THE DOOR TO REVELATION

An Autobiography
by
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"Father, as the local minister, was
a person of parts—"

BOOK ONE
The Doorstone

DOOR TO REVELATION

The Doorstone

CHAPTER ONE

THIS is the story of a man who spent the first thirty-eight years of his life groping for something higher and more satisfying than the normal rewards from strictly worldly living. Then in the thirty-ninth year of his age, in a single night, without the slightest suggestion of a warning, something happened as he lay asleep that altered his career, his philosophy, his destiny. It is also the story of a man who sought to share what came from that experience with millions of his fellow mortals stumbling in bogs of spiritual perplexity, academic fallacy, political subversion and economic bedlam, . . . and how they received it, and what later grew out of it. ¶ That man, perforce, is the person I call Myself. I must, at least in a literary sense, become the hero of my own narrative. It is the only role that I can essay in order to tell the tale with the drama and clarity that have gone into living it.

It is no easy task to tell such a story. Time and again it befalls such an author to speak of people and events with a certain blighting candor. Likewise, people and events do not always conduct themselves as they do in tales of fiction. They have a queer way of speaking and acting that too often condemns them out of their own mouths and lives. Consequently there are times when a sympathetic penman would spare them the verdicts that would thereby be uttered on them. The moment has arrived in my affairs, however, when I believe it will greatly profit my fellow

Americans to know what has happened to a person not one bit unlike themselves, what he has sincerely tried to do to make this nation a more wholesome and livable place because of the aforesaid revelation, and what amazing, unique, and weird reactions he has met, coming from the souls he has sought most to help.

I once knew a woman who owned a puppy. She lived in a house in torrid New York. She became so solicitous of her pet that one summer she sought a place in the country where her poodle could romp to its small heart's content. But after going to the trouble of making a journey, she set the dog down on a five-acre lawn. With a pat and a push, she stood up to watch it gambol. But did that pooch gambol? Indeed, it did not. It took one look at those awful open spaces and streaked for a hole 'neath the nearby veranda. And it stayed in that hole, I might say, doggedly. No amount of coaxing throughout the remainder of that visit could persuade it to come forth. That dog was born in confinement, and would not be satisfied with anything but confinement. It did not really want light and freedom. When freedom was offered, it scurried for confinement in nice cozy darkness.

There are humans like that, alas millions of humans. They yelp and howl behind the window-panes of life, indicating that the crux of mortal bliss is escaping social dictates, or the vigilance of tutors who truly are but parrots for what wiser men have taught them. Offer them true spiritual freedom, or the chance to gambol in wholly new areas of thought and labor, and they snap at the hand of him who would release them, or consider as menaces those who invite them to know Life as something other than darkened holes beneath structures of orthodoxy.

Understand me at the start, I would not complain that they suffer such reflexes. If people in the main did not exhibit such reactions, there might be no consequential reason for going to the trouble of getting out this book. Lest anyone upbraid me for leaning toward pessimism, I offer this as well——

The past four decades of my life have wrought the conviction strong within me that the world also contains a poignant horde of earnest people who hunger and thirst after Things of the Spirit so rapaciously, as I too hungered when the Door to Revelation opened for me, that not to write this book and tell them how it has been with me—a person exactly like themselves—with a view toward assuring them that they may experience as I have experienced, might be taken as a stricture in spiritual indolence.

¶ Here then, is the story. . . . .

In neither false pride nor false modesty, simply upon the story's merits, I leave my reader to judge me as I am. Sufficient it is for me to say in foreword that I have not drawn on fiction for an item in this whole narration. If thousands of people wonder in places whether or not I have made matters a trifle more graphic than they actually happened, I make the plain assertion that I have lived these things personally, with my eyes opened wide and my consciousness functioning. Believe this history or not, I tell you it has happened. . . .

CHAPTER TWO

GOING back to the start of things, where all good stories should begin, I first realized that I was again on earth, with a new body for me to occupy and a fresh life-span ahead for me to live, in a little white-box parsonage on a country road in North Prescott, Massachusetts. I do not mean that I was born there. It was nearly two years after my birth at 32 Goodrich Street, in the city of Lynn, Massachusetts, that I suddenly realized that I was human and alive. I mean that my first observations of life that impressed themselves upon my mind and caused me to marvel at the mortal status in which I now found myself, began in that parsonage beside a country church.

My father was pastor in that church.

I was his only son—between two and three years old.

He was a very young and earnest pastor, my father, in the Methodist denomination. He was very pink in his aquiline face, as I remember him first in those far-off years, very slim in his build, and took a vast amount of pride in the assumption that the Tribe of Pelley could trace its genealogy back in an unbroken line to one Sir John Pelley, knighted sponsored by Good Queen Elizabeth. Which attested, of course, that the Pelleys were English.

Just what Sir John had received his knighthood for, unless it were the firing of certain Scottish hayricks or keeping Queen Bess from becoming overly grouchy on a Sabbath afternoon, was a matter not detailed in the family's traditions. For reasons that seemed sufficient to the sovereign and my forebear, he towered high enough above the rabble to be requested to kneel down. Whereupon it is logical that Queen Bess borrowed a handy

cutlass from some sneering cavalier and did for the first time—of record—what many excellent women have been doing ever since: namely, took a couple of good clouts at a Pelley while she had one down. Whether Sir John had the urge to clout her back is something that is nowhere made clear in the text. I assert that he could not have been a real Pelley, however, if he had not felt it. We may let the matter pass. . . .

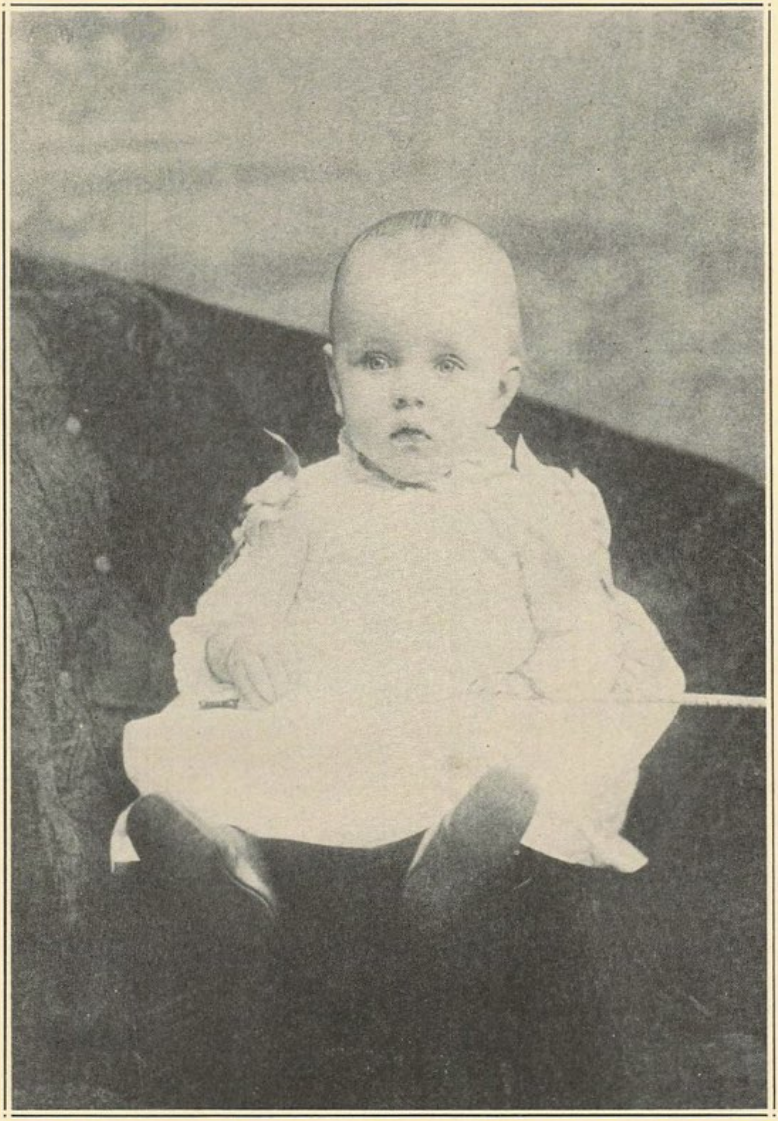
At any rate, he seems to have bogged down into genealogical inconsequence after being so honored, except for the item of multiple progeny that are still listed in Burke's Peerage. Certain of these were domiciled on ancestral acres in and around Southampton, I am told, when the eighteenth century opened. Whereupon it was again a woman who got a Pelley into trouble and caused him to step up from the lordly commonplace.

¶ I do not know the Christian name of my great-great-grandfather. But the family tradition has it, related as something to remember if not to emulate, that finding himself the youngest son of a lord in the Southampton neighborhood and thereby without much chance of inheriting either the family plate or scandals, he smashed the general stalemate of existence by falling in love with a commoner's daughter. Of course his family raised a fine shindy. And when he refused to give up the girl, although perfectly willing to make an honest woman out of her without persuasion from the shotgun, he showed the family mettle by helping her down a ladder from her second-story chamber in the dark of the moon. Next day in a vessel they were outbound for Virginia. In those days Virginia was known as "the Colonies." . . .

Just who performed the nuptial ceremonies need not cause palpitations. And there is a copious library of records showing how very common the commoner's daughter was—at least in the esteem of the boy's irate parents—in that she lost no time in honorably mothering a brood of sons and daughters. But before that sort of thing became an annual program, the Virginia-bound ship had encountered a storm. It was blown from its course to the Island of Newfoundland.

Thus did a little stramash of the elements keep me from referring to my forebears as contemporaries of the Washingtons, the Culpeppers, the Lees and the Fairfaxes. Put it down in your notebooks, you fine old southern coxcombs. Naught but the North Atlantic weather denied me to turn up my nose with the best of you! . . .

Pelleys are, indeed, as common in Newfoundland as Finkelbaums in the Washington government or Olsons in Wisconsin. Which implies that the good ship must have come to land, else I should not be here in this



"I was inducted into a new mortal coil, March 12th, 1890—"

western hemisphere kicking up this jostle in the present. And whether the newly-weds came ashore in a lighter, or were heaved overboard and swam, or came gracefully wafting in with their four legs down breeches buoys, is irrelevant to the fact that about the year 1875 there were so many Pelleys in and around St. Johns that it was advisable from the economic standpoint for some of them to emigrate. Among those who did so emigrate was Frederick William Pelley, my paternal grandfather of blessed memory, his wife Mahala, and eight small children all strung out behind them. My father of the wayside church was the second in that group and the oldest male offspring.

NOW before coming to "the States," my aforesaid grandsire had followed the sea like most Newfoundlanders, gone to Labrador or "the ice" every season after seal, grown a beard like a bath-mat, and generally worried himself with the fishing industry to such an extent that his life's career was finally altered by multiple experiences in getting his feet wet. And when a Newfoundlander wets his feet, such dampness is prodigious. ¶ Grandfather wet his feet so many times, splashing about St. Johns harbor, or Labrador, or the deck of a sailing sloop netting for cod, that he finally began to wonder why no one had ever thought to make water-tight boots. The more he considered water-tight boots, the less attention he gave to fishing. Came the epochal day when a final foot-wetting sent him ashore. Forthwith he started making boots—doughty leather boots—protected from the ocean's brine by cottonseed oil. He began selling these things to his erstwhile shipmates, then he sold them in the town. His shipmates and the town both discovered they were practical—at least Newfoundlanders came home from the sea with their feet a little less wet than they had been on previous occasions—and soon my grandfather possessed sufficient wherewithal to go in for little Pelleys in the aforesaid big way. By the time that Frederick William had booted most of the Newfoundland shipping industry with his horridly oiled overshoes, he began to cast speculative glances toward the adjacent United States. Finally he decided to go to Lynn, Massachusetts—Lynn being the center for manufacturing of the nation's boots and shoes. It may be added that hundreds of Newfoundland women, who had endured the drying-out of the Pelley brand of footwear behind their stoves on a thousand rainy evenings, doubtless breathed in olfactory relief when Frederick William, his consort and his progeny, waved poignant farewell to St. John's Narrows and Signal Hill blockhouse.

But there is always a fish-hook. What grandfather had failed to take into consideration was, that a certain aspiring young man by the name of Goodyear was bringing out at about the same time a boot of gutta-percha that did not make a housewife's darning-basket smell like a paint-factory in August. Grandfather landed his menage in Lynn and discovered to his horror that no Pelley boots were to dry behind any stoves in America while whole families vacated. But with true British fortitude he made the most of his unlucky advent and set about finding his domestic tribe a house.

¶ The chronicle has it that man and wife came finally upon a structure that suited and the price, it developed, was enticingly low. Grandfather performed his final feat of fishing—getting his wallet out of grandmother's bodice—and closed the deal before it escaped him. He was instructed to come around next morning and he would get his deed. Next morning when my forebear appeared on schedule, he found a stranger measuring the premises. "What do you want?" he demanded of my grandsire. ❧ ❧

Grandfather said, "This is my house. I'm about to move in."

"Over my dead body you will!" the other retorted. "You'll pay me for it first." ❧ ❧

"But I've already paid one man," cried my grandparent weakly, describing the one who had promised him the deed.

"That was my former tenant," scoffed the real landlord. "I ejected him yesterday for non-payment of rent."

Grandfather walked around for quite a while in a daze, looking for the man who had fleeced him of his savings. This person was still unlocated when my grandparent died, as late as 1912. A house renting for ten dollars a month sufficed the bilked Pelleys. Thirty-seven years later Frederick William gave up the ghost, worth twice as many thousands of dollars. ❧ ❧

Few Pelleys are caught in the same blunder twice.

So here was I, in the third year of my age, toddling on small, unsteady legs around the sun-baked foundations of a little New England church. I came into consciousness of myself that first drowsy summer, picking up bits of red and blue glass from about those foundations, as lawless youths from former years had done damage to the stained-glass windows.

My mother was a Goodale.

It is my understanding that the Goodales had been residents of Danvers, Massachusetts, ever since the days of the Puritan Fathers. There is no actual Mayflower Taint in my blood that I know of, yet on the other

hand, the residence of my maternal ancestors in the aforesaid community had little or nothing to do with the fact that Danvers is chiefly noted for containing the largest lunatic asylum in the New England States. As evidence of this, I aver that at the time of my mother's marriage to my father, my maternal grandsire embraced the humble but wholly rational calling of driving a horsecar about the crooked streets of Boston. I submit that anyone who can find his way about the crooked streets of Boston—let alone drive a horsecar through them—is by no means a lunatic.

In the matter of my maternal grandmother's extraction, there is just a bit of spice. My mother's mother had been an orphan, raised in Nova Scotia by some people named Thurston. When she finally came to Danvers and married Alonzo Goodale, she said her maiden name was Sutherland. Early in my boyhood I recall my father's teasing of my mother about her mother's family name. He said it was Sullivan. For some reason, known only to herself, my mother considered it something to secrete that her orphaned parent's name had a strong Celtic flavor. I never saw it so. If it made me one-quarter Irish, I was proud of the strain.

At any rate, Hannah Sutherland Thurston married Alonzo Goodale. And after a proper passing of years, their second daughter Grace married William George Apsey Pelley.

Again I say, in the year 1892 a boggle-eyed boy on legs somewhat bowed hunted bits of colored glass about the masonry of his father's country church, or slipped the rope with which he was tied to a front-yard pear tree down about his ankles and ran away down the road to a neighbor's—where he was served with cookies and questions, and later marched home to bed and a spanking.

It was a very lonely spot, the location of that dusty wayside church. On the eastern side of the parsonage stretched a graveyard.

There was no other house in sight. . . .

CHAPTER THREE

ABOUT that graveyard I thought a lot.

It was a very pleasant place in which to play, among those mossy headstones, finding berries in the brambles along its hoary fences. But when on week-day afternoons I saw the buggies of farmerfolk draw up around the church or when the weatherbeaten sheds in the rear had been filled with stamping horses, and after strange services for the midweek our neighbors brought out a long, black, cloth-covered box from the church's sacrosanct interior, toted it slowly up the road, and bore it in among the senile headstones, I knew a Nameless Horror.

What was contained in those heavy narrow boxes that made our parishioners act so stricken and constrained? Why were they always that dull unglistening black? I appealed to my mother. She always said, "Hush!" and cast a glance at father. . . .

Two or three years later, down in the village of East Templeton, an older girl named Carrie "passed over" suddenly. I had played with this Carrie. We had squatted under the same huge umbrella when a summer shower caught us off in a pasture. I recalled the intimacy as her funeral cortege wound slowly up the hill before the house, with fourteen whiffletrees creaking musically and steel tires striking small rocks in the sand. A matronly neighbor, delegated to keep me at home while my parents held the services, told me that Carrie was in the long black box that I could see through the glass of the carriage at the front.

What had happened to Carrie? I had known of her brief illness and vaguely understood it. But what did they mean by "dead" and how could she move in that mystical black box? I watched the procession move up out of sight. Carrie was gone. . . . And yet I cannot say truthfully that I did not know what was passing before me. Searching my memory honestly as I write these lines, it seems that in those far-off years I was quite as old a person as I feel myself to be at present. There were two souls of me inside—that was how it was! One knew all things. The other asked questions.

I cannot recall that I felt any sorrow at Carrie's mystical passing. I missed her as a playmate, but deep within my heart I understood that it had to be, that the world into which I had come was scheduled that way, that down some distant year—a millennium then in eternity—I too would be

ridden up a country hill in a sombre vehicle with plate-glass sides, lying unfeeling and motionless within. But I knew too that when that time came, movement would mean nothing. The real *I* would be . . . away!

¶ At the gigantic age of three, however, I was merely an ancient entity being ridden about the New England hills by two serious young adults, visiting strange families in bucolic sanctimony, exploring strange pantries, and being offered strange cookie-jars. As we drove home late each night, I looked up at high stars drowsily. I heard the tugs slapping measuredly against shafts of the buggy, the creaking of the whiffletree, the clicking of tires in the sand, or the soft warm rumble of the planking as we crossed some country bridge. . . .

Also too, I associated those belated returns with the far-off melancholy call of the whip-poor-will.

Father took his vocation seriously in those day of the New England Methodist Conference nearly fifty years bygone. The local minister was a person of parts. Pink and beardless though he was—his guileless eyes as blue as a small-town veranda ceiling—his word carried weight among those bent with living. As he visited his parishioners on comfortable farms set back in the hills, the buggy was always well-ballasted on leaving—with sacks of potatoes, turnips, and pumpkins. Just how mother felt about those visits is a matter of conjecture.

She developed a sense of humor—and vegetables!

Father received free rent of his parsonage, his donations of vegetables, and a salary of three hundred dollars in cash. Mother received the debatable compensations of listening Sunday after Sunday to the same callow sermons—in which her husband's knowledge of God was only exceeded by his shocking intimacy with the devil, of course before he entered the ministry—the opportunity of playing the matronly Samaritan to those parish wives whose husbands had in temper kicked them from bed, and the honor of accepting for her personal adornment such articles of clothing as other parish women decided they could "get along without." . . . The good woman, like ten thousand ministers' wives of the period, must have had pardonable cause for disquiet in her spirit when of theological etiquette and cruel necessity she found herself entering the church on Sabbath mornings wearing Mrs. Brown's bonnet, Mrs. Page's petticoats, and Mrs. King's slippers. But any suggestion of resentment would have meant a ruinous scandal. She would not have been properly contrite before the Lord. So mother wore the bonnets, the petticoats, and the slippers, and hoped against hope that St. Peter took note of it—or is it Gabriel who

takes note of such humiliations and sees to it that wives of ministers are ultimately rewarded?

At least mother wore them.

She wore them for two years, and I got stronger on my legs. And at the end of those two years father received a "call" to a larger parish in East Templeton—still in Massachusetts. The town was bigger, the church was bigger, so too was the parsonage. This last was a gaunt, two-story house set behind lugubrious pines that moaned softly when the wind swished through them on rainy autumn nights. You know how pine trees might be—great Norway pines—standing before a parsonage in a bleak New England village. . . .

They spoke strangely to me, those pine trees, on a hundred restless twilights, just before oil lamps were lit. They were striving to tell me something . . . that vaguely reminded me of . . . Carrie! . . .

CHAPTER FOUR

A MORE wholesome man than my father never lived. He was clean in his thinking, he was clean in his living. He had his peculiarities, indeed who has not? He aroused my ire on a hundred times when I had become a normal young American going about life's business on my own. But neither blood taint nor soul taint did he ever bequeath me. For that I can overlook our lesser dissensions. ¶ The Pelleys had been clean living, deeply religious people ever since the first Pelley set foot on Newfoundland. Mayhap that North Atlantic storm took all of the worldliness out of the runaway Pelley and set him on land aptly frightened at God. Anyhow, in my grandfather's sunset years, after he had retired from a real estate and building business, he had the aspect of a stocky, square-shouldered Moses with a burning gray eye and whiskers down his bosom. He spent weeks at a time in searching the Scriptures. The man knew his Bible as most men know their ledgers. That is not saying that he agreed with everything it held, especially the Old Testament. As a self-instructed scholar his learning was prodigious. Once he recited to me the entire list of the kings and queens of Britain, from the Roman conquest to the present, with the dates and lengths of the reigns of all. He did this from his memory. Not knowing the roster myself and therefore not being

in a position to check on the old gentleman, I approved his erudition and was properly awed.

The only thing about him that troubled me in those times when my parents took me to visit him, was his Britannic propensity for keeping a life-sized portrait of Queen Victoria, with the Union Jack draped over it, hanging in his dining room. This to me was ancestral sedition. It took fourteen first years of my life to pass the stage of fighting the American Revolution. For my own grandsire to brazenly flaunt a portrait of a British monarch to all and sundry was an insult from our clan to George Washington, John Hancock, Paul Revere, and Patrick Henry.

On my mother's side I had the Goodale ancestry—with that dash of County Sullivan. Three of my maternal grandfather's brothers fought most gallantly at Gettysburg. In her religious scruples and conscientious living, mother equalled father. If either of them erred in my early upbringing, it was by giving me an overdose of personal and domestic sanctimony, painful but guileless. Still, people took their religion seriously up in New England fifty years ago. And besides my father was a minister. I, his son, had to measure to my role.

At just what life period father "got religion" I have never been advised. I believe his age was fourteen years when his parents brought him down here to "the States" and he started to work in the shoe shops of Lynn. He was foreman of the Valpey & Anthony stitching-room when he met and married mother. They set up a modest home on Henry Avenue, in Lynn, moving later into Goodrich Street, where I was inducted into a new mortal coil at seven minutes to one o'clock on the morning of March 12, 1890. Let astrologers do with that date what they will. . . .

Father got his ministerial preparation in Boston Theological Seminary, in evening school classes. His North Prescott pastorate was his first. The church structure has lately been transported and reconstructed in Amherst, Massachusetts, as the entire district so familiar to my childhood now lies submerged in a vast inland lake—a reservoir for electric power that serves western Massachusetts. At any rate, father got religion and apparently got it hard. The only drawback about continuing as a pastor was a dearth of compensation. With the arrival of the hard times of 1893, even Mrs. Brown's bonnets, Mrs. Page's petticoats, and Mrs. King's slippers, were not available for mother. Something had to be done.

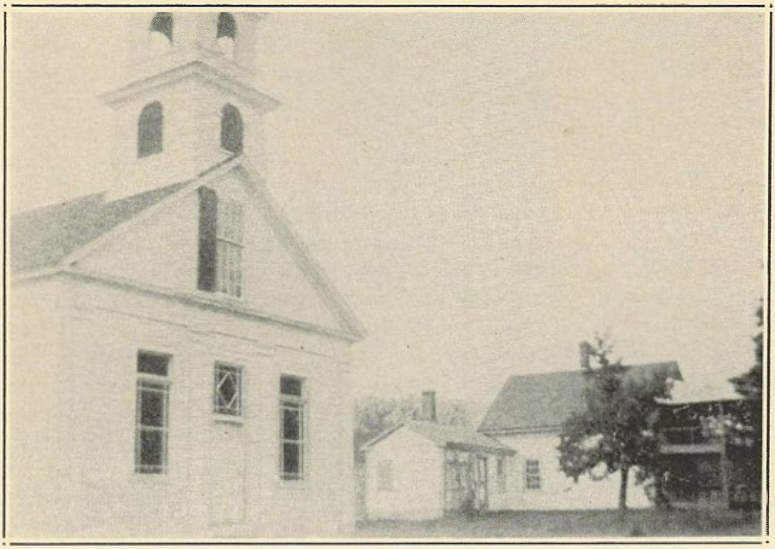
Looking back now on those years, I recall that my attitude and angle on this new life in which I found myself, comprised many items that were never quite accounted for in my father's fundamentalism. In the first

place, according to modern psychologists, no infant is supposed to think or remember until it has acquired a language to think or remember *in*. This is not true. Without meaning to publicize myself as unduly precocious, time and again after reaching maturity I recounted to mother the exact geography of the Goodrich Street rooms from which she and father moved before I was aged six months. I have told her of the steepness of the stair-flight down from upper bedrooms, the patterns of the carpets on the floors, of the short narrow hallway opening to the parlor, of the great easel with its painting of dogwood blossoms in a frame of orange plush that stood in a corner. I recalled to her the twin vases of glutinous whiteness that stood near either end of the parlor mantel holding the tail-feathers from some long-denuded peacock. I remember as well the "air-castle" made from bristles tied with pink yarn that hung from the ceiling and was supposed to be something very swank in the furnishing of parlors before the opening of this century.

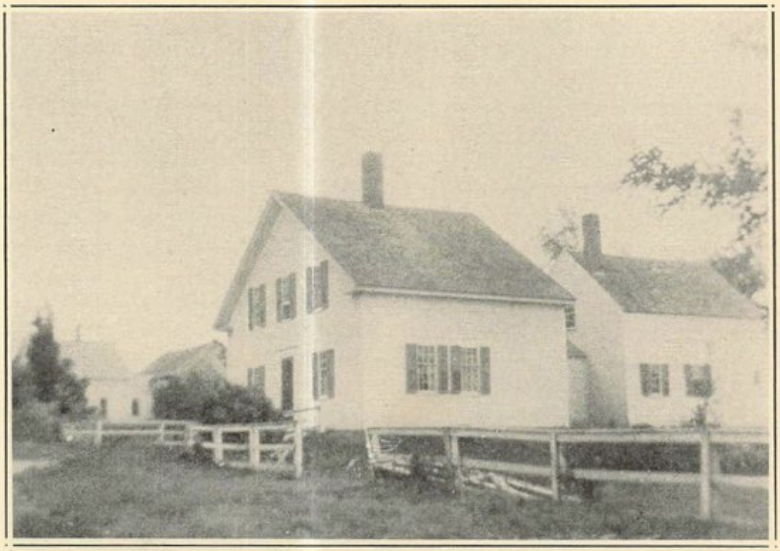
I have a distinct recollection, too, of journeying on my back in the depths of my carriage, feeling very hot, stuffy, and annoyed at my helpless inconvenience as I gazed up at the grey-silk lining of the vehicle's parasol suspended above me on nickel-plated arm. I recall a day in a high wind when my carriage blew from mother's grasp, bringing up against a fence and spilling me out . . . with no worse effects than bloodying my nose.

¶ The strange part of those memories has been, that I seemed to know all about the mortal confinement into which I had gotten myself. Then again, the mortal side of me did not. I felt upon a hundred occasions that I was "older" than my parents and wanted to convey how wrong and narrow they seemed to me in many of their pronouncements. It may be argued that every child does likewise. That too I concede. But I want to know *why*. If children—as maintained by orthodox philosophy—are the physical products of parental procreation, whence arise their impulses to exasperation when the hapless offspring is forced to submit to the dictates of adults, especially when unreasonable? Understand me, I do not refer to antagonisms to normal discipline required to protect and train a child and prepare it for maturity. I refer to exasperations toward parental limitations, the expression of ethical tenets if you please, with which the youngster disagrees.

It took me thirty-eight years to find the answer to that mystery. But I found it. It came as the aftermath of a single night's esoteric experience high in the mountains of distant California—when "The Door to Revelation" opened for me suddenly—that has been concretely and specifically



"I hunted colored glass around the masonry
of that North Prescott church—"



"My only sister, Edna, had been born in the
Templeton Center House, March 15th, 1894—"

responsible for what I have done in the United States since. But back there in 1893 my father had never heard of esoterics. My parents knew nothing of any aspects of life but those which offered them food and clothing, made them conform to current social dictates and impressed upon them that the Age of Miracles closed nineteen hundred years bygone—when our Lord took a sort of celestial levitation to heavenly realms, thereafter to become divine counsel for the defense, leaving the earth to run itself and talk about His visit through all future time.

In short, they were devout, clean living, orthodox people, strictly circumscribed by the Puritanic code of ethics and a literal interpretation of the Jewish Holy Scriptures. And born unto them had been a small, tow-headed cub who occasionally said or did things that brought qualms about his sanity. My zeal for entering anything which lured me, had a maturity that caused much consternation. I speak of certain incidents, I say again, to proclaim not my precocity but because I believe that in my own case I was proving something that my father's fundamentalism had tragically passed by. This again concerns the opening of the Door. I read fluently before I started school. I startled my parents of a week in 1895 when they opened their copy of the weekly *Zion's Herald* and beheld a contribution in The Youth's Letter-Box signed William Dudley Pelley. I had written and mailed the letter myself. It attested to the large experience of myself as gardener, containing among other asservations which required a certain editing, " . . . I have had beans spring up on me in one night." This was accurately the first time anywhere that the name of this author appeared publicly in print. Thereafter the stamp box was kept beyond my reach. . . .

Then came the incident of delivering a sermon.

ONE afternoon they missed me from the parsonage. A search of the neighborhood failed to produce me. The search widened sharply, my mother's panic growing. They looked in the well behind the parsonage. I had a propensity for wells. But I was not down the well. Groups of neighbors contributed to the search and commenced to scour the village. Finally a chair-ridden old lady was found who said, "I saw that Pelley child go into his father's church across the village green."

A swift examination showed that the key, usually kept in the clock at the parsonage, was truly in the lock. My parents pushed open that door and entered. Once in the vestry they heard a childish treble coming from the auditorium up near the pulpit. Opening the inside leathern doors, they

beheld my reader's humble servant standing on the seat of an altar chair tugged into position behind the high rostrum. With the pulpit's Bible opened before him, and a badly scrawled sermon spread out upon it, he was wholly absorbed in addressing an oration to that stretch of empty pews. ❧ ❧

Father was rueful and not a little frightened. He told me on a Sunday afternoon walk after I had reached my majority that the thing upsetting him most at the moment had been the fact that I seemed to be preaching a sermon quite on a par with his own at the time. Of course the neighbors laughed about it, and explained it as the mimicry of adulthood by a child. Father was not so sure. . . .

Again to forecast the Opening of the Door, I cannot remember a time when a public rostrum has not seemed as familiar to me as my chair at a table or a stool before a typecase. I say that something was "poking through" in those years, to be propounded later on. I was no child prodigy. Such things as prodigies, correctly understood, I declare do not exist. Quite another process is at work, as I dramatically found out. But neither father, mother, nor myself, knew it at the time.

After father had given up the ministry and opened a small shop in Templeton Center—in which community my only sister Edna was born in 1894—he made just one experiment on me, which for his own peace of mind he never repeated.

Like all normal youngsters I had a lawless tendency to explore a cool and savory pantry while my elders were elsewhere, abstracting sundry wedges of cold apple pie. Repeatedly warned, and as repeatedly spanked, I was finally advised that if I did it once more I would be penalized by having to shift for myself down all future years. The picture of me struggling against society's rapacities without fond and loving parents to fend for me was painted as graphically and luridly as possible. Came the day in spite of it when they bagged me again at the pie-shelf, red handed. Father dragged me forth with mock tears on his face.

"The day has come, Gracie," he told mother tragically. "It is the saddest of our lives, when we lose our darling boy."

"You mean he's disobeyed again?"

"Disobeyed again? Look at his face. Now he must go forth and fight the cruel world. Never will he see his loving folks hereafter."

Mother entered into the penalizing drama. She brought forth my best Sunday suit and bade me put it on. She rolled sundry other clothes in an eloquent bundle, including an extra pair of shoes and a brace of cold

flapjacks as my first meal "in the world." Finally the two of them tied up the kerchief, found me a walking-stick and thrust it through the top. Putting this combination over my shoulder, mother made a great shindy about "kissing me for the last time" and asking if, after she was dead, I would return as a man and put flowers on her grave.

"Oh, sure," I responded, with eyes fixed on the gate.

Without the slightest tear, certainly with no assistance, I swung my possessions over my shoulder, said goodbye to the cat, and started for the street. Father told it afterward that never in his life did he know of a youngster of my leg-length scuttling out of sight so fast. I made the turn in the road while he and mother were staring at one another and wondering if their strategy had somehow gone askew. . . .

"This is enough!" dad exploded finally. "Why, the whelp might get lost!"

¶ Pulling his hat on his head like a pot, he started on my trail in double-jig speed. I was halfway down the hill out of Templeton Center—going toward East Templeton, Gardner, Boston, London, Paris, and St. Petersburg—before he caught up with me and tried to snatch my ear. Instead of blubbering at departing my fond and loving parents, the blubbering one was coming in sight pursuing me. I had rather expected something of this order. Such invitings to adventure were too good to be true. Discarding my Ragged-Robin bundle, I took to a pasture as capture was imminent. I was in the act of squirming through a fence and gaining to a woodlot when father put an end to the whole brilliant business. With his hands on my heels, I came toward him in reverse. He held me up before him.

"Aren't you heartbroken at leaving your fond and loving parents?"

"No, sir," said I truthfully.

"You're not heartbroken?" he bellowed, shaking me again on a level with his face.

"N-n-no," I persisted as we got back to the road. "You *said* I could go out into the c-cold and cruel world. Now you won't let me!"

"Because you're not sorrowful."

"I don't see nuthin' to be sorrowful about. I wanna g-go out into the c-cold and cruel world!"

"March!" said my parent, pushing me before him.

"Where?"

"Home, you young blatherskite!" His face was beet red. . . .

CHAPTER FIVE

HIS FACE was not red but a grisly white, one murky afternoon in the autumn that followed, when he strode tragically into the house with a bandaged bundle of small human flesh limp across his arms. "Don't be frightened, Gracie," he apprized my mother, "but . . . our small boy's been hurt."

Mother stifled the scream that arose in her throat. She flew ahead of him and opened the bedroom door. "What happened?" she choked. ¶ "He fell down behind the horse's hoofs from the seat of the wagon," said father.

Then he laid me on the bed. He turned back the odorous horse-blanket in which I was rolled. Mother's scream came out of her throat. My head was a mass of bruises and bandages—my wounds patched together by a country doctor with generous applications of black cambric sticking-plaster. The frenzied fingers of my stricken young matron started taking off my clothes. "What do you mean, fell down from the wagon?"

"We reached the sawmill all right, and he played around while I filled my barrels with sawdust for banking the foundations of the house for the winter. As I got them loaded, I found I had to unhinge the seat and place it on top of the two forward barrels. The seat was none too steady but I told him to cling tightly to my arm. We came up the hill this side of Otter River. He suddenly saw a lone russet apple hanging on a tree just over the fence. He wanted that apple. I told him to hold the reins and I'd get it for him."

"You left him alone with that fractious horse?"

"The horse was all right till I handed up the apple. Sonny's mittens fumbled it. He grabbed to keep from losing it and the apple hit the horse. He gave a sudden jump and sonny lost his balance. He pitched straight downward between horse and whiffletree."

"Couldn't you catch him?"

"I tried to catch him but his clothing didn't hold. I could only clutch the reins and keep the horse from bolting. He started to rear and prance . . . with sonny . . . down there . . . under his hoofs."

Mother tried to get me in her arms. It aroused me to consciousness. She said that I smiled at her, and it was worse than a blow. "You let that horse *dance* on him?" she flamed at father.

"I only remember that somehow I braced my shoulder against the front

wheel and held the leg of that horse with my left hand while I dragged out Sonny to safety with my right."

"His bones must be broken. He may be hurt internally!"

"No!—I rolled him in a blanket and got him to Doctor Johnson's. Johnson said it was a miracle, but most of his injuries are confined to his scalp—his scalp and his face."

It was my first major mishap. A nervous horse had done his best to stamp out my life. He had succeeded in doing nothing worse than tearing open the side of my head and putting a horseshoe-shaped wound on the top of my scalp—my Luck Sign. I recall the whole incident graphically enough. Strange to say, I remember the offensive odor of that horse-blanket in which father rolled me in that mad gallop for the doctor's house more than I remember any pain from my injuries. Father could not bear to see stitches taken in my flesh. So the black sticking-plaster was employed instead, and it stayed on my face for a month and a day. Each morning it became a ceremony to have a portion cut away. I became quite proud of it. When the final fragment had gone, I found myself with the pattern of a horseshoe cut on my scalp and a scar down my right cheek that gradually diminished as the years came along until it finally showed as a mark beneath my eyebrow. It is there at this moment.

This propensity for coming unscathed out of accidents was something that followed me all through my life. Since that first mishap forty years ago, I have tumbled from a barn roof onto a rock-pile, been carried down a hill on an uncontrolled bicycle to plunge head-first through the glass of a grocery, been run over and dragged fifty feet by a flivver, gone through a dozen auto smash-ups—none of them of my own making, however—gone through the world war in Siberia with men about me dying like flies, and capped all these jeopardies with a forced night-landing and airplane "crack-up" over the wintry wastes of middle Virginia, and not added a single scar on my body to the one beneath my eye. I have never suffered a broken bone. I have only been in a hospital once, when I had a ten-week spell of typhoid in my thirty-second year. It became a tradition among my intimates when a lengthy auto trip was contemplated: "Let Bill do the driving and we'll get there in safety. He bears a charmed life."

Up to my thirty-ninth year I accepted this charmed-life business in the nature of luck. In all contrition, the Opening of the Door revealed to me that it was nothing of the sort. I had a protection about my physical self that it would be sacrilege to dispute and ingratitude to deny. How much longer it maintains is not for discussion. It is my conviction, however,

that it will maintain until I get the Job done which I came into life to do.

¶ Time and time again, after entering upon the ugly and dangerous work of antagonizing and defeating the forces of alien corruption in our nation, plots have been laid to do me harm. Always I have had strange premonitions of such mischiefs and been elsewhere when agents of conspirators sought to wreak their vengeance on me. I have become an absolute fatalist in that which men term Destiny. I believe I still have some bad roughings-up ahead at the hands of hoodwinked mobs, but if I depart this world suddenly it will be because the work which has called me into it—insofar as it was up to me to do it—has been completed.

The court-plaster came off my face in due season and I was soon swinging on our front gate as audaciously as ever. By that time, however, my parents had a new interest. My only sister Edna Grace had been born in the Templeton Center house on the 15th of March, 1894, and lack of patronage in the dry-goods business on which father embarked briefly after quitting the ministry, compelled my parent to close his store. We moved back to East Templeton. And in the village where he had formerly been the only pastor, he now set himself up as the only cobbler.

THE other day I passed the house into which we moved on this return, when mother and I took a motor trip for a day to East Templeton. It stands on the south side of the highway, halfway up the first grade running westward from the village, a little flat box-house with barn adjoining. How small and tawdry and barren it looked! How big and well-kept and bowered in trees and shrubs it was, as I had remembered it throughout four decades of absence!

Father bought this little house and a score of acres of land about, colloquially known as the Fairbanks Place, early in 1895, and there we made our residence for the ensuing two years. During this time a sainted soul whom I knew as Grandma Fairbanks gave me my first instruction in reading, using her sewing shears to point out the words in a book of Aesop's Fables. She had reserved two of the upstairs rooms for occupancy until her death, as a condition of the sale.

She was a patient-faced New England grandmother who wore her hair behind in a tight little walnut and only ventured forth into the village on a Sabbath morning when she put on a rusty bonnet, draped a genuine Paisley shawl about her rotund figure and attended divine service in the same church in which I had once held forth to my father's consternation.

¶ Those all-too-brief years in East Templeton when we lived "downstairs

under Grandma Fairbanks" remain in my memory as the perfect idyl of New England existence. When many years later I filled the fiction magazines of the country with homely stories of "Paris, Vermont" and the adventures of Sam Hod and his partner in conducting *The Paris Daily Telegraph,* it was this Massachusetts village of East Templeton that I called to do service as my "Foxboro Center, just over the mountain." . . .

Certain items stand out in recollection poignantly: the aforementioned death of Carrie while we lived in this house, my first sight of an electric car when the railway came through from Gardner, the sweet piping of spring frogs in the wallow down below the pasture, the dank smell of the rushes that grew along the Causeway where the road from the village bisected twin ponds, church bells tolling beautifully on summer Sabbath mornings, my mother's clear but slightly melancholy voice singing hymns in opal twilight, or the jingle of the bells on sleighs and bobsleds in the icy winter as they mounted the hill before the house and up into carmine sunset. No hurtling Sunday motorists disturbed the calm of that New England ruralism. I wandered the surrounding country by summer and winter, got into many of the scrapes depicted in *The Fog,* my second novel, finally approached that fraught period when I must start to school. But before doing so, I underwent another queer experience that lifted the Veil thus early on the Life-Behind-Life. . . .

One singing summer morning, with Edna an infant in her cradle and my elders busy elsewhere, I went out behind the house. The apple blossoms were heavy on the gnarled trees about me. A small knoll lifted southeastward at the edge of the mowing. I halted on this knoll and surveyed the bright landscape.

I looked at piled clouds in the berylline sky. I looked across meadow, pasture and woodlot. I watched bevies of butterflies wabbling into distance. At length I looked down—almost at my feet. An ant ran up a grass-stalk, found no further place to go, and descended as it came. All the world was lush with life. The universe throbbed with it. Then with a sense of shock, my attention came to rest on the body that I occupied. It was a healthy but dumpy little body. The feet were quite grimy. I believe one toe was wrapped in a rag. Despite my five years, I suddenly asked myself a question from the depths of Ageless Wisdom:

How had I come in that little boy's body?

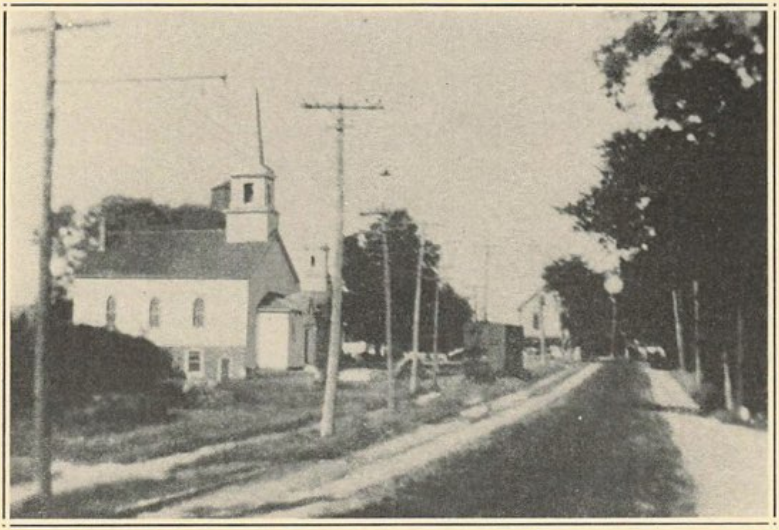
What was I doing in it indeed, in this vibrant world that deployed all about me. What if all of it had never "happened"? Where would I be then? I knew I would be somewhere. It seemed as though, for an instant,

standing on that knoll, a corner of the veil of Eternal Mortality was flashingly lifted, that despite all the assurance of my father's theology I had known such singing Nature a thousand times before. How funny to be encased in that pudgy little hulk of peregrinating protoplasm that got dirty so quickly, that had to be fed and washed and put to bed nightly, whose nether portions could be spanked with such blighting embarrassment! Where had all of these human beings come from? Where had the ant come from that ran up the stalk? Where had father and mother come from, and my "new" sister Edna? Yes, and where had Carrie, my playmate of yesteryear, "gone"?

I knew. I *knew!* It came to me for a fleeting instant on that meadow upland. Then Mortality shut down. I was the minister-cobbler's small son again. And two months later found me in school. . . .

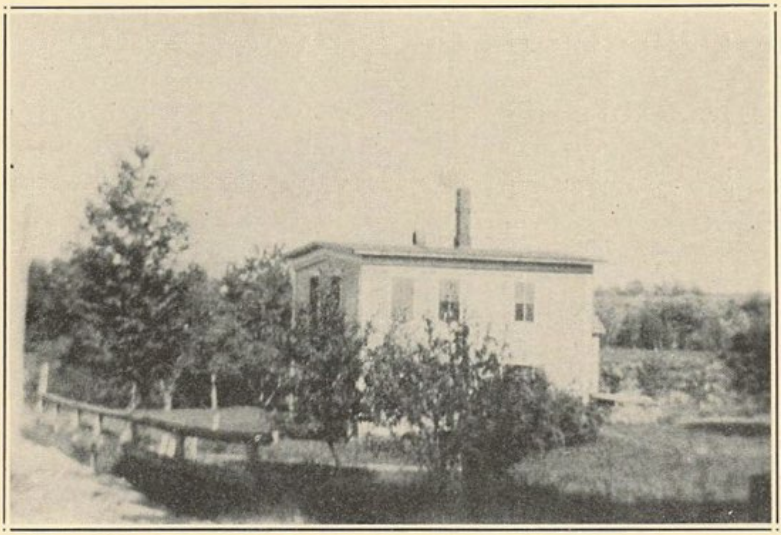
THE schoolhouse still stands, or it did this past autumn. It was located halfway up School Street, where all schools should be located in New England villages. East Templeton has since built a new and more modern schoolhouse and the building where I began my education—at least academically—now houses the lodge of American Red Men. Back in 1895 it was a white, two-story structure surmounted by a cupola in which was the school-bell. All in all, it was the typical American schoolhouse of story and tradition, with its sanitary arrangements in the telephone-booth manner at the rear of the yard, and huge stoves inside its two classrooms, always too hot or too cold in the winter. It was a heritage as well as a privilege to have attended such a school. . . . And mother made such a fuss about "getting me ready" . . . she discussed with Grandma Fairbanks how she should help me overcome my diffidence and adjust myself socially, and worried a lot about how the older boys would treat me. Finally when the first Tuesday in that epochal September arrived, she grasped me by a very clean hand and led me, a much-starched and well-turned-out little boy, down through the village and up to the schoolhouse. I think she meant to ask the older pupils to be kind to me, and remember that I was the former minister's son, till I completed my social adjustments.

What really happened was, that the instant I espied a crowd of boys gathered in the yard, I broke from her hand, that they should not see my mother fetching me to school. I charged them with a whoop. She kept calling frantically after me but I affected not to hear. A strange boy said to me, "Who's that woman? She sounds like a cow that's lost her



"—I saw the Pelley child go into his
father's church—"

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"—those all-too-brief years in East Templeton,
when we lived 'under Grandma Fairbanks'—"

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calf." "Oh," I opined, "her kid's prob'ly loose 'round here somewhere." And I scuttled out of sight.

I doubt if mother ever read a book on child psychology. But it never has ceased to perplex or perturb her that I had an uncanny yen to make my own way. Even in 1933, when I had such national personages as Barney M. Baruch and Raymond F. Moley bumbling on my trail, poor mother's concern was only for my safety. What if those men "did" something to me, she wanted to be told. When I assailed Franklin D. Roosevelt with the charge that his New Deal was naught but a Communistic scheme to get control of the nation's Christian-Gentile business institutions and that he ought to be impeached for his betrayal of his office, she would sit by the hour very straight in her chair, arms folded tightly, blinking her eyes. "But what will you do," she quavered, " if you actually get the *President* after you?" And when I replied, "I hope that I do, because it'll bring this nation from its coma about what's going on," she only received my comment in terms of the little tad who once fell down behind a horse's hoofs, and who might yet end his days being trodden into pulp by a far more evil Beast. I might even be cast in a federal penitentiary for lese majesty, something of the sort! . . .

As if going to a federal penitentiary were anything to bemoan if the sending were done by a lot of Russocrat politicians, frantically trying to suppress a patriotic citizen who was shouting too loudly about their skullduggeries! ☙ ☙

Incidentally, during those first two years of my schooling I got my first notions of national politics.

Bryan made his celebrated Cross of Gold Speech at the Chicago convention and gangs of boys went to and fro in the schoolyard demanding of me—and others—whether we were Republicans or whether we were Democrats. I appealed to my father. . . .

"Pa, am I a Republican or a Demmy-crack?"

"Why," he responded, "you're a Republican."

"Why am I a Republican?"

"Because *I'm* a Republican—and you happen to be my son."

Thus I discovered that politics had much in common with religion—or for that matter, citizenship itself. You are born into all of them.

I reported to my schoolmates that I "stood" for McKinley.

"All right," they decided. And forthwith I was exempt from manhandling—or maybe it was boy-handling—and joined in mussing up such other boys as had Demmy-crack fathers. . . .

Two autumns, two winters, and two springtimes, I went to that village school. I knew how a half-frozen lunch tasted from a pail that smelled of the grease of many home-made doughnuts. I experienced the horror of Friday-afternoon "piece speakin'" when the selectmen came in to take note of our eloquence. I idled on my way home from school, summer and winter, as boys will idle. I knew the joys of entering a warm house in the twilight, with only an oil lamp burning in the kitchen but the odor of frying potatoes savory from the stove. After supper I had my chores to do, and split my morning kindling. In another world, all of it, where life was wholesome and not an alien nightmare! . . .

CHAPTER SIX

WE WERE always moving.

Father's attempts at cobbling were equally as unprofitable as his ministry or the store. He was by no means a ne'er-do-well. Money was scarce up in the New England hills in those hard times of forty years ago as it is all over our nation today. He tried to eke out a living and his old experience in a stitching-room made him one of the best cobblers who ever fitted a shoe on a last. But he had too much intellect and energy to stay a mere cobbler. A series of visits to West Gardner in 1896 resulted in his securing a job as reporter and advertising solicitor on the town's weekly paper. Insofar as I was involved, I affirm it was Destiny.

From the first day that I set foot in *The Gardner Journal* office there was something hauntingly familiar about it. Not that particular office. Any printing office. No one had to show me how to hold a "stick" properly. I seemed to know the printer's case by instinct—only it wasn't instinct. Every moment of my spare time, after we moved to Gardner, I spent about those premises. Snatching up any composing-stick that a compositor laid down, I made for a stool and set up lines of type. I remember Old Man Whitaker, one of the paper's proprietors, exclaiming at the way I quadded out my lines. "Who taught you to do that?" he demanded, astonished.

I looked at him in equal wonder. Why should anyone "teach" me how to do it? It was simply done that way, and what more could be said?

"Oh, I learnt it years ago," I cried disdainfully. This at the ripe old age of seven.

The fascination which presses, type, and the smell that inked paper held for me, became my boyhood's dominant note. When irate compositors finally escorted me from the premises none too gently because they always found my name set up in precisely that composing-stick which they required to use next, the burning ambition of my small life was to have my own office and work my own outfit. One of the bitter disillusions of my childhood came from answering an advertisement in a Sunday supplement that offered "a complete printing outfit" to any juvenile who mailed one dollar to the advertisers. To get that dollar I ran my legs off on errands, I conducted a lemonade stand, I sold papers on the streets. Had the price been ten thousand dollars it would have seemed no larger nor harder to secure. All the same, I got it. I took four silver quarters to father, asking him to see that they were properly mailed. For a week I dozed to sleep each night envisioning equipment presently to arrive which in a later generation should have been capable of printing *The Saturday Evening Post*. I prepared a room in the cellar, estimated where I meant to locate the press, where the typeracks and imposing-stones should stand. Finally the expressman tossed out a package addressed to me, not much larger than a good-sized cigar-box. I cut the strings, puzzled, wondering who had sent me a gift out of season. Thereupon I lifted out a dinky little contraption of cheapest cast-iron about the size of a corporation's seal. In the box was a little tray of types, each one thrust down endways, two characters only to each compartment. There was likewise an ink dauber and a little tube of ink. In cold horror I looked at the manfacturer's name upon the wrapper and grasped that here at last was my printing plant. . . . There were not enough types to set up my name.

I fled blindly to the cellar and wept bitter tears. That dollar had come hard. While father was not exactly calloused, this *denouement* caused him laughter. "You'll learn by such experiences," he told me, "never to buy a pig in a bag."

"But I didn't want a pig. I wanted a printing plant like Whiting & Whitaker's."

"Did you actually think you could get such a plant for one dollar?"

"The newspaper said a printing outfit."

"I'm sorry, son. But let this be a lesson never to give up money for anything without seeing first just what you're buying."

So I made my first discovery that some men are liars—when it comes to

enticing the pence of children with offers in Sunday supplements. But it did not diminish my fanaticism to set myself up in the printing business as soon as I found the proper equipment. It took me the next four years to do it, but I did it in the end. And while I was doing it, father quit *The Gardner Journal* and opened an auction room and furniture store in the Greenwood Block in West Gardner Square.

ALTHOUGH I have since come to know every city and town of consequence in America from going to and fro in my country and traveling up and down in it, and have lived in the North, the South, the East and the West, it is to this little Massachusetts town that my thoughts will return whenever I visualize a place that represents home. We lived at 22 Lake Street when we first moved to Gardner, in a house that has long-since been demolished. It was while living in this house that I pitched off the barn roof onto a rock-pile—and my bones held together. While living in this house too, the Spanish War broke out. For a time I went around both sickened and thrilled that my father had declared his intention of enlisting. He had just been naturalized during his employment on *The Journal* and wanted to prove the sincerity of the gesture. But family responsibilities dictated otherwise.

The Spanish War, to me, consisted mostly of flag-raisings. That is what they called the open-air gatherings, held in the evenings, when military band concerts were followed by fiery speeches concerning our responsibilities in Cuba. At the proper dramatic moment a huge flag was unfurled, previously rolled tightly on an overhead cable stretched across the Square. Then after the huzzahing, came the long queues of men stepping up to enlist. ❧ ❧

One epochal evening I was chosen as guest of honor to pull the cord that unfurled the flag from the veranda of the Windsor House at Gardner Center. It was more than a cord. It was almost a clothesline. It came down in a two-hundred-foot span from the tightly-furled flag to the hotel's upper veranda. Disdaining adult assistance, I got me up on the balcony railing, in nervous hysteria to do the patriotic thing. The music had paused. The orator for the occasion was thrusting up his arms, imploring the flag to come shaking down in colorful glory above the heads of that crowd.

"Go ahead, pull it!" father whispered hoarsely.

I pulled and I tugged. The wrapping would not budge.

"*Pull* it, you cub!" came his louder admonition. Uncle Sam might be losing hundreds of recruits by this flaw in the ceremonies.

"I'm trying to pull it!"
"Here, let me have it."
"No! I wanna pull it!"
"Well, go ahead and *pull* it."
The orator was getting tired holding up his arms. Old Glory was failing badly to deliver. I gave another tremendous tug with all my strength. But I had not estimated my small equilibrium. With a sickening lurch it dawned upon me that the flag was pulling me instead of my pulling the flag—and below me yawned a chasm that was filled with human heads. Behold I was going somewhere, and it certainly was not to Cuba. Father made one frantic lurch and caught me by an ankle. I hung onto the rope—in fact, in his hands I was a happy extension of it. He pulled a small boy, and a small boy pulled the cord. And down came Old Glory at last, so the badly frayed orator could take down his arms. As for me, the Official Flag Puller, a dozen hands hauled me back upon the veranda by the feet and legs.
After that, they fought the war.
The recruits trained in the local fire-houses in romantic blue squads. After their departures we kept track of them by the scare heads in the Boston dailies tacked before the entrance of David Dora's News Room. It was the beginning of the days of yellow journalism and the Theodore Roosevelt tradition. When George Dewey whipped the Spanish fleet, all the neighborhood boys prevailed upon their elders to buy them marine suits. Thus clad, we climbed to dizzy heights in trees, swung by one arm to the horror of the girls, and advised the universe, "You may fire when you are ready, Gridley!" We became so martial on general principles that once I nearly speared the little Brooks boy with the family butcher-knife attached as a bayonet to a broomstick, when the mob of us turned loose to fight a miniature San Juan Hill. By night we fell asleep to the sweet and poignant notes of some songster above the piano keys in a nearby house singing "Just As the Sun Went Down." . . .

FATHER'S store at 201 Central Street sold everything in the way of appointments for the American home from bedsteads to hairpins. He had a streak of Yankee barter in his makeup that saw nothing unethical, despite his ministerial training, in acquiring the goods of an entire household at auction prices, transferring them to the backroom of his emporium, repairing and repainting them, and offering them to all and sundry as quite as good as new. Mother's complaint in those days was, that if a

customer called for some article of furniture which he failed to have in stock, he made a quick trip homeward, jerked it out of our household's equipment and spurted back to garner the money. When she found him loading her best parlor suite onto a wagon one day because some local Swede had called for a parlor suite, she put a final stop to it. She said he would have sold the beds out from under us children, if beds had been wanted and his store did not have them. "You'll miss one of your children some night," she declared heatedly after one of these forays, "and discover Billie or Edna was asleep on some mattress you've sold to a Polock." Mother was funny that way.

But father prospered in this store and eventually we moved to a larger house at 180 Oak Street. I remember sitting up in that house until twelve o'clock one midnight to watch the old century out and the new century in. Had I appreciated much that this new century would contain, I would have treated that night like any other night and not lost my slumber.

The Oak Street district in the northwest part of town has long-since been built up into a smart suburban neighborhood. But in those bygone days of the Spanish War it was almost "in the country" . . . the woods came down from Bancroft's Hill nearly to our rear door. With Willie Leamy, a boyhood chum, I tramped those woods. We came to know every square foot of that sylvan paradise. We knew every bypath, every pine glade, every swampland, every bog-hole. We knew where to look for the first trailing arbutus, and where the lady's-slippers grew in the warmth of piny hillsides. We knew where to go to scare out the partridges. We knew how to locate the haunted spot that had seen the death of a hunting youth by the accidental discharge of the rifle of a friend. No boy who has not known his New England—or American—woodlands between six and ten years old, has the proper experience to ballast his life.

I lived those far-off years in the very heart and essence of a clean, wholesome, untarnished America which must be brought back. Each year held four holidays sacredly observed in the best Nordic tradition: Memorial Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Those were the years when the Grand Army of the Republic was still a power in the land, and the decorating of the graves of soldiers who had died for the Union was a hallowed obligation. Never do I smell the fragrance of moist lilacs in the springtime that I am not carried back to those Memorial Days when hosts of men in blue, the silver beginning to show in their hair, placed New England flowers tenderly on mossy mounds beneath which com-

rades of other years were sleeping. We had appropriate exercises too, in the West Gardner schools. Old soldiers came in and addressed the classes. Righteous war, defense of one's country, fighting and dying for sacred principle, may be scoffed at today by our alien weaklings. But drilled nobly into our susceptible minds it did lay foundations for true Manhood and Womanhood. In those days had a schoolteacher failed, or refused, to take oath in support of the Federal Constitution, he would first have been discharged and then tarred and feathered—at least if a man. As for women, well, our schoolboards in that corner of traditional America where I was raised would never have hired a dishonorable or traitorous instructor of small children in the first place. It simply was not thought of.

But a swarm of alien locusts in human form has now descended on us from the gutters of Europe. The spawn and scum of renegade immigration, with no character and less stamina, now flaunts it before the young American that war is "brutal" and "inhuman," that we must boycott militarism, that all men should be "brothers" . . . principally that European nations, arming to the teeth, expanding their subtle villainies to overthrow, subvert, or emasculate the American tradition, may render impotent our maturing manhood and draw the teeth of an effective patriotism. Patriots who saw the light of day in the ghettos of the Ukraine now manage our federal affairs and prate of "Americanism"—meaning uncircumscribed license to loot or to dominate our free institutions. Praise God, I was reared in a different generation!

And yet it will come back. I leave it to posterity to decide whether or not I have delusions of grandeur, but I declare that I consider it my errand in life to help see that it *comes* back.

When July 4th arrived, we boys got up before dawn and made the air hideous with blastings and boomings. We shot off our firecrackers, we shot off our cannon, we shot off our fingers. What mattered it? Our forebears at Monmouth, Lundy's Lane, and Gettysburg, had lost their arms, their legs, and withal their lives. My most memorable July 4th comprised the loading of a small brass cannon, planting it in the center of a one-way street, putting fire to its fuse. Before such firing, we had plugged its bore with ample wadding and added some marbles and bolts for good measure. But we made the pardonable juvenile mistake of not discerning that it was pointed at the front door of the house that faced the intersection. Some people named Morgan, living in that house, were shot from their beds without the suggestion of a warning. At one moment

they were safely and peacefully sleeping. The next, a blast of eleven carriage bolts and some assorted marble agates had traversed their front hall and gone into the kitchen—where a negro maid preparing breakfast had a barrel of flour explode in her face. Presently the fire department was clattering in our neighborhood and a group of terrified youngsters hid in my pigeon-cote for the balance of that holiday. No matter. We were young Americans in those days, not mollycoddles encouraged by the agents of Stalin.

And the same thing went for Thanksgiving. We had the story of the Pilgrim Fathers and the Mayflower Compact. We could recite "The breaking waves dashed high on a stern and rockbound coast" till the ghost of old Chief Massasoit strode right into our classrooms. The next day for the epochal meal of the year at home, we had turkey and cranberry sauce—the only day of the year when we did have it. Thanksgiving was *thanks* giving. It was good to live in those days and know such a heritage. What red-blooded man would not exert himself to the utmost to see that they *are* brought back? . . .

My Christmases were distinguished by the unfailing arrival of my mother's affluent sister, Georgia, from her home in Peabody. Aunt Georgia was conceded to have made the best matrimonial match in the Goodale family of daughters, in that she had wedded the scion of a wealthy leathern-goods manufacturer. She had been twice to Europe and withal was childless—not that going to Europe could have had much to do with making her otherwise. So days before Christmas she made it an annual rite to hunt the Boston stores with a well-filled pocketbook—not known to sisters who had merely married ministers—and at length packed a crate of the latest toys and candies to make our Yuletide memorable. On the day before Christmas came the lady in person—the only day in the year when the depot hack drove up to our house. Her silk skirts swished in the best Gay Nineties manner and she was fragrant with perfume. She wore fearful and wonderful hats and had gold in her teeth. Her prize distinguishment in my eyes was a unique watch which had neither numerals nor hands upon its face but told the time by the sudden appearance of the exact hour and moment within little compartments in the center of the dial.

Once she was housed in the "company" bedroom, the unpacking of her boxes and parcels began. We brought in and set up the Christmas tree, selected months before in Bancroft's woods. My Grandmother Goodale—nee Thurston and alias Sullivan—was infallibly present. Whereupon we made merry in another tradition, quite as patriotic as it is American and



"I didn't want a pig; I wanted a
printing plant—"

Christian. For once in the year I had all the candy I could gorge. The house on Christmas morning, with all of Aunt Georgia's latest toys and gifts, was the sort of place that little children dream about, no matter how much silver has come into their hair. What Christmas in my boyhood would have been without my wealthy Aunt Georgia it is hard to conjecture. ☙ ☙

I look back on a childhood that was filled with all the sound and wholesome atmosphere in which a saddened citizenry of present-day America is viciously shortsuited. I have come to believe that the only way in which I can compensate for all those blessed inheritances and favors is by helping —I say again, for it will bear repeating—to return my country to a sanity, tranquillity, virility, and prosperity that perpetuates all that Nordic Christianity recognized as true greatness.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FATHER had the opportunity to sell his store to a man named Silverthorne in June of 1900. Mother had never liked living in West Gardner, anyhow. The town was filling with too many Polocks who worked in the chair shops. So she prevailed upon my sire to try his fortunes elsewhere. They selected the city of Springfield in western Massachusetts. Disposing of the store and shipping their household goods by the railroad, my peregrinating parents loaded Edna and me into the Concord buggy and drove over the road, consuming two days on a trip that mother and I made in my motorcar the other morning in a couple of hours.

Springfield was a very clean and prosperous little city of about 60,000 people when we thus arrived in it and took up our residence at 17 Spruce Street. This house has since been turned about to face on Hawthorn Street and a vacant lot is all that now remains of the yard where I climbed apple trees, raised rabbits, occasionally broke windows, and built disfiguring structures out of boxes and old boards.

Not having any business at once to engage in, father got a reporter's job on *The Springfield Union* newspaper. I entered the sixth grade of the Central Street school.

But I say again, the call of printing ink in my blood was inescapable. When dad left *The Springfield Union* to start a parcel delivery business,

I was hoarding my savings to get myself a press. With laudable parental wisdom in raising a small son and making him appreciate the value of his possessions by paying for them in labor, he offered me two cents a bundle for every delivery on my bicycle. Furthermore, he leaned toward no indulgences in the items that he gave me to deliver. I pedaled about Springfield for the next three years on an oversized "wheel," leaving everything at the front doors of citizens from sacks of fertilizer to Easter lilies. I had a wire gadget attached to my handlebars. I would pile this with bundles till I could scarcely see above them.

One night, after the day's deliveries, father met me at home with the epochal announcement, "The Kidder Printing Company up on Bay Street has a practical hand press that I think you could use. We'll drive over after supper and see if it suits."

Eat my supper with a press in sight at last? But I swallowed plenty when we got to Bay Street and I discovered that the owners of the shop wanted twenty dollars for the press whereas my savings were but twelve. Father saw my nausea.

"I'll loan you what you're short," he offered, "providing you'll continue to work it out in bundles."

It was a compact, substantial hand-press, that took a form six inches by nine. It weighed so much that two men had to carry it out to the wagon. I rode home sitting beside it as internes accompany patients to hospitals in ambulances. I had a shop all ready for it in a small room off the stable. We had moved from 17 Spruce Street to 132 Florence Street during the interval that I saved the twelve dollars and the barn out behind was well suited to my purpose. I had been collecting printing-supply catalogues and haunting Springfield's printing offices for odds and ends of fixtures. One day behind The Springfield Printing & Binding Company I found a discarded spill of reglet thrown out in the alley. It resembled the sort of dream that some of us have, of coming upon a pile of money scattered over the sidewalk. I salvaged it and sorted it. I made tables and type-racks from pieces of lumber. My first imposing-stone was a slab of marble taken from the bathroom of an abandoned neighboring house.

Father had ideas about saving himself money on his printing. "You can't run a printing office without type," he informed me. As if I did not know it! "You pick out what you need from the catalogues and I'll finance the payment. If you take in job printing you can pay me back exactly like a bank."

I would have contracted to tote a Jersey cow to the top of the Springfield

Arsenal and hang her overside by her tail if it got me that equipment. I ordered a dozen fonts of job type and enough eight-point to fill a chase with text. At last I was a printer!

Since that time I have owned eight different printing plants and three newspapers, one of them a daily that served half a state. I have run six magazines—one of them suppressed for a time by the corruptionists in Congress—and done everything in the publishing line excepting to make money. But no printing or publishing project that I have had command of, ever gave me half the thrill that I experienced when I viewed my equipment all in order about me. Of course I would be a publisher. So at the tender age of twelve I started a journal that I called *The Junior Star.* ☙ ☙

For the next four years my weeks of days ran something like this: School until three-thirty of each afternoon, a half-hour to get my bicycle or team and meet father in the city where the delivery of bundles consumed till seven-thirty. By eight o'clock I was out in my printshop. There I labored till eleven. Saturday came as celestial dispensation. I could apply myself from six-thirty in the morning till the middle afternoon. But there was no "monkeying" with that outfit on the Sabbath. I arose at nine o'clock on Sundays, was ready for church at eleven, took in Sunday School at twelve, went to Junior League at four, with evening preaching following at seven. Father might have been forced by economic duress to forego the ministry, but up to the very last day that I ever saw him, he never for an hour forgot his religion.

The first issue of *The Junior Star* appeared while I was attending the ninth grade at school. Its page-size was four by six inches, twelve pages with a cover. I "stuck" every type in it by hand, turned my pages on the fold and ran them through the press with a pull at the lever for every impression. I believe the circulation was one hundred copies. Mother still cherishes one of them, sewed with pink string. It contains an original poem, a short story—very short indeed, being two hundred words—an editorial, and a publisher's advertisement summoning the nation to subscribe. The price by the year was twenty-five cents. Night upon night I worked at it, week after week.

Thereat I discovered the Power of the Press!

Several issues of *The Star* had been handed about the schoolyard, each of them delayed for publisher's reasons, when I took my seat in class one noontime with a small green grass-snake secreted in my pocket. Ahead of me sat a buxom lass named Hazel. The bulge of Hazel's frock at the

back of her neck held a certain fascination and the particular devil that motivates small boys wrought a swift coordination of enticements and impulses. I took out my entirely harmless little reptile *and dropped it down her neck!* . . .

If I had dropped a pound of gunpowder into the school's hot furnace, I could not have managed a better explosion. Hazel was out in the aisle in a shake—in fact a great many shakes—frantically clawing the interior of her person. Clothes at the moment were anathema on principle. And she started a screeching that aroused the whole building.

Now my teacher of the period was a lady of some temperament who had failed to catch a man. But if she had failed to catch a man, she showed every indication of success in catching a plump and screeching girl and making her reveal the cause of her contortions. Somehow the snake dropped out and wriggled down a floor-crack. The teacher knew this thing had happened because girls in that classroom climbed high on their desks. That was about the time that I decided, regardless of the hour, that I should leave and go home. But the woman nabbed me going. The principal was sent for. He was a doughty Civil War veteran with a hand like a blackjack. . . .

Somehow I talked myself out of that scrape. Arriving at home and in the silence of my printshop, I decided however I did not like that teacher—she was totally devoid of the slightest sense of humor, or what passes for humor in the philosophy of boys. I decided, in short, that something was wrong with the whole public school system when such humorless females were placed in jurisdiction over up-and-coming youngsters. I would write the woman up and expose her in my paper.

I did write the woman up and expose her in my paper. Had I kept to an attack on the public school system, it would not have been so bad. But I had acquired sundry copies of Elbert Hubbard's *Philistine* and the sage of East Aurora had become my patron saint. I was steeped in the sweet vitriol of the erstwhile Fra Elbertus and I used it on my pen. I particularly emphasized that teacher's spinster status and told my reasons for it from a six-month observation. I gave my own account of the snake episode as though the whole world were waiting to receive it. The paper was printed. It offered comments on the gapes in Hazel's clothing and said that if I had to be chastised for the hapless business, it was a pity that the teacher's clothing had not received the reptile, it seemed to bulge everywhere. Remarks of that tenor.

Nothing I have ever published about the activities of America's radicals in

the past five years has created one-half the *denouement* that resulted when someone laid a copy on the aforesaid teacher's desk. She dismissed school early. She got her hat. She likewise got her umbrella—or perhaps it was her parasol. Straight for my parental domicile she smoked. She bothered to take along no small boy as Exhibit A in all the brilliant business; she probably thought she could lay hands on him at any time she wanted. Her one-track mind at the moment was prompting her to interview the parents who had been so brash as to give a small boy the uncensored use of a printing press and types. I skirted fourteen blocks in order to arrive at home that evening. When I finally summoned up the courage to go in, the woman was just leaving. Both she and my father had significant gleamings in their eyes. Mother was wisely keeping her silence. ❧ ❧

"Well, young man?" my father demanded.

"Yes, sir," I said carelessly, assuming an innocence.

"It seems that you've got me into a rather ugly mess. Don't you know there are some things you can't print in a paper without running the risk of being sued for libel?"

"What's libel?" I faltered.

"Printing the truth about people—too truthfully."

"Then what is it called when you happen to print lies?"

"We won't discuss the political phases of the situation. Now what's this mess about?" ❧ ❧

I tried to tell him.

"Ho-hum," he ruminated. His face held a queer look. "Perhaps you'll get along."

I usually had an instinct when father was going to larrup me. These symptoms seemed lacking. I heard him continue——

"I think you'd better change the name of your paper and sort of confine it to literary subjects. As for what you've done today . . . well, you'll learn in militant journalism that whatever you print is just about as safe from reprisal as your opponent's secret dread of you. You've said some unkind and impudent things about your teacher. She's been over here saying a lot of worse things about me for ever turning you loose with a printing press. But I don't have to take the press away from you. You've got to go to school to that woman for the balance of this year. Don't come whining to me if the going gets too tough."

I crept into classroom next morning desperately hoping that I would not be noticed. No such good luck. That teacher noticed no other child

that day. Yet the day held surprises. She greeted me with a pleasant good-morning and in forenoon recitation she gave me all the breaks. The week and the month wore scholastically onward. She was so increasingly saccharine in her treatment of me that I began to be troubled. The other boys were seeing it—with schoolyard reprisals. All of it was coals of fire upon my youthful head. Almost a year had passed and I was about to move along into high school before the correct explanation got through my brain. ☙ ☙

The woman was afraid that I might lampoon her again!

I confess to my guilt from the beginning of the incident. That teacher had every license to truss me by the thumbs from the rafters and flay me. But she could not afford to have more infant drivel distributed over Springfield to the hazard of her job. She was so nice to me that it began to dawn upon me how Voltaire might have felt when he wrote, "I may not possess a scepter but I do possess a pen!"

I give my father credit for being wise enough to know that tanning my seat for what I had done, or denying me my outfit, would have put a dangerous complex into my journalistic courage. Being wise as a newspaperman himself, he knew that sooner or later I would encounter my own reprisals from over-indiscretions. It was a sage thing to do. One month later a boy named Phillip Taft, about the size of whose mouth I had made some scathing writings, waylaid me on my way home from school and presented me with the pug-nose I am wearing at present. He did something to its bridge. I think his fists broke it.

I got father's viewpoint.

But, I reasoned out finally, my teacher would not have been so nice to me, nor would the Taft boy have committed mayhem on my person unless I possessed and had exercised some inherent power that they vaguely could not cope with. It was something to ponder.

The Taft boy was twice my size, and later became a traffic policeman. I hied myself to my smelly little sanctum and started journalistically to blast Phillip Taft's life. The fact that he had tried to suppress me by force only made me go for him in eighteen-point type. I felt that in the final analysis I possessed weapons which he emphatically did not. If he did not fear them, then why had he bashed me? Father intervened. . . .

"You confine yourself to literary subjects," he reminded me with grimness. "I don't want you murdered until I have raised you!"

The Junior Star set and was not thereafter heard from.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE Spanish and Philippine wars ended, McKinley had been assassinated at Buffalo, the automobile was coming in. The hard times of the otherwise Gay Nineties were behind us; ten thousand miles westward the Japs were whipping the Russians at Port Arthur, or so we assumed from the newspaper headlines. Theodore Roosevelt was the idol of the hour although scarcely a man amongst us realized the mischief he was performing at Portsmouth "for his dear friend, Mr. Loeb" by playing the game of the radical internationalists and elevating Japan to a first-class world power as Russia went down to defeat.

Amid it all, I was getting on.

I had taken my first ride in a motor-car, or rather, a contraption that sent Springfield's horses climbing madly into trees. I had seen my first movie. A man named Granger had bought a phonograph, and night after night we gathered beneath his opened windows as the summer dark echoed to singing and talking coming from a horn. I suppose it seems incredible to the present generation to think of daily life without a single automobile, without a movie or a radio, certainly without an airplane. All the same, we made out.

We had no crime problem, no sex problem, no alien problem. We accepted our government for what it was, and lived under it prosperously; we did not continually try to overthrow it. People paid cash for what they bought in the way of clothing, jewelry, or household appliances. Our only installment buying was furniture and real estate and we entered such contracts with all due solemnity. We lived decently, decorously, profiting in those increments that came from restraint. Some day it will be discernible in true perspective, what the alien horde of four millions of Jews did to us, who came to this country during the world war, and why we have been so stupid as to suffer it at all. It was a mighty period for a boy to grow up in, though not half so mighty as the era still ahead. . . .

¶ Father had made money in the parcel delivery business, just as he made money in the West Gardner store. Now he cherished an ambition to get into manufacturing. From thence would come the fortune that he ever envisioned. The redeeming part was, that he finally made good.

I had printed abominable letterheads for all the local tradesmen and got myself hated by all the neighboring boys for being held up by their

parents as a paragon of enterprise and a model of precocity. I had known my calf love-affairs with two or three little girls—one at a time—put on long pants, found a fuzz upon my jaw. The year of 1907 was in prospect and the panic that evolved the Federal Reserve in banking. In February of that year father came home one night bringing the stupefying announcement that he had sold his delivery. Moreover the price he had received was sizable enough to start him manufacturing with a partner named Sibley. This Sibley had invented an improved tissue-paper winder for toilet rolls—or convinced father that he had—which would revolutionize the business. Father was going out to York State with Sibley and in due time we would hear from him. He went, and we did.

He came back to drop a second bombshell directly in the center of the Pelley menage. He was taking me out of school! . . .

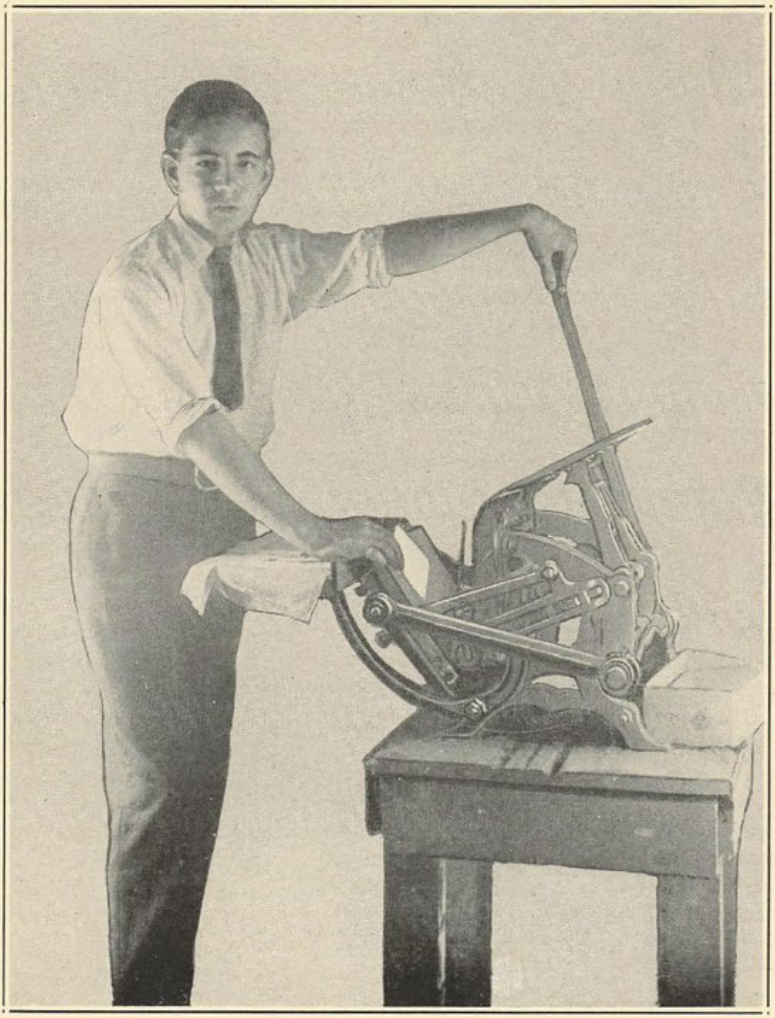
Yes, my education, academically, was finished. No college for me, nor high school graduation. It was my duty to accompany him to York State and help him make his millions via rolled-up tissue paper.

The prospect appalled me. I did not want to stop my schooling. I was then a sophomore at Technical High, the publisher of a more pretentious and successful monthly magazine called *The Black Crow*, president of the high school debating society, and standing so high in my English course that I never was required to take semi-annual exams. What could I do in a mill, making paper?

All of it was futile, my bitter remonstrance. The night we left for Fulton, a city north of Syracuse, a zero blizzard stopped us at Schenectady. The two of us put up at a small, cheap hotel. I remember my tears throughout most of that night. I wanted to go onward and complete my education, go to college, become an editor, an author.

"No," said father. "Paper!"

Now I appreciate that it was part of my role to have that invaluable experience in manufacturing, to learn business fundamentals through hard and gruelling practice, to know the problems of the employer, to learn to handle men. My writing would come later. And most certainly it did. That wintry night in Schenectady, however, with the icy blasts rattling the casements and the room overhot from a surcharge of steam, I found myself venomously critical of my father for what I considered his parental despotism over my destiny. What right had he to ruin my prospects and subvert my talents because he needed the aid of his son in his business? When we finally reached Fulton and I perceived that the much-vaunted factory was but a forty-foot room in which worked one sluttish girl and



"At last I was a printer—"

a small boy with adenoids, my disillusion was complete. What chance was there for me to write, to explore the classics, to exercise my wits upon the platform in debate, to create beautiful effects with papers and types? I had been side-tracked, abducted, sold to the galleys, turned into a grimy mill-hand to listen to the dreary roll of machinery week-end on week-end. Money had never meant much to me, excepting as a means to attain to an end. And the end I wanted to achieve in those years had been left behind in Springfield, in the printshop where my heart was, that I would never see again. ☙ ☙

What I missed in all this callow rebellion was, that I could be the artist wherever life carried me. The artist will *be* the artist whether he paints in a garret in Montmartre, or uses live men and women for his pigments on a canvas of industry in a papermill in York State. Furthermore, in the present labors in which I find myself engaged, I might be as impractical in supplanting the old predatory economic order with a wholly new concept of social economics as a Brain-Trust Professor out of the Jewish NRA, if I had not experienced the four years that followed. Not to anticipate, I beheld the Pelley Tissue Company become the fourth largest concern of its kind in the nation, and I was its Treasurer and General Superintendent. I had that industrial sequence coming to me as inexorably as the disfiguring bash from Phillip Taft's fist. . . .

In all of this, father was but an instrument at the command of higher forces. I believe it now—visualizing that sequence in perspective—with absolute conviction. I have shocked a good many people from time to time, telling them to stop their sniveling at what they imagine their parents have done to them. Weird as it may sound to those hearing this sort of thing for the first time, I have the same adamant conviction that we actually choose our parents, of our own free will, before entering life as infants. We know in advance, before we are physically born, I say, what the factors and trends in a given life will be . . . by selecting certain parents. The choice is our own. They merely prepare the embryo of which we take possession. We either want what they have to give us, or we do not. We may not always know it in our conscious minds, but eventually it will come to us.

But I did not recognize this great grim principle of esoterics at the time of which I write. Like a hundred million mortals who may not as yet have had the Door to Revelation opened to them, who, in consequence, fancy themselves defeated and thwarted, I accepted the silly tenets of orthodoxy that I had been assembled and projected into life by parental

procreation, that fate had decreed me to serve a 21-year sentence to their caprices and tempers, to be finally discharged with my future a mess. What a hodge-podge of blither! As if the physical acts of a man or woman could ever concoct an immortal soul, capable of writing a book or exclaiming at a sunset. But what was worse in my case, I beheld in those parents all adulthood in conspiracy against my spiritual integrity, with a smug God looking on woodenly and giving the scheme His blessing. In fact, my father reminded me that God was on his side—and I think that he believed it.

Father was really a sincere but inhibited man who had a hard row to hoe but who finally hoed it, to whom I owe the eternal debt of a sound and normal body, the sturdy tenets of morality derived from a theology that stood for no monkey-business, and last, but far from least, an inspirational philosophy that urged me to make the most of myself no matter what sacrifice was entailed in the process. He was harsh with the harshness of limited vision, but he did the best he knew according to his light. His religion frowned on drinking, dancing, card-playing, theater-going. During the days of the parcel delivery our only recreation aside from divine service on Sundays was attending a series of Sabbath afternoon lectures sponsored by the Springfield Young Men's Christian Association in Court Square Theater, which the foremost public men of America addressed. I had the profit of their counsel and ideals from the platform and father and I scarcely missed a one of them. Statesmen, publicists, economists, scientists, explorers, that contact with them was priceless, not for what they said but for what they represented. Henry Cabot Lodge, S. S. McClure, Senators Dolliver, Beveridge, and LaFollette, William Jennings Bryan, Governor Curtis Guild, Sir William Grenfel . . . these men dramatized ideals. ☘ ☘

On many a homeward walk after those meetings, father would put his arm about my shoulders and adjure me: "No matter what becomes of me, son, or in what situation you later find yourself, make the most of your life —NEVER LET IT GET YOU DOWN!"

Would to God that the boys of our present generation could live beneath such influences, in such years as I knew them.

But back there in Fulton in 1907, with academic education definitely behind me, I was a resentful young cub, certain that my sire was both bigoted and selfish. Did he propose to force me into being an adult ahead of my time? Very well, I would show him. If I had to smother and repress my literary talents, go to work at the blast of a whistle every morn-

ing, then insanely I demanded a grown man's prerogatives. Of course the chief of these is Woman. I began to look at Woman as I had not observed her. I made it my business to fall violently in love!

CHAPTER NINE

DATURALLY a certain diffidence maintains when a man turns his pen to the affairs of his heart. The intimacies of his spirit, about which his patrons would like to know most, turn to inhibitions controlled by sacrosanct urgings—that the dictates of good taste take into account the relationships involving others. But there were significant factors in that first love affair of mine that belong to this saga from the literary standpoint. . .

¶ It is sufficient to state that the young woman's name was Mabel and that she was a Canadian lass who came down to Fulton to visit an aunt and uncle for the winter. I met her in the choir of the Methodist Church—which father joined at once—where she sang a sweet soprano and I also made noises in a supposedly sacred manner. I looked upon her, and she looked upon me, and presently we transferred our noise making to her uncle's front parlor—where it ceased to be sacred. I found pleasure in bellowing out the popular ballads of the day while she furnished the proper piano accompaniment.

This sort of thing began one night a week at first, then twice in every week, then six nights in the week. Whereupon, having been forced into the life of a man insofar as business duties and payrolls were concerned, and scarcely understanding the primordial shudders that went through my person as I cuddled her close beneath an April umbrella, I saw nothing inconsistent in wanting my precocious maturity rounded out by the addition of a helpmate.

Just why I needed a mate, and at what she was to help, I paused to give no thought. The girl had a piquant nose, a well-matured bosom, a capricious ankle and a flare for toothsome cookery. She banged the parlor's musical equipment with quite as much cooperation as I put into yowling Charles K. Harris' tuneful banalities. In a matter of weeks we had parish tongues wagging. We were seen walking together in places of solitude at unseasonable hours. The girl came back from such excursions with

her hair out of pin and when she was queried, her manner was saucy. Thirty years ago it savored of Ruin!

The male and female old ladies who had "the best interests of the young" at heart, went out of their several ways to emphasize my youthfulness, and suggest to my parents that they should save me from my "folly." When the Light of My Life accidentally switched off the vestry lights one night and left the wife of the congregation's wealthiest man to bark her nose against a door, this affluent matron decided that I was involved with a Designing Woman. Miss Mabel should be peremptorily "shipped" back to Canada. In fact, Mrs. Edwin had never fancied my Lady-Love anyhow. The indiscreet chit often outsang her in the choir on Sunday mornings and in other ways implied that she was not so much.

The *denouement* was obvious.

I think half the mess that followed was precipitated quite as much by the circumstance that the complainant was the wife of my father's local banker as the fact that Miss Mabel might ruin my prospects. At any rate, the first sign of storm took the form of a parental homily on "knowing my own mind." . . .

May the good Lord help all of us! If our elders did not have that fine old bromide about "knowing our own minds" to fall back on when seeking to intrude on adolescent romance, pray what would they utilize? My hair is now as grey as I trust that it will ever be, I have sired my own family, and been two times married. I confess that I am no nearer "knowing my own mind" in regard to the fair sex than I was in that springtime when Mabel and I confronted our tragedy—that tragedy of having fallen in love with each other before either of us was able to do very much about it. For father came alive at the nature of my answers. What, What? Matrimony? *At my age?* He looked at me as though I had strangled my grandmother. Mother was present and put her portion over. Parental fiats made an end to the session. No matter about the banker's wife now. Father vowed that he would smash the infamous business if he had to break my neck.

Whereupon he broke plenty, but my neck was not included.

He was not particularly delicate in the manner of his breaking. When another week had passed and the news was cudgeled out of me that I had twice seen Miss Mabel, he took me to my chamber. He threatened me, he cuffed me, he even went so far as to lock me in that bedroom while he deployed across the town and took the matter up with the young woman's relatives. I lifted the sash and went down the rainspout.

Beating father to her home by a matter of moments, I whistled my lady-love down from her premises. We walked far afield discussing the *denouement.* ☙ ☙

The spring night was freighted with the incense of lilacs. After a time the moon arose and joined us. We stayed out so late that even the frogs ceased piping in soft distance. But we came to no decision. What was there to decide? I lacked three years of reaching my majority. I was wholly dependent on my father for my living. A shotgun wedding? No—we did not go in for that sort of thing. Our generation had raised us differently. ☙ ☙

It was one of the most poignant evenings which I have ever lived. We had to go back. At the edge of town the girl stopped beneath a wild cherry tree in blossom. She broke off a sprig and put it in her hair. Near the steps to the house she handed it to me. I kept the poor fragile little thing for years—till at last it fell apart.

At nine o'clock next morning she took train for Canada. At seven o'clock that evening I borrowed some money from her uncle—who never had approved of father's blacksmith methods—and headed for Ontario. In other words, I did exactly what my one-time forebear had done in England—but in my case I let the girl precede me instead of wedding her first. I caught up with her in a little Ontario city, leaving my parents to catch me as they could. It was inconsiderate of me, and doubly embarrassing to the young woman's relatives. But father had represented to me time and again how much of a man I was, when he wanted some work done that required extra effort. So I meant to go the whole hitch on this manhood business and if he would not let me love and marry the girl of my choice, I meant to exert that much lauded manhood and take the matter out of his hands. I had run away from home!

I next walked a Canadian park with the girl in the depths of summer evening and made matrimonial plans with her to the dreamy music of a distant band concert. The ceremony would occur "when she had her clothes ready" and I had found a job. I bade her goodbye at the steps of a suburban trolley-car next morning and journeyed on to Hamilton.

I have never set eyes on that young lady since.

FATHER located me in Hamilton where I was frantically trying to connect with a job. He walked up behind me on the street, of a summer morning, and crashed my fine air castles with a tragic *denouement.* My mother was seriously stricken as result of my flight. It had not been

my going, but its manner, that had felled her. If I stayed away longer, I must hold myself responsible for anything that happened.

At length he persuaded me. I went back with him to York State. I went back to a town in which the light of life's interest had been cruelly extinguished. Mother recovered. I resumed my old place as head of the mill. ❧ ❧

"If you'll show me by consistent waiting for one year that this heart-affair is real," said father, touched by my misery, "I'll not only give my consent to your marriage, but I'll see that you're financed, and furnished with a home." ❧ ❧

I wrote this to the girl. She wrote back to me vaguely. A year was a year, and a life-time, it seemed, to hot love at twenty. Meantime there were dances and parties and plenty of beaux to keep her mind occupied. I was down in a grubby little manufacturing town, roaming through evening streets that dealt me an anguish, filling tissue orders by day and rumpling my maternally-tended couch by night, refusing to go to church on Sundays because of the bittersweet recollections that the choir summoned up. I debated many times whether to keep my agreement with my father, feeling that no amount of commercial rewardings could possibly compensate for the torment that was wracking me.

I think father was frightened. He would steal sidelong glances at me in a troubled chagrin, as though he had uncovered depths in human nature that he had never dreamed existed. What to do about it, of course, he did not know. There were moments when he acted as though—if he had the situation presented to him again—he would keep his hands off and let nature take its course. I knew of these moods. He had played ducks and drakes with me, I thought. Having exercised his humor he could only be "sorry." . . .

One February night I went to the post office and took out a letter. The girl was sorry too—or so I gathered from the lines that at once blurred before me. But somehow she had decided that I was not my own master. If I had been man enough to break away once, and not let my parents attempt to run my life, why had I not stayed away and set up our promised home? And would I forgive her? Anyhow, she was leaving next day for a point in Ohio. She was in fact, embarking on a honeymoon. By the time I got her letter she would be wedded to another. He was the sort of fellow, she added, who did not let his parents "run him." . . .

I walked out of that post office, into a telephone pole.

Those things sometimes happen. Sometimes a man laughs them off, and

looks for other romantic distractions, especially at eighteen. Sometimes the lightning strikes—horridly flaming—straight down to the subcellar depths of the soul. And the burning is grisly.

I tried to forget the torture of my heartbreak by plunging like a robot into that which now claimed me. I passed up enticements of social diversions. Where could I go, that memories did not dart, to spear me like hot knife-blades? I filled freight cars with paper products by day, then went into the factory's printing plant and spent the empty nights in league with my grieving. Days and nights passed when I only exchanged formalities with father. He was chagrined, he was angered, he was frightened, he was penitent. He began making lengthy selling trips away from the mill to save himself the embarrassment that was growing between us. This left me with the business. And I was not yet twenty.

I finally began putting together a chipmunk magazine to release the tight resentment in my hectic young soul. I especially dealt roughly with an orthodox God. It seemed that He backed up my father in what had been accomplished. Copies of it sold. When the shock of my first agony had passed, I got out further issues. A young woman in Camden, N. J., applied to assist me. She too had known a lightning-bolt like mine. We played around with platonic nonsense for half a dozen issues and finally went our ways. I buried the magazine.

But the tissue business prospered. We added ten, twenty-five, fifty men. More and more, father stayed out on the road.

Inside me, however, my stricture was numbing. If the girl had merely died, I would not have felt so bad. Instead, she had fled with "the handsomer man." Hurt pride, damaged self-respect, and adolescent jealousy, these boiled inside me, stewing together with plain, old-fashioned heartbreak. The pity of the sequence was the needlessness of it.

As lamentably, I held my father responsible. My torture was my reward for being a dutiful son, for acting on his precepts, for taking his word about mother's prostration. As for the banker's spouse who had started all the tragedy, she "up and died" within the summer and I felt it to be a base running out on her brash responsibilities for wrecking my life. The affair was a mess, and I was messee! Of course I confirmed the statement that Mabel had married. Otherwise I should have left the mill flat, pursued her as before, and this time secured her beyond chance of escape. Instead, as life presented itself before me then, I meant to collect damages from that business for alienation of my romance. More and more the control and direction of that project were gathering in my hands. More and more my

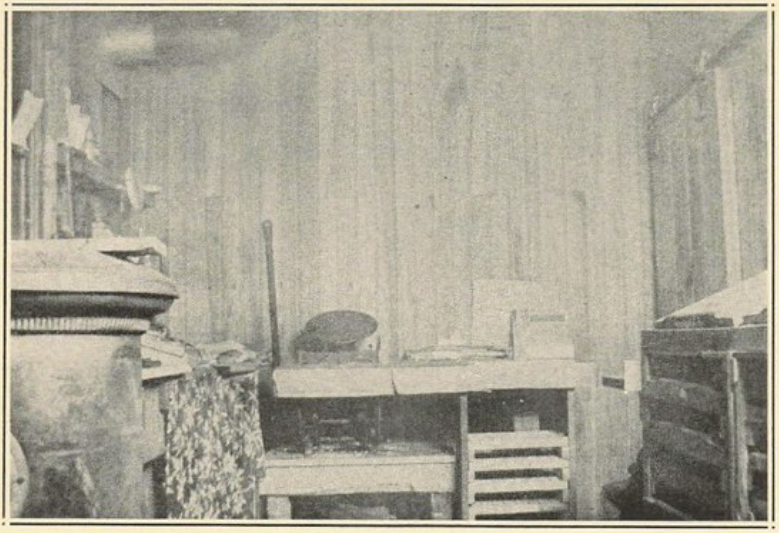
parent was becoming a salesman—absenting himself for weeks at a time while I got out the product, found money for payrolls, added employees as I needed them. I called my own meetings of the Board of Directors, the concern by this time having become a corporation. At times I was a bit impertinent in dictating to this Board what I wanted—in leeway to operate, in financial support. Father would come in off the road, attempt to retrieve his prestige by criticism, and meet blunt rebuke. One influential stockholder had an eye for executiveship somewhat keener than the rest. He ignored my tender years and exploited my precocities. To avoid local comment on what was transpiring, father went off on lengthier selling trips, and seemed content to make them. Perhaps he likewise was wresting a a species of alimony from our unnatural predicament. A year went by. Two years. We began to consider a second plant in Springfield, nearer to our markets. Meantime our holdings of stock in the business were mounting. I had made the modest fortune of seventy-five thousand dollars before I was twenty-one years old.

I fought a grim fight to build that business, as a sort of reprisal on the girl who had failed me. I do not think I am taking the slightest credit unto myself for anything that I did not deserve. There are people in Fulton today who will remember "Pelley's Boy" and the shindy he cut ere that business struck its snag. Of course I was getting invaluable experience, though it left me old before my time. Father was content with his comfortable salary—and I saw that he received it for giving me free field.

I am not saying that such would have been my course today. I am setting down what happened.

Vital switches had been thrown in the lives of us both.

We were off on strange rails. . . .



"I had a shop all ready for it, in a small room off the stable—"

Page 30



Page 36 Edna and father in 1907

CHAPTER TEN

DOUBTLESS is was mainly to retrieve a certain lost prestige that made father promote a second plant in Springfield. Sibley had long-since passed from the picture. If the Fulton directors gave me their allegiance in preference to my parent, for reasons best known only to themselves, he would circumvent all of us by a new project elsewhere. Anyhow, capital was secured and a model plant went up, built especially for our purposes. Then arose the question: who was to run it. Father could not do it. His specialty was salesmanship. A knack of handling men in numbers, coordinating and enthusing them, had been left from his makeup. No strange executives would know the details of the business. So I came on from Fulton and met the Springfield directors. I succeeded to that management by the fiats of my knowledge. Again I write facts. ☙ ☙

Father practically retired.

He had money at last. He was worth a modest property. He had his same high ideals, his same spiritual hungers. But in the *denouement* of his parenthood he likewise had a son whom he had weirdly alienated, who had grown beyond his management by the force of life's progressions. Perhaps my reader may be able to understand my own poignant longings of this present, to be able to sit down with him now, even for one evening, and compare notes as men, to take stock of the world and the place of fathers in it. I think that our speakings would be good for our souls. Alas for vain regrets. Life was moving onward.

But let no industrialist of the present criticize me or upbraid me for my economic precepts. I built an industry on the repressions of an adolescent love affair when most boys are showing their prowess in a stadium. I have pardonable license to say that I know the problems of the competitive manufacturer. Yet life had still grimmer tutelage to give me. I did not know, of course, that for twenty-one years I had only been standing on life's doorstone, that I had not yet stepped across its fraught threshold. True, I was matured before my time, but may I phrase it that this was because I *had* to start early to get the tremendous tasks ahead of me accomplished. ☙ ☙

Still another asset came from that sequence.

Eschewing companionships that were pale echoes of my romance, I gave

thought to my schooling which the mill had interrupted. Gradually it dawned on me that even academics were not confined to classrooms. If I wanted education, what prevented me from taking it? The lore of the world was contained in its books. I had but to *read* and all knowledge was my heritage.

I did read.

I drugged myself with reading.

I read long, serious books, curiously enough mostly history and biography. I wanted to know how other men had solved problems much like mine, how they had met crises, whether I was peculiar in my reactions to my parents.

¶ For twenty-five years I have read myself to sleep in bed every night. In twenty-five years a man can do a lot of reading. I came to know the biographies of statesmen, artists, scientists, as I knew my own saga in the years since I was born. Biography led me into history, economics, political economy. In 1932, when my collection of sixty-five lectures delivered in fifty-two days of Galahad Summer School in North Carolina covered the Unknown History of the World, my material was at hand in the depths of my own memory. Students of the Blue Lectures of the Foundation Fellowship have marveled at the data contained in those scripts. There was nothing strange about it. I secured it by digging, and all men can do likewise. My books *No More Hunger* and *Nations-in-Law* are the logical products of much thinking on their contents.

Up to a night in 1924, I had a strange inferiority complex about a college education. Always I considered that regardless of my reading, life had cheated me scholastically. Whereupon to my studio in Greenwich Village came a brilliant professor, with more degrees to his name than there are letters in the alphabet. He was seeking my advice on a point in economics. ❧ ❧

"Why come to me?" I demanded in surprise. "I've never been to college. I never finished high school."

"My dear fellow," he responded, "I'd give all my degrees for the knowledge in your head."

It left me rather flaccid.

THE spring of 1911 found me out of a job. The end came to the tissue company before I could grasp it.

Our Springfield directors were by no means the hard, practical papermen that we had had in Fulton. A real estate man, an insurance agent, the somewhat spoiled son of an eccentric wealthy banker, took umbrage at the

way in which I bossed the business. I was young, I was beardless. They knew nothing of my record in the factory in York State. To have a boy scarcely twenty directing the affairs of a quarter-million dollar corporation, grated on their egoes, and my way was made hard. Father was criticized for his customary absences. There was listening at keyholes of my private office doors. Orders to foremen were arrogantly altered. I was disparaged, I was balked.

In my youthful self-confidence, I finally forced the issue. Either these laymen-directors were going to keep away and let me run the works or I was resigning and no nonsense about it. After a particularly petty squabble about why I was not using a certain roll of tissue that was standing in the stockroom, I slammed down my resignation and took myself southward. I would spend two weeks at Atlantic City and after those amateurs had become sufficiently abraded from the emery of the business, they would see their own folly and send for me pronto. At least so I thought.

I did not take into account that there is a type of man that would rather sink a ship than confess inability to hold it on its course. The first act following on my departure was the cancellation of two fat annual contracts with certain steamship companies that were the backbone of our workings. It was pointed out to our stockholders as proof of my incapacities, that I was so foolish as to make a four dollar case of toilet rolls for only twelve cents profit. But four carloads per day were being shipped from our plant. Considered by the year, such earnings were neat. I had once fought twenty months to secure those two contracts. Now, tossed away, half our plant promptly went idle.

Did they call me back from Atlantic City to salvage their blunders? I have it to record that it was the receiver in bankruptcy who appealed to me by telephone to return from the South. And I had been there three months. ¶ A real estate man, an insurance agent, and a nondescript rich boy, had given the death-thrust to our company. I could not recoup.

With predatory Jews from Manhattan tearing at the carcass of the business I had built, I sought temporary sanctuary at a desk in a newspaper office. I was twenty-one at last, and full captain of my soul. I had regrets, heartaches, and a generous quota of experience.

I took a job, I say, as feature news writer on *The Springfield Homestead,* a society newspaper. The ache from Mabel's infidelity had turned to a passive insouciance in regard to femininity. And yet within me was an overriding Urge propelling me forward with ever stronger strokes. Not to

put too fine a point upon it, I might liken myself then to a power-driven vehicle with a motor too heavy for body or chassis. When the load came upon it—irresistibly dynamic—something had to give. I was driven, driven, driven, toward the Door, and through it.

One night I walked into the newspaper's proofroom. I found there a buxom young woman who was softly sympathetic regarding my recent business losses.

I submitted written drivel for her to approve.

She not only approved it, but she offered prescriptions for my temperamental lassitude. What I truly needed was a vacation, she said. And what better place to take it than in southern Vermont, at the home of her parents? ❧ ❧

The prospect of vacation struck me as unique. I had just had three months while my business went to rack. But perhaps the girl was right. I could play around now without worries to rend me. She seemed a good pal to even suggest it. Would she go up with me? She said that she might. . . .

¶ A few weeks later, in the kitchen of an old Vermont farmhouse, with sweet summer rain pattering on the shingles, I asked if she would marry me. ❧ ❧

She said that she might. . . .

Thus my majority. Life was a sour pickle on principle. . . .

BOOK TWO
The Threshold

DOOR TO REVELATION

The Threshold

CHAPTER ONE

AFTER the Door opened for me, in 1928, many professional psychologists took a morbid relish in analyzing my case—from fragmentary biographies—and informing the public from their asinine profundities that all that prompted the more dramatic episodes of my life was exaggerated neurasthenia. Now neurasthenia, according to the best dictionaries, is brain and nerve exhaustion, a depression of the vital forces. Lengthy monographs have from time to time been published, explaining in much detail my addictions to such exhaustions and depressions, principally penned of course by persons who never have met me in their lives.

One expert paid me the doubtful compliment of calling me a Shattered Soul. I say paid me a compliment, because I have uniformly found that the easiest way for experts to rationalize the behavior of a person who seeks to do anything out of the ordinary, is to call his soul shattered. Most analyses of the outstanding men of this or past generations have proven them shattered souls—beyond the fraction of a doubt. It is truly amazing what these personages of history accomplished as soon as their souls became properly shattered.

People without shattered souls are supposed to live normal lives, stay married to the same women, be chased by the same bill collectors, be bilked and hoodwinked by the same politicians, and pass away sedately, lying prone upon their beds. But let an infant kick the slats from its cradle in rebel-

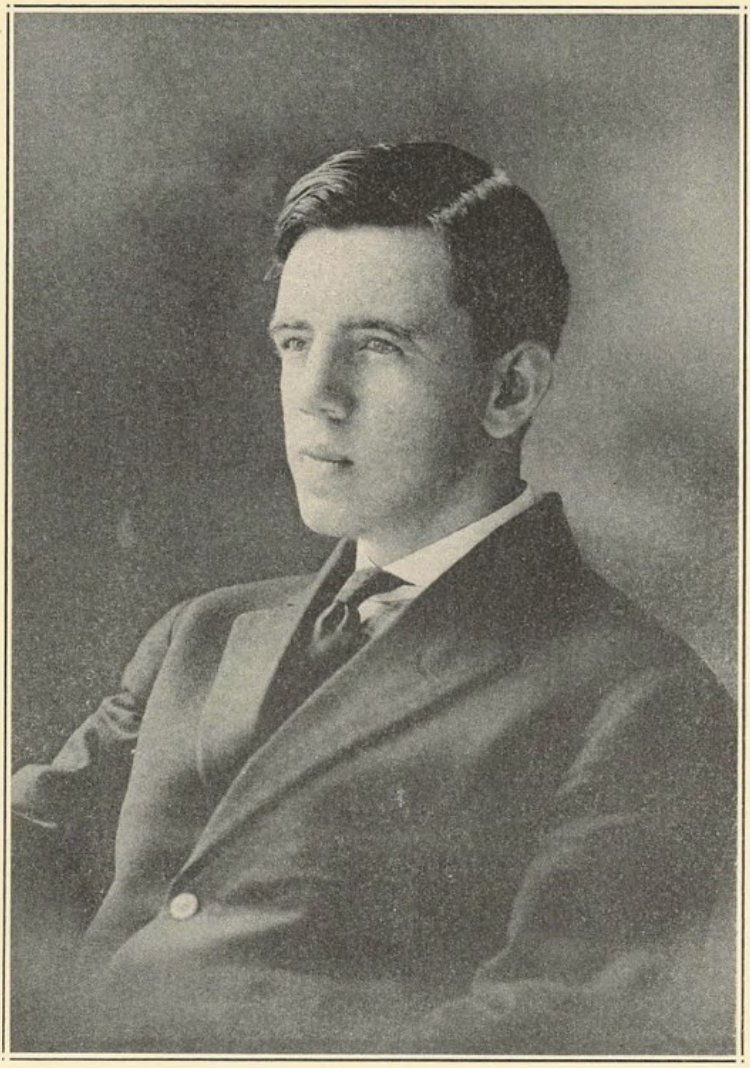
lion at the temperature of its milk, show signs of precocity in adolescence, affront the dictates of the social herd in early maturity, and generally bother God and the angels with expositions of his own individuality when he reaches those years when he can do something about it besides lament it, and it is demonstrated beyond the peradventure of a challenge, that life has kicked his soul in the face and shattered the poor thing into fifty-seven pieces. ☙ ☙

To all of it, fiddlesticks!

I never had a moment of brain or nerve exhaustion in my life—not even when I walked into that phone pole after getting Mabel's letter; I had simply been too engrossed in the blow of my tragedy to look where I was walking. If I have ever experienced any "depression of the vital forces" it has yet to be noted by those who are near to me. Quite to the contrary, the prevailing complaint has it that I usually give nerve and brain exhaustion to those in my company—and about fifteen millions of America's anti-Christian Hebrews are doing so much fretting over the improbability of any permanent depression of my vital forces that they have made my dynamics a congressional issue. Yes, I say fiddlesticks. I likewise say phooie! ☙ ☙

Once, twenty years ago, I fell in love with a girl, one of those knock-down-and-drag-out romances that may take hold of a male at any time between seventeen and seventy. Being overly sentient, and the affair occurring at an impressionable period when a strong idealism was being parentally thwarted, I took the stricture hard. If I had lived in the days of Byron or Keats, and had moped to the moon in poetic doggerel, I would later be having literary professors writing compassionate eulogies to my Misunderstood Heart, and maybe someone would tack up a tin plate to my poignant memory when, as, and if, the occasion became appropriate. The facts of the case were, that I was not misunderstood, nothing was the matter with me but an overdose of inhibiting parental management; and when the girl herself let me down, I transferred my affection to an industrial assignation.

But the affair had thrown its switches, and my Life Train was in motion. ¶ I could not see, and do not see now, how marrying the girl of my youthful romance would have sidetracked or wrecked that train, or kept it from arriving at its scheduled destination. Probably if I had married the girl, or she had tried to deter me or make me over into something which I was not, or manufactured burdens that restrained me from mounting to the heights of my cosmic expression, I would have parked her somewhere



"I made it my business to fall
violently in love!"

on an alimony lot and gone ruthlessly about the fulfilling of my brevet. I never have had much use for people who let the commonplaces of existence keep them commonplace, anyhow. I have had still less use for men and women who live their lives scared to death that perchance by giving free vent to their inner urges they may actually accomplish something that will leave them marooned on a social island of rugged individualism. I like people who are first and foremost themselves. When a man lives sincerely, without artifice or timidity, I know what he is and just where to find him when I need the particular brand of personality, or intellectual or moral attainments, that he has to contribute to our program. Far better to be eccentric, when it is artless eccentricity, than to be the most erudite rascal with a flawless conformity.

Looking at what occurred in its larger aspects, however, I believe that I came into life to do a definite job, and knew it, as a boy, in my subconscious mind. What I had to wait thirty-seven years to realize was, that the peculiarities of my role demanded not a training in the niceties of social performance nor even academic study, but a rigorous schooling in adversity and a trenchant curriculum in perverse human nature. I had to wait thirty-seven years to recognize consciously that I had lived here on earth before—as well as everybody else—that before coming into physical existence with a new body that had to be developed and mastered, I had the choice of parents, environment, and spiritual training, the combined influences from which would supply me with the best equipment, mentally and temperamentally, for the job I must do. But I came to know more. I came to accredit that when men and women have especially hard life-errands to consummate, they may take their training in compounded doses. The harder the childhood, the quicker the maturity. The quicker the maturity, the more seasoned and facile the equipment with which to achieve one's prenatally-chosen program.

You may not believe in this sort of thing, and I do not ask you to believe it. I am telling you how it has been in my own case.

Some people slide into life, to awaken in physical bodies with silver cutlery thrusting from their mouths. They have pleasant, carefree childhoods. They scarcely know a care or worry, even up to marriage. When they mate off, they still pursue a fairly even tenor of existence, give birth to their progeny, make a comfortable living, belong to all the best clubs and lodges, and then distinguish themselves by dying in sacrosanct decorum. The cemeteries of the world are stuffed with the husks of such mediocrities, who had no special errands to consummate excepting to themselves. No

worlds have taken fire in that they existed. They have been the great rank-and-file who sometimes have committed suicide when financial reverses were so ungracious as to touch them, or perished of broken hearts when their mates have eloped with stenographers or icemen. There are other people who have come into life to make a great dent on society's moral apathy, to shake up the cycles wherein they perform, to function as pioneering spirits in political, economic, or martial upheavals—or perhaps to write only one poem, or paint one picture, that influences the culture of a nation or a race. They know it all beforehand but temporarily forget it when mortality snugs about them. To do that job well, they ask for the bitterest possible doses of mortal vicissitude. They want life to take them by the scruff of the neck and rub their noses, from the cradle to the grave, in the abrasive gravels of trenchant experience. They ask for this sort of thing, and get it. They get it, I believe, by deliberately choosing the types of parents through whom they shall be born, or the known environment in which those parents raise them. They begin to acquire worldly experiencing with the casting off of pinafores. They find themselves batted around, maltreated, generally suppressed. When they come to maturity, they take their romances with lightning-bolt severity. If a woman or two lets them down, it is done by a sort of preconceived arrangement that such are their roles, to deliver the victims, who are not at all victims, their several doses of gruelling heartbreak making for increment in spiritual balance.

It all makes for courage, which, as Ernest Hemingway once said, is but grace under pressure. No man can be gracious under pressure, which is usually what is called for when he is destined to live dangerously or dramatically, unless he has been through spiritual upheaval and proved that he can take it. Some shrivel up and pass out when they encounter such torment or ordeal, and that is the end of them and good riddance to them. Others take their medicine and stand up to desolation, learning how to do it for a later time when the mettle of a nation may rest upon their stamina. ❧ ❧

I got exactly the early training which I required for the job I have to do. My parents gave me a sound body, which has never once failed me in the tremendous stresses I have loaded upon it. Father tutored me in a school of morals, religious and otherwise, that had precious little patience for the fripperies of modernism. The work he piled upon me brought home to me the rewards of industry when honestly acquired. He did me no wrong in taking me from school, although he did it blindly and

perhaps a trifle selfishly. At once he presented me with opportunities to learn things that are nowhere in schoolbooks. Smashing my romance accelerated my commercial progress and allowed me to know what bankruptcy felt like before I was old enough to take it to heart. I got all of the assets of such experiences and few of their liabilities. Then having done his task and introduced me to personal freedom at my majority, he betook himself off and out of my affairs. All honor to his memory.
You did a good job, dad. And wherever you are at this moment, I salute you! ❧ ❧

SO I stroked on my own.
As soon as I was legally free to do so, I exercised prerogatives and learned further life lessons that father could not give me. Incidentally I turned down an offer of $10,000 a year to go back to York State, after that crash of our own company, and manage the mill of an erstwhile competitor. That was big money back in 1911.
On the evening of my marriage I covered the newspaper assignment for the State Convention of Massachusetts Laundrymen at the Hotel Kimball, not arriving home until long after midnight.
My bride had come down from her parental home in Vermont to meet me for the ceremony, having given up her job as the newspaper's proofreader. The license had been secured and the clergyman arranged for. Then, a couple of hours before our arrival at the parsonage, a parish call had summoned this pastor to a dying sinner's bedside and the hours sped toward evening with the man remaining absent. I never desired anyone to die with such dispatch as I did that sinner. A fine slush was falling that winter's twilight and that laundrymen's convention was commanding my attendance. Dead men, slush, soiled shirts, and matrimony!
"Come on," I cried, disgusted, "we'll find another parson!"

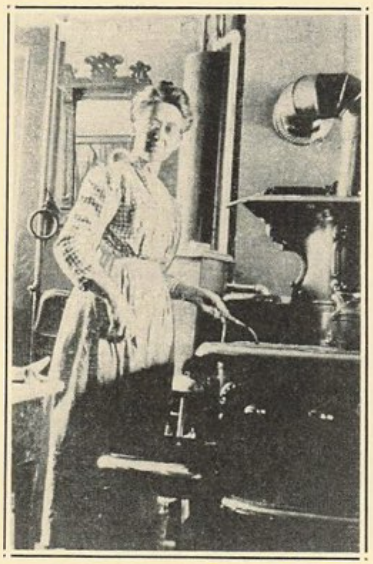
CHAPTER TWO

THE KNOT was eventually tied and I was back on my job at eight. I sat through long speeches on how best to iron the national shirt-front, with exactly seven dollars in my pocket, wondering if my new wife would wait up for my return. I had given up my job as columnist on *The Springfield Homestead* to become night editor on *The Boston Globe* in western Massachusetts. It was seven-day-per-week employment and my work commenced at five each afternoon. No matter. It gave me from the time of my forenoon arising until dusk to engage in pursuits aside from *The Globe*. I mantled a printshop. What else would I mantle? ¶ We had been married on December 16, 1911, by the Rev. A. D. Chadsey. Harriet, our first daughter, was born the next year. Thereupon I knew all the throes of being the proud and finicky young father. But long before that happened I came to the conclusion that I could not work for wages. It was anathema to my temperament. Although without funds, I promoted a newspaper. I had to promote it.

The French-Canadian mayor of the small manufacturing city of Chicopee, lying ten miles north of Springfield, was campaigning for reelection on a local option ticket. The city's more respectable element was insisting on reduction in the number of its saloons. I never perceived the sense in such restrictings. A city of Polocks could get just as drunk in five saloons as fifty: it simply meant that five would get ten times the business. But the mayor went forth as the Voice of Restraint crying in a wilderness of alcoholic wet. If he were reelected, he declared, he would reduce Chicopee's saloons from seventy-five to forty-two.

I knew that the nearby city papers were antagonistic to the mayor, most of them profiting from liquor advertisements. So I sought out his home one Sabbath morning—the better the day the better the deed—and made him a proposal. I had a printing plant. He had some money, or at least I assumed so and the man did not dissent. His campaign would hinge on newspaper support. If he would underwrite a paper in Chicopee, I would elect him though I voted for him myself.

The mayor was a big man, that is to say, physically. To control his own newspaper would be a very fine thing indeed. He expanded behind a thirty-inch white vest and told me to come back after he had dedicated a suburban hospital that afternoon, a dedication from which he returned



Mother



Father



Three of us



Harriet

proudly bearing an American flag, a great scarlet sash, and a bouquet of dahlias. Being generally elated by the day's adulation, he agreed to start the project by going on my note for at least a thousand dollars. He was still wearing the sash as we arranged these details. Thirty-one of his French-Canadian supporters thought well enough of the project to contribute five dollars apiece toward the paper's success. He was the sort of a mayor who had five-dollar friends. . . .

I removed my Springfield plant to Chicopee and brought out the first issue of the paper—a weekly. Most of its front page was taken up by an enormous portrait of the mayor in his sash, and I wrote from the heart when I told all good Chicopeans that here was a standard-bearer who could thrash the Demon Rum. Was he not bucking an all-powerful brewing company in the city to the south? I was for him to a man, and that man was myself.

