

Description and Processing of the original data

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Title: Relating the Zipf's law to textual information

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1. Basic information of the ten texts.

- [1] *The Age of Reason* (AR) by T. Paine, 1794 (The major source of British deism).
- [2] *Thoughts on the Funding System and its Effects* (TF) by P. Ravenstone, 1824 (Economics).
- [3] *Dream Lover* (DL) by J. MacIntyre, 1987 (Romance novella).
- [4] *Time Machine* (TM), by H. G. Wells, 1895 (Science fiction).
- [5] *Dawn of Avalon* (DA), by Anna Elliott, 2010 (Historical fantasy).
- [6] *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason and Seeking for Truth in the Sciences* (DM), by Rene Descartes, 1637 (Natural philosophy).
- [7] *Treatise on the Origin of Language* (TO), by Johann Gottfried Herder, 1772 (Historical linguistics).
- [8] *Tidal Swans*, by James Welsh (TS), 2011 (Romance novella).
- [9] *Overproduction and Crises*, by Karl Rodbertus (OC), 1898 (Economics).
- [10] *Whirl of the Wheel* (WW), by Catherine Condie, 2009 (Science fiction).

2. Processing of the original data.

All the ten texts are downloaded from the Gutenberg project, <http://www.gutenberg.org/>. We do some slight processing on the original data, i.e., the contents that do not belong to the story of text are deleted, such as the description of the text by Gutenberg at the beginning and in the end, the outline of the text, the page/section breaks (stars symbols), the unrecognized symbols, etc. Then according to the length of the text (total number of words), we divide the text into two, each with equal length.

We used the R language to calculate the values of all quantities for each text, the following are two examples of calculating the Yule's constant and the spatial frequency (R codes):

Yule's constant

```
library(jiebaR)
setwd("*****")

mixsegNoMarker=worker(symbol = F,write = FALSE)
noMarker=segment(code = "./AR1.txt",jiebar = mixsegNoMarker)
if(length(which(noMarker==" "))!=0){
    noMarker=noMarker[-which(noMarker==" ")]
}

#noMarker=noMarker[-which(noMarker==noMarker[7])]
noMarker <- casemap(noMarker,upper=F)
options(max.print = 10000000)

data(noMarker)
sink("noMarker.txt")
noMarker
sink()

Number <- table(noMarker)
Number2 <- as.data.frame(Number)
Numword <- Number2[[1]]
Numwordv <- as.vector(Numword)
Numfre <- Number2[[2]]
Numfrev <- as.vector(Numfre)
counts <- as.data.frame(table(Numfrev))
counts1 <- as.vector(counts[[1]])
counts2 <- as.vector(counts[[2]])
N=length(noMarker)
couSum=c()

for(i in 1:length(counts1)){
```

```
couSum[i] <- counts2[i]*(as.numeric(counts1[i])/N)^2
}
YK=sum(couSum)
YK
YK=YK-1.0/N
YK
```

Spatial frequency

```
library(jiebaR)
setwd("*****")
mixsegNoMarker=worker(symbol = FALSE,write = FALSE)
txt2=segment(code = "./AR1.txt",jiebar = mixsegNoMarker)
```

```
if(length(which(txt2==" "))!=0){
  txt2=txt2[-which(txt2==" ")]
}
```

```
untxt2 <- casefold(txt2,upper=F)
uuntxt2 <- unique(untxt2)
numT <- table(untxt2)
numT2 <- as.data.frame(numT)
numWord <- numT2[[1]]
numWordv <- as.vector(numWord)
numFre <- numT2[[2]]
numFrev <- as.vector(numFre)
```

```
matNum <- match(uuntxt2,numWordv)
numWordvv <- numWordv[matNum]
numFrevv <- numFrev[matNum]
```

```

anaFre <- numFrevv[which(numFrevv>=10)]

anaWords <- numWordvv[which(numFrevv>=10)]
anaWordsa <- paste0("\b",anaWords)
anaWordsb <- paste0(anaWordsa,"\\b")

d=list()
dx=list()
dAver=c()

for(i in 1:length(anaWordsb)){
  d[[i]]=grep(anaWordsb[i],untxt2)
  dx[[i]]=d[[i]][1:(length(d[[i]])-1)]
  for(j in 1:(length(d[[i]])-1)){
    dx[[i]][j]=(d[[i]][j+1]-d[[i]][j])-1
    dAver[i]=sum(dx[[i]])/length(dx[[i]])
  }
}

fspace <- 1/dAver
f <- anaFre/length(untxt2)
f_fspa <- sum(abs(f-fspace)/f)
f_fspa
-----
```

3. Original data (from AR1, AR2 to WW1, WW2).

AR1

PART FIRST

IT has been my intention, for several years past, to publish my thoughts upon religion. I am well aware of the difficulties that attend the subject, and from that consideration, had reserved it to a more advanced period of life. I intended it to be the last offering I should make to my fellow-citizens of all nations, and that at a time when the purity of the motive that induced me to it, could not admit of a question, even by those who might disapprove the work.

The circumstance that has now taken place in France of the total abolition of the whole national order of priesthood, and of everything appertaining to compulsive systems of religion, and compulsive articles of faith, has not only precipitated my intention, but rendered a work of this kind exceedingly necessary, lest in the general wreck of superstition, of false systems of government, and false theology, we lose sight of morality, of humanity, and of the theology that is true.

As several of my colleagues and others of my fellow-citizens of France have given me the example of making their voluntary and individual profession of faith, I also will make mine; and I do this with all that sincerity and frankness with which the mind of man communicates with itself.

I believe in one God, and no more; and I hope for happiness beyond this life.

I believe in the equality of man; and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow-creatures happy.

But, lest it should be supposed that I believe in many other things in addition to these, I shall, in the progress of this work, declare the things I do not believe, and my reasons for not believing them.

I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish church, by the Roman church, by the Greek church, by the Turkish church, by the Protestant church, nor by any church that I know of. My own mind is my own church.

All national institutions of churches, whether Jewish, Christian or Turkish, appear to me no other

than human inventions, set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit.

I do not mean by this declaration to condemn those who believe otherwise; they have the same right to their belief as I have to mine. But it is necessary to the happiness of man, that he be mentally faithful to himself. Infidelity does not consist in believing, or in disbelieving; it consists in professing to believe what he does not believe.

It is impossible to calculate the moral mischief, if I may so express it, that mental lying has produced in society. When a man has so far corrupted and prostituted the chastity of his mind, as to subscribe his professional belief to things he does not believe, he has prepared himself for the commission of every other crime. He takes up the trade of a priest for the sake of gain, and in order to qualify himself for that trade, he begins with a perjury. Can we conceive any thing more destructive to morality than this?

Soon after I had published the pamphlet Common Sense, in America, I saw the exceeding probability that a revolution in the system of government would be followed by a revolution in the system of religion. The adulterous connection of church and state, wherever it had taken place, whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish, had so effectually prohibited by pains and penalties, every discussion upon established creeds, and upon first principles of religion, that until the system of government should be changed, those subjects could not be brought fairly and openly before the world; but that whenever this should be done, a revolution in the system of religion would follow. Human inventions and priesthood would be detected; and man would return to the pure, unmixed and unadulterated belief of one God, and no more.

Every national church or religion has established itself by pretending some special mission from God, communicated to certain individuals. The Jews have their Moses; the Christians their Jesus Christ, their apostles and saints; and the Turks their Mahomet, as if the way to God was not open to every man alike.

Each of those churches show certain books, which they call revelation, or the word of God. The Jews say, that their word of God was given by God to Moses, face to face; the Christians say, that their word of God came by divine inspiration: and the Turks say, that their word of God (the Koran) was brought by an angel from Heaven. Each of those churches accuse the other of unbelief; and for my own part, I disbelieve them all.

As it is necessary to affix right ideas to words, I will, before I proceed further into the subject, offer some other observations on the word revelation. Revelation, when applied to religion, means something communicated immediately from God to man.

No one will deny or dispute the power of the Almighty to make such a communication, if he pleases. But admitting, for the sake of a case, that something has been revealed to a certain person, and not revealed to any other person, it is revelation to that person only. When he tells it to a second person, a second to a third, a third to a fourth, and so on, it ceases to be a revelation to all those persons. It is revelation to the first person only, and hearsay to every other, and consequently they are not obliged to believe it.

It is a contradiction in terms and ideas, to call anything a revelation that comes to us at second-hand, either verbally or in writing. Revelation is necessarily limited to the first communication – after this, it is only an account of something which that person says was a revelation made to him; and though he may find himself obliged to believe it, it cannot be incumbent on me to believe it in the same manner; for it was not a revelation made to me, and I have only his word for it that it was made to him.

When Moses told the children of Israel that he received the two tables of the commandments from the hands of God, they were not obliged to believe him, because they had no other authority for it than his telling them so; and I have no other authority for it than some historian telling me so. The commandments carry no internal evidence of divinity with them; they contain some good moral precepts, such as any man qualified to be a lawgiver, or a legislator, could produce himself, without having recourse to supernatural intervention.*

[* It is, however, necessary to except the declaration which says that God visits the sins of the fathers upon the children; it is contrary to every principle of moral justice.]

When I am told that the Koran was written in Heaven and brought to Mahomet by an angel, the account comes too near the same kind of hearsay evidence and second-hand authority as the former. I did not see the angel myself, and, therefore, I have a right not to believe it.

When also I am told that a woman called the Virgin Mary, said, or gave out, that she was with child

without any cohabitation with a man, and that her betrothed husband, Joseph, said that an angel told him so, I have a right to believe them or not; such a circumstance required a much stronger evidence than their bare word for it; but we have not even this – for neither Joseph nor Mary wrote any such matter themselves; it is only reported by others that they said so – it is hearsay upon hearsay, and I do not choose to rest my belief upon such evidence.

It is, however, not difficult to account for the credit that was given to the story of Jesus Christ being the son of God. He was born when the heathen mythology had still some fashion and repute in the world, and that mythology had prepared the people for the belief of such a story. Almost all the extraordinary men that lived under the heathen mythology were reputed to be the sons of some of their gods. It was not a new thing, at that time, to believe a man to have been celestially begotten; the intercourse of gods with women was then a matter of familiar opinion. Their Jupiter, according to their accounts, had cohabited with hundreds: the story, therefore, had nothing in it either new, wonderful, or obscene; it was conformable to the opinions that then prevailed among the people called Gentiles, or Mythologists, and it was those people only that believed it. The Jews who had kept strictly to the belief of one God, and no more, and who had always rejected the heathen mythology, never credited the story.

It is curious to observe how the theory of what is called the Christian church sprung out of the tail of the heathen mythology. A direct incorporation took place in the first instance, by making the reputed founder to be celestially begotten. The trinity of gods that then followed was no other than a reduction of the former plurality, which was about twenty or thirty thousand: the statue of Mary succeeded the statue of Diana of Ephesus; the deification of heroes changed into the canonization of saints; the Mythologists had gods for everything; the Christian Mythologists had saints for everything; the church became as crowded with one, as the Pantheon had been with the other, and Rome was the place of both. The Christian theory is little else than the idolatry of the ancient Mythologists, accommodated to the purposes of power and revenue; and it yet remains to reason and philosophy to abolish the amphibious fraud.

Nothing that is here said can apply, even with the most distant disrespect, to the real character of Jesus Christ. He was a virtuous and an amiable man. The morality that he preached and practised was of the most benevolent kind; and though similar systems of morality had been preached by Confucius, and by some of the Greek philosophers, many years before; by the Quakers since; and by many good men in all ages, it has not been exceeded by any.

Jesus Christ wrote no account of himself, of his birth, parentage, or any thing else; not a line of what is called the New Testament is of his own writing. The history of him is altogether the work of other people; and as to the account given of his resurrection and ascension, it was the necessary counterpart to the story of his birth. His historians having brought him into the world in a supernatural manner, were obliged to take him out again in the same manner, or the first part of the story must have fallen to the ground.

The wretched contrivance with which this latter part is told exceeds every thing that went before it. The first part, that of the miraculous conception, was not a thing that admitted of publicity; and therefore the tellers of this part of the story had this advantage, that though they might not be credited, they could not be detected. They could not be expected to prove it, because it was not one of those things that admitted of proof, and it was impossible that the person of whom it was told could prove it himself.

But the resurrection of a dead person from the grave, and his ascension through the air, is a thing very different as to the evidence it admits of, to the invisible conception of a child in the womb. The resurrection and ascension, supposing them to have taken place, admitted of public and ocular demonstration, like that of the ascension of a balloon, or the sun at noon-day, to all Jerusalem at least. A thing which everybody is required to believe, requires that the proof and evidence of it should be equal to all, and universal; and as the public visibility of this last related act was the only evidence that could give sanction to the former part, the whole of it falls to the ground, because that evidence never was given. Instead of this, a small number of persons, not more than eight or nine, are introduced as proxies for the whole world, to say they saw it, and all the rest of the world are called upon to believe it. But it appears that Thomas did not believe the resurrection, and, as they say, would not believe without having ocular and manual demonstration himself. So neither will I, and the reason is equally as good for me, and for every other person, as for Thomas.

It is in vain to attempt to palliate or disguise this matter. The story, so far as relates to the supernatural part, has every mark of fraud and imposition stamped upon the face of it. Who were the authors of it is as impossible for us now to know, as it is for us to be assured that the books in which the account is related were written by the persons whose names they bear; the best surviving evidence we now have respecting that affair is the Jews. They are regularly descended from the people who lived in the times this resurrection and ascension is said to have happened, and they

say, it is not true. It has long appeared to me a strange inconsistency to cite the Jews as a proof of the truth of the story. It is just the same as if a man were to say, I will prove the truth of what I have told you by producing the people who say it is false.

That such a person as Jesus Christ existed, and that he was crucified, which was the mode of execution at that day, are historical relations strictly within the limits of probability. He preached most excellent morality and the equality of man; but he preached also against the corruptions and avarice of the Jewish priests, and this brought upon him the hatred and vengeance of the whole order of priesthood. The accusation which those priests brought against him was that of sedition and conspiracy against the Roman government, to which the Jews were then subject and tributary; and it is not improbable that the Roman government might have some secret apprehensions of the effects of his doctrine, as well as the Jewish priests; neither is it improbable that Jesus Christ had in contemplation the delivery of the Jewish nation from the bondage of the Romans. Between the two, however, this virtuous reformer and revolutionist lost his life.

It is upon this plain narrative of facts, together with another case I am going to mention, that the Christian Mythologists, calling themselves the Christian Church, have erected their fable, which, for absurdity and extravagance, is not exceeded by anything that is to be found in the mythology of the ancients.

The ancient Mythologists tell us that the race of Giants made war against Jupiter, and that one of them threw a hundred rocks against him at one throw; that Jupiter defeated him with thunder, and confined him afterward under Mount Etna, and that every time the Giant turns himself Mount Etna belches fire.

It is here easy to see that the circumstance of the mountain, that of its being a volcano, suggested the idea of the fable; and that the fable is made to fit and wind itself up with that circumstance.

The Christian Mythologists tell us that their Satan made war against the Almighty, who defeated him, and confined him afterward, not under a mountain, but in a pit. It is here easy to see that the first fable suggested the idea of the second; for the fable of Jupiter and the Giants was told many hundred years before that of Satan.

Thus far the ancient and the Christian Mythologists differ very little from each other. But the latter

have contrived to carry the matter much farther. They have contrived to connect the fabulous part of the story of Jesus Christ with the fable originating from Mount Etna; and in order to make all the parts of the story tie together, they have taken to their aid the traditions of the Jews; for the Christian mythology is made up partly from the ancient mythology and partly from the Jewish traditions.

The Christian Mythologists, after having confined Satan in a pit, were obliged to let him out again to bring on the sequel of the fable. He is then introduced into the Garden of Eden, in the shape of a snake or a serpent, and in that shape he enters into familiar conversation with Eve, who is no way surprised to hear a snake talk; and the issue of this tete-a-tete is that he persuades her to eat an apple, and the eating of that apple damns all mankind.

After giving Satan this triumph over the whole creation, one would have supposed that the Church Mythologists would have been kind enough to send him back again to the pit; or, if they had not done this, that they would have put a mountain upon him (for they say that their faith can remove a mountain), or have put him under a mountain, as the former mythologists had done, to prevent his getting again among the women and doing more mischief. But instead of this they leave him at large, without even obliging him to give his parole – the secret of which is, that they could not do without him; and after being at the trouble of making him, they bribed him to stay. They promised him ALL the Jews, ALL the Turks by anticipation, nine-tenths of the world beside, and Mahomet into the bargain. After this, who can doubt the bountifulness of the Christian Mythology?

Having thus made an insurrection and a battle in Heaven, in which none of the combatants could be either killed or wounded – put Satan into the pit – let him out again – giving him a triumph over the whole creation – damned all mankind by the eating of an apple, these Christian Mythologists bring the two ends of their fable together. They represent this virtuous and amiable man, Jesus Christ, to be at once both God and Man, and also the Son of God, celestially begotten, on purpose to be sacrificed, because they say that Eve in her longing had eaten an apple.

Putting aside everything that might excite laughter by its absurdity, or detestation by its profaneness, and confining ourselves merely to an examination of the parts, it is impossible to conceive a story more derogatory to the Almighty, more inconsistent with his wisdom, more contradictory to his power, than this story is.

In order to make for it a foundation to rise upon, the inventors were under the necessity of giving to the being whom they call Satan, a power equally as great, if not greater than they attribute to the Almighty. They have not only given him the power of liberating himself from the pit, after what they call his fall, but they have made that power increase afterward to infinity. Before this fall they represent him only as an angel of limited existence, as they represent the rest. After his fall, he becomes, by their account, omnipresent. He exists everywhere, and at the same time. He occupies the whole immensity of space.

Not content with this deification of Satan, they represent him as defeating, by stratagem, in the shape of an animal of the creation, all the power and wisdom of the Almighty. They represent him as having compelled the Almighty to the direct necessity either of surrendering the whole of the creation to the government and sovereignty of this Satan, or of capitulating for its redemption by coming down upon earth, and exhibiting himself upon a cross in the shape of a man.

Had the inventors of this story told it the contrary way, that is, had they represented the Almighty as compelling Satan to exhibit himself on a cross, in the shape of a snake, as a punishment for his new transgression, the story would have been less absurd – less contradictory. But instead of this, they make the transgressor triumph, and the Almighty fall.

That many good men have believed this strange fable, and lived very good lives under that belief (for credulity is not a crime), is what I have no doubt of. In the first place, they were educated to believe it, and they would have believed anything else in the same manner. There are also many who have been so enthusiastically enraptured by what they conceived to be the infinite love of God to man, in making a sacrifice of himself, that the vehemence of the idea has forbidden and deterred them from examining into the absurdity and profaneness of the story. The more unnatural anything is, the more it is capable of becoming the object of dismal admiration.

But if objects for gratitude and admiration are our desire, do they not present themselves every hour to our eyes? Do we not see a fair creation prepared to receive us the instant we are born – a world furnished to our hands, that cost us nothing? Is it we that light up the sun, that pour down the rain, and fill the earth with abundance? Whether we sleep or wake, the vast machinery of the universe still goes on. Are these things, and the blessings they indicate in future, nothing to us? Can our gross feelings be excited by no other subjects than tragedy and suicide? Or is the gloomy pride of man become so intolerable, that nothing can flatter it but a sacrifice of the Creator?

I know that this bold investigation will alarm many, but it would be paying too great a compliment to their credulity to forbear it on their account; the times and the subject demand it to be done. The suspicion that the theory of what is called the Christian Church is fabulous is becoming very extensive in all countries; and it will be a consolation to men staggering under that suspicion, and doubting what to believe and what to disbelieve, to see the object freely investigated. I therefore pass on to an examination of the books called the Old and New Testament.

These books, beginning with Genesis and ending with Revelation (which, by the by, is a book of riddles that requires a revelation to explain it), are, we are told, the word of God. It is, therefore, proper for us to know who told us so, that we may know what credit to give to the report. The answer to this question is, that nobody can tell, except that we tell one another so. The case, however, historically appears to be as follows:

When the Church Mythologists established their system, they collected all the writings they could find, and managed them as they pleased. It is a matter altogether of uncertainty to us whether such of the writings as now appear under the name of the Old and New Testament are in the same state in which those collectors say they found them, or whether they added, altered, abridged, or dressed them up.

Be this as it may, they decided by vote which of the books out of the collection they had made should be the WORD OF GOD, and which should not. They rejected several; they voted others to be doubtful, such as the books called the Apocrypha; and those books which had a majority of votes, were voted to be the word of God. Had they voted otherwise, all the people, since calling themselves Christians, had believed otherwise – for the belief of the one comes from the vote of the other. Who the people were that did all this, we know nothing of; they called themselves by the general name of the Church, and this is all we know of the matter.

As we have no other external evidence or authority for believing these books to be the word of God than what I have mentioned, which is no evidence or authority at all, I come, in the next place, to examine the internal evidence contained in the books themselves.

In the former part of this Essay, I have spoken of revelation; I now proceed further with that subject, for the purpose of applying it to the books in question.

Revelation is a communication of something which the person to whom that thing is revealed did not know before. For if I have done a thing, or seen it done, it needs no revelation to tell me I have done it, or seen it, nor to enable me to tell it, or to write it.

Revelation, therefore, cannot be applied to anything done upon earth, of which man himself is the actor or the witness; and consequently all the historical and anecdotal parts of the Bible, which is almost the whole of it, is not within the meaning and compass of the word revelation, and, therefore, is not the word of God.

When Samson ran off with the gate-posts of Gaza, if he ever did so (and whether he did or not is nothing to us), or when he visited his Delilah, or caught his foxes, or did any thing else, what has revelation to do with these things? If they were facts, he could tell them himself, or his secretary, if he kept one, could write them, if they were worth either telling or writing; and if they were fictions, revelation could not make them true; and whether true or not, we are neither the better nor the wiser for knowing them. When we contemplate the immensity of that Being who directs and governs the incomprehensible **WHOLE**, of which the utmost ken of human sight can discover but a part, we ought to feel shame at calling such paltry stories the word of God.

As to the account of the Creation, with which the Book of Genesis opens, it has all the appearance of being a tradition which the Israelites had among them before they came into Egypt; and after their departure from that country they put it at the head of their history, without telling (as it is most probable) that they did not know how they came by it. The manner in which the account opens shows it to be traditional. It begins abruptly; it is nobody that speaks; it is nobody that hears; it is addressed to nobody; it has neither first, second, nor third person; it has every criterion of being a tradition; it has no voucher. Moses does not take it upon himself by introducing it with the formality that he uses on other occasions, such as that of saying, “The Lord spake unto Moses, saying.”

Why it has been called the Mosaic account of the Creation, I am at a loss to conceive. Moses, I believe, was too good a judge of such subjects to put his name to that account. He had been educated among The Egyptians, who were a people as well skilled in science, and particularly in astronomy, as any people of their day; and the silence and caution that Moses observes in not authenticating the account, is a good negative evidence that he neither told it nor believed it. The case is, that every nation of people has been world-makers, and the Israelites had as much right to set up the trade of

world-making as any of the rest; and as Moses was not an Israelite, he might not choose to contradict the tradition. The account, however, is harmless; and this is more than can be said of many other parts of the Bible.

Whenever we read the obscene stories, the voluptuous debaucheries, the cruel and torturous executions, the unrelenting vindictiveness, with which more than half the Bible is filled, it would be more consistent that we called it the word of a demon, than the word of God. It is a history of wickedness, that has served to corrupt and brutalize mankind; and, for my part, I sincerely detest it, as I detest everything that is cruel.

We scarcely meet with anything, a few phrases excepted, but what deserves either our abhorrence or our contempt, till we come to the miscellaneous parts of the Bible. In the anonymous publications, the Psalms, and the Book of Job, more particularly in the latter, we find a great deal of elevated sentiment reverentially expressed of the power and benignity of the Almighty; but they stand on no higher rank than many other compositions on similar subjects, as well before that time as since.

The Proverbs which are said to be Solomon's, though most probably a collection (because they discover a knowledge of life which his situation excluded him from knowing), are an instructive table of ethics. They are inferior in keenness to the proverbs of the Spaniards, and not more wise and economical than those of the American Franklin.

All the remaining parts of the Bible, generally known by the name of the Prophets, are the works of the Jewish poets and itinerant preachers, who mixed poetry,* anecdote, and devotion together – and those works still retain the air and style of poetry, though in translation.

[* As there are many readers who do not see that a composition is poetry unless it be in rhyme, it is for their information that I add this note.]

Poetry consists principally in two things – imagery and composition. The composition of poetry differs from that of prose in the manner of mixing long and short syllables together. Take a long syllable out of a line of poetry, and put a short one in the room of it, or put a long syllable where a short one should be, and that line will lose its poetical harmony. It will have an effect upon the line like that of misplacing a note in a song. The imagery in these books, called the Prophets, appertains altogether to poetry. It is fictitious, and oft en extravagant, and not admissible in any other kind of

writing than poetry. To show that these writings are composed in poetical numbers, I will take ten syllables, as they stand in the book, and make a line of the same number of syllables, (heroic measure) that shall rhyme with the last word. It will then be seen that the composition of these books is poetical measure. The instance I shall produce is from Isaiah:

“Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth!”
'Tis God himself that calls attention forth.

Another instance I shall quote is from the mournful Jeremiah, to which I shall add two other lines, for the purpose of carrying out the figure, and showing the intention the poet:

“O! that mine head were waters and mine eyes”
Were fountains flowing like the liquid skies;
Then would I give the mighty flood release,
And weep a deluge for the human race.

There is not, throughout the whole book called the Bible, any word that describes to us what we call a poet, nor any word that describes what we call poetry. The case is, that the word prophet, to which latter times have affixed a new idea, was the Bible word for poet, and the word prophesying meant the art of making poetry. It also meant the art of playing poetry to a tune upon any instrument of music.

We read of prophesying with pipes, tabrets, and horns – of prophesying with harps, with psalteries, with cymbals, and with every other instrument of music then in fashion. Were we now to speak of prophesying with a fiddle, or with a pipe and tabor, the expression would have no meaning or would appear ridiculous, and to some people contemptuous, because we have changed the meaning of the word.

We are told of Saul being among the prophets, and also that he prophesied; but we are not told what they prophesied, nor what he prophesied. The case is, there was nothing to tell; for these prophets were a company of musicians and poets, and Saul joined in the concert, and this was called prophesying.

The account given of this affair in the book called Samuel is, that Saul met a company of prophets;

a whole company of them! coming down with a psaltery, a tabret, a pipe and a harp, and that they prophesied, and that he prophesied with them. But it appears afterward, that Saul prophesied badly; that is, he performed his part badly; for it is said, that an “evil spirit from God”* came upon Saul, and he prophesied.

[* As those men who call themselves divines and commentators, are very fond of puzzling one another, I leave them to contest the meaning of the first part of the phrase, that of an evil spirit from God. I keep to my text – I keep to the meaning of the word prophesy.]

Now, were there no other passage in the book called the Bible than this, to demonstrate to us that we have lost the original meaning of the word prophesy, and substituted another meaning in its place, this alone would be sufficient; for it is impossible to use and apply the word prophesy, in the place it is here used and applied, if we give to it the sense which latter times have affixed to it. The manner in which it is here used strips it of all religious meaning, and shows that a man might then be a prophet, or he might prophesy, as he may now be a poet or a musician, without any regard to the morality or immorality of his character. The word was originally a term of science, promiscuously applied to poetry and to music, and not restricted to any subject upon which poetry and music might be exercised.

Deborah and Barak are called prophets, not because they predicted anything, but because they composed the poem or song that bears their name, in celebration of an act already done. David is ranked among the prophets, for he was a musician, and was also reputed to be (though perhaps very erroneously) the author of the Psalms. But Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not called prophets; it does not appear from any accounts we have that they could either sing, play music, or make poetry.

We are told of the greater and the lesser prophets. They might as well tell us of the greater and the lesser God; for there cannot be degrees in prophesying consistently with its modern sense. But there are degrees in poetry, and therefore the phrase is reconcilable to the case, when we understand by it the greater and the lesser poets.

It is altogether unnecessary, after this, to offer any observations upon what those men, styled prophets, have written. The axe goes at once to the root, by showing that the original meaning of the word has been mistaken and consequently all the inferences that have been drawn from those books, the devotional respect that has been paid to them, and the labored commentaries that have

been written upon them, under that mistaken meaning, are not worth disputing about. In many things, however, the writings of the Jewish poets deserve a better fate than that of being bound up, as they now are with the trash that accompanies them, under the abused name of the word of God.

If we permit ourselves to conceive right ideas of things, we must necessarily affix the idea, not only of unchangeableness, but of the utter impossibility of any change taking place, by any means or accident whatever, in that which we would honor with the name of the word of God; and therefore the word of God cannot exist in any written or human language.

The continually progressive change to which the meaning of words is subject, the want of a universal language which renders translation necessary, the errors to which translations are again subject, the mistakes of copyists and printers, together with the possibility of willful alteration, are of themselves evidences that the human language, whether in speech or in print, cannot be the vehicle of the word of God. The word of God exists in something else.

Did the book called the Bible excel in purity of ideas and expression all the books that are now extant in the world, I would not take it for my rule of faith, as being the word of God, because the possibility would nevertheless exist of my being imposed upon. But when I see throughout the greater part of this book scarcely anything but a history of the grossest vices and a collection of the most paltry and contemptible tales, I cannot dishonor my Creator by calling it by his name.

Thus much for the Bible; I now go on to the book called the New Testament. The New Testament! that is, the new will, as if there could be two wills of the Creator.

Had it been the object or the intention of Jesus Christ to establish a new religion, he would undoubtedly have written the system himself, or procured it to be written in his life-time. But there is no publication extant authenticated with his name. All the books called the New Testament were written after his death. He was a Jew by birth and by profession; and he was the son of God in like manner that every other person is – for the Creator is the Father of All.

The first four books, called Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, do not give a history of the life of Jesus Christ, but only detached anecdotes of him. It appears from these books that the whole time of his being a preacher was not more than eighteen months; and it was only during this short time that these men became acquainted with him. They make mention of him at the age of twelve years,

sitting, they say, among the Jewish doctors, asking and answering them questions. As this was several years before their acquaintance with him began, it is most probable they had this anecdote from his parents. From this time there is no account of him for about sixteen years. Where he lived, or how he employed himself during this interval, is not known. Most probably he was working at his father's trade, which was that of a carpenter. It does not appear that he had any school education, and the probability is, that he could not write, for his parents were extremely poor, as appears from their not being able to pay for a bed when he was born.

It is somewhat curious that the three persons whose names are the most universally recorded, were of very obscure parentage. Moses was a foundling; Jesus Christ was born in a stable; and Mahomet was a mule driver. The first and last of these men were founders of different systems of religion; but Jesus Christ founded no new system. He called men to the practice of moral virtues and the belief of one God. The great trait in his character is philanthropy.

The manner in which he was apprehended shows that he was not much known at that time; and it shows also, that the meetings he then held with his followers were in secret; and that he had given over or suspended preaching publicly. Judas could not otherwise betray him than by giving information where he was, and pointing him out to the officers that went to arrest him; and the reason for employing and paying Judas to do this could arise only from the cause already mentioned, that of his not being much known and living concealed.

The idea of his concealment not only agrees very ill with his reputed divinity, but associates with it something of pusillanimity; and his being betrayed, or in other words, his being apprehended, on the information of one of his followers, shows that he did not intend to be apprehended, and consequently that he did not intend to be crucified.

The Christian Mythologists tell us, that Christ died for the sins of the world, and that he came on purpose to die. Would it not then have been the same if he had died of a fever or of the small-pox, of old age, or of anything else?

The declaratory sentence which, they say, was passed upon Adam, in case he eat of the apple, was not, that thou shall surely be crucified, but thou shalt surely die – the sentence of death, and not the manner of dying. Crucifixion, therefore, or any other particular manner of dying, made no part of the sentence that Adam was to suffer, and consequently, even upon their own tactics, it could make

no part of the sentence that Christ was to suffer in the room of Adam. A fever would have done as well as a cross, if there was any occasion for either.

The sentence of death, which they tell us was thus passed upon Adam must either have meant dying naturally, that is, ceasing to live, or have meant what these Mythologists call damnation; and, consequently, the act of dying on the part of Jesus Christ, must, according to their system, apply as a prevention to one or other of these two things happening to Adam and to us.

That it does not prevent our dying is evident, because we all die; and if their accounts of longevity be true, men die faster since the crucifixion than before; and with respect to the second explanation (including with it the natural death of Jesus Christ as a substitute for the eternal death or damnation of all mankind), it is impertinently representing the Creator as coming off, or revoking the sentence, by a pun or a quibble upon the word death. That manufacturer of quibbles, St. Paul, if he wrote the books that bear his name, has helped this quibble on by making another quibble upon the word Adam. He makes there to be two Adams; the one who sins in fact, and suffers by proxy; the other who sins by proxy, and suffers in fact. A religion thus interlarded with quibble, subterfuge, and pun has a tendency to instruct its professors in the practice of these arts. They acquire the habit without being aware of the cause.

If Jesus Christ was the being which those Mythologists tell us he was, and that he came into this world to suffer, which is a word they sometimes use instead of to die, the only real suffering he could have endured, would have been to live. His existence here was a state of exilement or transportation from Heaven, and the way back to his original country was to die. In fine, everything in this strange system is the reverse of what it pretends to be. It is the reverse of truth, and I become so tired of examining into its inconsistencies and absurdities, that I hasten to the conclusion of it, in order to proceed to something better.

How much or what parts of the books called the New Testament, were written by the persons whose names they bear, is what we can know nothing of; neither are we certain in what language they were originally written. The matters they now contain may be classed under two heads – anecdote and epistolary correspondence.

The four books already mentioned, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, are altogether anecdotal. They relate events after they had taken place. They tell what Jesus Christ did and said, and what others

did and said to him; and in several instances they relate the same event differently. Revelation is necessarily out of the question with respect to those books; not only because of the disagreement of the writers, but because revelation cannot be applied to the relating of facts by the person who saw them done, nor to the relating or recording of any discourse or conversation by those who heard it. The book called the Acts of the Apostles (an anonymous work) belongs also to the anecdotal part.

All the other parts of the New Testament, except the book of enigmas called the Revelations, are a collection of letters under the name of epistles; and the forgery of letters has been such a common practice in the world, that the probability is at least equal, whether they are genuine or forged. One thing, however, is much less equivocal, which is, that out of the matters contained in those books, together with the assistance of some old stories, the Church has set up a system of religion very contradictory to the character of the person whose name it bears. It has set up a religion of pomp and revenue, in pretended imitation of a person whose life was humility and poverty.

The invention of purgatory, and of the releasing of souls therefrom by prayers bought of the church with money; the selling of pardons, dispensations, and indulgences, are revenue laws, without bearing that name or carrying that appearance. But the case nevertheless is, that those things derive their origin from the paroxysm of the crucifixion and the theory deduced therefrom, which was that one person could stand in the place of another, and could perform meritorious service for him. The probability, therefore, is that the whole theory or doctrine of what is called the redemption (which is said to have been accomplished by the act of one person in the room of another) was originally fabricated on purpose to bring forward and build all those secondary and pecuniary redemptions upon; and that the passages in the books, upon which the idea or theory of redemption is built, have been manufactured and fabricated for that purpose. Why are we to give this Church credit when she tells us that those books are genuine in every part, any more than we give her credit for everything else she has told us, or for the miracles she says she had performed? That she could fabricate writings is certain, because she could write; and the composition of the writings in question is of that kind that anybody might do it; and that she did fabricate them is not more inconsistent with probability than that she could tell us, as she has done, that she could and did work miracles.

Since, then no external evidence can, at this long distance of time, be produced to prove whether the Church fabricated the doctrines called redemption or not (for such evidence, whether for or

against, would be subject to the same suspicion of being fabricated), the case can only be referred to the internal evidence which the thing carries within itself; and this affords a very strong presumption of its being a fabrication. For the internal evidence is that the theory or doctrine of redemption bas for its base an idea of pecuniary Justice, and not that of moral Justice.

If I owe a person money, and cannot pay him, and he threatens to put me in prison, another person can take the debt upon himself, and pay it for me; but if I have committed a crime, every circumstance of the case is changed; moral Justice cannot take the innocent for the guilty, even if the innocent would offer itself. To suppose Justice to do this, is to destroy the principle of its existence, which is the thing itself; it is then no longer Justice, it is indiscriminate revenge.

This single reflection will show, that the doctrine of redemption is founded on a mere pecuniary idea corresponding to that of a debt which another person might pay; and as this pecuniary idea corresponds again with the system of second redemption, obtained through the means of money given to the Church for pardons, the probability is that the same persons fabricated both the one and the other of those theories; and that, in truth there is no such thing as redemption – that it is fabulous, and that man stands in the same relative condition with his Maker as he ever did stand since man existed, and that it is his greatest consolation to think so.

Let him believe this, and he will live more consistently and morally than by any other system; it is by his being taught to contemplate himself as an outlaw, as an outcast, as a beggar, as a mumper, as one thrown, as it were, on a dunghill at an immense distance from his Creator, and who must make his approaches by creeping and cringing to intermediate beings, that he conceives either a contemptuous disregard for everything under the name of religion, or becomes indifferent, or turns what he calls devout. In the latter case, he consumes his life in grief, or the affectation of it; his prayers are reproaches; his humility is ingratitude; he calls himself a worm, and the fertile earth a dunghill; and all the blessings of life by the thankless name of vanities; he despises the choicest gift of God to man, the GIFT OF REASON; and having endeavored to force upon himself the belief of a system against which reason revolts, he ungratefully calls it human reason, as if man could give reason to himself.

Yet, with all this strange appearance of humility and this contempt for human reason, he ventures into the boldest presumptions; he finds fault with everything; his selfishness is never satisfied; his ingratitude is never at an end. He takes on himself to direct the Almighty what to do, even in the

government of the universe; he prays dictatorially; when it is sunshine, he prays for rain, and when it is rain, he prays for sunshine; he follows the same idea in everything that he prays for; for what is the amount of all his prayers but an attempt to make the Almighty change his mind, and act otherwise than he does? It is as if he were to say: Thou knowest not so well as I.

But some, perhaps, will say: Are we to have no word of God – no revelation? I answer, Yes; there is a word of God; there is a revelation.

THE WORD OF GOD IS THE CREATION WE BEHOLD and it is in this word, which no human invention can counterfeit or alter, that God speaketh universally to man.

Human language is local and changeable, and is therefore incapable of being used as the means of unchangeable and universal information. The idea that God sent Jesus Christ to publish, as they say, the glad tidings to all nations, from one end of the earth to the other, is consistent only with the ignorance of those who knew nothing of the extent of the world, and who believed, as those world-saviours believed, and continued to believe for several centuries (and that in contradiction to the discoveries of philosophers and the experience of navigators), that the earth was flat like a trencher, and that man might walk to the end of it.

But how was Jesus Christ to make anything known to all nations? He could speak but one language which was Hebrew, and there are in the world several hundred languages. Scarcely any two nations speak the same language, or understand each other; and as to translations, every man who knows anything of languages knows that it is impossible to translate from one language to another, not only without losing a great part of the original, but frequently of mistaking the sense; and besides all this, the art of printing was wholly unknown at the time Christ lived.

It is always necessary that the means that are to accomplish any end be equal to the accomplishment of that end, or the end cannot be accomplished. It is in this that the difference between finite and infinite power and wisdom discovers itself. Man frequently fails in accomplishing his ends, from a natural inability of the power to the purpose, and frequently from the want of wisdom to apply power properly. But it is impossible for infinite power and wisdom to fail as man faileth. The means it useth are always equal to the end; but human language, more especially as there is not an universal language, is incapable of being used as an universal means of unchangeable and uniform information, and therefore it is not the means that God useth in manifesting himself universally to

man.

It is only in the CREATION that all our ideas and conceptions of a word of God can unite. The Creation speaketh an universal language, independently of human speech or human language, multiplied and various as they may be. It is an ever-existing original, which every man can read. It cannot be forged; it cannot be counterfeited; it cannot be lost; it cannot be altered; it cannot be suppressed. It does not depend upon the will of man whether it shall be published or not; it publishes itself from one end of the earth to the other. It preaches to all nations and to all worlds; and this word of God reveals to man all that is necessary for man to know of God.

Do we want to contemplate his power? We see it in the immensity of the Creation. Do we want to contemplate his wisdom? We see it in the unchangeable order by which the incomprehensible whole is governed! Do we want to contemplate his munificence? We see it in the abundance with which he fills the earth. Do we want to contemplate his mercy? We see it in his not withholding that abundance even from the unthankful. In fine, do we want to know what God is? Search not the book called the Scripture, which any human hand might make, but the Scripture called the Creation.

The only idea man can affix to the name of God is that of a first cause, the cause of all things. And incomprehensible and difficult as it is for a man to conceive what a first cause is, he arrives at the belief of it from the tenfold greater difficulty of disbelieving it. It is difficult beyond description to conceive that space can have no end; but it is more difficult to conceive an end. It is difficult beyond the power of man to conceive an eternal duration of what we call time; but it is more impossible to conceive a time when there shall be no time.

In like manner of reasoning, everything we behold carries in itself the internal evidence that it did not make itself Every man is an evidence to himself that he did not make himself; neither could his father make himself, nor his grandfather, nor any of his race; neither could any tree, plant, or animal make itself; and it is the conviction arising from this evidence that carries us on, as it were, by necessity to the belief of a first cause eternally existing, of a nature totally different to any material existence we know of, and by the power of which all things exist; and this first cause man calls God.

It is only by the exercise of reason that man can discover God. Take away that reason, and he would be incapable of understanding anything; and, in this case, it would be just as consistent to read even

the book called the Bible to a horse as to a man. How, then, is it that those people pretend to reject reason?

Almost the only parts in the book called the Bible that convey to us any idea of God, are some chapters in Job and the th Psalm; I recollect no other. Those parts are true deistical compositions, for they treat of the Deity through his works. They take the book of Creation as the word of God, they refer to no other book, and all the inferences they make are drawn from that volume.

I insert in this place the th Psalm, as paraphrased into English verse by Addison. I recollect not the prose, and where I write this I have not the opportunity of seeing it.

“The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great original proclaim.

The unwearied sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's power display;
And publishes to every land
The work of an Almighty hand.

“Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wondrous tale,
And nightly to the list'ning earth
Repeats the story of her birth;

While all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets, in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

“What though in solemn silence all
Move round this dark terrestrial ball?
What though no real voice, or sound,

Amidst their radiant orbs be found?

In reason's ear they all rejoice
And utter forth a glorious voice,
Forever singing, as they shine,
THE HAND THAT MADE US IS DIVINE."

What more does man want to know than that the hand or power that made these things is divine, is omnipotent? Let him believe this with the force it is impossible to repel, if he permits his reason to act, and his rule of moral life will follow of course.

The allusions in Job have, all of them, the same tendency with this Psalm; that of deducing or proving a truth that would be otherwise unknown, from truths already known.

I recollect not enough of the passages in Job to insert them correctly; but there is one occurs to me that is applicable to the subject I am speaking upon. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?"

I know not how the printers have pointed this passage, for I keep no Bible; but it contains two distinct questions that admit of distinct answers.

First, — Canst thou by searching find out God? Yes because, in the first place, I know I did not make myself, and yet I have existence; and by searching into the nature of other things, I find that no other thing could make itself; and yet millions of other things exist; therefore it is, that I know, by positive conclusion resulting from this search, that there is a power superior to all those things, and that power is God.

Secondly, — Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? No; not only because the power and wisdom He has manifested in the structure of the Creation that I behold is to me incomprehensible, but because even this manifestation, great as it is, is probably but a small display of that immensity of power and wisdom by which millions of other worlds, to me invisible by their distance, were created and continue to exist.

It is evident that both these questions were put to the reason of the person to whom they are

supposed to have been addressed; and it is only by admitting the first question to be answered affirmatively, that the second could follow. It would have been unnecessary and even absurd, to have put a second question, more difficult than the first, if the first question had been answered negatively. The two questions have different objects; the first refers to the existence of God, the second to his attributes; reason can discover the one, but it falls infinitely short in discovering the whole of the other.

I recollect not a single passage in all the writings ascribed to the men called apostles, that conveys any idea of what God is. Those writings are chiefly controversial; and the subjects they dwell upon, that of a man dying in agony on a cross, is better suited to the gloomy genius of a monk in a cell, by whom it is not impossible they were written, than to any man breathing the open air of the Creation. The only passage that occurs to me, that has any reference to the works of God, by which only his power and wisdom can be known, is related to have been spoken by Jesus Christ as a remedy against distrustful care. "Behold the lilies of the field, they toil not, neither do they spin." This, however, is far inferior to the allusions in Job and in the th Psalm; but it is similar in idea, and the modesty of the imagery is correspondent to the modesty of the man.

As to the Christian system of faith, it appears to me as a species of Atheism – a sort of religious denial of God. It professes to believe in a man rather than in God. It is a compound made up chiefly of Manism with but little Deism, and is as near to Atheism as twilight is to darkness. It introduces between man and his Maker an opaque body, which it calls a Redeemer, as the moon introduces her opaque self between the earth and the sun, and it produces by this means a religious, or an irreligious, eclipse of light. It has put the whole orbit of reason into shade.

The effect of this obscurity has been that of turning everything upside down, and representing it in reverse, and among the revolutions it has thus magically produced, it has made a revolution in theology.

That which is now called natural philosophy, embracing the whole circle of science, of which astronomy occupies the chief place, is the study of the works of God, and of the power and wisdom of God in his works, and is the true theology.

As to the theology that is now studied in its place, it is the study of human opinions and of human fancies concerning God. It is not the study of God himself in the works that he has made, but in the

works or writings that man has made; and it is not among the least of the mischiefs that the Christian system has done to the world, that it has abandoned the original and beautiful system of theology, like a beautiful innocent, to distress and reproach, to make room for the hag of superstition.

The Book of Job and the th Psalm, which even the Church admits to be more ancient than the chronological order in which they stand in the book called the Bible, are theological orations conformable to the original system of theology. The internal evidence of those orations proves to a demonstration that the study and contemplation of the works of creation, and of the power and wisdom of God, revealed and manifested in those works, made a great part in the religious devotion of the times in which they were written; and it was this devotional study and contemplation that led to the discovery of the principles upon which what are now called sciences are established; and it is to the discovery of these principles that almost all the arts that contribute to the convenience of human life owe their existence. Every principal art has some science for its parent, though the person who mechanically performs the work does not always, and but very seldom, perceive the connection.

It is a fraud of the Christian system to call the sciences human invention; it is only the application of them that is human. Every science has for its basis a system of principles as fixed and unalterable as those by which the universe is regulated and governed. Man cannot make principles, he can only discover them.

For example: Every person who looks at an almanac sees an account when an eclipse will take place, and he sees also that it never fails to take place according to the account there given. This shows that man is acquainted with the laws by which the heavenly bodies move. But it would be something worse than ignorance, were any Church on earth to say that those laws are a human invention. It would also be ignorance, or something worse, to say that the scientific principles by the aid of which man is enabled to calculate and foreknow when an eclipse will take place, are a human invention. Man cannot invent a thing that is eternal and immutable; and the scientific principles he employs for this purpose must be, and are of necessity, as eternal and immutable as the laws by which the heavenly bodies move, or they could not be used as they are to ascertain the time when, and the manner how, an eclipse will take place.

The scientific principles that man employs to obtain the foreknowledge of an eclipse, or of anything else relating to the motion of the heavenly bodies, are contained chiefly in that part of science which

is called trigonometry, or the properties of a triangle, which, when applied to the study of the heavenly bodies, is called astronomy; when applied to direct the course of a ship on the ocean, it is called navigation; when applied to the construction of figures drawn by rule and compass, it is called geometry; when applied to the construction of plans or edifices, it is called architecture; when applied to the measurement of any portion of the surface of the earth, it is called land surveying. In fine, it is the soul of science; it is an eternal truth; it contains the mathematical demonstration of which man speaks, and the extent of its uses is unknown.

It may be said that man can make or draw a triangle, and therefore a triangle is a human invention.

But the triangle, when drawn, is no other than the image of the principle; it is a delineation to the eye, and from thence to the mind, of a principle that would otherwise be imperceptible. The triangle does not make the principle, any more than a candle taken into a room that was dark makes the chairs and tables that before were invisible. All the properties of a triangle exist independently of the figure, and existed before any triangle was drawn or thought of by man. Man had no more to do in the formation of these properties or principles, than he had to do in making the laws by which the heavenly bodies move; and therefore the one must have the same Divine origin as the other.

In the same manner, as it may be said, that man can make a triangle, so also, may it be said, he can make the mechanical instrument called a lever; but the principle by which the lever acts is a thing distinct from the instrument, and would exist if the instrument did not; it attaches itself to the instrument after it is made; the instrument, therefore, cannot act otherwise than it does act; neither can all the efforts of human invention make it act otherwise – that which, in all such cases, man calls the effect is no other than the principle itself rendered perceptible to the senses.

Since, then, man cannot make principles, from whence did he gain a knowledge of them, so as to be able to apply them, not only to things on earth, but to ascertain the motion of bodies so immensely distant from him as all the heavenly bodies are? From whence, I ask, could he gain that knowledge, but from the study of the true theology?

It is the structure of the universe that has taught this knowledge to man. That structure is an ever-existing exhibition of every principle upon which every part of mathematical science is founded. The offspring of this science is mechanics; for mechanics is no other than the principles of science applied practically. The man who proportions the several parts of a mill, uses the same scientific

principles as if he had the power of constructing a universe; but as he cannot give to matter that invisible agency by which all the component parts of the immense machine of the universe have influence upon each other, and act in motional unison together, without any apparent contact, and to which man has given the name of attraction, gravitation, and repulsion, he supplies the place of that agency by the humble imitation of teeth and cogs. All the parts of man's microcosm must visibly touch; but could he gain a knowledge of that agency, so as to be able to apply it in practice, we might then say that another canonical book of the Word of God had been discovered.

If man could alter the properties of the lever, so also could he alter the properties of the triangle, for a lever (taking that sort of lever which is called a steelyard, for the sake of explanation) forms, when in motion, a triangle. The line it descends from (one point of that line being in the fulcrum), the line it descends to, and the cord of the arc which the end of the lever describes in the air, are the three sides of a triangle. The other arm of the lever describes also a triangle; and the corresponding sides of those two triangles, calculated scientifically, or measured geometrically, and also the sines, tangents, and secants generated from the angles, and geometrically measured,

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have the same proportions to each other, as the different weights have that will balance each other on the lever, leaving the weight of the lever out of the case.

It may also be said, that man can make a wheel and axis; that he can put wheels of different magnitudes together, and produce a mill. Still the case comes back to the same point, which is, that he did not make the principle that gives the wheels those powers. That principle is as unalterable as in the former case, or rather it is the same principle under a different appearance to the eye.

The power that two wheels of different magnitudes have upon each other, is in the same proportion as if the semi-diameter of the two wheels were joined together and made into that kind of lever I have described, suspended at the part where the semi-diameters join; for the two wheels, scientifically considered, are no other than the two circles generated by the motion of the compound lever.

It is from the study of the true theology that all out knowledge of science is derived, and it is from

that knowledge that all the arts have originated.

The Almighty Lecturer, by displaying the principles of science in the structure of the universe, has invited man to study and to imitation. It is as if He had said to the inhabitants of this globe, that we call ours, "I have made an earth for man to dwell upon, and I have rendered the starry heavens visible, to teach him science and the arts. He can now provide for his own comfort, AND LEARN FROM MY MUNIFICENCE TO ALL, TO BE KIND TO EACH OTHER."

Of what use is it, unless it be to teach man something, that his eye is endowed with the power of beholding to an incomprehensible distance, an immensity of worlds revolving in the ocean of space? Or of what use is it that this immensity of worlds is visible to man? What has man to do with the Pleiades, with Orion, with Sirius, with the star he calls the North Star, with the moving orbs he has named Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, and Mercury, if no uses are to follow from their being visible? A less power of vision would have been sufficient for man, if the immensity he now possesses were given only to waste itself, as it were, on an immense desert of space glittering with shows.

It is only by contemplating what he calls the starry heavens, as the book and school of science, that he discovers any use in their being visible to him, or any advantage resulting from his immensity of vision. But when he contemplates the subject in this light he sees an additional motive for saying, that nothing was made in vain; for in vain would be this power of vision if it taught man nothing.

As the Christian system of faith has made a revolution in theology, so also has it made a revolution in the state of learning. That which is now called learning, was not learning originally. Learning does not consist, as the schools now make it consist, in the knowledge of languages, but in the knowledge of things to which language gives names.

The Greeks were a learned people, but learning with them did not consist in speaking Greek, any more than in a Roman's speaking Latin, or a Frenchman's speaking French, or an Englishman's speaking English. From what we know of the Greeks, it does not appear that they knew or studied any language but their own, and this was one cause of their becoming so learned: it afforded them more time to apply themselves to better studies. The schools of the Greeks were schools of science and philosophy, and not of languages; and it is in the knowledge of the things that science and philosophy teach, that learning consists.

Almost all the scientific learning that now exists came to us from the Greeks, or the people who spoke the Greek language. It, therefore, became necessary for the people of other nations who spoke a different language that some among them should learn the Greek language, in order that the learning the Greeks had, might be made known in those nations, by translating the Greek books of science and philosophy into the mother tongue of each nation.

The study, therefore, of the Greek language (and in the same manner for the Latin) was no other than the drudgery business of a linguist; and the language thus obtained, was no other than the means, as it were the tools, employed to obtain the learning the Greeks had. It made no part of the learning itself, and was so distinct from it, as to make it exceedingly probable that the persons who had studied Greek sufficiently to translate those works, such, for instance, as Euclid's Elements, did not understand any of the learning the works contained.

As there is now nothing new to be learned from the dead languages, all the useful books being already translated, the languages are become useless, and the time expended in teaching and learning them is wasted. So far as the study of languages may contribute to the progress and communication of knowledge, (for it has nothing to do with the creation of knowledge), it is only in the living languages that new knowledge is to be found; and certain it is that, in general, a youth will learn more of a living language in one year, than of a dead language in seven, and it is but seldom that the teacher knows much of it himself. The difficulty of learning the dead languages does not arise from any superior abstruseness in the languages themselves, but in their being dead, and the pronunciation entirely lost. It would be the same thing with any other language when it becomes dead. The best Greek linguist that now exists does not understand Greek so well as a Grecian plowman did, or a Grecian milkmaid; and the same for the Latin, compared with a plowman or milkmaid of the Romans; it would therefore be advantageous to the state of learning to abolish the study of the dead languages, and to make learning consist, as it originally did, in scientific knowledge.

The apology that is sometimes made for continuing to teach the dead languages is, that they are taught at a time when a child is not capable of exerting any other mental faculty than that of memory; but that is altogether erroneous. The human mind has a natural disposition to scientific knowledge, and to the things connected with it. The first and favorite amusement of a child, even before it begins to play, is that of imitating the works of man. It builds houses with cards or sticks; it navigates the little ocean of a bowl of water with a paper boat, or dams the stream of a gutter and

contrives something which it calls a mill; and it interests itself in the fate of its works with a care that resembles affection. It afterwards goes to school, where its genius is killed by the barren study of a dead language, and the philosopher is lost in the linguist.

But the apology that is now made for continuing to teach the dead languages, could not be the cause, at first, of cutting down learning to the narrow and humble sphere of linguistry; the cause, therefore, must be sought for elsewhere. In all researches of this kind, the best evidence that can be produced, is the internal evidence the thing carries with itself, and the evidence of circumstances that unite with it; both of which, in this case, are not difficult to be discovered.

Putting then aside, as a matter of distinct consideration, the outrage offered to the moral justice of God by supposing him to make the innocent suffer for the guilty, and also the loose morality and low contrivance of supposing him to change himself into the shape of a man, in order to make an excuse to himself for not executing his supposed sentence upon Adam – putting, I say, those things aside as matter of distinct consideration, it is certain that what is called the Christian system of faith, including in it the whimsical account of the creation – the strange story of Eve – the snake and the apple – the ambiguous idea of a man-god – the corporeal idea of the death of a god – the mythological idea of a family of gods, and the Christian system of arithmetic, that three are one, and one is three, are all irreconcilable, not only to the divine gift of reason that God hath given to man, but to the knowledge that man gains of the power and wisdom of God, by the aid of the sciences and by studying the structure of the universe that God has made.

The setters-up, therefore, and the advocates of the Christian system of faith could not but foresee that the continually progressive knowledge that man would gain, by the aid of science, of the power and wisdom of God, manifested in the structure of the universe and in all the works of Creation, would militate against, and call into question, the truth of their system of faith; and therefore it became necessary to their purpose to cut learning down to a size less dangerous to their project, and this they effected by restricting the idea of learning to the dead study of dead languages.

They not only rejected the study of science out of the Christian schools, but they persecuted it, and it is only within about the last two centuries that the study has been revived. So late as , Galileo, a Florentine, discovered and introduced the use of telescopes, and by applying them to observe the motions and appearances of the heavenly bodies, afforded additional means for ascertaining the true structure of the universe. Instead of being esteemed for those discoveries, he was sentenced to

renounce them, or the opinions resulting from them, as a damnable heresy. And, prior to that time, Vigilius was condemned to be burned for asserting the antipodes, or in other words that the earth was a globe, and habitable in every part where there was land; yet the truth of this is now too well known even to be told.

If the belief of errors not morally bad did no mischief, it would make no part of the moral duty of man to oppose and remove them. There was no moral ill in believing the earth was flat like a trencher, any more than there was moral virtue in believing that it was round like a globe; neither was there any moral ill in believing that the Creator made no other world than this, any more than there was moral virtue in believing that he made millions, and that the infinity of space is filled with worlds. But when a system of religion is made to grow out of a supposed system of creation that is not true, and to unite itself therewith in a manner almost inseparable therefrom, the case assumes an entirely different ground. It is then that errors not morally bad become fraught with the same mischiefs as if they were. It is then that the truth, though otherwise indifferent itself, becomes an essential by becoming the criterion that either confirms by corresponding evidence, or denies by contradictory evidence, the reality of the religion itself. In this view of the case, it is the moral duty of man to obtain every possible evidence that the structure of the heavens, or any other part of creation affords, with respect to systems of religion. But this, the supporters or partisans of the Christian system, as if dreading the result, incessantly opposed, and not only rejected the sciences, but persecuted the professors. Had Newton or Descartes lived three or four hundred years ago, and pursued their studies as they did, it is most probable they would not have lived to finish them; and had Franklin drawn lightning from the clouds at the same time, it would have been at the hazard of expiring for it in the flames.

Later times have laid all the blame upon the Goths and Vandals; but, however unwilling the partisans of the Christian system may be to believe or to acknowledge it, it is nevertheless true that the age of ignorance commenced with the Christian system. There was more knowledge in the world before that period than for many centuries afterwards; and as to religious knowledge, the Christian system, as already said was only another species of mythology, and the mythology to which it succeeded was a corruption of an ancient system of theism.*

[* It is impossible for us now to know at what time the heathen mythology began; but it is certain, from the internal evidence that it carries, that it did not begin in the same state or condition in which it ended. All the gods of that mythology, except Saturn, were of modern invention. The supposed

reign of Saturn was prior to that which is called the heathen mythology, and was so far a species of theism, that it admitted the belief of only one God. Saturn is supposed to have abdicated the government in favor of his three sons and one daughter, Jupiter, Pluto, Neptune, and Juno; after this, thousands of other Gods and demi-gods were imaginarily created, and the calendar of gods increased as fast as the calendar of saints and the calendars of courts have increased since.]

All the corruptions that have taken place in theology and in religion, have been produced by admitting of what man calls revealed religion. The Mythologists pretended to more revealed religion than the Christians do. They had their oracles and their priests, who were supposed to receive and deliver the word of God verbally, on almost all occasions.

Since, then, all corruptions, down from Moloch to modern predestinarianism, and the human sacrifices of the heathens to the Christian sacrifice of the Creator, have been produced by admitting of what is called revealed religion, the most effectual means to prevent all such evils and impositions is not to admit of any other revelation than that which is manifested in the book of creation, and to contemplate the creation as the only true and real word of God that ever did or ever will exist; and that everything else, called the word of God, is fable and imposition.

It is owing to this long interregnum of science, and to no other cause, that we have now to look through a vast chasm of many hundred years to the respectable characters we call the ancients. Had the progression of knowledge gone on proportionably with that stock that before existed, that chasm would have been filled up with characters rising superior in knowledge to each other; and those ancients we now so much admire would have appeared respectably in the background of the scene. But the Christian system laid all waste; and if we take our stand about the beginning of the sixteenth century, we look back through that long chasm to the times of the ancients, as over a vast sandy desert, in which not a shrub appears to intercept the vision to the fertile hills beyond.

It is an inconsistency scarcely possible to be credited, that anything should exist, under the name of a religion, that held it to be irreligious to study and contemplate the structure of the universe that God has made. But the fact is too well established to be denied. The event that served more than any other to break the first link in this long chain of despotic ignorance is that known by the name of the Reformation by Luther. From that time, though it does not appear to have made any part of the intention of Luther, or of those who are called reformers, the sciences began to revive, and liberality, their natural associate, began to appear. This was the only public good the Reformation

did; for with respect to religious good, it might as well not have taken place. The mythology still continued the same, and a multiplicity of National Popes grew out of the downfall of the Pope of Christendom.

Having thus shown from the internal evidence of things the cause that produced a change in the state of learning, and the motive for substituting the study of the dead languages in the place of the sciences, I proceed, in addition to several observations already made in the former part of this work, to compare, or rather to confront, the evidence that the structure of the universe affords with the Christian system of religion; but, as I cannot begin this part better than by referring to the ideas that occurred to me at an early part of life, and which I doubt not have occurred in some degree to almost every person at one time or other, I shall state what those ideas were, and add thereto such other matter as shall arise out of the subject, giving to the whole, by way of preface, a short introduction.

My father being of the Quaker profession, it was my good fortune to have an exceedingly good moral education, and a tolerable stock of useful learning. Though I went to the grammar school,* I did not learn Latin, not only because I had no inclination to learn languages, but because of the objection the Quakers have against the books in which the language is taught. But this did not prevent me from being acquainted with the subject of all the Latin books used in the school.

[* The same school, Thetford In Norfolk that the present Counsellor Mingay went to and under the same master.]

The natural bent of my mind was to science. I had some turn, and I believe some talent, for poetry; but this I rather repressed than encouraged, as leading too much into the field of imagination. As soon as I was able I purchased a pair of globes, and attended the philosophical lectures of Martin and Ferguson, and became afterward acquainted with Dr. Bevis, of the society called the Royal Society, then living in the Temple, and an excellent astronomer.

I had no disposition for what is called politics. It presented to my mind no other idea than as contained in the word Jockeyship. When therefore I turned my thoughts toward matter of government, I had to form a system for myself that accorded with the moral and philosophic principles in which I have been educated. I saw, or at least I thought I saw, a vast scene opening itself to the world in the affairs of America, and it appeared to me that unless the Americans changed

the plan they were pursuing with respect to the government of England, and declared themselves independent, they would not only involve themselves in a multiplicity of new difficulties, but shut out the prospect that was then offering itself to mankind through their means. It was from these motives that I published the work known by the name of Common Sense, which was the first work I ever did publish; and so far as I can judge of myself, I believe I should never have been known in the world as an author, on any subject whatever, had it not been for the affairs of America. I wrote Common Sense the latter end of the year , and published it the first of January, . Independence was declared the fourth of July following.

Any person who has made observations on the state and progress of the human mind, by observing his own, cannot but have observed that there are two distinct classes of what are called thoughts – those that we produce in ourselves by reflection and the act of thinking, and those that bolt into the mind of their own accord. I have always made it a rule to treat those voluntary visitors with civility, taking care to examine, as well as I was able, if they were worth entertaining, and it is from them I have acquired almost all the knowledge that I have. As to the learning that any person gains from school education, it serves only, like a small capital, to put him in a way of beginning learning for himself afterward. Every person of learning is finally his own teacher, the reason of which is that principles, being a distinct quality to circumstances, cannot be impressed upon the memory; their place of mental residence is the understanding and they are never so lasting as when they begin by conception. Thus much for the introductory part.

From the time I was capable of conceiving an idea and acting upon it by reflection, I either doubted the truth of the Christian system or thought it to be a strange affair; I scarcely knew which it was, but I well remember, when about seven or eight years of age, hearing a sermon read by a relation of mine, who was a great devotee of the Church, upon the subject of what is called redemption by the death of the Son of God. After the sermon was ended, I went into the garden, and as I was going down the garden steps (for I perfectly recollect the spot) I revolted at the recollection of what I had heard, and thought to myself that it was making God Almighty act like a passionate man, that killed his son when he could not revenge himself in any other way, and as I was sure a man would be hanged that did such a thing, I could not see for what purpose they preached such sermons. This was not one of that kind of thoughts that had anything in it of childish levity; it was to me a serious reflection, arising from the idea I had that God was too good to do such an action, and also too almighty to be under any necessity of doing it. I believe in the same manner at this moment; and I moreover believe, that any system of religion that has anything in it that shocks the mind of a child,

cannot be a true system.

It seems as if parents of the Christian profession were ashamed to tell their children anything about the principles of their religion. They sometimes instruct them in morals, and talk to them of the goodness of what they call Providence, for the Christian mythology has five deities – there is God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, the God Providence, and the Goddess Nature. But the Christian story of God the Father putting his son to death, or employing people to do it (for that is the plain language of the story) cannot be told by a parent to a child; and to tell him that it was done to make mankind happier and better is making the story still worse – as if mankind could be improved by the example of murder; and to tell him that all this is a mystery is only making an excuse for the incredibility of it.

How different is this to the pure and simple profession of Deism! The true Deist has but one Deity, and his religion consists in contemplating the power, wisdom, and benignity of the Deity in his works, and in endeavoring to imitate him in everything moral, scientifical, and mechanical.

The religion that approaches the nearest of all others to true Deism, in the moral and benign part thereof, is that professed by the Quakers; but they have contracted themselves too much, by leaving the works of God out of their system. Though I reverence their philanthropy, I cannot help smiling at the conceit, that if the taste of a Quaker could have been consulted at the creation, what a silent and drab-colored creation it would have been! Not a flower would have blossomed its gayeties, nor a bird been permitted to sing.

Quitting these reflections, I proceed to other matters. After I had made myself master of the use of the globes and of the orrery,* and conceived an idea of the infinity of space, and the eternal divisibility of matter, and obtained at least a general knowledge of what is called natural philosophy, I began to compare, or, as I have before said, to confront the eternal evidence those things afford with the Christian system of faith.

[* As this book may fall into the hands of persons who do not know what an orrery is, it is for their information I add this note, as the name gives no idea of the uses of thing. The orrery has its name from the person who invented it. It is a machinery of clock-work, representing the universe in miniature, and in which the revolution of the earth round itself and round the sun, the revolution of the moon round the earth, the revolution of the planets round the sun, their relative distances from

the sun, as the centre of the whole system, their relative distances from each other, and their different magnitudes, are represented as they really exist in what we call the heavens.]

Though it is not a direct article of the Christian system, that this world that we inhabit is the whole of the habitable creation, yet it is so worked up therewith, from what is called the Mosaic account of the Creation, the story of Eve and the apple, and the counterpart of that story, the death of the Son of God, that to believe otherwise, that is, to believe that God created a plurality of worlds, at least as numerous as what we call stars, renders the Christian system of faith at once little and ridiculous, and scatters it in the mind like feathers in the air. The two beliefs cannot be held together in the same mind, and he who thinks that he believes both, has thought but little of either. Though the belief of a plurality of worlds was familiar to the ancients, it only within the last three centuries that the extent and dimensions of this globe that we inhabit have been ascertained. Several vessels, following the tract of the ocean, have sailed entirely round the world, as a man may march in a circle, and come round by the contrary side of the circle to the spot he set out from. The circular dimensions of our world, in the widest part, as a man would measure the widest round of an apple or ball, is only twenty-five thousand and twenty English miles, reckoning sixty-nine miles and a half to an equatorial degree, and may be sailed round in the space of about three years.*

[* Allowing a ship to sail, on an average, three miles in an hour, she would sail entirely round the world in less than one year, if she could sail in a direct circle; but she is obliged to follow the course of the ocean.]

A world of this extent may, at first thought, appear to us to be great; but if we compare it with the immensity of space in which it is suspended, like a bubble or balloon in the air, it is infinitely less in proportion than the smallest grain of sand is to the size of the world, or the finest particle of dew to the whole ocean, and is therefore but small; and, as will be hereafter shown, is only one of a system of worlds of which the universal creation is composed.

It is not difficult to gain some faint idea of the immensity of space in which this and all the other worlds are suspended, if we follow a progression of ideas. When we think of the size or dimensions of a room, our ideas limit themselves to the walls, and there they stop; but when our eye or our imagination darts into space, that is, when it looks upward into what we call the open air, we cannot conceive any walls or boundaries it can have, and if for the sake of resting our ideas, we suppose a boundary, the question immediately renews itself, and asks, what is beyond that boundary? and in

the same manner, what is beyond the next boundary? and so on till the fatigued imagination returns and says, There is no end. Certainly, then, the Creator was not pent for room when he made this world no larger than it is, and we have to seek the reason in something else.

If we take a survey of our own world, or rather of this, of which the Creator has given us the use as our portion in the immense system of creation, we find every part of it – the earth, the waters, and the air that surrounds it – filled and, as it were, crowded with life, down from the largest animals that we know of to the smallest insects the naked eye can behold, and from thence to others still smaller, and totally invisible without the assistance of the microscope. Every tree, every plant, every leaf, serves not only as a habitation but as a world to some numerous race, till animal existence becomes so exceedingly refined that the effluvia of a blade of grass would be food for thousands.

Since, then, no part of our earth is left unoccupied, why is it to be supposed that the immensity of space is a naked void, lying in eternal waste? There is room for millions of worlds as large or larger than ours, and each of them millions of miles apart from each other.

Having now arrived at this point, if we carry our ideas only one thought further, we shall see, perhaps, the true reason, at least a very good reason, for our happiness, why the Creator, instead of making one immense world extending over an immense quantity of space, has preferred dividing that quantity of matter into several distinct and separate worlds, which we call planets, of which our earth is one. But before I explain my ideas upon this subject, it is necessary (not for the sake of those who already know, but for those who do not) to show what the system of the universe is.

That part of the universe that is called the solar system (meaning the system of worlds to which our earth belongs, and of which Sol, or in English language, the Sun, is the centre) consists, besides the Sun, of six distinct orbs, or planets, or worlds, besides the secondary called the satellites or moons, of which our earth has one that attends her in her annual revolution around the Sun, in like manner as the other satellites or moons attend the planets or worlds to which they severally belong, as may be seen by the assistance of the telescope.

The Sun is the centre, round which those six worlds or planets revolve at different distances therefrom, and in circles concentrate to each other. Each world keeps constantly in nearly the same track round the Sun, and continues, at the same time, turning round itself in nearly an upright position, as a top turns round itself when it is spinning on the ground, and leans a little sideways.

It is this leaning of the earth (. degrees) that occasions summer and winter, and the different length of days and nights. If the earth turned round itself in a position perpendicular to the plane or level of the circle it moves in around the Sun, as a top turns round when it stands erect on the ground, the days and nights would be always of the same length, twelve hours day and twelve hours night, and the seasons would be uniformly the same throughout the year.

Every time that a planet (our earth for example) turns round itself, it makes what we call day and night; and every time it goes entirely round the Sun it makes what we call a year; consequently our world turns three hundred and sixty-five times round itself, in going once round the Sun.*

[* Those who supposed that the sun went round the earth every hours made the same mistake in idea that a cook would do in fact, that should make the fire go round the meat, instead of the meat turning round itself toward the fire.]

The names that the ancients gave to those six worlds, and which are still called by the same names, are Mercury, Venus, this world that we call ours, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. They appear larger to the eye than the stars, being many million miles nearer to our earth than any of the stars are. The planet Venus is that which is called the evening star, and sometimes the morning star, as she happens to set after or rise before the Sun, which in either case is never more than three hours.

The Sun, as before said, being the centre, the planet or world nearest the Sun is Mercury; his distance from the Sun is thirty-four million miles, and he moves round in a circle always at that distance from the Sun, as a top may be supposed to spin round in the track in which a horse goes in a mill. The second world is Venus; she is fifty-seven million miles distant from the Sun, and consequently moves round in a circle much greater than that of Mercury. The third world is this that we inhabit, and which is eighty-eight million miles distant from the Sun, and consequently moves round in a circle greater than that of Venus. The fourth world is Mars; he is distant from the Sun one hundred and thirty-four million miles, and consequently moves round in a circle greater than that of our earth. The fifth is Jupiter; he is distant from the Sun five hundred and fifty-seven million miles, and consequently moves round in a circle greater than that of Mars. The sixth world is Saturn; he is distant from the Sun seven hundred and sixty-three million miles, and consequently moves round in a circle that surrounds the circles, or orbits, of all the other worlds or planets.

The space, therefore, in the air, or in the immensity of space, that our solar system takes up for the several worlds to perform their revolutions in round the Sun, is of the extent in a straight line of the whole diameter of the orbit or circle, in which Saturn moves round the Sun, which being double his distance from the Sun, is fifteen hundred and twenty-six million miles and its circular extent is nearly five thousand million, and its globular contents is almost three thousand five hundred million times three thousand five hundred million square miles.*

[* If it should be asked, how can man know these things? I have one plain answer to give, which is, that man knows how to calculate an eclipse, and also how to calculate to a minute of time when the planet Venus, in making her revolutions around the sun will come in a straight line between our earth and the sun, and will appear to us about the size of a large pea passing across the face of the sun. This happens but twice in about a hundred years, at the distance of about eight years from each other, and has happened twice in our time, both of which were foreknown by calculation. It can also be known when they will happen again for a thousand years to come, or to any other portion of time. As, therefore, man could not be able to do these things if he did not understand the solar system, and the manner in which the revolutions of the several planets or worlds are performed, the fact of calculating an eclipse, or a transit of Venus, is a proof in point that the knowledge exists; and as to a few thousand, or even a few million miles, more or less, it makes scarcely any sensible difference in such immense distances.]

But this, immense as it is, is only one system of worlds. Beyond this, at a vast distance into space, far beyond all power of calculation, are the stars called the fixed stars. They are called fixed, because they have no revolutionary motion, as the six worlds or planets have that I have been describing. Those fixed stars continue always at the same distance from each other, and always in the same place, as the Sun does in the centre of our system. The probability, therefore, is, that each of these fixed stars is also a Sun, round which another system of worlds or planets, though too remote for us to discover, performs its revolutions, as our system of worlds does round our central Sun.

By this easy progression of ideas, the immensity of space will appear to us to be filled with systems of worlds, and that no part of space lies at waste, any more than any part of the globe of earth and water is left unoccupied.

Having thus endeavored to convey, in a familiar and easy manner, some idea of the structure of the

universe, I return to explain what I before alluded to, namely, the great benefits arising to man in consequence of the Creator having made a plurality of worlds, such as our system is, consisting of a central Sun and six worlds, besides satellites, in preference to that of creating one world only of a vast extent.

It is an idea I have never lost sight of, that all our knowledge of science is derived from the revolutions (exhibited to our eye and from thence to our understanding) which those several planets or worlds of which our system is composed make in their circuit round the Sun.

Had, then, the quantity of matter which these six worlds contain been blended into one solitary globe, the consequence to us would have been, that either no revolutionary motion would have existed, or not a sufficiency of it to give to us the idea and the knowledge of science we now have; and it is from the sciences that all the mechanical arts that contribute so much to our earthly felicity and comfort are derived.

As, therefore, the Creator made nothing in vain, so also must it be believed that he organized the structure of the universe in the most advantageous manner for the benefit of man; and as we see, and from experience feel, the benefits we derive from the structure of the universe formed as it is, which benefits we should not have had the opportunity of enjoying, if the structure, so far as relates to our system, had been a solitary globe – we can discover at least one reason why a plurality of worlds has been made, and that reason calls forth the devotional gratitude of man, as well as his admiration.

But it is not to us, the inhabitants of this globe, only, that the benefits arising from a plurality of worlds are limited. The inhabitants of each of the worlds of which our system is composed enjoy the same opportunities of knowledge as we do. They behold the revolutionary motions of our earth, as we behold theirs. All the planets revolve in sight of each other, and, therefore, the same universal school of science presents itself to all.

Neither does the knowledge stop here. The system of worlds next to us exhibits, in its revolutions, the same principles and school of science to the inhabitants of their system, as our system does to us, and in like manner throughout the immensity of space.

Our ideas, not only of the almighty of the Creator, but of his wisdom and his beneficence,

become enlarged in proportion as we contemplate the extent and the structure of the universe. The solitary idea of a solitary world, rolling or at rest in the immense ocean of space, gives place to the cheerful idea of a society of worlds, so happily contrived as to administer, even by their motion, instruction to man. We see our own earth filled with abundance, but we forget to consider how much of that abundance is owing to the scientific knowledge the vast machinery of the universe has unfolded.

But, in the midst of those reflections, what are we to think of the Christian system of faith, that forms itself upon the idea of only one world, and that of no greater extent, as is before shown, than twenty-five thousand miles? An extent which a man walking at the rate of three miles an hour, for twelve hours in the day, could he keep on in a circular direction, would walk entirely round in less than two years. Alas! what is this to the mighty ocean of space, and the almighty power of the Creator?

From whence, then, could arise the solitary and strange conceit that the Almighty, who had millions of worlds equally dependent on his protection, should quit the care of all the rest, and come to die in our world, because, they say, one man and one woman had eaten an apple? And, on the other hand, are we to suppose that every world in the boundless creation had an Eve, an apple, a serpent, and a redeemer? In this case, the person who is irreverently called the Son of God, and sometimes God himself, would have nothing else to do than to travel from world to world, in an endless succession of deaths, with scarcely a momentary interval of life. It has been by rejecting the evidence that the word or works of God in the creation afford to our senses, and the action of our reason upon that evidence, that so many wild and whimsical systems of faith and of religion have been fabricated and set up. There may be many systems of religion that, so far from being morally bad, are in many respects morally good; but there can be but ONE that is true; and that one necessarily must, as it ever will, be in all things consistent with the ever-existing word of God that we behold in his works. But such is the strange construction of the Christian system of faith that every evidence the Heavens afford to man either directly contradicts it or renders it absurd.

It is possible to believe, and I always feel pleasure in encouraging myself to believe it, that there have been men in the world who persuade themselves that what is called a pious fraud might, at least under particular circumstances, be productive of some good. But the fraud being once established, could not afterward be explained, for it is with a pious fraud as with a bad action, it begets a calamitous necessity of going on.

The persons who first preached the Christian system of faith, and in some measure combined it with the morality preached by Jesus Christ, might persuade themselves that it was better than the heathen mythology that then prevailed. From the first preachers the fraud went on to the second, and to the third, till the idea of its being a pious fraud became lost in the belief of its being true; and that belief became again encouraged by the interests of those who made a livelihood by preaching it.

But though such a belief might by such means be rendered almost general among the laity, it is next to impossible to account for the continual persecution carried on by the Church, for several hundred years, against the sciences and against the professors of science, if the Church had not some record or tradition that it was originally no other than a pious fraud, or did not foresee that it could not be maintained against the evidence that the structure of the universe afforded.

Having thus shown the irreconcilable inconsistencies between the real word of God existing in the universe, and that which is called the Word of God, as shown to us in a printed book that any man might make, I proceed to speak of the three principal means that have been employed in all ages, and perhaps in all countries, to impose upon mankind.

Those three means are Mystery, Miracle, and Prophecy. The two first are incompatible with true religion, and the third ought always to be suspected.

With respect to mystery, everything we behold is, in one sense, a mystery to us. Our own existence is a mystery; the whole vegetable world is a mystery. We cannot account how it is that an acorn, when put into the ground, is made to develop itself, and become an oak. We know not how it is that the seed we sow unfolds and multiplies itself, and returns to us such an abundant interest for so small a capital.

The fact, however, as distinct from the operating cause, is not a mystery, because we see it, and we know also the means we are to use, which is no other than putting the seed into the ground. We know, therefore, as much as is necessary for us to know; and that part of the operation that we do not know, and which, if we did, we could not perform, the Creator takes upon himself and performs it for us. We are, therefore, better off than if we had been let into the secret, and left to do it for ourselves.

But though every created thing is, in this sense, a mystery, the word mystery cannot be applied to moral truth, any more than obscurity can be applied to light. The God in whom we believe is a God of moral truth, and not a God of mystery or obscurity. Mystery is the antagonist of truth. It is a fog of human invention, that obscures truth, and represents it in distortion. Truth never envelops itself in mystery, and the mystery in which it is at any time enveloped is the work of its antagonist, and never of itself.

Religion, therefore, being the belief of a God and the practice of moral truth, cannot have connection with mystery. The belief of a God, so far from having anything of mystery in it, is of all beliefs the most easy, because it arises to us, as is before observed, out of necessity. And the practice of moral truth, or, in other words, a practical imitation of the moral goodness of God, is no other than our acting toward each other as he acts benignly toward all. We cannot serve God in the manner we serve those who cannot do without such service; and, therefore, the only idea we can have of serving God, is that of contributing to the happiness of the living creation that God has made. This cannot be done by retiring ourselves from the society of the world and spending a recluse life in selfish devotion.

The very nature and design of religion, if I may so express it, prove even to demonstration that it must be free from everything of mystery, and unencumbered with everything that is mysterious. Religion, considered as a duty, is incumbent upon every living soul alike, and, therefore, must be on a level with the understanding and comprehension of all. Man does not learn religion as he learns the secrets and mysteries of a trade. He learns the theory of religion by reflection. It arises out of the action of his own mind upon the things which he sees, or upon what he may happen to hear or to read, and the practice joins itself thereto.

When men, whether from policy or pious fraud, set up systems of religion incompatible with the word or works of God in the creation, and not only above, but repugnant to human comprehension, they were under the necessity of inventing or adopting a word that should serve as a bar to all questions, inquiries and speculation. The word mystery answered this purpose, and thus it has happened that religion, which is in itself without mystery, has been corrupted into a fog of mysteries.

As mystery answered all general purposes, miracle followed as an occasional auxiliary. The former served to bewilder the mind, the latter to puzzle the senses. The one was the lingo, the other the

legerdemain.

But before going further into this subject, it will be proper to inquire what is to be understood by a miracle.

In the same sense that everything may be said to be a mystery, so also may it be said that everything is a miracle, and that no one thing is a greater miracle than another. The elephant, though larger, is not a greater miracle than a mite, nor a mountain a greater miracle than an atom. To an almighty power, it is no more difficult to make the one than the other, and no more difficult to make millions of worlds than to make one. Everything, therefore, is a miracle, in one sense, whilst in the other sense, there is no such thing as a miracle. It is a miracle when compared to our power and to our comprehension, if not a miracle compared to the power that performs it; but as nothing in this description conveys the idea that is affixed to the word miracle, it is necessary to carry the inquiry further.

Mankind have conceived to themselves certain laws, by which what they call nature is supposed to act; and that miracle is something contrary to the operation and effect of those laws; but unless we know the whole extent of those laws, and of what are commonly called the powers of nature, we are not able to judge whether anything that may appear to us wonderful or miraculous be within, or be beyond, or be contrary to, her natural power of acting.

The ascension of a man several miles high in the air would have everything in it that constitutes the idea of a miracle, if it were not known that a species of air can be generated, several times lighter than the common atmospheric air, and yet possess elasticity enough to prevent the balloon in which that light air is enclosed from being compressed into as many times less bulk by the common air that surrounds it. In like manner, extracting flames or sparks of fire from the human body, as visible as from a steel struck with a flint, and causing iron or steel to move without any visible agent, would also give the idea of a miracle, if we were not acquainted with electricity and magnetism. So also would many other experiments in natural philosophy, to those who are not acquainted with the subject. The restoring persons to life who are to appearance dead, as is practised upon drowned persons, would also be a miracle, if it were not known that animation is capable of being suspended without being extinct.

Besides these, there are performances by sleight-of-hand, and by persons acting in concert, that

have a miraculous appearance, which when known are thought nothing of. And besides these, there are mechanical and optical deceptions. There is now an exhibition in Paris of ghosts or spectres, which, though it is not imposed upon the spectators as a fact, has an astonishing appearance. As, therefore, we know not the extent to which either nature or art can go, there is no positive criterion to determine what a miracle is, and mankind, in giving credit to appearances, under the idea of there being miracles, are subject to be continually imposed upon.

Since, then, appearances are so capable of deceiving, and things not real have a strong resemblance to things that are, nothing can be more inconsistent than to suppose that the Almighty would make use of means such as are called miracles, that would subject the person who performed them to the suspicion of being an impostor, and the person who related them to be suspected of lying, and the doctrine intended to be supported thereby to be suspected as a fabulous invention.

Of all the modes of evidence that ever were invented to obtain belief to any system or opinion to which the name of religion has been given, that of miracle, however successful the imposition may have been, is the most inconsistent. For, in the first place, whenever recourse is had to show, for the purpose of procuring that belief, (for a miracle, under any idea of the word, is a show), it implies a lameness or weakness in the doctrine that is preached. And, in the second place, it is degrading the Almighty into the character of a showman, playing tricks to amuse and make the people stare and wonder. It is also the most equivocal sort of evidence that can be set up; for the belief is not to depend upon the thing called a miracle, but upon the credit of the reporter who says that he saw it; and, therefore, the thing, were it true, would have no better chance of being believed than if it were a lie.

Suppose I were to say, that when I sat down to write this book, a hand presented itself in the air, took up the pen, and wrote every word that is herein written; would anybody believe me? Certainly they would not. Would they believe me a whit the more if the thing had been a fact? Certainly they would not. Since, then, a real miracle, were it to happen, would be subject to the same fate as the falsehood, the inconsistency becomes the greater of supposing the Almighty would make use of means that would not answer the purpose for which they were intended, even if they were real.

If we are to suppose a miracle to be something so entirely out of the course of what is called nature, that she must go out of that course to accomplish it, and we see an account given of such miracle by the person who said he saw it, it raises a question in the mind very easily decided, which is, is it

more probable that nature should go out of her course, or that a man should tell a lie? We have never seen, in our time, nature go out of her course; but we have good reason to believe that millions of lies have been told in the same time; it is therefore, at least millions to one, that the reporter of a miracle tells a lie.

The story of the whale swallowing Jonah, though a whale is large enough to do it, borders greatly on the marvelous; but it would have approached nearer to the idea of a miracle, if Jonah had swallowed the whale. In this, which may serve for all cases of miracles, the matter would decide itself, as before stated, namely, is it more that a man should have swallowed a whale or told a lie?

But suppose that Jonah had really swallowed the whale, and gone with it in his belly to Nineveh, and, to convince the people that it was true, had cast it up in their sight, of the full length and size of a whale, would they not have believed him to be the devil, instead of a prophet? Or, if the whale had carried Jonah to Nineveh, and cast him up in the same public manner, would they not have believed the whale to have been the devil, and Jonah one of his imps?

The most extraordinary of all the things called miracles, related in the New Testament, is that of the devil flying away with Jesus Christ, and carrying him to the top of a high mountain, and to the top of the highest pinnacle of the temple, and showing him and promising to him all the kingdoms of the World. How happened it that he did not discover America, or is it only with kingdoms that his sooty highness has any interest?

I have too much respect for the moral character of Christ to believe that he told this whale of a miracle himself; neither is it easy to account for what purpose it could have been fabricated, unless it were to impose upon the connoisseurs of Queen Anne's farthings and collectors of relics and antiquities; or to render the belief of miracles ridiculous, by outdoing miracles, as Don Quixote outdid chivalry; or to embarrass the belief of miracles, by making it doubtful by what power, whether of God or of the devil, anything called a miracle was performed. It requires, however, a great deal of faith in the devil to believe this miracle.

In every point of view in which those things called miracles can be placed and considered, the reality of them is improbable and their existence unnecessary. They would not, as before observed, answer any useful purpose, even if they were true; for it is more difficult to obtain belief to a miracle, than to a principle evidently moral without any miracle. Moral principle speaks universally for

itself. Miracle could be but a thing of the moment, and seen but by a few; after this it requires a transfer of faith from God to man to believe a miracle upon man's report. Instead, therefore, of admitting the recitals of miracles as evidence of any system of religion being true, they ought to be considered as symptoms of its being fabulous. It is necessary to the full and upright character of truth that it rejects the crutch, and it is consistent with the character of fable to seek the aid that truth rejects. Thus much for mystery and miracle.

As mystery and miracle took charge of the past and the present, prophecy took charge of the future and rounded the tenses of faith. It was not sufficient to know what had been done, but what would be done. The supposed prophet was the supposed historian of times to come; and if he happened, in shooting with a long bow of a thousand years, to strike within a thousand miles of a mark, the ingenuity of posterity could make it point-blank; and if he happened to be directly wrong, it was only to suppose, as in the case of Jonah and Nineveh, that God had repented himself and changed his mind. What a fool do fabulous systems make of man!

It has been shown, in a former part of this work, that the original meaning of the words prophet and prophesying has been changed, and that a prophet, in the sense of the word as now used, is a creature of modern invention; and it is owing to this change in the meaning of the words, that the flights and metaphors of the Jewish poets, and phrases and expressions now rendered obscure by our not being acquainted with the local circumstances to which they applied at the time they were used, have been erected into prophecies, and made to bend to explanations at the will and whimsical conceits of sectaries, expounders, and commentators. Everything unintelligible was prophetical, and everything insignificant was typical. A blunder would have served for a prophecy, and a dish-clout for a type.

If by a prophet we are to suppose a man to whom the Almighty communicated some event that would take place in future, either there were such men or there were not. If there were, it is consistent to believe that the event so communicated would be told in terms that could be understood, and not related in such a loose and obscure manner as to be out of the comprehension of those that heard it, and so equivocal as to fit almost any circumstance that may happen afterward. It is conceiving very irreverently of the Almighty, to suppose that he would deal in this jesting manner with mankind, yet all the things called prophecies in the book called the Bible come under this description.

But it is with prophecy as it is with miracle; it could not answer the purpose even if it were real. Those to whom a prophecy should be told, could not tell whether the man prophesied or lied, or whether it had been revealed to him, or whether he conceived it; and if the thing that he prophesied, or intended to prophesy, should happen, or something like it, among the multitude of things that are daily happening, nobody could again know whether he foreknew it, or guessed at it, or whether it was accidental. A prophet, therefore, is a character useless and unnecessary; and the safe side of the case is to guard against being imposed upon by not giving credit to such relations.

Upon the whole, mystery, miracle, and prophecy are appendages that belong to fabulous and not to true religion. They are the means by which so many Lo, heres! and Lo, theres! have been spread about the world, and religion been made into a trade. The success of one imposter gave encouragement to another, and the quieting salvo of doing some good by keeping up a pious fraud protected them from remorse.

Having now extended the subject to a greater length than I first intended, I shall bring it to a close by abstracting a summary from the whole.

First – That the idea or belief of a word of God existing in print, or in writing, or in speech, is inconsistent in itself for reasons already assigned. These reasons, among many others, are the want of a universal language; the mutability of language; the errors to which translations are subject: the possibility of totally suppressing such a word; the probability of altering it, or of fabricating the whole, and imposing it upon the world.

Secondly – That the Creation we behold is the real and ever-existing word of God, in which we cannot be deceived. It proclaims his power, it demonstrates his wisdom, it manifests his goodness and beneficence.

Thirdly – That the moral duty of man consists in imitating the moral goodness and beneficence of God, manifested in the creation toward all his creatures. That seeing, as we daily do, the goodness of God to all men, it is an example calling upon all men to practise the same toward each other; and, consequently, that everything of persecution and revenge between man and man, and everything of cruelty to animals, is a violation of moral duty.

I trouble not myself about the manner of future existence. I content myself with believing, even to

positive conviction, that the Power that gave me existence is able to continue it, in any form and manner he pleases, either with or without this body; and it appears more probable to me that I shall continue to exist hereafter, than that I should have had existence, as I now have, before that existence began.

It is certain that, in one point, all the nations of the earth and all religions agree – all believe in a God; the things in which they disagree, are the redundancies annexed to that belief; and, therefore, if ever a universal religion should prevail, it will not be by believing anything new, but in getting rid of redundancies, and believing as man believed at first. Adam, if ever there were such a man, was created a Deist; but in the meantime, let every man follow, as he has a right to do, the religion and the worship he prefers.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

Thus far I had written on the th of December, . In the evening I went to the Hotel Philadelphia (formerly White's Hotel), Passage des Petis Peres, where I lodged when I came to Paris, in consequence of being elected a member of the Convention, but left the lodging about nine months, and taken lodgings in the Rue Fauxbourg St. Denis, for the sake of being more retired than I could be in the middle of the town.

Meeting with a company of Americans at the Hotel Philadelphia, I agreed to spend the evening with them; and, as my lodging was distant about a mile and a half, I bespoke a bed at the hotel. The company broke up about twelve o'clock, and I went directly to bed. About four in the morning I was awakened by a rapping at my chamber door; when I opened it, I saw a guard, and the master of the hotel with them. The guard told me they came to put me under arrestation, and to demand the key of my papers. I desired them to walk in, and I would dress myself and go with them immediately. It happened that Achilles Audibert, of Calais, was then in the hotel; and I desired to be conducted into his room. When we came there, I told the guard that I had only lodged at the hotel for the night; that I was printing a work, and that part of that work was at the Maison Bretagne, Rue Jacob; and desired they would take me there first, which they did.

The printing-office at which the work was printing was near to the Maison Bretagne, where Colonel Blackden and Joel Barlow, of the United States of America, lodged; and I had desired Joel Barlow to compare the proof-sheets with the copy as they came from the press. The remainder of the manuscript, from page to , was at my lodging. But besides the necessity of my collecting all the

parts of the work together that the publication might not be interrupted by my imprisonment, or by any event that might happen to me, it was highly proper that I should have a fellow-citizen of America with me during the examination of my papers, as I had letters of correspondence in my possession of the President of Congress General Washington; the Minister of Foreign Affairs to Congress Mr. Jefferson; and the late Benjamin Franklin; and it might be necessary for me to make a proces-verbal to send to Congress.

It happened that Joel Barlow had received only one proof-sheet of the work, which he had compared with the copy and sent it back to the printing-office.

We then went, in company with Joel Barlow, to my lodging; and the guard, or commissaires, took with them the interpreter to the Committee of Surety-General. It was satisfactory to me, that they went through the examination of my papers with the strictness they did; and it is but justice that I say, they did it not only with civility, but with tokens of respect to my character.

I showed them the remainder of the manuscript of the foregoing work. The interpreter examined it and returned it to me, saying, "It is an interesting work; it will do much good." I also showed him another manuscript, which I had intended for the Committee of Public Safety. It is entitled, "Observations on the Commerce between the United States of America and France."

After the examination of my papers was finished, the guard conducted me to the prison of the Luxembourg, where they left me as they would a man whose undeserved fate they regretted. I offered to write under the proces-verbal they had made that they had executed their orders with civility, but they declined it.

From the Conclusion ...

The Bible of the creation is inexhaustible in texts. Every part of science, whether connected with the geometry of the universe, with the systems of animal and vegetable life, or with the properties of inanimate matter, is a text as well for devotion as for philosophy – for gratitude as for human improvement. It will perhaps be said, that if such a revolution in the system of religion takes place, every preacher ought to be a philosopher. Most certainly; and every house of devotion a school of science.

It has been by wandering from the immutable laws of science, and the right use of reason, and

setting up an invented thing called revealed religion, that so many wild and blasphemous conceits have been formed of the Almighty. The Jews have made him the assassin of the human species to make room for the religion of the Jews. The Christians have made him the murderer of himself and the founder of a new religion, to supersede and expel the Jewish religion. And to find pretence and admission for these things, they must have supposed his power or his wisdom imperfect, or his will changeable; and the changeableness of the will is imperfection of the judgement. The philosopher knows that the laws of the Creator have never changed with respect either to the principles of science, or the properties of matter. Why, then, is it supposed they have changed with respect to man?

I here close the subject. I have shown in all the foregoing parts of this work, that the Bible and Testament are impositions and forgeries; and I leave the evidence I have produced in proof of it, to be refuted, if any one can do it: and I leave the ideas that are suggested in the conclusion of the work, to rest on the mind of the reader; certain as I am, that when opinions are free, either in matters of government or religion, truth will finally and powerfully prevail.

TF1

The events of the last hundred years, the changes they have wrought in the mode of existence of every nation of Europe, and the complexity they have introduced into all the relations of society, have given to the science of political economy an importance to which it could never before pretend. As the classes into which nations are divided have been multiplied, as the space allotted to the motions of each individual have been more circumscribed, their different interests have brought men more frequently into collision, and it has required no small share of skill to state and regulate the pretensions of each. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, however much it may be matter of regret, that in discussions so intricate and often so perplexed. the true principles should be lost sight of on which society is formed, and which alone, by the general happiness they produce, can make amends for its laws and restrictions, and the abridgment of natural freedom that it necessarily brings in its train.

Among all the relations of society, what may be called it. financial relations are almost the last to attract attention. It is only in a high state of civilization, when the idle classes have become

numerous and powerful, that men occupy themselves with the best means of increasing and distributing a nation's wealth. Private interest is the great stimulus to improvement. The public good is seldom much thought of till it can be turned into the stream of individual advantage. It is never pursued with so much eagerness as when it can be made a pretext for jobs, when corruption can be sanctioned by its name.

In a country where land is the only property, and its rents and the profits which arise from their expenditure the only source of revenue, as there can be no mystery, as there is no room for contrivance, men are not very solicitous to inquire into the causes of the wealth of nations, nor into the best manner of disposing of their savings. As they see that all the productions of the earth are of a perishable nature, and have no value but what they derive from consumption, as they perceive that the only use of manufactures is to increase comforts, and to offer a more compendious and more refined mean of expenditure; they do not comprehend how it is possible for accumulation to take place. Where there is no fund in which savings can be laid up, to save seems in reality to waste. What is not consumed can only be thrown away. True wisdom, they think, and they think rightly, can only consist in well-regulated enjoyment: their industry can never be well employed but when it adds to their comforts.

Such is necessarily the state of every people who have created no public debt: such was the condition of all the nations of Europe before their governments had thought of the ingenious expedient of mortgaging the public revenues. They lived carelessly from day to day, enjoying the good whilst they had it, and opposing nothing to extraordinary difficulties when they came but extraordinary privations. The calls of the public, the necessities of a war, only put down for a time the extravagance of private luxury. The servants and retainers of the gentry were converted into soldiers, and the nobleman when he harnessed on his armour broke up every thing that was expensive in his establishment. A war caused no new expense, it only gave another direction to what already took place. The gentry were a militia always bound to obey the call of the nation: their estates were their stipend, which they spent as they pleased when not required for the service of the country, to whom they paid their rent by assuring to it security.

The funding system, by creating a new and undefinable species of property, which neither held of the land nor yet of the industry of the country, which had no local existence, no tangible being, not only overthrew the whole scheme of society, but gave a new turn to men's ideas. No bounds could be assigned to a nation's wealth when new fortunes might be created without taking away from

those that already existed. The power of accumulation bestowed on individuals appeared to be conferred on the whole community. Where wealth grew with so much rapidity, there seemed no difficulty in anticipating its growth, and supplying the wants of to-day by the means of to-morrow. The scheme could not but be agreeable to all the stirring spirits to whom it opened the road to fortune. Others without any views of interest were led away by the charm of words. The borrowing from posterity, as it was called, was so happy an expression, it was so full of vagueness and uncertainty, that it could not but generate confusion, and give birth to a thousand absurdities in reasoning. When men had once persuaded themselves that they could spend immediately what was only to exist hereafter, they could have no difficulty in believing that they might save what had already ceased to exist. One false consequence led to another. Though they were usually adventurers who grew rich by these revolutions of fortune, yet as men saw capital every where fastening on industry to share in the produce of its labour, they concluded that it was capital gave all its activity to industry. Though they saw fortunes raised during wars, which were again dissipated in time of peace, they chose, in deference to the common sense of mankind, but in defiance of their own principles, to consider war as a destroyer of capital, which could only be accumulated by the arts of peace.

These reasonings proceeding from false premises, as they could not fail to involve in a labyrinth of perplexities all those who had no other guide than common sense, soon raised political economy to the rank of a science. From that moment, as might be expected, every day added to the darkness with which it was surrounded, every new treatise only sunk it deeper in obscurity. They who though uninitiated in its mysteries have been accustomed to watch the progress of science, cannot but be aware how readily learned men in their inquiries content themselves with words, and what a natural abhorrence they have of whatever bears the stamp of common sense. As their chief object is to distinguish themselves from the great herd of men who are busied with things, they delight in abstractions, they choose words for their province. Certain cabalistical terms are introduced into the sciences, which are to silence all inquiries. It is not expected that the adept should understand them, it is enough that he can repeat them. No useful invention owes its birth to science; it seems the business of learned men to disguise under hard names, and to render obscure the simple discoveries of genius.

Political economy, as it was peculiarly obnoxious to its baleful influence, was not likely to escape unhurt from this tendency to jargon, which science has heaped up to encumber all the avenues to knowledge. There is something in the nature of the abstract sciences that stops pretenders on the

threshold. The very terms of the mathematics are repulsive; signs tangents and co-efficients are quite appalling to those who have never used their minds to steady application. The catechism of chemistry is not more enticing; as it cannot be acquired without a considerable effort of memory, it sets at defiance all desultory studies. Poetry is secured by other safeguards. Its popular character, which has rescued it from mystery, and the ridicule which follows on any unsuccessful attempt, deters the sober and the timid, and leave it to the unheeded pursuit of the rash and the successful cultivation of those who really feel the impulse of genius. Political economy has none of these securities against the inroads of ignorance and pretension. It seems to treat of the every-day occurrences of life; its terms are in common use; its language is that which is familiar in the world. The man who has spent all his days in getting and spending money easily fancies himself competent to decide on the nature of wealth and its consumption. He seems to be only generalizing his own experience, and embodying his own reflections. In an age of literary pretension, where every man is obliged, at least in appearance, to know something, political economy has accordingly become the study of all those who felt themselves unequal to other pursuits. It was the peaceful province of acrostic land where they whose courage cowered before higher enterprise might yet hope to acquire a comfortable renown. No fiery dragons were placed to guard its treasuresno fearful monsters rendered dangerous their approach; there was nothing in the adventure to dishearten the most recreant knight.

The wonderful has irresistible charms for ignorance. Narrow minds cannot conceive the simplicity of true knowledge; nothing seems to them worth knowing that is not strange and mysterious. They have no taste for the simple processes of nature, they cannot relish them till they are seasoned and disguised hy the hard words of science. Like the Bourgeois gentilhomme, they cannot persuade themselves that men's every-day talk is prose; that art is but the handmaid of Nature to follow and imitate her works, not to suggest them. The less they comprehend of doctrines, the more they are in opposition to generally-received notions, the more in their eyes they bear the stamp of genius. Learned words with them sanctify the greatest absurdities ; they readily yield their assent to propositions, when veiled under the garb of science, which in their natural state would stagger their belief.

Hence into political economy, which is essentially a science of calculation which treats of visible and tangible objects, which is principally conversant with facts, have been introduced, all the refinements and all the subtleties of metaphysics. The broad processes of nature have been lost sight of under the cobwebs of sophistry. Discussions have been pursued with all the eagerness of

the most angry polemics, hardly less absurd than those which once made it a question, whether the mendicant friars had a property or only a usufruct in the food they ate. He was the greatest authority, his fame was most widely spread, who dealt most largely in distinctions without a difference. The narrow views which such limited intellects would necessarily take of their subject, has not tended a little to create confusion. They generalized too fast. As children in their first attempts to classify their ideas, call every man they meet papa, so they erected the results of their individual experience into general laws. Because a thing was, they thought it could not be otherwise. The anomalies which in every country are created by the artificial regulations of men, they confounded with the great principles which govern and uphold the world. The abuses of society were to them as sacred as its primary and fundamental institutions. As they judged of the wisdom of nature by what to them seemed wisdom in the municipal regulations by which they were surrounded, they made her responsible for the follies and crimes of men. Political economy thus treated became perverted in all her principles. She was made the close ally of self-interest and corruption ; it was in the armory of her terms that tyranny and oppression found their dead. heat weapons. She has oftener been called in as an auxiliary, when abuses were to be accounted for and justified than when their origin was to be detected and their remedy suggested. The most oppressive governments have been those which have most earnestly cultivated this science, for it has tended to give stability to misrule, by lending it the support of system, and shrouding its deformities under the semblance of wisdom. The doctrine of capital and its effects is indeed the most injurious to society that ever was broached. To teach that the wealth and power of a nation depend on its capital, is to make industry ancillary to riches, to make men subservient to property. Where such a system is allowed to prevail, the greater part of the people must be, under whatever name disguised, merely sdscripti glebae. Their situation will be without comfort and without hope; they will be doomed to toil, not for their own benefit, but for that of their masters. All rights will belong to the rich, all duties will be left to the poor. The people will be made to bow their necks beneath the yoke of the harshest of all rules, the aristocracy of wealth.

From the errors into which men have fallen by not distinguishing the rights of industry from those of property, by looking on men but as the means of cultivation, has arisen the much debated question, which is most advantageous to a nation, to borrow, during the war, the means of carrying it on, or to employ the intervals of peace in laying up what is needful for the prosecution of future hostilities; whether a people shall begin by spending, that it may afterwards accumulate, or begin by heaping up the means of future expense. Treated solely as a question of finance, as it has hitherto been, the problem is deserving of little attention, it is but a question of words. All its importance

arises from the influence which the different practices may have on the happiness and freedom of a people In these discussions it has been assumed, without the least shadow of proof, that it is possible for a whole nation to accumulate, not In the true sense of adding every day to the comforts of every class of the people, but in the more popular sense of laying by a part of its income, of producing more than it consumes. It is not surprising that a position which seems warranted by every man's experience should have been so generally admitted. Men are for ever deluded by similitudes: there is no more frequent source of error than a mistaken analogy. What each individual of a community is certainly capable of doing, it seemed equally easy for the community in its corporate capacity to do. In the hurry and bustle of active life, where each man's attention is absorbed in his own pursuits, the great and rooted distinction between the two cases is so wrapped up in extraneous circumstances as to be wholly lost sight of: in the ordinary intercourse of individuals the property that one man acquires another as surely loses. One man cannot buy an estate but because another sells it. Acquisition is in reality only transfer. To a whole people it is therefore impossible. They may add to their produce, they may increase their consumption, they may swell the amount of their comforts, they may wanton in new luxuries, but they cannot lay by. This mistake, however, singular as it is, is much less extraordinary than that of the opponents of accumulation, the advocates of the funding system. In pretending to stave off the expenses of the present hour to a future day, in contending that you can burthen posterity to supply the wants of the existing generation, they in reality assert the monstrous proposition that you can consume what does not yet exist, that you can feed on provisions before their seeds have been sown in the earth. If these doctrines had been confined to the schools, their mistakes, as they would have been harmless, might have been amusing. But in the mouths of statesmen, they become of quite another importance. Mixed up with all its laws and institutions, new modelling the opinions of judges and warping the very principles of justice, (which, immutable as they are said to be, will still, so long as they are administered by men, be swayed by the caprice of fashion) they exercise a dreadful influence on the happiness of a nation. Its constitution perishes, whilst all its forms remain entire. The greatest innovators are found amongst the steadiest enemies of reform.

As this doctrine of capital and the wonderful effects of accumulation are the basis of all modern political economy, as It is the key-stone which holds together all the discordant parts of the funding system, it will not be a waste of time to examine it in detail. If it can be shewn that it is not possible for a nation either to save or to anticipate its revenues; if it can be shewn that all that is produced must be consumed at the very time of production, and that nothing can be consumed till it has been first produced; the whole merits amid demerits of the funding system will stand confessed before

us. Posterity will appear to be wholly uninterested in the acts of the present generation: all their good and all their evil will be for those who have committed them. Borrowing will not have diminished the expense of the present day, nor have added to that of time to come. All the wisdom of our statesmen will have ended in a great transfer of property from one class of persons to another, in creating an enormous fund for the reward of jobs and peculation.

In considering how small a proportion of every civilized society, even when regulated with most wisdom, is employed in productive industry, and that every step in civilization lessens even that small proportion; in observing how many of our fellow creatures seem only born to consume the fruits of the earth; what waste and extravagance attends the expenditure of the rich ; slight thinkers are insensibly led to conclude that if in any country all laboured and all lived with frugality, the accumulation of wealth must be prodigious; and as they have seen that in all individual instances power follows wealth, they infer that the power of such a nation would keep pace with its riches. But wealth and power are wholly relative terms, they have no positive existence; all their value is derived from the poverty and weakness of others. It is useless for one man to have too much, his superfluity would add nothing to his influence unless there were others who had too little. It is their wants which constitute his wealth. In England, as every man employed in productive labour produces five times as much as he consumes, his means greatly exceed his wants. If then every man laboured, all would be seemingly rich, for each would have five times as much as he had need of. But this apparent wealth would iii disguise his real poverty. When all were equal, none would labour for another. The necessaries of life would be over abundant whilst its comforts were entirely wanting. The greater part of each man's labour would be in vain, for there would be none to consume its produce. His toil would bring him no relaxation he would have nothing hut what lie owed to the labour of his own hands. Men's actions, however, are generally wiser than their words they seldom act up to their theories; feeling corrects the errors of their reasoning. Though moralists have dissented, time out of mind, on the advantages of industry though thousands of volumes have been written to prove that employment is necessary to happiness, a natural instinct teaches them that the worth of industry consists entirely in its consequences, and that where labour brings no reward, it is better to be idle than to be uselessly employed, to do no nothing than to labour in vain.

On this principle, society has been constructed, its progress has every where followed this law. In the early stages of association, when men, bound together by few ties, contribute little to each other's aid, it is as much as each can do with all his industry to keep himself from starving. The life of the savage, who subsists by hunting, has sometimes been described as a life of idleness, and it

may seem so to those who have only seen him when unemployed. But his repose is not that of indolence, it is called for by exhaustion: it is the consequence of severe fatigues and privations. His intervals of sloth are rendered necessary by the intensity of his labours. He throws himself on the ground to recover new strength for the chase. In every subsequent stage of society, as increased numbers and better contrivances add to each man's power of production, the number of those who labour is gradually diminished. What is more than is required for the maintenance of those who toil, is reserved for the support of a portion of the society which is allowed to live in idleness. Property grows from the improvement of the means of production; its sole business is the encouragement of idleness. When each man's labour is barely sufficient for his own subsistence, as there can be no property, there will be no idle men. When one man's labour can maintain five, there will be four idle men for one employed in production: in no other way can the produce be consumed.

As the object of society is to magnify the idle at the expense of the industrious, to create power out of plenty, this state of things is not always apparent. Social institutions are ever labouring to confound the industry which is employed in consumption with that primary industry whose duty it is to produce, the industry which waits on property with that from which it derives its existence. Indeed the first, as it gives to a state its splendour and magnificence, as from it rulers derive all their greatness, is usually considered as the most valuable. To increase a nation's modes of expenditure is supposed to add to its wealth. Yet no two things can be more distinct in their nature than these two species of industry. The Industry which produces is the parent of property: that which aids consumption is its child. This is always busy in pulling down what that is as constantly building up. It is, however, the industry of consumption, which, by a strange per. version of reasoning, political economy has chosen to consider as the source of the wealth of nations. Trade and manufactures, which grow with a nation's growth, whose increase necessarily keeps pace with every improvement in the employment of its industry, which are in reality only a channel to make expense more easy, have been looked on as the cause of that prosperity the) only follow. To artificial regulations, to the contrivances of men, have been attributed that power of expansion, that elasticity of nature, which is interwoven in the very texture of society. Men cannot turn their industry to produce the comforts and luxuries of life but because it is not wanted to produce what is necessary to existence. The refinements of life only begin to be thought of when no more labour can be usefully employed in its necessities. Every improvement in the power of production is the parent of a new manufacture. Where each man's labour is barely sufficient to procure his own subsistence, none can be employed in luxuries. As there could he none who would supply them with food, none to whom they could sell their useless industry, the professors of such arts must

starve. This is, therefore, from the very nature of things, the regular progress of society. As soon as increased numbers have allowed of these improvements in the employment of industry which make a man's labour sufficient for the maintenance of more than his own family, the hopeless scheme of accumulation is not thought of, but the surplus is assigned to the maintenance of some portion of the society who are permitted to live in idleness. Property is thus created, which is continually increasing with every improvement in the skill and industry with which labour is conducted. In a state of society where one man's labour can only support two families, the gross produce of the country will be shared equally between its industry and its property ; where increased skill enables one man to maintain five, four parts will constitute the property of the country, one only will be reserved for the maintenance of its industry. In the one case the idle men and their dependents will form one half of the nation: in the other, four fifths of the people will be comprised iii these classes. It is this growth of property, this greater ability to maintain idle men, and unproductive industry, that in political economy is called capital. But this increase of capital may be without any addition to a nation's wealth. Where the growth of society is allowed to follow its natural course, every improvement of the powers of industry will add to the comforts of the whole community; as more will be produced, each man may consume more. But when artificial regulations force the growth of property too fast, improved industry, instead of adding to the amount of production, only lessens the number of producers. The capital of such a country will be always increasing, whilst the real wealth of a nation, the comforts and happiness of the people, will be as rapidly diminishing. The unnatural growth of the idle will stunt and dwarf the industrious; when too much nourishment is bestowed on thee belly, the limbs lose their strength. But property which is wholly impotent in encouraging productive industry, and is sometimes hurtful to it, is all powerful in creating the industry of consumption. As the idle are the great consumers of the luxuries of life, trade and manufactures will be in proportion not to a nation's wealth, but to the amount of its property. They will grow fastest where the condition of the people is worst. As the destination of property is expense, as without that it is wholly useless to its owner, its existence is intimately connected with that of the industry of consumption. Like those mysterious beings we read of in eastern tales, one soul animates the two bodies; the one cannot die but the other perishes. They both, however, owe their life to the same parent. They are the offspring of productive industry, they are its nurse-children, and are fed from its breast; their health depends on its vigour; it cannot languish but it spreads their bed of sickness, it cannot pass away but it tolls their parting knell.

Property is in reality but a rent charge on productive Industry. It cannot increase the quantity of industry, for the very condition of its existence is a superabundance of produce. As consumption is

the purpose for which it is created, to that alone it can be devoted. As it increases with every increase of population and every improvement in the management of labour, it is continually outgrowing the natural wants of those to whom providence has assigned the right of living in idleness on the labours of their fellow creatures. The lord of boundless empires cannot in his own person consume more than the poorest of his subjects. The same quantity of food will satisfy his hunger; he does not require more clothing to protect him from the inclemency of the weather. He is compelled, therefore, to imagine artificial wants, to hire others to help in consuming his superfluities. This is the origin of all manufactures: they owe their existence to the necessity which the rich feel of consuming by the means of others that part of the produce of the earth which is too much for their own consumption; none of them contribute to the existence of man, they are only conversant with his artificial wants. They cannot add to the wealth of a people, they only furnish easier means of expenditure. Their amount is dependant on the success of productive industry. They are the superfluities of the cultivator which reward the manufacturer and enable him to live. If each man's labour were but enough to procure his own food, there could be no property, and no part of a people's industry could be turned away to work for the wants of the imagination. In every case, however, accumulation is equally impossible. As consumption is the only purpose of production, It necessarily regulates its amount, for it gives it all its value. The labour that is employed on useless things is entirely thrown away. They who are so occupied might as well be idle; they have in reality only been busy about nothing. Houses that there were none to inhabit would only encumber the earth: corn that there were none to eat, clothes that there were none to wear, would soon become the prey of the weevil and the moth. Instead of adding to men's wealth, they would only increase their plagues. To hoard is the wisdom of a jackdaw; to multiply his enjoyments, that of a reasonable creature.

But whilst the uselessness of saving what perishes in the moment of accumulation be admitted, there will be those who, whilst they allow the inability of trade and manufactures to increase a nation's property, will contend that there are other objects of a less perishable nature, whose use is of all times and all countries; that hoards of the precious metals may be made to any amount without losing any of their value. This scheme is, however, as bottomless as the other. The government of a state may indeed place itself in the situation of the idle men; by drawing to itself all the revenues of the country it may annihilate their existence; it may determine that all who are not occupied with the industry of production shall be employed in working for gold or silver, either directly, or if the country has no mines, in producing objects that may be exchanged with those nations that have. It is clear that a country directing all its industry to such a purpose might amass a treasure of almost

any conceivable magnitude. Its amount might render trifling even Dr. Price's most visionary conceptions. Nor would the industry of the country receive any check whilst this abstraction of capital was going forward. Every man would be employed either in producing the necessities of life or the means of purchasing gold and silver. The demand of the state would supply the want of individual consumption: the riches of the nation would make up for the poverty of private persons. As there would be no idle men, as the industry of all would be in constant activity, the amount of production would greatly exceed that of other nations where a large portion of the people are only employed in consumption, and its wealth, as it would not be consumed, would become almost boundless. But such is the fallacy of all human reasoning, that this accumulation, which on the principles of political economy should make a nation great and powerful, would only deprive the people of all comforts without adding to the power of the state. All this excess of industry would be only labour lost. Gold and silver, even more than other objects, as they administer only to the artificial wants of men, have but a conventional value. As they cannot themselves be applied to any useful purpose, their worth depends entirely on the means which people have of indulging in fancies. So long as they are only produced in proportion to the artificial wants of society, their value is estimated by the labour it has cost to procure them. The gold which it has taken ten days' labour to raise will exchange against the cloth which it has occupied the weaver ten days to make. Increase, however, the precious metals beyond what the state of society demands, and they become of no more value than stones. None will give the necessities of life for a superabundance of superfluities. A country thus overloaded with treasure would be in the situation of a besieged town, where the inhabitants may be dying of hunger whilst every bank is overflowing with gold and silver. An enormous hoard in the hour of danger would be found wholly inoperative to defend a country. As soon as it came to be used, it would destroy its own value. As all the surplus industry of the country will have been employed in its acquisition, there will be nothing against which it can exchange. Rub off the high polish which the imagination of avarice gives to the precious metals, and they shew but dross. To hoard them up serves but, like all other accumulation, to display their worthlessness.

Its numbers, not its riches, constitute a nation's strength. Men and the means of feeding them are all that war requires. It is only as an agent in procuring them that money is of any value. If the men and their subsistence do not already exist, no money can create them. If they do exist, a nation, whatever may be the amount of its treasure, can only do what the poorest of its neighbours can and would equally do, it will divert a part of its population from the industry of consumption to the purposes of war. In so doing, however, the people amongst whom industry is conducted with most

skill, will have a decided advantage. As a smaller proportion of the population will be required for production, a greater number can be spared for defence. In modern society, indeed, this advantage is more than compensated by the inequality of fortunes and the increase of fictitious wealth. Its possessors, who exercise a controlling influence over the government, embarrass all its operations by their unwillingness to part with any of their means of luxury. Since the gentry no longer constitute the militia of the country, since their retainers have ceased to form its armies, they insist that soldiers shall be found without lessening the number of servants, that the means of paying them shall not diminish their expense. The nation, therefore, which has least artificial wealth is always that which can send forth the largest hosts. Where there are habitually no idlers, it is easiest to create them. Where the exactions of property are least, industry has most to spare from its daily earnings. It was the destruction of the nobility, of the clergy, of the finances of France, that covered her soil with soldiers. With no treasure, and no credit, she balanced the resources of all Europe; for she could bring into the field all her idle men.

Hoarding has been so little the habit of states, that it is not easy to reason from the past. The few examples that occur certainly do not favour the practice. The princes of antiquity, who laid by treasures, do not seem to have added to their means of defence. Money with them never proved the sinews of war. The gold and silver of its kings only enabled their conquerors to carry the wealth of Asia with more ease to Rome. The Italian Republics of the middle ages indeed waged war solely with money ; their armies were entirely filled with mercenaries ; their citizens fought but with their purses. But the constitution of these states was so peculiar that their example cannot be drawn into a precedent. They were not nations; they were only guilds of traders, with no property but what they derived from their traffic. Possessed of no territory, with them there was no productive industry; theirs was the industry of consumption, which, administering to artificial wants, lives but by the plunder of the world. As their incomes were not derived from the soil they could not be spent in its productions. The hiring of stranger soldiers was the only way in which they could employ the profits they made from foreigners. What they gained as traders they were forced to use as sovereigns. They were but the channels through which the Swiss and the Germans and the Mountaineers of Italy applied their surplus produce to the maintenance of idlers. 'What Florence gained from them by trade she gave back to them for protection. It was riot, however, from accumulation that she drew her means. She acquired no territory ; her profits were never realized in land; her treasury was never filled with gold and silver; her palaces, her pictures, her statues, were riot easily convertible into the food of war, Her growing gains supplied her expenditure. What she got from foreigners with one hand she gave back with the other. It was from

necessity her armies were filled with strangers ; it was only in their persons the poorer debtors could discharge the balance of their trading transactions. It was not that Florence had not citizens, and that her citizens were not able and willing to fight. But the consumption of a country in native produce can never exceed the amount of production. That part of a nation's revenue which is derived from foreigners must, in some way or other, be spent on foreigners. As every thing that is produced forms income to somebody, the income derived from national resources must always be equal in amount to all the national commodities. The income derived from foreign sources can only be met by foreign produce. Such an income is usually dissipated in foreign luxuries; but the sumptuary laws which forbade this kind of expense compelled Florence to dabble in war. As she was not allowed to consume the goods of those with whom she dealt, she was forced to hire their persons.

This state of things was not peculiar to Florence. The trade and migrations of half the people of the world are regulated on the same principle. Ireland sends liner surplus produce to pay the rents of her landlords in England, and her surplus poor follow to consume it. Switzerland hires out her children to the neighbouring nations, and she accumulates her savings in the imaginary wealth of foreign funds in debts which are never to be paid. When Holland was the broker of other nations, when much of her income was derived from the funds of other states, her soldiers and her servants, the ministers of her state, amid her luxury, were nearly all foreigners. The stream of wealth which the tribute of Mexico and Peru poured into the bosom of Spain contributed nothing to feed her native industry. By withdrawing a larger portion of her people from productive industry, it served but to encourage luxury and its never failing companionwretchedness. That part of her income which exceeded her own produce was necessarily spent abroad. Spain in the fulness of her riches was overrun with idlers and beggars. As she drew from foreigners a part of her riches, she unavoidably became dependant on them for a part of her subsistence. Had she never possessed the mines of Potosi she had never wanted the corn of Poland. Since she has lost her transatlantic provinces she has almost ceased to import grain. They who can no longer derive a subsistence from the tribute of America, are forced to gain their livelihood by the exertion of their own industry. With her artificial wealth have disappeared her artificial wants.

These examples may satisfy us that by no ordinary process can accumulation be brought about. It can only happen when the usual march of society is interrupted, and when the government, putting itself in the place of the gentry of a country, draws to itself a greater share of its revenues than are needed for the purposes of government. Violent as such a measure seems to be, its financial consequences would be wholly unimportant to the nation at large it would neither take from nor

add to the wealth of the nation it would but give a different direction to its industry. The useless accumulation which now takes place in the hands of individuals in the shape of buckles and buttons, of pictures and statues, would then take place in the hands of the state in equally useless heaps of sovereigns or Napoleons, which, as soon as they exceeded the wants of society, would, like the buttons and buckles, there were none to wear, be wholly without value.

But the dread of this evil need not haunt our apprehensions. The government of every country is in the hands of the rich, and though power delights in riding a hobby horse, they will hardly indulge in an amusement that will lessen their own importance, and perhaps destroy their existence. They will find no pleasure in hoards which can only be made at their own expense. The fascinations of the Funding System will be more difficult to resist. Their anxiety to throw the burden from their own shoulders will blind them to its consequences, and will lead them to cherish the useless and extravagant expenditure of which it is at the same time the cause and the consequence—an expenditure not less destructive of the existing property of a country, though in its effects it may be perhaps not without advantage to society. But its workings are silent and unperceived. As for every rich man it pulls down it raises up a new one, as it does not destroy property, but only transfer it, its operation is not distinctly felt. Amidst the growing wealth of the prosperous, the poverty that assails individuals is but little heeded.

It is not, however, alone to ignorance of its tendency that the Funding System owes its general adoption. Other causes have contributed their full share. It was the easiest way of throwing the burthens of the country from its property on its industry. Modern politicians indeed contend that taxes on articles of consumption are not taxes on industry that to increase the cost of his bread, of his beer, of his soap, of his candles, is no injury to the labourer; that the increased expense of his subsistence is only paid nominally by himself, but really by his employer ; that as the wages of labour are never more than are absolutely necessary for the subsistence of the labourer, and as they can never be less, if the expense of his living be increased, the amount of his wages must be so likewise. If this atrocious doctrine, which reduces the greater part of the human race to the wretched condition of beasts of burden, whose wants and comforts are to be cared for only so far as is beneficial to their owner, had been generally true, no taxes would ever have been imposed on articles of consumption. If property had felt that the charge fell ultimately on itself, it would never have allowed it to come circuitously, augmented by all the expense of collection, and swelled in amount by all the profits of all the different tradesmen through whose hands it passed; it would have preferred direct taxation as attended with least expense. But it is not true that the wages of

labour are never more than is sufficient to support the labourer. In countries where wages are very low, the labour of the workman is very small. He receives as much in proportion to what he does, as when it is most cleanly paid. Wages are always regulated by the value of the work done in the general market of the world. The buyer does not inquire the cost of the goods, but their worth. A bushel of German wheat is in every part of the world worth as much as a bushel of English wheat. But, if rent and taxes be less in Germany than in England, and the profits of the farmer be much more moderate, if a smaller part of the produce he directed to other purposes, more will remain to the labourer. If he does not gain it in higher wages, he will gain it in diminished labour and diminished expenses. Where the produce of the land sells for little, it costs hut little to live. This equality of earnings is especially noticeable in the wages of artisans. They who have compared the manufactures of England with those of other countries, know that the foreign workman is as dearly paid as the English. If in the course of the year he receives less, it is because his employment, being less constant, he has done less work. Here, however, is a fund for taxation that does not fall on property. Increase the workman's expense of living, and, as he cannot add to the price of his article, he will increase the quantity of his labour. This he will be enabled to do without overloading the market with his peculiar industry; for, as whatever is raised by taxes goes to the maintenance of idle men, every additional tax, whilst it increases the number of consumers, lessens the number of workmen. The causes which compel him to do more work add in exactly the same proportion to the number of his customers. It is evident, however, that this power of increasing his labour is not without bounds. It never can exceed his physical strength. As it is easier to imagine new taxes than to invent new improvements for the abridgment of labour, it is seldom that the exertions of genius can keep pace with the contrivances of the Exchequer. In our own country this fund of reserved industry, which has stood our financiers in such good stead, seems wholly exhausted. In the last hundred years, since the invention of the Funding System, the expense of living to the artisan has more than doubled, whilst the price paid for his labour has undergone no alteration. Where labour is paid by the piece, the rates have not varied; where it is paid by the day, more work is required from the labourer. Our workmen are kept habitually in such a state of exertion, that no pressure can compel them to greater efforts. No saints' days allure them to idleness, no wakes, no holydays, are allowed to break in on their never-ceasing employment. The sun that rises on their toil goes down on their unfinished labours. The unbroken industry of six days afford but the bare means of existence. The artificial price which unjust laws have given to corn have reduced the wages of the labourer to the lowest sum on which he can subsist. The increase of poor-rates which immediately follows even the smallest rise in the cost of provisions, cannot leave a doubt that farther taxes on industry are impracticable ; that it is impossible to extract more from the wretchedness of the people.

