American Literature 2
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About This Book

Prior to my adaptation, this course was created from materials originally developed from an American Literature course at J. Sargent Reynolds Community College. *American Literature 2* is a modified version of the Lumen *American Literature II* text. The original version of this book was released under a CC-BY license and is copyright by Lumen Learning.

The changes to this book listed are released under a CC-BY-SA license and are copyright by Joshua Dickinson of Jefferson Community College in Watertown, NY. The renaming is done to have the course correspond to JCC’s ENG 204: American Literature 2 name.

I also adapted a *Writer’s Handbook* resource for the College that goes into far more depth in coverage of the writing process and MLA style. This resource should be available on the SUNY list of OER textbooks.

Some of the materials included in the course (including timelines) are the product of a team-taught cross-listed course, ENG 204/POL 260, taught with Dr. Ray Petersen in the Spring 2015 semester. Credit is given to Dr. Petersen wherever this is the case. Thanks, Ray!

**List of Changes**

- Added Instructor Resources JCC ENG 204 Grading Rubric, Course Themes: American Identity, and Short Story Terms Assignment.
- Added several student resources, including Literary Terms Assignment (private view); Self-Diagnosis of One’s Writing Ills can be Fun!; Here are some Dos and Don’ts Graders Think About; Timelines; Avoid Relativism (Because I Think So); Not Taking Sides is Like That Beetlejuice Waiting Room Scene. . .; Tragedy and Comedy; American Culture Terms; and Defining Literature.
- Added the following lectures to the Responding to Literary Texts part: Academic Writing Review; How not to Write the Introduction and Conclusion; Connecting Reading & Writing: The Voice You Hear Assignment; How to Avoid Plagiarizing; Proper Source Use in Paragraphs; The Paragraph Body: Supporting Your Ideas; With Analysis, Focus on Functions or Effects; Analysis is the Breaking Down of a Whole into its Parts; Troubleshoot Your Reading; Checklist: Using Quotations Effectively; Using Sources: Blending Source Material With Your Own Work; Annotations: Why Mark Up Texts?; and How Might I Avoid Letting Source Use Take Over?; Binary Patterns; and Irony.
- In Immigration part, added page on Preamble to the IWW Constitution
- In Humor part, added Charles W. Chesnutt’s story “The Goophered Grapevine.”
- Added MLA Style part.
- Added About the Author section to End Matter.

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Instructor Resources
Textual Annotations Assignments

Textual Annotations

This assignment is designed to help you in developing critical writing skills while also demonstrating your ability to critically read a text for content and response.

Complete the following prompts for each primary reading this semester (exclude contextual readings, author biographies, and videos).

To complete this assignment effectively you will first need to annotate the text. Over the course of the semester we will discuss a number of techniques to help you perform a close reading/annotation of a text. Be sure to take notes on these strategies, and choose the one that is best for you!

In your own words: Summarize the text (100 words maximum). Refer to eNote’s “How to Write a Summary” article for additional guidance.

Quote a passage that you found confusing (properly cite the quote in MLA format) and write about why you found it confusing. (100 words maximum). Refer to Purdue OWL’s “MLA In-Text Citations: The Basics” for additional guidance.

Identify and define at least one (1) word you did not previously know before reading this text. Use dictionary.com for an initial definition.

Answer one (1) of the Reader Response Questions found below. Be sure to use evidence from the text when discussing your answer. (100-150 words minimum)

Reward!: Students who earn a superior grade (20/20) on each Textual Annotation assignment for four (4) straight weeks will be excused from all future Textual Annotation submissions since they will have demonstrated their strength in independent critical reading.

Grading:

20 (A): Assignment demonstrates a close reading of the literary texts by thoroughly answering each prompt clearly with insightful material and responses.

16 (B): Responses to prompts are thorough, yet lack depth of “A” submissions.

14 (C): Responses to prompts are vague and/or demonstrate only a tertiary reading of the text by not including substantial details or in-depth responses.

12 (D): Responses to prompts are missing and/or do not stay focused on the prompt given.

10 (F): Responses to prompts are very brief with no indication of original thought or close reading.

Additional points may be deducted for the following:

-5: Incorrect MLA format and/or MLA format not attempted

-10: For each missing Textual Annotation (If multiple readings were assigned).
Reader Response Questions

Choose one of the questions below to answer for #4 for this text.

- What connections are there between the reading and your life? Explain.
- What is the most important word in the reading? Explain.
- Do you like the ending of the reading? Why or why not?
- What came as a surprise in the reading? Why?
- What was the author saying about life and living through this reading? Explain.
- What does the writer’s purpose seem to be? Are they successful? Explain.
- My favorite character is ________ because ________.
- I can relate to ________ (character) because ________.
- Create a slogan for the reading and explain why you chose this...
- If this reading would become a movie, choose 3 main scenes and explain why you chose them.
- This reading helps me understand the problem of ________ better because ________.
- Write and explain a feasible solution for a problem a character has that is different from anything suggested in the reading.
- Discuss how ________ (character) shows his/her personality through the dialogue in the story.
- Discuss how ________ (character) shows his /her personality by the actions he/she takes.
- Discuss how ________ (character) shows his/her personality by what other characters say or do toward this character.
- Create an award for this reading. Explain the award and why this book received it.

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Course Themes: American Identity

Course Themes: American Identity

Racial Equality
The End of Pastoralism: Industrialization, Social Darwinism
Big Business and Reaction to It: Populists & Muckrakers
Imperialism
Rise of Socialism & Anarchism
The Lost Generation
Poverty & Inequality
The American Century: Permanent War Economy & the Cold War
Credibility Gap: Cold War, Vietnam War, Civil Rights, Social Movements, Women’s Liberation, Environmentalism, Red Power
American Identity: Are We __________? How does each reading add to, take from, or alter the American identity?

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Short Story Terms Assignment

Define the **any fifteen** of the terms below. Then provide examples of each, making sure to prove that your examples actually fit the term. You must cite when necessary. Use complete sentences and your own wording for definitions. Again, for any credit to be earned, you must prove that the example you choose is actually an instance of that term. Unquoted quotes—even if cited—can constitute plagiarism. Your examples must come from your reading, not from the sources you consult for the definitions! **For any credit at all to be earned,** you need to prove that your example actually is an example of the term being defined. In literature courses, this is what we do! Here’s an example:

Motivation: The driving reasons behind a character’s thoughts, beliefs or actions. In *The Dark Knight*, Batman goes after the Joker because he wants to get rid of organized crime in Gotham City (and the Joker is the ringleader). The killing of his parents by criminals—which he witnesses—motivates him. This is an example of motivation because an early event in the character’s life is pushing him to act. Batman is who he is because of these earlier events.

–Notice that I’m applying the term to the character and proving in a sentence or two that the term actually fits. It’s an application exercise, but you must do all parts to earn any points.

- mood
- tone
- connotation
- denotation
- stream-of-consciousness
- denouement
- characterization
- unreliable narrator
- ambiguity
- hyperbole
- metaphor
- understatement
- the grotesque
- stock character
- limited omniscient point of view
- foreshadowing
- flashback
Student Resources
How to Annotate a Text

Annotate (v): To supply critical or explanatory notes to a text.

Identifying and responding to the elements below will aid you in completing a close reading of the text. While annotations will not be collected or graded, doing them properly will aid in your understanding of the material and help you develop material for the assignments (Textual Annotations, Weekly Journals, and Major Essays).

While Reading:

- Characters
- Setting (When and/or Where)
- Vocabulary
- Important ideas or information
- Write in the margins:
  - Formulate opinions
  - Make connections: Can you see any connections between this reading and another we have had?
  - Ask open-ended questions (How...? Why...?)
  - Write reflections / reactions / comments: Have a conversation with the text! Did you like something? Not like something?

I recommend using multiple colored highlighters for these elements. Characters: Green, Setting: Blue, Margin Notes: Yellow, etc.). And be as detailed as possible when making notes—You’d hate to go back to something later and not remember why you highlighted it!

After Reading:

- Summarize: Attempt to summarize the work in 2-3 sentences without looking at the material. I recommend limiting your summary to 2-3 sentences because any longer could risk turning into a “play-by-play” vs. an actual summary.
- Articulate the most important idea you feel the text is presenting. “The author wants us to know ___.” or “The moral of the story is ___.”

Complete these points in the margins at the end of the text or on the back of the last page.

Final Thought:

Annotating is as personal as reading, and there are MANY ways to annotate a work. This system is just a suggestion. For example, some people prefer to use colored highlighters, while others may prefer to use symbols (underlining key words, etc.). There’s no “right way” to annotate—If you already have a system, feel free to use what you are comfortable with. I am not going to hold you to a specific style, however whatever style you use should cover the major areas discussed above.
Literary Terms Assignment

Define any eight of the terms below. Then provide examples of each, making sure to prove that your examples actually fit the term. You must cite when necessary. Use complete sentences and your own wording for definitions. The key is for you to prove that the example actually fits the term being defined. Try and use your own examples (though they can come from film, television, or books we aren’t reading for class).

- mood
- tone
- connotation
- denotation
- magic realism
- stream-of-consciousness
- denouement
- motivation
- characterization
- unreliable narrator
- exposition
- ambiguity
- hyperbole
- metaphor
- understatement
- modernism
- the grotesque
- stock character
- limited omniscient point of view
- foreshadowing
- flashback

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Defining Literature

Defining literature is always difficult. There are several overlapping definitions. Some concentrate on where the words are—as our discussion is when it questions whether something can be literature if it’s oral. This gets at only part of the question. Other definitions get at what literature feels like to the audience/reader. Other definitions focus on the differences between literature and everyday use of language. By using a combination of approaches (being flexible) we can arrive at a definition.

I’m including a long quote from Jonathan Culler’s wonderful little book *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. Culler teaches at Cornell. If any of you are serious about English as a major, you should probably read this book. The reason I mention this is that Culler makes literary theory understandable and he cuts through a lot of the current trends in criticism—that’s saying a lot, if you’ve seen some of the strange things to come out of our field of study lately. I wish I had read a book like this before tackling those English classes! Anyway, I’m not going to say much else about this—he goes from pages 18-41 trying to define this strange thing we call literature.

See what you can say about Culler’s take on defining literature. You could respond to it for some discussion postings.

Remember that epic poems like *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad* were initially oral—they were only written down much later. They are in our canon. The origins of poetry are oral rather than written.

Note that Culler’s book is published by Oxford UP, so it’s going to have single quotes where there should be double—and other British usages like single – instead of the– for quick shifts in thought. You should continue using Standard American English and MLA format.

The Definition of Literature

What sort of question?

We find ourselves back at the key question, ‘What is literature?’, which will not go away. But what sort of question is it? If a 5-year-old is asking, it’s easy. ‘Literature’, you answer, ‘is stories, poems, and plays.’ But if the questioner is a literary theorist, it’s harder to know how to take the query. It might be a question about the general nature of this object, literature, which both of you already know well. What sort of object or activity is it? What does it do? What purposes does it serve? Thus understood, ‘What is literature?’ asks not for a definition but for an analysis, even an argument about why one might concern oneself with literature at all.

But ‘What is literature?’ might also be a question about distinguishing characteristics of the works known as literature: what distinguishes them from non-literary works? What differentiates literature from other human activities or pastimes? Now people might ask this question because they were wondering how to decide which books are literature and which are not, but it is more likely that they already have an idea what counts as literature and want to know something else: are there any essential, distinguishing features that literary works share?

This is a difficult question. Theorists have wrestled with it, but without notable success. The reasons are not far to seek: works of literature come in all shapes and sizes and most of them seem to have more in common with works that aren’t usually called literature than they do with some other works recognized as literature. Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*, for instance, more closely resembles an autobiography than it does a sonnet, and a poem by Robert Burns – ‘My love is like a red, red rose’ - resembles a folk-song more than it does Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. Are there qualities shared by poems, plays, and novels that distinguish them from, say, songs, transcriptions of conversations, and autobiographies?
Even a bit of historical perspective makes this question more complex. For twenty-five centuries people have written works that we call literature today, but the modern sense of literature is scarcely two centuries old. Prior to 1800 literature and analogous terms in other European languages meant writings’ or “book knowledge.” Even today, a scientist who says ‘the literature on evolution is immense’ means not that many poems and novels treat the topic but that much has been written about it. And works that today are studied as literature in English or Latin classes in schools and universities were once treated not as a special kind of writing but as fine examples of the use of language and rhetoric. They were instances of a larger category of exemplary practices of writing and thinking, which included speeches, sermons, history, and philosophy. Students were not asked to interpret them, as we now interpret literary works, seeking to explain what they are ‘really about’. On the contrary, students memorized them, studied their grammar, identified their rhetorical figures and their structures or procedures of argument. A work such as Virgil’s Aeneid, which today g is studied as literature, was treated very differently in schools prior to 1850.

The modern Western sense of literature as imaginative writing can be traced to the German Romantic theorists of the late eighteenth century and, if we want a particular source, to a book published in 1800 by a French Baroness, Madame de Staël’s On Literature Considered in its Relations with Social Institutions. But even if we restrict ourselves to the last two centuries, the category of literature becomes slippery:

would works which today count as literature—say poems that seem snippets of ordinary conversation, without rhyme or discernible metre—have qualified as literature for Madame de Staël? And once we begin to think about non-European cultures, the question of what counts as literature becomes increasingly difficult. It is tempting to give it up and conclude that literature is whatever a given society treats as literature—a set of texts that arbiters [tastemakers, critics] recognize as belonging to literature.

I hope this helps!

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Tragedy and Comedy

Tragedy isn’t Accidental

“That was such a tragic accident.” Huh?

Tragedy is a balloon word, like “culture” or “freedom.” It has been used in so many ways that its exact meaning is lost. I’ll expect you to be more precise with it. Know its roots. Tragedy and comedy are complementary forms. Stemming from early drama (with its rituals), a tragic protagonist makes a choice which leads to their eventual, inevitable destruction. Conversely, comedy’s choices are about marriage and sex. There is usually a marriage at the end of a comedy—they are life-affirming in a positive way.

Typically, tragic protagonists fall from on high and we enjoy watching this inevitable, choice-driven event while noticing the characteristic within them that led to it. In this way, tragedy is much like blues music, where we might feel joy at hearing that someone is “diggin’ my potatoes” (cheating on the singer with “his” woman). The Greeks called this catharsis, a ritual purging (out both ends, grossly enough, but we politely think of the upper one).

What Tragedies Accomplish

Tragedies are life-affirming in a negative sense. The “body count” at the end usually evokes “pity” and “terror.” Aristotle used these terms, and we still do today. And why do we feel good after a tragedy? Why, it didn’t happen to us! That’s one reason. Another is that we shared in someone’s suffering, and this causes us to reflect on things. Are there many ways in which Americans communally share anything? How much more individualized are we now than we were 100 years ago?

Genres and categories like tragedy and comedy are artificially applied to much modern literature, and to all NA literature. When a Mohawk writer is intentionally using tragedy, they are also using their Mohawk culture and mixing in elements from white culture, too. How are readers going to separate these threads? Is it even possible? Do you see what an interesting mess this provides for us as readers? It’s not necessarily a bad thing that we can’t get easy answers.

Problems Using Terms like Tragedy

Not only is tragedy a misused term, then, but when applied to another world literature—like Native American literature—it becomes problematic. If we can test some of these, we won’t have to rely on problem terms like “tragedy” that much.

I’d like you to leave this lecture as a seeker for the tragic and the non-tragic in their properly literary senses, and not merely the pop culture idea of good/bad, which is oversimplified.

What of Comedy, Then?

Well, comedy is easy... it’s about union, with most comedies featuring sexual union occurring offstage while the wedding guests joke about how long it will take till the wife starts cheating on the husband. It’s a strange genre, really, with old people trying to create matches for the young, often involving their older friends marrying to maintain wealth and control. Critic Northrop Frye on comedy: “A comedy is not a play which ends happily: it is a play in which a certain structure is present and works through to its own logical end [. . .]”
Frye’s Use of Mythical Cycles—and I’m not talking Harleys!

Frye continues, connecting comedy and tragedy with the workings of the four seasons.

The mythical backbone of all literature is the cycle of nature, which rolls from birth to death and back again to rebirth. The first half of this cycle, the movement from birth to death, spring to winter, dawn to dark, is the basis of the great alliance of nature and reason, the sense of nature as a rational order in which all movement is toward the increasingly predictable . . . [T]ragedy [and] the history play (always very close to tragedy) . . . are always close to this first half. There may be surprises in the last act of a Shakespearean tragedy, but the pervading feeling is of something inevitable working itself out . . . Comedy, however, is based on the second half of the great cycle, moving from death to rebirth, decadence to renewal, winter to spring, darkness to a new dawn . . . This movement from sterility to renewed life is as natural as the tragic movement, because it happens. But though natural it is somehow irrational: the sense of the alliance of nature with reason and predictable order is no longer present. We can see that death is the inevitable result of birth, but new life is not the inevitable result of death. It is hoped for, even expected, but at its core is something unpredictable and mysterious, something that belongs to the imaginative equivalents of faith, hope, and love, not to the rational virtues (119-22).

So we’re often partly correct about these genres while perhaps missing the key workings of each. There! You are cursed to correct any newscaster who utters “That was a tragic accident!”

And if all this isn’t strangely contingent enough, do some web searches to see how the original festivals of Dionysus worked out (with their Maenads) prior to the Greeks settling down and merely watching plays! See the connections?

"Dionysus Mosaic" by miriam.mollerus is licensed under CC BY 2.0
Self-Diagnosis of One's Writing Ailments can be Fun!

Is using plain language the law?

The following humorous site, “How to Write Good,” is located on the Plainlanguage.gov page. It lists and breaks several writing rules. In breaking the rules, they illustrate them. It is an engaging way to learn the rules of English—especially since they always seem to have exceptions.

Note that not all of the rules are really rules anymore. For instance, the one about ending a sentence on a preposition is one we have largely gotten out of. (Get it?)

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Here are Some Dos and Don'ts Graders Think Through

What we want and what we get are often wildly variant. Adults all know this. Even so, I can be surprised by some combinations of elements sometimes. That’s why I like to troubleshoot papers with you beforehand!

Problem: Paragraphs lacking topic sentences. These work in fiction, but not in explicit writing like ours. Even if it is not first, the topic sentence ought to be connected in obvious ways to your claim. We often defer to sources here or have paragraphs which only exist in the paper because of a source. It should be that the supporting role fits what you do, not vice versa.

One source for the first or last third (or any third) of a paper is a problem. We often see such overuse of one source: Great source? Great! Not great, however, if that source is the only voice in the paper or if, when it is used, the writer never questions it. Think of how ventriloquists’ dummies only exist to parrot the words of someone else:

Definitions which get plagiarized, unused, treated as impressive, or passed off as if they are unbiased are likely to backfire, turning a possibly-good move into a definitely-bad move. I’m not phased by statistics–particularly if the writer fails to quote properly, doesn’t look at the fact that the sample size was seventeen people paid by the company, or if the “citizens’ group” spouting them turns out to be a hate group with a nice-sounding name or if that source actually ripped them off from a second source. As Mark Twain stated aptly, there are “lies, damned lies, and statistics.”

Long quotes? They are often areas where summaries would work better, be shorter, and might actually receive interpretation. Filler long quotes nearly never get interpreted. Look at it as I do: the more a quote drones on, the more expectation it sets up that I would get something for it–some interpretation, anything! (I mean, people get free vacations in our country for sitting through two-day seminars . . . they obviously got something from the long setup.) We only quote if it’s well-worded, the strongly-held opinion of a thinker, or a thought at variance with the widely-held opinion in that field of study. Otherwise, summarize or paraphrase.

Examples can often be scarce, appearing only by page six. By then, it’s too late for readers. Don’t overuse or under use examples. According to the Goldilocks Principle, there has to be a “just right” zone for source use,
detail, even sentence and word length.

Lastly, the new game is to play with formatting. I know the trick of putting the punctuation in 16-point font to puff the piece. I have seen papers go from 10 to 3 pages because of ridiculous formatting tricks. That time is best spent writing, in my opinion. Some people have plagiarized by throwing in a source’s bibliography and citations, figuring I wouldn’t check or couldn’t see that move. That’s another bad one, since plagiarism requires that we look at intent and it takes intent to do something like that.

I hope that helps!
Critical Approaches Chart

Use the critical approaches discussed in the chart below to help you find an interesting angle from which to approach a text. Each approach is given a brief description (Beliefs), some guidelines for studying a text (Practices) and prompts to inspire your discussion (Questions).

Do not simply list and answer the questions for a particular critical approach. Instead, use the questions as a starting place for your actual analysis. The questions are intended to be thought-provoking, not a list to be completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Beliefs</th>
<th>Practices</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deconstructive</td>
<td>• Meaning is made by binary oppositions (happy/sad, man/woman, black/white); in every binary relationship, one item is favored over the other one • This favoring of one concept in the binary relationship can be questioned and reversed to open up new ideas and meanings</td>
<td>• Identify the binary oppositions in the text, and determine which items are favored</td>
<td>1. What are the binary oppositions that govern the text? 2. What ideas, concepts, and values are being established by these binaries? 3. Cite three different interpretations for the text by flipping a series of three major binaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist Criticism</td>
<td>• Any interpretation of the text is influenced by the reader’s own status, which includes gender and attitudes towards gender • Men and women are different: they write differently, read differently, and write about their reading differently</td>
<td>• Identify the gender of the author and narrator/main character of the text • Observe how sexual stereotypes might be reinforced or undermined in the text–specifically, how the text reflects, distorts, or supports the place of women (and men) in society</td>
<td>1. What types of roles do men/women have in the text? Do any stereotypical characterizations of men/women appear? 2. What are the attitudes toward women held by the male characters? 3. What is the author’s attitude toward women in society? Explain your reasoning using detailed examples from the text.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Reader-Oriented Criticism

- The reader’s response is what counts. We can’t know for sure what an author intended, and the text is meaningless unless a reader responds.
- Responding to a text is a process. Descriptions of the process are valuable because one person’s response may enrich another reader’s response.

- Focus on how particular details shape readers’ expectations and responses.

1. What did the author intend for you to feel while reading this work, and how did he or she make you feel it?
2. What kind of reader is implied by this text? For example, does it address you as if you are intelligent and well-informed, or as if you are inexperienced and innocent?
3. How is your response shaped by the text? For example, do the actions of a certain character bring you pleasure or displeasure? Why?

# Historical Criticism

- Interpretation of a text should be based on an understanding of its context.
- The context includes information about the author; when the text was written; where the text was written.

- Research the author’s life and relate that information to the text.
- Research the author’s time and location (the political history, economic history, etc.) and relate that information to the text.

1. How can you connect the author’s life to his or her text? Are there common issues, events, concerns?
2. Is the author part of a dominant culture, and how does that status affect the work?
3. What events occurred surrounding the original production of the text? How may these events be relevant to the text under investigation?

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Timelines

The following images are timelines of key events in American history. They can be used for searches for building context on the readings, or as homework for in-class presentations. Most of the events either are not taught in most history courses or are taught in ways which lessen critical thinking on their importance.

-Thanks to Dr. Ray Petersen at SUNY Jefferson for sharing these timelines.

Progressivism timeline

1920s timeline

1960s timeline part 1

1960s timeline part 2

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- Timelines. **Authored by:** Ray Petersen, Josh Dickinson. **Provided by:** Jefferson Community College. **Located at:** http://www.sunyjefferson.edu. **Project:** ENG 204. **License:** CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike
Avoid Relativism (Because I Think So)

Get the title?

So that we avoid the major problem of relativism, heed the following warnings:

- If you don’t happen to resemble an author’s audience, don’t attack the audience that writer appealed to
- What I often see in essays based on model reading assignments is reactive rather than flexible reading. For instance, I often teach skeptic Michael Shermer’s book *The Science of Good and Evil*. In online discussion posts, I’ll see people react with “Well, he is sarcastic but people already agreeing with him would find that funny. I just find it offensive.” Then the student writer proceeds to do that Samuel L. Jackson “Allow me to retort” move from *Pulp Fiction* (Tarantino), trying to match snarkiness with Shermer or to refute him. When they get really desperate, they go to the web and find attack sites. “Allow me to retort!” is not our purpose in most academic writing. Later in the course, though, we will cover refutals, which are appropriately-handled counterarguments.
- “It’s true for me” doesn’t work here. I see this happen a lot in definition or rhetorical analysis essays that often start courses. If the writing is rhetorical analysis, cut out one’s views from this process . . . it is supposed to be about form, not content, so if you start getting too much into content, you’re not doing a formal analysis. In fact, to the extent that you go off (or gush in support) at the writer, you’re not doing your job of analyzing. And definitions—while they may not seem arguable—actually contain areas of genuine, ongoing disagreement that we would do well to recognize.
- Academic writing is public, not private. Don’t overuse *I* or *you*. Filtering this through the self is a bad idea. As Charlton Heston says of the mystery food in the movie *Soylent Green* “It’s people!” (Fleischer). Don’t serve us yourself . . . your friend Willie Wonka says “But that is called cannibalism, my dear children, and is in fact frowned upon in most societies” (Burton). I’m having fun with this, but the idea remains: The chapter is the source, not the self. Subjectivism pushes discussion only through our limited selves.

I realize I am only going against the whole of American culture by stating this. . .

In interpreting literature, you may be right. . . just not only because you think so!

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- When Interpreting, Avoid Relativism (Because I Think So). **Authored by:** Joshua Dickinson. **Provided by:** Jefferson Community College. **Located at:** http://www.sunyjefferson.edu. **Project:**
Writing about Literature Handout

Literature (Fiction)

WHAT THIS HANDOUT IS ABOUT

This handout describes some steps for planning and writing papers about fiction texts. For information on writing about other kinds of literature, please see the Writing Center’s handouts on writing about drama and poetry explications.

DEMYSTIFYING THE PROCESS

Writing an analysis of a piece of fiction can be a mystifying process. First, literary analyses (or papers that offer an interpretation of a story) rely on the assumption that stories must mean something. How does a story mean something? Isn’t a story just an arrangement of characters and events? And if the author wanted to convey a meaning, wouldn’t he or she be much better off writing an essay just telling us what he or she meant?

It’s pretty easy to see how at least some stories convey clear meanings or morals. Just think about a parable like the prodigal son or a nursery tale about “crying wolf.” Stories like these are reduced down to the bare elements, giving us just enough detail to lead us to their main points, and because they are relatively easy to understand and tend to stick in our memories, they’re often used in some kinds of education.

But if the meanings were always as clear as they are in parables, who would really need to write a paper analyzing them? Interpretations of fiction would not be interesting if the meanings of the stories were clear to everyone who reads them. Thankfully (or perhaps regrettably, depending on your perspective) the stories we’re asked to interpret in our classes are a good bit more complicated than most parables. They use characters, settings, and actions to illustrate issues that have no easy resolution. They show different sides of a problem, and they can raise new questions. In short, the stories we read in class have meanings that are arguable and complicated, and it’s our job to sort them out.

It might seem that the stories do have specific meanings, and the instructor has already decided what those meanings are. Not true. Instructors can be pretty dazzling (or mystifying) with their interpretations, but that’s because they have a lot of practice with stories and have developed a sense of the kinds of things to look for. Even so, the most well-informed professor rarely arrives at conclusions that someone else wouldn’t disagree with. In fact, most professors are aware that their interpretations are debatable and actually love a good argument. But let’s not go to the other extreme. To say that there is no one answer is not to say that anything we decide to say about a novel or short story is valid, interesting, or valuable. Interpretations of fiction are often opinions, but not all opinions are equal.

So what makes a valid and interesting opinion? A good interpretation of fiction will:

- avoid the obvious (in other words, it won’t argue a conclusion that most readers could reach on their own from a general knowledge of the story)
- support its main points with strong evidence from the story
- use careful reasoning to explain how that evidence relates to the main points of the interpretation.

The following steps are intended as a guide through the difficult process of writing an interpretive paper that meets these criteria. Writing tends to be a highly individual task, so adapt these suggestions to fit your own habits and inclinations.
WRITING A PAPER ON FICTION IN 9 STEPS

1. Become familiar with the text.

There’s no substitute for a good general knowledge of your story. A good paper inevitably begins with the writer having a solid understanding of the work that he or she interprets. Being able to have the whole book, short story, or play in your head—at least in a general way—when you begin thinking through ideas will be a great help and will actually allow you to write the paper more quickly in the long run. It’s even a good idea to spend some time just thinking about the story. Flip back through the book and consider what interests you about this piece of writing—what seemed strange, new, or important?

2. Explore potential topics

Perhaps your instructor has given you a list of topics to choose, or perhaps you have been asked to create your own. Either way, you’ll need to generate ideas to use in the paper—even with an assigned topic, you’ll have to develop your own interpretation. Let’s assume for now that you are choosing your own topic.

After reading your story, a topic may just jump out at you, or you may have recognized a pattern or identified a problem that you’d like to think about in more detail. What is a pattern or a problem?

A pattern can be the recurrence of certain kinds of imagery or events. Usually, repetition of particular aspects of a story (similar events in the plot, similar descriptions, even repetition of particular words) tends to render those elements more conspicuous. Let’s say I’m writing a paper on Mary Shelley’s novel Frankenstein. In the course of reading that book, I keep noticing the author’s use of biblical imagery: Victor Frankenstein anticipates that “a new species would bless me as its creator and source” (52) while the monster is not sure whether to consider himself as an Adam or a Satan. These details might help me interpret the way characters think about themselves and about each other, as well as allow me to infer what the author might have wanted her reader to think by using the Bible as a frame of reference. On another subject, I also notice that the book repeatedly refers to types of education. The story mentions books that its characters read and the different contexts in which learning takes place.

A problem, on the other hand, is something in the story that bugs you or that doesn’t seem to add up. A character might act in some way that’s unaccountable, a narrator may leave out what we think is important information (or may focus on something that seems trivial), or a narrator or character may offer an explanation that doesn’t seem to make sense to us. Not all problems lead in interesting directions, but some definitely do and even seem to be important parts of the story. In Frankenstein, Victor works day and night to achieve his goal of bringing life to the dead, but once he realizes his goal, he is immediately repulsed by his creation and runs away. Why? Is there something wrong with his creation, something wrong with his goal in the first place, or something wrong with Victor himself? The book doesn’t give us a clear answer but seems to invite us to interpret this problem.

If nothing immediately strikes you as interesting or no patterns or problems jump out at you, don’t worry. Just start making a list of whatever you remember from your reading, regardless of how insignificant it may seem to you now. Consider a character’s peculiar behavior or comments, the unusual way the narrator describes an event, or the author’s placement of an action in an odd context. (Step 5 will cover some further elements of fiction that you might find useful at this stage as well.)

There’s a good chance that some of these intriguing moments and oddities will relate to other points in the story, eventually revealing some kind of pattern and giving you potential topics for your paper. Also keep in mind that if you found something peculiar in the story you’re writing about, chances are good that other people will have been perplexed by these moments in the story as well and will be interested to see how you make sense of it all. It’s even a good idea to test your ideas out on a friend, a classmate, or an instructor since talking about your ideas will help you develop them and push them beyond obvious interpretations of the story. And it’s only by pushing those ideas that you can write a paper that raises interesting issues or problems and that offers creative interpretations related to those issues.

3. Select a topic with a lot of evidence

If you’re selecting from a number of possible topics, narrow down your list by identifying how much evidence or how many specific details you could use to investigate each potential issue. Do this step just off the top of your head. Keep in mind that persuasive papers rely on ample evidence and that having a lot of details to choose from can also make your paper easier to write.
It might be helpful at this point to jot down all the events or elements of the story that have some bearing on the two or three topics that seem most promising. This can give you a more visual sense of how much evidence you will have to work with on each potential topic. It’s during this activity that having a good knowledge of your story will come in handy and save you a lot of time. Don’t launch into a topic without considering all the options first because you may end up with a topic that seemed promising initially but that only leads to a dead end.

4. Write out a working thesis

Based on the evidence that relates to your topic—and what you anticipate you might say about those pieces of evidence—come up with a working thesis. Don’t spend a lot of time composing this statement at this stage since it will probably change (and a changing thesis statement is a good sign that you’re starting to say more interesting and complex things on your subject). At this point in my Frankenstein project, I’ve become interested in ideas on education that seem to appear pretty regularly, and I have a general sense that aspects of Victor’s education lead to tragedy. Without considering things too deeply, I’ll just write something like “Victor Frankenstein’s tragic ambition was fueled by a faulty education.”

5. Make an extended list of evidence

Once you have a working topic in mind, skim back over the story and make a more comprehensive list of the details that relate to your point. For my paper about education in Frankenstein, I’ll want to take notes on what Victor Frankenstein reads at home, where he goes to school and why, what he studies at school, what others think about those studies, etc. And even though I’m primarily interested in Victor’s education, at this stage in the writing, I’m also interested in moments of education in the novel that don’t directly involve this character. These other examples might provide a context or some useful contrasts that could illuminate my evidence relating to Victor. With this goal in mind, I’ll also take notes on how the monster educates himself, what he reads, and what he learns from those he watches. As you make your notes keep track of page numbers so you can quickly find the passages in your book again and so you can easily document quoted passages when you write without having to fish back through the book.

At this point, you want to include anything, anything, that might be useful, and you also want to avoid the temptation to arrive at definite conclusions about your topic. Remember that one of the qualities that makes for a good interpretation is that it avoids the obvious. You want to develop complex ideas, and the best way to do that is to keep your ideas flexible until you’ve considered the evidence carefully. A good gauge of complexity is whether you feel you understand more about your topic than you did when you began (and even just reaching a higher state of confusion is a good indicator that you’re treating your topic in a complex way).

When you jot down ideas, you can focus on the observations from the narrator or things that certain characters say or do. These elements are certainly important. It might help you come up with more evidence if you also take into account some of the broader components that go into making fiction, things like plot, point of view, character, setting, and symbols.

Plot is the string of events that go into the narrative. Think of this as the “who did what to whom” part of the story. Plots can be significant in themselves since chances are pretty good that some action in the story will relate to your main idea. For my paper on education in Frankenstein, I’m interested in Victor’s going to the University of Ingolstadt to realize his father’s wish that Victor attend school where he could learn about another culture. Plots can also allow you to make connections between the story you’re interpreting and some other stories, and those connections might be useful in your interpretation. For example, the plot of Frankenstein, which involves a man who desires to bring life to the dead and creates a monster in the process, bears some similarity to the ancient Greek story of Icarus who flew too close to the sun on his wax wings. Both tell the story of a character who reaches too ambitiously after knowledge and suffers dire consequences.

Your plot could also have similarities to whole groups of other stories, all having conventional or easily recognizable plots. These types of stories are often called genres. Some popular genres include the gothic, the romance, the detective story, the bildungsroman (this is just a German term for a novel that is centered around the development of its main characters), and the novel of manners (a novel that focuses on the behavior and foibles of a particular class or social group). These categories are often helpful in characterizing a piece of writing, but this approach has its limitations. Many novels don’t fit nicely into one genre, and others seem to borrow a bit from a variety of different categories. For example, given my working thesis on education, I am more interested in Victor’s development than in relating Frankenstein to the gothic genre, so I might decide to treat the novel as a bildungsroman.

And just to complicate matters that much more, genre can sometimes take into account not only the type of plot
but the form the novelist uses to convey that plot. A story might be told in a series of letters (this is called an epistolary form), in a sequence of journal entries, or in a combination of forms (Frankenstein is actually told as a journal included within a letter).

These matters of form also introduce questions of point of view, that is, who is telling the story and what do they or don’t they know. Is the tale told by an omniscient or all-knowing narrator who doesn’t interact in the events, or is it presented by one of the characters within the story? Can the reader trust that person to give an objective account, or does that narrator color the story with his or her own biases and interests?

Character refers to the qualities assigned to the individual figures in the plot. Consider why the author assigns certain qualities to a character or characters and how any such qualities might relate to your topic. For example, a discussion of Victor Frankenstein’s education might take into account aspects of his character that appear to be developed (or underdeveloped) by the particular kind of education he undertakes. Victor tends to be ambitious, even compulsive about his studies, and I might be able to argue that his tendency to be extravagant leads him to devote his own education to writers who asserted grand, if questionable, conclusions.

Setting is the environment in which all of the actions take place. What is the time period, the location, the time of day, the season, the weather, the type of room or building? What is the general mood, and who is present? All of these elements can reflect on the story’s events, and though the setting of a story tends to be less conspicuous than plot and character, setting still colors everything that’s said and done within its context. If Victor Frankenstein does all of his experiments in “a solitary chamber, or rather a cell, at the top of the house, and separated from all the other apartments by a staircase” (53) we might conclude that there is something anti-social, isolated, and stale, maybe even unnatural about his project and his way of learning.

Obviously, if you consider all of these elements, you’ll probably have too much evidence to fit effectively into one paper. Your goal is merely to consider each of these aspects of fiction and include only those that are most relevant to your topic and most interesting to your reader. A good interpretive paper does not need to cover all elements of the story—plot, genre, narrative form, character, and setting. In fact, a paper that did try to say something about all of these elements would be unfocused. You might find that most of your topic could be supported by a consideration of character alone. That’s fine. For my Frankenstein paper, I’m finding that my evidence largely has to do with the setting, evidence that could lead to some interesting conclusions that my reader probably hasn’t recognized on his or her own.

6. Select your evidence

Once you’ve made your expanded list of evidence, decide which supporting details are the strongest. First, select the facts which bear the closest relation to your thesis statement. Second, choose the pieces of evidence you’ll be able to say the most about. Readers tend to be more dazzled with your interpretations of evidence than with a lot of quotes from the book. It would be useful to refer to Victor Frankenstein’s youthful reading in alchemy, but my reader will be more impressed by some analysis of how the writings of the alchemists—who pursued magical principles of chemistry and physics—reflect the ambition of his own goals. Select the details that will allow you to show off your own reasoning skills and allow you to help the reader see the story in a way he or she may not have seen it before.

7. Refine your thesis

Now it’s time to go back to your working thesis and refine it so that it reflects your new understanding of your topic. This step and the previous step (selecting evidence) are actually best done at the same time, since selecting your evidence and defining the focus of your paper depend upon each other. Don’t forget to consider the scope of your project: how long is the paper supposed to be, and what can you reasonably cover in a paper of that length? In rethinking the issue of education in Frankenstein, I realize that I can narrow my topic in a number of ways: I could focus on education and culture (Victor’s education abroad), education in the sciences as opposed to the humanities (the monster reads Milton, Goethe, and Plutarch), or differences in learning environments (e.g. independent study, university study, family reading). Since I think I found some interesting evidence in the settings that I can interpret in a way that will get my reader’s attention, I’ll take this last option and refine my working thesis about Victor’s faulty education to something like this: “Victor Frankenstein’s education in unnaturally isolated environments fosters his tragic ambition.”

8. Organize your evidence

Once you have a clear thesis you can go back to your list of selected evidence and group all the similar details together. The ideas that tie these clusters of evidence together can then become the claims that you’ll make in
your paper. As you begin thinking about what claims you can make (i.e. what kinds of conclusion you can come to) keep in mind that they should not only relate to all the evidence but also clearly support your thesis. Once you’re satisfied with the way you’ve grouped your evidence and with the way that your claims relate to your thesis, you can begin to consider the most logical way to organize each of those claims. To support my thesis about Frankenstein, I’ve decided to group my evidence chronologically. I’ll start with Victor’s education at home, then discuss his learning at the University, and finally address his own experiments. This arrangement will let me show that Victor was always prone to isolation in his education and that this tendency gets stronger as he becomes more ambitious.

There are certainly other organizational options that might work better depending on the type of points I want to stress. I could organize a discussion of education by the various forms of education found in the novel (for example, education through reading, through classrooms, and through observation), by specific characters (education for Victor, the monster, and Victor’s bride, Elizabeth), or by the effects of various types of education (those with harmful, beneficial, or neutral effects).

9. Interpret your evidence

Avoid the temptation to load your paper with evidence from your story. Each time you use a specific reference to your story, be sure to explain the significance of that evidence in your own words. To get your readers’ interest, you need to draw their attention to elements of the story that they wouldn’t necessarily notice or understand on their own. If you’re quoting passages without interpreting them, you’re not demonstrating your reasoning skills or helping the reader. In most cases, interpreting your evidence merely involves putting into your paper what is already in your head. Remember that we, as readers, are lazy—all of us. We don’t want to have to figure out a writer’s reasoning for ourselves; we want all the thinking to be done for us in the paper.

GENERAL HINTS

The previous nine steps are intended to give you a sense of the tasks usually involved in writing a good interpretive paper. What follows are just some additional hints that might help you find an interesting topic and maybe even make the process a little more enjoyable.

1. Make your thesis relevant to your readers

You’ll be able to keep your readers’ attention more easily if you pick a topic that relates to daily experience. Avoid writing a paper that identifies a pattern in a story but doesn’t quite explain why that pattern leads to an interesting interpretation. Identifying the biblical references in Frankenstein might provide a good start to a paper—Mary Shelley does use a lot of biblical allusions—but a good paper must also tell the reader why those references are meaningful. So what makes an interesting paper topic? Simply put, it has to address issues that we can use in our own lives. Your thesis should be able to answer the brutal question “So what?” Does your paper tell your reader something relevant about the context of the story you’re interpreting or about the human condition?

Some categories, like race, gender, and social class, are dependable sources of interest. This is not to say that all good papers necessarily deal with one of these issues. My thesis on education in Frankenstein does not. But a lot of readers would probably be less interested in reading a paper that traces the instances of water imagery than in reading a paper that compares male or female stereotypes used in a story or that takes a close look at relationships between characters of different races. Again, don’t feel compelled to write on race, gender, or class. The main idea is that you ask yourself whether the topic you’ve selected connects with a major human concern, and there are a lot of options here (for example, issues that relate to economics, family dynamics, education, religion, law, politics, sexuality, history, and psychology, among others).

Also, don’t assume that as long as you address one of these issues, your paper will be interesting. As mentioned in step 2, you need to address these big topics in a complex way. Doing this requires that you don’t go into a topic with a preconceived notion of what you’ll find. Be prepared to challenge your own ideas about what gender, race, or class mean in a particular text.

2. Select a topic of interest to you

Though you may feel like you have to select a topic that sounds like something your instructor would be interested in, don’t overlook the fact that you’ll be more invested in your paper and probably get more out of it if you make the topic something pertinent to yourself. Pick a topic that might allow you to learn about yourself and what you
find important.

Of course, your topic can’t entirely be of your choosing. We’re always at the mercy of the evidence that’s available to us. For example, your interest may really be in political issues, but if you’re reading Frankenstein, you might face some difficulties in finding enough evidence to make a good paper on that kind of topic. If, on the other hand, you’re interested in ethics, philosophy, science, psychology, religion, or even geography, you’ll probably have more than enough to write about and find yourself in the good position of having to select only the best pieces of evidence.

3. Make your thesis specific

The effort to be more specific almost always leads to a thesis that will get your reader’s attention, and it also separates you from the crowd as someone who challenges ideas and looks into topics more deeply. A paper about education in general in Frankenstein will probably not get my reader’s attention as much as a more specific topic about the impact of the learning environment on the main character. My readers may have already thought to some extent about ideas of education in the novel, if they have read it, but the chance that they have thought through something more specific like the educational environment is slimmer.

WORKS CONSULTED

We consulted these works while writing the original version of this handout. This is not a comprehensive list of resources on the handout’s topic, and we encourage you to do your own research to find the latest publications on this topic. Please do not use this list as a model for the format of your own reference list, as it may not match the citation style you are using. For guidance on formatting citations, please see the UNC Libraries citation tutorial.


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Not Taking Sides is Like That Beetlejuice Waiting Room Scene. . .

It is important that we recognize the benefits and limitations of methodology. Likely, you know your major discipline’s approaches well. There are ways of being recognized or not. For instance, in Jeopardy contests, one has to phrase the answer in the form of a question. In discussion postings, many instructors require the post subject to be in sentence form. In Fast Times at Ridgemont High, Jeff Spicoli, the surfer doesn’t recognize his little brother: “Curtis, you know I don’t hear you unless you knock. . . ” (Heckerling). In science, hypotheses have to be provable. In academic writing, thesis claims must be both provable and arguable.

I’m reminded of the notion of Purgatory, an invention of Dante in his La Divina Commedia (Divine Comedy). This gets played up famously in Beetlejuice and its waiting room scene:

What’s interesting is that this echoes Dante, who puts people who failed to distinguish themselves into Hell. For Dante’s Italians, not choosing was worse than choosing an opposite side to one’s preferred side. Strangely enough, we are often more knowledgeable of our opponents–more tolerant of them, even–than of those who never choose. He even puts the neutral angels into Hell. In that era (1300 Florence), he even put living people into Hell, claiming that these people were so bad that demons inhabited their bodies and they were already in hell.

So these ideas can receive dogmatic answers. They get recognized or not, but over time they accrete meaning, slow down, and become concrete. (No Dogma references necessary . . )

What I find interesting is that we’re often struggling with the miniscule rules of MLA style in the same way.

As with science, though, we can essentialize this a bit: We are always already entering ongoing conversations. We do have to be for or against something. Likely ways of being against something are going to lead to tone issues and assumptions about audience agreement.

As the Beetlejuice move states, “Take a number!” and “It’s showtime!” (Burton).

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Some of these figures and events predate the start of our course but are still important for context. You will be assigned a term to create a PowerPoint slide for. Using your own words and making sure to cite where necessary (and including a source in the notes area of the slide), create 1-2 PowerPoint slides for the term(s) assigned to you. Submit your slide by attaching it to an email message to jdickinson@sunyjefferson.edu

Thanks!

How does each term relate to an understanding of American culture and literature?

Fee Soil Movement
Oneida Community (early 19th century)
George Catlin (1796-1872)
Reconstruction
Copperheads
Tweed Ring (1870)
Pinkerton
Normal Schools
Looking Backward, by Edward Bellamy
Haymarket Riot (1886)
Jay Gould
Trudeau Institute
Importance of Tuberculosis
Temperance pledges
Land grant colleges
Adirondack Park
Upton Sinclair
Knights of Labor
Eugene Debs
S. Weir Mitchell
Kellogg
Nativism
Dreyfus Affair
Pancho Villa Expedition
Ethnology
Franz Boas

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Responding to Literature
Academic Writing Review

Remember these items as you edit your essay. They can make a big difference. I hope this sort of things helps. It’s incomplete, but it’s a start.

Think of the purpose of your paper, and of how each paragraph helps you fulfill it. As I mentioned elsewhere, the essays in the book aren’t pure models for the academic writing we will be doing. What we write should look more solid, even if it is less flashy. You’ll need to cite details and quickly follow up on their meanings through strong interpretation of the cited material. Topic sentences and transitions are key elements as well.

Thesis/Introduction

• Set up your thesis; it’s best to place it near/at the end of the introduction.
• Two-part introductions or other types of unconventional introductions tend not to work. Why? The writer tends not to do the jobs of the introduction. These include previewing the rest of the essay, setting up the thesis (and showing other sides to the point you’re trying to prove).
• Make sure your introduction promises what you’ll do. (Don’t say “In this essay I’ll . . .” or “First, I’ll discuss,” though. Just go ahead and start previewing the paper.)
• Avoid using “I” as much as possible.
• “Don’t use don’t.” Avoid contractions–as I haven’t in this posting!
• “Oh, I almost forgot.” Be careful of the formal writing voice you need to use. Don’t sound chatty. I want you to write more formally than you are in your postings.

Thesis Checklist

With the thesis statement, keep the following questions in mind. They might work for most academic writing. Get good at asking follow-up questions of your own so that you can edit your work.

• Is it a statement?
• Is it a complex sentence? (Most good thesis statements provide an overview of what you’ll go into. Therefore, most good thesis statements need to be complex sentences.)
• Does it take into account your 2-3 main reasons? (These are usually your body paragraph topics, right?)
• Does it take different sides into account? You want to appear fair, and the thesis is a great place for you to frame the merits and weak points of contending sides.
• Where will you locate this statement? Usually, though not always, we put the thesis either at the end of the introduction, or near the end. This allows us to set up the thesis carefully. Your introduction should take care to preview what you’ll get into in the body paragraphs, just as the conclusion reviews what you did.

Paragraphing

• Starting/ending paragraphs with quotes is often a warning sign. Why is that?
• When editing, check for strong topic sentences. Are they there? (Go a step further: did your major topics make it into the introduction as preview material, and into the conclusion as review?)
• Citing properly matters. If readers are wondering where a source begins or ends, they are not attending to the content you chose to cite. Their job of appreciating what you brought to the essay is made impossible by citing problems.
• Do interpret between quotes. Avoid stacking two or three quotes. I’m more interested in what you have to write about the quotes than what’s in the quotes.
○ Fix the problems with Smart Quotes. (See that mini-lecture in Module 1.)
○ Are your paragraphs connected directly to the thesis? How? (Is the connection clear enough?)
○ End paragraphs well. (Consider transitions as well as restatement of topic sentence.)

**Interpretation**

Perhaps the biggest frustration is that many of you include great quotes. They’re promising, they’re useful, they’re . . . sitting there! Use the words in the quote. Get readers to see their meaning. If you aren’t doing some work at this level, then you aren’t interpreting. Good readers are waiting for you to prove your points through close reading of the text. (Sell us on what the words mean. That takes some time.)

**Conclusion**

- Lack of a conclusion will seriously affect your readers’ reactions to the essay (and thus, your grade).
- I value strong conclusions that restate your points and remind readers about how you proved your claim(s).
- Do not add new information to the conclusion.
- Restate your thesis at a strategic point. Otherwise, readers will not remember your work soon afterwards—or a week from now.
- Be detailed: this is where you remind us of what you did.
- Don’t write two or three sentences and “be done with it.”

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Organizing Your Analysis

Click the following link to read the article “Organizing Your Analysis” from the Online Writing Lab at Purdue University.

“Organizing Your Analysis” from Purdue’s OWL
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How not to Write the Introduction and Conclusion

Overview
The opening and closing of anything one writes become increasingly important with busy readers. The way a writer introduces the subject to readers could determine how they will approach the ideas or even if they will continue reading. The introduction of a research paper is especially important because research papers tend to be long and complex.

The Introduction
Your introduction should accomplish key goals:

- Grab attention. Open with a quote, fact, statistic, or short narrative.
- Convince readers that your paper is worth reading. Demonstrate the importance of your subject with details.
- Explain the basic context of your subject
- Narrow the topic to a specific thesis that clearly states your position

You may use the introduction to explain or justify research methods or address readers’ objections.

The Conclusion
A conclusion should accomplish specific tasks:

- Bring the paper to an interesting, logical end
- End with a final fact, quote, or comment to provoke readers to accept your ideas and think about the topic on their own
- Reinforce the main points of the essay without unnecessary repetition
- Restate your thesis in a strategic spot where it will have the most effect on readers
- Speculate about future action

Trite, Cliched Beginnings and Endings Send Messages

Remember, readers’ memories are not very powerful. Remind them of the specific things they should take away from the reading of your essay. Just avoid saying “In conclusion, I will review ____ and ____,” because this patterned ending sounds false. In fact, avoid every writing “In conclusion” to start a paragraph which is, obviously, the last!

Often, I mine the words for my introduction from the conclusion. By that point, I know more about what I have accomplished in those body paragraphs. I can copy and paste (and reword) my conclusion, which appears sharper than the original introduction. This process might work for you, and it’s easy with the copy and paste commands. Then, go back and rewrite a conclusion, making sure it’s not just parroting the wording of the introduction. Call this the Robin Hood Principle: Stealing from the rich to give to the poor.

Read aloud both your introduction and conclusion. Hear how they sound, and make sure they are of similar quality and length without seeming identical. Lastly, avoid “According to Dictionary.com, ____ is” or any “Society verbs ________ “ constructions. (“Society views the media as bad.”) Provable? Arguable?)

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Connecting Reading & Writing: The Voice You Hear Response

Too often, reading is viewed as a passive act where the information is poured into static readers’ minds. To succeed at the college level, a reworking of the way one reads may be necessary. Read the following passage from reading researcher Katherine McCormick and jot down your interpretation of its meaning:

Tony slowly got up from the mat, planning his escape. He hesitated a moment and thought. Things were not going well. What bothered him the most was being held, especially since the charge against him had been weak. He considered his present situation. The lock that held him was strong but he thought he could break it . . . . He was being ridden unmercifully . . . . He felt that he was ready to make his move.

From the two possible interpretations here, it seems clear that 1) readers use their previous experiences to make meaning out of a text, and 2) context influences meaning. After all, if we knew we were reading a short story on wrestling, our understanding of the passage would differ. Reading needs to be recognized as an active process. Read the following poem by Thomas Lux and answer all of the questions below in complete sentences. The questions appear after the poem.

The Voice You Hear When You Read Silently

is not silent, it is a speaking-out-loud voice in your head;
it is spoken, a voice is saying it as you read.
It’s the writer’s words, of course, in a literary sense his or her “voice”
but the sound of that voice is the sound of your voice.
Not the sound your friends know or the sound of a tape played back
but your voice
caught in the dark cathedral of your skull, your voice heard by an internal
ear informed by internal abstracts
and what you know by feeling, having felt.
It is your voice saying, for example, the word “barn” that the writer wrote
but the “barn” you say is a barn you know or knew.
The voice in your head, speaking as you read, never says anything
neutrally—some people hated the barn they knew,
some people love the barn they know
so you hear the word loaded and a sensory constellation is lit:
horse-gnawed stalls, hayloft, black heat tape wrapping a water pipe,
a slippery spilled chirr of oats from a split sack,
the bony, filthy haunches of cows . . .

And “barn” is only a noun—no verb or subject has entered into the sentence yet!

The voice you hear when you read to yourself is the clearest voice: you speak its speaking to you.

When you hear the word barn, what barn or barns from your own life do you first see? What feelings and associations do you have with this word? How do you think the barn in your head is different from the barns in your classmates’ heads?

When you hear the word cathedral, what images and associations from your own life come into your head? Once again, how might your classmates’ internal images and associations with the word cathedral differ from yours?

Now reread the poem and consider the lines “Not the sound your friends know or the sound of a tape played back / but your voice / caught in the dark cathedral of your skull.” What do you think Lux means by the metaphor “dark cathedral of your skull”? What seems important about his choice of the word cathedral (rather than, say, house or cave or gymnasium or mansion)? How does skull work (rather than mind or brain or head)? Freewriting for several minutes, create your interpretation of “dark cathedral of the skull.”

Finally, reflect for a moment about your thinking processes in trying to interpret “cathedral of the skull.” Did you go back and reread the poem, looking for how this line fits other lines of the poem? Did you explore further your own ideas about cathedrals and skull? See if you can catch yourself in the act of interacting with the text—or actively constructing meaning.
How to Avoid Plagiarizing

**Tip #1: Make Sure You Are Very Certain about What Is and is Not Plagiarism**

**Tip #2: Give Yourself Plenty of Time to Complete an Assignment**

Running out of time on an assignment is a main cause of plagiarism. Rushing to meet a deadline can result in carelessness (leading to unintentional plagiarism – see the next tip) and the desire to find a quick, easy solution such as copying someone else’s work. Don’t give in to that temptation! Plagiarism is a serious academic offense, and the chance of being caught (which is likely) is not worth it.

Avoid this situation entirely by starting your assignment far ahead of time and planning out when you will complete each phase of the writing process. Even if your teacher does not require you to turn in materials for each stage of the **writing process** (i.e. brainstorming, creating a thesis statement, outlining, drafting, revising, etc.), set your own personal deadlines for each step along the way and make sure to give yourself more than enough time to finish everything.

**Tip #3: Document Everything**

Plagiarism isn’t always a conscious choice. Sometimes it can be unintentional, typically resulting from poor documentation of one’s sources during the research phase. For example, sometimes students will write down an idea from a source using words identical to or very close to those in the original, but then when they go to write their paper forget that the material was not already in their own words. Adopting good research habits can prevent this type of plagiarism.

Print, photocopy, or scan the relevant pages of every source you are using (including the title and copyright pages, since they have the information you need for a bibliographic citation). When taking notes by hand (or typed into a file), list the bibliographic information for each source you use. Make sure to put quotation marks around any wordings taken directly from the source (and note the page where you found it), and remember to put everything else into your own words right away, so there is no danger of forgetting something is a quote. Documenting where all of your ideas, information, quotations, and so on come from is an important step in avoiding plagiarism.

**Tip #4: Don’t Include Too Much Material Taken from Other Sources**
Writing assignments are about your ideas, your interpretations, and your ability to synthesize information. You should use relevant sources to support your ideas using evidence such as quotes, paraphrases, and summaries, as well as statistics and other data. But don’t lose sight of the fact that your argument is central! Including too much material from other sources can result in a paper that feels like it has been pasted together from a variety of authors, rather than a cohesive essay. Such papers also run a much higher risk of setting off plagiarism warnings in SafeAssign or other plagiarism-detecting software. Try to find a balance: use enough evidence from credible sources to prove your points but don’t let the ideas of others take the place of your own thoughts.

**Tip #5: When in Doubt, Give a Citation**

Tips for integrating sources into your research. There are certain types of information – typically referred to as common knowledge – that don’t require a citation when you include them in your writing. These are facts that are widely known and can be easily found in a number of sources. They are not ideas that originated with one particular source. Examples include scientific facts (for example, that solid, liquid, and gas are three states of matter), general historical information (for example, that George Washington was the first US president), or even information commonly known to certain groups of people but not others (for example, most musicians know that a C major triad includes the notes C, E, and G, even though many non-musicians would have no idea what a C major triad is).

For everything else, you need to include a citation, regardless of whether you are quoting directly from the source, paraphrasing it, or giving a summary. If you are at all unsure whether something qualifies as common knowledge or not, give a citation. You can also consult a more experienced figure in your field, such as your instructor, to find out if something counts as common knowledge or not.

In academic writing, the “Quote Sandwich” approach is useful for incorporating other writers’ voices into your essays. It gives meaning and context to a quote, and helps you avoid plagiarism. This 3-step approach offers your readers a deeper understanding of what the quote is and how it relates to your essay’s goals.

**Step 1:** Provide context for the source. If you haven’t used it yet in the essay, tell us the source’s title and author (if known), and any other information that’s relevant, like the purpose of the organization that published it, for instance.

**Step 2:** Provide the quote itself. Be sure to format correctly and use quotation marks around exact language.

**Step 3:** Provide a summary and/or analysis of what the quote says, and how it relates to the subject matter of your essay and your thesis.
Proper Source Use in Paragraphs

Function of Source Use

You use sources as a form of backup for what you write. They support your claims. This means that you own your paper.

Consequences of the String of Pearls Effect

Using a single source several times in a row and then moving on as if some writing occurred is a common writing problem. How great a percentage of an average body paragraph should come from the source? Answers vary, of course, depending on your purpose and the sophistication of your topic. However, if you consistently let the sources take over more than one-third of your body paragraphs, you will not be a successful arguer, thinker, or writer.

If you consistently string together a bunch of quotes, then readers are left with unused material. If you have two or three quotes in a row, that means you did not interpret them. For some reason, many writers think that the quotation marks are magic, as if the quotes speak—or mean something—for themselves. They don’t. If you think of the quotes as excuses for you to discuss their meaning, you will be much better off.

We call the stringing together of paraphrases or quotes “the string of pearls effect.” What is the effect on readers of such lists?

I usually tell students that readers need lots of prompts and reminders. Say things again, even if you think the quote did a good job of making meaning. Tell readers what something means—just don’t use “I” or “you” as you follow up on the quote. The ends of paragraphs are where things tend to fall apart, I think. Succeed in synthesizing your source, in using it and proving the meaning of source information.

With cited material, follow up by

- linking the paraphrase.quote to the paragraph’s topic sentence,
- linking the cited information to the thesis
- restating the relevance, credibility, or context of the source material
- setting up a transition to the upcoming paragraph(s)
- using a signal phrase like “In other words, . . .” and launching into a direct interpretation of the cited bit

Use your options. Take an active approach so papers—especially the research essay—actually use the sources actively.

A Typical Paragraph Pattern

(Remember, though, that this is not a formula. Vary your paragraphs, sentences, details, appeals, etc.)

| Topic sentence. This is your own. Avoid starting w/quote (Why is this so?) setup for source use (1-3 sentences) source use (quote then cite, or paraphrase one sentence then cite) direct interpretation of the quote’s words or the paraphrase’s meaning(s) (1-4 sentences, right?) |
In large part, how well you do from here on out depends on how well you learn MLA citing and the standards of writing academic arguments. If we’re stuck with poorly-written paragraphs, the papers will only reach a certain level of quality.

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The Paragraph Body: Supporting Your Ideas

Whether the drafting of a paragraph begins with a main idea or whether that idea surfaces in the revision process, once you have that main idea, you’ll want to make sure that the idea has enough support. The job of the paragraph body is to develop and support the topic. Here’s one way that you might think about it:

• Topic sentence: what is the main claim of your paragraph; what is the most important idea that you want your readers to take away from this paragraph?
• Support in the form of evidence: how can you prove that your claim or idea is true (or important, or noteworthy, or relevant)?
• Support in the form of analysis or evaluation: what discussion can you provide that helps your readers see the connection between the evidence and your claim?
• Transition: how can you help your readers move from the idea you’re currently discussing to the next idea presented?

Types of support might include
• Reasons.
• Facts.
• Statistics.
• Quotations.
• Examples.

Now that we have a good idea what it means to develop support for the main ideas of your paragraphs, let’s talk about how to make sure that those supporting details are solid and convincing.

Good vs. Weak Support

What questions will your readers have? What will they need to know? What makes for good supporting details? Why might readers consider some evidence to be weak?

If you’re already developing paragraphs, it’s likely that you already have a plan for your essay, at least at the most basic level. You know what your topic is, you might have a working thesis, and you probably have at least a couple of supporting ideas in mind that will further develop and support your thesis.

So imagine you’re developing a paragraph on one of these supporting ideas and you need to make sure that the support that you develop for this idea is solid. Considering some of the points about understanding and appealing to your audience can also be helpful in determining what your readers will consider good support and what they’ll consider to be weak. Here are some tips on what to strive for and what to avoid when it comes to supporting details.

Good support
• Is relevant and focused (sticks to the point).
• Is well developed.
• Provides sufficient detail.
• Is vivid and descriptive.
• Is well organized.
• Is coherent and consistent.
• Highlights key terms and ideas.

Weak Support
• Lacks a clear connection to the point that it’s meant to support.
• Lacks development.
• Lacks detail or gives too much detail.
• Is vague and imprecise.
• Lacks organization.
• Seems disjointed (ideas don’t clearly relate to each other).
• Lacks emphasis of key terms and ideas.

Breaking, Combining, or Beginning New Paragraphs

Like sentence length, paragraph length varies. There is no single ideal length for “the perfect paragraph.” There are some general guidelines, however. Some writing handbooks or resources suggest that a paragraph should be at least three or four sentences; others suggest that 100 to 200 words is a good target to shoot for. In academic writing, paragraphs tend to be longer, while in less formal or less complex writing, such as in a newspaper, paragraphs tend to be much shorter. Two-thirds to three-fourths of a page is usually a good target length for paragraphs at your current level of college writing. If your readers can’t see a paragraph break on the page, they might wonder if the paragraph is ever going to end or they might lose interest.

The most important thing to keep in mind here is that the amount of space needed to develop one idea will likely be different than the amount of space needed to develop another. So when is a paragraph complete? The answer is, when it’s fully developed. The guidelines above for providing good support should help.

Some signals that it’s time to end a paragraph and start a new one include that
• You’re ready to begin developing a new idea.
• You want to emphasize a point by setting it apart.
• You’re getting ready to continue discussing the same idea but in a different way (e.g. shifting from comparison to contrast).
• You notice that your current paragraph is getting too long (more than three-fourths of a page or so), and you think your writers will need a visual break.

Some signals that you may want to combine paragraphs include that
• You notice that some of your paragraphs appear to be short and choppy.
• You have multiple paragraphs on the same topic.
• You have undeveloped material that needs to be united under a clear topic.

Finally, paragraph number is a lot like paragraph length. You may have been asked in the past to write a five paragraph essay. There’s nothing inherently wrong with a five-paragraph essay, but just like sentence length and paragraph length, the number of paragraphs in an essay depends upon what’s needed to get the job done. There’s really no way to know that until you start writing. So try not to worry too much about the proper length and number of things. Just start writing and see where the essay and the paragraphs take you. There will be plenty of time to sort out the organization in the revision process. You’re not trying to fit pegs into holes here. You’re letting your ideas unfold. Give yourself—and them—the space to let that happen.

Developing Relationships Between Ideas

So you have a main idea, and you have supporting ideas, but how can you be sure that your readers will understand the relationships between them? How are the ideas tied to each other? One way to emphasize these relationships is through the use of clear transitions between ideas. Like every other part of your essay, transitions have a job to do. They form logical connections between the ideas presented in an essay or paragraph, and they give readers clues that reveal how you want them to think about (process, organize, or use) the topics presented.

Why are Transitions Important?

Transitions signal the order of ideas, highlight relationships, unify concepts, and let readers know what’s coming next or remind them about what’s already been covered. When instructors or peers comment that your writing is choppy, abrupt, or needs to “flow better,” those are some signals that you might need to work on building some better transitions into your writing. If a reader comments that she’s not sure how something relates to your thesis or main idea, a transition is probably the right tool for the job.

When Is the Right Time to Build in Transitions?

There’s no right answer to this question. Sometimes transitions occur spontaneously, but just as often (or maybe even more often) good transitions are developed in revision. While drafting, we often write what we think, sometimes without much reflection about how the ideas fit together or relate to one another. If your thought...
process jumps around a lot (and that’s okay), it’s more likely that you will need to pay careful attention to reorganization and to providing solid transitions as you revise.

When you’re working on building transitions into an essay, consider the essay’s overall organization. Consider using reverse outlining and other organizational strategies presented in this text to identify key ideas in your essay and to get a clearer look at how the ideas can be best organized. This can help you determine where transitions are needed.

Let’s take some time to consider the importance of transitions at the sentence level and transitions between paragraphs.

**Sentence-Level Transitions**

Transitions between sentences often use “connecting words” to emphasize relationships between one sentence and another. A friend and coworker suggests the “something old something new” approach, meaning that the idea behind a transition is to introduce something new while connecting it to something old from an earlier point in the essay or paragraph. Here are some examples of ways that writers use connecting words (highlighted with red text and italicized) to show connections between ideas in adjacent sentences:

**To Show Similarity**

When I was growing up, my mother taught me to say “please” and “thank you” as one small way that I could show appreciation and respect for others. In the same way, I have tried to impress the importance of manners on my own children. Other connecting words that show similarity include also, similarly, and likewise.

**To Show Contrast**

Some scientists take the existence of black holes for granted; however, in 2014, a physicist at the University of North Carolina claimed to have mathematically proven that they do not exist. Other connecting words that show contrast include in spite of, on the other hand, in contrast, and yet.

**To Exemplify**

The cost of college tuition is higher than ever, so students are becoming increasingly motivated to keep costs as low as possible. For example, a rising number of students are signing up to spend their first two years at a less costly community college before transferring to a more expensive four-year school to finish their degrees. Other connecting words that show example include for instance, specifically, and to illustrate.

**To Show Cause and Effect**

Where previously painters had to grind and mix their own dry pigments with linseed oil inside their studios, in the 1840s, new innovations in pigments allowed paints to be premixed in tubes. Consequently, this new technology facilitated the practice of painting outdoors and was a crucial tool for impressionist painters, such as Monet, Cezanne, Renoir, and Cassatt. Other connecting words that show cause and effect include therefore, so, and thus.

**To Show Additional Support**

When choosing a good trail bike, experts recommend 120–140 millimeters of suspension travel; that’s the amount that the frame or fork is able to flex or compress. Additionally, they recommend a 67–69 degree head-tube angle, as a steeper head-tube angle allows for faster turning and climbing. Other connecting words that show additional support include also, besides, equally important, and in addition.

**A Word of Caution**

Single-word or short-phrase transitions can be helpful to signal a shift in ideas within a paragraph, rather than between paragraphs (see the discussion below about transitions between paragraphs). But it’s also important to understand that these types of transitions shouldn’t be frequent within a paragraph. As with anything else that happens in your writing, they should be used when they feel natural and feel like the right choice. Here are some examples to help you see the difference between transitions that feel like they occur naturally and transitions that seem forced and make the paragraph awkward to read:

**Too Many Transitions**: The Impressionist painters of the late 19th century are well known for their visible brush strokes, for their ability to convey a realistic sense of light, and for their everyday subjects portrayed in outdoor settings. In spite of this fact, many casual admirers of their work are unaware of the scientific innovations that made it possible this movement in art to take place. Then, in 1841, an American painter named John Rand invented the collapsible paint tube. To illustrate the importance of this invention, pigments previously had
to be ground and mixed in a fairly complex process that made it difficult for artists to travel with them. For example, the mixtures were commonly stored in pieces of pig bladder to keep the paint from drying out. In addition, when working with their palettes, painters had to puncture the bladder, squeeze out some paint, and then mend the bladder again to keep the rest of the paint mixture from drying out. Thus, Rand’s collapsible tube freed the painters from these cumbersome and messy processes, allowing artists to be more mobile and to paint in the open air.

**Subtle Transitions that Aid Reader Understanding:** The Impressionist painters of the late 19th century are well known for their visible brush strokes, for their ability to convey a realistic sense of light, for their everyday subjects portrayed in outdoor settings. However, many casual admirers of their work are unaware of the scientific innovations that made it possible for this movement in art to take place. In 1841, an American painter named John Rand invented the collapsible paint tube. Before this invention, pigments had to be ground and mixed in a fairly complex process that made it difficult for artists to travel with them. The mixtures were commonly stored in pieces of pig bladder to keep the paint from drying out. When working with their palettes, painters had to puncture the bladder, squeeze out some paint, and then mend the bladder again to keep the rest of the paint mixture from drying out. Rand’s collapsible tube freed the painters from these cumbersome and messy processes, allowing artists to be more mobile and to paint in the open air.

**Transitions between Paragraphs and Sections**

It’s important to consider how to emphasize the relationships not just between sentences but also between paragraphs in your essay. Here are a few strategies to help you show your readers how the main ideas of your paragraphs relate to each other and also to your thesis.

**Use Signposts**

Signposts are words or phrases that indicate where you are in the process of organizing an idea; for example, signposts might indicate that you are introducing a new concept, that you are summarizing an idea, or that you are concluding your thoughts. Some of the most common signposts include words and phrases like first, then, next, finally, in sum, and in conclusion. Be careful not to overuse these types of transitions in your writing. Your readers will quickly find them tiring or too obvious. Instead, think of more creative ways to let your readers know where they are situated within the ideas presented in your essay. You might say, “The first problem with this practice is...” Or you might say, “The next thing to consider is...” Or you might say, “Some final thoughts about this topic are....”

**Use Forward-Looking Sentences at the End of Paragraphs**

Sometimes, as you conclude a paragraph, you might want to give your readers a hint about what’s coming next. For example, imagine that you’re writing an essay about the benefits of trees to the environment and you’ve just wrapped up a paragraph about how trees absorb pollutants and provide oxygen. You might conclude with a forward-looking sentence like this: “Trees benefits to local air quality are important, but surely they have more to offer our communities than clean air.” This might conclude a paragraph (or series of paragraphs) and then prepare your readers for additional paragraphs to come that cover the topics of trees’ shade value and ability to slow water evaporation on hot summer days. This transitional strategy can be tricky to employ smoothly. Make sure that the conclusion of your paragraph doesn’t sound like you’re leaving your readers hanging with the introduction of a completely new or unrelated topic.

**Use Backward-Looking Sentences at the Beginning of Paragraphs**

Rather than concluding a paragraph by looking forward, you might instead begin a paragraph by looking back. Continuing with the example above of an essay about the value of trees, let’s think about how we might begin a new paragraph or section by first taking a moment to look back. Maybe you just concluded a paragraph on the topic of trees’ ability to decrease soil erosion and you’re getting ready to talk about how they provide habitats for urban wildlife. Beginning the opening of a new paragraph or section of the essay with a backward-looking transition might look something like this: “While their benefits to soil and water conservation are great, the value that trees provide to our urban wildlife also cannot be overlooked.”

**Evaluate Transitions for Predictability or Conspicuousness**
Finally, the most important thing about transitions is that you don’t want them to become repetitive or too obvious. Reading your draft aloud is a great revision strategy for so many reasons, and revising your essay for transitions is no exception to this rule. If you read your essay aloud, you’re likely to hear the areas that sound choppy or abrupt. This can help you make note of areas where transitions need to be added. Repetition is another problem that can be easier to spot if you read your essay aloud. If you notice yourself using the same transitions over and over again, take time to find some alternatives. And if the transitions frequently stand out as you read aloud, you may want to see if you can find some subtler strategies.

With Analysis, Focus Upon Functions or Effects

At the college level, putting in the right-sounding quotes in the right-looking spots of a body paragraph is insufficient. Writers are expected to use the quotes as excuses to argue their points. Close reading is a crucial skill which helps the writer make sense of how something makes sense. Humanities courses largely aim to enhance or bring about readers’ abilities to handle complex, indirect texts that demand multiple responses.

Close reading is an analytical activity where the writer picks parts of larger whole and discusses how they function. This can be done while annotating or deciding what to say about an annotated chunk of text. Because your audience often knows the text and has ideas about how it works, it is up to you to do more than simply point out the existence of an important line, phrase, or word. Within the line, the critic must move from pointing out an idea to arguing how it functions. What effect is created by that phrase? How does this word affect readers? These questions get proved after careful setup and cited quotation work.

Once you have dissected a speech, description, or dialogue, remember that you have committed a fairly aggressive, destructive act. You yanked a part from the whole. Remember to use the late portions of paragraphs to put the pieces back together. (“Pick up your toys when you are done with them!”)

**What You Might Look for in a Text**

Focus on an author’s use of complexity by discussing the effects of any of the following:

- word choice (diction) word order (syntax)
- connotation denotation
- irony (dramatic, situational, verbal) symbolism
- mood tone
- paradox (seeming contradiction) how words fit/bring about character
- rhetorical appeals (logos, ethos, pathos) logical patterns (valid or not)

Rhetorical modes (description, narration, definition, process, illustration, comparison/contrast, classification/division, cause/effect, argument)

Basically, looking for moves of any sort is a good starting point with analysis.

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Binary Patterns

This or that? Me or you? I or thou? Subject or object?

Along with these basic either/or questions, Western thought is built on other key binaries.

A binary is an either/or choice like the zeroes and ones making up DVDs or other digital codes. While some things lend themselves to “this or that” choices, we know that the world is often much more complicated. The answer “Pepsi or Coke?” might define a person privately, but whether you like one or the other may not carry much public meaning. Ironically, it did carry meaning in the 80s during the Cola Wars.

These either/or choices often have strange histories. For instance, the tragedy/comedy binary informs genres on television and in literature. It is based on a thinker, Aristotle, who was not even approving of literature. Dig into the history of tragedy and comedy and you will find some strangeness. For instance, tragedy was supposed by Aristotle to feature someone making a choice which leads inevitably to their downfall, which we witness and feel catharsis, a sense of purging out of both ends...! Weird enough for you? It makes a certain amount of sense, just as listening to a blues song makes us feel happy, but it’s what we’d call contingent: based on a quirky, particular set of happenings that did not have to occur. So binaries are contingent. (Call this the non-tragic theory of approaching binaries.) And comedy was supposed to involve a mating and joining offstage in early Greek comedies—which were held at the festival of the god Dionysus, at which, originally, his devotees called Maenads were said to mate with willing victims on mountainsides, after which they would rend apart the sacrificial victim. And this is what informs our genres—and has done so for 2,500 years. So I’d add necessary vs. contingent as a binary that can be useful.

For more on the strangeness of binaries, you might do a search for humor theory or look at the history of academia (gowns, gavels, graduations...). Or if you’re talking good or evil, one might look at how evil always comes back (Sauron, Voldemort). Weirdly enough, this even contributes to a type of cannibalism whereby an enemy’s body is eaten so that his soul can be erased—for a time—from the eternal battlefield. As the cliche goes, “The truth is stranger than fiction.” In fields like literary analysis, there is no “capital-T Truth.” That idea of there being one would go back to Plato and his theory of Forms.

So these issues have histories of which we should become aware. As a critical reader, it is important for you to take note of binaries and gauge their effects. Though they may exclude other choices, it is the case that humans notice contrasts and oppositions.

Binaries are crutches, tools. They can work but can put blinders on what we notice. Early in stages of the writing or critical thinking processes, they can be useful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which side of a binary does the author notice or value more?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which views are portrayed as negative?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is undervalued or missing from a given text?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a writing course, then, you might create a persuasive essay that argues one side against another. We contribute to these ongoing debates most thoughtfully if we realize that they arguments will continue, however well we write about them! Just don’t fall into the trap of thinking that the world is either/or, comforting as that notion may be.

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Analysis is the Breaking Down of a Whole into its Parts

Part-to-whole relationships and breaking those down into their functions is what we do when we analyze. We argue about how the parts function. For practice, look at the following image. It is Edward Hicks’s *The Cornell Farm*. The image has a fascinating composition, so watch the way one’s eyes are directed from area to area in the painting. Are there any symbols? Signs? (Do you know the difference between a sign and a symbol?)

When we write, we analyze most of the time. Whether we are reading a student post or model essay, we look over each text and think about how we are looking. It’s a composition, so some of the vocabulary we use in its analysis is shared with other humanities courses like art appreciation or music appreciation.

Consider how the whole is broken down. If it’s artful, then there’s a guiding of one’s eyes as well as a frustration of easy expectations. See what you see and share that! Again, italicize the artworks’ titles.

Edward Hicks, *The Cornell Farm* (1848).

Clearly, we can argue the parts and how they function. Analysis is all about functions in the structure and effects upon the viewer/reader. It’s worth remembering that the act is destructive (*lys* meaning just that), sort of like taking apart a watch and seeing if it will function without this or that gear. And, no, don’t use the creationist blind watchmaker argument here just because I mentioned watches. Their idea that something as sophisticated as an eye could not have evolved is easily-enough refuted. CC licensed content, Original

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Troubleshoot Your Reading

Sometimes reading may seem difficult, you might have trouble getting started, or other challenges will surface. Here are some troubleshooting ideas.

Problem: “Sometimes I put my reading off or don’t have time to do it, and then when I do have time, well, I’m out of time.”
Suggestions: That’s a problem, for sure. I always suggest to students that rather than trying to do a bunch of reading at once, they try to do a little bit every day. That makes it easier.
If you’re stuck up against a deadline with no reading done, one suggestion is to do some good pre-reading. That should at least give you the idea of the main topic.
Another idea is to divide the total pages assigned by the number of available days, figuring out how many pages you’ll need to read each day to finish the assignment. Sometimes approaching the text in smaller pieces like this can make it feel more doable. Also, once you figure out how long it takes you to read, say, five pages, you can predict how much time it will take to read a larger section.

Problem: “If I don’t understand some part of the reading, I just skip over it and hope someone will explain it later in class.”
Suggestions: Not understanding reading can be frustrating—and it can make it hard to succeed on your assignments. The best suggestion is to talk with your teacher. Let them know you don’t understand the reading, and they should be able to help.
Another suggestion is to read sentence by sentence. Be sure you understand each word—if you don’t, look them up. As you read, master each sentence before going on to the next one, and then, at the end of a paragraph, stop and summarize the entire paragraph, reflecting on what you just read.
Yet another idea: use the Web and do a search for the title of the reading followed by the word ‘analysis.’ Reading what other people have said about the text may help you get past your stuck points. If you’re in a face-to-face classroom, asking a question in class will encourage discussion and will also help your fellow students, who may have the same confusions.

Problem: “I really don’t like to read that much, so I read pretty fast and tend to stick with the obvious meanings. But then the teacher is always asking us to dig deeper and try to figure out what the author really meant. I get so frustrated with that!”
Suggestions: College-level writing tends to have multiple layers of significance. The easiest way to think about this is by separating the “obvious or surface meaning” from the “buried treasure meaning.” This can actually be one of the most fun parts of a reading—you get to play detective. As you read, try to ask questions of the text: Why? Who? Where? For what reason? These questions will help you think more deeply about the text.

Problem: “Sometimes I jump to conclusions about what a text means and then later find out I wasn’t understanding it completely.”
Suggestions: This usually happens when we read too quickly and don’t engage with the text. The best way to avoid this is to slow down and take time with the text, following all the guidelines for effective and critical reading.

Problem: “When a text suggests an idea I strongly disagree with, I can’t seem to go any further.”
Suggestions: Aristotle was known for saying, “It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.” As a college student, you must be ready to explore and examine a wide range of ideas, whether you agree with them or not. In approaching texts with an open and willing mind, you leave yourself ready to engage with a wide world of ideas—many of which you may not have encountered before. This is what college is all about.
Problem: “I’m a slow reader. It takes me a long time to read material, and sometimes the amount of assigned reading panics me.”
Suggestions: Two thoughts. One, the more you read, the easier it gets: like anything, reading improves with practice. And two, you’ll probably find your reading is most effective if you try to do a little bit every day rather than several hours of reading all at one time. Plan ahead! Be aware of what you need to read and divide it up among the available days. Reading 100 pages in a week may seem overwhelming, but reading 15 pages a day will be easier. Be sure to read when you’re fresh, too, rather than at day’s end, when you’re exhausted.

Problem: “Sometimes the teacher assigns content in an area I really know nothing about. I want to be an accountant. Why should I read philosophy or natural history, and how am I supposed to understand them?”
Suggestions: By reading a wide variety of texts, we don’t just increase our knowledge base—we also make our minds work. This kind of “mental exercise” teaches the brain and prepares it to deal with all kinds of critical and innovative thinking. It also helps train us to different reading and writing tasks, even when they’re not familiar to us.

Problem: “When I examine a text, I tend to automatically accept what it says. But the teacher is always encouraging us to ask questions and not make assumptions.”
Suggestions: What you’re doing is reading as a reader—reading for yourself and making your own assumptions. The teacher wants you to reach for the next level by reading critically. By engaging with the text and digging through it as if you’re on an archaeological expedition, you’ll discover even more about the text. This can be fun, and it also helps train your brain to explore texts with an analytic eye.

Problem: “I really hate reading. I’ve found I can skip the readings, read the SparkNotes, and get by just fine.”
Suggestions: First, if you aren’t familiar with SparkNotes, it’s an online site that provides summary and analysis of many literary texts and other materials, and students often use this to either replace reading or to better understand materials. You may be able to get by, at least for a while, with reading Sparks Notes alone, for they do a decent basic job of summarizing content and talking about simple themes. But Sparks isn’t good at reading texts deeply or considering deep analysis, which means a Sparks-only approach will result in your missing a lot of what the text includes.

You’ll also be missing some great experiences. The more you read, the easier reading becomes. The more you read deeply and critically and the more comfortable you become with analyzing texts, the easier that process becomes. And as your textual skills become stronger, you’ll find yourself more successful with all of your college studies, too. Reading remains a vital college (and life!) skill—the more you practice reading, the better you’ll be at it. And honestly, reading can be fun, too– not to mention a great way to relax and an almost instant stress reducer.

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- Troubleshoot Your Reading. **Authored by:** Monique Babin, Clackamas Community College Carol Burnell, Clackamas Community College Susan Pesznecker, Portland State University. **Provided by:** Center for Open Education. **Located at:** https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/BookDetail.aspx?bookId=471. **Project:** American Lit 2. **License:** CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike
Checklist: Using Quotations Effectively

Before you include a quotation in your essay, ask yourself:

- Which point of mine does the quotation support?
- Why should the passage be quoted rather than paraphrased or summarized?
- What do my readers need to know about the quotation’s author?

As you integrate quotations into your draft, ask yourself:

- Have I sufficiently introduced the quotation with a phrase or sentence?
- Will my readers know whom I am quoting and why?
- Does the quotation fit smoothly into my own sentence?

As you revise your work, ask yourself:

- Have I strung together too many quotations?
- Have I used long quotations sparingly?
- Have I used quotation marks properly and documented each quote?

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Using Sources: Blending Source Material with Your Own Work

When working with sources, many students worry they are simply regurgitating ideas that others formulated. That is why it is important for you to develop your own assertions, organize your findings so that your own ideas are still the thrust of the paper, and take care not to rely too much on any one source, or your paper’s content might be controlled too heavily by that source.

In practical terms, some ways to develop and back up your assertions include:

Blend sources with your assertions. Organize your sources before and as you write so that they blend, even within paragraphs. Your paper—both globally and at the paragraph level—should reveal relationships among your sources, and should also reveal the relationships between your own ideas and those of your sources.

Write an original introduction and conclusion. As much as is practical, make the paper’s introduction and conclusion your own ideas or your own synthesis of the ideas inherent in your research. Use sources minimally in your introduction and conclusion.

Open and close paragraphs with originality. In general, use the openings and closing of your paragraphs to reveal your work—“enclose” your sources among your assertions. At a minimum, create your own topic sentences and wrap-up sentences for paragraphs.

Use transparent rhetorical strategies. When appropriate, outwardly practice such rhetorical strategies as analysis, synthesis, comparison, contrast, summary, description, definition, hierarchical structure, evaluation, hypothesis, generalization, classification, and even narration. Prove to your reader that you are thinking as you write.

Also, you must clarify where your own ideas end and the cited information begins. Part of your job is to help your reader draw the line between these two things, often by the way you create context for the cited information. A phrase such as “A 1979 study revealed that . . .” is an obvious announcement of citation to come. Another recommended technique is the insertion of the author’s name into the text to announce the beginning of your cited information. You may worry that you are not allowed to give the actual names of sources you have studied in the paper’s text, but just the opposite is true. In fact, the more respectable a source you cite, the more impressed your reader is likely to be with your material while reading. If you note that the source is the NASA Science website or an article by Stephen Jay Gould or a recent edition of The Wall Street Journal right in your text, you offer your readers immediate context without their having to guess or flip to the references page to look up the source.

What follows is an excerpt from a political science paper that clearly and admirably draws the line between writer and cited information:

The above political upheaval illuminates the reasons behind the growing Iranian hatred of foreign interference; as a result of this hatred, three enduring geopolitical patterns have evolved in Iran, as noted by John Limbert. First . . .

Note how the writer begins by redefining her previous paragraph’s topic (political upheaval), then connects this to Iran’s hatred of foreign interference, then suggests a causal relationship and ties her ideas into John Limbert’s analysis—thereby announcing that a synthesis of Limbert’s work is coming. This writer’s work also becomes more credible and meaningful because, right in the text, she announces the name of a person who is a recognized authority in the field. Even in this short excerpt, it is obvious that this writer is using proper citation and backing up her own assertions with confidence and style.

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Annotation: Why Mark Up Your Texts?

Marking up your book properly is a survival skill in college literature classes. Most instructors expect you to develop your own system for noting “significant stuff” when reading. Marking up your book will allow you to locate information while testing.

Even if you are renting a text or reading it on a Kindle or other device, there are annotation tools. In fact, some of the electronic tools can allow you collection your annotations.

How to Mark Up Your Book
There is no set way to mark up a text, but active readers tend to do several of the following things:

- Underline important passages. As an alternative, you could put vertical lines in the margin next to important areas.
- Put ?, ! or questions of your own in the margins next to confusing or surprising passages. This way, you won’t have to stop your reading for too long in order to look up words, phrases, etc.
- Draw lines and arrows between connected ideas. Try and find your own level of connections so that these become more meaningful.
- List concepts, themes, or the names of other authors in the margins. These indicate connections.
- List the page number or beginning of a quote similar to the one you’re annotating. Connect one quote with another. Quotes can be linked based on similarity, difference, emphasis, subtlety, etc. It’s up to you.
- Doubt the author. Be skeptical this in the margins! Insults work, too . .
- Use literary terms like irony, ambiguity, symbolism, tone to indicate where the author is making these moves.
- Create your own shorthand for marking the book. This could be as simple as using the triangle (delta), the mathematical symbol for change. I have a bunch of these. Seriously, this works.

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How Might I Avoid Letting Source Use Take Over?

Q: How can I Avoid Letting the Paper get Taken over by Sources?
A: This is a common issue. We think we know what we are classifying or writing about, but once we begin drafting and using others’ ideas, the focus seems to get lost.

Q: In the typical body paragraph, how much should I write?
A: Over 75% should be from you. Realize that summaries and paraphrases, though in your words, aren’t yours. They’re from the sources. So, we have this tough standard of having to write a lot of commentary. Without using “you” or “I,” you should be able to handle this at the ENG 101 level. Read on!

Integrating supporting sources without offering them chances to take over the paper is a huge issue. We’ll confront it for the rest of our writing lives. I can offer you some suggestions. They are in no particular order. Please read this carefully, though, as it might help you avoid either plagiarism or an extremely low grade. I’ll follow up on this with other postings, too.

- Freewrite what you think about the topic as soon as you decide on it. When you outline the paper’s reasons, be sure to write out what you think. (I like to hand write what I think and then type it. Typing allows me to add things and to think about them. At this point, at least I have something of my own, though I know it’ll change significantly.)
- Force yourself to write out topic sentences that are directly related to the thesis.
- Let your thesis change after you’re in the midpoint of the essay. It’s smart not to try and fit the paper to one sentence; it’s easier by far to fit one sentence to the paper you write than vice versa! Refine your working thesis repeatedly. It’s a messy process and it should be!
- Support needs to remain in support. Condition yourself to write two or more sentences of commentary for every piece of source information. You know you must cite summaries, paraphrases, and quotes, right? To do less would be to plagiarize. But, once we do this so carefully, we end up with paragraphs taken over by sources. Unless you provide commentary on these summaries, paraphrases, or quotes, you are not writing actively. You can create integrated paragraphs by handling the material, saying things about it.

Q: What might I do after the citation?
A: Question the source information, extend it, offer examples examples, respond by adopting any of various tones toward it, relate it to the topic sentence, relate to thesis, or relate it to what happens next. A power move is to show another example and then compare/contrast, discuss the examples (analysis, synthesis, evaluation skills). If you take a tone toward the material, you might be “accepting,” “skeptical,” “in agreement with” it. These are attitude words. It’s okay to have attitude as long as you don’t sound as if you are speaking or writing a newspaper editorial! In fact, avoid sounding like you’re chatting (which is something I am doing here.)

- Treat the citations as excuses for you to argue something. That “something” is up to you, but realize that readers expect your commentary to matter more than the cited information. Play the game, but realize that in college, these rules are radically different from what one could get away with in high school. (You are doing well with responses to the photos and essays, so do that some sort of logical, detailed thinking after citations.)
- If good things must occur after citations, they also must happen before the citations. Review the handbook and my information about signal phrases. Your job is to establish the context of what’s being said and why it matters. You handle this with exact verbs like “contends,” “refutes,” “suggests,” “defends,” rather than blah verbs like “is” or “says.” We call this setup a signal phrase. The signal phrase introduces a source. Use signal phrases to signal a shift from your
words to theirs. This is part of a well-integrated paragraph.
- **Save author for signal phrase** if you have no page to cite. For website and database sources, no page number goes into parentheses, so you’d better save the author for the signal phrase.
- Offer enough examples and logical discussion to take over those paragraphs that are in danger of being run by sources.
- Don’t start or end paragraphs with source material. I say this because sources take over if they begin or end. (That’s not an absolute rule, but you recognize its practicality.
- Readers are easily distracted. After a citation, it is okay to restate the paraphrase’s meaning.
- Writers hurt their chances at success with topic sentences that don’t get followed, paragraph endings that are vague, and a lack of transitions. You know that people notice the beginnings and endings the most, so be sure these are excellent. Transition smoothly from idea to idea, both within sentences and between paragraphs. (Many writers think well but cannot start sentences at all well. Be sure you don’t fit that category.)
- Read your work aloud with an “ear toward” hearing the transitions from you to the source and back. If there are big chunks of source use, you must break up those and provide sufficient commentary. That’s where that general “25% or more yours” rule fits in, since you can break up paragraphs and offer sufficient commentary to regain control.

Remember that good readers want to be able to appreciate what you bring to the discussion.

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Irony

Defining Irony

Irony is all about noticing contrast. No noticing by you = inaccurate interpretations.

Verbal irony occurs when the intended meaning and the stated meaning are different—and usually opposite. Huh? Let me clarify. Irony is when the connotation is the opposite of the denotation. Connotations are the contexts, the situations and feelings around a word. Denotations are the dictionary definitions surrounding a word.

When these don’t match up, a space is created. You see that space, and you react to it by giving that situation meaning.

Exemplifying Verbal Irony

Irony is like sarcasm. For example, if I said “That’s a Great tie” to someone with an extremely ugly tie, you would hear the tone in which I said it, right? You could look up “Great” in the dictionary and find that it means good, admirable, wonderful, etc. But “good” is opposite of the usage, right? I mean, I said it so he’d see it was ugly and bad. Some critics dispute this connection between sarcasm and irony.

How to Approach Irony

Ask questions about irony. Use the term in your discussions and your papers.

Do you think you’ll see irony in the works we’ll read? Will it be used in the same ways?

If irony is the difference between the stated meaning and the intended meaning, then is it used by all cultures?

Dramatic and Situation Irony: The Sidekick Types

Dramatic irony arises when an audience knows more about a situation than the character(s). The characters say or do something whose significance they don’t know. For example, you go to Oedipus the King knowing that he has married his mom. You know this, he doesn’t. So, as he discovers this, you watch and appreciate it.

Situational irony would result from a gapping—a difference—between what readers expect and what actually occurs. This is not to be confused with the popular misconception that irony occurs when something surprising or coincidental occurs. (Think of that 90s song by Alanis Morissette, “Isn’t it Ironic?” which actually featured nonexamples of irony. Now that’s ironic!)
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The American Novel: Huck Finn
Mark Twain, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN

(TOM SAWYER’S COMRADE)

SCENE: The Mississippi Valley
TIME: Forty to Fifty Years Ago

BY Mark Twain

ILLUSTRATED

NEW EDITION FROM NEW PLATES

HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS

NEW YORK AND LONDON

———

Books by

MARK TWAIN

ST. JOAN OF ARC
THE INNOCENTS ABROAD
ROUGHING IT
THE GILDED AGE
A TRAMP ABROAD
FOLLOWING THE EQUATOR
PUDD‘NHEAD WILSON
SKETCHES NEW AND OLD
THE AMERICAN CLAIMANT
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE
A CONNECTICUT YANKEE AT THE COURT OF KING ARTHUR
THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN
PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF JOAN OF ARC
LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI
THE MAN THAT CORRUPTED HADLEYBURG
THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER
THE $30,000 BEQUEST
THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER
TOM SAWYER ABROAD
WHAT IS MAN?
THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER
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Huckleberry Finn

CHAPTER I

You don’t know about me without you have read a book by the name of The Adventures of Tom Sawyer; but that ain’t no matter. That book was made by Mr. Mark Twain, and he told the truth, mainly. There was things which he stretched, but mainly he told the truth. That is nothing. I never seen anybody but lied one time or another, without it was Aunt Polly, or the widow, or maybe Mary. Aunt Polly—Tom’s Aunt Polly, she is—and Mary, and the Widow Douglas is all told about in that book, which is mostly a true book, with some stretchers, as I said before.

Now the way that the book winds up is this: Tom and me found the money that the robbers hid in the cave, and it made us rich. We got six thousand dollars apiece—all gold. It was an awful sight of money when it was piled up. Well, Judge Thatcher he took it and put it out at interest, and it fetched us a dollar a day apiece all the year round—more than a body could tell what to do with. The Widow Douglas she took me for her son, and allowed she would sivilize me; but it was rough living in the house all the time, considering how dismal regular and decent the widow was in all her ways; and so when I couldn’t stand it no longer I lit out. I got into my old rags and my sugar-hogshead again, and was free and satisfied. But Tom Sawyer he hunted me up and said he was going to start a band of robbers, and I might join if I would go back to the widow and be respectable. So I went back.

The widow she cried over me, and called me a poor lost lamb, and she called me a lot of other names, too, but she never meant no harm by it. She put me in them new clothes again, and I couldn’t do nothing but sweat and sweat, and feel all cramped up. Well, then, the old thing commenced again. The widow rung a bell for supper, and you had to come to time. When you got to the table you couldn’t go right to eating, but you had to wait for the widow to tuck down her head and grumble a little over the victuals, though there warn’t really anything the matter with
them—that is, nothing only everything was cooked by itself. In a barrel of odds and ends it is different; things get mixed up, and the juice kind of swaps around, and the things go better.

After supper she got out her book and learned me about Moses and the Bulrushers, and I was in a sweat to find out all about him; but by and by she let it out that Moses had been dead a considerable long time; so then I didn’t care no more about him, because I don’t take no stock in dead people.

Pretty soon I wanted to smoke, and asked the widow to let me. But she wouldn’t. She said it was a mean practice and wasn’t clean, and I must try to not do it any more. That is just the way with some people. They get down on a thing when they don’t know nothing about it. Here she was a-bothering about Moses, which was no kin to her, and no use to anybody, being gone, you see, yet finding a power of fault with me for doing a thing that had some good in it. And she took sniff, too; of course that was all right, because she done it herself.

Her sister, Miss Watson, a tolerable slim old maid, with goggles on, had just come to live with her, and took a set at me now with a spelling-book. She worked me middling hard for about an hour, and then the widow made her ease up. I couldn’t stand it much longer. Then for an hour it was deadly dull, and I was fidgety. Miss Watson would say, “Don’t put your feet up there, Huckleberry”; and “Don’t scrunch up like that, Huckleberry—set up straight”; and pretty soon she would say, “Don’t gap and stretch like that, Huckleberry—why don’t you try to behave?” Then she told me all about the bad place, and I said I wished I was there. She got mad then, but I didn’t mean no harm. All I wanted was to go somewheres; all I wanted was a change, I warn’t particular. She said it was wicked to say what I said; said she wouldn’t say it for the whole world; she was going to live so as to go to the good place. Well, I couldn’t see no advantage in going where she was going, so I made up my mind I wouldn’t try for it. But I never said so, because it would only make trouble, and wouldn’t do no good.

Now she had got a start, and she went on and told me all about the good place. She said all a body would have to do there was to go around all day long with a harp and sing, forever and ever. So I didn’t think much of it. But I never said so. I asked her if she reckoned Tom Sawyer would go there, and she said not by a considerable sight. I was glad about that, because I wanted him and me to be together.

Miss Watson she kept pecking at me, and it got tiresome and lonesome. By and by they fetched the niggers in and had prayers, and then everybody was off to bed. I went up to my room with a piece of candle, and put it on the table. Then I set down in a chair by the window and tried to think of something cheerful, but it warn’t no use. I felt so lonesome I most wished I was dead. The stars were shining, and the leaves rustled in the woods ever so mournful; and I heard an owl, away off, who-whooing about somebody that was dead, and a whippowill and a dog crying about somebody that was going to die; and the wind was trying to whisper something to me, and I couldn’t make out what it was, and so it made the cold shivers run over me. Then away out in the woods I heard that kind of a sound that a ghost makes when it wants to tell about something that’s on its mind and can’t make itself understood, and so can’t rest easy in its grave, and has to go about that way every night grieving. I got so downhearted and scared I did wish I had some company. Pretty soon a spider went crawling up my shoulder, and I flipped it off and it lit in the candle; and before I could budge it was all shriveled up. I didn’t need anybody to tell me that that was an awful bad sign and would fetch me some bad luck, so I was scared and most shook the clothes off of me. I got up and turned around in my tracks three times and crossed my breast every time; and then I tied up a little lock of my hair with a thread to keep witches away. But I hadn’t no confidence. You do that when you’ve lost a horseshoe that you’ve found, instead of nailing it up over the door, but I hadn’t ever heard anybody say it was any way to keep off bad luck when you’d killed a spider.

I set down again, a-shaking all over, and got out my pipe for a smoke; for the house was all as still as death now, and so the widow wouldn’t know. Well, after a long time I heard the clock away off in the town go boom—boom—boom—twelve licks; and all still again—stiller than ever. Pretty soon I heard a twig snap down in the dark amongst the trees—something was a-stirring. I set still and listened. Directly I could just barely hear a “me-yow! me-yow!” down there. That was good! Says I, “me-yow! me-yow!” as soft as I could, and then I put out the light and scrambled out of the window on to the shed. Then I slipped down to the ground and crawled in among the trees, and, sure enough, there was Tom Sawyer waiting for me.

CHAPTER II

We went tiptoeing along a path amongst the trees back toward the end of the widow’s garden, stooping down so as the branches wouldn’t scrape our heads. When we was passing by the kitchen I fell over a root and made a noise. We scrouched down and laid still. Miss Watson’s big nigger, named Jim, was setting in the kitchen door; we could see him pretty clear, because there was a light behind him. He got up and stretched his neck out about a
Now, we’ll start this band of robbers and call it Tom Sawyer’s Gang. Everybody that wants to join has got to take

a place and got into a kind of room, all damp and sweaty and cold, and there we stopped. Tom says:

“Pretty soon ducked under a wall where you wouldn’t ‘a’ noticed that there was a hole. We went along a narrow

We went about two hundred yards, and then the cave opened up. Tom poked about amongst the passages, and

in the hill, right in the thickest part of the bushes. Then we lit the candles, and crawled in on our hands and knees.

We went to a clump of bushes, and Tom made everybody swear to keep the secret, and then showed them a hole

pulled down the river two mile and a half, to the big scar on the hillside, and went ashore.

Joe Harper and Ben Rogers, and two or three more of the boys, hid in the old tanyard. So we unhitched a skiff and

down by the village was the river, a whole mile broad, and awful still and grand. We went down the hill and found

four lights twinkling, where there was sick folks, maybe; and the stars over us was sparkling ever so fine; and

Well, when Tom and me got to the edge of the hilltop we looked away down into the village and could see three or

four lights twinkling, where there was sick folks, maybe; and the stars over us was sparkling ever so fine; and

down by the village was the river, a whole mile broad, and awful still and grand. We went down the hill and found

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place and got into a kind of room, all damp and sweaty and cold, and there we stopped. Tom says:

“Now, we’ll start this band of robbers and call it Tom Sawyer’s Gang. Everybody that wants to join has got to take
an oath, and write his name in blood." Everybody was willing. So Tom got out a sheet of paper that he had wrote
the oath on, and read it. It swore every boy to stick to the band, and never tell any of the secrets; and if anybody
done anything to any boy in the band, whichever boy was ordered to kill that person and his family must do it, and
he mustn’t eat and he mustn’t sleep till he had killed them and hacked a cross in their breasts, which was the sign
of the band. And nobody that didn’t belong to the band could use that mark, and if he did he must be sued; and if
he done it again he must be killed. And if anybody that belonged to the band told the secrets, he must have his
throat cut, and then have his carcass burnt up and the ashes scattered all around, and his name blotted off the list
with blood and never mentioned again by the gang, but have a curse put on it and be forgot forever.

Everybody said it was a real beautiful oath, and asked Tom if he got it out of his own head. He said some of it, but
the rest was out of pirate-books and robber-books, and every gang that was high-toned had it.

Some thought it would be good to kill the families of boys that told the secrets. Tom said it was a good idea, so he
took a pencil and wrote it in. Then Ben Rogers says:

“Here’s Huck Finn, he hain’t got no family; what you going to do ’bout him?”

“Well, hain’t he got a father?” says Tom Sawyer.

“Yes, he’s got a father, but you can’t never find him these days. He used to lay drunk with the hogs in the tanyard,
but he hain’t been seen in these parts for a year or more.”

They talked it over, and they was going to rule me out, because they said every boy must have a family or
somebody to kill, or else it wouldn’t be fair and square for the others. Well, nobody could think of anything to
do—everybody was stumped, and set still. I was most ready to cry; but all at once I thought of a way, and so I
offered them Miss Watson—they could kill her. Everybody said:

“Oh, she’ll do. That’s all right. Huck can come in.”

Then they all stuck a pin in their fingers to get blood to sign with, and I made my mark on the paper.

“Now,” says Ben Rogers, “what’s the line of business of this Gang?”

“Nothing only robbery and murder,” Tom said.

“But who are we going to rob?—houses, or cattle, or—”

“Stuff! stealing cattle and such things ain’t robbery; it’s burglary,” says Tom Sawyer. “We ain’t burglars. That
ain’t no sort of style. We are highwaymen. We stop stages and carriages on the road, with masks on, and kill the
people and take their watches and money.”

“Must we always kill the people?”

“Oh, certainly. It’s best. Some authorities think different, but mostly it’s considered best to kill them—except some
that you bring to the cave here, and keep them till they’re ransomed.”

“Ransomed? What’s that?”

“I don’t know. But that’s what they do. I’ve seen it in books; and so of course that’s what we’ve got to do.”

“But how can we do it if we don’t know what it is?”

“Why, blame it all, we’ve got to do it. Don’t I tell you it’s in the books? Do you want to go to doing different from
what’s in the books, and get things all muddled up?”

“Oh, that’s all very fine to say, Tom Sawyer, but how in the nation are these fellows going to be ransomed if we
don’t know how to do it to them?—that’s the thing I want to get at. Now, what do you reckon it is?”

“Well, I don’t know. But per’aps if we keep them till they’re ransomed, it means that we keep them till they’re
dead.”

“Now, that’s something like. That’ll answer. Why couldn’t you said that before? We’ll keep them till they’re
ransomed to death; and a bothersome lot they’ll be, too—eating up everything, and always trying to get loose.”
“How you talk, Ben Rogers. How can they get loose when there’s a guard over them, ready to shoot them down if they move a peg?”

“A guard! Well, that is good. So somebody’s got to set up all night and never get any sleep, just so as to watch them. I think that’s foolishness. Why can’t a body take a club and ransom them as soon as they get here?”

“Because it ain’t in the books so—that’s why. Now, Ben Rogers, do you want to do things regular, or don’t you?—that’s the idea. Don’t you reckon that the people that made the books knows what’s the correct thing to do? Do you reckon you can learn ‘em anything? Not by a good deal. No, sir, we’ll just go on and ransom them in the regular way.”

“All right. I don’t mind; but I say it’s a fool way, anyhow. Say, do we kill the women, too?”

“Well, Ben Rogers, if I was as ignorant as you I wouldn’t let on. Kill the women? No; nobody ever saw anything in the books like that. You fetch them to the cave, and you’re always as polite as pie to them; and by and by they fall in love with you, and never want to go home any more.”

“Well, if that’s the way I’m agreed, but I don’t take no stock in it. Mighty soon we’ll have the cave so cluttered up with women, and fellows waiting to be ransomed, that there won’t be no place for the robbers. But go ahead, I ain’t got nothing to say."

Little Tommy Barnes was asleep now, and when they waked him up he was scared, and cried, and said he wanted to go home to his ma, and didn’t want to be a robber any more.

So they all made fun of him, and called him cry-baby, and that made him mad, and he said he would go straight and tell all the secrets. But Tom give him five cents to keep quiet, and said we would all go home and meet next week, and rob somebody and kill some people.

Ben Rogers said he couldn’t get out much, only Sundays, and so he wanted to begin next Sunday; but all the boys said it would be wicked to do it on Sunday, and that settled the thing. They agreed to get together and fix a day as soon as they could, and then we elected Tom Sawyer first captain and Joe Harper second captain of the Gang, and so started home.

I clumb up the shed and crept into my window just before day was breaking. My new clothes was all greased up and clayey, and I was dog-tired.

CHAPTER III

Well, I got a good going-over in the morning from old Miss Watson on account of my clothes; but the widow she didn’t scold, but only cleaned off the grease and clay, and looked so sorry that I thought I would behave awhile if I could. Then Miss Watson she took me in the closet and prayed, but nothing come of it. She told me to pray every day, and whatever I asked for I would get it. But it warn’t so. I tried it. Once I got a fish-line, but no hooks. It warn’t any good to me without hooks. I tried for the hooks three or four times, but somehow I couldn’t make it work. By and by, one day, I asked Miss Watson to try for me, but she said I was a fool. She never told me why, and I couldn’t make it out no way.

I set down one time back in the woods, and had a long think about it. I says to myself, if a body can get anything they pray for, why don’t Deacon Winn get back the money he lost on pork? Why can’t the widow get back her silver snuff-box that was stole? Why can’t Miss Watson fat up? No, says I to myself, there ain’t nothing in it. I went and told the widow about it, and she said the thing a body could get by praying for it was “spiritual gifts.” This was too many for me, but she told me what she meant—I must help other people, and do everything I could for other people, and look out for them all the time, and never think about myself. This was including Miss Watson, as I took it. I went out in the woods and turned it over in my mind a long time, but I couldn’t see no advantage about it—except for the other people; so at last I reckoned I wouldn’t worry about it any more, but just let it go. Sometimes the widow would take me one side and talk about Providence in a way to make a body’s mouth water; but maybe next day Miss Watson would take hold and knock it all down again. I judged I could see that there was two Providences, and a poor chap would stand considerable show with the widow’s Providence, but if Miss Watson’s got him there warn’t no help for him any more. I thought it all out, and reckoned I would belong to the widow’s if he wanted me, though I couldn’t make out how he was a-going to be any better off then than what he was before, seeing I was so ignorant, and so kind of low-down and ornery.
Pap he hadn’t been seen for more than a year, and that was comfortable for me; I didn’t want to see him no more. He used to always whale me when he was sober and could get his hands on me; though I used to take to the woods most of the time when he was around. Well, about this time he was found in the river drowned, about twelve mile above town, so people said. They judged it was him, anyway; said this drowned man was just his size, and was ragged, and had uncommon long hair, which was all like pap; but they couldn’t make nothing out of the face, because it had been in the water so long it warn’t much like a face at all. They said he was floating on his back in the water. They took him and buried him on the bank. But I warn’t comfortable long, because I happened to think of something. I knewed mighty well that a drowned man don’t float on his back, but on his face. So I knewed, then, that this warn’t pap, but a woman dressed up in a man’s clothes. So I was uncomfortable again. I judged the old man would turn up again by and by, though I wished he wouldn’t.

We played robber now and then about a month, and then I resigned. All the boys did. We hadn’t robbed nobody, hadn’t killed any people, but only just pretended. We used to hop out of the woods and go charging down on hog-drivers and women in carts taking garden stuff to market, but we never hived any of them. Tom Sawyer called the hogs “ingots,” and he called the turnips and stuff “julery,” and we would go to the cave and powwow over what we had done, and how many people we had killed and marked. But I couldn’t see no profit in it. One time Tom sent a boy to run about town with a blazing stick, which he called a slogan (which was the sign for the Gang to get together), and then he said he had got secret news by his spies that next day a whole parcel of Spanish merchants and rich A-rabs was going to camp in Cave Hollow with two hundred elephants, and six hundred camels, and over a thousand “sumter” mules, all loaded down with di’monds, and they didn’t have only a guard of four hundred soldiers, and so we would lay in ambush, as he called it, and kill the lot and scoop the things. He said we must slick up our swords and guns, and get ready. He never could go after even a turnip-cart but he must have the swords and guns all scoured up for it, though they was only lath and broomsticks, and you might scour at them till you rotted, and then they warn’t worth a mouthful of ashes more than what they was before. I didn’t believe we could lick such a crowd of Spaniards and A-rabs, but I wanted to see the camels and elephants, so I was on hand next day, Saturday, in the ambush; and when we got the word we rushed out of the woods and down the hill. But there warn’t no Spaniards and A-rabs, and there warn’t no camels nor no elephants. It warn’t anything but a Sunday-school picnic, and only a primer class at that. We busted it up, and chased the children up the hollow; but we never got anything but some doughnuts and jam, though Ben Rogers got a rag doll, and Joe Harper got a hymn-book and a tract; and then the teacher charged in, and made us drop everything and cut. I didn’t see no di’monds, and I told Tom Sawyer so. He said there was loads of them there, anyway; and he said there was A-rabs there, too, and elephants and things. I said, why couldn’t we see them, then? He said if I warn’t so ignorant, but had read a book called Don Quixote, I would know without asking. He said it was all done by enchantment. He said there was hundreds of soldiers there, and elephants and treasure, and so on, but we had enemies which he called magicians, and they had turned the whole thing into an infant Sunday-school, just out of spite. I said, all right; then the thing for us to do was to go for the magicians. Tom Sawyer said I was a numskull.

“Why,” said he, “a magician could call up a lot of genies, and they would hash you up like nothing before you could say Jack Robinson. They are as tall as a tree and as big around as a church.”

“Well,” I says, “s’pose we got some genies to help us—can’t we lick the other crowd then?”

“How you going to get them?”

“I don’t know. How do they get them?”

“Well, they rub an old tin lamp or an iron ring, and then the genies come tearing in, with the thunder and lightning a-ripping around and the smoke a-rolling, and everything they’re told to do they up and do it. They don’t think nothing of pulling a shot-tower up by the roots, and belting a Sunday-school superintendent over the head with it—or any other man.”

“Who makes them tear around so?”

“Why, whoever rubs the lamp or the ring. They belong to whoever rubs the lamp or the ring, and they’ve got to do whatever he says. If he tells them to build a palace forty miles long out of di’monds, and fill it full of chewing-gum, or whatever you want, and fetch an emperor’s daughter from China for you to marry, they’ve got to do it—and they’ve got to do it before sun-up next morning, too. And more: they’ve got to waltz that palace around over the country wherever you want it, you understand.”

“Well,” says I, “I think they are a pack of flatheads for not keeping the palace themselves ‘stead of fooling them away like that. And what’s more—if I was one of them I would see a man in Jericho before I would drop my business and come to him for the rubbing of an old tin lamp.”
“How you talk, Huck Finn. Why, you’d have to come when he rubbed it, whether you wanted to or not.”

“What! and I as high as a tree and as big as a church? All right, then; I would come; but I lay I’d make that man climb the highest tree there was in the country.”

“Shucks, it ain’t no use to talk to you, Huck Finn. You don’t seem to know anything, somehow—perfect saphead.”

I thought all this over for two or three days, and then I reckoned I would see if there was anything in it. I got an old tin lamp and an iron ring, and went out in the woods and rubbed and rubbed till I sweat like an Injun, calculating to build a palace and sell it; but it warn’t no use, none of the genies come. So then I judged that all that stuff was only just one of Tom Sawyer’s lies. I reckoned he believed in the A-rabs and the elephants, but as for me I think different. It had all the marks of a Sunday-school.

CHAPTER IV

Well, three or four months run along, and it was well into the winter now. I had been to school most all the time and could spell and read and write just a little, and could say the multiplication table up to six times seven is thirty-five, and I don’t reckon I could ever get any further than that if I was to live forever. I don’t take no stock in mathematics, anyway.

At first I hated the school, but by and by I got so I could stand it. Whenever I got uncommon tired I played hookey, and the hiding I got next day done me good and cheered me up. So the longer I went to school the easier it got to be. I was getting sort of used to the widow’s ways, too, and they warn’t so raspy on me. Living in a house and sleeping in a bed pulled on me pretty tight mostly, but before the cold weather I used to slide out and sleep in the woods sometimes, and so that was a rest to me. I liked the old ways best, but I was getting so I liked the new ones, too, a little bit. The widow said I was coming along slow but sure, and doing very satisfactory. She said she warn’t ashamed of me.

One morning I happened to turn over the salt-cellar at breakfast. I reached for some of it as quick as I could to throw over my left shoulder and keep off the bad luck, but Miss Watson was in ahead of me, and crossed me off. She says, “Take your hands away, Huckleberry; what a mess you are always making!” The widow put in a good word for me, but that warn’t going to keep off the bad luck, I knowed that well enough. I started out, after breakfast, feeling worried and shaky, and wondering where it was going to fall on me, and what it was going to be. There is ways to keep off some kinds of bad luck, but this wasn’t one of them kind; so I never tried to do anything, but just poked along low-spirited and on the watch-out.

I went down to the front garden and clumb over the stile where you go through the high board fence. There was an inch of new snow on the ground, and I seen somebody’s tracks. They had come up from the quarry and stood around the stile awhile, and then went on around the garden fence. It was funny they hadn’t come in, after standing around so. I couldn’t make it out. It was very curious, somehow. I was going to follow around, but I stooped down to look at the tracks first. I didn’t notice anything at first, but next I did. There was a cross in the left boot-heel made with big nails, to keep off the devil.

I was up in a second and shinney down the hill. I looked over my shoulder every now and then, but I didn’t see nobody. I was at Judge Thatcher’s as quick as I could get there. He said:

“Why, my boy, you are all out of breath. Did you come for your interest?”

“No, sir,” I says; “is there some for me?”

“Oh, yes, a half-yearly is in last night—over a hundred and fifty dollars. Quite a fortune for you. You had better let me invest it along with your six thousand, because if you take it you’ll spend it.”

“No, sir,” I says, “I don’t want to spend it. I don’t want it at all—nor the six thousand, nuther. I want you to take it; I want to give it to you—the six thousand and all.”

He looked surprised. He couldn’t seem to make it out. He says:

“Why, what can you mean, my boy?”
I says, “Don’t you ask me no questions about it, please. You’ll take it—won’t you?”

He says:

“Well, I’m puzzled. Is something the matter?”

“Please take it,” says I, “and don’t ask me nothing—then I won’t have to tell no lies.”

He studied awhile, and then he says:

“Ohoo-o! I think I see. You want to sell all your property to me—not give it. That’s the correct idea.”

Then he wrote something on a paper and read it over, and says:

“There; you see it says ‘for a consideration.’ That means I have bought it of you and paid you for it. Here’s a dollar for you. Now you sign it.”

So I signed it, and left.

Miss Watson’s nigger, Jim, had a hair-ball as big as your fist, which had been took out of the fourth stomach of an ox, and he used to do magic with it. He said there was a spirit inside of it, and it knowed everything. So I went to him that night and told him pap was here again, for I found his tracks in the snow. What I wanted to know was, what he was going to do, and was he going to stay? Jim got out his hair-ball and said something over it, and then he held it up and dropped it on the floor. It fell pretty solid, and only rolled about an inch. Jim tried it again, and then another time, and it acted just the same. Jim got down on his knees, and put his ear against it and listened. But it warn’t no use; he said it wouldn’t talk. Jim said sometimes it wouldn’t talk without money. I told him I had an old slick counterfeit quarter that warn’t no good because the brass showed through the silver a little, and it wouldn’t pass nohow, even if the brass didn’t show, because it was so slick it felt greasy, and so that would tell on it every time. (I reckoned I wouldn’t say nothing about the dollar I got from the judge.) I said it was pretty bad money, but maybe the hair-ball would take it, because maybe it wouldn’t know the difference. Jim smelt it and bit it and rubbed it, and said he would manage so the hair-ball would think it was good. He said he would split open a raw Irish potato and stick the quarter in between and keep it there all night, and next morning you couldn’t see no brass, and it wouldn’t feel greasy no more, and so anybody in town would take it in a minute, let alone a hair-ball. Well, I knowed a potato would do that before, but I had forgot it.

Jim put the quarter under the hair-ball, and got down and listened again. This time he said the hair-ball was all right. He said it would tell my whole fortune if I wanted it to. I says, go on. So the hair-ball talked to Jim, and Jim told it to me. He says:

“Yo’ ole father doan’ know yit what he’s a-gwyne to do. Sometimes he spec he’ll go ‘way, en den ag’in he spec he’ll stay. De bes’ way is to res’ easy en let de ole man take his own way. Dey’s two angels hoverin’ roun’ ‘bout him. One uv ‘em is white en shiny, en t’other one is black. De white one gits him to go right a little while, den de black one sail in en bust it all up. A body can’t tell yit which one gwyne to fetch him at de las’. But you is all right. You gwyne to have considable trouble in yo’ life, en considable joy. Sometimes you gwyne to git hurt, en sometimes you gwyne to git sick; but every time you’s gwyne to git well ag’in. Dey’s two gals flyin’ ‘bout you in yo’ life. One uv ‘em’s light en t’other one is dark. One is rich en t’other is po’. You’s gwyne to marry de po’ one fust en de rich one by en by. You wants to keep ‘way fum de water as much as you kin, en don’t run no resk, ‘kase it’s down in de bills dat you’s gwyne to git hung.”

When I lit my candle and went up to my room that night there sat pap—his own self!

CHAPTER V

I had shut the door to. Then I turned around, and there he was. I used to be scared of him all the time, he tanned me so much. I reckon I was scared now, too; but in a minute I see I was mistaken—that is, after the first jolt, as you may say, when my breath sort of hitched, he being so unexpected; but right away after I see I warn’t scared of him worth bothering about.

He was most fifty, and he looked it. His hair was long and tangled and greasy, and hung down, and you could see his eyes shining through like he was behind vines. It was all black, no gray; so was his long, mixed-up whiskers.
There warn’t no color in his face, where his face showed; it was white; not like another man’s white, but a white to make a body sick, a white to make a body’s flesh crawl—a tree-toad white, a fish-belly white. As for his clothes—just rags, that was all. He had one ankle resting on t’other knee; the boot on that foot was busted, and two of his toes stuck through, and he worked them now and then. His hat was laying on the floor—an old black slouch with the top caved in, like a lid.

I stood a-looking at him; he set there a-looking at me, with his chair tilted back a little. I set the candle down. I noticed the window was up; so he had clumb in by the shed. He kept a-looking me all over. By and by he says:

“Starchy clothes—very. You think you’re a good deal of a big-bug, don’t you?”

“Maybe I am, maybe I ain’t,” I says.

“Don’t you give me none o’ your lip,” says he. “You’ve put on considerable many frills since I been away. I’ll take you down a peg before I get done with you. You’re educated, too, they say—can read and write. You think you’re better’n your father, now, don’t you, because he can’t? I’ll take it out of you. Who told you you might meddle with such hifalut’n foolishness, hey?—who told you you could?”

“The widow. She told me.”

“The widow, hey?—and who told the widow she could put in her shovel about a thing that ain’t none of her business?”

“Nobody never told her.”

“Well, I’ll learn her how to meddle. And looky here—you drop that school, you hear? I’ll learn people to bring up a boy to put on airs over his own father and let on to be better’n what he is. You lemme catch you fooling around that school again, you hear? Your mother couldn’t read, and she couldn’t write, nuther, before she died. None of the family couldn’t before they died. I can’t; and here you’re a-swelling yourself up like this. I ain’t the man to stand it—you hear? Say, lemme hear you read.”

I took up a book and begun something about General Washington and the wars. When I’d read about a half a minute, he fetched the book a whack with his hand and knocked it across the house. He says:

“It’s so. You can do it. I had my doubts when you told me. Now looky here; you stop that putting on frills. I won’t have it. I’ll lay for you, my smarty; and if I catch you about that school I’ll tan you good. First you know you’ll get religion, too. I never see such a son.”

He took up a little blue and yaller picture of some cows and a boy, and says:

“What’s this?”

“It’s something they give me for learning my lessons good.”

He tore it up, and says:

“I’ll give you something better—I’ll give you a cowhide.”

He set there a-mumbling and a-growling a minute, and then he says:

“Ain’t you a sweet-scented dandy, though? A bed; and bedclothes; and a look’n’-glass; and a piece of carpet on the floor—and your own father got to sleep with the hogs in the tanyard. I never see such a son. I bet I’ll take some o’ these frills out o’ you before I’m done with you. Why, there ain’t no end to your airs—they say you’re rich. Hey?—how’s that?”

“They lie—that’s how.”

“Looky here—mind how you talk to me; I’m a-standing about all I can stand now—so don’t gimme no sass. I’ve been in town two days, and I hain’t heard nothing but about you hein’ rich. I heard about it away down the river, too. That’s why I come. You git me that money to-morrow—I want it.”

“I hain’t got no money.”

“It’s a lie. Judge Thatcher’s got it. You git it. I want it.”
“I hain’t got no money, I tell you. You ask Judge Thatcher; he’ll tell you the same.”

“All right. I’ll ask him; and I’ll make him pungle, too, or I’ll know the reason why. Say, how much you got in your pocket? I want it.”

“I hain’t got only a dollar, and I want that to—”

“It don’t make no difference what you want it for—you just shell it out.”

He took it and bit it to see if it was good, and then he said he was going down-town to get some whisky; said he hadn’t had a drink all day. When he had got out on the shed he put his head in again, and cussed me for putting on frills and trying to be better than him; and when I reckoned he was gone he come back and put his head in again, and told me to mind about that school, because he was going to lay for me and lick me if I didn’t drop that.

Next day he was drunk, and he went to Judge Thatcher’s and bullyragged him, and tried to make him give up the money; but he couldn’t, and then he swore he’d make the law force him.

The judge and the widow went to law to get the court to take me away from him and let one of them be my guardian; but it was a new judge that had just come, and he didn’t know the old man; so he said courts mustn’t interfere and separate families if they could help it; said he’d druther not take a child away from its father. So Judge Thatcher and the widow had to quit on the business.

That pleased the old man till he couldn’t rest. He said he’d cowhide me till I was black and blue if I didn’t raise some money for him. I borrowed three dollars from Judge Thatcher, and pap took it and got drunk, and went a—blowing around and cussing and whooping and carrying on; and he kept it up all over town, with a tin pan, till most midnight; then they jailed him, and next day they had him before court, and jailed him again for a week. But he said he was satisfied; said he was boss of his son, and he’d make it warm for him.

When he got out the new judge said he was a-going to make a man of him. So he took him to his own house, and dressed him up clean and nice, and had him to breakfast and dinner and supper with the family, and was just old pie to him, so to speak. And after supper he talked to him about temperance and such things till the old man cried, and said he’d been a fool, and fooled away his life; but now he was a-going to turn over a new leaf and be a man nobody wouldn’t be ashamed of, and he hoped the judge would help him and not look down on him. The judge said he could hug him for them words; so he cried, and his wife she cried again; pap said he’d been a man that had always been misunderstood before, and the judge said he believed it. The old man said that what a man wanted that was down was sympathy, and the judge said it was so; so they cried again. And when it was bedtime the old man rose up and held out his hand, and says:

“Look at it, gentlemen and ladies all; take a-hold of it; shake it. There’s a hand that was the hand of a hog; but it ain’t so no more; it’s the hand of a man that’s started in on a new life, and’ll die before he’ll go back. You mark them words—don’t forget I said them. It’s a clean hand now; shake it—don’t be afeard.”

So they shook it, one after the other, all around, and cried. The judge’s wife she kissed it. Then the old man he signed a pledge—made his mark. The judge said it was the holiest time on record, or something like that. Then they tucked the old man into a beautiful room, which was the spare room, and in the night some time he got powerful thirsty and clumb out on to the porch-roof and slid down a stanchion and traded his new coat for a jug of forty-rod, and clumb back again and had a good old time; and toward daylight he crawled out again, drunk as a fiddler, and rolled off the porch and broke his left arm in two places, and was most froze to death when somebody found him after sun-up. And when they come to look at that spare room they had to take soundings before they could navigate it.

The judge he felt kind of sore. He said he reckoned a body could reform the old man with a shotgun, maybe, but he didn’t know no other way.

CHAPTER VI

Well, pretty soon the old man was up and around again, and then he went for Judge Thatcher in the courts to make him give up that money, and he went for me, too, for not stopping school. He catched me a couple of times and thrashed me, but I went to school just the same, and dodged him or outrun him most of the time. I didn’t want to go to school much before, but I reckoned I’d go now to spite pap. That law trial was a slow business—appeared
like they warn’t ever going to get started on it; so every now and then I’d borrow two or three dollars off of the judge for him, to keep from getting a cowhiding. Every time he got money he got drunk; and every time he got drunk he raised Cain around town; and every time he raised Cain he got jailed. He was just suited—this kind of thing was right in his line.

He got to hanging around the widow’s too much, and so she told him at last that if he didn’t quit using around there she would make trouble for him. Well, wasn’t he mad? He said he would show who was Huck Finn’s boss. So he watched out for me one day in the spring, and caught me, and took me up the river about three mile in a skiff, and crossed over to the Illinois shore where it was woody and there warn’t no houses but an old log hut in a place where the timber was so thick you couldn’t find it if you didn’t know where it was.

He kept me with him all the time, and I never got a chance to run off. We lived in that old cabin, and he always locked the door and put the key under his head nights. He had a gun which he had stole, I reckon, and we fished and hunted, and that was what we lived on. Every little while he locked me in and went down to the store, three miles, to the ferry, and traded fish and game for whisky, and fetched it home and got drunk and had a good time, and licked me. The widow she found out where I was by and by, and she sent a man over to try to get hold of me; but pap drove him off with the gun, and it warn’t long after that till I was used to being where I was, and liked it—all but the cowhide part.

It was kind of lazy and jolly, laying off comfortable all day, smoking and fishing, and no books nor study. Two months or more run along, and my clothes got to be all rags and dirt, and I didn’t see how I’d ever got to like it so well at the widow’s, where you had to wash, and eat on a plate, and comb up, and go to bed and get up regular, and be forever bothering over a book, and have old Miss Watson pecking at you all the time. I didn’t want to go back no more. I had stopped cussing, because the widow didn’t like it; but now I took to it again because pap hadn’t no objections. It was pretty good times up in the woods there, take it all around.

But by and by pap got too handy with his hick’ry, and I couldn’t stand it. I was all over welts. He got to going away so much, too, and locking me in. Once he locked me in and was gone three days. It was dreadful lonesome. I judged he had got drowned, and I wasn’t ever going to get out any more. I was scared. I made up my mind I would fix up some way to leave there. I had tried to get out of that cabin many a time, but I couldn’t find no way. There warn’t a window to it big enough for a dog to get through. I couldn’t get up the chimbley; it was too narrow. The door was thick, solid oak slabs. Pap was pretty careful not to leave a knife or anything in the cabin when he was away; I reckon I had hunted the place over as much as a hundred times; well, I was most all the time at it, because it was about the only way to put in the time. But this time I found something at last; I found an old rusty wood-saw without any handle; it was laid in between a rafter and the clapboards of the roof. I greased it up and went to work. There was an old horse-blanket nailed against the logs at the far end of the cabin behind the table, to keep the wind from blowing through the chinks and putting the candle out. I got under the table and raised the blanket, and went to work to saw a section of the big bottom log out—big enough to let me through. Well, it was a good long job, but I was getting toward the end of it when I heard pap’s gun in the woods. I got rid of the signs of my work, and dropped the blanket and hid my saw, and pretty soon pap come in.

Pap warn’t in a good humor—so he was his natural self. He said he was down-town, and everything was going wrong. His lawyer said he reckoned he would win his lawsuit and get the money if they ever got started on the trial; but then there was ways to put it off a long time, and Judge Thatcher knew how to do it. And he said people allowed there’d be another trial to get me away from him and give me to the widow for my guardian, and they guessed it would win this time. This shook me up considerable, because I didn’t want to go back no more. I had stopped cussing, because the widow didn’t like it; but now I took to it again because pap hadn’t no objections. It was pretty good times up in the woods there, take it all around.

He said he would like to see the widow get me. He said he would watch out, and if they tried to come any such game on him he knewed of a place six or seven mile off to stow me in, where they might hunt till they dropped and they couldn’t find me. That made me pretty uneasy again, but only for a minute; I reckoned I wouldn’t stay on hand till he got that chance.

The old man made me go to the skiff and fetch the things he had got. There was a fifty-pound sack of corn meal, and a side of bacon, ammunition, and a four-gallon jug of whisky, and an old book and two newspapers for wadding, besides some tow. I toted up a load, and went back and set down on the bow of the skiff to rest. I thought it all over, and I reckoned I would walk off with the gun and some lines, and take to the woods when I run away. I guessed I wouldn’t stay in one place, but just tramp right across the country, mostly night-times, and hunt and fish to keep alive, and so get so far away that the old man nor the widow couldn’t ever find me any more. I
“Call this a govment! why, just look at it and see what it’s like. Here’s the law a-standing ready to take a man’s son away from him—a man’s own son, which he has had all the trouble and all the anxiety and all the expense of raising. Yes, just as that man has got that son raised at last, and ready to go to work and begin to do suthin’ for him and give him a rest, the law up and goes for him. And they call that govment! That ain’t all, nuther. The law backs that old Judge Thatcher up and helps him to keep me out o’ my property. Here’s what the law does: The law takes a man worth six thousand dollars and up’ards, and jams him into an old trap of a cabin like this, and lets him go round in clothes that ain’t fitten for a hog. They call that govment! A man can’t get his rights in a govment like this. Sometimes I’ve a mighty notion to just leave the country for good and all. Yes, and I told ’em so; I told old Thatcher so to his face. Lots of ’em heard me, and can tell what I said. Says I, for two cents I’d leave the blamed country and never come a-near it ag’in. Them’s the very words. I says, look at my hat—if you call it a hat—but the lid raises up and the rest of it goes down till it’s below my chin, and then it ain’t rightly a hat at all, but more like my head was shoved up through a jint o’ stove-pipe. Look at it, says I—such a hat for me to wear—one of the wealthiest men in this town if I could git my rights.

“Oh, yes, this is a wonderful govment, wonderful. Why, looky here. There was a free nigger there from Ohio—a mulatter, most as white as a white man. He had the whitest shirt on you ever see, too, and the shiniest hat; and there ain’t a man in that town that’s got as fine clothes as what he had; and he had a gold watch and chain, and a silver-headed cane—the awfulest old gray-headed nabob in the state. And what do you think? They said he was a prof’essor in a college, and could talk all kinds of languages, and knowed everything. And that ain’t the wust. They said he could vote when he was at home. Well, that let me out. Thinks I, what is the country a-coming to? It was ’lection day, and I was just about to go and vote myself if I warn’t too drunk to get there; but when they told me there was a state in this country where they’d let that nigger vote, I drewed out. I says I’ll never vote ag’in. Them’s the very words I said; they all heard me; and the country may rot for all me—I’ll never vote ag’in as long as I live. And to see the cool way of that nigger—why, he wouldn’t a’ give me the road if I hadn’t shoved him out o’ the way. I says to the people, why ain’t this nigger put up at auction and sold—that’s what I want to know. And what do you reckon they said? Why, they said he couldn’t be sold till he’d been in the state six months, and he hadn’t been there that long yet. There, now—that’s a specimen. They call that a govment that can’t sell a free nigger till he’s been in the state six months. Here’s a govment that calls itself a govment, and lets on to be a govment, and thinks it is a govment, and yet’s got to set stock-still for six whole months before it can take a-hold of a prowling, thieving, infernal, white-shirted free nigger, and—”

Pap was a-going on so he never noticed where his old limber legs was taking him to, so he went head over heels over the tub of salt pork and barked both shins, and the rest of his speech was all the hottest kind of language—mostly hove at the nigger and the govment, though he give the tub some, too, all along, here and there. He hopped around the cabin considerable, first on one leg and then on the other, holding first one shin and then the other one, and at last he let out with his left foot all of a sudden and fetched the tub a rattling kick. But it warn’t good judgment, because that was the boot that had a couple of his toes leaking out of the front end of it; so now he raised a howl that fairly made a body’s hair raise, and down he went in the dirt, and rolled there, and held his toes; and the cussing he done then laid over anything he had ever done previous. He said so his own self afterwards. He had heard old Sowberry Hagan in his best days, and he said it laid over him, too; but I reckon that was sort of piling it on, maybe.

After supper pap took the jug, and said he had enough whisky there for two drunks and one delirium tremens. That was always his word. I judged he would be blind drunk in about an hour, and then I would steal the key, or saw myself out, one or t’other. He drank and drank, and tumbled down on his blankets by and by; but luck didn’t run my way. He didn’t go sound asleep, but was uneasy. He groaned and moaned and thrashed around this way and that for a long time. At last I got so sleepy I couldn’t keep my eyes open all I could do, and so before I knew what I was about I was sound asleep, and the candle burning.

I don’t know how long I was asleep, but all of a sudden there was an awful scream and I was up. There was pap looking wild, and skipping around every which way and yelling about snakes. He said they was crawling up his legs; and then he would give a jump and scream, and say one had hit him on the cheek—but I couldn’t see no snakes. He started and run round and round the cabin, hollering “Take him off! take him off! he’s biting me on the neck!” I never see a man look so wild in the eyes. Pretty soon he was all fagged out, and fell down panting; then
he rolled over and over wonderful fast, kicking things every which way, and striking and grabbing at the air with his hands, and screaming and saying there was devils a-hold of him. He wore out by and by, and laid still awhile, moaning. Then he laid stiller, and didn’t make a sound. I could hear the owls and the wolves away off in the woods, and it seemed terrible still. He was laying over by the corner. By and by he raised up part way and listened, with his head to one side. He says, very low:

“Tramp—tramp—tramp; that’s the dead; tramp—tramp—tramp; they’re coming after me; but I won’t go. Oh, they’re here! don’t touch me—don’t! hands off—they’re cold; let go. Oh, let a poor devil alone!”

Then he went down on all fours and crawled off, begging them to let him alone, and he rolled himself up in his blanket and wallowed in under the old pine table, still a-begging; and then he went to crying. I could hear him through the blanket.

By and by he rolled out and jumped up on his feet looking wild, and he see me and went for me. He chased me round and round the place with a clasp-knife, calling me the Angel of Death, and saying he would kill me, and then I couldn’t come for him no more. I begged, and told him I was only Huck; but he laughed such a screechy laugh, and roared and cussed, and kept on chasing me up. Once when I turned short and dodged under his arm he made a grab and got me by the jacket between my shoulders, and I thought I was gone; but I slid out of the jacket quick as lightning, and saved myself. Pretty soon he was all tired out, and dropped down with his back against the door, and said he would rest a minute and then kill me. He put his knife under him, and said he would sleep and get strong, and then he would see who was who.

So he dozed off pretty soon. By and by I got the old split-bottom chair and clumb up as easy as I could, not to make any noise, and got down the gun. I slipped the ramrod down it to make sure it was loaded, and then I laid it across the turnip-barrel, pointing towards pap, and set down behind it to wait for him to stir. And how slow and still the time did drag along.

CHAPTER VII

“Git up! What you ‘bout?”

I opened my eyes and looked around, trying to make out where I was. It was after sun-up, and I had been sound asleep. Pap was standing over me looking sour—and sick, too. He says:

“What you doin’ with this gun?”

I judged he didn’t know nothing about what he had been doing, so I says:

“Somebody tried to get in, so I was laying for him.”

“Why didn’t you roust me out?”

“Well, I tried to, but I couldn’t; I couldn’t budge you.”

“Well, all right. Don’t stand there palavering all day, but out with you and see if there’s a fish on the lines for breakfast. I’ll be along in a minute.”

He unlocked the door, and I cleared out up the river-bank. I noticed some pieces of limbs and such things floating down, and a sprinkling of bark; so I knowed the river had begun to rise. I reckoned I would have great times now if I was over at the town. The June rise used to be always luck for me; because as soon as that rise begins here comes cordwood floating down, and pieces of log rafts—sometimes a dozen logs together; so all you have to do is to catch them and sell them to the woodyards and the sawmill.

I went along up the bank with one eye out for pap and t’other one out for what the rise might fetch along. Well, all at once here comes a canoe; just a beauty, too, about thirteen or fourteen foot long, riding high like a duck. I shot head-first off of the bank like a frog, clothes and all on, and struck out for the canoe. I just expected there’d be somebody laying down in it, because people often done that to fool folks, and when a chap had pulled a skiff out most to it they’d raise up and laugh at him. But it warn’t so this time. It was a drift-canoe sure enough, and I clumb in and paddled her ashore. Thinks I, the old man will be glad when he sees this—she’s worth ten dollars. But when I got to shore pap wasn’t in sight yet, and as I was running her into a little creek like a gully, all hung
over with vines and willows, I struck another idea: I judged I’d hide her good, and then, ‘stead of taking to the woods when I run off, I’d go down the river about fifty mile and camp in one place for good, and not have such a rough time tramping on foot.

It was pretty close to the shanty, and I thought I heard the old man coming all the time; but I got her hid; and then I out and looked around a bunch of willows, and there was the old man down the path a piece just drawing a bead on a bird with his gun. So he hadn’t seen anything.

When he got along I was hard at it taking up a “trot” line. He abused me a little for being so slow; but I told him I fell in the river, and that was what made me so long. I knewed he would see I was wet, and then he would be asking questions. We got five catfish off the lines and went home.

While we laid off after breakfast to sleep up, both of us being about wore out, I got to thinking that if I could fix up some way to keep pap and the widow from trying to follow me, it would be a certainer thing than trusting to luck to get far enough off before they missed me; you see, all kinds of things might happen. Well, I didn’t see no way for a while, but by and by pap raised up a minute to drink another barrel of water, and he says:

“Another time a man comes a-prowling round here you roust me out, you hear? That man warn’t here for no good. I’d a shot him. Next time you roust me out, you hear?”

Then he dropped down and went to sleep again; what he had been saying give me the very idea I wanted. I says to myself, I can fix it now so nobody won’t think of following me.

About twelve o’clock we turned out and went along up the bank. The river was coming up pretty fast, and lots of driftwood going by on the rise. By and by along comes part of a log raft—nine logs fast together. We went out with the skiff and towed it ashore. Then we had dinner. Anybody but pap would ‘a’ waited and seen the day through, so as to catch more stuff; but that warn’t pap’s style. Nine logs was enough for one time; he must shove right over to town and sell. So he locked me in and took the skiff, and started off towing the raft about half past three. I judged he wouldn’t come back that night. I waited till I reckoned he had got a good start; then I out with my saw, and went to work on that log again. Before he was t’other side of the river I was out of the hole; him and his raft was just a speck on the water away off yonder.

I took the sack of corn meal and took it to where the canoe was hid, and shoved the vines and branches apart and put it in; then I done the same with the side of bacon; then the whisky-jug. I took all the coffee and sugar there was, and all the ammunition; I took the wadding; I took the bucket and gourd; took a dipper and a tin cup, and my old saw and two blankets, and the skillet and the coffee-pot. I took fish-lines and matches and other things—everything that was worth a cent. I cleaned out the place. I wanted an ax, but there wasn’t any, only the one out at the woodpile, and I knewed why I was going to leave that. I fetched out the gun, and now I was done.

I had wore the ground a good deal crawling out of the hole and dragging out so many things. So I fixed that as good as I could from the outside by scattering dust on the place, which covered up the smoothness and the sawdust. Then I fixed the piece of log back into its place, and put two rocks under it and one against it to hold it there, for it was bent up at that place and didn’t quite touch ground. If you stood four or five foot away and didn’t know it was sawed, you wouldn’t never notice it; and besides, this was the back of the cabin, and it warn’t likely anybody would go fooling around there.

I took the ax and smashed in the door. I beat it and hacked it considerable a-doing it. I fetched the pig in, and took him back nearly to the table and hacked into his throat with the ax, and laid him down on the ground to bleed; I say ground because it was ground—hard packed, and no boards. Well, next I took an old sack and put a lot of big rocks in it—all I could drag—and I started it from the pig, and dragged it to the door and through the woods down to the river and dumped it in, and down it sunk, out of sight. You could easy see that something had been dragged over the ground. I did wish Tom Sawyer was there; I knewed he would take an interest in this kind of business, and throw in the fancy touches. Nobody could spread himself like Tom Sawyer in such a thing as that.

Well, last I pulled out some of my hair, and blooded the ax good, and stuck it on the back side, and slung the ax in the corner. Then I took up the pig and held him to my breast with my jacket (so he couldn’t drip) till I got a good
piece below the house and then dumped him into the river. Now I thought of something else. So I went and got the bag of meal and my old saw out of the canoe, and fetched them to the house. I took the bag to where it used to stand, and ripped a hole in the bottom of it with the saw, for there warn’t no knives and forks on the place—pap done everything with his clasp-knife about the cooking. Then I carried the sack about a hundred yards across the grass and through the willows east of the house, to a shallow lake that was five mile wide and full of rushes—and ducks too, you might say, in the season. There was a slough or a creek leading out of it on the other side that went miles away, I don’t know where, but it didn’t go to the river. The meal sifted out and made a little track all the way to the lake. I dropped pap’s whetstone there too, so as to look like it had been done by accident. Then I tied up the rip in the meal-sack with a string, so it wouldn’t leak no more, and took it and my saw to the canoe again.

It was about dark now; so I dropped the canoe down the river under some willows that hung over the bank, and waited for the moon to rise. I made fast to a willow; then I took a bite to eat, and by and by laid down in the canoe to smoke a pipe and lay out a plan. I says to myself, they’ll follow the track of that sackful of rocks to the shore and then drag the river for me. And they’ll follow that meal track to the lake and go browsing down the creek that leads out of it to find the robbers that killed me and took the things. They won’t ever hunt the river for anything but my dead carcass. They’ll soon get tired of that, and won’t bother no more about me. All right; I can stop anywhere I want to. Jackson’s Island is good enough for me; I know that island pretty well, and nobody ever comes there. And then I can paddle over to town nights, and slink around and pick up things I want. Jackson’s Island’s the place.

I was pretty tired, and the first thing I knowed I was asleep. When I woke up I didn’t know where I was for a minute. I set up and looked around, a little scared. Then I remembered. The river looked miles and miles across. The moon was so bright I could ‘a’ counted the drift-logs that went a-slipping along, black and still, hundreds of yards out from shore. Everything was dead quiet, and it looked late, and *smelt* late. You know what I mean—I don’t know the words to put it in.

I took a good gap and a stretch, and was just going to unhitch and start when I heard a sound away over the water. I listened. Pretty soon I made it out. It was that dull kind of a regular sound that comes from oars working in rowlocks when it’s a still night. I peeped out through the willow branches, and there it was—a skiff, away across the water. I couldn’t tell how many was in it. It kept a-coming, and when it was abreast of me I see there warn’t but one man in it. Thinks I, maybe it’s pap, though I warn’t expecting him. He dropped below me with the current, and by and by he came a-swinging up shore in the easy water, and he went by so close I could ‘a’ reached out the gun and touched him. Well, it was pap, sure enough—and sober, too, by the way he laid his oars.

I didn’t lose no time. The next minute I was a-spinning down-stream soft, but quick, in the shade of the bank. I made two mile and a half, and then struck out a quarter of a mile or more toward the middle of the river, because pretty soon I would be passing the ferry-landing, and people might see me and hail me. I got out amongst the driftwood, and then laid down in the bottom of the canoe and let her float. I laid there, and had a good rest and a smoke out of my pipe, looking away into the sky; not a cloud in it. The sky looks ever so deep when you lay down on your back in the moonshine; I never knowed it before. And how far a body can hear on the water such nights! I heard people talking at the ferry-landing. I heard what they said, too—every word of it. One man said it was getting towards the long days and the short nights now. ’T’other one said *this* warn’t one of the short ones, he reckoned—and then they laughed, and he said it over again, and they laughed again; then they waked up another fellow and told him, and laughed, but he didn’t laugh; he ripped out something brisk, and said let him alone. The first fellow said he ’lowed to tell it to his old woman—she would think it was pretty good; but he said that warn’t nothing to some things he had said in his time. I heard one man say it was nearly three o’clock, and he hoped daylight wouldn’t wait more than about a week longer. After that the talk got further and further away, and I couldn’t make out the words any more; but I could hear the mumble, and now and then a laugh, too, but it seemed a long ways off.

I was away below the ferry now. I rose up, and there was Jackson’s Island, about two mile and a half down-stream, heavy-timbered and standing up out of the middle of the river, big and dark and solid, like a steamboat without any lights. There warn’t any signs of the bar at the head—it was all under water now.

It didn’t take me long to get there. I shot past the head at a ripping rate, the current was so swift, and then I got into the dead water and landed on the side towards the Illinois shore. I run the canoe into a deep dent in the bank that I knowed about; I had to part the willow branches to get in; and when I made fast nobody could ‘a’ seen the canoe from the outside.

I went up and set down on a log at the head of the island, and looked out on the big river and the black driftwood and away over to the town, three mile away, where there was three or four lights twinkling. A monstrous big lumber-raft was about a mile upstream, coming along down, with a lantern in the middle of it. I watched it come creeping down, and when it was most abreast of where I stood I heard a man say, “Stern oars, there! heave her
head to stbboard!" I heard that just as plain as if the man was by my side.

There was a little gray in the sky now; so I stepped into the woods, and laid down for a nap before breakfast.

CHAPTER VIII

The sun was up so high when I waked that I judged it was after eight o’clock. I laid there in the grass and the cool shade thinking about things, and feeling rested and ruther comfortable and satisfied. I could see the sun out at one or two holes, but mostly it was big trees all about, and gloomy in there amongst them. There was freckled places on the ground where the light sifted down through the leaves, and the freckled places swapped about a little, showing there was a little breeze up there. A couple of squirrels set on a limb and jabbered at me very friendly.

I was powerful lazy and comfortable—didn’t want to get up and cook breakfast. Well, I was dozing off again when I thinks I hears a deep sound of “boom!” away up the river. I rouses up, and rests on my elbow and listens; pretty soon I hears it again. I hopped up, and went and looked out at a hole in the leaves, and I see a bunch of smoke laying on the water a long ways up—about abreast the ferry. And there was the ferryboat full of people floating along down. I knowed what was the matter now. “Boom!” I see the white smoke squirt out of the ferryboat’s side. You see, they was firing cannon over the water, trying to make my carcass come to the top.

I was pretty hungry, but it warn’t going to do for me to start a fire, because they might see the smoke. So I set there and watched the cannon-smoke and listened to the boom. The river was a mile wide there, and it always looks pretty on a summer morning—so I was having a good enough time seeing them hunt for my remainders if I only had a bite to eat. Well, then I happened to think how they always put quicksilver in loaves of bread and float them off, because they always go right to the drownded carcass and stop there. So, says I, I’ll keep a lookout, and if any of them’s floating around after me I’ll give them a show. I changed to the Illinois edge of the island to see what luck I could have, and I warn’t disappointed. A big double loaf come along, and I most got it with a long stick, but my foot slipped and she floated out further. Of course I was where the current set in the closest to the shore—I knowed enough for that. But by and by along comes another one, and this time I won. I took out the plug and shook out the little dab of quicksilver, and set my teeth in. It was “baker’s bread”—what the quality eat; none of your low-down corn-pone.

I got a good place amongst the leaves, and set there on a log, munching the bread and watching the ferry-boat, and very well satisfied. And then something struck me. I says, now I reckon the widow or the parson or somebody prayed that this bread would find me, and here it has gone and done it. So there ain’t no doubt but there is something in that thing—that is, there’s something in it when a body like the widow or the parson prays, but it don’t work for me, and I reckon it don’t work for only just the right kind.

I lit a pipe and had a good long smoke, and went on watching. The ferryboat was floating with the current, and I allowed I’d have a chance to see who was aboard when she come along, because she would come in close, where the bread did. When she’d got pretty well along down towards me, I put out my pipe and went to where I fished out the bread, and laid down behind a log on the bank in a little open place. Where the log forked I could peep through.

By and by she come along, and she drifted in so close that they could ‘a’ run out a plank and walked ashore. Most everybody was on the boat. Pap, and Judge Thatcher, and Bessie Thatcher, and Joe Harper, and Tom Sawyer, and his old Aunt Polly, and Sid and Mary, and plenty more. Everybody was talking about the murder, but the captain broke in and says:

“Look sharp, now; the current sets in the closest here, and maybe he’s washed ashore and got tangled amongst the brush at the water’s edge. I hope so, anyway.”