Let no one try to tell me of political corruption. I fought for that mayor with crusading zeal. I also had my newspaper venture to fight for, and the sustained adulation of an observant young wife. The local political bosses in the opposition wanted to know who the blank-blank was pushing that vitriolic pen in the fat mayor's favor. Election day approached, and I felt that our campaign was a foregone conclusion. Yes, we had it in the bag. I said so to the mayor and he swelled like a bullfrog.

At a quarter to eleven o'clock on the morning before election, a newspaper friend dropped in from Springfield. He laid photostat copies of documents on my desk. He said, "That for your Galahad out of Quebec!"

¶ I glanced at the photostats. Then I grabbed for them, palsied. They were reproductions of a true secret contract which My Lord Mayor had entered upon, weeks before, with the aforesaid brewing company, guaranteeing to work for it clandestinely and only close those saloons which it did not supply, *if* it supplied *him* with funds for his political campaign. Of such was the money that had financed my enterprise. I sat for a time on the small of my back.

"Do you want them?" asked my friend, flipping at the prints.

"How come," I whispered, "you don't use them . . . yourself?"

"Because they sock the brewery far worse than His Nibs. And the brewery's our advertiser. Six and four make ten."

I sat for a time with explosions assembling. So! After all the miasma of putrid politics through which I had waded in the recent six weeks, my male Carrie Nation was a delusion and a snare! I rang for the boy.

"Rush these photostats over to the engravers. Say that I want cuts by one o'clock sharp!"

"What are you going to do?" asked my informant.

"What's left to do? GIVE HIM THE WORKS!"

By one o'clock I had a complete reversal of my mayoralty support in screaming headlines across my front page. I told the citizens exactly the chicane to which I had lent myself. By the time I got through with what I thought of my erstwhile backer, his reputation was not worth exchanging for a bowl of French dressing. The forms were all ready to go on the press. Thereat I made the strategic error of leaving for lunch. Into the lunchroom burst an excited small boy as I finished my dessert. "Hey!" he bawled. "You better come over to Center Street and see what they're doin' to your paper!"

I raced to my office. The place was a mess. My typeracks were spilled, my press was disabled. On the floor was my front page, demolished by a mallet. Someone had obviously phoned the mayor of how I had reacted and what his own journal was to say of him that night. I had a sneaking hunch as to that someone's identity. But the mayor's strong-arm henchmen had arrived with dispatch. So likewise had the City Marshal. This official had a warrant for my immediate arrest. The charge? Obtaining money under false pretenses. I had undertaken to promote that bloated nabob and what had I shown myself but a double-crossing ingrate? "I'm sorry," said the Marshal. "You know that I'm for you, but the mayor is my boss and I've got to run you in."

"For how long?" I quavered.

"Till after election day at least. His Nibs can't afford to have those documents come out."

"You're putting me in j-jail?"

"And how!" said the policeman.

To make matters worse, that Human Hippopotamus had likewise sworn out a warrant for the arrest of my bride. Her name as well as mine was appended to that note. So down to the City Hall we rode, this time not to the mayor's sumptuous office but the odorous tank beneath it. The mayor was elsewhere when the Marshal brought us in, getting bouquets of dahlias for his stand on Prohibition.

So they cast me in the dungeon, refusing me counsel, denying me bond. Behind iron bars I stayed, for two nights and a day. And the mayor was reelected. Father bailed me out and fetched me an attorney.

"They can't do this to you!" roared that lawyer when he saw me—an opinion belated by fifty-four hours.

Thereat he interviewed that mayor.

One hundred and eighty-six dollars an hour, I believe it was that he paid me, for every sixty minutes of that dank incarceration. The charges were withdrawn. I was free to engage in my business as I could. Three days later the Respectable Element recognized what had happened. I was summoned to the office of an Affluent Citizen.

"How much money do you need to run that Fat Toad into British Columbia—by another election?"

I mentioned small thousands.

"Faugh! . . . take a million!"

I did not get a million, but I got a financial backing that permitted me to conduct that paper for six prosaic months for the city's wholesome element. At which the mayor did a dastardly thing.

He suddenly died in office.

Said my backers in assembly: "Quite as good as British Columbia—the place that he's landed—only perhaps a few degrees hotter!"

And from that night, thereafter, they seemed to forget me. . . .

But it had been a great little fight while it lasted and my experiences had encompassed a virulent immersion in municipal politics. I had made the discovery that if you do not lower your colors in the face of lecherous duress, you do not have to lower your colors at all. This nation is filled with honest, decent-minded people who will back up a man who dares tell them the truth.

Nevertheless, I was locked in a jail, finding out exactly how it feels to have iron bars before my freedom—let my present enemies make out of it all that they will. I am proud of the episode, considering its premise. Incidentally came revenge. . . .

On the day before election I was coming down with mumps. When the marshal arrested me, those mumps were growing poisonous. I gave them to the marshal, I gave them to the jailer. I started a first-class epidemic of mumps in that hoosegow. Then they seeped abovestairs. The city clerk took them, and the mayor's private secretary. If my memory serves me right, The Lord-God Himself felt a harshness in his throat. The day after election he looked into the mirror and realized the worst: the bulges of his jowls had by no means got there from the delivery of orations. The blinds were drawn on the mayor's domicile for the next painful week while I set about the business of remantling my plant. The mayor of

Chicopee was abovestairs in a monstrous dressing-gown, wondering when the doctor was coming to lance him! . . .

The only person beside the mayor whom I had hoped would catch those mumps but did not, was the meddlesome person who had brought me those photostats.

"Was it you who phoned the mayor?" I demanded when I saw him.

"After the trouble of securing them," he laughed, "I had to get a story out of them somehow."

I felt that my new wife never quite forgave me for involving her, however. While she had been immediately released upon her own recognizance, she had nonetheless suffered the disgrace of arrest. Was I really the bright young business man whom she had accepted? Women have strange ways of viewing such matters.

So everything seemed to go wrong from the start. My hopes had been high and my prospects had been excellent. But I never could play the game the moment that I realized that it ran counter to my principles. Not that I would lean over backwards in righteousness. Rather put it that my Methodist ethics were more potent than my prospects. There was a right way and a wrong way, always and forever. The moment I threw a sop to my scruples, something would go out of me. Father had said, "Make the most of your life. Never let it get you down!" His repeated suggestions could not compromise with roguery.

I had done a lot of thinking while locked in that bastile. The experience was but a pocket-handkerchief edition of what I was to go through nationally when I fought a vaster lechery—not that I knew it, of course, at the time. I clung to my precepts and had a revelation of all the wholesome support I needed as a matter of reaction. As it was with Chicopee City, so may it be with the entire United States. People will eventually come from their coma. They will recognize how vigorously constructive at its core this fight has been from the start.

Still, my new wife later reminded me of the taint of her arrest. I had no business monkeying with the politics of a French-Canuck element, it seemed. When the Better Classes expected too much reprint of Sunday sermons in *The Journal* and the papers were becoming too flossy to sell, I disposed of the project and went up to Vermont. . . .

CHAPTER THREE

THE WIFE I had married was Marion Harriet Stone and she had been born in Millers Falls, Mass., of a mother who was a Waste. The Wastes are too well known in northwestern Massachusetts for me to eulogize them here. The name, I was told, was a derivative from West, and the Wests from whom they in turn were derived were the equally well-known clan that signed the Mayflower Compact. ¶ We were mated intellectually, and in a manner of speaking, professionally—she having followed the printing craft like myself on finishing school, learning her business of proofreading at the Cambridge plant of Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Temperamentally, however, we were as opposite as the poles. I was creative, venturesome, crusading. Life to me was a constant campaign, with objectives to be won and heights to be conquered. Marion was conservative even to complacency. She viewed life, it later seemed to me, not as a campaign but rather as a program. You lived life, not in reaction to a Pounding Urge that banged your chassis to pieces if you could not get traction, but by arising at seven o'clock each morning and having your breakfast. Then you repaired to your daily labors and pursued them diligently until it was time to go home at night—with an hour off for lunch. You did this six days a week, with the Sabbath off for rest, four weeks to the month, twelve months to the year. At the end of each year you were one year older, just as at the end of each week, or possibly each month, you were certain dollars richer. You used this money to pay the bills incurred by living and if you could contrive a surplus, you banked it. Gradually you got ahead and owned a little better and larger homestead, and had a larger circle of more affluent friends. When you finally came to die, the local newspaper said nice things about you—perhaps half a column—and all sorts of people attended your funeral. Such was living life "successfully" as it was held up to me. I have no comment to make upon it, excepting that for some people it may be commendable and suitable but that I am not one of them! ¶ To me, that sort of existence was a kind of paralysis. It was walking about in a state of living death. Each day to me was a challenge to achieve, to essay something more noteworthy or impelling in character than yesterday or last week. It was a separate life-cycle unto itself, with its beginning and its ending, its inception and its climax. To do the same

thing twice in succession, in the same manner and at the same tempo, was to demonstrate that nothing had been learned, that no progress had been made, that the spirit had gone static. After that unbelievable catastrophe at the factory, too, when my most sensitive years at industrial effort had culminated in financial fiasco, I was left with a fixation in regard to money that from Marion's standpoint was as abstruse as it was hapless. Money to me was a means to an end. For a matter of years I had ruthlessly conserved and compounded money. When it got into the hundred thousand dollar status, the unstable and ephemeral nature of Money had suddenly revealed itself. As an intrinsic value within itself, it was data on books. If the figures were sizable enough, you wrote checks against them and had delivered what you wanted. Somehow it was a false standard by which to measure achievement, since you had it one moment in sizable quantities, or your bank teller told you that you did, and the next moment, through no particular fault of your own, you did not. Millions of my industrious and thrifty fellow citizens have come through this Depression with their standards of money similarly altered. Only I had such adjustment at the time of my majority. Money had proved a false friend, quite as much as it had been a Frankenstein, at the crisis in our business. It left me with a strange complex in regard to Money, that it only became of importance when I did not possess enough of it for some project in hand.

This became utterly incomprehensible to the girl I had married. I have no word of criticism to offer on her philosophy. Femininity's first demand on life is Security. This is particularly true if the woman be maternal. Her children must be provided for, in order to nurture them for their places in society. Marion did not see life in terms of any particular dragons to be vanquished, unless they were the dragons of one's personal improvidence. She was fiercely maternal, almost fanatical about the welfare and the safety of her children as they were born. Still, we had obligations and responsibilities of a cosmic nature toward each other, that had to be discharged. And we proceeded to discharge them. Thereupon, it seemed, I bade goodbye to dad. . . .

THAT curious collapse of the tissue paper company, father had taken hard. He felt that after a hectic career, judged by his standards, and after a life of movings to and fro, he had at last encountered success only to have it turn to tar and ashes in his life. He brooded considerably over my marriage to Marion—whom at first he did not like, she being but

another Mabel in his estimation—and implied that I should never be married at all. Or at such times as he unbended, he treated my new connubial status with parental condescension, as though I were merely playing at matrimony. This state of tension maintained between us. In addition, his losses in the tissue company left him more or less embarrassed. It was his turn now to hold me responsible.

I had demonstrated that after all I had not been quite the smart cub that I acted. His manner conveyed that if I had not tried to run things, or had been more prone to harken to his counsel of retrenchment all along the line, we would still have the business and the increments of industry. Besides, he had enjoyed living largely on his trips on the road. These were now denied him. He turned his hand to a little real estate, to helping with my newspaper, to running a photo-engraving plant—a job that I secured for him. There was always a bit of the little Newfoundland lad in father that was altogether lovable. He wanted to show his easy ability to cope with life as he found it down here in "the States" and when things went against him, his blue eyes showed panic. One day he came to me and half-ashamedly wanted to borrow the money to go to New York and take a job with a paper house. I was glad to let him have it. I contemplated transferring the scene of my journalistic endeavors to Vermont and hoped that he could make enough to keep him and mother. The night before I left for Vermont, having taken a job with *The Deerfield Valley Times*, I bade him goodbye on the side veranda of the Florence Street house where he stretched in the hamock. The soft August evening was vibrant with the zylophones of crickets. The fragrance of syringas bathed us as with incense. How could I know we had come to the parting?

Strangely enough, in that last hour I spent with him, we talked of religion; of Pastor Russell's Watch Tower Society in which father had found an interest. I finally kissed him and went down the walk to the car line, with bags containing combings of my possessions that had been in mother's custody. ❧ ❧

It was the last time I ever saw him.

Thus was completed the bittersweet saga that had begun for me in and about that North Prescott church, followed through to East Templeton with its weird infant sermon, embraced the sending me forth into the cold and cruel world in Templeton Center and the grisly mishap later on the Otter River road, taken us through Gardner, the store, the Christmas seasons with Aunt Georgia, the saving of my neck on the Windsor House veranda, comprised his helping me to buy the hand press and advancing

me the money to get types and fixtures, made the tragic trail to Fulton, with the crushing of my romance that threw such poignant switches.

Next day he started for New York, and from there went out toward Pittsburgh. My last letter from him, received in Vermont, was dated from Harrisburg. Then the days became a week, and the weeks became a month. Mother came up to Vermont from Springfield, frantic with alarm. What could have become of him? My sister confided to me that word had been received through one of our uncles that he had been seen and recognized on a street in Wichita, Kansas. From that point his trail wended into the Mist. Whether he was a victim of amnesia, whether for reasons of his own he wanted to go off and begin life afresh, whether the Kansas report was false and somewhere in Pennsylvania he had met with foul play—is the mystery of my manhood. Certainly were he alive, I cannot conceive that he would be preserving a silence after all the notoriety that his son has stirred up—somewhere, in the nature of things, I should long ago have heard of him.

Oh well! I am a grown man myself now, and have lived to see my own boy declare his personality, differ from my views, show definite inclinations for living his own life. Perhaps father learned too, from his contact with myself. It could not have been one-sided.

I assumed mother's support after she had exhausted the meager savings and property that had been left in her possession. Edna married presently, after an interval of working on my paper up in Vermont. I had my own way to make, with a wife, a baby, a mother, and subsequently a mother-in-law, who looked to me for their principal sustenance.

I set my wits to work. I succeeded in worming my way into the ownership of *The Deerfield Valley Times* in Wilmington, Vermont. . . .

CHAPTER FOUR

WILMINGTON was a little crossroads village in the center of the State, down rather close to the Massachusetts line. Today factories have come in. Cement roads and filling stations have modernized its aspect. But twenty years ago Wilmington was a very quiet and sedate little town, not unlike East Templeton. Most of its cottage homes were white with green blinds. Its lawns were close-cropped. Most house walls showed hollyhocks. Down through the center of its drowsy business section—which smelled mainly of its tar walks and feed stores—purled the stony Deerfield River, a shallow, nut-brown stream with a red iron bridge where it flowed beneath Main Street.

At this bridge's western end, built flush with the embankment, I had during an earlier visit seen the plant of the town's only weekly. It was an eight-page boilerplate weekly, run by a man named Dixon. I had met this Dixon. He was a lean little man of some fifty years. He had piercing green eyes, a sharp Vermont face, and handlebar mustaches above a curt mouth. He went about his printing shop from year's end to year's end in a khaki shirt, with vest unbuttoned, and corduroy trousers stuffed into brogans. As often he wore his hunting-cap. A buzzy cob pipe completed his ensemble. His wife did his typesetting, with a babycart beside her.

¶ No, *The Times* was not for sale but he did need a printer. The job that he offered paid twelve dollars a week. It seemed for a time an inglorious tumble, from ten thousand a year offered by the competitor of previous mention to twelve dollars per Saturday on a smudgy country weekly. But Wilmington was sleepy, quiet, tranquil. That nut-brown water crooned very pleasantly beneath the office windows on July afternoons. ❧ ❧

"I'm going to take the job," I confided to Marion. "Give me six months and I'll own the plant. You'll see."

Marion was not averse to making the removal. It brought her near her parents. Her mother had lost her father in middle married life and become the spouse of a man named Holbrook. "Pa Holbrook" was an invalid and presently he died. So to Wilmington we moved. I took up my work. ❧ ❧

But no sooner was I ensconced in Dixon's plant, than the man and I began to cross temperaments. He would pack his rifle or fishing-rod be-

neath his arm and be gone for four days out of each week. His wife and I attended to the business. Then Dixon showed up, and for a hectic two days we printed the paper. If he did not like anything that I had done in his absence, he invariably said so. I did quite a lot in those absences of which he disapproved. He had a particular foible for criticizing anything that savored of new methods in his plant, for saving time or expenses. What was time in a place like Wilmington?

We did the printing for the local railroad. One of its forms was a freight bill. Always they had been run, one freight bill at a time. I favored setting the form in quadruplicate and cutting press runs down to one-quarter. "No," said Dixon, coming in from one of his fishing trips, "we always have run 'em one bill at a time and we ain't gonna change it for no printer fr'm Springfield." He talked like that. Bluntly. I stood it two months.

"I'm going to Boston," I told Marion one noontime. "I'm going to tackle Martin Brown and see if he won't back me in buying Dixon's mortgage."

¶ Martin Brown was a distant relative of Marion's, a Wilmington boy who had gone to the city and made a small fortune in lumber and water-power. The Browns owned a summer place just east of the village. I had learned during my weeks of labor for Dixon that considerable feeling existed in the valley against flooding the Whitingham district for a reservoir. Vermont people had a certain spleen against prosperous farms and venerated burying-grounds' being condemned by the legislature for the New England Electric Power Company. And Martin had an interest in building that reservoir. It seemed to me that with such wholesale condemnation proceedings in prospect, what he and his associates needed was not only the local paper's endorsement but a certainty of its allegiance. Dixon was obdurate. He wrote vitriolic editorials damning the development.

Down to Boston I went, and crashed Martin's office. He was a lean, likeable chap, with an eye to the main chance, not averse to assisting a young man with ambition. "Okay," he said finally, after two or three conferences, "I'll raise the money—at least for the mortgage. Today's Friday, . . . you wait over here until tomorrow afternoon and we'll motor up to Brattleboro together and see the local bank folks. But it's understood that you're to back the power company to the limit and win the valley over to the Whitingham development. In fact, I think I'd better start off with a statement of my own, disarming those folks as to just what we're about."

Brown's big limousine carried us to Brattleboro that Saturday afternoon

and by Monday at ten, and for one year thereafter, the mortgage on *The Times* was transferred to me. I got back to Wilmington by country roads westward. ❧ ❧

"Where have *you* been?" Dixon flared at me.

"Oh," said I, "just moseying 'round."

"Moseyin', eh? Waal, s'pose you mosey 'long out back and put on more freight bills for delivery to the railroad."

I got into my apron and pulled out the slides containing standing forms. I pulled out the three extra forms I had set up to cut the costs of press-work. I locked them up together. Dixon came out, rifle slung beneath his arm. He was off on a hunting trip.

"Wait a minute, you!" he cried in some heat. "Thought I told you to run them things separately."

"You did," I responded, "but I don't have to do it."

"Wassat?"

"I said, I don't think I will."

"Which of us is crazy?"

"I'm not crazy. Run along to your hunting. Stay as long as you like. Stay a year if you want. You see, I've bought your mortgage."

For a moment I thought Dixon would use his gun to shoot me. He scuffed into the office and cranked the wall phone. A call through to Brattleboro established what had happened.

"So!" he said finally. "You're one o' them birds that snaps the hand that feeds you?" ❧ ❧

"Birds don't snap," I answered serenely. "I just got tired of having you drive me. Now suppose we talk about how much you ought to have for your equity in this paper." . . .

THE FIRST issue of *The Times* after my acquiring it, startled the valley. Off had gone the static front-page ads and the half-dead boiler-plate columns of twaddle. Headlines appeared. Pictures of local interest enlivened its features. One noon the cider mill burned to the ground, threatening half the town. I came out with an Extra! This was unheard-of. Old Man Kidder scuffed into the office. He held a copy of this Extra in his hand. "Wassa idea?" he growled. "You don't need to waste all this good white paper screamin' at us this way. We was all to the fire. We know that it happened!"

Those Vermonters liked their paper to keep its musty flavor. . . .

In the first issue after succeeding to its management, I had told the valley

frankly that it had been wrong, wrong, all wrong, about the Whitingham development. The power company was not the evil thing they thought. It did not kick cripples, starve orphans, or soak corpses in water by legislative condemnation. It was a State benefaction that was under way. Moreover, the officials of the power company were presently to make a statement through my paper that should forever lay suspicion about their calloused lack of altruism.

It was this last announcement that took the valley by the ears. The significant silence of the power company up till then, had condemned it up and down. I was promising an inside story of their plans and motivations. Farmerfolk who had not read *The Times* in years, dropped into the office and paid up back subscriptions. And true to his promise, Martin Brown wrote out a lengthy statement and mailed it to Wilmington to be set into type.

I got out one of the best issues of which the plant was capable. We usually went to press on a Wednesday afternoon, but the hour was well advanced toward evening before this issue was ready to print. Suddenly I heard the telephone jangle. Boston was calling on the long-distance wire.

It was Martin Brown's office. And his instructions were emphatic. Under no circumstances was I to publish a single line of his statement until his secretary could reach me and make certain explanations. I hooked the receiver with calorific reactions.

"Something's wrong somewhere," I reported to Marion's brother, Ernest, who had given up his job as pressman at the Springfield Printing & Binding Company to help me with *The Times*. "We'd better hold over the printing of this issue till the morning."

Knots of critical Vermonters began applying at the office for the paper after supper. Where was the power company's statement? I had to close the place and go home to be rid of them. At noon next day a smart young man stepped off the Boston train.

"Martin's instructions are to kill that story, lock, stock, and barrel!" was his devastating order. "And he sent me up to make sure that all copies of it are destroyed."

"What's the large idea?"

My caller shrugged his shoulders. "Guess Martin acted without consulting his attorneys. They don't want a line printed of what they contemplate doing in this valley. They say it's nobody's business but their own."

¶ "In other words, the public be damned, eh? But what about the public interest I've got worked up?"

"It's neither here nor there. Where's Martin's manuscript?"
"See here! Martin can't treat me like this. It means my reputation in this valley." ❧ ❧
"And perhaps it means the reputation of the power company. Where's Martin's manuscript?" ❧ ❧
"Supposing I don't give it to you?"
"You'll find yourself out of this paper like a shot from a gun."
Was it the French mayor episode all over again? Marion said no. "After all, the company's business is its own. Martin acted precipitously and probably wants to back up while there's time. Besides, don't you forget that he's a relative of mine. It'll make too much of a shindy in my family if you go ahead and ignore his instructions."
So I submitted. I relinquished the manuscript and remade my front page. In the center of it I put a boxed editorial:—
"Word has come suddenly from Boston that counsel for the power company thinks it inadvisable to make a statement before the legislature meets," was the gist of its intelligence.
To use a mild metaphor, that valley BLEW UP!
I was the subservient tool of the power company. The power company owned *The Times*. Free journalism was dead. The voice of the press had ceased to exist. A quota of my readers visited on street corners with my apology torn angrily. It was all a hoax from the start, they said. "This smart Alec never had any story from the power company. He got us hot and bothered to make himself new readers. More of his blarsted yellow journalism. We'll show him where he sits!" And assuredly they did.

CHAPTER FIVE

QUARION did not come over for her usual hitch at a typecase one afternoon in the winter which followed. "Something ails little Harriet," was the word she sent across the street. "If she doesn't get better by dark, I shall call Dr. Dunn." I went home to supper that night to find our small daughter fretting upon her cot, digging at her ears and kicking the bedclothes off in a peeve. She was ordinarily a sweet-tempered, violet-eyed little thing, just beginning to walk. ¶ Two days slipped by and Harriet grew no better. At ten-thirty one morning, my wife hurried into the office. "Dr. Dunn's decided that he wants Harriet in the Brattleboro Hospital. Something ails the baby that he can't seem to diagnose."

I recall exactly where I was standing, pulling out a typecase, when this ugly news was brought to me. "Do you want me to leave and drive her over?" & &

"No, mother's coming up from Jacksonville. You 'phone the Hospital that we're driving in. Doctor will get us there behind his fast span."

I 'phoned the Hospital to reserve a room, then hurried to the house. Harriet was being dressed and rolled in thick blankets.

"'Bye!" she shook her chubby little hand at me, as they bore her down the stairs. . . .

I returned to my work with my heart encased in ice. Something whispered of tragedy. In my twenty-two years till then, the hand of the Reaper had not touched my family intimately. . . .

I got a call from the Hospital about midnight. "You'd better come over first thing in the morning," my wife's tight voice suggested. "The baby's been in coma ever since we got her here."

A heavy snow fell that night. I procured a horse and sleigh from Craft's Livery and started alone for Brattleboro. Ernest and Edna must get out the paper. Driving up Hogback Mountain in cold, sunny forenoon, a sense of what lay ahead seized hold of me. As the horse stumbled onward through sun-refracting snowdrifts, I choked back full sobs.

"Oh God, don't let her die!" I groaned in a different agony than I had known to date. "Not my baby! Not *mine!*"

I had to learn that one does not make bargains with divine Providence. . . .

¶ I spent the rest of that week in Brattleboro. Physicians were called in consultation. Tests of spinal fluid resulted in no known diagnosis. Money

was nothing in that ghastly dilemma. For the first time in my life I went recklessly into debt. Hospital bills mounted. Specialists came up from Harvard University to examine this child's queer coma. They talked their Latin phrases, said, "Most interesting, most interesting!" and went back shrugging their shoulders.

"I've *got* to get back to Wilmington," I told Marion finally. "If anything happens to the paper I won't have money for these bills."

She had her mother to sustain her. I drove back over the road, not seeing a foot of landscape. Mrs. Holbrook was the kind of woman who was always called in by neighbors in emergency, anyhow. I reached home in twilight and stabled my exhausted horse. At a quarter to twelve that midnight, I had just gone to bed when a messenger came over from the telephone exchange. Brattleboro wanted me on my office telephone. I knew what awaited me as I crossed the sleeping Square. . . .

"We've lost Harriet," was the way it came—in my mother-in-law's brave voice. "We'll be back over home on tomorrow noon's train."

The little white casket came over from Brattleboro two days later. Old Man Kidder pulled it down from the station on a hand-sled. We held the funeral in the small front room of our Main Street flat. It brought together all the neighbors and relatives. . . . "I am the resurrection and the life," began the village minister. . . .

Marion did not weep. She sat beside me on the divan and her hand found mine in a grip of agony. She had shed all her tears in those hours at the hospital. Harriet had died of cerebral meningitis.

We did not stay to see that poignant little box carried down the stairs. By prearrangement with kindly neighbors, I had a car waiting at the foot of the stairs that would take my wife and me to the three o'clock train—to get out of that village for the first awful night. The body was to be kept in the local cemetery vault until the spring, anyhow.

I took Marion down to Springfield. It was a week before we returned to Wilmington. On my desk was a letter from Martin Brown.

"Are you prepared to pay the interest on your mortgage next week?" he queried me. "Also I've got a letter at hand from your local insurance man. He says you've been careless about keeping up your insurance premiums and is looking to me to reimburse him."

I sat down and tried to tell the man what a financial Golgotha I was living through. ☙ ☙

"You should keep your business and your family affairs separate," he subsequently responded. "You showed very poor judgment going away and

spending money on a Springfield trip after the death of your infant. Also, while I'm on the subject of infants, I note in the columns of your paper last week that you took half a page to tell the people of the valley all about its peculiar death. After all, you're not the only young father that ever lost a baby. What does southern Vermont care that yours had died strangely?" ❧ ❧

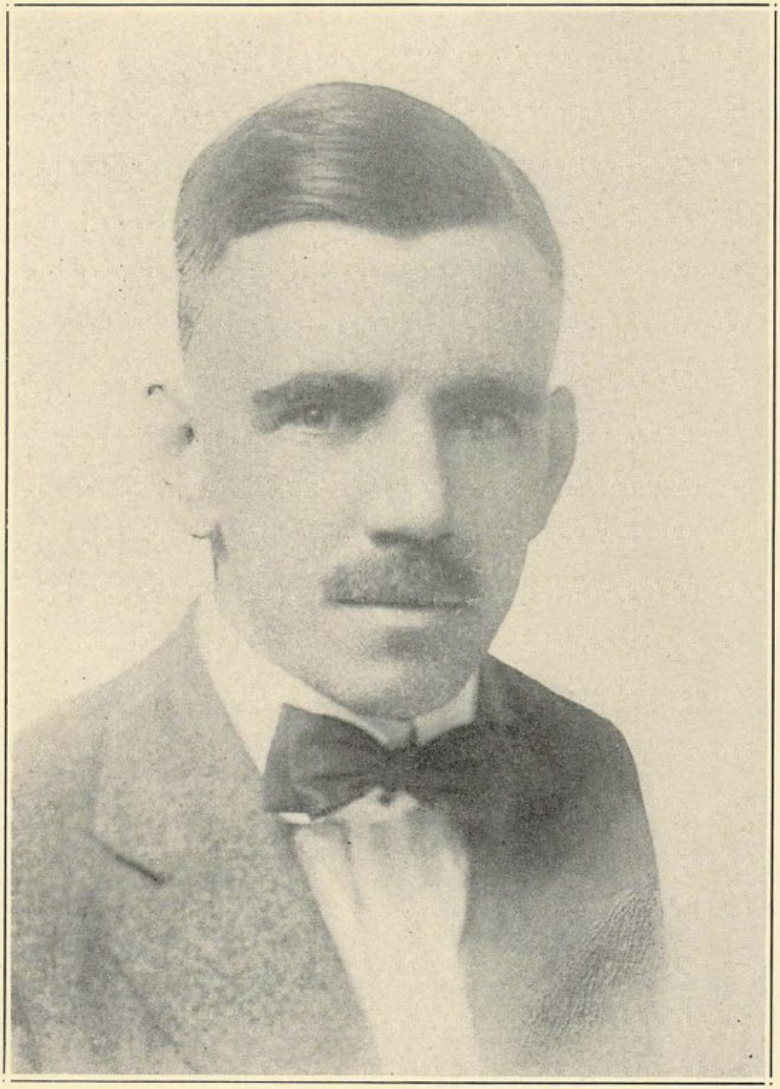
I wrote back to Martin Brown. I told him in substance that he could take his paper, his mortgage, his ideas about journalism, and jump in the lake of fiery brimstone reserved for the devil and all his angels. Then I went home and into a bedroom where an agonized young mother was sobbing in the dark. ❧ ❧

"No little white-flannel nightie to put on tonight," she whispered brokenly, "and it must be cold, cold, up in that vault half buried in the snow. . . ."

¶ The young people of the village were giving a dance that evening in the adjacent town hall. Hour after hour came the whine of the saxophones, the thump of the piano keys, the shuffle of dancing feet, the beat of the drums. Twelve o'clock came and it did not terminate. Blare-blare-blare! —toot-toot-toot—beat-beat-beat! Would they never give up their dratted frivolities and go home? But they did not. And I lay there. At one o'clock they were still at it. At two o'clock they started up afresh. Deep in maddening darkness I remained inert and let the iron seep into my soul. Death and dancing. Dancing and death. There was nothing I could do about it. I was standing up to life—in a reclining position. The bucolic revelry went on. . . .

SOMEHOW I floundered through the balance of that winter. I had alienated the valley by the power company high jinks. To make both ends meet I went down to North Adams and solicited department store advertising. That alienated my local advertisers who wanted buying kept in town but who would not advertise themselves. Marion had changed and I could not blame her. Perhaps I too had changed as a result of that Gethsemane. At length the spring of 1914 came beautifully over Vermont's Green Mountains. Harriet was lowered into a little grave in a quiet corner of the cemetery on the hill. Few Sabbath mornings passed that Marion and I did not go up among the ragged asters and sweet white clover and tend that tiny plot of ground where we had buried something that was a fragment of ourselves. . . .

When summer arrived, I found myself so deeply entangled in affairs of *The Times,* principally from mulcting my business to pay for Harriet's



"The spring of 1911 found me out of a job."

illness, that there was no saving it. One day in July a sprightly college graduate appeared in my office in a funny hat.

"My name's White," he announced. "Martin Brown sent me up here to take charge of this paper."

"And what becomes of all the work that I've put into it?"

"That's your funeral."

I got my hat and went over to the house. "This afternoon," I proposed to Marion, "we're driving over the mountain to Bennington. Maybe Frank Howe will give me a job on *The Banner*."

We came home that night by starlight. I had the job.

I had failed with *The Times*. Failed miserably. And that in my wife's home town. We owed every tradesman in the place and I still had ghastly bills in Brattleboro. My own mother was half-crazed by Harriet's passing. To complete the irony of my predicament, a new life was beating beneath by wife's heart. . . .

What was it that father had so often said to me? . . . "Stand up to life, never let it get you down!" Yes, I would stand up to life. On the last day of July our tenement was vacated. I left for Bennington by train, via Greenfield. At noon, while waiting at the junction of the Greenfield station, I bought a copy of *The Boston Globe*. Emblazoned over the front page were foreign despatches narrating the assassination of a certain Austrian archduke at Sarajevo. "If Serbia does not apologize, Germany may declare war within forty-eight hours,' 'declared the text. I rode up to Bennington apprizing myself of the fraught transpirings three thousand miles eastward. ☙ ☙

I took up my duties on *The Evening Banner* on that tragic August 4th, 1914. The first headlines I set up as foreman on the Bennington daily had to do with the assault on Liege.

Back in Wilmington, my twenty-six year old brother-in-law stayed on with young White. A few months later the Vermont newspaper fraternity learned that through peculiar convolutions of local finance, George Dixon was back in his old place as editor. Indeed, and why not? Sharp practices of an order had secured me *The Times*. We always get paid in our own coin for every deal of iniquity we finance.

"*The Times* has been sick!" was the opening line of Dixon's editorial after taking back the property.

The boilerplate, the stereotyped advertisements, the columns of provincial county correspondence, were returned at once to the smudgy front page. ¶ They are there at this moment.

CHAPTER SIX

IN THE extreme southwestern corner of Vermont lies Bennington, a town of ten thousand people, its tempo more like a small metropolis in York State than the rugged Green Mountains. I have written four novels and two hundred published short stories that were laid in this town of Bennington. Only in fiction, that was not always fiction, the place was named Paris. . . . ¶ It was a sedate yet sprightly community, depending upon a knitting mill for its industrial prosperity, having one long Main Street bisecting it east and west, the intersection of North and South Streets providing it with its business section. It was a brick sidewalk, maple tree bowered sort of town, with a single trolley line passing through Main Street and the famous Battle Monument lifting its noble obelisk on the hill to the west. It had no swollen wealth and on the other hand no squalor. It did have some snobbery, but what small town does not? On the south side of Main Street, between Endress Brothers' Cigar Store and Griswold's News Room, a corridor ran to the rear of the building. At the end of this corridor was a door to the left. The opening of this door ushered one into *The Evening Banner* office.

The paper had been established by Lieutenant-Governor Frank E. Howe some ten years before, by the simple expedient of combining two weeklies that had gone on the rocks. Frank was a tall, smooth-shaven, bald-headed man with rimless spectacles down his nose, throught which brown sheep's-eyes looked forth on the world. He resembled a prosperous physician far more than he did an editor, or should I put it that he was a physician for the troubles of the town? Certainly I never have met a man who was more sought after as a fixer of difficulties, both public and private. He was conservative, soft-spoken, sure to see his way to the end of any proposition before embarking on it, and content to let *The Banner* run along from year to year, making a modest profit but *making* it, while he climbed his way to the State's lieutenant governorship and from there to the dizzy heights of Bennington postmaster.

Kinsley, his editor, more familiary known as "Clate," was a town institution. He wore thick-lensed glasses before his sandy-red face, was conveniently deaf in one of his ears, and was married to the fortunes and destinies of *The Banner* as to a wife. His age was indeterminate. As he got along in years, his shoulders bowed slightly. And he did everything in that office

which the others would not do—from running the paper in Frank's absence in Montpelier to melting pigs of metal to stoke the single linotype. Every small-town newspaper must have such a functionary or it lands in disaster. Clate was Frank's alter-ego, working in the office early and late, going about the business section coatless, a rakish green eyeshade over his forehead, sliding into this place and that place after news with one shoulder a trifle higher than the other but always getting what he went after, beloved by all who knew him. His chief facial adornment was a mammoth calabash pipe which he was forever firing from a paper spill which had first been thrust in the office coal-stove. His chief ambition in life was to write a successful sory about the drilling of an oil well, in which he had participated as a younger man in Whittier, California.

The business offices of *The Banner* consisted of two small rooms, with a door in the inner room leading out to the composing-room. In this place at the time of my advent was one No. Five linotype and a Comet Duplex press. The rest of *The Banner* was some battered fonts of type and two unforgetable characters in the ad-alley, John Greene and John Burton. To be strictly fair there were sundry other employees, among them Ida Livingstone, the machine operator, Bernard Madigan, a freckle-faced Irish boy with an optimistic nose, and Pete Madison, a boy of all work who was likewise town sheik. Ida was an assertive lady who had once essayed matrimony and found it not so much. Bernard was an equally assertive jackanapes who would venture anything and approve of it on principle. Green and Burton were compositors. Into this plant, and among such persons, I came as foreman, make-up-man, and pressman. I allot so much space to description of this outfit, not only because it served as model for my *Paris Daily Telegraph* in four novels and two hundred magazine stories, but because on those premises I settled down to a thorough education in the small-town daily newspaper business. And I learned it! Marion joined me in Bennington a few days later and we set up housekeeping in a two-room flat on the second floor of 119 Jefferson Avenue. Our second daughter, Adelaide, was born in September.

But those ghastly Wilmington bills were hounding me. The Wastes, the Stones, and the Holbrooks were the sort of people who considered it a more sacred duty to meet one's obligations than it was a crime to loot a neighbor's henroost. I had a job—such as it was at $16 weekly— and my wife and new baby were eating on schedule. But I never could get out of that slough of debt on savings from my wages.

One night in Griswold's News Room I picked up a copy of *The American Magazine*. John Siddell had recently assumed its management, coming

from a Sunday editorship on *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*. In this particular issue of *The American Magazine*, John had devoted a full-page editorial to his manifest desire to encourage new authors . . . he offered $250 a story for every original manuscript by a hitherto unpublished author that he found suitable for his journal. I bought that magazine and stole home to my typewriter.

Here might be the answer to my quandary. A thousand men and women all up the years had found success and affluence in the writing of fiction. What they could do, so likewise could I. It might take me twenty years, but if I resolutely applied myself and held on adamantly no matter what the struggle, I might even surpass the earnings of dad's mill.

I made a silent vow with myself, saying nothing to my wife, that no matter what the vicissitudes I encountered, or how many rejection slips I piled up, I would hew to fiction till success came my way.

The Battle of Bennington was on.

WHENEVER I want to realize how long the World War lasted, I have only to think of the day in the Greenfield station when I bought that copy of *The Boston Globe* and the bitter night in Harbin, Manchuria, when after a 26-day ride over wintry Siberian wastes I walked past a little Chinese tobacconist's shop and saw the headlines on an English newspaper:

HINDENBURG ACCEPTS ALLIES' TERMS!

So much was crowded into those four years! In them I gained back to all that I had seemingly lost in either the tissue company, or Wilmington, . . . and more!

Marion was not long in discovering the oath-bound task to which I had set myself and was properly encouraging. Night after night I rushed through with the printing of *The Banner* that I might have more time at home to work at my typewriter. Frank never cared how early I put the paper to bed. The earlier it happened, the better he liked it. Gradually I put order and method into his rule-of-thumb composing-room. I printed as clean-cut and presentable a *Banner* as his equipment permitted. If the papers were printed at four o'clock, I was home by four-thirty, with supper eaten by five, and the click of my machine-keys starting, to continue far, far into the night.

I wrote and I wrote. But mostly I revised. All my life I had been

writing. Composition came fluently. But I had not yet learned the essentials of plot. That only came with practice—practice and analysis of the effects to be created.

One must learn to write by *writing*—and insofar as composition is concerned, keep always in mind that language is a form of music; a beautiful style, no matter how rugged, is only poetic euphony and when the effect is played, the harmony must come out simply and naturally, and, . . . know definitely before a piece of work is started, exactly what effect you mean to leave in a reader's mind when you have polished off the final paragraph, then bend every word, every phrase, every sentence, every plot-step in your narrative toward your final statement—newspaper stories are always told in the first paragraph, and preferably in the first sentence, but narrative fiction is always told in the last paragraph, and preferably in the final sentence. ❧ ❧

Of course these two stipulations came through a process of literary evolution. I had a long way to travel before I could write as simply and naturally as people talk in conversation—and so has any fledgling. I frequently chafed Kinsley on this very point. He was a master of straight news-telling and writing to the point. But the moment he sat down to his typewriter to narrate for the forty-seventh time that story about the Whittier oil well, he ran berserk in flowery inconsequence. "Just tell me what happened, Clate," I would appeal to him. He would cross to the stove with a spill of newsprint he had rolled, fire the enormous calabash, fold his arms with the gorgeous sleeveholders and black-cambric cuffs, and recount a straight-forward episode as he tilted and rocked on his toes and his heels. "Fine," I would advise him, "now sit down at your machine and say the same thing, just as you've related it to me, without altering a word." But he never could do it. He had the obsession that a magazine story must be a piece of "fine writing" . . . and the similies and metaphors began to compound till he was buried under them and he fought his way to victory by cramming his product into the office stove as trash.

I went at the business of creating a story exactly as I would straight-line a bit of manufacturing at the mill. Always I determined my plot, my complication, and—if it were that kind of story—my surprise ending, before I started to write. I dug this method from trenchant analysis of O. Henry. When I had written a dozen amateurish yarns, and they were as consistently returned to me, I finally invested in an edition of O. Henry and set myself to tearing every story of his apart, to study how he got his effects. I even copied portions of them on my machine, to see how they

looked in manuscript. I went thereafter on the principle that everyone of my stories ought to be so good that the first editor to whose attention it came should be seized with a fanatical desire to publish it. I did not always hit this mark, but when a story was returned to me, I always figured out that something must be basically wrong with it, or it would not have come back. What was that something? I set myself to find it. This often meant the complete rewriting of the yarn between each journey out to a magazine. ❧ ❧

My stories went out and heartrendingly came back. I was being dunned inhumanly to pay something on those bills in Wilmington and Brattleboro. I once compiled a collection of 175 rejection slips that had come to me before editors no longer sent me rejection slips. Throughout the winter of 1914-1915 I typed away, staving off my creditors, buying new typewriter ribbons and fresh reams of paper. Finally one noontime in December, 1914, I came home to lunch. Four months of the most assiduous effort had not sold a story. But I had shut my emotions to all disappointment. It was a war of attrition between those editors and myself, and I meant to show them that I could last longest. "Look under your plate," advised Marion cryptically.

Beneath it was a salmon-colored envelope with the corner-card of *The Popular Magazine,* published in New York by Street & Smith. I drew forth the contents, scarcely daring to breathe. A cheque dropped to the tablecloth. The accompanying letter read—

> We are pleased to accept your story "Spirit of the West" and to tender you herewith our cheque for $50 in payment. If you have any further stories along this order, we would be glad to read them. . . .

THAT fifty dollars was the biggest money that I have ever received for a piece of fiction in my life, not for the amount of the payment but for the fact that I could earn it. Furthermore, it had come in just before Christmas when otherwise our Yuletide had promised to be bleak. Marion took twenty dollars of the money and bought the first suit she had acquired since our marriage. We purchased a stock of inexpensive knick-knacks for the Holbrooks and went over to Jacksonville to spend Christmas with the family.

I had not breathed a word of my self-imposed brevet to the *Banner* staff, not even to Clate, with whom I was now crony. Not until the ensuing September did the news leak out as to where all the money was coming

from with which I was settling those Wilmington bills, moving into a better home at 129 Putnam Street, and acquiring the noisy flivver with which I began to journey around the country. Bernard Madigan came in from Griswold's News Room one afternoon just as I was putting the paper to bed.

"Hey!" he bellowed to all and sundry. "Bill—our Bill!—has got a story in this week's issue of *The Popular.*" And he almost leaped an imposing-stone in his eagerness to show the magazine to Clate and Ida.

"Good Lord!" cried Kinsley.

"Huh, it's only a newsprint magazine!" sniffed Ida, and she banged the cover on her linotype metal-pot.

I lifted a form and clacked it on the press-bed. . . .

ARTHUR HOFFMAN, editor of *Adventure Magazine,* bought the second story that sold for cash. The price, I believe, was seventy-five dollars. My first story had concerned the asinine adventure of a Montana cow-puncher. My second was a more involved incident concerning this same character. And as the reader knows, I had never been nearer Montana in my life than father's mill in York State. I had secured my salable local color from a former westerner who resided in Bennington—one Bill Hawkes—with whom I had struck up a newspaper acquaintance.

During that year 1915 I joined the Bennington County Fish and Game Association. I became its secretary. Part of the duties of this office required the blazing of trails over our section of the Green Mountains. As soon as the paper was published on Saturday I would swing a 40-pound pack on my back and strike for the woodlands. But one Monday morning, a belated train down from Manchester, at the upper end of the county, did not put me back in Bennington till early afternoon. On the way up to the house to rid myself of hiking clothes, I met Earl Darling, neighbor and groceryman. "Hey," he bawled from his wagon, "you better hustle home and see what your wife's got for you!" I suppose in such terms have men been apprised that they are the fathers of quintuplets. "What's biting Earl?" I demanded of Marion as I entered the house.

"Look on your desk," my wife advised airily.

My trembling fingers plucked up a square envelope with the fraught corner-card of *The Saturday Evening Post.* I pulled forth the terse letter inside with the inimitable scrawl of George Horace Lorimer. Again it was the fact that I could command such attention that supplied most of my thrill. I was winning, winning! Lorimer had written—

> We are most favorably impressed by your story "Li'l Son of a Gun" and if a payment of $300 will be acceptable we will have a cheque drawn to your order for that amount. We would like to cut the narrative somewhat but our surgery will be painless. . . .

Three hundred dollars! I sat down limply. It was more money than I had seen since the break-up of the tissue company. That afternoon I sought out Frank Howe. "Things are breaking so good for me," I said, "that I wish you'd let Bernie do the work on the press. I don't want to throw up my job, but if I came into the front office and worked, I'd have more time to write."

"Sold another story?" asked Frank with a grin.

"Yep. *Saturday Evening Post*."

"The devil you say!" The man nearly swallowed his cigar as he sat there before the exchange table in a torn vest, penciling an editorial on how he would conduct the War. It worried him a lot, the War. Or rather, its mismanagement. "How much money have you earned since you started this story thing?"

"About fifteen hundred dollars."

Again Howe was jolted. But it was a very fine thing to have a *Saturday Evening Post* writer employed on *The Banner*. Thereafter I wrote my stories at a front-office desk. By day I idled through Bennington's business section, collecting items, having local characters offer me salient experiences in their lives for magazine publication. Stories grew on bushes. I was learning my craft. I plucked them extravagantly, with a growing self-confidence. Never was a small-town newspaper office so full of atmosphere as that of *The Banner*. Week after week went past, each one producing remittances of increasing size. I was making more money than the men who employed me. Three thousand dollars I made that first year.

¶ Eventually the day came when Joe Evans, another newsroom proprietor, entered the office with a copy of *The Post*. "Gee willikens! I see where Pelley's made a first-class magazine," he said. "Wonder how much dough he pulled down for this one?"

Ida turned the pages of "L'l Son of a Gun" scoffingly.

"Huh, they didn't think enough of him to put his name on the cover!" Once again she arose and made contemptuous noises with the lid of her metal-pot. . . .

CHAPTER SEVEN

BENNINGTON people were worried sick, what I was doing with all the money I was making by this success at writing. It would scarcely be exaggerating to say that committees were almost appointed to wait upon me and give me counsel about spending it or saving it. My name now began to appear regularly in the current magazines. One epochal month I recall noting it on the covers of six different periodicals spread out on the tables in Joe Evans' News Room. ¶ I finally gave up my job on *The Banner*. I wanted to be free to travel about, to comb for new material, to write according to my moods. Clate, the lovable old rapskallion, had taken a personal interest in the progress of my expanding recognition. But he was still struggling with that yarn about the oil well. "Say," he cried suddenly, shut in with me one night in the cozy back-office, "I can't figure out why the devil you keep turning out stories of the wild and wooly west—as if nothing happened right here in Bennington. Take this office for instance—the drama that's occurred in it, or had fetched into it since nine o'clock this morning. Why don't you write up the local color here at home?"

Forthwith he launched into a poignant incident that had filled half a column in the night's *Evening Banner*. It struck me with a smash. The man was right! He went on. . . .

"There's a book you ought to read called *In Our Town*. It's by William Allen White of *The Emporia Gazette*. It's a book of homely sketches of the same sort of American folks who are passing through *The Banner* office day after day. I think my copy is up here in this cabinet." Kinsley arose and rummaged in a compartment above the exchange table. He pulled a book out and blew off the dust. "Take that home tonight and read it. Then see what you can do about fitting action-plots to that sort of character-drawing. You'll strike a new note."

I did as he suggested. Page after page of *In Our Town* moved me to tears. I knew these people. They were ordinary, two-legged humans—loving, hoping, laboring, marrying and dying—living their unwept, unhonored, and unsung lives as nobly as they could, representative Americans who displayed their poignant heroisms the clock around with never a thought that they were composing the true saga of our century.

Two weeks later I dropped into Jack Hart's Movie House to see a mother-

love film on the screen. A woman had been widowed and left with six boys. The plot of the movie had it that all six had turned out to be scalawags—and yet she carried on. I came from that theater doing some thinking. Why not a story in which the sons of a widowed mother all turned out to be world-famous successes? Would it not hold more drama and more wholesome emotion?

I had lately rented a little office across the street from the theater, which Clate often referred to as the Bennington Short Story Mill. I crossed to this office and snapped on the lights. At nine o'clock I began a story, about a woman whose boys were all successes. It was one of those rare narratives that literally wrote itself.

Once in my boyhood, while we had been living in the Spruce Street house, my father had been called to Lynn by the illness of his mother. He had taken me with him. All the rest of my uncles had been similarly summoned, though the old lady did not die. That scene in her bedroom, however, I had never forgotten. About her bed were gathered five strapping, full-grown sons—clean, fine men. On the bed stretched the form of a life-spent old woman. From her wasted loins these strong men had sprung. They owed their manhood, their virility, their careers to her. The drama of that tableau had seared on my memory.

Now, I wrote the story, simply, naturally, unaffectedly—as I felt it. When around midnight I came to read through my pages, I realized I did not have to alter a comma. With the emotion of it still gripping me, I found an envelope and stamps. I mailed it to John Siddell of *The American Magazine* as I passed the post office at midnight. Two days later came a telegram—

> COME TO NEW YORK AT ONCE. YOUR MOTHER STORY KNOCKOUT. WANT TO DISCUSS YOU DOING SERIES FOR US SIMILAR VEIN.

I went to New York and met John Siddell. I was ushered into the offices of Bert Boyden first, the managing editor. He was a strong but kindly faced fellow with a grim chuckle which put me at east at once. Presently in came a portly, six-foot Scotchman, whose hair gave the impression of a rumpled toupee. He had shrewd blue eyes behind rimless spectacles and the most volatile vocabulary in all my experience. "My gawd!" he cried, walking about and waving his arms. "What a story! WHAT a story! You're either a genius or had a lucky accident. How quick can you furnish me five more just like it?"

"As fast as you can pay for them. And it wasn't any accident."
"You're good, eh?"
"So I gather from your remarks."
"I'll pay you two hundred and fifty dollars apiece and jump you fifty dollars a series for every six I take thereafter."
I went back to my hotel and wrote another in similar vein—concerning plain ordinary folk who came and went each day through *The Banner* office. Sid grabbed for it in equal enthusiasm. Not one in the series did he ever turn back on me. I don't recall ever getting a rejection slip from *The American Magazine* while he remained its editor. But then, that was while Gentiles were running that enterprise. *Their Mother* was published in the September issue of *The American* and exhausted the edition on the newsstands. That awoke other New York magazine men. Arthur Vance of *Pictorial Review* took a small-town series. Karl Harriman of *The Red Book* bought twenty-two in a row.
Early in all this success, my wife's foster-father died and there came the distressing conduct of my flivver at his funeral. . . .

THIS machine had been my first motorcar and I was properly proud at possessing it. It was one of the first models that Henry had produced, with a broad brass band encircling its high box-hood and an ability to emit noises that have never been equalled by any car since. It had cost me two hundred and forty dollars and Marion's opinion of it was expressed in the truism that it did not run, it pounced. It started by hand-cranking in front, made a series of pounces, and called upon the universe to note that it was in action. After I got it safely from the garage, it had a discomfitting way of chugging smoothly down the asphalt until a timorous old lady or a traffic policeman hove in sight. Then it would deflect in its course and pounce. Something ailed its magneto, I was later advised. I had bought it as a second-hand car from a dealer who gave me a book of instructions, a free tank of gas, and a push, and I learned to run it on a Bennington backroad, pushing levers and treadles to find out what happened. Its previous owner had taken it apart, time after time, to learn where its pounces came from. I followed his example, had a lot of parts left over, and its pouncings were worse still.
I had alternately chugged and pounced about Bennington County in this contraption, when it so happened that Father Holbrook passed to his eternal rest in Greenfield and his body was brought up to Jacksonville, ten miles southeast of Wilmington, for services and interment. Nothing

would dissuade me from driving "over the mountain" with my little family in that Leaping Lena and bringing Mother Holbrook back to do her grieving on our premises.

The little village of Jacksonville is bisected north and south by a main thoroughfare that climbs a precipitous hill. The church where the services were held at 2:30 o'clock of a summer's afternoon, was down the river road at the base of this incline. The cemetery where the man's body would be laid away was emphatically at its top. It was a sign of worldly affluence in those days to own a "car" and I had to do the honors by the family. I wanted Father Holbrook to be properly adulated by the presence of such a "car" in his funeral cortege as he took his last ride from the river-road church ,up that steep grade, and into the quiet graveyard drowsing so peacefully in hot July sunshine. If "Ma" Holbrook thought anything about it, her silence was a compliment to my driving dexterity.

Anyhow, the beautiful services were ended, we filed through the front of the church and took a last view of the beloved deceased. Then the casket was closed and friends bore it out and put it in the hearse. This vehicle pulled off a little way and waited for other rigs to fill up and follow.

I succeeded in getting Lena cranked—after a series of unhallowed backfirings—and brought her left running-board flush with the steps. Mother Holbrook got in, deeply veiled in weeds. Marion followed, and Ernest, and my wife's stepsister, Sarah. I slid under the wheel and jerked at the levers. ☙ ☙

"Merciful heavens!" breathed Marion. "Must this thing pounce now!"

¶ Evidently the car did not relish the tone in which my wife said it. It gave a couple of pounces, just to show that it could do it, and most of those within it grabbed for their hats. It covered the space to the rear of the hearse in six pounces. There it halted balefully as though biding its time. ☙ ☙

"Remember," warned my spouse, "this is a funeral!"

"I'm aware of it," I answered.

"Well, this rattletrap had better do its stuff without any nonsense or you'll never get me to set foot in it again."

"Think she'll take the grade, Bill?" Ernest queried anxiously.

"Sure," I said largely. "I can run this thing up the side of a barn."

"That's just what I'm afraid of," Marion added grimly. Thus the conversation while the other rigs filled up. At least it took our minds off the sorrow of the moment. Presently we started. . . .

It was a unique procession. Anyone viewing it from the sidewalk, as

scores of neighbors did, might have decided that my flivver was trying to take savage bites at the glass wagon in front. Mrs. Holbrook did her best to weep, in the manner popularly expected of widows, but it was a difficult thing to manage when each new pounce rocked her head on her neck. ❧ ❧

"Cripes!" whispered Ernest. "We'd oughta get a horse."

I growled in my chagrin, "It's too late to get a horse!"

"You'd better control this thing," warned my wife, "or you're liable to bunt the back of that hearse!" The rising cresendo of her voice implied that the car would push entirely through the hearse and perhaps shove Pa Holbrook horridly out between the undertaker's legs.

"I've controlled it so far," I reminded her grimly.

"If you call it control," was her pleasing rejoinder.

By this time we were turning the curve up through the heart of the village. Straight ahead of us that hill arose in its challenge.

"What'll we do," asked Ernest, "if we happen to get stuck?"

"I know what I shall do," Marion declared herself.

"Can't you think of more cheerful conversation?" I begged. "As Marion says, this happens to be a funeral!"

"It may happen to be a double one if you're not careful!"

We got to the hill and began to go up.

"Don't you think I'd better get out and walk?" Mother Holbrook suggested timidly. "Or maybe the folks behind would give me a lift."

"Nonsense!" snapped her daughter. "I guess you don't have to get a ride at your own husband's funeral." She said it so that we envisioned the widow standing on a street corner and jerking her thumb in the direction of the cemetery.

"Something ails this car!" was Ernest's sudden comment.

"You mean," said his sister, "something ails all of us to ride in such a car." ❧ ❧

"I bet the magneto's wound wrong!"

"Suppose we wait till this funeral's over," I retorted, "before we discuss magnetos, or we may have a second funeral before we've finished with the first." ❧ ❧

The grade had now become so precipitous that a shift of gears was necessary. And shifting gears on one of those early model Fords was something of a rite. I first raced the engine. Then I stamped down on the proper treadle and shut both eyes tight. With a noise like the Shredded Wheat factory going over Niagara Falls we were suddenly running in "low" . . .

very low. The hearse was as suddenly gaining away from us.
"O dear!" cried Sarah. "Why does this funeral have to be so terribly disconnected?"
"It's this car," said Ernest sagely.
"It's what's driving this car," he was corrected tartly.
"Children! Children!" soothed Mother Holbrook. She said it in her best little-birdies-in-a-nest-should-always-agree manner. But the little birdies present were not in a nest. They were in an early model Ford and the magneto was wound wrong, or so somebody said. It made a lot of difference.
"Speed this thing up!" I was next commanded.
"I am speeding it up," I retorted, "—as fast as it will go in low without losing the engine and all the spare parts."
"Run it quieter!" bawled Ernest in my ear. "The horses just behind us are trying to turn into Cross Street and the cemetery isn't that way at all."
"I am running it quiet—as quiet as it'll work in low."
"Then your muffler must be busted. You'd just oughta hear the funny noises that are coming from behind."
"Huh," declared my wife, "there's funny noises coming from everywhere."
"Including the occupants of this car," I was goaded to respond.
The car was shaking like boilerplate with palsy. But we were moving up the grade. From time to time I wondered whether those Jacksonville folks were coming out on front verandas to see the passing of Fred Holbrook's cortege or to learn what variety of mechanical accident was continuing to happen all the way up Hill Street.
We had crawled up about a third of the distance when my secret fears were realized. The roarings, the coughings, and the pouncings were not due to the magneto. They were due to the gas-feed. Those early Fords had a gravity fuel flow. If one of them became tilted at too high an angle, the suddenly starved carburetor abruptly went on strike. A suddenly starved carburetor was going on strike in this grisly situation. With a couple of coughs and a last asthmatic wheeze, that flivver stopped dead—as dead as Pa Holbrook. And yet there was a difference. Pa Holbrook made no move to start rolling down the hill.
"PUT ON YOUR BRAKES!" shrieked Marion. Her frenzied backward glance had disclosed two horses immediately behind, pulling the rig apart in order to travel in opposite directions. The flivver, it seemed, was due to go between them.
I whammed my feet on all the treadles in sight and gave a tug on the

safety brake that nearly wrenched my shoulder. It was dramatically quiet all the length of Hill street. The flivver had stopped. So too had that cortege, at least the part behind us.

"Oh-h!" wailed Mother Holbrook. "We're losing the hearse again."

"Yes," said her daughter scathingly. "It would be an excellent idea to tie this procession together with a rope, like the mountain climbers do in Swiss Alps." ❧ ❧

Ernest said, anent the hearse, "Hadn't I better run ahead and stop it?"

"No," he was ordered, "we're making plenty of exhibition of ourselves in this village without your playing the role of motorcycle escort without the motorcycle."

"Why doesn't the undertaker stop? He'd oughta see we're no longer behind him."

"He's probably too disgusted to stop."

"I dare say he won't go any further than the burying-ground," my mother-in-law suggested.

Marion said, "He could take a joy ride all over the county and still be at the cemetery by the time we get there."

"Or put the hearse up overnight," said Sarah, "and finish the rest of the funeral tomorrow."

"Well," my lady addressed me, "you've got us into this fix, now how are you going to get us out?"

I said, "If we could get the teams just behind us to back up, I could swing the car across the road so that the gas will fill the carburetor again."

¶ "Sure!" agreed Ernest. "You can do what we did on Woodford Mountain Sunday, . . . back up in reverse."

"Wonderful!" cried Marion. "Now we do tricks!"

Sarah was startled. "Whoever heard of the mourners in a funeral procession following the hearse in a rig that moved backwards?"

"Sit tight," she was told, "and you'll learn a whole lot about funeral processions by the time you're finished with this one."

If anyone in that car, or even in the cortege, had any ideas about mourning in the approved and conventional manner, they were crowded out of mind by the necessity for unsnarling that one-car traffic jam on Jacksonville hill. Ernest alighted by the simple expedient of thrusting his long legs over his side of the back seat and shoving the rest of himself down after them. He knocked off his straw hat in this maneuver, and stepped on it. It collapsed with a sickening crunch. When Ernest put one of his feet onto such a thing as a new straw hat, that hat was ruined and no

argument about it. But he backed the horses on the rig behind us and gave me space in which to swing an arc. I eased off my brakes and swung that arc. It was a breath-taking experience for my back-seat passengers, because the rear wheels went into the right-hand gutter and I nearly flattened out a paperhanger's mail box. But the gas flowed again on something like a level and Ernest cranked the engine. Again and again he cranked it. . . .

"Something MUST ail your magneto!" he straightened to tell me.

"Yes, yes," agreed Marion, "we've heard all about that magneto. But let's not take it apart and fix it on this hill. Let's finish this funeral."

Ernest jammed his crushed straw hat on his head—no one knew why—and continued to crank. At last, when he was about ready to crawl into the same box with Pa Holbrook, we got sudden explosions and had a live car.

"Now where do we go?" my wife demanded. She said it as though I might desert the whole funeral and take the mourners with me.

"You could coast down the hill beside the procession," Ernest suggested, "then swing around and get a flying start. If you got enough momentum it might take you to the top."

"I gather," said his sister, "that you're crazy for stunts. We dart hither and yon while this whole procession watches us."

"I think we'd better walk the rest of the way," said Mother Holbrook kindly.

"We gotta get this crate outta the road or this whole procession's gonna walk," her son protested.

"I've got a better idea," I said. "I think I can zigzag up, go from side to side, before the gas has time to stop flowing on the turns."

Judging from the sputterings and pouncings as the engine raced, the flivver was capricious to try this expedient. Oblivious to the shocked comment that I knew must be directed at me by all present, I brought the car up out of the ditch. I cut diagonally across the road—swerving the wheel just in time to keep off an old lady's lawn and not flatten her pansy tub. I curved the other way and nearly went up the steps of Charley Waste's store. I jerked around once more and missed a front fence by a spare two inches.

With each of these gyrations I was successfully mounting higher. But behind me that cortege watched in stupefaction. Had the corpse's son-in-law gone raving crazy? That flivver was dexterously cutting figure eights and gradually lessening its distance to the hearse. In a manner of speak-

ing it was an unusual funeral. I believe that the first five or six steps that my mother-in-law essayed upon alighting from that vehicle—or rather, failed to essay—had nothing to do with her prostration as a widow.

We got Father Holbrook out of the hearse and subsequently piled a lot of real estate and flowers on him. We left him with the weight of these and it speaks well for my mother-in-law's good sportsmanship that she returned to my car and graciously assented to be ridden to Bennington. If my wife spoke at all on that return trip, it was to acquaint me with the fact that the next time we had a funeral in our family, we either attended in a horse-drawn conveyance or bought a better car. She was humiliated all out of proportion to her fortitude to bear it, and I dare say she was right. They would talk about Fred Holbrook's erratic cortege in Jacksonville for a year and a day. The very idea, cutting high jinks, showing off how expertly I could drive a car, at such a time. Yet what could be expected from the young rattlehead who had married Hattie Holbrook's girl, tried to run a yellow journal in Wilmington, and lost Martin Brown "his hundreds of thousands?" . . .

The only one disposed to laugh at what had happened was Mother Holbrook herself. She had recognized my unwitting predicament and been properly sympathetic.

The day after that same flivver had run over me when I tried to crank it in gear, and knocked most of my front teeth out, I bought a new car. . . .

CHAPTER EIGHT

ST. JOHNSBURY is a snug little town up in the northeast quarter of Vermont, flanked on the east by the Passumpsic River. On the banks of this river the community has grown. Two main streets had developed in consequence: one followed the river down close to its banks, the other ran from north to south at the top of the western hill. Connecting these two was a precipitous grade. Halfway up this grade on the left stood a huge barnlike structure painted virulent red, with a newspaper's sign hung high on its front. In this building, up to 1916, the *Weekly Caledonian* had enjoyed a career since 1832. In 1916 a man named Bigelow got Theodore N. Vail, the big telephone man, to back him, bought *The Caledonian*, made it a morning daily, and lost paper and money. Clate Kinsley said to me one night in *The Banner* office, "Too bad to see that sheet shut up. Why don't you go up there and buy it, Pelley? I would myself, if I were ten years younger."

One night subsequently, after a week's absence, I walked into my home. "I've bought the bankrupt *Caledonian*," I reported to Marion.

Her mouth acquired a grimness. She said, "Having made a fizzle of two papers already, you'd toss our good story money away on a third?"

"I'm not going to toss good story money anywhere. I'm going to MAKE money just to prove that I can do it."

"You don't have to prove anything. Stick to your writing and let's make us a bank account."

"But," I remonstrated, "pegging at a typewriter week after week is boring me stiff. I want to be in the swim of doing something. I want a problem to tackle and solve. This newspaper project gives me that problem. I'm going to revive it as an evening newspaper—"

"*The Caledonian* or the problem?"

"I want the experience of running a daily of my own."

"And after you've got it, and it's running nicely?"

"When that moment arrives, I'll probably walk out and leave it flat."

"Yes, I dare say you will."

I went back to St. Johnsbury. Having acquired lawful access to premises and equipment, I fired up a cold furnace, hired a couple of printers, and set about giving the northeastern quarter of Vermont a paper that I considered a paper. Inside the barnlike structure I had found a great spread

of floor-space that was the front office, and a second great spread of floor-space that was the composing-room. Imposing-stones, typeracks, and one lone and rickety linotype made a forlorn attempt to fill this acreage. Downstairs was a Comet Duplex press, not unlike the press of my experience on *The Banner*. As soon as possible I meant to renovate and re-equip the plant. It was the territory and the clientele that I had purchased.

Bigelow, I reasoned, had gone bankrupt because he had made *The Caledonian* a morning instead of an evening daily. Folks in New England's towns and small cities have no time in their mornings to read a newspaper. Their newspaper reading is done in the evening, sitting beside oil lamps with their shoes removed and their toe-joints creaking comfortably. By such time, a morning newspaper is already ancient history. I proceeded to print a six to eight page evening paper, concentrating on local news more than foreign, and developing reader interest by the writing of home town features.

My leading feature each night on my editorial page was a series of pert paragraphs after the motif of Abe Martin—exactly twelve to the feature—concerning the homely incidents that had transpired beneath my observation during each intervening day. I named this feature Life's Dreary Path. . . . ❧ ❧

But life's path for me in those months was anything but dreary. It was conceded by my brother publishers in jig time that I had resuscitated *The Caledonian* successfully. But I had done more. As the winter went on toward 1917 I had built up one of the most profitable newspaper properties, considering my investment, that existed in New England. Ten thousand dollars a year it was making me within a period of months. I might have struck a stalemate on *The Chicopee Journal* and made a fizzle of *The Deerfield Valley Times*. But *The St. Johnsbury Evening Caledonian* retrieved both episodes.

And right here I want to say something about the daily newspaper business that may sound bombastic or not, according as one looks at it. A man who can pull a bankrupt newspaper out of its debris and conduct it successfully in a New England town, whether it's myself or anybody, can run most anything successfully that requires executive management—and I am not excepting the United States of America as a nation.

People get a strange complex about newspaper publishing, just as they get an equally strange complex about politicians. The average man does not think that newspaper publishing is really a business. God knows what he

thinks it is, but most people react as though it were some sort of pastime. On the other hand, when it comes to the conduct of the federal affairs, most people accept as a foregone conclusion that the only persons competent to run them are professional politicians. I suppose they figure that professional politicians have the greater experience in manipulating public office, that public office is a business in itself and the professional politicians are the experts. Well, in a way, they are experts. They are experts in bulldozing and hoodwinking the public, in getting their hands into the public till without being caught, in running the state or nation on the principle, "It isn't what you know that counts, but what you get away with." On the other hand, consider the editor and publisher. He has to be the executive par excellence or his paper goes under. He has to know how to balance his budget and keep it balanced from week to week or he does not have any budget, or any business either. Which means that he has to know the hardest rudiments of finance. He has to be successful as a public tax collector, for that is what he does from his advertisers and subscribers around the clock. Moreover, he has to do it in such a way that they like it, and come back for more. Which means that he has to be a diplomat, or irate citizens wreck his project with clubs. He has to know men, and how to get work out of them, to work to a dead-line and no excuses. But more than all else, he has to know political life in all its phases even better than the politicians in order to keep track of them and promptly expose them if their behavior becomes too flagrant. I avow that the United States of America would know a well-nigh perfect administration if it could induct into office just one political ticket made up entirely of practical newspapermen. Abstractly speaking, newspapermen have to know more than all other classes of citizens in order to report on them intelligently. Integrity in public office in a country like ours relies solely on the acumen and critical analysis of the men who direct our newspapers. They are the eternal watch-dogs on affairs of state, and I claim that being competent as watch-dogs, they are doubly competent as fillers of the offices over which they keep vigilance as a matter of business. And yet if some political pinhead, who has never yet made a success of his own affairs, can only lick enough boots, and show himself sufficiently subservient to behind-the-scenes interests to merit their lavish praise of him to the public—so that he commands enough journalistic limelight to be thought a great man—if some political pinhead, I say, is promoted to conduct the nation's affairs in opposition to some hardheaded newspaper publisher who is practically the czar of a little world of his own from decade to decade, the



"I've bought the bankrupt *Caledonian*,"
I reported to Marion.

public will think that the pinhead is the more logical man for the office. Life is funny, funny.

THROUGH all this petty journalistic stramash, the great war in Europe had been going on, gradually settling into a gory stalemate. I still wrote stories for the national magazines, but no acceptance of a new story now gave me one-half the kick that I received from producing a snappy, profitable evening daily, playing around the forms myself, locking myself into the shop after hours and setting my own editorial features directly on the linotype. During that first six months I doubled the circulation, I moved the plant and duplex from the barnlike structure on Central Avenue hill into tight, compact quarters under Randall & Whitcomb's News Room. I bought two new Intertypes and redressed the paper in the matter of typography. In addition to this office rejuvenation, I bargained for one of the best homes available in the town's residential section, and traded my Saxon Six for the latest and most expensive Hudson Super-Six.

Life was zestful for me indeed, in those Green Mountain months. Society was still reasonably sane, although propaganda to get the United States into the conflict was being mischievously promoted by enemy agents ensconsed behind the scenes in Washington and elsewhere. The fates, however, would not leave me in peace. They had no intention of letting me bog down and marry a small-town evening newspaper. One night two men walked into my composing-room.

"No one is allowed out here," I said brusquely. "Go into the front office, please, and wait till I've put this paper to bed. Then I'll be with you."

They retreated ruefully and I locked my final pages. . . .

I had been brusque because one of the intruders was a Brattleboro insurance man. Evidently his companion was a solicitor or adjuster. I was in no mood that afternoon to consider more insurance. This second man was a portly individual although of unassuming mien, in his early fifties, affable of manner, and by no means offended at having been reprimanded for composing-room trespassing. He returned to the front office, removed his ulster, picked up a magazine and settled himself to read. In due time the Duplex was grinding, my hands were washed, and I came into the front office rolling down my sleeves. Daniels, the insurance man, introduced his friend.

"Pelley," said he, "meet Bishop Fred B. Fisher of the Methodist Episcopal Church."

I shook hands with the bishop. He did not look like a bishop, not the kind that came to my father's parsonage in my younger years. Fred B. Fisher, bishop or not, affected no Prince Albert coat, patriarchal beard, or sanctimonious manner. He looked rather, the prosperous American businessman in gray sack suit and rolled starched collar. Styles in Methodist bishops had changed, it seemed, while I had been attaining to my majority.

¶ His first words, however, sent my world into a tail-spin. "I've come up from New York to see you," he announced, "to find out if I can persuade you to take a trip around the world."

For a moment I regarded him as though he were a lunatic. Why should anybody, especially a Methodist bishop, offer me a trip around the world unless the deal held fishhooks?

"You're aware, I hope," my caller went on, "of the work of the Methodist Centenary. I'm up here representing Dr. Earl S. Taylor of the Centenary Movement. Dr. Taylor was coming through Colorado recently on a train when he happened to buy an *American Magazine* containing one of your stories. It affected him so powerfully that he exclaimed, 'This fellow Pelley is exactly the chap we should send out into the foreign missionary field on our Centenary survey. If he can write of Oriental conditions as movingly as he's written here about life in Vermont, we'll be doing ourselves a service by giving him the trip and paying his expenses.' So," continued Fisher, "that accounts for my being here."

"B-But," I faltered, "I c-can't afford to t-take a trip around the world."

¶ "No one's asking you to spend your own money. In fact, we'd be prepared to furnish your transportation with, say, five thousand dollars to compensate for your time."

I said, "Where's this money coming from?"

Fisher then outlined the generosity of the Rockefeller Foundation in the matter of the Centenary.

My next question was: "Where must I go?"

"You should sail from San Francisco in a month or six weeks. You should go first to Japan by way of Honolulu. After making a survey of foreign missions in Japan you ought to go up through Korea to North China, then around to India. From India you would return home by way of the Holy Land and Egypt. All the compensation we would ask of you would be that you write honestly, interestingly, and graphically of foreign missions as you find them, of the lives of the missionaries, and just what you think of the work they're accomplishing. The trip will take a year."

¶ "And what are the fishhooks?"

"My dear chap, there are no fishhooks."

"There must be fishhooks. Nobody puts five grand on the line for a fellow like me to go off on a pleasure trip. Because that's what it'd be. The writing to me means nothing. Suppose I find missions to be a wet smack?" ❧ ❧

Fisher was the sort of bishop to whom I could talk in newspaper jargon. ¶ "If you find foreign missions are just a . . . wet smack, write home and say so. If you find that they're doing goodly work, and deserve to be supported, write home and say that also. Such stories must be printed exclusively, however, in our Methodist publications."

I was somewhat flaccid as the essence of this development got home to me. I glanced around my perfectly appointed newspaper office, so new, so precociously calling for all that I had to give it. How could I absent myself for a whole year and leave it? And yet, a world trip under such conditions, and for such rewards! . . .

"Could I take Mrs. Pelley with me?"

"I think," said Fisher, "the idea would be excellent."

"Give me until tomorrow noon to return you your answer. There's a fishhook in it somewhere. There must be a fishhook!"

Daniels assured me, however, that all of it was *bona fide*. At ten o'clock that night I called Marion down in Bennington. Our conversation, I believe, ran something like this—

"Hello, old dear. How's everything down there?"

"Pretty good," she answered. "I'm still packing but expect to get the goods away Friday."

"Couldn't you put them in Walbridge's Warehouse for awhile?"

"Now what?"

"Oh, not much. It just occurred to me that perchance you'd like to go with me on a trip around the world."

Silence for a moment. Then a listless voice: "I think it would be real nice. WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DRINKING?"

"I haven't been drinking anything. I've just had an offer."

"Who's made you an offer of a trip around the world?" The lady's voice dropped lower and lower. Of all the Roman Candle fireworks that I had ever set off to disturb her peace of mind, this was the worst. . . .

"Dr. Taylor, of the Methodist Centenary."

"What's the Methodist Centenary?"

"Hanged if I know. But one of their bishops has just been up here and offered me expenses and five thousand dollars to go out to Japan, China,

and India, and come home by way of Palestine. I'm to snoop around foreign missions, something like that. We'd be gone a year."

"We!"

"For the love of Mike, don't you want to go along?"

"Of course, of course. But however could I? What about mother? What about Adelaide? What about *The Caledonian*?"

"Yes, what about them? I can make arrangements for the paper, if your mother and the baby can be arranged for, while we're gone."

"Well, I'd have to think it over. All of it sounds pretty crazy to me."

"Yes, it sounds pretty crazy to me, too, but we never had a honeymoon. We'll take one now, . . . on the Methodist Church."

Fisher came in next morning and I said I would go.

"Take a month and get your affairs in order," he suggested. "When you're all set, come down to New York and we'll see to your passports, the expense account, and the compensation."

That night *The Caledonian* carried the editorial bombshell that its proprietor was due to hie himself soon to very distant parts. The paper was printed and exchanged with brother editors about the State. They began to make cutting remarks about the convenience of editing a local news sheet while sashaying about Japan, China, India, and parts of Patagonia. How did this fellow Pelley get away with it? Just the moment that he seemed nicely labeled and pigeon-holed, he broke out afresh in new programs of sensations.

But a new saga in my experience was about to be written. I had business across the world that should one day serve me excellently. . . .

Came the day and the hour when I glanced about my perfectly appointed little newspaper plant for the last time, shook hands in farewell with my faithful employees, went out into my Hudson with my wife, my child, my mother, and my mother-in-law loaded aboard amid generous assortments of bags and queer parcels. Not that I was taking all of these with me. But I had found that my sailing date permitted us to cross America by motor car. Mother Holbrook and Adelaide would wait in Los Angeles until our return. My own little mother went along for the ride, to come back by train to her home in Springfield.

I still had a half-interest in my newspaper, money in the bank, forty thousand dollars' worth of paid-up insurance on my life, full expenses for the trip, five thousand dollars in Methodist Church drafts handed me in New York, and in addition to all of these, practically ten thousands dollars in

currency that I had received that morning from the two local men who were going to conduct the paper until my return.
Not so bad for a fellow who had married five years before with but seven dollars in his pocket. Ho hum! . . .

DURING my first day at sea a strange lassitude, almost coma-like, came over me. I was twenty-seven years old and ten years out of high school. In those ten years I had been going at such break-neck speed that I had scarcely time to take stock of myself, to ask myself what life was truly all about. I had made and lost one fortune and was well on my way toward making another. This time, however, I had in addition a national prestige that I had won by fair struggle. Now I had eighteen days for a breathing spell, to idle and to think. It wasn't the time that mattered, it was the Situation.
Eighteen days of sitting on deck drowsily watching the horizons, of following the shoals of flying fishes that broke from the white caps like bevies of dragon flies till the sprightly wavelets took them again, of sending dream cargoes off on the furl of the stack smoke, of reminiscing, perhaps of introspecting, of conjecturing whether, if I had married Mabel, I would still be aboard that steamer in those hours, on my way to a part of the world that had only existed for me till then in necromatic travelogue. Yes, mind, spirit, and even physical body fell into a comatose condition on that trip. . . .
"You're not sociable," Marion would upbraid me, as she came down-deck and found me browsing among the unread pages of a book in my steamer-chair. ☙ ☙
"I don't want to be sociable."
"You're on a reporting trip, getting five thousand dollars for doing it. You ought to be mingling among the passengers, posting yourself on what's ahead, making friendships that may mean something to you after this trip's over."
"You do the mingling. After I'm rested, anything can happen."
"It must be your liver."
"No, my liver's all right."
"Your complexion looks terrible. You're smoking too much." Having delivered herself of this wifely homily, familiar, I understand, to thousands of benedicts—she would trip back blithely to a Hindu woman suffragist who was aboard, who doubtless pointed out the terrible tattoos on her fore-

head as an example of what American womanhood might also arrive at, if it failed to vanquish the tyrant, Man.

But it was not my liver. It was not my smoking. A tragic corner was approaching in my life, although how could I know it then? The Orient was gradually looming before me with its stark and grisly war, the revelations that come from observing one's homeland from ten thousand miles distant. I shall always think of that outward trip to Japan as a mounting toward a summit already in sight. I was to reach that summit soon and start down the other side. As I gradually went down, I was to part from Marion and the life chapter close, between us. Other things were to happen also. . . .

Among the items to be learned was the mystical tenet that the fortunes of life are delivered to us in cycles. Uniformly those cycles consist of nine years. This strange fact of fate is as old as Pythagoras. Nine years prior to this Far Eastern trip I had been at the peak of my adolescent fortunes in the factory with father. In those nine years I had gone down into penury, assumed domestic responsibilities, buried a baby, owned two newspapers and lost one of them, replenished my fortunes, climbed up again, made my name known among the magazine fraternity from coast to coast, until now at twenty-seven the Rockefeller Foundation was practically paying my expenses to the Orient. Presently I was to pass the apex of the nine years and start down around a new cycle; it would be precisely another nine years before I again discovered myself at an apex.

How true this cycle is, my reader shall see. I have two more such cycles to record, to bring my story to the moment. But it does not apply to me alone. It is a sort of cosmic mystery applicable to anybody. Look back in your own life, reader, and see if I do not write with approximate correctness. The high lights of prosperity in your life have flashed like the swing of a flying-field beacon, nine years apart.

So I idled away my eighteen days on shipboard. Toward the last of the trip I began to sense a quickening of interest in the passenger-life about me, to give attention to the Oriental errands of my fellows, to grasp the poignant anticipation flavoring the ending of a long sea journey, particularly in a land where the country I had always known seemed merely part of a life that had somehow been dreamed. One opal afternoon, the boy child of a young missionary chatting beside me sought out his parent in infantile excitement. "Japan!" he cried. "We can see it ahead, high up in the sky! ☙ ☙

What could he mean, high up in the sky? We crowded around to the port

side of the ship. . . . Suddenly, magnificently, I beheld a snow-white cone that seemed exotic cloud. "Fujiyama!" explained the Japan-wise among us. ¶ America, Los Angeles where Adelaide and Mother Holbrook stayed, Vermont, my *Evening Caledonian* office, Bennington, Wilmington, Chicopee, the Fulton factory, the East Templeton parsonage . . . all these were far far away in another life when our doughty little vessel steamed slowly up Tokyo Bay toward Yokohama that nineteenth afternoon. The only link that bound me to all that I had ever been, was the girl I had married that slushy night in Springfield, surrounded now by a bevy of women friends near the prow of the ship, watching the first valiant sampans tacking across our course. I saw that approach to Japan through the eye of the novelist. . . .

Silver sunshine on cobalt water. Gulls and sampans. A low-lying beach of chalky whiteness flowing past us for an hour on the north as our vessel gradually entered Tokyo Bay. The snow-white cone of Fujiyama fading from the sky. Curdles of black industrial smoke arising above the outlines of incongruous skyscrapers. Then a veer toward the north as land showed straight ahead. The vessels of a hundred nations passing or at anchor. Yokohama's bluffs lifting green behind the city on the left. And always the sampans worming hither and yon, sometimes propelled by leg o' mutton sails, sometimes worried forward by naked brown boatmen plying at rudder oars. Then gradually the rising of the miles of docks from brackish yellow water. Everywhere now the fried-egg flag of Japan—the kerchief of yellow with its orange-pink yoke.

After picking up our pilot, a surly old Japanese officer had put me through a rigorous questionnaire in the cabin of the ship as we anchored at quarantine. What was I doing in Japan? Who had sent me out there? What places did I propose to visit? If I were correspondent of New York magazines, what magazines? It was war time in Japan and such inquiries were relevant. But our passports were in order. The *Tenyu Maru* was eased up to her dock and we were released, to go ashore in sunset.

But it had come to me with a sense of shock, I was no longer living under the American flag. I was suddenly a "foreigner" . . . I was in the Japan of story and folklore, of missionary talks in my father's church, of heathenish "darkness" and yellow journal castigation. The Orient was before me, my oyster to be opened. The ship's doctor came and stood beside me as I watched the first passengers leaving the ship.

"It's my forty-fourth trip," he told me. "I'd give a month's salary to be able to see Japan through your eyes, as you're seeing it at this moment."

¶ "Come along!" urged Marion. "You've got a job to do here. You can't be forever mooning around."

That was Marion. Practical. I must approach Nippon as a roster of masterpieces to be written, from eight until twelve, from one until five.

¶ We went down the gangplank and into necromacy. . . .

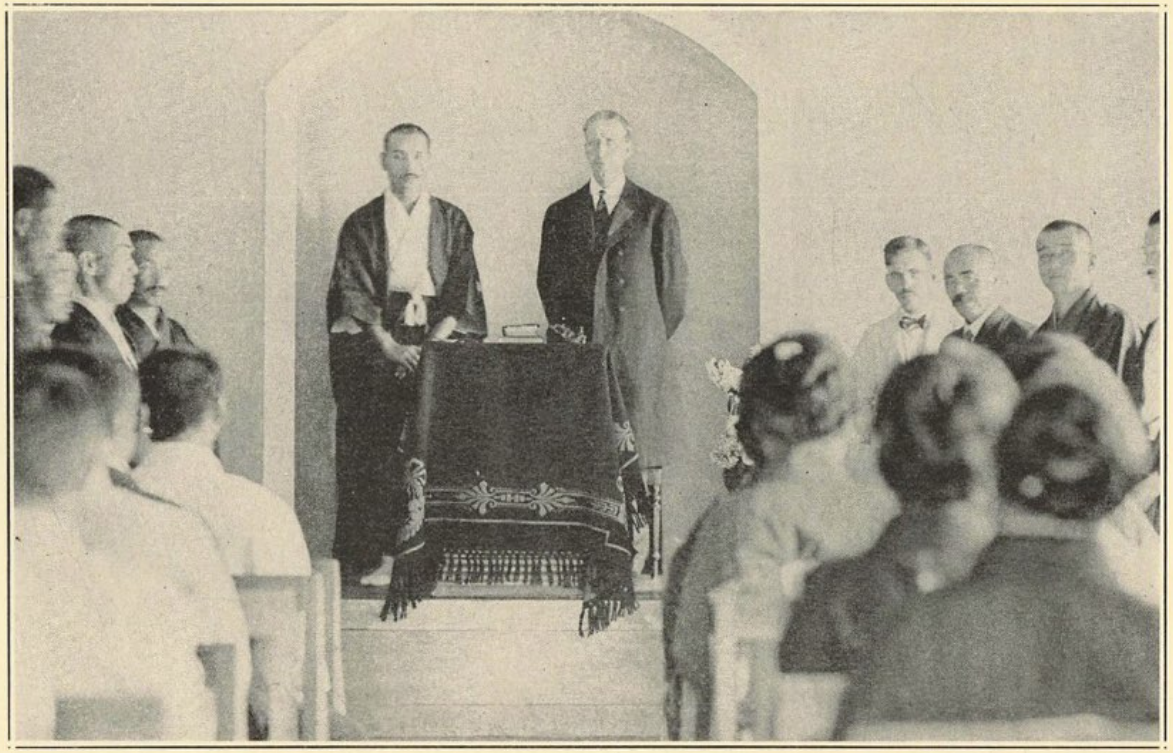
THE DOCK was crowded with Japanese businessmen in bluish-grey kimonos, most of them wearing American straw hats and carrying sunshades or umbrellas. Here and there was a figure in the civilian garb of the country we had left six thousand miles eastward. No sooner had we set foot upon the planking of the pier than a tall, elderly gentleman resembling a bespectacled college professor, stepped up and accosted us.

¶ "I take it you're the Pelleys. I'm Doctor Berry of Aoyama Compound. Bishop Fisher advised me of your arrival by this boat. So I came down to welcome you and see that you get hotel accommodations. Our Compound is in Tokyo."

It was highly acceptable to have such a friend meet us and induct us into this quaint foreign land. We came from the dock-shed after custom's examination—in which I had two boxes of excellent cigars confiscated as contraband—into a semicircular yard of jinrikisha men, all yowling for business, their grotesque two-wheeled carriages backed against the fence. We walked along the Bund with Dr. Berry, to get our first impressions of the country afoot and stretch our cramped legs. At the end of the Bund to the south was the famous Grand Hotel, since destroyed in the Japan earthquake in 1923.

Yokohama became to me a weird mixture of modern skyscrapers surrounded by streets of little wood-and-paper houses all open to the sidewalks, with the street's traveled surfaces covered with pulverized traprock. On this traprock the rikisha wheels crunched musically. The roofs of all the wood-and-paper houses were grotesque with overloads of red and gray tiles, to minimize the fire risk, we learned later. When a fire once starts in a city made of paper, that city promptly burns! . . .

As we walked along the Bund—like a nondescript horde of released refugees—Japanese boys in flowered kimonos, and bare legs, wove in and out on American bicycles, ringing their handlebar bells with importance. Gradually we became accustomed to the scuffing of the geta, or wooden sandals, of the native population traveling with us afoot. And crowding about us, making a bower out of the nation, over the roofs of red and gray tiles, were the mass of eucalyptus trees, the soft fronds of peppers, the



"Long before I quit Japan, I named the movement 'the missionary blunder' . . ."

hedges of boxwood, the banks of shrubbery and scentless flowers in which Japan abounds.

The Grand Hotel was the Occidental hostelry of Yokohama, a great rambling structure painted Iowa-barn red. Its principal feature was its massive veranda, two hundred feet long and thirty feet deep, opening on the Bay. Here we encountered former friends of shipboard. But the sea ties were loosening. People had their business to attend to, and we were ignored. We secured accommodations and went abovestairs to spacious corridors and airy chambers behind shuttered doors, with delightful sea breezes wafting the curtains and the inimitable smell of scoria reaching us to surfeit, not an offensive odor but an exotic fragrance compounded of volcanic ash and oil. No other country in the world has the odor of Japan. Later I went down to the white-tiled barber-shop in the basement. Twenty feet from me, lying face upward, was a copy of *The Popular Magazine* from distant New York. Believe it or not, the name PELLEY was plainly visible to me from the roster of writers on the cover. . . .

That night we took kurumas—as the rikishas are known in Japan—and were trotted through the streets. Our vehicles wove in and out through mysterious thoroughfares, missing the roar of traffic that is the pith and crux of western metropolism, crossed through flowered parks where the paper lanterns on the shafts of other kurumas were as elfin glowworms bobbing along in the dark, passed starlit silhouettes of rakish Shinto temples, came back finally to the Grand Hotel with the impression strong within me of a paper nation, a country of half-adults, half-children, tempo pitched in necromantic key. It was a new sensation for me to turn a corner and come upon a gleaming nude man, clad only in his loin-cloth, putting up wooden shutters before his little shop in anticipation of rice riots before morning, assisted by a diminutive wife in a flowered kimono, who "held the lantern" after the fashion of real wives from Greenland's Icy Mountain to India's Coral Strand. We fell asleep that first night to murmurs of clean oriental breezes wafting through the polished corridors or the mournful tooting of tugboats and shipping, plying up and down the Bay so close at hand. We were awakened next morning by outlandish off-key "music" being sung by a Japanese girl beggar beneath our north windows . . . and a bright sun presaging our trip up to Tokyo.

I was due to have my entire roster of notions about Japan, preconceived with the help of the Hearst yellow journals, wholesomely revolutionized even within a week after arriving in the kingdom.

I had thought of Japan as a nation of indubitable little brown men, fatal-

istic in their military philosophy, ready to fight any nation that affronted them, with stoical self-sacrifice, counting no cost too great to preserve their country's honor. But in the next four weeks I tramped from one end of the country to the other. I finally left the Flowery Kingdom in the company of a contingent of troops headed for the Siberian Intervention, as I shall presently narrate. I starved and froze and fought with the Japs in the Amur River campaign against the Bolsheviks and saw the yellow army at its best and its worst. I came from that ultra-practical contact with a shudder in my bones, not at what might happen to my own country in the event of a war with eastern Asia, but at what might happen to our foes the Japanese. To repeat the homely phrasing of an utterly disgusted doughboy later in a chill Siberian freightcar: "If we ever get into a first-class brawl with these brown-skinned babies, we'd go through them like a dose of salts. Gimme the Kansas National Guard and I'll lick the Mikado and all his relations." And to that sentiment I had to subscribe. I know that it is a prime rule of warfare never to underestimate your opponent but still I maintain that if the great United States ever got into a clean-cut brawl with the present Japanese, it would be just too bad—for the Japanese soldiery. The resultant conflict would be a slaughter of innocents.

For the Japanese are children—children and naught else. They strut and they bow and they grin and they scrape. They have their paper houses and their innocuous industries. They shake a sharp sword and send brilliant diplomats to the Jewish League of Nations. Most of it is "face" . . . we know the term in our western world as "front" . . . keeping up with the Jonses. In those first days and weeks in Japan, however, my impressions boiled down to this poignant recognition: Nippon was a nation that had been left to propagate or starve on a scoria rock. Nothing would grow on this rock excepting rice for food and ricestalks for paper. It was consequently a rice-paper nation and culture on principle, a nation that had to translate into warlike scowlings and rattling of swords its inherent poverty. to do lasting worldly mischief. Only as the Japanese frantically and furiously exchanged the products from cheap labor for the steels and explosives from more favored countries could they become a world menace.

As for the Japanese infantry, I considered it a joke. Rawboned country boys from the Island interior, scared half to death at the rifles in their hands, went to Siberia in the company of American gorillas who cast their guns away when necessary and used their bare fists. And that was an expedient that no Jap could understand. I saw whole companies of Japanese boys in Siberia who were more affrighted by one lone Yankee's

fists than by a battery of Red machine guns. A Jap's bones are so brittle, I was told, due to the amount of starch in his diet, that hitting an opponent with one's fist means a battered and broken hand. Besides, the Jap is so small that his blow packs no punch. A full-swing left hook from some brawny Texan would rout an army corps, figuratively speaking, if the Texan got close enough to hit a few of them where their chins joined their faces. ❧ ❧

A paper nation, a country of children, a land of exquisite culture, infallible courtesy, perfect law and order, inimitable ethics. In all the time that I spent in Japan, I never saw a street brawl, I saw but one drunken person, I never heard a Japanese baby howling nor, conversely, saw one spanked. Courtesy, docility, stiff and formal graciousness—these I saw met by western vulgarity, boorishness, bombast, all-round insolence. I had not been in the Flowery Kingdom a week before I was ashamed of my people, ashamed of what purported to be my "religion," certainly ashamed of the nature of my errand. I had come out at the expense of a great American church to investigate and report on the efficacy of foreign missions. What need, forsooth, had the Japs for our religion? I saw them living the ethics of it, day unto day, amongst and between themselves. I saw them as residents of a country where all the fine, intersocial precepts which we as Christians flaunt so brazenly as the end and aim of modern civilization, had become so stabilized that they were scarcely of comment.

I have not the slightest criticism to offer of missionaries as a caste, a group of earnest, self-sacrificing people who had exiled themselves from homeland and friends to remain out there in the Orient's "darkness" and carry the precepts of the Lowly Galilean unto those who knew Him not. But as for the missionary gesture as a gesture—I was almost minded to use the cruder term "racket"—it began to stack up to me as the most nonsensical, insolent, arrogant program that a distant nation of provincials could connive and inflict upon another in the name of Holy Spirit. In other words, it was purely theological. We were trying to "sell" the Japanese not so much on Christian ethics—because they already possessed and practiced those ethics in a way far advanced over ours—but upon a Theological Hypothesis. In other words, the Vicarious Atonement. And the Japs could comprehend neither one nor the other. Their minds did not function in complexities of doctrine, all more or less philosophical, or if they did, they saw nothing to get so excited about as these missionaries perceived with their many sects and creeds. All that fuss and pother, I thought, and the raising of millions of money, and the construction of churches and schools,

and traveling to and fro on steamboats, . . . for the proselyting of a Theological Hypothesis that causes plenty of wrangle among Christians at home! Small wonder that Christianity meant so little in the Orient! . . .

¶ Instead of sending missionaries to convert the Japanese, or the Chinese, or the Hindu, to Christian ethics, we should import a few of those Orientals to bring Christian ethics across the seas to us. At least it seemed so, as I probed deeper and deeper into the activity I had gone out to survey. I had not been in Japan a fortnight before my conscience began to hurt me—Dr. Taylor, Bishop Fisher, the others back at 150 Fifth Avenue in New York, had made this trip possible that I might become a polite propagandist for the missionary movement. Instead of this, my manifest conclusion was growing more embarrassing that the kindliest thing which we brain-strapped Christians could do would be to pack up our vaunted missionary enterprises and let the heathen alone. Coming right down to it—and my opinion did not alter when I finally sailed homeward—the heathen had far more to teach us than we could teach him in a millennium of Sundays. And I think my conclusion is the conclusion of every sane, unbiased, logical Nordic who has spent an appreciable time in the Orient. There are phases of oriental life that are merciless and vile. There is ignorance and superstition, poverty and squalor. But have we not the merciless and vile, the ignorant, the superstitious, among our western nations also? Was ever privation and squalor greater in America than at the present moment? Unkind tradesmen-residents often referred to such spiritual projects as I was surveying, as "the missionary racket." . . . It was not such, by any means, as we know rackets in popular parlance. Long before I came to quit Japan, I labeled the movement "the missionary blunder." There is all the difference in the world between a racket and a blunder.

So in the weeks that followed, I journeyed to and fro in Japan, learning from observation these troublesome items. Out in West Tokyo was Aoyama Compound. The Rev. Edward Iglehart and his wife opened their hospitable home to us. In the Compound was an American-Japanese school. It was not unlike transferring Mt. Hermon in Massachusetts out among the wilderness of tiled roofs of Tokyo. The missionaries "worked out" of Aoyama as out of headquarters. It was from this point that I made my most notable journey of a five-hundred-mile walking trip through the northern Amouri Province with Missionary Iglehart, and down through the center of the Japanese Alps. We bedded down by night in quaint little paper hotels, isolated in huge inland cities of which the tourist never hears, the only white people among millions of brown men. Invariably an argu-

ment preceded registration at these native hostelries—as to whether or not it was good enough for the Honorable White Arrivals. Once admitted, we were conducted abovestairs to mat-covered rooms with partitions of decorated paper. Each of these rooms was measured for size by the number of its mats. Its only furnishings were an eating taboret and a futon bed—one quilted mattress to be unrolled upon the mats, with a similar mattress to go on top for covering. In place of sheets, the guest was served with a cotton kimono.

Night after night I lay beneath the roofs of these quaint little hostelries, listening to the katydids or the croakings of huge crows that forever roosted upon the ridgepoles, and reflected upon the necromantic bypath which my present life was following. About me slept thousands of childlike Orientals. Measuredly the town watchman would scrape past on his geta, beating a tattoo with bamboo sticks to apprise night prowlers of his presence. I thought of St. Johnsbury and my paper, and how Messrs. Stone and Gilpin were progressing, and if they were careful about the neatness of the headlines and keeping the blankets clean on the Duplex. I thought of my magazine friends in New York, the struggle I had known on Jefferson Avenue in Bennington to get my name before the public. I would fall asleep and dream that I was back in Chicopee trying to elect a French mayor, back in the factory with father, strolling over to Mabel's house to summon her forth from her shadowed chamber and walk with her, off under hundreds of miles of cherry trees in exotic springtime. Afar on the other side of the earth, all of it had happened. Not to myself but to quite another person.

And yet as invariably a queer sixth sense would whisper to me that it was emphatically not upon a pleasure jaunt that I had come. It had not happened by a lucky chance that Dr. Taylor had picked up one of my stories in a transcontinental train. Nor was I out there, moving among these teeming Asiatics, to give thousands of earnest Christian people broken illusions about the efficacy of converting the heathen to our Christ. It was bigger than anything that I had stumbled upon to date. I was out there in preparation for something—that was it!—getting an education in international politics while I yet had time, seeing a world of international affairs that in my previous provincialism I had scarcely dreamed existed. I talked with Red Cross nurses, with Japanese officials. I gradually became intimate with missionary problems, with the quandaries of Japanese statesmanship, with Nipponese psychology. My sympathy, understanding and tolerance for the Japanese people began to grow apace. When I

finally came to leave, it was as a sincere friend of the Japanese people, and I have consistently been so, ever since. If I have criticized Japan, or if I have seemed to do so in printed articles in past magazines or books, it has not been malicious or biased criticism. It was honest judgment passed upon the shortcomings of a friend.

I shall never permit a war to break out between the United States and Japan if I have anything to do in future with the government of my country. I appreciate what Japan is facing as a nation.

YES, I feel that I saw and absorbed Japan from Hakodate to Nagasaki, from temple to brothel, from hell to breakfast. Our country at home had long since joined the Allies. The great Siberian Intervention had been decided upon and Japanese regiments were entraining for Vladivostok. To our sudden consternation, just as we were preparing to move on to Korea and into North China, came a decisive announcement from the Japanese admiralty. All passenger boats were being taken off the northern Pacific and to China to facilitate the transport of infantry to Russia. Again the fates took charge of my destiny.

One rainy night in the Methodist auditorium in Karuizawa, the Saratoga of Japan far up in its interior, a tall, military personage intercepted me as we started back to the Iglehart camp. "Isn't your name Pelley?"

I agreed that it was.

"I understand you're a writer for *The Saturday Evening Post*. My name's Phelps . . . George S. Phelps. I'm International Y. M. C. A. Secretary for the Far East with headquarters down in Tokyo. Your boats have been pulled off the China passenger service, Bishop Harris tells me, and you're sort of marooned here till the Intervention ends."

Again I agreed, wondering what was coming.

"I'm here to find out if the 'Y' could interest you in a proposition to go up to Siberia and do some special work . . . acting as a sort of scout for the establishment of the canteens we're going to install all through Russia. Also, being a trained newspaperman, you're equipped to take on certain espionage work that needs to be done . . . it'll give you the chance to see Russia under Bolshevism."

It seemed as though a great segment fell into proper place in those moments in my life.

I went back to the house and found Marion in a corner of the Iglehart living room with a big bag of knitting.

"I'm getting into the War," I told her simply. It was all in my brevet.

WE WERE seated at the breakfast table one morning, three or four days later, when Dr. Perry said, "You shouldn't leave this neighborhood without making a visit to the top of Mt. Asama. There's a party going up the volcano tonight and you've been asked to join them."

For a matter of weeks, coming and going out of Karuizawa, I had seen this majestic peak smouldering on the north—a mile-high pinnacle of scoria with its perpetually hovering cloud of volcanic ash and smoke. Making the all-night trip to the summit and gazing down into its lava cauldron was one of the exceptional experiences to be encountered in Japan. A man named Vinton, Sumner Vinton, a Baptist missionary up from Burma but visiting in Karuizawa on his way to the States, sat on the steps of the Iglehart bungalow and apprized me about the trip. He had taken it twice, I presently learned.

"We leave here at eleven o'clock tonight," said Vinton, eyeing the fraught eminence five to ten miles distant, arising above the foliage in a contour resembling the Rock of Gibraltar in the insurance advertisements. "We go the first twelve miles by bullock cart—for those who care to ride—to the three-line on the mountain. There's a famous hut up there, The Rest House of Sweet Content. We'll take a nap till two or half-past. Then we employ Japanese guides and start up the scoria-pile, five miles to the summit. It's one of the world's most famous views, turning from the pit of the burning crater in the dark to watch the dawn come in, above the eastern horizon."

So an hour before midnight a group of us set forth, to join the main party waiting in the village. Marion did not care to attempt such a journey and I was later glad for her sake that she chose to remain behind. Besides Sumner Vinton and his long-legged boy William, we were accompanied by one Charles Faus, missionary business agent visiting Karuizawa. It was a lowering night and soon the rain was spitting. Out of the bullock-cart came a consignment of fish-skin garments to shed the downpour that soon was a torrent. To call them fish-skins is perhaps incorrect. They were paper mackintoshes treated with a coating of fish-oil to render them waterproof. These thrust out from around our heads, our shoulders, our waists, like the petals of huge flowers. We were a procession of human hollyhocks moving along in rain. But there the similarity to any flowers ended, especially in the matter of olfactory repercussions. "Say," I addressed Vinton, "we'd better all sit down and clean off our shoes."

"What's the matter with our shoes?"

"We've walked through a mess of dead fish somewhere along this route."

"What makes you think so?"
"Man, what's the matter with your nose?"
"Oh, . . . you mean the smell!"
"I'm certainly refusing to call it a fragrance."
"It's your fish-skins, Pelley. You'll soon set used to them."
I halted in my tracks. "You mean to t-tell me . . . I'm wearing this unspeakable stench as a . . . raincoat!"
"Man," his voice trailed back, "you're a Peregrinating Stink. We're all Peregrinating Stinks. But if you don't want to be soaked, you'd better put us out of mind and keep on hoofing it till we leave this rain behind us." ❧ ❧
On and on we strode, through the rain-splashed night, the clack of the bullock-cart sounding in our rear. Over endless traprock roads we made our way, through muck, across limitless acres of mulberry and corn. Our little brown guide, clad in an enormous umbrella hat, a blouse and a loin-cloth, led the way before us with his bobbing paper-lantern. And ever and anon as the time went past midnight, the nimbus above Asamayama grew brighter and more awesome. Moments afterward, an equally sullen rumbling reached us. "The volcano in minor action," said Sumner. "Thank God the rain's ending . . . now we can discard these awful dead-fish garments."
He was a companionable sort of person, Vinton, about fifty years old. He was stocky as to build, with iron-gray hair and mournful dark eyes behind gold-rimmed spectacles. He had been born in Burma of missionary parents. He was regaling me with stories of his boyhood in India as we left the flat country and mounted up the grade. Dozens of natives had joined in, as we passed through small villages adjacent to the mountain. Many of them were women.
We broke through the low-hung ceiling of cloud and above us the moonlit heavens were clearing. Between one and two o'clock the Rest House loomed ahead of us. It was a blackened, straw-thatched hut on the scoria's lowest edge. In it an aged Japanese man and his wife scraped a living selling straw sandals and red-paper amulets to those who were presently to ascend the dangerous upper regions. In their hut were twin platforms, mat-covered. We stumbled in gratefully out of night chill, dried our soaked garments at the large brazier in the center of the room, and laid down presently to sleep as we could.
The long-legged Vinton boy was all over the place, however. On the trip to the Rest House he had leaped hither and yon like a sporting dog, covering thrice the distance that the course represented. Now he was aager to



"It was four in the morning when at last
we reached the top—"

get going afresh. Above our heads the sullen flashings and rumblings were close. We bought several pairs of sandals, to strap over our shoes and prevent them from being slit to ribbons in the ash, hung the extra pairs about our shoulders by their thongs and sallied forth at length to mount to the crater.

SOME SCENES in life, come and gone in an hour, remain throughout a lifetime stamped upon the memory. That climb up Asama was one of these for me. The mountains became as smooth and naked of vegetation as a crater on the moon. Walking three or four persons behind our guide, I turned and looked back. The distance between each climber was gradually growing greater. In a long, fantastic zigzag, little parasites of human beings were ascending the sides of that stupendous ash-heap in half-real light supplied from the plate of lunar yellow now riding in our rear. Native men in bare legs, their heads protected from showers of tiny pebbles by conical straw hats, were interspersed with Japanese maidens in be-flowered kimonos who might have stepped from a screen in a tea-house. When these women began to feel fatigue, the men unwound lengthy sashes, and tied them in loops. Each slung a loop around the waist of the woman behind, and with the front ends of the loops against their own bellies, they would strain against the grade to haul these ladies higher. Jesting, laughter, a general nocturnal pranking, enlivened this ascent. What a sombre people we Nordics are on principle beside these happy "heathen," carefree in their homeland! . . .

Up, up, we mounted, the ash of the scoria soon wrecking our sandals. I lost the brass tip on the end of my walking-stick. So sharp was the scoria that after an hour of thrusting this cane into the lava rock, it was sharpened like a fish spear. As our sandals cut to pieces, we sat down and put on new from the supply around our necks. Soon the track became so steep, and one set of body muscles so fatigued, that we had to start zig-zagging . . . twenty steps to the left, twenty steps to the right. And greater and more terrible over our heads was looming the sulphur cloud, the nimbus from the crater like an umbrella over hades.

It was a quarter to four in the morning when at last we reached the top. My legs were played out. I made the last five hundred feet literally crawling on knees and hands.

"If the sulphur shifts," warned Vinton, "run in the opposite direction and keep close against the ground!"

"If the sulphur shifts," I answered, "I stay right where I am."

"Do you want to be gassed?"

"I'll say I want to be gassed. Then I don't have to repeat that awful trek down!" The Vinton boy riled me. Around and about, I say, he darted like a spaniel, whooping and jumping, throwing stones, covering three mountain climbs in that necromantic morning. "If you'd tie that kid of yours in one place," I told Sumner, "I wouldn't feel half so played out."

¶ Scattered about us were fields of boulders cast up from the crater. Rarely a month passed that a tourist was not killed by a shower of such projectiles. They ranged in size from a football to a bungalow. I crawled behind a barricade of these to escape the icy gale that was howling across that summit.

"Whoopee!" cried young Vinton. "I've just been over and looked in the crater." ❧ ❧

I did not doubt this in the least. If he had told me that he had just skipped down and breakfasted in Karuizawa, and was back again, I would not have challenged him. But I might have cut his throat. I had the motive and the knife.

"Look out you don't fall in!" his parent admonished him.

"No such good luck!" I muttered to myself. I lay in the lee of a boulder, with Faus's shawl about me, and waited for a volcano to burn out in my legs. Then, in the darkest hour of morning, with the moon on the wane, I approached the crater's brink and looked into Inferno. . . .

The opposite wall was a half-mile across. Between us and that cliff was a sea of molten brimstone. It did not boil or bubble. It lay like a great mangy mass of cataclysmic grayness, a lake of unspeakable tremors, filled almost to its brim with igneous content. Suddenly across this mass would shoot a forked-lightning streak of vivid vermillion—to be covered at once by that coat of stinking top-crust. I began to be sickened by the stench of the sulphur. Back I retreated to my barricade of boulders.

"A fellow doesn't care to watch that very long," said someone close by.

"It's as near the Pit of Hell as I hope I ever get," I answered with vehemence. ❧ ❧

"Look!" cried young Vinton several minutes later. "The sun's coming up!"

¶ We looked where he pointed. Across hundreds of miles about and below us the Japanese hinterland lay shrouded in mist. It was not really mist. It was ceiling of cloud that presently in Karuizawa would compose murky heavens. Off across this spread of majestic effulgence a crude light was breaking. We sat in the lee of those boulders and watched. My clothing was dank from the perspiration of my climb. Never had mountain

wind cut through me so cold. I clasped my arms about my knees and beheld an exhibition that one rarely sees while his spirit is earthbound. . . .

¶ The dull gray of east began melting in color. . . . weak lemon at first, then strata of cherry. Lemon and cherry strengthened into crimson. This crimson bled off and bathed gory horizons. Then in the eastern center of the crucible, bright yellow was fusing. It grew hotter and higher. Like a soundless organ to unspeakable grandeur, I thought, its chords were crashing mightier. At the apex of its resonance, a terrifying shaft of brilliance reached us like a javelin.

The uppermost point of the sun was in evidence!

The English language contains no terms of pigments with which to paint the canvas that now filled up before us. Dawn above those clouds was not dawn as men know it. In a matter of minutes our tortured eyesight had turned from the pit of Inferno to the lambent gates of Paradise.

I knew God in those moments.

What became of Sumner, young Vinton, Faus, the rest of the party either American or Japanese, I sensed not, nor cared. The Golgotha of the night's exertion was overwhelmingly repaid in that breathless experience of beholding for one transfixed instant those celestial glories unto which I was witness. I sat upon that volcanic summit and saw the world in sunrise.

An hour went by. Two hours. Faus, discernible now as a bespectacled individual in a shapeless black hat, came over and said, "I guess I'll start down." ❧ ❧

"Go ahead," I replied. "I can find my way back."

Vinton went down, and his spaniel brat with him. With a warm sun mounting higher, I remained in the lee of the rockpile and dozed. When I awoke, I tried to get up. I discovered that my tortured muscles had stiffened. But the floor-clouds had parted, far down below me. Dimly I made out Karuizawa where Marion, by now, would be eating breakfast, . . . the mystical reaches of Japanese distance. I sank back in meditation and my thoughts wandered lazily .

Tomorrow, next week, I was starting for the wars. I was heading into Bolshevia, to encounter that Bath of Horror that would one day change me from a nondescript writer with a nonchalant existence to a grim crusader —that no similar Four Horsemen should ever ride my country.

But I could not know it then. I but sensed it intuitively. What I really should have sensed that morning, but did not, was the prescient significance that in arriving on that height in exotic Nippon I had almost, in a literal sense, arrived at a height in my second Life Cycle. The lowest

point in that cycle had been turned while I lay in bed behind the Town Hall in Wilmington and heard that blatant, shuffling music as we grieved for little Harriet. Death and dancing! Dancing and death! I had arisen from that bed, disposed of my paper, started to climb—steadily, vigorously, to the prominence on which I sat at that moment. Both literally and figuratively it was the highest apex I had attained in my young manhood. I was due to travel a thousand miles westward still, before I retraced my steps into temporary debacle. But when I arose to start down from Asama, I was also starting down into harsh disintegration. Nine years later I was due to have traversed the bottom and arrived at a still higher pinnacle—and on that higher pinnacle the Door to Revelation was to open for me, thrice more resplendent than the vista of vaporous Paradise which I had beheld that morning. The experience on Asama was but the earthly forerunner of something that still lay ahead to be experienced tacitly. Explain it I cannot till I take my reader forward to a dawn in the Sierra Madre mountains of southern California when the world changed before me, and from the Hades of Earthly Vicissitude I entered with ecstasy into rapturous Spirituality, the crux of Reality. One was to be the prototype of the other. ❧ ❧

The future still held the key that unlocked that Higher Door, however, and I had nine more years of journeyings through lowlands and morasses before I knew my earthly commission, that Christos had not spoken falsely when He said, "In my Father's house are many mansions! I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, ye may be also!"

It was the Alpha and Omega of earthly achievement. But only the heights of the world could expound it. . . .

I went down at last, climbing down painfully, step after step. A different set of muscles now shrieked with the torture. Significant to relate, I went down *alone*. ❧ ❧

Always and forever, we go down alone.

My party of the night had all vanished now. Brilliance of sunlight was flooding the world. Yet the depths into which I was lowering myself, moment on moment, were dark, dark. . . .

BOOK THREE
The Door

DOOR TO REVELATION

The Door

CHAPTER ONE

SPEAKING allegorically, I left my youthful writing-self up on the summit of Asama volcano. . . .

The world all about me was turning bottomside up. And when such a thing as a world is turned bottomside up, some mighty strange jetsam comes floating to the top. I was presently to meet it, to go through ten to fifteen years of still more practical experiencing before I could perceive the education I was receiving, in perspective, and properly appraise the merits of its factors. The night came in Yokohama when I kissed the wife of my youthful marriage goodbye and went aboard a sleeping-car that would take me to Tsuruga. Tsuruga was the seaport on Japan's western side where the Russian steamers docked, and where troops were being loaded.

A Tokyo druggist, an Englishman, going up to Vladivostok to see about medical contracts, was my Pullman companion. He was an affable fellow and tried to make me share his hip flask. "You don't know what you've got ahead of you," he said when I refused. I saw no reason for getting drunk in anticipation of it, however. He fell into a maudlin harangue against the Japs, the war, the world. I dropped into slumber, and when I awakened, the journey had ended.

I looked out and saw the world was misty grey, with an imminent sun beginning to burnish fragrant dews. I heard the inimitable sound of sabres in scabbards. Japanese officers were strolling the platform. Then we were

sidetracked, down along a wharf. Across a planked space was a grizzled transport. Gold letters upon its prow spelled PENZA. It would take us up to Russia. Its crew was made up of tall, brawny Slavs, wearing caps of white leather and loose Russian blouses. The size of these white men made notable contrast to the diminutive Orientals I had been meeting through the weeks. The vessel would not sail until evening, however. I went aboard, got my reservations, then returned to the station—to encounter the eminent Dr. Toisler and his staff of American surgeons and nurses, afterwards to compose the famous Mercy Train that was a distinctive feature of the Intervention. The Doctor invited me to have breakfast with his men. During the morning I also ran into another Red Triangle man who had been on my train, George Gleason, from Tokyo. Ten years later George was to distinguish himself as the chief promoter of The Institute of Pacific Relations. . . .

George was a sedate, methodical fellow, taking his mission in life and war seriously, his earnest blue eyes looking upon a bedlamic world through thick-lensed gold spectacles. Later in Bolshevia he would supply us with much mirth, insisting on shedding his uniform each night—no matter what the temperature or military predicament—and borrowing my pajamas in which to retire. Going to bed, with George, was a rite. He never neglected it. As though to tease him about it, however, the fates had decreed that his personal baggage containing his pajamas should be lost at Tsuruga. The Japanese were experts at that sort of thing. Without intending to be funny, they had signs posted over most of their express-rooms—

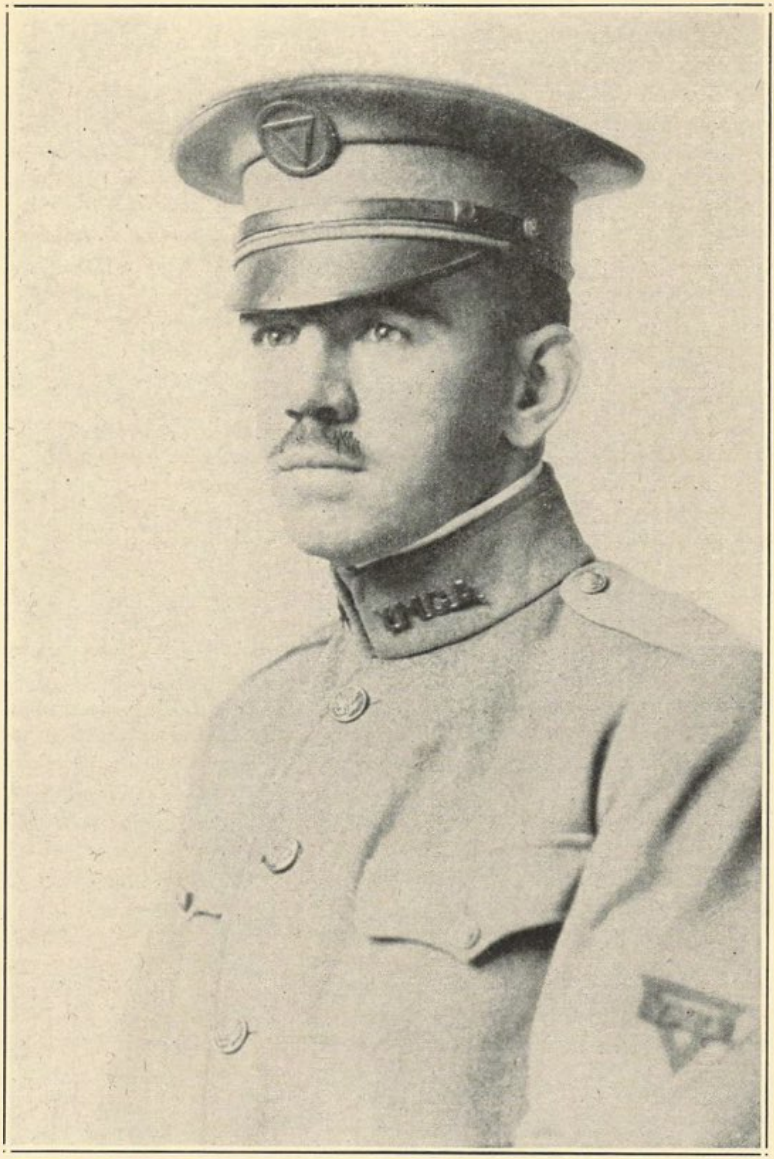
YOUR BAGGAGE WILL BE HANDLED HERE, PLEASE!
WE WILL SHIP IT IN ALL DIRECTIONS

They unerringly did!

