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WANDERINGS AND EXCURSIONS

BY

J. RAMSAY MacDONALD

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Note

THE great bulk of the articles here collected appeared in the *Forward*, to whose Editor grateful thanks are returned for permission to reprint them; also to Messrs. Cassell for permission to extract the preface to the 'Life of Keir Hardie'; to the Editor of the *Contemporary Review* for the study of Jaurès; and to the Editors of the *New Leader*, *Venturer*, *Daily Chronicle* and *Nation* for contributions originally appearing in their pages.

Introduction

THE papers included in this book were written to fill a corner in ephemeral sheets, or as comments on passing moods and events. Their life was meant to be brief and they had no expectation of resurrection. I have been asked frequently to collect some of them, but have thought that they might be allowed to lie comfortably forgotten amongst leaves that, through tints of yellow and brown, hasten to dust, taking with them all that has been printed upon them. Some friends, however, have been importunate. They have flattered me that if I took their advice, a few more feet might be induced to take to the open road and moor, and a few more thoughts turned to the rising and the setting sun. If the publication of these papers does that, it will do a good service.

The wanderlust is perhaps the most precious of all the troublesome appetites of the soul of man. It makes him keep in his cupboard a friendly old suit of comfortable wear that has paled under the fervent eye of the sun, and been matured by dust and mud and rain, and with that, a pair of honest boots nailed like the oak door of an ancient keep which of themselves direct one's way o'er moor and fell and bog and bypath away from the offence and clamour of cars and trains; it saves his soul from being lost in the vain attempt to keep itself alive by indulging in the vices of the smart or the flashy inanities of those to whom the jewels of life are paste or glass; it keeps his windows open to the winds of heaven and his heart to the song of birds. What better service

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can be done either to the body or the soul of man? So I have given a licence to dig and select, to take this and reject that. Therefore, whilst I have paternal responsibility for the papers, I am not the judge who has sent 'ane to heaven an' ten to hell.'

It is fitting that the sentences introducing a collection of such miscellaneous moods and subjects recalling wanderings in the by-ways of interest and life, should be written not only under strange skies but almost one by one disconnectedly amidst the distractions of a steamer's deck and smoking-room, the enervating heat of tropical hotels, and the wayside halts for rest and refreshment in forest and plantation.

I am ready to argue that the colour, gaiety and romance which are our portion in life come into it, in the main, during the first fifteen of our years. If we then fall in with our heroes and come under their spell, if we then come into possession of the great things of nature and the pulse-stirring achievements of men, if we then know where are the pilgrim and knightly shrines whither we must wander in our dreams and, God willing, on our feet later on – it is well with us. However dull our lot in life may be, or however much we may fail to keep our heads and hearts above the muddy waters of decorum and respectability, our weariness will never be too oppressive and the lifelessness of our materialistic and darkened minds too numbing to prevent us, when our grey hairs come, from having a voyage of an evening with Captain Kidd or a wild march through Darien forests with a band of swashbuckling black-

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guards recruited at Port Royal. We may pull ourselves up wondering at our own iniquities and at the primitive man who sleeps in us – and that with one eye open, too. The fact, however, is – and this is our justification as well as our apology – that Time is like a good mother in her care that the crimes and the follies of the strong and the reckless shall be clothed in glowing vestments, and whilst rigidly condemned in the courts of justice have a more tender judgment passed upon them at our firesides. We punish their badness but confess to their interest. We shun them like the plague upon the actual stage of life where we play our daily part or preach our weekly sermon, but in our moments of wanton privacy we enjoy their company. The spirit of adventure, like a core of the hard primitive fluxes of which the earth is made, stands out like blue mountain peaks seen from a distance and receives in fine glory the lights of dawning and of sun setting, whilst the softer earthy stuffs of passion and folly are washed away by the years and become the virgin soil for the cultivator of morals. Some admiration for the old disreputables does the living reputables no harm but much good. So, the Spanish Main, the Windward Passage, Darien, Hispaniola, Panama, are names that will make our hearts beat and our pulses throb so long as life is in our bodies. In those regions these sentences are being written.

I have passed by the tortoise-like island of Tortuga, the den of the buccaneers; in one of its bays lay a sea-beaten and weather-paled greenish-grey craft from the decks of which it was easy to imagine the plank was fixed for the skeletons now lying down below in

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the Windward Passage to walk to their end. I have skirted the coast of Hayti with its one hero, Toussaint, and its many worthless rivals and failures. I have been through the Costa Rican forests and swamps on a railroad which is one of the wonders of the world, and have seen the blue of the mountains of Central America which is surely unmatched by any blue of this earth. I have seen the miracle done by the Americans at the Colon end of the Panama Canal showing how the will and intelligence of man can subdue Nature whether in her most gigantic or her most minute powers and terrors. I have wandered over the hills, floated down the streams, bathed in the bays and shuddered in the decaying ghost-haunted Halls of Jamaica. Every minute of the days has been golden, and I return with no pained conscience that I have enjoyed myself but with a wish that it might be possible for all who hold the world and men in reverence to have the chance of at least one such journey before the earth and all it contains ceases to trouble and interest them.

And yet — and yet. — In a day or so I shall be back in the land of Rob Roy and Johnnie Armstrong, of the Grampians and the West Highland hills. If the exile in the West Indies sighs:

‘And in my dreams I see the Hebrides —’

his dreams are not bad. No people doomed to remain confined within the limits of their own country have a richer storehouse of treasures to explore than have ours. All we need is to know something of our own land, to keep our minds lyrical and our feet and

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boots in good condition. To turn in at Tibbie Shiels' of an evening, to go up the Enterkin in the dead of winter, to sleep out by Loch Avon; to know the foot-paths by instinct as a child of the wilds does, to trespass wherever the hills or the moors invite and whether or not the barbed wire and the notice boards forbid, to be independent of wind or rain or sun, to be at home at every inn fire when the day has closed and the blessing of drowsy weariness lies like God's boon upon you, to know the sweetness of the sleep of the labouring man whatever the bed may be; to walk on the footsteps of the men you revere, to enjoy their company by the firesides at which they sat, to wander over their homes and haunts, to be hunted with them on the moss hags and go reiving with them on the hill-sides — what lusty and gallant happiness greater than that has life to give?

And let no man think that he has possessed this happiness to the full till he can walk alone with his own thoughts and songs. The true wanderer sings by the way though he would be ashamed if any human ear were to hear his improvised outpourings. Walking and singing go together. The mood is everything. It is the note which Nature's finger touches in the soul and we must be free to give it forth. If it catches one gossiping of other things or dallying with other thoughts, it fades away and may not sound again. Moor and mountain are reserved for better concerns than the troubles we bring upon ourselves in the course of our trafficking with men and things. A book for the wayside and the evening between supper and bed — Wordsworth, Milton, the Elizabethan lyricists, the letters of Burns or Cowper

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— light for both pocket and hand to hold, and an inch to the mile ordnance survey map, are the essential companions. If any really good guides existed they too would be essential. Macmillan's *Highways and Byeways* Series are unequal, but are on the whole the best; though bulky and heavy, and get destroyed if carried in the pocket and lie like lead in a knapsack. The *Thorough Guides* give good walking directions and are plainly written by men who walk and not by compilers who move about by train — by folk who love the country and not by people who see nothing but churches and tombs. But I have found some of the best guides in cheap local publications, and it is a good rule to ransack those little book and news shops found in every country town for handbooks. Beyond that, never trust local information on anything. Only if you are either in dire extremity or careless where you may find yourself at the end of the day, or how many miles you may have to walk, should you seek advice from people you meet on the road. An inquiry suddenly made by a stranger flurries the countryman, or, to him, the highway is the only way upon which any respectable man would ever think of walking, or the person encountered really does not know or has vaguer notions than yourself. In any event, it is well to remember that if you cannot get yourself out of difficulties by a knowing and a useful head, the wayside adviser is likely to put you deeper into them.

When he was fifty-three, Mr. Gladstone at Balmoral wrote in his diary: 'Walked 24½ miles. Found it rather too much for my stiffening limbs. My day of long stretches is, I think, gone by.' It is a good

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thing to be able to say that one has beaten Mr. Gladstone at anything. But even if I can claim 30 miles without finding it 'too much' at fifty-three, there will be a walk which, looked back upon, will be recorded as 'the last.' Then when the fire dances, flashes on the fender, fills the room (where the blinds are drawn to keep out the cold and the night) with red light and black shadows, our truant memories will wander back upon the years; the winds will blow upon our faces, the sky be blue overhead, the birds call in our ears, the rattle of reaping machines come up from the distance, and we shall know that when the evening comes there will be the inn door open and that we shall be guided to it by the light from its hearth and its board lying across the dark road.

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD.

Jamaica, 1925.

PART I: AT HOME

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CHAPTER ONE: ON OLD FOOTSTEPS¹

WE never feel the world's change so much as when we return to old paths and haunts. There we see how the shadow of Time has passed over the dial face of Life. I wandered back the other day to a scene of great exploits. The unruly crowd who went to Drainie School to be licked into shape by Bain's Grammar, the tawse, and a much respected dominie, are scattered to all the winds, but, whether dead or alive, in their dreams they must often return to those wild days when a tear or two dissolved the worst of cares, and every sunrise brought a hilarious day.

And what were those days without the Nineteen Trees? No mariner returned with greater pride from voyaging into unknown seas bearing a cargo of gold and silk and spices than we did, when, mounting the first of the Nineteen, we swung and jumped in mid-air like squirrels from tree to tree until we went the round of the Nineteen for the first time. Then we were fit for any venture. We had accomplished the grand achievement, and had passed to a niche amongst the heroes.

I returned the other day and found the place desolate. The trees, like ourselves, had grown old, and the axe had been laid to their roots. They have passed on to another life. Perhaps they bear the scanty supper of the labourer; perhaps they are behind the venter of some shoddy creation of capitalism; perhaps they kept up the muddy sides of trenches in France, and are mouldering there with some of the

¹ *New Leader*, September 20, 1923.

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youths who climbed them. The woods are gone, and the naked ground appeared to my eye to be tortured with shame. It seemed to have forgotten us all in its own misery.

Then there were the romantic wanderings by the shore where every week brought its new 'fairlies' thrown up from the sea. The changeable is constant in its changes. The sandbanks have been blown by the winds and washed by the tides into new shapes, and the shingle has come farther west. But upon the beach are the familiar tins, spars, uprooted trees, and all the scraps which are the playthings of the waves. And the black bituminous shales which we used to treasure for their fossils are still washed up from their beds far out in the Firth – though no one seems to gather them now. Here Time has been merciful; and from whin to whin in the raised beaches behind chirp and fly the feathered children, forty generations and more removed from the parents whose nests we robbed.

At the end of the shingle beach and close by the mighty river is a hamlet that itself, under its thatch and with its white-washed walls, looks as if it had been thrown up by the sea. It was an old haunt. How had time dealt with it? Had it become the home of ghosts? Here on a bench sat in the sun a derelict who, when I saw him last, was in the prime of life. Now, 'the oldest man he seemed that ever wore grey hairs.' He leaned on his staff and sat as though he were waiting for something. We began a talk on the trivial things which are the avenues of approach to the intimate. We reached that in due time.

'There was a girl, Maggie-' 'Aye, aye! a glaikit

ON OLD FOOTSTEPS

quean, Maggie was.' 'And her brither Jock?' 'Aye, there wis her brither Jock.' 'She mairrit Jamie-?' 'Aye, Jamie wis a decent man.' He had lifted up his head and his eyes were upon the far-away hills. 'What has happened to them?' 'They're a' thegither out there' (pointing his stick to the churchyard on a brae slope) 'up in the tap corner there. Ye'll see their gravestanes.' We drifted in our talk like boats on a tide. Then: 'Aye, I min' those loons. They were a mischievious lot. Ane o' them aince stealt a boat o' mine, and he might hae been droont. I gaed him a good thrashin', an' the nickum nearly broke my head wi' a stane.' He paused and the far-away look came upon him again. 'An' whar's that deevil o' a loon noo, think ye?' 'Hung,' I suggested. 'Hung? deil a bit, man.'

'Ech, man, there's chainges. Ye're maybe frae the Sooth?' I assented. 'Weel, ye ken' o' 'im. He's flingin' stanes as big as the hill there at the heads o' the d - d Tories. I wid like tae see him again afore I dee. Bit he's forgotten a' about the boatie an' that clout he gave me. He struck me jaest there' (rubbing the back of his head). 'O, I'm prood o' 't, an' it wis ower forty years ago. Aye, aye! there's chainges, but there'll be nae chainge for me till they carry me up yonder.'

The shops had changed their names and their faces. A farm where I had many a 'piece' of thick floury scones had fitted itself out like a lady in a new hat, and a stranger had come to it. A mile or so beyond was the little Arcady where the old blacksmith of Lochill had retired with Eppie to await the coming. The house was a but and a ben with a 'best bedroom'

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added, and smelt of rose leaves and thyme. How well do I remember the big beds, the white counterpanes, the white sun and the delicious scent of the place. Its roof was of thick thatch, and on the first night I could not sleep there for the souch of the fir trees that grew close round it. The fence round the garden was green and grey with lichen, a burn ran close by, and part of its waters turned John Munro's mill wheel. The work of the miller, I used to think, was to stand at his door covered with meal and look cheery.

I found most of the wood cut; the dam on the burn was there, but not the rickety thing I knew. They had modernized it, and the modern thing was in decay. The wheel of the mill was rotting; the mill itself was but four empty walls falling to ruin and surrounded by rubbish. But most woeful of all, the plough had gone over Eppie's garden, the path up to where her beloved pigs were kept is blotted out, and not a trace of her home remains. 'When did they knock down the hoose?' I asked a damsel I met. She looked upon me in terror. 'There never was a hoose there,' she replied, and went off scared, as though she had met a madman. I went over the fence into the clover field, where Arcadia once was. Bees bummed, a cutting machine rattled in a near field, but the place of my dreams is like a city buried deep under the years. The very names of Eppie and Sandy have gone from the memories of men. Thus the generations flicker in the darkness and go out.

CHAPTER TWO: THE OLD DOMINIE¹

LONG did the dominie linger in retirement to gladden the hearts of his scholars. The boys whom he taught and flogged had wandered far. They are men of middle age now, bald in counting-houses, bronzed on prairies, salted at sea, but when they returned to where they played as ragamuffins, they never forgot that the dominie would be glad to see them, to live with them some of their school-days, and to hear from them how they fared; they, on the other hand, never thought of leaving without seeing the dominie. They came back to him as schoolboys – the most successful of them, who had found little to fear in the world, could not throw off every tremor of bashful terror, every discomfort of the palpitating heart, as they approached. He remained to them the dominie to the end, not because they feared, but because they revered him.

We came mostly in summer, when, after he retired we found him sitting in his chair in the garden, and it was good to look upon him. He had then laid his text-books and his golf-clubs aside for ever, and was waiting. He shone in the sun. The cool breezes from the Firth blew his grey hair gently on his head; the far-off blue hills beyond the sea, the silent sleepy-looking white-washed houses by the green, the lazy swish of the sea close at hand, made a world of peace and beauty for him. We talked of the past, of the big world outside into which he had never been, of our own ups and downs. He was happy and so were

¹ *Scottish Educational Journal*, September 26, 1919.

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we. He felt possession in us, and we paid our dues with a glad heart.

A mile or two inland was the school. It could not be seen from where he went when he retired, but the dominie's presence always brought us there in spirit, and there we held converse. We sat on the desks where we used to sit, we remembered where the gashes which we had made with our knives were, we saw the opening of those blue paper registers wherein were entered our class records which settled who were to bear off coveted prizes and who were to go empty away. Memory came like a garrulous gossip to us. 'Dinna ye mind,' she would begin — and then we were in her toils. The years came up from the dead, and we lived through many an exploit, many a misadventure (so sweet to recall), many a wickedness (from the cheeks of which time had stolen the blushes). Come we again to this world? Well, give us the old school and the old dominie. We would not have it otherwise. When, in the fullness of time, he left the school to wait in the village for evenfall, they cut the woods which grew behind it where we played with vigilant eye upon intruding gamekeepers; and now the building stands bare like a skeleton stuck in a dead land. We felt that was appropriate. Without him that little corner of the world could not be as it was, and it would have been fraudulent for it to keep up old appearances.

We had a long way to go to him at school, and the road was bleak. In the summer-time we lengthened it, for there were nests in the gorse and the trees, and the sea was enticing. Sometimes, alas! we never

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got there at all, and our ears were deaf to his whistle. Hidden behind trees or amongst the whins, we saw him come to the door, survey the empty playground, put to his lips the key upon which he summoned us to lessons, presently come again when there was no response to his call, and blow a short, angry blast – all to no purpose. The call of the wild was upon us. The woods, the bushes, the caves, the seashore had us in thrall for the day. We then thought him very angry, but later on, when we came to talk over those mishaps, we knew that it was the heart of the boy that admonished us next morning, and controlled the strokes that made our fingers tingle, and that whilst he stood with the instrument of torture in his hand – the school giggling behind us the while – instead of the lecture he gave us, he would have liked to say: ‘I wish I had been with you, but you know that that would not have done.’ We always felt, however, that the penalty was just, and that the whole transaction had been good. He never punished without making us feel that. The rain poured upon us at other times, and we were soaked through on the road; then the dominie stirred the fire for us whilst we steamed in front of it; the snow also came, and we had to walk on tops of dykes when it blew; then he let us out early, to get home by nightfall. Passing in review those days now that they have gone far past, the dominie is never out of the picture. The friend with the ruddy face that never looked old up to the very last, clothed almost always in light grey clothes, of leisurely mien, with the soft voice and the wagging finger, always comes in. No memory of the school is possible without him. What

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was his genius? Nothing recondite; nothing requiring unravelment by analytical minds. The simple kindness of the teacher is perhaps the most precious gift he can give to his scholars. By that, he gathers them to his knee, as it were, and puts his arm about them, and they never forget.

Like so many others of his calling and generation, in his younger years he saw the pulpit behind the desk, and he was a 'Rev,' but, by the mercy of Providence, the pulpit remained a vision, and the desk a reality. In those days the Elementary School was not skimmed of its cream, and drudgery alone was not the lot of the village dominie. We were a humbler and a ruder folk. We stayed where we were taught the A B C, until we passed into the University or the world. The machinery was as old as Knox; the education was the best ever given to the sons and daughters of men. So, instead of going a few miles off by train for the higher wisdom, we got it from the dominie who also drove into the heads of petticoated males that a-t was 'at,' and c-a-t was 'cat.' Night after night and morning after morning we took the long walk with Latin books, or Greek or Euclid open in our hands, and we tramped to the rhythm of *Amo, Amavi, Amatum, Amare, or τέτυω, τέτυφα, τέτυμαι*. In the full day of elementary grind (the school was only large enough to stand a pupil-teacher by the skin of its teeth) there was not much time for this higher work, so some of us went half-an-hour before the rest, and stayed an hour after them. Then we knew the dominie. Then he showed us that patience, then he drilled us in that thoroughness, the discipline of which many of his pupils have

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carried through life with them. Then he also showed his simple friendliness. Thus, to the older boys, he passed into a new relationship. He became, not the man who ruled, but the man who knew, and who helped. They, too, changed under his influence from the happy, careless schoolboys, romping through a summer day, to the pilgrims who began to understand the delight of knowledge, and the length of the way that leads to it.

The dominie belonged to that goodly company of schoolmasters, who teach without putting any goal except knowledge before their pupils, and who present knowledge to them as something which is pursued all through a man's life but never then fully possessed. Mr. Keith Leask, in his introduction to the third volume of *Musa Latina Aberdonensis*, tells with pride of the generations of Wandering Scholars who went over the seas from 'the little city by the Don and Dee,' and I can imagine that the men who put staves in their hands were like unto the dominie. Only once do I remember him troubling his head about badges and rewards. A certain Club gave prizes each year as the result of a competition held amongst the scholars of the county, and a neighbouring school had become famous — indeed, as we thought, vain — by continued success. This was too much for the dominie. He entered one of his pupils, and when the results were announced and that pupil was placed at the top, the dominie greeted him: 'Thanks. I knew we could do it. Now, we'll get back to our proper work.' That 'we' was no editorial pomposity; it was the happy friendly man expressing to his pupils, quite alert to its significance, that

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he and they were in a companionship of teaching and learning.

The little school was, as I have said, remote from habitations, and stood alone, with the parish church as a cold and gaunt companion, where fields joined with the woods. It looked out on one and nestled under the shelter of the other. There the dominie dwelt, and you could see his light from far on winter nights across the fields. To the notion of the folks, our dominie lived up to his part by burning oil far into the night when more ordinary folk were sleeping in the dark. The work done in the school was of an old order now. It was a steady hard grind to get at the heart of things. We turned everything outside in, pulled everything to pieces in order to put it together again, analysed, parsed, got firm hold of the roots, shivered English into fragments and fitted it together like a Chinese puzzle, all by the help of Bain's Sixteenpenny Grammar (which the dominie's pupils must remember in the same way as they do the Shorter Catechism), and wrestled with 'deductions.' Then every bolt in our intellect was tightened up. One of the dominie's generalizations was: 'You must master: that is education: when you have mastered one thing you are well on the way to master all things.' He was impatient with what he called 'new-fangled notions' both in educational organization and method. Himself as gentle as a woman, he regarded education as a serious and hard affair, beginning not in play but in drudgery. He groaned when the Time Tables began to bulge with items. 'It is not what a man knows,' he once said, 'but how' he knows it.' Again he said: 'If

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there were one subject – a dead language or anything – that touched men's minds in their complete composition, that subject is enough to be taught in schools; the pupils who mastered it would master life and the world.' Mental capacity and character are what he strove to produce in his boys. He was Calvinistic enough to see that he did not provide the armour for life's fight. That came from the Fates who give presents to life at birth. His work was to temper what was given. Upon which, a great philosophy can be worked out – and also a special educational method.

Of course he was a Tory – the Auld Kirk, to which he belonged, settled that. But politics and theology sat lightly upon him. He kept to his traditions, but they had attached themselves to him rather than he to them. He remained true to 'Blackwood,' as one might remain true to elderberry wine, but when some of us brought into his seclusion some of the stour of the outside world, he was as interested and unprejudiced as people are who listen to tales of wanderers in far countries. Now and then he broke in with an old-world notion and possibly with a prejudice, just perhaps to remind us that he was still the dominie, and that he was surrendering nothing to a strife and bustle which belonged to a time other than his, though they and his life happened to overlap. He looked upon the stream of affairs from the bank as a philosopher would, and he strolled amidst the hush of the past, even when his companions were men of the day. Scott and George Macdonald were the friends of his solitude. The one enlivened him with the coloured pageantry of

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Scottish story, the other pleased him with the generous charity of the Scottish heart. The picture of the old dominie which will always remain in the memory of his old boys who visited him in his last years was that of a man of happy face which time had apparently forgotten to etch with the lines of years, sitting in the sun with his face turned to the west and the far-away blue hills, with his guardian dog at his feet, and either a Scott or a George Macdonald open on his knee. It is such a memory as one delights to carry through the world like a talisman.

CHAPTER THREE: MORAYSHIRE

§ I

*Hopeman*¹

EVERYBODY remembers how the map shows that the sea has bitten from the north-east of Scotland a great triangle-shaped gap, and that where there should be green fields and early harvests, fishermen shoot their nets and their lines. Great mountain barriers to the west keep the sea in check, rugged, weather-beaten sandstone cliffs and grass-bound tawny sand dunes to the south push it back. About midway along this southern coast the moor slopes up to the cliff's edge. It defies the coaxing skill of the ploughman. It clothes itself in tender grass, wild thyme and moss, and adorns itself with broom and gorse. In winter the great gales from the Arctic Seas moisten it with flying spray; in early spring the western winds lift the sand into a vast confusion.

A whole estate, mansion house and all, lies buried to the west of Hopeman, deep under hills of white blown sand, which are to this day as lonesome and as barren as the desert. In later spring the whole land is abloom with scented gorse and happy with myriads of singing birds. Later the visitors come, and the Lossiemouth golf links, which are at hand, are alive all day. The links have then become sober in their colours, but the brilliant dyes of the ladies' coats, seen from a distance, make them look like stately hollyhocks or foxgloves walking.

If the country has then thrown off its brilliance, the

¹ *Daily Chronicle*, August 29, 1913.

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heavens have taken up their part in the procession of beauty. There are no sunsets like the autumn sunsets seen from Hopeman or Lossiemouth. Sun and cloud and moisture-laden air; mountain and sea, weave and clothe themselves as the day dies in the most gorgeous of raiment. There is no stint, no restraint, in colour. Blue and purple, orange and green, red and black, spread up from the horizon, gleam and gloom on the mountains, and are reflected on the sea; and the strong, piercing golden beams of the sun shoot upwards and downwards through all, the sign of his imperial might and majesty. The beauty of the dying day has drawn many like the late Principal Fairbairn to these parts, and some, like him, have built homes for themselves on the coast, whither they may come and borrow from these apocalyptic sunsets some colour and peace for their own eventide.

On the upward sloping moor, bare but for the gorse, free like a watch tower, is Hopeman Lodge, where Mr. Asquith is. Near it is the fishing village which gives it its name. The village is, like its folk, unassuming, without art or trick of insinuation, weather-beaten, salt-crusted, honest and sound to the core. It is withal Radical – Radical without humbug. Radical right to its soul, Radical from its pulpits to its hearths. These weather-beaten men who go out at the dead of night to strive with wind and wave and darkness, and who lie at the end of line and net and watch the dawn come up in fair and foul weather, are great politicians. The ‘gentry’ receive no undue homage from them. ‘He’s a rare dacent-looking-man’ was the equalitarian comment that one of these men made to me on the Prime Minister.

IN MORAYSHIRE

'It's hard to dee under a Tory Government,' said one who was dying just when 1905 was drawing to a close, and bringing himself and the Conservative Government to an end with it. When the conflict between Church and State broke out in Scotland, the people hereabout cast in their lot with the men who left church and manse for conscience' sake, and in later years a Rev. Mr. Cassie, one who led his flock in politics as well as in theology, controlled Hopeman.

§ 2

The village itself is not old, though the district is full of the traces of vanished peoples. Under it there is a cave curiously and rudely sculptured which tells of a people of whom written history knows nothing, and to its west is Burghead, from the promontory of which the Romans looked out upon the northern sea, and went no further, where Danish rovers fought for a footing, were slain and buried. In the grounds of Hopeman Lodge itself is a spring known as the Braemou Well, which in local tradition is a place of holy virtue. Its waters cured all disease, and within memory pilgrimages were made to it. It was also effective in counteracting the evil of the witch's eye — no mean virtue in this district which until very recent years lived on the border of fairyland. A local rhymester has written of it :

The well of Braemou in which
When bairns we were a' doukt (bathed)
thegither,
To tak' aff the ill e'e o' a witch.

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The reputation of the well was evidently acquired amongst peoples whose footsteps have been all but obliterated long ago.

It is a coast of goblins, fairies and witches. The popular explanation of the destruction of the estate to the west by sand is that its proprietor would play cards on the Sabbath, vowing to do so were the devil his partner. Thereupon a stranger appeared, and whilst the game proceeded the winds rose and the sand blew; and they say when the gales come down from the north-west you may still hear the clink of the passing coin as the game proceeds. At Burghead close at hand, the Pagan ceremony of 'burning the clavie' is still gone through every old New Year's Day to ward off witches and evil spirits; and at Gordonstown, in the immediate neighbourhood, the slim and wily Sir Robert Gordon played pranks on and with the Devil:—

The wisest of warlocks — the Morayshire chiel —
The despot o' Duffus, an' frien' o' the deil ;
The man whom the folks o' auld Morayshire
feared
The man whom the fiends o' auld Satan
revered
Oh! never to mortal was evil renown
Like that o' Sir Robert o' Gordonstown!

The name of the village is supposed to come from the Norse *Haupt* or *Hovel*, which means a promontory, and the French *monte*. Thus a double emphasis is laid upon its position on the cliff over the sea. The old people still call it the Howdman, evidently naming the site and not the village. The

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modern village was founded in 1805, when some fishermen crossed from the Inverness side of the Firth and induced the proprietor to provide them with housing accommodation. The land was barren and bleak, but the sea was rich. The neighbouring town of Elgin and the small farms round about provided a good market. Before them was a harbour, the boats were run upon the beach, men and women wading out to seize and secure them. We can hardly understand in these luxurious days what part the women played then. The women baited the lines and mended the nets. With heavy baskets of fish balanced on their backs they tramped landwards for many a mile, their skirts tucked up to their knees, to farmhouse and town markets, bargaining and selling. Twenty years ago one could not walk over this district without meeting the fishwife. She had regular weekly rounds, when she was expected and made welcome. A picturesque figure she was, bent under her load, trudging along with a queer, sturdy, forward swing, with a greeting on her lips for everybody she met and a tale of hardship bravely encountered and conquered for whoever opened converse with her as she rested by the wayside.

Her daughters follow other ways. They use trains and have laid aside the 'creel.' The agent buys the fish and sends them to the market; the little boat which was run up on the beach is a mere museum specimen; the fisherman owning his own craft is dying out. Capitalism has come in. Boats are now driven by steam, and the independent seafarer has become a hired servant. Banks hold title deeds; the fisherman is in the hands of the moneylender. What

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the end will be no one can tell. The fishing villages of the Moray Firth are losing their old colour and character. They are being absorbed in the world. Ichabod was written over them when the flood of summer visitors came with all the airs of the 'Sooth Countree' when ladies walked o' nights with bare bosoms on the links and men appeared with a square foot or two of white shirt front. The good people whose necks and white shirts were sacred from the public gaze could only hold up their hands in horror and bow their heads in surrender to the new-fangled times which from the beginning they knew would prove much too strong for them.

But if you meet them on a Sunday afternoon in the churchyard, where they go with unchangeable fidelity to be for an hour with those whom they have laid there, they will talk of the old times like kings who have been dispossessed of their realms, and in the end will return to the new with a sigh. What is to be must be. Who are they that they should challenge the will of the Almighty! And they light their clay pipes and turn away home.

And in all this change Hopeman and its little harbour stands on the shore with a kind of monument air about it. The world is too big and too bustling for it. Its life has gone out of it. The boats in its harbour are old. It seems lapsing into sleep and silence. But its heart pulses a little quicker to-day, as though the dreams of its youth were returning and it saw a golden age yet in store for it. The lodge at its gates shelters a Prime Minister, and its name is printed in the great papers of the South.

IN MORAYSHIRE

§ 2

*The Top of the Knowe*¹

The harsh scolding screeches of the seagulls have suddenly ceased and they no longer perch on the house roofs or swoop up and down amongst my whins. They are wheeling in the blue, high overhead, for the weather has changed and the elements are propitious. There is a spot on the top of a knowe from which one can sit and think and survey the beautiful land, and it calls on such days when the Earth robes itself in rich blue and green and purple and receives, like a grand dame, the King of Gracious Peace.

The knowe was long a headland in a calm sea where primitive man dwelt and has left behind him his flint weapons for chase and fight, his ornaments and his domestic utensils. But the Earth heaved and the sea fell back; the gales blew and the sand was unloosened and covered what the sea had left, and now far inland one finds the keels and ribs of boats which floated where the ploughman now whistles along the furrow. At its base are rush-grown marshes and a reed-margined loch, the abode of wild duck and of innumerable birds, and once, according to Camden, 'covered with swans.' Through glasses you can see them preening, quarrelling, pecking, playing, and, judging by comical bowings and antics, cracking jokes with one another.

At the foot of the knowe is the sombre, massive ruins of the old castle from which the rod ecclesiastic

¹ *Forward*, August 19, 1922.

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ruled the ancient Province. It was the home and the fastness of Bishops. Men who feared neither God nor Devil were some of these gentlemen, and the last of the race stands up in history like a proud cliff round which the tides of the Reformation washed ineffectively. He was not to be reformed, and the historian of the parish tells us that 'many of his descendants still live in the north of Scotland.' Their palace was, like themselves, haughty, strong, defiant, worldly, and in its ruins seems to snarl at these modern times which have used its stones for farm houses and have left its chimneys and cracks to the pigeon and jackdaw, and its broad yard to rank grass, nettles and burrs. It is out of keeping to pray for peace to their ashes. They must have wild dreams.

To me it is the scene of many combats. There was war between the youth of the smug capital town that boasted of scavengers, and ourselves who came from a village nearer to nature and grace. We fought at the old castle. In the greatest battle of all we were besieged and the casualties were heavy. One of us had powder and a brass toy cannon, and we decided it should end the day with victory for us. It was rammed hard and filled with slugs, for looking back from the heights of law and order I admit we were then untamed. It was fired, but Providence decreed that it should burst backwards, and it lodged so many powder particles in the face of him who held it that he could not go to church next day.

He is now a quiet, decent man teaching the youth of the south-west country science and good behaviour and has probably forgotten all about it. The report

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did more execution to the 'scaffies' (scavengers) than the pellets, and we charged heavily laden with stones through the sally port. The enemy fled pell-mell, and as the last man who cleared the dyke showed a long white streamer behind, we took it as a flag of surrender and chivalrously returned to celebrate our triumph. But these days are dead as the Bishops. They come before me with all their deeds as I stand on the knowe and wonder where are the rascals who made them great days and what fate has befallen them.

On the knowe itself, the first cathedral church of the province was built, but was moved at the beginning of the 13th century to the neighbouring city, about two miles off. Of this church not a stone is standing, but an ancient cross and other stones mark its bounds. The site is now a churchyard with several pen-like enclosures where the gentry lie apart from the common clay. Some years ago, it was a wilderness of rank grass and nettles, which hid the tombstones, and these, broken, moss-grown and falling, were the symbol of woeful neglect. But someone got ashamed, and now it is a little enclosure of restful neatness, grey stones and white stones, table stones and upright stones breaking the lawn-like turf, which must surely be tended by one who honours the dead and loves his work.

Set apart by the walls are the oldest of the stones, much worn by the weather, for some go back for nearly three hundred years, but they still bear the gaunt symbols of death, the sign of the guild to which the dead belonged, the more florid scrolls, puffy-cheeked cherubs, and the coats-of-arms by which

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worldly pride sought to perpetuate itself. The names are gone; the vanity remains. In one of the family enclosures where a branch of the House of Rothes is buried, the carving and the lettering of the stones built into the wall are specially good. The oldest bears the date of 1588. Some time ago a vault belonging to another family that once was of consequence lay open in decay and 'the dead in their last dresses' could be seen by peeping through holes in the rotten coffins.

Now, as I have said, this place of the dead has put off its ragged disorder and neglect, and is like to a garden where you lay your treasures and go to be with them in the summer sun. They greet you with smiles and tell you of their restful happiness. With you they survey the fair landscape of sea and loch and river, ruined castle and prosperous farm house, wood and field, blue hill and purple moor, and with gratitude on their faces say: 'You have chosen a goodly habitation for us. Here Time passes gently as the wind in the grass. Sound is our sleep under the winter snow; happy is our awakening when the spring flowers come. The night comes with the singing of the old cathedral choir, and the morning with the matins of the mavis, the yellow yarlin' and the lark.'

So the top of the knowe is not a place of the dead but of the living at rest. By the graves, there are tall white foxgloves, emblems of purity and grace, rosebushes covered with white bridal wreaths, pines stunted in height but with dark thick tops which keep the grass green on the graves and afford for you cool shades where you can sit away from the

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blaze of the sun. A squirrel sits on the wall, pigeons coo from the wood beyond it, the gulls wheel and scream over the loch ; a blue cloudless sky is overhead ; the yellow sands by the shore are clad in the gauzy green of the bents ; and the sea beyond looks across and speaks to you of the infinite.

When the blood tints in the west, the long deep shadows of the grass, and the tooth in the wind remind you that the day is ending, you return to your newspapers, to the stories of the struggles and the woes of the world, to the strife and folly of men, but you know that these are but the dark ripples on the surface of things. The real energies for the push onwards, the dreams that must conquer in the end and that sustain in the conquering, dwell in the Bishop's Palace and are gathered where the fox-gloves, the roses and the pines grow by the graves on the top of the knowe.

CHAPTER FOUR: ROB ROY'S COUNTRY

§ I

*'A Far Croonin'*¹

THERE are some gateways through which one passes from one world to another. On one side of them you are one person and on the other you are a different person. To me, the Suez Canal is one such gateway; another is in the hills above the Plain of Lombardy; the old bridge at Berwick is another. This bridge is special, because whilst my foot has never touched it, and whilst I have always been dragged over the Tweed like luggage on the back of one of the great unseemly bridges of the world, my soul follows 'the good old way across the Border,' by that hump-backed highway which preserves the art and the memories of other days.

This week I crossed it to the lilt of 'The Road to the Isles,' for in my pocket was a ticket to Callender and on the rack a stick and a knapsack. I fear I troubled an unknown friend in the train who, as he stepped out at Berwick, handed me a picture of myself at the Miners' Gala two days before, and said: 'When are you going back to Parliament?' 'Don't trouble me about Parliament just now, I am thinking of heaven.' In due course I got to Callender, and there stood coaches, and cars, and hotels, and tourists. Callender reminds me of a big parcel-clearing house where hampers of goods are reassorted and sent on on their diverse ways. Messrs.

¹ *Forward*, July 29, 1922.

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Cook are the greatest parcel delivery agents in the world.

The cars and the coaches scraighed and drove me into the roadside; able-bodied young men looked down from their padded seats in pity; on they raced as though they were matched against the 'prohibited hours' act and were determined to win. But he who saves time on the road to heaven pays for his meanness from his delights. You must lay siege, you must approach shyly, retreat and come again; you must be in no hurry – indeed a simulation of indifference is not bad art – you must toy, seem to pitch your tent short and be anything in the world but one of a rude and impatient 'storm corps.' I envied no man his car or his comfort that day, and later on when I joined a Glasgow Irish fisher who in wind and rain, sun and cloud, sat like the Sphinx waiting for finny joys to come to him, I recognized a man and a brother.

Ben Ledi unveiled its head, and the marshalled mountain keepers of Glen Gartney and their Aberfoyle rivals stood nobly out as for a review. It is a hard road from Callender to Loch Katrine, a road that makes you blaspheme, a road made by slaves for drudges, a plutocrats' road. But even such a road cannot break the spell of Coilantogle ford, of the Lanrick mead trysting place, of Duncraggan and the Brig o' Turk, and if its hardness drives you to crave a cup of tea by the wayside, the smile with which you are met and the fair-spoken lassie who lays the scones, the butter and the jam in front of you, make you moralize over the teapot that the evil things of life add to the enjoyment of the good.

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The hills close in; you feel you are nearing sanctuary; Ben Venue, rugged like a weather-beaten immortal (reminding me of Homer's face), begins to look right down upon you, a chieftain in his halls of Olympus waiting to bid you welcome to his abode. Between Lochs Achray and Katrine the ground is high and wooded. It is like a rood screen between the nave and the choir of a church. Within the holier precincts, mine excellent host, having laid aside the cares of a Glasgow Bailie for a brief time and surrounded by the best of good friends whom his kindly heart has drawn together, bids me welcome to the domains of the Glasgow Corporation, and in a few minutes more we are in his fleet and at sea.

On this water Ellen boated Fitzjames, here is her Isle, this point and that, though my eye has never before beheld it, is as familiar as a Lossie lane by reason of the witchery of 'The Lady of the Lake.' Here is the channel, so narrow that 'the wild duck's brood' can hardly swim upon it; here are the 'craggs, knolls and mounds confusedly hurled'; here is 'yon lone isle,' diminished, alas, because the Glasgow bodies need such a lot of water to dilute their drink; and here Loch Katrine far beneath us rolls, not 'a burnished sheet of living gold' but a heaving tide of glittering silver this afternoon. At last I get to rest on golden chairs with crowns upon them made for the repose of Queen Victoria and her dull but worthy Consort, and with Glasgow Corporation photographs on the walls, wherein I pick out faces of old friends, some, alas, 'gone,' but all alive and happy in memory.

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The hills are bare and silent but for the bleating of sheep; there are thickets of bracken at their feet, and on some of them the stiffest of moss hags where you catch glimpses of deer and disturb the grouse waiting in blissful ignorance of the fell Twelfth of August of which gentlemen are now dreaming and the House of Commons is thinking. Poor things, I think of their sad end, and leave them to enjoy life in the heather until the gentlemen arrive. One's companions on these hills are the MacGregors. Down by the lochside there is a little enclosed graveyard where they sleep under flat, moss-grown stones that have been moved; but what of that, for the spirit of the hillmen sleeping by the lapping waters, soothed by the sough of the wind in the grass, far from the noise and the bustle of a world which oppressed, disinherited and wiped them out, is there.

In the hills Rob still wanders; in the white mists the miserable remnants of his clansmen still gather; the grey drizzling rain fills the valleys that they may come down to visit the sleeping places of their fathers, launch their skiffs on the Lake and spend a short time of delightful satisfaction on the Red Isle, where Rob put the factor with a bag of oatmeal and a remark that this with a drink of the water which was around him in plenty was all that a healthy man required. Their fate has made us kindly to their failings; the romance that time has woven round them makes them desirable companions on a hill tramp.

The days are long, and before the lamps are lit it is near to a new day. Long after the sun is set

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and the hills have gone to sleep under the thick folds of fleecy cloud, a strange unearthly light lies on the Loch. My host is a man of song, and when the folks 'in city pent' have gone to bed with blinds down to dream of shipyard din and other worries, we take down the auld Scots sangs and awaken echoes on the hill sides. 'Hail to the Chief,' 'The MacGregors' Gathering,' 'Blue Bonnets over the Border,' and such like, roll out under the leadership of another Bailie whose solemnity on the Bench has not taken one jot or tittle from his geniality at the fireside. Rob and Nell and young Rob, with his head rather loose on his shoulders owing to the attentions of a hangman, come over the hills from Balquhidder, and their namesakes rise up from the lochside and listen. Sitting by the fire I fancy that I see their shadows against the gleam on the water. And when the new day has come and it is time for the dead and the living to return to sleep, we close the sang books and open the psalms, and with 'I to the Hills' or 'The Old Hundred' end the old day and hand ourselves over to the night.

§ 2

*Gregalach!*¹

They tell me that Scott's star is sinking and that in this world of change it, like everything else, is to have its day. If one takes a long enough view and looks away to the coming death when the Earth is to be as lifeless as the Moon, Scott must suffer

¹ *Forward*, Aug. 5, 1922.

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with the rest of men. But whilst there's 'leaves on the forest and foam on the river,' Scott will live, and the border country between Lowlands and Highlands will be one of his chief abodes. There is an upland road between Loch Katrine and Aberfoyle across which the mountain breezes blow and from which is to be seen a wide encirclement of hills – Glen Gartney, Menteith, the Ochils, Arrochar – and I took it with the worthy old brushmaker by my side and 'Rob Roy' in my heart.

We were lucky in our encounters that day, for we met nothing more than a baby being wheeled in a perambulator and two tourists being driven in a cart, until far down on the other side we returned to men's haunts. We had a tryst with Bailie Nicol Jarvie at the Clachan of Aberfoyle, but the long walk and the fine air impressed upon us the fact that we were still in the body and that the body required refreshment. Unlike the Bailie, we found the door of the inn doubly open, a flag advertised its whereabouts, and no frowning Jeanie MacAlpine but a douce sensible lassie listening to our programme of needs. Then we sallied forth to our spiritual enjoyment.

'That's the Forth,' said the Bailie, according to Sir Walter, and with similar reverence we greeted the stream, 'narrow, deep, still and silent.' And there is the 'old-fashioned stone bridge, very high and very narrow,' by which the three crossed to that adventure in the inn which will remain glorious whilst mankind loves a great story. But, alas! Aberfoyle is not content with its Forth and bridge and public-house. It must hang upon a tree in its

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midst the coulter with which the Bailie singed the Highlander's plaid and paint it red like a Communist manifesto to make us believe that it is still hot. An unworthy trick which the prevalence of American tourists does not fully excuse.

'The miserable little "bourdocks"' which were the clachan have gone, and so are the beldames; and Aberfoyle now, like Mistress Jean, has 'put off her apron an' on a silk gown.' Out on the hill side Jean MacAlpine's public stands like an old Highlander too proud of his pedigree to avoid poverty and decay. Holes are in its roof, dirt is its floor, sheep seek shelter and rest by its chimney nooks. But the smell of the singed plaid still hangs about it, and in the dim light we could see the wild mix-up with the doughty Bailie puffing in the midst. The brushmaker was visibly affected, and I strolled out into the open and left him at his worship.