The spell of the tax-gatherer has lost its charm. The time is gone by when the rich might be lavish of taxation; when under the hypocritical pretence of caring for the people's morals, they might vote a tax on beer or on spirits without any expense to themselves ; when the burthen of taxation was for the poor, its advantages, all the jobs it caused and justified, were for their representatives. Whatever burthens are now imposed must fall on the property of the country. Nothing can be given to taxes but what is taken from rent. The public mind has accordingly taken a new turn. Men begin to calculate more accurately the effect of the Funding System. Private interest easily gains the attention which was denied to the public good. So long as borrowing only pressed on the poor, so long as its worst consequences were only the reducing to beggary the great body of the people, it was bailed as a measure fraught with public good. But the moment its effects become harmless, the moment the worst crimes it can achieve is the transfer of property from one set of useless men to another equally useless, all its defects and all its vices are immediately discovered. It becomes an object of abhorrence for what was before the subject of praise.

There was a time, when such was the infatuation in men's minds, it might have been necessary to prove that a national debt adds nothing to a nation's wealth. They who made the riches of a people consist in the amount of its unproductive industry, who considered trade and manufactures as sources of wealth, were likely enough to fall into this error; to confound the increase of rich men with the increase of riches. They who had been taught, that the increase of property, which is often but the abuse of society, was its only end, were justified in considering the Funding System as beneficial to a nation, since it added a new class of rich men, without taking away from the means of those who already existed. The misery it inflicted on the great body of the people they did not see, and they did not care for. Lost in abstraction, they could not descend to realities. The wealth of the nation was their object, not the comfort and happiness of the people; and provided the quantity of fustians, and calicoes, and muslins and broad-cloths, was augmented, it mattered not to them by what privations of the people this result was obtained. As long as men shut their eyes to the perishable nature of every object which either nature or art producesas long as they would not see that it is consumption which, by giving them all their value, regulates the amount even of manufactures, they were not likely to discover that the produce of every nation must in all cases be in proportion to the population it is to support; that to force a greater production would only be to throw away labour; that the manner in which a nation's income is distributed, determines indeed the quality, but in no way the quantity, of its produce.

But the delusion is fast wearing away. Light begins to break into the minds of men. The importunate

demands of the tax-gatherer and the clamour of breaking tenants, have waked them from their dreams of ever growing riches, by dinging in their ears, in a tone that admits of no misconception that what is taken for national purposes is so much subtracted from individual income; that the more idle men are retained by the nation, the fewer can be allowed for the splendour of private life. The Funding System is no longer lauded as beneficial to a nation, necessity is urged as an excuse for its creation. Our heavy debt is no longer a source of wealth, it is no longer appealed to as a proof of our riches, it has at last become an unavoidable evil. The land-owners admit, that the national resources are crippled, that a part of the cargo has been thrown overboard, but it was for the good of the remainder; had the vessel not been lightened, she must have gone down.

This position is not more tenable than the other. Inquiry will convince us, that the whole extraordinary expenditure of the war was as little called for by necessity as by any views of advantage that loans did not even relieve the distresses of the moment that all the enormous transfer of property which has taken places did not even shift off the payment of a debt to a more convenient time; that the new proprietors have never paid a shilling of the purchase money ; that all their capital they have received as a pure and unconditional gift.

Whoever on the principles of modern political economy examines the history of every national debt, the circumstances under which it has been created, and the manner in which it has grown, cannot but be forcibly struck with some strange inconsistencies. The conclusions are always at variance with the principles. Nothing ever happens as we are taught to expect it. Peace is supposed to be the time when capital increases with most rapidity; war is always looked on as destructive of its growth. Yet it is always at the breaking out of hostilities, when the hoards of peace are yet entire, when capital is looking in vain for employment, that a government finds the greatest difficulty in making a loan. The more it spends, the more it is supposed to have wasted the national resources, the more easily it borrows. Its credit rises with its extravagance. The means of the nation grow the fastest which are destroyed with most rapidity. What was impossible to the wealth of a people, becomes easy to their poverty. In the last year of the last war, after all the exhaustion of twenty years of boundless extravagance, sixty millions were borrowed with greater ease than six in the first. Whatever the government wanted was always found; the means of the lender grew in exact proportion to the borrower's wants. To unravel this mystery, so puzzling to science, will not be difficult to common sense. If, instead of spinning theories, we attend to facts, we shall see that the expenditure always preceded the loan; that the nation in borrowing only changed the description of debts which had been already contracted; that the sum borrowed did not on an average exceed one

third of what was spent; that whenever, as in the year , it was attempted to exceed this proportion, great distress was immediately felt by the monied menthat when, as in that year, the contractors were called on to advance more than their profits, they were only enabled to do it by persuading the bank to exchange its bullion for their anticipation of future gains, an exchange which caused the failure of that establishment; that the price of every article for the service of the government was greatly enhanced; that enormous fortunes were made by all those who in any way were concerned in supplying its wants. If we weigh all these circumstances carefully, we are irresistibly brought to the conclusion, that the real expenses of the war were, as they must always be, really defrayed by the funds raised from taxes, and that the stock created went only to satisfy the gains of the contractors, and the jobs and peculation which so profusely attended the expense of the war. We shall be forced to conclude, what indeed reasoning would equally lead us to expect that they were only imaginary debts, that were or could be satisfied with an imaginary payment.

It does not require to be proved, that nothing can be consumed but what is already in existence; armies cannot be fed with corn that is yet to be sown, nor can fleets be victualled with provisions that will only exist hereafter. This, which would be really to anticipate future income, is impossible. Here the skill of the financier entirely fails. His spells are all powerful to change the destination of actual things, but those which shall only come into being in future times will not obey his call. But as whatever is produced must already be income to somebody, and as income derives all its value from expenditure, the expenditure of the whole society must ever be equal to its whole income, it must consume all that is produced. To prevent the waste which would otherwise arise from the perishable nature of all commodities, it is the constant business of society, it is the very principle on which it is constructed, to prevent useless production, by converting the industry which is not required for production, into the industry which lives by aiding consumption, to employ in the luxuries of life those who are not needed for its support. If, however, nothing exist in a country but what is required for its regular and ordinary consumption, it is only from this fund that the waste and expenses of a war can be supported. Individual luxury must give way to this luxury of the nation. The consumption of every people is always in proportion to its numbers. Lessen the number of consumers, and less will be required for their consumption. Every man added to the army is one taken from the civil society of the nation. Those who are called to fight the battles of their country only consume what would otherwise have gone to their maintenance in some other situation. They who now are fed by the state are no longer fed by individuals. That portion of the surplus revenue of the nation, which is now demanded for national purposes, as it no longer forms income to individuals, is no longer employed in administering to luxury. As there is less demand for the

industry of consumption, when the means of paying for it are less, there are so many more people left free to follow the trade of soldiers. Thus it is that war makes no waste of a nation's substance, it only gives a new direction to its employment. What the state takes, individuals lose. The loss in the one case being' exactly equal to the gain in the other, those who are no longer able to obtain a livelihood in administering to the luxury of their countrymen, find it again in serving their vengeance. As every expense, whether of a state or of individuals, ultimately resolves itself into the maintenance of men, the same expense will always maintain the same number of men, for the rich only consume more than the poor, by hiring others to assist in their consumption. Soldiers, whose diet is usually spare, cannot consume more than they would have consumed in any other condition; and the diminution of the means of individuals which compels them to take service, as it affords an equal income to the state, offers the means of supporting all those whom it derives from private employment. The growth of luxury, so remarkable in England during the war, does not invalidate this argument. It was confined to the upper classes, to those who were benefited by the blunders of our financiers, and they form but a small part of the nation. The middling and lower classes were robbed of almost every comfort. The labourer was compelled to do more work to obtain a more scanty subsistence. He lost, in reality, one third of his income. What was taken from him formed a fund fully equal to the maintenance of five hundred thousand soldiers, and his increased exertions, by diminishing the number of those who were required for the maintenance of the nation, set free that number to be employed for other purposes.

If the events which have passed in our own country could in any way throw a doubt on these doctrines, the experience of other countries would amply confirm their accuracy. France and the other nations of the Continent were not less deeply engaged in the late war than England; they did not embattle a smaller amount of their population; the battles they fought were not less numerous or less bloody: their exertions out of all proportion greater, were made without the assistance of credit. Relying on their own resources, they raised no loans, they borrowed nothing from posterity; and at the end of the war, their exertions and their sufferings, their losses and their confiscations, had caused no diminution of their means. If when peace restored our intercourse with the Continent, we discovered none of the splendour of fictitious riches, there was none of the misery they cause. Equally ignorant of the extremes of wealth and poverty, the people was every where comfortable and contented. England alone, who had kept all her resources entire, who, carrying on the war by the contributions of future generations, was adding every day to her riches, shewed symptoms of exhaustion. Germany, so often plundered, missed none of her comforts; the loss of her capital had not impaired her industry. France, though subdued, was cheerful and happy. It was only in England

that the cry of misery was heard to drown the acclamations of victory.

To a people who for so long a period have been revelling in the riot and gallantry of expenditure, who like all spendthrifts have accustomed themselves to glory in their extravagance and to consider frugality as the virtue of narrow souls, it may be somewhat mortifying to learn that of the loans which have so often been dinned in our ears as proofs of the exhaustless wealth of Great Britain, not one shilling has ever really been paid by those who claim to be the creditors of the country; that the enormous debt which presses so heavily on our shoulders is not composed of the hard earnings of industry generously subscribing for the defence of its household gods; that it has not grown from the devotion of patriotism, sacrificing every private comfort to the public good; but that it is a bloated and putrid mass of corruption wholly made up of fraud, of peculation, and of jobs. The nation has run the career of every thoughtless spendthrift; she has borrowed her own money at usurious interest; after having paid the full value of every thing she has received, she still finds herself loaded with a heavy debt of extortion ; her tradesmen, like his, have found in their unearned profits, in their fraudulent gains, the means of their usurious loans. They have advanced nothing which they hail not first stolen ; what they have lent was but the upbraiding of their conscience.

The sinking fund, that ingenious delusion which proposes to discharge debts with borrowed money, which increases its loans that it may pay them with more ease, has contributed not a little to the amount of our embarrassments. The intricacy which it introduced into all our financial operations disguised their real bearings even from those who were supposed to have their direction. The unnecessary amount of our loans gave them an air of reality; they were too bulky to seem the creatures of the imagination. It was difficult to persuade men that forty millions were raised, year after year, without something being advanced in payment of it; that all this mighty creation was but enough to satisfy the frauds of contractors and the peculation of jobbers. The sum seemed too vast for all the powers of malversation. Corruption itself would have stood aghast, had it appeared in its naked form, had it shewed itself in all its undisguised deformity. But the mystery of the sinking-fund threw a haze over the whole transaction. Between what was borrowed from necessity, and what was borrowed for amusement, between loans that were to increase the debt, and loans that were to pay it off, there was so much confusion, that the clearest sight could see nothing with distinctness. Interest and compound interest, debt and redemption, danced before men's eyes in such perpetual succession; there was such a phantasmagoria of consols and navy, of debentures and exchequer bills, of capital without interest and interest without capital, that the strongest understanding was bewildered. Men shrunk from the inquiry in despair.

But time, which brings all things to light, has enabled us to discover the true nature of all these fantastical operations, to fathom this sink of iniquity and corruption. Taking for our guide an article in a late Edinburgh Review, which has shewn from authorities which cannot be disputed, that of the money raised by the sale of millions of stock created during the war only millions were of real use to the state, that it was the whole of the expense which was not in fact raised by the taxes, it will not be impossible to shew what was in truth the employment of the whole. Of the millions of stock created there was nominally received about millions; but as millions were for the purposes of the sinking fund, the debt really contracted was millions, for which millions of stock was created. Allowing that of this sum millions were really advanced to the state, though it will appear presently that this has no better claims to be considered as a debt than the remainder, it will be shewn that the rest of this enormous sum, amounting to nearly millions, has been wasted in profits to loan contractors, in the machinery of the sinking fund, in the conversion of exchequer and navy bills, and in the compound interest of money which has never been advanced. Incredible as it may seem, the fact cannot be called In question. We are now burthened with a perpetual payment of twenty millions a year to avoid an annual payment of six millions during the war. Such are the happy effects of our financial wisdom, such the advantage of borrowing of posterity, that though we have already discharged the real debt with interest, the claims of our creditors are not in the least diminished. The present generation will pay what they have borrowed more than twice over, and will leave the debt unimpaired to posterity.

It is not possible to follow in detail all the complex transactions of twenty years of war and extravagance, nor to shew in each particular instance what has been the amount of waste and malversation; but the following statement, without pretending to minute accuracy, which in such cases is only affectation and pedantry, will be sufficient to convince by figures, those on whom reasoning will make no impression, that nothing has been asserted that cannot be proved. The millions which the war added to the national debt is made up of these sums:

The sum of which the state is supposed to have had really the use, being the difference between the expenditure and the amount raised by taxes during the war, . . . , , ,

Compound interest on this sum, years, at ? per cent. per an. being the average rate of interest at which loans were made, . . , ,

Loss by the sinking fund, being the difference between the price at which the stock was created and redeemed , ,

Compound interest as above , ,

Profit of the loan contractors. As it appears that the sinking fund on an average bought stock at ? per cent. higher than the contract price, and as their purchases were constant and regular, this may fairly be assumed as the rate of the contractors' profit. As the stock created amounted to millions, their profit at ? per cent. will have been , ,

Compound interest as above , ,

Loss on funding of navy and exchequer bills, and other similar operations, supposed to amount to , ,

Compound interest as above , ,

Total, . £ , ,

But this is far too favourable a view of our financial operations. It only shews the direct and immediate loss which proceeded from the adoption of the funding system; the differences between the price paid to the state by the contractors for stock, and the price at which they again sold it to those whose profits made cut of supplies to the state required to be realized in some shape or other. In allowing the sum of millions to have been actually advanced to the state, we overlook entirely the indirect but most important consequences of the funding system; the waste and extravagance which the apparent facility of procuring money introduced into every branch of the public service: we suppose that every expense was conducted with all possible economy, that nothing was ever charged to government beyond its real value, that there was no peculation, no jobs, no extravagant profits, no half-pay given to men who had never seen an enemy, no pensions conferred on others who had never done any service. But though a minister who made this assertion might be listened to with attention, and might be cheered by all his dependents, it would gain no credit even within the walls of the House of Com- mons, too many of whose members could in their own persons vouch for its inaccuracy, and it every where would be laughed at. There is not a man whose own observation has not convinced him of its want of truth. Few indeed are they who have not had an opportunity of seeing with what waste and extravagance every branch of the public service was conducted, what prodigality there was in the whole war expenditure. Jobs and peculation were rank in every department, and what corruption deigned to spare folly threw to the dogs. Transports were hired on such terms as to reimburse the owners their purchase money in a single year. The bills of the commissariat in Spain were sold at rates which insured the purchasers an immediate profit of per cent. There was not a man who could in any way hook himself on to the national expenditure, who, in spite of all his vulgar luxury, did not acquire a princely fortune. The display of upstart wealth which assails us on every side, the men of many millions, whose footsteps none can trace in the paths of regular commerce, may assure us that frugality was not the favourite virtue of the late war. The outgoings of the state, during the continuance of hostilities, exceeded one thousand millions exclusive of the interest of the national debt. On this sum millions is little more than per cent. But if ? per cent. was the profit on the loans which were openly contracted, it cannot be doubted that in the furnishing of supplies to government, where there was much less competition and much more mystery, where the secret and ill-understood nature of the profits tempted fewer rivals and admitted more readily of combination,

the gains were out of all proportion greater: and we shall be forced to believe that the millions which we have supposed to have been really advanced to the state, were only a small part of the gains which fraud and cunning made out of their dealings with government.

In this statement nothing has been allowed for the additional expense caused by the depreciation of the currency; an event intimately connected with the funding system, and which is entirely attributable to the scheme of borrowing from posterity. How much this tampering with paper added to our expenses it is difficult to compute with any accuracy; that its effect was enormous cannot be doubted, when it is considered that during the four first years of the war, when we maintained an army on the continent, and when most expensive armaments were fitted out for that most expensive theatre of war the West Indies, the annual expenditure exclusive of the interest of the debt, hardly amounted to millions, in the four last years of the war the same annual expenditure exceeded millions. The difference is too great to be accounted for by any difference in the amount of our exertions. Much of it must have been the immediate effect of the depreciation which enhanced the price of every article of consumption, and which probably added millions to our expenditure. But this was the least evil it brought in its train. Its real mischief was the facility it gave to the career of extravagance., the aid it lent to delusion, by creating a persuasion that the prosperity of the country and its revenue were every day growing; that war was but adding to the wealth of the nation. If the nation had wholly consisted of jobbers and contractors, of placemen and pensioners, the assertion would have been true; but the wealth of these men caused the poverty of all other classes. Their splendour was raised on the misery of the people.

The benefits of the Funding System, the advantages of borrowing from posterity, are now fairly before us. They increased our expense at least fifteen millions annually during the war, and they have added twenty millions a year for ever to our burthens. The millions we have since paid have taken nothing from our debt; they are indeed past and gone, but other millions succeed them in interminable procession to the end of time. For what has all this havoc been made in property, since It strengthened not our hand in war, since it gave us no assistance in the hour of battle? Nothing we have seen was ever lent to the state but the unreasonable profits which had already been made out of it, and which, as they represented no property, could in no other way be realised. As the whole expense of the war was In reality defrayed by the amount of taxes yearly raised, if there had been no jobs, no peculation, no extravagant profits to those who had dealings with government, there could have been no loans, and there would have been no need of them; and it may be added, had there been no loans, there must have been fewer jobs and less peculation. Imaginary claims could

never have been allowed, if they had not been content with an imaginary payment.

If we had indeed borrowed from posterity, if the debt we have acknowledged had been any thing but imaginary, it must have diminished the means of those who had contributed to it. If it had arisen from extraordinary consumption, its effects must have been felt In a lessening of the existing property. The great consumption of an army is in articles of food; if its supply had been borrowed from the stores of accumulation, its effects must have been seen in our flocks and our herds, in our barns and our granaries. Years of peace would have been required to repair the ravages of war. But during this period of waste and extravagance, whose supposed extraordinary consumption has loaded us with so much debt, our means of subsistence were continually increasing; they grew in exact proportion to the growth of our numbers. At the end of the war, they were found to bear as large a proportion to a population of twelve millions as they bore at the beginning to one of eight millions. As the people had increased one half in number, its produce had increased one half in its amount. Since it is consumption which gives value to production, this must ever be the case. Whilst corn is grown and cattle are bred not for amusement, but for profit, the stock of every country will always be regulated by its wants. The complaint of overproduction which issued from every mouth at the return of peace was not the cry of an exhausted and impoverished people. The great body of the nation was indeed suffering, but it was not from want of the means of subsistence, they were abundant; but because the idle classes had grown out of proportion to the Industrious; because the payments to the new creditors of the state, which had hitherto only been made in promises, by new borrowings and new creations of stock, were now to be discharged by giving them a share in the earnings of each man's industry, by transferring to them a large portion of the property of the country. The pressure was great as long as it was attempted to endow the new property at the expense of the already overburdened industry of the country; It ceased as soon as the old gentry, by reducing their rents, had in reality given up one third of their property to form the endowment of their newly-created brethren. The gentry indeed then in their turn felt distress, for the increase in the capital of the nation had brought no addition to its income.

If the wealth of a country be consumed almost in the moment of creation, if destruction always follow close in the footsteps of production, it will naturally be asked how nations ever emerge from that state of penury and destitution which is the lot of every infant community? How plenty succeeds to famine? How comforts and luxury grow where all was squalid poverty? If nothing can be saved, their condition can never alter, their original wretchedness must be without hope and without remedy. Yet the woods and the marshes, the bogs and the glens, among which the few

miserable natives of Britain sought a scanty and precarious subsistence, when the ambition of Caesar first made their existence known to the rest of the world, have long since given way to more cheerful scenes. Cultivation has be stowed a new face on the desert. The richest crops now cover lands whose severest duty was the growth of weeds. The lowing of the ox, the bleating of the sheep, now gladden the plains which then shuddered at the howling of wolves. The lazy river no longer wastes its powers among swamps, but, directed by the hand of industry, its waters become at once the ornament of the country and the instrument of its commerce. The deity of the stream, then weary of beholding only mallards, and pollards, and reeds, and rats, and widgeons, now rejoices to see reflected in his waves the pride of populous cities, with their spires, and their domes, and their towers, and all the glorious handywork of civilization. The lowest peasant, hard as is his condition, probably enjoys more real comforts than ever surrounded the regal pomp of Caradoc or Cassibelaun. There is not a citizen whose humble enjoyments might not excite the envy of their conquerors, the mighty masters of the world. What power has brought about this happy change? Which is the beneficent deity to whom we are indebted for all the comforts with which we are now surrounded? Whose is the temple where we must offer up our thanks and make known our gratitude?

The political economist who has learnt to troll his bead. roll will find no difficulty in answering the question. As Dr. Sangrado, undertook to cure all disorders with water, so with him the word capital is sufficient to account for every thing. If nations grow populous, it is the effect of capital. If they direct their industry to the cultivation of their fields, it is capital lends them hands. If they delight in war, it is capital that marshals and feeds their armies. If they seek their livelihood on the waters, it is capital that provides the means. If they build cities, and encourage manufactures, it is still the effect of capital. Such an answer may be quite satisfactory to science; it is not equally so to common sense. Whence came the capital that creates all these prodigies? Adam left none to his children: though sticking as close to society, though more hurtful in its consequences, it is not like original sin, an inheritance derived from our first forefather. Capital, like all the productions of man, has had a beginning; but how that which is the result of accumulation could act before accumulation took place, could be its cause, is a problem might puzzle even the ingenious author who has taught us how Prince Vortigern's grand-father stripped a painted vest from the body of a naked Pict. To such as him may be left its solution. Genius may triumph where reason cannot hope to succeed.

It may not, however, be amiss, to suggest to the sovereigns of Europe and their ministers, who are all smit with the sacred love of capital, just for the good and advancement of their favourite science, and the elucidation of its most obscure doctrine, to catch a capitalist, Mr. Baring or Mr. Rothschild,

it matters not which, and transport him to some of the thinly-peopled countries of Australasia, with all his bills and his bonds, his coupons and his counters, his gold and his silver. He will there, according to the system of modern political economy, have full employment for his capital. He may reclaim marshes and woods, he may make roads, build bridges, dig canals, and found cities. He may bring the deserts of New Holland into the same flourishing condition that Great Britain has been brought into, we are told, by similar means. So advantageous an employment of his wealth might, one would think, tempt the cupidity of a capitalist, might almost excite his ambition. To be the creator of a nation, and its sovereign, its king, and its proprietor, to owe his exaltation to the gratitude of a people whom he had loaded with wealth and surrounded with comfort, is indeed a glorious prize: it is a condition full of envy. Yet we fear none of these gentlemen will make the voyage so interesting to humanity, without a little gentle compulsion. Practice has a surer tact than theory. The children of Mammon are wiser in their generation than the children of Light. They may encourage ministers, in the absurdities of political economy, but they will not share in its delusions. They know that capital can only exist in a rich country, that it grows not by encouraging industry, but by appropriating to itself its earnings. They may suspect, and not without reason, that in New Holland their capital would soon be reduced to its true value. The natives would wing their arrows with their parchments, and give their sovereigns and their Napoleon, as playthings to their children. In a country where each man's exertions are barely sufficient for his own subsistence, a capitalist would be the most helpless of animals, all his millions would not keep him from starving.

But though capital is ever struggling against the progress of improvement, by turning away to the maintenance of idlers the labours of the industrious, yet the wealth of all countries is continually growing. It would be wilful blindness not to perceive that every part of Europe is fraught with comforts unknown to former times. Accommodations of all kinds are much more abundant; disease and famine are of much less frequent recurrence. Those epidemical maladies which formerly from time to time swept away half the population of a country, are now never heard of. The most inclement seasons produce nothing worse than scarcity, except where artificial regulations heighten it into famine. Nor is this improvement in the condition of the human race peculiar to one quarter of the globe, it is felt, though perhaps in a slighter degree, in every part of the world. Savages do not escape its influence. The alterations in a nation's institutions, though they appear to take place at particular periods, have always been brought about gradually. They have

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been preceded by silent and imperceptible changes in their habits, which force on them new modes of life. In adopting new laws and manners they are led, not by choice, but necessity. The hunter must have made some progress in civilization before he can pass into a shepherd; his comforts must have received still greater additions before he will think of tilling the earth. Towns cannot be built till increased numbers allow of a more economical employment of labour. Even manufactures, the triumph of modern genius, which contribute so much to the civilization of a people, are not the offspring of choice, they owe their origin to necessity: their peculiar character is always determined by the condition of the nation which cultivates them. The savage is clothed with skins; the same arrow that procures him food, provides him with clothing. It is to the care of man that the sheep owes the richness of its fleece; as population grows, sheep increase and wild beasts become more scarce: woollens then offer the materials of garments. Hemp, flax, and cotton, and other vegetable productions, gradually succeed, as the claims of wealth, by reducing the condition of the great body of the people, force them to live more and more on leguminous and farinaceous substances. As the quantity of sheep will always depend on the demand for the butcher, where the people live principally on potatoes, there will not be wool enough for their clothing, and the establishment of the cotton manufacture will indicate, not the wealth, but the poverty of the nation. In every case the change in the condition of a people, its improvement in manufactures, and in all the arts of living, may be distinctly traced to the increase of its numbers. It is the character, not the amount, of improvement that is determined by the manner in which property is distributed. Population does not grow from plenty, but the better employment of labour, which only a numerous people can adopt, generates abundance. Numbers increase in pretty nearly equal proportions in all times and in all countries; but the inhabitants of a thinly-peopled country are always wretched; they have nothing but what is absolutely necessary to existence. If coarse food be abundant, it is only because, neglecting the comforts and luxuries of life, all their industry is employed in procuring the means of subsistence, because all toil to do what, in more civilized countries, is left to the labour of a few. Though civilization is continually robbing the labourer of a greater part of his earnings, though every day the claims of property become more extortionate, yet the improvement in the application of labour always keeps pace with the demands on its earnings. If the people of a populous country consume more than those of a thinly-peopled district, and that they do can hardly be called in question, since the greater waste and extravagance of the rich will always more than compensate any diminution in the comforts of the poor, if any such really take place; it follows as an

incontrovertible proposition that the amount of production in a rich country must be greater in proportion to its numbers than in the poorer. Where all consume more, all must have more. Frugality and abstinence are the favourite virtues of mountaineers, the greater abundance of the plain holds them in less esteem. Ireland may, indeed, seem an exception to this rule, for the people are numerous and they are wretched. Yet their misery can not be ascribed to the want of land, for one half of this beautiful and fertile island is yet a wilderness; it may with more justice be attributed to the badness of their government, which, placing all power in the hands of the landlords, sets no bounds to their extortion. Rents are higher in Ireland than in any part of the world.

Numbers, then, are the real wealth of a nation, improvement always follows their increase. Without detracting from the merit of a Watt or an Arkwright, or even from that of the great Twemlow (for there is as much merit in adaptation as in discovery, it is the greatest evidence of talent to know the signs of the times,) inventions are seldom due to the man who brings them forward; they arise from the spirit of the age. The principle of the steam-engine was known long before the state of our population called it into general use. Had not our men grown faster than our sheep, had there still been wool enough for our clothing, Arkwright's spinning-jennies would never have displayed their graceful movements but for the amusement of the curious. Luxury must have added frills to shirts before Twemlow could think of box-irons. Invention always sleeps where there is no room for its discoveries. In thinly-peopled countries it is almost unknown. Where population is making great advances, and its strides are always largest where it is already most abundant, every day presents new combinations of machinery, calls into action powers that a few years before none would have dared to dream of. Chemistry and mechanics have only been studied with ardour, since society, needing their aid, has made their knowledge a road to fortune. The application of steam is still in its infancy ; its stupendous powers are yet but faintly appreciated. With the experience of the last years before us, who will venture to set limits to the discoveries which may be suggested by our necessities, or to say what new elements may not be subdued and made to minister to the wants of man?

This elasticity of nature, this constant tendency in every people to increase its numbers, and to give a more profitable employment to its industry, this exhaustless capacity of improvement, is the true capital of nations ; thence flows all their wealth. They who look for any other will surely meet with disappointment ; they who would find it in accumulation, they who expect present greatness from past prosperity, are seeking for the living among the dead. This principle of vitality it is that brings states, with renovated vigour, through all the diseases of bad government.

It is this power of expansion which has so often rescued them, and will yet often save them, from the consequences of their rulers' folly. But for it there is not a country of Europe whose property would not long since have changed hands; there would not have been left a gentleman who could trace his ancestry beyond the invention of the Funding System all the lands must have years ago passed into the possession of the government, to be distributed among the creditors of the state.

The population of every nation of Europe has been rapidly growing, and with its numbers have increased the means of subsisting them. As the only object of production is consumption, as it would otherwise be without motive amid without value; to say that the gross produce of a people always increases in proportion to its numbers, is only to say that two people consume twice as much as one. So self-evident a proposition needs no proof: nothing need be said on this subject. But though much has been written with the view, the manner in which the nett produce of a country increases, that which is left after satisfying the labourers' wants remains yet to be explained. It depends on a principle so closely interwoven in the texture of society as to seem almost a part of our nature; the disposition in every community to convert whatever can be spared from the earnings of the industrious to the increase of the idle; to prefer individual luxury to general comfort. Rent then, or the idle man's share of the industrious man's earnings, that part of a nation's produce which is always employed in the maintenance of unproductive industry, increases not simply in proportion to the increase of the gross produce, but in proportion to the increase of that produce multiplied by the increased skill and knowledge with which the industry of a people may be conducted. There is no invention, no improvement in the management of labour, however alien it may appear from agriculture, that does not tend to increase the amount of rent. If it does not increase the labourer's power of producing, it may lessen his expense of living. The machinery which reduces the amount of labour employed in the manufacture of clothing, as it more easily satisfies the wants of the industrious, allows of inure being employed in ministering to the idle. If we suppose a state of society where each man's labour is so ill applied that it will scarcely maintain himself, there can be no idle men and no rents, for they who labour having nothing to spare from their own wants, the idle must starve. So soon as an improvement takes place in the application of industry, so soon as the labour of nine people is equal to the support of ten, one must live in idleness, and rents are created; for if all laboured, as the produce would exceed the means of consumption, the labour employed in its production would be completely thrown away. But this improvement of skill always follows an increase of numbers, it cannot indeed take place without it. Machinery (an seldom be applied with success to abridge the labours of an individual ; more time would be lost in its

construction than could be saved by its application. It is only really useful when it acts on great masses, when a single machine can assist the labours of thousands. It is accordingly in the most populous countries where there are most idle men that it is always most abundant ; it is among the throngs of idleness that its powers are displayed with most effect. It is not called into action by a scarcity of men, but by the facility with which they can be brought to act in masses. It must create idle men in order to find customers for its labours.

In the early stages of society, when men have no artificial assistance to their powers of industry, the proportion of their earnings which can be afforded to rent is exceedingly small; for land, it must be remembered, has no natural value, it owes all its produce to industry. But every increase of skill adds to the proportion which can be reserved for rent. Where the labour of nine is required for the maintenance of ten, only one-tenth of the gross produce can be given to rent. Where one man's labour is sufficient for the maintenance of five, four-fifths will go to rent, or the other charges of the state, which can only be provided for out of the surplus produce of industry. The first proportion seems to have prevailed in England at the time of the Conquest, the last is that which actually takes place. As only one-fifth part of the people are now employed in the cultivation of the land, the rest must in reality live on the produce of their industry. As the population of this country is eight times as great as it was at the period of the Conquest, if this rule be true, it should follow that its rentals should be sixty-four times as great as it then was. It will be well to see how far this reasoning is borne out by experience. At arid about the period of the Conquest, or at least as early as we have any traces of subsidies, the population of England was calculated at , , . It may be laid down almost as a certain rule, that the subsistence of every individual, taking all ranks and classes together, is equivalent to the value of half a bushel of wheat per week. The gross produce of England was then at that period equal to , , of bushels of wheat, worth, at is. d. per bushel of the money of that time, about , , l., and we learn from the amount of a subsidy that the rental of England, including tithes and every description of property, could not then have exceeded , l., or , l. of the present money. If we adopt the same mode of calculation, we shall find the gross produce of the country to be at present equal to , , of bushels, worth, at s. d. per bushel, , , l. and the amount of rent, , . ; tithes, , , ; county rates, , , ; and taxes, including the expense of collecting them, , , ; making a total of , . --Rent then, for under this name we must include whatever goes to the maintenance of idle men, and the support of unproductive industry; of that industry, which, occupied with the embellishment of society, lives

but by the labour of others, has increased more than one-hundred times, whilst population has only increased eight times. But a part of this increase must be rejected; though it may make a figure in statistics, its existence is wholly imaginary. It arises, not from any addition to the quantity produced, but from the artificial price which our laws have imposed on corn. If we value wheat at s. d. per bushel, the average price it bears throughout the continent of Europe, and make some small allowance for the increased share of subsistence which would then fall to the labourer, we shall find the gross produce of the country amounting to , , 1 and the rent to , , l. being sixty-eight times as much as it was in the time of the Conqueror. This is not a nominal improvement in the condition of the landholder, proceeding merely from a difference in the denomination of money, and met by a correspondent increase of expenditure ; it is a real substantial increase mu his means of living. What, in the mean time, has been the condition of the labourer? Whilst his exertions have loaded his landlord with wealth ; they have been almost without benefit to himself: his work is not better paid than it was ; all the discoveries of genius, all the advantages derived from the sub-division of labour, have been not for him but for his master.

This inquiry might be pursued through every period of our history, and everywhere the results would be the same: rent uniformly increasing more rapidly than production; the processes of labour, as they were conducted with more skill, becoming continually more beneficial; everywhere the numbers of those who were employed in the industry of consumption, in the industry connected with and dependant on expense, growing faster than those to whose labours a nation owes its existence. But though the materials of such an inquiry are very scanty, to follow the subject into all its details, important as they are, would extend these pages beyond their proper bounds. It will be sufficient to bring before the reader one more example, drawn from a period of our history when abundance of documents leaves nothing to be supplied by conjecture. At the time the land-tax was first imposed, the population of England was , , . At the rate of a weekly allowance of half a bushel of wheat per head, the gross produce of the country must have been equal to millions of bushels of wheat, worth at four shillings per bushel , , l. As the expense of cultivation was then one-third of the produce, there remained , , l. for the nett produce, or the idle man's share. Rent accordingly amounted to , ,
1.Tithes to , , l.Taxes, including the expense of collecting them, to , ,
1.County rates aud other local charges probably absorbed the remainder. Even in the short period that has since elapsed, the share of property in the gross produce of the country has advanced from two-thirds to four-fifths, whilst that of industry has sunk from one-third to one-fifth so true it is that society twos every improvement but to the increase of idleness.

Much has been said of late years how population increases in a geometrical, whilst subsistence increases in an arithmetical, ratio. It might be said, with more truth, that subsistence increases in a geometrical, whilst the labour employed in its production only increases in an arithmetical, ratio. At the period of the Conquest more than three hundred thousand men were employed to raise food for less than two millions of people. At present more than twelve millions are fed by the labours of five hundred thousand. Twice the quantity of labour produces eight times the quantity of food. But such coincidences are a very unsure re ground-work fur reasoning. They render it more fantastical than solid. The passions of men do not allow them to act with so much regularity as to enable us to reduce the affairs of the world to mere mathematical abstractions. The plans of Providence, though ever tending to their completion, do not always move on a straight line. Sometimes they seem to yield to the right, sometimes to bend to the left, as their progress is opposed by the prejudices of men, as they have to encounter their passions and their imagined interest. The wisdom that never errs is content to act rather by insinuation than by force. He to whom all futurity is ever present ; he to whom eternity is but as a moment, is never pressed for time he can wait his occasions. It has often been noticed, as a proof of the exhaustless variety of nature's works, that no two leaves of a tree are exactly alike. This exuberance of fancy is not confined to the material world, it does not display itself only in inanimate objects. The moral world is not less chequered, nor less curiously fashioned; it exhibits as great a variety of forms and colours as the natural. Men and their systems offer endless varieties they' shew themselves, under every' possible anomaly of figure the tenderest plants are not more liable to be changed by disease and imperfect modes of cultivation they do not more feel the effects of soil and culture. The observer of human nature does not less than the botanist find perpetually new subjects of reflection he is not less than him puzzled in his classification of the specimens which are offered to his notice. Though every people of the earth is continually tending to improvmot though there is probably not one that may not look with disdain on the condition of its forefathers, yet the advance of different nations is very unequal they get forward with very different steps, and seemingly by very different tracks. What to one seems the height of wisdom, to another appears the extreme of folly. One attributes its prosperity to measures which another would consider as the sure forerunners of ruin. It is this plasticity of man's nature, this capacity of taking every form, and prospering equally under all, that render so hazardous the generalizations of political economy. Men's experience is so limited, they are so little acquainted with the inward workings of their neighbour's system, that their deductions are too often unfounded; the facts they collect, being ill understood, only tend to mislead. The great law of existence is indeed invariable ; the rule by which the world is governed is always the same; general principles can

never err. It is their application to individual cases that puzzles our sagacity. Particular combinations of the elements ascending through the trunk of a tree under time name of sap, will we know at the proper season burst forth in the shape of leaves ; but what it is that gives to the leaf of the oak its indented form, why that of the beech is round and glossy, no human sagacity can discover. In one of the commonest operations of nature, which is every day being repeated before our eyes, science is wholly at fault. Its political lucubrations are not more successful. Men are not less puzzled when they find that the same schemes of government applied to different countries produce very different consequences, whilst the most dissimilar systems of rule often end in the same results. When they come to apply their general rules some seemingly trifling circumstance escapes them, and their attempts prove no less unfortunate than his who obtained of Jupiter to regulate the seasons on his farm. The rain which did good to his turnips spoilt his barley. It is the same in the affairs of men ; there are always so many contending principles in action striving and jostling for the mastery; individual advantage is always so labouring to modify public good, that what is beneficial to one cannot but be hurtful to others. The world is governed by a system of compensations. There is nothing like positive good. The happiness of men under all their different forms of government probably varies but little in amount. The wisest plans are never without inconvenience; no scheme of government is wholly without its advantages. The regimen that cures one disease often sows the seeds of others; the laws which correct one abuse often generate others equally mischievous. Nations are indeed always improving their condition, they are ever tending towards perfection; but their best directed efforts may not hope to attain it. This consummation of all things is the end of their career, the final term of their existence. When the procession arrives at the temple of the gods, the victim without spot is offered on their altars.

The Funding System can claim no exemption from this general law ; it partakes of the mixed character of all earthly things. All its consequences are not evil. Results little anticipated by its inventors, and less dreamt of by those who have given it so large a sway in the affairs of men, have more than redeemed the mischief it has inflicted on society. Nothing can at first sight be more abominably fraught with ruin, to a nation than the system of funding. Nothing can abstractedly be more foolish than to create a debt for which no value has ever been given; to raise up from the lowest and most worthless of the people a new set of patricians ; to rob of a large portion of their property the ancient gentry of the land, to whose ancestors the nation owes its renown in arts and arms, and to transfer it to these new fangled hidalgos as a reward for their skill in the arts of fraud and peculation. Such conduct is surely foolish enough ; yet repugnant as it is to all wise and moral feeling it is not without its advantages; perhaps on the whole the good predominates. If it encourage

fraud and meanness ; if it clothe quackery and pretension in the garb of wisdom; if it turn a whole people into a nation of jobbers; if it substitute usury for real trade; if it break down all the prejudices of rank and birth to render money the only distinction among men; if it make kings to totter on their thrones, by teaching their Subjects to calculate what they cost and what they are worth, it checks violence and eradicates the ruder vices; it gives power to the law and security to the state, by breaking down the too great masses of property, which when too large to be spent with wisdom, often engage their owners In schemes of rash and turbulent ambition; It strengthens morals by giving a broader basis to public opinion; It destroys the perpetuity of property, which by withholding its reward from genius lays heavy on the spirit of improvement. It is by a facility in the acquisition of wealth invention is fostered when men cannot better their own condition they will not exert themselves to improve that of others.

In the early stages of society, when population is scanty, and each man's labour hardy sufficient for his own maintenance, as the amount of property is very small it is necessarily confined to few hands. Under the reign of our Norman kings there cannot have been in England more than ten thousand owners of land. The whole rental of the kingdom divided among this number will assign to each individual an income of l. per annum, equal in value to about l. at the present time. This income is but small, for the landholders were then the gentry of the country; they had no other means of livelihood than their lands. Land was not then held as now, as a mere appendage to trades and professions, as an object of amusement and vanity to those who have other ways of getting money. Indeed, when we reflect on the immense tracts of country then held by some of the powerful barons, when we calculate how little the enormity of their possessions left to be owned by inferior proprietors, this average appears small; and in computing the landholders at ten thousand, we probably over-rate their number. To this number, however, the present rental of Great Britain would give an average income of more than l. per annum. Such fortunes have in them nothing alarming to the state; but it is quite otherwise when we turn from the whole to examine its component parts. Property never has been and never will be divided equally among its owners. It is when we contemplate individual incomes that the evil shews itself in the strongest colours. It is when we think what might have been the wealth now united in one hand, what the power that must have accompanied its possession, that the mind startles with affright. Thomas, from the extent of his domains called the great Earl of Lancaster, is said to have had an income of , l. per annum, equivalent to more than , l. of our present money. Had the same possessions remained undivided, and had no taxes been imposed to diminish rents, his descendants would now be in the enjoyment, (if it be possible for an individual to enjoy such a fortune,) of a

rental of ten millions sterling. This is, indeed, an extraordinary instance, there is probably no other example of a subject in this country seized of such extensive domains. But history tells of many of the ancient nobility, who like the Nevilles and the Percys, bad. from one fourth to one half of this amount, and whose descendants, but for the operation of taxes, and the sales, to which the burthen of wars have so frequently compelled the nobility, might now have had revenues of from two to three millions a year. Indeed few very ancient families are in possession of more than a tenth of what once was owned by their ancestors. And it is well that it is so. No state it is evident could be safe where property was so unequally divided. Such incomes, too great for wisdom to spend, too great for liberality to dispense, too great for folly to waste, could only find employment in mischief. Their owners could be but a curse to their country. The days of Roman wealth and Roman profligacy might be again revived, and a venal senate might, and in all probability would, be found to dispose of the throne to the best bidder, and to sell the kingdom to the owner of a province. To break down such enormous masse, of property, to restrain their owners within harmless dimensions, individual folly and extravagance are wholly impotent; they will only yield to national prodigality or to national animosities, to a bill of subsidy or a bill of attainder, to the tax-gatherer or the headsman. Nor must we imagine that these examples of immoderate wealth are confined to ancient times, it is not necessary to go back to the days of the Phantagenets to convince us with what rapidity property increases. It is in our days that it has made the most gigantic strides. The estates which the bounty of his sovereigns lavished on the princely Buckingham brought him an income of , 1. The same lands after an Interval of less than two centuries pay to their owners in rent, and to the government in taxes, little less than , 1. Nay, there are among our present nobility more than one, who if the country were freed from taxes, would riot In an income of nearly half a million.

What has happened before we may be sure will again happen. The wisest of men has told us there is nothing new under the sun. The events of one age only differ in colouring from those of another. History is but a repetition of the same follies, of the same pretensions and the same disasters. Nothing is changed but the names. The evils from which accident, not wisdom, has saved us may yet befall our children. The tide of population sets in strong on our shores; and the spirit of improvement walks erect on its waters, its influence is felt in every bay and creek of society. Not a clay but may boast of some discovery for the abridgment of labour, and the temper of the times is bent to turn all to the lucre of landlords. Rents are growing with a rapidity never before witnessed. Numbers increase so rapidly, improvements in the management of Industry succeed each other so quickly, and both contribute so equally to the Increase of rent, that it swells with a promptitude

almost incredible. It jumps at once from infancy to manhood. Lands that yesterday were not worth cultivation, to-day render their owners an ample income. Every renewal of a lease brings with it an increase of payments. Like the giant, whom some necromancer in the Arabian Nights had confined in a chest, rent scarcely breaks from its bonds but it rises to ten times its former size. This is, indeed, an evil that may excite some alarm. If population continue to increase at the rate at which it has increased during the last hundred years; if the skill of our handicraftsmen shall produce as many useful inventions as it has hitherto done, if nothing shall be added to or taken from the national debt, if the government of the country shall be content with its present fund of patronage, If the gentry of the hand will rather receive their own directly from their tenants than circuitously from the hand of the minister; another century will certainly see every farm In the kingdom returning to its owner five times as much as it now pays; and there will again start up among us fortunes too vast for the enjoyment of their owners and the safety of the government.

What then are the evils of the funding system, which can be set in opposition to the good it does in breaking down the great masses of property, and giving an excitement to all the active spirits of a nation, by holding out to them a prospect of sharing in the wealth and dignities which in countries where property is never put in circulation, they may contemplate indeed with awe and reverence, but never with hope; Like all other things, it is mischievous in its excess. France was drawn into a revolution by the impatience of her gentry to submit to taxes when, exhausted by former prodigality, they could no lunger sup ply funds for new jobs. Holland perished as a nation when her taxes, absorbing all the surplus produce of the country, had virtually transferred all its lands to men who felt no interest in the soil. But, used with moderation, the funding system seems a necessary evil, a corrective for greater ills in countries where the law of primogeniture is established, and entails are permitted. It mitigates the narcotic effects of such drowsy institutions; it has perhaps saved England from the lethargy into which Spain has fallen. The fetters on property are as strict in Scotland as in any country in the world, and till the creation of the national debt, her people, now the most enterprising in Europe, were sunk deep in sloth, and pride, an(l poverty. This change has indeed been ascribed to the fortunes brought from India into Scotland, and the addition they made to the capital of the country ; but the capital which Mexico and Peru unceasingly poured into Spain, only increased her poverty, and sunk her deeper in apathy. It will hardly be thought an objection in a country such as England, where the vicissitudes of commerce have accustomed us to revolutions in property, that the old gentry are degraded by the contamination of these money-lenders, whom lucky hits have raised from the slime and filth of Duke's place and the Stock Exchange, to install them in baronial halls, to endow them with the broad acres of ancient families. This is but a passing

evil, for which time will easily find a remedy. In a few generations, when its mellowing influence shall have softened the hard and metallic stream which now flows in their veins, the descendants of the Ricardos and the Rothschilds will make as good gentlemen, will shew themselves as perfect in all the lineaments of high birth as the Darcys or the D'Aeths. The origin of almost all great houses is lost in obscurity they do not all begin with heroes. If the mist were dissipated which shrouds their first steps in darkness, It would be seen that most have owed their beginning to painful industry, to lucky chances, or to daring villany. Their blood has only become pure when they have become great. Shields, and crests, and pedigrees, are never refused to those who have houses, and manors, and parks. The science of blazonry has in no way degenerated from its ancient virtue. It may still, as formerly, boast to be the school of courtesy; modern heralds are not a whit behind their predecessors in civility and good breeding. Even the monsters they keep in their menagerie, softening down their rough natures, have caught the spirit of their calling their lions and their panthers, their griffins and their tigers, are always ready to come forth and assume every shape; gardant, passant, or couchant, at the bidding of those who hold in their hand the golden talisman of the prophet. The Garter and Clarencleux bear in mind that Adam `vas the first gentleman, and never refuse coat armour to those of his descendants who bear themselves rampant in a field or.

Whatever opinions may be entertained of the funding system, however much men may doubt whether its good or evil weighs heaviest in the scale, hut one judgment can be formed of sinking funds; they are unqualified evils, they have no virtues to redeem their vices. With many it may seem a sufficient objection to them that they are working a change in all the relations of property. But this is the least of their wrongs. Change is not necessarily an evil, it is inseparable from our condition ; it is the great law of nature, from whose observance we cannot escape. All the works of creation are continually assuming new forms: so rapid are their shiftings, that the eye is scarcely fixed in their contemplation when already they appear other than they were. Whatever exists is always hastening to its end, that by its destruction it may give birth to new beings. Folly and presumption can alone claim for the institutions of man a stability denied to the works of his Creator. The puny lord of an hour may toil and fret, and, forgetting the short span of his existence, may form schemes of future greatness, but he may be assured that the seeds of decay are always sowed In the bosom of improvement, that whilst he fondly believes he is building for eternity, Time stands by to strike with his withering dart. the noblest monuments of human genius, ere yet they have risen to completion. Yet, though yielding to his destiny, man may willingly submit to the mild operation of change, he may feel appalled at the stern aspect of revolution. The prodigality of the late war has worked an almost entire alteration in the property of the country. The havoc it has made could

hardly have been more extensive if revolution, in her frantic gambols, had struck at kings, and lords, and bishops, and all the robed and titled vanities of the world. New men have intruded into seats which a thousand years of possession had sanctified to their owners. The painted walls have spoken in vainthe threatening aspect of the warrior, the mild supplications of the venerable churchman have been no protection to their descendants; the widow has been driven from her home, the orphan, fondly lingering near the battlements which once marked the greatness of his house, in vain reclaims the inheritance of his fathers. One-third of the property of the country has been handed over to Jews and usurers, whilst another third has only escaped from their fangs by the aid of a law, which, artificially raising the price of bread, has carried misery and famine into every cottage in the kingdom. But these sufferings have been endured ; nothing can now prevent them. The tempest has passed over ; the lightened atmosphere is again gladdening all nature with the feeling of calm, the trees of the forest are putting forth new shoots, and the weaker plants, which had been struck down by the pelting of the storm, are again raising their heads, and sucking in the fragrant breath of morn. The industry of the country and its increasing population are fast rising superior to the folly of its rulers. Its growing prosperity has proved too strong for their deeds of ruin. Its strength is daily increasing, and the burthen which not long since seemed intolerable to all, will in a few years be scarcely heeded. The mischiefs of the funding system will be forgotten, the traces of its violence will be obliterated, and men will only remember that it has created new proprietors, somewhat too rapidly indeed, in proportion to the increasing property of the kingdom ; that it has prevented one of the greatest evils which can befall a country, the concentration of its revenues in too few hands.

Is this a condition so full of fear that we should look at it with dread? Is this a moment when the changes which time necessarily brings in his train should be hurried on by the foolish impatience of men? To pay off the national debt is not to place things where they were, it is not to recall those associations which antiquity had rendered venerable, it is not to restore the wanderer to his home; it is to bring about a revolution in property as complete as that we have undergone, without any of its alleviating circumstances; it is to heap up again, but in new hands, whose rapacious feelings have not yet been blunted by enjoyment, those overgrown masses of property, which a regard for the safety of the state should induce us to break down It is to forget that protection is the first duty of a government to its subjects, to sacrifice the weak to the strong, to offer up the widow and the fatherless to the avarice of the rich. It must not be imagined, that in paying off the national debt we shall reduce the wealth of those who were made rich by its creation; that the loss will fall on those who have enjoyed the gain. To the dealers in property. to the men who are used to derive advantage

from every fluctuation in a nation's counsel., the new change will not bring less profit than the old. Guilt is somewhat suspicious; the thief is too cunning to be caught with snares; whilst the thing Is yet the main or unconverted overt, he dreads a claim of restitution. He hastens to the first market-overt, to exchange his ill-gotten pelf for the more substantial possession of land, and when the hue and cry is raised, he is the first to join in the pursuit, the loudest in his exclamations against the rogues who have robbed him of his rent, and rendered valueless his acres. Having defrauded the old proprietor of his estate, he is now ready to cheat him of its price. The funded property of the country is no longer the portion of speculators; it has become mixed with all the domestic transactions of the nation; it is the subject matter of settlements and trusts, it is the support of the widow and the hope of the fatherless; It is the retreat of hard-earned industry, the refuge of fallen greatness. If ever fund was sacred, surely this is. To destroy it could only enter Into the bead of a cold-blooded and wrong-headed political economist, who, shut up In his closet, lost in abstraction, and bewildered in the confusion of his own ideas, has cast away all sympathy with his fellow-creatures, and with the frenzied seal of a madman is ever eager to pursue his favourite scheme, reckless of the havoc he is dealing around him, and seeing no way to possible good but through certain evil. The statesman who could adopt such a project would he wholly unfit for his station. True wisdom cannot be separated from humanity. None but a distempered imagination will conceive that the ruin of a part of Its members can contribute to the happiness of a people.

To pay off a debt which a nation has once contracted is not less wicked than to cancel it. The two operations differ but in name: they equally consign to beggary all those who have confided in the good faith of the government. The repayment of such a debt can never be otherwise than imaginary; as nothing was received by the state when it was crested, so nothing will be given when it is annihilated. The obligations of the state have a value, because their holders have a rent-charge on the industry of the country, they share in its earnings. Relieve industry from this charge, and the national debt will have but an imaginary existence. The millions in the books of the Bank, as they will represent nothing, will from unbounded wealth dwindle into waste paper. But the payment of the national debt implies the cancelling of the interest. This rent-charge on industry will have passed into other hands. It may have gone to increase the comforts of the Industrious, but it is more probable that It will have been seized on to swell the exactions of the landlord. The wealth of these new proprietors cannot exist but by destroying that of its old proprietors, the creditors of the country. If an equivalent be given, them the debt will not have ceased to exist; its name only will have been changed: it will still be a rent-charge on the industry of the country. As the earnings of industry constitute the matter of property, there can be no property producing Income which is not a rent-

charge on industry. It is however not easy to see what equivalent can be given them. The only payment of their debt which would not be a mockery of their claims, would be to distribute among them a portion of the land. If a part of the Industry of time country be diverted from the purposes of consumption to the acquisition of gold and silver, and these hoards be applied to the payment of the debt, the creditors will, in fact, receive nothing. They will have exchanged their claim on living industry for one on an Industry that no longer exists, their share in present and future things for a share in past. As the gold and silver thus accumulated will be beyond the wants of society, it will be entirely without value; instead of being a treasure, it will only be an incumbrance. We shall give to our creditors the representative of wealth whilst we keep to ourselves its reality,

But though the injustice of such a scheme, and its impracticability are sufficiently apparent, when viewed altogether, when all its consequences are at once set before our eyes, yet men will delude themselves into the belief that the result will be different, if brought about by degrees, they persuade themselves that all the parts will produce something different from the whole. It is this fallacy which constitutes the delusion of sinking funds. As they are supposed to act gradually, it is imagined they may do so without changing any of the existing relations of society. But if they do not, they do nothing. Their mischief must be as extensive as their power. A sinking fund can only be created by subtracting a part of the produce of the country from its present owners to bestow it on others. As production has no value but what it derives from consumption, as income exists but for expenditure, the whole consumption of a country must ever be equal to all its produce; it never can be more, and it never can be less. The consumption of all the produce of a country requires the expenditure of its whole revenue; and the employment of its revenue can only happen by the consumption of all its produce. Consumption and production are equal powers, which are continually neutralizing each other.

If a nation do not adopt the useless plan of accumulating gold and silver, a sinking fund can only act by giving to the creditors of the state, instead of a perpetual rent-charge on the industry of the country, something which has no value but for immediate consumption, something which at the end of the year will already have ceased to exist. It compels the stockholder to be a spendthrift, unless he can find some-land owner to ruin himself in his stead. If the stockholder, or somebody for him, do not in addition to his ordinary income spend the whole amount of the sinking fund, there must be a part of the revenue of the country which will not be spent, and of course there will be a part of the produce which will want a consumer. Any other supposition must be a contradiction in terms, for it would imply that the income of a country can exceed its whole produce; that all the

produce from whence the income is derived can be consumed whilst a part of the income is laid by; that revenue can exist independent of the matter which constitutes its being; that there can be an accident without a subject. It would suppose that there is income which arises out of nothing, whilst there is produce which affords income to nobody.

These conclusions do not rest solely on theory: though it is not much in the habits of governments to afford examples of economy, yet reasoning here may call in the aid of experience: all its suppositions have been realized. Shortly after the last peace the government endeavoured to raise the public revenue beyond the expenses of the state, and all the consequences here pointed out immediately ensued. The distress which has been ascribed to a transition from a state of war to that of peace was the effect of this blunder in finance. The people seemed to be starving in the midst of plenty. One half of the nation was groaning under the load of superabundance, whilst the other half was suffering all the misery of famine. All the bonds of society were broken up; all men's opinions were turned adrift. The wildest paradoxes gained belief; men almost persuaded themselves that plenty could be the cause of evil, that to abundance they owed all their wretchedness. The farmer, indeed, could not sell his corn, for there was none to buy it. The consumer could not purchase; for what should have constituted his income was stopped in its passage through the exchequer. As there was a part of the income of the country which formed revenue to nobody, there was a part of its produce which could find no consumer. The only year in which this country ever saw any considerable reduction of the national debt was a year of unexampled and unaccountable distress. The attempt to sever revenue from consumption ended in universal wretchedness. Ireland has since repeated the dreadful lesson for the instruction of statesmen. That ill-fated country, where property Is every thing and men nothing, witnessed the most portentous phenomenon that ever brought shame on afflicted humanity. She saw her people dying of hunger without any rise in the price of corn. 'The starving natives had no means of purchasing it; for, as the landlord's interests were first to be cared for, he took the whole of the scanty crop, all the people's means of subsistence, and sent it to England to be sold in payment of rent. These things have happened in a Christian country. They have called forth no remonstrances from a well-paid clergy. Are such the precepts of the gospel? A consideration of these circumstances may account to the late Chancellor of the Exchequer for the failure of his attempt to reduce the national debt; an event which must so often have puzzled his philosophy. He exhausted all the resources of stock-Jobbing. Brokers looked with wonder and envy at the variety of his conceptions, and the subtlety of his stratagems. His tactics seemed inexhaustible. He attacked the debt on every side and in every shape; he made his approaches by every possible avenue: he manoeuvred in every way to get round it: he coaxed and

he threatened, he caressed and he cajoled, he tried to persuade and he strove to intimidate. But all his contrivances and all his bandishments were thrown away: the debt was obstinate, anti would not yield; and eight years of peace and superabundant revenue brought no diminution of its amount. If his successor has been more fortunate, if he can really shew debt paid off, line owes his success to the invention of the dead weight, which allows him to create with one hand as much debt as he destroys with the other. The financial relations of society thus remain unaltered: every thing goes on as usual, except that a part of the nation's income is wasted in keeping up the clumsy and antagonistic machinery of these contending principles. A national debt may, indeed, be reduced, if not In its capital, at least In Its interest; If not in name It may yield in reality. As there is no natural proportion between capital and Interest, as money has no value but what it derives from the will of society, Its relations must always give way to the expression of that will. As the seller always receives as much money as the buyer pays, the plenty or scarcity of money must he merely matter of opinion, and the rate of interest must depend on the will of speculators. As they live by change, they dread nothing so much as stability. It is their interest, when no loans are making, that the value of stock should be continually rising: It is the only game they can play with sureness against the other classes of society. It is, therefore, always easy for the minister who holds the law in his hand, and who has so many ways of influencing the opinion of monied men, to make the rate of interest what he will. He has only to practise some of thorn tricking contrivances which the underlings of finance mistake for the pride of political wisdom: but the policy of such conduct is as questionable as its justice. To reduce the Interest of the debt is not lees a transfer of property than to destroy it. Disguise it under what mama you will, to reduce their interest, as it must always be done against their will, Is not less a robbery on the widow and the orphan than to earned their claim; it differs but in measure. It is to take from them all that renders their property valuable. This preserving the name and destroying the reality, this keeping entire the capital and lowering the interest, savours a good deal too much of the morality of Figaro, who tells his creditor that he will never think of denying his debt, provided he is never called on to pay it; it is unworthy of a nation. As it tends to bring property Into fewer hands, it is contrary to its interests.

Since a sinking fund cannot lessen consumption, without diminishing production, it cannot restore the exhausted vigour of a nation; that must be the work of time. Its merits, therefore, may be summed up in a few words: it destroys present enjoyment that it may create future misery; it makes one part of the nation unhappy now, that It may make another wretched hereafter.

They are melancholy reflections, and humbling to the pride of human nature, that rise In the mind

when it turns back to contemplate the history of the last thirty years. The passages of that eventful period display in the liveliest colours the weakness of man and the nullity of his wisdom. For twenty years the rulers of this country bent themselves with unwearied assiduity to spread the flames of war from one end of the world to the other. The globe was shaken to its centre; the existence of all created things seemed at stake; not a nation that they did not subsidize or attack, not a people whom they did not strive to entice or to force into the vortex of their mad ambition. Europe was torn by contention; the strength of Asia was poured out on Africa; whilst the sable sons of the Niger were embattled to keep down the rising of America. Every sea was tinged with the blood of Englishmen; not a land but. their bones are whitening on its plains. And what has been the issue of all these machinations and contrivances, of all this havoc and bloodshed, of this taxation and squandering, of this waste of treasure and of life? An age of dissensions and animosities, of heart-rendings and blood-sheddings, has left the world pretty much where it found it. It has achieved no higher adventure than the turning a few Jews Into gentlemen, and a few blockheads into political economists.

There maybe countries where the condition of the people is so easy, where the exactions of property are so moderate, that taxes may be required to subdue the exuberance of the soil, and to produce a tilth fit for the culture of society. But surely England is not among them: it cannot be necessary that her ministers and her parliament should amuse themselves with the sorry farce of a sinking-fund, which, if its produce be not wholly wasted, can only transfer property from one class of persons to another, in order to quicken the faculties and to call out the energies of Englishmen. What may be sport to their rulers is suffering to the people. Kept for ever on the rack of exertion they know no repose; the urgency of their present wants leaves them no time to think of the future. Toiling unceasingly in the tread-mill of life, with all they can grasp for ever slipping from their hold, if fainting under their labour, they make one false step, they fall never to rise again. The ministers of the law, like the devils in Dante's Inferno, stand by to catch the unfortunate wretches, whom weakness has driven to the shore, and to plunge them in a fire ten times hotter than that they have left. They who have never turned their mind to the subject, and it is one from which it shrinks with alarm, can little imagine how completely the wants of the treasury have debauched the law, and blotted out from the minds, not of the people only, but of the judges, the broad and eternal distinctions of justice and morality. It isa strange perversion of intellect, an utter abandonment of principle that can look on and punish, as atrocious crimes, mere offences against the revenue. It is to cast the sword of the law into the scale of justice. The law thus administered, becomes a snare for the people, a temptation to wickedness. There is hardly a man, who answers with his life for his

transgressions, that might not say, " But for the law, I had not known sin. The making forbidden offences more criminal than those which nature abhors, has been my ruin. If the law had not visited with undue severity, the act. harmless in itself, of having in my possession a cask of spirits or a pound of tea, I had never fled my home, and become an outlaw and a murderer." And these things are to be endured for the sake of a useless sinking fund. The people are to be starved, and their morals corrupted, that the minister may tell parliament that the finances of the country are flourishing. The repeal of the five millions of taxes, which are now consecrated to the upholding of the sinking-fund, would, by their abolition, so much increase the produce of other branches of the revenue, as to admit of lowering all the duties on consumption. Smuggling would then no more be heard of, and with their occasion, might be abrogated the odious and bloody laws which now fence round the collection of the revenue. It is a dreadful thing that in a Christian country, and one that is ever ready to vaunt its religion, the interests of morality should be sacrificed to trifling and mistaken considerations of revenue. The repeal of one tax would, in its consequence, do more good to the morals of the people than the establishment of a hundred Bible Societies, or the building of five hundred new churches. If idleness be the parent of vice, among the rich, it is misery which generates it among the poor. Honesty has little hold on men to whom it cannot procure the means of living. They have much to answer for, who by excess of taxation break down the spirit of a nation, and corrupt its morals. The gold which is wrung from the wretchedness of a people, is stained with blood, and robbery, and murder, and all the crimes its exaction drives men to commit.

But there are evils still worse than taxation, and England is doomed to know them. It is hardly possible to conceive a measure so fraught with mischief to a nation, so full of hatred and discord, as a law which shall persuade men that their Interest consists in starving their fellow-creatures, which makes them watch with hope and pleasure for the moment when they may deliver them over to the sufferings of famine. When Satan looked over the earth, and saw how good it was, his cheek, we are told, turned pale with envy at the happiness of man. Had he foreseen the Invention of corn-bills, in spite of the malice of his nature, his envy must have given way to pity; had he dreamt of this more insidious engine of murder, he had spared Cain the slaughter of his brother. This contrivance, too atrocious for the Devil, has been left for the wickedness of man to conceive; and England boasts the invention. There is no hope for her people; their wretchedness must ever arm them with hatred against their rulers as long as this ill-advised law is allowed to disgrace the statute book. It is as impolitic as it is cruel. It has reduced the people to the level of their cattle who drag the plough without any benefit to themselves. In shewing to them that no exertions of their own can better their condition, it teaches them to be idle. They have no motive to be industrious who

know that all their earnings will go into the pocket of their masters. They will have no repugnance to derive their maintenance at all times, from the parish, who know that the slightest failure of the crop will compel them to submit to this disgrace. The idle and dissolute are put on the same footing with the industrious; what is necessary to all, cannot be disreputable to any. If the members of the House of Commons, instead of plotting how they may relieve their estates from the burthen of the poor-rates, would look into the cause of their increase, they would find it in their own avarice. If they will have high rents, they must bear with their consequence. Heavy taxes on consumption have raised the price of subsistence, without raising the wages of labour. Having reduced the labourer's earnings to the lowest sum on which he can subsist, when in health and employ, his maintenance necessarily falls on his master, when any of the accidents to which humanity is subject, render him unable to provide for himself. The labourer, who can lay by nothing from his own earnings, is as much a slave as if bought with his master's money, and will not escape the vices of his condition. They who will enjoy the luxury of having slaves, must bear with the inconvenience of the practice. The poor, in questions of moral and political economy, generally reason better than the rich; for their interest never misleads them. They who have nothing, can find no good in wrong-doing. It is to property alone that systematic Injustice can be profitable. The poor man is not so little observant of what is passing in the world, as not to know that the seasons are changeable; he is not so little versed in the history of past events as not to know, that from time to time, scarcity will scourge the most favored lands: he knows that it lathe mean employed by Providence to keep up a friendly communication among nations to bind them together by an interchange of wants and superfluities. What motive can he have for exertion when he feels it will be useless to him? When the corn-bill, with a malignant spirit worthy of the author of all evil, aggravating the slightest scarcity into famine, calls on him for expenses which no savings he can make can ever hope to meet, it matters not to him that the scarcity Is artificial, that the country is indeed full of corn. He who out of eight shillings per week must pay fifteen-pence for the quartern loaf, is suffering the scourge of famine as much as if there was no bread in the land. He will not save, to whom the corn-bill has sternly decreed that nothing shall ever raise him beyond the reach of want. He will not strive to better his condition, to whom it is but folly to lay up against the evil day. This odious system must at last prove injurious even to landlords. In breaking down industry you destroy the source of rent. There is no incentive to labour like the hope of reward; it Is a light heart that best strings the sinews to exertion.

It has been urged in extenuation of the corn-bill, for no one has been shameless enough to justify it, that the expense of cultivation being higher in England than in other countries, it is necessary to protect the farmer against the competition of foreigners. Never was assertion so wholly unfounded.

It is built on a miserable quibble between the real and nominal expense of things. Because wages are nominally higher in England than on the continent, It is contended that they are really so. The effect of the corn bill is brought to show its necessity. Where labour is employed with most skill, as its results must be most advantageous, it must be in reality the cheapest. The superiority of English industry is never so manifest as when It Is left entirely without protection. The most flourishing of our manufactures, that of cotton, owes its material to foreigners, It depends on them chiefly to consume its produce. By the greater cheapness of labour alone, it is enabled to return them their own material manufactured for less than it would cost them to work it up at home. Our agriculture can boast of not fewer advantages. The smaller proportion of our people employed in raising food, Is decisive evidence of the cheapness of our husbandry. That work really costs least which is done by fewest men. In Russia and Poland, four-fifths of the people are employed in raising the subsistence of the whole. In England, this task is performed by one-fifth part of our numbers. But the real expense of cultivation is that part or the crop which is consumed in its production. As this in Russia is four-fifths, and in England only one-fifth, to raise corn in England really costs only one-fourth of what it costs in Russia That it is in fact produced at less expense in England than in any other country, may be shown from a comparison of rents. As rent is that which remains after paying the expense of cultivation, where that is highest the expense must be least. The quarter of wheat which can afford the landlord three bushels must have cost the farmer less than that out of which he can only pay One. In whatever way we make the calculation, the result is always the same; the surplus is always largest in England. If we look to the industry employed, we shall find that in England each man's labour produces bushels over and above his own consumption. In France, the surplus is not more than . In Russia what the labourer can spare from his own wants hardly amounts to forty. In money-rents the disproportion is still greater. In Russia, of whose fertility so much has been said, land on an average, does not produce its owner one shilling per acre. In France, the landlord receives seven shillings. In England, he complains when he only gets twenty-two shillings. If in England the farmer, notwithstanding all the burthen of taxation, can yet pay a rent three times as great as that received in any other country, he must grow his corn cheaper than foreigners. From their competition he needs no protection. He only requires to be defended from the extortion of his landlord. The good of the farmer is indeed only the pretext, the good of the landlord is the real object of the corn-bill; it proposes to increase rent by diminishing the real wages of labour.

This political economy is, in truth, a vile illiberal study: it corrupts the kindest natures. The English gentleman was once generous, it was his pride to be careless of money, but since he has

dabbled in statistics nothing can satisfy his greediness. Like the daughters of the horseleech, his cry is for ever "Give, give." He would only leave to the other classes of society wherewith to supply what may be needed for his and his children's sobs.

They are his necessities, he will tell us, that compel him to be griping. Taxes have so much raised his expenses, that he cannot live as he would do without exacting more from his tenants. He only asks of them to make up what the government takes from him. He only desires that a war, which has transferred one-half of the property of the country to new owners, should be without Injury to himself. Let him but have a little patience, and time and the growing population of the country will restore to him what his own folly has thrown away. In the mean time it does not seem quite just, that the people who had no share in the prodigality should alone bear all its burthen. Let not the gentleman rely on his claims of property, let him not tell us that the land is his, and that he has a right to get for it what he can. He should remember that property, which is created for the good of society, incurs forfeiture, whenever forgetting its tenure, it becomes injurious to its interests. There was a time when the people of Cornwall looked on it as part of their property to plunder and murder those whom the raging of the elements had thrown on their shore; the seaman escaping from shipwreck, the merchant whose hopes had been baffled by Providence, were a regular part of their income; they found in the distress of their fellow-creatures a remedy for the barrenness of their soil, something that made up for the badness of their crops. Unless they robbed these poor wretches, the produce of their lands could not be made equal to that of more fertile regions; their owners could not vie in expense with their more fortunate neighbours. Time seemed to have given them a vested interest in their inhumanity; their claim was sanctified by long enjoyment, the only real title to all property. If the law was justified in preventing and punishing such enormities, has It done right to authorize another more dreadful, as its inflection is more extensive? With what face can it forbid to the half savage Cornish man this old and long-practised method of increasing his revenue, whilst it allows the gentry to aggravate the evils of scarcity, and to plunder and starve their unfortunate countrymen whom Providence, by the inclemency of the seasons, may throw into their hands? What rights can the land-storm give, that the raging of the sea may not equally claim to bestow? Is the word of the Lord forgotten which says, that wickedness shall never prosper? Must we wait to learn from our own experience that plunder never turns to profit? Shall we bring no remedy to this crying iniquity till the poor laws, wringing from the griping hands of the land-owner his gold soiled with the blood and tears of his fellow-creatures, shall have taught him that the suggestions of avarice are as foolish as they are atrocious.

Many yet remember when, towards the close of the last century, the military and financial operations of government had raised the price of provisions so much above the means of the poor, as virtually to create a famine. The people In their distress came to the bar of the House of Commons, crying," Oh, give us bread, or we die." But the members armed themselves with philosophy; they told the people to have patience; that plenty and scarcity were the work of God; that human legislation could have no influence over them. In a few years the scene was changed. A fall in the price of corn threatened to bring down rents. The gentry lost all their philosophy, their reliance on Providence was shaken, and Impiously striving to wrest from the right hand of God the noblest of his attributes, his county, they determined, as much as in them lay, that the people should never again know the blessing of plenty.

There may be a tyranny so atrocious that, in the words of Burke, "every man is bound to resist it to the utmost of his power, whenever it shall show its face to the world. It is a crime to bear it when it can be rationally shaken off. Nothing but absolute impotence can justify men in not resisting it to the utmost of their ability." Rome drove out her kings because the chastity of a woman had been violated. England changed her dynasty, because her sovereign chose to worship God in a way different from his people. But what is the form of a mass, what the chastity of a woman, compared with the sufferings of a starving people?

As the only pretext for the corn-bill was taxation, a reduction of taxes would call for its repeal, and again putting the industry of England on an equality with that of other countries, would throw the burthens of society on those who alone enjoy its advantages. The sins of the corn bill are on the head of the Sinking Fund; It must answer for all the misery that flagitious measure may engender.

We have surely persisted long enough in error to satisfy us that we have wandered from the true path, and are gone astray; that In hunting after capital we are only pursuing a phantom. All its promises have ended in disappointment. Instead of showering down plenty on the heads of the people, it has only sunk them deep In wretchedness. It has not added more to the power and splendour of the state than it has to the happiness of individuals. It was a simple age, and not pretending to wealth, that raised the stupendous piles for the worship of God, which towering beyond the daring of modern genius, still look with derision on the puny and paltry buildings with which capital trafficking in religion has studded our streets, as if to mark the poverty of our conceptions and the littleness of our means. When the nation could boast of nothing but the richness of its soil; when its trade was carried on by the capital of Holland, It was great among the powers

of Christendom, and Cromwell was able, without borrowing, and with none but national means, to bridle the rising ambition of France, and to set bounds to the unwieldy greatness of Spain. Now, in the fulness of our wealth, when our capital is running over to the uttermost limits of the earth: when, having drained and exhausted our native industry, it is seeking for new prey in foreign lands, we have heard the humiliating avowal that England's voice is not listened to In Europe; that her threats have no terrors for the wrong-doer.

It is time to clear away the mist in which the sophistry of political economy has bewildered our understandings. It is time to wake from the dreams of wealth which Is to be produced by the encouragement of idleness. God, when he said to man," Go forth, increase and multiply, by the sweat of thy brow shalt thou live," pointed out to him the true source of the wealth of nations, numbers, and industry. To his own exertions man was to owe every thing. Nature indeed always kept a rich treasury; her garners were full, but her stores were only for those who, by the proper employment of their faculties, had shewn themselves worthy of her bounty. In order to secure man's obedience to this great law of his existence, that the necessity for his exertions might never relax, that plenty might not encourage sloth, It was decreed by almighty wisdom that all the productions of the earth, every object that could contribute to the sustenance of life, should be of a perish. able nature; that, if not consumed in its right season, it should be wholly useless. Accumulation was thus rendered impossible; since to save was but to waste. When man, tasting of the tree of knowledge, learnt to double all his faculties, and by a wiser direction of his industry to make the labour of an individual suffice for the maintenance of many, this law, so necessary to his happiness, was not abrogated. He was indeed enabled to increase the means of production, to multiply and render more effectual the instruments of labour; he might grow rich in new comforts and new luxuries, he might swell the amount of his enjoyments, but to lay by was still beyond his power. The productions of his industry yet retained their perishable nature; whatever he saved disappeared In the moment of hoarding. In vain the wilderness became, under his hand, a garden; in vain the heather and the broom gave way to the richest crops; the work of destruction kept pace with the labours of production, and what man's consumption spared vermin devoured. Each returning year saw him doomed to recommence the labour needful to his existence; each change of the seasons repeated in his ear the warning of the apostle, "He that will not labour neither shall he eat." Man cannot escape from his destiny; his capacity of producing beyond his wants is given him, not for useless saving, but for profitable enjoyment; it is bestowed on him that the care of his subsistence may not for ever bow him to the earth; but that leisure and reflection may improve him in that higher knowledge to which he shall ascend by degrees, and which, seizing on it as the birthright of the chosen and

favoured object of creation, shall in due time restore him to that communion with his Maker, from which he fell by listening to the suggestions of the tempter, who taught him to forfeit happiness for the mockery and delusion of imaginary wealth, and of vain knowledge that leads to nothing.

And is this foretaste of heavenly things to be forfeited for the accumulation of capital? What good has capital ever done for man? where are we to look for its triumphs? in what part of the world are to be seen the monuments of its achievements? It has visited every people in its turn, but so fleeting is its step that it leaves no traces behind; as well might you hope to track the passage of a ship in the sea. It has ever followed on the prosperity of a state, and been the forerunner of its decay. Nations, who by too much forcing of the idle classes, rise at once to premature wealth and greatness, sink as rapidly into exhaustion and decrepitude. Their riches never stand the test of time; their capital, when it seems all powerful, when surrounding eyes look with expectant wonder for the miracles it is about to perform, suddenly vanishes from sight, and leaves behind no vestiges of its existence. Theirs is the fate of all those too-daring spirits who, hoping to penetrate the secrets of nature, and by their knowledge to obtain a mastery over her arts, give themselves to unhallowed studies; their power is but delusion. Like the necromancer, they gain no empire over realities; they are but the shadows of forms that obey his call. Like the alchymist, their gold disappears in the very moment of projection; like his, their visions of wealth end in broken retorts. What has their capital done for Tadmor and Palmyra but strew the desert with their ruins? Where are the fields the wealth of Carthage has fertilized? The only remembrance her riches have left are a few hiding-places for lizards and scorpions. The proud merchants of Ormuz showered no wealth on the adjoining country; instead of becoming princes in the land, they have dwindled into half-famished pirates. Their capital has not prevented their city from becoming a den of thieves, the abode of wretchedness and want. Florence, when a great commercial city, when her citizens were rioting in all the luxuriance of wealth, saw her uncultivated fields stagnating in marshes, or withering under the load of heath; it was only when her capital had disappeared, when her industry, awaking from its dream of commercial riches, gave itself to wiser pursuits, that her barren soil was converted into a garden of Eden. They were poor monks living on charity, with no capital but their hands, who placed on the brow of the Apennines their noble crown of forest trees. Venice was great when her nobles were poor; as their fortunes grew her power declined. Holland has lost her capital and her commerce; yet the rebuilding of her cities, and the draining of her lakes, shew that her riches are nothing impaired.

The Jews are a money-getting people; they have for centuries been the usurers of the world; all

their thoughts have been turned to the accumulation of capital. Their object has been pursued with talent and perseverance; their penury is proverbial, and their savings have never been allowed to remain idle. There is not a state whose wants they have not relieved; they have been parties to every scheme for increasing the wealth of nations; they have sat upon and hatched the golden eggs of all the politicians of Europe. But what has been the fruit of all this grasping and all this hoarding? Where are the treasures they have heaped up, where the property that calls them lord? This people of capitalists, this nation of boundless gains, is yet the most beggarly race in existence: for cut off from all connexion with the land, and reduced to traffic in imaginary riches, their profits have never acquired the consistency of property. Wasting their labour on ideal acquisitions, they have sowed the wind and reaped the gossamer. The experience of all times may indeed assure us, that the prosperity soon fades and passes away which has not struck root in the soil; it is then only it brings forth a harvest of plenty. There is no true greatness it will tell us for nations, but in the number and character of their people; no true wealth but in the abundance and general diffusion of comforts.

Statesmen, if ye be wise, if ye seek the well being of those who are committed to your charge, if ye will that your name shall go down glorious to after ages, ye must cast away from you your books of vain science, and peruse the great volume of Nature. From it ye will learn the vanity of accumulation, it will teach you that plenty is given to man, not to hoard, but for enjoyment. If instead of reading lectures to Nature, and idly striving to improve her processes, ye will bend your wisdom to work out her decrees, science may, indeed, sneer at your labours, and Political Economy may laugh them to scorn, but the gratitude of a happy people shall be poured out in blessings on your heads, and heavenly pens shall inscribe your names In the great Book of Life, where are remembered all the benefactors to mankind.

DL1

CHAPTER ONE

What the hell, Charly thought, I've already lost the job so there's nothing to be gained by being polite.

"Very well, Mr. McKinnon. But I'd like to make a small wager with you. If I win, you hire me. If I lose, you hire any man you like."

As she was speaking, Charly saw the muscle in his jaw relax, the hostility in his eyes change to

interest and speculation.

"And the nature of this wager?"

"You choose any company files you wish and give them to me. I'll carry out the inspections under your supervision. Today is Friday. The wager will start Monday morning at nine and end at five p.m. on Wednesday, if you can spare the time, of course. And I'll work without pay. You can make my salary retroactive when you hire me Thursday. Have we got a deal?"

"We have a deal, Miss Benson. I'll meet you here at nine on Monday. But don't spend any money yet." And he smiled.

It was the first time his face had relaxed since the interview started two hours earlier. But the smile wasn't friendly. It was smug, a definite smirk. Ah well, she'd won the first round.

Picking up her résumé she stood, said, "Thank you for your time, gentlemen," and left the room. The tension that had been with her for the past several hours drained away as she shrugged into her coat, under the curious glances of the office staff.

Moving towards the door, she swung around as she heard her name being called. Bearing down on her was a still-smug Mr. McKinnon, some files held loosely in his right hand.

"You might like to look these over this weekend. We'll do three a day. See you Monday."

Taking the files from him, Charly had time only to murmur, "Thank you," before he had turned back to the boardroom.

Tucking them into her carrying case, along with her résumé, Charly went out and got behind the wheel of her SUV. Aware that she was still under the surveillance of the staff, she started the engine and moved off down the road, out of their line of vision.

Why the devil hadn't the manager told her that Mr. McKinnon was a confirmed misogynist? Was it just her he hated, or was it women in general? The manager had assured her the job was as good as hers two days ago, after reviewing her qualifications and interviewing her. He'd said the meeting with the Board of Directors was only a formality and a courtesy to herself and the directors. In retrospect, it was clear he'd known beforehand that there'd be a problem with McKinnon. Suddenly she was struck with the feeling that she'd been set up. Mr. McKinnon had bristled from the moment she had walked in the door and the battle lines had been firmly drawn. His questions had been repeatedly slanted towards the problem that her femininity would cause. Also her size. Was it possible he hadn't been told she was a woman? If he'd seen her application and read her name as Charly Benson, he might have assumed she was a man. Well, she'd show him!

Five years of intensive study had prepared her well for this job and she knew she could do it, given the chance. She had spent three years at Mohawk College studying for her Insurance Institute Certificate and had passed in the top five of her class. Then, knowing she'd need an edge because

she was trying to break into a man's field, she had spent two more years at Conestoga College in Guelph graduating with an Electrical Technician's papers.

So now, she was well qualified, maybe even over-qualified and quite aware that Mr. McKinnon's doubts were well founded. Growing up on her parents' dairy farm near Picton, she had known of the hesitation with which farmers were accepting women in men's roles.

Girls now were frequently a part of relief milking teams and were also employed as milk inspectors. She found it amusing that wives and daughters were often pressed into service driving tractors with heavy equipment behind them, and often helped with the milking, feeding and cleaning around the barns. But just let one of them apply for a job that was traditionally carried out by a man and watch the hackles rise!

Leaving the town of Picton behind, Charly drove, without conscious thought, to her parents' retirement home on the outskirts of Belleville. They had sold the farm last year because Charly was an only child and had no desire to be a dairy farmer - just a farm Insurance Inspector.

So much was riding on this job. She had bought the SUV with a loan from her Dad, had student loans to pay back, and wanted to rent or buy her own place so her parents could enjoy their retirement without having her underfoot. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday would probably be the three most important days in her life so far, and she had to make good.

McKinnon's smug smile likely meant that he'd chosen the most difficult files he could find and was probably anticipating her downfall with great glee. To be forewarned was to be forearmed and she would be ready for him. There was nothing she could do about her five foot four inches in height, but she could research and memorize the files until she knew them inside out.

Telling her parents only that she'd been given a three-day trial period, Charly poured over the files until she felt she knew everything there was to know about them. She had noticed the one right away that was causing McKinnon to smirk. There was a note on it suggesting that the policy should be cancelled immediately if repairs to the barn weren't completed. It was dated several weeks ago. The file also told her there was no mortgage, so the farmer was probably in good shape financially and his buildings, pigs and equipment were well insured. So what was his problem?

There didn't appear to be anything remarkable about the other two files, but she strongly suspected that they were also women-haters. There would be something to look out for anyway.

She checked her digital camera over carefully and made sure she had an extra fully charged battery. Although brokers were required to submit photos with the policy applications, she knew some would be missing and others outdated.

As Monday morning approached, she found herself becoming increasingly nervous. She had

purchased a detailed county map and had located the three farms, then planned the route she would follow in order to visit them without backtracking.

Her next problem was what to wear. She had to look professional but her clothes also had to be wash and wear, so she had bought five serviceable jumpsuits in deep pastel colours. They were sturdy, washable and quite attractive with an elasticized waist that emphasized her figure.

But she didn't want to wear one on Monday when Mr. McKinnon would be accompanying her. Finally deciding on a pair of chocolate brown trousers and tan blazer, with a tailored antique-gold shirt, she braided her waist-length auburn hair into one long plait which she twined into a knot on the back of her head. Slipping her feet into a comfortable pair of sand desert boots, she picked up matching clutch purse, her files and camera and headed for the car, pulse racing and a knot in her stomach.

The drive to Picton passed in a blur as her mind concentrated on the files and the information she had tried to assimilate. Anything to avoid thinking about Mr. McKinnon and the prospect of having him looking over her shoulder every inch of the way. But thoughts of him rushed solidly to the forefront when she pulled up outside the office at 8:50 to find him already there. All six feet two inches, leaning against his black Cadillac, legs crossed at the ankles, arms folded across his chest. Determined to hide her nervousness, she drove up beside him and, reaching across the width of the car, opened the door for him.

"Good morning, Mr. McKinnon. All set?"

Sliding his body into her little SUV wasn't easy and he grunted as he tried to arrange his long legs between the dash and the seat.

"Sure I'm all set. I'm just along for the ride. Remember?" He glanced at her, unsmiling, implacable, giving nothing away. Certainly not friendly!

So that's how it's going to be, she thought, as she pulled away from the curb. We'll see. Glancing side-ways, she realized he hadn't fastened his seatbelt and couldn't resist telling him to do so.

"Buckle up, please."

"Is your driving that bad?" No sarcasm, but no humour was evident either.

"My driving record is excellent, but why take a chance? Besides, the fines are heavy."

As he buckled up, she noticed how well dressed he was, and almost giggled aloud when she realized they must look like Mutt and Jeff because his outfit, with the exception of the shirt, was almost the same as hers. Brown slacks with a knife-sharp crease, tan blazer and brown loafers, and almost a foot of difference in their heights.

"Something amusing you, Miss Benson?"

The words were spoken sharply, and Charly realized he might think she was laughing at him, so

decided to come clean.

"It just struck me that we might have the same tailor, judging by our appearances. Will anyone believe this wasn't planned?"

"Frankly, I couldn't care less. I'm only concerned with your performance, not your looks."

And that puts me firmly in my place, I guess, God, what a humourless creature! How does his wife stand it?

Silence reigned for several miles, and it wasn't until they neared Mr. Baker's farm that he broke it.

"I assume you're doing Baker's first?"

At her nod of agreement, he continued, "You know what's required?"

"Check the state of his barn, primarily, and inform him he has one week to complete all necessary repairs, or his policy will be cancelled. Can I ask why it hasn't been done before now?"

"Mainly because we've been without an inspector for some time. But I'm sure you'll manage."

Without looking at him, she could again sense the smugness in his answer. But there was also an undercurrent of bitterness in his voice when he mentioned the former inspector and she wondered briefly about it.

She was lucky - very lucky. Because Mr. Baker was just coming from the barn with a hammer and a fistful of nails as she stepped out of the car. Quickly, she introduced herself and Mr. McKinnon, and informed him why she was there. It didn't take long to realize that he was normally crotchety and crabby, and didn't like strangers. But she poured on the charm, praised the efforts he had made in repairing the missing boards on the barn, and admired his antique tractor. When he realized she knew what she was talking about, he began to unbend and walked with her as she made her inspection.

While her eyes took in details of electrical wiring, general housekeeping, the presence of fire extinguishers, and she made quick notes on her clipboard, he told her he'd been in the hospital for an operation, and that his hired man hadn't bothered with maintenance. She told him about her Dad's farm and about a pet pig she'd had once, and all the while she was aware of Mr. McKinnon just behind them, watching and listening.

Out in the sunshine again, she looked around the machine shed and workshop, but could find nothing to criticize.

"Would you mind if I take some pictures for our files? The ones we have are outdated and should be renewed."

"You go ahead and take your pictures, Miss Benson. I'll put the kettle on and we'll have a cup of coffee when you're finished." He turned and walked into the house.

Charly ignored McKinnon as she took her photos, some of the house, the barn, and the outbuildings.

She was aware that he was again leaning on the car and watching her, but then, that was his assignment. When she had finished, she approached the car to put the camera in it, but he was leaning against her door.

"Excuse me, please. I'd like to get rid of this before I go inside. Coming for a coffee?"

"Oh, I wouldn't miss it for the world, Miss Benson." He straightened and pulled the door open for her.

"Keeping you amused, am I?" She realized her question was a bit flippant as soon as she uttered it, but his silent watchfulness was beginning to irritate her.

"Immensely amused. I haven't enjoyed myself this much in years."

Small things amuse small minds, she thought, and missed the sharp look he threw her. It was difficult to tell if he was being sarcastic, because his comments were all delivered in the same conversational tone. She decided it was best to say nothing further, and turned to the house instead. Mr. Baker had set the table with coffee mugs, cream, sugar, serviettes, and a plate of fresh muffins. Not wanting to offend him, Charly ate one. She was very surprised when he admitted he had baked them.

"Since my wife died, I've learned to do a lot of things that I'd never done before, like laundry, housecleaning and cooking. But I enjoy it."

As he was speaking, Charly suddenly became aware that McKinnon's eyes were riveted on her left hand where it curled around her coffee cup. And he was frowning. Outside of a murmured "Thank you" to Mr. Baker, he had been silent.

Completing a quick tour of the house, Charly thanked Mr. Baker for his hospitality and, when invited, said she would love to come back just to visit. And she meant it. She sensed the loneliness in him and decided he probably didn't have many visitors.

Back on the road again, she suppressed the urge to ask, "How did I do?" Her mind was already reviewing the next two farms and then there was the problem of lunch. By the time they reached their next destination, it would be 12:30 and not a good time to disturb a farmer.

Making her decision, she drove into Belleville and parked in the lot of her favourite pizza parlour. It wasn't crowded yet because it was only 11:30, so they didn't have to wait for a table. She didn't ask McKinnon what his preferences were and she didn't really care. She normally ate a salad for lunch and she knew this was one restaurant with a decent salad bar.

Once seated across from him, Charly began to feel uncomfortable. He was so damned uncommunicative and this was suddenly a social situation. It had been relatively easy to brush off his presence until now. But there he sat, big as life, just across the small table, studying the menu.

Knowing exactly what she wanted, Charly didn't need to look at the menu. So she looked at him instead and she saw him for the first time as a very attractive male. He would be mid-thirties and his features were rugged, rather than classically good-looking. His eyes were dark velvety-brown, covered at the moment by the sweep of long and slightly curled lashes. His hair was a dark mahogany with reddish highlights, and it was just a little longer than the average cut.

Too bad the personality is the pits, she mused, and then almost died when he glanced up sharply, and stared right into her eyes. Almost as though he could read my mind, damn it. She looked away as the waitress approached, and quickly gave her order for the salad bar and coffee.

Muttering, "Excuse me, please," she left the table and made her way to the Ladies' room. How embarrassing to be caught staring at him, like a schoolgirl! No doubt he's doing his best to unnerve me, but he isn't going to succeed. I want this job and I'm going to get it.

The self-administered pep talk seemed to help, and she made her way to the salad bar, where she piled her plate with all her favourite things. As she seated herself at their table, she noticed that McKinnon was eating a steak sandwich and thought, suits you, and again looked down quickly as he again glanced sharply at her.

This is ridiculous! We're two grown people, having lunch together, and I'm acting like an idiot. I've got to break the ice somehow, but how? He hates women, he answers questions in monosyllables and he definitely doesn't want me to have this job. Oh, the hell with it. I can be rude too.

Ignoring him completely, she proceeded to eat her lunch, reviewing the next two farms in her mind. Once mentally involved, it was easy to carry on as though she were alone. The next two farms were dairy and beef, respectively, and she could see no reason why either one should pose any problem. But no doubt there were problems, or he wouldn't have chosen them.

"You didn't tell us you were getting married, Miss Benson." The statement brought her quickly out of her reverie, and she immediately noticed his eyes again fixed on her left hand.

"That's because I'm not, Mr. McKinnon." And besides, it doesn't happen to be any of your damn business anyway. Again, he looked sharply at her and once more, she had the feeling he could read her mind.

"Sorry. My mistake." And he returned to his meal, as though he hadn't spoken. But she caught him looking several more times at the diamond on her left hand.

Glancing at her watch, she finished her coffee and was planning to leave, when McKinnon ordered a piece of coconut cream pie, and she was forced to sit and wait while he ate it. Slowly, it seemed to her.

Paying for the meal on the way out, Charly asked for a receipt and filed it away. Once hired, she

would be allowed expenses for mileage and meals, so why not think positively and start now? She noticed there was no comment from her shadow.

The next farm was well maintained, but it appeared that the bulk of the money went into the barns, equipment and outbuildings. As she approached the house, Charly noticed the beds of beautiful roses, but the building was old and needed some paint to freshen it up.

The reason for McKinnon's choice was evident as soon as the door was answered. The farmer's wife was young and pretty and probably not at all enthusiastic about another young female going into the barn with her husband. Well, no problem. After introducing herself and explaining her presence, Charly put her left hand up to her hair to push it back, turning slightly so the sun would catch her ring. At the same time, she commented on the roses with genuine interest, because she had been helping with her Dad's bushes for years.

As the discussion moved from insurance inspecting to roses and rings, Charly sensed McKinnon moving off out of hearing range. Tough luck, McKinnon. Foiled again. Mrs. Gordon was quite friendly now, and apologized to Charly because her husband was in town, and could she do her inspecting without him? Charly assured her that would be no problem and got on with it. McKinnon followed silently.

Climbing around through barns was nothing new to Charly, but doing so dressed as she was, was a nuisance. She hated having to be aware of her clothing all the time and vowed this would be the last day she was dressed inappropriately. It would be easier to get at wiring to check it more carefully if she was in blue jeans, as she would be at home. Oh well, tomorrow was another day.

Her notes complete and pictures taken, Charly returned to the driver's seat of the SUV, ignoring McKinnon as he again folded his length into the tight quarters. She replaced the Gordons' file and withdrew the next one, glanced at the map, and started the engine. He buckled up his belt, and proceeded to stare out through the windshield.

Driving to the next farm, Charly had some time to wonder about him. How could anybody stay silent for so long and be so gloomy? It just wasn't natural. Why all the animosity towards her? Although she had a strong feeling it wasn't just her. In fact, she'd be willing to bet he treated all females with the same distant dislike.

Being a very outgoing person herself, Charly was finding it more and more difficult to remain silent, but knew herself well enough to know that if she started a conversation and he didn't respond, she would likely end up being very rude. And she couldn't afford to be just now. So she held her tongue and drove on.

CHAPTER TWO

A surprise awaited her at the last farm of the day. When the door was opened, an old school friend, with whom she had lost contact, greeted her enthusiastically. She could almost sense McKinnon snorting with derision as they rapidly chatted about the years they had lost. She deliberately prolonged the conversation an extra few minutes.

After promising to return on her days off sometime for a real visit, Charly completed the inspection. She was aware that McKinnon had perched himself against a bale of hay and was letting her get on with it by herself. Could that mean he was beginning to trust her, or was he just testing her? She wasn't concerned because she knew her inspections were thorough and professional.

Overall, the day had been easier than she had expected. The actual work gave her no cause for worry. Her only fear was that McKinnon would find some reason to justify not giving her the job. So far, so good, and tomorrow was another day.

Charly walked back to where she had left McKinnon, only to find that he had gone outside. Joining him by the car, she put her files together neatly and prepared to leave. With the car once more out on the highway, she had time to look at her watch and feel pleased that it was just after five, in spite of her coffee break in the morning and her two afternoon chats.

Arriving back at the office at five-thirty, Charly went into the now-empty building with McKinnon to return the completed files to the boardroom and pick up three more for the next day. Still he maintained his silence, speaking only when necessary.

"We're staying on the Isle tomorrow, so we should finish early." Handing her the files he had chosen, he turned to the door and waited with his hand on the light switch, until she left the room. Charly couldn't wait to get away from him. The 'Isle' was Quinte's Isle, Prince Edward County, bordered by Lake Ontario and the Bay of Quinte. She had grown up on the Isle and knew many farmers who were neighbours of her parents while they had been farming, so it was quite conceivable she would know some of the farms he had chosen. Leaving the building, she tossed a "See you tomorrow" over her shoulder, as she headed for her car. He didn't reply, just unlocked his Cadillac and got in.

With another forty-five minute drive ahead of her, Charly took a minute to read the file names. What luck! Uncle Henry! Well, she knew for sure which farm she would visit first. And maybe she'd just give McKinnon something to think about while she was at it. Her mind was busy formulating plans all the way home, so the time passed quickly.

The weather had been unseasonably warm for May and Charly knew the farmers were expecting a cold spell soon. Although she now lived near the city, she still kept an ear to the weather from habit. The forecast also called for rain and winds by mid-week from a storm front moving up

from the Eastern States. She had learned at a young age that the weather was one thing farmers had to accept and learn to work around.

Studying the files that evening, she found them to be quite unremarkable. Just farms. Perhaps McKinnon knew now that she couldn't be thrown. Or perhaps he knew something about them that she didn't. Asking her Dad for a quick rundown on the two other files, she was assured that they were both quite respectable and responsible.

"In fact, I think Tom Harrison is a director for the company, isn't he?" he asked Charly.

"I guess it's quite possible. The day I was in there, I was too busy trying to defend myself against McKinnon's attacks to take any notice of the others. Thanks, Dad. It would be just like him to throw in a director's file and hope I embarrassed myself."

"Now, Charly, he can't be all that bad. I don't know the man personally, but I've never heard anything against him. Are you sure you aren't imagining things?"

"Yeah, I suppose I'm just paranoid because I want this job so badly." She dropped the subject and went to the phone, her good humour restored as she thought of McKinnon's face tomorrow.

"Hi, Uncle Henry. Are you going to be home tomorrow? Yes? Will you do me a favour? I've got to come over there with a stuffed shirt on business and I want you to pretend you don't know me, until I give you a signal. Don't ask why. It's just a little joke among friends. Okay?"

After some muttering, her uncle finally agreed and they said their goodbyes. Charly was grinning as she prepared for bed.

McKinnon never so much as batted an eye when he joined her next morning in her car. She had donned Western boots, snug jeans, and semi-dressy western shirt and had tucked her hair up under her western hat. Outside of a brief "Good morning," he was his usual inscrutable self.

It was just a short drive to her uncle's farm, and Charly could hardly wait to get there. She jumped out of the SUV, picked up her clipboard and headed over to where her uncle was working on a tractor engine. She swung her hips and made the most of her snug jeans, knowing that McKinnon was following and watching. Her uncle straightened up as she approached, and she watched in amazement as he looked past her, smiled and stretched his hand out to McKinnon.

"T. G., how are you?" He asked, shaking hands with him. She looked from one to the other, knowing suddenly that her plan had somehow gone quite wrong. As they talked to each other, ignoring her completely, she became annoyed, then enraged. Turning her back on them, she yanked her hat from her head, forgetting about her hair. As it tumbled in glowing auburn waves to her waist, she stomped into the barn, leaving the others where they were. She was unaware of the gleam in McKinnon's eye as he watched her progress. Her uncle had his back to the barn, so saw only the admiration on T. G.'s face, not the reason for it.

Hurrying through the inspection, Charly wrote up her notes and then set the file aside. Working quickly, she braided her hair and fastened it up as it had been yesterday. The fun hadn't even started and already it was over. Serves me right for trying to get the better of him. When she approached the men again, she found they were deep in conversation, but stopped speaking as soon as they noticed her presence.

"Everything seems to be in order, Mr. McKinnon. I'd like to get on to the next one, if you don't mind. Goodbye, Mr. Thomas."

Throwing an arm around her shoulders, her uncle gave her a squeeze and said, "You don't need to pretend you don't know me, Charly. T. G. already knew we were related. Good luck with your job. I know you'll make a fine inspector."

Feeling like a little girl again, Charly muttered "Goodbye," again and headed for the vehicle. McKinnon sauntered along behind, grinning broadly.

Once in the car, Charly tried to get herself under control. For once, he had the upper hand and she didn't like the feeling. To make matters worse, the next farm was Harrison's. Should she come right out and ask if he was a director? It would make her look even more stupid. Maybe she'd recognize him when she saw him. Deciding to stay quiet, she drove off, hoping for the best.

She did recognize him as soon as he appeared. He had been one of the ones who had spoken up in her defence several times during the interview. Relaxing immediately, Charly chatted away with him as they toured his buildings and examined the wiring. The farm was in excellent condition and obviously paying for itself. But she checked everything over, knowing there were two directors watching her now.

It was again lunchtime when they were finished, and she decided to drive over to Bloomfield, before stopping for lunch. It was a small village but had an excellent restaurant, and the third farm was just outside of town.

Her salad in front of her, Charly became consumed by her curiosity. T. G. McKinnon. Tom Gregory? Timothy George? Terry Glenn? None of them fit, and she just couldn't stand it any longer.

"What does the T. G. stand for?" She looked across the table at McKinnon and wondered if he would answer her, or maintain his usual stony silence.

"My mother said it stood for 'Thank God', because she had three daughters and my Dad wouldn't give up until he had a son. My birth certificate says Thomas Gordon, but I have to look at it now and then to remember, because I've never been anything but T. G. Satisfied?" He was almost smiling, as though he knew she had been sitting there trying to pin a name on him.

"Yes, thank you." Returning to her salad, she decided that T. G. suited him better. He certainly

wasn't a Thomas, maybe a Gordon; then again, maybe not. And he had actually said several sentences to her. Wow - a major breakthrough! Her silent contemplation was interrupted when he asked, "And Charly? That's not exactly a feminine name."

"Short for Charlene, but I was wearing denim overalls and trailing Dad around the barn from the time I could walk, so Charly I was. And still am." She looked up at him as she spoke and found his eyes on her mouth. They were no longer indifferent or cold, but only for a moment. He masked his expression quickly, and made a comment about how early they would be through today, barring any unforeseen circumstances.

Again picking up the tab, Charly vowed there would be none. She was beginning to feel as though she'd been inspecting farms for weeks rather than days. And she also felt that McKinnon had lost most of his reservations about her.

The day ended early and without incident. The temperature was still unseasonably high and the weather was beginning to be oppressive. She was glad to get home and take a long hot shower, before studying the files for tomorrow. Tomorrow - the day that would decide her whole future. On one hand, she was quite sure she had the job, but on the other, she still doubted that McKinnon really wanted her on staff. Maybe today he had been friendlier so that she would relax and let her guard down tomorrow.

However, Wednesday morning found Charly dressed in a pale blue jumpsuit, her hair neatly braided and fastened to the back of her head. Her boots had been cleaned and polished and she looked and felt like a professional. The farms they were looking at today were on the other side of Belleville at some distance, so it would be a long day.

McKinnon seemed to be in good humour when she picked him up at the office. He was smiling as he said good morning, and after a quick glance at her outfit, said, "Much more suitable attire, Miss Benson."

"I'm glad you approve, because this will be my standard uniform from now on."

"Oh, you've been hired, have you?"

Blushing, she glanced sideways, and was surprised to see a hint of humour in his smile. Maybe he wasn't such a stuffed shirt after all. Sighing inaudibly, she pulled out into the traffic and decided to enjoy herself.

Easier said than done, she mused, as one after another, the farmers proceeded to complain to her about the insurance they carried, the prices they had to pay, the claims that had been settled unfairly, in their opinion, until her head was swimming. She knew that she must remain loyal to the company at all costs, and yet she didn't wish to alienate any clients.

Surprisingly, McKinnon came to her rescue on several occasions. He was knowledgeable and

reasonable, and they seemed to respect his opinion. Maybe they just think I don't know anything because I'm a female. Pushing the negative thought aside, she carried out her inspections, aware that the weather was becoming even sultrier.

During lunch, a severe storm warning was issued for the area north east of Belleville. Charly decided to hurry through the next inspection, knowing that McKinnon was probably anxious to get home. There was bound to be a backlash of rain and wind on the Isle. With the radio on, they listened to the updates as they drove to their next destination. The farm was situated on a back road quite some distance from Belleville, and wound through heavy bush. The trees were still, the sky a dull steel grey.

On reaching the farm, Charly didn't waste any time. She asked her questions, ran through her inspection and made her notes. She didn't skip any areas that needed checking on, and as the milking system was an older one, she went over to have a better look at the wiring on the milking machine motor housing. McKinnon had followed her around, and was standing over by the window. She leaned forward to check the wires, her back to him, and suddenly felt a jolt of sexual tension run through her. It was powerful, like a charge of electricity, and her body responded of its own accord.

Straightening slowly, she turned and looked at McKinnon. He was staring out the window, but the telltale flush along his cheekbones told her all she needed to know. So. The man wasn't as inhuman as he appeared. In fact, if that thought originated in his mind, and she knew it had, he was very human, and very susceptible to the sight of a female derriere in tight pants. Well, well, well!

The farmer was obviously concerned about the weather as well. He was letting the cattle out of the yard into a field away from the buildings and opening windows and doors to the barns. Charly knew that since the severe tornadoes in Woodstock and Barrie, farmers all over the province took warnings of severe weather very seriously now. She didn't like the feel of the weather. It was too quiet, too still. Nothing stirred, but the sky had an eerie hue to it and an aura that she could only describe as alive, although the clouds didn't appear to be moving.

Joining McKinnon at the car, she asked, "Can we beat it home?"

"I hope so." Just three words, but she knew he doubted it. "Would you like me to drive?"

"No thanks, if it's okay with you. When I'm nervous, I prefer to have something to do. And I don't mind telling you I'm nervous." As she finished speaking, the radio crackled and the announcer advised them that the warnings had been updated to tornado alerts for Central and Eastern Ontario, to be in effect until at least nine p.m.

Ten miles down the road, Charly suddenly started to shiver. It wasn't cold in the vehicle, and she

knew it had nothing to do with the temperature. She had had these warnings before. Stopping the car, she turned to McKinnon and said, "Please don't ask any questions and please don't interrupt me for a few minutes. There's something I have to take care of. Just bear with me."

Closing her eyes, she took a couple of deep breaths, and forced herself to relax totally. Years of meditation practice enabled her to shut out all exterior influences and clear her mind. Envisioning the vehicle, T. G. and herself, she imagined a huge golden, impenetrable bubble around the car. She held the thought in her mind, and as a great sense of peace came over her, she opened her eyes. McKinnon was staring transfixed at her. Come to think of it, he had cause. To suddenly stop driving, ask him to be quiet and then sit back with her eyes shut, must make him think she was losing her sanity.

"Can I ask what that was all about?" He was still staring at her, a frown wrinkling his brow. Before she could form an answer, she saw his expression change and heard him swear. The SUV was filled with an unearthly roaring, and as they watched, trees slammed down into the road in front of them. The car rocked in the force of the wind and rain, as it drove against them. Turning to look behind, she couldn't see a thing. The windows were streaming with water and the roar of the wind was deafening.

Looking over at McKinnon, she saw the white line around his mouth and his clenched fist as it rested on the dash. Feeling sudden compassion for him, she placed her hand on his thigh for a moment. "It's okay, McKinnon. We won't be harmed."

"How can you know that? Why aren't you terrified? Why did you stop the car when you did? We almost got wiped out." His words came out jerky and grim at the same time.

"I can't explain it right now. Maybe later. Just believe me that we're going to be safe. The storm won't touch us." She quickly withdrew her hand from his thigh.

As though to give credence to her words, the rain began to slacken, and the wind came in bursts. With visibility now returned, they looked out and couldn't believe the devastation around them. Large trees and small had been uprooted and were flung every which way, some in front of the car, some behind it, but none touching it. They could see a swath cut through the bush and it seemed to part, and go around the car, then continue on. McKinnon stared at her for long moments. He looked outside again at the destruction and then looked back at her. "I don't know what you did just now, but I have a feeling I owe you my life. How did you know you should stop the car? I didn't hear a thing."

"Please don't ask me right now, McKinnon. I don't have time. I have to let my mother know I'm okay. No interruptions, please."

"You can't do that. We don't have a phone signal here."

"Please, no questions." Once more, she did her deep breathing, cleared her mind, and concentrated on sending her mother the knowledge that she was safe. Letting the thought go, she waited a few seconds until she felt the message had been received, then opened her eyes, only to see him staring at her again.

"Are you a witch?"

"No, McKinnon. I'm not a witch. And I really will try to explain later. But right now, I think we should try to figure out what to do next. Unless I'm mistaken, we're going to be here for some time, like maybe all night."

Opening the car door, he stepped out and looked around. The rain had stopped as quickly as it had come, and only a few gusts of wind swirled around him. Charly got out and looked around too. It was unbelievable. The road was blocked in both directions, with many fallen trees, and she knew they wouldn't be able to clear it.

CHAPTER THREE

"I'm afraid your estimation of the situation is right, Miss Benson. We'll be here for the night." He didn't look in the least happy at the prospect.

Knowing it would be a long night in the confines of her small SUV, Charly suggested they stay outside for a while and stretch their legs while they could. The storm had abated totally, although there was still a low cloud cover moving rapidly overhead.

"Let's climb over the trees and have a look at the road on the other side. Are you game?"

She challenged him with the question, knowing it was a bit unfair because he was again wearing dress pants, shirt, tie, blazer and loafers.

"Oh yes, I'm game, Miss Benson. Let's go."

Progress was slow as they tried to make their way over and under and around trunks and branches of trees. Some still had roots attached with earth clinging to them, torn from the ground like matchsticks. Finally crawling through to the far side of the blockage, they stood looking up the road to another mess of trees in the distance, also blocking the road.

"One night here may be a slightly optimistic estimate, Miss Benson." McKinnon had his hands in his pockets and, as she was just behind him, she had a good chance to admire his firm hips, the material of his trousers stretched tightly across them.

Moving up beside him, she suggested hopefully, "Maybe the other side isn't so badly blocked. Want to come and see?"

"Why not? There really isn't much else to do. Besides, we're already quite wet from climbing

around this mess. Or hadn't you noticed?"

She hadn't, not until he mentioned it. And suddenly Charly began to wonder at the wisdom of her actions. The temperature had dropped considerably with the arrival of the tornado and it would be a long night. Making their way back to the car was a bit easier and once there, she changed her mind about exploring further. In fact, the car was beginning to seem like a better place to be, with every passing minute.

Once inside, she started the engine and turned the heater on full power. Then she fiddled with the radio until she found the Belleville station. As news of the devastation reached them, they listened in silence, each wondering and worrying about their own family and friends. The reports made no mention of the Isle. Most of the damage was to the northeast end of the city and outlying areas. There had been no fatalities reported as yet and, on the whole, it seemed less severe than the Barrie tornado.

"Well, I guess I can assume my property is safe. What about your family?"

"South west end of the city. I imagine they're safe if they were at home."

"Well, Miss Benson, where would you like to dine this evening? I was going to take you out to dinner to celebrate your new position as our Farm Inspector, but it looks like that will have to wait. By the way, you are good at your job and you will be an asset to the company. My apologies for the rough time I gave you the other day, but there were extenuating circumstances."

"Apologies accepted and I thank you. Getting this position means a great deal to me, Mr. McKinnon, and I won't let you or the company down. As to dinner, all is not lost."

Climbing out of the SUV, she went to the back and removed her 'care' package, as she called it. Her Dad had presented it to her when she had bought the vehicle and she had carried it around ever since. There was an auto rug, a sleeping bag, and a box. She tossed the rug and sleeping bag into the second seat and carried the box back to the driver's seat with her.

"This is one advantage of being an only child and female. Fathers tend to worry more and be more protective."

Shutting off the car engine, she took out four cans of drinks - grape, V-8, apple and orange. Next was a large bottle of dried fruit and nuts, and lastly, another large bottle jammed with granola bars, still in their wrappers.

"Dinner is served, Mr. McKinnon. If there's any danger that we'll be here much beyond breakfast, we'll have to conserve this stuff, but at least we won't go hungry. Sorry I can't provide a hot meal."

"Believe me, Miss Benson, this looks like a royal feast. I'm not very good at going to bed hungry. By the way, can you drop the Mr. McKinnon and call me T. G.? Formality seems a bit ludicrous under the circumstances, don't you think?"

Glancing at him, she was surprised to see a genuine smile lighting his face. The change in him was quite remarkable, as though the storm had released him from some emotional prison.

"As you wish, T. G., although I've been thinking of you as McKinnon for three days now, so I may slip once in a while."

"Just McKinnon? No Mr.? How unprofessional, Miss Benson!"

Not only smiling, but almost actually flirting. Really, she thought, he's coming to life with a vengeance.

"Which kind of juice would you like, T. G.?" she asked, and smiled when he chose the grape.

"Maybe I can imagine it's a very young wine. And you?"

"Oh, I'm definitely a V-8 person. If I had made up this box, it would have been all V-8. Although I suppose one could get tired of that, given a long enough period of isolation. And that reminds me; I must have a word with dear old Dad. By putting this stuff in my car, he set up the expectation of my becoming stranded and maybe even caused it. He should know better at his age. Oh well, I guess I can forgive him this time."

"I won't pretend to understand what you just said, Charly, but I thank your Dad from the bottom of my heart. I'm starving."

"Why don't you remove your tie, unbutton a couple of buttons on that shirt, and act like you are home by your fire, relaxing?" Shaking a handful of fruit and nuts out for herself, she offered him the jar, adding, "You do have a fireplace at home, don't you?"

"I do, yes. But how did you know that?"

"Because you look like a fireplace person." Popping a cashew in her mouth, she watched as he pulled off the tie and stuffed it into his blazer pocket. He unbuttoned three buttons on his shirt, giving her a glimpse of a hair-darkened chest and a gold chain gleaming at his neck. Finding their relationship changing a little too rapidly for her liking, Charly began to ask him questions about the company she now worked for. He answered freely enough, until she came to one that threw him.

"Why did your last inspector leave, T. G.?"

She felt him stiffen beside her before the question was completed and knew somehow she had entered forbidden territory. He was silent for so long she was sure he wasn't going to answer, then began to speak.

"He was fired. You see, Miss Benson, he was spending time inspecting my dear wife when he was supposed to be out inspecting farms. When he left, she went with him. End of story."

"Oh, McKinnon, I'm sorry. I wouldn't have dreamed of asking if I'd known." Charly wished with all her heart that she'd done some research into the directors before now. She felt as though

she were a Peeping Tom, looking into his life in a way that was none of her business.

"Don't be sorry, Charly. I'm only telling you this because you're going to hear it from someone else, and I'd like you to know the truth. The marriage was a mistake from the start. We were both too young and didn't have any idea what we were getting into. I wanted children, she wanted to party. He wasn't the first man she'd had an affair with, but it was the first time she was so blatantly indiscreet."

He chewed on a piece of dried apple, then continued, "Anyway, we've been divorced for a year now, and except for the anger that remains at her betrayal, I'm much happier living alone."

Tearing the wrapper from a granola bar, he bit a chunk off, then asked, "What about that diamond on your left hand? I've bared my soul. Now it's your turn. Besides, I have an idea about it and I'd like to know if I'm right."

Charly shifted slightly to try and get more comfortable. Damn small vehicles anyway!

"First I want to ask you something, McKinnon. You picked those first three files because they were the ones most likely to cause me problems, didn't you?" Her question was more curious than accusatory.

He grinned as he answered her. "Guilty. I figured if you could handle Baker and a couple of young wives, you'd make it. I was right."

"Then you should know the ring is for the benefit of the young wives. It belonged to my Grandmother. I didn't come into this job with my eyes closed, and I knew hostile wives could be a problem. The ring won't pacify them all, but it will help a little."

"What about lecherous men? Have you thought of that?"

"Oh, yes. And prepared for it too. There was a very good Judo school in Hamilton and I've got my black belt. I'm not concerned."

Although it was too dark to see now, Charly felt his opinion of her rise several notches. Finishing her granola bar and V-8, she tidied away the food. Reaching across in front of McKinnon, she took the flashlight from the glove compartment.

"Okay, T. G., who's first for the bathroom? It's quite large, really, but doesn't have a shower."

Giggling, she corrected her statement quickly. "Well, it did have, but we've missed it."

"Judo or not, I'll go first, if you don't mind. God knows what the storm stirred up in the bush.

He climbed out of the car and she realized it was much colder now.

While he was gone, Charly tipped the seats back as far as they would go, thankful for the recliners. She placed the rug on his and pulled the sleeping bag up to hers. After all, he had a blazer. She just had her long-sleeved jumpsuit.

When he returned, she took the flashlight from him and asked, "Any beasties out there?"

"None that I could see, but don't be long. This is rabies country."

"Thanks, McKinnon. You really know how to put a person's mind at rest. See you."

The jumpsuit she had found so comfortable and professional now became a thorough nuisance as she tried to keep it out of the wet bushes. And the air was cold! She returned to the car in record time, to find McKinnon stretched out on his reclining seat, his blazer off and folded for a pillow. He had also removed his shoes and had spread the blanket over his legs. His shirt sleeves were rolled back to his elbows, and in spite of the cramped quarters, he looked quite comfortable.

"This hotel isn't bad, Miss Benson. I might even give it three stars in my review."

"It isn't morning yet, McKinnon, so don't be too hasty. The beds don't leave much room for tossing and turning. In fact, I think it would be safe to say turning is probably out of the question."

Removing her shoes, Charly settled herself into her sleeping bag, trying to get comfortable under the steering wheel.

"You have more room than I have, T. G., but you also have more body to arrange, so I guess we're even."

It was dark now, and Charly could see nothing. She was quite comfortable in her sleeping bag, and having company while she was stranded was an extra bonus. He really was quite human.

"It's too early to sleep yet, Charly, so how about telling me what you were doing during the storm? I've been very patient up until now."

"Agreed. You have been patient and I knew you were going to ask, but I still don't know how much or how little I'm going to tell you. It just isn't something I'm comfortable talking about to most people."

"Why don't you just start at the beginning and see what happens? Believe me, I'll be an attentive audience, as well as a captive one."

"Okay, McKinnon. But please remember, this isn't easy for me. How much do you know about metaphysics?"

"You mean séances, witchcraft, black magic, and stuff like that?"

"No, I don't. I mean dream analysis, reincarnation, spiritual realm as an actual part of the physical realm, telepathy, etc."

"I read a bit about it years ago, but I discarded most of it as someone's fantasy. With the exception of reincarnation, that is. I need more information, but it makes sense to me."

"Well, when I was about five, my parents joined a metaphysical study group. They brought home a series of instruction cassette tapes on meditation, dream analyses, holistic healing, etc., and played them over and over. I guess I absorbed a great deal of it, because I began having precognitive dreams when I was about seven. They were about fires, plane crashes, car accidents and stuff like

that. The dreams usually happened about a week before the incident. When I would hear about it, I would become very upset, I guess thinking that I should have been able to prevent them from happening. But I never knew where they were taking place, just that they were going to happen." "My parents started taking me to the meetings so that I could better understand what was occurring. Soon the precognitive dreams stopped, but not the other dreams. I learned how to analyze the symbols in my dreams so that I could understand my behaviour and change what needed changing. I also was able to get answers to questions or problems through dream analysis. It's just too vast a subject for me to get into right now, but you spend one third of your life sleeping and a great deal of that time dreaming. There is so much knowledge and understanding to be gained from dreams, you couldn't begin to guess at the extent of the benefits."

"I think the single most important thing that I learned from the study group was the fact that thoughts on the physical plane are deeds, or things, on the spiritual one. I know it sounds fantastic and a very difficult concept to grasp without the background study, but it's the basis for what I was doing this afternoon."

"First of all, I stopped the car because I suddenly got a cold chill. To me, that meant that we were in extreme danger. Now comes the part you'll have trouble with. I simply put myself into a meditative state, something else I learned at a very young age, and envisioned a large, golden ball of light energy around the car, you and I. I held the thought for a minute or so. It's a bit like generating a positive force field, but there's no way I can prove that it works. My parents and I have been doing this for years, during blizzards, when one of us was going on a trip, and we've never been in accidents. Makes us feel good anyway. Today was the first real demonstration of a positive reaction."

Pausing, she glanced at him then asked, "Have I thoroughly confused you?"

"Not entirely, but you've certainly given me a great deal to think about. I may get my books out and have another look at them. It sounds like an interesting way to spend a rainy day."

"That's the funny thing about it, McKinnon. If your mind accepts the theories, it becomes a way of life and you find every aspect of your life changes. It becomes impossible to lie, cheat, or hurt anyone in any way, by thought, word, or deed. I was so young when I was introduced to it all, I just assumed that everybody knew and practiced these things. But when I tried to talk to the other kids at school, they laughed at me. Up until today, I haven't discussed it with anyone but my parents. Thanks for listening. It was good to talk about it."

"So one might say you are a good witch?"

"You're really determined to make me out to be a witch, aren't you, McKinnon? Okay, here's some witchcraft for you. Think of something you want, but don't tell me what it is. As soon as you

get home tomorrow, write it out on a piece of paper and seal the paper in an envelope with the date on it. Then write on another piece of paper the following words: My conscious mind accepts the fact that I desire and deserve the following: then you add whatever it is that you want. And it can be anything from changing a bad habit to acquiring a gold watch. When you write it out be sure to write 'I have', not 'I want', as though it were already a fact.

"Now, for the next thirty-three days, you write the same thing out just before going to sleep. Then wait for the results. One thing it is especially good for is training yourself to remember your dreams."

"Here's another exercise for you. Sit back, close your eyes, and follow my instructions. You are about to be introduced to the most powerful force on the planet. It's called the Universal Law of Attraction and it applies to all of us, all of the time."

"Imagine that there is a powerful magnet in the core of you. Whether it carries a positive or a negative charge depends on you – your thoughts - but mostly your feelings. Then imagine that the Universe is a huge shopping mall. You can have anything you want – good health, money, healthy relationships, new car, or new furniture. You are only limited by your feelings of self-worth, your imagination and your ability to believe."

"Suppose you'd like to have twenty-five thousand dollars. Visualize a big bubble. Inside of the bubble, see yourself holding a cheque for twenty-five thousand dollars. See the big smile on your face, feel the happy feeling in your gut."

"You have just created an event that will take place, depending on how badly you want it and provided you keep your inner magnet positively charged. Once a day, take a couple of minutes to visualize the bubble again and feel the excitement holding that cheque will bring to you. See a shimmering green light like the Northern Lights, surrounding the bubble, becoming stronger and bigger each time you practice the procedure. Then thank the Universe for giving it to you, as though you already have it, and let it go. It isn't your responsibility to figure out how this will come about – that's the job of the Universe. It is only up to you to feel worthy and to believe. You can open your eyes now."

"One of the quickest and best ways to generate and maintain a positive charge on your internal magnet is to give gratitude and thanks, once a day, for at least seven things for which you are grateful. What you focus on is what you bring to yourself, be it poverty or wealth, illness or good health, sadness or happiness. The Law of Attraction is always working so we must be aware of what we are bringing to ourselves."

"When it comes to health, anything is fixable, using only your mind. I know that sounds totally

unbelievable, but there are many documented cases where people have cured themselves of 'incurable' diseases, without medical intervention. When you know that your entire body is composed of completely new cells approximately every seven years, it stands to reason that you can replace diseased cells with healthy ones, simply by focusing on health rather than illness. As the diseased cells are replaced with healthy ones, your general condition gradually improves, until you are well. The trick is to focus on health, give no thought or energy to the illness and give thanks daily for the healing."

"Anyway, I think that's more than enough for one lesson. We had better get some sleep in case we have a ten-mile walk in the morning."

"I suppose you're right, but it isn't going to be easy after everything you've told me. My mind is busy trying to process it all."

Settling herself more comfortably, Charly yawned, stretched and muttered, "Shut up, McKinnon." The day had been long and exhausting, but now she was warm, comfortable and happy, and ready to go to sleep.

"Goodnight to you too, Charly." He also shifted to try and settle more comfortably. Silence settled over them.

Charly was just beginning to doze off when she began to feel her body come alive with sexual feelings and sensations. She had been thinking about the people who were now homeless from the tornado and about the cleanup that would take days and weeks. So she knew that the thoughts were coming from McKinnon. She tried to shut her mind off, but it was useless. As her desire grew, she could almost imagine him making love to her, and the warmth that began to flash through her body threatened to make her do something she would regret in the morning. Knowing she had to stop him immediately, she turned her head in his direction, and spoke softly.

"McKinnon, are you awake?"

"Hmm. You want something?" She could tell from his response that he had been on the verge of sleep.

Clearing her throat, she pulled her thoughts together. "There are a couple of other things I should have told you, McKinnon. As I just told you, we all have energy fields, magnetic energy. There are about thirty-six different frequencies of energy. When two people are properly mated, their energy fields balance and enhance each other. I have reason to believe we are on complimentary wavelengths, McKinnon. I also should have told you that psychic energy and sexual energy are so similar that the difference between them is almost non-existent."

Sighing, she asked, "Would you please shut your mind down, or think about something else? For some reason, I'm picking up images from you - no specifics, just general feelings. It's not

exactly conducive to sleep. And I apologize for intruding, but occasionally these things happen and I have no control over them."

"You really are a witch. But the fact that I was thinking about making love to you is mostly your fault. You walked around in front of me wearing tight denims, and you let your glorious hair tumble down your back when you knew I was watching. I'm sorry for keeping you awake, but believe me, I was having a good time."

"Oh, I believe you, McKinnon. I was there as well. Remember? Anyway, go to sleep. We'll maybe discuss this further another time."

Once more, quiet settled over the car. Charly closed her eyes and settled down more snugly into her sleeping bag. Then she just had to say one more thing.

"You're an okay guy, McKinnon."

"So are you, Charly. So are you."

CHAPTER FOUR

Waking to a bright and sunny morning, Charly immediately looked over at McKinnon, to find that he was watching her with a half-smile on his face.

"Hi, Witch," he said softly.

"Hi, yourself," she answered, grinning, aware that she felt no embarrassment over last night's mind reading. Her hair had come loose in the night, and she could feel his eyes wandering over it as it lay in a tangled mass around her shoulders.

"Would you mind if we bring the Caddy next time?"

"Not at all, but can we come up with a less destructive excuse for being stranded?"

Leering at her, McKinnon drawled, "I could always run out of gas."

"To get down to business, how long before we get dug out of here, do you think?"

"Well, I suggest we take a hike back down the road after breakfast and see how extensive the damage is there. We already know it's very bad ahead of us."