So George went to war without his pajamas. And it bothered him frightfully. And he talked a lot about it, almost as much as I talked about blankets. I had similarly missed a blanket-roll. My life was saved in this regard a week later when Ed Iglehart's brother reached Vladivostok with more bedding than he could use. He threw me two blankets and I guarded them closer than my mess kit. I cherished them throughout the grim campaign that followed—to come out at last and go back to Tokyo.

"Iglehart certainly was a prince," I told Marion gratefully.

"Let me see those blankets," she ordered.



"I was heading into Bolshevia, to know
the Bath of Horror—"

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I spread them before her, frayed, tattered, and soiled, from four months of campaigning.

"Those are the blankets I discovered that you'd left behind," she announced. "I asked him to deliver them. Didn't he tell you?"

Things like that make for war. With what magnanimity had he thrown me my own property. Of course we did not expect to be put to bed every night, and tucked in, and kissed, and given a drink of water! . . .

IT WAS during that day while lounging in the Tsuruga station that for the first time in my life I was introduced to the world-wide Jewish question. And it came out in conversation with one of Toisler's surgeons. Although an American, he had joined the medical staff of the Russian armies from Poland at the outbreak of the war. I had asked him to tell me about the causes of the Intervention.

"It's something like this," he responded sourly. "When Russia went Bolshevik, there were a lot of Czecho-Slovakians—or Bohemians—interned in the Ukraine who wanted to fight the brawl to a finish. They knew from their own bitter experience that this war wasn't connived by the Germans at all. It was connived by a crowd of rich Jews, living in Germany and Austria. Those Sons of Judah thought when they fanaggled the scrap that it'd all be over in a couple of months and leave 'em sitting pretty in several conquered countries. When they couldn't get Russia licked in a stand-up fight, they imported the half-Jew, Lenin, to smash Russia by intrigue. You know, don't you, that the whole Bolshevik revolution was financed by the American Jew, Jacob Schiff, out of the Kuhn-Loeb banking house in New York?"

"No," I said, "I don't. Was it?"

"Huh, nobody's any dumber than an American, just come from his own country. YES, IT WAS! And every private in the Czech army knows it. The Czechs knew that if the Jews of Germany won the war, it might be curtains for little Bohemia. Jews would be all over the place. So they made a secret deal with France to bust out of their internment camp, trek across Siberia, and get to the western front by way of United States. But surprises started popping. General Gaida, a kid twenty-eight years old, made good his getaway and took his men with him. They started out without guns, ammunition, clothes, or food. They got their first weapons by rushing Russian army posts and capturing their supplies. Then they started grabbing and guarding the Trans-Siberian Railroad as they moved eastward, to protect themselves from behind. By the time they got to

Vladivostok, they'd captured the country. Then it was a problem whether to keep on toward France or stay in Siberia."

"But they did stay?" I suggested. . . .

"Yeah, they stayed. France looked upon the victorious Bohemians as wards of her own, and it didn't hurt her feelings to be in control of Lenin's back door. The Czechs got word that they were more valuable holding that railroad, which might come in handy at the Peace Conference, than adding a few thousand fighters to the gory lines in Belgium. They proceeded to dig in. At once Japan got nervous. If France entrenched in Siberia, who would get her out when the war had been ended? The Japs decided they'd better get the fishhooks out of their pants, hop up to Siberia, and do their share of grabbing. The moment the Japs gave it out that they felt obligated to help 'the valiant Bohemians' in this part of the world, the Americans had a gripe. If Japan's expedition resulted in her staying in Siberia and pairing off with France, Japan might thereby become an Asiatic power that would mean a lot more battleships. 'We'll come and help both of you,' Uncle Sam offered. But no sooner had he announced this magnanimity than Great Britain took notice. 'We're all in this mess together,' said King George, 'so I'm sending up a few of my men to show England's good intentions.' Not to be left behind, Italy next got a dose of the jitters. What was going on in Siberia that she wasn't in on? She proposed to find out. So here we all are," my informant summed up. "The Czechs are here to police the Bolsheviks. The French have come in to police the Czechs. The Japs are arriving to police the French. The Yanks are showing up to police the Japanese. The British are on tap to police the Americans, and the Italians are scurrying 'round to police anything that's left. We haven't seen any Swiss yet, or Spaniards, or Esquimaux. But that's because those races aren't yet in this war."

"Then you don't think there'll be a major offensive against Germany in the east?"

"Naw, everybody's sick of the war but the Americans and the Jews. Why get sick of something that makes you big money? I tell you, all these nationals are merely piling in here to see what they can grab. They'll hang onto what they can, and use what they can't to trade their way out. It's the greatest Kilkenny Cat show that this world mess has turned up."

"How will it end?"

"I'll tell you how. It'll end with all but the Jews and Japanese driven

out entirely. The Japs will set up a buffer state between Russia and China, because they can't afford to have the Jews so close to them."
"You mean the Russians so close to them."
"I mean the JEWS so close to them. Don't you know yet what the Jews are up to? I tell you they're out to make Russia a world political state for Jews—with their own form of government, which'll probably be a dictatorship. And Japan can't afford to have Lenin's Jewish principles—if you want to call 'em principles—spread down into China, or Korea, or Nippon. They'd either arouse the milions of China against the Mikado and give that gent and his family the works, or they'd undermine the throne and kick the Shinto religion into Jewish chop suey."
"But why Jewish?" I queried.
"Man, you won't monkey-fool long out here before you'll realize the true nature of what's been turned loose on this world of Gentile imbeciles. Don't you know the Jews are behind this whole bust-up?"
"Jews? What Jews?" The only Jews I had seriously encountered to that moment were certain shrewd-buying New York paper dealers when I had been in the factory with father, or the pack peddlers in the towns and cities where I had lived, who were reputed to go to church with their hats on, and were generally known as sheenies.
My informant shook his head. "You're just like all the rest of the goofs who've fallen for this war, thinking to make the world safe for Democracy. But someday the truth will come out as to just who did start it, and what they meant to gain. Take my word for it, it wasn't the Germans. I lived in Warsaw before I joined Toisler in Japan. Live for a time in Poland if you want to know Jews."
"But we are going to make the world safe for Democracy, aren't we?"
"Democracy, hell! The United States isn't a democracy. The United States is a republic. There's all the difference in the world. Why should we make the United States safe for something it isn't?"
I gave this intelligence the attention it merited. . . .
"The United States has been sold on this Safe-for-Democracy stuff," continued the doctor, "by the same conniving gang that first sold poor Germany on the Der-Tag stuff, . . . the same as the French back in 1789 were sold on the Liberty-Fraternity-Equality stuff, three terms absolutely contradictory to anyone with brains. Poor dumb Germans. If anyone's to be pitied in this war, it's the gullible Heinies who thought that Der Tag meant Germany's place in the sun. The Day, so to speak, of Germany's world power. And all the time the Jews were snickering in their

sleeves! Because it really meant The Day when the world dispersion of the Jews would be ended. That's the real meaning of the term Der Tag. And they're being killed by millions to make a kosher holiday."

"You don't think the Germans brought on the war?"

"Listen! . . . this war was stamped, cut, nailed together, sandpapered, and shellacked by three cut-throat Jew gangs working in racial union out of Frankfurt, Paris, and London, years before that damned little kike of a Princip shot the Archduke—to order!—at Sarajevo. We Allies are just the Christian cannon-fodder who go out in the name of glory and carve out each other's bowels, so for two dead Gentiles there'll be room for six Jews."

I finally moved away from this caustic, racially-biased person. This was no time to go stirring up more race hatreds, I told myself. The world had enough hates in it without laying all its troubles at the door of the poor persecuted Hebrews. And yet that was my rationalizing.

Deep down in my heart I knew from those twenty years of reading history in bed that Jewry was a problem which few Christians suspected. . . .

CHAPTER TWO

"WELL," declared Gleason, joining me at the Penza's rail next afternoon, "yonder lies Russia."

I looked northwestward. Up from the waterline of the dirty Japan Sea, a row of grey hills was rising. Afar on one of those hills as we steamed in closer I saw a bizarre pear-shaped turret.

"What's that grotesque thing?" I asked Gleason, puzzled. ¶ "Huh, the dome of a mosque." ¶ The dome took on tower-like foundations. These foundations showed walls, adjoining buildings. But long before the far-flung city about the Golden Horn came in sight, the rain clouds smothered down. We plowed up Golden Horn Bay in a downpour that sent us inside the transport. Not until we docked did I venture out on deck.

Before me were long low dockhouses, not unlike the Hoboken waterfront. Behind them, against a gigantic scoop in the hills, arose Vladivostok city. Its stolid stone business blocks and apartment houses, lifting tier on tier from the Maltaskya, were in sharp architectural contrast to effeminate Japan from which I had come. And surrounding them all, on the

highest hill to the northward was the Greek Catholic mosque, its twin domes and turrets both in prominence as we roped to a slimy wooden wharf where crated army supplies almost rivaled the height of the buildings. ¶ It came to me with a shock that *this* was Siberia. Where was the snow? Where were the wolves that dashed after whipped horses hitched to fleeing sledges and that stopped to eat the members of the pack that went down in that pursuit until the last wolf had the whole pack inside him? Somehow I had always visualized Siberia as perpetually icebound, within the Arctic circle, where the snow never melted, even in the summer, and the inhabitants dressed in furs from New Year's to Christmas. Before me was an ultra-modern city, with electric lights and tram cars, picture shows and deluxe restaurants.

On the wharfs below us were huge crates of merchandise, I say, railroad and army supplies—criminally exposed to destructive weather—hucksters and hawkers, Chinese drayers who carried their loads on wooden frameworks slung against their foreheads, long-bearded Russians in voluminous skirt-coats, droshkies, huge blond giants in more white leather caps, and blouses dangling outside their trousers. And percolating through the motleys were the colorful uniforms of the American, British, and Japanese soldiery, officers and doughboys, on a hundred soggy missions, all deluged by summer night's rain. We went ashore into exotic melancholy. For the present the city's lighting system was out of commission.

"One of the first things the dam' Bees did," said a Yankee officer who offered to show us the way to Red Triangle headquarters, "was to wreck the power plant when the Czechs approached. They're working double time to fix it. What good it did the Bees to smash it, no one seems to know." ❧ ❧

"What do you mean, Bees?" I asked.

"Local nickname for Bolsheviks. Their only idea of being in power seems to be smashing things. That's the way Jews act, anyhow, especially the rabble, when they get on a tear. You'll find out."

"What is this, a game? Everybody's knocking Jews. Pretty soon I'll be playing it."

"I'll say you'll be playing it, if you do much traveling into the interior and find out who's causing all this bloody upset."

We picked our way through the dockyards into a steep cobbled street. Here and there the putrid carcasses of dead hogs or dogs were smelled by all comers—lying in gutters, unsung and unburied. Of course no one might have cared to sing about a hog, especially a thoroughly dead hog, but

someone at least might have had the sense to bury it. This whole Russian nation seemed to be permeated with a queer acrid ordor compounded of soft coal, dead animals, sea bilge, horse manure, and improperly fumigated human excrescence. We came up onto an east-and-west thoroughfare bumbling with as much activity as might be found on Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis. Everyone seemed to accept that the war was hundreds of miles distant on the Trans-Siberian. That interminable main street—five to ten miles long—curved with the contour of Golden Horn Bay and the hills that made the city's northern background. Miles of three and four story business structures, quite in the American manner, lined this main stem, so wide that a double-track trolley line traversed its center.

At the first corner we reached, we saw a bedraggled carrousel, its gilded lions and tawdry awnings sodden in the twilight drizzle. About the rest of this lot were the nondescript paraphernalia of an abandoned street carnival. We started up the street toward the American consulate. Here and there we perceived a building whose windows were smashed, whose walls were obviously pockmarked with bullet holes. The entire Russian populace appeared as though it had been outfitted at a Salvation Army rummage sale —so I observed as we moved along the picturesque sidewalks in front of restaurants and hotels.

"So this is Russia!" I muttered to Gleason. It gave me a different thrill than I had gotten in Japan. Now I was walking on the continent of Asia.

¶ "Yeah," said George, "about as Russian right now as New York is American. You ain't seen nothing yet."

We slept that first night on the floor of a freight-car back near the docks. Billeting conditions were chaotic.

George made a frightful stew about it. It was a messy place to wear fresh pajamas. . . .

I SLEPT the second night after my arrival in Siberia in a house that had formerly been occupied by the head Commissar of Czarist Police for the Eastern Siberian district. The commissar, I understood, had fled down to China on the coming of the Bolsheviks. The United States had taken the property under its protection. Uncle Sam was always doing little things like that. . . .

Who was living in that house instead, what I saw go on there, whom I met, it is not feasible to record in the present edition of this work. After all, the Bolshevist Jews are still in control of Russia and I do not propose to tell them things that are none of their business.

Between my night in the freight-car, and the night or series of nights in the residence of the fugitive commissar, an important conference was held in the gaunt and sombre rooms of a greystone mansion overlooking Vladivostok on the west. The atmosphere of the place is vivid in my memory. I recall arriving ahead of my conferees and being ushered into a sepulchral drawing room whose overstuffed furniture was sheeted, whose elaborate chandeliers were globeless, and whose dominating appointment was a life-sized painting of a Tatar massacre hung above an expansive fireplace. The mansion reeked of that peculiar incense that is burned in Russian mosques. Weird strains of ragged off-key violin music presently sounded through the rooms. Listening more carefully, I heard strident reproofs administered to the player. Evidently a tutor was instructing a boy in apartments down the hall. It was the characteristic touch.

In this land of strife and Bolshevism, of human upset and political chaos, little Ivan must have his violin lesson! . . .

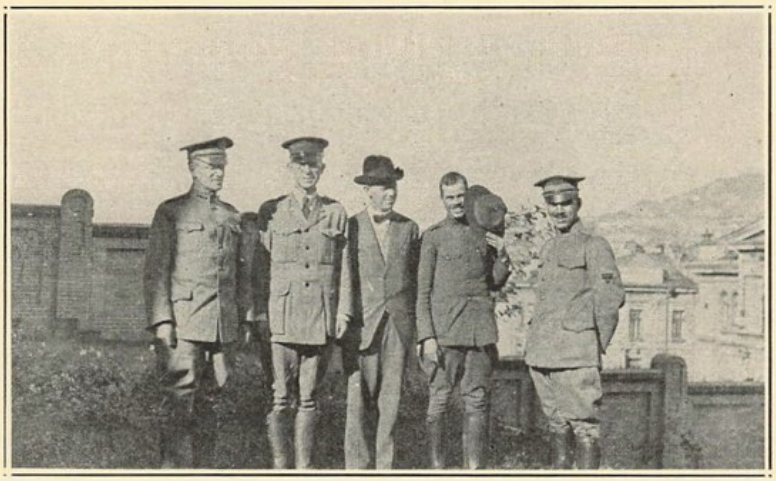
In the hour that followed I got my orders. The officials of the Young Men's Christian Association desired to secure vital information about internal Siberia and eastern Russia that would facilitate a drive to turn the young men of Russia away from satanic Leninism, to locate strong educational centers under Christian auspices from the cities of Kamchatka southwestward to the Ukraine, and conversely to acquaint the people of the United States with the true nature of Communism behind the scenes. It was a noble plan, and all honor to the men who then thought it possible. Could it have succeeded, the story of Siberian Asia might have been altered. My orders amounted to this: "Go into the interior and find out what's happening. Make contact with so-and-so at this point, and so-and-so at that point. Wherever you can do so, bring us back Kodak pictures of conditions but don't let yourself be caught using a camera too boldly or it means you'll be shot. If sealed orders or documents are put into your hands to bring out for the diplomatic corps, bring them out and no questions asked. You have *carte blanche* to move anywhere behind the Czech, the Japanese, and White Russian lines from Khabarovsk to Tomsk. You'll do this as an ordinary Red Triangle secretary, hitching your canteen car to Japanese and White Russian troop trains. No one is to know that you're anything else. And you'll start up-country into the Blagovyeshchenck sector, and around the Amur River district, day after tomorrow. When you reach Chita, wait there, if advisable, for contact with the official Red Triangle Commission that is going through Irkutsk in about a fortnight, and make your first report." It was a strange commission. No

man in the whole war had a stranger one. I found out that I was combination Red Triangle secretary, war correspondent, espionage agent, secret photographer, canteen proprietor, and consular courier—a sort of field scout for the advance guard of the Christian Y, striving to plant sanity, decency, and political stability in a land being slowly mutilated and mangled by Communism. In all of it I was to have no bodyguard, no official standing beyond my khaki uniform that carried the dubious military authority of second lieutenant. If I landed in a jam I could not appeal to my government for protection. Once I left Vladivostok and the jurisdiction of the Allies, I must depend solely on my wits. If I came out, I would merely be thanked. If I did not come out, no one would be the wiser. I would be just another dead body staring up at the cold Siberian sun to be picked by the jackals that roamed the empty wastes.

Reduced to American terms geographically understandable, it was not unlike being ordered to start from New York, proceed with a canteen freight-car up and around New England and the great curve of the St. Lawrence, to make my first report at a place that might be Chicago. From there I would be dispatched to Irkutsk, Omsk, Tomsk—cities that on the American map might be Minneapolis, Kansas City, Denver. Only remember that Siberian distances, in contrast to the United States, were three times as great. ❧ ❧

Viewed in a more personal light, however, it meant a stupendous field for social and political observation. I had been handed an entire theater of Asiatic hostilities to research at caprice. I had such a chance as came to no other man in the war to apprise myself of racial and psychological conditions from Japan to Turkestan. I would see Bolshevism installed in a country with my own eyes—and the more accreditable eye of the Kodak. I could meet and discuss this great soviet "experiment" with men who were undertaking to combat it tooth and claw in its incipient stages. Furthermore, I was to be private military observer at maneuvers of the Japanese troops throughout Manchuria and North China. I was to live among the little brown men under war-time conditions. I was to meet up with ill-fated General Kolchak and his heroic White Russians, to become caught in the great eastern exodus of royalist refugees fleeing before the Latvian mercenaries of Lenin and Trotsky, and hear from them by first-hand contact exactly what had happened in Petrograd and Moscow—and even Ekaterinburg with its Romanoff shambles—as the vast Communistic regime came in.

When parlor socialists and drawing room pinks here in the United States



"In the hour that followed, I got
my orders—"

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"Once I left Vladivostok, I must
depend upon my wits—"

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try to tell me what Bolshevism is or is not, or what Communism will do or what it will not do, I need not rely on Jewish propaganda or fanatical ignoramuses to serve me with the truth. I WAS THERE AND SAW COMMUNISM INSTALLED BEFORE MY GAZE! For I left Vladivostok on the day after that conference, and thereupon, and until after the end of the war, I was to all intents and purposes a free-lance adventurer, my own private espionage agent, lost in the immensity of embattled Asia, gaining my own soldier-of-forune education and enlightenment for the role I would be called upon to play in my own country, fifteen years in future. With such a background, such an opportunity, such an experience, such a training, how could I do otherwise than pursue my present calling? . . .

IN THE lazy heat of deep Siberian summer I left Vladivostok, proceeding to Khabarovsk where a Y-car was available. The Allied armies were moving so rapidly that ground canteens for the soldiery were impractical. So through political graft and military requisitioning, a fleet of great Manchurian freight-cars had been secured. The gauge of the Trans-Siberian is four inches wider than the railroads in America. This meant heavier rolling-stock, more sizable trains, smoother riding comfort when times were normal. It also meant freight-cars half again as big as anything met with in the United States. Chinese carpenters had been put to work on these. Doors and windows were cut in their sides. Within the barnlike interiors, the space was divided by partitions from side door to side door. One end was converted into a hut for soldiers, with benches, samovars, reading and writing facilities, decorations of Czech and Japanese flags. The opposite end was converted into a traveling store. All the goods and confections which the men of the Allied armies could not otherwise secure in the country, were available from the stocks in these rolling emporiums. Still further in behind the stocks of these goods were the private quarters for the secretaries, traveling two to the car. When reconstructed and equipped, these massive cars were coupled to the ends of military trains, to be shunted onto sidings near embattled areas.

Gleason accompanied me as far as Khabarovsk. There I presented him with my stock of pajamas and left him to wear them for the balance of the war. I quickly found that it was not the sort of mission on which one wore pajamas. On one hitch of my adventurings, a stretch of twenty-six days passed in which I had no opportunity to remove my clothes, even to wash soiled linen. Where would I have washed it? Pajamas in-

deed! My traveling outfit was swiftly cut down to my mess-kit, my blanket-roll, my portable typewriter, my contraband camera. At Khabarovsk I switched to my canteen car and acquired for a partner a young chap named Vyles. Up around the Blagovyeshchenck sector we now made our way. And swiftly enough we ran into WAR!

THE TERRAIN was flat, sandy, and overgrown with scrub. Hundreds of miles duplicated the landscape between Fitchburg and Boston, back in Massachusetts. Our locomotive burned wood. Showers of sparks had long since fired the woodlands far back from the tracks. Lakes and ravines opened as we mounted northward toward Kamchatka. Billions of wild flowers, of every conceivable color and variety, carpeted the uplands. The roadbed was rock-ballasted, the curves broad and stolid, the bridges heavy and substantial. But of cities and towns we saw next to none. The railroads in Siberia, not constructed for private profits from the citizenry but for movement of troops in war, made no effort to zigzag from community to community. Straight trackage was the rule, and if a city or town happened to be miles from the right-of-way, it was transportationally short on luck. The proximity of a sizable community might be indicated only by a long low railroad station, built half of logs, set back from the tracks across a rough-planked platform. The buildings comprised everything from waiting room and freight depot to station-master's private home and the omnipresent hotwater house. Most of these units were painted a flagrant mustard yellow. The typical Russian touch was supplied by the carved arabesque and rococo decorations in the angles of the gables.

Hour after hour, day after day, we droned northward, steadily approaching the Alexieffs' battlefields. Japanese troops were now everywhere in evidence, vigilant against guerrilla raidings. Bands of these renegade raiders made any sort of traveling precarious. Cossack groups, defected from the regular armies after the coming of Lenin, were plundering and pillaging on principle. In our car we had Josef, a Czech private, as cook and orderly. One night he summoned me excitedly and pointed northwestward. I summoned Vyles as quickly. The twilight sky held a horrid nimbus. Red flames were shooting higher as the railroad distance lessened.

¶ "Some bonfire!" Vyles cried worriedly.

"Ah tank Blagovyeshchenck, she burn," muttered Josef.

A city consumed by flames! The train slowed down and proceeded cautiously. Lit by the growing glare, darkness smothered with ominous sud-

denness. A man on a pony went tearing past. We could not tell his nationality but Josef addressed him in Bohemian Russian.
"He say Bolsheveek set fire. Mooch peeble shot. Japs have battle on hands preety qvick. Mebee beeg bridge down ahead, we wait here long time! . . . "

CHAPTER THREE

THE BRIDGE was not out. And for military reasons the train to which our car was attached did not stop its movement—at least not that night. I assume that the danger from the countryside's taking fire determined the commander not to be caught in the pocket of the holocaust. Slowly, weirdly, we jolted along, scenes of grisly confusion mottling the darkness in the headlight of our engine. All that caloric night we kept in motion, the glare of the flames so bright at times that it reddened our faces.
¶ It is a terrible and unforgetable sight to see a whole city burn. The smoke was magnificent, as magnificent as it was tragic and the nimbus was breath-taking. Verily it seemed at times as though whole roofs of houses went sailing off into the furls of the radiance. The crackling roar sounded like the wash of distant ocean in a storm. It was daylight when we halted and were shunted upon a siding. Whereupon battle-begrimed Japanese troops proceeded to avail themselves of the services we offered. . . .
I was suddenly stymied in an active theater of the war's strangest sector. No one seemed to know who had fired the city, or what had been the purpose. Half a dozen different groups of Cossacks, led by predatory hetmen, were as great a menace to law and order as the roving Bolsheviki. The objectives of all groups seemed to be to attack and extrminate whosoever opposed them. One night it might be Czechs, on another night it might be Japanese. Eight hundred of our American doughboys were reported trapped in one of these nocturnal raidings and ingloriously massacred. The excuse advanced for such guerrilla warfare was that the various nationals should withdraw from Siberia. It was a brilliant idea and would have saved a lot of lives, only no one seemed to take it. And as in every warfare of this order, it was the inoffensive common citizen who underwent the greatest suffering. . . .
This disruption of the peasantry was a piteous thing. All Siberia, I was presently to learn, was a chaotic migration of disrupted peasantry, no

destination to be arrived at, no geographical knowledge of the country to enable provincials to return to their villages—which all too often had become charred heaps of cabins on lonely steppes. Peasant trains were choked to suffocation when cold weather arrived, with these peregrinating homesteaders. Whole villages of peasants would seize upon a train, get into it, and refuse to be ejected. As most of the trains had wheels beneath the coaches, and rails beneath the wheels, and as sympathetic railroad crews manned cars and locomotives, these villages MOVED—so long as wood or coal held out. When it did not hold out, the engine-crew would halt at a point on the steppes, go over the hill with portable barrows, and come back with surface-coal turned up beneath the sod.

And what sights were all too common beneath the windows of those coaches! I know, I know!

Who can describe a Tatar battlefield, piled or strewn with human bodies? The Micawber sights, as Japanese or Czech troops set about interring the dead, if one could term it interment, were rendered thrice unspeakable by the stark nakedness of the corpses slowly bloating in putrefactive sunshine. Mangled bodies, burned bodies, bodies impaled by many things besides honest bayonets! The barbarous practice of stripping the dead of fabrics or boots, too valuable to bury, was something so common that it soon aroused no comment. Of the demoniacal mutilations I cannot write. . . .

But I made rakish discoveries in those horrible days. I learned that a corpse, left overlong above ground, turns a sickish green-black. I learned that the dead on a battlefield sometimes move, sometimes groan—without a spark of life within them. A mysterious feature of those Siberian raiding fields was the unaccountable quantities of what seemed to be tar paper thrown promiscuously about in tattered sheets. What it was, where it came from, I never learned accurately. I made the discovery too that human stench can become to terrific that the sense of smell suspends, the nostrils no longer sense it. Few attempts were made to lift the charred corpses and bury them in shrouds. There were no shrouds. A trench was dug. Ropes were looped over stiffened members and piles of bodies dragged apart and across the sod as so much carrion . . . for dumping in such trenches. Such things are not nice for the imaginations of the squeamish BUT THEY CAN HAPPEN RIGHT HERE IN AMERICA IF THIS COMMUNIST PERIL BECOMES GUERRILLA WARFARE! Certainly they made warfare as I saw it in Siberia. No man can say that he has lived a full life until he has known Love, Riches, and War. And the greatest of these is War.

Seeing a man shot before one's eyes was not half so terrible as those grinning, bloated Things strewn around amid sheets and scraps of the unaccountable tar paper—which must have been from water-proof linings of munitions boxes. Again and again I thought to myself . . . "and once, not so many years ago, each and every one of them was a pink and gurgling infant, whom some forgotten mother had suffered equally as frightfully to bring into this bedlamic world!" . . . At one time when our car was sidetracked within a fighting area a bewhiskered and hysterical Russian came running toward it. A volley from up the railroad yards got him. He slowed and staggered, hands clutching his belly. Presently he was sobbing, like a frightened little boy, one hand groping for the upright of a signal-post, the other gripping at his groin where the lead had gone in. When the raid was over, the little-boy sobbing gradually died away. So too did the life. When the train was suddenly jerked from the embattled district, his corpse was left lying against the post as though in his exertions he had merely dropped to sleep. It was usually a long time before anyone buried these corpses. The country was bestrewn with such gruesome exhibits. I brought back one picture of five Czechs crucified against a rail fence. They had been there a week, despatched by disemboweling. Bullets were too valuable to waste on executions.
It could happen in Kansas, Indiana, New Jersey. . . .

AND YET it was not the big major engagements, the mangling of the bodies, the dragging away of the women's one-time babies into trenches, the explosions under bridges and rolling-stock, that stayed with me longest and in the accumulate made that war in Siberia. It was the little human scenes of private distraction or tragedy that tore at the heart-strings and made the trek insufferable.
One rare October afternoon our car was shunted onto the end of a peasant train. A little family consisting of father, mother, three children, and grandparents, came from the hamlet's crude log station and began to load into the car just ahead of us. I doubt if that family knew where it was going, but it was moving somewhere on principle. All its possessions were a sack of clothing, another of onions, a bucksaw and a sawbuck, and a three-legged stool. These were handed up. The grandparents got aboard and reached down for the children. Then for some reason the young husband made a quick trip back into the station. The building had scarcely hidden him when the train started suddenly. "Papa! Papa!" wailed the distraught young mother who was still on the ground. Her

parents and babies were being borne away from her, . . . her husband could not hear her. In mad panic, unable to get aboard, she seized insanely on the door-frame to exert her strength and hold that train back. Her fingers locked into it as in a death-clutch. "Stop it! Stop it!" she wailed in Russian. But the train did not stop. It gathered momentum and she presently lost her footing. In terrible danger of being crushed beneath the wheels, she was dragged down the track. "Papa! Papa! Help me!" she wailed. That "Help me!" rang in my ears for a month and a day. Finally her grip was ruthlessly ripped loose. She crumpled against a culvert. & &

Happily to report, it did not kill her. Happier to relate, the train was not departing out of that station, it had merely gone down the yards to back up upon a spur. So the children and parents were presently restored to that wracked young mother, and the befuddled husband who lifted her tenderly. But no wail of the dying ever rang half so poignantly in my heart as the cry of love-fused maternity with which she greeted her parents and babies miraculously restored to her.

Human nature in the raw. Human love, human emotion, human heartbreak, human tragedy—none of it was any less vital afar there on the other side of the earth than in St. Johnsbury, Bennington, Wilmington, Springfield, East Templeton. . . . Nothing in these later years causes my temper to slip with greater ease than to hear some smug American fathead declare, anent what has taken place in Russia, "Oh, but those barbarians!—they naturally go in for riot and bloodshed! We're too civilized for such things to happen in America."

Kaleidoscopia! . . .

Not all of it was tragedy. On another afternoon we halted at a wayside hamlet to take aboard a wedding party. Halted is not exactly the word, . . . rather, we ran with extreme slowness while the wedding party boarded. It costs money to stop and start a train in Siberia, as upon the railroads of any country. Down the hill from the mosque came the stiffly starched young groom, resplendent in new boots—and of course other clothes—his bride upon his arm. Her wedding costume was principally a coarse-meshed lace curtain for a veil—and of course other clothes. Sprigs of flowers were thrust in lapels and headgear, many among the party having arms filled with the brightest leaves of autumn. A whole village, certainly all the relatives, had come down to the mosque from a village up the line, to see Katrina wed to Alex. Now they must catch the peasant train back.

Catch it, is accurate. The party caught aboard by running and jumping.

Eager hands pulled up bride and groom, aunts and uncles, nephews and grandparents, into the opened side-doors of the freight cars. Then when the hamlet up the line was reached, I was witness to another curious custom in peasant Russia. The whole party disembarked from that train by jumping. ❧ ❧

"Gosh, come and look!" Vyles called to me, entranced.

For a quarter-mile along the tracks a bed of soft gravel had been left. The train slowed down to ten miles an hour. Whereupon the married pair and wedding guests—to use an American phrase—"joined the bird gang." . . .

The groom jumped first. He did it expertly despite his bright boots, landing his heels neatly in the sand and springing back upright. Whereupon the bride gathered up her head lace in a bunch, gripped her skirts as she could and landed fifty feet farther up along the grit, rolling over twice. These two honored travelers having set the example, the party followed suit. Aunts and uncles went flying into space. Nephews and cousins left that freight car like cannon balls. The whole car exploded with attendants of that marriage. It spilled jumping, acrobatic relatives as excited student parachute jumpers leave airplanes.

"Gawd!" cried Vyles. "Now comes the old lady!"

Grandmother was the last to leave, but despite her years she was none the less courageous. Gathering her voluminous skirts about her aged thighs—exposing unbelievably sturdy shanks and bastions—she set her eyes grimly up-track and went off into air like a witch without a broom. Flat in the sand she presently came down, her generous beam excavating a dent that must have required to be filled with a shovel. It was all in the day's festivities and quite the proper caper. Our glorified caboose passed these people as they were gnerally arising and getting the gravel shaken out of their underclothes. Grandmother was back on her fundamentals, ruffling her skirts like a Plymouth Rock mother-hen that had just had a dust bath. . . .

¶ Day after day, week after week, I moved onward among these charmingly simple folk, characters out of Tolstoi, the prototypes in a thousand instances of my people up in New England, subscribers to *The Evening Caledonian* back in the Green Mountains. Generous to a fault, greeting us Americans with meats, butter, vegetables, refusing time after time to take a cent of payment, I remember them as gentle, inoffensive souls with a hurt look in their big and wistful eyes that any such scourge could have come upon their land. Dead now, most of them. Murdered, liquidated, by the sword or starvation—the proud work of a race of people called

Jews, who are quite certain the Lord has intended them to be the aristocrats of the earth.

WINTER comes early in Siberia and stays on till May. One bitter night with the first snows down, we had our car door locked for safety and warmth. Suddenly our train's emergency brakes slammed on and we leaped to our feet. Such a stop, afar on the steppes, could mean anything. Presently in eerie silence came hysterical babbling, and pounding on our car walls. Josef, our Czech, abruptly went berserk.

"My peeble, my peeble!" he cried in agitation.

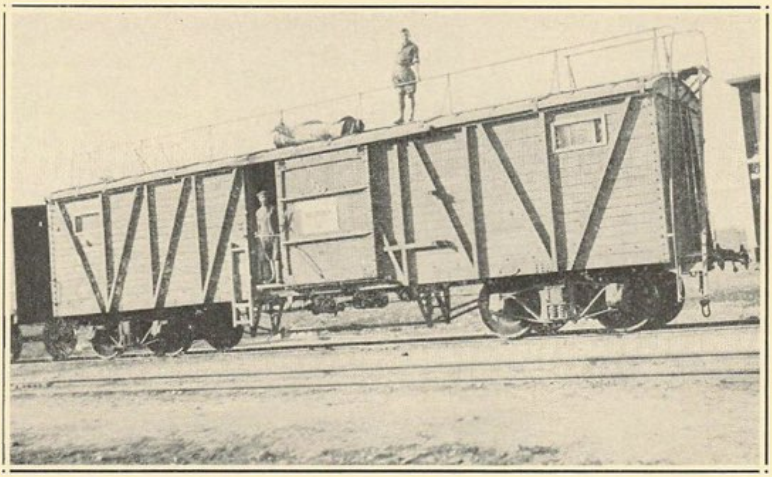
We got the door open. One lone coatless man, his limbs blue with cold, frenziedly sought to claw in upon the floor. There he fell senseless.

"O God!" cried Vyles, dropping the shirt he had raised at the back.

It was a solitary Czech private, this, previously captured in a Bolshevik raid and interned in a camp far off in the snow wastes. All his companions had been cutlassed. His life had been spared because he knew something about mechanics and the Bolshevik commissar had a captured Hupmobile. Knouted unmercifully from time to time, the previous afternoon he had managed to escape. All through the night he had stumbled across freezing wastes, coatless and hatless, to arrive by miraculous good fortune on the railroad right-of-way. Presently our train had drawn along and halted. . . .

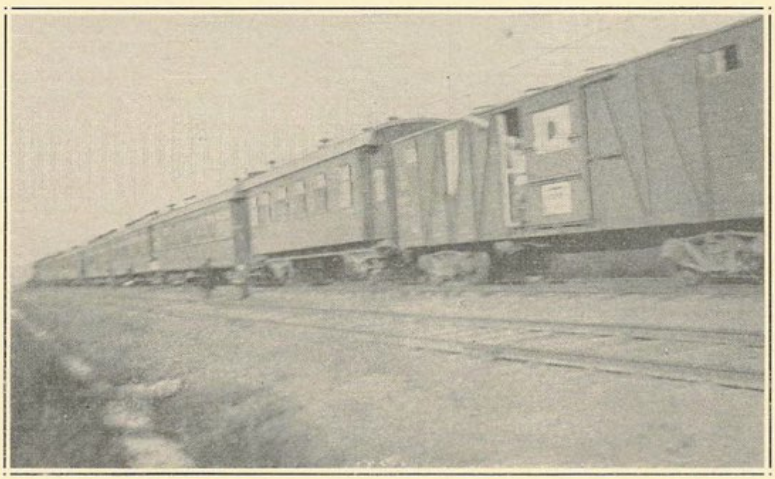
We gently thawed out his half-frozen body, dressed his wounds and fed him. He was a broad-shouldered, golden-headed fellow, whose gratitude at rescue was so great that it embarrassed us. As his wounds healed, he became a member of our car crew, and no task too menial for him to do eagerly. We found him to have been a graduate of the University at Prague and he knew a little English. Also Joe helped him translate. He sketched to us his experiences with Gaida, his home life in Bohemia, his boyhood. One night, diffidently, he showed me a picture of his sweetheart. He had carried it through three dark years of carnage and imprisonment. I took it to be a sort of honor, that he showed me that picture of his sweetheart.

So we worked our way deeper and deeper itno the heart of Siberia, and winter. At break of one dawn, Karl took advantage of our train's brief halt to ease himself down beside the tracks, our car being constructed minus toilet accommodations. I had arisen and was boiling coffee, therefore I knew when the train moved forward suddenly. I flew to the door, for Karl was not aboard.



"I'm on top of it!"

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"—freight cars half as big again as
those in the United States—"

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The sight I saw, sickened me. Karl had sprung for the grab-iron when the train started forward. But somehow he had missed it. Down twenty feet of snow-encrusted embankment he spiraled, arrived at the bottom, as frenziedly started up. Again he slid back horridly.

And the train went on and left him.

There was no signal-cord connecting cars and engine. By the time Karl had reached the top of that slippery embankment successfully, our long train was far down the tracks and cruelly gathering speed. Madly I threw out garments, food supplies, that happened to be handy. The last view I had of Karl was his coatless and hatless figure standing silhouetted against frosty sun, bravely waving his hand in farewell. He had ridden with us two weeks. The bitter death that he had escaped by finding us, had come back, mystically, to claim him. Tragedy! Tragedy! . . .

Such incidents, I say, made up the war for me, far more than the wholesale carnage to which I was witness.

We worked our way around the great circle of the Amur River and finally down to Chita. No one had heard of any "Y" Commission. Telegraph systems were in chaos. Should I wait or go along? I decided to go along. There were officials to see ahead, in Irkutsk, Omsk, Tomsk. We struck the shores of mighty Baikal, already freezing, to remain so till May. Around the western edge of Lake Baikal we creaked and jolted our way, our car hitched now to a train of British Tommies.

Refugees from Bolshevia were all about us, German prisoners of war, Czech soldiery, Kolchak's White Russians. I wanted to see Kolchak personally, due to arrive in Irkutsk within the fortnight. So at last came an evening when our train approached a great Siberian city far up the northern river and I beheld its mammoth white stone passenger terminal showing across the steppes like the palace of a genie. Weaving up through the railroad yards, our tired train came at last to a halt. I got out and went toward the station, looking for the yardmaster to unhook our car. The planks snapped under my boots like pistol shots. Opening massive bronze doors, I drew back in shock.

On the floor of this great inner concourse was a spread of prostrate bodies, alive but sleeping human beings, bestrewn on harsh cement. Hundreds of travelers without destinations, refugees striving to get out to Japan, peasant families with all their worldly goods clustered about them, piteously hoping to locate lost homesites—these were packed in a chaotic mass in the only building providing shelter and warmth. On the floor at least a thousand people must have been scattered in such spaces as offered. Men and

women, of every caste and station had sought slumber in utter fatigue and despair. It took me ten minutes to make my way across to the back. In the middle of that ordeal, I halted and looked about me. Well did I realize that exactly the same thing could happen in, say, the Union Station at Kansas City . . . if the Jewish instigators of this turmoil in Siberia, ever got control of my distant America.

Suddenly I was attracted by sounds of soft sobbing. I turned toward a pillar at my right.

I beheld a picture of Motherhood Incarnate. A comely young peasant wife sat on the floor with her back against that pillar. In the ample lap thus offered, I saw the heads of sleeping children—they were gathered about her in a spill of possessions, their figures positioned like a poignant human wheel. But that was not all. Against her left breast was the head of her husband—merely a lumbrous, moustached boy. Her left arm was about his shoulders as he sagged in her embrace. Her right hand applied her kerchief to her eyes. The husband, like the children, was blissfully unconscious of wars and Jewish ambitions. But not so the woman. With her sleeping babies gathered about her, even the head of her man pillowed against her heart, *she* was awake, watching over all of them.

And she sobbed in the midnight, with no one to see.

SOMEHOW that Jewish-fanaggled war got down into my marrow, with the beholding of that tableau. It was one of the most vivid fixations that I brought back from Asia. That hapless young mother had not caused the war. She asked nothing from the Schiffs, the Warburgs, the Adlers, the Samuels, . . . nothing from life beyond raising her little peasant family in some sky-girt steppes hamlet. But inhumanly the Four Horsemen had ridden her country. World Jewry had to be served. Almighty God had His chosen human pets that He must present with a whole earth of new Canaans. That night in the Irkutsk railroad station, her little family uprooted and made vagabond, she could not even tell what the coming day held for them. They had no place to go, nothing to sustain them but the bag of hard vegetables against which her shoulder rested. And when mortal weariness brought merciful unconsciousness to her babies and her man, the woman stayed awake, supplied them with the softness of her body, faced their tragedy alone with her motherhood.

And they tell us that we must love the Jews, whom I have long-since proven to my grim conviction were the plotters and manipulators of all that hor-

ror that they might attain to their messianic roles as the earth's aristocrats. Aristocrats, faugh!

How I wish that the parlor pinks, the perfumed socialists, the ministerial nincompoops who affect to arise in Christian pulpits and talk about the "beauties of Communism" and how God's Chosen People have a divine commission to project such suffering for human benefaction and social progress, could have stood beside me that bitter night and heard that young wife's sobbing.

For weeks I had ridden through such turmoil. The iron from many scenes had entered me. Indeed I had left the person who was my youthful writing self up on the summit of Asama volcano. Now this weeping young mother touched me as nothing had done to date. She was the stricken and prostrate spirit of the real Russia that was being torn asunder and slowly crucified that a race of predatory parasites might execute their murderous hatred upon the peoples of the Czar. God's Chosen People? Do you really think they ARE? You can excuse me from such thinking. I worship the Father to whom Christ prayed in the Garden. And such a God would be more fastidious.

I walked on finally and left her behind me. I had business in Great Russia. But the memory of that tableau was a brevet as from Kismet. True, she was only one woman, out of a million—out of seventy millions—who was facing liquidation because she was Christian. But for that little moment she was Motherhood Incarnate. Would that I had the talent to paint on canvass the picture that she burned on memory.

It was Edmund Burke who first uttered the asininity that one could not indict a whole people. But I demand to know what the Jewish people are doing, of their own racial volition, to put an end to such apostate leadership as precipitated the horrors I witnessed in Red Russia! On that basis, at present, I sweepingly indict the Jews of the world.

I passed on through that station. The months went by, and I passed on through Russia. But I could not forget that young mother by the pillar. I never *have* forgotten that young mother by the pillar.

Where is she tonight, I wonder?

CHAPTER FOUR

HAPPILY there are times in a person's life when the armor or investiture of spiritual insulation around the mortal coil, proves impregnable to the assaults of passion, vice, weakness, or horror, as constantly hurled against it. The will conquers all obstructions set before it. The still small voice supersedes the counsellings of the worldly mighty. The vision of ever greater things to be done, unveils the mystery of the ages: What is the purpose of it all, and can mortal man discover it? ¶ In a sense of possibilities in the human spirit to rise above all earthly assault, the still small voice is like a lambent beacon: sometimes it flames before us in conscious knowledge, sometimes it conveys its light through the intelligence and utterings of companions, sometimes it is merely a whisper within our own breasts. Then again, and mightiest of all, is a distinct and open blazing within our own consciousness, making it possible for us to recognize factors that would otherwise remain throughout the earthly tenure in a state of "active quiescence," of sombre insouciance, unknown to the multitude.

War can become a series of such blazings.

I had ample time in those days that I subsequently passed, to discern that there were mightier missions afoot for all of us who had been drawn together so weirdly in that minor theater of war, than merely ministering to a physically shattered or hungry soldiery. I had my moments when, spiritually insulated against the turmoil, the distraction, the suffering about me, I dimly caught radiant glimpses of the training school of cosmic urgings which most of us were attending. What would we do when we had reached, and passed, Commencement?

I thought at times, in my own case, that I knew. Then it would slip from me, like an imperfect imagery, remembered forward.

The winter was grim, that I now set about to live in the heart of Bolshevia. Vyles and I parted company at Irkutsk. I had other business thenceforth than helping to conduct a Y-car, passing out cigarettes and chocolate. He took the car alone, or at least with Josef, and worked his way down into the Ukraine. In pursuance of my mission, I became engulfed in that indescribable refugee horde that was fleeing before the cruelties of Jewish sovietism to the westward, a Reign of Terror principally projected under the supervision of two hundred and seventy-six Jews from New York's East

Side. Desperately they were striving to get out of this new Canaan which Jehovah was so generously giving to his Chosen People—to escape to China, Japan, perhaps to America. The appeals and the propositionings toward this end that were addressed to me, especially by Russian gentlewomen, wrought a curious psychology within me, not exactly a callousness but a purposeful resignation. It had to be purposeful.

I could not walk along any Siberian street in my American uniform without being accosted by these pitiable persons. Women who but two short years before had been surrounded with luxuries, ministered to by cohorts of servants, were now eager to follow me to America in any capacity for less than the price of a cake of sweet chocolate. These were not prostitutes. It was an equation in psychiatry, to observe how far such aristocratic femininity would go to barter their bodies in order to preserve them. We aided them as we could, but the country was becoming overrun with millions of them—wives, sisters, sweethearts—separated or torn from Bolshevik-hounded menfolk, searching for beloved faces and the sound of familiar voices throughout Great Siberia with all the pathos of Longfellow's Evangeline, after the Golgotha of Acadie. Again I say, these were the people—for the Moscow Jews have now butchered most of them—whom the parlor intellectualists have declared as worthy of their fate, or indifferent to it, being barbarians or savages on principle. Yes, iron entered into my soul in those months. The free and easy life that I had lived in the clean and orderly United States, I would never know again. Thenceforth the torment would always be just under the threshold of my consciousness, that I had to do something about all of it. But what, and when, and where, was beyond my conscious naming.

In there—in the heart of the country—there was no longer any question about the Semitic character of Communism, nor was there much talk about the temporary character of the government of the half-Jew, Lenin. On every side now, anti-Semitism was the hour's burning topic among Allied representatives of any intelligence. In the exact ratio that I had traveled westward into Bolshevia, I had been forced to discard my provincialisms in regard to the Jews. These quasi-Oriental commissars, everywhere succeeding to murderous control, were a wholly different breed from the greasy corner tailors and kosher marketmen I had called sheenies at home in Massachusetts. I found out, or beheld from my own observation, that no more fiendish creature exists in human form than the Jew when he is given cohorts at his back, and people whom he fancies to be his "enemies"—in that they may not like him—in front of him. If I had my choice, to be

tortured by a Jew or by a Chinaman, I would choose the Chinaman. The Chinaman would torture me because torture was torture. The Jew would torture me from a sadistic glee in watching me suffer. If I tried to include here some of the Jewish-inspired mutilations that came beneath my notice —many of which I photographed—I would put a black page of literary putridity in this narrative. The splendid Czech officers, every man of them a university graduate, were especially vitriolic in their flamings at Jewry. ☙ ☙

"Why should you hate Jews so?" I asked a certain major general in the Bohemian high command, as we sat in his snowbound wagon litz one night at the edge of the railroad yards.

"Because," he replied in his cultivated voice though his English held an accent, "we have long-since found out in our country what you Americans must finally come to recognize: that a deliberate and cleverly executed plot has long been germinating among the leaders of this peculiar people to bring the Christian nations under their open control, and this war is but a phase of it."

"I'm beginning to believe it," I conceded. "I thought at first in my American provincialism, that it was only Old-World bias, when people tried to tell me."

"This vast war, of which all of us are but the Christian victims, has had many aspects which Jews have not ordered. But the major conflict itself, the pull and draw of international diplomacy, the subtle controlling interests behind the royal antics of the Hohenzollern dynasty—these trace back to conniving Jewish interests, permeating the financial, economic and political control of the nations of Christendom to weld them together under one Hebraic super-government. Do you know Disraeli? Have you read his *Coniston*?"

"But that was a work of fiction, wasn't it?" This officer was too commanding a personage, too patient with my ignorance, too much of a kindly and cultured gentleman, for me to challenge his convictions as racial intolerance. ☙ ☙

"Only insofar as his characters applied. He was telling something to a world of Gentiles, but cleverly employing the fictional form. Disraeli had one of his characters say most truthfully, 'The world is governed by a far different set of persons than is suspected by those who are not behind the scenes.' We Bohemians have found out how true his racial boast was."

¶ The gale whined and whistled about the windows of the coach. The flame of the candle blew flat in the draught as an orderly came in and

passed on about his business. Could it be possible that this worldly wise officer was performing me a favor by thus enlightening me, that instead of always trying to shy away from such informants as promoters of race prejudice I had better sit silently and open my ears? Why had nearly everyone, from Toisler's surgeon to this Czech official, consistently expressed themselves as hostile to Jews? It must be more than merely wanting a scapegoat for the war. Take my own case. What had some of the mutilations that I had seen on corpses, to do with wanting a scapegoat for the war? If I had wanted a scapegoat for the war, I might have used the Germans. But the Germans I was contacting as war prisoners, were fine, upstanding, patient-faced fellows who no more approved of this war than I did. And never could I possibly identify any sort of outrage or sabotage as having been committed by a German. Always it was some Jewish commissar, some Jewish official, that was back of the atrocities we confronted. Facts were facts. What was to be gained by whitewashing them? Lenin was a Jew, Trotsky was a Jew, the whole mentally diseased rabble in Moscow, causing this ghastly turn-over of the patient people of all Russia, were Jews. The money of a Jew, Jacob Schiff in New York, was financing it. Jewish agents were already beginning to swarm over Siberia and adroitly work against any constructive measures to aid the suffering Russians. What they meant to do was to exterminate the Christians in a stupendous massacre, and have this rich country for themselves; but how could we know it then? . . . or rather, how could we accredit it?

"The people of America do not know Jews as we in Europe know them," my informant went on. "But you will come to it when they have moved sufficient of their number overseas. They will take over your political government, they will crowd into your civil and commercial offices, they will overrun your White House and Washington departments. You will find them dominating your fraternal lodges and secret societies, preaching the divine right of their race to stalk through your most hallowed institutions without a word of censure being raised against them. If you raise it, they will attack you savagely for being guilty of race prejudice. When it happens, not *if* it happens, your nation will know a period of suffering—like all other nations have done, that has always forced them to rise up and resort to measures that seem brutal, to rid themselves of that racial pestilence. Remember, my young man, few pogroms have merely 'happened' . . . they came in desperation at what has been inflicted on the persons who have resorted to them."

There was absence of any rancor in this big Czech's voice. He was dis-

cussing the matter as an equation in academics. Yet what a terrible certainty he expressed, of the correctness of his statements.

"When I was a boy," he continued, "the plague broke out in our village in Bohemia. Our people were stricken so fast that we had to bury them where and as they fell. My own mother and father were among such victims, interred in trenches by night. Morning after morning our neighbors would behold in horror that during the night the trenches had been opened and the bodies of their loved ones stripped of clothes and jewelry. Again and again we had to bury the naked bodies of our kinsfolk, because bands of scavenger Jews had worked on the graves by night and committed such ghoulish atrocities. Yes, I got my personal knowledge of the traits in Semitic character, early. For Jews will do such things to Christians. It's all a part of their religion . . . 'despoiling the Egyptians.' Egyptians, remember, are any people who are not Jews. Everything depends upon their fidelity to their Jewishness."

"But," I protested, "such atrocities might have been forced from bitter economic necessity."

"Haven't our Slavic and Nordic races known their periods of 'economic necessity'? Have you ever heard of their descending to such practices as looting the corpses of Jewish people felled by pestilence?"

Of course I had no answer. My father, in his ministry, from the days of the North Prescott pulpit down to the last night I saw him, had accepted and taught that Hebrews were God's Chosen People. It had been a fixation in my youthful consciousness that many things improper, immoral, or even Satanic for Christians to do, were blessed and sponsored by the Lord God when committed by Israelites. It had never occurred to me that maybe all of it was subtly promoted racial propaganda, assiduously kept alive for purposes more economic and political than religious. Had I come a bitter trek across central Asia purposely to interview and know this man and have him tell me such perturbing things, with the seal of his authority, character and prestige behind them? It was something to think about. Personally, I knew I had no quarrel with Jews as a race. Again I say, I remembered them as a peculiarly unclean people who had occupied a district in the Springfield of my boyhood that we stigmatized as "Ferry Street"—the city's only slum. Frequently I had to go into Ferry Street to deliver bundles for my father. I got out as soon as possible because of the stench from the alleys and doorways. Later, in the tissue-paper business, we had sold extensively to New York Jewish jobbing houses. I recalled one motherly Jewess who had been treasurer of one of these, who had

got me into the office of her concern and encouraged me to tell her frankly and confidentially the exact financial status of our business. Her intimation had been strong that if I would be candid, her associates might be generous in supplying us with capital to carry our accounts. I knew no Gentile woman of her years and personality who would ever have solicited me so and then betrayed my confidence. Among our kind it simply was not done. *Noblesse oblige* was too strong. No one had warned me that there is no such thing as *noblesse oblige* among Jews. So I responded in adolescent trust, particularly in womanhood. Ten days later father had come home to Fulton, furious that I had visited New York and been so loquacious. "Maybe it will help you to guard your tongue in future," said he, "to know that we've got to take a loss of over two hundred dollars a carload on our next shipment to that firm, just because it discovered our financial weakness and knew we couldn't afford to refuse the business, even for less." I was appalled. The woman was cold as flint when I next saw her and foolishly made complaint that she had violated my confidence. I perceived that it was all quite within Hebrew ethics to gain by any means or expedient, information which helped in more canny buying. That elderly Jewess doubtless flattered herself that she had turned a clever trick on a callow Christian youth at the time. But ever thereafter I had looked askance at people of her race. . . .

Anyhow, I left the beautiful wagon litz in which I had visited with the General and sought my humble freight car. How could I further ignore or seek to rationalize this mass of brutal testimony that was engulfing me from every quarter? How could so many hundreds—yes, thousands—of people hold precisely the same bitter views regarding these European and Asiatic Israelites, without there being truth behind their castigations?

I tried to dismiss the matter as thousands of my countrymen do at present: "Oh well, these are foreign Jews. In the United States they are more advanced, more enlightened, more generally Americanized." I told myself that thousands of Jewish boys were fighting in the Allied armies. Thousands of Jews must have been impoverished by the war. Thousands of Jews must have been refugees out of Prussia, out of Alsace, out of Transylvania. Would the leaders of that race start a war that involved, butchered or impoverished untold numbers of their own people? It failed to make sense. ☙ ☙

It never occurred to me that indeed they might do exactly that thing, that this business of "making sense" was my own Christian code at work, doing the reasoning in such matters. . . .

I applied myself to gaining information from other dignitaries. I met officials in the diplomatic services of other nations. I still cherish the memory of being present as an American observer at the military ceremonies in the Irkutsk station yard when Admiral Kolchak arrived and took formal command of the ill-fated White Russian forces.

One day I appeared at the American consulate, to find two civilians—a Britisher and a Norwegian—finishing luncheon with the consul. After coffee in the drawing room, I was taken aside.

"These two men are commercial couriers for the International Harvester Company," I was told. "They're carrying three-quarters of a million dollars with them in Czarist currency which they'll transfer to the diplomatic pouches in Harbin for conveyance to Chicago. It's money representing liquidated goods and properties, being saved from the Bolsheviki."

I nodded, wondering what was coming.

"They're continuing their trip eastward in a tepluska that leaves for Harbin tonight, attached to a fifth-class peasant train. The condition of the country, not to mention the state of their nerves after what they've been through in their getaway from Moscow, makes it feasible for you to join them as convoy and companion."

I was only too glad to do this. The sights and scenes that I was beholding daily, the increasing pathos of the refugees, and the plight of the residents in middle Siberia as Jewish agents penetrated everywhere and undermined what was being accomplished of a constructive nature, were telling on my own nerves. Again and again I realized that I might have gone through the October revolution in Moscow myself, so graphic were the accounts of thousands of participants and eye witnesses milling everywhere around me. I was sickened unto death of seeing naked, mutilated bodies, of passing through a bloodglut so terrible that frequently in excursions to hamlets or prison camps off the beaten track, we would come on half-frozen cattle with udders cut off to mock and starve the terrorized peasantry. By going eastward I would be retracing my steps toward Japan, toward San Francisco, toward Vermont. Besides, this particular trip would enable me to see the territory that is now Manchukuo. I was satiated with the information I had come thus far to obtain. After weeks and months of it, a whole summer, autumn, and part of a winter of it, I was fed up on Bolshevia. So I made the acquaintance of the two civilians. Because these men are still alive and important personages in their respective fields, let me call them merely Smith and Olson.

Smith was a cool-headed, middle-aged, bald-headed Britisher. Olson was

a stocky, sandy-haired, elderly Norwegian whose home was Chicago. They were men of my own racial strain, however, persons whose psychologies I understood. We were to be given a Czech orderly for the trip around Baikal. From Baikal eastward we must fend for ourselves.

A soft snow was falling in early winter twilight when I finally bade goodbye to friends at the consulate and went to join my new companions. Our tiny box car held a sheet iron stove. A quarter-cord of wood had likewise been provided. We had canned goods and provisions to fill an Ivory Soap box. For reading matter, Smith had somewhere snitched an armful of out-of-date magazines. Tucked securely away inside our khaki shirts were certain officially-sealed documents for the consul-general at Peking. They would go into the diplomatic pouches and thus arrive at the American State Department.

With all the world hushed in the muffling snowfall, I got my baggage over to the car and presently we started. It was really to become the most harrowing phase of my whole Siberian adventure. The winter cold was settling down in earnest. Siberian snow was a devastating thing in that sustained low temperatures allowed no intervals of thawing. Snowfall piled on snowfall. Only the open bleakness of the steppes kept the drifts from closing the railroad.

Down the Irkutsk River we slowly creaked our way, the Czech guard developing an infected foot from an old bayonet wound, that required putting him off at the first hamlet of size we encountered. So with the first snowy night behind us, we began the long circle about icing Baikal. During that first afternoon George Smith let out an exclamation as he reclined in a bunk against bare timbers. "I say, old topper, there's a chappie of your name got a story in this magazine. Do you know him, perhaps?"

He had picked up and brought along a copy of that *American Magazine* that held my epochal prize-winner, *Their Mother*. "Ripping!" he exclaimed as he finished the narrative. He was the sort of Englishman who would say Ripping! But there was precious little otherwise to say Ripping about.

¶ A sub-zero cold swept down from the Arctic. So deadly became the temperature that whole hours passed in which our locomotive could not make steam. Wind-blown snow would sift through the cracks in our tepluska—the Russian name for our type of box car—and build drifts in all corners, despite the brilliant sun. Our fuel gave out. We began destroying the planks inside the car to keep ourselves from freezing. At the end of a week we had exhausted our candles. On many a night I heard the wolves of Siberian legend howl indeed, as we lay marooned on wind-

swept steppes, peasant passengers freezing in cars behind. If those passengers died, which many of them did, their bodies were simply heaved out like frozen billets of cord-wood into the snowdrifts. The railroad right-of-way was increasingly bestrewn with wrecked rolling stock, whole trains upturned on their backs, mercifully snow-covered. Well enough we knew what the sights and odors would be, greeting travelers passing in the spring. ❧ ❧

For days at a time we went without food. Our provisions were long-since exhausted—with the single exception of a great Edam cheese. We each took turns in excavating in this cheese. Without water for shaving, I was forced to let my beard grow. My body lost weight in that month of privation. By night we took turns, one of us standing guard while the other two slept. An hour's slumber was all that we allowed ourselves, then up and at exercise. Otherwise we might have sunk into the sleep of frozen death. ¶ One night, tortured beyond human endurance by the cold, George paid the equivalent of $250 in American money for a small box of soft coal from the locomotive. He spilled it over his own head and shoulders in handing it up. With typical British fortitude, back he went for another. He took his life in his hands to do this, just as we took our lives in our hands by burning it. Siberian engineers and firemen had an unpleasant custom of shooting persons who approached their cabs, and inquiring about their business afterwards. At any rate, we got a fire started. Then the starving and freezing peasants in the cars both fore and aft—most of them Bolshevik-inspired by now—saw the sparks coming from our stack and were convinced we were hated aristocrats, escaping into China. Soon they were milling angrily in the curdling darkness outside our car door. It was one of the tightest squeaks—and one of the miracles—of my life. About the time that they were ready with an ice-encrusted sleeper to batter down our door and come in after us, following an all-day halt on the steppes because the low temperature hampered steam-making, . . . believe it or not . . . that train *moved!* It kept moving all night, and when dawn came at last we were in Manchuria.

To make matters worse, when we came to steppes hamlets where a bite of food might be purchased, we were hung up for hours and sometimes for days. Communism was being accepted so literally along the Trans-Siberian that committees were set up to conduct each train. The engine-cab occupants made up one committee. Each coach had its committee. So did the caboose and the workers in the station. A courier was sent around at intervals to get a consensus of opinion as to whether or not the train should

start, and how far it should travel. Please do not smile. The same Bolshevik Jews could effect similar arrangements on the Boston & Albany, the Nickel-Plate, the Southern Pacific. America has them—an additional four million of them, I understand, since Hitler asked them to get out of Germany. ☙ ☙

Twenty-six days it required to make that journey. Before the war a wagon litz train would have covered it in eight. But the evening came when we saw the serried lamps of a far-flung city ahead, close down along the tops of the snowdrifts. We rolled in off the steppes—or were blown in by the gale—to rumble over a lengthy bridge. Olson's jaw dropped. . . .

"Bah Yove!" he cried. "It bane Harbin!"

Our eastward journey was ended at last. Our tawdry train, snow-smothered from caboose to locomotive, whistled at last to a tired halt. George pointed across the tracks to an illuminated sign.

"The Grand Cafe!" he cracked brassily. "Does that mean food, or is it a mirage?"

We were three starved soldiers-of-fortune with three-quarters of a million dollars upon us. Lingering only to hire a Japanese sentryman to guard our car and have it detached, the Japs being in control of Manchuria at the moment, we stumbled across the station esplanade.

Food! After living for the better part of a fortnight on the cullings from a single Edam cheese, . . . FOOD! I had not gone fifty paces, however, when something caught my eye in a Chinese tobacco shop.

"D-Do you s-s-see what I see?" I pointed unsteadily.

In the window of the shop, or at least such portion as was clear of the hoarfrost, was a single copy of *The Japan Advertiser,* an English newspaper published by a Jew in Tokyo. And in screaming headlines across the splash of eight columns—

HINDENBURG ACCEPTS ALLIED TERMS

World War Officially Ended at Eleven O'clock this Morning

We stampeded inside to acquire that paper. But three-quarters of a million dollars would not buy it. We were, however, permitted to read it.

"Today's the twenty-fifth!" cried George. "Boys, this war's been over, two weeks!"

The World War ended! Somehow we crossed to the Grand Cafe. We ordered a meal costing nineteen dollars. Each!

To think that men had been slaughtered in Europe, night and day without

let-up, ever since that day in the Greenfield, Mass., station when I had started up to Bennington to take that job with Frank Howe!

CHAPTER FIVE

THE WORLD war ended! Four solid years of it!

"Well," said Olson, "Ay tank Ay get stewed."

Whereupon he got stewed as I have never seen man stewed. And pray, why not? For nearly two months he had been fleeing, traveling, dodging one death after another—from his getaway in Moscow to this night in Harbin. On the first leg of his journey, he told me, he had been locked all night in a tepluska jammed with so many human beings that one-third had been cast out as corpses next morning. "One time Ay bane ride forty-eight hour with dead woman hanging against me so hard that her chin dig in and make bruise on my chest. People bane sit on hot cylinder boxes of engine to get away. All of it over now. Yah, Ay tank Ay get stewed."

It consumed three-quarters of an hour for Smith and me to return him to our box car after that fifty-seven-dollar repast. For Olson was *pickled! En route* he wanted to stop and murder every Hebraic-appearing person whom we encountered. Storing him away at last in his bunk, we worked to get his shoes off. During this service to our friend, he suddenly discerned a procession of red, white and blue turkeys with straw hats on. This was later followed by a herd of giraffes eating ice cream cones. He told us about these curiosities. Then an overpowering desire possessed him to kick me in the face.

Why I required to be kicked in the face, he failed to clear up. We had been the best of companions *en route*. With several varieties of mixed drinks inside of him, however, and his nerves snapping like taut piano wires now that the frightful nightmare was ended, the crowning achievement of his Siberian sojourn was to kick me in the face. He *begged* to be allowed to kick me in the face. He even fought valiantly to kick me in the face. When the tepluska's stove and most of the bedding was a wreck in consequence, he collapsed and wept bitterly because, after our four-week companionship, our common dangers vanquished, our undying friendship cemented by privation, I would not be considerate enough to let him kick me in the face.

I finally compromised by telling him that perhaps with morning, when I

had nicely washed and shaved my face, and he had plenty of daylight by which to kick it unerringly and amply, then we would both of us consider the kicking of my face. Whereupon he insisted on kissing me, telling me that he had known from the first that I was a regular fellow, and fell heavily asleep. While he was asleep, I tidied the car. I discovered to my perturbation that a jar of strawberry jam which he had filched from the cafe and hurled at me, had lost its tin cover and emptied its contents into one of his shoes.

I hoped Olson had another pair of shoes, but doubted it. I held the shoe upside down and let the sticky stuff drain out of it. However was he to get his foot into that shoe with the coming of daylight? Of all our Siberian misadventures, this was the worst. He could not go hopping about Manchuria on one foot. He might put the shoe on, regardless of the jam, but in such event there was every possibility that he would never get it off. To make matters worse, Olson returned to the land of sobriety with a head that was due to explode at any moment and scatter his brains all over the Orient. Never was a world so dour as that Manchurian world to which our Nordic friend awoke. In due time, of course, he called for his shoes and I had to show him what had happened. For several minutes I saw he meant to actualize his prior night's obsession and kick me in the face. "You bane do this on purpose!" he glowered brackishly.

Whereupon I entered into argument with this strange person. What possible satisfaction would it give me to fill a pal's shoe with strawberry jam? "Jam's too valuable out here," I snapped, "to waste it on shoes. Before I'd turn it into anybody's shoes, even yours, I'd eat it!"

He admitted that this made sense. Still, it was the only pair of shoes he had. And the only way to make it fit for wearing again was to turn it inside out and wash it. Whereupon we had more argument as to whether or not a human's shoe had ever been turned inside out, and if so, how was it turned back again? Smith stopped the brilliant business by offering Olson one of the slippers in his bag, finding an isvochek and having Olson driven to a Russian department store where he got new shoes and other personal appointments. Then we went to the consulate.

To our gratification—for we were sick of traveling—we learned that the Consul-General was on his way up to Harbin from Peking. This would mean that after seeing him I could branch off toward Vladivostok and get out to Tokyo. I had not heard from Marion in the weeks of my travels and was anxious to learn if she had received news from home.

It was a sumptuous wagon litz that pulled into the Harbin railroad yards

the following morning. It was roomier, more exquisitely appointed than any private Pullman back in America. It had baths, pantries, individual bedrooms where feather beds invited. Most of its upholsteries were wine-red velvet. Mirrors were everywhere. At last I got a look at my face and began to understand why Olson wished to kick it—weeks of cold and privation had drawn the flesh across the cheekbones, out of which thrust my eyes in oversize bulges. Since leaving Japan I had not met a barber who could shear my crop of hair. Smith had often jibed me, "I say, old chappie, at just what point in your wanderings did you lose your violin?" Now on the Consul's car I found barber, bath, and feathers! A bath! For twenty-six days I had not had my clothes off. I soaked my aching bones in soapsuds, borrowed pajamas in lieu of those I had given to Gleason, and crawled into a bed that was softer than eiderdown.

Whereupon I relaxed. Knowing that the Consul would remain there a fortnight, I passed into a coma that lasted twenty hours.

I had traveled over seven thousand versts in Siberia. I had met almost everyone worth meeting. I had explored Siberia in summer, fall, and winter. Withal I had made the tortuous sojourn without suffering a scratch, without even annexing one specimen of vermin. It was hard to accredit. I arose at last and dressed in clean linen. For the first time since leaving Yokohama, my uniform was pressed and the Chinese lackey had polished shoes and puttees. This was harder to accredit. I found that I had lost twenty pounds since that day, seemingly years and years bygone, when I had attended the conference in the greystone mansion where despite imminent Bolshevism little Ivan had learned the fiddle. More significant still, I had new silver at my temples and more sprinkled through my hair.

¶ Blissful days of apathy followed. The war was ended. Over Harbin and adjacent Manchuria I idled, exploring the country, watching a score of nationalities reacting to a war that had suddenly gone bust. I watched Mongols and Khirgese working with their camels. I explored Chinese Harbin and bought presents for the homefolk.

During this interval I tried to make contact with those men who had sent me to Bolshevia. I sent cables to Marion over at the Igleharts. No word came from either. So back to the tepluska I went with my companions and the morning came when the Consul himself came down to say good-bye. As we reached down to shake his hand in farewell, he called one cryptic utterance—

"You'll never know, Pelley, what you've done for your country! Good-bye, and good-luck!"

What had he meant? What had been in those long official envelopes, sealed with red wax? After all, did it matter?

Ten more days of freight car transportation brought me once more to Vladivostok. In a sort of stupefaction I beheld the city now. Street cars were running, electric lights were brilliant. The length of Maltaskya was as smooth as Fifth Avenue back in New York. I sought out the new and enlarged headquarters of the "Y," staffed now with utter strangers with one idea: to close up and get home. The war was over, wasn't it? Why need anybody stay? I finally located the missionary who had brought me up the blankets. I said—

"What about those plans for Americanizing Russia?"

"Search me," he shrugged.

"Where are the big shots who sent me on this Odyssey?"

"So-and-so's dead. The typhus got him. The rest? Gone back to New York, or they went in-country just after you did, and have never been heard from."

"What about all the information and pictures I've brought out? What about Y's all the way to Moscow?"

"Nuts! It's a bust. You see, now the war's over, everyone's had plenty. Furthermore, this country's going Bolshevik and all hell can't stop it. That means they'll close every church and kick out every Christian. Believe me, Gentiles are out o' luck in this God-forsaken nation. It's the new land o' Canaan. Watch the Israelites wreck it. The sooner *we* get out, the better for all of us."

"Then I've had my trip for nothing!"

"You've had the experience. What are you beefing about?"

"I'll say I've had experience."

"Then you're all to the mustard. Why do any worrying? The Japs are going to make an issue out of some of this country, if I don't miss my guess. Kolchak's been sold out by the French and I hear he's been killed. The Czechs are going home and so are the Yanks. Lord, we're all going home. It's a question how long the Y can stay open."

"Then," I said aimlessly, "*I* might as well go home."

"You bet. Skedaddle! To put that Y-scheme over, granted the Jews would let us do it, would take several million dollars. And the suckers back home aren't interested in more Drives. The whole show's gone flooie and they want to forget it."

"Say," I asked finally, pausing at the door, "whenever did they find time or materials to pave Vladivostok?"

"Pave it? Applesauce. They simply shoveled the dirt out. Under the depth of refuse and dead hogs, they discovered the city was beautifully paved already! . . . "

That night I was lucky. I got me a berth on the *Penza* sailing at six o'clock for Tsuruga.

JAPAN again!

Marion met me at the station. Nothing important had transpired in my absence. She had got herself a job—put in the time teaching English to a class of Japanese boys on the Compound. No, she hadn't heard from home, not a single word.

Arrived at the Compound, put to bed in a cool quiet room at the Iglehart's, the war all a nightmare, *I suddenly cracked.*

My nerves went to pieces, with the need for tension gone. I was sick for a week. They called it the flu. I knew it was plain, old-fashioned reaction. ☙ ☙

The first evening that I came downstairs after my convalescence, we were sitting around the missionary's dining table, discussing the boats that we might take to Shanghai. We had been away six months, with six months still to go. Suddenly the bell rang. The Japanese chit-boy was bringing the mail. ☙ ☙

Word from home at last—at least for the Igleharts. For six months the censorship had obstructed correspondence. The Japanese had an effective way of censoring mail, especially English-written correspondence, which they could not make out. They simply burned it and that was the end of it. Now with the war suspended, mail could be resumed. Yes there was one newspaper for us. Marion tore it open.

At the shock which paled her face, I went around the table.

The paper had come from Greenfield, Massachusetts, five weeks before. From the center of the front page, Ernest's face looked out at us.

Marion whispered woodenly, "M-My brother is . . . d-dead!"

We read the tragic story. Shortly after our departure, Ernest had enlisted and gone to Camp Devens. He had been among the first to die of the flu. Already he was five weeks cold in his grave. How could we believe it? The week before we had left St. Johnsbury we had enjoyed a farewell outing together, fishing on Lake Willoughby. I picked up the wrapper, discarded on the table.

"It's in Mother Holbrook's handwriting, and yet it's from Greenfield! Then she and Adelaide have gone back to New England!"

Marion scarcely wept. She was not the weeping kind. With astounding self-composure she merely whispered . . . poignantly. . . .

"I wish we could g-go home!"

Yes, I wished it, too. I was sick of the sights and the smells of Asia. I longed with a bittersweet longing to step up to a stranger on the street and address him in a tongue that he readily understood. I longed to get into a white-tiled American bathroom and know the liquid music of a sanitary closet flush. More than all else, I revolted at continuing this so-called survey of foreign missions when I honestly felt that I could not indorse them. I had no assurance that China or India would be any different. Missionaries were missionaries. The Missionary Blunder was the missionary blunder. I said, "We *can* go home! I'll give Taylor back his money —the part we haven't spent."

My wife looked across at me with more tremor on her lips. "Let's g-go," she begged softly.

I was in that state of mind where I wanted to get home. My portfolios were crammed with data, I had gathered enough material to keep me busy two years, writing. But more than all else, deep down in my heart, I had the suspicion that in the years to come I was not to be concerned with China or India. Japan and Russia, Manchuria, Manchukuo, somehow or other these I should be familiar with—to deal in coming problems of racial internationalism. Dr. Taylor, Bishop Fisher, Secretary Phelps, had been but cosmic instruments to transfer me out into this exotic Eastern world and give me an education for quite other purposes than promoting religious missions. At length our host came back from the telephone.

¶ "The *Siberia Maru* sails for San Francisco next Monday at four. The missionary shipping agent says he can book you passage if you care to take an inside stateroom."

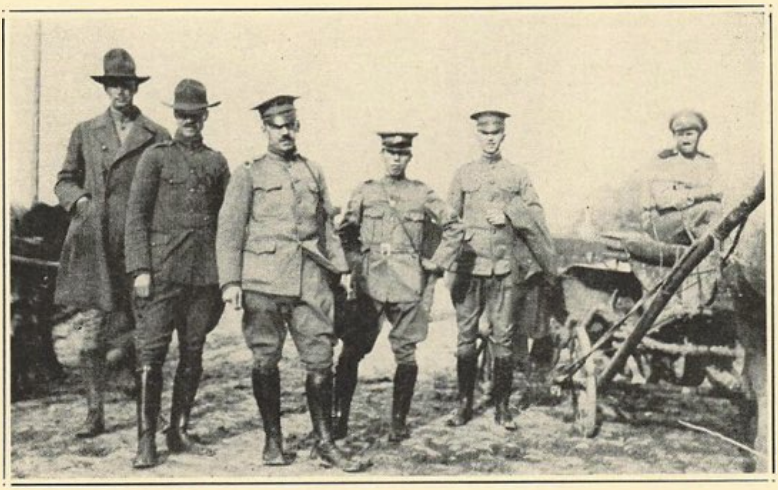
"I'd take the boiler-room," I growled, "the way I feel this moment."

The farewell parties which the Tokyo American colony gave us that week were pleasant and gracious, but I wanted to be gone. Mrs. Carl Ackermann, wife of the *New York Times* correspondent, gave us a dinner at the Imperial. George Smith's wife, who had been in Japan, gave another at the Grand. Thereat, the last I saw of George Smith was a wave of his hat at three o'clock of that Monday that followed when, after a two-minute blast of the *Siberia Maru's* whistle, I looked down on the crowd as we floated from the dock.

"Three cheers for the Americanski Limited!" I heard Smith's voice reach me—my last poignant reminder of the twenty-six day journey we had taken

together in that Arctic freight car. I turned to Marion and said—
"When it comes to a buddy who sticks with you through hell, give me a bloomin' Englishman, every time!"
We were headed homeward. . . .

OUT past the sampans with the leg-o'-mutton sails, out past the long run of chalk-white beach and the last lighthouses, the *Siberia* made her way. She dropped her pilot and the last letters. Then she took a deep sigh for the grizzled Pacific and hastened into its vasty embrace.
We had already dispatched a cable to Mother Holbrook offering our condolences and announcing our return. But before we would see the shorelines of God's beautiful America, we must live for three weeks with our new ship acquaintances. Under the circumstances, the delay was execrable.
¶ Poor Marion! There was no flitting about the ship's decks now. She was the one who passed hours in a steamer chair, sending sad thoughts on the furls of the stack smoke. I did not want to work on my data. The Orient, Japan, Bolshevia, were too horridly close. And yet I needed something to occupy my mind.
The second afternoon, in our stateroom, I was rummaging through my luggage, when from the folds of my uniform there fell a tattered magazine. It was that *American Magazine* I had salvaged from George Smith, that issue containing my story *Their Mother.*
One noontime in New York I had gone to lunch with John S. Phillips, fiction consultant for The Crowell Publishing Company. "When you get around to making that short story into a book-length novel," he had told me, "I believe you'll have a knock-out."
"I'm going to spend this sea voyage making *Their Mother* into a book-length story," I told Marion.
"Splendid," she responded.
When the lights of Telegraph Hill hove in sight, three weeks later, the manuscript was finished. Such was the genesis of my first book, *The Greater Glory.*



"I was to campaign with the Japanese
under war-time conditions—"

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I am in the top row, last man toward
the right

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CHAPTER SIX

BUT somehow, when I got into San Francisco, into a cross-country Pullman, in Massachusetts, and up to Greenfield, things were not quite the same. America was beautiful—in its cleanness, its orderliness. But I had seen what I had seen. Suppose Bolshevia ever stalked this land of freedom, sanitation and prosperity! The thought of it sickened me. What protection of Knowledge, to keep them out of it, did my fellowmen have? Bolshevia was to them an academic Something that had happened to a land of quasi-barbarians up in the vicinity of the Arctic Circle—and over on the earth's other side at that. The picture of that young Russian mother in the Irkutsk station, sobbing in the midnight for no one to see, persistently came back to me. Had God Himself chosen me for an instrument, sent me afar on the other side of the earth, to see that America was defended and protected? What else could I think?

Oh I know all about what your clever psychologists say concerning theophanies. First the curiosity, then the wonderment, then the brooding, then the flashing inspiration that perhaps the task that looms is one's own. Time would tell, . . . time would tell! . . .

Adelaide had grown somewhat and greeted us lustily. But the shadow of her heroic bereavement lay in Mother Holbrook's eyes.

"You'd better go up to your newspaper in Vermont," she told me evasively when our welcoming was done with. "From reports that've reached me, it's practically bankrupt."

"*Bankrupt!*" I echoed.

"I think it's still publishing. But my advice is, take a good lawyer along when you go up to see it."

I called my lawyer-friend "Bob" Healy in Bennington—the same Robert Healy later so prominent in Roosevelt's Securities Commission. He agreed to join me in St. Johnsbury the ensuing noon. At half-past four in the morning I stepped from the sleeper onto the familiar St. Johnsbury platform.

It was the same old town. Nothing had been changed but the posters on the billboards. It was difficult to accredit that it had been pursuing the even tenor of its way through all the weeks that I had been tramping Japan, exploring Bolshevia, idling about Harbin and sleeping on the consul-general's feathers. I climbed Central Avenue hill and approached

the office of my paper. A nightlamp was burning inside above the press. All through those hectic months abroad I had been carrying my office key as an amulet. I found the right key and unlocked the office door.

The familiar scent of warmly-heated printing ink assailed me. I closed the door and glanced about. I wanted to *weep!*

What an atrocious mess! Paper littered choked desks and cabinets. The furniture was battered and shoved about carelessly. The neat and shining office which I had quitted to walk out to my Hudson and ride my women westward, was barked and bedaubed, cluttered and nondescript. I took down a bound file of copies and bore them to the light. I turned over issue after issue of back numbers to discover what had been printed for a paper in my absence.

The sprightly *Evening Caledonian* had degenerated into a tawdry four-page sheet, mostly filled with boiler plate. There were two or three columns of advertisements set in blacksmith composition, lost amid cooking recipes, bedtime stories, pointless jokes, and how to make furniture out of old barrels and cretonne. The editorial page had vanished. The headlines were terrible. ☙ ☙

Arthur Stone, one of the men to whom I had sold a half-interest before my departure, unlocked the street-door—or tried to do so—as I was thumbing through the ledgers from the safe. Discovering it unfastened, he came in to confront me. "Oh, . .. you're back!" he cried, astounded.

"Yes, I'm back," I answered bitterly.

"Thought you'd planned to stay away a year?"

"I had the hunch to come back. How are things going?"

"We'll talk about that later."

Arthur was a professorial little man in a grey Vandyke. His family had formerly owned the paper as a Weekly. Now to my amazement he picked up the ledgers, shoved them in the safe and spun the combination.

I said, "What's the matter with you?"

"I think, before you touch anything here, you'd best to have a session with my attorney, Squire Dennett."

"I still say, what's the matter with you?"

"We've got to get the title to this paper straightened out. You left me here with too many bills to pay, too many notes to meet. Then Gilpin walked out on me and went home to Barton. My wife and I have carried on till you came back."

"Oh, your wife!" The lady in question was not unknown to me. "How much do you owe?"

"Plenty," said Stone dryly.
"So—you couldn't carry on?"
"You can tell that to Dennett." He was frankly, openly hostile, had gummed up my property, and for some weird reason was holding me responsible. ❧ ❧
I departed the office and got a hotel room. Until Healy arrived, I kept out of sight. If Stone had involved the project in litigation—or meant to do so—I had no intention of being my own attorney with a fool for a client. ❧ ❧
It was well that I did so.
Healy was delayed until night, however. He got off the six o'clock train, came to the St. Johnsbury House, and we went in to supper. I said, "Well, Bob, it looks like they've lost the ten grand a year the paper was making when I left, and gone into debt another twenty besides."
"How could they do that on a little country daily?"
"Nothing eats up money faster," I told Healy, "than any sort of paper—when it starts into the 'red'."
A bellhop came over and whispered at my shoulder. "Sheriff Garfield wants to see you, out in the lobby."
"You stay here, Bill," my lawyer directed. "I'm not having him serve you with papers till I find out what's doing."
It was nearly an hour before Healy rejoined me—in my room.
"You did a brainy thing," he laughed, "having me come here with you. I've just talked them out of locking you in jail."
"JAIL!" I cried, aghast.
"Yeah. Searles, the lawyer for one of the creditors, has sworn out a warrant for your arrest. He figured that the minute you saw how things were, you'd turn right around and get out of the State."
"What does he think I am?"
"Well, that's his way.
"But I've only just got here. Why should I run?"
"He thinks you'd make yourself an absconding debtor, something of the sort." ❧ ❧
"But I haven't absconded anywhere. And neither shall I do so. I mean to stay right here and pull this paper from its hole."
"You'll work miracles if you do. It owes enough bills to paper a room. And I've also learned from Dennett that the only way Stone will relinquish so that you can do anything to fix it, is to pay him back what he gave you in June."

"Well of all the rotten breaks!"

"Stone's dropped a lot of jack. He didn't have the sprawl to make the paper pay."

It was an amazing proposition to which I now listened.

The paper had begun to lose prestige within a fortnight of my absence. One by one its features had been dropped, its make-up grown sloppy, and its news reports perfunctory. Advertisers had sensed the loss of public interest. The night that so important a personage as Theodore Roosevelt died, *The Caledonian* had carried the story under a single-line heading—not much different from heading up an item about somebody's leaving a pair of rubbers in the library.

Such "journalism" was insufferable. And the blanket alibi for all this slipshod work had been, "Wait till Pelley gets back! . . . Pelley'll fix everything! . . . Pelley'll pay the bills!" Now Pelley was back. Six months ahead of time. But both Stone and Gilpin were part owners and they would not surrender until I redeemed their jeopardized investments.

Giving them their money might have been easy, even with my finances depleted after the money spent to take Marion to Japan, but now a battery of local creditors of every kind and description, bore down on me and wanted their money at once. In addition, it would require considerable capital to renovate the plant and carry paper bills and wages till superhuman management had turned the financial wheels over and got current receipts flowing in profitably. Then too, I had a disrupted and shelterless family. ❧ ❧

I must make my peace with Stone and Gilpin, negotiate with disgruntled creditors, produce a metamorphosed newspaper, acquire a home for my family, see to it that our goods were transferred upstate into it. This all came at once. Yet the stress did not end there. The Methodist Board of Foreign Missions wanted reams and reams of stories dashed off at once about my experiences in the Orient—whopping big stories that would persuade the homefolks how well foreign missions were doing, how converting the heathen to Methodism, or Congregationalism, or Presbyterianism, was only a matter of decades at the most. And a half-dozen of my former magazine editors were reminding me that I had promised them certain fiction stories before my departure and never delivered them. One head, one pair of hands, and only eighteen hours in any one day, must encompass these labors.

It was excellent experience. I took stock of my assets and quickly perceived that whatever liquid moneys I then possessed must be conserved for im-

mediate working funds and domestic expenses. That meant that I must treat with Stone and Gilpin on a basis of notes. They did not like this, and started a shindy. Why should I not return them a fat ten thousand dollars—plus interest on those funds for the time I had been away—and save them utterly harmless?

I had my own ideas as to why I should not do so. But I felt an obligation to loyal creditors who had carried the paper awaiting my return. It was a hectic two weeks that Healy spent with me. I discovered that St. Johnsbury contained provincial persons who had acquired a certain hostility against me from the very nature of my success up to my leave-taking. The lawyer, Searles, was especially venomous. "We'll show that dam' Pelley that he's not half so smart as he'd like to think he is. The very idea, editing a paper by sashaying to foreign parts!" Nevertheless, a majority of the town was with me, and I knew it. I could afford to be generous with the brainstrapped element. Squire Dennett, a lean old Scotsman and a local Vermont "character," proved to be as friendly to me as he was to his client. I signed a series of notes to Stone and Gilpin to run for a period of years. I transferred our household goods to a comfortable old residence on the River Road to the south of town. With the first issue of *The Caledonian* after my resumed management, the town had a paper again, and knew it. "Life's Dreary Path" soon had St. Johnsbury chuckling again, night upon night. To regain my circulation I did another significant thing: I ran the manuscript of *The Greater Glory* serially. Whereupon I faced Dr. Taylor and the Methodist Centenary. One Sabbath afternoon I sat down at my typewriter and wrote a long and earnest letter to Dr. Taylor. For his perusal only, I told him the Truth. I ended by describing my financial predicament of the moment, yet offering to return the funds he had been instrumental in providing for the trip, as soon as the paper's most pressing creditors were satisfied. I shall never forget the answer that came back. I cherished it for years. More than ever it convinced me that some influence higher than the Methodist Church or the Rockefeller Foundation had had its finger in the business of transporting me out into war-torn Asia. . . .

"I understand your letter perfectly," this kindly Christian nobleman responded. "If what you have said is the way you honestly feel about foreign missions, I stand by my original proposal and there is no more to be said. As for the money involved, please understand that it does not have to be refunded. The essence of the Methodist Centenary Movement is bigger than that. It is primarily engaged in building Men—whether in

Asia or America makes no real difference. Personally I feel that in selecting you to go out on that survey, we were building for long years. You have come back equipped with a wealth of enlightenment, wisdom, and practical knowledge about conditions in the East. All of it cannot help but make you a better American, a more efficient Christian, for having received it. In the years to come we shall get our compensation indirectly, for you will make a contribution of worth to all society as the logical outcome of all that you saw, heard, and experienced. We are happy to have been the instruments for thus advancing your career. As for your letter, a man of real integrity could not have written me less. See to it that the same integrity keeps with you in all of your future sociological and literary accomplishments." ❧ ❧

I wiped tears from my eyes in laying that letter aside. Only a man who was Big could have written it. He had, by that bigness, put me under an obligation to his church and my country that surpassed by millions any sums he had advanced me. Furthermore, he had by the writing on a single sheet of white paper, compensated for all the little jackdaws and harpies of provincial men who were making it so difficult for me to meet my Vermont obligations. So long as there were still men of Dr. Earl S. Taylor's calibre in the world, what did the small fry matter?

A handful of years later this estimable gentleman's health had broken and he was forced to exile himself out in the Arizona climate. Whereupon, succeeding to devastating influence in that great Protestant church which my father had served, under whose wing I had been brought to manhood, and which had finally conceived so ennobling a thing as the Centenary Movement and permitted me a part in it, came individuals of the stripe of Harry F. Ward, preaching the tenets of atheistic Jewish Communism—contact with which pestilence was changing my whole life. Out of The Methodist Publishing House, out of 150 Fifth Avenue and the missionary machinery both at home and abroad which it represented, out of this great Christian church as a church, poured forth doctrines of subtle subversion, the emasculation of virile patriotism—in the name of Christian "peace," social disruption and adolescent sedition. Most of this radical propaganda, I was to learn later, was prepared by this Ward on his foreign trips, much of his time being spent in a retreat in the Ural Mountains of Bolshevist Russia. So bald and brash were many of Ward's preachments, so apostate and prostitutional of all that men like Dr. Earl S. Taylor had formerly stood for—not to mention my own father—that even conferences of Methodist bishops in various parts of America were to rise in revolt. A

Jew named Nathan Strauss was to present a "gift" of $75,000 to the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, and on money so received the program of general Protestant mischief was to go forward. But it was to be ten to fifteen years yet before the significance of such mischief was to come to me. I feel that today I am repaying Dr. Taylor for what he did for me in my younger years, by fighting his successors and their Jewish sponsors tooth and claw. Perhaps that is my true purpose in having gone out to the Orient—doing such truly effective missionary work right here at home.

THE SUMMER of 1919 now came on apace. With it came the minor panic that accompanied the war's commercial liquidation. This was a quandary which a man with my handicap might expect a real contest to surmount. Merchants curtailed their advertising from bitter necessity. St. Johnsbury's factories laid off their hands. The only way that I could keep up the financial program I had set for myself, and save the *Caledonian* in spite of everything, was to turn back to my fiction.

Evening after evening—following days that were crammed with effort to pay off Stone's losses, cover expenses, and meet my funded obligations as I was able—I drew forth my typewriter and sought to write short stories. Throughout that spring and summer I applied myself eighteen hours a day, took no recreation and did not want any, did mechanical work in the office to save wages, and fought with everything that was in me to meet the exactions of that minor depression. Now and then I sold a story. Usually the cheque was spent long before it was received. The newspaper's creditors got most of this money. When matters became inhumanly difficult—the lawyer Searles setting himself to see that they were kept as much that way as possible—I met with a true friend in need, another St. Johnsbury lawyer, one Samuel W. Richardson. A wreath here for Sam. He proved to be another Golden Soul who kept my faith in human nature wholesome. With unaccountable fervor he threw himself into the job of helping me make order out of *The Caledonian's* affairs. Again and again he stood between me and impatient creditors who would have foreclosed and sold the enterprise before I had it fully resuscitated. Whereupon Searles busied himself outside of his law office, canvassing other creditors, seeking to have them assign their accounts to him personally, that he might foreclose on me himself. On one occasion, a hardware merchant named Peck nearly kicked Searles from his store. One Goodrich, a plumber now gathered to his fathers, did sue me for payment

of a furnace which he had installed on trial in my house. The thing failed to work and I requested him to live up to his agreement and remove it. Searles handled this suit with relish and eclat. When he lost his case in the courts, Searles and Goodrich made it their business to buy the mortgage on my property, serving notice on me that unless I kept the faulty contraption and paid for it in full, I would suffer seeing our bedsteads in the street.

The world contains people such as these—as it also holds people like the Taylors and the Richardsons just to balance up.

That infamous suit of Goodrich's, however, gave some smaller creditors gooseflesh. It was nip and tuck for months to see if I could best the situation into which I had returned. Throughout this grim period, neverethless, I found time to get about Vermont and make public addresses on conditions in the Far East and on our relations as a nation with Japan and Bolshevia. My predicament was curious. If I had cared to give proper time and attention to my story work, I might have been back on my feet financially in a matter of months. But if I had given such time and attention to story work, there would have been very little time left in which to run *The Caledonian*. Day unto day, issue on issue, it required all my best efforts to keep it up to standard. One more slump, after the high jinks that I felt Bigelow and Stone had played with the property, and St. Johnsbury folk would have been ready to bury that paper without prayers or flowers. So long as I gave everything I had to that poor ailing daily, I could more than hold my own. But that meant chiseled hours and a tired brain for the production of high-priced fiction. One day in New York I took Karl Harriman, editor of *The Red Book,* into my confidence.

"Sell the danged thing, Bill," he advised me. "What do you want of a sickly country newspaper up near the Canadian line when you can write fiction that brings you the sums you can command?"

"It's a matter of pride, Karl. After all, I did go away to Asia and leave it in the hands of strangers."

"You went away on a sort of public duty. And while you were away, you got into the war. Two men who stayed at home made hash of your enterprise and now you're the goat. I don't see it at all. Can't you get somebody to run it for you?"

"Not at the price that the project can afford."

"See here, Bill," he suddenly exclaimed, "are you feeling all right?"

"What do you mean, feeling all right?"

"You're either overworked or you've got something gnawing at you inside. What's the matter with you, anyhow?"
"It's hard to explain, Karl," I remember telling him. "Life's suddenly a serious proposition with me. I saw a lot of things in the Orient . . . up in Bolshevia . . . that have sort of changed my viewpoint."
"You need a rest!"
"It's not exactly a rest that I need. For the first time in my life, Karl, I'm not sure of myself."
"Not sure of yourself? Just how?"
"Ever since I was a boy I've worked—plenty hard. But it's always been for myself. You know what I mean, in the hope of private gain. In the factory with dad I was going to make a lot of money. Then I got married and went into the newspaper business. I wanted to show my wife I could do it. Next I went in for writing fiction. I was working to make a name for myself."
"You have made a name for yourself!"
"I know it. And it doesn't mean a thing. Neither did the money I made in the factory."
"I don't think I get you."
"There's a deeper reason than any of us recognize, why I went out to Asia. God Almighty took me by the scruff of the neck and said to me, 'Look here, you! There's a lot of things in the world that you don't know yet. Up till now you've sort of played around. Well, playing around may be all right up to a certain point. Now it's time that you took stock of yourself and applied yourself to other pursuits than those which merely advance your selfish interests'."
"War got you, eh?"
"It wasn't exactly the war that got me. Put it rather that the war woke me up. It may jolt you, Karl, but I'm not altogether sure that writing fiction is my whole life work. I've been thirty years preparing for something. That's all it's been—just preparation."
"You'd be a fool to throw up your writing."
I shrugged my shoulders. What I wanted to tell him was too deep for words. I was not certain that I knew it myself. A yeast was working inside me. Sooner or later I would make a Big Change.
"I'm not going to throw up my writing—at least not just yet. But writing stories to entertain people is not a man's job."
"I still say you need a good rest. Sell your danged newspaper and go off somewhere all by yourself. Drift around a bit. See yourself in per-

spective. You know, men can have a change-of-life period exactly like women. Perhaps yours is coming early because you matured early. Don't let it get you."

I gave this counsel the attention it merited. Back home in Vermont a fortnight later I said to Marion, "I'm going to smash this stalemate."

"Now what?" she demanded. The conjugal worry was quick in her eye.

"I'm selling the paper."

"Selling it! Who's buying it?"

"A fellow named Smith—though he doesn't know it yet. He's driving up here from Boston with his wife and baby, Sunday."

"Has he got any money?"

"I don't care about that. If I don't get a rest—change into something I can do with enthusiasm—I'm going to crack up. Somebody else can have this treadmill. Anyhow, I've brought back the paper to the point where all the creditors are saved from loss."

"If you sell *The Caledonian*, then what'll you do? Start gallivanting around again, spending all you make?"

"Marion," I said, "I'm suddenly tired—clean down to my heels. All of a sudden I'm losing interest in life. I'm losing my enthusiasm, losing my incentive. I can't go on like this. Sometimes I feel as though I'd never recovered from that spell of flu that I had in Tokyo. I want to look forward to something, to build for the sake of building . . . no, that's not exactly it . . . I want to build toward something that's bigger than I am, something that's bigger than my private life and affairs—"

"Why not control your delicate feelings," the wife of my bosom suggested, and build *The Caledonian*?"

"Because I've built *The Caledonian* as big as it'll ever be. I can't get more readers for it than there are people in the territory. I can't get advertisements from stores that don't exist."

"You could hold down to a steady grind of continuous publication."

"But why should I do that?"

"Because it's the only way to make a success of what you've started."

"Then Success means, never stopping after you've started a thing. Is that it?"

"Just the minute you get things nicely settled and running smoothly, you must suddenly tear everything up and do something else."

"You don't catch the spirit of what I'm telling you, at all."

"No, perhaps I don't. What is this 'spirit' that I should catch?"

"That the only difference between a rut and a grave is, that the rut is longer. How'd you like to live in New York?"

"Another change!" My wife dropped her head wearily on her wrists among the dishes of the supper table.

"Marion, we just don't see life alike. We probably never shall."

I left the house for an evening walk. I had no desire to quarrel with Marion. But somehow, in the thirtieth year of my age I was harrowed as I had never been harrowed. Old forms and fancies were dropping away. . . .

The Smiths arrived, inspected town and newspaper project, decided that *The Evening Caledonian* was exactly the property for which they were searching, and agreed to buy it.

I closed my deal with Smith.

"What about the balance of the notes?" cried Arthur Stone, meeting me one day on the street.

I said, "I'll settle your blankety-blank notes when I get blankety-blank good and ready!" I affirm I used such language.

I went to New York, reported this change in my affairs to Harriman, wrote him several stories at exceedingly comfortable profit to myself. Then I did a strange thing, not to be explained until eight years after.

One noontime I packed my baggage at the New York hotel where I had been staying, went to the bank and transferred funds to Marion in Vermont, put more money in my own wallet, and sought the Pennsylvania Station. ☘ ☘

"How much does a ticket for San Francisco cost?" I asked the Pullman agent. ☘ ☘

"One hundred and forty-five dollars," he responded.

"Fix one up for me."

Where was I going? I scarcely knew—consciously. Vaguely I did not care. I seemed to be suffering from a variety of spiritual shell-shock.

I was really going down, down . . . toward the bottom of my current nine-year cycle. . . .

CHAPTER SEVEN

WANDERLUST was not exactly the sole motivation of this departure for San Francisco. In San Francisco was published *The Sunset Magazine,* for which I had done several articles after my return from the Orient. The Japanese problem was a burning issue on the Pacific Coast. I felt that if I made the trip to California and talked personally with Charles Field, the editor, I might produce a different kind of material for that publication—setting forth the situation with the Japanese in a way that might contribute to constructive statesmanship.

Also, this was part of the Pattern that was weaving: I had received several letters from a newspaper woman living in San Francisco, soliciting me to collaborate with her on a series of stories for which she had the material but not the plot technique nor the literary prestige to find *entree* to the national magazines. This sort of thing is of daily occurrence in any author's mail. But when this woman went further and sketched the exact nature of what she wanted to produce, I decided she had something that was worth my attention. Being an aviatrix herself, she wanted to see a series of yarns written on the more romantic side of aviation. Here was a rich mine of new material. Also it meant a practical education in flying for me—something new to be learned—and a chance to get a new grip on myself, to try to see myself in the perspective that Karl Harriman had suggested.

Of course, collaborating with a woman in my current unrest was a dangerous proposition—unless she had a harelip, crossed eyes, and walked on crutches. But again it seemed that an over-powered engine beneath the hood of my physical chassis was driving me forward. I could no more have avoided going to San Francisco at this unseemly period of my life than I could have avoided my trip to the Orient or up to Bolshevia. It so ensued, therefore, that arriving in San Francisco on a Sunday twilight and not being able to see Field until next morning, I called Lillian on the telephone. ☙ ☙

"Come up to my apartment," she presently invited. "I had a clairvoyant feeling you'd arrive tonight."

I found the place in a smart section of commercial San Francisco. When I stepped from the lift, she was waiting in the corridor.

"How do you do?" was her matter of fact greeting, offering me her hand

in a gracious nonchalance. Emphatically she did not have a harelip, crossed eyes, or walk on crutches.

I found myself the Sunday evening guest of a strong-bodied, up-standing blond girl of some thirty summers—why is it so customary to reckon women's ages by summers and not springs, autumns, or winters?—with a characterful face, a strangely penetrating eye, a disconcerting poise, and the type of mind that clicked like a machine. A trace of the exotic lingered in her personality from her Russian extraction. Here was a woman of the world, astute, exquisitely bred, prematurely ripened by calorific experience, yet by no means "designing" in the accepted romantic sense. She conducted me into a small but modish apartment and a moment later shut the door on the world. I had put on my dinner-suit to call on her, and her first remark toned the friendship which ensued:

"Why'd you consider it necessary to wear those things? We don't need to start off on a Tuxedo basis, I hope. Sit down and relax. You seem all fussed up."

I sat down with an End-of-the-Trail feeling that befuddled me worse. It was more than the termination of a three-thousand-mile train journey; I had traveled that three thousand miles to meet this woman for a purpose. Exactly what purpose, I could not have said. I had no prescient sense of developing any romance with her. She sat herself carelessly in an opposite chair. She was wearing an artist's smock over a housedress and her luxuriant blond hair was knotted loosely on her neck.

"Now tell me," she asked coolly, when conventional remarks about my trip had been dismissed, "what's the matter with you?"

It was Karl Harriman's question, and I jolted. "What makes you think there's anything the matter with me?"

"Because you can't put pen to paper without shrieking it hysterically."

¶ "What do I shriek?"

"Well, not to beat about the bush, or use a theatric metaphor, that you're an eagle in a well, wrecking beautiful wings struggling to get out. What's got you in a well?"

What answer could I make without sounding mawkish? This woman was a stranger to me, and yet, not a stranger. I said, "The war did something to me . . . unleashed something in me . . . I feel that I've got some sort of important job to do, but I can't identify it, much less get into it."

"But don't you see? . . . you and I can't get anywhere, in a writing way or any other way, till you escape from your well and get up into Golden Moments where you can Fly. Something's got you all snarled up. I've

sensed it in your writings, I've sensed it in your letters. How old are you?"

¶ "Thirty years old. What difference does it make?"

"You're not old enough to have gotten sidetracked."

I bantered, "Don't you want to know how many rabbits I had when a boy or what particular dish my father liked to have cooked for him when he had pains in his back?"

"I'm trying to get a premise for a proper working arrangement between us. Why should you be facetious over simple fundamentals?"

"Why can't we go ahead and discuss the work?"

"Because you're in no fit shape to do any work. Not real work. Not work of lasting value. I know that I want to do Happy Material, not stuff that sobs a heartcry all over the place. Tell me about your wife."

There was a candor, a platonic honesty, about this person, that disarmed her inquisitiveness. And yet I demurred. I was by no means the husband misunderstood at home. Things went deeper than that.

"Oh come, come!" cried Lillian. "Marriage is a fact of life, like taxes and poor cooking. Ten thousand people a week get bogged down in the smothering sort of matrimony and try to smear their plights over with silences that are only rationalizations. And rationalizations like that are only inhibitions. There was a time in my life when I mistakenly thought it was the thing to do myself. I've been married twice, and I don't expect to flirt with you. On the whole, I'm too busy."

"I thought writing was to be my life work," I said. "All of a sudden I'm not so sure. Somehow or other it's not *vital* enough. It's continually talking about things instead of doing them."

An hour had not passed before I recognized that I had become the guest of an exceedingly clever woman. But it is also true that the really clever woman is also a conscientious woman. All others are merely smart. It was as inevitable that I should meet up with a woman of Lillian's type at this stage of my life as that I should have essayed any of my exploits to the moment. Pray God that when my own boy reaches thirty, if life has similarly involved him, he may meet a Lillian. She proved to be strong medicine, but I needed strong medicine. Somehow I did not want to fight her. I felt no urge to contradict her. I was tired, tired. It was a strange sensation for me. Ever since boyhood I had kept myself too busy to think of being tired.

"Half the unhappy people in the world," Lillian said to me that first night, "are running about, stewing in the juice of their own troubles, and boiling them over to drench or scald others, because they've got what I call 'messy

minds.' Having made themselves into snarls of inhibitions, based mostly on prudery or a false sense of honor, they blab and they blatt and they bleat. They want people to track around with them in their sticky self-pity when they really should be facing the fundamentals of their predicaments and altering them. I know you're not the kind of a man who expects some other person to clean up his mess—if he's in a mess. But you're the type who may be so fearful of implying something that'll compromise another—especially a woman or a wife—that you'll willingly compromise yourself and thus wreck the both of you."

"All right," I agreed. "But where does it get us?"

"I'm not so sure that the trouble with you is lack of action, wanting to do things instead of writing about them. You're groping for something because what you've got doesn't satisfy you. Life has gone stale on you because, in a manner of speaking, it holds no more explorations. Or rather, your arena for exploring is circumscribed. And you're trying to make the most of insufferable mediocrity. You flatter yourself it's quite the proper thing to put all thoughts of readjustment out of your head. Your real reason for refusing to face facts is because you're *afraid*."

"Afraid of what?" I demanded.

"New England conventions for one thing. Your own inherent chivalry for another and the antagonist it might become if you suddenly decided to meet Life head-on and let it bear you where it will. Take your marital predicament, for instance. You unconsciously bragged to me a few moments ago about what a clever woman your wife was, citing her activity in the Woman Suffrage movement as some sort of proof. In the first place, whenever a man starts bragging to me about how clever his wife is, I recognize at once that she's probably as stupid as a duck. It's a sort of apology for her, even to himself. In the second place, when any woman goes in for Suffrage, I know it's a subconscious castigation of men, and usually one man in particular. No woman who truly loves her man, goes in for Suffrage. Don't talk to me about these suffragists. I'm a newspaper person and a woman myself. I've sized it up that Suffrage is a polite and respectable way to express individual hostility against individual men and get a satisfaction vicariously that some women seize upon by poison phials and bullets. You can sit here and talk to me about how happy your marriage is, from now until San Francisco Bay becomes a mud-slough, but you'll be wasting your time. *That's* probably what's the matter with you, and you alibi it, or whitewash it, or soft-pedal it by declaring you're going stale or want action instead of narrative. As Elbert Hubbard remarked once, 'Even the proud-

est of women are willing to accept orders when the time is ripe, and I'm fully convinced that to be domineered over by the right man is a thing that all good women warmly desire.' Hubbard had it right, although I've put it a bit more subtly."

It was a strange conversation to have break upon me during my first evening in San Francisco. I drew Lillian on, to listen to her fluency and clean-cut mentality.

"When a woman truly loves a man," she declared, "and surfeits him with it, it's such a natural, spontaneous thing that neither one of them probably stops to give it a thought the calendar around. They just accept it, and live it, and that's all there is to it. There's never any need to make intellectual equations of matrimony. It's being, not logicizing. Anyhow, I'm just a poisonous person who's liable to disrupt your happy home, because after you've had the chance to draw off and think over what I've been minded to express this evening, you'll probably come pussyfooting back and tell me how much you love *me*. And it won't be love at all. It'll be hunger to have me administer some more Food of Truth to you, because you lack the stamina to feed it to yourself. You don't need a wife just now. You don't need a writing partner. You don't require any partner at all. You need a cook—a cook and a nurse. You're mentally sick through a type of emotional malnutrition."

"You're telling a lot of this to the wrong person," I laughed.

Lillian took a nervous turn up and down the room. For the first time I noted that her own pretty shoulders looked tired, tired. "Oh what's the matter with the women today?" she cried. "If they've got brains enough to contrive a matrimonial relationship, why haven't they got brains enough —and self-respect enough—to know that it means something more than ordering supplies from the grocer's?"

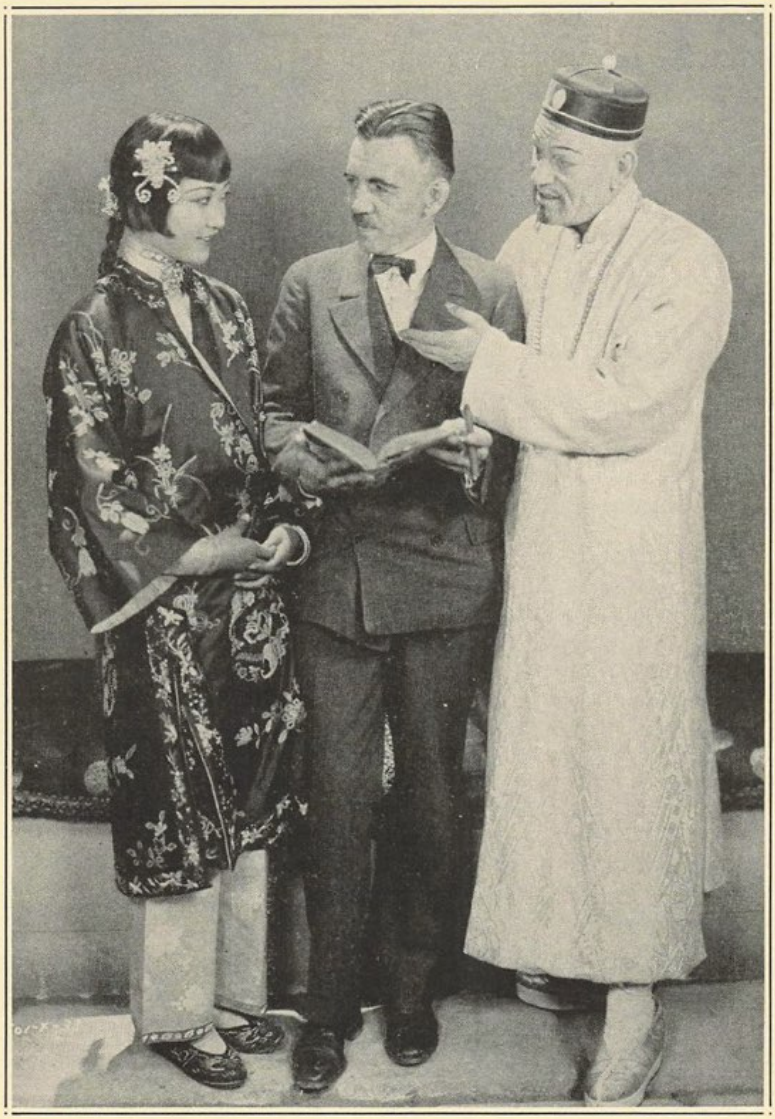
"After all," I said, "I'm no paragon of virtue. I haven't got the steadiest temperament in the world, myself."

"And why shouldn't you have an unsteady temperament? You're a writer, aren't you? . . . a creative artist? Percheron horses are *steady,* but when men want a race horse to reach a high goal, they select an Arab. Women marry Arabs in men and then berate them for not being Percherons."

I said, not very politely, "First I'm a bird, now I'm a horse!"

"Oh stop being an adolescent little boy, putting up his defenses, whistling in the dark, exhibiting how unafraid of the world he is, by making impertinent remarks."

It was nearly midnight when she paused before me thoughtfully.



I was with Anna May Wong and Lon Chaney
in the filming of *Mr. Wu*

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"What I'm debating," she said, "is whether, if I roll up my sleeves and try to help you find yourself, get on a better basis with life, you'll be worth the while and the results in the end halfway repay me. I'm announcing at the start, I'm cold-blooded about it. I'm not looking for a husband. I've got some things I want to see written, and I need a reasonably brainy man to help me write them—and short-cut to publication markets when they're finished. God knows that I don't want to get mixed up in this sort of thing *again,* but . . . I'm sensing that for some reason or other you've been *sent* to me, and that sort of . . . commission . . . is one I can't sidestep." ❧ ❧

Such a sequence was astounding. Utter sincerity rang in her voice. She was like a very wise older sister from whom I had been parted throughout the years of my manhood. But the sensations that played over me in my hotel that night—and most of next day—chagrin, anger, outrage, spiritual famine, uncertainty about the future of my career and where it might lead me to break the stalemate into which I was bogging, fused into something that was very like a challenge. I had suddenly been projected into this propinquity, which I had by no means solicited or anticipated. I'd be hanged if I would run.

So I sat on and on in her apartment that week, and that month, and let her drub me. Her massage was savage. Yet I discovered that I liked it. I was by no means ready to admit that all which she assumed about my marriage was correct. A sense of fair play would not permit me to submit to the blind castigation of the woman I had wedded. But in the personal matters having to do with my own deficiencies, I knew in my heart that I needed what she offered.

Selfishness? Perhaps so. Few men who have truly achieved anything in life can honestly look back and say that their careers have been without their Lillians. I entered into no intimacies with this girl, in the accepted sense. I never did other than take what she voluntarily offered for the hectic interlude, in masculine thoughtlessness. When the sequence closed between us, it closed. And while it lasted, I seized, absorbed, and profited . . . by her high-voltage altruism. It was that and little more.

She was one of those rare women who give in direct ratio to the need, whose roles are those of coming into the lives of men from a tangent, playing a horridly vital part, and suddenly dropping out as dramatically as they have entered. Not that it left her without a grisly void. But it was one of those strange karmic relationships that were not to end in stalemates of fresh matrimony. The least I can do for her is to publicly

acknowledge my debt thus contracted, although I can never write her true name. Although we parted in some enmity because of the nature of the circumstances, I believe that she too had the final goodness to sense that both of us were "guided," that what happened while in company was all a part of a more stupendous plan whose real import and pattern would not be made discernible while mortal coil encompassed us. In writing thus, I refuse to believe that I am wholly rationalizing. What is to be, WILL be . . . in any case, in any relationship. I had quite another woman waiting for me, further up the years. Lillian doubtless had other men. Strangely enough, however, with certain reservations I acceded to her proposals. ❧ ❧

SHE opened a new intellectual and social world to me, a world where men and women made a fine art of Living, where manners were not something to be put on like a garment when company knocked, where Woman was Man's team-mate, pulling adroitly and understandingly in double harness, and giving man by her complementing skill and intelligent compassion a catalytic that blended and fused all the elements of his talents into the compound of his triumph.

I began to realize for the first time in that contact, what a young barbarian I had been in many respects to the moment, what interclusions had occurred to me for never having been made aware of provincial deficiencies in the comities, what urbanities of life—energizing uncontrolled in my affairs up till then—called for basic readjustment.

Shock after shock Lillian administered to me, causing me to discern that convictions, like manners, can often be no more than infantile fixations, provincial reflexes, rampant idiosyncrasies permitted to run to weed. And I affirm that I liked it. I liked it, not from any masochistic delight in ordeal but because I discovered that I had hidden reservoirs of strength within myself that such measures tapped and wrought a stamina to endure. It became a sort of grim contest to see how much of this tonic-instruction I could absorb while it was available for me to take. And the girl's forked wisdom was often more than a tonic. It was a galvanic purgative when it brought trenchant, unfettered expression to lambent desirings in the artistic Eternal Verities.

"Failure?" she would say to me, when I had occasion to refer to those earlier episodes of mine in Chicopee, Wilmington, St. Johnsbury. "Nothing's failure so long as you can analyze it and see clearly the factors

producing the result. You had an ambition to push onward, to get close to the Big Drums of Life, to beat one yourself with a complicated resonance. You traveled each time to a sort of blank wall. It never occurred to you that perhaps the Wall reared suddenly because you must be stopped, that Cosmos was commanding you to take a new veer. When the Wall was too high for you to climb over, you termed it Failure because the beating of your naked skull against the granite did not knock the Wall down. You never paused to think that the world and Life being a sphere—or at least the Cosmic Circle—to travel in one direction long enough brings you back exactly to your starting-point. Then all must be retraveled. For the life of me, I can't see why all of your failures weren't essentially successes." ☙ ☙

"How do you figure it?" I would ask her, disquieted.