I didn’t hope so. They all crowded up and leaned over the rails, nearly in my face, and kept still, watching with all their might. I could see them first-rate, but they couldn’t see me. Then the captain sung out: “Stand away!” and the cannon let off such a blast right before me that it made me deaf with the noise and pretty near blind with the smoke, and I judged I was gone. If they’d ‘a’ had some bullets in, I reckon they’d ‘a’ got the corpse they was after. Well, I see I warn’t hurt, thanks to goodness. The boat floated on and went out of sight around the shoulder of the island. I could hear the booming now and then, further and further off, and by and by, after an hour, I didn’t hear it no more. The island was three mile long. I judged they had got to the foot, and was giving it up. But they didn’t yet awhile. They turned around the foot of the island and started up the channel on the Missouri side, under
steam, and booming once in a while as they went. I crossed over to that side and watched them. When they got abreast the head of the island they quit shooting and dropped over to the Missouri shore and went home to the town.

I knewed I was all right now. Nobody else would come a-hunting after me. I got my traps out of the canoe and made me a nice camp in the thick woods. I made a kind of a tent out of my blankets to put my things under so the rain couldn’t get at them. I caught a catfish and haggled him open with my saw, and towards sundown I started my camp-fire and had supper. Then I set out a line to catch some fish for breakfast.

When it was dark I set by my camp-fire smoking, and feeling pretty well satisfied; but by and by it got sort of lonesome, and so I went and set on the bank and listened to the current swashing along, and counted the stars and drift-logs and rafts that come down, and then went to bed; there ain’t no better way to put in time when you are lonesome; you can’t stay so, you soon get over it.

And so for three days and nights. No difference—just the same thing. But the next day I went exploring around down through the island. I was boss of it; it all belonged to me, so to say, and I wanted to know all about it; but mainly I wanted to put in the time. I found plenty strawberries, ripe and prime; and green summer grapes, and green razberries; and the green blackberries was just beginning to show. They would all come handy by and by, I judged.

Well, I went fooling along in the deep woods till I judged I warn’t far from the foot of the island. I had my gun along, but I hadn’t shot nothing; it was for protection; thought I would kill some game nigh home. About this time I mighty near stepped on a good-sized snake, and it went sliding off through the grass and flowers, and I after it, trying to get a shot at it. I clipped along, and all of a sudden I bounded right on to the ashes of a camp-fire that was still smoking.

My heart jumped up amongst my lungs. I never waited for to look further, but uncocked my gun and went sneaking back on my tiptoes as fast as I could. Every now and then I stopped a second amongst the thick leaves and listened, but my breath come so hard I couldn’t hear nothing else. I slunk along another piece further, then listened again; and so on, and so on. If I see a stump, I took it for a man; if I trod on a stick and broke it, it made me feel like a person had cut one of my breaths in two and I only got half, and the short half, too.

When I got to camp I warn’t feeling very brash, there warn’t much sand in my craw; but I says, this ain’t no time to be fooling around. So I got all my traps into my canoe again so as to have them out of sight, and I put out the fire and scattered the ashes around to look like an old last-year’s camp, and then clumb a tree.

I reckon I was up in the tree two hours; but I didn’t see nothing, I didn’t hear nothing—I only thought I heard and seen as much as a thousand things. Well, I couldn’t stay up there forever; so at last I got down, but I kept in the thick woods and on the lookout all the time. All I could get to eat was berries and what was left over from breakfast.

By the time it was night I was pretty hungry. So when it was good and dark I slid out from shore before moonrise and paddled over to the Illinois bank—about a quarter of a mile. I went out in the woods and cooked a supper, and I had about made up my mind I would stay there all night when I hear a plunkety-plunk, plunkety-plunk, and says to myself, horses coming; and next I hear people’s voices. I got everything into the canoe as quick as I could, and then went creeping through the woods to see what I could find out. I hadn’t got far when I hear a man say:

“We better camp here if we can find a good place; the horses is about beat out. Let’s look around.”

I didn’t wait, but shoved out and paddled away easy. I tied up in the old place, and reckoned I would sleep in the canoe.

I didn’t sleep much. I couldn’t, somehow, for thinking. And every time I waked up I thought somebody had me by the neck. So the sleep didn’t do me no good. By and by I says to myself, I can’t live this way; I’m a-going to find out who it is that’s here on the island with me; I’ll find it out or bust. Well, I felt better right off.

So I took my paddle and slid out from shore just a step or two, and then let the canoe drop along down amongst the shadows. The moon was shining, and outside of the shadows it made it most as light as day. I poked along well on to an hour, everything still as rocks and sound asleep. Well, by this time I was most down to the foot of the island. A little rippily, cool breeze begun to blow, and that was as good as saying the night was about done. I give her a turn with the paddle and brung her nose to shore; then I got my gun and slipped out and into the edge of the woods. I sat down there on a log, and looked out through the leaves. I see the moon go off watch, and the darkness begin to blanket the river. But in a little while I see a pale streak over the treetops, and knowed the day
was coming. So I took my gun and slipped off towards where I had run across that camp-fire, stopping every minute or two to listen. But I hadn’t no luck somehow; I couldn’t seem to find the place. But by and by, sure enough, I caught a glimpse of fire away through the trees. I went for it, cautious and slow. By and by I was close enough to have a look, and there lay a man on the ground. It most give me the fantods. He had a blanket around his head, and his head was nearly in the fire. I set there behind a clump of bushes in about six foot of him, and kept my eyes on him steady. It was getting gray daylight now. Pretty soon he gapped and stretched himself and hove off the blanket, and it was Miss Watson’s Jim! I bet I was glad to see him. I says:

“Hello, Jim!” and skipped out.

He bounced up and stared at me wild. Then he drops down on his knees, and puts his hands together and says:

“Doan’ hurt me—don’t! I hain’t ever done no harm to a ghos’. I alwuz liked dead people, en done all I could for ’em. You go en git in de river ag’in, whah you b’longs, en doan’ do nuffn to Ole Jim, ’at ’uz alwuz yo’ fren’.

Well, I warn’t long making him understand I warn’t dead. I was ever so glad to see Jim. I warn’t lonesome now. I told him I warn’t afraid of him telling the people where I was. I talked along, but he only set there and looked at me; never said nothing. Then I says:

“It’s good daylight. Le’s get breakfast. Make up your camp-fire good.”

“What’s de use er makin’ up de camp-fire to cook strawbries en sich truck? But you got a gun, hain’t you? Den we kin git sumfn better den strawbries.”

“Strawberries and such truck,” I says. “Is that what you live on?”

“I could’n git nuffn else,” he says.

“Why, how long you been on the island, Jim?”

“I come heah de night arter you’s killed.”

“What, all that time?”

“Yes-indeedy.”

“And ain’t you had nothing but that kind of rubbage to eat?”

“No, sah—nuffn else.”

“Well, you must be most starved, ain’t you?”

“I reck’n I could eat a hoss. I think I could. How long you ben on de islan’?”

“Since the night I got killed.”

“No! W’y, what has you lived on? But you got a gun. Oh, yes, you got a gun. Dat’s good. Now you kill sumfn en I’ll make up de fire.”

So we went over to where the canoe was, and while he built a fire in a grassy open place amongst the trees, I fetched meal and bacon and coffee, and coffee-pot and frying-pan, and sugar and tin cups, and the nigger was set back considerable, because he reckoned it was all done with witchcraft. I caught a good big catfish, too, and Jim cleaned him with his knife, and fried him.

When breakfast was ready we lolled on the grass and eat it smoking hot. Jim laid it in with all his might, for he was most about starved. Then when we had got pretty well stuffed, we laid off and lazied.

By and by Jim says:

“But looky here, Huck, who wuz it dat ‘uz killed in dat shanty ef it warn’t you?”

Then I told him the whole thing, and he said it was smart. He said Tom Sawyer couldn’t get up no better plan than what I had. Then I says:
“How do you come to be here, Jim, and how’d you get here?”

He looked pretty uneasy, and didn’t say nothing for a minute. Then he says:

“Maybe I better not tell.”

“Why, Jim?”

“Well, dey’s reasons. But you wouldn’ tell on me ef I ’uz to tell you, would you, Huck?”

“Blamed if I would, Jim.”

“Well, I b’lieve you, Huck. I—I run off.”

“Jim!”

“But mind, you said you wouldn’ tell—you know you said you wouldn’ tell, Huck.”

“Well, I did. I said I wouldn’t, and I’ll stick to it. Honest injun, I will. People would call me a low-down Abolitionist and despise me for keeping mum—but that don’t make no difference. I ain’t a-going to tell, and I ain’t a-going back there, anyways. So, now, le’s know all about it.”

“Well, you see, it ’uz dis way. Ole missus—dat’s Miss Watson—she pecks on me all de time, en treats me pooty rough, but she awluz said she wouldn’ sell me down to Orleans. But I noticed dey wuz a neger trader roun’ de place considerable lately, en I begin to git oneasy. Well, one night I creeps to de do’ pooty late, en de do’ warn’t quite shet, en I hear old missus tell de widder she gwyne to sell me down to Orleans, but she didn’ want to, but she could git eight hund’d dollars for me, en it ’uz sich a big stack o’ money she couldn’ resis’. De widder she try to git her to say she wouldn’t do it, but I never waited to hear de res’. I lit out mighty quick, I tell you.

“I tuck out en shin down de hill, en ’spec to steal a skift ’long de sho’ som’ers ’bove de town, but dey wuz a-stirring yit, so I hid in de ole tumbledown cooper shop on de bank to wait for everybody to go ‘way. Well, I wuz dah all night. Dey wuz somebody roun’ all de time. ’Long ’bout six in de mawnin’ skifts begin to go by, en ’bout eight er nine every skift dat went ’long wuz talkin’ ’bout how yo’ pap come over to de town en say you’s killed. Dese las’ skifts wuz full o’ ladies en genlmen a-goin’ over for to see de place. Sometimes dey’d pull up at de sho’ en take a res’ b’fo’ dey started acrost, so by de talk I got to know all ’bout de killin’. I ’uz powerful sorry you’s killed, Huck, but I ain’t no mo’ now.

“I laid dah under de shavin’s all day. I ’uz hungry, but I warn’t afeard; bekase I knewed ole missus en de widder wuz goin’ to start to de camp-meet’n’ right arter breakfas’ en be gone all day, en dey knows I goes off wid de cattle ’bout daylight, so dey wouldn’ ’spec to see me roun’ de place, en so dey wouldn’ miss me tell arter dark in de evenin’. De yuther servants wouldn’ miss me, kase dey’d shin out en take holiday soon as de ole folks ’uz out’n de way.

“Well, when it come dark I tuck out up de river road, en went ’bout two mile er more to whah dey warn’t no houses. I’d made up my mine ’bout what I’s a-gwyne to do. You see, ef I kep’ on tryin’ to git away afoot, de dogs ’ud track me; ef I stole a skift to cross over, dey’d miss dat skift, you see, en dey’d know ’bout whah I’d lan’ on de yuther side, en whah to pick up my track. So I says, a raff is what I’s arter; it doan’ make no track.

“I see a light a-comin’ roun’ de p’int bymeby, so I wade in en shove a log ahead o’ me en swum more’n half-way acrost de river, en got in ’mongst de drift-wood, en kep’ my head down low, en kinder swum agin de current tell de raff come along. Den I swum to de stern uv it en tuck a-holt. It clouded up en ’uz pooty dark for a little while. So I clumb up en laid down on de planks. De men ’uz all ’way yonder in de middle, whah de lantern wuz. De river wuz a-risin’, en dey wuz a good current; so I reck’n’d ’at by fo’ in de mawnin’ I’d be twenty-five mile down de river, en den I’d slip in jis b’fo’ daylight en swim asho’, en take to de woods on de Illinois side.

“But I didn’ have no luck. When we ’uz mos’ down to de head er de islan’ a man begin to come aft wid de lantern. I see it warn’t no use fer to wait, so I slid overboard en struck out fer de islan’. Well, I had a notion I could lan’ mos’ anywhers, but I couldn’t—bank too bluff. I uz mos’ to de foot er de islan’ b’fo’ I foun’ a good place. I went into de woods en jedged I wouldn’ fool wid raffs no mo’, long as dey move de lantern roun’ so. I had my pipe en a plug er dog-leg en some matches in my cap, en dey warn’t wet, so I ’uz all right.”

“And so you ain’t had no meat nor bread to eat all this time? Why didn’t you get mud-turkles?”

“How you gwyne to git ’m? You can’t slip up on um en grab um; en how’s a body gwyne to hit um wid a rock? How
could a body do it in de night? En I warn’t gwyne to show mysef on de bank in de daytime.”

“Well, that’s so. You’ve had to keep in the woods all the time, of course. Did you hear ‘em shooting the cannon?”

“Oh, yes. I knewed dey was arter you. I see um go by heah—watched um thoo de bushes.”

Some young birds come along, flying a yard or two at a time and lighting. Jim said it was a sign it was going to rain. He said it was a sign when young chickens flew that way, and so he reckoned it was the same way when young birds done it. I was going to catch some of them, but Jim wouldn’t let me. He said it was death. He said his father laid mighty sick once, and some of them caught a bird, and his old granny said his father would die, and he did.

And Jim said you mustn’t count the things you are going to cook for dinner, because that would bring bad luck. The same if you shook the tablecloth after sundown. And he said if a man owned a beehive and that man died, the bees must be told about it before sun-up next morning, or else the bees would all weaken down and quit work and die. Jim said bees wouldn’t sting idiots; but I didn’t believe that, because I had tried them lots of times myself, and they wouldn’t sting me.

I had heard about some of these things before, but not all of them. Jim knewed all kinds of signs. He said he knewed most everything. I said it looked to me like all the signs was about bad luck, and so I asked him if there warn’t any good-luck signs. He says:

“Mighty few—an’ dey ain’t no use to a body. What you want to know when good luck’s a-comin’ for? Want to keep it off?” And he said: “Ef you’s got hairy arms en a hairy breas’, it’s a sign dat you’s a-gwyne to be rich. Well, dey’s some use in a sign like dat, ‘kase it’s so fur ahead. You see, maybe you’s got to be po’ a long time fust, en so you might git discourag’ en kill yo’sef ‘f you didn’ know by de sign dat you gwyne to be rich byeby.”

“Have you got hairy arms and a hairy breast, Jim?”

“What’s de use to ax dat question? Don’t you see I has?”

“Well, are you rich?”

“No, but I ben rich wunst, and gwyne to be rich ag’in. Wunst I had foteen dollars, but I tuck to specalat’n’, en got busted out.”

“What did you speculate in, Jim?”

“Well, fust I tackled stock.”

“What kind of stock?”

“Why, live stock—cattle, you know. I put ten dollars in a cow. But I ain’ gwyne to resk no mo’ money in stock. De cow up ‘n’ died on my han’s.”

“So you lost the ten dollars.”

“No, I didn’t lose it all. I on’y los’ ’bout nine of it. I sole de hide en taller for a dollar en ten cents.”

“You had five dollars and ten cents left. Did you speculate any more?”

“Yes. You know that one-laigged nigger dat b’longs to old Misto Bradish? Well, he set up a bank, en say anybody dat put in a dollar would git fo’ dollars mo’ at de en’ er de year. Well, all de niggers went in, but dey didn’t have much. I wuz de on’y one dat had much. So I stuck out for mo’ dan fo’ dollars, en I said ‘f I didn’ git it I’d start a bank mysef. Well, o’ course dat nigger want’ to keep me out er de business, bekase he says dey warn’t business nough for two banks, so he say I could put in my five dollars en he pay me thirty-five at de en’ er de year.

“So I done it. Den I reck’n’de I’d inves’ de thirty-five dollars right off en keep things a-movin’. Dey wuz a nigger name’ Bob, dat had ketched a wood-flat, en his marster didn’ know it; en I bought it off’n him en told him to take de thirty-five dollars when de en’ er de year come; but somebody stole de wood-flat dat night, en nex’ day de one-laigged nigger say de bank’s busted. So dey didn’ none uv us git no money.”

“What did you do with the ten cents, Jim?”
“Well, I ‘uz gwyne to spen’ it, but I had a dream, en de dream tole me to give it to a nigger name’ Balum—Balum’s Ass dey call him for short; he’s one er dem chuckleheads, you know. But he’s lucky, dey say, en I see I warn’t lucky. De dream say let Balum inves’ de ten cents en he’d make a raise for me. Well, Balum he tuck de money, en when he wuz in church he hear de preacher say dat whoever give to de po’ len’ to de Lord, en boun’ to git his money back a hund’d times. So Balum he tuck en give de ten cents to de po’, en laid low to see what wuz gwyne to come of it.”

“Well, what did come of it, Jim?”

“Nuffn never come of it. I couldn’ manage to k’leck dat money no way; en Balum he couldn’. I ain’ gwyne to len’ no mo’ money ‘dout I see de security. Boun’ to git yo’ money back a hund’d times, de preacher says! Ef I could git de ten cents back, I’d call it squah, en be glad er de chanst.”

“Well, it’s all right anyway, Jim, long as you’re going to be rich again some time or other.”

“Yes; en I’s rich now, come to look at it. I owns myself, en I’s wuth eight hund’d dollars. I wisht I had de money, I wouldn’ want no mo’.”

CHAPTER IX

I wanted to go and look at a place right about the middle of the island that I’d found when I was exploring; so we started and soon got to it, because the island was only three miles long and a quarter of a mile wide.

This place was a tolerable long, steep hill or ridge about forty foot high. We had a rough time getting to the top, the sides was so steep and the bushes so thick. We tramped and clumb around all over it, and by and by found a good big cavern in the rock, most up to the top on the side towards Illinois. The cavern was as big as two or three rooms bunched together, and Jim could stand up straight in it. It was cool in there. Jim was for putting our traps in there right away, but I said we didn’t want to be climbing up and down there all the time.

Jim said if we had the canoe hid in a good place, and had all the traps in the cavern, we could rush there if anybody was to come to the island, and they would never find us without dogs. And, besides, he said them little birds had said it was going to rain, and did I want the things to get wet?

So we went back and got the canoe, and paddled up abreast the cavern, and lugged all the traps up there. Then we hunted up a place close by to hide the canoe in, amongst the thick willows. We took some fish off of the lines and set them again, and begun to get ready for dinner.

The door of the cavern was big enough to roll a hogshead in, and on one side of the door the floor stuck out a little bit, and was flat and a good place to build a fire on. So we built it there and cooked dinner.

We spread the blankets inside for a carpet, and eat our dinner in there. We put all the other things handy at the back of the cavern. Pretty soon it darkened up, and begun to thunder and lighten; so the birds was right about it. Directly it begun to rain, and it rained like all fury, too, and I never see the wind blow so. It was one of these regular summer storms. It would get so dark that it looked all blue-black outside, and lovely; and the rain would thrash along by so thick that the trees off a little ways looked dim and spider-webby; and here would come a blast of wind that would bend the trees down and turn up the pale underside of the leaves; and then a perfect ripper of a gust would follow along and set the branches to tossing their arms as if they was just wild; and next, when it was just about the bluest and blackest—fst! it was as bright as glory, and you’d have a little glimpse of tree-tops a-plunging about away off yonder in the storm, hundreds of yards further than you could see before; dark as sin again in a second, and now you’d hear the thunder let go with an awful crash, and then go rumbling, grumbling, tumbling, down the sky towards the under side of the world, like rolling empty barrels down-stairs—where it’s long stairs and they bounce a good deal, you know.

“Jim, this is nice,” I says. “I wouldn’t want to be nowhere else but here. Pass me along another hunk of fish and some hot corn-bread.”

“Well, you wouldn’t ‘a’ ben here ‘f it hadn’t ‘a’ ben for Jim. You’d ‘a’ ben down dah in de woods widout any dinner, en gittin’ mos’ drownned, too; dat you would, honey. Chickens knows when it’s gwyne to rain, en so do de birds, chile.”
The river went on raising and raising for ten or twelve days, till at last it was over the banks. The water was three or four foot deep on the island in the low places and on the Illinois bottom. On that side it was a good many miles wide, but on the Missouri side it was the same old distance across—a half a mile—because the Missouri shore was just a wall of high bluffs.

Daytimes we paddled all over the island in the canoe. It was mighty cool and shady in the deep woods, even if the sun was blazing outside. We went winding in and out amongst the trees, and sometimes the vines hung so thick we had to back away and go some other way. Well, on every old broken-down tree you could see rabbits and snakes and such things; and when the island had been overflowed a day or two they got so tame, on account of being hungry, that you could paddle right up and put your hand on them if you wanted to; but not the snakes and turtles—they would slide off in the water. The ridge our cavern was in was full of them. We could ‘a’ had pets enough if we’d wanted them.

One night we catched a little section of a lumber-raft—nice pine planks. It was twelve foot wide and about fifteen or sixteen foot long, and the top stood above water six or seven inches—a solid, level floor. We could see saw-logs go by in the daylight sometimes, but we let them go; we didn’t show ourselves in daylight.

Another night when we was up at the head of the island, just before daylight, here comes a frame-house down, on the west side. She was a two-story, and tilted over considerable. We paddled out and got aboard—clumb in at an up-stairs window. But it was too dark to see yet, so we made the canoe fast and set in her to wait for daylight.

The light begun to come before we got to the foot of the island. Then we looked in at the window. We could make out a bed, and a table, and two old chairs, and lots of things around about on the floor, and there was clothes hanging against the wall. There was something laying on the floor in the far corner that looked like a man. So Jim says:

“Hello, you!”

But it didn’t budge. So I hollered again, and then Jim says:

“De man ain’t asleep—he’s dead. You hold still—I’ll go en see.”

He went, and bent down and looked, and says:

“It’s a dead man. Yes, indeedy; naked, too. He’s ben shot in de back. I reck’n he’s ben dead two er three days. Come in, Huck, but doan’ look at his face—it’s too gashly.”

I didn’t look at him at all. Jim throwed some old rags over him, but he needn’t done it; I didn’t want to see him. There was heaps of old greasy cards scattered around over the floor, and old whiskey-bottles, and a couple of masks made out of black cloth; and all over the walls was the ignoranest kind of words and pictures made with charcoal. There was two old dirty calico dresses, and a sun-bonnet, and some women’s underclothes hanging against the wall, and some men’s clothing, too. We put the lot into the canoe—it might come good. We got an old tin lantern, and a butcher-knife without any handle, and a bran-new Barlow knife worth two bits in any store, and a lot of tallow candles, and a tin candlestick, and a gourd, and a tin cup, and a ratty old bedquilt off the bed, and a reticule with needles and pins and beeswax and buttons and thread and all such truck in it, and a hatchet and some nails, and a fish-line as thick as my little finger with some monstrous hooks on it, and a roll of buckskin, and a leather dog-collar, and a horseshoe, and some vials of medicine that didn’t have no label on them; and just as we was leaving I found a tolerable good currycomb, and Jim he found a ratty old fiddle-bow, and a wooden leg. The straps was broke off of it, but, barring that, it was a good enough leg, though it was too long for me and not long enough for Jim, and we couldn’t find the other one, though we hunted all around.

And so, take it all around, we made a good haul. When we was ready to shove off we was a quarter of a mile below the island, and it was pretty broad day; so I made Jim lay down in the canoe and cover up with the quilt, because if he set up people could tell he was a nigger a good ways off. I paddled over to the Illinois shore, and drifted down most a half a mile doing it. I crept up the dead water under the bank, and hadn’t no accidents and didn’t see nobody. We got home all safe.
CHAPTER X

After breakfast I wanted to talk about the dead man and guess out how he come to be killed, but Jim didn’t want to. He said it would fetch bad luck; and besides, he said, he might come and ha’nt us; he said a man that warn’t buried was more likely to go a-ha’nting around than one that was planted and comfortable. That sounded pretty reasonable, so I didn’t say no more; but I couldn’t keep from studying over it and wishing I knowed who shot the man, and what they done it for.

We rummaged the clothes we’d got, and found eight dollars in silver sewed up in the lining of an old blanket overcoat. Jim said he reckoned the people in that house stole the coat, because if they’d ‘a’ knowed the money was there they wouldn’t ‘a’ left it. I said I reckoned they killed him, too; but Jim didn’t want to talk about that. I says:

“Now you think it’s bad luck; but what did you say when I fetched in the snake-skin that I found on the top of the ridge day before yesterday? You said it was the worst bad luck in the world to touch a snake-skin with my hands. Well, here’s your bad luck! We’ve raked in all this truck and eight dollars besides. I wish we could have some bad luck like this every day, Jim.”

“Never you mind, honey, never you mind. Don’t you git too peart. It’s a-comin’. Mind I tell you, it’s a-comin’.”

It did come, too. It was a Tuesday that we had that talk. Well, after dinner Friday we was laying around in the grass at the upper end of the ridge, and got out of tobacco. I went to the cavern to get some, and found a rattlesnake in there. I killed him, and curled him up on the foot of Jim’s blanket, ever so natural, thinking there’d be some fun when Jim found him there. Well, by night I forgot all about the snake, and when Jim flung himself down on the blanket while I struck a light the snake’s mate was there, and bit him.

He jumped up yelling, and the first thing the light showed was the varmint curled up and ready for another spring. I laid him out in a second with a stick, and Jim grabbed pap’s whisky-jug and begun to pour it down.

He was barefooted, and the snake bit him right on the heel. That all comes of my being such a fool as to not remember that wherever you leave a dead snake its mate always comes there and curls around it. Jim told me to chop off the snake’s head and throw it away, and then skin the body and roast a piece of it. I done it, and he eat it and said it would help cure him. He made me take off the rattles and tie them around his wrist, too. He said that that would help. Then I slid out quiet and threw the snakes clear away amongst the bushes; for I warn’t going to let Jim find out it was all my fault, not if I could help it.

Jim sucked and sucked at the jug, and now and then he got out of his head and pitched around and yelled; but every time he come to himself he went to sucking at the jug again. His foot swelled up pretty big, and so did his leg; but by and by the drunk begun to come, and so I judged he was all right; but I’d druther been bit with a snake than pap’s whisky.

Jim was laid up for four days and nights. Then the swelling was all gone and he was around again. I made up my mind I wouldn’t ever take a-holt of a snake-skin again with my hands, now that I see what had come of it. Jim said he reckoned I would believe him next time. And he said that handling a snake-skin was such awful bad luck that maybe we hadn’t got to the end of it yet. He said he druther see the new moon over his left shoulder as much as a thousand times than take up a snake-skin in his hand. Well, I was getting to feel that way myself, though I’ve always reckoned that looking at the new moon over your left shoulder is one of the carelesssest and foolishest things a body can do. Old Hank Bunker done it once, and bragged about it; and in less than two years he got drunk and fell off of the shot-tower, and spread himself out so that he was just a kind of a layer, as you may say; and they slid him edgeways between two barn doors for a coffin, and buried him so, so they say, but I didn’t see it. Pap told me. But anyway it all come of looking at the moon that way, like a fool.

Well, the days went along, and the river went down between its banks again; and about the first thing we done was to bait one of the big hooks with a skinned rabbit and set it and catch a catfish that was as big as a man, being six foot two inches long, and weighed over two hundred pounds. We couldn’t handle him, of course; he would ‘a’ flung us into Illinois. We just set there and watched him rip and tear around till he drowned. We found a brass button in his stomach and a round ball, and lots of rubbage. We split the ball open with the hatchet, and there was a spool in it. Jim said he’d had it there a long time, to coat it over so and make a ball of it. It was as big a fish as was ever caught in the Mississippi, I reckon. Jim said he hadn’t ever seen a bigger one. He would ‘a’ been worth a good deal over at the village. They peddle out such a fish as that by the pound in the market-house there; everybody buys some of him; his meat’s as white as snow and makes a good fry.
Next morning I said it was getting slow and dull, and I wanted to get a stirring-up some way. I said I reckoned I would slip over the river and find out what was going on. Jim liked that notion; but he said I must go in the dark and look sharp. Then he studied it over and said, couldn’t I put on some of them old things and dress up like a girl? That was a good notion, too. So we shortened up one of the calico gowns, and I turned up my trouser-legs to my knees and got into it. Jim hitched it behind with the hooks, and it was a fair fit. I put on the sun-bonnet and tied it under my chin, and then for a body to look in and see my face was like looking down a joint of stove-pipe. Jim said nobody would know me, even in the daytime, hardly. I practised around all day to get the hang of the things, and by and by I could do pretty well in them, only Jim said I didn’t walk like a girl; and he said I must quit pulling up my gown to get at my britches-pocket. I took notice, and done better.

I started up the Illinois shore in the canoe just after dark.

I started across to the town from a little below the ferry-landing, and the drift of the current fetched me in at the bottom of the town. I tied up and started along the bank. There was a light burning in a little shanty that hadn’t been lived in for a long time, and I wondered who had took up quarters there. I slipped up and peeped in at the window. There was a woman about forty year old in there knitting by a candle that was on a pine table. I didn’t know her face; she was a stranger, for you couldn’t start a face in that town that I didn’t know. Now this was lucky, because I was weakening; I was getting afraid I had come; people might know my voice and find me out. But if this woman had been in such a little town two days she could tell me all I wanted to know; so I knocked at the door, and made up my mind I wouldn’t forget I was a girl.

CHAPTER XI

“Come in,” says the woman, and I did. She says: “Take a cheer.”

I done it. She looked me all over with her little shiny eyes, and says:

“What might your name be?”

“Sarah Williams.”

“Where’bouts do you live? In this neighborhood?”

“No’m. In Hookerville, seven mile below. I’ve walked all the way and I’m all tired out.”

“Hungry, too, I reckon. I’ll find you something.”

“No’, I ain’t hungry. I was so hungry I had to stop two miles below here at a farm; so I ain’t hungry no more. It’s what makes me so late. My mother’s down sick, and out of money and everything, and I come to tell my uncle Abner Moore. He lives at the upper end of the town, she says. I hain’t ever been here before. Do you know him?”

“No; but I don’t know everybody yet. I haven’t lived here quite two weeks. It’s a considerable ways to the upper end of the town. You better stay here all night. Take off your bonnet.”

“No,” I says; “I’ll rest awhile, I reckon, and go on. I ain’t afeard of the dark.”

She said she wouldn’t let me go by myself, but her husband would be in by and by, maybe in a hour and a half, and she’d send him along with me. Then she got to talking about her husband, and about her relations up the river, and her relations down the river, and about how much better off they used to was, and how they didn’t know but they’d made a mistake coming to our town, instead of letting well alone—and so on and so on, till I was afraid I had made a mistake coming to her to find out what was going on in the town; but by and by she dropped on to pap and the murder, and then I was pretty willing to let her clatter right along. She told about me and Tom Sawyer finding the twelve thousand dollars (only she got it twenty) and all about pap and what a hard lot he was, and what a hard lot I was, and at last she got down to where I was murdered. I says:

“Who done it? We’ve heard considerable about these goings-on down in Hookerville, but we don’t know who ’twas that killed Huck Finn.”

“Well, I reckon there’s a right smart chance of people here that ’d like to know who killed him. Some think old Finn done it himself.”
“No—is that so?”

“Most everybody thought it at first. He’ll never know how nigh he come to getting lynched. But before night they changed around and judged it was done by a runaway nigger named Jim.”

“Why he—”

I stopped. I reckoned I better keep still. She run on, and never noticed I had put in at all:

“The nigger run off the very night Huck Finn was killed. So there’s a reward out for him—three hundred dollars. And there’s a reward out for old Finn, too—two hundred dollars. You see, he come to town the morning after the murder, and told about it, and was out with ‘em on the ferryboat hunt, and right away after he up and left. Before night they wanted to Lynch him, but he was gone, you see. Well, next day they found out the nigger was gone; they found out he hadn’t ben seen sence ten o’clock the night the murder was done. So then they put it on him, you see; and while they was full of it, next day, back comes old Finn, and went boo-hooing to Judge Thatcher to get money to hunt for the nigger all over Illinois with. The judge gave him some, and that evening he got drunk, and was around till after midnight with a couple of mighty hard-looking strangers, and then went off with them. Well, he hain’t come back sence, and they ain’t looking for him back till this thing blows over a little, for people thinks now that he killed his boy and fixed things so folks would think robbers done it, and then he’d get Huck’s money without having to bother a long time with a lawsuit. People do say he warn’t any too good to do it. Oh, he’s sly, I reckon. If he don’t come back for a year he’ll be all right. You can’t prove anything on him, you know; everything will be quieted down then, and he’ll walk in Huck’s money as easy as nothing.”

“Yes, I reckon so, ‘m. I don’t see nothing in the way of it. Has everybody quit thinking the nigger done it?”

“Oh, no, not everybody. A good many thinks he done it. But they’ll get the nigger pretty soon now, and maybe they can scare it out of him.”

“Why, are they after him yet?”

“Well, you’re innocent, ain’t you! Does three hundred dollars lay around every day for people to pick up? Some folks think the nigger ain’t far from here. I’m one of them—but I hain’t talked it around. A few days ago I was talking with an old couple that lives next door in the log shanty, and they happened to say hardly anybody ever goes to that island over yonder that they call Jackson’s Island. Don’t anybody live there? says I. No, nobody, says they. I didn’t say any more, but I done some thinking. I was pretty near cert’n I’d seen smoke over there, about the head of the island, a day or two before that, so I says to myself, like as not that nigger’s hiding over there; anyway, says I, it’s worth the trouble to give the place a hunt. I hain’t seen any smoke sence, so I reckon maybe he’s gone, if it was him; but husband’s going over to see—him and another man. He was gone up the river; but he got back to-day, and I told him as soon as he got here two hours ago.”

I had got so uneasy I couldn’t set still. I had to do something with my hands; so I took up a needle off of the table and went to threading it. My hands shook, and I was making a bad job of it. When the woman stopped talking I looked up, and she was looking at me pretty curious and smiling a little. I put down the needle and thread, and let on to be interested—and I was, too—and says:

“Three hundred dollars is a power of money. I wish my mother could get it. Is your husband going over there tonight?”

“Oh, yes. He went up-town with the man I was telling you of, to get a boat and see if they could borrow another gun. They’ll go over after midnight.”

“Couldn’t they see better if they was to wait till daytime?”

“Yes. And couldn’t the nigger see better, too? After midnight he’ll likely be asleep, and they can slip around through the woods and hunt up his campfire all the better for the dark, if he’s got one.”

“I didn’t think of that.”

The woman kept looking at me pretty curious, and I didn’t feel a bit comfortable. Pretty soon she says:

“What did you say your name was, honey?”

“M—Mary Williams.”
Somehow it didn’t seem to me that I said it was Mary before, so I didn’t look up—seemed to me I said it was Sarah; so I felt sort of cornered, and was afeard maybe I was looking it, too. I wished the woman would say something more; the longer she set still the uneasier I was. But now she says:

“Honey, I thought you said it was Sarah when you first come in?”

“Oh, yes’m, I did. Sarah Mary Williams. Sarah’s my first name. Some calls me Sarah, some calls me Mary.”

“Oh, that’s the way of it?”

“Yes’m.”

I was feeling better then, but I wished I was out of there, anyway. I couldn’t look up yet.

Well, the woman fell to talking about how hard times was, and how poor they had to live, and how the rats was as free as if they owned the place, and so forth and so on, and then I got easy again. She was right about the rats. You’d see one stick his nose out of a hole in the corner every little while. She said she had to have things handy to throw at them when she was alone, or they wouldn’t give her no peace. She showed me a bar of lead twisted up into a knot, and said she was a good shot with it generly, but she’d wrenched her arm a day or two ago, and didn’t know whether she could throw true now. But she watched for a chance, and directly banged away at a rat; but she missed him wide, and said, “Ouch!” it hurt her arm so. Then she told me to try for the next one. I wanted to be getting away before the old man got back, but of course I didn’t let on. I got the thing, and the first rat that showed his nose I let drive, and if he’d ‘a’ stayed where he was he’d ‘a’ been a tolerable sick rat. She said that was first-rate, and she reckoned I would hive the next one. She went and got the lump of lead and fetched it back, and brought along a hank of yarn which she wanted me to help her with. I held up my two hands and she put the hank over them, and went on talking about her and her husband’s matters. But she broke off to say:

“Keep your eye on the rats. You better have the lead in your lap, handy.”

So she dropped the lump into my lap just at that moment, and I clapped my legs together on it and she went on talking. But only about a minute. Then she took off the hank and looked me straight in the face, and very pleasant, and says:

“Come, now, what’s your real name?”

“Wh-hat, mum?”

“What’s your real name? Is it Bill, or Tom, or Bob?—or what is it?”

I reckon I shook like a leaf, and I didn’t know hardly what to do. But I says:

“Please to don’t poke fun at a poor girl like me, mum. If I’m in the way here, I’ll—”

“No, you won’t. Set down and stay where you are. I ain’t going to hurt you, and I ain’t going to tell on you, nuther. You just tell me your secret, and trust me. I’ll keep it; and, what’s more, I’ll help you. So’ll my old man if you want him to. You see, you’re a runaway ’prentice, that’s all. It ain’t anything. There ain’t no harm in it. You’ve been treated bad, and you made up your mind to cut. Bless you, child, I wouldn’t tell on you. Tell me all about it now, that’s a good boy.”

So I said it wouldn’t be no use to try to play it any longer, and I would just make a clean breast and tell her everything, but she mustn’t go back on her promise. Then I told her my father and mother was dead, and the law had bound me out to a mean old farmer in the country thirty mile back from the river, and he treated me so bad I couldn’t stand it no longer; he went away to be gone a couple of days, and so I took my chance and stole some of his daughter’s old clothes and cleared out, and I had been three nights coming the thirty miles. I traveled nights, and hid daytimes and slept, and the bag of bread and meat I carried from home lasted me all the way, and I had a-plenty. I said I believed my uncle Abner Moore would take care of me, and so that was why I struck out for this town of Goshen.

“Goshen, child? This ain’t Goshen. This is St. Petersburg. Goshen’s ten mile further up the river. Who told you this was Goshen?”

“Why, a man I met at daybreak this morning, just as I was going to turn into the woods for my regular sleep. He told me when the roads forked I must take the right hand, and five mile would fetch me to Goshen.”
“He was drunk, I reckon. He told you just exactly wrong.”

“Well, he did act like he was drunk, but it ain’t no matter now. I got to be moving along. I’ll fetch Goshen before daylight.”

“Hold on a minute. I’ll put you up a snack to eat. You might want it.”

So she put me up a snack, and says:

“Say, when a cow’s laying down, which end of her gets up first? Answer up prompt now—don’t stop to study over it. Which end gets up first?”

“The hind end, mum.”

“Well, then, a horse?”

“The for’rard end, mum.”

“Which side of a tree does the moss grow on?”

“North side.”

“If fifteen cows is browsing on a hillside, how many of them eats with their heads pointed the same direction?”

“The whole fifteen, mum.”

“Well, I reckon you have lived in the country. I thought maybe you was trying to hocus me again. What’s your real name, now?”

“George Peters, mum.”

“Well, try to remember it, George. Don’t forget and tell me it’s Alexander before you go, and then get out by saying it’s George Alexander when I catch you. And don’t go about women in that old calico. You do a girl tolerable poor, but you might fool men, maybe. Bless you, child, when you set out to thread a needle don’t hold the thread still and fetch the needle up to it; hold the needle still and poke the thread at it; that’s the way a woman most always does, but a man always does t’other way. And when you throw at a rat or anything, hitch yourself up a-tiptoe and fetch your hand up over your head as awkward as you can, and miss your rat about six or seven foot. Throw stiff-armed from the shoulder, like there was a pivot there for it to turn on, like a girl; not from the wrist and elbow, with your arm out to one side, like a boy. And, mind you, when a girl tries to catch anything in her lap she throws her knees apart; she don’t clap them together, the way you did when you catched the lump of lead. Why, I spotted you for a boy when you was threading the needle; and I contrived the other things just to make certain. Now trot along to your uncle, Sarah Mary Williams George Alexander Peters, and if you get into trouble you send word to Mrs. Judith Loftus, which is me, and I’ll do what I can to get you out of it. Keep the river road all the way, and next time you tramp take shoes and socks with you. The river road’s a rocky one, and your feet ’ll be in a condition when you get to Goshen, I reckon.”

I went up the bank about fifty yards, and then I doubled on my tracks and slipped back to where my canoe was, a good piece below the house. I jumped in, and was off in a hurry. I went up-stream far enough to make the head of the island, and then started across. I took off the sun-bonnet, for I didn’t want no blinders on then. When I was about the middle I heard the clock begin to strike, so I stops and listens; the sound come faint over the water but clear—eleven. When I struck the head of the island I never waited to blow, though I was most winded, but I shoved right into the timber where my old camp used to be, and started a good fire there on a high and dry spot.

Then I jumped in the canoe and dug out for our place, a mile and a half below, as hard as I could go. I landed, and slopped through the timber and up the ridge and into the cavern. There Jim laid, sound asleep on the ground. I roused him out and says:

“Git up and hump yourself, Jim! There ain’t a minute to lose. They’re after us!”

Jim never asked no questions, he never said a word; but the way he worked for the next half an hour showed about how he was scared. By that time everything we had in the world was on our raft, and she was ready to be shoved out from the willow cove where she was hid. We put out the camp-fire at the cavern the first thing, and didn’t show a candle outside after that.
I took the canoe out from the shore a little piece, and took a look; but if there was a boat around I couldn’t see it, for stars and shadows ain’t good to see by. Then we got out the raft and slipped along down in the shade, past the foot of the island dead still—never saying a word.

CHAPTER XII

It must ‘a’ been close on to one o’clock when we got below the island at last, and the raft did seem to go mighty slow. If a boat was to come along we was going to take to the canoe and break for the Illinois shore; and it was well a boat didn’t come, for we hadn’t ever thought to put the gun in the canoe, or a fishing-line, or anything to eat. We was in ruther too much of a sweat to think of so many things. It warn’t good judgment to put everything on the raft.

If the men went to the island I just expect they found the camp-fire I built, and watched it all night for Jim to come. Anyways, they stayed away from us, and if my building the fire never fooled them it warn’t no fault of mine. I played it as low down on them as I could.

When the first streak of day began to show we tied up to a towhead in a big bend on the Illinois side, and hacked off cottonwood branches with the hatchet, and covered up the raft with them so she looked like there had been a cave-in in the bank there. A towhead is a sand-bar that has cottonwoods on it as thick as harrow-teeth.

We had mountains on the Missouri shore and heavy timber on the Illinois side, and the channel was down the Missouri shore at that place, so we warn’t afraid of anybody running across us. We laid there all day, and watched the rafts and steamboats spin down the Missouri shore, and up-bound steamboats fight the big river in the middle. I told Jim all about the time I had jabbering with that woman; and Jim said she was a smart one, and if she was to start after us herself she wouldn’t set down and watch a camp-fire—no, sir, she’d fetch a dog. Well, then, I said, why couldn’t she tell her husband to fetch a dog? Jim said he bet she did think of it by the time the men was ready to start, and he believed they must ‘a’ gone up-town to get a dog and so they lost all that time, or else we wouldn’t be here on a towhead sixteen or seventeen mile below the village—no, indeedy, we would be in that same old town again. So I said I didn’t care what was the reason they didn’t get us as long as they didn’t.

When it was beginning to come on dark we poked our heads out of the cottonwood thicket, and looked up and down and across; nothing in sight; so Jim took up some of the top planks of the raft and built a snug wigwam to get under in blazing weather and rainy, and to keep the things dry. Jim made a floor for the wigwam, and raised it a foot or more above the level of the raft, so now the blankets and all the traps was out of reach of steamboat waves. Right in the middle of the wigwam we made a layer of dirt about five or six inches deep with a frame around it for to hold it to its place; this was to build a fire on in sloppy weather or chilly; the wigwam would keep it from being seen. We made an extra steering-oar, too, because one of the others might get broke on a snag or something. We fixed up a short forked stick to hang the old lantern on, because we must always light the lantern whenever we see a steamboat coming down-stream, to keep from getting run over; but we wouldn’t have to light it for up-stream boats unless we see we was in what they call a “crossing”; for the river was pretty high yet, very low banks being still a little under water; so up-bound boats didn’t always run the channel, but hunted easy water.

This second night we run between seven and eight hours, with a current that was making over four mile an hour. We caught fish and talked, and we took a swim now and then to keep off sleepiness. It was kind of solemn, drifting down the big, still river, laying on our backs looking up at the stars, and we didn’t ever feel like talking loud, and it warn’t often that we laughed—only a little kind of a low chuckle. We had mighty good weather as a general thing, and nothing ever happened to us at all—that night, nor the next, nor the next.

Every night we passed towns, some of them away up on black hillsides, nothing but just a shiny bed of lights; not a house could you see. The fifth night we passed St. Louis, and it was like the whole world lit up. In St. Petersburg they used to say there was twenty or thirty thousand people in St. Louis, but I never believed it till I see that wonderful spread of lights at two o’clock that still night. There warn’t a sound there; everybody was asleep.

Every night now I used to slip ashore toward ten o’clock at some little village, and buy ten or fifteen cents’ worth of meal or bacon or other stuff to eat; and sometimes I lifted a chicken that warn’t roosting comfortable, and took him along. Pap always said, take a chicken when you get a chance, because if you don’t want him yourself you can easy find somebody that does, and a good deed ain’t ever forgot. I never see pap when he didn’t want the chicken himself, but that is what he used to say, anyway.

Mornings before daylight I slipped into corn-fields and borrowed a watermelon, or a mushmelon, or a punkin, or
some new corn, or things of that kind. Pap always said it warn’t no harm to borrow things if you was meaning to pay them back some time; but the widow said it warn’t anything but a soft name for stealing, and no decent body would do it. Jim said he reckoned the widow was partly right and pap was partly right; so the best way would be for us to pick out two or three things from the list and say we wouldn’t borrow them any more—then he reckoned it wouldn’t be no harm to borrow the others. So we talked it over all one night, drifting along down the river, trying to make up our minds whether to drop the watermelons, or the cantelopes, or the mushmelons, or what. But toward daylight we got it all settled satisfactory, and concluded to drop crabapples and p’simmons. We warn’t feeling just right before that, but it was all comfortable now. I was glad the way it come out, too, because crabapples ain’t ever good, and the p’simmons wouldn’t be ripe for two or three months yet.

We shot a water-fowl now and then that got up too early in the morning or didn’t go to bed early enough in the evening. Take it all round, we lived pretty high.

The fifth night below St. Louis we had a big storm after midnight, with a power of thunder and lightning, and the rain poured down in a solid sheet. We stayed in the wigwam and let the raft take care of itself. When the lightning glared out we could see a big straight river ahead, and high, rocky bluffs on both sides. By and by says I, “Hel-lo, Jim, looky yonder!” It was a steamboat that had killed herself on a rock. We was drifting straight down for her. The lightning showed her very distinct. She was leaning over, with part of her upper deck above water, and you could see every little chimby-guy clean and clear, and a chair by the big bell, with an old slouch hat hanging on the back of it, when the flashes come.

Well, it being away in the night and stormy, and all so mysterious-like, I felt just the way any other boy would ‘a’ felt when I seen that wreck laying there so mornful and lonesome in the middle of the river. I wanted to get aboard of her and slink around a little, and see what there was there. So I says:

“Le’s land on her, Jim.”

But Jim was dead against it at first. He says:

“I doan’ want to go fool’n’ ‘long er no wrack. We’s doin’ blame’ well, en we better let blame’ well alone, as de good book says. Like as not dey’s a watchman on dat wrack.”

“Watchman your grandmother,” I says; “there ain’t nothing to watch but the texas and the pilot-house; and do you reckon anybody’s going to resk his life for a texas and a pilot-house such a night as this, when it’s likely to break up and wash off down the river any minute?” Jim couldn’t say nothing to that, so he didn’t try. “And besides,” I says, “we might borrow something worth having out of the captain’s stateroom. Seegars, I bet you—and cost five cents apiece, solid cash. Steamboat captains is always rich, and get sixty dollars a month, and they don’t care a cent what a thing costs, you know, long as they want it. Stick a candle in your pocket; I can’t rest, Jim, till we give her a rummaging. Do you reckon Tom Sawyer would ever go by this thing? Not for pie, he wouldn’t. He’d call it an adventure—that’s what he’d call it; and he’d land on that wreck if it was his last act. And wouldn’t he throw style into it?—wouldn’t he spread himself, nor nothing? Why, you’d think it was Christopher C’lumbus discovering Kingdom Come. I wish Tom Sawyer was here.”

Jim he grumbled a little, but give in. He said we mustn’t talk any more than we could help, and then talk mighty low. The lightning showed us the wreck again just in time, and we fetched the stabboard derrick, and made fast there.

The deck was high out here. We went sneaking down the slope of it to labboard, in the dark, towards the texas, feeling our way slow with our feet, and spreading our hands out to fend off the guys, for it was so dark we couldn’t see no sign of them. Pretty soon we struck the forward end of the skylight, and by Jimminy, away down through the texas-hall we see a light! and all in the same second we seem to hear low voices in yonder!

Jim whispered and said he was feeling powerful sick, and told me to come along. I says, all right, and was going to start for the raft; but just then I heard a voice wail out and say:

“Oh, please don’t, boys; I swear I won’t ever tell!”

Another voice said, pretty loud:

“It’s a lie, Jim Turner. You’ve acted this way before. You always want more’n your share of the truck, and you’ve always got it, too, because you’ve swore ’t if you didn’t you’d tell. But this time you’ve said it jest one time too many. You’re the meanest, treacherousest hound in this country.”
By this time Jim was gone for the raft. I was just a-biling with curiosity; and I says to myself, Tom Sawyer wouldn’t back out now, and so I won’t either; I’m a-going to see what’s going on here. So I dropped on my hands and knees in the little passage, and crept aft in the dark till there warn’t but one stateroom betwixt me and the cross-hall of the texas. Then in there I see a man stretched on the floor and tied hand and foot, and two men standing over him, and one of them had a dim lantern in his hand, and the other one had a pistol. This one kept pointing the pistol at the man’s head on the floor, and saying:

“I’d like to! And I orter, too—a mean skunk!”

The man on the floor would shrivel up and say, “Oh, please don’t, Bill; I hain’t ever goin’ to tell.”

And every time he said that the man with the lantern would laugh and say:

“Deed you ain’t! You never said no truer thing’n that, you bet you.” And once he said: “Hear him beg! and yit if we hadn’t got the best of him and tied him he’d ‘a’ killed us both. And what for? Jist for noth’n’. Jist because we stood on our rights—that’s what for. But I lay you ain’t a-goin’ to threaten nobody any more, Jim Turner. Put up that pistol, Bill.”

Bill says:

“I don’t want to, Jake Packard. I’m for killin’ him—and didn’t he he kill old Hatfield jist the same way—and don’t he deserve it?”

“But I don’t want him killed, and I’ve got my reasons for it.”

“Bless yo’ heart for them words, Jake Packard! I’ll never forgit you long’s I live!” says the man on the floor, sort of blubbering.

Packard didn’t take no notice of that, but hung up his lantern on a nail and started toward where I was, there in the dark, and motioned Bill to come. I crawfished as fast as I could about two yards, but the boat slanted so that I couldn’t make very good time; so to keep from getting run over and catched I crawled into a stateroom on the upper side. The man came a-pawing along in the dark, and when Packard got to my stateroom, he says:

“Here—come in here.”

And in he come, and Bill after him. But before they got in I was up in the upper berth, cornered, and sorry I come. Then they stood there, with their hands on the ledge of the berth, and talked. I couldn’t see them, but I could tell where they was by the whisky they’d been having. I was glad I didn’t drink whisky; but it wouldn’t made much difference anyway, because most of the time they couldn’t ‘a’ treed me because I didn’t breathe. I was too scared. And, besides, a body couldn’t breathe and hear such talk. They talked low and earnest. Bill wanted to kill Turner. He says:

“He’s said he’ll tell, and he will. If we was to give both our shares to him now it wouldn’t make no difference after the row and the way we’ve served him. Shore’s you’re born, he’ll turn state’s evidence; now you hear me. I’m for putting him out of his troubles.”

“So’m I,” says Packard, very quiet.

“Blame it, I’d sorter begun to think you wasn’t. Well, then, that’s all right. Le’s go and do it.”

“Hold on a minute; I hain’t had my say yit. You listen to me. Shooting’s good, but there’s quieter ways if the things got to be done. But what I say is this: it ain’t good sense to go court’n’ around after a halter if you can git at what you’re up to in some way that’s jist as good and at the same time don’t bring you into no resks. Ain’t that so?”

“You bet it is. But how you goin’ to manage it this time?”

“Well, my idea is this: we’ll rustle around and gather up whatever pickin’s we’ve overlooked in the staterooms, and shove for shore and hide the truck. Then we’ll wait. Now I say it ain’t a-goin’ to be more’n two hours befo’ this wrack breaks up and washes off down the river. See? He’ll be drowned, and won’t have nobody to blame for it but his own self. I reckon that’s a considerable sight better’n killin’ of him. I’m unfavorable to killin’ a man as long as you can git aroun’ it; it ain’t good sense, it ain’t good morals. Ain’t I right?”

“Yes, I reck’n you are. But s’pose she don’t break up and wash off?”
“Well, we can wait the two hours anyway and see, can’t we?”

“All right, then; come along.”

So they started, and I lit out, all in a cold sweat, and scrambled forward. It was dark as pitch there; but I said, in a kind of a coarse whisper, “Jim!” and he answered up, right at my elbow, with a sort of a moan, and I says:

“Quick, Jim, it ain’t no time for fooling around and moaning; there’s a gang of murderers in yonder, and if we don’t hunt up their boat and set her drifting down the river so these fellows can’t get away from the wreck there’s one of ’em going to be in a bad fix. But if we find their boat we can put all of ’em in a bad fix—for the sheriff ’ll get ’em. Quick—hurry! I’ll hunt the labboard side, you hunt the stabboard. You start at the raft, and—”

“Oh, my lordy, lordy! Raf’? Dey ain’ no raf’ no mo’; she done broke loose en gone!—en here we is!”

CHAPTER XIII

Well, I catched my breath and most fainted. Shut up on a wreck with such a gang as that! But it warn’t no time to be sentimentering. We’d got to find that boat now—had to have it for ourselves. So we went a-quaking and shaking down the stabboard side, and slow work it was, too—seemed a week before we got to the stern. No sign of a boat. Jim said he didn’t believe he could go any farther—so scared he hadn’t hardly any strength left, he said. But I said, come on, if we get left on this wreck we are in a fix, sure. So on we prowled again. We struck for the stern of the texas, and found it, and then scrambled along forwards on the skylight, hanging on from shutter to shutter, for the edge of the skylight was in the water. When we got pretty close to the cross-hall door there was the skiff, sure enough! I could just barely see her. I felt ever so thankful. In another second I would ’a’ been aboard of her, but just then the door opened. One of the men stuck his head out only about a couple of foot from me, and I thought I was gone; but he jerked it in again, and says:

“Heave that blame lantern out o’ sight, Bill!” He flung a bag of something into the boat, and then got in himself and set down. It was Packard. Then Bill he come out and got in. Packard says, in a low voice:

“All ready—shove off!”

I couldn’t hardly hang on to the shutters, I was so weak. But Bill says:

“Hold on—’d you go through him?”

“No. Didn’t you?”

“No. So he’s got his share o’ the cash yet.”

“Well, then, come along; no use to take truck and leave money.”

“Say, won’t he suspicion what we’re up to?”

“Maybe he won’t. But we got to have it anyway. Come along.”

So they got out and went in.

The door slammed to because it was on the careened side; and in a half second I was in the boat, and Jim come tumbling after me. I out with my knife and cut the rope, and away we went!

We didn’t touch an oar, and we didn’t speak nor whisper, nor hardly even breathe. We went gliding swift along, dead silent, past the tip of the paddle-box, and past the stern; then in a second or two more we was a hundred yards below the wreck, and the darkness soaked her up, every last sign of her, and we was safe, and knowed it.

When we was three or four hundred yards down-stream we see the lantern show like a little spark at the texas door for a second, and we knowed by that that the rascals had missed their boat, and was beginning to understand that they was in just as much trouble now as Jim Turner was.

Then Jim manned the oars, and we took out after our raft. Now was the first time that I begun to worry about the men—I reckon I hadn’t had time to before. I begun to think how dreadful it was, even for murderers, to be in such
a fix. I says to myself, there ain’t no telling but I might come to be a murderer myself yet, and then how would I like it? So says I to Jim:

“The first light we see we’ll land a hundred yards below it or above it, in a place where it’s a good hiding-place for you and the skiff, and then I’ll go and fix up some kind of a yarn, and get somebody to go for that gang and get them out of their scrape, so they can be hung when their time comes.”

But that idea was a failure; for pretty soon it begun to storm again, and this time worse than ever. The rain poured down, and never a light showed; everybody in bed, I reckon. We boomed along down the river, watching for lights and watching for our raft. After a long time the rain let up, but the clouds stayed, and the lightning kept whimpering, and by and by a flash showed us a black thing ahead, floating, and we made for it.

It was the raft, and mighty glad was we to get aboard of it again. We seen a light now away down to the right, on shore. So I said I would go for it. The skiff was half full of plunder which that gang had stole there on the wreck. We hustled it on to the raft in a pile, and I told Jim to float along down, and show a light when he judged he had gone about two mile, and keep it burning till I come; then I manned my oars and shoved for the light. As I got down towards it three or four more showed—up on a hillside. It was a village. I closed in above the shore light, and laid on my oars and floated. As I went by I see it was a lantern hanging on the jackstaff of a double-hull ferryboat. I skimmed around for the watchman, a-wondering whereabouts he slept; and by and by I found him roosting on the bitts forward, with his head down between his knees. I gave his shoulder two or three little shoves, and begun to cry.

He stirred up in a kind of a startlish way; but when he see it was only me he took a good gap and stretch, and then he says:

“Hello, what’s up? Don’t cry, bub. What’s the trouble?”

I says:

“Pap, and mam, and sis, and—”

Then I broke down. He says:

“Oh, dang it now, don’t take on so; we all has to have our troubles, and this ‘n ’ll come out all right. What’s the matter with ’em?”

“They’re—they’re—are you the watchman of the boat?”

“Yes,” he says, kind of pretty-well-satisfied like. “I’m the captain and the owner and the mate and the pilot and watchman and head deck-hand; and sometimes I’m the freight and passengers. I ain’t as rich as old Jim Hornback, and I can’t be so blame’ generous and good to Tom, Dick, and Harry as what he is, and slam around money the way he does; but I’ve told him a many a time ‘t I wouldn’t trade places with him; for, says I, a sailor’s life’s the life for me, and I’m derned if I’d live two mile out o’ town, where there ain’t nothing ever goin’ on, not for all his spondulicks and as much more on top of it. Says I—”

I broke in and says:

“They’re in an awful peck of trouble, and—”

“Who is?”

“Why, pap and mam and sis and Miss Hooker; and if you’d take your ferryboat and go up there—”

“Up where? Where are they?”

“On the wreck.”

“What wreck?”

“Why, there ain’t but one.”

“What, you don’t mean the Walter Scott?”

“Yes.”
“Good land! what are they doin’ there, for gracious sakes?”

“Well, they didn’t go there a-purpose.”

“I bet they didn’t! Why, great goodness, there ain’t no chance for ‘em if they don’t git off mighty quick! Why, how in the nation did they ever git into such a scrape?”

“Easy enough. Miss Hooker was a-visiting up there to the town—”

“Yes, Booth’s Landing—go on.”

“She was a-visiting there at Booth’s Landing, and just in the edge of the evening she started over with her nigger woman in the horse-ferry to stay all night at her friend’s house, Miss What-you-may-call-her—I disremember her name—and they lost their steering-oar, and swung around and went a-floating down, stern first, about two mile, and saddle-baggsed on the wreck, and the ferryman and the nigger woman and the horses was all lost, but Miss Hooker she made a grab and got aboard the wreck. Well, about an hour after dark we come along down in our trading-scow, and it was so dark we didn’t notice the wreck till we was right on it; and so we saddle-baggsed; but all of us was saved but Bill Whipple—and oh, he was the best cretur!—I most wish ‘t it had been me, I do.”

“My George! It’s the beatenest thing I ever struck. And then what did you all do?”

“Well, we hollered and took on, but it’s so wide there we couldn’t make nobody hear. So pap said somebody got to get ashore and get help somehow. I was the only one that could swim, so I made a dash for it, and Miss Hooker she said if I didn’t strike help sooner, come here and hunt up her uncle, and he’d fix the thing. I made the land about a mile below, and been fooling along ever since, trying to get people to do something, but they said, ‘What, in such a night and such a current? There ain’t no sense in it; go for the steam-ferry.’ Now if you’ll go and—”

“By Jackson, I’d like to, and, blame it, I don’t know but I will; but who in the dingsnation’s a-going to pay for it? Do you reckon your pap—”

“Why that’s all right. Miss Hooker she tolle me, particular, that her uncle Hornback—”

“Great guns! is he her uncle? Looky here, you break for that light over yonder-way, and turn out west when you git there, and about a quarter of a mile out you’ll come to the tavern; tell ‘em to dart you out to Jim Hornback’s, and he’ll foot the bill. And don’t you fool around any, because he’ll want to know the news. Tell him I’ll have his niece all safe before he can get to town. Hump yourself, now; I’m a-going up around the corner here to roust out my engineer.”

I struck for the light, but as soon as he turned the corner I went back and got into my skiff and bailed her out, and then pulled up shore in the easy water about six hundred yards, and tucked myself in among some wood-boats; for I couldn’t rest easy till I could see the ferryboat start. But take it all around, I was feeling ruther comfortable on accounts of taking all this trouble for that gang, for not many would ‘a’ done it. I wished the widow knewed about it. I judged she would be proud of me for helping these rapscallions, because rapscallions and dead-beats is the kind the widow and good people takes the most interest in.

Well, before long here comes the wreck, dim and dusky, sliding along down! A kind of cold shiver went through me, and then I struck out for her. She was very deep, and I see in a minute there warn’t much chance for anybody being alive in her. I pulled all around her and hollered a little, but there wasn’t any answer; all dead still. I felt a little bit heavy-hearted about the gang, but not much, for I reckoned if they could stand it I could.

Then here comes the ferryboat; so I shoved for the middle of the river on a long down-stream slant; and when I judged I was out of eye-reach I laid on my oars, and looked back and see her go and smell around the wreck for Miss Hooker’s remainders, because the captain would know her uncle Hornback would want them; and then pretty soon the ferryboat give it up and went for the shore, and I laid into my work and went a-booming down the river.

It did seem a powerful long time before Jim’s light showed up; and when it did show it looked like it was a thousand mile off. By the time I got there the sky was beginning to get a little gray in the east; so we struck for an island, and hid the raft, and sunk the skiff, and turned in and slept like dead people.
CHAPTER XIV

By and by, when we got up, we turned over the truck the gang had stole off of the wreck, and found boots, and blankets, and clothes, and all sorts of other things, and a lot of books, and a spy-glass, and three boxes of seegars. We hadn’t ever been this rich before in neither of our lives. The seegars was prime. We laid off all the afternoon in the woods talking, and me reading the books, and having a general good time. I told Jim all about what happened inside the wreck and at the ferryboat, and I said these kinds of things was adventures; but he said he didn’t want no more adventures. He said that when I went in the texas and he crawled back to get on the raft and found her gone he nearly died, because he judged it was all up with him anyway it could be fixed; for if he didn’t get saved he would get drowned; and if he did get saved, whoever saved him would send him back home so as to get the reward, and then Miss Watson would sell him South, sure. Well, he was right; he was most always right; he had an uncommon level head for a nigger. I read considerable to Jim about kings and dukes and earls and such, and how gaudy they dressed, and how much style they put on, and called each other and so on, ‘stead of mister; and Jim’s eyes bugged out, and he was interested. He says:

“I didn’ know dey was so many un um. I hain’t hearn ’bout none un um, skasely, but ole King Sollermun, onless you counts dem kings dat’s in a pack er k’yards. How much do a king git?”

“Get?” I says; “why, they get a thousand dollars a month if they want it; they can have just as much as they want; everything belongs to them.”

“Ain’ dat gay? En what dey got to do, Huck?”

“They don’t do nothing! Why, how you talk! They just set around.”

“No; is dat so?”

“Of course it is. They just set around—except, maybe, when there’s a war; then they go to the war. But other times they just lazy around; or go hawking—just hawking and sp—Sh!—d’you hear a noise?”

We skipped out and looked; but it warn’t nothing but the flutter of a steamboat’s wheel away down, coming around the point; so we come back.

“Yes,” says I, “and other times, when things is dull, they fuss with the parlyment; and if everybody don’t go just so he whacks their heads off. But mostly they hang round the harem.”

“Roun’ de which?”

“Harem.”

“What’s de harem?”

“The place where he keeps his wives. Don’t you know about the harem? Solomon had one; he had about a million wives.”

“Why, yes, dat’s so; I—I’d done forgot it. A harem’s a bo’d’n-house, I reck’n. Mos’ likely dey has rackety times in de nussery. En I reck’n de wives quarrels considerable; en dat ‘crease de racket. Yit dey say Sollermun de wises’ man dat ever live’. I doan’ take no stock in dat. Bekase why: would a wise man want to live in de mids’ er sich a blim-blamin’ all de time? No—’deed he wouldn’t. A wise man ‘ud take en buil’ a biler-factry; en den he could shut down de biler-factry when he want to res’.”

“Well, but he was the wisest man, anyway; because the widow she told me so, her own self.”

“I doan’ k’yer what de widder say, he warn’t no wise man nuther. He had some er de dad-fetchedes’ ways I ever see. Does you know ’bout dat chile dat he ‘uz gwyne to chop in two?”

“Yes, the widow told me all about it.”

“Well, den! Warn’ dat de beatenes’ notion in de worl’? You jes’ take en look at it a minute. Dah’s de stump, dah—dat’s one er de women; heah’s you—dat’s de yuther one; I’s Sollermun; en dish yer dollar bill’s de chile. Bofe un you claims it. What does I do? Does I shin aroun’ mong’s de neighbors en fine out which un you de bill do
b’long to, en han’ it over to de right one, all safe en soun’, de way dat anybody dat had any gumption would? No; I take en whack de bill in two, en give half un it to you, en de yuther half to de yuther woman. Dat’s de way Sollermun was gwyne to do wid de chile. Now I want to ast you: what’s de use er dat half a bill?—can’t buy noth’n wid it. En what use is a half a chile? I wouldn’ give a dern for a million un um.”

“But hang it, Jim, you’ve clean missed the point—blame it, you’ve missed it a thousand mile.”

“Who? Me? Go ‘long. Doan’ talk to me ‘bout yo’ pints. I reck’n I knows sense when I sees it; en de ain’ no sense in sich doin’s as dat. De ’spute warn’t ‘bout a half a chile, de ’spute was ‘bout a whole chile; en de man dat think he kin settle a ’spute ‘bout a whole chile wid a half a chile doan’ know enough to come in out’n de rain. Doan’ talk to me ‘bout Sollermun, Huck, I knows him by de back.”

“But I tell you you don’t get the point.”

“Blame de point! I reck’n I knows what I knows. En mine you, de real pint furder—it’s down deeper. It lays in de way Sollermun was raised. You take a man dat’s got on’y one or two chillen; is dat man gwyne to be waseful o’ chillen? No, he ain’t; he can’t ‘ford it. He know how to value ‘em. But you take a man dat’s got ‘bout five million chillen runnin’ roun’ de house, en it’s diffunt. He as soon chop a chile in two as a cat. Dey’s plenty mo’. A chile er two, mo’ er less, warn’t no consekens to Sollermun, dad fetch him!”

I never see such a nigger. If he got a notion in his head once, there warn’t no getting it out again. He was the most down on Solomon of any nigger I ever see. So I went to talking about other kings, and let Solomon slide. I told about Louis Sixteenth that got his head cut off in France long time ago; and about his little boy the dolphin, that would ‘a’ been a king, but they took and shut him up in jail, and some say he died there.

“Po’ little chap.”

“But some says he got out and got away, and come to America.”

“Dat’s good! But he’ll be pooty lonesome—dey ain’ no kings here, is dey, Huck?”

“No.”

“Den he cain’t git no situation. What he gwyne to do?”

“Well, I don’t know. Some of them gets on the police, and some of them learns people how to talk French.”

“Why, Huck, doan’ de French people talk de same way we does?”

“No, Jim; you couldn’t understand a word they said—not a single word.”

“Well, now, I be ding-busted! How do dat come?”

“I don’t know; but it’s so. I got some of their jabber out of a book. S’pose a man was to come to you and say Polly-voo-franzy—what would you think?”

“I wouldn’ think nuffn; I’d take en bust him over de head—dat is, if he warn’t white. I wouldn’t ‘low no nigger to call me dat.”

“Shucks, it ain’t calling you anything. It’s only saying, do you know how to talk French?”

“Well, den, why couldn’t he say it?”

“Why, he is a-saying it. That’s a Frenchman’s way of saying it.”

“Well, it’s a blame ridicklous way, en I doan’ want to hear no mo’ ‘bout it. Dey ain’ no sense in it.”

“Looky here, Jim; does a cat talk like we do?”

“No, a cat don’t.”

“Well, does a cow?”

“No, a cow don’t, nuther.”
“Does a cat talk like a cow, or a cow talk like a cat?”

“No, dey don’t.”

“It’s natural and right for ‘em to talk different from each other, ain’t it?”

“Course.”

“And ain’t it natural and right for a cat and a cow to talk different from us?”

“Why, mos’ sholy it is.”

“Well, then, why ain’t it natural and right for a Frenchman to talk different from us? You answer me that.”

“Is a cat a man, Huck?”

“No.”

“Well, den, dey ain’t no sense in a cat talkin’ like a man. Is a cow a man?—er is a cow a cat?”

“No, she ain’t either of them.”

“Well, den, she ain’t got no business to talk like either one er the yuther of ’em. Is a Frenchman a man?”

“Yes.”

“Well, den! Dad blame it, why doan’ he talk like a man? You answer me dat!”

I see it warn’t no use wasting words—you can’t learn a nigger to argue. So I quit.

CHAPTER XV

We judged that three nights more would fetch us to Cairo, at the bottom of Illinois, where the Ohio River comes in, and that was what we was after. We would sell the raft and get on a steamboat and go way up the Ohio amongst the free states, and then be out of trouble.

Well, the second night a fog begun to come on, and we made for a towhead to tie to, for it wouldn’t do to try to run in a fog; but when I paddled ahead in the canoe, with the line to make fast, there warn’t anything but little saplings to tie to. I passed the line around one of them right on the edge of the cut bank, but there was a stiff current, and the raft come booming down so lively she tore it out by the roots and away she went. I see the fog closing down, and it made me so sick and scared I couldn’t budge for most a half a minute it seemed to me—and then there warn’t no raft in sight; you couldn’t see twenty yards. I jumped into the canoe and run back to the stern, and grabbed the paddle and set her back a stroke. But she didn’t come. I was in such a hurry I hadn’t untied her. I got up and tried to untie her, but I was so excited my hands shook so I couldn’t hardly do anything with them.

As soon as I got started I took out after the raft, hot and heavy, right down the towhead. That was all right as far as it went, but the towhead warn’t sixty yards long, and the minute I flew by the foot of it I shot out into the solid white fog, and hadn’t no more idea which way I was going than a dead man.

Thinks I, it won’t do to paddle; first I know I’ll run into the bank or a towhead or something; I got to set still and float, and yet it’s mighty fidgety business to have to hold your hands still at such a time. I whooped and listened. Away down there somewheres I hears a small whoop, and up comes my spirits. I went tearing after it, listening sharp to hear it again. The next time it come I see I warn’t heading for it, but heading away to the right of it. And the next time I was heading away to the left of it—and not gaining on it much either, for I was flying around, this way and that and t’other, but it was going straight ahead all the time.

I did wish the fool would think to beat a tin pan, and beat it all the time, but he never did, and it was the still places between the whoops that was making the trouble for me. Well, I fought along, and directly I hears the whoop behind me. I was tangled good now. That was somebody else’s whoop, or else I was turned around.
I threwed the paddle down. I heard the whoop again; it was behind me yet, but in a different place; it kept coming, and kept changing its place, and I kept answering, till by and by it was in front of me again, and I knowed the current had swung the canoe's head down-stream, and I was all right if that was Jim and not some other raftsman hollering. I couldn't tell nothing about voices in a fog, for nothing don't look natural nor sound natural in a fog.

The whooping went on, and in about a minute I come a-booming down on a cut bank with smoky ghosts of big trees on it, and the current threwed me off to the left and shot by, amongst a lot of snags that fairly roared, the current was tearing by them so swift.

In another second or two it was solid white and still again. I set perfectly still then, listening to my heart thump, and I reckon I didn't draw a breath while it thumped a hundred.

I just give up then. I knowed what the matter was. That cut bank was an island, and Jim had gone down t'other side of it. It warn't no towhead that you could float by in ten minutes. It had the big timber of a regular island; it might be five or six miles long and more than half a mile wide.

I kept quiet, with my ears cocked, about fifteen minutes, I reckon. I was floating along, of course, four or five miles an hour; but you don't ever think of that. No, you feel like you are laying dead still on the water; and if a little glimpse of a snag slips by you don't think to yourself how fast you're going, but you catch your breath and think, my! how that snag's tearing along. If you think it ain't dismal and lonesome out in a fog that way by yourself in the night, you try it once—you'll see.

Next, for about a half an hour, I whoops now and then; at last I hears the answer a long ways off, and tries to follow it, but I couldn't do it, and directly I judged I'd got into a nest of towheads, for I had little dim glimpses of them on both sides of me—sometimes just a narrow channel between, and some that I couldn't see I knowed was there because I'd hear the wash of the current against the old dead brush and trash that hung over the banks. Well, I warn't long loosing the whoops down amongst the towheads; and I only tried to chase them a little while, anyway, because it was worse than chasing a Jack-o'-lantern. You never knowed a sound dodge around so, and swap places so quick and so much.

I had to claw away from the bank pretty lively four or five times, to keep from knocking the islands out of the river; and so I judged the raft must be butting into the bank every now and then, or else it would get further ahead and clear out of hearing—it was floating a little faster than what I was.

Well, I seemed to be in the open river again by and by, but I couldn't hear no sign of a whoop nowheres. I reckoned Jim had fetched up on a snag, maybe, and it was all up with him. I was good and tired, so I laid down in the canoe and said I wouldn't bother no more. I didn't want to go to sleep, of course; but I was so sleepy I couldn't help it; so I thought I would take jest one little cat-nap.

But I reckon it was more than a cat-nap, for when I waked up the stars was shining bright, the fog was all gone, and I was spinning down a big bend stern first. First I didn't know where I was; I thought I was dreaming; and when things began to come back to me they seemed to come up dim out of last week.

It was a monstrous big river here, with the tallest and the thickest kind of timber on both banks; just a solid wall, as well as I could see by the stars. I looked away down-stream, and seen a black speck on the water. I took after it; but when I got to it it warn't nothing but a couple of saw-logs made fast together. Then I see another speck, and chased that; then another, and this time I was right. It was the raft.

When I got to it Jim was setting there with his head down between his knees, asleep, with his right arm hanging over the steering-oar. The other oar was smashed off, and the raft was littered up with leaves and branches and dirt. So she'd had a rough time.

I made fast and laid down under Jim's nose on the raft, and began to gap, and stretch my fists out against Jim, and says:

"Hello, Jim, have I been asleep? Why didn't you stir me up?"

"Goodness gracious, is dat you, Huck? En you ain' dead—you ain' drownded—you's back ag'in? It's too good for true, honey, it's too good for true. Lemme look at you chile, lemme feel o' you. No, you ain' dead! you's back ag'in, 'live en soun', jis de same ole Huck—de same ole Huck, thanks to goodness!"

"What's the matter with you, Jim? You been a-drinking?"
“Drinkin’? Has I ben a-drinkin’? Has I had a chance to be a-drinkin’?”

“Well, then, what makes you talk so wild?”

“How does I talk wild?”

“How? Why, hain’t you been talking about my coming back, and all that stuff, as if I’d been gone away?”

“Huck—Huck Finn, you look me in de eye; look me in de eye. Hain’t you ben gone away?”

“Gone away? Why, what in the nation do you mean? I hain’t been gone anywheres. Where would I go to?”

“Well, looky here, boss, dey’s sumfn wrong, dey is. Is I me, or who is I? Is I heah, or whah is I? Now dat’s what I wants to know.”

“Well, I think you’re here, plain enough, but I think you’re a tangle-headed old fool, Jim.”

“I is, is I? Well, you answer me dis: Didn’t you tote out de line in de canoe fer to make fas’ to de towhead?”

“No, I didn’t. What towhead? I hain’t seen no towhead.”

“You hain’t seen no towhead? Looky here, didn’t de line pull loose en de raft go a-hummin’ down de river, en leave you en de canoe behine in de fog?”

“What fog?”

“Why, de fog!—de fog dat’s been aroun’ all night. En didn’t you whoop, en didn’t I whoop, tell we got mix’ up in de islands en one un us got los’ en t’other one was jis’ as good as los’, ‘kase he didn’ know whah he wuz? En didn’t I bust up agin a lot er dem islands en have a turrible time en mos’ git drownded? Now ain’ dat so, boss—a’n’t it so? You answer me dat.”

“Well, this is too many for me, Jim. I hain’t seen no fog, nor no islands, nor no troubles, nor nothing. I been setting here talking with you all night till you went to sleep about ten minutes ago, and I reckon I done the same. You couldn’t ‘a’ got drunk in that time, so of course you’ve been dreaming.”

“Dad fetch it, how is I gwyne to dream all dat in ten minutes?”

“Well, hang it all, you did dream it, because there didn’t any of it happen.”

“But, Huck, it’s all jis’ as plain to me as—”

“It don’t make no difference how plain it is; there ain’t nothing in it. I know, because I’ve been here all the time.”

Jim didn’t say nothing for about five minutes, but set there studying over it. Then he says:

“Well, den, I reck’n I did dream it, Huck; but dog my cats ef it ain’t de powerfullest dream I ever see. En I hain’t ever had no dream b’fo’ dat’s tired me like dis one.”

“Oh, well, that’s all right, because a dream does tire a body like everything sometimes. But this one was a staving dream; tell me all about it, Jim.”

So Jim went to work and told me the whole thing right through, just as it happened, only he painted it up considerable. Then he said he must start in and “terpret” it, because it was sent for a warning. He said the first towhead stood for a man that would try to do us some good, but the current was another man that would get us away from him. The whoops was warnings that would come to us every now and then, and if we didn’t try hard to make out to understand them they’d just take us into bad luck, ‘stead of keeping us out of it. The lot of towheads was troubles we was going to get into with quarrelsome people and all kinds of mean folks, but if we minded our business and didn’t talk back and aggravate them, we would pull through and get out of the fog and into the big clear river, which was the free states, and wouldn’t have no more trouble.

It had clouded up pretty dark just after I got on to the raft, but it was clearing up again now.

“Oh, well, that’s all interpreted well enough as far as it goes, Jim,” I says; “but what does these things stand for?”
It was the leaves and rubbish on the raft and the smashed oar. You could see them first-rate now.

Jim looked at the trash, and then looked at me, and back at the trash again. He had got the dream fixed so strong in his head that he couldn’t seem to shake it loose and get the facts back into its place again right away. But when he did get the thing straightened around he looked at me steady without ever smiling, and says:

“What do dey stan’ for? I’s gwyne to tell you. When I got all wore out wid work, en wid de callin’ for you, en went to sleep, my heart wuz mos’ broke becaze you wuz los’, en I didn’ k’yer no’ mo’ what become er me en de raf’. En when I wake up en fine you back ag’in, all safe en soun’, de tears come, en I could ‘a’ got down on my knees en kiss yo’ foot, I’s so thankful. En all you wuz thinkin’ ’bout wuz how you could make a fool uv ole Jim wid a lie. Dat truck dah is trash; en trash is what people is dat puts dirt on de head er dey fren’s en makes ’em ashamed.”

Then he got up slow and walked to the wigwam, and went in there without saying anything but that. But that was enough. It made me feel so mean I could almost kissed his foot to get him to take it back.

It was fifteen minutes before I could work myself up to go and humble myself to a nigger; but I done it, and I warn’t ever sorry for it afterward, neither. I didn’t do him no more mean tricks, and I wouldn’t done that one if I’d ‘a’ known it would make him feel that way.

CHAPTER XVI

We slept most all day, and started out at night, a little ways behind a monstrous long raft that was as long going by as a procession. She had four long sweeps at each end, so we judged she carried as many as thirty men, likely. She had five big wigwams aboard, wide apart, and an open camp-fire in the middle, and a tall flag-pole at each end. There was a power of style about her. It amounted to something being a raftsman on such a craft as that.

We went drifting down into a big bend, and the night clouded up and got hot. The river was very wide, and was walled with solid timber on both sides; you couldn’t see a break in it hardly ever, or a light. We talked about Cairo, and wondered whether we would know it when we got to it. I said likely we wouldn’t, because I had heard say there warn’t but about a dozen houses there, and if they didn’t happen to have them lit up, how was we going to know we was passing a town? Jim said if the two big rivers joined together there, that would show. But I said maybe we might think we was passing the foot of an island and coming into the same old river again. That disturbed Jim—and me too. So the question was, what to do? I said, paddle ashore the first time a light showed, and tell them pap was behind, coming along with a trading-scow, and was a green hand at the business, and wanted to know how far it was to Cairo. Jim thought it was a good idea, so we took a smoke on it and waited.

There warn’t nothing to do now but to look out sharp for the town, and not pass it without seeing it. He said he’d be mighty sure to see it, because he’d be a free man the minute he seen it, but if he missed it he’d be in a slave country again and no more show for freedom. Every little while he jumps up and says:

“Dah she is?”

But it warn’t. It was Jack-o’-lanterns, or lightning-bugs; so he set down again, and went to watching, same as before. Jim said it made him all over trembly and feverish to be so close to freedom. Well, I can tell you it made me all over trembly and feverish, too, to hear him, because I begun to get it through my head that he was most free—and who was to blame for it? Why, me. I couldn’t get that out of my conscience, no how nor no way. It got to troubling me so I couldn’t rest; I couldn’t stay still in one place. It hadn’t ever come home to me before, what this thing was that I was doing. But now it did; and it stayed with me, and scorched me more and more. I tried to make out to myself that I warn’t to blame, because I didn’t run Jim off from his rightful owner; but it warn’t no use, conscience up and says, every time, “But you knowed he was running for his freedom, and you could ‘a’ paddled ashore and told somebody.” That was so—I couldn’t get around that no way. That was where it pinched. Conscience says to me, “What had poor Miss Watson done to you that you could see her nigger go off right under your eyes and never say one single word? What did that poor old woman do to you that you could treat her so mean? Why, she tried to learn you your book, she tried to learn you your manners, she tried to be good to you every way she knowed how. That’s what she done.”

I got to feeling so mean and so miserable I most wished I was dead. I fidgeted up and down the raft, abusing myself to myself, and Jim was fidgeting up and down past me. We neither of us could keep still. Every time he danced around and says, “Dah’s Cairo!” it went through me like a shot, and I thought if it was Cairo I reckoned I would die of miserableness.
Jim talked out loud all the time while I was talking to myself. He was saying how the first thing he would do when he got to a free state he would go to saving up money and never spend a single cent, and when he got enough he would buy his wife, which was owned on a farm close to where Miss Watson lived; and then they would both work to buy the two children, and if their master wouldn’t sell them, they’d get an Ab’litionist to go and steal them.

It most froze me to hear such talk. He wouldn’t ever dared to talk such talk in his life before. Just see what a difference it made in him the minute he judged he was about free. It was according to the old saying, “Give a nigger an inch and he’ll take an ell.” Thinks I, this is what comes of my not thinking. Here was this nigger, which I had as good as helped to run away, coming right out flat-footed and saying he would steal his children—children that belonged to a man I didn’t even know; a man that hadn’t ever done me no harm.

I was sorry to hear Jim say that, it was such a lowering of him. My conscience got to stirring me up hotter than ever, until at last I says to it, “Let up on me—it ain’t too late yet—I’ll paddle ashore at the first light and tell.” I felt easy and happy and light as a feather right off. All my troubles was gone. I went to looking out sharp for a light, and sort of singing to myself. By and by one showed. Jim sings out:

“We’s safe, Huck, we’s safe! Jump up and crack yo’ heels! Dat’s de good ole Cairo at las’, I jis knows it!”

I says:

“I’ll take the canoe and go and see, Jim. It mightn’t be, you know.”

He jumped and got the canoe ready, and put his old coat in the bottom for me to set on, and give me the paddle; and as I shoved off, he says:

“Pooty soon I’ll be a-shout’n’ for joy, en I’ll say, it’s all on accounts o’ Huck; I’s a free man, en I couldn’t ever ben free ef it hadn’ ben for Huck; Huck done it. Jim won’t ever forgit you, Huck; you’s de bes’ fren’ Jim’s ever had; en you’s de only fren’ ole Jim’s got now.”

I was paddling off, all in a sweat to tell on him; but when he says this, it seemed to kind of take the tuck all out of me. I went along slow then, and I warn’t right down certain whether I was glad I started or whether I warn’t. When I was fifty yards off, Jim says:

“Dah you goes, de ole true Huck; de on’y white genlman dat ever kep’ his promise to ole Jim.”

Well, I just felt sick. But I says, I got to do it—I can’t get out of it. Right then along comes a skiff with two men in it with guns, and they stopped and I stopped. One of them says:

“What’s that yonder?”

“A piece of a raft,” I says.

“Do you belong on it?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Any men on it?”

“Only one, sir.”

“Well, there’s five niggers run off to-night up yonder, above the head of the bend. Is your man white or black?”

I didn’t answer up prompt. I tried to, but the words wouldn’t come. I tried for a second or two to brace up and out with it, but I warn’t man enough—hadn’t the spunk of a rabbit. I see I was weakening; so I just give up trying, and up and says:

“He’s white.”

“I reckon we’ll go and see for ourselves.”

“I wish you would,” says I, “because it’s pap that’s there, and maybe you’d help me tow the raft ashore where the light is. He’s sick—and so is mam and Mary Ann.”

“Oh, the devil! we’re in a hurry, boy. But I s’pose we’ve got to. Come, buckle to your paddle, and let’s get along.”
I buckled to my paddle and they laid to their oars. When we had made a stroke or two, I says:

“Pap ’ll be mighty much obleeged to you, I can tell you. Everybody goes away when I want them to help me tow the raft ashore, and I can’t do it by myself.”

“Well, that’s infernal mean. Odd, too. Say, boy, what’s the matter with your father?”

“It’s the—a—the—well, it ain’t anything much.”

They stopped pulling. It warn’t but a mighty little ways to the raft now. One says:

“Boy, that’s a lie. What is the matter with your pap? Answer up square now, and it ’ll be the better for you.”

“I will, sir, I will, honest—but don’t leave us, please. It’s the—the—Gentlemen, if you’ll only pull ahead, and let me heave you the headline, you won’t have to come a-near the raft—please do.”

“Set her back, John, set her back!” says one. They backed water. “Keep away, boy—keep to looard. Confound it, I just expect the wind has blowed it to us. Your pap’s got the smallpox, and you know it precious well. Why didn’t you come out and say so? Do you want to spread it all over?”

“Well,” says I, a-blubbering, “I’ve told everybody before, and they just went away and left us.”

“Poor devil, there’s something in that. We are right down sorry for you, but we—well, hang it, we don’t want the smallpox, you see. Look here, I’ll tell you what to do. Don’t you try to land by yourself, or you’ll smash everything to pieces. You float along down about twenty miles, and you’ll come to a town on the left-hand side of the river. It will be long after sun-up then, and when you ask for help you tell them your folks are all down with chills and fever. Don’t be a fool again, and let people guess what is the matter. Now we’re trying to do you a kindness; so you just put twenty miles between us, that’s a good boy. It wouldn’t do any good to land yonder where the light is—it’s only a wood-yard. Say, I reckon your father’s poor, and I’m bound to say he’s in pretty hard luck. Here, I’ll put a twenty-dollar gold piece on this board, and you get it when it floats by. I feel mighty mean to leave you; but my kingdom! it won’t do to fool with small-pox, don’t you see?”

“Hold on, Parker,” says the man, “here’s a twenty to put on the board for me. Good-by, boy; you do as Mr. Parker told you, and you’ll be all right.”

“That’s so, my boy—good-by, good-bye. If you see any runaway niggers you get help and nab them, and you can make some money by it.”

“Good-by, sir,” says I; “I won’t let no runaway niggers get by me if I can help it.”

They went off and I got aboard the raft, feeling bad and low, because I knowed very well I had done wrong, and I see it warn’t no use for me to try to learn to do right; a body that don’t get started right when he’s little ain’t got no show—when the pinch comes there ain’t nothing to back him up and keep him to his work, and so he gets beat. Then I thought a minute, and says to myself, hold on; s’pose you’d ‘a’ done right and give Jim up, would you felt better than what you do now? No, says I, I’d feel bad—I’d feel just the same way I do now. Well, then, says I, what’s the use you learning to do right when it’s troublesome to do right and ain’t no trouble to do wrong, and the wages is just the same? I was stuck. I couldn’t answer that. So I reckon I wouldn’t bother no more about it, but after this always do whichever come handiest at the time.

I went into the wigwam; Jim warn’t there. I looked all around; he warn’t anywhere. I says:

“Jim!”

“Here I is, Huck. Is dey out o’ sight yit? Don’t talk loud.”

He was in the river under the stern oar, with just his nose out. I told him they were out of sight, so he come aboard. He says:

“I was a-listenin’ to all de talk, en I slips into de river en was gwyne to shove for sho’ if dey come aboard. Den I was gwyne to swim to de raf’ agin when dey was gone. But lawsy, how you did fool ’em, Huck! Dat wuz de smartes’ dodge! I tell you, chile, I ’spec it save’ ole Jim—ole Jim ain’t going to forgit you for dat, honey.”

Then we talked about the money. It was a pretty good raise—twenty dollars apiece. Jim said we could take deck passage on a steamboat now, and the money would last us as far as we wanted to go in the free states.
twenty mile more warn’t far for the raft to go, but he wished we was already there.

Towards daybreak we tied up, and Jim was mighty particular about hiding the raft good. Then he worked all day fixing things in bundles, and getting all ready to quit rafting.

That night about ten we hove in sight of the lights of a town away down in a left-hand bend.

I went off in the canoe to ask about it. Pretty soon I found a man out in the river with a skiff, setting a trot-line. I ranged up and says:

“Mister, is that town Cairo?”

“Cairo? no. You must be a blame’ fool.”

“What town is it, mister?”

“If you want to know, go and find out. If you stay here botherin’ around me for about a half a minute longer you’ll get something you won’t want.”

I paddled to the raft. Jim was awful disappointed, but I said never mind, Cairo would be the next place, I reckoned.

We passed another town before daylight, and I was going out again; but it was high ground, so I didn’t go. No high ground about Cairo, Jim said. I had forgot it. We laid up for the day on a towhead tolerable close to the left-hand bank. I begun to suspicion something. So did Jim. I says:

“Maybe we went by Cairo in the fog that night.”

He says:

“Doan’ le’s talk about it, Huck. Po’ niggers can’t have no luck. I awluz ‘spected dat rattlesnake-skin warn’t done wid its work.”

“I wish I’d never seen that snake-skin, Jim—I do wish I’d never laid eyes on it.”

“It ain’t yo’ fault, Huck; you didn’t know. Don’t you blame yo’self ’bout it.”

When it was daylight, here was the clear Ohio water inshore, sure enough, and outside was the old regular Muddy! So it was all up with Cairo.

We talked it all over. It wouldn’t do to take to the shore; we couldn’t take the raft up the stream, of course. There warn’t no way but to wait for dark, and start back in the canoe and take the chances. So we slept all day amongst the cottonwood thicket, so as to be fresh for the work, and when we went back to the raft about dark the canoe was gone!

We didn’t say a word for a good while. There warn’t anything to say. We both knowed well enough it was some more work of the rattlesnake-skin; so what was the use to talk about it? It would only look like we was finding fault, and that would be bound to fetch more bad luck—and keep on fetching it, too, till we knowed enough to keep still.

By and by we talked about what we better do, and found there warn’t no way but just to go along down with the raft till we got a chance to buy a canoe to go back in. We warn’t going to borrow it when there warn’t anybody around, the way pap would do, for that might set people after us.

So we shoved out after dark on the raft.

Anybody that don’t believe yet that it’s foolishness to handle a snake-skin, after all that that snake-skin done for us, will believe it now if they read on and see what more it done for us.

The place to buy canoes is off of rafts laying up at shore. But we didn’t see no rafts laying up; so we went along during three hours and more. Well, the night got gray and ruther thick, which is the next meanest thing to fog. You can’t tell the shape of the river, and you can’t see no distance. It got to be very late and still, and then along comes a steamboat up the river. We lit the lantern, and judged she would see it. Up-stream boats didn’t generly come close to us; they go out and follow the bars and hunt for easy water under the reefs; but nights like this they bull right up the channel against the whole river.
We could hear her pounding along, but we didn’t see her good till she was close. She aimed right for us. Often they do that and try to see how close they can come without touching; sometimes the wheel bites off a sweep, and then the pilot sticks his head out and laughs, and thinks he’s mighty smart. Well, here she comes, and we said she was going to try and shave us; but she didn’t seem to be sheering off a bit. She was a big one, and she was coming in a hurry, too, looking like a black cloud with rows of glow-worms around it; but all of a sudden she bulged out, big and scary, with a long row of wide-open furnace doors shining like red-hot teeth, and her monstrous bows and guards hanging right over us. There was a yell at us, and a jingling of bells to stop the engines, a powwow of cussing, and whistling of steam—and as Jim went overboard on one side and I on the other, she come smashing straight through the raft.

I dived—and I aimed to find the bottom, too, for a thirty-foot wheel had got to go over me, and I wanted it to have plenty of room. I could always stay under water a minute; this time I reckon I stayed under a minute and a half. Then I bounced for the top in a hurry, for I was nearly busting. I popped out to my armpits and blew the water out of my nose, and puffed a bit. Of course there was a booming current; and of course that boat started her engines again ten seconds after she stopped them, for they never cared much for raftsmen; so now she was churning along up the river, out of sight in the thick weather, though I could hear her.

I sung out for Jim about a dozen times, but I didn’t get any answer; so I grabbed a plank that touched me while I was “treading water,” and struck out for shore, shoving it ahead of me. But I made out to see that the drift of the current was towards the left-hand shore, which meant that I was in a crossing; so I changed off and went that way.

It was one of these long, slanting, two-mile crossings; so I was a good long time in getting over. I made a safe landing, and clumb up the bank. I couldn’t see but a little ways, but I went poking along over rough ground for a quarter of a mile or more, and then I run across a big old-fashioned double log house before I noticed it. I was going to rush by and get away, but a lot of dogs jumped out and went to howling and barking at me, and I knowed better than to move another peg.

CHAPTER XVII

In about a minute somebody spoke out of a window without putting his head out, and says:

“Be done, boys! Who’s there?”

I says:

“It’s me.”

“Who’s me?”

“George Jackson, sir.”

“What do you want?”

“I don’t want nothing, sir. I only want to go along by, but the dogs won’t let me.”

“What are you prowling around here this time of night for—hey?”

“I warn’t prowling around, sir; I fell overboard off of the steamboat.”

“Oh, you did, did you? Strike a light there, somebody. What did you say your name was?”

“George Jackson, sir. I’m only a boy.”

“Look here, if you’re telling the truth you needn’t be afraid—nobody ’ll hurt you. But don’t try to budge; stand right where you are. Rouse out Bob and Tom, some of you, and fetch the guns. George Jackson, is there anybody with you?”

“No, sir, nobody.”

I heard the people stirring around in the house now, and see a light. The man sung out: “Snatch that light away,
Betsy, you old fool—ain’t you got any sense? Put it on the floor behind the front door. Bob, if you and Tom are ready, take your places.”

“All ready.”

“Now, George Jackson, do you know the Shepherdsons?”

“No, sir; I never heard of them.”

“Well, that may be so, and it mayn’t. Now, all ready. Step forward, George Jackson. And mind, don’t you hurry—come mighty slow. If there’s anybody with you, let him keep back—if he shows himself he’ll be shot. Come along now. Come slow; push the door open yourself—just enough to squeeze in, d’you hear?”

I didn’t hurry; I couldn’t if I’d a-wanted to. I took one slow step at a time and there warn’t a sound, only I thought I could hear my heart. The dogs were as still as the humans, but they followed a little behind me. When I got to the three log doorsteps I heard them unlocking and unbarring and unbolting. I put my hand on the door and pushed it a little and a little more till somebody said, “There, that’s enough—put your head in.” I done it, but I judged they would take it off.

The candle was on the floor, and there they all was, looking at me, and me at them, for about a quarter of a minute: Three big men with guns pointed at me, which made me wince, I tell you; the oldest, gray and about sixty, the other two thirty or more—all of them fine and handsome—and the sweetest old gray-headed lady, and back of her two young women which I couldn’t see right well. The old gentleman says:

“There; I reckon it’s all right. Come in.”

As soon as I was in the old gentleman he locked the door and barred it and bolted it, and told the young men to come in with their guns, and they all went in a big parlor that had a new rag carpet on the floor, and got together in a corner that was out of the range of the front windows—there warn’t none on the side. They held the candle, and took a good look at me, and all said, “Why, he ain’t a Shepherdson—no, there ain’t any Shepherdson about him.” Then the old man said he hoped I wouldn’t mind being searched for arms, because he didn’t mean no harm by it—it was only to make sure. So he didn’t pry into my pockets, but only felt outside with his hands, and said it was all right. He told me to make myself easy and at home, and tell all about myself; but the old lady says:

“Why, bless you, Saul, the poor thing’s as wet as he can be; and don’t you reckon it may be he’s hungry?”

“True for you, Rachel—I forgot.”

So the old lady says:

“Betsy” (this was a nigger woman), “you fly around and get him something to eat as quick as you can, poor thing; and one of you girls go and wake up Buck and tell him—oh, here he is himself. Buck, take this little stranger and get the wet clothes off from him and dress him up in some of yours that’s dry.”

Buck looked about as old as me—thirteen or fourteen or along there, though he was a little bigger than me. He hadn’t on anything but a shirt, and he was very frowzy-headed. He came in gaping and digging one fist into his eyes, and he was dragging a gun along with the other one. He says:

“Ain’t they no Shepherdsons around?”

They said, no, ’twas a false alarm.

“Well,” he says, “if they’d ‘a’ ben some, I reckon I’d ‘a’ got one.”

They all laughed, and Bob says:

“Why, Buck, they might have scalped us all, you’ve been so slow in coming.”

“Well, nobody come after me, and it ain’t right. I’m always kept down; I don’t get no show.”

“Never mind, Buck, my boy,” says the old man, “you’ll have show enough, all in good time, don’t you fret about that. Go ’long with you now, and do as your mother told you.”

When we got up-stairs to his room he got me a coarse shirt and a roundabout and pants of his, and I put them on.
While I was at it he asked me what my name was, but before I could tell him he started to tell me about a bluejay and a young rabbit he had caught in the woods day before yesterday, and he asked me where Moses was when the candle went out. I said I didn’t know; I hadn’t heard about it before, no way.

“Well, guess,” he says.

“How’m I going to guess,” says I, “when I never heard tell of it before?”

“But you can guess, can’t you? It’s just as easy.”

“Which candle?” I says.

“Why, any candle,” he says.

“I don’t know where he was,” says I; “where was he?”

“Why, he was in the dark! That’s where he was!”

“Well, if you knowed where he was, what did you ask me for?”

“Well, blame it, it’s a riddle, don’t you see? Say, how long are you going to stay here? You got to stay always. We can just have booming times—they don’t have no school now. Do you own a dog? I’ve got a dog—and he’ll go in the river and bring out chips that you throw in. Do you like to comb up Sundays, and all that kind of foolishness? You bet I don’t, but ma she makes me. Confound these ole britches! I reckon I’d better put ‘em on, but I’d ruther not, it’s so warm. Are you all ready? All right. Come along, old hoss.”

Cold corn-pone, cold corn-beef, butter and buttermilk—that is what they had for me down there, and there ain’t nothing better that ever I’ve come across yet. Buck and his ma and all of them smoked cob pipes, except the nigger woman, which was gone, and the two young women. They all smoked and talked, and I eat and talked. The young women had quilts around them, and their hair down their backs. They all asked me questions, and I told them how pap and me and all the family was living on a little farm down at the bottom of Arkansaw, and my sister Mary Ann run off and got married and never was heard of no more, and Bill went to hunt them and he warn’t heard of no more, and Tom and Mort died, and then there warn’t nobody but just me and pap left, and he was just trimmed down to nothing, on account of his troubles; so when he died I took what there was left, because the farm didn’t belong to us, and started up the river, deck passage, and fell overboard; and that was how I come to be here. So they said I could have a home there as long as I wanted it. Then it was most daylight and everybody went to bed, and I went to bed with Buck, and when I waked up in the morning, drat it all, I had forgot what my name was. So I laid there about an hour trying to think, and when Buck waked up I says:

“Can you spell, Buck?”

“Yes,” he says.

“I bet you can’t spell my name,” says I.

“I bet you what you dare I can,” says he.

“All right,” says I, “go ahead.”

“G-e-o-r-g-e J-a-x-o-n—there now,” he says.

“Well,” says I, “you done it, but I didn’t think you could. It ain’t no slouch of a name to spell—right off without studying.”

I set it down, private, because somebody might want me to spell it next, and so I wanted to be handy with it and rattle it off like I was used to it. It was a mighty nice family, and a mighty nice house, too. I hadn’t seen no house out in the country before that was so nice and had so much style. It didn’t have an iron latch on the front door, nor a wooden one with a buckskin string, but a brass knob to turn, the same as houses in town. There warn’t no bed in the parlor, nor a sign of a bed; but heaps of parlors in towns has beds in them. There was a big fireplace that was bricked on the bottom, and the bricks was kept clean and red by pouring water on them and scrubbing them with another brick; sometimes they wash them over with red water-paint that they call Spanish-brown, same as they do in town. They had big brass dog-irons that could hold up a saw-log. There was a clock on the middle of the mantelpiece, with a picture of a town painted on the bottom half of the glass front, and a round place in the middle of it for the sun, and you could see the pendulum swinging behind it. It was beautiful to hear that clock tick; and
sometimes when one of these peddlers had been along and scoured her up and got her in good shape, she would start in and strike a hundred and fifty before she got tuckered out. They wouldn’t took any money for her.

Well, there was a big outlandish parrot on each side of the clock, made out of something like chalk, and painted up gaudy. By one of the parrots was a cat made of crockery, and a crockery dog by the other; and when you pressed down on them they squeaked, but didn’t open their mouths nor look different nor interested. They squeaked through underneath. There was a couple of big wild-turkey-wing fans spread out behind those things. On the table in the middle of the room was a kind of a lovely crockery basket that had apples and oranges and peaches and grapes piled up in it, which was much redder and yellower and prettier than real ones is, but they warn’t real because you could see where pieces had got chipped off and showed the white chalk, or whatever it was, underneath.

This table had a cover made out of beautiful oilcloth, with a red and blue spread-eagle painted on it, and a painted border all around. It come all the way from Philadelphia, they said. There was some books, too, piled up perfectly exact, on each corner of the table. One was a big family Bible full of pictures. One was Pilgrim’s Progress, about a man that left his family, it didn’t say why. I read considerable in it now and then. The statements was interesting, but tough. Another was Friendship’s Offering, full of beautiful stuff and poetry; but I didn’t read the poetry. Another was Henry Clay’s Speeches, and another was Dr. Gunn’s Family Medicine, which told you all about what to do if a body was sick or dead. There was a hymn-book, and a lot of other books. And there was nice split-bottom chairs, and perfectly sound, too—not bagged down in the middle and busted, like an old basket.

They had pictures hung on the walls—mainly Washingsons and Lafayettes, and battles, and Highland Marys, and one called “Signing the Declaration.” There was some that they called crayons, which one of the daughters which was dead made her own self when she was only fifteen years old. They was different from any pictures I ever see before—blacker, mostly, than is common. One was a woman in a slim black dress, belted small under the armpits, with bulges like a cabbage in the middle of the sleeves, and a large black scoop-shovel bonnet with a black veil, and white slim ankles crossed about with black tape, and very wee black slippers, like a chisel, and she was leaning pensive on a tombstone on her right elbow, under a weeping willow, and her other hand hanging down her side holding a white handkerchief and a reticule, and underneath the picture it said “Shall I Never See Thee More Alas.” Another one was a young lady with her hair all combed up straight to the top of her head, and knotted there in front of a comb like a chair-back, and she was crying into a handkerchief and had a dead bird laying on its back in her other hand with its heels up, and underneath the picture it said “I Shall Never Hear Thy Sweet Chirrup More Alas.” There was one where a young lady was at a window looking up at the moon, and tears running down her cheeks; and she had an open letter in one hand with black sealing-wax showing on one edge of it, and she was mashing a locket with a chain to it against her mouth, and underneath the picture it said “And Art Thou Gone Yes Thou Art Gone Alas.” These was all nice pictures, I reckon, but I didn’t somehow seem to take to them, because if ever I was down a little they always give me the fan-tods. Everybody was sorry she died, because she had laid out a lot more of these pictures to do, and a body could see by what she had done what they had lost. But I reckoned that with her disposition she was having a better time in the graveyard. She was at work on what they said was her greatest picture when she took sick, and every day and every night it was her prayer to be allowed to live till she got it done, but she never got the chance. It was a picture of a young woman in a long white gown, standing on the rail of a bridge all ready to jump off, with her hair all down her back, and looking up to the moon, with the tears running down her face, and she had two arms folded across her breast, and two arms stretched out in front, and two more reaching up toward the moon—and the idea was to see which pair would look best, and then scratch out all the other arms; but, as I was saying, she died before she got her mind made up, and now they kept this picture over the head of the bed in her room, and every time her birthday come they hung flowers on it. Other times it was hid with a little curtain. The young woman in the picture had a kind of a nice sweet face, but there was so many arms it made her look too spidery, seemed to me.

This young girl kept a scrap-book when she was alive, and used to paste obituaries and accidents and cases of patient suffering in it out of the Presbyterian Observer, and write poetry after them out of her own head. It was very good poetry. This is what she wrote about a boy by the name of Stephen Dowling Bots that fell down a well and was drowned:

**ODE TO STEPHEN DOWLING BOTS, DEC’D**

And did young Stephen sicken,
And did young Stephen die?
And did the sad hearts thicken,
And did the mourners cry?
No; such was not the fate of
Young Stephen Dowling Bots;
Though sad hearts round him thickened,
‘Twas not from sickness’ shots.

No whooping-cough did rack his frame,
Nor measles drear with spots;
Not these impaired the sacred name
Of Stephen Dowling Bots.

Despised love struck not with woe
That head of curly knots,
Nor stomach troubles laid him low,
Young Stephen Dowling Bots.

O no. Then list with tearful eye,
Whilst I his fate do tell.
His soul did from this cold world fly
By falling down a well.

They got him out and emptied him;
Alas it was too late;
His spirit was gone for to sport aloft
In the realms of the good and great.

If Emmeline Grangerford could make poetry like that before she was fourteen, there ain’t no telling what she could ‘a’ done by and by. Buck said she could rattle off poetry like nothing. She didn’t ever have to stop to think. He said she would slap down a line, and if she couldn’t find anything to rhyme with it would just scratch it out and slap down another one, and go ahead. She warn’t particular; she could write about anything you choose to give her to write about just so it was sadful. Every time a man died, or a woman died, or a child died, she would be on hand with her “tribute” before he was cold. She called them tributes. The neighbors said it was the doctor first, then Emmeline, then the undertaker—the undertaker never got in ahead of Emmeline but once, and then she hung fire on a rhyme for the dead person’s name, which was Whistler. She warn’t ever the same after that; she never complained, but she kinder pined away and did not live long. Poor thing, many’s the time I made myself go up to the little room that used to be hers and get out her poor old scrap-book and read in it when her pictures had been aggravating me and I had soured on her a little. I liked all that family, dead ones and all, and warn’t going to let anything come between us. Poor Emmeline made poetry about all the dead people when she was alive, and it didn’t seem right that there warn’t nobody to make some about her now she was gone; so I tried to sweat out a verse or two myself, but I couldn’t seem to make it go somehow. They kept Emmeline’s room trim and nice, and all the things fixed in it just the way she liked to have them when she was alive, and nobody ever slept there. The old lady took care of the room herself, though there was plenty of niggers, and she sewed there a good deal and read her Bible there mostly.

Well, as I was saying about the parlor, there was beautiful curtains on the windows: white, with pictures painted on them of castles with vines all down the walls, and cattle coming down to drink. There was a little old piano, too, that had tin pans in it, I reckon, and nothing was ever so lovely as to hear the young ladies sing “The Last Link is Broken” and play “The Battle of Prague” on it. The walls of all the rooms was plastered, and most had carpets on the floors, and the whole house was whitewashed on the outside.

It was a double house, and the big open place betwixt them was roofed and floored, and sometimes the table was set there in the middle of the day, and it was a cool, comfortable place. Nothing couldn’t be better. And warn’t the cooking good, and just bushels of it too!

CHAPTER XVIII

Col. Grangerford was a gentleman, you see. He was a gentleman all over; and so was his family. He was well born, as the saying is, and that’s worth as much in a man as it is in a horse, so the Widow Douglas said, and nobody ever denied that she was of the first aristocracy in our town; and pap he always said it, too, though he warn’t no more quality than a mudcat himself. Col. Grangerford was very tall and very slim, and had a darkish-paly complexion,
not a sign of red in it anywheres; he was clean-shaved every morning all over his thin face, and he had the thinnest kind of lips, and the thinnest kind of nostrils, and a high nose, and heavy eyebrows, and the blackest kind of eyes, sunk so deep back that they seemed like they was looking out of caverns at you, as you may say. His forehead was high, and his hair was gray and straight and hung to his shoulders. His hands was long and thin, and every day of his life he put on a clean shirt and a full suit from head to foot made out of linen so white it hurt your eyes to look at it; and on Sundays he wore a blue tail-coat with brass buttons on it. He carried a mahogany cane with a silver head to it. There warn’t no frivolishness about him, not a bit, and he warn’t ever loud. He was as kind as he could be—you could feel that, you know, and so you had confidence. Sometimes he smiled, and it was good to see; but when he straightened himself up like a liberty-pole, and the lightning begun to flicker out from under his eyebrows, you wanted to climb a tree first, and find out what the matter was afterwards. He didn’t ever have to tell anybody to mind their manners—everybody was always good-mannered where he was. Everybody loved to have him around, too; he was sunshine most always—I mean he made it seem like good weather. When he turned into a cloud-bank it was awful dark for half a minute, and that was enough; there wouldn’t nothing go wrong again for a week.

When him and the old lady come down in the morning all the family got up out of their chairs and give them good day, and didn’t set down again till they had set down. Then Tom and Bob went to the sideboard where the decanter was, and mixed a glass of bitters and handed it to him, and he held it in his hand and waited till Tom’s and Bob’s was mixed, and then they bowed and said, “Our duty to you, sir, and madam”; and they bowed the least bit in the world and said thank you, and so they drank, all three, and Bob and Tom poured a spoonful of water on the sugar and the mite of whisky or apple-brandy in the bottom of their tumblers, and give it to me and Buck, and we drank to the old people too.

Bob was the oldest and Tom next—tall, beautiful men with very broad shoulders and brown faces, and long black hair and black eyes. They dressed in white linen from head to foot, like the old gentleman, and wore broad Panama hats.

Then there was Miss Charlotte; she was twenty-five, and tall and proud and grand, but as good as she could be when she warn’t stirred up; but when she was she had a look that would make you wilt in your tracks, like her father. She was beautiful.

So was her sister, Miss Sophia, but it was a different kind. She was gentle and sweet like a dove, and she was only twenty.

Each person had their own nigger to wait on them—Buck too. My nigger had a monstrous easy time, because I warn’t used to having anybody do anything for me, but Buck’s was on the jump most of the time.

This was all there was of the family now, but there used to be more—three sons; they got killed; and Emmeline that died.

The old gentleman owned a lot of farms and over a hundred niggers. Sometimes a stack of people would come there, horseback, from ten or fifteen mile around, and stay five or six days, and have such junketings round about and on the river, and dances and picnics in the woods daytimes, and balls at the house nights. These people was mostly kinfolks of the family. The men brought their guns with them. It was a handsome lot of quality, I tell you.

There was another clan of aristocracy around there—five or six families—mostly of the name of Shepherdson. They was as high-toned and well born and rich and grand as the tribe of Grangerfords. The Shepherdsons and Grangerfords used the same steamboat-landing, which was about two mile above our house; so sometimes when I went up there with a lot of our folks I used to see a lot of the Shepherdsons there on their fine horses.

One day Buck and me was away out in the woods hunting, and heard a horse coming. We was crossing the road. Buck says:

“Quick! Jump for the woods!”

We done it, and then peeped down the woods through the leaves. Pretty soon a splendid young man came galloping down the road, setting his horse easy and looking like a soldier. He had his gun across his pommel. I had seen him before. It was young Harney Shepherdson. I heard Buck’s gun go off at my ear, and Harney’s hat tumbled off from his head. He grabbed his gun and rode straight to the place where we was hid. But we didn’t wait. We started through the woods on a run. The woods warn’t thick, so I looked over my shoulder to dodge the bullet, and twice I seen Harney cover Buck with his gun; and then he rode away the way he come—to get his hat, I reckon, but I couldn’t see. We never stopped running till we got home. The old gentleman’s eyes blazed a minute—‘twas pleasure, mainly, I judged—then his face sort of smoothed down, and he says, kind of gentle:
“I don’t like that shooting from behind a bush. Why didn’t you step into the road, my boy?"

“The Shepherdsons don’t, father. They always take advantage."

Miss Charlotte she held her head up like a queen while Buck was telling his tale, and her nostrils spread and her eyes snapped. The two young men looked dark, but never said nothing. Miss Sophia she turned pale, but the color come back when she found the man warn’t hurt.

Soon as I could get Buck down by the corn-cribs under the trees by ourselves, I says:

“Did you want to kill him, Buck?”

“Well, I bet I did.”

“What did he do to you?”

“Him? He never done nothing to me.”

“Well, then, what did you want to kill him for?”

“Why, nothing—only it’s on account of the feud.”

“What’s a feud?”

“Why, where was you raised? Don’t you know what a feud is?”

“Never heard of it before—tell me about it.”

“Well,” says Buck, “a feud is this way: A man has a quarrel with another man, and kills him; then that other man’s brother kills him; then the other brothers, on both sides, goes for one another; then the cousins chip in—and by and by everybody’s killed off, and there ain’t no more feud. But it’s kind of slow, and takes a long time.”

“Has this one been going on long, Buck?”

“Well, I should reckon! It started thirty year ago, or som’ers along there. There was trouble ‘bout something, and then a lawsuit to settle it; and the suit went agin one of the men, and so he up and shot the man that won the suit—which he would naturally do, of course. Anybody would.”

“What was the trouble about. Buck?—land?”

“I reckon maybe—I don’t know.”

“Well, who done the shooting? Was it a Grangerford Shepherdson?”

“Laws, how do I know? It was so long ago.”

“Don’t anybody know?”

“Oh, yes, pa knows, I reckon, and some of the other old people; but they don’t know now what the row was about in the first place.”

“Has there been many killed, Buck?”

“Yes; right smart chance of funerals. But they don’t always kill. Pa’s got a few buckshot in him; but he don’t mind it ‘cuz he don’t weigh much, anyway. Bob’s been carved up some with a bowie, and Tom’s been hurt once or twice.”

“Has anybody been killed this year, Buck?”

“Yes; we got one and they got one. ‘Bout three months ago my cousin Bud, fourteen year old, was riding through the woods on t’other side of the river, and didn’t have no weapon with him, which was blame’ foolishness, and in a lonesome place he hears a horse a-coming behind him, and sees old Baldy Shepherdson a-linkin’ after him with his gun in his hand and his white hair a-flying in the wind; and ‘stead of jumping off and taking to the brush, Bud lowed he could outrun him; so they had it, nip and tuck, for five mile or more, the old man a-gaining all the time;
so at last Bud seen it warn’t any use, so he stopped and faced around so as to have the bullet-holes in front, you know, and the old man he rode up and shot him down. But he didn’t git much chance to enjoy his luck, for inside of a week our folks laid him out.”

“I reckon that old man was a coward, Buck.”

“I reckon he warn’t a coward. Not by a blame’ sight. There ain’t a coward amongst them Shepherdsons—not a one. And there ain’t no cowards amongst the Grangerfords either. Why, that old man kep’ up his end in a fight one day for half an hour against three Grangerfords, and come out winner. They was all a-horseback; he lit off of his horse and got behind a little woodpile, and kep’ his horse before him to stop the bullets; but the Grangerfords stayed on their horses and capered around the old man, and peppered away at him, and he peppered away at them. Him and his horse both went home pretty leaky and crippled, but the Grangerfords had to be fetched home—and one of ’em was dead, and another died the next day. No, sir; if a body’s out hunting for cowards he don’t want to fool away any time amongst them Shepherdsons, becuz they don’t breed any of that kind.”

Next Sunday we all went to church, about three mile, everybody a-horseback. The men took their guns along, so did Buck, and kept them between their knees or stood them handy against the wall. The Shepherdsons done the same. It was pretty ornery preaching—all about brotherly love, and such-like tiresomeness; but everybody said it was a good sermon, and they all talked it over going home, and had such a powerful lot to say about faith and good works and free grace and preforeordination, and I don’t know what all, that it did seem to me to be one of the roughest Sundays I had run across yet.

About an hour after dinner everybody was dozing around, some in their chairs and some in their rooms, and it got to be pretty dull. Buck and a dog was stretched out on the grass in the sun sound asleep. I went up to our room, and judged I would take a nap myself. I found that sweet Miss Sophia standing in her door, which was next to ours, and she took me in her room and shut the door very soft, and asked me if I liked her, and I said I did; and she asked me if I would do something for her and not tell anybody, and I said I would. Then she said she’d forgot her Testament, and left it in the seat at church between two other books, and would I slip out quiet and go there and fetch it to her, and not say nothing to nobody. I said I would. So I slid out and slipped off up the road, and there warn’t anybody at the church, except maybe a hog or two, for there warn’t any lock on the door, and hogs likes a puncheon floor in summer-time because it’s cool. If you notice, most folks don’t go to church only when they’ve got to; but a hog is different.

Says I to myself, something’s up; it ain’t natural for a girl to be in such a sweat about a Testament. So I give it a shake, and out drops a little piece of paper with “Half past two” wrote on it with a pencil. I ransacked it, but couldn’t find anything else. I couldn’t make anything out of that, so I put the paper in the book again, and when I got home and upstairs there was Miss Sophia in her door waiting for me. She pulled me in and shut the door; then she looked in the Testament till she found the paper, and as soon as she read it she looked glad; and before a body could think she grabbed me and give me a squeeze, and said I was the best boy in the world, and not to tell anybody. She was mighty red in the face for a minute, and her eyes lighted up, and it made her powerful pretty. I was a good deal astonished, but when I got my breath I asked her what the paper was about, and she asked me if I had read it, and I said no, and she asked me if I could read writing, and I told her “no, only coarse-hand,” and then she said the paper warn’t anything but a book-mark to keep her place, and I might go and play now. I went off down to the river, studying over this thing, and pretty soon I noticed that my nigger was following along behind. When we was out of sight of the house he looked back and around a second, and then comes a-running, and says:

“Mars Jawge, if you’ll come down into de swamp I’ll show you a whole stack o’ water-moccasins.”

Thinks I, that’s mighty curious; he said that yesterday. He oughter know a body don’t love water-moccasins enough to go around hunting for them. What is he up to, anyway? So I says:

“All right; trot ahead.”

I followed a half a mile; then he struck out over the swamp, and waded ankle-deep as much as another half-mile. We come to a little flat piece of land which was dry and very thick with trees and bushes and vines, and he says:

“You shove right in dah jist a few steps, Mars Jawge; dah’s whah dey is. I’s seed ‘m befo’; I don’t k’yer to see ‘em no mo’,”

Then he slopped right along and went away, and pretty soon the trees hid him. I poked into the place a-ways and come to a little open patch as big as a bedroom all hung around with vines, and found a man laying there
asleep—and, by jings, it was my old Jim!

I waked him up, and I reckoned it was going to be a grand surprise to him to see me again, but it warn’t. He nearly cried he was so glad, but he warn’t surprised. Said he swum along behind me that night, and heard me yell every time, but dasn’t answer, because he didn’t want nobody to pick him up and take him into slavery again. Says he:

“I got hurt a little, en couldn’t swim fas’, so I wuz a considerable ways behine you towards de las’; when you landed I reck’ned I could ketch wid you on de lan’ ‘bout havin’ to shout at you, but when I see dat house I begin to go slow. I uz off too fur to hear what dey say to you—I wuz ‘fraid o’ de dogs; but when it uz all quiet ag’in I knowed you’s in de house, so I struck out for de woods to wait for day. Early in de mawnin’ some er de niggers come along, gwyne to de fields, en dey tuk me en showed me dis place, whah de dogs can’t track me on accounts o’ de water, en dey brings me truck to eat every night, en tells me how you’s a-gittin’ along.”

“Well, ‘twarn’t no use to ‘sturb you, Huck, tell we could do sumfn—but we’s all right now. I ben a-buyin’ pots en pans en vittles, as I got a chanst, en a-patchin’ up de raf’ nights when—”

“What raft, Jim?”

“Our ole raf’.”

“You mean to say our old raft warn’t smashed all to flinders?”

“No, she warn’t. She was tore up a good deal—one en’ of her was; but dey warn’t no great harm done, on’y our traps was mos’ all los’. Ef we hadn’ dive’ so deep en swum so fur under water, en de night hadn’t ben so dark, en we warn’t so sk’yerd, en ben sich punkin-heads, as de sayin’ is, we’d a seed de raf’. But it’s jis’ as well we didn’t, ‘kase now she’s all fixed up ag’in mos’ as good as new, en we’s got a new lot o’ stuff, in de place o’ what ‘uz los’.”

“Why, how did you get hold of the raft again, Jim—did you catch her?”

“How I gwyne to ketch her en I out in de woods? No; some er de niggers foun’ her ketchted on a snag along heah in de ben’, en dey hid her in a crick ‘mongst de willows, en dey wuz so much jawin’ ‘bout which un uv ‘um she b’long to de mos’ dat I come to heah ‘bout it pooty soon, so I ups en settles de trouble by tellin’ ‘um she don’t b’long to none uv ‘um, but to you en me; en I ast ‘m if dey gwyne to grab a young white genlman’s propaty, en git a hid’n for it? Den I gin ‘m ten cents apiece, en dey ’uz mighty well satisfied, en wisht some mo’ raf’s ’ud come along en make ’m rich ag’in. Dey’s mighty good to me, dese niggers is, en whatever I wants ‘m to do fur me I doan’ have to ast ‘m twice, honey. Dat Jack’s a good nigger, en pooty smart.”

“Yes, he is. He ain’t ever told me you was here; told me to come, and he’d show me a lot of water-moccasins. If anything happens he ain’t mixed up in it. He can say he never seen us together, and it ‘ll be the truth.”

I don’t want to talk much about the next day. I reckon I’ll cut it pretty short. I waked up about dawn, and was a-going to turn over and go to sleep again when I noticed how still it was—didn’t seem to be anybody stirring. That warn’t usual. Next I noticed that Buck was up and gone. Well, I gets up, a-wondering, and goes downstairs—nobody around; everything as still as a mouse. Just the same outside. Thinks I, what does it mean? Down by the woodpile I comes across my Jack, and says:

“What’s it all about?”

Says he:

“Don’t you know, Mars Jawge?”

“No,” says I, “I don’t.”

“Well, den, Miss Sophia’s run off! ‘Deed she has. She run off in de night some time—nobody don’t know jis’ when; run off to get married to dat young Harney Shepherdson, you know—leastways, so dey ‘spec. De fambly foun’ it out ‘bout half an hour ago—maybe a little mo’—en’ I tell you dey warn’t no time los’. Sich another hurryin’ up guns en hosses you never see! De women folks has gone for to stir up de relations, en ole Mars Saul en de boys tuck dey guns en rode up de river road for to try to ketch dat young man en kill him ‘fo’ he kin git acrost de river wid Miss Sophia. I reck’n dey’s gwyne to be mighty rough times.”
“Buck went off ‘thout waking me up."

“Well, I reck’n he did! Dey warn’t gwyne to mix you up in it. Mars Buck he loaded up his gun en ‘lowed he’s gwyne to fetch home a Shepherdson or bust. Well, dey’ll be plenty un ’m dah, I reck’n, en you bet you he’ll fetch one ef he gits a chanst.”

I took up the river road as hard as I could put. By and by I begin to hear guns a good ways off. When I came in sight of the log store and the woodpile where the steamboats lands I worked along under the trees and brush till I got to a good place, and then I clumb up into the forks of a cottonwood that was out of reach, and watched. There was a wood-rank four foot high a little ways in front of the tree, and first I was going to hide behind that; but maybe it was luckier I didn’t.

There was four or five men cavorting around on their horses in the open place before the log store, cussing and yelling, and trying to get at a couple of young chaps that was behind the wood-rank alongside of the steamboat-landing; but they couldn’t come it. Every time one of them showed himself on the river side of the woodpile he got shot at. The two boys was squatting back to back behind the pile, so they could watch both ways.

By and by the men stopped cavorting around and yelling. They started riding towards the store; then up gets one of the boys, draws a steady bead over the wood-rank, and drops one of them out of his saddle. All the men jumped off of their horses and grabbed the hurt one and started to carry him to the store; and that minute the two boys started on the run. They got half-way to the tree I was in before the men noticed. Then the men see them, and jumped on their horses and took out after them. They gained on the boys, but it didn’t do no good, the boys had too good a start; they got to the woodpile that was in front of my tree, and slipped in behind it, and so they had the bulge on the men again. One of the boys was Buck, and the other was a slim young chap about nineteen years old.

The men ripped around awhile, and then rode away. As soon as they was out of sight I sung out to Buck and told him. He didn’t know what to make of my voice coming out of the tree at first. He was awful surprised. He told me to watch out sharp and let him know when the men come in sight again; said they was up to some devilment or other—wouldn’t be gone long. I wished I was out of that tree, but I dasn’t come down. Buck begun to cry and rip, and ‘lowed that him and his cousin Joe (that was the other young chap) would make up for this day yet. He said his father and his two brothers was killed, and two or three of the enemy. Said the Shepherdsons laid for them in ambush. Buck said his father and brothers ought to waited for their relations—the Shepherdsons was too strong for them. I asked him what was become of young Harney and Miss Sophia. He said they’d got across the river and was safe. I was glad of that; but the way Buck did take on because he didn’t manage to kill Harney that day he shot at him—I hain’t ever heard anything like it.

All of a sudden, bang! bang! bang! goes three or four guns—the men had slipped around through the woods and come in from behind without their horses! The boys jumped for the river—both of them hurt—and as they swum down the current the men run along the bank shooting at them and singing out, “Kill them, kill them!” It made me so sick I most fell out of the tree. I ain’t a-going to tell all that happened—it would make me sick again if I was to do that. I wished I hadn’t ever come ashore that night to see such things. I ain’t ever going to get shut of them—lots of times I dream about them.

I stayed in the tree till it begun to get dark, afraid to come down. Sometimes I heard guns away off in the woods; and twice I seen little gangs of men gallop past the log store with guns; so I reckoned the trouble was still a-going on. I was mighty downhearted; so I made up my mind I wouldn’t ever go anear that house again, because I reckoned I was to blame, somehow. I judged that that piece of paper meant that Miss Sophia was to meet Harney somewheres at half past two and run off; and I judged I ought to told her father about that paper and the curious way she acted, and then maybe he would ‘a’ locked her up, and this awful mess wouldn’t ever happened.

When I got down out of the tree I crept along down the river-bank a piece, and found the two bodies laying in the edge of the water, and tugged at them till I got them ashore; then I covered up their faces, and got away as quick as I could. I cried a little when I was covering up Buck’s face, for he was mighty good to me.

It was just dark now. I never went near the house, but struck through the woods and made for the swamp. Jim warn’t on his island, so I tramped off in a hurry for the crick, and crowded through the willows, red-hot to jump aboard and get out of that awful country. The raft was gone! My souls, but I was scared! I couldn’t get my breath for most a minute. Then I raised a yell. A voice not twenty-five foot from me says:

“Good lan’! is dat you, honey? Doan’ make no noise.”

It was Jim’s voice—nothing ever sounded so good before. I run along the bank a piece and got aboard, and Jim he grabbed me and hugged me, he was so glad to see me. He says:
“Laws bless you, chile, I ‘uz right down sho’ you’s dead ag’in. Jack’s been heah; he say he reck’n you’s ben shot, kase you didn’ come home no mo’; so I’s jes’ dis minute a-startin’ startin’ de raf’ down towards de mouf er de crick, so’s to be all ready for to shove out en leave soon as Jack comes ag’in en tells me for certain you is dead. Lawsy, I’s mighty glad to git you back ag’in, honey.”

I says:

“All right—that’s mighty good; they won’t find me, and they’ll think I’ve been killed, and floated down the river—there’s something up there that ‘ll help them think so—so don’t you lose no time, Jim, but just shove off for the big water as fast as ever you can.”

I never felt easy till the raft was two mile below there and out in the middle of the Mississippi. Then we hung up our signal lantern, and judged that we was free and safe once more. I hadn’t had a bite to eat since yesterday, so Jim he got out some corn-dodgers and buttermilk, and pork and cabbage and greens—there ain’t nothing in the world so good when it’s cooked right—and whilst I eat my supper we talked and had a good time. I was powerful glad to get away from the feuds, and so was Jim to get away from the swamp. We said there warn’t no home like a raft, after all. Other places do seem so cramped up and smothery, but a raft don’t. You feel mighty free and easy and comfortable on a raft.

CHAPTER XIX

Two or three days and nights went by; I reckon I might say they swum by, they slid along so quiet and smooth and lovely. Here is the way we put in the time. It was a monstrous big river down there—sometimes a mile and a half wide; we run nights, and laid up and hid daytimes; soon as night was most gone we stopped navigating and tied up—nearly always in the dead water under a towhead; and then cut young cottonwoods and willows, and hid the raft with them. Then we set out the lines. Next we slid into the river and had a swim, so as to freshen up and cool off; then we set down on the sandy bottom where the water was about knee-deep, and watched the daylight come. Not a sound anywheres—perfectly still—just like the whole world was asleep, only sometimes the bullfrogs a-cluttering, maybe. The first thing to see, looking away over the water, was a kind of dull line—that was the woods on t’other side; you couldn’t make nothing else out; then a pale place in the sky; then more paleness spreading around; then the river softened up away off, and warn’t black any more, but gray; you could see little dark spots drifting along ever so far away—trading-scows, and such things; and long black streaks—rafts; sometimes you could hear a sweep screeking; or jumbled-up voices, it was so still, and sounds come so far; and by and by you could see a streak on the water which you know by the look of the streak that there’s a snag there in a swift current which breaks on it and makes that streak look that way; and you see the mist curl up off of the water, and the east reddens up, and the river, and you make out a log cabin in the edge of the woods, away on the bank on t’other side of the river, being a wood-yard, likely, and piled by them cheats so you can throw a dog through it anywheres; then the nice breeze springs up, and comes fanning you from over there, so cool and fresh and sweet to smell on account of the woods and the flowers; but sometimes not that way, because they’ve left dead fish laying around, gars and such, and they do get pretty rank; and next you’ve got the full day, and everything smiling in the sun, and the song-birds just going it!

A little smoke couldn’t be noticed now, so we would take some fish off of the lines and cook up a hot breakfast. And afterwards we would watch the lonesomeness of the river, and kind of lazy along, and by and by lazy off to sleep. Wake up by and by, and look to see what done it, and maybe see a steamboat coughing along up-stream, so far off towards the other side you couldn’t tell nothing about her only whether she was a stern-wheel or side-wheel; then for about an hour there wouldn’t be nothing to hear nor nothing to see—just solid lonesomeness. Next you’d see a raft sliding by, away off yonder, and maybe a galoot on it chopping, because they’re most always doing it on a raft; you’d see the ax flash and come down—you don’t hear nothing; you see that ax go up again, and by the time it’s above the man’s head then you hear the k’chunk!—it had took all that time to come over the water. So we would put in the day, lazying around, listening to the stillness. Once there was a thick fog, and the rafts and things that went by was beating tin pans so the steamboats wouldn’t run over them. A scow or a raft went by so close we could hear them talking and cussing and laughing—heard them plain; but we couldn’t see no sign of them; it made you feel crawly; it was like spirits carrying on that way in the air. Jim said he believed it was spirits; but I says:

“No; spirits wouldn’t say, ‘Dern the dern fog.’"

Soon as it was night out we shoved; when we got her out to about the middle we let her alone, and let her float wherever the current wanted her to; then we lit the pipes, and dangled our legs in the water, and talked about all kinds of things—we was always naked, day and night, whenever the mosquitoes would let us—the new clothes
Buck’s folks made for me was too good to be comfortable, and besides I didn’t go much on clothes, nohow.

Sometimes we’d have that whole river all to ourselves for the longest time. Yonder was the banks and the islands, across the water; and maybe a spark—which was a candle in a cabin window; and sometimes on the water you could see a spark or two—on a raft or a scow, you know; and maybe you could hear a fiddle or a song coming over from one of them crafts. It’s lovely to live on a raft. We had the sky up there, all speckled with stars, and we used to lay on our backs and look up at them, and discuss about whether they was made or only just happened. Jim he allowed they was made, but I allowed they happened; I judged it would have took too long to make so many. Jim said the moon could ‘a’ laid them; well, that looked kind of reasonable, so I didn’t say nothing against it, because I’ve seen a frog lay most as many, so of course it could be done. We used to watch the stars that fell, too, and see them streak down. Jim allowed they’d got spoiled and was hove out of the nest.

Once or twice of a night we would see a steamboat slipping along in the dark, and now and then she would belch a whole world of sparks up out of her chimbleys, and they would rain down in the river and look awful pretty; then she would turn a corner and her lights would wink out and leave the river still again; and by and by her waves would get to us, a long time after she was gone, and joggle the raft a bit, and after that you wouldn’t hear nothing for you couldn’t tell how long, except maybe frogs or something.

After midnight the people on shore went to bed, and then for two or three hours the shores was black—no more sparks in the cabin windows. These sparks was our clock—the first one that showed again meant morning was coming, so we hunted a place to hide and tie up right away.

One morning about daybreak I found a canoe and crossed over a chute to the main shore—it was only two hundred yards—and paddled about a mile up a crick amongst the cypress woods, to see if I couldn’t get some berries. Just as I was passing a place where a kind of a cowpath crossed the crick, here comes a couple of men tearing up the path as tight as they could foot it. I thought I was a goner, for whenever anybody was after anybody I judged it was me—or maybe Jim. I was about to dig out from there in a hurry, but they was pretty close to me then, and sung out and begged me to save their lives—said they hadn’t been doing nothing, and was being chased for it—said there was men and dogs a-coming. They wanted to jump right in, but I says:

“Don’t you do it. I don’t hear the dogs and horses yet; you’ve got time to crowd through the brush and get up the crick a little ways; then you take to the water and wade down to me and get in—that ’ll throw the dogs off the scent.”

They done it, and soon as they was aboard I lit out for our towhead, and in about five or ten minutes we heard the dogs and the men away off, shouting. We heard them come along towards the crick, but couldn’t see them; they seemed to stop and fool around awhile; then, as we got further and further away all the time, we couldn’t hardly hear them at all; by the time we had left a mile of woods behind us and struck the river, everything was quiet, and we paddled over to the towhead and hid in the cottonwoods and was safe.

One of these fellows was about seventy or upwards, and had a bald head and very gray whiskers. He had an old battered-up slouch hat on, and a greasy blue woolen shirt, and ragged old blue jeans britches stuffed into his boot-tops, and home-knit galluses—no, he only had one. He had an old long-tailed blue jeans coat with slick brass buttons flung over his arm, and both of them had big, fat, ratty-looking carpet-bags.

The other fellow was about thirty, and dressed about as ornery. After breakfast we all laid off and talked, and the first thing that come out was that these chaps didn’t know one another.

“What got you into trouble?” says the baldhead to t’other chap.

“Well, I’d been selling an article to take the tartar off the teeth—and it does take it off, too, and generly the enamel along with it—but I stayed about one night longer than I ought to, and was just in the act of sliding out when I ran across you on the trail this side of town, and you told me they were coming, and begged me to help you to get off. So I told you I was expecting trouble myself, and would scatter out with you. That’s the whole yarn—what’s yourn?”

“Well, I’d ben a-runnin’ a little temperance revival thar ‘bout a week, and was the pet of the women folks, big and little, for I was makin’ it mighty warm for the rummies, I tell you, and takin’ as much as five or six dollars a night—ten cents a head, children and niggers free—and business a-growin’ all the time, when somehow or another a little report got around last night that I had a way of puttin’ in my time with a private jug on the sly. A nigger rousted me out this mornin’, and told me the people was getherin’ on the quiet with their dogs and horses, and they’d be along pretty soon and give me ‘bout half an hour’s start, and then run me down if they could; and if they got me they’d tar and feather me and ride me on a rail, sure. I didn’t wait for no breakfast—I warn’t hungry.”
“Old man,” said the young one, “I reckon we might double-team it together; what do you think?”

“I ain’t undisposed. What’s your line—mainly?”

“Jour printer by trade; do a little in patent medicines; theater-actor—tragedy, you know; take a turn to mesmerism and phrenology when there’s a chance; teach singing-geography school for a change; sling a lecture sometimes—oh, I do lots of things—most anything that comes handy, so it ain’t work. What’s your lay?”

“I’ve done considerable in the doctoring way in my time. Layin’ on o’ hands is my best holt—for cancer and paralysis, and sich things; and I k’n tell a fortune pretty good when I’ve got somebody along to find out the facts for me. Preachin’ is my line, too, and workin’ camp-meetin’s, and missionaryin’ around.”

Nobody never said anything for a while; then the young man hove a sigh and says:

“Alas!”

“What ‘re you alassin’ about?” says the baldhead.

“To think I should have lived to be leading such a life, and be degraded down into such company.” And he begun to wipe the corner of his eye with a rag.

“Dern your skin, ain’t the company good enough for you?” says the baldhead, pretty pert and uppish.

“Yes, it is good enough for me; it’s as good as I deserve; for who fetched me so low when I was so high? I did myself. I don’t blame you, gentlemen—far from it; I don’t blame anybody. I deserve it all. Let the cold world do its worst; one thing I know—there’s a grave somewhere for me. The world may go on just as it’s always done, and take everything from me—loved ones, property, everything; but it can’t take that. Some day I’ll lie down in it and forget it all, and my poor broken heart will be at rest.” He went on a-wiping.

“Drot your pore broken heart,” says the baldhead; “what are you heaving your pore broken heart at us f’r? We hain’t done nothing.”

“No, I know you haven’t. I ain’t blaming you, gentlemen. I brought myself down—yes, I did it myself. It’s right I should suffer—perfectly right—I don’t make any moan.”

“Brought you down from whar? Whar was you brought down from?”

“Ah, you would not believe me; the world never believes—let it pass—’tis no matter. The secret of my birth—”

“The secret of your birth! Do you mean to say—”

“Gentlemen,” says the young man, very solemn, “I will reveal it to you, for I feel I may have confidence in you. By rights I am a duke!”

Jim’s eyes bugged out when he heard that; and I reckon mine did, too. Then the baldhead says: “No! you can’t mean it?”

“Yes. My great-grandfather, eldest son of the Duke of Bridgewater, fled to this country about the end of the last century, to breathe the pure air of freedom; married here, and died, leaving a son, his own father dying about the same time. The second son of the late duke seized the titles and estates—the infant real duke was ignored. I am the lineal descendant of that infant—I am the rightful Duke of Bridgewater; and here am I, forlorn, torn from my high estate, hunted of men, despised by the cold world, ragged, worn, heartbroken, and degraded to the companionship of felons on a raft!”

Jim pitied him ever so much, and so did I. We tried to comfort him, but he said it warn’t much use, he couldn’t be much comforted; said if we was a mind to acknowledge him, that would do him more good than most anything else; so we said we would, if he would tell us how. He said he ought to bow when we spoke to him, and say “Your Grace,” or “My Lord,” or “Your Lordship”—and he wouldn’t mind it if we called him plain “Bridgewater,” which, he said, was a title anyway, and not a name; and one of us ought to wait on him at dinner, and do any little thing for him he wanted done.

Well, that was all easy, so we done it. All through dinner Jim stood around and waited on him, and says, “Will yo’ Grace have some o’ dis or some o’ dat?” and so on, and a body could see it was mighty pleasing to him.
But the old man got pretty silent by and by—didn’t have much to say, and didn’t look pretty comfortable over all that petting that was going on around that duke. He seemed to have something on his mind. So, along in the afternoon, he says:

“Looky here, Bilgewater,” he says, “I’m nation sorry for you, but you ain’t the only person that’s had troubles like that.”

“No?”

“No, you ain’t. You ain’t the only person that’s ben snaked down wrongfully out’n a high place.”

“Alas!”

“No, you ain’t the only person that’s had a secret of his birth.” And, by jings, he begins to cry.

“Hold! What do you mean?”

“Bilgewater, kin I trust you?” says the old man, still sort of sobbing.

“To the bitter death!” He took the old man by the hand and squeezed it, and says, “That secret of your being: speak!”

“Bilgewater, I am the late Dauphin!”

You bet you, Jim and me stared this time. Then the duke says:

“You are what?”

“Yes, my friend, it is too true—your eyes is lookin’ at this very moment on the pore disappeared Dauphin, Looy the Seventeen, son of Looy the Sixteen and Marry Antonette.”

“You! At your age! No! You mean you’re the late Charlemagne; you must be six or seven hundred years old, at the very least.”

“Trouble has done it, Bilgewater, trouble has done it; trouble has brung these gray hairs and this premature balditude. Yes, gentlemen, you see before you, in blue jeans and misery, the wanderin’, exiled, trampled-on, and sufferin’ rightful King of France.”

Well, he cried and took on so that me and Jim didn’t know hardly what to do, we was so sorry—and so glad and proud we’d got him with us, too. So we set in, like we done before with the duke, and tried to comfort him. But he said it warn’t no use, nothing but to be dead and done with it all could do him any good; though he said it often made him feel easier and better for a while if people treated him according to his rights, and got down on one knee to speak to him, and always called him “Your Majesty,” and waited on him first at meals, and didn’t set down in his presence till he asked them. So Jim and me set to majestyng him, and doing this and that and t’other for him, and standing up till he told us we might set down. This done him heaps of good, and so he got cheerful and comfortable. But the duke kind of soured on him, and didn’t look a bit satisfied with the way things was going; still, the king acted real friendly towards him, and said the duke’s great-grandfather and all the other Dukes of Bilgewater was a good deal thought of by his father, and was allowed to come to the palace considerable; but the duke stayed huffy a good while, till by and by the king says:

“Like as not we got to be together a blamed long time on this h-yer raft, Bilgewater, and so what’s the use o’ your bein’ sour? It ’ll only make things uncomfortable. It ain’t my fault I warn’t born a duke, it ain’t your fault you warn’t born a king—so what’s the use to worry? Make the best o’ things the way you find ‘em, says I—that’s my motto. This ain’t no bad thing that we’ve struck here—plenty grub and an easy life—come, give us your hand, duke, and le’s all be friends.”

The duke done it, and Jim and me was pretty glad to see it. It took away all the uncomfortableness and we felt mighty good over it, because it would ‘a’ been a miserable business to have any unfriendliness on the raft; for what you want, above all things, on a raft, is for everybody to be satisfied, and feel right and kind towards the others.

It didn’t take me long to make up my mind that these liars warn’t no kings nor dukes at all, but just low-down humbugs and frauds. But I never said nothing, never let on; kept it to myself; it’s the best way; then you don’t have no quarrels, and don’t get into no trouble. If they wanted us to call them kings and dukes, I hadn’t no
objections, 'long as it would keep peace in the family; and it warn't no use to tell Jim, so I didn't tell him. If I never learnt nothing else out of pap, I learnt that the best way to get along with his kind of people is to let them have their own way.

**CHAPTER XX**

They asked us considerable many questions; wanted to know what we covered up the raft that way for, and laid by in the daytime instead of running—was Jim a runaway nigger? Says I:

“Goodness sakes! would a runaway nigger run south?”

No, they allowed he wouldn't. I had to account for things some way, so I says:

“My folks was living in Pike County, in Missouri, where I was born, and they all died off but me and pa and my brother Ike. Pa, he 'lowed he’d break up and go down and live with Uncle Ben, who’s got a little one-horse place on the river forty-four mile below Orleans. Pa was pretty poor, and had some debts; so when he’d squared up there warn’t nothing left but sixteen dollars and our nigger, Jim. That warn’t enough to take us fourteen hundred mile, deck passage nor no other way. Well, when the river rose pa had a streak of luck one day; he ketch this piece of a raft; so we reckoned we’d go down to Orleans on it. Pa’s luck didn’t hold out; a steamboat run over the forrard corner of the raft one night, and we all went overboard and dove under the wheel; Jim and me come up all right, but pa was drunk, and Ike was only four years old, so they never come up no more. Well, for the next day or two we had considerable trouble, because people was always coming out in skiffs and trying to take Jim away from me, saying they believed he was a runaway nigger. We don’t run daytimes no more now; nights they don’t bother us.”

The duke says:

“Leave me alone to cipher out a way so we can run in the daytime if we want to. I’ll think the thing over—I’ll invent a plan that ‘ll fix it. We’ll let it alone for to-day, because of course we don’t want to go by that town yonder in daylight—it mightn’t be healthy.”

Towards night it begun to darken up and look like rain; the heat-lightning was squirting around low down in the sky, and the leaves was beginning to shiver—it was going to be pretty ugly, it was easy to see that. So the duke and the king went to overhauling our wigwam, to see what the beds was like. My bed was a straw tick—better than Jim’s, which was a corn-shuck tick; there’s always cobs around about in a shuck tick, and they poke into you and hurt; and when you roll over the dry shucks sound like you was rolling over in a pile of dead leaves; it makes such a rustling that you wake up. Well, the duke allowed he would take my bed; but the king allowed he wouldn’t. He says:

“I should ‘a’ reckoned the difference in rank would a sejested to you that a corn-shuck bed warn’t just fitten for me to sleep on. Your Grace ‘ll take the shuck bed yourself.”

Jim and me was in a sweat again for a minute, being afraid there was going to be some more trouble amongst them; so we was pretty glad when the duke says:

“Tis my fate to be always ground into the mire under the iron heel of oppression. Misfortune has broken my once haughty spirit; I yield, I submit; ‘tis my fate. I am alone in the world—let me suffer; I can bear it.”

We got away as soon as it was good and dark. The king told us to stand well out towards the middle of the river, and not show a light till we got a long ways below the town. We come in sight of the little bunch of lights by and by—that was the town, you know—and slid by, about a half a mile out, all right. When we was three-quarters of a mile below we hoisted up our signal lantern; and about ten o’clock it come on to rain and blow and thunder and lighten like everything; so the king told us to both stay on watch till the weather got better; then him and the duke crawled into the wigwam and turned in for the night. It was my watch below till twelve, but I wouldn’t ‘a’ turned in anyway if I’d had a bed, because a body don’t see such a storm as that every day in the week, not by a long sight. My souls, how the wind did scream along! And every second or two there’d come a glare that lit up the white-caps for a half a mile around, and you’d see the islands looking dusty through the rain, and the trees thrashing around in the wind; then comes a h-whack!—bump! bump! bumble-umble-um-bum-bum-bum—and the thunder would go rumbling and grumbling away, and quit—and then rip comes another flash and another sock-dolager. The waves most washed me off the raft sometimes, but I hadn’t any clothes on, and didn’t mind. We
didn’t have no trouble about snags; the lightning was glaring and flittering around so constant that we could see
them plenty soon enough to throw her head this way or that and miss them.

I had the middle watch, you know, but I was pretty sleepy by that time, so Jim he said he would stand the first half
of it for me; he was always mighty good that way, Jim was. I crawled into the wigwam, but the king and the duke
had their legs sprawled around so there warn’t no show for me; so I laid outside—I didn’t mind the rain, because it
was warm, and the waves warn’t running so high now. About two they come up again, though, and Jim was going
to call me; but he changed his mind, because he reckoned they warn’t high enough yet to do any harm; but he was
mistaken about that, for pretty soon all of a sudden along comes a regular ripper and washed me overboard. It
most killed Jim a-laughing. He was the easiest nigger to laugh that ever was, anyway.

I took the watch, and Jim he laid down and snored away; and by and by the storm let up for good and all; and the
first cabin-light that showed I rousted him out, and we slid the raft into hiding-quarters for the day.

The king got out an old ratty deck of cards after breakfast, and him and the duke played seven-up awhile, five
cents a game. Then they got tired of it, and allowed they would “lay out a campaign,” as they called it. The duke
went down into his carpet-bag, and fetched up a lot of little printed bills and read them out loud. One bill said,
“The celebrated Dr. Armand de Montalban, of Paris,” would “lecture on the Science of Phrenology” at such and
such a place, on the blank day of blank, at ten cents admission, and “furnish charts of character at twenty-five
cents apiece.” The duke said that was him. In another bill he was the “world-renowned Shakespearian tragedian,
Garrick the Younger, of Drury Lane, London.” In other bills he had a lot of other names and done other wonderful
things, like finding water and gold with a “divining-rod,” “dissipating witch spells,” and so on. By and by he says:

“But the histrionic muse is the darling. Have you ever trod the boards, Royalty?”

“No,” says the king.

“You shall, then, before you’re three days older, Fallen Grandeur,” says the duke. “The first good town we come to
we’ll hire a hall and do the swordfight in ‘Richard III.’ and the balcony scene in ‘Romeo and Juliet.’ How does that
strike you?”

“I’m in, up to the hub, for anything that will pay, Bilgewater; but, you see, I don’t know nothing about play-actin’,
and hain’t ever seen much of it. I was too small when pap used to have ‘em at the palace. Do you reckon you can
learn me?”

“Easy!”

“All right. I’m jist a-freezin’ for something fresh, anyway. Le’s commence right away.”

So the duke he told him all about who Romeo was and who Juliet was, and said he was used to being Romeo, so
the king could be Juliet.

“But if Juliet’s such a young gal, duke, my peeled head and my white whiskers is goin’ to look oncommon odd on
her, maybe.”

“No, don’t you worry; these country jakes won’t ever think of that. Besides, you know, you’ll be in costume, and
that makes all the difference in the world; Juliet’s in a balcony, enjoying the moonlight before she goes to bed, and
she’s got on her nightgown and her ruffled nightcap. Here are the costumes for the parts.”

