

B.P.

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# POSTERITY

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# POSTERITY

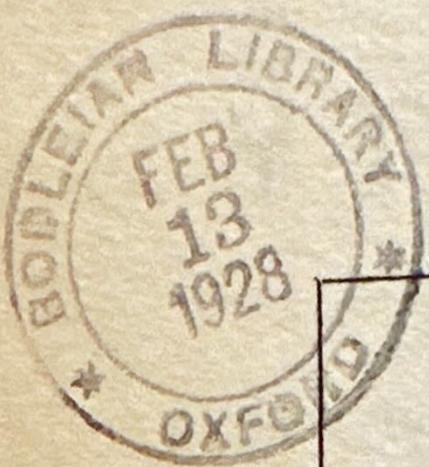
BY

STEPHEN KING-HALL



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By the Same Author

**FICTION**

STRANGE TALES FROM THE  
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THE DIARY OF A U-BOAT  
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THE UNCHARTED SEA.

**HISTORICAL & POLITICAL**

A NAVAL LIEUTENANT 1914-  
1918.

WESTERN CIVILIZATION AND THE  
FAR EAST.

IMPERIAL DEFENCE.

THE CHINA OF TO-DAY.

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## REMARKS

I ONCE wrote a book called *Western Civilization and the Far East*, of which a distinguished critic wrote that its most interesting feature was the post-war mentality which brooded over it.

He belonged, of course, to the generation which looked on the system of the balance of power as the best of all possible international arrangements. This generation was not permitted by Providence to appreciate the fact that the system of the balance of power which, in its efforts to preserve equipoise, continually added weight and counter-weight to either end of the see-saw, would eventually cause the plank of peace to split in the middle. I, on the

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other hand, belong to the generation which by time of birth was doomed to be sacrificed by the million, whilst those of us who survive are faced with the task of endeavouring to clear up the mess, and—if one has any sense of humanity—of preventing the repetition of the disaster.

The question as to which nation started the war seems now to be of no consequence whatsoever, and the fact that a number—I hope a decreasing number of people—still attach importance to this matter, is a distressing indication of how far we have yet to travel before the great majority of educated persons are able to see the Great War in its true light.

Viewed as an incident in the slow process by which man is changing from an ape to an angel, the War was an inevitable consequence of the manner in

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which international society was organised in 1914. It may be, it probably is, primarily a German responsibility that the consequence materialised in 1914 and not 1920 or 1930. But it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that it had to come. There was no other avenue of escape from the ludicrous paradox which overshadowed the 1914 world. That world lived a double life and maintained two establishments and modes of thought; in 1914 rival mistresses encountered each other.

On the one hand mankind in 1914 busied itself by spinning an intricate web of Internationalism, which was flung round the world. Methods of international trade, of communications and intercourse, were continually being improved and extended in their scope and convenience.

On the other hand the nations

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maintained beneath this web costly and uneconomic armed forces and organisations whose function was the destruction of the marvellous fabric of Internationalism which man was creating and in which he took such pride. The maintenance of these forces, justified by the needs of what was called "Defence," was due to an idea which was the child of a theory of Nationalism based on the fallacy that profit in the world (in the international sense) could only be obtained at the expense of another nation.

Civilised people had recognised the absurdity of this theory in the case of domestic national affairs for several centuries.

So long as this fallacy fermented men's minds, "Defence" forces were necessary. For so long as this fallacy has a substantial following amongst