We went westward with the English soldiers, but the road was no longer the track by which the devoted Dougal crater led them into ambush. The County Council had seen to that. Here, however, are the woods through which the pipes skirled; there the rock where Nell MacGregor stood; this the scene of the combat; and that the precipice from which the miserable Morris, the Government agent, was thrown into the Loch wrapped in a plaid with a stone for company; somewhere about, the Bailie hung by his coat tails from a tree, 'not unlike to the sign of the Golden Fleece over the door of a mercer in the Trongate of his native city.' Is it a sin if one, back for an hour to old times, does not love one's enemies but loves Nell and her caterans

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instead, and, as in a dream incongruous things get mixed up, is it strange that somehow or other the Gower election (Pontypridd has not been finished) entered into the joy of this delightful day?

And there was another day, longer, more trying to physical endurance, grander than this. We had been to where Rob was born, we had seen across Loch Arklet where Nell's voice was first heard in the world; we must go to where they lie side by side in the churchyard of Balquhidder. That was a long way. The hills were steep, the road obscure, the bogs broad, and the peat hags weary. Still the call came, and go we must. I know not if the most famous of all the Bailies of Glasgow, Nicol Jarvie, still looks down with paternal interest on his official children, helping them by his example, but that morning he must have felt proud of the two successors of his, who, like him, 'put on their boots' and went in search of Rob, his kinsman.

Many were the ups and downs, many 'the mosses; waters, slaps and stiles.' Equally many the rewards. Never were the hills more regal, never the voices of eternal things sweeter or gentler. And when we attained, never did wanderers feel nearer to Paradise. I live to sing the praises of Balquhidder and its Braes. Up a bank by the roadside is the churchyard with the old ivy-clad church and the MacGregor graves. There, flat on the ground, are three stones of the rough grey slate of the district. They are enclosed by an iron rail, put up by a MacGregor shipowner mainly to advertise himself, it would seem by their inscription. How Rob would have cursed him. They are utilitarian, however, and

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keep boots off the stones. The stones themselves with their rude almost obliterated carving, are perfect. They lie like shaggy old dogs keeping watch and ward. They belong to the time and the folk whose dust lies beneath them – Nell on the left, Rob in the middle, two sons, one of them hung, on the right.

The rattle of mowing machines comes up from the fields below, motors and motor-coaches grind on the road, the sun shines on the new paint of the cottages at hand, tourists wander about among the tombs, but the roofless church and these stones hold modern things at arms' length. For them, the sand-glass of time has ceased to run. They sleep.

A grand pride fills you when a knowing one, native to the soil, and a lorry-driver at that, assures you that you are so far from home and the road is so rough that you cannot sleep in a bed that night. So we started. The house where Rob lived and died was still seven miles off, but such miles! Every mile was a song, and the Bailies lilted as they went. The joy that was in Tannahill was in us. Then as the sun sunk low that deliciously heavy feeling of gentle weariness came upon us, and we thought of what awaited us beyond the hills and the Loch. Not on this side the grave shall I have a better day.

Every Bailie has his Mattie, and if the mother of all the Matties, she who was 'a carefu' lass' to Nicol Jarvie, also looks upon us with motherly feelings in her heart, she, like the son of 'the worthy Deacon,' would have been happy that day. One of us not learned in the dangers of prolonged physical exertion had forgotten that second injunction of the carefu'

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lass to the Bailie to 'take care of the waters' (not exactly as she meant it, however), arrived somewhat woebegotten, but when our smoke went up in signal for a boat, the ministering and carefu' angels came and there was a night of wine and oil and Loch trout and anxiety, haply followed by a morning of merriment and blushes.

Now, I am back from Paradise. The Loch and the hills, the clouds and the MacGregors, have gone, and the merry company and the carefu' folk are on the planestanes and on the Bench. But we had golden days together.

CHAPTER FIVE: YARROW—'OUT OF THE WORLD'¹

ONE of the many forms of vanity in which men indulge is to regard themselves and their affairs as 'the-world.' To them, Lord Chesterfield's 'Letters' is the proper sequel to 'Genesis' and a Coalition coupon an up-to-date appendix to 'Exodus.' Thus, 'the world' becomes a thing of drawing-rooms and committee meetings, a maze of affairs planted by man so that he may occupy his life interested in its entanglements. Consequently, we admire Prime Ministers who show resource in difficulties which they themselves have created, and the practical wisdom we hold in regard is that which accepts as a fateful necessity the troublesome consequences of habitual folly. All this, because we have never discovered 'the world.'

The autumn called from the Etrick Hills and the Yarrow Dens. Its dewy frosty mornings, its afternoons with an edge on the breeze, its warm noon-days when you lie on your back in the grass or heather and feel yourself a mere pin-point, a pebble, amidst the vast tumble of hilltops stretching from horizon to horizon, added appeal to the call, and I went to bid the summer adieu at an old trysting place I have long had with her. From Bradford we started. Northward goes a long road, a straight road, a flat road, a good road. There is tar upon it, and an engine roller has crushed it and smoothed it and hardened it. It is means perfectly adapted to ends; it bears the motorist along without a bump

¹ *Forward*, October 8, 1921.

Y A R R O W

to take the air between hotels, and is a model of the world and all that is therein as he desires it to be. It keeps at the foot of hills, and when it has to climb them it does so in decorous slopes in keeping with the mind of the Primrose League and the thoughts of the Economic Clubs. It is as expensive to keep going and as soothing as they. When it reaches the heads of the hills it cuts them off. It is a canny, unromantic thing of security, of compromise, and of least resistance. It is a thing of milestones and not of songs.

Away to the right rose Great Whernside, and a sense of unworthiness and unhappiness came upon us on this abomination of a road. We looked at maps and there there were mountain ways dotted to warn off the plutocracy and to speak words of invitation to our hearts. True, we were hurrying a hundred and eighty miles to hear the great choir that night sing 'The Flowers o' the Forest,' but the invitation of the mountain ways could not be denied. A quaint whitewashed bridge with a high-pitched back acted like saving grace. It decided us. This surely led to fairyland. With a grating groan we bade plutocracy adieu. We bumped up and we bumped down ; we made pebbles and hares and cats and dogs fly ; the hills joined us and the burns raced with us ; the moors unfolded themselves around us, and their fowl cackled and flurried as we passed ; we dropped down into quaint market towns and laboured up again, new valleys opening up and old ones falling behind ; over the Butter Tubs, up Birkdale, mounting, swinging, diving, northwards to the trysting place.

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Evening began to peep at us on Eskdale Muir over Ettrick Pen, and it met us in deeper shades by the Tima, beloved of fishers. It lifted when we swung into the more open Ettrick dale and returned on the wild hill road between Tushielaw and St. Mary's. When the autumn is upon the land my ghost will take its evening walk on the last mile and a half of that road, for few are the roads on this earth like to it. We won the race. We had reached the trysting place and had met summer shivering in the arms of autumn, and were in time to hear the singing in Selkirk. Late that night, when we tried to pass through the gates of sleep, we found them guarded by the boisterous echoes of 'Wi' a hundred pipers an' a' and the magic lilt of

'Sure, by Tummel and Loch Rannoch and Lochaber
I will go,
By heather tracks wi' heaven in their wiles,'

and it was hard to get through. When we did, it was only to dream of a great congregation and the Orpheus Choir multiplied a thousandfold with William Smith leading the singing of 'Oh, thou, my soul, bless God the Lord,' to the tune of French.

Whoever arranged the seasons created autumn out of pity. It is the triumph of the Consoling Will. In the morning, the dew sparkled on the grass and the heather and the gossamer stretched from blade to bough. The Loch slept late. The yelp of a dog, the crow of a cock, the plaint of a sheep, came from far, far away. It was a day for the hills and the moss hags of Loch Skene. Has Earth anything more peaceful to show than the view down

YARROW

St. Mary's Loch from the top of Oxcleuch on an autumn forenoon when the glare of the sun has burned itself out in September and the bracken is coppery, the grass yellow and the heather brown? To the west are the bogs lying between you and Muckle Knees; the long line of the Lochcraig Head group (for which we make this morning) limits the view, and White Coomb rises to the left with the sharp jagged ridges of the Mid Craigs in front. Hidden like the misfortunes that lie in wait for us through life is the deep cleuch of the Winterhope Burn. If you do not avoid it by bearing over heavy ground to the left (a favourite hiding-place of Covenanters) you drop down like a stone to the shepherd's house by the burnside and then must puff up the thousand feet or so of Lochcraig Head, still above you.

We had our 'piece' by the burn sitting on couches of divots, soft and fragrant; we washed it down by draughts from the burn; we smoked our pipes; with our eye upon the county boundary that runs in a black dyke up the side and over the top of Lochcraig Head, we mounted. At the top, if you distribute yourself judiciously, you can be in three counties at the same time — Dumfries, Peebles and Selkirk. From the top of the screes of Lochcraig Head by far and away the grandest and wildest impression of Loch Skene is to be had. In the mightiness of the hills, amidst the vast expanse of the peat hags, you feel yourself an intruder in a land tenanted by people of a different order. This day dark clouds were flying up from the west, and were rolling in confusion over White Coomb. Through

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them the sun was breaking, and long, straight clear-cut fingers of sunbeams came down, touching in moving patches of light, now the hillsides, now the loch, now the moor. It reminded us of those pictures that used to be so common of the descent of the Holy Spirit from Heaven. The flick of something sharp and bitter in the air and the growing gloominess of the light warned us that the sun was sinking. We went round the Loch on the top of the Craggs, dropped down to its level, had another pipe looking back over the long way we had come, scrambled over the dizzy path by the Grey Mare's Tail and down to that hospitable shepherd's table at Birkhill where the tea and the scones and the butter and the jam are fit for the gods.

In bygone days I had crossed the Enterkin Pass from Dumfries and had wandered into Leadhills on the top of snow wreaths, and I there and then made up my mind that I should return one day when the Lowthers were green and the burns were prattling. The dominie, the companion of the first mad venture, was alas, not with me; but the years pass and opportunity slips. My eye kept wandering with my heart away to the far borders of our maps where Leadhills lay. We could justify a car approach by taking the roads where we ran the risk of broken necks. The Megget Water babbled that morning like an old wife about Douglases and reivers and royal huntsmen and Queen Mary; the Talla road was never more magnificent and its long slope down to the Reservoir never more gladdening; the upper valley of the Tweed never more pleasing; the Devil's Beef Tub never more wonderful; finally, Leadhills

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surely never showed whiter houses or lay more couthily in the hills. The walk up Green Lowther with its stairlike slopes, carpeted by moss and soft grass, may well be called a lady's walk, but from its 2,400 feet summit the glory of the hills lies at one's feet. Who need write of the Enterkin after Dr. John Brown? In any event, I join joyously in the chorus in praise of it. The autumn is over for me. Whilst the morning was still dark I bade St. Mary's adieu. There were clouds low down on the hills and a cold, forbidding ripple was on the Loch. An owl flapped clumsily from the tree where it had been hooting all night. But I have taken the merry song of the Enterkin burn away with me, and what care I for winter's work or omens. I wonder as I write this in a jigglety-jogglety train hurrying South whether I have been out of the world and am returning to it, or whether in reality it is just the other way about.

CHAPTER SIX: THE GRAMPIANS

§ 1

*In Tune with the Elements*¹

THE man who has never spent a night in a lonely place amidst wind and rain knows not what life is. You cannot defy man till you have defied the elements, and then become friendly with them, and I know no spot where you can more appropriately challenge wind and rain and cloud than on Ben Macdhui. You may break your neck or your leg in doing so, but you may do that in a much more prosaic way in Argyle Street, and if the penny birls against you – well, like a gentleman, you can face the tails as well as the heads.

If you stand on the Aviemore Station on a beautiful summer morning, and look to the south-east, you will see one of the most magnificent groups of mountains that eye ever lit upon. Massive and calm they rise up, perfect in their demeanour as Highland eternal hills, the very aristocracy of Nature to look upon. If the grace of God be in you, you will go on pilgrimage to pay homage to them.

Mr. Hoover and his Committee, now that the backs of the Great Four have been turned and they have gone home with their withered and bedraggled wreaths of bay on their brows, have told Joseph to go about his business, and have upset the Tory Monarchists of the Allied Military Commissions who have been arranging things in the Near East; and Ludendorff has been telling the world how right

¹ *Forward*, September 6, 1919.

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we were when we told an incredulous House of Commons and a scoffing public that the best way to destroy German militarism and create a democratic revolution in Berlin was to hammer Democracy into the heads of the German people. We have now the very best authority for saying that it was the Russian Revolution which defeated the German Army. An ordinary insight into human nature could have told anyone that before the event, and it was quite unnecessary for us to wait for Ludendorff to tell us about it after the event.

But it is easier sometimes to read the heart of man than the signs of the weather. The world was righting itself, the morning looked fine, and the call of the mountains came upon me. With much less impedimenta than Stevenson piled on his donkey – for I had to play the part of Modestine for myself – I started, and guided some youthful feet as well, to where the Golden Age still lingers, despite the worries of Bolshevism, Marxian rebels, and increasing prices.

There were mists on the mountains and foam on the river, but whoever turns back from these things deserves the fate of Lot's wife. Besides, the heather and the pine woods never smelt sweeter, rain had laid the dust and laden the air with the scents of field and forest; the prospect was like alluring music. In the woods one came across the cruel, gashing handiwork of man. The Rothiemurchus forest was being turned into deals and cash. It was like an abandoned being sitting by the roadside in dishevelled rags, its trees lying lopped like human arms and legs, its heather torn, its paths in confusion. How a

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State, now that the science of forestry is so well known, can allow a private individual to desecrate God's earth and waste national wealth, as has been done here, passes comprehension.

'The worm that gnaw'd my bonny trees,
That reptile wears a ducal crown.'

I left the miserable, tortured thing behind me, crossed a mountain stream that welcomed me with greater fuss than I have ever known it to show – an ominous greeting – and went up to the long slopes of Cairngorm. The fleecy outposts of the dark cloud ahead met us with gentle warning. They thickened and cleared, drove past and swirled round, like happy children at play; but as I looked back the hills and lakes below were being screened by an ever-thickening curtain. The sheen had been dulled on Loch Morlich, the brightness of the heather dimmed. The rain came and the wind chased the rain. The outposts of the cloud passed; more frowning guardians swept upon us. Driven in front of them came some human beings, muffled up, wretched looking, hastening to other climes.

'The weather above is terrible,' said they. 'You had better turn. At the top of the next shoulder you cannot see ten yards ahead of you.' 'Are you afraid or uncomfortable?' I asked of the little thing with me. 'No, I like it,' was the reply. 'Then we shall go on. We shall have a great sight, and you will see strange things, and hear wonderful sounds, and feel eerie creeps; and when it is all over you will be glad you went, and be learned in the things that make men and women strong.' So we went up into the storm.

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The wind blew, the rain assaulted us, the clouds scudded in folds of varying thickness, the mad anger of rushing waters added their wrath to the raging elements. One's mind got uncertain, and the demons baffled in their attack upon the body, assaulted the imagination. Were we walking straight? Ought we not to bend more to the right? Or to the left? One's will had to be like a helmsman gripping tight the rudder. In the driving obscurity a glimpse of snow was got and it immediately vanished, a bit of foaming stream was seen ahead and it too vanished, boulders of vague size appeared and immediately seemed to run away. The ground got more broken. We came upon the granite-strewn slopes, which got steeper and steeper. Finally, all sense of distance was lost. Judged by time, I thought I had got far enough. I must have got level with the head of the Nethy river, and began to descend over ground strewn with boulders.

Then we had one of those visions seen only after braving storms and clouds like these. A wind swept the mountain sides like a besom, clearing the cobwebs in front of it. Suddenly the opposite hillsides, scarred with red, appeared; below, the blue waters and yellow margin of a lake; beyond, foaming torrents and steep green walls of mountain. It was like a new world rising from the sea, the water pouring down its sides and its face gleaming with wet. It was perhaps like the first glimpse of Paradise which we shall see after the blinding confusion of death. Only for a moment, however, did it last. The mists wrapped us all up again, but it was enough. Loch Avon was below us, at its far end was the Shelter

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Stone, and we pursued our broken way rejoicing.

I lay down that night under shelter of a great granite boulder, which, in times when the poor earth was convulsed with pain, came down like an angel from the heights to minister to the comforts of man. The wind moaned like a wild beast prowling around; I could hear the drip, drip of the rain in the little pools round the stone; the rush of the streams was like a gale in a wood; the elements outside sent their cold-fingered scouts through the cave to touch our shoulders and wander down our sides as though they wished to make sure we were there and to find out what strange beings had ventured to be with them on such a night. In a sheltered corner we boiled our kettle with that inseparable companion, the Primus, but we could make no fire. At eight o'clock we stretched ourselves out to sleep without a dry square inch of clothing on us and with the brittle stalks of heather, which had mercifully been left by whoever had last taken a night's lodging in this free 'hotel for travellers,' pricking us.

And we did sleep — a happy, dreamless sleep. Now and again the bed became too hard, or the heather too sharp, or the wind puffs too cold, but the dark moments of wakefulness only added to the pleasure. No king in his feather bed was happier. We were alone amidst the clouds, the companions of the storm and the rushing waters. We were to have started again at four: we slept till six. Fifteen well-measured miles on the map were before us, and the last train which returned us to civilization and a bankrupt world left at 2.50. We boiled our kettle once more, wrung the superfluous water from our garments,

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packed up by the glorious glow of our blazing bed. The whole valley was full of mist; not a glimpse of Loch Avon, which was but a few yards off, could we get. With a psalm of thankfulness we waded across the stream, boots and all, and went up by the broken, squashy side of Ben Macdhui, annoyed the scudding wrack by metaphorically chucking it under the chin, and greeting it with an affectionate kiss, and so up the mountain and down the pass.

Waiting for the train, we surveyed Messrs. Menzies' bookstall, stocked for the enlightenment of the world. We found it was being used for the dissemination of leaflets on 'Direct Action.' We took one and laughed and wept at its rubbish, invested in a Conrad, and so home to supper and bed.

And so Botha is dead, and his obituary notices show the fickleness of fame. I remember when he was 'the slim Boer,' the man who abandoned his women and children, the bogey which the British public set before it when it thanked God it is not as other men are. I met him first in an obscure London hotel, when Mr. Chamberlain was making false statements about the destruction of the Transvaal and the Orange River, and I was able to give him some photographs I had taken which put the matter beyond dispute.

I then met him when he was a London lion. He came to my house and played with my children. He was neither spoiled nor deceived by the lionizing; he longed for homely peace and to be with old friends, and he came again and again. He was not with us in general politics, but there was a great personality about the man which impressed itself by

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its quiet simplicity. His going will make a great difference to South Africa.

§ 2

Scotland's Hills for Me¹

Scotland and Scotsmen should be in sackcloth and ashes. We drink at our Burns clubs, we unveil war memorials, we beat our patriotic breasts and boast that we are who we are. There it begins and there it ends. A Yankee comes along with a pocket full of dollars, and there is not a national treasure which we should value beyond life itself but what he can buy and transport to some 'collection' on the other side of the Atlantic. He gets it for a sum that any vulgar war profiteer or trader with the enemy would double to get a knighthood, would subscribe to his Party in order to mix amongst 'the respectable,' or would spend on a night's rout under the patronage of a Duchess.

The occasion of this outburst of chagrin and contempt is our failure to preserve for our own National Gallery what should be a national treasure, Raeburn's portrait of Scott. I had not noticed that it was in jeopardy until I saw in the admirable London Letter of the *Aberdeen Free Press* a note of warning. I could not believe my eyes. A committee of leading Scotsmen had failed to get £10,000 to save the treasure from American clutches. The Raeburn Scott going to America! And for a price that our rich people would pay to get a couple of sycophants

¹ *Forward*, September 9, 1922.

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into Parliament to be their puppets! Surely the time is not yet come to write 'Ichabod' over our dear old country. I was far from the few wealthy friends whom I could influence, but I telegraphed begging for one more chance, and within twenty-four hours I was in a position to make a definite offer to buy. But the American had got his hands upon it, and it is now on the Atlantic to be added like a captured king to an imprisoned crowd of trophies.

I now hear that another owner of a portrait which is a national treasure, and which if sold to the foreigner will make the whole of the Scottish people the poorer, is likely to go. There will be plenty of pauses in the work which a Labour Government will do in restoring peace to Europe and in putting home affairs on a juster and happier foundation, to enable it to pass legislation preventing this traffic in the spiritual inheritance of the nation, but meanwhile they cannot put our hills on rollers and float them overseas. They can put fences round them, but whilst we can lift a leg we can regard a fence as something made to be climbed. On the Cairngorms, one can forget losses, and, lost in their mists, one's ears no longer echo the metallic ring of the almighty dollar.

This year we might have sold our sun, so little have we seen it, but whether one finds the Cairngorms in genial or in angry mood, it is all the same. To initiate young folks into the love of the hills and the physical endurance which is the homage exacted by the hills is as necessary as to initiate them into Marxian economics. So off we went, Miss Spring stepping by the side of Mr. Autumn, and various

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bits of the Year of Life following in the train. The heather was young as ever, the burns as tuneful, the woods as solemn, the hillsides as enticing. We crossed the stepping stones as lightsomely as when we first set foot on them, and, when we splashed in, laughed as heartily as when the Year of Life was all before us. Up over the tree line, above the heather, to the dark moss and bare gritty boulders, the remnants of the oldest world, until we rested by the cairn which is built 4084 feet above the sea.

Below us the hills lay like huge creatures squatting on some coast in the earliest of early days, and away to the north-east down the Nethy glen were the other hills of a tender gauzy blue tinged with pink from the declining sun. A misty sheen hung like a curtain to the west; thicker clouds hid the south, but the snow fields on Ben Macdhui refused to be hid. A cool breeze blew, and its growing coldness reminded us that our shelter for the night was still a mile or so on, a couple of thousand feet down a difficult rock-strewn hillside. The evening was beautiful on Loch Avon. Silence slept in the glen. The great precipices stood out like gods brooding sadly over the follies of men. We boiled our kettle, laid our table in the wilderness, lit our candles, read our books and lay down to sleep.

Ah, these mornings, fresh, crisp and cool. The precipices, the torrents, the Loch seemed awake and curious at our presence. We spread our meal upon a boulder table, packed, dug a well in our Vale of Baca in the shape of a contribution of heather for a bed and candles for light for the next who passed that way, went up by the torrent to the bare bouldery

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side of Ben Macdhui, turning often to behold the glen where we had passed the night. The whitest and most playful of clouds gambolled overhead and came down to have fun with us at close quarters, then fled into invisibility, and we went up with song and story and joke and praise. But the Ben was to have none of our familiarity. Like a haughty dame, it drew its mantle over its face in a hurry; it unloosed its storms; it flung its clouds and its rain upon us; like devoted lovers we withstood its temper and accepted its buffeting. We defied them; we enjoyed them. Drenched through and through even Miss Spring declined to shiver. Let the mighty Ben be in a tiff, we would spend the night on its shoulder. So, as we could not in safety move about, we built a shelter amongst the boulders and prepared to spend an extra night there.

Evidently our persistence and good spirits were upsetting the powers and they thought that they would have a peep at us. An over amount of curiosity has been the undoing of many. For a brief second the sun had a glimpse at us and Cairngorm had the same. Then we laughed and we shouted joyfully. In an instant down came the furies of mist and rain thicker than ever, but we knew where we were. The angry powers had given themselves away. We found our place on the map and could go on. 'Form fours! by the right, quick march.' Boulders, flat barrenness, gritty sand, lochs, streams, and the slope at last. Then down near two thousand feet by a hillside that could not be steeper. The clouds thinned, the precipice side of Cairn Toul scowled across at us, we were at the bottom of the Larig-Ghru Pass,

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some ten or twelve miles from the end of our journey and seven hours late.

The night in the hills came whilst it was still day in the low ground. In the forest the owls hooted uneasily and deer fled like ghosts before us. The foam on the river below caught the little light there was and looked like snow through the trees. We were in an enchanted forest haunted by gloomy things. By ten o'clock we saw a yellow gleam ahead, and soon we were by a blazing log fire warmed by the hospitality of a homely couple of mountain folk – blessed amongst mankind, for they are not only happy in their humble ways but make the night-bound wanderers as happy as themselves. Money! An insult! Our boots needed a nail or two. The man could cobble with the same heart as he shook hands. His wife boiled a kettle. A little band of youngsters cocked up their heads from their beds and blinked at us. 'From scenes like these' – you know the rest, gentle reader. There in the keeping of that good woman and her equally good man we left the three youngest of our party, and went on another half mile or so through the wood in search of more room. May life be good to that household.

The first place we came to was like the Inveraray Inn, where Providence, if he sent us there, did it in anger. A shoppy woman informed us, with her nose up like a peak in Darien, that she only opened her door to 'gentry.' She had come in contact with 'fouk frae the South' and had been contaminated. We thought that the father of some of us when High Sheriff of his county had hung better 'gentry.' Wet wanderers at eleven o'clock are apt to be unjust per-

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haps. But across the way a yellow light beckoned us, and there for the second time we met with the open door and the warm Scottish welcome. A fire soon crackled and blazed in the hearth and a kettle soon sang on the hob. A feast of the humble things that make folks strong was put – but lay not long – in front of us. Sound was our sleep on the floor that night. No effeminate body on a feather bed made better use of the hours of rest than did we. The fire was kept up till the good woman appeared with the morning kettle. She feasted us like kings, and asked for nothing but our blessings. The Lord be praised for these good people. How proud one is to be of their race and their origin. Down the forest road we went in the early morning as fresh and happy as daisies, and only when we got to the station and a train told us that one more glorious tramp in the hills was over, did we think of the woe-begotten exiled Raeburn Scott tossing sorrowfully on the Atlantic waves, dowie and wae, on its way to its prison house in the land of the stranger.

§ 3

*On Blowing the Trumpet and Ferries*¹

A ferry is the most poetical of roads. Some roads weary you until every step you take upon them makes your heart groan; some exhilarate you and you go whistling and singing along, heedless of time and space with thoughts of nothing but the joyous moment; on some you dance rather than walk.

¹ *Forward*, October 6, 1923.

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There are roads that open out the whole sunny world to you, and roads that are ways into sadness and gloom; roads that drive you in upon yourself and roads that give you wings for flight; roads that make you consign all things to the devil, and others made for 'walking and leaping and praising God.' There are also the glorious roads that are no roads at all but the way of the wanderer over heather and moor. But the ferry is the most enchanting of all roads.

The summer has been one of rain and mist. For the fourth year, Ben Macdhui has been hostile and has done its darned best to be unpleasant. It let us get to the Shelter Stone with but a moderate wetting; it gave us heather to sleep on that was only fairly wet; it vouchsafed a clear black sky for the night, a glowing moon and myriads of golden stars. In the morning, it poured its rainy wrath upon us; its waterfalls drowned us as we went up by their sides. The only effect was that the puns of the youths were more atrocious than usual. We treated it as a diplomatic wife handles an angry husband. We could not make it smile, but we reduced it to gloomy frowns. Close and black were the mists, but they could not rob us of conquest. We added our stones to its cairn, patted it on the head patronizingly, laughed in its face, and came down.

That was a great road, down, down, down amidst scudding mist and rain cloud to the Larig-Ghru. Whoever has never stood alone in snow or mist in this, the most lonely and least spoiled of our mountain paths, has missed an experience amongst the most glorious that life and nature can give.

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On any day whilst on our side of the Pass there were mist and gloom, on the other, clouds of the purest white flew along the hill tops and below them the wet rock faces glistened in the sun, white torrents streaked their sides, and the purple of the heather and green of the grass shone with pure radiance. When we got to the bottom our way northwards was barred by a black cloud, whilst to the south, the Aberdeen hills lay in peaceful tender blue as though never a storm could ripple their innocence and beauty.

These contrasts are the glory of the hills, particularly of our own Highlands. Later on and after days of this wayward weather, we came, though not on foot this time, to where the roads end in ferries, and we had to be boated across. We were a company that had fled from Division Lobbies and pumped-up air, and on the mountain ways sought refreshment to body and spirit. There is something peculiarly of the artistic fitness of things that makes us think that when our road comes to an end, we reach a ferry where a boat and a silent boatman meet us and we are carried over to a new land. The beat of the oar soothes us; we have ceased to trouble and to do. We lie like a helpless child whilst the water laps around us; the clouds behind come down shutting off what is past; we approach a new shore where there are white houses and green hills, and an outstretched hand to help us from the boat. So was it on that immortal day of ferries.

It poured. In response to our call a parson came clad in oilskins and told us we had to blow a trumpet because the boat was on the other side. But there

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was the trouble: who could blow? It was a tricky trumpet. The first shivering soul who tried the summons could not produce a note; the breath of the next seemed to tear a piece of cotton in the tube, and then die away in a puff of wind. No Charon could hear such a call. A dog or two turned their heads and continued their search for shelter; a face or two appeared at windows. 'Blow louder,' said the priest, appropriately officiating. It poured. We could see a boat moored off the opposite shore and a shed on the shore, but no creature moved. That trumpet had to be blown.

The trumpet went round. Then at last something happened that appalled us. An unearthly sound came like the braying of a thousand herds of asses in pain, like the rending and riving of mountains, like the key-note of an orchestra of madmen in pandemonium. It wandered up and down, across and back, and in echo returned again and again. Dogs fled howling with drooping tails, infants wailed, doors opened and curious people peeped out to see the earth dissolve, anxious eyes were turned to the churchyard, the infuriated rain poured faster. But whilst we stood in terror fearing we had unloosed some magic blast that might be our end, from the shed on the other side came a man, another came running out of a white house, another jumped into a boat on our side and began to row lustily. We had awakened the living at any rate.

Later on the performance had to be repeated where the water was broader and the rain more torrential. Again there was the solemn half-hour of waiting, the beat of the approaching oars, the hazy outline of

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the boat coming out of a boundless space so far as the eye could see, the greeting of the big weather-beaten boatmen, the preparation of planks and the settling of the car on a risky platform over the gun-wales of the cobble, the hard rattling pull against wind and tide, the emergence of the hidden land beyond, the miraculous landing.

This time our old friend who had driven us many a mile in many an excursion was on the very verge of things, and nearer a more ghostly ferry where the mists are thicker and the silence deeper. The slope upwards of the landing stage was steep, seaweed covered its lower end, the stones were slippery with the rain. So, when the heavy thing came groaning and jolting off the planks making the cobble dip and sway, its wheels found no grip and down it began to glide towards the bottom of the loch. But for the sturdy arm of a son of Anak who flung a boulder as large as the playthings of Fin M'Coul behind the wheel, we should now be 'lying fathoms deep with the salt waves washing o'er us.' That was not to be our end, however, and having given our obolus to our Charon, we passed through the gateway of the hills.

We have been far and we have been in strange places, up passes and down gorges, groping our way round 'devil's elbows' and flying like the wind on billiard-table roads, but this summer's wanderings will always recall first of all the blast of trumpets, the approach of boats in the rain, the crossing of ferries, and the bearded Charons pulling hard at their oars.

PART II: IN ENGLAND AND WALES

1. AFTER THE BATTLE
2. IN THE WEST COUNTRY
3. IN YORKSHIRE
4. IN OXFORDSHIRE
5. IN THE CHANNEL ISLES
6. IN THE LAKES
7. ABERAVON

CHAPTER ONE : AFTER THE BATTLE¹

SOMETIMES one *must* flee from familiar things and faces and voices, from the daily round and the common task, because one's mind becomes like a bit of green grass too much trod upon. It has to be protected and nursed, and it has to be let alone. Then give me the hill road, the bleating of sheep, the clouds, the sun and the rain, the graves of dead races, the thatched roofs of living ones, a pipe and a fire when the day is closing and a clean bed to lie upon until the sun calls in the morning. If friends fail, the hill road never does. When you are up it never flatters; it has no grievances if not put in a Cabinet, and its ruts are not made in revenge; when you are down, it does not attribute its misfortunes to you. It is your loyal friend always, and by its own cheery equality sweetens and freshens all your sanities. There is nothing in faithfulness like to it, and blessed is the man who has found it. It puts him above the fickleness of Fate and of men.

The battle was over, and unable to put up boards announcing for my protection that 'Trespassers will be prosecuted,' or 'Keep off the grass till it gets a rest,' like my forbears I took to the hills and the moors with a hope that I might invade the lowlands as Roy Roy occasionally stole into Glasgow. A morning of gauzy mist followed a night of white frost. The autumn fires glowed on hedge and wood, and a white road went into the mistiness that lay over the next ridge. Every new height we attained brought us to a wider world and a bluer heaven, and

¹ *Forward*, December 6, 1924.

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numbered life bestirred itself. At last we got to the broad flat summit of the Downs. The mounds around told of olden folk, but nothing more than that they had been and that some had been great. The moor birds ran fussily in front of us, took to wing, whirred and cackled; a leisurely wind with a tooth in it swerved the grass as it passed over, whistled with an apparent impatience and ill-humour through the fences which the evil mind of fallen man had set up to mark his possessions, but passed in a more friendly sough by the hay ricks. A vast expanse of brown and red and yellow, where patches of dark green woodland, sunlit spots glittering amidst duller cloud-shaded stretches, are bounded by far-off mists and softened by a veil of the most exquisite grey, held us in its keeping.

Elections were already the frettings of another life. We filled our lungs with the cool refreshing air, and our eyes with the beauty of the wide scene; we threw wide our arms to the rolling Downs and the serene sky and sunny contentment. Existence was enough. Here was the abiding and forgiving friendship. But we cannot, thank goodness, keep man, and his ways and his strivings, away from us for long. Here, however, we can laugh affectionately at his follies. We went down to where it is said that Guinevere retired to end her days and do penance, but when we asked of a maid where the church was she said: 'Next door,' directing us to as ugly a box in brick as was ever put up by sincere hearts guided by a bad architect. No spirit of Arthur's erring queen was there. We did our pilgrimage, however, and later on when filling our

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wallets with the bread that perishes we were not surprised to be told that in a place which has no reverence for itself, 'British traditions' were nobly upheld against 'foreigners and traitors' at the recent election! Poor Britain to be so served!

The afternoon was like unto the morning, only more mature and matronly in its calm and its colour. Our greatest remnant of ancient worship stood out in its moor, peculiarly austere and detached in the cold autumn light, but when we fled down the slopes to the thatched cottages in the valleys, and got glimpses of housewives and children and firesides through their open doors, warmth returned. Cosy life and the affections outlast the generations, whether good or bad, and when the moon was up we reached the end of our day's journey and looked down upon the ethereal towers of the great cathedral, slipped through its gates and its green, and found our night's abode.

We were on the confines of Avilion, 'where falls not hail nor rain nor any snow, nor even wind blows loudly.' The lights in the windows overlooking the green, throwing shafts of yellow across the dark; the turrets and towers pale and unsubstantial, almost transparent — where lit by the moonbeams — rising up like souls from the black massed below; the delicate tracery of the branches of the high trees against bright windows and a moon-lit sky; the sound of flowing waters; the chiming of bells; the chanting of psalms up a long shadowy close, surely marked a place sheltered from the furies of vanity where reverence and worship still lingered like the scent of incense. If Avilion ever was, it must be

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still here. Here surely dwelt a happy faith, generous in its judgment and enlightened in its spirit.

Nor was the peace marred by the moated and walled palace of the bishop. One could see that the draw-bridge and the portcullis were, like rusting armour in a museum, emblems of peace. Everything slept in the moonlight. The walls slept; the ruins we could see by peeping through the chinks in the gate, slept; the moat slept; the ducks floating on it slept; a sleep-muffled quack came from the shadowy margin, and the sleepy chirp of a robin came from a bush; the trees slept; the moon kept peaceful watch and ward; we went on tiptoe and whispered lest we should disturb something sleeping and dreaming of reverence, beauty and romance.

But that night some of our people found us out and come to greet us and to tell us of their burdens. They had been in the fight and were nursing their wounds. They told us sorrowfully that this enchanted nook was a fraud. It was the abode of no Round Table. It had turned out to make, and to glory in, the triumph of the world, the flesh, and the devil that England had just registered. It was of the Earth, earthy. So my faithful visitors shook their heads over me. For them the moat and the ramparts were not asleep, and the cathedral, its green and its close, were only the symbols of the ruling castes. The beauty and the repose of the place were ruffled into frowns when Labour sought for something other than servitude and charity. We had not found the Grail.

The bells chimed sweetly through long wakeful hours and I dreamt of the doors of the cathedral

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guarded against those seeking what their souls were bidden to seek. Next day, being Sunday, we refreshed ourselves by listening in the spacious nave to the singing, and went on our way to the most sacred spot of all where Joseph of Arimathea came and where the Holy Grail was seen. But, being Sunday, the gates were fast locked and only the public-houses were open. An old lady, bent and battered, graciously allowed me to look over the grey stone wall from her garden, and showed me a little church. So I left Avilion an outcast wanderer, and saw nothing but the blue bills of the grand Party of national honour and concern, getting blurred and besmirched by the weather, staining the hoardings as they had stained the public mind, asking the electors to 'Vote for S— and Stability, Security, and Safety,' and, by way of variation, for 'Britons and no Bolshies,' for 'the Union Jack and the British Empire.' Then came the woods and the hills and the sea, the Ship Inn with its noisy bar — and sleep.

CHAPTER TWO: IN THE WEST COUNTRY¹

§ I

NOTHING but the whim of consistency justifies me in writing 'From the Green Benches' this week. For it is the blessed Easter time when the daffodil blooms, the larch robes itself in its tender green shot with purple, and the spring puts the orange blossom of the sloe in its hair. So it is the moor, the open road, and the wayside inn for me.

Going down to where the footpath met the railway, the Parson, the Liberal and I were joined by Mars. Mars was a decent fellow, a follower of the plough at ordinary times, and he had been sorely wounded. The Parson was not hiding his light under a bushel, and when he informed the Liberal about what had been going on at Leicester, I saw a light in the eye of Mars as bright and happy as though he had been a knight of the neighbouring Glastonbury when the Holy Grail appeared.

'Are you So-and-So?' asked he, and being told it was so: 'I am proud,' he said, and begged to be allowed to shake hands. Thus we went from Leicester down into the West country, every orchard we passed in blossom, every cottage happy in its summer snow and its daffodils, every bank bright with its primroses.

Lichnowsky, Sukhomlinoff, Baron Rosen rose with us next morning and kept us company so long as the tram lines and the hard road (beloved of the Manufacturer, who this time preferred the bosom of his

¹ *Forward*, April 13, 1918.

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family to our gipsy company) remained with us. But by and by we stood in a little church and read on a scroll flying from a skull in bronze:—

Farewell, fond world, I found thee vaine at best,
'On Abraham's bosom I found sweeter rest.'

We vowed that the hills would be our Abraham, and there and then bade the world and Lichnowsky adieu.

Up on the hill-tops was the ridge way worn by the feet of our British predecessors, dotted with the grey stones and burial mounds of which Ossian sings with a sad heart, for even in his day the dead who lay there had lost their names. The mists came down, and the hills hid themselves in grey mantles. A great gloom was upon us, and the wind souched round us and supplied the magic which raises the dead.

No wise man takes this road o' nights. For at this corner the night-bound wanderer meets the black hounds with fiery tongues followed by a terrible rider on a headless horse; on this mound where the Danes lie, the night is made fearsome by the songs of the warriors of olden time, dead but still holding revelry; by this stone a lady in trouble has walked for centuries; and unless you are well stocked with protective charms from an Holy Book, woe betide you.

But we only see the young bracken shoots, the boughs laden with catkins or bursting into bud, the whortleberries in flower, and we think of the grand rambles which Coleridge and Wordsworth had there, and we console ourselves in the midst of our own

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experiences that the proprietor of a house near at hand refused to let it to Wordsworth because he was no patriot and held obnoxious opinions.

At the end of the day we return to politics. Here is the glorious mansion of the old Tory Whip known familiarly as 'the Pink 'Un,' with the church and churchyard under the trees at the foot of the hill – the most peaceful churchyard with its smooth sward, its blowing daffodils, and its white crosses that I have ever come across. Later on we come to his Constitutional Club on the sea front, painted in true blue, and in the evening we stretch our legs and smoke our pipes by the fire of an old inn with oak rafters, in a little village under the great Castle.

Progress like a sea has washed round this place. The inn is more frequented by ghosts than by guests, though the latter are plentiful. But recently, as the old waiter tell us, the new world came into their midst like an unbidden guest. One of the great ones of the Castle became a vegetarian, allowed his beard to grow until it became like Aaron's, harboured original notions about the Church, slept at night with full open windows, carried the Whig traditions of the family into a kind of Socialist Radicalism – and died. Then life went back to Elizabeth and the Romans.

As the old man told us the story of the back-sliding, his voice seemed to robe itself in crape. But pride returned when he described the festivities on the occasion of 'the Prince of Wales' marriage; and, musing in a gentle voice, he said: 'I have been here all my lifetime, and remember all the great occasions for more than fifty years.' He was gentle

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as the spring-time itself. To look upon him was balm. He waited upon you with a sweetness which almost compelled you to say: 'Pardon me, sir, but take my place and let me minister unto you.'

In opinions we got no further than the expression that this was 'a wicked war,' and we left him in the grey of a drizzly morning, as all inns are but for the night on a pilgrimage. That day the sun behaved like a spoiled child. Our feet sought 'the smallest church' in England; the cliffs were there with the solemn woods right down to the water's edge; the shy red deer scurried across our path; the fox scuttled amongst the whins and the boulders; but the sun sulked. It behaved with all the sombre patriotism of a meatless day, and we had to spin appropriate things from our imagination and kept each other's hearts up by hymns such as:

'I do not want to see the distant scene:
One step enough for me.'

Next morning no blind could keep out the sun, and we rose singing like larks. Once more we were on the ancient ways, high on the moors with the larks singing above us, the plovers screeching, and the curlews calling around. Every hill had its burial mound, for the heroes of those days were buried like Browning's grammarian where clouds form. We sat upon them and the sun blistered us as we offered up incense to the gods. 'Why should we return to hear Balfour on Count Czernin and be enslaved at £400 a year?' But the sun tarried not, though we did, and we went on downwards to where even in these days there are trains.

An inn bearing the legend: 'Our faith is in God'

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over two terrible lions so angry with each other that they were turning their backs and evidently calling names like 'Huns' over their shoulders - a true Christian pastime nowadays! - invited us, and there we feasted and bade farewell to unrationed meals. We patted a big loaf on the head and ate it, and thought sadly on the scanty London cupboard that awaited us on the morrow.

'When will it end?' the old lady asked us as she handed us our change. 'I have three sons in the firing line and I want them home. Do you think the Germans will come here?' We gave her consolation. 'You seem to speak with authority,' she said. 'I am glad you came.' No, we could not get away from the horrid thing. We vowed that the hills would be our Abraham and that for three days we should rest on his bosom. We could not keep our vow.

§ 2¹

One in search of peace is pretty sure to find it on the footsteps of the monks. Whether this is because the monks themselves knew where to find it, or because they sanctified what they trod upon, I shall leave to men of worldly wisdom and of faith to dispute. Enough for me that, as a matter of fact, where the abbeys and priories lie ruined, there is a serenity in wood and vale and river as if the cloaked and hooded men still walked abroad in the gloaming and vesper and matin bells still were rung. To such a place I have 'withdrawn.'

A long village bends and winds with an old British

¹ *Forward*, December 30, 1922.

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road that has in the course of centuries become a street. Many of the houses are thatched, and not a few of them show in the mouldings and carvings built into their walls that they borrowed their stones from the Abbey which once was here. The peasant stole a stone, the great ones a noble estate. Little of the Abbey is now left – a gateway, an ivy-grown wall, a farmhouse, these stones that like the clay of dead Cæsar are stopping the wind from a peasant's fire-side, and a barn. Standing by that barn one feels rich. Why, it is hard to say. But there one's heart expands, the generousities of life flow into one's soul, one feels comfortable. It is a great barn, a beautiful barn, a triumphant barn. The proportions and ecclesiastical design could have entered only the mind of an architect who regarded tithes as sacred and who fashioned a worthy habitation for them. It stands in part ruined now, a joy to heart and eye.