McKinnon had thrown off the rug, straightened the seat up and was replacing his shoes. "Guess you don't have any shaving gear with you, huh?"

"Just one more reason why you should have hired a man." She smiled at him, enjoying the opportunity to tease him.

"No thanks. I'm becoming used to our little female Inspector."

The blockage on the road behind the car was almost as bad as the one in front. After some discussion, they decided they might as well wait it out. As though it was a signal that they had

made the right decision, a helicopter flew over, circled back and dipped at them, to let them know they'd been seen. When they had struggled back through the fallen trees to the car, Charly opened her briefcase and removed a couple of sheets of blank paper.

"Know how to play battleships, McKinnon?"

"Sure. But it's been about twenty years since I last did it."

"No problem. Make your grid with ten squares, numbered from 1 to 10 across the top and A to J down the side. I think it's a 5-square destroyer, a 4-square submarine, and a couple of little 3-square something-or-others."

"Okay. First one to sink all the other's boats wins, right?"

"Right."

They settled down to play, concentrating on the game and the battle of wits. But Charly had forgotten how much in tune with each other they were, and realized almost immediately that McKinnon was reading her mind to pick off her boats, just as she was reading his. The first game ended almost as quickly as it had begun.

"So McKinnon, you not only send messages telepathically, you receive them as well. I told you we were compatible. Now we will have to create new strategies." Charly figured she still had an advantage over McKinnon because she had often tried to use her mental powers in games before with more than a little success. But this time, she couldn't believe it when he sank all of her boats in record time. She had only one hit on his boats and one small one sunk.

"How did you do that?"

"Pure logic. I knew you'd be concentrating on blank squares, so I ignored what I was picking up from you. Then I simply concentrated on my boats, hoping you'd assume that I was thinking of blank squares as well."

"Very clever, McKinnon, very clever. Want to try one more?"

But the next game never happened, for just then they heard clearly the sound of a heavy engine. Charly watched as McKinnon helped the road crew clear the trees with chain saws and axes. She would have offered to help as well, but knew they would refuse. When one of the workers commented on the fact that they had been very fortunate, Charly threw a warning glance at McKinnon, and he just agreed that they had indeed been fortunate.

The drive back to Picton seemed to pass very quickly. There was such a sense of kinship with McKinnon now that Charly found it very difficult to remember he was her superior, although the manager was her immediate boss. They had established a close rapport last night, and it was impossible to go back to their former sterile relationship.

It seemed that McKinnon felt the same way. "I want you to promise me something, Charly. I

won't be going out inspecting with you any more, so if you have problems with anyone, I want you to let me know immediately. We've told the office staff not to take any verbal abuse from anyone - clients or brokers. So now I'm telling you the same thing. If anyone gives you a hard time about their insurance, you refer them to the manager or one of us. Just don't let them be rude to you. You'll be a little more exposed to that kind of thing than the girls in the office, so you'll have more difficulty dealing with it. They can always hang up the phone. Promise?"

"Promise, McKinnon. And thanks. I won't deny that there will be problems of that nature. I saw it yesterday. But if I go out without the expectation of running into it, it won't happen."

"More witchcraft?"

"No, just positive thinking, another thing that works very powerfully, if people but knew it. As I told you before, thoughts are things, so you do bring to yourself whatever you focus upon."

Looking over at her with a half-grin, McKinnon said, "Will you have dinner with me in the near future, Charly? Call it a belated celebration of your hiring, but really I want to talk to you more about these things."

"Perhaps. I expect we'll be too busy for a while, though. There's going to be a lot of cleaning up to deal with. And I imagine your Claims Adjustor will be run off his feet for the next while." Her words proved to be very true. Everyone in the office was pressed into service as information was gathered, assembled, and claims were sorted out and dealt with. Most of the storm victims had found shelter by the time Charly and McKinnon had returned to civilization.

Friday afternoon she was just leaving the office when she saw McKinnon walking towards her. Pausing on the steps, she waited for him to reach her.

"How are you holding up, Charly?"

"Fine, McKinnon. I heard you were busy working with the cleanup crews. How are they progressing?"

"Quite well. Hydro and phones have been restored, most of the streets are open now, and people are beginning to think about rebuilding. But there's still plenty to do. I'd like to take you out for that dinner tonight, if you are free."

"I could be, I guess. I'll need an hour to go home and get changed. What did you have in mind?"

"Something relaxed and quiet in Belleville. I've already got reservations for eight."

Grinning at her, he continued, "You see I'm psychic too. I knew you'd say yes. I'll pick you up at seven-thirty."

"Don't get too sure of yourself, McKinnon. I might turn you into a frog."

"The sooner the better, little witch. Then you'll be obliged to kiss me to get rid of the spell. See

you later." And he ran down the steps to his car, before she could think of a suitable retort. Charly dressed carefully for her dinner date. She had to admit that she was excited about the prospect of dining with him. She enjoyed their conversations and the feeling of understanding that was developing between them.

When McKinnon arrived, he came in and visited with her parents for a few minutes. Charly admired the easy way he had with them and the fact that he appeared in no hurry to run off with her.

Driving to Belleville, he commented on how comfortable her parents' home seemed to be. She wondered if he was unconsciously comparing it to his own, before his divorce. If what he had said about his wife was true, she was sure his home must have been anything but relaxing.

When the wine he ordered had been brought to the table, he toasted 'our new little Inspector' and somehow Charly didn't mind being called little. It had often annoyed her in the past, especially during her school years.

Once again, the restaurant lived up to expectations, and they talked little as they dined on escargot, filet mignon, baked potato and asparagus tips. As they relaxed over Spanish coffee, though, they fell into easy conversation, like old friends meeting after a lengthy separation.

"So, Little Farm Inspector, have you run into any problems yet?"

"Hardly, McKinnon. I've been helping in the office since we got home the other day. But I do have a problem. Can you tell me of any houses to rent, preferably out in the country? I want to get out on my own now that I'm gainfully employed."

"You really are a witch, Charly. And there's nothing you can say now that will convince me otherwise." He was staring at her again, with an expression of amused bafflement.

"What made you say that? I just asked if you knew of a house I could rent." She frowned at him, confused.

"Remember what you told me about writing out something I wanted every night for thirty-three nights?" Charly had forgotten, but she smiled and asked, "What's that got to do with anything?" "Open this and read it." Taking a small envelope from his inside breast pocket, he handed it to her. Wednesday's date was written on the outside of it and the envelope was sealed.

"You sure you want me to open this?"

"Indeed, I do. In fact, I wish you would hurry up."

Shrugging her shoulders, Charly tore the end from the envelope. She pulled out a slip of paper and unfolded it. The words jumped from the page.

'I have a responsible, reliable tenant for the dwelling on my second farm', the affirmation stated, written in a bold hand. She read it, then read it again.

"Now do you see what I mean? Pure witchcraft. The house was obviously meant for you."

He looked at her with an accusatory grin. "I thought you said this would take thirty-three days."

"Usually, but not always. It depends on the circumstances, your ability to believe, and the needs of any other people involved in your request." She stopped speaking suddenly and then asked, "Are you saying that you have accommodation for me?"

"Available immediately, reasonable rent, major appliances included, and all utilities paid. The former owners spent most of their capital fixing up the house. It's a thirty-year old bungalow, and they renovated it completely. Then they had a couple of poor years with their cash crops, and finally had to think about declaring bankruptcy. I happened to hear that they were in trouble, so offered to buy them out for a fair market price. They accepted, and there I was with a beautiful second home sitting empty. I was almost ready to pay someone to look after it for me. When can you move in?"

"How about Sunday afternoon? I don't have much except my clothes and a few necessary items like bed, kitchen table and chairs, and my computer and desk, left over from my apartment days in Guelph. I think my mother has some furniture she's been saving in the basement for a few years in case I ever did move out."

"Would you like me to help with the move? I have a truck we can use."

"That's one offer I won't even hesitate over. Of course, you can help. I'm sure my Dad will be very appreciative. Now, tell me all about the house. How many bedrooms, is there a den, laundry, what colour are the carpets? I can't wait to see it." It was just beginning to sink in that she would soon have her own home and she was getting more excited by the moment.

"That's no problem. I'll take you over for a grand tour right now, if you like."

"Oh, believe me, I like!" She was impatient to be off.

The house was all he had said and more. It was very apparent to her that the former owners had spent a great deal of money, because the wiring was newly updated, and the oil furnace had been removed and replaced with a heat pump and electric furnace. All of the rooms had been recently decorated in a colonial theme with warm autumn colours predominating. She hurried from one room to the next, inspecting everything, and by the time she reached the den in the basement and found the fireplace, she felt like she had truly come home.

The room was painted with a hint of rose, a cream rug on the floor. Off to one side was a small powder room and laundry. The washer and dryer looked new. The main floor had three bedrooms, bathroom, large country kitchen and living room. She already knew which bedroom would be her office and which one she would sleep in.

McKinnon followed her around, taking pleasure in her delight. He stood now, hands in pockets,

watching her as she flitted from room to room.

"Would you consider selling this house, McKinnon? You could sever a lot for me, because I wouldn't want the land."

"Why don't you just live in it for a while and think about it, Charly? We can always set up a rent-to-purchase agreement, subject to severance, if that's what you'd like."

"Would you do that? I guess when I think about it, I'm not in any position to buy until I pay back a couple of loans. But that won't take long, and then I'll be asking you again." She still had trouble believing her good fortune.

McKinnon had perched himself on the edge of the bow window and his legs were extended in front of him, crossed at the ankles. His hands were again in his trouser pockets, and his suit jacket was open.

Coming over to stand beside him, she had her hands in her pockets as well. Pockets that she had hidden in the seams of her long dress. It was light emerald green velvet with leg-of-mutton sleeves, high lace-trimmed collar, and tight-fitting waist. The long skirt was A-line and the dress was one of her favourites. She'd had many compliments on it but few people were aware that she had made it herself. She had chosen to wear her hair loose, pulled up on the sides and secured with rhinestone combs. It fell in waves to her waist behind. She knew the dress gave her an old-fashioned air.

"How can I thank you, McKinnon? This is like a dream come true for me."

"You mean you haven't been writing down every night for thirty-three nights that you have a house just like this one?"

"No, I'm afraid not. So far, it was just a thought. But then, thoughts are things, so here's my house!" She twirled around in delight, taking in the kitchen cupboards, new stove and fridge, and the braided rug where her table and chairs would sit.

She stopped short when she felt McKinnon's hand on her shoulder.

"About the thanks you were going to give me. It's strange, but I feel like a frog. Do I look like a frog to you?"

He had turned her to face him, and she looked up at his warm smile.

"I'm catching the drift, McKinnon, and I'm thinking I should probably go home and pack now. Besides, you look a bit more like a wolf than a frog at the moment."

His hand was still on her shoulder, and he lifted her chin with his fingers. Tipping her face up, he bent over and kissed her lightly on the lips.

"Never a wolf with you, Little Witch. I just wanted to see if the reality came near to the dream. That little sample told me all I wanted to know." Stepping back, he said matter-of-factly, "Time

to go, I guess."

Charly was still standing, rooted to the spot. The thought had crossed her mind in the past few days that if she and McKinnon continued to see each other, at some point he would probably try to kiss her. She just wasn't prepared for it yet.

Grinning at her, he said, "Coming, Charly?"

Moving towards the door, she blushed and answered, "Coming, McKinnon."

Saturday passed like a whirlwind as she packed all of her things, chattered endlessly to her mother about her new house, and watched boxes pile up near the door, ready for moving. Her mother had a hide-a-bed sofa and chair for her den, and furniture for her second bedroom. Charly had also arranged for a telephone to be hooked up on Friday. She would have to buy office and living room furniture, but it would give her a good excuse to go to auction sales on the weekend.

McKinnon showed up with his truck just after lunch on Sunday and they soon had it loaded. Her parents followed in their car and the afternoon sped by as they arranged furniture and unpacked boxes. Charly was aware that McKinnon had had someone come in and clean the house thoroughly yesterday. It had been musty the day before, but now it sparkled and smelled like it had been well aired.

It was late when they finished, and Charly was surprised when McKinnon accepted her mother's invitation to dine with them. The distance wasn't far and she knew this pleased her parents. They had missed her during her five years of school in Western Ontario and were happy that she was once more close to home.

She was curious to see if McKinnon would mention anything about metaphysics to her parents, but he kept the conversation firmly on farming and she guessed that he wasn't yet comfortable discussing it with anyone but herself.

"Well, Mom, I hate to break this up, but I've got work tomorrow, so I'd better get home." She laughed, and then added, "It seems funny to be saying that, but frankly, I can't wait to get back and see my house again."

Her Dad came over and handed her an envelope. "You can open this when you get there, Charly. It's a little something

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in celebration of your new job." He put his arm around her and gave her a hug. "Don't forget to come and visit."

"Thanks, Dad. I won't."

McKinnon followed her home in his truck and went inside with her. "So you think you can live happily in your new surroundings?"

"Oh, McKinnon, do you even need to ask? How could anyone not be happy here?" As an afterthought, she asked, "Would you like a coffee? I think I have all the requirements."

"Okay. But I have to check on something downstairs. I'll do that now."

When the coffee was ready, McKinnon still hadn't come up. Setting up a tray, she decided to take it down, since that's where the sofa was.

As soon as she opened the door to the basement, she could hear the snapping of the logs in the fireplace and knew he had made her a fire.

"I got the feeling you were a fireplace person, too, Charly." McKinnon was kneeling on the rug by the fire, his jeans outlining his muscular body. The sleeves of his red wool sweater were pushed above the elbow and he looked quite at home.

Setting the tray down, she smiled at him. "You are right, McKinnon. I'm very much a fireplace person. In fact, I may set up my office down here, so I can work by the fire."

"Well, there's lots of wood piled by the fence out back. Help yourself."

"Oh, my God, McKinnon!" Clapping her hand over her mouth, Charly dropped on to the sofa.

"What's the matter?" He came over and sat beside her, alarmed at her pallor.

"I just realized I never asked you what the rent was going to be. How much, McKinnon? I've got to find out before I get any more comfortable. I can't believe I did this!"

"Don't scare me like that, Charly. I thought something was really wrong!" Relaxing, he stretched out his legs and put his arm along the back of the sofa behind her head.

"How much, McKinnon?" Of all the things she had done in her life, this was definitely the craziest. The amount he named was so ridiculously low, she wasn't sure she had heard correctly.

"But I paid almost twice that much for a two-bedroom apartment in the city."

"Forget it, Charly - end of discussion. Where's that coffee?"

Passing him his cup, she settled down beside him, only to feel the letter her Dad had given her crinkling in her pocket. She pulled it out and tore it open. After scanning it quickly, she turned in great excitement to McKinnon.

"Do you believe this, McKinnon? He's paid off all of my student loans and written off the loan he gave for my SUV. He says if I had been a spoiled brat, he wouldn't have done it. He also says he doesn't need the money, so I might as well have the use of some of it now, rather than waiting until he dies. What a guy!"

Sipping her coffee, she put the cup down and started talking again. "Do you know what this means,

McKinnon? I can buy this place as soon as you sever..."

"Shut up, Charly. You talk too much." And suddenly she was in his arms, his coffee-scented lips firm and warm on hers.

CHAPTER FIVE

Tucking her in close to his side, under his arm, McKinnon pushed the hair back from her face.

"Now tell me how this thirty-three day thing works."

Charly had barely caught her breath from the kiss. It had been extremely pleasant and quite unexpected. He was an incredibly good kisser - sensitive, sensuous and gentle all at once. Jerking herself back to his question, she quickly assembled her thoughts.

"As I understand it, we are composed of three main parts - conscious, subconscious and superconscious." She looked up from the fire into his face, the brown eyes fixed steadily and attentively on her. She noted idly how long his lashes were, the slight curl to them.

"Carry on. You're doing fine. Sounds like basic psychology."

"When you first fall asleep, your conscious mind needs to rest, so it steps aside and your subconscious, which doesn't need rest or sleep, begins to take over. It reviews the past forty-eight hours and the coming forty-eight hours, decides if changes should be made, what errors were made that should be corrected, and what is required for the next day or two. If you remember, and analyze, your dreams, you will be given direction from your subconscious and superconscious, which will assist you in your daily living. The subconscious and super conscious are never wrong, but they have to send messages in symbols so that the conscious mind disregards it, because it doesn't understand it, and therefore can't interfere."

McKinnon had picked up her left hand and was idly playing with her Grandmother's ring. She found she enjoyed the warmth of his fingers touching her skin.

"Are you still with me?"

"Sure am. But where does the superconscious and the thirty-three days come in?"

"The superconscious is your highest self and retains the memory of what it was you wanted to work on for soul development in this lifetime. It reviews your actions and choices and sends messages through profound dreams that occur in the deep sleep phase. These dreams usually are so different from your average dreams that they make a definite impression on you. Often they instruct you to do something you normally wouldn't consider. But remember, it is never wrong. And it is in agreement with your subconscious when it gives you directions, so the choice was actually yours, though you were unaware of making it. You still following me?"

"What about the thirty-three days?"

"Thirty-three days is the normal human cycle. It takes thirty-three days from the inception of a thought to a completed decision - sort of like programming yourself. But in order to convert a thought into a reality, there must be agreement at all three levels. Since your conscious mind wants to retain control, you have to trick it. Thus, the thirty-three day cycle of writing down whatever it is you want. The act of writing it passes it directly to your subconscious and it can get on with figuring out how it is to be accomplished."

"Now for the most important part - the statement I told you to use earlier. If you don't write first that your conscious mind accepts the fact that you desire and deserve whatever it is you want, it will throw up all kinds of roadblocks and excuses why you shouldn't have it. It also sometimes feels that you aren't worthy, especially if you are asking for wealth and success. So you have to trick it. This is all related to the Universal Law of Attraction as well – what you focus on is what you get."

"And suppose I write down that I made love to you?"

"You can make affirmations involving other people if you like, but the important thing is your intent. You should also know that it isn't possible to make someone else do something they don't wish to do. If we were both in agreement at all three levels of our being, it would probably take place. But that involves another whole area of theory and it's getting late. I really do have to work tomorrow."

"Okay, good Little Witch. I'll let you get away with an evasive answer this time, but we'll discuss it further later. And that's a promise." He stood slowly, unwinding his length and stretching. She felt very small standing beside him.

With McKinnon's departure, the house seemed suddenly terribly empty. With no living room furniture to absorb the sound, her footsteps echoed as she walked down the hardwood hall floor to her bedroom.

Stripping down, she curled her toes in the deep pile of the carpet, enjoying the sensuous feeling of freedom that accompanied the knowledge that she was alone, totally, and could do as she pleased. Her accommodations during her student days had always been shared and there just wasn't the same sense of freedom in the city.

Smiling and humming softly, she went into the shower, still naked and feeling sinfully free. The water was warm, cascading down over her shoulders, breasts and hips. She relaxed under the soothing spray, giving herself up to the purely physical sensations. Dried and powdered, she again went naked out of the bathroom, across the kitchen and down to the fire to check on it before retiring. The logs were still smouldering and throwing heat out into the room, and she stood

soaking it into her skin, the glow warm on her body.

Twirling around on her toes, she was again humming as she climbed upstairs and went to bed. She slid in under the covers, enjoying the feel of the sheets sliding over her skin, slightly cool, the weight of the blanket promising warmth within minutes.

As she nestled down and began slipping into sleep, her body again started to tingle with sexual arousal, and she knew immediately it was coming from McKinnon. Lying still, she tried to block it out, but the feelings were too strong. Her breasts were throbbing and aching, her legs were becoming weak. Her reactions were so strong that she knew she would be picking up specifics from him very soon if she didn't stop him. Short of phoning him, there was little she could do unless...

Sitting up, yoga-like, she did her deep breathing, cleared her mind and then conjured up his image. When it was clear, she mentally took his face between her hands and began kissing him - eyelids, eyebrows, forehead, cheeks, chin, earlobes, and finally his mouth. She concentrated all of her mental energy on the sensations he would experience as her lips touched his, just a feather caress first, while her fingers pushed into his hair and exerted just enough pressure on his head to hold it right where she wanted it.

She could feel the excitement build in his body as she imagined her tongue, warm and moist, running over his lips, gently prying them open, touching his teeth. She could almost hear him gasp, as she slipped her tongue into his mouth to find his, kissing him with a slowly building passion that quickly brought him from passivity to active participation. It was at that moment that she suddenly realized McKinnon had somehow joined her in her fantasy and instead of being acted upon, was acting. He was transmitting just as powerfully as she was and she could no longer tell which thoughts were hers and which his. Nor could she shut him out. She was caught and she had to participate until he willed otherwise.

Falling back onto her pillow, she found that her hands were clasping her breasts tightly as her mind played scene after scene of flesh against flesh, breasts against hair-roughened chest, soft white thighs against dark muscular ones, feet entwined, toes curling and caressing in tune with tongue and lips. She could feel him kissing her body, inch by trembling inch, the heat building, blood racing, and realized there were tears in her eyes because it was just not real enough. But still he wouldn't let her go.

As she lay frustrated and exhausted, she had to acknowledge the fact that McKinnon had shown her very clearly that he was psychically her superior in every way. It frightened her because her own psychic energy had always been a fact shared only with her parents and totally under her own control. She had lost that control now and she didn't like the feeling.

The phone by the bed rang, startling her so much that she sat bolt upright, then grabbed the receiver.

"Hello?"

"Welcome home, Little Witch. Sleep well and sweet dreams." Click. The connection was broken. As she thought-fully replaced the receiver, she could hear echoes of the humour in his voice. So, he found it amusing, did he? But in spite of it all, she slept soundly.

As the days, then the weeks, passed, she was busier than she had ever been before in her life. She didn't see McKinnon, and her fantasy wasn't repeated, though it was never very far from her mind. Sometimes when she was settled in bed, she was tempted to send some energy to McKinnon, but the knowledge of his superior strength held her back.

She couldn't control her dreams when she was asleep, though, and many mornings she would awaken, aware of having had highly erotic dreams and that McKinnon was there with her. She had studied astral projection and knew it was possible to share dreams, but didn't want to explore it further just now.

As the time passed, the weather warmed up, leaves came out full, and flowers bloomed and died, to be replaced by other, later flowers. Charly was delighted to find a variety of blooms appearing and disappearing in her flowerbeds. She spent hours digging around them, pruning shrubs, and setting out some tomato plants amongst the flowers. Today was Friday, the end of June and she was going to inspect McKinnon's farm. Would he be there? Had he set out his file on purpose? Had someone else set it out? Maybe he didn't even know she was coming over.

She had taken special care with her appearance this morning. Her western boots were gleaming with polish, her jumpsuit was pressed with knife-blade sharpness, and her hair had been braided and coiled in a coronet. She had decided to leave McKinnon's farm until last, just in case he wanted to spend some time with her. It had puzzled her greatly that he had not attempted to see her since she had moved into his house. They had become so close in such a short time, like very old friends, and she just couldn't understand his continuing silence.

* * *

McKinnon had good reason for his distance from her. He had been in the feed mill one day waiting on an order to be filled when Joe Corrigan, a fellow director, and not one of his favourite people, came up to him.

"I hear you have our little Inspector tucked away in a nest in the country. Cozy. Following your wife's footsteps, are you?"

As his face turned beet red, McKinnon's fist bunched up and his body coiled like an overdrawn bowstring. Struggling for control, he just muttered, "I'm not even going to dignify that remark with an answer. But I will tell you this. If I hear you've repeated it anywhere, I'll flatten you.

Got that?"

Turning on his heel, he stalked out of the mill and roared off in his truck, his order forgotten.

* * *

When McKinnon's housekeeper answered the door several hours later, Charly was dismayed to find that he was in Toronto and wasn't expected home until much later in the evening. She had been so sure she would see him. Hiding her disappointment, she went out and began her inspection of the barns and outbuildings. He had a very well run business and the standards of maintenance were high, so she didn't really expect to find anything to report. In fact, she was wondering why they had even put the file out. As she was about to leave the straw mow, she heard the distinct but weak mewling of very young kittens. Memories of searching them out in her father's barn came flooding back, and she set her clipboard and camera to one side, and then began moving quietly towards the sound.

It only took her a moment, because mamma cat had heard them as well and was on her way to feed them. Charly couldn't resist taking them from their hiding place and cuddling them for a few moments. One in particular caught her fancy. He was all black, a little larger than the rest, and much more aggressive.

"So, little Bagheera, you're going to be king of the jungle, are you?" He looked up at her with large, liquid eyes, blinking, but lying still in her hand." Tell me, where's McKinnon? Why hasn't he called me? I thought maybe we could be friends, but it looks like I was very wrong. I suppose socializing with an employee is just as much a no-no here as it would be in a big city office. But damn it, I enjoy talking to him."

The kitten was squirming to get his lunch, so she placed him down beside his mother, and laughed when he tried to walk and toppled over in the straw. He was soon eagerly feeding with his siblings. "Bye, little Bagheera. Grow strong and catch lots of mice." She spoke softly as she gathered up her things and went out into the sunshine. She didn't hear the footsteps pause at the far end of the barn, nor see the tall figure standing so quietly, just listening.

Restlessness plagued her later that evening as she tried to find something to do. Staying in on Friday nights hadn't bothered her before, but tonight was somehow different, probably because she had built up her hopes of seeing McKinnon, only to be disappointed. Driven with excess energy and no outlet, she finally pulled on some old jeans and a plaid shirt, braided her hair, and took gardening tools out to the flowerbeds.

She was attacking the weeds with unaccustomed vigour when she heard a car. As she rounded the corner of the house, she stopped in mid-stride. McKinnon was getting out of his black Cadillac.

"Hi Witch. What's new?"

Warily, she looked at him. He was acting as though they had just parted a few hours ago, instead of several weeks.

"Not much. To what do I owe the pleasure of your company?"

Becoming suddenly serious, he said, "I wanted to talk to you. I hope I haven't come at a bad time."

"Oh, very bad, McKinnon. I'm busy entertaining the mayor and his wife for tea. Can't you tell by my attire?" She grinned at him as she pulled off her grubby gloves. "Come on in."

Since McKinnon had last been in the house, Charly had managed to finish furnishing it. She offered him a seat in the living room while she cleaned up, and she wondered as she did so what it could be that he wanted to talk about. She wasn't long finding out. He was pacing around the room when she came back and her defences rose because she could sense that it wasn't going to be good news.

"Something's wrong, isn't it, McKinnon?"

"Yes, Charly, something's wrong. I'm not sure I can talk about this without blowing up."

"I think you had better just tell me what it is. I'll make some coffee while you get your thoughts together."

Was he going to tell her she was fired? Or that he had sold the property and she had to get out of the house? Filling two cups, she carried them out to the living room.

"Is it something I've done, McKinnon? You're scowling like a bear with a thorn in his paw."

"God, no Charly. It really hasn't anything to do with you, except that you happen to be living in my house." He sat down and picked up his coffee, staring blankly out the window.

"Come on, T. G., tell me. I can't stand suspense. Just tell me what happened to upset you." She sank down beside him, wanting to offer comfort but not knowing how to give it, because she didn't know yet what the problem was.

"Maybe that's the best way. I'll just tell you what happened and you can surmise the rest."

"Okay, shoot."

Briefly, he outlined the confrontation in the feed mill. "So you see, Charly, this whole situation is impossible."

Stunned, she stared at him. "Are you asking me to move out, McKinnon?"

"Good heavens, no. I wouldn't let anybody pressure me into a decision like that."

"Then are you asking me to quit my job?"

"I don't have the right to do that either. I wouldn't expect you to do it."

"Then what do you want from me?" Puzzled and confused, she continued to stare at him.

"I don't want anything from you, Charly, except your understanding. You see, with people

thinking and saying things like that, we can't see each other socially. I wanted you to know why you weren't hearing from me. I just won't have you exposed to that kind of malicious gossip."

"For God's sake, McKinnon, the gossip can't hurt me, or you either, for that matter. Didn't you listen to anything I told you? The only people hurt by that kind of thing are the originators of the thoughts and words. Not us." She placed her cup carefully on the coffee table. "Never us."

"I understand that on one level, Charly, but on another I just see red and want to punch somebody out, and that is damaging to my soul, believe me. Especially if I wallop my co-director in a public place." He set his cup beside hers and rose to begin pacing again. "It's just no use, Charly. We had something really special growing between us, but I won't let them destroy it with their malicious gossip. So it has to be over before it even has a chance to begin."

"There's nothing I can say to change your mind?"

"Nothing. I've been thinking about it for hours and I can't see any other solution. I have to stay so far away from here and from you that no one can point a finger at either of us. It would give certain people a good opportunity to say you should never have been hired, if they could even hint that we were having an affair. And this is a very small community."

"I can't believe this is happening, McKinnon. I feel like I'm losing my best friend. Would you hold me for a minute?" She had risen and stood gazing at him, her feelings evident in her tear-filled eyes.

Crossing the space that separated them, he gathered her into his arms, wrapping them tightly around her and holding her close against him. He dropped his head and rested his cheek on her hair. They stood silently for long moments. Charly drew comfort from the warmth of his arms and body. It felt so right to be close to him. How could people make it into something ugly? She didn't want their friendship to end now. There was so much more she wanted to know about him, so many things yet to discover.

For just a moment, she considered the possibility of seducing him and making him need her so much he wouldn't be able to say no, but only for a moment. It would be easy enough. Just lift her head, touch her lips to his and repeat the fantasy they had shared previously. Her mind began playing it back as she stood soaking in the warmth and scent and feel of him. Suddenly she felt him shudder and knew instinctively he had picked up her thoughts. Trying to blank her mind, she moved to step back from the circle of his arms, but as she lifted her head from his chest, his lips moved over hers and settled firmly on them, as though coming home.

Now the fantasy became three-dimensional reality, with added bonuses. She could touch him as he was touching her, feel the thick softness of his hair as her fingers slipped into it, sense the acceleration of his pulse and feel the throb of his heartbeat next to hers. She could hear his

breathing quicken as the kiss deepened and she sensed that he was rapidly reaching his limits of control.

Her own body was responding as it had in her fantasy, giving as much as she was taking, encouraging him to respond to her needs, by a little pressure here, a subtle movement there, all performed unconsciously and naturally. As his hands slipped from her face down to her rib cage, his fingers just under her breasts, she arched her body closer, his arousal alive and demanding against her. Her hands slid down over his shoulders to pull him even closer as the kiss they were sharing lifted them to heights only hinted at in their fantasies. But his hands had barely closed over her breasts to inflame them with his heat, when he pushed himself away from her, holding his hands up as though to ward her off.

"Stop me now, Charly, please!" His voice was anguished as he turned his back to her.

"I can't stop myself, McKinnon. I don't want to. So if you want to end this, you'd better leave now." Tears were falling, but she tried to keep them out of her voice.

"Charly..."

"Go, McKinnon. For God's sake, just go." She was standing with her arms clasped tightly around her middle, holding in her agony. She watched as he unclenched his fists and strode swiftly out of the house without a backward glance. She heard the engine revving and the tires tearing into the gravel as he spun out of the driveway. She felt a great emptiness invading her soul as the loneliness of the future stretched before her. No more deep voice calling her 'Little Witch'. No more discussions about metaphysics, but most of all, no more laughing and deepening comradeship with her friend.

CHAPTER SIX

It had been years since Charly had cried herself to sleep, so tonight she made up for lost time. She knew all the arguments about professional ethics, getting involved with superiors, and behaving in a manner that could cause people to talk. It was important that she maintain a good image in the community if she wished to retain the respect of the clients as well as the directors and staff. If only his wife had behaved in a different manner.

But knowing all the reasons why they couldn't be together didn't make the pain any less. For a while she mulled over the possibility of resigning and taking another job, but where? There wasn't another insurance company for miles, and even if McKinnon did want to see her again, she would be too far away. Maybe he could resign as a director. She was sure from what she had seen of his farm, he certainly didn't need the director's fees. But then, that wouldn't be a fair solution

either.

She fell into an exhausted sleep, only to waken a couple of hours later, tears streaming from her eyes and a feeling of dread that she couldn't shake. She got up and wandered around for a while, made a cup of mint tea and drank it, then sat in the darkened living room and tortured her self with memories of the last scene with him. Her mind replayed it all, from his first words to her last. She relived all of the emotions and feelings again, but the sadness in her took away all the joy she had felt in his arms. Her soul was crying out for its mate with a depth of feeling she had never before experienced. It was a very long night.

Somehow, Charly managed to carry on with her job. She gave it all of her attention, writing meticulous reports, making very detailed inspections, updating photos that really didn't need it, and putting in much longer hours than was expected of her. When the staff began to comment on her apparent weight loss, and the long hours she was working, hinting that maybe she was working too hard, she made an effort to stay out of the office as much as possible so they wouldn't know what she was doing.

She looked up old friends, but they lost interest in her when she was unable to give them her whole attention. Her most happy times were those spent alone with her flowerbeds, or walking out through the woods across the road. Then one morning she awakened feeling nauseated and headachy. She decided it was a bout of summer flu, so took some Vitamin C and carried on. As the day progressed, so did her feelings of discomfort. By late afternoon, she had severe cramps in her stomach and had to cut her last inspection short. She knew she was fevered by the time she got home and the pain had increased so much, she began to panic. It couldn't be just flu. It was too severe for that.

Picking up the phone, she called her parents, only remembering after the fifteenth ring that they had gone up north for a month of fishing. It was about a half-hour drive to the hospital and she knew she needed medical attention. Gathering up her purse and keys, she went back out to the car and drove to Belleville.

* * *

McKinnon had just sat down to a late dinner when he suddenly doubled over with severe stomach cramps. He had felt fine until only moments before. Clutching his stomach, he went into his bedroom and fell on the bed, knees drawn up to his chest. He stayed like that for an hour, when the pain finally eased and he was able to stand upright with little discomfort. Assuming it was something he had eaten, he went about his business.

It wasn't until two weeks later when he was in the office for their monthly meeting, that the manager asked him how his new tenant was.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean Charly. How is she?" The manager was looking at him strangely.

"Is something wrong with her?" McKinnon was suddenly very attentive.

"You should know. She's living in your house. She had her appendix out two weeks ago.

Where have you been?"

"I don't see her, if that's what you mean. She rents my house and that's it. I didn't know anything about it. I wonder where she is now?"

"I heard she went to her uncle's from the hospital. Her parents are away. She had a nurse call in the next day to tell us she wouldn't be back for at least four weeks. How about doing some inspections for us?"

"Sure. Anytime." McKinnon wasn't really paying attention. He should have known. To think she had to go through that without even a card from him! She must really think he was a brute.

The meeting dragged on forever, it seemed to him. He couldn't wait to get away from what seemed like very petty problems. His mind was miles away but nobody seemed to notice. Finally, he was able to make his excuses and hurry to his car. The others were meeting at the president's house as they sometimes did, but he just pleaded a prior engagement and sped to the florist, hoping the shop wouldn't be closed.

Choosing a large bunch of pink carnations and potted ivy, he placed them in the car, then went into the nearest department store and picked out the softest, most loveable teddy bear he could find. A stop at the grocery store for some mixed cheeses and fruit, and then a side trip into a bookstore just as the girl was about to close up, and his purchases were complete. Except for one thing. He stepped into a phone booth, dialled her number, and hung up as soon as she answered. Had she still been staying with her uncle, he would have had a great time explaining his purchases to his housekeeper.

One more trip into the Chinese restaurant to place an order for take-out, and his plans were complete. Except for some wine. But the store was already closed. Damn!

What if she had already eaten? What if she went out somewhere before he got there? What if she didn't want to see him? He tried to stay calm as he drove into her yard and gathered up his purchases. With arms full, he had to push the doorbell with his elbow. It seemed to take forever before she opened the door. And suddenly the effort was worthwhile. His doubts all vanished as he saw her face light up like a candle.

* * *

Charly replaced the receiver thoughtfully. Who would call and then hang up when she answered?

Shrugging her shoulders, she assumed it was someone who had reached a wrong number, and went back to the sofa and her book. She had been reading constantly since she returned home, except for a daily walk, as ordered by the doctor. She had been thinking about McKinnon too. It had been so hard in the hospital with no one but her aunt and uncle to visit. She had refused to let them call her parents, because she knew they had been looking forward to the trip. There was nothing they could do for her anyway.

Day after day she lay in the hospital wondering if McKinnon would come in to see her. Day after day passed with no sign of him. And as soon as she was mobile, she stood by the phone often, talking herself out of calling him. Now the worst was over. She was back in her own little house, her health was on the mend, and she had survived without him. Settling back down, she lost herself once more in her book, promising to make something to eat after the next chapter.

The doorbell startled her into jumping up, and swearing as the muscles in her abdomen protested. She made her way more slowly to the door, hoping it wasn't anyone important. She had begun wearing a comfortable multi-coloured caftan since her surgery and her hair was swinging around her shoulders, free. Her feet were bare. Pulling the door open, she gasped, and then smiled broadly. "McKinnon. Hi! Come on in." Stepping aside, she held the door as he struggled to the table, trying not to drop anything.

Shoving the flowers at her, he asked abruptly, "Charly, why the hell didn't you call me? Never mind. I shouldn't even ask." Groaning, he pulled her into his arms, his mouth gentle and warm on hers. Kissing her thoroughly, he stepped back and let her go.

"Better put those flowers in water. I think maybe we crushed them a little." Sheepishly, he tried to straighten them.

"We? What do you mean we, McKinnon?" Laughing, she went out to the kitchen and filled a vase. She had trouble keeping her emotions under control, she was so happy to see him. When she returned, McKinnon was standing again, the teddy bear held in his hands, a silly grin on his face. "I think I went a little crazy when I found out what you had been through, Charly. I wish someone had told me when it happened. Nothing would have kept me away." He walked towards her, holding the teddy bear out. "This is for you. I'm not even sure why I bought it. It just seemed the thing to do at the time."

"It was exactly the right thing to do. I've been collecting stuffed bears for years. I have boxes of them in my mother's basement. Maybe I'll bring them over and give them a place to sit in the spare room. After all, this guy would probably enjoy the company." Charly knew she was babbling again but couldn't help it. He was here with her at last.

"Come and sit down, Witch. I want to hear all about it. Was it really bad? If the jolt I had was

any indication, you sure didn't have much fun." And he told her about being doubled up with pain the day of her surgery.

"Are you going to go into labour when I have a baby, too, McKinnon?" She teased him.

"I sure would if it was my baby. Oh, Charly, why did you have to bring up that subject? I can't keep my mind off of making love with you as it is. I like your dress, by the way." He was smiling at her, his legs stretched out in front of him, arms across the back of the sofa behind her. One hand was playing idly with her hair, though she thought he was unaware of it.

"How about some Chinese food? Or have you eaten?" He knew they had to get involved in something immediately or he would take her in his arms and forget his better judgment.

Chatting as she worked, setting up plates and cutlery, Charly told him about her hospital stay, her recovery and her enforced retirement. "I hope the company isn't mad at me for goofing off so soon after being hired."

"Of course not. Having emergency surgery isn't goofing off. How did you get to the hospital, by the way? I heard your parents were away when it happened."

"They're not back yet either. I drove myself to the hospital. It wasn't too comfortable, but I made it."

"Damn it, Charly! Haven't you got any sense? Don't you know your appendix could have ruptured? Why didn't you call me?"

She had seen McKinnon withdrawn, sarcastic, passionate, funny and indifferent. But she hadn't seen him angry, until now. And he was furious. It was a nice feeling, to know that he cared so much.

"But it didn't, so don't have a coronary over it, McKinnon. I'm fine, you're fine, the teddy bear is fine, we're all fine, so relax and eat." She slapped a plate down in front of him none too gently and passed him the Soya sauce.

Silence reigned for several moments, until Charly could stand it no longer. "For heaven's sake, McKinnon, lighten up. Stop sulking. We haven't seen each other for eons and we're fighting. I can't stand it!"

"I'm not sulking, for your information. I just don't like to see people take unnecessary risks. And you did. I thought you promised to call me if you had any problems."

"Work problems, McKinnon. And that was before we decided not to see each other any more. Remember?"

"Don't remind me. Oh, hell, let's just forget it and enjoy the time we have."

They managed to forget their differences for the remainder of a very pleasant evening. They also stayed away from any discussion of their decision not to see each other. Charly was content to

enjoy his company for as long as he stayed with her.

"Would you do me a favour, Charly?" McKinnon was sitting across from her, downstairs by the fire, and grinning at her with an almost sheepish look. She wondered what was coming next.

"If I'm able, sure. What would you like?"

"I've been remembering and writing down some of my dreams but I have no idea how to analyze them. If I send some over, would you have a look at them and see what you make of them?"

"Are you sure you want me to see them, McKinnon? Dreams are about as personal as you can get."

"There's no one else I'd trust them with. Besides, I know you'll be tactful. After all, you are a good witch, right?"

"Right. Okay, send them over and I'll do what I can. Some symbols are quite standard, but others will be unique to you. If you would break your dreams down into the major parts for me and indicate what the different things mean to you, it will make it easier to analyze them."

"Can you give me an example of what you mean?" McKinnon was all seriousness now.

"Okay. Suppose you dream of cows. Normally they represent self-indulgence, but since you work with them all the time, they could simply mean work to you. It's also quite important that you describe the setting, the people, colours, activities, whether you are observing or participating, how close you are to the action, the overall feeling the dream leaves you with, and any words, names or number that appear. Sort of like doing a homework assignment."

She threw another log on the fire and sat down again.

"Quite often the messages will be humorous. For example, if you were to dream of being given a new tooth brush with a small horse head on the bristle end, the message would be that you should beware of looking a gift horse in the mouth, probably in connection with dental care. Those are the kinds I like best, because I love puzzles."

McKinnon was laughing, amusement and scepticism both evident in his expression. "Do people really dream stuff like that, or are you putting me on?"

"They really do. I could even show it to you, because it's one of mine. Another time when I asked for a dream to explain a previous dream I couldn't figure out, I dreamed I was having my skull measured to see how thick it was. I woke up laughing and the rest of the dream gave me enough clues that I could figure out the first one."

"Would you show me some of your dreams? It sounds like a fair trade to me. Besides, if I read your dreams with your interpretations it will help me learn how to analyze mine."

"Maybe I will. I'd like to look them over before I give you any of them though. I have dreams going as far back as I can remember, but I didn't always write out interpretations. I usually read

them over on Sundays from the past week to get some idea of where I'm going in my life, and if there's anything in particular I should or shouldn't be doing. I'll go through last week's dreams and put interpretations on them, then I'll send them to you. What's your mailing address?"

She wrote it out on a piece of paper and tucked it into her pocket. Then she smothered a yawn as she settled more comfortably in her chair.

"Oh, Charly, I'm sorry! I didn't realize it was so late. You must be tired, but I was enjoying myself so much I forgot you're still an invalid." Rising, he walked over to her, and placing his hands on the arms of her chair, leaned over and kissed her gently on the forehead. "I'll see myself out and I'll send you some dreams first thing tomorrow. Sleep well and dream well."

Before she could rise, he was gone up the stairs in several bounds, and she heard the door closing behind him. She knew why he hadn't wanted a lengthy goodbye. They were just too painful.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Charly found herself re-reading her dreams over the next few days with a totally different perspective. To read them over was one thing, but to have McKinnon reading them and knowing what they meant to her was going to be like letting him into her innermost thoughts. But then, he was willing to let her see his.

She sorted out some of the best for learning purposes, going back over several years. She was thankful now that she had kept them in loose-leaf form, so that she could be selective. To have him privy to all of them was just too threatening for the moment.

She found herself watching for the mailman on Monday morning and again on Tuesday. As soon as he pulled away from the mailbox, she would hurry out to retrieve her mail, hoping for the package from McKinnon. She was burning with curiosity to see what he had been dreaming.

When the package did arrive, it came in the night, and was tucked in between her front doors. She found it when she went out to check the weather Wednesday morning. Rushing inside, she poured a coffee and sat down. With trembling fingers, she tore open the large manila envelope and pulled out the typewritten sheets of paper.

Clipped to the top of the first page was a note, scrawled in his distinctive, firm handwriting.

"Here they are. This goes back to the first one I remember after our conversation on the subject, and includes every dream I've had since. Will keep on writing. Happy translating! T.G."

Charly had mailed some of hers off to him and expected that he would have received them already. Just knowing that he would be reading them made her feel very close to him.

She settled down more comfortably and began scanning the pages in front of her, images and

sensations flooding through her as she allowed herself to drift with his dreams. A very strong sense of his personality began coming through to her and she read quickly to the last page. Closing her eyes, she dropped her head back against the sofa and let the feelings flow for a few moments. Uppermost was a sense of pleasure at the quality of the self-awareness evident in his dreams, and the encouragement he was being given to continue. She roused herself and began writing swiftly, giving a brief outline of the general theme of his dreams, then a more specific translation of some of the symbols.

Time passed, with only the sound of the pen against the paper and the occasional rustle as she began a fresh sheet. When she finally ran out of words, she arched her back and rubbed the nape of her neck. With a fresh coffee beside her, she began re-reading what she had written, trying to see it through his eyes, rather than her own, wondering if it would make sense to him. With very little editing, she decided it was complete, and went into her office to process it on her computer.

The computer system was her treat once the fact that she was completely debt-free had registered. She had considered the possibility of compiling all of her dreams into a journal, and the idea began to take hold, with McKinnon's interest in the subject.

A pattern developed over the following weeks, one that she found immensely satisfying. Her days revolved around reviewing her own dreams as well as his, and the highlight of her days was the retrieval of the fat packages from the mailbox, and her enjoyment in getting to know him very well. He had begun slipping little personal notes into each package and she was replying with her own, so she was able to keep abreast of what was happening in his life, on all levels.

As the weeks passed, she explained to him the meaning of his dreams, but she also took the time to teach him how to interpret them on his own, suggesting that he get some file cards and begin his own personal dream dictionary. She explained that the same symbols would begin to appear repeatedly and when he had them documented, he would soon learn what they meant to him. She also told him that a diary of daily events and happenings would be of assistance as well, so that he could relate dreams to actual experiences. And how to look at other people in his dreams and, taking the first strong characteristic that came to mind about them, apply it to his own situation.

"The language of dreams is one of the oldest on earth, and simply needs to be learned like any foreign language," she wrote one day, in answer to his question about why she was personalizing everything. "Your subconscious mind looks for anything in picture form that will get a message across. You simply need to learn how to translate these pictures into words. Remember that your dreams, for the most part, are about you and for you. That's why they're personalized."

It was quite some time before he sent a dream which contained a story about his making love to another woman, and she smiled to herself as she interpreted it for him, knowing that he had

probably had more than one, but hadn't quite had the courage to send them to her.

"This dream symbolizes the integration of the other aspects of yourself - the unity forming with your subconscious and superconscious minds, and the feminine aspects of your personality. It really has nothing to do with sex. However, should you dream of rabbits..."

Then another day when his dream stated simply, 'Dreamed of a bunch of celery and some lettuce', she wrote back immediately, 'Eat more fresh vegetables! If you see a food that is black or has an X on it, it means that you should avoid it. Chalk up another one for your good old subconscious. He's trying to get your body into better physical condition, so pay attention.'

As his dreams began to show more depth, and symbols indicating cleansing with greater frequency, she told him to be prepared for long-forgotten memories to begin surfacing. 'The symbols of washing, doing laundry, bath towels, are a means of telling you that you are getting rid of a lot of `garbage' that you've been carrying around in your subconscious. If you find yourself becoming very quiet inside some day, just go off by yourself and relax. A memory will surface and along with it will come a better understanding of it. Recognize it and let it go. Each time this happens, you will find yourself beginning to feel lighter, although that isn't really the correct term. Another of those things that would be better described with symbols!'

There were dreams that she couldn't interpret and she told him to come back to them in several weeks, maybe even months, because they were probably about future events and would make sense later on. And she told him what it meant when he dreamed of an explosion in which he was killed. 'This does not mean to write out your will and buy a coffin. It simply means that there is a major change about to take place within you. Congratulations! Your progress is great!"

She still took great care and pride in her job, dealing with problems that came up with a professionalism that surprised her at times. She was aware of a newfound peace within herself and decided that it came from the closeness she was sharing with McKinnon through their dreams. And she was always aware of how her feelings for him were becoming deeper and stronger as the days, weeks and months slipped by.

As Christmas approached, she began to hope that they could spend even a few hours together. She longed to feel his arms around her once more, his lips on hers. She had kept a damper on all sexual feelings, but she found, as she thought of seeing him, they began to surface. Her mind was weaving daydreams of an evening by the fire shared with him, the exchange of gifts, the tree with its decorations gleaming in the firelight, the smell of wood smoke and the crackle of logs as they burned. She thought long and hard about what she could give him for a Christmas gift and finally settled on a book that she felt would help him the most. It was a book of dream interpretations that she had found very helpful when she was first learning the process.

She had almost convinced herself the dream was real, when it was suddenly burst like a soap bubble, without any warning. The usual package arrived on the Monday morning before Christmas. The note was attached to the top page, as usual.

`My Dear Little Witch:'

`I want so much to spend Christmas with you. You can't know how much. But if I were to spend five minutes with you now, I wouldn't be able to leave, and we both know that an affair would be disastrous for your reputation. I've decided to take myself off to Australia for a month where I'll visit an uncle and some cousins I haven't seen in about ten years. How I wish you were coming with me.'

`I had no intentions of getting personal, but I find that the more I study my dreams, and yours, the closer I feel to you. I often have the strong impression that you are thinking about me and I believe we share many moments without being together. You have become very important to me, as a friend and as a teacher, and as you probably are very well aware, I don't give or accept friendship easily.'

`I will take you with me when I leave this morning and keep you with me until I return. I'll miss our shared dreams and little notes more than I can say, but the month will pass quickly and I'll have a big fat envelope for you when I get back. Have a good Christmas and think of me on Christmas morning. Take a walk in the snow for me - I'll be enjoying summer weather `down under'.

It was simply signed, `Love, T. G.' and she realized she was crying as she folded the paper and returned it to the envelope.

Somehow, she made it through the month. Since her fireside scene of Christmas had evaporated, she simply wrapped the book and mailed it to him, knowing he wouldn't receive it until he returned. She half-hoped he would phone on Christmas Eve or maybe New Years, but both holidays passed silently and she tried to put on a bright face for her parents. Never had she experienced such devastating loneliness. The hours and days dragged by and she relived their entire relationship from beginning to end, wondering what future they had, trying to find a solution to their dilemma, for she knew he wasn't going to see her as long as she was working for the company.

Her own dreams began containing chase scenes and she realized she was being `chased' by her own creations - doubts and fears for the future of their friendship. She often woke up with tear-stained cheeks, but no memory of having been crying.

The week before McKinnon was due back, the manager called her into his office when she went in to pick up some files.

"You've been with us for quite a while and we are very pleased with your performance. How about a reward? There's an Insurance Convention in Toronto at the Sheraton Centre in March and,

since several of the speakers will be talking about subjects that will be of interest to you, the Directors have authorized me to invite you to join us this year. Your expenses will all be paid, of course, and the convention lasts for three days. What about it? Shall I register you?"

Charly stood staring at him. Although well aware that there were two conventions a year, one for the Presidents and Managers and one for the full Board of Directors, it had never occurred to her that she might be included. Immediately her mind flipped to McKinnon. If she went, would he stay home? If she didn't go, would he wonder why? If they both went...

"Can I think about it for a couple of days? You've caught me by surprise."

"Only a couple, please. We have to let the hotel know how many rooms we require and we like to get them in a block, if possible. Can you let me know by the day after tomorrow? I feel it would be very beneficial for you to go because they usually keep us posted on any new information about fire prevention equipment, alarm systems, and other topics that apply to your area of responsibility."

"Okay, I'll give you my decision then." And she walked out to her car, feeling as though the floor had fallen out from under her.

The answer came to her the next morning as she was writing out her dreams. It was all there for her to see - the trip, the lectures, and the banquet - well, almost all. She didn't see McKinnon anywhere in the dreams. So I'll go. I guess that means he'll be staying home. She wasn't sure whether she should be pleased or upset, but she told the manager to book her in when she went into the office later in the day.

True to his word, McKinnon had a very fat package of dreams for her when he returned. She was disappointed to find his note almost impersonal, with only a thumbnail sketch of his trip and one small sentence about having missed her. She set the dreams aside until the weekend, just not feeling up to the emotional upheaval of reading through them.

She knew now, and had known for some time, that she was very much in love with him. She just didn't want to acknowledge the fact, because to do so meant that she would have to make a decision about it, even if that decision was to accept the status quo and carry on with her life. During the month he was away, she had come to realize that she was ready to accept any kind of a relationship with him that he would allow her. It surprised her to find that she was very calm about the fact that she no longer cared what others might think about either of them.

As the day of the convention drew closer, she found herself becoming excited about it, and frequently asked herself why. She went shopping for some new clothes and chose a dress with great care for the banquet that she would be expected to attend. Right up to the last moment, she believed that McKinnon wasn't going, because he hadn't been in her dreams of the convention.

The last minute arrived and she suddenly realized that dreams didn't necessarily tell all. The manager had told her they would be pooling cars for the trip to Toronto to save on gas, and she was to meet the others at the office on Wednesday morning. When she arrived, she found them already loading cars and wondered whom she would be riding with, but not caring.

"Hi, Charly. I've put you in T. G.'s car, if that's okay with you. He seems to be the only one without a full load." She turned quickly and, for the first time, saw him. He was standing beside the black Cadillac, much as he had been on that first day that seemed like years ago - legs crossed at the ankles, arms folded on his chest, and no smile. She looked uncertainly at him, then shrugged and began unloading her things from the back of her SUV.

He was immediately at her side, taking the suitcase and garment bag from her, leaving just her purse for her to carry. He had the trunk loaded and closed in seconds and was holding open the passenger door for her, when it dawned on her that the others had driven off and she was his only passenger. She didn't know whether to laugh or cry. She only knew she wasn't ready for this.

CHAPTER EIGHT

It was with a feeling of *deja vu* that she settled in the seat and became resigned to the two-and-a-half-hour trip, wondering if he would talk to her, ignore her, tease her, or make love with her.

"You looked a bit shocked when you realized I was going to the convention, Charly. Why?" He looked sideways at her as he swung the car out into the traffic.

"Because you weren't in my dreams, that's why!" She spoke sharply, still unsettled. "I saw the whole convention in a dream weeks ago and you weren't there, so I assumed you wouldn't be going."

"Who was it that told me once one should never assume anything? I knew we were going together before I left for Australia because I also saw the convention and I definitely saw you there. Relax, Little Witch. The dream said we had a great time, so let's just enjoy ourselves. God only knows, we deserve it." The last was uttered under his breath, but she caught it and found herself smiling. From then on, her mood began to improve and she began firing questions at him regarding his vacation in Australia, a place she had always wanted to visit. The trip was over before she realized it and she was still questioning him as they followed the bellhop into the lobby and waited for their rooms to be assigned.

She hardly noticed as he collected their keys and walked with her to the elevator. He was still talking to her about his trip, as they paused for the bellhop to open their doors and place their luggage inside. But she finally wakened up to reality when he crossed from his room into hers

through the connecting door.

"Sorry we couldn't get all of the rooms together for your company, but we managed to keep all of you near someone else from the group." The bellhop accepted the tip McKinnon handed him and left.

Kicking the door to her room shut, McKinnon suddenly reached for her and pulled her into his arms. His mouth closed over hers in a long, slow kiss and she melted against him, relaxing into the haven of his arms. Ending the kiss, he pulled her more tightly against his chest and just held her silently for a long moment. She closed her eyes, savouring the closeness and sense of rightness.

"I don't know who we have to thank for our room arrangement, but I'm not going to question it or complain about it." He released her and stepped back just as someone knocked on the door of his room. "I'll see you before the banquet tonight." And he was gone through the door.

Charly unpacked her things, hanging her dresses up in the closet. She knew she didn't have a lecture to attend for a couple of hours and she also knew that McKinnon would be tied up for the rest of the day. She was still musing over the tenderness of his kiss and the warmth of his embrace. She knew without a doubt that they would make love before the end of the convention and she was content to let it happen when the time was right.

She didn't think beyond the convention to life in the County. She just knew she loved him and was sure he loved her as well. She was humming to herself as she finished unpacking and went happily to her lecture. She paid close attention to the speaker because she still had a job to do and she was here at the expense of the company, so she would fulfil her obligations. When the lecture was finished, she hurried up to the room to see McKinnon, only to find a note instead.

'Have to make the rounds of the hospitality suites. See you at the banquet.'

In a way, she was pleased because it meant that she could take her time getting bathed and dressed. She knew a dance followed the banquet, but she didn't worry about the seating arrangements, the dance, or anything else that might transpire. She was content to let events unroll in their own way and time, knowing that it would be right.

When she was dressed and made up and McKinnon still hadn't returned, she waited until it was nearly time for the banquet and then went down to the hall. Each of the ladies was being given a small corsage and she waited in line for hers, looking around now with interest, wondering where he might be. She had been given her meal ticket, and knew what table she was assigned, but she had no idea if he would be at the same one.

Her corsage pinned in place, she slowly entered the room, not seeing any of her group. She wove her way through the tables, reading the numbers as she went, finally locating hers in the corner near the dais. None of the others had arrived yet, so she treated herself to a front-facing chair. She

became absorbed in studying the dresses the other women were wearing. Many of the directors had brought their wives with them, although her company didn't do so.

She felt a hand settle on her shoulder, and looked up to see McKinnon smiling down into her eyes. He pulled out the chair next to her and settled himself close beside her. Like he really doesn't give a damn what anyone else thinks.

His behaviour towards her throughout dinner and the speeches was friendly, but he kept his comments general and included the others in their conversations as much as possible. When dinner was over, however, he claimed her for the first dance and led her out onto the floor with an arm around her shoulders.

Before the dance ended, she knew it had been a mistake for them to participate. So much had happened between them in the past few months without any physical contact that they were attuned to each other to a degree she had never experienced before. She knew what he was going to say before he said it, she knew what he was feeling without any words being spoken, and she was aware that he wanted her as badly as she wanted him.

"When this number is over, follow my lead and agree with whatever I say. We have to get out of here." As they moved in time to the music, together but apart, she forced herself to focus on the music, the people around them, anything but his warm and sensuous body so close to her own. Twice he stepped on her toe and apologized, swearing the second time it happened.

When the music stopped, other couples stayed in place for the next number, but McKinnon steered her quickly off the floor to their table, where several of the directors were deep in 'Insurance talk' as she called it. They looked up and grinned as McKinnon said, "I'm taking our inspector out to a movie. She's too young to be cooped up in here with all these old fogies."

His voice was light and his smile was sincere, but she could feel the tension running deep inside of him, barely held in check. Bidding the others goodnight, she picked up her handbag and walked with McKinnon to the door, and freedom. As they crossed the lobby, McKinnon took a newspaper from the rack and tucked it under his arm, then escorted her into the elevator.

Once in his room, McKinnon spread the newspaper open to the Entertainment section, and she thought, my God, he's really going to take me to a damn movie!

"What looks good to you, Charly?" He was looking at the page as he asked the question. The bed is the only thing that interests me, McKinnon, she thought and once more experienced the familiar feelings as he swung his head up and looked into her eyes.

"Humour me, Charly. Have you seen any of these movies before?" She forced herself to look away from him, and down at the newspaper. There were several she had seen, but only one she had really enjoyed, so she told him.

"Good. I've seen it too. That's all I needed to know." Rolling the paper up, he jammed it into the wastebasket and kicked off his shoes. "Get comfortable, Little Witch. The rest of this night is ours. If anyone asks tomorrow, which they won't, that's the movie we saw." His tie and suit coat were flung carelessly over the back of the nearest chair, and he unbuttoned the top three buttons of his shirt. Again, she had the feeling of having played this scene out once before.

Before she knew what was happening, he had picked her up, removed her shoes and placed her gently on the bed. Stretching out beside her, one arm under his head, one knee slightly raised, he looked up at her. "Beats the little SUV or the Caddy, huh, Witch?"

Charly had been silent up to this point, wondering how he was going to proceed. She smiled at him now, trusting him completely and loving him with all of her being. She settled closer to him, then glanced up and asked, "Want to play some Battleships?"

"I assume you're joking. There's only one thing I want to do and it's the same thing I wanted to do the night we were stranded together, and every night since. I don't know how it happened, Charly, when I swore I would never again be vulnerable to a woman, but I'm in love with you. More in love with you than I ever thought it possible to be in love." He was twisting a coil of her hair around his finger, and she realized that his hand was shaking.

"McKinnon, are you nervous?" Her own feelings were so strong and so right that she had no more doubts about their future. She knew it would work out in some fashion that was best for both of them, and she was content to let it happen.

Rolling away from her, McKinnon slid off the bed and went to the desk to pour them each a glass of wine. She had discovered that the directors all kept drinks available in their rooms, even though some of them didn't drink. She knew McKinnon rarely drank because they had discussed it the evening they were out to dinner together.

Handing her the glass, he sat beside her on the bed and took a sip of wine. Setting the glass down, he unbuttoned his shirtsleeves and rolled them up to his elbows as though he found them restricting. He ran his hand through his hair, causing it to stand up on one side, then tried to flatten it down again. She realized he was extremely nervous about something, but couldn't imagine that the prospect of making love with her could be the reason.

"Bear with me, Charly. This is difficult for me. It's so long since I've really communicated with anyone that I'm a bit rusty." He took another sip of wine, then set the glass aside and swung his legs up onto the bed beside her. He pulled the pillows up behind their heads and placed an arm around her shoulders. Then he shifted his position again and fussed with the pillows once more.

"For Pete's sake, McKinnon, settle down and talk! I won't bite. I might even help you out if you hit a rough spot. Just talk to me, because your anxiety is starting to rub off and I was feeling

great."

Taking a deep breath, McKinnon started to speak, softly at first, then with more strength and conviction. "When I went to Australia, Charly, I was running for my life. All the things about clearing out 'garbage' were happening to me and I wasn't sure I could handle it without your help. But most of it had to do with my ex-wife and my feelings about what had happened between us. I just didn't want to involve you in that. But you were right. I do feel much lighter inside since I got rid of all those negative feelings. And for that I thank you."

He paused to gather his thoughts and she waited quietly, no longer concerned about his restlessness and anxiety. He was doing just fine on his own.

"After I got to Australia and my recall of dreams dried up, I felt abandoned and a bit lost and I picked up the phone a dozen times to call you. But I resisted because I still had a lot of stuff to deal with. I spent most of the holiday wandering around by myself and I'm sure my relatives think I'm more than a bit odd."

"That goes with the turf, McKinnon. Quite a few people have considered me odd, over the years, but it hasn't hurt me any. Go ahead."

"Well, I finally had to admit to myself the truth - the fact that I am in love with you. Studying your dreams, reading the interpretations, waiting impatiently for your notes - all of those things should have told me, but they didn't. It wasn't until I was roaming around on the other side of the planet that I finally realized what I had to do."

Picking up her left hand, he carried it to his lips, pressing them firmly against her grandmother's ring. "Will you let me replace this with my mother's ring, Charly? Will you marry me?" He spoke the words as though they were forced out of him before he was ready. "I feel like the little kid in ninth grade asking his math teacher for a date, but this isn't a crush. I love you, Charly."

Turning to him, she put her arms around him and held him against her, giving him reassurance, warmth and love. Kissing him briefly, she slid her grandmother's ring off and set it on the night table.

"I'm all yours, McKinnon. I think I was from that first moment you barked at me in the boardroom. I just never allowed myself to hope that we could be married, because I knew how deeply your wife's actions hurt you. I had hoped the dreams would help you get cleared of all the negatives, but I'm surprised at how quickly you've done it. You get an A+."

Pulling her down more closely to him, McKinnon heaved a sigh of relief. "I'm glad that's settled. Now will you please shut up? You always did talk too much." His lips closed over hers and this time they lingered, straying to her eyes, her nose, her ears, as he showed her with his body how much he loved her with his heart.

At last Charly was able to give him all of her love, in every way she had ever imagined, knowing that the path they were on would enhance the feelings they had for each other, as they learned more about them-selves and became more complete, both as individuals and as a couple. She had so much more to teach him - things he was totally unaware of, and things that would change him even more. Her mind pulled back to the things McKinnon was doing to her and she gave herself up freely to his lovemaking, joining him with passion, love and acceptance of their union.

* * *

"Hi, Little Witch. Did you sleep well?" McKinnon was smiling down at her, his head propped up on one hand.

Charly blinked, stretched, then smiled back at him, pulling his head down for a good morning kiss. He slid back under the covers and gathered her close to him again, groaning as he glanced at his watch.

"Charly, we have to be at the Prayer Breakfast in 25 minutes, looking respectable, presentable, and as though we'd just spent the evening at a movie and then went to bed early."

"Well, McKinnon, you got part of it right, anyway." Charly chuckled at him. "What happens if we just spend the rest of the day right here? Do we get hung at dawn?"

"No, but we have every director leering knowingly at us for the rest of the convention and I don't want that for you." He yanked the covers off of her and gave her a little push towards the edge of the bed. "Quick, into the shower, and I'll help you wash."

Hopping off the bed, Charly looked back at him. "I thought you said we had to hurry, McKinnon." She was turning the water on in the shower when the phone rang, so she didn't hear the conversation that followed.

McKinnon grabbed it before the second ring. It was the manager. "Have you seen Charly, T. G.? Nobody seems to know where she is and we're getting a bit concerned." He sounded flustered and McKinnon wondered what the problem was, so he asked. "What's the matter?"

"I wanted to let her know that her lecture is cancelled this morning, so she can sleep in if she wants to, but she's not answering her phone."

McKinnon paused, and then burned his bridges. "It's okay, John. I'll see that she gets the message."

There was a long silence, then a low whistle. "Well, McKinnon, you've got my blessings. Take the morning off and I'll make your excuses for you. My, my, my." And he hung up.

Stepping into the shower, McKinnon took the soap from Charly. "If you could have one wish right now, Little Witch, what would it be?" He began soaping her back, sliding his arms around her, pressing his body in close to hers.

She moved against him, enjoying the warmth of the water as it cascaded over them. "Just to be able to stay here with you for the rest of the day." Reaching up, she pulled his head down for a long, slow kiss.

"Granted. You see, I too, have my own special powers."

Charly pulled back and looked up at him. By the grin on his face, she knew he was telling the truth. As he explained what had taken place, she blushed, then remembered that in just a short time they would be married, so she gave herself up to the joy of loving him and being loved, secure in the knowledge that they could overcome any challenges they might meet in the future.

And so it was that the dreams became reality and reality became a dream.

To my readers:

I hope you have enjoyed this journey with my characters. Preparing their profiles (complete with photos from a magazine or catalogue) and then 'listening' for them to tell me what they want to say and do is what makes writing so exciting for me. The story flows almost effortlessly, when I wait until an idea comes to me. You can contact me at dynamac58@yahoo.ca

Here's a taste of my second novella – Coffee To Go. Enjoy!

Jean.

CHAPTER ONE

"Hi, Mel. How are you?"

"Fine. Now tell me what you want." Melanie knew from the tone of Susan's voice that she was about to ask for something.

"I need a really big favor, Mel. Brian invited four associates over for dinner tonight and one couldn't make it. I need you to come over and fill a chair at the table."

"Susan, are you trying to set me up again?" Ever since she had broken her engagement two months ago, her well-intentioned but misguided sister had kept trying to get her to date again.

"Not this time, Mel. This dinner is really important to Brian. His architect will be here and I could really use your support. I haven't met any of these people before, so they could be sixty and balding for all I know. Please, Mel?"

"Don't whine. If you promise me this isn't a setup, I'll come over."

"I promise. Be here about six-thirty. Love ya! Bye." And she hung up the phone.

Having planned a long hot soak in the tub, Melanie now had to settle for a quick shower. She dressed carefully and applied a light touch of make-up. Her teal blue dress was flattering in its simplicity and she knew it brought out the highlights in her auburn hair. She added a gold choker and drop earrings. Grabbing a small evening bag, she took one last look in the mirror and left her apartment.

As an insurance broker, she was in contact with people on a daily basis, but since her break-up, she had been keeping to herself in her free time. Now she felt a little tremor of excitement at the prospect of meeting others in a social setting.

Tapping lightly on her sister's door, she let herself in. She saw him immediately – and flashed back to that disastrous episode at the local Tim Horton's only days ago. In unison, they both said "You!" Sensing the sudden tension in the room, Brian came over. "I see you've already met my architect, Russ." Before she could respond, Russ said, "We've bumped into each other before, yes."

Being introduced to the other couple gave Melanie a few moments to become composed, but she was dismayed to find herself seated beside Russ at dinner. At least I don't have to look at him, she mused. When he tried to make conversation, she answered in monosyllables or ignored him completely, until finally he leaned over and spoke very quietly into her ear. "Stop sulking and smile. Your attitude is going to spoil this dinner for your sister and Brian, and it is really important to them, so I suggest you shape up."

Without really thinking about it, Melanie turned and smiled at him while swinging her foot under the table and kicking him on the shin. Still smiling, she asked him "How's that for attitude?"

To give him credit, he just smiled back and raised an eyebrow. In spite of her antagonism towards him, she had to acknowledge the truth in what he said and she made a real effort to be pleasant for the rest of the meal. As soon as it was over and she had helped clean the table and load the dishwasher, she made her excuses and prepared to leave. She found him at her elbow as she reached for the doorknob.

"I'll walk you out."

"There's no need. I can see myself out."

"That wasn't a question, Melanie." He opened the door and waited for her to exit, then followed quickly as she almost sprinted to her car. Holding her car door closed with his hand on the frame, he said "Look, Melanie, I know you don't like me any better than I like you, but I'm going to be working closely with Brian, so we have to sort this out because we'll be running into each other. Will you have dinner with me tomorrow night so that we can come to some kind of an understanding? You choose the restaurant."

Reluctantly she agreed. "Okay. Meet me at Kelly's at seven-thirty. Now can I get into my car,

please?”

Holding up his hands, he stepped back and said, “Be my guest. I’ll see you tomorrow night.”

TM1

The Time Traveller (for so it will be convenient to speak of him) was expounding a recondite matter to us. His grey eyes shone and twinkled, and his usually pale face was flushed and animated. The fire burned brightly, and the soft radiance of the incandescent lights in the lilies of silver caught the bubbles that flashed and passed in our glasses. Our chairs, being his patents, embraced and caressed us rather than submitted to be sat upon, and there was that luxurious after-dinner atmosphere when thought roams gracefully free of the trammels of precision. And he put it to us in this way—marking the points with a lean forefinger—as we sat and lazily admired his earnestness over this new paradox (as we thought it:) and his fecundity.

“You must follow me carefully. I shall have to controvert one or two ideas that are almost universally accepted. The geometry, for instance, they taught you at school is founded on a misconception.”

“Is not that rather a large thing to expect us to begin upon?” said Filby, an argumentative person with red hair.

“I do not mean to ask you to accept anything without reasonable ground for it. You will soon admit as much as I need from you. You know of course that a mathematical line, a line of thickness nil, has no real existence. They taught you that? Neither has a mathematical plane. These things are mere abstractions.”

“That is all right,” said the Psychologist.

“Nor, having only length, breadth, and thickness, can a cube have a real existence.”

“There I object,” said Filby. “Of course a solid body may exist. All real things—”

“So most people think. But wait a moment. Can an instantaneous cube exist?”

“Don't follow you,” said Filby.

“Can a cube that does not last for any time at all, have a real existence?”

Filby became pensive. “Clearly,” the Time Traveller proceeded, “any real body must have extension in four directions: it must have Length, Breadth, Thickness, and—Duration. But through a natural infirmity of the flesh, which I will explain to you in a moment, we incline to overlook this fact. There are really four dimensions, three which we call the three planes of Space, and a fourth, Time. There is, however, a tendency to draw an unreal distinction between the former three dimensions and the latter, because it happens that our consciousness moves intermittently in one direction along the latter from the beginning to the end of our lives.”

“That,” said a very young man, making spasmodic efforts to relight his cigar over the lamp; “that . . . very clear indeed.”

“Now, it is very remarkable that this is so extensively overlooked,” continued the Time Traveller, with a slight accession of cheerfulness. “Really this is what is meant by the Fourth Dimension, though some people who talk about the Fourth Dimension do not know they mean it. It is only another way of looking at Time. There is no difference between time and any of the three dimensions of space except that our consciousness moves along it. But some foolish people have got hold of the wrong side of that idea. You have all heard what they have to say about this Fourth Dimension?”

“I have not,” said the Provincial Mayor.

“It is simply this. That Space, as our mathematicians have it, is spoken of as having three dimensions, which one may call Length, Breadth, and Thickness, and is always definable by reference to three planes, each at right angles to the others. But some philosophical people have been asking why three dimensions particularly—why not another direction at right angles to the other three?—and have even tried to construct a Four-Dimension geometry. Professor Simon Newcomb was expounding this to the New York Mathematical Society only a month or so ago.

You know how on a flat surface, which has only two dimensions, we can represent a figure of a three-dimensional solid, and similarly they think that by models of three dimensions they could represent one of four—if they could master the perspective of the thing. See?"

"I think so," murmured the Provincial Mayor; and, knitting his brows, he lapsed into an introspective state, his lips moving as one who repeats mystic words. "Yes, I think I see it now," he said after some time, brightening in a quite transitory manner.

"Well, I do not mind telling you I have been at work upon this geometry of Four Dimensions for some time. Some of my results are curious. For instance, here is a portrait of a man at eight years old, another at fifteen, another at seventeen, another at twenty-three, and so on. All these are evidently sections, as it were, Three-Dimensional representations of his Four-Dimensioned being, which is a fixed and unalterable thing.

"Scientific people," proceeded the Time Traveller, after the pause required for the proper assimilation of this, "know very well that Time is only a kind of Space. Here is a popular scientific diagram, a weather record. This line I trace with my finger shows the movement of the barometer. Yesterday it was so high, yesterday night it fell, then this morning it rose again, and so gently upward to here. Surely the mercury did not trace this line in any of the dimensions of Space generally recognized? But certainly it traced such a line, and that line, therefore, we must conclude was along the Time-Dimension."

"But," said the Medical Man, staring hard at a coal in the fire, "if Time is really only a fourth dimension of Space, why is it, and why has it always been, regarded as something different? And why cannot we move in Time as we move about in the other dimensions of Space?"

The Time Traveller smiled. "Are you sure we can move freely in Space? Right and left we can go, backward and forward freely enough, and men always have done so. I admit we move freely in two dimensions. But how about up and down? Gravitation limits us there."

"Not exactly," said the Medical Man. "There are balloons."

"But before the balloons, save for spasmodic jumping and the inequalities of the surface, man had

no freedom of vertical movement." "Still they could move a little up and down," said the Medical Man.

"Easier, far easier down than up."

"And you cannot move at all in Time, you cannot get away from the present moment."

"My dear sir, that is just where you are wrong. That is just where the whole world has gone wrong. We are always getting away from the present movement. Our mental existences, which are immaterial and have no dimensions, are passing along the Time-Dimension with a uniform velocity from the cradle to the grave. Just as we should travel down if we began our existence fifty miles above the earth's surface."

"But the great difficulty is this," interrupted the Psychologist. "You can move about in all directions of Space, but you cannot move about in Time."

"That is the germ of my great discovery. But you are wrong to say that we cannot move about in Time. For instance, if I am recalling an incident very vividly I go back to the instant of its occurrence: I become absent-minded, as you say. I jump back for a moment. Of course we have no means of staying back for any length of Time, any more than a savage or an animal has of staying six feet above the ground. But a civilized man is better off than the savage in this respect. He can go up against gravitation in a balloon, and why should he not hope that ultimately he may be able to stop or accelerate his drift along the Time-Dimension, or even turn about and travel the other way?"

"Oh, this," began Filby, "is all—"

"Why not?" said the Time Traveller.

"It's against reason," said Filby.

"What reason?" said the Time Traveller.

“You can show black is white by argument,” said Filby, “but you will never convince me.”

“Possibly not,” said the Time Traveller. “But now you begin to see the object of my investigations into the geometry of Four Dimensions. Long ago I had a vague inkling of a machine—”

“To travel through Time!” exclaimed the Very Young Man.

“That shall travel indifferently in any direction of Space and Time, as the driver determines.”

Filby contented himself with laughter.

“But I have experimental verification,” said the Time Traveller.

“It would be remarkably convenient for the historian,” the Psychologist suggested. “One might travel back and verify the accepted account of the Battle of Hastings, for instance!”

“Don’t you think you would attract attention?” said the Medical Man. “Our ancestors had no great tolerance for anachronisms.”

“One might get one’s Greek from the very lips of Homer and Plato,” the Very Young Man thought.

“In which case they would certainly plough you for the Little-go. The German scholars have improved Greek so much.”

“Then there is the future,” said the Very Young Man. “Just think! One might invest all one’s money, leave it to accumulate at interest, and hurry on ahead!”

“To discover a society,” said I, “erected on a strictly communistic basis.”

“Of all the wild extravagant theories!” began the Psychologist.

“Yes, so it seemed to me, and so I never talked of it until—”

“Experimental verification!” cried I. “You are going to verify that?”

“The experiment!” cried Filby, who was getting brain-weary.

“Let's see your experiment anyhow,” said the Psychologist, “though it's all humbug, you know.”

The Time Traveller smiled round at us. Then, still smiling faintly, and with his hands deep in his trousers pockets, he walked slowly out of the room, and we heard his slippers shuffling down the long passage to his laboratory.

The Psychologist looked at us. “I wonder what he's got?”

“Some sleight-of-hand trick or other,” said the Medical Man, and Filby tried to tell us about a conjurer he had seen at Burslem; but before he had finished his preface the Time Traveller came back, and Filby's anecdote collapsed.

The thing the Time Traveller held in his hand was a glittering metallic framework, scarcely larger than a small clock, and very delicately made. There was ivory in it, and some transparent crystalline substance. And now I must be explicit, for this that follows—unless his explanation is to be accepted—is an absolutely unaccountable thing. He took one of the small octagonal tables that were scattered about the room, and set it in front of the fire, with two legs on the hearthrug. On this table he placed the mechanism. Then he drew up a chair, and sat down. The only other object on the table was a small shaded lamp, the bright light of which fell upon the model. There were also perhaps a dozen candles about, two in brass candlesticks upon the mantel and several in sconces, so that the room was brilliantly illuminated. I sat in a low arm-chair nearest the fire, and I drew this forward so as to be almost between the Time Traveller and the fireplace. Filby sat behind him, looking over his shoulder. The Medical Man and the Provincial Mayor watched him in profile from the right, the Psychologist from the left. The Very Young Man stood behind the Psychologist. We were all on the alert. It appears incredible to me that any kind of trick, however subtly conceived and however adroitly done, could have been played upon us under these conditions.

The Time Traveller looked at us, and then at the mechanism. “Well?” said the Psychologist.

“This little affair,” said the Time Traveller, resting his elbows upon the table and pressing his hands together above the apparatus, “is only a model. It is my plan for a machine to travel through time. You will notice that it looks singularly askew, and that there is an odd twinkling appearance about this bar, as though it was in some way unreal.” He pointed to the part with his finger. “Also, here is one little white lever, and here is another.”

The Medical Man got up out of his chair and peered into the thing. “It’s beautifully made,” he said.

“It took two years to make,” retorted the Time Traveller. Then, when we had all imitated the action of the Medical Man, he said: “Now I want you clearly to understand that this lever, being pressed over, sends the machine gliding into the future, and this other reverses the motion. This saddle represents the seat of a time traveller. Presently I am going to press the lever, and off the machine will go. It will vanish, pass into future Time, and disappear. Have a good look at the thing. Look at the table too, and satisfy yourselves there is no trickery. I don’t want to waste this model, and then be told I’m a quack.”

There was a minute's pause perhaps. The Psychologist seemed about to speak to me, but changed his mind. Then the Time Traveller put forth his finger towards the lever. “No,” he said suddenly. “Lend me your hand.” And turning to the Psychologist, he took that individual's hand in his own and told him to put out his forefinger. So that it was the Psychologist himself who sent forth the model Time Machine on its interminable voyage. We all saw the lever turn. I am absolutely certain there was no trickery. There was a breath of wind, and the lamp flame jumped. One of the candles on the mantel was blown out, and the little machine suddenly swung round, became indistinct, was seen as a ghost for a second perhaps, as an eddy of faintly glittering brass and ivory; and it was gone—vanished! Save for the lamp the table was bare.

Everyone was silent for a minute. Then Filby said he was damned.

The Psychologist recovered from his stupor, and suddenly looked under the table. At that the Time Traveller laughed cheerfully. “Well?” he said, with a reminiscence of the Psychologist. Then, getting up, he went to the tobacco jar on the mantel, and with his back to us began to fill his pipe.

We stared at each other. “Look here,” said the Medical Man, “are you in earnest about this? Do you

seriously believe that that machine has travelled into time?"

"Certainly," said the Time Traveller, stooping to light a spill at the fire. Then he turned, lighting his pipe, to look at the Psychologist's face. (The Psychologist, to show that he was not unhinged, helped himself to a cigar and tried to light it uncut.) "What is more, I have a big machine nearly finished in there"—he indicated the laboratory—"and when that is put together I mean to have a journey on my own account."

"You mean to say that that machine has travelled into the future?" said Filby.

"Into the future or the past—I don't, for certain, know which."

After an interval the Psychologist had an inspiration. "It must have gone into the past if it has gone anywhere," he said.

"Why?" said the Time Traveller.

"Because I presume that it has not moved in space, and if it travelled into the future it would still be here all this time, since it must have travelled through this time."

"But," I said, "If it travelled into the past it would have been visible when we came first into this room; and last Thursday when we were here; and the Thursday before that; and so forth!"

"Serious objections," remarked the Provincial Mayor, with an air of impartiality, turning towards the Time Traveller.

"Not a bit," said the Time Traveller, and, to the Psychologist: "You think. You can explain that. It's presentation below the threshold, you know, diluted presentation."

"Of course," said the Psychologist, and reassured us. "That's a simple point of psychology. I should have thought of it. It's plain enough, and helps the paradox delightfully. We cannot see it, nor can we appreciate this machine, any more than we can the spoke of a wheel spinning, or a bullet flying through the air. If it is travelling through time fifty times or a hundred times faster than we

are, if it gets through a minute while we get through a second, the impression it creates will of course be only one-fiftieth or one-hundredth of what it would make if it were not travelling in time. That's plain enough." He passed his hand through the space in which the machine had been. "You see?" he said, laughing.

We sat and stared at the vacant table for a minute or so. Then the Time Traveller asked us what we thought of it all.

"It sounds plausible enough to-night," said the Medical Man; "but wait until to-morrow. Wait for the common sense of the morning."

"Would you like to see the Time Machine itself?" asked the Time Traveller. And therewith, taking the lamp in his hand, he led the way down the long, draughty corridor to his laboratory. I remember vividly the flickering light, his queer, broad head in silhouette, the dance of the shadows, how we all followed him, puzzled but incredulous, and how there in the laboratory we beheld a larger edition of the little mechanism which we had seen vanish from before our eyes. Parts were of nickel, parts of ivory, parts had certainly been filed or sawn out of rock crystal. The thing was generally complete, but the twisted crystalline bars lay unfinished upon the bench beside some sheets of drawings, and I took one up for a better look at it. Quartz it seemed to be.

"Look here," said the Medical Man, "are you perfectly serious? Or is this a trick—like that ghost you showed us last Christmas?"

"Upon that machine," said the Time Traveller, holding the lamp aloft, "I intend to explore time. Is that plain? I was never more serious in my life."

None of us quite knew how to take it.

I caught Filby's eye over the shoulder of the Medical Man, and he winked at me solemnly.

I think that at that time none of us quite believed in the Time Machine. The fact is, the Time Traveller was one of those men who are too clever to be believed: you never felt that you saw all

round him; you always suspected some subtle reserve, some ingenuity in ambush, behind his lucid frankness. Had Filby shown the model and explained the matter in the Time Traveller's words, we should have shown HIM far less scepticism. For we should have perceived his motives; a pork butcher could understand Filby. But the Time Traveller had more than a touch of whim among his elements, and we distrusted him. Things that would have made the frame of a less clever man seemed tricks in his hands. It is a mistake to do things too easily. The serious people who took him seriously never felt quite sure of his deportment; they were somehow aware that trusting their reputations for judgment with him was like furnishing a nursery with egg-shell china. So I don't think any of us said very much about time travelling in the interval between that Thursday and the next, though its odd potentialities ran, no doubt, in most of our minds: its plausibility, that is, its practical incredibleness, the curious possibilities of anachronism and of utter confusion it suggested. For my own part, I was particularly preoccupied with the trick of the model. That I remember discussing with the Medical Man, whom I met on Friday at the Linnaean. He said he had seen a similar thing at Tubingen, and laid considerable stress on the blowing out of the candle. But how the trick was done he could not explain.

The next Thursday I went again to Richmond—I suppose I was one of the Time Traveller's most constant guests—and, arriving late, found four or five men already assembled in his drawing-room. The Medical Man was standing before the fire with a sheet of paper in one hand and his watch in the other. I looked round for the Time Traveller, and—"It's half-past seven now," said the Medical Man. "I suppose we'd better have dinner?"

"Where's——?" said I, naming our host.

"You've just come? It's rather odd. He's unavoidably detained. He asks me in this note to lead off with dinner at seven if he's not back. Says he'll explain when he comes."

"It seems a pity to let the dinner spoil," said the Editor of a well-known daily paper; and thereupon the Doctor rang the bell.

The Psychologist was the only person besides the Doctor and myself who had attended the previous dinner. The other men were Blank, the Editor aforementioned, a certain journalist, and another—a quiet, shy man with a beard—whom I didn't know, and who, as far as my observation went, never opened his mouth all the evening. There was some speculation at the dinner-table about the Time

Traveller's absence, and I suggested time travelling, in a half-jocular spirit. The Editor wanted that explained to him, and the Psychologist volunteered a wooden account of the "ingenious paradox and trick" we had witnessed that day week. He was in the midst of his exposition when the door from the corridor opened slowly and without noise. I was facing the door, and saw it first. "Hallo!" I said. "At last!" And the door opened wider, and the Time Traveller stood before us. I gave a cry of surprise. "Good heavens! man, what's the matter?" cried the Medical Man, who saw him next. And the whole tableful turned towards the door.

He was in an amazing plight. His coat was dusty and dirty, and smeared with green down the sleeves; his hair disordered, and as it seemed to me greyer—either with dust and dirt or because its colour had actually faded. His face was ghastly pale; his chin had a brown cut on it—a cut half healed; his expression was haggard and drawn, as by intense suffering. For a moment he hesitated in the doorway, as if he had been dazzled by the light. Then he came into the room. He walked with just such a limp as I have seen in footsore tramps. We stared at him in silence, expecting him to speak.

He said not a word, but came painfully to the table, and made a motion towards the wine. The Editor filled a glass of champagne, and pushed it towards him. He drained it, and it seemed to do him good: for he looked round the table, and the ghost of his old smile flickered across his face. "What on earth have you been up to, man?" said the Doctor. The Time Traveller did not seem to hear. "Don't let me disturb you," he said, with a certain faltering articulation. "I'm all right." He stopped, held out his glass for more, and took it off at a draught. "That's good," he said. His eyes grew brighter, and a faint colour came into his cheeks. His glance flickered over our faces with a certain dull approval, and then went round the warm and comfortable room. Then he spoke again, still as it were feeling his way among his words. "I'm going to wash and dress, and then I'll come down and explain things. . . Save me some of that mutton. I'm starving for a bit of meat."

He looked across at the Editor, who was a rare visitor, and hoped he was all right. The Editor began a question. "Tell you presently," said the Time Traveller. "I'm—funny! Be all right in a minute."

He put down his glass, and walked towards the staircase door. Again I remarked his lameness and the soft padding sound of his footfall, and standing up in my place, I saw his feet as he went out. He had nothing on them but a pair of tattered blood-stained socks. Then the door closed upon him. I had half a mind to follow, till I remembered how he detested any fuss about himself. For a minute, perhaps, my mind was wool-gathering. Then, "Remarkable Behaviour of an Eminent Scientist," I

heard the Editor say, thinking (after his wont) in headlines. And this brought my attention back to the bright dinner-table.

“What's the game?” said the Journalist. “Has he been doing the Amateur Cadger? I don't follow.” I met the eye of the Psychologist, and read my own interpretation in his face. I thought of the Time Traveller limping painfully upstairs. I Don't think any one else had noticed his lameness.

The first to recover completely from this surprise was the Medical Man, who rang the bell—the Time Traveller hated to have servants waiting at dinner—for a hot plate. At that the Editor turned to his knife and fork with a grunt, and the Silent Man followed suit. The dinner was resumed. Conversation was exclamatory for a little while, with gaps of wonderment; and then the Editor got fervent in his curiosity. “Does our friend eke out his modest income with a crossing? or has he his Nebuchadnezzar phases?” he inquired. “I feel assured it's this business of the Time Machine,” I said, and took up the Psychologist's account of our previous meeting. The new guests were frankly incredulous. The Editor raised objections. “What WAS this time travelling? A man couldn't cover himself with dust by rolling in a paradox, could he?” And then, as the idea came home to him, he resorted to caricature. Hadn't they any clothes-brushes in the Future? The Journalist too, would not believe at any price, and joined the Editor in the easy work of heaping ridicule on the whole thing. They were both the new kind of journalist—very joyous, irreverent young men. “Our Special Correspondent in the Day after To-morrow reports,” the Journalist was saying—or rather shouting—when the Time Traveller came back. He was dressed in ordinary evening clothes, and nothing save his haggard look remained of the change that had startled me.

“I say,” said the Editor hilariously, “these chaps here say you have been travelling into the middle of next week! Tell us all about little Rosebery, will you? What will you take for the lot?”

The Time Traveller came to the place reserved for him without a word. He smiled quietly, in his old way. “Where's my mutton?” he said. “What a treat it is to stick a fork into meat again!”

“Story!” cried the Editor.

“Story be damned!” said the Time Traveller. “I want something to eat. I won't say a word until I get some peptone into my arteries. Thanks. And the salt.”

“One word,” said I. “Have you been time travelling?”

“Yes,” said the Time Traveller, with his mouth full, nodding his head.

“I'd give a shilling a line for a verbatim note,” said the Editor. The Time Traveller pushed his glass towards the Silent Man and rang it with his fingernail; at which the Silent Man, who had been staring at his face, started convulsively, and poured him wine. The rest of the dinner was uncomfortable. For my own part, sudden questions kept on rising to my lips, and I dare say it was the same with the others. The Journalist tried to relieve the tension by telling anecdotes of Hettie Potter. The Time Traveller devoted his attention to his dinner, and displayed the appetite of a tramp. The Medical Man smoked a cigarette, and watched the Time Traveller through his eyelashes. The Silent Man seemed even more clumsy than usual, and drank champagne with regularity and determination out of sheer nervousness. At last the Time Traveller pushed his plate away, and looked round us. “I suppose I must apologize,” he said. “I was simply starving. I've had a most amazing time.” He reached out his hand for a cigar, and cut the end. “But come into the smoking-room. It's too long a story to tell over greasy plates.” And ringing the bell in passing, he led the way into the adjoining room.

“You have told Blank, and Dash, and Chose about the machine?” he said to me, leaning back in his easy-chair and naming the three new guests.

“But the thing's a mere paradox,” said the Editor.

“I can't argue to-night. I don't mind telling you the story, but I can't argue. I will,” he went on, “tell you the story of what has happened to me, if you like, but you must refrain from interruptions. I want to tell it. Badly. Most of it will sound like lying. So be it! It's true—every word of it, all the same. I was in my laboratory at four o'clock, and since then ... I've lived eight days ... such days as no human being ever lived before! I'm nearly worn out, but I shan't sleep till I've told this thing over to you. Then I shall go to bed. But no interruptions! Is it agreed?”

“Agreed,” said the Editor, and the rest of us echoed “Agreed.” And with that the Time Traveller began his story as I have set it forth. He sat back in his chair at first, and spoke like a weary man.

Afterwards he got more animated. In writing it down I feel with only too much keenness the inadequacy of pen and ink—and, above all, my own inadequacy—to express its quality. You read, I will suppose, attentively enough; but you cannot see the speaker's white, sincere face in the bright circle of the little lamp, nor hear the intonation of his voice. You cannot know how his expression followed the turns of his story! Most of us hearers were in shadow, for the candles in the smoking-room had not been lighted, and only the face of the Journalist and the legs of the Silent Man from the knees downward were illuminated. At first we glanced now and again at each other. After a time we ceased to do that, and looked only at the Time Traveller's face.

"I told some of you last Thursday of the principles of the Time Machine, and showed you the actual thing itself, incomplete in the workshop. There it is now, a little travel-worn, truly; and one of the ivory bars is cracked, and a brass rail bent; but the rest of it's sound enough. I expected to finish it on Friday, but on Friday, when the putting together was nearly done, I found that one of the nickel bars was exactly one inch too short, and this I had to get remade; so that the thing was not complete until this morning. It was at ten o'clock to-day that the first of all Time Machines began its career. I gave it a last tap, tried all the screws again, put one more drop of oil on the quartz rod, and sat myself in the saddle. I suppose a suicide who holds a pistol to his skull feels much the same wonder at what will come next as I felt then. I took the starting lever in one hand and the stopping one in the other, pressed the first, and almost immediately the second. I seemed to reel; I felt a nightmare sensation of falling; and, looking round, I saw the laboratory exactly as before. Had anything happened? For a moment I suspected that my intellect had tricked me. Then I noted the clock. A moment before, as it seemed, it had stood at a minute or so past ten; now it was nearly half-past three!

"I drew a breath, set my teeth, gripped the starting lever with both hands, and went off with a thud. The laboratory got hazy and went dark. Mrs. Watchett came in and walked, apparently without seeing me, towards the garden door. I suppose it took her a minute or so to traverse the place, but to me she seemed to shoot across the room like a rocket. I pressed the lever over to its extreme position. The night came like the turning out of a lamp, and in another moment came to-morrow. The laboratory grew faint and hazy, then fainter and ever fainter. To-morrow night came black, then day again, night again, day again, faster and faster still. An eddying murmur filled my ears, and a strange, dumb confusedness descended on my mind.

"I am afraid I cannot convey the peculiar sensations of time travelling. They are excessively

unpleasant. There is a feeling exactly like that one has upon a switchback—of a helpless headlong motion! I felt the same horrible anticipation, too, of an imminent smash. As I put on pace, night followed day like the flapping of a black wing. The dim suggestion of the laboratory seemed presently to fall away from me, and I saw the sun hopping swiftly across the sky, leaping it every minute, and every minute marking a day. I supposed the laboratory had been destroyed and I had come into the open air. I had a dim impression of scaffolding, but I was already going too fast to be conscious of any moving things. The slowest snail that ever crawled dashed by too fast for me. The twinkling succession of darkness and light was excessively painful to the eye. Then, in the intermittent darkesses, I saw the moon spinning swiftly through her quarters from new to full, and had a faint glimpse of the circling stars. Presently, as I went on, still gaining velocity, the palpitation of night and day merged into one continuous greyness; the sky took on a wonderful deepness of blue, a splendid luminous color like that of early twilight; the jerking sun became a streak of fire, a brilliant arch, in space; the moon a fainter fluctuating band; and I could see nothing of the stars, save now and then a brighter circle flickering in the blue.

“The landscape was misty and vague. I was still on the hill-side upon which this house now stands, and the shoulder rose above me grey and dim. I saw trees growing and changing like puffs of vapour, now brown, now green; they grew, spread, shivered, and passed away. I saw huge buildings rise up faint and fair, and pass like dreams. The whole surface of the earth seemed changed—melting and flowing under my eyes. The little hands upon the dials that registered my speed raced round faster and faster. Presently I noted that the sun belt swayed up and down, from solstice to solstice, in a minute or less, and that consequently my pace was over a year a minute; and minute by minute the white snow flashed across the world, and vanished, and was followed by the bright, brief green of spring.

“The unpleasant sensations of the start were less poignant now. They merged at last into a kind of hysterical exhilaration. I remarked indeed a clumsy swaying of the machine, for which I was unable to account. But my mind was too confused to attend to it, so with a kind of madness growing upon me, I flung myself into futurity. At first I scarce thought of stopping, scarce thought of anything but these new sensations. But presently a fresh series of impressions grew up in my mind—a certain curiosity and therewith a certain dread—until at last they took complete possession of me. What strange developments of humanity, what wonderful advances upon our rudimentary civilization, I thought, might not appear when I came to look nearly into the dim elusive world that raced and fluctuated before my eyes! I saw great and splendid architecture rising about me, more massive

than any buildings of our own time, and yet, as it seemed, built of glimmer and mist. I saw a richer green flow up the hill-side, and remain there, without any wintry intermission. Even through the veil of my confusion the earth seemed very fair. And so my mind came round to the business of stopping,

"The peculiar risk lay in the possibility of my finding some substance in the space which I, or the machine, occupied. So long as I travelled at a high velocity through time, this scarcely mattered; I was, so to speak, attenuated—was slipping like a vapour through the interstices of intervening substances! But to come to a stop involved the jamming of myself, molecule by molecule, into whatever lay in my way; meant bringing my atoms into such intimate contact with those of the obstacle that a profound chemical reaction—possibly a far-reaching explosion—would result, and blow myself and my apparatus out of all possible dimensions—into the Unknown. This possibility had occurred to me again and again while I was making the machine; but then I had cheerfully accepted it as an unavoidable risk—one of the risks a man has got to take! Now the risk was inevitable, I no longer saw it in the same cheerful light. The fact is that insensibly, the absolute strangeness of everything, the sickly jarring and swaying of the machine, above all, the feeling of prolonged falling, had absolutely upset my nerve. I told myself that I could never stop, and with a gust of petulance I resolved to stop forthwith. Like an impatient fool, I lugged over the lever, and incontinently the thing went reeling over, and I was flung headlong through the air.

"There was the sound of a clap of thunder in my ears. I may have been stunned for a moment. A pitiless hail was hissing round me, and I was sitting on soft turf in front of the overset machine. Everything still seemed grey, but presently I remarked that the confusion in my ears was gone. I looked round me. I was on what seemed to be a little lawn in a garden, surrounded by rhododendron bushes, and I noticed that their mauve and purple blossoms were dropping in a shower under the beating of the hail-stones. The rebounding, dancing hail hung in a cloud over the machine, and drove along the ground like smoke. In a moment I was wet to the skin. "Fine hospitality," said I, "to a man who has travelled innumerable years to see you."

"Presently I thought what a fool I was to get wet. I stood up and looked round me. A colossal figure, carved apparently in some white stone, loomed indistinctly beyond the rhododendrons through the hazy downpour. But all else of the world was invisible.

"My sensations would be hard to describe. As the columns of hail grew thinner, I saw the white

figure more distinctly. It was very large, for a silver birch-tree touched its shoulder. It was of white marble, in shape something like a winged sphinx, but the wings, instead of being carried vertically at the sides, were spread so that it seemed to hover. The pedestal, it appeared to me, was of bronze, and was thick with verdigris. It chanced that the face was towards me; the sightless eyes seemed to watch me; there was the faint shadow of a smile on the lips. It was greatly weather-worn, and that imparted an unpleasant suggestion of disease. I stood looking at it for a little space—half a minute, perhaps, or half an hour. It seemed to advance and to recede as the hail drove before it denser or thinner. At last I tore my eyes from it for a moment and saw that the hail curtain had worn threadbare, and that the sky was lightening with the promise of the Sun.

“I looked up again at the crouching white shape, and the full temerity of my voyage came suddenly upon me. What might appear when that hazy curtain was altogether withdrawn? What might not have happened to men? What if cruelty had grown into a common passion? What if in this interval the race had lost its manliness and had developed into something inhuman, unsympathetic, and overwhelmingly powerful? I might seem some old-world savage animal, only the more dreadful and disgusting for our common likeness—a foul creature to be incontinently slain.

“Already I saw other vast shapes—huge buildings with intricate parapets and tall columns, with a wooded hill-side dimly creeping in upon me through the lessening storm. I was seized with a panic fear. I turned frantically to the Time Machine, and strove hard to readjust it. As I did so the shafts of the sun smote through the thunderstorm. The grey downpour was swept aside and vanished like the trailing garments of a ghost. Above me, in the intense blue of the summer sky, some faint brown shreds of cloud whirled into nothingness. The great buildings about me stood out clear and distinct, shining with the wet of the thunderstorm, and picked out in white by the unmelted hailstones piled along their courses. I felt naked in a strange world. I felt as perhaps a bird may feel in the clear air, knowing the hawk wings above and will swoop. My fear grew to frenzy. I took a breathing space, set my teeth, and again grappled fiercely, wrist and knee, with the machine. It gave under my desperate onset and turned over. It struck my chin violently. One hand on the saddle, the other on the lever, I stood panting heavily in attitude to mount again.

“But with this recovery of a prompt retreat my courage recovered. I looked more curiously and less fearfully at this world of the remote future. In a circular opening, high up in the wall of the nearer house, I saw a group of figures clad in rich soft robes. They had seen me, and their faces were directed towards me.

“Then I heard voices approaching me. Coming through the bushes by the White Sphinx were the heads and shoulders of men running. One of these emerged in a pathway leading straight to the little lawn upon which I stood with my machine. He was a slight creature—perhaps four feet high—clad in a purple tunic, girdled at the waist with a leather belt. Sandals or buskins—I could not clearly distinguish which—were on his feet; his legs were bare to the knees, and his head was bare. Noticing that, I noticed for the first time how warm the air was.

“He struck me as being a very beautiful and graceful creature, but indescribably frail. His flushed face reminded me of the more beautiful kind of consumptive—that hectic beauty of which we used to hear so much. At the sight of him I suddenly regained confidence. I took my hands from the machine.

“In another moment we were standing face to face, I and this fragile thing out of futurity. He came straight up to me and laughed into my eyes. The absence from his bearing of any sign of fear struck me at once. Then he turned to the two others who were following him and spoke to them in a strange and very sweet and liquid tongue.

“There were others coming, and presently a little group of perhaps eight or ten of these exquisite creatures were about me. One of them addressed me. It came into my head, oddly enough, that my voice was too harsh and deep for them. So I shook my head, and, pointing to my ears, shook it again. He came a step forward, hesitated, and then touched my hand. Then I felt other soft little tentacles upon my back and shoulders. They wanted to make sure I was real. There was nothing in this at all alarming. Indeed, there was something in these pretty little people that inspired confidence—a graceful gentleness, a certain childlike ease. And besides, they looked so frail that I could fancy myself flinging the whole dozen of them about like nine-pins. But I made a sudden motion to warn them when I saw their little pink hands feeling at the Time Machine. Happily then, when it was not too late, I thought of a danger I had hitherto forgotten, and reaching over the bars of the machine I unscrewed the little levers that would set it in motion, and put these in my pocket. Then I turned again to see what I could do in the way of communication.

“And then, looking more nearly into their features, I saw some further peculiarities in their

Dresden-china type of prettiness. Their hair, which was uniformly curly, came to a sharp end at the neck and cheek; there was not the faintest suggestion of it on the face, and their ears were singularly minute. The mouths were small, with bright red, rather thin lips, and the little chins ran to a point. The eyes were large and mild; and—this may seem egotism on my part—I fancied even that there was a certain lack of the interest I might have expected in them.

“As they made no effort to communicate with me, but simply stood round me smiling and speaking in soft cooing notes to each other, I began the conversation. I pointed to the Time Machine and to myself. Then hesitating for a moment how to express time, I pointed to the sun. At once a quaintly pretty little figure in chequered purple and white followed my gesture, and then astonished me by imitating the sound of thunder.

“For a moment I was staggered, though the import of his gesture was plain enough. The question had come into my mind abruptly: were these creatures fools? You may hardly understand how it took me. You see I had always anticipated that the people of the year Eight Hundred and Two Thousand odd would be incredibly in front of us in knowledge, art, everything. Then one of them suddenly asked me a question that showed him to be on the intellectual level of one of our five-year-old children—asked me, in fact, if I had come from the sun in a thunderstorm! It let loose the judgment I had suspended upon their clothes, their frail light limbs, and fragile features. A flow of disappointment rushed across my mind. For a moment I felt that I had built the Time Machine in vain.

“I nodded, pointed to the sun, and gave them such a vivid rendering of a thunderclap as startled them. They all withdrew a pace or so and bowed. Then came one laughing towards me, carrying a chain of beautiful flowers altogether new to me, and put it about my neck. The idea was received with melodious applause; and presently they were all running to and fro for flowers, and laughingly flinging them upon me until I was almost smothered with blossom. You who have never seen the like can scarcely imagine what delicate and wonderful flowers countless years of culture had created. Then someone suggested that their plaything should be exhibited in the nearest building, and so I was led past the sphinx of white marble, which had seemed to watch me all the while with a smile at my astonishment, towards a vast grey edifice of fretted stone. As I went with them the memory of my confident anticipations of a profoundly grave and intellectual posterity came, with irresistible merriment, to my mind.

“The building had a huge entry, and was altogether of colossal dimensions. I was naturally most occupied with the growing crowd of little people, and with the big open portals that yawned before me shadowy and mysterious. My general impression of the world I saw over their heads was a tangled waste of beautiful bushes and flowers, a long neglected and yet weedless garden. I saw a number of tall spikes of strange white flowers, measuring a foot perhaps across the spread of the waxen petals. They grew scattered, as if wild, among the variegated shrubs, but, as I say, I did not examine them closely at this time. The Time Machine was left deserted on the turf among the rhododendrons.

“The arch of the doorway was richly carved, but naturally I did not observe the carving very narrowly, though I fancied I saw suggestions of old Phoenician decorations as I passed through, and it struck me that they were very badly broken and weather-worn. Several more brightly clad people met me in the doorway, and so we entered, I, dressed in dingy nineteenth-century garments, looking grotesque enough, garlanded with flowers, and surrounded by an eddying mass of bright, soft-colored robes and shining white limbs, in a melodious whirl of laughter and laughing speech.

“The big doorway opened into a proportionately great hall hung with brown. The roof was in shadow, and the windows, partially glazed with coloured glass and partially unglazed, admitted a tempered light. The floor was made up of huge blocks of some very hard white metal, not plates nor slabs—blocks, and it was so much worn, as I judged by the going to and fro of past generations, as to be deeply channelled along the more frequented ways. Transverse to the length were innumerable tables made of slabs of polished stone, raised perhaps a foot from the floor, and upon these were heaps of fruits. Some I recognized as a kind of hypertrophied raspberry and orange, but for the most part they were strange.

“Between the tables was scattered a great number of cushions. Upon these my conductors seated themselves, signing for me to do likewise. With a pretty absence of ceremony they began to eat the fruit with their hands, flinging peel and stalks, and so forth, into the round openings in the sides of the tables. I was not loath to follow their example, for I felt thirsty and hungry. As I did so I surveyed the hall at my leisure.

“And perhaps the thing that struck me most was its dilapidated look. The stained-glass windows, which displayed only a geometrical pattern, were broken in many places, and the curtains that hung

across the lower end were thick with dust. And it caught my eye that the corner of the marble table near me was fractured. Nevertheless, the general effect was extremely rich and picturesque. There were, perhaps, a couple of hundred people dining in the hall, and most of them, seated as near to me as they could come, were watching me with interest, their little eyes shining over the fruit they were eating. All were clad in the same soft and yet strong, silky material.

“Fruit, by the by, was all their diet. These people of the remote future were strict vegetarians, and while I was with them, in spite of some carnal cravings, I had to be frugivorous also. Indeed, I found afterwards that horses, cattle, sheep, dogs, had followed the Ichthyosaurus into extinction. But the fruits were very delightful; one, in particular, that seemed to be in season all the time I was there—a floury thing in a three-sided husk —was especially good, and I made it my staple. At first I was puzzled by all these strange fruits, and by the strange flowers I saw, but later I began to perceive their import.

“However, I am telling you of my fruit dinner in the distant future now. So soon as my appetite was a little checked, I determined to make a resolute attempt to learn the speech of these new men of mine. Clearly that was the next thing to do. The fruits seemed a convenient thing to begin upon, and holding one of these up I began a series of interrogative sounds and gestures. I had some considerable difficulty in conveying my meaning. At first my efforts met with a stare of surprise or inextinguishable laughter, but presently a fair-haired little creature seemed to grasp my intention and repeated a name. They had to chatter and explain the business at great length to each other, and my first attempts to make the exquisite little sounds of their language caused an immense amount of amusement. However, I felt like a schoolmaster amidst children, and persisted, and presently I had a score of noun substantives at least at my command; and then I got to demonstrative pronouns, and even the verb "to eat." But it was slow work, and the little people soon tired and wanted to get away from my interrogations, so I determined, rather of necessity, to let them give their lessons in little doses when they felt inclined. And very little doses I found they were before long, for I never met people more indolent or more easily fatigued.

“A queer thing I soon discovered about my little hosts, and that was their lack of interest. They would come to me with eager cries of astonishment, like children, but like children they would soon stop examining me and wander away after some other toy. The dinner and my conversational beginnings ended, I noted for the first time that almost all those who had surrounded me at first were gone. It is odd, too, how speedily I came to disregard these little people. I went out through

the portal into the sunlit world again as soon as my hunger was satisfied. I was continually meeting more of these men of the future, who would follow me a little distance, chatter and laugh about me, and, having smiled and gesticulated in a friendly way, leave me again to my own devices.

"The calm of evening was upon the world as I emerged from the great hall, and the scene was lit by the warm glow of the setting sun. At first things were very confusing. Everything was so entirely different from the world I had known—even the flowers. The big building I had left was situated on the slope of a broad river valley, but the Thames had shifted perhaps a mile from its present position. I resolved to mount to the summit of a crest perhaps a mile and a half away, from which I could get a wider view of this our planet in the year Eight Hundred and Two Thousand Seven Hundred and One A.D. For that, I should explain, was the date the little dials of my machine recorded.

"As I walked I was watching for every impression that could possibly help to explain the condition of ruinous splendour in which I found the world—for ruinous it was. A little way up the hill, for instance, was a great heap of granite, bound together by masses of aluminium, a vast labyrinth of precipitous walls and crumpled heaps, amidst which were thick heaps of very beautiful pagoda-like plants—nettles possibly—but wonderfully tinted with brown about the leaves, and incapable of stinging. It was evidently the derelict remains of some vast structure, to what end built I could not determine. It was here that I was destined, at a later date, to have a very strange experience—the first intimation of a still stranger discovery—but of that I will speak in its proper place.

"Looking round with a sudden thought, from a terrace on which I rested for a while, I realized that there were no small houses to be seen. Apparently the single house, and possibly even the household, had vanished. Here and there among the greenery were palace-like buildings, but the house and the cottage, which form such characteristic features of our own English landscape, had disappeared.

" "Communism," said I to myself.

"And on the heels of that came another thought. I looked at the half-dozen little figures that were following me. Then, in a flash, I perceived that all had the same form of costume, the same soft hairless visage, and the same girlish rotundity of limb. It may seem strange, perhaps, that I had not

noticed this before. But everything was so strange. Now, I saw the fact plainly enough. In costume, and in all the differences of texture and bearing that now mark off the sexes from each other, these people of the future were alike. And the children seemed to my eyes to be but the miniatures of their parents. I judged, then, that the children of that time were extremely precocious, physically at least, and I found afterwards abundant verification of my opinion.

“Seeing the ease and security in which these people were living, I felt that this close resemblance of the sexes was after all what one would expect; for the strength of a man and the softness of a woman, the institution of the family, and the differentiation of occupations are mere militant necessities of an age of physical force; where population is balanced and abundant, much childbearing becomes an evil rather than a blessing to the State; where violence comes but rarely and off-spring are secure, there is less necessity—indeed there is no necessity—for an efficient family, and the specialization of the sexes with reference to their children's needs disappears. We see some beginnings of this even in our own time, and in this future age it was complete. This, I must remind you, was my speculation at the time. Later, I was to appreciate how far it fell short of the reality.

“While I was musing upon these things, my attention was attracted by a pretty little structure, like a well under a cupola. I thought in a transitory way of the oddness of wells still existing, and then resumed the thread of my speculations. There were no large buildings towards the top of the hill, and as my walking powers were evidently miraculous, I was presently left alone for the first time. With a strange sense of freedom and adventure I pushed on up to the crest.

“There I found a seat of some yellow metal that I did not recognize, corroded in places with a kind of pinkish rust and half smothered in soft moss, the arm-rests cast and filed into the resemblance of griffins’ heads. I sat down on it, and I surveyed the broad view of our old world under the sunset of that long day. It was as sweet and fair a view as I have ever seen. The sun had already gone below the horizon and the west was flaming gold, touched with some horizontal bars of purple and crimson. Below was the valley of the Thames, in which the river lay like a band of burnished steel. I have already spoken of the great palaces dotted about among the variegated greenery, some in ruins and some still occupied. Here and there rose a white or silvery figure in the waste garden of the earth, here and there came the sharp vertical line of some cupola or obelisk. There were no hedges, no signs of proprietary rights, no evidences of agriculture; the whole earth had become a garden.

“So watching, I began to put my interpretation upon the things I had seen, and as it shaped itself to me that evening, my interpretation was something in this way. (Afterwards I found I had got only a half-truth—or only a glimpse of one facet of the truth.)

“It seemed to me that I had happened upon humanity upon the wane. The ruddy sunset set me thinking of the sunset of mankind. For the first time I began to realize an odd consequence of the social effort in which we are at present engaged. And yet, come to think, it is a logical consequence enough. Strength is the outcome of need; security sets a premium on feebleness. The work of ameliorating the conditions of life—the true civilizing process that makes life more and more secure—had gone steadily on to a climax. One triumph of a united humanity over Nature had followed another. Things that are now mere dreams had become projects deliberately put in hand and carried forward. And the harvest was what I saw!

“After all, the sanitation and the agriculture of to-day are still in the rudimentary stage. The science of our time has attacked but a little department of the field of human disease, but even so, it spreads its operations very steadily and persistently. Our agriculture and horticulture destroy a weed just here and there and cultivate perhaps a score or so of wholesome plants, leaving the greater number to fight out a balance as they can. We improve our favourite plants and animals —and how few they are—gradually by selective breeding; now a new and better peach, now a seedless grape, now a sweeter and larger flower, now a more convenient breed of cattle. We improve them gradually, because our ideals are vague and tentative, and our knowledge is very limited; because Nature, too, is shy and slow in our clumsy hands. Some day all this will be better organized, and still better. That is the drift of the current in spite of the eddies. The whole world will be intelligent, educated, and co-operating; things will move faster and faster towards the subjugation of Nature. In the end, wisely and carefully we shall readjust the balance of animal and vegetable life to suit our human needs.

“This adjustment, I say, must have been done, and done well; done indeed for all Time, in the space of Time across which my machine had leaped. The air was free from gnats, the earth from weeds or fungi; everywhere were fruits and sweet and delightful flowers; brilliant butterflies flew hither and thither. The ideal of preventive medicine was attained. Diseases had been stamped out. I saw no evidence of any contagious diseases during all my stay. And I shall have to tell you later

that even the processes of putrefaction and decay had been profoundly affected by these changes.

“Social triumphs, too, had been effected. I saw mankind housed in splendid shelters, gloriously clothed, and as yet I had found them engaged in no toil. There were no signs of struggle, neither social nor economical struggle. The shop, the advertisement, traffic, all that commerce which constitutes the body of our world, was gone. It was natural on that golden evening that I should jump at the idea of a social paradise. The difficulty of increasing population had been met, I guessed, and population had ceased to increase.

“But with this change in condition comes inevitably adaptations to the change. What, unless biological science is a mass of errors, is the cause of human intelligence and vigour? Hardship and freedom: conditions under which the active, strong, and subtle survive and the weaker go to the wall; conditions that put a premium upon the loyal alliance of capable men, upon self-restraint, patience, and decision. And the institution of the family, and the emotions that arise therein, the fierce jealousy, the tenderness for offspring, parental self-devotion, all found their justification and support in the imminent dangers of the young. NOW, where are these imminent dangers? There is a sentiment arising, and it will grow, against connubial jealousy, against fierce maternity, against passion of all sorts; unnecessary things now, and things that make us uncomfortable, savage survivals, discords in a refined and pleasant life.

“I thought of the physical slightness of the people, their lack of intelligence, and those big abundant ruins, and it strengthened my belief in a perfect conquest of Nature. For after the battle comes Quiet. Humanity had been strong, energetic, and intelligent, and had used all its abundant vitality to alter the conditions under which it lived. And now came the reaction of the altered conditions.

“Under the new conditions of perfect comfort and security, that restless energy, that with us is strength, would become weakness. Even in our own time certain tendencies and desires, once necessary to survival, are a constant source of failure. Physical courage and the love of battle, for instance, are no great help—may even be hindrances—to a civilized man. And in a state of physical balance and security, power, intellectual as well as physical, would be out of place. For countless years I judged there had been no danger of war or solitary violence, no danger from wild beasts, no wasting disease to require strength of constitution, no need of toil. For such a life, what we should

call the weak are as well equipped as the strong, are indeed no longer weak. Better equipped indeed they are, for the strong would be fretted by an energy for which there was no outlet. No doubt the exquisite beauty of the buildings I saw was the outcome of the last surgings of the now purposeless energy of mankind before it settled down into perfect harmony with the conditions under which it lived—the flourish of that triumph which began the last great peace. This has ever been the fate of energy in security; it takes to art and to eroticism, and then come languor and decay.

"Even this artistic impetus would at last die away—had almost died in the Time I saw. To adorn themselves with flowers, to dance, to sing in the sunlight: so much was left of the artistic spirit, and no more. Even that would fade in the end into a contented inactivity. We are kept keen on the grindstone of pain and necessity, and, it seemed to me, that here was that hateful grindstone broken at last!

"As I stood there in the gathering dark I thought that in this simple explanation I had mastered the problem of the world—mastered the whole secret of these delicious people. Possibly the checks they had devised for the increase of population had succeeded too well, and their numbers had rather diminished than kept stationary. That would account for the abandoned ruins. Very simple was my explanation, and plausible enough—as most wrong theories are!

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"As I stood there musing over this too perfect triumph of man, the full moon, yellow and gibbous, came up out of an overflow of silver light in the north-east. The bright little figures ceased to move about below, a noiseless owl flitted by, and I shivered with the chill of the night. I determined to descend and find where I could sleep.

"I looked for the building I knew. Then my eye travelled along to the figure of the White Sphinx upon the pedestal of bronze, growing distinct as the light of the rising moon grew brighter. I could see the silver birch against it. There was the tangle of rhododendron bushes, black in the pale light, and there was the little lawn. I looked at the lawn again. A queer doubt chilled my complacency. "No," said I stoutly to myself, "that was not the lawn."

"But it WAS the lawn. For the white leprous face of the sphinx was towards it. Can you imagine

what I felt as this conviction came home to me? But you cannot. The Time Machine was gone!

"At once, like a lash across the face, came the possibility of losing my own age, of being left helpless in this strange new world. The bare thought of it was an actual physical sensation. I could feel it grip me at the throat and stop my breathing. In another moment I was in a passion of fear and running with great leaping strides down the slope. Once I fell headlong and cut my face; I lost no time in stanching the blood, but jumped up and ran on, with a warm trickle down my cheek and chin. All the time I ran I was saying to myself: "They have moved it a little, pushed it under the bushes out of the way." Nevertheless, I ran with all my might. All the time, with the certainty that sometimes comes with excessive dread, I knew that such assurance was folly, knew instinctively that the machine was removed out of my reach. My breath came with pain. I suppose I covered the whole distance from the hill crest to the little lawn, two miles perhaps, in ten minutes. And I am not a young man. I cursed aloud, as I ran, at my confident folly in leaving the machine, wasting good breath thereby. I cried aloud, and none answered. Not a creature seemed to be stirring in that moonlit world.

"When I reached the lawn my worst fears were realized. Not a trace of the thing was to be seen. I felt faint and cold when I faced the empty space among the black tangle of bushes. I ran round it furiously, as if the thing might be hidden in a corner, and then stopped abruptly, with my hands clutching my hair. Above me towered the sphinx, upon the bronze pedestal, white, shining, leprous, in the light of the rising moon. It seemed to smile in mockery of my dismay.

"I might have consoled myself by imagining the little people had put the mechanism in some shelter for me, had I not felt assured of their physical and intellectual inadequacy. That is what dismayed me: the sense of some hitherto unsuspected power, through whose intervention my invention had vanished. Yet, for one thing I felt assured: unless some other age had produced its exact duplicate, the machine could not have moved in time. The attachment of the levers—I will show you the method later—prevented any one from tampering with it in that way when they were removed. It had moved, and was hid, only in space. But then, where could it be?

"I think I must have had a kind of frenzy. I remember running violently in and out among the moonlit bushes all round the sphinx, and startling some white animal that, in the dim light, I took for a small deer. I remember, too, late that night, beating the bushes with my clenched fist until my

knuckles were gashed and bleeding from the broken twigs. Then, sobbing and raving in my anguish of mind, I went down to the great building of stone. The big hall was dark, silent, and deserted. I slipped on the uneven floor, and fell over one of the malachite tables, almost breaking my shin. I lit a match and went on past the dusty curtains, of which I have told you.

"There I found a second great hall covered with cushions, upon which, perhaps, a score or so of the little people were sleeping. I have no doubt they found my second appearance strange enough, coming suddenly out of the quiet darkness with inarticulate noises and the splutter and flare of a match. For they had forgotten about matches. "Where is my Time Machine?" I began, bawling like an angry child, laying hands upon them and shaking them up together. It must have been very queer to them. Some laughed, most of them looked sorely frightened. When I saw them standing round me, it came into my head that I was doing as foolish a thing as it was possible for me to do under the circumstances, in trying to revive the sensation of fear. For, reasoning from their daylight behaviour, I thought that fear must be forgotten.

"Abruptly, I dashed down the match, and, knocking one of the people over in my course, went blundering across the big dining-hall again, out under the moonlight. I heard cries of terror and their little feet running and stumbling this way and that. I do not remember all I did as the moon crept up the sky. I suppose it was the unexpected nature of my loss that maddened me. I felt hopelessly cut off from my own kind—a strange animal in an unknown world. I must have raved to and fro, screaming and crying upon God and Fate. I have a memory of horrible fatigue, as the long night of despair wore away; of looking in this impossible place and that; of groping among moon-lit ruins and touching strange creatures in the black shadows; at last, of lying on the ground near the sphinx and weeping with absolute wretchedness. I had nothing left but misery. Then I slept, and when I woke again it was full day, and a couple of sparrows were hopping round me on the turf within reach of my arm.

"I sat up in the freshness of the morning, trying to remember how I had got there, and why I had such a profound sense of desertion and despair. Then things came clear in my mind. With the plain, reasonable daylight, I could look my circumstances fairly in the face. I saw the wild folly of my frenzy overnight, and I could reason with myself. "Suppose the worst?" I said. "Suppose the machine altogether lost—perhaps destroyed? It behooves me to be calm and patient, to learn the way of the people, to get a clear idea of the method of my loss, and the means of getting materials and tools; so that in the end, perhaps, I may make another." That would be my only hope, perhaps,

but better than despair. And, after all, it was a beautiful and curious world.

“But probably, the machine had only been taken away. Still, I must be calm and patient, find its hiding-place, and recover it by force or cunning. And with that I scrambled to my feet and looked about me, wondering where I could bathe. I felt weary, stiff, and travel-soiled. The freshness of the morning made me desire an equal freshness. I had exhausted my emotion. Indeed, as I went about my business, I found myself wondering at my intense excitement overnight. I made a careful examination of the ground about the little lawn. I wasted some time in futile questionings, conveyed, as well as I was able, to such of the little people as came by. They all failed to understand my gestures; some were simply stolid, some thought it was a jest and laughed at me. I had the hardest task in the world to keep my hands off their pretty laughing faces. It was a foolish impulse, but the devil begotten of fear and blind anger was ill curbed and still eager to take advantage of my perplexity. The turf gave better counsel. I found a groove ripped in it, about midway between the pedestal of the sphinx and the marks of my feet where, on arrival, I had struggled with the overturned machine. There were other signs of removal about, with queer narrow footprints like those I could imagine made by a sloth. This directed my closer attention to the pedestal. It was, as I think I have said, of bronze. It was not a mere block, but highly decorated with deep framed panels on either side. I went and rapped at these. The pedestal was hollow. Examining the panels with care I found them discontinuous with the frames. There were no handles or keyholes, but possibly the panels, if they were doors, as I supposed, opened from within. One thing was clear enough to my mind. It took no very great mental effort to infer that my Time Machine was inside that pedestal. But how it got there was a different problem.

“I saw the heads of two orange-clad people coming through the bushes and under some blossom-covered apple-trees towards me. I turned smiling to them and beckoned them to me. They came, and then, pointing to the bronze pedestal, I tried to intimate my wish to open it. But at my first gesture towards this they behaved very oddly. I don’t know how to convey their expression to you. Suppose you were to use a grossly improper gesture to a delicate-minded woman—it is how she would look. They went off as if they had received the last possible insult. I tried a sweet-looking little chap in white next, with exactly the same result. Somehow, his manner made me feel ashamed of myself. But, as you know, I wanted the Time Machine, and I tried him once more. As he turned off, like the others, my temper got the better of me. In three strides I was after him, had him by the loose part of his robe round the neck, and began dragging him towards the sphinx. Then I saw the horror and repugnance of his face, and all of a sudden I let him go.

"But I was not beaten yet. I banged with my fist at the bronze panels. I thought I heard something stir inside—to be explicit, I thought I heard a sound like a chuckle—but I must have been mistaken. Then I got a big pebble from the river, and came and hammered till I had flattened a coil in the decorations, and the verdigris came off in powdery flakes. The delicate little people must have heard me hammering in gusty outbreaks a mile away on either hand, but nothing came of it. I saw a crowd of them upon the slopes, looking furtively at me. At last, hot and tired, I sat down to watch the place. But I was too restless to watch long; I am too Occidental for a long vigil. I could work at a problem for years, but to wait inactive for twenty-four hours—that is another matter.

"I got up after a time, and began walking aimlessly through the bushes towards the hill again. "Patience," said I to myself. "If you want your machine again you must leave that sphinx alone. If they mean to take your machine away, it's little good your wrecking their bronze panels, and if they don't, you will get it back as soon as you can ask for it. To sit among all those unknown things before a puzzle like that is hopeless. That way lies monomania. Face this world. Learn its ways, watch it, be careful of too hasty guesses at its meaning. In the end you will find clues to it all." Then suddenly the humour of the situation came into my mind: the thought of the years I had spent in study and toil to get into the future age, and now my passion of anxiety to get out of it. I had made myself the most complicated and the most hopeless trap that ever a man devised. Although it was at my own expense, I could not help myself. I laughed aloud.

"Going through the big palace, it seemed to me that the little people avoided me. It may have been my fancy, or it may have had something to do with my hammering at the gates of bronze. Yet I felt tolerably sure of the avoidance. I was careful, however, to show no concern and to abstain from any pursuit of them, and in the course of a day or two things got back to the old footing. I made what progress I could in the language, and in addition I pushed my explorations here and there. Either I missed some subtle point or their language was excessively simple—almost exclusively composed of concrete substantives and verbs. There seemed to be few, if any, abstract terms, or little use of figurative language. Their sentences were usually simple and of two words, and I failed to convey or understand any but the simplest propositions. I determined to put the thought of my Time Machine and the mystery of the bronze doors under the sphinx as much as possible in a corner of memory, until my growing knowledge would lead me back to them in a natural way. Yet a certain feeling, you may understand, tethered me in a circle of a few miles round the point of my arrival.