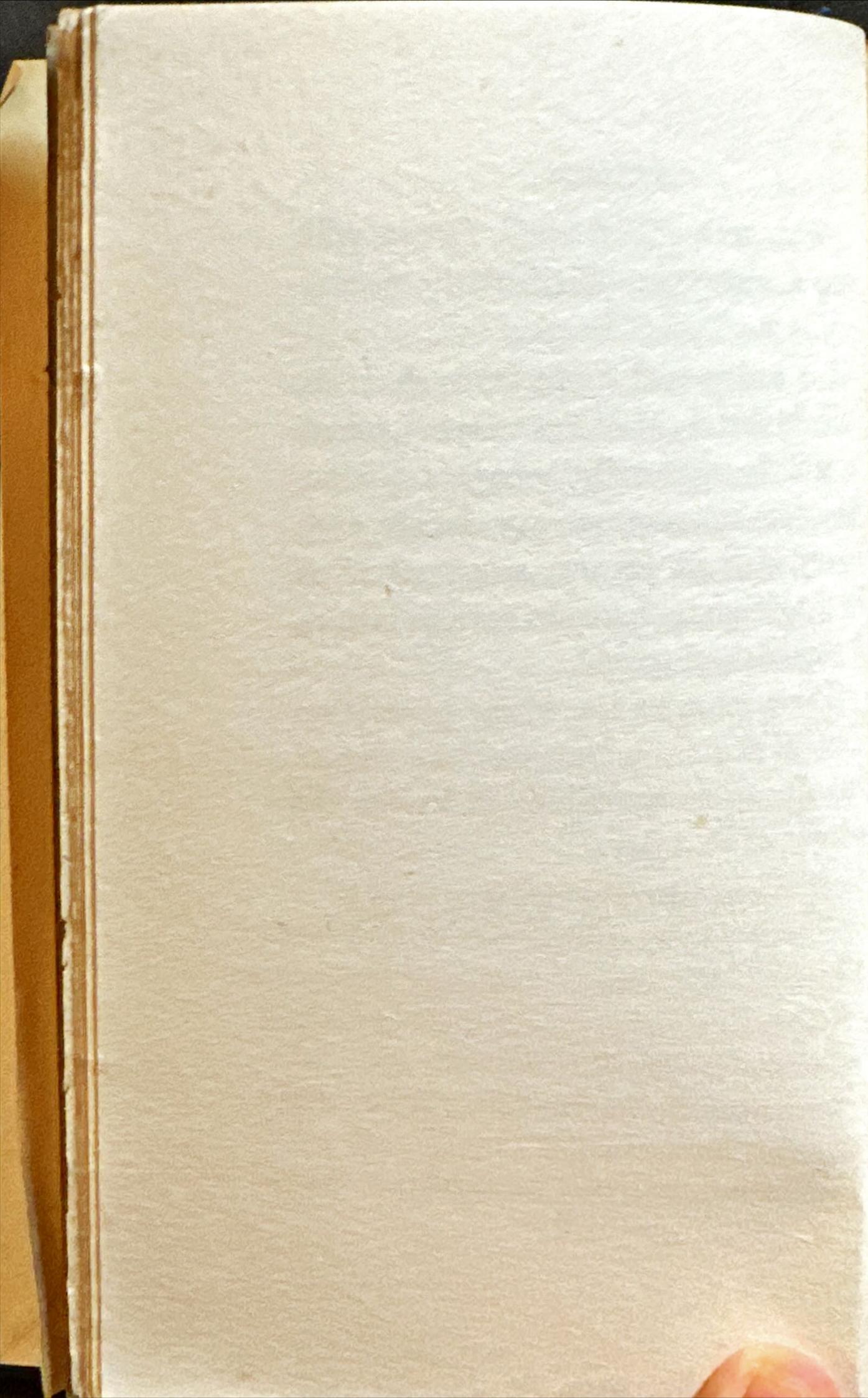
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civilised men “Defence” forces will remain necessary. Particularly necessary to the British Empire.

But a day will come, though it is unlikely that we shall live to see it, when it will be generally recognised that though human nature may change very slowly, if at all, yet war as a method of settling disputes between nations is both barbarous and stupid.

There must be few of my generation who do not from time to time feel an impulse to do something to hasten the advent of that day.

STEPHEN KING-HALL.



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### CURTAIN

*The scene is set in the ante-room of the Hereafter. Tall columns of black and white stretch to an infinite perspective.*

Enter Two PRIVATE SOLDIERS of the British Army in field kit. They look around in amazement and awe.

1ST SOLDIER. Billets?

2ND SOLDIER. That's about the size of it.

*(They dump their packs on the ground and sit on them.)*

1ST SOL. Never thought I'd be wearing this kit again.

2ND SOL. No! nor me neither. What

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beats me is 'ow they got it here, for it's  
me own right enough.

1<sup>ST</sup> SOL. Same here! bless me if it  
ain't the very same tunic wot I 'ad on  
when I stopped one. (*Looks at the  
tunic.*) Well, anyhow, they've 'ad the  
decency to mend the 'oles. Last time  
I seed this it was 'anging on me body  
on a bit of wire by Labasse. It's a  
miracle!