Here, one lives in the grey shadows of the early world. Far back as it is to find the beginnings of the place in King Canute's time and the founding of churches by St. Peter himself (in a vision, however), every hill-top is crowned with a dyke or a ditch where our British progenitors fortified themselves, cromlech and barrow and stone circle are around, the wind in the bracken whistles over the sites of British villages and Roman graveyards. This is the place to read the haunted cantos of Ossian. And you find a strange difference in the people – an element of tragedy and genius, a gleam of a day that broke but never advanced to full noontide – a promise that, never having been fulfilled, has become a tragedy.

It is the country of Thomas Hardy with its downs,

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its sheep, its gates, its people. We met one such in our wanderings. We had gone far over the downs and through many farms and villages until we came to a place we sought in the midst of the rugged moss-grown remnants of the very old times, and there at the 'Travellers' Rest' we refreshed our happily weary limbs. Ichabod might have been written over its doorway alongside the notice that William Roper was licensed to sell spirituous liquor and various other seductive things – as well as bread and cheese. A handsome young man sat in the tap-room; dark, alive, with no down-thrown eye or servile appearance – and we got into conversation with him. He was a weird composition of power and impotence; a man who had flashes and who failed to understand them; the son evidently of a race that had been conquered in spite of its promise but retained the possibility of coming again; the very personality of a tragedy which Thomas Hardy could play with, develop, and build into a cloud over our lives.

He began with all his senses, and he told us of the recent election. He propounded political economy to us with far more intelligence than any Tory M.P. I have yet heard in Parliament. He reflected with a quaint sad humour upon days when he used to work hard, but then he 'joined the Army and no more hard work for me.' He feared that our important people who employed the workmen might take their wealth away with them, and as he did not want any for himself and was happy to end his life just as he began it, he had no need for a Labour Party and was going out for a rabbit or two. But he was getting fuddled by this time, and we left him pro-

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testing that by all the rules as he had offered us a drink we ought to have offered one to him. Good advice is a poor substitute for a drink to some people.

The afternoon was advancing and a gale from the south-west was blowing. Mighty waves dashed upon the cliffs to the west and threw masses of spray all along the Chesil Bank (what memories of grinding at geology long ago does this place, seen for the first time, recall)! On the Downs, it was almost impossible to keep one's feet. Every demon that ever troubled the saintly monks who came here to wrestle with the devil seemed to be abroad, and the sky was full of vicious gleams, black clouds, and the gorgeous tints of wrath. We defied them all. It was like a personal contest, and the worsted elements became calmer, the brown bracken put on a more sombre hue as the sun sank, the spirits slept and a golden red arc of a new moon sailed through a deep blue sky. We went down to a blazing fire and rest in the village.

And here amidst old things of men's handiwork and fresh, vigorous, boisterous and yet peaceful nature, I must bid my old friends, the *Forward* readers, adieu. That very good comrade the Editor has allowed me week by week to write and speak alongside of himself through strenuous years of storm and wrathful gleam, through years which those who have lived through will always remember with pride, and which will never be recalled by me but with a feeling of loyal gratitude. We have won, and that is a new moon of promise riding proudly in our heavens. I should like to go on. *The Forward*

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has a great past and is to have a greater future, and to become only a very occasional contributor is a grief. But I have been called to other work which will leave me little leisure for writing. So I will retire with the victory and the year. If I am no longer of the company keeping the flag of the I.L.P. flying in the *Forward*, what matter? We must all obey new calls until the last imperative one comes to hold our peace and rest for ever, except for the ghosts we have left behind. My New-Year's Greetings to my readers must end with *Vale*.

CHAPTER THREE: IN YORKSHIRE¹

SOME poet or other wrote:

'In Craven's wild is many a den
To shelter persecuted men;
Far underground is many a cave
Where they might lie as in a grave.'

So, with walking-sticks, knapsacks, hob-nailed boots and U.D.C. principles and problems, we went to Craven. But whatever Craven may have been in ancient days, it is a glass house now, and instead of lying as in a grave, we found ourselves in the newspapers.

The patriots and the reporters drank beer and gossiped over the bars. Had we come to raise the standard of rebellion by the Maypole of Burnsall? Had we brought the chests of German gold to be hidden in the caves which gave harbourage to persecuted men? Newspaper correspondents disguised as gentlemen listened at key-holes, and with telescopes scanned the Fells like Admirals on quarter-decks. They discovered we could walk; they discovered we could sing; they discovered we could laugh; and they concluded the Empire was safe and that the war was not to be interfered with, and went home leaving us to the peaceful companionship of the river, the rain and the hills.

And these were kindly. Have you ever walked on the hills along which the rain wracks scud like mighty regiments of cavalry, whipping, lashing,

¹ *Forward*, October 5, 1918.

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piercing you to the skin, with the sun following after turning the charge to a rout, the track of which you can follow by the black shadows fleeing across hill and dale, wood and moor? If not, you do not know what it is to live.

'Nature is a great orator,' said one of us as we stood one day high up amidst the heather. 'She drives us first of all in upon ourselves by her baffling gloomy periods of cloud and wet, and then with consummate art she changes her key, and behold, we are riding like the worm that has turned madly and gaily upon her smiles in pursuit of the retreating storm.' Then the Radical Pacifist waved his stick up to the summit, and with the war cry: 'On, my boys, we'll beat them at the Election,' marched upwards through the heather.

Another day the river added its testimony. Tens of millions of swollen driblets rushed into its bed and it rose and rose like a press stunt to 'intern 'em all.' It bullied the bridges, it attacked the sedate trees within its reach, it boiled and foamed and roared and rushed. 'I am come to overwhelm the world,' it yelled to the fainting heart. With a Union Jack at its head, it rushed the footpaths like a mob at a pacifist meeting, and made us flee to the woods for safety. Looking down upon it from the little foot-bridge, our heads swam at its unbridled anger, and we went to bed to dream that passion had ended the world.

But lo and behold ! the sun got up in the morning, and the river was flowing as though soothing a child to sleep. All that remained of the riot of the day before were ridges of straws and spills and decayed

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leaves, drying and rotting in the sun. The Radical moralist again took up the parable, and we discussed 'The Conversion of the Nation' that day in the Village Institute as though the opening speech had been made by Nature the day before.

Politics in the city is too much a thing of bars and spittoons. Here it is a national spirit. The proper platform of the I.L.P. is a glacial boulder, not the St. Andrews Hall. In the streets it is an affair of wages, hours, grub, housing; on the moors it is a thing of liberty and of spirit. Every hill-top is a Pisgah for a democrat, and a sacred front parlour for a Tory. Upon that difference political parties should be founded. Really and truly I am not so particular in sharing out wealth as I am in sharing out history – though perhaps the former is the stepping stone to the latter, and we must view things from the beginning to the end.

Here in the evening, delightfully tired, tingling all over, drowsy with a pipe of slowly consuming tobacco, sitting in front of a genial fire, too contented to go to bed, one could write the wisest book on democratic philosophy which has ever seen the light, but it would not be original. It would be borrowed from the moors and the villages. One of its great sections would be on the democratic inheritance from the past.

In this place we have entered into temporary possession of a partly ruined tower for which we have paid no rent and no ransom. We just walk in and sit down under its massive black oak beams. On the first day we came down upon it like caterans from the hills, and demanded tribute from its kitchen. On one

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side of the room was a long dresser glistening and brown, with bright brass handles on its drawers, and in its racks a goodly array of old willow-pattern plates of large size. A great fire blazed in the hearth; antlers, guns and bill-hooks hung on the rafters. We settled down as though it had been our home for the last thousand years. 'You fussing wanderers will pass, and I shall remain' was its soothing and hospitable greeting. The place had belonged to the Cliffords, and the farmer who is now in occupation of the habitable part is the direct descendant of a retainer who came there seven hundred years ago. That his wife told us as she laid the table for us. 'When the Clifford followers mustered to fight at Flodden,' she said, 'one of us was among them. And,' pointing to a vicious looking halberd on the wall, 'he carried that with him.' I turned a vengeful eye upon it, but who could be angry with it now? It hung there like a palsied robber in an arm-chair, chattering no doubt of nights with the ghosts and the spinning wheel about these degenerate days of gas, and bombs, and seventy miles' range guns, and telling of that better day of deeds by Flodden.

The lady of the house talked with a lisp of the old times as though they were within her own memory. 'I am seven hundred years old,' she said. 'You Scots were always a troublesome lot, whether you were in a border raid or a Clyde strike'; and as we sat dreaming by the fire over our pipes after tea, all these troubles got mixed up in one drama of conflict, in one strenuous pilgrimage to peace. And the end is not yet. In the evening we read Mr. Asquith's speech and President Wilson's new deliverance. The ghosts

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of the old time stood behind our chairs and listened. Some seemed to guffaw; some wept.

I sought out, as an old man would the victim of his youthful misdeeds, a particular little village hidden deep in the hills. You climb steep paths and scale high walls to get to it. Here, when the Scots were abroad, came the women and the children, the oxen and the sheep, for safe keeping, for here the hills shielded them as a bending mother does her child, and the Abbeys and rich ecclesiastical places in the neighbourhood made the raiders hasten their steps to that quarter.

Its glory has departed in peace. In past times it was famous for its shoes, and a deputation of cobblers came from the churchyard to ask me about the Leicester factories of which they had heard so much in the shades, and the cobbler being born to mischief and liberty, they told me of the great fight they had when they stole the Maypole from the village green at Burnsall and carried it over the hills to Thorpe — 'just for the fun of the thing.' That ended the days of some of them, and supplied to others a topic of lively conversation for a long time, until another ploy took its place.

But even here the appropriate still reigns. On the way up the hill there is a dwelling that interests the eye and the heart of the passer-by. The affection of the hills and the spirit of the place have made it and have planted the bushes and flowers around it. 'A friend must live there,' we said, and it was so. For we were greeted by one who employed the accent of the Scot in his welcome, who was a member of the I.L.P., and who put the life of the hills and the people

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upon canvas. Thorpe has ended its pilgrimage of strife, and like the advance guard of an army, has entered into possession of the Promised Land of Peace.

Full, full of ancient saws and modern instances are all historical places. In another village hard by, the church speaks to us. To-day, the parson, catching up the accents of the crowd, outbids the drill-sergeant in the homage he pays to the world. Here this old grey church retains the memory of one, the nephew of Sir Isaac Newton, whose sermons have lost themselves in the mists of the moors, but whose prowess as a dancer still stirs life in the hearts of the people. 'The vicar was master of the complete art of dancing, as his uncle was of the complete science of mathematics,' we were told by a parishioner who was proud to worship where the man of 'jigs, strathspeys, and reels' once preached.

And we made also a discovery which fired the hearts of the women of our party, impatient for a General Election so that they might vote for somebody at last. The Tower which we had appropriated belonged to a family in which the women played a great part. Over its doorway was an inscription recording that it had once been restored by a lady of long title because her mother had lain there 'great with child.' But that was not the discovery.

It was this. Once upon a time a Secretary of State, acting like Mr. Gulland or Mr. Pratt as a whip to a political party, requested the lady in possession to promote the candidature of a certain person. She replied: 'I have been bullied by a usurper, I have been neglected by a Court' (she was no O.B.E. creature),

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'but I will not be dictated to by a subject. Your man shan't stand.'

We immediately became sensible of a proud revolt in the hearts and attitude of the handmaidens who had been pouring out our tea for us. The organizer from Manchester, the secretary from London, the *wxor* from Bradford ceased to be ministering angels and became ruling queens, and we paid our bills and shrank away into the twilight to let the silence of the river-path homewards soothe down their awakened imperiousness and calm their aggressive dignities.

CHAPTER FOUR: IN OXFORDSHIRE¹

I HAVE ridden a cock-horse to Banbury Cross and left London and the House of Commons to ponder over their sins. The Liberal and I are on a pilgrimage to battle-fields that have grown romantic with age. The blood is all washed out of them, and we see only the dash of cavalry and the glitter of swords. I have slept with diamond panes looking in upon me, quaintly carved figures telling of dates that mock me for my infancy (the only thing that does nowadays) holding converse with me from across the street, decorated gables like ladies in corkscrew curls telling me how much better everything was when they were young.

A town is wonderfully like a human being. Bicester, for instance, is just the blank-minded John Bull. You feel it in every street; you know it in every hotel. But Banbury — there you have the man of mind, the man who can sit of nights at his own fireside in the midst of a rich library bound in vellum or in calf. It tells you it 'feels the war,' and the pleasant maids at the inn sneer at the Food Controller and his coupons, and thus you recognize sensible women. Still, it is Banbury, the ancient of days, in spite of its modern unhappiness.

A nice little story is told of how its attributes were made. Camden said in his *Britannia* that it was famous for cheese, but the translator from the original Latin added from his own knowledge 'cakes and ale.' To 'ale' Camden objected and substituted therefor

¹ *Forward*, June 1, 1918.

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'zeal,' – referring to its worthy and hot Puritanism. Alas! cheese has gone with the war, and they may put up a monument with suitable inscription to it in the churchyard; the original cake shop still stands, but it could never have made fame and fortune out of the war-starved delicacies which lie as upon beds of sickness in its windows now; the zeal has gone ages ago, and nothing remains of it but farmers haggling over prices at the inn ordinary, and an adult school which stands like a sentry with fixed bayonet at the side of the church.

There is something of the aspect of a sturdy Roundhead about this adult school, and I made a point of passing it as I went out to Copredy Bridge and Edge Hill. We went out by a canal, and nothing rippled its surface except rats and fish. So perforce taking our minds off the seventeenth century and honest blows, we returned to our own day of starving and profiteering, and there was a symbol alongside of us of how personal interest is still greater than national need. A long train puffed painfully in the near distance, German prisoners were making a new railway close at hand; the silent and deserted canal, like a toothless dame falling to decrepitude in an almshouse, muttered doleful things through its reeds as we went along.

Battles ought to have appropriate names if they are to play their part in romance. Now, Copredy Bridge has always suggested to me a fine set-to and here it is as peaceful as an infant that has gathered great bunches of buttercups in its arms. Eye has never seen richer meadows; men have never built a cosier village on the high ground or crowned

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it with a more peaceful church; the ash away on the hill on the other side, which is the daughter of one which shaded Charles at dinner on the day of the battle, seems anxious to disclaim any knowledge of these events, and to be thinking of Dartmoor, Knutsford, and Conscientious Objectors.

Edge Hill, where the scene is quite different, seems to be also engaged in the game of repudiation. Here is Kinton below us, where Rupert drove the Parliamentary left pell mell and his troopers rifled their baggage. 'God bless me,' it seems to say. 'I know nothing about it. People say I had something to do with it, and there are some strange corpses I hold in keeping until they are claimed, but even when there are black thunder-clouds over me as there are to-day, and angry rain and hail sweep down upon me, really, do I look a battle village? Let me sleep.'

Farther along the ridge the deception becomes more troublesome. They have built a ruined tower with walls and gates and rickety stairs, on the spot where Verney held the royal standard, and there they sustain you with delicious new-laid eggs and a wonderful jam whilst you gather your wits and find out the hedges and ditches where the slaughter was greatest. I doubt if ever there was a battle of Edge Hill. It is the legend which makes a tea garden and a tied house pay.

Only one thing looked the part. It is said that as the King's army went down the hill to the charge, the bells of the church below were ringing for service, and the Rev. Jeremiah Hill was making his sermon ready. There is the church, and it looks as though its peaceful bells were always ringing.

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Away we went from this romance down into the villages of the plain, across footpaths hardly ever used apparently, and all in danger of being closed up, into churches glorious in their beauty and mystery, past the moated castles of the ancient mighty—dreams of distinction, of affluence, of ancient strife mingled with leisure and fair ladies. But wherever we went we were reminded of the pain of the day.

I had noticed in Oxfordshire before that when the recruiting days were on, they stuck little cards in windows showing that so many had gone from the household to the war. These are still there, and are now sadly faded. But in nearly every window there is now one or two bordered in black or with a bow of crape or black ribbon upon it. When the thunder clouds came and the rain swished down upon us and the land was suddenly darkened, we trudged on with these signs of mourning in our hearts.

As was the custom in old days, Banbury has its Tory and its Liberal Inn. We went to the Red, and passing up its oaken stairways, polished like a glass and slippery as ice, we were greeted on our bedroom landing with a sprightly smiling, self-confident Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. I dreamt of a class-conscious struggle, for my conscience was troublesome. Away over the hills was an old Castle with keep, draw-bridge (that had gone), family portraits, secret chambers, parchment treasures; and the owner thereof had met us by the way and had said: 'You must breakfast with me,' and to breakfast we were doomed.

The entrance gates opened into meadows golden with buttercups, a church stood sentinel by the moat, from the old stone bridge we saw the sedges and

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the water lilies. We went under the tower with its embattled gateway and its seats for the sentries, and at the doorway of the grey old house stood our host bare-headed and hospitable. We breakfasted in an oak-panelled room which has memories of the fifteenth century, and smoked in a great portrait-hung hall, the walls of which were of bare chiselled stone.

Then we went through its myriad passages and stairways. This is England of romance. The stairways are worn by the feet of many generations. Here Kings slept, in this cupboard fugitives hid, at this altar men whose memories will live for ever received sacrament. In a great barn-like room at the top a whole regiment slept before Edge Hill, and to a small isolated chamber approached by a secret stairway came John Hampden, John Pym, Sir Harry Vane, Warwick and Essex, to lay their plans. We walked away out of fairyland into peace — into the meadow and the corn land; along the obscured pathways to the villages, the churches, the inns.

Finally came the long, hard road, the setting sun, the dust, at the end the ideal constituency. The poor broken wounded soldier sauntered on the streets, rubbish lay on the roadway, great noisy lorries rattled along, the inns were suspicious in their cleanliness, and, quite appropriately, were full. We had wandered, as though we had missed our way, from a world of rich glamour to one of commonplace vulgarity. We shook its dust off our feet as a testimony against it, and took our departure by a crawling train to a distant bed.

CHAPTER FIVE: IN THE CHANNEL ISLES ¹

THE lot of the exile is not always accursed. Into this haven of repose the wash of the war storms has come. Long it was secluded from the bungles of government, and its people smoked good tobacco at fourpence an ounce and lived free of Income Tax. All that is gone. An Income Tax Commissioner has arrived, from Southampton, and has been 'welcomed' with a salvo of newspaper paragraphs, and the consoling pipe has become nearly as expensive a helpmate as it is in our benighted home. The Channel Islands are begining to bear the glorious burden of Imperial responsibility.

To-day I sit in a fireless room, and I hear the passers-by in the street talk of wages, labour tyranny, shop stewards, and such like topics. On Sunday, crouching in a corner sheltering from gusty rain, I joined in a little crowd of strikers (a blithering idiot of a commerical traveller is assaulting my ears and my common sense, and is making writing almost impossible, as he lays down the law of the superior man who knows nothing about labour troubles) in congratulating Mills on his splendid triumph at Dartford. For there is a strike here and we have no coals, and a gale on and no boats running. I came here for a real exile upon a Patmos; I find myself only on an out-of-the-way place of the battlefield.

I contemplate endless fields of potatoes, stately and peaceful mansions, the ideal abodes for a retired life, with potatoes growing as flowers in the front garden plots; I go out amongst the golden gorse and broom,

¹ *Forward*, April 24, 1920.

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and note how artistically their radiant sweeps can be broken by the sombre contrasts of potato patches; I go on to the cliffs and see how well the blue sea and the white foam blend with the potato-field, and my mind wanders upon the quiet ways of honest husbandry and the free paths of untameable Nature.

And yet there is preserved in this place something that makes it an appropriate land of exile. I envy the youthful Charles II, the cropped-eared William Prynne, and Victor Hugo. These came here into exile. From my bedroom window I look across a bay on the great mass of rock, an island at high water and a peninsula at low, crowned by a glorious old castle, beautiful and majestic in its ruins, like an ancient aristocratic family before it has restored itself by opening its gates to an heiress of American dollars. Round it stand its stout walls like faithful retainers, below it are long low buildings like dutiful domestics, above them it rises with upright and dignified head, grey but defiant, poor but proud.

Hither Charles II came, for Jersey remained loyal whilst its sister island went Cromwellian, and here his companion in exile, Clarendon, worked at his history of the Rebellion. It is easy to imagine now the scene on the day when the castle capitulated to the Parliamentary forces, and when its beaten garrison marched out along the causeway, 'with colours flying, drums beating, and all the honours of war,' holding 'their accountments of all sorts.'

Charles, the blackguard, was a troublesome guest on the island. There were many Nell Gwynnes about, with their trains of troubles, and the unfortunate and mysterious creature known as 'The Man with

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the Iron Mask' has been supposed to be a son of the 'Merry Monarch' born in Jersey. Be that as it may, he sought to raise the wind when here by selling the islands to the French, and people were glad to get rid of him.

To another castle on the other side of the island the notorious Prynne was sent after having had his ears chopped off in London, and having been put in the pillory at Charing Cross for libelling the Queen. Here he remained for nearly three years, and wrote such bad poetry on his castle as, if one has no sense of justice, makes us feel that he deserved all that he got. 'For sake of accuracy,' as the Speaker of the House of Commons saith when he reads the King's Speech, I have possessed myself of a copy. He describes the place of his exile in this fashion:

A proud High mount it hath, a Rampier long,
Foure gates, foure Pasternes, Bulworkes, Sconces
strong,
All built with Stone, on which there mounted lye
Fifteene caste peeces of Artillery;
With several Murdering Chambers, planted so
As best may fence itself, and hurt a foe.

He describes its 'two boystrous foes' as—

The Raging waves below, which ever dash
Themselves in pieces, whiles with it they clash;
The Stormy winds above, whose blasts doe breake
Themselves, not it, for which they are too weake.

There I shall leave this ancient hero of mine. I went to pay a dutiful call to his cell, but, behold! it no longer existed.

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The third of the exiles was Victor Hugo, who lived in a house near by where I am now writing, which looked out on to the murderous and vicious rocks with which the readers of his stories are familiar. Here he misbehaved himself politically by criticizing the Government of the island. Three of his colleagues were banished, and Victor erupted with indignation. 'We,' said he, 'have but one love-truth; and but one word—justice. Now, expel us.' He was taken at his word, and had to pack up his love and his word and remove to Guernsey, where he was left in peace to romance.

This is indeed a home for the exile. It may try to be Continental in its prices and its taxation and its potatoes, but it can never succeed in doing more than play at such things. A land for the exile it was born, and such will it remain. After lunch you can walk across it and find a resting-place for every mood. In Switzerland, for instance, everything is too big. The valleys are days in length, the mountains weeks in height. To be exiled there is to be sent to prison, and that is not the idea of exile. There you are a tourist—a vulgar, gaping tourist—a trudger. The exile is always a free gentleman. He is confined but free, and his limitations of space are no impediments to his being. He simply finds the world narrowed down to him, but it must still be the world.

Here, you start your walk on a perfect little bay, with a castle in its sweep, a dolmen at its edge, and a theatre, where they are playing 'Abraham Lincoln,' hidden behind stucco houses. That is the historical setting. In ten minutes, you are in the hollow of the most charming of dales, on a cart road avened by

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the most graceful of trees, bounded by slopes of blazing gorse, bejewelled with violets, primroses, and scores of starry points of colour. In another ten minutes, you are out where the farms are and the broad, hard roads and the telegraph poles and the people trudging to market or hoeing amidst the potatoes. In another ten minutes you have gone through this, and you are gazing upon grassy cliff tops sloping down through gorse and heather to ragged granite rocks and the dashing sea.

Thus, every chamber of the great home which Nature provides for man is here, not as a vast ambling palace which needs railway trains and express lifts to explore, but as a piece of chaste cottage building, every corner of which one's mind can fill when sitting at any of its genial firesides or resting in any of its comfortable nooks. And its music is equally varied.

On the little bay where I am the waves come in with a soothing splash, throwing happy dreams at my feet, or roll the pebbles in musical murmurs. In a minute or two, the grasshoppers are found chirping in unison with the daintiest of babblings from the daintiest of streams, and the birds of the woods are fluting and piping like mad. A few minutes more and you can come to where dogs bark and carts squeak and ducks quack and hens cackle and hoes clatter on the stones; and then out upon the high coast, where the big sea booms heavily and the twitter of linnets tones the scream of gulls.

Even the weather brings all the seasons into the compass of an hour and all the climes into the space of an acre. The sun beats upon you lustily and you

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throw open your garments to offer him hospitality; in a minute, the rift has darkened and edged winds come cutting about your ears, making you shiver; at one moment, the land is glistening in light and the reddish-brown walls of the castles, the tender green of the trees, the pale yellow of the gorse, and the duller brownish-green of the potato fields lie before you in a far-stretched picture worked in pastels; in an eye twinkling the mists of driving rain fall upon it, the gale is up, the sea blackens, you run for shelter, and before you have reached it the rainbow is out to laugh at you and tell you it was only a joke of the gods.

Verily, this is the ideal land of exile, where a man, within bounds round which he can almost walk for his morning constitutional until he has reached the age of seventy if he belongs to the old generation, and until he has reached the ripe years of thirty if he belongs to the new, may be free, may hear the echo and be heaved on the swell of every commotion disturbing the great world outside, and may enjoy all that Nature is pleased to provide for us. When the Independent Labour Party has joined the Third International and when the Dictatorship of the Proletariat is cleansing the world, if the Revolutionary Committee is too spiteful and too angry with me to send me right away to Paradise, may it enter their heads to send me here as a halfway house.

CHAPTER SIX: IN THE LAKES¹

THE years of war have made the hills higher, their sides steeper, and the roads to them longer; and the coal lock-out has drawn this corner of the map further away from the world so that newspapers linger longer on the way and posts are but few. But the waterfall behind Barrow House still wakens me in the morning like St. Simon's valet with a message to be up and doing, and the setting sun in all the gorgeous livery of the Celestial court tells me that the time to end the day and go to sleep has come.

In nothing essential is there variableness or shadow of turning. The light sleeps and mirrors in colours of most exquisite delicacy its guardian hills; it wakes and frets and splashes like a just soul beating itself out upon a hard world. Having resigned itself to its impotence as an agent of violence it pursues the more permanent way of conquering by beauty, and of keeping green the memory of song, poetry and romance which it holds in its heart.

Satan forced to pay homage to creation says:

With what delight could I have walked thee round,
If I could joy in aught, sweet interchange
Of hill, and valley, rivers, woods and plains,
Now land, now sea, and shores with forest crowned,
Rocks, dens and caves.

That is Derwentwater and Borrowdale. Out on the hill tracks when the evening closes in and you sit in the hush and listen to the thrush piping in the

¹ *Forward*, June 18, 1921.

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thorn below, the bleat of the sheep on the pasture above, the barking of the dog at the white farm on the opposite slope, the ghosts of Gray full of awe, of Wordsworth full of reverence, of Southey and Coleridge full of weird emotions, pass in their evening walks. Then the trippers are in their inns, the yellow coaches are off the roads, the horses are munching in their stalls, and 'the world is left to darkness and to me' except that there is no darkness now, for the finger tips of evening touch those of the dawn and the old day brings in the new by the hand.

The Lake mirrors the purples, the golds and the reds, and it, the hills, the islands and the woods seem to throw off their dead dignity of the day and speak their great thoughts to each other in words that break no silence but that can be heard all the same. Friar's Crag and its two neighbour islands seem to be particularly companionable. From the Crag Ruskin first beheld with 'intense joy mingled with awe' the dark lake. On one of the islands lived St. Herbert, the friend of St. Cuthbert, on another stood the castle of the Derwentwaters, mine-owners and Jacobites, who finished up on Tower Hill like gentlemen.

Hither came at a leisurely pace Mr. Churchill's speech, confessing manifold sins in the shape of a new policy, including a German understanding, proving in a somewhat oblique way the capacity to govern by admitting that the whole inspiration of the Coalition foreign policy has been a mistake; and following this, still more leisurely, came the news that his estimate in thousands of the cost of Napo-

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leonism in the Middle East has proved to be an underestimate to the extent of millions. That morning a magpie chattered from a tree near by, a cuckoo was fussily busy in the woods behind the house, and ravens wheeled incessantly round the crags.

Hither also came the news of the Heywood victory. This has been no usual contest. It is like one of the old-fashioned battles, which determined the course of a war, and which tested and revealed all the resources of a campaign. The Coalition fought as it had never fought before, and it was beaten as it was never beaten before. In this respect, Heywood tells a simple tale emphatically. This Parliament is requested to wind itself up. The English cricketers at Lord's excepted, it is the prize failure of the time. It is getting so funny as a serious institution that it would make its fortune in a black face on the sands of Blackpool or the Isle of Man.

But the Heywood fight did more than that. It also told us where Liberalism is. Some friends of mine are very keen about a Liberal-Labour *entente* to defeat the Coalition, and they think me very perverse when I say that such a thing would not be effective and is not desirable. Moreover, in seven cases out of eight, Labour benefits by the running of an independent Liberal candidate. A study of the speeches that were delivered during the Heywood context justifies me in doubting if Labour would have won but for the Liberal candidate. Whilst moving about the country, I can find no interest being taken in Liberalism. It is simply off the stage, except as in this neighbourhood when it

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recently appeared as the sole opposition to the Government.

The country cannot be said to have any clear ideas as to what it wants except in the vaguest possible terms. It would like to go to bed; it would like to be prosperous; it wants a rest. Poor thing! It will have to drain its war cup, however, right to the bottom, and the very best that can be done for it is to prevent the cup from being replenished again and again. That is all that can be done by clearing out the Coalition. Strife and poverty are to be our portion for some time until we have done penance for our follies.

It looks as though the Miners' lock-out were to end. For nearly three months men – and above all the women folk – have fought a grim fight with starvation, and if in the end they have to surrender with but a scanty trophy or two, the honour and the respect will be theirs alone. There need be no deceit about it. The terms upon which a ballot is being taken as I write this, are the terms of surrender. If the miners have to go back to work on these terms they will have failed. And there will be no peace, no heartiness, in work – just an armed truce. Capitalism, like Militarism, comes out as a weak feckless thing, winning victories by holding men down, starving and devastating into surrender. The struggle will have to be renewed, but, I hope, on the political field and with better weapons.

'They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep;
And Bahram, that great Hunter – the Wild Ass
Stamps o'er his head, but cannot break his sleep.'

CHAPTER SEVEN: ABERAVON¹

WHETHER the hour is 2.30 in the afternoon or 10 o'clock at night, there is not a building in the constituency nearly big enough to hold the crowds. It would be killing and nerve-destroying work, but for the great peace outside.

My place goes up for about twelve miles from the sea into the heart of the mountains. A river flows through the length of the valley and the hills press close upon its sides. A railway barely finds room between the river and the hills; a road, cut into the hill-side, runs with many a hairpin curve high above; coal-pits are frequent (less than one-third of the electors are miners, however); near its mouth the river in some long gone by time was dammed up into a lake upon the flat floor of which the lowest of the valley villages is built; the others hang on by their eyebrows to the mountain slopes – twenty steps up to their front door, the back door overhung by the cut hill-side. Here 8,500 of my 35,000 voters live. They are people of simple honest ways of life and my majority amongst them is sure.

The moon is full and no excited crowd can enlist the valley itself in the fight. From the road the hills look like huge sentinels, who watch and think but move not. The electric lights, glittering singly at pits or in groups in the villages, suggest some demoniac work going on in the night and in the midst of shadows. Clouds come and go, the car gropes its way over places that are rutty and smooth, crawling past bits which drop away sheer down to the river and

¹ *Forward*, 11th and 18th, and *Nation*, Nov. 25, 1922.

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where a mistaken swerve would create a vacancy in the ballot paper. Suffusing the whole long view up and down the valley cleft, is the most wonderful silvery light and the sky is resplendent with the magic of the moon. So, electioneering here is not without its compensations.

I am still in my own valley with the mountains on either hand and the river flowing ceaselessly to the sea by the villages. The outside world is still something very remote and vague, but over the hills one morning came the news of the Glasgow Municipal polls and we cheered and said, 'Aberavon and Glasgow are doing well.' The fight here is like a revival. From these villages the wind of the spirit that, passing over the dry bones, makes them live has been blowing, and the shout of life has been growing in volume every day. The bards have come in, the harps have been taken out, and the electors of Aberavon have been asked to regard themselves as the Men of Harlech whose deeds are to be 'told in song and story.'

It is good to feel that the influence and memory of Hardie still move people here. I have been fortunate in having as a Lloyd George candidate one who has been so incompetent in his Parliamentary work that the constituency is tired even of his name, but such small men are apt to be spiteful, and with Sir Alfred Mond on his platform, he has been indignant that a Scottish foreigner should invade the sacred soul of Wales. Swift and spontaneous from all over the constituency, the memory of Hardie's connection with an adjoining one in the same county has come into people's minds, and the fragrance is good. Instead

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of Scotland being a reproach here it is a commendation.

To explain how Aberavon was fought is really to explain the ordinary electioneering methods of the day. The fight was harder than in most places, the interest may have been a little more widespread, and the proportion of electors who voted may have been well above the average in consequence, but the methods were pretty much the same as elsewhere.

The registers of to-day contain an uncomfortably large number of voters who are interested in the excitement of elections but not in politics, and whose votes depend upon a catchword or a whim or a reputation. The existence of these electors makes stunt issues possible, and drives candidates more and more to fight upon sheer propaganda balderdash such as was printed on the blue bills which were pasted on the walls throughout the country in the interests of Tory candidates fighting Labour. Nine-tenths of the criticisms passed upon the Capital Levy proposal (such as that it penalized thrift, that it was a reduction in industrial capital, and so on) were of the same quality. It looks as though this method of electioneering had come to stay, and the party mainly responsible for this debasement in our political currency is the Tory Party. We have either to reply by following it into misquotation, prevarication, and misrepresentation, or put the method of serious discussion up against it and support it with strenuous will. We tried the latter in Aberavon, and in the end got a political verdict.

I was told that if Mr. Lloyd George came into the

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constituency he would recall many votes to his standard. He came and attacked me; he spoke in adjoining constituencies and elaborated his attack. The day after he had gone he was forgotten. In the industrial districts of South Wales, any one of a dozen Labour leaders I could name has more influence than Mr. Lloyd George. He has broken the Liberal Party there. Nonconformity is now badly divided. The simpler communities of kindly faith to which religion is a rich promise to the heart, and which are not confused by powerful pews, have left Liberalism, it seems, for good, and have come over to Labour; where the world sits in the pew, that is not so, but even there the chapel no longer reviles us; ministers must hold their tongues, and religion seems to be more silent or less committal than it was. The sincerely religious Welshman does not like that. This time the Labour vote cast in Aberavon in 1918 was just doubled, and that was owing, amongst other things, to a great change in Nonconformist sentiment towards Labour. I did not get 'Liberal' votes to any appreciable extent, so far as I can judge, but I got the votes of thousands of electors who had been Liberal in 1918 and are now Labour and will remain Labour.

The future of Nonconformity as a living and inspiring force in Wales is trembling in the balance. More, religion is truly democratic, and its inspiration is mainly working-class. The good soul I meet of an evening dispensing spiritual comfort and wealth to his neighbours in sorrow, I meet next day black in face going home from the pit. He cannot separate religion from life because it is life, and when he finds

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a tightening of materialistic interests upon his chapel, it is of his very faith that he doubts. When a new party arises that makes the East glow anew with a dawning vision, he turns to it. Some of his managers, some of his shopkeeper fellows in the faith, some of his respectable deacons (I say *some*, for this is not true of all), do not share his enthusiasm. He feels it keenly. It seems something like a falling away by the wayside before the end of the pilgrimage. All up the Afan Valley, where there are about 8,500 electors, the sons of workmen preach every Sunday (and many week-days) to working-class people the faith of the poor of simple heart, and all up that valley Liberalism and Toryism both put together did not poll one-third of the electorate. That, as much as the economic pressure of poverty, accounts for the Labour victories in South Wales.

If we are to protect our public life from being swayed by the emotionalism and the ignorance to which the Tory Party have just made such an unblushing appeal, if we are to secure that at elections political issues are to be discussed with some show of reason on both sides, to this great central block of electors must we appeal. I have never seen in more dramatic juxtaposition than in Aberavon the composition of the Tory Party. During the day in the main street the genteel ones went out shopping in blue to demonstrate the class to which they had assigned themselves, rather than any opinions they held; up to that street at one point a ward of terrible housing conditions came, and, from the blue of the lady in her car, I had only to turn a corner to come upon the blue of the urchin with his shirt hanging

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out from his trousers, who shouted at me: 'Bolshiel' This is the growing significance of the Tory and reactionary strength in this country – the comfortable who desire no change and the social wreckage which has no vision for further voyaging – except to the bottom of a beer-pot. The former vote by instinct, and in the political issues of these days prefer Toryism to Liberalism because the latter is devoid of social reputation. That is one reason why, in Aberavon, the Tory symbol polled double the votes of the old sitting Liberal. My vote came from the middle mass of workers, well educated as a rule, religious, interested in the discussion of real issues.

Nothing in the election was more remarkable than the women's vote. The women crowded their own meetings, and were always a large part of the general ones. They were great listeners; they followed intricate arguments like that in favour of the Capital Levy; they were downright; they are less *blasé* politically than men, and are the finest workers. My Tory opponent put up no political fight, but trusted to a long record of local charity and benevolence. That alone made him formidable, but I do not believe, from evidence in my possession, that the women, especially the poorer ones, who were expected to be much influenced by that irrelevant consideration, were so to any extent. My experience in Aberavon is that the women elector is seriously facing her responsibilities, and in the bulk is as anxious as men in the bulk to give an intelligent vote on national concerns. Nor does she always vote with her husband. Reports that the husband was to vote one way and the wife

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another were by no means uncommon, and this, moreover, was often shown by rival window cards. My canvass certainly indicated no greater support from men than from women.

Passing from the personal factors and coming to programme items and their influence on the result, the foundation of the victory was the general disgust with the Coalition Government and the economic effects of its policy. This the Tories tried to counteract by foolish bills about Russia, every one of which only afforded an admirable text for speeches on Mr. Bonar Law's 'constitutionalism,' the revolutionary influence of reaction, and the blockade.

But the item that started as a menace and grew into a perfect treasure was the Capital Levy. When the Press opened its attack, I felt in doubt as to whether the people at meetings, uncomfortably crowded, would tolerate the somewhat elaborate and complicated arguments and explanations that would be necessary for an effective reply. The result astonished me. As I experimented with economic arguments that increased in their technicality, interest increased. The nature of a National Debt, the incidence of taxation to pay for it, the nature of industrial capital, the effect of a heavy income tax on industrial investment, how the payment of the capital value of an annual income-tax imposition is not confiscation and does not reduce industrial capital – and such matters – were positively devoured by the audiences. I have no hesitation in saying that no other single item did me so much good and enabled me to turn the election to true educational use as this.

These enormous masses of electors put a terrible

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strain upon the candidate who fights by purely educational means. But the result of my contest in Aberavon leaves me convinced that a high appeal is a paying one.

PART III: TOWARDS THE SUN

1. DR. SUN
2. EASTWARDS
3. NAPLES AND POMPEII
4. THE ISLES OF GREECE
5. CONSTANTINOPLE
6. GEORGIA
 - (1) UNDER THE RED FLAG
 - (2) HOW WE ENTERED KAZBEK
7. EGYPT
 - (1) SOUTHWARDS BOUND
 - (2) SCOTLAND ÜBER ALLES
 - (3) THE LAND OF THE PHARAOHS
8. PALESTINE
9. NEW WINE IN OLD BOTTLES
10. INDIA
 - (1) THE NEW DELHI
 - (2) IN THE JUNGLE
11. HONOLULU
12. SOUTH AFRICA IN 1902

CHAPTER ONE: DR. SUN¹

MANY things have been written in gratitude to the good physician, and he is worthy of them all. He may be spoiled (as teachers, ministers, and members of all the great professions are) by the spirit of trade and the cash nexus, and then he becomes neither better nor worse than anyone else to whom the earning of a living is the most absorbing task in life. The good physician is more than a friend; he is a parent, a counsellor, and a wise man all in one. He ranks high amongst the claimants for celestial origin, for the greatest of all and the father of all physicians rides his chariot across the heavens from the mountains in the east to the sea in the west. He is no mean drudge with baggy trousers and threadbare coat, rushing hither and thither in a Ford, with an insignificant thousand or two names on his panel list. He clothes himself in Oriental splendour, he looks after all mankind; like to the great ones of Harley Street, he prefers that you seek him out. He cures you with his clouds and his winds, his beams and his beauties.

You can offer up to him as a sacrificial reward the value of a turtle-dove or of a thousand head of cattle – in other words, you can travel like a gentleman or a plutocrat – and, by a law of Providence, the pigeon yields better results than the herd. For, the cheaper you travel the more do you see and the more healing do you get. When our Socialist movement is as sound in its spirit as in its economics, it will see that the reward of service includes the fees necessary to be

¹ *New Leader*, October 19, 1923.

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paid to the great physician of soul as of body. There are those dull, graceless fellows upon whom we have always to keep an eye because the poison of treason is in them, who, because so many are doomed to live in sordidness, think it their duty to dwell in sordidness too. One of the greatest curses of Capitalism is that it robs us of the faculty of enjoying a holiday. Keats, thinking of Burns, reflects how delicacy of feeling has to be deadened 'in vulgarity and in things attainable,' because, the more we are capable of knowing true joy, the more are we maddened by the poverty and emptiness of our lives. But I offend, for in worshipping the sun and the open air, one must not preach. Praise alone enters into that service.

A cruel summer brought affliction, and I had to seek the great physician. I had been told of a road that ran for many miles southwards by the Alps until it ended at the Mediterranean, where one could get mighty draughts of healing, and I sought it. When I left it, I wondered if there was another such in the world.

It takes you to where the fields are small, but are full of folk; where people dress quaintly; where there has been heroic strife between races and creeds; where the villages are plastered like swallows' nests, high up on the faces of cliffs, with a church and castle over all, symbolizing liberating faith and frowning authority; where the church bells have a peculiarly peaceful note; where in some of the villages a pig-headed calf blocks your way for long and a cart of hay has to be unloaded before you may pass. It is a road of the mountains. It rises as high as eight thousand feet, and day after day progress consists in winding

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up on one side to wind down on the other. It is a road of great moments.

Napoleon seems to have been a kindlier man than our histories admit. At two or three points on this road – parts of which, by the by, both Hannibal and he used – he of his charity built refuges for the storm-stressed. Usually, near the top of the cols, the slope flattens, and the last stage in the ascent of the grey, barren peaks begins with meadows and trees or shrubs. On either hand the summits tower, frequently clothed in snow, and in front is the saddle-dip over which the road is carried. Behind and below, the road and the river run back into the blue mist, huge delicately tinted ranges keep the horizon, Mont Blanc being rarely absent; and you know that a few yards ahead at the summit you will look upon another wonderful panorama of valley and mountain lying before you. At this point you hear the tinkling bell of a browsing cow, and through the trees a house appears. Perhaps you have already noticed some one up the hill-side pottering about at something. This is the refuge whose doors are open to you if misfortune should befall you on the way, and where, if you are on foot, you can still have a modest bed and unpretentious meal. Times have changed since the traveler had to battle with the elements on these high roads, and Napoleon's charity may belong to times dead as himself. But I hope that for many centuries yet there will be people who, on these high meadowy slopes shut in by the grey jagged peaks, will wish to pause and wander up the mountain paths, to dally by the streams, to see the sun setting and rising, and to feel the awe of the wonderful land of forest and stream

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and village and mountain lying below, beyond and above.

One day I had a glad surprise. Everyone who has walked by mountain ways knows how graceful are the firs that grow on the steeper slopes. Our road twisted and doubled up through the forest. The tall trunks were becoming less densely packed, and the beams of the sun were dispelling the gloomy shadows as we went up to the forest line. At a turn of the road we were met by what I could not help feeling was a deputation. In that region, it is said, there are villages which to this day have characteristics all of their own, because Scottish soldiers of fortune settled in their neighbourhood and have left behind distinctive traces. Thus, during the fairs at Briançon a special dance is danced called the Bal Cubert or the Bacchu' Ber, and it would be hard to tell the difference between it and our Highland sword dance. I leave the explanation of these things to others, praying that truth may not be too cruelly sober. Amidst the tall and stately pines that might have been dressed by Court barbers appeared a gnarled, twisted, stunted, and forking species, bow-legged and towsy-topped — the real Scotch fir. They stood there like Highland caterans in kilts, in the midst of law, order and groomed beauty, and my heart shouted a joyous welcome. I noted at once on my map: 'Here I met my own kith and kin,' and I then went on my way rejoicing.