He got out two or three curtain-calico suits, which he said was meedyevil armor for Richard III. and t’other chap,
and a long white cotton nightshirt and a ruffled nightcap to match. The king was satisfied; so the duke got out his
book and read the parts over in the most splendid spread-eagle way, prancing around and acting at the same time,
to show how it had got to be done; then he give the book to the king and told him to get his part by heart.

There was a little one-horse town about three mile down the bend, and after dinner the duke said he had ciphered
out his idea about how to run in daylight without it being dangersome for Jim; so he allowed he would go down to
the town and fix that thing. The king allowed he would go, too, and see if he couldn’t strike something. We was out
of coffee, so Jim said I better go along with them in the canoe and get some.

When we got there there warn’t nobody stirring; streets empty, and perfectly dead and still, like Sunday. We
found a sick nigger sunning himself in a back yard, and he said everybody that warn’t too young or too sick or too
old was gone to camp-meeting, about two mile back in the woods. The king got the directions, and allowed he’d go
and work that camp-meeting for all it was worth, and I might go, too.
The duke said what he was after was a printing-office. We found it; a little bit of a concern, up over a carpenter-
shop—carpenters and printers all gone to the meeting, and no doors locked. It was a dirty, littered-up place, and 
had ink-marks, and handbills with pictures of horses and runaway niggers on them, all over the walls. The duke 
shed his coat and said he was all right now. So me and the king lit out for the camp-meeting.

We got there in about a half an hour fairly dripping, for it was a most awful hot day. There was as much as a 
thousand people there from twenty mile around. The woods was full of teams and wagons, hitched everywhere, 
feeding out of the wagon-troughs and stomping to keep off the flies. There was sheds made out of poles and roofed 
over with branches, where they had lemonade and gingerbread to sell, and piles of watermelons and green corn 
and such-like truck.

The preaching was going on under the same kinds of sheds, only they was bigger and held crowds of people. The 
benches was made out of outside slabs of logs, with holes bored in the round side to drive sticks into for legs. They 
didn’t have no backs. The preachers had high platforms to stand on at one end of the sheds. The women had on 
sun-bonnets; and some had linsey-woolsey frocks, some gingham ones, and a few of the young ones had on calico. 
Some of the young men was barefooted, and some of the children didn’t have on any clothes but just a tow-linen 
shirt. Some of the old women was knitting, and some of the young folks was courting on the sly.

The first shed we come to the preacher was lining out a hymn. He lined out two lines, everybody sung it, and it 
was kind of grand to hear it, there was so many of them and they done it in such a rousing way; then he lined out 
two more for them to sing—and so on. The people woke up more and more, and sung louder and louder; and 
towards the end some begun to groan, and some begun to shout. Then the preacher begun to preach, and begun 
in earnest, too; and went weaving first to one side of the platform and then the other, and then a-leaning down 
over the front of it, with his arms and his body going all the time, and shouting his words out with all his might; 
and every now and then he would hold up his Bible and spread it open, and kind of pass it around this way and 
that, shouting, “It’s the brazen serpent in the wilderness! Look upon it and live!” And people would shout out, 
“Glory!—A-a-men!” And so he went on, and the people groaning and crying and saying amen:

“Oh, come to the mourners’ bench! come, black with sin! (amen!) come, sick and sore! (amen!) come, lame and 
halt and blind! (amen!) come, pore and needy, sunk in shame! (a-a-men!) come, all that’s worn and soiled and 
suffering!—come with a broken spirit! come with a contrite heart! come in your rags and sin and dirt! the waters 
that cleanse is free, the door of heaven stands open—oh, enter in and be at rest!” (a-a-men! glory, glory 
hallelujah!)

And so on. You couldn’t make out what the preacher said any more, on account of the shouting and crying. Folks 
got up everywheres in the crowd, and worked their way just by main strength to the mourners’ bench, with the 
tears running down their faces; and when all the mourners had got up there to the front benches in a crowd, they 
sung and shouted and flung themselves down on the straw, just crazy and wild.

Well, the first I knowed the king got a-going, and you could hear him over everybody; and next he went a-charging 
up onto the platform, and the preacher he begged him to speak to the people, and he done it. He told them he was 
a pirate—been a pirate for thirty years out in the Indian Ocean—and his crew was thinned out considerable last 
spring in a fight, and he was home now to take out some fresh men, and thanks to goodness he’d been robbed last 
night and put ashore off of a steamboat without a cent, and he was glad of it; it was the blessedest thing that ever 
happened to him, because he was a changed man now, and happy for the first time in his life; and, poor as he was, 
he was going to start right off and work his way back to the Indian Ocean, and put in the rest of his life trying to 
turn the pirates into the true path; for he could do it better than anybody else, being acquainted with all pirate 
crews in that ocean; and though it would take him a long time to get there without money, he would get there 
anyway, and every time he convinced a pirate he would say to him, “Don’t you thank me, don’t you give me no 
credit; it all belongs to them dear people in Pokeville camp-meeting, natural brothers and benefactors of the race, 
and that dear preacher there, the truest friend a pirate ever had!”

And then he busted into tears, and so did everybody. Then somebody sings out, “Take up a collection for him, take 
up a collection!” Well, a half a dozen made a jump to do it, but somebody sings out, “Let him pass the hat around!” 
Then everybody said it, the preacher too.

So the king went all through the crowd with his hat, swabbing his eyes, and blessing the people and praising them 
and thanking them for being so good to the poor pirates away off there; and every little while the prettiest kind of 
girls, with the tears running down their cheeks, would up and ask him would he let them kiss him for to remember 
him by; and he always done it; and some of them he hugged and kissed as many as five or six times—and he was 
invited to stay a week; and everybody wanted him to live in their houses, and said they’d think it was an honor; 
but he said as this was the last day of the camp-meeting he couldn’t do no good, and besides he was in a sweat to 
get to the Indian Ocean right off and go to work on the pirates.
When we got back to the raft and he come to count up he found he had collected eighty-seven dollars and seventy-five cents. And then he had fetched away a three-gallon jug of whisky, too, that he found under a wagon when he was starting home through the woods. The king said, take it all around, it laid over any day he’d ever put in in the missionarying line. He said it warn’t no use talking, heathens don’t amount to shucks alongside of pirates to work a camp-meeting with.

The duke was thinking he’d been doing pretty well till the king come to show up, but after that he didn’t think so much. He had set up and printed off two little jobs for farmers in that printing-office—horse bills—and took the money, four dollars. And he had got in ten dollars’ worth of advertisements for the paper, which he said he would put in for four dollars if they would pay in advance—so they done it. The price of the paper was two dollars a year, but he took in three subscriptions for half a dollar apiece on condition of them paying him in advance; they were going to pay in cordwood and onions as usual, but he said he had just bought the concern and knocked down the price as low as he could afford it, and was going to run it for cash. He set up a little piece of poetry, which he made, himself, out of his own head—three verses—kind of sweet and saddish—the name of it was, “Yes, crush, cold world, this breaking heart”—and he left that all set up and ready to print in the paper, and didn’t charge nothing for it. Well, he took in nine dollars and a half, and said he’d done a pretty square day’s work for it.

Then he showed us another little job he’d printed and hadn’t charged for, because it was for us. It had a picture of a runaway nigger with a bundle on a stick over his shoulder, and “$200 reward” under it. The reading was all about Jim and just described him to a dot. It said he run away from St. Jacques’s plantation, forty mile below New Orleans, last winter, and likely went north, and whoever would catch him and send him back he could have the reward and expenses.

“Well,” says he, “dat’s all right, den. I doan’ mine one er two kings, but dat’s enough. Dis one’s powerful drunk, en de duke ain’ much better.”

I found Jim had been trying to get him to talk French, so he could hear what it was like; but he said he had been in this country so long, and had so much trouble, he’d forgot it.

CHAPTER XXI

It was after sun-up now, but we went right on and didn’t tie up. The king and the duke turned out by and by looking pretty rusty; but after they’d jumped overboard and took a swim it chippered them up a good deal. After breakfast the king he took a seat on the corner of the raft, and pulled off his boots and rolled up his britches, and let his legs dangle in the water, so as to be comfortable, and lit his pipe, and went to getting his “Romeo and Juliet” by heart. When he had got it pretty good him and the duke begun to practise it together. The duke had to learn him over and over again how to say every speech; and he made him sigh, and put his hand on his heart, and after a while he said he done it pretty well; “only,” he says, “you mustn’t bellow out Romeo! that way, like a bull—you must say it soft and sick and languishy, so—R-o-o-meo! that is the idea; for Juliet’s a dear sweet mere child of a girl, you know, and she doesn’t bray like a jackass.”
Well, next they got out a couple of long swords that the duke made out of oak laths, and begun to practise the sword-fight—the duke called himself Richard III.; and the way they laid on and pranced around the raft was grand to see. But by and by the king tripped and fell overboard, and after that they took a rest, and had a talk about all kinds of adventures they’d had in other times along the river.

After dinner the duke says:

“Well, Capet, we’ll want to make this a first-class show, you know, so I guess we’ll add a little more to it. We want a little something to answer encores with, anyway.”

“What’s onkores, Bilgewater?”

The duke told him, and then says:

“I’ll answer by doing the Highland fling or the sailor’s hornpipe; and you—well, let me see—oh, I’ve got it—you can do Hamlet’s soliloquy.”

“Hamlet’s which?”

“Hamlet’s soliloquy, you know; the most celebrated thing in Shakespeare. Ah, it’s sublime, sublime! Always fetches the house. I haven’t got it in the book—I’ve only got one volume—but I reckon I can piece it out from memory. I’ll just walk up and down a minute, and see if I can call it back from recollection’s vaults.”

So he went to marching up and down, thinking, and frowning horrible every now and then; then he would hoist up his eyebrows; next he would squeeze his hand on his forehead and stagger back and kind of moan; next he would sigh, and next he’d let on to drop a tear. It was beautiful to see him. By and by he got it. He told us to give attention. Then he strikes a most noble attitude, with one leg shoved forwards, and his arms stretched away up, and his head tilted back, looking up at the sky; and then he begins to rip and rave and grit his teeth; and after that, all through his speech, he howled, and spread around, and swelled up his chest, and just knocked the spots out of any acting ever I see before. This is the speech—I learned it, easy enough, while he was learning it to the king:

To be, or not to be; that is the bare bodkin
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would fardels bear, till Birnam Wood do come to Dunsinane,
But that the fear of something after death
Murders the innocent sleep,
Great nature’s second course,
And makes us rather sling the arrows of outrageous fortune
Than fly to others that we know not of.
There’s the respect must give us pause:
Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor’s wrong, the proud man’s contumely,
The law’s delay, and the quietus which his pangs might take,
In the dead waste and middle of the night, when churchyards yawn
In customary suits of solemn black,
But that the undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns,
Breathes forth contagion on the world,
And thus the native hue of resolution, like the poor cat i’ the adage,
Is sicklied o’er with care,
And all the clouds that lowered o’er our house tops,
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.
‘Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished. But soft you, the fair Ophelia:
Ope not thy ponderous and marble jaws,
But get thee to a nunnery—go!

Well, the old man he liked that speech, and he mighty soon got it so he could do it first rate. It seemed like he was just born for it; and when he had his hand in and was excited, it was perfectly lovely the way he would rip and tear and rair up behind when he was getting it off.
The first chance we got the duke he had some show-bills printed; and after that, for two or three days as we floated along, the raft was a most uncommon lively place, for there warn’t nothing but sword-fighting and rehearsing—as the duke called it—going on all the time. One morning, when we was pretty well down the state of Arkansaw, we come in sight of a little one-horse town in a big bend; so we tied up about three-quarters of a mile above it, in the mouth of a crick which was shut in like a tunnel by the cypress trees, and all of us but Jim took the canoe and went down there to see if there was any chance in that place for our show.

We struck it mighty lucky; there was going to be a circus there that afternoon, and the country-people was already beginning to come in, in all kinds of old shackly wagons, and on horses. The circus would leave before night, so our show would have a pretty good chance. The duke he hired the court-house, and we went around and stuck up our bills. They read like this:

Shakespearean Revival !!!
Wonderful Attraction!
For One Night Only!
The world renowned tragedians,
David Garrick the younger, of Drury Lane Theatre, London, and
Edmund Kean the elder, of the Royal Haymarket Theatre,
Whitechapel, Pudding Lane, Piccadilly, London, and the Royal Continental Theatres, in their sublime
Shakespearean Spectacle entitled
The Balcony Scene
in
Romeo and Juliet !!!
Romeo ............... Mr. Garrick
Juliet ............... Mr. Kean
Assisted by the whole strength of the company!
New costumes, new scenery, new appointments!
Also:
The thrilling, masterly, and blood-curdling
Broad-sword conflict
In Richard III !!!
Richard III ............. Mr. Garrick
Richmond ............. Mr. Kean
Also:
(by special request)
Hamlet’s Immortal Soliloquy !!!
By the Illustrious Kean!
Done by him 300 consecutive nights in Paris!
For One Night Only,
On account of imperative European engagements!
Admission 25 cents; children and servants, 10 cents.

Then we went loafing around town. The stores and houses was most all old, shackly, dried-up frame concerns that hadn’t ever been painted; they was set up three or four foot above ground on stilts, so as to be out of reach of the water when the river was overflowed. The houses had little gardens around them, but they didn’t seem to raise hardly anything in them but jimpson-weeds, and sunflowers, and ash-piles, and old curled-up boots and shoes, and pieces of bottles, and rags, and played-out tinware. The fences was made of different kinds of boards, nailed on at different times; and they leaned every which way, and had gates that didn’t generly have but one hinge—a leather one. Some of the fences had been whitewashed some time or another, but the duke said it was in Columbus’s time, like enough. There was generly hogs in the garden, and people driving them out.

All the stores was along one street. They had white domestic awnings in front, and the country-people hitched their horses to the awning-posts. There was empty dry-goods boxes under the awnings, and loafers roosting on them all day long, whistling them with their Barlow knives; and chawing tobacco, and gaping and yawning and stretching—a mighty ornery lot. They generly had on yellow straw hats most as wide as an umbrella, but didn’t wear no coats nor waistcoats; they called one another Bill, and Buck, and Hank, and Joe, and Andy, and talked lazy and drawly, and used considerable many cuss-words. There was as many as one loafer leaning up against every awning-post, and he most always had his hands in his britches pockets, except when he fetched them out to lend a chaw of tobacco or scratch. What a body was hearing amongst them all the time was:
“Gimme a chaw ‘v tobacker, Hank.”

“Cain’t; I hain’t got but one chaw left. Ask Bill.”

Maybe Bill he gives him a chaw; maybe he lies and says he ain’t got none. Some of them kinds of loafers never has a cent in the world, nor a chaw of tobacco of their own. They get all their chawing by borrowing; they say to a fellow, “I wisht you’d len’ me a chaw, Jack, I jist this minute give Ben Thompson the last chaw I had”—which is a lie pretty much every time; it don’t fool nobody but a stranger; but Jack ain’t no stranger, so he says:

“You give him a chaw, did you? So did your sister’s cat’s grandmother. You pay me back the chaws you’ve awready borry’d off’n me, Lafe Buckner, then I’ll loan you one or two ton of it, and won’t charge you no back intrust, nuther.”

“Well, I did pay you back some of it wunst.”

“Yes, you did—’bout six chaws. You borry’d store tobacker and paid back nigger-head.”

Store tobacco is flat black plug, but these fellows mostly chaws the natural leaf twisted. When they borrow a chaw they don’t generly cut it off with a knife, but set the plug in between their teeth, and gnaw with their teeth and tug at the plug with their hands till they get it in two; then sometimes the one that owns the tobacco looks mournful at it when it’s handed back, and says, sarcastic:

“Here, gimme the chaw, and you take the plug.”
“GIMME A CHAW”

All the streets and lanes was just mud; they warn’t nothing else but mud—mud as black as tar and nigh about a foot deep in some places, and two or three inches deep in all the places. The hogs loafed and grunted around everywheres. You’d see a muddy sow and a litter of pigs come lazing along the street and whollop herself right down in the way, where folks had to walk around her, and she’d stretch out and shut her eyes and wave her ears whilst the pigs was milking her, and look as happy as if she was on salary. And pretty soon you’d hear a loafer sing out, “Hi! so boy! sick him, Tige!” and away the sow would go, squealing most horrible, with a dog or two swinging to each ear, and three or four dozen more a-coming; and then you would see all the loafers get up and watch the thing out of sight, and laugh at the fun and look grateful for the noise. Then they’d settle back again till there was a dog-fight. There couldn’t anything wake them up all over, and make them happy all over, like a dog-fight—unless
it might be putting turpentine on a stray dog and setting fire to him, or tying a tin pan to his tail and see him run himself to death.

On the river-front some of the houses was sticking out over the bank, and they was bowed and bent, and about ready to tumble in. The people had moved out of them. The bank was caved away under one corner of some others, and that corner was hanging over. People lived in them yet, but it was dangersome, because sometimes a strip of land as wide as a house caves in at a time. Sometimes a belt of land a quarter of a mile deep will start in and cave along and cave along till it all caves into the river in one summer. Such a town as that has to be always moving back, and back, and back, because the river’s always gnawing at it.

The nearer it got to noon that day the thicker and thicker was the wagons and horses in the streets, and more coming all the time. Families fetched their dinners with them from the country, and eat them in the wagons. There was considerable whisky-drinking going on, and I seen three fights. By and by somebody sings out:

“Here comes old Boggs!—in from the country for his little old monthly drunk; here he comes, boys!”

All the loafers looked glad; I reckoned they was used to having fun out of Boggs. One of them says:

“Wonder who he’s a-gwyne to chaw up this time. If he’d a-chawed up all the men he’s ben a-gwyne to chaw up in the last twenty year he’d have considerable reputaion now.”

Another one says, “I wisht old Boggs ‘d threaten me, ‘cuz then I’d know I warn’t gwyne to die for a thousan’ year.”

Boggs comes a-tearing along on his horse, whooping and yelling like an Injun, and singing out:

“Cler the track, thar. I’m on the waw-path, and the price uv coffins is a-gwyne to raise.”

He was drunk, and weaving about in his saddle; he was over fifty year old, and had a very red face. Everybody yelled at him and laughed at him and sassed him, and he sassed back, and said he’d attend to them and lay them out in their regular turns, but he couldn’t wait now because he’d come to town to kill old Colonel Sherburn, and his motto was, “Meat first, and spoon vittles to top off on.”

He see me, and rode up and says:

“What’d you come f’m, boy? You prepared to die?”

Then he rode on. I was scared, but a man says:

“He don’t mean nothing; he’s always a-carryin’ on like that when he’s drunk. He’s the best-naturedest old fool in Arkansaw—never hurt nobody, drunk nor sober.”

Boggs rode up before the biggest store in town, and bent his head down so he could see under the curtain of the awning and yells:

“Come out here, Sherburn! Come out and meet the man you’ve swindled. You’re the houn’ I’m after, and I’m a-gwyne to have you, too!”

And so he went on, calling Sherburn everything he could lay his tongue to, and the whole street packed with people listening and laughing and going on. By and by a proud-looking man about fifty-five—and he was a heap the best-dressed man in that town, too—steps out of the store, and the crowd drops back on each side to let him come. He says to Boggs, mighty ca’m and slow—he says:

“I’m tired of this, but I’ll endure it till one o’clock. Till one o’clock, mind—no longer. If you open your mouth against me only once after that time you can’t travel so far but I will find you.”

Then he turns and goes in. The crowd looked mighty sober; nobody stirred, and there warn’t no more laughing. Boggs rode off blackguarding Sherburn as loud as he could yell, all down the street; and pretty soon back he comes and stops before the store, still keeping it up. Some men crowded around him and tried to get him to shut up, but he wouldn’t; they told him it would be one o’clock in about fifteen minutes, and so he must go home—he must go right away. But it didn’t do no good. He cussed away with all his might, and threwed his hat down in the mud and rode over it, and pretty soon away he went a-raging down the street again, with his gray hair a-flying. Everybody that could get a chance at him tried their best to coax him off of his horse so they could lock him up and get him sober; but it warn’t no use—up the street he would tear again, and give Sherburn another cussing. By and by somebody says:

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“Go for his daughter!—quick, go for his daughter; sometimes he’ll listen to her. If anybody can persuade him, she can.”

So somebody started on a run. I walked down street a ways and stopped. In about five or ten minutes here comes Boggs again, but not on his horse. He was a-reeling across the street towards me, bareheaded, with a friend on both sides of him a-holt of his arms and hurrying him along. He was quiet, and looked uneasy; and he warn’t hanging back any, but was doing some of the hurrying himself. Somebody sings out:

“Boggs!”

I looked over there to see who said it, and it was that Colonel Sherburn. He was standing perfectly still in the street, and had a pistol raised in his right hand—not aiming it, but holding it out with the barrel tilted up towards the sky. The same second I see a young girl coming on the run, and two men with her. Boggs and the men turned round to see who called him, and when they see the pistol the men jumped to one side, and the pistol-barrel come down slow and steady to a level—both barrels cocked. Boggs throws up both of his hands and says, “O Lord, don’t shoot!” Bang! goes the first shot, and he staggers back, clawing at the air—bang! goes the second one, and he tumbles backwards onto the ground, heavy and solid, with his arms spread out. That young girl screamed out and comes rushing, and down she throws herself on her father, crying, and saying, “Oh, he’s killed him, he’s killed him!” The crowd closed up around them, and shouldered and jammed one another, with their necks stretched, trying to see, and people on the inside trying to shove them back and shouting, “Back, back! give him air, give him air!”

Colonel Sherburn he tossed his pistol onto the ground, and turned around on his heels and walked off.

They took Boggs to a little drug store, the crowd pressing around just the same, and the whole town following, and I rushed and got a good place at the window, where I was close to him and could see in. They laid him on the floor and put one large Bible under his head, and opened another one and spread it on his breast; but they tore open his shirt first, and I seen where one of the bullets went in. He made about a dozen long gasps, his breast lifting the Bible up when he drawed in his breath, and letting it down again when he breathed it out—and after that he laid still; he was dead. Then they pulled his daughter away from him, screaming and crying, and took her off. She was about sixteen, and very sweet and gentle looking, but awful pale and scared.

Well, pretty soon the whole town was there, squirming and scrouging and pushing and shoving to get at the window and have a look, but people that had the places wouldn’t give them up, and folks behind them was saying all the time, “Say, now, you’ve looked enough, you fellows; ‘tain’t right and ‘tain’t fair for you to stay thar all the time, and never give nobody a chance; other folks has their rights as well as you.”

There was considerable jawing back, so I slid out, thinking maybe there was going to be trouble. The streets was full, and everybody was excited. Everybody that seen the shooting was telling how it happened, and there was a big crowd packed around each one of these fellows, stretching their necks and listening. One long, lanky man, with long hair and a big white fur stovepipe hat on the back of his head, and a crooked-handled cane, marked out the places on the ground where Boggs stood and where Sherburn stood, and the people following him around from one place to t’other and watching everything he done, and bobbing their heads to show they understood, and stooping a little and resting their hands on their thighs to watch him mark the places on the ground with his cane; and then he stood up straight and stiff where Sherburn had stood, frowning and having his hat-brim down over his eyes, and sung out, “Boggs!” and then fetched his cane down slow to a level, and says “Bang!” staggered backwards, says “Bang!” again, and fell down flat on his back. The people that had seen the thing said he done it perfect; said it was just exactly the way it all happened. Then as much as a dozen people got out their bottles and treated him.

Well, by and by somebody said Sherburn ought to be lynched. In about a minute everybody was saying it; so away they went, mad and yelling, and snatching down every clothes-line they come to to do the hanging with.

CHAPTER XXII

They swarmed up towards Sherburn’s house, a-whooping and raging like Injuns, and everything had to clear the way or get run over and tromped to mush, and it was awful to see. Children was heeling it ahead of the mob, screaming and trying to get out of the way; and every window along the road was full of women’s heads, and there was nigger boys in every tree, and bucks and wenches looking over every fence; and as soon as the mob would get nearly to them they would break and skaddle back out of reach. Lots of the women and girls was crying and taking
on, scared most to death.

They swarmed up in front of Sherburn’s palings as thick as they could jam together, and you couldn’t hear yourself think for the noise. It was a little twenty-foot yard. Some sung out “Tear down the fence! tear down the fence!” Then there was a racket of ripping and tearing and smashing, and down she goes, and the front wall of the crowd begins to roll in like a wave.

Just then Sherburn steps out onto the roof of his little front porch, with a double-barrel gun in his hand, and takes his stand, perfectly ca’m and deliberate, not saying a word. The racket stopped, and the wave sucked back.

Sherburn never said a word—just stood there, looking down. The stillness was awful creepy and uncomfortable. Sherburn run his eye slow along the crowd; and wherever it struck the people tried a little to outgaze him, but they couldn’t; they dropped their eyes and looked sneaky. Then pretty soon Sherburn sort of laughed; not the pleasant kind, but the kind that makes you feel like when you are eating bread that’s got sand in it.

Then he says, slow and scornful:

“The idea of you lynching anybody! It’s amusing. The idea of you thinking you had pluck enough to lynch a man! Because you’re brave enough to tar and feather poor friendless cast-out women that come along here, did that make you think you had grit enough to lay your hands on a man? Why, a man’s safe in the hands of ten thousand of your kind—as long as it’s daytime and you’re not behind him.

“Do I know you? I know you clear through. I was born and raised in the South, and I’ve lived in the North; so I know the average all around. The average man’s a coward. In the North he lets anybody walk over him that wants to, and goes home and prays for a humble spirit to bear it. In the South one man, all by himself, has stopped a stage full of men in the daytime, and robbed the lot. Your newspapers call you a brave people so much that you think you are braver than any other people—whereas you’re just as brave, and no braver. Why don’t your juries hang murderers? Because they’re afraid the man’s friends will shoot them in the back, in the dark—and it’s just what they would do.

“So they always acquit; and then a man goes in the night, with a hundred masked cowards at his back, and lynches the rascal. Your mistake is, that you didn’t bring a man with you; that’s one mistake, and the other is that you didn’t come in the dark and fetch your masks. You brought part of a man—Buck Harkness, there—and if you hadn’t had him to start you, you’d ‘a’ taken it out in blowing.

“You didn’t want to come. The average man don’t like trouble and danger. You don’t like trouble and danger. But if only half a man—like Buck Harkness, there—shouts ‘Lynch him! Lynch him!’ you’re afraid to back down—afraid you’ll be found out to be what you are—cowards—and so you raise a yell, and hang yourselves onto that half-a-man’s coat-tail, and come raging up here, swearing what big things you’re going to do. The pitifullest thing out is a mob; that’s what an army is—a mob; they don’t fight with courage that’s born in them, but with courage that’s borrowed from their mass, and from their officers. But a mob without any man at the head of it is beneath pitifulness. Now the thing for you to do is to droop your tails and go home and crawl in a hole. If any real lynching’s going to be done it will be done in the dark, Southern fashion; and when they come they’ll bring their masks, and fetch a man along. Now leave—and take your half-a-man with you”—tossing his gun up across his left arm and cocking it when he says this.

The crowd washed back sudden, and then broke all apart, and went tearing off every which way, and Buck Harkness he heeled it after them, looking tolerable cheap. I could ‘a’ stayed if I wanted to, but I didn’t want to.

I went to the circus and loafed around the back side till the watchman went by, and then dived in under the tent. I had my twenty-dollar gold piece and some other money, but I reckoned I better save it, because there ain’t no telling how soon you are going to need it, away from home and amongst strangers that way. You can’t be too careful. I ain’t opposed to spending money on circuses when there ain’t no other way, but there ain’t no use in wasting it on them.

It was a real bully circus. It was the splendididest sight that ever was when they all come riding in, two and two, and gentleman and lady, side by side, the men just in their drawers and undershirts, and no shoes nor stirrups, and resting their hands on their thighs easy and comfortable—there must ‘a’ been twenty of them—and every lady with a lovely complexion, and perfectly beautiful, and looking just like a gang of real sure-enough queens, and dressed in clothes that cost millions of dollars, and just littered with diamonds. It was a powerful fine sight; I never see anything so lovely. And then one by one they got up and stood, and went a-weaving around the ring so gentle and wavy and graceful, the men looking ever so tall and airy and straight, with their heads bobbing and skimming along, away up there under the tent-roof, and every lady’s rose-leafy dress flapping soft and silky around her hips,
and she looking like the most loveliest parasol.

And then faster and faster they went, all of them dancing, first one foot out in the air and then the other, the horses leaning more and more, and the ringmaster going round and round the center pole, cracking his whip and shouting “Hi!—hi!” and the clown cracking jokes behind him; and by and by all hands dropped the reins, and every lady put her knuckles on her hips and every gentleman folded his arms, and then how the horses did lean over and hump themselves! And so one after the other they all skipped off into the ring, and made the sweetest bow I ever see, and then scampered out, and everybody clapped their hands and went just about wild. Well, all through the circus they done the most astonishing things; and all the time that clown carried on so it most killed the people.

The ringmaster couldn’t ever say a word to him but he was back at him quick as a wink with the funniest things a body ever said; and how he ever could think of so many of them, and so sudden and so pat, was what I couldn’t no way understand. Why, I couldn’t ‘a’ thought of them in a year. And by and by a drunken man tried to get into the ring—said he wanted to ride; said he could ride as well as anybody that ever was. They argued and tried to keep him out, but he wouldn’t listen, and the whole show come to a standstill. Then the people begun to holler at him and make fun of him, and that made him mad, and he begun to rip and tear; so that stirred up the people, and a lot of men begun to pile down off of the benches and swarm toward the ring, saying, “Knock him down! throw him out!” and one or two women begun to scream. So, then, the ringmaster he made a little speech, and said he hoped there wouldn’t be no disturbance, and if the man would promise he wouldn’t make no more trouble he would let him ride if he thought he could stay on the horse. So everybody laughed and said all right, and the man got on. The minute he was on, the horse begun to rip and tear and jump and cavort around, with two circus men hanging on to his bridle trying to hold him, and the drunk man hanging on to his neck, and his heels flying in the air every jump, and the whole crowd of people standing up shouting and laughing till tears rolled down. And at last, sure enough, all the circus men could do, the horse broke loose, and away he went like the very nation, round and round the ring, with that sot laying down on him and hanging to his neck, with first one leg hanging most to the ground on one side, and then t’other one on t’other side, and the people just crazy. It warn’t funny to me, though; I was all of a tremble to see his danger. But pretty soon he struggled up astraddle and grabbed the bridle, a-reeling this way and that; and the next minute he sprung up and dropped the bridle and stood! and the horse a-going like a house afire, too. He just stood up there, a-sailing around as easy and comfortable as if he warn’t ever drunk in his life—and then he begun to pull off his clothes and sling them. He shed them so thick they kind of clogged up the air, and altogether he shed seventeen suits. And, then, there he was, slim and handsome, and dressed the gaudiest and prettiest you ever saw, and he lit into that horse with his whip and made him fairly hum—and finally skipped off, and made his bow and danced off to the dressing-room, and everybody just a-howling with pleasure and astonishment.

Then the ringmaster he see how he had been fooled, and he was the sickest ringmaster you ever see, I reckon. Why, it was one of his own men! He had got up that joke all out of his own head, and never let on to nobody. Well, I felt sheepish enough to be took in so, but I wouldn’t ‘a’ been in that ringmaster’s place, not for a thousand dollars. I don’t know; there may be bullier circuses than what that one was, but I never struck them yet. Anyways, it was plenty good enough for me; and wherever I run across it, it can have all of my custom every time.

Well, that night we had our show; but there warn’t only about twelve people there—just enough to pay expenses. And they laughed all the time, and that made the duke mad; and everybody left, anyway, before the show was over, but one boy which was asleep. So the duke said these Arkansaw lunkheads couldn’t come up to Shakespeare; what they wanted was low comedy—and maybe something ruther worse than low comedy, he reckoned. He said he could size their style. So next morning he got some big sheets of wrapping-paper and some black paint, and drew off some handbills, and stuck them up all over the village. The bills said:

AT THE COURT HOUSE!
FOR 3 NIGHTS ONLY!
The World-Renowned Tragedians
DAVID GARRICK THE YOUNGER!
AND
EDMUND KEAN THE ELDER!
Of the London and Continental Theatres,
In their Thrilling Tragedy of
THE KING’S CAMELEOPARD,
OR
THE ROYAL NONESUCH! ! !
Admission 50 cents.

Then at the bottom was the biggest line of all, which said:
Well, all day him and the king was hard at it, rigging up a stage and a curtain and a row of candles for footlights; and that night the house was jam full of men in no time. When the place couldn’t hold no more, the duke he quit tending door and went around the back way and come onto the stage and stood up before the curtain and made a little speech, and praised up this tragedy, and said it was the most thrillingest one that ever was; and so he went on a-bragging about the tragedy, and about Edmund Kean the Elder, which was to play the main principal part in it; and at last when he’d got everybody’s expectations up high enough, he rolled up the curtain, and the next minute the king come a-prancing out on all fours, naked; and he was painted all over, ring-streaked-and-striped, all sorts of colors, as splendid as a rainbow. And—but never mind the rest of his outfit; it was just wild, but it was awful funny. The people most killed themselves laughing; and when the king got done capering and capered off behind the scenes, they roared and clapped and stormed and haw-hawed till he come back and done it over again, and after that they made him do it another time. Well, it would make a cow laugh to see the shines that old idiot cut.

Then the duke he lets the curtain down, and bows to the people, and says the great tragedy will be performed only two nights more, on accounts of pressing London engagements, where the seats is all sold already for it in Drury Lane; and then he makes them another bow, and says if he has succeeded in pleasing them and instructing them, he will be deeply obleeged if they will mention it to their friends and get them to come and see it.

Twenty people sings out:

“What, is it over? Is that all?”

The duke says yes. Then there was a fine time. Everybody sings out, “Sold!” and rose up mad, and was a-going for that stage and them tragedians. But a big, fine-looking man jumps up on a bench and shouts:

“Hold on! Just a word, gentlemen.” They stopped to listen. “We are sold—mighty badly sold. But we don’t want to be the laughing-stock of this whole town, I reckon, and never hear the last of this thing as long as we live. No. What we want is to go out of here quiet, and talk this show up, and sell the rest of the town! Then we’ll all be in the same boat. Ain’t that sensible?” (“You bet it is!—the jedge is right!” everybody sings out.) “All right, then—not a word about any sell. Go along home, and advise everybody to come and see the tragedy.”

Next day you couldn’t hear nothing around that town but how splendid that show was. House was jammed again that night, and we sold this crowd the same way. When me and the king and the duke got home to the raft we all had a supper; and by and by, about midnight, they made Jim and me back her out and float her down the middle of the river, and fetch her in and hide her about two mile below town.

The third night the house was crammed again—and they warn’t new-comers this time, but people that was at the show the other two nights. I stood by the duke at the door, and I see that every man that went in had his pockets bulging, or something muffled up under his coat—and I see it warn’t no perfumery, neither, not by a long sight. I smelt sickly eggs by the barrel, and rotten cabbages, and such things; and if I know the signs of a dead cat being around, and I bet I do, there was sixty-four of them went in. I shoved in there for a minute, but it was too various for me; I couldn’t stand it. Well, when the place couldn’t hold no more people the duke he give a fellow a quarter and told him to tend door for him a minute, and then he started around for the stage door, I after him; but the minute we turned the corner and was in the dark he says:

“Walk fast now till you get away from the houses, and then shin for the raft like the dickens was after you!”

I done it, and he done the same. We struck the raft at the same time, and in less than two seconds we was gliding down-stream, all dark and still, and edging towards the middle of the river, nobody saying a word. I reckoned the poor king was in for a gaudy time of it with the audience, but nothing of the sort; pretty soon he crawls out from under the wigwam, and says:

“Well, how’d the old thing pan out this time, duke?” He hadn’t been up-town at all.
We never showed a light till we was about ten mile below the village. Then we lit up and had a supper, and the king and the duke fairly laughed their bones loose over the way they’d served them people. The duke says:

“Greenhorns, flatheads! I knew the first house would keep mum and let the rest of the town get roped in; and I knew they’d lay for us the third night, and consider it was their turn now. Well, it is their turn, and I’d give something to know how much they’d take for it. I would just like to know how they’re putting in their opportunity. They can turn it into a picnic if they want to—they brought plenty provisions.”

Them rapscallions took in four hundred and sixty-five dollars in that three nights. I never see money hauled in by the wagon-load like that before.

By and by, when they was asleep and snoring, Jim says:

“Don’t it s’prise you de way dem kings carries on, Huck?”

“No,” I says, “it don’t.”

“Why don’t it, Huck?”

“Well, it don’t, because it’s in the breed. I reckon they’re all alike.”

“But, Huck, dese kings o’ ourn is reglar rapscallions; dat’s jist what dey is; dey’s reglar rapscallions.”

“Well, that’s what I’m a-saying; all kings is mostly rapscallions, as fur as I can make out.”

“Is dat so?”

“You read about them once—you’ll see. Look at Henry the Eight; this ‘n’ ‘s a Sunday-school Superintendent to him. And look at Charles Second, and Louis Fourteen, and Louis Fifteen, and James Second, and Edward Second, and Richard Third, and forty more; besides all them Saxon heptarchies that used to rip around so in old times and raise Cain. My, you ought to seen old Henry the Eight when he was in bloom. He was a blossom. He used to marry a new wife every day, and chop off her head next morning. And he would do it just as indifferent as if he was ordering up eggs. ‘Fetch up Nell Gwynn,’ he says. They fetch her up. Next morning, ‘Chop off her head!’ And they chop it off. ‘Fetch up Jane Shore,’ he says; and up she comes. Next morning, ‘Chop off her head’—and they chop it off. ‘Ring up Fair Rosamun.’ Fair Rosamun answers the bell. Next morning, ‘Chop off her head.’ And he made every one of them tell him a tale every night; and he kept that up till he had hogged a thousand and one tales that way, and then he put them all in a book, and called it Domesday Book—which was a good name and stated the case. You don’t know kings, Jim, but I know them; and this old rip of ourn is one of the cleanest I’ve struck in history. Well, Henry he takes a notion he wants to get up some trouble with this country. How does he go at it—give notice?—give the country a show? No. All of a sudden he heaves all the tea in Boston Harbor overboard, and whacks out a declaration of independence, and dares them to come on. That was his style—he never give anybody a chance. He had suspicions of his father, the Duke of Wellington. Well, what did he do? Ask him to show up? No—drownded him in a butt of mamsey, like a cat. S’pose people left money laying around where he was—what did he do? He collared it. S’pose he contracted to do a thing, and you paid him, and didn’t set down there and see that he done it—what did he do? He always done the other thing. S’pose he opened his mouth—what then? If he didn’t shut it up powerful quick he’d lose a lie every time. That’s the kind of a bug Henry was; and if we’d ‘a’ had him along ‘stead of our kings he’d ‘a’ fooled that town a heap worse than ourn done. I don’t say that ourn is lambs, because they ain’t, when you come right down to the cold facts; but they ain’t nothing to that old ram, anyway. All I say is, kings is kings, and you got to make allowances. Take them all around, they’re a mighty ornery lot. It’s the way they’re raised.”

“But dis one do smell so like de nation, Huck.”

“Well, they all do, Jim. We can’t help the way a king smells; history don’t tell no way.”

“Now de duke, he’s a tolerble likely man in some ways.”

“Yes, a duke’s different. But not very different. This one’s a middling hard lot for a duke. When he’s drunk there ain’t no near-sighted man could tell him from a king.”

“Well, anyways, I doan’ hanker for no mo’ un um, Huck. Dese is all I kin stan’.”

“It’s the way I feel, too, Jim. But we’ve got them on our hands, and we got to remember what they are, and make allowances. Sometimes I wish we could hear of a country that’s out of kings.”
What was the use to tell Jim these warn’t real kings and dukes? It wouldn’t ‘a’ done no good; and, besides, it was just as I said: you couldn’t tell them from the real kind.

I went to sleep, and Jim didn’t call me when it was my turn. He often done that. When I waked up just at daybreak he was sitting there with his head down betwixt his knees, moaning and mourning to himself. I didn’t take notice nor let on. I knewed what it was about. He was thinking about his wife and his children, away up yonder, and he was low and homesick; because he hadn’t ever been away from home before in his life; and I do believe he cared just as much for his people as white folks does for their’n. It don’t seem natural, but I reckon it’s so. He was often moaning and mourning that way nights, when I judged he was asleep, and saying, “Po’ little ‘Lizabeth! po’ little Johnny! it’s mighty hard; I spec’ I ain’t ever gwyne to see you no mo’, no mo’!” He was a mighty good nigger, Jim was.

But this time I somehow got to talking to him about his wife and young ones; and by and by he says:

“What makes me feel so bad dis time ‘uz bekase I hear sumpn over yonder on de bank like a whack, er a slam, while ago, en it mine me er de time I treat my little ‘Lizabeth so ornery. She warn’t on’y ‘bout fo’ year ole, en she tuck de sk’yarlet fever, en had a powful rough spell; but she got well, en one day she was a-stannin’ aroun’, en I says to her, I says:

“‘Shet de do’.

“She never done it; jis’ stood dah, kiner smilin’ up at me. It make me mad; en I says ag’in, mighty loud, I says:

“‘Doan’ you hear me? Shet de do’!”

“She jis stood de same way, kiner smilin’ up. I was a-bilin’! I says:

“‘I lay I make you mine!’

“En wid dat I fetch’ her a slap side de head dat sotr her a-sprawlin’. Den I went into de yuther room, en ‘uz gone ‘bout ten minutes; en when I come back dah was dat do’ a-stannin’ open yit, en dat chile stannin’ mos’ right in it, a-lookin’ down and mournin’, en de tears runnin’ down. My, but I wuz mad! I was a-gwyne for de chile, but jis’ den—it was a do’ dat open innerds—jis’ den, ‘long come de wind en slam it to, behine de chile, ker-blam!—en my lan’, de chile never move’! My breff mos’ hop outer me; en I feel so—so—I doan’ know how I feel. I crope out, all a-tremblin’, en crope aroun’ en open de do’ easy en slow, en poke my head in behine de chile, sof’ en still, en all uv a sudden I says pow! jis’ as loud as I could yell. She never budge! Oh, Huck, I bust out a-cryin’ en grab her up in my arms, en say, ‘Oh, de po’ little thing! De Lord God Amighty fogive po’ ole Jim, kaze he never gwyne to fogive hisself as long’s he live!’ Oh, she was plumb deef en dumb, Huck, plumb deef en dumb—en I’d ben a-treat’n her so!”

CHAPTER XXIV

Next day, towards night, we laid up under a little willow towhead out in the middle, where there was a village on each side of the river, and the duke and the king begun to lay out a plan for working them towns. Jim he spoke to the duke, and said he hoped it wouldn’t take but a few hours, because it got mighty heavy and tiresome to him when he had to lay all day in the wigwam tied with the rope. You see, when we left him all alone we had to tie him, because if anybody happened on to him all by himself and not tied it wouldn’t look much like he was a runaway nigger, you know. So the duke said it was kind of hard to have to lay roped all day, and he’d cipher out some way to get around it.

He was uncommon bright, the duke was, and he soon struck it. He dressed Jim up in King Lear’s outfit—it was a long curtain-calico gown, and a white horse-hair wig and whiskers; and then he took his theater paint and painted Jim’s face and hands and ears and neck all over a dead, dull solid blue, like a man that’s been drowned nine days. Blamed if he warn’t the horriblest-looking outrage I ever see. Then the duke took and wrote out a sign on a shingle so:

Sick Arab—but harmless when not out of his head.

And he nailed that shingle to a lath, and stood the lath up four or five foot in front of the wigwam. Jim was satisfied. He said it was a sight better than lying tied a couple of years every day, and trembling all over every
time there was a sound. The duke told him to make himself free and easy, and if anybody ever come meddlin
around, he must hop out of the wigwam, and carry on a little, and fetch a howl or two like a wild beast, and he
reckoned they would light out and leave him alone. Which was sound enough judgment; but you take the average
man, and he wouldn’t wait for him to howl. Why, he didn’t only look like he was dead, he looked considerable
more than that.

These rapscallions wanted to try the Nonesuch again, because there was so much money in it, but they judged it
wouldn’t be safe, because maybe the news might ‘a’ worked along down by this time. They couldn’t hit no project
that suited exactly; so at last the duke said he reckoned he’d lay off and work his brains an hour or two and see if
he couldn’t put up something on the Arkansaw village; and the king he allowed he would drop over to t’other
village without any plan, but just trust in Providence to lead him the profitable way—meaning the devil, I reckon.
We had all bought store clothes where we stopped last; and now the king put his’n on, and he told me to put mine
on. I done it, of course. The king’s duds was all black, and he did look real swell and starchy. I never knewed how
clothes could change a body before. Why, before, he looked like the orneriest old rip that ever was; but now, when
he’d take off his new white beaver and make a bow and do a smile, he looked that grand and good and pious that
you’d say he had walked right out of the ark, and maybe was old Leviticus himself. Jim cleaned up the canoe, and I
got my paddle ready. There was a big steamboat laying at the shore away up under the point, about three mile
above the town—been there a couple of hours, taking on freight. Says the king:

“Seein’ how I’m dressed, I reckon maybe I better arrive down from St. Louis or Cincinnati, or some other big
place. Go for the steamboat, Huckleberry; we’ll come down to the village on her.”

I didn’t have to be ordered twice to go and take a steamboat ride. I fetched the shore a half a mile above the
village, and then went scooting along the bluff bank in the easy water. Pretty soon we come to a nice innocent-
looking young country jake setting on a log swabbing the sweat off of his face, for it was powerful warm weather;
and he had a couple of big carpet-bags by him.

“Run her nose inshore,” says the king. I done it. “Wher’ you bound for, young man?”

“For the steamboat; going to Orleans.”

“Git aboard,” says the king. “Hold on a minute, my servant ‘ll he’p you with them bags. Jump out and he’p the
gentleman, Adolphus”—meaning me, I see.

I done so, and then we all three started on again. The young chap was mighty thankful; said it was tough work
toting his baggage such weather. He asked the king where he was going, and the king told him he’d come down
the river and landed at the other village this morning, and now he was going up a few mile to see an old friend on
a farm up there. The young fellow says:

“When I first see you I says to myself, ‘It’s Mr. Wilks, sure, and he come mighty near getting here in time.’ But
then I says again, ‘No, I reckon it ain’t him, or else he wouldn’t be paddling up the river.’ You ain’t him, are you?”

“No, my name’s Blodgett—Alexander Blodgett—Reverend Alexander Blodgett, I s’pose I must say, as I’m one o’
the Lord’s poor servants. But still I’m jist as able to be sorry for Mr. Wilks for not arriving in time, all the same, if
he’s missed anything by it—which I hope he hasn’t.”

“Well, he don’t miss any property by it, because he’ll get that all right; but he’s missed seeing his brother Peter
die—which he mayn’t mind, nobody can tell as to that—but his brother would ‘a’ give anything in this world to see
him before he died; never talked about nothing else all these three weeks; hadn’t seen him since they was boys
together—and hadn’t ever seen his brother William at all—that’s the deaf and dumb one—William ain’t more than
thirty or thirty-five. Peter and George were the only ones that come out here; George was the married brother;
him and his wife both died last year. Harvey and William’s the only ones that’s left now; and, as I was saying, they
haven’t got here in time.”

“Did anybody send ‘em word?”

“Oh, yes; a month or two ago, when Peter was first took; because Peter said then that he sorter felt like he warn’t
going to get well this time. You see, he was pretty old, and George’s g’yrils was too young to be much company for
him, except Mary Jane, the red-headed one; and so he was kinner lonesome after George and his wife died, and
didn’t seem to care much to live. He most desperately wanted to see Harvey—and William, too, for that
matter—because he was one of them kind that can’t bear to make a will. He left a letter behind for Harvey, and
said he’d told in it where his money was hid, and how he wanted the rest of the property divided up so George’s
g’yrils would be all right—for George didn’t leave nothing. And that letter was all they could get him to put a pen
“Why do you reckon Harvey don’t come? Wher’ does he live?”

“Oh, he lives in England—Sheffield—preaches there—hasn’t ever been in this country. He hasn’t had any too much time—and besides he mightn’t ‘a’ got the letter at all, you know.”

“Too bad, too bad he couldn’t ‘a’ lived to see his brothers, poor soul. You going to Orleans, you say?”

“Yes, but that ain’t only a part of it. I’m going in a ship, next Wednesday, for Ryo Janeero, where my uncle lives.”

“It’s a pretty long journey. But it’ll be lovely; I wisht I was a-going. Is Mary Jane the oldest? How old is the others?”

“Mary Jane’s nineteen, Susan’s fifteen, and Joanna’s about fourteen—that’s the one that gives herself to good works and has a hare-lip.”

“Poor things! to be left alone in the cold world so.”

“Well, they could be worse off. Old Peter had friends, and they ain’t going to let them come to no harm. There’s Hobson, the Babtis’ preacher; and Deacon Lot Hovey, and Ben Rucker, and Abner Shackleford, and Levi Bell, the lawyer; and Dr. Robinson, and their wives, and the widow Bartley, and—well, there’s a lot of them; but these are the ones that Peter was thickest with, and used to write about sometimes, when he wrote home; so Harvey ’ll know where to look for friends when he gets here.”

Well, the old man went on asking questions till he just fairly emptied that young fellow. Blamed if he didn’t inquire about everybody and everything in that blessed town, and all about the Wilkses; and about Peter’s business—which was a tanner; and about George’s—which was a carpenter; and about Harvey’s—which was a dissenting minister; and so on, and so on. Then he says:

“What did you want to walk all the way up to the steamboat for?”

“Because she’s a big Orleans boat, and I was afeard she mightn’t stop there. When they’re deep they won’t stop for a hail. A Cincinnati boat will, but this is a St. Louis one.”

“Was Peter Wilks well off?”

“Oh, yes, pretty well off. He had houses and land, and it’s reckoned he left three or four thousand in cash hid up som’ers.”

“When did you say he died?”

“I didn’t say, but it was last night.”

“Funeral to-morrow, likely?”

“Yes, ’bout the middle of the day.”

“Well, it’s all terrible sad; but we’ve all got to go, one time or another. So what we want to do is to be prepared; then we’re all right.”

“Yes, sir, it’s the best way. Ma used to always say that.”

When we struck the boat she was about done loading, and pretty soon she got off. The king never said nothing about going aboard, so I lost my ride, after all. When the boat was gone the king made me paddle up another mile to a lonesome place, and then he got ashore and says:

“Now hustle back, right off, and fetch the duke up here, and the new carpet-bags. And if he’s gone over to t’other side, go over there and git him. And tell him to git himself up regardless. Shove along, now.”

I see what he was up to; but I never said nothing, of course. When I got back with the duke we hid the canoe, and then they set down on a log, and the king told him everything, just like the young fellow had said it—every last word of it. And all the time he was a-doing it he tried to talk like an Englishman; and he done it pretty well, too, for a slouch. I can’t imitate him, and so I ain’t a-going to try to; but he really done it pretty good. Then he says:
“How are you on the deaf and dumb, Bilgewater?”

The duke said, leave him alone for that; said he had played a deaf and dumb person on the histrionic boards. So then they waited for a steamboat.

About the middle of the afternoon a couple of little boats come along, but they didn’t come from high enough up the river; but at last there was a big one, and they hailed her. She sent out her yawl, and we went aboard, and she was from Cincinnati; and when they found we only wanted to go four or five mile they was booming mad, and gave us a cussing, and said they wouldn’t land us. But the king was ca’m. He says:

“If gentlemen kin afford to pay a dollar a mile apiece to be took on and put off in a yawl, a steamboat kin afford to carry ‘em, can’t it?”

So they softened down and said it was all right; and when we got to the village they yawled us ashore. About two dozen men flocked down when they see the yawl a-coming, and when the king says:

“Kin any of you gentlemen tell me wher’ Mr. Peter Wilks lives?” they give a glance at one another, and nodded their heads, as much as to say, “What ’d I tell you?” Then one of them says, kind of soft and gentle:

“I’m sorry, sir, but the best we can do is to tell you where he did live yesterday evening.”

Sudden as winking the ornery old cretur went all to smash, and fell up against the man, and put his chin on his shoulder, and cried down his back, and says:

“Alas, alas, our poor brother—gone, and we never got to see him; oh, it’s too, too hard!”

Then he turns around, blubbering, and makes a lot of idiotic signs to the duke on his hands, and blamed if he didn’t drop a carpet-bag and bust out a-crying. If they warn’t the beatenest lot, them two frauds, that ever I struck.

Well, the men gathered around and sympathized with them, and said all sorts of kind things to them, and carried their carpet-bags up the hill for them, and let them lean on them and cry, and told the king all about his brother’s last moments, and the king he told it all over again on his hands to the duke, and both of them took on about that dead tanner like they’d lost the twelve disciples. Well, if ever I struck anything like it, I’m a nigger. It was enough to make a body ashamed of the human race.

CHAPTER XXV

The news was all over town in two minutes, and you could see the people tearing down on the run from every which way, some of them putting on their coats as they come. Pretty soon we was in the middle of a crowd, and the noise of the trampling was like a soldier march. The windows and dooryards was full; and every minute somebody would say, over a fence:

“Is it them?”

And somebody trotting along with the gang would answer back and say:

“You bet it is.”

When we got to the house the street in front of it was packed, and the three girls was standing in the door. Mary Jane was red-headed, but that don’t make no difference, she was most awful beautiful, and her face and her eyes was all lit up like glory, she was so glad her uncles was come. The king he spread his arms, and Mary Jane she jumped for them, and the hare-lip jumped for the duke, and there they had it! Everybody most, leastways women, cried for joy to see them meet again at last and have such good times.

Then the king he hunched the duke private—I see him do it—and then he looked around and see the coffin, over in the corner on two chairs; so then him and the duke, with a hand across each other’s shoulder, and t’other hand to their eyes, walked slow and solemn over there, everybody dropping back to give them room, and all the talk and noise stopping, people saying “Sh!” and all the men taking their hats off and drooping their heads, so you could ‘a’ heard a pin fall. And when they got there they bent over and looked in the coffin, and took one sight, and then they bust out a-crying so you could ‘a’ heard them to Orleans, most; and then they put their arms around each
other’s necks, and hung their chins over each other’s shoulders; and then for three minutes, or maybe four, I never see two men leak the way they done. And, mind you, everybody was doing the same; and the place was that damp I never see anything like it. Then one of them got on one side of the coffin, and t’other on t’other side, and they kneeled down and rested their foreheads on the coffin, and let on to pray all to themselves. Well, when it come to that it worked the crowd like you never see anything like it, and everybody broke down and went to sobbing right out loud—the poor girls, too; and every woman, nearly, went up to the girls, without saying a word, and kissed them, solemn, on the forehead, and then put their hand on their head, and looked up towards the sky, with the tears running down, and then busted out and went off sobbing and swabbing, and give the next woman a show. I never see anything so disgusting. Well, by and by the king he gets up and comes forward a little, and works himself up and slobbers out a speech, all full of tears and flapdoodle, about its being a sore trial for him and his poor brother to lose the diseased, and to miss seeing diseased alive after the long journey of four thousand mile, but it’s a trial that’s sweetened and sanctified to us by this dear sympathy and these holy tears, and so he thanks them out of his heart and out of his brother’s heart, because out of their mouths they can’t, words being too weak and cold, and all that kind of rot and slush, till it was just sickening; and then he blubbers out a pious goody-goody Amen, and turns himself loose and goes to crying fit to bust.

And the minute the words were out of his mouth somebody over in the crowd struck up the doxolojer, and everybody joined in with all their might, and it just warmed you up and made you feel as good as church letting out. Music is a good thing; and after all that soul-butter and hogwash I never see it freshen up things so, and sound so honest and bully.

Then the king begins to work his jaw again, and says how him and his nieces would be glad if a few of the main principal friends of the family would take supper here with them this evening, and help set up with the ashes of the diseased; and says if his poor brother laying yonder could speak he knows who he would name, for they was names that was very dear to him, and mentioned often in his letters; and so he will name the same, to wit, as follows, viz.:—Rev. Mr. Hobson, and Deacon Lot Hovey, and Mr. Ben Rucker, and Abner Shackleford, and Levi Bell, and Dr. Robinson, and their wives, and the widow Bartley.

Rev. Hobson and Dr. Robinson was down to the end of the town a-hunting together—that is, I mean the doctor was shipping a sick man to t’other world, and the preacher was pinting him right. Lawyer Bell was away up to Louisville on business. But the rest was on hand, and so they all come and shook hands with the king and thanked him and talked to him; and then they shook hands with the duke and didn’t say nothing, but just kept a-smiling and bobbing their heads like a passel of sapheads whilst he made all sorts of signs with his hands and said “Goo-goo—goo-goo-goo” all the time, like a baby that can’t talk.

So the king he blattered along, and managed to inquire about pretty much everybody and dog in town, by his name, and mentioned all sorts of little things that happened one time or another in the town, or to George’s family, or to Peter. And he always let on that Peter wrote him the things; but that was a lie: he got every blessed one of them out of that young flathead that we canoed up to the steamboat.

Then Mary Jane she fetched the letter her father left behind, and the king he read it out loud and cried over it. It give the dwelling-house and three thousand dollars, gold, to the girls; and it give the tanyard (which was doing a good business), along with some other houses and land (worth about seven thousand), and three thousand dollars in gold to Harvey and William, and told where the six thousand cash was hid down cellar. So these two frauds said they’d go and fetch it up, and have everything square and above-board; and told me to come with a candle. We shut the cellar door behind us, and when they found the bag they spilt it out on the floor, and it was a lovely sight, all them yaller-boys. My, the way the king’s eyes did shine! He slaps the duke on the shoulder and says:

“Oh, this ain’t bully nor noth’n! Oh, no, I reckon not! Why, Biljy, it beats the Nonesuch, don’t it?”

The duke allowed it did. They pawed the yaller-boys, and sifted them through their fingers and let them jingle down on the floor; and the king says:

“It ain’t no use talkin’; bein’ brothers to a rich dead man and representatives of furrin heirs that’s got left is the line for you and me, Bilge. Thish yer comes of trust’n to Providence. It’s the best way, in the long run. I’ve tried ‘em all, and ther’ ain’t no better way.”

Most everybody would ‘a’ been satisfied with the pile, and took it on trust; but no, they must count it. So they counts it, and it comes out four hundred and fifteen dollars short. Says the king:

“Dern him, I wonder what he done with that four hundred and fifteen dollars?”

They worried over that awhile, and ransacked all around for it. Then the duke says:
“Well, he was a pretty sick man, and likely he made a mistake—I reckon that’s the way of it. The best way’s to let it go, and keep still about it. We can spare it.”

“Oh, shucks, yes, we can spare it. I don’t k’yer noth’n ‘bout that—it’s the count I’m thinkin’ about. We want to be awful square and open and above-board here, you know. We want to lug this h’yer money up-stairs and count it before everybody—then ther’ ain’t noth’n suspicious. But when the dead man says ther’s six thous’n dollars, you know, we don’t want to—”

“Hold on,” says the duke. “Le’s make up the deffisit,” and he begun to haul out yaller-boys out of his pocket.

“It’s a most amaz’n’ good idea, duke—you have got a rattlin’ clever head on you,” says the king. “Blest if the old Nonesuch ain’t a heppin’ us out ag’in,” and he begun to haul out yaller-jackets and stack them up.

It most busted them, but they made up the six thousand clean and clear.

“Say,” says the duke, “I got another idea. Le’s go up-stairs and count this money, and then take and give it to the girls.”

“Good land, duke, lemme hug you! It’s the most dazzling idea ‘at ever a man struck. You have cert’nly got the most astonishin’ head I ever see. Oh, this is the boss dodge, ther’ ain’t no mistake ‘bout it. Let ’em fetch along their suspicions now if they want to—this ’ll lay ‘em out.”

When we got up-stairs everybody gethered around the table, and the king he counted it and stacked it up, three hundred dollars in a pile—twenty elegant little piles. Everybody looked hungry at it, and licked their chops. Then they raked it into the bag again, and I see the king begin to swell himself up for another speech. He says:

“Friends all, my poor brother that lays yonder has done generous by them that’s left behind in the vale of sorrrers. He has done generous by these yer poor little lambs that he loved and sheltered, and that’s left fatherless and motherless. Yes, and we that knewed him knows that he would ‘a done more generous by ‘em if he hadn’t ben afeard o’ woundin’ his dear William and me. Now, wouldn’t he? Ther’ ain’t no question ‘bout it in my mind. Well, then, what kind o’ brothers would it be that ‘d stand in his way at sech a time? And what kind o’ uncles would it be that ‘d rob—yes, Rob—sech poor sweet lambs as these ‘at he loved so at sech a time? If I know William—and I think I do—he—well, I’ll jest ask him.” He turns around and begins to make a lot of signs to the duke with his hands, and the duke he looks at him stupid and leather-headed awhile; then all of a sudden he seems to catch his meaning, and jumps for the king, goo-gooing with all his might for joy, and hugs him about fifteen times before he lets up. Then the king says, “I knewed it; I reckon that’ll convince anybody the way he feels about it. Here, Mary Jane, Susan, Joanner, take the money—take it all. It’s the gift of him that lays yonder, cold but joyful.”

Mary Jane she went for him, Susan and the hare-lip went for the duke, and then such another hugging and kissing I never see yet. And everybody crowded up with the tears in their eyes, and most shook the hands off of them frauds, saying all the time:

“You dear good souls!—how lovely!—how could you!”

Well, then, pretty soon all hands got to talking about the diseased again, and how good he was, and what a loss he was, and all that; and before long a big iron-jawed man worked himself in there from outside, and stood a-listening and looking, and not saying anything; and nobody saying anything to him either, because the king was talking and they was all busy listening. The king was saying—in the middle of something he’d started in on—

“—they bein’ partickler friends o’ the diseased. That’s why they’re invited here this evenin’; but tomorrow we want all to come—everybody; for he respected everybody, he liked everybody, and so it’s fitten that his funeral orgies sh’d be public.”

And so he went a-mooning on and on, liking to hear himself talk, and every little while he fetched in his funeral orgies again, till the duke he couldn’t stand it no more; so he writes on a little scrap of paper, “Obsequies, you old fool,” and folds it up, and goes to goo-gooing and reaching it over people’s heads to him. The king he reads it and puts it in his pocket, and says:

“Poor William, afflicted as he is, his heart’s aluz right. Asks me to invite everybody to come to the funeral—wants me to make ‘em all welcome. But he needn’t ‘a worried—it was jest what I was at.”

Then he weaves along again, perfectly ca’m, and goes to dropping in his funeral orgies again every now and then, just like he done before. And when he done it the third time he says:
“I sayorgies, not because it’s the common term, because it ain’t—obsequies bein’ the common term—but because orgies is the right term. Obsequies ain’t used in England no more now—it’s gone out. We say orgies now in England. Orgies is better, because it means the thing you’re after more exact. It’s a word that’s made up out’n the Greek orgo, outside, open, abroad; and the Hebrew jeesum, to plant, cover up; hence inter. So, you see, funeral orgies is an open er public funeral.”

He was the worst I ever struck. Well, the iron-jawed man he laughed right in his face. Everybody was shocked. Everybody says, “Why, doctor!” and Abner Shackleford says:

“Why, Robinson, hain’t you heard the news? This is Harvey Wilks.”

The king he smiled eager, and shoved out his flapper, and says:

“Is it my poor brother’s dear good friend and physician? I—”

“Keep your hands off me!” says the doctor. “You talk like an Englishman, don’t you? It’s the worst imitation I ever heard. You Peter Wilks’s brother! You’re a fraud, that’s what you are!”

Well, how they all took on! They crowded around the doctor and tried to quiet him down, and tried to explain to him and tell him how Harvey’s showed in forty ways that he was Harvey, and knowed everybody by name, and the names of the very dogs, and begged and begged him not to hurt Harvey’s feelings and the poor girls’ feelings, and all that. But it warn’t no use; he stormed right along, and said any man that pretended to be an Englishman and couldn’t imitate the lingo no better than what he did was a fraud and a liar. The poor girls was hanging to the king and crying; and all of a sudden the doctor ups and turns on them. He says:

“I was your father’s friend, and I’m your friend; and I warn you as a friend, and an honest one that wants to protect you and keep you out of harm and trouble, to turn your backs on that scoundrel and have nothing to do with him, the ignorant tramp, with his idiotic Greek and Hebrew, as he calls it. He is the thinnest kind of an impostor—has come here with a lot of empty names and facts which he picked up somewheres; and you take them for proofs, and are helped to fool yourselves by these foolish friends here, who ought to know better. Mary Jane Wilks, you know me for your friend, and for your unselfish friend, too. Now listen to me; turn this pitiful rascal out—I beg you to do it. Will you?”

Mary Jane straightened herself up, and my, but she was handsome! She says:

“Here is my answer.” She hove up the bag of money and put it in the king’s hands, and says, “Take this six thousand dollars, and invest for me and my sisters any way you want to, and don’t give us no receipt for it.”

Then she put her arm around the king on one side, and Susan and the hare-lip done the same on the other. Everybody clapped their hands and stomped on the floor like a perfect storm, whilst the king held up his head and smiled proud. The doctor says:

“All right; I wash my hands of the matter. But I warn you all that a time’s coming when you’re going to feel sick whenever you think of this day.” And away he went.

“All right, doctor,” says the king, kinder mocking him; “we’ll try and get ’em to send for you;” which made them all laugh, and they said it was a prime good hit.

CHAPTER XXVI

Well, when they was all gone the king he asks Mary Jane how they was off for spare rooms, and she said she had one spare room, which would do for Uncle William, and she’d give her own room to Uncle Harvey, which was a little bigger, and she would turn into the room with her sisters and sleep on a cot; and up garret was a little cubby, with a pallet in it. The king said the cubby would do for his valley—meaning me.

So Mary Jane took us up, and she showed them their rooms, which was plain but nice. She said she’d have her frocks and a lot of other traps took out of her room if they was in Uncle Harvey’s way, but he said they warn’t. The frocks was hung along the wall, and before them was a curtain made out of calico that hung down to the floor. There was an old hair trunk in one corner, and a guitar-box in another, and all sorts of little knickknacks and jimcracks around, like girls brisken up a room with. The king said it was all the more homely and more pleasanter
for these fixings, and so don’t disturb them. The duke’s room was pretty small, but plenty good enough, and so was my cubby.

That night they had a big supper, and all them men and women was there, and I stood behind the king and the duke’s chairs and waited on them, and the niggers waited on the rest. Mary Jane she set at the head of the table, with Susan alongside of her, and said how bad the biscuits was, and how mean the preserves was, and how ornery and tough the fried chickens was—and all that kind of rot, the way women always do for to force out compliments; and the people all knowed everything was tiptop, and said so—said “How do you get biscuits to brown so nice?” and “Where, for the land’s sake, did you get these amaz’n pickles?” and all that kind of humbug talky-talk, just the way people always does at a supper, you know.

And when it was all done me and the hare-lip had supper in the kitchen off of the leavings, whilst the others was helping the niggers clean up the things. The hare-lip she got to pumping me about England, and blest if I didn’t think the ice was getting mighty thin sometimes. She says:

“Did you ever see the king?”

“Who? William Fourth? Well, I bet I have—he goes to our church.” I knowed he was dead years ago, but I never let on. So when I says he goes to our church, she says:

“What—regular?”

“Yes—regular. His pew’s right over opposite ourn—on t’other side the pulpit.”

“I thought he lived in London?”

“Well, he does. Where would he live?”

“But I thought you lived in Sheffield?”

I see I was up a stump. I had to let on to get choked with a chicken-bone, so as to get time to think how to get down again. Then I says:

“I mean he goes to our church regular when he’s in Sheffield. That’s only in the summer-time, when he comes there to take the sea baths.”

“Why, how you talk—Sheffield ain’t on the sea.”

“Well, who said it was?”

“Why, you did.”

“I didn’t, nuther.”

“You did!”

“I didn’t.”

“You did.”

“I never said nothing of the kind.”

“Well, what did you say, then?”

“Said he come to take the sea baths—that’s what I said.”

“Well, then, how’s he going to take the sea baths if it ain’t on the sea?”

“Looky here,” I says; “did you ever see any Congress-water?”

“Yes.”

“Well, did you have to go to Congress to get it?”

“Why, no.”
“Well, neither does William Fourth have to go to the sea to get a sea bath.”

“How does he get it, then?”

“Gets it the way people down here gets Congress-water—in barrels. There in the palace at Sheffield they’ve got furnaces, and he wants his water hot. They can’t bile that amount of water away off there at the sea. They haven’t got no conveniences for it.”

“Oh, I see, now. You might ‘a’ said that in the first place and saved time.”

When she said that I see I was out of the woods again, and so I was comfortable and glad. Next, she says:

“Do you go to church, too?”

“Yes—regular.”

“Where do you set?”

“Why, in our pew.”

“Whose pew?”

“Why, oun—you Uncle Harvey’s.”

“His’n? What does he want with a pew?”

“Wants it to set in. What did you reckon he wanted with it?”

“Why, I thought he’d be in the pulpit.”

Rot him, I forgot he was a preacher. I see I was up a stump again, so I played another chicken-bone and got another think. Then I says:

“Blame it, do you suppose there ain’t but one preacher to a church?”

“Why, what do they want with more?”

“What!—to preach before a king? I never did see such a girl as you. They don’t have no less than seventeen.”

“Seventeen! My land! Why, I wouldn’t set out such a string as that, not if I never got to glory. It must take ‘em a week.”

“Shucks, they don’t all of ‘em preach the same day—only one of ‘em.”

“Well, then, what does the rest of ‘em do?”

“Oh, nothing much. Loll around, pass the plate—and one thing or another. But mainly they don’t do nothing.”

“Well, then, what are they for?”

“Why, they’re for style. Don’t you know nothing?”

“Well, I don’t want to know no such foolishness as that. How is servants treated in England? Do they treat ‘em better ‘n we treat our niggers?”

“No! A servant ain’t nobody there. They treat them worse than dogs.”

“Don’t they give ‘em holidays, the way we do, Christmas and New Year’s week, and Fourth of July?”

“Oh, just listen! A body could tell you hain’t ever been to England by that. Why, Hare-l—why, Joanna, they never see a holiday from year’s end to year’s end; never go to the circus, nor theater, nor nigger shows, nor nowheres.”

“Nor church?”

“Nor church.”
“But you always went to church.”

Well, I was gone up again. I forgot I was the old man’s servant. But next minute I whirled in on a kind of an explanation how a valley was different from a common servant, and had to go to church whether he wanted to or not, and set with the family, on account of its being the law. But I didn’t do it pretty good, and when I got done I see she warn’t satisfied. She says:

“Honest injun, now, hain’t you been telling me a lot of lies?”

“Honest injun,” says I.

“None of it at all?”

“None of it at all. Not a lie in it,” says I.

“Lay your hand on this book and say it.”

I see it warn’t nothing but a dictionary, so I laid my hand on it and said it. So then she looked a little better satisfied, and says:

“Well, then, I’ll believe some of it; but I hope to gracious if I’ll believe the rest.”

“What is it you won’t believe, Jo?” says Mary Jane, stepping in with Susan behind her. “It ain’t right nor kind for you to talk so to him, and him a stranger and so far from his people. How would you like to be treated so?”

“That’s always your way, Maim—always sailing in to help somebody before they’re hurt. I hain’t done nothing to him. He’s told some stretchers, I reckon, and I said I wouldn’t swallow it all; and that’s every bit and grain I did say. I reckon he can stand a little thing like that, can’t he?”

“I don’t care whether ’twas little or whether ’twas big; he’s here in our house and a stranger, and it wasn’t good of you to say it. If you was in his place it would make you feel ashamed; and so you oughtn’t to say a thing to another person that will make them feel ashamed.”

“Why, Maim, he said—”

“It don’t make no difference what he said—that ain’t the thing. The thing is for you to treat him kind, and not be saying things to make him remember he ain’t in his own country and amongst his own folks.”

I says to myself, this is a girl that I’m letting that old reptile rob her of her money!

Then Susan she waltzed in; and if you’ll believe me, she did give Hare-lip hark from the tomb!

Says I to myself, and this is another one that I’m letting him rob her of her money!

Then Mary Jane she took another inning, and went in sweet and lovely again—which was her way; but when she got done there warn’t hardly anything left o’ poor Hare-lip. So she hollered.

“All right, then,” says the other girls; “you just ask his pardon.”

She done it, too; and she done it beautiful. She done it so beautiful it was good to hear; and I wished I could tell her a thousand lies, so she could do it again.

I says to myself, this is another one that I’m letting him rob her of her money. And when she got through they all jest laid theirselves out to make me feel at home and know I was amongst friends. I felt so ornery and low down and mean that I says to myself, my mind’s made up; I’ll hive that money for them or bust.

So then I lit out—for bed, I said, meaning some time or another. When I got by myself I went to thinking the thing over. I says to myself, shall I go to that doctor, private, and blow on these frauds? No—that won’t do. He might tell who told him; then the king and the duke would make it warm for me. Shall I go, private, and tell Mary Jane? No—I da’n’t do it. Her face would give them a hint, sure; they’ve got the money, and they’d slide right out and get away with it. If she was to fetch in help I’d get mixed up in the business before it was done with, I judge. No; there ain’t no good way but one. I got to steal that money, somehow; and I got to steal it some way that they won’t suspicion that I done it. They’ve got a good thing here, and they ain’t a-going to leave till they’ve played this family and this town for all they’re worth, so I’ll find a chance time enough. I’ll steal it and hide it; and by and by, when
I'm away down the river, I'll write a letter and tell Mary Jane where it's hid. But I better hive it to-night if I can, because the doctor maybe hasn't let up as much as he lets on he has; he might scare them out of here yet.

So, thinks I, I'll go and search them rooms. Upstairs the hall was dark, but I found the duke's room, and started to paw around it with my hands; but I recollected it wouldn't be much like the king to let anybody else take care of that money but his own self; so then I went to his room and begun to paw around there. But I see I couldn't do nothing without a candle, and I don't light one, of course. So I judged I'd got to do the other thing—lay for them and eavesdrop. About that time I hears their footsteps coming, and was going to skip under the bed; I reached for it, but it wasn't where I thought it would be; but I touched the curtain that hid Mary Jane's frocks, so I jumped in behind that and snuggled in amongst the gowns, and stood there perfectly still. They come in and shut the door; and the first thing the duke done was to get down and look under the bed. Then I was glad I hadn't found the bed when I wanted it. And yet, you know, it's kind of natural to hide under the bed when you are up to anything private. They sets down then, and the king says:

"Well, what is it? And cut it middlin' short, because it's better for us to be down there a-whoopin' up the mournin' than up here givin' 'em a chance to talk us over."

"Well, this is it, Capet. I ain't easy; I ain't comfortable. That doctor lays on my mind. I wanted to know your plans. I've got a notion, and I think it's a sound one."

"What is it, duke?"

"That we better glide out of this before three in the morning, and clip it down the river with what we've got. Specially, seeing we got it so easy—given back to us, flung at our heads, as you may say, when of course we allowed to have to steal it back. I'm for knocking off and lighting out."

That made me feel pretty bad. About an hour or two ago it would 'a' been a little different, but now it made me feel bad and disappointed. The king rips out and says:

"What! And not sell out the rest o' the property? March off like a passel of fools and leave eight or nine thous'n dollars' worth o' property layin' around jest sufferin' to be scooped in?—and all good, salable stuff, too."

The duke he grumbled; said the bag of gold was enough, and he didn't want to go no deeper—didn't want to rob a lot of orphans of everything they had.

"Why, how you talk!" says the king. "We sha'n't rob 'em of nothing at all but jest this money. The people that buys the property is the suff'rs; because as soon 's it's found out 'at we didn't own it—which won't be long after we've slid—the sale won't be valid, and it 'll all go back to the estate. These yer orphans 'll git their house back ag'in, and that's enough for them; they're young and spry, and k'n easy earn a livin'. They ain't a-goin' to suffer. Why, jest think—there's thous'n's and thous'n's that ain't nigh so well off. Bless you, they ain't got noth'n' to complain of."

Well, the king he talked him blind; so at last he give in, and said all right, but said he believed it was blamed foolishness to stay, and that doctor hanging over them. But the king says:

"Cuss the doctor! What do we k'yer for him? Hain't we got all the fools in town on our side? And ain't that a big enough majority in any town?"

So they got ready to go down-stairs again. The duke says:

"I don't think we put that money in a good place."

That cheered me up. I'd begun to think I warn't going to get a hint of no kind to help me. The king says:

"Why?"

"Because Mary Jane 'll be in mourning from this out; and first you know the nigger that does up the rooms will get an order to box these duds up and put 'em away; and do you reckon a nigger can run across money and not borrow some of it?"

"Your head's level ag'in, duke," says the king; and he comes a-fumbling under the curtain two or three foot from where I was. I stuck tight to the wall and kept mighty still, though quivery; and I wondered what them fellows would say to me if they caught me; and I tried to think what I'd better do if they did catch me. But the king he got the bag before I could think more than about a half a thought, and he never suspicioned I was around. They took
and shoved the bag through a rip in the straw tick that was under the feather-bed, and crammed it in a foot or two amongst the straw and said it was all right now, because a nigger only makes up the feather-bed, and don’t turn over the straw tick only about twice a year, and so it warn’t in no danger of getting stole now.

But I knowed better. I had it out of there before they was half-way down-stairs. I groped along up to my cubby, and hid it there till I could get a chance to do better. I judged I better hide it outside of the house somewheres, because if they missed it they would give the house a good ransacking; I knowed that very well. Then I turned in, with my clothes all on; but I couldn’t ‘a’ gone to sleep if I’d ‘a’ wanted to, I was in such a sweat to get through with the business. By and by I heard the king and the duke come up; so I rolled off my pallet and laid with my chin at the top of my ladder, and waited to see if anything was going to happen. But nothing did.

So I held on till all the late sounds had quit and the early ones hadn’t begun yet; and then I slipped down the ladder.

CHAPTER XXVII

I crept to their doors and listened; they was snoring. So I tiptoed along, and got downstairs all right. There warn’t a sound anywheres. I peeped through a crack of the dining-room door, and see the men that was watching the corpse all sound asleep on their chairs. The door was open into the parlor, where the corpse was laying, and there was a candle in both rooms. I passed along, and the parlor door was open; but I see there warn’t nobody in there but the remainders of Peter; so I shoved on by; but the front door was locked, and the key wasn’t there. Just then I heard somebody coming down the stairs, back behind me. I run in the parlor and took a swift look around, and the only place I see to hide the bag was in the coffin. The lid was shoved along about a foot, showing the dead man’s face down in there, with a wet cloth over it, and his shroud on. I tucked the money-bag in under the lid, just down beyond where his hands was crossed, which made me creep, they was so cold, and then I run back across the room and in behind the door.

The person coming was Mary Jane. She went to the coffin, very soft, and kneeled down and looked in; then she put up her handkerchief, and I see she begun to cry, though I couldn’t hear her, and her back was to me. I slid out, and as I passed the dining-room I thought I’d make sure them watchers hadn’t seen me; so I looked through the crack, and everything was all right. They hadn’t stirred.

I slipped up to bed, feeling ruther blue, on accounts of the thing playing out that way after I had took so much trouble and run so much resk about it. Says I, if it could stay where it is, all right; because when we get down the river a hundred mile or two I could write back to Mary Jane, and she could dig him up again and get it; but that ain’t the thing that’s going to happen; the thing that’s going to happen is, the money’ll be found when they come to screw on the lid. Then the king’ll get it again, and it’ll be a long day before he gives anybody another chance to smouch it from him. Of course I wanted to slide down and get it out of there, but I dasn’t try it. Every minute it was getting earlier now, and pretty soon some of them watchers would begin to stir, and I might get caught—caught with six thousand dollars in my hands that nobody hadn’t hired me to take care of. I don’t wish to be mixed up in no such business as that, I says to myself.

When I got down-stairs in the morning the parlor was shut up, and the watchers was gone. There warn’t nobody around but the family and the widow Bartley and our tribe. I watched their faces to see if anything had been happening, but I couldn’t tell.

Towards the middle of the day the undertaker come with his man, and they set the coffin in the middle of the room on a couple of chairs, and then set all our chairs in rows, and borrowed more from the neighbors till the hall and the parlor and the dining-room was full. I see the coffin lid was the way it was before, but I dasn’t go to look in under it, with folks around.

Then the people begun to flock in, and the beats and the girls took seats in the front row at the head of the coffin, and for a half an hour the people filed around slow, in single rank, and looked down at the dead man’s face a minute, and some dropped in a tear, and it was all very still and solemn, only the girls and the beats holding handkerchiefs to their eyes and keeping their heads bent, and sobbing a little. There warn’t no other sound but the scraping of the feet on the floor and blowing noses—because people always blows them more at a funeral than they do at other places except church.

When the place was packed full the undertaker he slid around in his black gloves with his softy soothering ways, putting on the last touches, and getting people and things all ship-shape and comfortable, and making no more
They had borrowed a melodeme—a sick one; and when everything was ready a young woman set down and worked it, and it was pretty skreeky and colicky, and everybody joined in and sung, and Peter was the only one that had a good thing, according to my notion. Then the Reverend Hobson opened up, slow and solemn, and begun to talk; and straight off the most outrageous row busted out in the cellar a body ever heard; it was only one dog, but he made a most powerful racket, and he kept it up right along; the parson he had to stand there, over the coffin, and wait—you couldn’t hear yourself think. It was right down awkward, and nobody didn’t seem to know what to do. But pretty soon they see that long-legged undertaker make a sign to the preacher as much as to say, “Don’t you worry—just depend on me.” Then he stooped down and begun to glide along the wall, just his shoulders showing over the people’s heads. So he glided along, and the powwow and racket getting more and more outrageous all the time; and at last, when he had gone around two sides of the room, he disappears down cellar. Then in about two seconds we heard a whack, and the dog he finished up with a most amazing howl or two, and then everything was dead still, and the parson begun his solemn talk where he left off. In a minute or two here comes this undertaker’s back and shoulders gliding along the wall again; and so he glided and glided around three sides of the room, and then rose up, and shaded his mouth with his hands, and stretched his neck out towards the preacher, over the people’s heads, and says, in a kind of a coarse whisper, “He had a rat!” Then he drooped down and glided along the wall again to his place. You could see it was a great satisfaction to the people, because naturally they wanted to know. A little thing like that don’t cost nothing, and it’s just the little things that makes a man to be looked up to and liked. There warn’t no more popular man in town than what that undertaker was.

Well, the funeral sermon was very good, but pison long and tiresome; and then the king he shoved in and got off some of his usual rubbage, and at last the job was through, and the undertaker begun to sneak up on the coffin with his screw-driver. I was in a sweat then, and watched him pretty keen. But he never meddled at all; just slid the lid along as soft as mush, and screwed it down tight and fast. So there I was! I didn’t know whether the money was in there or not. So, says I, s’pose somebody has hogged that bag on the sly?—now how do I know whether to write to Mary Jane or not? S’pose she dug him up and didn’t find nothing, what would she think of me? Blame it, I says, I might get hunted up and jailed; I’d better lay low and keep dark, and not write at all; the thing’s awful mixed now; trying to better it, I’ve worsened it a hundred times, and I wish to goodness I’d just let it alone, dad fetch the whole business!

They buried him, and we come back home, and I went to watching faces again—I couldn’t help it, and I couldn’t rest easy. But nothing come of it; the faces didn’t tell me nothing.

The king he visited around in the evening, and sweetened everybody up, and made himself ever so friendly; and he give out the idea that his congregation over in England would be in a sweat about him, so he must hurry and settle up the estate right away and leave for home. He was very sorry he was so pushed, and so was everybody; they wished he could stay longer, but they said they could see it couldn’t be done. And he said of course him and William would take the girls home with them; and that pleased everybody too, because then the girls would be well fixed and amongst their own relations; and it pleased the girls, too—ticked them so they clean forgot they ever had a trouble in the world; and told him to sell out as quick as he wanted to, they would be ready. Them poor things was that glad and happy it made my heart ache to see them getting fooled and lied to so, but I didn’t see no safe way for me to chip in and change the general tune.

Well, blamed if the king didn’t bill the house and the niggers and all the property for auction straight off—sale two days after the funeral; but anybody could buy private beforehand if they wanted to.

So the next day after the funeral, along about noon-time, the girls’ joy got the first jolt. A couple of nigger-traders come along, and the king sold them the niggers reasonable, for three-day drafts as they called it, and away they went, the two sons up the river to Memphis, and their mother down the river to Orleans. I thought them poor girls and them niggers would break their hearts for grief; they cried around each other, and took on so it most made me down sick to see it. The girls said they hadn’t ever dreamed of seeing the family separated or sold away from the town. I can’t ever get it out of my memory, the sight of them poor miserable girls and niggers hanging around each other’s necks and crying; and I reckon I couldn’t ‘a’ stood it all, but would ‘a’ had to bust out and tell on our gang if I hadn’t knowed the sale warn’t no account and the niggers would be back home in a week or two.

The thing made a big stir in the town, too, and a good many come out flatfooted and said it was scandalous to separate the mother and the children that way. It injured the frauds some; but the old fool he bullied right along, spite of all the duke could say or do, and I tell you the duke was powerful uneasy.
Next day was auction day. About broad day in the morning the king and the duke come up in the garret and woke me up, and I see by their look that there was trouble. The king says:

“Was you in my room night before last?”

“No, your majesty”—which was the way I always called him when nobody but our gang warn’t around.

“Was you in there yisterday er last night?”

“No, your majesty.“

“Honor bright, now—no lies.”

“Honor bright, your majesty, I’m telling you the truth. I hain’t been a-near your room since Miss Mary Jane took you and the duke and showed it to you.”

The duke says:

“Have you seen anybody else go in there?”

“No, your grace, not as I remember, I believe.”

“Stop and think.”

I studied awhile and see my chance; then I says: “Well, I see the niggers go in there several times.”

Both of them gave a little jump, and looked like they hadn’t ever expected it, and then like they had. Then the duke says:

“What, all of them?”

“No—leastways, not all at once—that is, I don’t think I ever see them all come out at once but just one time.”

“Hello! When was that?”

“It was the day we had the funeral. In the morning. It warn’t early, because I overslept. I was just starting down the ladder, and I see them.”

“Well, go on, go on! What did they do? How’d they act?”

“They didn’t do nothing. And they didn’t act anyway much, as far as I see. They tiptoed away; so I seen, easy enough, that they’d shoved in there to do up your majesty’s room, or something, s’posing you was up; and found you warn’t up, and so they was hoping to slide out of the way of trouble without waking you up, if they hadn’t already waked you up.”

“Great guns, this is a go!” says the king; and both of them looked pretty sick and tolerable silly. They stood there a-thinking and scratching their heads a minute, and the duke he bust into a kind of a little raspy chuckle, and says:

“It does beat all how neat the niggers played their hand. They let on to be sorry they was going out of this region! And I believed they was sorry, and so did you, and so did everybody. Don’t ever tell me any more that a nigger ain’t got any histrionic talent. Why, the way they played that thing it would fool anybody. In my opinion, there’s a fortune in ‘em. If I had capital and a theater, I wouldn’t want a better lay-out than that—and here we’ve gone and sold ‘em for a song. Yes, and ain’t privileged to sing the song yet. Say, where is that song—that draft?”

“In the bank for to be collected. Where would it be?”

“Well, that’s all right then, thank goodness.”

Says I, kind of timid-like:

“Is something gone wrong?”

The king whirls on me and rips out:

“None o’ your business! You keep your head shet, and mind y’r own affairs—if you got any. Long as you’re in this
town don’t you forgit that—you hear?” Then he says to the duke, “We got to jest swaller it and say noth’n’: mum’s the word for us.”

As they was starting down the ladder the duke he chuckles again, and says:

“Quick sales and small profits! It’s a good business—yes.”

The king snarls around on him and says:

“I was trying to do for the best in sellin’ ’em out so quick. If the profits has turned out to be none, lackin’ considerable, and none to carry, is it my fault any more’n it’s yourn?”

“Well, they’d be in this house yet and we wouldn’t if I could ‘a’ got my advice listened to.”

The king sassed back as much as was safe for him, and then swapped around and lit into me again. He give me down the banks for not coming and telling him I see the niggers come out of his room acting that way—said any fool would ‘a’ knowed something was up. And then waltzed in and cussed himself awhile, and said it all come of him not laying late and taking his natural rest that morning, and he’d be blamed if he’d ever do it again. So they went off a-jawing; and I felt dreadful glad I’d worked it all off onto the niggers, and yet hadn’t done the niggers no harm by it.

CHAPTER XXVIII

By and by it was getting-up time. So I come down the ladder and started for down-stairs; but as I come to the girls’ room the door was open, and I see Mary Jane setting by her old hair trunk, which was open and she’d been packing things in it—getting ready to go to England. But she had stopped now with a folded gown in her lap, and had her face in her hands, crying. I felt awful bad to see it; of course anybody would. I went in there and says:

“Miss Mary Jane, you can’t a-bear to see people in trouble, and I can’t—most always. Tell me about it.”

So she done it. And it was the niggers—I just expected it. She said the beautiful trip to England was most about spoiled for her; she didn’t know how she was ever going to be happy there, knowing the mother and the children warn’t ever going to see each other no more—and then busted out bitterer than ever, and flung up her hands, and says:

“Oh, dear, dear, to think they ain’t ever going to see each other any more!”

“But they will—and inside of two weeks—and I know it!” says I.

Laws, it was out before I could think! And before I could budge she throws her arms around my neck and told me to say it again, say it again, say it again!

I see I had spoke too sudden and said too much, and was in a close place. I asked her to let me think a minute; and she set there, very impatient and excited and handsome, but looking kind of happy and eased-up, like a person that’s had a tooth pulled out. So I went to studying it out. I says to myself, I reckon a body that ups and tells the truth when he is in a tight place is taking considerable many resks, though I ain’t had no experience, and can’t say for certain; but it looks so to me, anyway; and yet here’s a case where I’m blest if it don’t look to me like the truth is better and actuly safer than a lie. I must lay it by in my mind, and think it over some time or other, it’s so kind of strange and unregular. I never see nothing like it. Well, I says to myself at last, I’m a-going to chance it; I’ll up and tell the truth this time, though it does seem most like setting down on a kag of powder and touching it off just to see where you’ll go to. Then I says:

“Miss Mary Jane, is there any place out of town a little ways where you could go and stay three or four days?”

“Yes; Mr. Lothrop’s. Why?”

“Never mind why yet. If I’ll tell you how I know the niggers will see each other again—inside of two weeks—here in this house—and prove how I know it—will you go to Mr. Lothrop’s and stay four days?”

“Four days!” she says; “I’ll stay a year!”
“All right,” I says, “I don’t want nothing more out of you than just your word—I druther have it than another man’s kiss-the-Bible.” She smiled and reddened up very sweet, and I says, “If you don’t mind it, I’ll shut the door—and bolt it.”

Then I come back and set down again, and says:

“Don’t you holler. Just set still and take it like a man. I got to tell the truth, and you want to brace up, Miss Mary, because it’s a bad kind, and going to be hard to take, but there ain’t no help for it. These uncles of yourn ain’t no uncles at all; they’re a couple of frauds—regular dead-beats. There, now we’re over the worst of it, you can stand the rest middling easy.”

It jolted her up like everything, of course; but I was over the shoal water now, so I went right along, her eyes a-blazing higher and higher all the time, and told her every blame thing, from where we first struck that young fool going up to the steamboat, clear through to where she flung herself onto the king’s breast at the front door and he kissed her sixteen or seventeen times—and then up she jumps, with her face afire like sunset, and says:

“The brute! Come, don’t waste a minute—not a second—we’ll have them tarred and feathered, and flung in the river!”

Says I:

“Cert’nly. But do you mean before you go to Mr. Lothrop’s, or—”

“Oh,” she says, “what am I thinking about!” she says, and set right down again. “Don’t mind what I said—please don’t—you won’t, now, will you?” Laying her silky hand on mine in that kind of a way that I said I would die first. “I never thought, I was so stirred up,” she says; “now go on, and I won’t do so any more. You tell me what to do, and whatever you say I’ll do it.”

“Well,” I says, “it’s a rough gang, them two frauds, and I’m fixed so I got to travel with them a while longer, whether I want to or not—I druther not tell you why; and if you was to blow on them this town would get me out of their claws, and I’d be all right; but there’d be another person that you don’t know about who’d be in big trouble. Well, we got to save him, hain’t we? Of course. Well, then, we won’t blow on them.”

Saying them words put a good idea in my head. I see how maybe I could get me and Jim rid of the frauds; get them jailed here, and then leave. But I didn’t want to run the raft in the daytime without anybody aboard to answer questions but me; so I didn’t want the plan to begin working till pretty late to-night. I says:

“Miss Mary Jane, I’ll tell you what we’ll do, and you won’t have to stay at Mr. Lothrop’s so long, nuther. How fur is it?”

“A little short of four miles—right out in the country, back here.”

“Well, that’ll answer. Now you go along out there, and lay low till nine or half past to-night, and then get them to fetch you home again—tell them you’ve thought of something. If you get here before eleven put a candle in this window, and if I don’t turn up wait till eleven, and then if I don’t turn up it means I’m gone, and out of the way, and safe. Then you come out and spread the news around, and get these beats jailed.”

“Good,” she says, “I’ll do it.”

“And if it just happens so that I don’t get away, but get took up along with them, you must up and say I told you the whole thing beforehand, and you must stand by me all you can.”

“Stand by you! indeed I will. They sha’n’t touch a hair of your head!” she says, and I see her nostrils spread and her eyes snap when she said it, too.

“If I get away I sha’n’t be here,” I says, “to prove these rapscallions ain’t your uncles, and I couldn’t do it if I was here. I could swear they was beats and bummers, that’s all, though that’s worth something. Well, there’s others can do that better than what I can, and they’re people that ain’t going to be doubted as quick as I’d be. I’ll tell you how to find them. Gimme a pencil and a piece of paper. There—‘Royal Nonesuch, Bricksville.’ Put it away, and don’t lose it. When the court wants to find out something about these two, let them send up to Bricksville and say they’ve got the men that played the ‘Royal Nonesuch,’ and ask for some witnesses—why, you’ll have that entire town down here before you can hardly wink, Miss Mary. And they’ll come a-biling, too.”

I judged we had got everything fixed about right now. So I says:
“Just let the auction go right along, and don’t worry. Nobody don’t have to pay for the things they buy till a whole day after the auction on accounts of the short notice, and they ain’t going out of this till they get that money; and the way we’ve fixed it the sale ain’t going to count, and they ain’t going to get no money. It’s just like the way it was with the niggers—it warn’t no sale, and the niggers will be back before long. Why, they can’t collect the money for the niggers yet—they’re in the worst kind of a fix, Miss Mary.”

“Well,” she says, “I’ll run down to breakfast now, and then I’ll start straight for Mr. Lothrop’s.”

“Deed, that ain’t the ticket, Miss Mary Jane,” I says, “by no manner of means; go before breakfast.”

“Why?”

“What did you reckon I wanted you to go at all for, Miss Mary?”

“Well, I never thought—and come to think, I don’t know. What was it?”

“Well, it’s because you ain’t one of these leather-face people. I don’t want no better book than what your face is. A body can set down and read it off like coarse print. Do you reckon you can go and face your uncles when they come to kiss you good-morning, and never—”

“There, there, don’t! Yes, I’ll go before breakfast—I’ll be glad to. And leave my sisters with them?”

“Yes; never mind about them. They’ve got to stand it yet awhile. They might suspicion something if all of you was to go. I don’t want you to see them, nor your sisters, nor nobody in this town; if a neighbor was to ask how is your uncles this morning your face would tell something. No, you go right along, Miss Mary Jane, and I’ll fix it with all of them. I’ll tell Miss Susan to give your love to your uncles and say you’ve went away for a few hours for to get a little rest and change, or to see a friend, and you’ll be back to-night or early in the morning.”

“Gone to see a friend is all right, but I won’t have my love given to them.”

“Well, then, it sha’n’t be.” It was well enough to tell her so—no harm in it. It was only a little thing to do, and no trouble; and it’s the little things that smooths people’s roads the most, down here below; it would make Mary Jane comfortable, and it wouldn’t cost nothing. Then I says: “There’s one more thing—that bag of money.”

“Well, they’ve got that; and it makes me feel pretty silly to think how they got it.”

“No, you’re out, there. They hain’t got it.”

“I wish I knowed, but I don’t. I had it, because I stole it from them; and I stole it to give to you; and I know where I hid it, but I’m afraid it ain’t there no more. I’m awful sorry, Miss Mary Jane, I’m just as sorry as I can be; but I done the best I could; I did honest. I come nigh getting caught, and I had to shove it into the first place I come to, and run—and it warn’t a good place.”

“Oh, stop blaming yourself—it’s too bad to do it, and I won’t allow it—you couldn’t help it; it wasn’t your fault. Where did you hide it?”

I didn’t want to set her to thinking about her troubles again; and I couldn’t seem to get my mouth to tell her what would make her see that corpse laying in the coffin with that bag of money on his stomach. So for a minute I didn’t say nothing; then I says:

“I’d rather not tell you where I put it, Miss Mary Jane, if you don’t mind letting me off; but I’ll write it for you on a piece of paper, and you can read it along the road to Mr. Lothrop’s, if you want to. Do you reckon that ’ll do?”

“Oh, yes.”

So I wrote: “I put it in the coffin. It was in there when you was crying there, away in the night. I was behind the door, and I was mighty sorry for you, Miss Mary Jane.”

It made my eyes water a little to remember her crying there all by herself in the night, and them devils laying there right under her own roof, shaming her and robbing her; and when I folded it up and give it to her I see the water come into her eyes, too; and she shook me by the hand, hard, and says:
“Good-by. I’m going to do everything just as you’ve told me; and if I don’t ever see you again, I sha’n’t ever forget you, and I’ll think of you a many and a many a time, and I’ll pray for you, too!”—and she was gone.

Pray for me! I reckoned if she knowed me she’d take a job that was more nearer her size. But I bet she done it, just the same—she was just that kind. She had the grit to pray for Judus if she took the notion—there warn’t no back-down to her, I judge. You may say what you want to, but in my opinion she had more sand in her than any girl I ever see; in my opinion she was just full of sand. It sounds like flattery, but it ain’t no flattery. And when it comes to beauty—and goodness, too—she lays over them all. I hain’t ever seen her since that time that I see her go out of that door; no, I hain’t ever seen her since, but I reckon I’ve thought of her a many and a many a million times, and of her saying she would pray for me; and if ever I’d ‘a’ thought it would do any good for me to pray for her, blamed if I wouldn’t ‘a’ done it or bust.

Well, Mary Jane she lit out the back way, I reckon; because nobody see her go. When I struck Susan and the hare-lip, I says:

“What’s the name of them people over on t’other side of the river that you all goes to see sometimes?”

They says:

“There’s several; but it’s the Proctors, mainly.”

“That’s the name,” I says; “I most forgot it. Well, Miss Mary Jane she told me to tell you she’s gone over there in a dreadful hurry—one of them’s sick.”

“Which one?”

“I don’t know; leastways, I kinder forget; but I thinks it’s—”

“Sakes alive, I hope it ain’t Hanner?”

“I’m sorry to say it,” I says, “but Hanner’s the very one.”

“My goodness, and she so well only last week! Is she took bad?”

“It ain’t no name for it. They set up with her all night, Miss Mary Jane said, and they don’t think she’ll last many hours.”

“Only think of that, now! What’s the matter with her?”

I couldn’t think of anything reasonable, right off that way, so I says:

“Mumps.”

“Mumps your granny! They don’t set up with people that’s got the mumps.”

“They don’t, don’t they? You better bet they do with these mumps. These mumps is different. It’s a new kind, Miss Mary Jane said.”

“How’s it a new kind?”

“Because it’s mixed up with other things.”

“What other things?”

“Well, measles, and whooping-cough, and erysiplas, and consumption, and yaller janders, and brain-fever, and I don’t know what all.”

“My land! And they call it the mumps?”

“That’s what Miss Mary Jane said.”

“Well, what in the nation do they call it the mumps for?”

“Why, because it is the mumps. That’s what it starts with.”
“Well, ther’ ain’t no sense in it. A body might stump his toe, and take pison, and fall down the well, and break his neck, and bust his brains out, and somebody come along and ask what killed him, and some numskull up and say, ‘Why, he stumped his toe.’ Would ther’ be any sense in that? No. And ther’ ain’t no sense in this, nuther. Is it ketching?”

“Is it ketching? Why, how you talk. Is a harrow catching—in the dark? If you don’t hitch on to one tooth, you’re bound to on another, ain’t you? And you can’t get away with that tooth without fetching the whole harrow along, can you? Well, these kind of mumps is a kind of a harrow, as you may say—and it ain’t no slouch of a harrow, nuther, you come to get it hitched on good.”

“Well, it’s awful, I think,” says the hare-lip. “I’ll go to Uncle Harvey and—“

“Oh, yes,” I says, “I would. Of course I would. I wouldn’t lose no time.”

“Well, why wouldn’t you?”

“Just look at it a minute, and maybe you can see. Hain’t your uncles obleeged to get along home to England as fast as they can? And do you reckon they’d be mean enough to go off and leave you to go all that journey by yourselves? You know they’ll wait for you. So fur, so good. Your uncle Harvey’s a preacher, ain’t he? Very well, then; is a preacher going to deceive a steamboat clerk? Is he going to deceive a ship clerk?—so as to get them to let Miss Mary Jane go aboard? Now you know he ain’t. What will he do, then? Why, he’ll say, ‘It’s a great pity, but my church matters has got to get along the best way they can; for my niece has been exposed to the dreadful pluribus-unum mumps, and so it’s my bounden duty to set down here and wait the three months it takes to show on her if she’s got it.’ But never mind, if you think it’s best to tell your uncle Harvey—“

“Shucks, and stay fooling around here when we could all be having good times in England whilst we was waiting to find out whether Mary Jane’s got it or not? Why, you talk like a muggins.”

“Well, anyway, maybe you’d better tell some of the neighbors.”

“Listen at that, now. You do beat all for natural stupidness. Can’t you see that they’d go and tell? Ther’ ain’t no way but just to not tell anybody at all.”

“Well, maybe you’re right—yes, I judge you are right.”

“But I reckon we ought to tell Uncle Harvey she’s gone out awhile, anyway, so he won’t be uneasy about her?”

“Yes, Miss Mary Jane she wanted you to do that. She says, ‘Tell them to give Uncle Harvey and William my love and a kiss, and say I’ve run over the river to see Mr.’—Mr.—what is the name of that rich family your uncle Peter used to think so much of?—I mean the one that—“

“Why, you must mean the Apthorps, ain’t it?”

“Of course; bother them kind of names, a body can’t ever seem to remember them, half the time, somehow. Yes, she said, say she has run over for to ask the Apthorps to be sure and come to the auction and buy this house, because she allowed her uncle Peter would rather they had it than anybody else; and she’s going to stick to them till they say they’ll come, and then, if she ain’t too tired, she’s coming home; and if she is, she’ll be home in the morning anyway. She said, don’t say nothing about the Proctors, but only about the Apthorps—which ’ll be perfectly true, because she is going there to speak about their buying the house; I know it, because she told me so herself.”

“All right,” they said, and cleared out to lay for their uncles, and give them the love and the kisses, and tell them the message.

Everything was all right now. The girls wouldn’t say nothing because they wanted to go to England; and the king and the duke would rather Mary Jane was off working for the auction than around in reach of Doctor Robinson. I felt very good; I judged I had done it pretty neat—I reckoned Tom Sawyer couldn’t ’a’ done it no neater himself. Of course he would ’a’ threwed more style into it, but I can’t do that very handy, not being brung up to it.

Well, they held the auction in the public square, along towards the end of the afternoon, and it strung along, and strung along, and the old man he was on hand and looking his level pisonest, up there longside of the auctioneer, and chipping in a little Scripture now and then, or a little goody-goody saying of some kind, and the duke he was around goo-gooing for sympathy all he knowed how, and just spreading himself generly.
But by and by the thing dragged through, and everything was sold—everything but a little old trifling lot in the graveyard. So they’d got to work that off—I never see such a girafft as the king was for wanting to swallow everything. Well, whilst they was at it a steamboat landed, and in about two minutes up comes a crowd a-whooping and yelling and laughing and carrying on, and singing out:

“Here’s your opposition line! here’s your two sets o’ heirs to old Peter Wilks—and you pays your money and you takes your choice!”

CHAPTER XXIX

They was fetching a very nice-looking old gentleman along, and a nice-looking younger one, with his right arm in a sling. And, my souls, how the people yelled and laughed, and kept it up. But I didn’t see no joke about it, and I judged it would strain the duke and the king some to see any. I reckoned they’d turn pale. But no, nary a pale did they turn. The duke he never let on he suspicioned what was up, but just went a goo-gooing around, happy and satisfied, like a jug that’s googling out buttermilk; and as for the king, he just gazed and gazed down sorrowful on them new-comers like it give him the stomach-ache in his very heart to think there could be such frauds and rascals in the world. Oh, he done it admirable. Lots of the principal people gethered around the king, to let him see they was on his side. That old gentleman that had just come looked all puzzled to death. Pretty soon he begun to speak, and I see straight off he pronounced like an Englishman—not the king’s way, though the king’s was pretty good for an imitation. I can’t give the old gent’s words, nor I can’t imitate him; but he turned around to the crowd, and says, about like this:

“This is a surprise to me which I wasn’t looking for; and I’ll acknowledge, candid and frank, I ain’t very well fixed to meet it and answer it; for my brother and me has had misfortunes; he’s broke his arm, and our baggage got put off at a town above here last night in the night by a mistake. I am Peter Wilks’s brother Harvey, and this is his brother William, which can’t hear nor speak—and can’t even make signs to amount to much, now’t he’s only got one hand to work them with. We are who we say we are; and in a day or two, when I get the baggage, I can prove it. But up till then I won’t say nothing more, but go to the hotel and wait.”

So him and the new dummy started off; and the king he laughs, and blethers out:

“Broke his arm—very likely, ain’t it?—and very convenient, too, for a fraud that’s got to make signs, and ain’t learnt how. Lost their baggage! That’s mighty good!—and mighty ingenious—under the circumstances!”

So he laughed again; and so did everybody else, except three or four, or maybe half a dozen. One of these was that doctor; another one was a sharp-looking gentleman, with a carpet-bag of the old-fashioned kind made out of carpet-stuff, that had just come off of the steamboat and was talking to him in a low voice, and glancing towards the king now and then and nodding their heads—it was Levi Bell, the lawyer that was gone up to Louisville; and another one was a big rough husky that come along and listened to all the old gentlemen said, and was listening to the king now. And when the king got done this husky up and says:

“Say, looky here; if you are Harvey Wilks, when’d you come to this town?”

“The day before the funeral, friend,” says the king.

“But what time o’ day?”

“In the evenin’—’bout an hour er two before sundown.”

“How’d you come?”

“I come down on the Susan Powell from Cincinnati.”

“Well, then, how’d you come to be up at the Pint in the mornin’—in a canoe?”

“I warn’t up at the Pint in the mornin’.”

“It’s a lie.”

Several of them jumped for him and begged him not to talk that way to an old man and a preacher.
“Preacher be hanged, he’s a fraud and a liar. He was up at the Pint that mornin’. I live up there, don’t I? Well, I was up there, and he was up there. I see him there. He come in a canoe, along with Tim Collins and a boy.”

The doctor he up and says:

“Would you know the boy again if you was to see him, Hines?”

“I reckon I would, but I don’t know. Why, yonder he is, now. I know him perfectly easy.”

It was me he pointed at. The doctor says:

“Neighbores, I don’t know whether the new couple is frauds or not; but if these two ain’t frauds, I am an idiot, that’s all. I think it’s our duty to see that they don’t get away from here till we’ve looked into this thing. Come along, Hines; come along, the rest of you. We’ll take these fel lows to the tavern and affront them with t’other couple, and I reckon we’ll find out something before we get through.”

It was nuts for the crowd, though maybe not for the king’s friends; so we all started. It was about sundown. The doctor he led me along by the hand, and was plenty kind enough, but he never let go my hand.

We all got in a big room in the hotel, and lit up some candles, and fetched in the new couple. First, the doctor says:

“I don’t wish to be too hard on these two men, but I think they’re frauds, and they may have complices that we don’t know nothing about. If they have, won’t the complices get away with that bag of gold Peter Wilks left? It ain’t unlikely. If these men ain’t frauds, they won’t object to sending for that money and letting us keep it till they prove they’re all right—ain’t that so?”

Everybody agreed to that. So I judged they had our gang in a pretty tight place right at the out start. But the king he only looked sorrowful, and says:

“Gentlemen, I wish the money was there, for I ain’t got no disposition to throw anything in the way of a fair, open, out-and-out investigation o’ this misable business; but, alas, the money ain’t there; you k’n send and see, if you want to.”

“Where is it, then?”

“Well, when my niece give it to me to keep for her I took and hid it inside o’ the straw tick o’ my bed, not wishin’ to bank it for the few days we’d be here, and considerin’ the bed a safe place, we not bein’ used to niggers, and suppos’n’ em honest, like servants in England. The niggers stole it the very next mornin’ after I had went downstairs; and when I sold ’em I hadn’t missed the money yit, so they got clean away with it. My servant here k’n tell you ’bout it, gentlemen.”

The doctor and several said “Shucks!” and I see nobody didn’t altogether believe him. One man asked me if I see the niggers steal it. I said no, but I see them sneaking out of the room and hustling away, and I never thought nothing, only I reckoned they was afraid they had waked up my master and was trying to get away before he made trouble with them. That was all they asked me. Then the doctor whirls on me and says:

“Are you English, too?”

I says yes; and him and some others laughed, and said, “Stuff!”

Well, then they sailed in on the general investigation, and there we had it, up and down, hour in, hour out, and nobody never said a word about supper, nor ever seemed to think about it—and so they kept it up, and kept it up; and it was the worst mixed-up thing you ever see. They made the king tell his yarn, and they made the old gentleman tell his’n; and anybody but a lot of prejudiced chuckleheads would ’a’ seen that the old gentleman was spinning truth and t’other one lies. And by and by they had me up to tell what I knowed. The king he give me a left-handed look out of the corner of his eye, and so I knowed enough to talk on the right side. I begun to tell about Sheffield, and how we lived there, and all about the English Wilkses, and so on; but I didn’t get pretty fur till the doctor begun to laugh; and Levi Bell, the lawyer, says:

“Set down, my boy; I wouldn’t strain myself if I was you. I reckon you ain’t used to lying, it don’t seem to come handy; what you want is practice. You do it pretty awkward.”

I didn’t care nothing for the compliment, but I was glad to be let off, anyway.
The doctor he started to say something, and turns and says:

“If you’d been in town at first, Levi Bell—”

The king broke in and reached out his hand, and says:

“Why, is this my poor dead brother’s old friend that he’s wrote so often about?”

The lawyer and him shook hands, and the lawyer smiled and looked pleased, and they talked right along awhile, and then got to one side and talked low; and at last the lawyer speaks up and says:

“That’ll fix it. I’ll take the order and send it, along with your brother’s, and then they’ll know it’s all right.”

So they got some paper and a pen, and the king he set down and twisted his head to one side, and chawed his tongue, and scrawled off something; and then they give the pen to the duke—and then for the first time the duke looked sick. But he took the pen and wrote. So then the lawyer turns to the new old gentleman and says:

“You and your brother please write a line or two and sign your names.”

The old gentleman wrote, but nobody couldn’t read it. The lawyer looked powerful astonished, and says:

“Well, it beats me—and snaked a lot of old letters out of his pocket, and examined them, and then examined the old man’s writing, and then them again; and then says: “These old letters is from Harvey Wilks; and here’s these two handwritings, and anybody can see they didn’t write them” (the king and the duke looked sold and foolish, I tell you, to see how the lawyer had took them in), “and here’s this old gentleman’s handwritings, and anybody can tell, easy enough, he didn’t write them—fact is, the scratches he makes ain’t properly writing at all. Now, here’s some letters from—”

The new old gentleman says:

“If you please, let me explain. Nobody can read my hand but my brother there—so he copies for me. It’s his hand you’ve got there, not mine.”

“Well!” says the lawyer, “this is a state of things. I’ve got some of William’s letters, too; so if you’ll get him to write a line or so we can com—”

“He can’t write with his left hand,” says the old gentleman. “If he could use his right hand, you would see that he wrote his own letters and mine too. Look at both, please—they’re by the same hand.”

The lawyer done it, and says:

“I believe it’s so—and if it ain’t so, there’s a heap stronger resemblance than I’d noticed before, anyway. Well, well, well! I thought we was right on the track of a solution, but it’s gone to grass, partly. But anyway, one thing is proved—these two ain’t either of ‘em Wilkses”—and he wagged his head towards the king and the duke.

Well, what do you think? That mule-headed old fool wouldn’t give in then! Indeed he wouldn’t. Said it warn’t no fair test. Said his brother William was the cussedest joker in the world, and hadn’t tried to write—he see William was going to play one of his jokes the minute he put the pen to paper. And so he warmed up and went warbling right along till he was actuly beginning to believe what he was saying himself; but pretty soon the new gentleman broke in, and says:

“I’ve thought of something. Is there anybody here that helped to lay out my br—helped to lay out the late Peter Wilks for burying?”

“Yes,” says somebody, “me and Ab Turner done it. We’re both here.”

Then the old man turns toward the king, and says:

“Peraps this gentleman can tell me what was tattooed on his breast?”

Blamed if the king didn’t have to brace up mighty quick, or he’d ‘a’ squished down like a bluff bank that the river has cut under, it took him so sudden; and, mind you, it was a thing that was calculated to make most anybody squish to get fetched such a solid one as that without any notice, because how was he going to know what was tattooed on the man? He whitened a little; he couldn’t help it; and it was mighty still in there, and everybody
bending a little forwards and gazing at him. Says I to myself, Now he’ll throw up the sponge—there ain’t no more use. Well, did he? A body can’t hardly believe it, but he didn’t. I reckon he thought he’d keep the thing up till he tired them people out, so they’d thin out, and him and the duke could break loose and get away. Anyway, he set there, and pretty soon he begun to smile, and says:

“Mf! It’s a very tough question, ain’t it! Yes, sir, I k’n tell you what’s tattooed on his breast. It’s jest a small, thin, blue arrow—that’s what it is; and if you don’t look clost, you can’t see it. Now what do you say—hey?”

Well, I never see anything like that old blister for clean out-and-out cheek.

The new old gentleman turns brisk towards Ab Turner and his pard, and his eye lights up like he judged he’d got the king this time, and says:

“There—you’ve heard what he said! Was there any such mark on Peter Wilks’s breast?”

Both of them spoke up and says:

“We didn’t see no such mark.”

“Good!” says the old gentleman. “Now, what you did see on his breast was a small dim P, and a B (which is an initial he dropped when he was young), and a W, and dashes between them, so: P—B—W”—and he marked them that way on a piece of paper. “Come, ain’t that what you saw?”

Both of them spoke up again, and says:

“No, we didn’t. We never seen any marks at all.”

Well, everybody was in a state of mind now, and they sings out:

“The whole bilin’ of ’m ‘s frauds! Le’s duck ‘em! le’s drown ‘em! le’s ride ‘em on a rail!” and everybody was whooping at once, and there was a rattling powwow. But the lawyer he jumps on the table and yells, and says:

“Gentlemen—gentlemen! Hear me just a word—just a single word—if you PLEASE! There’s one way yet—let’s go and dig up the corpse and look.”

That took them.

“Hooray!” they all shouted, and was starting right off; but the lawyer and the doctor sung out:

“Hold on, hold on! Collar all these four men and the boy, and fetch them along, too!”

“We’ll do it!” they all shouted; “and if we don’t find them marks we’ll lynch the whole gang!”

I was scared, now, I tell you. But there warn’t no getting away, you know. They gripped us all, and marched us right along, straight for the graveyard, which was a mile and a half down the river, and the whole town at our heels, for we made noise enough, and it was only nine in the evening.

As we went by our house I wished I hadn’t sent Mary Jane out of town; because now if I could tip her the wink she’d light out and save me, and blow on our dead-beats.

Well, we swarmed along down the river road, just carrying on like wildcats; and to make it more scary the sky was darkening up, and the lightning beginning to wink and flitter, and the wind to shiver amongst the leaves. This was the most awful trouble and most dangerous I ever was in; and I was kinder stunned; everything was going so different from what I had allowed for; stead of being fixed so I could take my own time if I wanted to, and see all the fun, and have Mary Jane at my back to save me and set me free when the close-fit come, here was nothing in the world betwixt me and sudden death but just them tattoo-marks. If they didn’t find them—

I couldn’t bear to think about it; and yet, somehow, I couldn’t think about nothing else. It got darker and darker, and it was a beautiful time to give the crowd the slip; but that big husky had me by the wrist—Hines—and a body might as well try to give Goliar the slip. He dragged me right along, he was so excited, and I had to run to keep up.

When they got there they swarmed into the graveyard and washed over it like an overflow. And when they got to the grave they found they had about a hundred times as many shovels as they wanted, but nobody hadn’t thought
to fetch a lantern. But they sailed into digging anyway by the flicker of the lightning, and sent a man to the nearest house, a half a mile off, to borrow one.

So they dug and dug like everything; and it got awful dark, and the rain started, and the wind swished and swushed along, and the lightning came brisker and brisker, and the thunder boomed; but them people never took no notice of it, they was so full of this business; and one minute you could see everything and every face in that big crowd, and the shovelfuls of dirt sailing up out of the grave, and the next second the dark wiped it all out, and you couldn’t see nothing at all.

At last they got out the coffin and begun to unscrew the lid, and then such another crowding and shouldering and shoving as there was, to scrouge in and get a sight, you never see; and in the dark, that way, it was awful. Hines he hurt my wrist dreadful pulling and tugging so, and I reckon he clean forgot I was in the world, he was so excited and panting.

All of a sudden the lightning let go a perfect sluice of white glare, and somebody sings out:

“By the living jingo, here’s the bag of gold on his breast!”

Hines let out a whoop, like everybody else, and dropped my wrist and give a big surge to bust his way in and get a look, and the way I lit out and shinned for the road in the dark there ain’t nobody can tell.

I had the road all to myself, and I fairly flew—leastways, I had it all to myself except the solid dark, and the now-and-then glares, and the buzzing of the rain, and the thrashing of the wind, and the splitting of the thunder; and sure as you are born I did clip it along!

When I struck the town I see there warn’t nobody out in the storm, so I never hunted for no back streets, but humped it straight through the main one; and when I begun to get towards our house I aimed my eye and set it. No light there; the house all dark—which made me feel sorry and disappointed, I didn’t know why. But at last, just as I was sailing by, flash comes the light in Mary Jane’s window! and my heart swelled up sudden, like to bust; and the same second the house and all was behind me in the dark, and wasn’t ever going to be before me no more in this world. She was the best girl I ever see, and had the most sand.

The minute I was far enough above the town to see I could make the towhead, I begun to look sharp for a boat to borrow, and the first time the lightning showed me one that wasn’t chained I snatched it and shoved. It was a canoe, and warn’t fastened with nothing but a rope. The towhead was a rattling big distance off, away out there in the middle of the river, but I didn’t lose no time; and when I struck the raft at last I was so fagged I would ‘a’ just laid down to blow and gasp if I could afforded it. But I didn’t. As I sprung aboard I sung out:

“Out with you, Jim, and set her loose! Glory be to goodness, we’re shut of them!”

Jim lit out, and was a-coming for me with both arms spread, he was so full of joy; but when I glimpsed him in the lightning my heart shot up in my mouth and I went overboard backwards; for I forgot he was old King Lear and a drowned A-rab all in one, and it most scared the livers and lights out of me. But Jim fished me out, and was going to hug me and bless me, and so on, he was so glad I was back and we was shut of the king and the duke, but I says:

“Not now; have it for breakfast, have it for breakfast! Cut loose and let her slide!”

So in two seconds away we went a-sliding down the river, and it did seem so good to be free again and all by ourselves on the big river, and nobody to bother us. I had to skip around a bit, and jump up and crack my heels a few times—I couldn’t help it; but about the third crack I noticed a sound that I knowed mighty well, and held my breath and listened and waited; and sure enough, when the next flash busted out over the water, here they come!—and just a-laying to their oars and making their skiff hum! It was the king and the duke.

So I wilted right down onto the planks then, and give up; and it was all I could do to keep from crying.
CHAPTER XXX

When they got aboard the king went for me, and shook me by the collar, and says:

"Tryin’ to give us the slip, was ye, you pup! Tired of our company, hey?"

I says:

"No, your majesty, we warn’t—please don’t, your majesty!"

"Quick, then, and tell us what was your idea, or I’ll shake the insides out o’ you!"

"Honest, I’ll tell you everything just as it happened, your majesty. The man that had a-holt of me was very good to me, and kept saying he had a boy about as big as me that died last year, and he was sorry to see a boy in such a dangerous fix; and when they was all took by surprise by finding the gold, and made a rush for the coffin, he lets go of me and whispers, ‘Heel it now, or they’ll hang ye, sure!’ and I lit out. It didn’t seem no good for me to stay—I couldn’t do nothing, and I didn’t want to be hung if I could get away. So I never stopped running till I found the canoe; and when I got here I told Jim to hurry, or they’d catch me and hang me yet, and said I was afeard you and the duke wasn’t alive now, and I was awful sorry, and was awful glad when we see you coming; you may ask Jim if I didn’t.” Jim said it was so; and the king told him to shut up, and said, “Oh, yes, it’s mighty likely!” and shook me up again, and said he reckoned he’d drownd me. But the duke says:

“Leggo the boy, you old idiot! Would you ‘a’ done any different? Did you inquire around for him when you got loose? I don’t remember it.”

So the king let go of me, and begun to cuss that town and everybody in it. But the duke says:

“You better a blame’ sight give yourself a good cussing, for you’re the one that’s entitled to it most. You hain’t done a thing from the start that had any sense in it, except coming out so cool and cheeky with that imaginary blue-arrow mark. That was bright—it was right down bully; and it was the thing that saved us. For if it hadn’t been for that they’d ‘a’ jailed us till them Englishmen’s baggage come—and then—the penitentiary, you bet! But that trick took ‘em to the graveyard, and the gold done us a still bigger kindness; for if the excited fools hadn’t let go all holts and made that rush to get a look we’d ‘a’ slept in our cravats to-night—cravats warranted to wear, too—longer than we’d need ‘em.”

They was still a minute—thinking; then the king says, kind of absent-minded like:

“Mf! And we reckoned the niggers stole it!”

That made me squirm!

“Yes,” says the duke, kinder slow and deliberate and sarcastic, “we did.”

After about a half a minute the king drawls out:

“Leastways, I did.”

The duke says, the same way:

“On the contrary, I did.”

The king kind of ruffles up, and says:

“Looky here, Bilgewater, what’r you referrin’ to?” The duke says, pretty brisk:

“When it comes to that, maybe you’ll let me ask what was you referring to?”

“Shucks!” says the king, very sarcastic; “but I don’t know—maybe you was asleep, and didn’t know what you was about.”

The duke bristles up now, and says:
“Oh, let up on this cussed nonsense; do you take me for a blame’ fool? Don’t you reckon I know who hid that money in that coffin?”

“Yes, sir! I know you do know, because you done it yourself!”

“It’s a lie!”—and the duke went for him. The king sings out:

“Take y’r hands off!—leggo my throat!—I take it all back!”

The duke says:

“Well, you just own up, first, that you did hide that money there, intending to give me the slip one of these days, and come back and dig it up, and have it all to yourself.”

“Wait jest a minute, duke—answer me this one question, honest and fair; if you didn’t put the money there, say it, and I’l b’lieve you, and take back everything I said.”

“You old scoundrel, I didn’t, and you know I didn’t. There, now!”

“Well, then, I b’lieve you. But answer me only jest this one more—now don’t git mad; didn’t you have it in your mind to hook the money and hide it?”

The duke never said nothing for a little bit; then he says:

“Well, I don’t care if I did, I didn’t do it, anyway. But you not only had it in mind to do it, but you done it.”

“I wisht I never die if I done it, duke, and that’s honest. I won’t say I warn’t goin’ to do it, because I was; but you—I mean somebody—got in ahead o’ me.”

“It’s a lie! You done it, and you got to say you done it, or—”

The king began to gurgle, and then he gasps out:

“‘Nough!—I own up!”

I was very glad to hear him say that; it made me feel much more easier than what I was feeling before. So the duke took his hands off and says:

“If you ever deny it again I’ll drown you. It’s well for you to set there and blubber like a baby—it’s fitten for you, after the way you’ve acted. I never see such an old ostrich for wanting to gobble everything—and I a-trusting you all the time, like you was my own father. You ought to been ashamed of yourself to stand by and hear it saddled on to a lot of poor niggers, and you never say a word for ’em. It makes me feel ridiculous to think I was soft enough to believe that rubbage. Cuss you, I can see now why you was so anxious to make up the deffisit—you wanted to get what money I’d got out of the ’None-such’ and one thing or another, and scoop it all!”

The king says, timid, and still a-snuffling:

“Why, duke, it was you that said make up the deffersit; it warn’t me.”

“Dry up! I don’t want to hear no more out of you!” says the duke. “And now you see what you got by it. They’ve got all their own money back, and all of ours but a shekel or two besides. G’long to bed, and don’t you deffersit me no more deffersits, long ’s you live!”

So the king sneaked into the wigwam and took to his bottle for comfort, and before long the duke tackled his bottle; and so in about a half an hour they was as thick as thieves again, and the tighter they got the lovinger they got, and went off a-snoring in each other’s arms. They both got powerful mellow, but I noticed the king didn’t get mellow enough to forget to remember to not deny about hiding the money-bag again. That made me feel easy and satisfied. Of course when they got to snoring we had a long gabble, and I told Jim everything.
CHAPTER XXXI

We dasn’t stop again at any town for days and days; kept right along down the river. We was down south in the warm weather now, and a mighty long ways from home. We begun to come to trees with Spanish moss on them, hanging down from the limbs like long, gray beards. It was the first I ever see it growing, and it made the woods look solemn and dismal. So now the frauds reckoned they was out of danger, and they begun to work the villages again.

First they done a lecture on temperance; but they didn’t make enough for them both to get drunk on. Then in another village they started a dancing-school; but they didn’t know no more how to dance than a kangaroo does; so the first prance they made the general public jumped in and pranced them out of town. Another time they tried to go at yellocation; but they didn’t yellocate long till the audience got up and give them a solid good cussing, and made them skip out. They tackled missionarying, and mesmerizing, and doctoring, and telling fortunes, and a little of everything; but they couldn’t seem to have no luck. So at last they got just about dead broke, and laid around the raft as she floated along, thinking and thinking, and never saying nothing, by the half a day at a time, and dreadful blue and desperate.

And at last they took a change and begun to lay their heads together in the wigwam and talk low and confidential two or three hours at a time. Jim and me got uneasy. We didn’t like the look of it. We judged they was studying up some kind of worse deviltry than ever. We turned it over and over, and at last we made up our minds they was going to break into somebody’s house or store, or was going into the counterfeit-money business, or something. So then we was pretty scared, and made up an agreement that we wouldn’t have nothing in the world to do with such actions, and if we ever got the least show we would give them the cold shake and clear out and leave them behind. Well, early one morning we hid the raft in a good, safe place about two mile below a little bit of a shabby village named Pikesville, and the king he went ashore and told us all to stay hid whilst he went up to town and smelt around to see if anybody had got any wind of the “Royal Nonesuch” there yet. (“House to rob, you mean,” says I to myself; “and when you get through robbing it you’ll come back here and wonder what has become of me and Jim and the raft—and you’ll have to take it out in wondering.”) And he said if he warn’t back by midday the duke and me would know it was all right, and we was to come along.

So we stayed where we was. The duke he fretted and sweated around, and was in a mighty sour way. He scolded us for everything, and we couldn’t seem to do nothing right; he found fault with every little thing. Something was a-brewing, sure. I was good and glad when midday come and no king; we could have a change, anyway—and maybe a chance for the chance on top of it. So me and the duke went up to the village, and hunted around there for the king, and by and by we found him in the back room of a little low doggery, very tight, and a lot of loafers bullyragging him for sport, and he a-cussing and a-threatening with all his might, and so tight he couldn’t walk, and couldn’t do nothing to them. The duke he begun to abuse him for an old fool, and the king begun to sass back, and the minute they was fairly at it I lit out and shook the reefs out of my hind legs, and spun down the river road like a deer, for I see our chance; and I made up my mind that it would be a long day before they ever see me and Jim again. I got down there all out of breath but loaded up with joy, and sung out:

“Set her loose, Jim; we’re all right now!”

But there warn’t no answer, and nobody come out of the wigwam. Jim was gone! I set up a shout—and then another—and then another one; and run this way and that in the woods, whooping and screeching; but it warn’t no use—old Jim was gone. Then I set down and cried; I couldn’t help it. But I couldn’t set still long. Pretty soon I went out on the road, trying to think what I better do, and I run across a boy walking, and asked him if he’d seen a strange nigger dressed so and so, and he says:

“Yes.”

“Whereabouts?” says I.

“Down to Silas Phelps’s place, two mile below here. He’s a runaway nigger, and they’ve got him. Was you looking for him?”

“You bet I ain’t! I run across him in the woods about an hour or two ago, and he said if I hollered he’d cut my livers out—and told me to lay down and stay where I was; and I done it. Been there ever since; afeard to come out.”

“Well,” he says, “you needn’t be afeard no more, becuz they’ve got him. He run off f’m down South som’ers.”
“It’s a good job they got him.”

“Well, I reckon! There’s two hundred dollars dollars’ reward on him. It’s like picking up money out’n the road.”

“Yes, it is—and I could ‘a’ had it if I’d been big enough; I see him first. Who nailed him?”

“It was an old fellow—a stranger—and he sold out his chance in him for forty dollars, becuz he’s got to go up the river and can’t wait. Think o’ that, now! You bet I’d wait, if it was seven year.”

“That’s me, every time,” says I. “But maybe his chance ain’t worth no more than that, if he’ll sell it so cheap. Maybe there’s something ain’t straight about it.”

“But it is, though—straight as a string. I see the handbill myself. It tells all about him, to a dot—paints him like a picture, and tells the plantation he’s frum, below New Orleans. No-sirree-bob, they ain’t no trouble ‘bout that speculation, you bet you. Say, gimme a chaw tobacker, won’t ye?”

I didn’t have none, so he left. I went to the raft, and set down in the wigwam to think. But I couldn’t come to nothing. I thought till I wore my head sore, but I couldn’t see no way out of the trouble. After all this long journey, and after all we’d done for them scoundrels, here it was all come to nothing, everything all busted up and ruined, because they could have the heart to serve Jim such a trick as that, and make him a slave again all his life, and amongst strangers, too, for forty dirty dollars.

Once I said to myself it would be a thousand times better for Jim to be a slave at home where his family was, as long as he’d got to be a slave, and so I’d better write a letter to Tom Sawyer and tell him to tell Miss Watson where he was. But I soon give up that notion for two things: she’d be mad and disgusted at his rascality and ungratefulness for leaving her, and so she’d sell him straight down the river again; and if she didn’t, everybody naturally despises an ungrateful nigger, and they’d make Jim feel it all the time, and so he’d feel ornery and disgraced. And then think of me! It would get all around that Huck Finn helped a nigger to get his freedom; and if I was ever to see anybody from that town again I’d be ready to get down and lick his boots for shame. That’s just the way: a person does a low-down thing, and then he don’t want to take no consequences of it. Thinks as long as he can hide, it ain’t no disgrace. That was my fix exactly. The more I studied about this the more my conscience went to grinding me, and the more wicked and low-down and ornery I got to feeling. And at last, when it hit me all of a sudden that here was the plain hand of Providence slapping me in the face and letting me know my wickedness was being watched all the time from up there in heaven, whilst I was stealing a poor old woman’s nigger that hadn’t ever done me no harm, and now was showing me there’s One that’s always on the lookout, and ain’t a-going to allow no such miserable doings to go on only just so fur and no further, I most dropped in my tracks I was so scared. Well, I tried the best I could to kinder soften it up somehow for myself by saying I was brung up wicked, and so I warn’t so much to blame; but something inside of me kept saying, “There was the Sunday-school, you could ‘a’ gone to it; and if you’d ‘a’ done it they’d ‘a’ learnt you there that people that acts as I’d been acting about that nigger goes to everlasting fire.”

It made me shiver. And I about made up my mind to pray, and see if I couldn’t try to quit being the kind of a boy I was and be better. So I kneeled down. But the words wouldn’t come. Why wouldn’t they? It warn’t no use to try and hide it from Him. Nor from me, neither. I knowed very well why they wouldn’t come. It was because my heart warn’t right; it was because I warn’t square; it was because I was playing double. I was letting the wickedness get the upper hand, and hide it from Him. Nor from nobody. And I didn’t know what to do. At last I had an idea; and I says, I’ll go and write the letter—and then see if I can pray. Why, it was astonishing, the way I felt as light as a feather right straight off, and my troubles all gone. So I got a piece of paper and a pencil, all glad and excited, and set down and wrote:

Miss Watson, your runaway nigger Jim is down here two mile below Pikesville, and Mr. Phelps has got him and he will give him up for the reward if you send. HUCK FINN.
of his'n, ‘stead of calling me, so I could go on sleeping; and see him how glad he was when I come back out of the fog; and when I come to him again in the swamp, up there where the feud was; and such-like times; and would always call me honey, and pet me, and do everything he could think of for me, and how good he always was; and at last I struck the time I saved him by telling the men we had smallpox aboard, and he was so grateful, and said I was the best friend old Jim ever had in the world, and the only one he’s got now; and then I happened to look around and see that paper.

It was a close place. I took it up, and held it in my hand. I was a-trembling, because I’d got to decide, forever, betwixt two things, and I knewed it. I studied a minute, sort of holding my breath, and then says to myself:

“All right, then, I’ll go to hell”—and tore it up. It was awful thoughts and awful words, but they was said. And I let them stay said; and never thought no more about reforming. I shoved the whole thing out of my head, and said I would take up wickedness again, which was in my line, being brung up to it, and the other warn’t. And for a starter I would go to work and steal Jim out of slavery again; and if I could think up anything worse, I would do that, too; because as long as I was in, and in for good, I might as well go the whole hog.

Then I set to thinking over how to get at it, and turned over some considerable many ways in my mind; and at last fixed up a plan that suited me. So then I took the bearings of a woody island that was down the river a piece, and as soon as it was fairly dark I crept out with my raft and went for it, and hid it there, and then turned in. I slept the night through, and got up before it was light, and had my breakfast, and put on my store clothes, and tied up some others and one thing or another in a bundle, and took the canoe and cleared for shore. I landed below where I judged was Phelps’s place, and hid my bundle in the woods, and then filled up the canoe with water, and loaded rocks into her and sunk her where I could find her again when I wanted her, about a quarter of a mile below a little steam-sawmill that was on the bank.

Then I struck up the road, and when I passed the mill I see a sign on it, “Phelps’s Sawmill,” and when I come to the farm-houses, two or three hundred yards further along, I kept my eyes peeled, but didn’t see nobody around, though it was good daylight now. But I didn’t mind, because I didn’t want to see nobody just yet—I only wanted to get the lay of the land. According to my plan, I was going to turn up there from the village, not from below. So I just took a look, and shoved along, straight for town. Well, the very first man I see when I got there was the duke. He was sticking up a bill for the “Royal Nonesuch—three-night performance—like that other time. They had the cheek, them frauds! I was right on him before I could shirk. He looked astonished, and says:

“Hel-lo! Where’d you come from?” Then he says, kind of glad and eager, “Where’s the raft?—got her in a good place?”

I says:

“Why, that’s just what I was going to ask your grace.”

Then he didn’t look so joyful, and says:

“What was your idea for asking me?” he says.

“Well,” I says, “when I see the king in that doggery yesterday I says to myself, we can’t get him home for hours, till he’s soberer; so I went a-loafing around town to put in the time and wait. A man up and offered me ten cents to help him pull a skiff over the river and back to fetch a sheep, and so I went along; but when we was dragging him to the boat, and the man left me a-holt of the rope and went behind him to shove him along, he was too strong for me and jerked loose and run, and we after him. We didn’t have no dog, and so we had to chase him all over the country till we tired him out. We never got him till dark; then we fetched him over, and I started down for the raft. When I got there and see it was gone, I says to myself, ‘They’ve got into trouble and had to leave; and they’ve took my nigger, which is the only nigger I’ve got in the world, and now I’m in a strange country, and ain’t got no property no more, nor nothing, and no way to make my living’; so I set down and cried. I slept in the woods all night. But what did become of the raft, then?—and Jim—poor Jim!”

“Blamed if I know—that is, what’s become of the raft. That old fool had made a trade and got forty dollars, and when we found him in the doggery the loafers had matched half-dollars with him and got every cent but what he’d spent for whisky; and when I got him home late last night and found the raft gone, we said, ‘That little rascal has stole our raft and shook us, and run off down the river.’”

“I wouldn’t shake my nigger, would I?—the only nigger I had in the world, and the only property.”

“We never thought of that. Fact is, I reckon we’d come to consider him our nigger; yes, we did consider him
so—goodness knows we had trouble enough for him. So when we see the raft was gone and we flat broke, there warn’t anything for it but to try the ‘Royal Nonesuch’ another shake. And I’ve pegged along ever since, dry as a powder-horn. Where’s that ten cents? Give it here."

I had considerable money, so I give him ten cents, but begged him to spend it for something to eat, and give me some, because it was all the money I had, and I hadn’t had nothing to eat since yesterday. He never said nothing. The next minute he whirs on me and says:

“Do you reckon that nigger would blow on us? We’d skin him if he done that!”

“How can he blow? Hain’t he run off?”

“No! That old fool sold him, and never divided with me, and the money’s gone."

“Sold him?” I says, and begun to cry; “why, he was my nigger, and that was my money. Where is he?—I want my nigger.”

“Well, you can’t get your nigger, that’s all—so dry up your blubbering. Looky here—do you think you’d venture to blow on us? Blamed if I think I’d trust you. Why, if you was to blow on us—”

He stopped, but I never see the duke look so ugly out of his eyes before. I went on a-whimpering, and says:

“I don’t want to blow on nobody; and I ain’t got no time to blow, nohow; I got to turn out and find my nigger.”

He looked kinder bothered, and stood there with his bills fluttering on his arm, thinking, and wrinkling up his forehead. At last he says:

“I’ll tell you something. We got to be here three days. If you’ll promise you won’t blow, and won’t let the nigger blow, I’ll tell you where to find him.”

So I promised, and he says:

“A farmer by the name of Silas Ph—” and then he stopped. You see, he started to tell me the truth; but when he stopped that way, and begun to study and think again, I reckoned he was changing his mind. And so he was. He wouldn’t trust me; he wanted to make sure of having me out of the way the whole three days. So pretty soon he says:

“The man that bought him is named Abram Foster—Abram G. Foster—and he lives forty mile back here in the country, on the road to Lafayette.”

“All right,” I says, “I can walk it in three days. And I’ll start this very afternoon.”

“No you won’t, you’ll start now; and don’t you lose any time about it, neither, nor do any gabbling by the way. Just keep a tight tongue in your head and move right along, and then you won’t get into trouble with us, d’ye hear?”

That was the order I wanted, and that was the one I played for. I wanted to be left free to work my plans.

“So clear out,” he says; “and you can tell Mr. Foster whatever you want to. Maybe you can get him to believe that Jim is your nigger—some idiots don’t require documents—leastways I’ve heard there’s such down South here. And when you tell him the handbill and the reward’s bogus, maybe he’ll believe you when you explain to him what the idea was for getting ‘em out. Go ’long now, and tell him anything you want to; but mind you don’t work your jaw any between here and there.”

So I left, and struck for the back country. I didn’t look around, but I kinder felt like he was watching me. But I knowed I could tire him out at that. I went straight out in the country as much as a mile before I stopped; then I doubled back through the woods towards Phelps’s. I reckoned I better start in on my plan straight off without fooling around, because I wanted to stop Jim’s mouth till these fellows could get away. I didn’t want no trouble with their kind. I’d seen all I wanted to of them, and wanted to get entirely shut of them.
CHAPTER XXXII

When I got there it was all still and Sunday-like, and hot and sunshiny; the hands was gone to the fields; and there was them kind of faint droenings of bugs and flies in the air that makes it seem so lonesome and like everybody's dead and gone; and if a breeze fans along and quivers the leaves it makes you feel mournful, because you feel like it's spirits whispering—spirits that's been dead ever so many years—and you always think they're talking about you. As a general thing it makes a body wish he was dead, too, and done with it all.

Phelps's was one of these little one-horse cotton plantations, and they all look alike. A rail fence round a two-acre yard; a stile made out of logs sawed off and up-ended in steps, like barrels of a different length, to climb over the fence with, and for the women to stand on when they are going to jump onto a horse; some sickly grass-patches in the big yard, but mostly it was bare and smooth, like an old hat with the nap rubbed off; big double log house for the white folks—hewed logs, with the chinks stopped up with mud or mortar, and these mud-stripes been whitewashed some time or another; round-log kitchen, with a big broad, open but roofed passage joining it to the house; log smokehouse back of the kitchen; three little nigger cabins in a row t'other side the smokehouse; one little hut all by itself away down against the back fence, and some outbuildings down a piece the other side; ash-hopper and big kettle to bile soap in by the little hut; bench by the kitchen door, with bucket of water and a gourd; hound asleep there in the sun; more hounds asleep round about; about three shade trees away off in a corner; some currant bushes and gooseberry bushes in one place by the fence; outside of the fence a garden and a watermelon patch; then the cotton-fields begins, and after the fields the woods.

I went around and clumb over the back stile by the ash-hopper, and started for the kitchen. When I got a little ways I heard the dim hum of a spinning-wheel wailing along up and sinking along down again; and then I knowed for certain I wished I was dead—for that is the lonesomest sound in the whole world.

I went right along, not fixing up any particular plan, but just trusting to Providence to put the right words in my mouth when the time come; for I'd noticed that Providence always did put the right words in my mouth if I left it alone.

When I got half-way, first one hound and then another got up and went for me, and of course I stopped and faced them, and kept still. And such another powwow as they made! In a quarter of a minute I was a kind of a hub of a wheel, as you may say—spokes made out of dogs—circle of fifteen of them packed together around me, with their necks and noses stretched up towards me, a-barking and howling; and more a-coming; you could see them sailing over fences and around corners from every-wheres.

A nigger woman come tearing out of the kitchen with a rolling-pin in her hand, singing out, “Begone! you Tige! you Spot! begone sah!” and she fetched first one and then another of them a clip and sent them howling, and then the rest followed; and the next second half of them come back, wagging their tails around me, and making friends with me. There ain’t no harm in a hound, nohow.

And behind the woman comes a little nigger girl and two little nigger boys without anything on but tow-linen shirts, and they hung on to their mother’s gown, and peeped out from behind her at me, bashful, the way they always do. And here comes the white woman running from the house, about forty-five or fifty year old, bareheaded, and her spinning-stick in her hand; and behind her comes her little white children, acting the same way the little niggers was going. She was smiling all over so she could hardly stand—and says:

“It’s you, at last!—ain’t it?”

I out with a “Yes’m” before I thought.

She grabbed me and hugged me tight; and then gripped me by both hands and shook and shook; and the tears come in her eyes, and run down over; and she couldn’t seem to hug and shake enough, and kept saying, “You don’t look as much like your mother as I reckoned you would; but law sakes, I don’t care for that, I’m so glad to see you! Dear, dear, it does seem like I could eat you up! Children, it’s your cousin Tom!—tell him howdy.”

But they ducked their heads, and put their fingers in their mouths, and hid behind her. So she run on:

“Lize, hurry up and get him a hot breakfast right away—or did you get your breakfast on the boat?”

I said I had got it on the boat. So then she started for the house, leading me by the hand, and the children tagging after. When we got there she set me down in a split-bottomed chair, and set herself down on a little low stool in
front of me, holding both of my hands, and says:

“Now I can have a good look at you; and, laws-a-me, I’ve been hungry for it a many and a many a time, all these long years, and it’s come at last! We been expecting you a couple of days and more. What kep’ you?—boat get aground?”

“Yes’m—she—”

“Don’t say yes’m—say Aunt Sally. Where’d she get aground?”

I didn’t rightly know what to say, because I didn’t know whether the boat would be coming up the river or down. But I go a good deal on instinct; and my instinct said she would be coming up—from down towards Orleans. That didn’t help me much, though; for I didn’t know the names of bars down that way. I see I’d got to invent a bar, or forget the name of the one we got aground on—or—Now I struck an idea, and fetched it out:

“It warn’t the grounding—that didn’t keep us back but a little. We blowed out a cylinder-head.”

“Good gracious! anybody hurt?”

“No’m. Killed a nigger.”

“Well, it’s lucky; because sometimes peoples do get hurt. Two years ago last Christmas your uncle Silas was coming up from Newrleans on the old Lally Rook, and she blowed out a cylinder-head and crippled a man. And I think he died afterwards. He was a Baptist. Your uncle Silas knowed a family in Baton Rouge that knowed his people very well. Yes, I remember now, he did die. Mortification set in, and they had to amputate him. But it didn’t save him. Yes, it was mortification—that was it. He turned blue all over, and died in the hope of a glorious resurrection. They say he was a sight to look at. Your uncle’s been up to the town every day to fetch you. And he’s gone again, not more’n an hour ago; he’ll be back any minute now. You must ‘a’ met him on the road, didn’t you?—oldish man, with a—”

“No, I didn’t see nobody, Aunt Sally. The boat landed just at daylight, and I left my baggage on the wharf-boat and went looking around the town and out a piece in the country, to put in the time and not get here too soon; and so I come down the back way.”

“Who’d you give the baggage to?”

“Nobody.”

“Why, child, it ’ll be stole!”

“Not where I hid it I reckon it won’t,” I says.

“How’d you get your breakfast so early on the boat?”

It was kinder thin ice, but I says:

“The captain see me standing around, and told me I better have something to eat before I went ashore; so he took me in the texas to the officers’ lunch, and give me all I wanted.”

I was getting so uneasy I couldn’t listen good. I had my mind on the children all the time; I wanted to get them out to one side and pump them a little, and find out who I was. But I couldn’t get no show, Mrs. Phelps kept it up and run on so. Pretty soon she made the cold chills streak all down my back, because she says:

“But here we’re a-running on this way, and you hain’t told me a word about Sis, nor any of them. Now I’ll rest my works a little, and you start up yourn; just tell me everything—tell me all about ‘m all—every one of ‘m; and how they are, and what they’re doing, and what they told you to tell me; and every last thing you can think of.”

Well, I see I was up a stump—and up it good. Providence had stood by me this fur all right, but I was hard and tight aground now. I see it warn’t a bit of use to try to go ahead—I’d got to throw up my hand. So I says to myself, here’s another place where I got to resk the truth. I opened my mouth to begin; but she grabbed me and hustled me in behind the bed, and says:

“Here he comes! Stick your head down lower—there, that’ll do; you can’t be seen now. Don’t you let on you’re here. I’ll play a joke on him. Children, don’t you say a word.”
I see I was in a fix now. But it warn’t no use to worry; there warn’t nothing to do but just hold still, and try and be ready to stand from under when the lightning struck.

I had just one little glimpse of the old gentleman when he come in; then the bed hid him. Mrs. Phelps she jumps for him, and says: “Has he come?”

“No,” says her husband.

“Good-ness gracious!” she says, “what in the world can have become of him?”

“I can’t imagine,” says the old gentleman; “and I must say it makes me dreadful uneasy.”

“Uneasy!” she says; “I’m ready to go distracted! He must ‘a’ come; and you’ve missed him along the road. I know it’s so—something tells me so.”

“Why, Sally, I couldn’t miss him along the road—you know that.”

“But oh, dear, dear, what will Sis say! He must ‘a’ come! You must ‘a’ missed him. He—”

“Oh, don’t distress me any more’n I’m already distressed. I don’t know what in the world to make of it. I’m at my wit’s end, and I don’t mind acknowledging ‘t I’m right down scared. But there’s no hope that he’s come; for he couldn’t come and me miss him. Sally, it’s terrible—just terrible—something’s happened to the boat, sure!”

“Why, Silas! Look yonder!—up the road!—ain’t that somebody coming?”

He sprung to the window at the head of the bed, and that give Mrs. Phelps the chance she wanted. She stooped down quick at the foot of the bed and give me a pull, and out I come; and when he turned back from the window there she stood, a-beaming and a-smiling like a house afire, and I standing pretty meek and sweaty alongside. The old gentleman stared, and says:

“Why, who’s that?”

“Who do you reckon ‘tis?”

“I hain’t no idea. Who is it?”

“It’s Tom Sawyer!”

By jings, I most slumped through the floor! But there warn’t no time to swap knives; the old man grabbed me by the hand and shook, and kept on shaking; and all the time how the woman did dance around and laugh and cry; and then how they both did fire off questions about Sid, and Mary, and the rest of the tribe.

But if they was joyful, it warn’t nothing to what I was; for it was like being born again, I was so glad to find out who I was. Well, they froze to me for two hours; and at last, when my chin was so tired it couldn’t hardly go any more, I had told them more about my family—I mean the Sawyer family—than ever happened to any six Sawyer families. And I explained all about how we blew out a cylinder-head at the mouth of White River, and it took us three days to fix it. Which was all right, and worked first-rate; because they didn’t know but what it would take three days to fix it. If I’d ‘a’ called it a bolthead it would ‘a’ done just as well.

Now I was feeling pretty comfortable all down one side, and pretty uncomfortable all up the other. Being Tom Sawyer was easy and comfortable, and it stayed easy and comfortable till by and by I hear a steamboat coughing along down the river. Then I says to myself, s’pose Tom Sawyer comes down on that boat? And s’pose he steps in here any minute, and sings out my name before I can throw him a wink to keep quiet?

Well, I couldn’t have it that way; it wouldn’t do at all. I must go up the road and waylay him. So I told the folks I reckoned I would go up to the town and fetch down my baggage. The old gentleman was for going along with me, but I said no, I could drive the horse myself, and I druther he wouldn’t take no trouble about me.
CHAPTER XXXIII

So I started for town in the wagon, and when I was half-way I see a wagon coming, and sure enough it was Tom Sawyer, and I stopped and waited till he come along. I says “Hold on!” and it stopped alongside, and his mouth opened up like a trunk, and stayed so; and he swallowed two or three times like a person that’s got a dry throat, and then says:

“I hain’t ever done you no harm. You know that. So, then, what you want to come back and ha’nt me for?”

I says:

“I hain’t come back—I hain’t been gone.”

When he heard my voice it righted him up some, but he warn’t quite satisfied yet. He says:

“Don’t you play nothing on me, because I wouldn’t on you. Honest injun, you ain’t a ghost?”