2<sup>ND</sup> SOL. That's about it! I s'pose  
they've got a kind of 'Oly Army Service  
Corps in these parts, and you indents  
on "Q" same as anywhere else.

1<sup>ST</sup> SOL. Wonder if they runs a wet  
canteen?

2<sup>ND</sup> SOL. Looks too posh for that,  
mate! More likely an officers' mess  
somewhere 'andy.

(Enter a SAILOR.)

1<sup>ST</sup> SOL. Ullo Jack! how's she go?

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SAILOR (*sitting on his bag and hammock*). Pretty fair! Pretty fair!

2ND SOL. Where do you come from?

SAILOR. Where the 'errings come from! Out of the North Sea, me lad! It's a long watch I've kept with my mates in a fine great ship till we heard the pipe "All hands lay aft," and the skipper dished out our travelling warrants for the judgment seat.

1ST SOL. See any more blokes coming up this way?

SAILOR. Any more! Blimme! you've never seen such a crowd in your lives, not this life, nor the last! Why man, there's millions of souls forming up to muster by the open list! Who are yer getting at?

2ND SOL. Ain't you heard the news? Where do you come from any'ow?

1ST SOL. No, I ain't 'eard no news.

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I was washed ashore in Astikos Island,  
I was—torpedoed transport.

2ND SOL. Astikos—where's that?

SAILOR. One of them Greek islands  
without a pub wot we used to visit in  
the Mediterranean Fleet.

1ST SOL. You're right, it's a cruel  
spot! I was the only British body in  
the whole blessed island. Your naval  
chaps used to come and 'ave a dekker at  
me grave once in five years, but it was  
lonely in between. Then one day I 'eard  
a voice saying, "William Jones, Private  
of the East Lancashire Regiment, arise!  
and go forth!" and 'ere I am!

2ND SOL. Well, I'll tell you wot the  
buzz was when *I* left France. The  
officers' souls were saying that every  
soul wot lost its body during the War  
was to be judged at one court.

1ST SOL. My word, wot a crimes  
sheet!

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SAILOR. I met a chap down there at the barrack gates, as you might say, who seemed to be the executive officer of this 'ere outfit, and we passed the time o' day together. Well, 'e told me that all the nobs wot was mixed up in the War are going to 'ave their records examined at the same time.

1ST SOL. We may 'ear some spicey bits, eh?

2ND SOL. War! wot was the bloomin' War any'ow?

(Enter a CABINET MINISTER *in morning coat.*)

CABINET MINISTER. What was the War? Ah! how often have I explained the fundamental causes of that great conflict between right and wrong, the struggle for democracy, for er—ah—a self-determination—within reasonable

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2ND SOL. Garn! I'll tell you why I died! It was all because a ruddy fool of a colonel misread 'is ruddy orders, 'e did, and we walks into a ruddy barrage, we did! Strike me pink! 'ere is the old boy! Party, 'Tention!

(Enter a COLONEL.)

COLONEL (*examining 1ST SOLDIER*). Not a very good shave this morning, I fear. This is an occasion, Smith, on which I expect every man in the regiment to do himself, the regiment, and me the utmost credit.

2ND SOL. (*strictly at attention*). Very good, sir!

SAILOR. Good old British Army!

COLONEL (*to SAILOR*). You may be unaware that I rank with a post-captain.

SAILOR. Beg pardon, sir! no disrespect meant.

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COLONEL. Say no more about it. My regiment has had the honour of co-operating with the Royal Navy on several occasions.

C.M. (*addressing COLONEL*). Permit me to introduce myself, my dear sir. I am—I should say I was, on earth—Lord Blatherington.

COLONEL. I recollect your career perfectly well. You were in the Cabinet at some time or other, were you not?

C.M. I had that honour.

COLONEL. I always understood at the club that you favoured the Eastern policy.

C.M. I certainly inclined that way.

COLONEL. Well, let me take this opportunity of telling you that you and your friends were utterly and damnably wrong.

C.M. Er—hum—a—this is rather strong language in these precincts,

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Colonel—er—distinctly unparliamentary I should say—

COLONEL. It's the truth, and as such particularly appropriate here.

1ST SOL. Excuse me, sir, but could I have a word with you privately?

COLONEL. Certainly, my man! (*They move aside.*)

1ST SOL. Well, it's like this 'ere, sir. I've got two things on me conscience and I'd like your 'elp, sir!