Not a mile of the hundreds was dull, the worst being the long, straight exit from Grenoble, but as that was called Avenue Jean Jaurès, it was tolerable. The contrasts were lightsome. For instance, beyond

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one of the sunniest and happiest of those broad, elevated basins, where there was a refuge upon which my heart fixed for another and more leisurely visit if Fate be kind, we reached a summit to behold a truly fearsome desert of barren, loose, blood-coloured rock and debris. Grey, bare mountains, upon the top of which there was a sprinkling of snow, looked down upon it. Wicked-looking needles of high rock rose along the slopes, and amongst these the narrow unprotected road twisted downwards. Here, if anywhere on this earth, the ghosts of the damned dwelt. One gasped as one went on. The slightest mistake, a tremor of the hand that steered, and all would have been over. The first scraggy scrub we came to was like a sign of mercy and affection. The valley below, where a crowd of people were in the fields lifting potatoes, with mules and oxen and carts, was the sunniest and happiest of the places we went through.

From that we plunged into deep river gorges, the rocks on both sides rising sheer as a stone falls for hundreds of feet above us, the clear blue waters from the snowfields above rushing and foaming down over great boulders, twisting round sharp corners, leaping over steep walls, the rocks through which the road was cut hanging over us; a ruined fort crowning a steep cliff, a castle in ruins, as peacefully beautiful now as it was once cruelly dreadful. Thus the scenes were unfolded, until at last through a gap in the hills we saw a short, straight line on the horizon and a glitter below it. Then we knew that we had reached the sea and the end of the road.

There we came to the pleasures of men – to hotels, to casinos, to promenades, to *thés dansants*, to feasts

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and fashions, to the vain and vulgar strivings of the grand plutocracy to find happiness by stifling everything that gives the heart and the soul joy. They promenaded, they dressed up, they danced, they gambled, they gorged, they painted, they decorated, but I got sick of them and their joy-killing, and longed to be again in the forests with the snow mountains looking down upon us from heaven, to be with the Scotch firs, and to hear the mirth of rushing waters.

§ I

WHEN you go down to Clapham, there is no romance about Victoria Station. It is sordid and utilitarian. But when your journey is to be beyond the rim of the world, romance meets you, even at Victoria, and this noisy dull place becomes like the miserable doorkeeper of a palace. Her rags are hidden. It was but early morning and the mist was still over London when I started; but the East, like my kindly hosts, had come to my own door and taken me in charge.

But, they say, when a soul is about to be saved, the devil makes one last attempt to disturb it; and, so, as I sat in a quiet place on the boat gliding over a summer sea and reading tales of the fairies, Satan made up his mind to have a final go, and two highly respectable Tory members of Parliament appeared and insisted upon talking of the dirty world where their mansions were built. First of all they flattered and I saw their horns, then they cajoled and I saw their tails, then they became reasonable and I saw their hoofs. The sea became choppy, the sky overcast, and I put aside the story of the loves of Aengus and defended Mr. Smillie. The East had fled and I had turned it away.

What penance would I undergo? No one going through France need seek far for penance, and so I resolved to put myself in the evil hands of the restaurateurs of Boulogne and for a Spartan fare

¹ *Forward*, September, 1920.

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be fleeced as the pilgrims were by thieves who haunted the Pilgrims' Way. Handsomely did I do my penance, handsomely did my executioners do their duty; and as I stepped back upon the platform the East met me, took me by the arm and made me promise to be of better behaviour. 'I have doomed your Tory tormentors,' said she, 'to a bad dinner and a big bill. Listen, you can hear them groaning.' I listened, I heard, and my heart was good and glad.

The way through Purgatory is long and it takes one to Paris. Here we had to look at the newspapers and discuss them. There was nothing new. Poland was showing it did not want peace, and Russia was showing that it would not be safe for France or any other Power to make war. There was nothing unexpected about the mining situation except that it was discussed in a foreign tongue and with foreign fervour. But it was evidently to remain in the hands of the industrial leaders, and nothing had developed which indicated any good reason why I should not be away for a month. So the East again took me by the arm, and I nodded approval.

We dined, with the Third International as the sauce to our dinner. It had lost its bite, however, and was insipid. It apparently becomes more and more doubtful if the French will join the Third; it becomes less and less doubtful that if they do, the greatest blow ever dealt to French Socialism will be delivered. The Party will be broken, and the group that will secede will contain practically all the best men. Such a strong Federation as that

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of the Nord, will, for instance, leave the Party, and only Paris will remain as the ruined fabric of what was once great. I gathered from the men I met in Paris, however, that all over the Continent the Third is losing favour, and the reply made to the I.L.P. by Moscow has had a very damaging effect. Kautsky joins us to-morrow, and he will be able to tell us what the German Independents think of the reply that they have received. (*Note.*—He says they too will split.)

What one gathers here is that 'will' is the strength of Moscow, and that therefore its whole nature is to be tyrannical, to issue Edicts, to trust to violence. That is borne in upon me very strongly by the conversations I have had with men who have just returned from Russia and who went through the country in search of facts. Russia at last has come under the rule of strong-willed men, and the nobler the cause for which such men strive, the more are they able to justify a policy of force and tyranny. That is why you require to go to the annals of religion, with the eternal salvation of souls as the issue and the will of God as the revelation, to find the bitterness of persecution at its height.

This, however, is just what Socialism should resent — and what it will resent so soon as it has experienced it. Until you see and feel the collar it is nice to talk of it. But the Continental Socialists are beginning to see it. Whereas twelve months ago I heard of the success of Bolshevism as a Socialist venture, I now hear of its success mostly in keeping in the saddle. It has had to abandon one after another of its Socialist doctrines — yielding

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perhaps to necessity, but they are abandoned, and if it be found that the Moscow method is in reality no quicker but, perhaps, in the end slower than the Glasgow or the London method, then Moscow becomes a grand *tour de force* in the superficial things of government and society. That, at any rate, is what we have been discussing in the intervals of dreaming of lands of strange lights.

For the light on the roads to our Samarkands is neither that of the dawning nor of the evening. It is a fair light, and as you go south through France, and the mountains come with their great gorges, and the green of the land becomes grey, the leprous limestone seems to be an accursed barrier-land shutting off something desirable that, but for the barriers, all men would seek. And you feel you are really going somewhere and leaving something behind. When, behind the immediate rocky masses that rise up into some thousands of feet of pinnacle and bare rough-faced wall, you catch glimpses of something far higher behind – something that seems to have lost its substance and is composed of nothing but the colours of which spirits are made – then you know what sheer beauty and dignity are, and that you are seeing over the head of the Angel that guards the gates of Paradise.

After hours that never weary and dawdlings at stations and between stations that never tire, you find you have got to a top, and that, having endured thus far, your way is to be made easier. Down into the plains of Lombardy and night you go with a dash and a shriek and a recklessness. One more barrier desert has to be crossed. You waken

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in that extraordinary wilderness of tawny swamp and field and broken hill-side – pettifogging troublesome hills on one side and the placid Mediterranean on the other – which guards Rome. Then the city comes. You have a peep here and a peep there, and St. Peter's keeps watch and ward over all. You pass the place where Keats sleeps, you go under the Aqueduct wrinkled, parched and barren like an old woman of centuries who has seen her children and her children's children grow up and pass away, and so into Rome.

There is a full moon. The Capitol broods in the shadows. It is deserted; the voices and murmurs from the world below do not belong to that up here. Trajan's Pillar seems to be like a sleeper who wakes for a moment to whisper to you something of what he has been dreaming about. Vesta's Temple, cold, grey, lonely by the Tiber tells you (and you can almost hear the sobs) that it keeps nothing now but ashes. Through winding narrow streets smelling of decay and humanity, where men and women sit laughing and chaffing in dim and dingy wine shops, I wander. The Palaces on the Palatine are sad shadows up against the sky, and there in front through the Arch of Constantine is the gloomy, guilty Coliseum. You have seen men burdened with sin; here is a building that sits night and day brooding over the evil it has seen. And when the moon is full, time rolls back and the crowd of mad blood-lusty passions come up from their forgotten graves, and yell from the tiers. Like the Wandering Jew, Old Rome awakes in the moonlight, and he who wanders abroad and alone then,

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meets her as though he had had a tryst with her ghost.

My journey's end is not yet. I must cross the tortured land of fleas and such like impedimenta, for this pilgrimage is one of correct evolution. It is in accordance with the traditions and the tales, and to-day this stage begins. If no fiend, great or small, subdues me, my readers will hear how the journey ended and what we found in the land where Jason sought the Golden Fleece.

§ 2¹

Italy is no place for business — especially Italy in September. Here you talk; here you gesticulate; here you entertain your great thoughts; here you sleep; here you lose your temper for nothing. Now and again you do something, and as a rule you don't — not because doing is dangerous, but because it generally involves preparation, and preparation is of the flesh not of the spirit. So, however imperfectly I may read my Italian papers, this I see: that I am in the land of strikes, and the grievances which produce them belong rather to flaws in the cosmic order than to anything more common or mean. There are strikes here because the world is wrong. Yesterday it was the railwaymen, to-day it is the metalurgists, to-morrow it will be some one else. The Italian, being a gentleman, may also be a slave, but he will keep his heart.

Bacon, in one of his political essays, wrote that:

¹ *Forward*, September 18, 1920.

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'It is a certain sign of a wise government and proceeding, when it can hold men's hearts by hopes, when it cannot by satisfaction.'

My Italian Socialist friends have mastered that wisdom. They have 156 members in the Chamber of Deputies, and when I meet them in that dusty and dishevelled Committee Room which they tenant there, they never think of telling me of their achievements, but of their programme. Hence it is that Giolitti can settle down in a country where there should be no secure Government; hence it is that you rarely hear of the Socialist Party as a Parliamentary power.

Of course, there is a section much dissatisfied with this, and to it belong the ablest of the Parliament men, and, indeed, the leader of the Party, Turati himself. Outvoted on policy, he has kept quiet. He takes the I.L.P. position on Bolshevism, and urged Italy to remain inside the Second International. Now he sees that Socialism has to fight for its existence against a movement, born of the war, which is to destroy the Socialist movement if it captures Socialism, and whose leaders are a queer mixture of charlatans and of men of violent wills who can make Revolutions, but who cannot establish them. Therefore, at last, a split is threatened in Italy. Turati will not go much further on the road to Socialist destruction. He will leave the Party, of which he is the unchallenged leader, as far as brains and service are concerned.

I cannot believe, however, that this silly nonsense is to go on, and that charlatans are to be allowed to

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accomplish the smash which the Capitalists themselves could not effect during the war. I can assure my readers that the issues between the Second and the Third International are not affairs of superficial accommodation on the Continent. It is the old struggle between Bakunin and Marx over again, endowed with a new virility, and it behoves everyone who is to take any part in the fight, to understand what issues are to be settled by it. These affairs elbowed themselves, like unbidden guests, into our interest at Rome. And even at Taranto, where the temperature is 90 degrees in the shade, and the people are huddled up in a white town of narrow streets and shaded courtyards, where nothing lives in the noonday, and apparently nothing sleeps at night, the same matter forced itself upon me for discussion.

I was leaning over the rail looking out over the Mediterranean on to the far away Calabrian hills, and feeling a great peace come upon me. Some one passed, spoke, and stopped. By and by we were in the midst of Taranto history, in the days when it was a Greek colony, and when the terra cotta in the museum was being made. From the fourth century (B.C.) to the present day was only the time taken to drink a cup of coffee. My companion, assuming that, being here and being English, I must be a lord or a blackguard, took longer to indicate that he had sympathies with the Social Democrats. With some coyness I admitted a similar sin. He admitted a curiosity regarding some British Socialists; I admitted I knew some of them. Thereupon a dinner was proposed, a flask of wine, cigar-

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ettes. He would speak with me about heroes, only as the friends of heroes should speak of them – with wine to drink frequent draughts to their prosperity, if alive, and to their memory, if dead!

It was hot, but, behold, the carriages! And for only one lira (which is now only just over three-pence) we could go to where there are tables in the shade and wine in the cellar – the white of Frascati and the red of Capri. Amidst the shadows of the tall buildings and the stinks of the narrow streets, we talked of one who was no Bolshevik, but who was held evidently in good esteem. The old grey-haired man, who had been tanned apparently by centuries of suns and wizened by years that must be untold, would die happy were he to see him, and the young man professed similar sentiments, allowing for differences of condition. Did I know him? 'Yes; I see him often.' 'Ah!' 'He is not Bolshevik?' 'No.' 'Ah, that is good.' We drank to his health. We drank to the great International – the International of the great idea yet unborn. For a minute we gazed at each other in silence. For a minute the International was born in the hearts of four men sitting round a table in the little Piazza by the harbour at Taranto. Then we bade each other adieu, for neither in forum nor in café shall we ever meet again.

I am on one of the rims of the world, and in an hour I go off. I have been wandering here in shop, museum, and cathedral, able to speak to nobody, but knowing more of their lives than those who can tell how much a picture post-card costs, and for how much monkey nuts sell. The great linguists are

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eloquent upon menus and such things. But I have seen a blushing youth in the finest of black, in a new hat, a white tie, and well-polished boots, go to a photographer with three companions. I smiled, and they smiled. I wished them good luck and much blessing, and he opened, I thought, the door of his heart and put in my gift. A few minutes afterwards, at the Cathedral, a young lady in white, a perfect beam of happiness, came up, and I knew I had made no mistake. All the things that matter are simple things, and it is wonderful how little use language is for truth and the important things. I cannot speak Italian, nor do the courts, the squalling children, the windows from which women lean, the absorbed gamblers at the street corners, the shoemakers or the woodworkers in their doorways, the fishermen mending their nets. They all speak something more primitive – which I, too, speak.

The country around is of white limestone; vegetation upon it is scanty, but the fig-tree and the olive grow upon it; it is cut and nursed into vineyards; its water courses are dry; great chasms are worn into it by its torrential rains. It is strange to us, and with the keenest interest we watch the changing scene from the carriage windows. And yet, when I had my first peep out when the sun was not yet fully up, what I saw was weary people, young and old, trudging out to labour behind bullocks, and, later on, I saw the ploughman behind his plough, and following his bullocks with that familiar jolty walk when one foot is in the furrow and the other out of it.

I am on the Adriatic. Strange fishes swim by

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the side of the ship, and there is a blue on the sea which the Moray Firth would disdain as being a garb of effeminacy. But passing me, on their way to the fishing grounds, are fishermen rowing with their nets piled on the stern of their boats. The labour of men is the same; the essentials vary but little. To-night we approach to Greece, to-morrow we shall enter the Dardanelles, and Constantinople will see us in good time. Even there, I expect to find how fond nature is of changing her appearance, and how impossible she finds it to change her heart.

CHAPTER THREE: NAPLES AND POMPEII

OF course Naples is what one would call very impressive – it is so like the Italian models who haunt London art studios. It has a tanned face, long hair, wrinkles; it by no means lacks in picturesque dirt, and its costume is weather stained; altogether it might be a King fallen on evil days, or a beggar gifted with good looks. And it has other attractions. The bunches of green trailing plants hanging like festive decorations from the balconies of the narrowest and dirtiest of streets, refresh the eye, the little hives of hand industry – carpenters, blacksmiths, tailors and such-like crafts innumerable – crushed into dark filthy little dens in the streets, and the vegetable gardens which the wanderer strolls into in his attempts to find his way up to the top of the steep slope on which the town is built, are at any rate interesting to see. However abhorrent these high crowded tenements and dark cellars become when you think of life in them, to the man who strolls over Europe to see things, they certainly stand out in the museum of memories.

Then, there is the whole scene of close encompassing hills clasping a bay in their arms, with the ridge of the crater of Vesuvius in the middle and its ever streaming and never vanishing cloud banner low above it; the long sweep of yellowish-white houses up the hills and round the bay; the darker commanding masses of castle and wall by the sea; the jaunty rakish sails of the boats – truly one of the finest scenes of the kind in the whole world. But when you have driven round the Bay through

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the town and the towns that follow it like a string of ducklings at the tail of their mothers, when you have bounded first to one side of the road and then to the next amidst its chaotic traffic streams, your limbs and life having made a million miraculous escapes, it is the old Italian Art School model that remains in your mind – the filth, the damp walls, the thousands of lines of domestic washing across the streets, the squalor, the glimpses into dark living rooms with children crawling about the unpaved courts, where men and women sit on little chairs and talk, gesticulate, make love and run the world, the swarm of humanity, the streets crowded with little carts drawn by little horses and piled with little things, the cows and goats wandering about to be milked, the good-humoured disorder. Two rays of light lie across the sordid scene – the evident care taken in dress and the happy cart-loads of families drawn by horses decorated in equine finery, who have been out for the day. (I believe I went along the road on a minor holiday.) The human heart – for good and ill – will for ever remain more important than the human house.

Behind the forbidding walls, the dusty streets, the hives swarming with human beings, are the villas, glimpses of which you get as you whizz past their gateways, and behind them is Vesuvius – smoking, puffing, smouldering, its top purple because of the hidden fires, its lower parts tender green because of the courage and love of nature in healing every wound where it finds a root hold. Where at last the weary rows of houses, walls and streets end, we come to the mounds of Pompeii. It seems far from the

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burning mountain, but there it is under the vast heaps of black ash and small white stones which crept up over it and preserves to us the evidences of its prosperity and commerce, its beauty and its vice. I walked for miles through its stone paved streets and wandered into its temples, its shops, its theatres, its market places, its houses. Dull would be he who could not, amidst the ruins of its luxury and trade, see the pageantry of its gilded and cankered prosperity. It stands one of the noblest warnings that wealth and gain corrupt and enslave.

It is the simple things that touch one most intimately. The footprints of a mother and child preserved in clay now in the Reading Museum, for instance, make the whole collection of Roman antiquities there live by giving them a human touch. So in Pompeii. Streams ran down the narrow channel-like streets, and at the crossings great stepping-stones were placed. They are hollowed and smoothed by the feet of the passers-by. Slaves were the beasts of burden, and, where they dragged their carts past these stones, the pavement is cut into ruts; between the ruts the feet of the slaves have rubbed down and polished the pavement. At frequent street corners are large square marble troughs which received water spouting from the mouths of carved heads. On both sides of the marble slabs by the spout there are smooth grooves worn by the hands of those who supported themselves whilst they bent to drink, or held up jars to catch the water. These imprints speak of tragedies that crush more than earthquakes and eruptions of volcanoes. Time and humanity running together

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into centuries, fate, love, oblivion – the lot of man to be born, to toil and to cease from being, leaving behind but a scratch or a smoothness which, however, unto all generations will speak with poignant pathos to the hearts of the living.

A queer drama this with weltering poverty at one end of the long stage and the walls, the columns, the footways, the altars, the prisons, the theatres of the dead city at the other. The ants rush and bustle, toil and sweat, swarm and puff, and end in the oblivion from which they emerged, and their places are taken by ants like unto them, sharing in the same fate. Upon them looks the dead city sunk in that peaceful content which its ceremonials, its sacrifices, its commerce, its traffic in beings and in things, its beauty and its luxury never won for it. A moving contrast which stirs up profound reflections.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE ISLES OF GREECE¹

IT was a great Sabbath. Two candles guttered in the wind on a table on deck. Two men (one with a very beautiful face) went through a ceremony of which I knew nothing, and an assisting devotee had his mind racked between blowing cloths, running grease, and offices which he had to perform. He was interesting, and he amused rather than sanctified me. But that did not make the Sabbath. Dim, but flushed in the morning light, were the outposts of the Isles of Greece. Blue, blue was the sea, imperious was the sun, and the ship went on like a thing moving in sleep. We glided into the glamour of the world of romance. There was Ithaca, there Cephalonia. One sat and dreamed, and felt that one must have lived there two thousand years ago. To believe in transmigration is easy here.

Next morning I was up with the sun; indeed, like a devotee, I was there to greet its rising. We were alongside a group of pinky-yellow houses. Temple pillars were to be seen, and on the hill above was a wall and ruins. It was Corinth. Through the great walled canal we went, and behold Salamis greeted us, and Megara, and, by and by, through our glasses we could see Athens and its Acropolis under Hymettus. All that day, we slid slowly over a glassy sea amidst islands of perfect form and grace. The centuries were rolled up like a scroll. This *was* Greece, the Greece of chivalrous story of the life triumphant, because the life of beauty in form and thought.

How small it was! Was not that why it was great?

¹ *Forward*, Sept. 25, 1920.

THE ISLES OF GREECE

These outlines and this sea speak to the mind, and they speak of great things – of philosophy, of love, of the thought and the demeanour of magnificent men and women. In that Acropolis who would not be eloquent: amidst those hills who would not worship gods: a child of this scene, who would not be a poet? Thus the second day passed, and the sun went down with an abandon of barbaric glory, and the curtain of night fell upon the scene. We knew that the play was ended, and that next morning another scene and thoughts would possess us.

Again I was up to worship the rising sun, and as though the stage had not yet been cleared, I found myself in the land of Troy, with the Island of Tenedos and its grey castle close by. But away ahead I could discern through my glasses something that looked like wrecks on a shore. It was the tragedy of Gallipoli coming upon the stage. Greece was gone, and our lotus days were ended.

At first, the Dardanelles are disappointing. The shore of Asia Minor to the right is low, and the sun was too blinding for me to see it well. But the left shore lay clear and distinct in every scrub and rock layer. It is at first a low plateau, with precipitous sides of no height, then it dips on to a bay and then rises. The higher ground is covered with scrub, its prevailing colour is ochre, but it has in places a colour like heather in winter, and green. There are straggling houses amongst trees, and now and again a small group of houses. Even to the eye of a layman, studying a map and seeing the land, the murderous folly of the Gallipoli expedition is as plain as a pike staff. How these poor fellows must have

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suffered! How little chance was there of their sufferings yielding fruit! If the vain idiots who sent them there were condemned to spend the rest of their days on the lower wastes of this peninsula, they would only be treated with justice.

As you approach the entrance you see the wrecks of several ships, one of them a gunboat. Trenches cross the hill, dug-outs dot the slopes, parapets break the faces, wreckage of gun carriages are occasionally seen. Catching the morning sun, the white crosses, on this flat and that, here by the sea, there up the hill-side, here just in a group, there guarded by an arch with a cross and a flag upon it, sanctify the place. Instinctively one bows one's head as he passes, but, let it be confessed, one mingles one's prayers for the repose of the dead with curses upon the heads of the fools and the criminals who still live.

Rapidly the scene changes, and we leave behind the scarred and almost barren hills which have become part of our own land, by reason of what they know and what they keep. We are opposite the Turkish defences. What lies were told to us of them. There they are, parapet upon parapet, battery upon battery, barracks upon barracks. The great guns are lying broken and dismantled, but all the way up to the Narrows and Chanak we go through a fortress. They are the tops of the hills; they are upon the low flats near to the water's edge. No ships could live in these waters. Would that we could load argosies of intelligent workmen to come out here, to see what I have seen, and to return with flames of wrath in their hearts. The fires they would kindle at home would only consume rubbish and plague germs.

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At Chanak we took cattle on board, poor patient things. Nature gave them horns for defence; the horns were used for slinging them up into the air over the side of the ship. A thin cord, which they could have broken with a tug, tied them together on deck. Patiently they stood without food or water in the burning sun. At the end of an hour or two one gave a complaining moan, and there was a commotion of fear in the herd. Who was bold enough to speak? Who was this who would bring more trouble? Two or three moaned some time later. A famished, scraggy contraption of a cow brought her buttocks to bear upon them; one who made no secret of ribs and cheek-bones, lowered his horns under their noses. Then dead silence fell upon them all. What a parable!

The hills receded and the shores became a gentle slope tanned by the sun. Gallipoli passed by with the little clump of trees in its centre. Clouds of smoke rolled over the hill-sides, and the grass and bushes were seen to be licked up by waving and leaping tongues of fire. We were in the Sea of Marmora. Islands of pinky-blue were ahead, and the afternoon sun made the air on the ship a furnace blast. The cymbal clang of voices softened into a sleepy murmur, and the soothing wash of the water carried us away from the world of body and substance.

A cool puff blew along the deck. A purplish gauze was falling between us and the hills, and the colours were changing into predominant red and indigo. The sun was shorn of its beams. There was a stir amongst the patient cows, and the men

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who had come on board at Chanak laden with bundles and carrying melons and loaves and bunches of grapes, went down on their knees and said their prayers. The magic of the day was gone. When we wake to-morrow we shall be in Constantinople.

§ I

THE fame of Glasgow has gone far abroad. I stood bewildered in the midst of one of the most confused streams of humanity that has ever flowed around me, and I felt an orphan outcast. Strange beyond words were the land, the people, the tongues. Rickety old dirty trams jogged along narrow streets paved with irregular blocks of limestone; little boxes with more dust than merchandise afforded room for a little stool upon which a thin man (as a rule) of yellow countenance and black hair sat; now an ass, now a mule, now a horse, now a motor-car, now a porter with a mountain on his back taking all the street to himself, jostled me and made me jump, as though I was doing the sword dance to save my life. I cast my eyes about me for a friend, and there was none.

But stop! There is a sign like a blue blanket, but bluer, and in snow-white letters upon it I read the gladsome words 'Glasgow Bar.' It charmed me like 'a kent face,' and there was an Aberdeen man there and a Forfar man, and on this sacred soil where Moslem fought Christian, where the Holy Roman Empire flourished, and where the shrewd Constantine saw heavenly visions, we talked of Bannockburn, Presbyterianism, and John Knox. Our language troubled the polyglot scoundrels who lay in wait to rob us, and I found peace.

Who can describe Constantinople? It is a riot of defiant strangeness, of filth and beauty, of romance

¹ *Forward*, October 2, 1920.

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and sordidness. The meeting of many waters flowing from the East and the West; the no man's land between Europe and Asia, where all men gather. As we approached it, its face was hidden behind an Oriental veil of black smoke and grey haze. In the twinkling of an eye the veil was raised, and there in all its beauty stood the New Rome on the seven Byzantine hills staring us in the face. My eye has seen nothing like it. First, to the left, was Stamboul crowned with the Seraglio, St. Sofia with its tender minarets as uplifting to the soul as any Gothic spire, and the massive majesty of the Souleiman Mosque. Passing to the right, the eye wanders over a forest of masts on to the pinkish white buildings of Galata rising straight up like American sky-scrapers and centring in the great fire-tower. Further on is Pera, with the long grey palace of the Sultan by the shore, and so towards the Bosphorus. Behind us is Scutari, on the Asiatic side, hidden in shadow. We steam slowly up as if we were approaching a holy place — a Mecca and a Jerusalem for every man in whose heart the magnificence of the past still lives.

We landed on the Galata Bridge, surely one of the wonders of the world. A line of toll collectors bars both ends and extracts from the 150,000 people who cross it daily their little brass coin, purloining, it is said, two-thirds of the toll for themselves. The minarets of St. Sofia beckoned to us, and thither we went. But again, who can describe it? You can go round and see this and that. Here is the door by which the conquering Mohammed entered on his horse; high up on that pillar is the mark of his hand; these mosaics contain 30,000 cubes to the square

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yard; here the conqueror stood on that dark night and shouted his creed whilst mass was being said from the high altar — and so on, and so on. But the imposing vastness, the Byzantine grandeur, the soul of the place is what matters — is St. Sofia. Glimmering through the wash which the Moslems have put on it are to be seen the symbols of the Cross and the faces of Christ and his followers — and that double soul is St. Sofia.

One wants to go into a corner away from the noisy sightseers and the objectionable guides, and feel this place, the vastness of its dome, the glooms of its corners, the spaciousness of its idea. This is the imperial mind of spiritual authority. In St. Peter's at Rome, a few days ago, I felt I was in a secular place. From nowhere came one of those awful whispers which makes one bow one's head and listen. St. Sofia has everything which St. Peter's lacks. And just as the Coliseum is haunted by its sins, so is St. Sofia by that awful massacre in the night when the city fell. To-day the entrances to the building are closely guarded by Turkish soldiers lest Greeks should enter it and injure the Mohammedan symbols.

Outside was Constantinople's Coliseum, the Hippodrome. It, or what is left of it, is now a dusty, wind-swept, bare open space. But there once stood the glory of Byzantine buildings. There the games were held, there the generals received their triumphs and emperors and heretics their death. Three broken columns alone remain to mark it, and you must do your best to imagine it and its wild scenes. The hours pass like magic through the sandglass and you

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wander on, not only through the narrow bustling streets but back through the centuries, the tram bell and the driver's shout being like a chain jerking you back to the fact that you are a body of substance occupying space and not merely a feeling which does not obstruct traffic.

Sooner or later you get into the shades of the Bazaar. This is a wonderful place including some 4,000 shops, and has more than a hundred entrances. It is crowded by the most interesting crowd of human beings drawn from all over the East. They follow you, inviting you to enter their shops that are crowded with everything which Birmingham, Manchester, and the East supply – brass, silver, fabrics, lace, embroidery, silk, carpets – everything that suggests Oriental luxury and laziness – everything upon which a Western fool can be swindled. The ways are narrow and are paved with rough stone flags; arches cross them, and the shops are on both sides; a roof of stone is over all. You walk through their gloomy light, you hustle, you bargain. You see sedate men in grey beards sitting, as though posing for an illustration to the Arabian Nights, in the midst of slippers, or carpets, or pipes, or silks. You enjoy yourself right to the heart.

This, and much more. Walls, palaces, museums, mosques, gipsy encampments, vast disorderly burying places, one after another, all together, an unending series of delights, of surprises, of ecstasies – that is Constantinople. In the evening, if you are fortunate and your fame – good or evil – has gone before you, you dine in palaces, and, now that the veil of the Moslem woman has become thin and is being gener-

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ally discarded, understand why in the epic romances of the East the love-stricken knights wept for the pain that was in them, and the women were cruel in their beauty and masterful in their minds. You also hear of those terrible Court intrigues in which poison and the dagger played such a dominating part, and you understand the minds greedy for a power which they knew was but the garland of sacrifice and the gift of an evil fate.

I dined with one whose palace had been burnt by the Young Turks, who was kept in hiding in his own house for three months, whose friends were killed, who escaped as a veiled lady and was assisted politely to his carriage by one at whose belt was a dagger meant for his heart, who, after years of exile, had returned. On his table were books on science and philosophy, he was interested to hear of our Independent Labour Party, the reputation of Glasgow, and the claims of the miners, he was more intelligent upon Socialism than the *Morning Post*. One day he may be an important personage in a truly Liberal rule in this country; but, like everybody else, he sees nothing but the encouragement of every evil element in the present 'settlement' of the Turkish question.

I go from him and meet my exiled countrymen in Kilmarnock bonnets and kilts. Some stand with Turkish policemen regulating the traffic and watching for other eventualities; others guard passport offices with Aberdeen brogue and fixed bayonet. They sit in uncomfortable attitudes in bars advertised in alluring English like 'Restaurant of Good Taste,' or wander through bazaars and gaze in at shop

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windows. Sit down under a bench beneath a tree and speak to them of home, and they gather round you and seek information about the harvest and Ireland, strikes and the Government. It is an odd world – a strange mad world. For three days I have been in one of its oddest corners. A man passed me on the Galata Bridge to-day. He wore one garment of the most wonderful Oriental dye and texture and another of the most incongruous patchwork – camel-hair stuff, khaki, tweed, red flannel, and much else. ‘That is a dear beloved friend of mine,’ I said to my companion. ‘Do you know the cut-throat?’ ‘Verily,’ I replied, ‘his name is Constantinople.’

§ 2

*Two Years Later*¹

Constantinople always returns to my mind as I first saw it, enveloped in a black pall of morning mist. In the distance, the palaces on the Bosphorus stood out yellow and clear in the fresh light, a faint glitter was on the nearer waters of the Golden Horn, thin pinnacles rose above the mass of black which held the city in its bosom, motor boats barked and darted out of the obscurity, trailing great flags. A strange, expectant mystery brooded over the scene. The air, the staging were of the East, and I waited for something to happen. It happened with magic suddenness. The mist thinned and rolled away. The minarets, the domes, the cypresses of Stamboul, the piled houses of Pera, the myriad masts on the Golden

¹ *The Nation*, October 14, 1922.

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Horn low down between, came out like a wizard's trick.

There are places – sometimes great cities like Rome, sometimes only buildings like the Tower of London or the castles of Edinburgh and Stirling – into which time and event have breathed the breath of life and they have become as living souls. We think of them as brooding over their past and looking upon the generation around them with the detachment of one whose thoughts are fixed elsewhere, or with the pity of one who endures in the midst of a world that is fussing, fuming, and passing into a shadow. They are too dignified to speak; they only muse and remember. Such is Constantinople. The bazaars and the streets are filled with an ever-flowing stream which finds a leisurely backwater in the cafés where men toy with cigarettes, gossip, gamble, and let the hours run smoothly through their fingers, but Constantinople itself – the New Rome on its Seven Hills, the creation and glory of Emperors, that blazed in their triumphs and shuddered at their foul deeds, that proclaimed their pride and was ravaged by their fall – is remotely apart, inflexibly loyal in its heart and demeanour to the sovereign wills that honoured it so long ago.

It is nearly twenty-six centuries since, in obedience to the Delphic oracle, the Greek adventurers who had come to found a colony in Thrace decided to be guided by the crow that flew away with a piece of their sacrificial offering and dropped it at the point of the peninsula where the Bosphorus, the Golden Horn, and the Sea of Marmora meet. So there they founded their city. For sixteen of these centuries it

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has been a seat of Empire and a capital of Faith. No city of the world is like to it. The history of Imperial Rome is but a short span compared to the rule of Constantinople. The invasions, the sieges, the distresses of the one are but minor dramas compared to those of the other. Moreover, what scene in the long play of history rises higher in sheer dramatic power and completeness of technique than that of the Fall of Constantinople? What Act is so weirdly lit up by conflagration, made so barbaric by the struggles of men who fought with hate and lust and fear, so horribly brought to a climax as that enacted on the night of May 29, 1453? Where else were such protagonists, such issues, such settings, brought together on such a stage? The darkness, the horror, the fire-gleams and sword-flashes that night, the voice of the conqueror confessing his creed whilst he sat on his horse pawing the dead bodies heaped on the floor of St. Sofia, and leaving a bloody handmark on the pillar upon which he leaned, still haunt the imagination of Christendom, admonish us in our political policies, and throw upon the sky of our faith a lurid glow that our hearts bid us believe is the promise of redemption and not only the sinking flare of a sacked city.

There are two spots in Constantinople that appeal with overpowering force to every one with an historical mind — the walls and St. Sofia.

The land walls cross the peninsula where it is about five miles in width. They have been called 'the most colossal and pathetic relics of the ancient world that remain in Europe,' and are worthy of the description.

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Woeful are they, battered by assault and earthquake and time, left to decay after that last attack in 1453, and yet not decaying. The heaps of weed-grown debris at their foot only serve to keep a sense of their stoutness. By the gate which is called Top Kapu, but is best known as St. Romanus, one can stand in the very breach made by the Turkish artillery where the Moslems rushed in over the body of the last of the unhappy Byzantine emperors. Gipsies and beggars importune, dance, and whine and crave for alms, but you are hardly conscious of their presence. With the walls, you slumber in the past. Outside are wastes, orchards, cypresses, places of burial, an odd building or two; inside, the mud and rubbish of the shrunk city. Dull and sorrowful they seem, outcast and neglected, because their work is done. For fifteen centuries they have stood, and like old warriors with children at their knees, they tell through every tower, every gate, almost every stone, of battle, of pomp, of cruelty. From the top you see the blue Balkan Mountains, the sea, the Bosphorus, the Golden Horn, the city dipping down and rising up, the gathering-point for the commerce and the peoples of East and West, and your day and generation sink to but a heart-beat in the life of mankind.

St. Sofia dominates all. Near by is the space where the Hippodrome was wiped out for its iniquities; round it are the ruins of the grandeur of the ancient city; beneath it are the foundations of Byzantium with all their undisclosed treasures. Its gates are guarded against the proscribed infidel, and he who passes through is carefully scrutinized; in its courts lounge soldiers, gamesters, loafers, sightseers. Out-

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wardly, it is dishevelled, confused, not a little disappointing. The careless world comes up to its doors – comes up, but does not pass within. Beyond its doors and curtains is an unjarred peace. The world holds no Holy Place like it. St. Peter's is never free from bustle and traffic, and is a disturbing mixture of elevation and vulgarity. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is dark, filthy, stifling. The Pantheon is sadly aged and bereaved, and is dead to the soul. In St. Sofia dwells the Holy Wisdom, silent, unembodied, but *there* in the vast space. Its secret is its free spaciousness. The church was founded on superstition, and, in the shadows of its pillars and the corners of its niches, superstition lurks waiting for the credulous to bring it forth, but it does not walk abroad in the great spaces. In them is nothing that binds you to the earth or to yourself. Truth does not even whisper to you there – it just is. St. Sofia is not an offering of the glad heart revelling in details; it is a dwelling-place of pure being. Let the creed which the devotees murmur there be what it may, the temple is the abode of the Eternal, the Unconditioned, the Unknowable.

When you venture to look at its wonders of marble, precious stones, and colour, you see, like a hovering shadow through the wash and the inscriptions put on by hands doing homage to Allah and Mohammed, the benignant face and the symbols of Christ put there first of all by hands doing homage to God and His Son. This is indeed St. Sofia. It is a temple of the universal worship, neither church nor mosque, but something embracing both, and more spiritual than both. In Palestine, one has to escape from

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church and shrine and get out upon the hills of Judea, the road to Jericho, the waysides of Samaria, to feel the Presence. It dwells in St. Sofia.

Away across the Galata Bridge the tunnel tramway leads up to the European quarter where the West, infected by the sensuous luxuriousness of the East, is iridescent with putrefaction, where the bookshops are piled with carnal filth, and where troops of coloured men in khaki can be seen in open daylight marching with officers at their head to where the brothels are. Thence one may well look across the inlet to the minarets of St. Sofia with pain and humiliation at heart. The gap between the best and worst thoughts and deeds of man is infinite in breadth and height, and a contest for the custodianship of holy places had better not be fought out too openly or at too close quarters.

One is reminded by the strange turnings of the wheel of fortune in these days of how often Constantinople has appeared to be tottering to its fall and to be ending its long existence as a seat of government. Russian, Bulgar, and Greek have coveted possession of its church for a thousand years. Diplomats and captains have time and time again assigned it as spoil to one or the other; but though much chastised by Fate and though once captured by an alien race and creed, it has never fallen from its high estate. Nor apparently is it to do so now. It has taken on the image of its conqueror and disavowed the people from whom it came. Its back is turned to Europe and the West, and its face to Asia and the East. The lights of rejoicing beam from the crescent-tipped minarets of St. Sofia to-day, and we of the

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West may feel disappointed that it is so. Yet those who love Constantinople and who put its shrine amongst the highest which Christian hands have ever made need not be disturbed. St. Sofia, with its indwelling spirit of spacious calm and freedom, belongs to the universal, and the city, holding in its keeping the richest and most awful memories of the grandeur and weakness of erring man, stands for a common human will, baffled in its triumphs and beautiful in its failures. Who is to possess them seems a trivial matter beside the desire that they may be reverently kept by a people who love them.

CHAPTER SIX: IN GEORGIA

§ I

*Under the Red Flag*¹

YESTERDAY, one of our company, to ward off 'mal de mer,' had a third glass of cognac, and after a moment's contemplation looked up to the ceiling, cried in despair: 'It moves,' and disappeared from the table and a good dinner. That has been the only tragedy of the voyage, which, for but an hour or two, has been upon a painted ocean. This morning we returned to a land rich in fertile beauty. Imagine Loch Lomond, its south side cut away by water, and its north side rising two and three fold and its beauty increased to the same degree, and you will have some idea of the place where I am writing. Imagine a double bay something of the outline of the figure 3 reversed. Put an Oriental town in pinky white and yellow, climbing up a hillside on both bays, and put a fort on the point with two or three guns, and two or three guards squatting on the parapet or lounging about, and you have a general idea of Trebizond.

To fill in a few details, you must put an old Byzantine Church, St. Sofia, with a thick square belfry standing apart (now used as a minaret, as the church has become a mosque) at the far end of the first bay, a dainty mosque on the top of the hill well over a thousand feet up, a big sunk ship at the end of the second bay, a crowd of boats around the ship full of a shouting, pushing, gesticulating, fez-adorned crew, a

¹ *Forward*, October 16, 1920.

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long string of flags on the fort strung on a horizontal line with a huge red flag in the middle. Put a pale green sea below, a sky veiled by light fleecy clouds above and a hot steaming atmosphere around. Such is this outpost of Bolshevism and base of Kamil Pasha's Turkish Nationalist Army. Last night a body of 700 Turkish 'rebels' marched into the town, and this morning I can see through my glasses streams of men, laden mules and sheep on the road which winds round the hills into the place. We cannot land, as the English are particularly unpopular, but we lie off only a couple of hundred yards from the jetty and can see much of what is going on.

A deputation of Trebizond Socialists came off to give us news. Probably they came by stealth, for apparently the Bolsheviks hereabout pay no homage to such humbug things as liberty, equality, fraternity, such outworn symbols of Western delusions. They themselves sent out a boat to survey us. It went round the ship displaying somewhat ragged uniforms and a certain amount of seaman skill on the part of the helmsman. That was all, for, after its survey of our sides and our fore and aft, it mingled with the crowd of boats and returned to the shore. Their masters, the Turkish Nationalists, did the thing in much better style. They came out in great dignity, walked on board, showed us awesome uniforms, swords and pistols, went round amongst us as princes and gentlemen, and departed, leaving behind them in our hearts a sense of having been honoured.

My readers must not assume that, though this journey brings us to new scenes day by day, scenes that revive in us childish delight, we do nothing but

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go from shrine to shrine. We are also trying to understand what is going on and what general drift there is in the conflicting currents of opinion, passion, and will that reveal themselves whenever we throw out a float to detect them. We have found no one, be he Britisher or be he Turk, who regards our present policy to Turkey as being anything but mad. Kamil Pasha and his followers are 'rebels.' One of his officers captured outside Constantinople about the time of our arrival was hung, I was told. But the sympathy of most people is with Kamil Pasha. A love for the Turk seems to be infectious when you know him. He is easily the most popular of all the tribes and races that swarm in these parts, and the general opinion is that the Treaty of Peace does him such an injustice and puts him, in relation to his historical enemies, in such an insufferable position, that he cannot be expected to live quietly under it.

A constitutional Turkish Government working in the honest and humdrum ways which in our opinion means success must, under the best of circumstances, be a doubtful thing. But, just as we have observed in other parts of Europe, the policy which we are pursuing makes such a Government an absolute impossibility. Constantinople cannot fight Kamil, cannot suppress the National revolts, cannot aid in the handing over to Greece of territory which the Turk considers to be part of his being. The Turk and the Greek are like the dog and the cat. Therefore we are defying the creation of a Turkish Government. In Trebizond, we have been told by those who live there that, were there arms, one half of the town would massacre the other half. It would be a fine story for

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British consumption, and the mouths that would foam with indignation would not give utterance to a word indicating a troubled conscience because the murders were the inevitable consequences of our policy. And yet such would be the truth.

We have therefore a land which has been, and is, a perfect cockpit of races which hate each other and whose hatreds have never been allowed to cool. It is thrown back for centuries. The crusades only happened yesterday; all that has taken place since has been scrapped. The war that was to end all wars has just brought us back to the point from which all modern wars have started. Surely a poor result of the graveyards which we saw on the Dardanelles! The land is given over to conspiracy, revolt and disorder. And here enter our Bolshevist friends.

In this quarter of the world, Bolshevism is merely one of the forces in revolt against the powers that be, and has no reconstructive meaning or value. Thus, at Trebizond the flag is red, but there is a crescent on one side of it. It is indeed the national Turkish flag accepted by the Bolshevists for its red ground. The union between the followers of Kamil Pasha and the Bolshevists is really laughable even if understandable. Both are in revolt, and that is enough. Kamil uses them for what they are worth; they use Kamil; when it is no longer necessary for the one or the other to use the other and the one, they will be poles asunder.

I have talked to not a few of all points of view, and of intimate knowledge of what is going on in these quarters, and all that Bolshevism means here is revolution. Revolution for what? Just revolution.