“So far as I could see, all the world displayed the same exuberant richness as the Thames valley. From every hill I climbed I saw the same abundance of splendid buildings, endlessly varied in material and style, the same clustering thickets of evergreens, the same blossom-laden trees and tree-ferns. Here and there water shone like silver, and beyond, the land rose into blue undulating hills, and so faded into the serenity of the sky. A peculiar feature, which presently attracted my attention, was the presence of certain circular wells, several, as it seemed to me, of a very great depth. One lay by the path up the hill, which I had followed during my first walk. Like the others, it was rimmed with bronze, curiously wrought, and protected by a little cupola from the rain. Sitting by the side of these wells, and peering down into the shafted darkness, I could see no gleam of water, nor could I start any reflection with a lighted match. But in all of them I heard a certain sound: a thud-thud-thud, like the beating of some big engine; and I discovered, from the flaring of my matches, that a steady current of air set down the shafts. Further, I threw a scrap of paper into the throat of one, and, instead of fluttering slowly down, it was at once sucked swiftly out of sight.

“After a time, too, I came to connect these wells with tall towers standing here and there upon the slopes; for above them there was often just such a flicker in the air as one sees on a hot day above a sun-scorched beach. Putting things together, I reached a strong suggestion of an extensive system of subterranean ventilation, whose true import it was difficult to imagine. I was at first inclined to associate it with the sanitary apparatus of these people. It was an obvious conclusion, but it was absolutely wrong.

“And here I must admit that I learned very little of drains and bells and modes of conveyance, and the like conveniences, during my time in this real future. In some of these visions of Utopias and coming times which I have read, there is a vast amount of detail about building, and social arrangements, and so forth. But while such details are easy enough to obtain when the whole world is contained in one's imagination, they are altogether inaccessible to a real traveller amid such realities as I found here. Conceive the tale of London which a negro, fresh from Central Africa, would take back to his tribe! What would he know of railway companies, of social movements, of telephone and telegraph wires, of the Parcels Delivery Company, and postal orders and the like? Yet we, at least, should be willing enough to explain these things to him! And even of what he knew, how much could he make his untravelled friend either apprehend or believe? Then, think how narrow the gap between a negro and a white man of our own times, and how wide the interval between myself and these of the Golden Age! I was sensible of much which was unseen, and which contributed to my comfort; but save for a general impression of automatic organization, I fear I can

convey very little of the difference to your mind.

“In the matter of sepulchre, for instance, I could see no signs of crematoria nor anything suggestive of tombs. But it occurred to me that, possibly, there might be cemeteries (or crematoria) somewhere beyond the range of my explorings. This, again, was a question I deliberately put to myself, and my curiosity was at first entirely defeated upon the point. The thing puzzled me, and I was led to make a further remark, which puzzled me still more: that aged and infirm among this people there were none.

“I must confess that my satisfaction with my first theories of an automatic civilization and a decadent humanity did not long endure. Yet I could think of no other. Let me put my difficulties. The several big palaces I had explored were mere living places, great dining-halls and sleeping apartments. I could find no machinery, no appliances of any kind. Yet these people were clothed in pleasant fabrics that must at times need renewal, and their sandals, though undecorated, were fairly complex specimens of metalwork. Somehow such things must be made. And the little people displayed no vestige of a creative tendency. There were no shops, no workshops, no sign of importations among them. They spent all their time in playing gently, in bathing in the river, in making love in a half-playful fashion, in eating fruit and sleeping. I could not see how things were kept going.

“Then, again, about the Time Machine: something, I knew not what, had taken it into the hollow pedestal of the White Sphinx. Why? For the life of me I could not imagine. Those waterless wells, too, those flickering pillars. I felt I lacked a clue. I felt—how shall I put it? Suppose you found an inscription, with sentences here and there in excellent plain English, and interpolated therewith, others made up of words, of letters even, absolutely unknown to you? Well, on the third day of my visit, that was how the world of Eight Hundred and Two Thousand Seven Hundred and One presented itself to me!

“That day, too, I made a friend—of a sort. It happened that, as I was watching some of the little people bathing in a shallow, one of them was seized with cramp and began drifting downstream. The main current ran rather swiftly, but not too strongly for even a moderate swimmer. It will give you an idea, therefore, of the strange deficiency in these creatures, when I tell you that none made the slightest attempt to rescue the weakly crying little thing which was drowning before their eyes.

When I realized this, I hurriedly slipped off my clothes, and, wading in at a point lower down, I caught the poor mite and drew her safe to land. A little rubbing of the limbs soon brought her round, and I had the satisfaction of seeing she was all right before I left her. I had got to such a low estimate of her kind that I did not expect any gratitude from her. In that, however, I was wrong.

“This happened in the morning. In the afternoon I met my little woman, as I believe it was, as I was returning towards my centre from an exploration, and she received me with cries of delight and presented me with a big garland of flowers— evidently made for me and me alone. The thing took my imagination. Very possibly I had been feeling desolate. At any rate I did my best to display my appreciation of the gift. We were soon seated together in a little stone arbour, engaged in conversation, chiefly of smiles. The creature's friendliness affected me exactly as a child's might have done. We passed each other flowers, and she kissed my hands. I did the same to hers. Then I tried talk, and found that her name was Weena, which, though I don't know what it meant, somehow seemed appropriate enough. That was the beginning of a queer friendship which lasted a week, and ended—as I will tell you!

“She was exactly like a child. She wanted to be with me always. She tried to follow me everywhere, and on my next journey out and about it went to my heart to tire her down, and leave her at last, exhausted and calling after me rather plaintively. But the problems of the world had to be mastered. I had not, I said to myself, come into the future to carry on a miniature flirtation. Yet her distress when I left her was very great, her expostulations at the parting were sometimes frantic, and I think, altogether, I had as much trouble as comfort from her devotion. Nevertheless she was, somehow, a very great comfort. I thought it was mere childish affection that made her cling to me. Until it was too late, I did not clearly know what I had inflicted upon her when I left her. Nor until it was too late did I clearly understand what she was to me. For, by merely seeming fond of me, and showing in her weak, futile way that she cared for me, the little doll of a creature presently gave my return to the neighbourhood of the White Sphinx almost the feeling of coming home; and I would watch for her tiny figure of white and gold so soon as I came over the hill.

“It was from her, too, that I learned that fear had not yet left the world. She was fearless enough in the daylight, and she had the oddest confidence in me; for once, in a foolish moment, I made threatening grimaces at her, and she simply laughed at them. But she dreaded the dark, dreaded shadows, dreaded black things. Darkness to her was the one thing dreadful. It was a singularly passionate emotion, and it set me thinking and observing. I discovered then, among other things,

that these little people gathered into the great houses after dark, and slept in droves. To enter upon them without a light was to put them into a tumult of apprehension. I never found one out of doors, or one sleeping alone within doors, after dark. Yet I was still such a blockhead that I missed the lesson of that fear, and in spite of Weena's distress I insisted upon sleeping away from these slumbering multitudes.

"It troubled her greatly, but in the end her odd affection for me triumphed, and for five of the nights of our acquaintance, including the last night of all, she slept with her head pillow'd on my arm. But my story slips away from me as I speak of her. It must have been the night before her rescue that I was awakened about dawn. I had been restless, dreaming most disagreeably that I was drowned, and that sea anemones were feeling over my face with their soft palps. I woke with a start, and with an odd fancy that some greyish animal had just rushed out of the chamber. I tried to get to sleep again, but I felt restless and uncomfortable. It was that dim grey hour when things are just creeping out of darkness, when everything is colourless and clear cut, and yet unreal. I got up, and went down into the great hall, and so out upon the flagstones in front of the palace. I thought I would make a virtue of necessity, and see the sunrise.

"The moon was setting, and the dying moonlight and the first pallor of dawn were mingled in a ghastly half-light. The bushes were inky black, the ground a sombre grey, the sky colourless and cheerless. And up the hill I thought I could see ghosts. There several times, as I scanned the slope, I saw white figures. Twice I fancied I saw a solitary white, ape-like creature running rather quickly up the hill, and once near the ruins I saw a leash of them carrying some dark body. They moved hastily. I did not see what became of them. It seemed that they vanished among the bushes. The dawn was still indistinct, you must understand. I was feeling that chill, uncertain, early-morning feeling you may have known. I doubted my eyes.

"As the eastern sky grew brighter, and the light of the day came on and its vivid colouring returned upon the world once more, I scanned the view keenly. But I saw no vestige of my white figures. They were mere creatures of the half light. "They must have been ghosts," I said; "I wonder whence they dated." For a queer notion of Grant Allen's came into my head, and amused me. If each generation die and leave ghosts, he argued, the world at last will get overcrowded with them. On that theory they would have grown innumerable some Eight Hundred Thousand Years hence, and it was no great wonder to see four at once. But the jest was unsatisfying, and I was thinking of these figures all the morning, until Weena's rescue drove them out of my head. I associated them in some

indefinite way with the white animal I had startled in my first passionate search for the Time Machine. But Weena was a pleasant substitute. Yet all the same, they were soon destined to take far deadlier possession of my mind.

“I think I have said how much hotter than our own was the weather of this Golden Age. I cannot account for it. It may be that the sun was hotter, or the earth nearer the sun. It is usual to assume that the sun will go on cooling steadily in the future. But people, unfamiliar with such speculations as those of the younger Darwin, forget that the planets must ultimately fall back one by one into the parent body. As these catastrophes occur, the sun will blaze with renewed energy; and it may be that some inner planet had suffered this fate. Whatever the reason, the fact remains that the sun was very much hotter than we know it.

“Well, one very hot morning—my fourth, I think—as I was seeking shelter from the heat and glare in a colossal ruin near the great house where I slept and fed, there happened this strange thing: Clambering among these heaps of masonry, I found a narrow gallery, whose end and side windows were blocked by fallen masses of stone. By contrast with the brilliancy outside, it seemed at first impenetrably dark to me. I entered it groping, for the change from light to blackness made spots of colour swim before me. Suddenly I halted spellbound. A pair of eyes, luminous by reflection against the daylight without, was watching me out of the darkness.

“The old instinctive dread of wild beasts came upon me. I clenched my hands and steadfastly looked into the glaring eyeballs. I was afraid to turn. Then the thought of the absolute security in which humanity appeared to be living came to my mind. And then I remembered that strange terror of the dark. Overcoming my fear to some extent, I advanced a step and spoke. I will admit that my voice was harsh and ill-controlled. I put out my hand and touched something soft. At once the eyes darted sideways, and something white ran past me. I turned with my heart in my mouth, and saw a queer little ape-like figure, its head held down in a peculiar manner, running across the sunlit space behind me. It blundered against a block of granite, staggered aside, and in a moment was hidden in a black shadow beneath another pile of ruined masonry.

“My impression of it is, of course, imperfect; but I know it was a dull white, and had strange large greyish-red eyes; also that there was flaxen hair on its head and down its back. But, as I say, it went too fast for me to see distinctly. I cannot even say whether it ran on all-fours, or only with its

forearms held very low. After an instant's pause I followed it into the second heap of ruins. I could not find it at first; but, after a time in the profound obscurity, I came upon one of those round well-like openings of which I have told you, half closed by a fallen pillar. A sudden thought came to me. Could this Thing have vanished down the shaft? I lit a match, and, looking down, I saw a small, white, moving creature, with large bright eyes which regarded me steadfastly as it retreated. It made me shudder. It was so like a human spider! It was clambering down the wall, and now I saw for the first time a number of metal foot and hand rests forming a kind of ladder down the shaft. Then the light burned my fingers and fell out of my hand, going out as it dropped, and when I had lit another the little monster had disappeared.

“I do not know how long I sat peering down that well. It was not for some time that I could succeed in persuading myself that the thing I had seen was human. But, gradually, the truth dawned on me: that Man had not remained one species, but had differentiated into two distinct animals: that my graceful children of the Upper-world were not the sole descendants of our generation, but that this bleached, obscene, nocturnal Thing, which had flashed before me, was also heir to all the ages.

“I thought of the flickering pillars and of my theory of an underground ventilation. I began to suspect their true import. And what, I wondered, was this Lemur doing in my scheme of a perfectly balanced organization? How was it related to the indolent serenity of the beautiful Upper-worlders? And what was hidden down there, at the foot of that shaft? I sat upon the edge of the well telling myself that, at

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any rate, there was nothing to fear, and that there I must descend for the solution of my difficulties. And withal I was absolutely afraid to go! As I hesitated, two of the beautiful Upper-world people came running in their amorous sport across the daylight in the shadow. The male pursued the female, flinging flowers at her as he ran.

“They seemed distressed to find me, my arm against the overturned pillar, peering down the well. Apparently it was considered bad form to remark these apertures; for when I pointed to this one, and tried to frame a question about it in their tongue, they were still more visibly distressed and turned away. But they were interested by my matches, and I struck some to amuse them. I tried

them again about the well, and again I failed. So presently I left them, meaning to go back to Weena, and see what I could get from her. But my mind was already in revolution; my guesses and impressions were slipping and sliding to a new adjustment. I had now a clue to the import of these wells, to the ventilating towers, to the mystery of the ghosts; to say nothing of a hint at the meaning of the bronze gates and the fate of the Time Machine! And very vaguely there came a suggestion towards the solution of the economic problem that had puzzled me.

“Here was the new view. Plainly, this second species of Man was subterranean. There were three circumstances in particular which made me think that its rare emergence above ground was the outcome of a long-continued underground habit. In the first place, there was the bleached look common in most animals that live largely in the dark—the white fish of the Kentucky caves, for instance. Then, those large eyes, with that capacity for reflecting light, are common features of nocturnal things—witness the owl and the cat. And last of all, that evident confusion in the sunshine, that hasty yet fumbling awkward flight towards dark shadow, and that peculiar carriage of the head while in the light—all reinforced the theory of an extreme sensitiveness of the retina.

“Beneath my feet, then, the earth must be tunnelled enormously, and these tunnellings were the habitat of the new race. The presence of ventilating shafts and wells along the hill slopes—everywhere, in fact except along the river valley—showed how universal were its ramifications. What so natural, then, as to assume that it was in this artificial Underworld that such work as was necessary to the comfort of the daylight race was done? The notion was so plausible that I at once accepted it, and went on to assume the how of this splitting of the human species. I dare say you will anticipate the shape of my theory; though, for myself, I very soon felt that it fell far short of the truth.

“At first, proceeding from the problems of our own age, it seemed clear as daylight to me that the gradual widening of the present merely temporary and social difference between the Capitalist and the Labourer, was the key to the whole position. No doubt it will seem grotesque enough to you—and wildly incredible!—and yet even now there are existing circumstances to point that way. There is a tendency to utilize underground space for the less ornamental purposes of civilization; there is the Metropolitan Railway in London, for instance, there are new electric railways, there are subways, there are underground workrooms and restaurants, and they increase and multiply. Evidently, I thought, this tendency had increased till Industry had gradually lost its birthright in the sky. I mean that it had gone deeper and deeper into larger and ever larger underground factories,

spending a still-increasing amount of its time therein, till, in the end—! Even now, does not an East-end worker live in such artificial conditions as practically to be cut off from the natural surface of the earth?

“Again, the exclusive tendency of richer people—due, no doubt, to the increasing refinement of their education, and the widening gulf between them and the rude violence of the poor—is already leading to the closing, in their interest, of considerable portions of the surface of the land. About London, for instance, perhaps half the prettier country is shut in against intrusion. And this same widening gulf—which is due to the length and expense of the higher educational process and the increased facilities for and temptations towards refined habits on the part of the rich—will make that exchange between class and class, that promotion by intermarriage which at present retards the splitting of our species along lines of social stratification, less and less frequent. So, in the end, above ground you must have the Haves, pursuing pleasure and comfort and beauty, and below ground the Have-nots, the Workers getting continually adapted to the conditions of their labour. Once they were there, they would no doubt have to pay rent, and not a little of it, for the ventilation of their caverns; and if they refused, they would starve or be suffocated for arrears. Such of them as were so constituted as to be miserable and rebellious would die; and, in the end, the balance being permanent, the survivors would become as well adapted to the conditions of underground life, and as happy in their way, as the Upper-world people were to theirs. As it seemed to me, the refined beauty and the etiolated pallor followed naturally enough.

“The great triumph of Humanity I had dreamed of took a different shape in my mind. It had been no such triumph of moral education and general co-operation as I had imagined. Instead, I saw a real aristocracy, armed with a perfected science and working to a logical conclusion the industrial system of to-day. Its triumph had not been simply a triumph over Nature, but a triumph over Nature and the fellow-man. This, I must warn you, was my theory at the time. I had no convenient cicerone in the pattern of the Utopian books. My explanation may be absolutely wrong. I still think it is the most plausible one. But even on this supposition the balanced civilization that was at last attained must have long since passed its zenith, and was now far fallen into decay. The too-perfect security of the Upper-worlders had led them to a slow movement of degeneration, to a general dwindling in size, strength, and intelligence. That I could see clearly enough already. What had happened to the Under-grounders I did not yet suspect; but from what I had seen of the Morlocks—that, by the by, was the name by which these creatures were called—I could imagine that the modification of the human type was even far more profound than among the "Eloi," the beautiful race that I already

knew.

“Then came troublesome doubts. Why had the Morlocks taken my Time Machine? For I felt sure it was they who had taken it. Why, too, if the Eloi were masters, could they not restore the machine to me? And why were they so terribly afraid of the dark? I proceeded, as I have said, to question Weena about this Under-world, but here again I was disappointed. At first she would not understand my questions, and presently she refused to answer them. She shivered as though the topic was unendurable. And when I pressed her, perhaps a little harshly, she burst into tears. They were the only tears, except my own, I ever saw in that Golden Age. When I saw them I ceased abruptly to trouble about the Morlocks, and was only concerned in banishing these signs of the human inheritance from Weena's eyes. And very soon she was smiling and clapping her hands, while I solemnly burned a match.

VI

“It may seem odd to you, but it was two days before I could follow up the new-found clue in what was manifestly the proper way. I felt a peculiar shrinking from those pallid bodies. They were just the half-bleached colour of the worms and things one sees preserved in spirit in a zoological museum. And they were filthily cold to the touch. Probably my shrinking was largely due to the sympathetic influence of the Eloi, whose disgust of the Morlocks I now began to appreciate.

“The next night I did not sleep well. Probably my health was a little disordered. I was oppressed with perplexity and doubt. Once or twice I had a feeling of intense fear for which I could perceive no definite reason. I remember creeping noiselessly into the great hall where the little people were sleeping in the moonlight—that night Weena was among them—and feeling reassured by their presence. It occurred to me even then, that in the course of a few days the moon must pass through its last quarter, and the nights grow dark, when the appearances of these unpleasant creatures from below, these whitened Lemurs, this new vermin that had replaced the old, might be more abundant. And on both these days I had the restless feeling of one who shirks an inevitable duty. I felt assured that the Time Machine was only to be recovered by boldly penetrating these underground mysteries. Yet I could not face the mystery. If only I had had a companion it would have been different. But I was so horribly alone, and even to clamber down into the darkness of the well appalled me. I don't know if you will understand my feeling, but I never felt quite safe at my back.

“It was this restlessness, this insecurity, perhaps, that drove me further and further afield in my

exploring expeditions. Going to the south-westward towards the rising country that is now called Combe Wood, I observed far off, in the direction of nineteenth-century Banstead, a vast green structure, different in character from any I had hitherto seen. It was larger than the largest of the palaces or ruins I knew, and the facade had an Oriental look: the face of it having the lustre, as well as the pale-green tint, a kind of bluish-green, of a certain type of Chinese porcelain. This difference in aspect suggested a difference in use, and I was minded to push on and explore. But the day was growing late, and I had come upon the sight of the place after a long and tiring circuit; so I resolved to hold over the adventure for the following day, and I returned to the welcome and the caresses of little Weena. But next morning I perceived clearly enough that my curiosity regarding the Palace of Green Porcelain was a piece of self-deception, to enable me to shirk, by another day, an experience I dreaded. I resolved I would make the descent without further waste of time, and started out in the early morning towards a well near the ruins of granite and aluminium.

"Little Weena ran with me. She danced beside me to the well, but when she saw me lean over the mouth and look downward, she seemed strangely disconcerted. "Good-bye, Little Weena," I said, kissing her; and then putting her down, I began to feel over the parapet for the climbing hooks. Rather hastily, I may as well confess, for I feared my courage might leak away! At first she watched me in amazement. Then she gave a most piteous cry, and running to me, she began to pull at me with her little hands. I think her opposition nerved me rather to proceed. I shook her off, perhaps a little roughly, and in another moment I was in the throat of the well. I saw her agonized face over the parapet, and smiled to reassure her. Then I had to look down at the unstable hooks to which I clung.

"I had to clamber down a shaft of perhaps two hundred yards. The descent was effected by means of metallic bars projecting from the sides of the well, and these being adapted to the needs of a creature much smaller and lighter than myself, I was speedily cramped and fatigued by the descent. And not simply fatigued! One of the bars bent suddenly under my weight, and almost swung me off into the blackness beneath. For a moment I hung by one hand, and after that experience I did not dare to rest again. Though my arms and back were presently acutely painful, I went on clambering down the sheer descent with as quick a motion as possible. Glancing upward, I saw the aperture, a small blue disk, in which a star was visible, while little Weena's head showed as a round black projection. The thudding sound of a machine below grew louder and more oppressive. Everything save that little disk above was profoundly dark, and when I looked up again Weena had disappeared.

"I was in an agony of discomfort. I had some thought of trying to go up the shaft again, and leave the Under-world alone. But even while I turned this over in my mind I continued to descend. At last, with intense relief, I saw dimly coming up, a foot to the right of me, a slender loophole in the wall. Swinging myself in, I found it was the aperture of a narrow horizontal tunnel in which I could lie down and rest. It was not too soon. My arms ached, my back was cramped, and I was trembling with the prolonged terror of a fall. Besides this, the unbroken darkness had had a distressing effect upon my eyes. The air was full of the throb and hum of machinery pumping air down the shaft.

"I do not know how long I lay. I was roused by a soft hand touching my face. Starting up in the darkness I snatched at my matches and, hastily striking one, I saw three stooping white creatures similar to the one I had seen above ground in the ruin, hastily retreating before the light. Living, as they did, in what appeared to me impenetrable darkness, their eyes were abnormally large and sensitive, just as are the pupils of the abysmal fishes, and they reflected the light in the same way. I have no doubt they could see me in that rayless obscurity, and they did not seem to have any fear of me apart from the light. But, so soon as I struck a match in order to see them, they fled incontinently, vanishing into dark gutters and tunnels, from which their eyes glared at me in the strangest fashion.

"I tried to call to them, but the language they had was apparently different from that of the Over-world people; so that I was needs left to my own unaided efforts, and the thought of flight before exploration was even then in my mind. But I said to myself, "You are in for it now," and, feeling my way along the tunnel, I found the noise of machinery grow louder. Presently the walls fell away from me, and I came to a large open space, and striking another match, saw that I had entered a vast arched cavern, which stretched into utter darkness beyond the range of my light. The view I had of it was as much as one could see in the burning of a match.

"Necessarily my memory is vague. Great shapes like big machines rose out of the dimness, and cast grotesque black shadows, in which dim spectral Morlocks sheltered from the glare. The place, by the by, was very stuffy and oppressive, and the faint halitus of freshly shed blood was in the air. Some way down the central vista was a little table of white metal, laid with what seemed a meal. The Morlocks at any rate were carnivorous! Even at the time, I remember wondering what large animal could have survived to furnish the red joint I saw. It was all very indistinct: the heavy smell,

the big unmeaning shapes, the obscene figures lurking in the shadows, and only waiting for the darkness to come at me again! Then the match burned down, and stung my fingers, and fell, a wriggling red spot in the blackness.

“I have thought since how particularly ill-equipped I was for such an experience. When I had started with the Time Machine, I had started with the absurd assumption that the men of the Future would certainly be infinitely ahead of ourselves in all their appliances. I had come without arms, without medicine, without anything to smoke—at times I missed tobacco frightfully—even without enough matches. If only I had thought of a Kodak! I could have flashed that glimpse of the Underworld in a second, and examined it at leisure. But, as it was, I stood there with only the weapons and the powers that Nature had endowed me with—hands, feet, and teeth; these, and four safety-matches that still remained to me.

“I was afraid to push my way in among all this machinery in the dark, and it was only with my last glimpse of light I discovered that my store of matches had run low. It had never occurred to me until that moment that there was any need to economize them, and I had wasted almost half the box in astonishing the Upper-worlders, to whom fire was a novelty. Now, as I say, I had four left, and while I stood in the dark, a hand touched mine, lank fingers came feeling over my face, and I was sensible of a peculiar unpleasant odour. I fancied I heard the breathing of a crowd of those dreadful little beings about me. I felt the box of matches in my hand being gently disengaged, and other hands behind me plucking at my clothing. The sense of these unseen creatures examining me was indescribably unpleasant. The sudden realization of my ignorance of their ways of thinking and doing came home to me very vividly in the darkness. I shouted at them as loudly as I could. They started away, and then I could feel them approaching me again. They clutched at me more boldly, whispering odd sounds to each other. I shivered violently, and shouted again rather discordantly. This time they were not so seriously alarmed, and they made a queer laughing noise as they came back at me. I will confess I was horribly frightened. I determined to strike another match and escape under the protection of its glare. I did so, and eking out the flicker with a scrap of paper from my pocket, I made good my retreat to the narrow tunnel. But I had scarce entered this when my light was blown out and in the blackness I could hear the Morlocks rustling like wind among leaves, and pattering like the rain, as they hurried after me.

“In a moment I was clutched by several hands, and there was no mistaking that they were trying to haul me back. I struck another light, and waved it in their dazzled faces. You can scarce imagine

how nauseatingly inhuman they looked—those pale, chinless faces and great, lidless, pinkish-grey eyes!—as they stared in their blindness and bewilderment. But I did not stay to look, I promise you: I retreated again, and when my second match had ended, I struck my third. It had almost burned through when I reached the opening into the shaft. I lay down on the edge, for the throb of the great pump below made me giddy. Then I felt sideways for the projecting hooks, and, as I did so, my feet were grasped from behind, and I was violently tugged backward. I lit my last match . . . and it incontinently went out. But I had my hand on the climbing bars now, and, kicking violently, I disengaged myself from the clutches of the Morlocks and was speedily clambering up the shaft, while they stayed peering and blinking up at me: all but one little wretch who followed me for some way, and wellnigh secured my boot as a trophy.

“That climb seemed interminable to me. With the last twenty or thirty feet of it a deadly nausea came upon me. I had the greatest difficulty in keeping my hold. The last few yards was a frightful struggle against this faintness. Several times my head swam, and I felt all the sensations of falling. At last, however, I got over the well-mouth somehow, and staggered out of the ruin into the blinding sunlight. I fell upon my face. Even the soil smelt sweet and clean. Then I remember Weena kissing my hands and ears, and the voices of others among the Eloi. Then, for a time, I was insensible.

VII

“Now, indeed, I seemed in a worse case than before. Hitherto, except during my night's anguish at the loss of the Time Machine, I had felt a sustaining hope of ultimate escape, but that hope was staggered by these new discoveries. Hitherto I had merely thought myself impeded by the childish simplicity of the little people, and by some unknown forces which I had only to understand to overcome; but there was an altogether new element in the sickening quality of the Morlocks—a something inhuman and malign. Instinctively I loathed them. Before, I had felt as a man might feel who had fallen into a pit: my concern was with the pit and how to get out of it. Now I felt like a beast in a trap, whose enemy would come upon him soon.

“The enemy I dreaded may surprise you. It was the darkness of the new moon. Weena had put this into my head by some at first incomprehensible remarks about the Dark Nights. It was not now such a very difficult problem to guess what the coming Dark Nights might mean. The moon was on the wane: each night there was a longer interval of darkness. And I now understood to some slight degree at least the reason of the fear of the little Upper-world people for the dark. I wondered vaguely what foul villainy it might be that the Morlocks did under the new moon. I felt pretty sure

now that my second hypothesis was all wrong. The Upper-world people might once have been the favoured aristocracy, and the Morlocks their mechanical servants: but that had long since passed away. The two species that had resulted from the evolution of man were sliding down towards, or had already arrived at, an altogether new relationship. The Eloi, like the Carolingian kings, had decayed to a mere beautiful futility. They still possessed the earth on sufferance: since the Morlocks, subterranean for innumerable generations, had come at last to find the daylit surface intolerable. And the Morlocks made their garments, I inferred, and maintained them in their habitual needs, perhaps through the survival of an old habit of service. They did it as a standing horse paws with his foot, or as a man enjoys killing animals in sport: because ancient and departed necessities had impressed it on the organism. But, clearly, the old order was already in part reversed. The Nemesis of the delicate ones was creeping on apace. Ages ago, thousands of generations ago, man had thrust his brother man out of the ease and the sunshine. And now that brother was coming back changed! Already the Eloi had begun to learn one old lesson anew. They were becoming reacquainted with Fear. And suddenly there came into my head the memory of the meat I had seen in the Under-world. It seemed odd how it floated into my mind: not stirred up as it were by the current of my meditations, but coming in almost like a question from outside. I tried to recall the form of it. I had a vague sense of something familiar, but I could not tell what it was at the time.

“Still, however helpless the little people in the presence of their mysterious Fear, I was differently constituted. I came out of this age of ours, this ripe prime of the human race, when Fear does not paralyse and mystery has lost its terrors. I at least would defend myself. Without further delay I determined to make myself arms and a fastness where I might sleep. With that refuge as a base, I could face this strange world with some of that confidence I had lost in realizing to what creatures night by night I lay exposed. I felt I could never sleep again until my bed was secure from them. I shuddered with horror to think how they must already have examined me.

“I wandered during the afternoon along the valley of the Thames, but found nothing that commended itself to my mind as inaccessible. All the buildings and trees seemed easily practicable to such dexterous climbers as the Morlocks, to judge by their wells, must be. Then the tall pinnacles of the Palace of Green Porcelain and the polished gleam of its walls came back to my memory; and in the evening, taking Weena like a child upon my shoulder, I went up the hills towards the southwest. The distance, I had reckoned, was seven or eight miles, but it must have been nearer eighteen. I had first seen the place on a moist afternoon when distances are deceptively diminished. In addition, the heel of one of my shoes was loose, and a nail was working through the sole—they

were comfortable old shoes I wore about indoors—so that I was lame. And it was already long past sunset when I came in sight of the palace, silhouetted black against the pale yellow of the sky.

“Weena had been hugely delighted when I began to carry her, but after a while she desired me to let her down, and ran along by the side of me, occasionally darting off on either hand to pick flowers to stick in my pockets. My pockets had always puzzled Weena, but at the last she had concluded that they were an eccentric kind of vase for floral decoration. At least she utilized them for that purpose. And that reminds me! In changing my jacket I found . . .”

The Time Traveller paused, put his hand into his pocket, and silently placed two withered flowers, not unlike very large white mallows, upon the little table. Then he resumed his narrative.

“As the hush of evening crept over the world and we proceeded over the hill crest towards Wimbledon, Weena grew tired and wanted to return to the house of grey stone. But I pointed out the distant pinnacles of the Palace of Green Porcelain to her, and contrived to make her understand that we were seeking a refuge there from her Fear. You know that great pause that comes upon things before the dusk? Even the breeze stops in the trees. To me there is always an air of expectation about that evening stillness. The sky was clear, remote, and empty save for a few horizontal bars far down in the sunset. Well, that night the expectation took the colour of my fears. In that darkling calm my senses seemed preternaturally sharpened. I fancied I could even feel the hollowness of the ground beneath my feet: could, indeed, almost see through it the Morlocks on their ant-hill going hither and thither and waiting for the dark. In my excitement I fancied that they would receive my invasion of their burrows as a declaration of war. And why had they taken my Time Machine?

“So we went on in the quiet, and the twilight deepened into night. The clear blue of the distance faded, and one star after another came out. The ground grew dim and the trees black. Weena's fears and her fatigue grew upon her. I took her in my arms and talked to her and caressed her. Then, as the darkness grew deeper, she put her arms round my neck, and, closing her eyes, tightly pressed her face against my shoulder. So we went down a long slope into a valley, and there in the dimness I almost walked into a little river. This I waded, and went up the opposite side of the valley, past a number of sleeping houses, and by a statue—a Faun, or some such figure, MINUS the head. Here too were acacias. So far I had seen nothing of the Morlocks, but it was yet early in the night, and the darker hours before the old moon rose were still to come.

“From the brow of the next hill I saw a thick wood spreading wide and black before me. I hesitated at this. I could see no end to it, either to the right or the left. Feeling tired—my feet, in particular, were very sore—I carefully lowered Weena from my shoulder as I halted, and sat down upon the turf. I could no longer see the Palace of Green Porcelain, and I was in doubt of my direction. I looked into the thickness of the wood and thought of what it might hide. Under that dense tangle of branches one would be out of sight of the stars. Even were there no other lurking danger—a danger I did not care to let my imagination loose upon—there would still be all the roots to stumble over and the tree-boles to strike against.

“I was very tired, too, after the excitements of the day; so I decided that I would not face it, but would pass the night upon the open hill.

“Weena, I was glad to find, was fast asleep. I carefully wrapped her in my jacket, and sat down beside her to wait for the moonrise. The hill-side was quiet and deserted, but from the black of the wood there came now and then a stir of living things. Above me shone the stars, for the night was very clear. I felt a certain sense of friendly comfort in their twinkling. All the old constellations had gone from the sky, however: that slow movement which is imperceptible in a hundred human lifetimes, had long since rearranged them in unfamiliar groupings. But the Milky Way, it seemed to me, was still the same tattered streamer of star-dust as of yore. Southward (as I judged it) was a very bright red star that was new to me; it was even more splendid than our own green Sirius. And amid all these scintillating points of light one bright planet shone kindly and steadily like the face of an old friend.

“Looking at these stars suddenly dwarfed my own troubles and all the gravities of terrestrial life. I thought of their unfathomable distance, and the slow inevitable drift of their movements out of the unknown past into the unknown future. I thought of the great precessional cycle that the pole of the earth describes. Only forty times had that silent revolution occurred during all the years that I had traversed. And during these few revolutions all the activity, all the traditions, the complex organizations, the nations, languages, literatures, aspirations, even the mere memory of Man as I knew him, had been swept out of existence. Instead were these frail creatures who had forgotten their high ancestry, and the white Things of which I went in terror. Then I thought of the Great Fear that was between the two species, and for the first time, with a sudden shiver, came the clear

knowledge of what the meat I had seen might be. Yet it was too horrible! I looked at little Weena sleeping beside me, her face white and starlike under the stars, and forthwith dismissed the thought.

“Through that long night I held my mind off the Morlocks as well as I could, and whiled away the time by trying to fancy I could find signs of the old constellations in the new confusion. The sky kept very clear, except for a hazy cloud or so. No doubt I dozed at times. Then, as my vigil wore on, came a faintness in the eastward sky, like the reflection of some colourless fire, and the old moon rose, thin and peaked and white. And close behind, and overtaking it, and overflowing it, the dawn came, pale at first, and then growing pink and warm. No Morlocks had approached us. Indeed, I had seen none upon the hill that night. And in the confidence of renewed day it almost seemed to me that my fear had been unreasonable. I stood up and found my foot with the loose heel swollen at the ankle and painful under the heel; so I sat down again, took off my shoes, and flung them away.

“I awakened Weena, and we went down into the wood, now green and pleasant instead of black and forbidding. We found some fruit wherewith to break our fast. We soon met others of the dainty ones, laughing and dancing in the sunlight as though there was no such thing in nature as the night. And then I thought once more of the meat that I had seen. I felt assured now of what it was, and from the bottom of my heart I pitied this last feeble rill from the great flood of humanity. Clearly, at some time in the Long-Ago of human decay the Morlocks’ food had run short. Possibly they had lived on rats and such-like vermin. Even now man is far less discriminating and exclusive in his food than he was—far less than any monkey. His prejudice against human flesh is no deep-seated instinct. And so these inhuman sons of men——! I tried to look at the thing in a scientific spirit. After all, they were less human and more remote than our cannibal ancestors of three or four thousand years ago. And the intelligence that would have made this state of things a torment had gone. Why should I trouble myself? These Eloi were mere fatted cattle, which the ant-like Morlocks preserved and preyed upon—probably saw to the breeding of. And there was Weena dancing at my side!

“Then I tried to preserve myself from the horror that was coming upon me, by regarding it as a rigorous punishment of human selfishness. Man had been content to live in ease and delight upon the labours of his fellow-man, had taken Necessity as his watchword and excuse, and in the fullness of time Necessity had come home to him. I even tried a Carlyle-like scorn of this wretched aristocracy in decay. But this attitude of mind was impossible. However great their intellectual

degradation, the Eloi had kept too much of the human form not to claim my sympathy, and to make me perforce a sharer in their degradation and their Fear.

“I had at that time very vague ideas as to the course I should pursue. My first was to secure some safe place of refuge, and to make myself such arms of metal or stone as I could contrive. That necessity was immediate. In the next place, I hoped to procure some means of fire, so that I should have the weapon of a torch at hand, for nothing, I knew, would be more efficient against these Morlocks. Then I wanted to arrange some contrivance to break open the doors of bronze under the White Sphinx. I had in mind a battering ram. I had a persuasion that if I could enter those doors and carry a blaze of light before me I should discover the Time Machine and escape. I could not imagine the Morlocks were strong enough to move it far away. Weena I had resolved to bring with me to our own time. And turning such schemes over in my mind I pursued our way towards the building which my fancy had chosen as our dwelling.

VIII

“I found the Palace of Green Porcelain, when we approached it about noon, deserted and falling into ruin. Only ragged vestiges of glass remained in its windows, and great sheets of the green facing had fallen away from the corroded metallic framework. It lay very high upon a turf down, and looking north-eastward before I entered it, I was surprised to see a large estuary, or even creek, where I judged Wandsworth and Battersea must once have been. I thought then—though I never followed up the thought—of what might have happened, or might be happening, to the living things in the sea.

“The material of the Palace proved on examination to be indeed porcelain, and along the face of it I saw an inscription in some unknown character. I thought, rather foolishly, that Weena might help me to interpret this, but I only learned that the bare idea of writing had never entered her head. She always seemed to me, I fancy, more human than she was, perhaps because her affection was so human.

“Within the big valves of the door—which were open and broken—we found, instead of the customary hall, a long gallery lit by many side windows. At the first glance I was reminded of a museum. The tiled floor was thick with dust, and a remarkable array of miscellaneous objects was

shrouded in the same grey covering. Then I perceived, standing strange and gaunt in the centre of the hall, what was clearly the lower part of a huge skeleton. I recognized by the oblique feet that it was some extinct creature after the fashion of the Megatherium. The skull and the upper bones lay beside it in the thick dust, and in one place, where rain-water had dropped through a leak in the roof, the thing itself had been worn away. Further in the gallery was the huge skeleton barrel of a Brontosaurus. My museum hypothesis was confirmed. Going towards the side I found what appeared to be sloping shelves, and clearing away the thick dust, I found the old familiar glass cases of our own time. But they must have been air-tight to judge from the fair preservation of some of their contents.

“Clearly we stood among the ruins of some latter-day South Kensington! Here, apparently, was the Palaeontological Section, and a very splendid array of fossils it must have been, though the inevitable process of decay that had been staved off for a time, and had, through the extinction of bacteria and fungi, lost ninety-nine hundredths of its force, was nevertheless, with extreme sureness if with extreme slowness at work again upon all its treasures. Here and there I found traces of the little people in the shape of rare fossils broken to pieces or threaded in strings upon reeds. And the cases had in some instances been bodily removed—by the Morlocks as I judged. The place was very silent. The thick dust deadened our footsteps. Weena, who had been rolling a sea urchin down the sloping glass of a case, presently came, as I stared about me, and very quietly took my hand and stood beside me.

“And at first I was so much surprised by this ancient monument of an intellectual age, that I gave no thought to the possibilities it presented. Even my preoccupation about the Time Machine receded a little from my mind.

“To judge from the size of the place, this Palace of Green Porcelain had a great deal more in it than a Gallery of Palaeontology; possibly historical galleries; it might be, even a library! To me, at least in my present circumstances, these would be vastly more interesting than this spectacle of oldtime geology in decay. Exploring, I found another short gallery running transversely to the first. This appeared to be devoted to minerals, and the sight of a block of sulphur set my mind running on gunpowder. But I could find no saltpeter; indeed, no nitrates of any kind. Doubtless they had deliquesced ages ago. Yet the sulphur hung in my mind, and set up a train of thinking. As for the rest of the contents of that gallery, though on the whole they were the best preserved of all I saw, I had little interest. I am no specialist in mineralogy, and I went on down a very ruinous aisle running

parallel to the first hall I had entered. Apparently this section had been devoted to natural history, but everything had long since passed out of recognition. A few shrivelled and blackened vestiges of what had once been stuffed animals, desiccated mummies in jars that had once held spirit, a brown dust of departed plants: that was all! I was sorry for that, because I should have been glad to trace the patent readjustments by which the conquest of animated nature had been attained. Then we came to a gallery of simply colossal proportions, but singularly ill-lit, the floor of it running downward at a slight angle from the end at which I entered. At intervals white globes hung from the ceiling—many of them cracked and smashed—which suggested that originally the place had been artificially lit. Here I was more in my element, for rising on either side of me were the huge bulks of big machines, all greatly corroded and many broken down, but some still fairly complete. You know I have a certain weakness for mechanism, and I was inclined to linger among these; the more so as for the most part they had the interest of puzzles, and I could make only the vaguest guesses at what they were for. I fancied that if I could solve their puzzles I should find myself in possession of powers that might be of use against the Morlocks.

“Suddenly Weena came very close to my side. So suddenly that she startled me. Had it not been for her I do not think I should have noticed that the floor of the gallery sloped at all. The end I had come in at was quite above ground, and was lit by rare slit-like windows. As you went down the length, the ground came up against these windows, until at last there was a pit like the "area" of a London house before each, and only a narrow line of daylight at the top. I went slowly along, puzzling about the machines, and had been too intent upon them to notice the gradual diminution of the light, until Weena's increasing apprehensions drew my attention. Then I saw that the gallery ran down at last into a thick darkness. I hesitated, and then, as I looked round me, I saw that the dust was less abundant and its surface less even. Further away towards the dimness, it appeared to be broken by a number of small narrow footprints. My sense of the immediate presence of the Morlocks revived at that. I felt that I was wasting my time in the academic examination of machinery. I called to mind that it was already far advanced in the afternoon, and that I had still no weapon, no refuge, and no means of making a fire. And then down in the remote blackness of the gallery I heard a peculiar pattering, and the same odd noises I had heard down the well.

“I took Weena's hand. Then, struck with a sudden idea, I left her and turned to a machine from which projected a lever not unlike those in a signal-box. Clambering upon the stand, and grasping this lever in my hands, I put all my weight upon it sideways. Suddenly Weena, deserted in the central aisle, began to whimper. I had judged the strength of the lever pretty correctly, for it snapped

after a minute's strain, and I rejoined her with a mace in my hand more than sufficient, I judged, for any Morlock skull I might encounter. And I longed very much to kill a Morlock or so. Very inhuman, you may think, to want to go killing one's own descendants! But it was impossible, somehow, to feel any humanity in the things. Only my disinclination to leave Weena, and a persuasion that if I began to slake my thirst for murder my Time Machine might suffer, restrained me from going straight down the gallery and killing the brutes I heard.

"Well, mace in one hand and Weena in the other, I went out of that gallery and into another and still larger one, which at the first glance reminded me of a military chapel hung with tattered flags. The brown and charred rags that hung from the sides of it, I presently recognized as the decaying vestiges of books. They had long since dropped to pieces, and every semblance of print had left them. But here and there were warped boards and cracked metallic clasps that told the tale well enough. Had I been a literary man I might, perhaps, have moralized upon the futility of all ambition. But as it was, the thing that struck me with keenest force was the enormous waste of labour to which this sombre wilderness of rotting paper testified. At the time I will confess that I thought chiefly of the philosophical transactions and my own seventeen papers upon physical optics.

"Then, going up a broad staircase, we came to what may once have been a gallery of technical chemistry. And here I had not a little hope of useful discoveries. Except at one end where the roof had collapsed, this gallery was well preserved. I went eagerly to every unbroken case. And at last, in one of the really air-tight cases, I found a box of matches. Very eagerly I tried them. They were perfectly good. They were not even damp. I turned to Weena. "Dance," I cried to her in her own tongue. For now I had a weapon indeed against the horrible creatures we feared. And so, in that derelict museum, upon the thick soft carpeting of dust, to Weena's huge delight, I solemnly performed a kind of composite dance, whistling the land of the leal as cheerfully as I could. In part it was a modest cancan, in part a step dance, in part a skirt-dance (so far as my tail-coat permitted), and in part original. For I am naturally inventive, as you know.

"Now, I still think that for this box of matches to have escaped the wear of time for immemorial years was a most strange, as for me it was a most fortunate thing. Yet, oddly enough, I found a far unlikelier substance, and that was camphor. I found it in a sealed jar, that by chance, I suppose, had been really hermetically sealed. I fancied at first that it was paraffin wax, and smashed the glass accordingly. But the odour of camphor was unmistakable. In the universal decay this volatile substance had chanced to survive, perhaps through many thousands of centuries. It reminded me

of a sepia painting I had once seen done from the ink of a fossil Belemnite that must have perished and become fossilized millions of years ago. I was about to throw it away, but I remembered that it was inflammable and burned with a good bright flame—was, in fact, an excellent candle—and I put it in my pocket. I found no explosives, however, nor any means of breaking down the bronze doors. As yet my iron crowbar was the most helpful thing I had chanced upon. Nevertheless I left that gallery greatly elated.

“I cannot tell you all the story of that long afternoon. It would require a great effort of memory to recall my explorations in at all the proper order. I remember a long gallery of rusting stands of arms, and how I hesitated between my crowbar and a hatchet or a sword. I could not carry both, however, and my bar of iron promised best against the bronze gates. There were numbers of guns, pistols, and rifles. The most were masses of rust, but many were of some new metal, and still fairly sound. But any cartridges or powder there may once have been had rotted into dust. One corner I saw was charred and shattered; perhaps, I thought, by an explosion among the specimens. In another place was a vast array of idols—Polynesian, Mexican, Grecian, Phoenician, every country on earth I should think. And here, yielding to an irresistible impulse, I wrote my name upon the nose of a steatite monster from South America that particularly took my fancy.

“As the evening drew on, my interest waned. I went through gallery after gallery, dusty, silent, often ruinous, the exhibits sometimes mere heaps of rust and lignite, sometimes fresher. In one place I suddenly found myself near the model of a tin-mine, and then by the merest accident I discovered, in an air-tight case, two dynamite cartridges! I shouted “Eureka!” and smashed the case with joy. Then came a doubt. I hesitated. Then, selecting a little side gallery, I made my essay. I never felt such a disappointment as I did in waiting five, ten, fifteen minutes for an explosion that never came. Of course the things were dummies, as I might have guessed from their presence. I really believe that had they not been so, I should have rushed off incontinently and blown Sphinx, bronze doors, and (as it proved) my chances of finding the Time Machine, all together into nonexistence.

“It was after that, I think, that we came to a little open court within the palace. It was turfed, and had three fruit-trees. So we rested and refreshed ourselves. Towards sunset I began to consider our position. Night was creeping upon us, and my inaccessible hiding-place had still to be found. But that troubled me very little now. I had in my possession a thing that was, perhaps, the best of all defences against the Morlocks—I had matches! I had the camphor in my pocket, too, if a blaze

were needed. It seemed to me that the best thing we could do would be to pass the night in the open, protected by a fire. In the morning there was the getting of the Time Machine. Towards that, as yet, I had only my iron mace. But now, with my growing knowledge, I felt very differently towards those bronze doors. Up to this, I had refrained from forcing them, largely because of the mystery on the other side. They had never impressed me as being very strong, and I hoped to find my bar of iron not altogether inadequate for the work.

IX

“We emerged from the palace while the sun was still in part above the horizon. I was determined to reach the White Sphinx early the next morning, and ere the dusk I purposed pushing through the woods that had stopped me on the previous journey. My plan was to go as far as possible that night, and then, building a fire, to sleep in the protection of its glare. Accordingly, as we went along I gathered any sticks or dried grass I saw, and presently had my arms full of such litter. Thus loaded, our progress was slower than I had anticipated, and besides Weena was tired. And I began to suffer from sleepiness too; so that it was full night before we reached the wood. Upon the shrubby hill of its edge Weena would have stopped, fearing the darkness before us; but a singular sense of impending calamity, that should indeed have served me as a warning, drove me onward. I had been without sleep for a night and two days, and I was feverish and irritable. I felt sleep coming upon me, and the Morlocks with it.

“While we hesitated, among the black bushes behind us, and dim against their blackness, I saw three crouching figures. There was scrub and long grass all about us, and I did not feel safe from their insidious approach. The forest, I calculated, was rather less than a mile across. If we could get through it to the bare hill-side, there, as it seemed to me, was an altogether safer resting-place; I thought that with my matches and my camphor I could contrive to keep my path illuminated through the woods. Yet it was evident that if I was to flourish matches with my hands I should have to abandon my firewood; so, rather reluctantly, I put it down. And then it came into my head that I would amaze our friends behind by lighting it. I was to discover the atrocious folly of this proceeding, but it came to my mind as an ingenious move for covering our retreat.

“I don’t know if you have ever thought what a rare thing flame must be in the absence of man and in a temperate climate. The sun’s heat is rarely strong enough to burn, even when it is focused by dewdrops, as is sometimes the case in more tropical districts. Lightning may blast and blacken, but

it rarely gives rise to widespread fire. Decaying vegetation may occasionally smoulder with the heat of its fermentation, but this rarely results in flame. In this decadence, too, the art of fire-making had been forgotten on the earth. The red tongues that went licking up my heap of wood were an altogether new and strange thing to Weena.

“She wanted to run to it and play with it. I believe she would have cast herself into it had I not restrained her. But I caught her up, and in spite of her struggles, plunged boldly before me into the wood. For a little way the glare of my fire lit the path. Looking back presently, I could see, through the crowded stems, that from my heap of sticks the blaze had spread to some bushes adjacent, and a curved line of fire was creeping up the grass of the hill. I laughed at that, and turned again to the dark trees before me. It was very black, and Weena clung to me convulsively, but there was still, as my eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, sufficient light for me to avoid the stems. Overhead it was simply black, except where a gap of remote blue sky shone down upon us here and there. I struck none of my matches because I had no hand free. Upon my left arm I carried my little one, in my right hand I had my iron bar.

“For some way I heard nothing but the crackling twigs under my feet, the faint rustle of the breeze above, and my own breathing and the throb of the blood-vessels in my ears. Then I seemed to know of a pattering about me. I pushed on grimly. The pattering grew more distinct, and then I caught the same queer sound and voices I had heard in the Under-world. There were evidently several of the Morlocks, and they were closing in upon me. Indeed, in another minute I felt a tug at my coat, then something at my arm. And Weena shivered violently, and became quite still.

“It was time for a match. But to get one I must put her down. I did so, and, as I fumbled with my pocket, a struggle began in the darkness about my knees, perfectly silent on her part and with the same peculiar cooing sounds from the Morlocks. Soft little hands, too, were creeping over my coat and back, touching even my neck. Then the match scratched and fizzed. I held it flaring, and saw the white backs of the Morlocks in flight amid the trees. I hastily took a lump of camphor from my pocket, and prepared to light it as soon as the match should wane. Then I looked at Weena. She was lying clutching my feet and quite motionless, with her face to the ground. With a sudden fright I stooped to her. She seemed scarcely to breathe. I lit the block of camphor and flung it to the ground, and as it split and flared up and drove back the Morlocks and the shadows, I knelt down and lifted her. The wood behind seemed full of the stir and murmur of a great company!

“She seemed to have fainted. I put her carefully upon my shoulder and rose to push on, and then there came a horrible realization. In manoeuvring with my matches and Weena, I had turned myself about several times, and now I had not the faintest idea in what direction lay my path. For all I knew, I might be facing back towards the Palace of Green Porcelain. I found myself in a cold sweat. I had to think rapidly what to do. I determined to build a fire and encamp where we were. I put Weena, still motionless, down upon a turfy bole, and very hastily, as my first lump of camphor waned, I began collecting sticks and leaves. Here and there out of the darkness round me the Morlocks’ eyes shone like carbuncles.

“The camphor flickered and went out. I lit a match, and as I did so, two white forms that had been approaching Weena dashed hastily away. One was so blinded by the light that he came straight for me, and I felt his bones grind under the blow of my fist. He gave a whoop of dismay, staggered a little way, and fell down. I lit another piece of camphor, and went on gathering my bonfire. Presently I noticed how dry was some of the foliage above me, for since my arrival on the Time Machine, a matter of a week, no rain had fallen. So, instead of casting about among the trees for fallen twigs, I began leaping up and dragging down branches. Very soon I had a choking smoky fire of green wood and dry sticks, and could economize my camphor. Then I turned to where Weena lay beside my iron mace. I tried what I could to revive her, but she lay like one dead. I could not even satisfy myself whether or not she breathed.

“Now, the smoke of the fire beat over towards me, and it must have made me heavy of a sudden. Moreover, the vapour of camphor was in the air. My fire would not need replenishing for an hour or so. I felt very weary after my exertion, and sat down. The wood, too, was full of a slumbrous murmur that I did not understand. I seemed just to nod and open my eyes. But all was dark, and the Morlocks had their hands upon me. Flinging off their clinging fingers I hastily felt in my pocket for the match-box, and—it had gone! Then they gripped and closed with me again. In a moment I knew what had happened. I had slept, and my fire had gone out, and the bitterness of death came over my soul. The forest seemed full of the smell of burning wood. I was caught by the neck, by the hair, by the arms, and pulled down. It was indescribably horrible in the darkness to feel all these soft creatures heaped upon me. I felt as if I was in a monstrous spider’s web. I was overpowered, and went down. I felt little teeth nipping at my neck. I rolled over, and as I did so my hand came against my iron lever. It gave me strength. I struggled up, shaking the human rats from me, and, holding the bar short, I thrust where I judged their faces might be. I could feel the succulent giving of flesh and bone under my blows, and for a moment I was free.

“The strange exultation that so often seems to accompany hard fighting came upon me. I knew that both I and Weena were lost, but I determined to make the Morlocks pay for their meat. I stood with my back to a tree, swinging the iron bar before me. The whole wood was full of the stir and cries of them. A minute passed. Their voices seemed to rise to a higher pitch of excitement, and their movements grew faster. Yet none came within reach. I stood glaring at the blackness. Then suddenly came hope. What if the Morlocks were afraid? And close on the heels of that came a strange thing. The darkness seemed to grow luminous. Very dimly I began to see the Morlocks about me—three battered at my feet—and then I recognized, with incredulous surprise, that the others were running, in an incessant stream, as it seemed, from behind me, and away through the wood in front. And their backs seemed no longer white, but reddish. As I stood agape, I saw a little red spark go drifting across a gap of starlight between the branches, and vanish. And at that I understood the smell of burning wood, the slumbrous murmur that was growing now into a gusty roar, the red glow, and the Morlocks’ flight.

“Stepping out from behind my tree and looking back, I saw, through the black pillars of the nearer trees, the flames of the burning forest. It was my first fire coming after me. With that I looked for Weena, but she was gone. The hissing and crackling behind me, the explosive thud as each fresh tree burst into flame, left little time for reflection. My iron bar still gripped, I followed in the Morlocks’ path. It was a close race. Once the flames crept forward so swiftly on my right as I ran that I was outflanked and had to strike off to the left. But at last I emerged upon a small open space, and as I did so, a Morlock came blundering towards me, and past me, and went on straight into the fire!

“And now I was to see the most weird and horrible thing, I think, of all that I beheld in that future age. This whole space was as bright as day with the reflection of the fire. In the centre was a hillock or tumulus, surmounted by a scorched hawthorn. Beyond this was another arm of the burning forest, with yellow tongues already writhing from it, completely encircling the space with a fence of fire. Upon the hill-side were some thirty or forty Morlocks, dazzled by the light and heat, and blundering hither and thither against each other in their bewilderment. At first I did not realize their blindness, and struck furiously at them with my bar, in a frenzy of fear, as they approached me, killing one and crippling several more. But when I had watched the gestures of one of them groping under the hawthorn against the red sky, and heard their moans, I was assured of their absolute helplessness and misery in the glare, and I struck no more of them.

“Yet every now and then one would come straight towards me, setting loose a quivering horror that made me quick to elude him. At one time the flames died down somewhat, and I feared the foul creatures would presently be able to see me. I was thinking of beginning the fight by killing some of them before this should happen; but the fire burst out again brightly, and I stayed my hand. I walked about the hill among them and avoided them, looking for some trace of Weena. But Weena was gone.

“At last I sat down on the summit of the hillock, and watched this strange incredible company of blind things groping to and fro, and making uncanny noises to each other, as the glare of the fire beat on them. The coiling uprush of smoke streamed across the sky, and through the rare tatters of that red canopy, remote as though they belonged to another universe, shone the little stars. Two or three Morlocks came blundering into me, and I drove them off with blows of my fists, trembling as I did so.

“For the most part of that night I was persuaded it was a nightmare. I bit myself and screamed in a passionate desire to awake. I beat the ground with my hands, and got up and sat down again, and wandered here and there, and again sat down. Then I would fall to rubbing my eyes and calling upon God to let me awake. Thrice I saw Morlocks put their heads down in a kind of agony and rush into the flames. But, at last, above the subsiding red of the fire, above the streaming masses of black smoke and the whitening and blackening tree stumps, and the diminishing numbers of these dim creatures, came the white light of the day.

“I searched again for traces of Weena, but there were none. It was plain that they had left her poor little body in the forest. I cannot describe how it relieved me to think that it had escaped the awful fate to which it seemed destined. As I thought of that, I was almost moved to begin a massacre of the helpless abominations about me, but I contained myself. The hillock, as I have said, was a kind of island in the forest. From its summit I could now make out through a haze of smoke the Palace of Green Porcelain, and from that I could get my bearings for the White Sphinx. And so, leaving the remnant of these damned souls still going hither and thither and moaning, as the day grew clearer, I tied some grass about my feet and limped on across smoking ashes and among black stems, that still pulsated internally with fire, towards the hiding-place of the Time Machine. I walked slowly, for I was almost exhausted, as well as lame, and I felt the intensest wretchedness for the

horrible death of little Weena. It seemed an overwhelming calamity. Now, in this old familiar room, it is more like the sorrow of a dream than an actual loss. But that morning it left me absolutely lonely again—terribly alone. I began to think of this house of mine, of this fireside, of some of you, and with such thoughts came a longing that was pain.

“But as I walked over the smoking ashes under the bright morning sky, I made a discovery. In my trouser pocket were still some loose matches. The box must have leaked before it was lost.

X

“About eight or nine in the morning I came to the same seat of yellow metal from which I had viewed the world upon the evening of my arrival. I thought of my hasty conclusions upon that evening and could not refrain from laughing bitterly at my confidence. Here was the same beautiful scene, the same abundant foliage, the same splendid palaces and magnificent ruins, the same silver river running between its fertile banks. The gay robes of the beautiful people moved hither and thither among the trees. Some were bathing in exactly the place where I had saved Weena, and that suddenly gave me a keen stab of pain. And like blots upon the landscape rose the cupolas above the ways to the Under-world. I understood now what all the beauty of the Over-world people covered. Very pleasant was their day, as pleasant as the day of the cattle in the field. Like the cattle, they knew of no enemies and provided against no needs. And their end was the same.

“I grieved to think how brief the dream of the human intellect had been. It had committed suicide. It had set itself steadfastly towards comfort and ease, a balanced society with security and permanency as its watchword, it had attained its hopes—to come to this at last. Once, life and property must have reached almost absolute safety. The rich had been assured of his wealth and comfort, the toiler assured of his life and work. No doubt in that perfect world there had been no unemployed problem, no social question left unsolved. And a great quiet had followed.

“It is a law of nature we overlook, that intellectual versatility is the compensation for change, danger, and trouble. An animal perfectly in harmony with its environment is a perfect mechanism. Nature never appeals to intelligence until habit and instinct are useless. There is no intelligence where there is no change and no need of change. Only those animals partake of intelligence that have to meet a huge variety of needs and dangers.

“So, as I see it, the Upper-world man had drifted towards his feeble prettiness, and the Under-world to mere mechanical industry. But that perfect state had lacked one thing even for mechanical perfection—absolute permanency. Apparently as time went on, the feeding of the Under-world, however it was effected, had become disjointed. Mother Necessity, who had been staved off for a few thousand years, came back again, and she began below. The Under-world being in contact with machinery, which, however perfect, still needs some little thought outside habit, had probably retained perforce rather more initiative, if less of every other human character, than the Upper. And when other meat failed them, they turned to what old habit had hitherto forbidden. So I say I saw it in my last view of the world of Eight Hundred and Two Thousand Seven Hundred and One. It may be as wrong an explanation as mortal wit could invent. It is how the thing shaped itself to me, and as that I give it to you.

“After the fatigues, excitements, and terrors of the past days, and in spite of my grief, this seat and the tranquil view and the warm sunlight were very pleasant. I was very tired and sleepy, and soon my theorizing passed into dozing. Catching myself at that, I took my own hint, and spreading myself out upon the turf I had a long and refreshing sleep.

“I awoke a little before sunsetting. I now felt safe against being caught napping by the Morlocks, and, stretching myself, I came on down the hill towards the White Sphinx. I had my crowbar in one hand, and the other hand played with the matches in my pocket.

“And now came a most unexpected thing. As I approached the pedestal of the sphinx I found the bronze valves were open. They had slid down into grooves.

“At that I stopped short before them, hesitating to enter.

“Within was a small apartment, and on a raised place in the corner of this was the Time Machine. I had the small levers in my pocket. So here, after all my elaborate preparations for the siege of the White Sphinx, was a meek surrender. I threw my iron bar away, almost sorry not to use it.

“A sudden thought came into my head as I stooped towards the portal. For once, at least, I grasped the mental operations of the Morlocks. Suppressing a strong inclination to laugh, I stepped through

the bronze frame and up to the Time Machine. I was surprised to find it had been carefully oiled and cleaned. I have suspected since that the Morlocks had even partially taken it to pieces while trying in their dim way to grasp its purpose.

“Now as I stood and examined it, finding a pleasure in the mere touch of the contrivance, the thing I had expected happened. The bronze panels suddenly slid up and struck the frame with a clang. I was in the dark—trapped. So the Morlocks thought. At that I chuckled gleefully.

“I could already hear their murmuring laughter as they came towards me. Very calmly I tried to strike the match. I had only to fix on the levers and depart then like a ghost. But I had overlooked one little thing. The matches were of that abominable kind that light only on the box.

“You may imagine how all my calm vanished. The little brutes were close upon me. One touched me. I made a sweeping blow in the dark at them with the levers, and began to scramble into the saddle of the machine. Then came one hand upon me and then another. Then I had simply to fight against their persistent fingers for my levers, and at the same time feel for the studs over which these fitted. One, indeed, they almost got away from me. As it slipped from my hand, I had to butt in the dark with my head—I could hear the Morlock's skull ring—to recover it. It was a nearer thing than the fight in the forest, I think, this last scramble.

“But at last the lever was fitted and pulled over. The clinging hands slipped from me. The darkness presently fell from my eyes. I found myself in the same grey light and tumult I have already described.

XI

“I have already told you of the sickness and confusion that comes with time travelling. And this time I was not seated properly in the saddle, but sideways and in an unstable fashion. For an indefinite time I clung to the machine as it swayed and vibrated, quite unheeding how I went, and when I brought myself to look at the dials again I was amazed to find where I had arrived. One dial records days, and another thousands of days, another millions of days, and another thousands of millions. Now, instead of reversing the levers, I had pulled them over so as to go forward with them, and when I came to look at these indicators I found that the thousands hand was sweeping round as fast as the seconds hand of a watch—into futurity.

“As I drove on, a peculiar change crept over the appearance of things. The palpitating greyness grew darker; then—though I was still travelling with prodigious velocity—the blinking succession of day and night, which was usually indicative of a slower pace, returned, and grew more and more marked. This puzzled me very much at first. The alternations of night and day grew slower and slower, and so did the passage of the sun across the sky, until they seemed to stretch through centuries. At last a steady twilight brooded over the earth, a twilight only broken now and then when a comet glared across the darkling sky. The band of light that had indicated the sun had long since disappeared; for the sun had ceased to set—it simply rose and fell in the west, and grew ever broader and more red. All trace of the moon had vanished. The circling of the stars, growing slower and slower, had given place to creeping points of light. At last, some time before I stopped, the sun, red and very large, halted motionless upon the horizon, a vast dome glowing with a dull heat, and now and then suffering a momentary extinction. At one time it had for a little while glowed more brilliantly again, but it speedily reverted to its sullen red heat. I perceived by this slowing down of its rising and setting that the work of the tidal drag was done. The earth had come to rest with one face to the sun, even as in our own time the moon faces the earth. Very cautiously, for I remembered my former headlong fall, I began to reverse my motion. Slower and slower went the circling hands until the thousands one seemed motionless and the daily one was no longer a mere mist upon its scale. Still slower, until the dim outlines of a desolate beach grew visible.

“I stopped very gently and sat upon the Time Machine, looking round. The sky was no longer blue. North-eastward it was inky black, and out of the blackness shone brightly and steadily the pale white stars. Overhead it was a deep Indian red and starless, and south-eastward it grew brighter to a glowing scarlet where, cut by the horizon, lay the huge hull of the sun, red and motionless. The rocks about me were of a harsh reddish colour, and all the trace of life that I could see at first was the intensely green vegetation that covered every projecting point on their south-eastern face. It was the same rich green that one sees on forest moss or on the lichen in caves: plants which like these grow in a perpetual twilight.

“The machine was standing on a sloping beach. The sea stretched away to the south-west, to rise into a sharp bright horizon against the wan sky. There were no breakers and no waves, for not a breath of wind was stirring. Only a slight oily swell rose and fell like a gentle breathing, and showed that the eternal sea was still moving and living. And along the margin where the water sometimes broke was a thick incrustation of salt—pink under the lurid sky. There was a sense of oppression in my head, and I noticed that I was breathing very fast. The sensation reminded me of my only

experience of mountaineering, and from that I judged the air to be more rarefied than it is now.

“Far away up the desolate slope I heard a harsh scream, and saw a thing like a huge white butterfly go slanting and fluttering up into the sky and, circling, disappear over some low hillocks beyond. The sound of its voice was so dismal that I shivered and seated myself more firmly upon the machine. Looking round me again, I saw that, quite near, what I had taken to be a reddish mass of rock was moving slowly towards me. Then I saw the thing was really a monstrous crab-like creature. Can you imagine a crab as large as yonder table, with its many legs moving slowly and uncertainly, its big claws swaying, its long antennae, like carters’ whips, waving and feeling, and its stalked eyes gleaming at you on either side of its metallic front? Its back was corrugated and ornamented with ungainly bosses, and a greenish incrustation blotched it here and there. I could see the many palps of its complicated mouth flickering and feeling as it moved.

“As I stared at this sinister apparition crawling towards me, I felt a tickling on my cheek as though a fly had lighted there. I tried to brush it away with my hand, but in a moment it returned, and almost immediately came another by my ear. I struck at this, and caught something threadlike. It was drawn swiftly out of my hand. With a frightful qualm, I turned, and I saw that I had grasped the antenna of another monster crab that stood just behind me. Its evil eyes were wriggling on their stalks, its mouth was all alive with appetite, and its vast ungainly claws, smeared with an algal slime, were descending upon me. In a moment my hand was on the lever, and I had placed a month between myself and these monsters. But I was still on the same beach, and I saw them distinctly now as soon as I stopped. Dozens of them seemed to be crawling here and there, in the sombre light, among the foliated sheets of intense green.

“I cannot convey the sense of abominable desolation that hung over the world. The red eastern sky, the northward blackness, the salt Dead Sea, the stony beach crawling with these foul, slow-stirring monsters, the uniform poisonous-looking green of the lichenous plants, the thin air that hurts one’s lungs: all contributed to an appalling effect. I moved on a hundred years, and there was the same red sun—a little larger, a little duller—the same dying sea, the same chill air, and the same crowd of earthy crustacea creeping in and out among the green weed and the red rocks. And in the westward sky, I saw a curved pale line like a vast new moon.

“So I travelled, stopping ever and again, in great strides of a thousand years or more, drawn on by

the mystery of the earth's fate, watching with a strange fascination the sun grow larger and duller in the westward sky, and the life of the old earth ebb away. At last, more than thirty million years hence, the huge red-hot dome of the sun had come to obscure nearly a tenth part of the darkling heavens. Then I stopped once more, for the crawling multitude of crabs had disappeared, and the red beach, save for its livid green liverworts and lichens, seemed lifeless. And now it was flecked with white. A bitter cold assailed me. Rare white flakes ever and again came eddying down. To the north-eastward, the glare of snow lay under the starlight of the sable sky and I could see an undulating crest of hillocks pinkish white. There were fringes of ice along the sea margin, with drifting masses further out; but the main expanse of that salt ocean, all bloody under the eternal sunset, was still unfrozen.

"I looked about me to see if any traces of animal life remained. A certain indefinable apprehension still kept me in the saddle of the machine. But I saw nothing moving, in earth or sky or sea. The green slime on the rocks alone testified that life was not extinct. A shallow sandbank had appeared in the sea and the water had receded from the beach. I fancied I saw some black object flopping about upon this bank, but it became motionless as I looked at it, and I judged that my eye had been deceived, and that the black object was merely a rock. The stars in the sky were intensely bright and seemed to me to twinkle very little.

"Suddenly I noticed that the circular westward outline of the sun had changed; that a concavity, a bay, had appeared in the curve. I saw this grow larger. For a minute perhaps I stared aghast at this blackness that was creeping over the day, and then I realized that an eclipse was beginning. Either the moon or the planet Mercury was passing across the sun's disk. Naturally, at first I took it to be the moon, but there is much to incline me to believe that what I really saw was the transit of an inner planet passing very near to the earth.

"The darkness grew apace; a cold wind began to blow in freshening gusts from the east, and the showering white flakes in the air increased in number. From the edge of the sea came a ripple and whisper. Beyond these lifeless sounds the world was silent. Silent? It would be hard to convey the stillness of it. All the sounds of man, the bleating of sheep, the cries of birds, the hum of insects, the stir that makes the background of our lives—all that was over. As the darkness thickened, the eddying flakes grew more abundant, dancing before my eyes; and the cold of the air more intense. At last, one by one, swiftly, one after the other, the white peaks of the distant hills vanished into blackness. The breeze rose to a moaning wind. I saw the black central shadow of the eclipse

sweeping towards me. In another moment the pale stars alone were visible. All else was rayless obscurity. The sky was absolutely black.

“A horror of this great darkness came on me. The cold, that smote to my marrow, and the pain I felt in breathing, overcame me. I shivered, and a deadly nausea seized me. Then like a red-hot bow in the sky appeared the edge of the sun. I got off the machine to recover myself. I felt giddy and incapable of facing the return journey. As I stood sick and confused I saw again the moving thing upon the shoal—there was no mistake now that it was a moving thing—against the red water of the sea. It was a round thing, the size of a football perhaps, or, it may be, bigger, and tentacles trailed down from it; it seemed black against the weltering blood-red water, and it was hopping fitfully about. Then I felt I was fainting. But a terrible dread of lying helpless in that remote and awful twilight sustained me while I clambered upon the saddle.

XII

“So I came back. For a long time I must have been insensible upon the machine. The blinking succession of the days and nights was resumed, the sun got golden again, the sky blue. I breathed with greater freedom. The fluctuating contours of the land ebbed and flowed. The hands spun backward upon the dials. At last I saw again the dim shadows of houses, the evidences of decadent humanity. These, too, changed and passed, and others came. Presently, when the million dial was at zero, I slackened speed. I began to recognize our own petty and familiar architecture, the thousands hand ran back to the starting-point, the night and day flapped slower and slower. Then the old walls of the laboratory came round me. Very gently, now, I slowed the mechanism down.

“I saw one little thing that seemed odd to me. I think I have told you that when I set out, before my velocity became very high, Mrs. Watchett had walked across the room, travelling, as it seemed to me, like a rocket. As I returned, I passed again across that minute when she traversed the laboratory. But now her every motion appeared to be the exact inversion of her previous ones. The door at the lower end opened, and she glided quietly up the laboratory, back foremost, and disappeared behind the door by which she had previously entered. Just before that I seemed to see Hillyer for a moment; but he passed like a flash.

“Then I stopped the machine, and saw about me again the old familiar laboratory, my tools, my appliances just as I had left them. I got off the thing very shaky, and sat down upon my bench. For

several minutes I trembled violently. Then I became calmer. Around me was my old workshop again, exactly as it had been. I might have slept there, and the whole thing have been a dream.

“And yet, not exactly! The thing had started from the south-east corner of the laboratory. It had come to rest again in the north-west, against the wall where you saw it. That gives you the exact distance from my little lawn to the pedestal of the White Sphinx, into which the Morlocks had carried my machine.

“For a time my brain went stagnant. Presently I got up and came through the passage here, limping, because my heel was still painful, and feeling sorely begrimed. I saw the Pall Mall Gazette on the table by the door. I found the date was indeed to-day, and looking at the timepiece, saw the hour was almost eight o’clock. I heard your voices and the clatter of plates. I hesitated—I felt so sick and weak. Then I sniffed good wholesome meat, and opened the door on you. You know the rest. I washed, and dined, and now I am telling you the story.

“I know,” he said, after a pause, “that all this will be absolutely incredible to you. To me the one incredible thing is that I am here to-night in this old familiar room looking into your friendly faces and telling you these strange adventures.”

He looked at the Medical Man. “No. I cannot expect you to believe it. Take it as a lie—or a prophecy. Say I dreamed it in the workshop. Consider I have been speculating upon the destinies of our race until I have hatched this fiction. Treat my assertion of its truth as a mere stroke of art to enhance its interest. And taking it as a story, what do you think of it?”

He took up his pipe, and began, in his old accustomed manner, to tap with it nervously upon the bars of the grate. There was a momentary stillness. Then chairs began to creak and shoes to scrape upon the carpet. I took my eyes off the Time Traveller’s face, and looked round at his audience. They were in the dark, and little spots of colour swam before them. The Medical Man seemed absorbed in the contemplation of our host. The Editor was looking hard at the end of his cigar—the sixth. The Journalist fumbled for his watch. The others, as far as I remember, were motionless.

The Editor stood up with a sigh. “What a pity it is you’re not a writer of stories!” he said, putting his hand on the Time Traveller’s shoulder.

“You don't believe it?”

“Well——”

“I thought not.”

The Time Traveller turned to us. “Where are the matches?” he said. He lit one and spoke over his pipe, puffing. “To tell you the truth . . . I hardly believe it myself. . . . And yet . . .”

His eye fell with a mute inquiry upon the withered white flowers upon the little table. Then he turned over the hand holding his pipe, and I saw he was looking at some half-healed scars on his knuckles.

The Medical Man rose, came to the lamp, and examined the flowers. “The gynaeceum's odd,” he said. The Psychologist leant forward to see, holding out his hand for a specimen.

“I'm hanged if it isn't a quarter to one,” said the Journalist. “How shall we get home?”

“Plenty of cabs at the station,” said the Psychologist.

“It's a curious thing,” said the Medical Man; “but I certainly don't know the natural order of these flowers. May I have them?”

The Time Traveller hesitated. Then suddenly: “Certainly not.”

“Where did you really get them?” said the Medical Man.

The Time Traveller put his hand to his head. He spoke like one who was trying to keep hold of an idea that eluded him. “They were put into my pocket by Weena, when I travelled into Time.” He stared round the room. “I'm damned if it isn't all going. This room and you and the atmosphere of every day is too much for my memory. Did I ever make a Time Machine, or a model of a Time Machine? Or is it all only a dream? They say life is a dream, a precious poor dream at times—but I can't stand another that won't fit. It's madness. And where did the dream come from? . . . I must

look at that machine. If there is one!"

He caught up the lamp swiftly, and carried it, flaring red, through the door into the corridor. We followed him. There in the flickering light of the lamp was the machine sure enough, squat, ugly, and askew; a thing of brass, ebony, ivory, and translucent glimmering quartz. Solid to the touch—for I put out my hand and felt the rail of it—and with brown spots and smears upon the ivory, and bits of grass and moss upon the lower parts, and one rail bent awry.

The Time Traveller put the lamp down on the bench, and ran his hand along the damaged rail. "It's all right now," he said. "The story I told you was true. I'm sorry to have brought you out here in the cold." He took up the lamp, and, in an absolute silence, we returned to the smoking-room.

He came into the hall with us and helped the Editor on with his coat. The Medical Man looked into his face and, with a certain hesitation, told him he was suffering from overwork, at which he laughed hugely. I remember him standing in the open doorway, bawling good night.

I shared a cab with the Editor. He thought the tale a "gaudy lie." For my own part I was unable to come to a conclusion. The story was so fantastic and incredible, the telling so credible and sober. I lay awake most of the night thinking about it. I determined to go next day and see the Time Traveller again. I was told he was in the laboratory, and being on easy terms in the house, I went up to him. The laboratory, however, was empty. I stared for a minute at the Time Machine and put out my hand and touched the lever. At that the squat substantial-looking mass swayed like a bough shaken by the wind. Its instability startled me extremely, and I had a queer reminiscence of the childish days when I used to be forbidden to meddle. I came back through the corridor. The Time Traveller met me in the smoking-room. He was coming from the house. He had a small camera under one arm and a knapsack under the other. He laughed when he saw me, and gave me an elbow to shake. "I'm frightfully busy," said he, "with that thing in there."

"But is it not some hoax?" I said. "Do you really travel through time?"

"Really and truly I do." And he looked frankly into my eyes. He hesitated. His eye wandered about the room. "I only want half an hour," he said. "I know why you came, and it's awfully good of you. There's some magazines here. If you'll stop to lunch I'll prove you this time travelling up to the hilt, specimen and all. If you'll forgive my leaving you now?"

I consented, hardly comprehending then the full import of his words, and he nodded and went on down the corridor. I heard the door of the laboratory slam, seated myself in a chair, and took up a daily paper. What was he going to do before lunch-time? Then suddenly I was reminded by an advertisement that I had promised to meet Richardson, the publisher, at two. I looked at my watch, and saw that I could barely save that engagement. I got up and went down the passage to tell the Time Traveller.

As I took hold of the handle of the door I heard an exclamation, oddly truncated at the end, and a click and a thud. A gust of air whirled round me as I opened the door, and from within came the sound of broken glass falling on the floor. The Time Traveller was not there. I seemed to see a ghostly, indistinct figure sitting in a whirling mass of black and brass for a moment—a figure so transparent that the bench behind with its sheets of drawings was absolutely distinct; but this phantasm vanished as I rubbed my eyes. The Time Machine had gone. Save for a subsiding stir of dust, the further end of the laboratory was empty. A pane of the skylight had, apparently, just been blown in.

I felt an unreasonable amazement. I knew that something strange had happened, and for the moment could not distinguish what the strange thing might be. As I stood staring, the door into the garden opened, and the man-servant appeared.

We looked at each other. Then ideas began to come. “Has Mr. —— gone out that way?” said I.

“No, sir. No one has come out this way. I was expecting to find him here.”

At that I understood. At the risk of disappointing Richardson I stayed on, waiting for the Time Traveller; waiting for the second, perhaps still stranger story, and the specimens and photographs he would bring with him. But I am beginning now to fear that I must wait a lifetime. The Time Traveller vanished three years ago. And, as everybody knows now, he has never returned.

Epilogue

One cannot choose but wonder. Will he ever return? It may be that he swept back into the past, and fell among the blood-drinking, hairy savages of the Age of Unpolished Stone; into the abysses of the Cretaceous Sea; or among the grotesque saurians, the huge reptilian brutes of the Jurassic times.

He may even now—if I may use the phrase—be wandering on some plesiosaurus-haunted Oolitic coral reef, or beside the lonely saline lakes of the Triassic Age. Or did he go forward, into one of the nearer ages, in which men are still men, but with the riddles of our own time answered and its wearisome problems solved? Into the manhood of the race: for I, for my own part cannot think that these latter days of weak experiment, fragmentary theory, and mutual discord are indeed man's culminating time! I say, for my own part. He, I know—for the question had been discussed among us long before the Time Machine was made—thought but cheerlessly of the Advancement of Mankind, and saw in the growing pile of civilization only a foolish heaping that must inevitably fall back upon and destroy its makers in the end. If that is so, it remains for us to live as though it were not so. But to me the future is still black and blank—is a vast ignorance, lit at a few casual places by the memory of his story. And I have by me, for my comfort, two strange white flowers—shriveled now, and brown and flat and brittle—to witness that even when mind and strength had gone, gratitude and a mutual tenderness still lived on in the heart of man.

DA1

PAIN. HE WAS AWASH in a black sea of it, and each wave gnawed at his every muscle and nerve.

“I said, what is your name?”

The voice made the blood pound blackly behind the pain that had centered itself in his skull.

“Are you one of Uther’s scabby whore-son cowards? Answer me!”

The prisoner’s eyes were still closed, but he could see the other man against the blackness of his lids: a long, flat, gray-skinned face, like a slab of stone marking some ancient warrior’s grave.

By rights, Vortigern ought to have moss-grown spirals tattooed across his forehead.

Dirty straw rustled as Vortigern took a step forward, and the prisoner forced his eyes open, tensing his muscles and clenching his teeth against another blow.

But the boy stood, blocked Vortigern’s way. The scrawny, dark-haired boy the prisoner could remember coming every day with food and salves.

“No.” The lad had a pale, soft-looking face. He might be—fourteen? Fifteen? His eyes looked older than that, but his cheeks were still smooth as a girl’s. “You’ll only drive him unconscious, and then he’ll tell you nothing at all.”

The aging druid who had stood beside Vortigern opened his mouth as though to speak at that, then glanced at the boy and shut it again. He was a stoop-shouldered old man with gnarled hands and

a whipcord frame beneath the white druid's robe and bull's-hide cloak. His face looked like something carved in wood: rigid and weathered, one eye blinded by the scar that ran down from under his hair nearly to the corner of his mouth.

The prisoner remembered him coming in daily, as well. At least for as long as he could recall. Vortigern's eyes darted, snake-like, from the druid to the prisoner and back again. "Are you sure the boy knows his craft?"

"Know his craft? Oh, aye, I think—" The druid stopped, drew in his breath and said, in a flatter tone, "The ... boy knows the healing arts well enough."

"Good." Vortigern's eyes were stone-cold, floating empty in the narrow face. "I would not want him to die. At least, not until he has given me the answers I require of him."

The boy had started to spread some sort of vile ointment on the throbbing, crusted burns on the prisoner's arms. He glanced down to where the boy was working, feeling the vague surprise he felt every time he looked down at the length of his body. Lean and hard-muscled beneath shirt and breeches that were little more than rags.

The boy was telling a story. Something about dragons beneath the soil. He remembered him telling stories before, as well.

The prisoner let his mind drift above the pain, the black pounding in his skull, the fiery stab of his ribs.

This time, though, something reared up, hungry and dark on the edge of his mind, blotting out the words of the tale.

Swords clash. My hand slips on the hilt of my sword. Men choke and die. I must—I must—The prisoner clenched his teeth. Raised himself on one elbow and looked up at Vortigern. "I hope you enjoy failure, then."

Vortigern's kick took him in the gut, jarring what felt like cracked ribs. The many-toothed wave of pain swelled to claim him again as the prisoner's stomach spasmed, trying to wring out every last drop of the cup of water they'd allowed him today.

Whether he actually was—or had been—a man to hold up to torture, he had no idea. It didn't matter now. His world had narrowed down to three truths, three hard lumps of certainty here in this filthy prison cell:

He was a prisoner in this place.

He had to ensure he died here.

And Vortigern himself would be dead before the moon had waxed and waned another eight times.

PART I

THE RAYS of the rising sun stained the heaps of broken building stones to crimson orange. As though Lugh, the sun god, cried rusty tears, or the earth of Britain itself leaked blood from a hundred wounds.

Gnarled and bent in his bull's-hide cloak and white robe, the old druid raised his hands towards the fiery horizon. The sun glinted in his sightless eye. "Britain lies besieged on all sides. The Picts to the north, the Irish sea raiders from the west. Now you, my lord, are betrayed by your Saxon allies, who gobble our lands in the east like a horde of rabid wolves and leave a trail of broken bodies and blood-soaked fields in their wake."

"You seek refuge in these hills, this stronghold of the Old Ones. But I say to you that your tower walls will never stand until they are watered by the blood of a fatherless child."

If this were a fire tale, I might begin it that way. And mayhap it did happen just as I have imagined it, I do not know.

The harpers who sing of Glass Isles and faerie-forged swords would say that the weaving of this tale began when the Roman legions had trampled over Britain's holy springs and sacred groves, driving our gods from the land.

They would speak of a great darkness sweeping like a flock of ravens over Britain's kingdoms. And say the days in which we now lived were just the lightest feathered tip of the first bird's wings. Mayhap Bron did give the prophesy to Vortigern just as I've told, against the fiery backdrop of the rising sun; he had to utter it somehow and somewhere and in a way that would sway Vortigern and his warriors into believing the words.

But I never saw.

My part in the story began afterwards, helping a wounded and captive man vomit onto the straw covered floor.

"The shriek you hear is caused by the clash of two fighting dragons," I whispered through clenched teeth. "And every eve of Beltaine, they scream in pain and hurt."

There are those who claim me naught but a king's by-blow gotten on a whore; many more who say it is from thence my bad blood springs. But I may tell you that my mother was of the blood royal

in her own land, and wedded to my father by earth, fire, and air before he had her killed. Even Gamma, who took me in and taught me from the time I was four, was wont to say that I had a temper like a storm in summer. But I promise you that before that day, I had never had to clench my teeth to keep from smashing something when telling the story of Lludd and Llefelys and how they captured the two warring dragons who plagued Britain.

The prisoner heaved and retched again. I tightened my hand on the fold of rag I held, watching the knuckles whiten beneath the skin, even as I braced his shoulders with my free arm.

He was a young man, perhaps twenty, but surely no more, with a fall of disheveled, wheat-colored hair that reached to his broad shoulders.

And he had three ribs cracked, at least. Any of them might pierce a lung if he heaved too violently or curled himself forward too hard.

When he had stopped retching, I wiped his face with a fold of the rag, and he let out an involuntary sigh. But he didn't move, and he rolled onto his back, his eyes fixed on Vortigern.

Are you sure the boy knows his craft? Vortigern had just asked of Bron.

I scarcely heard Bron's answer, either, beyond vague awareness that his voice was stiff without the usual west-country lilt.

"You must dig a large pit, and in that pit, place a large cauldron brim-full of mead." I shaped the words almost soundlessly with my lips. Dipped the rag into a cup of water to wipe the prisoner's face again. "The dragons will be seen fighting in the sky, but in their exhaustion they will fall and become drunk on the mead. Then may you imprison them in a stone chamber deep beneath the ground."

A tale is a lie, and yet not a lie. And a man who hears it may be in pain, and yet not in pain, when caught up in a story where the past breathes and time is an endless curve.

And if my spirit was in those days somewhat soured on the romance of those tales harpers sing, I told them still when working over a man like the one before me now.

Three days ago, Vortigern's men had caught him on the edge of the fortress defenses and dragged him in, beaten and captive. Likely a warrior to one of the petty chieftains of Gwynedd, who had opposed Vortigern's bid for the throne. There surely was no shortage of those.

And Vortigern had crushed them all, before his Saxon allies rose up in revolt.

Now Vortigern demanded that I keep the prisoner alive long enough that he could be forced into revealing whose man he was, which of the chieftains dared still oppose Vortigern's reign.

"None so bad."

The prisoner was still breathing unsteadily from Vortigern's kick, and his mouth was torn from a backhanded blow of Vortigern's fist. A trickle of blood dripped down his chin.

He was not handsome. Even beneath the mottled bruising and the dirt, his features were too sharply-angled and high-browed. But his eyes were beautiful, surely, thickly lashed, and a deep-blue in color, blue as the sea.

Now the sea-blue eyes were implacable and hard and fixed on Vortigern.

"None so bad. Though you could use work on the follow-through after a blow. From the shoulder, if you mind what I told you before. But well done, for a king who must seldom dirty his own—"

The words ended in a grunt as Vortigern drove another savage kick into the already cracked ribs. Even the half-built walls of Vortigern's hill fortress seemed to press in around me. Walls of any kind were as yet passing strange to me still, and all the time Bron and I had been here I had felt as though the mere knowledge of the fort's defensive bounds was enough to peel my nerves raw.

Now my skin felt as though it would split open and the edges of my vision shivered red. Though I managed—just—to keep myself from turning to face Vortigern again.

I had seen hard sights before, the Goddess knew. On the journey here, to Vortigern's refuge, I had seen a settlement, burned and raided by one of the Saxon war parties that savaged our countryside. My father's people, or they once had been. Now men, women, and children—even babies—were broken rag dolls, lying in mud.

I had Seen the future Gamma had shown me in the scrying waters before she died.

Still, it took every last reserve of will to remain where I was, kneeling on the prison cell's floor. A thin, dark-haired boy of fourteen or fifteen—I could pass for as young as that, dressed as I was. I had given up on the story, but I spoke those other words silently over in my mind, again and again, like one of Gamma's charms: a thin, dark-haired, scrawny boy. No threat to any king, however tenuous or unstable his grip on the throne.

Even without turning, I could imagine the flare of Vortigern's nostrils, the curling and uncurling of his thick-fingered hands. "You know," he said, "A man can live a considerable time with most of his skin gone. I for one would take great pleasure in peeling off his scabby hide and nailing it to the wall of my fire hall. Who are you? Did Uther send you?"

Vortigern asked that of the prisoner at every turn; I could hear the name now without either flinching or feeling a familiar slow burn of fury.

Uther, called the Pendragon by his warriors. He it was who had driven the usurper of Britain's high kingship back into this last refuge, high in the hills of Gwynedd. Uther Pendragon, who besieged Vortigern's forces now and kept him penned like a wounded bear in a cage, within the stronghold he struggled to build on this ancient hill fort of Dinas Ffareon.

I had sat this way, in this same filthy prison cell, through seven interrogation sessions, now. Had

watched as Vortigern kicked the prisoner savagely, or burned him with a glowing brand. The prisoner's response never varied: he would give Vortigern a blank-faced, dead-eyed look from those sea-blue eyes and spill out answers that were merely a goad. Gadfly bites at Vortigern's wrath. As though he were trying to provoke Vortigern into hurting him more.

Only towards the very end of the sessions, when he was hurt nearly to unconsciousness, would the nameless prisoner gasp out an exhausted, I don't remember. I don't know.

Now: "All right." The prisoner still fought to draw breath, but the expression in his eyes hadn't changed. "I will tell you. I am oath-sworn to the boy, here." He jerked his head at me. "He is the one whose coming the druids have prophesied. Son of Uther the Pendragon, who shall come from the West, bearing the faerie-forged sword. I am sorry, lad."—he turned to look at me with an exaggerated, sorrowful leer—"I gave it my best try, but I—"

I did not for a moment imagine that he had intended Vortigern to believe his claim. He had overacted the speech so badly that even a two-year-old child would have seen through the lie. It was merely another goad, another lash to Vortigern's fury.

But this was Vortigern, who had ceded great swaths of the eastern short to the Saxon brothers Horsa and Hengist in exchange for the pledge of their swords. Then had seen his Saxon allies turn on him like rabid dogs and drive him back and back again into the Gwynedd hills where he struggled to build this fortress now. Only to find that his tower walls crumbled every time they rose past the height of a man. As though even the land itself were refusing to support his claim to Britain's throne.

And Vortigern faced now, too, the rumblings of dissent from his own men, not pleased to serve a king who made over whole kingdoms to the Saxon hordes. Or who could not win at battles with Uther, but fell back and back again.

I had heard the sullen mutters and seen the angry sidelong looks as the warriors worked to drag building stones from where they'd fallen in a tumbled heap. And I had treated many foot soldiers, these last weeks, who came to me with mysterious aches or pains and begged leave to return home to their families for the harvest time.

I swathed them in bandages and declared them unfit for duty whenever I could. They were brave men, and good ones, many of them, and it was not their fault if their oath-sworn lords had chosen in turn to give their oaths to Vortigern.

Gamma said, always, that when the Roman legions fouled our sacred wells and burned the holy groves, a wedge had been driven between Britain's gods and the land. She had said that any power of the Sight she taught me was but a faint, wavering reflection of the heights to which the druid-born had once soared.

Still, now, as I knelt there on the dirty cell floor, I could feel Vortigern's gaze swivel towards me, could hear the thoughts clashing together like knives behind the serpent cold gaze.

He had no particular reason to trust me. He had known me a scant few weeks, after all. And if Bron was a one of the druid-taught, he was a strange—

I could not—Goddess, could not—let that thin thread of suspicion pull taut. I could not let Vortigern finish the thought that echoed for me clearly as though he had indeed spoken the words aloud into the dank airless space of the prison cell. My hand was on one of the crusted burns on the prisoner's muscled forearm, close to the floor and hidden by my body so that Vortigern could not see.

I tightened my fingers. Dug in my nails, hard enough that the fair-haired man broke off with a sharp huff of breath in mid-word.

In a tale, I would have felt something in that instant when my hand closed over the prisoner's wound. A beat of Sight, maybe, like a second pulse, showing me the memory of Gamma's silent nemetons, the sacred groves where I had lived until last spring.

Or mayhap the red, wrinkled face of the infant who would be Britain's ruin and downfall one day. But as I turned and met Vortigern's gaze, I felt nothing. And if I reached towards the prisoner in my mind, it was only to promise him that I would pull out his tongue and beat him with it if he tried saying one single word more to undermine our purpose here.

"He is the One." My hands had gone cold, but the words came out quite steady as I looked first at Vortigern, then at Bron. "This man is the one you have sought, my lord: a man born of no earthly father. I Saw it as I tended his wounds just now."

* * *

MAYHAP MY TEMPERAMENT—for good or ill—does spring from my mother's folk, who were of Erin, land of gnarled thorn trees and mists and hidden springs. But she died when I was four, before I could know her more.

Since spring, when I had returned to my father's court—and been welcomed by him, I must grant him that much—I had told many tales, but never my own. Neither of my birth, nor of what was to come—my own life unfolding, glimpsed in the swirling blood Gamma had paid to the scrying waters before she died.

Now I could—almost—imagine Gamma standing before me, pursing her lips and telling me that

for a healer, compassion comes before all.

Because the prisoner's body showed scars on battle scars, marks of old sword wounds faded to thin white lines and newer ones still puckered and red. Even apart from the most recent marks, gift from Vortigern and his men. And I had to force myself to consider either scars or wounds as I demanded of him, "Have you utterly lost your wits?"

The prisoner looked at me, eyes hard in his dirt-smeared face.

We were alone in the underground cell's cramped, rank-smelling space; Bron had given me a long look, and then had muttered something about consulting the auguries to see if what I said were true and gone, drawing Vortigern with him.

There was an energy, a quick, nervous hum beneath the still-muscled control that kept the prisoner prone on the floor, where Vortigern's final kick had sent him. That was part of what had made me mark him for a fighting man, even more than the battle scars. For the past three days, that energy had been turned towards flicking Vortigern's temper on the raw. Now the part he had played was—at least partly—fallen away, leaving him free to regard me with a keen-edged, intense focus behind his gaze.

All he said, though—and so flatly that his voice sounded almost indifferent—was: "I might ask you the same thing."

Truly, one does need patience above all else when treating with men made ill-humored by the pain of their wounds. And to any who think me over-quick, let me say that I had many times before that day had injured warriors heave pots of their own waste at me—and never once had I let my temper slip.

I had not even intended to lose my temper with this man, now. But I was so tired that my eyes felt as though they had been salted like meat for the winter. And there was as well that future, glimpsed in the scrying waters months before.

If that vision was will be, and not merely a shifting may be, I had only this brief window of time to choose for myself how I might serve Britain's honor now. Before I was caught in the web of what harpers would one day turn to story and song.

The knowledge made me snap back through gritted teeth, "I apologize. Were you enjoying Vortigern's attentions? I could call him in here again. He might be willing to break another two or three of your ribs while you play the babbling fool. Though if you had half a grain of sense, you would at least pretend to be knocked unconscious when he gets to work on you. Men like Vortigern want those they hurt to be able to feel the pain."

The prisoner looked down at the length of linen I had bound tightly about his cracked ribs to keep their jagged edges from shifting and piercing a lung. Something hard crossed his face, like a cloud

across the sun. And then his hand shot out, so swiftly that I had no time to react before he was dragging me forward, close enough that I could smell the blood and sweat on his tattered clothes. “Maybe I want it to hurt. Did you ever think of that?”

His hand had wrapped itself around my throat in a grip like a vise. My chest burned and my vision blurred. His breath was hot on my face. “You realize all I’d have to do would be to squeeze, and—”

I did know how to defend myself, Bron and Gamma between them had seen to that. But I had no chance. Behind me, the door to the cell banged open. And then the prisoner was all at once jerked backwards, landing with a dull thud on the dirty, straw-strewn floor. Bron straddled him—braided hair, white druid’s robe and all—and held a knife to his throat.

The prisoner fought, and of a certainty he fought well, with a fierce, concentrated economy of movement. Once he did land a blow on Bron’s jaw, hard enough to snap Bron’s head back and make him spit a mouthful of blood.

But the nameless prisoner was weak, feverish after a week of imprisonment and starvation and interrogation at Vortigern’s hands. And for all Bron had passed sixty winters a season or two back, he knew more wrestling holds than most men learn in a lifetime or more.

When the brief, snarling scuffle ended, the younger man still lay flat, panting and winded, with Bron pinning him flat to the ground.

The prisoner was staring, eyes narrowed. “If you’re a druid, I’m—”

Bron grunted and shifted his grip on the hilt of the blade. “Right now I’d say all you should be caring about is that I’m the man with a knife at your throat. And that it stays there until you agree to show the lady a bit o’ respect.”

The prisoner’s eyes flared wide. His jaw went slack, and then his head turned—slowly. “Lady.” I ordered myself to draw a slow breath, despite the hollow sliver of fear pressing up under my ribcage. I could not, in conscience, be angry with Bron. I knew it even before the prisoner spat out the word. Bron was oath-sworn to protect me, to guard my life with his own, and had volunteered for this mission without even being asked. Volunteered though it meant walking a knife’s edge, where one slip might mean both our lives.

And I could see in his face, the tight set of his gray-stubbled jaw, that he was mortally afraid he might have made such a slip now.

Vortigern would not leave us alone here long, of that I had no doubt. If he did not come himself, he would certainly send a guard. Which meant that, of a surety and for good or ill, I had now no choice but to win this wounded, half-crazed prisoner’s trust.

“You were right, in a way,” I said, and met the prisoner’s gaze. “I am of Uther Pendragon’s line.

I am Morgan. His daughter. And this”—I tilted my head—“Is Bron. My bodyguard.” I drew a breath. “Will you tell me your name? Whose war band you belonged to?”

Something—just for a moment—flickered across the prisoner’s angular face. But then he moved, ran a hand across his face as though he were peeling the show of feeling from his skin and flinging it from him.

“Why should you think I ever belonged to anyone’s war band?”

Bron grunted at that, rubbing the reddened mark on his jaw where the nameless prisoner’s blow had landed. “Think we can rule out ‘bard’ or ‘scholar’ for what you might ha’ been before this, anyway.”

I watched the younger man, searching his gaze. But he did not move, not even by a fraction of a muscle. No expression on his face, nothing in the blue eyes.

And time was slipping away. I could feel each precious moment I had here dripping away, like water through clenched hands. A bare handful of moments in which I might persuade the prisoner not to blurt out the truth of who I was the moment Vortigern or one of his guards stepped into the room.

I let out a breath. “You’ve opened the leg wound again.” I gestured to the bandages I had used on the prisoner’s upper thigh. That wound he had already carried when he had first been captured and dragged into Vortigern’s prison cell: a deep cut made by a long dagger or sword, and already some days old when I had seen it on that first day.

But he jerked back and even tried to rise when I moved to unfasten the pin I had used to hold the bandage in place. “A lady shouldn’t—”

“So when you thought me a boy, it was all right to try to kill me. But now that you know me for a girl, I’m suddenly too delicate to dress a bloodied sword cut?”

I did manage to keep my touch gentle, though, as I pushed the prisoner back onto the straw. To my surprise, he did not resist. Perhaps he was only too much exhausted from the fight with Bron. I added, more quietly, “Lie still. Please. And let me help you.”

For a moment, visions of burned settlements, broken bodies and homes danced like sparks before my eyes. Our harpers are full of laments for a warrior slain in battle, but murdered mothers and babies lie in silent graves. “I only wish this were the worst thing I’d seen.”

The prisoner had torn out three stitches that would need to be reset. I threaded a needle and could feel Bron’s eyes on me. I had known him as long as I had known Gamma, since I was four years old. He had taught me to draw a bow and arrow, to throw a knife and spar with a wooden staff.

And now, even without the Sight, I could have read the silent look he gave: a silent apology for bringing us to this moment with his slip of the tongue, mingled with a dubious, Good luck to you,

lass. I hope you know what you're about.

I began. "When the Roman legions marched away and abandoned Britain, the land was left prey to barbarians on all sides. Constantine, Prince of Brittany, crossed the channel to Britain with an army two thousand strong, and defended the land, became Constantine Waredwr—Britain's deliverer and High King.

"But then Constantine was killed. Murdered by Pictish assassins. His throne was seized by Gwrtheyrn Gwrtheneu, he who calls himself Vortigern now. Only Constantine's nephew, Uther Pendragon, was left to oppose Vortigern's claim to the High Kingship of Britain."

I stopped and did risk a glance upward, then, holding the prisoner's gaze even as my mouth twisted just slightly, "My father, whatever he may think of me or I of him, does love Britain. He has struck at Vortigern's forces again and again. He would be here, now, storming the fortress—setting you free—were it not that any open attack on a hill as steep as this one would mean certain death."

I waited two, then three beats of my own heart; three, then four of the prisoner's harshly-drawn breaths.

I was used to anger from wounded men. When a man has nought else but his pride, he guards it at all costs. And a man rendered infant-helpless by a battle wound has little left to him but his pride.

I was used, too, to the youngest of the wounded men—little more than boys, really, cut down as they struggled to wield too-heavy swords—looking at me with pleading in their eyes. A look that said, plain as speaking, Tell me you can make me whole again. Tell me I'm not going to die.

This man, though—I had heard my father's Saxon slaves tell fire tales of monstrous beings who claw their way back from the grave, unable to die or feel pain. It might have been one of those creatures I spoke to now.

I laid a hand—just lightly—across the newly stitched wound.

The Sight, Gamma had called the power she had taught me. Once it flowed like the first thaw of spring, a bounty from Britain's earth, a song as many-voiced and bright-colored as the throb of the ocean or the cry of the wind.

Now men looked on the earth as naught but a slave, to be fought over and stripped of its spoils. And the Sight was a tide that sometimes ebbed, sometimes swelled, that would not come on command and did not always show true.

Still, I had found, sometimes, that I could catch a memory from a warrior's pain—See the battle or the sword fight where the wounded man had taken his injury, sometimes hear a quick echo of the man's thoughts at the time he got the wound. Fear and pain, often. Surprise, always. A warrior

ever imagines the Morrigan's raven wings will pass him by, however many of his companions fall.
Now, though—

I heard the prisoner's indrawn breath, a sharp gasp as of anguish or fear. But the prison walls, the prisoner himself, even, were gone, blotted out by the wash of red-tinted vision that filled my gaze. I saw stone towers shaking, crumbling to the ground. I saw ... myself. Wearing a dress of apple green, while all about me warriors drank and shouted victory and clapped my brother Arthur on the back.

I nearly gasped at that, for this vision I had Seen already, in Gamma's scrying waters, and I knew the ending of it all too well. But then, even as I bit my lip and tasted blood, the image was gone in a wash of darkness, and another took its place: Vortigern, screaming aloud in agony and beating at flames that licked his fur-trimmed robes as all about him a timbered building burned.

And then there was nothing, nothing but the dirty straw and the whitewashed earthen walls of the prison cell—and the nameless prisoner, staring at me with his eyes dilated almost to black, his lean features set and utterly blank, blank as a carving in stone.

I felt sick, still, and cold almost to my bones, and I had another of those moments when I could—almost—imagine Gamma standing beside me and asking why I did not simply take the prisoner by the shoulders and shake him and demand that he take me at my word.

But I had no time to speak, truly I had none, even had I recovered my breath the instant the vision had gone.

The cell door flew open with a crash that make my heart jerk again inside my chest, and two of Vortigern's guards burst into the room. Burly, mustached men, both of them, in helmets and leather armor, both carrying swords

I realized, in that instant, that it was not only in the vision I had shared with the prisoner that the earth had shook as building stones crashed to the ground. Outside, Vortigern's part-completed tower had fallen once more. And already the two guards were hauling the prisoner up between them, shouldering me aside to drag him to his feet.

"You say he's the one whose blood will allow the towers to stand." That was the older guard, a broad-shouldered man with fingers like blood sausages and a face scarred by some childhood pox.
"Vortigern says he dies now. Today."

PART II

I WOULD BEAR my brother Arthur a son, who would ride with him into battle and fight beside him, for a time. Would, with Arthur, succeed in turning back the Saxon tide. But then one day, our son would turn traitor, whether for greed or anger or love I did not yet know. But the son I would one day bear would one day turn on his father, and bring ruin on Arthur's reign.

That was my future, the one Gamma had shown me in the scrying waters before she died. A destiny written in my blood and Arthur's stars, a fate lying both within me and without, as all fate does.

But if my path forward lay in darkness, I had still this night, now.

On either side of me, a leather-armored guard lay snoring, slumped on the floor. Dana, great Goddess Mother, I prayed through gritted teeth, let them sleep on. Let the draught I had added to their evening ale keep them witless and unconscious at least until dawn.

I could not be caught, nor seen. I wore my boy's garb of rough tunic and breeches. But I had a dark traveling cloak thrown over my shoulders. And beneath the cloak, I carried a traveler's pack of my healer's kit, a change of clothes, and enough bread and dried venison to last at least two days. I had, too, the bow and linen arrow-bag that I had trained on with Bron.

None of these could be explained away if I were seen by one of Vortigern's guardsmen.

I had already lifted the heavy crossbar from across the door. Now as I pushed, the age-blackened panel swung open with a shriek that sounded like the scream of Llud's warring dragons. I froze, fear a wash of cold edged with grit over my skin. But the guards on either side of the door slept on.

Swiftly, then, my heart pounding hard in my ears, I slipped inside the darkened room where Vortigern's prisoner now lay. Not the cramped and filthy prison cell where he had been kept these last days; that had been deemed by Bron—and accepted grudgingly by Vortigern—as no fit place for a man to sojourn before gifting the gods with his life's blood.

Bron had, and I thanked the Goddess for it, kept his head when Vortigern's men would have dragged the prisoner out and slit his throat without delay. He had declared that the prisoner's spirit was to be chained as guardian of the fortress here. And that therefore the prisoner must be bathed and purified, as the druid princes who made the Great Gift had been of old.

He must, Bron said, be painted with the warriors' marks, and fed the last meal of oat cakes charred by an open flame.

Where a crabbed and rough-tongued warrior of sixty-odd had heard of the ancient rituals attending a Prince of the Land, I had no idea; the triple death was one of those practices leeched of their

power by the legions of Rome. Perhaps Gamma had told Bron stories. I had sometimes suspected he had been more to her than my trusted bodyguard. Though that Bron had known the rites—and that Vortigern believed in them—was all I could find it in me to care of, then or now. After the flare of torchlight in the hallway outside, my eyes took a moment to adjust to the darkness of the room within. I was alone; Bron's part was to attend the ceremony of wine and ale sharing in Vortigern's half-completed fire hall.

The prisoner had been housed in the roughly built timbered dwelling where Vortigern and the chiefs of his warriors slept. The room was windowless, the only light the rays of torchlight slanting in through the open doorway behind me. I could only just make out the shadowy shapes of the room's furnishings: a table, a crudely made wooden chair, a few skins flung down for rugs on the floor and an equally crude bed.

Vortigern had been fleeing for his life when he had come here, to this remote hill fort in the Gwynedd hills; his wealth, his fine furnishings, his chased silver drinking cups and cushioned chairs, all these he had been forced to leave behind. And as I stepped inside, I did not know, truly, whether the prisoner would trample over me in a wild bid for freedom or try once again to strangle me on sight.

But he did neither. The prisoner lay on the bed, his body a long, lean shadow edged with gold where the light struck. Naked, as befitted a Prince of the Land, save for an arm band of fox's fur. They had bound him. Vortigern might bow to the rites of the old ones, but neither was he a fool; the prisoner's wrists and ankles were tied to the four posts of the bed's frame. Though there was, at least, enough slack in the ropes for him to turn on his side if he chose, and the loops of rope about his wrists were padded so as not to chafe overmuch at his bare skin.

And he was asleep. Utterly, deeply so, I could hear it in the steady rhythm of his breathing, see the slow, shallow rise and fall of his chest.

Any may doubt me who like, but it was not until I had crossed the room as quickly and silently as I could did I realize that I had made no plan for what I would say to the man before me when he woke.

All this long day since I had first spoken to the prisoner in his cramped, airless cell, I had been strung up with the tension of planning out the how of our escape: drugging the guards, Bron's keeping Vortigern occupied and out of the way. If I had considered the prisoner at all, it was only with a quick, hot flash of anger that he had carelessly included me in his lying answers to Vortigern, had shattered the tenuous tolerance—if not trust—it had taken me weeks to build in Vortigern's mind.

And now I simply stood and stared down at the man before me.

My one true, clear memory of my mother is of her saying fiercely to someone—to Gamma, I think it was—Women have no honor. We have those we love, and those we hate, and that is all.

Perhaps it is true. I had chosen to be here, for Britain's honor, for the salvation of Britain's throne. And yet it was now a taste bitter as bile on my tongue that the cost of so doing had been to sit idly by while this man was beaten and lashed and burned with a red-hot brand again and again.

That I had had to grit my teeth or bite my lips until blood came to do it was scarcely recompense to the prisoner now. Still less a likely way of persuading him to put his fate in my hands and accompany me into the night.

I could have left him. Even if he woke, he could do nothing to prevent my simply turning and walking from the room.

But I had brought this man here, to this bed where he lay bound hand and foot and awaiting death. Vortigern would have killed him eventually in any case, of that I had no doubt. But if he died like this, it lay on my hands, not Vortigern's. And I knew I could not walk away now, not unless I woke him and attempted to persuade him—somehow—to make his bid for freedom along with mine.

The prisoner's head turned restlessly, a spasm crossed his face, as of pain, and he muttered something too low and indistinct for me to make out the words. And without thinking, I laid a hand across his forehead, as I would have done with any other wounded man in my care.

Both blessing and curse, I have heard the Sight called, and surely it had been so to me before that night. But just then, at that moment, I was willing to count it blessing entire. The moment I touched the prisoner's brow, a feeling, huge and powerful raced through me, as though something inside me were falling, falling into a space where I heard the echoing heartbeat of the earth itself.

The captive man was fevered, still; his skin was hot against my palm.

And for a moment, I saw only the memory of how he had lain here, hour upon hour, before sleep had claimed him: I saw the rigid, still-muscled control in the taut line of his shoulders, felt how he had been galled almost past endurance by being tied here thus, naked and helpless in the dark. And yet had held himself absolutely, utterly immobile, because if he allowed himself even a moment's slackening of control he would fall to struggling like a wild, frantic bird beating against the bars of a cage.

I should perhaps have been cautious of reaching out with the Sight, after what had happened before in the prison cell. But the liquid fire feeling was still racing through me, echoed by the a circling current, a deep chiming voice that seemed to say, Yes. Go on.

And then ... then, as I reached towards him along the lines of the Sight, I felt it: a swelling, a blossoming of that jagged inner darkness I had sensed before.

His whole body went rigid, and his eyes went wide and blind, though along that echoing channel that had opened between us I could catch snatches of what he Saw: swords clashing, horses screaming, wounded men crying as they crawled through churned earth and leaked their life's blood from a dozen and more wounds.

He would not be as like to call this a blessing. But it meant that after the first moment of breathless shock, I was able to draw the bone-handled knife I had brought and cut the ropes that bound him. And through all, he lay mute, rigid, and staring blindly at whatever ghosts I had conjured with the moment's touch.

I thought at first I would not be able to shift him, even after I had cut him free. But I tugged and pulled at his arms, and finally, after a furiously hissed order from me he did lurch upright, and even allowed me to propel him in a kind of jerky, stumbling rush out the door, past the two guards who still slept the sleep of the profoundly drunk and drugged.

* * *

THE PRISONER RELIVED in dream the days before his capture and imprisonment here, of that I was almost sure. I caught occasional flashes from him, enough to know that he had been plunged into a waking version of the same nightmare he'd been trapped in before I came. A dream memory of a battle's fearful aftermath, of fighting his way through a field of the dead and dying. Buzzing flies, ravens pecking at dead, staring eyes, and the awful, throat-clogging reek of blood.

I closed my mind to it as much as I could as we made our way across Vortigern's camp, weaving a path through the pitched tents of the warriors, past the reeking pens where the livestock were corralled.

Vortigern's warriors had not, you may be sure, foregone to carry their slave girls and army harlots along to this remote place. Vortigern allowed it, since without it many of them would not have stayed, might even have turned on him to overthrow his rule. He had even, in the last weeks, taken to doling out measures of his own expensive wine. On nights after the tower walls had fallen yet again, I had watched his warriors drink themselves into an angry, sullen stupor—or drag their slave girls off and use them hard enough to make them scream.

Most of the men were content to be serviced in a shadowed corner of the fire hall, or outside, since the winter's chill had held off so long. But I could not be certain—not entirely—that one of the older of Vortigern's chiefs might not prefer the comfort of his own tent with whatever woman he

chose for tonight.

The night was dark, with only the faintest limpid crescent of a moon to light our way; that was an added blessing to count in our favor. But still my back felt as exposed as though I, and not the prisoner, had been stripped to the skin; with every step we took, I expected to hear a shout of alarm from behind, or the pounding of feet running after us in angry pursuit.

Once as I guided him along a tumbled cairn of moss grown stones—part of the ancient hill fort that had once stood here—he himself gave a half-shout. His eyes had a blind, agonized cast in the pale moonlight, and he jerked his arm up as though to fend off a blow.

The sound was naught but a rough, wordless gasp of air, really, but it sounded in my ears loud as a warrior's battle cry and set my heart thumping. Still, I calmed him as best I could, spoke soft, soothing words as I would have done to a frightened child. Perhaps it helped, perhaps in some way he heard and was eased, I had no way of knowing for certain. The nameless man seemed no more aware of me than he was of the tents and heaps of raw building stones we passed. But at least he made no other sound. And he did not fight me off, but let me keep hold of his arm and guide his steps as I navigated what felt an agonizingly slow path towards the encampment's edge.

It was ill chance, pure and simple, that we were caught.

Vortigern had not forces enough to maintain a constant and effective guard around the perimeter of his fort. He trusted in the rocky terrain, the steepness of the slopes on which Dinas Ffareon stood, the lack of tree cover, which would mean any attacking army would be slaughtered in a hail of arrows and spears before ever they gained the summit.

That, indeed, was the reason entire that Bron and I had come here at all.

Vortigern had concentrated most of his guard on the fortress's southern side, where steep mountain paths led down to the River Glaslyn. He must needs maintain control of the routes by which he could resupply his fortress with fish and grain and ale if he hoped to survive there long.

And so I had led the prisoner to the northern perimeter of the camp, where the hill face dropped away in an almost sheer wall of rock. Surely Vortigern would not have troubled to post a sentry there.

But he had.

He stood in the shadow of the fortress's rough wooden palisade, which ran along the boundary of the ancient hill fort and was as yet a half-completed effort, like so much else at Dinas Ffareon. My skin had long since grown clammy beneath the dark woolen cloak I had thrown over my head and shoulders, and I might have cannoned straight into the sentry had the moonlight not glinted on the hilt of the sword he wore at his belt.

I froze, one hand clenched tight on the arm of the prisoner beside me, willing him into immobility,

as well. And for a moment, I thought we might be able to withdraw unseen. But it would seem whatever luck had carried us this far unhindered had run out, for the next instant the guard stiffened and straightened, then called out, "Who's that?"

He was not expecting trouble, not coming from within his own encampment. That was the only advantage we had, the only reason he did not at once draw his sword. Still, the knowledge thudded through me like the beat of a war drum that I could not hope to bluff my way out of this. Let him come close enough to recognize either the prisoner's or my face and he would have us impaled on his sword point in less time than it would take him to spit on our dead bodies afterward. And Bron's death would immediately follow, of that I had no doubt.

Even as the thought flashed through my mind, my hands were already on the bow and arrow-bag strapped to my back, already plucking an arrow out and laying it on the bow's stave, drawing the hemp cord back along my cheek.

The man must have seen it, dark as it was, or at least sensed danger, in the way men do who are trained for war. He did draw his sword, and took a step forward, head turning as he strained to see in the dark.

My arrow took him in the throat.

In that moment, everything seemed unnaturally razor keen and clear; even the faint stars above grew sharp as ice slivers, bright enough to hurt my eyes. I saw the man stagger backwards, hands scrabbling frantically at the bolt in his neck, saw the hot welling of blood around the wound.

I had already before that night seen men in their death-throes many, many times. Too many to count; any healer will say the same. But never had I had to stand by and watch a man die of a wound I had given him. Never had I seen a man wounded and in pain and done nothing to give him ease.

The breath rattled in the dying man's throat.

It was a horrible sound, horrible, and it seemed to go on an eternity while I stood there, too sick and frozen to move. I felt my muscles shaking, as with fever. Once the guard cried out, a low, choked cry of pain, and at the sound the prisoner beside me tensed and instantly thrust me behind him, one arm flung out to form a barrier of protection across my body.

His eyes were wide and still blind in the moonlight. The protective gesture nothing to do with me, only part of the nightmare memory into which he'd been plunged. Still, it was an anchor to cling to, the warmth of his body against mine, the solid strength of the muscles of his arm.

Finally the guard stopped thrashing on the ground and lay still. And somehow I made myself move, forced myself to stumble past his body, drawing the prisoner with me beyond the fortresses defenses.

Rocks rolling beneath my feet, tree branches that scraped at my face and caught like claws at my hair and clothes: I felt as though I had joined the prisoner in the depths of waking nightmare, and in truth I remember little of the descent from the summit of Dinas Ffareon.

When I came to myself, we were, I suppose, perhaps halfway down, though well into the thick screen of trees that grew beneath the rockiest stretch of the slope. I was retching up the contents of my stomach into the carpet of scrub and dried leaves underfoot. Though—lest he do aught that would give away our position—I somehow managed to keep one hand holding tightly to the prisoner's arm.

A strange sort of inverse, I thought distantly, of the way the prisoner and I had begun this in Vortigern's prison cell on the morning before.

And then the prisoner woke.

I felt the arm I held quiver and jerk under my fingers, heard him give a choking gasp, like a swimmer breaking the water's surface for air. And then he launched himself sideways at me, throwing me to the ground and pinning me fast, one forearm braced against my throat while his other hand held my arms down.

I could scarce feel shock for that, or blame him; the last he had known he had been stripped and bound and awaiting certain death; he had no idea what had happened or how we had come here, to this dark and deserted spot. But I felt still as though echoes of the dying guardsman's last rattling breaths were being pounded into my ears like spikes. And I would never have killed him, would never have been here at all tonight if not for this man.

I brought my knee up, driving it hard against the prisoner's cracked ribs. He cried out, a choked, raw cry that brought back echoes of the dying guard and made bile rise in my own throat all over again. But he rolled off me and lay half-curled on the ground, eyes closed, muscles shaking, jaw tight as though he were trying to hold back another groan or cry. The faint, silver light of moon and stars that filtered through the branches above showed a sheen of sweat on his brow.

I have said, and it is true, that he could not have stopped me leaving him lying bound in Vortigern's chambers. I could have left him just as easily now.

He was fevered, weak, wounded, still disoriented and dazed. If I ran—and a faint voice in my mind shouted at my muscles to do it—he would never be able to follow.

And yet I stayed.

There are those who imagine the healer's path one for the tender-hearted. To them, let me say this: you are wrong. I have been a healer all my life. And anyone over-kind or soft of heart would shred themselves to pieces grieving for the pain a healer must willingly see and cause.

I had, even before that night, sawed through muscle and sinew and bone to take off warriors' legs

or arms that had gone green and swollen with poisoned wounds. I had heard them scream, and yet gone on, because if the poison were allowed to spread beyond the affected limb, the men would die.

To a healer, compassion is neither gentle nor tender, but hard and keen as a blade.

But yet it was my healer's vow that held me fast and kept me now from turning away. That, and the memory of Vortigern's guard, clutching the arrow in his throat with lifeless hands. Once already tonight I had broken faith with my vows in denying comfort to him, a wounded man, albeit one wounded by my own hand. Now here was another man lying sick and hurting on the ground before me. And almost before I knew I had decided, I was dropping to my knees beside him on the ground.

"I'm sorry. I'm so truly sorry." I smoothed the wheat-blond hair back from his brow, made my voice a soothing murmur, counterpoint to all the soft, rustling sounds of the night forest all about. I had also lied to many a wounded man if the lie would give him a moment's peace. But I spoke true now: I was sorry that I had lost my temper even for that brief moment. Now that I touched him again, I could feel along the thrumming channel still opened between us a glimmer of what he himself felt. Pain, of course, raw and stomach-churning from his many wounds. The lingering scum of nightmare, sticky as grease over his skin.

But beyond that—

Goddess Mother, I had felt nothing like it before, never, not even when Gamma unwound both past and future from the ancient spirals etched in the scrying bowl.

A constant assault beat at the nameless prisoner like a cloud of stinging insects, and I felt it as I touched him now.

He looked out into the shadowed forest and saw each leaf on every tree turning brittle and brown and falling to the ground; saw the sap cooling and turning sluggish as winter came on, then quickening with the spring. He heard the harsh cry of a night bird, and saw how before night's end it would swoop low to snatch up a meadow vole in its claws. Saw how, three days hence, the night bird itself would die, thrashing on the point of a hunter's arrow.

He saw the vast, shadowed shape of the hill fort looming above us, and knew that before the moon had waxed and waned, the earth beneath its half-built walls would be soaked with blood and— Before I could See any more, he jerked away from me, gasping, his eyes wide and leeched of all color in the pale moonlight. Though there was, for the first time that night, a flicker of true awareness in their gaze.

"Gods, you're the one"—the words came out in short bursts of air—"who told Vortigern I was the fatherless child he wanted. Uther's girl-child."

Compassion or no, I was not fool enough to think him no longer a threat. I held my muscles tensed, ready to spring back in an instant if he made a move towards me. And yet despite the lean warrior's build, the muscles that bunched and tightened under his bruised skin, there was something lost about the look in his eyes, a kind of utter, weary fearlessness in the face of despair. It took little effort to make my voice gentle, soft as before.

"Morgan, yes."

I saw a muscle jump into relief in the side of his jaw. "And what is Uther's daughter and high seeress doing in Vortigern's pay? Did your father send you here? Or have you decided to turn your allegiance and support Vortigern's claim to the throne?"

My fingers twitched, but I forced my hands not to clench. This man, whoever he was, had a body that bespoke a lifetime of battle, fear and pain. And now he had spent days in a cramped and airless cell, lashed and burned by Vortigern.

"My father knows I am here, though he didn't send me, not quite." I heard my voice harden as I spoke the words. "Snow will fall on the midsummer fires of Beltaine before Uther Pendragon believes any but my brother Arthur can aid in Vortigern's fall. But when a mission arises, he is still perfectly willing for his unwanted girl-child to take the part that promises almost inevitable death."

This was, all of it, the story I never told. But I could see some tiny measure of tension ease out of the prisoner's frame as I spoke. And I could feel, still, that humming presence from somewhere in the earth itself. A chiming cadence like the most ancient of tales, whispering that I must give this man before me the truth, that there could be no half measures here.

"My father Uther loved my mother, I think. Or he did once. But he wanted a son—a son she had not given him, not in ten years of marriage. And, once he had seen her, he wanted Ygraine of Cornwall. And what my father wants, he takes. I do not think he even intends to be cruel. Though whether that makes him a worse man or a better one, I don't know. But he wanted a son, and he wanted Ygraine. So he accused my mother of lying with his guardsmen when he was away on campaign. Mayhap he even believed the charge. He wanted the charge to be true—and in his mind, so it was."

I felt my hands tighten. "She was burned at the stake, when I was four years old. I was taken in by a wise woman, guardian of the nemetons at Llyn y Fan Fach. Gamma. She told my father she had dreamed my coming to her." From somewhere deep in the forest, and owl called, a single low, mournful cry, and I swallowed. "And my father scarcely cared where I went, or with whom. Though he did send Bron with me, as bodyguard. Bron taught me to shoot a bow and arrow and throw a knife. And Gamma taught me the healer's craft. She was a healer, as well as a seer.

She died this past spring.”

For all the grief was months old, I felt my eyes stinging as I spoke the words. “I wanted to stay there, in the forest where she raised me. But she made me swear to return to my father’s court when she was gone.”

Uther my father had professed himself more than glad to see me. And I even thought he spoke true. For the half-moment or two he looked at me before he was away with his warriors, planning their next campaign. But he had not even tried to barter me away in marriage for the sake of some strategic alliance, as many fathers would have done. I must—did, I suppose—grant him that much. Still, I felt my mouth twist again. “I found, when I returned, that my father had indeed married Ygraine of Cornwall. And paid his druids to prophesy that their son was the promised one, he who would turn back the Saxon tide. I’m sorry for my brother Arthur, in a way. I had never seen him before last spring. I scarcely know him now. But I imagine it’s been a heavy load for a boy of thirteen to carry, to have been promised such a destiny from birth.”

For a moment, the swirling blood and water in Gamma’s scrying bowl stood before my gaze. I shut my eyes to clear them. “Yet I think, from what I have seen of him, that he carries the burden well. So well, indeed, that the prophesies may even prove true. He may be Britain’s savior from the Saxon hordes. If”—a shiver danced across my skin—“if he lives through the battles he and my father now fight. Lives long enough to grow to a man.”

I stopped again for breath, then said, still meeting the prisoner’s eyes, “A band of my father’s warriors has dug a tunnel, beneath this hill.” The owl called again as I gestured to the forested slope above and around. “Beneath Vortigern’s fortress. That is the true reason Vortigern’s walls will not stand. My father is, whatever else, a great warrior. He saw this place and knew he had no hope of mounting an open attack. Too many men would die before the summit of Dinas Ffareon could be gained. And so he set his builders to devising a tunnel, to carrying away the soil and bracing the tunnels walls. They have worked in secret these last weeks, night after night. Covering the mouth of the tunnel with branches and dry brush every morning at dawn. Though, truly, it has not been so hard to hide. Vortigern has not men enough to spare to send many out beyond the fortress on patrol. My part—my part and Bron’s—was to gain entrance in Bron’s guise of wandering druid, mine of his serving boy. To give Vortigern a false prophesy about the blood of a fatherless child, so that he would look no further for the reason his tower walls fell.”