"Because, by your own admission, you wrung dry from each venture all that it held to give you as a truly receptive entity. You plunged into each with the audacity of courage. You did the best you knew how at every turning-point. When each venture had no more to give you in new experiencing, you loosened your grip. You might not have done it consciously, all the same you did it—exactly as you should have done. Failure would have come had you persisted in monotony, grown stereotyped in your expressions, allowed the mechanisms which you had invented and set going, to whirr away, hour after hour, year after year, performing by cogwheels that which the very essence of mortality commands shall be done by continuing ingenuity. Don't you see, inventing the mechanism is the thing that counts, not watching it run?"

No woman had ever bothered to talk so to me before, and my callowness considered it.

Another time we had an argument about Chivalry—what it was.

"I'll tell you what it is," said Lillian, "it's aiding a woman as you can to be the biggest sort of woman that she can be, strictly within the limits of her womanhood. Coddling a woman's weaknesses, defending feminine indolence or lassitude, championing an intelligence that has all the brilliance and flexibility of cement, glossing over petulancies, that's never Chivalry. You're but making such a woman flabby. Besides, you're injuring yourself far worse."

"How, injuring myself?"

"Because by excusing or glossing over such deficiencies, you're losing your own sense of values, you're blunting the edge of Fine Reasoning, you're

getting sloppy in your discriminations and correct self-appraisals. But to get back to the subject of your being a 'failure' as a businessman. Just what's a successful businessman? Have you ever stopped to examine? . . . A successful businessman is one who's so far forgotten himself, in the elements of Spirit, that his soul has grown a paunch not unlike his body. He has, by the very nature of his success, become the slave of his own convictions. He views the future, the present, and the past, strictly in terms of polite rapacities. He's an eagle without a tail, all beak and no wings. He's usually a person who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing. Presently as his 'success' increases, he walks less on his toes and more on his heels. The elements of Trade are the elements of grossness. He must fight to keep what he's riven from the hard rock of realities; but it's no longer a venturesome, chivalrous fight. It's a sort of slaughter where his opponents have dud ammunition, where he knows in advance how the battle is planned, and takes excellent delight in performing mutilations on the resultant commercial corpses. Have you even been on a battlefield?"

"I've been on many battlefields," I answered her hoarsely.

"I mean a martial battlefield. Did you ever have a desire to loot the dead bodies of clothing or money?"

"Don't be absurd."

"But if you were a Good Businessman you'd so shudder to see all those good leather boots and fabrics buried with human debris, that stripping those corpses would be an 'economic necessity.' The essence of business is looting the other fellow before he loots you. Looting's raised to a science, a fine art. It's smeared all over with wonderful names—Human Service, Social Evolution, commercial exploration. That's all so much camouflage. The successful businessman is the one who at all times and under all conditions can annex everything in sight that isn't nailed down, and carry such voracities as the essence of his character. Do you want to do that?"

¶ "Certainly not. And never did. All the same I've had the urge—"

¶ " . . . You've had the urge to direct certain groups or masses of people along lines of constructive effort. It's gotten you into business ventures because primarily they're the only vehicles or type of expression available to you to date, enabling you to exercise that blind cosmic drive toward something that's your destiny. So long as you serve that Inner Drive, you're elated with your projects. The moment they become the amassing of gross worldly increment, you start to lose interest. That means those groups then disintegrate through the lack of silica-profits to hold them together.

But the effects upon YOU can be nothing but successful. You're serving your Drive—up near the Big Drums. And that's altogether splendid, and right where you belong."

THERE were times when this woman openly rebelled at the task she had so unnaturally taken upon herself. She had not sought it, she complained. It was altogether distasteful to her. Her method of meeting the situation in those times was to figuratively stamp on me with her spiked French heels, to give way to flaming interludes of mutual excoriation. Fixations and reflexes had worn thirty-year grooves in my subconscious—or I told myself they had. To furrow them out in a handful of weeks seemed well-nigh impossible, and too often inhuman in their effects upon us both. Yet it had to be done. Lillian would never spoil a man under any circumstances.

I began to see that, after all, I had grown up like a weed. I had a certain surface cleverness at manipulating men and situations. I thought this trait smartness. It was really the smartness of the maverick, romping hither and yon at his unbranded whim, gauging his astuteness by his agility in leaping fences—with no especial reasons for entering strange pastures—making folks chase him and calling it Leadership. Lillian felt herself obligated to accomplish in a month, what a wise and gentle wife would have consumed years in doing with warm romantic love as the humane anesthetic.

I had to stand up to the shock of this interlude, to watch this surgery upon my own spirit, without indulging myself with opiates to deaden the reactions that at times were an agony. And the reason why I write so candidly of the experience is to do away with the nonsensical assumption that there is ever such a thing as a Self-made Man.

We are all of us, rich or poor, failures or successes, the results of the persons we have met with, the sharp or dull human contacts that have made up our lives. Some men are lucky in having men like my father, wives like Marion, mentors like Lillian, to school them in tumult—provided they react with the mettle that is in them. That is why such contacts come to them, to smelt that mettle, to temper their stamina. But after it is done, there is no dishonor, no caddishness—according to my philosophy—like arising in the world's High Places and letting it be said, "This human marvel is self-made!" As well talk about an infant as being physically self-made! . . .

I make open acknowledgement that I have had debts to settle with this

long roster of splendorful souls who have arisen time and time again in my experience to point me the highroad to a finer self-expression. Without them I should be plodding and blundering in the low-lying mists of meddlesome mediocrity, a flat-footed human ox whose saga was a wallow in rancorous self-pity. I have left many of these people behind me now. But my heart is tender toward them. In future lives I shall doubtless repay them, each and severally, granted that I have not already done so.

At another time Lillian said, looking at me strangely, "I believe I'd give everything life might possess, to know the man you'll presently be at forty." ❧ ❧

"You think you won't?" I cried in dismay.

She shook her head slowly, hot eyes upon me. "That's the irony of life," she whispered. "The thing we help to create commands our affection in exact ratio to the effort we put into it. Then when it's time to realize on that effort, the essence of true character means to see that we forgo it."

¶ "That's a cruel philosophy."

"Not at all! Of course it seems cruel to persons not sufficiently evolved to deserve its real increment. Remember, the state of being affectionate means 'being affected' . . . letting ourselves be affected. Life must develop our poise so that nothing can affect us, throw us off balance. It's encompassing the kingdom of heaven within ourselves consciously, knowing that we are its living horizons. When we can relinquish the thing we most cherish, without a qualm of loss or regret, it's time for us to have it. And at such time we'll probably not want it, because we shall not need it!"

Fogs began to lift as I caught the girl's philosophy. Yet how much of it was academic with her, I wondered. She seemed to have moments of rebellion at her own philosophy. I had an affection for her without being "in love" with her. It was more the synthesis of gratitude—compensation's fulcrum. One day I gave voice to the Eternal Restlessness. She stopped me with this—

"It takes a woman of brains to discern that only those men who are on the wing, who are always up and taking the Highroad Beyond, can possibly be fit to live with. All others are merely providers. The woman who wants a good provider is a walking advertisement of her own besotted indolence. You can usually pick her out by the width of her hips."

Later I was to meet up with much the same sort of sentiment in the writings of my friend, Will Levington Comfort. Lillian was a great admirer of Comfort. . . .

"But women of brains," I countered, "are sometimes most uncomfortable

to live with, themselves. I'm speaking now, of course, from the standpoint of the man."

"That all depends on how far they consider it advisable to let a man down into himself. There's a lot of difference between relaxation and self-indulgence." ☙ ☙

"I mean, it's sometimes a fatiguing business, with all the other stresses a man must undergo, to constantly play up to them."

"No woman who has to be 'played up to,' is brainy. Truly great women are always noiseless. And they don't demand. They give."

"And where ARE these 'truly great women'?"

She answered whimsically, "I think they're in the hearts of the men who create them by their need."

This was a bit beyond me at the time and I squirmed as often under Lillian's trenchant scrutiny. Needless to say, there was little literary collaboration going on. A few times we tried it. As well try to drive a horse by one person handling the left rein and the other person the right. Lillian caught it first. She would.

"We're living a novel, not writing one," she snapped.

And yet I was undergoing changes without being consciously aware of them. The pallor and leanness which Siberia had put upon my face were gradually disappearing. California sunshine, days in the open, an interest in aviation, many wholesome excursions, were putting a healthy burnish on my flesh and on my soul. Golden Moments, indeed! I was learning to think clear of East Templeton fixations. My interlude with Lillian was nearing its completion but only the perspective of the years could reveal it. ☙ ☙

I had broken out into High Sunshine for the moment. I had learned to breathe deeply. Came the night when I found a letter from Vermont waiting for me at my hotel.

"You'd better be coming back as soon as you can arrange it," wrote Marion. "You're going to become a father again . . . in September!"

CHAPTER EIGHT



UR SON, William Ernest, was born in Brooklyn City Hospital on the 23rd day of September. I put my arms about his mother, weak and spent upon the bed, and the tears that we wept were not emotion only . . . at least not my own. "What are you working at now?" was Marion's poignant inquiry as I sat beside her cot in the fortnight which ensued. ¶ I said, "I'm getting ripened to do another novel. Little, Brown & Company want a Spring book to follow *The Greater Glory*." ¶ "What'll it be about?"

"Fog," I responded.

"I don't understand. Not a book on the weather!"

"I happened into Street & Smith's offices yesterday afternoon. The editor of *People's Magazine* threw an advance copy of a book across to me—a novel that's soon to appear called *Main Street*. By a chap named Sinclair Lewis." ❧ ❧

"Yes?"

"The editor wanted me to write him a human-interest article on whether or not I considered it an accurate picture of American small-town life. I took it up to the hotel last night. At half-past two this morning I threw it across the room."

"What's that to do with fog?"

"*Main Street* is a distorted, reprehensible libel on the American small town. I'm not only going to write an article for Street & Smith about it, I'm going to do a book myself for answer—a book that's got the inspiration that I maintain *Main Street* lacks. And I'm going to call it *The Fog*."

"Still, what's the significance?"

"I'm not only going to do as true a pen-picture as I can of the American small town, but I'm going to do a book that can be put into the hands of boys and girls in their twenties—to help them grope their ways out of the fog of adolescence and out upon the clean high table-lands of unobstructed life-traveling. Don't you see? Fog! It's all fog for most of us—this horrid stumbling and groping, striving to find oneself in one's life work, matrimony, spirituality, everything. Until a man or woman gets to know what life's about in any particular case, and where he or she fits into it, it can't be anything else but fog. But I'm also going to try something else. I'm going to attempt a new type of technique."

"Tell me about it." Those hours in that hospital's closets of pain were having their effect on my new son's mother. . . .

"I'm going to see if I can tell the stories of the lives of a boy and girl respectively. In the average novel, the story ends with hero and heroine's approaching the altar and facing the prospect of living happily ever after. I'm not going to have hero and heroine *meet* in *The Fog* until the book's final chapters. That meeting shall be the climax."

"Sounds interesting," said Marion, blinking her eyes with a habit she had

"Time to nurse the new little Pelley," announced the nurse, appearing at the doorway. . . .

I wrote *The Fog* that autumn and winter. I wrote snatches in hotel rooms and lobbies as I traveled around on my regular business. I finally rented an apartment up in Greenfield, Mass., where I did the closing chapters. In early March—blankets of snow still thick on the mountains—I journeyed up to St. Johnsbury, locked myself alone in our shuttered winter residence, built a fire in the homely kitchen range, drew the circular kitchen table up into the warmth, and proceeded to edit that book as never book was edited before.

I took every paragraph, every sentence, every word, and thrust it under the ruthless microscope of a lexicographer's examination. Did I have exactly the current terms in every instance? Were the sentences balanced? Was the euphony perfect in word combinations? Alone in that country ark, day after day, night after night, I read those sentences aloud to myself. Three lonely, concentrated weeks I spent in that strange exile. I finally finished the last paragraph and sentence. I knew I had a *book*.

Down to New York I went and gave the precious manuscript over to an expert typist. The words, phrases, sequences, rolled from her machine like softly advancing rivulets of oil.

The Fog appeared in the summer which now followed. It ran into seventeen printings and made me thirty-six thousand dollars.

WHILE it was in process of printing in Boston, I received a letter from Karl Harriman out on *The Red Book* in Chicago, regarding a three-part serial I had delivered to him between-times. "I like *White Faith*," he wrote, "but I simply can't publish it. Being a story premised on the appearance in America of the *Holy Grail* of Tennyson's poem and working wonders in this twentieth century, I'm afraid orthodox people will raise hob about it. They may not take to the idea of the Cup from which the Savior drank at the Last Supper, actually appearing in modern America after all

these centuries since its disappearance. The ideas' a knock-out and you've handled it reverently. Instead of returning you the manuscript, however, I'm taking the liberty of sending it to a motion-picture agent in Manhattan. His name is Larry Giffen. I think you'll get a splendid price for that plot as a screen production. Anyhow, here's hoping!"

If I could only have known then, the stupendous influence which this letter was to play upon my life! But I did not. The serial, at the time, meant nothing to me. It was just another story. My real interest that summer was in the success of my new book. I read the proofs and dispatched them back to Boston. Then I sought an opiate for the distraction that had gradually returned upon me after that California interlude, by throwing myself furiously into my gardening, my flowers, constructing a veranda about one end of the house and doing all the carpenter work myself.

Soon the gray days were making life intolerable. I strolled from room to room in our domicile—all "sides of the Well." I strolled about my acres —more "sides of the Well." Twice a week as the film changed at the local movie house, I went uptown and "saw the pictures." . . . The pettiness of such an existence nauseated me. I bought myself a saddle horse and rode over the hills. The splendid little beast put his foot in a hole while being galloped, broke his leg and had to be shot. I have never been able to bring myself to own a saddle horse since.

None of these expedients fed the famine in my spirit. With the small son well born and doing lustily, and her own strength regained, Marion was about her errand of life once more. I was given to understand that I should consider myself both lucky and proud to have such a fine family, that I ought to be content to "live in my children" . . . it was quite the commendable thing to do, to "live in one's children." When I demanded to know how one "lived in one's children," I was looked upon as a strange, unnatural father. "Can't these babies contrive to find their way to maturity without our considering that the raising of them is the last word in worldly existence?" I demanded hotly of their mother. I was usually advised that "someday I would be sorry that I didn't think more of them." "But I think plenty of them," I would argue foolishly, "but, truly, I can't see that parenthood is the end and aim of all adult existence." No, Marion and I were not hitting it off very well. All the time, in the back of my head, I was struggling with the Future. What was it that Lillian had said, something about moving up close to life's Big Drums? That was it . . . Big Drums! And I was ostracizing myself in a grubby little maple-sugar town, "living in my children." . . .

True, we planned to return to New York when the city's heat was ended. Little Bill commanded this midsummer's interval, and so did Adelaide, now developing into an exceptionally robust girl. But the beat of those Big Drums was acute in my senses. I had to precipitate myself into the heart of things, the essence of living, which *was* . . . doing to the utmost that which called mutely.

I was hysterical in my homesickness for a land I had not entered.

Somehow or other I must catch up with the future, catch up frantically while there was time. I tried to put my growing restiveness out of mind, to "commune with Nature." . . . Over the river road was a pasture and down at its foot ran the sluggish Passumpsic. I found a swimming-hole in that river. Morning and night I sought out the spot and swam nakedly in perfect isolation, building up my body for the strain that wracked my mind. ❧ ❧

The inevitable happened.

One hot July day I went down to the river and plunged off my diving-place. The water was covered with a peculiar greenish scum. I took an accidental swallow of it, wondering what had got into the river to make it taste so brackish. In the week that followed, I was fretful and feverish.

¶ One afternoon I collapsed on the lawn. Mother Holbrook helped me into the house and called a physician, a woman named Fairbanks. Dr. Fairbanks put aside her stethoscope. "This man's caught some ugly malady," she pronounced. "His fever's mounting rapidly."

I was so ill by sundown that Marion called an ambulance. By midnight, up in Brightlook Hospital in town, three white-robed nurses were working ice-packs furiously to save my life. My ailment was subsequently found to be typhoid.

I was down to the bottom of the cycle again.

I had come to the break.

CHAPTER NINE

FOR nine weeks I lay on the grid of wild fever and expatiated compensations for all that I had seized. By night, troops of mad cavalry thundered across my bed. Lillian's Big Drums beat, tom-tom, tom-tom-tom-tom, afar in starlit distance. I had weighed one hundred and sixty pounds when they removed me to the hospital. Ten days later I weighed less than one hundred. My body was dehydrated, my joints were like gourds. I became a prematurely old man. Edna came up from Springfield to visit me. I recall my puzzlement when she broke into tears as she saw me on the bed. Most of my hair came out in batches. My sense of smell left me, and it never returned. To me it was funny. I had suddenly arrived in a state of existence wherein I was principally spare parts.

A wisp of a French-Canadian nurse saved my life. Hour after hour she plied the ice-packs and fought the Grim Reaper. I was too delirious to know what was happening. I remember barbaric voyages on battle-fleets that vanished with dawn, one particularly horrible ordeal when a crooked-legged little darky with no flesh on his skull climbed through my window-screen with a dirk in his hand the length of a cutlass. I fought a mad fight with him. The night-nurse entered and sounded an alarm. I was off on the floor. My bed was wrecked. If that nurse had not entered I would have demolished that hospital. They did not leave me alone after that. ❧ ❧

"What I can't understand," said Dr. Fairbanks, "is how his heart holds out. It must be made of iron."

It was hot that summer, in that little country hospital. Its walls were paper-thin. I heard every groan let out by fellow patients in the throes of every ailment from delirium tremens to childbirth. One day the janitor came in to fix the lock on the door. He had a bag of tools that might have repaired a battleship. The nurse showed him the door that was always sagging open. Whereupon he started to work by merely releasing his finger-grip on the handle of his tool bag. The tools hit the floor and I hit the ceiling. The place was about as quiet as Ten Nights in One Bar-Room with the fleet in and seventeen sailors fighting in the basement. Once a reasonably cool breeze wandered in, but it did not belong there and as quickly got out. It was the only cool breeze, by the way, that entered there, that summer. At five o'clock every morning they awakened me to drink

an egg-nog. When I had consumed all the eggs in Caledonia County, they started in on Franklin County. I found myself listening peevishly for the Burlington train that a half hour later went puffing up the valley. I knew it was making the trip for more eggs.

It was almost October before the limousine of a friend returned me to Passumpsic. But I still had three weeks of bed ahead of me. Day after day I lay in cool autumn, listening to spicy breezes that I could no longer smell, wafting across the polished floors of the house. From time to time I called for writing materials and tried to catch up on overdue stories. But what was the use of writing? For the first time in life I was seized with a panic. ☙ ☙

I had said everything that I thought I could possibly say thereafter, all in one book, *The Fog*. . . .

By the middle of October I found myself normal. I gained back to my legs by walking each night to the post office in Passumpsic. On one of these nights I pulled an unfamiliar envelope from the box. It held Larry Giffen's corner card—that motion-picture agent down in New York.

"I can get you seven thousand five hundred dollars," it read, "for the screen rights to *White Faith*. Jules Brulatour, a local movie magnate, wants the story for Hope Hampton. Clarence Brown will direct it and the picture will probably be screened at Fort Lee. As soon as you are able, I suggest that you make the trip down here, sign the papers, and see about collaborating with Brown in the writing of the script."

Movies!

No other tonic could have whisked me off that sick-bed with such energizing swiftness. I was gaining back to weight and a new crop of hair was appearing on my scalp—iron gray hair now. I presented myself at Giffen's office in the week that followed.

"Local scenario editors are saying that *White Faith* is the greatest movie that's come to Broadway since *The Miracle Man*," Giffen complimented me. He was a stocky, middle-aged man, with a startling resemblance to Herbert Hoover. "I understand that they're bringing Lon Chaney from the West Coast to play the role of thug in your story."

I met Brown, today one of the greatest directors in the business. I found him to be a taciturn and somewhat ruthless young man, worked up into a tension because it was his first production as a professional director. We hied ourselves to a suite in the Commodore Hotel and for two weeks we worked out that film story, "shot" by "shot." . . .

With the script finished, the technicial crew was being assembled. One

November morning the door of the studio was pulled open with a bang. Along the outer glass partition of the corridor I saw a heavy-set, round-shouldered fellow enter, clad in a heavy raglan overcoat, with visor of his cap pulled down nearly to his eyes. "Chaney's come, Mr. Brown," said a badly-awed office boy.

Lon Chaney entered.

I was introduced to a soft-spoken, jovial-mannered man of about my own years, with the most poignant brown eyes into which I ever looked. He had won some screen recognition playing the cripple in *The Miracle Man,* with Betty Compson and Tommy Meighan. Then a legless role in *The Penalty* had followed. This was to be his third vehicle in which he was featured player. We discussed trade events in Hollywood at first, the gossip of the West Coast from which Chaney had just come. Then we got down to the story and the role he was to play. "Somebody's got to go over-town with me and show me where to find the right clothes," he said an hour later. ☙ ☙

"Pelley'll go with you," Brown responded. "He knows what's called for by the plot."

I walked out to the Fort Lee, N. J., trolley-line with Chaney. "So you wrote the story," he opened our friendship. "Tell me the action on the way across the ferry."

But I did not tell him the action on the way across the ferry. He was far more interested in the fact that across the river on Claremont Avenue I had a wife and two babies. "Swell!" was his comment. "My wife Hazel is down to the Commodore. Maybe your wife can keep her from being lonesome while we're here in New York."

Came the night when I phoned Marion, "Lon and Hazel Chaney are coming up for dinner." It was the commencement of an intimacy with the star of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* that practically endured to the month of his death. I was on the "set" with him, nearly ten years later, when he met with the mishap that put him in his coffin.

"Camera!" called Brown next day.

My seven-year submergence in movies had begun. . . .

CHAPTER TEN

THE BOTTOM of the arc was turned in my third life-cycle. From that morning in Japan when I had started the descent of Asama Volcano, to that night in Bright-look Hospital when I fought a mad battle with an African Illusion, the journey had been downgrade. Now I had crossed the sag of the valley. The Path-way started up. It always starts up, else valleys could not be valleys. ¶ I was back in the money with new goals before me. I welcomed the necromancy of movie making, the hectic tempo, the exciting bedlam. It gave me no time to think about myself or that horrible gnawing, deep, deep, in my spirit. I knew that movies were not my life work any more than fiction had been my life work. But not knowing then just what my life work truly was, I took them as an opiate for that ever-present ganglion. One could not hear the far-off throb of Lillian's Big Drums in the blare and wrack of screendom. I applied my-self to learning all that existed to be learned about the production of screen entertainment. Day after day, week after week, I stood beside Brown, determined that this—my first production—should be a box-office knock-out. ☙ ☙

During those evenings when not otherwise engaged on movie scripts for other producers, Marion and I were pals with the Chaneys in our home on Columbia Heights. Hazel was a roly-poly little Italian girl with Mona Lisa eyes. Night after night would find Chaney in our kitchenette with one of Marion's aprons tied about his waist, dexterously concocting savory messes while our wives laid the table. After the meal, Lon and I planned roles for his future screen career across the cleared cloth. His make-up for *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* was thus evolved, with many sketches and references to Hugo's works, in my New York apartment. One even-ing I came home from an afternoon's shooting at which his presence had not been required, to find this idol of photoplay millions squatted cross-legged on the rug with his tongue in his cheek, engrossed in showing Ade-laide how to dress a doll. Of the pair of them, the screen's most famous bad man was enjoying that costuming the more.

The day before Christmas we nearly killed Chaney. One of the sequences in my story required him to make an escape from the police by swinging from the top of a moving bus to the Ninth Avenue Elevated where it crosses Lincoln Square. Thence he was to draw himself up on the iron-

work, climb to the platform, board an incoming train, and be gone from the "shot." He made the grab from the top of the bus, but on crawling to the platform with the vehicle passed from under him, a rotted board cracked on the El's ancient woodwork. For a sickening instant thirty feet of space yawned underneath Chaney, nothing below but a crash on cement. By superhuman effort, greater than any test of strength that I saw him exert later in climbing the facade of the cathedral in *The Hunchback,* he drew himself to safety by clutching at a truss.

The picture was finished on Christmas morning and we spent the happy evening exchanging Yuletide gifts. Lon was anxious to get back to Hollywood where other roles awaited him. Long before his Manhattan nocturne was finished I had worked out another plot for him, *The Shock,* from my *Munsey Magazine* story, *The Pit of the Golden Dragon.* Briefly, it was a screen play of a cripple's prayer that brought on the San Francisco earthquake. I finished this play and Lon took it with him, to offer it in Hollywood. ☙ ☙

We had paid him but $750 a week for his work in *White Faith.* Six years later he had signed a $5,000 a week contract for three years, with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. I had considerable to do with this contract, as I shall relate further on. I recall the late December night when we strolled down the West side of Times Square, the sidewalks deserted. Lon walked with his arm inside of mine after a habit he had. Across the Square the bulbs of an illuminated sign blinked to darkness as we passed.

"I wonder, Bill," he mused whimsically, jerking up his powerful chin, "if I'll ever see *my* name up in electric lights, like that?"

He was a Man's man, Chaney. In his obituary, ten years later, someone told the incident of having come upon him in the rear yard of his Beverly Hills home, restoring to its nest a baby bird that had flopped out onto the ground. "Press-agent stuff!" exclaimed the cynical. "Terrible!" It was not press-agent stuff. During the years that followed I was one of a scant half-dozen who always had *entree* to his home. He could never tolerate the fripperies of actordom. I can attest that the episode of the fledgling was quite within his character.

"You come out to Hollywood," he counselled me. "Be my scenario-man and we'll both of us clean up."

But accompanying him to Hollywood was not feasible just then. I was enjoying my new privacy alone with my family, for Mrs. Holbrook had remained in Vermont. The New York movie fraternity was likewise proving cordial. Also my new novel, *The Fog,* was busy cutting capers. The

critics were scoring it, or obviously ignoring it. All the same, it was selling. At times it seemed as though a conspiracy existed to keep that novel from the public. Such reviews as were friendly, heralded the fact that "here at last is a novel of the American small town that possesses all the inspirational qualities which *Main Street* sorely lacked."

I did not know then that the reasons for this treatment lay precisely in that fact. I had no means then of learning that a very real conspiracy *was* afoot to disparage and discount the American small town, to make fun of everything American, to create a vast national dissatisfaction with American ideals and wholesome institutions. Get the Gentile millions disgusted with small town life so that they would come to the cities where they could be controlled or polluted—that was the strategy. Not for several years did I commence to discern that book after book, film after film, that was voraciously heralded and promoted to the public, always had something in it, or extolled a motif, that was basically negative, that poked fun at everything constructive and inspirational, that brought to general attention the vapidity and asininity of American life in some aspect or another. Think over the best-sellers of the past few years—most of them written by Jews if you only knew their true names and extractions—and somewhere in them you will discover that they disparaged things American, or told some exaggerated erotic story of wholesome ideals gone introvert. The promotion of such books among the public did not occur by chance.

And yet people bought my *Fog* and its many editions mounted. For nearly five years *The Fog* continued selling. Subsequently, in addition to the book royalties, I disposed of the screen rights for another ten thousand dollars. Then, just when I hoped that I had most of the ragged edges of my life happily folded in at last, I confronted catastrophe. . . .

The life-ways parted between Marion and myself!

MY READER should understand, I believe, how very impossible it is for me to chronicle here what the incidents were that wrought this great sorrow. The mother of my children—grown children now, beginning to think about homes of their own—is still alive and living in New York. If I attempted even to imply what wrought our *impasse,* she would have no opportunity of recounting her version of the tragedy. When the break came, it came quick, and sharp, and numbing—at least for myself. None of the usual motivations of such episodes in married life were present. For nearly fourteen years thereafter we lived apart, and when a divorce was finally the order, it was I who procured it. But even in this statement I

would cast no reflection upon the girl I first married. Things happened that way to save her distress.

As I remarked far back in these pages, we had looked upon life from two different angles. . . .

My studio, out of which I traveled to California many times in the next six years, was at 27 West 10th Street, on the edge of Greenwich Village. In a spacious room up among the chimney pots I lay in Gethsemane and grieved for my babies.

What was it that father had said? . . . "Make the most of your life. Never let it get you down!" . . .

And yet I saw myself at forty, fifty, sixty—conventional, common, with little trade ideas of good and bad, self-control, and politeness, walking as Lillian had put it, on my heels, pushing my shoulders back in order to balance my increasing heaviness in front. I would probably adopt tortoise shell spectacles with a ribbon down my jowl, hold forth at literary teas, wincing at the railleries of cool-eyed females, being careful to put on my rubbers when the weather was wet so as not to get a chill that interfered with masterpieces. I would be badgered with the hostages given to fortune, made always to carry on my sterile battle inwardly, to grope ever toward sunlight that was filtered through sadness, to grow gnarled on the surface while my heart rebelled within, verily for the Big Drums that had passed down the sky-line.

I knew I could not do it. That which cannot bend must break. Whatever breaks in a man's heart colors the complexion of his soul. Life was bigger than that. *Camaraderie* was more wholesome. A thousand people, similarly circumscribed, might never understand; but my brand of work was ever the enticement, the breath of a transition, the summons to a mastery. I was not even the gypsy, not even the gambler, so much as a soldier-of-fortune with ivories in his pack, zephyrs in his mess-kit, a song in his heart for the highroad that meant victories. All of such is mawkish to a person not creative. Big Drums. Pounding temples. Romance that sparkled like lights in old champagne. Yes, it was all as terrible to explain to a person whose life is a matter of six per cent interest, as trying to lock sweet wood smoke at sundown in a bank vault. Was it self-pity? What of the race horse that quivers for the track? . . .

Oh that fearful accolade that was waiting for me to bow before it, further up the years! My torn heart was a prophecy and a prophecy my torment.

¶ My marriage had gone sterile. I was surfeited with maps of uncaptured country. The highways of endeavor were grades into nonchalance. Where

could I go or turn that the emptiness of life did not cost me a heartburn? A thousand men, I suppose, caught in domestic dilemma, would have betrayed their married partners, kept up the aspects of the relationship and avoided its tumults. I could not do that. It was not in my philosophy. I had to come to a clean-cut break, face a strong wound, recover as I might. So long as I lived with a woman and gave her my allegiance, that relationship was sacrosanct. In the eleven years that I had been husband to Marion, I knew I had not cheated. That was all that mattered, that I knew it to myself. ❧ ❧

Now I opened my days with the breviary of repugnance. Something had gone out of life, something had come in. Between fallacious enticements to make up for shortages of romantic endeavor all in one pounce, I turned myself now to build up a future worthy of my sacrifice. For it had to be worthy of my sacrifice. And sacrifice it was. I could never mistake it. Yet deep in my consciousness was the dull ache and throbbing. Such surgery was deep. It had cut to the bone.

Romance? What was Romance? The cynic declares it to be that measure of ignorance which a man and a woman hold toward one another. The loftier critic declares, "Romance is the blossoming of a bud of promise, that all that life aspires to, may likewise know fulfilment."

Now I rumpled my bed. Milestones could perforce be headstones.

The Drums were beating very faint and far away as I listened to the melancholy tootings of the tugboats on the river and longed in my soul to escape my Old Serfdom.

For no one has ever gained to any kind of freedom without serving at the galleys of sacrosanct remorse, without knowing curdled aspirations, harbingers gone rancid, heart sacristies looted and left in defilements.

Now I am a soldier at the Mighty Wars.

Once I was a father and had a son.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

WHITE FAITH had turned out tragically. Chaney had done such a magnificent job of acting that he had stolen the picture from its heroine, Miss Hampton. Thereupon, after the way of movies, Hope and Brulatour had obviously locked themselves in the laboratory one Sunday with the negatives and cut it all over to suit the lady's whim. The build-up of the drama, with its nicely adjusted checks and pauses, meant nothing to these. Hope must be kept before her public, regardless of the epic I was striving to narrate. When prints were made and released from this cutting, the result was a plot about as clear and progressive as a Chinese laundry check. No matter. It had been Jules' one-hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars squandered in the opus, and Chaney's was the face on the cutting-room floor. If Jules wanted to ruin a magnificent screen story for the sake of keeping his lady's face before the camera, who was I, a mere author—the lowest form of life in Jewish movies—to utter my asinine protest? Anyhow, I was too far engrossed in new productions to waste tears on a masterpiece whose soul had been butchered.

I wrote *As a Man Lives, The Sawdust Trail, Ladies to Board, Torment, Backfire,* and *What Do Women Want?* Few of these movie plays sold for less than five thousand dollars, and most of them for ten. Chaney disposed of *The Shock* to Universal Pictures, and played its leading role. The production made so much money for Carl Laemmle that the Jew told Chaney that he could play anything for Universal that he chose.

"I want to do *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*," responded Chaney.

"What?" cried Laemmle. "You should do a football pitcher?"

More erudite people corrected the ex-cloak-and-suiter, and Chaney was given the contract which starred him.

This was about the time that a strange little person came into my life.

AN IOWA woman had written me, applying for a job as secretary. Finding that she was an expert court reporter, that she held a typewriting speed record, that she was sensible and sedate, I had given her the place. Ensconced day by day in my Greenwich Village studio, she had sensed that I was living within the shadow of a heartbreak. One evening it so happened that we talked in the dark. I confided in Beryl, as a bachelor man will.

"It's not my life, this," was my antique complaint. "Sometimes in flashes between these . . . these heart-heavy mysteries . . . I sense some sort of job that's waiting for me Out Yonder. It's so big that it appalls me. It's got something to do with ships . . . no, that's not it . . . but there are errands of mercy to the ends of the earth, bearing succor to the helpless . . . I feel the presence of marching men, the creak of straining leather, the maelstrom of a conflict that's not waged with bullets. What am I trying to tell you? It's a sacred confusion. Nevertheless, something's Out Yonder . . . beyond a Blaze of Radiance!"

After a moment of silence Beryl murmured, ". . . horse's hoof beats sounding suddenly across a drawbridge at midnight! . . . a bugle-call sharp and clear across lavender starlight! . . . massed flags and a wreath . . . a bright wreath . . . for sorrow. . . . "

What a strange little person. I asked, "Do you sense what I mean?"

She responded, "Of course. Why else am I here?"

She arose, crossed to my studio piano beneath the *atelier* window and let her fingers wander idly over *Fifth Nocturne.*

"I'm trying to remember something," I cried brokenly, "remember something *forward*!"

"Do you think that any of us go through anything in life that's not On the Program?"

"Tapping typewriter keys!" I protested hotly. "Writing silly stories of synthetic people! Telling grown-up play-children how to antic before a camera! What a life!"

". . . We go through many wars," mused Beryl, "but there's only one peace. Out Yonder's a big place, and yet so few find it. Something came to me once when I was deep in your novel, *The Fog*, . . . it's difficult to say . . . life itself is a bivouac, you know. The war never ceases. But . . . sometimes in starlight we catch a glimpse of That Peace Which Might Be . . . perhaps that Will Be, after all the poems and the crosses . . . when those of us who are called to fight the Big Fight realize after all it's more or less of a movie plot—that the real life, the real conflict, exists in that true reality that silly folk term dreams—"

"Go on," I begged her. She had paused.

"You've got a Commission waiting for you Out Yonder. You're going through all of this to burnish your equipment."

"You talk a lot at times like a woman I knew out in San Francisco a couple of years ago."

"I heard you murmur something once about Big Drums. Could you feel

a thrill at thought of them if you hadn't known them . . . somewhere . . . or weren't to know them at sometime in future?"
"I wasn't referring to literal drums."
"How do you know you weren't?"
"You m-mean . . . you think . . . I may become part of another Great War?" ❧ ❧
"I said there was only one war. Whenever has it ended? It pauses and resumes. At least that's how I see it."
"You're trying to tell me something, but don't really dare."
"That's right. I don't dare."

I WAS horridly restless. The drums of conviction were astoundingly real.
"Somehow," I said, with a wave of my hand toward the table's manuscripts, "all this seems like *tampering* with Reality!"
" . . . or perhaps," Beryl whispered, "it's writing yourself invitations to be present at your own Award for Valor . . . to keep a date with Inevitable Certainty." ❧ ❧
"Sometimes I feel that I'm just making a mess of everything."
"Yes, even Napoleon had his suicidal moments, believing that he had failed." ❧ ❧
"But I'm not Napoleon!"
"That's not for you to say. Has it never occurred to you that perhaps there can be Napoleons who have their St. Helenas at the beginnings of their careers? That's why they mayn't recognize themselves."
I said, "it's funny, your coming here all the way from Iowa and talking to me like this."
"At least it's better than a convent," this little five-foot person responded mischievously. Then her eyes lifted to the northern window where the nimbus of Times Square was aglow on clouds of evening.
"Have you ever felt urges toward a convent?"
"I've felt urges to peace. I'm thirty-two years old."
"You've come to a funny place for peace."
She arose and stood against the window, face turned away from me. Her voice held no mischief as she said, "Sometimes there are those of us who can find their greatest peace near another person's tumult." An instant later she added, "—providing that we can aid them."
"You're a queer person, Beryl. Where is Out Yonder?"
She said, "Where the picture-plots all end, and the Dreaming True begins." ❧ ❧

"Anyhow, there's a bigger job for me to do than I'm doing here." I was dogged about it. It was gnawing like a cancer.

"Yes, and you'll do it. You've made the first real step toward it. That's what I wanted to tell you when I didn't quite dare."

After she had left for the night I tried to figure it out. I began to ponder at the strangeness of Life's Tapestry—if there was a Tapestry.

Was the Pattern all prescribed for us, in every instance? An evening moth found its way into my studio and crawled upon my desk-top. Could it have been possible that fifty trillion years ago it had been prescribed that this particular moth should live in the year 1922, fly in at my window at exactly that moment, wobble across my blotter? Yet if something of the order were not so, the world must all be Chance. . . .

Yet the planet did not encircle the sun by chance. Where then did divine prescription leave off, Cosmic Blueprints cease to matter, Chance enter in? ¶ What might this Out Yonder be . . . but a snatched look at one's Blueprint? ❧ ❧

I had a date with Destiny.

My soul-qualms were my stage-fright!

CHAPTER TWELVE

IN THE terminology of moving pictures and picture making, there is the thing known as a "sequence." . . . A sequence is a scene or a series of scenes meant to be photographed in one location or upon one stage-setting and concerned in the main with the one group of characters. It is a definite period within the development of the theme that stands distinctly alone, but whose wider and deeper significance is only appreciated when fitted or joined in an order that makes the narrative.

Life, I began to perceive, was not unlike the construction of a photoplay. It had its sequences, or series of sequences, miniature life-spans in themselves, concerned with one location, one stage-setting, one group of characters. These played out the appropriate segment of the drama, and when it had been photographed on the film of the Spirit, their locations were abandoned, the settings quickly "struck," the cast first brought together by the Great Director, excused to stay excused. So it had been with me. I could not have avoided it.

Retrospecting—as I was constantly called upon to do for material, in the nature of my vocation—combing my own experience for dramatic ideas and situations, I was frequently appalled at the completeness of the "shooting" in the sequences that had made up the life I had lived.

Shakespeare wrote, "All the world's a stage, the men and women in it only players, and each man in his time plays many parts." It was not the playing of so many parts that disquieted me. It was the intensity of my relationships as those sequences were playing, and the utter nonchalance with which, in the wake of a given undertaking of Spirit, the players as a group disintegrated, went their ways, caring little or nothing for subsequent karma. Saying that I did not hold my friends when made, would not be a justified description of this oddity. It was more that I seemed to function as a type of human lodestone, strongly drawing and fastening personalities in a ganglion about me so long as I was present. But immediately that I moved along, such coagulations dropped apart.

I owned to no childhood background that could form a basis for life endurances with the boys and girls who had started out with me in school—father had lived in too many places in his meanderings. Besides, his demands on my time, even as a child and later as a youth helping him in his business, and my own application to my amateur printing activities, had permitted no interludes for the normal pursuits and recreations of boyhood and adolescence. Then had come the factory, the affair with Mabel, finally marriage. Chicopee, Wilmington, Bennington, had been high-pressure sequences played by different sets of characters. When they closed, they closed. There were few loose ends. No persons but Marion had lapped from one over into the other. Moreover, to each of these sequences I seemed to turn a different facet of my own maturing personality. This amounted to a feeling at times that I could not possibly be the same person who had played his previous roles. The lad who had been in the factory with father was not the fellow who had tried to elect that insufferable French mayor. The person who had coaxed Frank Howe's duplex press into performance in *The Banner* office was a totally different individual from the man who had stood near Admiral Kolchak on a Sunday morning at Irkutsk. As for *The Caledonian* and Manhattan experiences since, they might have been a series of rooms through which I had passed, each one done in a different motif, filled with different groups of people, none having common interest with those in previous chambers. Was I odd in this respect? People who had come and gone in my life had a storybook aspect. While they lived, the book was in process of reading. With

the final chapter arrived at, they became weirdly abstract. I thought no less of them than I had thought before, but immediately I knew a strange sense of detachment—I had somehow graduated from them, left them behind. Many times I had no desire to leave them behind. Quite the reverse. I would often strive to maintain the contact. Kismet would defeat me. They became beloved faces in baskets of daguerreotypes—and the archives of my spirit were filled with such baskets.

BERYL struck the keynote in the sequence that now opened.

She was a soft-spoken, dove-eyed, piquant little person. She, like Lillian, had come in at a tangent, played a swift, vital, altogether mystical part, and later died suddenly under an intestinal operation. But while she was with me she affected severely tailored suits and *pince-nez* glasses. She had an upturned nose and a dimple in her chin. I called it a Christian Endeavor nose. She called her dimple her Mark of Satan. From her viewpoint, in the glamorous movie role I was now essaying, her association with me held the call to high adventure. I dictated whole books of screen plots and adaptations of stories to her as rapidlv as I could talk them, striding the floor for hours at a time. Once I dictated a 100,000 word screen novel to her in three days and she never missed a comma. She had little of Lillian's therapeutic irony. Behind the character of her fortitude was a strain of the awe-struck little girl being admitted in this saga to a gaudily-bannered circus.

The male acquaintances who now came and went through my affairs knew Beryl as a staid little spinster who handled my business with deadly efficiency. If impoverished actor friends bethought to strike me for loans, it was always to Beryl that they first told their story—to win themselves her sympathy. If she took a violent dislike to a person, I ultimately found that her approximation of his designs upon me was correct. It was more than just a job to her, handling this detail into which my affairs expanded. There are people who are pivots in any man's concerns. Beryl was a pivot. The role was her meat and her appetite was ravenous.

Strange, strange, are these quiet, seemingly-colorless, spinster women. Frequently they have more flaming audacity, more splendorful courage, more reckless pursuance of the elusive element that is sometimes called Romance than the most calorific platinum blonde. It was neither nurse nor mentor that I required in this sequence I now entered. I merely wanted someone who could follow behind me and pick up and conserve the nug-

gets laid open to the sunlight by the ploughshares of my venturings. And Beryl was that person. Locked behind her china-blue eyes, small snubbed nose, and dimpled chin, was the temperament of one who in another age would have disguised herself as a page-boy and shipped with Jason in his quest for the Fleece, offered a concubine to Marco Polo in order to see the wonders of Cathay, donned platinum armor and fought for the Dauphins of any age—provided her bonnet rippled plumes to her waist. Five years of such sprightly *camaraderie* we had and then the trails parted as abruptly as they had come together. She is now but a name on a Sioux City tombstone. She may be no farther away from me than the hand on my wrist.

¶ So a studied caprice now seized me to utilize this interval to travel my country. As Beryl watched my practical affairs for weeks at a time, I acquired a ponderous high-powered car and rode the horizons with swashbuckling rapacities. It seemed that nothing less than a fever came on me to poke and pry my way into every corner of this nation, to find my way about every American city by an utter familiarity with its landmarks, to know every Main Street by the chippings on its curbstones. I knew that the cupola of the Union Pacific station at Cheyenne, Wyoming, held a broken window; that the car tracks out of Wheeling, West Virginia, to the south, ran so close to the river that someday they might slide over and take passengers with them; that the most restful spot in the nation was the *patio* pool at Capistrano Mission; that ghosts could still be seen on the St. Augustine slave block; that the bridge lamps over the Chippewa River at Eau Claire, Wisconsin, held five globes each. Silly things to know. Yet somehow or other, these came to my attention.

I knew rural New England, Dutch Pennsylvania, the tall spires of Maryland in early morning sunshine. I had seen the sandy Carolinas, known how the white flies fell on Dallas in August, heard the shuttle of reapers in Kansas wheatfields. I had watched the mists lift from the base of Niagara, and remarked on the haze of golden afternoon in the quiet of the Ozarks. I had smelled the stockyard stench in the Sioux City "jungle" and the sweetness of a night in old Virginia while the magnolias were in flower. From the beauty of the Hudson at West Point, to the bizarre apparition of an Apache Indian—his blanket-protected head grotesque—appearing in the siss of a New Mexican sandstorm, America was my pocket and her loveliness my heritage.

Seven times across my country I made the motor-trek in the years that now followed; seven times seven I rode to and fro, up and down from North to South. From the market-gardens of southern Michigan, washed by sweet

rain of an April afternoon, to the wastes about Cisco, Utah, brackish with cactuses, where no rain had fallen for at least forty years, my homeland narrowed swiftly to an intimate back yard. I came to know the stores along Nicolette Avenue in Minneapolis, and the historical structures along the Rue Royale in old New Orleans. I found myself as much at home in the White River Gorge behind Pikes Peak as in the House of Seven Gables in weatherbeaten Salem. The Alamo and Faneuil Hall, Custer's Battlefields on the Little Big Horn, how George Washington's hat and cape looked, hanging in the entry-way of his Valley Forge headquarters, Lincoln's iron casket behind the monument grate at Springfield, Illinois, Chicago with its lights lit, cold gale on Mojave just before sunrise, Victory atop the Circle Monument in the heart of Indianapolis—yes, all were my heritage. ❧ ❧

I could drive into any town of size from Baltimore to Seattle, know where to garage my car and find the right eating-house before it closed for the night. From the lakes of New Hampshire to the waterless Rio Grande I could pass rainy Sabbaths without becoming homesick. Homesick? For what? The nation was my home. Withal I came in, between-times, and hibernated in Greenwich Village or labored in Hollywood. And not only movie plots poured out. I wrote twenty-two stories for *Red Book* in a sequence. In 1924 appeared my third novel, *Drag*. In all, I either wrote or supervised twenty-one screen productions in Hollywood—for a compensation of nearly one hundred thousand dollars—and had them all behind me when the "talkies" came in.

It was a wild, restless, exotic period. Just as Kismet had forced me to go out to Siberia in war-time, so now my brevet commanded me to know America like my studio. For I had to know America. *America was* my studio. It was as necessary for me to bog to my hubs on an Indian Reservation in Arizona as to skid on the gumbo flats of South Dakota—or crack up in an airplane by forced night-landing over Fredericksburg, Virginia. It brought the hazards and the unity of Great America home to me. It schooled me in psychologies of its multicolored sectionalisms. I knew the problems of the maple sugar makers in Vermont as I knew the locust ravages in the San Joaquin valley of middle California—or the quandaries of stockmen in drought-riven Texas. I had been startled awake by the cry of the heron in the Florida Everglades and known the eerie *clunk* of a midnight oil pump in the Louisiana bayous. My life was not the kind of life that was "lived in my children." . . . I had designs to work out in the excellent United States. . . .

I was scouting my country for ten thousand battlefields in a New Economy! I was made to become intimate with America that I might serve her nobly. ¶ At the same time I was finding zest and enticement in being part of necromantic picture-making in that flamboyant wild-cat period when the original Old Guard held all fronts. Names that are now but poignant traditions were flesh and blood people to me, doing their antics, battling their most terrible enemy, Easily-Gotten Wealth. Where are they taking their studio calls at present? Wallie Reid, Earle Williams, Milton Sills, Gladys Brockwell, Fatty Arbuckle, Mabel Normand, Lew Cody, Theodore Roberts, the suave Valentino, the inimitable Chaney—for how many of the present generation do those names hold meaning? A generation hence our progeny may say, those were the actor-folk who delighted our fathers. For me, they have gone to join the Great Cast under the Master Director, playing their roles like the troupers I knew them to be, as the Technicians of Eternity leap to the thrilling order *"Lights!"*

I wrote scripts or vehicles for Bert Lytell, Viola Dana, Tom Mix, Hoot Gibson, Cullen Landis, Owen Moore and Bessie Love, Dick Barthelmess, Buster Collier, Gertrude Astor, Betty Compson, Colleen Moore. I had constant *entree* to the homes and affairs of such people as Henry Walthall, Chester Conklin, Mack Swain, Kate Price, Ralph Graves, Dot Reid, Huntley Gordon, Theda Bara. I had learned that the proper way to sell a story was to know the sweetie of your director, to go off to lunch with your famous star in his make-up—and let him pay for it—to be able to hail your producer by his first name on the wind-swept veranda of a Santa Monica beach club. Pity the poor stenographers and automobile salesmen in Jamestown, N. Y., or Marion, Alabama, who sat up nights writing screen things by lamplight. You had to be "one of the gang" . . . a glamorous, cockeyed, crazy gang, booze-lit and money-drunk children in *Arabian Nights* palaces of papier-mache.

Here was an entirely new business that I had mastered in months, that put a little fortune of a hundred thousand dollars into my hands, I say, before I left it wilfully. In New York I set up and maintained a printing establishment—The Pelley Press, at 39 West 8th Street—purposely to print the advertising matter that disposed of my plots. I paid one artist eighty dollars a week just to draw enticing pictures of scenes from these photoplays yet to be screened. I started a pocket magazine called *The Plot* to keep this work of mine before the movie magnates. I sold them with their own showmanship. . . .

"I Write 'Em, You Wreck 'Em!" was the satirical slogan that I placed on

my plot sheets. And the hysterical, dope-driven, competition-crazed personnel of the studios took me at my word. One of my best bits of work—or so I considered it—was a modernization of The Feeding of the Five Thousand by the little lad with five loaves and two fishes. I put a group of worldly, irresponsible, pleasure-chasing millionaires on a yacht and made it strike a ledge off Bar Harbor, Maine. Impaled there helpless upon it, beyond sight of land, their radio gone to smash, fat larders of food finally diminished, all the bad folk turned good and most of the "good" folks, bad. At length when their famine had them crawling on their knees, the biggest millionaire, whose wealth would not get him a ham sandwich, promised his Maker in a broken prayer that if by some hook or crook his life could be spared, he would feed five thousand of the earth's hungry every day of his life till the hour of his death. Presently, as though taking him up on that proposal, the Almighty caused a small boy to pass that way in a launch, having aboard five loaves of home-baked bread and two fishes. He thus supplied them with their first food in days, and carried back word that quickly wrought their rescue. The preachment was terrific and the spiritual values obvious. I was paid $7,500 for that script, written in two evenings. But, arrived in the hands of a Jewish production crew, IT WAS ALL ABOUT THE RUSSIAN CROWN JEWELS IN THE JAPANESE EARTHQUAKE! The millionaires started for Japan instead of Europe. And the starvation sequence occurred in sundry bank vaults under Tokyo. Figure it out, I never could. The only thing retained of my story was its apt title, *Torment!* Of course there was no boy with loaves and fishes.

"I'm telling you something," declared a particularly offensive little Jew to me, when I later encountered him at a Hollywood party. "Ve ain't makin' it moom-pitchers about your bastard Christ nor his loafs and fishes. Vat ve vant in it moom-pitchers is *legs.* Understand me? . . . legs! .. . vimmin's legs! Ven ve get done vid you Christians, I guess you find out vy ve got it control of movies, and it ain't to preach no sermon in a church. I'm telling you! Better ve should put every goy girl in a whorehouse, and by gott you'll like it!"

The fleshpots of Hollywood. Oriental custodians of adolescent entertainment. One short word for all of it—

JEWS!

Do you think me unduly incensed about them? I've seen too many Gentile maidens ravished and been unable to do anything about it. They have a

concupiscent slogan in screendom: "Don't hire till you see the whites of their thighs!"

I know all about Jews.

For six years I toiled in their galleys and got nothing but money.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

AND now, a prelude to a Symphony. . . .

Such dizzy maneuvering, of course, could not go on forever. In 1925 I sold The Pelley Press, gave up my Greenwich Village studio, and moved up to the seclusion of Newburgh-on-the-Hudson to do my novel, *Drag*. I had all the money which a reasonable man could want. I had unhampered freedom to work out my urgings. My two closest friends of sizable affairs were John S. Siddell of *The American Magazine*, and Warren S. Stone, president of the Four Trainmen's Brotherhoods. Now death took them both! . . .

All through my resuscitation of *The Caledonian*, my odyssey of travel, my Hollywood vagaries, I had never ceased writing for John. But from time to time as I had contacted him, I had noted how my bold bluff friend was failing physically. When I reached New York from California after hearing of his death, I got the heroic story.

He had long-since consulted expert physicians and learned that he was afflicted with cancer of the stomach. He had even been told the exact day and date on which his life would terminate. Friends learned afterwards that he had sworn the doctors and his wife to secrecy, then gone about his job as if nothing was amiss. He had passed on a Monday. Up to the prior Saturday noontime he had worked in his office, enduring the tortures of the damned internally with never a murmur escaping his lips, finished the current issue of the magazine, cleaned his desk, lowered the curtains to the same height on all the office windows, shaken hands with the staff, and gone home to Transition. It was the same intestinal vigor in dealing with life, worked out in his own case, that he had incessantly preached to *American* readers throughout his editorial career.

John had been succeeded, I presently learned, by a former staff contributor like myself, one Merle S. Crowell, a husky, football-player type of person with white eyebrows, a native of Maine who had drifted down to New York and done newspaper work till John took him on.

But Merle quickly made it evident that he had his own ideas as to how *The American Magazine* should be conducted, and the fact that I had antedated him or been equally in John's confidence, gave me no special privilege to offer advice or expect any breaks. The most fatal thing to remark to Merle, we writers quickly learned, was "John would have bought this manuscript, we wrote him so many like it." I exercised my prerogative on one particularly exasperating occasion and told him that as an editor I considered him a bust . . . he was merely rattling around in John Siddell's boots. One by one the country's leading fictionists began to drop away and leave him alone.

"I hear Crowell's got him a new fiction editor," a literary friend remarked to me subsequently. "He's given us up as temperamental freaks and turned us over to a woman to handle."

A few days later I sent a new manuscript up to this lady. Promptly came a letter. Would I call by and see her? I commuted down from Newburgh and sent in my card. I remember that it was just before lunchtime that I thus introduced myself. Then I paced the reception room, glanced at current magazines, nursed my stick between my knees. Presently I heard a soft voice say at my shoulder, "How do you do! I'm *so* glad you came up."

I arose quickly from the divan and glanced into the eyes of *The American's* new fiction editor. She did not look like an editor at all.

I faced a woman in her late thirties, with rich copper hair, intelligent brown eyes, a nose and chin like Dante's "Beatrice"—the one you see in the art shops, done in Carrara marble. She was slightly shorter than I was, comely in her figure, with an eager sincerity that bespoke an Old Soul. We talked conventionally a moment. Then she said, "I'll get my hat. We'll go somewhere for lunch."

MY LIFE has been enriched by knowing three truly great women. The first was Lillian. The second was the one who presently returned, her modish white street costume setting off elegantly the keen bronze of her hair. The third? We must meet her as in life, when she steps upon my scene. . . .

"Where shall we go?" asked Mary as we walked into the sunshine of 250 Park Avenue. She was Mary to me within a fortnight and never has been otherwise through the years to this moment. I suggested the Plaza. We went up in a cab and found an isolated corner in the tea room.

"You've interested me," she said, "ever since your first story came into

The Delineator office when I was editor down there." She had a quick, nervous intensity about adjusting this relationship, yet withal she was one of those splendorful feminine souls whom I have come to designate as Noiseless. ☙ ☙

She scuffed up no carpets in Life.

"Tell me why," I suggested, to make conversation.

"You're such a harum-scarum, hit-or-miss, erratic sort of workman. Yet you can write so brilliantly when the inspiration's on you. Tell me about yourself. Tell me everything there is to know!"

Mary did not go at this sort of thing along the average woman's promptings to touch off masculine vanity. She really had an interest. It was part of her job—or rather, her *role.*

I bantered, "Must I do it in an hour?"

"Oh bother the time. Some of your stories have just . . . emptied my heart. That *Sunset Derby* horse story that's in the office now. I'm making Merle take it. I think it's a classic."

"*The Country Gentleman* turned it down cold."

"They must have been crazy."

So I talked to Mary. Our luncheon consumed three hours. She too had been born in Iowa, like Beryl, the daughter of a country doctor. She had married her husband in Chicago, gone down into North Carolina that he might battle a malady, brought him up to New York, and . . . subsequently buried him. That loss had struck deep. She was that type of colleague. ☙ ☙

So it was not of the ordinary banalities of magazinedom that we talked, in that first fraught three hours, nor was it of myself. She had reached the poised years when courage was not conscious. She saw life evenly. She viewed it with calm eyes. And yet her ordeal had made her sweetly wistful. She had all of Lillian's trenchant perception, Beryl's savorings of life with quaint chivalries, but withal her own nonchalance that opened the doors on spirit-vistas without creaking of the hinges to reveal that they were opened. What I could not discern then, for there was no particular reason why I should, was the steel wire of Karma that bound me to this lady, and both of us to the fecund future. Mary was high voltage but safe current.

I knew that her apartment would never be littered with old magazines. . . .

"We must finish this talk, say Sunday afternoon," she finally declared, looking at her wrist watch.

"Does it have to be finished?"

"Very much has to. You're perilously close to something."
"Close to something? . . . what?"
"That's to be determined. I don't have to associate with a man for a period of years to discern when he's . . . well . . . due to Break Through. Please come up to my apartment in West Fifty-first Street next Sunday at three. And now, call a cab."
What could she be meaning? I escorted her out again into sunshine. As we rode down Fifth Avenue she patted my wrist.
"You need a certain coaching for what I sense ahead. I want to help. I really do."
I paid off the cabman after she had gone up into *The American Magazine* office again, and sauntered away. By all the ethics of writing and publishing this bronze-headed lady was my Boss.
I knew she was not.
Not *exactly* my boss.
Somehow or other she was offering me a chalice . . . or was it a chalice? Was it not rather, that very faint and far away I was subconsciously discerning the prelude to a symphony?
I walked afar in New York that September afternoon. What had she meant, that prophetic Breaking Through?
And *through* to just what? . . .

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

I HAVE this data in Memory's Notebook concerning that Sunday: One of those burnished days, keyed to fragrant coolness that descends on Manhattan with the coming of autumn. The front room of a walk-up apartment just off the Avenue in the Fifties. A room done in elusive tintings of oranges and garnets against pristine whites and teakwoods. A rug on the floor from a palace in Persia. A divan done in chintz. Naked furniture, dead black. Books flanking the hearth. Over the mantel on the room's western end, a mirror such as Alice might have climbed through to get into Wonderland. Candles in the mirror. Last but not least, the hands of the clock pointing a quarter to midnight with Monday in prospect. The fire was still burning to take off the chill.

Mary said, "Well, we don't seem to have arrived anywhere, do we?"

I said, appalled, "I've been sitting in this chair since five past three o'clock." ❧ ❧

"Please don't go yet!"

"But it's insufferable to stay so long."

"Why is it insufferable? If I hadn't wanted you to stay, don't you think I'd have managed otherwise?"

I took a turn about the rug. She sat on the divan before the front windows and looked at me thoughtfully. She was wearing a frock of black and white lace, with a loop of black beads which occasionally she nibbled. The flickering embers of the fire put a sheen on her temple that was nearest the grate. The cast of her head, the curve of the line from the earlobe to the shoulder, the exquisite tracings of *camaraderie* at the corners of her eyes, the pillow of throat and bosom, made her the most delectable ensemble that I had closely known to date.

She appeared to me like a prima donna of spiritual fortitude, as we sat there with workaday morning waiting to get in. An editress? Fiddlesticks. She was one of those rare women who occasionally stray down from the turrets that gleam on empyrean mountains and wait at the crossroads of life as for a street car, because such is the practical conveyance of the moment. I had a brevet with this woman that was not of the emotions. . . .

"Tell me," I begged, "and then I must go . . . what did you mean at

our luncheon Friday when you said you sensed that I was due to Break Through?"
"You don't know very much about the world, do you?"
"I've found my way about it for quite a long time."
"Oh, you've gone places—yes. You've met different men and women. But I don't mean a world of cabbages and kings. I'm speaking of the reasons why you've come into it at all."
"Does anyone know why they've come here at all?"
She responded in a whisper, "I believe there are some who do. Quite distinctly."
"Well, you might as well know my pet peeve at life. Despite all the kind things you've said about my authoring to date, it isn't my job to be forever writing fiction."
"No," she said thoughtfully, "probably not. And it's going to be too bad. Because you're one of the few writers today who possess the talent to write something that will live."
"It's kind of you to say so——"
"I'm not saying it from kindness. We editors keep track of writers of promise. If you'd truly get down and *work,* not be so erratic. . . . Tell me, whatever made you take up with moving pictures?"
"To be absolutely truthful, I needed the money."
"Why should you need money? I know the prices that editors have paid you. You need money! It's absurd."
"Well, it happened that I really *did* need money. My paper had rough sledding while I was absent at war. Then I had twelve weeks of typhoid——"
"Why didn't you go back to stories?"
"After *The Fog* I was somewhat 'written out'."
"Or was it that a lot of things in your life were at sixes and sevens? . . . that your incentive was lacking, at least for the moment? That's truly what slows up most writers, you know."
"Something of the sort perhaps. A man can't keep up a grind of masterpieces the clock around."
"Who says he can't?"
"You think he can?"
"He can if he's got his life under control."
"You suspect that my life's not under control?"
"Are you open to suggestion?"
"Decidedly," I said.

"I think you should put yourself under my care. You've got a big work to do, and you'll do it. But you can't or won't . . . Break Through . . . till you've had more preparation. Oh I don't meant instruction in technique of craftsmanship. You can give a lot of college professors on the short story, points on technique of craftsmanship right now. What I mean is, you've got . . . vacancies of spirit that you've got to have filled up. You'll get nowhere till you've filled them. Anything else is a tinsel construction. You've got to learn quietly that life's not quite the barren grade you've come to believe it way down in your heart."

Verily all of it was not unlike what Lillian had said to me. But here was a different sort of Lillian, a ladyship of frail porcelains and old crinolines, beautifully desirous of lifting me to prescience. I said——

"What do you think my real job is? You must have some idea."

"It'll come to you in time. You see . . . we're not allowed to *tamper*."

She bit at her beads and looked into the fire.

What could she mean, tamper? And who was We?

"That sort of answer leaves me worse at sea than ever."

"I know. And I'll help. I might make you think that I'll do it for the magazine. Well, perhaps I shall. But it's bigger than that. It's got to be bigger. People who have a terrific work to do in this world are never prepared for it by crass answers to conundrums. You see, people usually receive from life just about what they're ready for . . . or rather, have made adjustments to receive. But I'll tell you the truth—you're never going to make those adjustments till you've met with a woman who fills your whole life. No, I don't mean that. Put it the other way around. Till you fill a woman's whole life."

My face must have shown my morosity of spirit. Mary said quickly, "Oh don't take it so hard. There's never a life that sails entirely to one course or fails to put in at many ports that it never expects to visit. However, do you know what ports you want to reach? Few men do! The more delicately organized they are, the more terrible their vagueness. But you must get submerged in something. You've got to know a woman to whom you're so tremendously important that her life has no room for anything else."

"I'm happier without bothering with it," I said. It was a callow sort of statement. "Clever women are an annoying distraction and the other kind are . . . obnoxious on principle."

"How many really clever women have you ever known?" She was smiling sagely.

"At least one."

"What happened?"
"The time was out of joint."
Mary said, "A truly clever woman is clever enough not to let a man take note that she's clever. It's a secret with herself." She arose as a signal that at last I could go. "Tomorrow you bring me all the story manuscripts you've got on hand. I want to look them over. After all, there's plenty of time to discuss the philosophy of romance."
"I'd planned to go back to California next week."
She pursed those delicately molded lips. "Don't you think you're worth it to yourself, to try to find out whether or not you truly *want* to go?" . . .

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

CALIFORNIA interlude! . . .

How could I know that on the Sabbath night which I thus spent for the first time in Mary's apartment, a strange thing was happening in distant California? As it is chronologically appropriate, let me insert it as it was later told me although I was in no wise a participant in it. ¶ That evening in Pasadena held the lure of Elysium. The sky was clear cyanite with palm fronds etched sharply. The air held an edge. Headlights of motor cars glinted on pavements as clean as the floors of a well-ordered house. Down from the Nurse's home of City Hospital came three women in white uniforms. One wore a shoulder-cape that fell below her knees.
The trio walked along under murmuring pepper trees. In and out through shadows cast from the arc lamps they wended their way, past low-eaved bungalows built for loads of roses, down across Fair Oaks and Raymond Avenue, along California Street, up the grade to Marengo.
The woman in the center was taller than the others. She seemed conscious of her height and sought to avoid it, bowing her shoulders. She was agile and rangy as a mountain doe in April. The riot of her softly dressed hair marked out her features, resolution tempered. She walked as one who had fended for herself, seized her opportunities, opened her own doors to manifest achievement, snapped her strong fingers at both success and failure. A long stride, a sure grasp, a rapacious consummation, withal a sure tenderness when tenderness was merited—such was her caste and the role of her errand. She walked with two companions and

their frequent laughter blended with night xylophones of katydids. And yet she walked as one who had ever walked alone. She walked alone literally when her two companions left her at a street intersection. Thereupon she quickened her step. She turned at length into Wilson Avenue. Into a darkened bungalow she went, opened the door, snapped on the lights. Crossing to the stairs, she mounted to a chamber.

Swinging off her cape, she was about to cast it on the bed's white counterpane when she seemed to pause. Listening! Her tall body stiffened. Was she hearing a Voice that vaguely addressed her? Her gray eyes showed disquiet. Electrically a change came over the woman. She pulled out a suitcase and swung it to a trunk top. Hurriedly she emptied the contents of drawers. She took down the frocks that hung in the closet. She filled the suitcase, she filled the tray in the top of the trunk. Faster she worked, as though racing Time, besting by her efforts something that was imminent.

The room was denuded of personal belongings, even to small pictures that hung upon its walls. She fastened the baggage. The Voice that had spoken soundlessly had said, "Leave here at once. . . . Get out tonight . . . now . . . *now!*" Or was it a voice? Many times in her life such warnings had come to her . . . they were always spoken suddenly and when not expected.

She carried her bag belowstairs, left money for her rent upon the table, wrote a note for the family that was obviously at church. Her trunk would be sent for. Forth from the bungalow she hastened, carrying a suitcase from which a ribbon dangled. Up California Street she made her way. Where was she going? She could only conjecture.

The suitcase was heavy and presently it slowed her. At the corner of Marengo Avenue she came to a wall along a low embankment. She halted uncertainly and set down the suitcase. Was it a foolish thing to do—leaving that boarding place? Had subconscious caprice been the urge for her behavior?

She stood beneath the enfolding fronds of a palm tree. She had nowhere to go. Whoever would receive her? But the night continued calm. Automobiles purred past her. She raised her eyes to the star-studded heavens, each star a deft jewel. At length she moved onward. Had those stars reassured her? . . .

She crossed Marengo Avenue as one who might have had a friendly counsellor with her and walked up a lawn to the door of a bungalow. A softly-toned reading lamp burned inside the window. She mounted the

deep stone veranda and her fingers found the bell. Why that house of all others? Until that fraught interlude under the palm fronds she had not been aware of this bungalow's existence. A frail woman with sweet blue eyes in a care-lined face, answered the doorbell. The girl in the nurse's cape, with the head of rioting hair, addressed her as one who might have known her always—

"Have you a room to rent in this house?"

"Why . . . yes," the other answered, "however did you know?"

"I was sent here by a . . . friend."

"It must have been Miss Winslow. She only gave up this room this afternoon. My husband's work takes him off on the road. I rent two rooms, to have someone here for company."

"Might I see the room at once, please?"

The motif of the living room was deep russet and walnut, the chairs and the divan done in brown mohair. It was a broad, low, restful room, a fireplace at the west end, a piano at the other. Once the door was closed on the night, the applicant's nervousness left her.

"I'm Helen Hansmann," she introduced herself. "I'm a nurse at the Hospital."

"I'm Mrs. Leon Shaw. And this is my son Billie. And my daughter Marjorie."

Billie Shaw consisted mostly of elbows, knees, and freckles. Marjorie was a dark-eyed brunette, slightly the older. Mrs. Shaw continued—

"I only rent the two front bedrooms. One of them is taken on a sort of permanent arrangement by an author-friend of ours, a man named Pelley. Perhaps you've heard of him. He works in Hollywood when he's in California. Just now he's in New York. He mayn't be back for weeks. He may walk in before tomorrow night."

The name meant nothing to the nurse. She wished to see the room and unpack her suitcase.

"I can't understand how you knew about the room," Mrs. Shaw said later, "I've never offered it for rent publicly."

The other laughed raggedly to cover her nervousness. "I was *sent here*," she repeated. "Someday I'll explain it. I don't quite understand it myself yet. But . . . those things do happen."

"Isn't she funny!" commented Marjorie in the kitchen, from the yardstick wisdom of her seventeen summers.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

NOBODY ever remembers who writes a magazine story. The story may be recalled, but its author remains a Name.

Two hundred and twenty published narratives—fiction enough to fill thirty volumes of the ordinary novel length—was my record in the period when I made my living by popular writing.

I had mastered my craft, and knew it. There were four different text-books on the American short story containing specimens of my work, acclaimed as examples of dramatic construction so perfect that college students must analyze them as part of their courses in English. I could command a hundred dollars an hour for every hour that I would apply myself to my typewriter and engage in composition. Not once in those thirty volumes had I ever plagiarized from myself or used the same plot twice. I had traveled a long way from those nights on Jefferson Avenue when I hastened home from *The Banner* office for long evenings of typing and perfecting my technique.

Nobody ever remembers who writes a magazine story, I say. I have encountered hundreds of persons who have not forgotten the small-town chronicles of Sam Hod and his partner while conducting *The Daily Telegraph* in the mythical hamlet of Paris, Vermont. And uniformly the stories that I so produced after meeting Mary are those which people mention as outstanding in their memories. Such narratives as *The Face at the Window, The Man Who Lived in Eternity Now, Life is to Find Out, The Man Who Believed in God, Ask Any Father, Nellie Stover's Great Moment, The Continental Angle,* and *An Eagle Flies the Night,* brought such approbation from magazine readers that out of a poll taken at one time by the publishers of *The American,* my work drew fifty per-cent of the votes, the other fifty being scattered among a score of contemporaries. I do not write thus to indulge my own bombast. I write to give credit for such a metamorphosis to the very noble gentlelady who forthwith became my literary shepherdess.

Mary proved to be one of those unique and all-too-rare mentors for a writing-man, who could not concoct a plot of her own to save her lovely soul from the pit of the grotesque. But her sense of what was appropriate and exquisite in the work of another lifted her above the role of an editress and made her a Minerva only lacking an Olympus. She had a strange

knack of pouncing on some literary exercise that I might have consigned to the wastebasket and exclaiming, "You've got something there! . . . don't let it get past you!" while her finger went unerringly to the slightest sag in quality. And her kindness was commensurate. No matter how bedimmed her eyes with work or worry, or how pained her sweet spirit, she always had time for the eager perusal of a manuscript that contained the least merit. Her supreme joy was in discussing a literary creation before ever the words commenced to flow on paper. Long after we had arrived at the brother-and-sister stage of professional *camaraderie*, I would often leap from my chair in her apartment with the exclamation, "Mary, I've got an idea!" and I would proceed to describe some inspirational flash that under her cooperating criticism would presently be spread before two million readers in ways that not infrequently altered their lives. I have hundreds of such attestments.

It is difficult to write baldly of the friendship that now followed between this lady and myself. It became more than a counselling in literary technique. Our tastes and inclinations were so delicately in common, we worked and played so much together in that subsequent interlude, we each had quandaries in our private affairs that invited interchange of confidences, that as the weeks and months went past each began to assume the aspect of an institution in the life of the other. Later, when I stepped Through the Door and knew lambent Reality, it was this same sister-companion who kept her strong hand steady on my wrist, who cautioned me to splendors beyond earthly finding out. A truly great woman! It is a topsy-turvy world, when such as she, with her great gift to pour out on befuddled humanity in the throes of would-be artistic expression, could not have arrived at the patronage to permit her to give of herself to the utmost. A five-and-ten-cent-store heiress may have twenty million dollars to squander on some titled fop who never did an honest day's work in his life, and a soul like Mary's is compelled to keep a hand on the pulse of the commercial in order to be able to function at all.

I did not return to California that week. I did not return to California until 1926. Something besides an interest in my newly-found counsellor was responsible for a delay that later grew to months. I dropped into Larry Giffen's office one noontime and he said, "Do you want to do a special job that may get you in right with some worth while people down in Washington?"

"What sort of job?"

"A movie man named Berman came up from the Capital last week where

Somehow he got thrown in touch with officials on the Federal Penal Board. He learnt that there's agitation on in Congress for proposed legislation to install a more humane work-program in our federal penitentiaries—the prisoners are going screwy for want of work to fill their time. So the idea is, that if a film could be made and released, bringing to public attention the conditions in such prisons, it might speed such legislation through the House and Senate."

"What am I supposed to do?"

"I think I can get you the job of writing the necessary story. Anyhow, you can find out the details by going down and interviewing the late President Harding's brother-in-law—who heads up the penal board."

It was curiosity to engage in a new exploit that made me take the train that night for Washington in company with the scenario editor of the outfit that might later sponsor the film in production. I have never ceased to marvel that the incidents in life that have thrown the biggest switches have been those that introduced themselves "as a cloud no bigger than a man's hand"—coming into my career as from a tangent and certainly not planned with malice aforethought. I was confronted now by such an incident. We put up at The Castleton for the balance of that night and sauntered forth next morning to interview Mr. Votaw. His office was located in the old Department of Justice Building on the corner of Vermont and K Street.

I discovered him to be a ponderous, gray-haired man with a pile-driver jaw but a gentle voice, as befitted one who had stores of energy kept in well-controlled reserve. "I'm going to turn you over to one of my younger men," he said, when our conference on the proposed film had extended till long past lunch-time. "He's better versed then I am, in just what should be filmed."

He pressed a button.

Presently I was being introduced to a youngish, bald-headed, crisply spoken person whose contact with intricate federal matters being pursued behind Department of Justice walls left little to be conjectured. I quickly discovered that he was a reader of *The American Magazine* and conversant with my writings. Late that night I found myself ensconced in a secluded corner of the National Press Club with this Department of Justice executive and a friend—a Washington press correspondent now gathered to his forebears.

"Huh," exclaimed this D-J man, ale making him talkative, "it isn't a film of conditions in our federal penitentiaries that this country needs. It's a

film of the work being pursued by a wholly different tribe of burglars who ought to be in our pens but aren't. My gawd, Pelley, what a fellow in your position couldn't do to all this skulduggery if you'd get the bald facts and then turn loose your pen."
"And get us all hung!" exclaimed the Capital pressman.
"What sort of skulduggery?" I prompted my new friend.
"You tell him, Hal. Tell him what you were growling at, this noontime."

HAL cast a nervous glance around to make certain that no one lurked within earshot. "Young Teddy Roosevelt shot his mouth off up in the Army & Navy Club last night. Hell's going to be to pay. It may pop any moment. Secretary Fall's gummed up in a deal with Harry Sinclair and Old Man Doheny, giving away the nation's oil reserves for them two magnates to exploit. I'm telling you, Pelley, the country's due for a rocking that'd make the Frisco earthquake sound like a mere pavement-rumble under a passing furniture van. Still, that's not the point."
"No? What is the point?"
"When it comes . . . the Teapot Dome explosion . . . don't let yourself be fooled. There's a gang down here fixing to promote that scandal to the limit and it's deeper than enemy sharpshooting at two oilmen. There'll be something else they're up to, but the country never'll know it unless someone like yourself 'stumbles on it by accident.' "
"Go on, I'm listening."
"You'll hear a great fanfare and ballyhoo about stealing the nation's oil. It'll be a yowling smokescreen for something far rottener. Don't ask me how I know. We correspondents get around. But . . . I've got a hunch, let's put it . . . that there's a condition over in the Treasury . . . there's a looting going on over there in the redemption of various issues of Liberty Bonds . . . which if brought to the attention of the American people might crash the whole structure of our federal finance!"
I glanced from face to face. Here were hard-headed and somewhat cynical men of political Washington, who did not treat with gossipings or backyard hocus-pocus. Whereupon one of them continued—
"Harding discovered it, just after he took office. I understand he had twenty crack investigators running it down and proving it up."
"What did they find?"
"Well, it hasn't come to light yet. But it may. In case it *should* come to light, it can be discounted and made of small interest provided there's a bigger cannonade going on over something like this fuss between the

Navy and Harry Sinclair. So the thing to do is to rivet the nation's attention on this scandal in oil, make Secretary Denby the goat, and then if this Liberty-Bond mess gets out from undercover, it'll come in anti-climax and end up a dud."

"Tell me about this 'Liberty-Bond mess.' "

"As I get it, the Treasury Gang has had a bunch of burglars in there, paying off Liberty Bonds and then putting them back into circulation. I understand there's an ungodly mess of fake bonds going out as well. They travel the circle and come back for redemption. The Gang sees they're paid again, and pockets the swag."

"You mean they're not being redeemed and cancelled?"

"That's the lay as I get it. And no one to check on 'em. Somebody carried word of the steal to Harding and he put twenty crack investigators on the job. How much has been looted, God only knows."

"And what did Harding find out?"

"Harding didn't find out anything. Harding's DEAD," said my informant with a suggestive glance at his companion.

"I'm telling you, Pelley," the other carried on, "there are things going on behind the scenes of this government so damned sizable and audacious that not one man in ten thousand has got the brains to grasp it."

"Such *as*?" I demanded. I was getting an education. . . .

"There's a crowd of us here who still have some decency and patriotism left, who've come to accept that a crowd of Jew financiers—mostly from London, Paris, and Frankfurt, the Jake Schiff mob!—have put their heads together to take this country for a ride. If somebody don't stop 'em they'll ruin our credit system, crash the stock market, beggar all our people, and then take over our natural resources exactly as we all thought Germany would do if we failed to win the war."

Jews again! My companions ordered more drinks all around. . . .

"The hell of it is," continued my informant, "they'll set about accomplishing it so smoothly, so adroitly, it'll never be suspected till it's too late to help it. They'll do it under the disguise of being big-shot American citizens engaged in the most ordinary political and financial maneuvers. But they'll *do* it. And they'll probably blame it on something like 'world-wide economic conditions'."

I interrupted to ask for specific names. I got them. Plenty.

"We were jimmied into the war and added our resources to the Allies in France. That made the war end wrong—at least for the mob in Germany. It compelled Germany to pony up for the cost of it. Germany, of course,

had no way of ponying up, excepting to tax her industries and the fortunes of her magnates. And who were those magnates? The same sweet Jew bunch that we've got right here in Washington. But instead of fighting the terms of the peace treaty, or letting themselves be bankrupted by the reparations, they set their agents going in America and get the cash for such payments as the Allies force them to make, out of the pockets of the very people who are insisting on collections. Is that neat or isn't it?"

"It's neat," I agreed. I was doing a lot of thinking. . . .

"Do you think those big Yiddishers over on the Continent are submitting to any confiscation of their German assets to meet reparations payments, and all that tommyrot, like a lot of spanked school kids? Don't be a sap. For every dollar that the United States government wrests away from them, they can put their agent-burglars to work over on this side of the Atlantic and take two out of our Federal Reserve for transmission back to them. They'll pay across our share of the German war reparations with our own money—if they pay 'em at all. There's other ways of squaring the war, or even being recompensed for a licking, than by open demands laid down in a peace treaty."

"That brings up the Jewish Question in a different guise," I said. "I encountered it first during my war-hitch in Siberia. Later in Hollywood I've heard plenty about what the Jews are going to do to Christian America if we give them the opening."

"*Going* to do!" exclaimed my loquacious friends. "Now that we've blabbed this much, I'll tell you some more. The Federal Reserve system is nothing but a cunning Jew trick to collect all our Gentile money into bank pools everywhere in the nation so that instead of being handy to liquidate panics, it can be conserved in reservoirs of wealth to finance Jew maneuvers all over the universe. Oh I know they put a lot of Gentiles at the head of the Federal Reserve. But that's only camouflage. They're only there as fall-guys. I'm telling you there's an Unofficial Government being set up here in Washington. Every man who's in a key position, or worth his powder and shot as an Influence, either has his alter-ego in this Invisible Government, or has an agent of that Invisible Government assigned to him to see that he performs as his Jew bosses want him. He may not know it. He may act in sincerity according to his convictions. But if you knew the big-shots here in Washington who are operating right now by the blackmail that's put on them, it'd jolt your back teeth. The whole thing's a steal. And rapidly getting worse."

"I wouldn't be surprised."

"Don't take my word for anything. Dig in and investigate. You're a free lance. A bird like you can do it."

"I haven't given much attention to Washington till now. I haven't many contacts here."

"We'll give you the contacts—all the contacts you want. Your real difficulty won't be the accuracy or size of your findings. It'll be in getting anyone to believe that such a plot is real. Average citizens have little one-cell minds. Most of 'em are too scrambled over their own affairs, making a living, to have time or inclination for the government's troubles. That's why the steal is so criminally easy. Besides, Julius Caesar said a long time ago that it's difficult to get the popular mind to believe that which at heart it doesn't want to hear——"

"——and don't forget Machiavelli," broke in the other.

"What about Mac?"

"He put it, 'How perilous it is to free a people who prefer to be slaves.' "

¶ "Well, anyhow, the size of it is the perfect protection for what's now in progress. Imagine trying to get the rank and file of our people to believe that there's a European Gang operating right here in their Capital, looting the country blind, fixing things so that inside of ten years twenty million people may be workless, banks closed or wrecked, business slowed down so that everybody's broke, everyone gutted in their properties and securities . . . imagine asking the American people to believe that such a gang's operating here for exactly that end, promoting it daily, and that it stands every chance in the world of putting it across. Imagine it, I tell you. Yet watch the next ten years. *You're going to see it happen!*"

The hands of the clock went around to nine, ten, eleven o'clock. Still we sat talking. Using the vernacular, "here were men who knew their stuff." And I made the most of that epochal evening.

"Where does Cal Coolidge sit in all this?" I asked, around midnight.

Hal laughed crassly. "Asking my opinion, Coolidge came cheese-paring into his administration and is being allowed to have a thrifty, untampered-with hitch while the schemers watch to see whether the Liberty-Bond filch is coming to light. They may let Coolidge run till the end of his term with nothing of more consequence turning up than this Teapot Dome stink. But you watch the man who follows him. See if mysterious antics in finance and diplomacy don't start up at once. See if a wail doesn't bust out from Germany sooner or later, pleading for a moratorium on the war debts. Sure! The burglars who've used our Federal Reserve money pools to finance all their cockeyed Jew schemes overseas, won't give back a cent of

what they've fanaggled from us by 'loans' . . . and if my guess isn't wrong, we're only a couple of presidents away from a complete alteration in our government. The Jews 'll come in, and the Gentiles 'll go *out*. If Jews come in, it means we get Communism."

All the old Siberian sickness came back, as I sat in that club and heard the plan unfolded. That young Russian mother against the pillar in the station at Irkutsk! . . .

"I bet you," went on the D-J man, "that they contrive to get our country into such a financial and economic plight—the way the Federal Reserve is now shoveling out our dough abroad—that a nitwit Congress will stand for anything, assent to any kind of legislation, just to bring relief. Somebody's got to do something about all this, Pelley, or sooner or later our nation's due to crash. And when a nation crashes, *it means revolution*. You say you were in Russia. Then you've seen what I'm promising."

"I'm not big enough to do it," sighed Hal with a hiccough. "But sooner or later shomebody musht!"

What were the Big Drums that beat so suddenly and portentously in my spirit?

WAS ALL this motion-picture business more pattern for my Tapestry? Had I gone into this glamorous Hollywood sequence just to bring me to this table and have these two men sound a tocsin to my brevet? What was I to think, months and even years later, when I recalled that no film was ever made to create public sentiment for work in Federal prisons? The project never materialized, because Congress suddenly made the required appropriation and the photoplay was not required as national propaganda.

At the time, I thought that I had taken my Washington trip for nothing, that the episode was another of those wild-goose chases all too frequently attendant on movie erraticisms. But how else could I have had certain aspects of foreign conspirings—if conspirings they were—brought to my attention positively and authentically?

I spent three days in Washington. I made some of the contacts which my friends had suggested. I found out enough to know that the menace they had talked about was by no means chimerical.

Two weeks later the Teapot Dome scandal exploded with a roar, splashing hot oil from Montana to New Mexico. Whether the ensuing scandal had anything to do with covering up irregularities rampant in our Treasury,

I had no means of knowing. Today I have my doubts. But the balance of what they told me I later made good use of. It was my opening sequence in that gigantic battle which I have since waged with these alien despoilers—with no quarter given or taken—which has already cost the country two congressional investigations in endeavors to destroy me, and which continues at this writing with an ever quickening fury.

I made contacts on that trip which have lasted to the present. Before it was proper to do anything about them, however, I had revelations of quite another character coming to unfold me . . .

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

IN the early autumn of 1926 I went to California.

I had begun to do my first real thinking about myself that was not introspection. What was to be the outcome of all this dashing about, this putting together of organizations in caprice, and rending them asunder, this hectic striving always to get up near Lillian's big drums without knowing the meanings of their resonance even if I came on them? I wrote short stories and made money. I wrote books and made money. I wrote motion-picture scenarios and made money. My pursuit of experience carried me into every corner of America, among every class and caste of people.

Yet all of it was wandering. I started my Exodus from Bondage after leaving the St. Johnsbury hospital. I had not yet entered my Land of Promise. ❧ ❧

It was a novelist's business, I maintained, to mirror human life truthfully and yet insofar as possible, inspirationally. So I saw no merit in wasting time writing a story, or asking a reader to waste his time reading a story, purely for that elusive and badly prostituted thing that is called Entertainment. There should always be something permanent created and imparted that justifies the effort in a spiritual sense in both instances. But even inspiration flags when romancing spiritually means ever looking through a magic mirror into that which may seem unattainable personally.

¶ Three times in my life I had climbed to pinnacles of what the materialistic world would pronounce to be success. I had known success in the factory with father, a purely industrial and commercial success. The fact that disaster had finally ousted me did not alter the circumstance

that we had set out to do something and had achieved it. What subsequently followed was outside of that endeavor. Nine years after the manipulated receivership of the tissue company I had stood on a mountain-height in Japan, so accredited in my profession that it had carried me into contact with most of the celebrities in the Asiatic theater of war. That second success had been mental, intellectual, even as the first had been materialistic, physical. Conditions had been precipitated upon my return to Vermont that made duplication of my former efforts untenable. I had another type of mountain-height to climb, after touching the valley's lowest point in Brightlook Hospital. Well again, I had climbed it anew. I was nearing the top. This next arrival must be a spiritual apex.

And yet I was only thirty-six years old.

In other words, I had lived only one-half my three-score years and ten, albeit I had packed into each of my nine-year cycles as much adventuring and experiencing, as much drama and financial recompense, as my father had known throughout his whole life. Now what I wanted to know was, after achieving to affluence again and feeling that I had sense and ability enough to stay there—if Kismet would permit it—how was I to spend the thirty-four years of my span still to follow?

My children were growing up and I saw them frequently. I was paying Marion generous amounts to keep up her establishment on Morningside Heights with naught to do the clock around but care for her offspring. Mrs. Holbrook lived with her daughter and assisted her in doing this. No holiday or Christmas season went by that I did not visit with them—and observe with somewhat of a hollow feeling in my heart that outside of my financial provision I was no more essential to their developing lives than the Empire State Building or the George Washington Bridge. Adelaide was in high school now, and Bill was getting ready to enter Mount Hermon up in Northfield, Massachusetts.

Returning to California therefore, for the fourth or fifth time since I had gone out to Chaney at the filming of *The Hunchback,* I knew a disquiet in my spirit that was not as former moods, nor yet dissatisfaction from previous spiritual impoverishments. The world had become a trek, with occasional wells and watering places, true enough, but with no important announcements awaiting me at stopping places. Few really cared whether I tarried or departed. I despised people who expected to have things done for them, to have their ways made easy, who hungered and thirsted for spiritual nourishment and then deliberately slapped the Master Givers by their own selfish antics. How then could I invite or assure myself

sanctuary along that trek, if I never paused long enough anywhere to build up a confidence in those around me in my ultimate accomplishment, a desire to serve them, or in my wishes to be considered as a workman worthy of his hire, for the sake of the work and not for the payment?

I KNEW that I wanted something terribly, but could not describe it, even to myself. It could not be woman as Woman; I knew plenty of women, and had been raised, encouraged, and inspired by them—as well as plunged all too frequently by them into the deepest bogs of miseries. It could not be a home as a place, that I wanted, because my heart was a restless, unboundable thing. I could no more be satisfied with staying in one place for any length of time, than I could have remained back in East Templeton and succeeded my father as a cobbler of shoes. It was not a dearth of companions, even male companions, that was gnawing at me—like the Spartan boy with the fox in his tunic—for I had but to step across the street in any city where life found me and announce myself, to be pleasantly surrounded with hosts of good fellows.

What I truly wanted, I tried to tell myself, was something with an enticement in it that truly was not boundable. I wanted a chalice to drink from that offered an elixir that my lips had never tasted. I sought a Great Thrill, but not the thrill of the worldly adventurer who climbs his mountain peaks simply to prove that he is immune from tumbling into chasms. I was restless as the sea is restless because it *is* the sea and cannot be otherwise. No one had ever satisfied my subliminal urges such as had not been met by Lillian's maxims, atoned for by Marion's motherhood, complemented by Beryl's loyalties, appraised by Mary's altruisms. Life was becoming a surfeit of emotions without a single emotion predominating. It was a hodge-podge of *being* without *knowing*. It was an effervescent nostrum without a real headache for it to assuage. It was not that I pitied myself in this period, so much as it was that I puzzled myself. The words of my Capital acquaintances had disturbed me strangely. I wanted to believe that I had something to do in a public way that might be worthwhile in a civic sense; but to awaken to the actualities of a militant crusading at that time was beyond me.

I could not be Selfless.

I was all subjective and no objective. I measured the world, and life, and life's attainments, by the precept, "What is there in it for me?"

So I hungered.

Whenever I had been out on the Coast for the previous three or four years

I had made my home with Mr. and Mrs. Leon V. Shaw, friends of long-standing, at 553 South Marengo Avenue, in Pasadena. Leon at that time was traveling auditor for a finance company. His wife Matie, cruelly bedridden for long periods, kept the home for the two Shaw children. No matter how long I was absent in the East, my room and writing equipment were always in the order in which I had left them, for Matie was one of those calm, level-headed, compassionate women who have the full measure of motherly devotion to all who compose their households. She greeted me now, on my return from my latest and longest sojourn in New York, as I entered the Shaw house and made to go up to my long-accustomed quarters.

"We've had an addition to our family while you've been gone this time," she informed me. "I didn't want to be alone in the house with no grown folks about, so I rented the room across the hall from yours to a trained nurse, Miss Hansmann. She's employed at the Hospital."

Billie Shaw, prototype of the American small boy from Maine to Texas, liberally freckled, entered with a whoop—his wire-haired Scottie wheezing behind him. When boy and pooch had been quieted, his mother continued, "If you haven't any dinner engagement tonight, I'd like to have you come to table with us. And Miss Hansmann also. It'll give you a chance to get acquainted."

At seven o'clock that evening I came down from abovestairs. A strange woman straightened from bending over Matie's newspaper by the reading light. ☙ ☙

"Come here, Bill Pelley," Matie ordered me. "This is Miss Hansmann. Wilhelmina, believe it or not but this is Bill Pelley."

We looked upon each other, this tall girl and I.

She said, "So *this* is Bill Pelley?" It was done rather whimsically. A hand to be remarked upon for its womanly strength was extended toward me. "How do you do?"

Of course I did very well, and said so. It seems to be the custom in conventional introductions. I likewise clasped the hand, sensed its capable vigor, relinquished it to its possessor, and made the bald assertion that all in all, for some reason never quite figured out, I was partial to trained nurses. In fact, without the slightest malice aforethought, I had contrived to make the heroines of two of my books trained nurses.

The thing which at the moment was befuddling me however, making my comments so asinine, upsetting me in a breathless consternation, was the recognition arrived at in the instant that the Hansmann person had

straightened . . . somehow or other my former mentor, Lillian, had arrived to take up her residence at Shaws!

The two women, in appearance, might have been taken for twin sisters. This nurse had Lillian's height, her litheness, the same old-gold hair—done almost identically with that twist at the neck, the same pretty shoulders slightly bowed from weariness. But this girl before me was not clad in a smock. From her neck to her knees she was clad in the most beauteous of all feminine apparel, the free-falling cape of the Red Cross nurse, a fold of it cast back to reveal her supple figure in snowy-white uniform.

¶ "Well! . . . you've been a long time getting here," Miss Hansmann said presently. "Mrs. Shaw's talked about no one else but Bill Pelley from the night I first came here. I'd begun to believe you were really a myth."

IT was Lillian speaking—with the same shapely mouth, the same slate-gray eyes, the same characterful nose, the same graceful neck. The lids over this lady's eyes were heavier, the eyes deeper sunken, the complexion more delicate and given to rich flushing.

A woman who still blushed!

Miss Hansmann went abovestairs to prepare herself for dinner. I marveled at how it would seem to be going and coming in the same house thereafter with this nurse who must ever appear to me as the impersonation of the Big Drums, Golden Moments Girl, now five years back in memory. I did not look at the date on the calendar. I had no means of knowing what a stupendous page in my hectic life's record I had turned in those simple moments of trite introduction. I had simply come banging downstairs in a familiar home, found a feminine stranger present, acknowledged a presentation, and been confused by her likeness to someone I had known.

Miss Hansmann descended presently in a Prussian-blue dinner frock. We were placed opposite one another at table and we spread our snowy napkins. Grace was said. Matie served the dinner.

"We're past the age of calling her 'Miss Hansmann'," began our landlady, as the children clamored for choice bits of the roast. "I'm going to tell you that her real name is Minna Helen—not Wilhelmina. That's the name the soldiers gave her in Siberia, I understand. Sister Wilhelmina, she says the war prisoners called her."

"Siberia!" I gasped.

Strange indeed, it was, that four years bygone I had made the heroine of my second novel as Red Cross nurse who had served in Siberia!



"Matie called me over and said: 'This is Miss Hansmann—'"

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"Oh, I forgot," Matie chattered onward. "You were in Siberia too, weren't you, Bill Pelley?"
"Where in Siberia did you serve?" I asked my new acquaintance.
"Moscow," she responded, "before the revolution. Then Omsk. Most of my time I spent at Irkutsk."
"Good Lord!" I exclaimed. "When did you go in?"
"I went over with the first contingent of American nurses out of Bellevue Hospital in New York. In 1914. We went from Italy up to Sweden. Then from Sweden into Russia. Most of my work was among the German prisoners."
"And when did you leave?"
"In 1917. With the Reds getting wilder there was small use to stay. But I was a long time getting home. I nursed in Peking, Honolulu——"
"You spoke of Omsk. How long were you there?"
"Not so very long. I was mainly the guest there of a Mr. and Mrs. George Smith."
It gave me my second jolt. "George Smith!"
"Did you meet the George Smiths?"
"Meet them!" My knife clattered floorward and I forgot to recover it. "George Smith was my buddy, coming out of Siberia in a freight-car."
Matie had to interject the usual banality that when all was said and done the proportions of this planet were on the whole diminutive.

THE meal after that was a wild splurge of war talk. Not since my return from Vladivostok had I met a person, man or woman, with whom I could chat of the war's eastern theater—with a single exception. One day in 1922 George Gleason—he of the pajamas—had looked me up in Manhattan and we had lunched in company. I went abovestairs later and brought down my war pictures. It was the reverse of meeting a friend from home in a dismal foreign land.
Minna Helen had pictures. Some of hers matched mine; the same faces were in both. Yet she had been out of Siberia for months before I had gone in.
Strange that she had been drawn to that home on Marengo Avenue, an unattached woman who had never been married, at this particular time. Were there little notches cut on the Subconscious that arranged such things—that told when we had stayed long enough in one place and should move somewhere else because friends we ever must meet in each new life are waiting to greet us? I lay in bed that night with my arms behind

my head and stared upward into darkness. Out in a magnolia tree a mocking-bird cried raucously. . . .

I had lived thirty-six years in the world, and known poverty, matrimony, international war. According to O. Henry, a man who has known these three has known all that there is to life—that counts! How much must I experience, with my life but half-way through?

Not once did I get it into my thinking that I might be training for something—something so big that my mind could not then grasp it. Life then was merely something to be lived—with its ups and downs—each day a fresh but hapless adventure. But always adventure, and with purpose lacking. Days, noon-times, nights! How many of them—especially the nights—had I lived, and wondered where all of it was coming out! Anyhow, it was tantalizing.

Its departures and its landfalls were so *sudden!*

I fell asleep. . . .

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

FOR the first time in thirty-six years, I say, my life was becoming a stalemate on principle. It seemed real enough in its enticements. It beckoned me with glamorings to attempt this and that. Always when I stalked the lambent rainbow of material desire, and even came up to the Pot of Gold at the end of it and seized it, it was always a rainbow—a kind of bright fog. ¶ What did life hold in the way of objectives that were really worthwhile? Success? What was Success? Marion would define it, and did define it, as the retention and conservation of accumulated winnings so that affluence and security were paramount factors in day to day existence. But no matter what arena or stratum such success was concerned with, Divine Discontent for some mysterious reason was always at the end of it. Thus far and no farther. Always there must arrive that stage of sensation that what was being done was traveling an orbit. And an orbit was a stalemate. As soon be a squirrel and spin about a wheel. If you won and retained a million dollars, then you had to apply yourself to a treadmill of recurring happenings, to conserve it. You had to live up to the role of possessing it. Was it any different, having a million dollars in your bank account, or a hundred dollars in your pocket? You could do more things with the million, influence more lives, command a wider prestige. That was only dealing in larger composites of numerals. You still played the role of the possessor of $100, if that was all that your pocket contained. A role, a role, always a role. It was the playing of that role that mattered.

Suddenly it occurred to me to ask *why* men should pursue this curious thing, Success, at all? Was not the whole idea of success a sort of fetish, something that society had popularized, based on inferiority complexes and that drew its quota of devotees chiefly because it was considered the correct thing to do? Everybody pursued Success. Anyone who was not interested in pursuing it was "queer" or a vagrant. Nobody seemed to think very deeply about it. It was all a form of Keeping Up with the Joneses. And who were the Joneses, that they should be kept up with?

It began to appall me, what a lot of silly children playing with pretty pebbles, the major portion of the adult race was. The schoolboy fought over his pocket of marbles. Down in Wall Street ten thousand grown-up schoolboys fought over a different kind of marbles, called them dollars,

and locked them away in a steel vault at night. In Central Park a youth rigged a sailboat and put it on the water so that the breeze caught it and propelled it over to the basin's other side. On the broad Atlantic, Sir Thomas Lipton rigged a larger sailboat and put it on the water so that the breeze caught it and propelled it over to the basin's other side, and was hailed as a Great Sportsman—to get a big gold cup and his name in all the supplements for doing it, if his boat got over to the basin's other side ahead of all the other big boys' boats, which in Lipton's case was *never*. All of it was child's play. The whole human race was sporting with trifles —marbles, and gold dollars, and locomotives, and sailboats. What was the difference in the size of the thing, or the weight of the thing, or the value of the thing, or the numbers of things engaged in the accumulate? Still they were *things*, first, last, and all the time.

I began to see that even my paper in St. Johnsbury had been nothing but a plaything, a twenty-thousand dollar toy. When my toy had not run because two other boys had bent it during my absence at war so that it could not run, and I could not unbend it or fix it, I had let myself get downhearted temporarily because I was a "failure." Why not say as logically that if the sailboat tipped over with the boy on the Central Park basin, that the youth who rigged it and gave it a push had made a failure of his adolescence? Could *things*—possession of them no matter how brief or how long, command of them, employment of them, no matter for what purpose—dictate the success or failure of a sentient soul? Was there any real connection between a Thing and a Soul, whatsoever? Were they not made of different essences, evolved in two separate crucibles of values? ☙ ☙

I was struggling to acquire and compile a philosophy.

NEVERTHELESS, I had a canker in my heart. I had a hunger, an unidentified groping, for Complement and Balance, that also was part of an evolutionary sequence, an aspect of certain spiritual growing pains, that I could no more understand than I had understood the urges in my body when I took Mabel's arm in going home from church on those nights in faraway York State. I had my moments of fierce rebellion at Kismet because I had been "cheated" in the item of parents that should always keep older and wiser than I. I wanted mother to be forever the exhaustless mentor that she had been to me in the days of the East Templeton parsonage. That it was the agenda of life, for me to outstrip her, that children by the very nature of growth and social evolution must—

age by age—proceed further than the parents and become wiser, left me with a helpless, rudderless feeling. I wanted someone to come along and take charge of me because I felt the need of supervision *as* supervision. Really it was Polarity for which I was famishing. And now the need for it was vicious.

As often I changed this groping for Polarity into castigation of Marion because she had not mentored me as Lillian had mentored me, not recognizing that in time, had Lillian continued to be with me, or I with her, she would have reached her capacity for mentoring, as I responded to it in its fullness. Then she too would have epitomized Something that in turn would have become abstract.

I had not yet fully come to realize that there truly are no such things as Mentors. There are only people who impart to us what they know, and are willing to pass it on to us in turn, within the limits of their knowledge. They are mentors only while they are exhausting themselves upon us. Then they become just ordinary people once again.

Mother, Marion, Lillian, Beryl, Mary, these women mentors of their periods served out to me what they had to give, so richly. All honor unto them. To the extent that they emptied themselves, I stand in their debt. The fault was within myself, if fault existed anywhere. I absorbed from them, added their counsels to my stock of mental or spiritual goods, did traffic, and then groped for the heavier and more significant increment. My very capacity to absorb, was my cross. I wanted to find someone who was inexhaustible in what he or she had to give—to sit at such person's feet forever. But I did not know that such a person does not exist in a world of circumscribed mortality. Wisdom of that sort reaches us from quite a different reservoir. It never occurred to me to ask why anyone should be obliged to mentor me at all—or what I was doing to mentor someone else. Probably I was mentoring a whole lot of people as I went along through life, particularly by the *media* of my fictional expressions. But none of it was deliberately or productively conscious. It is only conscious mentoring that counts. Mentoring that spells sacrifices. Mentoring of the soul.

So I fumbled and I fumed. I wrote hectically when I wrote at all. I threw myself at Hollywood and ate of the fleshpots.

My purpose in detailing all this psycho-analytical data may be obscure. I aver that I was preparing for something without knowing it. These actions and reactions were subconscious stepping-stones to a permanent and splendorful philosophy that was subsequently to evolve for me in all

its fecund rhapsodies. I want my mature reader to know just what my personal evolvements were, physically, mentally, spiritually, and socially, that in a later sequence he may perhaps read into my *denouement* something of hope for his own emulations. For the moment let it pass.

It is sufficient to say that I was restless with a gnawing, groping frenzy that was ever getting more sizable and vicious. One moment I wanted to project a great newspaper chain from New Jersey to Utah and dynamite humanity from its virulent phlegmatisms. The next I would be certain that the acme of all spiritual aspirings would be reached if I secured a divorce and married a woman like Mary. That is, assuming that I could find one and that she would take me as a husband. Such oscillations at times were breath-taking. The engine under the hood of my mortality was pounding dangerously now—well-nigh banging my chassis to pieces. Mary gave me everything my spirit longed for in an intellectual and esthetic way. She was the epitome of understanding in the lengthy letters that she wrote to me in Hollywood. I used the dear girl as victim on a hundred nights to vent my divine dissatisfactions upon vicariously in a private and personal correspondence equally as voluminous. In Mary's case, however, an unknown quantity was lacking. The matrix was there but in minute detail the castings would not fit. Besides, Mary had builded her career separately. There was association between us. There could never be a fusion.

At last even Mary's literary counselling ceased to have vitality. When I wrote fiction, it was done mechanically.

"Not quite up to your former quality, Pelley," editors would tell me. And for the first time in a dozen years, my manuscripts were beginning to be rejected. "Aren't you, perhaps, writing too much? Try less quantity of output."

Either that, or movies were ruining me, they said. "The screen has spoiled more than one writer of talent," Karl Harriman told me. "Don't let it get you, Bill."

The screen, indeed!

DURING this period I had three male confidants, each one of them significant, each one in a separate department of my spiritual peregrinations. The first was Lon Chaney. The second was Grant Dolge. The third was Eddie Eckels. My relationships with Lon are already of comment. Grant Dolge was a Hollywood screen-talent casting agent, of whom more presently. Eddie Eckels was executive "gag man" in the

publicity department of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's Culver City studios.

"I know what ails you, feller," said Eddie one noontime as I sat in his office on the picture lot. "You haven't yet tumbled to the fact that the business of creating and promoting can be a career within itself. What you need is a field where you can just manufacture to your heart's content, and having manufactured, pass on and leave the product to bohunks on principle." ❧ ❧

Here was a philosophy of rampant materialism that had never occurred to me before. I created and promoted, and then I let myself become morose and at odds with destiny because I could not remain with what I had created and let it take the aspects of mechanical functioning.

Eddie was a dynamic personage in his late thirties, whom once seen and identified would never be confused with anyone else. I had first met him in Manhattan when I had been conducting The Pelley Press and he had been editor of *The Exhibitor's Trade Review*. He was a sandy-haired, bespectacled chap who banged about the Culver City "lot" in shirtsleeves and nonchalance, cap twisted around over one ear, who walked with a quick nervous stride and handled the exigencies of his job with a brain like a Gatling gun. He had one idea a minute—for thinking up tricks to sell pictures to exhibitors—and sometimes sixteen. He kept a dozen subordinates on the bounce, had three telephones on his desk—and all of them worked—and knew the movie racket as a surgeon knows anatomy.

"You're a promotin' fool, like I am," he continued. "You live to make jobs so other boobs can eat. The minute you've promoted something, and made jobs for a thousand palukas who don't grab off an original idea from New Year's to Christmas, your brains turn bolshevik on you. You just can't help it. Some of us are like that. We're not made to stick. We're made to originate."

"But where does it get us?"

"It doesn't get us anywhere. That's not the point. It's *being*—not doing. Don't you see the difference?"

I gave this due study. Was Eddie really right?

"Yeast doesn't 'get anywhere'," continued Eddie, "in a pan of bread, as yeast. The yeast might yammer, 'Where am I going?' The answer would be, 'Up with the bread.' While it mightn't satisfy the yeast, aspiring to go somewhere as the whole pan of dough, all the same it'd do its stuff and bread would appear in bakeries."

Eddie did not say this just as I have written it. In between each of those sentences he might have answered seventeen phone calls, made dates for

the personal appearances of ten movie stars at Firemen's Benefits, answered four rings from studio executives, eaten his luncheon from a paper napkin, and fired six subordinates for taking their jobs for granted.

"I've never looked at it in just that way," I said.

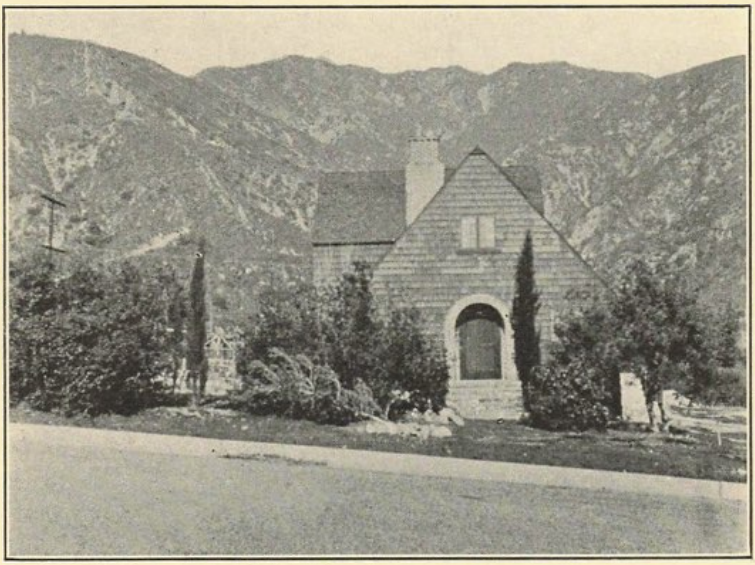
"Yeah, I know. I was in your muddle once. The minute I'd started something and got it running swell, I kicked it in the face. I finally doped it out that *originating,* whether it's a story masterpiece, a design for a carburetor, or opening a restaurant, is a profession in itself. Well, why not admit it? God Almighty has put certain angleworms into this can we call Life, equipped with just that talent—to give other bums jobs, to spell them for brains. I saw a squib in a paper the other day where Hank Ford back in Detroit claims that ninety-five percent of the human race is perfectly satisfied to pick up a piece of metal on one side of a stamping press, hold it under a machine, put a neat hole in it, and lay it on a pile on the other side. That's Work to them—their jobs, their lives. It never occurs to 'em where the piece of metal goes, or how it fits, or who makes the bolt that fits the hole, or what sort of a gas-crate comes from the works. Well, fellers like you and me get up the blueprints and set up the presses. With ten thousand slobs satisfied with jobs that earn 'em some jack and keep 'em in groceries, we snap off to the North Pole to see if we can't promote a new monument up there for all the explorers and liars who've made the trip, or mebbe open a string of hot-dog stands for those who come later to see if the first lot told the truth." He looked at me thoughtfully in one of his intervals of quiet. "I wonder," he mused, leaning back in his always-broken swivel, with hands clasped across the top of his head, "what sort of high jinks would result in Promotion if two top-notch hams like us teamed up?"

"Teamed up!" I echoed, startled.

"Yeah. Suppose we formed a partnership and did nothing else the clock around but just *promote!*"

"You mean you'd leave your high-priced job here?"

"Cripes, I'd leave my body in a bathtub and go walking around naked in my soul if it offered the chance for Bigger Creating. After all, what am I around this joint? Already this job is a lousy stalemate. Every film is just like every other film, only some are worse'n others. What can I do with it so that the exhibitor can sell it to the morons? Gags, gags, gags! I come in here at nine o'clock and think up gags till noon. Then I have my lunch—if that's what you call a Swiss with rye—and think up gags till dark. Call that a living? I'm telling you it's sheep-dip."



"We turned down Mount Curve Drive when my nurse friend suddenly exclaimed: 'There's a darling of a place. I wonder if it's for rent?' . . . 'This is my property,' I said. 'It's like Remembering Forward!' "

Here, I thought, was a kindred spirit. I cottoned to Eddie despite his clipped vocabulary.

"Grant Dolge wants to set up a Publicity Department for the actors he handles," I told Eddie one day later. "If we got fifty dollars a week from each of them, that would supply us with a seven-hundred-and-fifty dollar revenue four times a month to underwrite a lot more promotions."

"I'm on," Eddie snapped. "When do we start?"

So I have it to write, that I engaged in my first and only commercial partnership. Eddie and I turned Promotin' Fools. . . .

CHAPTER NINETEEN

EDDIE had been right. And yet he had been wrong. What afflicted me was this: The great cosmic coach, Kismet, had purposely and sagely trained me by a thousand experiences to engage in a mighty contest that was presently to open. I had known long and gruelling road-work in economic struggling. I had engaged in bag-punching with adversity, with domestic quandary, with romantic aridity. I had spent heart-breaking years in shadow boxing with philosophical hypotheses and sub-conscious idealizing of substantial attainment that could not be defined by tangible expletives. Now having brought myself to well-nigh perfect edge for The Battle of the Century, that epochal contest was being delayed. I could not locate the arena for my supreme exhibition. This promotional sparring with Eddie for a partner, might easily mean over-training, disastrously going stale. The metaphor is excellent. That is precisely what I did.

Eddie and I rented a suite of offices in the Guaranty Building in Hollywood. Later, as our staff increased, we took a small building on North Wilton Place. We became a pair of promoting idiots, recklessly tackling any sort of project that came along to challenge us.

Insofar as I was concerned, it was talent running to seed. I had no business prostituting the initiative I had developed in the gamut of my experiencings, finding out ways to fanaggle contracts from producers for actor robots or platinum cuties. It was keeping the worst sort of spiritual assignation, to employ the writing faculties that I had acquired by those nights in Bennington after getting out *The Banner,* those contacts in the Orient, those Golden Moments with Lillian, those awards and

increments that came from writing *The Greater Glory, The Fog,* and *Drag,* turning out calorific advertising matter for a California subdivision, a string of ice cream parlors, an airplane flight from Hawaii to Los Angeles, a daily News Bulletin that was tacked up in cigar stores. Eddie, too, once in intimate association, could not forgo his builded psychology of expecting all those about him to hop like Roman Candles when he fired them with orders—myself included. He did not mean to be dictatorial to his partner; but it was the first time in his life that he had ever had a partner. So it was with me. Partnership, whether of business or matrimony, is bound to be a perpetual compromise. Eddie and I had positive temperaments. Compromise rankled. Immediately we clashed.

The backlog of our undertaking, as I have said, was the press-agent work for Grant Dalge's stars. Again, as in that attempted collaboration with Lillian, one party to the driving of a team could not manipulate the left-hand rein and the other the right. The result was chaotic.

Grant was the closest and most loyal friend that a troubled man like myself could annex. Tall, dark-eyed, dark-haired, maturely poised, from the beginning of our friendship in Hollywood two years before, he had suffered my eccentricities in a sort of humorous interest, counselling as he could, finding some profit in it, doubtless, or he would not have indulged me, sharing with me his confidences as I shared mine with him. He was a year or two younger than I, although he was the larger man physically. Our tastes ran in common. Our acquaintance had begun when he had sent for me to come in and see him regarding the handling of my scenario work in Hollywood. He had handled it since. He had built up a sizable business, functioning as manager for a dozen to fifteen actor-folk, obtaining them their contracts with producers, keeping producers from imposing on them, collecting their compensations, directing their investments.

BUT he, like myself, knew that awful Cosmic restlessness. He loathed the vocation that netted him a living, chiefly because it forced him into daily contact with so many Jews and their business ethics. Nevertheless it maintained him a sumptuous suite of offices, permitted him an attractive home, and supplied him with two motor cars. He was the musician, the dilettante, the artist, in his spirit. And yet, pure German bred, he came from a long line of soldiers. Soldiering to him was more than an enticement. It gave his strange life balance—balance and polarity—which I had yet to find. He had been a major in the American army during the world war. Once each summer he abandoned his business and went off to camp,

to indulge his ache toward patriotism and masculine actionism. For Grant was all *man*.

He had started out in life as a piano manufacturer with his father, as I had started out in another line with mine. He had transferred into the manufacturing of felts in my native Massachusetts, which he had left to go to war. Exactly as in my case, incompetent subordinates had brought the firm to ruin in his absence. Leaving an incompatible wife, he had come to California and secured a divorce. Later he had remarried, after a saga so like my own that comparisons were uncanny. We worked together, played together, spent each other's money and drove each others' cars. And his contempt for the Jewishness of Hollywood, I repeat, was increasingly virulent.

Under his paternal wing in screenland were such personages as Henry Walthall, Chester Conklin, Mack Swain, Blanche Sweet, Huntley Gordon, Laska Winter, Henry Kolker, Gladys Brockwell, Lee Moran, Al St. John, Alphonse Ethier, Nigel de Brulier, Kate Price, Charles Emmet Mack, and Virginia Lee Corbin.

"What we need to give these stars publicity," I said to Eddie one day, "is a magazine of our own."

"Okay," said he. "What's stopping us from starting one?"

So *Hi-Hat Magazine* appeared on the news stands. I wrote practically the whole of each number, from cover to cover, under a score of pseudonyms.

¶ Grant had become involved, through the investments of his players, in a Beverly Hills subdivision development. Eddie came in one noontime and declared, "What say we take that whole development off Grant's hands? We'll promote a district to be kept exclusive to motion picture celebrities. We'll call it Filmanor. Make it hard for any but the swankiest movie bohunks to get in, and we'll unload that land like hot coffee in a blizzard."

Presently Hollywood was hearing about Filmanor. It comprised the whole of Sunset Mountain to the west of Hollywood. We took an option on that mountain and began to sell property. While the selling of this mountain was in progress, we acquired a chain of ice cream parlors in lieu of a sizable advertising bill that had defected on us. One night I drove home to Matie's and boasted, "What do you think I'm mixed up in now?"

¶ "Oh for the land's sake!" she protested. "Have you gone and got yourself in some sort of trouble?"

"I'm going to engineer an airplane flight across the Pacific, just as Lindy flew the Atlantic."

"You're not going to fly it!"
"Of course not. Grant's got a pilot who's been doing motion-picture stunt work. He's bought the sister-ship to *The Spirit of St. Louis.* Grant's going to attend to the mechanical details of the project—dispatching Dick Grace, the pilot, to Hawaii—while Eddie and I are taking over the commercial details. I stand to make about thirty thousand from it, if we pull it off successfully and Dick covers the hop from Hawaii to the California mainland without a mishap."
Matie sat down at the kitchen table. Her care-lined face was troubled. "Oh Bill," she lamented, "why does a man of your splendid capabilities let himself in for such a lot of boyish nonsense?"
"I don't call it nonsense, engineering a feat like that in progressive aviation."
"Progressive fiddlesticks! You're . . . running wild," she said with a little catch in her throat. "Just the other evening Miss Hansmann was saying——"
"What's it her business?"
"But she sees as I do, that you're wasting yourself on ribald distractions away from your obvious life-work."
"What is my life-work? Does the Hansmann person know? Does anybody know?"
"For a man who can write like you can—when he wants to—it's a sort of spiritual crime to let such mischief get him."
"I don't call it mischief."
"No, you're too close to it. As Miss Hansmann was saying, you're like an athlete that's let himself get muscle-bound. You're doing all sorts of crazy things to get relief, instead of using those splendid biceps to do some real work."
"But Matie, I don't know what my real work is. I'm . . . trying to find out." Never had I felt so callow and so purposeless as in those moments.
¶ Her motherly soul was touched. She arose and put her arms around me. "I wish that *I* could act as your manager for a little time," she said to me wistfully. "I know what's wrong with you but . . . the prescription's beyond me."
I clung to Matie's tired shoulders with a quiver running through me. Her husband, her son, myself . . . we were all boys to Matie. The door opened and Miss Hansmann came in from the hospital.
"So what!" she reprimanded us.
"Oh," said Matie, "Billy's gone and got himself mixed up in an airplane

flight and I'm afraid . . . it'll bring him trouble." She patted me between the shoulders, pulled herself out of my embrace, and set about washing lettuce for dinner.