COLONEL. Well, come along, let's have them.

1ST SOL. The first is about B Company's rum. I was corporal in charge of the details bringing up the rum in December 1917—we wos in the salient, and, my Gawd, it was cold!

COLONEL. Yes! Yes! go on man!

1ST SOL. Well, we got lost in the mud abaht 3 ack emma.

COLONEL. Yes!

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1ST SOL. And we didn't get to company 'eadquarters till 9 o'clock. It come on all foggy.

COLONEL. Yes!

1ST SOL. Well, you see, sir! the rum—

COLONEL. Yes! Yes! Yes!

1ST SOL. Well, sir! we drunk it ourselves and said as 'ow the rum-jars 'ad been chipped by M.G. bullets.

COLONEL. The devil you did!

1ST SOL. Yes, sir.

COLONEL (*after reflection*). It was a very serious military offence. Were you not suspected?

1ST SOL. No, sir! the sergeant-major 'e thought a lot out loud and made some nasty remarks, but we was all in it together and we kept our mouths shut.

COLONEL. And what is the other matter on your conscience?

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1ST SOL. (*confidentially*). It's about a woman, sir.

COLONEL. I always left women to Major Spencer, my second in command, a bachelor with immense experience. However, I suppose I must deal with your case. What are the details? Same old story, I suppose?

1ST SOL. She was a girl in Portsmouth, sir, called Ivy Jones, and we walked out in 1914.

SAILOR (*who has moved over*). Was she a red-headed skirt what was supposed to be going to marry some flat-footed grabby in France?

COLONEL (*to SAILOR*). We'll hear your reminiscences in a moment, my man. (*To SOLDIER*) Well, and what happened?

1ST SOL. Well, I went to France; she was expecting, and I wrote regular and never heard nothing, and I put in for leave to make a' honest woman of 'er,

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and I stopped one the week before I was due to go to Blighty. And the last thing I thought of, 'anging on the barbed wire, was my old Ivy and 'ow she never could be an 'onest woman.

SAILOR. Dontcher believe it, mate. When was you killed?

1ST SOL. January 1916.

SAILOR. Well, Ivy and me 'ad been spliced three months by then—that's why she didn't write to you.

1ST SOL. Strewth! What abaht the kid, mate?

SAILOR. Born in March, he was. I always said he was a bit quick on it, but 'er mother what 'ad 'ad eleven, bluffed me proper, she did. Well, any'ow, she was a good-looking girl.

COLONEL. Well, that matter is settled, and as far as the rum is concerned, I'll see what can be done. I'm not acquainted with the exact procedure

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which is employed here, but I presume that a colonel will carry a good deal of weight, and I shall put in a word for you. Still, it was a serious military offence, and you can't expect to get off scot free.

1ST SOL. No, sir. Thank you, sir!

C.M. I confess to a certain amount of curiosity as to the procedure when the Court opens.

COLONEL. I ask for nothing better than court-martial routine; we don't want any lawyers butting in. In any case, so far as I can remember the drill as laid down, we have all pleaded guilty in advance.

C.M. I have certainly done nothing of the sort!

COLONEL. I presume that you have at some time in your career attended a place of public worship and openly admitted you were a miserable sinner?

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C.M. If I did it was only as a matter of form and entirely without prejudice. The admission, I mean. In any case I doubt if that would be evidence in a properly constituted Court of Law. Amongst other offices I have held was that of Home Secretary, and I know a good deal about the Law of Evidence.

COLONEL. My experience has been, never try and bamboozle the Court, and I certainly shan't try and fool this one.

C.M. (*musingly*). I hope that my obituary notice in the *Times* is amongst the documents in my dossier. They gave me three and a half columns.

COLONEL. Humph! I only had four lines on the front page, and my wife paid for those. Piece of hypocrisy!

C.M. How so?

COLONEL. She put at the end, "Mourned for ever." I've never read

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such tommy rot; she was married again within the year. It was a guinea lie.

(Enter the BISHOP OF SEVENOAKS and the BISHOP OF GRINZELHEIM.)

C.M. My dear Bishop! this is indeed a pleasure!

BISHOP OF SEVENOAKS. Peace be with you!

SAILOR (*the Two SOLDIERS and SAILOR have been playing nap*). Hullo! here's a padre! now we're on velvet, he'll be able to help us.