I drew another breath, then said to the prisoner, my voice quiet in the larger hush of night, “You forced my hand when you nearly made Vortigern doubt me, doubt Bron. I told the first lie I could think of to make you stop, and to win back Vortigern’s trust. But I could not have let you to pay for the lie with your life.”

The prisoner ran a hand down his face. There was just light enough that I could read his expression: dazed confusion as he struggled to block out the visions long enough that he might take in the meaning of what I had told him. That, mixed with wary disbelief. Then both were gone, replaced by something hard and dully angry at the back of his gaze. “This wasn’t how it was supposed to be. I was supposed to die. That was all I wanted. Death. Is that so goddamned much to ask? For Vortigern to kill me and put an end to this—”

He made a quick, angry gesture and I saw a shudder twist through him as his gaze traveled around the night-dark forest. The shudder was instantly controlled, though; whoever he was, the force of discipline was deep in him and strong.

He stilled and looked back at me, the dead-eyed, stony look back in place. “I’m sorry if I hurt you, Morgan, Daughter of Uther. But you should go. Go to your father’s men and carry out your mission, if you will. But leave me here to finish mine.”

“No.” I was sick, still, and filled with a chill shaking that felt as though my bones had been turned to ice. I spoke almost before I knew—but if I am honest, in that moment, I could not have said whether I refused because some larger purpose spoke through me or whether I simply could not face the thought of going off into the night alone.

Above us, Vortigern’s fortress still loomed like a great, hulking beast ready to strike. But the woods here, the forest quiet, was at least a little like the forest of oaks where I had been raised. No walls, here, nor anything to keep the night breeze from stirring my hair, lifting the fear from my skin and blowing it free like dandelion seed.

I put my hand on the prisoner’s arm, not a gentle touch, this time, but a hard grip that made his head come up sharply and his muscles tense.

“A god rides your brow, whoever you are. And that is not an easy nor a comfortable gift. Believe me, I have cause to know. But I can’t let you stay here and get yourself recaptured and killed. There’s too much at stake.” I drew in another breath, still gripping his arm. “I need you to come with me now. And if anything happens to me, if Vortigern’s men find us, and I’m the one captured, I need you to swear to me that you’ll run—as fast as you can—to where my father’s men are. I’ll draw you a map on the ground here, now. And you must swear to me that if anything happens to me, you’ll get to my father’s men and deliver the message that they must make ready to attack.”

I saw him start to shake his head, saw him open his mouth to refuse again. I tightened my grasp. “You must! Would you have Vortigern remain king thanks to you? The man who gave you these?” I touched the raw lash marks on his back. “Would you let your choice tonight keep that man on Britain’s throne?”

I could see the fine tremor of a muscle on the side of his jaw, and realized just how on edge his

nerves were, how close to the point of breaking.

The moment lengthened, stretched out, the night silence grew and swelled between us, broken only by the harsh bark of a fox from somewhere not far distant, the creak of the branches above as they swayed in the night breeze.

Then, finally, the prisoner jerked his head in a wordless nod. He grimaced as the movement jarred his injuries, but spread his hand out, palm up.

“Go. I’ll follow. I swear to it. As you asked.”

* * *

MY FATHER’S MEN were gone.

They should have been hard at work, clearing earth from the tunnel they had made on the eastern side of Dinas Ffareon. But the forest was utterly deserted, and the black mouth of the tunnel, when we reached it, yawned silent and empty as a tomb.

I drew the prisoner inside, rearranged the cover of brush and branches over the opening as best I could. In truth, what else could I do? The prisoner had kept pace with me as best he might—and truly, better than I could have hoped—as we had made our way through the chill, dark night, skirting the thick forest along the base of the hill.

But the walk had tired him. He was pale and sweating, muscles shivering as though he fought at every moment a grim battle to stay on his feet. And dawn was breaking, pale-gray light beginning to spill like a cascade down the hillside. We could not risk remaining out in the open much longer; Vortigern’s patrols might be rare in the usual way, but he would surely send out searchers when he woke from the night’s drinking and found his proposed sacrifice to the gods gone.

“Sit.”

The prisoner didn’t resist, but sank down as I bade him onto the ground, though still with an echo of that spare, focused economy of movement I had seen in him before. A warrior’s training, too, had been carved deep into his muscle and bone.

I had given him my cloak to cover himself, and a pair of Bron’s breeches that rode low on his hips and ended well above his ankles.

But apart from that, I had had no boots nor other clothing to offer him. I could see, now, in the faint light of dawn that filtered through the branches, that his feet were pale with cold and bleeding from a dozen and more scratches, as were his hands and arms. He braced his forearms on his

knees and lowered his head, and I heard the harsh rasp as he fought to control his breathing. The opening of the tunnel had been braced with split timbers to hold back the weight of earth above and around. I sat down opposite him, leaning against one of the wooden beams. The prisoner's eyes, bleak and gray in the pale half-light, met mine.

"What now?"

I gave him the answer I had already decided on, the only answer I could find just now. "We wait. What else can we do? Vortigern's guardsmen will be out and combing the forest for you soon." He nodded once, moving as though the effort were almost too great, but then rubbed a hand across his face as though he were trying to keep alert.

"Your father's men?"

"I don't know." Now that we had stopped moving, I was realizing how utterly exhausted I was, as well. I heard a quiver in my voice, and gritted my teeth to stop the words shaking any more. "I don't know what's happened to them. They should be here."

All the might-be's seemed to flash in an instant through my mind: my father's warriors lying dead somewhere out there in the brooding forest, staring up at the lightening sky with sightless eyes. Vortigern's men tearing aside the branches that concealed our refuge, here, and dragging us out and back inside the fortress walls.

I pressed my eyes closed, then looked at the man opposite me. "You See the future. Don't you?"

"Is it the future?" I had the impression he spoke without conscious control, as though the words had wrenches themselves free to hang between us in the dim stillness. He ran a hand down his face again and went on. "I don't know. I don't know whether what I See actually comes to pass. I don't—"

He had regained control now; he stopped, gritting his teeth as though biting off any further words, then looked down at the ground and said, in a different tone, "The ground here—it's wet. We should make sure it's safe to stay before we do anything else."

I followed his gesture and saw he was right, the tunnel's earthen floor was muddied, the footmarks my father's men had left filled with little pools of dirtied water. At least it showed they had been here, and not long ago.

"Do you have flint?" the prisoner asked.

I dug in the pack I had brought and found flint and tinder both, wrapped in a scrap of oilskin to keep dry. A branch from the covering at the tunnel's mouth and a torn length of my cloak made a makeshift torch. When he had it lighted, the prisoner led the way along the muddied ground, deeper into the center of the hill.

The torch's flame cast wild, dancing shadows on the earthen walls, and my heart quickened, all weariness forgotten, for truly I did not know what we would find. My father's men worked slowly, bracing the walls as they went, and knew what they were about. But there are ever dangers in work of this kind, and a sudden cave-in could have buried them.

The air grew darker and chill as we made our way along, my companion holding the torch aloft. And then he stopped, so abruptly that I bumped against his back.

"This must be why they stopped work—why they're not here now."

I looked past him, and saw that the tunnel ended, not in the cave-in I had feared, but in a wall of solid gray rock, glistening and dripping with moisture in the fire's dancing orange light. I should perhaps have been frightened. We were deep underground, and there was always the danger that the seeping water would cause the tunnel walls to collapse.

But there was a strange, austere

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... beauty, I suppose, in the scene before us. As anything ancient and immovable must be called beautiful, in its way. The torchlight glinted off the rock's smooth, rippling face, sparking the drops and running rivulets of water to glowing jewels.

It was like a strange, earth-weighted sanctuary, or a shrine to some god of roots and rock and earth. And I felt, standing there, as though we did indeed stand in the singing presence of one of the Old Ones, who had passed from flesh into spirit to dwell forever in hollow hills like this one.

Perhaps my companion felt it, as well. Or perhaps he was only too exhausted for words. But we neither of us spoke, not until we had made our way back along the tunnel, back to the sunlight that poured through the entrance like some age-old answer to whatever lay buried deep within the soil.

I forced my lips apart to ask, "Is it safe for us to be here?"

"I think so." He was squinting as though the bright sunlight hurt his eyes, and sat down again, tipping his head back against one of the bracing beams. "If we stay here, near the entrance, we'll have time to get out if there's a collapse. And it's a better hiding place than any other, just now." He rubbed his eyes, and I had the feeling he was reaching towards some bleak reserve of strength. Then he looked up at me. "Tell me what happened last night. Tell me how we came to get away from Vortigern."

I had meant to ask him if he could see aught of our future, now. But I could feel the shivers of

the nightmare darkness still twisting beneath the surface of his control. Or perhaps I only saw it in the tautness of his neck and shoulders, the white lines about the corners of his mouth; a healer learns to read bodies as well as minds.

Instead I drew out my healer's kit. "Let me tend your injuries and I'll tell you the whole." He had opened the leg wound again. I could see the stain of fresh blood through the breeches I had given him, nearly black in the shadows of the tunnel. But it was in truth for myself as much as for him that I had offered to see to his wounds. Changing bandages, checking stitches and applying salves to the multitude of cuts and scrapes on his skin: these were all familiar, anchoring and steadyng me as I spoke.

I gave him the story of our escape from Vortigern's fort. And I thought that I managed well enough at holding my voice steady, at keeping the lingering sliver of ice under my breastbone from entering my tone. But when I came to letting loose my arrow at Vortigern's guard, the prisoner shocked me by putting a hand over mine.

"You had no other choice." He spoke quietly, the blue eyes steady on mine, and all his energy and intensity of focus audible in the words. "No other choice but to stand there and die. You can't blame yourself for choosing life."

And then he drew back, took his hand from mine and looked away, as though shocked in his turn by the current of energy that had leapt between us at the touch. Or perhaps it was only I that had been caught by surprise; even after he had withdrawn the touch I felt the heat of his skin on mine. I was conscious, all at once, of how alone here we were.

I bent to take out the food I had brought. Handed him a slab of bread, which he tore into at once with ferocious, concentrated appetite.

"Have you—" I stopped. "Whether your visions show the true future or no, have you always been able to See as you do now?"

I thought for a moment he would not answer, or would choose to misunderstand. For a long moment he simply looked at me, muscles flickering along the grim line of his jaw. But then: "Always?" He gave a short, harsh bark of a laugh, eyes still bleak and hard. "I don't know that, either. I've had this—this"—he sketched a brief, angry gesture in the air with one hand, finishing by spreading his palm out as though unable to find the word. "I've had this—whatever this is—since I woke in Vortigern's prison cell three days ago. But before that, I don't know. Before that, I don't know anything at all."

He glanced down at his own body, at the bruises that marked him, mottled purple and yellow across his chest and rib cage like lichens on one of the standing stones to the old gods. He laughed shortly again. "Vortigern could have peeled my skin off, inch by slow inch, and I still wouldn't

have been able to tell him what he wanted to know.”

He spoke more rapidly, now, as though he had tapped some inner welling of poison that must now gush until it ran dry. “I might as well have been born in Vortigern’s god-cursed fort. I’ve no memories from before. Not even my own name. I didn’t even recognize my own face when I saw it in the water you brought me to wash in on one of these past days.”

It was—oddly—hard to make myself touch him now. But I reached out and touched his head, running my fingers up beneath the fair hair. He hissed through his teeth when I found a place, just above and behind his ear: a hard knot of swelling, where he must have taken a fearsome blow, hard enough to crack the bone. But it had not bled, and he’d had so many other injuries besides this one that I had never found it before.

“I’ve heard of it happening.” My voice sounded as a whisper. “That a man may take a wound to the head and lose all memory of what he has been. Though not … not the other. That I’ve never heard of before.” His hair was smooth and fine beneath my fingers. I let my hand fall away. “Can you remember any family? Father or brothers? Or a wife?”

He shook his head. His eyes looked almost Sight-blinded as he stared at the braced earth that formed the opposite wall. But then his gaze cleared as he smoothed the hair back from his temples with both hands. “No.” He braced one hand against the space between his eyes. “I feel as though … as though I’ve been on my own, alone, a long time.” He gave another harsh laugh. “Though how do I know for certain? But I’ve no”—he raised one hand and let it fall, his gaze darkening as though he searched for the right word. “No memory of love or family, nor any feeling that I’ve left anyone behind, waiting and watching for my return. There’s only—”

He stopped, and was silent so long I thought he meant to stop speaking altogether. But then he said, muscles jumping again in his jaw, fingers curling as though he fought to keep from striking at something, “There’s only this nightmare that comes every time I shut my eyes. It’s all I remember of this past night. Walking through the dead and dying on a field of battle. And knowing that all of it—all the death and spilled guts and the stink of rotting bodies—is my doing. My fault. Knowing that I ought to be one of those lying dead in the mud. That I ought not be—”

“I know.” I remembered the nightmare vision I had shared during our escape. Grief and blood-soaked guilt, and no memory of anything besides. A warrior, a leader perhaps, who had stood against Vortigern and seen his war band crushed? There was, of a surety, no shortage of those. Though usually the gods had at least granted them a swift death with their men.

“It might be just that, though. A dream.”

“Just a dream.” His voice was rough. “I hope you lie better than that if Vortigern ever catches

up with us. Still—" his voice changed, and his mouth twisted in a brief, wry smile. "Thank you for trying." His hands clenched and he looked up at me. "I do mean that. Thank you. For that and for ... what you did tonight. It was—" he stopped again, and I saw white dents appear at the corners of his mouth. "It was an act of courage. Even if I have no right to my life, you have saved it for me. But we both know that whatever else that vision is, it's more than only a dream."

"I—" I stopped and looked down at my own hands, Seeing for a brief instant myself in pale green and my brother Arthur, face flushed with drink. The tunnel walls seemed to press in closer; even the weight of my boy's clothes seemed too much to bear on my skin.

I looked up at the prisoner again. "There must be a reason, though. A reason you're still alive." A flash of something hard and bitter crossed his gaze. But then his eyes searched mine and he said, "You believe that?"

"I have to."

He was silent a moment, eyes still on mine. Then he nodded once and looked away, gaze fixed on the opposite wall. "Maybe. Maybe it's a punishment, then. What I See, now, instead of my own past. Maybe that's why I was not allowed to die at Vortigern's hand. It's as though ... as though I'm living time backwards. In the place where memory should be, I see instead ... visions. Flashes. Call them whatever you like. But they're always changing. Nothing is fixed. I look at Vortigern, and I see him screaming as he dies by fire." The edges of his lips compressed. "Not that I'm likely to grieve over-much if that particular vision comes true. But"—he made the quick gesture of frustration again, raising one clenched hand and letting it fall. "But other times, I see him sitting on a throne, a bent old man, or dying at peace in a tapestried bed. I look at Vortigern's guards, and I see them gulping ale and getting their miserable, starved looking slave girls with child—and sometimes I see the infants dying before they're alive a full turning of the moon. Sometimes they live. But it all flows and shifts and changes like ... like quicksand. I've no notion which visions are true. If any are."

I watched him a moment, then said, my voice soft, "Do you see ... have you seen any of your own future? Our future, after this?"

The muscles in his throat contracted as he swallowed, and he avoided my gaze. "Sometimes. Sometimes I see myself. Dying, by the sword, with these warrior's marks still on me." He gestured to the swirling spirals that covered his shoulders and chest. "Other times I've seen myself a white-haired old man with a harp, standing beside a king's throne. But—" He stopped. Still, he didn't look at me. "I look at you, and—I didn't see it, at first. Not until you'd told me who you were, and then—"

He was staring at the tunnel's earthen wall, and there was the same lost look about his gaze, fearless

and yet exhausted beyond measure, as well. My fate, and yet now this man, too, had to bear the slithering premonition of it.

To hear me tell of it, it must sound as though I had Seen my own future in Gamma's scrying bowl and decided I could do naught but sit like a terror-frozen hare, waiting for the jaws of destiny to close in. But that is not true.

It was not merely one future I had seen, but many, branching like veins in a dried autumn leaf. I had seen myself running away, crossing the sea to Brittany on a leaking fishing vessel tossed by the storms. And my brother Arthur was wounded in battle. And without me, without a healer to tend him, he took fever and died. The petty kings and chieftains who had united under my father squabbled away what ground they had gained. And Britain fell to the Saxons, who ravaged and slaughtered their way across the land to the western sea.

I had seen myself locked away in a house of holy women. I had even seen myself murder the unborn son I was to bear Arthur with a purge of hemlock. In that future, I died, as well, bleeding my own life out along with the child. And without our child—the boy I would call Modred—to fight beside him, Arthur fell in battle and died, choking on mud and blood.

Future after future, but the tangled threads always unraveled to the same end: Without me, without our son, Arthur would die. Without Arthur, Britain would be utterly destroyed. One path, one future, I could chose, in which Arthur won a peace that lasted at least the span of a man's life. In which Britain was battered, yet unbroken in the end.

Hate it as I might, I could not make it untrue.

And whatever else, I knew at least that the future was no fault of this man's, save that he was forced to stare down its maw whenever he looked into my face.

I put my hand across his mouth and said, my voice soft, "I know. It's all right. I know that, too." His lips were dry, his breath hot against the palm of my hand. But this time I scarcely felt the touch. I felt as though my own blood pulsed along the quivering lines of the Sight. The throb of something deep inside me was echoed a moment later by those same chiming currents I had heard before. Ancient as the oldest tale, or the presence I had felt within the rock at the end of the tunnel. Like a heartbeat of the earth itself, a voice that seemed to breath, Yes. Go on. This day is yours.

A part—a small part—of me stood back, astonished at what I did. But if I let this chance pass me by, when might another come? I had perhaps only this day, this one day to make mine. And after that, a road to walk that grew narrower with each passing turn of the moon.

And so I didn't let myself hesitate, nor even think over-long. I took my hand away and leaned forward, touching my lips to his.

It was sweet, sweet as a mother's lullaby or the first drenching rain of spring. For the first time since Gamma had died, I felt real warmth flood through me, and something hard and clenched inside my chest seemed to ease.

After the first moment, though, the prisoner drew back, hands firm but gentle on my shoulders to hold me away. "I'm not—" The dawn was truly breaking outside our shelter; I could see him more plainly now. His breath came quick and unsteady, but he gave another quick, wry twist of what was almost a smile. "At least I hope I am not the man to take advantage of a girl left without protection and on her own. I don't—"

But I stopped him, laying a hand across his lips again. The circling currents seemed to brush, light as birds wings, against my skin. "Please." I held his gaze. "You say you've been alone a long time—perhaps all your life. But here, right now, you don't have to be."

His jaw was stubbled with several days' growth of beard, rough and prickling against my skin. He exhaled, just a brief burst of air. "You don't know me. I don't know me. But I know I'm not—" But I stopped him again. I felt as though I had crossed a bridge over a fast-moving current. Or been lifted up and set down, and not in quite the same place I had been before.

I lifted one finger and traced the angular line of his brow, his jaw. "I know that you are not evil, whatever you may have done. I know that you have courage to face whatever comes. I know that you should not have to bear the burdens you now carry all on your own."

He looked younger, now, seen as close as this, close enough that I could see tiny flecks of gold in the sea-blue of his eyes. He might perhaps be eighteen or nineteen, but no more, and no more than a few years older than I.

I swallowed to keep my voice from wavering. "You've seen yourself what the future holds for me. Please let me have this. Let me choose for myself now, with you."

* * *

EVER SINCE GAMMA had shown me her vision in the scrying waters, I had felt, like the throb of open wounds, how much would have been different had I been the boy my father so craved, the boy I had now spent weeks pretending to be.

My mother would have lived and been hailed as queen. My brother Arthur would never have been born, and perhaps all the prophesies spoken of him would have been made over my cradle, instead. Who can know such things of a certainty? But betimes Arianrhod, mistress of fate and

the silver wheel of the stars, seems a cruel goddess indeed.

And yet, that daybreak, I knew that I would never have traded places nor wished to be any other than I was. For in so doing I would have lost the wonder of that morning.

There is an old tale—I heard Gamma tell it once—of a maid of the Fair Folk, who fell in love with a human man and carried him away on a snow-white mare to live with her in the Otherworld. The Summerland, where there is no weariness, nor pain, nor sorrow, nor toil, but only day after day, perfect and unblemished as an endless strand of pearls.

And yet the maid's human love sickened and pined there, for his old life in the human world. And in pity, she allowed him to return to his own home, his own kind. She rode back with him on the snow-white mare, and left him to a human life and human love. But as she turned back towards the veil between the Otherworld and this, she wept, and her tears fell onto the rocks and grass and soil where she rode.

And it was said that any who touched the earth where one of her tears fell would be granted the gift of living a day from the Otherworld, one whole and utterly perfect day.

An old tale, and perhaps never meant to be believed, even when first told. But I could believe it that morning.

We ate of the food I had brought, and slept, and moved together in shadowed, earth-scented half-light. I was aware of the lightening of the tunnel as the day broke outside, of the movement of the patches of sunlight that dappled the earthen floor. But only in so far as they showed me my companion's face more clearly, let me see the look in his eyes: a kind of earnest, astonished wonder that made my heart ache with a pain so fierce it was sweet as that first meeting of our lips had been. Other women had spoken in my hearing of pain, but truly I felt none. Another gift of the Goddess, maybe. For if the weavings of our lives are spun of both joy and sorrow, the fabric of that morning seemed destined to be cast from threads of joy alone.

"Thank you," I whispered as I clung to him, my face buried against his shoulder. "Thank you."

"I think—" His voice, too, sounded younger. Husky, and with a break in it, like a youth's caught in the change from boy to man. "I think that's supposed to be what I say to you."

* * *

AFTERWARDS, AS I LAY DROWSING with my head on his shoulder and the warmth of his breath a soft tickle against my hair, he stirred all at once and said, "Merlin."

"Merlin?" I raised myself on one elbow and looked down at him. "A hawk?"

His fair hair was rumpled, and he must have been asleep, as well, because he squinted a little at the shafts of sunlight that filtered through the branches at the tunnel's entrance. He shook his head, one hand rubbing the space between his eyes. "No ... my name."

I must have given a start of surprise, because his hand came up to brush my hair, just lightly, even as his gaze clouded and his brow furrowed in an effort of remembrance. "I was lying here, listening to the birds outside, and I heard one—a merlin, I thought. And then it seemed as though . . as though I'd heard the word before. As though it belonged to me. Or perhaps not 'merlin' quite, but something like it. It felt right, just for a moment, as though I could remember being called that, sometime before now. But—" He stopped and let out a breath of frustration, shaking his head again. "But it's gone now. Now I'm just ... remembering that I remembered it. It's not a real memory any more."

I could hear the bird calls from the forest outside, soft chirps and twitters and the high, wild cry of the hawk he must have heard.

"I'm sorry." I could see the lost, shadowed look had crept back into his eyes, and I touched his cheek. "I wish I could give you back your true name, whoever you were before."

He drew his knees up, resting his chin on his crossed hands and staring at the opposite wall. The Sight-blinded look was gone from his eyes, but his look was distant, all the same, as though he listened to a voice from far off.

"I was a warrior." His fingers clenched and unclenched themselves. "I must have been, my body remembers it, even if it's wiped clean from my mind. But I—when I fought with Bron, I knew what to do even without thinking. I wished for a knife. And I knew already how it would feel in my hand, what it would be like to slide the blade between his ribs. As though I'd done it a hundred times before. I could almost feel the blood, hear the little grunt of pain he'd give when the knife found his heart."

I must have made some movement, some small sound because he turned and looked at me, eyes stricken. He shook his head. "I'm sorry. I don't know whose warrior I was, or for whose cause I fought, who I supported in what you tell me of the war for Britain's throne." A brief, wry smile pulled at the edges of his mouth. "Save that it was not Vortigern. But I don't—"

And then he stopped, frowning as though searching for the right words. "I don't know what I was before I woke in Vortigern's prison cell. I don't know what these hands of mine may have done. I think in truth"—the shadow crossed his face again—"that I would rather not know, though that may be the coward's choice."

He held out his hands, the pale golden sunlight dappling his skin. "But since my past is gone, I

have nothing else to give but this body, these hands. You saved my life this day and gave me ... gave me far more than I deserve. Just in seeing myself reflected in your eyes. A man I might not be ashamed to be. Merlin—”

He stopped, and then he smiled just a little as he spoke the word. “Merlin, whoever he may prove to be, is yours, then. And besides—” he drew my mouth back to his and kissed me with the same earnest, heart-stopping wonder of before. I felt him smile against my lips. A truer smile, this time. “I think you’d always have had the power to make me forget my own name.”

* * *

VORTIGERN’S MEN found us at sunset.

We were asleep, both of us, curled together on the floor of the tunnel, my head still on his shoulder, my palm spread flat on his chest. I could hear, even through the hazy sweetness of whatever I dreamed, the steady beat of his heart, feel the solid warmth of his arms fitted around me.

I had not even realized how much time had passed until he started up, waking me as well, and I saw how the patterns of sunlight had faded to faint, pale streaks of orange.

Dusk’s shadows blurred the air, but there was yet light enough for me to see my companion’s face. Merlin. Even as my heart stumbled in my chest and quickened, the name came with strange, natural ease. As though he truly had been named and reborn in this place that might have been some secret, close-protected womb of the earth itself.

But protected no more; he was alert, now every muscle taut, poised. And as I sat up, he put a hand across my mouth, warning me to silence.

I heard it a moment later, the noise that must have awakened him: men’s voices, low and angry, though the words were indistinct, and a crunch of dry bracken under heavy booted feet.

Just for a moment, in the heart-pounding stillness of the tunnel, I let myself hope that it might be my father’s men, at last returned. But in the next heartbeat I heard one of the men’s voices, louder than the rest: “Spread out and start searching. He can’t have got far.”

Vortigern’s men. I felt as though a giant hand was clenched round my chest, wringing the air from my lungs. Vortigern’s men, searching for the man beside me.

And they would find him. The knowledge pulsed in my stomach like sickness. The branches covering the mouth of the tunnel might be enough to deceive an ordinary patrol, weary of the duty and eager to return to the warmth of the ale hall. But searchers, sent out to comb the hillside

methodically for any trace of the fugitive man—we could have only a bare handful of moments before they discovered the tunnel's entrance.

I was looking up at Merlin's face, and saw the same knowledge reflected in his eyes, in the set of his shoulders and tight line of his mouth. But there was no fear, nor even hesitation. So much so, indeed, that until he put me gently aside and stepped towards the mouth of the tunnel, I did not even realize what he intended to do.

"You can't!" My voice was a whisper, a breath of sound, no more, but I caught hold of his arm and held him tightly, trying to pull him back. "You can't go out there. They'll kill you!"

"And if I wait any longer, we'll both die." His voice was the same soundless murmur, but his face was as focused with grim intent as ever I had seen it, even during the days he'd spent in Vortigern's cell. "If they find us both here, they'll know it was you helped me escape. They'll kill you, too." His mouth twisted. "And that's the least they'll do once they discover you're not a boy."

I could feel hot tears scalding my eyes, threatening to spill over. I shook my head, unable to trust myself to speak, and he said, his face softening, "Please. I made you a vow. My hands—my self—pledged to your service and protection." He framed my face, brushed my cheek with his thumb. "Please, don't make me betray that vow already. I've small enough time to make Merlin into a man I'm not ashamed to live—or die—as."

And then I saw it, swift as a lightning flash, and knife-edged in its intensity: the visions came more keenly now across the channel between us. I saw him, Merlin, fighting for his life amidst a group of Vortigern's warriors. He had—from somewhere—gotten a sword, and he moved like a serpent striking, swinging the blade in a fierce, terrible blur. But he was outnumbered, twenty or more against one. His mouth was torn and bleeding freely, and a crimson stain spread on his side. One of his eyes was so bruised it was swollen near shut, but the other eye looked at his attackers with flat, exhausted calm: the look of a man who sees death approach on razored wings.

He kissed me again, just the briefest, gentlest touch of his lips to mine, before the vision had even faded from my sight. And then he took my hand and pressed his mouth against my wrist, resting his forehead a long moment against my arm.

And then before I could move, before I could speak, he was gone, smashing through the branches at the tunnel entrance in one step and sweep of his arm. I heard him shout out a challenge to the warrior's outside, heard him running hard up the hill, leading them away from where I still hid.

Still, I heard Vortigern's men fall on him, the volley of kicks and punches that drove him to the ground, before one of Vortigern's guards—the leader, he must be—snarled an angry reminder that they were to bring back the prisoner alive. And then I heard them coming back, closer to where I

hid. I pressed myself back against the earthen wall, heart pounding, feeling as though the air I breathed had thickened and been edged with grit.

He had given me this chance, this one chance, I could not fail him by letting them capture me, as well. That much pierced the numb, icy feeling that had enclosed me like sea fog.

In the end, the warriors passed by the tunnel all unseeing; they were too flushed with bloodlust and triumph to search the hillside more. I felt as though I were encased behind a solid wall of ice, as though my chest had been locked with iron bonds. And I wished—the Goddess knew how hard—that I could have been cowardly enough to close my eyes. But I saw them, just a glimpse as they marched past, dragging their captive back up towards the summit of the hill and the fort.

His head lolled on one shoulder and his arms looked dragged from their sockets by the ropes they had used to bind his wrists. And his face was blood-smeared. I saw that much, through the gathering shadows of night, before they passed by and were gone.

I let myself sink, boneless, to the ground, let myself bury my face against my raised knees. But only for a moment. I dragged in one breath, then another, and another after that. Pressed the heels of my hands fiercely against my eyes.

And then I found my clothes and yanked them on with shaking hands. Boy's tunic, boy's ragged breeches. By the time I had dealt with the laces on my boots, I had forced my hands to steadiness and my breathing to slow.

I had let him go, had not stopped him as he saved me from discovery and bartered his life in exchange for mine. But I had made no promise that I would cower here, weeping in the dark, while he went out to meet the death we had both Seen.

PART III

“WE CAN’T GO BACK, LASS.” Bron’s voice was gruff with regret, but his mouth was set in a hard, flat line. “I’m not going to be the one to explain to your father why I helped you get yourself killed.”

We stood at the entrance to the tunnel, silvered, now, by the light of the moon that had risen an hour before.

Bron had left the fortress with Vortigern’s warriors, offering his own supposedly Sight-gifted

instincts in searching for the escaped prisoner whose blood would water Vortigern's tower walls. That had always been our plan, that he would join the searchers and slip away if and when he was able. We had sketched out our intent the previous night, before Bron had gone to Vortigern's drinking hall and I had walked past the guards to get the prisoner free.

Goddess, that seemed a lifetime and more ago, now.

And it had taken him until nightfall before the approaching dark had given him a chance. But he had gotten free of Vortigern's men and made his way here, to where he had found me.

If I had felt no pain before, I did feel it now. My skin felt gritty with dirt from the tunnel's floor, besides, and my every muscle was tight as a bowstring, quivering with the need for haste. But I clenched my hands and said, "You know where my father and his men should be camped."

"Yes, but—"

"I told you, they struck a wall of stone—maybe a hidden spring—under the hill. That's why they weren't here. They must have realized the tunnel would have to be re-dug if they were to make an entrance into the fortress. So they'll have gone back to camp. They must be there now."

Bron grunted. "All right, maybe so. But that doesn't mean—"

"How many men has my father with him?"

He shrugged. "A hundred spears? Maybe two dozen or more swordsmen. But the numbers don't matter." The moonlight turned his craggy face to a dour mask, but I saw his remaining eye soften. "I'm sorry for the lad as you are. He's a brave lad, and stood up to Vortigern's handling as well as any man I've seen. But he's one man, and we've got a hundred and more of our men's lives to weigh against his. Your father and brother and all the rest would be slaughtered in an open attack. You know that. That's why we started tunneling. But without a way into the fort—"

"It wouldn't be an open attack." It was an effort to make myself speak slowly, not to let the words pour in a tumbled rush past the tightness in my throat. "Not as you mean. Do you think Vortigern will not make a spectacle of his prisoner's death? Not summon all his men to watch as he ensures that the fortress walls will finally stand fast? You know he will—he can't afford not to. Not with his warriors' confidence in his rule at such an ebb. He'll gather them together—and they'll be distracted long enough for our men to swarm the walls and strike."

"Right." Bron huffed an exasperated breath. He had thrown a dark cloak over his druid's robe, but his grizzled hair was still fixed in the dozens of tiny braids. "That's if they knew there was a chance to strike. But for that to work, one of us would have to go and—"

He stopped, remaining eye narrowing in his grim, moonlit face. "Oh, no. Don't even think it,

lass. Look you, Vortigern's not going to sacrifice the lad without me there. Doesn't make for near the spectacle if he's not got his tame druid there to kill him by the triple death, like the men were all promised. He's not even going to get the men gathered together, not until I come back. Which I can't, because his men will have got back to the fort by now, and they'll have told him that I ... well—"

Bron rubbed his nose with the back of his thumb, and I saw—with a cold lurch that pulled tight in my chest—his tight lips and downcast eyes. "Bron." I gripped his arm. "That you what? What haven't you told me? What did you do?"

"That I had to knock two of his guardsmen on the head to get free of them." Bron's voice was a mutter. Then he looked up, single eye gleaming rheumy blue and hard in the pale light. "I was a fair way worried about you, lass. Not being able to get away from them like we'd planned. Vortigern had set a pair of his fool guards to watch over me—make sure the doddering old druid didn't turn an ankle or break a leg out wandering the hillside. Their orders were to stick to me like burrs and see I got back to the fortress safe to perform the ceremony when the lad was recaptured."

From somewhere deep in the forest, came another cry of an owl, low and mournful like a wailing for the dead that would never return.

Bron shrugged, mouth still tightened to a grim slash. "So I told them I was having a vision of where the prisoner was. Off to the east, far away from where everyone else was searching." Just for a moment, a ghost of a smile touched his face. "Followed me like sheep, the pair of them, both thinking they were going to get the glory of dragging Vortigern's captive back. And then when we were off at a distance, I knocked them both over their fool heads and made off. Didn't kill 'em, though." He grimaced. "No honor in killing a man just for doing his duty and when he's made no threat to you. And when you reach my age you start to have more of a care for your soul than you did at twenty-odd. Didn't think it would matter. Thought I'd find you and the lad here, and all the rest of your father's men. But there's no going back to the fort. Not when those two guards will have woken up with the devil's own headaches and gone back to Vortigern, spitting mad and swearing vengeance on the druid who fights like a swordsman."

Fate can be a freeing thing. If my future were immovable, fixed as one of the wayfarer's stars, I could not be killed now, tonight. And if I were killed, I would escape the future Gamma had Seen, the one the harpers would one day sing. More than once since that day I had thought that I had now my choice whether to fear everything or nothing at all. And—

I found my fingers had moved almost of their own accord, to cup my wrist where Merlin's lips had pressed, as if I could hold the warmth of the touch there even a moment more.

If I were to die, tonight was no bad time. Few, of a surety, are allowed to live their one perfect day, much less keep it always as their final memory of this world.

A night breeze had sprung up, whipping my hair back and rustling the branches above. I drew a breath. “You said it yourself, Bron. One of us must go and bring my father and his warriors, tell them that if they are to attack it must be now. And it must be you, since you can’t go back to Vortigern. I will go back to Vortigern’s fort. I’m the one who claimed to have Seen that Mer—that the prisoner was a fatherless child. I can tell him that I know the rituals as well as you, that it’s more fitting I should conduct the rites.”

Bron’s brows drew together. “Are you out of your pig-swiving—” he clenched his teeth over the words. “Are you out of your mind? When you were a chattering little magpie of a four-year-old girl, I drank Uther Pendragon’s ale and kissed his sword and cut the palm of my hand to swear an oath as your guard. If you think I’m going to break that vow—”

Twice, now, tonight, I had heard men speak of vows to guard my life with their own. I had asked for neither, and now, facing Bron in the moonlight, my temper broke.

“You would rather it all be for nothing? The weeks spent digging this tunnel? Our weeks of fawning on Vortigern and standing by doing nothing while he tortured an innocent man? You would rather see it all go to waste? You would rather see Vortigern squatting on Britain’s throne while the Saxons rape our lands and burn our fields?” I stopped for breath. “Look me in the eyes, Bron. Look at me and tell me you believe in your heart that my father would not want me to do this—that he would ever chose my life over Britain’s throne.”

For a single brief eternity, we stared at each other, my heart beating hard, while all around the branches swayed and creaked in the night wind. Then, finally, Bron’s gaze fell. “I must be out of my rutting mind,” I heard him mutter.

I let out the long, slow breath I had not known until that moment I held. “Tell my father to come from the north—that’s where the defenses are weakest, the walls are only half-built. Or through the gate, if I can find a way for it to be left without a guard. But—” I stopped myself, trying to force back the cold that now rushed in, biting to the bone. “You know that as well as I do. Just ... take care. And”—I swallowed—“thank you, Bron.”

Bron stood a moment, staring at the ground. But then his head lifted, and his remaining eye looked into my own, steady and—I thought—misted over if only for a moment. “Your father might choose the throne. But certain sure I would not.” One gnarled hand came up to my shoulder and squeezed. “You keep yourself safe, lass. Don’t try anything daft.”

I saw his throat muscles bob up and down as he swallowed. And then he turned and was gone, vanishing amongst the deeper shadows of the surrounding trees.

* * *

THERE ARE TALES of travelers who wander into the crystal caves of the Otherworld and have their wits stolen by the Fair Folk so that they may never speak of what they have seen. I thought, after leaving Bron, that whatever gods dwelt beneath Dinas Ffareon might have taken my capacity for fear. All capacity for feeling, really, for in truth I felt nothing, neither fear nor any other emotion besides. Only perhaps impatience and a grim intensity of purpose when I must needs freeze into immobility at a sound—a snap of a twig or a rustle of branches—among the trees.

I had no notion whether the news of the prisoner's recapture had yet worked its way through the night to recall the men Vortigern had sent to hunt. Stray searchers could still be out, and I could not risk falling into their hands. Not when I had no idea, either, whether word had yet spread of Bron's attack on his guards.

But the body is a strange thing, as any healer has cause to know. Dying men of a sudden rise from their beds and get well; hale men sicken and wither, and from no cause but despair. And now, as I came within sight of the main gates of Vortigern's fortress, my mind might still be as though frozen, fixed on a single intent. But the blood thudded in my ears like ocean waves, and my palms were clammy with sweat even so.

Moonlight spilled like silver rain onto the rock and timbered fortress walls. Wind whipped the torches set over the fortress's main gate to tattered banners of flame. I had stopped in the deepest part of the shadows of scraggy trees that grew from the stony soil, and for a moment, I closed my eyes. Rested my forehead against the trunk of a spindly ash and willed the beat of my heart to slow.

Then I straightened and looked up again, towards the massive gates.

I could see, beneath the burning torches, the men posted at the fortress gates as sentries; the light picked out with merciless clarity their leather helmets, the blades of their spears and swords. I stood in the deepest part of the shadow on the edge of the trail. They had not seen me yet, nor heard anything amiss.

But I had no hope of getting by them unseen; the instant I stepped out onto the path, I would be challenged, hailed down.

If time had not been so short, I might have tried working my way back around to the northern side of the fort, finding a way up the rocky slope to where Vortigern's defenses were weakest. That

might be safer. Would be, not might be. I acknowledged it to whatever fates were governing this night.

But climbing the nearly sheer rock, alone and in the dark, would be harder, far harder a feat than the sliding, slithering descent had been. My muscles were already shaky with exhaustion, and it had taken me far too long already to make my way here from where I had parted with Bron.

I could feel each moment now like a bowstring, pulling ever tighter and tighter in my chest.

I found myself arguing it to the fates. Or perhaps the image of Bron I had carried away with me, to the gruff echo of his voice telling me not to take foolish risks.

Every time I shut my eyes, the remembered vision flickered against the lingering dazzle of torchlight: a man with wheat-colored hair and sea-blue eyes, slashing with his sword and facing his own death with flat, exhausted calm.

I focused on the helmeted guards, willing all cracks in the grim, icy numbness away. I wore my boy's tunic and breeches; my face was dirt-streaked and my cropped hair tangled with twigs and flecks of dry leaves. If the guards had not yet learned that Bron was not what he seemed, I might be able to lie my way past, as Bron's serving boy. Or—

The gate swung open, and a third man stepped through. Another guardsman, wearing the same leather helm. He spoke to the sentries; I caught just the low murmur of their voices, though the night wind snatched away the words. Their gestures were quick, though, jerky and excited.

And then the sentries turned and followed the third man inside the fort at a run, leaving the gate without its guard.

How long I stood there I have no idea. It might have been the briefest of instants, or considerably longer; time seemed to have frozen along with my body as I stared at the unguarded gate, my heart beating a sickening rhythm in my ears.

And then I ran as the sentries had, all exhaustion fallen away in a moment, up the steep path to the fortress walls.

What I would have done had they barred the gate from the inside—I have no idea of that, either, truly none. I had no time for plans or even for thought, beyond those of concentrated purpose. But the massive wooden doors were unbarred. One of the doors even hung a little open, still shivering with the guardsmen's push.

* * *

I HAVE THOUGHT, and often, on how easy it is—too easy by far—to forget the suffering at the heart of so many harpers' tales. To forget that real men and women once earned the telling of those stories, in grief and pain and tears.

And yet this I will say: that I wish that I had a harper's words to tell of the scene that met my eyes within the fortress walls.

I had glimpsed, in vision, Merlin fighting twenty and more of Vortigern's guards with a stolen sword. I had relived the memory of it with every beat of my heart on the journey here. And yet no vision could have matched up to the reality before me as I pushed open the gate with all my strength and stepped inside.

He wore still the ragged breeches, but fought bare chested, like some blood and flesh vision sprung from the old warriors' tales. Bron's swirling blue whorls and spirals still marked his skin.

He fought on the open square of churned and muddied ground where Vortigern's warriors daily sparred with spears and swords. The light of surrounding torches turned his loosened hair to a gleam of gold amongst the leather helms of Vortigern's men, showed the patch of sticky scarlet from a gash in his side.

And I can say that he wielded the sword like harnessed lightning. Or that he fought like a striking eagle, screaming out of the sky. But no words—perhaps not even a harper's—can match up to the reality of how he spun and slashed and beat back attack after attack from the surrounding men, all the while with his own death plain in his gaze.

All around him were littered the bodies of those who had fallen to his blade, leaking their blood out onto the soil, some crying and dragging their own spilled guts behind as they tried to crawl away; that is one part of battle the harpers do not often sing.

Vortigern stood back and to one side, hurling curses at his own men, urging them onward, to attack, to kill the prisoner where he stood that the walls might stand. And they tried, the Goddess knew they tried, tripping over the bodies of the fallen, slipping and sliding in spilled blood.

One man here or there would get close enough to strike a blow, to open another gash in Merlin's arm or his side. But then Merlin's blade would spin and lash out, deadly-swift as a biting snake, and another of Vortigern's warriors would fall.

His death was inevitable, of that there could be no mistake. For every man he killed, another pressed forward to take the fallen man's place, and sooner or later he would be too slow to strike away one of their blows. But he would take twenty and more with him into Annwn, the Lord of the Dead's, great feasting hall.

I made no sound; I would swear to it. I made no sound, nor even moved from where I stood, pressed against the fortress's outer wall. And yet Merlin's head came up, and his eyes looked

straight into mine.

Only for an instant, no more than a split heartbeat of time.

And yet it was too much. Or enough. Enough to make him falter and lose the rhythm of parry and thrust with his sword, enough to form a crack in his guard.

A hard swing from an attacker's blade made him stagger, momentarily off balance, and I saw another of Vortigern's men close in, like a wolf scenting the kill, his sword upraised.

What had I planned when I left Bron? Scarcely anything, really. Nothing of use, now.

I had expected to find Merlin bound and in chains, awaiting the triple death of drowning, strangling, and the knife. And I had thought, in Bron's absence, that I might come forward myself and claim knowledge of the rites. Then stall and spin out the performance until—the Goddess willing—Bron could lead my father's men over the unguarded walls.

Now, in the instant Merlin faced his death—a death I had brought him for the second time, I had no time for plans, nor even for thought.

I screamed, long and piercing and loud, loud enough to be heard even above the roar and shouts of the warriors.

A dozen and more heads turned to me. Several more of the warriors took a few steps towards me, faces angry, blades drawn.

But the killing blow aimed at Merlin never fell. And I would have screamed again, and gone on until the entire crowd's attention was drawn to me, if it bought Merlin a few precious seconds more. I had no chance.

As though my thought had in that instant crackled between us, Merlin leapt forward, straight into the crowd of his attackers. I heard a voice cry out, and realized only a moment later that it had been my own. My vision shivered at the edges, and I expected at every moment to see him fall under strikes from a dozen and more swords.

But he never did. He moved like a bright jet of flame, like a burning brand through the sea of Vortigern's warriors, ducking, weaving, striking out and parrying blows with his sword, spinning and weaving under their guard. My teeth were clenched to keep from screaming again. But he fought in a blur of movement, and with such swift savagery that I would scarce have had time to draw breath before he had carved out a path to the other side of the crowd where Vortigern stood. I believe it was shock, as much as anything, that made Vortigern's men stand back for another frozen heartbeat of time. Only a moment, but time enough for Merlin to seize hold of Vortigern and drag him backwards, the blade of his sword at Vortigern's throat.

“Stop!” The shouted command rose above the roar of the crowd. “Stop or he dies!”

Vortigern's hands had come up, reflexively, to grasp at the still-dripping blade that bit into his neck.

Merlin must have tightened his hold enough to pierce the skin, though, for a fresh trickle of red slid down to stain the fur-trimmed collar of Vortigern's cloak. Vortigern went still, eyes contracting, lips drawing back over his teeth in the snarl of a wolf at bay.

"Do as he says!"

The warriors might have rushed him, even still, and even at the cost of Vortigern's life. Merlin was but one man, and had shamed and slain their comrades. And many of those assembled had small love for Vortigern after his last few months of rule.

But in the moment's hesitation, the moment's stillness that Vortigern's order had won, Merlin leapt backwards, onto the platform of an upturned and half-rotted frame of a wagon that had stood behind him at the edge of the practice yard.

It was an astonishing feat; I measured it afterwards and found the wagon to be more than half the height of a well-grown man, and Merlin was dragging Vortigern's weight up with him, besides. And yet he kept his footing, kept his hold on Vortigern and the hilt of his stolen sword.

"Keep back!" Merlin's face glistened in the flickering torchlight with sweat and spatters of blood. His unbruised eye looked bleak and shadowed, and his mouth was set in a hard, grim line. That look I had seen before, many times, on the faces of those in my care: the look of a man suffering almost unbearable pain. And I wondered of a sudden what he saw when he looked at the field of the dead and dying: children growing up fatherless, wives weeping for the men he had just killed?

Still, his voice rang out again, a furious shout, biting as steel. "Any man comes a step nearer, and your king's head rolls at your feet!"

One or two of the warriors had taken a step nearer, but stilled at that, hovering undecided a handful of paces from the wagon's rim, blades upraised.

The battle hunger of the crowd was almost palpable, a buzzing, crackling presence that made itself known in eager faces and clenched hands, in uneasily shifting feet and warm, panting breath. A thousand tiny signs that in an instant, Merlin's hold on the warriors could snap and they could close in for the kill.

"Listen!" His voice sounded hoarse with shouting, but his balance on the unstable platform of the wagon bed never faltered, no more than his grip on the sword at Vortigern's throat. "Listen to me! Your druids have claimed that my blood will make the building stones of this place stand. But I tell you now, that is a lie!"

A hiss, a sullen, angry mutter went round the crowd at that, and one or two more of the warriors shifted from foot to foot where they stood. Merlin's voice cut off the murmur of sound.

"Where is he? Where is the druid now, who claimed the soil here must needs be sprinkled with

the blood of a fatherless child?"

Another stir of voices and shifting movement went round the crowd of fighting men—but a different one, this time. From where I stood, pressed back in the shadows of the fort's outer wall, I thought that for the first moment a thread of doubt, fine as a hair, might have wound its way through the furious lust for blood.

In the glow of torches, Merlin's eyes gleamed almost red, and the smokey firelight gilded his face like the hammered metal face guard of some warrior of old, made an aureole of his wheat colored hair. "Vortigern's druid is not here. But I am! And I will tell you why these towers fall time and time again! Dig!" He made a violent stab with his free hand towards the ground where the fighting men stood. "Dig, I tell you! Dig down into the soil if you would know the reason no building walls will stand. Dig. Or"—he tightened his hold on Vortigern—"Or your king dies now!"

There was a moment, another heartbeat of time where the armed and helmeted warriors, the very currents of air that whipped the torches and blew back Merlin's hair seemed to still, waiting. And then, slowly, doubtfully, and with more than one sullen, wary glance, the men-at-arms started to dig. With their sword blades—for they had nothing else at first—they stabbed and scrabbled at the soil.

A few of the men stumped off, after a short while of this, to drag out proper shovels and picks, and began shifting and hauling the dirt away with those. Merlin stood throughout on the upturned wagon, stance sure, gaze unfaltering; Vortigern, still pinned in his grasp, was as one turned to stone, his breaths coming in short, panting huffs.

And I stood frozen as well, the outer wall of the fortress solid and rough at my back, strangely grateful for the pain of a dozen and more scratches and bruises from the journey here that now made themselves felt. The pain gave me an anchor, a hard core of glowing ember that kept the fury in my chest from burning away to powdered ash.

All the time I had labored, this last day and more, trying to win Merlin's trust, and it had not occurred to me—not even once—that he might not be worthy of mine.

I had seen, as he did, the soil of the fortress stained red with blood. But it might as easily be my father's men bleeding their lives away into Dinas Ffareon's muddied ground. Would be, when Vortigern's warriors found the beams and bracing of the tunnel beneath their feet, and were forewarned and ready when my father's men attacked with Bron.

Merlin's head came up with a jerk and turned, as though the thought had been an arrow strike, tugging his gaze to my patch of shadow. For an endless instant, his eyes looked into mine, twin pools of gleaming torchlight in the copper and gold mask of his bruised face.

And then he turned back to the laboring men. "Look down!" His voice rang out again, a hoarse war cry over their grunts and the scrape and thud of shovels biting into the earth. "Look down into the pit you've dug. You will find a pool. A pool of water beneath the soil here."

The crowd stirred again, and then a voice came out of the deepening pit in the ground, "He's right." And then—a second voice, this time: "He's right! There's water here!"

The muscles of Merlin's throat contracted as he swallowed. Both throat and chest were streaked with tracks of drying sweat, silver, as though the gold warrior's face guard had begun to melt and run. "A pool lies deep within that soil!" he shouted. "And beneath and within that pool lie two dragons. One white, the other red. You—you have all heard the tales. You know I speak true. Llud of the Silver Hand buried two dragons, beneath the ground, in the days before the rocks themselves began keeping time. I tell you these dragons—these two warring dragons—lie here, beneath Dinas Ffareon! It is they who cause the tower walls to fall with their eternal struggles. One white dragon, for the Saxon hordes. One red dragon, the dragon of Uther, Britain's rightful king. And I tell you now, dig up these dragons, let them crawl from the soil and have their final battle here, before our eyes! I swear to you, the red dragon—Uther Pendragon's dragon—will triumph in the end!"

I do not know, of a truth, whether they would have believed him or no. One thing to tell a harper's tale to a man when he lies wounded in the depths of fear and pain. Another to ask him to believe the story true, and on the words of a man who has battled and slaughtered his comrades.

And yet Merlin had struck among them like a thunder storm, battled single-handed and slain a dozen and more of Vortigern's finest warriors. If anyone could talk of wonders and be believed, it was surely he, backlit by the glow of torchlight, body bruised and bloodied and yet still painted with the blue woad that had guarded warriors from days long passed into story.

Vortigern's men held back, uncertain, looking wildly from one to the other, faces awed and suspicious and angry by turns in the patched shadows of moon and torchlight.

From the stables at the far side of the fortress, one of the horses whickered, low and nervous. And then, as the very air seemed to thicken and press in all around, my father's men erupted from all sides: screaming through the unguarded gate, boiling over the half-completed northern wall. A tide of armed and shouting men waving spears and axes and swords.

* * *

FIGHTING MEN are full of the glories of war, of their own deeds of courage, of enemies hacked down and stripped for their wealth in arms or gold. This I know, though: only a fool could stand in the thick of battle and be entirely without fear.

I remember the noise most of all, the roaring war cries of the men, the clang and clash of blades, the terrified screams and pounding hooves of the horses in the stables.

And yet ... and yet I could, that day, begin to see just a little of what the harpers had sung. Vortigern's men were utterly unprepared, off balance and weakened already by the fight with Merlin. My father's men tore into them like wolves savaging sheep. Many fell, bleeding, to the ground, many more fled into the night, through the open gate or over the unfinished wall.

And there was a fierce, terrible beauty to it all. I stood shivering, sickened, fear a metallic taste in my mouth. And yet I could not tear my gaze away.

I had lost sight of Merlin; strain as I might, I could not see his wheat-blond hair among the crowd of fighting men, nor the darker head of Vortigern. But I saw Bron amongst the throng of heaving, grunting bodies. He was wielding a sword with slashing blows, his face fixed in the grin of battle, remaining eye alight. More than one man fell to his blade.

I saw my father, his war cloak streaming behind him, the scarlet dragon blazoned on his shield. And I saw my brother. Arthur, the brother I scarcely knew, wielding a sword that looked too heavy by far for a boy of fourteen. And yet he used it well, and his square-cut face was grim but fearless as he hacked and slashed at a warrior twice his size.

I had frozen, watching Arthur, and the scene had gone distant. Almost as though I watched the battle in Gamma's scrying bowl. And then, swift as an adder's bite, one of Vortigern's men reared up before me, huge and powerful, sword upraised to deliver a killing blow.

What does one think, in that moment of facing death? In a tale, I might have seen Gamma's face, or even my mother, standing before me. Or at least seen glimpses from my life pass like visions before my eyes.

I felt nothing, though; my mind was too blank even for fear.

And then, before I had even gathered breath enough to cry out, the bloodied point of a sword ripped through the man's belly, and he fell instead at my feet.

Merlin tore his blade free, stepped over the body, and caught hold of my arm, dragging me back from the worst of the fighting, shielding my body with his.

If I had been too numb for fear before, the numbness was shattered now. My whole body started to shake, and I clung to him, slippery with blood and sweat as he was, before I could push him away.

"Go!" I had to shout to be heard over the noise. "Go, I'm all right. Go back to where the

men have need of you!"

Merlin shook his head, still gripping my arms. "It's over."

He was right.

Vortigern's men were dead, or running for their lives, or kneeling captive on the ground, at the point of my father's men's swords.

I felt something wet on my face, and when I wiped it with the back of my hand, it came away sticky red. Spattered blood from the man Merlin had killed; he had been that close to me, as close as that to ending my life with his sword.

I looked up at him. "Vortigern?"

"Gone. I had him," Merlin said. "And then I saw the man come towards you—about to strike, and—I let Vortigern go. If I'd taken the time even to kill him I'd not have gotten to you in time." I saw Merlin swallow and put my hand up to stop him saying any more. Though, truly, I do not know what I would have said.

I had no chance, though, no chance in any case. My father, Uther the Pendragon, was there, huge in his mail armor and bloodied war cloak, snatching me up in an embrace hard enough to bruise my ribs.

"Well done, girl, well done!"

My father I scarcely knew, either, no more than my brother Arthur. Before the spring, I had not seen him since I was four years old. And it was strange, passing strange, to be caught now in his embrace, to smell the sweat and blood on his skin, and see the network of fine lines about the corners of his eyes.

He was a big man, and a handsome one. Very like Arthur, truth be told, with blue eyes set deep in a square, weathered face where age was just beginning to loosen the skin over the bold, prominent bones.

"You're a daughter any man might be proud of, and no mistake!" Uther Pendragon swung me round in a circle. "Brave as a lad, that's my girl. Got the devils on the run, now. Only thing is, looks like Vortigern got away. But he'll not get far. We'll soon hunt him down." He looked from me to Merlin, still standing beside us, bruised and blood-spattered as my father. "And who is—"

And then he stopped. Stopped and set me down and strode across the fortress to where my brother Arthur was holding a fold of cloth pressed to the bloodied gash in his arm. "It's nothing," I heard Arthur say, and my father nodded and inspected the wound, then rewrapped it in a cleaner strip of cloth he tore from his own cloak.

I watched them.

And thought of the many, many threads of which fate was woven.

It should have angered me, perhaps. And yet, I stood and looked across the bloodied field of battle at my father's gray head bent to Arthur's golden fair one. And I could understand, at least a bit. A warrior of my father's ilk wanted a boy, a son to ride into battle at his side. The way of the world, the way Uther Pendragon was made, and it, too, I could hate or no without ever making it untrue.

"He does love you." Merlin stood beside me, still. Had followed my gaze to where Uther Pendragon stood with his son.

"He does," I said. "Perhaps he always did. But not quite enough."

And, oddly, there was in that a strange, backward sort of peace.

I moistened my lips and tasted blood. And realized that Merlin and I were alone, standing and facing each other beneath one of the flickering torches on the edge of the battle's aftermath.

I looked up at him. "I doubted you." My whole body was shaking, still, but the words forced themselves from my throat. "Just for one moment, no more than that. But when you told Vortigern's men to dig. Just for an instant, I thought you were going to betray us all."

"I know." Merlin's face looked the mirror of my own exhaustion, the eye that was not swollen shut hollow and rimmed with red. But then a quick, wry smile touched the edges of his mouth. "Did you think I would blame you for it? I asked myself whether I could expect a girl idiot enough to come back to Vortigern's fort to have wit enough to believe my sworn word. The answer came up: No, I could not."

I laughed. On the edge of that bloodstained field, I laughed, and felt the painful constriction in my chest start to ease a fraction of a bit. "I'm sorry for it, all the same."

Merlin reached down and lightly wiped a smear of blood from my cheek with his thumb. His face was grave once more. "I'm sorry, as well. Sorry you had to see that. Sorry I could not have spared you this."

Now, as the first waves of shock ebbed away, the sounds of the battle's aftermath began to filter in to my ears: moans from the dying, shouts from the victors, and the tramp of booted feet as the looting began. Vortigern's stores of grain and ale were dragged out from storage. And from somewhere I heard a woman's scream; my father's warriors must have found the slave girls in whatever bolt hole they had been hiding, as well.

I could see in Merlin's gaze a reflection of the morning we had spent together, in the tunnel beneath the hill where we stood now. So much had passed between us, and yet now the memory of it made me feel uncertain, almost, and strangely shy.

I looked down at the ground, then back up at him and said, "You'll be known now as a great

enchanter. One who calls forth dragons from the soil."

He looked down at the sword still clenched tight in one hand, and the bleak look crossed his gaze once more and a shudder went through his frame. "My days as a warrior are at any rate done, for good and all."

His face was shuttered, remote, as though he had stepped back behind a wall to a place I could not reach him. And I felt a hollowness spreading through me as it occurred to me that he might mean that for a goodbye.

But then our eyes met, and I realized that he looked as uncertain as I felt. "I would not—I would not wish to hold you to anything we may have said before. Any promises we made. I"—his eyes were grave—"it seems like a dream, now. I would not wish you to tie yourself—"

I stopped him. "What do you See"—my voice was fierce—"what do you See when you look at me? For tomorrow, I mean. Not days or years from now. If you truly now live time backward, what do you see for me—and for you—tonight, and tomorrow's morning?"

Merlin let out a long, slow breath. And then he smiled, one sided. "If the past is gone, I suppose I can think of worse things for Merlin to be than 'enchanter.' Mayhap ... your father has need of such a one?"

I felt myself smiling as well. "Mayhap he has."

He looked back, then, back at the body of the man he had killed in my defense. He swallowed again. "I—I could not let him kill you." His jaw clenched. "Gods, I could not. Even though it meant letting Vortigern go free. And yet if I had—"

If he had, I would have escaped the weight of the future that he had seen, that Gamma had shown me. The ever-narrowing path I must walk for Britain's sake.

I shook my head. And then I reached out and traced the bruises on his face just lightly, with the very tips of my fingers. He closed his eyes at my touch, just for a moment, then took my wrist and held it to his lips, as before.

My fingers twined themselves, almost of their own accord, in the wheat-blond hair, flecked, now, with speckles of dried blood. "I've had today." My voice was a whisper, scarce more. "I have today. And I have at least one morrow. Perhaps the promise of one tomorrow in the sunlight is all any of us can ask for or need."

DM1

Prefatory Note by the Author

If this Discourse appear too long to be read at once, it may be divided into six Parts: and, in the first, will be found various considerations touching the Sciences; in the second, the principal rules of the Method which the Author has discovered, in the third, certain of the rules of Morals which he has deduced from this Method; in the fourth, the reasonings by which he establishes the existence of God and of the Human Soul, which are the foundations of his Metaphysic; in the fifth, the order of the Physical questions which he has investigated, and, in particular, the explication of the motion of the heart and of some other difficulties pertaining to Medicine, as also the difference between the soul of man and that of the brutes; and, in the last, what the Author believes to be required in order to greater advancement in the investigation of Nature than has yet been made, with the reasons that have induced him to write.

Part

Good sense is, of all things among men, the most equally distributed; for every one thinks himself so abundantly provided with it, that those even who are the most difficult to satisfy in everything else, do not usually desire a larger measure of this quality than they already possess. And in this it is not likely that all are mistaken; the conviction is rather to be held as testifying that the power of judging aright and of distinguishing truth from error, which is properly what is called good sense or reason, is by nature equal in all men; and that the diversity of our opinions, consequently, does not arise from some being endowed with a larger share of reason than others, but solely from this, that we conduct our thoughts along different ways, and do not fix our attention on the same objects. For to be possessed of a vigorous mind is not enough; the prime requisite is rightly to apply it. The greatest minds, as they are capable of the highest excellences, are open likewise to the greatest aberrations; and those who travel very slowly may yet make far greater progress, provided they keep always to the straight road, than those who, while they run, forsake it.

For myself, I have never fancied my mind to be in any respect more perfect than those of the generality; on the contrary, I have often wished that I were equal to some others in promptitude of thought, or in clearness and distinctness of imagination, or in fullness and readiness of memory. And besides these, I know of no other qualities that contribute to the perfection of the mind; for as

to the reason or sense, inasmuch as it is that alone which constitutes us men, and distinguishes us from the brutes, I am disposed to believe that it is to be found complete in each individual; and on this point to adopt the common opinion of philosophers, who say that the difference of greater and less holds only among the accidents, and not among the forms or natures of individuals of the same species.

I will not hesitate, however, to avow my belief that it has been my singular good fortune to have very early in life fallen in with certain tracks which have conducted me to considerations and maxims, of which I have formed a method that gives me the means, as I think, of gradually augmenting my knowledge, and of raising it by little and little to the highest point which the mediocrity of my talents and the brief duration of my life will permit me to reach. For I have already reaped from it such fruits that, although I have been accustomed to think lowly enough of myself, and although when I look with the eye of a philosopher at the varied courses and pursuits of mankind at large, I find scarcely one which does not appear in vain and useless, I nevertheless derive the highest satisfaction from the progress I conceive myself to have already made in the search after truth, and cannot help entertaining such expectations of the future as to believe that if, among the occupations of men as men, there is any one really excellent and important, it is that which I have chosen.

After all, it is possible I may be mistaken; and it is but a little copper and glass, perhaps, that I take for gold and diamonds. I know how very liable we are to delusion in what relates to ourselves, and also how much the judgments of our friends are to be suspected when given in our favor. But I shall endeavour in this discourse to describe the paths I have followed, and to delineate my life as in a picture, in order that each one may also be able to judge of them for himself, and that in the general opinion entertained of them, as gathered from current report, I myself may have a new help towards instruction to be added to those I have been in the habit of employing.

My present design, then, is not to teach the method which each ought to follow for the right conduct of his reason, but solely to describe the way in which I have endeavoured to conduct my own. They who set themselves to give precepts must of course regard themselves as possessed of greater skill than those to whom they prescribe; and if they err in the slightest particular, they subject themselves to censure. But as this tract is put forth merely as a history, or, if you will, as a tale, in which, amid some examples worthy of imitation, there will be found, perhaps, as many more which it were advisable not to follow, I hope it will prove useful to some without being hurtful to any, and that

my openness will find some favor with all.

From my childhood, I have been familiar with letters; and as I was given to believe that by their help a clear and certain knowledge of all that is useful in life might be acquired, I was ardently desirous of instruction. But as soon as I had finished the entire course of study, at the close of which it is customary to be admitted into the order of the learned, I completely changed my opinion. For I found myself involved in so many doubts and errors, that I was convinced I had advanced no farther in all my attempts at learning, than the discovery at every turn of my own ignorance. And yet I was studying in one of the most celebrated schools in Europe, in which I thought there must be learned men, if such were anywhere to be found. I had been taught all that others learned there; and not contented with the sciences actually taught us, I had, in addition, read all the books that had fallen into my hands, treating of such branches as are esteemed the most curious and rare. I knew the judgment which others had formed of me; and I did not find that I was considered inferior to my fellows, although there were among them some who were already marked out to fill the places of our instructors. And, in fine, our age appeared to me as flourishing, and as fertile in powerful minds as any preceding one. I was thus led to take the liberty of judging of all other men by myself, and of concluding that there was no science in existence that was of such a nature as I had previously been given to believe.

I still continued, however, to hold in esteem the studies of the schools. I was aware that the languages taught in them are necessary to the understanding of the writings of the ancients; that the grace of fable stirs the mind; that the memorable deeds of history elevate it; and, if read with discretion, aid in forming the judgment; that the perusal of all excellent books is, as it were, to interview with the noblest men of past ages, who have written them, and even a studied interview, in which are discovered to us only their choicest thoughts; that eloquence has incomparable force and beauty; that poesy has its ravishing graces and delights; that in the mathematics there are many refined discoveries eminently suited to gratify the inquisitive, as well as further all the arts and lessen the labour of man; that numerous highly useful precepts and exhortations to virtue are contained in treatises on morals; that theology points out the path to heaven; that philosophy affords the means of discoursing with an appearance of truth on all matters, and commands the admiration of the more simple; that jurisprudence, medicine, and the other sciences, secure for their cultivators honours and riches; and, in fine, that it is useful to bestow some attention upon all, even upon those abounding the most in superstition and error, that we may be in a position to determine their real value, and guard against being deceived.

But I believed that I had already given sufficient time to languages, and likewise to the reading of the writings of the ancients, to their histories and fables. For to hold converse with those of other ages and to travel, are almost the same thing. It is useful to know something of the manners of different nations, that we may be enabled to form a more correct judgment regarding our own, and be prevented from thinking that everything contrary to our customs is ridiculous and irrational, a conclusion usually come to by those whose experience has been limited to their own country. On the other hand, when too much time is occupied in travelling, we become strangers to our native country; and the over curious in the customs of the past are generally ignorant of those of the present. Besides, fictitious narratives lead us to imagine the possibility of many events that are impossible; and even the most faithful histories, if they do not wholly misrepresent matters, or exaggerate their importance to render the account of them more worthy of perusal, omit, at least, almost always the meanest and least striking of the attendant circumstances; hence it happens that the remainder does not represent the truth, and that such as regulate their conduct by examples drawn from this source, are apt to fall into the extravagances of the knight-errants of romance, and to entertain projects that exceed their powers.

I esteemed eloquence highly, and was in raptures with poesy; but I thought that both were gifts of nature rather than fruits of study. Those in whom the faculty of reason is predominant, and who most skillfully dispose their thoughts with a view to render them clear and intelligible, are always the best able to persuade others of the truth of what they lay down, though they should speak only in the language of Lower Brittany, and be wholly ignorant of the rules of rhetoric; and those whose minds are stored with the most agreeable fancies, and who can give expression to them with the greatest embellishment and harmony, are still the best poets, though unacquainted with the art of poetry.

I was especially delighted with the mathematics, on account of the certitude and evidence of their reasonings; but I had not as yet a precise knowledge of their true use; and thinking that they but contributed to the advancement of the mechanical arts, I was astonished that foundations, so strong and solid, should have had no loftier superstructure reared on them. On the other hand, I compared the disquisitions of the ancient moralists to very towering and magnificent palaces with no better foundation than sand and mud: they laud the virtues very highly, and exhibit them as estimable far above anything on earth; but they give us no adequate criterion of virtue, and frequently that which they designate with so fine a name is but apathy, or pride, or despair, or parricide.

I revered our theology, and aspired as much as any one to reach heaven: but being given assuredly to understand that the way is not less open to the most ignorant than to the most learned, and that the revealed truths which lead to heaven are above our comprehension, I did not presume to subject them to the impotency of my reason; and I thought that in order competently to undertake their examination, there was need of some special help from heaven, and of being more than man.

Of philosophy I will say nothing, except that when I saw that it had been cultivated for many ages by the most distinguished men, and that yet there is not a single matter within its sphere which is not still in dispute, and nothing, therefore, which is above doubt, I did not presume to anticipate that my success would be greater in it than that of others; and further, when I considered the number of conflicting opinions touching a single matter that may be upheld by learned men, while there can be but one true, I reckoned as well-nigh false all that was only probable.

As to the other sciences, inasmuch as these borrow their principles from philosophy, I judged that no solid superstructures could be reared on foundations so infirm; and neither the honour nor the gain held out by them was sufficient to determine me to their cultivation: for I was not, thank Heaven, in a condition which compelled me to make merchandise of science for the bettering of my fortune; and though I might not profess to scorn glory as a cynic, I yet made very slight account of that honour which I hoped to acquire only through fictitious titles. And, in fine, of false sciences I thought I knew the worth sufficiently to escape being deceived by the professions of an alchemist, the predictions of an astrologer, the impostures of a magician, or by the artifices and boasting of any of those who profess to know things of which they are ignorant.

For these reasons, as soon as my age permitted me to pass from under the control of my instructors, I entirely abandoned the study of letters, and resolved no longer to seek any other science than the knowledge of myself, or of the great book of the world. I spent the remainder of my youth in travelling, in visiting courts and armies, in holding intercourse with men of different dispositions and ranks, in collecting varied experience, in proving myself in the different situations into which fortune threw me, and, above all, in making such reflection on the matter of my experience as to secure my improvement. For it occurred to me that I should find much more truth in the reasonings of each individual with reference to the affairs in which he is personally interested, and the issue of which must presently punish him if he has judged amiss, than in those conducted by a man of letters in his study, regarding speculative matters that are of no practical moment, and followed by no

consequences to himself, farther, perhaps, than that they foster his vanity the better the more remote they are from common sense; requiring, as they must in this case, the exercise of greater ingenuity and art to render them probable. In addition, I had always a most earnest desire to know how to distinguish the true from the false, in order that I might be able clearly to discriminate the right path in life, and proceed in it with confidence.

It is true that, while busied only in considering the manners of other men, I found here, too, scarce any ground for settled conviction, and remarked hardly less contradiction among them than in the opinions of the philosophers. So that the greatest advantage I derived from the study consisted in this, that, observing many things which, however extravagant and ridiculous to our apprehension, are yet by common consent received and approved by other great nations, I learned to entertain too decided a belief in regard to nothing of the truth of which I had been persuaded merely by example and custom; and thus I gradually extricated myself from many errors powerful enough to darken our natural intelligence, and incapacitate us in great measure from listening to reason. But after I had been occupied several years in thus studying the book of the world, and in essaying to gather some experience, I at length resolved to make myself an object of study, and to employ all the powers of my mind in choosing the paths I ought to follow, an undertaking which was accompanied with greater success than it would have been had I never quitted my country or my books.

Part II

I was then in Germany, attracted thither by the wars in that country, which have not yet been brought to a termination; and as I was returning to the army from the coronation of the emperor, the setting in of winter arrested me in a locality where, as I found no society to interest me, and was besides fortunately undisturbed by any cares or passions, I remained the whole day in seclusion, with full opportunity to occupy my attention with my own thoughts. Of these one of the very first that occurred to me was, that there is seldom so much perfection in works composed of many separate parts, upon which different hands had been employed, as in those completed by a single master. Thus it is observable that the buildings which a single architect has planned and executed, are generally more elegant and commodious than those which several have attempted to improve, by making old walls serve for purposes for which they were not originally built. Thus also, those ancient cities which, from being at first only villages, have become, in course of time, large towns, are usually but ill laid out compared with the regularity constructed towns which a professional architect has freely planned on an open plain; so that although the several buildings of the former may often equal or surpass in beauty those of the latter, yet when one observes their indiscriminate

juxtaposition, there a large one and here a small, and the consequent crookedness and irregularity of the streets, one is disposed to allege that chance rather than any human will guided by reason must have led to such an arrangement. And if we consider that nevertheless there have been at all times certain officers whose duty it was to see that private buildings contributed to public ornament, the difficulty of reaching high perfection with but the materials of others to operate on, will be readily acknowledged. In the same way I fancied that those nations which, starting from a semi-barbarous state and advancing to civilization by slow degrees, have had their laws successively determined, and, as it were, forced upon them simply by experience of the hurtfulness of particular crimes and disputes, would by this process come to be possessed of less perfect institutions than those which, from the commencement of their association as communities, have followed the appointments of some wise legislator. It is thus quite certain that the constitution of the true religion, the ordinances of which are derived from God, must be incomparably superior to that of every other. And, to speak of human affairs, I believe that the pre-eminence of Sparta was due not to the goodness of each of its laws in particular, for many of these were very strange, and even opposed to good morals, but to the circumstance that, originated by a single individual, they all tended to a single end. In the same way I thought that the sciences contained in books (such of them at least as are made up of probable reasonings, without demonstrations), composed as they are of the opinions of many different individuals massed together, are farther removed from truth than the simple inferences which a man of good sense using his natural and unprejudiced judgment draws respecting the matters of his experience. And because we have all to pass through a state of infancy to manhood, and have been of necessity, for a length of time, governed by our desires and preceptors (whose dictates were frequently conflicting, while neither perhaps always counselled us for the best), I farther concluded that it is almost impossible that our judgments can be so correct or solid as they would have been, had our reason been mature from the moment of our birth, and had we always been guided by it alone.

It is true, however, that it is not customary to pull down all the houses of a town with the single design of rebuilding them differently, and thereby rendering the streets more handsome; but it often happens that a private individual takes down his own with the view of erecting it anew, and that people are even sometimes constrained to this when their houses are in danger of falling from age, or when the foundations are insecure. With this before me by way of example, I was persuaded that it would indeed be preposterous for a private individual to think of reforming a state by fundamentally changing it throughout, and overturning it in order to set it up amended; and the same I thought was true of any similar project for reforming the body of the sciences, or the order

of teaching them established in the schools: but as for the opinions which up to that time I had embraced, I thought that I could not do better than resolve at once to sweep them wholly away, that I might afterwards be in a position to admit either others more correct, or even perhaps the same when they had undergone the scrutiny of reason. I firmly believed that in this way I should much better succeed in the conduct of my life, than if I built only upon old foundations, and leaned upon principles which, in my youth, I had taken upon trust. For although I recognized various difficulties in this undertaking, these were not, however, without remedy, nor once to be compared with such as attend the slightest reformation in public affairs. Large bodies, if once overthrown, are with great difficulty set up again, or even kept erect when once seriously shaken, and the fall of such is always disastrous. Then if there are any imperfections in the constitutions of states (and that many such exist the diversity of constitutions is alone sufficient to assure us), custom has without doubt materially smoothed their inconveniences, and has even managed to steer altogether clear of, or insensibly corrected a number which sagacity could not have provided against with equal effect; and, in fine, the defects are almost always more tolerable than the change necessary for their removal; in the same manner that highways which wind among mountains, by being much frequented, become gradually so smooth and commodious, that it is much better to follow them than to seek a straighter path by climbing over the tops of rocks and descending to the bottoms of precipices.

Hence it is that I cannot in any degree approve of those restless and busy meddlers who, called neither by birth nor fortune to take part in the management of public affairs, are yet always projecting reforms; and if I thought that this tract contained aught which might justify the suspicion that I was a victim of such folly, I would by no means permit its publication. I have never contemplated anything higher than the reformation of my own opinions, and basing them on a foundation wholly my own. And although my own satisfaction with my work has led me to present here a draft of it, I do not by any means therefore recommend to every one else to make a similar attempt. Those whom God has endowed with a larger measure of genius will entertain, perhaps, designs still more exalted; but for the many I am much afraid lest even the present undertaking be more than they can safely venture to imitate. The single design to strip one's self of all past beliefs is one that ought not to be taken by every one. The majority of men is composed of two classes, for neither of which would this be at all a befitting resolution: in the first place, of those who with more than a due confidence in their own powers, are precipitate in their judgments and want the patience requisite for orderly and circumspect thinking; whence it happens, that if men of this class once take the liberty to doubt of their accustomed opinions, and quit the beaten highway, they will never

be able to thread the byway that would lead them by a shorter course, and will lose themselves and continue to wander for life; in the second place, of those who, possessed of sufficient sense or modesty to determine that there are others who excel them in the power of discriminating between truth and error, and by whom they may be instructed, ought rather to content themselves with the opinions of such than trust for more correct to their own reason.

For my own part, I should doubtless have belonged to the latter class, had I received instruction from but one master, or had I never known the diversities of opinion that from time immemorial have prevailed among men of the greatest learning. But I had become aware, even so early as during my college life, that no opinion, however absurd and incredible, can be imagined, which has not been maintained by some one of the philosophers; and afterwards in the course of my travels I remarked that all those whose opinions are decidedly repugnant to ours are not in that account barbarians and savages, but on the contrary that many of these nations make an equally good, if not better, use of their reason than we do. I took into account also the very different character which a person brought up from infancy in France or Germany exhibits, from that which, with the same mind originally, this individual would have possessed had he lived always among the Chinese or with savages, and the circumstance that in dress itself the fashion which pleased us ten years ago, and which may again, perhaps, be received into favor before ten years have gone, appears to us at this moment extravagant and ridiculous. I was thus led to infer that the ground of our opinions is far more custom and example than any certain knowledge. And, finally, although such be the ground of our opinions, I remarked that a plurality of suffrages is no guarantee of truth where it is at all of difficult discovery, as in such cases it is much more likely that it will be found by one than by many. I could, however, select from the crowd no one whose opinions seemed worthy of preference, and thus I found myself constrained, as it were, to use my own reason in the conduct of my life.

But like one walking alone and in the dark, I resolved to proceed so slowly and with such circumspection, that if I did not advance far, I would at least guard against falling. I did not even choose to dismiss summarily any of the opinions that had crept into my belief without having been introduced by reason, but first of all took sufficient time carefully to satisfy myself of the general nature of the task I was setting myself, and ascertain the true method by which to arrive at the knowledge of whatever lay within the compass of my powers.

Among the branches of philosophy, I had, at an earlier period, given some attention to logic, and

among those of the mathematics to geometrical analysis and algebra, – three arts or sciences which ought, as I conceived, to contribute something to my design. But, on examination, I found that, as for logic, its syllogisms and the majority of its other precepts are of avail – rather in the communication of what we already know, or even as the art of Lully, in speaking without judgment of things of which we are ignorant, than in the investigation of the unknown; and although this science contains indeed a number of correct and very excellent precepts, there are, nevertheless, so many others, and these either injurious or superfluous, mingled with the former, that it is almost quite as difficult to effect a severance of the true from the false as it is to extract a Diana or a Minerva from a rough block of marble. Then as to the analysis of the ancients and the algebra of the moderns, besides that they embrace only matters highly abstract, and, to appearance, of no use, the former is so exclusively restricted to the consideration of figures, that it can exercise the understanding only on condition of greatly fatiguing the imagination; and, in the latter, there is so complete a subjection to certain rules and formulas, that there results an art full of confusion and obscurity calculated to embarrass, instead of a science fitted to cultivate the mind. By these considerations I was induced to seek some other method which would comprise the advantages of the three and be exempt from their defects. And as a multitude of laws often only hampers justice, so that a state is best governed when, with few laws, these are rigidly administered; in like manner, instead of the great number of precepts of which logic is composed, I believed that the four following would prove perfectly sufficient for me, provided I took the firm and unwavering resolution never in a single instance to fail in observing them.

The first was never to accept anything for true which I did not clearly know to be such; that is to say, carefully to avoid precipitancy and prejudice, and to comprise nothing more in my judgement than what was presented to my mind so clearly and distinctly as to exclude all ground of doubt.

The second, to divide each of the difficulties under examination into as many parts as possible, and as might be necessary for its adequate solution.

The third, to conduct my thoughts in such order that, by commencing with objects the simplest and easiest to know, I might ascend by little and little, and, as it were, step by step, to the knowledge of the more complex; assigning in thought a certain order even to those objects which in their own nature do not stand in a relation of antecedence and sequence.

And the last, in every case to make enumerations so complete, and reviews so general, that I might

be assured that nothing was omitted.

The long chains of simple and easy reasonings by means of which geometers are accustomed to reach the conclusions of their most difficult demonstrations, had led me to imagine that all things, to the knowledge of which man is competent, are mutually connected in the same way, and that there is nothing so far removed from us as to be beyond our reach, or so hidden that we cannot discover it, provided only we abstain from accepting the false for the true, and always preserve in our thoughts the order necessary for the deduction of one truth from another. And I had little difficulty in determining the objects with which it was necessary to commence, for I was already persuaded that it must be with the simplest and easiest to know, and, considering that of all those who have hitherto sought truth in the sciences, the mathematicians alone have been able to find any demonstrations, that is, any certain and evident reasons, I did not doubt but that such must have been the rule of their investigations. I resolved to commence, therefore, with the examination of the simplest objects, not anticipating, however, from this any other advantage than that to be found in accustoming my mind to the love and nourishment of truth, and to a distaste for all such reasonings as were unsound. But I had no intention on that account of attempting to master all the particular sciences commonly denominated mathematics: but observing that, however different their objects, they all agree in considering only the various relations or proportions subsisting among those objects, I thought it best for my purpose to consider these proportions in the most general form possible, without referring them to any objects in particular, except such as would most facilitate the knowledge of them, and without by any means restricting them to these, that afterwards I might thus be the better able to apply them to every other class of objects to which they are legitimately applicable. Perceiving further, that in order to understand these relations I should sometimes have to consider them one by one and sometimes only to bear them in mind, or embrace them in the aggregate, I thought that, in order the better to consider them individually, I should view them as subsisting between straight lines, than which I could find no objects more simple, or capable of being more distinctly represented to my imagination and senses; and on the other hand, that in order to retain them in the memory or embrace an aggregate of many, I should express them by certain characters the briefest possible. In this way I believed that I could borrow all that was best both in geometrical analysis and in algebra, and correct all the defects of the one by help of the other.

And, in point of fact, the accurate observance of these few precepts gave me, I take the liberty of saying, such ease in unravelling all the questions embraced in these two sciences, that in the two or

three months I devoted to their examination, not only did I reach solutions of questions I had formerly deemed exceedingly difficult but even as regards questions of the solution of which I continued ignorant, I was enabled, as it appeared to me, to determine the means whereby, and the extent to which a solution was possible; results attributable to the circumstance that I commenced with the simplest and most general truths, and that thus each truth discovered was a rule available in the discovery of subsequent ones Nor in this perhaps shall I appear too vain, if it be considered that, as the truth on any particular point is one whoever apprehends the truth, knows all that on that point can be known. The child, for example, who has been instructed in the elements of arithmetic, and has made a particular addition, according to rule, may be assured that he has found, with respect to the sum of the numbers before him, and that in this instance is within the reach of human genius. Now, in conclusion, the method which teaches adherence to the true order, and an exact enumeration of all the conditions of the thing sought includes all that gives certitude to the rules of arithmetic.

But the chief ground of my satisfaction with thus method, was the assurance I had of thereby exercising my reason in all matters, if not with absolute perfection, at least with the greatest attainable by me: besides, I was conscious that by its use my mind was becoming gradually habituated to clearer and more distinct conceptions of its objects; and I hoped also, from not having restricted this method to any particular matter, to apply it to the difficulties of the other sciences, with not less success than to those of algebra. I should not, however, on this account have ventured at once on the examination of all the difficulties of the sciences which presented themselves to me, for this would have been contrary to the order prescribed in the method, but observing that the knowledge of such is dependent on principles borrowed from philosophy, in which I found nothing certain, I thought it necessary first of all to endeavour to establish its principles. .And because I observed, besides, that an inquiry of this kind was of all others of the greatest moment, and one in which precipitancy and anticipation in judgment were most to be dreaded, I thought that I ought not to approach it till I had reached a more mature age (being at that time but twenty-three), and had first of all employed much of my time in preparation for the work, as well by eradicating from my mind all the erroneous opinions I had up to that moment accepted, as by amassing variety of experience to afford materials for my reasonings, and by continually exercising myself in my chosen method with a view to increased skill in its application.

Part III

And finally, as it is not enough, before commencing to rebuild the house in which we live, that it

be pulled down, and materials and builders provided, or that we engage in the work ourselves, according to a plan which we have beforehand carefully drawn out, but as it is likewise necessary that we be furnished with some other house in which we may live commodiously during the operations, so that I might not remain irresolute in my actions, while my reason compelled me to suspend my judgement, and that I might not be prevented from living thenceforward in the greatest possible felicity, I formed a provisory code of morals, composed of three or four maxims, with which I am desirous to make you acquainted.

The first was to obey the laws and customs of my country, adhering firmly to the faith in which, by the grace of God, I had been educated from my childhood and regulating my conduct in every other matter according to the most moderate opinions, and the farthest removed from extremes, which should happen to be adopted in practice with general consent of the most judicious of those among whom I might be living. For as I had from that time begun to hold my own opinions for nought because I wished to subject them all to examination, I was convinced that I could not do better than follow in the meantime the opinions of the most judicious; and although there are some perhaps among the Persians and Chinese as judicious as among ourselves, expediency seemed to dictate that I should regulate my practice conformably to the opinions of those with whom I should have to live; and it appeared to me that, in order to ascertain the real opinions of such, I ought rather to take cognizance of what they practised than of what they said, not only because, in the corruption of our manners, there are few disposed to speak exactly as they believe, but also because very many are not aware of what it is that they really believe; for, as the act of mind by which a thing is believed is different from that by which we know that we believe it, the one act is often found without the other. Also, amid many opinions held in equal repute, I chose always the most moderate, as much for the reason that these are always the most convenient for practice, and probably the best (for all excess is generally vicious), as that, in the event of my falling into error, I might be at less distance from the truth than if, having chosen one of the extremes, it should turn out to be the other which I ought to have adopted. And I placed in the class of extremes especially all promises by which somewhat of our freedom is abridged; not that I disapproved of the laws which, to provide against the instability of men of feeble resolution, when what is sought to be accomplished is some good, permit engagements by vows and contracts binding the parties to persevere in it, or even, for the security of commerce, sanction similar engagements where the purpose sought to be realized is indifferent: but because I did not find anything on earth which was wholly superior to change, and because, for myself in particular, I hoped gradually to perfect my judgments, and not to suffer them to deteriorate, I would have deemed it a grave sin against good sense, if, for the reason that I

approved of something at a particular time, I therefore bound myself to hold it for good at a subsequent time, when perhaps it had ceased to be so, or I had ceased to esteem it such.

My second maxim was to be as firm and resolute in my actions as I was able, and not to adhere less steadfastly to the most doubtful opinions, when once adopted, than if they had been highly certain; imitating in this the example of travellers who, when they have lost their way in a forest, ought not to wander from side to side, far less remain in one place, but proceed constantly towards the same side in as straight a line as possible, without changing their direction for slight reasons, although perhaps it might be chance alone which at first determined the selection; for in this way, if they do not exactly reach the point they desire, they will come at least in the end to some place that will probably be preferable to the middle of a forest. In the same way, since in action it frequently happens that no delay is permissible, it is very certain that, when it is not in our power to determine what is true, we ought to act according to what is most probable; and even although we should not remark a greater probability in one opinion than in another, we ought notwithstanding to choose one or the other, and afterwards consider it, in so far as it relates to practice, as no longer dubious, but manifestly true and certain, since the reason by which our choice has been determined is itself possessed of these qualities. This principle was sufficient thenceforward to rid me of all those repentings and pangs of remorse that usually disturb the consciences of such feeble and uncertain minds as, destitute of any clear and determinate principle of choice, allow themselves one day to adopt a course of action as the best, which they abandon the next, as the opposite.

My third maxim was to endeavour always to conquer myself rather than fortune, and change my desires rather than the order of the world, and in general, accustom myself to the persuasion that, except our own thoughts, there is nothing absolutely in our power; so that when we have done our best in things external to us, all wherein we fail of success is to be held, as regards us, absolutely impossible: and this single principle seemed to me sufficient to prevent me from desiring for the future anything which I could not obtain, and thus render me contented; for since our will naturally seeks those objects alone which the understanding represents as in some way possible of attainment, it is plain, that if we consider all external goods as equally beyond our power, we shall no more regret the absence of such goods as seem due to our birth, when deprived of them without any fault of ours, than our not possessing the kingdoms of China or Mexico, and thus making, so to speak, a virtue of necessity, we shall no more desire health in disease, or freedom in imprisonment, than we now do bodies incorruptible as diamonds, or the wings of birds to fly with. But I confess there is need of prolonged discipline and frequently repeated meditation to accustom the mind to view all

objects in this light; and I believe that in this chiefly consisted the secret of the power of such philosophers as in former times were enabled to rise superior to the influence of fortune, and, amid suffering and poverty, enjoy a happiness which their gods might have envied. For, occupied incessantly with the consideration of the limits prescribed to their power by nature, they became so entirely convinced that nothing was at their disposal except their own thoughts, that this conviction was of itself sufficient to prevent their entertaining any desire of other objects; and over their thoughts they acquired a sway so absolute, that they had some ground on this account for esteeming themselves more rich and more powerful, more free and more happy, than other men who, whatever be the favors heaped on them by nature and fortune, if destitute of this philosophy, can never command the realization of all their desires.

In fine, to conclude this code of morals, I thought of reviewing the different occupations of men in this life, with the view of making choice of the best. And, without wishing to offer any remarks on the employments of others, I may state that it was my conviction that I could not do better than continue in that in which I was engaged, viz., in devoting my whole life to the culture of my reason, and in making the greatest progress I was able in the knowledge of truth, on the principles of the method which I had prescribed to myself. This method, from the time I had begun to apply it, had been to me the source of satisfaction so intense as to lead me to, believe that more perfect or more innocent could not be enjoyed in this life; and as by its means I daily discovered truths that appeared to me of some importance, and of which other men were generally ignorant, the gratification thence arising so occupied my mind that I was wholly indifferent to every other object. Besides, the three preceding maxims were founded singly on the design of continuing the work of self- instruction. For since God has endowed each of us with some light of reason by which to distinguish truth from error, I could not have believed that I ought for a single moment to rest satisfied with the opinions of another, unless I had resolved to exercise my own judgment in examining these whenever I should be duly qualified for the task. Nor could I have proceeded on such opinions without scruple, had I supposed that I should thereby forfeit any advantage for attaining still more accurate, should such exist. And, in fine, I could not have restrained my desires, nor remained satisfied had I not followed a path in which I thought myself certain of attaining all the knowledge to the acquisition of which I was competent, as well as the largest amount of what is truly good which I could ever hope to secure. Inasmuch as we neither seek nor shun any object except in so far as our understanding represents it as good or bad, all that is necessary to right action is right judgment, and to the best action the most correct judgment, that is, to the acquisition of all the virtues with all else that is truly valuable and within our reach; and the assurance of such an acquisition cannot fail

to render us contented.

Having thus provided myself with these maxims, and having placed them in reserve along with the truths of faith, which have ever occupied the first place in my belief, I came to the conclusion that I might with freedom set about ridding myself of what remained of my opinions. And, inasmuch as I hoped to be better able successfully to accomplish this work by holding intercourse with mankind, than by remaining longer shut up in the retirement where these thoughts had occurred to me, I betook me again to travelling before the winter was well ended. And, during the nine subsequent years, I did nothing but roam from one place to another, desirous of being a spectator rather than an actor in the plays exhibited on the theatre of the world; and, as I made it my business in each matter to reflect particularly upon what might fairly be doubted and prove a source of error, I gradually rooted out from my mind all the errors which had hitherto crept into it. Not that in this I imitated the sceptics who doubt only that they may doubt, and seek nothing beyond uncertainty itself; for, on the contrary, my design was singly to find ground of assurance, and cast aside the loose earth and sand, that I might reach the rock or the clay. In this, as appears to me, I was successful enough; for, since I endeavoured to discover the falsehood or incertitude of the propositions I examined, not by feeble conjectures, but by clear and certain reasonings, I met with nothing so doubtful as not to yield some conclusion of adequate certainty, although this were merely the inference, that the matter in question contained nothing certain. And, just as in pulling down an old house, we usually reserve the ruins to contribute towards the erection, so, in destroying such of my opinions as I judged to be ill-founded, I made a variety of observations and acquired an amount of experience of which I availed myself in the establishment of more certain. And further, I continued to exercise myself in the method I had prescribed; for, besides taking care in general to conduct all my thoughts according to its rules, I reserved some hours from time to time which I expressly devoted to the employment of the method in the solution of mathematical difficulties, or even in the solution likewise of some questions belonging to other sciences, but which, by my having detached them from such principles of these sciences as were of inadequate certainty, were rendered almost mathematical: the truth of this will be manifest from the numerous examples contained in this volume. And thus, without in appearance living otherwise than those who, with no other occupation than that of spending their lives agreeably and innocently, study to sever pleasure from vice, and who, that they may enjoy their leisure without ennui, have recourse to such pursuits as are honourable, I was nevertheless prosecuting my design, and making greater progress in the knowledge of truth, than I might, perhaps, have made had I been engaged in the perusal of books merely, or in holding converse with men of letters.

These nine years passed away, however, before I had come to any determinate judgment respecting the difficulties which form matter of dispute among the learned, or had commenced to seek the principles of any philosophy more certain than the vulgar. And the examples of many men of the highest genius, who had, in former times, engaged in this inquiry, but, as appeared to me, without success, led me to imagine it to be a work of so much difficulty, that I would not perhaps have ventured on it so soon had I not heard it currently rumoured that I had already completed the inquiry. I know not what were the grounds of this opinion; and, if my conversation contributed in any measure to its rise, this must have happened rather from my having confessed my ignorance with greater freedom than those are accustomed to do who have studied a little, and expounded perhaps, the reasons that led me to doubt of many of those things that by others are esteemed certain, than from my having boasted of any system of philosophy. But, as I am of a disposition that makes me unwilling to be esteemed different from what I really am, I thought it necessary to endeavour by all means to render myself worthy of the reputation accorded to me; and it is now exactly eight years since this desire constrained me to remove from all those places where interruption from any of my acquaintances was possible, and betake myself to this country, in which the long duration of the war has led to the establishment of such discipline, that the armies maintained seem to be of use only in enabling the inhabitants to enjoy more securely the blessings of peace and where, in the midst of a great crowd actively engaged in business, and more careful of their own affairs than curious about those of others, I have been enabled to live without being deprived of any of the conveniences to be had in the most populous cities, and yet as solitary and as retired as in the midst of the most remote deserts.

Part IV

I am in doubt as to the propriety of making my first meditations in the place above mentioned matter of discourse; for these are so metaphysical, and so uncommon, as not, perhaps, to be acceptable to every one. And yet, that it may be determined whether the foundations that I have laid are sufficiently secure, I find myself in a measure constrained to advert to them. I had long before remarked that, in relation to practice, it is sometimes necessary to adopt, as if above doubt, opinions which we discern to be highly uncertain, as has been already said; but as I then desired to give my attention solely to the search after truth, I thought that a procedure exactly the opposite was called for, and that I ought to reject as absolutely false all opinions in regard to which I could suppose the least ground for doubt, in order to ascertain whether after that there remained aught in my belief that was wholly indubitable. Accordingly, seeing that our senses sometimes deceive us,

I was willing to suppose that there existed nothing really such as they presented to us; and because some men err in reasoning, and fall into paralogisms, even on the simplest matters of geometry, I, convinced that I was as open to error as any other, rejected as false all the reasonings I had hitherto taken for demonstrations; and finally, when I considered that the very same thoughts (presentations) which we experience when awake may also be experienced when we are asleep, while there is at that time not one of them true, I supposed that all the objects (presentations) that had ever entered into my mind when awake, had in them no more truth than the illusions of my dreams. But immediately upon this I observed that, whilst I thus wished to think that all was false, it was absolutely necessary that I, who thus thought, should be somewhat; and as I observed that this truth, I think, therefore I am (cogito ergo sum), was so certain and of such evidence that no ground of doubt, however extravagant, could be alleged by the sceptics capable of shaking it, I concluded that I might, without scruple, accept it as the first principle of the philosophy of which I was in search.

In the next place, I attentively examined what I was and as I observed that I could suppose that I had no body, and that there was no world nor any place in which I might be; but that I could not therefore suppose that I was not; and that, on the contrary, from the very circumstance that I thought to doubt of the truth of other things, it most clearly and certainly followed that I was; while, on the other hand, if I had only ceased to think, although all the other objects which I had ever imagined had been in reality existent, I would have had no reason to believe that I existed; I thence concluded that I was a substance whose whole essence or nature consists only in thinking, and which, that it may exist, has need of no place, nor is dependent on any material thing; so that "I," that is to say, the mind by which I am what I am, is wholly distinct from the body, and is even more easily known than the latter, and is such, that although the latter were not, it would still continue to be all that it is.

After this I inquired in general into what is essential to the truth and certainty of a proposition; for since I had discovered one which I knew to be true, I thought that I must likewise be able to discover the ground of this certitude. And as I observed that in the words I think, therefore I am, there is nothing at all which gives me assurance of their truth beyond this, that I see very clearly that in order to think it is necessary to exist, I concluded that I might take, as a general rule, the principle, that all the things which we very clearly and distinctly conceive are true, only observing, however, that there is some difficulty in rightly determining the objects which we distinctly conceive.

In the next place, from reflecting on the circumstance that I doubted, and that consequently my

being was not wholly perfect (for I clearly saw that it was a greater perfection to know than to doubt), I was led to inquire whence I had learned to think of something more perfect than myself; and I clearly recognized that I must hold this notion from some nature which in reality was more perfect. As for the thoughts of many other objects external to me, as of the sky, the earth, light, heat, and a thousand more, I was less at a loss to know whence these came; for since I remarked in them nothing which seemed to render them superior to myself, I could believe that, if these were true, they were dependencies on my own nature, in so far as it possessed a certain perfection, and, if they were false, that I held them from nothing, that is to say, that they were in me because of a certain imperfection of my nature. But this could not be the case with the idea of a nature more perfect than myself; for to receive it from nothing was a thing manifestly impossible; and, because it is not less repugnant that the more perfect should be an effect of, and dependence on the less perfect, than that something should proceed from nothing, it was equally impossible that I could hold it from myself: accordingly, it but remained that it had been placed in me by a nature which was in reality more perfect than mine, and which even possessed within itself all the perfections of which I could form any idea; that is to say, in a single word, which was God. And to this I added that, since I knew some perfections which I did not possess, I was not the only being in existence (I will here, with your permission, freely use the terms of the schools); but, on the contrary, that there was of necessity some other more perfect Being upon whom I was dependent, and from whom I had received all that I possessed; for if I had existed alone, and independently of every other being, so as to have had from myself all the perfection, however little, which I actually possessed, I should have been able, for the same reason, to have had from myself the whole remainder of perfection, of the want of which I was conscious, and thus could of myself have become infinite, eternal, immutable, omniscient, all-powerful, and, in fine, have possessed all the perfections which I could recognize in God. For in order to know the nature of God (whose existence has been established by the preceding reasonings), as far as my own nature permitted, I had only to consider in reference to all the properties of which I found in my mind some idea, whether their possession was a mark of perfection; and I was assured that no one which indicated any imperfection was in him, and that none of the rest was awanting. Thus I perceived that doubt, inconstancy, sadness, and such like, could not be found in God, since I myself would have been happy to be free from them. Besides, I had ideas of many sensible and corporeal things; for although I might suppose that I was dreaming, and that all which I saw or imagined was false, I could not, nevertheless, deny that the ideas were in reality in my thoughts. But, because I had already very clearly recognized in myself that the intelligent nature is distinct from the corporeal, and as I observed that all composition is an evidence of dependency, and that a state of dependency is manifestly a state of imperfection, I therefore

determined that it could not be a perfection in God to be compounded of these two natures and that consequently he was not so compounded; but that if there were any bodies in the world, or even any intelligences, or other natures that were not wholly perfect, their existence depended on his power in such a way that they could not subsist without him for a single moment.

I was disposed straightway to search for other truths and when I had represented to myself the object of the geometers, which I conceived to be a continuous body or a space indefinitely extended in length, breadth, and height or depth, divisible into divers parts which admit of different figures and sizes, and of being moved or transposed in all manner of ways (for all this the geometers suppose to be in the object they contemplate), I went over some of their simplest demonstrations. And, in the first place, I observed, that the great certitude which by common consent is accorded to these demonstrations, is founded solely upon this, that they are clearly conceived in accordance with the rules I have already laid down In the next place, I perceived that there was nothing at all in these demonstrations which could assure me of the existence of their object: thus, for example, supposing a triangle to be given, I distinctly perceived that its three angles were necessarily equal to two right angles, but I did not on that account perceive anything which could assure me that any triangle existed: while, on the contrary, recurring to the examination of the idea of a Perfect Being, I found that the existence of the Being was comprised in the idea in the same way that the equality of its three angles to two right angles is comprised in the idea of a triangle, or as in the idea of a sphere, the equidistance of all points on its surface from the centre, or even still more clearly; and that consequently it is at least as certain that God, who is this Perfect Being, is, or exists, as any demonstration of geometry can be.

But the reason which leads many to persuade themselves that there is a difficulty in knowing this truth, and even also in knowing what their mind really is, is that they never raise their thoughts above sensible objects, and are so accustomed to consider nothing except by way of imagination, which is a mode of thinking limited to material objects, that all that is not imaginable seems to them not intelligible. The truth of this is sufficiently manifest from the single circumstance, that the philosophers of the schools accept as a maxim that there is nothing in the understanding which was not previously in the senses, in which however it is certain that the ideas of God and of the soul have never been; and it appears to me that they who make use of their imagination to comprehend these ideas do exactly the same thing as if, in order to hear sounds or smell odours, they strove to avail themselves of their eyes; unless indeed that there is this difference, that the sense of sight does not afford us an inferior assurance to those of smell or hearing; in place of which, neither our

imagination nor our senses can give us assurance of anything unless our understanding intervene.

Finally, if there be still persons who are not sufficiently persuaded of the existence of God and of the soul, by the reasons I have adduced, I am desirous that they should know that all the other propositions, of the truth of which they deem themselves perhaps more assured, as that we have a body, and that there exist stars and an earth, and such like, are less certain; for, although we have a moral assurance of these things, which is so strong that there is an appearance of extravagance in doubting of their existence, yet at the same time no-one, unless his intellect is impaired, can deny, when the question relates to a metaphysical certitude, that there is sufficient reason to exclude entire assurance, in the observation that when asleep we can in the same way imagine ourselves possessed of another body and that we see other stars and another earth, when there is nothing of the kind. For how do we know that the thoughts which occur in dreaming are false rather than those other which we experience when awake, since the former are often not less vivid and distinct than the latter? And though men of the highest genius study this question as long as they please, I do not believe that they will be able to give any reason which can be sufficient to remove this doubt, unless they presuppose the existence of God. For, in the first place even the principle which I have already taken as a rule, viz., that all the things which we clearly and distinctly conceive are true, is certain only because God is or exists and because he is a Perfect Being, and because all that we possess is derived from him: whence it follows that our ideas or notions, which to the extent of their clearness and distinctness are real, and proceed from God, must to that extent be true. Accordingly, whereas we not infrequently have ideas or notions in which some falsity is contained, this can only be the case with such as are to some extent confused and obscure, and in this proceed from nothing (participate of negation), that is, exist in us thus confused because we are not wholly perfect. And it is evident that it is not less repugnant that falsity or imperfection, in so far as it is imperfection, should proceed from God, than that truth or perfection should proceed from nothing. But if we did not know that all which we possess of real and true proceeds from a Perfect and Infinite Being, however clear and distinct our ideas might be, we should have no ground on that account for the assurance that they possessed the perfection of being true.

But after the knowledge of God and of the soul has rendered us certain of this rule, we can easily understand that the truth of the thoughts we experience when awake, ought not in the slightest degree to be called in question on account of the illusions of our dreams. For if it happened that an individual, even when asleep, had some very distinct idea, as, for example, if a geometer should discover some new demonstration, the circumstance of his being asleep would not militate against

its truth; and as for the most ordinary error of our dreams, which consists in their representing to us various objects in the same way as our external senses, this is not prejudicial, since it leads us very properly to suspect the truth of the ideas of sense; for we are not infrequently deceived in the same manner when awake; as when persons in the jaundice see all objects yellow, or when the stars or bodies at a great distance appear to us much smaller than they are. For, in fine, whether awake or asleep, we ought never to allow ourselves to be persuaded of the truth of anything unless on the evidence of our reason. And it must be noted that I say of our reason, and not of our imagination or of our senses: thus, for example, although we very clearly see the sun, we ought not therefore to determine that it is only of the size which our sense of sight presents; and we may very distinctly imagine the head of a lion joined to the body of a goat, without being therefore shut up to the conclusion that a chimaera exists; for it is not a dictate of reason that what we thus see or imagine is in reality existent; but it plainly tells us that all our ideas or notions contain in them some truth; for otherwise it could not be that God, who is wholly perfect and veracious, should have placed them in us. And because our reasonings are never so clear or so complete during sleep as when we are awake, although sometimes the acts of our imagination are then as lively and distinct, if not more so than in our waking moments, reason

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further dictates that, since all our thoughts cannot be true because of our partial imperfection, those possessing truth must infallibly be found in the experience of our waking moments rather than in that of our dreams.

Part V

I would here willingly have proceeded to exhibit the whole chain of truths which I deduced from these primary but as with a view to this it would have been necessary now to treat of many questions in dispute among the learned, with whom I do not wish to be embroiled, I believe that it will be better for me to refrain from this exposition, and only mention in general what these truths are, that the more judicious may be able to determine whether a more special account of them would conduce to the public advantage. I have ever remained firm in my original resolution to suppose no other principle than that of which I have recently availed myself in demonstrating the existence of God and of the soul, and to accept as true nothing that did not appear to me more clear and certain than the demonstrations of the geometers had formerly appeared; and yet I venture to state that not

only have I found means to satisfy myself in a short time on all the principal difficulties which are usually treated of in philosophy, but I have also observed certain laws established in nature by God in such a manner, and of which he has impressed on our minds such notions, that after we have reflected sufficiently upon these, we cannot doubt that they are accurately observed in all that exists or takes place in the world and farther, by considering the concatenation of these laws, it appears to me that I have discovered many truths more useful and more important than all I had before learned, or even had expected to learn.

But because I have essayed to expound the chief of these discoveries in a treatise which certain considerations prevent me from publishing, I cannot make the results known more conveniently than by here giving a summary of the contents of this treatise. It was my design to comprise in it all that, before I set myself to write it, I thought I knew of the nature of material objects. But like the painters who, finding themselves unable to represent equally well on a plain surface all the different faces of a solid body, select one of the chief, on which alone they make the light fall, and throwing the rest into the shade, allow them to appear only in so far as they can be seen while looking at the principal one; so, fearing lest I should not be able to compense in my discourse all that was in my mind, I resolved to expound singly, though at considerable length, my opinions regarding light; then to take the opportunity of adding something on the sun and the fixed stars, since light almost wholly proceeds from them; on the heavens since they transmit it; on the planets, comets, and earth, since they reflect it; and particularly on all the bodies that are upon the earth, since they are either coloured, or transparent, or luminous; and finally on man, since he is the spectator of these objects. Further, to enable me to cast this variety of subjects somewhat into the shade, and to express my judgment regarding them with greater freedom, without being necessitated to adopt or refute the opinions of the learned, I resolved to leave all the people here to their disputes, and to speak only of what would happen in a new world, if God were now to create somewhere in the imaginary spaces matter sufficient to compose one, and were to agitate variously and confusedly the different parts of this matter, so that there resulted a chaos as disordered as the poets ever feigned, and after that did nothing more than lend his ordinary concurrence to nature, and allow her to act in accordance with the laws which he had established. On this supposition, I, in the first place, described this matter, and essayed to represent it in such a manner that to my mind there can be nothing clearer and more intelligible, except what has been recently said regarding God and the soul; for I even expressly supposed that it possessed none of those forms or qualities which are so debated in the schools, nor in general anything the knowledge of which is not so natural to our minds that no-one can so much as imagine himself ignorant of it. Besides, I have

pointed out what are the laws of nature; and, with no other principle upon which to found my reasonings except the infinite perfection of God, I endeavoured to demonstrate all those about which there could be any room for doubt, and to prove that they are such, that even if God had created more worlds, there could have been none in which these laws were not observed. Thereafter, I showed how the greatest part of the matter of this chaos must, in accordance with these laws, dispose and arrange itself in such a way as to present the appearance of heavens; how in the meantime some of its parts must compose an earth and some planets and comets, and others a sun and fixed stars. And, making a digression at this stage on the subject of light, I expounded at considerable length what the nature of that light must be which is found in the sun and the stars, and how thence in an instant of time it traverses the immense spaces of the heavens, and how from the planets and comets it is reflected towards the earth. To this I likewise added much respecting the substance, the situation, the motions, and all the different qualities of these heavens and stars; so that I thought I had said enough respecting them to show that there is nothing observable in the heavens or stars of our system that must not, or at least may not appear precisely alike in those of the system which I described. I came next to speak of the earth in particular, and to show how, even though I had expressly supposed that God had given no weight to the matter of which it is composed, this should not prevent all its parts from tending exactly to its centre; how with water and air on its surface, the disposition of the heavens and heavenly bodies, more especially of the moon, must cause a flow and ebb, like in all its circumstances to that observed in our seas, as also a certain current both of water and air from east to west, such as is likewise observed between the tropics; how the mountains, seas, fountains, and rivers might naturally be formed in it, and the metals produced in the mines, and the plants grow in the fields and in general, how all the bodies which are commonly denominated mixed or composite might be generated and, among other things in the discoveries alluded to inasmuch as besides the stars, I knew nothing except fire which produces light, I spared no pains to set forth all that pertains to its nature, – the manner of its production and support, and to explain how heat is sometimes found without light, and light without heat; to show how it can induce various colours upon different bodies and other diverse qualities; how it reduces some to a liquid state and hardens others; how it can consume almost all bodies, or convert them into ashes and smoke; and finally, how from these ashes, by the mere intensity of its action, it forms glass: for as this transmutation of ashes into glass appeared to me as wonderful as any other in nature, I took a special pleasure in describing it. I was not, however, disposed, from these circumstances, to conclude that this world had been created in the manner I described; for it is much more likely that God made it at the first such as it was to be. But this is certain, and an opinion commonly received among theologians, that the action by which he now sustains it is the same with

that by which he originally created it; so that even although he had from the beginning given it no other form than that of chaos, provided only he had established certain laws of nature, and had lent it his concurrence to enable it to act as it is wont to do, it may be believed, without discredit to the miracle of creation, that, in this way alone, things purely material might, in course of time, have become such as we observe them at present; and their nature is much more easily conceived when they are beheld coming in this manner gradually into existence, than when they are only considered as produced at once in a finished and perfect state.

From the description of inanimate bodies and plants, I passed to animals, and particularly to man. But since I had not as yet sufficient knowledge to enable me to treat of these in the same manner as of the rest, that is to say, by deducing effects from their causes, and by showing from what elements and in what manner nature must produce them, I remained satisfied with the supposition that God formed the body of man wholly like to one of ours, as well in the external shape of the members as in the internal conformation of the organs, of the same matter with that I had described, and at first placed in it no rational soul, nor any other principle, in room of the vegetative or sensitive soul, beyond kindling in the heart one of those fires without light, such as I had already described, and which I thought was not different from the heat in hay that has been heaped together before it is dry, or that which causes fermentation in new wines before they are run clear of the fruit. For, when I examined the kind of functions which might, as consequences of this supposition, exist in this body, I found precisely all those which may exist in us independently of all power of thinking, and consequently without being in any measure owing to the soul; in other words, to that part of us which is distinct from the body, and of which it has been said above that the nature distinctively consists in thinking, functions in which the animals void of reason may be said wholly to resemble us; but among which I could not discover any of those that, as dependent on thought alone, belong to us as men, while, on the other hand, I did afterwards discover these as soon as I supposed God to have created a rational soul, and to have annexed it to this body in a particular manner which I described.

But, in order to show how I there handled this matter, I mean here to give the explication of the motion of the heart and arteries, which, as the first and most general motion observed in animals, will afford the means of readily determining what should be thought of all the rest. And that there may be less difficulty in understanding what I am about to say on this subject, I advise those who are not versed in anatomy, before they commence the perusal of these observations, to take the trouble of getting dissected in their presence the heart of some large animal possessed of lungs (for

this is throughout sufficiently like the human), and to have shown to them its two ventricles or cavities: in the first place, that in the right side, with which correspond two very ample tubes, viz., the hollow vein (*vena cava*), which is the principal receptacle of the blood, and the trunk of the tree, as it were, of which all the other veins in the body are branches; and the arterial vein (*vena arteriosa*), inappropriately so denominated, since it is in truth only an artery, which, taking its rise in the heart, is divided, after passing out from it, into many branches which presently disperse themselves all over the lungs; in the second place, the cavity in the left side, with which correspond in the same manner two canals in size equal to or larger than the preceding, viz., the venous artery (*arteria venosa*), likewise inappropriately thus designated, because it is simply a vein which comes from the lungs, where it is divided into many branches, interlaced with those of the arterial vein, and those of the tube called the windpipe, through which the air we breathe enters; and the great artery which, issuing from the heart, sends its branches all over the body. I should wish also that such persons were carefully shown the eleven pellicles which, like so many small valves, open and shut the four orifices that are in these two cavities, viz., three at the entrance of the hollow veins where they are disposed in such a manner as by no means to prevent the blood which it contains from flowing into the right ventricle of the heart, and yet exactly to prevent its flowing out; three at the entrance to the arterial vein, which, arranged in a manner exactly the opposite of the former, readily permit the blood contained in this cavity to pass into the lungs, but hinder that contained in the lungs from returning to this cavity; and, in like manner, two others at the mouth of the venous artery, which allow the blood from the lungs to flow into the left cavity of the heart, but preclude its return; and three at the mouth of the great artery, which suffer the blood to flow from the heart, but prevent its reflux. Nor do we need to seek any other reason for the number of these pellicles beyond this that the orifice of the venous artery being of an oval shape from the nature of its situation, can be adequately closed with two, whereas the others being round are more conveniently closed with three. Besides, I wish such persons to observe that the grand artery and the arterial vein are of much harder and firmer texture than the venous artery and the hollow vein; and that the two last expand before entering the heart, and there form, as it were, two pouches denominated the auricles of the heart, which are composed of a substance similar to that of the heart itself; and that there is always more warmth in the heart than in any other part of the body, and finally, that this heat is capable of causing any drop of blood that passes into the cavities rapidly to expand and dilate, just as all liquors do when allowed to fall drop by drop into a highly heated vessel.

For, after these things, it is not necessary for me to say anything more with a view to explain the motion of the heart, except that when its cavities are not full of blood, into these the blood of

necessity flows, – from the hollow vein into the right, and from the venous artery into the left; because these two vessels are always full of blood, and their orifices, which are turned towards the heart, cannot then be closed. But as soon as two drops of blood have thus passed, one into each of the cavities, these drops which cannot but be very large, because the orifices through which they pass are wide, and the vessels from which they come full of blood, are immediately rarefied, and dilated by the heat they meet with. In this way they cause the whole heart to expand, and at the same time press home and shut the five small valves that are at the entrances of the two vessels from which they flow, and thus prevent any more blood from coming down into the heart, and becoming more and more rarefied, they push open the six small valves that are in the orifices of the other two vessels, through which they pass out, causing in this way all the branches of the arterial vein and of the grand artery to expand almost simultaneously with the heart which immediately thereafter begins to contract, as do also the arteries, because the blood that has entered them has cooled, and the six small valves close, and the five of the hollow vein and of the venous artery open anew and allow a passage to other two drops of blood, which cause the heart and the arteries again to expand as before. And, because the blood which thus enters into the heart passes through these two pouches called auricles, it thence happens that their motion is the contrary of that of the heart, and that when it expands they contract. But lest those who are ignorant of the force of mathematical demonstrations and who are not accustomed to distinguish true reasons from mere verisimilitudes, should venture without examination, to deny what has been said, I wish it to be considered that the motion which I have now explained follows as necessarily from the very arrangement of the parts, which may be observed in the heart by the eye alone, and from the heat which may be felt with the fingers, and from the nature of the blood as learned from experience, as does the motion of a clock from the power, the situation, and shape of its counterweights and wheels.

But if it be asked how it happens that the blood in the veins, flowing in this way continually into the heart, is not exhausted, and why the arteries do not become too full, since all the blood which passes through the heart flows into them, I need only mention in reply what has been written by a physician of England, who has the honour of having broken the ice on this subject, and of having been the first to teach that there are many small passages at the extremities of the arteries, through which the blood received by them from the heart passes into the small branches of the veins, whence it again returns to the heart; so that its course amounts precisely to a perpetual circulation. Of this we have abundant proof in the ordinary experience of surgeons, who, by binding the arm with a tie of moderate straightness above the part where they open the vein, cause the blood to flow more copiously than it would have done without any ligature; whereas quite the contrary would happen

were they to bind it below; that is, between the hand and the opening, or were to make the ligature above the opening very tight. For it is manifest that the tie, moderately straightened, while adequate to hinder the blood already in the arm from returning towards the heart by the veins, cannot on that account prevent new blood from coming forward through the arteries, because these are situated below the veins, and their coverings, from their greater consistency, are more difficult to compress; and also that the blood which comes from the heart tends to pass through them to the hand with greater force than it does to return from the hand to the heart through the veins. And since the latter current escapes from the arm by the opening made in one of the veins, there must of necessity be certain passages below the ligature, that is, towards the extremities of the arm through which it can come thither from the arteries. This physician likewise abundantly establishes what he has advanced respecting the motion of the blood, from the existence of certain pellicles, so disposed in various places along the course of the veins, in the manner of small valves, as not to permit the blood to pass from the middle of the body towards the extremities, but only to return from the extremities to the heart; and farther, from experience which shows that all the blood which is in the body may flow out of it in a very short time through a single artery that has been cut, even although this had been closely tied in the immediate neighbourhood of the heart and cut between the heart and the ligature, so as to prevent the supposition that the blood flowing out of it could come from any other quarter than the heart.

But there are many other circumstances which evince that what I have alleged is the true cause of the motion of the blood: thus, in the first place, the difference that is observed between the blood which flows from the veins, and that from the arteries, can only arise from this, that being rarefied, and, as it were, distilled by passing through the heart, it is thinner, and more vivid, and warmer immediately after leaving the heart, in other words, when in the arteries, than it was a short time before passing into either, in other words, when it was in the veins; and if attention be given, it will be found that this difference is very marked only in the neighbourhood of the heart; and is not so evident in parts more remote from it. In the next place, the consistency of the coats of which the arterial vein and the great artery are composed, sufficiently shows that the blood is impelled against them with more force than against the veins. And why should the left cavity of the heart and the great artery be wider and larger than the right cavity and the arterial vein, were it not that the blood of the venous artery, having only been in the lungs after it has passed through the heart, is thinner, and rarefies more readily, and in a higher degree, than the blood which proceeds immediately from the hollow vein? And what can physicians conjecture from feeling the pulse unless they know that according as the blood changes its nature it can be rarefied by the warmth of the heart, in a higher

or lower degree, and more or less quickly than before? And if it be inquired how this heat is communicated to the other members, must it not be admitted that this is effected by means of the blood, which, passing through the heart, is there heated anew, and thence diffused over all the body? Whence it happens, that if the blood be withdrawn from any part, the heat is likewise withdrawn by the same means; and although the heart were as-hot as glowing iron, it would not be capable of warming the feet and hands as at present, unless it continually sent thither new blood. We likewise perceive from this, that the true use of respiration is to bring sufficient fresh air into the lungs, to cause the blood which flows into them from the right ventricle of the heart, where it has been rarefied and, as it were, changed into vapors, to become thick, and to convert it anew into blood, before it flows into the left cavity, without which process it would be unfit for the nourishment of the fire that is there. This receives confirmation from the circumstance, that it is observed of animals destitute of lungs that they have also but one cavity in the heart, and that in children who cannot use them while in the womb, there is a hole through which the blood flows from the hollow vein into the left cavity of the heart, and a tube through which it passes from the arterial vein into the grand artery without passing through the lung. In the next place, how could digestion be carried on in the stomach unless the heart communicated heat to it through the arteries, and along with this certain of the more fluid parts of the blood, which assist in the dissolution of the food that has been taken in? Is not also the operation which converts the juice of food into blood easily comprehended, when it is considered that it is distilled by passing and repassing through the heart perhaps more than one or two hundred times in a day? And what more need be adduced to explain nutrition, and the production of the different humours of the body, beyond saying, that the force with which the blood, in being rarefied, passes from the heart towards the extremities of the arteries, causes certain of its parts to remain in the members at which they arrive, and there occupy the place of some others expelled by them; and that according to the situation, shape, or smallness of the pores with which they meet, some rather than others flow into certain parts, in the same way that some sieves are observed to act, which, by being variously perforated, serve to separate different species of grain? And, in the last place, what above all is here worthy of observation, is the generation of the animal spirits, which are like a very subtle wind, or rather a very pure and vivid flame which, continually ascending in great abundance from the heart to the brain, thence penetrates through the nerves into the muscles, and gives motion to all the members; so that to account for other parts of the blood which, as most agitated and penetrating, are the fittest to compose these spirits, proceeding towards the brain, it is not necessary to suppose any other cause, than simply, that the arteries which carry them thither proceed from the heart in the most direct lines, and that, according to the rules of mechanics which are the same with those of nature, when many objects tend at once

to the same point where there is not sufficient room for all (as is the case with the parts of the blood which flow forth from the left cavity of the heart and tend towards the brain), the weaker and less agitated parts must necessarily be driven aside from that point by the stronger which alone in this way reach it I had expounded all these matters with sufficient minuteness in the treatise which I formerly thought of publishing. And after these, I had shown what must be the fabric of the nerves and muscles of the human body to give the animal spirits contained in it the power to move the members, as when we see heads shortly after they have been struck off still move and bite the earth, although no longer animated; what changes must take place in the brain to produce waking, sleep, and dreams; how light, sounds, odours, tastes, heat, and all the other qualities of external objects impress it with different ideas by means of the senses; how hunger, thirst, and the other internal affections can likewise impress upon it divers ideas; what must be understood by the common sense (*sensus communis*) in which these ideas are received, by the memory which retains them, by the fantasy which can change them in various ways, and out of them compose new ideas, and which, by the same means, distributing the animal spirits through the muscles, can cause the members of such a body to move in as many different ways, and in a manner as suited, whether to the objects that are presented to its senses or to its internal affections, as can take place in our own case apart from the guidance of the will. Nor will this appear at all strange to those who are acquainted with the variety of movements performed by the different automata, or moving machines fabricated by human industry, and that with help of but few pieces compared with the great multitude of bones, muscles, nerves, arteries, veins, and other parts that are found in the body of each animal. Such persons will look upon this body as a machine made by the hands of God, which is incomparably better arranged, and adequate to movements more admirable than is any machine of human invention. And here I specially stayed to show that, were there such machines exactly resembling organs and outward form an ape or any other irrational animal, we could have no means of knowing that they were in any respect of a different nature from these animals; but if there were machines bearing the image of our bodies, and capable of imitating our actions as far as it is morally possible, there would still remain two most certain tests whereby to know that they were not therefore really men. Of these the first is that they could never use words or other signs arranged in such a manner as is competent to us in order to declare our thoughts to others: for we may easily conceive a machine to be so constructed that it emits vocables, and even that it emits some correspondent to the action upon it of external objects which cause a change in its organs; for example, if touched in a particular place it may demand what we wish to say to it; if in another it may cry out that it is hurt, and such like; but not that it should arrange them variously so as appositely to reply to what is said in its presence, as men of the lowest grade of intellect can do. The second test is, that although

such machines might execute many things with equal or perhaps greater perfection than any of us, they would, without doubt, fail in certain others from which it could be discovered that they did not act from knowledge, but solely from the disposition of their organs: for while reason is an universal instrument that is alike available on every occasion, these organs, on the contrary, need a particular arrangement for each particular action; whence it must be morally impossible that there should exist in any machine a diversity of organs sufficient to enable it to act in all the occurrences of life, in the way in which our reason enables us to act. Again, by means of these two tests we may likewise know the difference between men and brutes. For it is highly deserving of remark, that there are no men so dull and stupid, not even idiots, as to be incapable of joining together different words, and thereby constructing a declaration by which to make their thoughts understood; and that on the other hand, there is no other animal, however perfect or happily circumstanced, which can do the like. Nor does this inability arise from want of organs: for we observe that magpies and parrots can utter words like ourselves, and are yet unable to speak as we do, that is, so as to show that they understand what they say; in place of which men born deaf and dumb, and thus not less, but rather more than the brutes, destitute of the organs which others use in speaking, are in the habit of spontaneously inventing certain signs by which they discover their thoughts to those who, being usually in their company, have leisure to learn their language. And this proves not only that the brutes have less reason than man, but that they have none at all: for we see that very little is required to enable a person to speak; and since a certain inequality of capacity is observable among animals of the same species, as well as among men, and since some are more capable of being instructed than others, it is incredible that the most perfect ape or parrot of its species, should not in this be equal to the most stupid infant of its kind or at least to one that was crack-brained, unless the soul of brutes were of a nature wholly different from ours. And we ought not to confound speech with the natural movements which indicate the passions, and can be imitated by machines as well as manifested by animals; nor must it be thought with certain of the ancients, that the brutes speak, although we do not understand their language. For if such were the case, since they are endowed with many organs analogous to ours, they could as easily communicate their thoughts to us as to their fellows. It is also very worthy of remark, that, though there are many animals which manifest more industry than we in certain of their actions, the same animals are yet observed to show none at all in many others: so that the circumstance that they do better than we does not prove that they are endowed with mind, for it would thence follow that they possessed greater reason than any of us, and could surpass us in all things; on the contrary, it rather proves that they are destitute of reason, and that it is nature which acts in them according to the disposition of their organs: thus it is seen, that a clock composed only of wheels and weights can number the hours and measure time

more exactly than we with all our skin.

I had after this described the reasonable soul, and shown that it could by no means be educed from the power of matter, as the other things of which I had spoken, but that it must be expressly created; and that it is not sufficient that it be lodged in the human body exactly like a pilot in a ship, unless perhaps to move its members, but that it is necessary for it to be joined and united more closely to the body, in order to have sensations and appetites similar to ours, and thus constitute a real man. I here entered, in conclusion, upon the subject of the soul at considerable length, because it is of the greatest moment: for after the error of those who deny the existence of God, an error which I think I have already sufficiently refuted, there is none that is more powerful in leading feeble minds astray from the straight path of virtue than the supposition that the soul of the brutes is of the same nature with our own; and consequently that after this life we have nothing to hope for or fear, more than flies and ants; in place of which, when we know how far they differ we much better comprehend the reasons which establish that the soul is of a nature wholly independent of the body, and that consequently it is not liable to die with the latter and, finally, because no other causes are observed capable of destroying it, we are naturally led thence to judge that it is immortal.