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To think of a Bolshevist Turkey or a Bolshevist Anatolia or a Bolshevist Trebizond is absurd. It does violence to every sane conception of Socialism, to every intelligent reading of Marx. The simple and complete statement of the fact is this: The Allies are virtually at war with Russia, and the Russian Government is justified in giving the Allies all the trouble it can, whether here, in Persia, or anywhere else. I shall be able to add something to this when I have studied the conditions of Georgia.

Meanwhile, a body of active men, men whose fingers itch for rifles and whose heads are hot for fighting, must play an important part in these times and these places. The idea of dictatorship inspires them – not of the proletariat, but of themselves. They would seize power and they would keep it by the means by which they seized it. But all this kind of purpose and programme is as alien to Socialism as the birch and the cane are alien to education. The revolutionary is having a good and a gay time; the Socialist is not having a look in at all.

I was turning over in my mind these vanities of violence, after having talked matters over with some people in the bay at Trebizond, when a little incident occurred which displayed the sweeter and the better things. We have on board a lady who sang in the Moscow Opera and she sang for us. Two little faces came to the window – the bootblack who had come from the shore and a boy who was selling tobacco. They listened enraptured. Their faces lit up with gleaming pleasure, their eyes expanded wide, their mouths opened, they threw their fezes on to the back of their heads. Commerce was driven from

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their thoughts. When it was over they looked at each other, and it was easy to imagine the meaning of the words they exchanged as they went away to ply their trade anew. It is to that idealism common to us all that Socialism must appeal, and it must eschew those passions which may give it some Pyrrhic victories but which can never give it triumph.

§ 2

*How We Entered Kazbek*¹

There are days in one's life which dominate the years as a mountain dominates a countryside, and one of these was the day we entered Kazbek. Kazbek is a village far away in the heart of the Caucasus in the midst of a wild district where peace comes as rarely as the myrtle flower, and where, I have been told, is found the best cavalry of the world. Great precipices rise over it and above them, in monarchical grandeur and sanctity, tower the Kazbek peaks, flashing in eternal snow. Below is a rushing river, which cuts away year by year the great moraine deposits left by glaciers of olden time for hardy men to till for grain. It is so tiny in the midst of the sublime vastness and awfulness that it is like a sparrow sheltering under an eagle's wing. Between the avalanche and the torrent, the village is one of those bold confidences that amount to an impertinent intrusion of man upon nature.

But there man has built his habitations, goes forth in the springtime with his patient oxen to plough

¹ *Forward*, October 22, 1920.

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his fields and in the autumn sends his children and his women folk with hooks to reap his harvests. On the rocks he has raised his towers of defence, and has crowned the lower hills with his churches and belfries. He has adorned the mountains with a band of yellow smoothness running between the bare precipices and the broken torrent beds, and you see his flocks grazing there in the midst of a Sabbath calm. He himself remains a gay and a gallant sportsman, whose heart is ever ready to welcome the notes of alarm, who lives fully in the day time, and knows no tremor should he meet death suddenly. We found him riotous in the joy of being a free citizen of Georgia once more.

Long, long is the way thither, and it lies through mile upon mile of mountain road. By hair-pin twists and turns it mounts up over precipices. Were your driver to make the slightest mistake, a drop of hundreds of feet would be the end of all your journeyings on this earth. It is, however, a pleasant land of yellow hill-slope grazings whereupon you can see the shepherd herding his sheep, of dark forests, of sudden valleys which reminded me of the cleuchs on the Moffat road to Tibbie Shiels', only on a scale increased an hundredfold, of frequent villages which seem to be pegged down in their places, so steep are the slopes where they are. Churches and ruined towers on the lower heights give a human note to the grandeur of the road. We made an early start, but ere we had reached the cross marking the summit of the pass and gained a level with peaks which in the morning looked as though they reached to high heaven, the evening

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lights were upon the hills, the shepherds were drawing together their flocks, the valleys were being flooded by the tides of night, and the moon was up.

We dashed down into the deep blue darkness. The high mountain tops with their snow in the evening light and the moonbeams, seemed to withdraw from the world and to become something of form without substance – to become the mountains of dreamland, perfect in outline, and of a sublimity undisturbed by the jars and the hardness of earth. They rose up from the dark, their roots were upon the unseen. One lost all sense of the rattling of the car, of the dust, of the jolting. It was as though we were entering upon a land where human foot had never been and never could fall. Soon we were wakened from our dream.

Just as the pink was fading from the distant snows and the nearer greys and the greens were being submerged in the rising tides of deep blue, two horsemen wheeled into the middle of the road with a shout that was like a war cry, and proceeded ahead of our car in a wild gallop. One carried a red flag on a spear shaft. As we went down, new groups joined, until, about us and behind, there must have been a hundred horsemen, and the valley was filled with riotous shouts and echoes. They rode pell-mell, they passed, they fell behind, and galloped ahead; they yelled, the hoofs of their horses clattered, their accoutrements clanked. The road was narrow, and still narrower bridges were frequent; on one side it fell away steeply to the river; there were heaps of stones all along the edge; it twisted and turned. The moon lit only on high ground and it was pitch dark

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where we were, nothing but the patch of light from our car enabled us to see a few yards ahead. But the rout of horsemen recked little for all this. They rode like mad; in the space of light they bent down from their saddles when their horses were in full career and picked up stones from the road; they crushed and jostled until it seemed as though they must be overwhelmed in disaster. They sang snatches of song, they shouted, they cheered. The light caught their swords, their faces, the metal on their accoutrements. Over all bobbed the red flag. Down and down we went, the wild torrent gathering in size and boisterousness like a spate on the hills.

At the villages, there were waiting crowds and triumphal arches bearing in different forms salutations to Socialism and the International. We could just see them as we whizzed through, slackening our speed to let the torrent flow with us. At one place we stopped. The crowd blocked the way, speeches had to be made and ceremonies of welcome had to be performed. They gathered round the light of the car, but their borders were hidden in the dark. For the first time we could examine our escort, and the first impression was that we had been captured and made prisoners. Squeezed amongst the horses' legs were children, women, and old folks, those who from need or ailment could not bestride a horse—a tatterdemalion crowd with rags mysteriously united into covering and headgear—the prey who flee to the mountains when the alarum is sounded and the troopers are abroad.

But who can describe the lithe virile riders who sat on their horses as though horse and man were

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one, who were never still for a moment, whose faces were like glowing pages telling of many battles, wild slaughter and much else that man does when his blood is hot, many midnight rides, many nervy exploits, the gaiety of whose attitude proclaimed them to be of those who live a merry reckless life and romantic one? Some looked like Greek gods with fine cut faces, others like Bacchanalian dare-devils who would stick you as joyfully as kiss you, others bore their villainy as bare as they held their swords. Some were clad in those long flowing coats with round sheepskin caps, the perfect dress of a handsome man, some were in the ancient attire of their fathers with embroideries and tinsel; at the waists of all were sword and dagger, on their breasts cartridge cases, and some carried small round iron shields. The whole surged with ebullient animation, which could not be controlled when an old grey-beard rode up to receive us into the fellowship of the mountains and to welcome us as men whose names had gone before them and who came as the ambassadors of the Socialist International to the new mountain State of Georgia.

They danced and they sang before us on the roadway — strange gallant dances, just a little like our own barn dances, but with a barbaric demeanour in them, we clapping our hands in rhythmic time; they fought mimic fights with sword and shield. Higher and higher rose the excitement, the choruses, the shouts. And over all, the moon and the snowclad mountains imperturbable, and the fluttering red flag borne on a spear.

We were still some way from the end of our journey.

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The horsemen wheeled, shouted, dashed and cleared a lane for us through the crowd. To cries of 'Long live the International' (so I was told), and of goodness knows what else, we went on. Johnnie Armstrong and all the reivers who ever went out on a devil-may-care errand were back again having one more ride in the moonlight. Down the road the rout clattered, but more furiously than before, swords flashing overhead, whips wheeling, hoofs making sparks fly, dust turning the yellow light of the car into a grey blue. Lights again appeared ahead; a triumphal arch was passed and they bunched up to get through it, white houses came into view, and, dimmer than they, a church on a knoll. The roadway was blocked by a crowd and we drew up, our guard making a wide circle around us. Presently the great bell of the church tolled and we were conducted to the churchyard, where, from the top of the wall, I had to make a speech. Never did Socialist address such an audience, of such looks and such attire; never to the accompaniment of such shouts, such clashing of swords, such clattering of accoutrements were hot words of freedom and international amity thrown out. The old priest in a long cloak and almost equally long beard read an address couched in the most irreproachable terms of goodwill to men and on earth peace, and we passed to a table groaning with mysterious dishes and piled with bottles, and thence to bed.

Next day in the gayest and freshest of mornings, we went through the most forbidding of gorges of bare grey rock, which closed in upon us like the road to perdition; on to the Russian frontier, where

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we were met by an armed guard of Bolshevik soldiers (hated like poison all round hereabout), who accepted cigarettes, but would not allow us to proceed, and the sergeant of the guard, knowing us, sent through us fraternal greetings to the workmen of all the world, which I here and now deliver.

CHAPTER SEVEN: EGYPT

§ I

*Southwards Bound*¹

I GO through Victoria Station not infrequently, and it is as dull and forbidding as any in the world. But occasionally it is invaded by light and warmth, and then I go into it as into a cheery room from a snow blast. The monotonous voice of the man at the barrier calling to his colleague 'One First Paris,' is grateful music to my ears; I pass like a saint who has won Paradise. In the piles of luggage there early this week, I saw a vision of the Pyramids, and that crafty-eyed gentleman whose look seemed to have searched through the whole world in his sordid Scotland Yard job caused me no resentment; he reminded me of the Sphinx. Ah, what silk purses we can make out of sow's ears when we are in the grand creative humour.

By the by, the stoutest heart and the most creative imagination look materialistically at tossing waters and white-crested waves, and listen realistically to the wind in the rigging and the boat's sides scraping the jetty as she rises and falls; but again, the faithful inherit the Kingdom, and I found the Channel better than it ought to have been. We have sun as well as wind, and who would go below who could stay on deck? The London illustrated papers have been full of this notorious person skating in Switzerland with another notorious person's wife, or daughter, or protégé. Thus, Piccadilly is on the

¹ *Forward*, February 4, 1922.

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boat to-day hastening out to get photographed in Switzerland. On such occasions I always meet old Tory friends, and we keep each other from being seasick by deploring each others' political sins.

An old Admiral wags an accusing finger under my nose, but accompanies the gesture with an all-forgiving marine smile. He has no delight now under the gallery of the House, for the glories of debate have departed, he says, and there is no temptation now to commit sin by wishing to have a cup of tea in a corner with 'a d - d likeable' opponent. The major of the camel corps has a gossip on a twenty-year-old introduction; the very distinguished Tory aristocrat M.P. confesses to too much yawning in the House nowadays and to a lack of love of his Party troupe; the women folk, Monte Carlo bent, discuss the deterioration since the war. Before Calais we get as thick and as friendly as thieves, we discuss the prospects and the horrors of a Labour Government, the aid that r-r-red Reds have been to the trembling reaction of acres and profits and family heirlooms, and at the end of an hour we go our several ways.

Snow, snow, snow! The farther south the deeper the snow. Dull, gloomy Paris, more and more like a second-hand clothes shop, or a broken-down, feckless lady who has never been taught to make an honest living. The dishevelment of this city gets worse and worse. A friend meets us, and we jolt and joggle, now on the right, now on the left of the street, now shouting the most mellifluous running language of opprobrium at some other master of language, now holding our wind lest we should need it to extricate ourselves from the approach-

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ing mix-up of tramcars, carts, lamp-posts, six-story houses and people; listening in the intervals to a pungent review of French politics and politicians, and the French mentality and policy which transports the dishevelled streets into one's mind, and makes our final dash up the slope to the Gare de Lyons a promise of physical and mental rest.

Even the French waiters have lost their arts. English they cannot understand; we are too soon for regular dinner, and they cannot help us to pick and choose. What care we? We are out in pursuit of peace, happiness, health, and nothing is to stand in our way. We shall make that silk purse, sow's ear or no sow's ear. So we teach them politeness and perseverance, enjoy our meal, and receive their gratitude. Our triumph of self-complacency is short lived, however, for approaching the beautiful damsel in the bookstall and asking in an all-men-are-brothers frame of mind for a Tauchnitz, we behold the Napoleonienne spirit of France rise, sparkle, gleam, and our hearts tell us that now we are up against something. Should we run? No, by the gods! An apology, a shrug, and a tip have never been known to fail, though, in this case, the last can not be summoned to our aid.

When too late, we remember the sin we have thoughtlessly committed. We apologize. We explain that if we had asked of her the dirtiest, filthiest rubbish, the sale of which ought to have brought blushes to her cheeks, she would have supplied it in French with *sang froid*, but that we have been outrageous in asking for a copy of Morris' poems printed in Leipzig. She, not understanding our English (it be-

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ing rather ancient in some of its words and idioms), and we not being interested in her French, thus come to mutual agreement and part in smiles. How I welcome the hospitable appearance of that refuge, the Orient Express, with the places I sought painted in red letters on a white iron sheet on its sides – ‘Milan,’ ‘Venice,’ ‘Trieste,’ and, away beyond, ‘Constantinople.’ Cartoons by Grassier causing amusement to some of the train attendants, reveal to me a corner of the Red Flag, for Grassier is the cartoonist for *L’Humanité*, and the day closes with the vision of the Pyramids at Victoria again in full possession of me.

With the morning, snow, snow, snow, deeper, more beautiful, more than ever the snow that used to fall, but which I have not seen for many years – the snow that buries things right under it and clings to everything. And it was still falling in fine powder that in the sun was like silvery dust. The forests were bending under it; it got through and covered up the undergrowth; it overhung the rivers; it projected beyond the eaves of the houses; it blotted out the roads. At one place we passed a huge snow-plough piled high with stones upon which men stood, drawn by sixteen sweating horses. Thus it was all through Switzerland, away into Italy, over the plains of Lombardy until, in the failing light beyond Verona, it rained and the rain washed the white away.

At midnight we were out on the streets of Trieste hurrying as fast as a starved horse and a sedan chair on wheels, that had been new apparently in the days of crinolines and powdered wigs, would carry us. The winds from the Alps blew through chinks on top

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and bottom, right and left, behind and before. In front of us we could see the driver shiver and add another turn of his muffler to protect his ears. On the harbour front we could hear the cold, pitiless splash of wind-swept water. The city itself was as the dead. In the hotel the lights were dim and the rooms and corridors filled with shadows. But the bed! Never cosier couch soothed tried limbs to sleep. Thus we ended the first stage of our journey to the lands where there is always summer, where age is a never-ending day of autumnal mellowness, where shivering is unknown except from the bite of a mosquito or the fever of a troubled conscience.

§ 2

*Scotland über Alles*¹

Once, on my waysouth, I dropped in for a few minutes to that interesting museum in Brindisi where dusty heaps of relics of Greek and Roman and Saracen and Crusader tell of the romantic history of the port. There I came across a gravestone belonging to the first or second century whereon, in Latin carved beautifully, is the following inscription :

'Passer-by, tarry thy step, if thou hast a mind and read. Oft have I sailed over the ocean, and many lands have I trod, but this is my last halting place foretold by Fate on the day of my birth. Under this sward have I laid down my cares and sorrows. Here I no longer dread the stars, the storms, the treacherous sea, nor do I heed whether my outlays

¹ *Forward*, February 18, 1922.

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overrun my savings. To thee, Holy Fate, most sacred goddess, my fervent thanks for having protected me from oppressive frowning fortune. It is thy due that every mortal should yearn for thee. Passer-by, live and in health may thou always save what thou shalt not have spent, since thou hast not despised this stone and deemed it worthy of being read.'

When I had mused over the chastity of the diction of this long dead voice, the curator, a Canon, made suggestions to me of the race and the kindred of the wanderer. I maintained that on his mother's side at any rate, he must have been a Scotsman of Calvinist leanings and ingrained thrift, and his simple faith and admirable practice sent me away on my journeyings grateful that after two thousand years he and I should have met. And the fact that our meeting place had been built as a temple where some pagan god was worshipped, had then become a church of the Crusaders, and was now a museum, added to the satisfaction of the meeting.

I went on to brave the tempestuous seas and to watch the stars in fear, and in due course found solid earth. By and by I went into those narrow, crowded thoroughfares, where the noises of many trades and the chatter of bargaining are heard all day. It was at a time when it was not altogether advisable for an Englishman to go there, for the political unsettlement was intense and political assassination was not infrequent. But I happen to have a reputation that made it safe for me to go anywhere, and when I further explained that I was Scottish, they unfolded their priceless carpets for me to admire, they brought

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out their treasures, they regaled me with Turkish delight, coffee and cigarettes, and I sat and gossiped with them like an intruder in a scene from the Arabian Nights. Strange turbaned and fezzed figures salaamed, and all Western thoughts and memories went out of my mind.

A few brief days before I was bawling in the face of an Arctic gale to fishermen at the Lossie harbour. Now that was millions of miles away and thousands of years remote. The atmosphere was hot and laden with heavy scents, time passed slowly, and every thought and sentence was dyed in rich Oriental colour. I crossed a street or two and mounted the steps of my hotel. Was I the victim of magic? For what sounds were these I heard? Was I in 'Allowa's auld haunted kirk'? For, if anywhere under the sun a foursome reel was being danced, I heard the feet and the 'hoohs' of the dancers. And then, ye gods! the bagpipes, 'till roof and rafters a' did dirl.' The Scot was enjoying himself at the Cairo Continental. That night when I was sailing off to the Land o' Nod, my boat was pulled up for a moment by the strains of 'Auld Lang Syne,' and it went on with a piper as a pilot.

Four hundred and fifty miles south, well on to the Tropics, is Luxor, on the site of the ancient Thebes, the golden capital of the Egyptian monarchs. At one end are the massive ruins of Karnak temples, once the glory of Egypt, and still the delight and awe of the wanderers thither in its midst are the ruins of its own temple. Through it the broad Nile flows placidly, and on the opposite side, at the foot of the hills, are temples innumerable, and in the valleys,

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the tombs of the greatest and the proudest of the kings. Who can describe those noble monuments of vanished wealth, of dead faith, and of crushed splendour? Who can write the stories of worship and homage offered to the gods, of battles and victories, of kingly authority, told in exquisite carvings on wall and pillar?

We stood before one of those walls in the Temple of Luxor covered with a representation of the grandest of religious processions when the god was taken in his sacred boat up the Nile from Karnak to Luxor, whilst priests and devotees kept revel on the banks. First, there is a mass of offerings and temple paraphernalia, fruit, flowers, vessels; then come dancing girls in every posture of contortion moving to the beating of drums and music; after that is the representation of a great feast, and then the procession headed by soldiers with arms and standards, followed by the royal chariots, grooms, crowds hauling the barge of the god by ropes, after them a medley of merry-makers. Outside, we caught glimpses of the streams of men in long gowns, turbans and fezes; inside a crowd of excavators, running, singing, carrying baskets of earth on their heads. From a neighbouring minaret came the cry of a Muezzin, and we had visions of a great festival of three thousand five hundred years ago.

But what is this? Into our dream strolls a negro, black as night, attired in a suit of grey tweed that looks as if it was made off Piccadilly, and with him a kilted cateran looking like a gentleman. The tartan in the Temple of Luxor! It dominated pilon and pillar; it was a cartouche more arresting than those

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of Horemheb or Rameses, or any Pharaoh among them. We gave up our excursion down time and back through civilization. The sun went down and the sky blazed and then sobered into night. The Nile was folded in the darkness but for the mirrored light of the stars. The bats flitted in and out around us. But a tartan kilt, thin white bony knees, a Kilmarnock bonnet and a red head, were more dominating than the sights and sounds. It went home with us; it sat with us on the veranda under the new moon and the flowering creepers. When bed-time came, it went upstairs with me, and the barking of dogs, the calls from the boatmen on the river, a dreamy confusion of night sounds from the village, all seemed to blend into one insistent reiteration: 'Scotland über Alles! Scotland über Alles!'

§ 3

*In the Land of the Pharaohs*¹

My very learned guide-book tells me that the Book of Exodus is no more reliable on the story of the Children of Israel than is a Capitalist paper on a trade dispute. It seems to be as mixed up in its narration of events as the record of Liberal diplomacy by Professor Gilbert Murray, and as shaky in its complaints about Pharaoh as a Communist indictment of a Menshevist Government. I do not know, but that is what I read. True, it also tells me that the present Egyptian unrest is owing to the fact that there is now no lash allowed, and that Courts

¹ *Forward*, February 11, 1922.

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of Justice have increased crime because they put an end to the indiscriminate punishment of innocent and guilty! But a man who knows everything about mummies and hieroglyphics need not be expected to know much of living human nature, so I can enjoy the roundabouts without risking my reputation on the swings.

This at any rate seems clear. The Semites were not all slaves in Egypt, and they had frequently to be kept out and kicked out as well as kept in. Apparently Egypt is even to this day in a fix about sojourners who came for a day and who have no intention to go; and Messrs. Cook & Son, Ltd., have succeeded to the task of Joseph. The Radical Leicester citizen who saw what a fine thing it would be to get the multitude to travel, has indeed done his work as well as the pushful Jew who had ideas about himself that upset traditions and created an antagonism in his family similar to what I am told sometimes is to be experienced in the Labour Party. In any event, let who may be Sultan, or British Commissioner, or Prime Minister, Cook remains the Grand Vizier in control of storehouses and barns, oxen and asses, men-servants and maid-servants. Temples are unearthed, mummies discovered, the route of the Children of Israel worked out, and a dragoman of Cook's at once appears and leads the whole world to the shrines. And when it is all done in decency and in order, who need object?

One thing is evident. Cook's people are not in control of the weather. I had promised my travelling friend that the Mediterranean blue would send him to poetry; it dashed and foamed and raved about us

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as though it were a Bedlam ocean. He had been brought up on Bible pictures of Egypt, and they were all sun and light; in real life, Egypt was like a lady in *purdah*, hidden behind screens of rain, and when we got in at last, the jetty was swept with vicious showers. 'We have as good weather in South Wales,' he snorted as we dived, heads well into our overcoats, to the Custom House. But there the East was in full swing, and I felt happy.

Everybody was shouting, everybody was pushing, everybody was doing nothing with as much cackle as though they were creating the world. Money-changers in garb that bespoke great indigence, strolled about clanking coins under your nose; officials domineered or sat nonchalantly puffing cigarettes, greenhorns fussed for luggage that they were sure had been lost and lectured men in livery with the same effect as they would produce on a firework. The lights glared in the long shed and on the piled luggage; outside you could see the rain falling in glittering drops, and the drivers huddling miserably on their seats. At the end of an hour, having filled up all our papers, having had them examined, re-examined, checked, signed, stamped, having paid for porters and having received and given the due salaams, we were out splashing through the mud and gutters, jolted this way and that through those streets of peculiar odour which one sniffs like the air of a long-lost haggis, where men sit doubled up in little box shops lit by smoky lamps or gossip over restaurant tables, until the hotel porter gallantly received us as though we were kings or ladies of high degree. Thus we came to the land of

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Isis and Osiris, of the Pharaohs and perpetual sun.

But the smell of the East is an incense in my nostrils, and its clatter of tongues is music to my ears. I have been wandering in the mud of the city which Alexander the Great founded, which Julius Cæsar took by storm, which became the home of philosophy and religion, and which shone over the world as its Pharos shone over the Mediterranean. Hardly a stone of what was is now. What remains is buried under the streets of the modern town. Even the locations of its most famous spots are not known with certainty. Its libraries, its museums, its churches, its palaces, have gone. The Pompey Pillar rises from its mound in wonderful grace, but we are not even sure what was the purpose of its erection or where it originally stood. The church into which Hypatia was dragged and, 'for the advancement of the cause of Christ' as interpreted by a Bishop, stripped and done to death, has been wiped from the face of the earth. Even the bones of the founder of the city, brought here for pompous repose, lie in some places as unmarked and unknown as though they were those of a dog or a camel.

We sought for a tomb of special reputation that had been excavated in 1900. It was hard to find by strangers. We went through narrow streets as filthy as sewers, crowded by quaint humanity, blue-robed hulking men, graceful black-robed veiled women, half-naked yelling children. The only language we recognized was the Esperanto bray of the ass. At last we came to great rubbish heaps, a rotten barbed

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wire fence and a gate whereat officials in brass buttons sat, and we knew that here was what we sought. Every Egyptian understands enough English to tell you how much you owe him, and we found ourselves in due course with a guide and lit candles on a spiral stairway that descended into the rock.

The tomb was cut in the solid rock. The 'high Roman official' who was to rest there with his kindred has departed even as a name, but the colour on the walls, the beautiful carvings, the statues, are there as when the last workman laid down his chisel perhaps 2000 years ago. The tomb is of three storeys, one under the other, communicating by flights of steps. Its centre is the great funeral chamber entered by a doorway of chaste proportions carved with devices of religious meaning. Its roof is vaulted, and there is a coffin on each side hewn also out of solid rock. In the niches lay the undisturbed bones of men, women and children who had lived in the sun of old Alexandria; in urns lay the dust of others that had been cremated.

As we went through the labyrinth we felt ourselves unholy intruders and held our breath lest we should disturb the sleepers and maybe rouse the enmity of their ghosts. Cautiously and timorously we peered down into the burial chambers; an unearthly velvety sound and a queer shadow passing through the light startled us. Our guide laughed and pointed to a quivering downy mass of bats hanging on the ceiling disturbed by our intrusion. They found shelter there during the day, issuing thence up the shafts at night. Ah, the glory of the world! Up in the open air, the mud, the rubbish heaps, the

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official detachment of the three guardians, were like a sinister choragus chanting hard moralities.

Out in the streets the newsboys ran shouting their wares, and eager men bought them. There had been more arrests of political leaders and a further suppression of newspapers. The films of Time's never-ending, ever-changing, cinema were unreeling a new story of Imperial power. Rome slept in dust and ashes in the catacombs and we trod Alexandria as the Imperial race, and our Prefects, our soldiery and our police were still struggling with the Impossible. Who will follow us?

CHAPTER EIGHT: PALESTINE¹

AFTER far wanderings I seem to have come home, for I feel as familiar with this place as I do with the benty hillocks of Lossiemouth. I write in a room at Nazareth, and for days I have been in places where I have lived without setting foot in them before, places which I have now seen as though I had, in dreams, dwelt in them for as long as I can remember.

In an hour or two, in the dead of night, I crossed the desert where the Israelites wandered for forty years, and I awoke to look out upon what was the land of the Philistines, glistening after night rain and looking like a fair virgin robed in almond blossom. Here was Ashdod; here was Lod, where at the station some Socialists were waiting with a car to speed me to Joppa, whence Jonah embarked and where Simon the tanner's house is to be seen to this day. In the moonlight I crossed the Plain of Sharon, with the hills of Judah like shadows beyond, up over the dizzy curves of the passes through these hills to Jerusalem, perched high in their midst.

In the mud, in the dark crowded bazaars, in the narrow, slippery cobbled streets of the Holy City; on Zion; looking across the Valley of Kedron, with its myriad graves, on to the Mount of Olives; walking round the walls, entering by this gate or going out by that; in the room of the Last Supper; at the place where Stephen was stoned; by the Pool of Siloam — the peace of many Sabbaths awaited me,

¹ *Forward*, March 11, 1922.

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as the dead are said to await us. They were keeping tryst. No spot in the world is like this. The voice of the importunate guide sounded as though coming from a far land. I must have lived here in a generation now sunk in the misty grey of long past years. I knew the city better than the guides.

In some places this feeling is overwhelming. In some where it ought to be, it is not, because they have been desecrated by lies and superstition, and the vanities and vulgarities of men have evicted the spirits and offer the pilgrim only smells and darkness and candles at five piastres a time. Bethlehem is one of these. There, three rival sects light altar lamps with curses; one cuts off the corner of a carpet lest the hated feet of another sect should tread upon it; a Mohammedan soldier guards the spot of the Nativity lest rival Christians should cut each other's throats in front of it. I wonder what he, in whose memory the lamps are kept lit, thinks of it all. I fled in search of the purification of fresh air and the simple stall.

But go down the Street of David from the Jerusalem Jaffa Gate, plunge into its gloom, its colour, its stifling crowd; turn at the end into the Temple Street and pursue it till suddenly you come out on that vast sunny space of ruined wall and fountain with the Mosque of Omar rising solemnly in its midst, and you will know Jerusalem. This is Mount Moriah; here the Temple stood. Stand by the Mosque of Aksa and look down that long white vista of walls and gates, steps and domes, fountains and platforms for prayer, see the brightness of the sun and the gloom of the cypresses, and behold

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something which is not only fair of the fairest to the eye but glorious of the most glorious to the soul. I have seen much of the goodly things that this world has to show, but nothing to compare with this.

The trouble of the devout is to get away from the puny efforts of men to guard the sacred spots as one does a candle in the wind, and call them his own *and fashion them after himself*. Go down into the valley of Kedron and cross up Mount Olivet to Gethsemane. It is walled in, it is imprisoned, it is spoilt. Near by the gnarled olive of the Agony, a brutal stone records the benefaction of an American woman – in pretentious Latin forsooth. Go by the path winding round Mount Olivet to Bethany, and see how an architect who could not build a pigsty has made a monument over Lazarus' tomb, but you will seek in vain for the atmosphere of the home of Mary and Martha and the benignity of Christ. But go on over the barren limestone hills and down in to the hot valleys whereon is the way to Jericho. There the solitary wayfarer might still be beset by thieves, and at the side of the road you pass the inn of the Good Samaritan, as much a comforting refuge by the way as it was nearly two thousand years ago. You expect to see the good man come from the door to pursue his journey.

What a charm there is in the very names: The Hills of Judah, the Mountains of Moab, Gilgal, the Valley of Jezreel, Gilboa, Carmel, Mount Hermon. To-day I left Jerusalem bound, like Saul, for Damascus. The road lies over the Hills of Judah, where the limestone gives but bare subsistence and where the villages look woebegotten and ragged

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perched on the top of their hills and hillocks. I went up and down, twisted and turned, was cut by the hill-top winds and warmed by the sun in the valleys. From the summits of the passes I could see the land at my feet from the Dead Sea to Mount Hermon's snow, from the Mediterranean at Jaffa and Cæsarea to the mountains of Moab, Ammon, Gilead and Bashan. Nearly every place you pass or see on this road has its name written on your heart. The road goes past, or near, Mizpah, Beeroth, Bethel; it takes you to the well where the conversation between Christ and the woman of Samaria took place; it brings you to Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, with Shechem lying between. There you refresh yourself, and wander through one of the most typically Oriental towns. This was the capital of the Samaritans, and here you meet with that small remnant of Jews who pay no homage to the prophets of Jerusalem. Their little synagogue, so carefully locked (for it holds the oldest copy of their Book) with double keys, is like a toy place, and yet it has that quality which whispers of sacred things.

Then after further ups and downs with peeps at the far-away hills and seas, I came to where a cart waited me near the spot where Saul fought his last battle at Gilboa. As I jolted and joggled over the unmade road, I tried to recall some of the beautiful lines of David's lament. I was on my way to see the new thought nestling amidst the old tradition. In a little town of tents at the foot of Gilboa, by the spring where Gideon is said to have tested the endurance of his army, faithful men and women

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have come together to rebuild Palestine and fence it against Capitalism.

They work at roads, at planting, at any of the essential services; they doctor and they teach. I saw them at the anvil, the bench, the kitchen table, the fields, the dentist's machine. They are on terms of economic equality and they draw upon the common stores. They are tested first on public works, where they must work for a year, loafer and sponger thus being excluded. They came to a place all but waste, to swampy ground and a barren hill-side. They are building, they are planting olives and vines and pines and eucalyptus and cypress. They are starting nurseries to supply themselves and others with plants. I saw them happy, industrious and hopeful, and in a building with a mud floor they offered me hospitality and revealed minds as sunny as the plain which we could see through the door. They will fail, the man of practical intelligence will say. I hope he is wrong, but if they do and are scattered, they will have clothed the northern sides of Mount Gilboa, made rich the waste lands at its foot, and cheered and refreshed everyone who will come in contact with their work. They are believers.

As I sat talking with one who might have been an Isaiah, red tints spread over the sky and the hills, and I remembered that Nazareth was still a good way on upon its lofty perch. So I bade them farewell, in rapidly deepening darkness, bumped back to the highway, and in a night glorious with moon and stars climbed up and up and up to a bed in Nazareth.

CHAPTER NINE: NEW WINE IN OLD BOTTLES ¹

I AM tempted to go on telling the story of journeys in lands every corner of which has witnessed scenes and sheltered people whose memories are the life of history, and every prospect of which is pleasing and startling to the eye. But of that I have written enough, and now the journey is all over save for the return. I have come to the stick of the rocket. The Mediterranean, which I have been seeing in glimpses from inland heights or in a wide sweep from the top of Mount Carmel, is now under me and my face is towards the setting sun. Across the sea comes news of Labour victories and the incidents of the political daily round. Our mud-caked Ford cars are being scraped and repaired after their heroic journeys; our ruts are being trodden down by donkeys and camels; no more will the Bedouin scurry at our hoots, and shoulder his ass to the side of the road. All that is past!

But I must add a few jottings and thoughts appropriate to homeward ponderings. I have been in Egypt, Palestine and Syria, and they are all seething with an after-the-war unsettlement. Our 'only ones fit to govern' delivered blank cheques to Arabs and Jews, so anxious were they to prove the universal righteousness of our cause. Now we cannot cash the cheques. Moreover we paid inflaming devotions to Nationalism as a creed and as a right, and we are now asked to prove our sincerity, but we have 'much possessions.' The storm is over: the ship has been saved: the sailors, who prayed so fervently, wish to

¹ *Forward*, March 18, 1922.

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return to their old life, and to shirk the burdens of righteousness. But the world has heard and the world now looks on. The Egyptian, the Arab, the Jew, want to know what we meant and what we are now to do to make good our promises.

I still hold that the Egyptian problem is the simplest of all. But the most horrible of fiends, political assassination, has appeared as the result of a policy which always has been, always will be, its parent. When shall we learn not to be afraid of radical constitutional opinions? When shall we have eyes to see that suppressing that opinion, or declaring it outlaw, or asking the world to believe it to be mischievous, has the certain result of strengthening a revolting violence? The ostracizing of Zaghul Pasha because he has become bitter, or personal in his motives, or because he is awkward, is nothing but blind stupidity, of which no Englishman should be guilty. We have stirred up the East by our education and our war and our proclamations; and we are afraid to meet the consequences. It is another case of new wine in old bottles, but instead of attributing the bursting to natural causes, we regard it as the work of the devil. So, without injury to our moral self-esteem, we go further into trouble.

I am glad that Lord Allenby seems to have thwarted the mischievous mind of Mr. Churchill and those who think as he does, but Lord Allenby must show more steady genius than he has done. The light seems to be in him, but there are two Lord Allenbys — the soldier and the civilian — and the one rules one day and the other the next.

In Palestine the problem takes a different and a

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very novel form. It is still the conflict between the Middle Ages and the twentieth century, but in this case it is caused by the immigration of people, and not only by the growth of ideas within a nation. Mr. Balfour made a declaration which meant to every Jew that Palestine was to revert to his government, and that once again he was to take his place amongst the nations of the world. Probably Mr. Balfour did not know what he was talking about, but the Government is now doing what it can to show that Mr. Balfour's pledges to the Jews were of the same worthless character as Mr. Bonar Law's to the miners. The flood of Jewish immigration which immediately began to flow roused the fears of the Arabs (who had also been promised all the badges and laurel wreaths of nationality), and the masterful attitude of some Jews roused Arab anger. The result was the beginning of an awkward and dangerous racial feud.

Moreover, the new immigration brought in new ideas. Socialism and trade unionism came with the immigrants, and the Jewish workmen demanded a higher standard of life than the Arab. The old Arab leaders saw their position threatened, and at once took steps to defend themselves. At various times and in various places there have been anti-Jewish riots, and the prospects are still anything but peaceful. Fortunately in Palestine the High Commissioner has been trained in politics. When he was Home Secretary in the Asquith War Coalition I thought that he yielded far too much to those who clamoured for 'D.O.R.A.' repression, but here he seems to be true to his Liberal principles, and in consequence, is

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handling a delicate position with tact and patience. Time is on the side of the peace-maker, and a consistent policy of even-handed justice and a patient pursuit of an Arab-Jewish concordat will prevent Palestine from being the scene of racial feud.

In Syria, I had few opportunities to investigate political matters. I was told that it would be difficult to get people to speak, and an attempt to get a conference of some editors and publicists failed, they said, on account of the awe in which the French authorities are held. The 'occupation' here is much in evidence. I found French troops, mostly coloured of the blackest hues, everywhere. An intense French propaganda is evidently being carried on. The state of the country is not good, and from merchants in the Damascus bazaars, and people with whom I conversed in hotels and trains, I heard but one long drawn-out complaint of bad trade. How far that is only part of the world's disease, and how far it is an indication of the decay of Syrian commerce or its revolution, I had no means of ascertaining. It is quite evident, however, that the war has left Syria unsettled and unhappy, and that the new ways into which it will have to settle will not be the old ways.

That France is unpopular, and that the Syrian does not want French protection are pretty clear. I met no one in Syria who took the opposite view. Long before the war French agents had been working amongst the Arabs. I met some of the agents, and now I am not quite sure what they are doing. They are engaged in some political activities, and some of our officials suspect them in Palestine. There are

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also suspicions attached to the Latin Catholics and their association with the Arab leaders in an anti-Jewish propaganda (which is becoming more and more anti-British) requires some explanation. But this is a land of rumour and suspicion, and one must be wary lest he believes like a fool.

One of our representatives in a district which is specially difficult, discussed his troubles with me one evening. He was, by the by, one of those many admirable liberal-minded officials now becoming plentiful, who are turning to us for help, and who pray for an increase of the Labour Party's power at home. He dwelt upon our relations with France somewhat dolefully, and foresaw terrible disasters here unless men of common sense and generous minds come forward to guide the policies of both countries through these transition years.

Our own policy is plain. We should regard ourselves as friends in the background, guarding against evil, applying negative commandments rather than positive ones, beginning good things always with the co-operation of the people themselves, and less as government than as private and spontaneous effort, and guarding as much as possible against taking upon ourselves responsibility for a government that ought to become more and more self-government. British officials should be reduced to a minimum, and they should regard themselves mainly as advisers. We have still a great reputation for justice here, and though deputations and friends tell me that our recent actions have done much damage, a wise policy will not only conserve what remains, but enable us to regain what we have lost.

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The two great obstacles in our way are: first of all, the official who comes with a purely military mind to his task, who thinks of a British Empire of subject peoples being ruled by Englishmen, whose ideas of efficiency are English and nothing else. This man over-governs and makes a mess of things. And the other is the man of commercial interests, who thinks that his store is the Empire, and that his profits must be made sure by British political control exercised by British officials, soldiers and police. He knows nothing of politics and cares less — except when he confuses economic materialistic advantage for himself with good government. I am back, more convinced than ever that if we had at home a Government inspired by Labour and Socialist intelligence, the rough places here would be made smooth, and the moral reputation of our country would shine anew in the world.

CHAPTER TEN: INDIA

§ 1

*The New Delhi*¹

DELHI is a vast churchyard, sixty square miles in extent, with a little corner still inhabited by a swarm of huddled human beings. For what reason Providence only knows, the Government decided to build new palaces and new offices, and bring itself bag and baggage to this city of ruins and tombs. We wanted to shake the dust of Bengal from our feet and shut the unpleasant voice of the Bengali from our ears, and so we determined to regild the thrones of the Moguls and sit down upon them.

When a great thing is done many people say they suggested it; no one, so far as I have been able to gather, is bold enough or proud enough to avow parentage for this project. Like the little imps who beset one in Aden and Port Said, craving backsheesh, the new Delhi has 'no fadder, no mudder.'

There have been seven Delhis already. You find them in ruins on the plain between the right bank of the Jumna and ridges of high ground running more or less parallel with it, but some miles off. They are beautiful in their wreck, and they are watched over by the domed tombs of those who sat in their judgment halls. Away on the southern horizon rises the tower of the Kutb Minar, which has stood through earthquake and conquest for seven centuries; bounding the view to the north is the

¹ *Daily Citizen*, December 31, 1913.

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present Delhi, dominated by the minarets and domes of the great mosque and the Ridge with its Mutiny memories. Between is a brown land of silence, desertion and death. In the midst of it the eighth Delhi is to be built.

To-day it is alive with busy labourers. Mounds are being levelled, rocky heights are being cut down, ruins are being removed. Columns of dust fill the air, the shrill chatter of voices is everywhere, hammers and mattocks add to the confusion of the noise. They say that in a week or two at least 20,000 people will be at work.

For in India labour is cheap and machinery is dear. There are no gigantic arms of mechanical diggers about, few snorting engines, nothing of Western engineering. They are working as they worked for Akbar or Shah Jehan. Swarms of men and women, with swarms of little children squealing and playing in the dust, are filling little baskets with sand and in long processions are carrying it away on their heads and returning for more. A great medley of labourers is making blast holes in the rocks, another medley is filling trucks with boulders. All is a chaos of movement, of noise, of colour, but the rough places are being made smooth and the high places brought low, and they go home at night in long lines of bullock wagons singing catches of song in high-pitched shrill voices.

It is a prodigiously queer thing this escapade of building a city to order. It is to cost an enormous sum of money – at least £6,000,000; its success is not at all certain; it has had to be preceded by a great temporary city of lath and plaster which has

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wasted Indian resources like a famine. Every step the builders take has to be considered, lest their foot falls upon a tomb. A platform under a tree built by some one who desired to think and pray under a grateful shade becomes sacred in these days when holy places have to be purchased so that roads may be made and foundations dug; a new industry has sprung up in the bazaar for the making of tablets informing surveyors that this and that is the last resting-place of this khan and that shah. Nobody but a skilled and patient diplomatist could have emerged from the maze of holiness, false and real, which lay on the land.

Among the shrines to be preserved is that of the ninth Guru of the Sikhs, Teg Bahadur, who previous to his martyrdom at the hands of Aurungzeb foretold the coming of the European 'from beyond the seas to tear down thy *pardas* and destroy thine empire.' His ashes lie in a shady garden, and will be encompassed by the great public park which is to adjoin the new Government House, where the Lord Sahib of the conquerors is to sit in state. This, at any rate, is appropriate. Humayan and the other Moguls look from a distance, stately and apart, their tombs wearing an aspect of lofty aloofness; Guru Teg Bahadur nestles nearer at hand, under the shadow of the new order the coming of which he foretold.

There are some strange superstitions about Delhi. When old wives' tales are listened to one hears that whoever are to be the builders of the eighth city are to be luckless in their rule. And this is the eighth one. There is certainly a haunting doom of

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decay about the place. It still runs to tombs and the wilderness. The foundation stone of the new Delhi which the King laid is now miles away from where the city is now to be built. It stands like an Asoka pillar brooding on the whimsicality of fate.

One evening I walked out to where the Durbar was held. The roads that had been made at so much expense were but scars among the jungle grass, the raised terraces were cracked and bitten by the pouring rains, the jungle had crept softly up like one stealthily returning to a home from which he had been temporarily turned out. On the broad raised mound where the King was crowned and where the mighty ones of India gathered in blazing splendour to do obeisance to him, bushy scrub grew. As I approached I saw standing on the flat where the thrones were, outlined against the crimson evening sky, head in the air and antlers thrown back, the form of a black buck. It bounded across and down and fled away into the darkness.

§ 2

*In the Jungle at Easter*¹

The religious neutrality of the Indian Government is conveniently shown in its holidays. It has had to restrict itself in the homage it pays to many saints and fasts and feasts, but in picking and choosing it has shown great catholicity of spirit, and it turns impartially to Mecca, Benares and Jerusalem. Thus it comes about that the exiled European breathes

¹ *Daily Citizen*, April 8, 1914.

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freely for a day or two at Easter, and invites his friends to take holiday with him. I have wandered to where the Ghonds are in the district of Chanda. The city full of tombs and shrines was the capital from which their kings ruled, but it has fallen asleep, and its glory has departed. I try to shake its fine dust off my feet, and turning my back upon its temples, I rattle along its high roads behind sprightly bullocks, and swing along its jungle paths on the back of a plunging elephant.