SAILOR. I say, padre?

BISHOP (*to C.M.*). Excuse me! Allow me to introduce my colleague, the Bishop of Grinzelheim, the Bishop of G.—Lord Blatherington. (*To SAILOR*) Peace be with you!

SAILOR. But it ain't, that's my trouble.

BISHOP. What's your difficulty, my friend?

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SAILOR. Well, it's like this here, I was in a cruiser at Jutland and there was a lull in the action—

BISHOP. Jutland? the name is familiar to me!

BISHOP OF GRINZELHEIM. He means the German victory off Skajerack.

SAILOR. Hold hard, old goat face, you don't know what you're talking about. You only read the German newspapers. It was a British victory all right.

C.M. Shall we call it an indecisive action? There has been a lot of correspondence about it.

COLONEL. No, we shall *not*. Why, you'll tell me we didn't win the war next!

(Enter a NEUTRAL.)

NEUTRAL. Did you? Who are we?

COLONEL. Who the devil are you?

NEUTRAL. I was a neutral. I was

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ruined and my wife was killed by your war.

C.M. Most unfortunate!

B. OF S. }  
,, G. } Deplorable! Lamentable!

SAILOR. You ought to have had the savee to come in on our side like most of the other nootrals when they saw how the cat was moving.

NEUTRAL. Yes, but how was the cat moving? Listen, I was a man of importance in my country and—

C.M. What! did you hold Cabinet rank?

NEUTRAL. I did.

C.M. My dear sir, so did I! Allow me to introduce myself, Lord Blatherington.

NEUTRAL. I am delighted to have had this opportunity of renewing our acquaintance.

C.M. What! have we met before?

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NEUTRAL. Oh yes, at Versailles. I was one of the delegates. We met at a sub-committee meeting of the Big Three, you were one of the little twenty-six, and I was one of the lesser thirty-eight. We were forced into the War at the end.

C.M. Hum! I can't recollect the event. Later on, you know, I became one of the Ten—the Big Ten.

NEUTRAL. As I was saying, how could we tell which way the cat was moving? In 1914 Germany was winning, in 1914 Germany was losing, in 1915 and 1916 it was see-saw, in 1917 Russia died, America came in. In 1918 Germany was winning, and in 1918 she'd lost—or so we all thought, but really she'd won. The whole thing was madness.

C.M. Hush! Hush! you really must not talk like that.

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COLONEL. Damn nonsense!

B. OF S. }      Really, Colonel, have some  
,, G.    }      respect for us and your  
               surroundings.

COLONEL. Your Grace and I are in  
the same cart here, I imagine.

B. OF S. Peace be with you!

NEUTRAL. I repeat, madness! this war  
was an ill-begotten child of our civilisa-  
tion that burst ruthlessly from the  
delicate womb in which it should have  
been aborted. It was a boil from which  
exuded all the beastliness we glossed  
over with the rouge and powder of  
our marvellous social organisation—and  
my wife, innocent, young, beautiful  
—(fiercely) Oh, damn you all! (*hides  
head in hands*).

B. OF G. The consolation of religion,  
the helping hands of its ministers were  
available to support you in your trouble.

NEUTRAL. Helping hands! blood-

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stained like the rest of them. Hypocrites!

BISHOPS (*in unison*). Peace be with you!

SAILOR. Excuse me interrupting, but I was asking your advice, padre.

B. OF S. To be sure you were. Pray continue.

SAILOR. There was a lull in the action, and me and two other blokes in a turret started to play a game of Crown and Anchor. Well, I might as well be honest about it. I cheated a leading seaman called George Taylor, and as I cheated we was 'it in the magazine, and as my poor body left me I saw a look in me eyes that said as plain as I sez it now, "You are a something cheat," and I tried all I know to say to George, the arf-dollar was his, but I was just too late. Now 'ow do I stand, padre? 'Ad I repented or did I die a cheat, eh?

C.M. That's the sort of question I

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used to ask notice for or alternatively plead the public interest.

1ST SOL. I reckon he's tubbed you, sir!

COLONEL. The answer seems to be plain enough to me. Ten days' detention!

SAILOR. That sounds fair enough.

B. OF S. But hardly disposes of the moral side of the matter. Were you gambling?

2ND SOL. (*sarcastically*). Oh, dear me, no! you get money for nothing at Crown and Anchor, I don't think!