“Honest injun, I ain’t,” I says.

“Well—I—I—well, that ought to settle it, of course; but I can’t somehow seem to understand it no way. Looky here, warn’t you ever murdered at all?”

“No. I warn’t ever murdered at all—I played it on them. You come in here and feel of me if you don’t believe me.”

So he done it; and it satisfied him; and he was that glad to see me again he didn’t know what to do. And he wanted to know all about it right off, because it was a grand adventure, and mysterious, and so it hit him where he lived. But I said, leave it alone till by and by; and told his driver to wait, and we drove off a little piece, and I told him the kind of a fix I was in, and what did he reckon we better do? He said, let him alone a minute, and don’t disturb him. So he thought and thought, and pretty soon he says:

“It’s all right; I’ve got it. Take my trunk in your wagon, and let on it’s your’n; and you turn back and fool along slow, so as to get to the house about the time you ought to; and I’ll go towards town a piece, and take a fresh start, and get there a quarter or a half an hour after you; and you needn’t let on to know me at first.”

I says:

“All right; but wait a minute. There’s one more thing—a thing that nobody don’t know but me. And that is, there’s a nigger here that I’m a-trying to steal out of slavery, and his name is Jim—old Miss Watson’s Jim.”

He says:

“What! Why, Jim is—”

He stopped and went to studying. I says:

“I know what you’ll say. You’ll say it’s dirty, low-down business; but what if it is? I’m low down; and I’m a-going to steal him, and I want you keep mum and not let on. Will you?”

His eye lit up, and he says:

“I’ll help you steal him!”

Well, I let go all holts then, like I was shot. It was the most astonishing speech I ever heard—and I’m bound to say Tom Sawyer fell considerable in my estimation. Only I couldn’t believe it. Tom Sawyer a nigger-stealer!

“Oh, shucks!” I says; “you’re joking.”

“I ain’t joking, either.”

“Well, then,” I says, “joking or no joking, if you hear anything said about a runaway nigger, don’t forget to remember that you don’t know nothing about him, and I don’t know nothing about him.”
Then he took the trunk and put it in my wagon, and he drove off his way and I drove mine. But of course I forgot all about driving slow on accounts of being glad and full of thinking; so I got home a heap too quick for that length of a trip. The old gentleman was at the door; and he says:

“Why, this is wonderful! Whoever would ‘a’ thought it was in that mare to do it? I wish we’d ‘a’ timed her. And she hain’t sweated a hair—not a hair. It’s wonderful. Why, I wouldn’t take a hundred dollars for that horse now—I wouldn’t, honest; and yet I’d ‘a’ sold her for fifteen before, and thought ‘twas all she was worth.”

That’s all he said. He was the innocentest, best old soul I ever see. But it warn’t surprising; because he warn’t only just a farmer, he was a preacher, too, and had a little one-horse log church down back of the plantation, which he built it himself at his own expense, for a church and schoolhouse, and never charged nothing for his preaching, and it was worth it, too. There was plenty other farmer-preachers like that, and done the same way, down South.

In about half an hour Tom’s wagon drove up to the front stile, and Aunt Sally she see it through the window, because it was only about fifty yards, and says:

"Why, there’s somebody come! I wonder who ‘tis? Why, I do believe it’s a stranger. Jimmy” (that’s one of the children), “run and tell Lize to put on another plate for dinner.”

Everybody made a rush for the front door, because, of course, a stranger don’t come every year, and so he lays over the yaller-fever, for interest, when he does come. Tom was over the stile and starting for the house; the wagon was spinning up the road for the village, and we was all bunched in the front door. Tom had his store clothes on, and an audience—and that was always nuts for Tom Sawyer. In them circumstances it warn’t no trouble to him to throw in an amount of style that was suitable. He warn’t a boy to meeky along up that yard like a sheep; no, he come ca’m and important, like the ram. When he got a-front of us he lifts his hat ever so gracious and dainty, like it was the lid of a box that had butterflies asleep in it and he didn’t want to disturb them, and says:

“Mr. Archibald Nichols, I presume?”

“No, my boy,” says the old gentleman, “I’m sorry to say ‘t your driver has deceived you; Nichols’s place is down a matter of three mile more. Come in, come in.”

Tom he took a look back over his shoulder, and says, “Too late—he’s out of sight.”

“Yes, he’s gone, my son, and you must come in and eat your dinner with us; and then we’ll hitch up and take you down to Nichols’s.”

“Oh, I can’t make you so much trouble; I couldn’t think of it. I’ll walk—I don’t mind the distance.”

“But we won’t let you walk—it wouldn’t be Southern hospitality to do it. Come right in.”

“Oh, do,” says Aunt Sally; “it ain’t a bit of trouble to us, not a bit in the world. You must stay. It’s a long, dusty three mile, and we can’t let you walk. And, besides, I’ve already told ‘em to put on another plate when I see you coming; so you mustn’t disappoint us. Come right in and make yourself at home.”

So Tom he thanked them very hearty and handsome, and let himself be persuaded, and come in; and when he was in he said he was a stranger from Hicksville, Ohio, and his name was William Thompson—and he made another bow.

Well, he run on, and on, and on, making up stuff about Hicksville and everybody in it he could invent, and I getting a little nervous, and wondering how this was going to help me out of my scrape; and at last, still talking along, he reached over and kissed Aunt Sally right on the mouth, and then settled back again in his chair comfortable, and was going on talking; but she jumped up and wiped it off with the back of her hand, and says:

“You owdacious puppy!”

He looked kind of hurt, and says:

“I’m surprised at you, m’am.”

“You’re s’rp—Why, what do you reckon I am? I’ve a good notion to take and—Say, what do you mean by kissing me?”

He looked kind of humble, and says:
"I didn’t mean nothing, m’am. I didn’t mean no harm. I—I—thought you’d like it."

"Why, you born fool!" She took up the spinning-stick, and it looked like it was all she could do to keep from giving him a crack with it. "What made you think I’d like it?"

"Well, I don’t know. Only, they—they—told me you would."

"They told you I would. Whoever told you’s another lunatic. I never heard the beat of it. Who’s they?"

"Why, everybody. They all said so, m’am."

It was all she could do to hold in; and her eyes snapped, and her fingers worked like she wanted to scratch him; and she says:

"Who’s ‘everybody’? Out with their names, or ther’ll be an idiot short."

He got up and looked distressed, and fumbled his hat, and says:

"I’m sorry, and I warn’t expecting it. They told me to. They all told me to. They all said, kiss her; and said she’d like it. They all said it—every one of them. But I’m sorry, m’am, and I won’t do it no more—I won’t, honest."

"You won’t, won’t you? Well, I sh’d reckon you won’t!"

"No’m, I’m honest about it; I won’t ever do it again—till you ask me."

"Till I ask you! Well, I never see the beat of it in my born days! I lay you’ll be the Methusaleum-numskull of creation before ever I ask you—or the likes of you."

"Well," he says, "it does surprise me so. I can’t make it out, somehow. They said you would, and I thought you would. But—" He stopped and looked around slow, like he wished he could run across a friendly eye somewheres, and fetched up on the old gentleman’s, and says, "Didn’t you think she’d like me to kiss her, sir?"

"Why, no; I—I—well, no, I b’lieve I didn’t."

Then he looks on around the same way to me, and says:

"Tom, didn’t you think Aunt Sally ’d open out her arms and say, ‘Sid Sawyer—’"

"My land!" she says, breaking in and jumping for him, "you impudent young rascal, to fool a body so—" and was going to hug him, but he fended her off, and says:

"No, not till you’ve asked me first."

So she didn’t lose no time, but asked him; and hugged him and kissed him over and over again, and then turned him over to the old man, and he took what was left. And after they got a little quiet again she says:

"Why, dear me, I never see such a surprise. We warn’t looking for you at all, but only Tom. Sis never wrote to me about anybody coming but him."

"It’s because it warn’t intended for any of us to come but Tom," he says; "but I begged and begged, and at the last minute she let me come, too; so, coming down the river, me and Tom thought it would be a first-rate surprise for him to come here to the house first, and for me to by and by tag along and drop in, and let on to be a stranger. But it was a mistake, Aunt Sally. This ain’t no healthy place for a stranger to come."

"No—not impudent whelps, Sid. You ought to had your jaws boxed; I hain’t been so put out since I don’t know when. But I don’t care, I don’t mind the terms—I’d be willing to stand a thousand such jokes to have you here. Well, to think of that performance! I don’t deny it, I was most putrified with astonishment when you give me that smack."

We had dinner out in that broad open passage betwixt the house and the kitchen; and there was things enough on that table for seven families—and all hot, too; none of your flabby, tough meat that’s laid in a cupboard in a damp cellar all night and tastes like a hunk of old cold cannibal in the morning. Uncle Silas he asked a pretty long blessing over it, but it was worth it; and it didn’t cool it a bit, neither, the way I’ve seen them kind of interruptions do lots of times.
There was a considerable good deal of talk all the afternoon, and me and Tom was on the lookout all the time; but it warn’t no use, they didn’t happen to say nothing about any runaway nigger, and we was afraid to try to work up to it. But at supper, at night, one of the little boys says:

“Pa, mayn’t Tom and Sid and me go to the show?”

“No,” says the old man, “I reckon there ain’t going to be any; and you couldn’t go if there was; because the runaway nigger told Burton and me all about that scandalous show, and Burton said he would tell the people; so I reckon they’ve drove the owdacious loafers out of town before this time.”

So there it was!—but I couldn’t help it. Tom and me was to sleep in the same room and bed; so, being tired, we bid good night and went up to bed right after supper, and clumb out of the window and down the lightning-rod, and shoved for the town; for I didn’t believe anybody was going to give the king and the duke a hint, and so if I didn’t hurry up and give them one they’d get into trouble sure.

On the road Tom he told me all about how it was reckoned I was murdered, and how pap disappeared pretty soon, and didn’t come back no more, and what a stir there was when Jim run away; and I told Tom all about our “Royal Nonesuch” rapscllions, and as much of the raft voyage as I had time to; and as we struck into the town and up through the middle of it—it was as much as half after eight then—here comes a raging rush of people with torches, and an awful whooping and yelling, and banging tin pans and blowing horns; and we jumped to one side to let them go by; and as they went by I see they had the king and the duke astraddle of a rail—that is, I knewed it was the king and the duke, though they was all over tar and feathers, and didn’t look like nothing in the world that was human—just looked like a couple of monstrous big soldier-plumes. Well, it made me sick to see it; and I was sorry for them poor pitiful rascals, it seemed like I couldn’t ever feel any hardness against them any more in the world. It was a dreadful thing to see. Human beings can be awful cruel to one another.

We see we was too late—couldn’t do no good. We asked some stragglers about it, and they said everybody went to the show looking very innocent; and laid low and kept dark till the poor old king was in the middle of his cavortings on the stage; then somebody give a signal, and the house rose up and went for them.

So we poked along back home, and I warn’t feeling so brash as I was before, but kind of ornery, and humble, and to blame, somehow—though I hadn’t done nothing. But that’s always the way; it don’t make no difference whether you do right or wrong, a person’s conscience ain’t got no sense, and just goes for him anyway. If I had a yaller dog that didn’t know no more than a person’s conscience does I would pison him. It takes up more room than all the rest of a person’s insides, and yet ain’t no good, nohow. Tom Sawyer he says the same.

CHAPTER XXXIV

We stopped talking, and got to thinking. By and by Tom says:

“Looky here, Huck, what fools we are to not think of it before! I bet I know where Jim is.”

“No! Where?”

“In that hut down by the ash-hopper. Why, looky here. When we was at dinner, didn’t you see a nigger man go in there with some vittles?”

“Yes.”

“What did you think the vittles was for?”

“For a dog.”

“So ‘d I. Well, it wasn’t for a dog.”

“Why?”

“Because part of it was watermelon.”

“So it was—I noticed it. Well, it does beat all that I never thought about a dog not eating watermelon. It shows how a body can see and don’t see at the same time.”
“Well, the nigger unlocked the padlock when he went in, and he locked it again when he came out. He fetched uncle a key about the time we got up from table—same key, I bet. Watermelon shows man, lock shows prisoner; and it ain’t likely there’s two prisoners on such a little plantation, and where the people’s all so kind and good. Jim’s the prisoner. All right—I’m glad we found it out detective fashion; I wouldn’t give shucks for any other way. Now you work your mind, and study out a plan to steal Jim, and I will study out one, too; and we’ll take the one we like the best.”

What a head for just a boy to have! If I had Tom Sawyer’s head I wouldn’t trade it off to be a duke, nor mate of a steamboat, nor clown in a circus, nor nothing I can think of. I went to thinking out a plan, but only just to be doing something; I knowed very well where the right plan was going to come from. Pretty soon Tom says:

“Ready?”

“Yes,” I says.

“All right—bring it out.”

“My plan is this,” I says. “We can easy find out if it’s Jim in there. Then get up my canoe to-morrow night, and fetch my raft over from the island. Then the first dark night that comes steal the key out of the old man’s britches after he goes to bed, and shove off down the river on the raft with Jim, hiding daytimes and running nights, the way me and Jim used to do before. Wouldn’t that plan work?”

“Work? Why, cert’nly it would work, like rats a-fighting. But it’s too blame’ simple; there ain’t nothing to it. What’s the good of a plan that ain’t no more trouble than that? It’s as mild as goose-milk. Why, Huck, it wouldn’t make no more talk than breaking into a soap factory.”

I never said nothing, because I warn’t expecting nothing different; but I knowed mighty well that whenever he got his plan ready it wouldn’t have none of them objections to it.

And it didn’t. He told me what it was, and I see in a minute it was worth fifteen of mine for style, and would make Jim just as free a man as mine would, and maybe get us all killed besides. So I was satisfied, and said we would waltz in on it. I needn’t tell what it was here, because I knowed it wouldn’t stay the way it was. I knowed he would be changing it around every which way as we went along, and heaving in new bullinesses wherever he got a chance. And that is what he done.

Well, one thing was dead sure, and that was that Tom Sawyer was in earnest, and was actuly going to help steal that nigger out of slavery. That was the thing that was too many for me. Here was a boy that was respectable and well brung up; and had a character to lose; and folks at home that had characters; and he was bright and not leather-headed; and knowing and not ignorant; and not mean, but kind; and yet here he was, without any more pride, or rightness, or feeling, than to stoop to this business, and make himself a shame, and his family a shame, before everybody. I couldn’t understand it no way at all. It was outrageous, and I knowed I ought to just up and tell him so; and so be his true friend, and let him quit the thing right where he was and save himself. And I did start to tell him; but he shut me up, and says:

“Don’t you reckon I know what I’m about? Don’t I generly know what I’m about?”

“Yes.”

“Didn’t I say I was going to help steal the nigger?”

“Yes.”

“Well, then.”

That’s all he said, and that’s all I said. It warn’t no use to say any more; because when he said he’d do a thing, he always done it. But I couldn’t make out how he was willing to go into this thing; so I just let it go, and never bothered no more about it. If he was bound to have it so, I couldn’t help it.

When we got home the house was all dark and still; so we went on down to the hut by the ash-hopper for to examine it. We went through the yard so as to see what the hounds would do. They knowed us, and didn’t make no more noise than country dogs is always doing when anything comes by in the night. When we got to the cabin we took a look at the front and the two sides; and on the side I warn’t acquainted with—which was the north side—we found a square window-hole, up tolerable high, with just one stout board nailed across it. I says:
“Here’s the ticket. This hole’s big enough for Jim to get through if we wrench off the board.”

Tom says:

“It’s as simple as tit-tat-toe, three-in-a-row, and as easy as playing hooky. I should hope we can find a way that’s a little more complicated than that, Huck Finn.”

“Well, then,” I says, “how’ll it do to saw him out, the way I done before I was murdered that time?”

“That’s more like,” he says. “It’s real mysterious, and troublesome, and good,” he says; “but I bet we can find a way that’s twice as long. There ain’t no hurry; le’s keep on looking around.”

Betwixt the hut and the fence, on the back side, was a lean-to that joined the hut at the eaves, and was made out of plank. It was as long as the hut, but narrow—only about six foot wide. The door to it was at the south end, and was padlocked. Tom he went to the soap-kettle and searched around, and fetched back the iron thing they lift the lid with; so he took it and prized out one of the staples. The chain fell down, and we opened the door and went in, and shut it, and struck a match, and see the shed was only built against a cabin and hadn’t no connection with it; and there warn’t no floor to the shed, nor nothing in it but some old rusty played-out hoes and spades and picks and a crippled plow. The match went out, and so did we, and shoved in the staple again, and the door was locked as good as ever. Tom was joyful. He says:

“Now we’re all right. We’ll dig him out. It’ll take about a week!”

Then we started for the house, and I went in the back door—you only have to pull a buckskin latch-string, they don’t fasten the doors—but that warn’t romantical enough for Tom Sawyer; no way would do him but he must climb up the lightning-rod. But after he got up half-way about three times, and missed fire and fell every time, and the last time most busted his brains out, he thought he’d got to give it up; but after he was rested he allowed he would give her one more turn for luck, and this time he made the trip.

In the morning we was up at break of day, and down to the nigger cabins to pet the dogs and make friends with the nigger that fed Jim—if it was Jim that was being fed. The niggers was just getting through breakfast and starting for the fields; and Jim’s nigger was piling up a tin pan with bread and meat and things; and whilst the others was leaving, the key come from the house.

This nigger had a good-natured, chuckle-headed face, and his wool was all tied up in little bunches with thread. That was to keep witches off. He said the witches was pestering him awful these nights, and making him see all kinds of strange things, and hear all kinds of strange words and noises, and he didn’t believe he was ever witched so long before in his life. He got so worked up, and got to running on so about his troubles, he forgot all about what he’d been a-going to do. So Tom says:

“What’s the vittles for? Going to feed the dogs?”

The nigger kind of smiled around graduly over his face, like when you heave a brickbat in a mud-puddle, and he says:

“Yes, Mars Sid, a dog. Cur’us dog, too. Does you want to go en look at ‘im?”

“Yes.”

I hunched Tom, and whispers:

“You going, right here in the daybreak? That warn’t the plan.”

“No, it warn’t; but it’s the plan now.”

So, drat him, we went along, but I didn’t like it much. When we got in we couldn’t hardly see anything, it was so dark; but Jim was there, sure enough, and could see us; and he sings out:

“Why, Huck! En good lan’! ain’ dat Misto Tom?”

I just knewed how it would be; I just expected it. I didn’t know nothing to do; and if I had I couldn’t ‘a’ done it, because that nigger busted in and says:

“Why, de gracious sakes! do he know you genlmen?”
We could see pretty well now. Tom he looked at the nigger, steady and kind of wondering, and says:

“Does who know us?”

“Why, dis-yer runaway nigger.”

“I don’t reckon he does; but what put that into your head?”

“What put it dar? Didn’ he jis’ dis minute sing out like he knowed you?”

Tom says, in a puzzled-up kind of way:

“Well, that’s mighty curious. Who sung out? When did he sing out? What did he sing out?” And turns to me, perfectly ca’m, and says, “Did you hear anybody sing out?”

Of course there warn’t nothing to be said but the one thing; so I says:

“No; I ain’t heard nobody say nothing.”

Then he turns to Jim, and looks him over like he never see him before, and says:

“Did you sing out?”

“No, sah,” says Jim; “I hain’t said nothing, sah.”

“Not a word?”

“No, sah, I hain’t said a word.”

“Did you ever see us before?”

“No, sah; not as I knows on.”

So Tom turns to the nigger, which was looking wild and distressed, and says, kind of severe:

“What do you reckon’s the matter with you, anyway? What made you think somebody sung out?”

“Oh, it’s de dad-blame’ witches, sah, en I wisht I was dead, I do. Dey’s awluz at it, sah, en dey do mos’ kill me, dey sk’yers me so. Please to don’t tell nobody ’bout it sah, er ole Mars Silas he’ll scole me; ’kase he say dey ain’t no witches. I jis’ wish to goodness he was heah now—den what would he say! I jis’ bet he couldn’ fine no way to git aroun’ it dis time. But it’s awluz jis’ so; people dat’s sot, stays sot; dey won’t look into noth’n’ en fine it out f’r deyselves, en when you fine it out en tell um ’bout it, dey doan’ b’lieve you.”

Tom give him a dime, and said we wouldn’t tell nobody; and told him to buy some more thread to tie up his wool with; and then looks at Jim, and says:

“I wonder if Uncle Silas is going to hang this nigger. If I was to catch a nigger that was ungrateful enough to run away, I wouldn’t give him up, I’d hang him.” And whilst the nigger stepped to the door to look at the dime and bite it to see if it was good, he whispers to Jim and says:

“Don’t ever let on to know us. And if you hear any digging going on nights, it’s us; we’re going to set you free.”

Jim only had time to grab us by the hand and squeeze it; then the nigger come back, and we said we’d come again some time if the nigger wanted us to; and he said he would, more particular if it was dark, because the witches went for him mostly in the dark, and it was good to have folks around then.

CHAPTER XXXV

It would be most an hour yet till breakfast, so we left and struck down into the woods; because Tom said we got to have some light to see how to dig by, and a lantern makes too much, and might get us into trouble; what we must have was a lot of them rotten chunks that’s called fox-fire, and just makes a soft kind of a glow when you lay them
in a dark place. We fetched an armful and hid it in the weeds, and set down to rest, and Tom says, kind of dissatisfied:

“Blame it, this whole thing is just as easy and awkward as it can be. And so it makes it so rotten difficult to get up a difficult plan. There ain’t no watchman to be drugged—now there ought to be a watchman. There ain’t even a dog to give a sleeping-mixture to. And there’s Jim chained by one leg, with a ten-foot chain, to the leg of his bed: why, all you got to do is to lift up the bedstead and slip off the chain. And Uncle Silas he trusts everybody; sends the key to the punkin-headed nigger, and don’t send nobody to watch the nigger. Jim could ‘a’ got out of that window-hole before this, only there wouldn’t be no use trying to travel with a ten-foot chain on his leg. Why, drat it, Huck, it’s the stupidest arrangement I ever see. You got to invent all the difficulties. Well, we can’t help it; we got to do the best we can with the materials we’ve got. Anyhow, there’s one thing—there’s more honor in getting him out through a lot of difficulties and dangers, where there warn’t one of them furnished to you by the people who it was their duty to furnish them, and you had to contrive them all out of your own head. Now look at just that one thing of the lantern. When you come down to the cold facts, we simply got to let on that a lantern’s resky. Why, we could work with a torchlight procession if we wanted to, I believe. Now, whilst I think of it, we got to hunt up something to make a saw out of the first chance we get.”

“What do we want of a saw?”

“What do we want of a saw? Hain’t we got to saw the leg of Jim’s bed off, so as to get the chain loose?”

“Why, you just said a body could lift up the bedstead and slip the chain off.”

“Well, if that ain’t just like you, Huck Finn. You can get up the infant-schooliest ways of going at a thing. Why, hain’t you ever read any books at all?—Baron Trenck, nor Casanova, nor Benvenuto Chelleeny, nor Henri IV., nor none of them heroes? Who ever heard of getting a prisoner loose in such an old-maidy way as that? No; the way all the best authorities does is to saw the bed-leg in two, and leave it just so, and swallow the sawdust, so it can’t be found, and put some dirt and grease around the sawed place so the very keenest seneskal can’t see no sign of its being sawed, and thinks the bed-leg is perfectly sound. Then, the night you’re ready, fetch the leg a kick, down she goes; slip off your chain, and there you are. Nothing to do but hitch your rope ladder to the battlements, shin down it, break your leg in the moat—because a rope ladder is nineteen foot too short, you know—and there’s your horses and your trusty vassles, and they scoop you up and fling you across a saddle, and away you go to your native Langudoc, or Navarre, or wherever it is. It’s gaudy, Huck. I wish there was a moat to this cabin. If we get time, the night of the escape, we’ll dig one.”

I says:

“What do we want of a moat when we’re going to snake him out from under the cabin?”

But he never heard me. He had forgot me and everything else. He had his chin in his hand, thinking. Pretty soon he sighs and shakes his head; then sighs again, and says:

“No, it wouldn’t do—there ain’t necessity enough for it.”

“For what?” I says.

“Why, to saw Jim’s leg off,” he says.

“Good land!” I says; “why, there ain’t no necessity for it. And what would you want to saw his leg off for, anyway?”

“Well, some of the best authorities has done it. They couldn’t get the chain off, so they just cut their hand off and shoved. And a leg would be better still. But we got to let that go. There ain’t necessity enough in this case; and, besides, Jim’s a nigger, and wouldn’t understand the reasons for it, and how it’s the custom in Europe; so we’ll let it go. But there’s one thing—he can have a rope ladder; we can tear up our sheets and make him a rope ladder easy enough. And we can send it to him in a pie; it’s mostly done that way. And I’ve et worse pies.”

“Why, Tom Sawyer, how you talk,” I says; “Jim ain’t got no use for a rope ladder.”

“He has got use for it. How you talk, you better say; you don’t know nothing about it. He’s got to have a rope ladder; they all do.”

“What in the nation can he do with it?”

“Do with it? He can hide it in his bed, can’t he? That’s what they all do; and he’s got to, too. Huck, you don’t ever
seem to want to do anything that’s regular; you want to be starting something fresh all the time. S’pose he don’t do nothing with it? ain’t it there in his bed, for a clue, after he’s gone? and don’t you reckon they’ll want clues? Of course they will. And you wouldn’t leave them any? That would be a pretty howdy-do, wouldn’t it! I never heard of such a thing.”

“Well,” I says, “if it’s in the regulations, and he’s got to have it, all right, let him have it; because I don’t wish to go back on no regulations; but there’s one thing, Tom Sawyer—if we go to tearing up our sheets to make Jim a rope ladder, we’re going to get into trouble with Aunt Sally, just as sure as you’re born. Now, the way I look at it, a hickory-bark ladder don’t cost nothing, and don’t waste nothing, and is just as good to load up a pie with, and hide in a straw tick, as any rag ladder you can start; and as for Jim, he ain’t had no experience, and so he don’t care what kind of a—“

“Oh, shucks, Huck Finn, if I was as ignorant as you I’d keep still—that’s what I’d do. Who ever heard of a state prisoner escaping by a hickory-bark ladder? Why, it’s perfectly ridiculous.”

“Well, all right, Tom, fix it your own way; but if you’ll take my advice, you’ll let me borrow a sheet off of the clothes-line.”

He said that would do. And that gave him another idea, and he says:

“Borrow a shirt, too.” “What do we want of a shirt, Tom?” “Want it for Jim to keep a journal on.” “Journal your granny—Jim can’t write.” “S’pose he can’t write—he can make marks on the shirt, can’t he, if we make him a pen out of an old pewter spoon or a piece of an old iron barrel-hoop?”

“Why, Tom, we can pull a feather out of a goose and make him a better one; and quicker, too.”

“Prisoners don’t have geese running around the donjon-keep to pull pens out of, you muggins. They always make their pens out of the hardest, toughest, troublesomest piece of old brass candlestick or something like that they can get their hands on; and it takes them weeks and weeks and months and months to file it out, too, because they’ve got to do it by rubbing it on the wall. They wouldn’t use a goose-quill if they had it. It ain’t regular.”

“Well, then, what’ll we make him the ink out of?”

“Many makes it out of iron-rust and tears; but that’s the common sort and women; the best authorities uses their own blood. Jim can do that; and when he wants to send any little common ordinary mysterious message to let the world know where he’s captivated, he can write it on the bottom of a tin plate with a fork and throw it out of the window. The Iron Mask always done that, and it’s a blame’ good way, too.”

“Jim ain’t got no tin plates. They feed him in a pan.”

“That ain’t nothing; we can get him some.”

“Can’t nobody read his plates.”

“That ain’t got anything to do with it, Huck Finn. All he’s got to do is to write on the plate and throw it out. You don’t have to be able to read it. Why, half the time you can’t read anything a prisoner writes on a tin plate, or anywhere else.”

“Well, then, what’s the sense in wasting the plates?”

“Why, blame it all, it ain’t the prisoner’s plates.”

“But it’s somebody’s plates, ain’t it?”

“Well, spos’n it is? What does the prisoner care whose—”

He broke off there, because we heard the breakfast-horn blowing. So we cleared out for the house.

Along during the morning I borrowed a sheet and a white shirt off of the clothes-line; and I found an old sack and put them in it, and we went down and got the fox-fire, and put that in too. I called it borrowing, because that was what pap always called it; but Tom said it warn’t borrowing, it was stealing. He said we was representing prisoners; and prisoners don’t care how they get a thing so they get it, and nobody don’t blame them for it, either. It ain’t no crime in a prisoner to steal the thing he needs to get away with, Tom said; it’s his right; and so, as long as we was representing a prisoner, we had a perfect right to steal anything on this place we had the least use for
to get ourselves out of prison with. He said if we warn’t prisoners it would be a very different thing, and nobody but a mean, ornery person would steal when he warn’t a prisoner. So we allowed we would steal everything there was that come handy. And yet he made a mighty fuss, one day, after that, when I stole a watermelon out of the nigger patch and eat it; and he made me go and give the niggers a dime without telling them what it was for. Tom said that what he meant was, we could steal anything we needed. Well, I says, I needed the watermelon. But he said I didn’t need it to get out of prison with; there’s where the difference was. He said if I’d ‘a’ wanted it to hide a knife in, and smuggle it to Jim to kill the seneskal with, it would ‘a’ been all right. So I let it go at that, though I couldn’t see no advantage in my representing a prisoner if I got to set down and chaw over a lot of gold-leaf distinctions like that every time I see a chance to hog a watermelon.

Well, as I was saying, we waited that morning till everybody was settled down to business, and nobody in sight around the yard; then Tom he carried the sack into the lean-to whilst I stood off a piece to keep watch. By and by he come out, and we went and set down on the woodpile to talk. He says:

“Everything’s all right now except tools; and that’s easy fixed.”

“Tools?” I says.

“Yes.”

“Tools for what?”

“Why, to dig with. We ain’t a-going to gnaw him out, are we?”

“Ain’t them old crippled picks and things in there good enough to dig a nigger out with?” I says.

He turns on me, looking pitying enough to make a body cry, and says:

“Huck Finn, did you ever hear of a prisoner having picks and shovels, and all the modern conveniences in his wardrobe to dig himself out with? Now I want to ask you—if you got any reasonableness in you at all—what kind of a show would that give him to be a hero? Why, they might as well lend him the key and done with it. Picks and shovels—why, they wouldn’t furnish ‘em to a king.”

“Well, then,” I says, “if we don’t want the picks and shovels, what do we want?”

“A couple of case-knives.”

“To dig the foundations out from under that cabin with?”

“Yes.”

“Confound it, it’s foolish, Tom.”

“It don’t make no difference how foolish it is, it’s the right way—and it’s the regular way. And there ain’t no other way, that ever I heard of, and I’ve read all the books that gives any information about these things. They always dig out with a case-knife—and not through dirt, mind you; generly it’s through solid rock. And it takes them weeks and weeks and weeks, and for ever and ever. Why, look at one of them prisoners in the bottom dungeon of the Castle Deef, in the harbor of Marseilles, that dug himself out that way; how long was he at it, you reckon?”

“I don’t know.”

“Well, guess.”

“I don’t know. A month and a half.”

“Thirty-seven year—and he come out in China. That’s the kind. I wish the bottom of this fortress was solid rock.”

“Jim don’t know nobody in China.”

“What’s that got to do with it? Neither did that other fellow. But you’re always a-wandering off on a side issue. Why can’t you stick to the main point?”

“All right—I don’t care where he comes out, so he comes out; and Jim don’t, either, I reckon. But there’s one thing, anyway—Jim’s too old to be dug out with a case-knife. He won’t last.”
“Yes he will last, too. You don’t reckon it’s going to take thirty-seven years to dig out through a dirt foundation, do you?”

“How long will it take, Tom?”

“Well, we can’t resk being as long as we ought to, because it mayn’t take very long for Uncle Silas to hear from down there by New Orleans. He’ll hear Jim ain’t from there. Then his next move will be to advertise Jim, or something like that. So we can’t resk being as long digging him out as we ought to. By rights I reckon we ought to be a couple of years; but we can’t. Things being so uncertain, what I recommend is this: that we really dig right in, as quick as we can; and after that, we can let on, to ourselves, that we was at it thirty-seven years. Then we can snatch him out and rush him away the first time there’s an alarm. Yes, I reckon that ’ll be the best way.”

“Now, there’s sense in that,” I says. “Letting on don’t cost nothing; letting on ain’t no trouble; and if it’s any object, I don’t mind letting on we was at it a hundred and fifty year. It wouldn’t strain me none, after I got my hand in. So I’ll mosey along now, and smouch a couple of case-knives.”

“Smouch three,” he says; “we want one to make a saw out of.”

“Tom, if it ain’t unregular and irreligious to sejest it,” I says, “there’s an old rusty saw-blade around yonder sticking under the weather-boarding behind the smokehouse.”

He looked kind of weary and discouraged-like, and says:

“It ain’t no use to try to learn you nothing, Huck. Run along and smouch the knives—three of them.” So I done it

CHAPTER XXXVI

As soon as we reckoned everybody was asleep that night we went down the lightning-rod, and shut ourselves up in the lean-to, and got out our pile of fox-fire, and went to work. We cleared everything out of the way, about four or five foot along the middle of the bottom log. Tom said we was right behind Jim’s bed now, and we’d dig in under it, and when we got through there couldn’t nobody in the cabin ever know there was any hole there, because Jim’s counterpin hung down most to the ground, and you’d have to raise it up and look under to see the hole. So we dug and dug with the case-knives till most midnight; and then we was dog-tired, and our hands was blistered, and yet you couldn’t see we’d done anything hardly. At last I says:

“This ain’t no thirty-seven-year job; this is a thirty-eight-year job, Tom Sawyer.”

He never said nothing. But he sighed, and pretty soon he stopped digging, and then for a good little while I knewed that he was thinking. Then he says:

“It ain’t no use, Huck, it ain’t a-going to work. If we was prisoners it would, because then we’d have as many years as we wanted, and no hurry; and we wouldn’t get but a few minutes to dig, every day, while they was changing watches, and so our hands wouldn’t get blistered, and we could keep it up right along, year in and year out, and do it right, and the way it ought to be done. But we can’t fool along; we got to rush; we ain’t got no time to spare. If we was to put in another night this way we’d have to knock off for a week to let our hands get well—couldn’t touch a case-knife with them sooner.”

“Well, then, what we going to do, Tom?”

“I’ll tell you. It ain’t right, and it ain’t moral, and I wouldn’t like it to get out; but there ain’t only just the one way: we got to dig him out with the picks, and let on it’s case-knives.”

“Now you’re talking!” I says; “your head gets leveler and leveler all the time, Tom Sawyer,” I says. “Picks is the thing, moral or no moral; and as for me, I don’t care shucks for the morality of it, nohow. When I start in to steal a nigger, or a watermelon, or a Sunday-school book, I ain’t no ways particular how it’s done so it’s done. What I want is my nigger; or what I want is my watermelon; or what I want is my Sunday-school book; and if a pick’s the handiest thing, that’s the thing I’m a-going to dig that nigger or that watermelon or that Sunday-school book out
with; and I don’t give a dead rat what the authorities thinks about it nuther."

“Well,” he says, “there’s excuse for picks and letting on in a case like this; if it warn’t so, I wouldn’t approve of it, nor I wouldn’t stand by and see the rules broke—because right is right, and wrong is wrong, and a body ain’t got no business doing wrong when he ain’t ignorant and knows better. It might answer for you to dig Jim out with a pick, without any letting on, because you don’t know no better; but it wouldn’t for me, because I do know better. Gimme a case-knife."

He had his own by him, but I handed him mine. He flung it down, and says:

“Gimme a case-knife."

I didn’t know just what to do—but then I thought. I scratched around amongst the old tools, and got a pickax and give it to him, and he took it and went to work, and never said a word.

He was always just that particular. Full of principle.

So then I got a shovel, and then we picked and shoveled, turn about, and made the fur fly. We stuck to it about a half an hour, which was as long as we could stand up; but we had a good deal of a hole to show for it. When I got up-stairs I looked out at the window and see Tom doing his level best with the lightning-rod, but he couldn’t come it, his hands was so sore. At last he says:

“It ain’t no use, it can’t be done. What you reckon I better do? Can’t you think of no way?"

“Yes,” I says, “but I reckon it ain’t regular. Come up the stairs, and let on it’s a lightning-rod."

So he done it.

Next day Tom stole a pewter spoon and a brass candlestick in the house, for to make some pens for Jim out of, and six tallow candles; and I hung around the nigger cabins and laid for a chance, and stole three tin plates. Tom says it wasn’t enough; but I said nobody wouldn’t ever see the plates that Jim threwed out, because they’d fall in the dog-fennel and jimpson weeds under the window-hole—then we could tote them back and he could use them over again. So Tom was satisfied. Then he says:

“Now, the thing to study out is, how to get the things to Jim.”

“Take them in through the hole,” I says, “when we get it done.”

He only just looked scornful, and said something about nobody ever heard of such an idiotic idea, and then he went to studying. By and by he said he had ciphered out two or three ways, but there warn’t no need to decide on any of them yet. Said we’d got to post Jim first.

That night we went down the lightning-rod a little after ten, and took one of the candles along, and listened under the window-hole, and heard Jim snoring; so we pitched it in, and it didn’t wake him. Then we whirled in with the pick and shovel, and in about two hours and a half the job was done. We crept in under Jim’s bed and into the cabin, and pawed around and found the candle and lit it, and stood over Jim awhile, and found him looking hearty and healthy, and then we woke him up gentle and gradual. He was so glad to see us he most cried; and called us honey, and all the pet names he could think of; and was for having us hunt up a cold-chisel to cut the chain off of his leg with right away, and clearing out without losing any time. But Tom he showed him how unregular it would be, and set down and told him all about our plans, and how we could alter them in a minute any time there was an alarm; and not to be the least afraid, because we would see he got away, sure. So Jim he said it was all right, and we set there and talked over old times awhile, and then Tom asked a lot of questions, and when Jim told him Uncle Silas come in every day or two to pray with him, and Aunt Sally come in to see if he was comfortable and had plenty to eat, and both of them was kind as they could be, Tom says:

“Now I know how to fix it. We’ll send you some things by them.”

I said, “Don’t do nothing of the kind; it’s one of the most jackass ideas I ever struck”; but he never paid no attention to me; went right on. It was his way when he’d got his plans set.

So he told Jim how we’d have to smuggle in the rope-ladder pie and other large things by Nat, the nigger that fed him, and he must be on the lookout, and not be surprised, and not let Nat see him open them; and we would put small things in uncle’s coat pockets and he must steal them out; and we would tie things to aunt’s apron-strings or put them in her apron pocket, if we got a chance; and told him what they would be and what they was for. And
told him how to keep a journal on the shirt with his blood, and all that. He told him everything. Jim he couldn’t see no sense in the most of it, but he allowed we was white folks and knowed better than him; so he was satisfied, and said he would do it all just as Tom said.

Jim had plenty corn-cob pipes and tobacco; so we had a right down good sociable time; then we crawled out through the hole, and so home to bed, with hands that looked like they’d been chawed. Tom was in high spirits. He said it was the best fun he ever had in his life, and the most intellectural; and said if he only could see his way to it we would keep it up all the rest of our lives and leave Jim to our children to get out; for he believed Jim would come to like it better and better the more he got used to it. He said that in that way it could be strung out to as much as eighty year, and would be the best time on record. And he said it would make us all celebrated that had a hand in it.

In the morning we went out to the woodpile and chopped up the brass candlestick into handy sizes, and Tom put them and the pewter spoon in his pocket. Then we went to the nigger cabins, and while I got Nat’s notice off, Tom shoved a piece of candlestick into the middle of a corn-pone that was in Jim’s pan, and we went along with Nat to see how it would work, and it just worked noble; when Jim bit into it it most mashed all his teeth out; and there warn’t ever anything could ‘a’ worked better. Tom said so himself. Jim he never let on but what it was only just a piece of rock or something like that that’s always getting into bread, you know; but after that he never bit into nothing but what he jabbed his fork into it in three or four places first.

And whilst we was a-standing there in the dimmish light, here comes a couple of the hounds bulging in from under Jim’s bed; and they kept on piling in till there was eleven of them, and there warn’t hardly room in there to get your breath. By jings, we forgot to fasten that lean-to door! The nigger Nat he only just hollered “Witches” once, and keeled over onto the floor amongst the dogs, and begun to groan like he was dying. Tom jerked the door open and flung out a slab of Jim’s meat, and the dogs went for it, and in two seconds he was out himself and back again and shut the door, and I knowed he’d fixed the other door too. Then he went to work on the nigger, coaxing him and petting him, and asking him if he’d been imagining he saw something again. He raised up, and blinked his eyes around, and says:

“Mars Sid, you’ll say I’s a fool, but if I didn’t b’lieve I see most a million dogs, er devils, er some’n, I wish I may die right heah in dese tracks. I did, mos’ sholy. Mars Sid, I felt um—I felt um, sah; dey was all over me. Dad fetch it, I jis’ wish I could git my han’s on one er dem witches jis’ wunst—on’y jis’ wunst—it’s all I’d ast. But mos’ly I wish dey’d lemme ‘lone, I does.”

Tom says:

“Well, I tell you what I think. What makes them come here just at this runaway nigger’s breakfast-time? It’s because they’re hungry; that’s the reason. You make them a witch pie; that’s the thing for you to do.”

“But my lan’, Mars Sid, how’s I gwyne to make ’m a witch pie? I doan’ know how to make it. I hain’t ever hearn er sich a thing b’fo’.”

“Well, then, I’ll have to make it myself.”

“Will you do it, honey?—will you? I’ll wussup de groun’ und’ yo’ foot, I will!”
TOM ADVISES A WITCH PIE

“All right, I’ll do it, seeing it’s you, and you’ve been good to us and showed us the runaway nigger. But you got to be mighty careful. When we come around, you turn your back; and then whatever we’ve put in the pan, don’t you let on you see it at all. And don’t you look when Jim unloads the pan—something might happen, I don’t know what. And above all, don’t you handle the witch-things.”

“Hannel ’m, Mars Sid? What is you a-talkin’ ‘bout? I wouldn’ lay de weight er my finger on um, not f’r ten hund’d thous’n billion dollars, I wouldn’t.”
CHAPTER XXXVII

That was all fixed. So then we went away and went to the rubbish-pile in the back yard, where they keep the old boots, and rags, and pieces of bottles, and wore-out tin things, and all such truck, and scratched around and found an old tin washpan, and stopped up the holes as well as we could, to bake the pie in, and took it down cellar and stole it full of flour and started for breakfast, and found a couple of shingle-nails that Tom said would be handy for a prisoner to scrabble his name and sorrows on the dungeon walls with, and dropped one of them in Aunt Sally’s apron pocket which was hanging on a chair, and t’other we stuck in the band of Uncle Silas’s hat, which was on the bureau, because we heard the children say their pa and ma was going to the runaway nigger’s house this morning, and then went to breakfast, and Tom dropped the pewter spoon in Uncle Silas’s coat pocket, and Aunt Sally wasn’t come yet, so we had to wait a little while.

And when she come she was hot and red and cross, and couldn’t hardly wait for the blessing; and then she went to sluicing out coffee with one hand and cracking the handiest child’s head with her thimble with the other, and says:

“I’ve hunted high and I’ve hunted low, and it does beat all what has become of your other shirt.”

My heart fell down amongst my lungs and livers and things, and a hard piece of corn-crust started down my throat after it and got met on the road with a cough, and was shot across the table, and took one of the children in the eye and curled him up like a fishing-worm, and let a cry out of him the size of a war-whoop, and Tom he turned kinder blue around the gills, and it all amounted to a considerable state of things for about a quarter of a minute or as much as that, and I would ‘a’ sold out for half price if there was a bidder. But after that we was all right again—it was the sudden surprise of it that knocked us so kind of cold. Uncle Silas he says:

“It’s most uncommon curious, I can’t understand it. I know perfectly well I took it off, because—”

“Because you hain’t got but one on. Just listen at the man! I know you took it off, and know it by a better way than your wool-gathering memory, too, because it was on the clo’s-line yesterday—I see it there myself. But it’s gone, that’s the long and the short of it, and you’ll just have to change to a red flann’l one till I can get time to make a new one. And it’ll be the third I’ve made in two years. It just keeps a body on the jump to keep you in shirts; and whatever you do manage to do with ‘m all is more’n I can make out. A body’d think you would learn to take some sort of care of ’em at your time of life.”

“I know it, Sally, and I do try all I can. But it oughtn’t to be altogether my fault, because, you know, I don’t see them nor have nothing to do with them except when they’re on me; and I don’t believe I’ve ever lost one of them off of me.”

“Well, it ain’t your fault if you haven’t, Silas; you’d ‘a’ done it if you could, I reckon. And the shirt ain’t all that’s gone, nuther. Ther’s a spoon gone; and that ain’t all. There was ten, and now ther’ only nine. The calf got the shirt, I reckon, but the calf never took the spoon, that’s certain.”

“Why, what else is gone, Sally?”

“Ther’s six candles gone—that’s what. The rats could ‘a’ got the candles, and I reckon they did; I wonder they don’t walk off with the whole place, the way you’re always going to stop their holes and don’t do it; and if they warn’t fools they’d sleep in your hair, Silas—you’d never find it out; but you can’t lay the spoon on the rats, and that I know.”

“Well, Sally, I’m in fault, and I acknowledge it; I’ve been remiss; but I won’t let to-morrow go by without stopping up them holes.”

“Oh, I wouldn’t hurry; next year ‘ll do. Matilda Angelina Araminta Phelps!”

Whack comes the thimble, and the child snatches her claws out of the sugar-bowl without fooling around any. Just then the nigger woman steps onto the passage, and says:

“Missus, dey’s a sheet gone.”

“A sheet gone! Well, for the land’s sake!”

“I’ll stop up them holes to-day,” says Uncle Silas, looking sorrowful.
“Oh, do shut up!—s’pose the rats took the sheet? Where’s it gone, Lize?”

“Clah to goodness I hain’t no notion, Miss’ Sally. She wuz on de clo’s-line yistiddy, but she done gone: she ain’ dah no mo’ now.”

“I reckon the world is coming to an end. I never see the beat of it in all my born days. A shirt, and a sheet, and a spoon, and six can—”

“Missus,” comes a young yaller wench, “dey’s a brass cannelstick miss’n.”

“Cler out from here, you hussy, er I’ll take a skillet to ye!”

Well, she was just a-biling. I begun to lay for a chance; I reckoned I would sneak out and go for the woods till the weather moderated. She kept a-raging right along, running her insurrection all by herself, and everybody else mighty meek and quiet; and at last Uncle Silas, looking kind of foolish, fishes up that spoon out of his pocket. She stopped, with her mouth open and her hands up; and as for me, I wished I was in Jerusalem or somewheres. But not long, because she says:

“It’s just as I expected. So you had it in your pocket all the time; and like as not you’ve got the other things there, too. How’d it get there?”

“I reely don’t know, Sally,” he says, kind of apologizing, “or you know I would tell. I was a-studying over my text in Acts Seventeen before breakfast, and I reckon I put it in there, not noticing, meaning to put my Testament in, and it must be so, because my Testament ain’t in; but I’ll go and see; and if the Testament is where I had it, I’ll know I didn’t put it in, and that will show that I laid the Testament down and took up the spoon, and—”

“Oh, for the land’s sake! Give a body a rest! Go ‘long now, the whole kit and biling of ye; and don’t come nigh me again till I’ve got back my peace of mind.”

I’d ‘a’ heard her if she’d ‘a’ said it to herself, let alone speaking it out; and I’d ‘a’ got up and obeyed her if I’d ‘a’ been dead. As we was passing through the setting-room the old man he took up his hat, and the shingle-nail fell out on the floor, and he just merely picked it up and laid it on the mantel-shelf, and never said nothing, and went out. Tom see him do it, and remembered about the spoon, and says:

“Well, it ain’t no use to send things by him no more, he ain’t reliable.” Then he says: “But he done us a good turn with the spoon, anyway, without knowing it, and so we’ll go and do him one without him knowing it—stop up his rat-holes.”

There was a noble good lot of them down cellar, and it took us a whole hour, but we done the job tight and good and shipshape. Then we heard steps on the stairs, and blew out our light and hid; and here comes the old man, with a candle in one hand and a bundle of stuff in t’other, looking as absent-minded as year before last. He went a-mooning around, first to one rat-hole and then another, till he’d been to them all. Then he stood about five minutes, picking tallow-drip off of his candle and thinking. Then he turns off slow and dreamy towards the stairs, saying:

“Well, for the life of me I can’t remember when I done it. I could show her now that I warn’t to blame on account of the rats. But never mind—let it go. I reckon it wouldn’t do no good.”

And so he went on a-mumbling up-stairs, and then we left. He was a mighty nice old man. And always is.

Tom was a good deal bothered about what to do for a spoon, but he said we’d got to have it; so he took a think. When he had ciphered it out he told me how we was to do; then we went and waited around the spoon-basket till we see Aunt Sally coming, and then Tom went to counting the spoons and laying them out to one side, and I slid one of them up my sleeve, and Tom says:

“Why, Aunt Sally, there ain’t but nine spoons yet.”

She says:

“Go ‘long to your play, and don’t bother me. I know better, I counted ‘m myself.”

“Well, I’ve counted them twice, Aunty, and I can’t make but nine.”

She looked out of all patience, but of course she come to count—anybody would.
“I declare to gracious ther’ ain’t but nine!” she says. “Why, what in the world—plague take the things, I’ll count ‘m again.”

So I slipped back the one I had, and when she got done counting, she says:

“Hang the troublesome rubbage, ther’s ten now!” and she looked huffy and bothered both. But Tom says:

“Why, Aunty, I don’t think there’s ten.”

“You numskull, didn’t you see me count ‘m?”

“I know, but—“

“Well, I’ll count ‘m again.”

So I smouched one, and they come out nine, same as the other time. Well, she was in a tearing way—just a-trembling all over, she was so mad. But she counted and counted till she got that added she’d start to count in the basket for a spoon sometimes; and so, three times they come out right, and three times they come out wrong. Then she grabbed up the basket and slammed it across the house andknocked the cat galley-west; and she said cler out and let her have some peace, and if we come bothering around her again betwixt that and dinner she’d skin us. So we had the odd spoon, and dropped it in her apron pocket whilst she was a-giving us our sailing orders, and Jim got it all right, along with her shingle-nail, before noon. We was very well satisfied with this business, and Tom allowed it was worth twice the trouble it took, because he said now she couldn’t ever count them spoons twice alike again to save her life; and wouldn’t believe she’d counted them right if she did; and said that after she’d about counted her head off for the next three days he judged she’d give it up and offer to kill anybody that wanted her to ever count them any more.

So we put the sheet back on the line that night, and stole one out of her closet; and kept on putting it back and stealing it again for a couple of days till she didn’t know how many sheets she had any more, and she didn’t care, and warn’t a-going to bullyrag the rest of her soul out about it, and wouldn’t count them again not to save her life; she druther die first.

So we was all right now, as to the shirt and the sheet and the spoon and the candles, by the help of the calf and the rats and the mixed-up counting; and as to the candlestick, it warn’t no consequence, it would blow over by and by.

But that pie was a job; we had no end of trouble with that pie. We fixed it up away down in the woods, and cooked it there; and we got it done at last, and very satisfactory, too; but not all in one day; and we had to use up three wash-pans full of flour before we got through, and we got burnt pretty much all over, in places, and eyes put out with the smoke; because, you see, we didn’t want nothing but a crust, and we couldn’t prop it up right, and she would always cave in. But of course we thought of the right way at last—which was to cook the ladder, too, in the pie. So then we laid in with Jim the second night, and tore up the sheet all in little strings and twisted them together, and long before daylight we had a lovely rope that you could a’ hung a person with. We let on it took nine months to make it.

And in the forenoon we took it down to the woods, but it wouldn’t go into the pie. Being made of a whole sheet, that way, there was rope enough for forty pies if we’d a’ wanted them, and plenty left over for soup, or sausage, or anything you choose. We could a’ had a whole dinner.

But we didn’t need it. All we needed was just enough for the pie, and so we threwed the rest away. We didn’t cook none of the pies in the washpan—afraid the solder would melt; but Uncle Silas he had a noble brass warming-pan which he thought considerable of, because it belonged to one of his ancestors with a long wooden handle that came over from England with William the Conqueror in the Mayflower or one of them early ships and was hid away up garret with a lot of other old pots and things that was valuable, not on account of being any account, because they warn’t, but on account of them being relicts, you know, and we snaked her out, private, and took her down there, but she failed on the first pies, because we didn’t know how, but she come up smiling on the last one. We took and lined her with dough, and set her in the coals, and loaded her up with rag rope, and put on a dough roof, and shut down the lid, and put hot embers on top, and stood off five foot, with the long handle, cool and comfortable, and in fifteen minutes she turned out a pie that was a satisfaction to look at. But the person that et it would want to fetch a couple of kags of toothpicks along, for if that rope ladder wouldn’t cramp him down to business I don’t know nothing I’m talking about, and lay him in enough stomach-ache to last him till next time, too. Nat didn’t look when we put the witch pie in Jim’s pan; and we put the three tin plates in the bottom of the pan under the vittles; and so Jim got everything all right, and as soon as he was by himself he busted into the
pie and hid the rope ladder inside of his straw tick, and scratched some marks on a tin plate and threwed it out of the window-hole.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Making them pens was a distressid tough job, and so was the saw; and Jim allowed the inscription was going to be the toughest of all. That’s the one which the prisoner has to scrabble on the wall. But he had to have it; Tom said he’d got to; there warn’t no case of a state prisoner not scrabbling his inscription to leave behind, and his coat of arms.

“Look at Lady Jane Grey,” he says; “look at Gilford Dudley; look at old Northumberland! Why, Huck, s’pose it is considerable trouble?—what you going to do?—how you going to get around it? Jim’s got to do his inscription and coat of arms. They all do.”

Jim says:

“Why, Mars Tom, I hain’t got no coat o’ arm; I hain’t got nuffn but dish yer ole shirt, en you knows I got to keep de journal on dat.”

“Oh, you don’t understand, Jim; a coat of arms is very different.”

“Well,” I says, “Jim’s right, anyway, when he says he ain’t got no coat of arms, because he hain’t.”

“I reckon I knowed that,” Tom says, “but you bet he’ll have one before he goes out of this—because he’s going out right, and there ain’t going to be no flaws in his record.”

So whilst me and Jim filed away at the pens on a brickbat apiece, Jim a-making his’n out of the brass and I making mine out of the spoon, Tom set to work to think out the coat of arms. By and by he said he’d struck so many good ones he didn’t hardly know which to take, but there was one which he reckoned he’d decide on. He says:

“On the scutcheon we’ll have a bend or in the dexter base, a saltire murrey in the fess, with a dog, couchant, for common charge, and under his foot a chain embattled, for slavery, with a chevron vert in a chief engrailed, and three invected lines on a field azure, with the nombril points rampant on a dancette indented; crest, a runaway nigger, sable, with his bundle over his shoulder on a bar sinister; and a couple of gules for supporters, which is you and me; motto, Maggiore fretta, minore atto. Got it out of a book—means the more haste the less speed.”

“Geewhillikins,” I says, “but what does the rest of it mean?”

“We ain’t got no time to bother over that,” he says; “we got to dig in like all git-out.”

“Well, anyway,” I says, “what’s some of it? What’s a fess?”

“A fess—a fess is—you don’t need to know what a fess is. I’ll show him how to make it when he gets to it.”

“Shucks, Tom,” I says, “I think you might tell a person. What’s a bar sinister?”

“Oh, I don’t know. But he’s got to have it. All the nobility does.”

That was just his way. If it didn’t suit him to explain a thing to you, he wouldn’t do it. You might pump at him a week, it wouldn’t make no difference. He’d got all that coat-of-arms business fixed, so now he started in to finish up the rest of that part of the work, which was to plan out a mournful inscription—said Jim got to have one, like they all done. He made up a lot, and wrote them out on a paper, and read them off, so:

1. Here a captive heart busted.

2. Here a poor prisoner, forsook by the world and friends, fretted his sorrowful life.

3. Here a lonely heart broke, and a worn spirit went to its rest, after thirty-seven years of solitary captivity.
4. Here, homeless and friendless, after thirty-seven years of bitter captivity, perished a noble
stranger, natural son of Louis XIV.

Tom’s voice trembled whilst he was reading them, and he most broke down. When he got done he couldn’t no way
make up his mind which one for Jim to scrabble onto the wall, they was all so good; but at last he allowed he
would let him scrabble them all on. Jim said it would take him a year to scrabble such a lot of truck onto the logs
with a nail, and he didn’t know how to make letters, besides; but Tom said he would block them out for him, and
then he wouldn’t have nothing to do but just follow the lines. Then pretty soon he says:

“Come to think, the logs ain’t a-going to do; they don’t have log walls in a dungeon: we got to dig the inscriptions
into a rock. We’ll fetch a rock.” Jim said the rock was worse than the logs; he said it would take him such a pison
long time to dig them into a rock he wouldn’t ever get out. But Tom said he would let me help him do it. Then he
took a look to see how me and Jim was getting along with the pens. It was most pesky tedious hard work and slow,
and didn’t give my hands no show to get well of the sores, and we didn’t seem to make no headway, hardly; so
Tom says:

“I know how to fix it. We got to have a rock for the coat of arms and mournful inscriptions, and we can kill two
birds with that same rock. There’s a gaudy big grindstone down at the mill, and we’ll smouch it, and carve the
things on it, and file out the pens and the saw on it, too.”

It warn’t no slouch of an idea; and it warn’t no slouch of a grindstone nuther; but we allowed we’d tackle it. It
warn’t quite midnight yet, so we cleared out for the mill, leaving Jim at work. We smouched the grindstone, and
set out to roll her home, but it was a most nation tough job. Sometimes, do what we could, we couldn’t keep her
from falling over, and she come mighty near mashing us every time. Tom said she was going to get one of us, sure,
before we got through. We got her halfway; and then we was plumb played out, and most drowned with sweat.
We see it warn’t no use; we got to go and fetch Jim. So he raised up his bed and slid the chain off of the bed-leg,
and we crawled out through our hole and down there, and Jim and me laid into that grindstone and walked her along like nothing; and Tom superintended. He could out-superintend any boy I ever see. He knewed how to do everything.

Our hole was pretty big, but it warn’t big enough to get the grindstone through; but Jim he took the pick and soon
made it big enough. Then Tom marked out them things on it with the nail, and set Jim to work on them, with the
nail for a chisel and an iron bolt from the rubbage in the lean-to for a hammer, and told him to work till the rest of
his candle quit on him, and then he could go to bed, and hide the grindstone under his straw tick and sleep on it.
Then we helped him fix his chain back on the bed-leg, and was ready for bed ourselves. But Tom thought of
something, and says:

“You got any spiders in here, Jim?”

“No, sah, thanks to goodness I hain’t, Mars Tom.”

“All right, we’ll get you some.”

“But bless you, honey, I doan’ want none. I’s afeard un um. I jis’ ‘s soon have rattlesnakes aroun’.”

Tom thought a minute or two, and says:

“It’s a good idea. And I reckon it’s been done. It must ‘a’ been done; it stands to reason. Yes, it’s a prime good
idea. Where could you keep it?”

“Keep what, Mars Tom?”

“Why, a rattlesnake.”

“De goodness gracious alive, Mars Tom! Why, if dey was a rattlesnake to come in heah I’d take en bust right out
thoo dat log wall, I would, wid my head.”

“Why, Jim, you wouldn’t be afraid of it after a little. You could tame it.”

“Tame it!”

“Yes—easy enough. Every animal is grateful for kindness and petting, and they wouldn’t think of hurting a person
that pets them. Any book will tell you that. You try—that’s all I ask; just try for two or three days. Why, you can get
him so in a little while that he’ll love you; and sleep with you; and won’t stay away from you a minute; and will let you wrap him round your neck and put his head in your mouth.”

“Please, Tom—doan’ talk so! I can’t stan’ it! He’d let me shove his head in my mouf—fer a favor, hain’t it? I lay he’d wait a pow’ful long time ‘fo’ I ast him. En mo’ en dat, I doan’ want him to sleep wid me.”

“Jim, don’t act so foolish. A prisoner’s got to have some kind of a dumb pet, and if a rattlesnake hain’t ever been tried, why, there’s more glory to be gained in your being the first to ever try it than any other way you could ever think of to save your life.”

“Why, Mars Tom, I doan’ want no sich glory. Snake take ‘n bite Jim’s chin off, den whah is de glory? No, sah, I doan’ want no sich doin’s.”

“Blame it, can’t you try? I only want you to try—you needn’t keep it up if it don’t work.”

“But de trouble all done ef de snake bite me while I’s a-tryin’ him. Mars Tom, I’s willin’ to tackle mos’ anything ‘at ain’t onreasonable, but ef you en Huck fetches a rattlesnake in heah for me to tame, I’s gwyne to leave, dat’s shore.”

“Well, then, let it go, let it go, if you’re so bull-headed about it. We can get you some garter-snakes, and you can tie some buttons on their tails, and let on they’re rattlesnakes, and I reckon that ‘ll have to do.”

“I k’n stan’ dem, Mars Tom, but blame’ ‘f I couldn’ get along widout um, I tell you dat. I never knowed b’fo’ ‘twas so much bother and trouble to be a prisoner.”

“Well, it always is when it’s done right. You got any rats around here?”

“No, sah, I hain’t seed none.”

“Well, we’ll get you some rats.”

“Why, Mars Tom, I doan’ want no rats. Dey’s de dadblamedest creturs to ‘sturb a body, en rustle roun’ over ‘im, en bite his feet, when he’s tryin’ to sleep, I ever see. No, sah, gimme g’yarter-snakes, ‘f I’s got to have ‘m, but doan’ gimme no rats; I hain’ got no use f’r um, skasely.”

“But, Jim, you got to have ‘em—they all do. So don’t make no more fuss about it. Prisoners ain’t ever without rats. There ain’t no instance of it. And they train them, and pet them, and learn them tricks, and they get to be as sociable as flies. But you got to play music to them. You got anything to play music on?”

“I ain’ got nuffn but a coase comb en a piece o’ paper, en a juice-harp; but I reck’n dey wouldn’ take no stock in a juice-harp.”

“Yes they would. They don’t care what kind of music ‘tis. A jews-harp’s plenty good enough for a rat. All animals like music—in a prison they dote on it. Specially, painful music; and you can’t get no other kind out of a jew’s-harp. It always interests them; they come out to see what’s the matter with you. Yes, you’re all right; you’re fixed very well. You want to set on your bed nights before you go to sleep, and early in the mornings, and play your jew’s-harp; play ‘The Last Link is Broken’—that’s the thing that ‘ll scoop a rat quicker ‘n anything else; and when you’ve played about two minutes you’ll see all the rats, and the snakes, and spiders and things begin to feel worried about you, and come. And they’ll just fairly swarm over you, and have a noble good time.”

“Yes, dey will, I reck’n, Mars Tom, but what kine er time is Jim havin’? Blest if I kin see de pint. But I’ll do it ef I got to. I reck’n I better keep de animals satisfied, en not have no trouble in de house.”

Tom waited to think it over, and see if there wasn’t nothing else; and pretty soon he says:

“Oh, there’s one thing I forgot. Could you raise a flower here, do you reckon?”

“I doan’ know but maybe I could, Mars Tom; but it’s tolerable dark in heah, en I ain’ got no use f’r no flower, nohow, en she’d be a pow’ful sight o’ trouble.”

“Well, you try it, anyway. Some other prisoners has done it.”

“One er dem big cat-tail-lookin’ mullen-stalks would grow in heah, Mars Tom, I reck’n, but she wouldn’t be wuth half de trouble she’d coss.”
“Don’t you believe it. We’ll fetch you a little one and you plant it in the corner over there, and raise it. And don’t call it mullen, call it Pitchiola—that’s its right name when it’s in a prison. And you want to water it with your tears.”

“Why, I got plenty spring water, Mars Tom.”

“You don’t want spring water; you want to water it with your tears. It’s the way they always do.”

“Why, Mars Tom, I lay I kin raise one er dem mullen-stalks twyste wid spring water whiles another man’s a start’n one wid tears.”

“That ain’t the idea. You got to do it with tears.”

“She’ll die on my han’s, Mars Tom, she sholy will; kase I doan’ skasely ever cry.”

So Tom was stumped. But he studied it over, and then said Jim would have to worry along the best he could with an onion. He promised he would go to the nigger cabins and drop one, private, in Jim’s coffee-pot, in the morning. Jim said he would “jis’ s soon have tobacker in his coffee”; and found so much fault with it, and with the work and bother of raising the mullen, and jew’s-harping the rats, and petting and flattering up the snakes and spiders and things, on top of all the other work he had to do on pens, and inscriptions, and journals, and things, which made it more trouble and worry and responsibility to be a prisoner than anything he ever undertook, that Tom most lost all patience with him; and said he was just loaded down with more gaudier chances than a prisoner ever had in the world to make a name for himself, and yet he didn’t know enough to appreciate them, and they was just about wasted on him. So Jim he was sorry, and said he wouldn’t behave so no more, and then me and Tom shoved for bed.

CHAPTER XXXIX

In the morning we went up to the village and bought a wire rat-trap and fetched it down, and unstopped the best rat-hole, and in about an hour we had fifteen of the bulliest kind of ones; and then we took it and put it in a safe place under Aunt Sally’s bed. But while we was gone for spiders little Thomas Franklin Benjamin Jefferson Alexander Phelps found it there, and opened the door of it to see if the rats would come out, and they did; and Aunt Sally she come in, and when we got back she was a-standing on top of the bed raising Cain, and the rats was doing what they could to keep off the dull times for her. So she took and dusted us both with the hickry, and we was as much as two hours catching another fifteen or sixteen, drat that meddlesome cub, and they warn’t the likeliest, nuther, because the first haul was the pick of the flock. I never see a likelier lot of rats than what that first haul was.

We got a splendid stock of sorted spiders, and bugs, and frogs, and caterpillars, and one thing or another; and we like to got a hornet’s nest, but we didn’t. The family was at home. We didn’t give it right up, but stayed with them as long as we could; because we allowed we’d tire them out or they’d got to tire us out, and they done it. Then we got allycumpain and rubbed on the places, and was pretty near all right again, but couldn’t set down convenient. And so we went for the snakes, and grabbed a couple of dozen garters and house-snakes, and put them in a bag, and put it in our room, and by that time it was supper-time, and a rattling good honest day’s work: and hungry?—oh, no, I reckon not! And there warn’t a blessed snake up there when we went back—we didn’t half tie the sack, and they worked out somehow, and left. But it didn’t matter much, because they was still on the premises somewheres. So we judged we could get some of them again. No, there warn’t no real scarcity of snakes about the house for a considerable spell. You’d see them dripping from the rafters and places every now and then; and they generly landed in your plate, or down the back of your neck, and most of the time where you didn’t want them. Well, they was handsome and striped, and there warn’t no harm in a million of them; but that never made no difference to Aunt Sally; she despised snakes, be the breed what they might, and she couldn’t stand them no way you could fix it; and every time one of them flopped down on her, it didn’t make no difference what she was doing, she would just lay that work down and light out. I never see such a woman. And you could hear her whoop to Jericho. You couldn’t get her to take a-holt of one of them with the tongs. And if she turned over and found one in bed she would scramble out and lift a howl that you would think the house was afire. She disturbed the old man so that he said he could most wish there hadn’t ever been no snakes created. Why, after every last snake had been gone clear out of the house for as much as a week Aunt Sally warn’t over it yet; she warn’t near over it; when she was setting thinking about something you could touch her on the back of her neck with a feather and she would jump right out of her stockings. It was very curious. But Tom said all women was just so. He said they was made that way for some reason or other.

We got a licking every time one of our snakes come in her way, and she allowed these lickings warn’t nothing to what she would do if we ever loaded up the place again with them. I didn’t mind the lickings, because they didn’t amount to nothing; but I minded the trouble we had to lay in another lot. But we got them laid in, and all the other
things; and you never see a cabin as blithesome as Jim’s was when they’d all swarm out for music and go for him. Jim didn’t like the spiders, and the spiders didn’t like Jim; and so they’d lay for him, and make it mighty warm for him. And he said that between the rats and the snakes and the grindstone there warn’t no room in bed for him, skasely; and when there was, a body couldn’t sleep, it was so lively, and it was always lively, he said, because they never all slept at one time, but took turn about, so when the snakes was asleep the rats was on deck, and when the rats turned in the snakes come on watch, so he always had one gang under him, in his way, and t’other gang having a circus over him, and if he got up to hunt a new place the spiders would take a chance at him as he crossed over. He said if he ever got out this time he wouldn’t ever be a prisoner again, not for a salary.

Well, by the end of three weeks everything was in pretty good shape. The shirt was sent in early, in a pie, and every time a rat bit Jim he would get up and write a line in his journal whilst the ink was fresh; the pens was made, the inscriptions and so on was all carved on the grindstone; the bed-leg was sawed in two, and we had et up the sawdust, and it give us a most amazing stomach-ache. We reckoned we was all going to die, but didn’t. It was the most undigestible sawdust I ever see; and Tom said the same. But as I was saying, we’d got all the work done now, at last; and we was all pretty much fagged out, too, but mainly Jim. The old man had wrote a couple of times to the plantation below Orleans to come and get their runaway nigger, but hadn’t got no answer, because there warn’t no such plantation; so he allowed he would advertise Jim in the St. Louis and New Orleans papers; and when he mentioned the St. Louis ones it give me the cold shivers, and I see we hadn’t no time to lose. So Tom said, now for the nonnamous letters.

“What’s them?” I says.

“Warnings to the people that something is up. Sometimes it’s done one way, sometimes another. But there’s always somebody spying around that gives notice to the governor of the castle. When Louis XVI. was going to light out of the Tooleries a servant-girl done it. It’s a very good way, and so is the nonnamous letters. We’ll use them both. And it’s usual for the prisoner’s mother to change clothes with him, and she stays in, and he slides out in her clothes. We’ll do that, too.”

“But looky here, Tom, what do we want to warn anybody for that something’s up? Let them find it out for themselves—it’s their lookout.”

“Yes, I know; but you can’t depend on them. It’s the way they’ve acted from the very start—left us to do everything. They’re so confiding and mullet-headed they don’t take notice of nothing at all. So if we don’t give them notice there won’t be nobody nor nothing to interfere with us, and so after all our hard work and trouble this escape ’ll go off perfectly flat; won’t amount to nothing—won’t be nothing to it.”

“Well, as for me, Tom, that’s the way I’d like.”

“Shucks!” he says, and looked disgusted. So I says:

“But I ain’t going to make no complaint. Any way that suits you suits me. What you going to do about the servant-girl?”

“You’ll be her. You slide in, in the middle of the night, and hook that yaller girl’s frock.”

“Why, Tom, that ’ll make trouble next morning; because, of course, she prob’bly hain’t got any but that one.”

“I know; but you don’t want it but fifteen minutes, to carry the nonnamous letter and shove it under the front door.”

“All right, then, I’ll do it; but I could carry it just as handy in my own togs.”

“You wouldn’t look like a servant-girl then, would you?”

“No, but there won’t be nobody to see what I look like, anyway.”

“That ain’t got nothing to do with it. The thing for us to do is just to do our duty, and not worry about whether anybody sees us do it or not. Hain’t you got no principle at all?”

“All right, I ain’t saying nothing; I’m the servant-girl. Who’s Jim’s mother?”

“I’m his mother. I’ll hook a gown from Aunt Sally.”

“Well, then, you’ll have to stay in the cabin when me and Jim leaves.”
“Not much. I’ll stuff Jim’s clothes full of straw and lay it on his bed to represent his mother in disguise, and Jim’ll take the nigger woman’s gown off of me and wear it, and we’ll all evade together. When a prisoner of style escapes it’s called an evasion. It’s always called so when a king escapes, f’rinstance. And the same with a king’s son; it don’t make no difference whether he’s a natural one or an unnatural one.”

So Tom he wrote the nonnamous letter, and I smouched the yaller wench’s frock that night, and put it on, and shoved it under the front door, the way Tom told me to. It said:

\[ \text{Beware. Trouble is brewing. Keep a sharp lookout.} \]
\[ \text{UNKNOWN FRIEND.} \]

Next night we stuck a picture, which Tom drawed in blood, of a skull and crossbones on the front door; and next night another one of a coffin on the back door. I never see a family in such a sweat. They couldn’t ‘a’ been worse scared if the place had ‘a’ been full of ghosts laying for them behind everything and under the beds and shivering through the air. If a door banged, Aunt Sally she jumped and said “ouch!” if anything fell, she jumped and said “ouch!” if you happened to touch her, when she warn’t noticing, she done the same; she couldn’t face no way and be satisfied, because she allowed there was something behind her every time—so she was always a-whirling around sudden, and saying “ouch,” and before she’d got two-thirds around she’d whirl back again, and say it again; and she was afraid to go to bed, but she dasn’t set up. So the thing was working very well, Tom said; he said he never see a thing work more satisfactorily. He said it showed it was done right.

So he said, now for the grand bulge! So the very next morning at the streak of dawn we got another letter ready, and was wondering what we better do with it, because we heard them say at supper they was going to have a nigger on watch at both doors all night. Tom he went down the lightning-rod to spy around; and the nigger at the back door was asleep, and he stuck it in the back of his neck and come back. This letter said:

\[ \text{Don’t betray me, I wish to be your friend. There is a desperate gang of cutthroats from over in the Indian Territory going to steal your runaway nigger to-night, and they have been trying to scare you so as you will stay in the house and not bother them. I am one of the gang, but have got religion and wish to quit it and lead an honest life again, and will betray the helish design. They will sneak down from northards, along the fence, at midnight exact, with a false key, and go in the nigger’s cabin to get him. I am to be off a piece and blow a tin horn if I see any danger; but stead of that I will BA like a sheep soon as they get in and not blow at all; then whilst they are getting his chains loose, you slip there and lock them in, and can kill them at your leisure. Don’t do anything but just the way I am telling you; if you do they will suspicion something and raise whoop-jamboreehoo. I do not wish any reward but to know I have done the right thing.} \]
\[ \text{UNKNOWN FRIEND.} \]

\[ \text{CHAPTER XL} \]

We was feeling pretty good after breakfast, and took my canoe and went over the river a-fishing, with a lunch, and had a good time, and took a look at the raft and found her all right, and got home late to supper, and found them in such a sweat and worry they didn’t know which end they was standing on, and made us go right off to bed the minute we was done supper, and wouldn’t tell us what the trouble was, and never let on a word about the new letter, but didn’t need to, because we knewed as much about it as anybody did, and as soon as we was half up-stairs and her back was turned we slid for the cellar cubboard and loaded up a good lunch and took it up to our room and went to bed, and got up about half past eleven, and Tom put on Aunt Sally’s dress that he stole and was going to start with the lunch, but says:

“Where’s the butter?”

“I laid out a hunk of it,” I says, “on a piece of a corn-pone.”

“Well, you left it laid out, then—it ain’t here.”

“We can get along without it,” I says.

“We can get along with it, too,” he says; “just you slide down cellar and fetch it. And then mosey right down the lightning-rod and come along. I’ll go and stuff the straw into Jim’s clothes to represent his mother in disguise, and
be ready to be like a sheep and shove soon as you get there."

So out he went, and down cellar went I. The hunk of butter, big as a person's fist, was where I had left it, so I took up the slab of corn-pone with it on, and blew out my light, and started up-stairs very stealthy, and got up to the main floor all right, but here comes Aunt Sally with a candle, and I clapped the truck in my hat, and clapped my hat on my head, and the next second she see me; and she says:

“You been down cellar?”

“Yes'm.”

“What you been doing down there?”

“Noth'n.”

“Noth'n!”

“No'm.”

“Well, then, what possessed you to go down there this time of night?”

“I don't know 'm.”

“You don't know? Don't answer me that way. Tom, I want to know what you been doing down there.”

“I hain't been doing a single thing, Aunt Sally, I hope to gracious if I have.”

I reckoned she'd let me go now, and as a generl thing she would; but I s'pose there was so many strange things going on she was just in a sweat about every little thing that warn't yard-stick straight; so she says, very decided:

“You just march into that setting-room and stay there till I come. You been up to something you no business to, and I lay I'll find out what it is before I'm done with you.”

So she went away as I opened the door and walked into the setting-room. My, but there was a crowd there! Fifteen farmers, and every one of them had a gun. I was most powerful sick, and slunk to a chair and set down. They was setting around, some of them talking a little, in a low voice, and all of them fidgety and uneasy, but trying to look like they warn't; but I knewed they was, because they was always taking off their hats, and putting them on, and scratching their heads, and changing their seats, and fumbling with their buttons. I warn't easy myself, but I didn't take my hat off, all the same.

I did wish Aunt Sally would come, and get done with me, and lick me, if she wanted to, and let me get away and tell Tom how we'd overdone this thing, and what a thundering hornet's nest we'd got ourselves into, so we could stop fooling around straight off, and clear out with Jim before these rips got out of patience and come for us.

At last she come and begun to ask me questions, but I couldn't answer them straight, I didn't know which end of me was up; because these men was in such a fidget now that some was wanting to start right now and lay for them desperadoes, and saying it warn't but a few minutes to midnight; and others was trying to get them to hold on and wait for the sheep-signal; and here was Aunty pegging away at the questions, and me a-shaking all over and ready to sink down in my tracks I was that scared; and the place getting hotter and hotter, and the butter beginning to melt and run down my neck and behind my ears; and pretty soon, when one of them says, “I'm for going and getting in the cabin first and right now, and catching them when they come,” I most dropped; and a streak of butter come a-trickling down my forehead, and Aunt Sally she see it, and turns white as a sheet, and says:

“For the land’s sake, what is the matter with the child? He's got the brain-fever as shore as you’re born, and they’re oozing out!”

And everybody runs to see, and she snatches off my hat, and out comes the bread and what was left of the butter, and she grabbed me, and hugged me, and says:

“Oh, what a turn you did give me! and how glad and grateful I am it ain’t no worse; for luck’s against us, and it never rains but it pours, and when I see that truck I thought we’d lost you, for I knowed by the color and all it was just like your brains would be if—Dear, dear, whyd’nt you tell me that was what you’d been down there for, I wouldn’t ‘a’ cared. Now cler out to bed, and don’t lemme see no more of you till morning!”
I was up-stairs in a second, and down the lightning-rod in another one, and shinning through the dark for the lean-to. I couldn’t hardly get my words out, I was so anxious; but I told Tom as quick as I could we must jump for it now, and not a minute to lose—the house full of men, yonder, with guns!

His eyes just blazed; and he says:

“No!—is that so? Ain’t it bully! Why, Huck, if it was to do over again, I bet I could fetch two hundred! If we could put it off till—”


“Right at your elbow; if you reach out your arm you can touch him. He’s dressed, and everything’s ready. Now we’ll slide out and give the sheep-signal.”

But then we heard the tramp of men coming to the door, and heard them begin to fumble with the padlock, and heard a man say:

“I told you we’d be too soon; they haven’t come—the door is locked. Here, I’ll lock some of you into the cabin, and you lay for ‘em in the dark and kill ‘em when they come; and the rest scatter around a piece, and listen if you can hear ‘em coming.”

So in they come, but couldn’t see us in the dark, and most trod on us whilst we was hustling to get under the bed. But we got under all right, and out through the hole, swift but soft—Jim first, me next, and Tom last, which was according to Tom’s orders. Now we was in the lean-to, and heard trampings close by outside. So we crept to the door, and Tom stopped us there and put his eye to the crack, but couldn’t make out nothing, it was so dark; and whispered and said he would listen for the steps to get further, and when he nudged us Jim must glide out first, and him last. So he set his ear to the crack and listened, and listened, and listened, and the steps a-scraping around out there all the time; and at last he nudged us, and we slid out, and stooped down, not breathing, and not making the least noise, and slipped stealthy towards the fence in Injun file, and got to it all right, and me and Jim over it; but Tom’s britches catched fast on a splinter on the top rail, and then he hear the steps coming, so he had to pull loose, which snapped the splinter and made a noise; and as he dropped in our tracks and started somebody sings out:

“Who’s that? Answer, or I’ll shoot!”

But we didn’t answer; we just unfurled our heels and shoved. Then there was a rush, and a bang,bang,bang! and the bullets fairly whizzed around us! We heard them sing out:

“Here they are! They’ve broke for the river! After ‘em, boys, and turn loose the dogs!”

So here they come, full tilt. We could hear them because they wore boots and yelled, but we didn’t wear no boots and didn’t yell. We was in the path to the mill; and when they got pretty close onto us we dodged into the bush and let them go by, and then dropped in behind them. They’d had all the dogs shut up, so they wouldn’t scare off the robbers; but by this time somebody had let them loose, and here they come, making powwow enough for a million; but they was our dogs; so we stopped in our tracks till they caughted up; and when they see it warn’t nobody but us, and no excitement to offer them, they only just said howdy, and tore right ahead towards the shouting and clattering; and then we up-steam again, and whizzed along after them till we was nearly to the mill, and then struck up through the bush to where my canoe was tied, and hopped in and pulled for dear life towards the middle of the river, but didn’t make no more noise than we was obleighed to. Then we struck out, easy and comfortable, for the island where my raft was; and we could hear them yelling and barking at each other all up and down the bank, till we was so far away the sounds got dim and died out. And when we stepped onto the raft I says:

“Now, old Jim, you’re a free man again, and I bet you won’t ever be a slave no more.”

“En a mighty good job it wuz, too, Huck. It ‘uz planned beautiful, en it ‘uz done beautiful; en dey ain’t nobody kin git up a plan dat’s mo’ mixed up en splendid den what dat one wuz.”

We was all glad as we could be, but Tom was the gladdest of all because he had a bullet in the calf of his leg.

When me and Jim heard that we didn’t feel as brash as what we did before. It was hurting him considerable, and bleeding; so we laid him in the wigwam and tore up one of the duke’s shirts for to bandage him, but he says:

“Gimme the rags; I can do it myself. Don’t stop now; don’t fool around here, and the evasion booming along so
handsome; man the sweeps, and set her loose! Boys, we done it elegant!—’deed we did. I wish we’d ‘a’ had the handling of Louis XVI., there wouldn’t ‘a’ been no ‘Son of Saint Louis, ascend to heaven!’ wrote down in his biography; no, sir, we’d ‘a’ whooped him over the border—that’s what we’d ‘a’ done with him—and done it just as slick as nothing at all, too. Man the sweeps—man the sweeps!”

But me and Jim was consulting—and thinking. And after we’d thought a minute, I says:

“Say it, Jim.”

So he says:

“Well, den, dis is de way it look to me, Huck. Ef it wuz him dat ‘uz bein’ sot free, en one er de boys wuz to git shot, would he say, ‘Go on en save me, nemmine ‘bout a doctor f’r to save dis one’? Is dat like Mars Tom Sawyer? Would he say dat? You bet he wouldn’t! Well, den, is Jim gywne to say it? No, sah—I doan’ budge a step out’n dis place ‘dout a doctor; not if it’s forty year!”

I knowned he was white inside, and I reckon he’d say what he did say—so it was all right now, and I told Tom I was a-going for a doctor. He raised considerable row about it, but me and Jim stuck to it and wouldn’t budge; so he was for crawling out and setting the raft loose himself; but we wouldn’t let him. Then he give us a piece of his mind, but it didn’t do no good.

So when he sees me getting the canoe ready, he says:

“Well, then, if you’re bound to go, I’ll tell you the way to do when you get to the village. Shut the door and blindfold the doctor tight and fast, and make him swear to be silent as the grave, and put a purse full of gold in his hand, and then take and lead him all around the back alleys and everywheres in the dark, and then fetch him here in the canoe, in a roundabout way amongst the islands, and search him and take his chalk away from him, and don’t give it back to him till you get him back to the village, or else he will chalk this raft so he can find it again. It’s the way they all do.”

So I said I would, and left, and Jim was to hide in the woods when he see the doctor coming till he was gone again.

CHAPTER XLI

The doctor was an old man; a very nice, kind-looking old man when I got him up. I told him me and my brother was over on Spanish Island hunting yesterday afternoon, and camped on a piece of a raft we found, and about midnight he must ‘a’ kicked his gun in his dreams, for it went off and shot him in the leg, and we wanted him to go over there and fix it and not say nothing about it, nor let anybody know, because we wanted to come home this evening and surprise the folks.

“Who is your folks?” he says.

“The Phelpses, down yonder.”

“Oh,” he says. And after a minute, he says:

“How’d you say he got shot?”

“He had a dream,” I says, “and it shot him.”

“Singular dream,” he says.

So he lit up his lantern, and got his saddle-bags, and we started. But when he see the canoe he didn’t like the look of her—said she was big enough for one, but didn’t look pretty safe for two. I says:

“Oh, you needn’t be afeard, sir, she carried the three of us easy enough.”

“What three?”

“Why, me and Sid, and—and—and the guns; that’s what I mean.”
“Oh,” he says.

But he put his foot on the gunnel and rocked her, and shook his head, and said he reckoned he’d look around for a bigger one. But they was all locked and chained; so he took my canoe, and said for me to wait till he come back, or I could hunt around further, or maybe I better go down home and get them ready for the surprise if I wanted to. But I said I didn’t; so I told him just how to find the raft, and then he started.

I struck an idea pretty soon. I says to myself, spos’n he can’t fix that leg just in three shakes of a sheep’s tail, as the saying is? spos’n it takes him three or four days? What are we going to do?—lay around there till he lets the cat out of the bag? No, sir; I know what I’ll do. I’ll wait, and when he comes back if he says he’s got to go any more I’ll get down there, too, if I swim; and we’ll take and tie him, and keep him, and shove out down the river; and when Tom’s done with him we’ll give him what it’s worth, or all we got, and then let him get ashore.

So then I crept into a lumber-pile to get some sleep; and next time I waked up the sun was away up over my head! I shot out and went for the doctor’s house, but they told me he’d gone away in the night some time or other, and warn’t back yet. Well, thinks I, that looks powerful bad for Tom, and I’ll dig out for the island right off. So away I shoved, and turned the corner, and nearly rammed my head into Uncle Silas’s stomach! He says:

“Why, Tom! Where you been all this time, you rascal?”

“I hain’t been nowheres,” I says, “only just hunting for the runaway nigger—me and Sid.”

“Why, where ever did you go?” he says. “Your aunt’s been mighty uneasy.”

“She needn’t,” I says, “because we was all right. We followed the men and the dogs, but they outrun us, and we lost them; but we thought we heard them on the water, so we got a canoe and took out after them and crossed over, but couldn’t find nothing of them; so we cruised along up-shore till we got kind of tired and beat out; and tied up the canoe and went to sleep, and never waked up till about an hour ago; then we paddled over here to hear the news, and Sid’s at the post-office to see what he can hear, and I’m a-branching out to get something to eat for us, and then we’re going home.”

So then we went to the post-office to get “Sid”; but just as I suspicionsed, he warn’t there; so the old man he got a letter out of the office, and we waited awhile longer, but Sid didn’t come; so the old man said, come along, let Sid foot it home, or canoe it, when he got done fooling around—but we would ride. I couldn’t get him to let me stay and wait for Sid; and he said there warn’t no use in it, and I must come along, and let Aunt Sally see we was all right.

When we got home Aunt Sally was that glad to see me she laughed and cried both, and hugged me, and give me one of them lickings of hern that don’t amount to shucks, and said she’d serve Sid the same when he come.

And the place was plum full of farmers and farmers’ wives, to dinner; and such another clack a body never heard. Old Mrs. Hotchkiss was the worst; her tongue was a-going all the time. She says:

“Well, Sister Phelps, I’ve ransacked that-air cabin over, an’ I b’lieve the nigger was crazy. I says to Sister Damrell—didn’t I, Sister Damrell?—s’I, he’s crazy, s’I—them’s the very words I said. You all hearn me: he’s crazy, s’I; everything shows it, s’I. Look at that-air grindstone, s’I; want to tell me’t any cretur ‘t’s in his right mind ‘s a goin’ to scrabble all them crazy things onto a grindstone? s’I. Here sich ‘n’ sich a person busted his heart; ‘n’ here so ‘n’ so pegged along for thirty-seven year; ‘n’ all that—that-natcherl son o’ Louis somebody, ‘n’ sich everlast’n rubbish. He’s plumb crazy, s’I; it’s what I says in the fust place, it’s what I says in the middle, ‘n’ it’s what I says last ‘n’ all the time—the nigger’s crazy—crazy ’s Nebokoodneezer, s’I.”

“An’ look at that-air ladder made out’n rags, Sister Hotchkiss,” says old Mrs. Damrell; “what in the name o’ goodness could he ever want of—”

“The very words I was a-sayin’ no longer ago th’n this minute to Sister Utterback, ‘n’ she’ll tell you so herself. Sh-sh, look at that-air ladder, sh-sh; ‘n’ s’I, yes, look at it, s’I—what could he ‘a’ wanted of it, s’I. Sh-sh, Sister Hotchkiss, sh-sh—”

“But how in the nation’d they ever git that grindstone in there, anyway? ‘n’ who dug that-air hole? ‘n’ who—”

“My very words, Brer Penrod! I was a-sayin’—pass that-air sasser o’ m’lasses, won’t ye?—I was a-sayin’ to Sister Dunlap, jist this minute, how did they git that grindstone in there? s’I. Without help, mind you—’thout help! That’s where ‘tis. Don’t tell me, s’I; there wuz help, s’I; ‘n’ ther’ wuz a plenty help, too, s’I; ther’s ben a dozen a-helpin’
that nigger, ’n’ I lay I’d skin every last nigger on this place but I’d find out who done it, s’I; moreover, s’I—"

“A dozen says you!—forty couldn’t ‘a’ done everything that’s been done. Look at them case-knife saws and things, how tedious they’ve been made; look at that bed-leg sawed off with ‘m, a week’s work for six men: look at that nigger made out’n straw on the bed; and look at—”

“You may well say it, Brer Hightower! It’s just as I was a-sayin’ to Brer Phelps, his own self. S’e, what do you think of it, Sister Hotchkiss? s’e. Think o’ what, Brer Phelps? s’I. Think o’ that bed-leg sawed off that a way? s’e? Think of it? s’I. I lay it never sawed itself off, s’I—somebody sawed it, s’I; that’s my opinion, take it or leave it, it mayn’t be no count, s’I, but sich as ’t is, it’s my opinion, s’I, ’n’ if anybody k’n start a better one, s’I, let him do it, s’I, that’s all. I says to Sister Dunlap, s’I—”

“Why, dog my cats, they must ‘a’ ben a house-full o’ niggers in there every night for four weeks to ‘a’ done all that work, Sister Phelps. Look at that shirt—every last inch of it kivered over with secret African writ’n done with blood! Must ‘a’ ben a raft uv ‘m at it right along, all the time, amost. Why, I’d give two dollars to have it read to me; ’n’ as for the niggers that wrote it, I ’low I’d take ’n’ lash ’m t’ll—”

“People to help him, Brother Marples! Well, I reckon you’d think so if you’d ‘a’ been in this house for a while back. Why, they’ve stole everything they could lay their hands on—and we a-watching all the time, mind you. They stole that shirt right off o’ the line! and as for that sheet they made the rag ladder out of, ther’ ain’t no telling how many times they didn’t steal that; and flour, and candles, and candlesticks, and spoons, and the old warming-pan, and most a thousand things that I disremember now, and my new calico dress; and me and Silas and my Sid and Tom on the constant watch day and night, as I was a-telling you, and not a one of us could catch hide nor hair nor sight nor sound of them; and here at the last minute, lo and behold you, they slides right in under our noses and fools us, and not only fools us but the Injun Territory robbers too, and actuly gets away with that nigger safe and sound, and that with sixteen men and twenty-two dogs right on their very heels at that very time! I tell you, it just hangs anything I ever heard of. Why, sperits couldn’t ‘a’ done better and been no smarter. And I reckon they must ‘a’ been sperits—because, because, you know our dogs, and ther’ ain’t no better; well, them dogs never even got on the track of ‘m once! You explain that to me if you can!—any of you!”

“Well, it does beat—”

“Laws alive, I never—”

“So help me, I wouldn’t ‘a’ be—”

“House-thieves as well as—”

“Goodnessgraciouslysakes, I’d ‘a’ ben afeard to live in sich a—”

“Fraid to live!—why, I was that scared I dastn’t hardly go to bed, or get up, or lay down, or set down, Sister Ridgeway. Why, they’d steal the very—why, goodness sakes, you can guess what kind of a fluster I was in by the time midnight come last night. I hope to gracious if I warn’t afraid they’d steal some o’ the family! I was just to that pass I didn’t have no reasoning faculties no more. It looks foolish enough now, in the daytime; but I says to myself, there’s my two poor boys asleep, ‘way upstairs in that lonesome room, and I declare to goodness I was that uneasy ‘t I crep’ up there and locked ’em in! I did. And anybody would. Because, you know, when you get scared that way, and it keeps running on, and getting worse and worse all the time, and your wits gets to addling, and you get to doing all sorts o’ wild things, and by and by you think to yourself, spos’n I was a boy, and was away up that way, and it keeps running on, and getting worse and worse all the time, and your wits gets to addling, and you get to doing all sorts o’ wild things, and by and by you think to yourself, spos’n I was a boy, and was away up there, and the door ain’t locked, and you—” She stopped, looking kind of wondering, and then she turned her head around slow, and when her eye lit on me—I got up and took a walk.

Says I to myself, I can explain better how we come to not be in that room this morning if I go out to one side and study over it a little. So I done it. But I dastn’t go fur, or she’d ‘a’ sent for me. And when it was late in the day the people all went, and then I come in and told her the noise and shooting waked up me and “Sid,” and the door was locked, and we wanted to see the fun, so we went down the lightning-rod, and both of us got hurt a little, and we didn’t never want to try that no more. And then I went on and told her all what I told Uncle Silas before; and then she said she’d forgive us, and maybe it was all right enough anyway, and about what a body might expect of boys, for all boys was a pretty harum-scarum lot as fur as she could see; and so, as long as no harm hadn’t come of it, she judged she better put in her time being grateful we was alive and well and she had us still, stead of fretting over what was past and done. So then she kissed me, and patted me on the head, and dropped into a kind of a brown-study; and pretty soon jumps up, and says:

“Why, lawsamercy, it’s most night, and Sid not come yet! What has become of that boy?”
I see my chance; so I skips up and says:

“I’ll run right up to town and get him,” I says.

“No you won’t,” she says. “You’ll stay right wher’ you are; one’s enough to be lost at a time. If he ain’t here to supper, your uncle ‘ll go.”

Well, he warn’t there to supper; so right after supper uncle went.

He come back about ten a little bit uneasy; hadn’t run across Tom’s track. Aunt Sally was a good deal uneasy; but Uncle Silas he said there warn’t no occasion to be—boys will be boys, he said, and you’ll see this one turn up in the morning all sound and right. So she had to be satisfied. But she said she’d set up for him awhile anyway, and keep a light burning so he could see it.

And then when I went up to bed she come up with me and fetched her candle, and tucked me in, and mothered me so good I felt mean, and like I couldn’t look her in the face; and she set down on the bed and talked with me a long time, and said what a splendid boy Sid was, and didn’t seem to want to ever stop talking about him; and kept asking me every now and then if I reckoned he could ‘a’ got lost, or hurt, or maybe drownded, and might be laying at this minute somewheres suffering or dead, and she not by him to help him, and so the tears would drip down silent, and I would tell her that Sid was all right, and would be home in the morning, sure; and she would squeeze my hand, or maybe kiss me, and tell me to say it again, and keep on saying it, because it done her good, and she was in so much trouble. And when she was going away she looked down in my eyes so steady and gentle, and says:

“The door ain’t going to be locked, Tom, and there’s the window and the rod; but you’ll he good, won’t you? And you won’t go? For my sake.”

Laws knows I wanted to go bad enough to see about Tom, and was all intending to go; but after that I wouldn’t ‘a’ went, not for kingdoms.

But she was on my mind and Tom was on my mind, so I slept very restless. And twice I went down the rod away in the night, and slipped around front, and see her setting there by her candle in the window with her eyes towards the road and the tears in them; and I wished I could do something for her, but I couldn’t, only to swear that I wouldn’t never do nothing to grieve her any more. And the third time I waked up at dawn, and slid down, and she was there yet, and her candle was most out, and her old gray head was resting on her hand, and she was asleep.

CHAPTER XLII

The old man was uptown again before breakfast, but couldn’t get no track of Tom; and both of them set at the table thinking, and not saying nothing, and looking mournful, and their coffee getting cold, and not eating anything. And by and by the old man says:

“Did I give you the letter?”

“What letter?”

“The one I got yesterday out of the post-office.”

“No, you didn’t give me no letter.”

“Well, I must ‘a’ forgot it.”

So he rummaged his pockets, and then went off somewheres where he had laid it down, and fetched it, and give it to her. She says:

“Why, it’s from St. Petersburg—it’s from Sis.”

I allowed another walk would do me good; but I couldn’t stir. But before she could break it open she dropped it and run—for she see something. And so did I. It was Tom Sawyer on a mattress; and that old doctor; and Jim, in her calico dress, with his hands tied behind him; and a lot of people. I hid the letter behind the first thing that come handy, and rushed. She flung herself at Tom, crying, and says:
“Oh, he’s dead, he’s dead, I know he’s dead!”

And Tom he turned his head a little, and muttered something or other, which showed he warn’t in his right mind; then she flung up her hands, and says:

“He’s alive, thank God! And that’s enough!” and she snatched a kiss of him, and flew for the house to get the bed ready, and scattering orders right and left at the niggers and everybody else, as fast as her tongue could go, every jump of the way.

I followed the men to see what they was going to do with Jim; and the old doctor and Uncle Silas followed after Tom into the house. The men was very huffy, and some of them wanted to hang Jim for an example to all the other niggers around there, so they wouldn’t be trying to run away like Jim done, and making such a raft of trouble, and keeping a whole family scared most to death for days and nights. But the others said, don’t do it, it wouldn’t answer at all; he ain’t our nigger, and his owner would turn up and make us pay for him, sure. So that cooled them down a little, because the people that’s always the most anxious for to hang a nigger that hain’t done just right is always the very ones that ain’t the most anxious to pay for him when they’ve got their satisfaction out of him.

They cussed Jim considerble, though, and give him a cuff or two side the head once in a while, but Jim never said nothing, and he never let on to know me, and they took him to the same cabin, and put his own clothes on him, and chained him again, and not to no bed-leg this time, but to a big staple drove into the bottom log, and chained his hands, too, and both legs, and said he warn’t to have nothing but bread and water to eat after this till his owner come, or he was sold at auction because he didn’t come in a certain length of time, and filled up our hole, and said a couple of farmers with guns must stand watch around about the cabin every night, and a bulldog tied to the door in the daytime; and about this time they was through with the job and was tapering off with a kind of general good-by cussing, and then the old doctor comes and takes a look, and says:

“Don’t be no rougher on him than you’re obleeged to, because he ain’t a bad nigger. When I got to where I found the boy I see I couldn’t cut the bullet out without some help, and he warn’t in no condition for me to leave to go and get help; and he got a little worse and a little worse, and after a long time he went out of his head, and wouldn’t let me come a-nigh him any more, and said if I chalked his raft he’d kill me, and no end of wild foolishness like that, and I see I couldn’t do anything at all with him; so I says, I got to have help somehow; and the minute I says it out crawls this nigger from somewheres and says he’ll help, and he done it, too, and done it very well. Of course I judged he must be a runaway nigger, and there I was! and there I had to stick right straight along all the rest of the day and all night. It was a fix, I tell you! I had a couple of patients with the chills, and of course I’d of liked to run up to town and see them, but I dasn’t, because the nigger might get away, and then I’d be to blame; and yet never a skiff come close enough for me to hail. So there I had to stick plumb until daylight this morning; and I never see a nigger that was a better nuss or faithfuler, and yet he was risking his freedom to do it, and was all tired out, too, and I see plain enough he’d been worked main hard lately. I liked the nigger for that; I tell you, gentlemen, a nigger like that is worth a thousand dollars—and kind treatment, too. I had everything I needed, and the boy was doing as well there as he would ‘a’ done at home—better, maybe, because it was so quiet; but there I was, with both of ‘m on my hands, and there I had to stick till about dawn this morning; then some men in a skiff come by, and as good luck would have it the nigger was setting by the pallet with his head propped on his knees sound asleep; so I motioned them in quiet, and they slipped up on him and grabbed him and tied him before he knowed what he was about, and we never had no trouble. And the boy being in a kind of a flighty sleep, too, we muffled the oars and hitched the raft on, and towed her over very nice and quiet, and the nigger never made the least row nor said a word from the start. He ain’t no bad nigger, gentlemen; that’s what I think about him.”

Somebody says:

“Well, it sounds very good, doctor, I’m obleeged to say.”

Then the others softened up a little, too, and I was mighty thankful to that old doctor for doing Jim that good turn; and I was glad it was according to my judgment of him, too; because I thought he had a good heart in him and was a good man the first time I see him. Then they all agreed that Jim had acted very well, and was deserving to have some notice took of it, and reward. So every one of them promised, right out and hearty, that they wouldn’t cuss him no more.

Then they come out and locked him up. I hoped they was going to say he could have one or two of the chains took off, because they was rotten heavy, or could have meat and greens with his bread and water; but they didn’t think of it, and I reckoned it warn’t best for me to mix in, but I judged I’d get the doctor’s yarn to Aunt Sally somehow or other as soon as I’d got through the breakers that was laying just ahead of me—explanations, I mean, of how I forgot to mention about Sid being shot when I was telling how him and me put in that dratted night paddling
around hunting the runaway nigger.

But I had plenty time. Aunt Sally she stuck to the sick-room all day and all night, and every time I see Uncle Silas mooning around I dodged him.

Next morning I heard Tom was a good deal better, and they said Aunt Sally was gone to get a nap. So I slips to the sick-room, and if I found him awake I reckon we could put up a yarn for the family that would wash. But he was sleeping, and sleeping very peaceful, too; and pale, not fire-faced the way he was when he come. So I set down and laid for him to wake. In about half an hour Aunt Sally comes gliding in, and there I was, up a stump again! She motioned me to be still, and set down by me, and begun to whisper, and said we could all be joyful now, because all the symptoms was first-rate, and he’d been sleeping like that for ever so long, and looking better and peacefuler all the time, and ten to one he’d wake up in his right mind.

So we set there watching, and by and by he stirs a bit, and opened his eyes very natural, and takes a look, and says:

"Hello!—why, I’m at home! How’s that? Where’s the raft?"

"It’s all right," I says.

"And Jim?"

"The same," I says, but couldn’t say it pretty brash. But he never noticed, but says:

"Good! Splendid! Now we’re all right and safe! Did you tell Aunty?"

I was going to say yes; but she chipped in and says:

"About what, Sid?"

"Why, about the way the whole thing was done."

"What whole thing?"

"Why, the whole thing. There ain’t but one; how we set the runaway nigger free—me and Tom."

"Good land! Set the run—What is the child talking about! Dear, dear, out of his head again!"

"No, I ain’t out of my HEAD; I know all what I’m talking about. We did set him free—me and Tom. We laid out to do it, and we done it. And we done it elegant, too." He’d got a start, and she never checked him up, just set and stared and stared, and let him clip along, and I see it warn’t no use for me to put in. "Why, Aunty, it cost us a power of work—weeks of it—hours and hours, every night, whilst you was all asleep. And we had to steal candles, and the sheet, and the shirt, and your dress, and spoons, and tin plates, and case-knives, and the warming-pan, and the grindstone, and flour, and just no end of things, and you can’t think what work it was to make the saws, and pens, and inscriptions, and one thing or another, and you can’t think half the fun it was. And we had to make up the pictures of coffins and things, and nonnamous letters from the robbers, and get up and down the lightning-rod, and dig the hole into the cabin, and make the rope ladder and send it in cooked up in a pie, and send in spoons and things to work with in your apron pocket—"

"Mercy sakes!"

"—and load up the cabin with rats and snake’s and so on, for company for Jim; and then you kept Tom here so long with the butter in his hat that you come near spiling the whole business, because the men come before we was out of the cabin, and we had to rush, and they heard us and let drive at us, and I got my share, and we dodged out of the path and let them go by, and when the dogs come they warn’t interested in us, but went for the most noise, and we got our canoe, and made for the raft, and was all safe, and Jim was a free man, and we done it all by ourselves, and wasn’t it bully. Aunty!"

"Well, I never heard the likes of it in all my born days! So it was you, you little rapscallions, that’s been making all this trouble, and turned everybody’s wits clean inside out and scared us all most to death. I’ve as good a notion as ever I had in my life to take it out o’ you this very minute. To think, here I’ve been, night after night, a—you just get well once, you young scamp, and I lay I’ll tan the Old Harry out o’ both o’ ye!"

But Tom, he was so proud and joyful, he just couldn’t hold in, and his tongue just went it—she a-chipping in, and
spitting fire all along, and both of them going it at once, like a cat convention; and she says:

“Well, you get all the enjoyment you can out of it now, for mind I tell you if I catch you meddling with him again—”

“Meddling with who” Tom says, dropping his smile and looking surprised.

“With who? Why, the runaway nigger, of course. Who’d you reckon?”

Tom looks at me very grave, and says:

“Tom, didn’t you just tell me he was all right? Hasn’t he got away?”

“Him?” says Aunt Sally; “the runaway nigger? Deed he hasn’t. They’ve got him back, safe and sound, and he’s in that cabin again, on bread and water, and loaded down with chains, till he’s claimed or sold!”

Tom rose square up in bed, with his eye hot, and his nostrils opening and shutting like gills, and sings out to me:

“They hain’t no right to shut him up! Shove!—and don’t you lose a minute. Turn him loose! he ain’t no slave; he’s as free as any cretur that walks this earth!”

“What does the child mean?”

“I mean every word I say, Aunt Sally. and if somebody don’t go, I’ll go. I’ve knowed him all his life, and so has Tom, there. Old Miss Watson died two months ago, and she was ashamed she ever was going to sell him down the river, and said so; and she set him free in her will.”

“Then what on earth did you want to set him free for, seeing he was already free?”

“Well, that is a question, I must say; and just like women! Why, I wanted the adventure of it; and I’d ‘a’ waded neck-deep in blood to—goodness alive, Aunt Polly!”

If she warn’t standing right there, just inside the door, looking as sweet and contented as an angel half full of pie, I wish I may never!

Aunt Sally jumped for her, and most hugged the head off of her, and cried over her, and I found a good enough place for me under the bed, for it was getting pretty sultry for us, seemed to me. And I peeped out, and in a little while Tom’s Aunt Polly shook herself loose and stood there looking across at Tom over her spectacles—kind of grinding him into the earth, you know. And then she says:

“Yes, you better turn y’r head away—I would if I was you, Tom.”

“Oh, deary me!” says Aunt Sally; “is he changed so? Why, that ain’t Tom, it’s Sid; Tom’s—Tom’s—why, where is Tom? He was here a minute ago.”

“You mean where’s Huck Finn—that’s what you mean! I reckon I hain’t raised such a scamp as my Tom all these years not to know him when I see him. That would be a pretty howdy-do. Come out from under that bed, Huck Finn.”

So I done it. But not feeling brash.

Aunt Sally was one of the mixed-uppest-looking persons I ever see—except one, and that was Uncle Silas, when he come in and they told it all to him. It kind of made him drunk, as you may say, and he didn’t know nothing at all the rest of the day, and preached a prayer-meeting sermon that night that gave him a rattling reputation, because the oldest man in the world couldn’t ‘a’ understood it. So Tom’s Aunt Polly, she told all about who I was, and what; and I had to up and tell how I was in such a tight place that when Mrs. Phelps took me for Tom Sawyer—I had to stand it—there warn’t no other way, and I knowed he wouldn’t mind, because it would be nuts for him, being a mystery, and he’d make an adventure out of it, and be perfectly satisfied. And so it turned out, and he let on to be Sid, and made things as soft as he could for me.

And his Aunt Polly she said Tom was right about old Miss Watson setting Jim free in her will; and so, sure enough, Tom Sawyer had gone and took all that trouble and bother to set a free nigger free! and I couldn’t ever understand before, until that minute and that talk, how he could help a body set a nigger free with his bringing-up.
Well, Aunt Polly she said that when Aunt Sally wrote to her that Tom and Sid had come all right and safe, she says to herself:

“Look at that, now! I might have expected it, letting him go off that way without anybody to watch him. So now I got to go and trapse all the way down the river, eleven hundred mile, and find out what that creetur’s up to this time, as long as I couldn’t seem to get any answer out of you about it.”

“Well, I never heard nothing from you,” says Aunt Sally.

“Well, I wonder! Why, I wrote you twice to ask you what you could mean by Sid being here.”

“Well, I never got ‘em. Sis.”

Aunt Polly she turns around slow and severe, and says:

“You, Tom!”

“Well—what?” he says, kind of pettish.

“Don’t you what me, you impudent thing—hand out them letters.”

“What letters?”

“Them letters. I be bound, if I have to take a-holt of you I’ll—”

“They’re in the trunk. There, now. And they’re just the same as they was when I got them out of the office. I hain’t looked into them, I hain’t touched them. But I knowed they’d make trouble, and I thought if you warn’t in no hurry, I’d—”

“Well, you do need skinning, there ain’t no mistake about it. And I wrote another one to tell you I was coming; and I s’pose he—”

“No, it come yesterday; I hain’t read it yet, but it’s all right, I’ve got that one.”

I wanted to offer to bet two dollars she hadn’t, but I reckoned maybe it was just as safe to not to. So I never said nothing.

CHAPTER THE LAST

The first time I catched Tom private I asked him what was his idea, time of the evasion?—what it was he’d planned to do if the evasion worked all right and he managed to set a nigger free that was already free before? And he said, what he had planned in his head from the start, if we got Jim out all safe, was for us to run him down the river on the raft, and have adventures plumb to the mouth of the river, and then tell him about his being free, and take him back up home on a steamboat, in style, and pay him for his lost time, and write word ahead and get out all the niggers around, and have them waltz him into town with a torchlight procession and a brass-band, and then he would be a hero, and so would we. But I reckoned it was about as well the way it was.

We had Jim out of the chains in no time, and when Aunt Polly and Uncle Silas and Aunt Sally found out how good he helped the doctor nurse Tom, they made a heap of fuss over him, and fixed him up prime, and give him all he wanted to eat, and a good time, and nothing to do. And we had him up to the sick-room, and had a high talk; and Tom give Jim forty dollars for being prisoner for us so patient, and doing it up so good, and Jim was pleased most to death and busted out, and says:

“Dah, now, Huck, what I tell you?—what I tell you up dah on Jackson Islan’? I tole you I got a hairy breas’, en what’s de sign un it; en I tole you I ben rich wunst, en gwineter to be rich ag’in; en it’s come true; en heah she is! Dah, now! doan’ talk to me—signs is signs, mine I tell you; en I knowed jis’ ‘s well ‘at I ‘uz gwineter be rich ag’in as I’s a-stannin’ heah dis minute!”

And then Tom he talked along and talked along, and says, le’s all three slide out of here one of these nights and get an outfit, and go for howling adventures amongst the Injuns, over in the territory, for a couple of weeks or two; and I says, all right, that suits me, but I ain’t got no money for to buy the outfit, and I reckon I couldn’t get
none from home, because it’s likely pap’s been back before now, and got it all away from Judge Thatcher and drunk it up.

“No, he hain’t,” Tom says; “it’s all there yet—six thousand dollars and more; and your pap hain’t ever been back since. Hadn’t when I come away, anyhow.”

Jim says, kind of solemn:

“He ain’t a-comin’ back no mo’, Huck.”

I says:

“Why, Jim?”

“Nemmine why, Huck—but he ain’t comin’ back no mo’.”

But I kept at him; so at last he says:

“Doan’ you ‘member de house dat was float’n down de river, en dey wuz a man in dah, kivered up, en I went in en unkivered him and didn’ let you come in? Well, den, you kin git yo’ money when you wants it, kase dat wuz him.”

Tom’s most well now, and got his bullet around his neck on a watch-guard for a watch, and is always seeing what time it is, and so there ain’t nothing more to write about, and I am rotten glad of it, because if I’d ‘a’ knowed what a trouble it was to make a book I wouldn’t ‘a’ tackled it, and ain’t a-going to no more. But I reckon I got to light out for the territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally she’s going to adopt me and sivilize me, and I can’t stand it. I been there before.

THE END
Reading Myth: Some Tips

Reading mythology can be difficult. Here are several suggestions to help you read them.

- Take time to make time: account for the frequent gaps in chronology and timeline continuity.
- Give weight to time, thinking about how myths figure the passage of time.
- Try different lenses: Myth often reveals psychological states or changes. Also read the way a scientist would, using hypotheses and tests. Be an anthropologist, studying the structure and function of a story or hero or monster. Read as a literary critic, adopting approaches, using literary terms like motivation, conflict, irony.
- Have cognitive complexity, the ability to hold two or more disagreeing points of view at once.
- Look it up: If a word or name doesn’t make sense, find its origin.
- Read flexibly: As with reading Shakespeare, readings of myth run into dead end words, reordered phrases, and stilted, archaic language. Try and do a running translation of the work as you see it.
- Boil down long phrases: It may take forty lines to say that a hero was angry. Conversely, it may take six lines to discuss the creation of the world and man! Clearly, dealing with time flexibly is a must for a reader of myth.
- Cognitive Dissonance—Struggle with It! The notion of cognitive dissonance states that we’ll attempt to “gel” two or more contradictory ideas, reaching a state where we’re comfortable. This is often impossible with mythology, so you should try and read against the tendency to explain away contradictions. (This is sort of like attempts to keep metaphors—which are dissonant identifications of two unlike things—in our minds for a while.)
- Use binaries/get past binaries: Pairs of choices (binaries) can be useful tools in analysis. We can look at a hero in terms of what they are and are not, just as we can contrast a protagonist with an antagonist. We can contrast Eastern and Western mythological systems. Still, don’t get stuck in the either/or logic of binaries. For example, many heroes go beyond fear and desire, achieving something transcendent of both (i.e., Buddha, Jesus).
- E.M. Forster, the English novelist, said “Only connect.” Making thematic, symbolic or other connections helps. Heroes and myths have many similarities. By marking your book with care, you can draw upon the obvious connections and discover implicit ones.
- Keep asking “How does the action reflect psychological awareness and changes in awareness?” Tie your answers to specific textual details.
- Reading these myths aloud creates an experience of them that goes beyond reading silently.
- Reread, too. Adopt a voice as you do this. Take a stance with your tone.
- Appreciate what’s lost in translation. Read names, think of alternate syntax (word order), and focus on alternate verbs that’d do better at conveying the action of what you’re reading.
- Remembering audience and purpose, we know that most myths are limited in usefulness as scientific or even narrative pieces. For example, the labors of Herakles isn’t primarily an account of the constellation Sagittarius and its founding. What is it for, then?
- Figure out what your favorite lenses are: anthropological, psychological-of which there are many, mythological, literary, historical, feminist, Marxist, structuralist, reader response. Usually, you’re using at least two of these approaches when you read.
- Setting and conflict are good lenses for understanding difficult myths. There’s almost always an emphasis on how the landscape affects the plot, or how conflict relates to the audience.

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General Mythology Notes

Mythology—terms are underlined. Know all this for tests and to help you respond as we continue.

This is what we have learned so far:

- Different hunting cultures responded to their environment with myths and other stories.
- These stories put the people’s relationships with the world in order at that time and place.
- We need to be careful judging another culture—we should not judge them by our values.
- Psychological criticism (like Freudian criticism) can help us as we read difficult, strange stories.
- Humans respond to myths on conscious and unconscious levels.
- According to Campbell, myth and legend are part of the world of the imagination, which responds to the real world. The two are related and continue to change.
- Myths are dynamic—they have an energy that is kept alive as they are told and change through time.
- Symbolism—one thing representing another—and metaphor—a comparison of two unlike things—give us ways to read these myths. This puts pressure on you to read actively and to respond!
- There are amazing similarities between heroes, myths and concerns around the world at any time.

Hunting

- Hunters are concerned with the rules and gear of the hunt, and with how the animal masters are kept happy through their rituals. They felt survival depended on this.
- Hunters run into trouble as they move from place to place—they “trespassed” and fought a lot.
- They are often warlike and focus especially on individual skill in battle and hunting.
- Rituals “wipe out the guilt” caused by consuming other creatures in order to survive (Campbell).

What I also want you to know for this unit (notes):

- Hunting cultures are different from planting cultures. Their myths are also different.
- The basic binary (pair) of hunting and planting myths one way to split nearly all mythology.

Planter focus on the planting, growth, consumption and decay of their gods just as they do with their plants. Planters generally make myths were a being is sacrificed and returns.

- Planting mythology can involve sacrifice as a part of this regeneration cycle they saw in plants.
- Planters often emphasize the group over the individual—there is not as much call for individual prowess (skill) in these cultures.

Compare and Contrast Myths and Critical Approaches—This Gives You Critical Perspective

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<td>England</td>
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<td>Christianity</td>
<td>Greek Pantheon (represent parts of the mind)</td>
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**Freud** (Freudian, Psychoanalytic)  
(conscious/unconscious)

**Jung** (Jungian, Archetypal)  
archetypes—common threads all humans face
id, ego, superego of consciousness
collective unconscious—common wealth of being,

childhood shocks and stages are key
not inherited, but similar (vaguely) to instincts

importance of dreams and reading
common symbols to be read into, rather than Freud’s of them by
trained doctor
separate individual problems, are valued by Jung

Campbell (Archetypal, like Jung)

Hero journey—every hero anywhere basically goes through same journey

- Outer journey (plot) is symbolic of an inner psychological journey of discovery
- Myth must be read literally (as symbol and metaphor, flexibly) and not literally (as history or on surface only)
- Myths are dynamic—that is, they have an energy that is kept alive as they are told and change through time
- Myths are about inner adventures, not only outer stories
Alien Humor Analysis

You are part of an alien sociological team attempting to decode the humor of one Samuel Clemens, aka Mark Twain. An apparent earthling, this Twain's works elicited strong favor during his time. Like comedians, Twain appeared to favor socially inappropriate statements. However, his humor seems to be lost upon your civilization and species.

What exactly makes him funny?

Using “The Private History of a Campaign that Failed,” write a brief analysis of how Twain uses each of the following: understatement, overstatement, verbal irony, and symbolism. For each term, locate an instance of the term, cite it, and discuss why it is humorous. In doing this assignment thoroughly, you will be exercising the high-order critical thinking skills for which your species is famed.

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Immigration
Overview: Immigration

*Immigrants just arrived from Foreign Countries-Immigrant Building, Ellis Island, New York Harbor. (Half of a stereo card)*

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Video: Growth, Cities, and Immigration

The video attached gives a great “Crash Course” on American immigration at the turn of the 20th century with a focus on the implications of immigration on urbanization and the work force.

Published on Aug 15, 2013

In which John Green teaches you about the massive immigration to the United States during the late 19th and early 20th century. Immigrants flocked to the US from all over the world in this time period. Millions of Europeans moved to the US where they drove the growth of cities and manned the rapid industrialization that was taking place. In the western US many, many Chinese immigrants arrived to work on the railroad and in mines. As is often the case in the United States, the people who already lived in the US reacted kind of badly to this flood of immigrants. Some legislators tried to stem the flow of new arrivals, with mixed success. Grover Cleveland vetoed a general ban on immigration, but the leadership at the time did manage to get together to pass and anti-Chinese immigration law. Immigrants did win some important Supreme Court decisions upholding their rights, but in many ways, immigrants were treated as second class citizens. At the same time, the country was rapidly urbanizing. Cities were growing rapidly and industrial technology was developing new wonders all the time. John will cover all this upheaval and change, and hearken back to a time when racial profiling did in fact boil down to analyzing the side of someone’s face.

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Biography: Howard Zinn

Howard Zinn (August 24, 1922 – January 27, 2010) was an American historian, author, playwright, and social activist. He was a political science professor at Boston University. Zinn wrote more than 20 books, including his best-selling and influential *A People’s History of the United States*.

Zinn described himself as “something of an anarchist, something of asocialist. Maybe a democratic socialist.” He wrote extensively about the civil rights and anti-war movements, and labor history of the United States. His memoir, *You Can’t Be Neutral on a Moving Train*, was also the title of a 2004 documentary about Zinn’s life and work.

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<th>Howard Zinn</th>
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Zinn in May 2009

| Born       | August 24, 1922  
Brooklyn, New York City, New York, U.S. |
|------------|------------------|
| Died       | January 27, 2010 (aged 87)  
Santa Monica, California, U.S. |
| Occupation | Historian        |
| Alma mater | New York University (B.A.)  
Columbia University (M.A.) (Ph.D.) |
| Spouse     | Roslyn (Shechter) Zinn (died 2008) 2 children |
Life and career

World War II

Eager to fight fascism, Zinn joined the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II and was assigned as a bombardier in the 490th Bombardment Group, bombing targets in Berlin, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. As bombardier, Zinn dropped napalm bombs in April 1945 on Royan, a seaside resort in southwestern France. The anti-war stance Zinn developed later was informed, in part, by his experiences.

On a post-doctoral research mission nine years later, Zinn visited the resort near Bordeaux where he interviewed residents, reviewed municipal documents, and read wartime newspaper clippings at the local library. In 1966, Zinn returned to Royan after which he gave his fullest account of that research in his book, *The Politics of History*. On the ground, Zinn learned that the aerial bombing attacks in which he participated had killed more than 1000 French civilians as well as some German soldiers hiding near Royan to await the war’s end, events that are described “in all accounts” he found as “une tragique erreur” that leveled a small but ancient city and “its population that was, at least officially, friend, not foe.” In *The Politics of History*, Zinn described how the bombing was ordered—three weeks before the war in Europe ended—by military officials who were, in part, motivated more by the desire for their own career advancement than in legitimate military objectives. He quotes the official history of the U.S. Army Air Forces’ brief reference to the Eighth Air Force attack on Royan and also, in the same chapter, to the bombing of Pilsen in what was then Czechoslovakia. The official history stated that the famous Skoda works in Pilsen “received 500 well-placed tons,” and that “because of a warning sent out ahead of time the workers were able to escape, except for five persons.”

Zinn wrote:

I recalled flying on that mission, too, as deputy lead bombardier, and that we did not aim specifically at the ‘Skoda works’ (which I would have noted, because it was the one target in Czechoslovakia I had read about) but dropped our bombs, without much precision, on the city of Pilsen. Two Czech citizens who lived in Pilsen at the time told me, recently, that several hundred people were killed in that raid (that is, Czechs)—not five.

Zinn said his experience as a wartime bombardier, combined with his research into the reasons for, and effects of the bombing of Royan and Pilsen, sensitized him to the ethical dilemmas faced by G.I.s during wartime. Zinn questioned the justifications for military operations that inflicted massive civilian casualties during the Allied bombing of cities such as Dresden, Royan, Tokyo, and Hiroshima and Nagasaki in World War II, Hanoi during the War in Vietnam, and Baghdad during the war in Iraq and the civilian casualties during bombings in Afghanistan during the current war there. In his pamphlet, *Hiroshima: Breaking the Silence* written in 1995, he laid out the case against targeting civilians with aerial bombing.

Six years later, he wrote:

Recall that in the midst of the Gulf War, the U.S. military bombed an air raid shelter, killing 400 to 500 men, women, and children who were huddled to escape bombs. The claim was that it was a military target, housing a communications center, but reporters going through the ruins immediately afterward said there was no sign of anything like that. I suggest that the history of bombing—and no one has bombed more than this nation—is a history of endless atrocities, all calmly explained by deceptive and deadly language like ‘accident’, ‘military target’, and ‘collateral damage’.

Education

After World War II, Zinn attended New York University on the GI Bill, graduating with a B.A. in 1951. At Columbia University, he earned an M.A. (1952) and a Ph.D. in history with a minor in political science (1958). His masters’ thesis examined the Colorado coal strikes of 1914. His doctoral dissertation *LaGuardia in Congress* was a study of Fiorello LaGuardia’s congressional career, and it depicted “the conscience of the twenties” as LaGuardia fought for public power, the right to strike, and the redistribution of wealth by taxation. “His specific legislative program,” Zinn wrote, “was an astonishingly accurate preview of the New Deal.” It was published by the Cornell
University Press for the American Historical Association. *LaGuardia in Congress* was nominated for the American Historical Association’s Beveridge Prize as the best English-language book on American history.

His professors at Columbia included Harry Carman, Henry Steele Commager, and David Donald. But it was Columbia historian Richard Hofstadter’s *The American Political Tradition* that made the most lasting impression. Zinn regularly included it in his lists of recommended readings, and, after Barack Obama was elected President of the United States, Zinn wrote, “If Richard Hofstadter were adding to his book *The American Political Tradition*, in which he found both ‘conservative’ and ‘liberal’ presidents, both Democrats and Republicans, maintaining for dear life the two critical characteristics of the American system, nationalism and capitalism, Obama would fit the pattern.”

In 1960–61, Zinn was a post-doctoral fellow in East Asian Studies at Harvard University.

**Academic career**

“We were not born critical of existing society. There was a moment in our lives (or a month, or a year) when certain facts appeared before us, startled us, and then caused us to question beliefs that were strongly fixed in our consciousness – embedded there by years of family prejudices, orthodox schooling, imbibing of newspapers, radio, and television. This would seem to lead to a simple conclusion: that we all have an enormous responsibility to bring to the attention of others information they do not have, which has the potential of causing them to rethink long-held ideas.”

— Howard Zinn, 2005

Zinn was professor of history at Spelman College in Atlanta from 1956 to 1963, and visiting professor at both the University of Paris and University of Bologna. At the end of the academic year in 1963, Zinn was fired from Spelman. In 1964, he accepted a position at Boston University, after writing two books and participating in the Civil Rights Movement in the South. His classes in civil liberties were among the most popular at the university with as many as 400 students subscribing each semester to the non-required class. A professor of political science, he taught at BU for 24 years and retired in 1988 at age 64.

“He had a deep sense of fairness and justice for the underdog. But he always kept his sense of humor. He was a happy warrior,” said Caryl Rivers, journalism professor at Boston University. Rivers and Zinn were among a group of faculty members who in 1979 defended the right of the school’s clerical workers to strike and were threatened with dismissal after refusing to cross a picket line.

Zinn came to believe that the point of view expressed in traditional history books was often limited. Biographer Martin Duberman noted that when he was asked directly if he was a Marxist, Zinn replied, “Yes, I’m something of a Marxist.” He especially was influenced by the liberating vision of the young Marx in overcoming alienation, and disliked Marx’s later dogmatism. In later life he moved more toward anarchism.

He wrote a history textbook, *A People’s History of the United States*, to provide other perspectives on American history. The textbook depicts the struggles of Native Americans against European and U.S. conquest and expansion, slaves against slavery, unionists and other workers against capitalists, women against patriarchy, and African-Americans for civil rights. The book was a finalist for the National Book Award in 1981.

In the years since the first edition of *A People’s History* was published in 1980, it has been used as an alternative to standard textbooks in many high school and college history courses, and it is one of the most widely known examples of critical pedagogy. The *New York Times Book Review* stated in 2006 that the book “routinely sells more than 100,000 copies a year”.

In 2004, Zinn published *Voices of a People’s History of the United States* with Anthony Arnove. *Voices* is a sourcebook of speeches, articles, essays, poetry and song lyrics by the people themselves whose stories are told in *A People’s History*.

In 2008, the Zinn Education Project was launched to support educators using *A People’s History of the United States* as a source for middle and high school history. The Project was started when a former student of Zinn, who wanted to bring Zinn’s lessons to students around the country, provided the financial backing to allow two other organizations, Rethinking Schools and Teaching for Change to coordinate the Project. The Project hosts a website that has over 100 free downloadable lesson plans to complement *A People’s History of the United States*.

*The People Speak*, released in 2010, is a documentary movie based on *A People’s History of the United States* and
inspired by the lives of ordinary people who fought back against oppressive conditions over the course of the history of the United States. The film, narrated by Zinn, includes performances by Matt Damon, Morgan Freeman, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, Eddie Vedder, Viggo Mortensen, Josh Brolin, Danny Glover, Marisa Tomei, Don Cheadle, and Sandra Oh.

Civil Rights Movement

From 1956 through 1963, Zinn chaired the Department of History and social sciences at Spelman College. He participated in the Civil Rights Movement and lobbied with historian August Meier “to end the practice of the Southern Historical Association of holding meetings at segregated hotels”.

While at Spelman, Zinn served as an adviser to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and wrote about sit-ins and other actions by SNCC for The Nation and Harper’s. In 1964, Beacon Press published his book SNCC: The New Abolitionists.

Zinn collaborated with historian Staughton Lynd mentoring student activists, among them Alice Walker, who would later write The Color Purple; and Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children’s Defense Fund. Edelman identified Zinn as a major influence in her life and, in that same journal article, tells of his accompanying students to a sit-in at the segregated white section of the Georgia state legislature. Zinn also co-wrote a column in The Boston Globe with fellow activist Eric Mann, “Left Field Stands”.

Although Zinn was a tenured professor, he was dismissed in June 1963 after siding with students in the struggle against segregation. As Zinn described in The Nation, though Spelman administrators prided themselves for turning out refined “young ladies,” its students were likely to be found on the picket line, or in jail for participating in the greater effort to break down segregation in public places in Atlanta. Zinn’s years at Spelman are recounted in his autobiography You Can’t Be Neutral on a Moving Train: A Personal History of Our Times. His seven years at Spelman College, Zinn said, “are probably the most interesting, exciting, most educational years for me. I learned more from my students than my students learned from me.”

While living in Georgia, Zinn wrote that he observed 30 violations of the First and Fourteenth amendments to the United States Constitution in Albany, Georgia, including the rights to freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and equal protection under the law. In an article on the civil rights movement in Albany, Zinn described the people who participated in the Freedom Rides to end segregation, and the reluctance of President John F. Kennedy to enforce the law. Zinn has also pointed out that the Justice Department under Robert F. Kennedy and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, headed by J. Edgar Hoover, did little or nothing to stop the segregationists from brutalizing civil rights workers.

Zinn wrote about the struggle for civil rights, as both participant and historian. His second book, The Southern Mystique was published in 1964, the same year as his SNCC: The New Abolitionists in which he describes how the sit-ins against segregation were initiated by students and, in that sense, were independent of the efforts of the older, more established civil rights organizations.

In 2005, forty-one years after his firing, Zinn returned to Spelman where he was given an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters. He delivered the commencement address titled, “Against Discouragement” and said that “the lesson of that history is that you must not despair, that if you are right, and you persist, things will change. The government may try to deceive the people, and the newspapers and television may do the same, but the truth has a way of coming out. The truth has a power greater than a hundred lies.”

Anti-war efforts

Zinn wrote one of the earliest books calling for the U.S. withdrawal from its war in Vietnam. Vietnam: The Logic of Withdrawal was published by Beacon Press in 1967 based on his articles in Commonweal, The Nation, and Ramparts.

In Noam Chomsky’s view, The Logic of Withdrawal was Zinn’s most important book. “He was the first person to say—loudly, publicly, very persuasively—that this simply has to stop; we should get out, period, no conditions; we have no right to be there; it’s an act of aggression; pull out. It was so surprising at the time that there wasn’t even a review of the book. In fact, he asked me if I would review it in Ramparts just so that people would know about the book.”

In December 1969, radical historians tried unsuccessfully to persuade the American Historical Association to pass
an anti-Vietnam War resolution. “A debacle unfolded as Harvard historian (and AHA president in 1968) John Fairbank literally wrestled the microphone from Zinn’s hands.” Correspondence by Fairbank, Zinn and other historians, published by the AHA in 1970, is online in what Fairbank called “our briefly-famous Struggle for the Mike.”

In later years, Zinn was an adviser to the Disarm Education Fund.

Read Howard Zinn’s full biography on Wikipedia.
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A People's History of the United States Section 11

Zinn, Howard: *A People's History of the United States*

This link above will take you to an online copy of Howard Zinn’s book *A People’s History of the United States* in its entirety.

There will be multiple readings from this book throughout the semester.

For this week, you need to read **Section 11: Robber Barons and Rebels** “How the immigration of different ethnic groups...” to “...on trial for their ideas.)”

*Note: In Mozilla Firefox, go to Edit–>Find and type the first few words of the start of the reading (example: “How the immigration”) into the search box to find the start of the reading.

This reading deals with the impact of early 20th century immigration on the American work force and immigrant response to unjust labor practices. This will be valuable context for our readings next week from Bourne and Sinclair.

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Trans-national America

Written in 1916, Bourne’s “Trans-National America” discusses the state of the immigrant and the concept of the “melting pot” in post-World War I America.

Click here to read Randolph Bourne’s “Trans-National America” from The Atlantic.

When reading, pay particular attention to how Bourne discusses the topic of American Nationalism and the immigrant’s role in the evolution of this concept. Consider how this concept relates to the labor force addressed by Zinn last week. How might the laborers discussed by Zinn be either acquiescing or rebelling against the American Nationalism established by so-called “native born Anglo-Saxon Americans” (Bourne)?

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**Biography: Upton Sinclair**

**Upton Beall Sinclair, Jr.** (September 20, 1878 – November 25, 1968) was an American author who wrote nearly 100 books and other works across a number of genres. Sinclair’s work was well-known and popular in the first half of the twentieth century, and he won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1943.

| **Born**       | Upton Beall Sinclair, Jr.  
|               | September 20, 1878  
|               | Baltimore, Maryland |
| **Died**       | November 25, 1968 (aged 90)  
|               | Bound Brook, New Jersey |
| **Occupation** | Novelist, writer, journalist, political activist, politician |
| **Nationality**| American |
| **Spouse**     | Meta Fuller (1902–11)  
|               | Mary Craig Kimbrough, (1913–61)  
|               | Mary Elizabeth Willis (1961–67) |
| **Signature**  | ![Signature](signature.png) |

In 1906, Sinclair acquired particular fame for his classic muckraking novel, *The Jungle*, which exposed conditions in the U.S. meat packing industry, causing a public uproar that contributed in part to the passage a few months
later of the 1906 Pure Food and Drug Act and the Meat Inspection Act. In 1919, he published *The Brass Check*, a muckraking exposé of American journalism that publicized the issue of yellow journalism and the limitations of the “free press” in the United States. Four years after publication of *The Brass Check*, the first code of ethics for journalists was created. *Time* magazine called him “a man with every gift except humor and silence.” He is remembered for writing the famous line: “It is difficult to get a man to understand something, when his salary depends upon his not understanding it.”

Sinclair was an outspoken socialist and ran unsuccessfully for Congress as a nominee from the Socialist Party. He was also the Democratic Party candidate for Governor of California during the Great Depression, but was defeated in the 1934 elections.

### The Jungle

His novel based on the meatpacking industry in Chicago, *The Jungle*, was first published in serial form in the socialist newspaper *Appeal to Reason*, from February 25, 1905 to November 4, 1905. It was published as a book by Doubleday in 1906.

Sinclair had spent about six months investigating the Chicago meatpacking industry for *Appeal to Reason*, work which inspired his novel. He intended to “set forth the breaking of human hearts by a system which exploits the labor of men and women for profit.” The novel featured Jurgis Rudkus, a Lithuanian immigrant who works in a meat factory in Chicago, his teenage wife Ona Lukoszaite, and their extended family. Sinclair portrays their mistreatment by Rudkus’ employers and the wealthier elements of society. His descriptions of the unsanitary and inhumane conditions that workers suffered served to shock and galvanize readers. Jack London called Sinclair’s book “the *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* of wage slavery.” Domestic and foreign purchases of American meat fell by half.

Sinclair wrote in *Cosmopolitan Magazine* in October 1906 about *The Jungle*: “I aimed at the public’s heart, and by accident I hit it in the stomach.” The novel brought public lobbying for Congressional legislation and government regulation of the industry, including passage of the Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act. At the time, President Theodore Roosevelt characterized Sinclair as a “crackpot”, writing to William Allen White, “I have an utter contempt for him. He is hysterical, unbalanced, and untruthful. Three-fourths of the things he said were absolute falsehoods. For some of the remainder there was only a basis of truth.” After reading *The Jungle*, Roosevelt agreed with some of Sinclair’s conclusions but was opposed to legislation that he considered “socialist.” He said, “Radical action must be taken to do away with the efforts of arrogant and selfish greed on the part of the capitalist.”

View Upton Sinclair’s full biography on Wikipedia.

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One of the first consequences of the discovery of the union was that Jurgis became desirous of learning English. He wanted to know what was going on at the meetings, and to be able to take part in them, and so he began to look about him, and to try to pick up words. The children, who were at school, and learning fast, would teach him a few; and a friend loaned him a little book that had some in it, and Ona would read them to him. Then Jurgis became sorry that he could not read himself; and later on in the winter, when some one told him that there was a night school that was free, he went and enrolled. After that, every evening that he got home from the yards in time, he would go to the school; he would go even if he were in time for only half an hour. They were teaching him both to read and to speak English—and they would have taught him other things, if only he had had a little time.

The union made another great difference with him—it made him begin to pay attention to the country. It was the beginning of democracy with him. It was a little state, the union, a miniature republic; its affairs were every man’s affairs, and every man had a real say about them. In other words, in the union Jurgis learned to talk politics. In the place where he had come from there had not been any politics—in Russia one thought of the government as an affliction like the lightning and the hail. “Duck, little brother, duck,” the wise old peasants would whisper; “everything passes away.” And when Jurgis had first come to America he had supposed that it was the same. He had heard people say that it was a free country—but what did that mean? He found that here, precisely as in Russia, there were rich men who owned everything; and if one could not find any work, was not the hunger he began to feel the same sort of hunger?

When Jurgis had been working about three weeks at Brown’s, there had come to him one noontime a man who was employed as a night watchman, and who asked him if he would not like to take out naturalization papers and become a citizen. Jurgis did not know what that meant, but the man explained the advantages. In the first place, it would not cost him anything, and it would get him half a day off, with his pay just the same; and then when election time came he would be able to vote—and there was something in that. Jurgis was naturally glad to accept, and so the night watchman said a few words to the boss, and he was excused for the rest of the day. When, later on, he wanted a holiday to get married he could not get it; and as for a holiday with pay just the same—what power had wrought that miracle heaven only knew! However, he went with the man, who picked up several other newly landed immigrants, Poles, Lithuanians, and Slovaks, and took them all outside, where stood a great four-horse tallyho coach, with fifteen or twenty men already in it. It was a fine chance to see the sights of the city, and the party had a merry time, with plenty of beer handed up from inside. So they drove downtown and stopped before an imposing granite building, in which they interviewed an official, who had the papers all ready, with only the names to be filled in. So each man in turn took an oath of which he did not understand a word, and then was presented with a handsome ornamented document with a big red seal and the shield of the United States upon it, and was told that he had become a citizen of the Republic and the equal of the President himself.

A month or two later Jurgis had another interview with this same man, who told him where to go to “register.” And then finally, when election day came, the packing houses posted a notice that men who desired to vote might remain away until nine that morning, and the same night watchman took Jurgis and the rest of his flock into the back room of a saloon, and showed each of them where and how to mark a ballot, and then gave each two dollars, and took them to the polling place, where there was a policeman on duty especially to see that they got through all right. Jurgis felt quite proud of this good luck till he got home and met Jonas, who had taken the leader aside and whispered to him, offering to vote three times for four dollars, which offer had been accepted.

And now in the union Jurgis met men who explained all this mystery to him; and he learned that America differed from Russia in that its government existed under the form of a democracy. The officials who ruled it, and got all the graft, had to be elected first; and so there were two rival sets of grafters, known as political parties, and the one got the office which bought the most votes. Now and then, the election was very close, and that was the time...
the poor man came in. In the stockyards this was only in national and state elections, for in local elections the Democratic Party always carried everything. The ruler of the district was therefore the Democratic boss, a little Irishman named Mike Scully. Scully held an important party office in the state, and bossed even the mayor of the city, it was said; it was his boast that he carried the stockyards in his pocket. He was an enormously rich man—he had a hand in all the big graft in the neighborhood. It was Scully, for instance, who owned that dump which Jurgis and Ona had seen the first day of their arrival. Not only did he own the dump, but he owned the brick factory as well, and first he took out the clay and made it into bricks, and then he had the city bring garbage to fill up the hole, so that he could build houses to sell to the people. Then, too, he sold the bricks to the city, at his own price, and the city came and got them in its own wagons. And also he owned the other hole near by, where the stagnant water was; and it was he who cut the ice and sold it; and what was more, if the men told truth, he had not had to pay any taxes for the water, and he had built the ice-house out of city lumber, and had not had to pay anything for that. The newspapers had got hold of that story, and there had been a scandal; but Scully had hired somebody to confess and take all the blame, and then skip the country. It was said, too, that he had built his brick-kiln in the same way, and that the workmen were on the city payroll while they did it; however, one had to press closely to get these things out of the men, for it was not their business, and Mike Scully was a good man to stand in with. A note signed by him was equal to a job any time at the packing houses; and also he employed a good many men himself, and worked them only eight hours a day, and paid them the highest wages. This gave him many friends—all of whom he had gotten together into the “War Whoop League,” whose clubhouse you might see just outside of the yards. It was the biggest clubhouse, and the biggest club, in all Chicago; and they had prizefights every now and then, and cockfights and even dogfights. The policemen in the district all belonged to the league, and instead of suppressing the fights, they sold tickets for them. The man that had taken Jurgis to be naturalized was one of these “Indians,” as they were called; and on election day there would be hundreds of them out, and all with big wads of money in their pockets and free drinks at every saloon in the district. That was another thing, the men said—all the saloon-keepers had to be “Indians,” and to put up on demand, otherwise they could not do business on Sundays, nor have any gambling at all. In the same way Scully had all the jobs in the fire department at his disposal, and all the rest of the city graft in the stockyards district; he was building a block of flats somewhere up on Ashland Avenue, and the man who was overseeing it for him was drawing pay as a city inspector of sewers. The city inspector of water pipes had been dead and buried for over a year, but somebody was still drawing his pay. The city inspector of sidewalks was a barkeeper at the War Whoop Cafe—and maybe he could make it uncomfortable for any tradesman who did not stand in with Scully!

Even the packers were in awe of him, so the men said. It gave them pleasure to believe this, for Scully stood as the people’s man, and boasted of it boldly when election day came. The packers had wanted a bridge at Ashland Avenue, but they had not been able to get it till they had seen Scully; and it was the same with “Bubbly Creek,” which the city had threatened to make the packers cover over, till Scully had come to their aid. “Bubbly Creek” is an arm of the Chicago River, and forms the southern boundary of the yards; all the drainage of the square mile of packing houses empties into it, so that it is really a great open sewer a hundred or two feet wide. One long arm of it is blind, and the filth stays there forever and a day. The grease and chemicals that are poured into it undergo all sorts of strange transformations, which are the cause of its name; it is constantly in motion, as if huge fish were feeding in it, or great leviathans disporting themselves in its depths. Bubbles of carbonic acid gas will rise to the surface and burst, and make rings two or three feet wide. Here and there the grease and filth have caked solid, and the creek looks like a bed of lava; chickens walk about on it, feeding, and many times an unwary stranger has started to stroll across, and vanished temporarily. The packers used to leave the creek that way, till every now and then the surface would catch on fire and burn furiously, and the fire department would have to come and put it out. Once, however, an ingenious stranger came and started to gather this filth in scows, to make lard out of; then the packers took the cue, and got out an injunction to stop him, and afterward gathered it themselves. The banks of “Bubbly Creek” are plastered thick with hairs, and this also the packers gather and clean.

And there were things even stranger than this, according to the gossip of the men. The packers had secret mains, through which they stole billions of gallons of the city’s water. The newspapers had been full of this scandal—once there had even been an investigation, and an actual uncovering of the pipes; but nobody had been punished, and the thing went right on. And then there was the condemned meat industry, with its endless horrors. The people of Chicago saw the government inspectors in Packingtown, and they all took that to mean that they were protected from diseased meat; they did not understand that these hundred and sixty-three inspectors had been appointed at the request of the packers, and that they were paid by the United States government to certify that all the diseased meat was kept in the state. They had no authority beyond that; for the inspection of meat to be sold in the city and state the whole force in Packingtown consisted of three henchmen of the local political machine!*  

(*Rules and Regulations for the Inspection of Livestock and Their Products. United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Animal Industries, Order No. 125:—

Section 1. Proprietors of slaughterhouses, canning, salting, packing, or rendering establishments
engaged in the slaughtering of cattle, sheep, or swine, or the packing of any of their products, the carcasses or products of which are to become subjects of interstate or foreign commerce, shall make application to the Secretary of Agriculture for inspection of said animals and their products....

Section 15. Such rejected or condemned animals shall at once be removed by the owners from the pens containing animals which have been inspected and found to be free from disease and fit for human food, and shall be disposed of in accordance with the laws, ordinances, and regulations of the state and municipality in which said rejected or condemned animals are located....

Section 25. A microscopic examination for trichinae shall be made of all swine products exported to countries requiring such examination. No microscopic examination will be made of hogs slaughtered for interstate trade, but this examination shall be confined to those intended for the export trade.)

And shortly afterward one of these, a physician, made the discovery that the carcasses of steers which had been condemned as tubercular by the government inspectors, and which therefore contained ptomaines, which are deadly poisons, were left upon an open platform and carted away to be sold in the city; and so he insisted that these carcasses be treated with an injection of kerosene—and was ordered to resign the same week! So indignant were the packers that they went farther, and compelled the mayor to abolish the whole bureau of inspection; so that since then there has not been even a pretense of any interference with the graft. There was said to be two thousand dollars a week hush money from the tubercular steers alone; and as much again from the hogs which had died of cholera on the trains, and which you might see any day being loaded into boxcars and hauled away to a place called Globe, in Indiana, where they made a fancy grade of lard.

Jurgis heard of these things little by little, in the gossip of those who were obliged to perpetrate them. It seemed as if every time you met a person from a new department, you heard of new swindles and new crimes. There was, for instance, a Lithuanian who was a cattle butcher for the plant where Marija had worked, which killed meat for canning only; and to hear this man describe the animals which came to his place would have been worthwhile for a Dante or a Zola. It seemed that they must have agencies all over the country, to hunt out old and crippled and diseased cattle to be canned. There were cattle which had been fed on “whisky-malt,” the refuse of the breweries, and had become what the men called “steerly”—which means covered with boils. It was a nasty job killing these, for when you plunged your knife into them they would burst and splashed foul-smelling stuff into your face; and when a man’s sleeves were smeared with blood, and his hands steepled in it, how was he ever to wipe his face, or to clear his eyes so that he could see? It was stuff such as this that made the “embalmed beef” that had killed several times as many United States soldiers as all the bullets of the Spaniards; only the army beef, besides, was not fresh canned, it was old stuff that had been lying for years in the cellars.

Then one Sunday evening, Jurgis sat puffing his pipe by the kitchen stove, and talking with an old fellow whom Jonas had introduced, and who worked in the canning rooms at Durham’s; and so Jurgis learned a few things about the great and only Durham canned goods, which had become a national institution. They were regular alchemists at Durham’s; they advertised a mushroom-catsup, and the men who made it did not know what a mushroom looked like. They advertised “potted chicken,” and it was like the boardinghouse soup of the comic papers, through which a chicken had walked with rubber on. Perhaps they had a secret process for making chickens chemically—who knows? said Jurgis’ friend; the things that went into the mixture were tripe, and the fat of pork, and beef suet, and hearts of beef, and finally the waste ends of veal, when they had any. They put these up in several grades, and sold them at several prices; but the contents of the cans all came out of the same hopper. And then there was “potted game” and “potted grouse,” “potted ham,” and “deviled ham”—de-vyled, as the men called it. “De-vyled” ham was made out of the waste ends of smoked beef that were too small to be sliced by the machines; and also tripe, dyed with chemicals so that it would not show white; and trimmings of hams and corned beef; and potatoes, skins and all; and finally the hard cartilaginous gullets of beef, after the tongues had been cut out. All this ingenious mixture was ground up and flavored with spices to make it taste like something. Anybody who could invent a new imitation had been sure of a fortune from old Durham, said Jurgis’ informant; but it was hard to think of anything new in a place where so many sharp wits had been at work for so long; where men welcomed tuberculosis in the cattle they were feeding, because it made them fatten more quickly; and where they bought up all the old rancid butter left over in the grocery stores of a continent, and “oxidized” it by a forced-air process, to take away the odor, rechurned it with skim milk, and sold it in bricks in the cities! Up to a year or two ago it had been the custom to kill horses in the yards—ostensibly for fertilizer; but after long agitation the newspapers had been able to make the public realize that the horses were being canned. Now it was against the law to kill horses in Packington, and the law was really complied with—for the present, at any rate. Any day, however, one might see sharp-horned and shaggy-haired creatures running with the sheep and yet what a job you would have to get the public to believe that a good part of what it buys for lamb and mutton is really goat’s flesh!

There was another interesting set of statistics that a person might have gathered in Packington—those of the
various afflictions of the workers. When Jurgis had first inspected the packing plants with Szedvilas, he had marveled while he listened to the tale of all the things that were made out of the carcasses of animals, and of all the lesser industries that were maintained there; now he found that each one of these lesser industries was a separate little inferno, in its way as horrible as the killing beds, the source and fountain of them all. The workers in each of them had their own peculiar diseases. And the wandering visitor might be skeptical about all the swindles, but he could not be skeptical about these, for the worker bore the evidence of them about on his own person—generally he had only to hold out his hand.

There were the men in the pickle rooms, for instance, where old Antanas had gotten his death; scarce a one of these that had not some spot of horror on his person. Let a man so much as scrape his finger pushing a truck in the pickle rooms, and he might have a sore that would put him out of the world; all the joints in his fingers might be eaten by the acid, one by one. Of the butchers and floorsmen, the beef-boners and trimmers, and all those who used knives, you could scarcely find a person who had the use of his thumb; time and time again the base of it had been slashed, till it was a mere lump of flesh against which the man pressed the knife to hold it. The hands of these men would be criss-crossed with cuts, until you could no longer pretend to count them or to trace them. They would have no nails,—they had worn them off pulling hides; their knuckles were swollen so that their fingers spread out like a fan. There were men who worked in the cooking rooms, in the midst of steam and sickening odors, by artificial light; in these rooms the germs of tuberculosis might live for two years, but the supply was renewed every hour. There were the beef-luggers, who carried two-hundred-pound quarters into the refrigerator-cars; a fearful kind of work, that began at four o’clock in the morning, and that wore out the most powerful men in a few years. There were those who worked in the chilling rooms, and whose special disease was rheumatism; the time limit that a man could work in the chilling rooms was said to be five years. There were the wool-pluckers, whose hands went to pieces even sooner than the hands of the pickle men; for the pelts of the sheep had to be painted with acid to loosen the wool, and then the pluckers had to pull out this wool with their bare hands, till the acid had eaten their fingers off. There were those who made the tins for the canned meat; and their hands, too, were a maze of cuts, and each cut represented a chance for blood poisoning. Some worked at the stamping machines, and it was very seldom that one could work long there at the pace that was set, and not give out and forget himself and have a part of his hand chopped off. There were the “hoisters,” as they were called, whose task it was to press the lever which lifted the dead cattle off the floor. They ran along upon a rafter, peering down through the damp and the steam; and as old Durham’s architects had not built the killing room for the convenience of the hoisters, at every few feet they would have to stoop under a beam, say four feet above the one they ran on; which got them into the habit of stooping, so that in a few years they would be walking like chimpanzees. Worst of any, however, were the fertilizer men, and those who served in the cooking rooms. These people could not be shown to the visitor,—for the odor of a fertilizer man would scare any ordinary visitor at a hundred yards, and as for the other men, who worked in tank rooms full of steam, and in some of which there were open vats near the level of the floor, their peculiar trouble was that they fell into the vats; and when they were fished out, there was never enough of them left to be worth exhibiting,—sometimes they would be overlooked for days, till all but the bones of them had gone out to the world as Durham’s Pure Leaf Lard!