"What about an airplane flight?" asked Minna Helen.

"Grant's bought a plane," I related. "We're going to make Dick Grace the first man to fly the distance between Hawaii and Los Angeles. Eddie and I will manage the commercial hook-ups for a fifty-fifty cut."

Minna Helen, still in the nurse's cape she always wore over from the hospital, sat down in the chair which Matie had lately quitted and laid clasped fingers against her cheek. "You can't afford not to, I suppose," was her comment. It was a queer moment. Then she smiled at Matie. She had large shapely teeth with a natural lustre like mother-of-pearl. She also had a trick of tilting back her head when she laughed. "Our wandering boy will get himself cracked up," she confided to Matie. "Then he'll come back to us nurses to sew up the pieces."

"But," I defended, "I'm not going to do the flying."

"You're sure of that?"

"Dick's going to do the flying——"

"I wasn't referring to the plane."

The Shaws had their dinner and Matie left for the movies with her children. I went out on the front porch morosely, pulled up a chair so that my feet were pushed against the railing, and lit a cigar.

After a time Helen came down. She punched up the pillows on the box-hammock suspended from the western end of the veranda's roof, and stretched herself alongside my chair, head toward the street.

"I've been trying to figure you out," she announced.

"What's mysterious about *me* that needs figuring out?"

"You're not mysterious. You're so full of contradictions."

"Contradictions, how?"

"You give every indication of being a person of splendid possibilities, then you let yourself bother around with things so terribly childish that it throws me in confusion. Frankly I can't catalogue you."

"Perhaps I can't catalogue myself."

"Everybody should be able to catalogue himself even if others can't. You . . . well, you sometimes stack up to me . . . what I've seen of you about the house or during the evening auto rides on which you've taken me . . . as a man who's losing his grip on himself. What's making you do it?"

"Let's talk about the weather."

It was a luculent California night. A lustrous moon was leaving the

mountains up behind Altadena. Presently it would climb through the eucalyptus and pepper trees and drift up to the zenith like a mammoth ruddy bubble buoyed up on clear cyanite.

"I know it's none of my business," Minna Helen persisted, "but life holds so many worth-while things to which you could apply yourself——"

"Such as?"

"It's hard to express. But in all the things you've done—and Matie's mentioned most of them to me—something's impressed me above everything else. Your absolute materialistic selfishness!" She said it kindly, removing the sting.

"Selfishness!" I echoed.

"You've done a lot of interesting things, no doubt about that. But they've been strictly for Bill Pelley, to advance his prospects, to benefit him personally, to give him a thrill as the perfect egocentric. It's not difficult to see that you're due for a smash. You can't go on forever being the introvert, without the machinery's breaking down."

"Me, introvert!"

"How many times a year do you ever think of doing anything for anyone but yourself? Making a business of it, I mean?"

Vaguely, she nettled me. It was like having Lillian stretched there in the semi-darkness but speaking to me without Lillian's acerbity. The hands of this nurse took a strand of hair from her face and tucked it deftly into that supernal head of hair. I saw them in the half-light, those hands. They were big and strong and capable, yet perfectly feminine hands—hands that employed themselves the clock around at naught but easing human suffering.

I said, raggedly, "I guess I've never stopped to think very much about it. I've taken life as it came."

"Running around doing what you call 'creating' . . . just making experiments in curiosity, like a little boy's turning over stones on a lawn to see what sort of grubs may scuttle from beneath them."

"Why not put it," I argued, "seeing what he can build out of their various shapes and sizes?"

"But are you building with them? And why the necessity for building with them at all?"

Automobiles came down Marengo Avenue, always halting for the boulevard stop at the near-by corner, starting up again with acceleration of motors and traction of tires. Nine out of ten motorists rasped their gears horridly in getting under way. They annoyed me and I said so. "What

a crazy custom it is," I remarked, "that city statutes require a car to waste gasoline and rubber stopping and starting up, when a glance right and left shows no other car approaching for two blocks!"

"And what a crazy custom it is," said Helen, "for a man to be always wasting power stopping and starting up when a glance right and left should show him there isn't a reason in the world for not continuing at a smooth steady speed."

"A man's different."

"A person driving a motorcar generally knows where he's taking it. If he doesn't, he'd better keep it in the garage—unless he's out for a joyride."

"Not exactly."

"Then why not keep yourself in a garage till you know exactly where it is you're taking yourself."

"Life is different, I say. It's a blind run on principle——"

I stopped. Faint and faraway down California Street to the north came the whine of a siren. It grew louder and more blood-curdling. It must be a police or fire car. Nearer and stronger the unearthly screeching approached. Autoists on Marengo Avenue heard it above the beating of their engines. They slowed to a halt. Then from the north, hurtling across that interseciton like a streak of dark lightning, gone in a wail that sounded as far-distant as Lake Avenue on the south, the low-hung Pasadena Hospital emergency ambulance showed a lambent red eye in diminishing brightness.

Helen scarcely stirred. But she sighed as though to salve her conscience. She remarked, "I'm just as well satisfied that I'm not riding it tonight. Maybe I can do as much good lying here and talking to you. But you noticed what happened."

THE headlamps of the motorcars flashed brighter for a moment as they all started up and moved in a procession across the intersection.

"What do you mean, what happened?"

"Didn't you notice that when the ambulance approached that intersection it wasn't required to halt for any street signs. It shot across as though all-fury was after it. Other vehicles came to a stop—gave it right-of-way without the slightest question. Don't you see why?"

"It was going somewhere," I admitted, recalling the speed at which it had vanished.

"Yes. But why? It's going on a call because somebody's hurt somewhere. It's doing something to aid people, to lessen human suffering, perhaps to

save a life. Nothing's required to halt when that's the errand of the moment, for either a person or a motorcar."

I said, to cover my chagrin. "Have you ever been out on one of those trips?" ☙ ☙

Carelessly she answered, "That's been part of my job ever since I was in training."

"It must pack a thrill."

"I never thought of it as thrill. We merely wanted to get there in a hurry, to help as we could because the need for us was horrible."

I said thickly, "Do all nurses feel as you do?"

"All nurses do who take their profession seriously."

"All the same, you must get a thrill out of it."

Softly Helen answered, "We get our real thrill when we see someone who's come to us all broken up, or prostrate with illness, leaving us mended and whole again, ready to go back to the business of life, and resume it valiantly with their bodily mechanism behaving as it should."

"That's—a noble way—to look—at it——"

"Fiddlesticks! It's more applying yourself to something outside of yourself, not always thinking of your own insides. Have you ever noticed that people who aren't always thinking of themselves and their own insides, rarely have anything the matter with their health or their affairs? At least you never come on them running all to seed."

There was rebuke in it for me. And I took it. It was Lillian sublimated.

THE MOON climbed higher as we talked there. Automobiles grew fewer, coming down the thoroughfare and halting at the corner. The ambulance finally returned out of distance at a slower pace, wailed for the intersection again, but crossed it more circumspectly now as though conscious of the precious load it carried.

"That must be Bartlett on the night shift," mused Helen. Obviously she referred to some nurse of her acquaintance within the vehicle of mercy, performing her job. I detected her stirred interest, the *camaraderie* of one good soldier toward another, knowing that the other was indubitably carrying on. For a sickening instant, indictment assailed me. These women were living in a different world than mine. Their lives were turned outward, wholly absorbed in ministering to others. How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable, was this life that I was living, by contrast . . . touting silly robots of actors and actresses to venal producers, ballyhooing certain

brands of chalky ice cream, selling house lots by studied appeal to caste snobbery, calling such balderdash *creating!*
"I envy you," I conceded thickly.
"Envy me! What is there about me to envy?"
"My bringing-up has been along a totally different line."
"And that's the silliest alibi that you could possibly offer. Your training, indeed! As if anybody had to be 'trained' to apply himself to the needs of others instead of his own selfish interests and thrills!"

I LIT a fresh cigar and cogitated. Why had I felt an emotional stir, a surcharge of vicarious heroism, when the ambulance had shot past and the girl had made the comment, "I'm just as well satisfied that I'm not riding it tonight"? Riding it tonight! . . . answering calls of human distress and need, and making it a glorious vocation! Something old, old . . . as old as Womanhood itself . . . had lurked in that reference. It was not unlike the thrill that I had felt that night in the Washington Press Club when that correspondent had said, anent the Great Conspiracy, "For the good of the country, somebody's got to do it!" Was there a subliminal world of unselfishness, which I had not discovered for all my surface cleverness, for all my venturings and my vaporings?
I thought of Lillian. She epitomized Manners. I thought of Beryl. She epitomized Pivots. I thought of Mary. She epitomized Esthetics. This capable nurse, stretched wearily beside me after a full day of being on her feet in and out of those compartments of pain, epitomized nothing less than Womanhood Incarnate in her role of Ministering Samaritan. She did not "pass by on the other side." . . .
The moonlight had crept along by this time till its silvery radiance was prying a little distance under the veranda cornice. It moved along the two-foot cement parapet. I said, "Assuming what you say is true, what would you advise me in my present case to do? I can't be a doctor."
"Maybe not. Not a medical doctor. There are other kinds of doctors besides those who dole out pills. Get interested in some work that truly helps people, and you won't bore yourself or have any more dissatisfactions with life or with others."
"Suppose that I don't feel any special call to do that sort of thing?"
"Can you honestly say you don't?"
I sat for a time in silence after that, absorbing the lambent beauty of the night. Occasionally a mocking-bird called stridently up in the drooping fronds of the pepper trees.

"At least," I murmured, "you're switching my thinking into unaccustomed channels."

"We'll work it out," she said in mellow kindness, as though thinking a beautiful thought aloud. . . .

Was it a promise, or a prophecy? She had utter confidence that it could be done. But . . . *We!* In that instant I had an eerie sensation play up and down my spine. Of all the flanges that had ever kept me on true rails, or borne me unerringly to this evening of moonlight on Shaw's front veranda, none were less to be denied or ignored.

I turned and glanced at Minna Helen.

Who was this person?

What could I possibly have in common with her? Again the thought came to me, as it had come upon the night of our first meeting: *Was our significant contact by some weird prearrangement?*

Laughing voices came beneath the pepper trees. Four persons turned in upon the lawn from spotted reaches of shadowed sidewalk. "We saw a keen movie!" Billie Shaw declaimed. "Whatta you think? We saw Tom Mix!"

Helen arose and went up to bed. . . .

CHAPTER TWENTY

GRANT DOLGE was the type of friend that a man possesses but once in a lifetime, and having once possessed him, never knows him again.

I have described him as big-bodied, dark-eyed, dark-haired, maturely poised. That description might fit any one of a hundred men overtaken in an evening's walk up Main Street. As this is probably the only time that I shall ever be able to eulogize Grant as he deserves to be eulogized, let me make a better job of memorializing him. Sam Houston it was, I think, who upon being reprimanded for abusing his friends, cried heatedly: "If a man can't abuse his friends, who the 'ell *can* he abuse?" I would put the reverse-English on the same thought with Grant, and demand: "If a man can't eulogize his friends, what's the use of having 'em?"

Grant, like myself, was approaching his forties in the interlude during which I knew him; six feet in height, weighing nearly two hundred pounds, every pound of it evenly distributed over his fine, upstanding, soldierly figure. He had a well-shaped head with long oval skull, the forehead rising high, with thin dark hair combed smoothly down against his scalp from a part at the left. His features were heavily but symmetrically set, with an aquiline nose above a generous mouth.

But if you had come into his office and met Grant for only a moment across the desk top in the southeast corner of his inner room, you would have gone away with a memory of a jovial-spoken but sedate businessman, with a pair of rimless spectacles before trusting brown eyes, and a club moustache on a firm upper lip that expressed his clean-cut, well-turned-out personality at a glance.

I first met Grant when he wrote me in care of my book publishers shortly after *Drag* was issued. He saw possibilities in the book as a screen vehicle for Henry Walthall and asked me to let him offer it as such to producers. The queer part of this incident was, remarked upon by him on the last night that Helen and I saw him alive, that our personal contact lasted for the exact time between the publication of the book and its final sale to Dick Barthelmess as a film role. That was six years in length, Poignantly enough, when the story was finally bought for the screen, it was Larry Giffen in New York who put through the deal. Grant sold many screen dramas of mine, however, and from time to time made a

fair amount of money handling my work. But the book that brought us together never netted him a penny, and the week that I closed the contract in the east was followed by a trip back to the Coast whereon I shook the hand of this fine friend of mine for the final time.

In 1932 he died.

So, in a manner of speaking, it is with a beloved ghost that I linger for a few pages in this economized narrative and recall an interlude in my life that held many a happy moment that I could not then appreciate, in the profit of this gentleman's unique comradeship. For Grant Dolge will always stand out in the memory of all of his friends on both sides of the Veil as the modern Nobleman. I do not write mawkishly or with the slightest bias. Wherever he is at this moment, like my father, I salute him! . . .

You were a good pal, Grant. I have not forgotten you. Let me get this awful earthly mess of a muddled society off my hands, and you and I will sit down for another of our good talks, both of our twin boot-soles comfortably planked against some celestial desk while callers wait in the outer office through an interval of aeons! . . .

One of the happiest Christmas seasons of my life—and almost the only one that I ever spent away from the East and the children—was the yuletide of 1926-1927 in California, with Helen helping Matie decorate the Shaw home with evergreens, and the afternoon before Christmas spent with Grant and old Colonel Webster—a retired army man who rented desk-space for a real estate business in Grant's outer office—the three of us going from home to home of the players under Grant's management, admiring each tree, leaving presents for bevies of youngsters, accepting seasonable snifters out of clandestine but excellent "private stock"—for those were the days of a fancied Prohibition in the land. I drank so many toasts to the season, to the fair ladies in the houses where we called, to the movie industry, to all the Jewish cemeteries, to the Prohibition nuisance, that by the time I reached Pasadena—to pick up Minna Helen and make her my partner at a Christmas Party at Grant's home that night—the landscapes had a tendency to do many weird gymnastics.

On my desk before me as I write is a sizable pottery humidor which Grant presented to me that Christmas Eve, twelve years in the past. At that memorable yuletide gathering, which was never repeated, was Chester Conklin and Mack Swain—two of moviedom's outstanding fun-makers in those days—conducting themselves with painful decorum as behooved celebrated laughmakers away from the camera. Strange, that humidor is my

only souvenir of that one perfect friendship, an association that never held the slightest suggestion of a tiff on either side, where never a word of criticism was uttered from either side. Funny how such a thing as a little blue pottery jar with a cover, standing mutely here on my desk, can bring a choke to my throat and a longing to my heart for dear familiar faces that have vanished with the years. I remember that when Grant took the humidor from the tree, he handed it to Helen. Its weight surprised her and she dropped it. Two pounds of the rarest and finest pipe tobacco procurable in Hollywood, was spilled across the rug. I persisted in salvaging the last precious spoonful and my New England parsimony nearly broke up the party.

The last time that Grant made a gift to Helen was the final night that we visited his home in 1931. He presented her with a silver dinner-knife, two eyelet holes punched in the flat of its blade up near the end. All the evening Helen puzzled over the purpose of this knife and why those holes had been cut in its blade. Grant had his quiet chuckle as she affected politely to know perfectly well what the knife was used for in a lady's kitchen. As we arose to depart, he could restrain himself no longer. "I've got to set you right," he said. "That's not a kitchen knife. It's a dinner knife. A New England dinner knife."

"New England?" Helen suggested innocently.

"Well, I remember that when I lived in New England, most of the natives ate with their knives. And this happens to be a pea knife. At least two peas to each scoop will settle in the holes and you're practically sure of conveying them to your mouth." And the lovable small boy in Grant filled the room with his guffaw.

Was it any wonder then, that when he came out to Eddie's bungalow in Culver City one summer's night in the year which followed and advised us that he had bought an airplane and was going to sponsor Dick Grace in a flight to Los Angeles from Honolulu, I joined in the spirit of that vagabond enterprise with all the enthusiasm that I could call up. Presently we were encasing our plane in an outgoing Hawaiian steamer. Dick Grace went along, and a mechanician, and a couple of aids. Whereupon the nerve-wracking wait began—to learn that our boy was winging his way in toward us from the sunset.

Dick was a pink-faced, lean, blue-eyed boy, the final word in dare-devil courage. It was expected to make a Pacific Lindbergh out of him if he made the hop in safety. No one had ever made that flight, solo, from the Hawaiian Islands to the American mainland. Aviators who hung up

such records in those early years of flying were the popular idols of the public on principle.

Eddie and I had spent three febrile weeks closing all sorts of oil and merchandise contracts. I had sold the story of the flight to the Hearst newspapers for $8,000. The popularity of Grace, if he were first to cover the distance alone, would have meant thousands upon thousands of dollars for us for his appearances at air meets, in movie weeklies, even at county fairs. You see, I was still obsessed with making money!

Those were hectic days and nights that a group from Grant's official family spent, waiting in his private office for word to come that our boy was in the air—winging his way to fame and our fortune. But instead of word that Dick was in the air, we began receiving cables begging that we wire him money for new tires. He could not get into the air with his gas load. The air of the tropics was "mushy" except in early morning. Each time that Dick tried to pancake his plane off ground—from Barking Sands Naval Field—he popped those pneumatic tires. Again and again he tried. And they were standing us seventy to eighty dollars the pair. By the time that new tires had been fitted on, the sun had come up and the mushy air wouldn't provide sufficient lifting traction. He must therefore wait until the morning following. For four days and nights I did not take my clothes off. I slept on the divan in Grant's office, awaiting the electric word that the take-off had been accomplished . . . while Grant went off home and caught up on his slumber.

ON the fifth day, when our nerves were wearing badly beneath the strain, a cable arrived from Dick stating that he would make his last try next day but that conditions were so auspicious that it would be best to launch preparations for his arrival. Eddie went into action. The Mayor of Los Angeles was to be present at the specially roped-off field where Dick would come down, and a city council, not to mention a speech. All Los Angeles, excited by newspaper stories of the attempt, would be upon that field. We hired two bands and made up a reception committee of movieland's fairest queens.

"Well," said Grant on that final night—which incidentally happened to be the night before July 4th—"another twenty-four hours tells the story of whether we win or lose." He said it in his tired but indefatigable good sportsmanship. If Dick failed now, after the expense he had cost all of us to date, both Grant and his pair of partners were slated to pay strict attention to lucrative business for quite a time to come. "You go home

and get some real sleep," he cautioned me. "I'll stand watch tonight and be here to answer cables."

I borrowed his Studebaker and drove out to Eddie's, Culver City being handier than Pasadena. At five o'clock in the morning I heard the blare of the phone through the haze of patchy slumber. It could have but one meaning—either Dick had taken off, or broken his neck. Six weeks of work and most of our liquid money were in that wild cat project.

"Yes?" I responded.

"Bill? . . . Grant! . . . How's your courage this nice morning of the nation's most famous birthday?"

"How bad is it, Grant?"

"I don't know yet. Just a newspaper flash."

"Have we lost him, Grant?"

"Don't know yet. But I guess our crate's a washout. Mechanic's cable said some cockeyed thing about 'saving the engine and prop'."

"I'll be right down, Grant."

"Okay. I'm going home and sleep my fool head off."

I hurried into Hollywood. The papers learned more as I made the five-mile trip. Dick had managed to get off-ground but something had gone wrong after forty minutes' flying. As I unlocked the office door I saw a long Western Union cable shoved under the door-crack—

> BROKE RUDDER POST IN FINAL TAKEOFF STOP VIBRATION TO SHIP SO BAD HAD TO TURN BACK STOP OKAY PERSONALLY STOP STARTING HOME WITH ENGINE AND PROP TOMORROW STOP TRIED MY BEST SORRY DICK

He had tried his best! What a heartache in that line.

Afterwards we learned from the mechanics that the boy had done one of the most magnificent jobs of flying ever known in the Islands. He had finally pancaked into the dark without bursting more tires. At last he was winging—toward home and fame. But as daylight grew in the roseate east, a strange vibration of his "stick" began to numb his arm. He turned and examined the rear of his fuselage. Thereat his vitals turned to clabber. . . . ☙ ☙

In the last moment of the take-off, scarcely able to "get his tail up," his drag-stick had hit a water-bar on Barking Sands Field. It had snapped the welding of the rudder-post from the fuselage rods in the ship's main

body. His rudder was commencing to hang perilously from the top welding and the ship was becoming increasingly unmanageable. The Islands had long-since passed from sight. He was out over the watery wastes of the Pacific. What must have been the thoughts in the brave lad's heart as he realized that not only were the expenses and dreams of the past few weeks in vain, but that he stood to plunge to his death any minute! Anyhow, he had to turn back . . . provided he could do it. There was not to be any Los Angeles reception after all. The whole adventure was a bust. But even turning the ship about, was to be a feat —with that rudder pulling loose. Nevertheless, he managed it. Back toward Barking Sands Field he went hobbling in the dawn. He found the Islands and tried to get down. All he could do was to dump his gas load and throw off his switch to prevent a fire. Then he swooped toward the water and headed into breakers.

Up to coral beach rammed Grant's pathetic little ship and into a mass of haw bushes, carrying our load of high heart-hopes with it.

Everything was crack!

GRANT slept all that day and came down to face the debris of his gamble. But he took it like a sportsman. Never a word of complaint or temper passed his lips. He knew how to grin.

We had a bottle of champagne in the office that some well-wisher had brought in for Dick, had his flight been successful. "I suppose," said Grant dryly, "we might as well drink it."

We opened the champagne and consumed it together. Men get close, close, in an episode like that. Along toward dusk I secured my roadster from the parking lot and drove home to Pasadena. The champagne had begun to fizz in an overwrought system. I was exhausted, sick and retching when I abandoned the car in Shaw's driveway and tried to negotiate the steps.

Out from somewhere came a tall angel with golden hair and strong capable hands. She got her arms beneath my shoulders. She *would* be on hand in such a predicament.

"Don't try to tell me," she said in gentle whisper. "We've seen the evening papers."

"I g-guess I d-drank some bad . . . champagne. They b-brought in a bottle for Dick—"

"Let me help you to bed."

No one in my life had ever been quite so tender, so considerate, before.

I was helped upstairs, into my room, into the depths of a soft, cool bed. Practiced hands removed my outer clothing. Ice packs went under my throbbing, spinning head. I was in the hands of an expert at taking care of helpless people, and knew it, as the chamber spun in faster and more horrible circles and my stomach cramps got worse.

I remember that once toward midnight I opened torrid eyes in a great grotesque head. The room was lighted by the rays of the arc lamp coming in from the corner. In such eerie illumination I beheld someone sitting very quietly but vigilantly at the side of my bed. I moved. The watcher moved also. . . .

"Feeling better?" came the whisper. It was not an apparition. Someone had been watching over me in the dark thus for hours, days, weeks, years! How come?

I went skyrocketing off into more spiral nebulae. When I came out of it, sick and exhausted, a new sun of July 5th was prying under the lacy curtains. Helen, making no pother whatever about her long and patient vigil, was running the shades to the top of the windows.

"Have you been tending me all night?" I demanded of her.

"Never mind me. How are you feeling?"

"Rotten, thank you. The flight was a bust. Dick rammed the plane into a lot of haw bushes and spilled out on his head."

"I'm so sorry. I knew it was going to end that way, but couldn't bear to tell you. You just had to go through with it."

"You knew it? How?"

"Oh well. Call it . . . a woman's intuitive sense."

She put fresh ice packs under my throbbing cranium. I found that most emphatically she was not the kind of sickroom Samaritan that jiggled the bed. ☙ ☙

"It was sporting of you to t-take care of me," I stammered. "Did Matie see the binge I was in?"

"Matie understands, the same as I understand. You remember, I said that we'd be the ones to fix up the pieces."

"Listen," I said, "if you'd give me a first-class bawling out, it'd seem a lot more natural."

"Why should anyone give you a bawling out, as you term it? You tried your best to do something and failed. Just better luck next time."

She tidied the room and went down for my breakfast. Breakfast in bed—me! There were flowers on the tray. What sort of a woman had I met who did not think it the correct and requisite thing to make scorching—

or at least sarcastic—remarks when a chap had gambled crazily and lost? No, nothing but . . . beter luck next time!

I said, "I'm not sorry for myself. I'm sorry for Grant. It leaves him in an awful hole."

"I know. I'm sorry for him too. He's so calm and wistful and splendid. Did you leave him quite all right? Is there something I could do for him, do you think?"

"If that stale joy-water got him as it got me, he's in one mell of a hess, I can tell you that. I feel as though I'd swallowed the whole Los Angeles drainage system."

She had to go to the hospital shortly after that—a whole day of it. And no sleep all night on account of my bust. Yet she did not seem to mind. I dozed all day, not arousing till evening. Helen came again when her day's work was ended.

"You did wise to follow my orders and remain all day in bed."

"It wasn't your orders. I'm a washout. I've kissed goodbye to about thirty thousand smackers. What do you know about that?"

"You'll be making them back in no time at all."

She brought me up my supper. Again there were flowers on the tray. . . .

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

I WENT back to New York.

New York had become the accepted place to go when I wanted to get away from California, just as California had become the accepted place to go when I wanted to get away from New York. Besides, Mary was in New York. At least I could go to her and get companionship for the soul, even if what I needed the more was companionship for the heart. The day was to come when I was to understand that both are but pseudonyms for the Other Half of one's self, for which I was poignantly, gropingly, hunting up and down the worlds. My spirit was incomplete. The remainder of it, like myself, was groping, hunting—but how could I know *that,* on the worldly side of the Door?

"Well, Mary," I said, as I sat with my literary shepherdess in Keene's chop house in West 35th Street one rainy Sunday night, "again I'm obliged to make some new money quick."

"What have you done with the money you've earned?"

"Oh, I've got some of it invested in various places. But most of my liquid cash has gone into that Pelley & Eckels brain storm in Hollywood, trying to make a business of 'creating' . . . that and a darned big ocean east of Honolulu."

"Whatever possessed you to gamble on an air-flight?"

"My friendship for Grant." She knew about Grant. . . .

"Oh yes. Of course. I forgot you might have won."

"I'm not worried over money. There's more to be made. I merely want some quick."

Our dinner had been eaten. Before us was spread a red checkered tablecloth. Overhead the beams were heavy with clay pipes, hundreds of clay pipes. You could buy a pipe at Keene's, autograph it, have it put away up on the rafters for you to call for ten years later.

Mary was one of those women who smoked a cigarette by nervously tapping its edge on an ashtray. She never enjoyed smoking and usually did it just to keep her brother company. The night was soggy. She was wearing a shapeless felt hat that indicated the distance we had come together since that formal first luncheon at the Plaza. Nearly three years bygone! It scarcely seemed possible.

"Life's funny," sighed Mary. Countless thousands of persons have given

expression to that antique sentiment on rainy Sabbath evenings. She did not want to be original.

"What's the chance of selling Merle a bill of short stories in a hurry?"

"You won't *work*," she despaired. "The kind of stories that Merle wants, that you might sell him in a hurry, are never the kind turned off in a hurry. If for once in your life you'd get down and grind—"

"To get down and grind, a man must have incentive. I've got no incentive. I mean, outside my sudden need for cash."

She drew a ragged sigh. We had nowhere else to go. Trade was moribund at Keene's. We ordered fresh cups of coffee to alibi our lingering.

"Incentive!" she echoed. Her fine face was sad. "What a queer word it is. How much it covers up."

I knew that on nights like the present her thoughts would turn back to the man she had lost.

"What does it cover up?"

"I suppose . . . the hope . . . the very frail hope . . . that some day, in the years, we'll tread out into a beautiful and tranquil valley where everything we've longed for, and dreamed about, will suddenly lie before us."

¶ It was a night for reminiscing, for conjecturing, for whimsy. . . .

"Why tranquil, especially?"

"Isn't it tranquillity, that all of us are seeking?"

"I suppose so, yes. And life's a sojourn in giving us tumult, so that tranquillity can be recognized and appreciated, when we find it."

"You know," she mused, "at times you impress me as someone I've known very close, a long, long time ago. . . . "

"Need we go so far to know the basis for that?"

"No, I suppose not. What are we going to do?"

"I know what I'm going to do. I'm going to write and sell a mess of stories. Listen. . . . As I was coming through Chicago one of the Blue Book editors gave me a corking idea for a yarn. About this old Spiritist duffer, Sir Oliver Lodge."

"What about Sir Oliver?"

"Well, the rumor's out that his boy Raymond, the one he wrote the book about, isn't dead at all. He's reported alive and doing well in Canada. But he can't declare himself to the world, without smashing his old man's professional career. He's supposed to be dead, Raymond. The old man's claimed that he talked with him in spirit."

"So what?"

"Think of the drama in it! The old man's committed himself on this

spiritualistic humbug. The father's famous, so the son has to sacrifice his whole life to his parent's goofy blunder——"
"Except that it's no blunder."
"All the same, the lad's exiled from home and family, kept from divulging his identity——"
"Raymond's not in Canada," Mary told me quietly. "And you'll not write about it at all."
I looked at her puzzled. I saw her face become such a mask of pain that it made me cry quickly, "Mary, what's the matter?"
Her suffering passed. She gave me a rueful smile. "You should never try to write of things you don't know about. It isn't . . . nice!"
"You mean . . . you go in for . . . that sort of thing?"
"I don't 'go in' for anything. There are privacies we don't violate."
" . . . All the same, I could write a gorgeous yarn on that dramatic premise——"
"And, ten years from now, suffer the tortures of the damned because you'd been guilty of such an indiscretion. No, Bill. Stick to your airplane flights. They're safer."
"Why should I suffer any tortures of the damned? And especially, ten years hence?"
She answered, eyes downcast and voice husky, "Some day, Bill, you'll look back upon this period and see that you've only lived half your life."
"Sure. I'm only thirty-seven."
"I don't mean in years."
"What is this mystical 'other half' to live?"
"Sir Oliver Lodge could tell you," she suggested, "or rather—Raymond!"
I said after a moment's thought, "Do you really think it's possible to hold converse with the dead?"
"Don't let's discuss it. Not here in a restaurant."
I was profaning a sort of privacy, I saw. And she was my dear Sister in Predicament. "Well," I said, "I must get going, somehow. I'd certainly hate to think that I'd written my last story."
"You haven't written your last story. As a matter of fact, your real story masterpiece is ahead for you to do."
"And where's the incentive coming from?" I bantered.
She took some time in answering. "Maybe," she decided, "from the same place that Sir Oliver Lodge found inspiration for his 'Raymond'."
"You're trying to tell me that my own son may die . . . something of the sort?"

"No, no. I said a place. I didn't say a person."
"And how do I crash through, to get the incentive for that sort of story?"
"Some of us do it by waiting," she answered.
"Waiting for what? Death?"
"N-No, . . . waiting for . . . Life!"
"You're just talking riddles."
"Perhaps. Because you're thirty-seven."
"Listen, lady dear. You're not so terribly ancient yourself."
"Oh why must you gauge everything I say by silly mortal years?"
"Why not come out bluntly and tell me what you're driving at?"
"Because what I'm driving at can't be told bluntly. It's nothing to hear from somebody else. It's something you must *live!*'

THE RAIN beat groggily against the chophouse windows. A waiter yawned sleepily up near the desk. . . .
"Mary," I said huskily, "I'm in a devil of a mess."
"I know you are, Bill. And it wrenches my heart that there's no way I can help you."
"I've done too many things. And most of them wrong."
"No, not exactly. You haven't done them strong enough."
"I know. I should have taken Marion's advice . . . stayed up in Vermont, stuck to my knitting, lived in my children, been as much like all other staid family men as so many sparrows on a roof."
"God forbid!" she cried.
"Mary," I went on, "have you ever stopped to think how much like the animal kingdom the human race is? For instance, consider the strange fact that the animals all fall into one of two divisions, the carnivora or the ruminants, the preyers or the preyed upon."
She frowned a pretty frown and played with a match.
"That portion of the animal kingdom," said I, "whose vision is focused, the great cats, the bears, the wolves, the hyenas—the hawks and owls among the birds—are the stalkers and killers. And they travel alone. They're the fierce individualists. And that portion of the animal kingdom whose vision is sidereal, whose eyes are flat against the sides of its head and is able to see both ways at once, is usually vegetarian. It never hunts alone. Always in flocks or herds. I suppose for protection. It preserves life by flight. But strangely enough, wherever you find it, in whatever species, every specimen is just like every other specimen. The herd sinks

individuality, or rather, prohibits it from developing. The predatory species is individuality personified."

"All of which proves what?"

"Oh, just a whimsy. By a sort of reverse logic, the individualists—by the mere fact of their individuality—can't be anything other than Hunters Alone. On the other hand, the great human herd, ruminative in its habits, every specimen like every other specimen and thinking it a species of insanity for one to want to be anything different, must move together, stay huddled together, seek safety when safety's necessary, in a sort of common flight."

"It's Nature's method, I suppose, for developing spiritual awareness, keenness of perception, quickness of coordination. It's harsh, but effective."

"I was thinking of the Carnivora, the Stalkers Alone. They can't help being what they are. They've left the herd psychology behind them *millennia* ago. They've got to roam at will, take their chances on surviving by their own sense and prowess. Being just a specimen in a herd, would kill them."

My companion nodded.

"They're happy in a lone, isolated, individualistic way, I suppose. At least they're not so unhappy as they'd be, made to run with a pack or be nothing but a unit that makes up a herd. B-But . . . are they satisfied with life? Isn't it their eternal dissatisfaction with existence as they find it that makes them the killers—that gives them their distinction?"

"Doubtless," Mary nodded.

"And the basis of their eternal roving, their stalking, their individualistic performance, is always Hunger—physical hunger in the brute species, spiritual hunger in the human."

"Still, I don't see what it proves?"

"Maybe it doesn't prove anything at all. It doesn't need to prove anything. But how the sort of humanity that herds together and seeks its safety in life by flight *can* blister the Stalkers Alone, as it gets the chance?" ✻ ✻

"Believe it or not, Bill, you're only . . . *half* a man.

"Where's the other half that I'm not?"

"Perhaps in the same place that your literary incentive is for the moment. No, I don't mean that exactly. Perhaps she's right here in life——"

"She! Oh fiddlesticks. Let's leave the woman business out. You make me feel erotic."

"What you truly need is for someone to go along behind you and close up the vacuums."
"Vacuums!"
"Let it pass. You wouldn't understand any more than you understand about Sir Oliver and Raymond. But you're the sort of person whose life is meant to do the world's pushing-ahead, creating vacuums behind it. If no one fills them up, you feel their backward pull. I'd close them up for you if I could, but those are not our roles."

WE TALKED in desultory fashion after that for a time. Mary wrecked another cigarette, one puff and eight taps, two puffs and twelve scrapes on the edge of the ashtray. I wanted to tell her a whole heartful of things, but the finger pointed otherwise on the Cosmic Signpost.
¶ "Come to think of it, Mary," I ventured, "you're in pretty much the same box arent you . . . stalking alone, not part of the herd. . . . ?"
She said, "I'll find my tranquil valley, sometime, somewhere."
I knew she did not mean matrimony. That sort of Tranquil Valley was bigger than mere mating.
I said, "I'm coming to understand why it's possible for some people to end the futility by suicide. I figured up the other day that since those days in the factory with father and counting the sums I made in that period, I've been responsible for earning with my own hand or brain nearly three-quarters of a million dollars. I'm not exactly broke at the present, and I haven't lost my earning capacity, but what I mean is . . . I seem to have gotten the increment already from two or three men's normal lives. I've been everywhere I want to go. I've done everything I want to do. I've had about every kind of experience that a man could undergo except a permanent crippling. I've got nothing to live *for*. Oh I don't mean in the sentimental sense . . . another person . . . anything like that. I'm talking about things strong enough and deep enough to make life a splendid Going-On! Life for me isn't a Going-On. It's a going *around*."
"This Hollywood 'creating' business with Eckels, it isn't turning out as you originally expected?"
"I'm bored to distraction. Or rather, its distractions bore me to tears."
"I'm not at all surprised."
"I'm finding out that to 'create' a thing you've got to stay with it, put long nurturing attention into it, to make it stack up to you as having any value. If God loves the world with a surpassing love, as the Good Book tells us, it's not because of the chore of creating it, but because it's such

a contrary, cantankerous old place and has taken such a lot of headache to bring up, to the present. Even the act of procreating, of bringing into being, means little or nothing. What does parenthood mean to a turtle that deposits a lot of eggs in the sand and leaves them to the sun and elements to hatch?"

"Never having been a turtle, I'm afraid I can't answer you. You feel as if you'd completed a definite cycle . . . is that what you imply?"

"I feel, my dear, as if I'd completed a definite life. Two or three lives!"

"Well, perhaps you have."

"And then what?"

"One can always start another."

"But why?"

"I was hoping you'd ask *how?*"

"That's exactly the trouble. It's in the Why, not the How, that my present torment lies."

"Which is a whole lot healthier condition to be in, than you suspect at this moment."

"Healthier!"

"So long as the 'Why' is such a terrific factor in the equation of your life, you'll square the Life Cycle, find a way to go on. We all do! Its Kismet."

"You don't think then, that we find out the 'Why' by turning on the gas or buying a gun?"

"Some folks do, certainly. Then again, it's equally findable right here in life. You see, Bill, I don't think it makes any difference to the finding-out, whether or not we're encumbered with mortal sheathing. Being in or out of it—the mortal sheathing—has nothing to do with solving the Why. What difference does it make, while solving a proposition in geometry, whether or not we happen to be wearing an overcoat? Such nonsense! What really has an overcoat, or any sort of raiment, got to do with solving a mental equation, or putting together a proposition in Spirituality? They're two different factors in two different elements."

"If I got out of the mortal overcoat, as you put it, I might find the answer." ❧ ❧

"Not at all . . . don't be silly. It's a perfectly absurd notion to which the orthodox subscribe, that the minute they shed the physical overcoat they immediately know all the secrets of Cosmos. It does a lot of damage." ❧ ❧

"You think that we don't?"

"I know that we don't."
I said in banter, "Have you ever been dead?"
She answered sedately, "I think that all of us have been dead—a great many times."
"And what is it like?" I asked, taking her literally.
"Not a bit different from what we know here, at least insofar as the Tranquillity's concerned. Tranquillity's not a matter of location . . . it's having a philosophy . . . coming into a Kingdom."
Wise Mary! But how could I know then, how truthfully she spoke? I said, "Maybe it's tranquillity not to know anything. It might be a relief when at times we know too much."
"Have you ever heard of any such state?"
"It says in the Bible, 'the dead know not anything.' . . . "
"It says a lot of things in the Bible that we have to possess a philosophy to grasp. One minute you talk about acquiring the secrets of Cosmos by blowing out your brains, then next you declare that the dead know not anything. Make up your mind, but anyhow talk sense."
"Does the Bible make sense?"
"The New Testament makes sense—a whole lot more sense than we may have the philosophy to recognize." She herded a little bevy of crumbs about on the cloth. With downcast eyes she murmured, "A man is hungry . . . I suppose he could stop his hunger by killing his body. . . . The trouble is, the sort of hunger that you and I feel isn't an essence which killing affects." ❧ ❧
"There must be an answer to it somewhere."
"Yes, I think there's an answer. But being in or out of flesh has little or nothing to do with the premise—or finding the answer. It's coming into a consciousness of it. Suddenly! And consciousness as Consciousness is apart from our . . . overcoats."
Since she had brought the subject up, I ventured, "Where do you think people go when they die?"
"I don't think they go anywhere particularly. Where is there to go?"
"You don't think they go to heaven?"
"Astronomically speaking, just where is heaven?"
"Maybe on another planet. Anyhow, I don't know."
"Neither does anyone. Personally speaking, I'm inclined to agree with what the Elder Brother told us. The kingdom of heaven is *within* ourselves. He didn't mean inside of our bodies, in the space that's shared by our lungs or our vitals. He must have meant *within our con-*

sciousness, our state of perceiving, as big as it can grow. And that continues, and grows, whether we're encased in our physical outer garments of bone and cuticle or are wandering around without them in danger of catching a permanent cosmic cold."

"But we have to possess the mental overcoat, at least, or we can't perceive anything. We can't have consciousness apart from the body."

"No? Who said so?"

"Can we?"

"I certainly don't think this body I'm sitting in, was responsible for all the ingredients that constitute my soul. Was yours?"

Why did there flash before my eyes in that moment the picture of a little boy, out on the knoll behind the Fairbanks house in East Templeton sunshine? What about that Mystical Moment when I had glanced down and perceived my small dumpy body and wondered in a panic where I would have been if the universe had not "happened"? . . .

"Not in that way, no. Then heaven, you think, is a state of philosophy?"

¶ "Heaven," she said slowly, choosing her words, "is a state of spiritual recognition that everything worth while in life is folded up tightly within ourselves—and knowing that it will blossom—and watching it blossom—and enjoying its blossoming—beholding the perfect flower that finally results." She tilted her chin. "Find *that* by changing fleshly overcoats, or wandering around the stars in a sort of cosmic nakedness ahead of time? Fiddlesticks!"

"Then knowing the 'Why,' in your philosophy, isn't a matter of dying?"

"It decidedly is not. There's no such thing as dying—in my philosophy. The 'Why' comes to us in some moment of terrific realization, maybe revelation, when we're least expecting to stumble onto it, . . . in that moment when it finally dawns upon us consciously just why we were created." ❧ ❧

"Ah, that's it precisely! When it dawns on us *consciously.*" After a longer silence I added, "—and don't you see, that is the 'Why'?"

"It's been my experience," said Mary, feeling for her wrap and thrusting in an arm, " that such a moment rarely comes to us when we're consciously watchful of its arrival. Don't forget that it was Christ again who said, 'He who loses his life, shall find it.' I've always interpreted that to mean as well, 'Try to be forever finding your life and it's a sure shot that you'll lose it.' "

"I see. To find your life you should jump into a river and save some moron's life at the expense of your own?"

"No," Mary snapped, "losing the consciousness of one's self in the consciousness of others."

"I see. I should go as a missionary and live among those everlasting katydids in Aoyama Compound!"

"I dare say the nurse-friend of yours, whom you mentioned up in the apartment this afternoon, isn't all fussed up with the 'Why' of her existence." ❧ ❧

What answer could I make?

I glanced at the check and felt for my wallet. . . .

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

I GOT out of my temporary jam by a strange quirk of fortune. ❧ ❧

Nearly everybody who has been to New York knows the animated electric news bulletin that encircles the building in the center of Times Square. The man who developed that motorgraph sign was an ingenious Irishman by the name of Frank Riley. Frank Riley made money in his electrical sign business, then had a quaint weakness for sinking it in plays. Stage plays. Plays that rarely made any money. Always Frank was about to roll up a fortune by rolling up the curtain on some comedy that would run upon Broadway for a hundred thousand nights. This yen for producing made Riley my friend.

Again as with Grant, it was my third novel, *Drag,* that brought us together. Riley had read *Drag* and believed it would make a stage hit for the actor Glenn Hunter. Frank was also the intimate friend of that other brilliant actor-producer, Frank Craven—a canny Scot who never lost a dollar in show business. It must have been a case of the attraction of opposites. At any rate, word was got to me that if I cared to submit *Drag* as a stage play, Riley and Craven might produce it.

I hunted up Riley. I found him in a high corner office of the Brokaw building, one of the skyscrapers to the south of Times Square. This office, in addition to being cluttered up with every conceivable gadget in process of development, was hung with pictures of notorious folk—all autographed to Frank—from Elbert Hubbard to the Prince of Wales. How that Irishman ever fanaggled the Prince of Wales' picture is beyond me. Thomas A. Edison and Theodore N. Vail shared honors with George

Arliss and Minnie Madden Fisk. Even W. C. Fields ogled out of a corner. Two months after knowing Frank, the fellow Pelley's picture was likewise in that gallery. Frank had a penchant for hanging up his friends. ¶ He was a short, stocky, half-bald little Celt, about the same as myself in years, with black eyebrows, sharp sparrow features in a face growing rotund, and a sense of Irish humor that was one uproarious comedy. If Frank had simply walked upon the stage and been his own production, he might have made his million. His daily conversation was one eternal chuckle. No matter what his troubles, he could turn them with a laugh.

Did I want to see *Drag* produced as a stage play? Did a duck want to swim? I got down to tacks with Riley. I went up to his home on West End Avenue and met Nellie, his wife. They had a son named Ted. I certainly met Ted. We all sat in the Riley living room after many sumptuous dinners and drank highballs together. All but Frank himself. He could not drink highballs. They gave him sties on his eyelids. Betwixt and between such diversions I hied myself away to a hotel suite and made a play of *Drag*. Frank by the surname Riley took it to Frank by the surname Craven, and it was subsequently reported to me that the lines which I had written even made that Scotsman laugh. Verily they did more. They made that Scotsman dig down in his financial pants and actually hand me a whole thousand dollars, option and royalties paid in advance. I was to have a play produced on Broadway by Frank Craven, who had never been known to pick a box-office flop. Well, perhaps life was looking up.

But alas and alack, something else was looking up. Looking me up. Those notes of Stone's and Gilpin's which I had left up in Vermont. No, despite all my earnings, I had never paid those notes. A sense of the equities involved had left them in hiatus. I had suffered in body and purse while freezing on those wintry wastes of Siberia for Uncle Sam while my friends in Vermont had been fighting the war by buying interest-bearing bonds. So each time that Stone or Gilpin wrote me about settling up those notes, I wrote them back curtly if I wrote them at all. I advised them in such times that I recommended their taking their negotiable paper securely in their hands, finding a large and handy body of water without an outlet and submerging themselves in it with permanency and dispatch. "Well," said an attorney in lower Broadway to me, "since you've been in California we've got a judgment on you in York State by publication and default. Will you pay up—with all lapsed interest—or be garnisheed with all your editors?"

I bit my lip in rage. Nearly twelve thousand dollars was the sum they wanted pronto. "All right," I said finally, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'm going to have a stage play produced by Frank Craven. I'll assign you my royalties until the debt is paid. You can either take them on that basis, or I'm leaving for Vermont to sue Stone and Gilpin for wrecking my beautiful little property in my absence. I should have done it at the start." ☙ ☙

The lawyer took the contract and called Craven on the phone. The contract was *bona fide*. "All right," said he, "put your name on the back."

CAME the Sunday when I rented a Drive-Yourself car, called for Mary at her apartment, and we took an all-day drive up through Westchester County, across to Newburgh, down through Tuxedo into northern New Jersey.

"I've turned the financial corner," I reported. "I'm going back to California next week and wait for *Drag's* production."

"So you're going back to the fleshpots? Oh well, some people have a penchant for keeping themselves in stews."

"I've got to go back. I've started a lot of things out there that my friends are involved in. After all, it's my life."

"I suppose it is, . . . for the present," she agreed.

It was a marvelous ride that we enjoyed that day, over Bear Mountain and the Storm King highway. I remember that before it ended I had told her all about my strange interlude in San Francisco seven years before. I had never happened to hit on it before when I had been with her. She asked——

"And when you and Marion broke up, why didn't you go back to your Big Drums girl?"

"The ties between us had been such that once broken they could never be resumed. Somehow or other the cards were stacked differently . . . as they're stacked with you and me. They could never be played to take the same stakes."

"This nurse at Mrs. Shaw's . . . you say she might be the other girl's twin sister?"

"The resemblance is uncanny——"

"Do you love her?"

"Love who?"

"The woman who fetches your meals on a tray."

I answered Mary honestly, "I feel about as resilient in the matter of Romance as a strip of stair carpet in a slum-district boarding house!"
Mary had a smile in the corner of her mouth. . . .
I went away next day.
By the next time I saw Mary, I had traveled through the Door!

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

LILLIAN had once remarked, "Many a divorce begins with the breaking of a teacup." It was not a teacup that produced the business divorce between Eddie and myself. It was a batch of fresh page-proofs for the current *Hi-Hat*. And that inevitable separation was as sudden as it was sharp.

I returned to Hollywood with no especial reasons why I should return except that Grant was there and Eddie was there, and I had let myself become entangled in a lot of personal obligations toward these two and somehow I must work out of them. Aside from these, I had a world of rich experience tucked away inside my soul, but no apparent use to which it might be put.

The small building which Eddie and I had taken in North Wilton Place now became nothing but a tawdry packing-case of a structure; three large rooms on the ground floor, three abovestairs. In a compartment in the upstairs ell I had fitted up a bedroom and moved my things from Shaws'. If I were paying for such quarters I might as well use them. What possible difference did it make where I lived? When I got my books and manuscripts arranged, yanked down the bedclothes from a self-made bed, and dumped myself into it, my soul was filled with loathing.

So this sort of thing was "creating," was it? . . . I extinguished my bed-lamp and lay looking out the window at the clean California moon behind a barricade of pepper trees. A box bedroom in a nondescript little building, with a brassy radio cackling next door and a night of high jinks going on in the Jewish synagogue over the way!

I had an urge to go elsewhere; but where was there to go?

The next afternoon I wandered into Grant's private office and hoisted my feet on the sill of the window. I asked—

"Grant, am I 'queer'? . . ."

"As a busted cuckoo clock," he assured me. "What makes it particularly

occur to you now?"
"I'm too danged introspective. Not a thing that I tackle seems really worth doing. I go just so far in a project, slide it across, then presently . . . phooie! . . . everything's static. Life's a washout—"
"I know! Nothing to eat but food. Nothing to wear but clothes. Nothing to drink but the carbolic acid they offer these days for gin!"
"I suppose I ought to be back in New York watching my boy and girl grow up, getting a silly 'kick' out of bossing them around as the Popper, fretting myself into early prostration over various Wall Street trends, improving my golf—all the bally nincompoopery that makes life so real to most men at forty. Grant, life's a bust!"
"Listen, feller! Snap out of it. Life's glum enough without your blowing in here and wrecking my day, calling my attention to how I feel myself." He arose and closed his desk. "Come along out to Hank Walthall's with me. The ride will do you good."
"I've got to be back by eight. I've got a date with Eddie to go up to the house of a fellow named Garde—Svende Garde, the movie director out at Universal City. He's got some sort of gadget he wants to have promoted."

We drove out to Henry Walthall's. The Little Colonel, who had leaped to screen fame under D. W. Griffith in *The Birth of a Nation*, was working with Lon Chaney that week out at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's. As he expected to be acting in some night shots that evening, he had wanted to see Grant during the interval of dinner. We parked Grant's coupe before a large colonial house on one of Beverly Hills' most pretentious thoroughfares, and went within to find Henry not arrived.
"Hello, Grant! . . . Hi, Bill!" was Mary Walthall's greeting. "Come in and have a cocktail!" Such was Hollywood hospitality.
Mary Walthall was a sprightly little woman with a dash of County Kildare in her eye, whose devotion to Henry was the comment of the movie colony. She mothered him, she nursed him, she managed him, she looked after his wardrobe, his meals, his investments. She made a good job of it, and most of Hank's directors rose up and called her blessed.
"We're having our fortunes told," announced a small, squirming child as Mary went out to shake the cocktails. "Aunt Mary, she says I'm gonna grow up and have a large fambly—"
"Want your fortune told, Grant?" asked Mary, passing around the glasses and resuming her seat. "Shuffle the deck, make a wish, and cut it."
"Cut the wish?"

"Cut the comedy. You've got to be serious or this business doesn't work." Grant shuffled the deck. He made his wish and handed back the cards. Mary turned up pasteboards on the taboret before her. "Ill say you're going to get your wish," she told him presently. "What'd you wish for?"

¶ "Whatta you think I'd be wishing for? To get out of that airplane scrape financially.'

"You'll do it. Swimmingly. Here Bill, it's your turn. Shuffle and make your wish." ☙ ☙

What did I wish for? Strange caprices go through our minds. "Okay," I announced, handing back the deck.

Mary flipped up cards. She frowned. Then she scowled. Suddenly a fright passed over her face. "Man, this is terrible! You're headed toward . . . jail!"

"Toward where?"

"You heard me. Jail! A place with bars, where you can't get out."

"For what?"

"How should I know?" She continued to turn up cards. "Of all the messes!" I heard her exclaim. "Man, if these cards are telling the truth, your life's a madhouse."

"That much is truth."

She turned up two more cards, then dropped the whole pack as though it were hot. "No more of you for me!" she decided.

"Am I going to get my wish?"

"Not a ghost of a chance!"

I knew nothing of the marvels of subconscious psychometry, at the time. How could a handful of greasy cards determine my future because I had shuffled them? But the psychological effects at the moment were bad. I had merely wished that my forthcoming play might turn out a success ☙ ☙

The telephone rang as the sun sank on a beautiful August day. It was Henry calling from the studio. He could not come down home. Would Grant oblige him by continuing on to Culver City? The business was important. We finally went out and got into Grant's machine. Put me out at the car line," I suggested. "If I go to Culver City I'll miss my eight o'clock appointment."

Are such details irrelevant? They sometimes throw big switches.

"Cheer up," Grant consoled me, as I stood on the crosswalk, banging the door of the coupe to make certain that it was closed. "Things are never so bad that they couldn't be worse."

"I believed that, once. I also recall there used to be a Santa Claus."
With a forlorn smile and wave of his hand, Grant started his coupe again. It jounced over the car tracks and was lost in the traffic. About me, the Beverly Hills business section was lighting up, crystalline California twilight was bejeweled with neon signs. I wandered down the block and waited for my trolley. A newsboy came up and offered me a paper. I felt for money in my pockets.
My pockets were empty. I had changed into a freshly pressed suit before leaving my room but neglected to transfer the contents of the pockets. I even lacked car-fare to get back to Hollywood.
"Marooned penniless in Beverly Hills!" I thought, sourly. "What a life! It was three miles in to Hollywood.
Then I thought of Lon. His home was two blocks west. I would borrow some small change from Chaney or Hazel. Over to Linwood Drive I made my way, the Walthall cocktail not setting overwell. Skirting Chaney's lawn, I approached the rear door.
Lon was squatting across a chair in the kitchenette with a cold roast, a loaf of Italian Bread, and a bottle of wine before him. "'Lo, Bill," he greeted me, neither rising nor turning his head.
I went in and sat down.
"Maid's day off," he explained. "Cut yourself a chunk of the sheep. Or maybe it's cow. How's every little thing?" He was eating in his 'make-up,' the costume of the racing-track tout that he wore in *The Unholy Three.*
"Rotten," I answered.
He swallowed a generous mouthful of food, wiped off his mouth with the back of his hand, and finished what wine remained in the glass. "I gotta shoo you out o' here," he said, glancing at his wrist watch. "Hazel's gone some place and I gotta lock up."
Somehow he was not the Lon whom I had known. His address was perfunctory. My introspection was bad enough, but this tolerance was blighting.
"Okay by me," I said stiffly. I would not have asked him for car-fare, not a thin dime. I would have walked to San Francisco before my pride would let me do it. Lon stopped beside his car to light a cigarette.
"You still mixed up with Eckels?" he demanded.
"Mixed up is right."
"Say," he asked bluntly, "didn't you tell me you were such a big-shot once that the Rockefeller Foundation sent you out to the Orient?"

"Perhaps. What about it?"
"Oh—I was just wondering."
"I get it. Wondering what's got hold of me, that I'm puttering around in Hollywood."
"It'd be a danged good thing, Bill, if you sorta got wise to yourself."
He got into his Cadillac. "Well, so long, old horse. I suppose I'll be seein' you!" ❧ ❧
"I don't suppose anything of the sort," I said blackly.
I knew Lon was piqued for a handful of reasons. I had failed to click with the Jew crowd because I would not let them bulldoze me at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's where he had a contract at three thousand a week. He was likewise piqued that I played with the Hollywood screen crowd—forgetting that the situation with my work was different than his, that I had to do it to stand in with directors. Finally, he had previously had some tiff with Eddie Eckels. He was rugged and direct, this fellow Chaney, even if he did put birdies back in nests. If you failed to measure up, he contrived to let you know it.

SO I watched his car disappear likewise in the traffic, with an ache in my spirit. First Mary Walthall's card trick. Now Lon had intentionally snubbed me. And I had a three-mile walk ahead of me if I hoped to keep my engagement at Garde's. I walked into Hollywood. . . .
Life was so rancid within me, as I trudged on, block after block, increasingly hungry, with no money for food, my clothes growing hot and saggy upon me, that long before I arrived at Gardner Junction my frame of mind was dangerous. This couldn't go on. Better to court the sweet sleep of oblivion than live my life statically or slip deeper into morass. . . .
Suddenly a voice hailed me from traffic—
"Bill, you dam' louse! Whatta you mean, goin' off hiking?"
It was Eddie, in my roadster. He had started out to find me, and come on me by accident.
"I got caught in Beverly Hills with no money for car-fare."
"What'd you go to Beverly Hills for, clipping time so close?"
"Since when couldn't I go where I choose, if I took the notion?"
"We can't make a success of our business with you gadding 'round."
"The way I'm feeling tonight, Eddie, I don't particularly care whether I make success of it or not."
"Don't you want to create?"
"Bah!"

"Say, feller, I gave up a six thousand dollar job to kick in with you and make this firm go."
"I know you did, Eddie. That's one of the reasons why I haven't long-since chucked it."

SVENDE GARDE was a blond Viking of a man who had formerly been a celebrated ballet director in his native Copenhagen. His home was reached by climbing a curved cement thoroughfare off Sunset Boulevard where it merged with Beverly Hills. The movie director met us with his continental comity, led us through a spacious music room and out upon the *patio.* Below us to the east the lighted panorama of the Los Angeles valley was a titanic fairy gauze with billions of twinkling fireflies entangled in its meshes. A servant brought the usual tray replete with ice and many choice decanters. While we were admiring the view, Mrs. Garde came out briefly. She was deftly gowned, reserved, exotic. Her husband presented us. She stayed only a moment, but I had the fleeting impression of an exquisite jewel, set against deep velvet. . . .
"A few months ago," began Garde, while ice tinkled pleasantly in three frosted glasses, "a friend of mine wished the loan of certain funds. He gave as his security the rights to an invention. I've wondered what possibilities it might hold for commercial exploitation."
Eddie said, "We're the bright little boys that can discover 'em!"
I said, "What sort of an invention is it, Mr. Garde?" Vaguely I envisioned machines for renewing battleships, reforming the radio, sending space-cars to Mars.
"It is . . . ah . . . a toothbrush, gentlemen . . . a demountable toothbrush! . . . see, I will show you."
A toothbrush. *Demountable!*
Garde drew from his vest a tiny oblong box that had once held a fountain-pen. Now it held a toothbrush. "You see, gentlemen, sometimes we like to have our toothbrush with gold or silver handle. But the bristles wear out and must be thrown away. By pushing spring . . . *so!* . . . in this invention, old brush comes out and new brush goes in. It is new tooth-brush entirely, yes?"
"Swell!" exclaimed Eddie. "We could do a whole lot with that gadget if you'd put some real mazuma behind it for promotion."
I turned from my friends and walked to the edge of the *patio's* parapet. Lillian's Big Drums! Demountable Toothbrushes! I poured the choice highball down into the azaleas and came back with empty glass.

"Allow me!" cried Garde, reaching for my tumbler.
"No, thanks. One's quite aplenty."
"Perhaps you'd relish some *hors d'oeuvres?*"
The *hors d'oeuvres* were more acceptable. I found myself denuding the silver platter that had come out with the drinks. I was bilious with hunger.
¶ Lillian's Big Drums! . . . Lillian's Big Drums! . . . Gobbling up appetizers in lieu of my dinner! . . .
Garde's wife summoned him inside to the phone. Eddie came close and nudged me in the hip.
"F'r gawd's sakes, Bill, if you wan' to get any jack out of this guy, come alive and play up!"
"Suppose we do promote his dinky little mouth swab, what about it?"
"You wanted to create."
It was all so tawdry, so pathetic, so horrible, that my vitals knew an anguish. I said, "This isn't creating. It's just funning with jimcracks."
"It's creating to *me!*"
"Yes, Eddie. I know it."
"We've gotta make a showing, . . . with that airplane flop and all—"
"Not messing around with mouth-swabs. At least not for me."
The pathos of it all was getting me, I say. The pathos of all life! . . . Little grown-up boys playing around with this and that, motor contraptions, movie cameras, scantily-clad actresses, airplanes, demountable toothbrushes! . . . Was *this* why I was shut in my mortal encasement? . . . Yet how could I tell Eddie? . . . How get him to see it? . . . Garde came back.
"I would greatly enjoy to show you my library," he invited. "I have some ver' fine editions."
Eddie looked puzzled and not a little worried. Was he letting us down easy? We went into the library.
It was a large corner room with windows east and south. We crossed the perfectly appointed music room to reach it. The flavor of this room, the lights or lack of them, their glint in the mahogany of a mammoth piano, recalled a line to me that I had used years before in writing *The Fog* . . . something about "art drawing-rooms softly shaded at midnight." . . . What a long, long time since I had written *The Fog!* . . . Or was it some other man who had written *The Fog?* . . . Demountable toothbrushes now, instead. . . . Had I actually died somewhere along the years. . . . Possibly in Brightlook Hospital that night with the fever . . . and was this a form of consciousness in my personal hell? . . .
I became aware of a deep spread of carpet beneath my feet, a cushion of

sea-green loveliness. I trod upon this carpet. It laved to the walls that were heavy with books.

Books! Books everywhere! Beautiful books! Here were no serried shelves of tombstones made for the living by the living but destined too soon to remind us of the dead. These shelves of Svende Garde's library were electric with resonance—finely printed resonance, the epitome of Culture. Garde slid back a case-front and took out bindings lovingly. . . .

Was my Guardian Angel somewhere in the background that night? Did Kismet on distant cloud-forms, ten trillion miles removed, know of the famine in my spirit and use a Danish movie director's home to return me to my brevet? Did Svende Garde travel all the way from Denmark, get his job in Hollywood, buy this house on the side of a mountain, stock it with treasures . . . to put an inkling in my soul that somewhere, sometime, somehow, all the beauties and heart-hopes that entice us may eventually be our argosies coming shoreward in full sail?

I like to believe it. And I trust I am not selfish. . . .

I looked about that library. I beheld the deep-toned polishings, the sacrosanct appointments, the exotic *bibelots,* the *objets d'art,* the marbles, the bronzes, the shelvings filled with browns, blacks, golden calfskins, festooned letterings . . . a book-lover's paradise.

And yet, all that Svende Garde's library means to me at this moment is a sea-green carpet that spread beneath my feet. To walk on it! . . . *that!*

¶ I wanted to sob, as reactions a million years old surged up through my hot heart. Here was beauty, sanctuary, exquisite tranquillity, the crashing world muffled . . . all that Art and Man and God had wrought to produce the acme of a civilization . . . brought to crux in a room that had books in it like symphonies.

I asked myself, "Why cannot I live forever in a room like this library? What's stopping me from owning one?"

Eddie was fretting to talk about the toothbrush. He had a fishy eye for my subsequent discussion with Garde on the Lindisfarne Gospels, the Homilies of Chrysostom, the Westminster Psalter, the Lectionary of Paris, the Utrecht Psalter, the Durandus de Divinis Officiis, the Valerius Maximus. ☙ ☙

"What'd you waste time talking religion to him for?" he later abused me.

¶ "I wasn't talking religion to him, you poor egg. We happened to be discussing illuminated manuscripts."

"Oh," said Eddie vaguely. And my heart went out to him. . . .

Sea-green carpet! A room of sea-green carpet! . . . I had let myself be-

come shipwrecked, washed up, cast ashore, on an arid island of my own circumscriptions. Yet I began to find myself that night.
And a sea-green carpet did it. . . .
I should own such a sea-green carpet. I should know a room, yes even 'an art drawing-room softly shaded at midnight,' that spoke unto my soul in unutterable majesties. Pray and why not?
But where? And when? . . .

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

EDDIE scarcely spoke to me, going home that night. I said to Mr. Garde on leaving his library, "I don't think we'll be in much of a position to promote your toothbrush. But I have a friend in New York named Riley who might handle it for you much better."
This was treason to Eddie, and I certainly did not blame him.
I lay on my bed an hour later staring at those pepper trees. Somehow I had a hunch that Mary Walthall's mystical reading of those pasteboards would prove correct. I knew that Chaney's treatment of me had something more behind it than any grudge toward Eddie. But over and against these was that green phantasmagoria of that utterly Magic Carpet.
It had done something to me. Millions of people were later to be affected by that Something. But I could not then discern it.
I fell asleep to a rocking nightmare of cocktails, playing cards, movie contracts, toothbrushes, and green carpet, all underwritten by billions of money from a play that paid in gross counterfeits. I got up next morning with the inside of my mouth feeling like an uncured goatskin. Eddie was sleeping. I went down and made coffee. I knew I had a dour time coming with my partner. . . . I ought to fortify myself with a substantial breakfast; but I had fallen into the bachelor habit of snatching my breakfast and punishing my stomach. I swallowed black coffee and went upstairs to my desk. On my desk lay those proofs. I picked up a pencil and started to correct them. Eddie came in.
"Gimme those!" he snapped. He flipped the clump of them out of my hands. Around to his desk, facing mine, he went. And he applied himself to reading them.

"You're not very polite," I admonished him darkly.
"You've got work to do. Writing stuff. I can read proofs. We might have got a grand out of Garde last night."
"What's that got to do with your snatching those proofs?"
He returned me no answer. . . .
"Does it never occur to you, Eddie, that I'm working with you and not for you?" ✻ ✻
"You're not working at all. . . . For anybody. . . . Including yourself."
"Okay, Eddie."
"Now where are you going?"
"Out!"
"Out? My gawd. All yesterday aftenoon you gadded—"
"Yes, and I'm going to gad some more."
I put on my hat and went down to my car. I had no idea where my driving would take me. What did I care? I must merely *drive* . . . and think.
I picked up a better breakfast on Hollywood Boulevard. Then I turned toward Gardner Junction, Beverly Hills. Sea-green carpet had gripped me like hypnosis. Los Angeles trolley cars ground ponderously along. Children and dogs were playing on the sidewalks. Frequently traffic tooted me, wanting to get past me. I drove slowly, aimlessly, ten miles an hour. *Sea green carpet. . . . Art drawing-rooms softly shaded at midnight. . . . Big Drums. . . . Toothbrushes!*
"I've got to face this business of my future," I told myself grimly. "I can't run away from life. I'm in it and must face it."
I kept going southward on Santa Monica Boulevard. I crossed Doheny Drive. Ahead of me stretched Beverly Hills, bathed in its haze of silent golden sunshine. I began to run over the high lights of my life, as I ran over cross-walks.
Everyone spoke disparagingly of introspective people. If I had to be introspective, I proposed this morning to make a good job of it. It was unthinkable that Life was just a crazy jumble. There had to be a Pattern. Somewhere or other, along the line, I had tragically missed my cues.
I thought of my early boyhood dreams, the ecstasy of my first printing plant, the interlude with Mabel. These recalled father. Where were either of those beloved persons at the moment, and did they dream of the influence they were exercising on the soul of a man driving along Santa Monica Boulevard in California sunshine? I thought of those days after my return from Fulton, in Springfield, my job at *The Homestead* office,

how queerly it had come to me, my meeting with Marion. There must have been destiny in it, my meeting with Marion. . . .

Chicopee, Wilmington, Bennington, the little grave on a far Vermont hillside forgotten by all but one woman and God. I looked into each of these experiences without excuse or self-pity. I wanted to discern the very core of them. I thought of that long cruel fight against the rejection slips when I was mastering my craft, and finally, down a later day, the comment of one of the editors of *The American,* repeated to me outside: "I can't make up my mind whether this chap Pelley is the greatest writer we've got in the nation today, or just an ass who knows how to sling sentiment." I had dreams in those days—something to buoy me up, to carry me along. Why was it ever necessary to have an incentive? What was incentive? Why did the human spirit, at least my human spirit, require an enticement, a rainbow always ahead with a gold-pot at the foot of it? Why not go along and do the job for the job's sake itself? What was it, I was after? Why, ever, eternally, the lambent mirage? . . .

"I begin to see what incentive is," I told myself aloud. "It's the subconscious realization that you've got certain capabilities, and you make a wager with Life and Circumstance that your estimate of self is accurate. When you prove that it is, then the 'novelty' ceases. You 'lose your incentive.' . . . Incentive then, is just faith in one's estimate of self. The wagers which the human spirit makes with itself, concerning itself, surpass all other wagers. When spirit wins its bet, what remains to be done? What remains to be said?"

I debated just where this discovery landed me. I realized for the first time that life was becoming a stalemate to me because my spirit could make no more real wagers with itself as to whether it could accomplish this or that. Spirit had begun to find out that when it made wagers that it could not do this or that, it usually lost. It was becoming easy for me to master whatever challenged my hand. Given time then, I could work out any problem.

But again, where did it get me? My name on a monument for this or that? What was it that Socrates had said, "Wouldst you have your name on granite, O man? Then carve thy name upon a wayside stone and cast it in yon chasm." Something like that. What did adulation matter? Suppose people did praise you for being exceptionally good as a specialist? They likewise praised breakfast foods, corn plasters, pedigreed dogs. To be remarked upon as better than the next man, is only to indicate that you've had the more experience, you've got a little finer quality of expres-

sion in consciousness. Give the poor moron time. He will, doubtless, catch up with you, and probably will surpass you.

The Pattern. The Pattern. Where was the Pattern? What, in the Blind Accumulate, was I striving to get accomplished? That every man's life must have its pattern, was a subconscious acceptance I refused to disdain. I had done certain things in business, writing, publishing, movie-making. Given time, I say, I could work out any problem, even those jellybean demountable toothbrush problems that were Eddie's and my obsessions of the moment. But it was not the mere working-out of a lot of motions and processes that mattered, since all quantities after the first success were relative thereafter. My soul had been finding out its own capabilities, and having found them, would try them on celestial whetsones.

¶ An artist painted a picture. Into the picture he put all the technique and spiritual enterprise that he called his Art. He stretched some cloth on wooden sticks, applied ground dirt and oils to its surface, and got an effect in outline and color that provoked in the beholder the same sentiments that he had felt, which had started him off to do his painting. The canvass, the sticks, the pigments, meant nothing. The finished picture itself meant nothing. It was still canvass and sticks and pigments. But the artist had gauged a certain quality of spirit within himself and proceeded to demonstrate that he possessed it. He had given a demonstration of what he *was*, to the universe, by offering his handiwork as material prototype. The performance of spirit within him, the display of himself, to himself or to others, was the thing that got out the pictures.

¶ Artists of any kind then—painters, sculptors, poets—must be terribly uncertain about themselves to start out with, in their notions and their visions. To get a spiritual balance and ballast within themselves, they went ahead and produced works of art. They proved by these works of art whether they had been right or wrong about their notions and their visions. Ten thousand so-called artists a year proved that their notions and visions were wrong, and the world never heard of them. Were not the same purposes served in both the cases of the worldly successes and of the failures? Inward Spirit had determined something. Having determined it, the purpose was achieved.

It was a strange line of reasoning; but it gave me gratification in that I felt that I was working it out myself. Even by so doing, I was proving the capacities of Spirit to be this or that. Instead of stories, screen dramas, demountable toothbrushes, or even Reubens canvasses, it happened at the moment to be a philosophical conclusion.

I reached the Beverly Hills business section where I had awaited the trolley car the previous evening. I turned off across a subdivision in process of development. One street was like another. But the driving helped me think. ❧ ❧

I recalled the trip that I had taken to the Orient—the men I had met there who were doing the work of nations. I thought of the men who had died in Siberia, the Forgotten of the war, ending their lives because of seeming accident. . . . Had their precious lives no pattern? I came back in my thinking. I visited the Golden Moments girl in spirit. I thought of my domestic quandary with Marion, the trails that had parted after Lillian, after fever. Then had come Lon, Beryl, Mary. . . .

Wait a minute! *Lon!* I retraced my thoughts. *Hollywood!*

"Everything was in a forward crescendo," I argued to myself, "till I put aside everything for Hollywood, for movies."

Movies! Flickering shadows and seething high lights. Big money. Easy money. Slipshod work. Gin and cocktail parties. Concupiscence. Had I 'gone Hollywood'? . . . Was that it, I asked myself?

What was this business of "going Hollywood"? What was its significance in terms of Spirit? . . .

I was thinking of some of my profitable escapades in screen dramatics, when my vague vision cleared. It had to clear. . . . Through the windshield before me I beheld an obstruction. Unwittingly I had wheeled to the end of the street. Across a broken ledge of asphalt that spilled down behind a rough embankment, were heavy red sawbucks. And what was the sign that now spoke to me like Jehovah's voice from Sinai? . . .

BEYOND THIS POINT IMPASSABLE

GO BACK!

I slowed my car. I eased it over against the curbing. I jerked on my brake and cut out the motor.

The morning was sweetly silent.

Beyond this point impassable, go back! . . . I stared at the sign like a discarnate warning, giving me counsel in a moment of maelstrom. No workmen were about. No persons were in sight. I had come out into an arena of lambent sunshine, empty, abandoned—the sort of hiatus that meant final reflection. It might have been Mary's Tranquil Valley, an acre between the worlds. But . . . beyond this point impassable . . . *Go Back!*

¶ Back where? To what point?

In the seat's leathern corner I slouched and breathed raggedly. Now then, I must face it. Back to just *where?*

A half-hour passed, an hour, verily two hours.

And I cast my accounting with my soul.

It came to me that the various adventures on which I had embarked, always got me to the point, or carried me to that angle of observation, where I perceived larger possibilities within my own spirit. After all, in the spiritual sense, was not this the mysterious thing that is commonly known as Growth? . . . Discerning deeper and stronger possibilities within ourselves, waking up our dormant capabilities, summoning ourselves to more indubitable performance . . . this must be the real actionism in any life that counts. The action is not important, only that action be present. Always the gain is spiritual. The spirit wants to *know* that such and such a thing is true about itself in various aspects of performance. It sets about finding vehicles for proofs. Again, when it has reached its conclusions, it tries other expedients for getting self-recognition. Always and forever they are greater in size, or in commandments to courage. Suddenly it came to me, "It isn't the place where the road *leads* that matters. Nor is it altogether how you travel it. The thing that truly matters is, *that the way gets harder in its traveling as you move along!* When the way gets hard in going, the grade steeper, the obstructions more formidable, the spirit must put forth more energy to travel at all. In doing such, whether that energy be creative, combat, application, what-not, it discovers more facts about itself, that it possesses depths of endurance, reservoirs of talent, that it never dreamed it held. The Finding Out is the one supreme thing. It is God in miniature, reliving his Form-World. ❧ ❧

All else is mere incident.

I felt better after that. I was truly getting somewhere. And yet I went back a bit.

When I had spent that year in the Corbett house in Bennington, concentrating all my energies on the one objective—to force editorial recognition for myself—I had arrived where I had headed. But since that time, no! I had never owned to another definite objective. I had charted no real course of Growth for myself, stronger and sturdier taxations of my spirit. I had just played around. I had fallen into such growth-adventures as had happened in my way. Well, what *was* a worth while objective to have for a target after winning all those bull's-eyes in my writing? What chart of direct and conscious effort could I provide myself with, that

would *ever* mean bettings with my own spirit as to what I was still capable of doing—of engineering, of achieving—in spirit recognition?

I saw finally, in all self-frankness, that the answer was beyond me.

Well, if I did not know, would it not be the better, saner course, to stop living a life of human scrambled eggs, reacting to accidental stimuli, and withdraw into Quiet till the new road came clear? Withdraw into Quiet.

¶ Svende Garde's green carpet!

What was it that Minna Helen had said: "Instead of driving all over the place, wasting gasoline, why not put yourself up in a garage until you decide what your destination is to be?"

I drew a long breath. I made a decision that day in clean sunshine.

"All right," I directed myself, "I *will* go back. I'll go back to quiet. I'll find sanctuary and stay put, in it. I'll conserve my energies, live in waiting, till whatever gods there are, show me conclusively where my further soul-growth lies.

Beyond this point impassable . . . go back!

I started my engine as the whistles were tooting noontime. I turned and went back. Presently I discovered, as I passed through Gardner Junction, that a strange peace possessed me. I was confronting the hardest job in moral courage that I had ever faced in my life—announcing to Grant and Eddie that I meant to pull up stakes, to stop my commercial and financial philandering, to take life as a heritage till my Holy Grail quest was forever unmistakable. . . .

At half-past six that sunset I drove into Shaw's driveway. The car was piled to the top of the rumble seat with bags, boxes, pictures, the little portable trunk that had accompanied me on many travels. On the front steps, tossing a ball for Billie Shaw's pooch, was the lady in white uniform, over her shoulders the navy blue cape.

"Well!" she exclaimed, when she saw my car's contents.

I said, "I've come back."

"I thought you'd moved over to Hollywood with Eddie?"

"Eddie's got the firm. My share of it is whack'.'

"What happened?"

"I've quit Hollywood for good. I'm out of the fleshpots, with nothing but my clothes. After I've carted this truck upstairs, suppose you and I go buggy-riding."

I emptied the machine. Helen changed from her uniform. We backed from Shaw's driveway and drove up Marengo Avenue.

I told my nurse friend everything.

"And a green carpet did it?" she echoed when I was finished.
"A green carpet decided me not to make a vagrant ass of myself one day. one hour, one minute longer. I'm turning over a page in my life."
"How has Eddie taken it?"
"Hard. But I've given him the business. He can get a new partner. After all, he'd have been forced to do it if I'd gone along to a smash."
"And Grant?"
"He was splendid. I went to him first, before I went to Eddie. Do you know what he said? 'Don't you suppose I've seen this thing coming? It was only a question of time in my mind, just when it would break'."
"Have you cost him any money?"
"None that I won't pay. He knows that also."
"Where do you think you're driving now?"
"I want you to do something for me, if you will. I won't be put out if you choose to refuse."
"What is it you want?"
"I'm going to buy a house. Or rather, you're going to buy a house."
"I'm *what?* What for?"
"Under the California real estate laws, no man not divorced from his wife can hold property without his wife's owning half-equity. I can't have that sort of thing happen in this case. I want to buy a house because I don't propose to rent one. Renting would mean . . . just another roost. I'm going to buy a house, and stay put in it till I see my funny life as something besides a bust. I want to buy it in your name, and have you give me back a deed I won't record."
"What's the matter? Don't you trust me?"
"If anything should happen to you—with your relatives and all—I might be in as much of a fix as I am in New York."
"What house are you going to buy?"
"We're looking for it. Now!"
We drove south on Colorado Street and turned eastward on Lake Avenue. For the second time that day I had small idea of where I was heading. We kept driving and talking. We climbed the long hill that led to Altadena. ❧ ❧
"What sort of a house are you looking for?" asked Helen.
"A bungalow that's simply sunk in isolation. Not too big a bungalow. A place where I can live with a typewriter and a dog."
"You haven't got a dog."
"I can get a dog."

Beautiful afterglow hung over the world. The backdrop of the Sierra Madre mountains was tinted like a study by Maxfield Parrish. We got to the sheer top of the Lake Avenue grade, four miles up against the canyon by Mount Lowe. Afar in western distance was the opposite side of the Los Angeles valley floor and the fairy gauze of lights I had looked upon last evening. What a day it had been! . . . the most important day in my life but one, and that one just ahead. . . .

We had turned down Mount Curve Drive when my nurse friend exclaimed, "There's a darling of a place! I wonder if it's for rent?"

I glanced toward the left. Up the slight embankment, on the last level before the mountain began, stood a little Queen Anne bungalow with two sentinel birches flanking its door. It had little casement windows and was covered with cedar shingles.

"It's For Sale," I announced. "I feel funny about it."

Accredit it or no, thus unerringly had we come to it. It was the first, last and only house which we looked at. After inspecting it, further search was superfluous. I drove into the driveway and stopped by the garage. Helen will attest that I said as I shut off my motor and glanced about the premises—

"This is my property! I've driven in here so . . . stopped here so . . . a hundred times before. It's like Remembering Forward!"

That uncanny sensation that comes to one hundred percent of people, of having been in a given situation before, of being almost able to declare what the next step will be, possessed me to such surfeit that my flesh felt a creeping. ☙ ☙

Brief indeed, this narration. Yet no erraticism was exercising now. This bungalow had been built—left there waiting—to contribute its bit to the nation's spiritual history. . . .

The place was open for inspection, or at least I got it open.

It was the now-famous bungalow of *My Seven Minutes in Eternity!* . . . Helen followed me inside.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

THE HOUSE, downstairs, consisted of a large *atelier* room with a ceiling-high window opening eastward on the mountains, a dining room alcove, a spotlessly white kitchen. Abovestairs was one sizable sleeping chamber, a den, a bathroom. In all of the upper rooms the roof came down quaintly, garret-fashion, cutting off upper corners of walls.

The whole house was new.

Not a sound disturbed the ethereal quiet, up there on the mountain. Not the sound of a street car, a railroad, a motor car. For twenty miles the terrain sloped westward, meeting the Pacific far out beyond Long Beach. Vaguely the Los Angeles City Hall campanile poked its silver-pencil shaft out of far valley haze. Beyond was the glint of sunlight on ocean, Catalina Island, the vistas where the sun goes when it is tired with much shining.

"I'm going to live here a long time," I announced.

Woman fashion, Helen was estimating what would be needed to go in the rooms. The stars were coming out when we finally emerged and strolled about the yard. A quaint little rockpile held the jet of a fountain that gushed down into a basin for goldfish. Then came a peanut-candy wall. And beyond was the sagebrush that swept up the canyon.

It was isolation on a height, the world dropped below, the bumbling of humankind left in a chasm.

Next day I sought its owner. The ease with which I acquired the property evidenced to me further that Kismet was arranging it. Forthwith I bought lumber. My first maneuver was to cover the walls of the main room with shelves. Books would go upon them. I would gather my books from a dozen vaults of storage. I would gather together all the choice bits of furniture, of paintings, of tapestries, of bronzes and marbles, that I owned or might procure for the canvass I would paint. For I meant to paint a canvass—verily my art drawing-room softly shaded at midnight—one stroke at a time, and all the time in cosmos.

First I bought necessities to furnish the chamber. Forthwith I moved from Shaws', that home thenceforth a memory. I lived in the new bungalow alone, day after day, putting up shelves, smoothing them, staining them. They held space when completed, for ten thousand books. Ten thousand books! One day in Los Angeles I came upon a rug, a great

Chinese rug, an inch of blue thickness. I knew it was *my* rug the moment that I saw it.

Helen came up and helped with the curtains. Over fawn scrim went luxurious scarlet brocade overdrapes. Over the yawning spaces of empty book cabinets I hung olive-green velour. The combination of deep scarlet drapes, olive-green velour, the blue of the rug that was nearly a black, laid on the color strokes in strong virile contrast. Yet these colors did not clash. Then the furniture went in. One piece at a time I bought, hunting, hunting, for just the right item. Lamps I bought, shaded lamps that pointed up the charm of the tones in my sanctuary. Books were brought up, and found places on my shelves. As fast as each case filled, I removed the velour. A painting of the flagship of Columbus went over the mantel. That indomitable *Santa Maria* meant something to me not unlike my own life. The main room of the house began to take on an atmosphere, a character, a quality. Matie Shaw came up, and gasped at the threshold, "Why, it's almost like a church! . . . a man's room, obviously, yet what perfectly majestic blendings of colors!" A hundred little *bibelots* began to find spaces. The remainder of the house was by no means neglected; but I meant to attain a cloistered effect in my living room that should offer such a lodestone that my restive spirit would never wish to leave it.

¶ And I blessed every one of them.

At length I sat in my finished home and *wrote*. But an addition to my menage came presently that by no means should be overlooked. One day while making a deposit at the bank, a young teller said, "I hear you're living by yourself up in Altadena? You ought to have a dog to sort of keep you company."

"I've thought about a dog."

"I've got a dog I'll sell you."

"What kind of dog?"

"A somewhat famous dog. Laska. Grand-daughter of Chinook, Peary's lead-dog when he found the North Pole. I brought her and her brother across from New Hampshire."

"Does she cost a lot of money?"

"You can have her for a hundred . . . I happen to need the cash."

I went down to the teller's home in South Pasadena that evening. Tied in the rear yard was a splendid brute, half German police dog, half Alaskan husky. She was bigger than a leopard—and a beautiful peach yellow. ❧ ❧

"Hello, pooch!" I greeted her.

She affected to be bored. What kind of address was that, to a thoroughbred? Her eyes were like trout pools, great vacuums of wisdom. Her shell-like ears were delicately rimmed with charcoal. Her tawny breast had the Viking strength of a long line of magnificent ancestors. Here was a Personage.

She went home with me that evening.

Strangely enough, when my cloister was completed I felt no reaction of the usual futility. My buffeted soul had suddenly found Alsatia.

I had come into Peace.

Just outside the *atelier* window was a red cement *patio*. I covered this *patio* with a roof of bright awning. I carpeted its flooring. A comfortable box-swing, deep willow chairs, banks of fern and shrubbery, made this retreat the delight of pleasant evenings. Out from the deftly shaded lamps of the big room the subdued rays fell softly. Colors blended together like the hues of a sunset filmed through darkened gauze. Many a time the view of it, from outside looking in, pained with sweet anguish. Helen would exclaim, "It's so beautiful, it hurts!"

And beautiful it was, even more beautiful than that library at Garde's. I may own larger, costlier houses, but I will travel far to know the spirit of sweet cloisterage amid which I dwelt in those pregnant years of 1927-1928. Why do I linger on such details? Other people have furnished houses, true enough. But all of it was prelude to the mightier adventure that was now drawing close.

One evening in the autumn, when I was deep in the writing of my serial, *Blue Lamp,* for *Collier's Weekly,* Helen came from her transient labors in the small white kitchen. She busied herself with some feminine caprice near the radio in the corner, slightly in rich shadow. Laska was her incessant companion in those rare hours when our gracious landlady was privileged to be with us. I had raised my eyes from the book I was reading. The outer windows and doors were opened. In from the soft hush of evening came the pleasant sound of splashing water falling from the rockpile into the basin in the dark. A sense of tranquillity, of utter well-being, came over me, that constricted my throat. *I had everything I wanted!* ⁂ ⁂

Yes, I had everything I wanted, Nothing was missing. But this was the strange part: I hungered for no more. The Pattern? Why had it never occurred to me that I did not have to worry about the Pattern? The Pattern made itself? Life *was* the Pattern, in whatever phase we lived it!

¶ Each evening as eleven o'clock drew near, my landlady completed her ministrations and presented herself before me in the cape that meant so much. The final chore of my day was driving her the five miles down to Shaws'. And yet with what poignant wistfulness she tore herself away! That Cloister on the Hill was coming to mean as much to her as it had come to mean to myself. Where would it end? Where else could it end?
¶ Then, as prelude to the Supreme Adventure, there happened the episode of the Three Little Boys. . . .

HELEN was busy in the kitchenette one sunset. I was mending a screen on a window upstairs. Suddenly the sounds of bitter sobbing reached me. I paused and listened.

They were tight little sobs, sobs that meant pain. They could not be made by Helen . . . she was working too far on the other side of the house for me to hear. Suddenly, around the corner of the garage came three little boys. One of them was hobbling, supported by the others.

"Mister," asked one of them, "could-we-use-your-telephone-but-we-ain't-got-no-nickel?"

"What's the matter, son?"

"Tommy, now, he fell down the canyon. I gotta telephone his mother 'cause I guess he can't walk home."

From my position above them I took note of Tommy. None of the trio was over ten years old. Tommy's clothes were torn. One leg could not be stepped on. I got down through the house. . . . "There's a small boy hurt out here!" I called to Helen, sharply.

We got him on the *patio*. He was a manly little boy, trying his best to conquer his pain, not to sob too much. He made a bad job of it. I rolled down his sock. What I saw, sickened me. His chubby left leg had been cruelly gouged. He had lost a lot of blood, which had caked to his shoe. ☙ ☙

"We went, now, for a hike up the canyon," the third boy offered. The puckerstring of his blouse was down. His nose needed wiping. He was properly terrified and had been crying some himself. "We dared each other to look over the edge. Tommy, he dared. Then all of a suddint, the rock started rollin'. It went down the canyon and Tommy went with it."

I picked up the cob and carried him abovestairs. Helen flew for towels, bandages, ointments. We undressed Tommy in the bathroom, while his

companions sat by on the appointments customary to bathrooms, snuffling their noses, their caps in their laps. Their mothers were forgotten, excepting they supposed that when they reached home each of them would "catch it." . . .

"Did your mothers know you were going up the canyon?" Helen questioned.

"No'am," they confessed.

What mattered it who they were, or what mothers awaited them? They were three little boys, hurt, awestruck, and distressed. They submitted to the expert ministrations of my Golden Woman as to the Mother Eternal that all small boys recognize no matter how much gray has come into their hair. It was the most natural thing in the world that they had come to this house where "a lady wuz fixin' 'em." I think it was the incident of not knowing who they were, that worked the magic in myself.

¶ I had to leave the bathroom while Helen cleansed that wound. I had known men cut, slashed, shot, mutilated, thrust through with bayonets, in Siberia. But they were men. . . . Grown. Beholding that grisly hurt in a little boy's knee was quite something else. A faintness came over me that promised two patients for Helen to serve. A child hurt, a little boy. It turned me to tallow.

But Helen turned not to tallow. As I saw her intent upon her task, cool, deft, tender, ministering to human suffering, I knew, in a flash of devastating loveliness, what Mary had meant that rainy night at Keene's. . . . "I dare say that nurse friend of yours is not concerned about the Why of *her* existence." . . . Helen's hands were so strong, so capable, so gentle. The little boy stopped sobbing. He even stopped sniveling. He began to grow interested. Instead of more hurt, his pain was being soothed. As she began to wind bandages deftly about the cleansed wound, Helen asked, "Where do you three live?"

"Down somewheres on a street," one of them said largely.

"Don't you know the address?"

"No'am."

"I'll take them home in the car," I declared. "Doubtless we can find it."

¶ The wound was bandaged and expertly pinned. Helen decided that luckily enough no bones had been broken. The other two boys had their faces washed, their clothing brushed, their blouses neatly tied. I believe they likewise achieved to doughnuts. Forthwith I picked up Tommy and bore him to the car.

There were four of us in the seat of the roadster but somehow we man-

aged it. Tommy's leg was the awkward part. It had to have *space* . . . or so he implied, with the dressing completed and the wound convalescent. I think he was proud of the aspects of that dressing. His screeching at his companions informed me that he was normal. Down Lake Avenue we coasted and into the district about the famous deodars. "If you don't know the address," I advised the trio, "you tell me where to steer." ☙ ☙

"Yeah, we'll tell you aw right," I was positively assured.

Street after street I traversed in evening. "I think it's down *that* way," I would get a vague direction. But always the street was not the one expected. I had three homeless small boys on my hands, and probably three mothers were becoming slightly hysterical somewhere, wondering at the absence of their offspring, with evening. One boy, who seemed to know where *he* lived all right, after much driving and experimenting in streets, finally addressed Tommy—

"Hey, this ain't no way to treat nobuddy who's fixed up your leg. Doncha know where you *live?*"

Tommy said meekly, "We only moved over here from Los Angeles Tuesday." ☙ ☙

More driving. More likely looking streets that turned out to be wrong ones. ☙ ☙

"Lookit!" the third boy advised, as though I were not present. "We can't have this guy burnin' out his gas all over Pasadena just for the likes of us!"

But we finally found the house—with a recognition-shriek from Tommy. I drew up to the curbing and opened the door. With the precious leg carefully coddled, Tommy was eased out to the sidewalk and between the shoulders of his two small companions.

Then I faded from that neighborhood before his mother could know who had cared for her son. I did not want her to know. After all, Helen had been the Samaritan. They were three little boys, none of them unlike my own son of whom life was cheating me, who had come to us for succor and in no wise been denied. I write it unabashed . . . as I drove back up the hill I was sobbing inside of me. Even though it had been Helen, I say, who had done the ministering, and all that I had done was to hand out the doughnuts and take the lads back to their unknown mothers, something hard and brittle had broken in my spirit. . . .

It was a surcharge of emotion that had scarcely come to me since that far-off afternoon in Wilmington when I had gripped another woman's

hand and heard a country pastor begin . . . "I am the resurrection and the life! . . ."

It was not the size of the thing that had happened. It was not my part in it, for that had been trivial. It was being a part of Aid, when aid was needed terribly. Ever since that day in faraway Siberia when that young Russian mother had clung to the freight car and been dashed against the culvert, the saddest and most moving words in my mother-tongue had been, "Help me!" I understood it that poignant half-hour with those three little boys, Helen's remark about getting somewhere in a hurry with the ambulance. Thrill indeed! . . .

No, there is no sentimentality in the incident that I had helped minister to three little boys whom life had treated harshly to teach them a lesson in physical caution. I had been given a frail demonstration of what truly was meant by ministering to others.

Those terribly poignant words, "Help me!" The whole race is crying it. There are others who express it by their haplessness, mutely, like those three bruised youngsters. . . .

I got back to Helen, who had tidied the bathroom and gone on with her work. ❧ ❧

She asked, "Did you get them home safely?"

I said, "Yes, I got them home."

"Who were they, anyhow? Did you find out their names?"

"I didn't stop to ask. I never want to know. I just want to remember them as Three Little Boys."

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

AND so, at last, the Door! . . .

From midsummer of 1927 until May of 1928 I lived with Laska in that bungalow. In fact, I lived in that bungalow until March of 1929, but it was the night of the twenty-ninth of May, 1928, that the Panels of Understanding rolled back and I looked from the murk of all that I had ever been, into a vista whose radiance, please God, I am still exploring wondrously.

I was thirty-eight years and two months old.

The winter had been profitable. True, as the cards in the hands of Mrs. Walthall had foretold, I had received a letter from Frank Riley one day in the autumn, informing me that he and Craven were forfeiting the thousand-dollar option they had bought on *Drag*. Craven had suddenly been tendered a contract to produce six plays in a row for Erlanger, therefore would go ahead with no productions for himself. It must have caused him some frightful pangs . . . the Scotsman! Even worse than my disappointment.

As a matter of fact, that disappointment was not keen. Subconsciously, I had accepted that the reading of those cards had been subtle clairvoyance. Nor did I especially care. I had plenty of money. I had written a ten-thousand dollar serial for *Collier's* and nearly fifteen thousand dollars' worth of stories for other magazines. I applied myself to a new novel *The Chuckleheads*, which up to this date in 1939 I have not yet published.

So my days were days of quiet, and my nights were nights of calm.

Neither Grant nor Eddie had particularly suffered from the drastic decision I had made that morning off there in the sunshine of Beverly Hills. I repaid Grant all sums that I had ever owed him. And to demonstrate what happens when a man makes a truly constructive decision, no matter whom it hits or how it hurts—so long as it is constructive—almost the same week that I relinquished to Eddie all my rights and interests in the Pelley & Eckels enterprises, a man named Crawford came along and put $7,000 behind *Hi-Hat Magazine*. Eddie and Crawford changed the name to *The West Coaster* and it ran for over a year as *The New Yorker* of California. Eddie, I understand, is still at his work promoting, today. He has a partner named Ford and a pretentious organization in a substantial corner building on Sunset Boulevard.

A year of Quiet, I say. And a year is a long long time—as one watches the days open and close, summer turn into autumn, autumn sear into winter, winter green into spring. So completely had my life altered, that it seemed a whole decade in the past, instead of a mere twelve months, that Grant had given the Christmas party and Helen had spilled the tobacco on the rug.

Occasionally during this time I had driven to Hollywood with Helen in the evenings, to look in on Grant. But in the main I was finished with Hollywood. Few are the friendships that maintain in screenland. Jews do not know the meaning of friendships, and Hollywood is Jewish down to the core. One of my last visits paid to a movie studio, curiously enough, turned a joke on those Jews in regard to Chaney which only a Gentile could appreciate. . . .

Grant said to me as I lunched with him one noontime, "Believe it or not, I know every actor and actress in Hollywood except Lon Chaney."

The statement left me thunderstruck. And yet when I stopped to check over in my memory, never, in my association with these two, had they ever been in company. I asked, "And do you *want* to know him?"

"Do you think you can fix it?"

"What is there to fix. Come out to Culver City with me this afternoon. I've got a tiff to settle with that acrobat on my own hook."

We drove to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's studio and used our passes to get in on the "lot." I knew the location of Chaney's dressing-room of old, and saw him through the window as I knocked upon the door.

"Whoosit?" he bawled.

"Me! . . . Bill Pelley! . . . Let me in, you clown!"

He arose and unlocked the door. And I gasped in concern. One of his eyes was filmed with white cataract. Down from his nose, across his chin, and into his neck, ran a ghastly scar—it might have been slashed that morning. His hair was clipped close to his head, like a convict's. His torso was bare except for a blowsy goatskin vest. "Good Lord, what's the matter with you?" I cried in alarm.

"Happened? . . . Oh *this!* . . . .Make-up for *The Road to Mandalay,* that's all. Where you been these last few months?"

I introduced Grant. Grant said, "Bill's walked out on us. We're not good enough for him any longer. We're chucked."

Chaney at his make-up table, paused in his wiping of an eyebrow, forefinger pointed into a corner of towel. "Whatta you mean, chucked?"

I said, "I've quit Hollywood."

"Since when?"
"Since August of last year."
"Where you been keeping yourself?"
"I bought a bungalow over in Altadena. I've been staying in it, writing."
¶ Chaney grinned broadly. He reached his hand across and squeezed my leg above the knee. "Smart fella," was his comment.
He was the old Chaney whom I had known the previous six years. . . .
I saw him only once after that. It was on a rainy forenoon while he was playing the role of an Armless Wonder in *The Unknown*. He had both arms tightly buckled against his sides, so tightly that the bulges scarcely showed at the shoulders. An inhuman corset did it. A real armless man, a vaudeville performer, did the stunts required by the story. Later the film-cutting made it appear that Chaney did them. That corset killed Chaney, or so I was told. . . . It broke a blood vessel in one of his arms. A blood-clot started through his system, to stop months later in his throat. He died in a New York hospital, undergoing an operation for its removal.
But the afternoon that I introduced Grant to him, the three of us left the dressing room together and started toward the "set." . . . Irving Thalberg, Metro-Goldwyn's infantile manager, looked from the window of his office and perceived Chaney, Dolge and myself in what seemed to be a significant huddle. Grant was everywhere acknowledged as a manager of players. Lon told me later that no sooner had Grant and I left the lot than the smart but not clever young Jew promptly summoned Chaney to his office. Under Lon's nose he shoved a new contract. A five-year contract at $5,000 per week. $1,300,000! . . .
"Sign it!" cajoled Thalberg, proffering a pen.
Lon signed it. "Now what's it all about?" he grinned.
"Dolge and Pelley were trying to get you to quit us, weren't they? Well, with your box-office drawing power, I'm beating 'em to it."
Chaney kept his mouth shut.
Jews are like that . . . so smart that it costs them money.

IT WAS between the summer of 1927 and the summer of 1928. Again I had come to the top of the cycle. Nine years before, I had looked off across Japan from the summit of Asama volcano. When I had started down that grade, as previously recorded, I had started down into more than a valley. I had crossed a morass and come up again to table-lands. I was on a height literally. I was on a height spiritually. I was on a

height financially. More than all else, there was peace in my soul.

If what now happened had occurred a year before when I was torn driven, heckled, by my predicament with Eddie; when I was lonely, poorly fed, going the Hollywood pace—if the thing that now happened had occurred while I was in that condition of body, mind, and spirit, I say—I might easily have accounted for it as part of the mental turmoil of my life. But nothing of the sort was true. Mark this well!

Physically, I was rested as I had not been rested before in my life. Never had there been a full year during which I remained quiet as I had remained quiet in my Cloister on the Hill. The only manual labor that I did was spading my flowers, clearing sagebrush from my land, or strolling with Laska through the canyons. I was restoring my body and recharging my nerves, eating regularly and well, browsing in sensible comfort among my books and home appointments, finding such recreation as I cared for, picking up Helen and going to the theater occasionally in Pasadena or Los Angeles. The investments that I had made, putting most of my surplus cash into Pasadena real estate, soon became such that I was employing a man to look after them. This led to the opening of a suite of offices in the Central Building in Pasadena. Into the appointments of this suite I put the same artistic study that I had employed in the furnishing of my Altadena bungalow. I located my real estate manager, Al Burke, there, and my secretary, Helen Jamison. Soon I had organized The Pelley Corporation as a firm to handle my real estate holdings, on account of the homestead stipulations of previous mention. I let Burke talk me into financing a string of restaurants, a company that became known as The Briefmeal Corporation. But for the first time now, I did not embark on any of these projects in order to make money, or to show how smart I was, or to supply me with distractions from the ganglion in my spirit. I had no more ganglion in my spirit. My ganglion was gone.

My writing did not appear so futile to me now. I was not penning stories of robot men and women doing melodramatic things, for financial gainings of my own. I was beginning to get hold of the first frail fringe of the garment of a philosophy.

Lillian's Big Drums? . . . They were booming so close to me that I no longer heard them for the depth of their resonance! . . .

This, I declare, was my saga and my achievement, my conflict and my snug harbor, when the Door opened for me on transcendent exposition. I can attest now from a riper experience in all such matters, that the Door never could have opened, there could have been no exposition, while

I was held in the turmoil of uncircumscribed bedazzlement, or while I was battling in the vortex of my maelstrom. Divine Illumination is like Lillian's comment on Attainment. How well her words fitted—

"It's the irony of life . . . the thing we create commands our affection in exact ratio to the effort we put into it. Then when it's time to realize on that effort, the essence of true character is to see that we forgo it. Of course this seems cruel to persons not sufficiently evolved to discern its real increment. . . . It's encompassing the Kingdom of Heaven within ourselves consciously, knowing that we are its living horizons. When we can relinquish the thing we most cherish, without a qualm of loss or regret, it's time for us to have it. And at such times we won't want it because we shall not need it."

How frightfully vital that piece of wisdom was to become to me in a matter of weeks, days, hours! . . .

And so I come to write it. . . . I arrived at my Big Night, the night I have so mystically referred to in many queer twistings and turnings in this narrative. I am yet a long way from the end of that narrative, perhaps years from its end. There may be greater and grander nights in my life. Certainly I have a world of details and achievement to paint in, beside which much that has gone before is boy's play by comparison. Another great nine-year cycle was ready to open before me, in which I was to go Down the Hill after the manner that I have described on three occasions, and come up again to a still higher summit than ever before—finding myself, the next time, nominee of a national Christian Party for President of the United States, having set a whole nation by the ears by the nature of my constructive deployings. Thus far my climaxes had been minor and personal. Now the pinnacles of these higher and dizzier nine-year cycles were to broaden so that the lives of hundreds, thousands, millions of men and women were to be affected—whom I will probably never know nor meet personally. One of them I have already lived since that Night of Revelation in the Cloister on the Hill—and a still greater Revelation on the Mojave Desert—to which my narrative is coming. I believe that if I do that which I have been given to do, that I have nearly three of these cycles ahead of me, that my death is coming in a foreign land in or about the year 1962. I believe as I write these lines in early 1939 that I have but twenty-four more years of life remaining to me to complete my labors. But none of it could have happened had I not moved through the Door.

The Door of Revelation!

I came by the stages that I have set down—perhaps speciously, to some—

and by the details that I have painted, to the evening of the twenty-ninth of May, 1928. . . .

I THOUGHT that that year of isolation had changed me over. Perhaps in comparison with my escapades in Fulton, Springfield, Wilmington, Bennington, St. Johnsbury, New York, and Hollywood, it had. But how could I know as that singing day dawned, went on into silver forenoon, reached golden afternoon, and crept toward purple evening, that I was living the Day of Days in my life up till then, a day that might alter the thinking of a continent? . . .

I recall that I had begun work on that unusual manuscript, *Nations-in-Law,* which has but recently been republished, and that I had written the opening chapters. It was to be a serious analysis of philosophical politics, with material gathered from a thousand sources, personal and academic. I had finished the first three chapters, for it was slow and brain-taxing work. Helen had not been up to the bungalow for days: she was attending on a case of prolonged illness and was minding her patient the clock around. I was feeling in tip-top health. I had not taken an alcoholic drink in over a year. I always puffed a briar pipe at my work and had done so ever since my cub-reporter days back in the office of *The Springfield Homestead.* But my consumption of tobacco was not abnormal. As it is with my friends today, so was it then, that they aver I do not smoke tobacco. Being usually short of them, what I smoke is matches. I vigorously dispute that there was anything of peculiarity in my health, my mental condition, or my habits, to give grounds to the frailest rationalization that what now ensued was reaction from brain devitalization or nervous depression. If this were so, I would have been the first to observe and admit it—and kept the essence of the adventure to myself.

I had worked in the garden the first part of the evening, taken a stroll up the Drive with Laska, come back and done a few more pages on my book. Around half-past ten o'clock, of a perfect California night in May, I arrived at a place in my writing where a peculiar query occurred to me. . . . I laid down my fountain-pen, stretched my cramped fingers, picked up and refilled my pipe.

"What are races?" I asked myself curiously. This simple phenomenon of human life—why one man's skin was white, another's yellow, another's black—struck me with baffling wonderment. Why had not the Almighty created all races of people alike? . . . How could I go ahead with the sort of analysis I had planned until I had a cue that unsnarled that

puzzle? . . . It was in this frame of mind that I finally went to bed.

Locking all lower doors and windows as usual, I put out the downstairs lights. Laska followed me upstairs. A natural *camaraderie* had grown up between myself and that dog. Ever since her arrival in my domicile she had slept directly under my bed. I rarely stirred, certainly never got up in the night, that she failed to come awake and crawl out in an instant. Yet Laska was not the sort of cur that is forever barking at the moon. I undressed and got into bed. . . .

I remember that it was a book on medieval history that I was reading—still keeping my practice of twenty years, reading myself to sleep. The wealth of academic knowledge that I had thus stored away was to serve me in good stead in the years that followed. I read until my eyelids weighted. Then I pulled at the chain on my bed lamp. I fell asleep at once.

As I have often written in smaller monographs on this episode, I do not recall having any special dreams during the first half of the night, no physical distress, certainly no insomnia.

But between two and three o'clock in the morning—the time later verified by the clock on my bed table—a ghastly Inner Shriek seemed to tear through my consciousness. In despairing horror I wailed to myself—

"I'm dying! I'm dying!"

I had come to it at last. . . . *The fraught Door was opening!*

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

SEVEN Minutes in Eternity! . . . a "seven minutes" that was really two hours! What told me I was dying, I cannot say.

Some uncanny instinct had been unleashed in slumber to awaken me and shout it. Certainly something seemed to be happening to me—something that had not happened to me down all my past days. ¶ This was no dream. I knew I was awake, and yet I was not. I knew that some extraordinary condition had affected my head or my heart, or both, in sleep—that my consciousness was responding to the play of forces over which I had no control. I was practically awake, I say, and whereas I had been lying on a bed in the dark of a bungalow bedchamber one minute, the next I felt as though I were being whirled in a cataclysmic plunge into a mystical depth of cool blue space, not unlike the sinking sensation that attends on the taking of surgical anesthetic. Over and over in a curiously tumbling brain the thought was predominant, "So this is *Death!*"

I affirm that in the interval before my subconscious shriek, and the end of my "plunge," I was sufficiently possessed of mortal sense to think, "My body my lie in this house for days, unless Laska brings aid. Poor Helen! . . . she may have to suffer the shock of finding it!" Then I gave conscious attention to the program transpiring. Whereupon this thing happened: I felt myself "land" in the embrace of strong arms that supported me physically. No especial shock attended upon this incident. I had stopped my levitation. Someone had hold of me. The next instant I heard a calm, friendly voice say distinctly in my ear—

"Take it easy, old man. Don't be alarmed. You're quite all right. We've got you and are here to help you!"

I shrank, in those moments, from opening my eyes. What would they behold? I felt that I was being carried by two persons, one with an arm beneath my shoulders, the other with clasped hands looping my knees. I felt weirdly flaccid from my epochal transition . . . then it seemed as though I could not open my eyes at once because of the radiance of queer opal light that diffused in the strange area into which I had come.

When I finally essayed it, I perceived that I had been borne to a white marble pallet and laid nude upon it by two strong-bodied, kindly-faced young men in white uniforms not unlike those worn by internes

in hospitals. They seemed secretly amused at my obvious consternation. ¶ Who was the taller and stockier of the two? I felt as though I had met him somewhere. Then it gradually came to me . . . wasn't I confronting Bert Boyden? . . . in the flesh? You remember the editor man who had been John Siddell's assistant when I first came down to see John from Bennington? . . . him!

Boyden! Bert Boyden! In the flesh, it seemed. I could not be dreaming. He touched me, carried me, set me down on something. And yet Bert Boyden was reported to have "died" before John Siddell "died"—I think, while I had been in Siberia. I gasped out his name. My first exclamation was, "How did *you* get here?"

He only smiled the broader at that—as though he knew a goodly joke. "Feeling better?" he parried. He stood about six feet away from me, head cocked on one side, surveying my nude and seated figure. He seemed to be wiping his hands on a kerchief or a towel.

The other man was nearly Bert's build, with high smooth forehead, inclined toward baldness, with good-natured blue eyes and a somewhat pointed nose. Somehow I sensed a vague affinity or association with Mary, about him. Not exactly her husband. I had never known her husband. But did she not have a brother-in-law who had been a soldier? . . . and who had not come home from camp in 1917?

"Where am I?" I faltered.

Again those humorous glances. "Don't try to find our everything in the first seven minutes," was the adjuration from the person I took to be Boyden. . . . It was this initial exclamation, embodying so much, that I took for the title of the monograph that I later wrote for *The American Magazine*. Why seven? I haven't the faintest idea in the world. Anyhow, that title was unfortunate. Too many people concluded that my experience lasted only seven minutes, since editorial deletions left out the explanation. . . .

THEY did not need to answer my question. I knew what had happened, or felt that I knew. I considered that I had left my mortal body lying on a bed in that Altadena bungalow. I had gone through all the sensations of dying, and whether or not this was the After-life, or some intermediate station, most emphatically I had entered into a place which I had never seen duplicated in all my experience. I say this because of the inexpressible ecstasy that I immediately felt in my new condition, both physically and mentally.

For I had carried some sort of a *physical* body into that novel environment with me. That body was nude. But it was real. It had been capable of feeling the cool, steady pressure of Boyden's hands beneath the shoulders before my eyes were opened. Moreover, it must have had weight of a sort because it had taken two men to bear me to the pallet. I could hold up my hand before my eyes and examine it. I did hold up my hand before my eyes and examine it. To all intents and purposes—and to the quality of consciousness in which I was then operating—it was a flesh and blood hand.

This was an equally weird realization: although my body was nude, I felt strangely sexless. I had none of the inhibitions, in this remarkable condition, that attend on the nightmare of discovering oneself disrobed in a public place—and which psychologists declare is motivated by some parts of the body becoming uncovered during slumber. And now that I had awakened without the slightest distress or injury, I was conscious of a beauty and tranquillity that surpasses setting down on paper. . . .

I found myself glancing about a marble-tiled portico, lighted by soft illumination of purest whiteness emanating from walls or materials without the slightest dazzlement. Marble, however, is not quite correct. Alabaster would be the better description. It had a chalky resiliency that also impressed me as holding ruggedness and strength—strong enough, at least, for three walls and columns to uphold the roof.

I was seated on a chaste Grecian bench of the same material, placed in the center of the unbroken western wall. My back was toward this wall. I estimated the portico to be thirty feet square. Along the north side at my left, was a row of low Corinthian pilaster columns with the parallel wall and corridor running eastward beyond them. On my right, opening toward what I thought the south, were two more sets of columns with wide opening between—and steps that went down upon a space of darkened greensward. Down and away into misty blue shadow sloped an area that I might well describe as a Garden of Dreams—only, again I affirm, this was no dream. I saw the faint outlines of magnificent spruces. Still farther beyond them, trillions of miles beyond, were twinkling stars in a sky of deep cyanite.

A marble basin opened in the southeast corner of the portico. A half-dozen steps led down into a pool of water so immaculately pure that I scarcely realized it held water at all until Bert—if Bert it was—suggested that I step down into it, if I still felt perturbed. I did as he suggested, though not at once. . . .

I looked from the garden vista with its backdrop of perfectly star-strewn sky, to these friends who had received me. There were no other persons present during the first half of this experience. I sat up of my own effort and swung my bare feet to the cool marble tiling, both hands gripping the edge of the bench.

What had happened to Boyden? He was bigger now, more virile, more kindly, than I had ever known him back there in Sid's office. The bodies of both himself and his companion had a physical "glow" that vaguely disconcerted me. Something about them spelled self-confidence sublimated—sublimated physical and mental expression. Apparently, I repeat, they knew a good joke about me; they continued to regard me with smiles in their eyes. And so I found my voice. For I had a voice. Beginning with the beautiful spread of flawless wall behind Bert's figure, my gaze traveled around the space to the exquisitely fluted columns, to the vista of night sky, to the bench on which I sat.

"It's . . . real!" . . . was all that I could call up at the moment.

"Of course," my friend assented pleasantly.

I continued to stare. The second man, the someone I was vaguely trying to "place" as having an association with Mary, shrugged his big shoulders and for the moment at least went off about his business. Again my gaze sought Boyden. How could I ask him how come that he was "dead," when I had the evidence of my senses that he was alive . . . tremendously alive . . . looking infinitely better than I had ever seen him? And what about myself? Was I "dead," as well? I got up from my bench, somewhat unsteadily at first, and began to move about the portico. I felt surprised that I could walk. I stood on the steps that led down into the pool.

¶ "Go ahead," urged Boyden. "See what it does to you." He was still standing where I had first noted him, wiping his hands on that bit of fabric as a surgeon might do after some sort of operation. He talked as naturally and familiarly to me as I had ever known him to speak in life.

¶ I believe that I went down those steps into the water. When I came up I had lost all consciousness that I was nude. On the other hand, neither was I conscious that I had donned clothes. Immersion in that "water" had done something to me. What, I don't know.

It did not occur to me to feel the slightest awe or wonder that I had left my bungalow premises and penetrated so preposterously into such a lovely place. It all seemed as natural as it now seems natural for me to be sitting here in my well-known physical body, putting these words upon the keys of my typewriter. I repeat, it was all as absurd to try to discuss the fact

with Boyden that either of us might be "dead," as it would be for me to go about mortal life in the present, discussing with people any strangeness in that fact that we are all "alive." Today I know there is only one *Consciousness.* It is the continuity of it, that so frequently troubles and confuses us. We feel as comfortably at home in one phase of it as in another. It is the consciousness of *self-identity* that matters, not the type of the vehicle by which we get expression.

And so now, I can write with reasonable accuracy and detail of the snatches of conversation which followed on that Night of Nights . . . at least as I remember them after a lapse of ten years. In the narrative in *The American Magazine,* I had no chance to place before my readers the minuteness of detail contained in my life, furnishing the substance for the ensuing conversations. They started most humanly. . . . I said, "For the lova-mike, Bert, what's this all about?"

He continued to smile. "Don't you know? Can't you guess?"

"Am I . . . sort of . . . all washed up with . . . earthly life?" . . . Verily it seemed so, with all that radiance about me, the beauty of the colors, the clearness of perception with which I saw my friend. . . .

"No," he said whimsically, "you're not . . . washed up. Call it that you're having a little trip for some significant experience."

"It's an experience, all right! But that doesn't answer my question, Bert."

¶ "Tell me," he suggested, "why do you call me Bert?"

"Aren't you . . . Bert Boyden? You l-look like Bert Boyden. I can't be mistaken."

"Oh," he laughed, "*that's* it? You recognize me as someone you know, and yet . . . you don't. All right. I understand."

For a moment I felt chagrined. I asked, "Where is this place? . . . if I'm not committing more blunders by asking."

"I'm afraid I can't explain it so that you'd understand it. Not now. As near as I can make it clear to you, it's . . . interpenetrating the world to which you're accustomed. Does that seem to make sense?"

"Interpenetrating, how?"

"Scientists like to believe that two solids can't occupy the same space at the same time. How little they know."

Sometime later I exclaimed—for it began to come to me all at once—"It's hard to explain, b-but . . . I don't really feel like the fellow I've always been. . . . I feel like somebody else . . . I feel like *a whole lot of people!* . . . Does that make sense to *you?*"

"The height of sanity, my dear fellow, quite!"

"Tell me, how is it, in this place or . . . condition . . . I feel like a whole bundle of personalities, all at once? I don't know that I like it."
"Because, my dear chap, you *are* a whole bundle of personalities . . . everybody is! . . . all rolled into one."
"I don't quite get it."
"Don't try to get it. Suppose you just accept it. If people would only get over trying to understand everything! . . . if they'd only accept things and grasp the fact that perhaps the accepting *is* the understanding!" Quizzically he went on, "Does any memory bestir in you about being here before?" ❧ ❧
"Have I been here before?"
"Let it pass," he said carelessly.
I mused, striving to grasp the ecstasy of it. "I've got a body, and I haven't got a body. Or rather, I've got two bodies . . . great guns, *I've got* a whole crowd of bodies and they're all *me!* I can't feel the end of them."
"Maybe," he responded, "there isn't any end."
It all seemed rather involved at the moment. I might best explain it that I might have lived a hundred lives and each life as I lived it was merely added to the sum-total of myself, and that every time I lived a new life and came to the end of it, the sum-total of it was added to the supreme personage that was Myself. I was, in truth, a whole crowd of people, a multiple personality, so to speak, yet capable of thinking and acting as the one personality in the sum-total of my individual experiencings. Something like that. Now there was a flavor of distinguishment of each, as though the strands that held these various personalities in the bundle of the Personage were not tight as in mortality, but relaxed and somewhat loosened. And yet this friend of mine who looked like Bert Boyden sublimated—and who I was not at all sure *was* Bert Boyden—seemed so kind, so reassuring, so wise with a knowledge that it was all a gentle joke, that I was moved to ask: "—this feeling of mine, of being a whole bundle of people, is it a sensation that's usual in this . . . state?" What a perfectly silly word, I thought!
"Put it that the frail beginnings of your Memory may be working. In time you might get yourself successfully sorted out. What difference would it make?"
Sorted out indeed? It occurred to me to ask if that wasn't what I'd been trying to do ever since the days in the North Prescott parsonage. Wasn't it true that I, in common with all other persons, felt on some days that I were one individual, and on other days quite another? We commonly call

these, "moods." After all, what were moods? We had seated ourselves side by side on the bench.