SAILOR. Well, I suppose you would call it a bit of a gamble.

BISHOP. Then both you and your friend were to blame, but considering the peculiar circumstances of the case and the undoubted fact that the will to repent was present, I am inclined to think you can set your mind at rest.

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B. OF G. You were not a Roman Catholic by any chance, were you?

SAILOR. No, I was a Plymouth Brother.

B. OF G. That's all right. I thought for a moment that it might be a case falling within my jurisdiction.

SAILOR (*addressing SOLDIERS*). What say get on with our little game, eh, mates?

1<sup>ST</sup> SOL. Good enough.

2<sup>ND</sup> SOL. But watch our naval friend close, Bill, after what we've just 'eard.

SAILOR. Now, then, that's enough from you.

(*They settle down to cards.*)

B. OF G. To continue our conversation, I confess that I am far from satisfied with our position.

B. OF S. I take a more hopeful view than you do.

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B. OF G. I wish I knew when His Holiness was to be expected.

B. OF S. With all due deference to the Bishop of Rome, and sympathetic though I am to Anglo-Catholic aspirations, I must frankly say that I could not accept his decision as binding.

B. OF G. We won't go over that ground again—

C.M. This sounds like a theological-political discussion in which I might with propriety intervene. Though I have never actually been Premier, two holders of that office have been good enough to consult me when high ecclesiastical preferments were in question. There is, perhaps, no harm in saying, my dear Bishop, that when Sevenoaks fell vacant I had just read a sermon of yours on the subject of righteousness and the War, and I pressed your case

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very strongly with the Prime Minister  
—with—a—ah—the happiest results.

B. OF S. Thank you. It is curious that you should mention that sermon of mine. If you recollect, we had just suffered a rather serious reverse on the Western front, and one felt that a stiffener was needed—a re-statement of our case in terms of Christianity. I was but the poor instrument, but it has always been a source of satisfaction to me that the recruiting figures in our district responded very sharply.

C.M. But why curious?

B. OF S. Simply that it touches on a question that my brother the Bishop of Grinzelheim and myself have been discussing for some hours.

COLONEL (*pacing up and down and rehearsing a part, speaking to himself*). “I believe in my God, my King, my Country, and my Regiment, gentle-

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men!" No, that won't do! "I believe in my God, my King, the British Empire, the British Army, and my Regiment, and always have done so, your Lordships!" Hum, that sounds better. "I was educated at Wellington and Sandhurst, served in the Great War, was mentioned six times in despatches, was unfaithful twice to my wife in France under great temptation, and owned up to one of them. Assisted by my lawyer, who was an M.P., defrauded the income tax legally for six years, and then I died." Yes, that sounds all right. I must go and write it out.

(*Exit COLONEL.*)

B. OF G. I wonder if that should be treated as a confession. He may belong to me.

C.M. Pardon my insistence, but what was it you two were discussing.

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I was a famous mediator in my time, and many a formula of mine has put off until to-morrow the inconveniences of to-day.

B. OF S. Well, it was simply this. My brother-bishop and I were discussing the fact that during the War, as became our stations in life, we were both praying for victory and supporting the War from a Christian point of view.

C.M. Rather confusing for the Deity, unless he ignored your appeals.

B. OF G. I can hardly be expected to subscribe to that idea.

B. OF S. Nor I.

B. OF G. But the consequence is that we are in an awkward position.

B. OF S. At any rate a very illogical one.

C.M. I suppose you both committed yourselves irrevocably?

B. OF S. I distinctly remember com-

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paring the Germans to Pagan savages satiated with the lust of destruction.

C.M. You did, and excellent propaganda it made. I have found it a good rule in public life never to commit oneself, otherwise consistency becomes difficult.

B. OF G. Personally I shall leave my case entirely in the hands of His Holiness the Pope.

B. OF S. I almost envy you the Pope.

B. OF G. My dear fellow, come over to Rome. It's been done before.

C.M. I trust you will *not* forsake the Church by law established. Don't bite the hand which fed you.

B. OF S. Certainly not. Still, I shall feel easier when it's all over. Like one's first sermon, eh?

(Enter ST PETER dressed as a North Sea fisherman in sou'wester, blue jersey,

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*serge trousers, and sea boots. He is closely followed by an AMERICAN of the hard-faced 100 per cent. American He-man type.)*

AMERICAN. Hi! Hi! Say, Saint, where do you park your hips? I'm real tired of chasing you round this block! (*Drops his papers.*) Darn it!