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Additional Resources: Immigration

Helpful Websites

“9 Things You May Not Know About Ellis Island,” from History.com
This link provides a series of little known facts regarding the history and processing linked to Ellis Island.

“Immigrating to America, 1905” from EyewitnessToHistory.com
The story of one family and the process they went through upon arrival in 1905.

Videos

“I Pity The Poor Immigrant Lyrics“ from John Wesley Harding on MetroLyrics.com

“Welcome to the Jungle Lyrics“ from Greatest Hits on MetroLyrics.com

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Preamble to the IWW Constitution

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of the working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the Earth.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or in all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, “A fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work,” we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, “Abolition of the wage system.”

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

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VI

Roaring '20s
Overview: Roaring '20s

Removal of liquor during prohibition

Objectives

- Respond to the weekly readings within the context of your own perspective (Textual Annotations)
- Identify and examine the major themes of early 20th century American fiction (Weekly Journal Entry)

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Biography: F. Scott Fitzgerald

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald (September 24, 1896 – December 21, 1940) was an American author of novels and short stories, whose works are the paradigmatic writings of the Jazz Age. He is widely regarded as one of the greatest American writers of the 20th century. Fitzgerald is considered a member of the “Lost Generation” of the 1920s. He finished four novels: This Side of Paradise, The Beautiful and Damned, The Great Gatsby (his best known), and Tender Is the Night. A fifth, unfinished novel, The Love of the Last Tycoon, was published posthumously. Fitzgerald also wrote many short stories that treat themes of youth and promise along with age and despair.

F. Scott Fitzgerald

Born
Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald
September 24, 1896
St. Paul, Minnesota, United States

Died
December 21, 1940 (aged 44)
Hollywood, Los Angeles, California, United States

Resting place
Saint Mary’s Cemetery

Occupation
Novelist, short story writer, poet

Nationality
American

Period
1920–40

Notable works
The Great Gatsby

Spouse
Zelda Sayre (m. 1920–40)
F. Scott Fitzgerald's work has inspired writers ever since he was first published. The publication of *The Great Gatsby* prompted T. S. Eliot to write, in a letter to Fitzgerald, "[I]t seems to me to be the first step that American fiction has taken since Henry James ...". Don Birnam, the protagonist of Charles Jackson’s *The Lost Weekend*, says to himself, referring to *The Great Gatsby*, "There’s no such thing ... as a flawless novel. But if there is, this is it." In letters written in the 1940s, J. D. Salinger expressed admiration of Fitzgerald’s work, and his biographer Ian Hamilton wrote that Salinger even saw himself for some time as “Fitzgerald’s successor.” Richard Yates, a writer often compared to Fitzgerald, called *The Great Gatsby* “the most nourishing novel [he] read ... a miracle of talent ... a triumph of technique.” It was written in a *New York Times* editorial after his death that Fitzgerald “was better than he knew, for in fact and in the literary sense he invented a generation ... He might have interpreted them and even guided them, as in their middle years they saw a different and nobler freedom threatened with destruction.”

Into the 21st century, millions of copies of *The Great Gatsby* and his other works have been sold, and *Gatsby*, a constant best-seller, is required reading in many high school and college classes.

View F. Scott Fitzgerald’s full biography on Wikipedia.

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Parts of New Jersey, as you know, are under water, and other parts are under continual surveillance by the authorities. But here and there lie patches of garden country dotted with old-fashioned frame mansions, which have wide shady porches and a red swing on the lawn. And perhaps, on the widest and shadiest of the porches there is even a hammock left over from the hammock days, stirring gently in a mid-Victorian wind.

When tourists come to such last-century landmarks they stop their cars and gaze for a while and then mutter: “Well, thank God this age is joined on to something” or else they say: “Well, of course, that house is mostly halls and has a thousand rats and one bathroom, but there’s an atmosphere about it—”

The tourist doesn’t stay long. He drives on to his Elizabethan villa of pressed cardboard or his early Norman meat-market or his medieval Italian pigeon-coop—because this is the twentieth century and Victorian houses are as unfashionable as the works of Mrs. Humphry Ward.

He can’t see the hammock from the road—but sometimes there’s a girl in the hammock. There was this afternoon. She was asleep in it and apparently unaware of the esthetic horrors which surrounded her, the stone statue of Diana, for instance, which grinned idiotically under the sunlight on the lawn.

There was something enormously yellow about the whole scene—there was this sunlight, for instance, that was yellow, and the hammock was of the particularly hideous yellow peculiar to hammocks, and the girl’s yellow hair was spread out upon the hammock in a sort of invidious comparison.

She slept with her lips closed and her hands clasped behind her head, as it is proper for young girls to sleep. Her breast rose and fell slightly with no more emphasis than the sway of the hammock’s fringe.

Her name, Amanthis, was as old-fashioned as the house she lived in. I regret to say that her mid-Victorian connections ceased abruptly at this point.

Now if this were a moving picture (as, of course, I hope it will some day be) I would take as many thousand feet of her as I was allowed—then I would move the camera up close and show the yellow down on the back of her neck where her hair stopped and the warm color of her cheeks and arms, because I like to think of her sleeping there, as you yourself might have slept, back in your young days. Then I would hire a man named Israel Glucose to write some idiotic line of transition, and switch thereby to another
scene that was taking place at no particular spot far down the road.

In a moving automobile sat a southern gentleman accompanied by his body-servant. He was on his way, after a fashion, to New York but he was somewhat hampered by the fact that the upper and lower portions of his automobile were no longer in exact juxtaposition. In fact from time to time the two riders would dismount, shove the body on to the chassis, corner to corner, and then continue onward, vibrating slightly in involuntary unison with the motor.

Except that it had no door in back the car might have been built early in the mechanical age. It was covered with the mud of eight states and adorned in front by an enormous but defunct motometer and behind by a mangy pennant bearing the legend “Tarleton, Ga.” In the dim past someone had begun to paint the hood yellow but unfortunately had been called away when but half through the task.

As the gentleman and his body-servant were passing the house where Amanthis lay beautifully asleep in the hammock, something happened—the body fell off the car. My only apology for stating this so suddenly is that it happened very suddenly indeed. When the noise had died down and the dust had drifted away master and man arose and inspected the two halves.

“Look-a-there,” said the gentleman in disgust, “the doggone thing got all separated that time.”

“She bust in two,” agreed the body-servant.

“Hugo,” said the gentleman, after some consideration, “we got to get a hammer an’ nails an’ TACK it on.”

They glanced up at the Victorian house. On all sides faintly irregular fields stretched away to a faintly irregular unpopulated horizon. There was no choice, so the black Hugo opened the gate and followed his master up a gravel walk, casting only the blasé glances of a confirmed traveler at the red swing and the stone statue of Diana which turned on them a storm-crazed stare.

At the exact moment when they reached the porch Amanthis awoke, sat up suddenly and looked them over.

The gentleman was young, perhaps twenty-four, and his name was Jim Powell. He was dressed in a tight and dusty readymade suit which was evidently expected to take flight at a moment’s notice, for it was secured to his body by a line of six preposterous buttons.

There were supernumerary buttons upon the coat-sleeves also and Amanthis could not resist a glance to determine whether or not more buttons ran up the side of his trouser leg. But the trouser bottoms were distinguished only by their shape, which was that of a bell. His vest was cut low, barely restraining an amazing necktie from fluttering in the wind.

He bowed formally, dusting his knees with a thatched straw hat. Simultaneously he smiled, half shutting his faded blue eyes and displaying white and beautifully symmetrical teeth.

“Good evenin’,” he said in abandoned Georgian. “My automobile has met with an accident out yonder by your gate. I wondered if it wouldn’t be too much to ask you if I could have the use of a hammer
and some tacks-nails, for a little while."

Amanthis laughed. For a moment she laughed uncontrollably. Mr. Jim Powell laughed, politely and appreciatively, with her. His body-servant, deep in the throes of colored adolescence, alone preserved a dignified gravity.

“I better introduce who I am, maybe,” said the visitor. “My name’s Powell. I’m a resident of Tarleton, Georgia. This here nigger’s my boy Hugo."

“Your SON!” The girl stared from one to the other in wild fascination.

“No, he’s my body-servant, I guess you’d call it. We call a nigger a boy down yonder."

At this reference to the finer customs of his native soil the boy Hugo put his hands behind his back and looked darkly and superciliously down the lawn.

“Yas’m,” he muttered, “I’m a body-servant."

“Where you going in your automobile,” demanded Amanthis.

“Goin’ north for the summer."

“Where to?"

The tourist waved his hand with a careless gesture as if to indicate the Adirondacks, the Thousand Islands, Newport—but he said:

“We’re tryin’ New York."

“Have you ever been there before?"

“Never have. But I been to Atlanta lots of times. An’ we passed through all kinds of cities this trip. Man!"

He whistled to express the enormous spectactularity of his recent travels.

“Listen,” said Amanthis intently, “you better have something to eat. Tell your—your body-servant to go ‘round in back and ask the cook to send us out some sandwiches and lemonade. Or maybe you don’t drink lemonade—very few people do any more.”

Mr. Powell by a circular motion of his finger sped Hugo on the designated mission. Then he seated himself gingerly in a rocking-chair and began revolving his thatched straw hat rapidly in his hands.

“You cer’nly are mighty kind,” he told her. “An’ if I wanted anything stronger than lemonade I got a bottle of good old corn out in the car. I brought it along because I thought maybe I wouldn’t be able to drink the whisky they got up here."

“Listen,” she said, “my name’s Powell too. Amanthis Powell."

“Say, is that right?” He laughed ecstatically. “Maybe we’re kin to each other. I come from mighty good people,” he went on. “Pore though. I got some money because my aunt she was using it to keep her in a sanitarium and she died.” He paused, presumably out of
respect to his late aunt. Then he concluded with brisk nonchalance, “I aint touched the principal but I got a lot of the income all at once so I thought I’d come north for the summer.”

At this point Hugo reappeared on the veranda steps and became audible.

“White lady back there she asked me don’t I want eat some too. What I tell her?”

“You tell her yes mamm if she be so kind,” directed his master. And as Hugo retired he confided to Amanthis: “That boy’s got no sense at all. He don’t want to do nothing without I tell him he can. I brought him up,” he added, not without pride.

When the sandwiches arrived Mr. Powell stood up. He was unaccustomed to white servants and obviously expected an introduction.

“Are you a married lady?” he inquired of Amanthis, when the servant was gone.

“No,” she answered, and added from the security of eighteen, “I’m an old maid.”

Again he laughed politely.

“You mean you’re a society girl.”

She shook her head. Mr. Powell noted with embarrassed enthusiasm the particular yellowness of her yellow hair.

“Does this old place look like it?” she said cheerfully. “No, you perceive in me a daughter of the countryside. Color—one hundred percent spontaneous—in the daytime anyhow. Suitors—promising young barbers from the neighboring village with somebody’s late hair still clinging to their coat-sleeves.”

“Your daddy oughtn’t to let you go with a country barber,” said the tourist disapprovingly. He considered—“You ought to be a New York society girl.”

“No.” Amanthis shook her head sadly. “I’m too good-looking. To be a New York society girl you have to have a long nose and projecting teeth and dress like the actresses did three years ago.”

Jim began to tap his foot rhythmically on the porch and in a moment Amanthis discovered that she was unconsciously doing the same thing.

“Stop!” she commanded, “Don’t make me do that.”

He looked down at his foot.

“Excuse me,” he said humbly. “I don’t know—it’s just something I do.”

This intense discussion was now interrupted by Hugo who appeared on the steps bearing a hammer and a handful of nails.

Mr. Powell arose unwillingly and looked at his watch.

“We got to go, daggone it,” he said, frowning heavily. “See here. Wouldn’t you LIKE to be a New York society girl and go to those
dances an’ all, like you read about, where they throw gold pieces away?”

She looked at him with a curious expression.

“Don’t your folks know some society people?” he went on.

“All I’ve got’s my daddy—and, you see, he’s a judge.”

“That’s too bad,” he agreed.

She got herself by some means from the hammock and they went down toward the road, side by side.

“Well, I’ll keep my eyes open for you and let you know,” he persisted. “A pretty girl like you ought to go around in society. We may be kin to each other, you see, and us Powells ought to stick together.”

“What are you going to do in New York?”

They were now almost at the gate and the tourist pointed to the two depressing sectors of his automobile.

“I’m goin’ to drive a taxi. This one right here. Only it’s got so it busts in two all the time.”

“You’re going to drive THAT in New York?”

Jim looked at her uncertainly. Such a pretty girl should certainly control the habit of shaking all over upon no provocation at all.

“Yes mamm,” he said with dignity.

Amanthis watched while they placed the upper half of the car upon the lower half and nailed it severely into place. Then Mr. Powell took the wheel and his body-servant climbed in beside him.

“I’m cer’ny very much obliged to you indeed for your hospitality. Convey my respects to your father.”

“I will,” she assured him. “Come back and see me, if you don’t mind barbers in the room.”

He dismissed this unpleasant thought with a gesture.

“Your company would always be charming.” He put the car into gear as though to drown out the temerity of his parting speech. “You’re the prettiest girl I’ve seen up north—by far.”

Then with a groan and a rattle Mr. Powell of southern Georgia with his own car and his own body-servant and his own ambitions and his own private cloud of dust continued on north for the summer.

She thought she would never see him again. She lay in her hammock, slim and beautiful, opened her left eye slightly to see June come in and then closed it and retired contentedly back into her dreams.

But one day when the midsummer vines had climbed the precarious sides of the red swing in the lawn, Mr. Jim Powell of Tarleton, Georgia, came vibrating back into her life. They sat on the wide porch as before.

“I’ve got a great scheme,” he told her.
“Did you drive your taxi like you said?”

“Yes mamm, but the business was right bad. I waited around in front of all those hotels and theaters an’ nobody ever got in.”

“NObody?”

“Well, one night there was some drunk fellas they got in, only just as I was gettin’ started my automobile came apart. And another night it was rainin’ and there wasn’t no other taxis and a lady got in because she said she had to go a long ways. But before we got there she made me stop and she got out. She seemed kinda mad and she went walkin’ off in the rain. Mighty proud lot of people they got up in New York.”

“And so you’re going home?” asked Amanthis sympathetically.

“No MAMM. I got an idea.” His blue eyes grew narrow. “Has that barber been around here–with hair on his sleeves?”

“No. He’s–he’s gone away.”

“Well, then, first thing is I want to leave this car of mine here with you, if that’s all right. It ain’t the right color for a taxi. To pay for its keep I’d like to have you drive it just as much as you want. ‘Long as you got a hammer an’ nails with you there ain’t much bad that can happen–”

“I’ll take care of it,” interrupted Amanthis, “but where are YOU going?”

“Southampton. It’s about the most aristocratic watering trough-watering-place there is around here, so that’s where I’m going.”

She sat up in amazement.

“What are you going to do there?”

“Listen.” He leaned toward her confidentially. “Were you serious about wanting to be a New York society girl?”

“Deadly serious.”

“That’s all I wanted to know,” he said inscrutably. “You just wait here on this porch a couple of weeks and–and sleep. And if any barbers come to see you with hair on their sleeves you tell ‘em you’re too sleepy to see ‘em.”

“What then?”

“Then you’ll hear from me. Just tell your old daddy he can do all the judging he wants but you’re goin’ to do some DANCIN’. Mamm,” he continued decisively, “you talk about society! Before one month I’m goin’ to have you in more society than you ever saw.”

Further than this he would say nothing. His manner conveyed that she was going to be suspended over a perfect pool of gaiety and violently immersed, to an accompaniment of: “Is it gay enough for you, mamm? Shall I let in a little more excitement, mamm?”

“Well,” answered Amanthis, lazily considering, “there are few things for which I’d forego the luxury of sleeping through July and August–but if you’ll write me a letter I’ll–I’ll run up to
Southampton."

Jim snapped his fingers ecstatically.

"More society," he assured her with all the confidence at his command, "than anybody ever saw."

Three days later a young man wearing a straw hat that might have been cut from the thatched roof of an English cottage rang the doorbell of the enormous and astounding Madison Harlan house at Southampton. He asked the butler if there were any people in the house between the ages of sixteen and twenty. He was informed that Miss Genevieve Harlan and Mr. Ronald Harlan answered that description and thereupon he handed in a most peculiar card and requested in fetching Georgian that it be brought to their attention.

As a result he was closeted for almost an hour with Mr. Ronald Harlan (who was a student at the Hillkiss School) and Miss Genevieve Harlan (who was not uncelebrated at Southampton dances). When he left he bore a short note in Miss Harlan’s handwriting which he presented together with his peculiar card at the next large estate. It happened to be that of the Clifton Garneaus. Here, as if by magic, the same audience was granted him.

He went on—it was a hot day, and men who could not afford to do so were carrying their coats on the public highway, but Jim, a native of southernmost Georgia, was as fresh and cool at the last house as at the first. He visited ten houses that day. Anyone following him in his course might have taken him to be some curiously gifted book-agent with a much sought-after volume as his stock in trade.

There was something in his unexpected demand for the adolescent members of the family which made hardened butlers lose their critical acumen. As he left each house a close observer might have seen that fascinated eyes followed him to the door and excited voices whispered something which hinted at a future meeting.

The second day he visited twelve houses. Southampton has grown enormously—he might have kept on his round for a week and never seen the same butler twice—but it was only the palatial, the amazing houses which intrigued him.

On the third day he did a thing that many people have been told to do and few have done—he hired a hall. Perhaps the sixteen-to-twenty-year-old people in the enormous houses had told him to. The hall he hired had once been “Mr. Snorkey’s Private Gymnasium for Gentlemen.” It was situated over a garage on the south edge of Southampton and in the days of its prosperity had been, I regret to say, a place where gentlemen could, under Mr. Snorkey’s direction, work off the effects of the night before. It was now abandoned—Mr. Snorkey had given up and gone away and died.

We will now skip three weeks during which time we may assume that the project which had to do with hiring a hall and visiting the two dozen largest houses in Southampton got under way.

The day to which we will skip was the July day on which Mr. James Powell sent a wire to Miss Amanthis Powell saying that if she still aspired to the gaiety of the highest society she should set out for Southampton by the earliest possible train. He himself would meet her at the station.
Jim was no longer a man of leisure, so when she failed to arrive at
the time her wire had promised he grew restless. He supposed she
was coming on a later train, turned to go back to his—his project—and met her entering the station from the street side.

“Why, how did you—”

“Well,” said Amanthis, “I arrived this morning instead, and I
didn’t want to bother you so I found a respectable, not to say
dull, boarding-house on the Ocean Road.”

She was quite different from the indolent Amanthis of the porch
hammock, he thought. She wore a suit of robins’ egg blue and a
rakish young hat with a curling feather—she was attired not unlike
those young ladies between sixteen and twenty who of late were
absorbing his attention. Yes, she would do very well.

He bowed her profoundly into a taxicab and got in beside her.

“Isn’t it about time you told me your scheme?” she suggested.

“Well, it’s about these society girls up here.” He waved his hand
airily. “I know ‘em all.”

“Where are they?”

“Right now they’re with Hugo. You remember—that’s my body-
servant.”

“With Hugo!” Her eyes widened. “Why? What’s it all about?”

“Well, I got—I got sort of a school, I guess you’d call it.”

“A school?”

“It’s a sort of Academy. And I’m the head of it. I invented it.”

He flipped a card from his case as though he were shaking down a
thermometer.

“Look.”

She took the card. In large lettering it bore the legend

JAMES POWELL; J.M.

“Dice, Brassknuckles and Guitar”

She stared in amazement.

“Dice, Brassknuckles and Guitar?” she repeated in awe.

“Yes mamm.”

“What does it mean? What—do you SELL ‘em?”

“No mamm, I teach ‘em. It’s a profession.”

“Dice, Brassknuckles and Guitar? What’s the J. M.?“

“That stands for Jazz Master.”

“But what is it? What’s it about?”

“Well, you see, it’s like this. One night when I was in New York I
got talkin’ to a young fella who was drunk. He was one of my fares. And he’d taken some society girl somewhere and lost her.”

“LOST her?”

“Yes mamm. He forgot her, I guess. And he was right worried. Well, I got to thinkin’ that these girls nowadays—these society girls—they lead a sort of dangerous life and my course of study offers a means of protection against these dangers.”

“You teach ‘em to use brassknuckles?”

“Yes mamm, if necessary. Look here, you take a girl and she goes into some café where she’s got no business to go. Well then, her escort he gets a little too much to drink an’ he goes to sleep an’ then some other fella comes up and says ‘Hello, sweet mamma’ or whatever one of those mashers says up here. What does she do? She can’t scream, on account of no real lady’ll scream nowadays—no—She just reaches down in her pocket and slips her fingers into a pair of Powell’s defensive brassknuckles, débutante’s size, executes what I call the Society Hook, and Wham! that big fella’s on his way to the cellar.”

“Well—what—what’s the guitar for?” whispered the awed Amanthis.

“Do they have to knock somebody over with the guitar?”

“No, MAMM!” exclaimed Jim in horror. “No mamm. In my course no lady would be taught to raise a guitar against anybody. I teach ‘em to play. Shucks! you ought to hear ‘em. Why, when I’ve given ‘em two lessons you’d think some of ‘em was colored.”

“And the dice?”

“Dice? I’m related to a dice. My grandfather was a dice. I teach ‘em how to make those dice perform. I protect pocketbook as well as person.”

“Did you—Have you got any pupils?”

“Mamm I got all the really nice, rich people in the place. What I told you ain’t all. I teach lots of things. I teach ‘em the jellyroll—and the Mississippi Sunrise. Why, there was one girl she came to me and said she wanted to learn to snap her fingers. I mean REALLY snap ‘em-like they do. She said she never could snap her fingers since she was little. I gave her two lessons and now Wham! Her daddy says he’s goin’ to leave home.”

“When do you have it?” demanded the weak and shaken Amanthis.

“Three times a week. We’re goin’ there right now.”

“And where do I fit in?”

“Well, you’ll just be one of the pupils. I got it fixed up that you come from very high-tone people down in New Jersey. I didn’t tell ‘em your daddy was a judge—I told ‘em he was the man that had the patent on lump sugar.”

She gasped.

“So all you got to do,” he went on, “is to pretend you never saw no barber.”

They were now at the south end of the village and Amanthis saw a
row of cars parked in front of a two-story building. The cars were all low, long, rakish and of a brilliant hue. They were the sort of car that is manufactured to solve the millionaire’s problem on his son’s eighteenth birthday.

Then Amanthis was ascending a narrow stairs to the second story. Here, painted on a door from which came the sounds of music and laughter were the words:

JAMES POWELL; J. M.  
“Dice, Brassknuckles and Guitar”  
Mon.–Wed.–Fri.  
Hours 3-5 P.M.

“Now if you’ll just step this way–” said the Principal, pushing open the door.

Amanthis found herself in a long, bright room, populated with girls and men of about her own age. The scene presented itself to her at first as a sort of animated afternoon tea but after a moment she began to see, here and there, a motive and a pattern to the proceedings.

The students were scattered into groups, sitting, kneeling, standing, but all rapaciously intent on the subjects which engrossed them. From six young ladies gathered in a ring around some indistinguishable objects came a medley of cries and exclamations—plaintive, pleading, supplicating, exhorting, imploring and lamenting—their voices serving as tenor to an undertone of mysterious clatters.

Next to this group, four young men were surrounding an adolescent black, who proved to be none other than Mr. Powell’s late body-servant. The young men were roaring at Hugo apparently unrelated phrases, expressing a wide gamut of emotion. Now their voices rose to a sort of clamor, now they spoke softly and gently, with mellow implication. Every little while Hugo would answer them with words of approbation, correction or disapproval.

“What are they doing?” whispered Amanthis to Jim.

“That there’s a course in southern accent. Lot of young men up here want to learn southern accent—so we teach it—Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Eastern Shore, Ole Virginian. Some of ’em even want straight nigger—for song purposes.”

They walked around among the groups. Some girls with metal knuckles were furiously insulting two punching bags on each of which was painted the leering, winking face of a “masher.” A mixed group, led by a banjo tom-tom, were rolling harmonic syllables from their guitars. There were couples dancing flat-footed in the corner to a phonograph record made by Rastus Muldoon’s Savannah Band; there were couples stalking a slow Chicago with a Memphis Sideswoop solemnly around the room.

“Are there any rules?” asked Amanthis.

Jim considered.

“Well,” he answered finally, “they can’t smoke unless they’re over sixteen, and the boys have got to shoot square dice and I don’t let ‘em bring liquor into the Academy.”
"I see."

"And now, Miss Powell, if you’re ready I’ll ask you to take off your hat and go over and join Miss Genevieve Harlan at that punching bag in the corner." He raised his voice. "Hugo," he called, "there’s a new student here. Equip her with a pair of Powell’s Defensive Brassknuckles—débutante size."

I regret to say that I never saw Jim Powell’s famous Jazz School in action nor followed his personally conducted tours into the mysteries of Dice, Brassknuckles and Guitar. So I can give you only such details as were later reported to me by one of his admiring pupils. During all the discussion of it afterwards no one ever denied that it was an enormous success, and no pupil ever regretted having received its degree—Bachelor of Jazz.

The parents innocently assumed that it was a sort of musical and dancing academy, but its real curriculum was transmitted from Santa Barbara to Biddeford Pool by that underground associated press which links up the so-called younger generation. Invitations to visit Southampton were at a premium—and Southampton generally is almost as dull for young people as Newport.

The Academy branched out with a small but well-groomed Jazz Orchestra.

“If I could keep it dark," Jim confided to Amanthis, “I’d have up Rastus Muldoon’s Band from Savannah. That’s the band I’ve always wanted to lead."

He was making money. His charges were not exorbitant—as a rule his pupils were not particularly flush—but he moved from his boarding-house to the Casino Hotel where he took a suite and had Hugo serve him his breakfast in bed.

The establishing of Amanthis as a member of Southampton’s younger set was easier than he had expected. Within a week she was known to everyone in the school by her first name. Miss Genevieve Harlan took such a fancy to her that she was invited to a sub-deb dance at the Harlan house—and evidently acquitted herself with tact, for thereafter she was invited to almost every such entertainment in Southampton.

Jim saw less of her than he would have liked. Not that her manner toward him changed—she walked with him often in the mornings, she was always willing to listen to his plans—but after she was taken up by the fashionable her evenings seemed to be monopolized. Several times Jim arrived at her boarding-house to find her out of breath, as if she had just come in at a run, presumably from some festivity in which he had no share.

So as the summer waned he found that one thing was lacking to complete the triumph of his enterprise. Despite the hospitality shown to Amanthis, the doors of Southampton were closed to him. Polite to, or rather, fascinated by him as his pupils were from three to five, after that hour they moved in another world.

His was the position of a golf professional who, though he may fraternize, and even command, on the links, loses his privileges with the sun-down. He may look in the club window but he cannot dance. And, likewise, it was not given to Jim to see his teachings put into effect. He could hear the gossip of the morning after—
that was all.

But while the golf professional, being English, holds himself proudly below his patrons, Jim Powell, who “came from a right good family down there—pore though,” lay awake many nights in his hotel bed and heard the music drifting into his window from the Katzbys’ house or the Beach Club, and turned over restlessly and wondered what was the matter. In the early days of his success he had bought himself a dress-suit, thinking that he would soon have a chance to wear it—but it still lay untouched in the box in which it had come from the tailor’s.

Perhaps, he thought, there was some real gap which separated him from the rest. It worried him. One boy in particular, Martin Van Vleck, son of Van Vleck the ash-can King, made him conscious of the gap. Van Vleck was twenty-one, a tutoring-school product who still hoped to enter Yale. Several times Jim had heard him make remarks not intended for Jim’s ear—once in regard to the suit with multiple buttons, again in reference to Jim’s long, pointed shoes. Jim had passed these over.

He knew that Van Vleck was attending the school chiefly to monopolize the time of little Martha Katzby, who was just sixteen and too young to have attention of a boy of twenty-one—especially the attention of Van Vleck, who was so spiritually exhausted by his educational failures that he drew on the rather exhaustible innocence of sixteen.

It was late in September, two days before the Harlan dance which was to be the last and biggest of the season for this younger crowd. Jim, as usual, was not invited. He had hoped that he would be. The two young Harlans, Ronald and Genevieve, had been his first patrons when he arrived at Southampton—and it was Genevieve who had taken such a fancy to Amanthis. To have been at their dance—the most magnificent dance of all—would have crowned and justified the success of the waning summer.

His class, gathering for the afternoon, was loudly anticipating the next day’s revel with no more thought of him than if he had been the family butler. Hugo, standing beside Jim, chuckled suddenly and remarked:

“Look yonder that man Van Vleck. He paralyzed. He been havin’ powerful lotta corn this evenin’.”

Jim turned and stared at Van Vleck, who had linked arms with little Martha Katzby and was saying something to her in a low voice. Jim saw her try to draw away.

He put his whistle to his mouth and blew it.

“All right,” he cried, “Le’s go! Group one tossin’ the drumstick, high an’ zig-zag, group two, test your mouth organs for the Riverfront Shuffle. Promise ‘em sugar! Flatfoots this way! Orchestra—let’s have the Florida Drag-Out played as a dirge.”

There was an unaccustomed sharpness in his voice and the exercises began with a mutter of facetious protest.

With his smoldering grievance directing itself toward Van Vleck, Jim was walking here and there among the groups when Hugo tapped him suddenly on the arm. He looked around. Two participants had withdrawn from the mouth organ institute—one of them was Van Vleck
and he was giving a drink out of his flask to fifteen-year-old Ronald Harlan.

Jim strode across the room. Van Vleck turned defiantly as he came up.

“All right,” said Jim, trembling with anger, “you know the rules. You get out!”

The music died slowly away and there was a sudden drifting over in the direction of the trouble. Somebody snickered. An atmosphere of anticipation formed instantly. Despite the fact that they all liked Jim their sympathies were divided—Van Vleck was one of them.

“Get out!” repeated Jim, more quietly.

“Are you talking to me?” inquired Van Vleck coldly.

“Yes.”

“Then you better say ‘sir.’”

“I wouldn’t say ‘sir’ to anybody that’d give a little boy whisky! You get out!”

“Look here!” said Van Vleck furiously. “You’ve butted in once too much. I’ve known Ronald since he was two years old. Ask HIM if he wants YOU to tell him what he can do!”

Ronald Harlan, his dignity offended, grew several years older and looked haughtily at Jim.

“Mind your own business!” he said defiantly, albeit a little guiltily.

“Hear that?” demanded Van Vleck. “My God, can’t you see you’re just a servant? Ronald here’d no more think of asking you to his party than he would his bootlegger.”

“You better get out!” cried Jim incoherently.

Van Vleck did not move. Reaching out suddenly, Jim caught his wrist and jerking it behind his back forced his arm upward until Van Vleck bent forward in agony. Jim leaned and picked the flask from the floor with his free hand. Then he signed Hugo to open the hall-door, uttered an abrupt “You STEP!” and marched his helpless captive out into the hall where he literally THREW him downstairs, head over heels bumping from wall to banister, and hurled his flask after him.

Then he reentered his academy, closed the door behind him and stood with his back against it.

“It—it happens to be a rule that nobody drinks while in this Academy.” He paused, looking from face to face, finding there sympathy, awe, disapproval, conflicting emotions. They stirred uneasily. He caught Amanthis’s eye, fancied he saw a faint nod of encouragement and, with almost an effort, went on:

“I just HAD to throw that fella out an’ you-all know it.” Then he concluded with a transparent affectation of dismissing an unimportant matter—“All right, let’s go! Orchestra—!”

But no one felt exactly like going on. The spontaneity of the
proceedings had been violently disturbed. Someone made a run or two on the sliding guitar and several of the girls began whamming at the leer on the punching bags, but Ronald Harlan, followed by two other boys, got their hats and went silently out the door.

Jim and Hugo moved among the groups as usual until a certain measure of routine activity was restored but the enthusiasm was unrecapturable and Jim, shaken and discouraged, considered discontinuing school for the day. But he dared not. If they went home in this mood they might not come back. The whole thing depended on a mood. He must recreate it, he thought frantically—now, at once!

But try as he might, there was little response. He himself was not happy—he could communicate no gaiety to them. They watched his efforts listlessly and, he thought, a little contemptuously.

Then the tension snapped when the door burst suddenly open, precipitating a brace of middle-aged and excited women into the room. No person over twenty-one had ever entered the Academy before—but Van Vleck had gone direct to headquarters. The women were Mrs. Clifton Garneau and Mrs. Poindexter Katzby, two of the most fashionable and, at present, two of the most flurried women in Southampton. They were in search of their daughters as, in these days, so many women continually are.

The business was over in about three minutes.

“And as for you!” cried Mrs. Clifton Garneau in an awful voice, “your idea is to run a bar and—and opium den for children! You ghastly, horrible, unspeakable man! I can smell morphin fumes! Don’t tell me I can’t smell morphin fumes. I can smell morphin fumes!”

“And,” bellowed Mrs. Poindexter Katzby, “you have colored men around! You have colored girls hidden! I’m going to the police!”

Not content with herding their own daughters from the room, they insisted on the exodus of their friends’ daughters. Jim was not a little touched when several of them—including even little Martha Katzby, before she was snatched fiercely away by her mother—came up and shook hands with him. But they were all going, haughtily, regretfully or with shame-faced mutters of apology.

“Good-by,” he told them wistfully. “In the morning I’ll send you the money that’s due you.”

And, after all, they were not sorry to go. Outside, the sound of their starting motors, the triumphant put-put of their cut-outs cutting the warm September air, was a jubilant sound—a sound of youth and hopes high as the sun. Down to the ocean, to roll in the waves and forget—forget him and their discomfort at his humiliation.

They were gone—he was alone with Hugo in the room. He sat down suddenly with his face in his hands.

“Hugo,” he said huskily. “They don’t want us up here.”

“Don’t you care,” said a voice.

He looked up to see Amanthis standing beside him.
“You better go with them,” he told her. “You better not be seen here with me.”

“Why?”

“Because you’re in society now and I’m no better to those people than a servant. You’re in society—I fixed that up. You better go or they won’t invite you to any of their dances.”

“They won’t anyhow, Jim,” she said gently. “They didn’t invite me to the one tomorrow night.”

He looked up indignantly.

“They DIDN’T?”

She shook her head.

“I’ll MAKE ’em!” he said wildly. “I’ll tell ’em they got to. I’ll— I’ll—”

She came close to him with shining eyes.

“Don’t you mind, Jim,” she soothed him. “Don’t you mind. They don’t matter. We’ll have a party of our own tomorrow—just you and I.”

“I come from right good folks,” he said, defiantly. “Pore though.”

She laid her hand softly on his shoulder.

“I understand. You’re better than all of them put together, Jim.”

He got up and went to the window and stared out mournfully into the late afternoon.

“I reckon I should have let you sleep in that hammock.”

She laughed.

“I’m awfully glad you didn’t.”

He turned and faced the room, and his face was dark.

“Sweep up and lock up, Hugo,” he said, his voice trembling. “The summer’s over and we’re going down home.”

Autumn had come early. Jim Powell woke next morning to find his room cool, and the phenomenon of frosted breath in September absorbed him for a moment to the exclusion of the day before. Then the lines of his face drooped with unhappiness as he remembered the humiliation which had washed the cheery glitter from the summer. There was nothing left for him except to go back where he was known, where under no provocation were such things said to white people as had been said to him here.

After breakfast a measure of his customary light-heartedness returned. He was a child of the South—brooding was alien to his nature. He could conjure up an injury only a certain number of times before it faded into the great vacancy of the past.

But when, from force of habit, he strolled over to his defunct establishment, already as obsolete as Snorkey’s late sanitarium, melancholy again dwelt in his heart. Hugo was there, a specter of
despair, deep in the lugubrious blues amidst his master’s broken hopes.

Usually a few words from Jim were enough to raise him to an inarticulate ecstasy, but this morning there were no words to utter. For two months Hugo had lived on a pinnacle of which he had never dreamed. He had enjoyed his work simply and passionately, arriving before school hours and lingering long after Mr. Powell’s pupils had gone.

The day dragged toward a not-too-promising night. Amanthis did not appear and Jim wondered forlornly if she had not changed her mind about dining with him that night. Perhaps it would be better if she were not seen with them. But then, he reflected dismally, no one would see them anyhow–everybody was going to the big dance at the Harlans’ house.

When twilight threw unbearable shadows into the school hall he locked it up for the last time, took down the sign “James Powell; J. M., Dice, Brassknuckles and Guitar,” and went back to his hotel. Looking over his scrawled accounts he saw that there was another month’s rent to pay on his school and some bills for windows broken and new equipment that had hardly been used. Jim had lived in state, and he realized that financially he would have nothing to show for the summer after all.

When he had finished he took his new dress-suit out of its box and inspected it, running his hand over the satin of the lapels and lining. This, at least, he owned and perhaps in Tarleton somebody would ask him to a party where he could wear it.

“Shucks!” he said scoffingly. “It was just a no account old academy, anyhow. Some of those boys round the garage down home could of beat it all hollow.”

Whistling “Jeanne of Jelly-bean Town” to a not-dispirited rhythm Jim encased himself in his first dress-suit and walked downtown.

“Orchids,” he said to the clerk. He surveyed his purchase with some pride. He knew that no girl at the Harlan dance would wear anything lovelier than these exotic blossoms that leaned languorously backward against green ferns.

In a taxi-cab, carefully selected to look like a private car, he drove to Amanthis’s boarding-house. She came down wearing a rose-colored evening dress into which the orchids melted like colors into a sunset.

“I reckon we’ll go to the Casino Hotel,” he suggested, “unless you got some other place—”

At their table, looking out over the dark ocean, his mood became a contended sadness. The windows were shut against the cool but the orchestra played “Kalula” and “South Sea Moon” and for awhile, with her young loveliness opposite him, he felt himself to be a romantic participant in the life around him. They did not dance, and he was glad—it would have reminded him of that other brighter and more radiant dance to which they could not go.

After dinner they took a taxi and followed the sandy roads for an hour, glimpsing the now starry ocean through the casual trees.

“I want to thank you,” she said, “for all you’ve done for me, Jim.”
“That’s all right—we Powells ought to stick together.”

“What are you going to do?”

“I’m going to Tarleton tomorrow.”

“I’m sorry,” she said softly. “Are you going to drive down?”

“I got to. I got to get the car south because I couldn’t get what she was worth by sellin’ it. You don’t suppose anybody’s stole my car out of your barn?” he asked in sudden alarm.

She repressed a smile.

“No.”

“I’m sorry about this—about you,” he went on huskily, “and—and I would like to have gone to just one of their dances. You shouldn’t of stayed with me yesterday. Maybe it kept ’em from asking you.”

“Jim,” she suggested eagerly, “let’s go and stand outside and listen to their old music. We don’t care.”

“They’ll be coming out,” he objected.

“No, it’s too cold. Besides there’s nothing they could do to you any more than they HAVE done.”

She gave the chauffeur a direction and a few minutes later they stopped in front of the heavy Georgian beauty of the Madison Harlan house whence the windows cast their gaiety in bright patches on the lawn. There was laughter inside and the plaintive wind of fashionable horns, and now and again the slow, mysterious shuffle of dancing feet.

“Let’s go up close,” whispered Amanthis in an ecstatic trance, “I want to hear.”

They walked toward the house, keeping in the shadow of the great trees. Jim proceeded with awe—suddenly he stopped and seized Amanthis’s arm.

“Man!” he cried in an excited whisper. “Do you know what that is?”

“A night watchman?” Amanthis cast a startled look around.

“It’s Rastus Muldoon’s Band from Savannah! I heard ’em once, and I KNOW. It’s Rastus Muldoon’s Band!”

They moved closer till they could see first pompadours, then slicked male heads, and high coiffures and finally even bobbed hair pressed under black ties. They could distinguish chatter below the ceaseless laughter. Two figures appeared on the porch, gulped something quickly from flasks and returned inside. But the music had bewitched Jim Powell. His eyes were fixed and he moved his feet like a blind man.

Pressed in close behind some dark bushes they listened. The number ended. A breeze from the ocean blew over them and Jim shivered slightly. Then, in a wistful whisper:

“I’ve always wanted to lead that band. Just once.” His voice grew listless. “Come on. Let’s go. I reckon I don’t belong around
here."

He held out his arm to her but instead of taking it she stepped suddenly out of the bushes and into a bright patch of light.

"Come on, Jim," she said startlingly. "Let’s go inside."

"What-?"

She seized his arm and though he drew back in a sort of stupefied horror at her boldness she urged him persistently toward the great front door.

"Watch out!" he gasped. "Somebody’s coming out of that house and see us."

"No, Jim," she said firmly. "Nobody’s coming out of that house—but two people are going in."

"Why?" he demanded wildly, standing in full glare of the porte-cochere lamps. "Why?"

"Why?" she mocked him. "Why, just because this dance happens to be given for me."

He thought she was mad.

"Come home before they see us," he begged her.

The great doors swung open and a gentleman stepped out on the porch. In horror Jim recognized Mr. Madison Harlan. He made a movement as though to break away and run. But the man walked down the steps holding out both hands to Amanthis.

"Hello at last," he cried. "Where on earth have you two been? Cousin Amanthis—" He kissed her, and turned cordially to Jim. "And for you, Mr. Powell," he went on, "to make up for being late you’ve got to promise that for just one number you’re going to lead that band."

New Jersey was warm, all except the part that was under water, and that mattered only to the fishes. All the tourists who rode through the long green miles stopped their cars in front of a spreading old-fashioned country house and looked at the red swing on the lawn and the wide, shady porch, and sighed and drove on—swerving a little to avoid a jet-black body-servant in the road. The body-servant was applying a hammer and nails to a decayed flivver which flaunted from its rear the legend, "Tarleton, Ga."

A girl with yellow hair and a warm color to her face was lying in the hammock looking as though she could fall asleep any moment. Near her sat a gentleman in an extraordinarily tight suit. They had come down together the day before from the fashionable resort at Southampton.

"When you first appeared," she was explaining, "I never thought I’d see you again so I made that up about the barber and all. As a matter of fact, I’ve been around quite a bit—with or without brassknuckles. I’m coming out this autumn."

"I reckon I had a lot to learn," said Jim.

"And you see," went on Amanthis, looking at him rather anxiously, "I’d been invited up to Southampton to visit my cousins—and when
you said you were going, I wanted to see what you’d do. I always slept at the Harlans’ but I kept a room at the boarding-house so you wouldn’t know. The reason I didn’t get there on the right train was because I had to come early and warn a lot of people to pretend not to know me.”

Jim got up, nodding his head in comprehension.

“I reckon I and Hugo had better be movin’ along. We got to make Baltimore by night.”

“That’s a long way.”

“I want to sleep south tonight,” he said simply.

Together they walked down the path and past the idiotic statue of Diana on the lawn.

“You see,” added Amanthis gently, “you don’t have to be rich up here in order to–to go around, any more than you do in Georgia–” She broke off abruptly, “Won’t you come back next year and start another Academy?”

“No mamm, not me. That Mr. Harlan told me I could go on with the one I had but I told him no.”

“Haven’t you–didn’t you make money?”

“No mamm,” he answered. “I got enough of my own income to just get me home. I didn’t have my principal along. One time I was way ahead but I was livin’ high and there was my rent an’ apparatus and those musicians. Besides, there at the end I had to pay what they’d advanced me for their lessons.”

“You shouldn’t have done that!” cried Amanthis indignantly.

“They didn’t want me to, but I told ’em they’d have to take it.”

He didn’t consider it necessary to mention that Mr. Harlan had tried to present him with a check.

They reached the automobile just as Hugo drove in his last nail. Jim opened a pocket of the door and took from it an unlabeled bottle containing a whitish-yellow liquid.

“I intended to get you a present,” he told her awkwardly, “but my money got away before I could, so I thought I’d send you something from Georgia. This here’s just a personal remembrance. It won’t do for you to drink but maybe after you come out into society you might want to show some of those young fellas what good old corn tastes like.”

She took the bottle.

“Thank you, Jim.”

“That’s all right.” He turned to Hugo. “I reckon we’ll go along now. Give the lady the hammer.”

“Oh, you can have the hammer,” said Amanthis tearfully. “Oh, won’t you promise to come back?”

“Someday–maybe.”
He looked for a moment at her yellow hair and her blue eyes misty with sleep and tears. Then he got into his car and as his foot found the clutch his whole manner underwent a change.

“I’ll say good-by mamm,” he announced with impressive dignity, “we’re goin’ south for the winter.”

The gesture of his straw hat indicated Palm Beach, St. Augustine, Miami. His body-servant spun the crank, gained his seat and became part of the intense vibration into which the automobile was thrown.

“South for the winter,” repeated Jim, and then he added softly, “You’re the prettiest girl I ever knew. You go back up there and lie down in that hammock, and sleep–sle-eep–”

It was almost a lullaby, as he said it. He bowed to her, magnificently, profoundly, including the whole North in the splendor of his obeisance–

Then they were gone down the road in quite a preposterous cloud of dust. Just before they reached the first bend Amanthis saw them come to a full stop, dismount and shove the top part of the car on to the bottom pan. They took their seats again without looking around. Then the bend–and they were out of sight, leaving only a faint brown mist to show that they had passed.

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Bernice Bobs Her Hair

by F. Scott Fitzgerald

From the collection Flappers and Philosophers

After dark on Saturday night one could stand on the first tee of the golf-course and see the country-club windows as a yellow expanse over a very black and wavy ocean. The waves of this ocean, so to speak, were the heads of many curious caddies, a few of the more ingenious chauffeurs, the golf professional's deaf sister—and there were usually several stray, diffident waves who might have rolled inside had they so desired. This was the gallery.

The balcony was inside. It consisted of the circle of wicker chairs that lined the wall of the combination clubroom and ballroom. At these Saturday-night dances it was largely feminine; a great babel of middle-aged ladies with sharp eyes and icy hearts behind lorgnettes and large bosoms. The main function of the balcony was critical, it occasionally showed grudging admiration, but never approval, for it is well known among ladies over thirty-five that when the younger set dance in the summer-time it is with the very worst intentions in the world, and if they are not bombarded with stony eyes stray couples will dance weird barbaric interludes in the corners, and the more popular, more dangerous, girls will sometimes be kissed in the parked limousines of unsuspecting dowagers.

But, after all, this critical circle is not close enough to the stage to see the actors' faces and catch the subtler byplay. It can only frown and lean, ask questions and make satisfactory deductions from its set of postulates, such as the one which states that every young man with a large income leads the life of a hunted partridge. It never really appreciates the drama of the shifting, semi-cruel world of adolescence. No; boxes, orchestra-circle, principals, and chorus be represented by the medley of faces and voices that sway to the plaintive African rhythm of Dyer's dance orchestra.

From sixteen-year-old Otis Ormonde, who has two more years at Hill School, to G. Reece Stoddard, over whose bureau at home hangs a Harvard law diploma; from little Madeleine Hogue, whose hair still feels strange and uncomfortable on top of her head, to Bessie MacRae, who has been the life of the party a little too long—more than ten years—the medley is not only the centre of the stage but contains the only people capable of getting an unobstructed view of it.

With a flourish and a bang the music stops. The couples exchange artificial, effortless smiles, facetiously repeat "la-de-da-da dum-dum," and then the clatter of young feminine voices soars over the burst of clapping.

A few disappointed stags caught in midfloor as they had been about to cut in subsided listlessly back to the walls, because this was not like the riotous Christmas dances—these summer hops were considered just pleasantly warm and exciting, where even the younger marrieds rose and performed ancient waltzes and terrifying fox trots to the tolerant amusement of their younger brothers and sisters.

Warren McIntyre, who casually attended Yale, being one of the unfortunate stags, felt in his dinner-coat pocket for a cigarette and strolled out onto the wide, semidark veranda, where couples were scattered at tables, filling the lantern-hung night with vague words and hazy laughter. He nodded here and there at the less absorbed and as he passed each couple some half-forgotten fragment of a story played in his mind, for it was not a large city and every one was Who's Who to every one else's past. There, for example, were Jim Strain and Ethel Demorest, who had been privately engaged for three years. Every one knew that as soon as Jim managed to hold a job for more than two months she would marry him. Yet how bored they both looked, and how wearily Ethel regarded Jim sometimes, as if she wondered why she had trained the vines of her affection on such a wind-shaken poplar.

Warren was nineteen and rather pitying with those of his friends who hadn't gone East to college. But, like most
boys, he bragged tremendously about the girls of his city when he was away from it. There was Genevieve Ormonde, who regularly made the rounds of dances, house-parties, and football games at Princeton, Yale, Williams, and Cornell; there was black-eyed Roberta Dillon, who was quite as famous to her own generation as Hiram Johnson or Ty Cobb; and, of course, there was Marjorie Harvey, who besides having a fairylike face and a dazzling, bewildering tongue was already justly celebrated for having turned five cart-wheels in succession during the last pump-and-slipper dance at New Haven.

Warren, who had grown up across the street from Marjorie, had long been “crazy about her.” Sometimes she seemed to reciprocate his feeling with a faint gratitude, but she had tried him by her infallible test and informed him gravely that she did not love him. Her test was that when she was away from him she forgot him and had affairs with other boys. Warren found this discouraging, especially as Marjorie had been making little trips all summer, and for the first two or three days after each arrival home he saw great heaps of mail on the Harveys’ hall table addressed to her in various masculine handwritings. To make matters worse, all during the month of August she had been visited by her cousin Bernice from Eau Claire, and it seemed impossible to see her alone. It was always necessary to hunt round and find some one to take care of Bernice. As August waned this was becoming more and more difficult.

Much as Warren worshipped Marjorie he had to admit that Cousin Bernice was sorta dopeless. She was pretty, with dark hair and high color, but she was no fun on a party. Every Saturday night he danced a long arduous duty dance with her to please Marjorie, but he had never been anything but bored in her company.

“Warren”—a soft voice at his elbow broke in upon his thoughts, and he turned to see Marjorie, flushed and radiant as usual. She laid a hand on his shoulder and a glow settled almost imperceptibly over him.

“Warren,” she whispered “do something for me—dance with Bernice. She’s been stuck with little Otis Ormonde for almost an hour.”

Warren’s glow faded.

“Why—sure,” he answered half-heartedly.

“You don’t mind, do you? I’ll see that you don’t get stuck.”

“Sall right.”

Marjorie smiled—that smile that was thanks enough.

“You’re an angel, and I’m obliged loads.”

With a sigh the angel glanced round the veranda, but Bernice and Otis were not in sight. He wandered back inside, and there in front of the women’s dressing-room he found Otis in the centre of a group of young men who were convulsed with laughter. Otis was brandishing a piece of timber he had picked up, and discoursing volubly.

“She’s gone in to fix her hair,” he announced wildly. “I’m waiting to dance another hour with her.”

Their laughter was renewed.

“Why don’t some of you cut in?” cried Otis resentfully. “She likes more variety.”

“Why, Otis,” suggested a friend “you’ve just barely got used to her.”

“Why the two-by-four, Otis?” inquired Warren, smiling.

“The two-by-four? Oh, this? This is a club. When she comes out I’ll hit her on the head and knock her in again.”

Warren collapsed on a settee and howled with glee.

“Never mind, Otis,” he articulated finally. “I’m relieving you this time.”

Otis simulated a sudden fainting attack and handed the stick to Warren.

“If you need it, old man,” he said hoarsely.

No matter how beautiful or brilliant a girl may be, the reputation of not being frequently cut in on makes her
position at a dance unfortunate. Perhaps boys prefer her company to that of the butterflies with whom they dance a dozen times an but, youth in this jazz-nourished generation is temperamentally restless, and the idea of fox-trotting more than one full fox trot with the same girl is distasteful, not to say odious. When it comes to several dances and the intermissions between she can be quite sure that a young man, once relieved, will never tread on her wayward toes again.

Warren danced the next full dance with Bernice, and finally, thankful for the intermission, he led her to a table on the veranda. There was a moment’s silence while she did unimpressive things with her fan.

“It’s hotter here than in Eau Claire,” she said.

Warren stifled a sigh and nodded. It might be for all he knew or cared. He wondered idly whether she was a poor conversationalist because she got no attention or got no attention because she was a poor conversationalist.

“You going to be here much longer?” he asked and then turned rather red. She might suspect his reasons for asking.

“Another week,” she answered, and stared at him as if to lunge at his next remark when it left his lips.

Warren fidgeted. Then with a sudden charitable impulse he decided to try part of his line on her. He turned and looked at her eyes.

“You’ve got an awfully kissable mouth,” he began quietly.

This was a remark that he sometimes made to girls at college proms when they were talking in just such half dark as this. Bernice distinctly jumped. She turned an ungraceful red and became clumsy with her fan. No one had ever made such a remark to her before.

“Fresh!”—the word had slipped out before she realized it, and she bit her lip. Too late she decided to be amused, and offered him a flustered smile.

Warren was annoyed. Though not accustomed to have that remark taken seriously, still it usually provoked a laugh or a paragraph of sentimental banter. And he hated to be called fresh, except in a joking way. His charitable impulse died and he switched the topic.

“Jim Strain and Ethel Demorest sitting out as usual,” he commented.

This was more in Bernice’s line, but a faint regret mingled with her relief as the subject changed. Men did not talk to her about kissable mouths, but she knew that they talked in some such way to other girls.

“Oh, yes,” she said, and laughed. “I hear they’ve been mooning around for years without a red penny. Isn’t it silly?”

Warren’s disgust increased. Jim Strain was a close friend of his brother’s, and anyway he considered it bad form to sneer at people for not having money. But Bernice had had no intention of sneering. She was merely nervous.

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When Marjorie and Bernice reached home at half after midnight they said good night at the top of the stairs. Though cousins, they were not intimates. As a matter of fact Marjorie had no female intimates—she considered girls stupid. Bernice on the contrary all through this parent-arranged visit had rather longed to exchange those confidences flavored with giggles and tears that she considered an indispensable factor in all feminine intercourse. But in this respect she found Marjorie rather cold; felt somehow the same difficulty in talking to her that she had in talking to men. Marjorie never giggled, was never frightened, seldom embarrassed, and in fact had very few of the qualities which Bernice considered appropriately and blessedly feminine.

As Bernice busied herself with tooth-brush and paste this night she wondered for the hundredth time why she never had any attention when she was away from home. That her family were the wealthiest in Eau Claire; that her mother entertained tremendously, gave little diners for her daughter before all dances and bought her a car of
her own to drive round in, never occurred to her as factors in her home-town social success. Like most girls she had been brought up on the warm milk prepared by Annie Fellows Johnston and on novels in which the female was beloved because of certain mysterious womanly qualities, always mentioned but never displayed.

Bernice felt a vague pain that she was not at present engaged in being popular. She did not know that had it not been for Marjorie’s campaigning she would have danced the entire evening with one man; but she knew that even in Eau Claire other girls with less position and less pulchritude were given a much bigger rush. She attributed this to something subtly unscrupulous in those girls. It had never worried her, and if it had her mother would have assured her that the other girls cheapened themselves and that men really respected girls like Bernice.

She turned out the light in her bathroom, and on an impulse decided to go in and chat for a moment with her aunt Josephine, whose light was still on. Her soft slippers bore her noiselessly down the carpeted hall, but hearing voices inside she stopped near the partly openers door. Then she caught her own name, and without any definite intention of eavesdropping lingered—and the thread of the conversation going on inside pierced her consciousness sharply as if it had been drawn through with a needle.

“She’s absolutely hopeless!” It was Marjorie’s voice. “Oh, I know what you’re going to say! So many people have told you how pretty and sweet she is, and how she can cook! What of it? She has a bum time. Men don’t like her.”

“What’s a little cheap popularity?”

Mrs. Harvey sounded annoyed.

“It’s everything when you’re eighteen,” said Marjorie emphatically. “I’ve done my best. I’ve been polite and I’ve made men dance with her, but they just won’t stand being bored. When I think of that gorgeous coloring wasted on such a ninny, and think what Martha Carey could do with it—oh!”

“There’s no courtesy these days.”

Mrs. Harvey’s voice implied that modern situations were too much for her. When she was a girl all young ladies who belonged to nice families had glorious times.

“Well,” said Marjorie, “no girl can permanently bolster up a lame-duck visitor, because these days it’s every girl for herself. I’ve even tried to drop hints about clothes and things, and she’s been furious—given me the funniest looks. She’s sensitive enough to know she’s not getting away with much, but I’ll bet she consoles herself by thinking that she’s very virtuous and that I’m too gay and fickle and will come to a bad end. All unpopular girls think that way. Sour grapes! Sarah Hopkins refers to Genevieve and Roberta and me as gardenia girls! I’ll bet she’d give ten years of her life and her European education to be a gardenia girl and have three or four men in love with her and be cut in on every few feet at dances.”

“It seems to me,” interrupted Mrs. Harvey rather wearily, “that you ought to be able to do something for Bernice. I know she’s not very vivacious.”

Marjorie groaned.

“Vivacious! Good grief! I’ve never heard her say anything to a boy except that it’s hot or the floor’s crowded or that she’s going to school in New York next year. Sometimes she asks them what kind of car they have and tells them the kind she has. Thrilling!”

There was a short silence and then Mrs. Harvey took up her refrain:

“All I know is that other girls not half so sweet and attractive get partners. Martha Carey, for instance, is stout and loud, and her mother is distinctly common. Roberta Dillon is so thin this year that she looks as though Arizona were the place for her. She’s dancing herself to death.”

“But, mother,” objected Marjorie impatiently, “Martha is cheerful and awfully witty and an awfully slick girl, and Roberta’s a marvellous dancer. She’s been popular for ages!”

Mrs. Harvey yawned.

“I think it’s that crazy Indian blood in Bernice,” continued Marjorie. “Maybe she’s a reversion to type. Indian women all just sat round and never said anything.”

“Go to bed, you silly child,” laughed Mrs. Harvey. “I wouldn’t have told you that if I’d thought you were going to
remember it. And I think most of your ideas are perfectly idiotic,” she finished sleepily.

There was another silence, while Marjorie considered whether or not convincing her mother was worth the trouble. People over forty can seldom be permanently convinced of anything. At eighteen our convictions are hills from which we look; at forty-five they are caves in which we hide.

Having decided this, Marjorie said good night. When she came out into the hall it was quite empty.

III

While Marjorie was breakfasting late next day Bernice came into the room with a rather formal good morning, sat down opposite, stared intently over and slightly moistened her lips.

“What’s on your mind?” inquired Marjorie, rather puzzled.

Bernice paused before she threw her hand-grenade.

“I heard what you said about me to your mother last night.”

Marjorie was startled, but she showed only a faintly heightened color and her voice was quite even when she spoke.

“Where were you?”

“In the hall. I didn’t mean to listen—at first.”

After an involuntary look of contempt Marjorie dropped her eyes and became very interested in balancing a stray corn-flake on her finger.

“I guess I’d better go back to Eau Claire—if I’m such a nuisance.” Bernice’s lower lip was trembling violently and she continued on a wavering note: “I’ve tried to be nice, and—and I’ve been first neglected and then insulted. No one ever visited me and got such treatment.”

Marjorie was silent.

“But I’m in the way, I see. I’m a drag on you. Your friends don’t like me.” She paused, and then remembered another one of her grievances. “Of course I was furious last week when you tried to hint to me that that dress was unbecoming. Don’t you think I know how to dress myself?”

“No,” murmured less than half-aloud.

“What?”

“I didn’t hint anything,” said Marjorie succinctly. “I said, as I remember, that it was better to wear a becoming dress three times straight than to alternate it with two frights.”

“Do you think that was a very nice thing to say?”

“I wasn’t trying to be nice.” Then after a pause: “When do you want to go?”

Bernice drew in her breath sharply.

“Oh!” It was a little half-cry.

Marjorie looked up in surprise.

“Didn’t you say you were going?”

“Yes, but—-”
“Oh, you were only bluffing!”

They stared at each other across the breakfast-table for a moment. Misty waves were passing before Bernice’s eyes, while Marjorie’s face wore that rather hard expression that she used when slightly intoxicated undergraduate’s were making love to her.

“So you were bluffing,” she repeated as if it were what she might have expected.

Bernice admitted it by bursting into tears. Marjorie’s eyes showed boredom.

“You’re my cousin,” sobbed Bernice. “I’m v-v-visiting you. I was to stay a month, and if I go home my mother will know and she’ll wah-wonder——”

Marjorie waited until the shower of broken words collapsed into little sniffles.

“I’ll give you my month’s allowance,” she said coldly, “and you can spend this last week anywhere you want. There’s a very nice hotel——”

Bernice’s sobs rose to a flute note, and rising of a sudden she fled from the room.

An hour later, while Marjorie was in the library absorbed in composing one of those non-committal marvelously elusive letters that only a young girl can write, Bernice reappeared, very red-eyed, and consciously calm. She cast no glance at Marjorie but took a book at random from the shelf and sat down as if to read. Marjorie seemed absorbed in her letter and continued writing. When the clock showed noon Bernice closed her book with a snap.

“I suppose I’d better get my railroad ticket.”

This was not the beginning of the speech she had rehearsed up-stairs, but as Marjorie was not getting her cues—wasn’t urging her to be reasonable; it’s an a mistake—it was the best opening she could muster.

“Just wait till I finish this letter,” said Marjorie without looking round. “I want to get it off in the next mail.”

After another minute, during which her pen scratched busily, she turned round and relaxed with an air of “at your service.” Again Bernice had to speak.

“Do you want me to go home?”

“Well,” said Marjorie, considering, “I suppose if you’re not having a good time you’d better go. No use being miserable.”

“Don’t you think common kindness——”

“Oh, please don’t quote ‘Little Women’!” cried Marjorie impatiently. “That’s out of style.”

“You think so?”

“Heavens, yes! What modern girl could live like those inane females?”

“They were the models for our mothers.”

Marjorie laughed.

“Yes, they were—not! Besides, our mothers were all very well in their way, but they know very little about their daughters’ problems.”

Bernice drew herself up.

“Please don’t talk about my mother.”

Marjorie laughed.

“I don’t think I mentioned her.”

Bernice felt that she was being led away from her subject.
“Do you think you’ve treated me very well?”

“I’ve done my best. You’re rather hard material to work with.”

The lids of Bernice’s eyes reddened.

“I think you’re hard and selfish, and you haven’t a feminine quality in you.”

“Oh, my Lord!” cried Marjorie in desperation “You little nut! Girls like you are responsible for all the tiresome colorless marriages; all those ghastly inefficiencies that pass as feminine qualities. What a blow it must be when a man with imagination marries the beautiful bundle of clothes that he’s been building ideals round, and finds that she’s just a weak, whining, cowardly mass of affectations!”

Bernice’s mouth had slipped half open.

“The womanly woman!” continued Marjorie. “Her whole early life is occupied in whining criticisms of girls like me who really do have a good time.”

Bernice’s jaw descended farther as Marjorie’s voice rose.

“There’s some excuse for an ugly girl whining. If I’d been irretrievably ugly I’d never have forgiven my parents for bringing me into the world. But you’re starting life without any handicap—” Marjorie’s little fist clinched, “If you expect me to weep with you you’ll be disappointed. Go or stay, just as you like.” And picking up her letters she left the room.

Bernice claimed a headache and failed to appear at luncheon. They had a matinée date for the afternoon, but the headache persisting, Marjorie made explanation to a not very downcast boy. But when she returned late in the afternoon she found Bernice with a strangely set face waiting for her in her bedroom.

“I’ve decided,” began Bernice without preliminaries, “that maybe you’re right about things—possibly not. But if you’ll tell me why your friends aren’t—aren’t interested in me I’ll see if I can do what you want me to.”

Marjorie was at the mirror shaking down her hair.

“Do you mean it?”

“Yes.”

“Without reservations? Will you do exactly what I say?”

“Well, I—”

“Well nothing! Will you do exactly as I say?”

“If they’re sensible things.”

“They’re not! You’re no case for sensible things.”

“Are you going to make—to recommend—”

“Yes, everything. If I tell you to take boxing-lessons you’ll have to do it. Write home and tell your mother you’re going’ to stay another two weeks.

“If you’ll tell me—”

“All right—I’ll just give you a few examples now. First you have no ease of manner. Why? Because you’re never sure about your personal appearance. When a girl feels that she’s perfectly groomed and dressed she can forget that part of her. That’s charm. The more parts of yourself you can afford to forget the more charm you have.”

“Don’t I look all right?”

“No; for instance you never take care of your eyebrows. They’re black and lustrous, but by leaving them straggly they’re a blemish. They’d be beautiful if you’d take care of them in one-tenth the time you take doing nothing. You’re going to brush them so that they’ll grow straight.”
Bernice raised the brows in question.

“Do you mean to say that men notice eyebrows?”

“Yes—subconsciously. And when you go home you ought to have your teeth straightened a little. It’s almost imperceptible, still——”

“But I thought,” interrupted Bernice in bewilderment, “that you despised little dainty feminine things like that.”

“I hate dainty minds,” answered Marjorie. “But a girl has to be dainty in person. If she looks like a million dollars she can talk about Russia, ping-pong, or the League of Nations and get away with it.”

“What else?”

“Oh, I’m just beginning! There’s your dancing.”

“Don’t I dance all right?”

“No, you don’t—you lean on a man; yes, you do—ever so slightly. I noticed it when we were dancing together yesterday. And you dance standing up straight instead of bending over a little. Probably some old lady on the sideline once told you that you looked so dignified that way. But except with a very small girl it’s much harder on the man, and he’s the one that counts.”

“Go on.” Bernice’s brain was reeling.

“Well, you’ve got to learn to be nice to men who are sad birds. You look as if you’d been insulted whenever you’re thrown with any except the most popular boys. Why, Bernice, I’m cut in on every few feet—and who does most of it? Why, those very sad birds. No girl can afford to neglect them. They’re the big part of any crowd. Young boys too shy to talk are the very best conversational practice. Clumsy boys are the best dancing practice. If you can follow them and yet look graceful you can follow a baby tank across a barb-wire sky-scraper.”

Bernice sighed profoundly, but Marjorie was not through.

“If you go to a dance and really amuse, say, three sad birds that dance with you; if you talk so well to them that they forget they’re stuck with you, you’ve done something. They’ll come back next time, and gradually so many sad birds will dance with you that the attractive boys will see there’s no danger of being stuck—then they’ll dance with you.”

“Yes,” agreed Bernice faintly. “I think I begin to see.”

“And finally,” concluded Marjorie, “poise and charm will just come. You’ll wake up some morning knowing you’ve attained it and men will know it too.”

Bernice rose.

“It’s been awfully kind of you—but nobody’s ever talked to me like this before, and I feel sort of startled.”

Marjorie made no answer but gazed pensively at her own image in the mirror.

“You’re a peach to help me,” continued Bernice.

Still Marjorie did not answer, and Bernice thought she had seemed too grateful.

“I know you don’t like sentiment,” she said timidly.

Marjorie turned to her quickly.

“Oh, I wasn’t thinking about that. I was considering whether we hadn’t better bob your hair.”

Bernice collapsed backward upon the bed.
IV

On the following Wednesday evening there was a dinner-dance at the country club. When the guests strolled in Bernice found her place-card with a slight feeling of irritation. Though at her right sat G. Reece Stoddard, a most desirable and distinguished young bachelor, the all-important left held only Charley Paulson. Charley lacked height, beauty, and social shrewdness, and in her new enlightenment Bernice decided that his only qualification to be her partner was that he had never been stuck with her. But this feeling of irritation left with the last of the soup-plates, and Marjorie’s specific instruction came to her. Swallowing her pride she turned to Charley Paulson and plunged.

“Do you think I ought to bob my hair, Mr. Charley Paulson?”

Charley looked up in surprise.

“Why?”

“Because I’m considering it. It’s such a sure and easy way of attracting attention.”

Charley smiled pleasantly. He could not know this had been rehearsed. He replied that he didn’t know much about bobbed hair. But Bernice was there to tell him.

“I want to be a society vampire, you see,” she announced coolly, and went on to inform him that bobbed hair was the necessary prelude. She added that she wanted to ask his advice, because she had heard he was so critical about girls.

Charley, who knew as much about the psychology of women as he did of the mental states of Buddhist contemplatives, felt vaguely flattered.

“So I’ve decided,” she continued, her voice rising slightly, “that early next week I’m going down to the Sevier Hotel barber-shop, sit in the first chair, and get my hair bobbed.” She faltered noticing that the people near her had paused in their conversation and were listening; but after a confused second Marjorie’s coaching told, and she finished her paragraph to the vicinity at large. “Of course I’m charging admission, but if you’ll all come down and encourage me I’ll issue passes for the inside seats.”

There was a ripple of appreciative laughter, and under cover of it G. Reece Stoddard leaned over quickly and said close to her ear: “I’ll take a box right now.”

She met his eyes and smiled as if he had said something surprisingly brilliant.

“Do you believe in bobbed hair?” asked G. Reece in the same undertone.

“I think it’s unmoral,” affirmed Bernice gravely. “But, of course, you’ve either got to amuse people or feed ‘em or shock ‘em.” Marjorie had culled this from Oscar Wilde. It was greeted with a ripple of laughter from the men and a series of quick, intent looks from the girls. And then as though she had said nothing of wit or moment Bernice turned again to Charley and spoke confidentially in his ear.

“I want to ask you your opinion of several people. I imagine you’re a wonderful judge of character.”

Charley thrilled faintly—paid her a subtle compliment by overturning her water.

Two hours later, while Warren McIntyre was standing passively in the stag line abstractedly watching the dancers and wondering whither and with whom Marjorie had disappeared, an unrelated perception began to creep slowly upon him—a perception that Bernice, cousin to Marjorie, had been cut in on several times in the past five minutes. He closed his eyes, opened them and looked again. Several minutes back she had been dancing with a visiting boy, a matter easily accounted for; a visiting boy would know no better. But now she was dancing with some one else, and there was Charley Paulson headed for her with enthusiastic determination in his eye. Funny—Charley seldom danced with more than three girls an evening.

Warren was distinctly surprised when—the exchange having been effected—the man relieved proved to be none other than G. Reece Stoddard himself. And G. Reece seemed not at all jubilant at being relieved. Next time Bernice danced near, Warren regarded her intently. Yes, she was pretty, distinctly pretty; and to-night her face
seemed really vivacious. She had that look that no woman, however histrionically proficient, can successfully counterfeit—she looked as if she were having a good time. He liked the way she had her hair arranged, wondered if it was brilliantine that made it glisten so. And that dress was becoming—a dark red that set off her shadowy eyes and high coloring. He remembered that he had thought her pretty when she first came to town, before he had realized that she was dull. Too bad she was dull—dull girls unbearable—certainly pretty though.

His thoughts zigzagged back to Marjorie. This disappearance would be like other disappearances. When she reappeared he would demand where she had been—would be told emphatically that it was none of his business. What a pity she was so sure of him! She basked in the knowledge that no other girl in town interested him; she defied him to fall in love with Genevieve or Roberta.

Warren sighed. The way to Marjorie’s affections was a labyrinth indeed. He looked up. Bernice was again dancing with the visiting boy. Half unconsciously he took a step out from the stag line in her direction, and hesitated. Then he said to himself that it was charity. He walked toward her—collided suddenly with G. Reece Stoddard.

“Pardon me,” said Warren.

But G. Reece had not stopped to apologize. He had again cut in on Bernice.

That night at one o’clock Marjorie, with one hand on the electric-light switch in the hall, turned to take a last look at Bernice’s sparkling eyes.

“So it worked?”

“Oh, Marjorie, yes!” cried Bernice.

“I saw you were having a gay time.”

“I did! The only trouble was that about midnight I ran short of talk. I had to repeat myself—with different men of course. I hope they won’t compare notes.”

“Men don’t,” said Marjorie, yawning, “and it wouldn’t matter if they did—they’d think you were even trickier.”

She snapped out the light, and as they started up the stairs Bernice grasped the banister thankfully. For the first time in her life she had been danced tired.

“You see,” said Marjorie it the top of the stairs, “one man sees another man cut in and he thinks there must be something there. Well, we’ll fix up some new stuff to-morrow. Good night.”

“Good night.”

As Bernice took down her hair she passed the evening before her in review. She had followed instructions exactly. Even when Charley Paulson cut in for the eighth time she had simulated delight and had apparently been both interested and flattered. She had not talked about the weather or Eau Claire or automobiles or her school, but had confined her conversation to me, you, and us.

But a few minutes before she fell asleep a rebellious thought was churning drowsily in her brain—after all, it was she who had done it. Marjorie, to be sure, had given her her conversation, but then Marjorie got much of her conversation out of things she read. Bernice had bought the red dress, though she had never valued it highly before Marjorie dug it out of her trunk—and her own voice had said the words, her own lips had smiled, her own feet had danced. Marjorie nice girl—vain, though—nice evening—nice boys—like Warren—Warren—Warren—what’s his name—Warren—

She fell asleep.
To Bernice the next week was a revelation. With the feeling that people really enjoyed looking at her and listening to her came the foundation of self-confidence. Of course there were numerous mistakes at first. She did not know, for instance, that Draycott Deyo was studying for the ministry; she was unaware that he had cut in on her because he thought she was a quiet, reserved girl. Had she known these things she would not have treated him to the line which began “Hello, Shell Shock!” and continued with the bathtub story—“It takes a frightful lot of energy to fix my hair in the summer—there’s so much of it—so I always fix it first and powder my face and put on my hat; then I get into the bathtub, and dress afterward. Don’t you think that’s the best plan?”

Though Draycott Deyo was in the throes of difficulties concerning baptism by immersion and might possibly have seen a connection, it must be admitted that he did not. He considered feminine bathing an immoral subject, and gave her some of his ideas on the depravity of modern society.

But to offset that unfortunate occurrence Bernice had several signal successes to her credit. Little Otis Ormonde pleaded off from a trip East and elected instead to follow her with a puppylike devotion, to the amusement of his crowd and to the irritation of G. Reece Stoddard, several of whose afternoon calls Otis completely ruined by the disgusting tenderness of the glances he bent on Bernice. He even told her the story of the two-by-four and the dressing-room to show her how frightfully mistaken he and every one else had been in their first judgment of her. Bernice laughed off that incident with a slight sinking sensation.

Of all Bernice’s conversation perhaps the best known and most universally approved was the line about the bobbing of her hair.

“Oh, Bernice, when you goin’ to get the hair bobbed?”

“Day after to-morrow maybe,“ she would reply, laughing. “Will you come and see me? Because I’m counting on you, you know.”

“Will we? You know! But you better hurry up.”

Bernice, whose tonsorial intentions were strictly dishonorable, would laugh again.

“Pretty soon now. You’d be surprised.”

But perhaps the most significant symbol of her success was the gray car of the hypercritical Warren McIntyre, parked daily in front of the Harvey house. At first the parlor-maid was distinctly startled when he asked for Bernice instead of Marjorie; after a week of it she told the cook that Miss Bernice had gotta holda Miss Marjorie’s best fella.

And Miss Bernice had. Perhaps it began with Warren’s desire to rouse jealousy in Marjorie; perhaps it was the familiar though unrecognized strain of Marjorie in Bernice’s conversation; perhaps it was both of these and something of sincere attraction besides. But somehow the collective mind of the younger set knew within a week that Marjorie’s most reliable beau had made an amazing face-about and was giving an indisputable rush to Marjorie’s guest. The question of the moment was how Marjorie would take it. Warren called Bernice on the ‘phone twice a day, sent her notes, and they were frequently seen together in his roadster, obviously engrossed in one of those tense, significant conversations as to whether or not he was sincere.

Marjorie on being twitted only laughed. She said she was mighty glad that Warren had at last found some one who appreciated him. So the younger set laughed, too, and guessed that Marjorie didn’t care and let it go at that.

One afternoon when there were only three days left of her visit Bernice was waiting in the hall for Warren, with whom she was going to a bridge party. She was in rather a blissful mood, and when Marjorie—also bound for the party—appeared beside her and began casually to adjust her hat in the mirror, Bernice was utterly unprepared for anything in the nature of a clash. Marjorie did her work very coldly and succinctly in three sentences.

“You may as well get Warren out of your head,” she said coldly.

“What?” Bernice was utterly astounded.

“You may as well stop making a fool of yourself over Warren McIntyre. He doesn’t care a snap of his fingers about
you."

For a tense moment they regarded each other—Marjorie scornful, aloof; Bernice astounded, half-angry, half-frightened. Then two cars drove up in front of the house and there was a riotous honking. Both of them gasped faintly, turned, and side by side hurried out.

All through the bridge party Bernice strove in vain to master a rising uneasiness. She had offended Marjorie, the sphinx of sphinxes. With the most wholesome and innocent intentions in the world she had stolen Marjorie’s property. She felt suddenly and horribly guilty. After the bridge game, when they sat in an informal circle and the conversation became general, the storm gradually broke. Little Otis Ormonde inadvertently precipitated it.

“When you going back to kindergarten, Otis?” some one had asked.

“Me? Day Bernice gets her hair bobbed.”

“Then your education’s over,” said Marjorie quickly. “That’s only a bluff of hers. I should think you’d have realized.”

“That a fact?” demanded Otis, giving Bernice a reproachful glance.

Bernice’s ears burned as she tried to think up an effectual come-back. In the face of this direct attack her imagination was paralysed.

“There’s a lot of bluff in the world,” continued Marjorie quite pleasantly. “I should think you’d be young enough to know that, Otis.”

“Well,” said Otis, “maybe so. But gee! With a line like Bernice’s——”

“Really?” yawned Marjorie. “What’s her latest bon mot?”

No one seemed to know. In fact, Bernice, having trifled with her muse’s beau, had said nothing memorable of late.

“Was that really all a line?” asked Roberta curiously.

Bernice hesitated. She felt that wit in some form was demanded of her, but under her cousin’s suddenly frigid eyes she was completely incapacitated.

“I don’t know,” she stalled.

“Splush!” said Marjorie. “Admit it!”

Bernice saw that Warren’s eyes had left a ukulele he had been tinkering with and were fixed on her questioningly.

“Oh, I don’t know!” she repeated steadily. Her cheeks were glowing.

“Splush!” remarked Marjorie again.

“Come through, Bernice,” urged Otis. “Tell her where to get off.” Bernice looked round again—she seemed unable to get away from Warren’s eyes.

“I like bobbed hair,” she said hurriedly, as if he had asked her a question, “and I intend to bob mine.”

“When?” demanded Marjorie.

“Any time.”

“No time like the present,” suggested Roberta.

Otis jumped to his feet.

“Good stuff!” he cried. “We’ll have a summer bobbing party. Sevier Hotel barber-shop, I think you said.”

In an instant all were on their feet. Bernice’s heart throbbed violently.

“What?” she gasped.
Out of the group came Marjorie’s voice, very clear and contemptuous.

“Don’t worry—she’ll back out!”

“Come on, Bernice!” cried Otis, starting toward the door.

Four eyes—Warren’s and Marjorie’s—stared at her, challenged her, defied her. For another second she wavered wildly.

“All right,” she said swiftly “I don’t care if I do.”

An eternity of minutes later, riding down-town through the late afternoon beside Warren, the others following in Roberta’s car close behind, Bernice had all the sensations of Marie Antoinette bound for the guillotine in a tumbrel. Vaguely she wondered why she did not cry out that it was all a mistake. It was all she could do to keep from clutching her hair with both bands to protect it from the suddenly hostile world. Yet she did neither. Even the thought of her mother was no deterrent now. This was the test supreme of her sportsmanship; her right to walk unchallenged in the starry heaven of popular girls.

Warren was moodily silent, and when they came to the hotel he drew up at the curb and nodded to Bernice to precede him out. Roberta’s car emptied a laughing crowd into the shop, which presented two bold plate-glass windows to the street.

Bernice stood on the curb and looked at the sign, Sevier Barber-Shop. It was a guillotine indeed, and the hangman was the first barber, who, attired in a white coat and smoking a cigarette, leaned nonchalantly against the first chair. He must have heard of her; he must have been waiting all week, smoking eternal cigarettes beside that portentous, too-often-mentioned first chair. Would they blind-fold her? No, but they would tie a white cloth round her neck lest any of her blood—nonsense—hair—should get on her clothes.

“All right, Bernice,” said Warren quickly.

With her chin in the air she crossed the sidewalk, pushed open the swinging screen-door, and giving not a glance to the uproarious, riotous row that occupied the waiting bench, went up to the fat barber.

“I want you to bob my hair.”

The first barber’s mouth slid somewhat open. His cigarette dropped to the floor.

“Huh?”

“My hair—bob it!”

Refusing further preliminaries, Bernice took her seat on high. A man in the chair next to her turned on his side and gave her a glance, half lather, half amazement. One barber started and spoiled little Willy Schuneman’s monthly haircut. Mr. O’Reilly in the last chair grunted and swore musically in ancient Gaelic as a razor bit into his cheek. Two bootblacks became wide-eyed and rushed for her feet. No, Bernice didn’t care for a shine.

Outside a passer-by stopped and stared; a couple joined him; half a dozen small boys’ nose sprang into life, flattened against the glass; and snatches of conversation borne on the summer breeze drifted in through the screen-door.

“Lookada long hair on a kid!”

“Where’d yuh get ‘at stuff? ‘At’s a bearded lady he just finished shavin’.”

But Bernice saw nothing, heard nothing. Her only living sense told her that this man in the white coat had removed one tortoise-shell comb and then another; that his fingers were fumbling clumsily with unfamiliar hairpins; that this hair, this wonderful hair of hers, was going—she would never again feel its long voluptuous pull as it hung in a dark-brown glory down her back. For a second she was near breaking down, and then the picture before her swam mechanically into her vision—Marjorie’s mouth curling in a faint ironic smile as if to say:

“Give up and get down! You tried to buck me and I called your bluff. You see you haven’t got a prayer.”

And some last energy rose up in Bernice, for she clinched her hands under the white cloth, and there was a curious narrowing of her eyes that Marjorie remarked on to some one long afterward.
Twenty minutes later the barber swung her round to face the mirror, and she flinched at the full extent of the damage that had been wrought. Her hair was not curls and now it lay in lank lifeless blocks on both sides of her suddenly pale face. It was ugly as sin—she had known it would be ugly as sin. Her face’s chief charm had been a Madonna-like simplicity. Now that was gone and she was—well frightfully mediocre—not stagy; only ridiculous, like a Greenwich Villager who had left her spectacles at home.

As she climbed down from the chair she tried to smile—failed miserably. She saw two of the girls exchange glances; noticed Marjorie’s mouth curved in attenuated mockery—and that Warren’s eyes were suddenly very cold.

“You see,”—her words fell into an awkward pause—“I’ve done it.”

“Yes, you’ve—done it,” admitted Warren.

“Do you like it?”

There was a half-hearted “Sure” from two or three voices, another awkward pause, and then Marjorie turned swiftly and with serpentlike intensity to Warren.

“Would you mind running me down to the cleaners?” she asked. “I’ve simply got to get a dress there before supper. Roberta’s driving right home and she can take the others.”

Warren stared abstractedly at some infinite speck out the window. Then for an instant his eyes rested coldly on Bernice before they turned to Marjorie.

“Be glad to,” he said slowly.

Bernice did not fully realize the outrageous trap that had been set for her until she met her aunt’s amazed glance just before dinner.

“Why Bernice!”

“I’ve bobbed it, Aunt Josephine.”

“Why, child!”

“Do you like it?”

“Why Bernice!”

“I suppose I’ve shocked you.”

“No, but what’ll Mrs. Deyo think tomorrow night? Bernice, you should have waited until after the Deyo’s dance—you should have waited if you wanted to do that.”

“It was sudden, Aunt Josephine. Anyway, why does it matter to Mrs. Deyo particularly?”

“Why child,” cried Mrs. Harvey, “in her paper on ‘The Foibles of the Younger Generation’ that she read at the last meeting of the Thursday Club she devoted fifteen minutes to bobbed hair. It’s her pet abomination. And the dance is for you and Marjorie!“

“I’m sorry.”

“Oh, Bernice, what’ll your mother say? She’ll think I let you do it.”

“I’m sorry.”
Dinner was an agony. She had made a hasty attempt with a curling-iron, and burned her finger and much hair. She could see that her aunt was both worried and grieved, and her uncle kept saying, “Well, I’ll be darned!” over and over in a hurt and faintly hostile torte. And Marjorie sat very quietly, intrenched behind a faint smile, a faintly mocking smile.

Somehow she got through the evening. Three boy’s called; Marjorie disappeared with one of them, and Bernice made a listless unsuccessful attempt to entertain the two others—sighed thankfully as she climbed the stairs to her room at half past ten. What a day!

When she had undressed for the night the door opened and Marjorie came in.

“Bernice,” she said “I’m awfully sorry about the Deyo dance. I’ll give you my word of honor I’d forgotten all about it.”

“Sall right,” said Bernice shortly. Standing before the mirror she passed her comb slowly through her short hair.

“I’ll take you down-town to-morrow,” continued Marjorie, “and the hairdresser’ll fix it so you’ll look slick. I didn’t imagine you’d go through with it. I’m really mighty sorry.”

“Oh, ‘sall right!”

“Still it’s your last night, so I suppose it won’t matter much.”

Then Bernice winced as Marjorie tossed her own hair over her shoulders and began to twist it slowly into two long blond braids until in her cream-colored negligée she looked like a delicate painting of some Saxon princess. Fascinated, Bernice watched the braids grow. Heavy and luxurious they were moving under the supple fingers like restive snakes—and to Bernice remained this relic and the curling-iron and a to-morrow full of eyes. She could see G. Reece Stoddard, who liked her, assuming his Harvard manner and telling his dinner partner that Bernice shouldn’t have been allowed to go to the movies so much; she could see Draycott Deyo exchanging glances with his mother and then being conscientiously charitable to her. But then perhaps by to-morrow Mrs. Deyo would have heard the news; would send round an icy little note requesting that she fail to appear—and behind her back they would all laugh and know that Marjorie had made a fool of her; that her chance at beauty had been sacrificed to the jealous whim of a selfish girl. She sat down suddenly before the mirror, biting the inside of her cheek.

“I like it,” she said with an effort. “I think it’ll be becoming.”

Marjorie smiled.

“It looks all right. For heaven’s sake, don’t let it worry you!”

“I won’t.”

“Good night Bernice.”

But as the door closed something snapped within Bernice. She sprang dynamically to her feet, clinching her hands, then swiftly and noiseless crossed over to her bed and from underneath it dragged out her suitcase. Into it she tossed toilet articles and a change of clothing, Then she turned to her trunk and quickly dumped in two drawerfulls of lingerie and stammer dresses. She moved quietly, but deadly efficiency, and in three-quarters of an hour her trunk was locked and strapped and she was fully dressed in a becoming new travelling suit that Marjorie had helped her pick out.

Sitting down at her desk she wrote a short note to Mrs. Harvey, in which she briefly outlined her reasons for going. She sealed it, addressed it, and laid it on her pillow. She glanced at her watch. The train left at one, and she knew that if she walked down to the Marborough Hotel two blocks away she could easily get a taxicab.

Suddenly she drew in her breath sharply and an expression flashed into her eyes that a practiced character reader might have connected vaguely with the set look she had worn in the barber’s chair—somehow a development of it. It was quite a new look for Bernice—and it carried consequences.

She went stealthily to the bureau, picked up an article that lay there, and turning out all the lights stood quietly until her eyes became accustomed to the darkness. Softly she pushed open the door to Marjorie’s room. She heard the quiet, even breathing of an untroubled conscience asleep.

She was by the bedside now, very deliberate and calm. She acted swiftly. Bending over she found one of the braids
of Marjorie’s hair, followed it up with her hand to the point nearest the head, and then holding it a little slack so that the sleeper would feel no pull, she reached down with the shears and severed it. With the pigtail in her hand she held her breath. Marjorie had muttered something in her sleep. Bernice deftly amputated the other braid, paused for an instant, and then flitted swiftly and silently back to her own room.

Down-stairs she opened the big front door, closed it carefully behind her, and feeling oddly happy and exuberant stepped off the porch into the moonlight, swinging her heavy grip like a shopping-bag. After a minute’s brisk walk she discovered that her left hand still held the two blond braids. She laughed unexpectedly—had to shut her mouth hard to keep from emitting an absolute peal. She was passing Warren’s house now, and on the impulse she set down her baggage, and swinging the braids like piece of rope flung them at the wooden porch, where they landed with a slight thud. She laughed again, no longer restraining herself.

“Huh,” she giggled wildly. “Scalp the selfish thing!”

Then picking up her staircase she set off at a half-run down the moonlit street.

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In which John Green teaches you about the poetry of Langston Hughes. Langston Hughes was a poet and playwright in the first half of the 20th century, and he was involved in the Harlem Renaissance, which was a cultural movement among African Americans of the time that produced all kinds of great works in literature, poetry, painting, sculpture, music, and other areas. The Harlem Renaissance mainly happened in Harlem, the traditionally black neighborhood in upper Manhattan in New York City. Langston Hughes was primarily known as a poet, but he was involved deeply in the movement itself as well. John will teach you a bit about Hughes’s background, and he’ll examine a few of his best known poems.
Biography: Langston Hughes

James Mercer Langston Hughes (February 1, 1902 – May 22, 1967) was an American poet, social activist, novelist, playwright, and columnist from Joplin, Missouri.

He was one of the earliest innovators of the then-new literary art form called jazz poetry. Hughes is best known as a leader of the Harlem Renaissance. He famously wrote about the period that “the negro was in vogue”, which was later paraphrased as “when Harlem was in vogue.”

| Birthplace   | James Mercer Langston Hughes  
|             | February 1, 1902  
|             | Joplin, Missouri, United States  
| Died        | May 22, 1967 (aged 65)  
|             | New York City, United States  
| Occupation  | Poet, columnist, dramatist, essayist, novelist  
| Ethnicity   | African American, White American, Native American  
| Period      | 1926–64  

1936 photo by Carl Van Vechten
Career

First published in *The Crisis* in 1921, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers,” which became Hughes's signature poem, was collected in his first book of poetry *The Weary Blues* (1926). Hughes’s first and last published poems appeared in *The Crisis*; more of his poems were published in *The Crisis* than in any other journal. Hughes’s life and work were enormously influential during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, alongside those of his contemporaries, Zora Neale Hurston, Wallace Thurman, Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, Richard Bruce Nugent, and Aaron Douglas.

Hughes and his contemporaries had different goals and aspirations than the black middle class. They criticized the men known as the midwives of the Harlem Renaissance: W. E. B. Du Bois, Jessie Redmon Fauset, and Alain LeRoy Locke, as being overly accommodating and assimilating eurocentric values and culture to achieve social equality.

Hughes and his fellows tried to depict the “low-life” in their art: that is, the real lives of blacks in the lower social-economic strata. They criticized the divisions and prejudices based on skin color within the black community. Hughes wrote what would be considered their manifesto, “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain,” published in *The Nation* in 1926:

> The younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it doesn’t matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly, too. The tom-tom cries, and the tom-tom laughs. If colored people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, their displeasure doesn’t matter either. We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top of the mountain free within ourselves.

His poetry and fiction portrayed the lives of the working-class blacks in America, lives he portrayed as full of struggle, joy, laughter, and music. Permeating his work is pride in the African-American identity and its diverse culture. “My seeking has been to explain and illuminate the Negro condition in America and obliquely that of all human kind,” Hughes is quoted as saying. He confronted racial stereotypes, protested social conditions, and expanded African America’s image of itself—a “people’s poet” who sought to reeducate both audience and artist by lifting the theory of the black aesthetic into reality.

Hughes stressed a racial consciousness and cultural nationalism devoid of self-hate. His thought united people of African descent and Africa across the globe to encourage pride in their diverse black folk culture and black aesthetic. Hughes was one of the few prominent black writers to champion racial consciousness as a source of inspiration for black artists. In addition to his example in social attitudes, Hughes had an important technical influence by his emphasis on folk and jazz rhythms as the basis of his poetry of racial pride.

View Upton Sinclair’s full biography on Wikipedia.

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The Negro Speaks of Rivers

by Langston Hughes

I’ve known rivers
I’ve known rivers ancient as the world and older than the
flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln
went down to New Orleans, and I’ve seen its muddy
bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I’ve known rivers
Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.
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Additional Resources: Roaring '20s

Helpful Websites

“The Roaring Twenties” from History.com

This interactive website will give a brief overview of relevant news and cultural events that took place during the Roaring '20s. Be sure to view all embedded videos and read the written text as well!

“Prohibition in Virginia” from Rustycans.com

This page chronicles the major organizations and movements that influenced Virginia during the Prohibition era.

“The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain” by Langston Hughes, from Hartford-hwp.com

Videos

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Video: Modernism in American Literature

A brief overview of the Modernist movement in American Literature.

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Writers at War
Overview: Writers at War

Children of an eastern suburb of London, who have been made homeless by the random bombs of the Nazi night raiders, waiting outside the wreckage of what was their home. September 1940. New Times Paris Bureau Collection.

Objectives

- Respond to the weekly readings within the context of your own perspective (Textual Annotations)
- Analyze the American perspective of war (Weekly Journal Entry)

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A People's History of the United States Section 14

Zinn, Howard: *A People’s History of the United States*

This link above will take you to an online copy of Howard Zinn’s book *A People’s History of the United States* in its entirety.

There will be multiple readings from this book throughout the semester.

For this week, you need to read **Section 14: “War is the Health of the State.”**

Howard Zinn in 2009

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- Survey of American Literature II. **Authored by**: Joshua Watson. **Provided by**: Reynolds Community College. **Located at**: http://www.reynolds.edu/. **License**: CC BY: Attribution

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Additional Resources: Writers at War

Helpful Websites

“Interviews: Ernest Hemingway, the Art of Fiction 21” from The Paris Review

“The Vietnam Conflict: The Rock ‘n’ Roll War” from Ramble On by Paola Sarappa

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Utopia and Dystopia
Edward Bellamy, Looking Backward: 
2000-1887

LOOKING BACKWARD

From 2000 to 1887

by

Edward Bellamy

AUTHOR’S PREFACE

Historical Section Shawmut College, Boston, 
December 26, 2000

Living as we do in the closing year of the twentieth century, enjoying the blessings of a social order at once so simple and logical that it seems but the triumph of common sense, it is no doubt difficult for those whose studies have not been largely historical to realize that the present organization of society is, in its completeness, less than a century old. No historical fact is, however, better established than that till nearly the end of the nineteenth century it was the general belief that the ancient industrial system, with all its shocking social consequences, was destined to last, with possibly a little patching, to the end of time. How strange and wellnigh incredible does it seem that so prodigious a moral and material transformation as has taken place since then could have been accomplished in so brief an interval! The readiness with which men accustom themselves, as matters of course, to improvements in their condition, which, when anticipated, seemed to leave nothing more to be desired, could not be more strikingly illustrated. What reflection could be better calculated to moderate the enthusiasm of reformers who count for their reward on the lively gratitude of future ages!

The object of this volume is to assist persons who, while desiring to gain a more definite idea of the social contrasts between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, are daunted by the formal aspect of the histories which treat the subject. Warned by a teacher’s experience that learning is accounted a weariness to the flesh, the author has sought to alleviate the instructive quality of the book by casting it in the form of a romantic narrative, which he would be glad to fancy not wholly devoid of interest on its own account.

The reader, to whom modern social institutions and their underlying principles are matters of course, may at times find Dr. Leete’s explanations of them rather trite—but it must be remembered that to Dr. Leete’s guest they were not matters of course, and that this book is written for the express purpose of inducing the reader to forget for the nonce that they are so to him. One word more. The almost universal theme of the writers and orators who have celebrated this bimillennial epoch has been the future rather than the past, not the advance that has been made, but the progress that shall be made, ever onward and upward, till the race shall achieve its ineffable destiny. This is well, wholly well, but it seems to me that nowhere can we find more solid ground for daring anticipations of human development during the next one thousand years, than by “Looking Backward” upon the progress of the last one hundred.

That this volume may be so fortunate as to find readers whose interest in the subject shall incline them to overlook the deficiencies of the treatment is the hope in which the author steps aside and leaves Mr. Julian West to speak for himself.
I first saw the light in the city of Boston in the year 1857. “What!” you say, “eighteen fifty-seven? That is an odd slip. He means nineteen fifty-seven, of course.” I beg pardon, but there is no mistake. It was about four in the afternoon of December the 26th, one day after Christmas, in the year 1857, not 1957, that I first breathed the east wind of Boston, which, I assure the reader, was at that remote period marked by the same penetrating quality characterizing it in the present year of grace, 2000.

These statements seem so absurd on their face, especially when I add that I am a young man apparently of about thirty years of age, that no person can be blamed for refusing to read another word of what promises to be a mere imposition upon his credulity. Nevertheless I earnestly assure the reader that no imposition is intended, and will undertake, if he shall follow me a few pages, to entirely convince him of this. If I may, then, provisionally assume, with the pledge of justifying the assumption, that I know better than the reader when I was born, I will go on with my narrative. As every schoolboy knows, in the latter part of the nineteenth century the civilization of to-day, or anything like it, did not exist, although the elements which were to develop it were already in ferment. Nothing had, however, occurred to modify the immemorial division of society into the four classes, or nations, as they may be more fitly called, since the differences between them were far greater than those between any nations nowadays, of the rich and the poor, the educated and the ignorant. I myself was rich and also educated, and possessed, therefore, all the elements of happiness enjoyed by the most fortunate in that age. Living in luxury, and occupied only with the pursuit of the pleasures and refinements of life, I derived the means of my support from the labor of others, rendering no sort of service in return. My parents and grand-parents had lived in the same way, and I expected that my descendants, if I had any, would enjoy a like easy existence.

But how could I live without service to the world? you ask. Why should the world have supported in utter idleness one who was able to render service? The answer is that my great-grandfather had accumulated a sum of money on which his descendants had ever since lived. The sum, you will naturally infer, must have been very large not to have been exhausted in supporting three generations in idleness. This, however, was not the fact. The sum had been originally by no means large. It was, in fact, much larger now that three generations had been supported upon it in idleness, than it was at first. This mystery of use without consumption, of warmth without combustion, seems like magic, but was merely an ingenious application of the art now happily lost but carried to great perfection by your ancestors, of shifting the burden of one’s support on the shoulders of others. The man who had accomplished this, and it was the end all sought, was said to live on the income of his investments. To explain at this point how the ancient methods of industry made this possible would delay us too much. I shall only stop now to say that interest on investments was a species of tax in perpetuity upon the product of those engaged in industry which a person possessing or inheriting money was able to levy. It must not be supposed that an arrangement which seems so unnatural and preposterous according to modern notions was never criticized by your ancestors. It had been the effort of lawgivers and prophets from the earliest ages to abolish interest, or at least to limit it to the smallest possible rate. All these efforts had, however, failed, as they necessarily must so long
as the ancient social organizations prevailed. At the time of which I write, the latter part of the nineteenth
century, governments had generally given up trying to regulate the subject at all.

By way of attempting to give the reader some general impression of the way people lived together in those days,
and especially of the relations of the rich and poor to one another, perhaps I cannot do better than to compare
society as it then was to a prodigious coach which the masses of humanity were harnessed to and dragged
toilsomely along a very hilly and sandy road. The driver was hunger, and permitted no lagging, though the pace
was necessarily very slow. Despite the difficulty of drawing the coach at all along so hard a road, the top was
covered with passengers who never got down, even at the steepest ascents. These seats on top were very breezy
and comfortable. Well up out of the dust, their occupants could enjoy the scenery at their leisure, or critically
discuss the merits of the straining team. Naturally such places were in great demand and the competition for
them was keen, every one seeking as the first end in life to secure a seat on the coach for himself and to leave it to
his child after him. By the rule of the coach a man could leave his seat to whom he wished, but on the other hand
there were many accidents by which it might at any time be wholly lost. For all that they were so easy, the seats
were very insecure, and at every sudden jolt of the coach persons were slipping out of them and falling to the
ground, where they were instantly compelled to take hold of the rope and help to drag the coach on which they
had before ridden so pleasantly. It was naturally regarded as a terrible misfortune to lose one’s seat, and the
prehension that this might happen to them or their friends was a constant cloud upon the happiness of those
who rode.

But did they think only of themselves? you ask. Was not their very luxury rendered intolerable to them by
comparison with the lot of their brothers and sisters in the harness, and the knowledge that their own weight
added to their toil? Had they no compassion for fellow beings from whom fortune only distinguished them? Oh, yes;
commiseration was frequently expressed by those who rode for those who had to pull the coach, especially
when the vehicle came to a bad place in the road, as it was constantly doing, or to a particularly steep hill. At such
times, the desperate straining of the team, their agonized leaping and plunging under the pitiless lashing of
hunger, the many who fainted at the rope and were trampled in the mire, made a very distressing spectacle, which
often called forth highly creditable displays of feeling on the top of the coach. At such times the passengers would
call down encouragingly to the toilers of the rope, exhorting them to patience, and holding out hopes of possible
compensation in another world for the hardness of their lot, while others contributed to buy salves and liniments
for the crippled and injured. It was agreed that it was a great pity that the coach should be so hard to pull, and
there was a sense of general relief when the specially bad piece of road was gotten over. This relief was not, indeed,
wholly on account of the team, for there was always some danger at these bad places of a general
overturn in which all would lose their seats.

It must in truth be admitted that the main effect of the spectacle of the misery of the toilers at the rope was to
enhance the passengers’ sense of the value of their seats upon the coach, and to cause them to hold on to them
more desperately than before. If the passengers could only have felt assured that neither they nor their friends
would ever fall from the top, it is probable that, beyond contributing to the funds for liniments and bandages, they
would have troubled themselves extremely little about those who dragged the coach.

I am well aware that this will appear to the men and women of the twentieth century an incredible inhumanity,
but there are two facts, both very curious, which partly explain it. In the first place, it was firmly and sincerely
believed that there was no other way in which Society could get along, except the many pulled at the rope and the
few rode, and not only this, but that no very radical improvement even was possible, either in the harness, the
coach, the roadway, or the distribution of the toil. It had always been as it was, and it always would be so. It was a
pity, but it could not be helped, and philosophy forbade wasting compassion on what was beyond remedy.

The other fact is yet more curious, consisting in a singular hallucination which those on the top of the coach
generally shared, that they were not exactly like their brothers and sisters who pulled at the rope, but of finer
clay, in some way belonging to a higher order of beings who might justly expect to be drawn. This seems
unaccountable, but, as I once rode on this very coach and shared that very hallucination, I ought to be believed.
The strangest thing about the hallucination was that those who had but just climbed up from the ground, before
they had outgrown the marks of the rope upon their hands, began to fall under its influence. As for those whose
parents and grand-parents before them had been so fortunate as to keep their seats on the top, the conviction they
cherished of the essential difference between their sort of humanity and the common article was absolute. The
effect of such a delusion in moderating fellow feeling for the sufferings of the mass of men into a distant and
philosophical compassion is obvious. To it I refer as the only extenuation I can offer for the indifference which, at
the period I write of, marked my own attitude toward the misery of my brothers.

In 1887 I came to my thirtieth year. Although still unmarried, I was engaged to wed Edith Bartlett. She, like
myself, rode on the top of the coach. That is to say, not to encumber ourselves further with an illustration which
has, I hope, served its purpose of giving the reader some general impression of how we lived then, her family was wealthy. In that age, when money alone commanded all that was agreeable and refined in life, it was enough for a woman to be rich to have suitors; but Edith Bartlett was beautiful and graceful also.

My lady readers, I am aware, will protest at this. "Handsome she might have been," I hear them saying, "but graceful never, in the costumes which were the fashion at that period, when the head covering was a dizzy structure a foot tall, and the almost incredible extension of the skirt behind by means of artificial contrivances more thoroughly dehumanized the form than any former device of dressmakers. Fancy any one graceful in such a costume!" The point is certainly well taken, and I can only reply that while the ladies of the twentieth century are lovely demonstrations of the effect of appropriate drapery in accenting feminine graces, my recollection of their great-grandmothers enables me to maintain that no deformity of costume can wholly disguise them.

Our marriage only waited on the completion of the house which I was building for our occupancy in one of the most desirable parts of the city, that is to say, a part chiefly inhabited by the rich. For it must be understood that the comparative desirability of different parts of Boston for residence depended then, not on natural features, but on the character of the neighboring population. Each class or nation lived by itself, in quarters of its own. A rich man living among the poor, an educated man among the uneducated, was like one living in isolation among a jealous and alien race. When the house had been begun, its completion by the winter of 1886 had been expected. The spring of the following year found it, however, yet incomplete, and my marriage still a thing of the future. The cause of a delay calculated to be particularly exasperating to an ardent lover was a series of strikes, that is to say, concerted refusals to work on the part of the brick-layers, masons, carpenters, painters, plumbers, and other trades concerned in house building. What the specific causes of these strikes were I do not remember. Strikes had become so common at that period that people had ceased to inquire into their particular grounds. In one department of industry or another, they had been nearly incessant ever since the great business crisis of 1873. In fact it had come to be the exceptional thing to see any class of laborers pursue their avocation steadily for more than a few months at a time.

The reader who observes the dates alluded to will of course recognize in these disturbances of industry the first and incoherent phase of the great movement which ended in the establishment of the modern industrial system with all its social consequences. This is all so plain in the retrospect that a child can understand it, but not being prophets, we of that day had no clear idea what was happening to us. What we did see was that industrially the country was in a very queer way. The relation between the workingman and the employer, between labor and capital, appeared in some unaccountable manner to have become dislocated. The working classes had quite suddenly and very generally become infected with a profound discontent with their condition, and an idea that it could be greatly bettered if they only knew how to go about it. On every side, with one accord, they preferred demands for higher pay, shorter hours, better dwellings, better educational advantages, and a share in the refinements and luxuries of life, demands which it was impossible to see the way to granting unless the world were to become a great deal richer than it then was. Though they knew something of what they wanted, they knew nothing of how to accomplish it, and the eager enthusiasm with which they thronged about any one who seemed likely to give them any light on the subject lent sudden reputation to many would-be leaders, some of whom had little enough light to give. However chimerical the aspirations of the laboring classes might be deemed, the devotion with which they supported one another in the strikes, which were their chief weapon, and the sacrifices which they underwent to carry them out left no doubt of their dead earnestness.

As to the final outcome of the labor troubles, which was the phrase by which the movement I have described was most commonly referred to, the opinions of the people of my class differed according to individual temperament. The sanguine argued very forcibly that it was in the very nature of things impossible that the new hopes of the workingmen could be satisfied, simply because the world had not the wherewithal to satisfy them. It was only because the masses worked very hard and lived on short commons that the race did not starve outright, and no considerable improvement in their condition was possible while the world, as a whole, remained so poor. It was not the capitalists whom the laboring men were contending with, these maintained, but the iron-bound environment of humanity, and it was merely a question of the thickness of their skulls when they would discover the fact and make up their minds to endure what they could not cure.

The less sanguine admitted all this. Of course the workingmen’s aspirations were impossible of fulfillment for natural reasons, but there were grounds to fear that they would not discover this fact until they had made a sad mess of society. They had the votes and the power to do so if they pleased, and their leaders meant they should. Some of these desponding observers went so far as to predict an impending social cataclysm. Humanity, they argued, having climbed to the top round of the ladder of civilization, was about to take a header into chaos, after which it would doubtless pick itself up, turn round, and begin to climb again. Repeated experiences of this sort in historic and prehistoric times possibly accounted for the puzzling bumps on the human cranium. Human history, like all great movements, was cyclical, and returned to the point of beginning. The idea of indefinite progress in a
right line was a chimera of the imagination, with no analogue in nature. The parabola of a comet was perhaps a yet better illustration of the career of humanity. Tending upward and sunward from the aphelion of barbarism, the race attained the perihelion of civilization only to plunge downward once more to its nether goal in the regions of chaos.

This, of course, was an extreme opinion, but I remember serious men among my acquaintances who, in discussing the signs of the times, adopted a very similar tone. It was no doubt the common opinion of thoughtful men that society was approaching a critical period which might result in great changes. The labor troubles, their causes, course, and cure, took lead of all other topics in the public prints, and in serious conversation.

The nervous tension of the public mind could not have been more strikingly illustrated than it was by the alarm resulting from the talk of a small band of men who called themselves anarchists, and proposed to terrify the American people into adopting their ideas by threats of violence, as if a mighty nation which had but just put down a rebellion of half its own numbers, in order to maintain its political system, were likely to adopt a new social system out of fear.

As one of the wealthy, with a large stake in the existing order of things, I naturally shared the apprehensions of my class. The particular grievance I had against the working classes at the time of which I write, on account of the effect of their strikes in postponing my wedded bliss, no doubt lent a special animosity to my feeling toward them.

Chapter 2

The thirtieth day of May, 1887, fell on a Monday. It was one of the annual holidays of the nation in the latter third of the nineteenth century, being set apart under the name of Decoration Day, for doing honor to the memory of the soldiers of the North who took part in the war for the preservation of the union of the States. The survivors of the war, escorted by military and civic processions and bands of music, were wont on this occasion to visit the cemeteries and lay wreaths of flowers upon the graves of their dead comrades, the ceremony being a very solemn and touching one. The eldest brother of Edith Bartlett had fallen in the war, and on Decoration Day the family was in the habit of making a visit to Mount Auburn, where he lay.

I had asked permission to make one of the party, and, on our return to the city at nightfall, remained to dine with the family of my betrothed. In the drawing-room, after dinner, I picked up an evening paper and read of a fresh strike in the building trades, which would probably still further delay the completion of my unlucky house. I remember distinctly how exasperated I was at this, and the objuries, as forcible as the presence of the ladies permitted, which I lavished upon workmen in general, and these strikers in particular. I had abundant sympathy from those about me, and the remarks made in the desultory conversation which followed, upon the unprincipled conduct of the labor agitators, were calculated to make those gentlemen’s ears tingle. It was agreed that affairs were going from bad to worse very fast, and that there was no telling what we should come to soon. “The worst of it,” I remember Mrs. Bartlett’s saying, “is that the working classes all over the world seem to be going crazy at once. In Europe it is far worse even than here. I’m sure I should not dare to live there at all. I asked Mr. Bartlett the other day where we should emigrate to if all the terrible things took place which those socialists threaten. He said he did not know any place now where society could be called stable except Greenland, Patagonia, and the Chinese Empire.” “Those Chinamen knew what they were about,” somebody added, “when they refused to let in our western civilization. They knew what it would lead to better than we did. They saw it was nothing but dynamite in disguise.”

After this, I remember drawing Edith apart and trying to persuade her that it would be better to be married at once without waiting for the completion of the house, spending the time in travel till our home was ready for us. She was remarkably handsome that evening, the mourning costume that she wore in recognition of the day setting off to great advantage the purity of her complexion. I can see her even now with my mind’s eye just as she looked that night. When I took my leave she followed me into the hall and I kissed her good-by as usual. There was no circumstance out of the common to distinguish this parting from previous occasions when we had bade each other good-by for a night or a day. There was absolutely no premonition in my mind, or I am sure in hers, that this was more than an ordinary separation.

Ah, well!

The hour at which I had left my betrothed was a rather early one for a lover, but the fact was no reflection on my devotion. I was a confirmed sufferer from insomnia, and although otherwise perfectly well had been completely fagged out that day, from having slept scarcely at all the two previous nights. Edith knew this and had insisted on sending me home by nine o’clock, with strict orders to go to bed at once.
The house in which I lived had been occupied by three generations of the family of which I was the only living representative in the direct line. It was a large, ancient wooden mansion, very elegant in an old-fashioned way within, but situated in a quarter that had long since become undesirable for residence, from its invasion by tenement houses and manufactories. It was not a house to which I could think of bringing a bride, much less so dainty a one as Edith Bartlett. I had advertised it for sale, and meanwhile merely used it for sleeping purposes, dining at my club. One servant, a faithful colored man by the name of Sawyer, lived with me and attended to my few wants. One feature of the house I expected to miss greatly when I should leave it, and this was the sleeping chamber which I had built under the foundations. I could not have slept in the city at all, with its never ceasing nightly noises, if I had been obliged to use an upstairs chamber. But to this subterranean room no murmur from the upper world ever penetrated. When I had entered it and closed the door, I was surrounded by the silence of the tomb. In order to prevent the dampness of the subsoil from penetrating the chamber, the walls had been laid in hydraulic cement and were very thick, and the floor was likewise protected. In order that the room might serve also as a vault equally proof against violence and flames, for the storage of valuables, I had roofed it with stone slabs hermetically sealed, and the outer door was of iron with a thick coating of asbestos. A small pipe, communicating with a wind-mill on the top of the house, insured the renewal of air.

It might seem that the tenant of such a chamber ought to be able to command slumber, but it was rare that I slept well, even there, two nights in succession. So accustomed was I to wakefulness that I minded little the loss of one night’s rest. A second night, however, spent in my reading chair instead of my bed, tired me out, and I never allowed myself to go longer than that without slumber, from fear of nervous disorder. From this statement it will be inferred that I had at my command some artificial means for inducing sleep in the last resort, and so in fact I had. If after two sleepless nights I found myself on the approach of the third without sensations of drowsiness, I called in Dr. Pillsbury.

He was a doctor by courtesy only, what was called in those days an “irregular” or “quack” doctor. He called himself a “Professor of Animal Magnetism.” I had come across him in the course of some amateur investigations into the phenomena of animal magnetism. I don’t think he knew anything about medicine, but he was certainly a remarkable mesmerist. It was for the purpose of being put to sleep by his manipulations that I used to send for him when I found a third night of sleeplessness impending. Let my nervous excitement or mental preoccupation be however great, Dr. Pillsbury never failed, after a short time, to leave me in a deep slumber, which continued till I was aroused by a reversal of the mesmerizing process. The process for awaking the sleeper was much simpler than that for putting him to sleep, and for convenience I had made Dr Pillsbury teach Sawyer how to do it.

My faithful servant alone knew for what purpose Dr. Pillsbury visited me, or that he did so at all. Of course, when Edith became my wife I should have to tell her my secrets. I had not hitherto told her this, because there was unquestionably a slight risk in the mesmeric sleep, and I knew she would set her face against my practice. The risk, of course, was that it might become too profound and pass into a trance beyond the mesmerizer’s power to break, ending in death. Repeated experiments had fully convinced me that the risk was next to nothing if reasonable precautions were exercised, and of this I hoped, though doubtfully, to convince Edith. I went directly home after leaving her, and at once sent Sawyer to fetch Dr. Pillsbury. Meanwhile I sought my subterranean sleeping chamber, and exchanging my costume for a comfortable dressing-gown, sat down to read the letters by the evening mail which Sawyer had laid on my reading table.

One of them was from the builder of my new house, and confirmed what I had inferred from the newspaper item. The new strikes, he said, had postponed indefinitely the completion of the contract, as neither masters nor workmen would concede the point at issue without a long struggle. Caligula wished that the Roman people had but one neck that he might cut it off, and as I read this letter I am afraid that for a moment I was capable of wishing the same thing concerning the laboring classes of America. The return of Sawyer with the doctor interrupted my gloomy meditations.

It appeared that he had with difficulty been able to secure his services, as he was preparing to leave the city that very night. The doctor explained that since he had seen me last he had learned of a fine professional opening in a distant city, and decided to take prompt advantage of it. On my asking, in some panic, what I was to do for some one to put me to sleep, he gave me the names of several mesmerizers in Boston who, he averred, had quite as great powers as he.

Somewhat relieved on this point, I instructed Sawyer to rouse me at nine o’clock next morning, and, lying down on the bed in my dressing-gown, assumed a comfortable attitude, and surrendered myself to the manipulations of the mesmerizer. Owing, perhaps, to my unusually nervous state, I was slower than common in losing consciousness, but at length a delicious drowsiness stole over me.
Chapter 3

“He is going to open his eyes. He had better see but one of us at first."

“Promise me, then, that you will not tell him.”

The first voice was a man’s, the second a woman’s, and both spoke in whispers.

“I will see how he seems,” replied the man.

“No, no, promise me,” persisted the other.

“Let her have her way,” whispered a third voice, also a woman.

“Well, well, I promise, then,” answered the man. “Quick, go! He is coming out of it.”

There was a rustle of garments and I opened my eyes. A fine looking man of perhaps sixty was bending over me, an expression of much benevolence mingled with great curiosity upon his features. He was an utter stranger. I raised myself on an elbow and looked around. The room was empty. I certainly had never been in it before, or one furnished like it. I looked back at my companion. He smiled.

“How do you feel?” he inquired.

“Where am I?” I demanded.

“You are in my house,” was the reply.

“How came I here?”

“We will talk about that when you are stronger. Meanwhile, I beg you will feel no anxiety. You are among friends and in good hands. How do you feel?”

“A bit queerly,” I replied, “but I am well, I suppose. Will you tell me how I came to be indebted to your hospitality? What has happened to me? How came I here? It was in my own house that I went to sleep.”

“There will be time enough for explanations later,” my unknown host replied, with a reassuring smile. “It will be better to avoid agitating talk until you are a little more yourself. Will you oblige me by taking a couple of swallows of this mixture? It will do you good. I am a physician.”

I repelled the glass with my hand and sat up on the couch, although with an effort, for my head was strangely light.

“I insist upon knowing at once where I am and what you have been doing with me,” I said.

“My dear sir,” responded my companion, “let me beg that you will not agitate yourself. I would rather you did not insist upon explanations so soon, but if you do, I will try to satisfy you, provided you will first take this draught, which will strengthen you somewhat.”

I thereupon drank what he offered me. Then he said, “It is not so simple a matter as you evidently suppose to tell you how you came here. You can tell me quite as much on that point as I can tell you. You have just been roused from a deep sleep, or, more properly, trance. So much I can tell you. You say you were in your own house when you fell into that sleep. May I ask you when that was?”

“When?” I replied, “when? Why, last evening, of course, at about ten o’clock. I left my man Sawyer orders to call me at nine o’clock. What has become of Sawyer?”

“I can’t precisely tell you that,” replied my companion, regarding me with a curious expression, “but I am sure that he is excusable for not being here. And now can you tell me a little more explicitly when it was that you fell into that sleep, the date, I mean?”

“Why, last night, of course; I said so, didn’t I? that is, unless I have overslept an entire day. Great heavens! that cannot be possible; and yet I have an odd sensation of having slept a long time. It was Decoration Day that I went to sleep.”
“Decoration Day?”

“Yes, Monday, the 30th.”

“Pardon me, the 30th of what?”

“Why, of this month, of course, unless I have slept into June, but that can’t be.”

“This month is September.”

“September! You don’t mean that I’ve slept since May! God in heaven! Why, it is incredible.”

“We shall see,” replied my companion; “you say that it was May 30th when you went to sleep?”

“Yes.”

“May I ask of what year?”

I stared blankly at him, incapable of speech, for some moments.

“Of what year?” I feebly echoed at last.

“Yes, of what year, if you please? After you have told me that I shall be able to tell you how long you have slept.”

“It was the year 1887,” I said.

My companion insisted that I should take another draught from the glass, and felt my pulse.

“My dear sir,” he said, “your manner indicates that you are a man of culture, which I am aware was by no means the matter of course in your day it now is. No doubt, then, you have yourself made the observation that nothing in this world can be truly said to be more wonderful than anything else. The causes of all phenomena are equally adequate, and the results equally matters of course. That you should be startled by what I shall tell you is to be expected; but I am confident that you will not permit it to affect your equanimity unduly. Your appearance is that of a young man of barely thirty, and your bodily condition seems not greatly different from that of one just roused from a somewhat too long and profound sleep, and yet this is the tenth day of September in the year 2000, and you have slept exactly one hundred and thirteen years, three months, and eleven days.”

Feeling partially dazed, I drank a cup of some sort of broth at my companion’s suggestion, and, immediately afterward becoming very drowsy, went off into a deep sleep.

When I awoke it was broad daylight in the room, which had been lighted artificially when I was awake before. My mysterious host was sitting near. He was not looking at me when I opened my eyes, and I had a good opportunity to study him and meditate upon my extraordinary situation, before he observed that I was awake. My giddiness was all gone, and my mind perfectly clear. The story that I had been asleep one hundred and thirteen years, which, in my former weak and bewildered condition, I had accepted without question, recurred to me now only to be rejected as a preposterous attempt at an imposture, the motive of which it was impossible remotely to surmise.

Something extraordinary had certainly happened to account for my waking up in this strange house with this unknown companion, but my fancy was utterly impotent to suggest more than the wildest guess as to what that something might have been. Could it be that I was the victim of some sort of conspiracy? It looked so, certainly; and yet, if human lineaments ever gave true evidence, it was certain that this man by my side, with a face so refined and ingenuous, was no party to any scheme of crime or outrage. Then it occurred to me to question if I might not be the butt of some elaborate practical joke on the part of friends who had somehow learned the secret of my underground chamber and taken this means of impressing me with the peril of mesmeric experiments. There were great difficulties in the way of this theory; Sawyer would never have betrayed me, nor had I any friends at all likely to undertake such an enterprise; nevertheless the supposition that I was the victim of a practical joke seemed on the whole the only tenable. Half expecting to catch a glimpse of some familiar face grinning from behind a chair or curtain, I looked carefully about the room. When my eyes next rested on my companion, he was looking at me.

“You have had a fine nap of twelve hours,” he said briskly, “and I can see that it has done you good. You look much better. Your color is good and your eyes are bright. How do you feel?”

“I never felt better,” I said, sitting up.
“You remember your first waking, no doubt,” he pursued, “and your surprise when I told you how long you had been asleep?”

“You said, I believe, that I had slept one hundred and thirteen years.”

“Exactly.”

“You will admit,” I said, with an ironical smile, “that the story was rather an improbable one.”

“Extraordinary, I admit,” he responded, “but given the proper conditions, not improbable nor inconsistent with what we know of the trance state. When complete, as in your case, the vital functions are absolutely suspended, and there is no waste of the tissues. No limit can be set to the possible duration of a trance when the external conditions protect the body from physical injury. This trance of yours is indeed the longest of which there is any positive record, but there is no known reason wherefore, had you not been discovered and had the chamber in which we found you continued intact, you might not have remained in a state of suspended animation till, at the end of indefinite ages, the gradual refrigeration of the earth had destroyed the bodily tissues and set the spirit free.”

I had to admit that, if I were indeed the victim of a practical joke, its authors had chosen an admirable agent for carrying out their imposition. The impressive and even eloquent manner of this man would have lent dignity to an argument that the moon was made of cheese. The smile with which I had regarded him as he advanced his trance hypothesis did not appear to confuse him in the slightest degree.

“Perhaps,” I said, “you will go on and favor me with some particulars as to the circumstances under which you discovered this chamber of which you speak, and its contents. I enjoy good fiction.”

“In this case,” was the grave reply, “no fiction could be so strange as the truth. You must know that these many years I have been cherishing the idea of building a laboratory in the large garden beside this house, for the purpose of chemical experiments for which I have a taste. Last Thursday the excavation for the cellar was at last begun. It was completed by that night, and Friday the masons were to have come. Thursday night we had a tremendous deluge of rain, and Friday morning I found my cellar a frog-pond and the walls quite washed down. My daughter, who had come out to view the disaster with me, called my attention to a corner of masonry laid bare by the crumbling away of one of the walls. I cleared a little earth from it, and, finding that it seemed part of a large mass, determined to investigate it. The workmen I sent for unearthed an oblong vault some eight feet below the surface, and set in the corner of what had evidently been the foundation walls of an ancient house. A layer of ashes and charcoal on the top of the vault showed that the house above had perished by fire. The vault itself was perfectly intact, the cement being as good as when first applied. It had a door, but this we could not force, and found entrance by removing one of the flagstones which formed the roof. The air which came up was stagnant but pure, dry and not cold. Descending with a lantern, I found myself in an apartment fitted up as a bedroom in the style of the nineteenth century. On the bed lay a young man. That he was dead and must have been dead a century was of course to be taken for granted; but the extraordinary state of preservation of the body struck me and the medical colleagues whom I had summoned with amazement. That the art of such embalming as this had ever been known we should not have believed, yet here seemed conclusive testimony that our immediate ancestors had possessed it. My medical colleagues, whose curiosity was highly excited, were at once for undertaking experiments to test the nature of the process employed, but I withheld them. My motive in so doing, at least the only motive I now need speak of, was the recollection of something I once had read about the extent to which your contemporaries had cultivated the subject of animal magnetism. It had occurred to me as just conceivable that you might be in a trance, and that the secret of your bodily integrity after so long a time was not the craft of an embalmer, but life. So extremely fanciful did this idea seem, even to me, that I did not risk the ridicule of my fellow physicians by mentioning it, but gave some other reason for postponing their experiments. No sooner, however, had they left me, than I set on foot a systematic attempt at resuscitation, of which you know the result.”

Had its theme been yet more incredible, the circumstantiality of this narrative, as well as the impressive manner and personality of the narrator, might have staggered a listener, and I had begun to feel very strangely, when, as he closed, I chanced to catch a glimpse of my reflection in a mirror hanging on the wall of the room. I rose and went up to it. The face I saw was the face to a hair and a line and not a day older than the one I had looked at as I tied my cravat before going to Edith that Decoration Day, which, as this man would have me believe, was celebrated one hundred and thirteen years before. At this, the colossal character of the fraud which was being attempted on me, came over me afresh. Indignation mastered my mind as I realized the outrageous liberty that had been taken.

“You are probably surprised,” said my companion, “to see that, although you are a century older than when you lay down to sleep in that underground chamber, your appearance is unchanged. That should not amaze you. It is
by virtue of the total arrest of the vital functions that you have survived this great period of time. If your body could have undergone any change during your trance, it would long ago have suffered dissolution."

“Sir,” I replied, turning to him, “what your motive can be in reciting to me with a serious face this remarkable farrago, I am utterly unable to guess; but you are surely yourself too intelligent to suppose that anybody but an imbecile could be deceived by it. Spare me any more of this elaborate nonsense and once for all tell me whether you refuse to give me an intelligible account of where I am and how I came here. If so, I shall proceed to ascertain my whereabouts for myself, whoever may hinder.”

“You do not, then, believe that this is the year 2000?”

“Do you really think it necessary to ask me that?” I returned.

“Very well,” replied my extraordinary host. “Since I cannot convince you, you shall convince yourself. Are you strong enough to follow me upstairs?”

“I am as strong as I ever was,” I replied angrily, “as I may have to prove if this jest is carried much farther.”

“I beg, sir,” was my companion’s response, “that you will not allow yourself to be too fully persuaded that you are the victim of a trick, lest the reaction, when you are convinced of the truth of my statements, should be too great.”

The tone of concern, mingled with commiseration, with which he said this, and the entire absence of any sign of resentment at my hot words, strangely daunted me, and I followed him from the room with an extraordinary mixture of emotions. He led the way up two flights of stairs and then up a shorter one, which landed us upon a belvedere on the house-top. “Be pleased to look around you,” he said, as we reached the platform, “and tell me if this is the Boston of the nineteenth century.”

At my feet lay a great city. Miles of broad streets, shaded by trees and lined with fine buildings, for the most part not in continuous blocks but set in larger or smaller inclosures, stretched in every direction. Every quarter contained large open squares filled with trees, among which statues glistened and fountains flashed in the late afternoon sun. Public buildings of a colossal size and an architectural grandeur unparalleled in my day raised their stately piles on every side. Surely I had never seen this city nor one comparable to it before. Raising my eyes at last towards the horizon, I looked westward. That blue ribbon winding away to the sunset, was it not the sinuous Charles? I looked east; Boston harbor stretched before me within its headlands, not one of its green islets missing.

I knew then that I had been told the truth concerning the prodigious thing which had befallen me.

Chapter 4

I did not faint, but the effort to realize my position made me very giddy, and I remember that my companion had to give me a strong arm as he conducted me from the roof to a roomy apartment on the upper floor of the house, where he insisted on my drinking a glass or two of good wine and partaking of a light repast.

“I think you are going to be all right now,” he said cheerily. “I should not have taken so abrupt a means to convince you of your position if your course, while perfectly excusable under the circumstances, had not rather obliged me to do so. I confess,” he added laughing, “I was a little apprehensive at one time that I should undergo what I believe you used to call a knockdown in the nineteenth century, if I did not act rather promptly. I remembered that the Bostonians of your day were famous pugilists, and thought best to lose no time. I take it you are now ready to acquit me of the charge of hoaxing you.”

“If you had told me,” I replied, profoundly awed, “that a thousand years instead of a hundred had elapsed since I last looked on this city, I should now believe you.”

“Only a century has passed,” he answered, “but many a millennium in the world’s history has seen changes less extraordinary.”

“And now,” he added, extending his hand with an air of irresistible cordiality, “let me give you a hearty welcome to the Boston of the twentieth century and to this house. My name is Leete, Dr. Leete they call me.”

“My name,” I said as I shook his hand, “is Julian West.”

“I am most happy in making your acquaintance, Mr. West,” he responded. “Seeing that this house is built on the
site of your own, I hope you will find it easy to make yourself at home in it."

After my refreshment Dr. Leete offered me a bath and a change of clothing, of which I gladly availed myself.

It did not appear that any very startling revolution in men’s attire had been among the great changes my host had spoken of, for, barring a few details, my new habiliments did not puzzle me at all.

Physically, I was now myself again. But mentally, how was it with me, the reader will doubtless wonder. What were my intellectual sensations, he may wish to know, on finding myself so suddenly dropped as it were into a new world. In reply let me ask him to suppose himself suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, transported from earth, say, to Paradise or Hades. What does he fancy would be his own experience? Would his thoughts return at once to the earth he had just left, or would he, after the first shock, wellnigh forget his former life for a while, albeit to be remembered later, in the interest excited by his new surroundings? All I can say is, that if his experience were at all like mine in the transition I am describing, the latter hypothesis would prove the correct one. The impressions of amazement and curiosity which my new surroundings produced occupied my mind, after the first shock, to the exclusion of all other thoughts. For the time the memory of my former life was, as it were, in abeyance.

No sooner did I find myself physically rehabilitated through the kind offices of my host, than I became eager to return to the house-top; and presently we were comfortably established there in easy-chairs, with the city beneath and around us. After Dr. Leete had responded to numerous questions on my part, as to the ancient landmarks I missed and the new ones which had replaced them, he asked me what point of the contrast between the new and the old city struck me most forcibly.

"To speak of small things before great," I responded, "I really think that the complete absence of chimneys and their smoke is the detail that first impressed me."

"Ah!" ejaculated my companion with an air of much interest, "I had forgotten the chimneys, it is so long since they went out of use. It is nearly a century since the crude method of combustion on which you depended for heat became obsolete."

"In general," I said, "what impresses me most about the city is the material prosperity on the part of the people which its magnificence implies."

"I would give a great deal for just one glimpse of the Boston of your day," replied Dr. Leete. "No doubt, as you imply, the cities of that period were rather shabby affairs. If you had the taste to make them splendid, which I would not be so rude as to question, the general poverty resulting from your extraordinary industrial system would not have given you the means. Moreover, the excessive individualism which then prevailed was inconsistent with much public spirit. What little wealth you had seems almost wholly to have been lavished in private luxury. Nowadays, on the contrary, there is no destination of the surplus wealth so popular as the adornment of the city, which all enjoy in equal degree."

The sun had been setting as we returned to the house-top, and as we talked night descended upon the city.

"It is growing dark," said Dr. Leete. "Let us descend into the house; I want to introduce my wife and daughter to you."

His words recalled to me the feminine voices which I had heard whispering about me as I was coming back to conscious life; and, most curious to learn what the ladies of the year 2000 were like, I assented with alacrity to the proposition. The apartment in which we found the wife and daughter of my host, as well as the entire interior of the house, was filled with a mellow light, which I knew must be artificial, although I could not discover the source from which it was diffused. Mrs. Leete was an exceptionally fine looking and well preserved woman of about her husband’s age, while the daughter, who was in the first blush of womanhood, was the most beautiful girl I had ever seen. Her face was as bewitching as deep blue eyes, delicately tinted complexion, and perfect features could make it, but even had her countenance lacked special charms, the faultless luxuriance of her figure would have given her place as a beauty among the women of the nineteenth century. Feminine softness and delicacy were in this lovely creature deliciously combined with an appearance of health and abounding physical vitality too often lacking in the maidens with whom alone I could compare her. It was a coincidence trifling in comparison with the general strangeness of the situation, but still striking, that her name should be Edith.

The evening that followed was certainly unique in the history of social intercourse, but to suppose that our conversation was peculiarly strained or difficult would be a great mistake. I believe indeed that it is under what may be called unnatural, in the sense of extraordinary, circumstances that people behave most naturally, for the reason, no doubt, that such circumstances banish artificiality. I know at any rate that my intercourse that evening
with these representatives of another age and world was marked by an ingenuous sincerity and frankness such as but rarely crown long acquaintance. No doubt the exquisite tact of my entertainers had much to do with this. Of course there was nothing we could talk of but the strange experience by virtue of which I was there, but they talked of it with an interest so naive and direct in its expression as to relieve the subject to a great degree of the element of the weird and the uncanny which might so easily have been overpowering. One would have supposed that they were quite in the habit of entertaining waifs from another century, so perfect was their tact.

For my own part, never do I remember the operations of my mind to have been more alert and acute than that evening, or my intellectual sensibilities more keen. Of course I do not mean that the consciousness of my amazing situation was for a moment out of mind, but its chief effect thus far was to produce a feverish elation, a sort of mental intoxication.

Edith Leete took little part in the conversation, but when several times the magnetism of her beauty drew my glance to her face, I found her eyes fixed on me with an absorbed intensity, almost like fascination. It was evident that I had excited her interest to an extraordinary degree, as was not astonishing, supposing her to be a girl of imagination. Though I supposed curiosity was the chief motive of her interest, it could but affect me as it would not have done had she been less beautiful.

Dr. Leete, as well as the ladies, seemed greatly interested in my account of the circumstances under which I had gone to sleep in the underground chamber. All had suggestions to offer to account for my having been forgotten there, and the theory which we finally agreed on offers at least a plausible explanation, although whether it be in its details the true one, nobody, of course, will ever know. The layer of ashes found above the chamber indicated that the house had been burned down. Let it be supposed that the conflagration had taken place the night I fell asleep. It only remains to assume that Sawyer lost his life in the fire or by some accident connected with it, and the rest follows naturally enough. No one but he and Dr. Pillsbury either knew of the existence of the chamber or that I was in it, and Dr. Pillsbury, who had gone that night to New Orleans, had probably never heard of the fire at all. The conclusion of my friends, and of the public, must have been that I had perished in the flames. An excavation of the ruins, unless thorough, would not have disclosed the recess in the foundation walls connecting with my chamber. To be sure, if the site had been again built upon, at least immediately, such an excavation would have been necessary, but the troublous times and the undesirable character of the locality might well have prevented rebuilding. The size of the trees in the garden now occupying the site indicated, Dr. Leete said, that for more than half a century at least it had been open ground.

[1] In accounting for this state of mind it must be remembered that, except for the topic of our conversations, there was in my surroundings next to nothing to suggest what had befallen me. Within a block of my home in the old Boston I could have found social circles vastly more foreign to me. The speech of the Bostonians of the twentieth century differs even less from that of their cultured ancestors of the nineteenth than did that of the latter from the language of Washington and Franklin, while the differences between the style of dress and furniture of the two epochs are not more marked than I have known fashion to make in the time of one generation.

Chapter 5

When, in the course of the evening the ladies retired, leaving Dr. Leete and myself alone, he sounded me as to my disposition for sleep, saying that if I felt like it my bed was ready for me; but if I was inclined to wakefulness nothing would please him better than to bear me company. “I am a late bird, myself,” he said, “and, without suspicion of flattery, I may say that a companion more interesting than yourself could scarcely be imagined. It is decidedly not often that one has a chance to converse with a man of the nineteenth century.”

Now I had been looking forward all the evening with some dread to the time when I should be alone, on retiring for the night. Surrounded by these most friendly strangers, stimulated and supported by their sympathetic interest, I had been able to keep my mental balance. Even then, however, in pauses of the conversation I had had glimpses, vivid as lightning flashes, of the horror of strangeness that was waiting to be faced when I could no longer command diversion. I knew I could not sleep that night, and as for lying awake and thinking, it argues no cowardice, I am sure, to confess that I was afraid of it. When, in reply to my host’s question, I frankly told him this, he replied that it would be strange if I did not feel just so, but that I need have no anxiety about sleeping; whenever I wanted to go to bed, he would give me a dose which would insure me a sound night’s sleep without fail. Next morning, no doubt, I would awake with the feeling of an old citizen.
“Before I acquired that,” I replied, “I must know a little more about the sort of Boston I have come back to. You told me when we were upon the house-top that though a century only had elapsed since I fell asleep, it had been marked by greater changes in the conditions of humanity than many a previous millennium. With the city before me I could well believe that, but I am very curious to know what some of the changes have been. To make a beginning somewhere, for the subject is doubtless a large one, what solution, if any, have you found for the labor question? It was the Sphinx’s riddle of the nineteenth century, and when I dropped out the Sphinx was threatening to devour society, because the answer was not forthcoming. It is well worth sleeping a hundred years to learn what the right answer was, if, indeed, you have found it yet.”

“As no such thing as the labor question is known nowadays,” replied Dr. Leete, “and there is no way in which it could arise, I suppose we may claim to have solved it. Society would indeed have fully deserved being devoured if it had failed to answer a riddle so entirely simple. In fact, to speak by the book, it was not necessary for society to solve the riddle at all. It may be said to have solved itself. The solution came as the result of a process of industrial evolution which could not have terminated otherwise. All that society had to do was to recognize and cooperate with that evolution, when its tendency had become unmistakable.”

“I can only say,” I answered, “that at the time I fell asleep no such evolution had been recognized.”

“It was in 1887 that you fell into this sleep, I think you said.”

“Yes, May 30th, 1887.”

My companion regarded me musingly for some moments. Then he observed, “And you tell me that even then there was no general recognition of the nature of the crisis which society was nearing? Of course, I fully credit your statement. The singular blindness of your contemporaries to the signs of the times is a phenomenon commented on by many of our historians, but few facts of history are more difficult for us to realize, so obvious and unmistakable as we look back seem the indications, which must also have come under your eyes, of the transformation about to come to pass. I should be interested, Mr. West, if you would give me a little more definite idea of the view which you and men of your grade of intellect took of the state and prospects of society in 1887. You must, at least, have realized that the widespread industrial and social troubles, and the underlying dissatisfaction of all classes with the inequalities of society, and the general misery of mankind, were portents of great changes of some sort.”

“We did, indeed, fully realize that,” I replied. “We felt that society was dragging anchor and in danger of going adrift. Whither it would drift nobody could say, but all feared the rocks.”

“Nevertheless,” said Dr. Leete, “the set of the current was perfectly perceptible if you had but taken pains to observe it, and it was not toward the rocks, but toward a deeper channel.”

“We had a popular proverb,” I replied, “that ‘hindsight is better than foresight,’ the force of which I shall now, no doubt, appreciate more fully than ever. All I can say is, that the prospect was such when I went into that long sleep that I should not have been surprised had I looked down from your house-top to-day on a heap of charred and moss-grown ruins instead of this glorious city.”

Dr. Leete had listened to me with close attention and nodded thoughtfully as I finished speaking. “What you have said,” he observed, “will be regarded as a most valuable vindication of Storiot, whose account of your era has been generally thought exaggerated in its picture of the gloom and confusion of men’s minds. That a period of transition like that should be full of excitement and agitation was indeed to be looked for; but seeing how plain was the tendency of the forces in operation, it was natural to believe that hope rather than fear would have been the prevailing temper of the popular mind.”

“You have not yet told me what was the answer to the riddle which you found,” I said. “I am impatient to know by what contradiction of natural sequence the peace and prosperity which you now seem to enjoy could have been the outcome of an era like my own.”

“Excuse me,” replied my host, “but do you smoke?” It was not till our cigars were lighted and drawing well that he resumed. “Since you are in the humor to talk rather than to sleep, as I certainly am, perhaps I cannot do better than to try to give you enough idea of our modern industrial system to dissipate at least the impression that there is any mystery about the process of its evolution. The Bostonians of your day had the reputation of being great askers of questions, and I am going to show my descent by asking you one to begin with. What should you name as the most prominent feature of the labor troubles of your day?”

“Why, the strikes, of course,” I replied.
“Exactly; but what made the strikes so formidable?”

“The great labor organizations."

“And what was the motive of these great organizations?”

“The workmen claimed they had to organize to get their rights from the big corporations,” I replied.

“That is just it,” said Dr. Leete; “the organization of labor and the strikes were an effect, merely, of the concentration of capital in greater masses than had ever been known before. Before this concentration began, while as yet commerce and industry were conducted by innumerable petty concerns with small capital, instead of a small number of great concerns with vast capital, the individual workman was relatively important and independent in his relations to the employer. Moreover, when a little capital or a new idea was enough to start a man in business for himself, workingmen were constantly becoming employers and there was no hard and fast line between the two classes. Labor unions were needless then, and general strikes out of the question. But when the era of small concerns with small capital was succeeded by that of the great aggregations of capital, all this was changed. The individual laborer, who had been relatively important to the small employer, was reduced to insignificance and powerlessness over against the great corporation, while at the same time the way upward to the grade of employer was closed to him. Self-defense drove him to union with his fellows.

“The records of the period show that the outcry against the concentration of capital was furious. Men believed that it threatened society with a form of tyranny more abhorrent than it had ever endured. They believed that the great corporations were preparing for them the yoke of a baser servitude than had ever been imposed on the race, servitude not to men but to soulless machines incapable of any motive but insatiable greed. Looking back, we cannot wonder at their desperation, for certainly humanity was never confronted with a fate more sordid and hideous than would have been the era of corporate tyranny which they anticipated.

“Meanwhile, without being in the smallest degree checked by the clamor against it, the absorption of business by ever larger monopolies continued. In the United States there was not, after the beginning of the last quarter of the century, any opportunity whatever for individual enterprise in any important field of industry, unless backed by a great capital. During the last decade of the century, such small businesses as still remained were fast-failing survivals of a past epoch, or mere parasites on the great corporations, or else existed in fields too small to attract the great capitalists. Small businesses, as far as they still remained, were reduced to the condition of rats and mice, living in holes and corners, and counting on evading notice for the enjoyment of existence. The railroads had gone on combining till a few great syndicates controlled every rail in the land. In manufactories, every important staple was controlled by a syndicate. These syndicates, pools, trusts, or whatever their name, fixed prices and crushed all competition except when combinations as vast as themselves arose. Then a struggle, resulting in a still greater consolidation, ensued. The great city bazar crushed it country rivals with branch stores, and in the city itself absorbed its smaller rivals till the business of a whole quarter was concentrated under one roof, with a hundred former proprietors of shops serving as clerks. Having no business of his own to put his money in, the small capitalist, at the same time that he took service under the corporation, found no other investment for his money but its stocks and bonds, thus becoming doubly dependent upon it.

“The fact that the desperate popular opposition to the consolidation of business in a few powerful hands had no effect to check it proves that there must have been a strong economical reason for it. The small capitalists, with their innumerable petty concerns, had in fact yielded the field to the great aggregations of capital, because they belonged to a day of small things and were totally incompetent to the demands of an age of steam and telegraphs and the gigantic scale of its enterprises. To restore the former order of things, even if possible, would have involved returning to the day of stagecoaches. Oppressive and intolerable as was the regime of the great consolidations of capital, even its victims, while they cursed it, were forced to admit the prodigious increase of efficiency which had been imparted to the national industries, the vast economies effected by concentration of management and unity of organization, and to confess that since the new system had taken the place of the old the wealth of the world had increased at a rate before undreamed of. To be sure this vast increase had gone chiefly to make the rich richer, increasing the gap between them and the poor; but the fact remained that, as a means merely of producing wealth, capital had been proved efficient in proportion to its consolidation. The restoration of the old system with the subdivision of capital, if it were possible, might indeed bring back a greater equality of conditions, with more individual dignity and freedom, but it would be at the price of general poverty and the arrest of material progress.

“Was there, then, no way of commanding the services of the mighty wealth-producing principle of consolidated capital without bowing down to a plutocracy like that of Carthage? As soon as men began to ask themselves these questions, they found the answer ready for them. The movement toward the conduct of business by larger and larger aggregations of capital, the tendency toward monopolies, which had been so desperately and vainly
resisted, was recognized at last, in its true significance, as a process which only needed to complete its logical
evolution to open a golden future to humanity.

“Early in the last century the evolution was completed by the final consolidation of the entire capital of the nation.
The industry and commerce of the country, ceasing to be conducted by a set of irresponsible corporations and
syndicates of private persons at their caprice and for their profit, were intrusted to a single syndicate representing
the people, to be conducted in the common interest for the common profit. The nation, that is to say, organized as
the one great business corporation in which all other corporations were absorbed; it became the one capitalist in
the place of all other capitalists, the sole employer, the final monopoly in which all previous and lesser monopolies
were swallowed up, a monopoly in the profits and economies of which all citizens shared. The epoch of trusts had
ended in The Great Trust. In a word, the people of the United States concluded to assume the conduct of their own
business, just as one hundred odd years before they had assumed the conduct of their own government,
organizing now for industrial purposes on precisely the same grounds that they had then organized for political
purposes. At last, strangely late in the world’s history, the obvious fact was perceived that no business is so
essentially the public business as the industry and commerce on which the people’s livelihood depends, and that
to entrust it to private persons to be managed for private profit is a folly similar in kind, though vastly greater in
magnitude, to that of surrendering the functions of political government to kings and nobles to be conducted for
their personal glorification.”

“Such a stupendous change as you describe,” said I, “did not, of course, take place without great bloodshed and
terrible convulsions.”

“Oh the contrary,” replied Dr. Leete, “there was absolutely no violence. The change had been long foreseen.
Public opinion had become fully ripe for it, and the whole mass of the people was behind it. There was no more
possibility of opposing it by force than by argument. On the other hand the popular sentiment toward the great
corporations and those identified with them had ceased to be one of bitterness, as they came to realize their
necessity as a link, a transition phase, in the evolution of the true industrial system. The most violent foes of the
great private monopolies were now forced to recognize how invaluable and indispensable had been their office in
educating the people up to the point of assuming control of their own business. Fifty years before, the
consolidation of the industries of the country under national control would have seemed a very daring experiment
to the most sanguine. But by a series of object lessons, seen and studied by all men, the great corporations had
taught the people an entirely new set of ideas on this subject. They had seen for many years syndicates handling
revenues greater than those of states, and directing the labors of hundreds of thousands of men with an efficiency
and economy unattainable in smaller operations. It had come to be recognized as an axiom that the larger the
business the simpler the principles that can be applied to it; that, as the machine is truer than the hand, so the
system, which in a great concern does the work of the master’s eye in a small business, turns out more accurate
results. Thus it came about that, thanks to the corporations themselves, when it was proposed that the nation
should assume their functions, the suggestion implied nothing which seemed impracticable even to the timid. To
be sure it was a step beyond any yet taken, a broader generalization, but the very fact that the nation would be
the sole corporation in the field would, it was seen, relieve the undertaking of many difficulties with which the
partial monopolies had contended.”

Chapter 6

Dr. Leete ceased speaking, and I remained silent, endeavoring to form some general conception of the changes in
the arrangements of society implied in the tremendous revolution which he had described.

Finally I said, “The idea of such an extension of the functions of government is, to say the least, rather
overwhelming.”

“Extension!” he repeated, “where is the extension?”

“In my day,” I replied, “it was considered that the proper functions of government, strictly speaking, were limited
to keeping the peace and defending the people against the public enemy, that is, to the military and police
powers.”

“And, in heaven’s name, who are the public enemies?” exclaimed Dr. Leete. “Are they France, England, Germany,
or hunger, cold, and nakedness? In your day governments were accustomed, on the slightest international
misunderstanding, to seize upon the bodies of citizens and deliver them over by hundreds of thousands to death
and mutilation, wasting their treasures the while like water; and all this oftenest for no imaginable profit to the
victims. We have no wars now, and our governments no war powers, but in order to protect every citizen against hunger, cold, and nakedness, and provide for all his physical and mental needs, the function is assumed of directing his industry for a term of years. No, Mr. West, I am sure on reflection you will perceive that it was in your age, not in ours, that the extension of the functions of governments was extraordinary. Not even for the best ends would men now allow their governments such powers as were then used for the most maleficent."

"Leaving comparisons aside," I said, "the demagoguery and corruption of our public men would have been considered, in my day, insuperable objections to any assumption by government of the charge of the national industries. We should have thought that no arrangement could be worse than to entrust the politicians with control of the wealth-producing machinery of the country. Its material interests were quite too much the football of parties as it was."

"No doubt you were right," rejoined Dr. Leete, "but all that is changed now. We have no parties or politicians, and as for demagoguery and corruption, they are words having only an historical significance."

"Human nature itself must have changed very much," I said.

"Not at all," was Dr. Leete’s reply, "but the conditions of human life have changed, and with them the motives of human action. The organization of society with you was such that officials were under a constant temptation to misuse their power for the private profit of themselves or others. Under such circumstances it seems almost strange that you dared entrust them with any of your affairs. Nowadays, on the contrary, society is so constituted that there is absolutely no way in which an official, however ill-disposed, could possibly make any profit for himself or any one else by a misuse of his power. Let him be as bad an official as you please, he cannot be a corrupt one. There is no motive to be. The social system no longer offers a premium on dishonesty. But these are matters which you can only understand as you come, with time, to know us better."

"But you have not yet told me how you have settled the labor problem. It is the problem of capital which we have been discussing," I said. "After the nation had assumed conduct of the mills, machinery, railroads, farms, mines, and capital in general of the country, the labor question still remained. In assuming the responsibilities of capital the nation had assumed the difficulties of the capitalist’s position."

"The moment the nation assumed the responsibilities of capital those difficulties vanished," replied Dr. Leete. "The national organization of labor under one direction was the complete solution of what was, in your day and under your system, justly regarded as the insoluble labor problem. When the nation became the sole employer, all the citizens, by virtue of their citizenship, became employees, to be distributed according to the needs of industry."