"Predominant personalities," I recall my friend explaining, "may not be so un-literal as men in their ignorance try to make out. Isn't it reasonable that a whole life that's been lived, could remain in a man's character more or less distinct unto itself, that what they term a facet of any given person's nature may really be the expression of a given past-life's personality as it finally accumulated and crystallized? After all, what's character anyhow, but the common mean of all of them, obtaining expression?"

I said blankly, "You mean this fellow Pelley has lived before?"

"No," he said sagely, "*Pelley* has never lived before. Put it that someone or something has been living as Pelley."

"What someone? Who?"

"The real *You,* formless and nameless, and in a manner of speaking, deathless . . . known *to* yourself *as* Yourself."

"And it adds a new facet of character to itself, every time it has an earth-experience?" . . . Was this the reason that I had felt the strange sensation back there at five years of age, on the knoll in summer morning behind the house in East Templeton? Was this the reason that I had been able to climb into the altar-chair in my father's church and preach an intelligible sermon to a stretch of empty pews? . . . These things we called our Instincts, and which Science maintained were somehow inherited through our parents, mightn't they be but memories of our nameless and deathless selves? . . . Later I was to find precisely that exposition in both Plato and Socrates.

"It adds," corrected my friend, "a newly developed *personage* to the character, but these seem like facets when the sum-total of all of them is manifesting in the latest mortal span."

I was thunderstruck. Here was an absolutely new idea, at least to me . . . something that I had never hit upon, or considered, down all my days. Yet when I stopped to give it thought, how much it explained in the phases of my own personality that had always baffled and defeated me!

ARE YOU sufficiently imaginative, friend reader, ever to have conjectured what your sensations and conversations could be, or might be, in your first ten minutes—or ten hours—after arrival in that state of spiritual gradation that ignorant men term life-after-death?

Of course this wasn't Death. I had not *really* died. In the bedroom of my Altadena bungalow, the same physical body that is now responsible for

typing these lines, was lying inert, probably seeming to any second person who might have viewed it as nothing more than asleep. All the physical functions were performing, doubtless the heart was beating faintly, there was a phase of respiration. On the other hand, it is the sanest part of truth, that *something had gone out of it!* The sentient *me* within it was no longer present. I was consciously involved in one of the most baffling, and intriguing, mysteries in all Esoterics. Nine out of ten men will say that the Consciousness cannot quit the physical self without death's resulting. They reason thus because they have never beheld a dead body that exhibited the slightest trace of consciousness. But just because an overcoat may not be able to move about a three-dimensional world without a man inside of it—"wearing it" as we say—does not prove the nonexistence of such persons when we behold an overcoat without a wearer. ¶ I know now that I was keeping my body alive by a peculiar process that is of the most constant practice among the masters and mahatmas of the East—operating it from outside it and from a certain "distance" instead of being confined inside of it. Don't say dogmatically, reader, that the notion is absurd. Even a quarter-century ago you might have called it equally as absurd if the claim had been made that the President of the United States could address an evening session of Congress and his literal voice be heard in every home in the nation without any arrangement of wires between. People who have truly taken the time and trouble to go deep, deep, into these matters, and conduct the most profound experiments, have proven that the soul has the ability to do the most astounding things altogether independently of the physical body. All the old Magi—the Wise Men who journeyed to the Manger in the Stable of Bethlehem—the ancient adepts, the followers of the various Elusinian and Pythagorean "mysteries," knew of them centuries upon centuries in the past. I repeat, without especially intending to defend my position, that Socrates and Plato were not only acquainted with them but made them the very corner stones of their so-called wisdom. The Indian pundits and mahatmas of today do provable things "for which science has no explanation," but that is not saying that such things are not actual and are not known to thousands. Is it not reasonable to conclude that I had commanded such phenomena in my own person because the time had ripened for me to enter a wholly new arena of spiritual maneuvering, to "Break Through" —as Mary had tried to convey to me that night at Keene's—to "live the other half of me" of which I had known no more than the average orthodox person who perchance may come upon such staggering facts for

the first time in these, the pages of my story? But enough of that for now. I was "away" insofar as my sentient body was concerned, and yet mystically connected with it, controlling it, able at any moment—as I presently discovered—to return to it and normally occupy it. As my Friend of the Reality said, we may understand many things by accepting and performing them. Again that Friend was talking. . . .

"You're writing a book on the peculiarities of Races . . . yes, I know all about it. . . . You'd be astounded if you could know the numbers of folk who've been keeping track of everything you've ever said and done! . . . You came to a point this evening where you wondered what Races were. . . . I'll tell you what they are . . . they're mortal classifications of humanity, largely determining standardized gradations of spiritual attainments . . . the consensus in each case, we might put it, of Cosmic development . . . starting with the black man—the Negroid—and proceeding upward, cycle after cycle, to the brown man, the yellow man, the red man, the white man. Put it that each race is a sort of educational institution with many grades and classrooms within itself, which individual souls enter or are enrolled in, and attend through whole college-courses of their lives. They each hold something greater and more profitable in the way of spiritual expression or opportunities for service either to themselves or to mankind as a mass . . . their attainments in each of the major classifications being distinguished or exhibited by the colors of their skins."

Strange that I had no sense of the passing of Time while talking with this friend. I might have been there only seven minutes, I might have been there seventy years. As a matter of fact, I found out later that the chronology of event was approximately the same as it would have been had I been occupying my physical body. It was all a consciousness, anyhow; not spatial kaleidoscopia. "You m-mean," I faltered, "that all men and women have visited at some time or other in the various races?"

"Put it," he said kindly, "that certain 'facets of their characters' may have done so, to keep our hypothesis logical. And mightn't such experience be profoundest part of sense? How else could men and women in the more moribund forms of expression know the practical increments which each racial culture might provide them?"

The moribund forms of expression! I knew what he meant. People in the physical. And some earthly folks were so positive that *they* were the only ones alive! How often had my father preached in the North Prescott and Templeton pulpits "the dead know not anything!" The dead indeed! But hold! . . . hadn't he been right without exactly meaning it?

Of course they knew not anything *because there were no dead!*
Christ had tried to tell men the same thing nineteen centuries in the past and they had hooted Him. Throughout those nineteen centuries good "Christians" had heard His words and—like my dad—repeated them. They had done the same hooting, by refusing to believe it deep down in their hearts. This being a world where it is conceded in all other branches of thought that there cannot be a human desire, or a human quandary, without a human fulfilment or answer, why did they never stop to ask themselves how they came by their desire for survival, if there was no survival to supply the soul's hope of it?
All of this struck me with such progressive awe, as it gradually penetrated, that I went on faintly, "You said that a lot of people had 'watched' everything that I'd ever done. What did you mean by that?"
"Naturally they would. You had to go through certain experiences *this time* to equip you first for all that must follow, different from the *other times.* People in the Higher Consciousness know the audacious significance of what you've got to do before your earthly career terminates. They've been watching and helping as they could, every step of the way. This thing, too, has happened all up the ages, and men have refused to accredit its literality. Wherever and whenever there had to be a wholly new evaluation of human thought, a man or a group of men have come into life to launch it. Naturally their lives—as lives—were highly esteemed and preserved. How many famous men have you heard of, who were certain that they had Guardian Angels! Or they mystically referred to 'following their Stars.' . . . It's just a form of having their lives and careers watched over and conserved by great wise souls in Cosmos to make certain they perform correctly as agents in mortality. What's strange about that?"
I gave these statements the reflection they merited. All of them were startling. I had hitherto imagined, as most men do, that I had fought my life's battles pretty much alone. What if all of that were nonsense? I said, "You m-mean . . . everything I've ever done, every sequence of experience I've ever encountered and lived through, has served a definite and foreordained goal?"
"Something of the sort. It's rather involved."
"But so many of my experiences seemed so silly, so futile!"
"My dear brother, get this into your head consciously, henceforth, and preach it to men with a clarion voice, . . . no experience ever is silly, no incident in their lives—no matter how trifling—ever is futile. For every

experience you've gone through, every word you've uttered, every person you've met, there's been a deliberate motivation . . . and a purpose to be served. Moreover, you've known it in your Subconscious Mind. No," this friend emphasized gravely, "regardless of what spiritual or sense adventures you've ever had, or that any man or woman has ever had, or which you or they will have in future, always recall my saying it, *no part of your experience ever is purposeless!* You've no relations with anyone that are not on your Program. And that applies equally to every soul that's ever lived."

I believe I murmured something about my experiences with dad. I think I called them troubles. . . .

"But you don't understand. How could they be 'troubles'? You had an education to gain as swiftly as possible—polishing up your abilities to handle men in groups, regaining a comprehensive knowledge of commercial practices . . . you got under way as early as you could contrive it. There's nothing to *that!*"

"But I've always felt that father wandered off sort of broken-hearted, not fully understanding——"

"Bosh and nonsense! He did nothing of the sort. Set your mind at rest. He had other people with whom he had appointments in life, that didn't concern you, or your mother, or your sister, in the slightest. He departed and kept them."

It did not occur to me to question the authority of this friend for his statements, or inquire how he came to know my life's smallest details. I made mention of Marion.

"That," came his answer, "was a somewhat different case. You as man and woman had a definite period of stress and strain to undergo together that was to serve both of you in developing your poise."

I asked, "What is poise?"

"Poise is the ability to listen for the eternal voice of Truth in regard to character, situation, or event. It's the gift of peaceful consideration of the universe, knowing that all which is of error or indiscretion shall one day come to be disclosed. But then again, in the matter of your marriage, there was likewise something else . . . your daughter. It was necessary for her to become mortally conscious in such a situation that she could serve both of you in the filial relationship, and both of you serve *her*. Only a marriage, and its attendant parenthood, could effect such arrangement. Do you notice that after this had been arrived at—the both of your two children being correctly inducted into life—the breach followed quickly

between your wife and yourself. The Cosmic Purpose had been served which brought the two of you together. Whereupon both of you became aware that you had relationships to discharge in this life as well, with widely scattered persons. You went forth seeking them."

I gave a thought to the meeting of Marion and myself in those nights in the proof room of *The Homestead* office . . . If such explanations were correct, how might we have suspected that matrimony was ahead for us partly because the souls of so-called children were waiting to get into manifestations of mortality whereby certain obligations could be discharged pro and con among all of us equally? . . . How many other people were there in life, like Marion and me, serving like purposes blindly, never knowing the reasons consciously, as I was now privileged to know? . . . I asked, "How about my son?"

"The events of your lives will prove that you and he are strangers . . . your lives are not together . . . he's a debtor and creditor on the ledger of your wife's life . . . but your daughter is yours; and in time, you'll grasp it."

Several times I had wanted, with a pardonable awe, to make reference to Harriet, the baby we had lost long-since in Brattleboro. . . . Was I in such a situation that I might make such contact, see her in the "body" as the years might have changed her? My friend caught my thought. . . .

¶ "Go on," he prompted. "Figure it out. You never did lose Harriet!"

Was he referring to Adelaide? Immediately he added—

"Thre are no 'lost babies.' . . . An accident can happen, . . . or a pareht may need the poise that comes from what seems to be frightful sorrow. But many a mother holds in her arms her 'lost' child, and never knows it. If it wasn't so, Life would be too cruel."

"But Life *is* cruel!"

"No, Life can't be cruel. Life is merely profitable!" It was the gentlest of rebukes. . . .

Strange, that I had no urges to go poking or prying about, looking up lost relatives, asking for a glimpse of historical personages. One doesn't, in that marvelous situation. The locality was no more mine, to go poking and prying about in, than as if I were visiting in the home of an acquaintance. I was simply content to sit by the side of this sublimated person and consider his wisdom. He did not seem in a hurry to give it. His time was my time, and my time his time. I believe I returned again to that mystical sense of feeling like the loosely knit bundle of a score of personalities. In life they were all bound up into one—so right that

I never could tell which one was in command of me and so all were in command. This unit made of many units, I commonly termed Myself. If this were so, then instead of losing our sense of identity at the death of the body, we increased it. What a thought! But given sufficient time, how did one determine which of the composite units was which. I expressed the desire to know how it might be done. My friend made me then this most profound adjuration. He said—

"Listen, my brother! *Listen in your spirit!*"

Listen! How could listening perform it? I allowed this to pass. But life—all existence—was suddenly growing orderly.

The Pattern, the Pattern! Life had *been* the Pattern. One had only to live it—to let it happen. All the factors and ingredients had been supplied by the conditionings of my boyhood, perhaps of many boyhoods, the circumscriptions of my youth, the employments of young manhood, the calls of my maturity. Always and forever I had responded to those calls. They had brought me unerringly, straight to this moment. I said finally, "And what am I supposed to do, now that I'm beginning to understand? And why will I do it?"

The answer came thoughtfully, "You'll do all the things you originally made the Compact to do. Then, when you Come Back to stay, the Why will be clear!"

"I made some sort of Compact?"

"Everyone makes a Compact. He has to make a compact. That is his entrance-card to the Arena of Experiencing. How could it be otherwise and the world not be chaos? Could a stage manager direct an earthly drama, and create an intelligent performance, if it were not arranged beforehand with all the actors, precisely what each was to say, and how and when they were to say it, after the curtain lifted? How much more significant is the Great Stage Play of earth!"

I was learning by *feeling*, in those fraught, ageless moments. I cannot include in this sequence all my conversations of that interlude. If I did, this chapter would be my whole book. Besides, I say again, I cannot violate privacies of people who may never write biographies. But after an hour of such intercourse, I affirm that this thing happened—

As I sat and received such wisdom, a strange bluish mist began slowly to swirl about me. At first I believed it an illusion of the circumstance. Then it seemed that heavier and heavier furls of scentless smoke were closing in about me. It suddenly became opaque, then tangible to touch. ¶ Presently they were so strong and eddied so furiously that the face

and figure of my friend became obscured. I realized that somehow the phenomenon had seized hold of me. I was swirling physically with it!

Faster and faster spun that weird carrousel. Then, in its vortex as I became a part of it, I lost sense of sight and place. Straight through the heart of it I seemed to be traveling, at a speed that was terrific. As abruptly I paused. . . .

As I paused, something *awful* closed about me. It seemed as though a great suit of clammy and cloying tallow and suet, pounds of it, tons of it, a miasmic rending, grinding, suffocating flood of it, was seeking to crush me. It crunched me horridly, an excruciating crunch, that ended in a click!

I opened my eyes to my bungalow bedroom, with faint patches of starlight marking out the casements. I was back in the mortal Thing, the grinding and groaning of physical atoms composing my "moribund" body. My heart was pounding frightfully. My constricted forehead was wet with perspiration.

I lay stunned for half a minute, striving to accredit the strange occurrence that had left me in such distress. I was back in the so-called earthly vehicle, and my physical flesh was loathesome about me.

I pulled myself up on one elbow in the bed. . . .

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

I ASK no man to believe the greater mystery that now followed. All I affirm is, that I would be a fool to base my whole subsequent life and career on the aftermath of it, if it were but a figment of my own imagination. From somewhere in that vicinity it seemed that I heard a familiar voice address me. Was it audible in the room, or inside my own head?

"Wait a minute! Make the transition again. We haven't finished with our visiting!"

Make the transition over again? However could I manage it?

"You *know* how to do it. Relax and come back!"

I recall lying back on my pillow with the eager thought, "Yes, I want more of it." This thought, in truth, was like the poignant desire that comes to all of us to return to the ecstasies of an agreeable dream when some shock has awakened us. But what followed was no more a dream than the first.

I was fully conscious now. My stricture had passed, my respiration was normal. And in that darkened morning hour, alone but for my dog in that mountainside bungalow, I had it in my Subconscious to actually relax and vacate.

I felt myself quitting my body deliberately.

None of the spasm this time, none of the distress. Oh if poor, terrified, fright-wracked mortals could only know the bliss that is life's Great Release! With the same exquisite languor that I had felt first in the grasp of my friends, I went through the vortex of the fraught Purple Passage. ✻ ✻

I poised.

I arrived.

This time no one "caught" me. I moved out as from a bluish fog into that exquisite radiance that is just on the other side of the Door. Nor did it occur to me that I had done anything especially marvelous. I went through that avenue in this ensuing episode as smoothly and uneventfully as though I had dropped back into slumber, as I say, and resumed a pleasant dream. I knew my Way! But when I emerged into the larger Reality this time, a peculiar change had come over the portico. It was filling with scores of people! . . .

They seemed to be sauntering into the place from that long columned corridor on the compartment's "northern" side. They did not appear to be gratifying boorish curiosity. It seemed a most casual and fraternal goodfellowship that assembled them so. They had all the time in the world, it seemed. They stood around chatting in groups. And nearly everyone nodded and spoke to me.

They had a kindness, a courtesy, a friendliness, in faces and addresses, that quite overwhelmed me. Think of all the attractive, sedate, poised, and yet goodhumored folk you know, imagine them gathering in a chamber that was exclusive to themselves—no social misfits, no tense countenances, no sour leers, no lines of repressed temper or subtle dissipations—and the entire environment permeated with their ecstatic harmony as universal as air, and you get an idea of that "reception" in my reactions. But was it a reception?

I noticed that whenever I engaged anyone's attention, he had that gentle laughter in his eyes, the crux of good humor mixed with fine poise. I exclaimed to myself, "How happy everyone seems! Every person here transmits something that makes me want to know him or her better!" Then my complacency gave way to shock—

These persons were not strangers to me! Each and every one of them I had known intimately somewhere or other, at sometime or other!
But they were sublimated now . . . splendidly rejuvenated . . . not at all as I had know them in "the moribund state." . . .

HOW can I make my reader understand how natural it seemed that I should be there with them, and included among them? All terror at the strangeness of my condition, had left me. Never in my life had I felt more *alive*. It had not occurred to me before, or then, that I might be in "heaven," or if it did, it left no more impress upon my mind than it would seem queer to me at present to realize that I am on "earth." . . . After all, does humanity know more about this place than the other? Of a certainty, both are natural.
I had made two necromantic voyages on the same night through what seemed a bluish void, and each time found myself sexless in a most entrancing place, contacting affable, cultured, gracious people. . . . Those Who Had Attained. They saw something about *me* that amused them to the point of quiet merriment, and yet never a merriment that I could resent. They seemed to be more or less conventionally garbed, these people, both men and women. The big, broad-shouldered, blue-eyed friend in white, whom I had first taken to be Boyden, always stayed in my vicinity as though keeping an eye on my condition or conduct. The other man, who seemed so vaguely connected with Mary, was back in this second sequence and for the first time we spoke and grew better acquainted. . . .
¶ Nobody in that assemblage seemed to leave the portico, any more than people gathered for an evening in an exquisitely lighted residence would bethink them to go out and stroll on darkened lawns. I talked with these people, felt that I correctly identified most of them, called some by wrong names and was properly chagrined.
Dead people?
What a travesty on intelligence!
Oh if the human race—the whole plodding, stumbling, despairing, blundering, terrified race of little children called men and women—could only know what I know of the state that awaits them after the toil and the heartbreak and the disappointment of this transient life are ended, how graciously Life itself might be viewed! Oh that these could grasp, as I was permitted to grasp, the Time of Beauteous Rejoicing that *is* to be—the Golden Moment that is in the *millennia*—when we all go through the Purple Passage and come out safely into porticos of loveliness, envisioning

in stupefaction those beloved faces that we may scarcely recognize at first because of the way that divine munificence has transmuted and transformed them! Yes, let the orthodox term it the Concourse Beautiful in through heaven's gate. . . . What harm does it do? What do terms matter? The cries of tender greeting, the beloved reunions; the blessed realization that there is no need to go back, as I was twice obliged to go back, *that* is the Attainment, and the Power, and the Glory. And yet I declare, I was proud to go back. My privilege it was, to carry word to those who had not been favored as I had been favored, to keep the heart stout and the lip tight for just a little longer, to hold the courage high and the soul gentle for just a few years more . . . until the Golden Moment arrives for each and every one to heave the gentle sigh and slip away to infinite reaches of tranquil understanding. No, I did not die, in the conventional sense of dying. My body I kept alive, while I transcended the heartaches and soul-griefs of common mortality and for a blessed and beloved interval mingled with the Choir Invisible of the Immortal *Living*, dwelling in porticos beautiful whose terraces open on delectable mountains. That was my augury, that was my destiny, that was my heartbreak, my epilog, my pattern. It was my mission to See, my brevet to Know. I had conquered in my own life—by the grace of my preferment and the loving companionship of a compassionate woman. So I had come to the crown and the radiance, the commitment and the treasure. . . .

And so it is for everyone! Take heart, my brother. Be of good cheer, my sister. The way is steep and the path is stony. There are many brambles and the pitfalls seem inhuman. But He who said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Light," uttered no falsehood when He also said, "In My Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, ye may be also."

I know that there is one Mansion at least.

For a fleeting moment in eternity I stood within its portico. And then I returned that I might tell *you* about it! . . .

FINALLY I was alone. Alone but for the second friend this time. We sat upon the steps of that portico in starlight. It seemed a long long time, ages and ages bygone, that I had made my entrance into that exquisite place, that these friends had "caught" me and sought to reassure me. ❧ ❧

I said to him, "If all of life's experiences could be rolled up into one,

if all the smiles and joys and tears, the mistakes and trifles and increments and all the greater things and all the lesser things, were encased in one lambent attaining of Desire, what would the world envision as the product, I wonder?

He answered thoughtfully, crystal-blue eyes afar on the stars that seemed quite as friendly as any stars that I had witnessed in the Slower Rate of Circumstance, "My dear fellow, we're the sum and substance of such attainment, as we *are*. It's in our faces and our voices, in our speech and in our fluency—and the tune that we hum in the freshness of morning. It couldn't be otherwise and have it all real."

"This is the Real," I told him in aftermath.

HE SEEMED thoughtful after that. "You'll hear me speaking to you many times hereafter," said he. "Please try to hear me."

I said, "Can that be managed?"

"It's the most natural process in the world. Just relax and listen. Wait and have patience. Strike a Deep Silence and wait for Faith's echo. It will come. If the strange Thought Voice enters into your mind, speaking, don't think you're irrational, that your Subconscious is playing tricks. Millions of people have the gift but never suspect it. They get the intercourse in fragments and call them Inspirations. Or they get it in impressions and they say, 'I have a hunch.' But you'll know what is happening. I must go," he concluded.

"How can I make myself believe that this night's thing has happened? How can I describe it so my friends will accredit it?"

"They'll grasp it . . . better than you think. The hearts of the world are famished to grasp it."

"But men and women have so often been tricked."

"But the hunger's in their souls. They're encased for the moment in mortal hurts and heartbreaks that they think are 'practicalities' . . . but underneath, they know. And you'll bear living witness of what they truly *want* to believe. Besides, we'll help you more than you dream."

"Just what must I do?"

"Your Life-Plan brought you up to tonight. Do you think it'll halt? . . . that it won't flow strongly onward till your Compact is fulfilled? You'll know what to do. Or *circumstance* will show you."

"And is that all?" I asked.

He said, "I'll tell you the rest a fragment at a time . . . as you have need in your progressing affairs. If people only knew where many of the

thoughts are derived from, which they fondly imagine they originate themselves, how contrite they might be." He added a moment later, "And if they knew as well what the thoughts they *do* originate can project into this spatial universe, a lot of them might alter their insouciant philosophies." ❧ ❧

"Project *here,* you mean?"

"Exactly," he declared. "Thought-forms. Horrible thought-forms often. So poignantly sent to people *this* world. And now forgive me if I leave you." ❧ ❧

He arose and departed along the lovely cyanite shadows. . . . How was I to know then that this too was part of the Plan . . . that I had one final incident coming, to show me the effects of ganglion?

I was alone.

And yet, a greater and sweeter tranquillity than I had ever known, moved up around my spirit. . . . I did an incongruous thing—or perhaps the most natural thing in the world. I thought of Marion. I thought of her as I had first known her, back there in *The Homestead* office in Springfield, seventeen years before.

Behold what happened! . . .

I saw, taking slow and terrible form there in the half-light before me, the unmistakable outlines of a woman. Vague and unsteady at first, then stronger and more opaque they grew. I thought in a panic, "Can Marion be *here?*"

As I gave stronger impetus by this consternation, this apparition moved. For it *was* apparition. And because it was merely a projection of my own internal thought, forming externally—because in a manner of speaking I was being a god and creating in my own right—I looked in cold horror on this thing I was fashioning.

It was the Thought Husk of the woman who had been the mother of my children. She swayed toward me. The light touched her face, the matted tresses of her hair. It was like seeing an upright corpse, lifted from an invisible casket. I recoiled from that spectacle. And even as I recoiled, I seemed to pull it towards me. I even saw color like ghastly rouge on the flat of the cheekbones. Marion had never used rouge. The hair too, was unreal. It was too soft, too matted, too glossy.

The whole *thing* was monstrous!

And it did not walk, it drifted. It pulled along after me as I sprang up and retreated in my sudden isolation. Then, full in the radiance of the interior of the portico as she entered upon it, I saw that this thought-

form was as the papier-mache husk of a woman. *Her visage had no eyes!*

¶ I tried to cry out at the dreadfulness of it. I retreated toward the bench. I got as far back as I could go, the apparition following close. I fell sitting upon the seat.

Thereat started a merciful curtain of the lambent swirling mist! . . . It spun, it eddied, it shut away the projected image of Marion. It was blotted out. Vaguely it dissolved . . . it was lost in quickening phantasm as the mystical vortex spun faster and faster. . . .

This time it was sanctuary. I was ready to Go Back. I yielded to it willingly, as to the arms of a nurse whom I knew I could trust.

I made the Purple Passage.

But I aver that there was no less shock, no less horribleness, no less pain and wracking, entering again into the sluggishness of atoms. It's not the Going Over that hurts. No, my friend, it's the Coming Back. Pray God you don't ever have to do that. . . .

It was over. It had happened. Now all of it was Memory. I had been through the First Door of Revelation and something within me was lifted, lifted. . . . Life could never weigh down again, it could never slacken. It could never exert pressure that would crush me beneath it. Never would I forget the Beauty and the Peace. . . .

I sat on the edge of my bed with my head in my hands. When I started to consider mundane things again, I sensed the fact that the sun of new California morning was singing across the tops of the mountains. The clock on my bedstand said twenty minutes to six o'clock. Laska crawled out. She stretched first her front legs, then her hind legs, sat down on her haunches and thumped her tail thrice. This meant in dog-language, "When do we eat?"

"*O God!*" I sobbed suddenly. . . .

THAT I was back again. That I had to come back!

I had not consciously or wilfully invited this experience, which three millions of people were presently to hear about. I had lived my life as best I knew how from month to month and from year to year. Now this had broken on me! So what?

The day was before me. The year was before me. Life was before me. I disregarded Laska. I lay supine on the rumpled bed and remained there most of that banal forenoon. *Stunned.*

"I've got to see Mary," I finally whispered. "I've got to get to her and tell her all about it as soon as I can manage it."

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

AND yet it was October before I got away. . . .

Let me not take the space at this point to descend to the trivialities of narrating what happened at my offices that afternoon when I made my daily visit. That I had changed physically by the night's experience was so apparent, although no one knew the cause, that my employees gathered in little knots to discuss me. I sought out Helen and described the full episodes. A quiet gratification and an utter acceptance of every item, was my Golden Girl's reaction. I withdrew into myself, engaged in as little commercial business as I could, and sought to understand what had been unleashed within my own soul by that astounding night's *denouement*.

For something had *happened* to me, inwardly, mentally.

I suddenly had access to reservoirs of Knowledge that can only be described as I recount the application. That will come presently.

As I went through those weeks, preceding the most stupendous fall and winter that I had lived through to date, any awe at my alteration wore away among those with whom I mingled. All of them admitted that somehow or other I had known rejuvenation. My skin took on a ruddiness. Lines were gone from my face. Bodily fatigue departed me.

I had somehow been reborn. . . .

But even back in those first few weeks, I knew what I knew. It has been said of Hitler that he came from his tent one morning during the Gallipoli campaign and announced to his companions that he had dreamed a dream —that's the way they took it—during the night, that it was his destiny to save the German people. This "knowing what one knows" . . . I dare say that Adolf would understand exactly what happened that night in my bungalow. . . .

It was increasingly clear, as autumn approached, what those weird urges were that made writing so banal—that I had persistently described to Lillian, Beryl, Mary, . . . the Big Job, the humanitarian ships, the cohorts of mercy that must visit a nation. I had gone through life to date to train me for Something. Now I saw what it was, or at least began to sense it. A time of great trouble was coming to America. Impoverishment and suffering were to prostrate my country—not only *my* country but all nations of the globe. Out of it, and after it, a Golden Age was scheduled to come in wondrously. Men were going to undergo complete transforma-

tions in their habits of thinking and living, of learning and worshiping. All the Great Drums of the universe were due to crash mightier. I must march in their tumult. Yes, squarely in the heart of it! I query the cynical rationalists, if, as they subsequently contended, my experience had all been a dream, how did I come from it knowing in those weeks back in 1928, of the stupendous events that have since come to pass, that are now happening 'round me, that loom inexorable for the future? How could I have registered with my friends the things that I did? They will tell you that I did so.

ONE autumn sunset I stood on the front steps of my bungalow. The western skies were flaming scarlet. The sun was a blob of incandescent glory. I looked afar into Pacific haze . . . a museum of vermilions, mauves and cherries, across scores of miles of valley. I was leaving the next afternoon for New York. A feeling of ghastly homesickness swept over me. My spirit was a heartcry. *I wanted to be with those people of the Portico!*

My bungalow meant little or nothing to me now. My books, my writing, my worldly prospects, had a deeper significance. It was not at all the old dissatisfaction. What bothered me now was, that the things of life were *things*. I knew there were avenues and monuments beyond mortal circumscription, realms that truly counted, where living was a harmony, where one walked with one's kind.

Truly, despite my Golden-Head, despite my revelation and my brevet, I was a stranger in a strange land.

I was sick to be home.

Once before, in a crucial juncture in my life, I had looked into the sun's heart and wondered at my destiny. I mean, that morning on Asama volcano. Nine years before, it had been, almost to the month. My cycle had maneuvered. I had arisen that morning on Asama, nine years in the past, gone down the scoria, lowered myself step by step into realms that had been dark. And *what* those nine years had encompassed! I recalled Bolshevia, those corpses that moved on the Alexieffs battlefield, Karl waving adieu to me in bitter sunshine of winter's morning as our train took a curve. . . . Where was Karl at the moment, I wondered? . . . I thought of my return to St. Johnsbury, the loss of my paper. Then had come that new cavalcade of intimates: Lillian, Beryl, Mary, Lon, Eddie, Grant. How evenly balanced were the men and women in my life. I thought of those ten weeks of nights in the St. Johnsbury hospital as I lay wracked with

fever, those first days in Manhattan, my parting from Marion. Then had come those wanderings . . . the eating of the fleshpots. Nine years of it. Could it be possible that only nine years had encompassed it? With my leaving for New York on the morrow, a new cycle was opening. What would that bring? There was bound to be a bottom to every Curve of Fortune. Where would mine find me?

Yes, my heart was full as I walked down the steps of my little property and out upon the lawn—the little property into which I had put so much work and sentiment. I looked from my height into oceans of shadows where the night was coming in.

My first Cycle had been one of material acquisition, a gross fleshly hill-top that ended with boyhood. My second had maneuvered through vicissitudes of intellect, the winning of laurels in the writing profession, a Cycle of Mind. My third had brought me up to the Door of Revelation, the portals into Spirit. After *Spirit,* what?

Helen was up there that night. She came and stood beside me. We watched the sunset. "It's so beautiful!" she choked.

Was she referring to the sunset—or the vista—or Life? But any of them was beautiful. Each stood for so *much.*

As I stood there with Helen on that height in the Sierra Madres that poignant autumn twilight and watched lambent night hang out an evening star, I had a beautiful home, a prosperous business, more money in the bank than I had ever known in my life, more than all else a woman who was tender, who knew my strange urges—the Girl of the Valiant Heart who never once had wavered in the *camaraderie* of the Sojourn.

For she too was a Stranger with me in a country that was strange. Small wonder that I had known her face better than my own mother's that night on Mrs. Shaw's porch in creeping moonlight. I was leaving her next day for just a little while. The absence did not matter. The *Cycle* indeed!

¶ The colors turned to embers, and ashes filled the sky. Fireflies of city lights winged and prinkled in the mist. This was to be our last evening together in the beloved bungalow with all things in order and our hearts in its essence. But we did not know it then. At eleven o'clock, as usual, I drove her down to Shaws'. . . .

And now that Nine-Year Cycle that I faced afresh that twilight, had maneuvered once again. I had been down to the bottom arc of the valley for the fourth time, and for the fourth time mounted up. I had as many eventful things to write as any that I had ever written. But one thing was blessed.

Again I wrote from a mountain top—a place known in the nation's geographies as the Land of the Sky. I wrote from another exquisite little home whose windows looked out on Delectable Mountains . . . the Great Smokies of western North Carolina, for verily it seemed that all America was my home.

And my Golden Girl no longer departed at eleven. The deep night enfolded us. There was now but one set of footprints on the Trail. . . .

CHAPTER THIRTY

ONE MORE episode I have to record before I close this sequence. ¶ Again it concerns the Spirit. ¶ All through my boyhood I had been religious but never theological. If I thought of the After-life in terms of my father's dogma, it was to fiercely resent the idea that I had to spend eternity twanging away on an Irish zither or maybe roasting away on a griddle. For the personal character of the Great Teacher of Galilee I had always entertained a fraternal loving reverence. But there was nothing either religious or theological about it. It was a more personal relationship. True, I did not place much stock in the story that He had died for my sins. I saw no merit to *me*, that anyone should have died for my sins—no more than I felt called upon to be punished for the sins of others, and emphatically not some ancient Adam. Vicarious Atonement was the philosophical escape of moral weaklings from an equally philosophical dilemma. If I were guilty of any sins sufficient to merit death, I was not afraid of doing my own dying.

It was not the Christ of the Cross therefore, who particularly appealed to me, but Christ the Counsellor, Friend, Instructor, and Wiser Elder Brother. Thousands of people, I often told myself, have fallen down elevator-shafts, had their legs cut off by locomotives, smashed into hurtling motorcars on Sabbath afternoons and flopped around in agony on asphalt pavements—suffering quite as painful deaths as being affixed for a few hours to crossed beams of wood. If I had any penalties coming to me, I say, I preferred to stand up and take them for myself. . . . God made me that way.

These utterances are important because of what happened on a night as I crossed the Mojave Desert. . . .

Religion, I sum it up, was encompassed for me in Ethics. Love the Lord

thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, venerate and emulate the beautiful, and give the other fellow an even break—this totaled my religious notions to the moment, although I plead guilty to being rather weak on the loving of the Lord part. I had never met the Lord up till then, nor seen any particular reason for steaming up affection for Him. If He was the God of the Jews who were making a shambles of Russia and a stink of Hollywood, and naught else, then He and I could manage to stagger along separately for a little while longer without much maudlin interchange of sentiment. Who was God, I say, that I should particularly love Him? I translated loving God with the serenity of my childhood life in the village of East Templeton on summer Sunday mornings. All the same, I had read enough of the Neo-Platonists to realize that man's days were few in number and when his body died, it could be a long long time to Resurrection. Maybe I was raised at the last trump and maybe I wasn't. A lot depended on who trumped the trump.

This was the condition of my heart and mind religiously, despite my hyperdimensional experience in May, in bidding Helen goodbye at the train, waving adieu to Al Burke with Laska between both of them in the seat of my roadster at the Pasadena station, and being rolled smoothly down through the orange groves toward San Bernardino and Cajon Pass.

¶ It was the fall of the year, the eucalyptus trees were growing heavy and leathery, California was as sear from its usual summer's burning as a cheap cigar. We got down around the San Bernardino curve in late afternoon, puffed up the Pass and gained to Victoryville. Eastward for two days and a night then stretched the Mojave Desert—that vast spread of sand, emptiness and color that bound the Sierra Madres to the Colorado Rockies. I had made the trip a dozen times before. Not until the sun sank and the long lines of slanting beauty painted the Mojave with necromancy, did I lay aside my book and stare through the windows.

The world was exquisite as I watched the first stars of evening come out. The mountains were not mountains, they were summits of hazy uplands seen in dreams, made merely to catch supernal color and caress it. It was as though God had said, "See what I can do!" . . . Do you like it?" And when one exclaimed at it, He said, "Wait a moment, let me show you something else," and He tried another lavish splash of tints and shades that did something more than impinge on the eye—it tremored the soul.

¶ The evening wore on, the moon came up, the desert grew chill—I knew from the breezes, smoke-scented, that came in beneath the screens. A great ocean of ochre vacuity, the landscapes now were, with an ebon vault over

them where the stars sagged down by reason of their weight. Eight o'clock came, nine, ten. I had gone forward into the club car after dinner. This coach now emptied.

Softly, soothingly, the great train clicked along through the void of aridity, past mesquite and lava ash, through thorn and yucca. The mountains had gone to sleep, their blankets deep mauve. The train ran so steadily that the coaches scarcely swayed.

I remember that the negro porter cleaned the car for the night and turned out some lights. I sat browsing over Emerson. The porter finally went back through the train. I was now the sole occupant of that big forward coach. ❧ ❧

Then this thing happened! . . .

I had come to a certain page in Emerson's wondrous essay on the Over-soul. I had lowered my book. . . . What *was* the Over-soul? . . . Was there a vast, brooding, benevolent Consciousness that wrapt all humanity in Its heart? I asked. I asked earnestly. I wanted an answer.

I was not asleep. I was not expecting what dramatically transpired.

It seemed as though that entire club coach was filled with a Presence!

Twice later in my life I would know that vibration, that stupendous and stunning flash of proximity to the Over-soul in Real. This was the first time. My whole being paused.

I did not sense the car about me. I was unmindful where I was. Whether physically alone or with ten thousand persons, would have made no difference. I could not have been alone in those moments.

Out on a desert of the great southwest, on a train winding carefully through the starlit beauty of the night, I suddenly knew something, something tremendous! . . .

Jesus called Christ was not a Sabbath myth!

LIGHT, it was, that told me . . . a flood of vast Radiance immersing my soul, a fount crystal clear, sensuous as flame, pure as a mountain of green ice, lambent as a new-born star, old as Eternal Time out of the cache of the aeons, dear as my mother's sacrifice, tender as a woman's devotion, high as the dizziest crux of the zenith.

Jesus called Christ was not a Sabbath myth! He was not a theological postulation. He was not the Guess of ponderous savants. He was not an etching on the copper of the whimsical. He was not smug ethics on a salver, served with cracked ice and a bit of pious lemon.

He was livingly, radiantly, overwhelmingly *real!*

A rash came on my forearms where my sleeves were rolled up. My neck felt the brush of it. Shivers were playing up my back, across my groin, down the calves of my legs. Not shivers of terror but impulses to splendor, beauty so high and so deep and so wide and so rich that I wanted to sing with it. . . . All that I could do was to swallow in my throat.

Where had I been all my life? What had I been doing with myself? What sort of truant had I played with my destiny? What sort of a commission had I been given, only to doubt the One who had given it?

I was hot. I was cold. I was surcharged with emotion. I was empty as a church. I was never calmer in my days.

I had nothing more to worry about!

DO NOT ask me how all this reached me. It was totally different from my adventure in *Seven Minutes*. That was dimensional. This was *Pure Knowing*. I had an overwhelming flood of supernal Consciousness, the call to an ennoblement, a desire to a valor. Let the foolish, the squeamish, the little chattering daws of men, peck at me curiously and say that this happened or that happened, or my subliminal self produced an illusion.

It was not illusion. It was Majesty, Humility, Desiring, Arriving! It was equipoise, heart's ease, lovely acquiescence to the Eternal, wherever and however the Eternal came in. It was letting down, halting, exquisitely releasing. It was the final and ultimate cessation of contest.

I knew a complete—an inexorable—a transcendent—*peace!* It reached me, it lifted me, it enfolded and cherished me. I say that it bore me outward and onward. But onward to what?

Jesus called Christ was not afar on some twinkling planet. He was not stalking some theological Valhalla, pleading for the sentenced. He was neither judge nor advocate. Men judged themselves.

Jesus called Christ was an Infinite Tenderness, yet withal a Proud Intellect, omnipotence gone personal. I knew that I did not have to strive and wrestle with cankerings any longer. I did not need to brawl with the world, to make faces at Destiny and dare it to chase me. I *was* the man I had wanted to be from the first. All things were real. All life was whole. The Celestial Flash had come . . . with the passing of mere minutes. ☘ ☘

What was the Over-soul, indeed?

The Over-soul was not something that one dusted off with brooms of philosophy; it was nothing to kodak and send a print to one's sister. It

was a sublime sense of *Knowing*, in that one *was*. It was living a part of it, breathing a fraction of it, thinking the blessing of it, pulsing as the acorn of life within the all-enfolding tree of it.
Christ was. *I* was. There was nothing more to fret about. If such were Patmos, then I knew how St. John felt about it when he returned from his island and bethought him to write a Book upon it before the details slipped his memory.

STARS and nights, and things forgotten and things known! . . . Loveliness beyond depiction, sweet tears and sweeter blessings from those who in blessing forever bless softly! . . . Nights and stars, and radiant beatitudes tremoring from the galaxies! . . . Charmed paternosters, balms, balsams, and elixirs, missives of contentment lost on verdant hillsides and misnamed wild flowers; brooks that held within their singings the rolling pangs of oceans, the seven seas themselves! . . . old diadems and new crowns, argosies, ecstasies! . . . One night and the purity, one night and the Transition, one night and the eternal majesty of old worlds going out and new worlds coming in! . . . the zenith and the richness of it, the distance and the music of it! . . . One Night of *Revelation!*
Once there was a Star, and once there was a Manger . . . once there were Wise Men . . . once there were shepherds . . . Once those shepherds watched their flocks, and the woods and the hills and the murmuring pools were pregnant. . . . Suddenly was music! . . . The whole world rang with it! . . . Angels crashed an anthem and it flooded up the aeons. . . . "Peace on earth! Enlightenment! Good will toward all those who behold with Clear Vision!" . . .
I knew it all now. It was clear and untarnished, and uplifting, and triumphant . . . withal it was Tranquillity raised to the mission of a millennium, the surrender to Patience, the accolade of Mastership.
Do not try to tell me of The Carpenter! . . . I *felt* Him inquiring for me. . . . I breathed in His nobility. . . .
Patmos on a Pullman?
Perhaps. Perhaps. Stranger things have happened, and men have not marveled. ✍ ✍
It was *Spirit Triumphant* believing its own.
The Cycle had maneuvered.
I had found a New Silence. . . .
I had gone through the Door! . . .

BOOK FOUR
Through The Door

DOOR TO REVELATION

Through The Door

CHAPTER ONE

ALL great movements that have changed the course of empires have started as Clouds no bigger than a man's hand. . . . ¶ The vast institution of predatory Judah was begun when a Midianite shepherd appeared in the ghettos of Memphis, Egypt, and harangued the Israelites on the significance of Jehovah's speaking to him from a burning bush on a lonely mountainside. ¶ Modern Christianity started with a young Nazarene's sauntering in among some wedding guests at Cana, making them wine by passing His hands over jars of water, and remaining to discuss with them the terrible degeneration of the religion of the Scribes and Pharisees.

When that young Nazarene's religion had swept the Mediterranean world and known a tragic subversion in its turn, it was one lone monk's nailing the Ninety-five Theses to the chapel door in Wittenberg that projected the far-reaching Reformation.

Coming down into more recent times, one preacher rode up and down the manufacturing towns of England and preached to crowds on street corners or in fields. Thus Wesley gave birth to Methodism.

A bedridden woman in New Hampshire was handed a book by one Quimby of Maine on the control of Mind over body. She wrote a better book of her own and in a handful of years Christian Science had swept the nation.

The Cloud no bigger than a man's hand has shown itself quite as potent in Politics and Government. . . .

A ragged French peasant wandered the hedgerows of Chambery and thought out the principles of the Social Contract. The European radicals made it the corner stone of the French Reign of Terror. Thus Jean Jacques Rousseau was indirectly responsible for the Napoleonic wars which followed it, changing the stream of history.

John Adams was responsible for calling together the handful of colonial delegates who met in a forty-foot room in Carpenter's Hall, Philadelphia, and out of whose deliberations came the Declaration of Independence and our present United States.

Four students meeting in an upper room changed the government of Japan. ❧ ❧

The list is endless.

William Lloyd Garrison, a young printer so poor that he had to sleep beneath his shop's imposing-stone, wrote, "I am deadly in earnest, I will not equivocate, I will not play politics, I will not retreat a single inch, and I will be heard!" The printer was heard, the Civil War resulted, and the black man was freed.

Adolf Hitler's first speech was delivered to seven people from the top of a beer-keg and he often went about the streets of Munich in the afternoon handing out free tickets to his own lectures in the evening.

The individual, not the mass, molds history.

And yet, the program with each has been that when he first wrote, or stood up to speak, the Crowd has cried as it cried of old, "Is not this Joseph the carpenter's son? Or again, "How can any good come out of Nazareth?" ❧ ❧

The Crowd forgets that every prophet must first be suckled by some woman, somewhere. Even a Christ must wear a shirt. The mightiest Caesar that ever ordered up the legions of the universe, has walked the floor with his face in a sling because toothache could order him where monarchs could not.

This is a human world, where God gets His work done by human instruments. Always and forever when the Almighty has some special renaissance to bring about in Religion, Government, or Economics, He shuffles His celestial card-index of hoping, fearing, struggling, loving mortals, till He comes to some name that makes Him purse his lips. Mayhap He tosses out the card.

Subsequently, in mortality, a Cloud appears . . . no bigger than a man's

hand. The Cloud *is* a man's hand. It has suddenly abandoned the tinseled things of Mammon, the childish toys of material acquisitions. It has set itself to plow a great furrow, to paint a great canvass, to right a great wrong. He is the man who a year ago fought a lawsuit with his neighbor over eight chickens that dug up his garden. He is the rowdy who ten years in the past eloped with a barmaid and ran a Punch and Judy show over on the highroad. He is the same imp who in his childish years tied cats' tails in knots to hear the creatures yowl or changed the sugar for salt at the banquet of the deacons.

What has God to do with that?

God is concerned in *getting the work done.* It is assumed that men who have fought lawsuits over the neighbors' chickens, eloped with barmaids, run Punch and Judy shows, or performed miracles of sound with the appendages of cats, have acquired a certain facility in the methods of this world so that finding themselves on rostrums does not strike them mute for words.

They do not take the pen in hand as though it were a crowbar. . . .

But the Crowd has queer ideas.

The prophet must be a stuffed image of probity and utter vast wisdoms as he lies in his cradle.

The true Christ can never sprawl on his nose from a root in the pathway, or drop a well-buttered knife upon his knees, or swallow a fish-bone and require to be generously hammered on the back.

Such things are unthinkable.

God seems to hold differently. And so we have the Crowd refusing to abide by the Lord's designations, hooting or stoning him unto whom the Vision has come.

What has that to do with the size of the Cloud in an ensuing generation? The Cloud appears, no bigger than a man's hand. It grows and takes on volume. One, two, or three persons say, "I don't know where Joseph's son ever got hold of these ideas he's telling us . . . he must have snitched them out of some prophet's memoirs. . . . Nevertheless, they seem to feed my spirit." They each tell twelve friends who have never met Joseph, so his son is of no moment. Presently the thirty-six have become a hundred and eighty. And in the exact ratio that the terrible humanness of the prophet is not known in the beginning, the numbers swell to thousands. ¶ Show them their prophet engaged with a bellyache trying to mend a clock, carting the ashes out from the cellar, and they tell you his ideals are a delusion and a snare. What they truly mean is, "Having no particu-

lar ideals of our own, we cannot reveal our own spiritual penury by admitting that a man who otherwise thinks, acts and talks like we do, can possibly best us in snaring the Infinite. We want *gods* to worship, not men who wield hammers and sometimes pound their thumbs!"

Yet they ultimately worship those whose names are on the index-cards which the Almighty has tossed in a pile of their own.

They take good care, however, to sublimate the deeds of him whom God has chosen. The lawsuit was not a lawsuit over fowls; he was holding the faultiness of men's courts up to travesty. The elopement with the barmaid was not an elopement: the prophet was thus rebuking the sale of malt liquors. As for the Punch and Judy shows, the tying of the cats' tails, the switching of salt for sugar at the banquet, these were the fabrications of malicious persons seeking to subvert belief in the prophet's divinity. Which suggests that perhaps John the Baptist lost his head to Salome, not because he came crying in a great wilderness . . . she probably knew that as a dancer she was terrible, and that John, being onto it, might ultimately divulge it.

The Almighty, I say, is concerned with *His Cloud*. The masses in mortality are concerned with theophanies—using many seven-pound words and much clearing of the tonsils to explain what can happen in human affairs when a clever individual acquires delusions of grandeur.

What difference does it make?

The renaissance *comes*. . . .

CHAPTER TWO

MARY dropped back a step when she came through the station-concourse entrance to the Commodore Hotel and we met face to face. "Why! . . . you've . . . you've *changed!*" she cried faintly, eyes searching my features. On arrival I had phoned her to come over to the Commodore for luncheon. ¶ Later that afternoon, in the ladies' lounge, I reported all that had happened. She said when I had finished, "You've got to write this up for *The American!* Think of the inspiration that this could be to millions."

"Not in a *million* years!" I protested.

"What's the matter?"

"Matter enough. Do you think they'll understand it? Ninety out of every hundred people will say I've turned Spiritualist, or that I merely dreamed a dream, or perhaps—worse yet—they'll come out quite bluntly and declare I've gone balmy. No, the whole experience—or I should say three experiences—must forever remain something personally inviolate."

¶ "I'm not so sure of that."

"Why aren't you sure?"

"You've heard of the parable of the Talents and the Napkin. That experience might never have been given you for you to bury selfishly."

"But Mary, think of the aftermath, what might grow from it!"

"Exactly," she answered. "That's just what I'm thinking."

"You m-mean you believe that people would accredit it?"

"The world's reached a stage where it's spiritually famished. People are reaching out, clutching after something more substantial, more satisfying, than what they hear in churches."

"But I'm not a Spiritualist, Mary. And I didn't dream a dream. And I haven't gone balmy—at least I don't think I have. Still, if I go writing about what's happened to me, publicly, it may wreck all the prestige I've commanded to the moment—prestige that I might want to employ to more constructive ends."

"Why not say rather, it might *give* you a prestige . . . that you might never have otherwise?" She flounced her handbag up and down in her lap. "Tell me some more about these 'higher senses' that you claim were awakened by having those experiences."

"Mary . . . I don't know . . . it sounds like an insanity. . . ."

"Never mind the insanity part. I guess I can tell when a person is crazy. Just because a dumb, illiterate, bigoted world designates as idiocy what it can't achieve itself, is no especial reason for accepting its verdict. You said you'd 'broken into' a reservoir of wisdom. Give me full details . . . just why it seems so."

"Well . . . ever since the morning that I came awake—and lay half a day, stunned—I've discovered a change in . . . my mental perceptions. That experience, or those experiences, *did* something to me, Mary. They unlocked my mind . . . or the processes of Mind . . . so that no matter what I want to know, it just comes to me . . . accurately!"

"Comes to you, how?"

"You've probably had the experience common to all, of being faced with a problem whose answer eludes you. You sit up past midnight struggling and considering it. Then you go to bed. You say, 'I'll get up and try a fresh brain on it in the morning.' But lo and behold, you wake up along between five and six o'clock with the answer in your possession. People commonly say, 'Subconscious mind was at work while I slept.' Well, maybe it was, and maybe it wasn't. But suppose the same sort of thing performed without such lapse for slumber? Suppose you wanted to know some terrific piece of wisdom, and instead of wasting a lot of hours in bed you relaxed in a chair and stopped thinking consciously. Presto! . . . at once . . . up from the regions at the back of your brain . . . the answer came full-born, *even spoken to you in logical sentences one upon the other,* . . . and all you had to do was to repeat them aloud to someone who took them down on paper. That's how it is . . . as near as I can describe it." ❧ ❧

Mary was silent. But I saw she was studying me.

"So! . . . *you've Broken Through!*" she whispered. "You recall I said you would." ❧ ❧

"Sometimes," I admitted, "I'm scared of what's happened. "It's so horridly potent. Why, just this morning while waiting for you to come over here to lunch, I sat down at my table upstairs in my room and began to wonder where all this might lead me. Particularly was I troubled about my relations with Marion. Do you know what happened? I got a forecast . . . seemingly out of Nowhere . . . that's too freighted with consequence, too minute and logical, to be any desiring out of Subconscious Mind. I filled sheets with the writing. And it's not my own at all. . . . I mean, even the penmanship."

"Have you got those sheets with you?"

"Will you pledge yourself to silence about what they contain?"
She told me that she would. I gave her the pages that were folded in my pocket. "I want these!" she said suddenly.
"Want them? What for?"
"There are profound persons in this city, interested in such research. They've got to know your story. It'll prove a lot of theories."
"Never!" I avowed. And despite her protesting, I took the pages back.
"Bill, you've got to be sensible about this thing. There's every indication in the world that you've been selected as an instrument to bring in a revolutionized program of thinking and worshiping. It's as clear to me as light. Ever since I've known you, I've felt you were slated to do something extraordinary. It came to me first during our luncheon at the Plaza. All your struggles and disgruntlements were just growing-pains toward something. It's kept my interest in you white-hot. Now that you've passed the threshold of such achievement, you can't reveal your soul as unequal to its trust."
"It's not a question of my soul, I think. It's a matter of wisdom, being effectively discreet."
"Doesn't your Higher Intelligence tell you that I'm right?"
Right there she had me stopped. Mary went along—
"Doesn't it tell in Exodus about God's speaking to Moses out on a mountain, ordering him to go over into Egypt and say certain things to Pharaoh? If my memory serves me right, Moses too was silly. Right away he started to argue with God that he didn't feel up to it. Who was he, Moses, that he should face Pharaoh and declare what God wanted?"
"I don't believe a bit of it. Just ballyhoo for Jews! Besides, I'm not Moses." ❧ ❧
"No. But your work may prove quite as important." She glanced at the clock and gave a quick start. "I've got to be getting back to the office. But you do as I tell you. You come up to my apartment tonight and we'll both probe this deeper. I listened while you ranted for a hundred afternoons on how punching a typewriter was not your life's work. Well, you've gone through the *Door* into dazzling *Revelation*. Now I'll not let a maudlin modesty attempt to keep you little. Will you come up tonight?"
¶ "Certainly," I told her.

SO STRANGELY had it happened to me.
I had neither exaggerated nor talked balderdash to my literary shepherdess when I said that no matter what it was, upon which I wished en-

lightenment, I had only to relax and the answers came prodigiously. Where did they come from? I have my own convictions. But as man in the bigotry of his present blindness and envy has not yet evolved to a point where such things are general to humankind everywhere, the wiser course is silence, till he makes his own discoveries. I maintain that in the five million words of converse which I have since made available, the evidence bespeaks an origin which squares with my contentions. . . .

Mary said, at the conclusion of certain demonstrations that evening, "You ought to be back here in New York—not away off in California—where you can confer from time to time with people of like attainments. I can name at random a dozen persons—whom you should know, and who should know *you*. This thing may turn out big!"

"Perhaps I shall come back," I said, disquieted.

She went into an adjoining room and returned with the portrait of a man. "Does that resemble anyone you've met?"

I knew a strange jolt. Thereat I faltered, "Is that man 'dead'?"

"He is. But who is he?"

"He's the man who was with Bert Boyden—or the one I took for Boyden —that night in *Seven Minutes!*"

"Sure of it?"

"Positive!"

"That's my husband's brother. He was accidentally shot by a rooky's rifle at one of the army camps at the very commencement of the war."

On the fourth evening of my visit I sat on the divan beside my gracious counsellor. Across our laps was a big sheet of writing-board, with paper and pencils.

"Go back to California at once," was the writing subsequently produced between us. "Go tomorrow . . . at two-forty o'clock . . . taking the Empire State Express!"

"Bother!" I exclaimed. "I can't get away as early as that. I've got editors to see, appointments to keep—"

"Drop them all and *go*! If you fail to go, you'll always be sorry."

Mary said, "What's the meaning of that? Is something going to happen?"

¶ "It looks so," I said, "though I can't make out what."

Forthwith I argued with this Higher Intelligence . . . whatever it was. I would go the day following. I would go the next evening. None of these would answer. I must take the Empire State Express for Albany next day for if I neglected, my arrival would be all wrong when I got to the Coast. . . .

I left New York next day.

The following Friday at one-thirty I stepped from the transcontinental train onto the platform of the Pasadena station. There was no one to meet me for I had not announced my coming. I went up to my office. "Is everything all right here?" I asked Mrs. Jamison. "Quite all right," she answered, startled by my appearance. "Everything all right up to the bungalow?" She nodded too at that. "Al Burke looked in up there last night. Why? What's the matter?"

Had this new talent failed me? Had I made the tedious journey across a whole continent through some sort of hoax? I went over to the garage and got my car. I drove to Mrs. Shaw's where Helen was keeping Laska. Matie came out at my appearance in the yard.

"Bill Pelley!" she cried. "Helen was positive you'd be here today!"

"She couldn't have known. I didn't advise a soul.'

"Can't help it. She knew it. And you'd better drive down to Pomona as fast as you can go."

"Pomona! What for?"

"Day before yesterday her mother had a fall. Helen's down there tending her. The mother's not expected to live through tonight."

So! *That* was it! And somehow or other I had known about it something like four days before Mrs. Hansmann's accident! . . .

I got down to Pomona.

Mrs. Hansmann passed at three minutes to six o'clock—a matter of twenty minutes before I drove up to the house. . . .

Later that evening I drove Helen back to Pasadena for things that would be necessary for the funeral on Tuesday.

"I've made up my mind to close the bungalow," I told my nurse friend that evening. "I'm returning to Manhattan. I'm going to get a group around me and probe these higher spiritual mysteries down to the lowest bottom. I've got to know them adeptly, professionally—*all* there is to know about them—before I dare reveal that I'm concerned with them at all."

CHAPTER THREE

AT TEN minutes to twelve o'clock of a midweek forenoon in the February that followed, I walked into Mary's office. ¶ "I've brought you a manuscript," was my conventional announcement. And I laid it on her desk. She had put on her hat for the midday pause for eating.

"A new story?" she asked carelessly.

"Yes, it's a story. A sort of story. It's the story of my night's experience in my Altadena bungalow."

"*What!*"

She dropped into her chair, unmindful of her hat. I nursed my stick and waited. One page, two pages, three pages, she read. Five. Ten. Fifteen. Up she sprang from her desk and sped down the corridor.

She was gone forty minutes.

When she came back, she had Merle Crowell with her. Merle was red-eyed, I knew he had been mopping. "Bill Pelley," he said, "you've written the story of the century. I'm wiring our printing plant in Ohio to stop all presses till this manuscript can reach them."

Lunch was forgotten for Mary that day. It was the hour of her supreme justification for all that she had held for me. Speaking for myself, I was altogether startled by what I had uncorked. I said to Mary privately, "I wrote that manuscript in a couple of hours this morning, over in the Commodore. It should be rewritten. . . ."

'You'll not change a comma! You've struck off your masterpiece. We may have to cut it here and there to make it fit exactly the story it's displacing. But I mean to do it personally."

"It'll probably mean my finish as a writer of fiction."

"Oh . . . *fiction!*" cried Mary scornfully. She added a minute later, 'And Lindbergh might have said it meant his finish if his plane had gone down in the ocean. But it didn't go down in the ocean. It went down upon that flying-field in Paris. I guess you're not dumb. What convinced you at last that this story should be written?"

"In my room this morning I was crossing from my bath to my bag for clean linen. It came that I should do it, in a . . . flash of realization!"

"So? Go back over to the Commodore and get yourself some more of that kind of flashes."

"I'm going back over to the Commodore and get myself some quinine. I

feel rotten," I said. "The flashes I'm feeling have nothing to do with literature." * *

By ten o'clock that night I was running a fever. The abrupt change from California sunshine to Manhattan in February had changed a cold to flu. New York was full of flu, a regular epidemic. Mary phoned me at midnight, 'I've tried all over this town to get you a nurse. There's not one to be had."

"No matter," I said. "I'll get along somehow. The hotel physician's keeping an eye on me."

For a week I lay wracked by hot needles and cold icicles. At ten o'clock of the sixth day came a rap at my door. I thought it was the doctor, but little I cared. "Come in!" I called weakly.

The door responded.

For an instant I was certain that my sickness had reached delirium.

Helen walked in! . . .

"Of all the monkeyshines!" she greeted me. "To come to New York and end up here helpless!"

"Where . . . d-did you drop from?"

"Mary called me long-distance last Monday night. She said you were ill here and I'd better come quick."

"I'll spank that pretty red-head!"

"You'll be spanking *yourself* if you don't let me fix you."

Off came the cape I knew so well. Off came the hat. Bags started opening. Strange bottles flew out. I was dosed. I was compressed. The hotel flunkies were blistered for letting my room reach such a condition. Mary appeared at six o'clock. The pair of them went into a huddle like sisters. I was brought from that illness as though by magic.

BETWEEN Fifth and Sixth Avenues, on the south side of 53rd Street there is a row of brownstone houses. On the second floor of Number 56 I found exactly the apartment that was suited to my needs. Presently from Altadena came rugs, chairs. pictures. Draperies went up. My books found new shelves. There were two high-ceilinged rooms—with a kitchenette between. The front room was lofty, spacious. I made it into an artful livingroom. The room behind was my chamber and writing-room. It was sunny and quiet. Helen took rooms at the Allerton Hotel for Women on Lexington Avenue. New York was not unfamiliar to her. She had gone from Bellevue Hospital on that war hitch in Russia.

¶ Now began one of the strangest interludes in my life—a solid year of experimentations in mystical research.

I slowly compiled one of the best private libraries in New York on matters that had to do with capabilities of spirit. What could man do with his body? What marvels could Consciousness perform outside of the human brain? What natural forces which man had not coded, were there in existence, that when properly understood would open up new fields in religious research? I wanted to *know*.

Christ had said, "The things that I do, ye shall do . . . yet greater things than I do shall ye do, if ye but believe on me!" Was He referring to mystical marvels far ahead in the centuries . . . or after men got out of mortal life? Or right here in the present when proper and sensible explorations had made the supranatural, natural?

I had persons up to my flat endowed with strange capabilities for vacating the body and traveling to a distance without death of the physical body's resulting. I tested out for my own satisfaction many of the theories of Swedenborg. After *Seven Minutes in Eternity* appeared in the current number of *The American*—with a flood of inquiring mail resulting in thousands of letters—persons who had undergone strange and unexplainable experiences in their own lives, commenced to seek me out, to give me the details, to ask for explanations. Here was an avocation that struck to the very core and roots of human life. Here was a pursuit that opened a Vast Book to terrified, blundering, circumscribed humanity. What calling could be nobler?

Of what I discovered I could do with my own organism during this period, I have written too much elsewhere to burden these pages with necromantic repetition. People who know absolutely nothing about these matters, or who have been terrified into shunning everything that is above the common understanding of the masses, might misinterpret many of the results of my findings. That I had either a gift, or a source, from which I could obtain specific intimations about occurrences that lay in the future, was so many times demonstrated that my friends ceased to marvel. That I was recording the most abstruse papers and monographs on matters that up till then were accounted as life's supreme 'mysteries,' was evidenced by the transcripts of those monographs themselves. Men who tried to explain all the phenomena in human life on the materialistic or biological basis, went from my premises shaking their heads. They had seen what they had seen. They had heard what they had heard. They had read what they had read. How to account for it? They could not account

for it. So the devil must be in it. Did they not say of My Lord nineteen centuries in the past, "Joseph's son hath a devil?

Sir Conan Doyle wrote me after *Seven Minutes* appeared. "Never mind what you say, Pelley, you *are* a Spiritualist," he said. I wrote back to him heatedly, "I'm not a Spiritualist. I believe in the Universality of God the Father, but that doesn't make me a Universalist. I think every congregation should be an independent body unto itself; but that doesn't make me a Congregationalist. I'm a philosopher engaged in finding out what the human soul *is*, what it can *do*, whether personality survives that confusing state called Death. Just because I agree that Mind has supreme control over body, that doesn't make me a Christian Scientist; and I refuse to be labeled a Spiritualist."

Soon they had me lecturing down to Hyslop Foundation. A publisher approached me to issue *Seven Minutes* in book form. Every esoteric society in the New York territory solicited me to come and speak to it. Soon I was discovering that in my researchings and recordings, I had not only encompassed what was known upon these subjects, but was advancing far beyond them. One night I repeated a paper to Helen in pure Sanskrit. I had never studied Sanskrit and neither had she. She recorded the words phonetically. Two Sanskrit scholars translated the sounds, and they each, without knowing the other had done so, forthwith produced the same interpretations . . . concerning events to come in America in this era now upon us. Exactly as Swedenborg had done concerning the great fire in Copenhagen—although he was miles away at the time with no means of communication, seeing it happen and reporting fully its details—I could upon occasion project some mystical part of myself and visit far distances, or be seen by friends who recognized me, and who came back reporting what they had seen. Witnesses to such experiments in New York acknowledged that the details checked with all which I had told them. How was it done? I could not say myself. I was merely pioneering in vast fields of human thought belonging to the future. Whereupon, without desiring these lines to appear in the least bombastic, I found that the aftermath of *Seven Minutes* had endowed me with another strange faculty. I could take a piece of old jewelry in my hand and give an accurate report of its history, frequently describing persons who had worn it. I could handle a handkerchief or bit of clothing and know accurately all there was to be known about that person, including some of the most intimate affairs of their lives. There are literally thousands of people in all parts of America who have witnessed me do these things,

and can attest that I write truthfully.

In April of 1930 I was called to lecture before the Psychiatrical Board at Dartmouth College upon some aspects of Insanity. Present in my audience were learned physicians and superintendents of New England asylums and sanatoriums. One astounded doctor sought me out after my discourse—which lasted for two hours—and demanded, "Where can I *get* this thing? If I knew what it's all too evident that you know about the causes and processes of soul phenomena, I could cure half the patients over at my Nut Farm in a matter of weeks. I'll come to New York and live with you, I'll pay you anything. . . . Only give this knowledge to me! It's a boon to all humanity!"

I mention these facts, I say, not to toot my personal saxophone but because they are personal attestments of the veracities of my studies.

The mail which promptly resulted from two millions of people reading *My Seven Minutes in Eternity* was the most poignant—and ofttimes tragic—thing which had ever come before my notice. My soul was shaken to its very depths. Thousands of persons had had such experiences, I learned, but had kept mute about them, fearing the derision or vengeance of the orthodox. Thousands of others wrote me, imploring me to go further and write more upon my studies, to give them the consolation that scientific discovery and credible research turned up to them.

I was suddenly sobered as never before in my life had I been sobered. The poor befuddled human race was one great human miasma of buffeted, terrified little children, bamboozled by quacks, played upon by theology, made frenzied by uncanny experiences to which it in no wise had the key. Could a man devote his life to any more worth while or meritorious calling than fearlessly exploring such Grand Canyons of human knowledge? . . .

¶ And yet, through it all, I knew that such studies must remain an avocation. Such was not the main business for which I had entered life.

I perceived it all plainly.

These great gifts which had somehow or other been heroically alloted me were for quite another purpose. . . .

Incarnate in human life were great malicious entities—almost literally the fiends of history—haters of the Christ and all His works—thought to be men in that they went about their business speaking and acting in the bodies of men, yet present in life to give the Christ contest, to pull down and destroy all that science, and art, and ethics, and religion, had been patiently, earnestly building throughout the centuries. The human race knew naught of these. It thought their malicious actings only political

or economic vagaries. But those of us being entrusted with the Deeper Knowledge, discerned them accurately.

Our job it was to challenge them, to bring them to a vanquishing!

That was the Mission to which we had set ourselves. And because we were valiant enough to stand our ground and do it, such was the equipment given unto our employments. . . .

I tried to dismiss my mystical inquirers with a book, expounding in a fiction story what great action and reaction occurred in the phenomena of life and death. I called it *Golden Rubbish,* and it was published by Putnam's in the summer of 1930. But at once came the yowl of organized orthodoxy. Who was I, that I should use great publishing houses like The Crowell Publishing Company, or George P. Putnam's Sons, to propagandize the nation on "discredited Spiritualism"? . . . Things began to happen. *The American Magazine* suddenly had a new editor. Merle Crowell "resigned." . . . Mary got her walking papers. Into the chair so ably filled by John Siddell—who declared that the American people were interested in just three subjects, Love, Business, and Religion, and the greatest of these, religion—came a man by the name of Blossom. Blossom, I was told, came to the position from a concupiscent New York tabloid. Forthwith my long association with *The American Magazine* ended. "No more of that spiritual rot!" seemed to be the order. Forthwith the great *American Magazine,* almost a spiritual institution in the lives of our people, became "just another magazine," filled up with stories of golf, motoring, money-grubbing, articles by incipient Communists, or the brashest of Jew propaganda. As for George P. Putnam's Sons, *Golden Rubbish* was given just one edition, then dropped like a hot potato. Every Jewish book reviewer in the nation descended on the novel with hot picks and spiked boots. No more of that in books, either! What the American people must be given was not explorings in mystical Christianity, but ballyhoo on the beauties of various forms of atheistic Communism.

The serial *Dark Happiness,* done in two nights and a day, was practically the last piece of work which I did for *The American.* But somehow I was indifferent. Regardless of how organized orthodoxy clamped down upon me, or jittery Judah did all within its power to keep men of my attainments from gaining the public ear lest we divulge what Judah was about in this hemisphere, I had caught a glimpse of the ghasty heartbreak that existed within the rank and file of starved, hoodwinked, befuddled, terror-stricken men and women of this nation, in the response which had greeted my widely-read article in the *American.* What

a piteous muddle human life was in! What a tragic hoax was being put over on millions by frenziedly keeping from them any of these great and beauteous truths of existence that would go so far toward making life endurable! ❧ ❧

Once in the Altadena bungalow, Helen and I had ministered to three terrorized little boys. Now I was perceiving that most of humanity was just similarly terrorized, buffeted, suppressed children that knew not where to turn for radiance in their darkness. The same spirit of contrite desire to minister, came to me now with an insistence that was terrible. Plato tells of Socrates, in his final dialogue with Crito, of "the oracle within me that ever tells me those things I should not do, without informing me of voluntary actions." . . . I knew what Plato meant. I felt that I knew of what Socrates was speaking. I too had "an oracle within me" and it was saying not to idle in such consolations yet awhile. I had a stronger brevet.

ONE NIGHT in August, 1929, it was, that I had more revelation. . . . As we got along into 1929 I had formed an inner group of seven that met each Friday evening at the home of some kindred investigators who lived on Riverside Drive. Each Friday evening at the conclusion of dinner, Mary usually called for Helen and myself, and took us up to Mrs. Leslie's in her car. Each person in that group was possessed of some talent expounding the supranatural.

On the evening of which I write, we were preparing to depart when the phone-bell whirred suddenly. On lifting the receiver, Mary's voice greeted me. "I'm going to be detained for an hour and a half," she said. "Will you wait till nine o'clock and all go up as usual? Or will you and Helen take a cab and I'll meet you there later?" I said that we would wait. She had already called our friends on the Drive. And without her the group would be incomplete anyhow. Helen had come over from her hotel in a frock. We had ninety minutes of time on our hands. "Why not put it in, doing some recording of the Wisdom?" she suggested. ❧ ❧

So she got out her pad and bunch of sharpened pencils. Day after day for months I had relaxed in a chair and dictated thousands of similar pages to her. The strange part about this labor was, remarked on by our friends, that though she began in the morning at nine o'clock and worked with me till dark, neither physical weariness nor writer's cramp at-

tended on these efforts. How to explain it? It was another natural law that had not yet been coded.

I sat myself down in evening clothes and stopped my thinking consciously. Presently came "the voice of the oracle." . . .

"This unusual delay tonight is not a matter of chance," it dictated. "Before you visit Mrs. Leslie on this, your final meeting, there are things to be known that have hitherto been veiled—veiled with a purpose. Prepare to write strange statements."

DEEPER and deeper I sank into reverie. Clearer and clearer came the reasoning Intelligence. . . .

"First, it might be well to acquaint all your friends now speculating in the stock market that nothing which they could do would be more discreet than to cash in on their winnings and get them out in money. Either in money or in government bonds, since government bonds as of this present issue will be the only securities which will maintain their value after the horrible debacle ahead."

"Debacle!" cried Helen. . . .

Thereat she transcribed further . . ."—because on or about October 15th of this year there is coming a crash upon the bourses of the world that will pull down all peoples into seven years of famine. A vast effluvia of evil spreads across all nations. Great commercial concerns will go bankrupt, laborers will be turned out laborless in millions, all banks will close! . . . and some of the darkest and most terrible monsters incarnate now in life will spread out their satanic clutches for the prosperous United States. It is time for you to know now that you are to function in this crisis. That is your chief errand, your main business in this life. . . .

"Are you sure you're understanding correctly?" Helen whispered hoarsely.

I answered, "Never was the Wisdom more vivid in its clearness!"

" . . . Hear the Prophecy and know it for its value! . . . Within a year or thereabout you will find yourself at the head of a great spiritual movement that shall spread across this nation. But that is not of account, since it only prepares the minds of certain leaders to step from the mass and proceed to function with you. Within two years or thereabout, you will find yourself sitting with the heads of government *behind* the government in Washingon. There you will learn the most intimate details of the Great Conspiracy against Christian lives and institutions. Men will come into your affairs who will help you to become the land's outstanding

authority on the plotting of the Dark Ones. But that is preparation. In three years or thereabout, you will find yourself at the head of a national vigilante organization, a quasi-military force, which you will project and bring to strange flower. But not as men might hope. Not as you yourself might conceive at its inception. Vast overturnings of society must come first. Man will be assailed as he has never been assailed. Forces will seize him of whose evil he has small conception. There will come a time in this nation when Christian Constitutionalism shall hang by a thread. Strong arms and stronger hearts must function in that interlude. . . .

"When will it happen? . . . listen to the Time. . . .

"Over in Europe at this moment exists a young Austrian. . . . By trade he is a painter. . . . He is coming to the head of the German people. . . . His work is not as yours, for his is strictly political. . . . Yours is economic, but spiritual as well. He will become the great power in Central Europe. That power of his may extend over Russia, overthrowing there the Legions of Darkness. The day that this man ascends into the chancellorship of the German people, do you take it as your time-signal to launch your organization in America!'

"Whoever can it mean?" Helen bethought to question. A pause came in her writing.

"Wasn't there a chap who was an Austrian painter, thrown into jail for trying some sort of putsch with Ludendorff?" I asked. "But go on writing . . . there's more to this Script."

" . . . God has queer ways of *calling* men," Helen next transcribed. "When the work is great, or terrific, or unusual, He sometimes lets them know in advance . . . particularly when they must rely, in crises, on aid above the mortal. You will project your organization *on the day that the Ausrian becomes German chancellor.* But a time of trouble and struggle will follow. You will be attacked. Your body will be seized. From ocean to ocean your name will be vilified. You will be accused of crimes which you have never committed. You may possibly be mobbed. You may possibly be shot at. As the forces of evil strive to extend their control across this country, stifling all liberty, bringing woes upon millions that they may become subservient, they will indict you and hound you. You may be hunted like an animal. But take courage and take heart. *It is all in the Program.* You will not be afraid because *you will be forearmed with knowledge* . . . knowledge which your enemies never can censor." ✻ ✻

Naturally this sort of thing, actualizing in my super-consciousness, un-

nerved me for the moment. How was I, a fiction-writer in a New York flat, ever to so commend myself to the nation that such things could come to pass? . . . But the "oracle" went on.

"Out of the Seven Lean Years the effluvia will climax. America will be bankrupted down to the bone. Larders will be empty. Homes and farms will be seized. As that climax approaches, you will write a great book. It will show the frenzied and harassed human race how a better order may be realized, how evil can be curbed, how life's dark master-forces shall be circumscribed themselves and ultimately brought to ruin. . . .

"Nine years it will be your commission to lead in the great work of national education for the Golden Age that is coming in. On March 4, 1945, your political labors will be finished. Thereafter, if you have served as you are expected, seventeen years will be permitted you . . . to travel . . . to write . . . to edit . . . to set up those great institutions for spiritual explorations that now seem enticing pastime. . . . Go forward therefore, sure and calm and free, knowing that nothing can harm you, that you cannot be injured; *that you have your task to do and will do it!*"

On and on my amanuensis wrote, at times following my somnolent voice so furiously that she threw filled pages off upon the rug. The oracle spoke of the mysterious "German chancellor," of what some of his lives had been in the past—without ever mentioning his name! . . . of the task he had assumed—to lead all the nations in the world in the cooping of the world's international marplots, even as I was supposed to lead in delineating constructively that better order of human relations to be called the Christian Commonwealth. . . .

"Tomorrow," recorded Helen further, "go to that bookstore with which you have relations. Inside the door at the left-hand side you will find a table with a green baize top. On the baize are four books. The figures on the price tag are 1-9-5-0. Acquire those four volumes. Bring them home to your library. Read them as a Bible. You will presently see why. Promptly on completing your study of them, you will take four months of papers . . . specific papers . . . papers that translate the Christian Commonwealth. Script after script, preachment after preachment, you will inscribe at higher order. And when you have finished, you will know what the future contains, what your epochal book contains that does the thinking for a continent; what you must do specifically to act in your great place." ✻ ✻

Whirr! went the doorbell. . . .

We glanced at the clock. The time was 8:50. . . .

Ninety minutes had gone as by magic. Helen gathered up her papers from the rug as I answered Mary's summons. We went down to the car.

¶ "What's the matter with you?" asked Mary as we drove across Central Park. "Why so solemn all of a sudden?"

"My oracle has been giving out some strange predictions tonight," I parried. "Helen and I have just taken a recording that sort of jars me up."

"What sort of recording?"

I concluded to tell her everything. I did not omit that reference about my job—the Big Job—that embraced the salvation of a culture. "Well," I prompted finally, our destination ahead, "what do you think of it? Do you think that any such thing is ahead for myself?"

"Bill," said Mary solemnly, "I've known something of the sort was ahead for you, ever since I've known *you*!"

CHAPTER FOUR

SHALL I ever forget the unfoldments of that evening—even those unfoldments to which I subsequently listened? ☙ ☙

Our hostess was a remarkable gentlelady who had lived out in India and studied with the pundits. Her agate eyes kept on me as I entered the room.

"Well!" she exclaimed. "*What* a revelation!"

I asked her what she meant.

"You've had one, haven't you? . . . before coming here tonight?"

"What makes you think so?"

"I see it in your aura. Now I understand . . . *much!*"

This was operating on a stratum of Intelligence that the average man will blink at. But I'm telling him, such things happen! I sat down in the place where I usually sat. And Mrs. Leslie continued to regard me. Soon that astounding clairvoyant eye of hers was functioning. . . .

"Seven years!" she whispered. "Seven *lean* years! . . . seven years of inhuman struggle and heartbreak . . . seven years of talking and preaching and writing . . . seven years of enduring the sneers and libels of ignorant persons, of carrying the insults and the clawings of the bigoted upon your flesh, of seeking to bring man a new vision of himself, and being stoned in the spirit for the effort. This is what's ahead for you, my friend.

You'll try to persuade and prove to man that his personality cannot perish, and man will viciously defame you for your sacrifice. You'll beggar yourself to warn man that a fiendish menace stalks him, that a savage beast waits in ambush for him. Man will reward you by calling you a fool. People will come to you begging you to succor them. You'll help them in purse, you'll help them in spirit. Then when they are somewhat refreshed from the plights that have assailed them, they'll turn on you and point you out to the crowd as a self-seeker, a trickster, a plotter for gain, using their former relationships to you as their bases for warning the multitude against you. Men will see your good works, and instead of glorifying your Father who is in heaven they'll maliciously applaud when Organized Evil seeks to crush you, to imprison you, to smash and destroy all that you're so patiently building up for man's political and spiritual enlightenment. Seven years of it, I say. Every man's hand will be lifted against you. Millions of people will be fooled, or enraged, by the calumny directed upon you. You will be called a shyster, a charlatan, a corrupter of public morals, a breeder of hates and tumults and seditions. So bitter will be the persecutions turned upon you, that you cannot appear openly in the public places and be known for whom you are, without turmoil and riot springing up around you by those who hate the Christ and all His works and agents. In short, there will be a brief period toward the end of the Seven Lean Years when you will be the most hated and hounded man in the whole United States. I see you sitting, as it were, on an iceberg, surrounded by a sea of hostile humanity. Outside of a little handful of your intimates who still believe in you, you are *alone*! Terribly inhuman is that loneliness to be. But wait! . . . Suddenly in center of this frightful isolation, a shaft of *light* breaks. Something *happens*. I can't see what it is, but I get a sense of a national incident. In upon that ocean and that iceberg comes a dramatic flood of radiance. In a day and a night, hostile and hoodwinked people have the mask of their blindness stripped from their eyes. Abruptly they perceive the staggering hoax that's been played upon them from the very beginning. That iceberg *melts*! . . . Between sunset and sunrise! You lie down to sleep as one of the most hated, most vilified of men, everyone's hand set against you. You awaken to discover that men have discerned the greatness of their blundering, *and are behind you to a man!* You can do anything with this United States that your whim decrees. The nation will be as putty for your molding. And you will remold it as a wise and gracious statesman, so that the evils of the Seven Lean Years can never be repeated!" . . .

THUS the evening. And more of it. And more of it.

Understand me, I do not insert this episode here to prove that there is such a thing as accurate clairvoyance. I give the substance of these occurrences in my life as factors in the psychology of my subsequent conduct. That there are persons gifted with Second Sight, the most reliable reportings of history will attest. When Josephine was a little unknown Creole girl on a West Indian plantation, an aged negress repeatedly prophesied that before her life ended she would be queen of France. So outstanding was the "seeing" that history has made record of it. She journeyed to Paris and became in time the Empress of Napoleon. Of the celebrated case of Joan of Arc I need make no mention. People who knew Lincoln report that the martyred president knew, while a country lawyer in Illinois, that he would be called to head the nation through a time of vast turmoil, and later that his life would terminate from an assassin's bullet. Shakespeare wrote an immortal drama upon the greatest of the Roman emperors, based on naught but Second Sight. Certainly I have lived through enough in the past nine years to know the infallibility of Mrs. Leslie's utterings that night. She was not by any means a professional seer. Only a handful knew of her gifts. Yet without a slip-up, without an exception, every detail which she predicted that night which could have come true to the present *has* come true. What can anybody think? ☙ ☙

Of course the rationalists can cry, "Simple enough! You were told a lot of grandiose suggestions by your subconscious mind or by sympathetic friends, and having such ideas implanted in your subconscious you went forth and shaped your career to conform to them. Now you think it something to marvel at, that such conduct precipitated the events so 'prophesied'." That's what the rationalists can say, and perhaps it gratifies them to have thus explained the universe by their biological limitations. But why does none among them come forward and rationalize the predictions of that night which by no manner of expediency or self-motivated conduct could possibly have been controlled by me? The stock market crash in October for instance. Scores of people now living in New York will attest that I faithfully warned them what would happen in October. Why didn't I make it November, December, the spring of 1930? Then that little item of Hitler. He seemed then to stand no more chance of becoming German chancellor than I did. What of the item of the set of books in Putnam's? I went there next day and sure enough, there were the four volumes on the green baize table inside the

door of the bookstore. The set was *The Life of John Marshall* and the price tag upon it was $19.50. I acquired them, read them as a Bible, knew my fundamentals of Constitutionalism as most men know their ledgers. And forthwith I began to write "inspirationally" the great unfoldment of the Christian Commonwealth which thousands of people have since marveled at.

And what of the remaining prophecies of that night? In a year "or thereabout" The League for the Liberation had come into existence and 476 assemblies or study groups from Boston to Los Angeles were engaged in weekly delvings into the esoteric truths I was purveying. In two years "or thereabout" I found myself living in Washington, D. C., intimately acquainted and associating with some of the most gracious and enlightened men in our government, men who were making a trenchant examination of the great Jewish-Bolshevist plot to strike down our nation and who freely shared with me their most intimate findings. In three years "or thereabout" I was deep in the operations of The Silver Legion, which was presently to be attacked by the radicals in Congress—of which more presently.

There are some happenings in life that we cannot explain, that we cannot rationalize. We just *have* to accept them. And so it was with me. I write these matters as a history, not as one side of a debate in a controversy. In a manner of speaking I "knew in advance" most of what was due to happen here in the United States in and after 1929. And by the same token, I maintain I "know in advance" much of what is imminent for America to endure that has not yet transpired. But alas and alack, people as a mass are no more willing or ready to accredit this knowledge than they were in the matter of the stock market crash back in 1929. In bitter tears some of them came to me during 1930 and cried, "Oh if I'd only taken your advice! . . . but you know, I didn't take the slightest stock in this business of Second Sight." And so it goes. . . .

The stock market crashed of a day in October, just as the day came three years later when the jailed Austrian painter stood forth as chancellor of Germany. Helen and I worked assiduously throughout the balance of that year and on into 1930. I sold the screen rights of my novel *Drag* during this period for $11,500 and this money somewhat compensated for the injury which *Seven Minutes in Eternity* had unerringly done to my literary reputation. For sure enough, far and wide, people immediately put me down as "a Spiritualistic nut" who had gone chasing off into bogs of superstition. In February, Larry Giffen got me a contract making

a series of two-reel dramas for a movie company on Long Island. This project collapsed before it was begun. No Jewish film company anywhere in the country would distribute photoplays with my name upon them now. I was already beginning to be marked as a man who did not approve of the manner in which Jews were everywhere succeeding to a petty racial tyranny in my country. Mary was out of her job on *The American,* ostensibly for having aided me to get *Seven Minutes* published. Merle Crowell had gone out to Arizona "for his health." . . . But day unto day my mail was growing heavier. Why had I suddenly stopped writing for *The American*? Why had I not complied with the thousands of letters addressed to me, begging more light, more information, on my spiritual explorings? People wanted to *know*. Only those great orthodox institutions that fattened on human ignorance, and tried to capitalize on human error and heartbreak, were opposed to me.

One day I announced to Helen, "I'm not going to try to fight this editorial antagonism from the magazines any longer. After all, I'm not obliged to do it. The world is wide and this country is free. I've won all the honors in the fiction field for which any reasonable man could ask. If all these revelations have come to me, and people have shown how sincerely they want more enlightenment on what I may have been endowed to give them, it seems the proper thing to do, to cast all else overboard and make a career as an authority in this new science of eschatology. Pray and why not?"

"How do you propose to go about it?" my First Disciple asked.

"I've aways been a publisher. I know the publishing business, upside-down and through the middle. I think I'll found a publishing house of my own that makes a business of producing such literature."

On the 25th day of April, after my return from two heavily attended lectures—one at Dartmouth College and another in Boston, Mass.—the first number of a 48-page magazine, *The New Liberator,* appeared. I was its sponsor.

The Program was on! . . .

CHAPTER FIVE

THREE events of significance attended upon *The New Liberator's* appearance. My mother was suddenly stricken with an illness and Helen left New York to go to Springfield and care for her. Charlotte Koster, the little Danish girl who had been my secretary since returning to New York, took a better-paying job and Mary Joyce came to work in her stead. Last but not least, I met Margaret Christie. Of these three, more anon. . . . ¶ Mary Joyce was the 28-year-old daughter of a fellow publisher of esoteric books in Akron, Ohio. She had come to New York many years before as a director in The Little Theater movement, but with the Depression settling on the land she must needs turn her hand to a position more lucrative.

Margaret Christie—Maggie, as we came to know her—was a middle-aged English woman of strong metaphysical leanings who was engaged in the business of agent for authors, with offices in Madison Avenue. Maggie was a big-bodied, athletic, go-getting spinster. She came up to my apartment as a visitor with some friends one evening and her black eyes snapped with interest behind her *pince-nez* as she listened to my plans for conducting *The New Liberator.*

"You're taking too much upon yourself," she declared in the weeks that now followed. "You can't do all your mystical experimentings and writings and attend to the details devolving on a commercial publisher."

I had mentioned that with the instant approval and support which had greeted the magazine I wanted to bring out a weighty volume called *An End to Commandment.* Knowing that my real labors in this period were to be economic and political, I wanted to produce a compendium of mysticism that should treat with all that had been found out about it, or coded about it, in a constructive, hard-headed, comprehensive way. With this volume available, I could say to the inquirer, "Are you troubled in your spirit about this or that? Withdraw by yourself and read all that's in this book. You'll find your quandaries ended."

Maggie said to me, "Why don't you lock your apartment, get out of New York for a time, and make it your business to produce such a volume?"

I said, "How about the magazine?"

"I'll run the magazine."

"What?"

"You get out the material to fill it, month by month, in your retreat. I have offices here and credit with printers. I'll take over the business end of the project as trustee. At the end of the year, if the magazine is profitable, we'll divide any increment."

I gave this proposal the attention it deserved. But it wasn't the production of *An End to Commandment* which brought my acquiescence. It was the appearance of *Drag* on all the nation's screens. *Drag* was a *talking* picture —one of the first. The photoplay had not been running a week before Mary called me hurriedly. "There's a sheriff around here looking for you," she exclaimed, "with a warrant for your arrest!"

"*Arrest*? What for?"

"For selling mortgaged property . . . something of the sort."

"But I haven't sold any mortgaged property. There must be some mistake." ☙ ☙

"Well, you'd best get in touch with your lawyer at once."

My attorney in New York, ever since the days of The Pelley Press in West 8th Street, had been Conrad Milliken, with offices in the Bar Building in West 43rd Street. Conrad was more than a lawyer: he was also a friend. He was an esthetic, something of a mystic, with a white mane and profile like a Roman senator's. I went to him at once.

"It's Stone and Gilpin," he presently reported. "They've heard about *Drag's* being produced as a photoplay. They say you sold rights which you'd previously assigned to them."

"I did nothing of the sort. I assigned them the *stage* rights. Screen rights are something else, so recognized everywhere. That the play wasn't staged is none of my affair. The contract I assigned had to do with Frank Craven, not First National Pictures out in Hollywood."

"Sorry, old man. But the courts have ruled against you."

"Ruled against *me*? When?"

"Stage and screen rights were formerly separate—in that you're quite right. But with the coming-in of talking pictures a test case was tried in the State of California. The courts out there ruled that the distinction was ended. Thenceforth dramatic rights were 'spoken' rights, and that included the screen."

"What should I do?"

"You'd better rustle about ten thousand dollars and rustle it quick!"

My vitals took a somersault. "Ten thousand dollars? Where can I raise that?"

"I'm sure I don't know. But I can get you twenty-four hours' leeway.

Stone and Gilpin's lawyers mean to have their pound of flesh."
Bitter was the gall then, of those long-deferred notes. The manifest unfairness of it all, of compensating two men who had caused me one of the major financial losses of my life, corroded deep. Yet I had to get action. That the California courts had brought in their ruling between the time of my selling *Drag* to Warner Brothers and the date of its appearance as a finished photoplay, sliced no bacon. I jammed on my hat and went forth to seek my friends.
Few such hectic days have I ever experienced. I got a thousand dollars here, a thousand dollars there. Larry Giffen loaned me fifteen hundred. George Putnam, my publisher, later Amelia Earhart's husband, loaned me twenty-five hundred. With what cash I had in the bank at the moment, I completed the payment and took it to Conrad.
"How does it leave you?" he suggested.
"Broke!" I responded.
"How about your various California properties?"
"Don't you know that my bankers out there began blackjacking me the week that I published *Seven Minutes?* . . . Men who are fools enough to think that they die in the night and come back to life . . . to say nothing of suddenly developing 'oracles,' are not good business risks. At least so they decided. Scores of notes on property were all called at once. And what they didn't get, the Market Crash did."
"Humph . . . costing you a pretty penny, isn't it, to be an esoteric pioneer!" ☙ ☙
"It's practically cleaned me clean."
Conrad smiled a grim smile. He was duly sympathetic. "And yet I hear a lot of folks going around saying that you're taking up mysticism as a career because it's so profitable."
"It's cost me between fifty and a hundred thousand dollars to the moment. Likewise the loss of a twenty-five thousand dollar revenue every year as a writing man. If that's racketeering, yes I'm a racketeer."
"Do you think you can gain it back?"
"No, probably not."
"Is it worth it, old man?"
"If I didn't think it was worth it, I certainly wouldn't do it.'
I went over to Maggie. . . .
"If this magazine's going to come out again," I said, "I guess you'd better publish it."
We drew up a Trustee Agreement embodying the details. Stone and

Gilpin got their due reimbursement with full quota of interest for all their "inconvenience." . . .

I locked my apartment—or to be strictly truthful, put my goods in storage —and got out of New York.

CHAPTER SIX

MY MIND was troubled, though my heart knew tranquillity. Mentally I perceived that I was engaged as usual in going down, down, down, to the low arc in my Cycle. But performance had indicated that far-flung about me was a vast nation of people who eagerly desired what I had to give them richly. How could I service them? Could a single book do it? Day after day, night after night, as I labored upon it, living on the ill-spared bounty of my friends, I thought of the millions that were being squandered on worldly pursuits, silly foibles, things that *The American Magazine,* with its new Jewish motif, now touted so crassly. And here was I, sincerely sacrificing everything to give heart-hungry people such estimate as I could of the Eternal Verities as I saw them, and becoming a philosopher-pauper for my pains. True, Mrs. Leslie and some others had declared that this would happen. But it all seemed so needless. I didn't want money to support a court of satellites, to live in a mansion, to drive a fleet of motor cars. All I wished for was sufficient funds to buy the necessities to keep me alive—and publish shelves of books! Week unto week, month after month, Mary Joyce worked for practically nothing on my manuscripts. Due to the pressure of the economic circumstance, Helen could not rejoin me. After the interim in Springfield, she went down to friends in Boston. She lived with them in Boston till the following September. All of her life savings had been in those many California properties, which I had seen seized when the bankers started after me. I had that sorrow also. Helen had trusted my every business judgment. Everything had been healthy, happy, and prosperous, till I issued *Seven Minutes.* That was apparently the Sin Unforgivable. I had brought a gigantic message of hope and inspiration to half a million people. And for it I was penalized.

Not that I pitied myself in the slightest. It was part of the Plan, and again I was living it. But the world contained great agencies of ignorance,

greed, personified selfishness. The message I brought it, assailed these where they lived. I must be kept down, impoverished, treated as no-account, else much that I might write would unsettle their security. Ministers and pastors who should have had more sense, men whose mission it was to preach the certainty of After-life, were mounting their pulpits Sunday after Sunday and declaring me pariah, a man whose findings were striking at the very roots of "existing institutions"—these institutions, of course, being naught but their jobs. Jews were becoming exercised because my "oracle" was telling on them, what they were about in this land of their sanctuary from old-world persecution.

Men like Spencer Lewis, head of the Amorc Rosicrucians in California, were giving their students to understand that the reason for this reversal in my literary career was that I was "an excommunicated Rosicrucian." After the publication of *Seven Minutes* I had stopped Spencer Lewis from capitalizing on it and on me . . . implying to many prospects that I was one of his pupils, that my awakening in Altadena had arrived through his guidance, that if they took his course they would duplicate the happening. ☙ ☙

George Putnam got me in his office and flayed me verbally for sacrificing one of the most profitable literary careers in New York for my "mystical nonsense." He felt that I had bilked him by writing *Golden Rubbish* and getting him to publish it.

Mary was hunting a position, but she, like myself, was known for the "foolishness" of printing *Seven Minutes.* We were birds of a feather and should be properly penalized. Even the publishers of *The American* gave it out that the response to *Seven Minutes* had not been extraordinary. Then, regardless of the fact that copies of the magazine containing the article were selling for as high as $5 apiece and that the issue had sold clean, they immediately turned about and contradicted themselves by saying, "Publishing that article by Pelley was the one great mistake of which this firm was guilty—had we responded to the interest aroused by *Seven Minutes,* we might have been forced to turn *The American* into a metaphysical periodical, or at any rate boost Pelley all out of proportion to what he deserves. After all, this country holds other writers quite as good as Pelley. We can't let him get so popular that our readers *demand* him." Those identical statements were made in my hearing at a luncheon given in East 67th Street one noontime, by the Managing Editor of *The American* personally. Later he wanted to punch me in the nose for connecting Mary's name or discharge with the article.

Yes, such things bothered. They were growing-pains in my newer development. I was building my *real* career, though I could scarcely see it, and such griefs and upsets were the living materials. So autumn slipped away into winter. And 1930 was cancelled from the calendar. I sent consignments of manuscript up to Maggie faithfully. For several months a-running, finished copies came back. But when Christmas arrived and the December issue had been mysteriously delayed, I hopped on the train and went over to New York. Maggie rebuked me:

"Go back to your knitting and let *me* do the worrying. Our printer's been involved in the crash of a bank here. The magazine's delayed but it will come out presently."

I took her word for it, and went back to Pennsylvania.

But January came and with it no issue. This time I borrowed a friend's automobile, and money for gas, and drove across New Jersey. Mary Joyce went with me. It was a problem with her, how much longer she could stick. . . .

"I'm sorry, Bill," said Maggie finally. "The magazine's no-go!"

"You mean it's not paying?"

"I haven't been able to meet expenses since the day I took it over. I've kept the truth from you so you could do your book. How's the book coming?"

"Never mind the book. Is the publication a bust?" My soul was now sickened by thought of those subscribers. . . .

"There's exactly ten dollars in the bank. You've had eighty-five dollars since you've been over in Pennsylvania. That's ninety-five you get, and I get the losses—because I'll write you a cheque for the ten dollars and call the thing quits."

MARY JOYCE followed me downstairs and we stood on the curbing. It was a murky winter's night. A cutting zero wind came sweeping up the Avenue. The windows about us were furry with hoarfrost. I fingered the ten dollars—one bank note in my pocket.

"Well," I said to Joyce, "I guess it's the end of metaphysical 'exploring.' And yet . . . I feel funny. Something's not *right!*"

"What makes you think so?"

I shook my head, befuddled. I could not accredit that a magazine which had started off so brilliantly had flunked in five months.

My 'oracle' was trying to tell me something, but I angrily shut my ears!

"Well," sighed Mary Joyce sadly, "we've both got to live."

"I'll give you this bank note . . . when I've taken out the gas that gets me back to Pennsylvania."
"I don't want that bank note. I wouldn't take it on a bet."
The chill wind cut through us. Joyce had her fur collar up against one cheek. . . .
"Hey, Bill!" cried a voice.
Both of us turned.
Approaching up the sidewalk was a fellow we both knew. He greeted us effusively. "When did you folks get into town? Where are you staying? Will you be here overnight? Suppose we have dinner somewhere together, then we'll go up to my flat. I've finished a new play. You've both got to hear it."
Listening to amateur playwrights read plays in our two states of mind was a trifle insufferable. Yet the dinner talk lured us. Dan was a rusty-complexioned fellow, New Yorker to his fingertips, whom both of us had met at a mystical gathering. He, like Mrs. Leslie, had the gift of Second Sight. . . .
We went out to Fifth Avenue and took a bus northward. A few minutes later we were cheering our spirits with a cozy dinner in a 58th Street restaurant. Bit by bit he got my story. He looked at me queerly and thereafter was thoughtful. As I have remarked elsewhere in this narrative, the smallest incidents sometimes throw the biggest switches.
We listened to his play, a lusty grate-fire warming us. I tried to determine what it was about, but my thoughts were in my future. . . . What was I to do? I had wrecked myself as a writer. I was deeply in debt to Griffen and Putnam. Sooner or later those subscribers would be fretful. And a bitter wintry drive in an open motorcar was facing me before another day's dawning.
It was past ten o'clock when Dan glanced at me through squinted eyes and asked, "Have you ever had a woman named Rose in your affairs?"
"*Rose?*" I echoed, jolted. "Some three years ago I knew a printer-lady in Pasadena whose first name was Rose. She printed a magazine which I published in Hollywood."
"Humph! . . . how did you make out with her?"
"We ended in a fuss . . . when I closed my affairs with my partners in the project. She'd expected me to buy her shop and I'd refused to go through with the deal. She was considerably put out."
"You've got another 'Rose' in your affairs this moment. Listen to this description!" . . .

He began to describe a woman. I glanced at Mary Joyce, and she at me. He was portraying Maggie Christie, even to the way she did her hair. Dan didn't know Margaret—not to our knowledge.

I said, "What about this woman?"

"You're as concerned in her affairs—or she is in yours—as the 'Rose' you knew out west. And yet there's a condition . . . something about it . . . which you should investigate. She's taking an improper advantage of you somehow. Did the other 'Rose' do that?"

"I always thought so. She sued me for damages when the proposed deal between us couldn't be consummated because of my changed finances."

"You look into the affairs of the person I've described. . . . Now let's play a hand of bridge."

Joyce and I found separate friends to take us in that night. I recall that it was Friday—in that the next day was Saturday and because of the half-day Maggie did her work at home. At nine o'clock I called her to meet me at the office. She showed up at eleven.

Olive Robbins kept Maggie's office open. Olive was an elderly woman who had first joined in with my affairs when I engaged her as advance agent for a New England lecture tour. Olive was stout and fifty, assertive and capable. She wore her gray hair bobbed and two feet of gold chain, dropped down one cheek, kept her glasses from breakage by attachment to her bosom. Olive had formerly worked in my uptown apartment helping with the magazine. When I gave it over to Margaret to manage, Olive had succeeded to its practical business details.

"Oh, you're back!" exclaimed Olive as I entered next morning. "So you stayed in town all night?"

"I've got to see Margaret on something important. I'm not at all satisfied at shutting down the project."

"And I'll say you shouldn't be!"

"What do you mean?"

When Olive waxed wroth, she flounced. She likewise had trouble clearing her throat. She did both things now.

"What *I* want to know is, what's become of all the money that I've been depositing as magazine receipts? This paper shouldn't *stop*. It's like killing a lusty baby."

"Lusty!" I echoed. "Maggie said last night that everything was bust!"

¶ "I'd like to know *why*."

"How much money have you taken in, since I've been over in Pennsylvania?"

"Between two and three thousand dollars! I've saved duplicate deposit slips of every dollar taken in." She yanked open a drawer and slapped down before me a generous sheaf of slips.

"And how much have you spent?"

"Practically not a cent—that is, on the paper. You got eighty-five dollars and I've had my salary. What Margaret's done with the rest I don't know. I don't keep her books."

Two hours later, Margaret strode in. I closed her office door so Olive could not hear. That much was due Margaret.

Two minutes' questioning brought out the truth. . . .

Caught in the vortex of a cruel dilemma herself—principally due to the Market Crash—she had tried to carry on in an uncomplaining heroism. Fearing to worry me with exactly how things stood, she had expected to pull out by commissions on stories. But the markets were closing. Things were going whack. The international Jews were preparing America for Communism and we were mere gnats in that greater diablerie.

Taken solely as a project and stood on its own feet, the magazine had been so profitable that Maggie had leaned on it—too hard—to carry her over the cruel hiatus. She had not exactly lied to me. She had simply neglected to tell the whole truth. "Well," she said tearfully, "what are you going to do to me? I just couldn't handle it, with everything at loggerheads."

Nothing is more pathetic than a woman who has tried to the utmost of her ability to succeed in a business project and faced inhuman reversals.

"Do to you? I'm not going to do anything to you. Just give me back the mailing list and our trust agreement, that's all. We'll work it out *somehow*."

I knew she had done her best. At times in my own life I had done my best and it had not been enough. . . . If I have any criticism for Margaret, it is for not being frank. But she thought the thoughts that came to her. And so do you and I. . . .

At three o'clock the following Monday afternoon Olive came over from a call in Forty-Second Street. "I've found some furnished offices that we can sublet. They're over in Salmon Tower."

"Good! You and Mary Joyce and I will form a small corporation. Heroic dilemmas require heroic remedies. We'll call it Galahad Press. This mail I've been examining convinces me that there are people enough about this nation, interested in what we're doing, so they'll put up some capital to start the Press off. We'll issue a hundred shares of Common Stock,

dividing it three ways between you and Mary Joyce and myself. If we can get authority from the State of New York to do it, we'll raise our needed funds by selling Preferred Stock. Just enough to make up Maggie's losses and get the paper floated."

We found a lawyer who would draw the papers. I borrowed forty dollars from Olive and had some folders printed. The three of us licked stamps. Ten days later our addressees responded. The sum of $730 was put in the bank from stock sales and contributions by the fifteenth of February. ¶ *The New Liberator* reappeared.

It ran without a stop till I made it a Weekly. . . .

CHAPTER SEVEN

THESE details are important. . . .

Four years later, in Asheville, North Carolina, I was to be held up before a hillbilly jury and the reports flashed all over the country that I had been a stock-promoting shyster for having taken these entirely legitimate methods of treating with a desperate situation. "What money of your *own* did you put into Galahad Press?" roared the prosecuting attorney at me. The good will of the magazine, the fecundities of the subscription-list, the writing of it entire—that it might be a magazine at all—was made subservient to the fact that I had done what a thousand corporation organizers do every week in the year: floated my project and procured its working capital by sales of preferred stock. It was this same Galahad Press, and what they did to it when they got me in a corner, that nearly railroaded me to State's Prison. In my prospectus, however, I had told my readers frankly, just why I wanted the money, and what I expected to do with it. Stock subscriptions came in. Subscriptions to the revitalized magazine poured in. Something like $13,000 we had taken in when we closed our books that year. The three of us drew only our living expenses out of the receipts. Everything else went into printed matter. The magazine had printed but 2,500 copies under Maggie's management. Under my own promotion it jumped to 5,000, then 7,500, then 10,000 copies. And these copies, forsooth, were paid for in full—at 35 cents a copy.

One Sunday morning, Bob Collier, publisher of *Mind Magazine,* asked me to address his esoteric group at a hall in the upper Forties. The place was

packed and we had a good meeting. After it was over, the usual congratulators crowded about the platform. One man put forth his hand and as I glanced into his face I thought that my eyes were playing me tricks. "You remember me?" he smiled.

How could I forget him?

It was Sumner Vinton!

"It's a long long way back to that night on Asama Volcano," I suggested.

¶ "Indeed it is," said he. "I want to talk to you some more about this thing. It's altogether . . . tremendous!"

"Where have you been keeping yourself these past ten years?"

"I've been right here in New York—working on The Golden Rule Foundation and living over in Rosedale, N. J."

"Come up and lunch with me tomorrow," I begged. "We'll talk over our experiences . . . in the Far East and elsewhere."

The next noon Sumner came.

"THIS thing's got to be carried to the masses in the proper way," he said. "It's not enough to publish a magazine. You've got hold of a doctrine that would revolutionize man's thinking."

I shrugged my shoulders. "I've got just one pair of hands and two women helpers," I replied. "I know it's not enough, just to publish a magazine. Already my mail is heavy with letters—from Boston to California—telling me that the writers are recognizing I know a lot more than I'm publishing every month and querying why some arrangement can't be arrived at whereby the deeper phases of what my Oracle's telling me are conveyed to those people prepared to receive it."

"Give me all the literature you've published or written to date," Sumner begged. "I've spent my life as an orthodox minister, or as a missionary to the heathen. Now for the first time, in my fifty-odd years, at last I've got hold of something spiritual that I can get my teeth in. I want it to help others as it's already helped me."

I gave Sumner what he wanted and he presently withdrew. Before he reappeared at the office the following week, a letter came from Washington, D. C. ❧ ❧

"This doctrine of Spiritual Liberation that you're preaching," it read, "is one of the epochal things of the century. People have got to *get* it. Why can't you prepare a series of weekly monographs or scripts . . . perhaps a complete program for a meeting . . . and give it to those who might care to get groups of neighbors or friends around them, to receive the

profounder phases of the Message? I, for one, would be cheerfully willing to defray my share of the expense."

Sumner came back and I showed him the letter. I showed him two dozen letters just like it. "That's exactly what I mean," he agreed when he read them.

"But if I started that sort of thing, it might grow out of hand. At the most it would need an executive to watch it, concerned with little else."

"I'd be willing to give part time to it—at least till it got started."

It promised to be an expedient that would gain me audiences by the hundred for the more practical message I had to preach later. Mrs. Leslie's prophecy, that within a year or thereabout I would be at the head of a nation-wide spiritual movement, scarcely entered my head when I finally mailed announcements to my magazine's reader-list that I would do the following—

I would prepare 52 programs for 52 weekly meetings, and no more, giving *The Liberation Doctrine* in its essence. Once each week I would mail out one of these to each of those volunteer leaders who would agree to get a group together and read them the Message. I asked no remuneration for these, excepting that a silver offering should be taken to pay any costs of hall, publicity, and the printing and mailing of the Scripts themselves. If there was money left over from those offerings, the leader could keep half of it and remit us the other half to finance more promotion. I had a economic battle was ahead. It was not my place to found any cult, or purpose in holding the number down to 52. I knew the greater politico-project any new religion. Who was I, that I should presume to project a religion? On the week preceding the 7th of May, I mailed out 30 of these mimeographed programs. Sumner came up three days a week and attended to the mail.

On Sunday, May 7th, these first thirty meetings were held in thirty different cities throughout the United States. We had to have a name for this union of instructors thus linked with headquarters.

Someone suggested *The League for the Liberation*. . . .

Thus spontaneously, without the slightest conniving on my part, indeed with somewhat of an annoyance on my own part that I must hold myself to preparing such programs, The League for the Liberation got under way.

¶ But a month had not passed ere I discerned I had started something.

The thirty first-assemblies became a hundred. Then they magically doubled. Sumner resigned from the Golden Rule Foundation. Soon hundreds . . . *thousands* . . . were demanding copies of these weekly

scripts which had been heard from the platform, to take to their homes and peruse at their leisure. Preparation by mimeograph was quite too elemental. They must be printed—like the magazine—as a regular weekly job. A printer in Wilkesbarre, Pennsylvania, volunteered to do the work at cost. "I've dabbled in about every esoteric doctrine that's ever been promoted," he told me, one rainy Sunday noontime in my office. "I've got more meat out of *one* of the *Liberation Scripts* than in six months of study in other mystical orders. I recently paid dues of twelve dollars in one of the Rosicrucian Fellowships, and it hasn't given me as much as I've found in your weekly programs at thirty-five cents!"

So, unwittingly, still slightly annoyed by the interruption to our periodical publishing, we began the weekly issuing of the so-called Pink Scripts.

What was the epitome of the *program* on which I was engaged? My Oracle had put it thus—

> "This is a complete exposition of what might be called a new world order, religiously, politically, sociologically, building by a new terminology that which is the essence of a new society, not conceived by a few men after their own whims but as conceived by those who are planning that new society from the loftier dimensions of Time and Space. . . .
>
> "It encompasses a *World Program,* beginning with new standards upon which religious thinking is based as being the starting-point for the application of a new set of ethical and sociological principles, both practical and academic. . . .
>
> "This grand work has not been conceived in a day but is the outgrowth of a union of Master Minds who have been many years conceiving and discarding from the fruits of both experience and observation what is both wanted and needed in an entirely new social program for the races. This concept is twofold in principle: Making man to understand his *destiny* in both Mortality and Immortality, for essentially there is but *one life,* having these two phases. . . . "

So those first few months of the nefarious Depression grew upon us, and yet The League for the Liberation made progress. How to account for it? Something like 476 of those great Sunday assemblies, sometimes comprising from five hundred to a thousand people each, and these modest home study classes, was our total enrollment as that course drew toward its close. Assuredly, people are not drawn thus to hear things said which

have already been said, or to come out to meetings week after week, in ever-increasing numbers, unless they are finding nourishment for their souls. ☙ ☙

And yet I entertained no illusions as to what I was about. Again and again I was appealed to, that I should crystallize my findings into a church. Whenever the idea appeared, I squelched it. A church would mean competition with a hundred other sects, creeds, and denominations. I was not engaged in the business of adding to the numbers of churches already in existence. I was merely striving to "sandblast Christianity," to bring back as I could the pristine Christian message.

I knew that over the generations the Jews had notoriously subverted the Christian message. Things were put into the mouths of theologians to say, that Christ Himself had not once entertained. Christ had not designated the Jews as God's Chosen People. He had scouted the idea that the Father played any favorites. Instead, He had stood forth and upbraided the Jews "as of the Synagogue of Satan" Well-meaning Christians had always assumed that in the instance He was merely indicting the members of the Sanhedrin. They had never been told that the Sanhedrin in ancient times *was* Jewry; it was the high religious and secular council that directed Jews' affairs throughout the known earth. If such supreme officials were of a "synagogue of Satan," then what of the followers over whom they ruled?

This problem of Jewry was troubling me exceedingly. My own esoteric talents, developing keener and keener as practice made them facile, coupled with contacts I was making with officials in government, were giving me an insight into the machinations of this people that was becoming slightly devastating. What to do about it? I tried to bide my time. Meanwhile I had a magazine to write and publish, scripts to prepare, letters to answer, a business to conduct requiring more and more money. Scores of our assemblies were returning us nothing. We were not in the work for money. We made it a rule never to hold back the printed matter because a person could not pay for it. Did a person or a group desire it enough to ask for it? Forthwith they got it.

Far into the night we frequently labored, to seek our beds with tired backs and brains. For the benefit of those who have fallen for the libel that I was commercializing spirituality in this period, let me say that my sworn income tax reports to Uncle Sam will show that over the past ten years I have scarcely had as much money to use, derived from my activities, as is commonly paid to an efficient private secretary. Often I

had royalty checks come in, from past books and stories. I threw these into the general League fund. Once, just before the infamous bank holiday of 1933, I had $500 sent me for two stories I had written under a *nom de plume* for one of the New York magazines. The money went to settle the weekly payroll at Headquarters.

Such was the strain I was under—writing, publishing, lecturing, financing . . . making one dollar do the work of six, that more and more people might hear the Message, when a chap named MacGrath came in for an interview. "Mac" had previously been active in Dr. Holmes' Church of Divine Science at the old Waldorf. But Dr. Holmes had died, and his group had broken up.

Mac was a lovable and audacious Irishman, with earnest blue eyes and typical Celtic grit. Of an age with myself, he had knocked about the world and knew it like his pocket. Out in the Philippines, he said, certain esoteric experiences had come to him that had turned his thinking to aggressive metaphysics. What did he want in The League for the Liberation? He had heard that I was handicapped for funds to keep pace with the League's prodigious growth. He would make a job of soliciting affluent New Yorkers and bringing to our efforts the wherewithal they commanded. We reached an arrangement and Mac began his canvassing. . . .

CHAPTER EIGHT

I FELT uneasily that I had not bargained for all the complications that were now turned my way. . . .

Vaguely I recalled that over in Greece some three thousand years ago there had been a metaphysician called Pythagoras. I was not aware that although times have altered and this is the United States of America in the twentieth century, human nature is human nature and three thousand years is a mere twinkling in eternity. And human nature does not change in a twinkling. The other day I got hold of a book on Pythagoras and my heart bled for the man, and what he and his wife experienced on the Island of Crotona. . . . You can get a good sketch of the man in Elbert Hubbard's *Little Journeys.* I won't burden my pages with his story when Hubbard has written the story of The League for the Liberation in the Crotona setting, so much better. . . .

Of time for myself I found that I had none. Of moneys for personal

recreation there was ever the haunting self-indictment that poor people were sending me money they could ill-afford, to pay for the scripts because the contents meant so much to them. This money was merely left me in trust. I took my bare living expenses, I say, and scarcely a penny besides. Most of my creative writing was done after full days of answering correspondence, attending to the business details of an expanding organization, receiving anteroomfuls of callers, finding cash for printers and postage bills, smoothing the ruffled tempers of workers. Yet now I was not working for myself. I had no mind to defect. A score of times a day my throat and my heart were very full as I beheld before my eyes what this Liberation Doctrine was doing to remake people's lives. Indeed, and why not? It had first remade my own. . . .

Mac whistled in and out of the office most of that hot summer which ensued. My heart was wrung for the man, footsore and weary with many rebuffs, keeping eternally at a thankless job. Now and then someone received him. He would bring in moderate sums of money for us to use . . . ten, fifty, hundred dollar donations. . . . We put it immediately into more printed matter. We turned over from forty to fifty thousand dollars' worth of scripts and publications that first year, of which a fifth to a quarter went out to deserving and appreciative folk for absolutely nothing. And yet I doubt very much if an examination of our books would have disclosed more than a seventy-five dollar bank balance on any Saturday night throughout the period. I had long-since forgiven Maggie her misjudgments and filled the subscriptions for which she got the money. Again, why not? I was in this thing for profit of the soul, not profit of the pocketbook. That wasn't the sort of thing that gave me gray hair. . . .

¶ Mac came in one night and his blue eyes were shining. Down on my desk he whacked a sheaf of securities. I picked them up. Twelve thousand dollars' worth. "Good Lord!" I gasped.

"A wreath for Little Arthur," he observed.

"Who gave you those?"

"Mrs. Ogden."

"Marie Ogden?"

"Right!" He had a crisp way of saying "Right." . . .

I said, "Is she interested in us *that* much? When she first came in here she thought Christian mysticism was a lot of twaddle. She even made fun of the friend she accompanied, while the friend bought some magazines." ☙ ☙

"Maybe. But she's got this thing and got it hard. There's twelve to

fourteen grand in prime real estate bonds. You're to hypothecate them and use the money in the work. All she wants is a job . . . not for the money, because she's giving it instead of taking it. She wants to help."