Part VI

Three years have now elapsed since I finished the treatise containing all these matters; and I was beginning to revise it, with the view to put it into the hands of a printer, when I learned that persons to whom I greatly defer, and whose authority over my actions is hardly less influential than is my own reason over my thoughts, had condemned a certain doctrine in physics, published a short time previously by another individual to which I will not say that I adhered, but only that, previously to their censure I had observed in it nothing which I could imagine to be prejudicial either to religion or to the state, and nothing therefore which would have prevented me from giving expression to it in writing, if reason had persuaded me of its truth; and this led me to fear lest among my own doctrines likewise some one might be found in which I had departed from the truth, notwithstanding the great care I have always taken not to accord belief to new opinions of which I had not the most certain demonstrations, and not to give expression to aught that might tend to the hurt of any one. This has been sufficient to make me alter my purpose of publishing them; for although the reasons by which I had been induced to take this resolution were very strong, yet my inclination, which has always been hostile to writing books, enabled me immediately to discover other considerations sufficient to excuse me for not undertaking the task. And these reasons, on one side and the other, are such that not only is it in some measure my interest here to state them, but that of the public,

perhaps, to know them.

I have never made much account of what has proceeded from my own mind; and so long as I gathered no other advantage from the method I employ beyond satisfying myself on some difficulties belonging to the speculative sciences, or endeavouring to regulate my actions according to the principles it taught me, I never thought myself bound to publish anything respecting it. For in what regards manners, everyone is so full of his own wisdom, that there might be found as many reformers as heads, if any were allowed to take upon themselves the task of mending them, except those whom God has constituted the supreme rulers of his people or to whom he has given sufficient grace and zeal to be prophets; and although my speculations greatly pleased myself, I believed that others had theirs, which perhaps pleased them still more. But as soon as I had acquired some general notions respecting physics, and beginning to make trial of them in various particular difficulties, had observed how far they can carry us, and how much they differ from the principles that have been employed up to the present time, I believed that I could not keep them concealed without sinning grievously against the law by which we are bound to promote, as far as in us lies, the general good of mankind. For by them I perceived it to be possible to arrive at knowledge highly useful in life; and in room of the speculative philosophy usually taught in the schools, to discover a practical, by means of which, knowing the force and action of fire, water, air the stars, the heavens, and all the other bodies that surround us, as distinctly as we know the various crafts of our artisans, we might also apply them in the same way to all the uses to which they are adapted, and thus render ourselves the lords and possessors of nature. And this is a result to be desired, not only in order to the invention of an infinity of arts, by which we might be enabled to enjoy without any trouble the fruits of the earth, and all its comforts, but also and especially for the preservation of health, which is without doubt, of all the blessings of this life, the first and fundamental one; for the mind is so intimately dependent upon the condition and relation of the organs of the body, that if any means can ever be found to render men wiser and more ingenious than hitherto, I believe that it is in medicine they must be sought for. It is true that the science of medicine, as it now exists, contains few things whose utility is very remarkable: but without any wish to depreciate it, I am confident that there is no-one, even among those whose profession it is, who does not admit that all at present known in it is almost nothing in comparison of what remains to be discovered; and that we could free ourselves from an infinity of maladies of body as well as of mind, and perhaps also even from the debility of age, if we had sufficiently ample knowledge of their causes, and of all the remedies provided for us by nature. But since I designed to employ my whole life in the search after so necessary a science, and since I had fallen in with a path which seems to me such, that if anyone

follow it he must inevitably reach the end desired, unless he be hindered either by the shortness of life or the want of experiments, I judged that there could be no more effectual provision against these two impediments than if I were faithfully to communicate to the public all the little I might myself have found, and incite men of superior genius to strive to proceed farther, by contributing, each according to his inclination and ability, to the experiments which it would be necessary to make, and also by informing the public of all they might discover, so that, by the last beginning where those before them had left off, and thus connecting the lives and labours of many, we might collectively proceed much farther than each by himself could do.

I remarked, moreover, with respect to experiments, that they become always more necessary the more one is advanced in knowledge; for, at the commencement, it is better to make use only of what is spontaneously presented to our senses, and of which we cannot remain ignorant, provided we bestow on it any reflection, however slight, than to concern ourselves about more uncommon and recondite phenomena: the reason of which is, that the more uncommon often only mislead us so long as the causes of the more ordinary are still unknown; and the circumstances upon which they depend are almost always so special and minute as to be highly difficult to detect. But in this I have adopted the following order: first, I have essayed to find in general the principles, or first causes of all that is or can be in the world, without taking into consideration for this end anything but God himself who has created it, and without educating them from any other source than from certain germs of truths naturally existing in our minds. In the second place, I examined what were the first and most ordinary effects that could be deduced from these causes; and it appears to me that, in this way, I have found heavens, stars, an earth, and even on the earth water, air, fire, minerals, and some other things of this kind, which of all others are the most common and simple, and hence the easiest to know. Afterwards when I wished to descend to the more particular, so many diverse objects presented themselves to me, that I believed it to be impossible for the human mind to distinguish the forms or species of bodies that are upon the earth, from an infinity of others which might have been, if it had pleased God to place them there, or consequently to apply them to our use, unless we rise to causes through their effects, and avail ourselves of many particular experiments. Thereupon, turning over in my mind, the objects that had ever been presented to my senses I freely venture to state that I have never observed any which I could not satisfactorily explain by the principles had discovered. But it is necessary also to confess that the power of nature is so ample and vast, and these principles so simple and general, that I have hardly observed a single particular effect which I cannot at once recognize as capable of being deduced in many different modes from the principles, and that my greatest difficulty usually is to discover in which of these

modes the effect is dependent upon them; for out of this difficulty cannot otherwise extricate myself than by again seeking certain experiments, which may be such that their result is not the same, if it is in the one of these modes at we must explain it, as it would be if it were to be explained in the other. As to what remains, I am now in a position to discern, as I think, with sufficient clearness what course must be taken to make the majority those experiments which may conduce to this end: but I perceive likewise that they are such and so numerous, that neither my hands nor my income, though it were a thousand times larger than it is, would be sufficient for them all; so that according as henceforward I shall have the means of making more or fewer experiments, I shall in the same proportion make greater or less progress in the knowledge of nature. This was what I had hoped to make known by the treatise I had written, and so clearly to exhibit the advantage that would thence accrue to the public, as to induce all who have the common good of man at heart, that is, all who are virtuous in truth, and not merely in appearance, or according to opinion, as well to communicate to me the experiments they had already made, as to assist me in those that remain to be made.

But since that time other reasons have occurred to me, by which I have been led to change my opinion, and to think that I ought indeed to go on committing to writing all the results which I deemed of any moment, as soon as I should have tested their truth, and to bestow the same care upon them as I would have done had it been my design to publish them. This course commended itself to me, as well because I thus afforded myself more ample inducement to examine them thoroughly, for doubtless that is always more narrowly scrutinized which we believe will be read by many, than that which is written merely for our private use (and frequently what has seemed to me true when I first conceived it, has appeared false when I have set about committing it to writing), as because I thus lost no opportunity of advancing the interests of the public, as far as in me lay, and since thus likewise, if my writings possess any value, those into whose hands they may fall after my death may be able to put them to what use they deem proper. But I resolved by no means to consent to their publication during my lifetime, lest either the oppositions or the controversies to which they might give rise, or even the reputation, such as it might be, which they would acquire for me, should be any occasion of my losing the time that I had set apart for my own improvement. For though it be true that everyone is bound to promote to the extent of his ability the good of others, and that to be useful to no-one is really to be worthless, yet it is likewise true that our cares ought to extend beyond the present, and it is good to omit doing what might perhaps bring some profit to the living, when we have in view the accomplishment of other ends that will be of much greater advantage to posterity. And in truth, I am quite willing it should be known that the little I have hitherto learned is almost nothing in comparison with that of which I am ignorant, and to the

knowledge of which I do not despair of being able to attain; for it is much the same with those who gradually discover truth in the sciences, as with those who when growing rich find less difficulty in making great acquisitions, than they formerly experienced when poor in making acquisitions of much smaller amount. Or they may be compared to the commanders of armies, whose forces usually increase in proportion to their victories, and who need greater prudence to keep together the residue of their troops after a defeat than after a victory to take towns and provinces. For he truly engages in battle who endeavours to surmount all the difficulties and errors which prevent him from reaching the knowledge of truth, and he is overcome in fight who admits a false opinion touching a matter of any generality and importance, and he requires thereafter much more skill to recover his former position than to make great advances when once in possession of thoroughly ascertained principles. As for myself, if I have succeeded in discovering any truths in the sciences (and I trust that what is contained in this volume I will show that I have found some), I can declare that they are but the consequences and results of five or six principal difficulties which I have surmounted, and my encounters with which I reckoned as battles in which victory declared for me. I will not hesitate even to avow my belief that nothing further is wanting to enable me fully to realize my designs than to gain two or three similar victories; and that I am not so far advanced in years but that, according to the ordinary course of nature, I may still have sufficient leisure for this end. But I conceive myself the more bound to husband the time that remains the greater my expectation of being able to employ it aright, and I should doubtless have much to rob me of it, were I to publish the principles of my physics: for although they are almost all so evident that to assent to them no more is needed than simply to understand them, and although there is not one of them of which I do not expect to be able to give demonstration, yet, as it is impossible that they can be in accordance with all the diverse opinions of others, I foresee that I should frequently be turned aside from my grand design, on occasion of the opposition which they would be sure to awaken.

It may be said, that these oppositions would be useful both in making me aware of my errors, and, if my speculations contain anything of value, in bringing others to a fuller understanding of it; and still farther, as many can see better than one, in leading others who are now beginning to avail themselves of my principles, to assist me in turn with their discoveries. But though I recognize my extreme liability to error, and scarce ever trust to the first thoughts which occur to me, yet-the experience I have had of possible objections to my views prevents me from anticipating any profit from them. For I have already had frequent proof of the judgments, as well of those I esteemed friends, as of some others to whom I thought I was an object of indifference, and even of some whose malignancy and envy would, I knew, determine them to endeavour to discover what

partiality concealed from the eyes of my friends. But it has rarely happened that anything has been objected to me which I had myself altogether overlooked, unless it were something far removed from the subject: so that I have never met with a single critic of my opinions who did not appear to me either less rigorous or less equitable than myself. And further, I have never observed that any truth before unknown has been brought to light by the disputations that are practised in the schools; for while each strives for the victory, each is much more occupied in making the best of mere verisimilitude, than in weighing the reasons on both sides of the question; and those who have been long good advocates are not afterwards on that account the better judges.

As for the advantage that others would derive from the communication of my thoughts, it could not be very great; because I have not yet so far prosecuted them as that much does not remain to be added before they can be applied to practice. And I think I may say without vanity, that if there is any one who can carry them out that length, it must be myself rather than another: not that there may not be in the world many minds incomparably superior to mine, but because one cannot so well seize a thing and make it one's own, when it has been learned from another, as when one has himself discovered it. And so true is this of the present subject that, though I have often explained some of my opinions to persons of much acuteness, who, whilst I was speaking, appeared to understand them very distinctly, yet, when they repeated them, I have observed that they almost always changed them to such an extent that I could no longer acknowledge them as mine. I am glad, by the way, to take this opportunity of requesting posterity never to believe on hearsay that anything has proceeded from me which has not been published by myself; and I am not at all astonished at the extravagances attributed to those ancient philosophers whose own writings we do not possess; whose thoughts, however, I do not on that account suppose to have been really absurd, seeing they were among the ablest men of their times, but only that these have been falsely represented to us. It is observable, accordingly, that scarcely in a single instance has any one of their disciples surpassed them; and I am quite sure that the most devoted of the present followers of Aristotle would think themselves happy if they had as much knowledge of nature as he possessed, were it even under the condition that they should never afterwards attain to higher. In this respect they are like the ivy which never strives to rise above the tree that sustains it, and which frequently even returns downwards when it has reached the top; for it seems to me that they also sink, in other words, render themselves less wise than they would be if they gave up study, who, not contented with knowing all that is intelligibly explained in their author, desire in addition to find in him the solution of many difficulties of which he says not a word, and never perhaps so much as thought. Their fashion of philosophizing, however, is well suited to persons whose abilities fall below

mediocrity; for the obscurity of the distinctions and principles of which they make use enables them to speak of all things with as much confidence as if they really knew them, and to defend all that they say on any subject against the most subtle and skilful, without its being possible for any one to convict them of error. In this they seem to me to be like a blind man, who, in order to fight on equal terms with a person that sees, should have made him descend to the bottom of an intensely dark cave: and I may say that such persons have an interest in my refraining from publishing the principles of the philosophy of which I make use; for, since these are of a kind the simplest and most evident, I should, by publishing them, do much the same as if I were to throw open the windows, and allow the light of day to enter the cave into which the combatants had descended. But even superior men have no reason for any great anxiety to know these principles, for if what they desire is to be able to speak of all things, and to acquire a reputation for learning, they will gain their end more easily by remaining satisfied with the appearance of truth, which can be found without much difficulty in all sorts of matters, than by seeking the truth itself which unfolds itself but slowly and that only in some departments, while it obliges us, when we have to speak of others, freely to confess our ignorance. If, however, they prefer the knowledge of some few truths to the vanity of appearing ignorant of none, as such knowledge is undoubtedly much to be preferred, and, if they choose to follow a course similar to mine, they do not require for this that I should say anything more than I have already said in this discourse. For if they are capable of making greater advancement than I have made, they will much more be able of themselves to discover all that I believe myself to have found; since as I have never examined aught except in order, it is certain that what yet remains to be discovered is in itself more difficult and recondite, than that which I have already been enabled to find, and the gratification would be much less in learning it from me than in discovering it for themselves. Besides this, the habit which they will acquire, by seeking first what is easy, and then passing onward slowly and step by step to the more difficult, will benefit them more than all my instructions. Thus, in my own case, I am persuaded that if I had been taught from my youth all the truths of which I have since sought out demonstrations, and had thus learned them without labour, I should never, perhaps, have known any beyond these; at least, I should never have acquired the habit and the facility which I think I possess in always discovering new truths in proportion as I give myself to the search. And, in a single word, if there is any work in the world which cannot be so well finished by another as by him who has commenced it, it is that at which I labour.

It is true, indeed, as regards the experiments which may conduce to this end, that one man is not equal to the task of making them all; but yet he can advantageously avail himself, in this work, of

no hands besides his own, unless those of artisans, or parties of the same kind, whom he could pay, and whom the hope of gain (a means of great efficacy) might stimulate to accuracy in the performance of what was prescribed to them. For as to those who, through curiosity or a desire of learning, of their own accord, perhaps, offer him their services, besides that in general their promises exceed their performance, and that they sketch out fine designs of which not one is ever realized, they will, without doubt, expect to be compensated for their trouble by the explication of some difficulties, or, at least, by compliments and useless speeches, in which he cannot spend any portion of his time without loss to himself. And as for the experiments that others have already made, even although these parties should be willing of themselves to communicate them to him (which is what those who esteem them secrets will never do), the experiments are, for the most part, accompanied with so many circumstances and superfluous elements, as to make it exceedingly difficult to disentangle the truth from its adjuncts- besides, he will find almost all of them so ill described, or even so false (because those who made them have wished to see in them only such facts as they deemed conformable to their principles), that, if in the entire number there should be some of a nature suited to his purpose, still their value could not compensate for the time what would be necessary to make the selection. So that if there existed any one whom we assuredly knew to be capable of making discoveries of the highest kind, and of the greatest possible utility to the public; and if all other men were therefore eager by all means to assist him in successfully prosecuting his designs, I do not see that they could do aught else for him beyond contributing to defray the expenses of the experiments that might be necessary; and for the rest, prevent his being deprived of his leisure by the unseasonable interruptions of any one. But besides that I neither have so high an opinion of myself as to be willing to make promise of anything extraordinary, nor feed on imaginations so vain as to fancy that the public must be much interested in my designs; I do not, on the other hand, own a soul so mean as to be capable of accepting from any one a favour of which it could be supposed that I was unworthy.

These considerations taken together were the reason why, for the last three years, I have been unwilling to publish the treatise I had on hand, and why I even resolved to give publicity during my life to no other that was so general, or by which the principles of my physics might be understood. But since then, two other reasons have come into operation that have determined me here to subjoin some particular specimens, and give the public some account of my doings and designs. Of these considerations, the first is, that if I failed to do so, many who were cognizant of my previous intention to publish some writings, might have imagined that the reasons which induced me to refrain from so doing, were less to my credit than they really are; for although I am

not immoderately desirous of glory, or even, if I may venture so to say, although I am averse from it in so far as I deem it hostile to repose which I hold in greater account than aught else, yet, at the same time, I have never sought to conceal my actions as if they were crimes, nor made use of many precautions that I might remain unknown; and this partly because I should have thought such a course of conduct a wrong against myself, and partly because it would have occasioned me some sort of uneasiness which would again have been contrary to the perfect mental tranquillity which I court. And forasmuch as, while thus indifferent to the thought alike of fame or of forgetfulness, I have yet been unable to prevent myself from acquiring some sort of reputation, I have thought it incumbent on me to do my best to save myself at least from being ill-spoken of. The other reason that has determined me to commit to writing these specimens of philosophy is, that I am becoming daily more and more alive to the delay which my design of self-instruction suffers, for want of the infinity of experiments I require, and which it is impossible for me to make without the assistance of others: and, without flattering myself so much as to expect the public to take a large share in my interests, I am yet unwilling to be found so far wanting in the duty I owe to myself, as to give occasion to those who shall survive me to make it matter of reproach against me some day, that I might have left them many things in a much more perfect state than I have done, had I not too much neglected to make them aware of the ways in which they could have promoted the accomplishment of my designs.

And I thought that it was easy for me to select some matters which should neither be obnoxious to much controversy, nor should compel me to expound more of my principles than I desired, and which should yet be sufficient clearly to exhibit what I can or cannot accomplish in the sciences. Whether or not I have succeeded in this it is not for me to say; and I do not wish to forestall the judgments of others by speaking myself of my writings; but it will gratify me if they be examined, and, to afford the greater inducement to this I request all who may have any objections to make to them, to take the trouble of forwarding these to my publisher, who will give me notice of them, that I may endeavour to subjoin at the same time my reply; and in this way readers seeing both at once will more easily determine where the truth lies; for I do not engage in any case to make prolix replies, but only with perfect frankness to avow my errors if I am convinced of them, or if I cannot perceive them, simply to state what I think is required for defence of the matters I have written, adding thereto no explication of any new matte that it may not be necessary to pass without end from one thing to another.

If some of the matters of which I have spoken in the beginning of the “Dioptrics” and “Meteorics”

should offend at first sight, because I call them hypotheses and seem indifferent about giving proof of them, I request a patient and attentive reading of the whole, from which I hope those hesitating will derive satisfaction; for it appears to me that the reasonings are so mutually connected in these treatises, that, as the last are demonstrated by the first which are their causes, the first are in their turn demonstrated by the last which are their effects. Nor must it be imagined that I here commit the fallacy which the logicians call a circle; for since experience renders the majority of these effects most certain, the causes from which I deduce them do not serve so much to establish their reality as to explain their existence; but on the contrary, the reality of the causes is established by the reality of the effects. Nor have I called them hypotheses with any other end in view except that it may be known that I think I am able to deduce them from those first truths which I have already expounded; and yet that I have expressly determined not to do so, to prevent a certain class of minds from thence taking occasion to build some extravagant philosophy upon what they may take to be my principles, and my being blamed for it. I refer to those who imagine that they can master in a day all that another has taken twenty years to think out, as soon as he has spoken two or three words to them on the subject; or who are the more liable to error and the less capable of perceiving truth in very proportion as they are more subtle and lively. As to the opinions which are truly and wholly mine, I offer no apology for them as new, — persuaded as I am that if their reasons be well considered they will be found to be so simple and so conformed, to common sense as to appear less extraordinary and less paradoxical than any others which can be held on the same subjects; nor do I even boast of being the earliest discoverer of any of them, but only of having adopted them, neither because they had nor because they had not been held by others, but solely because reason has convinced me of their truth.

Though artisans may not be able at once to execute the invention which is explained in the "Dioptics," I do not think that any one on that account is entitled to condemn it; for since address and practice are required in order so to make and adjust the machines described by me as not to overlook the smallest particular, I should not be less astonished if they succeeded on the first attempt than if a person were in one day to become an accomplished performer on the guitar, by merely having excellent sheets of music set up before him. And if I write in French, which is the language of my country, in preference to Latin, which is that of my preceptors, it is because I expect that those who make use of their unprejudiced natural reason will be better judges of my opinions than those who give heed to the writings of the ancients only; and as for those who unite good sense with habits of study, whom alone I desire for judges, they will not, I feel assured, be so partial to Latin as to refuse to listen to my reasonings merely because I expound them in the vulgar tongue.

In conclusion, I am unwilling here to say anything very specific of the progress which I expect to make for the future in the sciences, or to bind myself to the public by any promise which I am not certain of being able to fulfil; but this only will I say, that I have resolved to devote what time I may still have to live to no other occupation than that of endeavouring to acquire some knowledge of Nature, which shall be of such a kind as to enable us therefrom to deduce rules in medicine of greater certainty than those at present in use; and that my inclination is so much opposed to all other pursuits, especially to such as cannot be useful to some without being hurtful to others, that if, by any circumstances, I had been constrained to engage in such, I do not believe that I should have been able to succeed. Of this I here make a public declaration, though well aware that it cannot serve to procure for me any consideration in the world, which, however, I do not in the least affect; and I shall always hold myself more obliged to those through whose favour I am permitted to enjoy my retirement without interruption than to any who might offer me the highest earthly preferments.

TO1

I do not want to pursue the hypothesis of the divine origin of language any further on a metaphysical basis, for its groundlessness is clear psychologically from the fact that in order to understand the language of the gods on Olympus the human being must already have reason and consequently must already have language. Still less can I indulge in a pleasant detailing of the animal languages, for, as we have seen, it turns out that they all stand completely and incommensurably apart from human language. What I renounce least happily here are the many sorts of prospects which would lead from this point of the genesis of language in the human soul into the broad fields of Logic, Aesthetics, and Psychology, especially concerning the question, How far can one think without language, what must one think with language?, a question which subsequently spreads itself in its applications over almost all the sciences. Let it suffice here to note that language is the real *differentia* of our species from without, as reason is from within.

In more than one language word and reason, concept and word, language and originating cause [Ursache], consequently also share one name, and this synonymy contains its whole genetic origin. With the Easterners it became the most everyday idiom to call the acknowledgment of a thing name-giving, for in the bottom of the soul both actions are one. They call the human being the speaking animal, and the nonrational animals the dumb – the expression characterizes them sensuously, and

the Greek word *alogos* comprises both things. In this way language becomes a natural organ of the understanding, a sense of the human soul, just as the force of vision of that sensitive soul of the ancients builds for itself the eye, and the instinct of the bee builds for itself its cell.

[It is] excellent that this new, self-made sense belonging to the mind is immediately in its origin a means of connection in its turn. I cannot think the first human thought, cannot set up the first aware judgment in a sequence, without engaging in dialogue, or striving to engage in dialogue, in my soul. Hence the first human thought by its very nature prepares one to be able to engage in dialogue with others! The first characteristic mark that I grasp is a characteristic word for me and a communication word for others!

– Sic verba, quibus voces sensusque notarent

Nominaque invenere – Horace

Third section

The focal point at which Prometheus's heavenly spark catches fire in the human soul has been determined. With the first characteristic mark language arose. But which were the first characteristic marks to serve as elements of language,

I. Sounds

Cheselden's blind man shows how slowly sight develops; with what difficulty the soul arrives at the concepts of space, shape, and color; how many attempts must be made, how much geometry must be acquired, in order to use these characteristic marks distinctly. This was not therefore the most suitable sense for language. In addition, its phenomena were so cold and dumb, and the sensations of the cruder senses in their turn so indistinct and mixed up, that according to all nature either nothing or the ear became the first teacher of language.

There, for example, is the sheep. As an image it hovers before the eye with all objects, images, and colors on a single great nature picture. How much to distinguish, and with what effort! All characteristic marks are finely interwoven, beside each other – all still inexpressible! Who can speak shapes? Who can sound colors? He takes the sheep under his groping hand. Feeling is surer and fuller – but so full, so obscurely mixed up. Who can say what he feels? But listen! The sheep bleats! There a characteristic mark of itself tears itself free from the canvas of the color picture in which so little could be distinguished – has penetrated deeply and distinctly into the soul. “Aha!”

says the learning child-without-any-say, like that formerly blind man of Cheselden's, "Now I will know you again. You bleat!" The turtle-dove coos! The dog barks! There are three words, because he tried out three distinct ideas – these ideas for his logic, those words for his vocabulary! Reason and language took a timid step together, and nature came to meet them half-way through hearing. Nature sounded the characteristic mark not only forth but deep into the soul! It rang out! The soul laid hold – and there it has a resounding word!

The human being is therefore, as a listening, noting creature, naturally formed for language, and even a blind and dumb man, one sees, would inevitably invent language, if only he is not without feeling and deaf Put him comfortably and contentedly on a lonely island; nature will reveal itself to him through his ear, a thousand creatures which he cannot see will nonetheless seem to speak with him, and even if his mouth and his eye remained forever closed, his soul does not remain entirely without language. When the leaves of the tree rustle down coolness for the poor lonely one, when the stream that murmurs past rocks him to sleep, and the west wind whistling in fans his cheeks – the bleating sheep gives him milk, the trickling spring water, the rustling tree fruit – interest enough to know these beneficent beings, urgent cause enough, without eyes and tongue, to name them in his soul. The tree will be called the rustler, the west wind the whistler, the spring the trickler. A small vocabulary lies ready there, and awaits the speech organs' minting. How impoverished and strange, though, would have to be the representations which this mutilated person associates with such sounds!

Now set all of the human being's senses free, let him simultaneously see and touch and feel all the beings which speak into his ear. Heaven! What a classroom of ideas and language! Bring no Mercury or Apollo down from the clouds as operatic dei ex machina; all of many-sounded, divine nature is language mistress and Muse! There she leads all creatures past him; each bears its name on its tongue, and names itself to this enshrouded, visible god! as his vassal and servant. It delivers unto him its characteristic word into the book of his governance like a tribute, that he may remember it by this name, call it in future, and enjoy it. I ask whether this truth – "Precisely the understanding, through which the human being rules over nature, was the father of a living language, which it abstracted for itself from the sounds of resounding beings as characteristic marks for distinguishing!" whether this dry truth can ever be expressed more nobly and beautifully in an Eastern way than [in the words]: "God led the animals to him that he might see how he should name them! And however he would name them, thus were they to be called!" Where can it be said more definitely in an Eastern, poetic way: the human being invented language for himself! – from the sounds of living

nature! – to be characteristic marks of his governing understanding! And that is what I prove.

If an angel or heavenly spirit had invented language, how could it be otherwise than that language's whole structure would have to be an offspring of this spirit's manner of thought, For by what else could I recognize a picture that an angel had painted than by the angelic quality, the supernatural quality of its traits?, But where does that happen in the case of our language? Structure and layout, yes, even the first foundation stone of this palace, betrays humanity!

In what language are heavenly, spiritual concepts the first ones? Those concepts which would also have to be the first according to the order of our thinking spirit – subjects, notiones communes, the seeds of our cognition, the points about which everything turns and [to which] every thing leads back – are these living points not elements of language? After all, the subjects would naturally have to have come before the predicate, and the simplest subjects before the compound ones, that which does and acts before what it does, the essential and certain before the uncertain contingent ... Yes, what all could one not infer, and – in our original languages the clear opposite happens throughout. A hearing, listening creature is recognizable but no heavenly spirit, for resounding verbs are the first ruling elements. Resounding verbs? Actions, and still nothing which acts there? Predicates, and still no subject, The heavenly genius may need to be ashamed of that, but not the sensuous, human creature, for what moved the latter – as we have seen – more deeply than these resounding actions? And hence what else is language's whole manner of construction than a mode of development of this creature's spirit, a history of its discoveries? The divine origin explains nothing and lets nothing be explained from it, it is, as Bacon says of another subject, a holy Vestal Virgin - consecrated to God but barren, pious but useless!

The first vocabulary was therefore collected from the sounds of the whole world. From each resounding being its name rang out, the human soul impressed its image on them, thought of them as characteristic signs, How could it be otherwise than that these resounding interjections became the first? And so it is that, for example, the Eastern languages are full of verbs as basic roots of language. The thought of the thing itself still hovered between the agent and the action. The sound had to designate the thing, just as the thing gave the sound. Hence from the verbs arose nouns, and not from the nouns verbs. The child names the sheep not as a sheep but as a bleating creature, and hence makes the interjection into a verb. This matter becomes explicable in the context of the steps of development of human sensuality, but not in the context of the logic of the higher spirit.

All old, savage languages are full of this origin, and in a “philosophical dictionary of the Easterners” each stem-word with its family, properly presented and soundly developed, would be a map of the course of the human spirit, a history of its development, and a whole such dictionary would be the most excellent proof of the human soul’s art of invention. But also of God’s linguistic and pedagogical method? I doubt it!

Since the whole of nature resounds, there is nothing more natural for a sensuous human being than that it lives, it speaks, it acts. That savage saw the high tree with its splendid crown and admired. The crown rustled! That is the work of divinity! The savage falls down and prays to it! Behold there the history of the sensuous human being, the obscure link, how nouns arise from the verbs – and the easiest step to abstraction! With the savages of North America, for example, everything is still alive: each thing has its genius, its spirit. And that it was just the same with the Greeks and the Easterners is shown by their oldest vocabulary and grammar they are, as the whole of nature was to the inventor, a pantheon!, a realm of living, acting beings!

But because the human being related everything to himself, because everything seemed to speak with him, and really acted for or against him, because he consequently took sides with or against it, loved or hated it, and imagined everything to be human, all these traces of humanity impressed themselves into the first names as well! They too expressed love or hate, curse or blessing, softness or opposition, and especially there arose from this feeling in so many languages the articles! Here everything became human, personified into woman or man – everywhere gods; goddesses; acting, wicked or good, beings!; the roaring storm and the sweet zephyr; the clear spring and the mighty ocean – their whole mythology lies in the mines, the verbs and nouns, of the ancient languages, and the oldest vocabulary was as much a resounding pantheon, a meeting hall of both genders, as nature was to the senses of the first inventor. Here the language of those ancient savages is a study in the strayings of human imagination and passions , like their mythology. Each family of words is an overgrown bush around a sensuous main idea, around a holy, oak on which there are Still traces of the impression that the inventor had of this Dryad The feelings are woven together for him; what moves lives; what resounds speaks – and since it resounds for You or against you, it is friend or enemy; god or goddess; it acts from passions, like You!

A human, sensuous creature is what I love when I reflect on this manner of thought: I see everywhere the weak and timid sensitive person who must love or hate, trust or fear, and would like to spread these sensations from his own breast over all beings. I see everywhere the weak and

yet mighty creature which needs the whole universe and entangles everything into war or peace with itself, which depends on everything and yet rules over everything. – The poetry and the gender-creation of language are hence humanity's interest, and the genitals of speech, so to speak, the means of its reproduction. But now, if a higher genius brought language down out of the stars, how is this? Did this genius out of the stars become entangled on our earth under the moon in such passions of love and weakness, of hate and fear, that he wove everything into liking and hate, that he marked all words with fear and joy, that he, finally, constructed everything on the basis of gender pairings? Did he see and feel as a human being sees, so that the nouns had to pair off into genders and articles for him, so that he put the verbs together in the active and the passive, accorded them so many legitimate and illegitimate children – in short, so that he constructed the whole language on the basis of the feeling of human weaknesses? Did he see and feel in this way?

To a defender of the supernatural origin [of language] it is divine ordering of language “that most stem-words have one syllable, verbs are mostly of two syllables, and hence language is arranged in accordance with the measure of memory.” The fact is inexact and the inference unsure. In the remains of the language which is accepted as being most ancient the roots are all verbs of two syllables, which fact, now, I can explain very well from what I said above, whereas the opposite hypothesis finds no support. These verbs, namely, are immediately built on the sounds and interjections of resounding nature – which often still resound in them, and are here and there even still preserved in them as interjections; but for the most part, as semi-unarticulated sounds, they were inevitably lost when the language developed. Hence in the Eastern languages these first attempts of the stammering tongue are absent; but the fact that they. are absent, and that only their regular remains resound in the verbs, precisely this testifies to the originality and ... the humanity of language. Are these stems treasures and abstractions from God's understanding, or rather the first sounds of the listening ear, the first noises of the stammering tongue? For of course the human species in its childhood formed for itself precisely the language which a child-without-any-say stammers; it is the babbling vocabulary of the wet-nurse's quarters – but where does that remain in the mouths of adults?

The thing that so many ancients say , and so many moderns have repeated without sense, wins from this its sensuous life, namely “that poetry was older than prose!” For what was this first language but a collection of elements of poetry? Imitation of resounding, acting, stirring nature! Taken from the interjections of all beings and enlivened by the interjection of human sensation! The natural language of all creatures poetized by the understanding into sounds, into images of action, of

passion, and of living effect! A vocabulary of the soul which is simultaneously a mythology and a wonderful epic of the actions and speakings of all beings! Hence a constant poetic creation of fable with passion and interest! What else is poetry?

In addition. The tradition of antiquity says: the first language of the human species was song. And many good, musical people have believed that human beings could well have learned this song from the birds. That is, it must be admitted, a lot to swallow! A great, heavy clock with all its sharp wheels and newly stretched springs and hundredweight weights can to be sure produce a carillon of tones. But to set forth the newly created human being, with his driving motives, with his needs, with his strong sensations, with his almost blindly preoccupied attention, and finally with his primitive throat, so that he might ape the nightingale, and from the nightingale sing himself a language, is – however many histories of music and poetry it may be asserted in – unintelligible to me. To be sure, a language through musical tones would be possible (however Leibniz arrived at this idea!). But for the first natural human beings this language was not possible, so artificial and fine is it. In the chain of beings each thing has its voice and a language in accordance with its voice. The language of love is sweet song in the nest of the nightingale, as it is roaring in the cave of the lion; in the deer's forest it is troating lust, and in the cat's den a caterwaul. Each species speaks its own language of love, not for the human being but for itself, and for itself as pleasantly as Petrarch's song to his Laura! Hence as little as the nightingale sings in order to sing as an example for human beings, the way people imagine, just as little will the human being ever want to invent language for himself by trilling in imitation of the nightingale. And then really, what sort of monster is this: a human nightingale in a cave or in the game forest.

So if the first human language was song, it was song which was as natural to the human being, as appropriate to his organs and natural drives, as the nightingale's song was natural to the nightingale, a creature which is, so to speak, a hovering lung – and that was ... precisely our resounding language. Condillac, Rousseau, and others were half on the right track here in that they derive the meter and song of the oldest languages from the cry of sensation -and without doubt sensation did indeed enliven the first sounds and elevate them. But since from the mere sounds of sensation human language could never have arisen, though this song certainly was such a language, something more is still needed in order to produce this song – and that was precisely the naming of each creature in accordance with its own language. So there sang and resounded the whole of nature as an example, and the human being's song was a concerto of all these voices, to the extent that his understanding needed them, his sensation grasped them, his organs were able to express them. Song was born, but

neither a nightingale's song nor Leibniz's musical language nor a mere animals' cry of sensation: an expression of the language of all creatures within the natural scale of the human voice!

Even when language later became more regular, monotonous, and regimented [gereiht], it still remained a species of song, as the accents of so many savages bear witness; and that the oldest poetry and music arose from this song, subsequently made nobler and finer, has now already been proved by more than one person. The philosophical Englishman who in our century tackled this origin of poetry and music could have got furthest if he had not excluded the spirit of language from his investigation and had aimed less at his system of confining poetry and music to a single point of unification – in which neither of them can show itself in its true light – than at the origination of both from the whole nature of the human being. In general, because the best pieces of ancient poetry are remains from these language-singing times, the misconceptions, misappropriations, and misguided errors of taste that have been spelled forth from the course of the most ancient poems, of the Greek tragedies, and of the Greek orations are quite countless. How much could still be said here by a philosopher who had learned among the savages, where this age still lives, the tone in which to read these pieces! Otherwise, and usually, people only ever see the weave of the back of the carpet!, *disjecti membra poetae*! But I would lose myself in an immeasurable field if I were to go into individual observations about language – so back to the first path of the invention of language!

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How words arose from sounds minted into characteristic marks by the understanding was very intelligible, but not all objects make sounds. Whence, then, characteristic words for these [other] objects for the soul to name them with, Whence the human being's art of turning something that is not noise into noise., What does color, roundness have in common with the name which arises from it just as the name 'bleating' arises from the sheep ? The defenders of the supernatural origin [of language] immediately have a solution here: "[This happens] by arbitrary volition! Who can comprehend, and investigate in God's understanding, why green is called 'green' and not 'blue'? Clearly, that is the way he wanted it!" And thus the thread [of inquiry] is cut off! All philosophy about the art of inventing language thus hovers arbitrarily-voluntarily in the clouds, and for us each word is a *qualitas occulta*, something arbitrarily willed! Only it may not be taken ill that in this case I do not understand the term 'arbitrarily willed.? To invent a language out of one's brain by arbitrary volition and without any ground of choice is, at least for a human soul, which Wants to have a ground, even if only a single ground, for everything, as much a torture as it is for the body to have

itself tickled to death. Moreover, in the case of a primitive, sensuous natural human being whose forces are not yet fine enough to play aiming at what is useless, who, in his lack of practice and his strength, does nothing without a pressing cause, and wants to do nothing in vain, the invention of a language out of insipid, empty arbitrary volition is opposed to the whole analogy of his nature.

And in general, it is opposed to the whole analogy of all human forces of soul, a language thought out from pure arbitrary volition.

So, to the matter. How was the human being, left to his own forces, also able even to invent for himself.

II. a language when no sound resounded for him as an example?

How are sight and hearing, color and word, scent and sound, connected Not among themselves in the objects. But what, then, are these properties in the objects? They are merely sensuous sensations in us, and as such do they not all flow into one, We are a single thinking sensorium commune, only touched from various sides. There lies the explanation.

Feeling forms the basis of all the senses, and this already gives to the most diverse sensations such an inward, strong, inexpressible bond that the strangest phenomena arise from this connection. I am familiar with more than one example in which people, perhaps due to an impression from childhood, by nature could not but through a sudden onset immediately associate with this sound that color, with this phenomenon that quite different, obscure feeling, which in the light of leisurely reason's comparison has no relation with it at all – for who can compare sound and color, phenomenon and feeling? We are full of such connections of the most different senses, only we do not notice them except in onsets which make us beside ourselves, in sicknesses of the imagination, or on occasions when they become unusually noticeable. The normal course of our thoughts proceeds so quickly, the waves of our sensations rush so obscurely into each other, there is so much in our soul at once, that in regard to most ideas we are as though asleep by a spring where to be sure we still hear the rush of each wave, but so obscurely that in the end sleep takes away from us all noticeable feeling. If it were possible for us to arrest the chain of our thoughts and look at each link for its connection, what strange phenomena!, what foreign analogies among the most different senses – in accordance with which, however, the soul habitually acts! In the eyes of a merely rational being, we would all be similar to that type of madmen who think cleverly but combine very unintelligibly and foolishly!

In the case of sensuous creatures who have sensation through many different senses simultaneously this collecting together of ideas is unavoidable, for what are all the senses but mere modes of representation of a single positive force of the soul? We distinguish them, but once again only through senses; hence modes of representation through modes of representation. With much effort we learn to separate them in use – but in a certain basis they still function together. All dissections of sensation in the case of Buffon's, Condillac's, and Bonnet's sensing human being are abstractions; the philosopher has to neglect one thread of sensation in pursuing the other, but in nature all these threads are a single web! Now, the more obscure the senses are, the more they flow into each other; and the more untrained they are, the less a person has yet learned to use one without the other, to use it with skill and distinctness, then the more obscure they are! – Let us apply this to the beginning of language! The childhood and inexperience of the human species made language easier!

The human being stepped into the world. What an ocean immediately fell upon him! With what difficulty did he learn to distinguish!, to recognize senses!, to use recognized senses alone! Vision is the coldest sense , and if it had always been as cold, as remote, as distinct as it has become for us through an effort and training lasting many years, then indeed I would not see how one can make audible what one sees. But nature has taken care of this and has shortened the path, for even this vision was, as children and formerly blind people testify, to begin with only feeling. Most visible things move, many make a sound when they move, and where not, then they, so to speak, lie closer to the eye in its initial condition, immediately upon it, and can hence be felt. Feeling lies so close to hearing; its descriptive terms, for example, hart, rauh, weich, wollig, sammt, haarig, starr, glatt, schlacht, borstig, etc., which of course all concern only surfaces and do not even penetrate deeply, all make a sound as though one felt the thing. The soul, which stood in the throng of such a confluence of sensations, and in need of forming a word, reached out and got hold perhaps of the word of a neighboring sense whose feeling flowed together with this one. In this way words arose for all the senses, and even for the coldest of them. Lightning does not make a noise, but if it is to be expressed, this messenger of midnight!,

That, in a spleen, unfolds both hem en and earth,
And ere a man hath power to say , “Behold!”
The jaws of darkness do devour it up.

then naturally this will be done by a word which through the help of an intermediary feeling gives

the ear the sensation of what is most suddenly quick which the eye had: Blitz! The words Duft, Ton, suss, bitter, sauer, etc. all make a sound as though one felt – for what else are all the senses originally but feeling? But how feeling can express itself in sound – this we have already in the first section accepted as an immediate natural law of the sensing machine which we may explain no further!

And hence all the difficulties lead back to the following two proven, distinct propositions:) Since all the senses are nothing but modes of representation belonging to the soul, let the soul only have distinct representation, and consequently a characteristic mark, and with the characteristic mark it has inner language.

) Since all the senses, especially in the condition of human childhood, are nothing but ways of feeling belonging to a soul, but all feeling according to a law of sensation pertaining to animal nature immediately has its sound, let this feeling only be elevated to the distinctness of a characteristic mark, then the word for external language is present. Here we come to a mass of special observations concerning “how nature’s wisdom has thoroughly organized the human being so that he might invent language for himself.” Here is the main observation:

“Since the human being only receives the language of teaching nature through the sense of hearing, and without this cannot invent language, hearing in a certain way became the middle one of his senses, the actual door to the soul, and the bond connecting the other senses.” I want to explain myself!

) Hearing is the middle one of the human senses in regard to sphere of sensitivity from outside. Feeling senses everything only in itself and in its organ; vision throws us far outside ourselves; hearing stands in its degree of communicativity in the middle. What does that do for language. Suppose a creature, even a rational creature, for whom feeling were the main sense (if this is possible!). How small its world is! And since it does not sense this through hearing, it will no doubt perhaps like the insect construct a web for itself, but it will not construct for itself a language through sounds! Again, a creature that is all eye. How inexhaustible the world of its visual observations is! How immeasurably far it is thrown outside itself! Dispersed into what infinite manifoldness! Its spoken language (we have no idea of it!) would become a sort of infinitely fine pantomime, its writing an algebra by means of colors and strokes – but resounding language never! We creatures who hear stand in the middle: we see, we feel, but seen, felt nature resounds! It becomes a teacher of language through sounds! We become, so to speak, hearing through all our

senses!

Let us feel the comfortableness of our position – through it each sense becomes capable of language. To be sure, only hearing actually gives sounds, and the human being cannot invent but only find, only imitate. But on the one side feeling lies next door, and on the other side vision is the neighboring sense. The sensations unite together and hence all approach the region where characteristic marks turn into sounds. In this way, what one sees, what one feels, becomes soundable as well. The sense for language has become our middle and unifying sense; we are linguistic creatures.

) Hearing is the middle one among the senses in respect of distinctness and clarity, and hence again the sense for language. How obscure is feeling! It gets stunned [übertäubt]! It senses everything mixed up. There it is difficult to separate off a characteristic mark for acknowledgment; it proves inexpressible!

Again, vision is so bright and blinding [überglanzend], it supplies such a mass of characteristic marks, that the soul succumbs under the manifoldness, and can for example separate one of them off only so weakly that recognition by means of it becomes weak. Hearing is in the middle. It leaves aside all feeling's mixed-up, obscure characteristic marks. All vision's excessively fine characteristic marks as well! But does a sound tear itself free there from the felt, observed object? Into this sound the characteristic marks of those two senses gather themselves – this becomes a characteristic word! So hearing reaches out on both sides; it makes clear what was too obscure, it makes pleasanter what was too bright, it introduces more unity into the obscure manifold of feeling, and also into the excessively bright manifold of vision; and since this acknowledgment of the manifold through one, through a characteristic mark, becomes language, hearing is language.

) Hearing is the middle sense with respect to liveliness and hence the sense for language. Feeling overpowers [überwältigt]; vision is too cold and indifferent. The former penetrates too deeply into us to be able to become language; the latter remains too much at rest before us. Hearing's sound penetrates so intimately into our souls that it inevitably becomes a characteristic mark, but still not so stunningly [übertaubend] that it could not become a clear characteristic mark. That is the sense for language.

How brief, tiring, and unbearable the language of any cruder sense would be for us! How confusing

and mind-emptying the language of excessively fine vision! Who can always taste, feel, and smell without soon, as Pope says, dying an aromatic death? And who always attentively gape at a color-piano without soon going blind? But we can for longer and almost for ever hear, think words with hearing, so to speak; hearing is for the soul what green, the middle color, is for sight. The human being is formed to be a linguistic creature.

) Hearing is the middle sense in relation to the time in which it operates, and hence the sense for language. Feeling casts everything into us at once, it stirs our strings strongly but briefly and in jumps. Vision presents everything to us at once, and hence intimidates the pupil through the immeasurable canvas of its side-by-side. Behold how [nature] the teacher of language spares us through hearing! She counts sounds into our souls only one after another, gives and never tires, gives and always has more to give. She thus practices the whole knack of method: she teaches progressiively! Who in these circumstances could not grasp language, invent language for himself?

) Hearing is the middle sense in relation to the need to express oneself, and hence the sense for language. Feeling operates too obscurely to be expressed; but so much the less may it be expressed – it concerns our self so much!, it is so selfish and self-engrossed! Vision is inexpressible for the inventor of language; but why does it need to be expressed immediately? The objects remain! They can be shown by means of gestures! But the objects of hearing are bound up with movement; they proceed past; but precisely thereby they also resound. They become expressible because they must be expressed, and through the fact that they must be expressed, through their movement, do they become expressible. What an ability for language!

) Hearing is the middle sense in relation to its development, and hence the sense for language. The human being is feeling through and through: the embryo in its first moment of life feels as does the infant; that is the natural stem out of which the more delicate branches of sensuality grow , and the tangled ball out of which all finer forces of the soul unfold. How do these unfold? As we have seen, through hearing, since nature awakens the soul to its first distinct sensation through sounds. Hence, so to speak, awakens it out of the obscure sleep of feeling and ripens it to still finer sensuality. If, for example, vision was already there unfolded before hearing, or if it were possible that it should be awakened out of feeling otherwise than through the middle sense of hearing -what wise poverty!, . what clairvoyant stupidity! How difficult it would become for such a creature – all eye!, when it should instead be a human being – to name what it saw!, to unite cold vision with warmer feeling, with the whole stem of humanity! However, the very governing assumption [Instanz] turns

out to be self-contradictory; the way to the unfolding of human nature – is better and single! Since all the senses function cooperatively, through the sense of hearing we are, so to speak, always in nature's school, learning to abstract and simultaneously to speak; vision refines itself with reason reason and the talent of referring. And so when the human being comes to the most subtle characterization of visual phenomena – what a store of language and linguistic similarities already lies ready! He took the path from feeling into the sense of his visual images [Phantasmen] no otherwise than via the sense of language, and has hence learned to sound forth what he sees as much as what he felt.

If I could now bring all the ends together here and make visible simultaneously that web called human nature: through and through a web for language. For this, we saw, were space and sphere granted to this positive force of thought; for this were its content and matter measured out; for this were shape and form created; finally, for this were the senses organized and ordered – for language! This is why the human being does not think more clearly or more obscurely; this is why he does not see and feel more sharply, at greater length, more vividly; this is why he has these senses, not more and not different ones – everything counterbalances!, is spared and substituted for!, is disposed and distributed intentionally! – unity and connection!, proportion and order!, a whole!, a system!, a creature of awareness and language, of taking-awareness and creating language! If someone after all [our] observations still wanted to deny this destiny [of the human being] as a linguistic creature, he would have to begin by turning from being nature's observer into being its destroyer! He would have to tear apart all the indicated harmonies into discords, strike the whole magnificent structure of human forces into ruins, lay waste its sensuality, and in place of nature's masterpiece feel a creature full of shortcomings and gaps, full of weaknesses and convulsions! And if then now, on the other hand, "language also precisely is as it had to become according to the basic outline and momentum of the preceding creature?"

I shall proceed to the proof of this latter position, although a very pleasant stroll would still lie before me here calculating in accordance with the rules of Sulzer's theory of pleasure "what sorts of advantages and comforts a language through hearing might have for us over the language of other senses." That stroll would lead too far, though; and one must forgo it when the main road still stretches far ahead in need of securing and rectifying. – So, first of all:

I. "The older and more original languages are, the more noticeable becomes this analogy of the senses in their roots!"

Although in later languages we characterize anger in its roots as a phenomenon of the visible face or as an abstraction – for example, through the flashing of the eyes, the glowing of the cheeks, etc. – and hence only see it or think it, the Easterner hears it! He hears it snort!, hears it spray burning smoke and storming sparks! That became the stem"? of the word; the nose the seat of anger; the whole family of anger words and anger metaphors snort their origin.

If for us life expresses itself through the pulse, through undulation and fine characteristic marks, in language too, it revealed itself to the Easterner respiring aloud – the human being lived when he breathed, died when he breathed out his last, and one hears the root of the word breathe like the first living Adam.

If we characterize giving birth in our way, the Easterner hears even in the names for it the cry of the mother's fear, or in the case of animals the shaking out of an afterbirth. This is the central idea around which his images revolve!

If we in the word dawn [Morgenr?te] obscurely hear such things as the beauty, the shining, the freshness, the enduring nomad in the Orient feels even in the root of the word the first, rapid, delightful ray of light which one of us has perhaps never seen, or at least never felt with the sense of feeling. – The examples from ancient and savage languages of how heartily and with what strong sensation they, characterize on the basis of hearing and feeling become countless, and “a work of this sort that really sought out the basic feeling of such ideas in various peoples” would be a complete demonstration of my thesis and of the human invention of language.

II. “The older and more original languages are, the more feelings also intersect in the roots of the words.”

Let one open any available Eastern dictionary and one will see the impetus of the desire to achieve self-expression! How the inventor tore ideas out of one type of feeling and borrowed them for another!; how he borrowed most in the case of the heaviest, coldest, distinctest senses!; how everything had to become feeling and sound in order to become expression! Hence the strong, bold metaphors in the roots of the words! Hence the metaphorical transferences from one type of feeling to another, so that the meanings of a stem-word, and still more those of its derivatives, set in contrast with one another, turn into the most motley picture. The genetic cause lies in the poverty, of the

human soul and in the confluence of the sensations of a primitive human being. One sees his need to express himself so distinctly; one sees it to an ever greater extent the further away in sensation the idea lay from feeling and sound – so that one may no longer doubt the human character of the origin of language. For how do the champions of another origination claim to explain this interweaving of ideas in the roots of words ?? M as God so poor in ideas and words that he had to resort to such confusing word usage'. Or was he such a lover of hyperboles, of outlandish metaphors, that he imprinted this spirit into the very basic-roots of his language?

The so-called divine language, the Hebrew language, is entirely imprinted with these examples of daring, so that the Orient even has the honor of designating them with its name. Only, let this spirit of metaphor please not, though, be called ‘Asiatic’ as if it were not to be found anywhere else! It lives in all savage languages – only, to be sure, in each one in proportion to the nation’s level of civilization [Bildung] and in accordance with the peculiar character of the nation’s manner of thought. A people which did not distinguish its feelings much and did not distinguish them sharply, a people which did not have enough heart to express itself and to steal expressions mightily, will also be less at a loss because of nuances in feeling, or will make do with slothful semi-expressions. A fiery nation reveals its courage in such metaphors, whether it lives in the Orient or in North America. But the nation which in its deepest ground reveals the most such transplantations has the language which was the poorest, the oldest, the most original ahead of others, and this nation was certainly in the Orient.

One sees how difficult “a true etymological dictionary” must be in the case of such a language. The so very diverse meanings of a root which are supposed to be deduced and traced back to their origin in a genealogical chart are only related through such obscure feelings, through fleeting side ideas, through coinciding sensations [Mitempfindungen], which rise up from the bottom of the soul and can be but little grasped in rules! Moreover, their relationships are so national, so much according to the peculiar manner of thinking and seeing of that people, of that inventor, in that land, in that time, in those circumstances, that they are infinitely difficult for a Northerner and Westerner to get right, and must suffer infinitely in long, cold paraphrases. Moreover, since they were forced into existence by necessity, and were invented in affect, in feeling, in the need for expression – what a stroke of fortune is necessary to hit on the same feeling! And finally, since in a dictionary of this kind the words and the meanings of a word are supposed to be gathered together from such diverse times, occasions, and manners of thinking, and these momentary determinations hence increase in number ad infinitum, how the labor multiplies here!, what insightfulness [is necessary] to penetrate

into these circumstances and needs, and what moderation to keep within reasonable bounds in this in one's interpretations of various times!, what knowledge and flexibility of soul is required to give oneself so completely this primitive wit, this bold imagination, this national feeling of foreign times, and not , to modernize it according to ours! But precisely thereby there would also "be borne a torch not merely into the history, manner of thinking, and literature of the land, but quite generally into the obscure region of the human soul, where concepts intersect and get entangled!, where the most diverse feelings produce one another, where a pressing occasion summons forth all the forces of the soul and reveals the whole art of invention of which the soul is capable." Every step in such a work would be discovery! And every new observation would be the fullest proof of the human character of the origin of language.

Schultens has earned himself renown in the development of several such origins of the Hebrew language. Each of these developments is a proof of my rule. But for many reasons I do not believe that the origins of the first human language, even if it were the Hebrew language, can ever be developed fully.

I infer a further remark which is too universal and important to be omitted. The basis of the bold verbal metaphors lay in the first invention. But what is going on when late afterwards, when all need has already disappeared, such species of words and images remain out of mere addiction to imitation or love for antiquity? And even get extended and elevated further, Then, oh then, it turns into the sublime nonsense, the turgid wordplay which in the beginning it actually was not. In the beginning it was bold, manly wit which perhaps meant to play least at the times when it seemed to play most! It was primitive sublimity of imagination that worked out such a feeling in such a word. But now in the hands of insipid imitators, without such a feeling, without such an occasion ... ah!, ampullae of words without spirit! And that has "been the fate in later times of all those languages whose first forms were so bold." The later French poets cannot stray in peaks because the first inventors of their language did not stray in peaks; their whole language is sound reason's prose and originally has virtually no poetic word that might belong to the poet. But the Easterners? The Greeks? The English? And we Germans?

From this it follows that the older a language is, the more such bits of boldness there are in its roots, if it has lived for a long time, has developed for a long time, then so much the less must one automatically head for every original bit of boldness as though every one of these intersecting concepts had also on every occasion in every late use been thought of as a component. The original

metaphor was [a result of] the impulse to speak. If later, in every case when the word had already gained currency and had worn down its sharpness, it is taken to be fruitfulness and energy to combine all such peculiarities – what miserable examples abound before us in whole schools of the Eastern languages!

One more thing, If, pushing things further, certain fine concepts of a dogma, of a system, adhere to, or get fixed to, or are supposed to be investigated from, such bold word struggles, such transpositions of feelings into an expression, such intersections of ideas without rule or plumb-line heaven!, how little were these word experiments of an emerging or early emerged language the definitions of a system, and how often people end up creating word idols of which the inventor or later usage had no thought! But such remarks would go on for ever. I proceed to a new canon:

III. “The more original a language is, the more frequently such feelings intersect in it, then the less these can be exactly and logically subordinated to each other. The language is rich in synonyms; for all its essential poverty it has the greatest unnecessary excess.”

The defenders of the divine origin, who know how to find divine order in everything, can hardly find it here, and deny the synonyms. Deny them? Fine then, let it be the case that among the words that the Arab has for the lion, among the that he has for the snake, among the So that he has for honey, and among the more than , that he has for the sword fine distinctions are present, or would have been present but have been lost. Why were they there if they were bound to be lost? Why did God invent an unnecessary vocabulary which, as the Arabs say, only a divine prophet was able to grasp in its entire scope? Did He invent for the emptiness of oblivion, Comparatively speaking, though, these words are still synonyms, considering the many other ideas for which words are quite lacking. Now let someone, then, unfold divine order in the fact that He who enjoyed oversight of the plan of language invented words for the stone, and none for all the so essential ideas, Inner feelings, and abstractions, that He in the former case smothered with unnecessary excess, but in the latter case abandoned in the greatest poverty, so that people had to steal, to usurp metaphors, to talk semi-nonsense, etc.

Humanly, the matter explains itself As improperly as difficult, rare ideas had to be expressed could the available and easy ideas be expressed frequently. The less familiar one was with nature, the more sides one could look at it from and hardly recognize it because of inexperience, the less one invented a priori but in accordance with sensuous circumstances, then the more synonyms! The

more people invented, the more nomadic and separated they were when they invented, and yet for the most part invented only in a single circle for a single kind of things, then, when they afterwards came together, when their languages flowed into an ocean of vocabulary, the more synonyms! They could not be thrown away , all of them. For which should be thrown away? They were current with this tribe, with this family, with this poet. And so it became, as that Arab dictionary writer said when he had counted up words for misery, the four hundredth misery to have to count up the words for misery. Such a language is rich because it is poor, because its inventors did not yet have enough of a plan to become poor. And that futile inventor of precisely the most imperfect language would be God?

The analogies of all savage languages confirm my thesis: each of them is in its way prodigal and needy – only each in its own manner. If the Arab has so many words for stone, camel, sword, snake (things among which he lives!), then the language of Ceylon is, in accordance with its people's inclinations, rich in flatteries, titles, and verbal ornamentation. For the word ‘woman’ it has twelve sorts of names according to class and rank, whereas we impolite Germans, for example, have to borrow in this area from our neighbors. Thou and you are articulated in eight sorts of ways according to class and rank, and this as much by the daylaborer as by the courtier. This jumble is the form of the language. In Si am there are eight ways of saying I and we, depending on whether the lord is speaking with the slave or the slave with the lord. The language of the savage Caribs is almost divided into two languages belonging to the women and the men, and the most common things – bed, moon, sun, bow – the two sexes name differently. What an excess of synonyms! And yet precisely these Caribs have only four words for the colors, to which they must refer all others. What poverty! The Hurons have in each case a double verb for something that has a soul and something that lacks a soul, so that seeing in ‘seeing a stone’ and seeing in ‘seeing a human being’ are always two different expressions. Let one pursue that principle through the whole of nature. What a richness! ‘To use one’s own property’ or ‘the property of the person with whom one is speaking’ always has two different words. What a richness! In the main language of Peru the genders are named in such a peculiarly distinct way that the sister of a brother and the sister of a sister, the child of a father and the child of a mother, are called something quite different. And yet precisely this language has no real plural! -Each of these cases of synonymy is so interconnected with the custom, character, and origin of the people – but everywhere the inventing human spirit reveals its stamp. – A new canon:

IV “Just as the human soul can recollect no abstraction from the realm of spirits that it did not arrive

at through occasions and awakenings of the senses, likewise also no language has an abstractum that it did not arrive at through sound and feeling. And the more original the language, then the fewer abstractions, the more feelings." In this immeasurable field I can again only pick flowers:

The whole construction of the Eastern languages bears witness that all their abstracta were previously sensualities: Spirit was wind, breath, nocturnal storm! Holy meant separate, alone. Soul meant breath. Anger meant the snorting of the nose. Etc. The more universal concepts were hence only accreted to language"? later through abstraction, wit, imagination, simile, analogy, etc. – in the deepest abyss of language there lies not a single one of them!"

With all savages the same thing happens, according to the level of the culture. In the language of Barantola the word holy, and with the Hottentots the word spirit, could not be found. All missionaries in all parts of the world complain about the difficulty of communicating Christian concepts to savages in their own languages, and yet of course these communications are never supposed to be a scholastic dogmatics but only the common concepts of the common understanding. If one reads here and there samples of this presentation among the savages, or even only among the uncivilized languages of Europe, for example the Lapp, Finnish, or Estonian languages, in translation and looks at the grammars and dictionaries of these peoples, the difficulties become obvious.

If one is not willing to believe the missionaries, then let one read the philosophers: de la Condamine in Peru and on the Amazon river, Maupertius in Lapland, etc. Time, duration, space, essence, matter, body, virtue, justice, freedom, gratitude do not exist in the tongue of the Peruvians, even though they often show with their reason that they, infer in accordance with these concepts, and show with their deeds that they have these virtues. As long as they have not made the idea clear to themselves as a characteristic mark, they have no word for it.

"Where, therefore, such words have entered the language, one clearly recognizes in them their origin." The church language of the Russian nation is for the most part Greek. The Christian concepts of the Latvians are German words or German concepts transposed into Latvian. The Mexican who wants to express his poor sinner paints him as someone kneeling who is making auricular confession, and his triunity as three faces with halos. It is known by what routes most abstractions have entered "into our scientific language," into theology and law, into philosophy and other subjects. It is known how often scholastics and polemicists could not even fight with words

of their own language and hence had to import arms (hypostasis and substance, homoousios and homoiousios) from those languages in which the concepts were abstracted, in which the arms were whetted! Our whole psychology, as refined and precise as it is, has no word of its own.

This is so true that it is not even possible for mystic fanatics and the enraptured to characterize their new secrets from nature, from heaven and hell, otherwise than through images and sensuous representations. Swedenborg could not do otherwise than intuit-together his angels and spirits out of all the senses, and the sublime Klopstock – the greatest antithesis to him! -could not do otherwise than construct his heaven and hell from sensuous materials. The Negro intuits his gods down from the treetops for himself, and the Chinghailese hears his devil into existence for himself from the noise of the forests. I have crept in pursuit of several of these abstractions among various peoples, in various languages, and have perceived “the strangest tricks of invention of the human spirit.” The subject is much too large, but the basis is always the same. “When the savage thinks that this thing has a spirit, then there must be a sensuous thing present from which he abstracts the spirit for himself.” Only the abstraction has its very diverse species, levels, and methods. – The easiest example of the fact that no nation has in its language more or other words than it has learned to abstract is those doubtless very easy abstractions, the numbers. How few do most savages have, however rich, excellent, and developed their languages may be! Never more than they needed. The trading Phoenician was the first to invent arithmetic; the shepherd who counts his flock also learns to count; the hunting nations, which never have work involving large numbers, only know to describe an army as like hairs on a head! Who can count them? Who, if he has never counted up so high, has words for this?

Is it possible to disregard all these traces of the changing, language-creating mind, and to seek an origin in the clouds? What sort of proof does anyone have of a “single word which only God could have invented?” Does there exist in any, language even a single pure universal concept which came to man from heaven? Where is it even merely possible? “And what , grounds and analogies and proofs there are of the genesis of language in the human soul in accordance with the human senses and manners of seeing! What proofs there are of the progress of language with reason, and of its development out of reason, among all peoples, latitudes, and circumstances!” What ear is there that does not hear this universal voice of the nations?

And yet I see with astonishment that Mr. Sü?milch again confronts me and on the path where I discover the most human order imaginable finds divine order.” “That no language has at present

yet been discovered which was entirely unsuited to arts and sciences” – what else does that show, then, than that no language is brutish, that they are all human? Where, then, has anyone discovered a human being who was entirely unsuited to arts and sciences? And was that a miracle? Or not precisely the most common thing, because he was a human being? “All missionaries have been able to talk with the most savage peoples and to convince them. That could not have happened without inferences and grounds. Their languages therefore must have contained abstract terms, etc.” And if that was so, was it divine order, Or was it not precisely the most human thing, to abstract words for oneself where one needed them? And what people has ever had even a single abstraction in its language which it did not acquire for itself ? And then, were there an equal number in the case of all peoples? Were the missionaries able to express themselves equally easily everywhere, or has one not read the opposite from all parts of the world? And how, then, did they express themselves but by molding their new concepts onto the language according to analogy with it? And did this everywhere happen in the same manner- About the fact so much, so much could be said! The inference says entirely the opposite: “Precisely because human reason cannot exist without abstraction, and each abstraction does not come to be without language, it must also be the case that in every people language contains abstractions, that is, is an offspring of reason, of which it was a tool.” “But as each language contains only as many abstractions as the people was able to make, and not a single one that was made without the senses, as is shown by its originally sensuous expression, it follows that divine order is nowhere to be seen except insofar as language is through and through human.”

V. Finally, “since every grammar is only a philosophy about language and a method for language’s use, the more original the language, the less grammar there must be in it, and the oldest language is just the previously indicated vocabulary of nature!” I shall sketch a few amplifications.

) Declensions and conjugations are nothing but abbreviations and determinations of the use of nouns and verbs according to number, tense

and mood, and person. Hence, the more primitive a language is, the more irregular it is in these determinations, and it shows in each step forward the course of human reason. Initially, in the absence of art in use, language is mere vocabulary.

) Just as the verbs of a language are earlier than the nouns roundly abstracted from them, likewise also at the beginning, the less people have learned to subordinate concepts to one another, the more

conjugations there are. How many the Easterners have! And yet there are really none – for what transplantations and violent transpositions of verbs from conjugation into conjugation still occur! The matter is quite natural. Since nothing concerns the human being as much, or at least touches him as much linguistically, as what he is supposed to narrate, deeds, actions, events, it is inevitable that such a mass of deeds and events accumulates originally that there comes to be a new verb for almost every condition. “In the Huron language everything gets conjugated. An art that cannot be explained allows the nouns, pronouns, and adverbs to be distinguished in it from the verbs. The simple verbs have a double conjugation, one for themselves and one which refers to other things. The forms of the third person have both genders. Concerning tenses, one finds the fine distinctions which one observes, for example, in Greek; indeed, if one wants to give the account of a journey, one expresses oneself differently depending on whether one has made it by land or by water. The active forms multiply as many times as there are things that fall under the action; the word ‘eat’ changes with every edible thing. The action of an ensouled thing is expressed differently from that of a thing without a soul. To use one’s own property and that of the person with whom one is speaking has two forms of expression. Etc.” Let one imagine all this multiplicity of verbs’ moods, tenses, persons, conditions, genders, etc. – what effort and art [it would take] to set this in hierarchical order to some extent! To turn what was entirely vocabulary into grammar to some extent! Father Leri’s grammar of the Topinambuans in Brazil shows exactly the same thing! For “just as the first vocabulary of the human soul was a living epic of resounding, acting nature, so the first grammar was virtually nothing but a philosophical attempt to turn this epic into more regular history.” It therefore works itself to exhaustion with very verbs, and works in a chaos which is inexhaustible for the art of poetry, when more ordered very rich for the determining of history, but last of all usable for axioms and demonstrations.

) The word which immediately followed the sound of nature, imitating it, already followed something past: “past tenses are hence the roots of verbs, but past tenses which still almost hold for the present.” A priori the fact is strange and inexplicable, since the present time ought to be the first, as indeed it has come to be in all languages were formed later. But according to the history of the invention of language it could not have been otherwise. “One shows the present, but one has to narrate what is past.” And since one could narrate what was past in so many ways, and to begin with, in the need to find words, had to do this so diversely, there arose “in all ancient languages many past tenses but only one or no present tense.” In more civilized [gebildeteren] ages, now, the art of poetry and history inevitably found much to rejoice at in this, but philosophy very little, because philosophy does not like a confusing stock. – Here Hurons, Brazilians, Easterners, and

Greeks are again alike: everywhere traces of the course of the human spirit!

) All modern philosophical languages have modified the noun more finely, the verb less but more regularly. For language grew more “for cold observation of what exists and what existed rather than still remaining an irregularly stammering mixture of what perhaps existed.” People got used to expressing the former one thing after another, and hence to determining it through numbers and articles and cases, etc. “The ancient inventors wanted to say everything at once, not merely what had been done but who had done it, when, how, and where it had happened. So they, immediately introduced into nouns the condition; into each person of the verb the gender; they immediately distinguished through preformatives and adformatives, through affixes and suffixes; verb and adverb, verb and noun, and everything flowed together.” The later, the more distinguishing and counting out took place; breaths turned into articles, word endings [Ans?tzen] turned into persons, word beginnings [Vors?tzen] turned into moods or adverbs; the parts of speech flowed apart; now grammar gradually came into being. Thus this art of speaking, this philosophy about language, was only formed [gebildet] slowly and step by step, down through centuries and ages, and the first mind who contemplates “a true philosophy of grammar, the art of speaking!” must certainly first have thought over “the history of the same down through peoples and levels.” But if we only had such a history! With all its progressions and deviations it would be a map of the humanity of language.

) But how was it possible for a language to exist entirely without grammar? A mere confluence of images and sensations without interconnection and determination? Both were provided for; it was living language. There the great attuning participation of gestures so to speak set the rhythm and the sphere to which what was said belonged; and the great wealth of determinations which lay in the vocabulary itself substituted for the art of grammar. Observe the old writing of the Mexicans! They paint sheer individual images; where no image enters the senses, they have agreed on strokes and the interconnection for everything must be given by the world, to which it belongs, from which it gets prophesied. This “prophetic art of guessing interconnection from individual signs” – how far only individual dumb and deaf people can still exercise it! And if this art itself belongs to the language as a part of it, itself gets learned from childhood on as a part of it, if this art becomes ever easier and more perfect with the tradition [Tradition] of generations, then I see nothing unintelligible [in it]. – But the more this art is made easier, then the more it diminishes, the more grammar comes into being – and that is the progressive course of the human spirit!

Proofs of this are, for example, La Loubere’s reports about the Siamese language. How similar it

still is to the interconnection of [the language of] the Easterners -especially before more interconnection yet entered through later cultivation [Bildung]. The Siamese wants to say “If I were in Siam, then I would be happy!” and says “If I being city Siam, I happy heart much!” He wants to pray the Lord’s Prayer and has to say “Father us being heaven! God’s name wanting hallowing everywhere, etc.” How Eastern and original that is! just as interconnecting as a Mexican image-writing!, or the stammerings of those who are ineducable in foreign languages!

) I must explain here one further strange phenomenon which I again see misunderstood in Mr. Sü?milch’s divine ordering, “namely, the diversity of the meanings of a word according to the difference between minor articulations!” I find this knack among almost all savages – as, for example, Garcilaso de la Vega cites it of the Peruvians, Condamine of the Brazilians, La Loubere of the Siamese, Resnel of the North Americans. I find it likewise in the case of the ancient languages, for example, the Chinese language and the Eastern languages, especially Hebrew, where a minor sound, accent, breath changes the whole meaning. And yet, I find in it nothing but a very human thing: poverty and comfort of the inventors! They needed a new word, and since unnecessary invention out of nothing is so difficult, they took a similar word with the alteration of perhaps only a single breath. That was a law of economy, initially very natural for them with their interwoven feelings and still fairly comfortable for them with their more forceful pronunciation of words. But for a foreigner, who has not habituated his ear to this from childhood, and to whom the language is now hissed forth with phlegm, the sound half remaining in the mouth, this law of economy and neediness makes speech inaudible and inexpressible. The more a sound grammar has imported domestic management into languages, the less necessary this parsimony becomes. So [it is] precisely the opposite of an indication of divine invention – in which case the inventor would certainly have been very inept at coping if he had to resort to such a thing.

Finally, the progress of language through reason and of reason through language becomes most obvious “when language has already taken a few steps, when pieces of art already exist in it, for example, poems, when writing I is invented, when one genre of writing develops after the other.” Then no step can be taken, no new word invented, no new happy form given currency in which there is not an offspring of the human soul. Then through poems meters, choice of the strongest words and colors, and ordering and zest in images enter language; then through history distinction between tenses and precision of expression enter language; then, finally, through the orators the full rounding-out of the refined sentence enters language. Now just as before each such addition nothing of the sort yet

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existed in the language, but everything was introduced by the human soul and could be introduced by the human soul, where would one want to set limits to this creativity, this fruitfulness? Where would one want to say "Here the human soul began to operate, but not earlier"? If the human soul was able to invent what is finest, what is most difficult, then why not what is easiest? If it was able to institute, why not to experiment, why not to begin? For after all, what else was the beginning but the production of a single word as a sign of reason? And this the soul had to do, blindly and dumbly in its depths, as truly as it possessed reason.

I am vain enough to suppose that the possibility of the human invention of language is so proven by what I have said, from within in terms of the human soul, and from without in terms of the organization of the human being and in terms of the analogy of all languages and peoples, partly in the components of all speech, partly in the whole great progress of language with reason, that whoever does not deny reason to the human being, or what amounts to the same, whoever merely knows what reason is, whoever in addition has ever concerned himself with the elements of language in a philosophical way, whoever moreover has taken into consideration with the eye of an observer the constitution and history of the languages on the earth, cannot doubt for a single moment, even if I were to add not one word more. [The case for] the genesis [of language] in the human soul is as demonstrative as any philosophical proof, and the external analogy of all times, languages, and peoples [possesses] as high a degree of probability as is possible in the most certain historical matter. However, in order to forestall all objections for good, and also to make the thesis as externally certain as a philosophical truth can be, so to speak, let us in addition prove from all external circumstances and from the whole analogy of human nature "that the human being had to invent his language for himself, and under which circumstances he was able to invent it for himself most suitably."

Second part: In what way the human being was most suitably able and obliged to invent language for himself

Nature gives no forces in vain. So when nature not only gave the human being abilities to invent language, but also made this ability the distinguishing trait of his essence and the impulse behind his special direction [in life], this force came from nature's hand no otherwise than living, and hence

it could not but be set in a sphere is-here it had to be effective. Let us consider more closely a few of these circumstances and concerns which

straightaway occasioned the human being to develop language when he entered the world with the immediate disposition to form language for himself And since there are many, of these concerns, I collect them under certain main laws of the human being's nature and of his species:

First natural law

“The human being is a freely thinking, active being, whose forces operate forth progressively. Therefore let him be a creature of language!”

Considered as a naked, instinctless animal, the human being is the most miserable of beings. Here there is no obscure, innate drive which pulls him into his element and into his circle of efficacy, , to his means of subsistence and to his work. No sense of smell or power to scent which pulls him towards plants so that he may sate his hunger! No blind, mechanical master craftsman who would build his nest for him! Weak and succumbing, abandoned to the contention of the elements, to hunger, to all dangers, to the claws of all stronger animals, to a thousandfold death, he stands there!, lonely and alone!, without the immediate instruction of his creatress [nature] and without the sure guidance of her hand – thus, lost on all sides.

But as vividly as this picture may be painted out, it is not the picture of the human being – it is only a single side of his surface, and even that stands in a false light. If understanding and awareness [Besonnenheit] is the natural gift of his kind, this had to express itself immediately when the weaker sensuality and all the poverty of his lacks expressed itself. The instinctless, miserable creature which came from nature's hands so abandoned was also from the first moment on the freely active, rational creature which was destined to help itself, and inevitably had the ability to do so. All his shortcomings and needs as an animal were pressing reasons to prove himself with all his forces as a human being – just as these human forces were not, say, merely weak compensations for the greater animal perfections denied to him, as our modern philosophy, the great patroness of animals!, claims, but were, without comparison or actual balancing of one against another, his nature. His center of gravity [Schwerpunkt], the main direction of his soul's efficacies, fell as much on this understanding, on human awareness [Besonnenheit], as with the bee it falls immediately on sucking and building.

If now it has been proved that not even the slightest action of his understanding could occur without a characteristic word, then the first moment of taking-awareness [Besinnung] was also the moment for the inward emergence of language.

Let one allow the human being as much time as one wants for this first distinct taking-awareness [Besinnung]. Let one – in the manner of Buffon (only more philosophically than he) – make this creature that has come into being achieve conscious control gradually. But let one not forget that immediately from the very first moment on it is no animal but a human being, to be sure not yet a creature which takes awareness [von Besinnung] but one which already has awareness [von Besonnenheit], that awakens into the universe. Not as a great, clumsy, helpless machine which is supposed to move, but with its stiff limbs cannot move; which is supposed to see, hear, taste, but with thick fluids in its eye, with a hardened ear, and with a petrified tongue, can do none of this - people who raise doubts of this sort really ought to keep in mind that this human being did not come from Plato's cave, from a dark jail where, from the first moment of his life on through a series of years, without light or movement, he had sat with open eyes until he was blind, and with healthy limbs until he was stiff, but that he came from the hands of nature, with his forces and fluids in the freshest of conditions, and with the best immediate disposition to develop himself from the first moment. To be sure, creating Providence must have presided over the first moments of coming to conscious control – but it is not the job of philosophy to explain the miraculous aspect in these moments, as little as philosophy can explain the human being's creation. Philosophy takes up the human being in his first condition of free activity, in his first full feeling of his sound existence, and hence explains these moments only in human terms.

Now I can refer back to what was said before. Since no metaphysical separation of the senses occurs here, since the whole machine senses and immediately works up from obscure feeling to taking-awareness [Besinnung], since this point, the sensation of the first distinct characteristic mark, precisely concerns hearing, the middle sense between seeing and feeling therefore the genesis of language is as much an inner imperative as is the impulse of the embryo to be born at the moment when it reaches maturity. The whole of nature storms at the human being in order to develop his senses until he is a human being. And since language begins from this condition, “the whole chain of conditions in the human soul is of such a kind that each of them forms language further [fortbildet].” I want to cast light on this great law of the natural order.

Animals connect their thoughts obscurely or clearly but not distinctly. just as, to be sure, the kinds

which are closest to the human being in manner of life and nerve structure, the animals of the field, often display much memory, much recollection, and in some cases a stronger recollection than the human being, but it is still always only sensuous recollection, and none of them has ever demonstrated through an action a memory that it had improved its condition for its whole species, or had generalized experiences in order to make use of them subsequently. To be sure, the dog can recognize the bodily gesture which has hit him, and the fox can flee the unsafe place where he was ambushed, but neither of them can illuminate for itself a general reflection concerning how it could ever escape this blow-threatening bodily gesture or this hunters' ruse for good. So the animal still always only remained stuck at the individual sensuous case, and its recollection became a series of these sensuous cases, which produce and reproduce themselves – but never connected "through reflection"; a manifold without distinct unity, a dream of very sensuous, clear, vivid representations without an overarching law of clear wakefulness to order this dream.

To be sure, there is still a great difference among these species and kinds. The narrower the circle is, the stronger the sensuality and the drive is, the more uniform the ability for art and the work in life is, then the less is even the slightest progress through experience observable, at least for us. The bee builds in its childhood as it does in advanced age, and will build the same way at the end of the world as in the beginning of creation. They are individual points, shining sparks from the light of God's perfection, which, however, always shine individually. An experienced fox, on the other hand, is indeed very different from the first apprentice of the chase; he already knows many tricks ahead of time, and attempts to escape them. But whence does he know them? And how does he attempt to escape them? Because the law of this action follows immediately from such experience. In no case is distinct reflection operative, for are not the cleverest foxes still now tricked in the same way as by the first hunter in the world? In the case of the human being a different law of nature obviously governs the succession of his ideas: awareness. Awareness still governs even in the most sensuous condition, only less noticeably. [The human being is] the most ignorant creature when he comes into the world, but immediately he becomes nature's apprentice in a way that no animal does; not only does each day teach the next, but each minute of the day teaches the next, each thought the next. It is an essential knack of his soul to learn nothing for this moment, but to marshal everything either along with what it already knew or in readiness for what it intends to link with it in the future. His soul hence takes into account the store which it has already collected or still intends to collect. And in this way the soul becomes a force of steadily collecting. Such a chain continues on until death. [He is,] so to speak, never the whole human being; always in development, in progression, in process of perfection. One mode of efficacy is transcended through the other, one

builds on the other, one develops out of the other. There arise periods of life, epochs, which we only name according to the noticeable steps, but which – since the human being never feels how he is growing but always only bow be grew – can be divided infinitely finely. We are always growing out of a childhood, however old we may be, are ever in motion, restless, unsatisfied. The essential feature of our life is never enjoyment but always progression, and we have never been human beings until we – have lived out our lives. By contrast, the bee was a bee when it built its first cell. To be sure, this law of perfecting, of progress through awareness, does not operate with equal noticeability at all times. But is what is less noticeable therefore nonexistent? In a dream, in a thought-dream, the human being does not think as orderly and distinctly as when awake, but nonetheless he still thinks as a human being – as a human being in a middle state, never as a complete animal. In the case of a healthy human being his dreams must have a rule of connection as much as his waking thoughts, only it cannot be the same rule, or operate as uniformly. Hence even these exceptions would bear witness to the validity of the overarching law. And the obvious illnesses and unnatural conditions – swoons, madnesses, etc. – do so even more. Not every action of the soul is immediately a consequence of taking-awareness [Besinnung], but every one is a consequence of awareness [Besonnenheit]. None of them, in the form in which it occurs in a human being, could express itself if the human being were not a human being and did not think in accordance with such a law of nature.

“Now if the human being’s first condition of taking-awareness was not able to become actual without the word of the soul, then all conditions of awareness in him become linguistic; his chain of thoughts becomes a chain of words.”

Do I mean to say by this that the human being can make every sensation of his most obscure sense of feeling into a word, or cannot sense it except by means of a word, It would be nonsense to say this, since precisely to the contrary it is proven that “a sensation which can only be had through the obscure sense of feeling is susceptible of no word for us, because it is susceptible of no distinct characteristic mark.” Hence the foundation of humanity is, if we are talking about voluntary language, linguistically inexpressible. But then, the foundation the whole form? Plinth the whole statue? Is the human being in his whole nature a merely obscurely feeling oyster, then? So let us take the whole thread of his thoughts: since this thread is woven from awareness [Besonnenheit], since there is no condition in it which, taken as a whole, is not itself a taking of awareness [Besinnung] or at least capable of being illuminated in a taking of awareness, since in it the sense of feeling does not rule but the whole center of its nature falls on finer senses, vision and hearing,

and these constantly give it language, it follows that, taken as a whole, “there is also no condition in the human soul which does not turn out to be [werde] susceptible of words or actually determined by words of the soul.” To think entirely without words one would have to be the most obscure mystic or an animal, the most abstract religious visionary or a dreaming monad. And in the human soul, as we see even in dreams and in the case of madmen, no such condition is possible. As bold as it may sound, it is true: the human being senses with the understanding and speaks in thinking. And now, due to the fact that he always thinks on in this way and, as we have seen, implicitly puts each thought together with the preceding one and with the future, it must be the case that..

“Each condition which is linked up in this way through reflection thinks better and hence also speaks better.” Allow him the free use of his senses; since the mid-point of this use falls on vision and hearing, where the former gives him the characteristic mark and the latter the sound for the characteristic mark, it follows that with each easier, more formed [gebildeteren] use of these senses language gets formed further [fortgebildet] for him. Allow him the free use of his forces of soul; since the mid-point of their use falls on awareness, and hence does not occur without language, it follows that with each easier, more formed use of awareness language gets more formed for him. Consequently, “the progressive formation of language turns out to be [wird] as natural for the human being as his nature itself.”

Who is there, then, who would know the scope of the forces of a human soul, especially when they express themselves with full effort against difficulties and dangers? Who is there who would assess the degree of perfection at which, through a constant, inwardly complicated, and so diverse progressive formation, the soul can arrive? And since everything comes down to language, how great is that which an individual human being must collect towards language! If even the blind and dumb person on his lonely island had to create a meager language for himself, then the human being, the apprentice of all the senses!, the apprentice of the whole world! – how much richer he must become! What should he eat? Senses, sense of smell, ability to scent, for the plants that are healthy for him, disliking for those that are harmful for him, nature has not given him; so he must experiment, taste, and, like the Europeans in America, learn from watching the animals what is edible. Hence collect for himself characteristic marks of plants, and therefore language! He is not strong enough to confront the lion; so let him flee far from it, know it from afar by its sound, and in order to be able to flee it in a human way and with forethought, let him learn to recognize it and a hundred other harmful animals distinctly, and therefore to name them! Now the more he collects experiences, becomes acquainted with various things and from various sides, the richer his

language becomes! The more often he sees these experiences and repeats the characteristic marks to himself, the firmer and more fluent his language becomes. The more he distinguishes and subordinates one thing to another, the more orderly his language becomes! This, continued through years, in an active life, in continual changes, in constant struggle with difficulties and necessity, with constant novelty in objects, is the beginning of language. Unimpressive? And observe!, it is only the life of a single human being!

A human being who was dumb in the sense in which the animals are, who could not even in his soul think words, would be the saddest, most senseless, most abandoned creature of creation – and the greatest self-contradiction Alone, as it were, in the whole universe, attached to nothing and there for everything, secured by nothing, and still less by himself, the human being must either succumb or else rule over everything, with the plan of a wisdom of which no animal is capable, either take distinct possession of everything or else die! Be thou nothing or else the monarch of creation through understanding! Fall in ruins or else create language for thyself! And if, nosy, in this pressing circle of needs all forces of the soul bring themselves to conscious control, if the whole of humanity, struggles to be human – how much can be invented, done, ordered!

We human beings of society can only ever imaginatively project our~ selves into such a condition with trembling: “Oh! If the human being is only destined to save himself from everything in such a slow, weak, inadequate manner ... Through reason’. Through reflection’. How slowly this reflects! And how fast, how pressing his needs are! His dangers!” – This objection can indeed be richly decked out with examples. But it is always fighting against a quite different position [from the one in question]. Our society, which has brought many human beings together so that with their abilities and functions they should be one, must consequently distribute abilities and afford opportunities [to people] from childhood on in such a way that one ability gets developed in preference to another. In this way, the one human being becomes for society entirely algebra, entirely reason, so to speak, just as in another human being society needs only heart, courage, and physical force. This one is of use to society by having no genius and much industry; the former by having genius in one thing and nothing in anything else. Each cog must have its relationship and position, otherwise they do not constitute a whole machine. But let this distribution of the forces of the soul, in which people noticeably suffocate all the other forces in order to excel beyond other people in a single one of them, not be transferred to the condition of a natural human being. Set a philosopher, born and raised in society, who has only trained his head for thinking and his hand for writing, set him suddenly, outside all the protection and reciprocal comforts that society affords him for his one-

sided services – he is supposed to seek his own means of subsistence in an unfamiliar land, and fight against the animals, and be his own protecting deity in everything. How helpless! He has for this neither the senses nor the forces nor the training in either! In the strayings of his abstraction he has perhaps lost the sense of smell and sight and hearing and the gift of quick invention – and certainly that courage, that quick decisiveness, which only develops and expresses itself in dangers, which needs to be in constant, new efficacy or else it dies. If, now, he is of an age when the life-source of his mental abilities has already ceased to flow, or is beginning to dry up, then indeed it will be forever too late to want to educate him into [hineinbilden] this circle. But then, is this the case in question? All the attempts at language that I am citing are not at all made in order to be philosophical attempts. The characteristic marks of plants that I am citing are not discovered as Linnaeus classified them. The first experiences are not cold, slowly reasoned, carefully abstracting experiments like the leisurely, lone philosopher makes when he creeps in pursuit of nature in its hidden course and no longer wants to know that but how it works. This was precisely what concerned nature's first dweller least. Did he need to have it demonstrated to him that this or that plant is poisonous? Was he, then, so much more than brutish that even in this he did not imitate the brutes? And did he need to be attacked by the lion in order to be afraid of it? Is not his timidity combined with his weakness, and his awareness combined with all the subtlety of his forces of soul, enough by itself to provide him with a comfortable condition, since nature herself acknowledged that it was adequate for this? Since, therefore, we have no need at all of a timid, abstract study – philosopher as the inventor of language, since the primitive natural human being who still feels his soul, like his body, so entirely of a single piece is more to us than any number of language-creating academies, and yet is anything but a scholar ... why on earth, then, would we want to take this scholar as a model? Do we want to cast dust in each other's eyes in order to have proved that the human being cannot see?

Sü?milch is again here the opponent with whom I am fighting. He has devoted a whole section to showing "how impossible it is that the human being should have formed a language further [fortbilden] for himself, even if he had invented it through imitation!" That the invention of language through mere imitation without a human soul is nonsense is proven, and if the defender of the divine origin of language had been demonstratively certain of this cause, that it is nonsense, then I trust that he would not have gathered together a mass of half-true reasons against this nonsense which, as things are, all prove nothing against a human invention of language through understanding. I cannot possibly explain the whole section in its totality here, woven through with arbitrarily-assumed postulates and false axioms about the nature of language as it is, because the

author would always appear in a certain light in which he should not appear here. So I select only as much as is necessary, namely, "that in his objections the nature of a human language that forms itself further [sich fortbildenden] and of a human soul that forms itself further is entirely misperceived."

"If one assumes that the inhabitants of the first world consisted only of a few thousand families, since the light of the understanding already shone so brightly through the use of language that they understood what language is and hence were able to begin thinking of the improvement of this splendid instrument, it follows. ..." But no one assumes anything of all these antecedent propositions. Did people need a thousand generations to understand for the first time what language is, The first human being understood it when he thought the first thought. Did people need a thousand generations to reach the point of understanding for the first time that it is good to improve language? The first human being understood it when he learned to order better, correct, distinguish, and combine his first characteristic marks, and he immediately improved language each time that he learned such a thing for the first time. And then, how, though, could the light of the understanding have become so brightly enlightened over the course of a thousand generations through language if in the course of these generations language had not already become enlightened? So enlightenment without improvement, and after an improvement lasting through a thousand families the beginning of an improvement still impossible? That is simply contradictory.

"But would not writing have to be assumed as a quite indispensable aid in this philosophical and philological course of instruction"? No! For it was not at all a philosophical and philological course of instruction, this first, natural, living, human progressive formation of language. And then, what can the philosopher and philologist in his dead museum improve in a language which lives in all its efficacy?

"Are all peoples supposed, then, to have proceeded with the improvement in the same way"? In exactly the same way, for they all proceeded in a human way – so that we can be confident here, in the rudiments of language, about taking one person for all. When, however, it is supposed to be the greatest miracle" that all languages have eight parts of speech, then once again the fact is false and the inference incorrect. Not all languages have from all times on had eight, but [even] the first philosophical look at the manner of construction of a language shows that these eight have developed out of each other. In the oldest languages verbs were earlier than nouns, and perhaps interjections earlier than even regular verbs. In the later languages nouns are immediately derived

together with verbs but even of the Greek language Aristotle says that even in it these were initially all the parts of speech, and the others only developed out of them later through the grammarians. I have read precisely, the same of the language of the Hurons, and it is obvious of the Eastern languages. Indeed, what sort of trick, then is it in the end, this arbitrary and in part unphilosophical abstraction by the grammarians into eight parts of speech? Is this as regular and divine as the form of a bee's cell? And if it were, is it not entirely explicable and shown necessary in terms of the human soul?

"And what is supposed to have attracted human beings to this most bitter labor of improvement?" Oh, [it was] not at all a bitter speculative study-labor! Not at all an abstract improvement a priori! And hence [there were] also certainly y no attractants to do it, which only occur in our condition of refined society. I have to part company with my opponent completely here. He assumes that "the first improvers would have to have been really good philosophical minds who would certainly have seen further and deeper than most scholars are now wont to do in regard to language and its inner constitution." He assumes that "these scholars would have to have recognized everywhere that their language was imperfect and that it was not only capable but also in need of an improvement." He assumes that "they had to judge the purpose of language properly, etc., that the representation of this good which was to be achieved needs to have been adequate, strong, and vivid enough to become a motive for taking on this difficult labor." In short, the philosopher of our age was not willing to venture even one step outside of all our age's accidental features. And how, then, could he from such a point of view A-rite about the origination of a language? To be sure, in our century language could have originated as little as it needs to originate.

But do we not, then, already now know human beings in such various ages, regions, and levels of civilization [Bildung] that this so transformed great drama would teach us to infer with greater sureness back to its first scene? Do we not, then, know that precisely in the corners of the earth where reason is still least cast into the fine, societal, many-sided, scholarly form, sensuality and primitive cleverness and cunning and courageous efficacy and passion and spirit of invention – the whole undivided human soul – still operates in the most lively way? Still operates in the most lively way – because, not yet brought to any longwinded rules, this soul still ever lives whole in a circle of needs, of dangers, of pressing demands, and hence ever feels new and whole. There, only there, does the soul reveal forces to form [bilden] language for itself and to form it further [fortzubilden]! There the soul has enough sensuality and, so to speak, instinct in order to sense the whole sound and all the self-expressing characteristic marks of living nature as wholly as we are no longer able

to, and, when the taking of awareness then isolates one of these characteristic marks, in order to name it as strongly and inwardly as we would not name it. The less the forces of the soul are yet unfolded and each one adjusted for a sphere of its own, then the more strongly all operate together, the deeper the midpoint of their intensity is. But separate out this great, unbreakable sheaf of arrows and you can break them all, and then certainly the miracle cannot be performed with a single wand, then certainly language can never be invented with the philosophers' single cold gift of abstraction. But was that our question Did not that other sense for the world penetrate more deeply? And, with the constant confluence of all the senses, in whose mid-point the inner sense was always alert, were not ever new characteristic marks, orderings, viewpoints, rapid modes of inference present, and hence ever new enrichments of language? And did the human soul not therefore receive its best inspirations for language (if one does not want to count on eight parts of speech) for as long as, still without any of the stimulations of society, it only stimulated itself all the more mightily, gave itself all the activity of sensation and thought which it had to give itself in view of inner impulse and external demands? There language was born with the whole unfolding of the human forces.

It is unintelligible to me how our century can lose itself so deeply in the shadows, in the obscure workshops, of that which relates to art without even wanting to recognize the broad, bright light of unimprisoned nature. The greatest heroic deeds of the human spirit which it could only do and express in impact with the living world have turned into school exercises in the dust of our school-prisons, the masterpieces of human poetic art and oratory into childish tricks from which aged children and young children learn empty phrases and cull rules. We grasp their formalities and have lost their spirit, we learn their language and do not feel the living world of their thoughts. It is the same with our judgments concerning the masterpiece of the human spirit, the formation of language in general. Here dead reflection is supposed to teach us things which were only able to ensoul the human being, to summon him, and form him further, from the living breath of the world, from the spirit of great, active nature. Here the dull, late laws of the grammarians are supposed to be the most divine thing, which we revere while forgetting the true divine linguistic nature which formed itself in its core with the human spirit – however irregular this true divine linguistic nature may seem. The formation of language has retreated to the shadows of the schools, whence it no longer achieves anything for the living world – consequently it is said that there never even was a bright world in which the first formers of language had to live, feel, create, and poetize. I appeal to the sensitivity of those who do not fail to recognize the human being in the root of his forces, and what is forceful, powerful, and great in the languages of the savages, and the essential nature of language in general. So I continue:

Second natural law

“The human being is in his destiny a creature of the herd, of society. Hence the progressive formation of a language becomes natural, essential, necessary for him.”

The human female has no season for being in heat like animal females.

Arid the man’s power of procreation is not so unrestrained but enduring. If, now, storks and doves have marriages, I cannot see why the human being should not have them, for several reasons.

The human being, compared to the rough bear and the bristly hedgehog, is a weaker, needier, more naked animal. It needs caves, and these very naturally become, due to the preceding reasons, communal caves.

The human being is a weaker animal which in many zones would be very badly exposed to the seasons. The human female therefore in her pregnancy, as a birth-giver, has greater need of societal help than the ostrich which lays its eggs in the desert.

Finally, especially the human young, the infant put into the world – how much he is a vassal of human help and societal pity. From a condition in which he depended as a plant on his mother’s heart, he is thrown onto the earth – the weakest, most helpless creature among all the animals, were not maternal breasts there to nourish him, and did not paternal knees come towards him to take him up as a son. To whom does not “nature’s household-management in the interest of humanity’s socialization” become obvious from these facts? And indeed a natural household-management that is as Immediate, as close to instinct, as could be the case with a creature possessed of awareness!

I must develop the last point further, for nature’s work shows itself most clearly in this, and my inference proceeds from it that much more quickly. If, like our crude Epicureans, one wants to explain everything from blind pleasure or immediate self-interest- who can explain the feeling of parents towards their children? And the strong bonds that this produces? Behold! This poor earth-dweller comes wretched into the world without knowing that he is wretched; he needs pity without being able to make himself in the least deserving of it; he cries, but even this crying ought to become as burdensome as was the howling of Philoctetes, even though he had so many meritorious accomplishments, to the Greeks, who abandoned him to the desolate island. Thus according to our

cold philosophy the bonds of nature precisely ought to break earliest here, where they are [in fact] most strongly efficacious. The mother has finally delivered herself with pains of the fruit that has caused her so much trouble – if the matter depends merely on enjoyment and new pleasure, then she throws it away. The father has cooled his burning lust in a few minutes – why should he concern himself further with mother and child as objects of his effort? Like Rousseau's man-animal, he runs into the forest and seeks for himself another object of his animal enjoyment. How quite opposite is the order of nature here, with animals and with human beings, and how much more wise. Precisely the pains and troubles increase maternal love! Precisely the infant's lamentableness and unamiableness, the weak, frail quality of his nature, the troublesome, vexing effort of his upbringing, doubles the strivings of his parents! The mother regards with warmer emotion the son who has cost her the most pains, who has threatened her with his departure most often, on whom she shed most tears of care. The father regards with warmer emotion the son whom he saved from a danger early on, whom he raised with the greatest effort, who cost him the most in instruction and education [Bildung]. And likewise nature also knows "how to make strength out of weakness in the whole of the species." The human being comes into the world weaker, needier, more abandoned by, nature's instruction, more completely without skills and talents, than any animal, precisely in order that, like no animal, he "may enjoy an upbringing, and the human species may, like no animal species, become an inwardly united whole!"

The young ducks slip away from the hen which hatched them out and, happily splashing in the element into which the call of maternal nature drew them, they do not hear the warning, calling voice of their step-mother who laments on the shore. The human child would do the same as well if it came into the world with the instinct of the duck. Each bird brings the skill of building nests with it from its egg and also takes it with it, without transferring it to others, into its grave; nature instructs for it. Thus everything remains individual, the immediate work of nature, and so there arises "no progression of the soul of the species," no whole, of the sort that nature wanted in the case of the human being. Nature consequently bonded together the human being [with other human beings] through necessity and a caring parental drive for which the Greeks had the word *storgē*, and in this way "a bond of instruction and upbringing became essential to him. In this case parents had not collected the circle of their ideas for themselves; at the same time it was there in order to be communicated, and the son has the advantage of already inheriting the wealth of their spirit early, as though in epitome. The former pay off nature's debt by teaching; the latter fill up the idea-less need of their own nature by learning, just as they will later in turn pay off their natural debt of increasing this wealth with their own contribution and transferring it again to others. No individual

human being exists for himself; “he is inserted into the whole of the species, he is only one for the continuing series.”

What sort of effect this has on the whole chain we will see later. Here we will] restrict ourselves to the connection between the first two rings only!, to “the formation of a familial manner of thinking through the instruction of upbringing” and –

Since the instruction of the single soul is the parental language’s circle of ideas, “the further formation of human instruction through the spirit of the family, through which spirit nature has united the whole species, becomes also the further formation of language.”

Why does this child-without-any-say cling so weakly and ignorantly to the breasts of his mother, to the knees of his father? That he may, desire to be taught and may learn language. He is weak so that his species may become strong. Now the whole soul, the whole manner of thinking, of his begetters gets communicated to him with the language; but they communicate it to him gladly precisely because it is what they have thought for themselves, felt for themselves, invented for themselves that they are communicating. The infant who stammers his first words, stammers a repetition of the feelings of his parents, and swears with each early stammering, in accordance with which his tongue and soul forms itself that he will make these feelings endure eternally, as truly as he calls them father- or mother-tongue. For his whole life these first impressions from his childhood, these images from the soul and the heart of his parents, will live and take effect within him: with the word will come back the whole feeling that then, early on, flowed over his soul; with the word’s idea all the side ideas that then presented themselves to him when he made this new, early dawn-survey into the realm of creation – they will return and take effect more mightily than the pure, clear main idea itself. This therefore becomes familial manner of thinking and hence familial language. Here, then, stands the cold philosopher and asks “through what law, then, indeed, human beings could have forced their arbitrarily invented language on one another, and caused the other part to accept the law.” This question, about which Rousseau preaches so loftily and another author so long, answers itself immediately when we take a look at “the economy of the nature of the human species” – and who can then endure the aforementioned sermons’

Is it not, then, law and making-eternal enough, this familial further formation of language, The woman, in nature so much the weaker party must she not accept law from the experienced, providing, language-forming man? Indeed, is that properly even called law which is merely the

gentle good deed of instruction? The weak child, who is so aptly called a child-without-any-say does it not have to accept language, since it consumes the milk of its mother and the spirit of its father with language? And must not this language be made eternal if anything is made eternal? Oh, the laws of nature are mightier than all the conventions that cunning politics agrees to and the wise philosopher wants to enumerate! The words of childhood – these our early playmates in the dawn of life!, together with whom our whole soul formed itself jointly – when will we fail to recognize them, when will we forget them? For our mother-tongue was simultaneously the first world that we saw, the first sensations that we felt, the first efficacy and joy that we tasted! The side ideas of place and time, of love and hate, of joy and activity, and whatever the fiery, turbulent soul of youth thought to itself in the process, all gets made eternal along with it. Now language really becomes tribal core [Stamm]! And the smaller this tribal core is, the more it gains in inner strength. Our fathers, who thought nothing for themselves, who invented nothing themselves, who learned everything mechanically – what do they care about the instruction of their sons, about making eternal what they do not even possess themselves,” But the first father, the first needy inventors of language, who sacrificed the work of their souls on almost every word , who everywhere in the language still felt the warm sweat which it had cost their activity – what informant could they call upon? The whole language of their children was a dialect of their own thoughts, a paean to their own deeds, like the songs of Ossian for his father Fingal. Rousseau and others have raised so many paradoxes about the origin of and right to the first property, And if the former had only asked the nature of his beloved animal-human, then this animal-human would have answered him. Why does this flower belong to the bee that sucks on it? The bee will answer: Because nature made me for this sucking] My instinct, which lands on this flower and no other, is dictator enough for me – let it assign me this flower and its garden as my property! And if now we ask the first human being, Who has given you the right to these plants?, then what can he answer but: Nature, which gave me the taking of awareness [Besinnung]! I have come to know these plants with effort! With effort I have taught my wife and my son to know them! We all live from them! I have more right to them than the bee that hums on them and the cattle that grazes on them, for these have not had all the effort of coming to know and teaching to know! Thus every thought that I have designed on them is a seal of my property, and whoever drives me away from them takes away from me not only my life, if I do not find this means of subsistence again, but really also the value of my lived years, my sweat, my effort, my thoughts, my language. I have earned them for myself! And should not such a signature of the soul on something through coming to know, through characteristic mark, through language, constitute for the first among humanity more of a right of property than a stamp on a coin?

“ How much ordering and development [Ausbildung] language therefore already receives precisely by becoming paternal teaching!” Who does not learn in the process of teaching? Who does not reassure himself of his ideas, who does not examine his words, in the process of communicating them to others and so often hearing them stammered by the lips of the child-without-any-say? Language therefore already here wins an artistic form, a methodical form! Here the first grammar, which was an offprint of the human soul and of its natural logic, already got corrected by a sharply examining censorship.

Rousseau, who here exclaims in his usual manner, “What great amount did the mother have to say to her child, then? Did the child not have more to say to its mother? Whence, then, did the child already learn language in order to teach it to its mother?” also, though, in his usual manner, here makes a panicky battle clamor. Certainly the mother had more to teach the child than the child the mother – because the former was able to teach it more, and because the maternal instinct, love and sympathy, which Rousseau from compassion concedes to the animals but from pride denies to his own species, compelled her to this instruction, as the excess of milk compelled her to suckle. Do we not, then, see even in some animals that the older ones habituate their young to their manner of life? And now, when a father habituated his son to hunting from early youth on, did this happen without instruction and language, then, “Yes!, such a dictation of words certainly indicates a formed language which one is teaching, [but] not a language which is just being formed!” And again, is this a difference that constitutes an exception? To be sure, that language which they taught their children was already formed in the father and mother, but does this imply that the language already had to be completely formed, including even that language which they did not teach their children? And could the children in a newer, broader, more refined world not, then, invent anything more in addition? And is, then, a partly formed language which is still undergoing further formation a contradiction? When, then, is the French language, which has been so much formed through academies and authors and dictionaries, so finally formed that it would not have to form, or deform, itself anew with each new original author, indeed with each mind who introduces a new tone into society? It is with such fallacies that the champions of the opposite opinion are adorned. Let it be judged whether it is worthwhile to go into every trivial detail of their objections.

Another, for example, asks “but how, then, human beings could ever have wanted to form their language further due to necessity if they had been Lucretius’s *mutum et turpe pecus*” and goes into a pile of half-true evidentiary examples of savages. I merely answer: Never! They could never have

wanted to, or been able to, do it if they had been a mutum pecus. For in that case did they not, of course, lack all language? But are savages like this- Is, then, even the most barbarous human nation without language?" And has the human being ever been so, then, except in philosophers' abstractions and hence in their heads?

He asks "whether, then, really, since all animals eschew constraint, and all human beings love laziness, it can ever be expected of Condamine's Orenocks that they should change and improve their longwinded, eight-syllabled, difficult, and most cumbersome language." And I answer: First, the fact is again incorrect, like almost all that he cites." "Their longwinded, eight-syllabled language" it is not. Condamine merely says that it is so unpronounceable and distinctively organized that where they pronounce three or four syllables we would have to write seven or eight, and yet we would still not have written them completely. Does that mean that it Is longwinded, eight-syllabled? ? And "difficult, most cumbersome" – For whom is it so except for foreigners? And they are supposed to make improvements in it for foreigners? To improve it for an arriving Frenchman who hardly ever learns any language except his own without mutilating it, and hence to Frenchify it, But is it the case that the Orenocks have not yet formed anything in their language, indeed not yet formed for themselves any language, just because they do not choose to exchange the genius which is so peculiarly theirs for a foreigner who comes sailing along? Indeed, even assuming that they were to form nothing more in their language, not even for themselves – has a person, then, never grown if he no longer grows?, And have the savages, then, done nothing because they do not like to do anything without need And what a treasure familial language is for a developing race! In almost all small nations of all parts of the world, however little cultivated [gebiIdet] they may be, ballads of their fathers, songs of the deeds of their ancestors, are the treasure of their language and history and poetic art, [they are] their wisdom and their encouragement, their instruction and their games and dances. The Greeks sang of their Argonauts, of Hercules and Bacchus, of heroes and conquerors of Troy, and the Celts of the fathers of their tribes, of Fingal and Ossian! Among Peruvians and North Americans, on the Caribbean and Mariana Islands, this origin of the tribal language in the ballads of their tribes and fathers still holds sway – just as in almost all parts of the world father and mother have similar names. And it is only precisely here that it can be indicated why among many peoples, of which we have cited examples, the male and female genders have almost two different languages, namely, because in accordance with the customs of the nation the two, as the noble and the base genders, almost constitute two quite separate peoples, who do not even eat together. According, then, to whether the upbringing was paternal or maternal, the language too inevitably became either father- or mother-tongue – as, in accordance with the

customs of the Romans, it even became lingua Vernacular.

Third natural law

“Just as the whole human species could not possibly remain a single herd, likewise it could not retain a single language either. So there arises a formation of different national languages.”

In the real metaphysical sense, it is already never possible for there to be a single language between man and wife, father and son, child and old man. Let one, for example, go through, in the case of the Easterners, the long and short vowels, the many different kinds of breathings and gutteral letters, the easy and so manifold exchanging of letters by one kind of organ, the pause and the linguistic signs, with all the variations which are so difficult to express in writing: pitch and emphasis, increase and diminution of this, and a hundred other contingent small things in the elements of language. And let one, on the other hand, note the diversity of the linguistic organs in both genders, in youth and in old age, even simply in the case of two similar people – in accordance with many contingencies and individual circumstances which alter the structure of these organs, given many habits which become second nature, etc. “As little as there can be two human beings who share exactly the same form and facial traits, just as little can there be two languages in the mouths of two human beings which would in fact still be only one language, even merely in terms of pronunciation.”

Each race will bring into its language the sound belonging to its house and family; this becomes, in terms of pronunciation, a different dialect.

Climate [Klima], air and Water, food and drink, will have an influence on the linguistic organs and naturally also on language, Society’s ethics and the mighty goddess Habit will soon introduce these peculiarities and those differences in accordance with behavior and decency – a dialect. – “A philosophical essay on the Easterners’ related languages” would be the pleasantest proof of these theses.

That was only pronunciation. But words themselves, sense, the soul of language – what an endless field of differences. We have seen how the oldest languages necessarily came to be full of synonyms. And now, when, of these synonyms, this one became more familiar to the one person, that one to the other person, more appropriate to his viewpoint, more original for his circle of sensation, more frequently occurring in the course of his life, in short, of greater influence on him – then there arose

favorite words, words of one's own, idioms, linguistic idiom.

For the former person that word became extinguished, this word remained. That word got bent away from the main subject through a secondary viewpoint; here the spirit of the main concept itself changed with the passage of time. There hence arose here distinctive bendings, diversions, changes, promotions and additions and transpositions and removals, of whole and half meanings – a new idiom! And all this as naturally as language is for the human being the sense of his soul.

The livelier a language is, the nearer it is to its origin, and hence [the more] it is still in the periods of youth and growth, then the more changeable it is. If the language exists only in books, Where it is learned according to rules, where it is used only in sciences and not in living intercourse, where it has its set number of objects and applications, Where therefore its vocabulary is closed, its grammar regulated, its sphere fixed – such a language can the more easily remain unchanged in what is noticeable, and yet even here only in what is noticeable. But a language in savage, free life, in the realm of great, broad creation, still Without formally minted rules, still Without books and letters and accepted masterpieces, Poor and imperfect enough still to need daily enrichment, and youthfully supple enough still to be capable of it at the first hint from attentiveness, the first command from passion and sensation – this language inevitably changes with each new world that is seen, with each method in accordance with which people think and progress in thinking. Egyptian laws of uniformity cannot effect the opposite here.

Now it is obvious that the whole face of the earth is made for the human species, and the human species for the Whole face of the earth. (I do not say that every inhabitant of the earth, every people is immediately, through the most sudden leap, for the most opposite clime [Klima] and hence for all zones of the world, but the whole species for the whole circle of the earth.) Wherever We look about us, there the human being is as much at home as the land animals which are originally destined for this region. He endures in Greenland amid the ice and roasts in Guinea under the vertical sun; he is on home turf When he glides over the snow With his reindeer in Lapland, and when he trots through the Arab desert with his thirsty came], The cave of the troglodytes and the mountaintops of the Kabyles, the smoking fireplace of the Ostyaks and the golden palace of the Mogul, contain – human beings. For them is the earth flattened at its pole and raised at its equator, for them does the earth revolve around the sun as it does and not otherwise, for them are the earth's zones and seasons and changes – and they in their turn are for the zones, for the seasons, and for the changes of the earth. This natural law is hence apparent here too: "Human beings should live

everywhere on the earth, while every animal species merely has its land and its narrower sphere”; the earth-dweller becomes apparent. And if that is so, then his language becomes language of the earth as well. A new language in every new world, national language in every nation – I cannot repeat all the aforementioned determining causes of the change – language becomes a Proteus on the round surface of the earth.

Some recent fashionable philosophers have been so unable to bind this Proteus and see him in his true form that it has seemed to them more probable that nature was as able to create for each large region of the earth a pair of human beings to found tribes as it was to create special animals for each clime. These human beings then – it is alleged – invented for themselves such a regional and national language of their own as had a whole construction that was made only for this region. On this account, the little Lapp, with his language and his thin beard, with his skills and his spirit, is as much a human animal original to Lapland as his reindeer [is an animal original to Lapland]; and the Negro, with his skin, with his ink-bubble blackness, with his lips, and hair, and turkey language, and stupidity, and laziness, is a natural brother of the apes of the same clime. One should – it is alleged – as little dream up similarity between the languages of the earth as between the [physical] formations of the [different] races of human beings. And it would have been a very unwise plan of God’s – the account proceeds – to have put forth, so weak and timid, a prey for the elements and animals, only one pair of human beings into one corner of the earth as tribal parents for the whole earth, and to have abandoned them to a thousandfold hazard of dangers.

At least – an opinion which asserts less continues – language is a natural product of the human spirit which only gradually moved to foreign climes with the human species, hence it must also have changed only gradually. One would need to observe the subtle alteration, the movement forth, and the relatedness of peoples progressing in connection with one another, and to be able to give oneself an exact account everywhere of manner of thought, manner of speech or dialect, and manner of life in terms of small nuances. But who can do that? Does one not find in the same clime, indeed right next to each other, in all parts of the world little peoples who in the same sort of circle have such different and opposite languages that everything becomes a confusing thicket, Whoever has read travel descriptions from North and South America, from Africa and Asia, does not need to have the tribes of this thicket counted out to him. So here, these doubters conclude, all human investigation comes to an end.

And because these people merely doubt, I want to attempt to show that the investigation does not

come to an end here, but that this “difference [between peoples] right next to each other can be explained just as naturally as the unity of the familial language in one nation.”

The division of the families into separated nations certainly does not proceed in accordance with the slow and boring connections between distance, migration, new relationship, and that sort of thing, as the idle, cold philosopher, compasses in hand, measures [them] on the map, and as, in terms of this measurement, large books have been written “on relatednesses of the peoples,” wherein everything is true except the rule in accordance with which everything was calculated. If we take a look at the living, active world, there are motives there which must very naturally give rise to the difference of language among peoples near to each other – only let one not want to force the human being to change in accordance with some pet system. He is no Rousseauian forest man; he has language. He is no Hobbesian wolf; he has a familial language. But in other connections he is also no premature lamb. So he can form for himself an opposed nature, habit, and language. In short, “the basis of this difference between such near little peoples in language, manner of thought, and manner of life is reciprocal familial and national hatred.”

Without any blackening of human nature or stigmatizing of it as heretical, [we can say,] if we transpose ourselves into their familial manner of thought, [that] two or more near tribes cannot do otherwise than soon find things to quarrel over. It is not merely that similar needs soon entangle them in a struggle of – if I may, put it this way – hunger and thirst, as for example two bands of shepherds quarrel over well and pasture, and in view of the [physical] constitution of their regions of the world may often very naturally quarrel. A much hotter spark kindles their fire: jealousy, feeling of honor, pride in their race and their superiority. The same liking for family which, turned inward on itself, gave strength to the harmony of a single tribe, turned outward from itself, against another race, produces strength of dissension, familial hatred! In the former case it drew many all the more firmly together into a single whole; in the latter case it makes two parties immediately into enemies. The basis of this enmity and these eternal wars is in such a case more noble human weakness than base vice.

Since humanity on this level of civilization [Bildung] has more forces of efficacy than goods of possession, it is also the case that pride in the former is more the point of honor than miserable possessing of the latter, as in later, fiberless ages. But in that age to be a brave man and to belong to a brave family were almost the same thing, since the son in many ways even more truly than is the case with us inherited and learned his virtue and bravery from his father, and the whole tribe in

general supported a brave man on all occasions. Hence the slogan soon became natural: Whoever is not with us and of us is beneath us! The foreigner is worse than us, is a barbarian. In this sense ‘barbarian’ was the watchword of contempt: a foreigner and simultaneously a more ignoble person who is not our equal in wisdom or bravery, or whatever the age’s point of honor might be.

Now, indeed, as an Englishman correctly notes, if what is at stake is merely selfishness and security of possession, then this fact, that our neighbor is not as brave as we are, is no reason for hatred, but we should quietly rejoice about it. But precisely because this opinion is only an opinion, and is the same opinion of both parties, who have the same feeling for their tribe – precisely hereby the trumpet of war is blown? This touches the honor, this awakens the pride and courage, of the whole tribe! Heroes and patriots [come forth] from both sides! And because the cause of the war affected each person, and each person could understand and feel this cause, the national hatred was made eternal in perpetual, bitter wars, And there the second synonym was ready: Whoever is not with me is against me. Barbarian and spiteful one! Foreigner, enemy! As the word hostis originally [illustrates] in the case of the Romans!

The third thing followed immediately: complete division and separation. Who wanted to have anything in common with such an enemy, the contemptible barbarian ? No familial customs, no remembrance of a single origin, and least of all language. For language was actually “characteristic word of the race, bond of the family, tool of instruction, hero song of the fathers’ deeds, and the voice of these fathers from their graves.” Language could not possibly, therefore, remain of one kind, and so the same familial feeling that had formed a single language, when it became national hatred, often created difference, complete difference in language. He is a barbarian, he speaks a foreign language -the third, so usual synonym.

As inverted as the etymology of these words may seem, the history of all little peoples and languages, which are at issue in this question, on the contrary fully proves its truth. And the layers of etymology are only abstractions, not divisions in history. All such near polyglots are simultaneously the fiercest, most irreconcilable enemies – and indeed, not all from desire to rob and greed, since for the most part they do not plunder, but only kill and lay waste, and sacrifice to the shades of their fathers. Shades of their fathers are the divinities, and the sole invisible dei ex machina, of the whole bloody epic – as in the songs of Ossian. It is they who stir and stimulate the leader in dreams, and for whom he spends his nights awake; it is they whose names his companions name in vows and songs; it is to them that the captured are consecrated in all tortures; and it is also

they, on the other side, who strengthen the tortured one in his songs and dirges. “Family hatred made eternal” is hence the cause of their wars, of their so jealous separations into peoples, which are often scarcely even like families, and in all probability also of the “complete differences between their customs and languages.”

An Eastern document about the division of the languages” – which I consider here only as a poetic fragment for the archaeology of the history of peoples – confirms through a very poetic narrative what so many nations from all parts of the world confirm through their example. “The languages did not change gradually,” as the philosopher multiplies them through migrations; “the peoples united, the poem says, for a great work; then the frenzy of confusion and of the multiplicity of languages flowed over them, so that they desisted and separated.” What was this but a rapid embitterment and quarrel, for which precisely such a great work provided the richest stimulus? There the spirit of family awakened, insulted on what was perhaps a trivial occasion. Alliance and purpose fought themselves to pieces. The spark of disunity shot into flames. They sped apart, and achieved “now all the more violently what they had wanted to forestall through their work: they confused the unitary constituent of their origin, their language. In this way there arose different peoples, and there, the later report says, the ruins are still called: confusion of the peoples!” – Whoever knows the spirit of the Easterners in their often so far-fetched clothings [of their ideas] and their epic, miraculous histories (I do not mean here to exclude for theology a higher Providence), will perhaps not fail to recognize the main thought that is made sensuous [here]: that “division over a great common purpose,” and not only the migration of peoples, became a contributing cause of so many languages.

Setting aside this Eastern testimony (which, moreover, I only in fact meant to cite here as a poem), one sees that the multiplicity of languages can constitute no objection to the natural and human character of the further formation of a language. To be sure, mountains can be raised up here and there by earthquakes, but does it, then, follow from this that the earth as a whole, with its mountain ranges and rivers and seas, cannot have won its form from water, -Only, indeed, just the same consideration also imposes on etymologists and ethnographers a useful constraint to caution, “not to infer too despotically from dissimilarities in languages to their genealogy.” Families can be very closely related and yet have had cause to suppress the relatedness of their coats of arms. The spirit of such little peoples gives sufficient cause for this.

Fourth natural law

“Just as in all probability the human species [Geschlecht] constitutes a single progressive whole with a single origin in a single great household-economy, likewise all languages too, and with them the whole chain of civilization [Bildung].”

The distinctive characteristic plan which governs a human being has been pointed out: his soul has the habit of always ranking what it sees with what it has seen, and there thus arises through awareness “a progressive unity of all conditions of life.” Hence, further formation [Fortbildung] of language.

The distinctive characteristic plan which governs a human race [Menschengeschlecht] has been pointed out: that through the chain of instruction parents and children become one, and hence each link only gets shoved by nature between two others in order to receive and to communicate. Thereby arises “further formation of language.”

Finally, this distinctive plan also continues to the whole human species [Menschengeschlecht], and thereby arises “a further formation in the highest meaning of the expression” which follows immediately from the two preceding.

Each individual is a human being; consequently, he continues to think for the whole chain of his life. Each individual is a son or daughter, was educated [gebildet] through instruction; consequently, he always inherited a share of the thought-treasures of his ancestors early on, and will pass them down in his own way to others. Hence in a certain way there is “no thought, no invention, no perfection which does not reach further, almost ad infinitum.” Just as I can perform no action, think no thought, that does not have a natural effect on the whole immeasurable sphere of my existence, likewise neither I nor any creature of my kind [Gattung] can do so without also having an effect with each [action or thought] for the whole kind and for the continuing totality of the whole kind. Each [action or thought] always produces a large or small wave: each changes the condition of the individual soul, and hence the totality of these conditions; always has an effect on others, changes something in these as well – the first thought in the first human soul is connected with the last thought in the last human soul.

TS1

Act I: The Set-Up

When God created the world, he said, Let there be light, and it was so.

When Io created the world for the Maori, he said Light and it was so.

When Tirawa – god among Pawnee – created the world, he sang Lightning and it was so.

When the Netsilik hare created the world, he said Day and it was so.

When Liz created Jacob, she said Hi and it was so.

The Hi was at 6:55 pm on a Tuesday night. There was no 6:53, no 6:54. It was not that time didn't exist before the Creation. It was just that the time didn't matter then. Every second had looked like every other second, drenched in a cold, wet darkness. When she said Hi, a flickery ceiling light nearby turned a solid bright, throwing light over her shoulders like bad luck salt. It was like someone spun the shutters open and let the morning in for coffee.

Hi.

Jacob looked up, saw the pretty girl standing next to his chair. The chair with the bad back. Had to be careful not to lean back too far, they said, else you'd make it a bed. And you'd make yourself look like an idiot.

Hi, Jacob mirrored back.

There was once a nymph named Echo. Caught having a fling with Zeus, Echo was cursed by the jealous Hera. Echo could only speak when she was repeating the words of someone else. There was also a man named Narcissus, who was in love with himself. Poor Echo was smitten, but could only regurgitate what Narcissus said to her. Not impressed, Narcissus left Echo heartbroken. The nymph cried until the only thing left was her voice. Later, Narcissus fell in love with his mirror in the water and paled to death, all the while gazing lovingly at his own reflection.

What started all of this? The prophet Teiresias said that Narcissus would live to be an old man, as long as he never knew himself for what he was. At what point did Narcissus give into himself? At what point did Narcissus put on a wig and cross-dress as Echo? At what point did Narcissus hallucinate his self-love into a nymph that could only repeat what he said?

Maybe that's when you know it's true love – when you can't tell your words from hers.

So, have we met before?

Um, n-no.

Jacob almost stuttered the word. Hard to quiver a word with one syllable. The old childhood stutter was back to haunt. He straightened himself out.

No, no we haven't. I'm Jacob.

I'm Liz.

So, uh, Liz...what's your major?

Art conservation.

That so?

Well, I used to be in chemistry. My parents wanted me to work in a lab the rest of my life. Make us proud and make some money, they said.

Liz said the last sentence mockingly. She rolled her eyes and continued.

Parents say so much. That bothers me. I just switched majors yesterday. To art conservation that is. Haven't told my parents yet. I don't know if I should. No...I don't think I will. It's none of their business. They aren't paying my way through college. Uncle Sam is. So who do they think they are, deserving answers? I've always been a question. Why? Don't answer that. It'll kill me.

Um.

But I just love paintings so much. Love how the shadows make the people move. That's why the eyes follow you when you walk down the main hallway upstairs. Funny how shades create light, I mean life. And I love, Love the way painters slather the colors on the canvas. You could run your fingers on the painting and feel the landscape. The hills, the mountains, the trees, the ocean. My parents don't understand. No one understands. I don't understand. I just feel. I feel the paintings. I can't feel DNA. You need a microscope to see these things. I want larger than life. But enough about me, I think. What's your major?

Jacob said, English education. Used to be English Education before switching.

Ah...you a freshman?

Yes, how could you tell? Is it that obvious?

You're optimistic. This university will beat the good will out of you. Give it a year. That's how long it took for me.

Oh.

Liz continued, And whatever you do, don't take a class on something you love. You'll hate it even quicker.

I'll try and remember that.

Jacob looked at the clock on the far wall. It was 7:00pm. It was changing of the guard.

Jacob said, Well, I'm about to head out. Have some homework I have to start working on.

Isn't it ironic?

What?

We work in a library and we never have time to study. That's the one thing I hate about all of this.

Oh. Well, like I said – have to get going. It was nice talking to you...

Liz.

That's right. Sorry.

It's okay. Names are overrated. Nice talking to you as well.

Good night.

Good night.

Jacob left the desk. He walked for the door, thoughts rattling in his skull. She talked too much. People who talk too much are afraid to think. Still, Jacob wished he had someone to talk to at that second. Because when you don't talk, you think. And all Jacob could think about was Liz. Her fervent redhair. Her little smirk. Her dreaming blue eyes.

And here was he was. The oakish hair. The muddy April eyes. The confused look. Like tails chasing dogs but never catching on like fads.

Jacob was afraid to think of it.

When Jacob – son of Isaac – was walking at night, praying to God that his brother Esau wouldn't kill him, he met a mysterious person. Jacob demanded the person's name. The person wouldn't give it. They argued, they fought. And they fought. And fought. It wasn't until morning that Jacob walked away with a kosher limp. They say you never ask an angel's name. If you know their true name, you can evoke them in prayer. That's all it takes to break an angel, knowing their name. Just knowing a word can make you God amongst men. Perhaps that's why God is God – he knows the Oxford English Dictionary by heart.

And yet, so few English majors study literature for that reason. Jacob loved words too much to control them. Although it's easy to mistake love for fear sometimes.

And yet, so much of Liz was angel.

And yet, our Jacob – leaving the library that night – could name her but she already won him over.

Jacob tossed and turned in his bed like ship that night. The dark rain was tapping on the windows. The rain crackled like clock ticks, counting off the seconds, the minutes, the hours. And still Jacob turned, the bedsheets washing over him. He was a shipwrecked sailor and the tides were

pushing him ashore.

It wasn't the rain that kept him up. He loved a little rain like drought flowers did. Rain never killed anyone. Besides, Jacob was Irish. The only water that could kill an Irishman is the River Shannon. The Irish poor rolling in their beds – then graves. The begging for water. The water turning steam from the pneumonic fever.

TV was on. Some infomercial about kitchen knives or something. Jacob couldn't go to sleep without the white noise of infomercials that all sound the same. Call in the next twenty minutes! was his rockabye lullaby.

Yet so many thoughts. He was getting too old for thinking. Only eighteen – yes – but cavemen got pensions when they were eighteen. First day of classes, he had gotten out of bed and his bones creaked like door hinges. Being late for class was the oil in his gears. He whooshed off to first class – Shakespeare – where the professor gave Othello for next week's reading, Twelfth Night the week after. The professor spoke in a thick Stanfordese – it was hard to understand.