"That is," I suggested, "you have simply applied the principle of universal military service, as it was understood in our day, to the labor question."

"Yes," said Dr. Leete, "that was something which followed as a matter of course as soon as the nation had become the sole capitalist. The people were already accustomed to the idea that the obligation of every citizen, not physically disabled, to contribute his military services to the defense of the nation was equal and absolute. That it was equally the duty of every citizen to contribute his quota of industrial or intellectual services to the maintenance of the nation was equally evident, though it was not until the nation became the employer of labor that citizens were able to render this sort of service with any pretense either of universality or equity. No organization of labor was possible when the employing power was divided among hundreds or thousands of individuals and corporations, between which concert of any kind was neither desired, nor indeed feasible. It constantly happened then that vast numbers who desired to labor could find no opportunity, and on the other hand, those who desired to evade a part or all of their debt could easily do so."

"Service, now, I suppose, is compulsory upon all," I suggested.

"It is rather a matter of course than of compulsion," replied Dr. Leete. "It is regarded as so absolutely natural and reasonable that the idea of its being compulsory has ceased to be thought of. He would be thought to be an incredibly contemptible person who should need compulsion in such a case. Nevertheless, to speak of service being compulsory would be a weak way to state its absolute inevitableness. Our entire social order is so wholly based upon and deduced from it that if it were conceivable that a man could escape it, he would be left with no possible way to provide for his existence. He would have excluded himself from the world, cut himself off from his kind, in a word, committed suicide."

"Is the term of service in this industrial army for life?"
“Oh, no; it both begins later and ends earlier than the average working period in your day. Your workshops were filled with children and old men, but we hold the period of youth sacred to education, and the period of maturity, when the physical forces begin to flag, equally sacred to ease and agreeable relaxation. The period of industrial service is twenty-four years, beginning at the close of the course of education at twenty-one and terminating at forty-five. After forty-five, while discharged from labor, the citizen still remains liable to special calls, in case of emergencies causing a sudden great increase in the demand for labor, till he reaches the age of fifty-five, but such calls are rarely, in fact almost never, made. The fifteenth day of October of every year is what we call Muster Day, because those who have reached the age of twenty-one are then mustered into the industrial service, and at the same time those who, after twenty-four years’ service, have reached the age of forty-five, are honorably mustered out. It is the great day of the year with us, whence we reckon all other events, our Olympiad, save that it is annual.”

Chapter 7

“It is after you have mustered your industrial army into service,” I said, “that I should expect the chief difficulty to arise, for there its analogy with a military army must cease. Soldiers have all the same thing, and a very simple thing, to do, namely, to practice the manual of arms, to march and stand guard. But the industrial army must learn and follow two or three hundred diverse trades and avocations. What administrative talent can be equal to determining wisely what trade or business every individual in a great nation shall pursue?”

“The administration has nothing to do with determining that point.”

“Who does determine it, then?” I asked.

“Every man for himself in accordance with his natural aptitude, the utmost pains being taken to enable him to find out what his natural aptitude really is. The principle on which our industrial army is organized is that a man’s natural endowments, mental and physical, determine what he can work at most profitably to the nation and most satisfactorily to himself. While the obligation of service in some form is not to be evaded, voluntary election, subject only to necessary regulation, is depended on to determine the particular sort of service every man is to render. As an individual’s satisfaction during his term of service depends on his having an occupation to his taste, parents and teachers watch from early years for indications of special aptitudes in children. A thorough study of the National industrial system, with the history and rudiments of all the great trades, is an essential part of our educational system. While manual training is not allowed to encroach on the general intellectual culture to which our schools are devoted, it is carried far enough to give our youth, in addition to their theoretical knowledge of the national industries, mechanical and agricultural, a certain familiarity with their tools and methods. Our schools are constantly visiting our workshops, and often are taken on long excursions to inspect particular industrial enterprises. In your day a man was not ashamed to be grossly ignorant of all trades except his own, but such ignorance would not be consistent with our idea of placing every one in a position to select intelligently the occupation for which he has most taste. Usually long before he is mustered into service a young man has found out the pursuit he wants to follow, has acquired a great deal of knowledge about it, and is waiting impatiently the time when he can enlist in its ranks.”

“Surely,” I said, “it can hardly be that the number of volunteers for any trade is exactly the number needed in that trade. It must be generally either under or over the demand.”

“The supply of volunteers is always expected to fully equal the demand,” replied Dr. Leete. “It is the business of the administration to see that this is the case. The rate of volunteering for each trade is closely watched. If there be a noticeably greater excess of volunteers over men needed in any trade, it is inferred that the trade offers greater attractions than others. On the other hand, if the number of volunteers for a trade tends to drop below the demand, it is inferred that it is thought more arduous. It is the business of the administration to seek constantly to equalize the attractions of the trades, so far as the conditions of labor in them are concerned, so that all trades shall be equally attractive to persons having natural tastes for them. This is done by making the hours of labor in different trades to differ according to their arduousness. The lighter trades, prosecuted under the most agreeable circumstances, have in this way the longest hours, while an arduous trade, such as mining, has very short hours. There is no theory, no a priori rule, by which the respective attractiveness of industries is determined. The administration, in taking burdens off one class of workers and adding them to other classes, simply follows the fluctuations of opinion among the workers themselves as indicated by the rate of volunteering. The principle is that no man’s work ought to be, on the whole, harder for him than any other man’s for him, the workers themselves to be the judges. There are no limits to the application of this rule. If any particular occupation is in itself so arduous or so oppressive that, in order to induce volunteers, the day’s work in it had to be reduced to ten
minutes, it would be done. If, even then, no man was willing to do it, it would remain undone. But of course, in point of fact, a moderate reduction in the hours of labor, or addition of other privileges, suffices to secure all needed volunteers for any occupation necessary to men. If, indeed, the unavoidable difficulties and dangers of such a necessary pursuit were so great that no inducement of compensating advantages would overcome men’s repugnance to it, the administration would only need to take it out of the common order of occupations by declaring it ‘extra hazardous,’ and those who pursued it especially worthy of the national gratitude, to be overrun with volunteers. Our young men are very greedy of honor, and do not let slip such opportunities. Of course you will see that dependence on the purely voluntary choice of avocations involves the abolition in all of anything like unhygienic conditions or special peril to life and limb. Health and safety are conditions common to all industries. The nation does not maim and slaughter its workmen by thousands, as did the private capitalists and corporations of your day.”

“When there are more who want to enter a particular trade than there is room for, how do you decide between the applicants?” I inquired.

“Preference is given to those who have acquired the most knowledge of the trade they wish to follow. No man, however, who through successive years remains persistent in his desire to show what he can do at any particular trade, is in the end denied an opportunity. Meanwhile, if a man cannot at first win entrance into the business he prefers, he has usually one or more alternative preferences, pursuits for which he has some degree of aptitude, although not the highest. Every one, indeed, is expected to study his aptitudes so as to have not only a first choice as to occupation, but a second or third, so that if, either at the outset of his career or subsequently, owing to the progress of invention or changes in demand, he is unable to follow his first vocation, he can still find reasonably congenial employment. This principle of secondary choices as to occupation is quite important in our system. I should add, in reference to the counter-possibility of some sudden failure of volunteers in a particular trade, or some sudden necessity of an increased force, that the administration, while depending on the voluntary system for filling up the trades as a rule, holds always in reserve the power to call for special volunteers, or draft any force needed from any quarter. Generally, however, all needs of this sort can be met by details from the class of unskilled or common laborers.”

“How is this class of common laborers recruited?” I asked. “Surely nobody voluntarily enters that.”

“It is the grade to which all new recruits belong for the first three years of their service. It is not till after this period, during which he is assignable to any work at the discretion of his superiors, that the young man is allowed to elect a special avocation. These three years of stringent discipline none are exempt from, and very glad our young men are to pass from this severe school into the comparative liberty of the trades. If a man were so stupid as to have no choice as to occupation, he would simply remain a common laborer; but such cases, as you may suppose, are not common.”

“Having once elected and entered on a trade or occupation,” I remarked, “I suppose he has to stick to it the rest of his life.”

“Not necessarily,” replied Dr. Leete; “while frequent and merely capricious changes of occupation are not encouraged or even permitted, every worker is allowed, of course, under certain regulations and in accordance with the exigencies of the service, to volunteer for another industry which he thinks would suit him better than his first choice. In this case his application is received just as if he were volunteering for the first time, and on the same terms. Not only this, but a worker may likewise, under suitable regulations and not too frequently, obtain a transfer to an establishment of the same industry in another part of the country which for any reason he may prefer. Under your system a discontented man could indeed leave his work at will, but he left his means of support at the same time, and took his chances as to future livelihood. We find that the number of men who wish to abandon an accustomed occupation for a new one, and old friends and associations for strange ones, is small. It is only the poorer sort of workmen who desire to change even as frequently as our regulations permit. Of course transfers or discharges, when health demands them, are always given.”

“As an industrial system, I should think this might be extremely efficient,” I said, “but I don’t see that it makes any provision for the professional classes, the men who serve the nation with brains instead of hands. Of course you can’t get along without the brain-workers. How, then, are they selected from those who are to serve as farmers and mechanics? That must require a very delicate sort of sifting process, I should say.”

“So it does,” replied Dr. Leete; “the most delicate possible test is needed here, and so we leave the question whether a man shall be a brain or hand worker entirely to him to settle. At the end of the term of three years as a common laborer, which every man must serve, it is for him to choose, in accordance to his natural tastes, whether he will fit himself for an art or profession, or be a farmer or mechanic. If he feels that he can do better work with his brains than his muscles, he finds every facility provided for testing the reality of his supposed bent, of
cultivating it, and if fit of pursuing it as his avocation. The schools of technology, of medicine, of art, of music, of histrionics, and of higher liberal learning are always open to aspirants without condition."

"Are not the schools flooded with young men whose only motive is to avoid work?"

Dr. Leete smiled a little grimly.

"No one is at all likely to enter the professional schools for the purpose of avoiding work, I assure you," he said. "They are intended for those with special aptitude for the branches they teach, and any one without it would find it easier to do double hours at his trade than try to keep up with the classes. Of course many honestly mistake their vocation, and, finding themselves unequal to the requirements of the schools, drop out and return to the industrial service; no discredit attaches to such persons, for the public policy is to encourage all to develop suspected talents which only actual tests can prove the reality of. The professional and scientific schools of your day depended on the patronage of their pupils for support, and the practice appears to have been common of giving diplomas to unfit persons, who afterwards found their way into the professions. Our schools are national institutions, and to have passed their tests is a proof of special abilities not to be questioned.

"This opportunity for a professional training," the doctor continued, "remains open to every man till the age of thirty is reached, after which students are not received, as there would remain too brief a period before the age of discharge in which to serve the nation in their professions. In your day young men had to choose their professions very young, and therefore, in a large proportion of instances, wholly mistook their vocations. It is recognized nowadays that the natural aptitudes of some are later than those of others in developing, and therefore, while the choice of profession may be made as early as twenty-four, it remains open for six years longer."

A question which had a dozen times before been on my lips now found utterance, a question which touched upon what, in my time, had been regarded the most vital difficulty in the way of any final settlement of the industrial problem. "It is an extraordinary thing," I said, "that you should not yet have said a word about the method of adjusting wages. Since the nation is the sole employer, the government must fix the rate of wages and determine just how much everybody shall earn, from the doctors to the diggers. All I can say is, that this plan would never have worked with us, and I don’t see how it can now unless human nature has changed. In my day, nobody was satisfied with his wages or salary. Even if he felt he received enough, he was sure his neighbor had too much, which was as bad. If the universal discontent on this subject, instead of being dissipated in curses and strikes directed against innumerable employers, could have been concentrated upon one, and that the government, the strongest ever devised would not have seen two pay days."

Dr. Leete laughed heartily.

"Very true, very true," he said, "a general strike would most probably have followed the first pay day, and a strike directed against a government is a revolution."

"How, then, do you avoid a revolution every pay day?" if demanded. "Has some prodigious philosopher devised a new system of calculus satisfactory to all for determining the exact and comparative value of all sorts of service, whether by brawn or brain, by hand or voice, by ear or eye? Or has human nature itself changed, so that no man looks upon his own things but ‘every man on the things of his neighbor’? One or the other of these events must be the explanation."

"Neither one nor the other, however, is," was my host’s laughing response. "And now, Mr. West," he continued, "you must remember that you are my patient as well as my guest, and permit me to prescribe sleep for you before we have any more conversation. It is after three o’clock."

"The prescription is, no doubt, a wise one," I said; "I only hope it can be filled."

"I will see to that," the doctor replied, and he did, for he gave me a wineglass of something or other which sent me to sleep as soon as my head touched the pillow.

Chapter 8

When I awoke I felt greatly refreshed, and lay a considerable time in a dozing state, enjoying the sensation of bodily comfort. The experiences of the day previous, my waking to find myself in the year 2000, the sight of the new Boston, my host and his family, and the wonderful things I had heard, were a blank in my memory. I thought I
was in my bed-chamber at home, and the half-dreaming, half-waking fancies which passed before my mind related to the incidents and experiences of my former life. Dreamily I reviewed the incidents of Decoration Day, my trip in company with Edith and her parents to Mount Auburn, and my dining with them on our return to the city. I recalled how extremely well Edith had looked, and from that fell to thinking of our marriage; but scarcely had my imagination begun to develop this delightful theme than my waking dream was cut short by the recollection of the letter I had received the night before from the builder announcing that the new strikes might postpone indefinitely the completion of the new house. The chagrin which this recollection brought with it effectually roused me. I remembered that I had an appointment with the builder at eleven o'clock, to discuss the strike, and opening my eyes, looked up at the clock at the foot of my bed to see what time it was. But no clock met my glance, and what was more, I instantly perceived that I was not in my room. Starting up on my couch, I stared wildly round the strange apartment.

I think it must have been many seconds that I sat up thus in bed staring about, without being able to regain the clew to my personal identity. I was no more able to distinguish myself from pure being during those moments than we may suppose a soul in the rough to be before it has received the ear-marks, the individualizing touches which make it a person. Strange that the sense of this inability should be such anguish! but so we are constituted. There are no words for the mental torture I endured during this helpless, eyeless groping for myself in a boundless void. No other experience of the mind gives probably anything like the sense of absolute intellectual arrest from the loss of a mental fulcrum, a starting point of thought, which comes during such a momentary obscuration of the sense of one's identity. I trust I may never know what it is again.

I do not know how long this condition had lasted—it seemed an interminable time—when, like a flash, the recollection of everything came back to me. I remembered who and where I was, and how I had come here, and that these scenes as of the life of yesterday which had been passing before my mind concerned a generation long, long ago mouldered to dust. Leaping from bed, I stood in the middle of the room clasping my temples with all my might between my hands to keep them from bursting. Then I fell prone on the couch, and, burying my face in the pillow, lay without motion. The reaction which was inevitable, from the mental elation, the fever of the intellect that had been the first effect of my tremendous experience, had arrived. The emotional crisis which had awaited the full realization of my actual position, and all that it implied, was upon me, and with set teeth and laboring chest, gripping the bedstead with frenzied strength, I lay there and fought for my sanity. In my mind, all had broken loose, habits of feeling, associations of thought, ideas of persons and things, all had dissolved and lost coherence and were seething together in apparently irretrievable chaos. There were no rallying points, nothing was left stable. There only remained the will, and was any human will strong enough to say to such a waltering sea, "Peace, be still"? I dared not think. Every effort to reason upon what had befallen me, and realize what it implied, set up an intolerable swimming of the brain. The idea that I was two persons, that my identity was double, began to fascinate me with its simple solution of my experience.

I knew that I was on the verge of losing my mental balance. If I lay there thinking, I was doomed. Diversion of some sort I must have, at least the diversion of physical exertion. I sprang up, and, hastily dressing, opened the door of my room and went down-stairs. The hour was very early, it being not yet fairly light, and I found no one in the lower part of the house. There was a hat in the hall, and, opening the front door, which was fastened with a slightness indicating that burglary was not among the perils of the modern Boston, I found myself on the street. For two hours I walked or ran through the streets of the city, visiting most quarters of the peninsular part of the town. None but an antiquarian who knows something of the contrast which the Boston of today offers to the Boston of the nineteenth century can begin to appreciate what a series of bewildering surprises I underwent during that time. Viewed from the house-top the day before, the city had indeed appeared strange to me, but that was only in its general aspect. How complete the change had been I first realized now that I walked the streets. The few old landmarks which still remained only intensified this effect, for without them I might have imagined myself in a foreign town. A man may leave his native city in childhood, and return fifty years later, perhaps, to find it transformed in many features. He is astonished, but he is not bewildered. He is aware of a great lapse of time, and of changes likewise occurring in himself meanwhile. He but dimly recalls the city as he knew it when a child. But remember that there was no sense of any lapse of time with me. So far as my consciousness was concerned, it was but yesterday, but a few hours, since I had walked these streets in which scarcely a feature had escaped a complete metamorphosis. The mental image of the old city was so fresh and strong that it did not yield to the impression of the actual city, but contended with it, so that it was first one and then the other which seemed the more unreal. There was nothing I saw which was not blurred in this way, like the faces of a composite photograph.

Finally, I stood again at the door of the house from which I had come out. My feet must have instinctively brought me back to the site of my old home, for I had no clear idea of returning thither. It was no more homelike to me than any other spot in this city of a strange generation, nor were its inmates less utterly and necessarily strangers than all the other men and women now on the earth. Had the door of the house been locked, I should have been reminded by its resistance that I had no object in entering, and turned away, but it yielded to my hand, and
advancing with uncertain steps through the hall, I entered one of the apartments opening from it. Throwing myself
into a chair, I covered my burning eyeballs with my hands to shut out the horror of strangeness. My mental
confusion was so intense as to produce actual nausea. The anguish of those moments, during which my brain
seemed melting, or the abjectness of my sense of helplessness, how can I describe? In my despair I groaned aloud.
I began to feel that unless some help should come I was about to lose my mind. And just then it did come. I heard
the rustle of drapery, and looked up. Edith Leete was standing before me. Her beautiful face was full of the most
poignant sympathy.

“Oh, what is the matter, Mr. West?” she said. “I was here when you came in. I saw how dreadfully distressed you
looked, and when I heard you groan, I could not keep silent. What has happened to you? Where have you been?
Can’t I do something for you?”

Perhaps she involuntarily held out her hands in a gesture of compassion as she spoke. At any rate I had caught
them in my own and was clinging to them with an impulse as instinctive as that which prompts the drowning man
to seize upon and cling to the rope which is thrown him as he sinks for the last time. As I looked up into her
compassionate face and her eyes moist with pity, my brain ceased to whirl. The tender human sympathy which
thrilled in the soft pressure of her fingers had brought me the support I needed. Its effect to calm and soothe was
like that of some wonder-working elixir.

“God bless you,” I said, after a few moments. “He must have sent you to me just now. I think I was in danger of
going crazy if you had not come.” At this the tears came into her eyes.

“Oh, Mr. West!” she cried. “How heartless you must have thought us! How could we leave you to yourself so long!
But it is over now, is it not? You are better, surely.”

“Yes,” I said, “thanks to you. If you will not go away quite yet, I shall be myself soon.”

“Indeed I will not go away,” she said, with a little quiver of her face, more expressive of her sympathy than a
volume of words. “You must not think us so heartless as we seemed in leaving you so by yourself. I scarcely slept
last night, for thinking how strange your waking would be this morning; but father said you would sleep till late.
He said that it would be better not to show too much sympathy with you at first, but to try to divert your thoughts
and make you feel that you were among friends.”

“You have indeed made me feel that,” I answered. “But you see it is a good deal of a jolt to drop a hundred years,
and although I did not seem to feel it so much last night, I have had very odd sensations this morning.” While I
held her hands and kept my eyes on her face, I could already even jest a little at my plight.

“No one thought of such a thing as your going out in the city alone so early in the morning,” she went on. “Oh, Mr.
West, where have you been?”

Then I told her of my morning’s experience, from my first waking till the moment I had looked up to see her before
me, just as I have told it here. She was overcome by distressful pity during the recital, and, though I had released
one of her hands, did not try to take from me the other, seeing, no doubt, how much good it did me to hold it. “I
can think a little what this feeling must have been like,” she said. “It must have been terrible. And to think you
were left alone to struggle with it! Can you ever forgive us?”

“But it is gone now. You have driven it quite away for the present,” I said.

“You will not let it return again,” she queried anxiously.

“I can’t quite say that,” I replied. “It might be too early to say that, considering how strange everything will still be
to me.”

“But you will not try to contend with it alone again, at least,” she persisted. “Promise that you will come to us, and
let us sympathize with you, and try to help you. Perhaps we can’t do much, but it will surely be better than to try
to bear such feelings alone.”

“I will come to you if you will let me,” I said.

“Oh yes, yes, I beg you will,” she said eagerly. “I would do anything to help you that I could.”

“All you need do is to be sorry for me, as you seem to be now,” I replied.

“It is understood, then,” she said, smiling with wet eyes, “that you are to come and tell me next time, and not run
all over Boston among strangers.”

This assumption that we were not strangers seemed scarcely strange, so near within these few minutes had my trouble and her sympathetic tears brought us.

“I will promise, when you come to me,” she added, with an expression of charming archness, passing, as she continued, into one of enthusiasm, “to seem as sorry for you as you wish, but you must not for a moment suppose that I am really sorry for you at all, or that I think you will long be sorry for yourself. I know, as well as I know that the world now is heaven compared with what it was in your day, that the only feeling you will have after a little while will be one of thankfulness to God that your life in that age was so strangely cut off, to be returned to you in this.”

Chapter 9

Dr. and Mrs. Leete were evidently not a little startled to learn, when they presently appeared, that I had been all over the city alone that morning, and it was apparent that they were agreeably surprised to see that I seemed so little agitated after the experience.

“Your stroll could scarcely have failed to be a very interesting one,” said Mrs. Leete, as we sat down to table soon after. “You must have seen a good many new things.”

“I saw very little that was not new,” I replied. “But I think what surprised me as much as anything was not to find any stores on Washington Street, or any banks on State. What have you done with the merchants and bankers? Hung them all, perhaps, as the anarchists wanted to do in my day?”

“Not so bad as that,” replied Dr. Leete. “We have simply dispensed with them. Their functions are obsolete in the modern world.”

“Who sells you things when you want to buy them?” I inquired.

“There is neither selling nor buying nowadays; the distribution of goods is effected in another way. As to the bankers, having no money we have no use for those gentry.”

“Miss Leete,” said I, turning to Edith, “I am afraid that your father is making sport of me. I don’t blame him, for the temptation my innocence offers must be extraordinary. But, really, there are limits to my credulity as to possible alterations in the social system.”

“Father has no idea of jesting, I am sure,” she replied, with a reassuring smile.

The conversation took another turn then, the point of ladies’ fashions in the nineteenth century being raised, if I remember rightly, by Mrs. Leete, and it was not till after breakfast, when the doctor had invited me up to the house-top, which appeared to be a favorite resort of his, that he recurred to the subject.

“You were surprised,” he said, “at my saying that we got along without money or trade, but a moment’s reflection will show that trade existed and money was needed in your day simply because the business of production was left in private hands, and that, consequently, they are superfluous now.”

“I do not at once see how that follows,” I replied.

“It is very simple,” said Dr. Leete. “When innumerable different and independent persons produced the various things needful to life and comfort, endless exchanges between individuals were requisite in order that they might supply themselves with what they desired. These exchanges constituted trade, and money was essential as their medium. But as soon as the nation became the sole producer of all sorts of commodities, there was no need of exchanges between individuals that they might get what they required. Everything was procurable from one source, and nothing could be procured anywhere else. A system of direct distribution from the national storehouses took the place of trade, and for this money was unnecessary.”

“How is this distribution managed?” I asked.

“On the simplest possible plan,” replied Dr. Leete. “A credit corresponding to his share of the annual product of the nation is given to every citizen on the public books at the beginning of each year, and a credit card issued him
with which he procures at the public storehouses, found in every community, whatever he desires whenever he desires it. This arrangement, you will see, totally obviates the necessity for business transactions of any sort between individuals and consumers. Perhaps you would like to see what our credit cards are like.

“You observe,” he pursued as I was curiously examining the piece of pasteboard he gave me, “that this card is issued for a certain number of dollars. We have kept the old word, but not the substance. The term, as we use it, answers to no real thing, but merely serves as an algebraical symbol for comparing the values of products with one another. For this purpose they are all priced in dollars and cents, just as in your day. The value of what I procure on this card is checked off by the clerk, who pricks out of these tiers of squares the price of what I order.”

“If you wanted to buy something of your neighbor, could you transfer part of your credit to him as consideration?” I inquired.

“In the first place,” replied Dr. Leete, “our neighbors have nothing to sell us, but in any event our credit would not be transferable, being strictly personal. Before the nation could even think of honoring any such transfer as you speak of, it would be bound to inquire into all the circumstances of the transaction, so as to be able to guarantee its absolute equity. It would have been reason enough, had there been no other, for abolishing money, that its possession was no indication of rightful title to it. In the hands of the man who had stolen it or murdered for it, it was as good as in those which had earned it by industry. People nowadays interchange gifts and favors out of friendship, but buying and selling is considered absolutely inconsistent with the mutual benevolence and disinterestedness which should prevail between citizens and the sense of community of interest which supports our social system. According to our ideas, buying and selling is essentially anti-social in all its tendencies. It is an education in self-seeking at the expense of others, and no society whose citizens are trained in such a school can possibly rise above a very low grade of civilization.”

“What if you have to spend more than your card in any one year?” I asked.

“The provision is so ample that we are more likely not to spend it all,” replied Dr. Leete. “But if extraordinary expenses should exhaust it, we can obtain a limited advance on the next year’s credit, though this practice is not encouraged, and a heavy discount is charged to check it. Of course if a man showed himself a reckless spendthrift he would receive his allowance monthly or weekly instead of yearly, or if necessary not be permitted to handle it all.”

“If you don’t spend your allowance, I suppose it accumulates?”

“That is also permitted to a certain extent when a special outlay is anticipated. But unless notice to the contrary is given, it is presumed that the citizen who does not fully expend his credit did not have occasion to do so, and the balance is turned into the general surplus.”

“Such a system does not encourage saving habits on the part of citizens,” I said.

“It is not intended to,” was the reply. “The nation is rich, and does not wish the people to deprive themselves of any good thing. In your day, men were bound to lay up goods and money against coming failure of the means of support and for their children. This necessity made parsimony a virtue. But now it would have no such laudable object, and, having lost its utility, it has ceased to be regarded as a virtue. No man any more has any care for the morrow, either for himself or his children, for the nation guarantees the nurture, education, and comfortable maintenance of every citizen from the cradle to the grave.”

“That is a sweeping guarantee!” I said. “What certainty can there be that the value of a man’s labor will recompense the nation for its outlay on him? On the whole, society may be able to support all its members, but some must earn less than enough for their support, and others more; and that brings us back once more to the wages question, on which you have hitherto said nothing. It was at just this point, if you remember, that our talk ended last evening; and I say again, as I did then, that here I should suppose a national industrial system like yours would find its main difficulty. How, I ask once more, can you adjust satisfactorily the comparative wages or remuneration of the multitude of avocations, so unlike and so incommensurable, which are necessary for the service of society? In our day the market rate determined the price of labor of all sorts, as well as of goods. The employer paid as little as he could, and the worker got as much. It was not a pretty system ethically, I admit; but it did, at least, furnish us a rough and ready formula for settling a question which must be settled ten thousand times a day if the world was ever going to get forward. There seemed to us no other practicable way of doing it.”

“Yes,” replied Dr. Leete, “it was the only practicable way under a system which made the interests of every individual antagonistic to those of every other; but it would have been a pity if humanity could never have devised a better plan, for yours was simply the application to the mutual relations of men of the devil’s maxim, ‘Your
necessity is my opportunity.’ The reward of any service depended not upon its difficulty, danger, or hardship, for throughout the world it seems that the most perilous, severe, and repulsive labor was done by the worst paid classes; but solely upon the strait of those who needed the service."

“All that is conceded,” I said. “But, with all its defects, the plan of settling prices by the market rate was a practical plan; and I cannot conceive what satisfactory substitute you can have devised for it. The government being the only possible employer, there is of course no labor market or market rate. Wages of all sorts must be arbitrarily fixed by the government. I cannot imagine a more complex and delicate function than that must be, or one, however performed, more certain to breed universal dissatisfaction.”

“I beg your pardon,” replied Dr. Leete, “but I think you exaggerate the difficulty. Suppose a board of fairly sensible men were charged with settling the wages for all sorts of trades under a system which, like ours, guaranteed employment to all, while permitting the choice of avocations. Don’t you see that, however unsatisfactory the first adjustment might be, the mistakes would soon correct themselves? The favored trades would have too many volunteers, and those discriminated against would lack them till the errors were set right. But this is aside from the purpose, for, though this plan would, I fancy, be practicable enough, it is no part of our system.”

“How, then, do you regulate wages?” I once more asked.

Dr. Leete did not reply till after several moments of meditative silence. “I know, of course,” he finally said, “enough of the old order of things to understand just what you mean by that question; and yet the present order is so utterly different at this point that I am a little at loss how to answer you best. You ask me how we regulate wages; I can only reply that there is no idea in the modern social economy which at all corresponds with what was meant by wages in your day.”

“I suppose you mean that you have no money to pay wages in,” said I. “But the credit given the worker at the government storehouse answers to his wages with us. How is the amount of the credit given respectively to the workers in different lines determined? By what title does the individual claim his particular share? What is the basis of allotment?”

“His title,” replied Dr. Leete, “is his humanity. The basis of his claim is the fact that he is a man.”

“The fact that he is a man!” I repeated, incredulously. “Do you possibly mean that all have the same share?”

“Most assuredly.”

The readers of this book never having practically known any other arrangement, or perhaps very carefully considered the historical accounts of former epochs in which a very different system prevailed, cannot be expected to appreciate the stupor of amazement into which Dr. Leete’s simple statement plunged me.

“You see,” he said, smiling, “that it is not merely that we have no money to pay wages in, but, as I said, we have nothing at all answering to your idea of wages.”

By this time I had pulled myself together sufficiently to voice some of the criticisms which, man of the nineteenth century as I was, came uppermost in my mind, upon this to me astounding arrangement. “Some men do twice the work of others!” I exclaimed. “Are the clever workmen content with a plan that ranks them with the indifferent?”

“We leave no possible ground for any complaint of injustice,” replied Dr. Leete, “by requiring precisely the same measure of service from all.”

“How can you do that, I should like to know, when no two men’s powers are the same?”

“Nothing could be simpler,” was Dr. Leete’s reply. “We require of each that he shall make the same effort; that is, we demand of him the best service it is in his power to give.”

“And supposing all do the best they can,” I answered, “the amount of the product resulting is twice greater from one man than from another.”

“Very true,” replied Dr. Leete; “but the amount of the resulting product has nothing whatever to do with the question, which is one of desert. Desert is a moral question, and the amount of the product a material quantity. It would be an extraordinary sort of logic which should try to determine a moral question by a material standard. The amount of the effort alone is pertinent to the question of desert. All men who do their best, do the same. A man’s endowments, however godlike, merely fix the measure of his duty. The man of great endowments who does
not do all he might, though he may do more than a man of small endowments who does his best, is deemed a less
deserving worker than the latter, and dies a debtor to his fellows. The Creator sets men's tasks for them by the
faculties he gives them; we simply exact their fulfillment."

“No doubt that is very fine philosophy,” I said; “nevertheless it seems hard that the man who produces twice as
much as another, even if both do their best, should have only the same share.”

“Does it, indeed, seem so to you?” responded Dr. Leete. “Now, do you know, that seems very curious to me? The
way it strikes people nowadays is, that a man who can produce twice as much as another with the same effort,
instead of being rewarded for doing so, ought to be punished if he does not do so. In the nineteenth century, when
a horse pulled a heavier load than a goat, I suppose you rewarded him. Now, we should have whipped him soundly
if he had not, on the ground that, being much stronger, he ought to. It is singular how ethical standards change."
The doctor said this with such a twinkle in his eye that I was obliged to laugh.

“I suppose,” I said, “that the real reason that we rewarded men for their endowments, while we considered those
of horses and goats merely as fixing the service to be severally required of them, was that the animals, not being
reasoning beings, naturally did the best they could, whereas men could only be induced to do so by rewarding
them according to the amount of their product. That brings me to ask why, unless human nature has mightily
changed in a hundred years, you are not under the same necessity.”

“We are,” replied Dr. Leete. “I don’t think there has been any change in human nature in that respect since your
day. It is still so constituted that special incentives in the form of prizes, and advantages to be gained, are
requisite to call out the best endeavors of the average man in any direction.”

“But what inducement,” I asked, “can a man have to put forth his best endeavors when, however much or little he
accomplishes, his income remains the same? High characters may be moved by devotion to the common welfare
under such a system, but does not the average man tend to rest back on his oar, reasoning that it is of no use to
make a special effort, since the effort will not increase his income, nor its withholding diminish it?”

“Does it then really seem to you,” answered my companion, “that human nature is insensible to any motives save
fear of want and love of luxury, that you should expect security and equality of livelihood to leave them without
possible incentives to effort? Your contemporaries did not really think so, though they might fancy they did. When
it was a question of the grandest class of efforts, the most absolute self-devotion, they depended on quite other
incentives. Not higher wages, but honor and the hope of men’s gratitude, patriotism and the inspiration of duty,
were the motives which they set before their soldiers when it was a question of dying for the nation, and never
was there an age of the world when those motives did not call out what is best and noblest in men. And not only
this, but when you come to analyze the love of money which was the general impulse to effort in your day, you find
that the dread of want and desire of luxury was but one of several motives which the pursuit of money
represented; the others, and with many the more influential, being desire of power, of social position, and
reputation for ability and success. So you see that though we have abolished poverty and the fear of it, and
inordinate luxury with the hope of it, we have not touched the greater part of the motives which underlay the love
of money in former times, or any of those which prompted the supreme sorts of effort. The coarser motives,
which no longer move us, have been replaced by higher motives wholly unknown to the mere wage earners of
your age. Now that industry of whatever sort is no longer self-service, but service of the nation, patriotism,
passion for humanity, impel the worker as in your day they did the soldier. The army of industry is an army, not
alone by virtue of its perfect organization, but by reason also of the ardor of self-devotion which animates its
members.

“But as you used to supplement the motives of patriotism with the love of glory, in order to stimulate the valor of
your soldiers, so do we. Based as our industrial system is on the principle of requiring the same unit of effort from
every man, that is, the best he can do, you will see that the means by which we spur the workers to do their best
must be a very essential part of our scheme. With us, diligence in the national service is the sole and certain way
to public repute, social distinction, and official power. The value of a man’s services to society fixes his rank in it.
Compared with the effect of our social arrangements in impelling men to be zealous in business, we deem the
object-lessons of biting poverty and wanton luxury on which you depended a device as weak and uncertain as it
was barbaric. The lust of honor even in your sordid day notoriously impelled men to more desperate effort than
the love of money could.”

“I should be extremely interested,” I said, “to learn something of what these social arrangements are.”

“The scheme in its details,” replied the doctor, “is of course very elaborate, for it underlies the entire organization
of our industrial army; but a few words will give you a general idea of it.”
At this moment our talk was charmingly interrupted by the emergence upon the aerial platform where we sat of Edith Leete. She was dressed for the street, and had come to speak to her father about some commission she was to do for him.

“By the way, Edith,” he exclaimed, as she was about to leave us to ourselves, “I wonder if Mr. West would not be interested in visiting the store with you? I have been telling him something about our system of distribution, and perhaps he might like to see it in practical operation.”

“My daughter,” he added, turning to me, “is an indefatigable shopper, and can tell you more about the stores than I can.”

The proposition was naturally very agreeable to me, and Edith being good enough to say that she should be glad to have my company, we left the house together.

Chapter 10

“If I am going to explain our way of shopping to you,” said my companion, as we walked along the street, “you must explain your way to me. I have never been able to understand it from all I have read on the subject. For example, when you had such a vast number of shops, each with its different assortment, how could a lady ever settle upon any purchase till she had visited all the shops? for, until she had, she could not know what there was to choose from.”

“It was as you suppose; that was the only way she could know,” I replied.

“Father calls me an indefatigable shopper, but I should soon be a very fatigued one if I had to do as they did,” was Edith’s laughing comment.

“The loss of time in going from shop to shop was indeed a waste which the busy bitterly complained of,” I said; “but as for the ladies of the idle class, though they complained also, I think the system was really a godsend by furnishing a device to kill time.”

“But say there were a thousand shops in a city, hundreds, perhaps, of the same sort, how could even the idlest find time to make their rounds?”

“They really could not visit all, of course,” I replied. “Those who did a great deal of buying, learned in time where they might expect to find what they wanted. This class had made a science of the specialties of the shops, and bought at advantage, always getting the most and best for the least money. It required, however, long experience to acquire this knowledge. Those who were too busy, or bought too little to gain it, took their chances and were generally unfortunate, getting the least and worst for the most money. It was the merest chance if persons not experienced in shopping received the value of their money.”

“But why did you put up with such a shockingly inconvenient arrangement when you saw its faults so plainly?” Edith asked me.

“It was like all our social arrangements,” I replied. “You can see their faults scarcely more plainly than we did, but we saw no remedy for them.”

“Here we are at the store of our ward,” said Edith, as we turned in at the great portal of one of the magnificent public buildings I had observed in my morning walk. There was nothing in the exterior aspect of the edifice to suggest a store to a representative of the nineteenth century. There was no display of goods in the great windows, or any device to advertise wares, or attract custom. Nor was there any sort of sign or legend on the front of the building to indicate the character of the business carried on there; but instead, above the portal, standing out from the front of the building, a majestic life-size group of statuary, the central figure of which was a female ideal of Plenty, with her cornucopia. Judging from the composition of the throng passing in and out, about the same proportion of the sexes among shoppers obtained as in the nineteenth century. As we entered, Edith said that there was one of these great distributing establishments in each ward of the city, so that no residence was more than five or ten minutes’ walk from one of them. It was the first interior of a twentieth-century public building that I had ever beheld, and the spectacle naturally impressed me deeply. I was in a vast hall full of light, received not alone from the windows on all sides, but from the dome, the point of which was a hundred feet above. Beneath it, in the centre of the hall, a magnificent fountain played, cooling the atmosphere to a delicious freshness with its
spray. The walls and ceiling were frescoed in mellow tints, calculated to soften without absorbing the light which flooded the interior. Around the fountain was a space occupied with chairs and sofas, on which many persons were seated conversing. Legends on the walls all about the hall indicated to what classes of commodities the counters below were devoted. Edith directed her steps towards one of these, where samples of muslin of a bewildering variety were displayed, and proceeded to inspect them.

“Where is the clerk?” I asked, for there was no one behind the counter, and no one seemed coming to attend to the customer.

“I have no need of the clerk yet,” said Edith; “I have not made my selection.”

“It was the principal business of clerks to help people to make their selections in my day,” I replied.

“What! To tell people what they wanted?”

“Yes; and oftener to induce them to buy what they didn’t want.”

“But did not ladies find that very impertinent?” Edith asked, wonderingly. “What concern could it possibly be to the clerks whether people bought or not?”

“It was their sole concern,” I answered. “They were hired for the purpose of getting rid of the goods, and were expected to do their utmost, short of the use of force, to compass that end.”

“Ah, yes! How stupid I am to forget!” said Edith. “The storekeeper and his clerks depended for their livelihood on selling the goods in your day. Of course that is all different now. The goods are the nation’s. They are here for those who want them, and it is the business of the clerks to wait on people and take their orders; but it is not the interest of the clerk or the nation to dispose of a yard or a pound of anything to anybody who does not want it.” She smiled as she added, “How exceedingly odd it must have seemed to have clerks trying to induce one to take what one did not want, or was doubtful about!”

“But even a twentieth century clerk might make himself useful in giving you information about the goods, though he did not tease you to buy them,” I suggested.

“No,” said Edith, “that is not the business of the clerk. These printed cards, for which the government authorities are responsible, give us all the information we can possibly need.”

I saw then that there was fastened to each sample a card containing in succinct form a complete statement of the make and materials of the goods and all its qualities, as well as price, leaving absolutely no point to hang a question on.

“The clerk has, then, nothing to say about the goods he sells?” I said.

“Nothing at all. It is not necessary that he should know or profess to know anything about them. Courtesy and accuracy in taking orders are all that are required of him.”

“What a prodigious amount of lying that simple arrangement saves!” I ejaculated.

“Do you mean that all the clerks misrepresented their goods in your day?” Edith asked.

“God forbid that I should say so!” I replied, “for there were many who did not, and they were entitled to especial credit, for when one’s livelihood and that of his wife and babies depended on the amount of goods he could dispose of, the temptation to deceive the customer—or let him deceive himself—was wellnigh overwhelming. But, Miss Leete, I am distracting you from your task with my talk.”

“No at all. I have made my selections.” With that she touched a button, and in a moment a clerk appeared. He took down her order on a tablet with a pencil which made two copies, of which he gave one to her, and enclosing the counterpart in a small receptacle, dropped it into a transmitting tube.

“The duplicate of the order,” said Edith as she turned away from the counter, after the clerk had punched the value of her purchase out of the credit card she gave him, “is given to the purchaser, so that any mistakes in filling it can be easily traced and rectified.”

“You were very quick about your selections,” I said. “May I ask how you knew that you might not have found something to suit you better in some of the other stores? But probably you are required to buy in your own
district."

“Oh, no,” she replied. “We buy where we please, though naturally most often near home. But I should have gained
nothing by visiting other stores. The assortment in all is exactly the same, representing as it does in each case
samples of all the varieties produced or imported by the United States. That is why one can decide quickly, and
never need visit two stores.”

“And is this merely a sample store? I see no clerks cutting off goods or marking bundles.”

“All our stores are sample stores, except as to a few classes of articles. The goods, with these exceptions, are all at
the great central warehouse of the city, to which they are shipped directly from the producers. We order from the
sample and the printed statement of texture, make, and qualities. The orders are sent to the warehouse, and the
goods distributed from there.”

“That must be a tremendous saving of handling,” I said. “By our system, the manufacturer sold to the wholesaler,
the wholesaler to the retailer, and the retailer to the consumer, and the goods had to be handled each time. You
avoid one handling of the goods, and eliminate the retailer altogether, with his big profit and the army of clerks it
goes to support. Why, Miss Leete, this store is merely the order department of a wholesale house, with no more
than a wholesaler’s complement of clerks. Under our system of handling the goods, persuading the customer to
buy them, cutting them off, and packing them, ten clerks would not do what one does here. The saving must be
enormous.”

“I suppose so,” said Edith, “but of course we have never known any other way. But, Mr. West, you must not fail to
ask father to take you to the central warehouse some day, where they receive the orders from the different sample
houses all over the city and parcel out and send the goods to their destinations. He took me there not long ago,
and it was a wonderful sight. The system is certainly perfect; for example, over yonder in that sort of cage is the
dispatching clerk. The orders, as they are taken by the different departments in the store, are sent by transmitters
to him. His assistants sort them and enclose each class in a carrier-box by itself. The dispatching clerk has a dozen
pneumatic transmitters before him answering to the general classes of goods, each communicating with the
 corresponding department at the warehouse. He drops the box of orders into the tube it calls for, and in a few
moments later it drops on the proper desk in the warehouse, together with all the orders of the same sort from the
other sample stores. The orders are read off, recorded, and sent to be filled, like lightning. The filling I thought
the most interesting part. Bales of cloth are placed on spindles and turned by machinery, and the cutter, who also
has a machine, works right through one bale after another till exhausted, when another man takes his place; and
it is the same with those who fill the orders in any other staple. The packages are then delivered by larger tubes to
the city districts, and thence distributed to the houses. You may understand how quickly it is all done when I tell
you that my order will probably be at home sooner than I could have carried it from here.”

“How do you manage in the thinly settled rural districts?” I asked.

“The system is the same,” Edith explained; “the village sample shops are connected by transmitters with the
central county warehouse, which may be twenty miles away. The transmission is so swift, though, that the time
lost on the way is trifling. But, to save expense, in many counties one set of tubes connect several villages with the
warehouse, and then there is time lost waiting for one another. Sometimes it is two or three hours before goods
ordered are received. It was so where I was staying last summer, and I found it quite inconvenient.”[1]

“There must be many other respects also, no doubt, in which the country stores are inferior to the city stores,” I
suggested.

“No,” Edith answered, “they are otherwise precisely as good. The sample shop of the smallest village, just like this
one, gives you your choice of all the varieties of goods the nation has, for the county warehouse draws on the
same source as the city warehouse.”

As we walked home I commented on the great variety in the size and cost of the houses. “How is it,” I asked, “that
this difference is consistent with the fact that all citizens have the same income?”

“Because,” Edith explained, “although the income is the same, personal taste determines how the individual shall
spend it. Some like fine horses; others, like myself, prefer pretty clothes; and still others want an elaborate table.
The rents which the nation receives for these houses vary, according to size, elegance, and location, so that
everybody can find something to suit. The larger houses are usually occupied by large families, in which there are
several to contribute to the rent; while small families, like ours, find smaller houses more convenient and
economical. It is a matter of taste and convenience wholly. I have read that in old times people often kept up
estABLishments and did other things which they could not afford for ostentation, to make people think them richer
than they were. Was it really so, Mr. West?"

"I shall have to admit that it was," I replied.

"Well, you see, it could not be so nowadays; for everybody's income is known, and it is known that what is spent one way must be saved another."

[1] I am informed since the above is in type that this lack of perfection in the distributing service of some of the county districts is to be remedied, and that soon every village will have its own set of tubes.

Chapter 11

When we arrived home, Dr. Leete had not yet returned, and Mrs. Leete was not visible. "Are you fond of music, Mr. West?" Edith asked.

I assured her that it was half of life, according to my notion.

"I ought to apologize for inquiring," she said. "It is not a question that we ask one another nowadays; but I have read that in your day, even among the cultured class, there were some who did not care for music."

"You must remember, in excuse," I said, "that we had some rather absurd kinds of music."

"Yes," she said, "I know that; I am afraid I should not have fancied it all myself. Would you like to hear some of ours now, Mr. West?"

"Nothing would delight me so much as to listen to you," I said.

"To me!" she exclaimed, laughing. "Did you think I was going to play or sing to you?"

"I hoped so, certainly," I replied.

Seeing that I was a little abashed, she subdued her merriment and explained. "Of course, we all sing nowadays as a matter of course in the training of the voice, and some learn to play instruments for their private amusement; but the professional music is so much grander and more perfect than any performance of ours, and so easily commanded when we wish to hear it, that we don't think of calling our singing or playing music at all. All the really fine singers and players are in the musical service, and the rest of us hold our peace for the main part. But would you really like to hear some music?"

I assured her once more that I would.

"Come, then, into the music room," she said, and I followed her into an apartment finished, without hangings, in wood, with a floor of polished wood. I was prepared for new devices in musical instruments, but I saw nothing in the room which by any stretch of imagination could be conceived as such. It was evident that my puzzled appearance was affording intense amusement to Edith.

"Please look at to-day's music," she said, handing me a card, "and tell me what you would prefer. It is now five o'clock, you will remember."

The card bore the date "September 12, 2000," and contained the longest programme of music I had ever seen. It was as various as it was long, including a most extraordinary range of vocal and instrumental solos, duets, quartettes, and various orchestral combinations. I remained bewildered by the prodigious list until Edith's pink finger tip indicated a particular section of it, where several selections were bracketed, with the words "5 P.M." against them; then I observed that this prodigious programme was an all-day one, divided into twenty-four sections answering to the hours. There were but a few pieces of music in the "5 P.M." section, and I indicated an organ piece as my preference.

"I am so glad you like the organ," said she. "I think there is scarcely any music that suits my mood oftener."

She made me sit down comfortably, and, crossing the room, so far as I could see, merely touched one or two
screws, and at once the room was filled with the music of a grand organ anthem; filled, not flooded, for, by some means, the volume of melody had been perfectly graduated to the size of the apartment. I listened, scarcely breathing, to the close. Such music, so perfectly rendered, I had never expected to hear.

“Grand!” I cried, as the last great wave of sound broke and ebbed away into silence. “Bach must be at the keys of that organ; but where is the organ?”

“Wait a moment, please,” said Edith; “I want to have you listen to this waltz before you ask any questions. I think it is perfectly charming”; and as she spoke the sound of violins filled the room with the witchery of a summer night. When this had also ceased, she said: “There is nothing in the least mysterious about the music, as you seem to imagine. It is not made by fairies or genii, but by good, honest, and exceedingly clever human hands. We have simply carried the idea of labor saving by cooperation into our musical service as into everything else. There are a number of music rooms in the city, perfectly adapted acoustically to the different sorts of music. These halls are connected by telephone with all the houses of the city whose people care to pay the small fee, and there are none, you may be sure, who do not. The corps of musicians attached to each hall is so large that, although no individual performer, or group of performers, has more than a brief part, each day’s programme lasts through the twenty-four hours. There are on that card for to-day, as you will see if you observe closely, distinct programmes of four of these concerts, each of a different order of music from the others, being now simultaneously performed, and any one of the four pieces now going on that you prefer, you can hear by merely pressing the button which will connect your house-wire with the hall where it is being rendered. The programmes are so coordinated that the pieces at any one time simultaneously proceeding in the different halls usually offer a choice, not only between instrumental and vocal, and between different sorts of instruments; but also between different motives from grave to gay, so that all tastes and moods can be suited.”

“It appears to me, Miss Leete,” I said, “that if we could have devised an arrangement for providing everybody with music in their homes, perfect in quality, unlimited in quantity, suited to every mood, and beginning and ceasing at will, we should have considered the limit of human felicity already attained, and ceased to strive for further improvements.”

“I am sure I never could imagine how those among you who depended at all on music managed to endure the old-fashioned system for providing it,” replied Edith. “Music really worth hearing must have been, I suppose, wholly out of the reach of the masses, and attainable by the most favored only occasionally, at great trouble, prodigious expense, and then for brief periods, arbitrarily fixed by somebody else, and in connection with all sorts of undesirable circumstances. Your concerts, for instance, and operas! How perfectly exasperating it must have been, for the sake of a piece or two of music that suited you, to have to sit for hours listening to what you did not care for! Now, at a dinner one can skip the courses one does not care for. Who would ever dine, however hungry, if required to eat everything brought on the table? and I am sure one’s hearing is quite as sensitive as one’s taste. I suppose it was these difficulties in the way of commanding really good music which made you endure so much playing and singing in your homes by people who had only the rudiments of the art.”

“Yes,” I replied, “it was that sort of music or none for most of us.

“Ah, well,” Edith sighed, “when one really considers, it is not so strange that people in those days so often did not care for music. I dare say I should have detested it, too.”

“Did I understand you rightly,” I inquired, “that this musical programme covers the entire twenty-four hours? It seems to on this card, certainly; but who is there to listen to music between say midnight and morning?”

“Oh, many,” Edith replied. “Our people keep all hours; but if the music were provided from midnight to morning for no others, it still would be for the sleepless, the sick, and the dying. All our bedchambers have a telephone attachment at the head of the bed by which any person who may be sleepless can command music at pleasure, of the sort suited to the mood.”

“Is there such an arrangement in the room assigned to me?”

“Why, certainly; and how stupid, how very stupid, of me not to think to tell you of that last night! Father will show you about the adjustment before you go to bed to-night, however; and with the receiver at your ear, I am quite sure you will be able to snap your fingers at all sorts of uncanny feelings if they trouble you again.”

That evening Dr. Leete asked us about our visit to the store, and in the course of the desultory comparison of the ways of the nineteenth century and the twentieth, which followed, something raised the question of inheritance. “I suppose,” I said, “the inheritance of property is not now allowed.”
“On the contrary,” replied Dr. Leete, “there is no interference with it. In fact, you will find, Mr. West, as you come to know us, that there is far less interference of any sort with personal liberty nowadays than you were accustomed to. We require, indeed, by law that every man shall serve the nation for a fixed period, instead of leaving him his choice, as you did, between working, stealing, or starving. With the exception of this fundamental law, which is, indeed, merely a codification of the law of nature—the edict of Eden—by which it is made equal in its pressure on men, our system depends in no particular upon legislation, but is entirely voluntary, the logical outcome of the operation of human nature under rational conditions. This question of inheritance illustrates just that point. The fact that the nation is the sole capitalist and land-owner of course restricts the individual’s possessions to his annual credit, and what personal and household belongings he may have procured with it. His credit, like an annuity in your day, ceases on his death, with the allowance of a fixed sum for funeral expenses. His other possessions he leaves as he pleases.”

“What is to prevent, in course of time, such accumulations of valuable goods and chattels in the hands of individuals as might seriously interfere with equality in the circumstances of citizens?” I asked.

“That matter arranges itself very simply,” was the reply. “Under the present organization of society, accumulations of personal property are merely burdensome the moment they exceed what adds to the real comfort. In your day, if a man had a house crammed full with gold and silver plate, rare china, expensive furniture, and such things, he was considered rich, for these things represented money, and could at any time be turned into it. Nowadays a man whom the legacies of a hundred relatives, simultaneously dying, should place in a similar position, would be considered very unlucky. The articles, not being salable, would be of no value to him except for their actual use or the enjoyment of their beauty. On the other hand, his income remaining the same, he would have to deplete his credit to hire houses to store the goods in, and still further to pay for the service of those who took care of them. You may be very sure that such a man would lose no time in scattering among his friends possessions which only made him the poorer, and that none of those friends would accept more of them than they could easily spare room for and time to attend to. You see, then, that to prohibit the inheritance of personal property with a view to prevent great accumulations would be a superfluous precaution for the nation. The individual citizen can be trusted to see that he is not overburdened. So careful is he in this respect, that the relatives usually waive claim to most of the effects of deceased friends, reserving only particular objects. The nation takes charge of the resigned chattels, and turns such as are of value into the common stock once more.”

“You spoke of paying for service to take care of your houses,” said I; “that suggests a question I have several times been on the point of asking. How have you disposed of the problem of domestic service? Who are willing to be domestic servants in a community where all are social equals? Our ladies found it hard enough to find such even when there was little pretense of social equality.”

“It is precisely because we are all social equals whose equality nothing can compromise, and because service is honorable, in a society whose fundamental principle is that all in turn shall serve the rest, that we could easily provide a corps of domestic servants such as you never dreamed of, if we needed them,” replied Dr. Leete. “But we do not need them.”

“Who does your house-work, then?” I asked.

“There is none to do,” said Mrs. Leete, to whom I had addressed this question. “Our washing is all done at public laundries at excessively cheap rates, and our cooking at public kitchens. The making and repairing of all we wear are done outside in public shops. Electricity, of course, takes the place of all fires and lighting. We choose houses no larger than we need, and furnish them so as to involve the minimum of trouble to keep them in order. We have no use for domestic servants.”

“The fact,” said Dr. Leete, “that you had in the poorer classes a boundless supply of serfs on whom you could impose all sorts of painful and disagreeable tasks, made you indifferent to devices to avoid the necessity for them. But now that we all have to do in turn whatever work is done for society, every individual in the nation has the same interest, and a personal one, in devices for lightening the burden. This fact has given a prodigious impulse to labor-saving inventions in all sorts of industry, of which the combination of the maximum of comfort and minimum of trouble in household arrangements was one of the earliest results.

“In case of special emergencies in the household,” pursued Dr. Leete, “such as extensive cleaning or renovation, or sickness in the family, we can always secure assistance from the industrial force.”

“But how do you recompense these assistants, since you have no money?”

“We do not pay them, of course, but the nation for them. Their services can be obtained by application at the proper bureau, and their value is pricked off the credit card of the applicant.”
“What a paradise for womankind the world must be now!” I exclaimed. “In my day, even wealth and unlimited servants did not enfranchise their possessors from household cares, while the women of the merely well-to-do and poorer classes lived and died martyrs to them.”

“Yes,” said Mrs. Leete, “I have read something of that; enough to convince me that, badly off as the men, too, were in your day, they were more fortunate than their mothers and wives.”

“The broad shoulders of the nation,” said Dr. Leete, “bear now like a feather the burden that broke the backs of the women of your day. Their misery came, with all your other miseries, from that incapacity for cooperation which followed from the individualism on which your social system was founded, from your inability to perceive that you could make ten times more profit out of your fellow men by uniting with them than by contending with them. The wonder is, not that you did not live more comfortably, but that you were able to live together at all, who were all confessedly bent on making one another your servants, and securing possession of one another’s goods.

“There, there, father, if you are so vehement, Mr. West will think you are scolding him,” laughingly interposed Edith.

“When you want a doctor,” I asked, “do you simply apply to the proper bureau and take any one that may be sent?”

“That rule would not work well in the case of physicians,” replied Dr. Leete. “The good a physician can do a patient depends largely on his acquaintance with his constitutional tendencies and condition. The patient must be able, therefore, to call in a particular doctor, and he does so just as patients did in your day. The only difference is that, instead of collecting his fee for himself, the doctor collects it for the nation by pricking off the amount, according to a regular scale for medical attendance, from the patient’s credit card.”

“I can imagine,” I said, “that if the fee is always the same, and a doctor may not turn away patients, as I suppose he may not, the good doctors are called constantly and the poor doctors left in idleness.”

“In the first place, if you will overlook the apparent conceit of the remark from a retired physician,” replied Dr. Leete, with a smile, “we have no poor doctors. Anybody who pleases to get a little smattering of medical terms is not now at liberty to practice on the bodies of citizens, as in your day. None but students who have passed the severe tests of the schools, and clearly proved their vocation, are permitted to practice. Then, too, you will observe that there is nowadays no attempt of doctors to build up their practice at the expense of other doctors. There would be no motive for that. For the rest, the doctor has to render regular reports of his work to the medical bureau, and if he is not reasonably well employed, work is found for him.”

Chapter 12

The questions which I needed to ask before I could acquire even an outline acquaintance with the institutions of the twentieth century being endless, and Dr. Leete’s good-nature appearing equally so, we sat up talking for several hours after the ladies left us. Reminding my host of the point at which our talk had broken off that morning, I expressed my curiosity to learn how the organization of the industrial army was made to afford a sufficient stimulus to diligence in the lack of any anxiety on the worker’s part as to his livelihood.

“You must understand in the first place,” replied the doctor, “that the supply of incentives to effort is but one of the objects sought in the organization we have adopted for the army. The other, and equally important, is to secure for the file-leaders and captains of the force, and the great officers of the nation, men of proven abilities, who are pledged by their own careers to hold their followers up to their highest standard of performance and permit no lagging. With a view to these two ends the industrial army is organized. First comes the unclassified grade of common laborers, men of all work, to which all recruits during their first three years belong. This grade is a sort of school, and a very strict one, in which the young men are taught habits of obedience, subordination, and devotion to duty. While the miscellaneous nature of the work done by this force prevents the systematic grading of the workers which is afterwards possible, yet individual records are kept, and excellence receives distinction corresponding with the penalties that negligence incurs. It is not, however, policy with us to permit youthful recklessness or indiscretion, when not deeply culpable, to handicap the future careers of young men, and all who have passed through the unclassified grade without serious disgrace have an equal opportunity to choose the life employment they have most liking for. Having selected this, they enter upon it as apprentices. The length of the apprenticeship naturally differs in different occupations. At the end of it the apprentice becomes a full workman, and a member of his trade or guild. Now not only are the individual records of the apprentices for
ability and industry strictly kept, and excellence distinguished by suitable distinctions, but upon the average of his record during apprenticeship the standing given the apprentice among the full workmen depends.

"While the internal organizations of different industries, mechanical and agricultural, differ according to their peculiar conditions, they agree in a general division of their workers into first, second, and third grades, according to ability, and these grades are in many cases subdivided into first and second classes. According to his standing as an apprentice a young man is assigned his place as a first, second, or third grade worker. Of course only men of unusual ability pass directly from apprenticeship into the first grade of the workers. The most fall into the lower grades, working up as they grow more experienced, at the periodical regradings. These regradings take place in each industry at intervals corresponding with the length of the apprenticeship to that industry, so that merit never need wait long to rise, nor can any rest on past achievements unless they would drop into a lower rank. One of the notable advantages of a high grading is the privilege it gives the worker in electing which of the various branches or processes of his industry he will follow as his specialty. Of course it is not intended that any of these processes shall be disproportionately arduous, but there is often much difference between them, and the privilege of election is accordingly highly prized. So far as possible, indeed, the preferences even of the poorest workmen are considered in assigning them their line of work, because not only their happiness but their usefulness is thus enhanced. While, however, the wish of the lower grade man is consulted so far as the exigencies of the service permit, he is considered only after the upper grade men have been provided for, and often he has to put up with second or third choice, or even with an arbitrary assignment when help is needed. This privilege of election attends every regrading, and when a man loses his grade he also risks having to exchange the sort of work he likes for some other less to his taste. The results of each regrading, giving the standing of every man in his industry, are gazetted in the public prints, and those who have won promotion since the last regrading receive the nation’s thanks and are publicly invested with the badge of their new rank."

“What may this badge be?” I asked.

“Every industry has its emblematic device,” replied Dr. Leete, “and this, in the shape of a metallic badge so small that you might not see it unless you knew where to look, is all the insignia which the men of the army wear, except where public convenience demands a distinctive uniform. This badge is the same in form for all grades of industry, but while the badge of the third grade is iron, that of the second grade is silver, and that of the first is gilt.

“Apart from the grand incentive to endeavor afforded by the fact that the high places in the nation are open only to the highest class men, and that rank in the army constitutes the only mode of social distinction for the vast majority who are not aspirants in art, literature, and the professions, various incitements of a minor, but perhaps equally effective, sort are provided in the form of special privileges and immunities in the way of discipline, which the superior class men enjoy. These, while intended to be as little as possible invidious to the less successful, have the effect of keeping constantly before every man’s mind the great desirability of attaining the grade next above his own.

“It is obviously important that not only the good but also the indifferent and poor workmen should be able to cherish the ambition of rising. Indeed, the number of the latter being so much greater, it is even more essential that the ranking system should not operate to discourage them than that it should stimulate the others. It is to this end that the grades are divided into classes. The grades as well as the classes being made numerically equal at each regrading, there is not at any time, counting out the officers and the unclassified and apprentice grades, over one-ninth of the industrial army in the lowest class, and most of this number are recent apprentices, all of whom expect to rise. Those who remain during the entire term of service in the lowest class are but a trifling fraction of the industrial army, and likely to be as deficient in sensibility to their position as in ability to better it.

“It is not even necessary that a worker should win promotion to a higher grade to have at least a taste of glory. While promotion requires a general excellence of record as a worker, honorable mention and various sorts of prizes are awarded for excellence less than sufficient for promotion, and also for special feats and single performances in the various industries. There are many minor distinctions of standing, not only within the grades but within the classes, each of which acts as a spur to the efforts of a group. It is intended that no form of merit shall wholly fail of recognition.

“As for actual neglect of work positively bad work, or other overt remissness on the part of men incapable of generous motives, the discipline of the industrial army is far too strict to allow anything whatever of the sort. A man able to do duty, and persistently refusing, is sentenced to solitary imprisonment on bread and water till he consents.

“The lowest grade of the officers of the industrial army, that of assistant foremen or lieutenants, is appointed out of men who have held their place for two years in the first class of the first grade. Where this leaves too large a range of choice, only the first group of this class are eligible. No one thus comes to the point of commanding men
until he is about thirty years old. After a man becomes an officer, his rating of course no longer depends on the efficiency of his own work, but on that of his men. The foremen are appointed from among the assistant foremen, by the same exercise of discretion limited to a small eligible class. In the appointments to the still higher grades another principle is introduced, which it would take too much time to explain now.

“Of course such a system of grading as I have described would have been impracticable applied to the small industrial concerns of your day, in some of which there were hardly enough employees to have left one apiece for the classes. You must remember that, under the national organization of labor, all industries are carried on by great bodies of men, many of your farms or shops being combined as one. It is also owing solely to the vast scale on which each industry is organized, with co-ordinate establishments in every part of the country, that we are able by exchanges and transfers to fit every man so nearly with the sort of work he can do best.

“And now, Mr. West, I will leave it to you, on the bare outline of its features which I have given, if those who need special incentives to do their best are likely to lack them under our system. Does it not seem to you that men who found themselves obliged, whether they wished or not, to work, would under such a system be strongly impelled to do their best?”

I replied that it seemed to me the incentives offered were, if any objection were to be made, too strong; that the pace set for the young men was too hot; and such, indeed, I would add with deference, still remains my opinion, now that by longer residence among you I become better acquainted with the whole subject.

Dr. Leete, however, desired me to reflect, and I am ready to say that it is perhaps a sufficient reply to my objection, that the worker’s livelihood is in no way dependent on his ranking, and anxiety for that never embitters his disappointments; that the working hours are short, the vacations regular, and that all emulation ceases at forty-five, with the attainment of middle life.

“There are two or three other points I ought to refer to,” he added, “to prevent your getting mistaken impressions. In the first place, you must understand that this system of preferment given the more efficient workers over the less so, in no way contravenes the fundamental idea of our social system, that all who do their best are equally deserving, whether that best be great or small. I have shown that the system is arranged to encourage the weaker as well as the stronger with the hope of rising, while the fact that the stronger are selected for the leaders is in no way a reflection upon the weaker, but in the interest of the common weal.

“Do not imagine, either, because emulation is given free play as an incentive under our system, that we deem it a motive likely to appeal to the nobler sort of men, or worthy of them. Such as these find their motives within, not without, and measure their duty by their own endowments, not by those of others. So long as their achievement is proportioned to their powers, they would consider it preposterous to expect praise or blame because it chanced to be great or small. To such natures emulation appears philosophically absurd, and despicable in a moral aspect by its substitution of envy for admiration, and exultation for regret, in one’s attitude toward the successes and the failures of others.

“But all men, even in the last year of the twentieth century, are not of this high order, and the incentives to endeavor requisite for those who are not must be of a sort adapted to their inferior natures. For these, then, emulation of the keenest edge is provided as a constant spur. Those who need this motive will feel it. Those who are above its influence do not need it.

“I should not fail to mention,” resumed the doctor, “that for those too deficient in mental or bodily strength to be fairly graded with the main body of workers, we have a separate grade, unconnected with the others,—a sort of invalid corps, the members of which are provided with a light class of tasks fitted to their strength. All our sick in mind and body, all our deaf and dumb, and lame and blind and crippled, and even our insane, belong to this invalid corps, and bear its insignia. The strongest often do nearly a man’s work, the feeblest, of course, nothing; but none who can do anything are willing quite to give up. In their lucid intervals, even our insane are eager to do what they can.”

“That is a pretty idea of the invalid corps,” I said. “Even a barbarian from the nineteenth century can appreciate that. It is a very graceful way of disguising charity, and must be grateful to the feelings of its recipients.”

“Charity!” repeated Dr. Leete. “Did you suppose that we consider the incapable class we are talking of objects of charity?”

“Why, naturally,” I said, “inasmuch as they are incapable of self-support.”

But here the doctor took me up quickly.
“Who is capable of self-support?” he demanded. “There is no such thing in a civilized society as self-support. In a state of society so barbarous as not even to know family cooperation, each individual may possibly support himself, though even then for a part of his life only; but from the moment that men begin to live together, and constitute even the rudest sort of society, self-support becomes impossible. As men grow more civilized, and the subdivision of occupations and services is carried out, a complex mutual dependence becomes the universal rule. Every man, however solitary may seem his occupation, is a member of a vast industrial partnership, as large as the nation, as large as humanity. The necessity of mutual dependence should imply the duty and guarantee of mutual support; and that it did not in your day constituted the essential cruelty and unreason of your system.”

“That may all be so,” I replied, “but it does not touch the case of those who are unable to contribute anything to the product of industry.”

“Surely I told you this morning, at least I thought I did,” replied Dr. Leete, “that the right of a man to maintenance at the nation’s table depends on the fact that he is a man, and not on the amount of health and strength he may have, so long as he does his best.”

“You said so,” I answered, “but I supposed the rule applied only to the workers of different ability. Does it also hold of those who can do nothing at all?”

“Are they not also men?”

“I am to understand, then, that the lame, the blind, the sick, and the impotent, are as well off as the most efficient and have the same income?”

“Certainly,” was the reply.

“The idea of charity on such a scale,” I answered, “would have made our most enthusiastic philanthropists gasp.”

“If you had a sick brother at home,” replied Dr. Leete, “unable to work, would you feed him on less dainty food, and lodge and clothe him more poorly, than yourself? More likely far, you would give him the preference; nor would you think of calling it charity. Would not the word, in that connection, fill you with indignation?”

“Of course,” I replied; “but the cases are not parallel. There is a sense, no doubt, in which all men are brothers; but this general sort of brotherhood is not to be compared, except for rhetorical purposes, to the brotherhood of blood, either as to its sentiment or its obligations.”

“There speaks the nineteenth century!” exclaimed Dr. Leete. “Ah, Mr. West, there is no doubt as to the length of time that you slept. If I were to give you, in one sentence, a key to what may seem the mysteries of our civilization as compared with that of your age, I should say that it is the fact that the solidarity of the race and the brotherhood of man, which to you were but fine phrases, are, to our thinking and feeling, ties as real and as vital as physical fraternity.

“But even setting that consideration aside, I do not see why it so surprises you that those who cannot work are conceded the full right to live on the produce of those who can. Even in your day, the duty of military service for the protection of the nation, to which our industrial service corresponds, while obligatory on those able to discharge it, did not operate to deprive of the privileges of citizenship those who were unable. They stayed at home, and were protected by those who fought, and nobody questioned their right to be, or thought less of them. So, now, the requirement of industrial service from those able to render it does not operate to deprive of the privileges of citizenship, which now implies the citizen’s maintenance, him who cannot work. The worker is not a citizen because he works, but works because he is a citizen. As you recognize the duty of the strong to fight for the weak, we, now that fighting is gone by, recognize his duty to work for him.

“A solution which leaves an unaccounted-for residuum is no solution at all; and our solution of the problem of human society would have been none at all had it left the lame, the sick, and the blind outside with the beasts, to fare as they might. Better far have left the strong and well unprovided for than these burdened ones, toward whom every heart must yearn, and for whom ease of mind and body should be provided, if for no others. Therefore it is, as I told you this morning, that the title of every man, woman, and child to the means of existence rests on no basis less plain, broad, and simple than the fact that they are fellows of one race-members of one human family. The only coin current is the image of God, and that is good for all we have.

“I think there is no feature of the civilization of your epoch so repugnant to modern ideas as the neglect with which you treated your dependent classes. Even if you had no pity, no feeling of brotherhood, how was it that you did not see that you were robbing the incapable class of their plain right in leaving them unprovided for?”
“I don’t quite follow you there,” I said. “I admit the claim of this class to our pity, but how could they who produced nothing claim a share of the product as a right?”

“How happened it,” was Dr. Leete’s reply, “that your workers were able to produce more than so many savages would have done? Was it not wholly on account of the heritage of the past knowledge and achievements of the race, the machinery of society, thousands of years in contriving, found by you ready-made to your hand? How did you come to be possessors of this knowledge and this machinery, which represent nine parts to one contributed by yourself in the value of your product? You inherited it, did you not? And were not these others, these unfortunate and crippled brothers whom you cast out, joint inheritors, co-heirs with you? What did you do with their share? Did you not rob them when you put them off with crusts, who were entitled to sit with the heirs, and did you not add insult to robbery when you called the crusts charity?

“Ah, Mr. West,” Dr. Leete continued, as I did not respond, “what I do not understand is, setting aside all considerations either of justice or brotherly feeling toward the crippled and defective, how the workers of your day could have had any heart for their work, knowing that their children, or grand-children, if unfortunate, would be deprived of the comforts and even necessities of life. It is a mystery how men with children could favor a system under which they were rewarded beyond those less endowed with bodily strength or mental power. For, by the same discrimination by which the father profited, the son, for whom he would give his life, being perchance weaker than others, might be reduced to crusts and beggary. How men dared leave children behind them, I have never been able to understand.”

Note.—Although in his talk on the previous evening Dr. Leete had emphasized the pains taken to enable every man to ascertain and follow his natural bent in choosing an occupation, it was not till I learned that the worker’s income is the same in all occupations that I realized how absolutely he may be counted on to do so, and thus, by selecting the harness which sets most lightly on himself, find that in which he can pull best. The failure of my age in any systematic or effective way to develop and utilize the natural aptitudes of men for the industries and intellectual avocations was one of the great wastes, as well as one of the most common causes of unhappiness in that time. The vast majority of my contemporaries, though nominally free to do so, never really chose their occupations at all, but were forced by circumstances into work for which they were relatively inefficient, because not naturally fitted for it. The rich, in this respect, had little advantage over the poor. The latter, indeed, being generally deprived of education, had no opportunity even to ascertain the natural aptitudes they might have, and on account of their poverty were unable to develop them by cultivation even when ascertained. The liberal and technical professions, except by favorable accident, were shut to them, to their own great loss and that of the nation. On the other hand, the well-to-do, although they could command education and opportunity, were scarcely less hampered by social prejudice, which forbade them to pursue manual avocations, even when adapted to them, and destined them, whether fit or unfit, to the professions, thus wasting many an excellent handicraftsman. Mercenary considerations, tempting men to pursue money-making occupations for which they were unfit, instead of less remunerative employments for which they were fit, were responsible for another vast perversion of talent. All these things now are changed. Equal education and opportunity must needs bring to light whatever aptitudes a man has, and neither social prejudices nor mercenary considerations hamper him in the choice of his life work.

Chapter 13

As Edith had promised he should do, Dr. Leete accompanied me to my bedroom when I retired, to instruct me as to the adjustment of the musical telephone. He showed how, by turning a screw, the volume of the music could be made to fill the room, or die away to an echo so faint and far that one could scarcely be sure whether he heard or imagined it. If, of two persons side by side, one desired to listen to music and the other to sleep, it could be made audible to one and inaudible to another.

“I should strongly advise you to sleep if you can to-night, Mr. West, in preference to listening to the finest tunes in the world,” the doctor said, after explaining these points. “In the trying experience you are just now passing through, sleep is a nerve tonic for which there is no substitute.”

Mindful of what had happened to me that very morning, I promised to heed his counsel.

“Very well,” he said, “then I will set the telephone at eight o’clock.”

“What do you mean?” I asked.

He explained that, by a clock-work combination, a person could arrange to be awakened at any hour by the music.
It began to appear, as has since fully proved to be the case, that I had left my tendency to insomnia behind me with the other discomforts of existence in the nineteenth century; for though I took no sleeping draught this time, yet, as the night before, I had no sooner touched the pillow than I was asleep.

I dreamed that I sat on the throne of the Abencerrages in the banqueting hall of the Alhambra, feasting my lords and generals, who next day were to follow the crescent against the Christian dogs of Spain. The air, cooled by the spray of fountains, was heavy with the scent of flowers. A band of Nautch girls, round-limbed and luscious-lipped, danced with voluptuous grace to the music of brazen and stringed instruments. Looking up to the latticed galleries, one caught a gleam now and then from the eye of some beauty of the royal harem, looking down upon the assembled flower of Moorish chivalry. Louder and louder clashed the cymbals, wilder and wilder grew the strain, till the blood of the desert race could no longer resist the martial delirium, and the swart nobles leaped to their feet; a thousand scimitars were bared, and the cry, “Allah il Allah!” shook the hall and awoke me, to find it broad daylight, and the room tingling with the electric music of the “Turkish Reveille.”

At the breakfast-table, when I told my host of my morning’s experience, I learned that it was not a mere chance that the piece of music which awakened me was a reveille. The airs played at one of the halls during the waking hours of the morning were always of an inspiring type.

“By the way,” I said, “I have not thought to ask you anything about the state of Europe. Have the societies of the Old World also been remodeled?”

“Yes,” replied Dr. Leete, “the great nations of Europe as well as Australia, Mexico, and parts of South America, are now organized industrially like the United States, which was the pioneer of the evolution. The peaceful relations of these nations are assured by a loose form of federal union of world-wide extent. An international council regulates the mutual intercourse and commerce of the members of the union and their joint policy toward the more backward races, which are gradually being educated up to civilized institutions. Complete autonomy within its own limits is enjoyed by every nation.”

“How do you carry on commerce without money?” I said. “In trading with other nations, you must use some sort of money, although you dispense with it in the internal affairs of the nation.”

“Oh, no; money is as superfluous in our foreign as in our internal relations. When foreign commerce was conducted by private enterprise, money was necessary to adjust it on account of the multifarious complexity of the transactions; but nowadays it is a function of the nations as units. There are thus only a dozen or so merchants in the world, and their business being supervised by the international council, a simple system of book accounts serves perfectly to regulate their dealings. Customs duties of every sort are of course superfluous. A nation simply does not import what its government does not think requisite for the general interest. Each nation has a bureau of foreign exchange, which manages its trading. For example, the American bureau, estimating such and such quantities of French goods necessary to America for a given year, sends the order to the French bureau, which in turn sends its order to our bureau. The same is done mutually by all the nations.”

“But how are the prices of foreign goods settled, since there is no competition?”

“The price at which one nation supplies another with goods,” replied Dr. Leete, “must be that at which it supplies its own citizens. So you see there is no danger of misunderstanding. Of course no nation is theoretically bound to supply another with the product of its own labor, but it is for the interest of all to exchange some commodities. If a nation is regularly supplying another with certain goods, notice is required from either side of any important change in the relation.”

“But what if a nation, having a monopoly of some natural product, should refuse to supply it to the others, or to one of them?”

“Such a case has never occurred, and could not without doing the refusing party vastly more harm than the others,” replied Dr. Leete. “In the first place, no favoritism could be legally shown. The law requires that each nation shall deal with the others, in all respects, on exactly the same footing. Such a course as you suggest would cut off the nation adopting it from the remainder of the earth for all purposes whatever. The contingency is one that need not give us much anxiety.”

“But,” said I, “supposing a nation, having a natural monopoly in some product of which it exports more than it consumes, should put the price away up, and thus, without cutting off the supply, make a profit out of its neighbors’ necessities? Its own citizens would of course have to pay the higher price on that commodity, but as a body would make more out of foreigners than they would be out of pocket themselves.”
“When you come to know how prices of all commodities are determined nowadays, you will perceive how impossible it is that they could be altered, except with reference to the amount or arduousness of the work required respectively to produce them,” was Dr. Leete’s reply. “This principle is an international as well as a national guarantee; but even without it the sense of community of interest, international as well as national, and the conviction of the folly of selfishness, are too deep nowadays to render possible such a piece of sharp practice as you apprehend. You must understand that we all look forward to an eventual unification of the world as one nation. That, no doubt, will be the ultimate form of society, and will realize certain economic advantages over the present federal system of autonomous nations. Meanwhile, however, the present system works so nearly perfectly that we are quite content to leave to posterity the completion of the scheme. There are, indeed, some who hold that it never will be completed, on the ground that the federal plan is not merely a provisional solution of the problem of human society, but the best ultimate solution.”

“How do you manage,” I asked, “when the books of any two nations do not balance? Supposing we import more from France than we export to her.”

“At the end of each year,” replied the doctor, “the books of every nation are examined. If France is found in our debt, probably we are in the debt of some nation which owes France, and so on with all the nations. The balances that remain after the accounts have been cleared by the international council should not be large under our system. Whatever they may be, the council requires them to be settled every few years, and may require their settlement at any time if they are getting too large; for it is not intended that any nation shall run largely in debt to another, lest feelings unfavorable to amity should be engendered. To guard further against this, the international council inspects the commodities interchanged by the nations, to see that they are of perfect quality.”

“But what are the balances finally settled with, seeing that you have no money?”

“In national staples; a basis of agreement as to what staples shall be accepted, and in what proportions, for settlement of accounts, being a preliminary to trade relations.”

“Emigration is another point I want to ask you about,” said I. “With every nation organized as a close industrial partnership, monopolizing all means of production in the country, the emigrant, even if he were permitted to land, would starve. I suppose there is no emigration nowadays.”

“On the contrary, there is constant emigration, by which I suppose you mean removal to foreign countries for permanent residence,” replied Dr. Leete. “It is arranged on a simple international arrangement of indemnities. For example, if a man at twenty-one emigrates from England to America, England loses all the expense of his maintenance and education, and America gets a workman for nothing. America accordingly makes England an allowance. The same principle, varied to suit the case, applies generally. If the man is near the term of his labor when he emigrates, the country receiving him has the allowance. As to imbecile persons, it is deemed best that each nation should be responsible for its own, and the emigration of such must be under full guarantees of support by his own nation. Subject to these regulations, the right of any man to emigrate at any time is unrestricted.”

“But how about mere pleasure trips; tours of observation? How can a stranger travel in a country whose people do not receive money, and are themselves supplied with the means of life on a basis not extended to him? His own credit card cannot, of course, be good in other lands. How does he pay his way?”

“An American credit card,” replied Dr. Leete, “is just as good in Europe as American gold used to be, and on precisely the same condition, namely, that it be exchanged into the currency of the country you are traveling in. An American in Berlin takes his credit card to the local office of the international council, and receives in exchange for the whole or part of it a German credit card, the amount being charged against the United States in favor of Germany on the international account.”

“Perhaps Mr. West would like to dine at the Elephant to-day,” said Edith, as we left the table.

“That is the name we give to the general dining-house in our ward,” explained her father. “Not only is our cooking done at the public kitchens, as I told you last night, but the service and quality of the meals are much more satisfactory if taken at the dining-house. The two minor meals of the day are usually taken at home, as not worth the trouble of going out; but it is general to go out to dine. We have not done so since you have been with us, from a notion that it would be better to wait till you had become a little more familiar with our ways. What do you think? Shall we take dinner at the dining-house to-day?”

I said that I should be very much pleased to do so.
Not long after, Edith came to me, smiling, and said:

“Last night, as I was thinking what I could do to make you feel at home until you came to be a little more used to
us and our ways, an idea occurred to me. What would you say if I were to introduce you to some very nice people
of your own times, whom I am sure you used to be well acquainted with?”

I replied, rather vaguely, that it would certainly be very agreeable, but I did not see how she was going to manage
it.

“Come with me,” was her smiling reply, “and see if I am not as good as my word.”

My susceptibility to surprise had been pretty well exhausted by the numerous shocks it had received, but it was
with some wonderment that I followed her into a room which I had not before entered. It was a small, cosy
apartment, walled with cases filled with books.

“Here are your friends,” said Edith, indicating one of the cases, and as my eye glanced over the names on the
backs of the volumes, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Shelley, Tennyson, Defoe, Dickens, Thackeray, Hugo,
Hawthorne, Irving, and a score of other great writers of my time and all time, I understood her meaning. She had
indeed made good her promise in a sense compared with which its literal fulfillment would have been a
disappointment. She had introduced me to a circle of friends whom the century that had elapsed since last I
communed with them had aged as little as it had myself. Their spirit was as high, their wit as keen, their laughter
and their tears as contagious, as when their speech had whiled away the hours of a former century. Lonely I was
not and could not be more, with this goodly companionship, however wide the gulf of years that gaped between
me and my old life.

“You are glad I brought you here,” exclaimed Edith, radiant, as she read in my face the success of her experiment.
“It was a good idea, was it not, Mr. West? How stupid in me not to think of it before! I will leave you now with
your old friends, for I know there will be no company for you like them just now; but remember you must not let
old friends make you quite forget new ones!” and with that smiling caution she left me.

Attracted by the most familiar of the names before me, I laid my hand on a volume of Dickens, and sat down to
read. He had been my prime favorite among the bookwriters of the century,—I mean the nineteenth century,—and
a week had rarely passed in my old life during which I had not taken up some volume of his works to while away
an idle hour. Any volume with which I had been familiar would have produced an extraordinary impression, read
under my present circumstances, but my exceptional familiarity with Dickens, and his consequent power to call up
the associations of my former life, gave to his writings an effect no others could have had, to intensify, by force of
contrast, my appreciation of the strangeness of my present environment. However new and astonishing one’s
surroundings, the tendency is to become a part of them so soon that almost from the first the power to see them
objectively and fully measure their strangeness, is lost. That power, already dulled in my case, the pages of
Dickens restored by carrying me back through their associations to the standpoint of my former life.

With a clearness which I had not been able before to attain, I saw now the past and present, like contrasting
pictures, side by side.

The genius of the great novelist of the nineteenth century, like that of Homer, might indeed defy time; but the
setting of his pathetic tales, the misery of the poor, the wrongs of power, the pitiless cruelty of the system of
society, had passed away as utterly as Circe and the sirens, Charybdis and Cyclops.

During the hour or two that I sat there with Dickens open before me, I did not actually read more than a couple of
pages. Every paragraph, every phrase, brought up some new aspect of the world-transformation which had taken
place, and led my thoughts on long and widely ramifying excursions. As meditating thus in Dr. Leete’s library I
gradually attained a more clear and coherent idea of the prodigious spectacle which I had been so strangely
enabled to view, I was filled with a deepening wonder at the seeming capriciousness of the fate that had given to
one who so little deserved it, or seemed in any way set apart for it, the power alone among his contemporaries to
stand upon the earth in this latter day. I had neither foreseen the new world nor toiled for it, as many about me
had done regardless of the scorn of fools or the misconstruction of the good. Surely it would have been more in
accordance with the fitness of things had one of those prophetic and strenuous souls been enabled to see the
travail of his soul and be satisfied; he, for example, a thousand times rather than I, who, having beheld in a vision
the world I looked on, sang of it in words that again and again, during these last wondrous days, had rung in my
mind:

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be
Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags were furled.
In the Parliament of man, the federation of the world.

Then the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.
For I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns.

What though, in his old age, he momentarily lost faith in his own prediction, as prophets in their hours of depression and doubt generally do; the words had remained eternal testimony to the seership of a poet’s heart, the insight that is given to faith.

I was still in the library when some hours later Dr. Leete sought me there. “Edith told me of her idea,” he said, “and I thought it an excellent one. I had a little curiosity what writer you would first turn to. Ah, Dickens! You admired him, then! That is where we moderns agree with you. Judged by our standards, he outshines all the writers of his age, not because his literary genius was highest, but because his great heart beat for the poor, because he made the cause of the victims of society his own, and devoted his pen to exposing its cruelties and shams. No man of his time did so much as he to turn men’s minds to the wrong and wretchedness of the old order of things, and open their eyes to the necessity of the great change that was coming, although he himself did not clearly foresee it.”

Chapter 14

A heavy rainstorm came up during the day, and I had concluded that the condition of the streets would be such that my hosts would have to give up the idea of going out to dinner, although the dining-hall I had understood to be quite near. I was much surprised when at the dinner hour the ladies appeared prepared to go out, but without either rubbers or umbrellas.

The mystery was explained when we found ourselves on the street, for a continuous waterproof covering had been let down so as to inclose the sidewalk and turn it into a well lighted and perfectly dry corridor, which was filled with a stream of ladies and gentlemen dressed for dinner. At the corners the entire open space was similarly roofed in. Edith Leete, with whom I walked, seemed much interested in learning what appeared to be entirely new to her, that in the stormy weather the streets of the Boston of my day had been impassable, except to persons protected by umbrellas, boots, and heavy clothing. “Were sidewalk coverings not used at all?” she asked. They were used, I explained, but in a scattered and utterly unsystematic way, being private enterprises. She said to me that at the present time all the streets were provided against inclement weather in the manner I saw, the apparatus being rolled out of the way when it was unnecessary. She intimated that it would be considered an extraordinary imbecility to permit the weather to have any effect on the social movements of the people.

Dr. Leete, who was walking ahead, overhearing something of our talk, turned to say that the difference between the age of individualism and that of concert was well characterized by the fact that, in the nineteenth century, when it rained, the people of Boston put up three hundred thousand umbrellas over as many heads, and in the twentieth century they put up one umbrella over all the heads.

As we walked on, Edith said, “The private umbrella is father’s favorite figure to illustrate the old way when everybody lived for himself and his family. There is a nineteenth century painting at the Art Gallery representing a crowd of people in the rain, each one holding his umbrella over himself and his wife, and giving his neighbors the drippings, which he claims must have been meant by the artist as a satire on his times.”

We now entered a large building into which a stream of people was pouring. I could not see the front, owing to the awning, but, if in correspondence with the interior, which was even finer than the store I visited the day before, it would have been magnificent. My companion said that the sculptured group over the entrance was especially admired. Going up a grand staircase we walked some distance along a broad corridor with many doors opening upon it. At one of these, which bore my host’s name, we turned in, and I found myself in an elegant dining-room containing a table for four. Windows opened on a courtyard where a fountain played to a great height and music made the air electric.

“You seem at home here,” I said, as we seated ourselves at table, and Dr. Leete touched an annunciator.
“This is, in fact, a part of our house, slightly detached from the rest,” he replied. “Every family in the ward has a room set apart in this great building for its permanent and exclusive use for a small annual rental. For transient guests and individuals there is accommodation on another floor. If we expect to dine here, we put in our orders the night before, selecting anything in market, according to the daily reports in the papers. The meal is as expensive or as simple as we please, though of course everything is vastly cheaper as well as better than it would be prepared at home. There is actually nothing which our people take more interest in than the perfection of the catering and cooking done for them, and I admit that we are a little vain of the success that has been attained by this branch of the service. Ah, my dear Mr. West, though other aspects of your civilization were more tragical, I can imagine that none could have been more depressing than the poor dinners you had to eat, that is, all of you who had not great wealth."

“You would have found none of us disposed to disagree with you on that point,” I said.

The waiter, a fine-looking young fellow, wearing a slightly distinctive uniform, now made his appearance. I observed him closely, as it was the first time I had been able to study particularly the bearing of one of the enlisted members of the industrial army. This young man, I knew from what I had been told, must be highly educated, and the equal, socially and in all respects, of those he served. But it was perfectly evident that to neither side was the situation in the slightest degree embarrassing. Dr. Leete addressed the young man in a tone devoid, of course, as any gentleman’s would be, of superciliousness, but at the same time not in any way deprecatory, while the manner of the young man was simply that of a person intent on discharging correctly the task he was engaged in, equally without familiarity or obsequiousness. It was, in fact, the manner of a soldier on duty, but without the military stiffness. As the youth left the room, I said, “I cannot get over my wonder at seeing a young man like that serving so contentedly in a menial position.”

“What is that word ‘menial’? I never heard it,” said Edith.

“It is obsolete now,” remarked her father. “If I understand it rightly, it applied to persons who performed particularly disagreeable and unpleasant tasks for others, and carried with it an implication of contempt. Was it not so, Mr. West?”

“That is about it,” I said. “Personal service, such as waiting on tables, was considered menial, and held in such contempt, in my day, that persons of culture and refinement would suffer hardship before condescending to it.”

“What a strangely artificial idea,” exclaimed Mrs. Leete wonderingly.

“And yet these services had to be rendered,” said Edith.

“Of course,” I replied. “But we imposed them on the poor, and those who had no alternative but starvation.”

“And increased the burden you imposed on them by adding your contempt,” remarked Dr. Leete.

“I don’t think I clearly understand,” said Edith. “Do you mean that you permitted people to do things for you which you despised them for doing, or that you accepted services from them which you would have been unwilling to render them? You can’t surely mean that, Mr. West?”

I was obliged to tell her that the fact was just as she had stated. Dr. Leete, however, came to my relief.

“To understand why Edith is surprised,” he said, “you must know that nowadays it is an axiom of ethics that to accept a service from another which we would be unwilling to return in kind, if need were, is like borrowing with the intention of not repaying, while to enforce such a service by taking advantage of the poverty or necessity of a person would be an outrage like forcible robbery. It is the worst thing about any system which divides men, or allows them to be divided, into classes and castes, that it weakens the sense of a common humanity. Unequal distribution of wealth, and, still more effectually, unequal opportunities of education and culture, divided society in your day into classes which in many respects regarded each other as distinct races. There is not, after all, such a difference as might appear between our ways of looking at this question of service. Ladies and gentlemen of the cultured class in your day would no more have permitted persons of their own class to render them services they would scorn to return than we would permit anybody to do so. The poor and the uncultured, however, they looked upon as of another kind from themselves. The equal wealth and equal opportunities of culture which all persons now enjoy have simply made us all members of one class, which corresponds to the most fortunate class with you. Until this equality of condition had come to pass, the idea of the solidarity of humanity, the brotherhood of all men, could never have become the real conviction and practical principle of action it is nowadays. In your day the same phrases were indeed used, but they were phrases merely.”
“Do the waiters, also, volunteer?”

“No,” replied Dr. Leete. “The waiters are young men in the unclassified grade of the industrial army who are assignable to all sorts of miscellaneous occupations not requiring special skill. Waiting on table is one of these, and every young recruit is given a taste of it. I myself served as a waiter for several months in this very dining-house some forty years ago. Once more you must remember that there is recognized no sort of difference between the dignity of the different sorts of work required by the nation. The individual is never regarded, nor regards himself, as the servant of those he serves, nor is he in any way dependent upon them. It is always the nation which he is serving. No difference is recognized between a waiter’s functions and those of any other worker. The fact that his is a personal service is indifferent from our point of view. So is a doctor’s. I should as soon expect our waiter today to look down on me because I served him as a doctor, as think of looking down on him because he serves me as a waiter.”

After dinner my entertainers conducted me about the building, of which the extent, the magnificent architecture and richness of embellishment, astonished me. It seemed that it was not merely a dining-hall, but likewise a great pleasure-house and social rendezvous of the quarter, and no appliance of entertainment or recreation seemed lacking.

“You find illustrated here,” said Dr. Leete, when I had expressed my admiration, “what I said to you in our first conversation, when you were looking out over the city, as to the splendor of our public and common life as compared with the simplicity of our private and home life, and the contrast which, in this respect, the twentieth bears to the nineteenth century. To save ourselves useless burdens, we have as little gear about us at home as is consistent with comfort, but the social side of our life is ornate and luxurious beyond anything the world ever knew before. All the industrial and professional guilds have clubhouses as extensive as this, as well as country, mountain, and seaside houses for sport and rest in vacations.”

NOTE. In the latter part of the nineteenth century it became a practice of needy young men at some of the colleges of the country to earn a little money for their term bills by serving as waiters on tables at hotels during the long summer vacation. It was claimed, in reply to critics who expressed the prejudices of the time in asserting that persons voluntarily following such an occupation could not be gentlemen, that they were entitled to praise for vindicating, by their example, the dignity of all honest and necessary labor. The use of this argument illustrates a common confusion in thought on the part of my former contemporaries. The business of waiting on tables was in no more need of defense than most of the other ways of getting a living in that day, but to talk of dignity attaching to labor of any sort under the system then prevailing was absurd. There is no way in which selling labor for the highest price it will fetch is more dignified than selling goods for what can be got. Both were commercial transactions to be judged by the commercial standard. By setting a price in money on his service, the worker accepted the money measure for it, and renounced all clear claim to be judged by any other. The sordid taint which this necessity imparted to the noblest and the highest sorts of service was bitterly resented by generous souls, but there was no evading it. There was no exemption, however transcendent the quality of one’s service, from the necessity of haggling for its price in the market-place. The physician must sell his healing and the apostle his preaching like the rest. The prophet, who had guessed the meaning of God, must dicker for the price of the revelation, and the poet hawk his visions in printers’ row. If I were asked to name the most distinguishing felicity of this age, as compared to that in which I first saw the light, I should say that to me it seems to consist in the dignity you have given to labor by refusing to set a price upon it and abolishing the market-place forever. By requiring of every man his best you have made God his task-master, and by making honor the sole reward of achievement you have imparted to all service the distinction peculiar in my day to the soldier’s.

Chapter 15

When, in the course of our tour of inspection, we came to the library, we succumbed to the temptation of the luxurious leather chairs with which it was furnished, and sat down in one of the book-lined alcoves to rest and chat awhile.[1]

“Edith tells me that you have been in the library all the morning,” said Mrs. Leete. “Do you know, it seems to me, Mr. West, that you are the most enviable of mortals.”

“I should like to know just why,” I replied.
Because the books of the last hundred years will be new to you," she answered. "You will have so much of the most absorbing literature to read as to leave you scarcely time for meals these five years to come. Ah, what would I give if I had not already read Berrian’s novels."

"Or Nesmyth’s, mamma," added Edith.

"Yes, or Oates’ poems, or ‘Past and Present,’ or, ‘In the Beginning,’ or—oh, I could name a dozen books, each worth a year of one’s life," declared Mrs. Leete, enthusiastically.

"I judge, then, that there has been some notable literature produced in this century."

"Yes," said Dr. Leete. "It has been an era of unexampled intellectual splendor. Probably humanity never before passed through a moral and material evolution, at once so vast in its scope and brief in its time of accomplishment, as that from the old order to the new in the early part of this century. When men came to realize the greatness of the felicity which had befallen them, and that the change through which they had passed was not merely an improvement in details of their condition, but the rise of the race to a new plane of existence with an illimitable vista of progress, their minds were affected in all their faculties with a stimulus, of which the outburst of the mediaeval renaissance offers a suggestion but faint indeed. There ensued an era of mechanical invention, scientific discovery, art, musical and literary productiveness to which no previous age of the world offers anything comparable."

"By the way," said I, "talking of literature, how are books published now? Is that also done by the nation?"

"Certainly."

"But how do you manage it? Does the government publish everything that is brought it as a matter of course, at the public expense, or does it exercise a censorship and print only what it approves?"

"Neither way. The printing department has no censorial powers. It is bound to print all that is offered it, but prints it only on condition that the author defray the first cost out of his credit. He must pay for the privilege of the public ear, and if he has any message worth hearing we consider that he will be glad to do it. Of course, if incomes were unequal, as in the old times, this rule would enable only the rich to be authors, but the resources of citizens being equal, it merely measures the strength of the author’s motive. The cost of an edition of an average book can be saved out of a year’s credit by the practice of economy and some sacrifices. The book, on being published, is placed on sale by the nation."

"The author receiving a royalty on the sales as with us, I suppose," I suggested.

"Not as with you, certainly," replied Dr. Leete, "but nevertheless in one way. The price of every book is made up of the cost of its publication with a royalty for the author. The author fixes this royalty at any figure he pleases. Of course if he puts it unreasonably high it is his own loss, for the book will not sell. The amount of this royalty is set to his credit and he is discharged from other service to the nation for so long a period as this credit at the rate of allowance for the support of citizens shall suffice to support him. If his book be moderately successful, he has thus a furlough for several months, a year, two or three years, and if he in the mean time produces other successful work, the remission of service is extended so far as the sale of that may justify. An author of much acceptance succeeds in supporting himself by his pen during the entire period of service, and the degree of any writer’s literary ability, as determined by the popular voice, is thus the measure of the opportunity given him to devote his time to literature. In this respect the outcome of our system is not very dissimilar to that of yours, but there are two notable differences. In the first place, the universally high level of education nowadays gives the popular verdict a conclusiveness on the real merit of literary work which in your day it was as far as possible from having. In the second place, there is no such thing now as favoritism of any sort to interfere with the recognition of true merit. Every author has precisely the same facilities for bringing his work before the popular tribunal. To judge from the complaints of the writers of your day, this absolute equality of opportunity would have been greatly prized."

"In the recognition of merit in other fields of original genius, such as music, art, invention, design," I said, "I suppose you follow a similar principle."

"Yes," he replied, "although the details differ. In art, for example, as in literature, the people are the sole judges. They vote upon the acceptance of statues and paintings for the public buildings, and their favorable verdict carries with it the artist’s remission from other tasks to devote himself to his vocation. On copies of his work disposed of, he also derives the same advantage as the author on sales of his books. In all these lines of original genius the plan pursued is the same to offer a free field to aspirants, and as soon as exceptional talent is
recognized to release it from all trammels and let it have free course. The remission of other service in these cases is not intended as a gift or reward, but as the means of obtaining more and higher service. Of course there are various literary, art, and scientific institutes to which membership comes to the famous and is greatly prized. The highest of all honors in the nation, higher than the presidency, which calls merely for good sense and devotion to duty, is the red ribbon awarded by the vote of the people to the great authors, artists, engineers, physicians, and inventors of the generation. Not over a certain number wear it at any one time, though every bright young fellow in the country loses innumerable nights’ sleep dreaming of it. I even did myself.”

“Just as if mamma and I would have thought any more of you with it,” exclaimed Edith; “not that it isn’t, of course, a very fine thing to have.”

“You had no choice, my dear, but to take your father as you found him and make the best of him,” Dr. Leete replied; “but as for your mother, there, she would never have had me if I had not assured her that I was bound to get the red ribbon or at least the blue.”

On this extravagance Mrs. Leete’s only comment was a smile.

“How about periodicals and newspapers?” I said. “I won’t deny that your book publishing system is a considerable improvement on ours, both as to its tendency to encourage a real literary vocation, and, quite as important, to discourage mere scribblers; but I don’t see how it can be made to apply to magazines and newspapers. It is very well to make a man pay for publishing a book, because the expense will be only occasional; but no man could afford the expense of publishing a newspaper every day in the year. It took the deep pockets of our private capitalists to do that, and often exhausted even them before the returns came in. If you have newspapers at all, they must, I fancy, be published by the government at the public expense, with government editors, reflecting government opinions. Now, if your system is so perfect that there is never anything to criticize in the conduct of affairs, this arrangement may answer. Otherwise I should think the lack of an independent unofficial medium for the expression of public opinion would have most unfortunate results. Confess, Dr. Leete, that a free newspaper press, with all that it implies, was a redeeming incident of the old system when capital was in private hands, and that you have to set off the loss of that against your gains in other respects.”

“I am afraid I can’t give you even that consolation,” replied Dr. Leete, laughing. “In the first place, Mr. West, the newspaper press is by no means the only or, as we look at it, the best vehicle for serious criticism of public affairs. To us, the judgments of your newspapers on such themes seem generally to have been crude and flippant, as well as deeply tainted with prejudice and bitterness. In so far as they may be taken as expressing public opinion, they give an unfavorable impression of the popular intelligence, while so far as they may have formed public opinion, the nation was not to be felicitated. Nowadays, when a citizen desires to make a serious impression upon the public mind as to any aspect of public affairs, he comes out with a book or pamphlet, published as other books are. But this is not because we lack newspapers and magazines, or that they lack the most absolute freedom. The newspaper press is organized so as to be a more perfect expression of public opinion than it possibly could be in your day, when private capital controlled and managed it primarily as a money-making business, and secondarily only as a mouthpiece for the people.”

“But,” said I, “if the government prints the papers at the public expense, how can it fail to control their policy? Who appoints the editors, if not the government?”

“The government does not pay the expense of the papers, nor appoint their editors, nor in any way exert the slightest influence on their policy,” replied Dr. Leete. “The people who take the paper pay the expense of its publication, choose its editor, and remove him when unsatisfactory. You will scarcely say, I think, that such a newspaper press is not a free organ of popular opinion.”

“Decidedly I shall not,” I replied, “but how is it practicable?”

“Nothing could be simpler. Supposing some of my neighbors or myself think we ought to have a newspaper reflecting our opinions, and devoted especially to our locality, trade, or profession. We go about among the people till we get the names of such a number that their annual subscriptions will meet the cost of the paper, which is little or big according to the largeness of its constituency. The amount of the subscriptions marked off the credits of the citizens guarantees the nation against loss in publishing the paper, its business, you understand, being that of a publisher purely, with no option to refuse the duty required. The subscribers to the paper now elect somebody as editor, who, if he accepts the office, is discharged from other service during his incumbency. Instead of paying a salary to him, as in your day, the subscribers pay the nation an indemnity equal to the cost of his support for taking him away from the general service. He manages the paper just as one of your editors did, except that he has no counting-room to obey, or interests of private capital as against the public good to defend. At the end of the first year, the subscribers for the next either re-elect the former editor or choose any one else to his place. An able
editor, of course, keeps his place indefinitely. As the subscription list enlarges, the funds of the paper increase, and it is improved by the securing of more and better contributors, just as your papers were."

“How is the staff of contributors recompensed, since they cannot be paid in money?”

“The editor settles with them the price of their wares. The amount is transferred to their individual credit from the guarantee credit of the paper, and a remission of service is granted the contributor for a length of time corresponding to the amount credited him, just as to other authors. As to magazines, the system is the same. Those interested in the prospectus of a new periodical pledge enough subscriptions to run it for a year; select their editor, who recompenses his contributors just as in the other case, the printing bureau furnishing the necessary force and material for publication, as a matter of course. When an editor’s services are no longer desired, if he cannot earn the right to his time by other literary work, he simply resumes his place in the industrial army. I should add that, though ordinarily the editor is elected only at the end of the year, and as a rule is continued in office for a term of years, in case of any sudden change he should give to the tone of the paper, provision is made for taking the sense of the subscribers as to his removal at any time.”

“However earnestly a man may long for leisure for purposes of study or meditation,” I remarked, “he cannot get out of the harness, if I understand you rightly, except in these two ways you have mentioned. He must either by literary, artistic, or inventive productiveness indemnify the nation for the loss of his services, or must get a sufficient number of other people to contribute to such an indemnity.”

“It is most certain,” replied Dr. Leete, “that no able-bodied man nowadays can evade his share of work and live on the toil of others, whether he calls himself by the fine name of student or confesses to being simply lazy. At the same time our system is elastic enough to give free play to every instinct of human nature which does not aim at dominating others or living on the fruit of others’ labor. There is not only the remission by indemnification but the remission by abnegation. Any man in his thirty-third year, his term of service being then half done, can obtain an honorable discharge from the army, provided he accepts for the rest of his life one half the rate of maintenance other citizens receive. It is quite possible to live on this amount, though one must forego the luxuries and elegancies of life, with some, perhaps, of its comforts.”

When the ladies retired that evening, Edith brought me a book and said:

“If you should be wakeful to-night, Mr. West, you might be interested in looking over this story by Berrian. It is considered his masterpiece, and will at least give you an idea what the stories nowadays are like.”

I sat up in my room that night reading “Penthesilia” till it grew gray in the east, and did not lay it down till I had finished it. And yet let no admirer of the great romancer of the twentieth century resent my saying that at the first reading what most impressed me was not so much what was in the book as what was left out of it. The story-writers of my day would have deemed the making of bricks without straw a light task compared with the construction of a romance from which should be excluded all effects drawn from the contrasts of wealth and poverty, education and ignorance, coarseness and refinement, high and low, all motives drawn from social pride and ambition, the desire of being richer or the fear of being poorer, together with sordid anxieties of any sort for one’s self or others; a romance in which there should, indeed, be love galore, but love unfretted by artificial barriers created by differences of station or possessions, owning no other law but that of the heart. The reading of “Penthesilia” was of more value than almost any amount of explanation would have been in giving me something like a general impression of the social aspect of the twentieth century. The information Dr. Leete had imparted was indeed extensive as to facts, but they had affected my mind as so many separate impressions, which I had as yet succeeded but imperfectly in making cohere. Berrian put them together for me in a picture.

[1] I cannot sufficiently celebrate the glorious liberty that reigns in the public libraries of the twentieth century as compared with the intolerable management of those of the nineteenth century, in which the books were jealously railed away from the people, and obtainable only at an expenditure of time and red tape calculated to discourage any ordinary taste for literature.

Chapter 16

Next morning I rose somewhat before the breakfast hour. As I descended the stairs, Edith stepped into the hall from the room which had been the scene of the morning interview between us described some chapters back.
“Ah!” she exclaimed, with a charmingly arch expression, “you thought to slip out unbeknown for another of those solitary morning rambles which have such nice effects on you. But you see I am up too early for you this time. You are fairly caught.”

“You discredit the efficacy of your own cure,” I said, “by supposing that such a ramble would now be attended with bad consequences.”

“I am very glad to hear that,” she said. “I was in here arranging some flowers for the breakfast table when I heard you come down, and fancied I detected something surreptitious in your step on the stairs.”

“You did me injustice,” I replied. “I had no idea of going out at all.”

Despite her effort to convey an impression that my interception was purely accidental, I had at the time a dim suspicion of what I afterwards learned to be the fact, namely, that this sweet creature, in pursuance of her self-assumed guardianship over me, had risen for the last two or three mornings at an unheard-of hour, to insure against the possibility of my wandering off alone in case I should be affected as on the former occasion. Receiving permission to assist her in making up the breakfast bouquet, I followed her into the room from which she had emerged.

“Are you sure,” she asked, “that you are quite done with those terrible sensations you had that morning?”

“I can’t say that I do not have times of feeling decidedly queer,” I replied, “moments when my personal identity seems an open question. It would be too much to expect after my experience that I should not have such sensations occasionally, but as for being carried entirely off my feet, as I was on the point of being that morning, I think the danger is past.”

“I shall never forget how you looked that morning,” she said.

“If you had merely saved my life,” I continued, “I might, perhaps, find words to express my gratitude, but it was my reason you saved, and there are no words that would not belittle my debt to you.” I spoke with emotion, and her eyes grew suddenly moist.

“It is too much to believe all this,” she said, “but it is very delightful to hear you say it. What I did was very little. I was very much distressed for you, I know. Father never thinks anything ought to astonish us when it can be explained scientifically, as I suppose this long sleep of yours can be, but even to fancy myself in your place makes my head swim. I know that I could not have borne it at all.”

“That would depend,” I replied, “on whether an angel came to support you with her sympathy in the crisis of your condition, as one came to me.” If my face at all expressed the feelings I had a right to have toward this sweet and lovely young girl, who had played so angelic a role toward me, its expression must have been very worshipful just then. The expression or the words, or both together, caused her now to drop her eyes with a charming blush.

“For the matter of that,” I said, “if your experience has not been as startling as mine, it must have been rather overwhelming to see a man belonging to a strange century, and apparently a hundred years dead, raised to life.”

“It seemed indeed strange beyond any describing at first,” she said, “but when we began to put ourselves in your place, and realize how much stranger it must seem to you, I fancy we forgot our own feelings a good deal, at least I know I did. It seemed then not so much astounding as interesting and touching beyond anything ever heard of before.”

“But does it not come over you as astounding to sit at table with me, seeing who I am?”

“You must remember that you do not seem so strange to us as we must to you,” she answered. “We belong to a future of which you could not form an idea, a generation of which you knew nothing until you saw us. But you belong to a generation of which our forefathers were a part. We know all about it; the names of many of its members are household words with us. We have made a study of your ways of living and thinking; nothing you say or do surprises us, while we say and do nothing which does not seem strange to you. So you see, Mr. West, that if you feel that you can, in time, get accustomed to us, you must not be surprised that from the first we have scarcely found you strange at all.”

“I had not thought of it in that way,” I replied. “There is indeed much in what you say. One can look back a thousand years easier than forward fifty. A century is not so very long a retrospect. I might have known your great-grand-parents. Possibly I did. Did they live in Boston?”
“I believe so.”

“You are not sure, then?”

“Yes,” she replied. “Now I think, they did.”

“I had a very large circle of acquaintances in the city.” I said. “It is not unlikely that I knew or knew of some of them. Perhaps I may have known them well. Wouldn’t it be interesting if I should chance to be able to tell you all about your great-grandfather, for instance?”

“Very interesting.”

“Do you know your genealogy well enough to tell me who your forbears were in the Boston of my day?”

“Oh, yes.”

“Perhaps, then, you will some time tell me what some of their names were.”

She was engrossed in arranging a troublesome spray of green, and did not reply at once. Steps upon the stairway indicated that the other members of the family were descending.

“Perhaps, some time,” she said.

After breakfast, Dr. Leete suggested taking me to inspect the central warehouse and observe actually in operation the machinery of distribution, which Edith had described to me. As we walked away from the house I said, “It is now several days that I have been living in your household on a most extraordinary footing, or rather on none at all. I have not spoken of this aspect of my position before because there were so many other aspects yet more extraordinary. But now that I am beginning a little to feel my feet under me, and to realize that, however I came here, I am here, and must make the best of it, I must speak to you on this point.”

“As for your being a guest in my house,” replied Dr. Leete, “I pray you not to begin to be uneasy on that point, for I mean to keep you a long time yet. With all your modesty, you can but realize that such a guest as yourself is an acquisition not willingly to be parted with.”

“Thanks, doctor,” I said. “It would be absurd, certainly, for me to affect any oversensitiveness about accepting the temporary hospitality of one to whom I owe it that I am not still awaiting the end of the world in a living tomb. But if I am to be a permanent citizen of this century I must have some standing in it. Now, in my time a person more or less entering the world, however he got in, would not be noticed in the unorganized throng of men, and might make a place for himself anywhere he chose if he were strong enough. But nowadays everybody is a part of a system with a distinct place and function. I am outside the system, and don’t see how I can get in; there seems no way to get in, except to be born in or to come in as an emigrant from some other system.”

Dr. Leete laughed heartily.

“I admit,” he said, “that our system is defective in lacking provision for cases like yours, but you see nobody anticipated additions to the world except by the usual process. You need, however, have no fear that we shall be unable to provide both a place and occupation for you in due time. You have as yet been brought in contact only with the members of my family, but you must not suppose that I have kept your secret. On the contrary, your case, even before your resuscitation, and vastly more since has excited the profoundest interest in the nation. In view of your precarious nervous condition, it was thought best that I should take exclusive charge of you at first, and that you should, through me and my family, receive some general idea of the sort of world you had come back to before you began to make the acquaintance generally of its inhabitants. As to finding a function for you in society, there was no hesitation as to what that would be. Few of us have it in our power to confer so great a service on the nation as you will be able to when you leave my roof, which, however, you must not think of doing for a good time yet.”

“What can I possibly do?” I asked. “Perhaps you imagine I have some trade, or art, or special skill. I assure you I have none whatever. I never earned a dollar in my life, or did an hour’s work. I am strong, and might be a common laborer, but nothing more.”

“If that were the most efficient service you were able to render the nation, you would find that avocation considered quite as respectable as any other,” replied Dr. Leete; “but you can do something else better. You are easily the master of all our historians on questions relating to the social condition of the latter part of the nineteenth century, to us one of the most absorbingly interesting periods of history: and whenever in due time you
have sufficiently familiarized yourself with our institutions, and are willing to teach us something concerning those of your day, you will find an historical lectureship in one of our colleges awaiting you."

“Very good! very good indeed,” I said, much relieved by so practical a suggestion on a point which had begun to trouble me. “If your people are really so much interested in the nineteenth century, there will indeed be an occupation ready-made for me. I don’t think there is anything else that I could possibly earn my salt at, but I certainly may claim without conceit to have some special qualifications for such a post as you describe.”

Chapter 17

I found the processes at the warehouse quite as interesting as Edith had described them, and became even enthusiastic over the truly remarkable illustration which is seen there of the prodigiously multiplied efficiency which perfect organization can give to labor. It is like a gigantic mill, into the hopper of which goods are being constantly poured by the train-load and shipload, to issue at the other end in packages of pounds and ounces, yards and inches, pints and gallons, corresponding to the infinitely complex personal needs of half a million people. Dr. Leete, with the assistance of data furnished by me as to the way goods were sold in my day, figured out some astounding results in the way of the economies effected by the modern system.

As we set out homeward, I said: “After what I have seen to-day, together with what you have told me, and what I learned under Miss Leete’s tutelage at the sample store, I have a tolerably clear idea of your system of distribution, and how it enables you to dispense with a circulating medium. But I should like very much to know something more about your system of production. You have told me in general how your industrial army is levied and organized, but who directs its efforts? What supreme authority determines what shall be done in every department, so that enough of everything is produced and yet no labor wasted? It seems to me that this must be a wonderfully complex and difficult function, requiring very unusual endowments.”

“Does it indeed seem so to you?” responded Dr. Leete. “I assure you that it is nothing of the kind, but on the other hand so simple, and depending on principles so obvious and easily applied, that the functionaries at Washington to whom it is trusted require to be nothing more than men of fair abilities to discharge it to the entire satisfaction of the nation. The machine which they direct is indeed a vast one, but so logical in its principles and direct and simple in its workings, that it all but runs itself; and nobody but a fool could derange it, as I think you will agree after a few words of explanation. Since you already have a pretty good idea of the working of the distributive system, let us begin at that end. Even in your day statisticians were able to tell you the number of yards of cotton, velvet, woolen, the number of barrels of flour, potatoes, butter, number of pairs of shoes, hats, and umbrellas annually consumed by the nation. Owing to the fact that production was in private hands, and that there was no way of getting statistics of actual distribution, these figures were not exact, but they were nearly so. Now that every pin which is given out from a national warehouse is recorded, of course the figures of consumption for any week, month, or year, in the possession of the department of distribution at the end of that period, are precise. On these figures, allowing for tendencies to increase or decrease and for any special causes likely to affect demand, the estimates, say for a year ahead, are based. These estimates, with a proper margin for security, having been accepted by the general administration, the responsibility of the distributive department ceases until the goods are delivered to it. I speak of the estimates being furnished for an entire year ahead, but in reality they cover that much time only in case of the great staples for which the demand can be calculated on as steady. In the great majority of smaller industries for the product of which popular taste fluctuates, and novelty is frequently required, production is kept barely ahead of consumption, the distributive department furnishing frequent estimates based on the weekly state of demand.

“Now the entire field of productive and constructive industry is divided into ten great departments, each representing a group of allied industries, each particular industry being in turn represented by a subordinate bureau, which has a complete record of the plant and force under its control, of the present product, and means of increasing it. The estimates of the distributive department, after adoption by the administration, are sent as mandates to the ten great departments, which allot them to the subordinate bureaus representing the particular industries, and these set the men at work. Each bureau is responsible for the task given it, and this responsibility is enforced by departmental oversight and that of the administration; nor does the distributive department accept the product without its own inspection; while even if in the hands of the consumer an article turns out unfit, the system enables the fault to be traced back to the original workman. The production of the commodities for actual public consumption does not, of course, require by any means all the national force of workers. After the necessary contingents have been detailed for the various industries, the amount of labor left for other employment is expended in creating fixed capital, such as buildings, machinery, engineering works, and so forth.”
“One point occurs to me,” I said, “on which I should think there might be dissatisfaction. Where there is no opportunity for private enterprise, how is there any assurance that the claims of small minorities of the people to have articles produced, for which there is no wide demand, will be respected? An official decree at any moment may deprive them of the means of gratifying some special taste, merely because the majority does not share it.”

“That would be tyranny indeed,” replied Dr. Leete, “and you may be very sure that it does not happen with us, to whom liberty is as dear as equality or fraternity. As you come to know our system better, you will see that our officials are in fact, and not merely in name, the agents and servants of the people. The administration has no power to stop the production of any commodity for which there continues to be a demand. Suppose the demand for any article declines to such a point that its production becomes very costly. The price has to be raised in proportion, of course, but as long as the consumer cares to pay it, the production goes on. Again, suppose an article not before produced is demanded. If the administration doubts the reality of the demand, a popular petition guaranteeing a certain basis of consumption compels it to produce the desired article. A government, or a majority, which should undertake to tell the people, or a minority, what they were to eat, drink, or wear, as I believe governments in America did in your day, would be regarded as a curious anachronism indeed. Possibly you had reasons for tolerating these infringements of personal independence, but we should not think them endurable. I am glad you raised this point, for it has given me a chance to show you how much more direct and efficient is the control over production exercised by the individual citizen now than it was in your day, when what you called private initiative prevailed, though it should have been called capitalist initiative, for the average private citizen had little enough share in it.”

“You speak of raising the price of costly articles,” I said. “How can prices be regulated in a country where there is no competition between buyers or sellers?”

“Just as they were with you,” replied Dr. Leete. “You think that needs explaining,” he added, as I looked incredulous, “but the explanation need not be long; the cost of the labor which produced it was recognized as the legitimate basis of the price of an article in your day, and so it is in ours. In your day, it was the difference in wages that made the difference in the cost of labor; now it is the relative number of hours constituting a day’s work in different trades, the maintenance of the worker being equal in all cases. The cost of a man’s work in a trade so difficult that in order to attract volunteers the hours have to be fixed at four a day is twice as great as that in a trade where the men work eight hours. The result as to the cost of labor, you see, is just the same as if the man working four hours were paid, under your system, twice the wages the others get. This calculation applied to the labor employed in the various processes of a manufactured article gives its price relatively to other articles. Besides the cost of production and transportation, the factor of scarcity affects the prices of some commodities. As regards the great staples of life, of which an abundance can always be secured, scarcity is eliminated as a factor. There is always a large surplus kept on hand from which any fluctuations of demand or supply can be corrected, even in most cases of bad crops. The prices of the staples grow less year by year, but rarely, if ever, rise. There are, however, certain classes of articles permanently, and others temporarily, unequal to the demand, as, for example, fresh fish or dairy products in the latter category, and the products of high skill and rare materials in the other. All that can be done here is to equalize the inconvenience of the scarcity. This is done by temporarily raising the price if the scarcity be temporary, or fixing it high if it be permanent. High prices in your day meant restriction of the articles affected to the rich, but nowadays, when the means of all are the same, the effect is only that those to whom the articles seem most desirable are the ones who purchase them. Of course the nation, as any other caterer for the public needs must be, is frequently left with small lots of goods on its hands by changes in taste, unseasonable weather and various other causes. These it has to dispose of at a sacrifice just as merchants often did in your day, charging up the loss to the expenses of the business. Owing, however, to the vast body of consumers to which such lots can be simultaneously offered, there is rarely any difficulty in getting rid of them at trifling loss. I have given you now some general notion of our system of production; as well as distribution. Do you find it as complex as you expected?”

I admitted that nothing could be much simpler.

“I am sure,” said Dr. Leete, “that it is within the truth to say that the head of one of the myriad private businesses of your day, who had to maintain sleepless vigilance against the fluctuations of the market, the machinations of his rivals, and the failure of his debtors, had a far more trying task than the group of men at Washington who nowadays direct the industries of the entire nation. All this merely shows, my dear fellow, how much easier it is to do things the right way than the wrong. It is easier for a general up in a balloon, with perfect survey of the field, to manoeuvre a million men to victory than for a sergeant to manage a platoon in a thicket.”

“The general of this army, including the flower of the manhood of the nation, must be the foremost man in the country, really greater even than the President of the United States,” I said.

“He is the President of the United States,” replied Dr. Leete, “or rather the most important function of the
presidency is the headship of the industrial army."

“How is he chosen?” I asked.

“I explained to you before,” replied Dr. Leete, “when I was describing the force of the motive of emulation among all grades of the industrial army, that the line of promotion for the meritorious lies through three grades to the officer’s grade, and thence up through the lieutenancies to the captaincy or foremanship, and superintendency or colonel’s rank. Next, with an intervening grade in some of the larger trades, comes the general of the guild, under whose immediate control all the operations of the trade are conducted. This officer is at the head of the national bureau representing his trade, and is responsible for its work to the administration. The general of his guild holds a splendid position, and one which amply satisfies the ambition of most men, but above his rank, which may be compared—to follow the military analogies familiar to you—to that of a general of division or major-general, is that of the chiefs of the ten great departments, or groups of allied trades. The chiefs of these ten grand divisions of the industrial army may be compared to your commanders of army corps, or lieutenant-generals, each having from a dozen to a score of generals of separate guilds reporting to him. Above these ten great officers, who form his council, is the general-in-chief, who is the President of the United States.

“The general-in-chief of the industrial army must have passed through all the grades below him, from the common laborers up. Let us see how he rises. As I have told you, it is simply by the excellence of his record as a worker that one rises through the grades of the privates and becomes a candidate for a lieutenancy. Through the lieutenancies he rises to the colonelcy, or superintendent’s position, by appointment from above, strictly limited to the candidates of the best records. The general of the guild appoints to the ranks under him, but he himself is not appointed, but chosen by suffrage.”

“By suffrage!” I exclaimed. “Is not that ruinous to the discipline of the guild, by tempting the candidates to intrigue for the support of the workers under them?”

“So it would be, no doubt,” replied Dr. Leete, “if the workers had any suffrage to exercise, or anything to say about the choice. But they have nothing. Just here comes in a peculiarity of our system. The general of the guild is chosen from among the superintendents by vote of the honorary members of the guild, that is, of those who have served their time in the guild and received their discharge. As you know, at the age of forty-five we are mustered out of the army of industry, and have the residue of life for the pursuit of our own improvement or recreation. Of course, however, the associations of our active lifetime retain a powerful hold on us. The companionships we formed then remain our companionships till the end of life. We always continue honorary members of our former guilds, and retain the keenest and most jealous interest in their welfare and repute in the hands of the following generation. In the clubs maintained by the honorary members of the several guilds, in which we meet socially, there are no topics of conversation so common as those which relate to these matters, and the young aspirants for guild leadership who can pass the criticism of us old fellows are likely to be pretty well equipped. Recognizing this fact, the nation entrusts to the honorary members of each guild the election of its general, and I venture to claim that no previous form of society could have developed a body of electors so ideally adapted to their office, as regards absolute impartiality, knowledge of the special qualifications and record of candidates, solicitude for the best result, and complete absence of self-interest.

“Each of the ten lieutenant-generals or heads of departments is himself elected from among the generals of the guilds grouped as a department, by vote of the honorary members of the guilds thus grouped. Of course there is a tendency on the part of each guild to vote for its own general, but no guild of any group has nearly enough votes to elect a man not supported by most of the others. I assure you that these elections are exceedingly lively.”

“The President, I suppose, is selected from among the ten heads of the great departments,” I suggested.

“Precisely, but the heads of departments are not eligible to the presidency till they have been a certain number of years out of office. It is rarely that a man passes through all the grades to the headship of a department much before he is forty, and at the end of a five years’ term he is usually forty-five. If more, he still serves through his term, and if less, he is nevertheless discharged from the industrial army at its termination. It would not do for him to return to the ranks. The interval before he is a candidate for the presidency is intended to give time for him to recognize fully that he has returned into the general mass of the nation, and is identified with it rather than with the industrial army. Moreover, it is expected that he will employ this period in studying the general condition of the army, instead of that of the special group of guilds of which he was the head. From among the former heads of departments who may be eligible at the time, the President is elected by vote of all the men of the nation who are not connected with the industrial army.”

“The army is not allowed to vote for President?”
“Certainly not. That would be perilous to its discipline, which it is the business of the President to maintain as the representative of the nation at large. His right hand for this purpose is the inspectorate, a highly important department of our system; to the inspectorate come all complaints or information as to defects in goods, insolence or inefficiency of officials, or dereliction of any sort in the public service. The inspectorate, however, does not wait for complaints. Not only is it on the alert to catch and sift every rumor of a fault in the service, but it is its business, by systematic and constant oversight and inspection of every branch of the army, to find out what is going wrong before anybody else does. The President is usually not far from fifty when elected, and serves five years, forming an honorable exception to the rule of retirement at forty-five. At the end of his term of office, a national Congress is called to receive his report and approve or condemn it. If it is approved, Congress usually elects him to represent the nation for five years more in the international council. Congress, I should also say, passes on the reports of the outgoing heads of departments, and a disapproval renders any one of them ineligible for President. But it is rare, indeed, that the nation has occasion for other sentiments than those of gratitude toward its high officers. As to their ability, to have risen from the ranks, by tests so various and severe, to their positions, is proof in itself of extraordinary qualities, while as to faithfulness, our social system leaves them absolutely without any other motive than that of winning the esteem of their fellow citizens. Corruption is impossible in a society where there is neither poverty to be bribed nor wealth to bribe, while as to demagoguery or intrigue for office, the conditions of promotion render them out of the question.”

“One point I do not quite understand,” I said. “Are the members of the liberal professions eligible to the presidency? and if so, how are they ranked with those who pursue the industries proper?”

“They have no ranking with them,” replied Dr. Leete. “The members of the technical professions, such as engineers and architects, have a ranking with the constructive guilds; but the members of the liberal professions, the doctors and teachers, as well as the artists and men of letters who obtain remissions of industrial service, do not belong to the industrial army. On this ground they vote for the President, but are not eligible to his office. One of its main duties being the control and discipline of the industrial army, it is essential that the President should have passed through all its grades to understand his business.”

“That is reasonable,” I said; “but if the doctors and teachers do not know enough of industry to be President, neither, I should think, can the President know enough of medicine and education to control those departments.”

“No more does he,” was the reply. “Except in the general way that he is responsible for the enforcement of the laws as to all classes, the President has nothing to do with the faculties of medicine and education, which are controlled by boards of regents of their own, in which the President is ex-officio chairman, and has the casting vote. These regents, who, of course, are responsible to Congress, are chosen by the honorary members of the guilds of education and medicine, the retired teachers and doctors of the country.”

“Do you know,” I said, “the method of electing officials by votes of the retired members of the guilds is nothing more than the application on a national scale of the plan of government by alumni, which we used to a slight extent occasionally in the management of our higher educational institutions.”

“Did you, indeed?” exclaimed Dr. Leete, with animation. “That is quite new to me, and I fancy will be to most of us, and of much interest as well. There has been great discussion as to the germ of the idea, and we fancied that there was for once something new under the sun. Well! well! In your higher educational institutions! that is interesting indeed. You must tell me more of that.”

“Truly, there is very little more to tell than I have told already,” I replied. “If we had the germ of your idea, it was but as a germ.”

Chapter 18

That evening I sat up for some time after the ladies had retired, talking with Dr. Leete about the effect of the plan of exempting men from further service to the nation after the age of forty-five, a point brought up by his account of the part taken by the retired citizens in the government.

“At forty-five,” said I, “a man still has ten years of good manual labor in him, and twice ten years of good intellectual service. To be superannuated at that age and laid on the shelf must be regarded rather as a hardship than a favor by men of energetic dispositions.”

“My dear Mr. West,” exclaimed Dr. Leete, beaming upon me, “you cannot have any idea of the piquancy your
nineteenth century ideas have for us of this day, the rare quaintness of their effect. Know, O child of another race and yet the same, that the labor we have to render as our part in securing for the nation the means of a comfortable physical existence is by no means regarded as the most important, the most interesting, or the most dignified employment of our powers. We look upon it as a necessary duty to be discharged before we can fully devote ourselves to the higher exercise of our faculties, the intellectual and spiritual enjoyments and pursuits which alone mean life. Everything possible is indeed done by the just distribution of burdens, and by all manner of special attractions and incentives to relieve our labor of irksomeness, and, except in a comparative sense, it is not usually irksome, and is often inspiring. But it is not our labor, but the higher and larger activities which the performance of our task will leave us free to enter upon, that are considered the main business of existence.

"Of course not all, nor the majority, have those scientific, artistic, literary, or scholarly interests which make leisure the one thing valuable to their possessors. Many look upon the last half of life chiefly as a period for enjoyment of other sorts; for travel, for social relaxation in the company of their life-time friends; a time for the cultivation of all manner of personal idiosyncrasies and special tastes, and the pursuit of every imaginable form of recreation; in a word, a time for the leisurely and unperturbed appreciation of the good things of the world which they have helped to create. But, whatever the differences between our individual tastes as to the use we shall put our leisure to, we all agree in looking forward to the date of our discharge as the time when we shall first enter upon the full enjoyment of our birthright, the period when we shall first really attain our majority and become enfranchised from discipline and control, with the fee of our lives vested in ourselves. As eager boys in your day anticipated twenty-one, so men nowadays look forward to forty-five. At twenty-one we become men, but at forty-five we renew youth. Middle age and what you would have called old age are considered, rather than youth, the enviable time of life. Thanks to the better conditions of existence nowadays, and above all the freedom of every one from care, old age approaches many years later and has an aspect far more benign than in past times. Persons of average constitution usually live to eighty-five or ninety, and at forty-five we are physically and mentally younger, I fancy, than you were at thirty-five. It is a strange reflection that at forty-five, when we are just entering upon the most enjoyable period of life, you already began to think of growing old and to look backward. With you it was the forenoon, with us it is the afternoon, which is the brighter half of life."

After this I remember that our talk branched into the subject of popular sports and recreations at the present time as compared with those of the nineteenth century.

"In one respect," said Dr. Leete, "there is a marked difference. The professional sportsmen, which were such a curious feature of your day, we have nothing answering to, nor are the prizes for which our athletes contend money prizes, as with you. Our contests are always for glory only. The generous rivalry existing between the various guilds, and the loyalty of each worker to his own, afford a constant stimulation to all sorts of games and matches by sea and land, in which the young men take scarcely more interest than the honorary guildsmen who have served their time. The guild yacht races off Marblehead take place next week, and you will be able to judge for yourself of the popular enthusiasm which such events nowadays call out as compared with your day. The demand for 'panem ef circenses' preferred by the Roman populace is recognized nowadays as a wholly reasonable one. If bread is the first necessity of life, recreation is a close second, and the nation caters for both. Americans of the nineteenth century were as unfortunate in lacking an adequate provision for the one sort of need as for the other. Even if the people of that period had enjoyed larger leisure, they would, I fancy, have often been at a loss how to pass it agreeably. We are never in that predicament."

Chapter 19

In the course of an early morning constitutional I visited Charlestown. Among the changes, too numerous to attempt to indicate, which mark the lapse of a century in that quarter, I particularly noted the total disappearance of the old state prison.

"That went before my day, but I remember hearing about it," said Dr. Leete, when I alluded to the fact at the breakfast table. "We have no jails nowadays. All cases of atavism are treated in the hospitals."

"Of atavism!" I exclaimed, staring.

"Why, yes," replied Dr. Leete. "The idea of dealing punitively with those unfortunates was given up at least fifty years ago, and I think more."

"I don't quite understand you," I said. "Atavism in my day was a word applied to the cases of persons in whom some trait of a remote ancestor recurred in a noticeable manner. Am I to understand that crime is nowadays
looked upon as the recurrence of an ancestral trait?"

"I beg your pardon," said Dr. Leete with a smile half humorous, half deprecating, "but since you have so explicitly asked the question, I am forced to say that the fact is precisely that."

After what I had already learned of the moral contrasts between the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, it was doubtless absurd in me to begin to develop sensitiveness on the subject, and probably if Dr. Leete had not spoken with that apologetic air and Mrs. Leete and Edith shown a corresponding embarrassment, I should not have flushed, as I was conscious I did.

"I was not in much danger of being vain of my generation before," I said; "but, really—"

"This is your generation, Mr. West," interposed Edith. "It is the one in which you are living, you know, and it is only because we are alive now that we call it ours."

"Thank you. I will try to think of it so," I said, and as my eyes met hers their expression quite cured my senseless sensitiveness. "After all," I said, with a laugh, "I was brought up a Calvinist, and ought not to be startled to hear crime spoken of as an ancestral trait."

"In point of fact," said Dr. Leete, "our use of the word is no reflection at all on your generation, if, begging Edith's pardon, we may call it yours, so far as seeming to imply that we think ourselves, apart from our circumstances, better than you were. In your day fully nineteen twentieths of the crime, using the word broadly to include all sorts of misdemeanors, resulted from the inequality in the possessions of individuals; want tempted the poor, lust of greater gains, or the desire to preserve former gains, tempted the well-to-do. Directly or indirectly, the desire for money, which then meant every good thing, was the motive of all this crime, the taproot of a vast poison growth, which the machinery of law, courts, and police could barely prevent from choking your civilization outright. When we made the nation the sole trustee of the wealth of the people, and guaranteed to all abundant maintenance, on the one hand abolishing want, and on the other checking the accumulation of riches, we cut this root, and the poison tree that overshadowed your society withered, like Jonah's gourd, in a day. As for the comparatively small class of violent crimes against persons, unconnected with any idea of gain, they were almost wholly confined, even in your day, to the ignorant and bestial; and in these days, when education and good manners are not the monopoly of a few, but universal, such atrocities are scarcely ever heard of. You now see why the word 'atavism' is used for crime. It is because nearly all forms of crime known to you are motiveless now, and when they appear can only be explained as the outcropping of ancestral traits. You used to call persons who stole, evidently without any rational motive, kleptomaniacs, and when the case was clear deemed it absurd to punish them as thieves. Your attitude toward the genuine kleptomaniac is precisely ours toward the victim of atavism, an attitude of compassion and firm but gentle restraint."

"Your courts must have an easy time of it," I observed. "With no private property to speak of, no disputes between citizens over business relations, no real estate to divide or debts to collect, there must be absolutely no civil business at all for them; and with no offenses against property, and mighty few of any sort to provide criminal cases, I should think you might almost do without judges and lawyers altogether."

"We do without the lawyers, certainly," was Dr. Leete's reply. "It would not seem reasonable to us, in a case where the only interest of the nation is to find out the truth, that persons should take part in the proceedings who had an acknowledged motive to color it."

"But who defends the accused?"

"If he is a criminal he needs no defense, for he pleads guilty in most instances," replied Dr. Leete. "The plea of the accused is not a mere formality with us, as with you. It is usually the end of the case."

"You don't mean that the man who pleads not guilty is thereupon discharged?"

"No, I do not mean that. He is not accused on light grounds, and if he denies his guilt, must still be tried. But trials are few, for in most cases the guilty man pleads guilty. When he makes a false plea and is clearly proved guilty, his penalty is doubled. Falsehood is, however, so despised among us that few offenders would lie to save themselves."

"That is the most astounding thing you have yet told me," I exclaimed. "If lying has gone out of fashion, this is indeed the 'new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness,' which the prophet foretold."

"Such is, in fact, the belief of some persons nowadays," was the doctor's answer. "They hold that we have entered
among minor offenses is more sure of a prompt penalty than this. Not only justice but civility is enforced by our
of the lowest class. As for churlishness or rudeness by an official of any sort, in his relations to the public, not one
the private obeys, but no officer is so high that he would dare display an overbearing manner toward a workman
workman to just and considerate treatment is backed by the whole power of the nation. The officer commands and
cases. The efficiency of industry requires the strictest discipline in the army of labor, but the claim of the
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"I should not fail to speak of one important function of the minor judges," added Dr. Leete. "This is to adjudicate
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You must not imagine, however, that we have any disrespect for those ancient worthies because we have no use
the law school to the bench."

"There being no legal profession to serve as a school for judges," I said, "they must, of course, come directly from
the law school to the bench."

"We have no such things as law schools," replied the doctor smiling. "The law as a special science is obsolete. It
was a system of casuistry which the elaborate artificiality of the old order of society absolutely required to
interpret it, but only a few of the plainest and simplest legal maxims have any application to the existing state of
the world. Everything touching the relations of men to one another is now simpler, beyond any comparison, than
in your day. We should have no sort of use for the hair-splitting experts who presided and argued in your courts.
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among minor offenses is more sure of a prompt penalty than this. Not only justice but civility is enforced by our
judges in all sorts of intercourse. No value of service is accepted as a set-off to boorish or offensive manners.”

It occurred to me, as Dr. Leete was speaking, that in all his talk I had heard much of the nation and nothing of the state governments. Had the organization of the nation as an industrial unit done away with the states? I asked.

“Necessarily,” he replied. “The state governments would have interfered with the control and discipline of the industrial army, which, of course, required to be central and uniform. Even if the state governments had not become inconvenient for other reasons, they were rendered superfluous by the prodigious simplification in the task of government since your day. Almost the sole function of the administration now is that of directing the industries of the country. Most of the purposes for which governments formerly existed no longer remain to be subserved. We have no army or navy, and no military organization. We have no departments of state or treasury, no excuse or revenue services, no taxes or tax collectors. The only function proper of government, as known to you, which still remains, is the judiciary and police system. I have already explained to you how simple is our judicial system as compared with your huge and complex machine. Of course the same absence of crime and temptation to it, which make the duties of judges so light, reduces the number and duties of the police to a minimum.”

“But with no state legislatures, and Congress meeting only once in five years, how do you get your legislation done?”

“We have no legislation,” replied Dr. Leete, “that is, next to none. It is rarely that Congress, even when it meets, considers any new laws of consequence, and then it only has power to commend them to the following Congress, lest anything be done hastily. If you will consider a moment, Mr. West, you will see that we have nothing to make laws about. The fundamental principles on which our society is founded settle for all time the strifes and misunderstandings which in your day called for legislation.

“Fully ninety-nine hundredths of the laws of that time concerned the definition and protection of private property and the relations of buyers and sellers. There is neither private property, beyond personal belongings, now, nor buying and selling, and therefore the occasion of nearly all the legislation formerly necessary has passed away. Formerly, society was a pyramid poised on its apex. All the gravitations of human nature were constantly tending to topple it over, and it could be maintained upright, or rather upwrong (if you will pardon the feeble witticism), by an elaborate system of constantly renewed props and buttresses and guy-ropes in the form of laws. A central Congress and forty state legislatures, turning out some twenty thousand laws a year, could not make new props fast enough to take the place of those which were constantly breaking down or becoming ineffectual through some shifting of the strain. Now society rests on its base, and is in as little need of artificial supports as the everlasting hills.”

“But you have at least municipal governments besides the one central authority?”

“Certainly, and they have important and extensive functions in looking out for the public comfort and recreation, and the improvement and embellishment of the villages and cities.”

“But having no control over the labor of their people, or means of hiring it, how can they do anything?”

“Every town or city is conceded the right to retain, for its own public works, a certain proportion of the quota of labor its citizens contribute to the nation. This proportion, being assigned it as so much credit, can be applied in any way desired.”

Chapter 20

That afternoon Edith casually inquired if I had yet revisited the underground chamber in the garden in which I had been found.

“Not yet,” I replied. “To be frank, I have shrunk thus far from doing so, lest the visit might revive old associations rather too strongly for my mental equilibrium.”

“Ah, yes!” she said, “I can imagine that you have done well to stay away. I ought to have thought of that.”

“No,” I said, “I am glad you spoke of it. The danger, if there was any, existed only during the first day or two. Thanks to you, chiefly and always, I feel my footing now so firm in this new world, that if you will go with me to keep the ghosts off, I should really like to visit the place this afternoon.”
Edith demurred at first, but, finding that I was in earnest, consented to accompany me. The rampart of earth thrown up from the excavation was visible among the trees from the house, and a few steps brought us to the spot. All remained as it was at the point when work was interrupted by the discovery of the tenant of the chamber, save that the door had been opened and the slab from the roof replaced. Descending the sloping sides of the excavation, we went in at the door and stood within the dimly lighted room.

Everything was just as I had beheld it last on that evening one hundred and thirteen years previous, just before closing my eyes for that long sleep. I stood for some time silently looking about me. I saw that my companion was furtively regarding me with an expression of awed and sympathetic curiosity. I put out my hand to her and she placed hers in it, the soft fingers responding with a reassuring pressure to my clasp. Finally she whispered, “Had we not better go out now? You must not try yourself too far. Oh, how strange it must be to you!”

“Oh the contrary,” I replied, “it does not seem strange; that is the strangest part of it.”

“Not strange?” she echoed.

“Even so,” I replied. “The emotions with which you evidently credit me, and which I anticipated would attend this visit, I simply do not feel. I realize all that these surroundings suggest, but without the agitation I expected. You can’t be nearly as much surprised at this as I am myself. Ever since that terrible morning when you came to my help, I have tried to avoid thinking of my former life, just as I have avoided coming here, for fear of the agitating effects. I am for all the world like a man who has permitted an injured limb to lie motionless under the impression that it is exquisitely sensitive, and on trying to move it finds that it is paralyzed.”

“Do you mean your memory is gone?”

“Not at all. I remember everything connected with my former life, but with a total lack of keen sensation. I remember it for clearness as if it had been but a day since then, but my feelings about what I remember are as faint as if to my consciousness, as well as in fact, a hundred years had intervened. Perhaps it is possible to explain this, too. The effect of change in surroundings is like that of lapse of time in making the past seem remote. When I first woke from that trance, my former life appeared as yesterday, but now, since I have learned to know my new surroundings, and to realize the prodigious changes that have transformed the world, I no longer find it hard, but very easy, to realize that I have slept a century. Can you conceive of such a thing as living a hundred years in four days? It really seems to me that I have done just that, and that it is this experience which has given so remote and unreal an appearance to my former life. Can you see how such a thing might be?”

“I can conceive it,” replied Edith, meditatively, “and I think we ought all to be thankful that it is so, for it will save you much suffering, I am sure.”

“Imagine,” I said, in an effort to explain, as much to myself as to her, the strangeness of my mental condition, “that a man first heard of a bereavement many, many years, half a lifetime perhaps, after the event occurred. I fancy his feeling would be perhaps something as mine is. When I think of my friends in the world of that former day, and the sorrow they must have felt for me, it is with a pensive pity, rather than keen anguish, as of a sorrow long, long ago ended.”

“You have told us nothing yet of your friends,” said Edith. “Had you many to mourn you?”

“Thank God, I had very few relatives, none nearer than cousins,” I replied. “But there was one, not a relative, but dearer to me than any kin of blood. She had your name. She was to have been my wife soon. Ah me!”

“Ah me!” sighed the Edith by my side. “Think of the heartache she must have had.”

Something in the deep feeling of this gentle girl touched a chord in my benumbed heart. My eyes, before so dry, were flooded with the tears that had till now refused to come. When I had regained my composure, I saw that she too had been weeping freely.

“God bless your tender heart,” I said. “Would you like to see her picture?”

A small locket with Edith Bartlett’s picture, secured about my neck with a gold chain, had lain upon my breast all through that long sleep, and removing this I opened and gave it to my companion. She took it with eagerness, and after poring long over the sweet face, touched the picture with her lips.

“I know that she was good and lovely enough to well deserve your tears,” she said; “but remember her heartache was over long ago, and she has been in heaven for nearly a century.”
It was indeed so. Whatever her sorrow had once been, for nearly a century she had ceased to weep, and, my sudden passion spent, my own tears dried away. I had loved her very dearly in my other life, but it was a hundred years ago! I do not know but some may find in this confession evidence of lack of feeling, but I think, perhaps, that none can have had an experience sufficiently like mine to enable them to judge me. As we were about to leave the chamber, my eye rested upon the great iron safe which stood in one corner. Calling my companion’s attention to it, I said:

“This was my strong room as well as my sleeping room. In the safe yonder are several thousand dollars in gold, and any amount of securities. If I had known when I went to sleep that night just how long my nap would be, I should still have thought that the gold was a safe provision for my needs in any country or any century, however distant. That a time would ever come when it would lose its purchasing power, I should have considered the wildest of fancies. Nevertheless, here I wake up to find myself among a people of whom a cartload of gold will not procure a loaf of bread.”

As might be expected, I did not succeed in impressing Edith that there was anything remarkable in this fact. “Why in the world should it?” she merely asked.

Chapter 21

It had been suggested by Dr. Leete that we should devote the next morning to an inspection of the schools and colleges of the city, with some attempt on his own part at an explanation of the educational system of the twentieth century.

“You will see,” said he, as we set out after breakfast, “many very important differences between our methods of education and yours, but the main difference is that nowadays all persons equally have those opportunities of higher education which in your day only an infinitesimal portion of the population enjoyed. We should think we had gained nothing worth speaking of, in equalizing the physical comfort of men, without this educational equality.”

“The cost must be very great,” I said.

“If it took half the revenue of the nation, nobody would grudge it,” replied Dr. Leete, “nor even if it took it all save a bare pittance. But in truth the expense of educating ten thousand youth is not ten nor five times that of educating one thousand. The principle which makes all operations on a large scale proportionally cheaper than on a small scale holds as to education also.”

“College education was terribly expensive in my day,” said I.

“If I have not been misinformed by our historians,” Dr. Leete answered, “it was not college education but college dissipation and extravagance which cost so highly. The actual expense of your colleges appears to have been very low, and would have been far lower if their patronage had been greater. The higher education nowadays is as cheap as the lower, as all grades of teachers, like all other workers, receive the same support. We have simply added to the common school system of compulsory education, in vogue in Massachusetts a hundred years ago, a half dozen higher grades, carrying the youth to the age of twenty-one and giving him what you used to call the education of a gentleman, instead of turning him loose at fourteen or fifteen with no mental equipment beyond reading, writing, and the multiplication table.”

“Setting aside the actual cost of these additional years of education,” I replied, “we should not have thought we could afford the loss of time from industrial pursuits. Boys of the poorer classes usually went to work at sixteen or younger, and knew their trade at twenty.”

“We should not concede you any gain even in material product by that plan,” Dr. Leete replied. “The greater efficiency which education gives to all sorts of labor, except the rudest, makes up in a short period for the time lost in acquiring it.”

“We should also have been afraid,” said I, “that a high education, while it adapted men to the professions, would set them against manual labor of all sorts.”

“That was the effect of high education in your day, I have read,” replied the doctor; “and it was no wonder, for manual labor meant association with a rude, coarse, and ignorant class of people. There is no such class now. It
was inevitable that such a feeling should exist then, for the further reason that all men receiving a high education were understood to be destined for the professions or for wealthy leisure, and such an education in one neither rich nor professional was a proof of disappointed aspirations, an evidence of failure, a badge of inferiority rather than superiority. Nowadays, of course, when the highest education is deemed necessary to fit a man merely to live, without any reference to the sort of work he may do, its possession conveys no such implication."

"After all," I remarked, "no amount of education can cure natural dullness or make up for original mental deficiencies. Unless the average natural mental capacity of men is much above its level in my day, a high education must be pretty nearly thrown away on a large element of the population. We used to hold that a certain amount of susceptibility to educational influences is required to make a mind worth cultivating, just as a certain natural fertility in soil is required if it is to repay tilling."

"Ah," said Dr. Leete, "I am glad you used that illustration, for it is just the one I would have chosen to set forth the modern view of education. You say that land so poor that the product will not repay the labor of tilling is not cultivated. Nevertheless, much land that does not begin to repay tilling by its product was cultivated in your day and is in ours. I refer to gardens, parks, lawns, and, in general, to pieces of land so situated that, were they left to grow up to weeds and briers, they would be eyesores and inconveniences to all about. They are therefore tilled, and though their product is little, there is yet no land that, in a wider sense, better repays cultivation. So it is with the men and women with whom we mingle in the relations of society, whose voices are always in our ears, whose behavior in innumerable ways affects our enjoyment—who are, in fact, as much conditions of our lives as the air we breathe, or any of the physical elements on which we depend. If, indeed, we could not afford to educate everybody, we should choose the coarsest and dullest by nature, rather than the brightest, to receive what education we could give. The naturally refined and intellectual can better dispense with aids to culture than those less fortunate in natural endowments.

"To borrow a phrase which was often used in your day, we should not consider life worth living if we had to be surrounded by a population of ignorant, boorish, coarse, wholly uncultivated men and women, as was the plight of the few educated in your day. Is a man satisfied, merely because he is perfumed himself, to mingle with a malodorous crowd? Could he take more than a very limited satisfaction, even in a palatial apartment, if the windows on all four sides opened into stable yards? And yet just that was the situation of those considered most fortunate as to culture and refinement in your day. I know that the poor and ignorant envied the rich and cultured then; but to us the latter, living as they did, surrounded by squalor and brutishness, seem little better off than the former. The cultured man in your age was like one up to the neck in a nauseous bog solacing himself with a smelling bottle. You see, perhaps, now, how we look at this question of universal high education. No single thing is so important to every man as to have for neighbors intelligent, companionable persons. There is nothing, therefore, which the nation can do for him that will enhance so much his own happiness as to educate his neighbors. When it fails to do so, the value of his own education to him is reduced by half, and many of the tastes he has cultivated are made positive sources of pain.