1<sup>ST</sup> SOL. 'Ullo, 'ere's a perishin' Yank.

2<sup>ND</sup> SOL. In a 'urry, but late as usual, same as 'appened once before in France.

SAILOR (*to ST PETER*). Blimme, mate! One of the trawler section! Copped it minesweeping, I'll lay arf a dollar?

ST PETER (*to SAILOR*). Not exactly, though I am a fisherman—a fisher of men.

(BISHOP OF G. *losing his head genuflects profoundly.* BISHOP OF S. *in great confusion bobbingly follows suit.* SAILOR and SOLDIERS *realising ST*

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PETER's identity hastily rise and take their caps off. ST PETER holds out his hand to them, but they are very shy. Meanwhile BISHOPS, eyeing each other with suspicion, begin to advance simultaneously. CABINET MINISTER, preening himself, steps forward with an ingratiating smile.)

C.M. My dear St Peter, my name may not be unfamiliar to you. I am—er—I was Lord—

AMERICAN (*thrusting himself to the front*). (*To C.M.*) Cut that right out! Say, guess I'm scheduled for the first appointment with this Saint! (*To ST PETER*) Now, sir, perhaps you can spare me a moment on a business matter.

ST PETER. Dear me, what a hustler you are! I think you are under a misapprehension.

AMERICAN. Now, say, be reasonable! I never expected to have to come to

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Court about it, and certainly the British have been on the level from the word go, but some of the others——

ST PETER. I see you are under a false impression; where do you imagine you are?

AMERICAN. Well, now, if this isn't a scream! Isn't this lay-out in the precincts of the Judgment Seat?

ST PETER. It is.

AMERICAN. Well, ain't I gotta a case? Ain't I gotta a right to sue for breach of contract? Ain't I gotta——

ST PETER. This Court is not a debt-collecting agency.

AMERICAN. Gee! that's fierce! that sure is a K.O. I've often said I'd have to wait till doomsday to be paid what's owing to me, but I did think it would be all right then.

C.M. My dear sir, you were ever a race of idealists, and as my right

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reverend friends here would tell you,  
“What shall it profit a man . . . if he  
lose his soul.”

AMERICAN. Guess you are right, Mr

---

C.M. My name is Lord Blather-  
ington. I was in the British Cabinet  
in—

AMERICAN. Not *the* Lord Blather-  
ington?

(C.M. bows).

AMERICAN (*extending hand*). Say, this  
is a pleasure! I am glad to have you  
know me. I really do wish you could  
come and stay a piece with me in my  
home town. I say, Saint, have you met  
Lord Blatherington? if not, permit me  
to introduce two of the world's really  
prominent men. (*Looks around.*) Gosh!  
not a movie man in sight, and what a  
chance!

ST PETER (*who has been talking to*

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SAILOR). Oh, I know him, thank you, if you would care to have a few words of advice before the Court opens——

B. OF S. If it is not taking up too much of your time may I ask you an opinion on one or two theological questions? Coming from such an authority——

B. OF G. I also would like to ask you as one who was the first Bishop of Rome for a ruling on——

ST PETER. Theology! Oh, we don't go in for that here. That's a human invention of which God does not approve.

BISHOPS. Doesn't approve!

(Enter a MESSENGER. Hands a document  
to ST PETER.)

ST PETER. Ah! a communication from headquarters. (Opens and reads it.)

ST PETER. I am afraid this will be

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rather a disappointment to you, gentlemen. You will not be required to stand your trial after all.

C.M. Prosecution withdraws for lack of evidence, I presume. I recollect that during the Ulster troubles in 1914, when I was in the Cabinet, we used that excuse to avoid indicting—

ST PETER. On the contrary, the Court has had all the evidence before it for centuries, and I take it that none of you had any defence to the charge of being implicated in some manner in the Great War.

NEUTRAL. Surely in my case I can hardly be accused of starting the damned thing?

ST PETER. Agreed, but you undoubtedly helped to prolong it.

AMERICAN. You've said a jugful, St Peter. Reckon as how we all drew a card in that jack-pot, and by golly the

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bidding was fierce before we saw each other's hands in 1918.