The jungle is hot as an oven; every breath of wind is a blast of fire. The sun blazes upon you like a fierce furnace. A hard glitter of steely greyness blinds you and confuses you. When you get a long view it looks like some bewitched wood stricken with leprosy, splashed with the blood of the Flame of the Forest. But when the day dies and the fierceness of the sun has burnt out, the jungle becomes tender. Faint greens and yellows, which were consumed in the ardent glitter of the day appear, the darker greens stand out, the crimsons deepen, and a flush of pink lies over the grey. With the return of cooling colour, the creatures bestir themselves. The cooing of doves, the cackle of jungle fowl, the rippling music of grasshoppers fill the jungle. The villager with his cattle returns across the fields, the women wend their way to the well. A soothing peace settles down over us all. At these intervals between night and day my mind wanders away to Stoke Poges and Gray's 'Elegy.' The peace of the Buckingham and the Chanda villages is pretty much the same when the curfew rings.

Our camp is pitched on the edge of the village

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clearing. Hunaman, the monkey god, the favourite of the villages in these quarters, squats under the shade of a tamarind turning his ochred face to my tent. The village cattle browse in the afternoons on the little banked up fields where, at the edge of the forest, we can also see the graceful chital deer come to feed just before sunset, watchful and scared by the least movement. From the jungle itself in the early evening comes the bark of the sambhar stag, and when we sit out in the moonlight we hear the jackal announcing by his hard aggressive bark that he is out in company with such important jungle personages as the tiger or the panther.

We are out for tiger. The footprints of two have been noticed in the nullahs of the neighbourhood, and we have 'kills' out every night. But no cheerful news is brought in by the forest officers in the morning. So we give a wide berth to the blocks where the tiger footprints are and we beat elsewhere. The game is simple. You get up upon a small platform in a tree with a somewhat clear space in front of you and the beaters draw off and line up about a mile away. Then with shouts and yells they move forward towards you. Faint over the trees at first comes their din, but in your immediate neighbourhood there is silence. Your part is to keep still, to watch and listen and wait for the time and opportunity to kill. The excitement is intense. You hear your heart beat. A leathery teak leaf falls rustling to the ground, a bough cracks, a tree shudders. The least note is sharpened as though it came to your ears through a microphone.

Presently another kind of noise comes — the noise of hurrying feet amongst the brittle leaves, and you

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see things moving, coming stealthily towards you. Peacocks glide from cover to cover, jungle fowl rush about in timorous confusion. They rush across the open space and are gone. A heavier rustle announces the monkeys – funny, bounding things, with their long tails, jumping and waiting, waiting and jumping, scurrying after their tiny laggards and spurring them on. They, too, disappear behind. But something bigger and blacker comes waggling amidst the bamboo. It rises every now and again and sways its head from side to side. There is a big yell from far behind and it comes running on. It stops again. Rifles are up. Poor Teddy will never pass. The being that is in him is to be released for another reincarnation. A noise more wicked than the yell of the hundred beaters fills the jungle. Another – and Teddy has ceased to wonder what the annoying row is all about. In an instant there is a crashing like a cavalry charge amongst the bamboo, and a herd of sambhar deer rush past. Amongst them is one of proud antlered head and he, too, is broken and crushed by the same wicked bang. The beaters come up and burst into a babel of confused noise. The sun is very hot and we come down and fling ourselves into the shade.

Our ill-luck with the tiger is annoying to our villager friends. Under a tree close by our tents is, as I have said, a rudely carved stone covered with vermilion, and they suggest to the forest officer that if this thing were promised a goat or two the sahibs might get their tiger. The forest officer is, I fear, a man of sin, for he yielded to the temptation. A bargain, fair and square, was offered the god. I am told

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the long lanky rascal of a priest informed the god that if he would help us with the tiger he would be honoured by having three goats sacrificed to him; but that if he remained sulky, he would be dishonoured by having his nose twisted. Be that as it may, the new day brought glad tidings.

As we sat at breakfast they rushed in out of breath and told us that one of the bullocks tied up the night before had been killed. No mustering of beaters was required. They were ready to start, and we were soon swishing through bamboo and thorn into the heart of the jungle. The usual preliminaries were gone through, and the din of the beat came to us faint and far. But there was a difference to-day. A peacock rose up from the bush well ahead and perched on a tree; the monkeys coughed as they came on. The sworn enemies of the terror of the jungle were telling everyone whom it might concern that he was on the move. Then we saw him. The first glimpse of a tiger free in the jungle is one of the most exhilarating of experiences. He comes amongst the bamboos with regal leisure, erect, graceful, imperious. He seems but half-awake, and if you are very fastidious you see the one touch of vulgarity about him in his yawn. He occasionally shows an irritated impatience when the chorus of the beat swells, and he then moves some paces quickly, as though he would break into a run. But his whole mien seems to resent hurry. His ferocity sleeps in his grace. There are to be a few seconds of fierce passion and pain when the jungle is to be filled with his roars, after the rifles of the sahibs have spoken. But that is forgotten, and the tiger lives in one's memory as the conscious

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tyrant of the jungle, beautiful for the eye to look upon.

He is covered with leaves and brought into camp by the light of the moon, and everyone turns out to see him in his fallen state. He does look ignominious now. The children gather at the fence and gesticulate and chatter in mockery as he passes. Vultures look on from high overhead. He is laid on one of the little rice-fields, log fires are lit, that the last rites performed on a dead tiger may be performed, and far into the night we see in their gleam the moving forms of busy men.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: HONOLULU — A GARDEN
IN THE PACIFIC¹

A MORNING comes after seven days' tossing on the Pacific out from Vancouver, when the horizon is broken by a serrated edge of hills rising over the sea like the spine of a mighty lizard, and the ship plunges and splashes past extinct craters, whose sides are bare lava streams, but whose feet rest in the bluest of blue seas and the greenest of green plantations, up to Honolulu, the capital city of Hawaii, the burial place of the kings.

Honolulu is the most absurd place in the world. It is a top-hat in the tropics. The light-hearted natives, portly, smiling, deferential, enwreathed in garlands of carnations and other sweet-smelling flowers, offer you equally gorgeous garlands, and invite you to the shades of their palm trees and the scents of their groves, where you should live without work and flourish without effort; but the Custom House officer demands your intentions, your nationality, an insight into your purse, and the morals of the hard puritanical north have gone so far in this sunny land of Adamic innocence that a passenger dressed in Highland garb in the boat before ours was not allowed to land on the score of decency. Under the blazing sun the marts hum, electric tramways buzz, and proud commerce ventures even to think in sky-scrapers. You are rent and riven between Chicago and cannibalism, between a Wall-street operator and a child of nature.

There is, therefore, a heartlessness about the pride

¹ *Daily Chronicle*, December 11, 1906.

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of the coconut palm and an extra humility about the modest banana tree. The times are out of joint with the garden island. Its people are no longer gay; they wander to the towns; they discover the glorious vices of the conquering whites; they die; soon they will be not at all.

But up in the valleys which score the side of the long spinous ridge, the ancient still lingers. The stream trickles over the rough ashy stone, and ferns and creeping greenery embrace over it to hide its face from the sun. By the roadside gardens lie with their hedges of hibiscus, their plots of carnations, their beds of flaming flowers; whilst further up an untamed wildness prevails. Every tree is festooned with climbing trailing plants forming shady bowers, where man might dwell in peace disturbed by nought save the wistful beauty of sea and land, or perhaps the silent threat of the sleeping craters beyond.

Our chauffeur grumbles at the road whilst up our sleeves we hope it may never be better. He tells us of the kings – the great kings – who lie in the little mausoleum in the enclosure where the massive monuments are, whilst down in the town the old queen lives like a crushed creature, deprived of homage and property. Up the valley, along which we are whizzing, the greatest of this line of monarchs drove his enemies once in awful battle – up and back until the crack ended and the mountain-side fell away by a precipice of a thousand feet down to the sea-level, and there the human avalanche of 3,000 warriors fell, and to this day their bones and weapons are sometimes found. Suddenly you emerge upon this awe-inspiring brink, and even the fair peace of

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the rice-fields and the sea below is troubled by the wicked look of the jagged grey face of the rocks and the tragic gloominess of the matted greenery immediately beneath.

Strange, strange mixture of north and south, of man the awkward conqueror of the sun, and of sun the genial master of man. And perhaps most comical of all is the great Imperial idea of the alien rulers. The Labour Laws of New York are made to apply to this garden island of Oahu; the political machine of San Francisco, wheel for wheel, cog for cog, has been imported and set up, and the boodle, the patronage, and all the little adjuncts of the caucus are taking root and flourish beside the palm trees which shade the resting-place of the Hawaiian kings. We come across gangs of natives mending the roads because an election is pending and the Works Department have woke up for a few minutes. Natives lounge on the garden plots of certain prominent citizens because for a few weeks all men on the voters' roll are born free and equal. The papers are full of the meetings of Republican and Democratic primaries, and even Mr. Gompers' friends in the shape of a Trades and Labour Council are in evidence. Washington is promising, so the papers say, to restore to the island some of the custom duties filched as the result of annexation, and will keep promising until the election is past. Over the soothing beating of the surf on the shore, the loud guffaw of the spirit of political cynicism is heard. It is surpassingly amusing.

And in the pauses of that great side-splitting guffaw, a whisper of sadness can be heard. In the town the old queen, the last of the native rulers, is

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ping away. Her people are fading away as though a blight had fallen upon them; the music and the flowers in the garden are being borne away on the gentle winds which blow over the island. The great plutocrat has triumphed. The wage worker from China and Japan has come to toil in silence; the hum of commerce is the only music that can be heard.

That day, in this island paradise, whilst our ship lay at the wharf, we beheld the reality of one of the greatest failures of the Imperial methods; we saw one of the most absurdly comical experiments in transplanting political institutions. We have laughed at the Fiji chiefs in white or blue coats and brass buttons with heads adorned in all the gorgeous art of cannibal beaux, going forth with a big Bible and an umbrella under their arms. But the Fiji chief in his Sunday best is not nearly so excellent specimen of the serio-comic as American government in Hawaii.

CHAPTER TWELVE: SOUTH AFRICA IN 1902

WE tried to get across from Mafeking to Johannesburg by cart, but there were no horses to be had. Then we tried to cross in the same way from Kimberley to Bloemfontein, but so scarce were horses and fodder that we were asked £30 for a Cape cart and two horses, the usual price, we were told, being not more than £4 at the most. But even then we were informed that we could have no guarantee that we would be taken further than Boshof, not half-way to Bloemfontein, as horse disease had broken out and communications might be cut off. When at Pretoria we tried to arrange to drive from Barberton through the Eastern Transvaal to Standerton, but reports came in from the districts we desired to pass through that everything was laid waste, that no transport could be got, that there was not a scrap of food to be had. Having had to abandon that route we were then anxious to leave the train at Standerton and drive thence and back to Ermelo. But we failed in making arrangements. Ermelo was completely destroyed. It had neither shelter nor food, and though we were prepared to take both with us, we again found it impossible to get horses.

Our next attempt at getting away from the railway was to drive westwards across the Orange River Colony from Harrismith to Kroonstad. This we accomplished. Our first stop was Bethlehem. Round the village so far as we could see not a farmhouse was standing, and on the way thither we passed the site of what were prosperous stores, but only a heap of stones marked where they had been. All had been burned.

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About one-fifth of the village itself had been destroyed, the houses on the outlying streets having been pulled to pieces to provide fuel for the troops; but when remarking upon the deplorable destruction, we were told that Bethlehem had suffered least of the villages in that part of the Colony. Starting from Bethlehem, we drove eastwards to Lindley. Our road lay through splendid grazing ground with frequent farms. Every one had been burned with the exception of Malan's farm by the False River, which had been used as a hospital up to the peace. The sad dreariness of that sunny Sunday drive will haunt me to my dying day. Every mile or so we came upon the tall gum trees or cactus hedge of a farm, and in the midst the gaunt blackened gables stood like the ghosts of happy homes. Sometimes the trees had been cut down, and the black ruins lay bare to the eye of anyone passing within half a dozen miles of the spot. A Kaffir kraal now and again, a stray white man wandering about amongst the ruins or over the empty fields, only added to the sense of desolation.

We outspanned for our morning meal in the garden of the General who had entertained us the previous evening in Bethlehem. His peach trees threw out scraggy blossoms from the thick, tall yellow reeds, the stumps of his gum trees stood rotting in the ground, his water dams were broken. His house, a substantial building of well-dressed stone, stood a grey ruin. When we walked up to what had been his front door, lizards scuttled away beneath the stones. Lying embedded in ashes was the iron framework of an upright grand piano, with its wires twisted over it in an entangling mass. The iron

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handles lay where they had fallen in the fire. Picture nails, brass studs, all the little metal knick-knacks of the best room of a well-to-do Boer, lay in the ashes just where they had fallen, and as though in grim irony, a copy of a Royal Reader, in English, fluttered only half-consumed in the kitchen doorway. The house had been burned in order to punish the General.

That evening we outspanned on the edge of the church square of Lindley. It was dark when we got there, but against the sky we could see roofless houses around us. Thanks to the genial hospitality of one of the heartiest and most typical Scotsmen it has ever been my good fortune to meet, we supped sumptuously from tins, in a room just reclaimed from ruins. It was roofed over with pieces of corrugated iron picked up on the streets; its window, from which the frames had been burnt out, was stuffed with sandbags. We made a strange company, and our host's tales of the war, and especially of the Highland Brigade, told in a Doric which had lost none of its richness by long contact with the veldt, mingled well with our strange surroundings. When I returned after midnight to my wagon to sleep, half a dozen Kaffirs squatted round a smoky fire in what used to be the yard of the hotel; my own men had covered themselves up under the wagon, and in the starlight I saw the heap of ruins which was all that remained of one of the prettiest villages of the Orange Free State.

When I woke next morning and looked out it was as though I had slept among some of the ancient ruins of the desert. Every house, without a single

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exception, was burnt; the church in the square was burnt. Had I been there a week before I should have had the place to myself. Before the war, Lindley was an Arcadia embowered in trees; now it lay shadeless on the yellow, parched veldt slope. A few faithful peach blossoms from blasted and broken branches struggled to respond to the warm touch of spring, and managed to throw a shimmer of pink amidst some of the ruins. The place had stood practically untouched, although taken and retaken many times, until February 1902, when a column entered it unmolested, found it absolutely deserted, and proceeded to burn it. The houses are so separated from each other by gardens that the greatest care must have been taken to set every one alight. From inquiries which I made from our officers and from our host, who was the chief intelligence officer for the district, there was no earthly reason why Lindley should have been touched. When burnt it was a more advantageous fighting ground for the Republicans than when intact, and the destruction done fell more heavily upon our friends than upon our enemies.

From Lindley we drove to Kroonstad. Once more the land was desolate, and the farms invariably burned. A member of the South African Constabulary, a company of soldiers, a transport Repatriation Board wagon with a team of the most miserable and disease-eaten mules I ever saw, a family of Boers living in tents by a burnt farm near a drift, block-houses, trenches, barbed wire entanglements, were all we saw until the sun sank and left us in darkness, just within sight of the lights of Kroonstad.

For three days — the 4th, 5th and 6th of October

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— we drove about 150 miles. The country was as waste as the edge of the Sahara; almost the only cattle we saw were carcasses rotting on the wayside; we passed only one farmhouse that was intact; we stopped at two villages, about one-fifth of one being destroyed, and of the other not a single roof remained. Some Kaffirs had broken up mealie patches in one or two places, but with that exception we could see nothing to show that a plough or a hoe had been put in the ground; and the sowing time was almost over.

PART IV: THE INTERNATIONAL

1. BERNE 1919
2. BERLIN 1920
3. A DANISH GATHERING (1921)
4. THE BERLIN SOCIALIST CONFERENCE 1922
5. TALKS IN BELGIUM (1922)
6. AT PRAGUE (1922)

CHAPTER ONE: THE NEW WORLD AT BERNE¹

BERNE is smiling under frost and snow. Youngsters are sliding and skating, and every fir looks like a Christmas tree. A holiday frame of mind creeps upon one whether one invites or not. It is a time of 'jigs, strathspeys, and reels,' and it is not at all easy to remind myself that we have all come here for stern business.

This place now seems to be at the uttermost ends of the earth. To get to it you appear to have to go round the world and pass through every Custom House in creation. You have to get past barriers, be penned up in queues awaiting the nod of men who stand in doorways like St. Peter at the gate of Heaven, be examined and cross-examined, have to declare how much filthy lucre you have with you — and when you get free at last to scramble for a place in a train, you feel as though you should be clothed in broad-arrow canvas.

Never was the folly of man and his nationalist antagonism so exemplified as in a journey to Switzerland. Everybody is suspect; everybody is sifted. And yet it was some consolation for us to meet with evidence everywhere of the great interest taken in the Conference. The official examining our passports looked up with a sly welcoming smile. 'Ah! you go to the International!' That ended it — unless for a whispered 'God speed.'

The experience was really most heartening. The common folk recognized their own ambassadors. Paris to them is little; Berne is everything. Paris is

¹ *Forward*, February 22, 1919.

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full of the amateurs, the diplomatists, the lecturers. It is like a great Summer School run at enormous national expense. The smart young man who knows nothing of mass opinion or national life is there with his books, documents, and theories. The old type of diplomatist and politician who propose to build a new world from the bricks and mortar of the old and in the style of architecture of the old are there also: they are Paris. Nothing of that is here.

Here there are the leaders of the new world, the men who are responsible for European revolutions in States, in labour outlook, in ideas. Eisner came to meet me on my arrival last night; Haase and Kautsky came this morning; Vandervelde and his Belgians; Longuet and Thomas with the French delegation; Russians, Italians, Czechs, Greeks – the men who are in the midst of the changing life of Europe are in the Hotel Smokings and the Volks-Haus; and, in preparation for the formal sittings of the Conference, we exchange views, discuss difficulties, explain the position in our various nations, and are coming to agreements. We gossip ourselves back into our old relationships, and think and plan ourselves forward into the New World.

The one threatening rock ahead is a discussion on responsibilities for the war. One section, headed by the Chauvinist French Minority and the Belgian Minority, wish for an *ex parte* judgment which may not stand the examination of time. No one wishes to shirk the issue, but most of the other sections wish a preliminary examination of the facts and an immediate concentration here upon peace problems. I have had some talk with Kautsky and his wife,

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under whose charge the German official documents are, and who hope to finish their work of editing and ordering in a week or two. They do not desire to hide anything, or to avoid any discussion.

But although Kautsky is trusted by the Majority party, he has the mind and the outlook of the Independents. So, of course, has Eisner, who looks more than ever like Kropotkin or some professor who has peered so much into books that his shoulders have bent and his eyes become dimmed. Haase is also here, apparently more nimble and springy than ever. These are the three leading members of the German delegation, and they would join in any condemnation of German militarism that the Conference thought fit to make.

On the other hand, the German Majority delegation – so far as it has arrived up to the time of writing – is feeble. Molkenbuhr is old and broken. The first glimpse of him was a great shock; he had become small, thin, tottering. Müller also bore traces of worry and hardship, but Wels, who had been Military Commissary in Berlin, looks as sturdy as before. They feel their humiliation; they are a little sullen. Upon them the fury of the attack will fall.

They will plead national defence, and will argue that when a war begins questions of who struck first disappear, and each nation is bound to get out of it as best it can. That, however, will not carry them far, and if the debate were confined within these limits it would do good rather than harm. But behind that there are accusations of treachery to International Socialism, there are personal charges, there is passion, and once the floodgates are opened

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it will be a wild rushing tide that will break through.

We meet informally every day to talk over business, and hitherto a Sabbatical peace has prevailed. But we await the arrival of the French Chauvinist Minority and the Belgian resentful Majority (if it comes) with some apprehension. I have hopes that the Conference has already become so consolidated that it will now weather any storm, and that the Germans will handle the position with such discretion that the disruptive elements will be kept under control.

I referred to atrocities. They flared up. 'Atrocities! The greatest atrocity of the war,' said one of them, 'was the starvation of our women and children.' That feeling is deep-seated in the German mind.

Yesterday I tried to explain to some of the German Minority delegates the feeling in England regarding them and their country. They could not understand it. They had been seeing *The Times* and some of our worst war sheets regularly. Their authorities had allowed these to be sold because they were a great help to the Militarist parties. They kept Germany in the field long after she would have broken up.

But the men with whom I was talking did not believe that these papers represented English opinion. Our election with its great victories for reaction had prepared them a little for the unpleasant truth I had to tell them. 'But it is a new Germany,' they said, 'which now exists.' That they repeated again and again. And as I sat and listened to them at the Conferences and elsewhere expounding their plans of peace, applying the principles of nationality to the

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new divisions of Europe, emphasizing the determination of Germany to pursue the policy of disarmament and advance the project of a League of Nations, and when I remembered that some of them were Presidents of the new Republics and all of them Ministers and men of supreme influence in the State, I was convinced that we were dealing with totally new conditions.

When we talked of peace conditions, I found that they had thought out details far more than any other section I had met – far more certainly than I found anyone had done in Paris. They produced maps of nationalities better executed and much clearer than any I had seen. Their attitude was that they were beaten, that if injustice were imposed upon them they would not be in a position to resist it, but that in that case unsettlement would follow. Europe would then be full of bad neighbours, and the League of Nations would then either be a farce or an instrument of oppression.

Regarding indemnities they were particularly interesting. When we were discussing the International Labour legislation arising out of a League of Nations, they reminded me that if Germany had excessive indemnities imposed upon her, she could not accept high standards of labour conditions. To sweat her workers would be necessary. Sweating and oppressively burdensome indemnities could not be separated. If Germany were punished for disregarding International Labour standards, the Allies would only find increasing difficulty in getting anything out of her at all. In fact, a complete deadlock would be reached.

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On the whole subject their minds were perfectly clear. They expected a heavy burden, and they were willing to accept it without demur. But in the nature of things they thought that their payments would have to be limited to a sum which could be paid in a comparatively short period of years. Political, economic, and military considerations prevented any other policy not in the interests of Germany, but in those of the Allies. 'If I wished for revenge upon the Entente,' said one, 'I should encourage it to impose upon Germany an indemnity so great that it could not be paid for many years. That would keep Germany united and resentful, and it would weaken the Entente and weary it. Then my chance would come. But I do not wish this at all. I want peace.'

At the same time, I find that everybody is dreading Anarchy, brought about by the poverty of the people, and the stagnation of industry. 'It is either we Socialists or chaos,' they said in various tongues and forms, and they blame the Entente Powers for rushing them blindly towards chaos. As one sits here in conference and discussion, and particularly as one watches the types of men who have come as delegates and listens to the tone and style of their conversation, it becomes clearer and clearer that they are to wield a great influence in the future, that they cannot be permanently eclipsed, that they are not the people upon whom follies can be done with impunity. It is not the mad ideas of fools that are to be the foundations of the New World.

CHAPTER TWO: IN BERLIN IN 1920¹

§ I

A FEW broken stones on the front of the Schlosse, the variety of military uniforms, an unusual freedom of the proletariat to travel in first-class carriages with third-class tickets – thus the Revolution proclaims itself to the casual stroller about the streets of Berlin. As for the war, you find it in empty streets, rather sparsely stocked shop windows, general dilapidation (the only new paint I have seen thus far has been on the British Embassy), prices unbelievable, worried housekeepers, free dinners, and such-like things. One buxom lassie told us as we were passing her that we were miserable creatures, but the folk in ordinary are just as they were before the war.

When you penetrate a little deeper, you find other things. Ebert, whom I last saw in London in a workman's Sunday clothes, received me under the shades of the most Imperial trees, and, soothed by the restful green of lawns and the dreamy splash of fountains, we talked of the revolution, Germany, the Second International. It was a queer dramatic change, and we felt it and spoke of it as we strolled on the paths hardened by the feet of men who had dug the channels down which the streams of European history have run.

Another time we dined in the great palatial home of the President of the Reichstag. There in its midst was Loebe – the quiet, unassuming Loebe, with the

¹ *Forward*, August 7, 1920.

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bright, lively little face and the big spectacles – with a different coat and waistcoat, but with the same simple, honest keenness, eager to learn everything he could, to discuss policy, and to deplore the divisions in the Socialist ranks. The ornate Imperial rooms seemed to shiver, and their marble seemed to blanch at the change. William (waiting removal) looked down upon us, because it is sometimes easier to change a monarch in your State than a picture in your rooms. And yet, I doubt if any company of men who ever assembled in that place of banquets discussed affairs of State in better mind than was done there that night.

Or again, what memories and emotions one had standing in the Minister's room at the Foreign Office in Wilhelmstrasse. Bismarck is still on the walls, but the other pictures of the German governing caste have gone. In their places are landscapes as seen by the modern school of painters. They reminded me in their drawing and colour of the paintings on the wall of a certain Soho restaurant which needy artists painted to get rid of dinner accounts. I do not know if it was by design or by accident, but the companion to Bismarck was a painting of a dark lowering sea and sky with gleaming white crested waves dashing angrily forward, one of them like a great bony grasping hand seeking something.

Dr. Simons, who now rules there, and who won such a great reputation at Spa, is a man with those smallish clean-cut features which I associate with precision and dignity. He is stiff without being pig-headed, and, I should say, thoroughly honourable. He means to carry out every possible obliga-

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tion, but he rightly will decline to accept the position of continued threats and humility heaped upon humility. In demeanour and in mind he belongs to the old order of diplomacy rather than to the new, and to him the Revolution does not mean much more than the liberalizing of the German State. A really able man (even if one may not agree with him) is at the head of German foreign policy. In Dr. Simons, Mr. Lloyd George and M. Millerand have met their match, who will be all the more effective because his mentality is totally different from theirs.

My mind goes from this sanctuary of the Foreign Office to the study of the famous Herr Professor of History with whom I discussed events and appearances in wider relations than the mere happenings in Paris or Spa, and with longer views than are bounded by to-day and to-morrow. As we sat roaming over folk life, over recent developments in literature and religion, we were conscious of the benign face of Hegel on the one side looking across at the frowning countenance of Bismarck on the other. The Professor saw nothing but gloom ahead. In common with his class, he had the greatest forebodings about the Red Army then marching onwards to the Prussian frontier. He sighed for authority whilst he discussed and admitted the evil features of the late Prussian State. He was as one who had been forced to cross a Jordan, who had lived for over sixty years on one side and had made a home upon it, and who was a stranger in the new land and found it hard to understand.

In these high places one meets the great change as though it were a dream of somewhat incongru-

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ous experiences. It is the strangeness of things that strikes one. It is a death and resurrection. One sees men wandering hither and thither, and that feeling so possesses one that the very streets in their emptiness and the great buildings in their desertion seem to add voices to the general murmur of doubt as to the meaning of it all, as to the whence, the where, and the whither. The state of mind is one of wonder; only the great captain of industry, the associate of Stinnes, who came to see us, showed the bustling energy which enters the mists and brushes through the briars.

Elsewhere, you see the pain of the change. We have yet to visit the Moabit quarter and see the women and the children, but two scenes we have witnessed. We have seen the thin pale student at the University, buttoned up to the neck for economy's sake, sit at tables where meals are supplied by charity. That cuts to the quick. They are not the Bohemian spirits with whom one meets in the Paris Latin Quarter; they are the sons of the professional people who are wrecked. They are kin to the tattered tragedy I saw on the street one day, clad in nothing decent but dignity, who picked up a scrap from the pavement as though it were a lady's fan in a drawing-room.

The other sight was of a different order. On our journey thither we stopped at a station and a train came in alongside of us. From it swarmed, literally in hundreds, people with knapsacks, baskets, bottles, packages, bags, laden as though they had been on a looting expedition. Age, youth and manhood rushed and jostled each other, scrambled, jumped, tumbled

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over a railing, stuck, were buried up, emerged, and finally filled our train, packed it from engine to rear light. They had been across the Dutch frontier buying things. I was told that beyond the frontier petty traders hold market on the roadway, and their stalls stretch for miles. Thither people come from the German side, pay fares, add heavy custom duties to the prices, and then buy things cheap.

I got some figures. Coffee is bought over the frontier for 10 marks the lb., the duty paid is 7 marks; if bought on the German side it costs 32 marks. A packet of cocoa is bought for 10 marks, bears duty of 2.50 marks; in the German shops it costs 30 marks. And so on. Let those who theorize about markets explain this. As for me, I have seen the flight from high prices. It was like bees swarming, like starlings in autumn, like hordes on the march. Rain was falling, a fine, silent, mournful rain; out along the railway lines one looked into a mysterious haze, set on fire by the evening sun. It was an eerie picture, a symbol of those powers that drive men to slaughter, to flight, to pilgrimage, and to which we do obeisance as Fate.

§ 2¹

The endurance of mankind is one of the greatest revelations of the war. First of all the soldier in the trenches showed it, now it is to be met with everywhere. Grim distress, with the long sinewy fingers which grip people by the throat, has declared war

¹ *Forward*, August 14, 1920.

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upon Europe, and I have been in the first line of trenches. They are filled with women and children who, night and day, are at hand-grips with the enemy. I said (silently to myself, just to see what it would feel like), to a little mite with large hungry eyes, with death nursing it like a mother: 'You must put up with it, it is God punishing you for the sins of your people. I heard that in church, and it must be true. I saw a bill on a church door in Glasgow, saying that you must be left to die, so it must be just!' It started. It was as though the devil spoke over my shoulder, and I looked round to see him. Oh, there is no doubt of the success of the Statesmen in this job. They may be unable to draft an Act of Parliament, but they can starve the people, give them rickets, and scourge them with tuberculosis. I have seen the work of the Supreme Craftsman.

In the few days I have been here, I have spoken to people of all kinds of opinion and party, and also of all kinds of interest, and some conclusions are pretty clear. Only in quarters of no account is there an unwillingness to do what can be done to carry out the Treaty: Germany will, of course, try to bargain, for in that respect its human nature is like our own; there is little foundation for the stories told so assiduously at home that Germany is keeping armed men with an eye upon the possibility of using them against other nations. To start with these, or similar fears, is to start wrong. The sections that harbour these thoughts are depressed. When they pipe, people do not dance: when they speak, people do not listen. 'Ludendorff is very pessimistic,' said one of his close personal friends to me.

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I have come to the conclusion that Germany accepts defeat, and, for the moment, it is thinking of how it is to keep itself together. There is no doubt but that the State is badly shattered. Its Budget is impossible; to make ends meet is impossible. A case was given to me of an estate of 12,000,000 marks being reduced on the death of its owner to 1,800,000 by taxation. There can be no fresh start till Germany's liabilities are made definite. The German workman is virtually a slave to his State creditors.

My readers know all about the shortage of food and raw materials, especially cotton and iron. The topic of universal discussion at present is coal. Without doubt 2,000,000 tons a month can be taken out of Germany, but that amount is not a surplus: it is a draining of life blood. I have talked to the representatives of great capital about it, and at Geneva I shall have a chance of talking to Hue and the miners' officials about it. The last word upon it will not be said either by the Capitalists or by the Government, but by the workmen. This tribute will be for a long time dry tinder to which the match of disorder can easily be applied.

In spite of all this, I believe that German Capitalism is stronger to-day than ever it was. It is better federated. It is meeting its difficulties by more complete organization. Both in public administration and in finance, combinations of industrial groups are being recognized. The world will, by and by, have to meet, not so much as the result of the war as of the utter stupidity of Paris and the Supreme Councils since the Armistice, a competition from German

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Capitalism far more efficient than has ever been known. I say this even if, in the meantime, the German State has to become bankrupt.

Let there be no mistake about it, the German Revolution has so far done little more than turn Germany into a Capitalist State. The power of the Junker and of the military caste is broken. The restoration of the Monarchy is a vain dream: the re-establishment of military ascendancy is out of the question. The feudalism of the Government has gone. On some of the old Pomeranian estates it survives, but in the Government offices here it only remains in portraits that are being displaced. The Capitalist is in office and in control. He is to be strengthened by political liberty.

One may ask 'What of the Socialists?' They are powerful in votes and in representation. Ah, yes; but what about policy? One of them, who now holds high authority in the Reichstag, deplored to me the fact that, until the Revolution, in so far as they were positive, they were theoretical, whereas, when they were practical, they were merely negative, and he reminded me of a great bout I had with Ledebour, at Copenhagen, when I argued that a great party which made a supreme virtue of voting against credits was only playing with grand politics. The Socialist Party has all the ability to control State policy, but it is not ready in habits of thought. It did not drive hard enough.

It was hampered in three ways. It got enmeshed in war affairs. Like the majority of our own Labour Party, it allowed itself to be too much identified with the ordinary governing class, and could not see its

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national duty, except through the spectacles and from the point of view of that class. From that position it began to govern, and, of course, it failed. Then the trade-union section upon which it rested had lost all its vision. The 'class war' had become a mere shibboleth of opposition, and when tested in office it was barren. Its words were revolutionary, but it had no corresponding policy of action. *After* it possessed the land, it had to consider its policy. Meanwhile, the interests of Capitalism and Nationalism gathered together behind it. They knew what to do. In spite of the ruin facing them, they had confidence. The Socialists produced Noske to defend their State, but no leader to transform it.

That brings me to their third impediment, their division. The Spartacists were the saviours of Capitalism by diverting the energies of the Socialist Right from economic ends to military problems. The Independents, so magnificent as critics, failed when they should have boldly undertaken responsibilities. They continued to criticize, to refuse to work with those with whom they had some disagreements, to decline a share in the Socialist Government because they could not get their full programme. Thus a Socialist policy became impossible, until, to-day, the Socialist majority has been driven into nearly the same position as our Parliamentary Labour Party was in up to the outbreak of the war, when, owing to its own weakness and the political circumstances in which it was placed, it had to keep a Government in office with which it had little in common.

The German Independents contain within themselves two antagonistic tendencies which will prob-

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ably split them, and, at the same time, they now appear to be losing strength in the constituencies owing to their attitude of pure criticism and their refusal to co-operate with the majority in reconstructive work. The present position of the Independents ought to be a warning to the I.L.P. to make up its mind where it stands, and have the courage to pursue its policy. The Independents had a great opportunity which they have thrown away by dallying with Communism, without going heartily into it or keeping away from it. The Majority, on the other hand, seems to be recovering from its mistakes. Its policy is commending itself to the masses, but leaders and spokesmen are sadly needed.

Such is the German political scene, as I have been able to get a grip of it. Starvation, bankruptcy, chaos are its background; a Revolution which will change a few coats of arms and decorations is its foreground; the figures moving on the stage are groups of well-organized Capitalists and badly-organized Labour and rival Socialist Parties. It looks as though great chances will pass, and German Socialism will have to settle down to master the tactics of Parliamentary power. It might have had a little bit of a short cut, but its divisions prevented it, so it must trudge the long road.

CHAPTER THREE: A DANISH GATHERING¹

A FOREIGN journey nowadays is a kind of obstacle race. A gentleman with a stiff back first of all takes your passport and passes judgment like an art critic or a solicitous family on your photograph. Then he proceeds to write your name and number in the Book of Suspicious People who cross Frontiers. He begins, bites his pencil in doubt as to spelling, begins again, asks for explanations in a form of the English tongue which you meet with nowhere else, and by hint of heroic persistence the job gets finished. Then he stamps your passport with official emphasis, has a last suspicious look at you, and you are passed on to another Didymus.

This gentleman wants to know why you are so rich as to have £20 with you. Your interest is roused, for here at last the man of money is a suspect person. I take to this official in green uniform. He has the roots of morality in him. Innocent man that I am, for I soon discover that the book which he has been consulting is not the Bible, but a compilation of prohibited sums of money in every coinage under the sun. I must forfeit £5. I explain in broken English that I am Scottish, and that that is a hard thing to do. I will give him my right hand, but not a £5 note. He politely, but officially, informs me that great as the Scots are, his official orders are greater. I enter into a metaphysical argument on how that cannot be, and get him out of his depth. At the door appears a fat man — one whose pocket-book obtrudes from his tie to his watch chain, obviously an Anti-Waste champion,

¹ *Forward*, August 6, 1921.

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and I see the allurements of the greater victim working upon my despoiler. Interest in me is dimmed. I close my pocket-book, and there is a mild protest; I put it in my pocket, and there is no protest. I smile; thank him for his fraternal help, and pass out.

Then another directs my footsteps, not as I would, but as he commands. I must go downstairs. Have I not luggage, and what can be in that luggage? Naked as to the earth I came, so apparently naked must I cross the frontiers of the nations. Going from one country to another is like going between life and death—a journey on which you can take nothing but your virtues—and of these you are not to be the judge. Well, it was over at last, and when I got out, approved, stamped, and chalked, I asked how many summers had I been in Purgatory? what was the historical judgment on an old British Premier, called Mr. Lloyd George? whether the Irish question was settled? and if there had ever been a Labour Government?

I was assured that I was still in time to take part in the Jubilee Fêtes of the Danish Socialist Party in 1921, and, looking northwards, I saw a vast body of Vikings careering in wild rain clouds. They escorted us across, they blew up the sea, they sounded their trumpets round our hotel that night. I dreamt that England was still in drought and sunshine. Before the Fêtes burst upon us in their encircling fury, we had an hour or two to reflect. Much was familiar. I discovered the corner where we sat in 1910 when we were together at the International. The screening ivy was still there, the tables and the chairs—as though kings and queens had been there, and

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their resting-places were kept sacred and untouched for posterity. And the ghosts were there, and I, alone of those who stole to that corner, remain in the flesh! Gone are the old familiar faces. But no more of this. The curtain is about to be rung up on the Fêtes, and the call-boy has come to tell me that I am wanted on the stage.

Delegates have gathered from all over Denmark, from the political, industrial, and co-operative sections, which work here in unity, and some dozen foreigners (from Iceland to Prague) have been invited to be guests of the party. We meet first of all in one of the halls of the Parliament House. How very familiar was the crowd. I know those quiet, solid, sedate men, clad in their Sunday best, or in their 'blacks,' and nearly all in black ties. They sat there listening like a congregation in the United Free Church at Lossiemouth, when not spoiled by visitors. I have met them on the hills at home; I could pick out their cousins by the score on the farms of Morayshire. There, for instance, is my old friend, Jock French, still alive and speaking Danish; and Willie Munro, too shy to speak anything, but too honest to withhold his heart from his handshake.

All that day, we presented addresses and we ate and we drank. To tell of the manner of our feasting I should have to begin with the feasting of the 'Hardy Norsemen,' so as to establish pedigrees. There was the board laden with everything which strong appetites can covet and strong heads can stand, and we helped ourselves. And yet the Daintiest of the Dainty would have had no cause for being shocked even had she stayed till the cracked bell of

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the Town Hall chimed its hymn after midnight. Spontaneously came the speeches, the hohcs, the laughter; and we sang the 'International,' and songs new made for the occasion, which lampooned the Danish enemies of Socialism; we honoured the dead and the infirm fathers who could only send us messages from their beds or their firesides. In the end, only the husks of the feast remained, the addresses were all given, the songs all sung, and we went home by the light of the moon.

Next day was given over to the great procession, in which twenty thousand people took part. They do these things far better than with us. They march six abreast, and have not only bands but choirs that sing as they go. And they do not sing rubbish like the 'Red Flag,' but music that makes your pulses beat, and puts fire in your heart. They embower themselves in branches of the oak, but, above all, they use the flag as opposed to the banner. The banner is a dead thing, whereas the flag is riotous with wild life. The effect of massed flags is wonderful. Walt Whitman felt the witchery of flags, and I thought of his poem as they flapped and nodded before me to-day. I never faced such a sea of faces as I have just done from the platform. In a great blaze of light the merry-making went on far into the night. Black clouds flew overhead, the moon was pale with jealousy, because her light was not required, in the great tents there were shouts of happy people and the clatter of dishes and the flapping of flags was over the whole park; I left long before there was any sign of weariness, and continued the fête in my dreams.

I have been struck by the nature of the questions

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put to me by the people I have met here, and particularly by the gentlemen who wish you to say something of interest to the readers of the newspapers. By far and away the most common one was: 'Is there to be peace with Ireland?' and a very good second was: 'Why is England so impotent in Foreign Policy?' 'Is it really ignorant of what France is doing?' Both were difficult questions to answer, but I did my best to give impartial and objective replies. I found a growing suspicion and fear of French policy and a growing wonder at our own. My readers need make no mistake. Our country, inspired by a vigorous democratic vision, can lead the Continental democratic movement, and be its rallying centre. And that is true whether one has in mind Foreign Offices or the Socialist movement.

CHAPTER FOUR : THE BERLIN CONFERENCE ¹

§ I

I AM just leaving to take part in the Joint Conference of the Executives of the three Internationals, which takes place next week in Berlin. Of its complete success I am not very optimistic. From the very beginning I have taken the view that the Third was divided so deeply from the main Socialist movement in temperament and methods that it had to be regarded not only as independent but as hostile, and no sloshy sentiment of brotherly unity made me blind to what I considered to be the facts that ought to dominate our attitude.

True, Communism, as the Government of Moscow, has departed far from the ground it occupied two or three years ago. Let my readers get hold of a report of the I.L.P. Conference, at Glasgow, and read what the Communists said there. They will give themselves much entertainment from the incapacity there displayed to make the simplest forecasts on the effect of certain policies; they will see from what a morass of floundering effort the I.L.P. so narrowly escaped.

Mr. Ransome has recently exposed in the *Manchester Guardian* the present position of Moscow since the surrender of the Communists to Capitalist ways. When they made their revolution they showed heroic courage but little common sense; now that they are trying to settle it, they are still lacking

¹ *Forward*, April 8, 1922.

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in the capacity to defend themselves against ill-digested policy.

Whilst in the practical affairs of government they have begun to face real problems of a political and economic kind, the Executive of their Third International, however, does not seem to have learned anything. Above all, it has not learned how to pursue a straight and an honourable course of action. Its manifestoes, and particularly its private instructions to its agents, pursue a mean underhand policy of deceit and expediency. By pretending to be friendly and to seek a united front, it plans to disrupt the industrial and political movement still further, and it is apparently going to Berlin next week to play that game. We shall see!

If, when I get there, I find I am wrong, I shall offer a handsome apology. I think, however, that the meeting of the *three* Executives is premature. We cannot co-operate whole-heartedly with men of whose straightness we doubt, men whom, we suspect, desire to come in in order to make mischief, and I regret that the Vienna Union, now that it has been forced to meet with the Second International, has insisted that the Third should be there as well. We should have faced our difficulties by stages, and, first of all, united those who were divided without good cause.

We have lost valuable years by our divisions, and we have a Right Nationalist Wing unchecked at a time when International Socialism ought to have made its position clear. We are out for transformation, not for sudden change; we recognize that every National Party has its own problems and

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methods imposed upon it by its conditions, and that it ought, therefore, to have full liberty to develop its own policy, provided it keeps upon a well-defined Socialist road.

If Lenin, whose serious illness gives us all great concern, would pursue his own way in Russia and leave us alone, unhindered by his subsidized agents, newspapers, and propaganda, to pursue ours, there is no reason why we should not be in the same International: he helping us and we helping him. But no one who surveys recent controversy can hope for such a thing!

The deadlock is well seen in the trial of Social Revolutionaries by the political tribunal of the Bolsheviks, about which protests are being sent to Moscow from all over the world. This is the situation. The Communists claim the right to be allowed to stir up rebellion, not only against Capitalist but against Socialist Governments, and if these Governments defend themselves by imprisonment or execution, the Communists shout 'tyranny' or 'murder.' If in Russia, however, a Social Revolutionary proposes by word or deed to overthrow the Dictatorship, the Communist claims the right to imprison or execute — and to be insolent in the doing of it.

I see no chance of a union of the three Internationals; and, so far as I am concerned, I am to agree to nothing that will confuse our Socialist standpoint or unnecessarily embarrass us in our work here. I envy the Communists their spirit of effort, and I get disgusted and discouraged by the placidity and complacency and acquiescence of some of our own people. Spirit remains the problem of

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the I.L.P., and still more of the Labour Party, but the way to get it is not to fuse with the Third International.

Because I feel more and more the need of the revolting spirit, which energetically strives to gain better things, and which unites a divine discontent with a firm and intelligent will, I rubbed my eyes when I found that some of my Bradford friends, in drafting that very inadequate and midnight-oil new constitution for the I.L.P., put an echo from Schopenhauer in it, and declare that the I.L.P. should impart to the people a 'will' to realize Socialism. I take off my hat to the Bradford philosophers, though I am to vote against them as constitution-mongers. It is will that we want: without it, power is of no consequence.