"To educate some to the highest degree, and leave the mass wholly uncultivated, as you did, made the gap between them almost like that between different natural species, which have no means of communication. What could be more inhuman than this consequence of a partial enjoyment of education! Its universal and equal enjoyment leaves, indeed, the differences between men as to natural endowments as marked as in a state of nature, but the level of the lowest is vastly raised. Brutishness is eliminated. All have some inkling of the humanities, some appreciation of the things of the mind, and an admiration for the still higher culture they have fallen short of. They have become capable of receiving and imparting, in various degrees, but all in some measure, the pleasures and inspirations of a refined social life. The cultured society of the nineteenth century—what did it consist of but here and there a few microscopic oases in a vast, unbroken wilderness? The proportion of individuals capable of intellectual sympathies or refined intercourse, to the mass of their contemporaries, used to be so infinitesimal as to be in any broad view of humanity scarcely worth mentioning. One generation of the world to-day represents a greater volume of intellectual life than any five centuries ever did before.

"There is still another point I should mention in stating the grounds on which nothing less than the universality of the best education could now be tolerated," continued Dr. Leete, "and that is, the interest of the coming generation in having educated parents. To put the matter in a nutshell, there are three main grounds on which our educational system rests: first, the right of every man to the completest education the nation can give him on his own account, as necessary to his enjoyment of himself; second, the right of his fellow-citizens to have him educated, as necessary to their enjoyment of his society; third, the right of the unborn to be guaranteed an intelligent and refined parentage."

I shall not describe in detail what I saw in the schools that day. Having taken but slight interest in educational matters in my former life, I could offer few comparisons of interest. Next to the fact of the universality of the
higher as well as the lower education, I was most struck with the prominence given to physical culture, and the fact that proficiency in athletic feats and games as well as in scholarship had a place in the rating of the youth.

“The faculty of education,” Dr. Leete explained, “is held to the same responsibility for the bodies as for the minds of its charges. The highest possible physical, as well as mental, development of every one is the double object of a curriculum which lasts from the age of six to that of twenty-one.”

The magnificent health of the young people in the schools impressed me strongly. My previous observations, not only of the notable personal endowments of the family of my host, but of the people I had seen in my walks abroad, had already suggested the idea that there must have been something like a general improvement in the physical standard of the race since my day, and now, as I compared these stalwart young men and fresh, vigorous maidens with the young people I had seen in the schools of the nineteenth century, I was moved to impart my thought to Dr. Leete. He listened with great interest to what I said.

“Your testimony on this point,” he declared, “is invaluable. We believe that there has been such an improvement as you speak of, but of course it could only be a matter of theory with us. It is an incident of your unique position that you alone in the world of to-day can speak with authority on this point. Your opinion, when you state it publicly, will, I assure you, make a profound sensation. For the rest it would be strange, certainly, if the race did not show an improvement. In your day, riches debauched one class with idleness of mind and body, while poverty sapped the vitality of the masses by overwork, bad food, and pestilent homes. The labor required of children, and the burdens laid on women, enfeebled the very springs of life. Instead of these maleficent circumstances, all now enjoy the most favorable conditions of physical life; the young are carefully nurtured and studiously cared for; the labor which is required of all is limited to the period of greatest bodily vigor, and is never excessive; care for one’s self and one’s family, anxiety as to livelihood, the strain of a ceaseless battle for life—all these influences, which once did so much to wreck the minds and bodies of men and women, are known no more. Certainly, an improvement of the species ought to follow such a change. In certain specific respects we know, indeed, that the improvement has taken place. Insanity, for instance, which in the nineteenth century was so terribly common a product of your insane mode of life, has almost disappeared, with its alternative, suicide.”

Chapter 22

We had made an appointment to meet the ladies at the dining-hall for dinner, after which, having some engagement, they left us sitting at table there, discussing our wine and cigars with a multitude of other matters.

“Doctor,” said I, in the course of our talk, “morally speaking, your social system is one which I should be insensate not to admire in comparison with any previously in vogue in the world, and especially with that of my own most unhappy century. If I were to fall into a mesmeric sleep tonight as lasting as that other and meanwhile the course of time were to take a turn backward instead of forward, and I were to wake up again in the nineteenth century, when I had told my friends what I had seen, they would every one admit that your world was a paradise of order, equity, and felicity. But they were a very practical people, my contemporaries, and after expressing their admiration for the moral beauty and material splendor of the system, they would presently begin to cipher and ask how you got the money to make everybody so happy; for certainly, to support the whole nation at a rate of three or four hundred dollars per head, not very much more than enough to supply the necessities of life with comfort, and even luxury, such as I see around me, must involve vastly greater wealth than the nation produced in my day. Now, while I could explain to them pretty nearly everything else of the main features of your system, I should quite fail to answer this question, and failing there, they would tell me, for they were very close cipherers, that I had been dreaming; nor would they ever believe anything else. In my day, I know that the total annual product of the nation, although it might have been divided with absolute equality, would not have come to more than three or four hundred dollars per head, not very much more than enough to supply the necessities of life with few or any of its comforts. How is it that you have so much more?”

“That is a very pertinent question, Mr. West,” replied Dr. Leete, “and I should not blame your friends, in the case you supposed, if they declared your story all moonshine, failing a satisfactory reply to it. It is a question which I cannot answer exhaustively at any one sitting, and as for the exact statistics to bear out my general statements, I shall have to refer you for them to books in my library, but it would certainly be a pity to leave you to be put to confusion by your old acquaintances, in case of the contingency you speak of, for lack of a few suggestions.

“Let us begin with a number of small items wherein we economize wealth as compared with you. We have no national, state, county, or municipal debts, or payments on their account. We have no sort of military or naval expenditures for men or materials, no army, navy, or militia. We have no revenue service, no swarm of tax assessors and collectors. As regards our judiciary, police, sheriffs, and jailers, the force which Massachusetts alone kept on foot in your day far more than suffices for the nation now. We have no criminal class preying upon
the wealth of society as you had. The number of persons, more or less absolutely lost to the working force through physical disability, of the lame, sick, and debilitated, which constituted such a burden on the able-bodied in your day, now that all live under conditions of health and comfort, has shrunk to scarcely perceptible proportions, and with every generation is becoming more completely eliminated.

"Another item wherein we save is the disuse of money and the thousand occupations connected with financial operations of all sorts, whereby an army of men was formerly taken away from useful employments. Also consider that the waste of the very rich in your day on inordinate personal luxury has ceased, though, indeed, this item might easily be over-estimated. Again, consider that there are no idlers now, rich or poor—no drones.

"A very important cause of former poverty was the vast waste of labor and materials which resulted from domestic washing and cooking, and the performing separately of innumerable other tasks to which we apply the cooperative plan.

"A larger economy than any of these—yes, of all together—is effected by the organization of our distributing system, by which the work done once by the merchants, traders, storekeepers, with their various grades of jobbers, wholesalers, retailers, agents, commercial travelers, and middlemen of all sorts, with an excessive waste of energy in needless transportation and interminable handlings, is performed by one tenth the number of hands and an unnecessary turn of not one wheel. Something of what our distributing system is like you know. Our statisticians calculate that one eightieth part of our workers suffices for all the processes of distribution which in your day required one eighth of the population, so much being withdrawn from the force engaged in productive labor."

"I begin to see," I said, "where you get your greater wealth."

"I beg your pardon," replied Dr. Leete, "but you scarcely do as yet. The economies I have mentioned thus far, in the aggregate, considering the labor they would save directly and indirectly through saving of material, might possibly be equivalent to the addition to your annual production of wealth of one half its former total. These items are, however, scarcely worth mentioning in comparison with other prodigious wastes, now saved, which resulted inevitably from leaving the industries of the nation to private enterprise. However great the economies your contemporaries might have devised in the consumption of products, and however marvelous the progress of mechanical invention, they could never have raised themselves out of the slough of poverty so long as they held to that system.

"No mode more wasteful for utilizing human energy could be devised, and for the credit of the human intellect it should be remembered that the system never was devised, but was merely a survival from the rude ages when the lack of social organization made any sort of cooperation impossible."

"I will readily admit," I said, "that our industrial system was ethically very bad, but as a mere wealth-making machine, apart from moral aspects, it seemed to us admirable."

"As I said," responded the doctor, "the subject is too large to discuss at length now, but if you are really interested to know the main criticisms which we moderns make on your industrial system as compared with our own, I can touch briefly on some of them.

"The wastes which resulted from leaving the conduct of industry to irresponsible individuals, wholly without mutual understanding or concert, were mainly four: first, the waste by mistaken undertakings; second, the waste from the competition and mutual hostility of those engaged in industry; third, the waste by periodical gluts and crises, with the consequent interruptions of industry; fourth, the waste from idle capital and labor, at all times. Any one of these four great leaks, were all the others stopped, would suffice to make the difference between wealth and poverty on the part of a nation.

"Take the waste by mistaken undertakings, to begin with. In your day the production and distribution of commodities being without concert or organization, there was no means of knowing just what demand there was for any class of products, or what was the rate of supply. Therefore, any enterprise by a private capitalist was always a doubtful experiment. The projector having no general view of the field of industry and consumption, such as our government has, could never be sure either what the people wanted, or what arrangements other capitalists were making to supply them. In view of this, we are not surprised to learn that the chances were considered several to one in favor of the failure of any given business enterprise, and that it was common for persons who at last succeeded in making a hit to have failed repeatedly. If a shoemaker, for every pair of shoes he succeeded in completing, spoiled the leather of four or five pair, besides losing the time spent on them, he would stand about the same chance of getting rich as your contemporaries did with their system of private enterprise, and its average of four or five failures to one success.
"The next of the great wastes was that from competition. The field of industry was a battlefield as wide as the world, in which the workers wasted, in assailing one another, energies which, if expended in concerted effort, as to-day, would have enriched all. As for mercy or quarter in this warfare, there was absolutely no suggestion of it. To deliberately enter a field of business and destroy the enterprises of those who had occupied it previously, in order to plant one's own enterprise on their ruins, was an achievement which never failed to command popular admiration. Nor is there any stretch of fancy in comparing this sort of struggle with actual warfare, so far as concerns the mental agony and physical suffering which attended the struggle, and the misery which overwhelmed the defeated and those dependent on them. Now nothing about your age is, at first sight, more astounding to a man of modern times than the fact that men engaged in the same industry, instead of fraternizing as comrades and co-laborers to a common end, should have regarded each other as rivals and enemies to be throttled and overthrown. This certainly seems like sheer madness, a scene from bedlam. But more closely regarded, it is seen to be no such thing. Your contemporaries, with their mutual throat-cutting, knew very well what they were at. The producers of the nineteenth century were not, like ours, working together for the maintenance of the community, but each solely for his own maintenance at the expense of the community. If, in working to this end, he at the same time increased the aggregate wealth, that was merely incidental. It was just as feasible and as common to increase one's private hoard by practices injurious to the general welfare. One's worst enemies were necessarily those of his own trade, for, under your plan of making private profit the motive of production, a scarcity of the article he produced was what each particular producer desired. It was for his interest that no more of it should be produced than he himself could produce. To secure this consummation as far as circumstances permitted, by killing off and discouraging those engaged in his line of industry, was his constant effort. When he had killed off all he could, his policy was to combine with those he could not kill, and convert their mutual warfare into a warfare upon the public at large by cornering the market, as I believe you used to call it, and putting up prices to the highest point people would stand before going without the goods. The day dream of the nineteenth century producer was to gain absolute control of the supply of some necessity of life, so that he might keep the public at the verge of starvation, and always command famine prices for what he supplied. This, Mr. West, is what was called in the nineteenth century a system of production. I will leave it to you if it does not seem, in some of its aspects, a great deal more like a system for preventing production. Some time when we have plenty of leisure I am going to ask you to sit down with me and try to make me comprehend, as I never yet could, though I have studied the matter a great deal how such shrewd fellows as your contemporaries appear to have been in many respects ever came to entrust the business of providing for the community to a class whose interest it was to starve it. I assure you that the wonder with us is, not that the world did not get rich under such a system, but that it did not perish outright from want. This wonder increases as we go on to consider some of the other prodigious wastes that characterized it.

"Apart from the waste of labor and capital by misdirected industry, and that from the constant bloodletting of your industrial warfare, your system was liable to periodical convulsions, overwhelming alike the wise and unwise, the successful cut-throat as well as his victim. I refer to the business crises at intervals of five to ten years, which wrecked the industries of the nation, prostrating all weak enterprises and crippling the strongest, and were followed by long seasons, often of many years, of so-called dull times, during which the capitalists slowly regathered their dissipated strength while the laboring classes starved and rioted. Then would ensue another brief season of prosperity, followed in turn by another crisis and the ensuing years of exhaustion. As commerce developed, making the nations mutually dependent, these crises became world-wide, while the obstinacy of the ensuing state of collapse increased with the area affected by the convulsions, and the consequent lack of rallying centres. In proportion as the industries of the world multiplied and became complex, and the volume of capital involved was increased, these business cataclysms became more frequent, till, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, there were two years of bad times to one of good, and the system of industry, never before so extended or so imposing, seemed in danger of collapsing by its own weight. After endless discussions, your economists appear by that time to have settled down to the despairing conclusion that there was no more possibility of preventing or controlling these crises than if they had been drouths or hurricanes. It only remained to endure them as necessary evils, and when they had passed over to build up again the shattered structure of industry, as dwellers in an earthquake country keep on rebuilding their cities on the same site.

"So far as considering the causes of the trouble inherent in their industrial system, your contemporaries were certainly correct. They were in its very basis, and must needs become more and more maleficient as the business fabric grew in size and complexity. One of these causes was the lack of any common control of the different industries, and the consequent impossibility of their orderly and coordinate development. It inevitably resulted from this lack that they were continually getting out of step with one another and out of relation with the demand.

"Of the latter there was no criterion such as organized distribution gives us, and the first notice that it had been exceeded in any group of industries was a crash of prices, bankruptcy of producers, stoppage of production, reduction of wages, or discharge of workmen. This process was constantly going on in many industries, even in what were called good times, but a crisis took place only when the industries affected were extensive. The
markets then were glutted with goods, of which nobody wanted beyond a sufficiency at any price. The wages and
profits of those making the glutted classes of goods being reduced or wholly stopped, their purchasing power as
consumers of other classes of goods, of which there were no natural glut, was taken away, and, as a consequence,
goods of which there was no natural glut became artificially glutted, till their prices also were broken down, and
their makers thrown out of work and deprived of income. The crisis was by this time fairly under way, and nothing
could check it till a nation’s ransom had been wasted.

“A cause, also inherent in your system, which often produced and always terribly aggravated crises, was the
machinery of money and credit. Money was essential when production was in many private hands, and buying and
selling was necessary to secure what one wanted. It was, however, open to the obvious objection of substituting
for food, clothing, and other things a merely conventional representative of them. The confusion of mind which
this favored, between goods and their representative, led the way to the credit system and its prodigious illusions.
Already accustomed to accept money for commodities, the people next accepted promises for money, and ceased
to look at all behind the representative for the thing represented. Money was a sign of real commodities, but
credit was but the sign of a sign. There was a natural limit to gold and silver, that is, money proper, but none to
credit, and the result was that the volume of credit, that is, the promises of money, ceased to bear any
ascertainable proportion to the money, still less to the commodities, actually in existence. Under such a system,
frequent and periodical crises were necessitated by a law as absolute as that which brings to the ground a
structure overhanging its centre of gravity. It was one of your fictions that the government and the banks
authorized by it alone issued money; but everybody who gave a dollar’s credit issued money to that extent, which
was as good as any to swell the circulation till the next crises. The great extension of the credit system was a
characteristic of the latter part of the nineteenth century, and accounts largely for the almost incessant business
crises which marked that period. Perilous as credit was, you could not dispense with its use, for, lacking any
national or other public organization of the capital of the country, it was the only means you had for concentrating
and directing it upon industrial enterprises. It was in this way a most potent means for exaggerating the chief
peril of the private enterprise system of industry by enabling particular industries to absorb disproportionate
amounts of the disposable capital of the country, and thus prepare disaster. Business enterprises were always
vastly in debt for advances of credit, both to one another and to the banks and capitalists, and the prompt
withdrawal of this credit at the first sign of a crisis was generally the precipitating cause of it.

“It was the misfortune of your contemporaries that they had to cement their business fabric with a material which
an accident might at any moment turn into an explosive. They were in the plight of a man building a house with
dynamite for mortar, for credit can be compared with nothing else.

“If you would see how needless were these convulsions of business which I have been speaking of, and how
entirely they resulted from leaving industry to private and unorganized management, just consider the working of
our system. Overproduction in special lines, which was the great hobgoblin of your day, is impossible now, for by
the connection between distribution and production supply is geared to demand like an engine to the governor
which regulates its speed. Even suppose by an error of judgment an excessive production of some commodity. The
consequent slackening or cessation of production in that line throws nobody out of employment. The suspended
workers are at once found occupation in some other department of the vast workshop and lose only the time spent
in changing, while, as for the glut, the business of the nation is large enough to carry any amount of product
manufactured in excess of demand till the latter overtakes it. In such a case of over-production, as I have
supposed, there is not with us, as with you, any complex machinery to get out of order and magnify a thousand
times the original mistake. Of course, having not even money, we still less have credit. All estimates deal directly
with the real things, the flour, iron, wood, wool, and labor, of which money and credit were for you the very
misleading representatives. In our calculation of cost there can be no mistakes. Out of the annual product the
amount necessary for the support of the people is taken, and the requisite labor to produce the next year’s
consumption provided for. The residue of the material and labor represents what can be safely expended in
improvements. If the crops are bad, the surplus for that year is less than usual, that is all. Except for slight
occasional effects of such natural causes, there are no fluctuations of business; the material prosperity of the
nation flows on uninterruptedly from generation to generation, like an ever broadening and deepening river.

“Your business crises, Mr. West,” continued the doctor, “like either of the great wastes I mentioned before, were
enough, alone, to have kept your noses to the grindstone forever; but I have still to speak of one other great cause
of your poverty, and that was the idleness of a great part of your capital and labor. With us it is the business of the
administration to keep in constant employment every ounce of available capital and labor in the country. In your
day there was no general control of either capital or labor, and a large part of both failed to find employment.
‘Capital,’ you used to say, ‘is naturally timid,’ and it would certainly have been reckless if it had not been timid in
an epoch when there was a large preponderance of probability that any particular business venture would end in
failure. There was no time when, if security could have been guaranteed it, the amount of capital devoted to
productive industry could not have been greatly increased. The proportion of it so employed underwent constant
extraordinary fluctuations, according to the greater or less feeling of uncertainty as to the stability of the industrial situation, so that the output of the national industries greatly varied in different years. But for the same reason that the amount of capital employed at times of special insecurity was far less than at times of somewhat greater security, a very large proportion was never employed at all, because the hazard of business was always very great in the best of times.

“It should be also noted that the great amount of capital always seeking employment where tolerable safety could be insured terribly embittered the competition between capitalists when a promising opening presented itself. The idleness of capital, the result of its timidity, of course meant the idleness of labor in corresponding degree. Moreover, every change in the adjustments of business, every slightest alteration in the condition of commerce or manufactures, not to speak of the innumerable business failures that took place yearly, even in the best of times, were constantly throwing a multitude of men out of employment for periods of weeks or months, or even years. A great number of these seekers after employment were constantly traversing the country, becoming in time professional vagabonds, then criminals. ‘Give us work!’ was the cry of an army of the unemployed at nearly all seasons, and in seasons of dullness in business this army swelled to a host so vast and desperate as to threaten the stability of the government. Could there conceivably be a more conclusive demonstration of the imbecility of the system of private enterprise as a method for enriching a nation than the fact that, in an age of such general poverty and want of everything, capitalists had to throttle one another to find a safe chance to invest their capital and workmen rioted and burned because they could find no work to do?

“Now, Mr. West,” continued Dr. Leete, “I want you to bear in mind that these points of which I have been speaking indicate only negatively the advantages of the national organization of industry by showing certain fatal defects and prodigious imbecilities of the systems of private enterprise which are not found in it. These alone, you must admit, would pretty well explain why the nation is so much richer than in your day. But the larger half of our advantage over you, the positive side of it, I have yet barely spoken of. Supposing the system of private enterprise in industry were without any of the great leaks I have mentioned; that there were no waste on account of misdirected effort growing out of mistakes as to the demand, and inability to command a general view of the industrial field. Suppose, also, there were no neutralizing and duplicating of effort from competition. Suppose, also, there were no waste from business panics and crises through bankruptcy and long interruptions of industry, and also none from the idleness of capital and labor. Supposing these evils, which are essential to the conduct of industry by capital in private hands, could all be miraculously prevented, and the system yet retained; even then the superiority of the results attained by the modern industrial system of national control would remain overwhelming.

“You used to have some pretty large textile manufacturing establishments, even in your day, although not comparable with ours. No doubt you have visited these great mills in your time, covering acres of ground, employing thousands of hands, and combining under one roof, under one control, the hundred distinct processes between, say, the cotton bale and the bale of glossy calicoes. You have admired the vast economy of labor as of mechanical force resulting from the perfect interworking with the rest of every wheel and every hand. No doubt you have reflected how much less the same force of workers employed in that factory would accomplish if they were scattered, each man working independently. Would you think it an exaggeration to say that the utmost product of those workers, working thus apart, however amicable their relations might be, was increased not merely by a percentage, but many fold, when their efforts were organized under one control? Well now, Mr. West, the organization of the industry of the nation under a single control, so that all its processes interlock, has multiplied the total product over the utmost that could be done under the former system, even leaving out of account the four great wastes mentioned, in the same proportion that the product of those millworkers was increased by cooperation. The effectiveness of the working force of a nation, under the myriad-headed leadership of private capital, even if the leaders were not mutual enemies, as compared with that which it attains under a single head, may be likened to the military efficiency of a mob, or a horde of barbarians with a thousand petty chiefs, as compared with that of a disciplined army under one general—such a fighting machine, for example, as the German army in the time of Von Moltke.”

“After what you have told me,” I said, “I do not so much wonder that the nation is richer now than then, but that you are not all Croesuses.”

“Well,” replied Dr. Leete, “we are pretty well off. The rate at which we live is as luxurious as we could wish. The rivalry of ostentation, which in your day led to extravagance in no way conducive to comfort, finds no place, of course, in a society of people absolutely equal in resources, and our ambition stops at the surroundings which minister to the enjoyment of life. We might, indeed, have much larger incomes, individually, if we chose so to use the surplus of our product, but we prefer to expend it upon public works and pleasures in which all share, upon public halls and buildings, art galleries, bridges, statuary, means of transit, and the conveniences of our cities, great musical and theatrical exhibitions, and in providing on a vast scale for the recreations of the people. You
have not begun to see how we live yet, Mr. West. At home we have comfort, but the splendor of our life is, on its social side, that which we share with our fellows. When you know more of it you will see where the money goes, as you used to say, and I think you will agree that we do well so to expend it.”

“I suppose,” observed Dr. Leete, as we strolled homeward from the dining hall, “that no reflection would have cut the men of your wealth-worshiping century more keenly than the suggestion that they did not know how to make money. Nevertheless that is just the verdict history has passed on them. Their system of unorganized and antagonistic industries was as absurd economically as it was morally abominable. Selfishness was their only science, and in industrial production selfishness is suicide. Competition, which is the instinct of selfishness, is another word for dissipation of energy, while combination is the secret of efficient production; and not till the idea of increasing the individual hoard gives place to the idea of increasing the common stock can industrial combination be realized, and the acquisition of wealth really begin. Even if the principle of share and share alike for all men were not the only humane and rational basis for a society, we should still enforce it as economically expedient, seeing that until the disintegrating influence of self-seeking is suppressed no true concert of industry is possible.”

Chapter 23

That evening, as I sat with Edith in the music room, listening to some pieces in the programme of that day which had attracted my notice, I took advantage of an interval in the music to say, “I have a question to ask you which I fear is rather indiscreet.”

“I am quite sure it is not that,” she replied, encouragingly.

“I am in the position of an eavesdropper,” I continued, “who, having overheard a little of a matter not intended for him, though seeming to concern him, has the impudence to come to the speaker for the rest.”

“An eavesdropper!” she repeated, looking puzzled.

“Yes,” I said, “but an excusable one, as I think you will admit.”

“This is very mysterious,” she replied.

“Yes,” said I, “so mysterious that often I have doubted whether I really overheard at all what I am going to ask you about, or only dreamed it. I want you to tell me. The matter is this: When I was coming out of that sleep of a century, the first impression of which I was conscious was of voices talking around me, voices that afterwards I recognized as your father’s, your mother’s, and your own. First, I remember your father’s voice saying, “He is going to open his eyes. He had better see but one person at first.” Then you said, if I did not dream it all, “Promise me, then, that you will not tell him.” Your father seemed to hesitate about promising, but you insisted, and your mother interposing, he finally promised, and when I opened my eyes I saw only him.”

I had been quite serious when I said that I was not sure that I had not dreamed the conversation I fancied I had overheard, so incomprehensible was it that these people should know anything of me, a contemporary of their great-grandparents, which I did not know myself. But when I saw the effect of my words upon Edith, I knew that it was no dream, but another mystery, and a more puzzling one than any I had before encountered. For from the moment that the drift of my question became apparent, she showed indications of the most acute embarrassment. Her eyes, always so frank and direct in expression, had dropped in a panic before mine, while her face crimsoned from neck to forehead.

“Pardon me,” I said, as soon as I had recovered from bewilderment at the extraordinary effect of my words. “It seems, then, that I was not dreaming. There is some secret, something about me, which you are withholding from me. Really, doesn’t it seem a little hard that a person in my position should not be given all the information possible concerning himself?”

“It does not concern you—that is, not directly. It is not about you exactly,” she replied, scarcely audibly.

“But it concerns me in some way,” I persisted. “It must be something that would interest me.”

“I don’t know even that,” she replied, venturing a momentary glance at my face, furiously blushing, and yet with a quaint smile flickering about her lips which betrayed a certain perception of humor in the situation despite its
embarrassment,—"I am not sure that it would even interest you."

"Your father would have told me," I insisted, with an accent of reproach. "It was you who forbade him. He thought I ought to know."

She did not reply. She was so entirely charming in her confusion that I was now prompted, as much by the desire to prolong the situation as by my original curiosity, to importune her further.

"Am I never to know? Will you never tell me?" I said.

"It depends," she answered, after a long pause.

"On what?" I persisted.

"Ah, you ask too much," she replied. Then, raising to mine a face which inscrutable eyes, flushed cheeks, and smiling lips combined to render perfectly bewitching, she added, "What should you think if I said that it depended on—you yourself?"

"On myself?" I echoed. "How can that possibly be?"

"Mr. West, we are losing some charming music," was her only reply to this, and turning to the telephone, at a touch of her finger she set the air to swaying to the rhythm of an adagio. After that she took good care that the music should leave no opportunity for conversation. She kept her face averted from me, and pretended to be absorbed in the airs, but that it was a mere pretense the crimson tide standing at flood in her cheeks sufficiently betrayed.

When at length she suggested that I might have heard all I cared to, for that time, and we rose to leave the room, she came straight up to me and said, without raising her eyes, "Mr. West, you say I have been good to you. I have not been particularly so, but if you think I have, I want you to promise me that you will not try again to make me tell you this thing you have asked to-night, and that you will not try to find it out from any one else,—my father or mother, for instance."

To such an appeal there was but one reply possible. "Forgive me for distressing you. Of course I will promise," I said. "I would never have asked you if I had fancied it could distress you. But do you blame me for being curious?"

"I do not blame you at all."

"And some time," I added, "if I do not tease you, you may tell me of your own accord. May I not hope so?"

"Perhaps," she murmured.

"Only perhaps?"

Looking up, she read my face with a quick, deep glance. "Yes," she said, "I think I may tell you—some time": and so our conversation ended, for she gave me no chance to say anything more.

That night I don't think even Dr. Pillsbury could have put me to sleep, till toward morning at least. Mysteries had been my accustomed food for days now, but none had before confronted me at once so mysterious and so fascinating as this, the solution of which Edith Leete had forbidden me even to seek. It was a double mystery. How, in the first place, was it conceivable that she should know any secret about me, a stranger from a strange age? In the second place, even if she should know such a secret, how account for the agitating effect which the knowledge of it seemed to have upon her? There are puzzles so difficult that one cannot even get so far as a conjecture as to the solution, and this seemed one of them. I am usually of too practical a turn to waste time on such conundrums; but the difficulty of a riddle embodied in a beautiful young girl does not detract from its fascination. In general, no doubt, maidens' blushes may be safely assumed to tell the same tale to young men in all ages and races, but to give that interpretation to Edith's crimson cheeks would, considering my position and the length of time I had known her, and still more the fact that this mystery dated from before I had known her at all, be a piece of utter fatuity. And yet she was an angel, and I should not have been a young man if reason and common sense had been able quite to banish a roseate tinge from my dreams that night.
Chapter 24

In the morning I went down stairs early in the hope of seeing Edith alone. In this, however, I was disappointed. Not finding her in the house, I sought her in the garden, but she was not there. In the course of my wanderings I visited the underground chamber, and sat down there to rest. Upon the reading table in the chamber several periodicals and newspapers lay, and thinking that Dr. Leete might be interested in glancing over a Boston daily of 1887, I brought one of the papers with me into the house when I came.

At breakfast I met Edith. She blushed as she greeted me, but was perfectly self-possessed. As we sat at table, Dr. Leete amused himself with looking over the paper I had brought in. There was in it, as in all the newspapers of that date, a great deal about the labor troubles, strikes, lockouts, boycotts, the programmes of labor parties, and the wild threats of the anarchists.

“By the way,” said I, as the doctor read aloud to us some of these items, “what part did the followers of the red flag take in the establishment of the new order of things? They were making considerable noise the last thing that I knew.”

“They had nothing to do with it except to hinder it, of course,” replied Dr. Leete. “They did that very effectually while they lasted, for their talk so disgusted people as to deprive the best considered projects for social reform of a hearing. The subsidizing of those fellows was one of the shrewdest moves of the opponents of reform.”

“Subsidizing them!” I exclaimed in astonishment.

“Certainly,” replied Dr. Leete. “No historical authority nowadays doubts that they were paid by the great monopolies to wave the red flag and talk about burning, sacking, and blowing people up, in order, by alarming the timid, to head off any real reforms. What astonishes me most is that you should have fallen into the trap so unsuspectingly.”

“What are your grounds for believing that the red flag party was subsidized?” I inquired.

“Why simply because they must have seen that their course made a thousand enemies of their professed cause to one friend. Not to suppose that they were hired for the work is to credit them with an inconceivable folly.[1] In the United States, of all countries, no party could intelligently expect to carry its point without first winning over to its ideas a majority of the nation, as the national party eventually did.”

“The national party!” I exclaimed. “That must have arisen after my day. I suppose it was one of the labor parties.”

“Oh no!” replied the doctor. “The labor parties, as such, never could have accomplished anything on a large or permanent scale. For purposes of national scope, their basis as merely class organizations was too narrow. It was not till a rearrangement of the industrial and social system on a higher ethical basis, and for the more efficient production of wealth, was recognized as the interest, not of one class, but equally of all classes, of rich and poor, cultured and ignorant, old and young, weak and strong, men and women, that there was any prospect that it would be achieved. Then the national party arose to carry it out by political methods. It probably took that name because its aim was to nationalize the functions of production and distribution. Indeed, it could not well have had any other name, for its purpose was to realize the idea of the nation with a grandeur and completeness never before conceived, not as an association of men for certain merely political functions affecting their happiness only remotely and superficially, but as a family, a vital union, a common life, a mighty heaven-touching tree whose leaves are its people, fed from its veins, and feeding it in turn. The most patriotic of all possible parties, it sought to justify patriotism and raise it from an instinct to a rational devotion, by making the native land truly a father land, a father who kept the people alive and was not merely an idol for which they were expected to die.”

[1] I fully admit the difficulty of accounting for the course of the anarchists on any other theory than that they were subsidized by the capitalists, but at the same time, there is no doubt that the theory is wholly erroneous. It certainly was not held at the time by any one, though it may seem so obvious in the retrospect.
The personality of Edith Leete had naturally impressed me strongly ever since I had come, in so strange a manner, to be an inmate of her father’s house, and it was to be expected that after what had happened the night previous, I should be more than ever preoccupied with thoughts of her. From the first I had been struck with the air of serene frankness and ingenuous directness, more like that of a noble and innocent boy than any girl I had ever known, which characterized her. I was curious to know how far this charming quality might be peculiar to herself, and how far possibly a result of alterations in the social position of women which might have taken place since my time. Finding an opportunity that day, when alone with Dr. Leete, I turned the conversation in that direction.

“I suppose,” I said, “that women nowadays, having been relieved of the burden of housework, have no employment but the cultivation of their charms and graces.”

“So far as we men are concerned,” replied Dr. Leete, “we should consider that they amply paid their way, to use one of your forms of expression, if they confined themselves to that occupation, but you may be very sure that they have quite too much spirit to consent to be mere beneficiaries of society, even as a return for ornamenting it. They did, indeed, welcome their riddance from housework, because that was not only exceptionally wearing in itself, but also wasteful, in the extreme, of energy, as compared with the cooperative plan; but they accepted relief from that sort of work only that they might contribute in other and more effectual, as well as more agreeable, ways to the common weal. Our women, as well as our men, are members of the industrial army, and leave it only when maternal duties claim them. The result is that most women, at one time or another of their lives, serve industrially some five or ten or fifteen years, while those who have no children fill out the full term.”

“A woman does not, then, necessarily leave the industrial service on marriage?” I queried.

“No more than a man,” replied the doctor. “Why on earth should she? Married women have no housekeeping responsibilities now, you know, and a husband is not a baby that he should be cared for.”

“It was thought one of the most grievous features of our civilization that we required so much toil from women,” I said; “but it seems to me you get more out of them than we did.”

Dr. Leete laughed. “Indeed we do, just as we do out of our men. Yet the women of this age are very happy, and those of the nineteenth century, unless contemporary references greatly mislead us, were very miserable. The reason that women nowadays are so much more efficient collaborators with the men, and at the same time are so happy, is that, in regard to their work as well as men’s, we follow the principle of providing every one the kind of occupation he or she is best adapted to. Women being inferior in strength to men, and further disqualified industrially in special ways, the kinds of occupation reserved for them, and the conditions under which they pursue them, have reference to these facts. The heavier sorts of work are everywhere reserved for men, the lighter occupations for women. Under no circumstances is a woman permitted to follow any employment not perfectly adapted, both as to kind and degree of labor, to her sex. Moreover, the hours of women’s work are considerably shorter than those of men’s, more frequent vacations are granted, and the most careful provision is made for rest when needed. The men of this day so well appreciate that they owe to the beauty and grace of women the chief zest of their lives and their main incentive to effort, that they permit them to work at all only because it is fully understood that a certain regular requirement of labor, of a sort adapted to their powers, is well for body and mind, during the period of maximum physical vigor. We believe that the magnificent health which distinguishes our women from those of your day, who seem to have been so generally sickly, is owing largely to the fact that all alike are furnished with healthful and inspiring occupation.”

“I understood you,” I said, “that the women-workers belong to the army of industry, but how can they be under the same system of ranking and discipline with the men, when the conditions of their labor are so different?”

“They are under an entirely different discipline,” replied Dr. Leete, “and constitute rather an allied force than an integral part of the army of the men. They have a woman general-in-chief and are under exclusively feminine regime. This general, as also the higher officers, is chosen by the body of women who have passed the time of service, in correspondence with the manner in which the chiefs of the masculine army and the President of the nation are elected. The general of the women’s army sits in the cabinet of the President and has a veto on measures respecting women’s work, pending appeals to Congress. I should have said, in speaking of the judiciary, that we have women on the bench, appointed by the general of the women, as well as men. Causes in which both parties are women are determined by women judges, and where a man and a woman are parties to a case, a judge of either sex must consent to the verdict.”

“Womanhood seems to be organized as a sort of imperium in imperio in your system,” I said.
“To some extent,” Dr. Leete replied; “but the inner imperium is one from which you will admit there is not likely to be much danger to the nation. The lack of some such recognition of the distinct individuality of the sexes was one of the innumerable defects of your society. The passionat attraction between men and women has too often prevented a perception of the profound differences which make the members of each sex in many things strange to the other, and capable of sympathy only with their own. It is in giving full play to the differences of sex rather than in seeking to obliterate them, as was apparently the effort of some reformers in your day, that the enjoyment of each by itself and the piquancy which each has for the other, are alike enhanced. In your day there was no career for women except in an unnatural rivalry with men. We have given them a world of their own, with its emulations, ambitions, and careers, and I assure you they are very happy in it. It seems to us that women were more than any other class the victims of your civilization. There is something which, even at this distance of time, penetrates one with pathos in the spectacle of their ennuied, undeveloped lives, stunted at marriage, their narrow horizon, bounded so often, physically, by the four walls of home, and morally by a petty circle of personal interests. I speak now, not of the poorer classes, who were generally worked to death, but also of the well-to-do and rich. From the great sorrows, as well as the petty frets of life, they had no refuge in the breezy outdoor world of human affairs, nor any interests save those of the family. Such an existence would have softened men’s brains or driven them mad. All that is changed to-day. No woman is heard nowadays wishing she were a man, nor parents desiring boy rather than girl children. Our girls are as full of ambition for their careers as our boys. Marriage, when it comes, does not mean incarceration for them, nor does it separate them in any way from the larger interests of society, the bustling life of the world. Only when maternity fills a woman’s mind with new interests does she withdraw from the world for a time. Afterward, and at any time, she may return to her place among her comrades, nor need she ever lose touch with them. Women are a very happy race nowadays, as compared with what they ever were before in the world’s history, and their power of giving happiness to men has been of course increased in proportion.”

“I should imagine it possible,” I said, “that the interest which girls take in their careers as members of the industrial army and candidates for its distinctions might have an effect to deter them from marriage.”

Dr. Leete smiled. “Have no anxiety on that score, Mr. West,” he replied. “The Creator took very good care that whatever other modifications the dispositions of men and women might with time take on, their attraction for each other should remain constant. The mere fact that in an age like yours, when the struggle for existence must have left people little time for other thoughts, and the future was so uncertain that to assume parental responsibilities must have often seemed like a criminal risk, there was even then marrying and giving in marriage, should be conclusive on this point. As for love nowadays, one of our authors says that the vacuum left in the minds of men and women by the absence of care for one’s livelihood has been entirely taken up by the tender passion. That, however, I beg you to believe, is something of an exaggeration. For the rest, so far is marriage from being an interference with a woman’s career, that the higher positions in the feminine army of industry are intrusted only to women who have been both wives and mothers, as they alone fully represent their sex.”

“Are credit cards issued to the women just as to the men?”

“Certainly.”

“The credits of the women, I suppose, are for smaller sums, owing to the frequent suspension of their labor on account of family responsibilities.”

“Smaller!” exclaimed Dr. Leete, “oh, no! The maintenance of all our people is the same. There are no exceptions to that rule, but if any difference were made on account of the interruptions you speak of, it would be by making the woman’s credit larger, not smaller. Can you think of any service constituting a stronger claim on the nation’s gratitude than bearing and nursing the nation’s children? According to our view, none deserve so well of the world’s history, and their power of giving happiness to men has been of course increased in proportion.”

“It would seem to follow, from what you have said, that wives are in no way dependent on their husbands for maintenance.”

“Of course they are not,” replied Dr. Leete, “nor children on their parents either, that is, for means of support, though of course they are for the offices of affection. The child’s labor, when he grows up, will go to increase the common stock, not his parents’, who will be dead, and therefore he is properly nurtured out of the common stock. The account of every person, man, woman, and child, you must understand, is always with the nation directly, and never through any intermediary, except, of course, that parents, to a certain extent, act for children as their guardians. You see that it is by virtue of the relation of individuals to the nation, of their membership in it, that they are entitled to support; and this title is in no way connected with or affected by their relations to other individuals who are fellow members of the nation with them. That any person should be dependent for the means
of support upon another would be shocking to the moral sense as well as indefensible on any rational social
theory. What would become of personal liberty and dignity under such an arrangement? I am aware that you
called yourselves free in the nineteenth century. The meaning of the word could not then, however, have been at
all what it is at present, or you certainly would not have applied it to a society of which nearly every member was
in a position of galling personal dependence upon others as to the very means of life, the poor upon the rich, or
employed upon employer, women upon men, children upon parents. Instead of distributing the product of the
nation directly to its members, which would seem the most natural and obvious method, it would actually appear
that you had given your minds to devising a plan of hand to hand distribution, involving the maximum of personal
humiliation to all classes of recipients.

“As regards the dependence of women upon men for support, which then was usual, of course, natural attraction
in case of marriages of love may often have made it endurable, though for spirited women I should fancy it must
always have remained humiliating. What, then, must it have been in the innumerable cases where women, with or
without the form of marriage, had to sell themselves to men to get their living? Even your contemporaries, callous
as they were to most of the revolting aspects of their society, seem to have had an idea that this was not quite as it
should be; but, it was still only for pity’s sake that they deplored the lot of the women. It did not occur to them
that it was robbery as well as cruelty when men seized for themselves the whole product of the world and left
women to beg and wheedle for their share. Why—but bless me, Mr. West, I am really running on at a remarkable
rate, just as if the robbery, the sorrow, and the shame which those poor women endured were not over a century
since, or as if you were responsible for what you no doubt deplored as much as I do.”

“I must bear my share of responsibility for the world as it then was,” I replied. “All I can say in extenuation is that
until the nation was ripe for the present system of organized production and distribution, no radical improvement
in the position of woman was possible. The root of her disability, as you say, was her personal dependence upon
man for her livelihood, and I can imagine no other mode of social organization than that you have adopted, which
would have set woman free of man at the same time that it set men free of one another. I suppose, by the way,
that so entire a change in the position of women cannot have taken place without affecting in marked ways the
social relations of the sexes. That will be a very interesting study for me.”

“The change you will observe,” said Dr. Leete, “will chiefly be, I think, the entire frankness and unconstraint
which now characterizes those relations, as compared with the artificiality which seems to have marked them in
your time. The sexes now meet with the ease of perfect equals, suitors to each other for nothing but love. In your
time the fact that women were dependent for support on men made the woman in reality the one chiefly benefited
by marriage. This fact, so far as we can judge from contemporary records, appears to have been coarsely enough
recognized among the lower classes, while among the more polished it was glossed over by a system of elaborate
conventionalities which aimed to carry the precisely opposite meaning, namely, that the man was the party chiefly
benefited. To keep up this convention it was essential that he should always seem the suitor. Nothing was
therefore considered more shocking to the proprieties than that a woman should betray a fondness for a man
before he had indicated a desire to marry her. Why, we actually have in our libraries books, by authors of your
day, written for no other purpose than to discuss the question whether, under any conceivable circumstances, a
woman might, without discredit to her sex, reveal an unsolicited love. All this seems exquisitely absurd to us, and
yet we know that, given your circumstances, the problem might have a serious side. When for a woman to proffer
her love to a man was in effect to invite him to assume the burden of her support, it is easy to see that pride and
delicacy might well have checked the promptings of the heart. When you go out into our society, Mr. West, you
must be prepared to be often cross-questioned on this point by our young people, who are naturally much
interested in this aspect of old-fashioned manners.”[1]

“And so the girls of the twentieth century tell their love.”

“If they choose,” replied Dr. Leete. “There is no more pretense of a concealment of feeling on their part than on
the part of their lovers. Coquetry would be as much despised in a girl as in a man. Affected coldness, which in
your day rarely deceived a lover, would deceive him wholly now, for no one thinks of practicing it.”

“One result which must follow from the independence of women I can see for myself,” I said. “There can be no
marriages now except those of inclination.”

“That is a matter of course,” replied Dr. Leete.

“Think of a world in which there are nothing but matches of pure love! Ah me, Dr. Leete, how far you are from
being able to understand what an astonishing phenomenon such a world seems to a man of the nineteenth
century!”

“I can, however, to some extent, imagine it,” replied the doctor. “But the fact you celebrate, that there are nothing
but love matches, means even more, perhaps, than you probably at first realize. It means that for the first time in
human history the principle of sexual selection, with its tendency to preserve and transmit the better types of the
race, and let the inferior types drop out, has unhindered operation. The necessities of poverty, the need of having
a home, no longer tempt women to accept as the fathers of their children men whom they neither can love nor
respect. Wealth and rank no longer divert attention from personal qualities. Gold no longer ‘gilds the straitened
forehead of the fool.’ The gifts of person, mind, and disposition; beauty, wit, eloquence, kindness, generosity,
geniality, courage, are sure of transmission to posterity. Every generation is sifted through a little finer mesh than
the last. The attributes that human nature admires are preserved, those that repel it are left behind. There are, of
course, a great many women who with love must mingle admiration, and seek to wed greatly, but these not the
less obey the same law, for to wed greatly now is not to marry men of fortune or title, but those who have risen
above their fellows by the solidity or brilliance of their services to humanity. These form nowadays the only
aristocracy with which alliance is distinction.

“You were speaking, a day or two ago, of the physical superiority of our people to your contemporaries. Perhaps
more important than any of the causes I mentioned then as tending to race purification has been the effect of
untrammeled sexual selection upon the quality of two or three successive generations. I believe that when you
have made a fuller study of our people you will find in them not only a physical, but a mental and moral
improvement. It would be strange if it were not so, for not only is one of the great laws of nature now freely
working out the salvation of the race, but a profound moral sentiment has come to its support. Individualism,
which in your day was the animating idea of society, not only was fatal to any vital sentiment of brotherhood and
common interest among living men, but equally to any realization of the responsibility of the living for the
generation to follow. To-day this sense of responsibility, practically unrecognized in all previous ages, has become
one of the great ethical ideas of the race, reinforcing, with an intense conviction of duty, the natural impulse to
seek in marriage the best and noblest of the other sex. The result is, that not all the encouragements and
incentives of every sort which we have provided to develop industry, talent, genius, excellence of whatever kind,
are comparable in their effect on our young men with the fact that our women sit aloft as judges of the race and
reserve themselves to reward the winners. Of all the whips, and spurs, and baits, and prizes, there is none like the
thought of the radiant faces which the laggards will find averted.

“Celibates nowadays are almost invariably men who have failed to acquit themselves creditably in the work of life.
The woman must be a courageous one, with a very evil sort of courage, too, whom pity for one of these
unfortunates should lead to defy the opinion of her generation—for otherwise she is free—so far as to accept him
for a husband. I should add that, more exacting and difficult to resist than any other element in that opinion, she
would find the sentiment of her own sex. Our women have risen to the full height of their responsibility as the
wardens of the world to come, to whose keeping the keys of the future are confided. Their feeling of duty in this
respect amounts to a sense of religious consecration. It is a cult in which they educate their daughters from
childhood.”

After going to my room that night, I sat up late to read a romance of Berrian, handed me by Dr. Leete, the plot of
which turned on a situation suggested by his last words, concerning the modern view of parental responsibility. A
similar situation would almost certainly have been treated by a nineteenth century romancist so as to excite the
morbid sympathy of the reader with the sentimental selfishness of the lovers, and his resentment toward the
unwritten law which they outraged. I need not describe—for who has not read “Ruth Elton”?—how different is the
course which Berrian takes, and with what tremendous effect he enforces the principle which he states: “Over the
unborn our power is that of God, and our responsibility like His toward us. As we acquit ourselves toward them, so
let Him deal with us.”

[1] I may say that Dr. Leete’s warning has been fully justified by my experience. The amount and intensity of
amusement which the young people of this day, and the young women especially, are able to extract from what
they are pleased to call the oddities of courtship in the nineteenth century, appear unlimited.

Chapter 26

I think if a person were ever excusable for losing track of the days of the week, the circumstances excused me.
Indeed, if I had been told that the method of reckoning time had been wholly changed and the days were now
counted in lots of five, ten, or fifteen instead of seven, I should have been in no way surprised after what I had
already heard and seen of the twentieth century. The first time that any inquiry as to the days of the week
occurred to me was the morning following the conversation related in the last chapter. At the breakfast table Dr.
Leete asked me if I would care to hear a sermon.

"Is it Sunday, then?" I exclaimed.

"Yes," he replied. "It was on Friday, you see, when we made the lucky discovery of the buried chamber to which we owe your society this morning. It was on Saturday morning, soon after midnight, that you first awoke, and Sunday afternoon when you awoke the second time with faculties fully regained."

"So you still have Sundays and sermons," I said. "We had prophets who foretold that long before this time the world would have dispensed with both. I am very curious to know how the ecclesiastical systems fit in with the rest of your social arrangements. I suppose you have a sort of national church with official clergymen."

Dr. Leete laughed, and Mrs. Leete and Edith seemed greatly amused.

"Why, Mr. West," Edith said, "what odd people you must think us. You were quite done with national religious establishments in the nineteenth century, and did you fancy we had gone back to them?"

"But how can voluntary churches and an unofficial clerical profession be reconciled with national ownership of all buildings, and the industrial service required of all men?" I answered.

"The religious practices of the people have naturally changed considerably in a century," replied Dr. Leete; "but supposing them to have remained unchanged, our social system would accommodate them perfectly. The nation supplies any person or number of persons with buildings on guarantee of the rent, and they remain tenants while they pay it. As for the clergymen, if a number of persons wish the services of an individual for any particular end of their own, apart from the general service of the nation, they can always secure it, with that individual's own consent, of course, just as we secure the service of our editors, by contributing from their credit cards an indemnity to the nation for the loss of his services in general industry. This indemnity paid the nation for the individual answers to the salary in your day paid to the individual himself; and the various applications of this principle leave private initiative full play in all details to which national control is not applicable. Now, as to hearing a sermon to-day, if you wish to do so, you can either go to a church to hear it or stay at home."

"How am I to hear it if I stay at home?"

"Simply by accompanying us to the music room at the proper hour and selecting an easy chair. There are some who still prefer to hear sermons in church, but most of our preaching, like our musical performances, is not in public, but delivered in acoustically prepared chambers, connected by wire with subscribers' houses. If you prefer to go to a church I shall be glad to accompany you, but I really don't believe you are likely to hear anywhere a better discourse than you will at home. I see by the paper that Mr. Barton is to preach this morning, and he preaches only by telephone, and to audiences often reaching 150,000."

"The novelty of the experience of hearing a sermon under such circumstances would incline me to be one of Mr. Barton's hearers, if for no other reason," I said.

An hour or two later, as I sat reading in the library, Edith came for me, and I followed her to the music room, where Dr. and Mrs. Leete were waiting. We had not more than seated ourselves comfortably when the tinkle of a bell was heard, and a few moments after the voice of a man, at the pitch of ordinary conversation, addressed us, with an effect of proceeding from an invisible person in the room. This was what the voice said:

**MR. BARTON'S SERMON**

"We have had among us, during the past week, a critic from the nineteenth century, a living representative of the epoch of our great-grandparents. It would be strange if a fact so extraordinary had not somewhat strongly affected our imaginations. Perhaps most of us have been stimulated to some effort to realize the society of a century ago, and figure to ourselves what it must have been like to live then. In inviting you now to consider certain reflections upon this subject which have occurred to me, I presume that I shall rather follow than divert the course of your own thoughts."

Edith whispered something to her father at this point, to which he nodded assent and turned to me.

"Mr. West," he said, "Edith suggests that you may find it slightly embarrassing to listen to a discourse on the lines Mr. Barton is laying down, and if so, you need not be cheated out of a sermon. She will connect us with Mr. Sweetser's speaking room if you say so, and I can still promise you a very good discourse."

"No, no," I said. "Believe me, I would much rather hear what Mr. Barton has to say."
“As you please,” replied my host.

When her father spoke to me Edith had touched a screw, and the voice of Mr. Barton had ceased abruptly. Now at another touch the room was once more filled with the earnest sympathetic tones which had already impressed me most favorably.

“I venture to assume that one effect has been common with us as a result of this effort at retrospection, and that it has been to leave us more than ever amazed at the stupendous change which one brief century has made in the material and moral conditions of humanity.

“Still, as regards the contrast between the poverty of the nation and the world in the nineteenth century and their wealth now, it is not greater, possibly, than had been before seen in human history, perhaps not greater, for example, than that between the poverty of this country during the earliest colonial period of the seventeenth century and the relatively great wealth it had attained at the close of the nineteenth, or between the England of William the Conqueror and that of Victoria. Although the aggregate riches of a nation did not then, as now, afford any accurate criterion of the masses of its people, yet instances like these afford partial parallels for the merely material side of the contrast between the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. It is when we contemplate the moral aspect of that contrast that we find ourselves in the presence of a phenomenon for which history offers no precedent, however far back we may cast our eye. One might almost be excused who should exclaim, ‘Here, surely, is something like a miracle!’ Nevertheless, when we give over idle wonder, and begin to examine the seeming prodigy critically, we find it no prodigy at all, much less a miracle. It is not necessary to suppose a moral new birth of humanity, or a wholesale destruction of the wicked and survival of the good, to account for the fact before us. It finds its simple and obvious explanation in the reaction of a changed environment upon human nature. It means merely that a form of society which was founded on the pseudo self-interest of selfishness, and appealed solely to the anti-social and brutal side of human nature, has been replaced by institutions based on the true self-interest of a rational unselfishness, and appealing to the social and generous instincts of men.

“My friends, if you would see men again the beasts of prey they seemed in the nineteenth century, all you have to do is to restore the old social and industrial system, which taught them to view their natural prey in their fellow-men, and find their gain in the loss of others. No doubt it seems to you that no necessity, however dire, would have tempted you to subsist on what superior skill or strength enabled you to wrest from others equally needy. But suppose it were not merely your own life that you were responsible for. I know well that there must have been many a man among our ancestors who, if it had been merely a question of his own life, would sooner have given it up than nourished it by bread snatched from others. But this he was not permitted to do. He had dear lives dependent on him. Men loved women in those days, as now. God knows how they dared be fathers, but they had babies as sweet, no doubt, to them as ours to us, whom they must feed, clothe, educate. The gentlest creatures are fierce when they have young to provide for, and in that wolfish society the struggle for bread borrowed a peculiar desperation from the tenderest sentiments. For the sake of those dependent on him, a man might not choose, but must plunge into the foul fight—cheat, overreach, supplant, defraud, buy below worth and sell above, break down the business by which his neighbor fed his young ones, tempt men to buy what they ought not and to sell what they should not, grind his laborers, sweat his debtors, cozen his creditors. Though a man sought it carefully with tears, it was hard to find a way in which he could earn a living and provide for his family except by pressing in before some weaker rival and taking the food from his mouth. Even the ministers of religion were not exempt from this cruel necessity. While they warned their flocks against the love of money, regard for their families compelled them to keep an outlook for the pecuniary prizes of their calling. Poor fellows, theirs was indeed a trying business, preaching to men a generosity and unselfishness which they and everybody knew would, in the existing state of the world, reduce to poverty those who should practice them, laying down laws of conduct which the law of self-preservation compelled men to break. Looking on the inhuman spectacle of society, these worthy men bitterly bemoaned the depravity of human nature; as if angelic nature would not have been debauched in such a devil’s school! Ah, my friends, believe me, it is not now in this happy age that humanity is proving the divinity within it. It was rather in those evil days when not even the fight for life with one another, the struggle for mere existence, in which mercy was folly, could wholly banish generosity and kindness from the earth.

“It is not hard to understand the desperation with which men and women, who under other conditions would have been full of gentleness and truth, fought and tore each other in the scramble for gold, when we realize what it meant to miss it, what poverty was in that day. For the body it was hunger and thirst, torment by heat and frost, in sickness neglect, in health unremitting toil; for the moral nature it meant oppression, contempt, and the patient endurance of indignity, brutish associations from infancy, the loss of all the innocence of childhood, the grace of womanhood, the dignity of manhood; for the mind it meant the death of ignorance, the torpor of all those faculties which distinguish us from brutes, the reduction of life to a round of bodily functions.

“Ah, my friends, if such a fate as this were offered you and your children as the only alternative of success in the
accumulation of wealth, how long do you fancy would you be in sinking to the moral level of your ancestors?

“Some two or three centuries ago an act of barbarity was committed in India, which, though the number of lives destroyed was but a few score, was attended by such peculiar horrors that its memory is likely to be perpetual. A number of English prisoners were shut up in a room containing not enough air to supply one-tenth their number. The unfortunates were gallant men, devoted comrades in service, but, as the agonies of suffocation began to take hold on them, they forgot all else, and became involved in a hideous struggle, each one for himself, and against all others, to force a way to one of the small apertures of the prison at which alone it was possible to get a breath of air. It was a struggle in which men became beasts, and the recital of its horrors by the few survivors so shocked our forefathers that for a century later we find it a stock reference in their literature as a typical illustration of the extreme possibilities of human misery, as shocking in its moral as its physical aspect. They could scarcely have anticipated that to us the Black Hole of Calcutta, with its press of maddened men tearing and trampling one another in the struggle to win a place at the breathing holes, would seem a striking type of the society of their age. It lacked something of being a complete type, however, for in the Calcutta Black Hole there were no tender women, no little children and old men and women, no cripples. They were at least all men, strong to bear, who suffered.

“When we reflect that the ancient order of which I have been speaking was prevalent up to the end of the nineteenth century, while to us the new order which succeeded it already seems antique, even our parents having known no other, we cannot fail to be astonished at the suddenness with which a transition so profound beyond all previous experience of the race must have been effected. Some observation of the state of men’s minds during the last quarter of the nineteenth century will, however, in great measure, dissipate this astonishment. Though general intelligence in the modern sense could not be said to exist in any community at that time, yet, as compared with previous generations, the one then on the stage was intelligent. The inevitable consequence of even this comparative degree of intelligence had been a perception of the evils of society, such as had never before been general. It is quite true that these evils had been even worse, much worse, in previous ages. It was the increased intelligence of the masses which made the difference, as the dawn reveals the squalor of surroundings which in the darkness may have seemed tolerable. The key-note of the literature of the period was one of compassion for the poor and unfortunate, and indignant outcry against the failure of the social machinery to ameliorate the miseries of men. It is plain from these outbursts that the moral hideousness of the spectacle about them was, at least by flashes, fully realized by the best of the men of that time, and that the lives of some of the more sensitive and generous hearted of them were rendered well nigh unendurable by the intensity of their sympathies.

“Although the idea of the vital unity of the family of mankind, the reality of human brotherhood, was very far from being apprehended by them as the moral axiom it seems to us, yet it is a mistake to suppose that there was no feeling at all corresponding to it. I could read you passages of great beauty from some of their writers which show that the conception was clearly attained by a few, and no doubt vaguely by many more. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that the nineteenth century was in name Christian, and the fact that the entire commercial and industrial frame of society was the embodiment of the anti-Christian spirit must have had some weight, though I admit it was strangely little, with the nominal followers of Jesus Christ.

“When we inquire why it did not have more, why, in general, long after a vast majority of men had agreed as to the crying abuses of the existing social arrangement, they still tolerated it, or contented themselves with talking of petty reforms in it, we come upon an extraordinary fact. It was the sincere belief of even the best of men at that epoch that the only stable elements in human nature, on which a social system could be safely founded, were its worst propensities. They had been taught and believed that greed and self-seeking were all that held mankind together, and that all human associations would fall to pieces if anything were done to blunt the edge of these motives or curb their operation. In a word, they believed—even those who longed to believe otherwise—the exact reverse of what seems to us self-evident; they believed, that is, that the anti-social qualities of men, and not their social qualities, were what furnished the cohesive force of society. It seemed reasonable to them that men lived together solely for the purpose of overreaching and oppressing one another, and of being overreached and oppressed, and that while a society that gave full scope to these propensities could stand, there would be little chance for one based on the idea of cooperation for the benefit of all. It seems absurd to expect any one to believe that convictions like these were ever seriously entertained by men; but that they were not only entertained by our great-grandfathers, but were responsible for the long delay in doing away with the ancient order, after a conviction of its intolerable abuses had become general, is as well established as any fact in history can be. Just here you will find the explanation of the profound pessimism of the literature of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the note of melancholy in its poetry, and the cynicism of its humor.

“Feeling that the condition of the race was unendurable, they had no clear hope of anything better. They believed that the evolution of humanity had resulted in leading it into a cul de sac, and that there was no way of getting
forward. The frame of men’s minds at this time is strikingly illustrated by treatises which have come down to us, and may even now be consulted in our libraries by the curious, in which laborious arguments are pursued to prove that despite the evil plight of men, life was still, by some slight preponderance of considerations, probably better worth living than leaving. Despising themselves, they despised their Creator. There was a general decay of religious belief. Pale and watery gleams, from skies thickly veiled by doubt and dread, alone lighted up the chaos of earth. That men should doubt Him whose breath is in their nostrils, or dread the hands that moulded them, seems to us indeed a pitiable insanity; but we must remember that children who are brave by day have sometimes foolish fears at night. The dawn has come since then. It is very easy to believe in the fatherhood of God in the twentieth century.

“Briefly, as must needs be in a discourse of this character, I have adverted to some of the causes which had prepared men’s minds for the change from the old to the new order, as well as some causes of the conservatism of despair which for a while held it back after the time was ripe. To wonder at the rapidity with which the change was completed after its possibility was first entertained is to forget the intoxicating effect of hope upon minds long accustomed to despair. The sunburst, after so long and dark a night, must needs have had a dazzling effect. From the moment men allowed themselves to believe that humanity after all had not been meant for a dwarf, that its squat stature was not the measure of its possible growth, but that it stood upon the verge of an avatar of limitless development, the reaction must needs have been overwhelming. It is evident that nothing was able to stand against the enthusiasm which the new faith inspired.

“Here, at last, men must have felt, was a cause compared with which the grandest of historic causes had been trivial. It was doubtless because it could have commanded millions of martyrs, that none were needed. The change of a dynasty in a petty kingdom of the old world often cost more lives than did the revolution which set the feet of the human race at last in the right way.

“Doubtless it ill beseems one to whom the boon of life in our resplendent age has been vouchsafed to wish his destiny other, and yet I have often thought that I would fain exchange my share in this serene and golden day for a place in that stormy epoch of transition, when heroes burst the barred gate of the future and revealed to the kindling gaze of a hopeless race, in place of the blank wall that had closed its path, a vista of progress whose end, for very excess of light, still dazzles us. Ah, my friends! who will say that to have lived then, when the weakest influence was a lever to whose touch the centuries trembled, was not worth a share even in this era of fruition?

“You know the story of that last, greatest, and most bloodless of revolutions. In the time of one generation men laid aside the social traditions and practices of barbarians, and assumed a social order worthy of rational and human beings. Ceasing to be predatory in their habits, they became co-workers, and found in fraternity, at once, the science of wealth and happiness. ‘What shall I eat and drink, and wherewithal shall I be clothed?’ stated as a problem beginning and ending in self, had been an anxious and an endless one. But when once it was conceived, not from the individual, but the fraternal standpoint, ‘What shall we eat and drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?’—its difficulties vanished.

“Poverty with servitude had been the result, for the mass of humanity, of attempting to solve the problem of maintenance from the individual standpoint, but no sooner had the nation become the sole capitalist and employer than not alone did plenty replace poverty, but the last vestige of the servdom of man to man disappeared from earth. Human slavery, so often vainly scotched, at last was killed. The means of subsistence no longer doled out by men to women, by employer to employed, by rich to poor, was distributed from a common stock as among children at the father’s table. It was impossible for a man any longer to use his fellow-men as tools for his own profit. His esteem was the only sort of gain he could thenceforth make out of him. There was no more either arrogance or servility in the relations of human beings to one another. For the first time since the creation every man stood up straight before God. The fear of want and the lust of gain became extinct motives when abundance was assured to all and immoderate possessions made impossible of attainment. There were no more beggars nor almoners. Equity left charity without an occupation. The ten commandments became well nigh obsolete in a world where there was no temptation to theft, no occasion to lie either for fear or favor, no room for envy where all were equal, and little provocation to violence where men were disarmed of power to injure one another. Humanity’s ancient dream of liberty, equality, fraternity, mocked by so many ages, at last was realized.

“As in the old society the generous, the just, the tender-hearted had been placed at a disadvantage by the possession of those qualities; so in the new society the cold-hearted, the greedy, and self-seeking found themselves out of joint with the world. Now that the conditions of life for the first time ceased to operate as a forcing process to develop the brutal qualities of human nature, and the premium which had heretofore encouraged selfishness was not only removed, but placed upon unselfishness, it was for the first time possible to see what unperverted human nature really was like. The depraved tendencies, which had previously overgrown and obscured the better to so large an extent, now withered like cellar fungi in the open air, and the nobler
qualities showed a sudden luxuriance which turned cynics into panegyrists and for the first time in human history
tempted mankind to fall in love with itself. Soon was fully revealed, what the divines and philosophers of the old
world never would have believed, that human nature in its essential qualities is good, not bad, that men by their
natural intention and structure are generous, not selfish, pitiful, not cruel, sympathetic, not arrogant, godlike in
aspirations, instinct with divinest impulses of tenderness and self-sacrifice, images of God indeed, not the
travesties upon Him they had seemed. The constant pressure, through numberless generations, of conditions of
life which might have perverted angels, had not been able to essentially alter the natural nobility of the stock, and
these conditions once removed, like a bent tree, it had sprung back to its normal uprightness.

“To put the whole matter in the nutshell of a parable, let me compare humanity in the olden time to a rosebush
planted in a swamp, watered with black bog-water, breathing miasmatic fogs by day, and chilled with poison dews
at night. Innumerable generations of gardeners had done their best to make it bloom, but beyond an occasional
half-opened bud with a worm at the heart, their efforts had been unsuccessful. Many, indeed, claimed that the
bush was no rosebush at all, but a noxious shrub, fit only to be uprooted and burned. The gardeners, for the most
part, however, held that the bush belonged to the rose family, but had some ineradicable taint about it, which
prevented the buds from coming out, and accounted for its generally sickly condition. There were a few, indeed,
who maintained that the stock was good enough, that the trouble was in the bog, and that under more favorable
conditions the plant might be expected to do better. But these persons were not regular gardeners, and being
condemned by the latter as mere theorists and day dreamers, were, for the most part, so regarded by the people.
Moreover, urged some eminent moral philosophers, even conceding for the sake of the argument that the bush
might possibly do better elsewhere, it was a more valuable discipline for the buds to try to bloom in a bog than it
would be under more favorable conditions. The buds that succeeded in opening might indeed be very rare, and the
flowers pale and scentless, but they represented far more moral effort than if they had bloomed spontaneously in
a garden.

“The regular gardeners and the moral philosophers had their way. The bush remained rooted in the bog, and the
old course of treatment went on. Continually new varieties of forcing mixtures were applied to the roots, and more
recipes than could be numbered, each declared by its advocates the best and only suitable preparation, were used
to kill the vermin and remove the mildew. This went on a very long time. Occasionally some one claimed to
observe a slight improvement in the appearance of the bush, but there were quite as many who declared that it
did not look so well as it used to. On the whole there could not be said to be any marked change. Finally, during a
period of general despondency as to the prospects of the bush where it was, the idea of transplanting it was again
mooted, and this time found favor. ‘Let us try it,’ was the general voice. ‘Perhaps it may thrive better elsewhere,
and here it is certainly doubtful if it be worth cultivating longer.’ So it came about that the rosebush of humanity
was transplanted, and set in sweet, warm, dry earth, where the sun bathed it, the stars wooed it, and the south
wind caressed it. Then it appeared that it was indeed a rosebush. The vermin and the mildew disappeared, and the
bush was covered with most beautiful red roses, whose fragrance filled the world.

“It is a pledge of the destiny appointed for us that the Creator has set in our hearts an infinite standard of
achievement, judged by which our past attainments seem always insignificant, and the goal never nearer. Had our
forefathers conceived a state of society in which men should live together like brethren dwelling in unity, without
strifes or envying, violence or overreaching, and where, at the price of a degree of labor not greater than health
demands, in their chosen occupations, they should be wholly freed from care for the morrow and left with no more
concern for their livelihood than trees which are watered by unfailing streams,—had they conceived such a
condition, I say, it would have seemed to them nothing less than paradise. They would have conformed it with
their idea of heaven, nor dreamed that there could possibly lie further beyond anything to be desired or striven
for.

“But how is it with us who stand on this height which they gazed up to? Already we have well nigh forgotten,
extcept when it is especially called to our minds by some occasion like the present, that it was not always with men
as it is now. It is a strain on our imaginations to conceive the social arrangements of our immediate ancestors. We
find them grotesque. The solution of the problem of physical maintenance so as to banish care and crime, so far
from seeming to us an ultimate attainment, appears but as a preliminary to anything like real human progress. We
have but relieved ourselves of an impertinent and needless harassment which hindered our ancestor from
undertaking the real ends of existence. We are merely stripped for the race; no more. We are like a child which
has just learned to stand upright and to walk. His horizon did but widen when he rose, and enlarge as he moved. A great event indeed, in one sense, was his first step, but only as a beginning, not as the end. His true career was but then first entered
on. The enfranchisement of humanity in the last century, from mental and physical absorption in working and
scheming for the mere bodily necessities, may be regarded as a species of second birth of the race, without which
its first birth to an existence that was but a burden would forever have remained unjustified, but whereby it is now
abundantly vindicated. Since then, humanity has entered on a new phase of spiritual development, an evolution of higher faculties, the very existence of which in human nature our ancestors scarcely suspected. In place of the dreary hopelessness of the nineteenth century, its profound pessimism as to the future of humanity, the animating idea of the present age is an enthusiastic conception of the opportunities of our earthly existence, and the unbounded possibilities of human nature. The betterment of mankind from generation to generation, physically, mentally, morally, is recognized as the one great object supremely worthy of effort and of sacrifice. We believe the race for the first time to have entered on the realization of God's ideal of it, and each generation must now be a step upward.

“Do you ask what we look for when unnumbered generations shall have passed away? I answer, the way stretches far before us, but the end is lost in light. For twofold is the return of man to God 'who is our home,' the return of the individual by the way of death, and the return of the race by the fulfillment of the evolution, when the divine secret hidden in the germ shall be perfectly unfolded. With a tear for the dark past, turn we then to the dazzling future, and, veiling our eyes, press forward. The long and weary winter of the race is ended. Its summer has begun. Humanity has burst the chrysalis. The heavens are before it.”

Chapter 27

I never could tell just why, but Sunday afternoon during my old life had been a time when I was peculiarly subject to melancholy, when the color unaccountably faded out of all the aspects of life, and everything appeared pathetically uninteresting. The hours, which in general were wont to bear me easily on their wings, lost the power of flight, and toward the close of the day, drooping quite to earth, had fairly to be dragged along by main strength. Perhaps it was partly owing to the established association of ideas that, despite the utter change in my circumstances, I fell into a state of profound depression on the afternoon of this my first Sunday in the twentieth century.

It was not, however, on the present occasion a depression without specific cause, the mere vague melancholy I have spoken of, but a sentiment suggested and certainly quite justified by my position. The sermon of Mr. Barton, with its constant implication of the vast moral gap between the century to which I belonged and that in which I found myself, had had an effect strongly to accentuate my sense of loneliness in it. Considerately and philosophically as he had spoken, his words could scarcely have failed to leave upon my mind a strong impression of the mingled pity, curiosity, and aversion which I, as a representative of an abhorred epoch, must excite in all around me.

The extraordinary kindness with which I had been treated by Dr. Leete and his family, and especially the goodness of Edith, had hitherto prevented my fully realizing that their real sentiment toward me must necessarily be that of the whole generation to which they belonged. The recognition of this, as regarded Dr. Leete and his amiable wife, however painful, I might have endured, but the conviction that Edith must share their feeling was more than I could bear.

The crushing effect with which this belated perception of a fact so obvious came to me opened my eyes fully to something which perhaps the reader has already suspected,—I loved Edith.

Was it strange that I did? The affecting occasion on which our intimacy had begun, when her hands had drawn me out of the whirlpool of madness; the fact that her sympathy was the vital breath which had set me up in this new life and enabled me to support it; my habit of looking to her as the mediator between me and the world around in a sense that even her father was not,—these were circumstances that had predetermined a result which her remarkable loveliness of person and disposition would alone have accounted for. It was quite inevitable that she should have come to seem to me, in a sense quite different from the usual experience of lovers, the only woman in this world. Now that I had become suddenly sensible of the fatuity of the hopes I had begun to cherish, I suffered not merely what another lover might, but in addition a desolate loneliness, an utter forlornness, such as no other lover, however unhappy, could have felt.

My hosts evidently saw that I was depressed in spirits, and did their best to divert me. Edith especially, I could see, was distressed for me, but according to the usual perversity of lovers, having once been so mad as to dream of receiving something more from her, there was no longer any virtue for me in a kindness that I knew was only sympathy.

Toward nightfall, after secluding myself in my room most of the afternoon, I went into the garden to walk about. The day was overcast, with an autumnal flavor in the warm, still air. Finding myself near the excavation, I entered...
the subterranean chamber and sat down there. “This,” I muttered to myself, “is the only home I have. Let me stay here, and not go forth any more.” Seeking aid from the familiar surroundings, I endeavored to find a sad sort of consolation in reviving the past and summoning up the forms and faces that were about me in my former life. It was in vain. There was no longer any life in them. For nearly one hundred years the stars had been looking down on Edith Bartlett’s grave, and the graves of all my generation.

The past was dead, crushed beneath a century’s weight, and from the present I was shut out. There was no place for me anywhere. I was neither dead nor properly alive.

“Forgive me for following you.”

I looked up. Edith stood in the door of the subterranean room, regarding me smilingly, but with eyes full of sympathetic distress.

“Send me away if I am intruding on you,” she said; “but we saw that you were out of spirits, and you know you promised to let me know if that were so. You have not kept your word.”

I rose and came to the door, trying to smile, but making, I fancy, rather sorry work of it, for the sight of her loveliness brought home to me the more poignantly the cause of my wretchedness.

“I was feeling a little lonely, that is all,” I said. “Has it never occurred to you that my position is so much more utterly alone than any human being’s ever was before that a new word is really needed to describe it?”

“Oh, you must not talk that way—you must not let yourself feel that way—you must not!” she exclaimed, with moistened eyes. “Are we not your friends? It is your own fault if you will not let us be. You need not be lonely.”

“You are good to me beyond my power of understanding,” I said, “but don’t you suppose that I know it is pity merely, sweet pity, but pity only. I should be a fool not to know that I cannot seem to you as other men of your own generation do, but as some strange uncanny being, a stranded creature of an unknown sea, whose forlornness touches your compassion despite its grotesqueness. I have been so foolish, you were so kind, as to almost forget that this must needs be so, and to fancy I might in time become naturalized, as we used to say, in this age, so as to feel like one of you and to seem to you like the other men about you. But Mr. Barton’s sermon taught me how vain such a fancy is, how great the gulf between us must seem to you.”

“Oh that miserable sermon!” she exclaimed, fairly crying now in her sympathy, “I wanted you not to hear it. What does he know of you? He has read in old musty books about your times, that is all. What do you care about him, to let yourself be vexed by anything he said? Isn’t it anything to you, that we who know you feel differently? Don’t you care more about what we think of you than what he does who never saw you? Oh, Mr. West! you don’t know, you can’t think, how it makes me feel to see you so forlorn. I can’t have it so. What can I say to you? How can I convince you how different our feeling for you is from what you think?”

As before, in that other crisis of my fate when she had come to me, she extended her hands toward me in a gesture of helpfulness, and, as then, I caught and held them in my own; her bosom heaved with strong emotion, and little tremors in the fingers which I clasped emphasized the depth of her feeling. In her face, pity contended in a sort of divine spite against the obstacles which reduced it to impotence. Womanly compassion surely never wore a guise more lovely.

Such beauty and such goodness quite melted me, and it seemed that the only fitting response I could make was to tell her just the truth. Of course I had not a spark of hope, but on the other hand I had no fear that she would be angry. She was too pitiful for that. So I said presently, “It is very ungrateful in me not to be satisfied with such kindness as you have shown me, and are showing me now. But are you so blind as not to see why they are not enough to make me happy? Don’t you see that it is because I have been mad enough to love you?”

At my last words she blushed deeply and her eyes fell before mine, but she made no effort to withdraw her hands from my clasp. For some moments she stood so, panting a little. Then blushing deeper than ever, but with a dazzling smile, she looked up.

“Are you sure it is not you who are blind?” she said.

That was all, but it was enough, for it told me that, unaccountable, incredible as it was, this radiant daughter of a golden age had bestowed upon me not alone her pity, but her love. Still, I half believed I must be under some blissful hallucination even as I clasped her in my arms. “If I am beside myself,” I cried, “let me remain so.”
“It is I whom you must think beside myself,” she panted, escaping from my arms when I had barely tasted the
tsweetness of her lips. “Oh! oh! what must you think of me almost to throw myself in the arms of one I have known
but a week? I did not mean that you should find it out so soon, but I was so sorry for you I forgot what I was
saying. No, no; you must not touch me again till you know who I am. After that, sir, you shall apologize to me very
humbly for thinking, as I know you do, that I have been over quick to fall in love with you. After you know who I
am, you will be bound to confess that it was nothing less than my duty to fall in love with you at first sight, and
that no girl of proper feeling in my place could do otherwise.”

As may be supposed, I would have been quite content to waive explanations, but Edith was resolute that there
should be no more kisses until she had been vindicated from all suspicion of precipitancy in the bestowal of her
affections, and I was fain to follow the lovely enigma into the house. Having come where her mother was, she
blushingly whispered something in her ear and ran away, leaving us together.

It then appeared that, strange as my experience had been, I was now first to know what was perhaps its strangest
feature. From Mrs. Leete I learned that Edith was the great-granddaughter of no other than my lost love, Edith
Bartlett. After mourning me for fourteen years, she had made a marriage of esteem, and left a son who had been
Mrs. Leete’s father. Mrs. Leete had never seen her grandmother, but had heard much of her, and, when her
dughter was born, gave her the name of Edith. This fact might have tended to increase the interest which the girl
took, as she grew up, in all that concerned her ancestress, and especially the tragic story of the supposed death of
the lover, whose wife she expected to be, in the conflagration of his house. It was a tale well calculated to touch
the sympathy of a romantic girl, and the fact that the blood of the unfortunate heroine was in her own veins
naturally heightened Edith’s interest in it. A portrait of Edith Bartlett and some of her papers, including a packet
of my own letters, were among the family heirlooms. The picture represented a very beautiful young woman about
whom it was easy to imagine all manner of tender and romantic things. My letters gave Edith some material for
forming a distinct idea of my personality, and both together sufficed to make the sad old story very real to her.
She used to tell her parents, half jestingly, that she would never marry till she found a lover like Julian West, and
there were none such nowadays.

Now all this, of course, was merely the daydreaming of a girl whose mind had never been taken up by a love affair
of her own, and would have had no serious consequence but for the discovery that morning of the buried vault in
her father’s garden and the revelation of the identity of its inmate. For when the apparently lifeless form had been
borne into the house, the face in the locket found upon the breast was instantly recognized as that of Edith
Bartlett, and by that fact, taken in connection with the other circumstances, they knew that I was no other than
Julian West. Even had there been no thought, as at first there was not, of my resuscitation, Mrs. Leete said she
believed that this event would have affected her daughter in a critical and life-long manner. The presumption of
some subtle ordering of destiny, involving her fate with mine, would under all circumstances have possessed an
irresistible fascination for almost any woman.

Whether when I came back to life a few hours afterward, and from the first seemed to turn to her with a peculiar
dependence and to find a special solace in her company, she had been too quick in giving her love at the first sign
of mine, I could now, her mother said, judge for myself. If I thought so, I must remember that this, after all, was
the twentieth and not the nineteenth century, and love was, no doubt, now quicker in growth, as well as franker in
utterance than then.

From Mrs. Leete I went to Edith. When I found her, it was first of all to take her by both hands and stand a long
time in rapt contemplation of her face. As I gazed, the memory of that other Edith, which had been affected as
with a benumbing shock by the tremendous experience that had parted us, revived, and my heart was dissolved
with tender and pitiful emotions, but also very blissful ones. For she who brought to me so poignantly the sense of
my loss was to make that loss good. It was as if from her eyes Edith Bartlett looked into mine, and smiled
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my loss was to make that loss good. It was as if from her eyes Edith Bartlett looked into mine, and smiled
consolation to me. My fate was not alone the strangest, but the most fortunate that ever befell a man. A double
miracle had been wrought for me. I had not been stranded upon the shore of this strange world to find myself
alone and companionless. My love, whom I had dreamed lost, had been reembodied for my consolation. When at
last, in an ecstasy of gratitude and tenderness, I folded the lovely girl in my arms, the two Ediths were blended in
an alliance which for me was a double miracle.

"You must not love me too much for myself," she said. "I shall be very jealous for her. I shall not let you forget her.
I am going to tell you something which you may think strange. Do you not believe that spirits sometimes come
back to the world to fulfill some work that lay near their hearts? What if I were to tell you that I have sometimes
thought that her spirit lives in me—that Edith Bartlett, not Edith Leete, is my real name. I cannot know it; of course none of us can know who we really are; but I can feel it. Can you wonder that I have such a feeling, seeing how my life was affected by her and by you, even before you came. So you see you need not trouble to love me at all, if only you are true to her. I shall not be likely to be jealous."

Dr. Leete had gone out that afternoon, and I did not have an interview with him till later. He was not, apparently, wholly unprepared for the intelligence I conveyed, and shook my hand heartily.

"Under any ordinary circumstances, Mr. West, I should say that this step had been taken on rather short acquaintance; but these are decidedly not ordinary circumstances. In fairness, perhaps I ought to tell you," he added smilingly, "that while I cheerfully consent to the proposed arrangement, you must not feel too much indebted to me, as I judge my consent is a mere formality. From the moment the secret of the locket was out, it had to be, I fancy. Why, bless me, if Edith had not been there to redeem her great-grandmother's pledge, I really apprehend that Mrs. Leete's loyalty to me would have suffered a severe strain."

That evening the garden was bathed in moonlight, and till midnight Edith and I wandered to and fro there, trying to grow accustomed to our happiness.

"What should I have done if you had not cared for me?" she exclaimed. "I was afraid you were not going to. What should I have done then, when I felt I was consecrated to you! As soon as you came back to life, I was as sure as if she had told me that I was to be to you what she could not be, but that could only be if you would let me. Oh, how I wanted to tell you that morning, when you felt so terribly strange among us, who I was, but dared not open my lips about that, or let father or mother——"

"That must have been what you would not let your father tell me!" I exclaimed, referring to the conversation I had overheard as I came out of my trance.

"Of course it was," Edith laughed. "Did you only just guess that? Father being only a man, thought that it would make you feel among friends to tell you who we were. He did not think of me at all. But mother knew what I meant, and so I had my way. I could never have looked you in the face if you had known who I was. It would have been forcing myself on you quite too boldly. I am afraid you think I did that to-day, as it was. I am sure I did not mean to, for I know girls were expected to hide their feelings in your day, and I was dreadfully afraid of shocking you. Ah me, how hard it must have been for them to have always had to conceal their love like a fault. Why did they think it such a shame to love any one till they had been given permission? It is so odd to think of waiting for permission to fall in love. Was it because men in those days were angry when girls loved them? That is not the way women would feel, I am sure, or men either, I think, now. I don't understand it at all. That will be one of the curious things about the women of those days that you will have to explain to me. I don't believe Edith Bartlett was so foolish as the others."

After sundry ineffectual attempts at parting, she finally insisted that we must say good night. I was about to imprint upon her lips the positively last kiss, when she said, with an indescribable archness:

"One thing troubles me. Are you sure that you quite forgive Edith Bartlett for marrying any one else? The books that have come down to us make out lovers of your time more jealous than fond, and that is what makes me ask. It would be a great relief to me if I could feel sure that you were not in the least jealous of my great-grandfather for marrying your sweetheart. May I tell my great-grandmother's picture when I go to my room that you quite forgive her for proving false to you?"

Will the reader believe it, this coquettish quip, whether the speaker herself had any idea of it or not, actually touched and with the touching cured a preposterous ache of something like jealousy which I had been vaguely conscious of ever since Mrs. Leete had told me of Edith Bartlett's marriage. Even while I had been holding Edith Bartlett's great-granddaughter in my arms, I had not, till this moment, so illogical are some of our feelings, distinctly realized that but for that marriage I could not have done so. The absurdity of this frame of mind could only be equalled by the abruptness with which it dissolved as Edith's roguish query cleared the fog from my perceptions. I laughed as I kissed her.

"You may assure her of my entire forgiveness," I said, "although if it had been any man but your great-grandfather whom she married, it would have been a very different matter."

On reaching my chamber that night I did not open the musical telephone that I might be lulled to sleep with soothing tunes, as had become my habit. For once my thoughts made better music than even twentieth century orchestras discourse, and it held me enchanted till well toward morning, when I fell asleep.
Chapter 28

“It’s a little after the time you told me to wake you, sir. You did not come out of it as quick as common, sir.”

The voice was the voice of my man Sawyer. I started bolt upright in bed and stared around. I was in my underground chamber. The mellow light of the lamp which always burned in the room when I occupied it illumined the familiar walls and furnishings. By my bedside, with the glass of sherry in his hand which Dr. Pillsbury prescribed on first rousing from a mesmeric sleep, by way of awakening the torpid physical functions, stood Sawyer.

“Better take this right off, sir,” he said, as I stared blankly at him. “You look kind of flushed like, sir, and you need it.”

I tossed off the liquor and began to realize what had happened to me. It was, of course, very plain. All that about the twentieth century had been a dream. I had but dreamed of that enlightened and care-free race of men and their ingeniously simple institutions, of the glorious new Boston with its domes and pinnacles, its gardens and fountains, and its universal reign of comfort. The amiable family which I had learned to know so well, my genial host and Mentor, Dr. Leete, his wife, and their daughter, the second and more beauteous Edith, my betrothed—these, too, had been but figments of a vision.

For a considerable time I remained in the attitude in which this conviction had come over me, sitting up in bed gazing at vacancy, absorbed in recalling the scenes and incidents of my fantastic experience. Sawyer, alarmed at my looks, was meanwhile anxiously inquiring what was the matter with me. Roused at length by his importunities to a recognition of my surroundings, I pulled myself together with an effort and assured the faithful fellow that I was all right. “I have had an extraordinary dream, that’s all, Sawyer,” I said, “a most-ex-traor-dinary dream.”

I dressed in a mechanical way, feeling light-headed and oddly uncertain of myself, and sat down to the coffee and rolls which Sawyer was in the habit of providing for my refreshment before I left the house. The morning newspaper lay by the plate. I took it up, and my eye fell on the date, May 31, 1887. I had known, of course, from the moment I opened my eyes that my long and detailed experience in another century had been a dream, and yet it was startling to have it so conclusively demonstrated that the world was but a few hours older than when I had lain down to sleep.

Glancing at the table of contents at the head of the paper, which reviewed the news of the morning, I read the following summary:

FOREIGN AFFAIRS.—The impending war between France and Germany. The French Chambers asked for new military credits to meet Germany’s increase of her army. Probability that all Europe will be involved in case of war.—Great suffering among the unemployed in London. They demand work. Monster demonstration to be made. The authorities uneasy.—Great strikes in Belgium. The government preparing to repress outbreaks. Shocking facts in regard to the employment of girls in Belgium coal mines.—Wholesale evictions in Ireland.

“HOME AFFAIRS.—The epidemic of fraud unchecked. Embezzlement of half a million in New York.—Misappropriation of a trust fund by executors. Orphans left penniless.—Clever system of thefts by a bank teller; $50,000 gone.—The coal barons decide to advance the price of coal and reduce production.—Speculators engineering a great wheat corner at Chicago.—A clique forcing up the price of coffee.—Enormous land-grabs of Western syndicates.—Revelations of shocking corruption among Chicago officials. Systematic bribery.—The trials of the Boodle aldermen to go on at New York.—Large failures of business houses. Fears of a business crisis.—A large grist of burglaries and larcenies.—A woman murdered in cold blood for her money at New Haven.—A householder shot by a burglar in this city last night.—A man shoots himself in Worcester because he could not get work. A large family left destitute.—An aged couple in New Jersey commit suicide rather than go to the poor-house.—Pitiable destitution among the women wage-workers in the great cities.—Startling growth of illiteracy in Massachusetts.—More insane asylums wanted.—Decoration Day addresses. Professor Brown’s oration on the moral grandeur of nineteenth century civilization.”

It was indeed the nineteenth century to which I had awakened; there could be no kind of doubt about that. Its complete microcosm this summary of the day’s news had presented, even to that last unmistakable touch of fatuous self-complacency. Coming after such a damning indictment of the age as that one day’s chronicle of world-
wide bloodshed, greed, and tyranny, was a bit of cynicism worthy of Mephistopheles, and yet of all whose eyes it
had met this morning I was, perhaps, the only one who perceived the cynicism, and but yesterday I should have
perceived it no more than the others. That strange dream it was which had made all the difference. For I know not
how long, I forgot my surroundings after this, and was again in fancy moving in that vivid dream-world, in that
glorious city, with its homes of simple comfort and its gorgeous public palaces. Around me were again faces
unmarred by arrogance or servility, by envy or greed, by anxious care or feverish ambition, and stately forms of
men and women who had never known fear of a fellow man or depended on his favor, but always, in the words of
that sermon which still rang in my ears, had “stood up straight before God.”

With a profound sigh and a sense of irreparable loss, not the less poignant that it was a loss of what had never
really been, I roused at last from my reverie, and soon after left the house.

A dozen times between my door and Washington Street I had to stop and pull myself together, such power had
been in that vision of the Boston of the future to make the real Boston strange. The squalor and malodorousness of
the town struck me, from the moment I stood upon the street, as facts I had never before observed. But yesterday,
moreover, it had seemed quite a matter of course that some of my fellow-citizens should wear silks, and others
rags, that some should look well fed, and others hungry. Now on the contrary the glaring disparities in the dress
and condition of the men and women who brushed each other on the sidewalks shocked me at every step, and yet
more the entire indifference which the prosperous showed to the plight of the unfortunate. Were these human
beings, who could behold the wretchedness of their fellows without so much as a change of countenance? And yet,
all the while, I knew well that it was I who had changed, and not my contemporaries. I had dreamed of a city
whose people fared all alike as children of one family and were one another’s keepers in all things.

Another feature of the real Boston, which assumed the extraordinary effect of strangeness that marks familiar
things seen in a new light, was the prevalence of advertising. There had been no personal advertising in the
Boston of the twentieth century, because there was no need of any, but here the walls of the buildings, the
windows, the broadsides of the newspapers in every hand, the very pavements, everything in fact in sight, save
the sky, were covered with the appeals of individuals who sought, under innumerable pretexts, to attract the
contributions of others to their support. However the wording might vary, the tenor of all these appeals was the
same:

“Help John Jones. Never mind the rest. They are frauds. I, John Jones, am the right one. Buy of me. Employ me.
Visit me. Hear me, John Jones. Look at me. Make no mistake, John Jones is the man and nobody else. Let the rest
starve, but for God’s sake remember John Jones!”

Whether the pathos or the moral repulsiveness of the spectacle most impressed me, so suddenly become a
stranger in my own city, I know not. Wretched men, I was moved to cry, who, because they will not learn to be
helpers of one another, are doomed to be beggars of one another from the least to the greatest! This horrible
babel of shameless self-assertion and mutual depreciation, this stunning clamor of conflicting boasts, appeals, and
adjurations, this stupendous system of brazen beggary, what was it all but the necessity of a society in which the
opportunity to serve the world according to his gifts, instead of being secured to every man as the first object of
social organization, had to be fought for!

I reached Washington Street at the busiest point, and there I stood and laughed aloud, to the scandal of the
passers-by. For my life I could not have helped it, with such a mad humor was I moved at sight of the interminable
rows of stores on either side, up and down the street so far as I could see—scores of them, to make the spectacle
more utterly preposterosus, within a stone’s throw devoted to selling the same sort of goods. Stores! stores! stores!
miles of stores! ten thousand stores to distribute the goods needed by this one city, which in my dream had been
supplied with all things from a single warehouse, as they were ordered through one great store in every quarter,
where the buyer, without waste of time or labor, found under one roof the world’s assortment in whatever line he
desired. There the labor of distribution had been so slight as to add but a scarcely perceptible fraction to the cost
of commodities to the user. The cost of production was virtually all he paid. But here the mere distribution of the
goods, their handling alone, added a fourth, a third, a half and more, to the cost. All these ten thousand plants
must be paid for, their rent, their staffs of superintendence, their platoons of salesmen, their ten thousand sets of
accountants, jobbers, and business dependents, with all they spent in advertising themselves and fighting one
another, and the consumers must do the paying. What a famous process for beggaring a nation!

Were these serious men I saw about me, or children, who did their business on such a plan? Could they be
reasoning beings, who did not see the folly which, when the product is made and ready for use, wastes so much of
it in getting it to the user? If people eat with a spoon that leaks half its contents between bowl and lip, are they
not likely to go hungry?

I had passed through Washington Street thousands of times before and viewed the ways of those who sold
merchandise, but my curiosity concerning them was as if I had never gone by their way before. I took wondering
note of the show windows of the stores, filled with goods arranged with a wealth of pains and artistic device to
attract the eye. I saw the throngs of ladies looking in, and the proprietors eagerly watching the effect of the bait. I
went within and noted the hawk-eyed floor-walker watching for business, overlooking the clerks, keeping them up
to their task of inducing the customers to buy, buy, buy, for money if they had it, for credit if they had it not, to
buy what they wanted not, more than they wanted, what they could not afford. At times I momentarily lost the
cue and was confused by the sight. Why this effort to induce people to buy? Surely that had nothing to do with the
legitimate business of distributing products to those who needed them. Surely it was the sheerest waste to force
upon people what they did not want, but what might be useful to another. The nation was so much the poorer for
every such achievement. What were these clerks thinking of? Then I would remember that they were not acting as
distributors like those in the store I had visited in the dream Boston. They were not serving the public interest, but
their immediate personal interest, and it was nothing to them what the ultimate effect of their course on the
general prosperity might be, if but they increased their own hoard, for these goods were their own, and the more
they sold and the more they got for them, the greater their gain. The more wasteful the people were, the more
articles they did not want which they could be induced to buy, the better for these sellers. To encourage
prodigality was the express aim of the ten thousand stores of Boston.

Nor were these storekeepers and clerks a whit worse men than any others in Boston. They must earn a living and
support their families, and how were they to find a trade to do it by which did not necessitate placing their
individual interests before those of others and that of all? They could not be asked to starve while they waited for
an order of things such as I had seen in my dream, in which the interest of each and that of all were identical. But,
God in heaven! what wonder, under such a system as this about me—what wonder that the city was so shabby,
and the people so meanly dressed, and so many of them ragged and hungry!

Some time after this it was that I drifted over into South Boston and found myself among the manufacturing
establishments. I had been in this quarter of the city a hundred times before, just as I had been on Washington
Street, but here, as well as there, I now first perceived the true significance of what I witnessed. Formerly I had
taken pride in the fact that, by actual count, Boston had some four thousand independent manufacturing
establishments; but in this very multiplicity and independence I recognized now the secret of the insignificant
total product of their industry.

If Washington Street had been like a lane in Bedlam, this was a spectacle as much more melancholy as production
is a more vital function than distribution. For not only were these four thousand establishments not working in
concert, and for that reason alone operating at prodigious disadvantage, but, as if this did not involve a
sufficiently disastrous loss of power, they were using their utmost skill to frustrate one another’s effort, praying by
night and working by day for the destruction of one another’s enterprises.

The roar and rattle of wheels and hammers resounding from every side was not the hum of a peaceful industry,
but the clangor of swords wielded by foemen. These mills and shops were so many forts, each under its own flag,
its guns trained on the mills and shops about it, and its sappers busy below, undermining them.

Within each one of these forts the strictest organization of industry was insisted on; the separate gangs worked
under a single central authority. No interference and no duplicating of work were permitted. Each had his allotted
task, and none were idle. By what hiatus in the logical faculty, by what lost link of reasoning, account, then, for
the failure to recognize the necessity of applying the same principle to the organization of the national industries
as a whole, to see that if lack of organization could impair the efficiency of a shop, it must have effects as much
more disastrous in disabling the industries of the nation at large as the latter are vaster in volume and more
complex in the relationship of their parts.

People would be prompt enough to ridicule an army in which there were neither companies, battalions, regiments,
brigades, divisions, or army corps—no unit of organization, in fact, larger than the corporal’s squad, with no
officer higher than a corporal, and all the corporals equal in authority. And yet just such an army were the
manufacturing industries of nineteenth century Boston, an army of four thousand independent squads led by four
thousand independent corporals, each with a separate plan of campaign.

Knots of idle men were to be seen here and there on every side, some idle because they could find no work at any
price, others because they could not get what they thought a fair price. I accosted some of the latter, and they told
me their grievances. It was very little comfort I could give them. “I am sorry for you,” I said. “You get little
enough, certainly, and yet the wonder to me is, not that industries conducted as these are do not pay you living
wages, but that they are able to pay you any wages at all.”

Making my way back again after this to the peninsular city, toward three o’clock I stood on State Street, staring,
as if I had never seen them before, at the banks and brokers’ offices, and other financial institutions, of which
there had been in the State Street of my vision no vestige. Business men, confidential clerks, and errand boys
were thronging in and out of the banks, for it wanted but a few minutes of the closing hour. Opposite me was the
bank where I did business, and presently I crossed the street, and, going in with the crowd, stood in a recess of
the wall looking on at the army of clerks handling money, and the cues of depositors at the tellers’ windows. An
old gentleman whom I knew, a director of the bank, passing me and observing my contemplative attitude, stopped
a moment.

“Interesting sight, isn’t it, Mr. West,” he said. “Wonderful piece of mechanism; I find it so myself. I like sometimes
to stand and look on at it just as you are doing. It’s a poem, sir, a poem, that’s what I call it. Did you ever think,
Mr. West, that the bank is the heart of the business system? From it and to it, in endless flux and reflux, the life
blood goes. It is flowing in now. It will flow out again in the morning”; and pleased with his little conceit, the old
man passed on smiling.

Yesterday I should have considered the simile apt enough, but since then I had visited a world incomparably more
affluent than this, in which money was unknown and without conceivable use. I had learned that it had a use in
the world around me only because the work of producing the nation’s livelihood, instead of being regarded as the
most strictly public and common of all concerns, and as such conducted by the nation, was abandoned to the haphazard
efforts of individuals. This original mistake necessitated endless exchanges to bring about any sort of
general distribution of products. These exchanges money effected—how equitably, might be seen in a walk from
the tenement house districts to the Back Bay—at the cost of an army of men taken from productive labor to
manage it, with constant ruinous breakdowns of its machinery, and a generally debauching influence on mankind
which had justified its description, from ancient time, as the “root of all evil.”

Alas for the poor old bank director with his poem! He had mistaken the throbbing of an abscess for the beating of
the heart. What he called “a wonderful piece of mechanism” was an imperfect device to remedy an unnecessary
defect, the clumsy crutch of a self-made cripple.

After the banks had closed I wandered aimlessly about the business quarter for an hour or two, and later sat a
while on one of the benches of the Common, finding an interest merely in watching the throngs that passed, such
as one has in studying the populace of a foreign city, so strange since yesterday had my fellow citizens and their
ways become to me. For thirty years I had lived among them, and yet I seemed to have never noted before how
drawn and anxious were their faces, of the rich as of the poor, the refined, acute faces of the educated as well as
the dull masks of the ignorant. And well it might be so, for I saw now, as never before I had seen so plainly, that
each as he walked constantly turned to catch the whispers of a spectre at his ear, the spectre of Uncertainty. “Do
your work never so well,” the spectre was whispering—“rise early and toil till late, rob cunningly or serve
faithfully, you shall never know security. Rich you may be now and still come to poverty at last. Leave never so
much wealth to your children, you cannot buy the assurance that your son may not be the servant of your servant,
or that your daughter will not have to sell herself for bread.”

A man passing by thrust an advertising card in my hand, which set forth the merits of some new scheme of life
insurance. The incident reminded me of the only device, pathetic in its admission of the universal need it so poorly
supplied, which offered these tired and hunted men and women even a partial protection from uncertainty. By this
means, those already well-to-do, I remembered, might purchase a precarious confidence that after their death
their loved ones would not, for a while at least, be trampled under the feet of men. But this was all, and this was
only for those who could pay well for it. What idea was possible to these wretched dwellers in the land of Ishmael,
where every man’s hand was against each and the hand of each against every other, of true life insurance as I had
seen it among the people of that dream land, each of whom, by virtue merely of his membership in the national
family, was guaranteed against need of any sort, by a policy underwritten by one hundred million fellow
countrymen.

Some time after this it was that I recall a glimpse of myself standing on the steps of a building on Tremont Street,
looking at a military parade. A regiment was passing. It was the first sight in that dreary day which had inspired
me with any other emotions than wondering pity and amazement. Here at last were order and reason, an
exhibition of what intelligent cooperation can accomplish. The people who stood looking on with kindling
faces,—could it be that the sight had for them no more than but a spectacular interest? Could they fail to see that
it was their perfect concert of action, their organization under one control, which made these men the tremendous
group they were, able to vanquish a mob ten times as numerous? Seeing this so plainly, could they fail to
compare the scientific manner in which the nation went to war with the unscientific manner in which it went to
work? Would they not query since what time the killing of men had been a task so much more important than
feeding and clothing them, that a trained army should be deemed alone adequate to the former, while the latter
was left to a mob?

It was now toward nightfall, and the streets were thronged with the workers from the stores, the shops, and mills.
Carried along with the stronger part of the current, I found myself, as it began to grow dark, in the midst of a scene of squalor and human degradation such as only the South Cove tenement district could present. I had seen the mad wasting of human labor; here I saw in direst shape the want that waste had bred.

From the black doorways and windows of the rookeries on every side came gusts of fetid air. The streets and alleys reeked with the effluvia of a slave ship’s between-decks. As I passed I had glimpses within of pale babies gasping out their lives amid sultry stenches, of hopeless-faced women deformed by hardship, retaining of womanhood no trait save weakness, while from the windows leered girls with brows of brass. Like the starving bands of mongrel curs that infest the streets of Moslem towns, swarms of half-clad brutalized children filled the air with shrieks and curses as they fought and tumbled among the garbage that littered the court-yards.

There was nothing in all this that was new to me. Often had I passed through this part of the city and witnessed its sights with feelings of disgust mingled with a certain philosophical wonder at the extremities mortals will endure and still cling to life. But not alone as regarded the economical follies of this age, but equally as touched its moral abominations, scales had fallen from my eyes since that vision of another century. No more did I look upon the woful dwellers in this Inferno with a callous curiosity as creatures scarcely human. I saw in them my brothers and sisters, my parents, my children, flesh of my flesh, blood of my blood. The festering mass of human wretchedness about me offended not now my senses merely, but pierced my heart like a knife, so that I could not repress sighs and groans. I not only saw but felt in my body all that I saw.

Presently, too, as I observed the wretched beings about me more closely, I perceived that they were all quite dead. Their bodies were so many living sepulchres. On each brutal brow was plainly written the hic jacet of a soul dead within.

As I looked, horror struck, from one death’s head to another, I was affected by a singular hallucination. Like a wavering translucent spirit face superimposed upon each of these brutish masks I saw the ideal, the possible face that would have been the actual if mind and soul had lived. It was not till I was aware of these ghostly faces, and of the reproach that could not be gainsaid which was in their eyes, that the full piteousness of the ruin that had been wrought was revealed to me. I was moved with contrition as with a strong agony, for I had been one of those who had endured that these things should be. I had been one of those who, well knowing that they were, had not desired to hear or be compelled to think much of them, but had gone on as if they were not, seeking my own pleasure and profit. Therefore now I found upon my garments the blood of this great multitude of strangled souls of my brothers. The voice of their blood cried out against me from the ground. Every stone of the reeking pavements, every brick of the pestilential rookeries, found a tongue and called after me as I fled: What hast thou done with thy brother Abel?

I have no clear recollection of anything after this till I found myself standing on the carved stone steps of the magnificent home of my betrothed in Commonwealth Avenue. Amid the tumult of my thoughts that day, I had scarcely once thought of her, but now obeying some unconscious impulse my feet had found the familiar way to her door. I was told that the family were at dinner, but word was sent out that I should join them at table. Besides the family, I found several guests present, all known to me. The table glittered with plate and costly china. The ladies were sumptuously dressed and wore the jewels of queens. The scene was one of costly elegance and lavish luxury. The company was in excellent spirits, and there was plentiful laughter and a running fire of jests.

To me it was as if, in wandering through the place of doom, my blood turned to tears by its sights, and my spirit attuned to sorrow, pity, and despair, I had happened in some glade upon a merry party of roisterers. I sat in silence until Edith began to rally me upon my sombre looks, What ailed me? The others presently joined in the playful assault, and I became a target for quips and jests. Where had I been, and what had I seen to make such a dull fellow of me?

“I have been in Golgotha,” at last I answered. “I have seen Humanity hanging on a cross! Do none of you know what sights the sun and stars look down on in this city, that you can think and talk of anything else? Do you not know that close to your doors a great multitude of men and women, flesh of your flesh, live lives that are one agony from birth to death? Listen! their dwellings are so near that if you hush your laughter you will hear their grievous voices, the piteous crying of the little ones that suckle poverty, the hoarse curses of men sodden in misery turned half-way back to brutes, the chaffering of an army of women selling themselves for bread. With what have you stopped your ears that you do not hear these doleful sounds? For me, I can hear nothing else.”

Silence followed my words. A passion of pity had shaken me as I spoke, but when I looked around upon the company, I saw that, far from being stirred as I was, their faces expressed a cold and hard astonishment, mingled in Edith’s with extreme mortification, in her father’s with anger. The ladies were exchanging scandalized looks, while one of the gentlemen had put up his eyeglass and was studying me with an air of scientific curiosity. When I saw that things which were to me so intolerable moved them not at all, that words that melted my heart to speak
had only offended them with the speaker, I was at first stunned and then overcome with a desperate sickness and
dizziness at the heart. What hope was there for the wretched, for the world, if thoughtful men and tender women
were not moved by things like these! Then I bethought myself that it must be because I had not spoken aright. No
doubt I had put the case badly. They were angry because they thought I was berating them, when God knew I was
merely thinking of the horror of the fact without any attempt to assign the responsibility for it.

I restrained my passion, and tried to speak calmly and logically that I might correct this impression. I told them
that I had not meant to accuse them, as if they, or the rich in general, were responsible for the misery of the
world. True indeed it was, that the superfluity which they wasted would, otherwise bestowed, relieve much bitter
suffering. These costly viands, these rich wines, these gorgeous fabrics and glistening jewels represented the
ransom of many lives. They were verily not without the guiltiness of those who waste in a land stricken with
famine. Nevertheless, all the waste of all the rich, were it saved, would go but a little way to cure the poverty of
the world. There was so little to divide that even if the rich went share and share with the poor, there would be
but a common fare of crusts, albeit made very sweet then by brotherly love.

The folly of men, not their hard-heartedness, was the great cause of the world’s poverty. It was not the crime of
man, nor of any class of men, that made the race so miserable, but a hideous, ghastly mistake, a colossal world-
darkening blunder. And then I showed them how four fifths of the labor of men was utterly wasted by the mutual
warfare, the lack of organization and concert among the workers. Seeking to make the matter very plain, I
instanced the case of arid lands where the soil yielded the means of life only by careful use of the watercourses for
irrigation. I showed how in such countries it was counted the most important function of the government to see
that the water was not wasted by the selfishness or ignorance of individuals, since otherwise there would be
famine. To this end its use was strictly regulated and systematized, and individuals of their mere caprice were not
permitted to dam it or divert it, or in any way to tamper with it.

The labor of men, I explained, was the fertilizing stream which alone rendered earth habitable. It was but a scanty
stream at best, and its use required to be regulated by a system which expended every drop to the best advantage,
if the world were to be supported in abundance. But how far from any system was the actual practice! Every man
wasted the precious fluid as he wished, animated only by the equal motives of saving his own crop and spoiling his
neighbor’s, that his might sell the better. What with greed and what with spite some fields were flooded while
others were parched, and half the water ran wholly to waste. In such a land, though a few by strength or cunning
might win the means of luxury, the lot of the great mass must be poverty, and of the weak and ignorant bitter
want and perennial famine.

Let but the famine-stricken nation assume the function it had neglected, and regulate for the common good the
course of the life-giving stream, and the earth would bloom like one garden, and none of its children lack any good
thing. I described the physical felicity, mental enlightenment, and moral elevation which would then attend the
lives of all men. With fervency I spoke of that new world, blessed with plenty, purified by justice and sweetened by
brotherly kindness, the world of which I had indeed but dreamed, but which might so easily be made real. But
when I had expected now surely the faces around me to light up with emotions akin to mine, they grew ever more
dark, angry, and scornful. Instead of enthusiasm, the ladies showed only aversion and dread, while the men
interrupted me with shouts of reprobation and contempt. “Madman!” “Pestilent fellow!” “Fanatic!” “Enemy of
society!” were some of their cries, and the one who had before taken his eyeglass to me exclaimed, “He says we
are to have no more poor. Ha! ha!”

“Put the fellow out!” exclaimed the father of my betrothed, and at the signal the men sprang from their chairs and
advanced upon me.

It seemed to me that my heart would burst with the anguish of finding that what was to me so plain and so all
important was to them meaningless, and that I was powerless to make it other. So hot had been my heart that I
had thought to melt an iceberg with its glow, only to find at last the overmastering chill seizing my own vitals. It
was not enmity that I felt toward them as they thronged me, but pity only, for them and for the world.

Although despairing, I could not give over. Still I strove with them. Tears poured from my eyes. In my vehemence I
became inarticulate. I panted, I sobbed, I groaned, and immediately afterward found myself sitting upright in bed
in my room in Dr. Leete’s house, and the morning sun shining through the open window into my eyes. I was
gasping. The tears were streaming down my face, and I quivered in every nerve.

As with an escaped convict who dreams that he has been recaptured and brought back to his dark and reeking
dungeon, and opens his eyes to see the heaven’s vault spread above him, so it was with me, as I realized that my
return to the nineteenth century had been the dream, and my presence in the twentieth was the reality.

The cruel sights which I had witnessed in my vision, and could so well confirm from the experience of my former
life, though they had, alas! once been, and must in the retrospect to the end of time move the compassionate to

tears, were, God be thanked, forever gone by. Long ago oppressor and oppressed, prophet and scorners, had been
dust. For generations, rich and poor had been forgotten words.

But in that moment, while yet I mused with unspeakable thankfulness upon the greatness of the world’s salvation
and my privilege in beholding it, there suddenly pierced me like a knife a pang of shame, remorse, and wondering
self-reproach, that bowed my head upon my breast and made me wish the grave had hid me with my fellows from
the sun. For I had been a man of that former time. What had I done to help on the deliverance whereat I now
presumed to rejoice? I who had lived in those cruel, insensate days, what had I done to bring them to an end? I
had been every whit as indifferent to the wretchedness of my brothers, as cynically incredulous of better things,
as besotted a worshiper of Chaos and Old Night, as any of my fellows. So far as my personal influence went, it had
been exerted rather to hinder than to help forward the enfranchisement of the race which was even then
preparing. What right had I to hail a salvation which reproached me, to rejoice in a day whose dawning I had
mocked?

“Better for you, better for you,” a voice within me rang, “had this evil dream been the reality, and this fair reality
the dream; better your part pleading for crucified humanity with a scoffing generation, than here, drinking of
wells you digged not, and eating of trees whose husbandmen you stoned”; and my spirit answered, “Better, truly.”

When at length I raised my bowed head and looked forth from the window, Edith, fresh as the morning, had come
into the garden and was gathering flowers. I hastened to descend to her. Kneeling before her, with my face in the
dust, I confessed with tears how little was my worth to breathe the air of this golden century, and how infinitely
less to wear upon my breast its consummate flower. Fortunate is he who, with a case so desperate as mine, finds a
judge so merciful.

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Writers Abroad
Overview: Writers Abroad

Objectives

- Respond to the weekly readings within the context of your own perspective (Textual Annotations)
- Identify common themes in American views of travel and exploration (Weekly Journal Entry)

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Biography: Mark Twain

Samuel Langhorne Clemens (November 30, 1835 – April 21, 1910), better known by his pen name Mark Twain, was an American author and humorist. He wrote The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (1876) and its sequel, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1885), the latter often called “The Great American Novel.”

Twain grew up in Hannibal, Missouri, which provided the setting for Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer. After an apprenticeship with a printer, he worked as a typesetter and contributed articles to the newspaper of his older brother, Orion Clemens. He later became a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi River before heading west to join Orion in Nevada. He referred humorously to his singular lack of success at mining, turning to journalism for the Virginia City Territorial Enterprise. In 1865, his humorous story, “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County,” was published, based on a story he heard at Angels Hotel in Angels Camp, California, where he had spent some time as a miner. The short story brought international attention, and was even translated into classic Greek. His wit and satire, in prose and in speech, earned praise from critics and peers, and he was a friend to presidents, artists, industrialists, and European royalty.

Twain was born shortly after a visit by Halley’s Comet, and he predicted that he would “go out with it”, too. He died the day after the comet returned. He was lauded as the “greatest American humorist of his age,” and William Faulkner called Twain “the father of American literature.”
Twain began his career writing light, humorous verse, but evolved into a chronicler of the vanities, hypocrisies and murderous acts of mankind. At mid-career, with *Huckleberry Finn*, he combined rich humor, sturdy narrative and social criticism. Twain was a master at rendering colloquial speech and helped to create and popularize a distinctive American literature built on American themes and language. Many of Twain’s works have been suppressed at times for various reasons. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* has been repeatedly restricted in American high schools.

A complete bibliography of his works is nearly impossible to compile because of the vast number of pieces written by Twain (often in obscure newspapers) and his use of several different pen names. Additionally, a large portion of his speeches and lectures have been lost or were not written down; thus, the collection of Twain’s works is an ongoing process. Researchers rediscovered published material by Twain as recently as 1995 and 2015.

View Mark Twain’s full biography on Wikipedia.

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For months the great pleasure excursion to Europe and the Holy Land was chatted about in the newspapers everywhere in America and discussed at countless firesides. It was a novelty in the way of excursions—it's like had not been thought of before, and it compelled that interest which attractive novelties always command. It was to be a picnic on a gigantic scale. The participants in it, instead of freighting an ungainly steam ferry—boat with youth and beauty and pies and doughnuts, and paddling up some obscure creek to disembark upon a grassy lawn and wear themselves out with a long summer day's laborious frolicking under the impression that it was fun, were to sail away in a great steamship with flags flying and cannon pealing, and take a royal holiday beyond the broad ocean in many a strange clime and in many a land renowned in history! They were to sail for months over the breezy Atlantic and the sunny Mediterranean; they were to scamper about the decks by day, filling the ship with shouts and laughter—or read novels and poetry in the shade of the smokestacks, or watch for the jelly-fish and the nautilus over the side, and the shark, the whale, and other strange monsters of the deep; and at night they were to dance in the open air, on the upper deck, in the midst of a ballroom that stretched from horizon to horizon, and was domed by the bending heavens and lighted by no meaner lamps than the stars and the magnificent moon—dance, and promenade, and smoke, and sing, and make love, and search the skies for constellations that never associate with the "Big Dipper" they were so tired of; and they were to see the ships of twenty navies—the customs and costumes of twenty curious peoples—the great cities of half a world—they were to hob-nob with nobility and hold friendly converse with kings and princes, grand moguls, and the anointed lords of mighty empires! It was a brave conception; it was the offspring of a most ingenious brain. It was well advertised, but it hardly needed it: the bold originality, the extraordinary character, the seductive nature, and the vastness of the enterprise provoked comment everywhere and advertised it in every household in the land. Who could read the program of the excursion without longing to make one of the party? I will insert it here. It is almost as good as a map. As a text for this book, nothing could be better:

EXCURSION TO THE HOLY LAND, EGYPT,
THE CRIMEA, GREECE, AND INTERMEDIATE POINTS OF INTEREST.

BROOKLYN, February 1st, 1867

The undersigned will make an excursion as above during the coming season, and begs to submit to you the following programme:

A first-class steamer, to be under his own command, and capable of accommodating at least one hundred and fifty cabin passengers, will be selected, in which will be taken a select company, numbering not more than three-fourths of the ship's capacity. There is good reason to believe that this company can be easily made up in this immediate vicinity, of mutual friends and acquaintances.

The steamer will be provided with every necessary comfort, including library and musical instruments.

An experienced physician will be on board.

Leaving New York about June 1st, a middle and pleasant route will be taken across the Atlantic, and passing through the group of Azores, St. Michael will be reached in about ten days. A day or two will be spent here, enjoying the fruit and wild scenery of these islands, and the voyage continued, and Gibraltar reached in three or four days.

A day or two will be spent here in looking over the wonderful subterraneous fortifications, permission to visit these galleries being readily obtained.

From Gibraltar, running along the coasts of Spain and France, Marseilles will be reached in three days. Here ample time will be given not only to look over the city, which was founded six hundred years before the Christian
era, and its artificial port, the finest of the kind in the Mediterranean, but to visit Paris during the Great Exhibition; and the beautiful city of Lyons, lying intermediate, from the heights of which, on a clear day, Mont Blanc and the Alps can be distinctly seen. Passengers who may wish to extend the time at Paris can do so, and, passing down through Switzerland, rejoin the steamer at Genoa.

From Marseilles to Genoa is a run of one night. The excursionists will have an opportunity to look over this, the “magnificent city of palaces,” and visit the birthplace of Columbus, twelve miles off, over a beautiful road built by Napoleon I. From this point, excursions may be made to Milan, Lakes Como and Maggiore, or to Milan, Verona (famous for its extraordinary fortifications), Padua, and Venice. Or, if passengers desire to visit Parma (famous for Correggio’s frescoes) and Bologna, they can by rail go on to Florence, and rejoin the steamer at Leghorn, thus spending about three weeks amid the cities most famous for art in Italy.

From Genoa the run to Leghorn will be made along the coast in one night, and time appropriated to this point in which to visit Florence, its palaces and galleries; Pisa, its cathedral and “Leaning Tower,” and Lucca and its baths, and Roman amphitheater; Florence, the most remote, being distant by rail about sixty miles.

From Leghorn to Naples (calling at Civita Vecchia to land any who may prefer to go to Rome from that point), the distance will be made in about thirty-six hours; the route will lay along the coast of Italy, close by Caprera, Elba, and Corsica. Arrangements have been made to take on board at Leghorn a pilot for Caprera, and, if practicable, a call will be made there to visit the home of Garibaldi.

Rome [by rail], Herculanenum, Pompeii, Vesuvius, Vergil’s tomb, and possibly the ruins of Paestum can be visited, as well as the beautiful surroundings of Naples and its charming bay.

The next point of interest will be Palermo, the most beautiful city of Sicily, which will be reached in one night from Naples. A day will be spent here, and leaving in the evening, the course will be taken towards Athens.

Skirting along the north coast of Sicily, passing through the group of Aeolian Isles, in sight of Stromboli and Vulcana, both active volcanoes, through the Straits of Messina, with “Scylla” on the one hand and “Charybdis” on the other, along the east coast of Sicily, and in sight of Mount Etna, along the south coast of Italy, the west and south coast of Greece, in sight of ancient Crete, up Athens Gulf, and into the Piraeus, Athens will be reached in two and a half or three days. After tarrying here awhile, the Bay of Salamis will be crossed, and a day given to Corinth, whence the voyage will be continued to Constantinople, passing on the way through the Grecian Archipelago, the Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmora, and the mouth of the Golden Horn, and arriving in about forty-eight hours from Athens.

After leaving Constantinople, the way will be taken out through the beautiful Bosphorus, across the Black Sea to Sebastopol and Balaklava, a run of about twenty-four hours. Here it is proposed to remain two days, visiting the harbors, fortifications, and battlefields of the Crimea; thence back through the Bosphorus, touching at Constantinople to take in any who may have preferred to remain there; down through the Sea of Marmora and the Dardanelles, along the coasts of ancient Troy and Lydia in Asia, to Smyrna, which will be reached in two or two and a half days from Constantinople. A sufficient stay will be made here to give opportunity of visiting Ephesus, fifty miles distant by rail.

From Smyrna towards the Holy Land the course will lay through the Grecian Archipelago, close by the Isle of Patmos, along the coast of Asia, ancient Pamphylia, and the Isle of Cyprus. Beirut will be reached in three days. At Beirut time will be given to visit Damascus; after which the steamer will proceed to Joppa.

From Joppa, Jerusalem, the River Jordan, the Sea of Tiberias, Nazareth, Bethany, Bethlehem, and other points of interest in the Holy Land can be visited, and here those who may have preferred to make the journey from Beirut through the country, passing through Damascus, Galilee, Capernaum, Samaria, and by the River Jordan and Sea of Tiberias, can rejoin the steamer.

Leaving Joppa, the next point of interest to visit will be Alexandria, which will be reached in twenty-four hours. The ruins of Caesar’s Palace, Pompey’s Pillar, Cleopatra’s Needle, the Catacombs, and ruins of ancient Alexandria will be found worth the visit. The journey to Cairo, one hundred and thirty miles by rail, can be made in a few hours, and from which can be visited the site of ancient Memphis, Joseph’s Granaries, and the Pyramids.

From Alexandria the route will be taken homeward, calling at Malta, Cagliari (in Sardinia), and Palma (in Majorca), all magnificent harbors, with charming scenery, and abounding in fruits.

A day or two will be spent at each place, and leaving Parma in the evening, Valencia in Spain will be reached the next morning. A few days will be spent in this, the finest city of Spain.
From Valencia, the homeward course will be continued, skirting along the coast of Spain. Alicant, Cartagena, Palos, and Malaga will be passed but a mile or two distant, and Gibraltar reached in about twenty-four hours.

A stay of one day will be made here, and the voyage continued to Madeira, which will be reached in about three days. Captain Marryatt writes: “I do not know a spot on the globe which so much astonishes and delights upon first arrival as Madeira.” A stay of one or two days will be made here, which, if time permits, may be extended, and passing on through the islands, and probably in sight of the Peak of Teneriffe, a southern track will be taken, and the Atlantic crossed within the latitudes of the northeast trade winds, where mild and pleasant weather, and a smooth sea, can always be expected.

A call will be made at Bermuda, which lies directly in this route homeward, and will be reached in about ten days from Madeira, and after spending a short time with our friends the Bermudians, the final departure will be made for home, which will be reached in about three days.

Already, applications have been received from parties in Europe wishing to join the Excursion there.

The ship will at all times be a home, where the excursionists, if sick, will be surrounded by kind friends, and have all possible comfort and sympathy.

Should contagious sickness exist in any of the ports named in the program, such ports will be passed, and others of interest substituted.

The price of passage is fixed at $1,250, currency, for each adult passenger. Choice of rooms and of seats at the tables apportioned in the order in which passages are engaged; and no passage considered engaged until ten percent of the passage money is deposited with the treasurer.

Passengers can remain on board of the steamer, at all ports, if they desire, without additional expense, and all boating at the expense of the ship.

All passages must be paid for when taken, in order that the most perfect arrangements be made for starting at the appointed time.

Applications for passage must be approved by the committee before tickets are issued, and can be made to the undersigned.

Articles of interest or curiosity, procured by the passengers during the voyage, may be brought home in the steamer free of charge.

Five dollars per day, in gold, it is believed, will be a fair calculation to make for all traveling expenses onshore and at the various points where passengers may wish to leave the steamer for days at a time.

The trip can be extended, and the route changed, by unanimous vote of the passengers.

CHAS. C. DUNCAN, 117 WALL STREET, NEW YORK

R. R. G******, Treasurer

Committee on Applications

J. T. H***** ESQ. R. R. G***** ESQ. C. C. Duncan

Committee on Selecting Steamer

CAPT. W. W. S* * **, Surveyor for Board of Underwriters

C. W. C******, Consulting Engineer for U.S. and Canada

J. T. H***** Esq.

C. C. DUNCAN

P.S.—The very beautiful and substantial side-wheel steamship “Quaker City” has been chartered for the occasion, and will leave New York June 8th. Letters have been issued by the government commending the party to courtesies abroad.
What was there lacking about that program to make it perfectly irresistible? Nothing that any finite mind could discover. Paris, England, Scotland, Switzerland, Italy—Garibaldi! The Grecian Archipelago! Vesuvius! Constantinople! Smyrna! The Holy Land! Egypt and “our friends the Bermudians”! People in Europe desiring to join the excursion—contagious sickness to be avoided—boating at the expense of the ship—physician on board—the circuit of the globe to be made if the passengers unanimously desired it—the company to be rigidly selected by a pitiless “Committee on Applications”—the vessel to be as rigidly selected by as pitiless a “Committee on Selecting Steamer.” Human nature could not withstand these bewildering temptations. I hurried to the treasurer’s office and deposited my ten percent. I rejoiced to know that a few vacant staterooms were still left. I did avoid a critical personal examination into my character by that bowelless committee, but I referred to all the people of high standing I could think of in the community who would be least likely to know anything about me.

Shortly a supplementary program was issued which set forth that the Plymouth Collection of Hymns would be used on board the ship. I then paid the balance of my passage money.

I was provided with a receipt and duly and officially accepted as an excursionist. There was happiness in that but it was tame compared to the novelty of being “select.”

This supplementary program also instructed the excursionists to provide themselves with light musical instruments for amusement in the ship, with saddles for Syrian travel, green spectacles and umbrellas, veils for Egypt, and substantial clothing to use in rough pilgrimizing in the Holy Land. Furthermore, it was suggested that although the ship’s library would afford a fair amount of reading matter, it would still be well if each passenger would provide himself with a few guidebooks, a Bible, and some standard works of travel. A list was appended, which consisted chiefly of books relating to the Holy Land, since the Holy Land was part of the excursion and seemed to be its main feature.

Reverend Henry Ward Beecher was to have accompanied the expedition, but urgent duties obliged him to give up the idea. There were other passengers who could have been spared better and would have been spared more willingly. Lieutenant General Sherman was to have been of the party also, but the Indian war compelled his presence on the plains. A popular actress had entered her name on the ship’s books, but something interfered and she couldn’t go. The “Drummer Boy of the Potomac” deserted, and lo, we had never a celebrity left!

However, we were to have a “battery of guns” from the Navy Department (as per advertisement) to be used in answering royal salutes; and the document furnished by the Secretary of the Navy, which was to make “General Sherman and party” welcome guests in the courts and camps of the old world, was still left to us, though both document and battery, I think, were shorn of somewhat of their original august proportions. However, had not we the seductive program still, with its Paris, its Constantinople, Smyrna, Jerusalem, Jericho, and “our friends the Bermudians?” What did we care?

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In this place I will print an article which I wrote for the New York Herald the night we arrived. I do it partly because my contract with my publishers makes it compulsory; partly because it is a proper, tolerably accurate, and exhaustive summing up of the cruise of the ship and the performances of the pilgrims in foreign lands; and partly because some of the passengers have abused me for writing it, and I wish the public to see how thankless a task it is to put one’s self to trouble to glorify unappreciative people. I was charged with “rushing into print” with these compliments. I did not rush. I had written news letters to the Herald sometimes, but yet when I visited the office that day I did not say any thing about writing a valedictory. I did go to the Tribune office to see if such an article was wanted, because I belonged on the regular staff of that paper and it was simply a duty to do it. The managing editor was absent, and so I thought no more about it. At night when the Herald’s request came for an article, I did not “rush.” In fact, I demurred for a while, because I did not feel like writing compliments then, and therefore was afraid to speak of the cruise lest I might be betrayed into using other than complimentary language. However, I reflected that it would be a just and righteous thing to go down and write a kind word for the Hadjis—Hadjis are people who have made the pilgrimage—because parties not interested could not do it so feelingly as I, a fellow-Hadji, and so I penned the valedictory. I have read it, and read it again; and if there is a sentence in it that is not fulsomely complimentary to captain, ship and passengers, I can not find it. If it is not a chapter that any company might be proud to have a body write about them, my judgment is fit for nothing. With these remarks I confidently submit it to the unprejudiced judgment of the reader:

RETURN OF THE HOLY LAND EXCURSIONISTS—THE STORY OF THE CRUISE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD:

The steamer Quaker City has accomplished at last her extraordinary voyage and returned to her old pier at the foot of Wall street. The expedition was a success in some respects, in some it was not. Originally it was advertised as a “pleasure excursion.” Well, perhaps, it was a pleasure excursion, but certainly it did not look like one; certainly it did not act like one. Any body’s and every body’s notion of a pleasure excursion is that the parties to it will of a necessity be young and giddy and somewhat boisterous. They will dance a good deal, sing a good deal, make love, but sermonize very little. Any body’s and every body’s notion of a well conducted funeral is that there must be a hearse and a corpse, and chief mourners and mourners by courtesy, many old people, much solemnity, no levity, and a prayer and a sermon withal. Three-fourths of the Quaker City’s passengers were between forty and seventy years of age! There was a picnic crowd for you! It may be supposed that the other fourth was composed of young girls. But it was not. It was chiefly composed of rusty old bachelors and a child of six years. Let us average the ages of the Quaker City’s pilgrims and set the figure down as fifty years. Is any man insane enough to imagine that this picnic of patriarchs sang, made love, danced, laughed, told anecdotes, dealt in ungodly levity? In my experience they sinned little in these matters. No doubt it was presumed here at home that these frolicsome veterans laughed and sang and romped all day, and day after day, and kept up a noisy excitement from one end of the ship to the other; and that they played blind-man’s buff or danced quadrilles and waltzes on moonlight evenings on the quarter-deck; and that at odd moments of unoccupied time they jotted a laconic item or two in the journals they opened on such an elaborate plan when they left home, and then skurried off to their whist and euchre labors under the cabin lamps. If these things were presumed, the presumption was at fault. The venerable excursionists were not gay and frisky. They played no blind-man’s buff; they dealt not in whist; they shirked not the irksome journal, for alas! most of them were even writing books. They never romped, they talked but little, they never sang, save in the nightly prayer-meeting. The pleasure ship was a synagogue, and the pleasure trip was a funeral excursion without a corpse. (There is nothing exhilarating about a funeral excursion without a corpse.) A free, hearty laugh was a sound that was not heard oftener than once in seven days about those decks or in those
cabins, and when it was heard it met with precious little sympathy. The excursionists danced, on three separate evenings, long, long ago, (it seems an age,) quadrilles, of a single set, made up of three ladies and five gentlemen, (the latter with handkerchiefs around their arms to signify their sex,) who timed their feet to the solemn wheezing of a melodeon; but even this melancholy orgie was voted to be sinful, and dancing was discontinued.

The pilgrims played dominoes when too much Josephus or Robinson's Holy Land Researches, or book-writing, made recreation necessary—for dominoes is about as mild and sinless a game as any in the world, perhaps, excepting always the ineffably insipid diversion they call croquet, which is a game where you don’t pocket any balls and don’t carom on any thing of any consequence, and when you are done nobody has to pay, and there are no refreshments to saw off, and, consequently, there isn’t any satisfaction whatever about it—they played dominoes till they were rested, and then they blackguarded each other privately till prayer-time. When they were not seasick they were uncommonly prompt when the dinner-gong sounded. Such was our daily life on board the ship—solemnity, decorum, dinner, dominoes, devotions, slander. It was not lively enough for a pleasure trip; but if we had only had a corpse it would have made a noble funeral excursion. It is all over now; but when I look back, the idea of these venerable fossils skipping forth on a six months’ picnic, seems exquisitely refreshing. The advertised title of the expedition—“The Grand Holy Land Pleasure Excursion”—was a misnomer. “The Grand Holy Land Funeral Procession” would have been better—much better.

Wherever we went, in Europe, Asia, or Africa, we made a sensational, and, I suppose I may add, created a famine. None of us had ever been any where before; we all hailed from the interior; travel was a wild novelty to us, and we conducted ourselves in accordance with the natural instincts that were in us, and trammeled ourselves with no ceremonies, no conventionalities. We always took care to make it understood that we were Americans—Americans! When we found that a good many foreigners had hardly ever heard of America, and that a good many more knew it only as a barbarous province away off somewhere, that had lately been at war with somebody, we pitied the ignorance of the Old World, but abated no jot of our importance. Many and many a simple community in the Eastern hemisphere will remember for years the incursion of the strange horde in the year of our Lord 1867, that called themselves Americans, and seemed to imagine in some unaccountable way that they had a right to be proud of it. We generally created a famine, partly because the coffee on the Quaker City was unendurable, and sometimes the more substantial fare was not strictly first class; and partly because one naturally tires of sitting long at the same board and eating from the same dishes.

The people of those foreign countries are very, very ignorant. They looked curiously at the costumes we had brought from the wilds of America. They observed that we talked loudly at table sometimes. They noticed that we looked out for expenses, and got what we conveniently could out of a franc, and wondered where in the mischief we came from. In Paris they just simply opened their eyes and stared when we spoke to them in French! We never did succeed in making those idiots understand their own language. One of our passengers said to a shopkeeper, in reference to a proposed return to buy a pair of gloves, “Allong restay trankeel—may be ve coom Moonday;” and would you believe it, that shopkeeper, a born Frenchman, had to ask what it was that had been said. Sometimes it seems to me, somehow, that there must be a difference between Parisian French and Quaker City French.

The people stared at us every where, and we stared at them. We generally made them feel rather small, too, before we got done with them, because we bore down on them with America’s greatness until we crushed them. And yet we took kindly to the manners and customs, and especially to the fashions of the various people we visited. When we left the Azores, we wore awful capotes and used fine tooth combs—successfully. When we came back from Tangier, in Africa, we were topped with fezzes of the bloodiest hue, hung with tassels like an Indian’s scalp-lock. In France and Spain we attracted some attention in these costumes. In Italy they naturally took us for distempered Garibaldians, and set a gunboat to look for any thing significant in our changes of uniform. We made Rome howl. We could have made any place howl when we had all our clothes on. We got no fresh raiment in Greece—they had but little there of any kind. But at Constantinople, how we turned out! Turbans, scimitars, fezzes, horse-pistols, tunics, sashes, baggy trousers, yellow slippers—Oh, we were gorgeous! The illustrious dogs of Constantinople barked their under jaws off, and even then failed to do us justice. They are all dead by this time. They could not go through such a run of business as we gave them and survive.

And then we went to see the Emperor of Russia. We just called on him as comfortably as if we had
known him a century or so, and when we had finished our visit we variegated ourselves with selections from Russian costumes and sailed away again more picturesque than ever. In Smyrna we picked up camel’s hair shawls and other dressy things from Persia; but in Palestine—ah, in Palestine—our splendid career ended. They didn’t wear any clothes there to speak of. We were satisfied, and stopped. We made no experiments. We did not try their costume. But we astonished the natives of that country. We astonished them with such eccentricities of dress as we could muster. We prowled through the Holy Land, from Cesarea Philippi to Jerusalem and the Dead Sea, a weird procession of pilgrims, gotten up regardless of expense, solemn, gorgeous, green-spectacled, drowsing under blue umbrellas, and astride of a sorrier lot of horses, camels and asses than those that came out of Noah’s ark, after eleven months of seasickness and short rations. If ever those children of Israel in Palestine forget when Gideon’s Band went through there from America, they ought to be cursed once more and finished. It was the rarest spectacle that ever astounded mortal eyes, perhaps.

Well, we were at home in Palestine. It was easy to see that that was the grand feature of the expedition. We had cared nothing much about Europe. We galloped through the Louvre, the Pitti, the Ufizzi, the Vatican—all the galleries—and through the pictured and frescoed churches of Venice, Naples, and the cathedrals of Spain; some of us said that certain of the great works of the old masters were glorious creations of genius, (we found it out in the guide-book, though we got hold of the wrong picture sometimes,) and the others said they were disgraceful old daubs. We examined modern and ancient statuary with a critical eye in Florence, Rome, or any where we found it, and praised it if we saw fit, and if we didn’t we said we preferred the wooden Indians in front of the cigar stores of America. But the Holy Land brought out all our enthusiasm. We fell into raptures by the barren shores of Galilee; we pondered at Tabor and at Nazareth; we exploded into poetry over the questionable loveliness of Esdraelon; we meditated at Jezreel and Samaria over the missionary zeal of Jehu; we rioted—fairly rioted among the holy places of Jerusalem; we bathed in Jordan and the Dead Sea, reckless whether our accident-insurance policies were extra-hazardous or not, and brought away so many jugs of precious water from both places that all the country from Jericho to the mountains of Moab will suffer from drouth this year, I think. Yet, the pilgrimage part of the excursion was its pet feature—there is no question about that. After dismal, smileless Palestine, beautiful Egypt had few charms for us. We merely glanced at it and were ready for home.

They wouldn’t let us land at Malta—quarantine; they would not let us land in Sardinia; nor at Algiers, Africa; nor at Malaga, Spain, nor Cadiz, nor at the Madeira islands. So we got offended at all foreigners and turned our backs upon them and came home. I suppose we only stopped at the Bermudas because they were in the programme. We did not care any thing about any place at all. We wanted to go home. Homesickness was abroad in the ship—it was epidemic. If the authorities of New York had known how badly we had it, they would have quarantined us here.

The grand pilgrimage is over. Good-bye to it, and a pleasant memory to it, I am able to say in all kindness. I bear no malice, no ill-will toward any individual that was connected with it, either as passenger or officer. Things I did not like at all yesterday I like very well to-day, now that I am at home, and always hereafter I shall be able to poke fun at the whole gang if the spirit so moves me to do, without ever saying a malicious word. The expedition accomplished all that its programme promised that it should accomplish, and we ought all to be satisfied with the management of the matter, certainly. Bye-bye!

MARK TWAIN.

I call that complimentary. It is complimentary; and yet I never have received a word of thanks for it from the Hadjis; on the contrary I speak nothing but the serious truth when I say that many of them even took exceptions to the article. In endeavoring to please them I slaved over that sketch for two hours, and had my labor for my pains. I never will do a generous deed again.

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The Innocents Abroad: Conclusion

by Mark Twain

originally published 1869

Nearly one year has flown since this notable pilgrimage was ended; and as I sit here at home in San Francisco thinking, I am moved to confess that day by day the mass of my memories of the excursion have grown more and more pleasant as the disagreeable incidents of travel which encumbered them flitted one by one out of my mind—and now, if the Quaker City were weighing her anchor to sail away on the very same cruise again, nothing could gratify me more than to be a passenger. With the same captain and even the same pilgrims, the same sinners. I was on excellent terms with eight or nine of the excursionists (they are my staunch friends yet,) and was even on speaking terms with the rest of the sixty-five. I have been at sea quite enough to know that that was a very good average. Because a long sea-voyage not only brings out all the mean traits one has, and exaggerates them, but raises up others which he never suspected he possessed, and even creates new ones. A twelve months’ voyage at sea would make of an ordinary man a very miracle of meanness. On the other hand, if a man has good qualities, the spirit seldom moves him to exhibit them on shipboard, at least with any sort of emphasis. Now I am satisfied that our pilgrims are pleasant old people on shore; I am also satisfied that at sea on a second voyage they would be pleasanter, somewhat, than they were on our grand excursion, and so I say without hesitation that I would be glad enough to sail with them again. I could at least enjoy life with my handful of old friends. They could enjoy life with their cliques as well—passengers invariably divide up into cliques, on all ships.

And I will say, here, that I would rather travel with an excursion party of Methuselahs than have to be changing ships and comrades constantly, as people do who travel in the ordinary way. Those latter are always grieving over some other ship they have known and lost, and over other comrades whom diverging routes have separated from them. They learn to love a ship just in time to change it for another, and they become attached to a pleasant traveling companion only to lose him. They have that most dismal experience of being in a strange vessel, among strange people who care nothing about them, and of undergoing the customary bullying by strange officers and the insolence of strange servants, repeated over and over again within the compass of every month. They have also that other misery of packing and unpacking trunks—of running the distressing gauntlet of custom-houses—of the anxieties attendant upon getting a mass of baggage from point to point on land in safety. I had rasher sail with a whole brigade of patriarchs than suffer so. We never packed our trunks but twice—when we sailed from New York, and when we returned to it. Whenever we made a land journey, we estimated how many days we should be gone and what amount of clothing we should need, figured it down to a mathematical nicety, packed a valise or two accordingly, and left the trunks on board. We chose our comrades from among our old, tried friends, and started. We were never dependent upon strangers for companionship. We often had occasion to pity Americans whom we found traveling drearily among strangers with no friends to exchange pains and pleasures with. Whenever we were coming back from a land journey, our eyes sought one thing in the distance first—the ship—and when we saw it riding at anchor with the flag apeak, we felt as a returning wanderer feels when he sees his home. When we stepped on board, our cares vanished, our troubles were at an end—for the ship was home to us. We always had the same familiar old state-room to go to, and feel safe and at peace and comfortable again.

I have no fault to find with the manner in which our excursion was conducted. Its programme was faithfully carried out—a thing which surprised me, for great enterprises usually promise vastly more than they perform. It would be well if such an excursion could be gotten up every year and the system regularly inaugurated. Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things can not be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one’s lifetime.

The Excursion is ended, and has passed to its place among the things that were. But its varied scenes and its manifold incidents will linger pleasantly in our memories for many a year to come. Always on the wing, as we were, and merely pausing a moment to catch fitful glimpses of the wonders of half a world, we could not hope to receive or retain vivid impressions of all it was our fortune to see. Yet our holyday flight has not been in vain—for above the confusion of vague recollections, certain of its best prized pictures lift themselves and will still continue perfect in tint and outline after their surroundings shall have faded away.
We shall remember something of pleasant France; and something also of Paris, though it flashed upon us a splendid meteor, and was gone again, we hardly knew how or where. We shall remember, always, how we saw majestic Gibraltar glorified with the rich coloring of a Spanish sunset and swimming in a sea of rainbows. In fancy we shall see Milan again, and her stately Cathedral with its marble wilderness of graceful spires. And Padua—Verona—Como, jeweled with stars; and patrician Venice, afloat on her stagnant flood—silent, desolate, haughty—scornful of her humbled state—wrapping herself in memories of her lost fleets, of battle and triumph, and all the pageantry of a glory that is departed.

We can not forget Florence—Naples—nor the foretaste of heaven that is in the delicious atmosphere of Greece—and surely not Athens and the broken temples of the Acropolis. Surely not venerable Rome—nor the green plain that compasses her round about, contrasting its brightness with her gray decay—nor the ruined arches that stand apart in the plain and clothe their looped and windowed raggedness with vines. We shall remember St. Peter's: not as one sees it when he walks the streets of Rome and fancies all her domes are just alike, but as he sees it leagues away, when every meaner edifice has faded out of sight and that one dome looms superbly up in the flush of sunset, full of dignity and grace, strongly outlined as a mountain.

We shall remember Constantinople and the Bosporus—the colossal magnificence of Baalbec—the Pyramids of Egypt—the prodigious form, the benignant countenance of the Sphynx—Oriental Smyrna—sacred Jerusalem—Damascus, the “Pearl of the East,” the pride of Syria, the fabled Garden of Eden, the home of princes and genii of the Arabian Nights, the oldest metropolis on earth, the one city in all the world that has kept its name and held its place and looked serenely on while the Kingdoms and Empires of four thousand years have risen to life, enjoyed their little season of pride and pomp, and then vanished and been forgotten!

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One Trip Abroad

by F. Scott Fitzgerald

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In the afternoon the air became black with locusts, and some of the women shrieked, sinking to the floor of the motorbus and covering their hair with traveling rugs. The locusts were coming north, eating everything in their path, which was not so much in that part of the world; they were flying silently and in straight lines, flakes of black snow. But none struck the windshield or tumbled into the car, and presently humorists began holding out their hands, trying to catch some. After ten minutes the cloud thinned out, passed, and the women emerged from the blankets, disheveled and feeling silly. And everyone talked together.

Everyone talked; it would have been absurd not to talk after having been through a swarm of locusts on the edge of the Sahara. The Smyrna-American talked to the British widow going down to Biskra to have one last fling with an as-yet-unencountered sheik. The member of the San Francisco Stock Exchange talked shyly to the author. “Aren’t you an author?” he said. The father and daughter from Wilmington talked to the cockney airman who was going to fly to Timbuctoo. Even the French chauffeur turned about and explained in a loud, clear voice: “Bumblebees,” which sent the trained nurse from New York into shriek after shriek of hysterical laughter.

Amongst the unsubtle rushing together of the travelers there was one interchange more carefully considered. Mr. and Mrs. Liddell Miles, turning as one person, smiled and spoke to the young American couple in the seat behind:

“Didn’t catch any in your hair?”

The young couple smiled back politely.

“No. We survived that plague.”

They were in their twenties, and there was still a pleasant touch of bride and groom upon them. A handsome couple; the man rather intense and sensitive, the girl arrestingly light of hue in eyes and hair, her face without shadows, its living freshness modulated by a lovely confident calm. Mr. and Mrs. Miles did not fail to notice their air of good breeding, of a specifically “swell” background, expressed both by their unsophistication and by their ingrained reticence that was not stiffness. If they held aloof, it was because they were sufficient to each other, while Mr. and Mrs. Miles’ aloofness toward the other passengers was a conscious mask, a social attitude, quite as public an affair in its essence as the ubiquitous advances of the Smyrna-American, who was snubbed by all.

The Mileses had, in fact, decided that the young couple were “possible” and, bored with themselves, were frankly approaching them.

“Have you been to Africa before? It’s been so utterly fascinating! Are you going on to Tunis?”

The Mileses, if somewhat worn away inside by fifteen years of a particular set in Paris, had undeniable style, even charm, and before the evening arrival at the little oasis town of Bou Saada they had all four become companionable. They uncovered mutual friends in New York and, meeting for a cocktail in the bar of the Hotel Transatlantique, decided to have dinner together.

As the young Kellys came downstairs later, Nicole was conscious of a certain regret that they had accepted, realizing that now they were probably committed to seeing a certain amount of their new acquaintances as far as Constantine, where their routes diverged.
In the eight months of their marriage she had been so very happy that it seemed like spoiling something. On the Italian liner that had brought them to Gibraltar they had not joined the groups that leaned desperately on one another in the bar; instead, they seriously studied French, and Nelson worked on business contingent on his recent inheritance of half a million dollars. Also he painted a picture of a smokestack. When one member of the gay crowd in the bar disappeared permanently into the Atlantic just this side of the Azores, the young Kellys were almost glad, for it justified their aloof attitude.

But there was another reason Nicole was sorry they had committed themselves. She spoke to Nelson about it: “I passed that couple in the hall just now.”

“Who—the Mileses?”

“No, that young couple—about our age—the ones that were on the other motorbus, that we thought looked so nice, in Bir Rabalou after lunch, in the camel market.”

“They did look nice.”

“Charming,” she said emphatically; “the girl and man, both. I’m almost sure I’ve met the girl somewhere before.”

The couple referred to were sitting across the room at dinner, and Nicole found her eyes drawn irresistibly toward them. They, too, now had companions, and again Nicole, who had not talked to a girl of her own age for two months, felt a faint regret. The Mileses, being formally sophisticated and frankly snobbish, were a different matter. They had been to an alarming number of places and seemed to know all the flashing phantoms of the newspapers.

They dined on the hotel veranda under a sky that was low and full of the presence of a strange and watchful God; around the corners of the hotel the night already stirred with the sounds of which they had so often read but that were even so hysterically unfamiliar—drums from Senegal, a native flute, the selfish, effeminate whine of a camel, the Arabs pattering past in shoes made of old automobile tires, the wail of Magian prayer.

At the desk in the hotel, a fellow passenger was arguing monotonously with the clerk about the rate of exchange, and the inappropriateness added to the detachment which had increased steadily as they went south.

Mrs. Miles was the first to break the lingering silence; with a sort of impatience she pulled them with her, in from the night and up to the table.

“We really should have dressed. Dinner’s more amusing if people dress, because they feel differently in formal clothes. The English know that.”

“Dress here?” her husband objected. “I’d feel like that man in the ragged dress suit we passed today, driving the flock of sheep.”

“I always feel like a tourist if I’m not dressed.”

“Well, we are, aren’t we?” asked Nelson.

“I don’t consider myself a tourist. A tourist is somebody who gets up early and goes to cathedrals and talks about scenery.”

Nicole and Nelson, having seen all the official sights from Fez to Algiers, and taken reels of moving pictures and felt improved, confessed themselves, but decided that their experiences on the trip would not interest Mrs. Miles.

“Every place is the same,” Mrs. Miles continued. “The only thing that matters is who’s there. New scenery is fine for half an hour, but after that you want your own kind to see. That’s why some places have a certain vogue, and then the vogue changes and the people move on somewhere else. The place itself really never matters.”

“But doesn’t somebody first decide that the place is nice?” objected Nelson. “The first ones go there because they like the place.”

“Where were you going this spring?” Mrs. Miles asked.

“We thought of San Remo, or maybe Sorrento. We’ve never been to Europe before.”

“My children, I know both Sorrento and San Remo, and you won’t stand either of them for a week. They’re full of
the most awful English, reading the Daily Mail and waiting for letters and talking about the most incredibly dull things. You might as well go to Brighton or Bournemouth and buy a white poodle and a sunshade and walk on the pier. How long are you staying in Europe?"

“We don’t know; perhaps several years.” Nicole hesitated. “Nelson came into a little money, and we wanted a change. When I was young, my father had asthma and I had to live in the most depressing health resorts with him for years; and Nelson was in the fur business in Alaska and he loathed it; so when we were free we came abroad. Nelson’s going to paint and I’m going to study singing.” She looked triumphantly at her husband. “So far, it’s been absolutely gorgeous.”

Mrs. Miles decided, from the evidence of the younger woman’s clothes, that it was quite a bit of money, and their enthusiasm was infectious.

“You really must go to Biarritz,” she advised them. “Or else come to Monte Carlo.”

“They tell me there’s a great show here,” said Miles, ordering champagne. “The Ouled Naïls. The concierge says they’re some kind of tribe of girls who come down from the mountains and learn to be dancers, and what not, till they’ve collected enough gold to go back to their mountains and marry. Well, they give a performance tonight.”

Walking over to the Café of the Ouled Naïls afterward, Nicole regretted that she and Nelson were not strolling alone through the ever-lower, ever-softer, ever-brighter night. Nelson had reciprocated the bottle of champagne at dinner, and neither of them was accustomed to so much. As they drew near the sad flute she didn’t want to go inside, but rather to climb to the top of a low hill where a white mosque shone clear as a planet through the night. Life was better than any show; closing in toward Nelson, she pressed his hand.

The little cave of a café was filled with the passengers from the two busses. The girls—light-brown, flat-nosed Berbers with fine, deep-shaded eyes—were already doing each one her solo on the platform. They wore cotton dresses, faintly reminiscent of Southern mammies; under these their bodies writhed in a slow nautch, culminating in a stomach dance, with silver belts bobbing wildly and their strings of real gold coins tinkling on their necks and arms. The flute player was also a comedian; he danced, burlesquing the girls. The drummer, swathed in goatskins like a witch doctor, was a true black from the Sudan.