ST PETER. Such being the case, the Court has directed me to inform you that it has reached the unanimous decision that you are unfit to plead.

BISHOPS. You mean?

ST PETER. That you must all have been *non compos mentis*—in other words, stark, staring mad—and you will therefore be detained in Purgatory for the duration of this creation.

C.M. (*staggered*). My dear sir! Insane! Mentally deficient, do you mean? I tell you I was a member of the——

CURTAIN.

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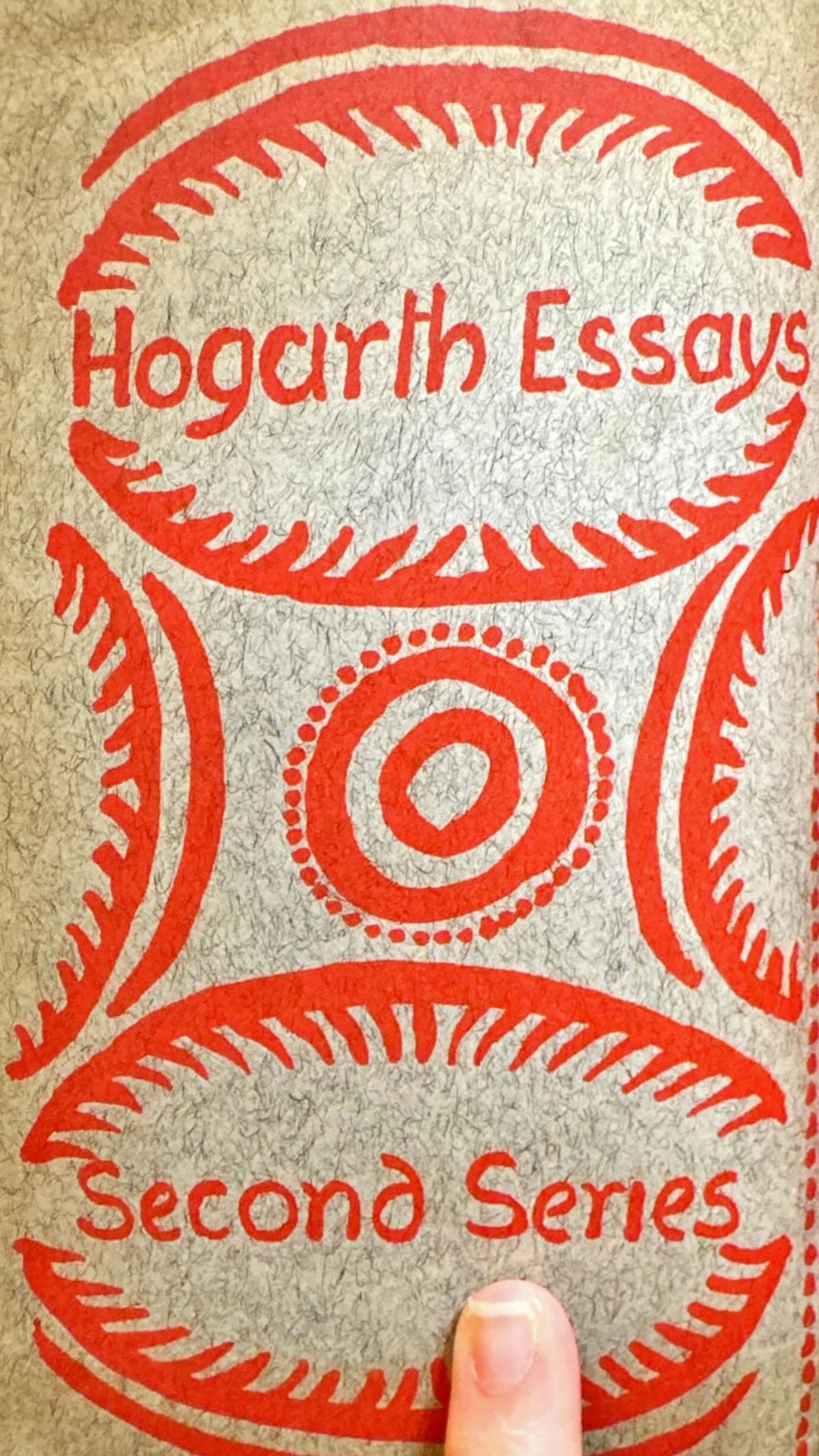
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