My hopes of Berlin are confined to this. I have never seen that there was any need for the Vienna Union, and, but for keeping up an International connection I believe that the money spent by the I.L.P. upon it has been wasted. At Berlin, the two Socialist Internationals ought to come together and remain together, and a new Executive and Secretariat ought to be elected. Only in one country do the conditions make that difficult. The problem to which we have to address ourselves in Berlin is to get over these difficulties.

§ 2¹

The Conference preliminaries which took place behind closed doors were important only because they showed every now and again the hand of the

¹ *Forward*, April 15, 1922.

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jockey manœuvring for position, and at the very last moment the Business Committee of nine, of which, for my sins, I was a member, had to hold up the meeting of the Conference for two hours whilst it discussed the accuracy of reports and the sections of the Press to be admitted.

When we entered the great Committee Room of the Reichstag, which had been placed at our disposal, the atmosphere was already thick with smoke, and through the haze was to be seen an animated throng which, by face and tongue, had evidently come from very far. At the Moscow table next the door sat Bucharin and Radek, and Katayama, looking a hundred years older than when I last met him; at the Vienna table, which was next, was Otto Bauer, the most accomplished of Socialists; at the London table was an array of well-known internationalists. At a neutral point in the middle Serrati's genial full-bearded face stood out from his surrounding. Outside great white snowflakes fell.

Such was the geography, and now for the psychology. Before Clara Zetkin had read half of the declaration of the Third International, its policy was clear. The disillusioned and ineffective Revolutionary always becomes a Reactionary. Moscow actually wants an International Conference in which everybody from itself to the American Federation of Labour is to be represented. The Labour Party in its most reactionary days during the war had a similar bright idea. It brought Mr. Samuel Gompers over to add his views to ours – and, in simple language, the Conference was a farce.

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Smooth, smooth was the declaration. In it Communism was a lamb bleating in the wilderness. It contained not a word so strong as those that the I.L.P. has been uttering for years, and the war criticisms were but a pale reflection of our own. Were those the people who have been splitting the Socialist and Trade Union world on the excuse that the old leaders were reactionary? My readers may take it that the Third International declaration read at Berlin was an unqualified confession of bankruptcy both in ideas and policy.

Of the debate, and the developments which took place during it, I can say little in detail. Vandervelde opened for the Second International, and went to the heart of the matter. Were the Third International sincere, or was all this a move in tactics? Would they give proofs by allowing the democracies of Georgia and other States to govern themselves? Would they give their political prisoners a proper judicial trial? The Second International was anxious to co-operate — it had co-operated — but it was not anxious to waste its time, to join in calling a Conference foredoomed to failure, to be made a fool of.

The speech gave the Third International a chance of making a reasoned statement upon which negotiations could begin. But Radek, who followed, soon blew that hope to smithereens. He was offensive, declamatory, absurd. In twenty minutes he treated us to a display of the arrogance and vanity of the worst brand of Communism, and also to glimpses of the best. I was to reply, but it was too late, and the Conference had to adjourn. Next

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day there was no Conference, because the various sections had to meet to review the deadlock caused by the reply of the Third, which made it impossible for the Second to modify its position and yet retain the Socialist position. To have yielded in face of Radek's speech would have been to sell the pass which we have held, and intend to hold, against Communist disruptive tactics.

The Vienna Union had blundered into a dangerous position, and had dragged the International Movement with it. The problem now was to extricate ourselves. The next day I opened the debate, and strove to get on to ground where negotiation was possible. Serrati, not nearly up to his usual mark, did not help matters, and Bauer, speaking for Vienna, was fine, as he always is. Bauer is one of the men in the International Movement whose views are those of sound common sense, but his speech lacked in finish because he avoided the real problem before us: 'The Communists have declared that they are uniting with us now in order to give us trouble—they refuse to withdraw that declaration; how, then, can we co-operate?'

That point I tried to emphasize and also clear up, and until it was cleared up it was only waste of time to appeal for unity. Vienna was in the air. Late in the afternoon Radek rose to reply to me. I blushed under his friendly declarations, and smiled at his protests against my moralities as being nothing but English Imperialism. 'Justice,' 'honour,' and such sentiments, the Communist laughs at as being the cloaks of bourgeois Imperialism! Radek's second speech was, however, very different from the first.

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But it left the substantial points pretty much where they were.

We had only got thus far. The Communists declined to put an end to their policy of splitting the Socialist movement; they are holding up Georgia, because they must control the oil supplies of Baku, and because they need it for a political frontier, as our Imperialists say we need Ireland and Egypt; if Vandervelde goes to Moscow to defend the Socialist prisoners, he will have to answer accusations against himself. Obviously the Conference had either to end abruptly, or we had to abandon our conditions.

Again the Committee of nine took its coat off and began to work under the very worst Chairman who has ever muddled and prolonged business. I had already made up my mind from certain signals of distress and manœuvring, that if it had been left to the Third and the Second we should very soon have cleared the ground, but Vienna had to justify its existence, and it produced wordy documents and compromises which, in the end, I flatly refused to sign until amended. Then I signed.

The effect of the agreement is this: We all declare that a general Conference is desirable if it can be made a success, and the Second won its point, that before a Conference can be made a success, certain obstacles have to be removed:—

(1) We must have an understanding with the Third upon its pernicious policy of weakening the industrial and political position of Labour and Socialism by splitting it up and going inside to give it trouble.

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(2) We must get an agreement about the military and imperialist policy of Bolshevism.

(3) We must get guarantees that Socialist prisoners in Russia are to receive a fair trial.

On the last two we made great progress; with the first, the delegations of the Third had no powers to deal. The Conference was so useful, however, that we agreed to ask for the appointment of a joint Committee of nine to carry on negotiations and attempt to remove the obstacles to a general Conference. That, roughly and very summarily, is the agreement. I was really very glad to meet the delegates of the Third. I disagree with them and told them in public that they would have to retreat from their political, as they had from their economic, tactics. I believe they are making up their minds to do this, and I am hopeful of the work of the nine.

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The Committee of nine has failed to agree, and so the proposal to bring the Communists into harmonious action with the Socialists has brought no immediate results. On the principle that if one is forced to try something, one ought to do so with as much hope as possible, I did my best to get any good there was in this rather foolish move. But the inevitable has happened.

I call it a foolish move, and I have already explained in *Forward* why that is so. If one thinks for a moment of the bitter strife for which the Communists are responsible, the wild personal attacks, and the

¹ *Forward*, June 3, 1922.

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efforts to split the industrial movement, and remembers, in addition, the contemptible spirit in which it was done, one can see what an impossible task it is to try and get common action, without preliminary soundings, without any explorations of the difficulties and conditions beforehand, and with the fight going on all the time as though no negotiations were on foot.

When the Committee met this week all that could be reported as the result of the Conference here seven weeks ago was nothing. In no country had that Conference allayed strife. From every land we had reports of meetings broken up, Trade Union Conferences attacked, Unions split, rival candidates, and such things, and also reports of the cynical declarations of the Communists that their demand for a 'United front' was only tactics, and that they meant to use it to destroy the organizations with which they were nominally working. The difference in mind, method and outlook between Communists and Socialists is far too great to make common action anything but artificial.

I was again in charge of the Socialist case, and I went to the meeting with the full intention of continuing the Committee if there was the least chance of securing real unity of action. But I had no intention of wasting time by playing a fool's game. My charges and my questions were clear and specific, and they all amounted to this: Do you agree with what has been done in your name since the last meeting? Is that what you mean by a 'United Front'? They were given to understand that if they wanted claymores to represent the olive

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branch, claymores they could have, but they were left to choose. After an adjournment, which they asked for, they told us that they preferred claymores for themselves and the olive branch for us. I am sorry, but business cannot be done on that basis. I shall meet them again to-morrow with pleasure if they come honestly desiring co-operation, but this unfortunate move was premature, and for that Vienna is to blame. As Radek said, in effect, it brought us together and then left us in the lurch.

The unfortunate fact is that in nearly every country the Communists, who are now steadily weakening, have made Socialist co-operation impossible. Where they themselves are in power, repression is their sole idea of co-operation; where they are in a minority they ask for co-operation whilst they continue to attack. It will not do, and the Vienna Executive ought never to have allowed itself to be misled and to involve us all in this failure. The question now remaining is: Can anything further be done to promote unity? We shall have to make a further appeal to Vienna, and I hope that the Vienna Executive is to consider the position with some care. Meanwhile, we cannot wait. Things are moving with lightning speed in Europe, and by and by everything that is to make or mar the future will be a *fait accompli*. We had a most valuable exchange of opinion between the French, Belgians and ourselves, and it made my blood boil when I was informed afterwards that Vienna had graciously 'allowed' the French to take part. 'Allowed,' indeed! Nero seems to be fiddling whilst Europe is burning. If organized international co-operation is impos-

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sible, then let us scrap all the Internationals and get back to individual co-operation. There are some real things hindering that co-operation, but when they are augmented by a few pontiffs who act as dancing masters, then all organizations should take matters into their own hands.

One evening a few old cronies from different lands, who had taken part in many International meetings, foregathered and lived over years and events now almost buried in the past. Bebel, Jaurès, and the rest whose memories we keep green, joined us and we had a great time together. Amongst us was an ageing German who used to be a doughty antagonist of ours when theoretical orthodoxy was like a watchdog at International Congresses, and when the I.L.P. was fighting its way to the front. He recalled the great battle at Amsterdam, when it was decided by the vote of Japan that the French were wrong in supporting the Waldeck-Rousseau Ministry. My friend was furiously intransigent then. He recalled the debate.

He asked me if I had ever thought of the result of the decision. Indeed, I had. As events turned out, it was a great tragedy. He told me something I did not know, however. He said that in 1914, when there was a good Radical and Pacifist majority in the French Chamber, Jaurès thought of coming to a working agreement with Caillaux, but decided against it, remembering the Amsterdam decision. Thus the road to war was kept clear and Jaurès was assassinated. We sat on a balcony overlooking the gardens where Bismarcks, Moltkes, and Kaisers had walked and plotted in the dead days. The night was

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still, and we looked down on the trees through a blue haze of tobacco smoke, and philosophized on life and fate until midnight was long past and the silence of the city drove us to our beds and our dead to their graves.

When I was here about two months ago, I wrote about the low prices. I now find that they have gone up considerably again. But the market here continues an absolute chaos, and, so far as I have been able to see, the chief factor in determining price is whether the customer is a foreigner or not. Opinion waggles like the market. For the moment there seems to be a grand alliance between the Junkers and the Communists, but the Treaty of Rapallo is generally regarded as having been bad for German interests. And yet, it was the most natural step for Germany to take in its own self-defence. The only misgiving I have about it is that it shows how difficult it is still for Germans to have an objective vision of their own actions. Their conception of other opinion was again wrong.

The spirit is out of the people, and I am quite sure that if Germany is not to recover its morale it will be more dangerous to the communal health of Europe than it was when it strutted offensively. It is indeed high time for us to separate ourselves from the policy of passionate and blind repression which the French Government is pursuing. Whether it be the demobilization of the State Police (the only reliable Republican and Social Democratic force), the reparation policy, the administration of the Saar Valley — wherever the French finger is found, the results are deplorable and consequences are threat-

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ening. A cowed people on the one hand and a fear-stricken and resentful one on the other – that is the disease of Europe to-day. It will remain till some one arises to lead both sides away from their accursed war inheritance.

CHAPTER FIVE: TALKS IN BELGIUM ¹

THE spring is glorious in Belgium. The forests are in full leaf of the tenderest green, the parks are gay with flowers, the sun is upon the land. As we drove out this morning to the Labour College in the suburbs of Brussels, it was difficult to keep our minds upon the fact that we were here in order to discuss the strife that is rising up between France, Belgium, and ourselves. But so it was, and I propose to outline the results of our exploration.

But first of all I must write an appreciative paragraph on the Labour College itself. It is unlike ours in nearly every respect. It is in its own grounds and has a rural rather than an academic air. Attached to it are well-worked gardens and fields that yield all the agricultural produce required by the small community. Here, there is no imitation of the ways and style of ancient universities, and no self-conscious revolt which makes education a mere form of propaganda. There is a scientific working out of what is working-class education and culture. I wish we had such an institution in England and Scotland.

In an upper room looking out upon trees, lawns and garden walls, fourteen of us representing France, Belgium and Great Britain met and discussed why our countries are drifting apart. First of all we reported on the state of public opinion and then we considered common action in and out of Parliament. All parties agreed that the outlook was becoming more and more serious, and we also agreed that mis-

¹ *Forward*, May 27, 1922.

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understanding and misrepresentation were at the root of the evil.

I shall deal with Belgium first. The Belgians deny that the action of Jaspas at Genoa was inspired by France. The instructions came from Brussels, and our friends are inclined to believe that they were inspired by American influences – not political as much as commercial. They did not quite convince me.

They agreed, however, with what I wrote last week, that the average Belgian is more moved by property ideas of the *petite bourgeoisie* than is the average Englishman, and, consequently, when Jaspas raised the flag of the sacredness of private property and the sinfulness of appropriating it, his action did receive some response from Belgian public opinion. This affected even working class and Socialist opinion. The reason given was that if Russia is to modify its Communist position, Belgian capital must benefit, and there is a widespread suspicion that British egotism will, as usual, secure for itself the lion's share of the benefits and concessions.

So, whilst the Belgian working classes have no intention of supporting Jaspas in doing anything to widen the gulfs now yawning across Europe, whilst, in fact, they are opposed to him in so far as he has done this; they are not sorry that he has given a warning to Great Britain that Belgium has interests and a point of view which must be asserted.

In this the French support them, and, so far as it goes (and it does not go far) they are quite right. French opinion is more dangerous, although we have been assured that it is not nearly so bad as it looks. It undoubtedly fears Germany, and it con-

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siders that a Germany once more on its feet is to be its enemy. That is why it pleads for a military pact. If it got that, it would feel more secure and then might become more rational — so the report went. Meanwhile, it is afraid to let Germany get up.

Moreover, it is faced with bankruptcy. Its Budgets will not balance; France is going deeper and deeper into debt; it believes that it can tax itself no more and that its solvency depends upon its getting payments from Germany. When it speaks with these fears and hopes in its mind, it seems to be Imperialist and Militarist. But in reality, our friends have assured us, it is neither the one nor the other.

In our discussions, the effect of Mr. Lloyd George's policy in its variety of expression, came up repeatedly. His changes, his doublings; his sharp practices have made it impossible for France to trust him or us so long as he speaks for us. They say that whilst reason could have been followed immediately after the Armistice, Mr. Lloyd George was as responsible as anyone for the false start that was then made. He asked the people of his country to support him in a certain policy, which was more violent and extreme than then prevailed in France. He got his majority, and that had as bad an influence on France as on Great Britain itself. Now, having done the mischief, he poses as the Moses who is to lead Europe out of its bondage!

The French people do not understand this; it angers them, it makes them suspect us. Our Prime Minister is not only detested in France, but he can not now recover confidence. If he remains our spokesman, it will be hard for us to keep in good

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relations with France. He blames France for the reactions for which he himself is largely responsible. His nimbleness, his adaptability, his little tricky expedients have raised in the minds of the French all the traditional conceptions of British egotism, pose, lack of principle and unreliability.

The falseness of the French and British elections has been the cause of untold evil. It has given excessive power and opportunity to Parliaments that were far from representing the permanent will and interest of the peoples. In France, the Government and the Chamber of Deputies has grossly obscured real opinion. We were assured that the people of France would not willingly mobilize to provide an army for the Ruhr and that the General Staff know it. Even the Nationalist *bloc* would not support such a step with unanimity. So, whilst on the surface France is militarist, we were told that in heart it is pacifist.

The reports that Sembat and his friends gave us were surprising, I must confess. Their confidence in the essential justness of French opinion was very different from what our Press had led us to imagine, or what the policy of the French Government seemed to indicate. That opinion, disturbed by Genoa tactics – both British and French – and masked by Capitalist agents, is very different from what our French comrades see. They see something that wants peace but is afraid, that craves for co-operation but has lost its confidence.

We are to try and repair the damage. We have begun common action, and are to continue it in a persistent organized way. We are to go to France

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and Belgium and the French and Belgians are to come to us, and we are to voice from the same platform the same policy of peace and co-operation. The peoples cannot lose personal touch. If they do it will be at their peril. At the same time in Brussels, Paris and London the Parliamentary parties will pursue the same policy, will oppose Government adopting the methods of force, of occupation of the iron heel, will point out other ways and show another spirit. We, at any rate, are free not only to speak to our own people but to appeal directly to other peoples.

For our foreign policy we shall create and use an international platform. A Labour Foreign Minister should be, and, if the work begun here is pursued with success, will be, not only the custodian of the interests and will of his own country, but will be recognized as the exponent of other countries and other peoples as well. The democratic conceptions that revolt against secret and personal diplomacy is at war with the consequences of that diplomacy — national separateness, sterile formalities, hesitations to speak beyond frontiers. We are to try and pursue the policy of direct contact and see what happens. There are certain fundamental differences in our outlook, and the Governments are largely controlled by rival financial and industrial interests. The general opinion here is that Genoa has done much harm and only a little good, and we were only amused by the absurd interview which Mr. Lloyd George has given to the *Daily Express* blowing his own trumpet. It is grotesque in view of opinion here.

CHAPTER SIX: AT PRAGUE¹

WE have all at some time or other indulged in day-dreams of splendour when we imagined ourselves distributing pound notes as lavishly as the sun distributes its beams, or, what was less bizarre, when we thought of a Heine-like Paradise in which for a shilling we could live on the fat of the land. I have just been where, by thinking of pre-war values at one moment and present-day exchange the next, I have lived in both fairy worlds. We have been giving tips ranging from £5 to £10, feeding the inner man puritanically for a penny or two, and having a great feast for less than a shilling. In other words, I have been going through Germany, once more on the wake of a slump of the mark.

The longest and the most fairy-like hours have an ending, however, and as I worked my way eastwards, the flat plains ended and the mountainous valleys of the upper Elbe came to delight our eye with their basaltic precipices, pine woods, warm red-roofed homes and changing views. Emerging for a moment from the river valley, the train pulls up at that old place (showing only villas from the station), Tetschen, squabbled over at Paris as it has been squabbled over for generations, lying in a broadish basin amidst the hills, and there happened one of those strange things which are constantly reminding one of the great men who govern us and the lunatic nature of the world, at one and the same time. Tetschen is out of the land of the Mark. Its tongue and its cash are both very upsetting. You pay no

¹ *Forward*, August 26, 1922.

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more in thousands, but in tens, but the ten is greater than the thousand; generosity is frozen out of your heart; you think of bankruptcy.

All this in the twinkling of an eye. Germany and its mark must be a dream. Czecho-Slovakia does its best to convince you that it itself is a hard reality, and it succeeds. Its advance guard is its Customs House officer, a gentleman dressed in the most severely official uniform, but who might be sent to the London School of Economics and the Half Circle to learn how to administer and how to receive guests. He encourages you to tear and rive each other while waiting in a pack for his pleasure, he regards you as his game; if he discovers anything German in your possessions he dances a hornpipe and makes you part with your last stiver to get it through his clutches. I have never seen a more comic scene in my life than the gentleman pursued on the Tetschen platform by a porter waving two partly empty bottles, one containing German hair wash and the other eau-de-Cologne, because he had refused to pay what he considered to be an unjust duty equal to more than he gave for them.

But, the Customs officer is only a symbol of the prickly pear hedges which man plants and waters all over the world to make him feel that he is looking after himself and 'doing' the other fellow. This is one of the moral gains of the war about which so many sermons were preached. How queer is it that whilst on one side of Tetschen I lunch for ninepence, on the other the same food costs me three or four shillings. In the one case, I pay with the German mark, in the other with the Czecho-Slovakian

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crown. This financial muddle, in the making of which Mr. Lloyd George and his friends won much honour and confidence from their peoples, is becoming so baffling in its simple absurdities and so evil in its consequences (Czecho-Slovakia, for instance, finds its comparatively sound financial position a great industrial drawback for the moment because it cannot sell its products on account of the high rate of exchange of its currency) that one of the Ministers in this region said to me: 'As the matter is really under the control of France and yourselves, if you do not agree about German reparations you will ruin not only the three of you but every other nation as well.'

Through such tribulations I got to Prague. Every one who loves Edinburgh and regards its stones as precious must love Prague, for the history of the two cities is curiously alike. Whereas Edinburgh is a small town with its historical backbone lying within the compass of an easy walk, Prague is much extended; its castles and churches crown hill-tops, and its wide river sweeps round wide curves and is spanned by several bridges. One of these, the Charles Bridge, with its statues, its gate towers and its buttresses, is after my whole heart and soul. From every stone the dead generations call shame on our sordidness and shout in our ears that revolutions are made by men who love beauty and freedom. You can chop off the heads of such men and put them, as was done, on these tower gates, but they win all the same. Only — the custodianship of the memory of such men calls for men like themselves. Material desires make revolts but not revolutions. That is what we seem to forget.

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It is good to begin the day with a walk by the river. It flows swiftly and smoothly, and the newly awakened sun beams gently upon the castle-crowned hills and the woods. There are not many people about if you are out early enough and have not come to Prague to enjoy the comforts of a bed and a heavy breakfast. The bather and the fisher are before you. The latter, like a bit out of an old engraving, has moored his long skiff so near the bridge that he is part of it, and he sits with his long rods over the side of his boat waiting with the implacable patience of Time the joys and disappointments that events may bring. Or you can stroll with the milkman up and down the narrow crooked streets and catch the shadows of the last ghosts of the past. Huss and his friends, for instance, going to dispute, or the twenty-seven city leaders led out to execution in the market-place — seeking refuge from the daylight. Or you can join the crowds gaping at the old clock and watch the procession of the Apostles when it strikes, and hear the accusing cock-a-doodle-doo of the cock which ends the ceremony.

PART V: POLITICS AND POLITICIANS

1. SOCIALISM DURING WAR
2. LETTER TO A YOUNG LIBERAL
3. LETTER TO A COMMUNIST
4. A GLIMPSE OF THE FRENCH CHAMBER
5. JEAN JAURÈS
6. KEIR HARDIE
7. THE MEANING OF MAY DAY

CHAPTER ONE: SOCIALISM DURING WAR¹

THE position of the Socialist during war is a difficult one. With very few exceptions the British Socialist movement condemned this war. Unlike most people, it read its White Papers with some knowledge and recollection of the policy which preceded their publication and from which the events in them sprang; and the resolution which the Executive of the Labour Party passed two days after Sir Edward Grey made his speech remains to this day the official pronouncement of the Party.² That has

¹ *The Socialist Review*, October, 1914.

² (i.) That the conflict between the nations in Europe in which this country is involved is owing to Foreign Ministers pursuing diplomatic policies for the purpose of maintaining a balance of power; that our own national policy of understandings with France and Russia only was bound to increase the power of Russia both in Europe and Asia, and to endanger good relations with Germany.

That Sir Edward Grey, as proved by the facts which he gave to the House of Commons, committed without the knowledge of our people the honour of the country to supporting France in the event of any war in which she was seriously involved, and gave definite assurance of support before the House of Commons had any chance of considering the matter.

That the Labour movement reiterates the fact that it has opposed the policy which has produced the war, and that its duty is now to secure peace at the earliest possible moment on such conditions as will provide the best opportunities for the re-establishment of amicable feelings between the workers of Europe.

(ii.) That without in any way receding from the position that the Labour movement has taken in opposition to our engaging in a European war, the Executive of the Party advises that, whilst watching for the earliest opportunity for taking effective action in the interests of peace and the re-establishment of good feeling between the workers of the European nations, all Labour and

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been supplemented by statements issued by the Council of the Independent Labour Party, by resolutions of our branches, and by speeches made at scores of local meetings.

But when a war is actually upon us, when our friends are dying in the trenches and being mown down on the battlefields; when Europe is in the melting pot and our own country is not quite safe from attack, a set of problems different from those which faced us at the outbreak of the war have to be dealt with. Let us be quite definite upon this, however. The attitude we took up at the commencement is not altered one jot or tittle. A flood of one-sided statements is pouring over the country; people unprepared in any way to read it critically are devouring Bernhardi's attack upon his fellow Germans as though it were a statement of their mind and opinions; newspapers are deliberately garbling the truth and maliciously raising prejudices – through all these things the Socialist who knows his creed and understands why he believes in it sticks to it. War he abhors – not only in a pious way like some ecclesiastics who hold shares in armament firms and so know how to serve God and profit from Mammon, but in a definite way, and this war he continues to regard as the product of diplomacy and of the frame of mind of the classes from which diplomats come.

Socialist organizations should concentrate their energies meantime upon the task of carrying out the resolutions passed at the Conference of Labour organizations held at the House of Commons on August 5, detailing measures to be taken to mitigate the destitution which will inevitably overtake our working people whilst the state of war lasts.

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He also believes that every condition which brought this war upon us will remain to create more wars unless the people of Europe, acting directly through their own parties and organizations, decide to put an end to them; and particularly he sees that if diplomacy is to remain in the hands of those who now conduct it any opposition taken to conscription is to be hypocritical in theory and ineffective in practice. There he takes his stand. He deplores the destruction of cathedrals and libraries and old buildings, but he knows the war can no more be carried on without such barbarities than without loss of life. And there are some of us who put life before cathedrals and little happy families before libraries. That is the democratic prejudice, perhaps. It is a good one, nevertheless. Therefore, the Socialist regards all these things as the result of war. He does not attribute them to the barbarity of any one nation. War is one unbroken atrocity – always and whoever are the combatants. Barbarities therefore do not change our original attitude; they do not make us lose our heads and start cursing this army or that, and calling this people and that names. We hate them all in their common cause – war. The Socialist also knows that *The Times* tells as many lies as the *Cologne Gazette*, and that the British censor is no nearer to an angel of light than the German one.

We might prefer to say nothing about causes when hostilities have begun in earnest and after we had made our position quite clear. But the other side, knowing that its popularity is ephemeral and that the highest tides ebb, must justify itself. Recruiting meetings are turned into political gatherings to in-

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culcate jingoism and hatred. It is assumed that men will not defend their country unless they are convinced that the two or three gentlemen responsible for its foreign policy have been right, and so every criticism of them is treason and every doubt thrown upon their omniscience is a depletion of the army. As some Labour members who have joined the recruiting campaign of public meetings have found, they have been compelled, not only to appeal for the defence of their country, but to confess that they have been giving wrong votes in the House of Commons for years. We cannot allow this propaganda and browbeating to go altogether unchallenged. We have to protect the opinion to which the country will have to trust later on from being misled and stampered; we must put the true side, the facts, to our own people at any rate.

This part of our work ought not to be more at present than a subordinate part. A great campaign showing how our Foreign Office failed, both in word and deed, must come later when we are called upon to put our own house in order.

What more have we to do?

At the very outset we have to meet a fundamental difficulty – an old friend. Are we Tolstoyans? If we are, we must stand aside content with a purely negative message in one form or another for immediate purposes. Our positive message will be the proclamation of eternal spiritual principles which we shall see by the eye of faith over-ruling all evil, all violence and all defeats. Suffice it for me to say at the moment that for myself I cannot accept that doctrine. It is emerging from the moral evolution of

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the world. I wait for it like Simeon on the temple steps. But it has not yet come. Doctrines like that must be embodied before they can be followed. I give it the homage of one who is working for its embodiment. Beyond that I cannot go now.

If we cannot agree to non-resistance, what form should our help to the country take?

I shall put on one side all civil work, though we ought to lose no opportunity of pointing out that so soon as the State was menaced it flew to Socialist conceptions for its succour. Let that be given out from every platform of ours. The working class is always menaced, is always in the midst of economic war — outflanked, commissariat lines cut, and so on. Its state can be very dramatically described by the phrases now used in every paper telling us of the operations and tactics of our armies. Therefore the steps which the menaced State has taken are, by the admission of the powers that be, the right ones for the working class itself. But to discuss and elaborate this would lead me on to a road which I do not propose to travel in this article. I am just indicating it in passing.

The question that is always facing us is that of recruiting. As a matter of fact that is no Socialist test at all. Always assuming that we are not Tolstoyans or members of the Society of Friends, there is really nothing in this problem except individual judgment. Personally, I could not appear on a pro-war platform. I do not believe in recruiting meetings. I think them quite unnecessary if the State would do its duty to the families and dependents of the men who enlist; and the so-called political truce

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which they are supposed to mark is to me nothing but humbug. To get men to meetings and then work them up to a great pitch of excitement by the wildest and most ranting of statements is wrong and, as some officers recently told me, has not produced very satisfactory results. It is not the way to enlist an army. I believe that the effect of the whole thing is antagonistic to Labour's principles, self-respect, and political efficiency. Yet, I can see how Socialists may quite conscientiously disagree on this matter, and provided that their speeches retain some distinctive quality of the working-class mind, and put the Labour point of view, they must be allowed to use their own judgment.

There is nothing inconsistent in Socialists saying that their native land should be protected in its day of trial, or that when it finds itself in a war it should be helped to get out of it without disgrace and dishonour, if that be at all possible. In this respect the present war is quite different from the Boer War. Our failure in the Boer War would have brought no evil consequences, but that cannot be said about the present one. To reconstruct Europe and readjust the politics of the world with Great Britain beaten and on her knees is a military revolution which no one with any imagination would welcome or even think of complacently. It is going to be bad enough with Russia as an ally, but it would be unspeakably worse with Russia unbeaten (for Russia cannot be beaten in the way that France can be beaten) and ourselves suing for mercy.

But if Socialists take this line they must not do it after the vulgar fashion of a loud-mouthed Jingo;

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voicing every national prejudice current in the street and giving expression to the contemptible hatred for the enemy which the unregenerate man in the crowd confuses with love for one's own country. Here we come to the distinctive attitude of the Socialist movement.

When the war broke out everybody moralized on the failure of International Socialism. That was only in keeping with the general ignorance in which the war found the country. Nobody who knew the International was in any doubt on the following points:

(1) If Russia attacked Germany the German Social Democrats would fight wholeheartedly. The Russian Government is distrusted and detested by every Socialist in the world. Bebel and other German leaders have said repeatedly that they would fight Russia. That anyone should be surprised when they agreed to attack France is only a proof of how little the European situation has been studied by the British people. An attack on France, since the Franco-Russian alliance, was the first move in a war against Russia, and everybody knew it. A Cabinet Minister years ago said to me: 'Germany must attack Russia through Paris.'

(2) The French Socialists in such a war would help to repel the German invasion, first of all because it is an invasion, and secondly because they fear Prussianism.

(3) The Russian Socialists would be crushed at the very outset of the war, and their influence would be of no account.

(4) The British Labour Party would be divided.

(5) The Belgian Labour Party would merge in the

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Government because, their country being invaded, they would be covered by the Kautsky declaration at Amsterdam that in the event of a foreign army invading a country the Socialists of that country would be justified in joining a Coalition Government of defence.

Therefore, when the International was thrown out of action it was the expected that happened. But amidst all this surfeit of outrage, destruction, hate, and carnage, the Socialist must keep his international spirit. He must continue to have faith in his Continental comrades; he must decline to believe that the bitter fruits of war represent in any way the mind or the spirit of any European nation; he must retain a confidence in the men he has met, has known, and has called comrades; he must labour for a peace in which they will be cordial co-operators and not sullen participants. In other words, he must keep his own mind free from the hate which is being sodiabolically worked up by our papers, and strive to do the same service to other people. The Socialist knows better than anyone else — provided he has kept his head — that no military operations will secure peace in Europe. A nation of 60,000,000 people cannot be dictated to even by an army of occupation. It cannot be freed by others; it can only be helped to free itself. I always thought that that was a principle of Liberalism as well as an instinct of Socialism. But at the moment it has been forgotten. Sooner or later we must return to the idea that the peace of Europe cannot be based on the force of authority, but on the consent and desire of the people. In the midst of military operations it is difficult to see that there is any safe resting-

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place short of crushing the enemy. Force then dominates every other consideration. Politics are lost sight of. That is always the failure of the plans of force. We see it dramatically illustrated in the bungling of Germany to-day. German militarism is the most efficient of its kind in the world, and it has come to its perfection by subordinating all considerations to its own interests. Striking at France by way of Belgium was a tactic which every military authority said was the best. But the British Cabinet saw at once that the political folly of such a move would enable them to raise not only the cry of small nationalities in danger, but of violated treaties. In making peace do not let us be misled by our military frames of mind to make the same kind of political blunder that German soldiers made when making war. Military operations alone are not to create the conditions of an abiding peace. If German militarism is to be crushed so that it is no longer to be a European menace, Germany must not be given as an inheritance from this war the spirit of revenge. The German people will rid themselves of Prussianism soon enough, provided that Prussianism is not essential to their self-respect and national pride.

Socialist pronouncements on the war should therefore be characterized by international feeling and by an appreciation of just how far militarism can lead us towards peace and when the statesman should come in.

Finally, never let us forget to point out the cost of war to Europe. By all means let us do what we can to secure some good from this war. Let us advocate small nationalities, the sacredness of treaties, dis-

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armament, arbitration, democratic control, and everything else that is desirable for the healing and the happiness of the nations, and, whatever may be our own expectations, let us ungrudgingly do our best to prove wrong those of us who think that very little benefit will follow this war. But never let us overlook the cost at which these blessings are to be bought. They are to be dear, terribly dear. The price is to be too great. And we must remember that these blessings were coming steadily through peace and that at best the war is like an unnecessary surgical operation.

The mere operations of war are costly things. Blood and treasure flow in streams, hate is nurtured, nations are crippled, civilization and Christianity are insulted. (How incongruous now is it for men who defend this war to appeal for the Christianization of the heathen!) The flower of the peoples die in their prime. Destitution follows, general poverty increases. Capital is destroyed, prices rise and standards of living fall. National vitality is lowered. Progressive political movements are set back. Socialism becomes impotent, Labour is split and is paralysed for a generation. All the bulwarks which the poor have raised to protect themselves against their exploiters fall. It is the duty of moral organizations to keep those things before the minds of the people so as to steady them, and to save them from their own delusions and follies. But when the passion comes, these organizations are as militarist as the War Office and care as little as a messroom for the civil consequences of military triumphs. Let Socialism take the place deserted by the churches and stand by

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moral wisdom. In this connection a supreme duty claims us. It is our duty to preach true conceptions of national honour. In matters of national conduct we are still living in the age of the colonels. It is their notions – false and wayward – which come into our heads when we think of honour. Little more than a generation ago – and it is still the case in France and Germany – I would have been branded as a disgraced coward had I not for some triviality called honour, and believed to be honour, fought a duel. Civilization has wiped out in every country not ruled by military notions the false conceptions of personal honour which necessitated duels, and, whatever the unregenerate may think, moral and working-class Christian organizations at any rate, should hold up the same advance in national honour as has taken place in personal honour. But at this moment the great leaders of these organizations are shouting the morality of the very worst. Our public men withhold information for a purpose. If they had been concerned in personal and private transactions their deception would have won for them contempt and opprobrium; being concerned in diplomacy and having to conform only to the conceptions of mess-room moral honour, they can deceive without punishment and few seem to feel the insult or the injury of their conduct.

Commitments and obligations must be observed by nations as by men. A nation's word must be as sacred as an individual's. But the civilized and moral methods of vindicating individual honour are good enough and high enough for nations. Moreover, a nation's honour is a mere figment of fancy if it is put

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in pawn by one who is not its owner, if it may be pledged without the knowledge of the nation, if it is only something which can be used by soldiers and diplomats to bind the people to their will. And when these things happen, Pilate may wash his hands preparatory to acquiescing in the sins of the crowd, but he must not palm himself off as Christ because he has been a coward. Many good friends of mine have been begging me not to get out of sympathy with 'national aspirations,' not to become alienated from the general current of national sentiment. If to save myself from that I have to appear in tainted political companionship, the wilderness where one must live on locusts and wild honey is a Paradise of happiness compared with the marketplace of sauced foods and popularity. One's belief in democracy does not mean one's shouting with the crowd even if every professor in the country and every parson in the land are packed in the crowd and hoarse bawling the catchwords of the crowd. The Socialist democrat has another purpose in life than that. The people cannot always remain alien from the truth. Let Socialists think of the morrow as well as the day.

Truth crushed to earth will rise again,
The eternal years of God are hers.

That is the strength of our movement. Let us not evacuate our citadels because the fiendish bugles of war are blowing.

CHAPTER TWO : AN OPEN LETTER TO A YOUNG
LIBERAL ¹

DEAR SIR,—
The sordid tragedy of blooming and buoyant Spring mating with decrepit Winter has always been a favourite theme for those who wish to display the follies, the faults and the futilities of men. With that, there has been another favourite study for these satirists: that is, Winter seeking to conceal her age and her impotence under rouged cheeks, a sable wig and a maiden's bonnet.

The tragedy and vanity can be seen as regards principles as well as persons. The youth who has all the cautious coldness of age, who has no haloed delusions, no generousities, may be still on the sunny slopes of life so far as years go, but as regards being, he has skipped from his cradle to the edge of the grave, in the atmosphere of which he will burrow until he ceases from troubling. From that edge he never sees heaven.

If you propose to devote yourself to public life, it is, therefore, necessary that you should choose your Party in exactly the same way as you are to choose your fireside partner. I can imagine no greater misfortune befall you than that, when you have announced your political allegiance, you should feel in your marrow the cold chills of a Party kept alive, not because its own heart is warm, but because it is supplied with lukewarm blood from hot-water bottles.

What is Liberalism? Can anyone tell you? One of

¹ *Labour Leader*, September 7, 1922.

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the most revered Liberals of the Gladstone age once defined it to me with a sigh: 'Ninepence for fourpence.' Since then it has become fourpence for ninepence. Liberalism is already the title of a chapter in history that has been closed. It was the politics of the enfranchisement of the middle classes: it was the battle by which they gained social recognition, their peculiar form of property – trade – accepted as being quite respectable, their economic interests put in control of the State.

Whenever we have a class conflict between those who belong to social groups that govern and those who do not, the latter arm themselves with general principles which are applicable to their own cause. Narrow class conflicts are always carried on by liberal ideas. So that Liberalism, whilst it was winning its historical battle for middle-class recognition, was in reality giving rise to liberal democratic ideas which the next generation was to amplify and extend. It was then a Party of Youth.

But so soon as it won its battle, it ceased to give birth to new ideas. It had some momentum to carry it on – the momentum of its reputation and tradition, and the momentum of the ideas which still had driving power in them. The Party, however, had no source of renewed energy, and so it has been dying like a spent top.

I recite these things because I believe that youth seeks a political association that is romantic – like Jacobitism or Toryism (though not the Toryism of the *nouveaux riches*, which is snobbery); or that is formed for high enterprise – an association with the dead who lie in great emblazoned pomp, or with

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the living who with fresh cheek and eager eye look to the rising sun; and also because, if my view is correct, Liberalism has done its work and lingers on as a political machine with funds, head offices, leaders, summer schools, but with no spiritual and intellectual mission or gospel for the future.

Liberalism presents no view of the world, no view of society, no view of any of our present-day problems, seen whole. Its position is a temporary make-shift (indeed, I ought to write in the plural not in the singular) with an eye and a half on whatever is in people's minds for the moment, and half an eye on its own past. When men cease to order their lives by some great end, they must become straws blown hither and thither in every conflicting wind. When parties outlive their historical period, the magnetism goes out of them, and the needle that guides them swings like a weathercock towards every point of the earth. Is not that the history of the Liberal Party since the death of Gladstone?

During the South African War some of the worst speeches were made by Liberal leaders; when the great electoral victories of 1906 came, the only possible Liberal leader, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, was very nearly jockeyed out of his due by a conspiracy of the Liberal Imperialist section; when these men were fitted into the Cabinet (much against the instinct of that wonderful woman, Lady Campbell-Bannerman) they deceived their own leader and ran policies of their own; they were not bad men though, they were only dull-witted and incapable of understanding the meaning of what was going on around them, so they became mere tools in the hands

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of cleverer men who flattered their simplicity and dragged them into war.

In war they had no policy, and in the end were hoist by their own petard—a conspiracy undid them; whilst in office they began that suppression of criticism and that code of Dora legislation, a lapse from their faith which, later on in Opposition, they condemned. They were the first to declare the economic ruin of Germany, and now, far from the rear they cry in wrath at those who say what they have said. They are responsible for abandoning the country to the profiteer, and for some of our most fraudulent forms of taxation, like the Excess Profits Tax; until opinion was made by others they did not utter a wise or a warning word about debts, reparations, trade, Russia; the Paisley speeches you will find an admirable mirror of the chaotic and accommodating opinions of Liberalism on the problems and prejudices of the time.

In a sentence, the Liberal Party of to-day is a camp follower upon public opinion.

What is the camp for? Where is to be its next resting-place? Upon such things Liberalism has no opinion. If there is discontent in the camp, if there is some petty failure in the administration, if there is a chance of factious criticism, Liberalism shows a Martha-like interest in these things, and assumes the rôle of leader and champion. It listens to meetings at the street corners, and watches the crowds. When opinion is changing, it tries to put itself at the head of a body of semi-conviction, puts on the airs of the statesmen who are no fly-aways, announces its willingness to bestride the old cob that was fresh when

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Victoria came to the throne, and the young colt that will kick through a reign or two yet, and perched upon such a combination of quietude and mettle, it asks to be allowed once more to rule the country.

I do not deny the cosmic utility of this. But it is the utility of the elder statesmen, the bath chair, the brake on the wheel, the gout, the gravel, the night winds, the hooting owl; or of the hand mirror, the rouge pot, the friseur, the pads and the belladonna. It is not your utility – yet.

You must fly with your winged wisdom of Life before you hobble with the laden wisdom of Death. You will become Conservative, you will bow to the coercive force of habit and circumstance, only after you have lived your life as a pioneer. The chrysalis stage of man follows and does not precede his psychic stage.

The dead hand, the past habit, the skeleton of ancient things are in all conscience very, very heavy upon every young generation. What would happen if youth did not cast upon its time, with generous liberality, the light from the 'trailing clouds of glory' in which it comes? That, indeed, would be the end of hope and of progress.

To those who do not belong to their party, Mr. Asquith owes his conversion to a sound Russian policy and to a more or less Liberal European one, Sir John Simon owes his reconversion to the principles of liberty, and Mr. Runciman to those of Free Trade and unhampered international exchange. The great tides of progress have been flowing beyond them and beneath them, and have been carrying them about. Once they had their great testing. The

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fiends were let loose around them. These men could have shown they were men. They were mastered. They bowed to every great blast. They surrendered the ship to the elements. In Parliament they may be great critics, in the world they are spent forces.

They went from office failures, and from the edges of the turmoil where they have been hanging and drifting ever since they have been picking up the spars broken from the Coalition, and have been floating upon them. In none of their speeches since 1914 can you find any of those illuminating anticipations, those far-seeing judgments, which show that their minds grasp the spirit which through storm and calm determines whether men are to be wise or unwise, and States happy or troubled. They have waited for safety, they have chosen their sides when the brunt of the battle has been borne by others; their wisdom consists in coming in at the last moment.

No, my friend, the Liberal Party is no place for you. You are meant to be in the van, in the place of exhilaration and honour. The others can come crawling along, safe, respectable, half-hearted, worldly wise, dim in sight, but it is not yours to saunter in the midst of them. It is yours to be on the far horizon ahead, and to look back upon the sunset light on their banners.

CHAPTER THREE: A LETTER TO A COMMUNIST¹

MY DEAR FRIEND,—
Yes, I am sure the 'old fogey' is something of an offence to you. It must seem strange to you that youth, with a seeming eternity of life in store for it, is so impatient with the passing of time as though every minute was its last chance of doing anything, whilst the 'old fogey,' with but few years which he can reasonably call his own, sees, in apparently philosophic quietude, the days pass with only a meagre accomplishment. You want to possess heaven whilst you are still young; we are content if we may see a beam or two from it lighting our last darkness. Therefore you challenge me to defend myself. I do not accept the challenge. That would be a Zohrab and Rustum battle, and bring grief to whoever won. Rather through the smoke of the pipes of peace let me try to tell you some things.

Youth is always at enmity with the world, for the world itself is an 'old fogey.' It pursues no method but that of ca' canny. The earthquake is a mighty phenomenon for the journalist, but a mere insignificant sneeze for Nature. Here are some truths for you! Big things are an accumulation of small things; a revolution is only like a dog shaking himself from muzzle to tail to get rid of a flea; the man who saves time by galloping loses it by missing his way; the shepherd who hurries his flock to get them home quick, spends the night on the mountain looking for the lost; economy does not consist in haste but in certainty.