I was rather weak. I counted them again. There *was* fourteen thousand dollars' worth. In my first bedazzlement I had counted incorrectly. Arthur was compensated for weeks of fruitless tenacity all in a lump. His manner was sincere enough. And yet it was jaunty. As for me, . . . my heart knew a great thanksgiving. Fourteen thousand dollars coming to us just then was a regal donation in its printing fecundities. After the strain of the recent months I let go. . . . God was being good to me, I thought. ❧ ❧

Next day, next week, next month, I wasn't so sure. I took those bonds to bank after bank, to person after person. It was all summed up by the comment of a little Jewish broker who ran his thumb disdainfully through the packet and remarked, "No goot, . . . ve get that stuff . . . all ve vant of it . . . for five cents on the tollar before this Depression is over!" He tossed them back at me. A fairly affluent broker-friend went out of his way to get me a bid on them. "I can get you fifty-five," he reported. I turned it down.

I didn't think it would be fair to Mrs. Ogden.

"Better lock them away in the safe," I told Mary Joyce. Mrs. Ogden had followed up her gift with the suggestion that she would appreciate stock in Galahad Press for the bonds. Something warned me to be careful. If I had to issue her fourteen thousand dollars' worth of stock for the bonds, and they sold for fifty-five or less, I would be giving away the stock for about fifty cents on the dollar. Would that be fair to the other stockholders who were cheerfully paying par that the work might progress?

Strange to relate, at Sumner's arrangement our magazine was being printed by a firm down on 23rd Street whose representative in our office was a bland and affable Scotsman. We owed him quite a bill. He had heard the talk in our quarters about a generous block of bonds floating about the premises. He wanted to know why we didn't hypothecate them and reduce the account. He asked if he could bring his partner up to talk to me. They had a proposition to make me. Of course I would see his partner. ❧ ❧

His partner came.

He was a diminutive little Jew with fallen arches and a greasy bald head. He got down to business.

"You got it a goot racket here," was the way he opened the conference.

"I'm sorry," I contradicted, "it's not a racket."
Tolerantly he smiled, a smile that purported to convey that all was understood between gentlemen of sense. "Ve been vatching you," he went on. "It's printed matter you need to put this thing over *big*. Vell, ve got it the presses und you got it the piziness. Vot say ve go partners? Ve giff you all the printed matter you need und vack up the profits!"
"I'm sorry," I repeated, when I got his full drift. "I don't think it'd be exactly the thing for a Christian institution like this, to be mortgaged fifty percent to a Hebrew printing firm."
The man's affability vanished in a twinkling. Typical Jewish rage at frustration by a Gentile suffused his countenance. "Okay," he said finally when he saw it was no go. "You got it bonds here. Plenty bonds. No more magazines until you pay up."
"Well," I said to Joyce, Olive, Mac, and Sumner, when he had departed, "that's that!" After a time I added, "I'm going to Washington!"
Mary Joyce asked, "What for?"
"We've got some fine people, some affluent people, in our assembly down in Washington. Maybe if I go down there and talk with a few of them, I can explain our true situation and get the needed help."
It was enough explanation for the office at the moment. In my heart I knew what I knew. I had to go to Washington because presently I was going to move there. It was a trifling matter of Destiny. . . .
So I went to Washington. I went to Washington half a dozen times. I met our Washington chaplain, who had a Liberation assembly at the Capital, of nearly four hundred people. I met several personages whom I had first encountered that epochal day years before when I went forth to check up on the Jewish Conspiracy of which my friends in the Press Club had told me. "I think I'm going to connect with what we need," I reported to my associates.
"Oh, don't let the printing bill worry you," I was told. "It's all been fixed in your absence."
"Fixed! Fixed how?"
"We put up Mrs. Ogden's bonds with the printing firm as surety that we'll square the account in full."
"What do you m-mean, you put them up?"
"Why, the printing salesman was up here and said that they'd print next month's magazine for us okay if we'd merely let them hold the bonds as security."
"You've let them g-go . . . out of our possession?"

"What difference does it make? We intend to pay the bill, don't we?"
I sat down weakly. "Did you get a receipt for them? Or anything in writing to that effect?"
"N-No, we didn't think it necessary."
Don't try to tell me anything about *Jews!* In my absence, my womenfolk had been played upon, the bonds had been surrendered, and the one who got them had scuttled down the stairs without stopping long enough to write out a receipt.
Next day they were being offered for sale at about twenty-nine cents on the dollar and I had to take legal action to stop their sale, on the honest avowal that they had not been ours to surrender! . . .

CHAPTER NINE

MY WORK in Manhattan was drawing to a close. In my heart I knew it. On the 15th of October I signed the lease for two floors of a commodious little building on Fifteenth Street at the nation's capital. It was altogether fitting and proper that in the next phase of the work which I contemplated, the base of my operations should be the District of Columbia.
¶ Joyce and Mac were not so situated that they could follow me to Washington. But Olive accompanied me. And so did Sumner. About this time also, my little 90-lb. mother decided that she had lived long enough up in Springfield alone, and being weak from her recent illness, begged to be allowed to join me in my new location. Helen came with her.
A big manufacturer in Buffalo came to my financial assistance, through the intercession of some supporters at the Capital. We did not stop the Jew printer from selling Mrs. Ogden's bonds, but we did stop him from selling them for fifty dollars to a racial compatriot and telling us we still owed him the balance. As for Mrs. Ogden, the files of the Western Union Telegraph Company—and her own conscience—will reveal that one week in the June which followed, while I was lecturing in Atlanta, Georgia, she sent me a three-dollar night-wire advising me that in all Christian charity she was forgiving me the debt. The loss of the bonds was not chargeable to me. She had her own plans for metaphysical explorings. She likewise wrote my associates in Washington to the same effect.

Those things, of course, are everyone's experiences.
The trouble with my line of activity was, however, that by the nature of the circumstances I dwelt in a residence of transparent materials.
Those are the episodes of which enemies make capital. . . .
And I had them—enemies. Their numbers were becoming legion. And the day was to come when they would make plenty out of the incident of Marie Ogden's bonds.

EVERY little while it was the program, back there in the early days of the League for the Liberation, for ponderous gentlemen to arise and address the public on the absorbing topic as to how this man Pelley first dreamed a vivid dream in California, then put it into effect in a secular way, and from the combination of both happenings, assumed he had a destiny. All of it was pathological—according to the ponderous gentlemen who have explanations of all such matters neatly sorted at their fingertips. Subconscious Mind, of course, was responsible. I found out how to smile when I learned of such pronouncements. They were *so* superficial.
¶ They were superficial, I say, because in all my explorings I have never come across a biological explanation as to how or why Subconscious Mind is capable of going ahead and opening doors in worldly affairs for a man strictly in line with what his Oracle has told him.
I leave it to the savants to figure it out. All I know is, that it happened.
¶ For instance, take Julia.
Her real name wasn't Julia, but I must call her something. She came to me, a total stranger, at a party one night and asked me for a job. She was a proofreader, she said. Did I need a proofreader? That afternoon her employers had sacked her. Without the slightest reason why I should do so, I gave the woman employment.
One day that winter I wrote something for the magazine that had to do with the Encroaching Conspiracy. The printer sent over the proofs. In early evening I pawed my desk for them. Julia must have taken them home with her. So, as some silly urge made me want them that evening, I called at Julia's flat on the way to my hotel. The outside night was raw. Julia's fire burned cheerily. She was sprawled on the divan before the blaze, my proofs strewn around her.
"Boss," she said curiously as I lingered to thaw myself, "did you ever know that I was one of the secretaries on the Belgian Relief Commission during the war?"
I certainly had not. I asked her what about it.

"Oh not much. But it's curious how I got my job with you. I see here in your article that you've made a dark reference to what went on in Belgium." ✍ ✍

"I got my information from Washington secret service men."

And you had Bigger Information right in your own office."

"And what must I do, to get you to enlighten me?"

"Send the boy out for a quart of good Sautern. Also, you might pay for it. I'm only a little girl trying to get along."

The white wine was sent for, in double-quick time.

I went away from Julia's flat, that night, given to deep cogitations. I had bought wine for many women in my time, as any man will who gets about the world. But never had a bottle of Sautern procured me quite as much information as that epochal bottle which had loosened Julia's lips. John Hamill's book, *The Strange Career of Mr. Hoover* had not then been published. To my growing understanding of what the Great Conspiracy was all about, had been added a loquacious account of the colossal machinations of the Jew, Emile Francqui, director of the Societe Generale and member of the Brussels Relief Committee. DeWouters, Louis Franck, DeCoppee, DeMerode, Hulse, Heinemann . . . I had a confused but complete picture *of how the United States had fed Germany through this infamous Relief Commission while at the same time our boys were dying by the tens of thousands before the German guns.*

Or take Mrs. Lane. "Mrs. Lane" is not her name, for I cannot embarrass the lady, who still resides in Washington. I had met Mrs. Lane when I had my studio in West Tenth Street. Mrs. Lane had formerly been a Secret Service woman attached to the Bureau of Immigration. Being a conscientious sort of woman, her patriotism had become outraged by the high-handed slipping of masses of Jews into the nation in utter defiance of quotas and regulations. Jewish influence in Washington had made itself felt increasingly ever since the days of Theodore Roosevelt "and his dear friend, Mr. Loeb." Mrs. Lane had first been indignant at the way in which Jews were everywhere taking control of things, then outraged, then bellicose. For trying to make the Jewish bloc in the Immigration Department obey the laws, she had found herself sacked from her job. But during her long tenure before the sacking, she had made herself familiar with every ramification of the Jewish encroachment. Probably no woman in Washington was better posted on the country's great preparation for Bolshevism, than Mrs. Lane. Suddenly, and for no apparent reason that I was aware of then, she opened her mind and her library to

me, not to mention her archives. I began, through her supervision, to read every line that had been penned or published, up to that time, on Judah's plans for the destruction of Christian institutions. This woman's home was a salon of a sort for most of the outstanding Christian men in the government who had likewise familiarized themselves with all phases of the Plot. Without hesitation she brought me in contact with them.

¶ I met the man who wrote most of the Ford articles in *The Dearborn Independent,* through Mrs. Lane. One Sunday afternoon I sat in his home in Manhattan from one o'clock in the afternoon till nearly midnight, heard his version of his discoveries in the military intelligence corps during the war, and inspected documentary proofs of much that he told me. ❧ ❧

One rainy afternoon when I chanced to be in New York, Mrs. Lane phoned me. "Can you come down to Greenwich Village?" she asked. "I want you to meet a certain congressman who's better posted on this Jew thing than any other man on Capitol Hill. He happens to be in town today and will be at my hotel at four. It's important that you know him."

At five minutes to four I sauntered into the lobby of that nondescript hotel, shaking my hat and umbrella. A stocky, square-shouldered, elderly man rode up the elevator with me. We alighted together and went down the same corridor. "We seem to be looking for the same room," he laughed presently. We found the room and entered. Mrs. Lane shut the door. "Mr. Pelley," she said, "shake hands with Congressman Louis T. McFadden!"

McFadden and I laid off our wet raincoats. Thereupon he sat in a straight-backed chair, tilted against that bedroom wall, feet wound in its rungs, while I sank further and further onto the small of my back in a rocking-chair opposite. From four o'clock until middle evening we discussed what Jews were planning to do to our nation. "Mac" was Chairman of the all-powerful Finance Committee in the Congress at the time. It was the beginning of an intimate friendship that lasted till his death.

¶ Later in Washington I renewed my contact. I grew to love this kindly, sincere, purposeful gentleman who held one of the most important posts in the nation, and certainly one which brought him into closest contact with predatory Jewry in its money ramifications. And his courtesies to me were unending. In the five years that followed, the doors to his private office were not closed to me once. I gave him the benefit of all data coming into my possession that might in any way help him in the historical speeches he was destined to make in Congress on the Jewish question—speeches that

thus became unassailable government archives. He reciprocated to such an extent that sometimes I knew days and weeks ahead what deep international moves were afoot, in both this nation and abroad. Later I was privileged to meet Mrs. McFadden. The men who came and went on business with McFadden were not palm-greasers or crossers. They were men of character, coming to appraise at its true value the Roosevelt-Russocrat program that was even then preparing.

When Mac began those doughty speeches in the House which were to effect his crucifixion politically at the hands of conniving Jews, it was my publications and my organization in North Carolina that emblazoned them to the nation and distributed them in booklet form. On one number and printing alone, we issued 50,000 copies.

OR TAKE Doctor Gordon. . . .

One day Mrs. Lane called me on the phone from Washington. "Be in the Fort Lee ferry house at five o'clock," she said. "There's a British gentleman who'll pick you up there in his car and take you out to his house. He's heard about what you're doing and wants to know you."

"How shall I recognize him?"

"You'll find out the rest when you've kept the appointment."

I went up in the subway, crossed the North River and sauntered out into the cab shed. Such a blind steer from Mrs. Lane meant important developments. At once I was hailed by an elderly man with bald head and white Vandyke beard. I got into his car beside him and we headed toward northern New Jersey.

Doctor Gordon had, as a younger man, so his story ran, been attached to the British medical corps in India. When the Boer war broke out there were men in the British government who were at a loss to fathom the strange and pernicious bias in the American Congress against England's side in the struggle. Dr. Gordon, with eleven others, had been chosen to investigate this unusual condition—because of his cleverness as a diagnostician. Having established the fact that the American Guggenheims were behind the Boer War in order to achieve Jewish control of South African gold mines, Dr. Gordon was kept on the job in a hundred parts of the world in the quarter-century which followed, running down this Gargantuan conspiracy against Christian governments, Christian interests, and Christian ethics. His was a rich, and a ripe, experience. It was 2:30 in the morning before he drove me back to the ferry house.

ONE day, after Dr. Gordon had become so interwoven with my daily affairs that he was sharing my New York offices, he came to me and said, "Catch up your hat and come along. I'm going to meet a man whom you ought to know."

Through the Hudson Tubes we rode, across to Jersey City and Newark. Into the offices of a great New Jersey corporation in a Newark skyscraper, we finally made our way.

"Mr. Pelley," said my British friend, "shake hands with Mr. Sharp."

A tall and nonchalant southern gentleman offered me his handclasp. He had a shock of iron-gray hair above a lean Henry Clay face. And before ten minutes of the mysterious conference between Dr. Gordon and this new acquaintance had passed, I was pricking up my ears at the value of the contact.

This gentleman was the Hon. Robert Sharp, former directing general of Uncle Sam's Secret Service, State Department Division. He had first come to the attention of official Washington as head postal inspector under William Howard Taft. His rise had been steady. He knew the ramifications of world conspiracy from a background of irrefutable authority. In the closing months of the Coolidge administration he had resigned, to take a unique position as head of the anti-Communist work which his corporation was forced to do among its employes. Jews were everywhere at work among these employes, getting them organized for the forthcoming revolution in the United States.

A contact and acquaintanceship second only to Dr. Gordon's in its influence on my affairs, was begun that afternoon. Later I was to sit in this man's private office with United States senators and railroad presidents and hear reports on the machinations of international Jewish bankers that had cost the United States as much as a quarter-million dollars to secure.

¶ Every little while some incredulous person arises in the country and challenges the veracity or accuracy of some of the statements which I make against Judah in Silver Legion literature. Little do they suspect the long hours with eminent and accomplished men . . . who have given their lives to this sort of thing . . . that I have put in, equipping myself with the utmost details of the knowledge supplied me by them. I had the cream of the espionage brains of the country to draw upon. What was it that the Oracle had said back there in the 53rd Street flat and later corroborated by Mrs. Leslie? . . ."—in two years or thereabout, you'll find yourself sitting with the heads of government *behind* the government at Washington!"

I required no flash of illumination to explain now what "behind" the government meant.
I was "behind" it with a vengeance. . . .

CHAPTER TEN

BUT what to do about it? For what purpose could all this be happening to me? In what other light could I look at it but that I was being intrusted with a Bright Responsibility? Such men as I have named were not taking me into the deepest reservoirs of their confidence without a purpose lying somewhere behind it. If I were to take a position of aggressive leadership in this nation, as the Oracle had declared, I positively had to possess the knowledge . . . verily the wisdom . . . which these doughty and substantial men had to give me. No, I did not come by my equipment for the ugly but significant job that I have performed, by listening at keyholes or making scrapbooks of newspaper clippings.
It is no bombast on my part to say that I knew the entire Roosevelt-Russocrat plot nearly five years before it came to its later pernicious head, . . . knew it in every detail . . . saw its dark flowering step by step as my espionage friends had possessed themselves of the plans for it out of Manhattan Jewish banking houses.
The man who must function at the head of this nation must have *knowledge*. He must know every marplot in the nation and abroad, where he fits in, just who employs him and in what he specializes. And that knowledge was mine—richly—for the taking and using.
No matter what the personal differences are, which have arisen from time to time between these authorities and myself as the work progressed, I have accepted their educating friendships as a sacrosanct responsibility. I am on this job, denying myself to do this work, carrying it forward in the face of the ugliest menacings which life can call up, because there is a *camaraderie* of honor which I must acknowledge and be true to. Let the Jews and the Reds call me names as they will. I think that I know their schemings. . . .
I learned them from experts!
MacGrath and Mary Joyce were carrying on in our New York offices, with Dr. Gordon to counsel them. We still had too many connections and inter-

ests in the Manhattan district to warrant closing our first quarters at once. One evening I returned to New York to have Joyce say to me—

¶ "Do you remember Mrs. Terry who helped us finance the last printing of *Seven Minutes*. She's got a summer home down in North Carolina . . . somewhere near Asheville. And she's invited you and Mac and me down to visit her over the week-end. The place is Black Mountain."

"That's nice," said I. "But I can't go away on week-end trips with all this writing work demanding my attention."

"I rather think you'll go when you hear what she's proposed. She's going to present you with land enough to put up a college!"

"*What!*"

"Three hundred acres of it. She had me up to her Park Avenue apartment a few nights ago. I told her about the difficulty we were having in finding teachers properly equipped to give out instruction. 'What Mr. Pelley should do,' she suggested, 'is to come down to a nice quiet little mountain city in the South, like Asheville, and establish a school which people can attend from all over America.' And she added, 'I've got three hundred acres of land on Black Mountain that I'll give him, providing he can finance the buildings.'"

"Oh," I sighed lamely. "Providing I can finance the buildings!"

Joyce sank down in the chair beside my desk. "Well, you haven't heard all of it. I took the proposal up with Dr. Gordon, and he thinks he knows some men in Detroit who'd put up the money for the buildings. Don't you see . . . it'd give us a Headquarters background . . . a stability . . . for all we're working so hard here, to achieve."

WAS this too on the cards?

Frankly, I was puzzled. My Oracle . . . and Mrs. Leslie . . . had mentioned nothing about a school in North Carolina.

Dr. Gordon came in and we talked it over. I concluded to accept Mrs. Terry's invitation, travel down to Black Mountain, and view the tendered acres. So upon Mrs. Terry's largess, the following Saturday found the group of us speeding southward.

The following day I had my first view of Asheville.

I say I was confused. I felt that something tremendous was due to break just around the corner of the months. I knew that all the tremendous facts that I was learning in Washington were not for selfish keeping—sooner or later I must put them to use. But coming down to Asheville!

. . . in western North Carolina, thus far off the beaten track! . . . what was the import of *that*?

Back in New York, Dr. Gordon said to me, "Let's go to Detroit. I've always wanted to see an esoteric school of merit started in this nation. If we can find the men who'll back it, suppose we accept that it's the thing we should do."

Mrs. Terry was a gracious hostess. For three days I wandered over the North Carolina mountain country, tramped over the land which she was offering to give me, and tried to get psychometric reaction to State and people. ☙ ☙

My Oracle was silent.

Nevertheless, I *did* want to stabilize the work which I was doing. What better method for stabilizing it could I embrace, than founding some institution, modest at the start, that should nationally "teach the teachers"?

¶ North Carolina, or the city of Asheville, did not count in it particularly. Any locality, north, south, east, or west, would have answered as well. Here was Mrs. Terry offering me three hundred acres of spectacular mountain real estate, however, "far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife." Maybe isolation in southern mountain-country was precisely the locale in which the instruction should flower.

I went back to New York.

"I know some men in Detroit," volunteered Dr. Gordon, "who might help in such a project."

Forthwith he told me the story of the ill-fated Union League of Michigan. It had been a sort of civic betterment organization made up of the State's patriotic businessmen. One of its objectives had been the deportation of undesirable aliens flooding the State and causing racial animosities as early as 1925. Communistic Jews were assailing the motor industries of Detroit, laying the foundations for precisely the industrial troubles that matured under John L. Lewis and his CIO crowd in 1937. The League had sponsored the celebrated but short-lived Alien Deportation Act. In other words, the patriotic businessmen of Detroit, as far back as 1925, had attempted to clean the subversive aliens out of the State of Michigan. But like tens of thousands of similarly well-intentioned people, they had bethought them to fight Communism without taking account of Jews. It was "religious intolerance," it was "racial persecution," to consider ejecting the "aliens" from Michigan. A decade later it would have been given another name—"un-American activity," and Senate and House Committees, financed with generous public appropriations, would have "probed"

the Union League, in defense of the constitutional and civil rights of such Jews and aliens. Anyhow, the rabbis and big Yiddish businessmen moved up their heavy ordnance and laid down a barrage on the Union League with its insufferable Deportation Act. League and Act were made splintered debris before an incredulous Detroit public knew what the fuss was all about. A new building under construction for the League in the heart of downtown Detroit, was abandoned before the walls could be completed around its steel-work. "There are men in Detroit who are plenty wrathy over the way that the Jews obstructed their drastic settlement of the alien problem," concluded Gordon. "Maybe if we tackled the same issue in a more adroit national manner, we might get the funds that the Union League never got the chance to use."

At three o'clock of a subsequent Sunday afternoon, high in skyscraper offices of a firm of Detroit attorneys, we held our first conference with ten of Detroit's leading citizens. Incidentally I might add, to quiet the curious, that Henry Ford was not one of them and that I have never once had contact with Henry Ford in any way, shape, manner, or form.

We discussed the Jewish question till twilight necessitated the turning on of lights. Nothing specific was agreed upon, *then!*

Three weeks later, however, having gone down again to Asheville to supervise a survey of the Terry property, I was called to the telephone.

One of those Detroiters at our conference had been sufficiently impressed with the project I had outlined, that he had come south with his wife to investigate the material aspects of the Asheville situation. Would I have dinner with himself and lady at the Grove Park Inn—Asheville's swankiest hostelry—the purpose thereof to be financial underwriting.

I came away from the Grove Park Inn that night verily believing in a Santa Claus.

"Be in Detroit on the fifteenth," this man said at eleven o'clock, "and I'll arrange to finance you up to fifty thousand dollars!"

This man had the money. He meant business. He and his wife had made the thousand-mile trip to look into the Asheville end of the proposition. As a matter of fact he had already been two days in Asheville, investigating, before he gave me that ring on the phone. Moreover, he put his offer in writing.

With these entirely *bona fide* tangibles in hand, I sent announcements throughout the whole nation, describing what the next move in the expansion of the Liberation work was to be.

Such was the background for my going to Asheville. . . .

"We don't want this man here. We never invited him here. He chose North Carolina as a field for his slick schemes and descended upon us to bunco us," orated an Asheville attorney—of course in the pay of Jews —to an Asheville hillbilly jury some four years later when the Yiddishers were spending money like the proverbial water to have me sent to Raleigh Penitentiary to silence my pen.

All of it was as baseless as the equally unsupportable charge that I "made a racket" out of the Jewish Question after Adolf Hitler had shown me how to do it.

I went to Asheville on the direct solicitation of others, just as I have set it down. ❧ ❧

As for Hitler's showing me how to "make a racket" out of "persecuting the poor Jews," I was actively at work agitating and exposing the Jewish menace before Hitler was even known throughout his own Fatherland.

But the anti-defamation mill of the Jews must have its grist. I was an unspeakable wretch on principle and whatever I said was used against me. ¶ So the Asheville Sequence opened—and has remained in running form to this moment.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE CLOUD no bigger than a man's hand! . . . Who could deny that in my own case it was growing, thickening, taking on height and volume?

It was in a series of weekly reports on Washington economics which I called Confidential Bulletins, that I made my first public utterance on the Jewish Question. ¶ I had begun to issue these bulletins for two reasons. I had businessmen supporters about the nation who sensed that I knew far more about the Depression, which was growing upon the country, than I was printing in either the Scripts or *The New Liberator*. They wanted the facts. They would pay for the facts. And this was well. I needed someone to pay for the facts. The work was taking such increasing amounts of money that I was well-nigh beggared. I had been under the necessity of keeping my mother near me at the Hamilton Hotel. I was doing much traveling. My daughter Adelaide had graduated from the New York high school and I wanted to do more for her financially than I was able to do on moneys contributed strictly

for the League. So I had reasoned to myself, "Why can't I fatten my personal exchequer by issuing a weekly letter service on economics to these business clients? It's my own personal information and there's nothing particularly spiritual or religious about it."

So the Confidential Bulletins began to go forth . . . and as eagerly be bought up!

Strangely enough, at that time it was not my purpose to crusade against the Jews. I knew the crusading was due to start eventually, but I seemed to be keeping the Spiritual, Political and Economic phases of my activities in separate compartments of my thinking. Up to this point the Spiritual projections of my activities had commanded my time exclusively. I wanted to get the fifty-two Liberation Scripts published before I gave thought to anything else. With that background to build against, I could put the same intensity of construction into the Political and Economic projections. When I got around to doing them, I wanted to do them well. So the first Confidential Bulletins, sent out to a selected list of businessmen, were simply by-products of my Washington contacts at the moment. At once I was destined to learn, however, that I was nearer to the political and economic crusading than I supposed. It was an incident precipitated by the head of the B'nai B'rith Order in Washington that brought this vigorously and graphically to my attention. But before that happened, some radical alterations were of moment in the personnel of my helpers. —Joyce and MacGrath dropped out of the picture. And Sumner Vinton gave way to Mont Hardwick and Don Kellogg. . . .

FROM time to time over the past five years, malicious or non-understanding people have called attention to what they take to be significant lapses in my character, that I do not keep my associates, that men and women come and go in the projects which I establish, that I "use a man, wring him dry, and throw him out" with a soulless indifference that surpasses any commercial corporation. And they cite the circumstance of Vinton in proof.

Sumner had come to me when I scarcely knew what my program of public enlightenment was to be. With a feverish sincerity and an uncanny ability for inspiring men and women in the field—to form groups to study this Liberation Doctrine—he had nursed the League from thirty groups on May 7, 1931, to over four hundred by the next year's April. He did this, not from any hope of financial remuneration or making a prestige to be known of men, but because the Liberation precepts had altered his whole

life. He beheld what the new philosophy, which I had recorded at the behest of my Oracle, was doing in the way of remaking the lives and spiritual fortunes of others. From first to last he was in the work, as I was in the work, purely for the good which he could accomplish in his fellowman. Never did a human being work harder or more conscientiously to attain to his objectives. But behold what happened . . . without the slightest disparagement or criticism of an outstanding Christian nobleman:

¶ The League was reaching the point where the sheer detail involved demanded executives to handle it. Mails were piling up day upon day. Teachers and group leaders in the field were commencing to write me blistering letters, that we were slipshod at Headquarters, that letters got no attention, that goods did not arrive *as* and *when* they were ordered, that some assemblies numbering hundreds of people were meeting together without any word or Scripts from us to serve them. At first I put down this sort of thing to the disgruntlement of the eccentric or finicky folk who will attach themselves to any gesture in public teaching. Sumner assured me that all was well, that he was doing his best to satisfy all chaplains, that we had simply grown too fast to keep up with the demands upon us considering the limited resources at our command. I felt a responsibility toward him in this. I did not mix in his end of the work. I stayed in my office on the third floor while he conducted the detail of the League amid an ocean of desks and workers on the second floor. In a way he had been responsible for the League's growth. I wrote correspondents apologetic letters as I could, and hoped for the best. Then a man named MacDonald applied for a position.

This MacDonald had previously been at Unity headquarters in Kansas City. He was a lean-faced Scotchman, quick-thinking, quick-spoken. He was one of those rare executives who entered a situation and appraised it correctly and trenchantly at a glance. Exactly the man to help out Sumner, I believed. I gave him the job and he worked at it four days.

"It's no use, Chief," he said to me at a private conference which he had asked for, on the fifth afternoon. "I'm moving along."

"What do you mean, you're moving along?"

"I can't work in such a bedlam and satisfy myself, much less do the thing which my salary demands. I don't think you've got the faintest idea, sitting up here in this third-floor office and doing the writing required by this Movement, of what goes on daily on the floor underneath you. I'm not peddling tales. I'm merely explaining why I'm not sticking with you." ❧ ❧

"What goes on?" I faltered.
"Your man Vinton is literally and figuratively working himself into his grave. He's two or three weeks behind on hundreds of his letters due to nothing but the press of the duties upon him. He's built a sort of Frankenstein, and sitting up here until two in the morning—as he does—won't control it. But that's not all. He's so horribly overworked that he hasn't time to see to the shipments of either literature or scripts. They're just being shoveled out on consignment to anyone who wants them. What worries me is, how you're going to square yourself with Uncle Sam when it comes time to make out your income tax reports."
This was alarming information. I answered MacDonald—
"Granted what you say is true . . . don't you see, that's why I've asked you to come in and help."
"I can't help," said MacDonald. "That League in a way is Vinton's personal creation. He's got a thousand and one strings leading into his hands by the very nature of what he's done already. Now that it's grown beyond the capacity of any one executive, it turns about and runs *him* . . . and delegating work to others seems to stack up to him as an indictment that he's failed."

HERE was a man who had joined me in the excess of his Christian zeal when the project was a foundling. Literally and figuratively, he had given it his heart's blood. He had his eccentricities and likes and dislikes, but who among us has not? He had been faithful to a fault, loyal to a whole bushel basket of faults. And I was confronted by the prospect of having to go to him and say: "Sumner, you've got to relinquish some of this detail and let others do it for the sake of our obligations to the people in the field, or I've got to make a change here that'll look like gross ingratitude." I said to MacDonald, "Hold your horses and let me investigate. I'll transfer Vinton for a few days to New York."
"Nope, I'm gone," MacDonald answered. He had made up his mind. He was that type of man.
I did transfer Vinton to New York, however, and went downstairs personally to study my own concern.
I stood aghast at what I learned.
The demands of Sumner's Gargantuan mail were appalling enough, but truly the worst trouble was not Vinton's at all. I soon estimated that eight to ten thousand dollars' worth of literature and scripts had been moved out to two or three hundred chaplains without an entry's having

gone upon the books. This was inexcusable. I sought out the bookkeeper and we had a good fight.

"It needs *three* bookkeepers to do this work!" the man stormed. "I'm a month behind, myself."

"But why has material gone out without accounting?"

"Because our people must have goods to keep their meetings going. You're trying to do a sixty thousand dollar annual business on about ten thousand dollars' worth of capital. And that's mostly tied up in Scripts upon the shelves. This project needs fifty thousand dollars to carry it properly, to equip it and staff it. We decided to ship the goods out to the chaplains as depots, let them sell what they could and return what they didn't. It's a Christian movement, isn't it? Most of them are honest." ☙ ☙

"But how do we know where we stand financially?"

"We don't, but what of it? We're not working for dividends, we're working for men's souls . . . saving them spiritually."

I retorted, "Try and tell that to the State Corporation authorities at Albany, New York. Or the Bureau of Federal Revenue."

Our accountant shrugged his shoulders. "If you've got the money to pay two other competent bookkeepers, go ahead and hire 'em. Our people are kicking at the cost of the Lessons as it is."

Heroic measures were necessary, all down the line. On the 15th of March tax reports must be in. I let the man out and brought in an accountant.

"Tell me what the inventory is, being carried on the books," I said.

"About six hundred and eighty dollars," she subsequently reported.

My vitals somersaulted. "It's nearer ten thousand actually!" I cried. "There's more than six hundred and eighty dollars' worth in the stockroom right at this moment!"

"It means you've got to query every chaplain and assembly leader in the field. Then, apparently, you must rewrite your books from the date they supply you. Or have the goods shipped back."

I ordered an immediate poll of the goods in chaplains' hands. It came time for our annual stockholders' meeting and I hastened to New York.

"Here's the condition of things," I told Joyce and Olive. "Here's the list of our *actual* inventory and here's the story told by our books. Until the books are rewritten and made accurate for Uncle Sam, we've got to put down a notation somewhere that'll show our true condition."

Joyce and Olive looked through my figures. Olive had the pardonable feminine reaction . . . if I'd only let *her* continue to run things, few

of such troubles would have happened. Sumner, a year later, took much the same position.

"There's just one thing to do," I finally said. "We'll incorporate this data showing our correct condition, on the reports of our Directors. At least they'll be of record. Then no one can say that we're dealing in chicane if our books are examined in their present condition."

It seemed the logical alternative and the women agreed to it. The true report went into our stock books. I mention such details, that my reader may understand clearly what later took place in North Carolina when prison loomed before me through the machinations of my enemies. . . .

The minutes were signed. Then I interviewed Sumner. "I'm sorry," I told him with a real pain in my heart, "but you'd better let several people do the work which you've been doing. It's nothing against *you*! The League's just too big for one man to look after it."

But Sumner took it hard. No, he wouldn't stay if that was the way I felt about it, after all the hours he'd put in and the personal sacrifices he'd been called upon to make.

It was one of those vital but poignant situations which a man in my place had to stand up to, that the work might go forward. I offered him a place in the forthcoming college down in North Carolina. No, he wasn't interested in a college job in North Carolina. He had given his whole heart and soul to The League for the Liberation and now I was thanklessly taking it away from him—so he implied. How could I make him see that there is a point where even a man, or men, who have launched a project, are required to relinquish to dozens, hundreds, thousands of others, when it grows beyond their capacities? Sumner took it hard, I say. In fact, the insinuations began to grow . . . from the quite necessary expedients I was taking to put the gesture on a better business basis . . . that I was going commercial, that I was capitalizing on the League's success, to make a lot of money from the original spiritual premise. How could I make people understand, that unless these commodity principles were installed with vigor, everything we stood for was confronted with a fold-up? I made the wise decision. They might think what they might. I had to do the thing which necessity demanded.

So Sumner went home to New Jersey to grieve within his spirit. And I earned the first frail defamations of being a man who didn't play fair, who took on men, wrung them dry, and cast them out. Yet if I had the same thing to live over again, I could not have done differently. Had Sumner been the man to stride along with me, dispatch all work by an

abstract supervision, do nothing himself but watch the wheels turn on the machine he had constructed, he would have been with me today. And I would arise and call him blessed. He saw the League, however, as something whose detail he must watch every instant. He must know the contents of every letter that came in, and all but respond to it personally. Those who understudied him were disintegrating agents . . . at least so he felt. I performed a surgical operation as lovingly as I could.
And it broke the man's heart! . . . ah me!

THE NEXT thing that happened was the vanishing of Joyce.
She had not wanted to leave New York—for either Washington or Asheville. She had the lease of her apartment, her friends and her interests there. So presently the day came when I ran up to Manhattan to suggest the closing of those premises. It was nonsensical to have three offices, one in New York, another at the Capital, another in the South.
"Where's Joyce?" I asked the man in charge.
"Gone," he said simply.
"Gone where?"
"Search me. Gone! I think she's married Mac."
"MacGrath! I thought he was married."
"He'd got him a divorce. Anyhow, they're gone!"
Later I discovered that this was not quite true. Joyce had gone home to visit her parents and MacGrath had accompanied her. Not expecting me in New York she had not informed me. She came back ultimately and I reached an arrangement with her that she should make her living thenceforth maintaining a depot for our books in Manhattan. She kept it up three months from a store in Sutton Place. When I returned from a long Spring lecture-tour, I found it closed. Joyce and Mac had married indeed. They had left New York permanently and left no address where mail should be sent. It was not at all desertion. It was the closing of a sequence. They too had played their parts. For almost two years I had not the slightest inkling of the newly-weds' whereabouts. And it caused me no end of distress in that Joyce had taken her Common Stock with her. When later Olive Robbins also went her way, I was indeed in a plight. How could I conduct the corporation, hold stockholders' and directors' meetings with a quorum present as our By-Laws required, when I personally held but one-third of the stock? I consulted attorneys.
"There's only one thing to do, if you can't locate either woman . . . that's to liquidate The Press. Certainly you need a more appropriate

corporation to handle the project developing in the South. A printing concern can't conduct a college."

"But I've got stockholders in The Press. How can I liquidate?"

"You can pay up The Press's outstanding obligations and then redeem the stock at one hundred and ten."

"With what?"

"You say you've considered taking out a charter in North Carolina for The Foundation for Christian Economics. Well, such a corporation could buy the Press's assets. Buy them in lieu of taking its funds and paying Galahad Press's bills. Besides, you've never had personal control of The Press, and that's a dangerous position for you to be in. Suppose some of your Jewish adversaries get to either of those women and buy up their holdings? Or get to them both and thus control your company? They could wreck all you've done and cast you out besides."

I gave this proposal the attention it merited. I had fifty thousand dollars in prospect for the project in Asheville. I no longer required The Press as a company. It was awkward, anyhow, to conduct a New York State corporation down in North Carolina.

"Fair enough!" I said finally. "We'll liquidate The Press."

CHAPTER TWELVE

ASHEVILLE turned up one relationship of note. In that little southern city, already made famous by the author, O. Henry, was a printing concern—the Biltmore Press. ¶ The Biltmore Press had recently been acquired by a young married couple—Robert and Gladys Williams—whom I had met upon the occasion of my second visit to the place. Robert and Gladys were fine types of earnest and energetic young married people, aspiring to win trade for their shop and get ahead. They were then sympathetic toward my project and I showed them the letter from my "backer" in Detroit.

"We'll be glad," said "Bob" Williams, "to supply you with whatever printing you may need."

I took Liberation Scripts to them, quantities of which were sadly needed in Washington to supply the national Assemblies. Presently I took the current issue of *The New Liberator*.

Within a year, our business with the Biltmore Press was running between ten and twenty thousand dollars. For nearly seven years, almost without a break, the Biltmore Press was the printing firm for all Liberation publications. Bob confided to me once, that our business practically put the Williams' project on its feet. More about that later. . . .

It was a wonderful three weeks which I lived that fraught March, getting details arranged for the beginning of our school. Over in the town of Black Mountain was a group of empty buildings and classrooms occupied in summer by the Y. M. C. A. I found that I might lease these buildings for nine months in each year. Thus my school could start at once. The property which Mrs. Terry was putting at our disposal ran alongside on the west. I could construct new buildings on it and when they were completed, transfer the school from one plant to the other. So far and wide throughout the Liberation Assemblies of the nation had gone the announcement that commencing in July I would personally take students for a trial summer session.

So Bob and Gladys Williams, on the strength of what they knew about my Movement—Gladys having been a reader of our magazine for months before Asheville was ever thought of—extended me a three thousand dollar printing credit. The current issue of *The New Liberator* was transferred to their shop.

Up in Washington throughout these developments two earnest young men, brothers-in-law, had come down from Buffalo to take Sumner Vinton's place. Young Hardwicke—"Mont" as he was called—was another serious-minded fellow who likewise had an Oracle that worked. His brother-in-law, Don Kellogg, was an adept circulation man, having handled the distribution of the McFadden Publications throughout northern New York State. Mont was a clean-cut, capable business executive who had been in the advertising business in Hartford, Conn., and later with a mining concern in Ontario. His brother-in-law was a golden-headed boy with such a striking resemblance to Colonel Charles Lindbergh that he frequently attracted crowds on the street. Mont Hardwicke walked into Sumner Vinton's place in Washington and installed system and efficiency in a matter of days. Executive after executive was acquired and drilled and directed. Don took the circulation of *The New Liberator* and started performing miracles. I had suddenly acquired two helpers that could not have been more apt had I molded them to order.

Over a hundred prospective students were enrolled for our new college in something like ten days. . . .

THUS it was that Mont Hardwicke one afternoon in the Washington offices answered a phone-call that was decidedly mysterious. If he would come over to a certain street address, he would learn much of interest to his employer and stockholders. Mont got his hat.

It was the Washington headquarters of the order B'nai B'rith.

There are thousands of people in America who believe that B'nai B'rith is merely a Hebrew fraternal organization, like the Y. M. C. A. among Gentiles. Thus it is implied by all Jews themselves. But men and women in the inner councils of the federal Secret Service had long-since advised us that B'nai B'rith was quite something else. They claimed that in practice it was a nation-wide espionage organization for the Jews as a race, more efficiently organized than the national Secret Service, with representatives in every city, town, and hamlet to watch out for the slightest agitation against Jewish machinations, or individual protest at what is being done by Judah, and to squelch it with ruthlessness.

Mont reported that he was passed through an anteroom of hawk-eyed young Hebrews and into a semi-circular chamber where a man sat at a desk. Before him was a pile of our Scripts and Confidential Bulletins. His greeting was curt.

"We know all about what Mr. Pelley's up to," was his opening pronouncement, tapping his knuckle on the literature before him. "Who does he think he is, that he's going to get away with it?"

"I don't get you," parried Hardwicke.

"Fellers that write this sort of thing," was the insolent declaration, "don't live so long. It's about time he knew it."

"What do you mean, don't live so long?"

"Well . . . sometimes they fall 'by accident' in front of traffic . . . sometimes they're standing on subway platforms when trains come in, and something happens to 'em . . . sometimes they eat things that ain't so good—" ☙ ☙

"See here!" cried Mont. "Have you brought me over here to threaten Mr. Pelley's life?"

"Who's threatening?" sing-songed the Jew with a characteristic gesture of his hands. "It ain't threatening to tell you things you don't know."

The supreme arrogance, the cocksureness, the assumption of racial power and security, angered my associate. Yet he contrived to ask: "Well, what about it?"

"He should watch his step! It ain't healthy, you should know, to write things against Jews."

"Oh no? And who do you Jews think *you* are, that you can stop Pelley from writing the truth if he happens to take the notion?"
"We got it ways to stop him. If he goes on writing things against us, we'll smash him . . . you'll see!"
"Got it all sort o' sewed up in your own mind, haven't you?" snarled Hardwicke, in whom courage was not lacking.
"We got it ourselves to protect, and Pelley or nobody else ain't gonna say things that stirs us up trouble!"
"Then why don't you folks stop doing things that make it necessary for Pelley to write as he does, at all?"
"That's our business."
"Yes, and it's Pelley's business what he writes. This is free America, and Pelley's a native American. There's still such a thing as the Constitution, and freedom of speech, and of the press—"
"I'm only *telling* you. Make sure you tell your boss." And the Hebrew arose, indicating the 'conference' was at an end.
Mont went forth and crossed directly to the offices of our attorney. There he immediately made a statement of the conversation and swore to it, for future evidence in case I was attacked.
But ten thousand Jews who had been watching me uneasily ever since that day in Salmon Tower when my printer had propositioned me "to go partners" and I had refused him, were now certain that I meant them no good. They knew whom I traveled with. Their spies had seen me going in and out of such offices as Louis McFadden's. They beheld me in company with Gentile Secret Service men. In my Scripts I had made pointed references to Dark and Sinister Forces that between 1929 and 1939 were going to seize hold of, and strangle, America under an effluvia of evil. They contrived to subscribe for the Confidential Bulletins and know therefrom that my information about them was exhaustive and irrefutable. ✠ ✠
From that moment forward, I was a marked man in this country. I was daring to challenge the powers that had decided in their own conclaves to smash Christianity and free institutions. It was an age-old contest in which they were engaged, and now they imagined they were nearing its consummation. ✠ ✠
"Fiddlesticks!" I said to Hardwicke, on coming up from Asheville and learning of the interview.
"What do you mean, fiddlesticks?"
"If they want to kill me, that's splendid," I told him. "You see, I'm

not afraid of death because I know it can't hurt me. I'm leaving for Detroit tonight to get that backing. The College is going forward and all the Jews in hell can't halt it!" . . .

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

DOCTOR GORDON accompanied me. Down in North Carolina I had incorporated The Foundation for Christian Economics. This was a non-profit taking educational institution, fully authorized to conduct such an enterprise as I hoped Galahad College might become. The Young Men's Christian Association authorities had drawn up the papers for the taking over of their buildings. Students from all quarters of the nation had sent in their applications for enrollment. After the publicity that I had gained in over four hundred Liberation Assemblies, the news that I would personally lecture at this school every day throughout that first summer, had been sufficient to attract them. Again I ask, was not all this activity, this growth and this interest, a strange circumstance if out there in California I had merely "dreamed a dream"? . . .

¶ In due course of transportation, Doctor Gordon and I reached Detroit. We registered at our hotel and I called our benefactor at his home. "I'll tell him when he comes in," the maid responded. And we sat ourselves to wait. ☙ ☙

We waited till midnight. Surely the maid had forgotten her promise. We waited the better part of the following forenoon. Then I called again.

¶ "Meet me at the bank at eleven o'clock," our Detroit man directed.

"What's wrong?" asked Gordon.

"I don't know," I said worriedly. "But he didn't sound enthusiastic."

We went over to the bank. Our man appeared. As he entered through the revolving doors, I took a firm grip on my courage. He had all the aspects of not having slept for a week. Across at the wicket he said to the teller, "Joe, query upstairs and have them tell me what my bank balance is."

The teller worked his mechanical pencil and the figures came back. He wrote them on a slip and passed it out, face downwards. "Take it without me looking at it," the Detroiter said to Gordon, who was standing nearest to him. "Whatever it is, I'll give you a tenth of it."

Gordon looked at the slip.

The figures were $818.39. . . . Our man drew a ragged sigh. "Upon my honor," he said huskily, "that's every penny I've got in the world. In the three weeks since I visited Asheville, I've . . . been . . . cleaned clean." ❧ ❧

If the Doctor's face was grim, my face was chalky.

"It happened just a few days after I got home," went on our friend. "A Jew-crowd pulled a coup on our company and froze us all out. Now they're 'reorganizing' and I'm not a part of it. I've lost the increment of thirty years of labor. When I sat with Pelley in Asheville I was worth half a million dollars. Now all I've got, upon my sacred honor, is that $818 and the homestead property where I live—that's in my wife's name." ¶ I got myself readjusted. . . . Those things happen in life. . . . It's all a part of the spiritual adventure. . . .

"I'm sorry you men, had the trip up here for nothing. Truth to tell, I was so engrossed in my own affairs, trying to salvage what I could from the wreck, that I forgot you were coming or I'd have stopped you. Anyhow, I'll give you a hundred dollars out of that money. It'll cover your expenses." ❧ ❧

"You keep it," I said to Doctor Gordon out on the sidewalk. "You probably need it more than I do!" I was not reflecting on Doctor Gordon. I saw by his face that such disappointment was grievous. Besides, my thoughts were in Asheville, on the poignant confidence which Bob and Gladys Williams had taken in my statements, in the credits they had allowed me and the goods they had delivered, which they could by no means afford if money did not come promptly. Also I was thinking of those hundred students that were due to arrive the first of July. I said that I expected to start a school in Asheville. If I could not locate another backer quickly—and the probabilities were that I could not—this defection left me in a major shell-hole. How could I get out?

But I had not gone through thirty years of grim business experience to let such disappointment floor me. "Doctor," said I, riding home on the Pullman that night, "maybe this let-down is all for the best. We need money to start that school and repair our own finances. Let's you and I spend the time between now and July going out on a lecture-tour."

He was immediately interested. "Where?" he responded.

"There's not a city in the nation that I couldn't go into, put out our advertising, and draw a good crowd. People by the thousands have come to our Assemblies. I've never appeared at any of them, because if I went

to one I'd have to go to them all. Now we'll make definite public appearances to finance our school."

By the time we reached New York, we had the trip planned . . . to open in Cleveland as soon as I could arrange it, move up to Detroit, go on to Chicago and down to St. Louis. We had heavy Assemblies in all those cities. ❧ ❧

For the time being I did not announce our changed plans in Asheville. I stayed down there long enough to get out the copy for the current issue of the magazine, paid the Williamses what I could on account, and arranged for what local buildings I could get, because the expensive Y. M. C. A. premises were now out of the question.

"Never mind," Helen told me. "You did the best you could. Maybe you'll encounter another backer on your tour."

The night before I left Asheville—to open the speakings in Cleveland the following Monday night—I got another jolt. A letter was delivered to me from Mrs. Terry.

"I find that I made a blunder," she informed me, "in thinking I could give you that land for your school. There's something about my estate, my attorneys inform me, that renders such a gift impossible."

Poor little Mrs. Terry. I knew that she was "a good friend" of Lillian Wald, Jewish directress of the so-called Williams Street Settlement, endowed by Jacob Schiff in his will. And Jake, as my reader remembers, was the man who shook his fist at the White House and made those Communistic remarks when he found that he could not intimidate William Howard Taft. Mrs. Terry, I later learned, did not at all approve of my "attacks on the Jews" . . . the Jews were nice people . . . it wasn't Christlike to do that sort of thing. . . .

THEREFORE at Carnegie Hall in Cleveland, Ohio, I opened our speaking tour on April twenty-fourth. Dr. Gordon was delayed in joining me and I had to carry the first six lectures alone. It was only an incident. The crowds packed Carnegie Hall night after night in swelling numbers. Olive Robbins had been sent ahead to act as our advance agent, her old job which she had tried to do for me in New England, and at which she was an expert. People had not truly begun to feel the Depression and the silver money counted up.

From a fruitful week in Cleveland, we moved on to Detroit. Our success here was nominal. Grand Rapids came next and the attendance was better. Our biggest success, however, was in Chicago. Night after night

we filled the Auditorium. Sometimes I also lectured in the afternoon, so great was the interest in the doctrine I was preaching. One night a group of prominent Chicago businessmen tendered me a dinner in the Sherman Hotel. They wanted me to give them the truthful "low-down" on what was behind the atrocious hiatus that was settling on the nation. Then it was that I commenced to put my findings to account. I gave them the complete Jewish picture in a two-hour address. And it left them slightly stunned. I told them why Herbert Hoover had been put in the White House and what he was supposed to do. I explained that the Moratorium he had called was all part of the scheming, that I believed he was expected to make relief as impractical as possible so that the country might repudiate him in favor of a Man of Action. Whom it would be? I said I didn't know. But I was convinced that under the stress of hard times, a President would be slipped in who would carry out those cunning measures long-since planned by the Schiffs and koonlobers.

I had barely time, after finishing this talk, to catch a cab for the Auditorium where I was to begin lecturing at 8:30.

DOWN to St. Louis we worked our way, and there constitutional differences between the Doctor and myself—as to what sort of college it should be, and how it should be conducted—brought us to a sudden crisis in our relationship. The Doctor had the right to his outlook on the project. I felt that I had the right to mine. Furthermore, the people who were coming to the school were Liberation Assembly students. They expected something of the same order that I had taught them in the Scripts. Doctor Gordon saw things differently. When I ran over to Asheville from St. Louis to see what progress was being made on rental of new quarters, I received a peremptory wire from the man toward whom I was otherwise indebted for so much.

"If I come as President of your school," he telegraphed, "I must insist on a salary guarantee of ten thousand a year."

This telegram was not acknowledged. . . .

I went up to Washington, D. C. and got in another week of lectures. I went down to Atlanta and talked there for five nights.

It was during this visit to Atlanta that Mrs. Ogden's message reached me . . . that she was forgiving me the debt on those real estate bonds and the stock which I could not issue. I say again, as I shall have occasion to mention further on, I took her at her word. I did not know that she had written a letter to Mont Hardwicke confirming this. With a full

heart, in view of the troubles I was carrying, I scarcely bothered to keep that telegram. . . .

But another communication reached me in Atlanta. The news came that through the kindness of Asheville people, interested in my enterprise, it was possible for us to secure the Asheville Woman's Club indefinitely for our school. It had a beautiful location, artful and commodious, and had the largest non-theatrical assembly hall in Asheville, with a full-sized stage and organ. And the rental was low, due to the club's financial difficulties. I returned from Atlanta to inspect a $120,000 building, fully equipped and furnished, in the city's finest section. In front of it was a park that could answer as a campus.

On the fifth day of July, Galahad College in Asheville opened. . . . With Doctor Gordon missing from the picture, I carried on alone, alone except for the able assistance of Henry Hardwicke, Mont's father and one of the nation's foremost authorities in metapsychics, and James Edgerton, president of the New Thought Alliance and known for his writings on Christian esoterics. Dr. Edgerton acted as Dean. The three of us conducted a hundred students through nine weeks of intensified studies in all branches of Christian Mysticism. I personally delivered one hundred and five lectures in a period of forty-nine days and nights. I did this without repeating myself once, without notes, without previous preparation. I gave my first daily lecture at 9:15 in the morning and my second at 4:30 in the afternoon. On top of this, I sometimes lectured in the evening. On each Sunday evening at seven o'clock I delivered a religious sermon. ❧ ❧

Men and women from every State in the Union came to Asheville and sat without creaking their chairs through a program of enlightenment so unusual that many a "pupil" came to me after the third week and declared, "If this school closed tomorrow, I want you to know that I consider I've got my money's worth!" And they were paying $150 for the term! None of them were curiosity-seekers. They were staid and sedate men and women, doctors, many of them—we had one representative all through the sessions from the Rockefeller Foundation—clergymen, school teachers, metaphysical leaders, earnest Christian people.

And I took them through a metaphysical evolution of the world, from the projection of the planet down through every phase of secular and sacred history to the present. I gave them, in effect, the Unknown and Unwritten History of the Earth, which the great Jewish-endowed orthodox schools of learning will not permit to be taught, as invalidating the pre-

posterous claim that the Father to whom Jesus prayed in the Garden, has any mortal favorites.

"In heaven's name, where did you *get* such extraordinary material!" the Rockefeller Foundation doctor demanded of me one evening.

"Oh," I bantered, "I've been twenty-five years reading every night in bed!" ☙ ☙

On another night I was waited upon by representatives from another group. "This great, soul-relieving curriculum must be made available," they contended, "for the hundreds of people who would come here if they only could manage it financially, or if they knew about what you've made available for us. Can't these morning lectures be printed?"

"Perhaps," I promised. . . .

It was the most beautiful summer that my life had contained. I had about me more than a hundred people, all sincerely zealous to explore with me the great Christian truths of sentient mortality. All the services were in the sacred manner. We researched psychics, metaphysics, mysticism and psychometry. I gave them the background of the Jewish cabal from its inception. Now and then a Jew would intrude, find out the sort of enlightenment I was passing out to these people, and go forth in Asheville to help along a malicious whispering campaign . . . that we were a lot of atheists, that we were a bunch of crazy Spiritualists, that we were a crowd of imminent seditionists, that I was against the Jews because I was against Christ. Asheville people, who never bothered to accept our invitations to come in on Sunday nights and find out what we *were* teaching, accepted these defamations at face value. It was the old, old story of Pythagoras and his colony at Crotona, repeated—not that I would class myself with Pythagoras.

But I disregarded that. The people before me were being helped. Furthermore, they would be mentally and spiritually equipped to meet and prosper others when our nation entered its Dark Days in earnest.

I think my vanity was pardonable when I reminded myself that I did most of this out of a rich experience with men and life as I have previously set forth. I was the lad who had wept bitter tears in the Schenectady hotel because father would not permit me to go on into college and complete my education. But the Dark Days were coming on swiftly. I still had my Real Job *ahead*. . . .

CHAPTER FOURTEEN



UT of the Wilderness crieth a voice: Arise, O shepherd, and help lead My people! for their hearts are heavy and their footsteps are weary . . . they know not the treasure of the glories which shall be! ¶ Night after night in Galahad College, with a city sleeping around me, I withdrew into my silence and communed with my Oracle. ¶ Great days were in the making. The commanders of Darkness were unleashing their legions. A famine was coming upon the land, and a time of trouble such as never had been since there was a nation.

Hoover had been repudiated just as I had known he would be repudiated. A man whom Theodore Roosevelt had stigmatized as his "illegitimate" cousin—only he hadn't parlorized the "illegitimate"—had ascended to the seat of Jewish power in the nation. I had reason to believe he was a Dutch Jew himself. Anyhow, men like McFadden, Gordon, Sharp, and others had put me in possession of irrefutable information regarding the Plot being wound about America and snaring my beloved country in its coils. My Oracle was telling me exactly what I had to do, that days of persecution and defamation were ahead, that I must expect crucifixion even as My Lord was crucified . . . for striving to bring men the lambent prospect of a Higher, Better Order. They listened to Him sneeringly and asked, as they were likewise saying in Asheville, "Now whoever heard of the likes of *that* before?"

Lillian's Big Drums! . . . the crash of them had never left me, since that night upon the Mojave.

Plainly I discerned, as the summer wore onward and people came and went, that founding a college was decidedly premature. The types of people financially able to attend, were not crusaders. Aggressive proselyters for the Doctrine were without resources to linger in Asheville and receive the instruction. I was waiting, listening, expecting a summons. But I was not prepared for it in just the way it came.

One thing I had done . . . I had completed my contract with the Liberation Assemblies. The fifty-two Scripts which I had promised back in New York had been compiled and delivered. I even went so far as to write fifteen more, to give our folk good measure. I had recorded and projected an entirely new religious philosophy, a philosophy of Christian mysticism raised to ideality but minus the hatreds, vengeances and pre-

posterous absurdities of the Jewish God of Jealousy. I felt that I had done my part toward bringing back the cleansed and beautified Message of Jesus exactly as He spoke it, not as the subversionists later seized upon it and made it coincide with the Jewish Old Testament. What made me think this? . . . The Scripts spoke for themselves. . . . If my reader is curious to know what the foundation-strength was, for these Herculean labors, he can procure them for himself and form his own conclusions.

As for Galahad Press, I was paying off its bills and winding it up. It too had served its purpose. There were bigger things ahead, I say, and the winter was to bring them.

There were changes in personnel. Olive Robbins, after the break-up of the Gordon lecture tour, had gone to a sister's home in Cleveland, then taken a new job somewhere in the West. Mont Hardwicke had become engrossed in chemical experiments and had gone off upon his own. One day in the autumn I gave it out that I would not continue the college on a personal attendance basis. The lectures, yes. I would make them the basis of a nation-wide correspondence school course which people could enjoy in the convenience of their homes. But I needed a man to conduct this as a unit.

Dr. Henry Hardwicke said to me one afternoon in late September, "I think I've got the person to take my son's place. His name is Anderson —George Anderson—and his home is in Buffalo. He'd make a national institution out of this Correspondence Fellowship idea. And he'd be sympathetic to the principles we're trying to inculcate, because he's had experiences in his own life right along the same lines."

It was an astute executive, a practical business manager who wouldn't attempt to commercialize the instruction, that I needed just then. I wrote to this Anderson. And he motored down to see me.

He was a brown-eyed individual of about 50 years, with a slightly-hooked nose and snow-white hair above a ruddy complexion. And he was portly, well-ballasted. He had read my writings. He was free to join me . . . provided, however, I would aid him with sundry personal expenses that were embarrassing him in Buffalo. As the result of many conferences, I gave him the job.

Even to this moment I have never been able to make Anderson out. My reader must judge the man's character for himself . . . and strictly by what happened. I helped him with his bills and traveling expenses. He came to Asheville and took hold of things with zest.

George lifted all business and financial details off my overworked shoul-

ders. He answered correspondence. He saw to all printing. Under his supervision the numbers of Fellowship students began to mount—three hundred, four hundred, five hundred, six hundred! He was first at the building in the morning, the last to leave it at night. Face drawn with weariness, he often worked as Sumner had worked before him, far into the morning, relieving me and protecting me from the harassments of commercial matters so that I could devote myself to writing. Scores of the college students had stayed on in Asheville, and now we gave them positions because of their training.

So the remaining months of 1932 were lived. Roosevelt had been elected. Money was growing tighter, still it did not affect us as it affected others. So long as people had money, ours was the sort of material that they most desired to read. The first item in Mrs. Leslie's prophecy had come true about the "nation-wide spiritual movement" . . . the second had materialized that "in two years or thereabout you'll find yourself sitting with the heads of government *behind* the government in Washington" . . . but the third item, that "in three years or thereabout you'll find yourself at the head of a quasi-military order pledged to protect Christian Constitutionalism when it hangs by a thread" was still in the future. What could it encompass? Would the implied Great Pyramid date of January 31, 1933, give me indication? We were watching that date. The Pyramid had never failed.

It so happened that I was working late one night in my office at the east end of the main college building when Marion Henderson, my secretary, came in with the Asheville evening paper. I saw eight-column headlines. Curiously I picked it up. The date was January 30, 1933. And screaming from the page were the significant words—

ADOLF HITLER BECOMES GERMAN CHANCELLOR

I looked at the lines. I read them again. I sought to comprehend them. Something clicked in my brain! . . .

I laid the paper down. *The prophecy heard that night in the 53rd Street flat before going up to Mrs. Leslie's, was working!*

"Tomorrow," I announced, "we have the Silvershirts!"

Anderson scowled. Marion was puzzled. One of them demanded, "What do you mean, Silvershirts?"

"Let me alone tonight!" I begged. "Tomorrow you'll know everything!"



Far and wide across the nation, in the opening months of 1933, went the high tocsin to America's Christian patriots to form the Legion of the *Silvershirts!*

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

"DIGHT lies curdled over the world,"—thus went down the first words on my typewriter. "Beneath its black cloak the Powers of Darkness seduce and slay. Monstrous shapes laugh derisively at God. They think that the Christ is a man of straw. They mock the Higher Fraternity with vauntings. 'Worship us,' they say, . . . 'bow down and do us reverence!' . . . . or we violate your firesides, we despoil your daughters, we make perverts of your sons, there shall be no godly thing endure unless it serve our lust—for we, the Powers of Darkness have said it. Did we not crucify your Lord? Did we not spit upon your Prince? Have we not shown ourselves victorious in every land where Fraternity is slogan? We come unto you and say in curdled blackness, "You know not our names except that we be powerful!"

"And the timid shrink. The women and children cower. Even the strong men blanch. The Four Horsemen ride the crest of men's heart-hopes. The righteous cry for peace, but peace is denied them. The hungry wail for bread and the divinity of labor. But the bread has been scattered and labor is a blasphemy.

"Night lies curdled over the world. Its heart is of pitch. Locks and vaults are powerless to prevail against its lecheries. Humanity groans, prostrate, ravished in its sculleries. Out of the jaws of darkness no Voice has yet sounded: 'Up! ye men of Christ! Stretch your strong biceps! Clang mightily your armor, ye invincible stalwarts of the Galilean!'

"Long is the Night.

"Yet Prophecy is errorless.

"Through the night's heart goes a shudder of stillness. It freezes the phantoms. The thieves drop their plunder.

"*What is that nimbus atop yonder mountain?* . . .

"WATCH it, ye peoples! Strange is that radiance! . . . what can it portend? Behold the mountaintop grows itself an aura, weak as a moonbeam, vague as a heart-hope. Something is happening behind yonder summit! See, the world is not darkness, the world is pearl-gray! Look around you. Gaze across vague distance. Turn your eyes behind you and look you to the westward.

"Where are those Three Crosses that in last evening's twilight showed against dark tumult? *Behold they are missing!*

"What can it mean? What has become of them? Who has removed them? Look back toward the East. . . .

"The East takes on color, the mountain shapes grow sharper, a hush holds the world. The fogs of the dawn prepare for an anthem. Harken to the silence!

"But is it a silence?

"Are men marching somewhere?

"FAINT come the sounds. Now they seem stronger—though valley-mists screen them. Who can these be who thus march in foreday? Hark! . . . the sounds are growing louder! . . . This is no company of heavy-eyed marauders who thus plague the dawn. Their footsteps are dauntless. They step with steel courage! There is a horde somewhere, whose serried ranks are coming ever closer! The light grows brighter, the treads grow heavier. *This is no watch that patrols night with languor! . . .*

"An army is coming from Somewhere!

"Its stride is a tocsin.

"Men of Christ!—*arouse!* Look upon this Miracle emerging from the mist-banks! Where have they come from, those silvered ranks of valor? Who brought this host together? Who cast them in this concord? What is that snow-white banner with its one letter of deep scarlet, whose folds catch the gleam from the blaze on the skyline?

"Has night birthed this wonder?

"Who rides that milky stallion at the head of such battalions, His hands lifted high to salute little children? Is this indeed He whose cadaver drooped last night from a cross of cedar timbers?

"Who flourish those trumpets? What Captains support Him? Ah God, can this be true? . . .

"The Commander comes riding in with the dawn . . . and behind Him his legions, resplendent in silver!

"YES, the Silvershirts are marching!

"Christ Men! Grim men! Men of stamina, men of mettle, . . . old men, young men, Lords of High Courage, Chamberlains of Valor. . . .

"The Silvershirts are marching!

"Their war cry is the Morning.

"Is it not time that we sprang erect to meet them?

"What salute so martial as the right hand at the forehead, as the Prince of Peace approaches?
"No kneeling to this Prince! . . . no bowing or groveling! . . . the command is *Attention!* . . . straight bodies, lifted faces.

"THESE are our beatitudes expressed in garbed splendor. These are our atonements, that we blend with those cordons. America has need of us! The world awaits our pibroch.
"Do we languish for action? Has the Prophecy not blazoned?
"Into the Silver uniform, ye challenged! Take the Mark of the Prince upon your shoulders! Receive the Bright Accolade—
"Love!
"Light!
"Loyalty!
"Liberation!
"For the morning is *here* . . . and its nimbus is *Victory!*"

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

WHO in this stricken nation has not heard of the Silvershirts? ¶ Step up to the average man on the streets today and ask him, "Have you ever heard of the Silvershirts?" What will he answer in these early months of 1939? "Sure I've heard of 'em. There was a crazy fool down somewhere in the South who tried to revive the Ku Klux Klan and go after the Jews. But the government authorities fixed him. I think he got in jail." ¶ The average man says that, because such is the perversive intelligence that has been published. But the battle is still raging, that I started that midnight back in 1933. And I did not land in jail, though its doors opened for me.
Far and wide across this nation in the opening months of that epochal year went the high tocsin to America's Christian patriots, to form the Silver Legion.
From Maine, from Oregon, from Michigan, from Texas, came back the pledges of Christian freemen to band themselves together and clean the Great Homestead that was the stricken United States.
The tiny lad that had stood on the knoll in summer morning behind the

East Templeton parsonage and marveled at the mystery of an ant running up a grass-stalk, the lad who had stood with Mabel beneath that wild cherry tree while she broke off a sprig of cherry-blossoms and put them in her hair, the youth who had lain in that Wilmington tenement and grieved for a little white casket to the drone of midnight saxophones, the fellow who had stood with Admiral Kolchak in faraway Siberia, who had watched the moth wobble on his table in a Greenwich Village twilight, the man who had beheld Svende Garde's green carpet, then approached the Doors of Revelation and gone through them . . . what does the world know of the innermost thoughts of a mortal's heart when he sounds a bugle to a nation and beholds the Miracle of great hordes' responding? . . .

¶ To summon a nation to a valor, to step up and command it, to feel the self-sufficiency, the formidable self-confidence, the inexorable fortitude to assume upon one's shoulders the lives and affairs of a hundred million souls . . . surely a man must have need of a certainty of kinship with the souls of Just Men who in every cycle have painted earth's splendors!

I felt without bombast that I had that kinship.

My gods had been good to me. They had taken me early and put me to eat at a lean and cheerless banquet. They had reared me on heartbreak, denied me advantages that I might make them for myself. They had given me whisperings of sacred deeds to come. They had shown me the Promised Land of the Spirit, than which there is none grander. I had prayed in my heart, and said it from the rostrum: "God make my future *hard!*"

But I said it in wisdom.

I knew what I was doing.

I was trained as an athlete to run a Great Marathon.

GEORGE ANDERSON regarded me with a face somewhat blank.

"Do you realize what you're doing?" he demanded, appalled.

"Perfectly," I answered.

"You go working on people's feelings, getting them to follow you in numbers, and the first thing you know, they'll overthrow the government!"

"Even if that happened," I told George quietly, "I'd know what to do."

"Who gave you that knowledge?"

"That's something I don't talk about."

"You can't blast the Jews like this. They'll come down here and rub us out!"

"Christ called that people the Synagogue of Satan. I'm not afraid of Satan. And . . . I've got an armor that the Jews don't know about."
"Christ's armor wasn't so much. The Jews erased Him."
"Did they, George? Can you say that *honestly?*"
"I don't see this Silvershirt thing at all. It stirs up race prejudice. It makes us enemies by droves, the ugliest enemies anywhere on earth."
"I'm not thinking of enemies. I'm thinking of America. You've got it slightly wrong, George. It's in our cards to win!"
But George was disgruntled. He didn't believe in creating sales resistance in selling a bill of goods. I went my own way, thinking my own thoughts, concerned with principles, not with expediencies. And now, along with the pledges, my mail turned up threats.
"You'll be shot on sight for what you're doing!" some of these made bold to say. Usually they added diatribes containing obscenities. . . .
"You see?" said George Anderson.
"My dear fellow," I told him, "when people are really going to kill a man they never incriminate themselves by giving him warning in advance."
"Maybe you want to get shot. I certainly don't."
"Nobody's going to shoot you, George. Or me, either. At least not the people writing these letters. Remember the ancient proverb, Threatened men live long. Remember too, George, threats are always an exhibit of weakness. Only scared people, people not sure of their strengths or their powers to deal with a man or situation, resort to threats."

OF COURSE I assumed that if Anderson reached the point in his convictions that he could not sustain me, he would come to me like a man and say so. I could understand his disquiet, but the way was open for him to excuse himself. On the contrary, however, he applied himself to his duties more zealously than ever. The threatening letters went into the wastebasket.
I was boarding during this period with Bob and Gladys Williams. Mother had come down from Washington and attended Galahad summer school. But with winter approaching she had wanted to return to Massachusetts, where she had lived so many fruitful years and had her own friends. Helen had rooms near Galahad headquarters and served as housekeeper of the premises, now bumbling daily with twenty to thirty workers. Both offices, in New York and Washington, had now been discontinued and their furniture and fixtures moved to Asheville.
One night in February I had been at the Biltmore Press laying out some

printing forms to get a certain layout exactly as I wanted it. A friend had taken me home. I had undressed and was reading in bed. The household about me had been asleep for hours.

Suddenly as I followed the type-lines of my book, I became aware of an optical illusion above the top of my page, seemingly in distance. I had a premonition not to raise my glance. That it was not a deception of overwrought vision was immediately demonstrated in that it took on shape and movement. Out of "the top of my eye," so to speak, I saw an upright oblong of startling whiteness, no bigger at first than a postage stamp. But this little white oblong was moving toward me and growing larger as it came. Closer and closer to the top edge of my book it approached, enlarging swiftly in measurement. I could restrain my curiosity no longer. Whether I might destroy it by direct glance or not, I looked at it directly. And it did not go away! . . .

I was looking squarely at the front page of a publication, about nine by twelve inches in size, a background of rich black velvet. There were two four-inch columns of type to the page. Across the top was the one clear word: *Liberation.* And directly beneath the date-line, in a blot of red ink, was a decorative figure whose detail was vague. As I stared, the "illusion" vanished.

I felt a queer prickle of shock up my back.

Up from the bed I got, at two in the morning. I put on my clothes and went down through the house. I walked the mile to the printshop—and as I moved through the silent sleeping streets of Asheville, *I knew with every step I took that somehow or other I was making history.*

I had to catch the format of that publication, in type, on paper, before exact details faded from memory.

I worked the remainder of the night, locked in that printshop alone. At eight next morning, astonished workmen appeared. And lying on imposing-stones were the pages of an imminent periodical.

"What is it?" they asked.

"It's the new weekly organ of the Silver Legion," I said. "Follow that make-up exactly as I've specified. Merely change the text-matter week after week."

Thus on the eighteenth day of February, the first number of LIBERATION went abroad through the nation.

Galahad Press and The League for the Liberation were finished, now. Galahad College had become the Liberation Fellowship and was crystallized in a literature which students might procure down a hundred years. I had

given our people a renovated Christian message. I had made available a more truthful History of Society than was anywhere taught in corrupted schools and colleges. Now I was equipped and ready to enter into the final phase of that brevet for which I had been preparing for nearly forty years.

I must *actualize* in society a true liberation. I must give to the nation not only a political and economic philosophy, but I must take active leadership and see that both were consummated.

I was not merely *hearing* Lillian's Big Drums now. I must march in the midst of them, forge toward the front with them, perchance seize the baton that led them up the stars. . . .

FOR men were "joining up." . . .

From Massachusetts, from Montana, from Florida, from Idaho, from Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington, Illinois and California, the Silver Legionnaires were responding to my tocsin. It was an awe-inspiring thing. ¶ I had known that the nation was disgruntled with the encroaching caste of Jewry. I had never appreciated that it hungered for leadership like this. Yet had the prophecy back there in New York not stated: "When the young painter comes to power in Germany, take that as your time signal to launch your organization." There was substance to such prophecy. It was not idle vaporing of subconscious mind. And always and forever in the back of my thinking was the radiant culmination . . . I must "sit upon an iceberg, in the center of a sea of hostile humanity" . . . and then something was to happen! . . . something that melted that iceberg "in a night" and put the nation behind me to a man. If all the points of the three-fold prophecy had come true to date, what cause had I for disbelieving that the climax would in due time accrue as well?

Yet I knew the history and biographies of those who, up the centuries, had sought to bring mankind obvious benefactions. In the exact ratio that they succeeded in altering men's concepts for the better, the cohorts of the evil-minded, the vicious, the menaced, the "darkly devouring," grew in numbers and influence and dug pits for their feet. I was deliberately inviting all the calumny and vengeance that the Synagogue of Satan could summon up against me. "We've stopped bigger men than Pelley," had been the substance of that threat to Hardwicke in Washington. Only now I believe I knew what these Mammonites did not, . . . the time was arriving in the cycles of the ages when they were to know terrible and lasting defeat *and their power be finally broken!*

Insolent evil was not to have its conspiring way forever. My Elder Brother had said so first in Galilee. "Go ye into the world and preach the gospel *as a witness* unto all nations, . . . and then shall I come! . . . verily I say unto you, there are those among you who shall not taste of Death until I come again." After that night on the Mojave, I had known what my Elder Brother had meant.

Over in the valley of the Nile was the Pillar of Enoch, "the Bible in stone." It had recorded and preserved in stone over fifty centuries the unalterable fiats of Immortal Causation. It had definite things to say about what should happen in this, our Cycle.

On the 11th day of March, at nine in the evening, I was busy at my typewriter in the east wing of the building. One of my associates came in. He held in his hands a letter and a pamphlet. The letter was from Professor David Davidson, the eminent Great Pyramid authority. It had come in that evening from England.

"Chief," he asked whimsically, "have you ever seen this monograph of Davidson's on his interpretations of these current Pyramid dates? . . . for instance, January 31st?"

"No," I responded.

"Take a look at the publication-date on this booklet first. Note that it was published two years ago—in March, 1931."

"I see. What of it?"

"Now read what Davidson had to say about the significance of January thirty-first."

I read what he indicated. I am sorry I do not have the booklet before me as I write, nor is it immediately procurable. But hundreds of my readers may have it in their possession. "On this date in America," the paragraph said in substance, "is conceived (in the obstetrical sense) the seeds of the new theocratic State throughout the earth, which will lie in secret germination in the body politic as in a woman's womb until September 16, 1936." ☙ ☙

There was more to the notation. But again the psychic shock traveled up my spine. . . .

On January 31st throughout America I had proclaimed the Silver Legion! And the *piece de resistance* of the Silver Legion was the ultimate setting up of the Christian Commonwealth. Already I had circulated throughout the growing ranks of the Legionnaires the thought-provoking booklet, *What Kind of Government is the Christ to Set Up?* My manuscript for the first edition of the volume *No More Hunger,* describing this Christian

Commonwealth in detail, was being cast in type and would presently be issued. No other "conception" had occurred in the United States on January 31st but this founding of the Legion . . . the calendar date otherwise was a mediocre blank.

What could I think? . . .

Yes, plenty of trouble was ahead. The same type of mob, made frenzied by machinations of the same stripe of plotter, was to cry "Crucify him!" in my case, as had shrieked in my Lord's. Well, what of that? He had not gone through with it to become famed of men. There was a higher purpose being served. Judah, the Man of Old, must ultimately be "bound," and his mischief be ended in the lives of all men. And some of us had to take the mud-balls and scourges, the calumnies and persecutions, that the record of that "binding" might live as a tradition. If it were engraved on basalt rock, fifty centuries in the past, then all was foreordainment, no matter what men said.

So I published *No More Hunger* . . . and the Silver Legion expanded . . . and *Liberation Weekly* rang its tocsin throughout the nation.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

PEOPLE in general, I find, are annoyingly limited in their understandings of what a leader with my motivations confronts and experiences when he seeks to bring society a new spiritual, philosophical, or political concept and actualize it permanently with weak human materials. The common notion is, that if a man originates, or is given, a new program for improving the lives of his fellows, and is reasonably magnetic or clever in personality, he merely gathers about him those amenable to his ideas and these form a yeast-like cell that proceeds to give leaven to the social loaf in that degree to which his ideas or recommendations have popular appeal. An organization, to the average person, is a matter of officers and members, by-laws and dues. It is believed that no one comes into an organization unless he believes in all the principles which it represents. If he indorses such principles, of course he proposes to abide by the regulations laid down by someone for the conduct of the whole.

For a quarter-century, as my reader has noted, I had been dealing with human nature in its practical aspects. I had handled it as an employer,

I had met with it in publishing. In the Orient I had gone to war with it. For fifteen of those twenty-five years I had also written about it generously—certainly a novelist whose writings had earned him between a quarter and a half million dollars might have claimed legitimately that he "knew" human nature. So I had accepted, thinking little about it.

Now, while I was on the quest of Something Big in the social sense, I was likewise to discover that my erudition in the matter of knowing human nature in the idealistic sense was about two degrees greater than that of an infant in arms.

Boiled down to fundamentals, this gesture that I was making was a departure in Pure Idealism. I use the term *Pure* in this connection to distinguish the brand of idealism in which I was working, from that muddy idealism that is more truthfully a superficial jingoism or commercialized sentimentality.

America has experienced many Movements for the improving of spiritual, moral, or economic conditions, and, generally speaking, the leaders of such have been expediently sincere. But sooner or later each has died out, or assumed the aspects of a racket. I had never bothered to ask myself why such Movements failed. On the whole, I was far too busy with this new Silver Legion, promoting the principles which it sought to actualize, to go into digressions of its effects on those about me. We had a sizable and ugly job ahead of us, purging the nation of its colossal miscreants, projecting and materializing a program of economic betterment, and remaking America as we could, to more aptly comply with the notions of our forebears. So, at least, it stacked up to me. So, I assumed, it stacked up to others. If it did not so stack up to others—meaning specifically those who were riding along with me deeper and deeper into the work—they would naturally say so, or show it in their conduct. So long as they kept silent, or put forth motive effort, my conclusion was allowable that they as a unit were "with me."

Now the months were at hand when wholly new departments in human nature were to open to my gaze. I was to unlearn many of the fatuous beliefs that had been my writing raw-stock. I was to find out, in instance after instance, that there were as many brands of Idealism as there were persons in the nation, that each individual specializes in Idealism but doesn't always know it, that just because a man founds a movement, by no means does it give him license to consider it his property.

People encounter a disagreeable condition in life and seek to have it altered. A man comes along and proposes his changes. It is alteration

as alteration in which numbers are first interested. But the founder of the Movement very rarely stops to grasp it. He only beholds great numbers of human beings flocking about his standard. In the fervor of materializing his remedial measures he takes for granted what may not exist. He overlooks or ignores the fact that the one great reason why all men and women are in life, is to experience self-expression. Undoubtedly the conditions which have prompted them to rally to his standard have suppressed self-expression. More popularly speaking, these are called Curtailed Liberties. So the malcontents enlist. The very motives that have turned them the leader's way, mostly resentment at curtailed liberties, will sooner or later produce confusions and schisms within his own ranks. Each and every man or woman, who has anything vital to do with the Movement, wants to express himself. He wants to express himself within the Movement. He doesn't particularly care what form that expression takes. But it must truly be expression. Doing things with hand or brain is not enough. The private personality must so impress itself upon the ranks, that others take note of it. If this cannot be connived over a period of time, one of two things will happen. Either the recruit, or the leader's associate, will lose his enthusiasm and finally drift away, or he will start an indignant protest that the Movement is not being properly conducted, that matters with the leaders are not as they should be, that the leader is a dolt or secretly incompetent and hoodwinking the public. Disgruntlement at conditions which brought him into the ranks is taken for granted and ignored. Personal ambition in greater or lesser degree, is another item of Desire for Expression, and it assumes the form of continual plotting for ascendancy which is not always recognized for that which it is. And as men are big or small in their own concepts, so these aspirations will work unwitting mischief in matters big or small as they are given opportunity.

People, I say, become interested in such a Movement as I had founded, to ease their disgruntlement at life as they have encountered it. Whereupon, having gotten into the Movement, they translate their altered status as the relief itself, not the instrument toward achieving, and set about orienting themselves according to capabilities. Here and there one person in a thousand actually grasps the fact that the Movement is not the relief but the means toward it. These as a body constitute the associates on which a leader may rely. They will work with him, labor earnestly and loyally, and await their rewards when the relief has been realized.

But back in 1933 I was an infant in arms at perceiving this clearly. I

was immediately intoxicated with gratification that the nation held such numbers of excellent people willing to support me in bettering the country according to my policies. I did not know that I had to go through a concentrated and intensified period of education, treating with human nature in its more subtle aspects. I made the blunder, which I have seen many novices make since, of assuming that those who stayed with me, and labored about me day upon day, accepted the Movement as I had conceived it, the means to an end, not the end in itself.

My first correction in this assumption was furnished by George Anderson.

MEN of character, whose avowals and credentials were beyond reproach, were responding to my appeals for State organizers from every quarter of the country. It was purely to encourage them in their field work and enable them to support their dependents and pay their traveling expenses, that I placed a fee on membership in the Silver Legion and arranged to pay such organizers a legitimate and reasonable part of it. After all, I had no angel behind this maneuver, regardless of the insane claims being everywhere made by Jews that I was secretly receiving subsidies from Adolf Hitler for starting an American branch of the Nazis. I had to build this organization and promote its activities more or less on volunteer contributions, for even membership fees are nothing else. People weren't obliged to belong to the Legion. They applied for affiliation as its principles appealed to them. After they were in, it took money to service them, pay headquarters overhead, and maintain our publications. Growing personally wealthy from such resources was an idea that had not entered my mind. Carrying on a membership racket, for which the Jews at once arraigned me, was equally preposterous and unthought of. Throughout the whole course of the Silver Legion I received in money an average of $35 a week, a fact attested by my tax reports to the Federal government. This princely salary—not so much as Anderson was drawing—barely covered my expenses at my Asheville boarding-place, the cost of supporting my mother in Springfield, and the somewhat poignant sums I was able to send from time to time to my boy and girl. For this I had relinquished a salary of $500 weekly. . . . Racketeering, indeed! . . . Our Jewish critics never made it clear to the public that the $10 charged for membership in the Legion and the $1 per month dues, covered the cost of servicing such member and no more. When I discerned that thousands of good men were being kept out of the ranks because they lacked such funds, due to the national impoverishment, I took the step

of cancelling all entrance fees and depending solely on public donations. We called the fund from these, the War Chest. . . .

George Anderson worked zealously and laboriously to keep that War Chest filled. He had to finance *Liberation Weekly,* steadily mounting in circulation, keep the Liberation Fellowship students serviced, and answer a prodigious business correspondence accruing from the field. After his first protest that the Silver Legion might be seditiously interpreted by some, he had never mentioned it again. One night, however, he came down to my private office in the east wing of the building. And the man was angry.

"I don't often make a request such as I'm making now," he announced, "but if I'm staying on here as Business Comptroller, I want Marion Henderson discharged!"

I glanced up from my evening work at my typewriter. "Discharged!" I echoed. "Why Marion Henderson? What's she been doing?"

"I can't stand her. I want her thrown out."

A word about the girl to whom he referred. . . .

During the run of the Galahad summer school one of the students, a certain Dr. Sumner, had made a week-end trip, home to Indianapolis. When he returned on Monday, he brought a group with him. Among them was a dark-eyed, soft-spoken, eager-mannered young woman with a romantic dash of white in her coal-black hair and an avid desire motivating her to serve the Movement as she could. Was it possible to find a secretarial place for her to compensate for her tuition? Ever since the departure of Mary Joyce I had worked beneath a handicap trying to keep abreast of the detail that swamped me. Joyce, as I have said, was one of those rare persons with a genius for pacing a busy executive, figuratively knowing exactly what he wanted before he wanted it, eliminating non-essentials, yet always keeping live wires open to his desk. I felt that the loss of her was a sort of personal tragedy. Where on seven continents would I ever find her duplicate? Now I interviewed Miss Henderson. I gave her some test work. In less than a week I knew Kismet had been good to me.

Marion was Joyce multiplied threefold. . ..

Strange indeed, it seems to me at times, that a man in my position draws such competents into his affairs. Glancing back now over ten years of effort, I can discern that at every step of the way—when I truly needed a person of given capabilities to fill a complicated function—always such person had appeared as by magic. I knew I made small effort to locate

these people. Always they had come to me, and when they had announced themselves I felt that everything was *Right*. It has passed all coincidence.

¶ By the time that Galahad Summer School had closed, and a considerable time before the advent of George Anderson, I had discovered that by acquiring the services of Marion Henderson I had taken unto myself another "pivot," around whom my affairs would swing—like Beryl and Mary Joyce. Gracious in temperament, as conscientious as she was capable, loyal to the point of fanaticism, she soon had the reins of my expanding activities within her grasp and was handling them like a veteran. Inevitably there is one such person in every busy man's affairs.

Our expanding staff quickly came to recognize Marion as liaison executive, fixer, and trouble-shooter, on whatever problem in personnel arose to my distraction. She grew haggard at times, from the weight of her increasing burden, but she did not break down under it. No, she was *broken* down, and it was done by a brutal and vulgar Jewish-bloc Congressman who third-degreed her with the usurped powers of the whole Federal government behind him. His purpose, of course, was to make her divulge the field personnel of the Legion, that Jewish agents might get upon their trails surreptitiously and by methods only employed by Jews, compel them to desist from the advancement of our patriotic Movement. More of that, later. . . .

This was the invaluable helper who Anderson now insisted should be dispensed with.

"You must be mistaken, George," I parried.

"I'm not going to argue. I want that girl fired!"

"You can't have her fired," I told him quietly. "Furthermore, your attitude takes too much for granted. Miss Henderson is my personal secretary and in no wise in your department. She's been with me longer than yourself, *and*," I added in a touch of pique, "if you force me to speak frankly, I consider her the more competent of the two of you."

"I see!" muttered George, his eyes growing veiled. "She's got more drag with you—is that what you mean?"

" 'Drag' doesn't enter into it."

"I insist upon knowing."

"You're not in a position to 'insist' upon anything. I've taken you on, to do a certain job here. So long as you do it, we'll get along fine. Whom I select to do my secretarial work, is my business, strictly."

"Then," decided George, "I know where I sit!" He had leaned back in his chair, arms folded across his chest. His eyes were mere slits.

"Exactly. You know where you sit!"
"And I'm serving notice that this building, and this Movement, aren't big enough for that young lady and myself."
"Then it's you who're out of luck," I retorted, "and what do you want to do about it?" I knew that if I submitted to this kind of intimidation now, I would easily find myself slated for a constant program of it.
I waited for his answer.
George got up from the chair, put on his hat, and stalked from the building. I did not expect him to return the next morning.
All the same, he came back.
His disgruntlement had vanished and he continued with his work. No more was said about Miss Henderson.
In the month that ensued, however, I had greater things to bother me. One of them involved the item of mail.
"We're writing the most important letters to State leaders," Marion complained, "and few of them are answering. Moreover, our receipts are falling off, yet letters arrive occasionally, indicating that remittances have been sent."
I leaned back in my chair and considered many unanswered letters I had written, myself. Only a dribble of responses had come back. "It's plausible," said I, "that Jews in the post office are tampering with our mail."
I went to Anderson's office. "George," I asked, "have you had any evidence that our mail is intercepted?"
It was late in the evening. Anderson was seated at his desk in his shirtsleeves, eyes tired, face drawn, figuring out how—on suddenly shortened finances—he could make both ends meet. He said—
"I'm noticing plenty of disruption in the matter of revenue. It's dropped to one-half."
"You haven't any mail upstairs here, not yet turned over to Marion or myself?" ☙ ☙
George pointed to a tray on the table behind his chair. "Only those in that basket," was his qualified response.
I reached for the tray and hastily thumbed through it. *What was the queer psychometric reaction I had from those letters and that tray, that something was very wrong?*
"When you make tomorrow's deposits in the bank, get me fifty dollars," I directed. "I'm going to leave for a short trip into the field and I'll need money for expenses."
"Where are you going?"

"Philadelphia first. A man up there by the name of Sieber wants to become organizer for Pennsylvania. If our letters are being intercepted, I'm going to talk with him personally."

"You shouldn't do that. We can't afford it."

"I can afford anything to find out what's going wrong with the mail."

I went back to my office and wrote a letter to a correspondent in Los Angeles. "I suspect that mischief is afoot in the matter of our mail," said I. "Write me to the enclosed address in Philadelphia. If your reply comes to hand, I'll know that the hold-up must be in the post office at Asheville." ❧ ❧

I drove to a village outside of town and mailed this letter. Next day I started northward.

At five o'clock of late June afternoon, a half-week later, a rotund, pleasant-spoken fellow of about my own years—iron-gray hair close-cropped to his head—sought me out in the Philadelphia suburb where I was lodging with friends.

"I'm Harry Sieber," he introduced himself. Graven lines of worry were deep around his eyes. I knew at a glance that he was frantic with a burden.

"The Depression's cleaned me out," he told me subsequently. "At the time of the Crash, I was president of a surburban bank here. Now my family's down in New Jersey, with the rent due."

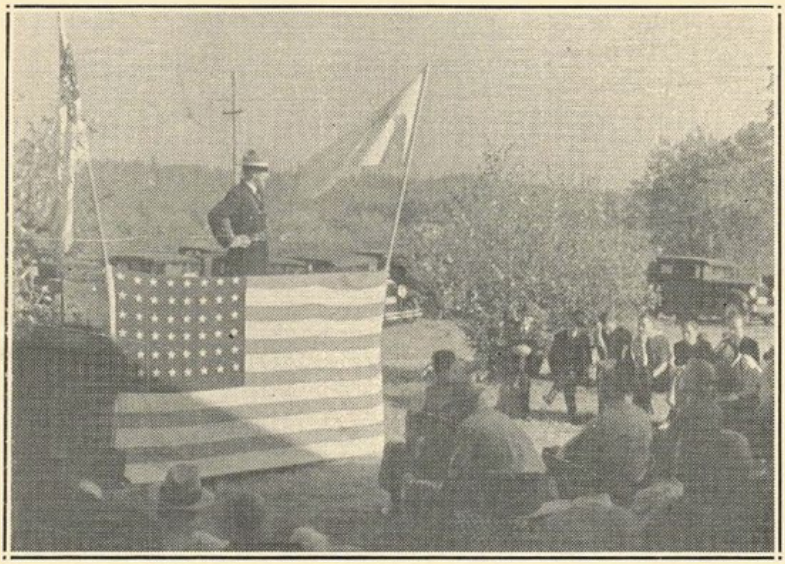
We discussed the Legion's prospects. We talked about putting out a Philadelphia tabloid to promote the Silvershirts' purposes. I liked the man. As he recounted his troubles, my compassion went out to him. We discussed correspondence."

"I've mailed you three letters within the fortnight," he informed me.

"Then our mail *is* being intercepted," I declared. "I never got one of them." It was midnight before Sieber departed. I said on the steps: "I'll send Anderson a wire tonight, asking him to send up the names of all persons interested in our Movement in Pennsylvania. We'll get that tabloid started."

Next day we set about making printing arrangements for the paper. Two days passed without response from Anderson. Sieber and I were in need of those names. Toward the end of the week, the postman brought two letters up to the veranda where Sieber and I were conferring on our project. One was from Anderson, the other from Los Angeles. I opened the latter first—

"I'm enclosing you carbon copies," wrote my California correspond-



I took a cavalcade of thirty to fifty men from San Diego in California, up the coast to Seattle and eastward as far as Spokane, bringing the Christian Party to the attention of the nation, making seventeen open-air speeches in thirty-four days.

ent, "of my past-month letters to Asheville. I'm also enclosing photostats of a dozen bank cheques, indorsed by you, showing that you received those remittances but have never shipped goods which they paid for. Will you kindly explain, if you can, before I take up the matter with the postal authorities."

I glanced at the photostats. The cheques showed my indorsement, indeed, but I knew my own signature; and these signatures were spurious. *My name indorsed them in George Anderson's penmanship!* One cheque in particular amounted to $35. I recalled asking George about that $35 remittance and he had denied receiving it. I opened his letter—

"I have received your wired request to supply you with names of Pennsylvania Silvershirts. I do not consider it advisable for these names to be allowed outside Legion Headquarters. Sorry to inconvenience you, but that's my decision."

I could scarcely believe the effrontery of it. I said to Sieber: "You told me, I think, that you'd been an accountant. Can you come down to North Carolina with me at once and check through some books?"
"What books?"
"The Silver Legion's books! One of these days I'll obey my metapsychical hunches. I've felt for weeks that something's been wrong with Anderson. These letters prove it."
"What are you going to do?"
"I'm going back to Asheville and you're going with me. In passing through Washington we'll pick up Bert Ward. Bert's been my attorney since 1931."
"What about the tabloid? I've got to have a job."
"You've got a job. Right now! You go on the payroll the moment of our arrival. We'll postpone the tabloid till this insufferable mystery's solved."

MRS. SIEBER took her husband's announcement of a North Carolina sojourn graciously but worriedly. I applied the financial stop-gap as I could, Harry packed a bag, and we left that night for Washington.
Bert Ward, my attorney—big-bodied, assertive, dark-eyed and capable—listened to my story and nodded approvingly. Bert, originally an Orego-

nian, had been Alien Property Custodian under Calvin Coolidge. He too knew accounting. "You're coming to your senses," he declared when I finished. "I've had my reservations about Anderson ever since I met him."

¶ We left my roadster in Washington and shifted to Bert's sedan. All the next day we rode down across Virginia, into North Carolina, and reached Asheville after midnight.

Night lights were burning in Headquarters when we drew up in front. I took out my keys and let myself in.

The building was tenantless.

"What we want to do first," said Ward, "is to check these photostats with Anderson's books. Where *are* the books?"

"Locked in George's desk. But I've got a key."

"I'm asking you," said Ward, "in the presence of Sieber, if I've got your authority to open this desk."

"You certainly have," I responded with vigor.

Bert drew forth the cashbook from George's center drawer. Two letters fell out with it and dropped on the rug. "Funny," said Sieber, "they seem to be unopened."

I glanced at their postmarks. Both were from the West and dated two weeks back. "This drawer seems to have quite a lot of mail in it," my attorney said as I slit both the envelopes and remittances fell out.

"Clean it!" I ordered. "Let's see what's in it."

Bert pulled out twenty to thirty letters, all unopened, and tossed them on the blotter. "He must have gotten a mail delivery at the post office and forgotten to examine it," said Harry.

"I'm going to look in these other drawers," said Ward, "with your permission." He pulled out the left-hand bottom drawer. "Lord! . . . *look at this!*"

The drawer was so full of unopened mail that letters were crumpled by pulling it forth. I examined their postmarks. Some were weeks old.

"Get an eyeful of this!" Ward said. He had drawn forth the left-hand top drawer.

It was bulging with letters, days and weeks old, opened and laid flat. And every letter in that drawer had a bank note or postal order carefully appended. They totaled more than a thousand dollars. But not a cheque among them. The cheques, it appeared, had been carefully deposited.

We continued to turn up mail. Anderson's desk was a storage chest of it. Nine-tenths was unopened. Sieber said finally, "Do you suppose he's been secreting mail anywhere else besides in his desk?"

In a twelve-foot bookcase on the room's east side we found boxes, files, and a private brief case, stuffed with more letters.

Two thousand letters thus secreted had almost been successful in wrecking the Silver Legion! . . .

It took six clerks ten days to open, sort, and read them.

WHEN George Anderson went to the post office to get more mail next morning, he discovered a plug in the lock of the Silver Legion box. ❧ ❧

"What's the large idea?" he demanded of the mail clerk.

"Sorry," said the latter. "Mr. Pelley's orders!"

"But Pelley's up north!"

"No, he returned to town last night."

Anderson hurried to his car and broke Asheville's speed laws getting to Headquarters. He encountered Bert Ward in charge of the premises and Sieber at a table going over his books. With scarcely a word to Ward, George stalked to his desk and yanked open its drawers.

His face went chalk-white.

"By whose orders—" he began.

"Take it easy, Anderson," was the warning from Ward. "You're decidedly on the spot. Looks to me that for reasons of your own, you've done your level best to smash this Silver Legion. Any Jews paying you for this silly maneuver?"

"N-No . . . but you'll pay . . . handsomely . . ."

"Be a nice boy," Ward advised him. "Don't call any names, or anything like that. Before the day's over you may find yourself locked up!"

Anderson, who had given indications of striking Ward, winced at this announcement. He went over and sat down. Such was the tableau into which I then walked.

"Well, George," I greeted him, "it becomes clear just why you objected to Marion's 'snooping' around your desk."

"You'd better not try to go anywhere, Anderson," Lawyer Ward ordered. "We'll adjourn to the Council Room. You can give your explanation and it'd better be good!"

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

A TWOFOLD purpose has been served in cluttering this narrative with such detail. First, I have wanted to get out to readers of this biography, who were also writers of those letters, exactly what happened in this vital stage of the Legion's work in 1933. The episode, hitherto explained but sketchily, is now part and parcel of Silvershirt tradition. Second, it serves to illustrate the peculiar reactions of such a Movement on the temperament of a man like Anderson. For two hours Ward and Sieber grilled him in the Council Room while I sat by and listened.

Why had he done it? . . . As Treasurer of the project he was accountable for its finances. . . . If clerks opened the mail with currency in it, they might have temptation put in their way to filch it. He preferred to handle such matters himself and hadn't gotten around to opening so *much* mail or making out acknowledgments. . . . His alibi was so silly that we were all of us disgusted.

"You'll find nothing missing," was his ultimate announcement.

"With two thousand letters in your desk, why didn't you advise Mr. Pelley?" asked Ward. "As a businessman you knew that to hold up correspondence would eventually mean trouble."

Anderson had no answer. At the end of six days the tie-up was cleared.

"Well," said Anderson cheerily, coming into my office on the seventh morning, "what do I do next? You've got Sieber's statement that there's no shortage."

"But I haven't had your statement as to just why you did it."

"I told you. I was overworked—"

"Are you trying to tell me that after the way you walked the floor nights, and made appeals for the War Chest, you were actually unmindful of drawer upon drawer of remittances in your desk?"

He stared at me blankly. Finally he said, "I've never liked the job being Treasurer, anyhow. What I'd like better is a job in the field."

"My dear fellow," I said, "apparently it's not dawned on you that your usefulness here is done."

"You don't m-mean I'm *fired!*" In a whisper he added, "If you do that, you'll be sorry."

"Is that a threat?"

"No, just a warning."

"We're all washed up, Anderson. And I'm trying to live my Christian principles by not taking action against you for the damage you came near doing, or perhaps have achieved."

He started to argue, to appeal to my sympathies.

"*Get out!*" I ordered him.

The next day he tried to involve one of our young women in a criminal complication, coaxing her to filch certain important documents from the archives and deliver them to him. She reported his proposition. We instructed her to get the documents and keep her appointment. A private detective followed her, to arrest Anderson in the moment of receiving them. ☙ ☙

Anderson failed to meet the girl and we let the matter drop.

A year or so later, this was the gentleman who sat with the State's prosecution in the Buncombe County court room and assiduously counselled with the lawyers who were doing their utmost to send me to prison. The zeal with which he testified against me, the fraternity that was apparent between him and my prosecutors, made painfully obvious the prosecution's character. Incidentally he was exempted from answering any questions as to how he became disconnected from Legion Headquarters. He managed to convey to the jury that he had resigned for dark and mysterious reasons having to do with Headquarters' "irregularities." He did not specify just what these reasons were, or that he had made them instead of myself. . . . As the reader will see, it was that kind of "trial." . . .

Sieber stayed on in Asheville and took Anderson's place. The Silver Legion was forging ahead. One August day, while visiting my friend Louis McFadden in Washington, Marion Henderson sent me a telegram. ¶ A party of men were driving up to Asheville from Louisiana and urgently wished to see me. Notably among them was the Rev. Gerald K. Smith, later to achieve notoriety as orator at the funeral of the murdered Huey Long. . . .

THE Reverend Gerald Smith was a big-bodied, dynamic young man, with a wife as dainty as his voice was bombastic. He was pastor of a church in Shreveport, I learned, but had read my writings and was moved to be a Silvershirt. He was the sort of pastor who walks bareheaded in rain and breathes deeply and with gusto. During a two-day visit at Headquarters, during which time he, and his wife, and his brother-in-law, *all became Silvershirts,* he perpetually nursed a walking-stick.

This hatless young man—with the pretty wife and the walking-stick—had

been accompanied to Asheville by one "Major" Luther Powell, a gaunt and bald-headed man in tortoise-shell spectacles, whom I later learned to have been engaged in Ku Klux Klan work in the far Northwest. What did these want? The Reverend Gerald proposed to give up his Shreveport church and with Powell's assistance organize the Mississippi Valley for the Silvershirts.

It was their proposition. I sat and listened.

My days were filled with negotiations in this sort of thing. The Legion was growing so fast that I was increasingly desperate . . . desperate for capable and honest leaders to take charge and effect the discipline without which success would be abortive.

"Pay me a salary sufficient to keep my wife while I'm away," declaimed the Reverend Gerald, "and I'll resign from my church and start up the Mississippi Valley, publicizing Silvershirts to crowds on street corners. My idea is to recruit a cavalcade in Louisiana, to march through the country dressed in Silver Legion uniform, to sleep in the open and get this to the masses."

"Fair enough if you've got the nerve," I told him. He failed to impress me as a person of much ballast. Still, persons of his temperament have their places in this work. He could do little damage and not a little good.

¶ Thus I entered into contractual relations with the Reverend Gerald. He and Powell were to organize Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Missouri, and Iowa, for the Silver Legion.

Headquarters was strangely silent when the Reverend Smith departed. . . .

¶ Presently came a night telegram, which Marion brought to my desk with a smile. She remarked, "Our minister Boy Friend is waxing dramatic." This night wire read—

> WE ARE STARTING. IF WE FAIL, PITY US. IF WE SUCCEED, REWARD US. IF WE FAIL, SLAY US.
>
> SMITH.

"Messy job, slaying him," I remarked to Marion. "Let's hope he succeeds."

¶ But from the moment of receiving that wire, I knew he would not succeed. I took my carbon of his contract from my desk. I said to Miss Henderson, "Put it away in our file of curios. We won't be needing it."

¶ Sure enough, we didn't.

When I visited Shreveport a month or so later, I found from the boys there exactly what had happened.

The Reverend Gerald had intrigued a score of them to go with him on

his journey. Getting up into Arkansas, he held a couple of meetings on street corners. Angry Jews began to buzz around him like hornets. Suddenly the Reverend Gerald appeared to decide it was nicer to inveigh against the country's despoilers from the safe altar rails of a Christian church. ❧ ❧

He caught the first bus that came along, and left his earnest young crowd of Silvershirts to get back to Shreveport in any ways they could.

The next I heard of him, he was waving his arms all over Louisiana for Senator Long and his Share-the-Wealth Clubs.

I did not slay him.

DURING the middle of August came a strange convocation of Silvershirt leaders at Asheville. I describe it as strange in that it was not premeditated or arranged for. Suddenly it seemed that from all points of the compass, State organizers and district leaders converged on Headquarters. From as far distant as Idaho they came.

We held a three-day session.

"The time has arrived," they counselled, "to divide the work of the Legion into Eastern and Western Divisions. We need a Headquarters somewhere beyond the Mississippi. The western Shirts want *action!*"

"What sort of action?" I inquired. I thought I knew but wanted to hear them say it. Mrs. Leslie's prophecy, back in 1929, was maturing to the dot.

¶ "If we took some western State . . . say Oklahoma . . . and set up a Silvershirt Encampment, we could draw in the boys who are spoiling for a brawl from Kansas City to Seattle. Moreover, we could train them to handle men under them, to supply us with true leaders for the Christian Commonwealth." ❧ ❧

I turned to our man from Texas. "How many Silvershirts," I asked him, "do you seriously think you could enroll from *your* State to make a business of such gathering?" I meant those, of course, not handicapped by families.

He mused a moment. "Five hundred," he announced.

I knew two things which these fellows did not. First, it was within the karma of the Silvershirt Movement to work out a maneuver somewhere in the West. Second, tucked away in my files were letters from influential Oklahomans, informing me that if I would make the Legion a power in Oklahoma politics, aid in private ways might in no wise be lacking. . . .

¶ I knew that I *had* to go to Oklahoma. It was "on the cards" of this Movement, though *why* was beyond me.

My daughter Adelaide, now woman-grown, had completed her schooling and joined me in Asheville. Of a day in September we left Asheville with the eastern work established behind me. Marion Henderson remained behind as a "pivot" for Sieber. Adelaide became my secretary. With Helen and others I motored through the Great Smokies and on toward Oklahoma. . . .

CHAPTER NINETEEN

I HAVE frequently been queried: "What was your purpose in summoning up the Silvershirts?" . . . What did I expect to accomplish with them, practically? Did I expect to recruit enough men, and have them trained in implicit obedience, to dare intimidate the Federal Government? Had I hoped to launch a second Ku Klux Klan but devoid of the anti-Catholic stipulation? How could I expect to stir up anti-Jewish sentiment across the nation and yet do nothing to lead it into military action . . . which might have meant treason?

Examining from perspective my psychology in this period, based mainly on certainties of a prophetical nature, it was none of these and all of them. ¶ I felt that I knew positively, for instance, that nothing of a vital nature was going to occur throughout America until 1936. Furthermore, it wasn't to be the Legion as it was recruited in 1933 that would finally serve the nation in its interval of upset. Persecution must come first.

The thing that I was doing was *locating and proving leadership* for the country's greater plight years further ahead.

Just as The League for the Liberation had connected me with my first associates of worth, and supplied a background for the Legion when it came, so these Silver Cohorts were finding and testing character for heading the Christian Commonwealth. Over and over again, in a hundred places, students of this Movement will find this thought expressed in the sixty-seven issues of *Liberation Weekly* throughout 1933 and 1934.

"Three times you will fail," the Prophecy had uttered, "but the fourth time be successful! Yet the fourth time cannot happen unless three steps go before." The League, the College, the Legion, these were the steps that could now be identified.

And yet I knew also that the Christian Party, when it came, would be

made up of the gold drained off from human alloy in these initial three divisions. ☙ ☙

Looking back now I can discern that every move I made, supplied its contribution. No matter where I went, or what I did, I was making contacts, widening my lines, making the country conscious of Spiritual-Patriotism.

That the nation's vengeful marplots were going to conduct two inhuman persecutions of my labors, but that each would play its part in developing my destiny, was so certain that it colored my every thought. Our party discussed it freely on the long trip to Shreveport.

In Shreveport I found Powell.

The Major was disgusted at the behavior of Smith. He had employed himself recruiting men for the Oklahoma sojourn. In Shreveport I addressed a Post of Silvershirts, as splendid a body of Americans as the nation could produce. The Encampment was popular. The drama of it had caught them. Three carloads of men subsequently drew out of Louisiana and headed for Oklahoma City, with others soon to follow from Missouri and Texas. An ex-Texas oil man by the name of Leland Weeks was among this Shreveport contingent. He produced credentials purporting to show that during the War he had been in the Military Intelligence, and joined with us now to recruit a Silvershirt cavalry. Powell besought me to allow him to become Chief of Staff in the colorful gesture. Incidentally, before quitting Shreveport I made it possible for Powell to come with us by loaning him funds to meet his lapsed house rent. I seemed to have a weakness for saving families from ejection.

Assembled finally in a suite at the Huckins Hotel in Oklahoma City, I gathered the heads of this Encampment around me and issued their orders. First of all, we courted no publicity. Secondly, a tremendous amount of ground work must be done before any men were ordered to begin the concentration. The intimated backing must first be secured, buildings arranged for, a newspaper launched to correctly acquaint the West with the Silver Rangers' program.

Powell demurred. . . .

"We can't put this thing over without general publicity!" he cried.

"True," I agreed. "But let's make sure it's right. We certainly don't expect breaks from these Jew-owned local papers. Let's first get entrenched, then make our bid for favor."

Men heard we had arrived in Oklahoma, however. Heads of western Posts began coming to see me. From Texas and Nebraska, from Missouri,

from Arkansas, they made such a group that on my first Sunday in Oklahoma I had to address them. The Jews of Oklahoma City heard about it. *Silvershirts were in Oklahoma!* Up to the offices of the papers they smoked and forthwith the headlines blared. Seditionists were loose! Nazism threatened! All the good people who loved law and order were beseeched to gather 'round and protect their institutions.

"Where the devil are the reporters getting this stuff?" I demanded of Adelaide.

"I saw a group of fellows who looked like reporters coming out of Powell's room," she told me.

I sent for Luther Powell. "Have you been giving interviews contrary to my orders?"

It developed that he had, and our session was ugly.

Immediately I noticed a coolness growing between Powell and others on my staff. I thought at the time it concerned the publicity. Then more important business engaged my attention. We had a paper of our own to get out, to give the truth to Oklahoma people. My daughter—who had developed into an amazingly competent political writer—assisted as she could. But I wanted a man to take the heavier responsibility.

"What's the matter with Craig?" suggested Jasper Long, our Kansas City leader.

I said, "Who's Craig?"

"James Craig. The tall, elderly, white-haired man who attended the session Sunday. He used to be desk-man on the *Kansas City Star*. What's more, he's broke."

"I know," I said. "Everybody's broke. And Craig's about to be ejected for non-payment of his rent!"

"That's right," agreed Jasper. "How did you know?"

"Because I'm Santa Claus. I go around the nation fixing up men about to be ejected for non-payment of their house rent. It's part of the ritual for becoming a Silvershirt."

"I'll undertake to pay Craig's bills, if you'll let him stay here and give him a job."

"All right," I said. "I'll give him a try-out."

When I later saw Craig, I felt a sort of qualm. He was tall, sickly, sepulchral. On the top of a head of unruly white hair was a silly Jimmy Walker toque. I suppressed the vaudeville line that asked him, "How much would you charge to haunt a house?" But he thought he could handle the "Silver Ranger" editorship. Adelaide, with her inimitable sense

of humor, came into my room later that evening and said, "You'd better slip Craig a couple of dollars for grub, dad, or the first thing you know he'll be dying on your hands. It's cheaper to feed him."

We got Craig fixed up, and when a headquarters was opened assigned him to a desk. I was beginning to be worried. Powell's fool interviews with reporters had done a lot of damage. One especially nasty item had appeared—

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TO INVESTIGATE SILVERSHIRTS

Communicating immediately with friends of mine in Washington, I was advised that the Department of Justice had no more idea of "investigating" us than of sleuthing Mussolini. But that is the way Jews work. For this sort of "protection" of themselves have they secured domination of the American press.

The first number of our *Silver Ranger* appeared. It told Oklahoma the *truth* about the Silvershirts.

The battle was on.

"God send me *men!*" I prayed in a heartburn night after night. "Send me men of courage, character, and *brains!* I can't fight this fight with broken-down misfits!"

There were men for the ranks but leaders were lacking.

ONE NIGHT during the third week of these Oklahoma preparations, word was conveyed to me to call the New York City operator. A Manhattan banker friend came later on the wire.

"I want you to grab a plane and be here by Thursday noon," he told me."

¶ "What's so important?"

"Barney Baruch wants to have a talk with you. He wants you to come to luncheon."

"Luncheon? Barney Baruch? Which of us is crazy?"

"Barney commissioned me to find you and bring you up to luncheon. You're raising too much hell. He wants to fix things up. It's not everyone, you know, who gets that invitation from Barney Baruch."

"I wouldn't accept a luncheon date with Baruch if both of us ate from the same kosher stew-bowl."

"Have a little sense, man," my friend pleaded worriedly. "I think I can get you a fine bit of money for your work if you'll only be nice to him and handle the Legion along a slightly different line."

"The only contact I want with Barney Baruch," I responded, "is the excellent moment when I take off his hide and nail it to a door."
"But I'm supposed to fetch you. It's like an order from the President. No one turns down such a man as Baruch!"
"Then I'm Man Number One. You're merely just wasting phone tolls."
¶ I had to ring off to stop the other's protests. So Baruch considered me important enough to invite me to luncheon, eh? Then the Legion must be scouring.

AND the Legion was scouring. In Massachusetts and Oregon, in Texas and Utah, in Florida and Montana, the Silvershirts were gathering. Soon I had men in heavy numbers in every State in the Union but one. That State was little Delaware. California had more Silvershirts than either policemen or National Guardsmen. Mass meetings of Jews had been held in Philadelphia, Cleveland, Salt Lake City and Los Angeles, all having one tenor: How can Pelley be stopped?
In New York City some cunning but not clever Hebrew bedaubed the front of his own synagogue with Silver Legion labels. Whereupon a Jewish publication flew into front-cover headlines with a $500 reward for the arrest and conviction of the Silvershirt committing the "desecration."
¶ "Huh," commented a lean old Oklahoma Silvershirt when I showed him the offer, "guess if we wanted to desecrate their synagogue, we'd do it with sumpin' besides little paper stickers!"
That was western sentiment.
The Silver Ranger started with a circulation of 10,000 copies, climbed swiftly to 20,000, then mounted toward 30,000. The West was waking up. Groups of Silvershirt speakers began touring Oklahoma. One contingent of these arrived in the little town of Bristow where the American Legion Hall had been hired for the occasion. The meeting in this Hall had been set for eight o'clock. At half after seven a frantic ex-soldier sought out our spellbinder where he was dining in a restaurant.
"Are you gonna speak against Communism?" he asked.
"I certainly am," our speaker assured him.
"Then I'm afraid we can't let you have the Hall. You see, we've got too many Communists in the Legion over here. If you talked against Communism, you might hurt their feelings!"
Noble American Legion!
Our men made quick arrangements to take adantage of an offer from a local Silvershirt who owned an ice-cream parlor. Wicker tables were

moved out. A boy at the Legion Hall turned arrivals across the street. Immediately a clique of Jews posted themselves in the front of the refreshment place, along cigarstand and fountain, and took the name of every local person attending. Next day each Gentile, come to hear about the wholesome Christian activities of the Silvershirts, was politely informed by visitor or phone that if he attended any more such meetings, he would summarily be ruined. Trouble was brewing. My man called me frantically in Oklahoma City. "Move along," I instructed him. "They'll capitalize a riot to misrepresent us elsewhere."

Already there had been anti-Silvershirt riots on the streets of Los Angeles. My one-man war was upsetting the nation. . . .

Our speakers obeyed my instructions. Next night they arrived at a small town over the line in Arkansas. Practically all Gentiles of Bristow followed them. Speaking at a country schoolhouse that held forty children by day, the place was soon jammed so that over 500 heard the address through the windows. After the meeting, one of the attenders sought out our organizer. "We've got seven hundred men up here in the hills," he whispered. "Their families are starving but each man's got a rifle. If Pelley'll say the word, we'll blow off this lid by attacking Fort Smith and hanging every Jew within the city."

"Not a chance, brother," the zealot was informed. "This is an organization to preserve law and order, not destroy it."

I called the group in.

BUT mysteriously enough, the promised Oklahoma support was annoyingly delayed. Hebrews were blocking the procuring of ranch lands. *Silver Rangers,* deposited in the Oklahoma City post office for wholesale mailing, were not reaching purchasers. Out of one issue of the *Ranger*—of 20,000 copies—nearly 12,000 were never delivered. Such losses were ruinous and we needed money. We held a council of war. It was decided that I should make a trip East.

I left Craig and Adelaide in charge of the *Ranger,* and Powell and Weeks in charge of recruiting. Driving my car alone, I headed for Washington.

¶ In the national Capital, earlier in the summer, I had established *The Liberation News Bureau* as a personal enterprise to raise myself revenue. It was a weekly service of Confidential Bulletins to a select list of businessmen. Two trusted lieutenants had it in charge. Thus while Jewish papers were defaming me for public racketeering, I was truly drawing so little money from the Legion that I had to run a private project on the

side to support my dependents. From my Washington office I now wrote some letters to a list of close friends. I explained my predicament and the condition of the Legion.

Answers came back, with relief for my predicament. One Massachusetts person wrote indignantly: "I'm mailing you some money orders to Oklahoma City. See that you use it for your own private purposes. It's a gift, not a loan. The only condition attached to it is, that you must spend it on yourself."

I drove into Oklahoma City to find my daughter indignant. "You've got the wrong set-up here, dad," she warned me. "I've been learning a lot that I think you should know about."

"Go on," I prompted her.

"Well, first of all, I found out about Powell. We hadn't been in town two hours, and got quartered in the hotel, before Powell held a gathering in his room unbeknown to you."

"I suspected as much."

"He told them: 'If we play our cards right, we can get this whole Legion away from Pelley and run it for ourselves.' Rather than make trouble within the ranks, they've all of them kept quiet."

I sent for Luther. It was during the noon hour.

"I'm afraid," said I, "that your usefulness here is finished. I know all about your proposition to the men. But men are scarce, so I'll give you another chance."

Powell muttered an apology. What new chance would I give him?

"I'm sending you back to Asheville to work under Sieber. And you're not Chief of Staff, and what's more, you never have been. There's a party of our men returning to Asheville, starting within the hour. You go with them, or go to Shreveport. Which shall it be?"

He said he would go to Asheville. I saw the party start and returned to my office.

At two o'clock that afternoon the Paramount Sound Truck drove up before our office. Out of it spilled Jews.

"Vell, vere's Pelley? Ve come to take the pitchers."

"What pictures?" Long demanded.

"Shots for the News Weeklies. Doncha want to get in the movies?"

"We do *not!*" they were told.

"But ve got to get the pitchers. Ve made it an appointment. The big bald-headed guy who wears the glasses—he said Pelley'd be here and make it a speech for the movies about the Silver Legion."