Shakespeare was fun though. Linguistics, no. Philosophy, no. Latin, Ford no. Wished that adviser never talked him into Latin. In the dark, Jacob flipped the bird like an omelet in no particular direction at the adviser. Latin was a dead language for a reason. No point in bringing it back to life. Bloody language drowned in so many different tenses it was hard to keep track of it all. When the professor spoke, Jacob couldn't tell if she was speaking in the future, the past, the conditional, the imperative. She was everywhere – like the world – and the world confused Jacob.

Blah. His friends were just a week fresh. They were all rough, New Jersey-bred. They were starting to get stale though. One guy hallucinated, thought his well-to-do suburban home was the projects, that his lyrics that simply rhymed together were legendary. The rest were little better. The serious writer in the group evoked Jack Kerouac in all the wrong ways, rarely showing up for class and – when he did – he was drunk skunk. Smelled like one too.

There are countless ways for people to go sour. The one girl he knew was sour. Jacob figured it was because she was tanned leather. Anyone who sits out in the sun for that long is bound to go milksour.

He missed his high school friends. Missed how they didn't try to hug the world all at once. Sure, they were narrow, but they were happy. The more smart people learn, the more ways they have of killing themselves. The stupid people are all instincts and reflexes. They can't fight the urge to eat, sleep, and so on and so forth. The smart people are always sad. The world has ruined the world for them. The smart people also know about hangman's knots, water's conductivity, drug cocktails.

Jacob missed his stupid people – people who believed that Philadelphia was the end of the world. Darfur was fiction to them. Rwanda was fiction to them. The Indian Ocean earthquake was fiction to them. No wonder they were so happy.

Sigh. I think too much. And I watch the news too much.

And Liz talked too much. He smiled to himself in bed, thinking of how she wouldn't shut up. He hadn't forgotten about her – he was trying so hard too. She was a dreamer, yes, but she wasn't a dream. He was awake and she still lingered stubborn. You're supposed to forget about dreams when you wake up.

Why couldn't he forget her?

Maybe because she was a redhead. Jacob had a thing for ladies with bloodrose hair. If a redhead is the first thing you see when you wake up, it's like the sunrise shining through the window. Better than coffee. Redheads were always slightly insane though – so much the better. Explained the last redhaired lady in his life...

Jacob groaned and got out of bed. He put his glasses on and pulled a chair up to the window. He could feel the chill pressing through the window. He brushed his hand against the glass. It was sticky with cold. The rain was still quietly tapping on the window. He tapped back. It was pillowsoft Morse code.

Jacob tapped, What should I do?

The rain whispered, Just fall where you fall.

Good rain. You were always the smart one. Not like that slow snow.

Lightning flashed deep away. It was so cold outside that when the lightning burst, it was an electric blue. It wasn't a forked branch either. It was a sudden flash, like the pilot light flicking on. The whole night became a cold oven warming up.

The thunder came three seconds later. It was a muted trumpet, dying before it could echo. Like a lady passing away before she could become a mother. Sad way to go. Quiet too.

The rain was beginning to fall slower now. A large raindrop cracked against the window and trembled slow down the glass. It reminded him of what Joyce said:

His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead.

He looked back at his bed. He saw the rumpled sheets coming in like the high tide. He saw the TV beyond the bed, the bright screen a lighthouse across the bedsheets. There was no one floating in the water. No one but himself. All alone in the swirl, pushing closer and closer towards the

jagged rocks.

A tiny voice murmured inside him. Taunting him.

That's why you can't forget her.

When Frankenstein created his monster, he never gave his beloved Creation a name. Why? He put life together, but couldn't bring himself to a name. Even the Dark Ages bred their Smiths, their Coopers. The monster roamed the world, lost without a name or a purpose. He became the unknown. He was monster to some, devil to others, wretch on occasion. Because everyone's terrified of something without a name.

The monster took its vengeance, picked apart Frankenstein's family, killed Frankenstein's wife, Elizabeth, fresh from the wedding. It seems love doesn't love to love love. Frankenstein's obsession for dead ends killed his life, I mean wife.

And then Elizabeth was an angel.

Jacob had gotten his library job less than a week into classes. It was in the library's basement – called the Dungeon in some circles. There was only one window on the entire floor, the light somehow seeping in like spilt orange juice running off the table. The Dungeon was dark and gloomy and medical journals. The new computing site – just put in the semester before – was bright and warm and electric. On the cold mornings, you could gather around the computers and feed off the baked air the fans were spitting out.

The librarians called blasphemy at first. The idea of having electronics in a library was sin, right up there with using dictionary pages as toilet paper. Librarians were afraid that people would become illiterate if they used computers. Because – as we all know – people do absolutely no reading on a computer. They don't read e-books, news articles, word processors, and so on and so forth.

So the librarians attacked from a different side. They said computers are weak. You could wave a magnet over one and wipe years of hard work. They said computers only work for a few years. That books work for a few hundred or even a few thousand years. They conveniently forget how easily combustible a book is. Damn Nazis burned Kafka, Hemingway, Wells. Oxford University scorched Thomas Hobbes. Savonarola burned Metamorphoses at the stake. Caesar arsoned the Library of Alexandria, taking with it Homer's works along with tens of thousands of books. The Greek plays we still read today are the charred fragments of that fire.

So viruses destroy computers and madmen with torches destroy books. It's too easy to confuse madness with viruses. It's almost as if the world isn't perfect.

Dort, wo man Bücher verbrennt, verbrennt man am Ende auch Menschen

But moving on...computers had that certain allure to Jacob. He had grown up with one in his bedroom like it was his brother. He had nothing else to turn to. The speech therapist called it impediment when the preacher called it speaking in tongues. He almost wished the preacher was his speech therapist. At least then people would pay attention to the boy speaking tongues. But the therapist was his therapist, so no one could understand a word he was saying. The computer could hear him though. Nothing rings louder and clearer than keys clacking away. He could speak with his hands better than he could with his mouth. He was as close to being deaf as the hearing can get.

He missed the quiet. No silence – mind you – there's still the hum of the computer fans whirring. It was a soft, white noise though. Books were even quieter. The occasional rustle, turning the page over like a stone. It crackled merry like autumn leaves beneath feet. Firedry leaves love the attention, how people step out of their way for them.

Jacob missed a book when he didn't have one right in front of him. He loved knowing that the answer to everything was on the next page. A good writer never leaves you hanging, but has you wanting more still.

He hated his last job. Retail, psh. No next page, no answers. Just customers who check their smarts at the door like coats. Sales for the wrong days. The shoplifters with the bouncing eyes. The cash register algebra. Too much for a boy – no, Jacob supposed he was a man now – to handle. A man who nursed on silence growing up. Sounds and distractions are all the same. Silence is lustrous.

He wasn't Meher Baba. Baba loved the quiet, true. Baba also loved loneliness – although he did declare to the world he was the Avatar. Doesn't make any sense. How can you say you want privacy in one hand and proclaim yourself as a deity in the other? Jacob's heart had beat for silence, but it needed company to keep the hours. How else would it know the rhythm for pumping blood? Jacob was always bad at rhythm.

The library was always crowded. The library was always quiet. Maybe why Jacob always walked to the service desk with a smile. He knew that besides the occasional question (Excuse me, where's the bathroom at?) he would have the world to himself, hearts beating around him like an orchestra warming up.

It was a warm feeling.

This warm feeling buzzed in the back of his mind as he walked between classes. He loved people. He missed them too easily. That was probably why he agreed to the text message so quickly.

Party IvyRoad 42 @9 tonite.

Jacob smiled as he sauntered into Linguistics – a first. He suddenly remembered that he had homework due for class today. Something about the AAVE. He swore, startling a couple girls sitting near the door, chatting.

He wasn't looking forward to the drinking though. He was sober for an Irishman – another first. He was a control freak, hated feeling his smarts slip out as beer poured in. It scared him when he didn't have an answer. The writer in Jacob was easily amused though, taking notes while everyone acted out idiot. Would make for great writing material someday. While everyone was possessed by their demons after the party, he was sitting out in the gutter, drinking his water bottle, trying to find constellations in the murky skies. Every star you could see was a shooting star in a Delawarean's eyes. They were all rare – too rare.

He still burned for sitting at the party, sobered amongst the sick. It was enough to keep him going through Linguistics. Enough to keep him going past his TA's evil stare when he didn't hand her his homework.

The college was run by the frats. They were drunk with power, holding the monopoly on parties. These supposed parties were all about initiation, seeing how the new recruits could stand the humiliation. Jacob heard the horror stories for years. He figured that if the little brats wanted to have their stupid treehouse clubs, then it was best to leave them be. Let them be the douche lawyers later on down the road. Although how could you sell your soul to be a lawyer if you didn't have a soul to begin with?

Jacob never went to those parties. In his first week, he was invited to several frat parties. He got creative with excuses. He even got away with telling the one person he was sick with polio. The friend must have thought that was some strain of the flu. Jacob still immediately changed the polio definition on Wikipedia – just in case. Jacob was a college student for less than a month and already he was thinking like one.

No, Jacob went to a different kind of party. The not-so-mainstream ones. The creek parties. Crowded with the art freaks. The impromptu poetry slams. Throwing paint at the bedroom walls, hoping the art was at least worth the security deposit. Huddled around the tiny TVs, watching vintage music videos that lived only at night like vampires.

These are the parties.

It was the evening, and Jacob was lounging in the living room, squished between people on the grungy couch. The front of the room was transformed into a stage. A rickety stool was a platform. The people who dared use it had a good sense of humor as well as a good sense of balance.

One of those people daring the squeaky stool was one of Jacob's New Jersey friends – the one with the Kerouac look. He was up front, wearing a flat cap to let people know he was a poet. He was intense as hell about poetry, dragging out metaphors until they were little more than crumbs. Jacob wished he could be as fervent about poetics as Kerouac was – Jacob loved song lyrics more. But Jacob knew the time would come, when he would adore poetics the same. There is enough time for everything, including death.

Kerouac finished, everyone applauded. He bowed deep – he had some box wine earlier – and sauntered off the stage, chattering with a friend close to the soapbox.

Someone nearby whispered, Excuse me, and pushed themselves off the couch. Jacob looked up and saw the girl from the other night – Liz was it? I think so. Yes, Liz – walk past and for the kitchen. Jacob's eyes widened. He got up from the couch – sinking like quicksand beneath the weight of a near-dozen people – and went for the kitchen as well. He said, Congratulations, to Kerouac and stepped into the next room. As soon as he did, he ran his foot into the cabinet hiding just around the corner.

Jacob swore. Liz – who was grabbing some popcorn to put in the microwave – was startled. She dropped the bag.

Red in the face, Jacob said, Sorry. Didn't mean to scare you.

Wellll, it's okay. I love a good scare every now and then...say, aren't you that boy I work with? Jacob?

Yup.

You having fun?

Definitely, yes. You?

Meh, could be better. I have a horrible headache though.

Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

Don't be.

What? Sorry?

Liz nodded, I hate when people say they're sorry for things they didn't do. Cheapens it, you know?

Oh.

Silence. Liz tossed the popcorn bag in the microwave and turned it on. They both stood there, watching the popcorn bag spin slow.

I love dancing.

I'm sor...I mean, well, what do you mean?

The popcorn bag's spinning. Reminds me of ballerinas. I used to be a ballerina, you know.

Used to be? What happened?

Got tired of it. Like I do of everything else. Had to move on.

Well, there have to be some things you still love after all these years.

Liz looked up, her eyes glistening. She said softly, There are. Have to have one love. Else you'll forget who you are.

Ain't that the truth?

The microwave dinged.

Liz gingerly picked the hot bag out, flopped it down on the counter.

Staring at it, she said, I shouldn't be eating food like this. Too greasy. It'll make my headache worse. Why did I choose popcorn?

I can help you eat the popcorn.

You will?

Jacob nodded.

Liz smiled, That's the nicest thing anyone's ever said to me.

You're from New York?

Liz nodded, Yup, born and raised right in Queens. You can see the skyline from my house some mornings. You know, if it's not too muggy out.

That must be wild, living in the city like that.

You ever been there?

Jacob cleared his throat, Yes, a few times. Went up there with my track team to run a few meets here and there. That was some time back though.

It's a lovely city.

It is. Too noisy, though. I can't stand the noise.

Personally, I don't see how you can stand it here.

Jacob laughed, You mean here, as in Delaware?

Liz nodded, It has such a small town vibe here. Everyone seems to know everyone. It's all six degrees of separation. It would drive me up a wall, people knowing every single thing about me. Jacob leaned back in his chair, chewing on a piece of popcorn. He said slowly, Well, why did you come here for school?

Because it's hard for me to stay in one place for too long. I'd feel trapped. Wouldn't you?

I'd rather things feel like home and not a prison.

So you'd want to live here? As in forever forever?

Yeah. It's all I've ever known. I don't even leave the state too often. I get homesick too easy.

Liz looked at Jacob sadly. She said, I don't think you know.

Know what?

What you're missing. This world is so much bigger. And scarier.

I know. That's why I prefer living here.

Like I said before, I love a good scare every once in awhile. And you should too.

I'll rather be safe. This life is all I have.

Don't be silly. Because this life is really all you have. I hate that carpe diem crap that's playing on everyone's broken record, but it's true. I don't think you know what you're not getting yourself into.

Jacob smiled a little smile, If you say so.

They went silent and back to eating the rest of the popcorn. Out in the living room, someone finished performing a poem. Everyone cheered, the sound echoing around the corner.

Liz suddenly got up, stretched, and said, Well, I suppose I better get going.

You are?

Yep. I told a friend of mine that I would drink cheap wine with her and trade horror stories about boys.

Oh.

Liz shrugged, It's a way to pass a Friday night. Well, good night. I'll see you in work in a few days.

You too.

Liz started walking out of the kitchen. Suddenly, Jacob asked, Can I have your number?

Liz stopped and turned around. She looked at him questionably. She asked, Why's that, darling?

You're an honest person. My New Year's resolution this year was to be around honest people more.

Liz smiled, Is that so?

She scrounged around in one of the kitchen drawers for a pen and paper. She found a marker, but nothing to write on.

Jacob offered up his arm. He said, Here's something you can write on.

Good idea.

Liz took Jacob's arm and began writing her number on the inside of his wrist.

He couldn't help but ask, Why the wrist?

If you write anything on your palm, you'll smear the ink quick. This way it lasts a little longer.

She finished writing her number on the wrist. He could already feel the ink pumping straight through his veins. His heart remembered each number all the quicker.

Jacob said, Huh. Learned something new today. And I had Linguistics class today too.

Haha. Linguistics, what a joke. We'll have to talk about that whenever you call me.

Deal.

And Liz left. Not for the last time.

When Jacob called two nights later, they didn't talk about Linguistics. Jacob was glad. He had spent four hours earlier that evening translating IPA to regular spelling.

How did your we-hate-boys evening go?

Huh?...oh, it went well. We sat around and ate ice cream. I poured whisky all over my French vanilla. Whisky is the new hot fudge.

I'm surprised you don't have diabetes yet.

Liz laughed, Me too. I love food soooo much. I'm going into withdrawal right now, actually. I don't keep food in my apartment. If I see food, I must eat it. I can't help it. I'm addicted to things.

I suppose we all are...have to keep grounded somehow. So, what are you up to right now?

Just finished Italian homework.

Ugh.

Ugh? How can you say that? I love Italian.

I'm dying in my Latin class. I'm thinking about withdrawing.

Latin sucks. It's a dead language for a reason.

That's my same thought. Who speaks Latin nowadays? Besides the priests, that is.

Jacob could almost hear Liz shrug over the phone. There was a long pause. Jacob thought for a moment the line disconnected and he was about to ask if Liz was still there when he heard her ask in a small voice, Do you have a friend who's so great that they make you feel terrible?

Yeah, a good friend of mine from high school actually.

What's his story?

He had no motivation at all. I had to threaten him to get him to pass his last classes. If it was up to him, he would still be in high school. This past summer he was walking outside of a movie theater with his girlfriend. Mugger tried to rob them. During the scuffle, the mugger shot his girlfriend dead. My friend got shot up pretty bad too.

Oh my God, that's terrible!

He took it pretty rough. I didn't go to see him in the hospital.

May I ask why?

I can't see people I love in the hospital. If I do, I would lose my nerves. No one should see the people they love broken.

...I understand.

But anyway, I never really talked with him about that night since he got out of the hospital. He's quiet now, a lot more than he used to be. Now he's going to college, taking classes. I've never seen him so driven before. He's become a real man now. Shame it took death to wake him up. But I'm glad that something did.

Liz said, I have a good friend. She's always having horrible stuff happen to her. But she's always laughing it off and pushing on. I don't know whether to look up to her or hate her.

Hate her?

She makes me feel so insignificant.

Does she mean to?

No. She's too nice to do something like that. I just want to tell her to stop being so great all the time.

Might be easier to be like her instead of bringing her down to you.

What's that supposed to mean?

I mean...oh nevermind. It's just that you should feel inspired by her. It's rare to see someone make a good thing out of a bad thing.

That's too hard.

Well...

Jacob let the word hang. He didn't know what to say.

Liz said, I wish I was great. Then people would speak to me.

What do you mean?

When I was growing up, no one ever said a single word to me. My parents never talked to me. Though they were the social butterflies. I was the ghost in the corner. It got to the point where

I was even hoping the girls in high school would pick on me. Just to prove I wasn't invisible.

You aren't invisible.

Yes I am. I am to you right now. All you're doing is talking to a phone. A phone that just walks and talks like me.

Jacob offered, There were times I wished I was invisible.

Be careful of what you wish for.

But it's true. You would be shocked how often I got picked on in high school. How often I got beat up. I remember laying in the snow in middle school, covered in blood and my glasses broken. I had people threatening to kill me all throughout high school. I've had people pull guns and knives on me. So believe me when I say that I wish I was invisible more than anything else. Because it's hard to kill a ghost.

Liz mused sagely, Ain't that the truth?

So why you think no one paid attention to you?

Well, I had a speech impediment while growing up. I couldn't pronounce S or T. I still remember in kindergarten, me wanting to play with kids on the playground. I would try talking with them, but – since they couldn't understand me – they would walk away. I still hate them for that.

But they were kids. Kids are stupid.

And older people aren't?

Jacob shrugged, Well...you have a point.

I know I do.

Jacob said, I had a speech impediment too growing up.

What was wrong with you?

You know the alphabet?

Liz said, Yeah.

I couldn't pronounce half of it.

Oh. I see.

Jacob continued, I had the same trouble as you. People would have a hard time understanding me.

They would walk away. But I would try just that much harder to make them listen.

What would you do?

I would draw pictures. Say I wanted water. My mom would hear waaha. So I would draw a picture of a glass of water to make her understand. I would make hand gestures to make people understand. I have always needed people to understand.

So what happened over the years?

I grew out of the speech problems. I forced myself to evolve. Problem was, I overcompensated. I spoke too much because I knew people understood so little. I've found the more someone talks, the more trouble they get themselves into. That's why I got bullied all those years. Believe it or not, bullies have excellent hearing. It makes up for their tiny brains. They're like bats. If they hear you answering questions in class, that's like blood in the water.

Liz sighed, I hate when adults say it's so easy being a kid. Being a kid sucks as much as being an adult, but at least adults have manners some of the time. Etiquette is a pair of shoes a kid never grows into.

Tell me about it.

There was silence on the phone for a few moments.

Liz said, I just wish people would talk.

Jacob said, I wish people would stop talking.

Then what are we doing right now?

This? This is nice.

Liz laughed, I guess you don't have a lot of talks like this?

Not really, no. Some of my friends, I've known for years. The only thing we ever talk about are classes or something. I've only known you for a week and we're already being therapists. I feel I should be sitting on a couch.

Liz asked, When am I getting paid?

Not as soon as you would like, probably.

Dammit.

Jacob continued, But yeah, falling back on what we were talking about, words are sooo important. It's what distinguishes us from all the other animals.

Not so much.

What do you mean?

Liz said, Well, I don't know if I told you this, but I used to be a chemistry major.

I remember.

Oh. Well, I did learn a thing or two before I switched. Back when they were trying to figure out the definition of intelligence – the British scientists, that was – one scientist kept arguing that every definition they gave was wrong.

Wrong? Why's that?

Because every definition of intelligence would apply to bacteria just as well as it would for humans.

A petri dish is just a smaller Earth, once you stop and think about it.

Huh. That sounds pretty interesting. Who was the scientist?

Uhhh, I forget the name. One of the reasons why I wasn't in the major for long.

Perhaps.

Liz sighed, Welllll, I suppose I better get going. It's late and I have class early in the morning.

You do? Sucks.

Yeah, yeah. I'm thinking about just sleeping in late. I'd probably sleep through the class anyway.

Good point. Well, okay then, I'll talk to you later then?

Okay. What'll be on the next episode of Liz & Jacob?

That'll be a surprise for our viewers, I guess.

Liz laughed, Ah, a cliffhanger. You clever son of a gun. G'night.

You too.

Liz didn't call until that Friday. When she did, Jacob wished she hadn't.

Jacob said, Heyyyy, how's it going? What are ya up to?

Drunk.

Jacob joked, Drunk? On a Friday night? Who gets drunk on a Friday?

Shut up.

Oh.

I was at a party. My boy – (she spat the word) – was making out with this whore. He only did that because he knew I was there. That rotten ass-hat. He knew I was there, he knew it. I bet you he didn't even know her name. I doubt he'll ever ask. That stupid little idiot.

Woah, woah. When did you start going out with someone?

I'm not going out with him. At least, not right now...

Liz sneezed twice.

Jacob said, Bless you.

He and I broke up a few weeks ago. A few weeks! And he's already going out for nights on the town with sluts. I can't believe him. I absolutely can't.

You didn't say anything, I hope?

What do you mean?

I mean...

I had vodka and stormed out. I would have thrown my drink on him. Waste of good vodka though.

Well, Liz, I mean, people move on. People fall in and out of love. You just have to wish them good luck because that's all anyone needs is luck...

You don't get it, do you?

Get what?

I don't want to wish him luck. I want to wish him back. I was his good luck and he used me all up! He wouldn't have met my friends if it wasn't for me. He wouldn't have gotten his apartment if it wasn't for me.

Well, I'm sorry...

Don't you dare be sorry. I told you before, only be sorry for things you do. And you don't even know what's going on. No one does. I don't even know...

Liz's voice broke. Jacob thought for sure she was going to cry, but she pressed on.

I don't even know why I bothered calling you. As if you were any help.

Well, I'm trying...

Oh, you're trying.

Jacob stopped a moment. He had to push down the anger. His insides were boiling. He hated being mocked more than anything else. He wasn't going to let her drag him down. He wasn't, he wasn't. He was going to swim. Even if that meant letting her drown.

Jacob said calmly, Listen, I know you're going to hate hearing this, but give it time. Sober up. You're at a low right now so you can only go up from here...

Liz snarled, You're a na?ve fool. You know that, right? Goodbye.

And she hung up.

Hiiii.

Uh, hello.

How are you?

It had been two days since the drunk dial incident. Jacob strained his ear against the phone. She sounded sober enough.

Jacob said cautiously, I'm doing good. Just, um, just struggling with this English paper.

Eck. What's it on?

About the witches in Macbeth.

I thought you couldn't say that name?

That's only if you are performing it on stage. At least, I think. I hope so.

I never read Macbeth. I gave up on Shakespeare after reading Hamlet.

Jacob asked, Ah. Why's that?

He could almost hear Liz shrug over the phone.

I dunno. I suppose because he takes the whole play to make one decision. I'm too impulsive. I hate indecisive people.

If Hamlet was an impulsive person, that would have been a really short play.

Liz laughed, You're probably right.

Yeah.

Are you okay?

Yeah, yeah. I'm fine.

You sure? You sound a bit corpsy.

Corpsy?

Yeah, you know. Like stiff.

Oh. No, no. I'm good. Just tired. Long couple of days.

So what are you having trouble with on your Macbeth paper?

Well, in the story, there are witches, you see. They make a prediction that Macbeth will kill the king and take the throne.

Does he?

Well, yes. But it's ambiguous. Hard to tell if the witches saw the future, or if they planted the idea in Macbeth's mind.

So what's the problem?

Well, it's how you look at it. If you're a sci-fi or fantasy person, you'll read the play for mysticism and stuff. If you're realistic and look for psychology, you'll read it for manipulation and self-fulfilling prophecies.

What kind of a man are you? Sci-fi or psychological?

I'm not sure. I think I need witches to tell me.

A pause. Liz said abruptly, If I had to live by someone else's rules, I'll kill myself.

Well...that's a bit of an overreaction.

You mean you wouldn't mind living by someone's rules?

I wouldn't enjoy it. But everyone needs a hand every once in awhile. If we're all by ourselves, we'll get lost pretty quick.

But you're still having someone else live your life.

Yeah. It's a cold comfort. If only life was DIY.

Liz sighed, I hate having to rely on other people. Everyone has been breaking my heart for years and the warranty's expired.

Isn't pain fantastic?

I wouldn't know. I haven't felt it in years. I've been habituated.

Tell me about it. I wanted to be an astronaut when I grew up, but all I am now is one of Pavlov's dogs.

Liz snorted, That mean everytime you eat, you flinch?

A little bit, yes.

Liz laughed, You're so goofy.

That's what people keep telling me. It helps me sleep better at night.

You're a cool person. Don't ever let any witch tell you otherwise.

Oh how ironic.

Jacob's eyes widened. I didn't just say that, did I? He wished he thought before he spoke. The other night flashed back to him. When Liz was a witch, under vodka's spell.

Liz caught on, What do you mean? What's ironic?

Well...

Liz interrupted, Sorry, but I think we have to close up shop for the night.

What's wrong?

Starting to get one of my migraines. I'm going to take some medicine and go to bed.

Sorry to hear...

Uh uh, remember what I said about being sorry?

Jacob couldn't help but smile, What I meant to say was I hope you get better. Have a good night.

Thankssss. You too. Nights.

Jacob was sitting at the kitchen table, drinking his cup of coffee slow. All the clocks in the house chimed in 11 o'clock. The night was thin. He glanced out the window, could still see gray streaks in the sky. The town had sweated off its electricity, and now the wattage was thick in the air, waiting for morning before raining down.

Civilization was nothing more than a massive nightlight.

Jacob looked down at his paper, scattered across the table. He was four pages down, one left to go. He had to cut some paragraphs out, though. It was due tomorrow. His opening sentence on the witches didn't feel right. Don't want to change that though. That means starting over.

Jacob sighed and rubbed his eyes awake. He tried to keep focused on the paper, about how the witches formed Macbeth into a pawn.

But his mind kept coming back to Liz. Did she really forget all that she said the other night? Did she really have that much to drink? She had to have forgotten. Jacob could have told her. No, should have told her. What good would that do? Have her angry at him again? This time while

sober? This time that she could remember?

Jacob looked at his murky reflection in the coffee and whispered, And this is why you don't fall in love anymore.

He promised himself over that past summer that he would never fall in love again. He had a lot of time to think that summer. He had made the mistake of taking a job at a department store. At least he had a lot of time to think while roaming lost in the aisles.

Jacob had something with this one girl he graduated with. Sort of something. It was complicated. Her name was Olivia. She wore thick glasses. She smelled faintly like oranges. She liked fun. But what she called fun, Jacob called stupid. But Jacob still liked her. He would have smoked cigarettes and drank tequila and got into trouble as long as it was with her. Olivia said no, that he wouldn't be able to keep up with her.

Jacob could still remember the last time they talked.

She said, I don't want you to change your life. I'm not worth changing your life over. Just be you, that's all I ask.

Jacob winced everytime he thought of her saying that. He wished that people would be more creative. He wished they didn't recycle lines from after-school specials. He wished that people put more effort into ditching him.

His friends kept him in the loop since. Said she fell in with some guy who rides a dirtbike. A real rebel without a cause. Olivia was supposed to be a teacher. But her shifts at the fast-food restaurants paid just enough for cigarettes. She was fine with that. Jacob wondered what would have happened, if she had chosen him over James Dean. Would she still be happy?

Probably not. People are happier being lazy. She wouldn't regret anything until she got old. Real old. Then it would be too late for anything bigger. Too late for everything, even an early bird special.

Jacob frowned. He thought about his promise: Thou shalt not fall in love. He wished he hadn't made the promise in the first place. Promises are made to be broken. And Liz was the bull in the china shop.

He wished he could forget things as easy as Liz did. Can't break a promise that you don't remember. Maybe that's why alcoholics drink. After a couple beers, who could remember their New Year's resolution?

Jacob casted his eyes downward. He knew he couldn't forget things. He was terrified of forgetting. His journals were mountaining in his closet. He didn't want to miss a single thing. Because at some point in life, that'd be all you'll have in the world. Jacob didn't have the heart to scatter his memories like grain in the September rustle.

And so he let the memories build up like trash heaps. Liz was everywhere he turned. He had to forget either her or the promise. Couldn't keep both. The promise never to fall in love was solid. It was consistent. But it couldn't smile the way Liz did in her little happy moments. Nothing could smile the way Liz did. Not even Olivia.

Jacob drank the rest of his coffee, hoping to wash the thoughts down. His tongue tingled as the hot coffee rinsed over it. The coffee's touch kept him awake, more so than the caffeine ever could.

Hi.

Hello, how are you?

Good, good.

How did your paper go?

Which one?

The one on Shakespeare. Macbeth, was it?

Jacob sighed, Meh, could have been better. I ran out of time.

That sucks.

Tell me about it. I've been watching old home videos all night.

You have? Why?

I miss 1992.

I don't see what's so special about '92. It was a mess, just like every other year.

Jacob turned from the phone and coughed. He said, Well, it was a good year. See, I was about four years old, and my family went on vacation. My grandparents came along. It was the only time I could remember my grandfather not being in a hospital bed.

What happened to him?

Cancer took him. Took a couple years, but cancer got him in the end.

That's a shame. I lost my granddad to a heart attack when I was about that old too.

It's sad to see them go when you're that young, isn't it?

Yeah.

I mean, all you really have of them in the end is memories. That's all that can outlive a person.

Yeah.

I was told...

Jacob chuckled.

...I was told this one story about my granddad. When he was a bit younger, his family owned a barn. It was old and filled with snakes. Really nasty ones. And they decided that it would be

best to tear it down. Now, my granddad was one of seventeen...

Seventeen?

Yep. He was Irish.

Ah. That explains everything. Continue.

Well, like I was saying, he was one of seventeen and the only one to agree to tear it down. Now, he wasn't interested in tearing it down by hand, though. He had a more efficient idea in mind. He poured gasoline all over the barn, lit a match, and walked away.

Liz laughed, Sounds like fun.

Well, it probably was. Until the fire got out of control. Apparently, gasoline fires can get pretty wild. They had to call the fire department when the fire started creeping towards my great-grandma's house.

He sounds like quite the character.

He was. It's a genetic thing. My family passes down the crazy like it was an heirloom.

A pause.

Liz offered, I guess it's best if we have to lose people, we lose them young.

I don't know. I guess. I lost a good friend of mine in high school. I remember that. Too well.

May I ask how he died?

It was a she. Car accident. She got ejected, and the car rolled over her legs. It took her a couple months to die.

That's awful.

It was. She was a good person. She just fell in with the wrong crowd sometimes. It was the wrong crowd that talked her into the car that night. She was a wonderful person.

I'm sure she was.

Jacob continued, She was a writer. A very good one.

What did she write?

Poetry, mostly. I still remember the first time I heard one of her poems. Everyone had to bring a poem to class to recite. I had just started writing poetry at the time, and I was embarrassed. So I brought Kipling. She brought one of her own poems. It was wonderful – much better than Kipling's. She was amazing. I think about her everytime I write a poem. Also, everytime I get into a car. Might be why I'm afraid of driving, now that I think about it.

You're afraid of driving?

Absolutely, yes. I hate it with all my soul.

Maybe you should move to the city then. Take public transportation.

I would, but I don't think I'm cut out for the city. I'll take Delaware over the big town any day.

Didn't we talk about this before? I'm getting déjà vu.

Me too. But there's no point to living life doing something you hate.

Isn't that what life is filled with?

Yes. So why add to the list?

You do have a point.

Liz snorted, I know. That's why I talk.

A pause.

Jacob started up again, I guess I just worry too much.

You guess? It sounds like you have OCD, for christakes.

I suppose we all do. Everyone wants some control.

Not me. I love the surprise. Don't you?

Not as much of a gambler as you are.

Shame. Gamblers have all the fun too. What language are you taking?

Jacob was caught off guard, Huh, what?

What foreign language are you going to take, silly?

Ohhh. I'm thinking about taking French.

Take Italian. It's such a gorgeous language.

Is it?

Yep. And I'm not just saying that because I'm Italian.

I'll consider it.

Liz went on, It's just that English is such a boring language. It's so mechanical. No music to it.

Well, that's what happens when you borrow from German.

Guess so. But yes, take Italian next semester. That way we can be study partners. I need someone to hound me to study.

Jacob offered, We can use Italian as some sort of twinspeak.

Twinspeak?

You know – that secret language that twins use to talk to each other?

Liz burst out laughing, Ohhh I see. Well then, it sounds like a plan...twin.

And so it came time to pick classes for the next semester. Jacob picked up two English classes and some other random stuff. He gazed longingly at the poetry workshop class. He couldn't fit the fun stuff in his schedule though. Jacob didn't have the time. There were too many education classes, too much student teaching, and not enough time and certainly not enough money to

compromise.

But then it came time for the foreign language. Jacob didn't have much of a choice – he had to take a language. University rules.

He had been thinking for awhile of taking German. He took a few years of it in high school. Some of the words had to have been still sticking to him, right? Even after all this time?

He saw the introductory German. He also saw classes for Portuguese, Spanish, French, Russian, Chinese, Arabic. And he saw an intro Italian course. And he remembered what Liz said about the language. How they could be study partners. How she could help him with the class.

So Jacob signed up for Italian.

And all with just a few sentences of thinking behind it.

Hi Jacob.

Hi Liz.

Having fun?

The two were sitting at the service desk in the library. 6:55 again on a Tuesday night.

Jacob inflated his cheeks and rolled his eyes, Can you please shoot me?

Haha. You have a couple minutes left of your shift. Be glad.

Couldn't be any longer.

Is sitting on your ass – I mean, your posterior – for a couple hours really that back-breaking?

Do you know how many people I told where the bathroom was tonight?

Too many, I guess?

If they put up a sign telling people where the bathroom is, I'll be out of a job.

You and me both, darling.

Someone's phone went off nearby. Ringtone playing some obscure electronica. The person quickly stifled the ring.

Liz's eyes widened, Ohhhh, let's dance.

Right now? In front of the whole library?

Liz smirked, Afraid of being the dancing rebel? What is this, a remake of Footloose?

No. I'm just not much of a dancer.

Well, here's the next best thing.

Liz reached in and hugged Jacob hard. He could feel all of his blood being pushed up from the squeeze, the red flushing his cheeks.

What? Now don't tell me you're much of a hugger, either.

I'm not. I can't help it.

You can't?

I'm part German.

Liz laughed, That explains you being such a stiff then.

I'm allergic to hugs. They make me sneeze. When I was little and my grandma would try to hug me, I would run and hide.

Really?

Jacob nodded.

How could you live like that?

Jacob shrugged.

Remember though...something can repel you, but it's only pushing you closer to something else.

Jacob wanted to say something. He wanted to ask, So why do you bother running away from things? He already knew how to deal with Liz, though. So he simply nodded.

Everyone's afraid of everyone, so they make everyone everyone's problem.

Jacob laughed, That makes...sense.

Hey, I'm just the scientist. Was the scientist.

That's right. Now you're one of us. You're an art major.

Noooooooo.

Jacob looked up at the clock. It was almost time to leave. He didn't want it. He wanted to stay at work forever. He couldn't believe he was saying it, but he would gladly direct people to the bathroom for the rest of his life if he could. As long as Liz was there to keep him company.

Remember what you said about never falling in love.

Shut up. This is not falling in love. This is being friends.

Is there a difference?

Yes...I think. I don't know.

But it was time to leave. And he had stuff he had to do. He got up, stretched.

Jacob said, Well, it's about that time.

So it is, darling.

You able to talk on the phone tonight?

Liz's eyes glinted, Yes, that sounds lovely.

Good...good.

Someone suddenly stopped by the desk – a lanky athletic-type – and asked, Excuse me, where's the bathroom at?

Jacob pointed in the far corner, said, It's down the hallway just beyond that stairwell.

Oh, okay. Thank you.

The lanky athletic-type barely turned the corner before Jacob and Liz had burst out laughing.
They couldn't help it. No one could.

Jacobbbb.

Hey, what's up?

Looking out the window. Guess what?

What?

Liz said gleefully, I can see stars.

You can?

Uh huh. It's wonderful. Can't see worth shit in the city. I love New York, but it's hard to look past all the skyscrapers.

I love stars. I can't get enough of them.

I think you would love living out in the desert somewhere.

Really? You think so?

Yup. I can tell things about people. I figured out a lot about you today.

Do tell.

You hug like a statue, for one.

And?

Well, that's about it. You can tell a lot about people, the way they hug. You hug as if you wish you were the only person you ever saw.

Jacob played pretend-hurt, Ah jezz, that stings.

You sound so offended.

How do you think you hug then?

What's that? I'm sorry, I blanked out for a moment.

How do you think you hug? If I hug like a statue?

Liz deadpanned, I hug like a bird that poops on statues.

Jacob laughed, No, seriously.

I hug...like I want to love everyone. No, that's wrong.

Jacob asked, How so?

Only thing I remember from freshman English class was the difference between metaphors and similes.

Similes use like or as. Metaphors don't.

Exactly. Using like is the same as just talking about something. Waters it down, you know? With a metaphor, you are that something. So I hug everyone because...well, I have to love everyone.

Huh, interesting.

Jacob could almost feel Liz beam over the phone.

I know, right? Not bad for a silly girl. I just wish everyone loved me the way I love them.

What do you mean?

Liz asked, Have I ever told you about Ethan?

No. Who's that?

Liz sighed, Ethan was my ex. We broke up some time back.

Ohhhh.

Jacob suddenly remembered the drunk dial incident. He didn't say anything else, though, but let Liz continue.

When we were going out, we were always arguing.

Arguing about what, may I ask?

Anything. Stupid stuff really, now that I think about it. We would fight, he would leave. Couple days later, I would see pictures posted all over the bloody Internet of him drunk with girls. He would come back. Rinse, cycle, repeat. Blah.

Jacob said helpfully, Sounds like he was a douche.

Same thing I thought. That is, until he left.

What changed?

Me. I realized I was being horrible to him. It's my fault he left all those times. He had been soooo good to me over the past year or two.

It doesn't sound like it.

He was. It's hard to pin someone down in a couple sentences. A good person anyway. The interesting people need the whole language to be explained.

So you think you can reel him back in?

I like to think so, yes. Even trying would help me sleep better at night. I think I can change him.

Change him? As in break him?

Liz said stubbornly, Not really. He's not some stallion. He's just a chubby boy with glasses. I think I can make him accept me.

I don't see why that's your problem. Sounds like something he has to deal with.

It's a monster I created. It's my responsibility.

You confuse me.

I do?

Yup. I thought you were one of the free spirits. Now here you are, chaining yourself to what this Ethan boy wants.

Love is too important for the little things. Don't you agree?

Yes...no...I don't know.

Don't be such a Hamlet.

Ah, an allusion.

Liz giggled, You noticed? I'm afraid I'm starting to become James Joyce.

I could never understand Joyce.

Liz said dreamily, I can't either. That's why he's amazing.

Anyway, back to the talk...this guy, um...

Ethan.

Ethan, that's right. So you really love him, then?

Yes.

Even if he's been knocking up every girl in town?

I wouldn't say that about him. That's a bit unfair. He subscribes to the hippie love.

You're okay with that?

I either have to forgive him or forget him. I'll rather forgive him. I heard he's been dating a new girl though.

Is that so?

Uh huh.

The memory of a weaker Liz, drunk and tearful, flooding over the phone was haunting Jacob. He could have sworn he was sleeping, and this was a nightmare. He shook it off and tried to come back to awake.

Liz continued, I've been throwing coins into the fountain outside the library.

Wishing on what?

That he would leave his new girl and come back for me. I know what you're going to say: that wishing fountains are only supposed to be used for good, not evil.

I would say that, but that would make me a hypocrite.

Jacob had thrown a fistful's worth of pennies into that same fountain awhile back. He hoped that would be enough for Olivia to come back to her senses, to dump her James Dean. It didn't work.

You have to be richer to afford love.

Liz said quietly, I just feel like I'm being replaced.

That's not saying much for yourself.

What do you mean?

Well, you're saying if he's confusing someone else for you, then that means you weren't that special.
I suppose.

But you are special.

Liz laughed shortly, You're sweet. But I still think she's the new me for him.
You make it sound like love's an assembly line.

It is. If it's defective, you send it back for a new one. People think it's as easy as getting a toaster.
Jacob couldn't help but ask, So why not think of him as being a toaster?
Because he's the only one who can calm me down. I have...my moments.

That so?

Uh huh. When I'm with him, I can never stop hugging him. He's like a giant quilt.

Jacob wondered if it was possible for a person to smother a quilt, not the other way around.

Jacob?

Hmmm?

I miss him.

I can tell.

I'm so confused.

Jacob asked, I thought you liked the surprise?

I do. But I don't.

I see.

I just wish he would notice me. I've been dying my hair all different colors the past few weeks.
Everytime I see him, all he says is Hi. Nothing about my hair. I would keep changing it colors
if I wasn't so afraid I'd go bald.

I've noticed.

What? My hair?

Yup. I was going to say something at work, but I forgot.

That so?

Yes. I wish I could pull off having purple hair. People would look at me weird, though.
At least they'll look at you. I don't even know what my original hair color is anymore.

Liz sighed hard, then continued.

A crazy person shouldn't have to be lonely. All eyes should be on them wherever they go. Not
to say you're a loon.

Jacob reassured her, I don't mind. If anything, I take that as a compliment.

Liz said, Good, I'm glad someone does. I was starting to get worried about people.

Why's that?

If nobody acts silly, everyone looks the same. They're all shades in the night.

Oh.

A quiet.

Jacob?

Hmm?

I have to go. Good night.

Night.

The Greeks once believed that Orpheus civilized us. He gave us medicine, the sciences, mysticism. Whatever he did, the rest of humanity followed close behind, mirroring his steps. He was the pinnacle of us and thank goodness we never thought to walk past him.

Not bad for him being a poet and a musician.

One day, his wife – Eurydice – was walking in the tall grass when she stepped on a snake. The snake bit her. The fangs were sharp, but the poison was sharper. When Orpheus found her body in the grass, he played such heartbreak songs that the world cried with him. The world was his groupie after all.

Orpheus decided to rescue her. He went to the underworld and confronted Hades himself. He won Eurydice back, all for the price of a song on his lyre. Hades warned him, though, that if Orpheus dared look at his wife before they left the underworld, he would lose her forever.

As they ran for the surface, Orpheus had doubts. Was she really behind him? Did she fall back? Was it all tricks on his mind? He couldn't help it. He looked back and saw his beloved get immediately snatched up by the darkness, this time for good.

If Orpheus couldn't bring his beloved back to his arms, who's to say the rest of the human race could?

Hiiii.

Liz dragged out the syllable into a paragraph over the phone.

Hey there. How are ya?

Gooood. Just making spaghetti.

Jacob put down the book he was reading for class. He asked, Does it stick to the wall well?

Huh?

The spaghetti, does it stick?

Oh. I'm afraid to check. As long as it doesn't stick to the bottom of this pot, I'm happy.

So...?

Liz sighed, Nobody wants to talk to me.

Why's that?

I dunno. My roommate doesn't want to talk with me. Ethan doesn't want to talk with me. I called my mom earlier tonight. She said she was doing laundry. Can you believe that?

Jacob couldn't help but be honest. He said, Not really, no.

I'm an only child, but my parents ignore me like I'm one of the middle kids.

Just do what I do.

What's that?

I keep talking until someone notices. Works most of the time.

Liz laughed short, I'll stick with that. It seems to have worked tonight.

But surely they haven't always ignored you? They must have noticed when your mom gave birth to you.

Oh, my mom kinda had to. After that, they seem surprised when I talk to them. Almost as if they forgot about me.

Examples?

Well...like when we went to Key West last summer...

Ah, you went to Key West?

Yes.

Did you like it?

Jacob could almost see Liz smile on the other end of the phone.

Yes. The decline of Western Civilization never felt so wonderful. Although it could have smelled better.

Jacob laughed, Nice. But continue. Sorry for interrupting.

Not at all. But yeah, during the entire trip, they kept wanting to sit on the beach the whole day.

What did you want to do?

I wanted to walk through all the dorky little museums.

That so?

Uh huh. I love museums. But when I told them I wanted to visit the museums, they told me to go swimming in the water for a bit. As if I'm just some little kid.

Which you're not.

I know I'm not. I'm glad someone else thinks so too. Besides, there's sharks all around the Keys.

You would think they were signing my death warrant. You know, by having me swim with all those horrible sharks.

How could you be so sure?

So sure of what?

Jacob shrugged, Well, when a fin's sticking out of the water, it's awful hard to tell if it's a dolphin or a shark.

I hate them both.

Oh.

Sharks have that constant snarl. Dolphins are just stupid. They're like a bunch of dogs chasing their tails and licking their junk.

I take it you're not a dog person?

I'm a crazy cat lady. Always have been, always will be.

Jacob couldn't help but ask, What is it that people see in cats?

I take it you're a dog person?

Jacob laughed, Yes.

Well, the cat is used to being alone. If anything, it's actually proud of it. I strive to be a cat. If I'm going to be lonely, I might as well be arrogant about it.

I see. It doesn't have to be like that though.

It does for me. The less people you talk with, the easier it is to run away.

Jacob asked, So why are you calling me?

Why?

Jacob immediately regretted it. He was afraid of igniting her temper.

Well, I was just curious...

Welllll, I dunno. I get confused easily. I guess...

You just need a second opinion?

I suppose so, yes. Let's go with that.

A quiet.

Jacob said, You know, Liz, when you need someone to talk with, I'll be here. I'm only a phone call away. Believe it or not, someone cares about you.

Thanks, that means a lot. You know what that means though?

What's that?

That you're giving me yet another reason to run away.

How does that work out?

Maybe some other time. I'm tired. I'm going to bed.

Good night.

Nights.

It was the middle of April. Jacob had one of those moments, the moments that everyone wants to forget. The moment which you tell people years later where you were and what you were doing when the trauma happened.

His grandparents could remember the Kennedys getting gunned down, Camelot shot dirty through a clean heart. His parents could remember Reagan's near-assassination, Lennon's murder. Jacob himself could remember that September morning years before when New York City didn't shatter, but it did get scratched.

Jacob would have to shoulder remembering this day too. He had to clean out old, good memories of his childhood and put this day here to remember. He wished there was nothing to remember. He was sitting in the library. Jacob should have been studying. Instead, he was sitting at one of the computers, surfing the net. Jacob was a news junkie, he had to admit. He had to know everything going on in the world. Had to know about every broken treaty, every hunger strike, every daredevil stunt gone wrong. He had to know everything in the world. He was terrified of the world, but he knew the more he knew, the more he could make it home.

He saw a news flash on the one webpage. A couple students had been shot in Virginia Tech, deep in Blacksburg. Jacob frowned. That's no good. Nobody wants to send their kid to school to die.

When Jacob checked the news again a few hours later – he was still in the library – the number had jumped. Over thirty dead, almost the same number wounded. Jacob's eyes widened. He inhaled sharply. He didn't care if the people sitting nearby could hear him.

Stalin was wrong – a million deaths isn't a statistic. It is a million tragedies.

Jacob would come to see the pictures of the gone sprawled on all the news. He knew the media would run the story for weeks, if not months – long after the people had been buried. He wished they wouldn't do that. He wished that people would rest in peace, not in arguments between news personalities over who was right and who was wrong. As if the personalities could sway leaders to better us all.

The candlelit vigils came. They swept across the country as the fastest wildfire on record. By the end of the week, almost every college was hosting moments of silence. Moments were all that many could muster. It's harder to hold back crying than you might think.

Almost every college had a vigil. Almost every one.

We should change that.

Change what?

The vigil. We should have a vigil.

Jacob and Liz were trading shifts at the library – Jacob leaving, Liz arriving. It had been raining. Liz was wearing her thin coat. Jacob had forgotten his jacket. He wasn't looking forward to the outside. Especially since Liz was here, inside. Her hair was dyed a faint green for some reason. Jacob couldn't help but ask, How would we get one of those set up?

What do you mean, how? Have you been to one before?

Well, yeah, I have. I'm used to being on the sidelines, though. I'm not bred to be an organizer. Liz said stoutly, Well, I am. We'll pull this off together. Both of us can't screw up on the same thing, can we?

Now that I think about it, not really.

Well, good then – it's settled.

There's still the issue of what we're going to do.

What we're going to do?

Liz rolled her eyes, You know, like logistics and whatnot. We need candles, for one.

We can collect from the churches around here. I'm sure they have a whole stockpile of candles hidden in their basements.

Good point. I'll talk with the priest at my church, see if I can get some candles off him. How many people do you think will show up?

Hard to say. Maybe a couple dozen. Maybe a couple thousand. Numbers don't matter. What matters is that people care in the first place.

Good point. You have a point.

I know I do. Spread the word. Tell your friends and have them tell their friends.

Jacob couldn't help but notice...despite how bohemian Liz was at times, she was a militant community organizer at heart.

Jacob asked, When and where should it be held?

Hmmm, good question. What do you think?

Thursday night, probably. Everyone will be drunk on Friday and Saturday. As to where, I say the sidewalk in front of the library.

Why?

It's a public place. We hold the vigil there, we don't have to worry about red tape elsewhere on

campus.

It was true – the sidewalk running between the library and the main road was one of the few public places in the university. Jacob knew this because he had to walk past some lunatic every morning while going to classes, the idiot talking about how everyone's going to Hell. Apparently, Jacob was going to Hell. Jacob was Catholic. And sure, Jacob wasn't gay – but he supported gay rights. So in that guy's eyes, Jacob was going to Hell twice. And sure, Jacob wasn't Jewish – but he had a lot of Jewish friends and loved them all. So in the preacher's eyes, Jacob was going to Hell three times. Jacob wished the university could shut the man up. Hate breeds hate, after all. The university said no, it didn't have the authority. So Jacob supposed that thousands of people walking around campus had to have their right to morning peace infringed by one madman with a bullhorn.

Liz said excitedly, That's a great idea! And you say you're not an organizer. Psh.

Thursday night arrived too soon. Jacob was still picking up candles on the afternoon of. He scrounged from all the churches. He had gotten a bagful of candles from the chapel, after promising the priest that he would go to confession in return.

But somehow, during the past few days, Jacob could feel a cold sneaking on him. He didn't know where he got it from – maybe he caught a virus from his computer? Anything's possible.

The cold was getting worse and worse until that night, when Liz stopped by to pick up the candles. I'm sorry, but I can't go.

What? Why not?

Jacob's head was swimming. He was drowning on dry land.

I have a cold. I don't want anyone there to catch it.

Liz looked disappointed, Ohhh...well, I'm sorry to hear that.

Me too.

And after all the work you put into it. I heard there's going to be a couple hundred people there too.

I knowwww. It sucks. But I'm not that important. There's bigger things.

You're right.

I'll keep the lights on here though.

That sounds like a good idea.

Jacob handed Liz the bags of candles.

Jacob advised, Make sure you don't light the campus on fire.

Liz laughed, I'll make sure. Well, I'll talk to ya later.

She stepped up to Jacob to hug him, but Jacob recoiled.

Oh, that's right, m'dear. Almost forgot. You have a cold. I hope you aren't offended, but I don't want your germs that bad.

No, not at all.

Byes.

Bye.

Later that night – after the sun tripped and fell down – Jacob kept his word and then some. He turned on every light in the room until everywhere he looked was drenched in watts. Jacob felt like he was sitting on the sun.

Huh. I thought it would be hotter.

He picked up his notebook and began studying.

People walking past would look up at the window, see the brilliant light seeping through. Jacob hoped it was a lighthouse to them, guiding people around the clashing rocks in the heat of night. Miles away, the sidewalk outside the library was glowing even brighter, a sea of flickering orange juice. The waves of candles swelled in the breeze. In the words of Bovee:

The light in the world comes from the sun and the student's lamp.

And when you put all those students and all those lamps together, you would think it's the sun.

About five thousand years ago, people living in County Meath, Ireland built a mausoleum. Called Newgrange, it was a stone-and-dirt mound – a crowning achievement for any prehistoric people. Newgrange was a huge commitment to the dead, being several stories tall and took up a good acre of real estate. Unfortunately, time has weathered the writing off the stone like...well, like a gravestone. We know how it was built, but we don't know why. The archeologists of today have picked for answers. Some think it's a tomb. They've found bones – and where there are bones, there's mourning. Others go further, though – they say the tomb was a church to the sun. They say that yes, it is possible to worship the darkness of the dead and the brightness of sunlight in the same room.

Whatever the case, every year during the winter solstice, the sunrise floods the entire room with a warming light. As if to say there's nowhere you can be buried where the sun doesn't shine. And you know what? I sleep better at night knowing that.

The spring semester was already coming to a close and with it, Jacob's freshman year. He had survived – scraped and scratched – but he survived. And in the end, the end is what matters.

Liz needed help with cleaning out her room for the summer. She was going back to New York for a few months. Jacob offered to help with the move. He arrived to find himself the only willing soul. Liz's roommate was sitting in the open window, smoking a cigarette in a non-smoking dorm. Even Liz was listless, sprawled facedown on the couch and not feeling the urge to move.

Jacob took a TV remote off the endstand and poked Liz in the shoulder with it.

Jacob said calmly, C'mon, get up. You're making me look responsible. It's scaring me.

Uhhhhhhhhh.

Her roommate coughed and said, She's been like that all morning

Jacob couldn't remember the roommate's name for the life of him.

Liz murmured, No, no, I'm getting up, I'm getting up...

She didn't so much as get up as she rolled off the couch. Crumbled on the floor, Liz said, Okay, now I'm ready.

They started first by packing up Liz's room. All they had on hand were a few boxes, but Liz shook it off.

She said, That's all I need, really. Even that is too much.

And Liz wasn't lying. She haphazardly tossed her clothes into the one box. She was able to fit all of her fashion into it.

Jacob asked, Are you sure you're a girl?

I think so. Why?

Most girls bring suitcases of clothes with them.

Liz looked quizzically at him and then at the box. She realized what he meant and laughed, Oh, that. I'm into recycling clothes.

Oh?

Uh huh. I buy thrift clothes. Then I take scissors, some fabric, needles, and thread to it and change it up. When I can't change it anymore, I pitch it. Or use the leftover stuff as rags.

Ah. I've never noticed that.

Liz smiled, You're a guy. I would be scared if you did notice. Be careful with those paintings on the desk, by the way.

Okay, I'll make sure.

As Jacob was putting the paintings away, he noticed they were all ballet scenes. Some of the scenes, it was just a girl, either twirling or leaping. Most of the other scenes, though, had paired the girl with a guy, who held her up. Always close and always longingly.

Jacob mentioned, You really love to paint ballet.

Yup. Dancing is so gorgeous that it does all the beauty for you. All I did was watch ballet videos.

I drew from there. Then I threw paint at it. Ta-da.

Jacob admired the artwork for a minute, then carefully put them in a nearby folder, ready to go.

Liz began to rummage through her closet. He could hear her swearing.

What's wrong?

Liz was tossing books over her shoulder, each landing in a pile behind her. She said, These stupid textbooks. I paid hundreds of dollars for them, put them in the closet, and forgot about them.

So?

So it's probably too late to sell them back now.

There's probably still time.

They're books from last semester.

Oh.

Liz sighed, These editions are probably extinct by now. I hate how they do that. How they change a few words from edition to edition. Expect us to pay a hundred dollars for each book.

They can kiss my ass.

Jacob snorted, Agreed.

Liz turned suddenly, asked, You know what?

What?

You've never shown me any of your poems before.

I haven't?

Nope.

Well...I have one memorized, I think. If you want to hear it. I want to warn you though. It's not that good.

Liz laughed, Oh, shut up.

No, I'm serious.

Liz pouted, Please?

Okay. This is called Where Fireflies End, Where Lightning Begins:

I can't tell where
the fireflies end and
the lightning begins –
they're all blank, jagged
splatters crowded
on the deep night
canvas. It's all an origami

landscape creped
around our world.

We can goodbye
across continents
and still the sunset that I sleep to
is the sunrise that wakes you up.

Our dusks and dawns
all look the same,
each a chord of our
black-and-white nights
and days – it's all songed together
into a sun that weathers down
as rains of rays that raise up
the cornstalks while at the
same time raze them down.

All these things are different – like you and me.

All these things are the same – like us.

Liz was silent for a moment, absorbing the last few lines of the poem. Then she smiled broadly.
I love it!

Jacob – blushed and smiled without showing any teeth – said, Thanks.

No problem. Now, let's get back to cleaning this place up.

Sure thing.

As they cleaned, Jacob was silent. He wasn't sure why, but he felt diminished yet bursting at the same time.

When Julius Caesar wrote his *Commentarii de Bello Gallico*, he described some of the Gaelic culture. He mentioned a particularly gruesome practice known as the wicker man. Some may be familiar with this. The Gauls would make an effigy of straw and sticks and such around a person. When the person was completely blanketed with sticks, the Gauls would light him on fire.

The druids offered the screaming man up to their gods – it was, to them, how they described their love for their faith.

Nowadays, such love could be expressed a little more humanely (not by much) through diamond rings and such. The idea has still stuck to us over the centuries like burning sticks though. The idea that if you give yourself to love, love gives you back to you.

It's not the best investment, but – over time – it can recycle plastic dolls into breathing people. And in the case of the thieves the Gauls sacrifice? I suppose they became fire-breathing people.

Act II: Babel's Raising

Jacob was feeling listless. And he wasn't sure why.

It may have been the afternoon heat. Summer this year in Delaware was being vicious. The grass was greening into brown hay and the flowers were blistering. Jacob had air conditioning, but the heat still seeped into the walls. The humidity gummed up his joints, made it hard to move about.

But that wasn't the reason why he was now lying in his bed, gazing blank at the peeling ceiling above him.

Jacob was thinking he was tired...because the room was quiet.

Jacob was confused. He loved silence, loved how there were no distractions. He had always burned for that long stretch of lonely highway, where he had only his thoughts to keep him company. Didn't he love silence not too long ago?

Just last summer, he would have died for some silence. Sometimes it was so quiet he thought he had died. Now, the silence was alive – and it hurt. And he had a nagging suspicion why. He didn't have Liz's voice nearby, its dreamy and distant syllables making the day overcast. The days were sunny when she wasn't there. And part of him was hoping for the clouds.

Liz had made him hate silence, in less time than it takes some people to read a book. And he had to admit – the more noise she gave him, the more he craved. He wanted life to get to the point now where it blasted him deaf like Beethoven.

What a year a difference makes.

He absentmindedly rubbed his fingers on the bed comforter. It scratched at his fingertips. Amazing how something that was supposed to be so comfortable could be so rough.

Jacob suddenly sneezed into his sleeve, his body racking. He was always a hard sneezer. Jacob settled back into bed and let the warm afternoon carry him. It took him awhile to drift off to sleep. When he did it was to the tune of a quiet hiss. He could have sworn he heard it speaking to him, but the closer he listened, the sleepier he got. Until he was deep asleep, having fallen head over heels into the words he could barely translate.

Guess what?

Jacob took a swig of coffee from his cup. It was a late night.

What?

I'm staying!

Staying?

Liz said excitedly, Yep. Right here in New York!

The cellphone slipped through Jacob's hand. He picked it up.

Liz called out, You still there?

Yeah. So you're not coming back to Delaware then?

Nope. I've been thinking a lot during the summer break.

Apparently so.

When I was applying to colleges a few years back, I got accepted to a couple schools right inside the city here.

So you're just going to be switching one college for another?

Liz was exuberant, Yes!

But why would you change? Why not just finish your last two years here in Delaware?

A pause on the other end.

Liz almost spat the word, Ethan.

Oh.

Everytime I think of Delaware, I think of Ethan.

He ruined things that bad for you?

Uh huh. And the only way to get rid of the gangrene is to amputate. So I'm cut, cut, cutting away.

Well, I'm sorry to hear I won't be seeing you this fall.

And the same with you. But you understand, right?

Sure, sure. I'm not going to stand in the way of people being happy? Your parents take it well, I hope?

Liz laughed, They're taking it.
Are you coming down to visit at all? I hope?
Liz hesitated at the end of the line.
Maybe. You can try stopping up here for once. You know, Delaware's borders aren't the edge of the world.
I know, I know...I might come up.
Liar.
I'm not lying. I promise I'll try to visit you.
I don't like that word try.
Jacob wanted to tell her that he didn't like the fact she left Delaware so abruptly. He laughed instead.
Okay, I promise I'll visit you.
That's the spirit, cap't!

Non, rien de rien
Non, je ne regrette rien
Ni le bien qu'on m'a fait
Ni le mal, tout ?a m'est bien égal
Non, rien de rien
Non, je ne regrette rien
C'est payé, balayé, oublié
Je me fous du passé

Avec mes souvenirs, j'ai allumé le feu
Mes chagrins, mes plaisirs, je n'ai plus besoin d'eux
Balayées les amours, avec leurs trémolos
Balayées pour toujours, je repars à zéro

Non, rien de rien
Non, je ne regrette rien
Ni le bien qu'on m'a fait
Ni le mal, tout ?a m'est bien égal
Non, rien de rien

Non, je ne regrette rien
Car ma vie car mes joies
Aujourd'hui, ?a commence avec toi

In 1851, a man named William Henry was arrested under the Fugitive Slave Law. He had escaped from slavery in Missouri and made his way up north. He had finally settled in Syracuse, New York. He had thought he was free of his chains. The government begged to differ. The town was widely pro-abolition. When word broke out of the arrest, the good people of Syracuse took matters into their own hands. A couple hundred abolitionists ransacked the jail and freed William. He headed for Canada and was never bothered again.

No matter how far you run, the second you stop, your past will be waiting. You're the hare and it's the turtle. Every once in awhile, though, there is someone willing to offer you a hand. Someone who can pull you along, so fast that your past actually loses its breath for once.

We can call that person a human being.

Heyyy, guess what?

What?

Jacob was trying to get used to the surprises. It was hard, though – it felt like a constant catchup.

Me and Ethan got back together again!

What? But I thought...

Thought what?

Well, I...I thought you left Delaware to get away from him.

I didn't want to get away from him. I wanted to forget him.

Okay...

Let me finish. I wanted to forget him like he forgot me. He called me last night. Said he couldn't bear to live without me.

And you believed that line?

I know, I know. That line's been done to death in the movies...

Jacob added, And has been brought back to life as a zombie...

He could hear Liz shrug. She said, True. But every cliché is true. That's why it's a cliché.

Everyone knows it's honest. There's no surprise to it.

But I thought you liked a good surprise every now and then?

I do...I mean, I did. I don't know. Everything's happening so fast. I'm just getting myself lost in it all.

So I guess that means you're coming back to Delaware then?

Lord no.

Then...

There's such a thing called trains, silly. I'll hop on the train on the weekends.

Does this mean we'll hang out then?

Liz paused, Well, like I said before, you can always come up to New York. I'll tell the city to leave the lights on for you.

But since you're coming down on the weekends, I figured...

That's time for Ethan and me.

Oh.

Yeah.

A pause.

Jacob started up the talk again, So...are you enjoying New York then? Was it worth the move?

Was it ever. God, life has never smelled better.

Smelled better? Are we both talking about the same city?

I don't live in Staten Island, silly goose. I live in Queens, the brighter side of town.

That's right. I forgot. So for your new school, is registration...?

Everything's going smooth. Too smooth. It's scaring me. I'm already set up with all my classes for the fall semester. The classes here are better for an artist. This city's filled with art museums too. Gives me an excuse for more unsanctioned solo field trips. Is Delaware treating you well?

Good I suppose. I just finished signing up for classes.

Any winners?

Does grammar count?

Grammar? Oh my God.

Jacob couldn't help but laugh, It's required. For my major, that is.

And you're going for English, right?

English Ed.

That's right, that's right. So are you looking forward to teaching a bunch of little brats for the rest of your life?

As ready as I'll ever be.

God, I could never teach. Everytime I would see a kid sleeping in my class, I would probably

slap him.

I can imagine.

I hate when people don't pay any attention to me. That's the quickest way to kill someone you know. Laziest way, too. Not paying any attention to them, any attention at all.

Jacob said quietly, I know.

I was listening to the news the other day. Some poor bastard was carjacked and shot in the Bronx. He was laying there, on the street, drenched in blood, crying out for help.

Did anyone help him?

Police looked on the security camera at the gas station nearby. Dozens of people walked past. Not a single person stopped to help. Not a single goddamn person. The carjacker may have shot him, but those people killed him without lifting a finger. I hate it when people don't pay attention.

Hate it, hate it, hate it.

You're preaching to the choir.

Amen.

Liz sneezed hard.

Bless you.

Thanks, love. So you still want to teach all those squirmly, rotten, little kids? Even after all I said?

Jacob smiled, Yes.

You're weird.

No. I'm interesting.

Liz laughed, You little revisionist.

Have to practice my grammar somehow.

Liz cleared her throat, Hey, listen, I have to get going.

So soon?

Uh huh. I'm getting hungry. This stomach isn't going to feed itself, ya know.

All right then. Have a good night.

Nights.

And Liz?

Yes?

I miss you.

Awww, I miss you too.

Click.

In the Odyssey, Odysseus spends some ten years lost in the Mediterranean. Mainly because he is too proud to ask the women he meets along the way for directions. His son, Telemachus, is lost too. He finds himself – literally – without a father figure, and must learn how to grow up. Odysseus's wife, Penelope, is lost too. She must learn how to trick and con a pack of suitors at bay – without any help from her infamously-mischiefous husband.

All three people are lost for the vast majority of the story. At the start, they think they all need one another to save their identities and be comfortable again. However, by the time they are all reunited, they have all found their selves. They come back together as a completely-different family.

You have to lose yourself to find yourself. Can't find what you haven't lost.

How are you?

Liz sighed, Another headache.

Another one? You might want to get that checked.

Oh, I've been getting bad migraines for years. It's nothing new.

Jacob chided gently, Still, you only have one brain. It's not like it's a kidney.

Liz laughed, If only. Shame too, because I just used up the rest of my meds the other day.

Jacob asked, You had a migraine yesterday too?

Nope. I was perfectly fine.

Oh.

Jacob immediately understood. Liz, either ignoring or not understanding the significance of her confession, continued calmly, I'm kind of glad I get these headaches so often though.

Why's that?

It reminds me I still have a brain flopping around like a fish in my skull.

Jacob mentioned, It sounds like it's proven its point though.

Liz sighed, Yeah. But it's stubborn about me being stubborn.

Makes...sense.

It's also proof that the modern medicine doesn't work.

Ah. So I guess you're all for those alternative things? Like acupuncture and herbal stuff?

A bit yes. But I'd rather have a cigarette.

I don't think that counts as medicine.

The medicine's not in the black stuff that tars up your lungs, darling. It's the smell.

The smell?

Mmmm, it's a wonderful smell if done right. It's like sewing autumn into a blanket and wrapping it around you. Nothing quite like it.

And when you finally choke to death on it, it'll feel like winter.

Pooh on you. All these prissy girls want to die hiding behind mirrors. I'll rather die hiding behind smoke.

Jacob smiled, Fair enough. But addictions get you dead quicker.

Addictions are a highway, maybe. But everyone's an addict. So everyone's stuck in traffic then.

I take it you don't have much faith in people?

I have faith in people. For them to be people.

Jacob laughed.

You know what, though?

Liz asked, What's that?

What if the person is addicted to life? How will that get him...

...or her...

...or her dead sooner?

Liz paused, then said, Well, have you ever heard of mountain-climbing? There's a reason why people like that live like there's no tomorrow. Because there really is no tomorrow after you fall a couple thousand feet down a mountain.

I thought you were one of those carpe diem people?

Liz said defiantly, I am. I have no problem with people getting creative about death. There's only one way to come into this world, but there's millions of ways to run your life into the ground. I say let people be artists. Like what Rand said.

Rand?

Ayn Rand. Don't tell me you haven't read her before?

I've heard the name. I can tell you that much.

Liz sighed, I adore Ayn. You must read Atlas Shrugged if you ever get the chance.

Jacob asked, What's it about?

Just that you as a person matter more than anyone else.

Jacob said, But if you preach that to the whole world, everyone's going to be the same.

Liz countered, But she didn't want the whole world to rise up. She only wanted the talented ones to.

So why did she publish the book? For any Joe or Sally to read? If everyone rises, no one rises.

I...I don't know. I'm terrible at debating philosophy like this.

I didn't mean it like that, Liz. I didn't mean to...

Don't be sorry for things you didn't do. You didn't mean it.

A pause.

Liz continued, Frankly, I don't know why I love Ayn so much. I think it's because I'm as stubborn as she was. Beyond that, I'm not much of a capitalist.

That so?

Uh huh. I hate how capitalism gives all the money to a few and lets the rest fight for a dollar like starving dogs. Adam Smith said that competition is a good thing. How can it, though, when competition causes war?

It's Social Darwinism at its finest. Let the strong survive and all that nonsense.

Liz asked, So, what's your views on the whole matter?

Well...you don't want to listen to those. You'll think I'm an old loon or something.

Try me.

...Okay. I believe in egalitarianism.

What's that?

Jacob explained, Means everyone is the same.

So you're a communist then?

Not in the sense you're probably thinking of. I'm no fan of the Soviet brand of communism. In fact, I'm glad it failed.

That so?

Yup. My idea is like an even more liberal United States. Where everyone has the exact same rights and the exact same access to happiness. You should be able to speak your mind on anything, travel anywhere, and do whatever makes you happy. No one has the right to deny anyone anything.

Liz asked, So you're a libertarian then?

Well, libertarians believe that you should get out of other people's ways. Let them succeed or fail on their own. I believe you should get in people's ways, but only to help them.

What if they don't want help?

Everyone needs help. It's just that not a lot of people ask for it. Damned egos and pride and all that crap. I say if everyone puts everyone else before themselves, then everyone rises.

Liz paused and said slowly, That makes sense. I guess.

Jacob laughed, I told you I would sound like a crazy person.

No, no, not at all. It's just that I don't agree with a lot of that. We're all different. I'm more of a feminist than a...what was it again?

Egalitarian.

That's right. Egalitarian. Well, like I said, I'm more of a feminist.

Jacob asked, In that you believe women should have more rights?

No. That men should have less rights.

Oh.

Men are a bunch of apes. If women had power, we would already be in the future. Men and all their dick—swinging keeps us in the past.

Um...

Liz added as an afterthought, No offense by the way. I just remembered I'm talking to a guy.

Jacob laughed, That's all right. Just remember, if women rise up and exterminate all the guys, make sure to keep me alive. I could make a good jester.

Liz said mischievously, Deal...maybe.

But I do agree though. Men are stupid. But hey, what can you do?

Exactly what a stupid man would say.

Jacob snorted, If you say so, it must be true.

All this talk is making my headache worse.

Did you want to get some rest?

Liz said, I think that's a good idea. Maybe you aren't a completely stupid guy after all.

Well, thanks. That's the nicest thing anyone's ever said to me.

Talk, same time, tomorrow night?

You betcha. Hope you're feeling better by then.

Liz sighed, Me too. I should pick up more meds. Nights.

Good night.

F. Scott Fitzgerald is known for writing The Great Gatsby, This Side of Paradise, Tender Is The Night, among many other stories. All amazing, heartbreakingly beautiful stories. Many writers have wanted to write the Great American Novel. For Fitzgerald, it was a gift and a curse that he had to write brilliant stories. Living in the Jazz Age broke better men – both psychologically and financially. It didn't help that mixed drinks were the new water. It took many people all the money they had to float at the surface while at the same time drowning in whisky.

Fitzgerald was to all eyes – or beer goggles – an alcoholic. So when his breath became more ragged and his eyes more hazy, people wrote it off as him having one too many at the bar. He died from a heart attack. The years of being judged as a drunk failure had finally broken his heart. Fitzgerald lived as an addict, but he died as a human. Fitzgerald lived as a human, but he died as

an addict. Who knows? It's so easy to confuse the two at times.

Hey Liz.

Hello.

Jacob asked, What's up?

Liz said shortly, Pissed as anything.

Oh, why's that?

I'm drunk. And I got in a fight with Ethan.

Jacob winced. Of all the nights he had to call her, he had to pick the Thursday when she was drunk and angry. He learned from last time not to talk, just listen.

So he asked, Do you want to talk about it?

Liz snapped, No. I'm just so pissed at the world. How Ethan's left me out in the cold. Again.

I'm sorry to hear that. Well, when you want to talk about it, I'm all ears.

It won't do any good. No good at all. What makes you think some words can...can fix this?

I...I...

Yeah, that's right. Just shut up. You're making yourself look stupid. You stupid little prick.

Jacob cleared his throat, I think I'm going to head out now. There's something I need to take care of.

Yeah, that's right, go...leave me, leave like everyone else has.

Jacob almost wanted to say something, but he thought better of it. Instead, he just ended the call with a sigh.

Just like beer can make ugly women beautiful, it can make beautiful women ugly.

You curve and twist with your bluster
and muster a thousand storms
that form off in the distance, a distance
that wisps with steam in the summer
heat and takes me back to my first
tomb in my mother's womb –
the warmth's rather fitting.

You shout and scream and pound

lean fingers against the lumber
table (make the wood crack
like trees left in the track
of the cold death of winter).
Your bold breath breaks like eggs,
but instead of birds, there's words
like "how could you" and "why won't you"
and it feels rather marvelous to
wrap myself in the blanket
of all of this.

You could
be screaming because you care,
or you could be screaming because
you aren't for or with me anymore.
Either or, it doesn't matter
since you brought my head
in on a silver platter as if
there wasn't any food left
from this winter frozen over
with vanity and pride and judgment
and – oh how the cold brings
out the clarity!

Ohmigosh, Jacob, Jacob, come over here!
What? What's up?
Isn't this the most adorable kitty you've ever seen?
Jacob walked to the front of the store and looked down at the plush cage. The muddy gold cat
was pacing the length of its claustrophobia. It purred and licked Liz's fingers through the cage.
Liz looked up, beaming, I think he likes me. Kneel down and let him lick your fingers.
I'll rather not.
What? Don't say you're not a cat person.
Silence.

Liz asked, Well?

I can't say I'm a cat person. So I'm not saying anything.

Liz laughed while curling her purple-dyed hair.

She said, Don't be such a spoilsport. This is only the cutest kitty ever. Yes you are! Yes you are!

Liz finally stood up, her eyes still glittery. She said to Jacob, I haven't had a cat ever since I was little. Her name was Adele.

What happened to her?

A teen driver.

Oh.

I buried her in Central Park when no one was looking.

Oh?

Liz said proudly, She caught a mouse there once. It was the least I could do for her.

Liz stared wistfully off. She was looking at the pet store cashier without knowing it. The cashier shifted uncomfortably.

Jacob said, Well here, let's go spelunking in the back of the store.

What's back there?

You'll see.

Jacob dragged her away from the cats, past the dogs, to where all the lizards and birds were. They walked past an iguana cage.

Jacob said, You know, when I was little, I always wanted a pet iguana.

Mmmm, that so?

Yep. I kept thinking I was going to get one any day. So when I was working on watercolor pictures and stuff, I would keep the cup of paint water stowed away.

Eww. Why?

Because I thought that iguanas liked to drink watercolors.

Liz laughed, Well, at least it's safer than the tap water around here.

True that. Oh, so did I tell you what happened last night?

No, what happened?

Jacob began, Well, I was performing slam poetry. It was some charity benefit thingy on campus. Well anyway, I performed that one poem I showed you the other week. You know, the one that is written half in English and half in Italian.

Ohhh, I love that poem! Go on.

Jacob smiled, Well, everyone there loved it too. However, after the benefit was over, everyone

came up to me and told me they loved how I worked Spanish into the poem.

Liz had burst out laughing. It took her a good ten seconds before she could work up the air to ask,
Are people really that ignorant?

Well, Italian and Spanish sound a bit alike...

English is part-French and part-German and yada, yada, yada. Does it sound like any of those?

Jacob grinned, No, I guess not.

Exxxx-actly. Because as an art major, I'm fully-qualified to teach linguistics.

Jacob asked, So when do you have to go?

I told them I was going to meet them at 7 tonight.

Jacob said, I wish we could hang out for longer.

Liz shrugged, I wish so too. But what can you do? I'm only in town for the weekend.
Delaware seems a lot larger when you have to visit every person from now until Sunday. You
know what though?

What?

Liz offered, You can hang out with my friends and me tonight. We're going to get pissy drunk at
a party.

Wellllll....

Liz frowned, You don't want to go?

It's not that, it's just...

Liz's eyes widened, Ohhh, look!

Jacob turned, saw a flowery parrot perched in a cage. It stared like a statue, barely moving a
feather. Jacob couldn't tell if the bird was being noble or bored.

Liz oohed, Aren't parrots so cute? I wonder if it knows any cuss words?

Liz grinned mischievously, Well, let's find out.

TS2

She took a candy bar out of her purse. She walked slowly towards the birdcage while slowly
unwrapping the foil from the chocolate.

Liz said, Hi there little birdy.

Can you say Fuck This?

Jacob could barely stifle his laugh.

Liz slowly held out a piece of chocolate in her fingers. She weaved her hand through the cage.

C'mon, little birdy. Didn't the pirates you sail with teach you anything...?

There was suddenly a squawk and a sharp flurry. Liz yelped and snatched her hand out of the cage. She winced as she sucked on her bloody finger.

Jacob rushed over, asked, Are you all right?

She turned, looked at him with that what-do-you-think look.

The cashier from up front called out, What's going on back there?

Jacob said, Nothing, nothing at all. Just reenacting a scene from The Birds.

He turned to Liz and asked, Do you still think the parrot is cute?

A little bit still. Oh my Godot, that hurts like a bitch.

Well, I guess the parrot only speaks in sign language.

Why's that?

Jacob said airily, Well, you did ask him to say Fuck You. I think he just signed it out to you.

Liz couldn't help but laugh, showing her crimson smile from her bloody finger.

C'mon, let's get you a band-aid before your finger falls off.

Another summer come. The school year had ended too quick. He was now a junior. Jacob was scared by how quick that had happened. They say the days zoom by quicker when you have a routine. If you whistle while you work, life's even more fleeting.

Maybe that's why he never learned how to whistle. Or maybe it was because he had no idea how to make his voice into an instrument.

Jacob was looking forward to the first week of summer. He was going to Lake Raystown deep in Pennsylvania. It was the family vacation every year. They would sit in one of the cabins overlooking the manmade lake, fish, hike, whatever. They were going to be there for the better part of the month, a bit longer than most of their other vacations in the past. He wasn't looking forward to being without his computer for so long, but worse things have happened. He guessed. The first day of the trip went well enough. When they pulled up in front of the cabin, Jacob was feeling a bit queasy. His family chided him.

Maybe if you didn't read that book while we were driving up and down those hills, you wouldn't be sick now.

Jacob took a deep breath and said, It'll clear. I just need some time.

It took a few hours for him to exhale his sickness. By then, he was already back to reading, leaning against a tree, his feet dipped in the Raystown waters.

He was reading Vonnegut. A friend of his a few months back insisted – upon threat of death –

that he start reading Vonnegut's books. He had already read Slaughterhouse-Five, which was a great book.

This book was Sirens of Titan though. There was something about it – every page that Jacob read took his breath away. He wondered if he would still be alive by the time he finished reading the book. He hoped he was – he was tempted to read it again.

Jacob wondered if a good book could ever kill someone who read it. He knew there were plenty of books that have called on the reader to kill. Those books aren't good, though, at least not any more.

When Jacob finished reading the book, he cast a glance across the lake like a fishing hook. It was too quiet for a Saturday morning. There should be boats and people yelling and splashing and scaring the fish away, deeper to the cold floor. But the water was silent. There were no boats on this side of the winding lake, there were no dragonflies skimming the waters, there were no fish leaping up and out, wanting to know what it felt like to be dry for just one moment in time.

The lake was a sheet of mirror. Jacob took his feet out of the water. He was afraid to break the surface, to get seven years' of bad luck.

But who's to say that bad luck isn't an improvement?

Jacob called out, Hello?!

His voice reached out with both arms across the waters, taking everything he could see in a single hug. But his voice didn't echo back. It was the dog that went to fetch the stick and ran away instead.

Jacob put the book aside and leaned back. He put his arm behind his back, rubbing his fingers against the tree he was using for a chair. The bark was smooth, there was no roughness, no crags. He thought about how the distance between cells in his body was as far as stars were in the universe. He thought of how one crack in the bark was as deep and sprawling as the Grand Canyon. How the Colorado River roars as deafening as a raindrop hitting the tears in a tree.

But the tree was smooth and silent.

Jacob bit his lip and looked back out. His eyes were blank. He wanted someone to break the silence with. Someone who could rip this world, his world right down the middle with a laugh.

You're dancing around the who.

No, no, I'm not.

Then say the name, say it –

I won't.

You say the name, it's like an incantation. It'll bring the person to you, no matter what.

No, I can't.

What, say the name? Or want her with you?

I told myself I wouldn't love again. I don't want her to be with me. I want her to be her.

Don't dance around the why too.

She's in New York. I'm in Delaware. It won't work. Nothing works.

Why shouldn't you try?

Why should I?

If you stop trying to do things, you'll die. Trying is the same as moving. When a shark stops moving, it dies.

I'm not a shark. I'm a man.

You're not a man. You're Hamlet. Say the goddamn name. Say the name, or I will.

No. I won't, I won't say –

Liz.

The word escaped Jacob's lips. It fell into the water.

Liz...

She was the only person that he could talk to. That could talk back to him. She was the reverse seamstress that could unclothe the world. She was the only one who could fell the trees, drain the lake, flatten the hills. Until the world was smooth and blank as paper. And she was all the words, engined by her inky heart. All the words that filled the paper. She could destroy his world and rebuild it from scratch. She was his demolisher and architect, crumbling him up like a bad poem each time she said Bye. Smoothing him back out the next time she said Hello.

They had talked so many times, she had broken him and put him back together so many times, that he did not remember his initial self. He could not remember the Jacob from before 6:55 that fateful Tuesday evening when they first met. The Jacob before that time was as irrelevant as a counted number.

And Jacob put his head in his hands, as if he was some god molding the first man. He missed Liz.

He...

Say it.

He missed Liz. She was all his senses. The world was dark and silent without her. He needed to come to his senses. He needed to close the distance between this lake and the borough of Queens.

But even a foot between him and her would feel as vast as stars in the sky.

And it was at that moment that he was edging towards discovery. A discovery that had to do with everything at once.

Jacob burst into tears. He couldn't help it. He could feel a pulsing glow somewhere deep inside

him. He thought it was his heart at first. But it wasn't like the last ten minutes of every cheap chick flick. But it was.

The pulse was in his lungs. He could feel it bubbling up. His throat dried and crackled. His tongue was ashen. He...

I love Liz.

Jacob went statue, shocked by his find. Yet he was more shocked at the fact that he could feel the distance between two points beginning to narrow. He was still sitting there, but his soul was already seeping out of him, swishing between the trees, heading for the road, hoping to hitchhike to New York on the first semi.

Leaving Jacob still sitting there, numb to the look, silently mouthing the same words over and over again, flickery tears still running his cheeks, the drops roaring against his pores like a thunderstorm.

I love Liz. I love Liz. I love Liz.

According to some Greek myths, mankind looked completely different when it was first created by the gods. Each person had four arms, four legs, and two faces. No one was man, no one was woman. Each person was simply a one. With all these limbs and power, the people felt like immortals. They began scurrying to the top of Mount Olympus like millions of spiders. Zeus saw the ascent and was afraid. He split each person into two halves. He lost the halves in the wind and mankind got lost and civilized the world but never their selves. The men and women wandered lost, hopeful in finding their other half. The half that would let them become a one again.

After all, when you complete a rainy day puzzle, it's no longer a puzzle – it's a picture.

The rain sweltered later that night like the tears that were on his face. Jacob was laying in bed. The window was right next to his face. He could turn and see the billions of raindrops rushing toward him just inches away.

But Jacob wasn't paying the rain attention. He was staring up at the ceiling, the ceiling with rafters and beams and all the rustique he would never find back home. But he wasn't paying any attention to that. Jacob had future on the mind like mosquito on the nerve. It was sipping him up until he was less himself and more his future.

So why was he an English Education major again? Jacob used to have reasons for it. He could

have studied to be a college professor. But he was going to teach high schoolers. He wanted to teach high schoolers. He wanted to give them a chance at a quality education, a quality education that they wouldn't have to break bank for.

Being a high school teacher would destroy you though.

I know. But other people are more important.

Shouldn't you be one of those people? What gives you the right to rise above the world and be godly? Why can't you be human? You're incomplete and flawed to begin with. Act your role. Delaware needs me. I have to go back and teach the kids there –

Kids who only know Delaware, who are only taught by people who only know Delaware. Don't be a bastard. Don't turn more kids into the people you knew in high school – a bunch of cattle content and taking the taxi to the slaughterhouse. The only person who can show them the outside is an outsider. Show them how brilliant the sunshine is outside the house.

Jacob shook the thoughts away. He turned and looked out the window. He couldn't fine the sunshine. Unless it was hiding in the warm rain.

Don't ruin yourself because you have to. Ruin yourself because you want to. It's time to grow your legs, for christakes. It's the only way you'll be able to run to her. Don't think about it. Think about her. Do this for her.

And the more Jacob thought about her, the more he wanted to try harder. And the more he wanted to try harder, the closer he got to Liz. And he was getting closer all without budging from his bed.

Hey there, m'darling.

Jacob said, Hi! How are you?

Liz said dreamily, Gooood. How was your vacation?

It was all right. I just wished there was wireless internet at the lake. And cable television with a thousand channels. And a coffeehouse.

Liz laughed, That's the whole point of a vacation, silly. It doesn't have any of that crap. Life becomes so much simpler.

So says the city girl.

I like complex things. I'm a complex lady. Or rather, I'm a lady with personality. Saying I'm complex makes me sound like a math problem.

Jacob pointed out, Thankfully, you're not. Otherwise, you would have scared me off a long time ago.

Like all the other boys in my life.

What do you mean?

Ethan.

Jacob asked, What about him?

Liz's voice weakened a bit, He left me. Again.

Again?

Uh huh. He's already dating another girl. It's only been three days.

Oh my.

Liz sighed, Yup. The funny thing is, well, I know her. And she hates me.

Jacob asked, What gives you that idea?

Because Ethan told me awhile back.

Oh.

Liz continued, He told me that she...goddammit, what's her name, I think Laura...was talking about me. She had said some stuff like I'm not a true vegan because I eat a hamburger every once in awhile...

You're a vegan?

I never told you that?

Nope.

Well, in Laura's eyes, I'm apparently not one. She also said I have way too many temper tantrums.

I think her words were something like I'm a teenage girl hiding in a lady.

Jacob lied without thinking about it, You don't have tantrums.

I know, right? I don't know where she got that idea.

Jacob couldn't tell if Liz was being sarcastic or not.

Liz kept talking, saying, And you know what the worse thing she said about me is?

What?

She said that I'm an idiot for always dying my hair. She thinks I do it for the attention.

Hmmm, I see.

He'll be back though. Ethan. He has to leave if he wants to come back to me.

Jacob said confusedly, Oh?

Liz shrugged over the phone, It doesn't make sense, I know. It's just him and me...we...um, we...

Are always breaking up and getting back together?

Liz sighed, I wanted to say something a bit more memorable, but that works.

You know – you don't have to wait for him to come back. This isn't some war and he isn't a soldier. You don't have to sit at the front door, waiting for him to walk back up the driveway.

Liz hesitated, You know, I've been wondering the same thing too lately. I think I like losing things

because, well, because finding something you've lost is the most wonderful feeling in the entire world.

And as Liz went on and on about how wonderful it was waiting for Ethan, Jacob couldn't help but feel that, once more, he was losing Liz to Ethan. But, like what Liz said, you have to lose something in order to find something. Jacob just wished it was a lost cellphone or camera, not a lost love they were dealing with that night.

And Jacob?

Hmmm?

I just want to say thank you.

Surprised, Jacob asked, Thank me? For what?

I've been bitching and moaning forever. Thank you for not running away. Thank you for listening.

Anytime. I'm more than glad to be your human punching bag.

Liz laughed, Well hopefully it won't come to punches.

As if this doesn't hurt enough.

Act III: Uneager Climax

Jacob couldn't take it anymore. He needed someone to talk to about Liz. Someone who wasn't Liz.

The first person who came to mind was Addison. Addison had been good friends with Liz for a few years. But that wasn't enough. Jacob needed someone with a quiet mouth. And Addison was as quiet as the moon.

So he texted her, asked if she could meet him at the coffeehouse just outside of campus. Jacob said it was about Liz, that it was urgent. Addison's text came back, simple and clean:

Tonite@8.

It was Halloween of all nights. The summer blanket was slipping off the bed and the winter chill was coming, falling slower than snow but it was coming. Still, Jacob sat out on the patio behind the coffeehouse for a good hour. He gripped his cup of coffee closer than a pen when he wrote.

He was nervous. He had no idea what he was going to say.

Maybe that's why he came to the coffeehouse an hour early, sitting out in the cold evening. To gather his thoughts. At least, he should have been. Jacob was reading The Great Gatsby instead. Jacob wanted to know how much it would cost to win a lady's heart. He hadn't gotten to the part where Fitzgerald says no fortune can buy love.

All the better he hadn't gotten to that part yet. He wasn't ready, anyway.

Someone tapped his shoulder like it was a window. He turned, looked up. Addison was standing there. She was shortish, all freckles, long oak hair, and timber eyes. She had a hard look to her. But she was flexible enough to smile sunrise, curling it over the horizon.

She asked, Hey you. What's up?

Not much. You want to get a cup of coffee? I'm paying.

She smiled, Oh, you don't have to do that.

And you didn't have to come here. I feel bad for wasting your Halloween.

Addison laughed, Well, in that case, I'll take a French vanilla.

After he got her a cup of coffee, they sat back down at the patio.

Jacob asked, So how was your work this summer in...where was it...?

Sudan.

That's right. I knew that.

About as good as living in hell.

That nice?

No one deserves to live there. Not even the devil himself. Yet no one wants to break those poor souls free. They just want to break them. So if we can't bring the people in the Sudan to happiness, we can at least bring happiness to them.

What kind of work did you do there?

We dug up some wells here and there. It's amazing how much water is hiding underneath a desert.

I wouldn't be surprised. So, are you adjusting back to life in the States well?

I won't have enough time to.

What do you mean?

I'll be leaving this winter.

Surprised, Jacob asked, No way! Where to?

Cambodia. Remember those floods they had last month?

Yep.

Well, I'm going there to help with the reconstruction efforts.

Jacob couldn't help but ask, So you just came back from helping a dried-out nation find water, and

now you're getting ready to help a flooded nation get dry?

Addison laughed mirthlessly, Something like that, yeah.

She took a sip and leaned in, looking worried. Jacob knew what was coming next. She asked, So what's up with Liz? What's wrong?

The moment had arrived.

Jacob said slowly, I think...I think I'm in love with her.

Addison's eyes widened slightly.

Jacob continued, I think I've been in love with her for a long time.

You think you are?

Jacob frowned, I don't like things being certain. If they are certain, then that means they can be certainly taken away. I like the hope of maybes and thinks.

Addison asked, Have you told her this yet?

Not yet. But I'm planning on it. I wanted your advice, your...your...

Blessing?

Well, you've known her for a lot longer than I have. I need your help in understanding her.

Addison took a slow drink of her French vanilla.

She said, You know, when you sent me that text earlier, I thought that something bad had happened to her.

Sorry if I gave you that impression. I didn't mean to.

That's all right. Text messages are always short and vague. Bytes always get lost in translation.

True. But, in a way, she is making a mistake. I think so, anyway.

What's that?

Her moving away. Her getting caught up in that clown Ethan.

Addison cocked her head to the side and asked, What's wrong with Ethan?

Liz hates him as much as she loves him. He treats her like dirt.

I think you may have gotten the wrong impression about him. He's a really lovely guy once you meet him in person. I wouldn't really trust the things that Liz says about people anyway.

Why's that?

Addison sighed, I love Liz like a sister. But she...well, she just sees things differently from everyone else. Red to some people is green to her.

So what are you trying to say?

That you shouldn't trust her with driving. Among other things. Don't let that scare you away from her though. I could have stopped talking to her years ago. But I didn't. I'm still friends with her after I've learned so much about her.

And why's that?

Because the more you learn about her, the less you know. That's the wonderful thing about a crazy person. You're always learning something new about them.

Jacob asked, So you think she's a bit loony too?

Only in a good sense of the word. I mean, everyone's a bit crazy every now and then. But she strives for it. I look at her and I see a soul. I look at her and I realize that not everyone is some machine. She's my memo to myself.

So...?

Addison looked at him for a long moment. She said, Let her make her own mistakes. Telling her how to fix something is the same as troubleshooting a computer. Don't make her a piece of hardware. And when you tell her you love her and she feels the same, please don't break her heart. She's like fine china – she looks beautiful until she falls. Please help her stay beautiful as long as possible.

I'm not a bull in the china shop, Addison.

Addison smiled, I know you aren't. I believe you. You wouldn't have asked for my help if you didn't want it. Just keep her on the pedestal you've built for her. Make sure the pedestal's solid to begin with.

I will. Don't worry.

Addison suddenly pulled a piece of paper and a pen out of her purse. She jotted down something quick on the paper and pushed it across the table to Jacob.

What's this?

Addison said, This is about a charity concert happening in a few weeks. They're having it right on campus. Last I talked to Liz, she said she was going to be there. Meet her at the concert and tell her you love her.

Jacob asked, What if she doesn't feel the same? I don't want to lose a friend over this.

Addison thought a long moment, If you do tell her, that'll prove you have courage. And darling, love is ninety-nine percent courage. Just remember what I said a minute ago – don't drop her on the floor. She's fragile goods – she won't look nearly as nice after the fall.

So the day came when the benefit concert was going on. Jacob actually dressed up for once – sort of. He stood in front of his mirror. He was dressed up in khakis and a button-down shirt. He had tried to comb his hair, but gave up after five minutes.

She must be important if I've gone through this much trouble.

The concert was being held in the college's recitation hall. It was a small, domed building with a miniature concert hall just inside. Jacob actually had a class in there before. Rather, the class was in the hall's basement. Him and his classmates joked about the basement, calling it The Ship. The hallways were a claustrophobic narrow and you felt like you were under water. The fact that the toilets and sinks in the bathrooms occasionally overflowed contributed to the sinking feeling. As Jacob walked into the concert hall, there were students manning the doorways. They weren't collecting money for tickets. They were accepting donations.

One of them, a girl with a dazzling smile, called out to Jacob, saying, Do you want to donate to the fund?

Jacob felt like an idiot when he asked, What's it for again?

The girl said reverently, For the Darfur crisis.

That's right. Sorry, I forgot.

Jacob plunked a twenty dollar bill in the bucket and kept walking. He was usually more stingy, but he was distracted tonight. Maybe he was trying to bribe his way into good fortune? Who knew? Jacob certainly didn't know.

He got a seat towards the back. He was a bit of an agoraphobic and hated being in the crowd. So he always sat on the fringes, preferably by the nearest exit. He was nervous enough as it was – no reason to make things worse. He was two seats away from the exit.

He was also ten minutes early. He made up for the found time by scribbling away. He always kept a golf pencil and a scrap of paper in his pocket. You know, for the bored moments. Jacob was scribbling fiercely now, the pencil tip withering away as he stormed the paper. It was garbled poetry at best, but it kept his mind distant. Distant until he had trouble seeing the paper. And he knew they were dimming the light. The show was about to begin.

It wasn't the traditional concert. There were no bands. Instead, it was a series of acapella groups performing. Strange how this campus had so many of those groups. It was as if the school was stuck permanently in the 1950s. Not to say the groups weren't good or anything. They were. It was the first time Jacob had ever seen an acapella group perform live. He liked it. At least, he liked it when he was paying attention. His mind was bouncing between thousands of thoughts like pinball machines. He was worrying about everything at the same time.

By the time intermission rolled around, the lights buzzed back on. As people got up to use the bathrooms or talk on their cellphones outside, Jacob glanced around. That was when he saw her. She was sitting a few rows from the front of the stage. He could only see the back of her head and wilting glimpses of her face. But that was more than enough. It had been getting close to a year since he saw her face last. But he could remember her after decades. Although he hoped it

would never come to that.

And still he was rooted to his chair. Even as he saw Liz get up to go into the lobby. He was petrified and for once he had an answer as to why.

She'll think I'm a stalker. She didn't tell me she was coming to this concert. She'll think I followed her here. And I can't tell her that Addison told me. This was a mistake. I shouldn't be here. I should leave...

But he couldn't get out of his seat, not even to leave. He argued with himself like Hamlet until the lights dimmed again and it was too late for a graceful exit.

The rest of the show ended sooner than he wanted it too. And again the lights came back on. And again, he saw Liz get up. She was going to leave. Who knows? This might be the last time he would ever see her.

Jacob exhaled like a balloon and got up. He wobbled over to Liz, his teeth chattering in the warm room. She was walking up the aisle, he walking down.

As he got closer, her eyes widened. She cried out, Jacob!

She ran up and hugged Jacob. He could feel his cheeks redden.

Liz let go of him after a few moments and said, It looks like you're burning up.

Yeah. I always get like this when I'm stuck in a room with hundreds of people for a couple hours. So, I didn't know you were going to be here.

Yup! A couple friends of mine were in one of the groups. I promised them I'd see them perform, and here I am. You?

Oh, heard about it around campus. Figured it would be fun, and it would ease my conscience if I came here.

Liz laughed and asked, Say, are you doing anything tonight?

Nope. Why you ask?

Well, I'll be taking the train back up to New York tomorrow morning. Me and some friends of mine are thinking about painting the town red. You in?

Absolutely.

Liz beamed, Fantastic!

She dragged him by the hand over to her group of friends in the lobby. A few of them Jacob recognized. They were artist types, all surreal and serious. Jacob never met the one though. He was a tallish, chubbyish guy with wavyish hair. He was mannish and girlish at the same time. Jacob had no idea what to make of him.

Liz tapped him on the shoulder and he turned to meet the two.

Liz said, Jacob, I want you to meet Ethan. Ethan, Jacob. This is that friend of mine I was telling

you about, love.

Jacob's knees spasmed a little. He was meeting Ethan for the first time. The man who had spoiled things for so many people over the years without meaning to. It's amazing how much chaos you can make without paying any attention at all.

That was Jacob's first thought. The second thought: why was Ethan there? Didn't he and Liz break up just a few weeks ago?

Ethan said shortly, How's it going, dude.

What's up.

And that was it. Ethan turned to Liz and said, I just called the others. They're waiting for us in the coffeehouse. We should get going.

Liz said brightly, Okay! You heard the guy, ladies and gents. Let's get moving.

They shuffled out of the crowded lobby and into the crisp November. The air was biting at them like thirsty mosquitoes. Jacob wrapped his jacket closer around him for warmth. The chill still cut through the thin fabric and stuck to his sides.

Liz and Ethan were walking a few steps ahead of the group. They didn't have jackets handy. Instead, they were using each other for coats. Their arms wrapped around each other's sides, they were warmer than Jacob's coat ever would be.

And Jacob's heart began to spill out on the sidewalk behind him, leaving a red, sticky mess like slug trails. He realized now why Ethan was at the concert in the first place.

They must love breaking up over and over again. I wonder if they have any heart left to break.

The group walked – their soft chatter frozen in the air above them – to the coffeehouse. The same place where, not even a few weeks before, Addison had given Jacob her blessing. They walked into the coffeehouse, a bell clinking as they opened the front door. Their cheeks flushed at the oven heat of the place.

They made their rendezvous with the others. The group, the number swollen now, ordered some coffee before heading out. Liz was the only person who ordered tea.

She gingerly tasted her tea and made a face. Jacob asked, What's wrong with it?

Liz wrinkled her nose, It tastes burnt somehow.

Ethan said grumpily, Don't be silly. Only coffee can taste burnt. Just let it sit for a few minutes. C'mon, let's get going.

The group left and braved the cold again. This time they were heading for the other side of campus, to one of the dorms there. Convenient distances.

As they walked, Jacob snuck in a bit of a conversation with Liz.

Jacob asked, So is Delaware making you realize how boring New York is?

Liz laughed, Yep, absolutely. It makes me wish I had stayed here where my options for a good Friday night are going to the mall, or going to the mall, or – you know – going to the mall...

You say that as if New York is the capital of the world.

Liz smiled, No, Jacob. It's the capital of the universe. It's the center, it's the Big Bang.

I think a lot of astronomers would have a problem with that.

Pooh on them. They're just mad because you can't see any stars in the sky on a New York night. They floated in and out of conversation. Jacob had to compete with the rest of the group for Liz's attention. They were excited that she was back, even for the night. Excited as...well, as postmodern artist types could be. Liz juggled their talk well enough. She was distant though. Well, her voice always seemed a bit far-off, true. But her eyes were darting in all sorts of directions like a compass gone mad. Jacob could tell that she was already thinking of places to run off to. From time to time, though, her compass righted itself and she looked longingly north. New York was north. Just like Jacob as a child used to think Heaven was north (before he learned the difference between up/down and north/south).

After a good ten minutes of walking, they had reached the dorm. By this point, Liz and Ethan had grown more and more attached to each other. It had gotten to the point where they were sneaking quick pecks on each other's cheeks. Jacob couldn't stand it anymore.

Right before they were going to walk in, Jacob said to Liz, You know what? I have to get going. Really? Why? I thought your night was free.

It was. It's just that I'm really tired.

That's what the coffee was for.

Well, I have work in the morning too, so...

Jacob could tell Liz was disappointed.

She said, Well, okay then. Sorry we didn't have more of a chance to hang out. Next time we'll have more time. Promise?

I promise. Good night. Have a safe trip back up tomorrow.

Thanks! You too...well, you know what I mean.

Jacob laughed shortly, I do.

Jacob turned to walk back to the sidewalk. The group squeezed into the dormitory's narrow door and closed it behind them. As the door closed, the bright lights inside were cut, leaving Jacob out in the cold dark.

He sighed and walked. It was true – he did have work the next morning. But he was a born insomniac – every college student is.

He just couldn't tell Liz he loved her. He couldn't when Ethan was standing right there. When

Ethan was in Liz's life, nothing else mattered.

Jacob walked. He kicked a pebble for a few feet. The pebble went rogue and hopped into the grass.

He was walking on the campus green. He looked at his watch – it was getting close to 11pm. He was all alone. This was the most important detail.

His lip began to tremble and his knees quaked more. He was shaking all over like hunger was taking him.

FUCK!

His voice rang out over the green. There was no one there to be shocked by the outburst. He almost wanted there to be. Someone, anyone.

He sent a text to Addison:

Liz is back together with Ethan.

Addison replied a minute later:

Really? I didn't know. Sorry to hear that.

Jacob walked with a growl into the dark and let the night take him home. The streetlights were twitching along the way, but he didn't need light to find his way back. He had walked around this town enough that he could retrace his exact footsteps, every print feeling like home all over again. He almost cried at the thought of it. And he wanted to know why.

In Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra, everyone dies from a broken heart. Some hearts break metaphorically (Ahenobarbus dies from shame of deserting his commander Antony), some brutally (Antony dies windily after botching his suicidal fall upon his sword), and the bizarre (Cleopatra has a poisonous asp bite her breast).

All of these hearts wouldn't have broken if it wasn't for Octavian – the mastermind who would be crowned Emperor of the Rome Empire soon enough. He offered amnesty to his enemies, but all that did was shame them to their deathbeds.

Antony and Cleopatra may have hated each other at times – yes – but when they died with the other's name on their lips, a pained Octavian buried the pair so famous together. So that they could be in each other's arms into the afterlife and even beyond that.

While the doomed lovers each had their own heart to break and mend, together they had an even

larger heart. And when that one shattered, there was not enough glue in the world to put it back together.

Sitting at his desk, Jacob began writing an email to Liz. It went something like this:

Liz,

Tonight I must have seemed a bit quiet. More so than usual. But just because I was quiet on the outside didn't mean I was silent on the inside. I was bursting to tell you something, but I couldn't. Not with the company you had.

Liz, I have been wanting to tell you this for longer than I knew it. This past summer I admitted to myself that I've been in love with you since the first day we met. I admit that when we first talked, you startled me a bit. I'm not used to dealing with free spirits. Being in such a small state, the odds of meeting one are small to begin with. It took me too long to come to grasps with this. I promised myself long ago that I would never fall in love again. The fact that I'm breaking this promise to myself is amazing by itself. I am usually more disciplined than this. But love seems to make me more human, less machine.

Liz, writers over the centuries have lived a long life and died before ever meeting their muses. I've been lucky – not only that I met my own muse, but that I met her so early in life. I have churned out more inspired work since I've known you than any other time in my life. I don't know why that's the case – I guess it's because you remind me that I actually have a soul. It's easy to forget things like that nowadays.

You are the last creative spark in the world. Everyone I know is burnt out. Everyone I know is in the dark. You're the only light that can get me home. You're the light that I use to see myself. And I see a man who is a mess, but who can put himself together under that light. You're a wonderful light.

Please don't dim on me by leaving me.

I gather that you're back with that Ethan guy now. I know he makes you happy. I also know he makes you angry and depressed. I'm not going to stop you from feeding yourself to all these bumps in the road though. I may not be the love you're looking for in life. I strive for a consistency – I strive to be remarkable for as long as I can hold my breath. I know routines bore you. And I know that even love can become a routine over a period of time. Ethan may be that surprise of ups-and-downs that you're looking for in life.

All I can say is that even surprises can become routines over time as well. I think we discussed this before. You may not remember. But once the surprise is gone, so is all the fun. Then you're left with a guy who, frankly, doesn't give a damn about you. Do you really want to love someone who can't tell the difference between you and other girls?

Hopefully you read this and agree to this madcap business venture. If you don't, that may be best for everyone. I'd be sad, yes. But don't worry about that. I just hope this will shed some light on me. I hope you will finally understand why I have been the way I am over the years.

I'll await your answer by email, by letter, by phone, by horse, by pigeon. Surprise me...surprise me just like this email has probably surprised you too.

Jacob

It took a day for him to get a reply to his email. It went something like this:

I don't know what to say. Surprises are a wonderful thing, yes. I do love surprises. But I don't love you. At least, not the way you think. I love you as a friend. I know that's the rage these days – the girl leaves the guy out in the cold and says she likes him as a friend still. I'm not one of those girls. And I'll prove it. I'll still love you as hard as I did last week. I just can't love you anymore. Not that I don't want to or anything. It's just that I can't.

I would say this whether I was having a fling with Ethan or not. I know I bitch about him a lot – yes. It's just all part of the act, darling. He's a rollercoaster, and I have to play along and scream and cry for the sake of the ride. You have to understand this – it is possible to hate and love something at the same time. You say you would always love me the same? Don't lie to yourself. If the road isn't hilly, don't believe it's a road. Because it's not.

Just like you say in your email that I'll finally understand you, I hope you finally understand me in this email too. Losing words in translation is the real tragedy.

Expect a call from me tomorrow. I would call tonight but I'm busy. I will call. Just because there's no spark between us doesn't mean we don't need each other. We do. Trust me.

Liz.

P. S. My heroes always tell the truth. Please be honest more. I want you to be a hero.

A week later, Jacob made another confession to the world. He wanted to drop the Ed in his English Ed major.

When he told this to his adviser, Ms. Fields, he could almost see her tear up a bit. He couldn't blame her. It wasn't as if there were a lot of people in his major. Every person who dropped the program was putting another nail in the coffin.

She asked, Won't you reconsider it?

I have. I've gone over it in my mind for a long time now.

Well, what made you decide to change?

Teaching high school isn't for me. I want to be around people who love books as much as I do.

A kid in high school hates reading. At least, they hate the books the curriculum assigns them.

Ms. Fields persisted, But you can make them love books.

You can point a gun at my head right now, and I would still hate Nathaniel Hawthorne with all my soul. I don't care for any of those postmodernists that are always making the bestseller's lists nowadays. The only books that matter to me...they won't let the high schools read.

Like what?

Like Eliot.

Ms. Fields asked, George Eliot?

No, T. S. Eliot. Ezra Pound. Sylvia Plath. James Joyce. Ernest Hemingway. E. E. Cummings. Robert Frost. Elizabeth Bishop. The schools won't let me teach them. Their books are filled with swears and atheism and paganism and big words and big ideas and poetry that doesn't always rhyme. I refuse to teach The Scarlet Letter when I know that I can be teaching Prufrock somewhere else.

Disappointed, Fields asked, So that's what you decided then? You're going to become a professor?

Jacob smiled, You make it sound so horrible.

Well, the high schools need you more. You have a passion. I can see that. And those schools need teachers with passion.

And the colleges don't?

Fields stiffened, Colleges are filled with professors who have experience.

Yes. But they traded that spark for tenure...

Oh.

Listen, Professor Fields, I don't want to argue this with you. I just want to know how to switch to being just an English literature major. Are you able to help me with that? Please?

I'll see what I can do.

Jacob sighed, Thank you.

Fields picked up the phone to make the necessary calls. As she dialed the extension, she said, I just wish you would reconsider.

Jacob thought, And I just wish you would let me make my own decision.

It took Jacob a couple weeks to talk the coward out of him and hear Liz's voice again. He was afraid of what she would say, but he was more afraid of never hearing her say anything again. He almost cried for joy when Liz picked up her phone.

Hiiii.

Hey, hey. How are you?

Good. It's been a forever, darling. I was afraid you'd forgotten about me.

Jacob laughed, I'm not that forgetful. Just give me another year or two.

I'll try to remember that. Guess what?

Jacob asked, What?

Liz said, I'm coming back to Delaware. For the day, that is.

You are? When?

This Friday. There's a concert happening on Main Street. You know the bar, Tibet Timber?

Yep.

Well, the band performing there, I'm good friends with the drummer. I told him I would be there.

And I keep my word. Can I hope I'd see you there?

Jacob asked, You said this Friday, right?

Yes sir. Friday at 9.

Jacob said, Uh, sure, sure. I'll be there. I have nothing going on Friday night.

Jacob could feel Liz beam over the phone.

Great! I'll see you there then. I would stay and chat some more, but I'm actually heading out the door.

Oh?

Yup. I got a stray cat!

You did?

Liz said distractedly, Uh huh. Found him the other day. He's gorgeous. I'll love him until I die. I refuse to let him die first. That's why I'm taking him to the vet.

Jacob said, Well, hopefully he checks out okay.

I hope so too.

Have you given him a name yet?

Liz said triumphantly, Samson.

Samson?

When I found him, his fur was all dirty and matted. It was disgusting. So he had to get a haircut.

Thus, Samson.

Makes sense. Well then, have a good night. And hopefully I'll see ya this Friday?

Definitely! Definitely. Buh bye.

So that Friday, Jacob was sitting at the bar counter in Tibet Timber. He was underage, yes. But who gets carded in a college town? The unwritten rule was the alpha, the omega, and all of the fraternities and sororities in between.

Jacob was sipping on a pale ale, or at least trying to. The counter was crowded, and elbows kept churning his ribs into dough. He took a step away and headed downstairs. In this particular establishment, the bar was topside, while the so-called party room was deep in the hull. And the way everyone was spilling puddles of their drinks everywhere, it looked like the hull had sprung a leak.

The party room – we'll just call it what it was: a cellar – was crammed with people. The fire marshal would have a heart attack if he saw the crowd crushing at the walls. The room was filled with damp couches – Jacob was afraid to ask why the couches were damp – and a few rickety, termited chairs.

Jacob decided to stand.

The stage was in the far corner. The band – they had called themselves the Thinkinistas – were setting up. There were, the drummer, the two bassists, the random piano guy. Jacob could have sworn he saw a set of bagpipes in the flurry of preparation, but he had a feeling it was the ale already getting to him.

People kept piling into the room, despite the fact there was no more room. What do you call a room that has no room left? Jacob had to stretch out on his tiptoes to see over the pack.

One of the bassists pulled the microphone stand close to him and called out, Hello, world! We're the Thinkinistas! That is, until we change our name next week!

The crowd roared.

It's a Friday night, and we all know you've done your drinking. Now, it's time for the thinking!

The crowd laughed and cheered.

As the band thundered into its first song, Jacob began looking around the room for Liz.

Where is she at?

It was hard. The room was dim for the atmosphere. Jacob wondered absent-mindedly if the atmosphere was a stormy one. It certainly sounded like one. He pushed through the crowd like a sailor. A wave of watery beer splashed on his shoulder. Jacob flipped an underhanded bird and kept walking.

Jacob had walked past every single person in the room and still he couldn't find her. Night had settled on the room and it was impossible to see.

It was when he was squeezing through the room a second time that he saw her. She was sitting on one of the soggy couches. He hadn't seen her at first because some guy was flanking her. His Irish cap camouflaged both of their faces, but Jacob knew what they were doing. Liz was limply holding onto a beer bottle. She let it fall to the ground – the bottle crinkling into shards – and moved that hand to cradle her kisser's face.

Jacob could vaguely feel the rest of the crowd moving about, like they were stormy waves crashing against the rock. Another person spilled some beer on his sleeve again, but Jacob didn't notice. He felt numb at first. But as he turned and made his way for the stairs, he could feel anger prickling at his sides. It started as an elderly pain, but it became more youthful and growling with each step he took away from them.

Jacob made his way to the first floor. He ordered another beer from the bartender – although he wasn't finished with his first. No matter – he downed both of the drinks inside of a minute. He was rinsing his mind clean. Let the hangover the next morning wring out the wet.

Jacob went to the men's room, took a piss. As he clumsily washed his hands, he looked in the cracked mirror. There were a dozen men hiding in the mirror, all of them crying silent for him.

Jacob slurred soft, S'all right, guys. Don't worry. Don't worry.

There were no paper towels. Jacob wiped his soaked hands against his legs and stumbled out of the room. He forgot how two beers at once felt like drinking for half the night. He was never good at math. But he was good enough at math to know his money. He handed another five to the bartender and asked for another drink. The man looked at Jacob shrewdly, but silently handed over another glass. Jacob waved away the change and walked off with his drink.

He had to get outside. The whole bar felt pressing and his cheeks were fiery to the touch. Distant, Jacob didn't know if it was his claustrophobia getting to him or the crying. He didn't care. He didn't care with a passion.

He sat out on the front patio. The skies were beginning to ooze rain, thick drops of the stuff. As people ran for roofs all up and down the street, Jacob sat at one of the outside tables. He let the acid rain of Delaware baptize him. He was shaking from the cold, the raindrops bouncing off his

drowned shirt. He still drank, but not as quickly nor fervently as before. The rain was sweeping away his fury, his depression, but it took away the rest of his emotions as well. It did not giveth what it taketh, leaving Jacob a shuddering shell.

He finished the drink and walked into the bar for the last time. He set the glass down on the counter for the last time.

Jacob was too drunk, too cold, too tired to walk home. But there was still some primal beginning deep in his brain that knew enough to call a taxi. Thank God. The town was rare with taxis – it was a town after all – so Jacob had to wait a good fifteen minutes for a checkered cab to show its face after he called it in.

While he waited, he hoped that Liz wouldn't come upstairs. And whomever she was with. He couldn't tell for sure, but he knew it definitely wasn't Ethan. Ethan wasn't that tall, that hulking. Finally, the taxi pulled up in front of the bar, its yellows distorted in the water-pecked windows. Jacob shuffled out into the rain and awkwardly leaned into the cab. The driver, a gruff shadow of a lady with long, matted hair turned in her seat, barked, Where to?

Jacob told her and she turned around to start driving. Everything felt like silhouettes – it was hard to tell what was real and what just felt wrong. The streetlights zipped past the cab window like fireflies in the fields, their brief sparks of life not enough to upset the night. The buildings on either side of the street loomed over him like trees, shading him even more in the thick dark...

Shit!

The sharp swear slightly startled Jacob. He looked through the window closer, saw that they had just sped through an intersection. There was a car honking behind them.

He asked, What, um, what happened?

The lady said sheepishly, Sorry about that. The light was red. That car back there almost drove into your side. I wasn't paying attention. Shit.

S'ok. No worries.

The lady craned her neck and looked back. She pled, Please don't report this. I've been in trouble enough.

Don't kill me and I won't report you.

Thanks, hon.

The driver kept up her side of the promise. Jacob certainly didn't die. His legs were very much alive – and shaky – when they landed on the pavement. Jacob slurred up to his room and right into bed. He slunk into bed, damn the fact he was still wearing all his clothes. He didn't care if he would wake up the next morning, smelling like beer and repulsion. He hoped it was enough to keep everyone away from him. As he curled into a dream paralysis, his thinking was fleeting.

It was nonsense, but still his thoughts. It was all he had and clung to them, proud as fathers. That was a terrible cabbie. I could have driven better tonight. I will never go back to that bar again. What a miserable place. The band wasn't even that good. Why did they think they were good? What...

Jacob stopped thinking for a moment. The thought startled him, and it sobered him up enough to sleep.

What if I died and tonight was the last night I would have ever seen Liz?

They didn't talk again for a few nights.

When Liz did call, she said resolutely, I'm going to study abroad.

Jacob's heart sank.

Where?

Liz said, I'm thinking Italy. Siena to be more exact.

Italy? Why do you have your heart set on going there?

Because I'm Italian. And I speak Italian.

Sheepish, Jacob said, Oh. I guess you have a point.

Liz said brightly, Oh, I do! It's going to be a lovely program, provided I get into it. The study abroad stuff at this college is top-notch, and so of course everyone wants to join in on the fun.

Must be why the program is drowning in enough cash as it is.

When would you be going?

Well, I'm looking at this upcoming winter semester probably.

Surprised, Jacob asked, Liz?

Yes, m'darling?

It's November. That's next month.

Of course, silly goose. The program director said that someone just dropped out of the program last week. She said since my grades are high enough, that seat on the plane ride over is as good as mine. Besides, it'll be cheaper to go for the winter rather than the spring. And why wait a few more months for spring?

Again with the good points and you making them.

Liz laughed.

She then sobered up for a moment and said seriously, I need to get away from all of this for awhile.

What? Are you starting not to like New York now too?

Oh no, no. It's nothing like that. I just need to hide behind the Atlantic for awhile. I need

space to think and it's either going to Europe or crashlanding on a deserted island in the Pacific. And I'd rather be where there's an art gallery nearby.

You know, no matter where you run to, you're always going to be at home.

Liz asked, What do you mean?

I mean, you ran away from Delaware, and where did you run to?

Jacob...

He wasn't sure where all of this was coming from. He knew Liz's quick temper. He knew he was stupid to light a match near it. Maybe it was the frustration from the other night? That it may have seriously been the last time he'd ever see her again?

Jacob persisted, You ran back home. You ran from one home to another. If all you want to do is run away from home, then you're always going to be on the road.

Jacob...

I'm sorry. I don't mean to be so abrupt. It's just that I'm looking out for...

Liz said seriously, I can look out for myself. Just pretend for one moment that I'm not a woman and you're not a man.

Okay.

Are you pretending?

Yes.

Let me make my own decisions, hon. This is why I'm always packing. You and everyone else...you're all making me feel allergic.

I'm sorry...

Exasperated, Liz said, Oh my god, how many times do I have to tell you not to be sorry for stuff you don't do? If you say you're sorry one more time, I'll definitely give you something to be sorry for.

Why isn't it my fault?

Liz calmed down a bit and said slowly, Because you're one of the good guys. You have to look out for everyone. You can't help it.

Jacob wanted to ask if that was why she only dated evil bastards. He already made the mistake of saying what was on his mind once that night though.

Liz continued, I don't need your help. I need your support.

Isn't that the same thing?

Help means getting in my way. Support means you'll get out of my way, no matter what choice I make. And when you said I'm always running away from home? I can never run away from home.

Why's that?

Because...well, because everything is my home. How can I, um, leave everything?

The passions reasoned down and the talk became much calmer than it was. As they continued, though, Jacob had a nagging feeling about what Liz said to end the argument. How it sounded hesitant and unnatural coming out of her lips. He couldn't help but think that, in all the time that he had known her, this may have been the first time he ever heard her lie.

And so Liz eventually left. Gone for the winter to Italy. The day she left, Jacob found himself watching the news more than usual. And praying more than usual. He knew airplanes were the safest way to get around. That the movies make flying seem like the final frontier. But still he watched the news, praying that they wouldn't do a breaking news flash across the screen, cut to smoking wreckage in the Alps.

But nothing happened. Jacob exhaled until he deflated when he got an email from her. It was short, but safe and alive.

Hi Jacob! I'm in the hotel in Siena right now. Everything's well. We're leaving in awhile. Going to dinner. I'll talk to you later. Bye!

Telegrams from the 19th century were longer than that email. Yet still, Jacob couldn't help but smile a little, glad smile he almost forgot he had.

The emails in the days following were just a little longer. They went to Rome one day. Liz talked about all the churches they went to. She wasn't a Christian at all, but she was an art major in the end. And Rome sparkles in an artist's eyes as much as it does in a Catholic. How she got in trouble for chasing the pigeons around in St. Peter's Square (I wasn't chasing them, honest!...I was just pretending to flap around with them).

They visited Pisa another day. She mentioned that she didn't bother doing the touristy thing, pretending to hold up the Leaning Tower in a picture (this would be the second time she ever lied to Jacob about anything).

The days turned to weeks. She saw the aqueducts that have snaked through the countryside ever since the Romans propped them up thousands of years ago. She saw the vineyards. She saw the Mediterranean. She almost took a weekend trip into France (only to have a falling-out with some of her fellow classmates at the last moment). Liz said that she wasn't fretting too much over it. She had always wanted to walk around in France, but she still enjoyed strolling through Siena,

walking in circles around the Piazza del Campo, pretending she was a horse in one of the races there.

And whenever Jacob read the little emails she sent him over the ocean like the sunrise, he couldn't help but smile a little each time. Not so much for himself, but for her. He was glad that someone he knew could break out of the continent and reach for the world like the ball in a game of jacks. Jacob could never do something like that though. At least, he was pretty sure he couldn't. He didn't know. He never tried. He doubted if he ever would. Or could.

And still...still little sparks were sprinkling through the hay underneath his feet. He had only Liz to blame for the friction. But who ever said that friction was such a terrible thing?

The best act of the whole play – like any play – was the final act. Not because the play was over, but because of the climax. Those were two separate things. The winter would be gone soon, and Liz would come back home and all would be enough again. It was no coincidence that she was going to get back at the same time as spring.

And still Jacob flinched at some of the emails he got from here. The first flinch was this one:

I met a lovely boy here. His name is Benigno. He hardly says anything and lets me talk the whole time. I want to marry him already.

Jacob tried to write it off in his mind. Like what Liz said, she loved to talk a lot. When you exchange talk for action, you lose a lot of money in the exchange. Jacob kept telling himself that. As the season rolled on – and Jacob began wearing his winter coat indoors because the heater in his room was broken – Liz and Benigno were already starting to act like an old, married couple.

I wanted to take a trip over to Liguria. I wanted to see the Genoese walls. But Benigno wasn't having any of it. He said he already saw the walls once and that was one too many times. When I told him I wanted to go still, he ignored me and sulked off.

During the last week there, Jacob got another email about Liz's Italian sweetheart:

I was telling Benigno that the other girls in the group hate me for some reason. He told me to shut up. That I was being silly and imagining things.

When Jacob asked her if Benigno was worth all the trouble, she simply said that not every girl could claim to have an Italian boyfriend. And she didn't want to be like all the other girls in the

world. Benigno was worth the trouble and more.

And Jacob was beginning to get worried. He had known Liz for just long enough to know what to expect next. The next came the night before she was getting ready to head back to the States.

I love it here in Italy. I'm thinking of moving back here when I'm finished with undergrad. How cool would it be to go to grad school right here in Italy? If school doesn't work out, at least I would have a cute Italian boy here, waiting for me.

Jacob clenched his eyes, trying to squeeze out the thought of losing Liz as soon as she came back. Again. But the harder he closed his eyes, the deeper the thought stuck. Until her homecoming became another goodbye.

In Athenian times, Theseus was regarded as being one of the true heroes. He survived being married to the witch Medea. He killed the Minotaur. He had the guts to abandon Ariadne – the princess who helped him escape the Labyrinth – by leaving her on a deserted island in the middle of the night.

Who said that a hero always had to be a hero?

Although he committed so many incredible feats, his legacy – like every other hero's – waned in the centuries after his death. Even the hero-cults die in time. However, one reminder of Theseus lived long after the hero did. It was his ship. Generations later, the ship that glided him around the Aegean Sea was still very much alive. If anything, it looked brand-new. How? Because over the years, workers cut out the decaying parts of the ship and patched the holes with new planks. Over time, the ship became a quilt, testament to all of its repairmen over all of those years.

It was still a ship. Yes. But was it still Theseus's ship? After how long of giving and taking does something transform entirely? How many times can the love of your life come and go before you are nothing more than a shade of your personality, a patchwork of tragedies?

The spring came with Liz and, like Liz, it was going to leave soon. Jacob's dread grew with the temperatures. Classes that semester were easy – a miracle. Because he was getting distracted left and right. Every girl who walked past him around campus looked like Liz.

And when they walked away, they looked like her even more. And they all liked to step on the sidewalk cracks, breaking Jacob's heart at each stride.

And Jacob tried not to look at the calendar. He didn't want the summer – and Liz's graduation – and her move to Italy – to creep up on him like a countdown. Jacob was looking forward to the surprise. Nothing but shock was strong enough to carry him through.

But Liz kept talking and talking and talking about it. If she wasn't sure about moving before, she certainly was now. She even had the perfect street to live on lined up. It was on the edge of town. If she was lucky, she could get a house with the doorway facing east. She could wake up in the morning and watch the sunrise while sipping her tea. Later, she could sit down at dinner and watch the sunset through the kitchen window. She didn't care if it was in a bad part of town. Although even the better – that would mean that the rent was cheap.

And although Liz was still there in the States, and although Jacob was still at home, and although the status quo wasn't rattling yet, he could still feel the end coming, like oil spills tiding towards the summer beach.

In Eliot's Prufrock, we meet our graying, balding man – I've always taken him to be a banker – standing outside of it all. Prufrock is watching the party through a window, trying to steel up his courage and walk into the party where the women come and go, talking of Michelangelo. But he can't. He's afraid of being laughed at. An old man trying to act young. He knows wonderful things lie beyond the door, but he's not strong enough to step through the doorway. All of his fears have gnawed away and made him hollow. And weak. Too weak to even turn the doorknob. What use is such a man? Hundreds of years since Hamlet, and he couldn't find the smarts to evolve even a decision ahead.

Can you still find the strength to hug someone, even if your fears are stronger than yourself? Or would the hug break all your paper bones?

It was the night before Liz was going to head overseas.

She had called earlier that night. She had the cell on speakerphone while packing boxes. She was puffing.

Liz said, So, I – I...ugh.

What's up?

Nothing. It's just that I tried picking up my suitcase off the floor just now. Too heavy.

Jacob asked, I thought you liked to travel light?

Well, if I go to Italy and forget something, it'll be hard for the mailman to deliver it.

Makes sense.

Liz continued, And I am leaving for a very long time too.