¹ *The Venturer*, January 1921.

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You extend your arms in despair and your jaw drops in disgust. These words bring to you a vision of the politician starting in a bullock cart for the Promised Land. You are altogether wrong in your imagery. Argumentative imagery is always wrong because it always produces extremes. Think of me rather in a motor-car going along a broken road or up-hill on a low gear. That does not give you the satisfaction, perhaps, of a good picture, but it does give you the assistance of being something akin to the real truth. Let us drop imagery and come to business.

I am a Democrat, and therefore I must believe in public opinion and education; I am a Socialist, and therefore I must believe in the steady transformation of society upon a plan of growth rather than by its obedience to orders. I must have some proportion between ways and means, some regard for the nature of the instrument and its work. I do not use a bread knife to sharpen my pencil, nor a boot brush to clean my teeth. I do not beat my children until they become wise or starve them until they become moral — my reason being that bruises and wisdom, hunger and morality, have no relation to each other. In some cases, obedience is good in itself and orders may then be enforced, but to expect a whole society to behave decently on order, and on order to do the right thing in thought and conduct, is shown by the history of the Soviet Government (by its abandonment of Sovietism, its treatment of the land, its suppression of workshop control, its concessions to foreign financiers), to be like believing that every Scotsman who knows the Shorter Catechism by

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heart is immune from all the snares of life. Violent means and a Socialist object do not go together. The passions say 'violence,' the head says 'Socialism,' the emotions say that they co-operate, the reason that they are at war.

The first duty of the man who wishes to recreate Society is not to get hold of a weapon, but to understand what he wants to do. That done, he may then select a bludgeon, a lancet, or a sermon. Owing to inveterate habit acquired from ancestors of doubtful intelligence, we still fly to the bludgeon first of all. Now, what I want to do is to get a totally new relationship between the functions of Society, and a totally new standpoint regarding social values. That is Socialism. I cannot do that, however, by anything of the species of fisticuffs. To me, the 'peace' of the European war is exactly what I expected it would be. 'The war-to-end-war' warriors expected a miracle and they did not get it, much to their discomfiture. They were not betrayed by their leaders; they were only foolish from the beginning. They took up their weapons before they had considered the nature of the thing they wanted. I select my weapons according to my work — a pen to write, a fork to eat, a sword to make an idiot of myself, a revolution (as you understand the word) to waste my life and other people's.

For my social ends I select reason, the success of specific endeavour, the transformation of opinion, the assent of the people. In doing that, I get in the quickest way to the things I am driving at. The blood-stirring Russian Revolution, the extraordinary defence of the Bolsheviks against external enemies, the pamphlets and manifestos proving, as far as

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formal logic can prove anything, that there had to be violence and repression and that there were no human rights but only State ones, did not solve the most elementary problem in Socialism – workshop control by the workmen. The economic mechanism of society is constructed not out of economic but out of psychological material. We must, therefore, get behind the machine, and that is true whether we have a revolution or not. A revolution eases none of our problems except the superficial and mechanical ones. I attack them last, not first. One of the weakest things in the world is an Act of Parliament which does not embody public opinion; perhaps the only thing weaker is the decree of a dictatorship. I value the Socialist work of Lenin not so much for what he has done, but for what he is experiencing. In ten years the work of the Bolshevist Government, freed from outside attacks and commanding the necessities of life, will bring Russia to where (and no further) five years of a Labour Government in this country backed by public opinion would be; two years of Bolshevism in this country would bring us to where Russia was a dozen years before the Revolution.

Now you can see how wrong you were when you thought that the 'old fogeys' had no concern for time. I am so anxious to economize my time that I cannot afford to be a Communist. It is like a spree at the Ritz, and I must lunch at the 1917 club. Every minute I spend must be in work, not in pleasure. A guinea for the garnishing of my feast I cannot afford, a decade of coloured wastefulness in energy I cannot spare. Or, I may put it this way: I

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am too old to go back for a start to the pre-democratic and pre-scientific days. Do not jeer. That is true. History was written in order that we may pass over the road of progress once, and not a hundred times.

The Communist is a politician in crinolines and corkscrew curls. The common people in history have been working through violence into politics, and now that they have got there I am in too great a hurry to go back. I know that ancient times had their attractions – the Spartacus revolt, Wat Tyler, John Ball, Oliver Cromwell – that the French Revolution is inspiring in spite of its dirt, and the Commune heroic in spite of its squabbles and its failure before the Versailles troops came in to murder it. I prefer to read about them rather than to repeat them, and to use the powers they have given us rather than neglect them. The disfranchised revolted during the past two centuries in order that their offspring might not have to revolt any more but govern. I, being a modern creature, believe in government rather than revolutions or dictatorships. My friend, you really belong to that class of worthy but odd people who prefer an uncomfortable chair because it was made in Queen Anne's time, to a comfortable one made in the time of our own George. You say you are on the Left of the battle. You may be, but your manual of tactics is that used at Culloden. Why should you want to re-write history? My ambition is to write it.

Change must proceed from the bottom upwards, otherwise it has no foundation. That means patience, work, trouble. It means being baffled like a seaman in adverse winds; it means an application of fixed principles to the thousand and one diversities of

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weather encountered, and under the thousand and one situations that no logic can place theoretically on the chart. The path to Socialism is not that of a star which logic and mathematics can trace. Its discovery therefore comes by experiment and exploration.

No, whatever you do, do not continue to harbour the delusion that you are the modern man of energy, that you are the heir of the ages, that you are the man who is to stand no humbug, that you run when others crawl, that you value time. You are only the long-dead mail-clad warrior come to life to scare the hearts of the dear people who look into milliners' shops in Piccadilly or in Regent Street of an afternoon. I am fond of you and I like the romance that glows in your heart. But you belong to an historical pageant, not to politics.

There are many signs which seem to show that you are to play some part in the life of Europe. People have always rushed from the battlefields to the circuses and the Coliseums; their hunger, their lust and their passions demand a brave and a bloody show as an interregnum between war and peace. But in time – and a short one at that – the people will get tired and some wiser than the others will whisper: 'We are wasting our lives doing nothing. Let us turn the gladiators into useful workmen and go and attend to the business of life which we have so long neglected.'

CHAPTER FOUR : A GLIMPSE AT THE FRENCH
CHAMBER ¹

AN important gentleman in blue livery that had a military touch about it, bawled upstairs: 'Ancient Deputies,' bowed to us, and passed us up. We went through a door and found ourselves high up in a kind of lecture room of a College. Its shape was semi-circular; its benches rose below us in arcs one above the other; its chord was broken by two tribunes, one over the other, approached by lateral stairs; on one were a silver bell and lamps, and on the other and lower one, nothing. A few men, some in livery, stood about or strolled in the well of the amphitheatre, lounged in the side wings, sat on the benches. A visitor who had attended scientific lectures would look for a magic lantern and apparatus for chemical demonstrations in such a building. This, however, is the French Chamber of Deputies in which we find ourselves.

There is a roll of drums, and a gentleman in evening dress hurries in with rapid step, mounts the back stairs, stands by a silver bell which he clangs with lusty muscle, and declares the sitting open. Thereupon a few rush to seats, and the hubbub increases. They are at business. The front seats are full. In the centre is an undistinguished-looking man, but I know him by his photographs to be M. Poincaré. He chats to the right and the left; he chats over his shoulder; they all chat; they are merry; they are loquacious; a gentleman is in the tribune reading a speech, or a poem, or a sermon — something; he

¹ *Forward*, April 14, 1923.

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finishes; they applaud; a messenger rushes up to him; he hands over his manuscript; it is handed to another messenger, to another, to another, and disappears; he comes down and chats before he gets to his seat and after he gets to his seat; they all chat; the people in the galleries chat; the reporters up overhead chat; the Chamber is in session.

Meanwhile the President is tranquil and signs papers. They call '*Hish*'; he looks up and then goes on signing. The hubbub increases. Some one after the manner of the Front Bench in Westminster repeats '*Hish*.' He looks up; he clangs his bell; he starts bolt upright, and, waving first his left arm, shouts: '*Silence*'; then his right arm, and again shouts: '*Silence*.' The gentleman is up again in the tribune reading — goodness knows what, but reading. I study the back of Briand's head, then Herriot's head, and by that time the President is up reading, and they are all talking, talking, talking. The bell clangs; they are surprised, look at the bell, and, as it is only the bell, fall a-talking worse than ever. And the President goes on reading.

Suddenly a dead silence falls for the space of a breath, and some gentlemen rush to where groups of little white-topped boxes lie on the benches. There is a division. Every member has his box, and the boxes are in the keeping of the Party Whips, who are now hovering over them, taking out of each some white cards and some green. The Whips do the voting, and members do not require to be present. A messenger comes round with the urn, and the Whips drop into it the full voting pack of cards of their respective parties. Then the scene is changed.

GLIMPSE AT THE FRENCH CHAMBER

A new man runs up into the tribune, and planks a great bundle of notes in front of him. There is silence. 'The debate on the Ruhr has begun,' says a friend by me. He opens in a low voice. 'Louder,' shout the reporters from their high perch, and he obeys. There begin rattling volleys of short, sharp, crackling interruptions, like Lewis guns. The Centre and Right show mass agitation, for it is a Socialist who speaks. The Left claps its hands; the Right throws up its arms. There is great emotion, and two bearded gentlemen are specially affected. It is like a revival meeting, where sinner after sinner rises impelled by a sense of sin, to testify to the spirit moving in him. When he starts there is a hush; as he proceeds he fires others. The bell clangs, and the fire dies down to smouldering.

The speaker goes doggedly on through his bundle of notes. The gentlemen who are like gunpowder have gone off so often that they seem to have no more 'go off' in them. They gesticulate in dumb despair. But the fire is going lower, and the less inflammable material is becoming hot. A professional, respectable-looking gentleman rises and yells, recollects himself, tones down, shouts with an attempt to be dignified, looks round, puts his hands in his pockets, feels he has done his duty, and sits down to receive the approval of his neighbours. By and by he is up again, and his passion having gone through exactly the same phases, his hands seek his pockets, and he sits down. So it goes on till midnight, when it is closed, and I go away. (I heard that the closure was carried, but that the debate and the scenes were immediately resumed.)

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Here was the logical and inevitable result of discussion by interruption, and the evolution of a body too lacking in self-restraint to listen to another side. It was a spectacle as humiliating as it was ineffective. It gave one an understanding of the queer problem of why the French Chamber can pursue impossibilities, after they are proved to be impossible. When legislators put demonstration and vociferation first, they soon cease to be honest. I was not at all surprised when a cynical Frenchman, to soothe my evident disgust at the whole proceedings, explained that all these demonstrations meant nothing, except that the support of M. Poincaré was weakening, and was shouting to camouflage the change coming over it.

CHAPTER FIVE: JEAN JAURÈS¹

THE assassination of Jaurès by the hand of an unbalanced youth reminds us how niggardly Nature is in giving us great men, and how reckless Fate is in disposing of them. Nothing was less fitting than that this gay, hearty, volatile man should be the victim of blind hate and insane bigotry. The incongruity of the end darkens the tragedy. That Robespierre should finish his grim severe life on the scaffold, that Danton should go down amidst the confused clangour which he himself raised, - that Lasalle should go to destruction by quixotic recklessness, belong to the appropriate order of things; but that Jaurès should have lived with the doom of a mean assassination written against him, is jarring to one's expectations of what Providence should put upon the stage of life.

I was once walking through the streets of Stuttgart and saw a strange figure in front of me. It belonged to an order all by itself. Jauntily set upon its head was a straw hat, somewhat the worse for wear, its clothes were baggy and pitchforked upon its back, below its trouser-legs were folds of collapsed white stockings, under its arms it carried, or rather dragged, an overcoat. It sauntered along looking at the shops and houses as it went, unconscious of everything except its own interest, like a youth looking upon a new world, or a strolling player who had mastered fate and had discovered how to fill the moments with happy unconcern. It was the happy-go-lucky Jaurès.

¹ *Contemporary Review*, September, 1914.

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Jaurès was an impulse. He was an embodiment of the chivalrous refinement and the romantic love of liberty of the South of France. He was no mean philosopher, and he was an historical scholar, but these qualities were subordinated in him to his instinctive life. He never left an argument untouched by imagination; he never surveyed a field without taking a glimpse of the landscape and leaving the colours in his survey; he never spoke learnedly without tripping down from his austere and solid pedestal and; with a whimsical humour and quaint imaginativeness, presenting his argument as a mischievous Puck would see it. The world of free imagination interpreted to him the world of hard fact and harnessed reason. I am sure that no one who went to Paris in 1903 and attended the Anglo-French Parliamentary dinner, will forget the wonderful oration which Jaurès then delivered and its surprising conclusion, which began with these sentences: 'And if you press me to risk a prophecy on my own account (regarding how peace was to come), I can only answer you by a parable which seems a little strange still and obscure. I gleaned it by fragments from the legends of Merlin the magician, from the *Arabian Nights*, and from a book that is still unread.' Then he told with a touch of fairy grace the story of the enchanted frost-bound trees, afraid to respond to the joy of spring lest the ice-tipped branches of those which remained cold might lacerate the swelling buds of those which opened their hearts to gladness. Then, with sustained, dainty accuracy, he closed his speech: 'Gentlemen, if you will allow me to fit my toast to this old allegory and give it to you in the

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form of an invocation to Nature, I will drink to the sunbeam that charmed the whole forest into bloom.' Most men, when they wander into these dainty realms of fancy, betray the awkwardness of humans. You hear their foot fall heavily and they do not speak the gentle words or think the naïve thoughts of the fairies. But Jaurès could go there and be of the little people. So responsively tuned was his mind that he never sounded a false note. No speaker living to-day used more imagery in his appeals, and no one used it with more easy certainty or delicate accuracy. I have heard men fetch the applause of heated crowds by using an imagery so false and commonplace that it seemed to beat your soul with cudgels, but Jaurès' flights were always perfectly appropriate because his instinct remained vital.

The success of Jaurès' oratory is easily explained. The crowd will always be allured by imaginativeness. There are some minds of great richness which are clogged by their own wealth. Jaurès had no trouble of that kind. He possessed himself; his mind was at his command. Other men often are unable to use themselves completely. Parts of them lie like wastes around gardens. But the whole of Jaurès was in blossom. From his complete store of knowledge and idea he drew his illustrations and his arguments. He had the rare faculty of being able to unify himself. None of his wealth was hidden away or lying dusty and deteriorating in some inaccessible place. He was like the possessor of a rich jewel chamber who can spend hours in showing treasure after treasure, talking, explaining, revelling in his possessions whilst they lie in his hands flashing in

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response to his own enthusiasm. His oratory came freely, sparkling with fancy, rippling with humour, biting with satire, overwhelming with conviction. Its moods were infinite; it appealed to every sentiment of the human heart, and there was always in it the gaiety of the *gamin* mingled with the earnestness of the Puritan. His speeches were like the playful fancies of a great musician dallying over the keys of an organ. They were rarely prepared or premeditated. The crowd faced him; thoughts, ideas, whims, phrases came. They were not delivered by a winning voice or with insinuating gesture. The one was harsh and of very limited compass, the other was too violent. But the speaker from top to toe was alive. He was the embodiment of the great persuasive powers of instinct and reason, and he swayed the mass by stirring its being — not its interests, or its prejudices, or its reason, but simply its instinctive being.

One of his greatest orations was delivered at Amsterdam in 1904, in a small overcrowded room where the Commission on Socialist Political Tactics met and discussed a resolution aimed against Jaurès's parliamentary policy.

He was the leader of that section of French Socialists which, in 1898, saw in the union of the militarist and reactionary elements in France a threat to the very existence of the Republic, and which felt it its duty to rally alongside the Liberal sections to preserve French revolutionary traditions. The Alsace-Lorraine disgrace still burned in the heart of France. She bowed to military authority because she dreamt of days of revenge still to come.

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She became frenzied over the Dreyfus affair. The France which Jaurès loved and honoured was being led astray and was covering herself with disgrace by her blind attachment to military interests. She was closing her ears and her eyes to the disreputable doings of the military caste, and in the name of her dignity and her safety was forgetting her liberty and was ceasing to do justice. He faced her clamour and her anger. He championed Dreyfus. He fought for the honour of dishonoured France. He sent one of his own Socialist friends into the Ministry, and when Millerand was assailed he stood by him. This was the bravest of his many braveries. It is heart-breaking to fight for the good name of a country which goes down to disgrace clamouring that it is maintaining its rectitude all the time. Bright did it in his day, Jaurès in his, and the tribute which history bears to both is an enduring warning to politicians to treat with scanty respect the errant unanimity of peoples when under the spell of militarist passions.

But his anxiety to save France from the enemy which lodged within her own heart exposed him not only to the attacks of the crowd, but to the opposition of the stricter Marxian Socialists, who saw in his political alliance with bourgeois parties an abandonment of the Marxian dogma, that all these parties were equally bad from the Socialist standpoint. So, when the International Socialist Congress met at Amsterdam, the Marxists demanded the affirmation of a resolution which the German Social-Democrats had passed the previous year at Dresden, declaring for the isolation of the Socialist Parliamentary parties. The Marxists won, and the Amsterdam Congress

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has become famous in consequence. The 'Amsterdam Resolution' is known all over the Socialist movement in every country in the world.

I was one of the British representatives on the Commission which discussed the Dresden resolution before it came up for debate in the full Congress, and I saw much of Jaurès at the time. Amongst the members were Adler of Austria, Vandervelde of Belgium, Bebel of Germany, Ferri of Italy, Branting of Sweden, and every day brought its great duel, for the Commission was sharply divided. I sat next Jaurès, and when the time drew near for him to reply he became as lively as a cricket. He interjected spear-point remarks whilst others were speaking, and his whispered comments were like the playful good nature of an accomplished swordsman making fun of a novice. Then he rose himself, without a note. The room crowded up. People filled the windows, and some were helped to a precarious sitting on a mantelpiece. He singled out Bebel and the Germans for special attack. One moment he laughed at them, the next he belaboured them. He was mischievous and he enjoyed himself. Then he plunged into the great controversies of policy and of Socialist relationships with Governments. He surveyed tactics and their results. History, philosophy, common sense, the achievements and failures of the different national movements, were marshalled in his support. He played with opponents, he tickled them under the chin, he reasoned with them, he expostulated with them, he knocked them on the head. The room had become stifling; people crushed hard against each other. A space had to be cleared round

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him, for he had been bringing his fists down upon the heads of his neighbours. His perspiration literally dripped on the floor. Broad purple streaks spread from his tie to his collar and shirt front, and a handkerchief, which he kept in his trousers pocket and rubbed across his face with the happy valour of a schoolboy, was sodden. Ejaculations came from the listeners; a woman fell from the mantelpiece; one moment there was great din and hubbub, the next you could hear a pin fall. The day faded, dusk glided into darkness; the lights from outside patched the walls with red glow and dark shadow. Still Jaurès went on. Like a brave and a lithe man keeping beasts at bay, alert at every point, goading, soothing, killing, he fought. When it ended and he was beaten on a vote, we awoke as from a spell; we looked at the time and saw it was dark, and we became aware that hunger was gnawing within us. But he, irrepressible and inexhaustible, keen and good-humoured, came out into the night with us, still laughing, arguing, explaining, revelling in the finished fight, as mischievous as when he opened his attack on his German assailants hours before.

Jaurès' personality was one of fine instincts. He kept the child mind whilst he gained knowledge and experience of the world. No shell ever grew round him to harden him; no dust of the political world ever blinded his eyes. I have never known a man of whom it could be more truly said, in a good sense, that he was as wise as a serpent and as innocent as a dove. And at the very worst of times – during the height of the Dreyfus agitation, for instance – he took an easy and happy view of life. Fortunate is the

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man who can assume at the age of fifty, and after a strenuous life in conflict with the Amalekites, that his own emotions and expectations are those of the whole cosmic order and that he is but a focus of the personality of the totality of creation. Jaurès was such a one. 'There is spirit everywhere,' he wrote, 'soul everywhere, and the universe itself is simply an immense confused aspiration towards order, beauty, freedom, and goodness.' He was attracted to Socialism because it offered a promise of orderly peace and rational harmony, and because he thought that under its protective economic organization alone could the personal freedom which belonged to a social order be attained. In an article called 'Moonlight,' which shows his lyrical habit of imparting his own feelings to nature herself, he wrote: 'Come, let the universe be: it contains joy for all: it is Socialistic after its fashion.' This mind could not look forward to earthquake and cataclysm as the designed means of social evolution. To it the pageantry of leisurely but insistent peace was more inspiring and enticing than the violent and eruptive drama of war. When the times seemed to be asleep the heart of creation was beating most tenderly. The faithful woman weaving her enduring fabrics by her own hearth on a loom which was almost voiceless typified to Jaurès the movement of creation towards the completion of its perfect purpose. In contradistinction to the revolutionary expectations which Marx enunciated in *Capital* and the *Communist Manifesto*, Jaurès wrote: 'Humanity will raise itself insensibly towards fraternal justice, just as the earth that bears us rises with a silent motion in the starry spaces.'

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Then we have to observe another characteristic of Jaurès' greatness. It is but rare to find this instinctive idealism combined with a capacity to face successfully the every-day problems which social change creates. This incapacity is always the undoing of the dreamer with his coat off. Sorel shifts and changes between Monarchist and Syndicalist. The rebel type is unstable in action by reason of its virtuous instincts. The protection of practical reason which instinctive action needs threatens to stifle the instinct, and yet without it the instinct is blown and swayed by every gust of passion. In times of great national crime virtuous instinct invents excuses for the criminality. An ordinary Peace Society is a most dangerous thing in the time of a popular war. But in Jaurès instinct was protected, and the balance between the protection and the protected was delicately adjusted. His conviction that there was 'soul everywhere' was transformed by him into a firmly-held political method. The defence he made of his Parliamentary action when he was supporting the Republican *bloc* had all the effectiveness of the work of a great political leader who was unhampered by any delusions of idealism, but was concerned solely with the practical features of his work, who accepted drudgery as a necessary yoke, and was indifferent to flamboyancy regarding 'ultimate harmonies.' Consequently, we find in his *Études Socialistes* sudden transformations from seer-like visions of a dream society to parliamentary insight as to how to manage political minorities. And yet there is no feeling of jar or inconsistency, no suggestion that there are two minds at work. Jaurès rejected Marxism because he

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saw 'soul everywhere.' 'Marx was mistaken,' he wrote. 'It is not from absolute destitution that absolute liberation would come.' There were forces ameliorating and protecting labour, being created by the soul in Capitalism, and by the rational operation of these forces social transformation was to take place. 'Engels, for his part, had so strict and rigid a conception of the inflexibility of the capitalist system, of its impotence to adapt itself to the least reform, that he made the gravest and most decided mistakes in his interpretation of social movements.' History, he said, 'had given the lie in almost every particular' to Engels' most widely-read book, *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*.

On the other hand, his responsiveness to facts, however fragmentary and however embedded in mistakes, made him aware of how much truth there was in the general social conceptions of the authors of the *Communist Manifesto*, and their thought and phrasing appeared in his own work, modified slightly in meaning and put to somewhat unusual uses. In later days we find the same response to Syndicalism, and this is brought out most clearly in his attitude to the General Strike. He liked the idea. He felt it was one of those movements in instinctive action which could not be discouraged without damping the ardour of the whole working class. When I discussed it with him he agreed with me that as a revolutionary act it was worse than futile. But yet he could not help being attracted by it, and he wrote in favour of it whilst giving to it a meaning and a place in working-class action which robbed it of its value. He wrote of it in these uncertain words: 'I have

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always interpreted the General Strike not as a method of violence, but as one of the most gigantic means of legal pressure that the educated and organized proletariat could bring to bear for great and definite ends.' One of these 'great and definite ends' was the stopping of war. But, obviously, when the proletariat are educated and organized enough to make a General Strike successful, their education and organization will be enough to make impossible the conditions which would necessitate such a strike.

The circumstances of his death have thrown into a relief which is out of all proportion to the rest of his work his labours for peace. Every Socialist leader is an Internationalist, and Peace is a cardinal item in his creed. He appears on platforms both in his own and in foreign countries appealing to the people to stamp out their military and diplomatic autocracies and make international relationships depend not upon the intrigues and prejudices of Foreign Offices, but upon the will and the interest of the democracies. His membership of many international committees, and particularly if he belongs, as Jaurès did, to the International Socialist Bureau, gives him many opportunities for attending such meetings. Jaurès' great power over audiences, and his world-wide reputation, made his words of special value. But he always spoke as a Socialist, as one who believed little in peace propaganda in the abstract or detached from the vital international democratic movement. Peace was to come only when the peoples were responsible for their own international policy. And they were no more responsible for that in France or England than in Russia or Germany, although the forms of their

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helplessness in the two latter countries were more offensive and dangerous than in the two former ones. He consequently never deluded himself regarding the power of the Socialist movement when faced by the spirit of war. He knew it would be temporarily submerged. At the meeting of the International Socialist Bureau which he attended in Brussels a day or two before his death he was fully alive to this. He felt that both the military lords and the diplomatic priests still held the keys of the temples of peace in their keeping. He knew that if Russia were to mobilize, Germany would have to do so too in self-defence, and that the cry of Germany in danger from Russia would have the same effect in Berlin as that of Great Britain in danger from Germany would have in London. He dreaded Germany. The German State embodied everything which his sense of freedom detested. He saw the evils of the German State in German Socialism itself and his frequent friendly conflicts with the German Socialist leaders reflected his suspicions. When the war came, he was convinced that the life and civilization of France were at stake, and he hoped, as we all hope, that its result will be to break for ever the power of the Prussian in the German Empire. He would have wished, as we all wish, that that might have been done by ordinary political methods, and I know he was never satisfied that the German Socialists used their power in the most effective way to that end. When the time for making peace comes he would have been an invaluable ambassador to the German people, an invaluable check to the lustful passions which will prolong the war, if they can, until Germany is not

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only defeated but disgraced, an invaluable leader in drawing France away from the toils of Russia. But to think of these things now is to brood over vain regrets. He died at a moment when the International movement was going down into 'a dark tremendous sea of cloud,' and when its eclipse was being gleefully proclaimed by the Liberal and reactionary press alike. The International will look after itself as it has done before, and it will hold in sacred keeping the memory of the most richly endowed mind that ever served it.

CHAPTER SIX: KEIR HARDIE¹

THE purposes of biography are manifold, but they have this common end: to interpret the subject and show forth what manner of man he was of whom the writer writes. That done faithfully, the biographer can launch his work upon the waters and trust to the winds and the currents for a prosperous voyage.

But what is 'faithfully'? A patient and accurate accumulation of facts and events strung upon time as boys used to hang rows of birds' eggs upon strings? A cold impartial scrutiny of a life made from a judgment seat placed above the baffling conflicts of doubting conscience, groping reason and weak desire? Biographies may be so written. But the life of him who has stood in the market-place with a mission to his fellows, who has sought to bring visions of greater dignity and power into the minds of the sleeping and vegetating crowds, who has tried to gather scattered and indifferent men into a mighty movement and to elevate discontented kickings against the pricks into a crusade for the conquest of some Holy Land, cannot be dealt with in that way. He must submit to the rigid scrutiny; the dross that is in him, the mistakes and miscalculations which he made, must be exposed with his virtues, wisdoms and good qualities. But to portray such a man, the biographer has not only to scrutinize him objectively; he must also tell how he appeared to, and was *felt* by, the people who were influenced by him,

¹ Reprinted, by kind permission of Messrs. Cassell, from the *Life*, by W. Stewart.

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and preserve for the future the hero or the saint who received the homage of leadership and the worship of affection. The glamour of the myth gathers round all great popular leaders and becomes an atmosphere as real to their personality as the colour of cloud and sun is real to a landscape. Were we to separate what is inseparable, we might say that such a man has two beings, that which the critic alone can see, dissecting him as though he lay a lifeless thing upon a table, and that which the artist sees, regarding him as one of the living formative forces of his time.

In the latter way the biography of Keir Hardie must be treated if it is to be a full interpretation of the man. Mr. Stewart, who has done this book, writes of his hero, frankly and unashamedly, as a worshipper. He is a disciple who for many years has enjoyed the intimacy of his master, and he sees with the eye and writes with the pen which reveal the inspiring leader to us. He has gathered from a great mass of details the outstanding incidents in Hardie's life, and through the deeds has shown the man. He has also preserved for all who may read his book, and especially for those in whose memories those precious days of pioneering have no place, the inspiration that made the work possible and brought forth from chaos the Labour Movement.

Every one who came in contact with Hardie felt his personality right away at the outset. His power never lay in his being at the head of a political organization which he commanded, for the organization of the Independent Labour Party was always

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weak compared with its influence, and he had ceased to be an official of the miners before their combination became really formidable; nor did it lie in his ability to sway the crowd by divine gifts of speech and appeal, for his diction though beautifully simple was rarely tempestuous, and his voice had few of the qualities that steal into the hearts of men and stir them in their heights and depths; more certainly still he never secured a follower by flattery nor won the ear of a crowd by playing down to it. He set a hard task before his people, and gave them great ends to pursue. He left no man in peace in the valley gutter, but winded them on the mountain tracks. What then was the secret of the man? I who have seen him in all relationships, at the height of triumph and the depths of humiliation, on the platform and at the fireside, dignified among strangers and merry amongst friends, generally fighting by his side but sometimes in conflict with him, regard that secret as first of all his personality and then his proud esteem for the common folk and his utter blindness to all the decorations of humanity. He was a simple man, a strong man, a gritty man.

Hardie was of the 'old folk.' Born in a corner of Scotland where there still lingered a belief in the uncanny and the superhuman, where Pan's pipes were still heard in the woods, the kelpie still seen at the fords and the fairy still met with on the hills, and born in the time of transition when the heart and imagination paid homage whilst the reason was venturing to laugh, he went out into the world with a listening awe in his soul; brought up in surroundings eloquent with the memory of sturdy men who trusted

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to the mists to shield them from the murderous eyes of the Claverhouses and their dragoons, and dotted with the graves and the monuments of martyrs to a faith – dreary moors ‘where about the graves of the martyrs the whaups are crying,’ and grey farmhouses where in the ‘killing times’ women lamented over their husbands and sons murdered at their doors for loyalty to God and the Covenant – surroundings, moreover, which in later times had seen Burns at the plough, dejected, and had heard him singing his songs of love, of pity, of gaiety, he went out a strong man in heart and in backbone, with the spirit of great tradition in him; nurtured by a mother who faced the hard world like a woman of unconquerable soul, whose tears were followed by defiance and whose sighs ended with challenge, he went out like a knight armed with a sword which had the magic of conquest tempering its steel. That was his birthright, and that birthright made him a gentleman, whether running errands for a baker in Glasgow, or facing the ‘overfed beasts’ on the benches of the House of Commons. Such men never fear the face of men and never respect their baubles. | |

From the same sources came his comfort in the common folk. All great human discovery is the discovery of the wisdom that comes from babes and sucklings, as all great artistic achievement depends on the joy that dwells in the simple. It has been said that there is a false ring of peevishness in Burns’ ‘A man’s a man for a’ that,’ and it may be that resentment gives a falsetto note to some of the lines. But when the great Labour leader comes, whether he be born from the people or not will be of little

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concern, the decisive thing will be whether he values in his heart, as Burns did, the scenes and the people from which spring not only 'Scotia's grandeur,' but the power which is to purify society and expose the falseness and the vulgarity of materialist possession and class distinctions. The mind of the Labour leader must be too rich to do homage to 'tinsel show,' too proud of its own lineage to make obeisance to false honour, and too cultured to be misled by vulgar display.

A title, Dempster merits it;
A garter gie to Willie Pitt;
Gie wealth to some be-ledger'd cit,
 In cent. per cent.
But give me real sterling wit,
 And I'm content.

A working class living in moral and social parasitism on its 'betters' will only increase the barrenness and the futility of life. In the end, it is perhaps a matter of good taste and self-respect, and these are birthrights and are not taught in the schools. They belong to the influences which life assimilates as plants assimilate a rich or an impoverished air and sap. Perhaps the Scotsman is peculiarly fortunate in this respect. No country has had a meaner aristocracy or a sturdier common people. Partly its education, partly its history, partly its church government and system of worship, partly the frugality which nature imposed upon it for so many generations, laid up a store of independence in the characters of many of its people, and Burns awoke this

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into activity. I doubt if any man who received the historical birthright of Scotsmen at his birth, ever accepted a tinsel honour without feeling that he was doing wrong and somehow abandoning his country.

Be these things as they may, Hardie had those native qualities which never became incompetent to value the honour and the worth of a kitchen fireside, of a woman who, like his mother, toiled in the fields, of a man who earned his living by the sweat of his brow, subduing Heaven the while. He said a life-long Amen to the words which Scott puts in the mouth of Rob Roy on Glasgow bridge: 'He that is without name, without friends, without coin, without country, is still at least a man; and he that has all these is no more.' Hardie's democratic spirit might have added 'and is often something less.' When he became famous, his world widened and he mixed with people in different circumstances. But he met them as the self-respecting workman, all unconscious of difference and with neither an attempt nor a desire to imitate them. The drawing-rooms of the rich never allured him into a sycophantic servitude, a chair at a workman's fireside hard to sit upon never robbed that fireside of its cheery warmth. The true gentleman is he who acts like a gentleman unconsciously. Therefore, this quality eludes him who would write of it, for an explanation of it suggests consciousness of it. Only when the ruling class habits sought to impose themselves on him by authority did he resent them and become conscious of his own nature—as when he went to the House of Commons in a cloth cap, or when, in an outburst

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of moral loathing, he replied to the jeers of a band who had returned to the House radiant in the garb and demeanour of those who had risen from a well-replenished table, by the epithet 'well-fed beasts' – and then his native good taste speedily asserted itself and he became natural.

Experience in the world strengthened this part of his nature. Whether as a baker's messenger forced to pass moral judgment on the man of substantial respectability, or as a Trade Union official studying the results of the work of directors, managers, and such like, or as a politician in touch with the political intelligence and general capacity of 'the ruling classes,' he saw no inferiority in his fellow workmen. He found them careless, disorganized, indifferent; but their lives remained real and their common interests were the true interests. They were the robust stem upon which every desirable thing had to be grafted.

Thus it was that the sober people, the people prepared for idealistic effort, the people whose ears detected the ring of a genuine coin and had become tired of the spurious or ill-minted thing, the people who were laying the foundations of their new cities on the rock of human worth, were drawn to him, honoured him, believed in him and loved him. It is very difficult for a man made of that material to do justice to 'the classes' in these times – to their qualities, their lives, their interests, and even their worship – but Hardie was catholic, and rarely have his friends heard from his lips an unjust condemnation of these people. Charity lay even in his most emphatic condemnations.

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Of Hardie's work it is easy to judge even at this early day, so distinctive was it. He will stand out for ever as the Moses who led the children of labour in this country out of bondage – out of bondage, not into Canaan, for this is to be a longer job. Others had described that bondage, had explained it, had told what ought to come after it. Hardie found the Labour Movement on its industrial side narrowed to a conflict with employers, and totally unaware that that conflict, if successful, could only issue in a new economic order; on its political side, he found it only thinking of returning to Parliament men who came from the pits and workshops to do pretty much the same work that the politicians belonging to the old political parties had done, and totally unaware that Labour in politics must have a new outlook, a new driving force of ideas and a new standard of political effort. When he raised the flag of revolt in Mid-Lanark, he was a rebel proclaiming civil war: when he fought the old Trade Union leaders from the floor of Congress, he was a sectary; when the Independent Labour Party was formed in Bradford, it was almost a forlorn hope attacked by a section of Socialists on the one hand and by the Labour leaders in power on the other. What days of fighting, of murmuring, of dreary desert trudging were to follow, only those who went through them know. Through them, a mere handful of men and women sustained the drudgery and the buffetings. Hardie's dogged – even dour – persistence made faint-heartedness impossible. One has to think of some of those miraculous endurances of the men who defied hardship in the blank wilderness, the entangled forest,

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the endless snowfield, to get an understanding of the exhaustion of soul and mind and body which had to be undergone between 1890 and 1900, in order to create a Labour Movement.

For this endurance Hardie had an inexhaustible inner resource. He knew

The hills where his life rose,
And the sea where it goes.

He was one of the sternest champions which his class has ever produced, and yet his was no class mind. His driving and resisting power was not hate nor any of the feelings that belong to that category of impulse. When I used the expression 'communal consciousness,' for the first time in a book I had written, as the antithesis to 'class consciousness,' which some Socialists regarded as the shibboleth test of rectitude, he wrote me saying that that was exactly what he felt. But even that was not comprehensive enough. His life of sense was but the manifestations of the spirit, and to him 'the spirit' was something like what it was to the men whose bones lay on the Ayrshire moors under martyrs' monuments. It was the grand crowned authority of life, but an authority that spoke from behind a veil, that revealed itself in mysterious things both to man's heart and eyes. He used to tell us tales and confess to beliefs, in words that seemed to fall from the lips of a child. Had he not found his portion where blows had to be given and to be fended, and where the mind had to be actively wary every moment of the day in advancing and retreating, he would have

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been one of an old time to whom a belief in mystic signs and warnings would have been reverence and not superstition, and by whom such signs would have been given. Those who knew him have often met him looking as though a part of him were absent in some excursion in lands now barred to most of mankind. This, I believe, explains the hospitality he always gave to every new attempt to express the truth, explains his devotion to the cause of women as it was in his lifetime and, above all, explains the mysterious affinity there was between himself and children. His whole being lay under the shadow of the hand of the crowned Authority which told him of its presence now by a lightning flash, now by a whisper, and now by a mere tremor in his soul like what the old folk believe went through the earth when night died and the day was born. The world was life, not things, to him.

Thus, his Socialism was not an economic doctrine, not a formula proved and expressed in algebraic signs of x and y . He got more Socialism from Burns than from Marx; 'The Twa Dogs,' and 'A Man's a Man for a' that,' were more prolific text-books for his politics than *Das Kapital*. This being the spirit of his handiwork, the Independent Labour Party, is one reason why it became the greatest political influence of our time and threw into an almost negligible background, both in its enthusiastic propaganda and practical capacity, all other Socialist bodies in this country.

The inconsistencies which are essential attributes of human greatness are the cause of much trouble to the ordinary man, but these inconsistencies do not

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belong to the same order of things as the unreliabilities of the charlatan or the changefulness of the time-server. Hardie's apparent waywardness often gave his colleagues concern. He was responsive to every movement and hospitable to the most childlike thoughts – so much so that in a battle he not infrequently seemed to be almost in the opposing ranks, as at that Derby Conference, described by Mr. Stewart, when he sorely tried the loyalty of our own women by going out of his way to greet those who had done everything in their power to harass and insult them. A great man has so many sides to which the various voices of the day make appeal. He is not only one man but several – not only man, but woman too. But greatness is inconsistent only in the things that do not matter very much, and in the grand conflict of great issues he stood up as reliable as a mighty boulder in a torrent. The strength of hills was his for exactly the same reason as he had the trustful mind of a child. What appeared to be inconsistency was indeed manysidedness. No man was more generously international in his outlook and spirit, and yet to the very core of his being he was a Scotsman of Scotsmen, and it is not at all inappropriate that I came across him first of all at a meeting to demand Home Rule for Scotland. A man who held in no special esteem the 'book lear' of universities, he, nevertheless, warmed in interest to all kinds of lore, and he read choicely and was ever ready to sit at the feet of whomsoever had knowledge to impart. Always willing to listen, he was never ready to yield; loyal like a man, he was, nevertheless, persistent in his own way sometimes to a fault;

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humble in the councils of friends, he was proud in the world. Looking back at him now, the memory of his waywardness only adds to affection and admiration. One sees how necessary it was for his work.

There is one other inconsistency of greatness which he showed only to his friends. He could stand alone, and yet he could not. 'No one can ever know,' he once said to me, 'what suffering a man has to endure by misrepresentation.' He required a corner in the hearts of his people where he could rest and be soothed by regard. He therefore felt keenly every attack that was crudely cruel. For instance, he was sorely struck by the brutally vile cartoon which *Punch* published of him when he was in India. (I knew of the letters which Lord Minto was sending home expressing pleasure at his conduct in India, and I cheered him by telling him of them.)

But sorest of all was the wound which the war made upon him. Like every intelligent man who kept his head, he saw that the most worthless elements in the country would ride the whirlwind, that the people would be worked up into a state of mind that would not only defy every appeal to reason, but would prolong the agony and settle it, as all wars have hitherto been settled, by crushing debts, ruined ideals and a peace which would only be a truce to give time for the sowing of new seeds of war. He knew that when the clash came it could not be ended until the conditions of a settlement arose, and he joined heartily with the small group in the country who took the view that those conditions were political and not military, and that, therefore, whilst the soldier was holding the trenches, the politician should

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be as busy as the munition worker creating the political weapons which were to bring peace. He also knew that, when the war comes, the safety of every country is endangered by its enemy and that adequate steps must be taken to protect it. But he saw that problem in its fullness and not with military blinkers limiting his vision to recruitment, guns, and poison gas. He was quite well aware that the sky would speedily be darkened by black clouds of lies and misrepresentations, innocent and deliberate. That was in the day's work, and he knew that in time the attitude of his colleagues and himself would first of all be understood and that, later on, people would wonder why it took them so long to see the same things. He saw the Treaty of Versailles before 1915 was very far spent, and he was content to endure and wait. That is not how he was wounded. The deadly blow was given by the attitude of his old colleagues. When he returned from his first meeting in his constituency on the outbreak of war, described by Mr. Stewart, he was a crushed man, and sitting in the sun on the Terrace of the House of Commons where I came across him, he seemed to be looking out on blank desolation. From that he never recovered. Then followed the complete mergence of the Labour Party in the war-lusty crowd. The Independent Labour Party kept as trusty as ever, but he felt that his work was over, that all he could do in his lifetime was to amount to no more than picking up some of the broken spars of the wreckage. As Bunyan puts it, 'a post had come from the Celestial City for him.' And so he died.

The outlook has already changed. The floods are

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subsiding and his work stands. We are still too near to that work to see it in its detailed historical relations; the day and its events are too pressingly close and urgent to enable us to view the results of it in a lasting setting. Of this we are assured, however: in its great purposes and general achievements it is permanent. It is well with him and his memory.

'I shall be satisfied when I awake.'

CHAPTER SEVEN : THE MEANING OF MAY DAY ¹

TO the Independent Labour Party this year the land is indeed green with the promise of a coming harvest. It is sometimes, for long stretches of time, very difficult to see evidences that the world changes and that men are really moving onwards. The seeds of progress seem to fall upon men's minds and to be buried, and people go hither and thither whispering and shouting, sometimes as sneering cynics and sometimes as crude revolutionaries, that nothing is going to happen and that our efforts are to be in vain. They misread events. The powers of mind and will that make great changes have to accumulate, and whilst they are accumulating they are not much in evidence. As waters behind a barrier, they rise and rise, and then they come into play.

To-day is a time of manifestation. We can see now that during our thirty years of propaganda there has been not one lost word or thought. All are now in their place playing their part in the springlike pageantry of promise of these days. On the walls of some of our homes hang those prints of happy folk in classical draperies bearing bulging banners, which Walter Crane used to draw when ideas were in the Spring. They are now the Spring of achievement. They then were symbolical of our own hearts; now they are symbolical of what is happening in the world. Thus idealism transforms itself into reality, and our generation writes its name in the history of mankind.

¹ *New Leader*, May, 1923.

THE MEANING OF MAY DAY

We are still far from an Autumn peace, and the toils of Spring and Summer are by no means over. But the green blade is cheering, and the first flowers are out by the wayside.

We must not forget one thing, however. The final coming of Socialism is not to be like the arrival of an invading force. It is to be a renewal of life. It is to come like the Spring everywhere – in the sky, in the fields, in the woods. Not one voice is to proclaim it, nor one dance, nor one manifestation. Each in its appropriate way is to join in the change. So, not by Parliament alone, nor by one kind of attack in Parliament or out of it, is the transformation to come, but by the complete awakening of everything that quickens to higher and higher endeavour, to more and more truth and beauty. We might well go to where the Spring is to be found and, knowing what a mysterious choir of joyful sound and wonderful blend of beauty it is, turn to our own work with the secret of success in our possession – the co-operation and harmony of all the qualities of good directed to universal ends. That is Socialism: that is the significance of May.

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