"Clear out, before you get thrown out!" Jasper ordered all of them. A former cook in the Navy, standing six feet tall and weighing two hundred pounds, he reached for the Jew who happened to be nearest him.
Hebrews spilled out, squealing.
Powell, I discovered, had fixed a deal with the Jewish movie men to dress up a chap named Barnes, of my height and build, paste a Vandyke on his face, and have him read an asinine speech into the camera to be generally broadcast throughout the United States.
Ludicrous? Of course! But tragic if consummated. And now all a part of Silvershirt tradition.
Battle, battle, battle! So my days and nights went. A country was being undermined. Our culture was being gutted. The Washington Gang was looting the Treasury. Men in hordes were poignantly willing to follow able leadership. And men who should have been taking competent responsibility, were keeping to snug offices and indorsing NRA. I was trying to save the nation on dimes while such "leadership" as was available went about pasting whiskers on boys' faces. . . .
Craig of the Jimmy-Walker toque approached me in his best undertaker's manner later that evening and slipped me a letter. "There are money orders for five hundred dollars in it," he whispered. "Some person up in Massachusetts—"
"Yes," I said hastily, "I know all about those money orders." I put them in my pocket.
Craig made a wry face. . . .
This was the gentleman who, later in Los Angeles, arraigned me in his scurrilous diatribes before the nation, after *stealing* a part of *The Silver Ranger* mailing list and using it to tell people that I pocketed donations contributed for the work.
O God, send me *men!*

CHAPTER TWENTY

I DROPPED the idea of holding an Encampment. California was boiling with Silvershirt activity. Demands were reaching me by letter and wire to come to the Coast and locate there instead. The Golden State had leaders who were hewing to a line. Yet I could not leave at once. I summoned Alvin Bick.

Bick had come to Asheville from the Posts up in Idaho. He was one of our party when it went to Oklahoma. A tall, sparse, earnest man, with a startling resemblance to Ramsay MacDonald, he was clamoring for field work that meant real responsibility.

"Take your car and start for California," I instructed him carefully. "Enter the State at San Diego and move northward up to 'Frisco. Address all the Posts as you have opportunity. Hear their troubles. Tell them to be patient. I'll follow you out there as soon as I can make it."

Bick departed. I applied myself to winding up our affairs in Oklahoma. The explosive nature of the Southwest was such that to bring men in for training might precipitate violence. And yet excellent work had been done in Oklahoma. Contacts had been made there enduring to the present. By the day after Christmas, 1933, matters had so shaped themselves that I was free to leave. In came a wire a few hours before departure—

> BICK REPUDIATES YOU AS LEADER. HAS CALLED STATE-WIDE CONVENTION OF SILVERSHIRTS AT ATASCADERO TO FORM NEW ORGANIZATION. GET HERE AT ONCE. MOST LEGIONNAIRES STILL LOYAL.

Such are the vicissitudes accruing to a man who of his own efforts would build a liberating movement to save the land from chaos. It was not that these men were treacherous or vile. It was solely that they were little. They wanted to express themselves. They thought that the business of raising a great horde of patriots that might presently save the country, was printing a mass of literature and pasting a lot of postage stamps. Well, if I could do it they could do it also, and ascend to my position. True, they had no especial training to ascend to my position. They did not see that raising the dust, as I was doing in America, came from something else than ballyhoo. The organization that I was putting together,

with such materials as came to hand, hailed them in my stead and they forgot they were but sparrows who had been carried up to prominence—to use a brash metaphor—riding on an eagle's back and "taking off" from his flight's highest point. Yes, they saw opportunity to fly high, and took it. And I was the somewhat harassed and moth-eaten eagle—seeing that I have used the metaphor—that could only watch them shatter in the gales. High flights are for strong wings. So I saw them plunge to grief.

Of course not all helpers defected thus lamentably. Out of the scores, and even hundreds of splendid men across this nation, who have been mainly responsible for my achievements to date, Anderson, the Reverend Gerald, Powell, and Bick—and later Craig and Sieber—were the only ones deserting me when the battle came in earnest. These men, however, did much damage because their egress was so noisy. Each made a great pother about having "been at Headquarters" . . . each had access to mailing lists to satisfy his grudge. It never occurs to the critical public that if a man has "been at Headquarters" and is not now at Headquarters, perhaps the fault is his and he has grievously muffed it. "Being at Headquarters" doesn't mean a thing, excepting that for some reason or other, they failed to measure up. Sieber's case was different, as I shall later explain. . . .

No, these Little Men think it's all mailing lists and postage stamps, and if Pelley has done it, why can't they do it, also? So they try and they fail. And when they have failed, their way of getting back is to mutter behind the hand, " . . . if you only knew, as I know, what goes on at Headquarters"; and the public imagines everything it shouldn't. Pinned down to exactly what they mean, these Little Men never reveal anything specific, except that they have been dismissed.

And yet the theory seems to be, that a man who is a *real* leader should, with no bank roll to compensate men of ability, pick out his helpers with one hundred percent perfection.

O God, send me *men!*

OUR PARTY arrived in California on the first day of 1934, in the midst of the New Year flood. One of the first things which Helen and I did, when the rest had been quartered, was to drive up in the murk to Altadena, to visit the little bungalow that still meant so much.

My heart sank when I saw it.

The soft brown cedar shingles had been painted a brazen white. It thrust up like a hencoop whose whitewash was bedraggled. Trees and shrubs

were blasted. All lawn had disappeared. Could this be the same romantic little place where five years before we had stood and watched the sunset? . . .

Oh well, such is life.

We returned to Los Angeles and plunged into the battle.

Bick had come to California, discovered its Legionnaires frenzied for action, adjudged me incompetent because I kept my head, and set about saving the nation by himself. Yet I should be fair to Bick. The man was sincere. Not knowing the reasons for my many changed decisions—to meet new conditions—he thought me departing from my first-expressed principles. He did not know, as many do not know, that no leader can remain an immovable image. Projectiles would shatter the implacable statue. The true leader is the general on the battlefield. He alters his plans as the gauge of conflict dictates. He does not stop to explain to his regiments of soldiers why this or that is best. He directs! . . . and keeps his counsel.

Bick had been sure that I didn't know my business. Did the Californians want fight? He would see that they got it. Joining with an Atascadero astrologist he held a "convention" of all the West Coast Silvershirts.

Sixteen men responded—four of them my agents to report on what was done. ☙ ☙

Bick's schism was a flop. After a couple of months' trying to promote something he called the Associated Americans—which loyal Silvershirts nicknamed the Ass Americans—he was visited by tragedy. His eldest daughter, an accomplished violinist, vanished overboard from a Puget Sound ferry. . . .

Bick withdrew into his grief.

THE STORY of the California Silvershirts is yet in the writing. Perhaps in a sequel to this volume down later years, I can report how it finished. But my introduction to my own cohorts in the Golden State convinced me more than ever that my efforts were not fruitless, that America meant business. It was a queer sensation, to go back into the State where I had lived so much with Grant, Eddie, Helen, Matie Shaw, the movie-folk, and discover it in turmoil, acclaiming me as leader. A lot of water had "flowed under the bridge" since I made my decision that night at Svende Garde's. . . .

Could I be the same person?

Two men, as far apart in type and temperament as the poles, were awaiting

my advent when I reached the end of the trek in Los Angeles. Hinckley was a burly Protestant Irishman, six-foot-two in his stocking feet, spoiling for battle with all the Jews in Christendom. Cummings—today known as "Hial," the cartoonist, to LIBERATION readers—small, silent, keen as a ferret, only needing the ruff about his neck to make him the perfect medieval Norman, answered the door at the apartment provided for me, and when I took his hand, I felt I had known him always. Already, far and wide up and down the State, they had cohorts of Silvershirts awaiting my bidding. Meetings of Silvershirts in Los Angeles sometimes totaled a thousand persons.

And these were patriots, lovers of their country, eager to clean it of the aliens despoiling it.

What did I want done? I had only to speak and it would be executed.

"The first thing I want this crowd to do," I said bluntly, and employing the vernacular, "is to keep their shirts on! Verily their Silvershirts! We've not come together to overthrow the government. We're preparing to stand together as a *bulwark*, if these Jewish Reds abolish constitutionalism. That and naught else! When the Reds have wrecked the nation, we'll turn and rebuild it . . . in the Christian Commonwealth!"

"Hell, what sort of leadership is that?" roared Hinckley. "Me, I want action!" ☙ ☙

"If the Chief talked anything else, he wouldn't be capable of leading us," said Cummings.

Mine was the job of combining fire and ice.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

BEAR in mind that what was happening in California was by no means confined to that State alone. It was happening in Massachusetts and Florida, in Texas and Oregon, in Utah and Missouri. By the end of January, 1934, there was scarcely one State in the American Union that did not have its representation of Silvershirts. Every type of man was responding to the tocsin of the Legion, out of every walk of life. My problem was not to find men but to find leaders of men. Personally I did not see the Movement as a tawdry gesture at Jew-baiting, no matter how much the Jews themselves said so. Neither did I see myself as any American Hitler. What I *did* see, was a nation losing its spiritual moorings, dragging its anchor, beginning to drift before the gales of Red Bolshevism. Insofar as Jews were responsible for this vicious and tragic trend, I was against Jews as such. But no matter what my enemies were saying about me, in my heart of hearts my concernment was to aid America as I could, to get through her Seven Lean Years of impoverishment successfully, hold her true to the concepts and precepts of the Continental Fathers, and ultimately rebuild her commercial and social structure along more stable and impregnable lines. I was convinced that any country which periodically encountered the strifes and upsets of 1893, 1907, and now 1929, with financial losses running into the billions, had something wrong with its internal machinery. Our economic and financial ensemble had to go through a renovating alteration. Day unto day the machinations of the gang that had come into power in Washington, were getting sillier and sillier. No real gesture in intelligent statesmanship had been made. I plainly saw, as Congressman McFadden and Robert Sharpe had earlier seen, that American officialdom had been deliberately emasculated of ability and character in preparation for such a crisis. An international clique was at work, not only gutting the vast reservoir of wealth that was the United States Treasury and the American banking system, but the morale and stamina of the citizenry as well. This clique had made long preparations for the success of their plot. Now there was no one to stand up and expose it, no one of national prestige to take a firm grasp on the helm of State and halt it. The country had leaders but no Leader. People by the millions were becoming more and more hysterical as economic conditions grew worse. So many suicides were becoming of daily occur-

rence that newspapers refused to publish the incidents. The general bedlam was becoming devastating, while a vain and irresponsible man in the Chief Executive's chair was docilely carrying out the orders obviously handed him by one tight little group of Hebrews ensconced in a house in Georgetown. A Congress made up of bewildered men, seemingly chosen for their incompetency, kept up the phantasm of representative government. The real work of government—at least such government as a stricken nation was getting—was being done by a small handful of Jewish financiers, who kept from sight as artfully as possible, letting each development of their cunning be made to appear as a natural happening. For a man who had the resources to see through every move they made—tending straight toward dictatorial Bolshevism—who had the intelligence to likewise discern what the American people truly needed in the way of economic and spiritual leadership, and yet who found himself with an ever-growing horde of increasingly disgruntled common citizens at his back, my position was not an enviable one. I knew what was being done to smash Constitutional government. I knew what should be initiated to cure the bedlam, and I had men who wanted to go into action against their despoilers, figuratively armed with broomsticks and air-rifles. My task was not only to educate the masses but to organize and astutely direct these men, so that when the proper time came, any action which might be taken would be cool-brained and constructive, that would truly arrive somewhere and achieve lasting good. What I needed was men who were the extension of myself, with my own early training, my desire to see a truly valuable piece of statesmanship performed. I was heartsick, night after night, at the type of human being with which I had to work. I had, potentially, the makings of a great national army of liberators in the rank and file. But alas, my captains, colonels, majors, and generals—men who might step forth and meet the issue courageously and efficiently, giving thousands of splendid fellows the lieutenant-leadership they commanded—were still chained to their desks, sold on the idea that Roosevelt and his Georgetown Gang should be "given a chance," hoping against hope that what I was trying to make them see was the product of a novelist's imagination. It was an appalling prospect.

Soon I perceived other phases of my dilemma. Half the men and women who had joined the Legion looked upon the movement as a spiritual gesture only. They saw it metaphysically. Their idea was to hold Post meetings, turn down the lights, sit in meditation, "commune with Holy Spirit," and trust to what they termed "constructive thinking" to solve the problems

hourly looming higher on the fateful horizon. The other half had joined the Legion because it promised action. They assumed that, overnight, I was going to hurl a mob of reckless roustabouts together and start some mad project like a March on Washington. This element saw the Jewish question as something to be solved by squadding up, attacking Jewish tailor shops by night, smashing the glass, and leaving threatening missives in Hebrews' letter boxes. If I attempted to control and discipline the latter —in fact give them undue attention—the first looked askance at me and murmured that I was departing from the mentorship of the Christ. If I gave countenance to the metaphysical, meditating element, the actionist boys were disgusted and rebellious that the Movement was obviously an old ladies' sewing circle. Shuttling back and forth between these two elements were scores of loyal and well-meaning individuals, who took it upon themselves to do the strangest things, under the impression that they were helping me bear my load. Several anti-Semitic riots had occurred in the downtown streets of Los Angeles when Jews had attacked newsdealers openly selling our Silvershirt periodicals and our men had fought them off. Straight to city and police authorities had sped all kinds of volunteer "fixers," purporting to have been sent by me personally, who swiftly disgusted the authorities by their behavior, causing them to exclaim, "If this is the calibre of man that Pelley appoints to represent him, the man must be an ass and his Movement a joke." Of course I knew nothing about such incidents. But that did not stop these volunteer fixers from bringing myself and followers into disrepute. Men whom I had never seen, much less empowered, climbed the platform at disorderly Silver Legion meetings, announced themselves as speaking for me, and made the most asinine or dangerous addresses, further confusing and disgusting the public. Meanwhile Jewish and Communistic spies were everywhere, teasing amateur leaders into compromising situations. The whole Silvershirt horde required military discipline from top to bottom. But military discipline is military discipline. It rests on severe penalties for infractions of rules. It depends on uniforms to designate rank and therefore authentic responsibilities. I had a great volunteer mob, aroused, reasonably loyal, eager to go into action and straighten out the nation, but I had to win men, hold them, control them, by nothing but personality. Throwing them in the brig for violations of orders was a satisfaction that was denied me. So long as they were acting voluntarily, I did not even have the power of the purse-strings over them. My days and nights were a long and disordered bedlam of meeting situations where reports of activities

would invariably be followed by angry exclamations on my part, "Who told that irresponsible muddlehead to do any such thing?" The reply would be, "No one told him, he just went ahead and did it!" Whereupon I had to fix up the mess resulting, as best I could.

I had to keep a cool head through all this din, never lose my temper, show no partiality, raise the money for executive expenses, cajole the hotheads against the more fantastic projects, listen sympathetically to the woes or blunders of little people who saw the movement only as a squabble in their own backyards, and all the while keep a weather-eye out for what was happening in Massachusetts, Florida, Ohio, Missouri, Utah, and Texas, not to mention a score of additional States, where leaders were becoming resentful that I was giving the Golden State attention which they deserved as well.

For the first time in my life, however, I found myself in a situation that demanded, and received, every last ounce of talent and ability that went to make my character. In that much I was satisfied. I had to hold the actionists down until the condition of the nation warranted reprisals against the Washington Gang, while at the same time I trained the metaphysical element to see that "thinking nice thoughts" was all right in its place, but that nice thoughts had to be translated into constructive action in the right place and moment. Meantime I was keeping two weekly publications running, routing Legion speakers, holding conferences with leaders, striving to hold an even tempo in the work from the Pacific to the Atlantic. ❧ ❧

Hinckley, my galvanic Irishman, said to me one night, "I think I've got exactly the man you need to grab hold of these wild men and lick some discipline into them. He's Colonel McCord of the Reserve Officers Training Corps. I'll have him at the house tomorrow night and if you can sell him on your program, your local battle will be won."

So I met the Colonel on the ensuing night. I found myself closeted with a grizzled old army man, who had a long and honorable war record behind him. He knew army discipline and how to achieve it. He would undertake the job of organizing the Pacific Coast Silvershirts and make them a force to be reckoned with if I would give him the authority and find money for his expenses. Was this my Baron von Steuben? Eagerly I hoped so.

Suddenly, however, before I could go into minute details about all the Legion's west-coast affairs with the Colonel, came an SOS from Asheville and New York. I had to make a swift trip back to those places. Anti-

Silvershirt riots had broken out in Manhattan and New Jersey. Halls had been stench-bombed. Men had been hurt. If I wished to hold my organization intact in the east, I must pay the Atlantic coast a visit.

In Pasadena was a young Silvershirt flyer who owned a plane. I hauled him out of bed at midnight. "How quick can you fly me to North Carolina and Washington?" I asked him.

"Get you there in two days," he replied.

"Warm up!" I ordered. "I want to make the trip so quickly that West Coast people don't know that I've been absent."

At seven next morning, before the mist-banks had burned away before the California sun, Don and I took off in an open-cockpit Steerman plane.

¶ Whereupon ensued one of the most memorable experiences of my life, an experience which can never come again, from the nature of the circumstances. I flew across my United States in a trifle less than 40 hours—Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Missouri, finally Tennessee, and the Great Smoky Mountains west of Asheville passed below me one mile down. I had plenty of time to think in those hours. Just what did I propose to *do* with these Silvershirts?

The Jews took a masochistic pleasure in the foregone conclusion that I was recruiting an army of Christian barbarians to murder them all in their beds. A cross-section of the citizenry given to accepting and believing whatever they read in the papers, was stupidly convinced that I was raising a seditious horde to overturn the federal government and install myself as dictator. Most of the Roman Catholics of the country, flimflammed and bamboozled by conniving Jews, got the scare that I was reviving the Ku Klux Klan. In Boston and other New England cities, the Hearst newspapers—managed by Jewish editors—had said so to Massachusetts Catholics in eight-column front-page headlines. All the political lunatics in the nation, jealous of the personal following I was getting, took time off to inform a bilked and stricken public that, at the most, I was a dangerous racketeer.

Privately I knew that Roosevelt's NRA was not Roosevelt's at all, but an economic step artfully planned by Frankfurter and his crowd, to close the gap between the Hoover brand of Republicanism and the Browder brand of Sovietism slated for the nation somewhere around 1940. The Jews who had plotted the Red bankruptcy of the nation were using the NRA codes to force unsuspecting Gentile businessmen to turn in the most vital statistics on their operations to the government, where one Dr. Alexander Sachs was compiling and computing them. Crawling masses of

Jews, calling themselves "advisers" or "economists," were assailing these thousands of reports, learning the most vital trade secrets of their former Christian competitors, and bragging among themselves that they would have every Gentile businessman *out* of business within two years.

I knew as well that the heavy bond issues which a nit-wit Congress was approving at any crack of the Georgetown Whip were not for the purpose of providing relief for America's stricken millions. No honest attempt was being made to furnish the average citizen with a restored buying power. The "gag" had another character. First, the bonds enabled the despoilers to beggar and close the banks of the country by making the bankers exchange billions of their liquid capital for pretty sheets of lithographed paper—which would ultimately come to mean nothing as assets, inasmuch as there would be no market in which to sell them. Second, this atrocious load of bonded debt would eventually lift taxes to such an appalling level—to pay interest charges—that owners of private property would have to surrender and relinquish it, lacking a revenue to keep it up. This would create a homeless and disillusioned people with nothing of a sentimental value to fight for. A great cross-section of Gentile "bankers" would get the blame for mass foreclosures, the death-knell of "capitalism" would be sounded, and eventually a rancorous United States would be in a mental condition where "the beauties of Communism" would be applauded as a gesture of sheer reprisal. It was an astutely worked-out scheme, and daily and hourly I beheld it scouring.

My purpose in forming the Silvershirts—in my own heart at least—was to prepare a great horde of men nationally to meet the crisis intelligently and constructively. Every Silvershirt must know the full extent of the conspiracy, see it in its most detailed workings, get his thinking up onto a level where the size of the plot could be accredited, and if Red Communism in all its frightfulness were finally projected upon the country, be in a position to join with tens of thousands of similarly-enlightened Christians, and preserve the form of Constitutional government set up by the forefathers. If this last meant using force to hurl a great regime of scoundrels from the country, very well then, it meant force. But I proposed that it should be intelligent force, correctly directed, reasonably disciplined, that knew—as a police force knows—what it was seeking to achieve and how best to go about it. My supreme handicap lay in the circumstance that I was thinking approximately six years in advance of the rest of the nation. People were not then ready to accredit that any overseas gang had either the nerve or the brains to steal and take over

this mammoth country for its godless purposes. I must be insane to conceive such a thing. My second handicap was, that I had every newspaper, every radio, every talking-picture screen in the nation, turned against me to defame me as a racketeer. Of course I must be a racketeer, taking millions of graft money away from dupes, else why should I concern myself with what any gang was doing to the nation at all? Outside of revenue, what could there possibly be in it for *me?* My third handicap was, that back in 1934 I could scarcely get a man of standing to aid me financially. The affluent man, not yet aware of the true purpose of NRA, preferred to give Roosevelt's "policies" a chance. Or he was so ensnared already that he could not support me without suffering financial reprisals from Jewish affiliations. I was financing my hectic activities from little contributions, $1, $5, and $10 bills donated by an arousing common people. The contention made by my Jewish adversaries later, that I was secretly being financed by Adolf Hitler, was an atrocious fabrication. It fooled the public for a time and did some mischief. But like most Jewish duplicities, it eventually back-fired on those who projected it. My fourth handicap was a mediocre success in finding men to serve the movement who combined ability with loyalty, and loyalty with intelligence. Take Craig as example. . . .

I had left Craig in Oklahoma City for a time to close up the affairs of *The Silver Ranger.* Of course he needed money. I told him to sit tight until I reached California, when I would raise the money and send it back to him. Subsequently on arriving in Los Angeles, some Liberation students furnished me with funds. Immediately I wired Craig to inform me how much he required to square the remaining bills and come on to the Coast. I got his answer and remitted him the cash. The days had gone by and he had not appeared. So finally I dropped from the clouds in an airplane in Oklahoma City, and summoned him to a friend's office where I could ascertain what had delayed him. I found out readily.

The man had used the funds that I had wired him, to pay his own expenses. He alibied this by mumbling some half-disgruntled excuse that I had never paid him half enough for his services anyhow, and he felt he had taken what he had coming to him. Few if any of the remaining Oklahoma City bills had been paid, and I must raise the sums all over again. In plain police language, Craig had diverted trust funds of a sort to his own private uses, and the Silvershirts in Oklahoma City were in bad repute in consequence. I could, of course, have had Craig jailed. But why jail an elderly sick man without the vision to see the Movement in

larger terms than his grocery bills and rent? Besides, I had been responsible for leaving him behind. Also I could not be bothered—loaded down with executive responsibility as I was—with a silly prosecution of an individual in Oklahoma involving at the most but a few hundred dollars. I heard his story, held my peace, told him to wait till I got east and I would find other ways of settling the local obligations. Secretly I hoped that he would return to Kansas City, as he had been a pathetic liability from the day that Jasper Long persuaded me to hire him.

So I was increasingly appalled, I say, at the dearth of men either capable or willing to take responsibility in this increasing national dilemma. I had many good men about the nation, yes. If I had not had them, there would have been no Silver Legion setting the Judan Lion by the ears or twisting the poor old moth-eaten Leo's tail. But they in turn were sounding the same poignant wail. Was it possible that the gutting of American manhood, and Christian morale, had gone so far that this courageous gesture would go away merely for lack of material to guide it? I held to my faith that if I did the best of which I was capable, the men would finally come forward. . . .

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

EVERY item of the prophetic material which my nurse friend and I had received that evening in New York back in 1929, every item which Mrs. Leslie had predicted in that epochal session which followed, had come true to the moment. . . . Banged, tossed, dropped, raised, side-swiped, and boosted ever onward by our sturdy motor, our plane winged eastward and I looked down on the America that I wanted to serve so efficiently that the longing was now an ulcer in my life. And as it winged, I considered all this enlightenment which had been my portion, from sources spiritual or secular, in the light of experiences yet to be. If all the details of the prophetic material due to come to pass up to the present *had* come to pass, then how could I doubt that prophecies whose *denouement* was still in the future would materialize as well? Somehow, out of this bedlam of volunteer workers for human liberties was coming an order, a Movement, an *achievement*. Mrs. Leslie had said, however, that I must undergo seven years of struggle before the tide turned in my

favor. I had persecutions yet to endure. Three attacks would be made upon my life. Still, at the end lay victory. It was somehow Written . . . in cosmic event. Well, maybe! I had become a different man, however, than the one who lay in the Wilmington tenement and grieved for Harriet, who saw that young Russian mother weeping in the midnight of the Irkutsk station, who stood in Beverly Hills without money in his pocket, who had heard the ambulance go clanging past the Marengo Avenue intersection. Always before me now was that mystical theophany in the Mojave Desert Pullman. No matter whether it was hallucination, delusion of grandeur, *bona fide* brevet from Between the Worlds, or subconscious desire to live my life to the utmost, the Program set for me was maturing. I was suddenly part of the very essence and fibre of my country's current history.

So Don set his sturdy plane down on the North Carolina flying field south of Asheville. Marion came after me in a car. I walked into our national headquarters, and twirled the chair before my desk, as though I had only been out for lunch. Harry Sieber piled papers before me. I dispatched them rapid-fire fashion, caught a night's sleep, and prepared with Don to take off next morning for Washington. It was 500 miles to Washington, yet flying in crow-line, we should be there by dusk.

Up through morning cloud-bank our plane poked its nose, and Mount Mitchell's peak passed below us on the right. Ahead was Roanoke, our first and only halt to refuel and eat. But we had been delayed in getting away from Hendersonville and it was three in the afternoon—a winter's day in February—before we taxied up to the Roanoke hangar, unclasped our safety belts and went inside to thaw out.

On more than one occasion during this trip my pilot had shown himself an expert. But taking to the air for the final leg of our hop, with the February sun dropping low in the west, I began to have qualms at the vista before us. We were heading into twilight, the country beneath us was savagely wooded hill-land, the cold was growing bitter. What if our motor conked in the zero temperature with no landing beneath us but tree-covered slope? But our motor purred faultlessly, even as it had purred through 40 hours from the Coast. It was not the motor that bothered, not then. Darkness meant terrain with which Don was unfamiliar, and he could not pick out landmarks from the map across his knees. We veered eastward and sought to pick up the beacon lights that stretched from Miami to Manhattan. Finally miles eastward we beheld one flashing.

It got darker. It got colder. The stars came out in a steel-black sky. For

a hundred miles in every direction spread corrugated woodlands, with here and there a pocket-handkerchief patch of whiteness that indicated a negro's summer cornfield. Still our motor drummed sturdily. It was nearly eight o'clock when faintly in the east I saw the nimbus above a city. Was it Washington? Unless we had lost our course, it *should* be Washington? Don disregarded the beacons and flew directly for it. At the end of another half-hour we came over the metropolis and I looked overside for familiar landmarks, the Dome of the Capitol, the Washington Monument. The city seemed as big as Washington but not a landmark could I recognize. Finally I made out a bridge under construction over the ribbon of frozen river far below. "Richmond!" I shouted to Don. He read my lips and nodded. This meant another hundred miles to go before we could drop on a sizable landing-field.

The temperature, a mile in the air and traveling at nearly a hundred miles an hour, became so agonizing that I almost sobbed at the torture of it. To thrust my helmeted face around the corner of the windshield meant to have it frozen in a quick blast of pain. Northward toward Fredericksburg we drummed our night-sky trek. Far below us I could see the winking fireflies of auto headlights on the Richmond-Washington Pike. Another thirty minutes and the ordeal would be over. Fredericksburg slipped away beneath our tail. Faint and far away at last I made out the distant nimbus of the Capital.

Then it happened.

The motor lost a beat, coughed, staggered . . . and sputtered badly. For a quarter-moment we volplaned. Was Don merely gliding while shifting from one gas-tank to the other? I glanced beneath. Nothing but woodlands, woodlands, woodlands as far as the eye could carry.

But the motor resumed.

It drummed steadily once more and we regained our lost altitude. It *had* been a shift from one gas-tank to the other, I thought. I thanked my lucky stars that no forced landing was going to be necessary over that forest. I turned my eyes ahead to that nimbus over Washington. . . .

Then the motor conked dead!

There was no mistaking it this time.

The icy night-wind was rushing through the struts. The guy wires were singing. The propellor was like a rakish arm thrust up before me by a scarecrow.

And we were going *down!*

I knew from the frantic manner in which Don was keeping in motion from

one side of his cockpit to the other that he was seeking the biggest patch of cleared ground beneath him on which to drop his machine as he could. The quiet, after the motor's all-day roar, shrieked at my eardrums. In a stupendous circle we glided earthward. We crossed the Fredericksburg Pike and the fireflies of headlamps died in our rear. Where now?

Three thousand miles of flying across the whole of the United States, and now *this* above the wooded hills of Virginia! Strange to narrate, it was not exactly a sense of Death that crept over me in those fateful moments. I recall saying over and over to myself, "Well, the thing that I've been trying to put out of mind ever since leaving Helen at Pasadena, *is now happening!*" But it was for the safety of Don and his plane that I was hysterically grieving.

And nearer and nearer came the earth—only a sprinkling of lightly-fallen snow showing the cleared spaces that opened through the woods.

Finally we were down where the tree-tops were greeting us.

An open space appeared ahead. Gaunt, leafless limbs and branches loomed before us. I saw that Don had somehow contrived to guide the plane down into the avenue of a woods road. Ahead was a two-hundred foot clearing, a hillside cornfield with grade sloping southward. Get our "tail" down, we could not. Don discerned the inevitable, realized he must not crash the woods head-on and drive the motor back through my body, pulled up the plane's nose at the strategic moment, and pancaked the undercarriage squarely on the brush.

I recall a taut fence-wire that snapped with a whine, a rock, a leap, a rush and a *bump!* That bump, and the impact of my forehead against the cowling, came together.

Then all was silent.

We had made our landing.

"All right, Chief?" was Don's quick demand.

"Yes, I'm all right. How about you?"

My pilot failed to answer. But he was disentangling himself from his belts, so I knew he had not been hurt. I got myself free of the forward cockpit, walked out on the left-hand wing and dropped to solid ground.

Don got both legs over the edge and took the five-foot leap from the tail's rakish incline. But he was farther to the rear than myself, and the cleared space beneath him was *not* solid ground. It was frozen expanse of the ten-foot creek that encircled the pasture on the south. And the ice gave way.

Don went into water to his knees!

"A danged good airplane gone to hell!" he sobbed over and over as I pulled him to dry ground.

"It's not smashed so badly that it can't be fixed. What I'm chiefly concerned about is where we've landed. You're soaked to the skin and have got to have a fire."

We examined the plane as we could in the dark. Insofar as I could see, no damage had been done beyond a partially-bent undercarriage and a twisted propellor blade. Woods were about us. A maze of winter-sear brush that covered the creek had acted as a cushion, breaking the impact of our stop. How to reach the highroad before Don's feet froze, was the problem. ❧ ❧

So we wandered.

We tramped two hours in those winter woods.

It was eleven o'clock when we finally emerged on the Fredericksburg Pike. Down the Pike was a filling station run by colored people. We gained to its light and entered its warmth. For the first time I saw Don as our mishap had wounded him. He had thumped his head against his dashboard and cut his forehead. He had lost much blood down eyes and face. ¶ A solicitous colored woman gave a motherly cry at sight of him and helped him to a chair. She brought hot water and towels. I helped get Don's boots off and chunks of ice spattered over the floor. Then she made us coffee and fried us ham and chicken. She even made hot biscuits.

Her husband, a characterful negro, was concerned in rounding up a crew to go back in the woods and help us to get our baggage.

I had figured in a forced landing from a mile's height, on the coldest night of the winter of 1934, and come down in ragged woodlands without suffering a scratch.

"You know, Chief," Don drawled weeks later, when we were riding late one evening in a motorcar, "there was somethin' funny about that landin'. . . . I've never mentioned it but perhaps I oughta. You know . . . I wasn't workin' that stick as we were glidin' down. I found I couldn't work it. I know it sounds screwy, but *somebody else had hold of it!* . . . I'll swear there was somebody I couldn't see, right there with me in that cockpit! They made the landin' . . . believe it or not!"

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

I COULD not be overly upset by airplane crack-ups. I had to get on to Washington and New York. I left Don with a crew that would take the plane apart next morning, caught the Greyhound bus for the Capital and another night found me registered at a hotel in Newark. I knew that an immediate return to the Coast was out of the question. The staff out there must carry on as best it could until I got back. And yet judge my feelings when a report of the mishap to my daughter, Adelaide, brought back this intelligence—

YOUR RETURN IMPERATIVE. McCORD AND OTHERS IN LOS ANGELES HAVE INCORPORATED COMPETITIVE SILVER LEGION WITH YOUNG RADICAL NAMED CASE AS NEW CHIEF. HAVE BEGUN PUBLICATION THEIR OWN EDITIONS OF SILVER RANGER NEWSPAPER. CROWD HERE LOYAL BUT PUBLIC CONFUSED.

I went up to my room and sat down in the quiet.

During the next half-hour I lived one of those periods that no one knows about but the man who has sincerely tried to give to his fellows to the best of his ability and discovered himself betrayed for thirty pieces of silver by his Judas.

Having tried every other expedient to stop me or wreck me, now the subversive crowd was striving to set up a rival Silver Legion and split the ranks by a rancorous dispute as to which contingent was the *bona fide* Silvershirt body to recognize. They were the same tactics later employed in the Labor Movement to destroy the A. F. of L., by the C. I. O. But McCord! . . . a grizzled old army man with a record behind him . . . could it be possible he would engage in such deceits? Intuitively I knew what had happened. The wild-cat element in the Legion, that had more than once criticized me for not letting them mob the Los Angeles Jews, were determined to translate the Legion's influence into what they termed "action." . . . Action, to this element, was common rioting and I would have none of it. So rebellion had broken out. Somehow or other Colonel McCord had been inveigled into heading it, probably armed with credentials I had given him before departing. A pretty kettle of fish, indeed!

I was marooned in snow-bound New Jersey with a grounded airplane in Virginia. Should I go back by train and leave Don to get home alone when repairs had been completed? I finally made the type of decision that I have been called upon to make in many similar situations since.

"I'm doing the best I can with what I've got to work with," I told myself wearily. "If this apathetic and menaced nation wants to leave it to one man to carry on its war against the looters and despoilers, it's not for me to groan about. So long as I know in my own heart that I'm doing the best I can, I'll have to leave the outcome to Higher Powers than mine."

¶ There must, of course, be sense to it somewhere.

I wired Adelaide to watch developments, see that I was kept informed, and look for me back as soon as my New York business was completed. With Newark as base, I went over to Manhattan.

The Jews of New York were up in arms against the Silvershirts. Jewish newspaper reporters had penetrated into Post meetings, to write the vilest fabrications of what they had seen and heard. We were plotting a great pogrom of Manhattan's Israelites, screeched one paper. We were armed and primed to advance on Washington, assassinate the President, grab the government, and install myself as dictator, railed another. The Silver Legion was a gigantic sucker-scheme, declaimed a third, and when I had "cleaned up" financially I was all set to desert my dupes and flee abroad with sizable funds I was hoarding secretly. Such were the delectable dishes with which a hoodwinked public was served.

"This man is Public Enemy Number One!" one Jewish daily emblazoned libelously. "If the government does not halt him, he will overthrow Constitutionalism, and American Democracy will be a thing of the past!"

Yes, the Jews had the jitters. But they also had the newspapers. They also had the money, millions of it, all looted first from stricken Americans. The great Jewish leaders knew among themselves that I was *not* racketeering, that I was "onto" their schemings from first to last, that I stood an excellent chance of recruiting the nation to rise and oust them. The thing that discomfited them most, however, was the fact that I had rolled up my prestige and gained the national ear without money to underwrite me. They depended on money themselves, these Gargantuan plotters, to put their atrocious schemes across. They likewise depended on their control *over* money to hobble or halt any leader who might rise and challenge them. Yet here was I, selling the entire American nation on the actuality of their plot, and contriving to do it on pennies and nickels. They had no way to get *at* me! Gnashing their teeth in the

vilest of Hebrew hatred, the only weapon left them was open libel upon my character and program. They knew I had neither time nor resources to institute libel suits by wholesale. If I let myself be drawn into such, I would be prosecuting nothing else. Besides, what sort of judgments would I get in New York where magistrates and juries would be predominantly Hebrew?

No, I had to use a different defense.

It was accorded to me in such incidents as the situation I encountered on my second night in Manhattan. . . .

I had come to New York to meet with a few men of affluence in the Union Club on upper Park Avenue, to discuss with them some of the more intimate phases of the NRA conspiracy against Gentile business, and win their financial backing as I could. Arriving at the Union Club to confer with them precisely on the dot of five o'clock one February afternoon, I was sent by the flunky to a certain room abovestairs. At once I was puzzled. Had I been misdirected? The room was one of the largest in the club. It was crowded with men and thick with cigar smoke. Pausing in the corridor, uncertain what to do, I saw my host. His face was white.

"My Lord, Pelley! . . . I invited you here to talk with three men and look what's happened! . . . The club got word that you were going to be here and they want to hear you speak! . . . have you got anything to say to so many?" ❧ ❧

Had I?

"Don't let it worry you," I laughed.

"Can you . . . make them a speech?"

"I think I can."

Into the great room and around to the head of an expansive table I was conducted. A hundred men, the cream of the Republican and financial leaders of New York, found chairs around that Board. Two or three foreign ambassadors were present. My host introduced me. . . .

For two solid hours I talked to those men as I had addressed no crowd in my life. I took them back into the earliest and most clandestine origins of the racial attack from which they were suffering. I traced the ramifications of the great international banking houses through recent subversive activities which they might check for themselves. I named names, and dates, and places. I gave them the story of the Silver Legion, what was ahead for them, and what the Legion presumed to do.

And regardless of the fact that most of those men had put in a fatiguing business day in the lower city, they sat like schoolboys and absorbed

every word. Only three men arose and left in the two hours of my talk. They sent apologies later that their departures had been occasioned by previously made engagements.

Here and there as I talked I beheld doubting Thomases with sneers on their faces. When I made the statement that Jacob Schiff's domination of Theodore Roosevelt at the Portsmouth peace conference, and subsequent recognition of Japan as victor in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904, had since cost the United States 35 billions of dollars—in Pacific fleet, island fortifications, protection of our interests in the Philippines and China . . . and subsequent loss of American trade to the Japanese because of their recognized military power—there were those who decided that I had spiraled into stratosphere. No matter! I had made my computations from United States Department of Commerce Abstracts. When I told them that Roosevelt's genealogy showed that he was a Sephardic Jew, a few laughed openly.

Later, in the club grill, I was detained by a large contingent of my auditors until 1:30 in the morning. The main body of those present declared that I was right.

Two years later I was to get repercussions from the scoffers. . . . "If I'd only had *sense* enough to accredit what you told us that night at the Union Club!" . . . Such were the lamentations.

It was in such episodes that I have gotten in my most telling blows against predatory Jewry. What the Jews had to do, therefore, was to suppress such exposes by suppressing me personally. This Silver Legion business had to be *smashed* and no nonsense about it!

With my Manhattan and Washington business finally completed, and while on my way back to Virginia to rejoin Don in his mended plane and make the return flight to California, I called in at a midnight lunchroom on the Baltimore Pike.

The radio was blaring out the news of the day.

"Washington!" declaimed the announcer. "Congress today appropriated the sum of twenty thousand dollars to finance an investigation by a House Committee led by Congressman Dickstein of New York, to probe the extent of Nazi and other un-American activities throughout the United States. This body will be known as the McCormack Committee, after Congressman McCormack of Massachusetts. Subversive activities of all kinds will be investigated with an eye to vigilante organizations reputed to be financed in this country by Germany's pint-sized dictator, Adolf Hitler!" ☙ ☙

"Who does that mean?" demanded Jones, one of the attaches of my Washington office, my motor companion of the moment.
"*Us,* of course," I said grimly. "I've been expecting it for months."

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

IF CALIFORNIA had been a bedlam when I came into the State in January, it was now a madhouse—insofar as Silvershirt activities were concerned—when Don set his Steerman down in a perfect three-point landing on the Pasadena flying-field one week later. My first maneuver, after contacting my daughter and getting her full report of happenings in my absence, was to summon District Leader Kemp from San Diego. Kemp had the most men enrolled, equipped, and drilled. If the Reds sought to take over California, he was prepared to give them a contest.
"What about McCord?" I demanded when we found ourselves alone.
"*Dumb!*" exploded my lieutenant. "He might be a great army officer but when it comes to knowing what we're up against fighting these Jews he's an infant in arms. You hadn't been out of the State three days before he was issuing orders for a public mobilization and review of Silvershirts in the San Diego districts. Of all maneuvers on earth that'd play directly into the hands of the Communist Jews, such a thing was the worst. For months they've been spending money like water and adopting every expedient known to the rabbis, to learn the identities of our men. The idea's to browbeat them, intimidate them, or sling-shot them, to desert the Legion. Now McCord wants them all brought out in public array where every man-jack of them can even be *photographed.* When I refused to jeopardize my boys by any such fool maneuver, he came down to San Diego to haul me on the carpet for insubordination. And while in the city, he was entertained in the home of a woman who has Communist Jews bumbling around her like flies about a honey-pot. When I wouldn't mobilize my men and put them on the spot, he next ordered me to have a contingent at a public meeting in San Diego as ushers. I knew that also was a Communist set-up. Again I refused. But I understand that he held his meeting, and all the rabbis' dearest friends and intimates were out in full force. I gave up in disgust. Next I heard from Los Angeles, that the young adjutant he'd appointed, a chap named Case, had in-

corporated the California Legion and put himself at the head of it. 'Pelley's too incompetent to lead this movement,' he told the fellows. 'He's afraid of taking action. His own leaders won't obey the orders of the men he left in supreme control. We must have a Legion of Silvershirts that grapples with the situation as it deserves.' And so they raised a pot to finance the incorporation. Two nights later Case got into a drunken gun-fight on Santa Monica Boulevard and I suppose Adelaide's told you how the local papers smeared it?"

I nodded, thinking deeply. *"Chief of Silvershirts Arrested in Drunken Brawl!"* had been the announcements. Only when the reader followed far far down into the mazes of fine-point type was it reported that the "Chief of the Silvershirts" so deporting himself was not a man named Pelley, but an unknown by the name of Case. And Case was still in the hoosegow with a serious charge against him. "Stand by," I told Kemp. "I'm going to the mat on this, to show the nation I can control my own Legion!"

An interview with the Colonel brought me no satisfaction, only diatribes against Kemp for not obeying orders. Ten minutes of conversation showed me that Colonel McCord emphatically was not my von Steuben. In all kindness to the gentleman, when it came to adroit handling of forces to be pitted against the wiles of Jewish Reds, he lacked the faintest idea of what it was all about. . . .

But he did slap me with a formidable expense and salary account which I must pay. And he denied participation in the incorporation of the bogus Legion except as he had been persuaded that the men had acted at my express stipulation. Afterward it was brought to me that rumors were afloat in Los Angeles *that Case was being paid $75 a month from the Communist war chest to get into the Silver Legion and bring it to grief.*

¶ For the next two weeks, I battled this situation, won back those men who truly had been gulled, forced the incorporators to relinquish, and washed the bogus Legion out. Case was fined for assaulting an officer, released, and not heard from further. I picked Kemp and two other outstanding group leaders to function thereafter as a triumvirate over California Legionnaires. Excitement simmered down. The bogus *Silver Ranger* stopped its publishing and our own tabloid went forward as formerly to increased sales. . . . But the rabbis of the Coast did not propose to let the menace continue unchallenged. . . . Meetings were being held weekly in Los Angeles, drawing as high as a thousand persons in attendance. I was beginning to impress upon Legionnaires the necessity of thoroughly schooling and preparing themselves for the real fight ahead,

recognizing and upholding the true purpose of the movement, which was not to bait Jews but to know what to do in the event that the nation's economic system cracked—as I knew it was ultimately due to crack—and red riot superseded Constitutional government.

The episode had further disclosed to thousands of Legionnaires the seriousness of the problem of opposition arrayed against us, how the Jewish Communists work to achieve their ends, and what sensible precautions have to be taken to safeguard the lives and property of innocent citizens. Sub-leaders were beginning to grasp the need of leadership that *was* leadership, not mere appointments to places of authority. With these labors behind me in the lower half of the State, I was preparing one morning to move up to San Francisco when a night-wire reached me from Sieber in Asheville—

GALAHAD PRESS IN SERIOUS LITIGATION. STOTT AND COMPANY OF WASHINGTON, D. C. HAVE SECURED RECEIVERSHIP FOR NON-PAYMENT BALANCE OF BILL. MAY HAVE TO DECLARE BANKRUPTCY TO ABSOLVE SILVER LEGION. HOLD YOURSELF IN READINESS FOR NECESSARY RETURN.

I MADE my up-state journey with disquiet in my heart. No sooner did I get one mess cleaned up, than these Jewish termites, never quiet, provoked a fresh mess elsewhere. And my half-trained subordinates were unable to grasp that it was all *one* attack, engineered more or less from a central source ruthlessly determined to find a way to crush me out by fair means or foul. True, they were becoming educated fast, my associates, but with a country as large as America territorially, it was an exhausting role to watch all holes in the national dyke and keep the reservoir of our organization forever intact till men in all quarters were equipped to handle themselves.

I had been in San Francisco but two days, attending to some private mining interests of my own in Oregon which might possibly materialize in ample finances for the movement, when I got a bulky airmail letter from Sieber.

"Headquarters has been completely gutted," I reported to Helen, who was working with me and three others in the Bay District at the moment.

"Gutted!" she echoed. "You mean we've had a fire?"

"Sieber says the Dickstein Committee has begun its congressional sittings

in Asheville, and almost its first move was to back vans up to headquarters and move everything out."

"You mean . . . headquarters is shut down? How could they do that?"

"That's for us to find out. We're all going east as fast as we can drive."

It was, of course, the most telling blow directed against our labors to the moment. These Communistic Jews had found no way to cramp us financially, challenge my statements about their activities, intimidate our enlightened workers successfully, or halt the Silver Legion by slander and defamation. So now they had turned to the powers of the Congress. The Federal government itself was in the atrocious position of investigating and annihilating a nation-wide hook-up of Christian patriots whose only desire had been to protect our people from final ruin. To challenge and expose the alien plotters, as we had done, was "un-American" it seemed. If patriots knew what was good for them, they should keep their voices silent and graciously allow the predatory Jews to do what harm they would.

Our party started from San Francisco that same night. The next day found us afar in Nevada. Meanwhile I had dispatched a cryptic message to Sieber to meet me at a rendezvous in the middle west.

Onward I came across America, putting State after State behind me. In Illinois I picked up a copy of a Chicago newspaper. Dickstein in an interview with reporters had given it out that "naturally Pelley can't be found . . . he's fled to Mexico to escape the results of his misdeeds." Such reports, circulated the length and breadth of the land, were only a prelude to reams of similar defamations that presently were to become part of the Silver Legion tradition.

At eleven o'clock at night I encountered a party of my loyal associates from Asheville at a spot in midwest country under the stars. Harry's first statement conveyed the ordeal that faced me.

"You've been indicted by the Buncombe County Grand Jury on thirteen counts of fraud," he announced.

"*Fraud!*" I echoed.

"Illegally selling stock in Galahad Press."

"When did I sell stock illegally in Galahad Press?"

"You ran an advertisement in *The New Liberator* two years ago, asking folks for funds to carry on the work and saying you'd reimburse them with stock in the Press."

"What if I did? The State of New York had given me the right."

"Sure! Only you made the mistake of having the magazine printed in North Carolina. That brought you under the North Carolina law."
"This is absurd!" I cried in wrath.
"Maybe, but it happens to be the facts. They got a receivership against us on the balance of a bill we owed stationers in Washington. Immediately that they seized control of the books, they combed them for the slightest irregularities. Of course, helped by Anderson."
"*Anderson!*"
"Yep. He's been staying around Asheville, laying to *get* you for the way you kicked him out. I've heard that he recently made a mysterious trip to New York and Washington. Anyhow, he's in cahoots with the Jew crowd in Asheville that's out to smash us. Printing that advertisement in a magazine published inside of North Carolina was the biggest count in the indictments. Thereafter every stock certificate you issued constituted a count." ❧ ❧
"But I never sold a dollar's worth of stock from that ad. The certificates I issued were for blocks of stock in the Press that people had paid for, and surrendered!"
"You'll have to tell that to the jury. They've indicted you on sixteen counts in all, and a warrant's been issued for your arrest. Right this minute you're a fugitive from justice."
"Whoopee!" I laughed. "It certainly *is* a dangerous job to try to save your country from Reds!"
"What'll you do?" Harry asked forlornly.
"Do?" I retorted. "What else is there to do . . . but get down there as soon as possible and fight 'em to a standstill!"
"The trouble is, they've seized all our records, cleaned out our premises, and put themselves in possession of everything you need for your defense."
¶ "Tell me about that gutting. What happened, anyhow?"
"A crowd of strong-arm men calling themselves 'federals' . . . whatever federals are . . . pushed their way into the place late one Saturday night when only Charles, the negro janitor, was guarding the premises. They loaded everything into vans in twenty minutes, and the vans turned the corner. I don't know where the stuff is, or what's being done with it."
"Did they have authority to do it? . . . a warrant, or anything?"
"If they did I never saw it. You see, Kramer, the Jew Congressman from Los Angeles, has been holding hearings in the federal building in Asheville, putting all of us through star-chamber sessions on the charge that we're Nazis."

"You start back immediately," I ordered Sieber. "I can't let you be drawn into this, for 'harboring a fugitive from justice,' no matter how heinous my crimes. See our local lawyers and arrange for my bond. The minute you advise me the bond's ready, I'll submit to arrest. Then we'll leave it to the court as to how much 'wrong' I've done."

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

IT WAS a new and novel sensation, being a fugitive from justice. I had been through many strange experiences in my life, but this capped them all. I had never registered my Galahad Press corporation in North Carolina because I was liquidating it, having lost control of it as previously mentioned when Joyce and Olive had dropped out of my affairs. Besides, the appeal for donations, on which the case was built, had expressly stated in cold type that it was not a stock-selling advertisement. How could I be made out a criminal for merely issuing stock certificates to installment purchasers in States outside of North Carolina when transfers had been made long before Asheville as a base of operations was ever thought of? I did not know the horrible viciousness of Jewish influences behind the legal machinery of our country as I subsequently encountered it. People of Asheville were being treated to the spectacle of Pelley being "investigated" by the Federal Congress. That of itself implied fearsome irregularities. Now came this stock-jobbing charge, ample foundation for a fresh campaign of villification and defamation across the nation. . . .

Yes, the Jews certainly were out to "get" the Silver Legion. They were out to demonstrate that no one may challenge the depredations of Jews in this land of the free and thereafter be successful in any of his projects.

I was up against a form of American OGPU. . . .

The nation's penitentiaries yawned for me.

It was a disconcerted crowd of Israelites, locally and nationally, however, who received the news that I had voluntarily appeared in North Carolina and submitted to arrest. They had heralded it far and wide that I had fled to Mexico, and I had not fled anywhere but to Asheville, straight to my accusers, demanding to be informed "what it was all about." . . .

My bond had been arranged, however. My arrest was a technicality. I was not locked up. That hectic election day back in Chicopee when I

had started to expose the French mayor, was the only 24 hours in my life that I have ever been restrained behind bars.

Whereupon I went into council with my attorneys.

The State had no case, these lawyers assured me. North Carolina had no jurisdiction over stock sold and issued in other States. As for the publishing of the magazine in North Carolina, it had merely been given to a job printer as work. On one occasion I had made a present of ten shares of Galahad stock to a student at the college, but that was because of her generous donations to the work of the Foundation for Christian Economics. She had wanted the certificate as a souvenir. The stock had been surrendered to me by purchasers in New York who had wished me well in liquidating the Press for reasons which I had fully explained to them. What the Jew Crowd was after specifically was to make it appear that because Galahad Press and the Silver Legion had occupied the same quarters for a few months in Asheville, the Silver Legion belonged to Galahad Press—a printing concern—and could therefore be taken over and examined.

What, I wonder, will the Americans of fifty years hence think of this record, and the infamous practices which the predatory crowd was allowed to pursue?

The charges against me were so fallacious that my lawyers scarcely bothered about my defense. They were far more concerned over the bankruptcy proceedings, and the information which might be forced out of me at the Federal hearings and used against me in the criminal case.

"They're out to get you, Pelley, and they're going to do it," was the consolation that I got from local acquaintances.

"We'll see about that," I retorted grimly.

"Sure we know that the Jews own the country," they would admit. "But it's insanity to think that one lone man can smash their hold."

"Then I'm insane as well as a criminal," I conceded.

I wanted my trial held and the annoyance done with. I had a nation of Legionnaires to head. I could not afford to be detained too long on such silly charges in North Carolina.

I soon discovered that holding me as long as possible in North Carolina was all part of the program arranged by mine adversaries. If they could hold me under bond within the State indefinitely, their data on the Press and the Legion, secured by the Dicksteiners, would enable them to use their agents to disintegrate the Legion district by district. Thus thoroughly and adroitly had my own labors registered.

A trial at once? Impossible! The local district attorney wasn't "ready." Furthermore, he pleaded that he wouldn't be ready until he had "caught" Mont Hardwicke. Mont had long-since moved from Asheville and we had all lost sight of him. But he had been an officer of the corporation when the offending call for donations had been printed. So he too was included in the indictment, along with a lad named Summerville, and Don Kellogg. Yes, Mont too must be "caught" and brought back to answer for his "crimes" against the peace and sovereignty of the people of North Carolina. So my trial was indefinite. Meanwhile I must stay cooped in the State or be jailed. . . .

The Kramer hearings had abruptly ceased in Asheville, on publication of the news that I had not "fled to Mexico" but was headed swiftly southward. Kramer vanished and took his crowd of Jewish inquisitors with him. Not a shred of evidence had been gathered that the Silvershirts had the slightest connection with German Nazis, that they had ever received a penny of support from abroad, or that the Silver Legion had ever done anything un-American but challenge the depredations of Russocrat Jews. But the Committee—which later got $10,000 more of the taxpayers' money out of that nit-wit Congress—had made a neat job of putting itself in possession of everything at Silver Legion headquarters and giving accounting to nobody. Subsequently—it is of interest to note—letters taken from our files by such high-handed and unconstitutional methods, *were brazenly reproduced in "The New Masses," America's leading Communist magazine.* And the Congress and people of the United States, had been told that the McCormack Committee was appointed for the express purpose of investigating and smashing Communism, along with Nazism, in the nation! The Irish Congressman, McCormack, from Massachusetts, was later presented with a medal, struck off by Jews, for his most excellent services in aiding them to smash the dangerous Silvershirts.

Figure it out!

I had returned to Asheville now, not to twirl my swivel at my desk and resume my labors as though I had merely been absent at lunch, but to discover myself with only my portable typewriter and the documents in my brief case—to show for four years' work. Desks, typewriters, filing cabinets, had all been taken and no one knew their whereabouts. Two of Helen's trunks, left for safekeeping at Headquarters, had been ruthlessly seized by the United States marshal. Just why the august Congress of the United States should sense a menace to its longevity or sovereignty in two of a gentlewoman's trunks filled with

lingerie and keepsakes from her Siberian war sequence, was never made clear by the authorities. My staff was scattered. Marion Henderson had been inhumanly grilled in a star-chamber session by a brutal Jewish Congressman till our attorney protested and the girl had collapsed. Nothing about Nazism was referred to, in these sessions. The chief point which Congressman Kramer seemed to wish to score was the fact that fornication had been rife at Silvershirt headquarters. He had an insane certainty that fornication *must* have gone on. He was deliberately determined to prove that fornication had gone on. When Kellogg had spiritedly demanded of Kramer how and why the Congress of the United States was interested in such points, whether or not they were true, he was threatened with jail for contempt of the Committee.

Of course Kramer proved nothing but what existed in the depths of his own peculiar Jewish mind. Sentiment in the community began to go against such high-handed OGPU tactics. He folded up in disgust one day and went on West. Thousands of dollars had been squandered on these travesties of hearings. But it was public money, under a Jewish administration, and so who cared? . . .

I had left Helen with friends in Washington, D. C. I made the trip to Asheville in company with my man Jones of the *Liberation News Bureau* in the Capital. We moved into a tourist cabin outside of town. All mail had to go to the referee in bankruptcy or the Special Master. The attorney for the referee in bankruptcy was a young local Jew, Alvin Kartus. He it was who sat in on all of the subsequent hearings and suggested the questions. ☙ ☙

Kartus' Gentile front and general associate in my inquisitioning was one Robert R. Williams, an Asheville attorney, assisted likewise by one Thomas Harkins, also an Asheville attorney, who had been captain in the North Carolina Reserve Infantry during the war. Attorney Williams played an extremely interesting role in the whole litigation. He had first been a Special Investigator for the McCormack Committee—whatever a special investigator was—then he represented the grieving creditors of Galahad Press, specifically which creditors he declined to state, even when challenged in the court, then he became right-hand man to County Attorney Zeb Nettles and assumed charge of prosecution of the Blue Sky case. Attorney Williams was a well-authorized man.

The unfortunate phase of these roles, for me, lay in the fact that he could use information gathered in one branch of his activities for prosecution in another. I had not been in Asheville twenty-four hours before I

was subpoenaed as chief witness in approximately two weeks of bankruptcy examinations. My attorneys were not permitted to advise me in these examinations. I was "on the spot," with three clever attorneys pitted against me, one of them a Jew. And they obviously set out to prove that as a criminal I was superior to Jesse James, Dr. Crippen, Al Capone, and Old Doc Cook. Hadn't I done this, and hadn't I done that? What was my reason for doing so-and-so if I hadn't been trying to cover up something.

¶ "Just a dam' fishing expedition to bolster up their Blue Sky case!" snapped one of my lawyers after a particularly nauseous session.

For the better part of two weeks, however, in the hottest days of southern summer, I remained in the witness chair at these hearings before the Special Master, and fended for myself as I could. Sneers, insinuations, implications that in previous hearings I had said what I had not, distinguished these examinations. It was a matter of amusement to my associates that after one session in which the *Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion* had been mentioned, Attorney Williams turned to young Kartus and asked behind his hand, "What are the *Protocols*?" Kartus' face assumed a delicate pea-green. . . . I did not observe that he explained.

Someone had been insidiously at work, all of us perceived, convincing Messrs. Williams and Harkins that I was a shyster, a racketeer, a spiritual quack, and an undesirable citizen on principle. The finest metaphysical truths, matter far over the heads of these workers for venomous Jewry, were treated as material of the vilest and most scurrilous nature.

These hearings finally ended, with exactly nothing learned of the slightest value to the Jews who would destroy me. I had been guilty of no breaches of honesty in conducting the affairs of Galahad Press. True, again and again we had been short of working capital for our enterprise, but that was no crime. It was shown that I had reduced the indebtedness of Galahad Press from something like $14,000 down to $3,700 in an honest liquidation, when Attorney Williams had suddenly presented the balance of the Stott bill and demanded that it be settled in full at once. Reluctantly they had to let me depart. But dire things were whispered for me, about what was to happen when my Blue Sky case came to trial. But when would it do so?

At the first session of Superior Court, the presiding judge refused to hear the case. Obviously he did not want to get mixed up in the matter at all. I was cut off from my supporters in every quarter of the nation. Nothing was immune from seizure.

I had flouted the Jews. For that I should pay!

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

THE SUMMER which I was now forced to endure was insufferable because of the idleness entailed. I could not go out of North Carolina, under penalty of forfeiting my bond. Communications sent to my lieutenants were either not received or subsequently published in the newspapers as part of the record of the Kramer hearings in Los Angeles. My Silver Legion men in every State suspended activities until the outcome of my trial should be known. I moved to a cabin near Pisgah Mountain and sought to make the interlude a period of rest. But rest was impossible. For some unique reason known only to themselves, my persecutors suddenly drew new bills of indictment and caused me to be officially arrested all over again. But my bond still held and my attorneys were not laggard. ☙ ☙

One epochal event served to illumine the shadows of this period.

On a day in mid-July I encountered one of my attorneys on an Asheville street. "Pelley," he asked me, "why don't you take advantage of the present sitting of court to have your divorce put through. You've lived in the State a year, you've been separated fram your first wife for twelve years and the law requires but two. We can make an appearance in half an hour, have the judgment recorded, and then you'll be free to marry Miss Hansmann."

"Go to it!" I ordered him.

When Superior Court opened the following day I took the witness stand in a ten-minute divorce hearing. A scratch of the judge's pen, and I walked out of the building a single man once more.

A fortnight later, Helen and I were married at the country home of Charles Milton Newcomb at five o'clock as the sun was sinking. In a natural bower formed by mountain foliage, in a nook washed by a murmuring brook, the perfume of wild roses and honeysuckle in the air, we stood in a semi-circle made by a dozen intimates and the girl who had straightened from over Matie's chair that long-ago night at Shaw's, promised to continue along the trail with me as Life and its *denouement* dictated. Bob and Gladys Williams, our printer friends ever since our advent in Asheville, stood up with us, and Hial Cummings of Hollywood, who had motored through with John Aarhus, another California faithful, to be close to me during the trial. Hugh Ward, who had formerly been

auditor at Headquarters, was likewise present, with members of the Newcomb family.

The scene was Peace Incarnate.

How strange that in a world made so beautiful and tranquil by Almighty God, men's spirits should disclose themselves so madly perverse! Because I had sought to tell my apathetic or ignorant countrymen of the Gargantuan plot being engineered against their liberties, I must marry as a felon in sight of the gallows. But the girl who had essayed to make the fight with me, did not think of that. She knew that she too had her particular role to play before a million American women. She was ready to play it. She had known it from the first. . . .

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

WITH September in prospect I was well-nigh frantic. I must have a mouthpiece to tell my thousands of friends throughout the nation what was happening in Asheville. *Liberation Weekly* had been promptly suppressed with the appointment of a Jewish receiver for Galahad Press. Stopping that magazine seemed to give the Hebrews satisfaction . . . at last they were making progress against me. *The Silver Ranger* had continued to publish on the Coast until it became necessary for Adelaide to return to New York. The Craig person, who had let me down so grievously in Oklahoma City, had made his way through to Los Angeles, remained in bed three weeks—during which time local Silvershirts supported him—then arose to ask for his old job as editor. He was given the place as a sort of charity. But when he wanted to run articles by Jews and Communists in the *Ranger,* Adelaide had demurred. Appealed to for directions, I had ordered the paper stopped.

So as September drew on apace, I made my plans for the issuance of a new weekly, to which I gave my own name as my only challenge to my persecuting adversaries. We had rented three tawdry little mountain shacks on the property near Pisgah. Helen and I had the largest, the rest of the boys took the others. Here we proceeded to set up editorial quarters with desks and tables made from old lumber and boxes. We had two portable typewriters between us. The cabins burned oil lamps. The first issue of *Pelley's Weekly* came forth on August 29th. It was identical

in format with *Liberation Weekly*. It *was Liberation Weekly,* merely with change of name.

How futile and childish these Hebrews are at times, thinking they can destroy a work that is based on a personality!

With an organ through which I could talk to my supporters again, I felt better. It enabled me, above all else, to raise funds for the legal fight which was coming. The referee in bankruptcy could not commandeer mail that was addressed to Helen as publisher. Harry Sieber, who had departed for his home and family immediately after my arrival in Asheville, agreed to represent the publication in the field. Subscriptions came pouring in anew. With my people hearing from me again, some support was resumed. One afternoon in town my beloved attorney-friend Joseph Ford said to me—

"It's a crime for you people to be carrying on in those mountain cabins when you've had to stand so much. Out in Lakeview Park I've got a roomy residence, almost as big as your former Headquarters. I'll donate the use of it if you'll meet the taxes and interest."

We accepted Mr. Ford's tender.

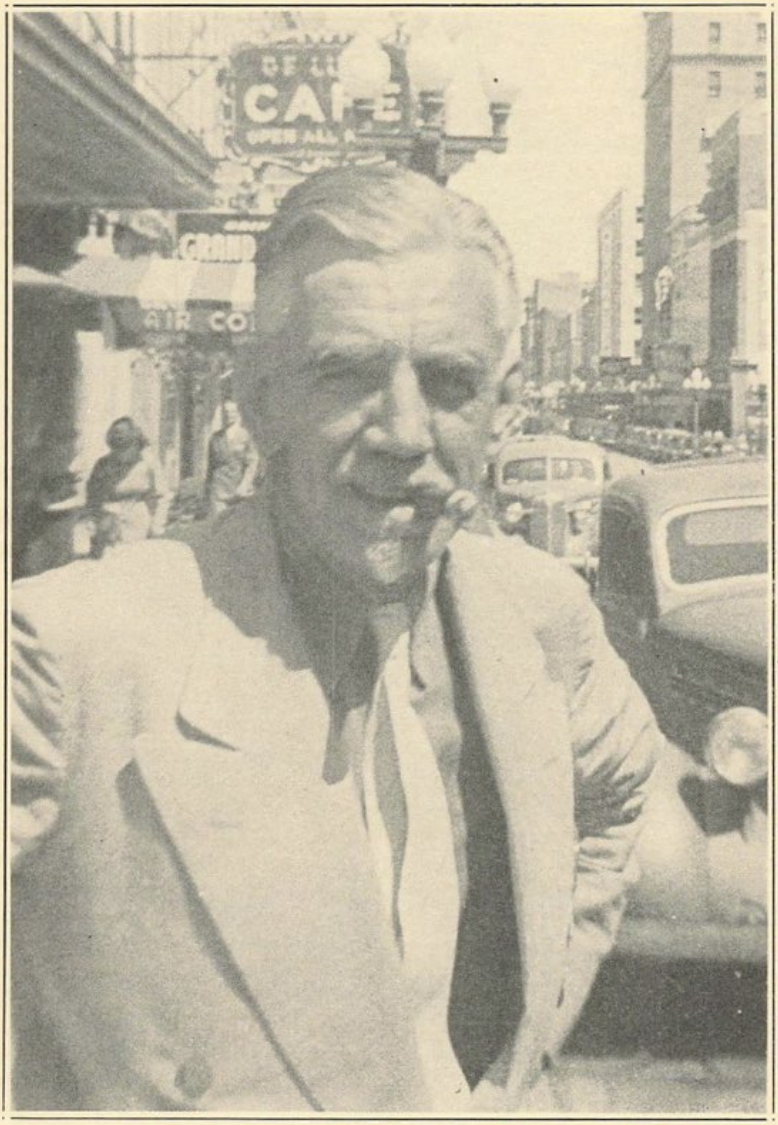
Seven months after the Kartus-Williams-Dickstein combination had deprived us of our premises and equipment, we were again housed in splendid Headquarters with new people coming in to help carry the burden.

Harry E. Martin appeared from Chicago, accepting my offer of Harry Sieber's place. Martin, an expert businessman, accountant, and office manager, who had arrived at those years where he discerned the spiritual worth of the work I had projected, joined me at his own expense and for nearly six months paid his own bills for the privilege of assisting.

I had that kind of friends.

Marion Henderson returned from Indiana, whither she had gone after the ordeal at the hands of Kramer. Again I had a Pivot. Hial drew cartoons. We began to build a renovated staff, although all of these people worked merely for their board.

IT WAS during this period that Craig in Los Angeles let loose his scurrilous blast of defamation, embodied in a circular to the Silver Legion mailing list. This man, whom I had helped time and time again when he was physically hungry, who had caused me so much annoyance on account of his financial deportment in Oklahoma City, who had been restrained from printing Communist articles in a Silvershirt weekly, now suddenly decided that I was a delusion and a snare, a racketeer and a



"I have reached those exquisite years when
I have compiled a philosophy—"

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scoundrel. He said so in biting, blistering words, harking back to that same old saw, "he had been at Headquarters, therefore he knew things." He was somewhat vague as to what things he knew. He merely wanted the country to know that he had suddenly "found me out." Chief among the things he had "found out," was an item of "catching" me pocketing funds for personal use that he was positive had been sent for the Legion work in general. He was referring to the money order that had arrived in Oklahoma City for me, after that hectic trip to Washington, from the very generous lady who had made it a condition of her gift that I use it for myself and *not* for the Legion. I had not, of course, taken Craig into my confidence upon this matter when the money order arrived and he was near me when I cashed them. He was certain that I was chiseling on the Legion, and said so unmindful of slander or libel. The whole of it was an eccentric way of repaying kindness with defamation, but the world holds people like that, I suppose. I learned later that a mailing list which Marion Henderson had sent my daughter in Los Angeles, had been signed for by him and slipped into his pocket. To a list of these names he now addressed himself, begging all Silvershirt malcontents around the country to join up instead with a Legion of his own, which he bethought to promote. ¶ He published one issue of a newspaper, discovered that organizing the United States to fight predatory Communism was something more than spending money for printing bills, followed his defamatory circular with a mimeographed wheeze of hate against me, and expired to stay expired as a militant crusader.

Funny thing!—a month or so later, while I was trying to ignore the miserable business, he ran down a child in his automobile in Los Angeles, and killed it. Thereupon he had plenty of trouble looking after the affairs of James Craig. Defaming Pelley dropped from his mind.

Sieber had joined the Saint Germainers in Chicago and was busy proselyting up and down the land that "Pelley was all washed up," implying thereby that I was headed for jail, that I had "failed to learn my lesson" because I had dared to continue the fight against the Jews after the Headquarters' crack-down, and that what the country needed metaphysically was not Liberation Doctrine, but the preachments of one Ballard. In New York he had called together audiences of former Fellowship students, allowing them to understand that he had a message from me in Asheville. Whereupon they learned from the platform that the mantle of spiritual leadership in the nation had been transferred to the shoulders of a mythical ascended master. Perhaps so. Time would tell.

I had a bit of heartache when I thought over the many things I had done for Harry, helping him with his personal expenses, saving his family from being put on the sidewalk. But when I mentioned these things he wrote me an unkind letter, telling me arrogantly that he considered that anything I had paid him, he had earned. If he wanted to throw in his lot with Ballard, that was his affair. Two months later a hurtling automobile on the Baltimore Pike had knocked him a hundred feet and left him on the side of the road for dead. Whereupon the Ballards dropped him, too, and the last word I heard from him, he was peddling insurance in Philadelphia. ❧ ❧

Life has a queer way of paying compensations.

Any leader, to be such, I maintain, must overlook the limitations of these people of small vision. I know that I have been many times criticized for ever taking them on to begin with. There is a class of supporter who assumes that a man in my position should judge infallibly who will serve and who will defect. The grim humor of the situation lies in the fact that I often *did* know who would stand firm and who would flee when the "heat" was turned on. But I had no others to take their places. I say again, I had to produce the best results possible with the human material given to my hand. I was keeping my vision on the Larger Circumstance. All men were not defectionists. If the Asheville litigation did nothing else, it showed me which men would stand firm and which men would wilt.

I HOLD no enmity against these persons who could only "see" the project when the days were bright and trouble far away. After all, I say again, they thought the thoughts which came to them, and that was all which I did myself. Regardless of what the Jews think or say to the contrary, I'm an exceedingly poor hater. If any persons do not want to travel along with me the whole way, they doubtless have their reasons. The loss or the gain is strictly theirs alone. . . .

Thanksgiving passed and still I could not get my case brought to trial. Each time that I gathered costly attorneys together, paid the expenses of my witnesses from distant points, screwed up my mettle to face my accusers, the district attorney had some excuse that he wasn't "ready."

This drain on my finances was almost unbearable. The week came when I finally had to suspend *Pelley's Weekly* and fall back on a mimeographed *Bulletin* to hold my folk in line.

At last, in January, after an appeal to the Governor of the State to appoint a Judge, and after Hardwicke had finally been located and per-

suaded to come to Asheville and battle beside me, the great State of North Carolina got down to the business of doing the bidding of the Jews. My case was called for the 7th of January. Now at last the crisis had come! . . .

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

OUR counsel table was headed by Robert McNeill of Washington, D. C., the attorney who had previously been so successful in acquitting Bishop Cannon of charges promoted against him by the Romanist Church. Assisting Mr. McNeill was Judge Robert Wells of Asheville, a veteran war-horse of the Buncombe County Bar, Joseph Ford, President of the North Carolina Bar Association . . . who had been like a father to me throughout the whole litigation . . . and J. Y. Jordan, one of Asheville's most brilliant younger lawyers. The magistrate especially appointed by the Governor was Wilson Warlick of Newton.

Judge Warlick was the typical southern gentleman, like my friend Ford, younger in years but wise in a shrewd guess of what the brawl was mostly about. He was portly, soft-spoken, dignified, distinguished by a mane of iron-gray hair, keen in his blue-eyed glance, an adept in jurisprudence.

"Bob" McNeill of my counsel was tall, bellicose, determined, with a baleful eye for his antagonists and a manner that pulled no punches. Already the Jews of Washington and Baltimore had sought him out with intimidations for taking my case, as they had Judge Wells and Ford. The duress only nettled him the more.

Attorney Williams—Dickstein's appointee—who headed the opposition, was a tall, nervous, green-eyed man who bore a faint resemblance to the late President Wilson. Only he lacked Woodrow Wilson's polish and finesse. Williams' manner for winning cases seemed to be the efficacy of his sneers. Comment was plentiful in Asheville that a $7,500 fee was in prospect for each of these prosecuting attorneys, whether or not they succeeded in putting the obstreperous Pelley in the penitentiary.

District Attorney Nettles, supposed to be saving the people of North Carolina from the heinous bamboozlements of the Silvershirt Chief, scarcely spoke a half-dozen sentences throughout the whole trial . . . except for one brief interval when he arose to browbeat and bulldoze a

lady witness who had come to my defense, and lastly, address the jury. ¶ A minute record of what happened is not necessary here . . . or anywhere. Three days were spent in selecting a jury. The sheriff merely went out into the highways and byways of Asheville and scooped in droves of sidewalk loafers. When the most and least intelligent of these had been combed, and the number exhausted, the sheriff went further and scooped in others. I was sick at heart when I finally assayed the queer assortment of nondescript humanity drawn together to pass on corporate and metaphysical activities, the commonest terms of which were as foreign to their understanding as the language spoken on Mars.

Jews swarmed the courtroom. Young Alvin Kartus, later the head of B'nai B'rith in Asheville, hovered perpetually in every background. No group got together for a private conversation between sessions that he failed to nose into it, to learn what was being said. When he got tired doing this sort of thing, he went up into the box supposed to be occupied by the Clerk of the Court, *on a level with the Judge,* put his feet on the rail, tipped back in his chair, and manicured his fingernails. He did this unrebuked. It was generally conceded that he was the ex-officio spirit of the proceedings.

George Anderson put in appearance early and took up his place at the prosecutor's table. He gave full cooperation to Nettles, Williams, Harkins, and Kartus, explaining all points in my books from his own familiarity with them while my trusted lieutenant. It was his little day of glory. He was "getting back" at me for discharging him. . . . Funny human nature, when it comes in small packets!

Judge Warlick heard the opening arguments by the State, and when they were in, he promptly ruled out and negated thirteen of the sixteen indictments. The State of North Carolina had no jurisdiction, he said, to penalize a man for stock sold outside the Commonwealth. *So all the stock-selling indictments were quashed.* That left only three counts to be heard by the jury. Had I actually published and circulated the magazine with the appeal for donations in it, to any North Carolina people? Had I made a sale of stock when I had given the lady the ten shares as a souvenir? Had I made any erroneous statements in the magazine regarding the assets and liabilities of my company when I ran the ad?

It was soon proved by one witness from Greensboro that he had subscribed for the magazine and received a copy containing the donations appeal. *Just one lone copy had been sold and circulated in all North Carolina* . . . nevertheless, the State contended it had been a violation of the statutes.

Miss Bertha Allar, the lady to whom I had presented the ten shares as souvenir, made the trip from Cleveland to testify that the certificates had been nothing but a free gift on my part. Immediately she reached the courtroom, Prosecutor Nettles subpoenaed her for the other side. She was taken into a rear room and subjected to a star-chamber grilling. When Nettles, Williams, Harkins, et al. heard her story and could not get her to change it, they refused to put her on the stand. Their case was blowing up and all were exceedingly worried. The statutes excepted a "solitary case" in the matter of the one copy of the magazine printed and circulated with the donations appeal inside it. Now Miss Allar refused to concur that I had ever "sold" her anything. The cashier of the local bank had to be subpoenaed, along with records of Miss Allar's former bank account, to show that she could not have bought and paid for the stock on the date specified, for she had closed the said account several weeks before.

I began to breathe easier. Nothing had been proven on the three remaining counts—as yet. On the final count, as to whether or not my corporate figures were correct, I was not worried. If worst came to worst I could take the jury out to the Ford house and show them the actual goods, still in my possession, in the shape of tacit Liberation Scripts, that had represented the figures in my inventory. I had succeeded in buying this $10,000 mass of printed matter from the referee for the price of old paper. ☙ ☙

Yet for ten days the battle raged, carried forward by the State. And when the latter finally rested, attorneys crowded around, shaking my hand. No lawyer present could by the faintest stretch of the legal imagination see wherein a case had been made out against me. As a trial, it was pishmince. . . .

Whereupon, when the defense opened, I at once took the stand to give Judge and jury a full and frank statement of everything that had happened. ☙ ☙

A smile of great satisfaction spread over the faces of the prosecution when I mounted the witness stand. Now at last, in the opportunity to quiz me about my unorthodox religious beliefs, perhaps they could make real headway.

When my attorneys had brought forth from me all the points which they wanted to register, I was turned over to Williams for cross-examination. He drew a long breath, cast his curiously green eyes at the jury, thumbed the Liberation pamphlets before him and shot his first question—

"Mr. Pelley, *have you ever been dead?*"

So! It was upon the spiritual aspects of the case and *My Seven Minutes in Eternity* that they expected to get a verdict that should send me to Raleigh. ❧ ❧

"I object, your Honor!" cried Bob McNeill hotly.

"Objection sustained," said Judge Warlick gently.

"But, your Honor," protested Williams, "this whole case hinges on this man's fraudulent religious teachings—"

"We're not interested in Mr. Pelley's religious teachings, fraudulent or otherwise. Nor are we interested in Mr. Pelley's religion. That's not on trial in this case. We're only concerned as to whether or not he sold stock or published stock advertisements in North Carolina, contrary to law." ❧ ❧

Williams was at a loss. He bit back his rage. "Well, Mr. Pelley, let me put it in this way: Have you ever written a book called *My Seven Minutes in Eternity?*"

"Objection, your Honor!" cried McNeill in new heat. "That's getting at the same matter in another form."

"Objection sustained!"

"Your Honor," snarled Williams, "we've simply *got* to interrogate this witness about the basic reasons for attracting his dupes—"

The bang of a chair interrupted the implication. Lawyer Jordan was on his feet. He whipped off his tortoise-shell spectacles.

"Your Honor," he interposed, *"I make a motion for the withdrawal of a jury, the declaration of a mistrial, and a citation of Mr. Williams for contempt of court!"*

The silence was electric.

If such a motion were allowed, my ordeal was ended.

It was the high point in the trial.

Judge Warlick coughed gently and addressed Attorney Williams. "I've ruled on the matter of introducing Mr. Pelley's religious beliefs into this trial," he said firmly. "The prosecution will kindly make no further reference to the same throughout the balance of this case. There seems to have been much discussion as to whether the defendant once died and went to heaven. My own attitude is, that if he did, the account of it printed in a book would be worth a whole lot more than sixty cents. We're not concerned here, I repeat, with anything but his alleged stock frauds . . . if any. Suppose we get along with this case. It's run too long, already." ❧ ❧

All the carefully selected items and publishings of metaphysical material, which the prosecution had so artfully chosen in order to bias a southern orthodox jury against me, now lay useless in front of my tormentors. Williams had lost another segment of his case. And his manner from there on, showed it. Taking no pains to conceal his ill humor, not being the type of attorney who could adapt himself gracefully to set-backs, he shifted his interrogation to various entries in the books. To answer him intelligently, I asked to consult the books. The main Galahad ledger had remained in the possession of the prosecution from the time of seizure at Headquarters. Now it lay upon the plaintiff's counsel table where Anderson was minutely aiding a Jewish accountant in every step of the case to interpret any entries to my maximum disadvantage.

Williams picked up the ledger I had requested, brought it forward, and practically heaved it at me from a distance of four feet. Across the corner of the witness box, was a sheet of flimsy cardboard. The weight of the ledger, and the way it was thrown, collapsed this board—everything upon it crashed out of sight inside the witness box, down about my feet. ❧ ❧

I'm sorry to say that it was the one time when my temper slipped. I was weary unto death of this man's bad manners.

Regardless of judge or jury, I "opened up" on Attorney Williams. I told him in no uncertain manner just what I thought of him.

When I stopped to realize what I was saying, and under what circumstances, I wondered that I had not been halted. Much confusion was going on about my feet where a court attendant was rescuing the debris of books and documents from inside the witness box. Suddenly this person straightened up from his knees. . . .

It was Judge Warlick himself! The presiding magistrate had left the bench and was courteously recovering the spilled ledger and documents.

It was not only a stinging rebuke to a prosecution whose courtroom manners were leaving much to be desired. As Judge Wells commented later, "I've been trying cases for forty years, but that was the most gracious and chivalrous thing that I ever saw a judge do inside a courtroom!"

The State resorted to the old, old trick of taking maximum time to present the prosecution's side of the case—a whole ten days—so that by the time the defense had its innings, both judge and jury would be heartily sick of the affair and want it ended as soon as possible. Despite Judge Warlick's equitable rulings therefore, everything about the defense maneuvers was conducted on a hurry-up basis. Testimony was clipped as short as

possible. Explanations were pitched in a tempo which indicated that there could be but one outcome to the affair, so why waste further time over it?

¶ County Attorney Nettles bestirred himself but once in thirteen days. That was to undertake the cross-examination of Miss Allar. His manner indicated that prosecuting women was the one spot where he scintillated. But harangue and browbeat as he would, he could not shake Miss Allar's straightforward and truthful story. She had donated a hundred dollars early in the summer of 1932, she said, not to Galahad Press but to the Foundation for Christian Economics. On coming to leave the school in the fall, she had wanted a souvenir of the experience in the form of a certificate bearing my seal and signature. I had told her at the time that I was not issuing new stock on account of the concern's being in liquidation. But I had *given* her ten shares of previously surrendered stock. Both of us had understood that it was a gift and nothing more. She told the jury that I had remarked upon this at the time. She told the jury more. She said that during this same summer school session she had wanted to deposit with me, for my use, the sum of $2,300 . . . all the money she had in the world . . . *but that I had refused to accept it,* and had not accepted it, telling her she could not afford to so beggar herself. All that County Attorney Nettles could do in the face of such damning evidence—that I was *not* in the business of robbing widows and orphans—was to mimic Miss Allar's somewhat broken speech and address himself to her from a closeness so offensive, that on two occasions she appealed to Judge Warlick to protect her from his behavior. "You will kindly not address Miss Allar from a distance of less than six feet," were the jurist's instructions in light of such appeals. The later subpoena of the local bank's ledger-sheets proved by documents the truth of this witness's testimony.

All in all, it was not shown that I had ever offered or sold a single share of stock anywhere in the State of North Carolina at any time.

The summing up to the jury was a masterpiece of sarcasm and implication on the part of the prosecution, and an equal masterpiece of logic, evidence, and legal dignity on the part of the defense.

Williams, Harkins, and Nettles all addressed the jury, standing before a portable blackboard they had set up in front of the jury box, on which mazes of corporation figures and statements were recorded—to prove that I had tried to sell securities criminally in an insolvent corporation. Local mountaineers who had never earned more than three dollars a day in their lives, and who wouldn't know a corporation statement from a Morgenthau Treasury balance sheet, blinked at these figures, tried to look wise, and acted

as though I must be guilty of *something* or the exposition would not appear so complicated.

Attorney Williams' speech was the cruellest of the three, because he went back with constant references to the sale of the Marie Ogden bonds.

Little, if anything, had been said throughout the trial and submission of evidence, about any chicane in the Marie Ogden bonds. On one occasion I had been queried about them, and had tried to explain the matter precisely as hereinbefore set down. I said that I still possessed Mrs. Ogden's correspondence, *giving* me the bonds. Attorney Tom Harkins had challenged me to produce the letter. I promised to have it in court next day. That night, when I read it, and noted statements in it regarding intimate complications in Marie Ogden's life and past matrimonial affairs, I knew that submitting it, as promised, would by no means be the chivalrous thing. The lady had written me the letter in confidence, at a time when there was no personal tension between us. Because I was now in the toils of the law, was no excuse for my parading her private heart-affairs before a hillbilly jury. I came into court next day and said I could not produce the letter.

Tom Harkins' sarcasm was scarlet. He even tried to mimic my tone of voice in which I had expressed such failure, when he likewise referred to the item in asking for my condemnation. Four years later, Lawyer Harkins found himself the attorney for the West Asheville Hosiery Company, trying to defend that firm from depredations of NLRB investigators—all Jews. I doubt if, today, Thomas Harkins would show himself so rancorous in prosecuting a citizen whose main "crime" had been the exposure of Judaism. ✍ ✍

Williams and Nettles, however, made lively capital out of my "flimflamming" of Mrs. Ogden. They made lively capital out of that entry on the Directors' records of Galahad Press, when I had noted the true inventory of goods with Chaplains about the country in order—as I had supposed at the time—to protect myself. If the whole concern wasn't a humbug, why did one entry appear upon the books of account and another in the Directors' records? The jury, of course, was in no position to answer his question, the matter not having been thoroughly thrashed out in the three brief days permitted for my defense.

It was that kind of trial—raw "railroading"—in order to make swift and effective disposal of a man who had challenged the arrogances of Jewry. Asheville reporters were busy, sending copious dispatches out over the AP wires about my "fraudulent" transactions, and implying that I didn't have

a Chinaman's chance of escaping State's Prison.

I had always supposed that when a prosecutor addressed a jury to plead his case, he was ethically obligated to confine his summing-up strictly to such evidence as might have been brought forth during the testimony of witnesses. I learned that in North Carolina, when the prisoner at the Bar was a fighter against Judaism, even the product of an attorney's imagination could be introduced and declaimed—in a tone of voice that gave the jurors small chance of recalling whether they listened to evidence or opinion. ❧ ❧

But it came time for my own attorneys to defend me before the jury, and Bob McNeill led off with a dramatic speech that tried to undo the mischief of prosecution wild-catting. My friend Ford delivered one of the most fluent and effective legal orations which I had ever heard in a courtroom . . . and in my newspaper experience I had been present at the delivery of many. In a judicial chamber so silent that the proverbial pin might have been heard, thudding on the floor, he arrived at his climax in this final insinuation of the prosecution's tactics—

"And the mountain labored . . . *and brought forth a mouse!*"

So the case went to the jury, at three in the afternoon of the fourteenth day. It had not been shown that I had ever dealt in a single share of stock in North Carolina at any time. Only one copy of *The New Liberator* had ever been circulated within the State, and the statute specifically exempted what it described as "a solitary case" of violation. As for incorrect figures on the books, the point rested on whether or not stock subscriptions could be listed as current liabilities, which at all times should be covered by quick assets to prove solvency. My attorneys had maintained that stock subscriptions in the accounts of any corporation were capital liabilities and not otherwise. And a jury made up of hillbillies that had never owned a share of any kind of stock in their lives, blinked dully and thought of the delicious three dollars a day they were each to be paid for fourteen days' service. Moreover, if they held the trial beyond five o'clock, it would mean still another three dollars as overnight fee, for each of them.

The case was closed. The jury filed out.

Four o'clock came. Five. Six. Judge Warlick dismissed court for dinner. All principals were back in their places at seven o'clock. Eight o'clock came. Nine. The Judge came down from his bench and sat tilted back in a chair at the counsel tables, swapping reminiscences with the attorneys.

At a quarter to ten o'clock the jury came in.

The clerk of the court put the questions to the foreman somewhat as follows: "What is your verdict on the defendant's sale of stock in North Carolina?" ☙ ☙
"Not guilty," returned the spokesman.
"What say you about the publishing of a stock-selling advertisement?"
"Guilty as charged!"
"What say you about advertising stock for sale in an insolvent corporation?" ☙ ☙
"Guilty as charged!"
Two counts of guilty. If an appeal to a higher court were unsuccessful, I faced a maximum of five years in the State penitentiary on each count! Every spectator in the room, and most of the lawyers, were stunned.
What had happened in that jury room? . . .

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

"YOUR bond will be continued another day," said Judge Warlick. "Come back in the morning and we'll finish the disposal of the case." His face was imperturbable —as it had been throughout the trial.
I cannot say that I was overly upset. I knew that appeals could be taken that would keep me from any prison incarceration for at least three years. On the whole I was puzzled. . . .
For five years I had sacrificed all personal increments to devote myself unreservedly to helping my fellowman spiritually, academically, economically. I had taken no vacations, worked for nothing but my bare sustenance, seen a beautiful organization which I had built up, scattered and crushed, stood up against threats and jeopardies . . . now for the moment my reward was crucifixion. By that jury's verdict I was officially branded a felon. Even as we prepared to go homeward that night, the Associated Press wires were humming, carrying the news all over the nation that I was guilty of my accusers' charges, that I was a fraud and a mountebank, that the North Carolina State's Prison waited to receive me. Only a complete reversal of the verdict in the State Court of Appeals would save me, but even if it reversed the verdict, I had no way of forcing the Jewish-manipulated Associated Press to print correct reports in its dispatches, vindicating me. Also I faced an additional expense of two to

three thousand dollars to finance such appeal. The trial to the moment had cost me around five thousand dollars—the money having been contributed by impoverished but loyal people all over the land who knew the inside facts and why the litigation had been launched from the beginning. ☙ ☙

The why of the litigation was all summed up in the expansive gratification on the face of the Jew Alvin Kartus, as he prepared to quit the premises. . . . ☙ ☙

Doubtless he would go high in B'nai B'rith for what he had achieved.

As I was leaving the courtroom, however, a man clutched my arm and drew me aside. He was one of my Silvershirts from Florida.

"Chief, you should demand a new trial on the strength of what I've heard in the corridor while the jury was out!"

I asked, "What have you heard?"

"One lawyer against you was walking up and down the corridor nervously chewing gum. A mountaineer slouching against a post called to him amusedly, 'What you so jittery about—'fraid you're gonna lose your case?' And do you know what I heard? I'm willing to go on the stand and testify to it."

"What did you hear?"

"The other fellow gave a sneer and said out of the corner of his mouth, 'Think I'm darned fool enough not to have my own men on the jury?' Chief, *you've been framed!*"

"Maybe," I responded. "But tonight's no time to do much about it. I'll see what my lawyers say in the morning."

Few words were spoken on our midnight drive homeward.

"To think," choked Helen, "that after all you've tried to do to help people, they hand you *this!*"

"It's all part of the historical tradition of the Movement," I consoled her. "Mrs. Leslie said that it would happen, remember."

"What I'm worried about," said Marion, "is the effect that the verdict's going to have on hundreds of thousands of hoodwinked people who'll only know about the case from what they read in the papers."

"Things are far from settled yet," I said. "This is only the start of the battle, by no means the finish. Tomorrow morning we'll take our Appeal and get ourselves ready for the hearing in September."

At ten the next morning we were back in our places. I had scarcely shed my overcoat when Bob McNeill beckoned from a doorway beside the Judge's chambers. I followed into a small side room.

"We've been talking with Warlick," my chief counsel announced with the door closed. . . . For once Alvin Kartus could not get in, to find out what was said. "The Judge is not overly keen to have this case brought up in Raleigh with every chance of reversal. Boiled down into a proposition, what do you say to accepting the lowest fine that the court can give you under the law, paying the fine and getting yourself discharged?"

"How much of a fine?"

"The lowest the court's allowed to give you is a thousand dollars. But your sentence and Summerville's can be pronounced as one." Incidentally, both Kellogg and Hardwicke had been adjudged Not Guilty on all counts the night before, and discharged. McNeill added, "But you'll also have to stand the court costs of the trial, about seven hundred more."

Seventeen hundred dollars! . . . *for naught else but challenging the depredations of the nation's Red Jews too successfully!*

"How much will our appeal to the higher court in Raleigh cost?" I asked Joe Ford.

"Three thousand dollars, if it costs you a cent."

"In other words, I save our supporters about the nation—who've really got to bear the financial brunt of this travesty—thirteen hundred dollars?"

¶ "Exactly. And you're free to go back to directing the Silvershirts."

"Will Warlick give me time to raise the money?" The poignant fact remained that I had a trifle over $200 in the world at the moment.

"We'll see what we can do," McNeill responded.

Half an hour of conference with the magistrate followed. "The Judge says that if you'll pay $200 on the fine this morning, as evidence of good faith, he'll release you under your present bond until you've got the balance paid in instalments."

"Tell him I'll accept his proposition," I decided after an interval alone.

At eleven o'clock Judge Warlick resumed the bench and dictated his sentence. It was typed and signed. I went down to the clerk of courts and paid my first instalment. Whereupon I walked from the courtroom with the ordeal behind me.

Back home I hurried and mimeographed a Bulletin to our thousands of Silvershirts. I told them truthfully what had happened and asked for their help.

Within a week I had money enough wired or mailed in to me to pay the entire fine and costs twice over!

Eight days later I walked into Judge Warlick's court, settled the balance of my fine, and was discharged a free man.

But the Jews of Asheville were in a bumble of rage.
"Fifteen thousan' dollars it costs us to put the goy in jail, and he don't go! Ve don't get it a square deal! There ain't no justice!" . . . Such were the comments that reached the ears of my attorneys.
That night, in the silence of my home, the Beloved Voice came to me. . . .
¶ *"Think ye that I allow my servants to fall in pits?"*
Verily I had the attestment of my senses that the same Protection that had assumed charge of Don's airplane in that night landing near Fredericksburg, had not been impotent in directing a righteous Judge's sentence.
All of which is something that Robert R. Williams, Thomas Harkins, the Honorable Zeb Nettles and Alvin Kartus know nothing about. . . .

CHAPTER THIRTY

IT ENDED in January of 1935, that trial. That is four years bygone, for it is a Spring morning in March, 1939, that I am bringing this first half of my life story to a close. I am in a position now, to appraise the damage —or profit—from all those early years and struggles, so poignantly in retrospect.
When I walked from the Buncombe County courthouse that January day, free to resume my crusading activities throughout the nation, I had turned the Great Corner in the founding of the Silvershirts. The Craigs, the Siebers, the Andersons, the Powells, had all been "burned out" by the seething heat which the episode of my prosecution had turned upon it. It had been demonstrated to me, which supporters about the nation I could thereafter rely upon—to the end in victory. The far-flung publicity attendant upon my ordeal had put the word *Silvershirt* into the country's daily speech.
Dickstein had submitted a fulsome report to the Congress about the seditious activities of myself and organization, but most of it was such flimsy key-hole evidence, that authorities of sense had refused to consider it.
¶ My first chore was to get *Liberation Weekly* running smoothly again.
Harry Martin, the accountant who had come down from Chicago to be near me throughout the trial, Hial Cummings, the artist, John Aarhus of Los Angeles—today in charge of all Pelley Publication shipping—and Marion Henderson, constituted the modest staff with which I began the work of "building back."

My first big maneuver that year of 1935 was to make a motor-trip up into the Pacific Northwest. Some of my most loyal support throughout the trial had come from the Northwest, and I had never visited the territory. ¶ It was to be a fateful trip—because that visitation brought me into touch with Roy Zachary.

I HAD, from time to time throughout the previous two years, received correspondence from Seattle signed by a man named Zachary, connected with the Port of Seattle and a former organizer for Coin Harvey's erstwhile Liberty Party. He had been a self-starter in organizing Northwest Silvershirts. He had helped to work up moral support for, and correctly publicize my trial. Besides, up in the Northwest were hundreds of loyal and zealous men and women whose financial support held no little significance while I had been fighting the Dickstein-Williams-Harkins-Kartus-Nettles coalition back in Asheville.

I went by way of New York, Ohio, Minnesota, and California, to reach Oregon and Washington. Wherever I stopped, crowds of Silvershirts came out to greet me and beg me to address them. Youthful, unstable, and irresponsible zealots were now missing from my audiences. A type of staid, mature, but increasingly disgruntled adult now remained to represent the character of the Silver Legion. I talked to audiences. I met groups in private homes. Money was thrust into my hands by people who fiercely resented the treatment which North Carolina had accorded me.

In Cleveland, I ran into a peculiar episode. Walking by arrangement of a prominent Cleveland Silvershirt into the office of an executive in the Manufacturers Association, the latter cried at sight of me: "When did *you* get out?" The man, it seemed, had been informed that I was incarcerated in Atlanta Penitentiary.

"Who told you such blither?" I demanded, laughing.

"Kramer!" he exploded. "*Congressman Kramer!* He came to Cleveland and delivered an hour's talk before our luncheon club. He said to all of us, that he had sent you to Atlanta Penitentiary after a secret trial, for robbing arsenals in Southern California. We even reprinted his speech in our monthly magazine!"

"Then I could sue you for libel, but I won't. You Gentile businessmen will learn, one of these days, to recognize the type of law-maker that serves these Jews in Congress."

"That d—— politician will never get a second chance to address our organization!" was the wrathy comment of this Ohio executive, when I

had acquainted him with the facts. Truth is a queer thing. Moralists discovered a long time ago, that it has a neat way of eventually coming out. ☙ ☙

It was a rainy night in Seattle when a knock at my hotel-room door disclosed a stocky, two-fisted, firm-jawed man of some fifty years, with a cold-steel eye and a chin like a plowshare.

"I'm Zachary," he said curtly. There was nothing wishy-washy about his manner of shaking hands.

I sat down with Zachary and we visited.

I told him about the hectic time I had been having with the Weaker Brethren elsewhere in the nation, the high lights of my trial, my plans for a greater Legion. He told me about his boyhood in North Carolina, some thirty miles southwest of Asheville, his years in lumbering and railroading. Our first session ended with a promise from me to address a meeting of the local Silvershirts which Zachary would arrange. To that moment, none but Zachary and a handful of his trusted lieutenants, knew that I had come into the territory.

This committee gathered secretly the following evening. I met its members informally and answered their questions. The Big Event was scheduled for the following Thursday night.

A HALL belonging to a local labor union was secured for the speech. Without anyone's suspecting who the speaker was to be, it was crowded to the door. Zachary had merely announced an unknown emissary from Asheville, to report upon the outcome of the recent Pelley Trial. I was held in an ante-room till the session had opened. Then, at a signal, the doors were opened, and I was escorted down the aisle—in uniform—by a group of elated committeemen.

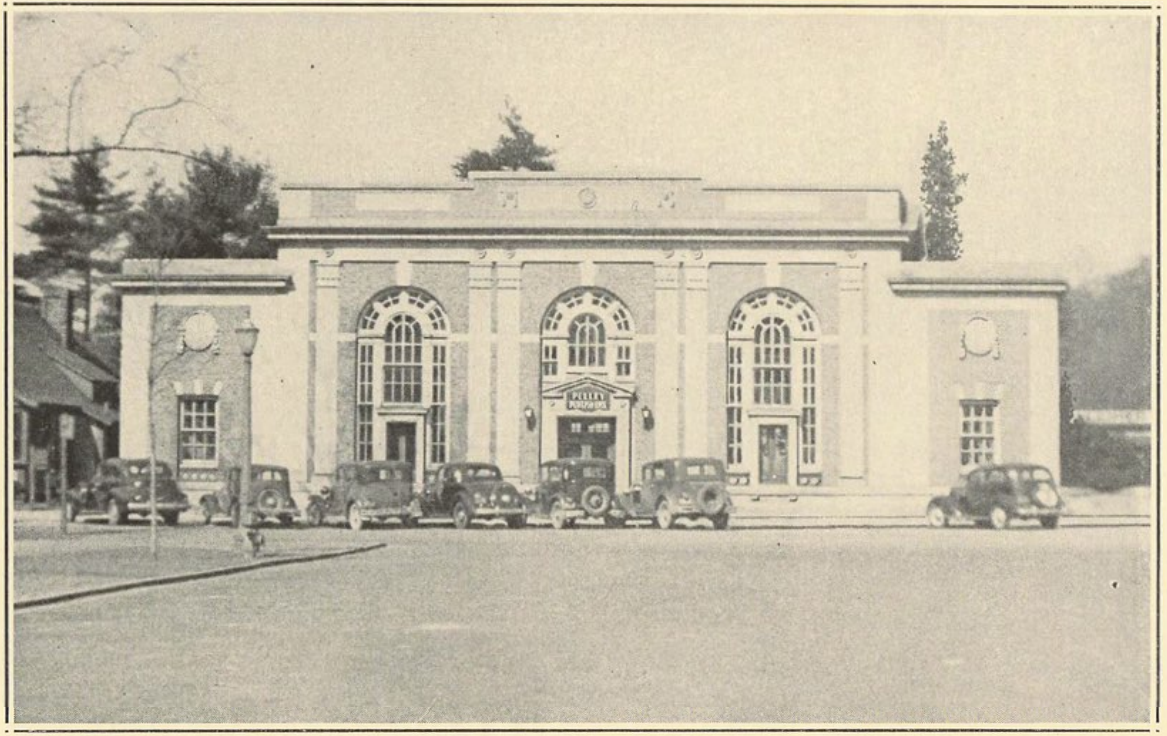
What followed, as I mounted the platform and was recognized, was the proverbial ovation.

It took three minutes for the cheering to be stopped.

So I made those Western Washington Silvershirts a speech!

All my pent-up feelings of the past eight months gave way. I am told that I made a "pretty fair talk!"

Silvershirts recall that initial speech in the Northwest territory, to the present moment. Six months later, it was my overwhelming experience to stand before an audience of a thousand Silvershirts amassed in Moose Auditorium, walls draped with Old Glory and Liberation banners, and make them another speech. I understand that the second was a good



Two million pieces of literature went out
from Asheville Headquarters in 1938

speech, too. But that first night was my introduction to the sterling men and women of the State of Washington—people like Attorney Floyd Hatfield, Earl Peterson, Fred Widmer, Mrs. Rubie Johnson, and scores whose names I would list if space permitted.

Roy was on his feet after I had reached my climax.

"Men and women, we've got a *leader!*" I recall his crying above the din.

¶ The Northwest was awakened to the Red-Jew Menace. I went from the hall that night to begin my long motor-trip back to Asheville, with ears deafened and my right hand so swollen from hand-clasps that I could scarcely hold the steering-wheel when it became my turn to drive.

But I came away with something else besides deafened ears and a swollen hand. I came away with a deep and abiding friendship begun with the man who at this moment is my noble compatriot and capable right bower.

¶ Zachary declares that it was my first speech, that night in Seattle, which won him to the work and has held him ever since. Within six months he had given up his position with the Port of Seattle and was helping the Silvershirts organize the Christian Party in the State of Washington, to run a slate of Silvershirt candidates in 1936.

For the Silvershirts needed a political Party of their own. Such a Party would refute the defamations made by our opponents that we were a seditious, un-American lot, organized to seize the government by violence.

¶ I gave the move my blessing, returned to Asheville, and set about launching the Christian Party throughout the nation, with a vim.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

TO WHAT has occurred in the history of the Silvershirt Movement since the political campaign of 1936, I need devote small space. All over the nation Silvershirts "went to it," attempting to get the Christian Party registered, only to discover the extent of the arrangements which had surreptitiously been made throughout a majority of States for keeping the Two-Party political system intact, and frustrating the effectiveness of Third Parties, that the Republican and Democratic Parties might remain beneath Jew control. Practically a majority of States had made the registration of Third Parties so difficult, or so wound about with red tape, that electing other than a Republican or Democratic candidate was impossible. None the less, the Silvershirts put a full national ticket upon the slate in Washington State, and I took a Cavalcade of thirty to fifty men, from San Diego in California, up the coast to Seattle and eastward as far as Spokane, to bring it to the attention of bedeviled citizens. I made seventeen speeches in thirty-four nights.

When the memorable Election Day came—that gave Roosevelt his fallacious "Mandate"—people wanting to vote the Christian Party ticket as a protest against Jew Control, discovered that handles on the voting machines had been plugged, so that votes could not be registered.

Forthwith, this chicane accomplished, the Jewish press emblazoned to the nation that my "support" had been ludicrous—that there was no anti-Semitism, in consequence, discernible in the nation excepting what "un-American" Silvershirts, and similar breeders of "Hate," promoted.

I returned to Asheville.

I had to return to Asheville. My faithful assistant, Martin, was suddenly invalided by an affliction in a foot. Three months after my arrival, the man was dead! He Passed Over while undergoing a surgical operation to remove the afflicted leg at the knee!

It was the first death directly within our Inner Circle.

And it properly saddened us.

But our grief was short-lived, as Harry would have had it.

PROMPTLY with the winning of the Mandate, and the passing of the Great Pyramid date of September 16, 1936, things began to disintegrate mysteriously for the Jews. Franco started winning his way

in Spain. John Lewis and his Sit-Downers lost their auto and steel strikes. Roosevelt began to be discredited. And in the exact ratio that the New Dealers started down the toboggan, the Silvershirts forged ahead.

Everything which I touched, after 1936, seemed to turn out successful.

The time had come for us to acquire our own publishing facilities. I made a trip to New York, put my figures up to zealous supporters there, and got the loan of the necessary funds without the slightest argument. It was a proud day for me when I walked through our fully equipped publishing plant for the first time and saw LIBERATION coming off our own presses. ❧ ❧

For Bob Williams and I had reached a parting of the ways. I could no longer get the quality of work from his shop that I wanted, or with the dispatch or at the figure, that we ourselves could produce. And I suspected that there had been times when the LIBERATION publications were shelved in his shop, to give preference to work from Asheville Jews or Black Mountain radicals—Black Mountain being a town to the east of Asheville, noted for its school of alleged Communistic teachings. Unhappily for Williams, most of his workmen preferred to work for me.

¶ Dwight Williams, master pressman, had printed almost the first Galahad publication that had been done in Williams' shop. Fenton Cunningham, compositor and machine operator, had set up the first Liberation Script at Biltmore Press, seven years bygone. Rexford Boyd, who does the artful imposition work in laying out our book and magazine pages, and John MacEwen, who takes the night shift on the presses in our present publishing house, are former Biltmore Press employes. I have made no effort to strip the Biltmore Press. It has simply been that these men desired the more to work for Pelley than to work for Williams, and that is that!

Five years have gone since the day when I was driven to a tenantless mountain cabin near Mount Pisgah with nothing in the way of material assets but a portable typewriter and a small portrait of the Christ, that the despoilers of the Galahad project had not bethought to confiscate when they gutted our building. As one local wag puts it: "The Jews made their one mistake in not confiscating that portable typewriter too!"

¶ In January of last year, 1938, the radical LaFollette Civil Liberties Committee in the Senate, sought to subpoena Spencer Warwick, our Ohio liaison man, and make him surrender his Silvershirt records so that Administration Jews could paw them through. This time I had political friends. I had counsel. I flooded so much adverse publicity throughout

Washington, along with my petition to the courts for a restraining order, that John L. Lewis's senatorial stooge withdrew his subpoena and his committee folded up.

In the summer of 1938, the assiduous Dickstein sought another probing Committee from the Congress, bethinking to smash and gut us again. But its chairmanship went to Martin Dies of Texas.

Jews gave it out that Dies was coming to Asheville to probe us. Had he done so, he would have found himself made exceeding ridiculous.

For the Silvershirts were ceasing to be an organization and were functioning as a Movement!

Experience with men like McCord and Case in the West, and the Dickstein-Kramer combination in the East, had taught me a lesson. I had altered the pattern of the Legion internally. Almost no records worthy the name, were kept in Asheville, or for that matter, anywhere. Councils of Safety meeting in private homes, or Posts and Chapels assembling when officers summoned them to give me support in my political battles, merely had liaison men who, upon necessary occasions, contacted me personally for instructions. Subversion was thus minimized. If one leader, or one unit, defected, it was only known to the one group concerned.

And proselyting these expanding units over the whole United States was Roy Zachary, Field Marshal for the Legion, who rolled up 75,000 miles on his speedometer last year, counselling our supporters as our work took in more territory.

Martin Dies and his Committeemen did not come to Asheville and probe me a second time—and so furious were Administration Jews, that they fanaggled a Second Dies Committee, whose work at this writing is now in prospect.

I am not afraid of it. The sentiment of the nation now is such, that whatever Jews attempt to wreak on me, will but lift me the further and harder *upstairs!*

SO I pause in the midst of this, my strange life, and leave the *denouement* from all this contest to a later day and volume. Today I am ballasted with co-workers whose loyalty has been proven under fire.

Marion Henderson—who George Anderson was so grimly determined should be discharged—is still my Pivot, around whom turns the creative work of Pelley Publishers. Hial Cummings, who opened the apartment-door that flood-night in Los Angeles five years bygone, has his office a few feet from mine, and his weekly cartoons in LIBERATION are earning him

nation-wide fame. Alfred Talpey, comptroller of affairs at publishing headquarters, with his wife, Lenora, is a veteran of the Dickstein Crackdown of 1935. Jesse Kling, who handles much of my personal correspondence, Herma Jefferys, who supervises subscriptions, John Aarhus, whose labors in naught but mailing consume twelve to fourteen hours of his day, Lawrence Brown, who does most of the editorial research work on LIBERATION—practically all of these are associates of three to four years' standing.

And all of us stand now on the threshhold of an entirely new departure in our work, for Roosevelt and his Jew Gang are everywhere slipping and tobogganing to extinction. When Roy Zachary spoke recently in Chicago, and a Jewish-provoked riot resulted, some of the strongest politicians in Washington and Illinois saw to it that he was swiftly exonerated.

Perhaps the Great Turn in national affairs is partly the result of the two million pieces of enlightening literature that came from the Pelley presses during 1938. I like to think so. I know that nearly every Senator and Congressman at Washington get gratis copies of our publications, and that they are zealously read now, is attested by the fact that if they miss an issue, they unerringly tell us.

MY STORY—for a time—is done. But how to close? That is the question.

It is always a risky procedure for a man to attempt his autobiography while still in middle life. Still, I have had a purpose in compiling this narrative.

I know that the seeds making for righteousness which I have sought to sow throughout America to the moment have sprouted in such a way that they cannot be uprooted. This pioneering work which began for me with that splendorful experience in my California bungalow in 1928, completed its first sequence when I walked from Judge Warlick's court in February, 1935, with my discharge in my pocket. With the projection of the Christian Party throughout the land in August, the second phase opened. This second phase is one of Action. The first was Enlightenment. And with the Actionist Sequence ahead, I appreciate that renewed depredations, disparagements, even downright slander, will be employed against me by my Red enemies as the forces I now have the honor to head, press forward to victory. I have wanted to behold in existence a truthful and official account of exactly how it has been with me from the very

first. The confidence which my thousands of friends have shown in me, has commanded it.

Since that morning in February, 1935, when I walked from Judge Warlick's chambers with my bond discharged, free to resume my aggressive labors for my stricken compatriots, I have traveled one hundred and twenty thousand miles up and down my country, counselling and speaking. Naurally my enemies are making the most of that fateful decision in the Asheville courthouse to consistently blackball me before a puzzled nation. It will go on interminably until the public learns the truth. In Seattle, where the Christian Party scored too heavily for Jewish mental tranquillity, one Richard Gudstadt, president of District Grand Lodge No. 4. B'nai B'rith addressed 300 members of that order at which time he said—

> "There are men in America today who boast that they will be Hitlers here. There are others, and we know whom they are, who are not not so frank about it. Today there are 55 anti-Semitic organizations in this country. We Jews in free America have never before faced organized anti-Semitism . . . lies spread by petty racketeers, making a living by stirring up hate . . . on the scale existent today.
>
> "Jewish hatred spread by these Christian Party racketeers in this State," he continued, "is neither Christian nor American. It is perversion. William Dudley Pelley, former Silvershirt head, is the Christian Party's candidate for President. If I know nothing else, I know this: he'll never be President of the United States because he is not a citizen. He is not a citizen because he lost his citizenship rights when he was convicted of a felony in North Carolina in connection with the Silvershirt racket. That's the kind of people who peddle anti-Semitism."

I have given my reader the truthful and unbiased *facts* of what I have experienced. I must leave it to the details of the record, and the reader's sense of Christian fair play, to determine for himself whether such continued defamations are in any way justifiable.

The Jews think I "hate" them. . . . I do nothing of the sort. I go back to my days in Siberia, my conversations with Czech and other officials anent the Jews, my contacts in Washington with men like Robert Sharpe, Doctor Gordon, Congressman McFadden, my own bitter experiences in finding Jewish rabbis persistently arrayed against me when I seek to tell the truth behind this Great Impoverishment, as the cause of my reactions

against this peculiar racial element. The Jewish people all over the earth are in the throes of the greatest persecution of all history. It is bigger than a mere American problem. I have simply given articulate expression in advance of the crisis, to such people of my race and faith as are coming to realize that I am tilting at no windmills.

But will my reader take note that my ultimate solution of the Jewish problem contains no violence reprisals against the Jews. I have given my nation a new Spiritual Hypothesis, a New History, a Political Philosophy. I have shown how my countrymen may escape the detonations of these Seven Lean Years by embracing and putting into practice the stipulations in *No More Hunger*. . . . The Jews, however, take no notice of either. The only ammunition they can call up against me is the scurrility of the Asheville litigation and its aftermath. Of this they rant, over and over and over, till the defamation grows brassy.

The facts of the matter are, that the Jews have no real weapons to use against me. I have not dealt in lies, for then they could have impaled me in libel suits. They have not dared even to get me publicly upon the stand, to attest to the salient features of the Jewish question. After the Dickstein hearings were ended, a friend of mine in New York demanded of Dickstein personally why—after all the fanfare and hallabaloo of two years before—he had not called me before his tribunal. Dickstein is reported to have replied in his broken Yiddisher English, "It would have been very im-polly-tick to get that guy up where he could talk before reporters. *He knows too much!*"

To the slander that I have ambitions to make myself dictator of the American scene, I refuse to comment. It is Jewish imbecility at its worst. What I *do* aspire to do, is to lead my hoodwinked countrymen out into the full illumination and freedom of a perfect recognition of the basic causes of their sufferings. I believe there are enough Christian patriots in the nation, after that is accomplished, to indicate whether or not they want me to continue to serve them and reestablish the kind of government bequeathed us by the forefathers.

I have tried to keep this record, however, not a political document so much as an interesting account of one man's reactions to life and the validities of the Higher Summons.

I am in my fiftieth year as I conclude this boyhood narrative. I have lived much and seen much. I have had my hours of pain and my days of encouragement. Women have come and gone in my life, like the men, staunch friends, true compatriots, inspiring companions. I have married

two of them. When I came to secure my divorce, Marion, my first wife, willingly consented that the bond between us be dissolved. My boy and girl have grown. I have reached those exquisite years where I have compiled a Philosophy. . . .

I have looked upon life and found it good. I have found it comprising ten strong people—people of principle, loyalty, and affection—for every person of weakness, venality, or limited vision. I know that the heart of my America is sound. No matter how many men have betrayed or disillusioned me, I still trust human nature with an abiding faith. The handclasp of earnest men, the laughter of little children, the sacrifice in the eyes of loving womanhood, are the precious increments that come to me along the daily Pathway.

I find myself as eager to serve my country as I ever was back in 1928 when the Door to Revelation opened for me wondrously. Nothing which has happened to me has left its mark upon me . . . that I am aware of personally. And the secret of this last lies solely in the essence of the experience in the empty Pullman crossing the Mojave.

I know that my Redeemer liveth! . . .

I am not afraid of the task which confronts me, no matter where My Elder Brother desires that I shall lead His people. I know my nation so intimately that in truth it has narrowed to the confines of a yard. I have become as fully at home in Seattle as in Boston, I know Minneapolis as I know Asheville, I feel as oriented in Texas as I do in Vermont. The problems of my country are but one problem . . . how to eventually educate the subversive alien within the gates so that he begins to appreciate what the Continental Fathers prescribed in the way of benefits for all of us. There are privileges and increments enough for all. But there are ill-mannered and ignorant children in our midst. Some must be chided, some must be disciplined, some must be spanked and isolated from others until they have learned their lesson. Yet I say without the slightest gesture toward maudlinity, it is not for these I am working . . . I am doing it to advance the earthly mission of My Elder Brother, whose Presence continues quite as real to me as anything experienced in *Seven Minutes in Eternity*. ☙ ☙

Yes, I feel that I have come a long way since I picked up those bits of colored glass around my father's country church, since I preached that sermon to empty pews, since I walked with Mabel beneath the springtime cherry trees and she pinned a sprig of blossoms in her hair. My hours in the factory, the running of my papers, my experiences in Bolshevia,

the *denouements* of Hollywood, all have narrowed down to a curriculum of experience, prescribed for a Purpose. The prophecy has said that I am going to make the Passing in a foreign land at a date in the future. Perhaps. I don't know. For reasons not accountable I may be slain tomorrow, for my enemies are many and their hatred is savage. Let no lamentation be given, however, no matter what happens. Death to me is but a glorious graduation. If my enemies kill me, they shall be doing me a favor. You see, I *know* what awaits behind the Veil. . . .

And so I say, once there was a lad who stood on Life's Doorstone. Once there was a youth who stood on its Threshold. Once there was a man who saw the Door to Revelation open . . . and he passed through it to Behind the Beyond.

In his heart of hearts it is all a brevet. We come into life to serve or be served. When the service is rendered, the scene dissolves before us.

Perhaps down some future years, when my Greater America has come into its own, I shall be able to withdraw into a quiet place and write the sequel to this volume. Perhaps I shall have greater venturings to tell. I shall do it if I can . . . and if it serves a purpose by which my fellowmen are benefited. Just now I am at a crossroads in the million-mile journey that is the march up through the star-worlds. I have said what I have said that the record may be accurate.

The vista is bright that now spreads before me. I believe that we shall emerge from these times of Great Heartbreak. We shall know a New Country . . . the Promised Land indeed. But that is another story . . . a tale to be written. . . .

I have come unto mankind to spread a Great Compassion.

I have come unto mankind to aid with a harvest.

I work for a Harvester who has said as a compact: He who attests of Me before men, of him will I attest before the Father.

I have faith in that contract.

I have faith in my Sojourn.

God has trusted me with myself!

FINIS