Through the smoke of cigarettes each girl went in turn through the finger movement, like piano playing in the air—outwardly facile, yet, after a few moments, so obviously exacting—and then through the very simply languid yet equally precise steps of the feet—these were but preparation to the wild sensuality of the culminated dance.

Afterward there was a lull. Though the performance seemed not quite over, most of the audience gradually got up to go, but there was a whispering in the air.

“What is it?” Nicole asked her husband.

“Why, I believe—it appears that for a consideration the Ouled Naïls dance in more or less—ah—Oriental style—in very little except jewelry.”

“Oh.”

“We’re all staying,” Mr. Miles assured her jovially. “After all, we’re here to see the real customs and manners of the country; a little prudishness shouldn’t stand in our way.”

Most of the men remained, and several of the women. Nicole stood up suddenly.

“I’ll wait outside,” she said.

“Why not stay, Nicole? After all, Mrs. Miles is staying.”

The flute player was making preliminary flourishes. Upon the raised dais two pale brown children of perhaps fourteen were taking off their cotton dresses. For an instant Nicole hesitated, torn between repulsion and the desire not to appear to be a prig. Then she saw another young American woman get up quickly and start for the door. Recognizing the attractive young wife from the other bus, her own decision came quickly and she followed.

Nelson hurried after her. “I’m going if you go,” he said, but with evident reluctance.

“Please don’t bother. I’ll wait with the guide outside.”
“Well—” The drum was starting. He compromised: “I’ll only stay a minute. I want to see what it’s like.”

Waiting in the fresh night, she found that the incident had hurt her—Nelson’s not coming with her at once, giving as an argument the fact that Mrs. Miles was staying. From being hurt, she grew angry and made signs to the guide that she wanted to return to the hotel.

Twenty minutes later, Nelson appeared, angry with the anxiety at finding her gone, as well as to hide his guilt at having left her. Incredulous with themselves, they were suddenly in a quarrel.

Much later, when there were no sounds at all in Bou Saada and the nomads in the market place were only motionless bundles rolled up in their burnouses, she was asleep upon his shoulder. Life is progressive, no matter what our intentions, but something was harmed, some precedent of possible nonagreement was set. It was a love match, though, and it could stand a great deal. She and Nelson had passed lonely youths, and now they wanted the taste and smell of the living world; for the present they were finding it in each other.

A month later they were in Sorrento, where Nicole took singing lessons and Nelson tried to paint something new into the Bay of Naples. It was the existence they had planned and often read about. But they found, as so many have found, that the charm of idyllic interludes depends upon one person’s “giving the party”—which is to say, furnishing the background, the experience, the patience, against which the other seems to enjoy again the spells of pastoral tranquillity recollected from childhood. Nicole and Nelson were at once too old and too young, and too American, to fall into immediate soft agreement with a strange land. Their vitality made them restless, for as yet his painting had no direction and her singing no immediate prospect of becoming serious. They said they were not “getting anywhere”—the evenings were long, so they began to drink a lot of vin de Capri at dinner.

The English owned the hotel. They were aged, come South for good weather and tranquillity; Nelson and Nicole resented the mild tenor of their days. Could people be content to talk eternally about the weather, promenade the same walks, face the same variant of macaroni at dinner month after month? They grew bored, and Americans bored are already in sight of excitement. Things came to head all in one night.

Over a flask of wine at dinner they decided to go to Paris, settle in an apartment and work seriously. Paris promised metropolitan diversion, friends of their own age, a general intensity that Italy lacked. Eager with new hopes, they strolled into the salon after dinner, when, for the tenth time, Nelson noticed an ancient and enormous mechanical piano and was moved to try it.

Across the salon sat the only English people with whom they had had any connection—Gen. Sir Evelyne Fragelle and Lady Fragelle. The connection had been brief and unpleasant—seeing them walking out of the hotel in peignoirs to swim, she had announced, over quite a few yards of floor space, that it was disgusting and shouldn’t be allowed.

But that was nothing compared with her response to the first terrific bursts of sound from the electric piano. As the dust of years trembled off the keyboard at the vibration, she shot galvanically forward with the sort of jerk associated with the electric chair. Somewhat stunned himself by the sudden din of Waiting for the Robert E. Lee, Nelson had scarcely sat down when she projected herself across the room, her train quivering behind her, and, without glancing at the Kellys, turned off the instrument.

It was one of those gestures that are either plainly justified, or else outrageous. For a moment Nelson hesitated uncertainly; then, remembering Lady Fragelle’s arrogant remark about his bathing suit, he returned to the instrument in her still-billow ing wake and turned it on again.

The incident had become international. The eyes of the entire salon fell eagerly upon the protagonists, watching for the next move. Nicole hurried after Nelson, urging him to let the matter pass, but it was too late. From the outraged English table there arose, joint by joint, Gen. Sir Evelyne Fragelle, faced with perhaps his most crucial situation since the relief of Ladysmith.

“’T’lee outrageous!—’t’lee outrageous!”

“I beg your pardon,” said Nelson.

“Here for fifteen years!” screamed Sir Evelyne to himself. “Never heard of anyone doing such a thing before!”

“I gathered that this was put here for the amusement of the guests.”

Scorning to answer, Sir Evelyne knelt, reached for the catch, pushed it the wrong way, whereupon the speed and
volume of the instrument tripled until they stood in a wild pandemonium of sound; Sir Evelyne livid with military emotions, Nelson on the point of maniacal laughter.

In a moment the firm hand of the hotel manager settled the matter; the instrument gulped and stopped, trembling a little from its unaccustomed outburst, leaving behind it a great silence in which Sir Evelyne turned to the manager.

“Most outrageous affair ever heard of in my life. My wife turned it off once, and he”–this was his first acknowledgment of Nelson’s identity as distinct from the instrument–“he put it on again!”

“This is a public room in a hotel,” Nelson protested. “The instrument is apparently here to be used.”


But Nelson said, “If there’s any apology, it’s certainly due to me.”

Sir Evelyne’s eye was fixed menacingly upon the manager, waiting for him to do his duty. The latter thought of Sir Evelyne’s fifteen years of residence, and cringed.

“It is not the habitude to play the instrument in the evening. The clients are each one quiet on his or her table.”

“American cheek!” snapped Sir Evelyne.

“Very well,” Nelson said; “we’ll relieve the hotel of our presence tomorrow.”

As a reaction from this incident, as a sort of protest against Sir Evelyne Fragelle, they went not to Paris but to Monte Carlo after all. They were through with being alone.

II

A little more than two years after the Kellys’ first visit to Monte Carlo, Nicole woke up one morning into what, though it bore the same name, had become to her a different place altogether.

In spite of hurried months in Paris or Biarritz, it was now home to them. They had a villa, they had a large acquaintance among the spring and summer crowd–a crowd which, naturally, did not include people on charted trips or the shore parties from Mediterranean cruises; these latter had become for them “tourists.”

They loved the Riviera in full summer with many friends there and the nights open and full of music. Before the maid drew the curtains this morning to shut out the glare, Nicole saw from her window the yacht of T. F. Golding, placid among the swells of the Monacan Bay, as if constantly bound on a romantic voyage not dependent upon actual motion.

The yacht had taken the slow tempo of the coast; it had gone no farther than to Cannes and back all summer, though it might have toured the world. The Kellys were dining on board that night.

Nicole spoke excellent French; she had five new evening dresses and four others that would do; she had her husband; she had two men in love with her, and she felt sad for one of them. She had her pretty face. At 10:30 she was meeting a third man, who was just beginning to be in love with her “in a harmless way.” At one she was having a dozen charming people to luncheon. All that.

“I’m happy,” she brooded toward the bright blinds. “I’m young and good-looking, and my name is often in the paper as having been here and there, but really I don’t care about shi-shi. I think it’s all awfully silly, but if you do want to see people, you might as well see the chic, amusing ones; and if people call you a snob, it’s envy, and they know it and everybody knows it.”

She repeated the substance of this to Oscar Dane on the Mont Agel golf course two hours later, and he cursed her
quietly.

“Not at all,” he said. “You’re just getting to be an old snob. Do you call that crowd of drunks you run with amusing people? Why, they’re not even very swell. They’re so hard that they’ve shifted down through Europe like nails in a sack of wheat, till they stick out of it a little into the Mediterranean Sea.”

Annoyed, Nicole fired a name at him, but he answered: “Class C. A good solid article for beginners.”

“The Colbys–anyway, her.”

“Third flight.”

“Marquis and Marquise de Kalb.”

“If she didn’t happen to take dope and he didn’t have other peculiarities.”

“Well, then, where are the amusing people?” she demanded impatiently.

“Off by themselves somewhere. They don’t hunt in herds, except occasionally.”

“How about you? You’d snap up an invitation from every person I named. I’ve heard stories about you wilder than any you can make up. There’s not a man that’s known you six months that would take your check for ten dollars. You’re a sponge and a parasite and everything–”

“Shut up for a minute,” he interrupted. “I don’t want to spoil this drive. . . . I just don’t like to see you kid yourself,” he continued. “What passes with you for international society is just about as hard to enter nowadays as the public rooms at the Casino; and if I can make my living by sponging off it, I’m still giving twenty times more than I get. We dead heats are about the only people in it with any stuff, and we stay with it because we have to.”

She laughed, liking him immensely, wondering how angry Nelson would be when he found that Oscar had walked off with his nail scissors and his copy of the New York Herald this morning.

“Anyhow,” she thought afterward, as she drove home toward luncheon, “we’re getting out of it all soon, and we’ll be serious and have a baby. After this last summer.”

Stopping for a moment at a florist’s, she saw a young woman coming out with an armful of flowers. The young woman glanced at her over the heap of color, and Nicole perceived that she was extremely smart, and then that her face was familiar. It was someone she had known once, but only slightly; the name had escaped her, so she did not nod, and forgot the incident until that afternoon.

They were twelve for luncheon: The Goldings’ party from the yacht, Liddell and Cardine Miles, Mr. Dane–seven different nationalities she counted; among them an exquisite young French woman, Madame Delauney, whom Nicole referred to lightly as “Nelson’s girl.” Noel Delauney was perhaps her closest friend; when they made up foursomes for golf or for trips, she paired off with Nelson; but today, as Nicole introduced her to someone as “Nelson’s girl,” the bantering phrase filled Nicole with distaste.

She said aloud at luncheon: “Nelson and I are going to get away from it all.”

Everybody agreed that they, too, were going to get away from it all.

“It’s all right for the English,” someone said, “because they’re doing a sort of dance of death—you know, gayety in the doomed fort, with the Sepoys at the gate. You can see it by their faces when they dance—the intensity. They know it and they want it, and they don’t see any future. But you Americans, you’re having a rotten time. If you want to wear the green hat or the crushed hat, or whatever it is, you always have to get a little tipsy.”

“We’re going to get away from it all,” Nicole said firmly, but something within her argued: “What a pity–this lovely blue sea, this happy time.” What came afterward? Did one just accept a lessening of tension? It was somehow Nelson’s business to answer that. His growing discontent that he wasn’t getting anywhere ought to explode into a new life for both of them, or rather a new hope and content with life. That secret should be his masculine contribution.

“Well, children, good-by.”

“It was a great luncheon.”
“Don’t forget about getting away from it all.”

“See you when–”

The guests walked down the path toward their cars. Only Oscar, just faintly flushed on liqueurs, stood with Nicole on the veranda, talking on and on about the girl he had invited up to see his stamp collection. Momentarily tired of people, impatient to be alone, Nicole listened for a moment and then, taking a glass vase of flowers from the luncheon table, went through the French windows into the dark, shadowy villa, his voice following her as he talked on and on out there.

It was when she crossed the first salon, still hearing Oscar’s monologue on the veranda, that she began to hear another voice in the next room, cutting sharply across Oscar’s voice.

“Ah, but kiss me again,” it said, stopped; Nicole stopped, too, rigid in the silence, now broken only by the voice on the porch.

“Be careful.” Nicole recognized the faint French accent of Noel Delauney.

“I’m tired of being careful. Anyhow, they’re on the veranda.”

“No, better the usual place.”

“Darling, sweet darling.”

The voice of Oscar Dane on the veranda grew weary and stopped and, as if thereby released from her paralysis, Nicole took a step—forward or backward, she did not know which. At the sound of her heel on the floor, she heard the two people in the next room breaking swiftly apart.

Then she went in. Nelson was lighting a cigarette; Noel, with her back turned, was apparently hunting for hat or purse on a chair. With blind horror rather than anger, Nicole threw, or rather pushed away from her, the glass vase which she carried. If at anyone, it was at Nelson she threw it, but the force of her feeling had entered the inanimate thing; it flew past him, and Noel Delauney, just turning about, was struck full on the side of her head and face.

“Say, there!” Nelson cried. Noel sank slowly into the chair before which she stood, her hand slowly rising to cover the side of her face. The jar rolled unbroken on the thick carpet, scattering its flowers.

“You look out!” Nelson was at Noel’s side, trying to take the hand away to see what had happened.

“C’est liquide,” gasped Noel in a whisper. “Est-ce que c’est le sang?”

He forced her hand away, and cried breathlessly, “No, it’s just water!” and then, to Oscar, who had appeared in the doorway: “Get some cognac!” and to Nicole: “You fool, you must be crazy!”

Nicole, breathing hard, said nothing. When the brandy arrived, there was a continuing silence, like that of people watching an operation, while Nelson poured a glass down Noel’s throat. Nicole signaled to Oscar for a drink, and, as if afraid to break the silence without it, they all had a brandy. Then Noel and Nelson spoke at once:

“If you can find my hat–”

“This is the silliest–”

“–I shall go immediately.”

“–thing I ever saw; I–”

They all looked at Nicole, who said: “Have her car drive right up to the door.” Oscar departed quickly.

“Are you sure you don’t want to see a doctor?” asked Nelson anxiously.

“I want to go.”

A minute later, when the car had driven away, Nelson came in and poured himself another glass of brandy. A wave of subsiding tension flowed over him, showing in his face; Nicole saw it, and saw also his gathering will to make
the best he could of it.

"I want to know just why you did that," he demanded. "No, don't go, Oscar." He saw the story starting out into the world.

"What possible reason—"

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Nicole.

"If I kissed Noel, there's nothing so terrible about it. It's of absolutely no significance."

She made a contemptuous sound. "I heard what you said to her."

"You're crazy."

He said it as if she were crazy, and wild rage filled her.

"You liar! All this time pretending to be so square, and so particular what I did, and all the time behind my back you've been playing around with that little—"

She used a serious word, and as if maddened with the sound of it, she sprang toward his chair. In protection against this sudden attack, he flung up his arm quickly, and the knuckles of his open hand struck across the socket of her eye. Covering her face with her hand as Noel had done ten minutes previously, she fell sobbing to the floor.

"Hasn't this gone far enough?" Oscar cried.

"Yes," admitted Nelson, "I guess it has."

"You go on out on the veranda and cool off."

He got Nicole to a couch and sat beside her, holding her hand.

"Brace up—brace up, baby," he said, over and over. "What are you—Jack Dempsey? You can't go around hitting French women; they'll sue you."

"He told her he loved her," she gasped hysterically. "She said she'd meet him at the same place. . . . Has he gone there now?"

"He's out on the porch, walking up and down, sorry as the devil that he accidentally hit you, and sorry he ever saw Noel Delauney."

"Oh, yes!"

"You might have heard wrong, and it doesn't prove a thing, anyhow."

After twenty minutes, Nelson came in suddenly and sank down on his knees by the side of his wife. Mr. Oscar Dane, reënforced in his idea that he gave much more than he got, backed discreetly and far from unwillingly to the door.

In another hour, Nelson and Nicole, arm in arm, emerged from their villa and walked slowly down to the Café de Paris. They walked instead of driving, as if trying to return to the simplicity they had once possessed, as if they were trying to unwind something that had become visibly tangled. Nicole accepted his explanations, not because they were credible, but because she wanted passionately to believe them. They were both very quiet and sorry.

The Café de Paris was pleasant at that hour, with sunset drooping through the yellow awnings and the red parasols as through stained glass. Glancing about, Nicole saw the young woman she had encountered that morning. She was with a man now, and Nelson placed them immediately as the young couple they had seen in Algeria, almost three years ago.

"They've changed," he commented. "I suppose we have, too, but not so much. They're harder-looking and he looks dissipated. Dissipation always shows in light eyes rather than in dark ones. The girl is tout ce qu'il y a de chic, as they say, but there's a hard look in her face too."

"I like her."
“Do you want me to go and ask them if they are that same couple?”

“No! That’d be like lonesome tourists do. They have their own friends.”

At that moment people were joining them at their table.

“Nelson, how about tonight?” Nicole asked a little later. “Do you think we can appear at the Goldings’ after what’s happened?”

“We not only can but we’ve got to. If the story’s around and we’re not there, we’ll just be handing them a nice juicy subject of conversation. . . . Hello! What on earth–”

Something strident and violent had happened across the café; a woman screamed and the people at one table were all on their feet, surging back and forth like one person. Then the people at the other tables were standing and crowding forward; for just a moment the Kellys saw the face of the girl they had been watching, pale now, and distorted with anger. Panic-stricken, Nicole plucked at Nelson’s sleeve.

“I want to get out. I can’t stand any more today. Take me home. Is everybody going crazy?”

On the way home, Nelson glanced at Nicole’s face and perceived with a start that they were not going to dinner on the Goldings’ yacht after all. For Nicole had the beginnings of a well-defined and unmistakable black eye—an eye that by eleven o’clock would be beyond the aid of all the cosmetics in the principality. His heart sank and he decided to say nothing about it until they reached home.

III

There is some wise advice in the catechism about avoiding the occasions of sin, and when the Kellys went up to Paris a month later they made a conscientious list of the places they wouldn’t visit any more and the people they didn’t want to see again. The places included several famous bars, all the night clubs except one or two that were highly decorous, all the early-morning clubs of every description, and all summer resorts that made whoopee for its own sake—whoopee triumphant and unrestrained—the main attraction of the season.

The people they were through with included three-fourths of those with whom they had passed the last two years. They did this not in snobbishness, but for self-preservation, and not without a certain fear in their hearts that they were cutting themselves off from human contacts forever.

But the world is always curious, and people become valuable merely for their inaccessibility. They found that there were others in Paris who were only interested in those who had separated from the many. The first crowd they had known was largely American, salted with Europeans; the second was largely European, peppered with Americans. This latter crowd was “society,” and here and there it touched the ultimate milieu, made up of individuals of high position, of great fortune, very occasionally of genius, and always of power. Without being intimate with the great, they made new friends of a more conservative type. Moreover, Nelson began to paint again; he had a studio, and they visited the studios of Brancusi and Leger and Deschamps. It seemed that they were more part of something than before, and when certain gaudy rendezvous were mentioned, they felt a contempt for their first two years in Europe, speaking of their former acquaintances as “that crowd” and as “people who waste your time.”

So, although they kept their rules, they entertained frequently at home and they went out to the houses of others. They were young and handsome and intelligent; they came to know what did go and what did not go, and adapted themselves accordingly. Moreover, they were naturally generous and willing, within the limits of common sense, to pay.

When one went out one generally drank. This meant little to Nicole, who had a horror of losing her soigné air, losing a touch of bloom or a ray of admiration, but Nelson, thwarted somewhere, found himself quite as tempted to drink at these small dinners as in the more frankly rowdy world. He was not a drunk, he did nothing
conspicuous or sodden, but he was no longer willing to go out socially without the stimulus of liquor. It was with the idea of bringing him to a serious and responsible attitude that Nicole decided after a year in Paris, that the time had come to have a baby.

This was coincidental with their meeting Count Chiki Sarolai. He was an attractive relic of the Austrian court, with no fortune or pretense to any, but with solid social and financial connections in France. His sister was married to the Marquis de la Clos d’Hirondelle, who, in addition to being of the ancient noblesse, was a successful banker in Paris. Count Chiki roved here and there, frankly sponging, rather like Oscar Dane, but in a different sphere.

His penchant was Americans; he hung on their words with a pathetic eagerness, as if they would sooner or later let slip their mysterious formula for making money. After a casual meeting, his interest gravitated to the Kellys. During Nicole’s months of waiting he was in the house continually, tirelessly interested in anything that concerned American crime, slang, finance or manners. He came in for a luncheon or dinner when he had no other place to go, and with tacit gratitude he persuaded his sister to call on Nicole, who was immensely flattered.

It was arranged that when Nicole went to the hospital he would stay at the appartement and keep Nelson company–an arrangement of which Nicole didn’t approve, since they were inclined to drink together. But the day on which it was decided, he arrived with news of one of his brother-in-law’s famous canal-boat parties on the Seine, to which the Kellys were to be invited and which, conveniently enough, was to occur three weeks after the arrival of the baby. So, when Nicole moved out to the American Hospital Count Chiki moved in.

The baby was a boy. For a while Nicole forgot all about people and their human status and their value. She even wondered at the fact that she had become such a snob, since everything seemed trivial compared with the new individual that, eight times a day, they carried to her breast.

After two weeks she and the baby went back to the apartment, but Chiki and his valet stayed on. It was understood, with that subtlety the Kellys had only recently begun to appreciate, that he was merely staying until after his brother-in-law’s party, but the apartment was crowded and Nicole wished him gone. But her old idea, that if one had to see people they might as well be the best, was carried out in being invited to the De la Clos d’Hirondelles’.

As she lay in her chaise longue the day before the event, Chiki explained the arrangements, in which he had evidently aided.

“Everyone who arrives must drink two cocktails in the American style before they can come aboard–as a ticket of admission.”

“But I thought that very fashionable French–Faubourg St. Germain and all that–didn’t drink cocktails.”

“Oh, but my family is very modern. We adopt many American customs.”

“Who’ll be there?”

“Everyone! Everyone in Paris.”

Great names swam before her eyes. Next day she could not resist dragging the affair into conversation with her doctor. But she was rather offended at the look of astonishment and incredulity that came into his eyes.

“Did I understand you aright?” he demanded. “Did I understand you to say that you were going to a ball tomorrow?”


“My dear lady, you are not going to stir out of the house for two more weeks; you are not going to dance or do anything strenuous for two more after that.”

“That’s ridiculous!” she cried. “It’s been three weeks already! Esther Sherman went to America after–”

“Never mind,” he interrupted. “Every case is different. There is a complication which makes it positively necessary for you to follow my orders.”

“But the idea is that I’ll just go for two hours, because of course I’ll have to come home to Sonny–”

“You’ll not go for two minutes.”
She knew, from the seriousness of his tone, that he was right, but, perversely, she did not mention the matter to Nelson. She said, instead, that she was tired, that possibly she might not go, and lay awake that night measuring her disappointment against her fear. She woke up for Sonny’s first feeding, thinking to herself: “But if I just take ten steps from a limousine to a chair and just sit half an hour—"

At the last minute the pale green evening dress from Callets, draped across a chair in her bedroom, decided her. She went.

Somewhere, during the shuffle and delay on the gangplank while the guests went aboard and were challenged and drank down their cocktails with attendant gayety, Nicole realized that she had made a mistake. There was, at any rate, no formal receiving line and, after greeting their hosts, Nelson found her a chair on deck, where presently her faintness disappeared.

Then she was glad she had come. The boat was hung with fragile lanterns, which blended with the pastels of the bridges and the reflected stars in the dark Seine, like a child’s dream out of the Arabian Nights. A crowd of hungry-eyed spectators were gathered on the banks. Champagne moved past in platoons like a drill of bottles, while the music, instead of being loud and obtrusive, drifted down from the upper deck like frosting dripping over a cake. She became aware presently that they were not the only Americans there—across the deck were the Liddell Mileses, whom she had not seen for several years.

Other people from that crowd were present, and she felt a faint disappointment. What if this was not the marquis’ best party? She remembered her mother’s second days at home. She asked Chiki, who was at her side, to point out celebrities, but when she inquired about several people whom she associated with that set, he replied vaguely that they were away, or coming later, or could not be there. It seemed to her that she saw across the room the girl who had made the scene in the Café de Paris at Monte Carlo, but she could not be sure, for with the faint almost imperceptible movement of the boat, she realized that she was growing faint again. She sent for Nelson to take her home.

“You can come right back, of course. You needn’t wait for me, because I’m going right to bed.”

He left her in the hands of the nurse, who helped her upstairs and aided her to undress quickly.

“I’m desperately tired,” Nicole said. “Will you put my pearls away?”

“Where?”

“In the jewel box on the dressing table.”

“I don’t see it,” said the nurse after a minute.

“When it’s in a drawer.”

There was a thorough rummaging of the dressing table, without result.

“But of course it’s there.” Nicole attempted to rise, but fell back, exhausted. “Look for it, please, again. Everything is in it—all my mother’s things and my engagement things.”

“I’m sorry, Mrs. Kelly. There’s nothing in this room that answers to that description.”

“Wake up the maid.”

The maid knew nothing; then, after a persistent cross-examination, she did know something. Count Sarolai’s valet had gone out, carrying his suitcase, half an hour after madame left the house.

Writhing in sharp and sudden pain, with a hastily summoned doctor at her side, it seemed to Nicole hours before Nelson came home. When he arrived, his face was deathly pale and his eyes were wild. He came directly into her room.

“What do you think?” he said savagely. Then he saw the doctor. “Why, what’s the matter?”

“Oh, Nelson, I’m sick as a dog and my jewel box is gone, and Chiki’s valet has gone. I’ve told the police. . . . Perhaps Chiki would know where the man—”

“Chiki will never come in this house again,” he said slowly. “Do you know whose party that was? Have you got any
idea whose party that was?” He burst into wild laughter. “It was our party–our party, do you understand? We gave it–we didn’t know it, but we did.”

“Maintenant, monsieur, il ne faut pas exciter madame–” the doctor began.

“I thought it was odd when the marquis went home early, but I didn’t suspect till the end. They were just guests–Chiki invited all the people. After it was over, the caterers and musicians began to come up and ask me where to send their bills. And that damn Chiki had the nerve to tell me he thought I knew all the time. He said that all he’d promised was that it would be his brother-in-law’s sort of party, and that his sister would be there. He said perhaps I was drunk, or perhaps I didn’t understand French–as if we’d ever talked anything but English to him.”

“Don’t pay!” she said. “I wouldn’t think of paying.”

“So I said, but they’re going to sue–the boat people and the others. They want twelve thousand dollars.”

She relaxed suddenly. “Oh, go away!” she cried. “I don’t care! I’ve lost my jewels and I’m sick, sick!”

IV

This is the story of a trip abroad, and the geographical element must not be slighted. Having visited North Africa, Italy, the Riviera, Paris and points in between, it was not surprising that eventually the Kellys should go to Switzerland. Switzerland is a country where very few things begin, but many things end.

Though there was an element of choice in their other ports of call, the Kellys went to Switzerland because they had to. They had been married a little more than four years when they arrived one spring day at the lake that is the center of Europe—a placid, smiling spot with pastoral hillsides, a backdrop of mountains and waters of postcard blue, waters that are a little sinister beneath the surface with all the misery that has dragged itself here from every corner of Europe. Weariness to recuperate and death to die. There are schools, too, and young people splashing at the sunny plages; there is Bonivard’s dungeon and Calvin’s city, and the ghosts of Byron and Shelley still sail the dim shores by night; but the Lake Geneva that Nelson and Nicole came to was the dreary one of sanatoriums and rest hotels.

For, as if by some profound sympathy that had continued to exist beneath the unlucky destiny that had pursued their affairs, health had failed them both at the same time; Nicole lay on the balcony of a hotel coming slowly back to life after two successive operations, while Nelson fought for life against jaundice in a hospital two miles away. Even after the reserve force of twenty-nine years had pulled him through, there were months ahead during which he must live quietly. Often they wondered why, of all those who sought pleasure over the face of Europe, this misfortune should have come to them.

“There’ve been too many people in our lives,” Nelson said. “We’ve never been able to resist people. We were so happy the first year when there weren’t any people.”

Nicole agreed. “If we could ever be alone–really alone–we could make up some kind of life for ourselves. We’ll try, won’t we, Nelson?”

But there were other days when they both wanted company desperately, concealing it from each other. Days when they eyed the obese, the wasted, the crippled and the broken of all nationalities who filled the hotel, seeking for one who might be amusing. It was a new life for them, turning on the daily visits of their two doctors, the arrival of the mail and newspapers from Paris, the little walk into the hillside village or occasionally the descent by funicular to the pale resort on the lake, with its Kursaal, its grass beach, its tennis clubs and sight-seeing busses. They read Tauchnitz editions and yellow-jacketed Edgar Wallaces; at a certain hour each day they watched the baby being given its bath; three nights a week there was a tired and patient orchestra in the lounge after dinner, that was all.

And sometimes there was a booming from the vine-covered hills on the other side of the lake, which meant that cannons were shooting at hail-bearing clouds, to save the vineyard from an approaching storm; it came swiftly,
first falling from the heavens and then falling again in torrents from the mountains, washing loudly down the roads and stone ditches; it came with a dark, frightening sky and savage filaments of lightning and crashing, world-splitting thunder, while ragged and destroyed clouds fled along before the wind past the hotel. The mountains and the lake disappeared completely; the hotel crouched alone amid tumult and chaos and darkness.

It was during such a storm, when the mere opening of a door admitted a tornado of rain and wind into the hall, that the Kellys for the first time in months saw someone they knew. Sitting downstairs with other victims of frayed nerves, they became aware of two new arrivals—a man and woman whom they recognized as the couple, first seen in Algiers, who had crossed their path several times since. A single unexpressed thought flashed through Nelson and Nicole. It seemed like destiny that at last here in this desolate place they should know them, and watching, they saw other couples eying them in the same tentative way. Yet something held the Kellys back. Had they not just been complaining that there were too many people in their lives?

Later, when the storm had dozed off into a quiet rain, Nicole found herself near the girl on the glass veranda. Under cover of reading a book, she inspected the face closely. It was an inquisitive face, she saw at once, possibly calculating; the eyes, intelligent enough, but with no peace in them, swept over people in a single quick glance as though estimating their value. “Terrible egoist,” Nicole thought, with a certain distaste. For the rest, the cheeks were wan, and there were little pouches of ill health under the eyes; these combining with a certain flabbiness of arms and legs to give an impression of unwholesomeness. She was dressed expensively, but with a hint of slovenliness, as if she did not consider the people of the hotel important.

On the whole, Nicole decided she did not like her; she was glad that they had not spoken, but she was rather surprised that she had not noticed these things when the girl crossed her path before.

Telling Nelson her impression at dinner, he agreed with her.

“I ran into the man in the bar, and I noticed we both took nothing but mineral water, so I started to say something. But I got a good look at his face in the mirror and I decided not to. His face is so weak and self-indulgent that it’s almost mean—the kind of face that needs half a dozen drinks really to open the eyes and stiffen the mouth up to normal.”

After dinner the rain stopped and the night was fine outside. Eager for the air, the Kellys wandered down into the dark garden; on their way they passed the subjects of their late discussion, who withdrew abruptly down a side path.

“They loitered among the wild rosebushes and the beds of damp-sweet, indistinguishable flowers. Below the hotel, where the terrace fell a thousand feet to the lake, stretched a necklace of lights that was Montreux and Vevey, and then, in a dim pendant, Lausanne; a blurred twinkling across the lake was Evian and France. From somewhere below—probably the Kursaal—came the sound of full-bodied dance music—American, they guessed, though now they heard American tunes months late, mere distant echoes of what was happening far away.

Over the Dent du Midi, over a black bank of clouds that was the rearguard of the receding storm, the moon lifted itself and the lake brightened; the music and the far-away lights were like hope, like the enchanted distance from which children see things. In their separate hearts Nelson and Nicole gazed backward to a time when life was all like this. Her arm went through his quietly and drew him close.

“We can have it all again,” she whispered. “Can’t we try, Nelson?”

She paused as two dark forms came into the shadows nearby and stood looking down at the lake below.

Nelson put his arm around Nicole and pulled her closer.

“It’s just that we don’t understand what’s the matter,” she said. “Why did we lose peace and love and health, one after the other? If we knew, if there was anybody to tell us, I believe we could try. I’d try so hard.”

The last clouds were lifting themselves over the Bernese Alps. Suddenly, with a final intensity, the west flared with pale white lightning. Nelson and Nicole turned, and simultaneously the other couple turned, while for an instant the night was as bright as day. Then darkness and a last low peal of thunder, and from Nicole a sharp, terrified cry. She flung herself against Nelson; even in the darkness she saw that his face was as white and strained as her own.
“Did you see?” she cried in a whisper. “Did you see them?”

“Yes!”

“They’re us! They’re us! Don’t you see?”

Trembling, they clung together. The clouds merged into the dark mass of mountains; looking around after a moment, Nelson and Nicole saw that they were alone together in the tranquil moonlight.

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Equal in Paris

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Writers at Home
Overview: Writers at Home

Sky view of suburban neighborhood circa 1962. After WWII returning soldiers sought quiet environments from which they could (1) easily commute to work in a major city and (2) raise their “baby boomer” children. For this, they migrated to suburbs—neighborhoods of duplicate or similarly designed houses deemed safe for their distance from the major cities (urban environments) but not so far removed that the people living there felt completely isolated (rural environments).

Objectives

- Respond to the weekly readings within the context of your own perspective (Textual Annotations)
- Analyze the literary theme of Community as it is presented by Carver and Cheever (Weekly Journal Entry)

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Biography: John Cheever

John William Cheever (May 27, 1912 – June 18, 1982) was an American novelist and short story writer. He is sometimes called “the Chekhov of the suburbs”. His fiction is mostly set in the Upper East Side of Manhattan, the Westchester suburbs, old New England villages based on various South Shore towns around Quincy, Massachusetts, where he was born, and Italy, especially Rome. He is “now recognized as one of the most important short fiction writers of the 20th century.” While Cheever is perhaps best remembered for his short stories (including “The Enormous Radio”, “Goodbye, My Brother”, “The Five-Forty-Eight”, “The Country Husband”, and “The Swimmer”), he also wrote four novels, comprising *The Wapshot Chronicle* (National Book Award, 1958), *The Wapshot Scandal* (William Dean Howells Medal, 1965), *Bullet Park* (1969), *Falconer* (1977) and a novella *Oh What a Paradise It Seems* (1982).

His main themes include the duality of human nature: sometimes dramatized as the disparity between a character’s decorous social persona and inner corruption, and sometimes as a conflict between two characters (often brothers) who embody the salient aspects of both – light and dark, flesh and spirit. Many of his works also express a nostalgia for a vanishing way of life (as evoked by the mythical St. Botolphs in the *Wapshot* novels), characterized by abiding cultural traditions and a profound sense of community, as opposed to the alienating nomadism of modern suburbia.


On April 27, 1982, six weeks before his death, Cheever was awarded the National Medal for Literature by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His work has been included in the Library of America.

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The Swimmer

Read “The Swimmer” by John Cheever using the link below.

“The Swimmer” from Story of the Week, hosted by The Library of America.

Alternatively, listen to Cheever read “The Swimmer” here.

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Additional Resources: Writers at Home

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Consumerism
Overview: Consumerism

Objectives

- Analyze two pieces of 20th century American literature using one of the four major themes discussed in this course (Essay #1)
- Respond to the weekly readings within the context of your own perspective (Textual Annotations)
- Analyze the influence of consumerism to late 20th century American writing (Weekly Journal Entry)

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Video: 1990s Mall Commercial

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- 1990s Mall commercial. **Authored by:** Hootyhaha Hootyhaha. **Located at:** https://youtu.be/b1Ilr8WpkgY. **License:** All Rights Reserved. **License Terms:** Standard YouTube License
Biography: Allen Ginsberg

Irwin Allen Ginsberg (June 3, 1926 – April 5, 1997) was an American poet and one of the leading figures of both the Beat Generation of the 1950s and the counterculture that soon would follow. He vigorously opposed militarism, economic materialism and sexual repression. Ginsberg is best known for his epic poem “Howl,” in which he denounced what he saw as the destructive forces of capitalism and conformity in the United States.

In 1957, “Howl” attracted widespread publicity when it became the subject of an obscenity trial, as it depicted heterosexual and homosexual sex at a time when sodomy laws made homosexual acts a crime in every U.S. state. “Howl” reflected Ginsberg’s own homosexuality and his relationships with a number of men, including Peter Orlovsky, his lifelong partner. Judge Clayton W. Horn ruled that “Howl” was not obscene, adding, “Would there be any freedom of press or speech if one must reduce his vocabulary to vapid innocuous euphemisms?”

Ginsberg was a practicing Buddhist who studied Eastern religious disciplines extensively. He lived modestly, buying his clothing in second-hand stores and residing in downscale apartments in New York’s East Village. One of his most influential teachers was the Tibetan Buddhist, the Venerable Chögyam Trungpa, founder of the Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado. At Trungpa’s urging, Ginsberg and poet Anne Waldman started The Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics there in 1974.

Ginsberg took part in decades of non-violent political protest against everything from the Vietnam War to the War on Drugs. His poem “September on Jessore Road,” calling attention to the plight of Bangladeshi refugees, exemplifies what the literary critic Helen Vendler described as Ginsberg’s tireless persistence in protesting against “imperial politics, and persecution of the powerless.”

His collection The Fall of America shared the annual U.S. National Book Award for Poetry in 1974. In 1979 he received the National Arts Club gold medal and was inducted into the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. In 1986 he was awarded the Golden Wreath of the Struga Poetry Evenings in Struga, Macedonia. Ginsberg was a Pulitzer Prize finalist in 1995 for his book Cosmopolitan Greetings: Poems 1986-1992.
| **Born** | Irwin Allen Ginsberg  
June 3, 1926  
Newark, New Jersey, United States |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Died**  | April 5, 1997 (aged 70)  
New York City, United States |
| **Occupation** | Writer, poet |
| **Nationality** | American |
| **Alma mater** | Montclair State College, Columbia University |
| **Literary movement** | Beat literature, Hippie |
| **Notable awards** | National Book Award  
{1974}  
Robert Frost Medal (1986) |
| **Partner** | Peter Orlovsky  
1954–1997 (Ginsberg’s death) |

View Allen Ginsberg’s full biography on Wikipedia.
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- Allen Ginsberg. **Provided by:** Wikipedia. **Located at:**
  https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allen_Ginsberg. **License:** CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike
- Image of Allen Ginsberg. **Authored by:** Hans van Dijk, Anefo. **Located at:**
A Supermarket in California

Please use the following link to access the poem “A Supermarket in California” by Allen Ginsberg, published originally in 1955. Both the text and an audio recording are available at this site.

“A Supermarket in California“ from The Poetry Foundation
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Additional Resources: Consumerism

Helpful Websites

Video: “The 80s the Decade that Made Us HD Part 3” from Daily Motion
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Humor
Overview: Humor

Photo of the comedy team The Three Stooges. From left: Joe DeRita (Curly Joe), Moe Howard (Moe), and Larry Fine (Larry). This photo was taken as the Stooges made ready for a second appearance on Steve Allen’s talk program (later became the Tonight Show).

Objectives

- Analyze two pieces of 20th century American literature using one of the four major themes discussed in this course (Essay #1)
- Respond to the weekly readings within the context of your own perspective (Textual Annotations)
- Examine the principles of American humor in both a historical and cultural context (Weekly Journal Entry)

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Biography: Ring Lardner

**Ringgold Wilmer Lardner** (March 6, 1885 – September 25, 1933) was an American sports columnist and short story writer best known for his satirical writings about sports, marriage, and theatre drama.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Born</th>
<th>Ringgold Wilmer Lardner</th>
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<tr>
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<td>March 6, 1885</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Niles, Michigan, USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Died</td>
<td>September 25, 1933 (aged 48)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East Hampton, New York, USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Writer</td>
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<td>Journalist</td>
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</tbody>
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Lardner was a good friend of F. Scott Fitzgerald and other authors of the Jazz Age. His books were published by Maxwell Perkins, who also served as Fitzgerald’s editor. To create his first book of short stories Lardner had to get copies from the magazines he had sold them to— he held his own short stories in low regard and did not save copies.

Lardner was in some respects the model for the tragic character Abe North of Fitzgerald’s last completed novel, *Tender Is the Night*.

Lardner influenced Ernest Hemingway, who sometimes wrote articles for his high school newspaper using the pseudonym Ring Lardner, Jr.
Ring Lardner. **Provided by:** Wikipedia. **Located at:** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ring_Lardner. **License:** CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike
Haircut

Click the link below to read the short story “Haircut” by Ring Lardner, originally published in Liberty magazine in 1925.

“Haircut” from Story of the Week, Library of America
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A Fairly Sad Tale

Click below to read the poem “A Fairly Sad Tale” by Dorothy Parker.

“A Fairly Sad Tale” by Dorothy Parker, from Poem Hunter

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- Image of Dorothy Parker. Located at: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Young_Dorothy_Parker.jpg. License: Public Domain: No Known Copyright
Reformers: A Hymn of Hate

by Dorothy Parker

I hate Reformers;
They raise my blood pressure.

There are the Prohibitionists;
The Fathers of Bootlegging.
They made us what we are to-day—
I hope they’re satisfied.
They can prove that the Johnstown flood,
And the blizzard of 1888,
And the destruction of Pompeii
Were all due to alcohol.
They have it figured out
That anyone who would give a gin daisy a friendly look
Is just wasting time out of jail,
And anyone who would stay under the same roof
With a bottle of Scotch
Is right in line for a cozy seat in the electric chair.
They fixed things all up pretty for us;
Now that they have dried up the country,
You can hardly get a drink unless you go in and order one.
They are in a nasty state over this light wines and beer idea;
They say that lips that touch liquor
Shall never touch wine.
They swear that the Eighteenth Amendment
Shall be improved upon
Over their dead bodies—
Fair enough!
Then there are the Suppressors of Vice;
The Boys Who Made the Name of Cabell a Household Word.
Their aim is to keep art and letters in their place;
If they see a book
Which does not come right out and say
That the doctor brings babies in his little black bag,
Or find a painting of a young lady
Showing her without her rubbers,
They call out the militia.
They have a mean eye for dirt;
They can find it
In a copy of “What Katy Did at School,”
Or a snapshot of Aunt Bessie in bathing at Sandy Creek,
Or a picture postcard of Moonlight in Bryant Park.
They are always running around suppressing things,
Beginning with their desires.
They get a lot of excitement out of life,—
They are constantly discovering
The New Rabelais
Or the Twentieth Century Hogarth.
Their leader is regarded
As the representative of Comstock here on earth.
How does that song of Tosti’s go?—
“Good-bye, Sumner, good-bye, good-bye.”

There are the Movie Censors,
The motion picture is still in its infancy,—
They are the boys who keep it there.
If the film shows a party of clubmen tossing off ginger ale,
Or a young bride dreaming over tiny garments,
Or Douglas Fairbanks kissing Mary Pickford’s hand,
They cut out the scene
And burn it in the public square.
They fix up all the historical events
So that their own mothers wouldn’t know them.
They make Du Barry Mrs. Louis Fifteenth,
And show that Anthony and Cleopatra were like brother and sister,
And announce Salome’s engagement to John the Baptist,
So that the audiences won’t go and get ideas in their heads.
They insist that Sherlock Holmes is made to say,
“Quick, Watson, the crochet needle!”
And the state pays them for it.
They say they are going to take the sin out of cinema
If they perish in the attempt,—
I wish to God they would!
And then there are the All-American Crabs;
The Brave Little Band that is Against Everything.
They have got up the idea
That things are not what they were when Grandma was a girl.
They say that they don’t know what we’re coming to,
As if they had just written the line.
They are always running a temperature
Over the modern dances,
Or the new skirts,
Or the goings-on of the younger set.
They can barely hold themselves in
When they think of the menace of the drama;
They seem to be going ahead under the idea
That everything but the Passion Play
Was written by Avery Hopwood.
They will never feel really themselves
Until every theatre in the country is razed.
They are forever signing petitions
Urging that cigarette-smokers should be deported,
And that all places of amusement should be closed on Sunday
And kept closed all week.
They take everything personally;
They go about shaking their heads,
And sighing, “It’s all wrong, it’s all wrong,”—
They said it.

I hate Reformers;
They raise my blood pressure.

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- Reformers: A Hymn of Hate. **Authored by:** Dorothy Parker. **Located at:** https://www.gutenberg.org/files/6678/6678-h/6678-h.htm. **Project:** Nonsenseorship: Sundry Observations Concerning Prohibitions Inhibitions and Illegalities. **License:** Public Domain: No Known Copyright
Biography: James Thurber

James Grover Thurber (December 8, 1894 – November 2, 1961) was an American cartoonist, author, journalist, playwright, and celebrated wit. Thurber was best known for his cartoons and short stories, published mainly in The New Yorker magazine and collected in his numerous books. One of the most popular humorists of his time, Thurber celebrated the comic frustrations and eccentricities of ordinary people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>James Thurber</th>
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James Thurber in 1954

| Born           | James Grover Thurber  
|                | December 8, 1894  
|                | Columbus, Ohio, U.S. |
| Died           | November 2, 1961 (aged 66)  
|                | New York, New York, U.S. |
| Resting place  | Green Lawn Cemetery, Columbus, Ohio, U.S. |
| Occupation     | Humorist  
| Nationality    | American  
| Period         | 1929–1961  
| Genre          | short stories, cartoons, essays  
| Subject        | humor, language |
| Notable works | My Life and Hard Times,  
|              | My World and Welcome to It |

**Career**

Uniquely among major American literary figures, he became equally well known for his simple, surrealistic drawings and cartoons. Both his skills were helped along by the support of, and collaboration with, fellow *New Yorker* staff member E. B. White, who insisted that Thurber’s sketches could stand on their own as artistic expressions. Thurber drew six covers and numerous classic illustrations for *The New Yorker*.


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The Secret Life of Walter Mitty

Please use the link below to access the short story “The Secret Life of Walter Mitty” by James Thurber, originally published in *The New Yorker* in 1939.

“The Secret Life of Walter Mitty” from *The New Yorker*
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Tails of Manhattan

Click below to read the short story “Tails of Manhattan” by Woody Allen, first published by The New Yorker in 2009.

“Tails of Manhattan” by Woody Allen, from The New Yorker

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Additional Resources: Humor

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The Goophered Grapevine

Charles W. Chesnutt’s use of humor and dialect to send up the Northern character in this story open several lenses onto the workings of language, humor, and even magic in the American countryside following the Civil War.

Enjoy “The Goophered Grapevine.”

ABOUT ten years ago my wife was in poor health, and our family doctor, in whose skill and honesty I had implicit confidence, advised a change of climate. I was engaged in grape-culture in northern Ohio, and decided to look for a locality suitable for carrying on the same business in some Southern State. I wrote to a cousin who had gone into the turpentine business in central North Carolina, and he assured me that no better place could be found in the South than the State and neighborhood in which he lived: climate and soil were all that could be asked for, and land could be bought for a mere song. A cordial invitation to visit him while I looked into the matter was accepted. We found the weather delightful at that season, the end of the summer, and were most hospitably entertained. Our host placed a horse and buggy at our disposal, and himself acted as guide until I got somewhat familiar with the country.

I went several times to look at a place which I thought might suit me. It had been at one time a thriving plantation, but shiftless cultivation had well-nigh exhausted the soil. There had been a vineyard of some extent on the place, but it had not been attended to since the war, and had fallen into utter neglect. The vines — here partly supported by decayed and broken-down arbors, there twining themselves among the branches of the slender saplings which had sprung up among them — grew in wild and unpruned luxuriance, and the few scanty grapes which they bore were the undisputed prey of the first comer. The site was admirably adapted to grape-raising; the soil, with a little attention, could not have been better; and with the native grape, the luscious scuppernong, mainly to rely upon, I felt sure that I could introduce and cultivate successfully a number of other varieties.

One day I went over with my wife, to show her the place. We drove between the decayed gate-posts — the gate itself had long since disappeared — and up the straight, sandy lane to the open space where a dwelling-house had once stood. But the house had fallen a victim to the fortunes of war, and nothing remained of it except the brick pillars upon which the sills had rested. We alighted, and walked about the place for a while; but on Annie’s complaining of weariness I led the way back to the yard, where a pine log, lying under a spreading elm, formed a shady though somewhat hard seat. One end of the log was already occupied by a venerable-looking colored man. He held on his knees a hat full of grapes, over which he was smacking his lips with great gusto, and a pile of grape-skins near him indicated that the performance was no new thing. He respectfully rose as we approached, and was moving away, when I begged him to keep his seat.

“Don’t let us disturb you,” I said. “There’s plenty of room for us all.”

He resumed his seat with somewhat of embarrassment.

“Do you live around here?” I asked, anxious to put him at his ease.

“Yas, suh. I lives des ober yander, behine de nex’ san’-hill, on de Lumberton plank-road.”

“Do you know anything about the time when this vineyard was cultivated?”

“Lawd bless yer, suh, I knows all about it. Dey ain’ na’er a man in dis settlement w’at won’ tell yer ole Julius McAdoo ‘uz bawn an’ raise’ on dis yer same plantation. Is you de Norv’n gemman w’at’s gwine ter buy de ole vimya’d?”

“I am looking at it,” I replied; “but I don’t know that I shall care to buy unless I can be reasonably sure of making something out of it.”
"Well, suh, you is a stranger ter me, en I is a stranger ter you, en we is bofe strangers ter one anudder, but ‘f I ‘uz in yo’ place, I wouldn’ buy dis vimya’d."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Well, I dunner whe’r you b’lieves in cunj’in er not,— some er de w’ite folks don’t, er says dey don’t,— but de truf er de matter is dat dis yer ole vimya’d is goophered."

"Is what?" I asked, not grasping the meaning of this unfamiliar word.

"Is goophered, cunju’d, bewitch’."

He imparted this information with such solemn earnestness, and with such an air of confidential mystery, that I felt somewhat interested, while Annie was evidently much impressed, and drew closer to me.

"How do you know it is bewitched?" I asked.

"I wouldn’ spec’ fer you ter b’lieve me ‘less you know all ‘bout de fac’s. But ef you en young miss dere doan’ min’ lis’n’in’ ter a ole nigger run on a minute er two w’ile you er restin’, I kin ‘splain to yer how it all happen’."

We assured him that we would be glad to hear how it all happened, and he began to tell us. At first the current of his memory — or imagination — seemed somewhat sluggish; but as his embarrassment wore off, his language flowed more freely, and the story acquired perspective and coherence. As he became more and more absorbed in the narrative, his eyes assumed a dreamy expression, and he seemed to lose sight of his auditors, and to be living over again in monologue his life on the old plantation.

"Ole Mars Dugal’ McAdoo bought dis place long many years befo’ de wah, en I ‘member well w’en he sot out all dis yer part er de plantation in scuppernon’s. De vimes growed monst’us fas’, en Mars Dugal’ made a thousan’ gallon er scuppernon’ wine eve’y year.

"Now, ef dey’s an’thing a nigger lub, nex’ ter ‘possum, en chick’n, en watermillyums, it’s scuppernon’s. Dey ain’ nuffin dat kin stan’ up side’n de scuppernon’ fer sweetness; sugar ain’t a suckumstance ter scuppernon’. W’en de season is nigh ‘bout ober, en de grapes begin ter swivel up des a little wid de wrinkles er ole age, — w’en de skin git sof’ en brown, — den de scuppernon’ make you smack yo’ lip en roll yo’ eye en wush fer mo’; so I reckon it ain’ very ‘stonishin’ dat niggers lub scuppernon’.

"Dey wuz a sight er niggers in de nabehood er de vimya’d. Dere wuz ole Mars Henry Brayboy’s niggers, en ole Mars Dunkin McLean’s niggers, en Mars Dugal’ own niggers; den dey wuz a settlement er free niggers en po’ buckrahs down by de Wim’l’ton Road, en Mars Dugal’ had de only vimya’d in de nabehood. I reckon it ain’ so much so nowadays, but befo’ de wah, in slab’ry times, er nigger didn’ mine goin’ fi’ er ten mile in a night, w’en dey wuz sump’n good ter eat at de yuther een.

"So atter a w’ile Mars Dugal’ begin ter miss his scuppernon’s. Co’se he ‘cuse’ de niggers er it, but dey all ‘nied it ter de las’. Mars Dugal’ sot spring guns en steel traps, en he en de oberseah sot up nights once’t er twice’t, tel one night Mars Dugal’ — he ‘uz a monst’us keerless man — got his leg shot full er cow-peas. But somehow er nudder dey couldn’ nebber ketch none er de niggers. I dunner how it happen, but it happen des like I tell yer, en de grapes kep’ on a-goin des de same.

"But bimeby ole Mars Dugal’ fix’ up a plan ter stop it. Dey ‘uz a cunjuh ‘ooman livin’ down mongs’ de free niggers on de Wim’l’ton Road, en all de darkies fum Rockfish ter Beaver Crick wuz feared uv her. She could wuk de mos’ powerfulles’ kind er goopher, — could make people hab fits er rheumatiz, er make ‘em des dwinel away en die; en dey say she went out ridin’ de niggers at night, for she wuz a witch ’sides bein’ a cunjuh ‘ooman. Mars Dugal’ hearn ’bout Aun’ Peggy’s doin’s, en begun ter ‘flect whe’r er no he couldn’ git her ter he’p him keep de niggers off’n de grapevimes. One day in de spring er de year, ole miss pack’ up a basket er chick’n en poun’-cake, en a bottle er scuppernon’ wine, en Mars Dugal’ tuk it in his buggy en driv ober ter Aun’ Peggy’s cabin. He tuk de basket in, en had a long talk wid Aun’ Peggy.

De nex’ day Aun’ Peggy come up ter de vimya’d. De niggers seed her slippin’ ‘roun’, en dey soon foun’ out what she ‘uz doin’ dere. Mars Dugal’ had hi’ed her ter goopher de grapevimes. She sa’ntered ’roun’ dey foun’ dis, en tuk a leaf fum dis one, en a grape-hull fum dat one, en a grape-seed fum anudder one; en den a little twig fum here, en a little pinch er dirt fum dere, — en put it all in a big black bottle, wid a snake’s toof en a speckle’ hen’s gall en some ha’rs fum a black cat’s tail, en den fill’ de bottle wid scuppernon’ wine. W’en she got de goopher all ready en fix’, she tuk ’n went out in de woods en buried it under de root uv a red oak tree, en den come back en
told one er de niggers she done goopher de grapevimes, en a’er a nigger w’at eat dem grapes ‘ud be sho ter die inside’n twel’ mont’s.

“After dat de niggers let de scuppernon’s ‘lone, en Mars Dugal’ didn’ hab no ‘casion ter fine no mo’ fault; en de season wuz mos’ gone, w’en a strange gemman stop at de plantation one night ter see Mars Dugal’ on some business; en his coachman, seein’ de scuppernon’s growin’ so nice en sweet, slip ‘roun’ behine de smoke-house, en et all de scuppernon’s he could hole. Nobody didn’ notice it at de time, but dat night, on de way home, de gemman’s hoss runned away en kill’ de coachman. W’en we hear’n de noos, Aun’ Lucy, de cook, she up ‘n say she seed de strange nigger eat’n er de scuppernon’s behine de smoke-house; en den we knowed de goopher had b’en er wukkin. Den one er de nigger chilluns runned away fun de quarters one day, en got in de scuppernon’s, en died de nex’ week. W’ite folks say he die’ er de fevuh, but de niggers knowed it wuz de goopher. So you k’n be sho de darkies didn’ hab much ter do wid dem scuppernon’ vimes.

“W’en de scuppernon’s season ‘uz ober fer dat year, Mars Dugal’ foun’ he had made fifteen hun’d’ed gallon er wine; en one er de niggers hear’n him laffin’ wid de oberseah fit ter kill, en sayin’ dem fifteen hun’d’ed gallon er wine wuz monst’us good intrus’ on de ten dollars he laid out on de vinya’d. So I ‘low ez he paid Aun’ Peggy ten dollars fer to goopher de grapevimes.

“De goopher didn’ wuk no mo’ tel de nex’ summer, w’en ‘long to’ds de middle er de season one er de fiel’ han’s died; en ez dat lef’ Mars Dugal’ sho’er han’s, he went off ter town fer ter buy anudder. He fotch de noo nigger home wid ‘im. He wuz er ole nigger, er de color er a gingy-cake, en ball ez a hoss-apple on de top er his head. He wuz a peart ole nigger, do’, en could do a big day’s wuk.

“Now it happen dat one er de niggers on de nex’ plantation, one er ole Mars Henry Brayboy’s niggers, had runned away de day befo’, en tuk ter de swamp, en ole Mars Dugal’ en some er de yuther nabor w’ite folks had gone out wid dere guns en axed dogs ter fer ter he’p de nigger; en de han’s on our own plantation wuz all so flusterated dat we fuhgot ter tell de noo han’ ‘bout de goopher on de scuppernon’ vimes. Co’se he smell de grapes en see de vimes, an atter dahk de fus’ thing he done wuz ter slip off ter de grapevimes ‘dout sayin’ nuffin ter nobody. Nex’ mawnin’ he tole some er de niggers ‘bout de fine bait er scuppernon’ he et de night befo’. 

“W’en dey tole ‘im ‘bout de goopher on de grapevimes, he ‘uz dat terrified dat he turn pale, en look des like he gwine ter die right in his tracks. De oberseah come up en axed w’at ‘uz de matter; en w’en dey tole ‘im Henry be’n eatin’ er de scuppernon’s, en got de goopher on ‘im, en he gin Henry a big drink er w’iskey, en ‘low dat de nex’ rainy day he take ‘im ober ter Aun’ Peggy’s, en see ef she wouldn’ take de goopher off’n him, seein’ ez he didn’ know nuffin erbout it tel he done et de grapes.

“Sho nuff, it rain de nex’ day, en de oberseah went ober ter Aun’ Peggy’s wid Henry. En Aun’ Peggy say dat bein’ ez Henry didn’ know ‘bout de goopher, en et de grapes in ign’an’ce en de quiunseconces, she reckon she mought be able fer ter take de goopher off’n him. So she fotch out er bottle wid some cunjuh medicine in it, en po’d some out in a go’d fer Henry ter drink. He manage ter git it down; he say it tas’e like whiskey wid sum’n bitter in it. She ‘lowed dat ‘ud keep de goopher off’n him tel de spring; but w’en de sap begin ter rise in de grapevimes he ha’ ter come en see her agin, en see him w’at e’s ter do.

“Nex’ spring, w’en de sap commence’ ter rise in de scuppernon’ vime, Henry tuk a ham one night. Whar’d he git de ham? I doan know; dey wa’nt no hams on de plantation ‘cep’n’ w’at was in de smoke-house, but I never see Henry ‘bout de smoke-house. But ez I wuz a-sayin’, he tuk de ham ober ter Aun’ Peggy’s; en Aun’ Peggy tole ‘im dat w’en Mars Dugal’ begin ter prume de grapevimes, he mus’ go en take ‘n scrape off de sap whar it ooze out’n de cut een’s er de vimes, en ‘n’int his ball head wid it; en ef he dodat once’t a year de goopher wouldn’ wuk agin ‘im long ez he done it. En bein’ ez he fotch her de ham, she fix’ it so he kin eat all de scuppernon’ he want.

“So Henry ‘n’int his head wid de sap out’n de big grapevime des ha’f way ‘twix’ de quarters en de big house, en de goopher nebber wuk agin him dat summer. But de beatenes’ thing you eber see happen ter Henry. Up ter dat time he wuz ez ball ez a sweeten’ ‘tater, but des ez soon ez de young leaves begun ter come out on de grapevimes de ha’r begun ter grow out on Henry’s head; en by de middle er de summer he had de bigges’ head er ha’r on de plantation. Befo’ dat, Henry had tol’able good ha’r ‘roun de aidges, but soon ez de young grapes begun ter come Henry’s ha’r begun ter quirl all up in little balls, des like dis yer reg’lar grapy ha’r, en by de time de grapes got ripe his head look des like a bunch er grapes. Combin’ it didn’ do no good; he wuk at it ha’f de night wid er Jim Crow, en think he git it straighten’ out, but in de mawnin’ de grapes ‘ud be dere des de same. So he gin it up, en tried ter keep de grapes down by havin’ his ha’r cut sho’t.

“But dat wa’nt de quares’ thing ‘bout de goopher. When Henry come ter de plantation, he wuz gittin’ a little ole an stiff in de j’ints. But dat summer he got des ez spry en libely ez any young nigger on de plantation; fac’ he got so biggity dat Mars Jackson, de oberseah, ha’ ter th’eaten ter whip ‘im, ef he didn’ stop cuttin’ up his didos en behave
“Now, ef you’d a knowed ole Mars Dugal’ McAdoo, you’d a knowed dat it ha’ ter be a mighty rainy day when he couldn’ fine sump’n fer his niggers ter do, en it ha’ ter be a mighty little hole he couldn’ crawl thoo, en ha’ ter be a monst’us cloudy night w’en a dollar git by him in de darkness; en w’en he see how Henry git young in de spring en ole in de fall, he ‘lowed ter hisse’f ez how he could make mo’ money outen Henry dan by wukkin’ him in de cotton fiel’. ‘Long de nex’ spring, atter de sap commence’ ter rise, en Henry ‘n’int ‘is head en commence fer ter git young en soopl, Mars Dugal’ up ‘n tuk Henry ter town, en sole ‘im fer fifteen hunder’ dollars. Co’se de man w’at bought Henry didn’ know nuffin ‘bout de goopher, en Mars Dugal’ didn’ see no ‘casion fer ter tell ‘im. Long to’ds de fall, w’en de sap went down, Henry begin ter git ole again same ez yuzhal, en his noo marster begin ter git skeered les’n he gwine ter lose his fifteen-hunder’-dollar nigger. He sent fer a mighty fine doctor, but de med’cine didn’ ‘pear ter do no good; de goopher had a good holt. Henry tole de doctor ‘bout de goopher, but de doctor des laff at ‘im.

“One day in de winter Mars Dugal’ went ter town, en wuz santerin’ ‘long de Main Street, when who should he meet but Henry’s noo marster. Dey said ‘Hoddy,’ en Mars Dugal’ ax ‘im ter hab a seegyar; en atter dey run on awhile ‘bout de craps en de weather, Mars Dugal’ ax ‘im, sorter keerless, like ez ef he des thought of it, —

“‘How you like de nigger I sole you las’ spring?’

“Henry’s marster shuck his head en knock de ashes off’n his seegyar.

“‘Spec’ I made a bad bahgin when I bought dat nigger. Henry done good wuk all de summer, but sence de fall set in he ‘pears ter be sorter pinin’ away. Dey ain’ nuffin pertickler de matter wid ‘im — leastways de doctor say so — ‘cep’n’ a tech er de rheumatiz; but his ha’r is all fell out, en ef he don’t pick up his strenk mighty soon, I spec’ I’m gwine ter lose ‘im.”

“Dey smoked on awhile, en bimeby ole mars say, ‘Well, a bahgin’s a bahgin, but you en me is good fren’s, en I doan wan’ ter see you lose all de money you paid fer dat digger [sic]; en ef w’at you say is so, en I ain’t ‘sputin’ it, he ain’t wuf much now. I spec’s you wukked him too ha’d dis summer, er e’se de swamps down here don’t agree wid de san’-hill nigger. So you des lemme know, en ef he gits any wusser I’ll be willin’ ter gib yer five hund’ed dollars fer ‘im, en take my chances on his livin’.

“Sho nuff, when Henry begun ter draw up wid de rheumatiz en it look like he gwine ter die fer sho, his noo marster sen’ fer Mars Dugal’, en Mars Dugal’ gin him what he promus, en brung Henry home ag’in. He tuk good keer uv ‘im dyoin’ er de winter, — give ‘im w’iskey ter rub his rheumatiz, en terbacker ter smoke, en all he want ter eat, — ‘caze a nigger w’at he could make a thousand dollars a year off’n didn’ grow on eve’y huckleberry bush.

“Nex’ spring, w’en de sap ris en Henry’s ha’r commence’ ter sprout, Mars Dugal’ sole ‘im ag’in, down in Robeson County dis time; en he kep’ dat sellin’ business up fer five year er mo’. Henry nebber say nuffin ‘bout de goopher ter his noo marsters, ‘caze he know he gwine ter be tuk good keer uv de nex’ winter, w’en Mars Dugal’ buy him back. En Mars Dugal’ made ‘nuff money off’n Henry ter buy anudder plantation ober on Beaver Crick.

“But long ‘bout de een’ er dat five year dey come a stranger ter stop at de plantation. De fus’ day he ‘uz dere he went out wid Mars Dugal’ en spent all de mawnin’ lookin’ ober de vimya’d, en atter dinner dey spent all de evenin’ playin’ kya’ds. De niggers soon ‘skiver’ dat he wuz a Yankee, en dat he come down ter Norf C’lina fer ter learn de w’ite folks how to raise grapes en make wine. He promus Mars Dugal’ he cud make de grapevimes b’ar twice’t ez many grapes, en dat de noo wine-press he wuz a-sellin’ would make mo’ d’n twice’t ez many gallons er wine. En ole Mars Dugal’ des drunk it all in, des ‘peared ter be bewitched wit dat Yankee. W’en de darkies see dat Yankee runnin’ roun de vimya’d en diggin’ under de grapevimes, dey shuk dere heads, en ‘lowed dat dey feared Mars Dugal’ losin’ his min’. Mars Dugal’ had all de dirt dug away fum under de roots er all de scuppernon’ vimes, an’ let ‘em stan’ dat away fer a week er mo’. Den dat Yankee made de niggers fix up a mixtry er lime en ashes en manyo, en po’ it roun de roots er de grapevimes. Den he ‘vise’ Mars Dugal’ ter trim de vimes close’te, en Mars Dugal’ tuck ‘n done eve’thing de Yankee tole him ter do. Dyoin’ all er dis time, mind yer, ‘e wuz libbin’ off’n de fat er de lan’, at de big house, en playin’ kyards wid Mars Dugal’ eve’y night; en dey say Mars Dugal’ los’ mo’n a thousand dollars dyoin’ er de week dat Yankee wuz a runnin’ de grapevimes.
“W’en de sap ris nex’ spring, ole Henry ‘n’inted his head ez yuzhal, en his ha’r commence’ ter grow des de same ez it done eve’y year. De scuppernon’ vimes growed monst’s fas’, en de leaves wuz greener en thicker dan dey eber be’n dyowin my rememb’ance; en Henry’s ha’r growed out thicker dan eber, en he ‘peared ter git younger ‘n younger, en soopler ‘n soopler; en seein’ ez he wuz sho’t er han’s dat spring, havin’ tuk in consid’able noo groun’, Mars Dugal’ cluded he wouldn’ sell Henry ‘tel he git de crap in en de cotton chop’. So he kep’ Henry on de plantation.

“But ‘long ‘bout time fer de grapes ter come on de scuppernon’ vimes, dey ‘peared ter come a change ober dem; de leaves wivered en swivel’ up, en de young grapes turn’ yaller, en bimeby eve’ybody on de plantation could see dat de whole vinya’d wuz dyin’. Mars Dugal’ tuck ‘n water de vimes en done all he could, but ‘t wan’ no use: dat Yankee done bus’ de watermillyum. One time de vimes picked up a bit, en Mars Dugal’ thought dey wuz gwine ter come out ag’in; but dat Yankee done dug too close unde’ de roots, en prune de branches too close ter de vime, en all dat lime en ashes done burn’ de life outen de vimes, en dey des kep’ a with’in’ en a swivelin’.

“All dis time de goopher wuz a-wukkin’. W’en de vimes commence’ ter wither, Henry commence’ ter complain er his rheumatiz, en when de leaves begin ter dry up his ha’r commence’ ter drop out. When de vimes fresh up a bit Henry ‘ud git peart agin, en when de vimes wither agin Henry ‘ud git ole agin, en des kep’ gittin’ mo’ en mo’ fitten fer nuffin; he des pined away, en fine’ly tuk ter his cabin; en when de big vime whar he got de sap ter ‘n’int his head withered en turned yaller en died, Henry died too, — des went out sorter like a cannel. Dey didn’t ‘pear ter be nuffin de matter wid ‘im, ‘cep’n de rheumatiz, but his strenk des dwinel’ away ‘tel he didn’ hab ernuff lef’ ter draw his bref. De goopher had got de under holt, en th’owed Henry fer good en all dat time.

“Mars Dugal’ tuk on might’ly ‘bout losin’ his vimes en his nigger in de same year; en he swo’ dat ef he could git hold er dat Yankee he’d wear ‘im ter a frazzle, en den chaw up de frazzle; en he’d done it, too, for Mars Dugal’ uz a monst’us brash man w’en he once git started. He sot de vinya’d out ober agin, but it wuz th’ee er fo’ year befo’ de vimes got ter b’arin’ any scuppernon’s.

“W’en de wah broke out, Mars Dugal’ raise’ a comp’ny, en went off ter fight de Yankees. He saw he wuz mighty glad dat wah come, en he des want ter kill a Yankee fer eve’y dollar he los’ ‘long er dat grape-raisin’ Yankee. En I spec’ he would a done it, too, ef de Yankees hadn’ s’picioned sump’n, en killed him fus’. Atter de s’render ole miss move’ ter town, de niggers all scattered ‘way fum de plantation, en de vinya’d ain’ be’nicultivated sence.”

“Is that story true?” asked Annie, doubtfully, but seriously, as the old man concluded his narrative.

“It’s des ez true ez I’m a-settin’ here, miss. Dey’s a easy way ter prove it: I kin lead de way right ter Henry’s grave ober yander in de plantation buryin’-groun’. En I tell yer w’at, marster, I wouldn’ vise yer to buy dis yer ole vinya’d, ‘caze de goopher’s on it yit, en dey ain’ no tellin’ w’en it’s gwine ter crap out.”

“But I thought you said all the old vines died.”

“Dey did ‘pear ter die, but a few ov ‘em come out ag’in, en is mixed in mongs’ de yuthers. I ain’ skeered ter eat de grapes, ‘caze I knows de old vimes fum de noo ones; but wid strangers dey ain’ no tellin’ w’at might happen. I wouldn’ vise yer ter buy dis vinya’d.”

I bought the vineyard, nevertheless, and it has been for a long time in a thriving condition, and is referred to by the local press as a striking illustration of the opportunities open to Northern capital in the development of Southern industries. The luscious scuppernong holds first rank among our grapes, though we cultivate a great many other varieties, and our income from grapes packed and shipped to the Northern markets is quite considerable. I have not noticed any developments of the goopher in the vineyard, although I have a mild suspicion that our colored assistants do not suffer from want of grapes during the season.

I found, when I bought the vineyard, that Uncle Julius had occupied a cabin on the place for many years, and derived a respectable revenue from the neglected grapevines. This, doubtless, accounted for his advice to me not to buy the vineyard, though whether it inspired the goopher story I am unable to state. I believe, however, that the wages I pay him for his services are more than an equivalent for anything he lost by the sale of the vineyard.

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XIII

Drugs
Overview: Drugs

Theatrical poster for Reefer Madness (1936)—an American propaganda film espousing the dangers of using marijuana

Objectives

- Respond to the weekly readings within the context of your own perspective. (Textual Annotations)
- Analyze the evolution of American perceptions of drug use in the 20th century by comparing a variety of texts within their historical context. (Weekly Journal Entry)

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Biography: Hunter S. Thompson

Hunter Stockton Thompson (July 18, 1937 – February 20, 2005) was an American journalist and author, and the founder of the gonzo journalism movement. Born in Louisville, Kentucky, to a middle-class family, Thompson had a turbulent youth after the death of his father left the family in poverty. He was unable to formally finish high school as he was incarcerated for 60 days after abetting a robbery. He subsequently joined the United States Air Force before moving into journalism. He traveled frequently, including stints in California, Puerto Rico, and Brazil, before settling in Aspen, Colorado, in the early 1960s.

Thompson became internationally known with the publication of Hell’s Angels: The Strange and Terrible Saga of the Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (1967). For his research on the book he had spent a year living and riding with the Angels, experiencing their lives and hearing their stories first-hand. Previously a relatively conventional journalist, with the publication in 1970 of “The Kentucky Derby Is Decadent and Depraved” he became a counter cultural figure, with his own brand of New Journalism which he termed “Gonzo,” an experimental style of journalism where reporters involve themselves in the action to such a degree that they become central figures of their stories. The work he remains best known for, Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas: A Savage Journey to the Heart of the American Dream (1971), constitutes a rumination on the failure of the 1960s counterculture movement. It was first serialized in Rolling Stone, a magazine with which Thompson would be long associated, and was released as a film starring Johnny Depp and directed by Terry Gilliam in 1998.

Politically minded, Thompson ran unsuccessfully for sheriff of Pitkin County, Colorado, in 1970, on the Freak Power ticket. He became well known for his inverete hatred of Richard Nixon, whom he claimed represented “that dark, venal, and incurably violent side of the American character” and whom he characterized in Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail ’72. Thompson’s output notably declined from the mid-1970s, as he struggled with the consequences of fame, and he complained that he could no longer merely report on events as he was too easily recognized. He was also known for his lifelong use of alcohol and illegal drugs, his love of firearms, and his iconoclastic contempt for authoritarianism. He remarked: “I hate to advocate drugs, alcohol, violence, or insanity to anyone, but they’ve always worked for me.”

While suffering a bout of health problems, Thompson committed suicide at the age of 67. Per his wishes, his ashes were fired out of a cannon in a ceremony funded by his friend Johnny Depp and attended by a host of friends including then Senator John Kerry and Jack Nicholson. Hari Kunzru wrote that, “the true voice of Thompson is revealed to be that of American moralist ... one who often makes himself ugly to expose the ugliness he sees around him.”
| **Born** | Hunter Stockton Thompson  
July 18, 1937  
Louisville, Kentucky |
|---|---|
| **Died** | February 20, 2005 (aged 67)  
Woody Creek, Colorado |
| **Occupation** | Journalist, author |
| **Genre** | Gonzo journalism |
| **Literary movement** | New Journalism |
| **Notable works** | *Hell’s Angels*  
*The Rum Diary*  
*Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*  
*Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail ’72*  
*The Curse of Lono* |

View Hunter S. Thompson’s full biography on Wikipedia.
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Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas

Click the link below to access the article “Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas,” originally published in Rolling Stone magazine in 1971.

“Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas” from Rolling Stone
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Video: Reefer Madness

This cautionary tale features a trio of drug dealers and innocent teens who become addicted to “reefer cigarettes.” Originally released in 1936.

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Additional Resources: Drugs

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- Survey of American Literature II. **Authored by:** Joshua Watson. **Provided by:** Reynolds Community College. **Located at:** http://www.reynolds.edu/. **License:** *CC BY: Attribution*
Counterculture & Social Commentary
Overview: American Counterculture and Social Commentary

A small part of the crowd of 400,000, after the rain, Woodstock, United States, August 1969

Objectives

- Respond to the weekly readings within the context of your own perspective. (Textual Annotations)
- Compare different approaches to counterculture across different types of literature (fiction, non-fiction, poetry, etc.). (Weekly Journal Entry)

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Additional Resources: American Counterculture and Social Commentary

Helpful Websites

“The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson, audio file read by Maureen Stapleton

“Charles Manson and the Manson Family” from Crime Museum

“People v. Manson” from Continuing Education of the Bar, California

“What is Grindhouse?” from Grindhouse.com

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What the hell is post-modernism?! Good question, and I bravely attempt to answer it. More on http://www.unboringlearning.com

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XV

Sex
Overview: Sex


The Women's Movement


“The Women’s Movement” by Joan Didion, from The New York Times
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A Telephone Call

View a stage production of Dorothy Parker's short story “A Telephone Call.”

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- A Telephone Call by Dorothy Parker. **Authored by:** Syrie Moskowitz. **Located at:** https://youtu.be/c_iMR4b869A. **License:** All Rights Reserved. **License Terms:** Standard YouTube License
Additional Resources: Sex

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American Protest
Overview: American Protest

*Black Panther mural*
Video: The 1960s in America

In which John Green teaches you about a time of relative tumult in the United States, the 1960s. America was changing rapidly in the 1960s, and rights movements were at the forefront of those changes. Civil Rights were dominant, but the 60s also saw growth in the Women’s Movement, the LGBT rights movement, the Latino rights movement, and the American Indian movement. Also, Americans began to pay a bit more attention to the environment. All this change happened against the backdrop of the Cold War and the Rise of Conservatism. It was just wild. John will teach you about sit-ins, Freedom Rides, The March on Washington, MLK, JFK, LBJ, and NOW. Man, that is a lot of initialisms. And one acronym.

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John Wayne: A Love Song

Click below to access the essay “John Wayne: A Love Song” by Joan Didion, first published in *The Independent* in 1993.

“John Wayne: A Love Song,” by Joan Didion, from Independent.co.uk

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Additional Resources: American Protest

Helpful Websites

“The 1960s-70s American Feminist Movement: Breaking Down Barriers for Women” from Tavaana

“Writings of Betty Friedan” from C-Span
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XVII

American Horror
Overview: American Horror

A digital illustration of the father of cosmic existentialist horror, Howard Phillips Lovecraft

Objectives

- Respond to the weekly readings within the context of your own perspective. (Textual Annotations)
- Consider how genre fiction—specifically Fantasy/Horror—embodies themes we have previously discussed this term. (Weekly Journal Entry)

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ACROSS the red drifts and mail-clad forms, two figures glared at each other. In that utter desolation only they moved. The frosty sky was over them, the white illimitable plain around them, the dead men at their feet. Slowly through the corpses they came, as ghosts might come to a tryst through the shambles of a dead world. In the brooding silence they stood face to face.

Both were tall men, built like tigers. Their shields were gone, their corselets battered and dinted. Blood dried on their mail; their swords were stained red. Their horned helmets showed the marks of fierce strokes. One was beardless and black-maned. The locks and beard of the other were red as the blood on the sunlit snow.

“Man,” said he, “tell me your name, so that my brothers in Vanaheim may know who was the last of Wulfhere’s band to fall before the sword of Heimdul.”

“Not in Vanaheim,” growled the black-haired warrior, “but in Valhalla will you tell your brothers that you met Conan of Cimmeria.”

Heimdul roared and leaped, and his sword flashed in deathly arc. Conan staggered and his vision was filled with red sparks as the singing blade crashed on his helmet, shivering into bits of blue fire. But as he reeled he thrust with all the power of his broad shoulders behind the humming blade. The sharp point tore through brass scales and bones and heart, and the red-haired warrior died at Conan’s feet.

The Cimmerian stood upright, trailing his sword, a sudden sick weariness assailing him. The glare of the sun on the snow cut his eyes like a knife and the sky seemed shrunked and strangely apart. He turned away from the trampled expanse where yellow-bearded warriors lay locked with red-haired slayers in the embrace of death. A few steps he took, and the glare of the snow fields was suddenly dimmed. A rushing wave of blindness engulfed him and he sank down into the snow, supporting himself on one mailed arm, seeking to shake the blindness out of his eyes as a lion might shake his mane.

A silvery laugh cut through his dizziness, and his sight cleared slowly. He looked up; there was a strangeness about all the landscape that he could not place or define—an unfamiliar tinge to earth and sky. But he did not think long of this. Before him, swaying like a sapling in the wind, stood a woman. Her body was like ivory to his dazed gaze, and save for a light veil of gossamer, she was naked as the day. Her slender bare feet were whiter than the snow they spurned. She laughed down at the bewildered warrior. Her laughter was sweeter than the rippling of silvery fountains, and poisonous with cruel mockery.

“Who are you?” asked the Cimmerian. “Whence come you?”

“What matter?” Her voice was more musical than a silver-stringed harp, but it was edged with cruelty.

“Call up your men,” said he, grasping his sword. “Yet though my strength fail me, they shall not take me alive. I see that you are of the Vanir.”

“Have I said so?”

His gaze went again to her unruly locks, which at first glance he had thought to be red. Now he saw that they were neither red nor yellow but a glorious compound of both colors. He gazed spell-bound. Her hair was like elfin-gold; the sun struck it so dazzlingly that he could scarcely bear to look upon it. Her eyes were likewise neither wholly blue nor wholly grey, but of shifting colors and dancing lights and clouds of colors he could not define. Her full red lips smiled, and from her slender feet to the blinding crown of her billowy hair, her ivory body was as
perfect as the dream of a god. Conan’s pulse hammered in his temples.

“I can not tell,” said he, “whether you are of Vanahem and mine enemy, or of Asgard and my friend. Far have I wandered, but a woman like you I have never seen. Your locks blind me with their brightness. Never have I seen such hair, not even among the fairest daughters of the Aesir. By Ymir—”

“Who are you to swear by Ymir?” she mocked. “What know you of the gods of ice and snow, you who have come up from the south to adventure among an alien people?”

“By the dark gods of my own race!” he cried in anger. “Though I am not of the golden-haired Aesir, none has been more forward in sword-play! This day I have seen four score men fall, and I alone have survived the field where Wulfhere’s reavers met the wolves of Bragi. Tell me, woman, have you seen the flash of mail out across the snow-plain, or seen armed men moving upon the ice?”

“I have seen the hoar-frost glittering in the sun,” she answered. “I have heard the wind whispering across the everlasting snows.”

He shook his head with a sigh.

“Niord should have come up with us before the battle joined. I fear he and his fighting-men have been ambushed. Wulfhere and his warriors lie dead.

“I had thought there was no village within many leagues of this spot, for the war carried us far, but you can not have come a great distance over these snows, naked as you are. Lead me to your tribe, if you are of Asgard, for I am faint with blows and the weariness of strife.”

“My village is further than you can walk, Conan of Cimmeria,” she laughed. Spreading her arms wide, she swayed before him, her golden head lolling sensuously, her scintillant eyes half shadowed beneath their long silken lashes. “Am I not beautiful, oh man?”

“Like Dawn running naked on the snows,” he muttered, his eyes burning like those of a wolf.

“Then why do you not rise and follow me? Who is the strong warrior who falls down before me?” she chanted in maddening mockery. “Lie down and die in the snow with the other fools, Conan of the black hair. You can not follow where I would lead.”

With an oath the Cimmerian heaved himself up on his feet, his blue eyes blazing, his dark scarred face contorted. Rage shook his soul, but desire for the taunting figure before him hammered at his temples and drove his wild blood fiercely through his veins. Passion fierce as physical agony flooded his whole being, so that earth and sky swam red to his dizzy gaze. In the madness that swept upon him, weariness and faintness were swept away.

He spoke no word as he drove at her, fingers spread to grip her soft flesh. With a shriek of laughter she leaped back and ran, laughing at him over her white shoulder. With a low growl Conan followed. He had forgotten the fight, forgotten the mailed warriors who lay in their blood, forgotten Niord and the reavers who had failed to reach the fight. He had thought only for the slender white shape which seemed to float rather than run before him.

Out across the white blinding plain the chase led. The trampled red field fell out of sight behind him, but still Conan kept on with the silent tenacity of his race. His mailed feet broke through the frozen crust; he sank deep in the drifts and forged through them by sheer strength. But the girl danced across the snow light as a feather floating across a pool; her naked feet barely left their imprint on the hoar-frost that overlaid the crust. In spite of the fire in his veins, the cold bit through warrior’s mail and fur-lined tunic; but the girl in her gossamer veil ran as lightly: as gaily as if she danced through the palm and rose gardens of Poitain.

On and on she led, and Conan followed. Black curses drooled through the Cimmerian’s parched lips. The great veins in his temples swelled and throbbed and his teeth gnashed.

“You can not escape me!” he roared. “Lead me into a trap and I’ll pile the heads of your kinsmen at your feet! Hide from me and I’ll tear apart the mountains to find you! I’ll follow you to hell!”

Her maddening laughter floated back to him, and foam flew from the barbarian’s lips. Further and further into the wastes she led him. The land changed; the wide plains gave way to low hills, marching upward in broken ranges. Far to the north he caught a glimpse of towering mountains, blue with the distance, or white with the eternal snows. Above these mountains shone the flaring rays of the borealis. They spread fan-wise into the sky, frosty
blades of cold flaming light, changing in color, growing and brightening.

Above him the skies glowed and crackled with strange lights and gleams. The snow shone weirdly, now frosty blue, now icy crimson, now cold silver. Through a shimmering icy realm of enchantment Conan plunged doggedly onward, in a crystalline maze where the only reality was the white body dancing across the glittering snow beyond his reach—ever beyond his reach.

He did not wonder at the strangeness of it all, not even when two gigantic figures rose up to bar his way. The scales of their mail were white with hoar-frost; their helmets and their axes were covered with ice. Snow sprinkled their locks; in their beards were spikes of icicles; their eyes were cold as the lights that streamed above them.

“Brothers!” cried the girl, dancing between them. “Look who follows! I have brought you a man to slay! Take his heart that we may lay it smoking on our father’s board!”

The giants answered with roars like the grinding of ice-bergs on a frozen shore and heaved up their shining axes as the maddened Cimmerian hurled himself upon them. A frosty blade flashed before his eyes, blinding him with its brightness, and he gave back a terrible stroke that sheared through his foe’s thigh. With a groan the victim fell, and at the instant Conan was dashed into the snow, his left shoulder numb from the blow of the survivor, from which the Cimmerian’s mail had barely saved his life. Conan saw the remaining giant looming high above him like a colossus carved of ice, etched against the cold glowing sky. The axe fell, to sink through the snow and deep into the frozen earth as Conan hurled himself aside and leaped to his feet. The giant roared and wrenched his axe free, but even as he did, Conan’s sword sang down. The giant’s knees bent and he sank slowly into the snow, which turned crimson with the blood that gushed from his half-severed neck.

Conan wheeled, to see the girl standing a short distance away, staring at him in wide-eyed horror, all the mockery gone from her face. He cried out fiercely and the blood-drops flew from his sword as his hand shook in the intensity of his passion.

“Call the rest of your brothers!” he cried. “I’ll give their hearts to the wolves! You can not escape me—”

With a cry of fright she turned and ran fleetly. She did not laugh now, nor mock him over her white shoulder. She ran as for her life, and though he strained every nerve and thw, until his temples were like to burst and the snow swam red to his gaze, she drew away from him, dwindling in the witch-fire of the skies, until she was a figure no bigger than a child, then a dancing white flame on the snow, then a dim blur in the distance. But grinding his teeth until the blood started from his gums, he reeled on, and he saw the blur grow to a dancing white flame, and the flame to a figure big as a child; and then she was running less than a hundred paces ahead of him, and slowly the space narrowed, foot by foot.

She was running with effort now, her golden locks blowing free; he heard the quick panting of her breath, and saw a flash of fear in the look she cast over her white shoulder. The grim endurance of the barbarian had served him well. The speed ebbed from her flashing white legs; she reeled in her gait. In his untamed soul leaped up the fires of hell she had fanned so well. With an inhuman roar he closed in on her, just as she wheeled with a haunting cry and flung out her arms to fend him off.

His sword fell into the snow as he crushed her to him. Her lithe body bent backward as she fought with desperate frenzy in his iron arms. Her golden hair blew about his face, blinding him with its sheen; the feel of her slender body twisting in his mailed arms drove him to blinder madness. His strong fingers sank deep into her smooth flesh; and that flesh was cold as ice. It was as if he embraced not a woman of human flesh and blood, but a woman of flaming ice. She writhed her golden head aside, striving to avoid the fierce kisses that bruised her red lips.

“You are cold as the snows,” he mumbled dazedly. “I will warm you with the fire in my own blood—”

With a scream and a desperate wrench she slipped from his arms, leaving her single gossamer garment in his grasp. She sprang back and faced him, her golden locks in wild disarray, her white bosom heaving, her beautiful eyes blazing with terror. For an instant he stood frozen, awed by her terrible beauty as she posed naked against the snows.

And in that instant she flung her arms toward the lights that glowed in the skies above her and cried out in a voice that rang in Conan’s ears for ever after: “Ymir! Oh, my father, save me!”

Conan was leaping forward, arms spread to seize her, when with a crack like the breaking of an ice mountain, the whole skies leaped into icy fire. The girl’s ivory body was suddenly enveloped in a cold blue flame so blinding that the Cimmerian threw up his hands to shield his eyes from the intolerable blaze. A fleeting instant, skies and snowy
hills were bathed in crackling white flames, blue darts of icy light, and frozen crimson fires. Then Conan staggered and cried out. The girl was gone. The glowing snow lay empty and bare; high above his head the witch-lights flashed and played in a frosty sky gone mad, and among the distant blue mountains there sounded a rolling thunder as of a gigantic war-chariot rushing behind steeds whose frantic hoofs struck lightning from the snows and echoes from the skies.

Then suddenly the borealis, the snow-clad hills and the blazing heavens reeled drunkenly to Conan’s sight; thousands of fire-balls burst with showers of sparks, and the sky itself became a titanic wheel which rained stars as it spun. Under his feet the snowy hills heaved up like a wave, and the Cimmerian crumpled into the snows to lie motionless.

In a cold dark universe, whose sun was extinguished eons ago, Conan felt the movement of life, alien and unguessed. An earthquake had him in its grip and was shaking him to and fro, at the same time chafing his hands and feet until he yelled in pain and fury and groped for his sword.

“He’s coming to, Horsa,” said a voice. “Haste—we must rub the frost out of his limbs, if he’s ever to wield sword again.”

“He won’t open his left hand,” growled another. “He’s clutching something—”

Conan opened his eyes and stared into the bearded faces that bent over him. He was surrounded by tall golden-haired warriors in mail and furs.

“Conan! You live!”

“By Crom, Niord,” gasped the Cimmerian. ‘Am I alive, or are we all dead and in Valhalla?’

“We live,” grunted the Aesir, busy over Conan’s half-frozen feet. “We had to fight our way through an ambush, or we had come up with you before the battle was joined. The corpses were scarce cold when we came upon the field. We did not find you among the dead, so we followed your spoor. In Ymir’s name, Conan, why did you wander off into the wastes of the north? We have followed your tracks in the snow for hours. Had a blizzard come up and hidden them, we had never found you, by Ymir!”

“Swear not so often by Ymir,” uneasily muttered a warrior, glancing at the distant mountains. “This is his land and the god bides among yonder mountains, the legends say.”

“I saw a woman,” Conan answered hazily. “We met Bragi’s men in the plains. I know not how long we fought. I alone lived. I was dizzy and faint. The land lay like a dream before me. Only now do all things seem natural and familiar. The woman came and taunted me. She was beautiful as a frozen flame from hell. A strange madness fell upon me when I looked at her, so I forgot all else in the world. I followed her. Did you not find her tracks? Or the giants in icy mail I slew?”

Niord shook his head.

“We found only your tracks in the snow, Conan.”

“Then it may be I am mad,” said Conan dazedly. “Yet you yourself are no more real to me than was the golden-locked witch who fled naked across the snows before me. Yet from under my very hands she vanished in icy flame.”

“He is delirious,” whispered a warrior.

“Not so!” cried an older man, whose eyes were wild and weird. “It was Atali, the daughter of Ymir, the frost-giant! To fields of the dead she comes, and shows herself to the dying! Myself when a boy I saw her, when I lay half-slain on the bloody field of Wolraven. I saw her walk among the dead in the snows, her naked body gleaming like ivory and her golden hair unbearably bright in the moonlight. I lay and howled like a dying dog because I could not crawl after her. She lures men from stricken fields into the wastelands to be slain by her brothers, the ice-giants, who lay men’s red hearts smoking on Ymir’s board. The Cimmerian has seen Atali, the frost-giant’s daughter!”

“Bah!” grunted Horsa. “Old Gorm’s mind was touched in his youth by a sword cut on the head. Conan was delirious from the fury of battle—look how his helmet is dinted. Any of those blows might have addled his brain. It was an hallucination he followed into the wastes. He is from the south; what does he know of Atali?”
“You speak truth, perhaps,” muttered Conan. “It was all strange and weird—by Crom!”

He broke off, glaring at the object that still dangled from his clenched left fist; the others gaped silently at the veil he held up—a wisp of gossamer that was never spun by human distaff.

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Biography: H.P. Lovecraft

Howard Phillips Lovecraft (August 20, 1890 – March 15, 1937), known as H. P. Lovecraft, was an American author who achieved posthumous fame through his influential works of horror fiction. Virtually unknown and only published in pulp magazines before he died in poverty, he is now regarded as one of the most significant 20th-century authors in his genre.

Although he seems to have had some social life, attending meetings of a club for local young men, Lovecraft, in early adulthood, was established in a reclusive “nightbird” lifestyle without occupation or pursuit of romantic adventures. In 1913 his conduct of a long running controversy in the letters page of a story magazine led to his being invited to participate in an amateur journalism association. Encouraged, he started circulating his stories; he was 31 at the time of his first publication in a professional magazine. Lovecraft contracted a marriage to an older woman he had met at an association conference. By age 34, he was a regular contributor to the newly founded Weird Tales magazine; he turned down an offer of the editorship.

Lovecraft returned to Providence from New York in 1926 and, over the next nine months, he produced some of his most celebrated tales, including “The Call of Cthulhu,” canonical to the Cthulhu Mythos. Never able to support himself from earnings as author and editor, Lovecraft saw commercial success increasingly elude him in this latter period, partly because he lacked the confidence and drive to promote himself. He subsisted in progressively straitened circumstances in his last years; an inheritance was completely spent by the time he died at the age of 46.

<table>
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<th>H. P. Lovecraft</th>
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<td>Lovecraft in 1934</td>
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| Born | Howard Phillips Lovecraft  
| August 20, 1890  
| Providence, Rhode Island, USA |

| Died | March 15, 1937 (aged 46)  
<p>| Providence, Rhode Island |</p>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Resting place</strong></th>
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| **Pen name**      | Lewis Theobald  
|                   | Humphrey Littlewit  
|                   | Ward Phillips  
|                   | Edward Softly |
| **Occupation**    | Short-story writer, editor, novelist, poet |
| **Period**        | 1917–1937 |
| **Genre**         | Dark, Fantasy, Gothic, Horror, Science fiction, Weird |
| **Literary movement** | Cosmicism |
| **Notable works** | • “The Call of Cthulhu”  
|                   | • The Shadow Out of Time  
|                   | • At the Mountains of Madness |
| **Spouse**        | Sonia Greene (1924–1926) |

**Signature**: 

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View H. P. Lovecraft’s full biography on Wikipedia.  
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From even the greatest of horrors irony is seldom absent. Sometimes it enters directly into the composition of the events, while sometimes it relates only to their fortuitous position among persons and places. The latter sort is splendidly exemplified by a case in the ancient city of Providence, where in the late forties Edgar Allan Poe used to sojourn often during his unsuccessful wooing of the gifted poetess, Mrs. Whitman. Poe generally stopped at the Mansion House in Benefit Street—the renamed Golden Ball Inn whose roof has sheltered Washington, Jefferson, and Lafayette—and his favorite walk led northward along the same street to Mrs. Whitman’s home and the neighboring hillside churchyard of St. John’s, whose hidden expanse of Eighteenth Century gravestones had for him a peculiar fascination.

Now the irony is this. In this walk, so many times repeated, the world’s greatest master of the terrible and the bizarre was obliged to pass a particular house on the eastern side of the street; a dingy, antiquated structure perched on the abruptly rising side hill, with a great unkempt yard dating from a time when the region was partly open country. It does not appear that he ever wrote or spoke of it, nor is there any evidence that he even noticed it. And yet that house, to the two persons in possession of certain information, equals or outranks in horror the wildest fantasy of the genius who so often passed it unknowingly, and stands starkly leering as a symbol of all that is unutterably hideous.

The house was—and for that matter still is—of a kind to attract the attention of the curious. Originally a farm or semi-farm building, it followed the average New England colonial lines of the middle Eighteenth Century—the prosperous peaked-roof sort, with two stories and dormerless attic, and with the Georgian doorway and interior panelling dictated by the progress of taste at that time. It faced south, with one gable end buried to the lower windows in the eastward rising hill, and the other exposed to the foundations toward the street. Its construction, over a century and a half ago, had followed the grading and straightening of the road in that especial vicinity; for Benefit Street—at first called Back Street—was laid out as a lane winding amongst the graveyards of the first settlers, and straightened only when the removal of the bodies to the North Burial Ground made it decently possible to cut through the old family plots.

At the start, the western wall had lain some twenty feet up a precipitous lawn from the roadway; but a widening of the street at about the time of the Revolution sheared off most of the intervening space, exposing the foundations so that a brick basement wall had to be made, giving the deep cellar a street frontage with door and one window above ground, close to the new line of public travel. When the sidewalk was laid out a century ago the last of the intervening space was removed; and Poe in his walks must have seen only a sheer ascent of dull gray brick flush with the sidewalk and surmounted at a height of ten feet by the antique shingled bulk of the house proper.
American Literature 2

“That awful door in Benefit Street which I had left ajar.”

The farm-like ground extended back very deeply up the hill, almost to Wheaton Street. The space south of the house, abutting on Benefit Street, was of course greatly above the existing sidewalk level, forming a terrace bounded by a high bank wall of damp, mossy stone pierced by a steep flight of narrow steps which led inward between canyon-like surfaces to the upper region of mangy lawn, rheumy brick walks, and neglected gardens whose dismantled cement urns, rusted kettles fallen from tripods of knotty sticks, and similar paraphernalia set off the weather-beaten front door with its broken fanlight, rotting Ionic pilasters, and wormy triangular pediment.

What I heard in my youth about the shunned house was merely that people died there in alarmingly great numbers. That, I was told, was why the original owners had moved out some twenty years after building the place. It was plainly unhealthy, perhaps because of the dampness and fungous growths in the cellar, the general sickish smell, the drafts of the hallways, or the quality of the well and pump water. These things were bad enough, and these were all that gained belief among the persons whom I knew. Only the notebooks of my antiquarian uncle, Doctor Elihu Whipple, revealed to me at length the darker, vaguer surmises which formed an undercurrent of folklore among old-time servants and humble folk; surmises which never travelled far, and which were largely forgotten when Providence grew to be a metropolis with a shifting modern population.

The general fact is, that the house was never regarded by the solid part of the community as in any real sense “haunted.” There were no widespread tales of rattling chains, cold currents of air, extinguished lights, or faces at the window. Extremists sometimes said the house was “unlucky,” but that is as far as even they went. What was really beyond dispute is that a frightful proportion of persons died there; or more accurately, had died there, since after some peculiar happenings over sixty years ago the building had become deserted through the sheer impossibility of renting it. These persons were not all cut off suddenly by any one cause; rather did it seem that their vitality was insidiously sapped, so that each one died the sooner from whatever tendency to weakness he may have naturally had. And those who did not die displayed in varying degree a type of anemia or consumption, and sometimes a decline of the mental faculties, which spoke ill for the salubriousness of the building. Neighboring houses, it must be added, seemed entirely free from the noxious quality.

This much I knew before my insistent questioning led my uncle to show me the notes which finally embarked us both on our hideous investigation. In my childhood the shunned house was vacant, with barren, gnarled and terrible old trees, long, queerly pale grass and nightmarishly misshapen weeds in the high terraced yard where birds never lingered. We boys used to overrun the place, and I can still recall my youthful terror not only at the morbid strangeness of this sinister vegetation, but at the eldritch atmosphere and odor of the dilapidated house, whose unlocked front door was often entered in quest of shudders. The small-paned windows were largely broken, and a nameless air of desolation hung round the precarious panelling, shaky interior shutters, peeling wall-paper, falling plaster, rickety staircases, and such fragments of battered furniture as still remained. The dust and cobwebs added their touch of the fearful; and brave indeed was the boy who would voluntarily ascend the ladder to the attic, a vast raftered length lighted only by small blinking windows in the gable ends, and filled with a
massed wreckage of chests, chairs, and spinning-wheels which infinite years of deposit had shrouded and festooned into monstrous and hellish shapes.

But after all, the attic was not the most terrible part of the house. It was the dank, humid cellar which somehow exerted the strongest repulsion on us, even though it was wholly above ground on the street side, with only a thin door and window-pierced brick wall to separate it from the busy sidewalk. We scarcely knew whether to haunt it in spectral fascination, or to shun it for the sake of our souls and our sanity. For one thing, the bad odor of the house was strongest there; and for another thing, we did not like the white fungous growths which occasionally sprang up in rainy summer weather from the hard earth floor. Those fungi, grotesquely like the vegetation in the yard outside, were truly horrible in their outlines; detestable parodies of toadstools and Indian-pipes, whose like we had never seen in any other situation. They rotted quickly, and at one stage became slightly phosphorescent; so that nocturnal passers-by sometimes spoke of witch-fires glowing behind the broken panes of the fetor-spreading windows.

We never—even in our wildest Halloween moods—visited this cellar by night, but in some of our daytime visits could detect the phosphorescence, especially when the day was dark and wet. There was also a subtler thing we often thought we detected—a very strange thing which was, however, merely suggestive at most. I refer to a sort of cloudy whitish pattern on the dirt floor—a vague, shifting deposit of mold or niter which we sometimes thought we could trace amidst the sparse fungous growths near the huge fireplace of the basement kitchen. Once in a while it struck us that this patch bore an uncanny resemblance to a doubled-up human figure, though generally no such kinship existed, and often there was no whitish deposit whatever.

On a certain rainy afternoon when this illusion seemed phenomenally strong, and when, in addition, I had fancied I glimpsed a kind of thin, yellowish, shimmering exhalation rising from the nitrous pattern toward the yawning fireplace, I spoke to my uncle about the matter. He smiled at this odd conceit, but it seemed that his smile was tinged with reminiscence. Later I heard that a similar notion entered into some of the wild ancient tales of the common folk—a notion likewise alluding to ghoulish, wolfish shapes taken by smoke from the great chimney, and queer contours assumed by certain of the sinuous tree-roots that thrust their way into the cellar through the loose foundation-stones.

Not till my adult years did my uncle set before me the notes and data which he had collected concerning the shunned house. Doctor Whipple was a sane, conservative physician of the old school, and for all his interest in the place was not eager to encourage young thoughts toward the abnormal. His own view, postulating simply a building and location of markedly unsanitary qualities, had nothing to do with abnormality; but he realized that the very picturesqueness which aroused his own interest would in a boy’s fanciful mind take on all manner of gruesome imaginative associations.

The doctor was a bachelor; a white-haired, clean-shaven, old-fashioned gentleman, and a local historian of note, who had often broken a lance with such controversial guardians of tradition as Sidney S. Rider and Thomas W. Bicknell. He lived with one man-servant in a Georgian homestead with knocker and iron-railed steps, balanced eerily on the steep ascent of North Court Street beside the ancient brick court and colony house where his grandfather—a cousin of that celebrated privateersman, Captain Whipple, who burnt His Majesty’s armed schooner Gaspee in 1772—had voted in the legislature on May 4, 1776, for the independence of the Rhode Island Colony. Around him in the damp, low-ceiled library with the musty white panelling, heavy carved overmantel and small-paned, vine-shaded windows, were the relics and records of his ancient family, among which were many dubious allusions to the shunned house in Benefit Street. That pest spot lies not far distant—for Benefit runs ledgewise just above the court house along the precipitous hill up which the first settlement climbed.

When, in the end, my insistent pestering and maturing years evoked from my uncle the hoarded lore I sought, there lay before me a strange enough chronicle. Long-winded, statistical, and drearily genealogical as some of the matter was, there ran through it a continuous thread of brooding, tenacious horror and preternatural malevolence which impressed me even more than it had impressed the good doctor. Separate events fitted together uncannily, and seemingly irrelevant details held mines of hideous possibilities. A new and burning curiosity grew in me, compared to which my boyish curiosity was feeble and inchoate.

The first revelation led to an exhaustive research, and finally to that shuddering quest which proved so disastrous to myself and mine. For at the last my uncle insisted on joining the search I had commenced, and after a certain night in that house he did not come away with me. I am lonely without that gentle soul whose long years were
filled only with honor, virtue, good taste, benevolence, and learning. I have reared a marble urn to his memory in St. John’s churchyard—the place that Poe loved—the hidden grove of giant willows on the hill, where tombs and headstones huddle quietly between the hoary bulk of the church and the houses and bank walls of Benefit Street.

The history of the house, opening amidst a maze of dates, revealed no trace of the sinister either about its construction or about the prosperous and honorable family who built it. Yet from the first a taint of calamity, soon increased to boding significance, was apparent. My uncle’s carefully compiled record began with the building of the structure in 1763, and followed the theme with an unusual amount of detail. The shunned house, it seems, was first inhabited by William Harris and his wife Rhoby Dexter, with their children, Elkanah, born in 1755, Abigail, born in 1757, William, Jr., born in 1759, and Ruth, born in 1761. Harris was a substantial merchant and seaman in the West India trade, connected with the firm of Obadiah Brown and his nephews. After Brown’s death in 1761, the new firm of Nicholas Brown & Company made him master of the brig Prudence, Providence-built, of 120 tons, thus enabling him to erect the new homestead he had desired ever since his marriage.

The site he had chosen—a recently straightened part of the new and fashionable Back Street, which ran along the side of the hill above crowded Cheapside—was all that could be wished, and the building did justice to the location. It was the best that moderate means could afford, and Harris hastened to move in before the birth of a fifth child which the family expected. That child, a boy, came in December; but was still-born. Nor was any child to be born alive in that house for a century and a half.

The next April, sickness occurred among the children, and Abigail and Ruth died before the month was over. Doctor Job Ives diagnosed the trouble as some infantile fever, though others declared it was more of a mere wasting-away or decline. It seemed, in any event, to be contagious; for Hannah Bowen, one of the two servants, died of it in the following June. Eli Lidason, the other servant, constantly complained of weakness; and would have returned to his father’s farm in Rehoboth but for a sudden attachment for Mehitabel Pierce, who was hired to succeed Hannah. He died the next year—a sad year indeed, since it marked the death of William Harris himself, enfeebled as he was by the climate of Martinique, where his occupation had kept him for considerable periods during the preceding decade.

The widowed Rhoby Harris never recovered from the shock of her husband’s death, and the passing of her first-born Elkanah two years later was the final blow to her reason. In 1768 she fell victim to a mild form of insanity, and was thereafter confined to the upper part of the house; her elder maiden sister, Mercy Dexter, having moved in to take charge of the family. Mercy was a plain, raw-boned woman of great strength; but her health visibly declined from the time of her advent. She was greatly devoted to her unfortunate sister, and had an especial affection for her only surviving nephew William, who from a sturdy infant had become a sickly, spindling lad. In this year the servant Mehitabel died, and the other servant, Preserved Smith, left without coherent explanation—or at least, with only some wild tales and a complaint that he disliked the smell of the place. For a time Mercy could secure no more help, since the seven deaths and case of madness, all occurring within five years’ space, had begun to set in motion the body of fireside rumor which later became so bizarre. Ultimately, however, she obtained new servants from out of town; Ann White, a morose woman from that part of North Kingstown now set off as the township of Exeter, and a capable Boston man named Zenas Low.

It was Ann White who first gave definite shape to the sinister idle talk. Mercy should have known better than to hire anyone from the Nooseneck Hill country, for that remote bit of backwoods was then, as now, a seat of the most uncomfortable superstitions. As lately as 1892 an Exeter community exhumed a dead body and ceremoniously burnt its heart in order to prevent certain alleged visitations injurious to the public health and peace, and one may imagine the point of view of the same section in 1768. Ann’s tongue was perniciously active, and within a few months Mercy discharged her, filling her place with a faithful and amiable Amazon from Newport, Maria Robbins.

Meanwhile poor Rhoby Harris, in her madness, gave voice to dreams and imaginings of the most hideous sort. At times her screams became insupportable, and for long periods she would utter shrieking horrors which necessitated her son’s temporary residence with his cousin, Peleg Harris, in Presbyterian Lane near the new college building. The boy would seem to improve after these visits, and had Mercy been as wise as she was well-meaning, she would have let him live permanently with Peleg. Just what Mrs. Harris cried out in her fits of violence, tradition hesitates to say; or rather, presents such extravagant accounts that they nullify themselves through sheer absurdity. Certainly it sounds absurd to hear that a woman educated only in the rudiments of French often shouted for hours in a coarse and idiomatic form of that language, or that the same person, alone and guarded, complained wildly of a staring thing which bit and chewed at her. In 1772 the servant Zenas died, and when Mrs. Harris heard of it she laughed with a shocking delight utterly foreign to her. The next year she herself died, and was laid to rest in the North Burial Ground beside her husband.
Upon the outbreak of trouble with Great Britain in 1775, William Harris, despite his scant sixteen years and feeble constitution, managed to enlist in the Army of Observation under General Greene; and from that time on enjoyed a steady rise in health and prestige. In 1780, as a captain in the Rhode Island forces in New Jersey under Colonel Angell, he met and married Phebe Hetfield of Elizabethtown, whom he brought to Providence upon his honorable discharge in the following year.

The young soldier’s return was not a thing of unmitigated happiness. The house, it is true, was still in good condition; and the street had been widened and changed in name from Back Street to Benefit Street. But Mercy Dexter’s once robust frame had undergone a sad and curious decay, so that she was now a stooped and pathetic figure with hollow voice and disconcerting pallor—qualities shared to a singular degree by the one remaining servant Maria. In the autumn of 1782 Phebe Harris gave birth to a still-born daughter, and on the fifteenth of the next May Mercy Dexter took leave of a useful, austere, and virtuous life.

William Harris, at last thoroughly convinced of the radically unhealthful nature of his abode, now took steps toward quitting it and closing it for ever. Securing temporary quarters for himself and his wife at the newly opened Golden Ball Inn, he arranged for the building of a new and finer house in Westminster Street, in the growing part of the town across the Great Bridge. There, in 1785, his son Dutee was born; and there the family dwelt till the encroachments of commerce drove them back across the river and over the hill to Angell Street, in the newer East Side residence district, where the late Archer Harris built his sumptuous but hideous French-roofed mansion in 1876. William and Phebe both succumbed to the yellow fever epidemic of 1797, but Dutee was brought up by his cousin Rathbone Harris, Peleg’s son.

Rathbone was a practical man, and rented the Benefit Street house despite William’s wish to keep it vacant. He considered it an obligation to his ward to make the most of all the boy’s property, nor did he concern himself with the deaths and illnesses which caused so many changes of tenants, or the steadily growing aversion with which the house was generally regarded. It is likely that he felt only vexation when, in 1804, the town council ordered him to fumigate the place with sulfur, tar, and gum camphor on account of the much-discussed deaths of four persons, presumably caused by the then diminishing fever epidemic. They said the place had a febrile smell.

Dutee himself thought little of the house, for he grew up to be a privateersman, and served with distinction on the Vigilant under Captain Cahoone in the War of 1812. He returned unharmed, married in 1814, and became a father on that memorable night of September 23, 1815, when a great gale drove the waters of the bay over half the town, and floated a tall sloop well up Westminster Street so that its masts almost tapped the Harris windows in symbolic affirmation that the new boy, Welcome, was a seaman’s son.

Welcome did not survive his father, but lived to perish gloriously at Fredericksburg in 1862. Neither he nor his son Archer knew of the shunned house as other than a nuisance almost impossible to rent—perhaps on account of the mustiness and sickly odor of unkempt old age. Indeed, it never was rented after a series of deaths culminating in 1861, which the excitement of the war tended to throw into obscurity. Carrington Harris, last of the male line, knew it only as a deserted and somewhat picturesque center of legend until I told him my experience. He had meant to tear it down and build an apartment house on the site, but after my account decided to let it stand, install plumbing, and rent it. Nor has he yet had any difficulty in obtaining tenants. The horror has gone.

It may well be imagined how powerfully I was affected by the annals of the Harrises. In this continuous record there seemed to me to brood a persistent evil beyond anything in nature as I had known it; an evil clearly connected with the house and not with the family. This impression was confirmed by my uncle’s less systematic array of miscellaneous data—legends transcribed from servant gossip, cuttings from the papers, copies of death certificates by fellow-physicians, and the like. All of this material I cannot hope to give, for my uncle was a tireless antiquarian and very deeply interested in the shunned house; but I may refer to several dominant points which earn notice by their recurrence through many reports from diverse sources. For example, the servant gossip was practically unanimous in attributing to the fungous and malodorous cellar of the house a vast supremacy in evil influence. There had been servants—Ann White especially—who would not use the cellar kitchen, and at least three well-defined legends bore upon the queer quasi-human or diabolic outlines assumed by tree-roots and patches of mold in that region. These latter narratives interested me profoundly, on account of what I had seen in my boyhood, but I felt that most of the significance had in each case been largely obscured by additions from the common stock of local ghost lore.

Ann White, with her Exeter superstition, had promulgated the most extravagant and at the same time most
consistent tale; alleging that there must lie buried beneath the house one of those vampires—the dead who retain their bodily form and live on the blood or breath of the living—whose hideous legions send their preying shapes or spirits abroad by night. To destroy a vampire one must, the grandmothers say, exhume it and burn its heart, or at least drive a stake through that organ; and Ann’s dogged insistence on a search under the cellar had been prominent in bringing about her discharge.

Her tales, however, commanded a wide audience, and were the more readily accepted because the house indeed stood on land once used for burial purposes. To me their interest depended less on this circumstance than on the peculiarly appropriate way in which they dovetailed with certain other things—the complaint of the departing servant Preserved Smith, who had preceded Ann and never heard of her, that something “sucked his breath” at night; the death-certificates of the fever victims of 1804, issued by Doctor Chad Hopkins, and showing the four deceased persons all unaccountably lacking in blood; and the obscure passages of poor Rhoby Harris’s ravings, where she complained of the sharp teeth of a glassy-eyed, half-visible presence.

Free from unwarranted superstition though I am, these things produced in me an odd sensation, which was intensified by a pair of widely separated newspaper cuttings relating to deaths in the shunned house—one from the Providence Gazette and Country-Journal of April 12, 1815, and the other from the Daily Transcript and Chronicle of October 27, 1845—each of which detailed an appallingly grisly circumstance whose duplication was remarkable. It seems that in both instances the dying person, in 1815 a gentle old lady named Stafford and in 1845 a schoolteacher of middle age named Eleazar Durfee, became transfigured in a horrible way, glaring glassily and attempting to bite the throat of the attending physician. Even more puzzling, though, was the final case which put an end to the renting of the house—a series of anemia deaths preceded by progressive madnesses wherein the patient would craftily attempt the lives of his relatives by incisions in the neck or wrist.

This was in 1860 and 1861, when my uncle had just begun his medical practise; and before leaving for the front he heard much of it from his elder professional colleagues. The really inexplicable thing was the way in which the victims—ignorant people, for the ill-smelling and widely shunned house could now be rented to no others—would babble maledictions in French, a language they could not possibly have studied to any extent. It made one think of poor Rhoby Harris nearly a century before, and so moved my uncle that he commenced collecting historical data on the house after listening, some time subsequent to his return from the war, to the first-hand account of Doctors Chase and Whitmarsh. Indeed, I could see that my uncle had thought deeply on the subject, and that he was glad of my own interest—an open-minded and sympathetic interest which enabled him to discuss with me matters at which others would merely have laughed. His fancy had not gone so far as mine, but he felt that the place was rare in its imaginative potentialities, and worthy of note as an inspiration in the field of the grotesque and macabre.

For my part, I was disposed to take the whole subject with profound seriousness, and began at once not only to review the evidence, but to accumulate as much more as I could. I talked with the elderly Archer Harris, then owner of the house, many times before his death in 1916; and obtained from him and his still surviving maiden sister Alice an authentic corroboration of all the family data my uncle had collected. When, however, I asked them what connection with France or its language the house could have, they confessed themselves as frankly baffled and ignorant as I. Archer knew nothing, and all that Miss Harris could say was that an old allusion her grandfather, Dutee Harris, had heard of might have shed a little light. The old seaman, who had survived his son Welcome’s death in battle by two years, had not himself known the legend, but recalled that his earliest nurse, the ancient Maria Robbins, seemed darkly aware of something that might have lent a weird significance to the French raving of Rhoby Harris, which she had so often heard during the last days of that hapless woman. Maria had been at the shunned house from 1769 till the removal of the family in 1783, and had seen Mercy Dexter die. Once she hinted to the child Dutee of a somewhat peculiar circumstance in Mercy’s last moments, but he had soon forgotten all about it save that it was something peculiar. The granddaughter, moreover, recalled even this much with difficulty. She and her brother were not so much interested in the house as was Archer’s son Carrington, the present owner, with whom I talked after my experience.

Having exhausted the Harris family of all the information it could furnish, I turned my attention to early town records and deeds with a zeal more penetrating than that which my uncle had occasionally shown in the same work. What I wished was a comprehensive history of the site from its very settlement in 1636—or even before, if any Narragansett Indian legend could be unearthed to supply the data. I found, at the start, that the land had been part of the long strip of home lot granted originally to John Throckmorton; one of many similar strips beginning at the Town Street beside the river and extending up over the hill to a line roughly corresponding with the modern Hope Street. The Throckmorton lot had later, of course, been much subdivided; and I became very assiduous in tracing that section through which Back or Benefit Street was later run. It had, as rumor indeed said,
been the Throckmorton graveyard; but as I examined the records more carefully, I found that the graves had all been transferred at an early date to the North Burial Ground on the Pawtucket West Road.

Then suddenly I came—by a rare piece of chance, since it was not in the main body of records and might easily have been missed—upon something which aroused my keenest eagerness, fitting in as it did with several of the queerest phases of the affair. It was the record of a lease, in 1697, of a small tract of ground to an Etienne Roulet and wife. At last the French element had appeared—that, and another deeper element of horror which the name conjured up from the darkest recesses of my weird and heterogeneous reading—and I feverishly studied the platting of the locality as it had been before the cutting through and partial straightening of Back Street between 1747 and 1758. I found what I had half expected, that where the shunned house now stood the Roulets had laid out their graveyard behind a one-story and attic cottage, and that no record of any transfer of graves existed. The document, indeed, ended in much confusion; and I was forced to ransack both the Rhode Island Historical Society and Shepley Library before I could find a local door which the name of Etienne Roulet would unlock. In the end I did find something; something of such vague but monstrous import that I set about at once to examine the cellar of the shunned house itself with a new and excited minuteness.

The Roulets, it seemed, had come in 1696 from East Greenwich, down the west shore of Narragansett Bay. They were Huguenots from Caude, and had encountered much opposition before the Providence selectmen allowed them to settle in the town. Unpopularity had dogged them in East Greenwich, whither they had come in 1686, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and rumor said that the cause of dislike extended beyond mere racial and national prejudice, or the land disputes which involved other French settlers with the English in rivalries which not even Governor Andros could quell. But their ardent Protestantism—too ardent, some whispered—and their evident distress when virtually driven from the village down the bay, had moved the sympathy of the town fathers. Here the strangers had been granted a haven; and the swarthy Etienne Roulet, less apt at agriculture than at reading queer books and drawing queer diagrams, was given a clerical post in the warehouse at Pardon Tillinghast’s wharf, far south in Town Street. There had, however, been a riot of some sort later on—perhaps forty years later, after old Roulet’s death—and no one seemed to hear of the family after that.

For a century and more, it appeared, the Roulets had been well remembered and frequently discussed as vivid incidents in the quiet life of a New England seaport. Etienne’s son Paul, a surly fellow whose erratic conduct had probably provoked the riot which wiped out the family, was particularly a source of speculation; and though Providence never shared the witchcraft panics of her Puritan neighbors, it was freely intimated by old wives that his prayers were neither uttered at the proper time nor directed toward the proper object. All this had undoubtedly formed the basis of the legend known by old Maria Robbins. What relation it had to the French ravings of Rhoby Harris and other inhabitants of the shunned house, imagination or future discovery alone could determine. I wondered how many of those who had known the legends realized that additional link with the terrible which my wider reading had given me; that ominous item in the annals of morbid horror which tells of the creature *Jacques Roulet, of Caude*, who in 1598 was condemned to death as a demoniac but afterward saved from the stake by the Paris parliament and shut in a madhouse. He had been found covered with blood and shreds of flesh in a wood, shortly after the killing and rendering of a boy by a pair of wolves. One wolf was seen to lope away unhurt. Surely a pretty hearthside tale, with a queer significance as to name and place; but I decided that the Providence gossips could not have generally known of it. Had they known, the coincidence of names would have brought some drastic and frightened action—indeed, might not its limited whispering have precipitated the final riot which erased the Roulets from the town?

I now visited the accursed place with increased frequency; studying the unwholesome vegetation of the garden, examining all the walls of the building, and poring over every inch of the earthen cellar floor. Finally, with Carrington Harris’s permission, I fitted a key to the disused door opening from the cellar directly upon Benefit Street, preferring to have a more immediate access to the outside world than the dark stairs, ground-floor hall, and front door could give. There, where morbidity lurked most thickly, I searched and poked during long afternoons when the sunlight filtered in through the cobwebbed above-ground windows, and a sense of security glowed from the unlocked door which placed me only a few feet from the placid sidewalk outside. Nothing new rewarded my efforts—only the same depressing mustiness and faint suggestions of noxious odors and nitrous outlines on the floor—and I fancy that many pedestrians must have watched me curiously through the broken panes.

At length, upon a suggestion of my uncle’s, I decided to try the spot nocturnally; and one stormy midnight ran the beams of an electric torch over the moldy floor with its uncanny shapes and distorted, half-phosphorescent fungi. The place had dispirited me curiously that evening, and I was almost prepared when I saw—or thought I saw—amidst the whitish deposits a particularly sharp definition of the “huddled form” I had suspected from boyhood. Its clearness was astonishing and unprecedented—and as I watched I seemed to see again the thin, yellowish, shimmering exhalation which had startled me on that rainy afternoon so many years before.
Above the anthropomorphic patch of mold by the fireplace it rose; a subtle, sickish, almost luminous vapor which as it hung trembling in the dampness seemed to develop vague and shocking suggestions of form, gradually trailing off into nebulous decay and passing up into the blackness of the great chimney with a fetor in its wake. It was truly horrible, and the more so to me because of what I knew of the spot. Refusing to flee, I watched it fade—and as I watched I felt that it was in turn watching me greedily with eyes more imaginable than visible. When I told my uncle about it he was greatly aroused; and after a tense hour of reflection, arrived at a definite and drastic decision. Weighing in his mind the importance of the matter, and the significance of our relation to it, he insisted that we both test—and if possible destroy—the horror of the house by a joint night or nights of aggressive vigil in that musty and fungus-cursed cellar.

On Wednesday, June 25, 1919, after a proper notification of Carrington Harris which did not include surmises as to what we expected to find, my uncle and I conveyed to the shunned house two camp chairs and a folding camp cot, together with some scientific mechanism of greater weight and intricacy. These we placed in the cellar during the day, screening the windows with paper and planning to return in the evening for our first vigil. We had locked the door from the cellar to the ground floor; and having a key to the outside cellar door, were prepared to leave our expensive and delicate apparatus—which we had obtained secretly and at great cost—as many days as our vigils might be protracted. It was our design to sit up together till very late, and then watch singly till dawn in two-hour stretches, myself first and then my companion; the inactive member resting on the cot.

The natural leadership with which my uncle procured the instruments from the laboratories of Brown University and the Cranston Street Armory, and instinctively assumed direction of our venture, was a marvelous commentary on the potential vitality and resilience of a man of eighty-one. Elihu Whipple had lived according to the hygienic laws he had preached as a physician, and but for what happened later would be here in full vigor today. Only two persons suspected what did happen—Carrington Harris and myself. I had to tell Harris because he owned the house and deserved to know what had gone out of it. Then too, we had spoken to him in advance of our quest; and I felt after my uncle’s going that he would understand and assist me in some vitally necessary public explanations. He turned very pale, but agreed to help me, and decided that it would now be safe to rent the house.

To declare that we were not nervous on that rainy night of watching would be an exaggeration both gross and ridiculous. We were not, as I have said, in any sense childishly superstitious, but scientific study and reflection had taught us that the known universe of three dimensions embraces the merest fraction of the whole cosmos of substance and energy. In this case an overwhelming preponderance of evidence from numerous authentic sources pointed to the tenacious existence of certain forces of great power and, so far as the human point of view is concerned, exceptional malignancy. To say that we actually believed in vampires or werewolves would be a carelessly inclusive statement. Rather must it be said that we were not prepared to deny the possibility of certain unfamiliar and unclassified modifications of vital force and attenuated matter; existing very infrequently in three-dimensional space because of its more intimate connection with other spatial units, yet close enough to the boundary of our own to furnish us occasional manifestations which we, for lack of a proper vantage-point, may never hope to understand.

In short, it seemed to my uncle and me that an incontrovertible array of facts pointed to some lingering influence in the shunned house; traceable to one or another of the ill-favored French settlers of two centuries before, and still operative through rare and unknown laws of atomic and electronic motion. That the family of Roulet had possessed an abnormal affinity for outer circles of entity—dark spheres which for normal folk hold only repulsion and terror—their recorded history seemed to prove. Had not, then, the riots of those bygone seventeen-thirties set moving certain kinetic patterns in the morbid brain of one or more of them—notably the sinister Paul Roulet—which obscurely survived the bodies murdered and buried by the mob, and continued to function in some multiple-dimensioned space along the original lines of force determined by a frantic hatred of the encroaching community?

Such a thing was surely not a physical or biochemical impossibility in the light of a newer science which includes the theories of relativity and intra-atomic action. One might easily imagine an alien nucleus of substance or energy, formless or otherwise, kept alive by imperceptible or immaterial subtractions from the life-force or bodily tissue and fluids of other and more palpably living things into which it penetrates and with whose fabric it sometimes completely merges itself. It might be actively hostile, or it might be dictated merely by blind motives of self-preservation. In any case such a monster must of necessity be in our scheme of things an anomaly and an intruder, whose extirpation forms a primary duty with every man not an enemy to the world’s life, health, and
sanity.

What baffled us was our utter ignorance of the aspect in which we might encounter the thing. No sane person had ever seen it, and few had ever felt it definitely. It might be pure energy—a form ethereal and outside the realm of substance—or it might be partly material; some unknown and equivocal mass of plasticity, capable of changing at will to nebulous approximations of the solid, liquid, gaseous, or tenuously unparticled states. The anthropomorphic patch of mold on the floor, the form of the yellowish vapor, and the curvature of the tree-roots in some of the old tales, all argued at least a remote and reminiscent connection with the human shape; but how representative or permanent that similarity might be, none could say with any kind of certainty.

We had devised two weapons to fight it; a large and specially fitted Crookes tube operated by powerful storage batteries and provided with peculiar screens and reflectors, in case it proved intangible and opposable only by vigorously destructive ether radiations, and a pair of military flame-throwers of the sort used in the World War, in case it proved partly material and susceptible of mechanical destruction—for like the superstitious Exeter rustics, we were prepared to burn the thing’s heart out if heart existed to burn. All this aggressive mechanism we set in the cellar in positions carefully arranged with reference to the cot and chairs, and to the spot before the fireplace where the mold had taken strange shapes. That suggestive patch, by the way, was only faintly visible when we placed our furniture and instruments, and when we returned that evening for the actual vigil. For a moment I half doubted that I had ever seen it in the more definitely limned form—but then I thought of the legends.

Our cellar vigil began at ten p. m., daylight saving time, and as it continued we found no promise of pertinent developments. A weak, filtered glow from the rain-harassed street-lamps outside, and a feeble phosphorescence from the detestable fungi within, showed the dripping stone of the walls, from which all traces of whitewash had vanished; the dank, fetid and mildew-tainted hard earth floor with its obscene fungi; the rotted remains of what had been stools, chairs, and tables, and other more shapeless furniture; the heavy planks and massive beams of the ground floor overhead; the decrepit plank door leading to bins and chambers beneath other parts of the house; the crumbling stone staircase with ruined wooden hand-rail; and the crude and cavernous fireplace of blackened brick where rusted iron fragments revealed the past presence of hooks, andirons, spit, crane, and a door to the Dutch oven—these things, and our austere cot and camp chairs, and the heavy and intricate destructive machinery we had brought.

We had, as in my own former explorations, left the door to the street unlocked; so that a direct and practical path of escape might lie open in case of manifestations beyond our power to deal with. It was our idea that our continued nocturnal presence would call forth whatever malign entity lurked there; and that being prepared, we could dispose of the thing with one or the other of our provided means as soon as we had recognized and observed it sufficiently. How long it might require to evoke and extinguish the thing, we had no notion. It occurred to us, too, that our venture was far from safe; for in what strength the thing might appear no one could tell. But we deemed the game worth the hazard, and embarked on it alone and unhesitatingly; conscious that the seeking of outside aid would only expose us to ridicule and perhaps defeat our entire purpose. Such was our frame of mind as we talked—far into the night, till my uncle’s growing drowsiness made me remind him to lie down for his two-hour sleep.

Something like fear chilled me as I sat there in the small hours alone—I say alone, for one who sits by a sleeper is indeed alone; perhaps more alone than he can realize. My uncle breathed heavily, his deep inhalations and exhalations accompanied by the rain outside, and punctuated by another nerve-racking sound of distant dripping water within—for the house was repulsively damp even in dry weather, and in this storm positively swamp-like. I studied the loose, antique masonry of the walls in the fungus-light and the feeble rays which stole in from the street through the screened window; and once, when the noisome atmosphere of the place seemed about to sicken me, I opened the door and looked up and down the street, feasting my eyes on familiar sights and my nostrils on wholesome air. Still nothing occurred to reward my watching; and I yawned repeatedly, fatigue getting the better of apprehension.

Then the stirring of my uncle in his sleep attracted my notice. He had turned restlessly on the cot several times during the latter half of the first hour, but now he was breathing with unusual irregularity, occasionally heaving a sigh which held more than a few of the qualities of a choking moan.

I turned my electric flashlight on him and found his face averted; so rising and crossing to the other side of the cot, I again flashed the light to see if he seemed in any pain. What I saw unnerved me most surprisingly, considering its relative triviality. It must have been merely the association of any odd circumstance with the sinister nature of our location and mission, for surely the circumstance was not in itself frightful or unnatural. It was merely that my uncle’s facial expression, disturbed no doubt by the strange dreams which our situation
prompted, betrayed considerable agitation, and seemed not at all characteristic of him. His habitual expression was one of kindly and well-bred calm, whereas now a variety of emotions seemed struggling within him. I think, on the whole, that it was this variety which chiefly disturbed me. My uncle, as he gasped and tossed in increasing perturbation and with eyes that had now started open, seemed not one but many men, and suggested a curious quality of alienage from himself.

All at once he commenced to mutter, and I did not like the look of his mouth and teeth as he spoke. The words were at first indistinguishable, and then—with a tremendous start—I recognized something about them which filled me with icy fear till I recalled the breadth of my uncle’s education and the interminable translations he had made from anthropological and antiquarian articles in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. For the venerable Elihu Whipple was muttering in French, and the few phrases I could distinguish seemed connected with the darkest myths he had ever adapted from the famous Paris magazine.

Suddenly a perspiration broke out on the sleeper’s forehead, and he leaped abruptly up, half awake. The jumble of French changed to a cry in English, and the hoarse voice shouted excitedly, “My breath, my breath!” Then the awakening became complete, and with a subsidence of facial expression to the normal state my uncle seized my hand and began to relate a dream whose nucleus of significance I could only surmise with a kind of awe.

He had, he said, floated off from a very ordinary series of dream-pictures into a scene whose strangeness was related to nothing he had ever read. It was of this world, and yet not of it—a shadowy geometrical confusion in which could be seen elements of familiar things in most unfamiliar and perturbing combinations. There was a suggestion of queerly disordered pictures superimposed one upon another; an arrangement in which the essentials of time as well as of space seemed dissolved and mixed in the most illogical fashion. In this kaleidoscopic vortex of phantasmal images were occasional snap-shots, if one might use the term, of singular clearness but unaccountable heterogeneity.

Once my uncle thought he lay in a carelessly dug open pit, with a crowd of angry faces framed by straggling locks and three-cornered hats frowning down on him. Again he seemed to be in the interior of a house—an old house, apparently—but the details and inhabitants were constantly changing, and he could never be certain of the faces or the furniture, or even of the room itself, since doors and windows seemed in just as great a state of flux as the presumably more mobile objects. It was queer—damnably queer—and my uncle spoke almost sheepishly, as if half expecting not to be believed, when he declared that of the strange faces many had unmistakably borne the features of the Harris family. And all the while there was a personal sensation of choking, as if some pervasive presence had spread itself through his body and sought to possess itself of his vital processes.

I shuddered at the thought of those vital processes, worn as they were by eighty-one years of continuous functioning, in conflict with unknown forces of which the youngest and strongest system might well be afraid; but in another moment reflected that dreams are only dreams, and that these uncomfortable visions could be, at most, no more than my uncle’s reaction to the investigations and expectations which had lately filled our minds to the exclusion of all else.

Conversation, also, soon tended to dispel my sense of strangeness; and in time I yielded to my yawns and took my turn at slumber. My uncle seemed now very wakeful, and welcomed his period of watching even though the nightmare had aroused him far ahead of his allotted two hours.

Sleep seized me quickly, and I was at once haunted with dreams of the most disturbing kind. I felt, in my visions, a cosmic and abysmal loneliness; with hostility surging from all sides upon some prison where I lay confined. I seemed bound and gagged, and taunted by the echoing yells of distant multitudes who thirsted for my blood. My uncle’s face came to me with less pleasant association than in waking hours, and I recall many futile struggles and attempts to scream. It was not a pleasant sleep, and for a second I was not sorry for the echoing shriek which clove through the barriers of dream and flung me to a sharp and startled awakeness in which every actual object before my eyes stood out with more than natural clearness and reality.

I had been lying with my face away from my uncle’s chair, so that in this sudden flash of awakening I saw only the door to the street, the window, and the wall and floor and ceiling toward the north of the room, all photographed with morbid vividness on my brain in a light brighter than the glow of the fungi or the rays from the street outside.
It was not a strong or even a fairly strong light; certainly not nearly strong enough to read an average book by. But it cast a shadow of myself and the cot on the floor, and had a yellowish, penetrating force that hinted at things more potent than luminosity. This I perceived with unhealthy sharpness despite the fact that two of my other senses were violently assailed. For on my ears rang the reverberations of that shocking scream, while my nostrils revolted at the stench which filled the place. My mind, as alert as my senses, recognized the gravely unusual; and almost automatically I leaped up and turned about to grasp the destructive instruments which we had left trained on the moldy spot before the fireplace. As I turned, I dreaded what I was to see; for the scream had been in my uncle's voice, and I knew not against what menace I should have to defend him and myself.

Yet after all, the sight was worse than I had dreaded. There are horrors beyond horrors, and this was one of those nuclei of all dreamable hideousness which the cosmos saves to blast an accursed and unhappy few. Out of the fungus-ridden earth steamed up a vaporous corpse-light, yellow and diseased, which bubbled and lapped to a gigantic height in vague outlines half human and half monstrous, through which I could see the chimney and fireplace beyond. It was all eyes—wolfish and mocking—and the rugose insect-like head dissolved at the top to a thin stream of mist which curled putridly about and finally vanished up the chimney. I say that I saw this thing, but it is only in conscious retrospection that I ever definitely traced its damnable approach to form. At the time, it was to me only a seething, dimly phosphorescent cloud of fungous loathsomeness, enveloping and dissolving to an abhorrent plasticity the one object on which all my attention was focussed. That object was my uncle—the venerable Elihu Whipple—who with blackening and decaying features leered and gibbered at me, and reached out dripping claws to rend me in the fury which this horror had brought.

It was a sense of routine which kept me from going mad. I had drilled myself in preparation for the crucial moment, and blind training saved me. Recognizing the bubbling evil as no substance reachable by matter or material chemistry, and therefore ignoring the flame-thower which loomed on my left, I threw on the current of the Crookes tube apparatus, and focussed toward that scene of immortal blasphemousness the strongest ether radiations which man's art can arouse from the spaces and fluids of nature. There was a bluish haze and a frenzied sputtering, and the yellowish phosphorescence grew dimmer to my eyes. But I saw the dimness was only that of contrast, and that the waves from the machine had no effect whatever.

Then, in the midst of that demoniac spectacle, I saw a fresh horror which brought cries to my lips and sent me fumbling and staggering toward that unlocked door to the quiet street, careless of what abnormal terrors I loosed upon the world, or what thoughts or judgments of men I brought down upon my head. In that dim blend of blue and yellow the form of my uncle had commenced a nauseous liquefaction whose essence eludes all description, and in which there played across his vanishing face such changes of identity as only madness can conceive. He was at once a devil and a multitude, a charnel-house and a pageant. Lit by the mixed and uncertain beams, that gelatinous face assumed a dozen—a score—a hundred—aspects; grinning, as it sank to the ground on a body that melted like tallow, in the caricatured likeness of legions strange and yet not strange.

I saw the features of the Harris line, masculine and feminine, adult and infantile, and other features old and young, coarse and refined, familiar and unfamiliar. For a second there flashed a degraded counterfeit of a miniature of poor mad Rhoby Harris that I had seen in the School of Design museum, and another time I thought I caught the raw-boned image of Mercy Dexter as I recalled her from a painting in Carrington Harris's house. It was frightful beyond conception; toward the last, when a curious blend of servant and baby visages flickered close to the fungous floor where a pool of greenish grease was spreading, it seemed as though the shifting features fought against themselves and strove to form contours like those of my uncle's kindly face. I like to think that he existed at that moment, and that he tried to bid me farewell. It seems to me I hiccupped a farewell from my own parched throat as I lurched out into the street; a thin stream of grease following me through the door to the rain-drenched sidewalk.

The rest is shadowy and monstrous. There was no one in the soaking street, and in all the world there was no one I dared tell. I walked aimlessly south past College Hill and the Athenæum, down Hopkins Street, and over the bridge to the business section where tall buildings seemed to guard me as modern material things guard the world from ancient and unwholesome wonder. Then gray dawn unfolded wetly from the east, silhouetting the archaic hill and its venerable steeples, and beckoning me to the place where my terrible work was still unfinished. And in the end I went, wet, hatless, and dazed in the morning light, and entered that awful door in Benefit Street which I had left ajar, and which still swung cryptically in full sight of the early householders to whom I dared not speak.

The grease was gone, for the moldy floor was porous. And in front of the fireplace was no vestige of the giant doubled-up form traced in niter. I looked at the cot, the chairs, the instruments, my neglected hat, and the yellowed straw hat of my uncle. Dazedness was uppermost, and I could scarcely recall what was dream and what was reality. Then thought trickled back, and I knew that I had witnessed things more horrible than I had dreamed.
Sitting down, I tried to conjecture as nearly as sanity would let me just what had happened, and how I might end the horror, if indeed it had been real. Matter it seemed not to be, nor ether, nor anything else conceivable by mortal mind. What, then, but some exotic emanation; some vampirish vapor such as Exeter rustics tell of as lurking over certain churchyards? This I felt was the clue, and again I looked at the floor before the fireplace where the mold and niter had taken strange forms.

In ten minutes my mind was made up, and taking my hat I set out for home, where I bathed, ate, and gave by telephone an order for a pickax, a spade, a military gas-mask, and six carboys of sulfuric acid, all to be delivered the next morning at the cellar door of the shunned house in Benefit Street. After that I tried to sleep; and failing, passed the hours in reading and in the composition of inane verses to counteract my mood.

At eleven a. m. the next day I commenced digging. It was sunny weather, and I was glad of that. I was still alone, for as much as I feared the unknown horror I sought, there was more fear in the thought of telling anybody. Later I told Harris only through sheer necessity, and because he had heard odd tales from old people which disposed him ever so little toward belief. As I turned up the stinking black earth in front of the fireplace, my spade causing a viscous yellow ichor to ooze from the white fungi which it severed, I trembled at the dubious thoughts of what I might uncover. Some secrets of inner earth are not good for mankind, and this seemed to me one of them.

My hand shook perceptibly, but still I delved; after a while standing in the large hole I had made. With the deepening of the hole, which was about six feet square, the evil smell increased; and I lost all doubt of my imminent contact with the hellish thing whose emanations had cursed the house for over a century and a half. I wondered what it would look like—what its form and substance would be, and how big it might have waxed through long ages of life-sucking. At length I climbed out of the hole and dispersed the heaped-up dirt, then arranging the great carboys of acid around and near two sides, so that when necessary I might empty them all down the aperture in quick succession. After that I dumped earth only along the other two sides; working more slowly and donning my gas-mask as the smell grew. I was nearly unnerved at my proximity to a nameless thing at the bottom of a pit.

Suddenly my spade struck something softer than earth. I shuddered, and made a motion as if to climb out of the hole, which was now as deep as my neck. Then courage returned, and I scraped away more dirt in the light of the electric torch I had provided. The surface I uncovered was fishy and glassy—a kind of semi-putrid congealed jelly with suggestions of translucency. I scraped further, and saw that it had form. There was a rift where a part of the substance was folded over. The exposed area was huge and roughly cylindrical; like a mammoth soft blue-white stovepipe doubled in two, its largest part some two feet in diameter. Still more I scraped, and then abruptly I leaped out of the hole and away from the filthy thing; frantically unstopping and tilting the heavy carboys, and precipitating their corrosive contents one after another down that charnel gulf and upon the unthinkable abnormality whose titan elbow I had seen.

The blinding maelstrom of greenish-yellow vapor which surged tempestuously up from that hole as the floods of acid descended, will never leave my memory. All along the hill people tell of the yellow day, when virulent and horrible fumes arose from the factory waste dumped in the Providence River, but I know how mistaken they are as to the source. They tell, too, of the hideous roar which at the same time came from some disordered water-pipe or gas main underground—but again I could correct them if I dared. It was unspeakably shocking, and I do not see how I lived through it. I did faint after emptying the fourth carboy, which I had to handle after the fumes had begun to penetrate my mask; but when I recovered I saw that the hole was emitting no fresh vapors.

The two remaining carboys I emptied down without particular result, and after a time I felt it safe to shovel the earth back into the pit. It was twilight before I was done, but fear had gone out of the place. The dampness was less fetid, and all the strange fungi had withered to a kind of harmless grayish powder which blew ash-like along the floor. One of earth’s nethermost terrors had perished for ever; and if there be a hell, it had received at last the demon soul of an unhallowed thing. And as I patted down the last spadeful of mold, I shed the first of the many tears with which I have paid unaffected tribute to my beloved uncle’s memory.

The next spring no more pale grass and strange weeds came up in the shunned house’s terraced garden, and shortly afterward Carrington Harris rented the place. It is still spectral, but its strangeness fascinates me, and I shall find mixed with my relief a queer regret when it is torn down to make way for a tawdry shop or vulgar apartment building. The barren old trees in the yard have begun to bear small, sweet apples, and last year the birds nested in their gnarled boughs.
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  https://www.gutenberg.org/files/31469/31469-h/31469-h.htm. **License:** Public Domain: No Known Copyright
Video: Night of the Living Dead

Click to view Night of the Living Dead, the 1968 Color version.

“This public domain copy” is an American independent horror and cult film directed by George A. Romero and starring Duane Jones, Judith O’Dea and Karl Hardman. It premiered on October 1, 1968, and was completed on a US$114,000 budget. After decades of cinematic re-releases, the film ultimately became a financial success, grossing $12 million domestically and $18 million internationally. Night of the Living Dead was heavily criticized at its release owing to explicit content, but eventually garnered critical acclaim and has been selected by the Library of Congress for preservation in the National Film Registry as a film deemed “culturally, historically or aesthetically significant.

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Video: Dawn of the Dead

https://youtu.be/wN-L7NqFMdk
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Additional Resources: American Horror

Library Resources


“Abstract: Discusses how social politics and ideology infiltrate genres and influence authorship practices in hippie horror films of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Definition of horror film according to the essay “An Introduction to the American Horror Film,” by Robin Wood; Similarity of the social role of the horror film to the Freudian understanding of dreams; Views of director Wes Craven on horror films that are centered around the conceit of mirrored families.”
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XVIII

Comic Books
Overview: Comic Books

A Facebook Timeline cover of comic books at the L.A. County Fair 2012 in Pomona, California.

Within the last ten years comic books have seen a great boom period in America thanks to the attention of the film industry. With that in mind, I thought it would be nice to finish the semester on a genre of American literature that both encapsulates all of the themes and motifs we have discussed so far, as well as create its own themes in the process.

Objectives

- Respond to the weekly readings within the context of your own perspective. (Textual Annotations)
- Demonstrate an understanding of the major debate in American comic books in the 20th century. (Weekly Journal Entry)

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Seduction of the Innocent

Please see the attached link to a digital copy of Fredric Wertham’s *Seduction of the Innocent*. Written in the 1950s, this text is considered by many to be “ground zero” for the debate on how comic books were ruining the young and impressionable generation by influencing them to commit violent and subversive acts.

Consider this argument as you then read the comic book selections in this unit.

*Seduction of the Innocent* (1954 – 2nd Printing) by Dr. Frederic Wertham

This video was a public service film (PSF) created shortly after Dr. Wertham’s book was released to explicitly demonstrate the “dangers” of comic books. Consider how a parent in the 1950s/60s would have responded to this film as opposed to reading Wertham’s novel. Is the primary argument here rational? Why or why not?

This link will take you to an article written by Jamie Coville on the impact of Wertham’s book *Seduction of the Innocent* on the developmental history of comics in America.

“*The Comic Book Villian, Dr. Frederic Wertham, M.D.*” by Jamie Coville, available from Integrative Arts 10 from Penn State University

Here’s a modern critical response to *Seduction of the Innocent* by Dave Itzkoff of The New York Times.

“*Scholar Finds Flaws in Work by Archenemy of Comics*” by Dave Itzkoff from The New York Times

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- Confidential File: Horror Comic Books!. **Authored by:** MattHawes. **Located at:** https://youtu.be/GI8IJA8kdkI. **License:** All Rights Reserved. **License Terms:** Standard YouTube License
Near-Humans Freak Out Humans

If you’re a gamer, you have likely heard of the uncanny valley. (Heck, it’s even the name of a game.)

It’s that near-humanness that can innately bother us. I think it’s fascinating.

Here’s a quick video on this.

For more, check out Blade Runner in its entirety, or at least this little clip or some that follow:

If we’re in the mode of defining human, we can see the works of science fiction in a new light, since they are often about this, or about how technology affirms or denies our humanity.

And now you understand why I can never watch more than fifteen seconds of the PBS show Sid the Science Kid. . . !
I Killed Mary

The original version of the “I Killed Mary” comic book can be found on the blog post below.

“Stark Terror: I Killed Mary” comic posted by David Zuzelo on Tomb It May Concern

Next is a version of the story “I Killed Mary” written after the Comics Code Authority (CCA) was enacted (see the article by Jamie Coville for a description of the CCA).

This story was published in a comic that did not have the CCA seal of approval.

While reading, compare this version of the story “I Killed Mary” to the original published before the CCA was created. What (visually) is different? What do you think sparked these changes? How do these changes impact your reading of the story? Why?

“I Chopped Her Head Off!” comic posted by Karswell on The Horrors of It All

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Amazing Fantasy #15: Spider-Man

Published in 1962, Stan Lee’s Amazing Fantasy #15 is a typical example of post-CCA mainstream comics. Additionally, it is the first appearance and origin story of the now-famous superhero Spider-Man.

While reading this story, consider the claims Dr. Wertham puts forth in the opening chapter of his book Seduction of the Innocent. Do you consider this a subversive work? Why or why not?

“Amazing Fantasy #15: ‘Spider-Man!’” from The Warrior’s Comic Book Den
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XIX

Civil Rights
Overview: Civil Rights

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- Survey of American Literature II. **Authored by:** Joshua Watson. **Provided by:** Reynolds Community College. **Located at:** http://www.reynolds.edu/. **License:** CC BY: Attribution
Video: Civil Rights and the 1950s

In which John Green teaches you about the early days of the Civil Rights movement. By way of providing context for this, John also talks a bit about wider America in the 1950s. The 1950s are a deeply nostalgic period for many Americans, but there is more than a little idealizing going on here. The 1950s were a time of economic expansion, new technologies, and a growing middle class. America was becoming a suburban nation thanks to cookie-cutter housing developments like the Levittowns. While the white working class saw their wages and status improve, the proverbial rising tide wasn’t lifting all proverbial ships. A lot of people were excluded from the prosperity of the 1950s. Segregation in housing and education made for some serious inequality for African Americans. As a result, the Civil Rights movement was born. John will talk about the early careers of Martin Luther King, Thurgood Marshall, Rosa Parks, and even Earl Warren. He’ll teach you about Brown v Board of Education, and the lesser known Mendez vs Westminster, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and all kinds of other stuff.

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A Talk to Teachers

Click the link below to read the article “A Talk to Teachers” by James Baldwin, originally published in The Saturday Review in 1961.

“James Baldwin: A Talk to Teachers” from Flagler Live.
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Video: Get Christie Love

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Additional Resources: Civil Rights

Helpful Websites

“Blaxploitation’s Baadassss History” from The Root

Blaxploitation Movie Trailers [Viewer Discretion Advised]

https://youtu.be/jmlhV1sqkOc
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XX

MLA Style
Page One in an Essay Abounds in Pitfalls for Errors

So that we all avoid any issues, here are the most common page one problems in order of appearance:

- Pagination appears in a header and is in the same font as the rest of the essay.
- Titles get centered but have no extra spaces above/below.
- In the heading, don’t have Essay 1 listed. Also avoid having Essay 1 as the title.
- Avoid assuming audiences don’t know what rhetoric or irony are. Only define terms you believe they may not know or whose wording is important to set forward and use.
- Make sure the first body paragraph features a topic sentence (somewhere . . . but usually first) that relates directly to the proving of your claim. Too often, we begin with the first “thing” of interest in the chapter or summarize the chapter in ways that don’t obviously further the thesis’ proving.
- Articles or essays are not novels or stories, so don’t misidentify the title, misspell the author’s (or my) name, or neglect to indicate which topic you’re analyzing.
- Why it matters is called exigency in writing. Convey some sense of why it matters that we understand your thesis.

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Paragraph Menu Settings Use No Extra Vertical Spaces

MLA calls for double-spacing with no extra spaces (around titles, heading, between paragraphs). Avoid getting a significant penalty for multiple MLA errors.

Here's a screen shot of the proper Paragraph menu settings in Word:

When managing the works cited page, use the Paragraph menu to create the hanging indent that indent the second or third lines of a given works cited entry.

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Works Cited Entries: What to Include

The Indian River State College Library pages have many useful pages covering MLA style and how to approach it. I like this page on what goes into a works cited entry for the way it reminds us that the entries have common elements we should remember.

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About the Author

OER books are usually blends of different texts, so I cannot speak to the original Lumen authors’ backgrounds.

Here is a little bit of background about myself, though (written in that third person that is always a warning sign for individuals, as Seinfeld episodes show us).

Josh Dickinson is an Associate Professor of English at Jefferson Community College in Watertown, NY. He teaches English and Education courses with a focus upon American Literature 1 and 2, Native American Literature, and non-Western Literature. Josh attended SUNY Jefferson, SUNY Potsdam, Syracuse University, and Colgate University.

Josh also supervises Jefferson’s EDGE (concurrent enrollment) English offerings at over a dozen local high school and BOCES sites.

He enjoys participating in the National Novel Writing Month contest, having completed seven novels so far each November.

Josh has officiated high school soccer matches for 25 years and supports pro teams Tottenham Hotspur, FC Barcelona, and Borussia Dortmund.

At the Canadian Museum of History, Ottawa: Go Habs, Go!