Well, it'll be for just a year or two. Unless you're thinking about living there forever.

Well...we'll see.

Jacob asked seriously, You aren't thinking of living living there, are you?

Again, we'll see.

Oh.

Liz changed topics to one slightly brighter, asking, So, um, should I bring my Italian dictionary with me?

Well, you are going to be living in Italy. I would highly recommend it.

Liz explained, Well, I don't want to spend all my time getting my nose all inky from burrowing through my dictionary. Besides, I'll learn the language all the quicker if I have only myself to rely on.

Well, you better hope you're not in a pop spelling bee while you're there.

Liz laughed, Well, I am a born illiterate. Why do you think I took up art?

I thought you took up art so that you could work at a supermarket like all the other art majors?

Har-har-har. So says the boy damned to working in bookstores...ouch! Goddamit.

Jacob asked, What happened?

Just dropped a stapler on my foot.

Why did you drop a stapler on your foot?

Because you should never put lotion on your hands before handling heavy objects.

So hand lotion is the new cold medicine?

Confused, Liz asked, Huh? No wait, you're thinking of operating heavy machinery.

Oh.

Liz swore again.

Jacob asked, You drop the stapler again?

No, I just looked at the clock. It's almost eleven. I have to be at the airport by five tomorrow.

Well, it's a good thing you didn't wait until the last minute to start packing.

I know, right? Else it could have been a real catastrophe trying to get it all done the night before I leave.

I could hang up if I'm distracting...

No, no. Stay on the line. Please?

Okay.

Liz didn't say anything for a few moments. Jacob could hear her taping up a box on the other end.

Jacob?

Yep?

Just because I'm leaving doesn't mean we're going to stop talking.

No one said that.

No one wants to say that. But just because I'll be away doesn't give you any reason to stop talking to me.

Don't worry. I won't.

Liz said half-seriously, If you do, I'll finally give you a reason to be sorry about something.

Jacob laughed, Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned.

It sounds like that Shakespeare guy had the right idea.

I don't think it was Shakespeare who said that.

Liz asked, Then who was it?

I don't know. But this is going to bother me the whole night.

Liz smiled over the phone, Well then, that's my parting gift to you.

I thought you said you weren't going to leave me?

Well then, I guess it's more a see-you-next-time gift.

They talked for a bit longer until Liz finally had to go to sleep. She didn't want to sleep in for her departure time like it was some exam. Time waits for no man – or woman – and all airplanes were time.

While Jacob assumed that Liz was getting her sleep, he was sitting at the foot of his bed. He didn't bother to turn the light on. You don't need light to think.

Jacob was thinking of so many things – all of them Liz. He could still hear the linger in her voice when she talked about staying in Italy for longer than she planned. And that scared him.

I don't know how she can just pick up and leave like that. I don't have the courage to follow her around the world. Why can't she stay at home? Why won't love love me?

And still he thought. And still the midnight grew and the room darkened even further.

I can't lose her. She has made me question so much in life. If she leaves, who will help me answer all my questions? Who will help me take this test?

He had dozens of ideas simmering. All of them stupid. One idea he had was moving to Italy after graduating. He had taken enough Italian classes over the years – he could somewhat survive. He tried that idea on for a few moments before realizing that it was four sizes too large for him. He simply couldn't grow into the bravery of it.

And there's such a fine line between stupidity and bravery too. You'd either have to be stupid – or brave – not to notice.

And then he got another stupid idea. This one stuck to his mind for a bit longer.

It was an engagement ring.

If Liz said yes, she would stay.

If Liz said no, she would leave.

She was going to leave anyway.

The whole thing seemed insane, but there Jacob was, working out the logistics.

If I leave now, I could get to JFK before her plane took off. I can't afford a ring. I could promise her one. But she hates guys who were all talk. But she hangs out with art types – she knows what poverty means.

Jacob knew what her answer would be. It would be an ending No. The last time he would ever see her would be getting on that plane. She would never want anything to do with him again.

She still wants to be friends, even over an ocean. Why ruin that?

Because nobody can stay friends over the Atlantic. Nobody can stay friends across a creek from one another. Friends are supposed to get closer over time, not further apart.

You still have time to drive.

But he couldn't work up the stupid in him to drive through New Jersey to rescue his last chance.

Don't think of it as stupid. Think brave.

But what survives a hasty proposal? Only roaches survive the nuclear blast.

-That is the question-

Can I really break all these doubts? Can I?

-By opposing, end them-

And what if she said Yes? Was Jacob ready for the finish line already?

-Ay, there's the rub, for in that sleep of death what dreams may come-

If there was a Yes, then there was each fight to look forward to which...

-Makes calamity of so long life-

And what if she said No? The far more likely No? She would go to Italy.

-The undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns-

If there was a No, I would have ruined everything. I can't do that to her.

-Conscience does make cowards of us all-

If he could only drive himself to drive New Jersey, to the JFK. Make all new. These...

-Enterprises of great pitch and moment-

I can't. I can. If she says yes, we die dusty and wrinkled. If she Nos, she leaves...

-All my sins remembered.-

Jacob could feel a throbbing pain in his right hand. He looked down, saw that he was clenching

his car keys, the edges digging into his skin like dirt. He felt like dirt. He tossed the keys to the floor and laid down in bed. He wanted to sleep on the whole decision. Although he knew by morning it would be too late. It was always too late if you're between a J. Alfred Prufrock and a hard place.

Act IV: The Fall of Roma

The moment Liz put a time zone between them – several, in fact – Jacob was ashes scattered in the wind. He was everywhere and so he didn't know where he was. When most people go into a depression, they lay in bed, watching the wall, watching the paint sweat.

Jacob took to walking.

Every moment he had – whether it was between classes, on break from work, when he should have been studying – Jacob was walking. He walked the campus in circles – he was turning into a compass spinning at the poles.

When he wore his sole down from all the walking, he would retire to his room every evening. He would look at the blank paper on the desk. Before, he would write down what was on his mind. He still did – blank was on his mind and so blank was what he wrote.

The semester kept on without him. Jacob used to be the backseat driver to these things. He would let it drive him, speaking up only at times for it to speed or slow. Now, he was just in the backseat to it all, sleeping with his head resting against the cool pillow window.

When it came time to pick classes for the next – and his final – semester, Jacob signed up for a couple classes. Greek tragedy. Irish History. Religions of the world. Abnormal psychology. An Italian class – any Italian class – was conspicuously missing.

Jacob stopped going to open mics in his free time. The muse for his poetry was slipped out from under him and Jacob was afraid of being on stage in front of the world, silent as the pages of nothing he kept on his desk. The people at the open mics knew him, would call and email him each week, asking why he wasn't showing up. He never returned the calls, never replied to the emails. The week that the messages stopped, Jacob had a sudden, bizarre urge to feel homeless. Homeless despite the fact he still slept under a roof every night.

He had the change coming. He was due.

The blank pages still haunted him, of course. They followed him in his sleep like some paper-

maché ghost you wear for Halloween. The pages were as pure as snowfall, and Jacob hated them for it. Jacob wanted them to be smeared with ink. He wanted them to be a grimy jet, a midnight to get lost in. He wanted to write mazes into it...

Well, you get the idea.

And the silence was back now. It was louder than ever. The phone was ringing less in the evenings now. When it did ring, it was someone from class, asking what the homework was because they were out sick. Or it was family, asking about this or that. Everytime he picked up the cell, he hoped to see a New York area code in the number. There never was. And he would sit there, letting the phone's ring wring out his heart dry.

What was he expecting? For Liz to dial in the whole way from Italy, burning up dollars by the minute just to hear his voice?

You know, you could always call her. You can't buy her love, but you can buy hearing her voice. At least for one last time.

And Jacob knew that wouldn't work. A phone call to New York was ruinous enough. A call to Italy would stamp his spirit out as if it were flickers of fire. At that distance, talking to Liz would be like talking to someone from beyond the grave. He knew it, but he couldn't say it. And he especially couldn't hear it.

That was not to say that they didn't speak at all. He got the occasional email from Liz. Letting him know how Italy was going. What sights she saw that day. What food she ate. How the Italian wind through the vines sounds so much more sonorous than American wind does.

But those weren't talks. Those were postcards. They were what you sent people when you were away for a week, even two. You never send people you love little cheap paragraphs about the place you ran off to.

When Jacob got each email, he would promptly delete it without even bothering to read it. The next morning, he would retrieve the email from the trash folder and read it. As if he could read them. He read them like an illiterate, his eyes skimming foreign words. Words that were English to anyone else, but exotic to him. He wondered the same thing everytime he read each email: What was it that I just read? He was seeing some sort of abstract art to the words. It was all beautiful nonsense.

The ugly logic was that, even if someone left you, you can never lose them. As long as you remember what their voice sounded like, you can never lose them. And already some nights, Jacob was having a helluva time trying to remember her voice.

If dreams were just waking, then Jacob never slept.

He used to love going to sleep at night. Now he hated it. Like when you were a kid and loved the snow. You would grow into an adult the first winter you hated snow.

Every morning when Jacob would wake up, his eyes would crackle with scarlet spiderwebs more and more. His eyes were going to look like red beet eggs soon enough. He was bleeding inside-out from being tired. But how he looked forward to the mornings.

At night when he closed his eyes, she was waiting for him. His mind was a house and Liz was haunting every stairwell, every locked, dusty room. There was no way for him to hide.

Every night the dream was the same. He was sitting on the edge of a bed. The bed was made, and somehow this mattered to him. Liz would come slinking into the room. His eyes would flood.

He would say, It's been forever.

Although last night's dreaming was no forever.

She would say, I know, darling. But you can't look forward to the hellos if you don't say the goodbyes first.

Hello.

Hello.

She would glide across the room. Jacob was facing east, she was skimming west like the sun. She was stepping over exotic lands, wetting her ankles in the seas along the way. The continents creaked like elderly floorboards and the seas splashed like puddles orange-squeezed from the leaky roof. The clouds all around them were as fluffy as radio-crackled paint.

As Liz got closer, she seemed to grow. Or the world seemed to shrink around them. Whatever the pushing or pulling, the world was fitted around them like a suit. Nothing else mattered. They could squeeze the whole world out of existence if they wanted, you know – and encore it back when this tiny moment slipped between their fingers. And then she would be gone. And the world would stretch into a goodbye. And she would be a world apart from him, and he from her. And his continent would be dimmed with tar, waiting for the next night when her sunrise would come around again.

Would her lips still taste as good as they did last night? The thought pressed against Jacob's mind like mountains. Would a brush of her lips craft heights taller than all of us?

And still she would walk closer and still the world would crush around them. Jacob swore he could reach out with his hand and touch the side of the universe. He did – it seemed to shiver at his tickle.

Liz would sit on the bed next to him. She would rinse the back of her hand against his sleeve.

Inside of that moment, Jacob felt so much like water. He was falling apart being so close to her. And she would move in close, press her lips against his own. His lips were speechless, hers were a roar. He couldn't hear anything over her kiss.

And after that long second, Liz would draw back slow. Jacob would lean forward as she drew away. He was caught in the fishing lure of the moment. She would then look at him steady and say:

I...

A white noise would settle over them like snow. Jacob couldn't hear the last two words of what she said. But he could make out the last word: you.

Jacob would call out, begging, You what me?

And she, patient, would say the words again. And still the white noise drowned her like an icy pond. And still Jacob couldn't make out the word between the I and the you.

And that would be when Jacob woke up, shivering and sweating in his bed.

It had been like that every night for the past few weeks. The weeks were becoming years now. So the minute that Jacob took to sob in his bed after each dream was stretched out into months. And still every night he went to sleep. And still every night he woke up, tired by the torture. Love is beautiful. Lingering love is torture.

One night – it was a Sunday – Jacob tossed in his bed, kicking the dust out of his sheets as he bucked and turned. He knew it was sometime deep in the night. He could have opened his eyes, looked at the clock. But what's the point – every clock is wrong. Every clock in the world has that little tic, where they all toc at different speeds. Everything human hands stitch together is flawed – even clockwork. When they ring in the hour, they're a deaf orchestra warming up. There's no point in picking one clock over all the others. What makes any given moment so special then?

Jacob groaned. He squeezed the pillow at his side, squeezed it hard, squishing the egg white out of it.

He knew he had work the next morning. That's where the insomnia was waiting for him. He knew the next morning, he would be a step behind all the other clocks in the world. The day would drag like exhausted feet. It didn't matter though. He wasn't sure why.

Blessed be the sleepy, for they will sleep well in the end.

Jacob fell into the pillow and sobbed. His tears made the pillow even softer, which made him cry all the harder.

He whispered only three words, three words that nothing in the world but that pillow would ever hear from his lips. Three words that he knew – that he thought – that he hoped – that Liz's ghost was saying in his deep dreams every single night.

I miss you.

One morning, Jacob couldn't take it anymore. He told every person he knew:

I'm moving to New York City.

And each person told him things he knew they were going to say:

You're a Delaware boy. Why leave the only home you know?...

You're not city material. They'll eat you alive on those streets...

You can do the same stuff down here that you would do up there. Why not get a job here where it's cheap? Why not just visit New York every once in awhile for vacation? I like the beach, but I don't want to live at the beach for the rest of my life...

And so on and so forth.

Jacob was expecting all of that. He was expecting their words. The sentences still cut him all the same – as if no one has faith in ideas anymore.

And Jacob was full of ideas, so it would make sense that nobody could trust him. He had been working the logistics: he was going to apply to grad school sometime this year before he finished his undergrad work. He would hopefully get accepted, go for English literature, and walk out of New York with a doctorate. After that, a professorship. After that, what he hoped were easy decades.

He needed easy decades after this one.

People asked him, more out of curiosity than spite: what would you do if you didn't get into grad school? Still, those questions cut with a hopeful condescension. And still Jacob had answers. He would get a job in publishing. Or marketing. Something that he could put his English degree towards. It was either get into writing or get a part-time job at a fast food place. Not much else for an English major to pick and choose from. But when you have options, you have to pick at

least one of them. There is no none of the above. That answer would be gone with the multiple-choice tests he took so far in college.

And he had to break eggs to make the omelet. That was the painful part. Delaware was all he knew for these past twenty-one years or so. You can build up a lot of moss on your legs in that time. It would take all he had to shake that off. He had to shake all that off to move. If he didn't, he would be a statue in no time at all.

So he stopped talking to people. He stopped talking to his childhood friends. Even his first best friend, the same guy who would play with him during recess when none of the other kids would. Nothing's going to keep me from New York.

Gone were his high school friends. The ones he used to run track and cross-country with. Even though they made Jacob the punchline of their jokes, they would at least talk to him. In high school – where every clique was a country club – Jacob was proud to say that he was a part of a group. He was proud to say that, yes, he had a rudder to guide him through his turbulent high school years.

Nothing's going to keep me from New York.

Last to go were his college friends. The ones who went to school in Delaware and could easily go home between classes. There was nothing wrong with those friends. The only thing that Jacob could hold against them was where they had grown up. Delaware was all he could hold against them.

Nothing's going to keep me from New York.

And all Jacob did was simply stop talking to them. That was it. He didn't instigate fights with them. He didn't tell them off. Nothing violent at all. He just...scattered them. Never looked back really, after shaking them off. And of all the little gears in his master plan, this one terrified Jacob the most. How quickly people stopped talking to him as soon as he stopped. As if words were the only thing that kept all those bonds together.

Is that really all that kept me chained to Delaware over all these years? Just some words? I honestly don't have anything like memories or interests – anything more concrete – that kept me tied to them? It was nothing but words the whole time?

And this scared him because he thought he knew so much about words, but it was really the other way around. Every pore in his skin was a rabbit hole and for the first time he saw how far down each one went, grazing his veins like grass.

He was shedding all of his friends and his loved ones off him, like autumn trees molting their leaves for the winter. And it wasn't until his branches were naked that he realized how much he was beginning to look like Liz. All this time he wondered how Liz could float around the world so

easy. He had always wondered how she managed without any anchors.

Now he saw how easy it was to cut the lines and let the anchors sink like the stones they actually were to the ocean's bottom. How easy it was, and how much it was still a sacrifice. How disconnecting yourself from each person was like pulling the plug on a loved one. It really was pulling the plug on a loved one. And he realized why Liz felt so lost and dazed all the time. Because he now felt the same way, lost and dazed.

Jacob thought to himself, Well if I get nothing else out of this, at least I'll feel like Liz. At least I might finally understand her.

But deep down inside, he was hoping he would never really figure her out. When you figure someone out, after all, the journey ends and the credits roll. There's really nothing after.

Lucky for Jacob, that moment never came. He would end long before the pain ever did. Pain is an immortal beast. And an end is the only hero against it.

JacobLarson: Hey there, how are you?

LizMaguire: Hiiii. I'm very tired.

JacobLarson: Living can do that. How's Siena treating you?

LizMaguire: Things could be better. A LOT better.

JacobLarson: Why's that?

LizMaguire: I lost my job working at the school.

JacobLarson: You did? What happened?

LizMaguire: They had to make cuts. Since I was new, I was first to go. This is fucking terrible.

JacobLarson: I can only imagine.

LizMaguire: You'll just have to. I'm ruined. Absolutely ruined.

JacobLarson: How bad is it?

LizMaguire: I have just enough money right now for either another month's rent or a plane ticket home.

JacobLarson: That's a hell of a choice you have there.

LizMaguire: I know. I don't know what I'm going to do.

LizMaguire: I can't ask my parents for money. I just won't.

LizMaguire: I won't go crawling to them.

JacobLarson: Well, if it makes you feel any better

JacobLarson: I would wire you money if I had any.

LizMaguire: That would make me feel better if you actually had that money – can't pay the landlord

with your nonexistent money.

JacobLarson: Oh.

LizMaguire: I think I'm going to try staying here another month.

JacobLarson: You are?

LizMaguire: Yes. If it doesn't work out here, I'll find work somewhere else. I'll rather be homeless than come back home.

JacobLarson: By the sounds of it, you were homeless to begin with.

LizMaguire: What's that supposed to mean?

JacobLarson: It means

JacobLarson: that you don't have to run away from home all the time

LizMaguire: I refuse to come back home to my parents

LizMaguire: I'm a grown woman. I don't need them anymore.

JacobLarson: I didn't mean that home. I mean some home. Any home. An anchor. Some place you would never leave.

LizMaguire: The world is my home.

JacobLarson: You're not answering my question.

LizMaguire: Well, it's a stupid question.

JacobLarson: I see you're giving it a stupid answer.

LizMaguire: Listen, don't tell me what I should do.

JacobLarson: But you said you didn't know what you were going to do.

LizMaguire: As if you know anything more. Or anyone else. Let me figure things out. Let me make my own mistakes. I would do the same for you. Or anyone else.

JacobLarson: Yeah, because you don't give a shit about anybody but yourself.

LizMaguire: That's not true!

LizMaguire: I love everyone.

JacobLarson: Then why do you run away from everyone?

LizMaguire: I don't. I'm trying to love every single person. I'm just running from love to love.

JacobLarson: Don't cheapen it. Either you love one person, or you love no one at all. Don't water it down – that's utter bullshit.

LizMaguire: That so?

JacobLarson: Yeah.

LizMaguire: Well, we'll see about it.

And that was it. Liz disconnected, leaving Jacob there, staring at a computer screen. The

conversation still lingered on the monitor, like some ghost. It was already haunting him. And Jacob felt ashamed of what he had just said. Which was bad. And Jacob had no idea why he felt this shame. Which was worse.

Act V: Funeral at the Catastrophe

I'm terribly sorry for your loss.

If there's anything I can do...

He was such a happy man. Always sad to see the good go early. Always sad.

The murmurs were a pillowsoft crescendo that still rattled the windows. The funeral home was packed and swirling, people swathed in black shuffled about. The room felt so bitter. But the food was good. Whether the viewing made the food taste better or the good food made the viewing worse, no one would ever know. No one cared about those little questions that had big answers. There was no point to things on days like this. Buddha would have been proud. People had finally understood the universe – at least until the next day.

Everyone seemed almost dead, honoring the gone in their way. There was a man, though, who jittered with a nervous energy. He was sitting uncomfortably in a wooden chair in the far corner. He was holding a platter of food. The plate was trembling in his hand. Not for the man who laid in the coffin. His hand already trembled enough earlier that week when he heard the news.

He was trembling because he saw her across the room. She still looked like a hurricane butterfly after all these years. Her eyes, those deepocean blues, were still warm enough to dream. The years hadn't chilled them. Her hair was beginning to whiten at the edges, but it still glowed across the room like lightning.

He hadn't felt old until that moment when he saw her graying hair.

Her dark chocolate dress swirled with her whitewash arms. She was camouflaged against the scene of ghostpale women, all of whom were dressed stern. Everyone around her looked caged to the earth. She was still Icarian though – always floating higher. It didn't make sense. None of it did. He knew that. Then again, the Amazon flows upriver and it couldn't look anymore wonderful.

He set his plate down on the table and stepped forward. He excused me through the thick crowd towards her. She was looking around, listless, like she was at the train station. He tapped her on

her shoulder.

All he could say, after all those years, was, You look beautiful.

She was surprised to see it was him. She recovered quick though.

She cleared her throat, said, Hello. I wasn't trying to. It is a funeral, after all.

I know. I...I just feel you needed some good news.

She frowned, Not really. I'll rather wait to smile.

Oh.

Even after all that time, all he could ever say to her was that word. Oh. Jacob was surprised that he was still surprised by that word. It should have come as easy as breathing by now.

He cleared his throat, So, you were good friends with...?

She nodded, In a way. Friend of a friend. Met him at a party. He loaned me money.

That so?

Another nod.

Can I ask how much?

Can I ask why?

Just curious. Was it enough to buy a candy bar? Enough to pay the landlord?

Enough to buy popcorn at the movies.

When did you start going to the movies?

When did you become a detective?

He shrugged his shoulders, Just curious. You never went to the movies when we were, you know...

He paused. The past tense startled him. It was as if he forgot what got him to that moment. He had forgotten. The same guy who had constantly replayed their past – a record skipping the same stones over and over. If you keep going over something in the back of your mind – mistakes, love, good shot of whisky – it stays in the present. It's only when you forget that it's in the past.

I only went to the movies with him a few times.

Oh?

It was nothing serious. Just a friend of a friend.

He wanted to tell her – if it walks like a fuck, if it talks like a fuck, then it's a fuck. It startled him to be so rough around her. The years should have worn him down smooth. But they made him rough and catscratchy. Still though, she had never taken anyone serious enough.

She coughed hard. She thumped her chest.

He asked, You okay?

She waved it off, Fine, fine. Damn cigarettes.

You're still smoking, after all this time?

She shrugged, Well, yeah. They're going to kill me one of these days, you know.

A couple standing nearby looked at her oddly. She shrugged them off before turning back to him.

I wish people weren't so uptight at these things.

He said, Well, it is a funeral after all.

What, we can't talk about death? At a funeral? C'mon, you can't spell funeral without spelling fun, can't you?

He almost laughed. She was almost her old self. It was almost one of her good days.

He asked, So what have you been up to?

Oh, struggling. I'm a curator in a little art museum outside of Rome.

Do you still draw?

She said, Yes. It's not nearly enough to pay the bills though. I've been paying off debt with debt for awhile now. It works. I see you aren't a struggling artist anymore, though.

He suddenly felt embarrassed. Although he shouldn't have been. He still hid his fancy watch further up his sleeve with his other hand.

He said gruffly, There's a difference between being successful and being happy.

No, no there isn't.

He looked wistful, Sometimes there is.

She shrugged, Well, I guess one of us has to be lucky.

So says the lady living in Italy.

She suddenly said, I read about you.

Oh? Where?

Are you really in that many magazines that you can't tell one interview from the next?

No. But I like to think I am.

Well, it was a good write-up of you anyway. I thought your answer to that last question was a bit strange though.

What was the question?

She frowned, remembering.

It was...what inspired you to write. You said it was the forest, how...

...how it writes its history on wood. That I write my history on paper made from the same wood.

I remember now.

That sounds too cheesy. I expected better from you.

Well, it is my stock answer. You're the only person who deserves hearing the truth.

Oh?

It was so strange to hear her say oh. It sounded almost sexy coming from her. When I say it, it sounds so grinding.

He said nervously, I think we should go somewhere else to talk about this. Can I get you a cup of coffee after this?

No. You know me, darling; I'm impatient.

He breathed hard. He was ready to say this ten years before. Not now.

He closed his eyes hard and finally said, You're my muse. You're my muse the way a bunch of damn oak trees will never be.

Scarlet colors martyred on her pale cheeks. She was quiet. She let him continue. So he did.

You were the one who told me to live for love. Before you, I already knew routines...

Now...

You taught me to live a little...

Listen, please...

His eyes flaring, he said, Let me finish.

Okay.

He calmed down for a moment, said, You taught me to live a little. So I decided to live a lot. Do you remember telling me those words?

No, I can't say I do.

He bit his lip, I became a writer because of you. You made me with those words. And you can't remember them?

No. I'm sorry.

Silence.

She coughed, asked, Is that it? Is that all you wanted to say?

He nodded.

How long have you wanted to say that?

Ten years.

Ten bloody years? And that was all you could think of? For christakes, your last book was some eight hundred pages, wasn't it?

He frowned. This wasn't where he expecting it to go. He decided to make another confession.

Damn the torpedoes and all.

I loved you. You remember that, at least?

Yes. I didn't love you. You remember that as well?

He said sadly, I don't forget things that easily.

I know you don't. I just figured you'd make yourself forget that tiny little fact.

He cleared his throat and confessed, I almost proposed to you.

When?

When you were about to move to Italy.

Well, why didn't you?

I was afraid.

It's a good thing, too.

Oh?

She said conversationally, I would have slapped you if you proposed.

That's why we would have made such a great couple.

Really? Why's that?

Isn't it always the couple who hate each other that stay married the longest?

She snorted, I suppose so, yes. Explains why my parents are still together.

More quiet. For the first time in his life, he wished someone would talk. Say something, anything. He looked down at his shoes for a moment. When he glanced up, she was looking at him curiously. She was seeing him in a light she never saw before. It lit up her eyes. He couldn't tell if it was mischief or intellect.

She finally asked, Why are you telling me this? Now? At a funeral home, of all places?

Ten years of silence have broken better men. You meant the world to me. You still do. I want to live in that world again.

You have your books. Live in those.

He winced. She was hiding knives in the words.

But books are proofread. You're full of misspelled words and forgotten commas. That's what I loved about you. You were so natural, so...so flowing. I would give up writing for you.

You would?

He nodded.

She frowned, I doubt you would.

Oh?

Because I'm about to tell you I never want to see you again. I can't have you for a lover. And I can't have a lover for a friend.

I had a feeling you would say that.

And when I say I never want to see you again, you'll have nothing but books to love. And you know what?

What?

You can live with that. I know you can.

Why would I ever love books over you?

Because...books will never leave you.

He left. He had to. She wanted to talk with the other people there. She was always stubborn granite. He couldn't be there anymore, so he slipped out the door. Like a puddle of water. Coincidentally, it was a puddle of water that he stamped in walking down the street that made him remember. In his walk of shame towards the door, he had forgotten his jacket on the coat rack. It was his favorite. And it was supposed to rain later that night. The rain wanted to be fashionably late for the viewing. Still, he wanted to leave the jacket there. But he couldn't. Goddammit.

He decided he would sneak back in. He would grab the jacket and leave.

He managed to sneak in.

So far, so good.

He found his lonely jacket on the coatrack. It was still sweating with that morning's rain. It almost looked as if it was crying.

Go. Now.

He let his eyes dart around. He shouldn't have. He saw her again. This time standing with one of her old friends from college. He squinted. It almost looked like...no, was it? Yes, yes it was. Her old roommate. The one she never cared for.

He couldn't help sneaking close. He had to hear her voice one last time. He stuck to the crowd for cover, listened hard. He could just barely make out the voices. That was enough – he just wanted to hear her voice for one last time. One last time.

The roommate asked, So who was that man you were standing with just a few minutes ago? He looked familiar.

Oh, just a friend of a friend.

Curtain.

OC1

You like myself, my honoured friend, recognize that it is pauperism and a glutted market that lie at the root of the economic distresses of the time; and no one, I should think, who has sufficiently

reflected upon the subject, can fail to perceive this. It is, then, in our views of the causes and remedies only that we find ourselves differing from others. I shall first give a complete account of the investigation of the causes, according to your conception of them as well as mine, before proceeding to a consideration of the remedies proposed by you and by myself, for the counteraction of them.

You, like so many others, do not trace those phenomena back to one single cause, to one single error in the present economic organization. You agree with me, indeed, in the conviction that they spring from economic circumstances and relations, while so many merely from lack of thorough comprehension of political economy account for them on social grounds of a general nature, or even on moral grounds; but you assign a different economic circumstance as the cause of pauperism, and still other economic circumstances as the cause of gluts.

You have devoted to the explanation of these two phenomena two dissertations, *Die Grundrente in socialer Beziehung* and *Die Tauschgesellschaft*.

In the first of these you account for pauperism on the basis of the fundamental law which, according to Ricardo, governs the creation and increase of the rent of land. You fully agree with him upon his theory of rent, but do not coincide in all the inferences which that famous man has deduced from it. You draw other conclusions from it, conclusions which ought by all means to follow from it, if - if, indeed, the theory itself were a correct one. I must take the privilege of quoting from my paper, to which you also make reference, "An Inquiry concerning Present Economic Conditions," in which already I called attention to the fact that Ricardo's method was not logical. The passage is as follows:

"Ricardo has a different view of the fall of profit, and McCulloch shares his view, inasmuch as he understands by profit the relative share of the capitalist in the product. Since both let rent arise in its own special way, they put the share in the product contained therein to one side, and then let the other two shares in the product, wages and profit, vary inversely to each other. They hold accordingly, that in consequence of the increasing unproductiveness of the land, and because the [real] wages of labour consist in the main of the products of the soil, wages in their nominal amount and consequently also as relative share in the product, become continually greater, and for this reason the relative share of the capitalist in the product, i.e., profit, becomes continually smaller.

"Yet even admitting the hypothesis of the increasing unproductiveness of the soil, that theory is wrong. Of course, if the effect which rent has upon profit is once for all considered as having already been taken into account, and is thenceforward left out of the discussion, a change in the profit on capital can take place only in the case of an inverse change in wages. But then that would be the most trivial of propositions. The real question is, what is the fundamental law which governs the constant fall of profit on capital? One must not, therefore, leave out of account one share in the product, and consider only the inverse changes in the other two, but specially investigate which one of the different shares chiefly effects, by its changes, the fall of profit on capital. This fall, however, is due far more, even according to the Ricardian view of rent and of the increasing unproductiveness of agriculture, to rent than to wages. For if by the rise in value of raw material wages are relatively increased, then the relative share of the land-owner must increase still more, because this is affected solely by the price of raw materials, while wages involve another factor besides the labour of producing raw materials the ever increasingly productive processes of manufacture and of transportation. One cannot, therefore, consider the rise of wages due to the increasing unproductiveness of the soil and the consequent fall of profit on capital, without bearing in mind that there occurs at the same time, and to a still greater degree, a rise in rent and also a consequent fall in the profit on capital. Ricardo seems to overlook the fact that if poorer soil is brought under cultivation,, and the product of good soil rises in value equally with that of the poorer, the landowner's whole relative share of the national income must necessarily rise, and that this rise can occur only at the expense of the capitalists' share, as according to his own assumption the labourer's share is increased also."

This conclusion, my honoured friend, which I have deduced in the above extract, and which Ricardo failed to infer, you, for your part, have actually drawn. You also rightly conclude assuming as true the actually false hypothesis of the increasing unproductiveness of land that since, on account of the advanced price at which the one new bushel of grain is brought to market, the price of the millions of bushels hitherto raised must rise as well, there must be always less and less of the national product left for wages and profit for the labourer and the capitalist. You also deviate from Ricardo in a second conclusion, namely, you do not allow that wages rise with the rise of the price of grain, but hold that they are maintained at a steady rate or even lowered by certain circumstances of social development. Out of these deviations from the doctrines of your great predecessor you have, while adhering to his principle of rent, constructed for yourself a new theory of pauperism, which appears all the more seductive from your singularly happy manner of presenting it.

I now go on to give an account of this theory by means of extracts from your presentation.

You distinguish a two-fold origin of rent, a historic and an economic one; the former you find in slavery, and the latter in those circumstances from which Ricardo also derives rent. For, you say, "the historic restriction of the labourer to the bare necessities of life" - to the food of slaves, which leaves remaining a part of the product for rent - "should have disappeared when, at least in Western Europe, the freedom of the person and of occupation were developed, when labourers were no longer obliged to submit to the dictate: 'So much only shall you consume, and the rest deliver to me, your master.' Nevertheless, rent remained, nay, it has even arisen in the populous states of North America, which enjoy complete civil and political liberty. In this case the basis must be a different one, and Ricardo has shown what it is."

According to this, "rent is based upon three circumstances:

() "That no country possesses land and soil of uniform composition or quality, but that they present the most varied degrees of fertility. To this is added the greater proximity or remoteness of the fields from the places where the consumers live; the location, which increases or diminishes the cost of transportation, has the same effect as difference in fertility.

() "That in populous countries the better and nearer land no longer suffices to furnish the amount of raw material required for the nourishment and clothing of the inhabitants, and that therefore poorer and more remote land must be brought into requisition.

() "That the price of grain, meat, skins, and all other products of the soil must be uniform for products of the same kind and quality, whether the individual bag of grain be raised upon good or upon poor soil."

For "with the rise in price" - you say in another place -

"which is caused by the increase of population and the consequent necessity of cultivating poorer land, the price of the grain grown on good land is, naturally, also raised, and the advantage thereby gained accrues - for the same reason as remarked above, namely, that labour and interest on capital cannot stand at different levels not to the labourer or the capitalist but to the landowner."

"Let us assume," you continue,

"that an acre of good land has hitherto yielded bushels of grain; that the price of a bushel was thlr., and that capitalists and labourers divided these thlrs. among themselves alone. The increase of population necessitates the cultivation of poorer soil which, applying an equal amount of labour and capital, yields only bushels; now it is clear that this grain cannot be sold for less than / thlr. a bushel, because the labourer and capitalist want to get thlr. here as well. But then the price of those bushels grown on good soil rises also; those bushels now cost, at thlr. per bushel, / thlr., and it is clear that the landowner will in this case too give up only thlr. to the labourer and capitalist, retaining, therefore, / thlr. per acre as rent for himself.

"If the growth of population compels the use of still poorer soil, which yields only bushels, then the price of a bushel of grain must rise to thlr.; although the landlord obtains no rent as yet from this class of soil, he does now from the second class; his rent from the first class now amounts to thlr., from the second to thlr., altogether thlr., while before it amounted to only / thlr.

"The data furnished by experienced agriculturists agree exactly with this view. According to Block's estimates, page , the net product from soils of various classes was as follows:

Class

"That is to say, that upon good soil the cost of the capital and labour required to obtain bushels of grain amounted to only to bushels, but in order to raise bushels of grain upon poor soil (X_b) to bushels must be expended. In the first, out of bushels to are left over for the landowner as rent, in the last only to bushels."

This principle is, according to you, the most important cause of the increase of rent.

"Society," you say, "has hitherto needed million bushels of grain for its maintenance; society has, however, by the blessing of God and the skill of the physician, increased by , souls. It

requires, therefore, the addition of another million bushels of grain to those million. This new million bushels must be raised upon poorer soil, or with a larger outlay of capital, than those million; they cost, therefore, a proportionately greater amount of capital and labour. Those cost thlr. a bushel, these cost thlr. sgr. Society would assuredly be glad to pay this increase of , silbergroschen, equal to , thlr. But the landowner says, 'No! not only these last , bushels, which alone cost more, shall have this higher price, society shall pay as high for the old million bushels; instead of , thlr., it shall give us / million thlr. additional'; and society obediently fulfils the command."

This law," you go on to say, "is not nullified progress made in husbandry and by free trade in grain." This, you say, is demonstrated by experience. "These two facts are well known: that the price of grain is constantly, even if slowly, rising, and that these prices, in countries of a pretty equal degree of fertility, are highest where the population is densest. For instance, the average price of rye in Brunswick for fifty-year periods was as follows:

markgroschen.

""

"In Brussels the averages for wheat were:

Brabant sols.

"The experience of all countries furnishes the same result. The sudden jump in the sixteenth century, it is true, is explained by the decline of the value of silver consequent on the discovery of America; but the steady increase is a proof that prices, and therefore rent, increased with the increase of population, in spite of all the improvements in agriculture. The relation in which the average price of rye in Prussia, from the year to the year , stands to the population in the separate provinces is as follows:

Province

Price of Rye

Population to the
square mile in

Prussia

sgr

souls

Posen

"

"

Brandenburg and Pomerania

"

"

"

Saxony

"

"

"

Silesia

"

"

"

Westphalia

"

"

"

Rhine Province

"

"

"

(Compare Rau's Political Economy, page .)

"In Wurtemburg we have the following relations:

District

Average Rent

of an Acre.

Population to

the square mile.

Danube

fl

souls

Jaxt

"

"

Black Forest

"

"

"

Neckar

"

"

"

"We see here that prices keep almost exact pace with density of population, and the slight deviations in the first table may be readily accounted for by the greater productivity of Silesia and the greater difficulty it has, as compared with Saxony, in finding a market. If it were possible to increase productivity in husbandry in like proportion with the increase in population, why does not this increase take place on the Rhine, where the price more than half again as high certainly strongly incites and urges the agriculturist to it?"

"It is evident," you continue, "that the improvements in agriculture have at all events contributed to check the excessive rise of prices and thus of rent; but it is also evident that they are not able fully to counteract the law; and we may look forward to a time when this law will be far more

powerfully manifested, especially in Prussia, namely, when the separations and the peasantry regulations will have been consummated, whereby the chief obstacle to agricultural productivity and industry will have been removed, but at the same time this great source of increase of productivity will have been exhausted."

In this law which governs rent, and accordingly in rent itself, as it is actually created and increased, you see the cause of the growing impoverishment of society. You argue: since population is constantly increasing, not, indeed, as Malthus holds, in proportion to the food supply, but rather, on the contrary, in proportion to the scarcity of that supply and the wretchedness of the population; and since, moreover, wages do not, as Ricardo holds, rise in equal proportion with the rise in rent; the share of the three classes the labourer, the capitalist, and the landowner in the product gets shifted by the rise in rent, in spite of the increased productivity in all branches of industry; the shares of the first two classes are diminished in favour of the third. Rent is constantly rising in kind and in money, while wages and interest, reckoned by raw materials, are constantly falling. While genius and application augment productivity in all branches of industry, while all classes should enjoy a flow of prosperity, it is the landowner who interposes an ever-growing dam to this stream of happiness. It is natural that it is not the labourer only, but the capitalist also, who suffers by this. The great capitalist, however, with his large income, does not feel this; the small artisan and the labourer, on the other hand, live a life in which the main part of their income is spent on food. The small artisan spends three fourths of his yearly income for potatoes, bread, butter, oil, and fuel, and only a quarter for clothing, dwelling, and little, simple, social pleasures. This disproportion is still greater in the case of the labourer. He expends seven-eighths of his wages upon food and fuel. What does it avail this class, which comprises seven-eighths of the nation, that the price of calico, cloths, sugar and coffee, knives and scissors is lowered, while that of potatoes, grain, wood, oil, leather is constantly rising? The little that is gained in the purchase of clothing is far from counterbalancing the increased rate of food products; their only recourse is to dress worse than before, live in worse dwellings, and eat less and worse food. Hence the misery of these poor mechanics and of the labourers.

"This is the explanation," you conclude, "of one of the weightiest and most far-reaching phenomena of present society. Notwithstanding that the nation has been freed from its shackles of slavery and hereditary subjection, the labouring classes of the population are materially still for the most part in the old depressed condition. They have been given the right to freedom, but the means wherewith to enjoy this freedom the landlord reserves now, as he did before, to himself, and this

supremacy of the landlord is the more dreadful, as it is based upon the apparently unalterable laws of nature and of trade.

"So long as human society cannot abolish the inequalities in the fertility and location of land, the increase of population, and the payment of like prices for like products, so long will it have to suffer the rent of the landowner; so long will the greater part of the fruit of labour have to be delivered over into the hands of a strange master, who, with his hands folded in idleness, permits the labourer to make use of kind Nature's productive forces. But not satisfied with this, every increase in population will only serve to multiply the landowner's share of food products, wood, metals, rent of dwellings, all without his expending any labour. The more children the poor have, the greater the demand of a growing population for work, the smaller will be the share left over for the work of the hungering labourer, and the greater the share that falls into the landowner's pocket; and all this will happen upon the ground of those inexorable laws of nature and of trade, which, like blind Fate, pour riches where they already abound, and rob poverty already suffering from lack of the necessities of life. Ireland offers an awful instance of this increase of rent, one that must with mathematical certainty be developed in every country having a rapidly growing population, unless, as in England, it is tempered by a great expansion of manufacturing industries. It is rent alone which is the source of the dreadful destitution of Ireland, not the splitting up of the land. For give the farmer the rent he pays, often amounting to £ for an acre of potato land, and he will be able to return to a decent mode of life, and thus also to restrain the excessive growth of population; for it is only where man in his wretchedness sinks to the level of a brute that this excess of population springs up a grim and awful contrast of misery and fertility.

"Take, on the other hand, the United States of North America. Its prosperity, its strength, lies simply and alone in the fact that rents do not as yet exist in the greater part of the Union, and are, in the remaining portions, very low. The rate of interest and the rate of wages are both, as is well known, very high in America; the usual rate of interest is from eight to twelve per cent.; the daily wages of a labourer, one dollar and above. But what would this high rate of interest and of wages avail if rents stood in the proportion in which they do in Western Germany? It is well known that wages and the rate of profit are the factors which determine the price of all goods, including the products of the soil; these last because those produced upon the poorest soil set the price, and yet yield no rent. Now, when interest and wages are high, the price of all products is high also; the labourer gains nothing in consequence; his wages are three times as high, but so also are bread, cloth, the rent of his dwelling, light, and wood three times as dear, and thus he can procure no more

indulgences for himself than before. This result would be literally verified in America were the rents the same as in Germany. But the superabundance of fertile soil relatively to the present population, together with their excellent and cheap means of transportation, enable them to raise sixteen bushels on an acre, whereas, with the same amount of capital and labour applied to the last grade of land, we should, here in Germany, produce perhaps two bushels. Though the rate of interest and of wages be, therefore, three times as great as in Germany, their returns from the soil are eight times as great, and consequently the price of corn three-eighths of the price in Germany. This holds good, of course, of all products of the earth, as well as of corn; that is why meat, leather, and all raw materials are also only half as dear as in Germany. Now, since in such products as cloth and shoes a great part of the value consists in the raw material, it follows that these products, too, in spite of the high wages and interest, can be manufactured lower than in Germany. Those goods alone form an exception where the work required to transform the raw material is very great articles of luxury, and those demanding skill, which, therefore, are lower in Germany than in America.

"Thus a labourer in North America who does not require luxuries is six times as well off as one in Germany, solely because rent is either low or does not as yet exist at all. His wages are three times as great and the prices of all his necessaries only half as high as in Germany. He can eat more meat every day, drink more beer, and, if he chooses, need not work as much as does a very well-to-do mechanic and citizen with us.

"That this fortunate condition of the population of North America is based solely upon the fact that they are either totally exempt from rent or that the rents are very low, can never be too deeply impressed upon the mind or too often repeated. All other grounds upon which it is customary to account for it are either deceptive, or merely skim the surface of the reality, or turn upon hazy notions, such as 'virgin soil,' 'a rising nation,' which are but a cloak to ignorance.

"Ireland and North America: these are the antipodes in the effects of rent. There, wretchedness and men lowered to the state of brutes; here, prosperity, activity, stirring, happy life everywhere.

"Germany's position is between the two; but towards which one is it tending? Towards the conditions prevailing in Ireland, or towards those in America? To one who understands the state of society the answer cannot long remain doubtful. The tendency is a downward one, towards the misery of Ireland. It is beyond doubt that in Germany, too, and particularly in Prussia, rents are regularly rising; all the miseries, therefore, attendant upon an excessive increase in rent the future,

though it may be only a distant one, holds in store for our country also, should the present conditions continue."

While in this first treatise you trace pauperism back to this one cause the presumed law of rent in the second you find the explanation of gluts in a mass of circumstances, so to say in the whole character of present-day traffic. I shall give a faithful abstract of this theory also.

You put as the brunt of your argument: "that the greatest part of the social evils spring not from deficient production, but from a deficient market for products; that the more a country is able to produce, the more means it possesses of satisfying all its needs, the greater is the danger it incurs of being exposed to misery and want."

This question of a market affects the capitalist as well as the merchant, the agriculturist as well as the mechanic; even "the much-vexed question of the right to work finally resolves itself into a question of how to find a market."

"We see" - you conclude therefore - "that the social problem is almost identical with the problem of a market. The evils of that so much abused competition even disappear with the certainty of a market; its good features alone would remain; the emulation to provide good and cheap wares; but the life-and-death struggle which is caused solely by the want of a market will disappear."

You then proceed to give Say's explanation of a market, which may be expressed in these words: Products are bought only with products - production, therefore, constitutes its own market - and where on one side there appears to be an overproduction, there is, on the other, but too little. You show how these propositions, universal as their truth may be, "do not exhaust the actual facts," and add:

"There are still other laws hidden in trade which prevent the clear working of those propositions, and it is by their discovery alone that the present glut in the markets can be explained; and by this discovery, too, perhaps, a means may be found to obviate this great evil. We believe that there are three circumstances in the present system of society which cause the contradictions between Say's indubitable law and the actual state of things.

"These circumstances are: () the too unequal distribution of products among those who have

contributed to their creation; () the difficulties, either constant and enduring, or changing and unequal, which Nature interposes in the production of raw materials; () the inadequacy and defectiveness of the present system of trade, that is, of the agency which acts as a medium between production and consumption."

A closer examination of these circumstances forms the principal matter of this, your second treatise.

"The first circumstance" - to use your own words - may be more concisely expressed by saying "that wages are too low, that from this cause arises stagnation in trade. To one who understands that the two factors which alone regulate the price of goods are wages and rate of profit, this proposition may appear strange; if wages are low, so also is the price of goods low; if, again, the former are high, the latter, too, will be high. Wages and prices, then, are in a direct proportion and compensate each other. The only reason that England abolished its duty on corn, as well as on meat and other articles of food, was in order to lower the working-man's wages, and thus enable the manufacturer to drive out all other competitors in the markets of the world by still cheaper goods. This view is correct, however, only in part, and does not touch upon the proportion, which here is the only thing to be considered, the proportion in which production is divided between capital and labour. The too unequal distribution between these two is the first and weightiest reason why Say's law is not actually realized; why, in spite of production in every branch, all the markets suffer from over-supply. This assertion is so important that it demands an exact proof. Let us assume, to simplify the proof, that the inhabitants of a certain place supply all their own wants by their own production; that this production consists of three kinds only: one supplies the clothing; the second, food, light, and fuel; and the third, dwellings, furniture, and implements. In each one of these departments of production there is an entrepreneur who furnishes the capital and the raw material, and workmen who do the mechanical part of the work. The result in each one of these departments is that the workman receives as his wages one-half of the yearly products, and that the entrepreneur gets the other Half as interest on his capital and profit on his undertaking.

"This place, then, consists of inhabitants, who themselves produce all their necessaries; the one who undertakes to provide the clothing for these inhabitants is very able to do so with his body of workmen; and so can he who is to furnish food, light, and fuel very well succeed, with his labourers, in obtaining the requisite food and materials for all the people from the cultivation of the soil; the same is true of the one who undertakes to provide dwellings and

implements; he can, with his workmen, furnish the repairs, the new constructions, as well as the furniture, housekeeping utensils, and all the implements needed for dwelling and housekeeping purposes for the inhabitants. This locality, then, possesses all the conditions requisite to secure a general well-being for all its inhabitants. All, accordingly, start out fresh and full of courage to their work. But after a few days the matter appears in quite a different aspect; those workmen have only the very scantiest clothing, food, and dwelling-places, and those three entrepreneurs have their warehouses filled with clothes and raw materials, and houses standing vacant; they complain of the lack of a market, and the workmen, on the contrary, of their inability to satisfy their wants, just as is the case in actual life to-day. How does this happen in a place where the forces and means of production are so justly employed and apportioned that, taking all the inhabitants and their wants into consideration, nothing could be better? We see that in this place the trouble does not lie, as Say and Rau hold, in the fact that too much is produced in one branch of industry and too little in another, or that there is a deficiency in the aggregate means of production. No. The means are just so great, their apportionment to the different industries just so arranged, that all of the inhabitants could procure for themselves good and ample clothing and nourishment, and good and ample dwellings. That, in spite of all, this does not take place, that there is an obstruction, is due simply and solely to the way the products are divided; the distribution is not an equal one among all, for the entrepreneurs retain as interest and profit half for themselves and give only half, to the workmen. It is clear that the man engaged in working on clothes, therefore, can get in exchange for half of his productions only half of the products required for nourishment, dwelling, and so on, and it is clear that the entrepreneurs cannot get rid of the other half, because none of the workmen have any products left to exchange with him. The entrepreneurs are lost with their abundance, the workmen with their hunger and their nakedness.

"The unequal distribution which is the cause of this condition of simultaneous superfluity and misery, is but another name for wages and profit.

"The misery of this village, then, is caused solely by the fact that the entrepreneur does not share equally with his workmen; that is, that he appropriates a part of the products beforehand before the distribution takes place. If he divided equally, without such deduction, every man engaged in making clothes would be able to obtain his own clothing with one-third of his product, exchange his second third for food, fuel, and light, and, using his remaining third as rent, procure for himself a healthy and comfortable dwelling. The workmen in the other two branches of production would be in the same position, and all the inhabitants of the village comfortable and happy; they would

be plentifully nourished and clothed, and have good dwellings, without having to work one moment longer than where the entrepreneur retains half as his profit. We have in this village a mathematical demonstration that Say's law does not suffice; that the marketing of products through products alone cannot be secured; that there enters, rather, another element, which is concerned with the distribution of products among those who have contributed to create them."

You find this fundamental example applicable to the great commercial intercourse of the real world, because the circumstances that "instead of three kinds of production there are a hundred and more in actual society"; that "the proportion in which the entrepreneurs share with the workmen is not always a half, but, it may be, a third or a fourth"; that "the entrepreneurs do not own a capital with which they conduct business"; that "in reality production in the various branches is not so abundant that all members could, with an equal division, obtain ample satisfaction for their wants"; that "wages and profit are paid not in kind, but in money" all these circumstances would not in any essential particular alter the force of that example.

"There are, however," you continue, "two points of difference between our village and the real world, which may exert greater influence than those hitherto mentioned; these are luxury and foreign trade, which, in connection with this question, stand in close relation to each other.

"In our fictitious locality the entrepreneurs found their stock accumulating because they could not themselves make use of the entire half of the total production of clothing, food, dwellings, and household materials, which fell to their share as profit, and because the workmen had not the means to purchase it of them. Now, it may be said that this surplus would at once disappear if half of the workmen, instead of making such ordinary goods, would manufacture articles of luxury, which require more capital and labour; those workmen would, in consequence, produce no more goods than the entrepreneurs can consume. It is in the nature of luxuries that they enable the consumer to utilize more of the producing power of capital and labour than is possible in the case of ordinary goods.

"Should the three entrepreneurs agree to these propositions the state of things would be as follows: instead of workmen there would be but employed in making clothing; these would still be able to manufacture as much clothing as the entire population used before; it is the surplus of clothing only which would be eliminated by taking away of the men from the work on clothing a surplus which the entrepreneurs had hitherto retained as profit, and which accumulated

because they could not consume the profit in this shape themselves. The entrepreneur, consequently, decides to employ these and the same amount of capital with which these men had worked before upon the manufacture of articles of luxury. He employs them, for instance, in making fine embroidery, elegant laces, costly shawls, and handsome carriages. Conducting his enterprise in this manner the entrepreneur thus obtains, instead of a surplus of ordinary clothes, just the quantity of rich clothing, cloths, carriages, and so on, that the three entrepreneurs of the place can conveniently make use of themselves. The wages which he is to pay these workmen, engaged in manufacturing luxuries, he gets from the clothing which the other workmen are obliged now, as before, to deliver up to him.

"Should the second and third entrepreneur proceed in a like manner, the workmen would continue to live in the same penury as before; the three entrepreneurs, however, would, in consequence of having luxuries produced instead of limiting themselves to the manufacture of ordinary goods, be relieved of the embarrassment of having to live in an inferior style while masses of unsaleable goods lay heaped up around them; they would themselves be able to consume the products which the men working on articles of luxury now produce, and thus avoid altogether the piling up of unsaleable wares."

Now we find, of course, luxury existing on a great scale in real life also; yet, you ask with good reason, Why, in spite of the most refined luxury, is there a glut of all kinds of products, common and expensive alike?

"The only answer possible is that this glut of goods in the real world is due solely to the fact that there is too little luxury, or, in other words, that as yet too little is consumed by the capitalists; that is, by those who have the means of consumption"

This assertion, which you yourself acknowledge is a glaring contradiction of the now prevailing views of political economy, according to which saving is the primary condition of the welfare of nations, you proceed to prove in the following manner. You revert to that fundamental example in which you showed that the luxury of the three entrepreneurs obviated over - production, and continue:

"Now let us suppose a case, one commended in political economy as preferable, a case of productive consumption. In this case the entrepreneurs say: We do not wish to consume our income

down to the last penny in luxury and show; we shall use it again in productive investments. What does that mean? It means nothing but the founding of new productive enterprises of all kinds, by means of which commodities will again be obtained; the sale of these commodities is to furnish the interest on the unconsumed capital of the three entrepreneurs which they have saved and invested. The three entrepreneurs determine, accordingly, to consume the production of workmen only; that is, to materially retrench their luxuries, and to employ the labour-power of the remaining men, and the capital they had used, in the founding of new productive enterprises. But now the question arises, In what departments of industry should this capital be invested? The three entrepreneurs have the choice only of starting either manufactories of ordinary goods, or manufactories of luxuries. They choose at first the former. The first year is devoted to setting up the new factories; constructing workshops for tailors, shoemakers, and so forth; preparing the new ground for grain and raw products; establishing new quarries for building houses; constructing new machines for the manufacture of household implements and utensils. The second year, the arrangements being completed, the men are employed in producing the new commodities. But the three entrepreneurs soon notice with dismay that they are confronted with the same difficulty as in the first instance; for there is no one who could purchase their stock of them. The workmen, in consequence of their scant pay, are only able to buy the products of the workmen who have continued in their old industries; that which the additional men have now produced, much as they would like to consume it, much as they may feel the need for it, is beyond their reach; they have no means to buy it. Neither would the three entrepreneurs buy it of each other, for they cannot consume these ordinary goods themselves.

"In angry mood the three entrepreneurs now turn their productive consumption, their investment of new capital, in the other direction. No places are fitted up for the manufacture of ordinary goods, only those for the manufacture of luxuries. All the arrangements and appliances are completed by the first year; the second, they proceed to the work. At the end of this year the entrepreneurs are astonished to see that they have by this means only reverted to the second case; for there is no one to purchase these luxuries from them, unless they should buy them of each other; and this they do not wish to do because they desire to save and not to consume, and the workmen suffice to secure them moderate comfort. Thus we see that in the simple conditions of this place it is by no means possible for this so-called productive consumption, of which political economists make so much, to ameliorate the condition of society, to promote its progress. The population is always confronted with this dilemma: The three entrepreneurs must either expend their income to the last penny in comforts and luxuries of every description, in which case all the workmen will at

least be able to make a living, even though a miserable one, or if they curtail their luxuries and determine to save, they find no market, the goods accumulate, and part of the workmen will have no work and therefore no means of subsistence."

It is the same, you maintain, in real life. "It is because capitalists consume too little unproductively and too much productively," that in spite of the prevalence of luxury we still in actual life have deficient markets, accumulation of goods, and lack of opportunity for labour. The enormous accumulation of capital in recent times is, according to you, the cause of these evils. The real world you hold finds itself in the same dilemma as the village in our oft-quoted example.

"The accumulation of capital does not, as is well known, consist in the mere storing up of goods, or in the heaping up of quantities of money and bullion to lie unused in the owner's cellar; whoever wishes to save does so by investing his savings either himself or through others profitably as capital, and thus deriving an income from them. Such income is only possible if this capital is employed in such new enterprises as are capable of yielding the required interest. One man builds a ship, another builds a barn, the third cultivates a barren heath with his savings, the fourth gets himself a new spinning-jenny, the fifth buys more leather and engages more journeymen, in order to extend his shoemaker's trade and so on. Only in thus applying it will the capital that has been saved bear interest, which is the end and aim of all saving.

"Now, in real life, as well as in our imagined community, even before this new accumulation of capital, seven-eighths of the inhabitants that is, all those who live by the products of their labour, the mechanic who works in a small way, the small landed proprietor were unable to buy more than the barest necessities, the things they had been consuming all along; and the remaining eighth, although able, had not the desire to buy more, because their overruling tendency is to save.

"What, then, is to become of those new commodities which are produced by the new capital invested in the form of ships, machinery, improvement of land, and which serve to furnish the interest? If they are ordinary goods the well-to-do (the last one-eighth) do not wish them, and the poor the first seven-eighths cannot buy them, for they do not earn any more than before; the former amount of products amply sufficed to furnish what they could afford to purchase. If, on the contrary, they are luxuries, the poor, naturally, are still less able to buy them; the rich, of course, could do so, but on account of the predominant tendency to save before mentioned, they will not. It is then quite inevitable that this predominant tendency of modern times, to save, must produce gluts in the

markets, and as a consequence augment want in the labouring class.

"The condition of all manufacturing countries is the most convincing proof of this; all the warehouses are full, everybody is intently, eagerly seeking a market, and the majority want to save, that is, to increase the amount of commodities still more, and by that means augment their fortune and their income."

You believe that the objections of political economy to this view spring from delusion and short-sightedness. In the first place it overlooks the fact that this amassing of goods certainly does not at once follow the new accumulation of capital. The fitting up of places for business, the transformation of money-capital into really productive capital, the consequently increasing demands at first manifested for the various products and also for work, blind the eyes of political economy.

"As soon, however, as the machines are set in motion, as soon as the new products are sent to the markets, the occupation of the men engaged in fitting out the enterprises ceases, and the capitalist is now anxious to dispose of his wares; but in vain does he look around for a purchaser. The number and the circumstances of the consumers have remained totally unchanged; the former arrangements for producing commodities were adequate to supply their wants, and no one is able to buy the new increase."

According to your opinion, the political economists are right only so far as regards the beginnings of the new application of capital. In order that those enterprises should secure the working-men permanent employment, a market must in addition be found for the increased quantity of goods; but with the system of wages hitherto prevailing "the labourers have no means with which to purchase." We must, of course, you say, distinguish between the two directions taken by accumulations of capital. Part is applied to new inventions. New applications of capital of this kind indisputably prove most beneficial to society as a whole, for they yield cheaper and better wares, the labourer can better satisfy his wants "with unchanged money-wages"; but in exchange value he cannot consume any more than before; and his gain in the enhanced quality and usefulness of his commodities does not lessen the glut in the markets, because the increased productiveness has augmented the quantity in a like proportion. But even this species of application of capital depresses wages because it takes away work from the labourer; and even should this be the case only in the beginning of the undertaking, Proudhon is right when he says that, as inventions never cease, this

beginning never ends.

"But," you add, "the second sort of new application of capital consists in the multiplication of enterprises in the old lines; consequently new artisans engage in business, new factories are set up, new ships built, the flocks of sheep increased, and so on. It is clear that this second sort of capital - accumulation must necessarily increase the piling up of stock, the glut in the market. For it does not, as has been shown, have the effect of raising wages; more goods, merely of the old familiar kinds are produced at the old rates, and no one can or no one wishes to buy them, for reasons so often stated."

You therefore regard the enormous accumulations of capital in recent times as advantageous only to society as a whole, not to the individual. For when the calm observer looks upon those nations so rich in capital, he sees with astonishment on turning his attention to the individual, who hitherto has appeared to him only as a part of a great whole, that in spite of these enormous accumulations of capital, in spite of the countless inventions for the guidance and mastery of the forces of nature and of man, but a small part of the resulting advantages are enjoyed by all branches of society; that the greater part of these advantages accrue to the benefit of a chosen class only, and that, owing to the hitherto prevailing system of wages and profit, and to the tendency to save, these fortunate classes themselves occupy a paradoxical position which allows them no rest. Selfishness impels them to take from the labourer in the shape of interest on capital and entrepreneurs profit, half of the product and his ability to consume; and from selfishness again they themselves refrain from consuming, while with a blind eagerness they continue to set up new establishments of production to produce things that no one can buy. Seated in the midst of all the means of enjoyment, they can neither make up their minds to let the labourers standing around them reap the benefits, nor to make use of them themselves. Like another Sisyphus, they torment themselves with an insoluble contradiction a desire to sell, after they have deprived the buyer of the means wherewith to buy. Present-day society may, indeed, be well compared to a band of travellers in the desert. Suffering with thirst, they find a spring which would suffice to refresh and strengthen them all; but a small number constitute themselves masters of the spring; they grudge giving the majority more than a few drops to quench their thirst; they themselves take long draughts, but the stream flows faster than they are able to drink, and so from satiety and want of goodwill they let half of the gushing stream waste itself in the sand.

Neither can an increase of population, according to you, prevent these results caused by the

accumulation of capital. If it be in proportion to the latter, it produces no change in the hitherto existing glut; if the accumulation of capital is in the lead, the glut becomes still greater; if, again, population increases at the greater rate, the glut would not cease, only the misery of the poor would be increased, because the additional number of labourers would in that case find no employment on account of lack of capital; the glut remains the same, while the starvation of these new labourers is added besides.

Nor does foreign trade, in your opinion, create any change in this disconsolate state of things; for the essence of this trade is either "to increase the variety of goods in the home market" or to increase productivity. "Either, then," you conclude, "these goods which foreign trade through its factories offers the nation for sale are common, in which case the capitalist does not wish to buy them, and the labourer cannot do so because he has not the means, or they are luxuries, in which case the labourer is, naturally, still less able to buy them, and the capitalist, owing to his endeavour to save, does not want them."

You believe that by the foregoing arguments you have set forth the first of those three circumstances to which you charge the existence of gluts, namely, the too unequal distribution of products among those who have contributed to create them. You say repeatedly that society cannot consume the fruits of its enormous masses of capital, because the labourer's share of the product is too small. I have had to follow you pretty fully in this portion of your treatise, partly in order to give a just idea of your peculiar conception of the nature and effects of capital, partly because I do not agree with you in a single one of the grounds upon which you derive gluts from the disproportionate division of products. Your views upon the other two circumstances I shall be able to extract more briefly.

"Agriculture differs essentially," you say, "from all other productive industries in two points: in the very unequal crops, varying as they do with the fruitfulness of the year, though the amount of capital and labour expended remain the same, and in the ever-increasing difficulty, in the populous countries of Europe, of augmenting the average quantity of the products of the soil"

The first peculiarity has, according to you, only an indirect effect upon the markets. From the fluctuations in the market price of food products it results that the farmer class receives now so many millions more and again just so many millions less. Though, therefore, consumption "remains, on the whole, the same in value, it does not in kind. But with this change in the kind of consumption

a change must also be made in the kinds of production, and the necessary consequence is that all productive industries are affected, and now flourish, now languish, according to the varying price of grain."

But the second peculiarity of agriculture has, according to you, a direct effect upon the problem of markets.

"In the industrial countries of Europe all the good or well-situated land has," you assert, "long since been brought under cultivation, and all the improvements have been effected which bear promise of yielding revenue; that is, the current rate of interest on the outlay. Credit, which, through the institution of the mortgage, is pre-eminently at the landowner's command, the long-continued peace, and the abundance of capital before the era of railroad-building, necessarily led to this result. Excepting, then, unfortunate individual cases, individual neglected estates, agriculture has for the last twenty years been in such a condition that new investments of capital, whether they be employed in opening up new soil or in improving the old, no longer yield the current rate of interest, at the prices which agricultural products now command. Only when the population increases and the consequent demand makes the increase in prices a permanent one will a new application of capital be made possible."

But the increase of population, you say, is slow, its effect is markedly noticeable only after the lapse of decades, while other circumstances may convert the rise of prices into a fall. Thus the repeal of the English corn laws lowered the price of grain in Prussia also for a considerable time. Prussia lost, thereby, a great deal on its export trade to England. With the former sliding scale of duties those countries alone which lay close to England could engage in the business of exporting grain to that country this closeness enabling them to take rapid advantage of the fluctuations in the duty, which often lasted only a few weeks. Since the imposition of a fixed duty of one shilling (equal to sgr.) per quarter (equal to / Berlin bushels) all countries, even the most remote, are able to carry on a regular traffic in grain with England; and it is well known what immense quantities of flour North America has since then been sending there. Prussia will never again, in spite of an almost nominal duty, reach its former height of grain exports to England, and, therefore, until this former English consumption is made up by an increased population at home the price in Prussia must fall.

The reason, you believe, that during longer or shorter periods of time the greatest of all industries

agriculture does not permit of any new investments of capital is because it does not yield the current rate of interest; "the necessary consequence, therefore, is that the newly-saved capital, especially that amassed in agriculture, is applied almost exclusively to commerce, manufactures, and the various trades; and thus the gluts, arising from causes above explained, are still further increased." Another injurious effect which this presumed increasing agricultural unproductiveness is supposed to have upon the markets is that while on the one hand it restricts the application of capital to husbandry, on the other, through the rise in rent which it entails, it lessens the labourer's and artisan's ability to purchase.

The third circumstance, finally, which you mention as the cause of gluts, consists in the nature of modern commerce and the part that money plays in it.

Hitherto traffic has been considered without this intermediate factor. Things, however, you say, are not bought with products, but with money.

"The producing of anything engenders a desire to buy; this is undoubtedly true, but the desire is of no avail if the power to fulfil it is lacking; and it is only money that gives this power; that is, one's own productions must be sold converted into money. Money has, therefore, assumed for the producer a significance far above its exchange value. The manufacturing and mercantile classes have given the strongest expression to this in their conception of bankruptcy. The goods which a manufacturer has in his warerooms may by far exceed in value the amount of his debts; a banker may have in his desk, against his liabilities, double their amount in notes and public securities; both, nevertheless, are bankrupts in the eyes of the mercantile world if they cannot pay their notes in cash the day they fall due.

"Money is the commodity that can buy all others; no other commodity can do this. The capacity to consume, the ability to buy, is, therefore, only half attained by the possession of products; the other equally essential condition is that these products be first sold. This second condition offers far more difficulties, these times, than the first, and it is this point that Say has overlooked.

"In a society where sales could be readily effected, where the present disproportion of working-men's wages did not exist, the difficulties in the way of the second condition would, of course, disappear.

"But in a society like that of our modern states, where the consumption of products is already checked by the interest demanded for capital, by rent and the consequent restriction of wages, Say's idea of forcing a market and consumption by an increase of products is an entirely perverted one. Every such increase must augment the pressure for selling, which is the second before-mentioned condition, and thereby magnify the difficulty of selling, of converting products into money.

"Money, therefore, has in our time become the watchword of every manufacturer, every producer, every merchant. In times and in countries where sales are effected with ease and regularity money does not possess a predominating value, and serves merely to facilitate exchange; in times, however, when it is difficult to find a market, the value and effective power of money are raised to an abnormal height, which in its turn exerts an injurious effect upon the markets. The manufacturer cannot with his finished goods pay his workmen or those who supply him with raw material, nor pay for repairs on his machines and buildings; in modern society he can use money only for these purposes; this money he must have at a fixed time; in no case may the money be lacking beyond that period if he is to keep his business free from ruinous interruptions and himself from bankruptcy. But the sale of his goods, by which means he wants to obtain the money, does not rest with him; events of the most various nature may intervene to check this sale. Yet the sale must be effected by a certain time in order that the money due at that time should be on hand, and thus this pressure creates that competition, that rush after buyers and a market which in the end serves only to ruin even the regular channels of sale.

"To this danger," you go on to say, "which is primarily caused by the wild struggle for a market of the great and small manufacturers and merchants is added another, the enormous increase of credit to which modern trade has been driven. It is true that in olden times, too, the manufacturer and the wholesale merchant sold to the retail dealer on credit, upon drafts which fell due at the next fair (Messe), but his capital was so large that he could keep these drafts in his portfolio until the day they fell due. In the old times it was considered a disgrace not to do so. Nowadays no manufacturer, no merchant, retains his drafts in that manner; he sends them, immediately after acceptance, to the bank to be discounted; that is, he sells these drafts at once, and is thus naturally able to carry on an equally large business with much smaller capital than in the old times. Now the whole system of manufactures and commerce being so arranged that the minimum of capital possible to carry it on is used, it cannot stand even the slightest hitch if the machinery is to be kept going. In olden times capital was larger, and a portion of it remained unused, failure to pay could be better and longer borne; now this is impossible. Out of one hundred business houses ninety-nine

cannot now subsist if their drafts are not paid and their products sold by a certain day. The modern age has by most ingenious devices, such as the discounting of notes, the full development of the banking business, achieved for trade something like what it has done for manufactures by the introduction of machines; trade, the exchange of goods, can in consequence be carried on with much less capital than formerly, but this restriction to what is absolutely necessary, though it has contributed essentially to the increase of trade, has at the same time put it into a feverish condition, into a state of tension, such that any disturbance, even a very slight one, shatters the whole structure!"

To recapitulate in brief, your view of the causes of pauperism and gluts is as follows:

As regards pauperism, agriculture, which furnishes material for all industries and nourishment for the human stomach, is always growing more unproductive; it requires, according to you, always more labour and capital to satisfy the increasing wants of a growing population. Hence the constant rise in the price of the necessaries of life; hence also a rise in rent, even of land that is worked with no more labour and capital than before; hence constant diminution of the capitalists' and labourers' share; hence pauperism among all those classes of people that spend the greatest part of their income upon the necessities of life.

As regards commercial crises they cannot, in your estimation, be traced to an equally simple cause. They are rather the result of three "circumstances" acting together, the first of which consists in the proportion in which products are divided between capitalists and labourers; the second, in the inherent peculiarities of husbandry; and the third, in the present system of money and credit transactions. The ratio of division between capitalists and labourers allows the first too much and the second too little. To the capitalists' excessive share is added their exaggerated bent for saving. Thus capital accumulates and production increases without there being a sufficient number of purchasers for the products, for the capitalists do not wish to consume more and the workmen are not able to do so. The second circumstance, the peculiarity of husbandry, aggravates this first cause of a congested market. Agriculture, by its frequent changes - changes beyond the control of man of good and bad harvests, fluctuates between high and low prices, and is thus always disturbing the regularity of the markets, the rural population having now much and now little means at their disposal. The increasing unproductivity of the soil exerts a still more direct effect upon gluts. For while, on the one hand, those classes whose income is expended chiefly upon the necessities of life, are constantly growing less able to buy manufactured products, on the other, the investment of

capital in agriculture is rendered more difficult, and what is saved in its pursuit is likewise diverted into manufacturing channels. As, finally, in the third place, most enterprises are conducted upon credit, and therefore need money at a "fixed time," there arises a general pressure to sell, which adds another factor to the difficulty of finding a market.

Facts and laws of a nature opposite to what you think you have discovered in history, in statistics, in political economy, and in agriculture, have led me, my honoured friend, to adopt an almost opposite view of the cause of the economic distresses of the time.

I, for my part, find that the Ricardian theory of rent is fundamentally false, and very far from offering an explanation of the social significance of rent. Altogether, I find that all the theories hitherto advanced have failed to make clear the social significance either of rent or of profit, or even of wages. I find that science has as yet shed but little light upon the three branches of national income in their relation as shares of the product; also that the peculiar effects of land and capital ownership upon "production and distribution" are as good as ignored. I find also that these laws of the production and distribution of the national product, as influenced by the ownership of land and capital, must be grasped in their connection, in order to obtain access to the cause of commercial crises and of pauperism.

In opposition to your theory, therefore, and to the theories of others, I maintain one which, I assert, is but the consistent sequel of the proposition introduced into the science by Smith and placed upon a still deeper foundation by the school of Ricardo, the proposition that all commodities economically considered must be regarded solely as the product of labour, as costing nothing but labour a proposition of which already Kraus said that it signifies for social science what the unit introduced by Galileo does for velocity in physics.

According to this theory, pauperism and commercial crises spring from one and the same cause, it is one and the same circumstance of our present economic system which is answerable for these, the two greatest obstacles to the uniform and uninterrupted progress of society. This circumstance is that when the distribution of the national product is left to itself, certain circumstances connected with the development of society produce this effect: that with increasing productiveness, of the labour of society, the wages of the labouring classes become an ever smaller portion of the national product.

I wish you to understand me clearly. I do not speak of the quantity of wages, of the amount of bread, meat, stuff which those wages procure the labourer, but of his relative share of the product. If, for instance, , labourers produced million bushels of grain years ago, but today produce million bushels, and if each labourer should nevertheless receive to-day, as he did years ago, only bushels as wages, the wages of labour would remain the same in quantity; but as quota, as relative share of the product, they would sink to half of what they were before. They would sink still lower if the quantity, too, should be diminished, say, to bushels, and the quota of product would sink even though the quantity should rise to from to bushels. As share of the product, they would only then not fall, but be maintained, if in quantity they were increased in direct proportion with the increase of productiveness if they increased from to bushels; because then only would they, as well after as before the increase in productiveness, amount to half of the gross product. I consider it Ricardo's greatest merit to have been the first to advance this conception of the relative wages of labour, though, unfortunately, neither his friends nor his opponents knew what to do with it, and Ricardo himself made a perverted use of it; so absorbed was he in his theory of rent, and in the contemplation of the increasing unproductiveness of land, that he even thought that wages as quota of product were constantly increasing.

You will grant, my honoured friend, that if it were indeed possible to establish the circumstance that wages to-day are becoming an always smaller share of product, its connection with pauperism and commercial crises would be manifest. For it would appear clear that thereby the labouring classes are excluded from all increase of the national wealth, and, in opposition to the progressively growing income of the other classes, at best only maintain their former income, which, in the present legal and political status of the labouring classes, must, upon economic as well as social grounds, bear pauperism in its train. It would be equally clear that on account of that circumstance the main channel of sale of internal and consequently of the entire national trade, that is, the purchasing power of four-fifths or five-sixths of society, does not expand in proportion to the progressive production, but rather simultaneously contracts in like proportion, from which it would be just as easy to demonstrate the necessity of gluts. I, for my part, am in fact convinced that this circumstance can be shown to exist; I am convinced that in present economic conditions it even asserts itself so strongly that the wages of labour, regarded as quota of product, fall in a proportion at least equal to the rise of the productiveness of labour, if not in a greater proportion.

The proof that this is so depends evidently upon the proof of two necessary suppositions. It must be shown, first, that productiveness of labour has increased and continues to increase, and, secondly,

that the quantitative sum of wages has at best not increased in like proportion, has perhaps remained stationary, or even fallen. Should these two historical preliminaries be demonstrated, the existence of that circumstance must follow as a theoretical conclusion; the fall of wages, as quota of product, must then stand in some relation to the increase of productiveness.

It seems, then, that I should only have to undertake the proof of these two suppositions, in order to proceed to the easier demonstration that it is from them that pauperism and commercial crises spring. And yet, I have not reached that point! You, honoured friend, with your knowledge of the present state of economic theory, know best how many concepts still obscure, how many scientific prejudices stand in the way of the very starting-point of this conception of mine. Why, even the idea itself that wages are to be regarded as share of the product is disputed! How different is the general view of the nature and constitution of profit from that which forms the basis of my conception of it! How greatly does the prevailing doctrine of the origin and increase of rent stand in its way! Nay, I do not go too far if I assert that the entire method of treatment to which our science has thus far been subjected makes difficult the comprehension of that proposition to which I trace the economic distresses of our time.

Instead of the science starting out, as it ought to have done, by recognizing that, through the division of labour, society becomes an indissoluble whole; instead of taking, as it should have done, this whole as a starting-point and from it proceeding to explain the separate economic concepts and phenomena; instead, therefore, of placing the idea of national property (the property of society), national production, national capital, national income, and its division into rent, profit, and wages, at the head, and, through these social concepts, explaining the shares of the individual in them, political economy has been unable to escape the exaggerated individualistic tendencies of the time. It has torn into shreds that which, through the division of labour, is an indissoluble whole, a social entity, that which can have being only upon the assumption of the existence of such a whole; and from the shreds, from the particular shares of individuals, it has wished to rise to the conception of the whole. It has, for example, used the property of the individual as a basis, without considering that the property of a person united to other members of society by the division of labour is a thing entirely different from the property of an individual totally isolated, managing for himself. It has started out, for instance, from the rent of a single owner of land, without considering that the conception of rent presupposes that of profit and of wages; that, indeed, none of these conceptions can enter into the discussion unless we presuppose the whole present constitution of society and social income, of which the rent, etc., arising in society are but the parts. It has proceeded as if

society were but a sum of different economic units, a mathematical and not a moral entity, as if even political economy itself were but an aggregate of individual economies and not an organic combined economy, whose separate organs may be still suffering from the pressure of many a historic circumstance, even from such as partly stand in the way of the rights of the individual also.

Had political economy not fallen into this radically false method it would by this time have assumed a different shape, and certainly have progressed further in its development. I cannot refrain from giving here a brief sketch of a system of political economy such as a method governed by the principle of this science the division of labour would demand; more particularly as I am convinced that this sketch will contribute greatly to the understanding of the discussion I have undertaken.

Had political economy sought to follow a right method, it should certainly in a first part of the science, corresponding to the present conception of economics as a mere natural science of economic intercourse have started out with the present economic condition of the world, with all the wealth of phenomena it presents, and its manifestations when left to itself.

And it should in a first division of this part have started out directly from the conception of national (social) labour and of the national property the former as the combined action of the individual forces indissolubly bound together into one whole through the division of labour; the latter, as the aggregate of the material goods of the nation, bound together just as indissolubly through the employment of the national labour. Then it should have shown how the circumstance of the division of labour, in the case of every article, breaks up social labour into production-divisions - extractive industry, manufactures, transportation - and these divisions again into production-groups, into individual enterprises; wherefore the national property also is correspondingly subdivided. It should, in the national property, have distinguished between national land the more or less abundant source of all materials and the national capital i.e., the aggregate of the products distributed in various undertakings for use in further productive work; and then it should have set over against the national capital the result of the varying national production in a given period of time, i.e. the national product. It should have further been shown how one portion of the latter is always destined to be used for replacing the capital consumed or impaired in the process of production, and the other portion, the national income, for satisfying the direct needs of society and its members. It would then have had to discuss the concept of national productiveness and to show therefrom how the magnitude of the national product (and accordingly also of the national income) relatively to the population, in other words, how the national wealth depends upon the degree of productiveness.

After such a general exposition of economic conceptions and of their connection with each other, it would have remained to show how the management and the movement of national production, as well as the distribution of the national product, are dependent upon the institutions of positive law.

In order to make clearer the explanation of this dependence upon the most prominent institutions of the positive law of to-day, the ownership of land and capital, it should first of all have been shown how different a form the management and movement of national production would assume and how necessarily different the distribution of the national product would be if land and capital, instead of being private property, were in the possession of society at large, and the right of property attached only to the share of the national income which each one would receive. It would not be necessary that under such a condition of things the distribution of the national income should be made according to communistic principles without laws regulating distributive rights; the measure of everyone's due share could be fixed in accordance with the measure of his work by the legal ordinances of society. The individual labours of workmen, varied as may be their strength and skill, can very well be compared with each other and their relative value estimated. Property, then, under such a condition of things, would not disappear, but only be reduced strictly to its proper and original principle. And there can be no doubt that an economic organization of national production, as well as of distribution of the national product conformable to such a state of the law, could be carried out. The only question would be the practical one, whether the moral strength of the people would be great enough to cause them to persist, of their own free will, upon the path of national labour, that is, of national progress without being, as they are to-day, held fast to it, or even driven forward by the scourge of necessity, through the compelling force of land and capital ownership.

It should have been shown by the method of comparison how under a condition of law in which land and capital were social possessions and the national income alone were private property, there would have to be a public authority which would undertake to direct the national production in accordance with national needs, or, in other words, to regulate the application of the national property in the most advantageous manner, while under present conditions where the national property is, by the institution of land and capital ownership,

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divided up among private owners, the interest of these owners takes the place of such an authority; these owners likewise applying those parts of the national property which now belong to them, to the production of things intended to meet the needs of society.

It should have been shown how under those conditions it would only be necessary for that public authority to issue an order, to bring about the transportation of goods in process of production and still in the public possession, from one production - division and production - locality to another, and at last to its destination, the home of the consumer; while under these, where the ownership of land and of capital includes also the ownership of the property produced directly by them, in place of such an order there necessarily intervene, besides the like economic work of transportation, also the legal business of the sale or exchange of products, trade and with it money; so that to-day the movement of national production, from beginning to end, i.e., from the first stroke of work applied to the raw material up to the completion of the product, is carried on by a series of property transfers effected through the medium of money.

It would have been necessary to point out how there it would devolve upon that public authority to take care that one part of the national production should always be devoted to replacing the capital which has been consumed or impaired in the process of production, and only the remaining portion be used for producing the national income, i.e., the products required to satisfy social needs; while here, in place of that care, these things are governed by the management and the interest of the owners of capital or their representatives, the entrepreneurs, who regard as profit, as income, that only which trade in their products leaves as a remainder over and above the restitution of capital, and who will undertake such production alone as yields such a remainder.

After having in this manner shown the effect which positive law has upon the management and movement of production, its influence upon the distribution of the national product would have had to be explained.

It would have been necessary to show how in a state of things in which land and capital belong to society and the national income alone becomes private property, distributed by a principle of justice according to the work rendered, the entire national income would fall to the share of the producers,

the workers, while in a state of things in which land and capital ownership exist this income is distributed in such a manner between the labourers, the owners of land, and the owners of capital, that the larger part falls to the last two; how the distribution there, where it would be in accordance with the work rendered, would have to be made in such a way that the value of every product would be determined by the time expended upon its production[]; and every participant in the national production would receive along with the certificate attesting the time he expended on his work a draft upon an equal value of any desired income-commodities, which commodities would then, after he had given up his draft, be delivered to him from the storehouses of the State, and be considered private property as strictly as are the wages which the workman receives to-day; while here, where a division is made between the labourers, the owners of land, and the owners of capital, this division assumes such a shape that it is the landowners and the capitalists, or their representatives, the entrepreneurs, who engage the workmen in production, under a law which governs wages and depresses them far below the value of the product; they then convert the completed product into money, in accordance with the definite value set upon it by the natural laws governing competition and the market; after deducting those wages and replacing the capital (see above) the landowners and the capitalists divide the remaining amount of product under the name of rent and profit among themselves, in accordance with a law founded upon the value of the respective products (raw materials and manufactured products); divide it in order to purchase, just as the workman does with his wages, their share of the national income out of the stores of the various private establishments.

It should, finally, have been shown in the first division of this first part of political economy how it is the distribution of the national income the magnitude of the individual share which, in the succession and varying degrees of all human needs, dictates the direction and variety of national production; so that under the one set of conditions the public authority which regulated the kinds of production would have to carry out, just as under the other set of conditions the interest of the landowners and the capitalists does carry out, the mandate contained in this distribution of the national income.

While in this first division the economic movement would have been discussed under the presumption of unchanged productive forces, in the second the effect of a change in productive forces upon this movement and the effect, indeed, of a change in the aggregate of productive forces as well as of productivity would have had to be exhibited.

In this connection the meaning of increase of the national capital and of "saving" should first of all have been explained. From this it would have appeared that "saving" is only a form of increase of capital which is dependent upon the existence of land and capital ownership, and whose place can be largely supplied by credit.

It would then have been necessary to show that the increase of the aggregate of the productive forces, consequent upon increased national labour or increased population, is indeed capable of augmenting the national capital and the national product, and therefore revenue[] in general and the combined national wages; but that this augmentation effects a rise [of rate] only in the rent of land, since the increased amount of wages must be distributed among a greater number of labourers, the increased profits of capital be reckoned upon the increased capital invested, and the increased rent of land alone is reckoned upon an unchanged area of land; and that an increase of the national wealth, an increase of the national product which might redound to the benefit of all, can only occur in case of the increased fruitfulness of labour, increased productivity.

Here it should have been shown from what small beginnings national wealth had its rise, how revenue itself rent of land and profits of capital was made possible only by the progress of productiveness.

It would further have been necessary to explain, how in a condition in which land and capital ownership did not exist, the result of increased productiveness would accrue solely to the benefit of the labourers, so that their income would increase in direct proportion to the increase of productiveness; while to-day that institution, with its law governing wages, has the effect of throwing all the benefits arising from increased productiveness exclusively into the hands of the landowners and the capitalists.

In a third division, finally, the question of how to satisfy the needs arising through the existence of society as such and through its "government" would have had to be discussed and, therefore, in this third division the management of finances or the principles of taxation, and the application of taxes as regards the effect of that application both upon the movement of production and the distribution of the national product, should have been discussed.

After having explained in such a first part of political economy "the production, distribution, and consumption of goods," one would naturally have been led to point out in a second part the dangers

which threaten society if its economic development under existing legal institutions should continue to be left to itself; and would finally, in a third part, have suggested measures whereby these dangers might be counteracted.

Such a method would carry its own justification with it, even though, regarded strictly, it should as little deserve to be termed systematic as that superficial linking together of economic matter, of which Say's school and the Germans have in particular been guilty. But if this latter procedure has contributed to divert attention from the living development of political economy, that method would have made it evident that it is the very fact of political economy now passing through such a living, urgent phase of development, which does not allow its actual problems to assume that symmetry which would permit them to be ranged and classified, like, for instance, those of jurisprudence. That method would at the same time contain an indication that political economy would be capable of systematic treatment and classification only after having passed this phase, and would then become the foremost and most comprehensive of all the social sciences, having in great part absorbed jurisprudence itself.

Had this method been followed in economics, had economists thus proceeded from the whole of society to the individual, the science would to-day contain a far less number of prejudices; the more general recognition of that circumstance which I regard as the cause of pauperism and of commercial crises would have found the ground better prepared for it; I should, in fact, have been able to proceed at once, in order to establish my views, to the proof of the actual increase of the productiveness of labour and the unchanged (or even decreased) wages, and to deduce from the fact of this decrease in wages regarded as share of the product the inevitableness of those visitations. As it is, I am obliged to add to the foregoing sketch of a better method a complete theory, in accordance with that better method. They will make each other mutually clearer.

I wish to sum up this new theory, which I place over against the hitherto prevailing one, in a number of propositions which I shall endeavour to make as concise and as clear as possible.

() I repeat that wages, interest, rent of land, profits of capital are social facts and concepts, i.e., facts and concepts which exist only because the individuals who participate in them are joined by the division of labour into a society; that from the very start one sets out from a false standpoint if one attempts to explain the principles which underlie those facts from considerations referring to the individual participants, from the standpoint of one of the many labourers, and so on; that one

must, on the contrary, in an explanation of principles understand by wages, interest, and so forth the aggregate wages accruing in the society, or think of the whole of the society as represented by one labourer, one landowner, and one capitalist. For the laws which regulate the further distribution of wages, rent, and profit among the individual labourers, the individual landowners and the individual capitalists are different from the laws which in the first place govern the division of the product into wages, rent, and profit; and in taking the former for the latter economists only continue to do what the Say school has pre-eminently done: to mistake the chance circumstances which play upon the surface of economic intercourse for the principles which work with silent, unperceived power. Accordingly in the following discussion I understand these concepts always in their most general significance.

() Revenue, according to this theory, includes all income which is derived, without one's own labour, solely from one's possessions. The existence of such an income in society no one will deny, even though it be asserted that this possession is the product of the possessor's own labour. To it belong rent of land, profits of capital, and interest on capital. Profits of capital and interest on capital are therefore no less revenue than the rent of land.

() As there can be no income which is not produced by labour, revenue depends upon two indispensable preliminary conditions. First, there can be no revenue unless labour produces at all events more than the labourers require in order to continue their work for it is impossible for anyone not labouring himself to continue regularly to draw an income without such a surplus. Secondly, there can be no revenue if there be no arrangements which deprive the labourers of the whole or part of this surplus, and bestow it upon others who do not themselves labour; for by nature the labourers are the first to come into possession of their own productions. That labour yields such a surplus is due to economic causes, causes that increase the productivity of labour. That this surplus is in whole or in part taken away from the labourers and given to others is due to positive law, which has always allied itself to force, and which now effects this deprivation only by continued coercion.

() Originally it was slavery, whose beginning is coincident with that of agriculture and the ownership of land, which exercised this coercion. The labourers, who by their labour produced such a surplus, were slaves, and the master, to whom the labourers and consequently the product also belonged, gave them only as much of it as was required for the continuance of their labour, keeping the rest or surplus for himself. When all the soil of a country has become private property,

and all capital at the same time is in private possession, then the ownership of land and capital exercises a similar coercive power over freed or free labourers. For this ownership brings about, just as slavery did, that, in the first place, the product does not belong to the labourers but to the masters of land and capital; and secondly, that the labourers, possessing nothing, as against the masters who own the land and the capital, are glad to obtain out of the product of their own labour such a part as will suffice for their maintenance that is, for the further continuance of their work. Thus the compact between the labourer and the master of wages has indeed taken the place of the slave-owner's orders, but this compact is free only in form not in reality, and hunger is an almost exact substitute for the lash. Only, that which was formerly called feed is now called wages.

() Revenue and wages are then the shares into which product, in so far as it forms income, is divided. It follows hence that the greater the one share is, the smaller must the other be. [] If revenue (rent of land and profits of capital combined) absorb a large share of the product, only a small one can be left over for wages. If the magnitude of one share changes, the other share must change inversely. As the magnitude of the shares in the product determines at the same time the value of the shares, the terms "high," and "rise," and "fall" are used to indicate the level and the changes of revenue and wages, these terms thus denoting relative conceptions. Revenue is said to be "high" or "rising," and wages "low" or "falling," when the former takes up a large or a growing share in the product, and the latter, consequently, a small or diminishing share in it.

() But in speaking of wages, the terms high and low level, rising and falling, are considered from another aspect besides. The degrading idea, namely, of "necessary wages" has been introduced into the science of wages which comprise only such an amount of commodities as is required by the workman to enable him to continue his work; thus the free labourer has again imperceptibly come to be regarded in the light of a slave who costs only as much in the way of sustenance as a machine does in repairs. This amount of necessary wages is taken as a criterion, as a fixed standard of measure, and wages are said to be high or rising, or, on the contrary, low or falling[^] according as they vary to the advantage or the disadvantage of the workmen by receding from or approaching that point. This conception of necessary wages does not, however, imply that actual wages cannot fall below that point, nor that it represents a quantity uniform at all times and in all countries.

() In dealing with the level or the change of wages, we must carefully distinguish between these two relations, which are by no means identical. In one relation wages may be high or be rising, while they may, at the same time, in reference to the other, be low or falling; and vice versa. The

creation of these effects depends entirely upon the degree or the change of the productiveness of labour. If, for example, the same amount of labour produces a large or a growing quantity of commodities, then wages, considered as share of the product, may be low or be falling, while regarded in relation to the measure of necessary sustenance, they may be high or even rising. One ought to become familiar with the conception of both these movements of wages, for it may in future acquire a decisive influence in economic science and in the practical world.

() Originally the division of labour assumed such a shape that the masters of the land were also for the most part the masters of the capital. Capital comprises, logically historically the scope of the concept has undergone great change, as has been shown in I. raw materials, accessory materials, and tools; it is product which is used for future production; reduced to terms of labour, it is stored-up labour. As long as the masters of the soil are also masters of the capital the raw product will necessarily be developed, by slaves or free labourers, into the finished product in the same service, that of the landlords; the owner of land is at the same time the "manufacturer," and usually also the wholesale dealer in the finished wares. In such a condition the entire revenue will fall to the share of a single person, the owner of land and the owner of capital being merged into one; and, in fact, there could be no recognized distinction between the revenue of land and the revenue of capital. This condition constituted the rule in ancient Greece and Rome, and is one of the reasons why the rich domain of political economy remained undiscovered by the ancients, and especially why they knew only money-capital, and did not even conceive of capital in its economic sense.[]

() But if the division of labour has been so developed that land and capital have different owners, and that, therefore, the raw product which is produced by one set of workmen in the service of the landowners is then manufactured into finished wares by another set in the service of the capitalists, into whose possession this raw product is transferred; in that case the revenue will be divided, one part going to the owner of the raw product, the landowner, the other to the person who had this product converted into finished product, the capitalist. For if revenue in general originated, on the one hand, because labour produced more than was necessary for the sustenance of the labourers, and, on the other, because positive law gave this surplus not to the labourers, but to the owners of the product of labour, there follows also the division of revenue part of the product of labour which is in excess of that required for the labourers' maintenance going to one owner and part to the other. And it can make no difference that there exists this cross-wise division, as it were, of the products of labour between the two owners, the landlord and the capitalist, that in one and the same article the result of the work goes to the one in so far as it is raw product, to the other in so far as it is

manufactured product, since the division takes place on the basis of value after all. Nor does the institution of private property produce a different effect upon the status of the labourers engaged in the production of raw materials or the labourers engaged in manufactures after its division into land and capital ownership from what it did before that division. With the German distinction between city and country, with the legal separation between "city trades" and agriculture, this separation between land ownership and capital ownership, and consequently the division of revenue into revenue of land and revenue of capital, first came into being as a thorough-going system, transforming the division of labour

() This division is made according to the ratio which the value of the raw product bears to the value added to the raw product by the labour furnished by the capitalists in the way of manufacture or transportation[]; in other words, in proportion to the fraction of the value of the finished product which is taken up by the raw product. The lower the value of the raw product in proportion to the value of the manufacture-product or vice versa, the smaller or the greater will be the part of the revenue falling to the raw product, the greater or smaller the part going to the manufacture-product.

() The owners of capital term the last part profit of capital, and reckon it according to the ratio it bears to the amount of capital; as has become customary, in comparison with a hundred or according to percentage. This ratio expresses the rate of the profit of capital. It sets the standard at the same time for the yield of the revenue of all applications of capital-property [Kapitalverm?gen] People will not apply capital-property where it does not yield revenue in accordance with this standard; and as capital is required in the creation of raw product also, a part of the profit which falls to the raw product will have to be taken off as revenue or "ordinary rate of profit" reckoned by this standard, upon the capital which has been invested. If there be a portion remaining beyond this, that portion is termed rent of land, because it falls to the owner of land purely as such, without regard to his being owner of capital or, it may be, labourer. And it is according to its rent that the value of a piece of land is estimated as capital or is "capitalized."

() As the profit on capital is greater the higher the percentage, it must rise or fall at the same rate as the ratio which the value of the raw product bears to the value of the manufacture-product falls or rises. For in the capital, upon which its share of the revenue which is called profit is reckoned by percentage, the value of the raw product is counted in, since the capitalists purchase it with their "capital-property." Since now the revenue is divided according to the proportion which the value of the raw product bears to that of the manufacture-product so that if the latter is high a

low value of the raw product must be reckoned in with the capital; and, on the contrary, if it is low a high value of the raw product is to be reckoned in with the capital it is evident that the ratio of the profit on capital to the value of the capital (i.e., the rate of interest) must rise with the rise of value of the manufacture-product or the fall of value of the raw product, and must fall in the opposite case. For the interest on capital (since the capitalist must buy the raw product) must be reckoned in the one case upon a relatively lower, and in the other upon a relatively higher capital-value.

() If the profit of capital is high, then the rent of land, so far as regards the division of the revenue, must be low. For if of that portion of the revenue already a small one which falls to the share of the landowner a still greater part has to be reckoned as profit on the capital he has applied, then a correspondingly smaller portion will be left over for the rent of land. Under such conditions, then, the profits on capital will swallow up the whole, or almost the whole, revenue of society, and can leave little or no remainder for the rent of land. Yet the value of the raw product may easily be high enough to admit of a rent of land; rent must, for instance, always be left over where the value of the raw product is equal to that of the manufacture-product, and this for the reason that while in manufactures the value of the material, that is, the whole of the raw product, is reckoned in with the capital, in raw production it is the land itself which constitutes this material, and land does not come into play as capital. If in raw production land, regarded as material, were counted in with the capital, as is done, for instance, by purchasers[] [or if in manufacture the raw product or material were not reckoned as capital, because it, too, belonged to the capitalists],[] there could never be any rent of land left over, no matter how high the value of raw products might rise.

() However, the ratio of value between raw product and manufacture-product can determine only the ratio of division between landlord and capitalist; can determine only in what ratio the whole revenue the level of which is fixed by the ratio of division between it and wages is to be further divided into rent of land and profit on capital. A variation in that ratio of value alone, therefore, merely takes from one part to give to the other. A rise in the value of raw product does, it is true, raise the rent of land, but only at the expense of the profit of capital which, on its side, must fall. A fall in the value of raw products does, it is true, raise the profits on capital, but only at the expense of the rent of land, which must now on its side fall. But no fall or rise in the value of raw product or of manufacture-product can in itself raise or lower the profit on capital, or raise or lower the rent of land, without effecting a contrary movement in the other part of revenue.

() A variation in one part of revenue which should not affect the other, or a variation in both

parts of revenue in the same direction, as, for example, a rise in the rent of land without a fall in the profit on capital, or a rise both in rent and in profit - the shares in the product only are here being considered throughout - can take place only if the ratio of division between wages and revenue varies, if revenue as a whole rises or falls. If, for instance, the revenue, which had amounted in value to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the product, = x , rose to $\frac{1}{3}$ of the product, = x , and if each part of revenue - rent of land and profit on capital - had before absorbed $x/2$ then, after this rise of revenue as a whole, one part of revenue could rise to $x/3$ without the other having to fall, or they could both rise to x at the same time.

() It is clear that a simultaneous rise of both parts of revenue, rent of land and profit on capital, or the rise of one part which should not be at the expense of the other, must, since both can occur only in consequence of the rise of revenue as a whole, take place at the expense of the wages of labour. In this case wages must be limited to a smaller share of the product; they must vary inversely with the variation of one or both parts of revenue, and accordingly, in the above case, they must fall. Whether wages, which, to be sure, must fall as share in the product, fall as referred to the standard of the wages necessary for subsistence, depends entirely upon whether at the same time the productiveness of labour has increased or not.

() If the productiveness of labour has not increased, and there is a rise either in one or in both parts of revenue, then wages must fall, whether regarded as share of the product or from the standpoint of the wages necessary for subsistence. For since, in this case, the product of a given amount of labour the quantity of goods resulting from it has not varied, a diminution in the proportional part, the share of the product, which anyone obtains must carry with it a diminution in the amount of product, the quantity of goods, which he receives. But suppose that the productiveness of labour has increased, that the same amount of labour produces more commodities, and that, accordingly, a greater quantity of commodities would fall to a given proportional part or share in the product going to the labourer. Then it still remains to be considered what relation the diminution of this proportional part, due to the rise of one or both parts of revenue, bears to the increase in productiveness or in the quantity of goods falling to a given proportional part. If, for instance, productiveness has doubled, if, therefore, the product of a given amount of labour or a given proportional part of that product has doubled in amount doubled in quantity of goods wages as share of the product may diminish by a half, e.g., from $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ of the product, while, measured by quantity of goods, or viewed in reference to the standard of "necessary wages," they have remained the same.

() In like manner a change in wages as share of the product must exert a contrary effect upon one or both parts of revenue. If a change has taken place in wages without an accompanying change in productiveness, then rent of land and profits of capital would benefit or suffer in the same proportion in which they have hitherto divided the revenue between them; for the ratio between raw product and manufacture-product can not on its part be changed by a change in wages unaccompanied by a simultaneous change in productiveness. If, however, the change in wages be accompanied by a change in productiveness, if, e.g., wages have fallen while productiveness has increased, the question will be in what proportion extractive industry and manufactures have contributed to this increase in productiveness; and that part of revenue whose productiveness has not increased, or has increased least, will alone or mainly profit by this rise consequent upon the fall in wages of the revenue as a whole.

() Up to this point only the effects of changes taking place in the various shares of the product, wages, rent, and profits, assuming either a constant or varying productiveness,[] have been considered, without bringing in the question of a change in the aggregate of the productive forces. It still remains to note the effects of changes in the aggregate of the productive forces applied, which, in the last analysis, consist of changes in the quantity of labour, i.e., the labouring population. Such a change in the aggregate of the productive forces leaving out of account any change in productiveness and any change in the ratio of division of the product between the labourers, the landowners, and the capitalists, changes only the aggregate of the national product; and thus, not exercising any influence upon the ratio of division, changes only the aggregate of wages and of both parts of revenue. There accrues, according as the productive forces have increased or diminished, more or less rent, there accrues more or less profit on capital. The individual wages alone remain constant. For since it is assumed that productiveness and the ratio of division of the product between the labourers, the landowners, and the capitalists, have remained constant, the additional product created by the increased labouring population is divided in the old way.

() However, the increase or diminution of revenue consequent upon the increase or diminution of the productive forces exercises an apparently different influence upon the rent of land from what it does upon the profits of capital. It raises or lowers the rate of rent, but not the rate of profit. For the increased or diminished rent must always be reckoned upon the same quantity of surface, since the land and individual parcels of land do not grow, but are confined within fixed limits. The increased or diminished profit, on the contrary, is reckoned upon the increased or diminished capital,

without which the assumed increase or decrease in the aggregate product cannot be conceived; the rate of profit cannot, therefore, rise or fall, but only a greater or less amount of profit accrue to the nation. While, then, the rent of a given piece of land may rise upon the same grounds upon which the profits of capital rise, namely, because revenue as a whole has risen at the expense of the labourer's share in the product, as well as because one part of revenue has risen at the expense of the other, rent may in addition rise from the third cause, the increase of the total revenue, while this does not occur in the case of profit. This last to call attention already here to this point is perhaps the most efficacious cause of the rise of rent, which circumstance, however, political economists have thus far not represented in a proper light, even though Jones, the chief opponent of Ricardo, alleges the augmentation of production to be one of the most important causes of the rise of rent.

() The legal regulation of property rights does not alter these principles of revenue. Rent of land, e.g., is merely divided between the higher and the lower landowner, the hereditary landlord, and the hereditary tenant-farmer, according to positive legal regulations. Just as little does the interpolation of the entrepreneur alter the above principles. The tenant-farmer only draws profit on his capital, and if he has made an advantageous lease, a part of the rent besides. The entrepreneur in the trades, in manufacture, and in transportation, in so far as he is distinguished from the capitalist, only divides the profits on capital with the latter, and that in accordance with the usual rate of interest on borrowed capital. But no regular gain upon enterprises can arise from anything but profits on capital mortgage capital is not in question here, the interest on it being but an amount of ground rent, the loan on a piece of land but a purchase of rent no regular profit on capital can arise from anything but revenue, no revenue from anything but the product of labour. []

() Within the circle of these numerous variations, then, may the division of the national product revolve. Wages may vary as share in the product as well as in relation to the standard of necessary sustenance; equally in both respects, independently of each other, and even inversely; they may, e.g., fall as share in the product, and yet rise in relation to necessary sustenance. If a fixed ratio of division be assumed between wages and revenue, then the two parts of revenue, rent and profit, can vary, as share in the product, only inversely; just as much as the one rises or falls must the other fall or rise. Again, if one part of revenue varies as share in the product without exercising any effect upon the other, or if both vary equally, this can only occur if a contrary variation takes place in wages; e.g. a rise in rent - as share in the product - without a fall in profit must lower wages as share in the product. An increase in revenue consequent upon the increase in the national product, however, raises rent also without lowering either the level of profit or wages as share in the product;

and among the combinations, therefore, formed by these various changes the case is even conceivable where profit, wages - the latter likewise as share in the product - and even rent rise simultaneously; namely, when, though rent falls indeed as share in the product, and this fall accrues to the advantage of both the other shares, the relative fall is more than counterbalanced by the increase in the total revenue. One cannot pass a correct judgment upon the different phenomena of the division of the national product without being able to distinguish these points of view, to analyze these relations crossing and recrossing each other so variously, and thus to connect the individual phenomena with their peculiar causes.

() If land and capital ownership exist in the society, and if the division of labour is left to itself, then the division of the national product takes place within this range of variation [innerhalb dieser Wechself?lle] in the form of exchange. The individual exchange is made thus: A exchanges a product which is of less value to him we mean here less value in use for a product of B's which is of greater value to him. The same motive impels B. It is in this manner that the exchange of a certain quantity of both products is concluded. The worth which the one product as against the other acquires thereby, and which may be estimated by the quantity of the other obtained in exchange, is likewise termed value, i.e., exchange value. Exchange, therefore, proves to be a relation in which everyone produces value-in-use for another person, and obtains in consequence his compensation from that other person. And exchange value is nothing but value-in-use to others, which receives its compensation. Exchange value may, therefore, be also termed social value-in-use; that it is the former proves that it is the latter.

() The exchange value expresses at the same time the measure of compensation which the exchanger receives. Assuming that each of the exchangers always produced exactly that quantity of value-in-use which the other requires to satisfy his successive needs, this compensation would be a just one only if it corresponded with the sacrifice, the cost, the amount of productive force which each exchanger has expended for the other in the production of the value-in-use. Such would be the case if the product received in exchange contained a like sacrifice, an equal amount of cost, the same expenditure of productive force in other words, if the exchange value coincided with the amount of cost, if in the products exchanged equal amounts of cost were exchanged. Labour is the original sacrifice, the primary cost, the first and last productive force which is expended upon all products. Under the above assumption the exchange value of the products exchanged must be equal to the quantity of labour which has been expended upon them; in the exchange of products equal quantities of labour must always be exchanged for each other. And labour, varied as it is or appears

to be in the various productions, does admit an adjustment and a measure according to the work and the time days and the hours of labour. [] But it is clear that if that assumption were not realized such compensation could make no pretension to justice; justice could not demand this rule of compensation. For if A has not produced the value-in-use required by B, if he has, consequently, expended uselessly a quantity of productive force, how can A demand compensation of B just as though he had realized that assumption? And this assumption will be least conformed to in isolated cases of exchange. Therefore the measure of compensation, the exchange value, will here depend upon the urgency of need and the supply of product of each of the exchangers, i.e., upon individual demand and supply. But even supposing that that assumption were realized, there would still have to be, since everything would depend upon human knowledge and human will, a just estimate, adjustment, and determination of the quantities of labour contained in the products to be exchanged; and for this purpose a law would be required to which the exchangers would submit.

() If exchange becomes the rule, because every participant produces now only value-in-use for others, social value-in-use, exchange value; because of the existence of the division of labour, that strong bond of union in which one works for all and all for one; exchange value becomes market value. In isolated, accidental cases of exchange the only exchange value that can come into question is that which one product received in exchange has as against another given in return; and this is controlled by individual demand and supply. The market value is the exchange value which each product has relative to all other products which are exchanged in commerce; and it is controlled by the general demand and supply of the competitors. The existence of market value is facilitated by the intervention of a peculiar product, a product intended for exchange alone, a market commodity which is preferred to all others, and which, therefore, expresses the market value of all other commodities the precious metals. Everybody first exchanges his product for this preferred market commodity, gold or silver, and only then exchanges the quantity which he has received of this commodity for that which he wishes to use. In ordinary life we say he sells and buys; exchange, then, resolves itself into two acts. Thus gold and silver perform the office of money, the conception of which is by no means that of a market commodity. The essence of money consists solely in its being a certificate of the market value which anyone has given away in his exchange-product, and which, in turn, he can realize as a draft upon just the same amount of market value. Were it possible, therefore, to determine the market value according to the quantity of labour which the products have cost, a money could be introduced which would answer perfectly to its conception. It would consist of strips of paper, which would constitute accurate receipts for the quantity of labour which each one had in trade delivered in his products, and therefore also drafts entitling him to obtain in

trade the same quantity in return. [] It is only a historic necessity, an accident, therefore, that till now money consists of a commodity, i.e. is a certificate and a draft which expresses the value certified and drawn for always by its own value. It is well known that, because money is to-day a commodity which is itself, like all other products, subject to fluctuations in value, a given quantity of this money-commodity, or an equal amount coined according to the same standard of coinage, will after a time no longer represent the same value as before. And one can, therefore, in this respect also speak, e.g., of a rise in wages and in rent; though not indeed of a rise in profit on capital, since the increased money-value of the income of capital is reckoned upon a like increased money-value of the capital, thus leaving the ratio between the two, which determines the level of profit, the same. Inasmuch as the quantities of the money-commodity are coined under certain coin-names, it may also happen that smaller quantities of money-commodity are substituted for the original ones; so that, finally, in this respect also a rise in wages and in rent, though again not in profit, may take place. This is, indeed, a deception on the part of the administrators of the Mint, but it is one which it is well known has often been practised.

() Even though the market value, in a commerce left to itself, is subject to the changeful dominion of the general demand and supply, it gravitates at least towards the amount of productive force which has been expended in the creation of the product: towards its cost. It strives continually, at least, to allow a just compensation. For self-interest will, in competition, bring it about that no one will long obtain for a smaller amount of expended productive force a larger amount in the product he gets in exchange. For everybody would rush into such advantageous production until equilibrium would again be restored, and there would again be an equal expenditure of productive force, equal cost, equal labour in the products exchanged. But the actual movements of the market will nevertheless, like the oscillations of the pendulum, swing beyond this position of equilibrium on either side; though the school which has most closely followed in Adam Smith's footsteps, the school of Ricardo, takes this mere striving for the accomplished fact itself, and bases all its further deductions, therefore, upon an assumption which does not exist in reality. That which Ricardo assumes to be realized is only what should take place, is one of the greatest, and practically also one of the most important of economic ideas. Just as in the theory of natural law the social contract was in the beginning regarded as an actual historical fact of the past, until a juster perception recognized in it only an idea according to which individual rights and duties should be regulated a thing by its nature, therefore, to be realized in the future; so likewise the congruence of the exchange value of products with the quantity of labour which they cost is not a fact, but the grandest economic idea which has ever striven towards realization. That law of gravitation, however, to which allusion

has been made accomplishments even to-day so much as this that in general the market value of products is in inverse ratio to productiveness; that if with the same expenditure of productive force double the quantity of product is created, the market value of the original quantity of product will at the same time sink to half its former amount.

() Just as much market value as one has, just so much purchasing power does he possess. Just as much purchasing power as one possesses, just so much value-in-use can he convert into market value through the process of exchange. In exchange, then, the value-in-use which everyone produces for society must have a corresponding purchasing power, otherwise it neither attains a market value in the hands of its producer, nor is of benefit to anybody in society, inasmuch as it does not command an equivalent. Producers can in exchange, therefore, produce only such a quantity of value-in-use as shall correspond to the actual purchasing power of society. While land and capital ownership exist the real producers, the labourers, have, indeed, no voice in the matter of the kind or the measure of production, for this depends entirely upon the will of the quasi-producers, the owners of the "production-fund" ["Productivfonds"]. In exchange, then, the owners of the production-fund can make this fund effective only so far as the purchasing power of society compensates them for the products.

() Were the division of labour as simple a relation as political economists often represent it to be; did it, namely, assume the shape that each participant produced a certain product entirely by and for himself, and consequently also reaped the proceeds of this product entirely himself; if, e.g., A produced bread, B clothes, C shoes, D tables, and so on, and each one himself obtained the entire value of the product, then the purchasing power of each one would always be equal to the market value of his whole product. But the division of labour is not so simple as all that. The division is made not merely as those political economists assume, but in such a manner in addition that the owners of the production-fund, the landowners and capitalists, share with the real producers, the labourers, in every single product. For positive law declares land and capital to be as peculiarly the property of single individuals as labour-power [Arbeitskraft] is of the labourer. Consequently the labourers are compelled, in order to be able to produce at all, to enter into a combination with the owners of land and capital, and to share the product of labour with them. A false and superficial abstraction has, indeed, in its explanation of what landowners and capitalists receive in that compulsory division, pointed back to the special and varied services rendered to production by labour, land, and capital; and, again, has conceived the product created by this combination to be the result of these varied services operating together. But who does not see that this is the grossest

petitio principii of which any science has ever been guilty, and, it may be added, the most pernicious practical error which still remains for the human understanding to combat! That combination, certainly effects no alteration in the natural elements of the production of all commodities; it only removes a social hindrance to production, the arbitrary Quod non of the owners of land and capital, and removes this by a division of the product. Therefore, though it is true that under the form which the division of labour actually assumes to-day, there is still exchange of "products for products," as the economists express it, yet the purchasing-power which each participant possesses is not, as those economists have further falsely concluded, regulated by the value of his product, but by his share in this product. I beg my readers to consider this, that purchasing-power to-day is only share in the product, for to the fact that the Say-Bastiat school has overlooked this is it due that it so violently opposes the necessary further development of political economy.

() In a society such as is here assumed and such as to-day still actually exists, the shares of the labourers, landowners, and capitalists in the product are not regulated by social foresight, by a rational social law, but are likewise left to be acted on by exchange left to itself; by the so-called natural laws of society. It depends upon the chances of the market what the share of each class in the national product shall amount to. The relative shares of the landowners and the capitalists are, indeed, determined by the relative value of the raw product and the manufacture-product, and this gravitates, as has been shown, towards the cost of the respective products, or according to the law of the productiveness of the respective amounts of labour. Yet, because the highest of economic goods, the essence [Princip] of all products, labour, has also become an object of exchange, the more momentous division between revenue-receivers and labourers is given over to the domination of exchange. The labourer gives his labour in accordance with the laws of supply and demand to the entrepreneur, and receives for it, according to the same laws, its exchange value, his wages; receives, therefore, his share in the product as determined by exchange. A conception just as degrading as that which gauged the wages of labour by the standard of necessary sustenance, or looked upon them in the light of machine repairs, is that which speaks of a "natural price" or "cost" of labour - labour, the essence of all commodities, regarded as itself a commodity just as of the products of labour; and puts this natural price, this cost of labour, into the sum of the expenses that are necessary in order to keep up the supply of labour in the market, i.e. y in order to enable the labourer to reproduce his kind. What an absurd, indescribable contradiction in the conception of those economists who allow labourers in their legal status a voice in determining the destinies of society, yet at the same time want them to be treated economically only as commodities! - for labour in this connection is the labourers. Were the Say-Bastiat school self-conscious in all social relations,

it would necessarily consist of census-takers only.

() The division of the national product according to the "natural" laws of exchange has as its consequence that with increasing productiveness of labour the wages of the labourers become an always smaller share of the product. For the labourers, even if they could perceive that by an altered combination of the same simple operations on their part their labour grows always more productive, are economically not in a position to insist, as against their opponents in the bargain, that their labour should be compensated in exchange according to its productiveness, and according to the increase in that productiveness. With them the motives for exchange which determine them to get rid of their goods, namely labour, are of the most urgent nature, and thus is the highest of economic goods, the essence of all products, put on a level with a common and rather worthless commodity. The labourers own many hours of labour, but nothing more, and they have, therefore, fighting against them in the front rank, in exchange transactions, their own hunger and the sufferings of their families. Consequently they give away their labour easily, if only their most crying wants are satisfied by the exchange, if only this exchange amounts to enough to give them strength to continue their labour, i.e., enable them by labour further to satisfy these crying wants. It is only when wages amount to still less this is established by experience when they are so low that the labourers in continuing their labour would do so at the expense of their bodily strength, only then do they desist from work, and rather steal, in accordance with a profound natural instinct that under such circumstances the moral conditions of social existence have been violated, and violated against them. But the measure of what satisfies those most crying wants is not a quota but a quantity of product, and a quantity which during a labourer's lifetime in the same country, and taking the average of the seasons, remains a pretty constant quantity. If labour, then, becomes more productive, if an equal quantity of labour creates more product, if, accordingly, an equal quantity of product represents a smaller quantity of labour, and, therefore, constitutes a smaller proportional share of the entire product, then it is evident, since those motives for exchange are dominant with the labourers, that with the increasing productivity of labour their wages become an always smaller quota of the product.

() In the development of society still other causes are added, which strengthen the labourers' motives to get rid of their product at "cost price." The more populous the country, the more productive its labour, and the greater at the same time the freedom of the individual, the more will the labourer, trade being left to itself, be forced to work "cheap." For the more will labour be placed on a level with a commodity subject to the law of competition, and a competition which is harmful;

and the more able will the entrepreneurs be to "give out" the work to those who demand the least. As if the entrepreneurs gave away the work instead of receiving it! But so perverted have even ordinary conceptions become in consequence of existing relations, that because to-day work cannot be done without permission, this permission is called the work itself. In the early conditions of modern colonies which may be expressed by the formula: The arts and the capital of the old civilization, with entire political liberty, sparse population, and rich, superfluous land! - these laws keeping down wages appear, of course, to be changed; but their operations are only suspended, because here competition for the time being turns to the advantage of the labourers. [] Under the conditions which exist in the mother countries where the decisive factor of that formula fertile land more than sufficient for the population is lacking; where the labouring classes have never occupied the position in which they are suddenly placed in the colonies; where, besides, released from the servile relations of centuries, they have carried with them into freedom the spirit of subservience and the habit of a merely necessary subsistence; where, when their emancipation took place, the conditions of population and of productivity were already against them [] - there they are indeed no longer able to raise themselves by peaceful striving to a position from which they could successfully combat those laws. There want does not allow the spirit of freedom to nerve the moral force of these classes to the pitch of a firm determination to labour for such wages only as are worthy of a free citizen. There the full liberty of the labourer exercises an effect upon wages hardly different from that which easier means of transportation have upon the price of a commodity already depressed by competition; it only facilitates the supply of labour, only depresses the "price" of labour still more.

() If every participant in exchange always retained the entire product of his labour, if his purchasing power, therefore, consisted in the market-value of the entire product - which, as is well known, the economists of the school of Ricardo, as of the Say-Bastiat school, falsely represent to be the case - then no glut could arise from an increase of productiveness, either in respect to any one or to all commodities, until all the participants had received enough of them for their use, until more of them had been produced than is required by society. For since the market value of the product is in inverse ratio to productivity, the market value of each man's product would remain constant, and consequently also his purchasing power; this as well in the case of those in respect to whose products there had been an increase in productiveness as of those who were not so placed. Every participant would be able to buy a larger quantity of every product in respect to which productiveness had increased; and the undiminished purchasing power of everyone could cope with the increased amount of product consequent upon increased productiveness - until the wants of

everyone were absolutely satisfied; until no one would buy more even though he could. In this case, then, the purchasing power of society would always remain commensurate with its productiveness; or, in other words, as much value-in-use as society might produce, so much market value and so much purchasing power would it possess also, until all the wants of every sharer in production were gratified; and value-in-use would cease to be market value and purchasing power only when it had itself ceased to be value-in-use any longer for anybody in society. As is familiar, the school of Ricardo and of Say endeavour also by this example to prove, in the midst of the woes of "overproduction," that no such thing can take place. And evidently this example also pictures the happiest economic outcome and condition that can possibly be imagined a condition, namely, where there is overproduction only after all the members of society have fully satisfied their needs; while the commercial crises of to-day consist precisely in this, that simultaneously with superfluity, four-fifths or five-sixths of society suffer want. A like success would attend the increase of productiveness even though the product were divided, as it is to-day, among three sharers, if the share of each one remained a fixed, unalterable quota of the product. Under this supposition also the purchasing power of every participant in exchange would remain constant, be the increase in productiveness what it may. And overproduction in the case of one or of all commodities could likewise take place only after the needs of all the sharers were satisfied even though, to reach that point, there would have to be, on account of that division of the product, a yet greater rise in productiveness than in the condition assumed by Ricardo and Say, where each one would have the market value of his entire product at his disposal. But if neither of these assumptions is realized, if the product is not only divided among three sharers, but the share of the labouring classes (i.e., of the great majority of society) is besides, in accordance with the "natural" laws of trade left to itself, not a fixed, unalterable quota of the product but, on the contrary, becomes a smaller quota of the product exactly in proportion to the increase in productiveness - then that fortunate issue of the increase in productiveness cannot occur. For according to this third supposition, purchasing power and productiveness are no longer in direct proportion to each other. On the contrary, the purchasing power of the greatest part of society diminishes in proportion to increasing productiveness; and society is placed in the position of producing value-in-use which is no longer market value and purchasing power, while yet the need for it is, in the case of most people, unsatisfied.

() It is obvious that wherever and whenever the "natural" laws of trade produce such effects, and no rational laws interpose a dam against those effects, phenomena must necessarily occur in consequence, which resemble those that are to-day called gluts and pauperism. A phenomenon must necessarily then arise as irrational as this: that the productiveness of society may rise ever so high,

may rise so very high that all its members could live in affluence from its proceeds, and yet, and even because of that very productiveness, the majority are thrown into poverty, and the minority into loss of property. In virtue of the connection of economic development with legal and political development, which on its part carries with it an always greater degree of legal equality and political freedom, the fatal contradiction must then be generated in society that the greater the equality and freedom of its members legally and politically, the more unequal and dependent does the condition of the majority, the labouring classes, become. For as regards commercial crises, overproduction must take place before the needs of society are fully satisfied, since the purchasing power of the majority of society, of the working classes, diminishes in proportion to the increase of productiveness. And as regards pauperism since the material demands of the majority of society, the labouring classes, are constantly rising, and their desires are constantly inflamed by seeing the wealth of the minority alone increase, while the measure of their income diminishes, or remains the same, and therefore at least relatively diminishes the economic position of the labouring classes must necessarily be a distracted one. In a word, the result must be the incredible absurdity that though the majority of society are languishing in poverty, they cannot by far put their productive force into full activity, since then even the smaller portion would also be plunged into poverty.

() In these "natural" laws of exchange left to itself lies the key to the economic problems of the present time. The assumptions from which such phenomena as pauperism and commercial crises have just been deduced as necessary conclusions, actually exist to-day; and society has thus far promulgated no laws to check the consequences, now also growing practical, of assumptions which have become practical. Productiveness has in fact greatly increased, and though the increase has been far greater in manufacture and transportation than in the production of raw material, the increase in the last, too, has been considerable. The national product has, moreover, been largely increased also through the increase in productive force consequent upon the growth of population. Wages in Europe, on the other hand where they have never been favoured by colonial conditions such as prevail in North America and Australia, but have been evolved, under the conditions of far greater density of population and of land already fully occupied, from the wage-relations of serfs have never in general risen much or for any length of time above the point of necessary wants. Other social circumstances have besides developed in such a way that they have exerted a constantly depressing effect upon them. And accordingly the consequences, the present form of division of the national product, have been inevitable. Wages in Europe have in fact become an always smaller share of the product. In consequence of this, revenue as a whole has risen, and this rise has mainly benefited rent, since productiveness has increased more in manufacture and

transportation than in the production of raw materials; it has directly benefited profit on capital only in so far that without this rise in revenue as a whole it would have fallen still lower. The rent of one and the same piece of land has in addition experienced a considerable rise through the increase of revenue consequent upon the increase of productive force, and it is this in great part which has raised it to its present high level. [] This form of division of the national product, then, has decreed against society pauperism and commercial crises. They have both become facts, as fully as that division and the assumptions from which they were deduced. There is no longer an optimism so blind or a self-interest so narrow as not to acknowledge the existence of phenomena which have sprung into life with such violence, and which arouse such general attention. Those who still deny them no longer count. The controversy no longer turns upon the existence of these phenomena, but upon the means of remedying them; or at most upon the assertion of their absolute necessity by that little group which is in the habit of regarding social perversities as the "will of God."

Those assumptions will in reality reach out still farther. Since the various industries have allied themselves with the progress of the natural sciences, the increase in productiveness is incalculable. Chemistry and mechanics make man by degrees a new creator, with the calling and the desire to supplement Nature wherever she is inadequate. Only one thing may be foreseen in this undoubtedly further increase in productiveness: the increase in extractive industry, especially in food products, will in the future no longer lag behind that in the productiveness of manufacture and transportation. Husbandry has not thus far drawn marked advantage from the advances in either chemistry or mechanics. It is to-day but little more than technology was only a few decades ago, little more than crude empiricism. In our day agricultural chemistry is only beginning to open up prospects which, though they will doubtless lead to many a false path, will finally put the creation of food products as completely in the power of society as it is in its power to-day to supply any desired quantity of cloth, provided only there be the necessary provision of wool. And yet if no rational laws oppose the "natural" ones, pauperism and commercial crises will continue to be the companions of reality, and society will continue to be in possession of productive forces whose efficacy could be of avail to all, but which cannot be allowed to become effective lest they be harmful to all. Will society suffer this? Will a school, undoubtedly ardent for liberty, succeed in inoculating society itself with their own confusion of "creation" and history, of nature and society? I doubt it! In nature alone do things and relations contain their own rational law within themselves; in society they demand this of man. And necessity will help to lead society to a recognition of this truth, if doctrine alone should not suffice.

This, then, is the theory, my honoured friend, which I oppose to yours, and which I will likewise briefly review.

To the labour of society I join a productiveness which has increased in great degree in all branches of industry, and particularly also in all branches of agriculture, and whose further increase is unlimited. But the "natural" laws which, in a commerce left to itself, where land and capital ownership exist, govern the division of the social product, prevent that increase from proving an unalloyed blessing to society. For on the one hand, they cause this division to assume the form of exchange, in which the private owners of the landed and capital property of society can institute no production at all, or none beyond the capacity of the existing purchasing power; and on the other hand, they not only cause the product to be divided between these owners and the labouring classes, but also bring it about that the share of the latter in the product, and therefore the purchasing power of the majority of society, grows always smaller. They produce this last effect because labour, the creator of all product, becomes likewise a commodity which is paid - i.e., is recompensed, or receives its share of the product according to the laws of supply and demand; and because these laws, in the development of society, prove, precisely with growing productiveness, increasingly disadvantageous to those who possess this "commodity," i.e. to the labouring classes.

Thus, because according to the "natural" laws of trade the productive force of society can manifest itself only to the extent to which there is a corresponding purchasing power, and the same laws, again, with increasing productiveness lower the purchasing power of the majority, the effect of these laws is that an increase of fortune which should by its nature serve only the growth of the well-being and happiness of society becomes a cause of the opposite. The increase in productiveness which should make all richer, only causes, according to the "natural" laws of trade, one part of society to grow poorer, while it injures and jeopardises even the prosperity of the other, the favoured part.

These "natural" laws have the effect, then, that productiveness to-day can never manifest itself to a degree corresponding to its real capacity. Though ever striving to do so, it is crippled by commercial crises, and is forced to lie fallow, while it is capable of bearing fruit adequate for all the members of society who are languishing in poverty. The calculation, therefore, that if the present national income were distributed equally among all the individuals of society the sum falling to each would still be inconsiderable, is a false one. For the gain that would result from a distribution which would allow a full manifestation of the productive forces of society ought manifestly to be

included in the computation.

Thus the "natural" laws of trade have plunged society into a direful contradiction; have cast an evil spell, as it were, over it. Under the form which the division of labour and the division of the national product have assumed, production can advance in proportion to productiveness only if the ratio of division of the product between the owners of the production-fund and the labourers is at least a constant one, or one that varies to the advantage of the latter. But the "natural" laws of that form have as a consequence that this ratio is not constant, but one that varies to the detriment of the labouring classes. Production, with trade left to itself, can prove beneficial to society only if distribution is good, and the laws of trade left to itself as regards distribution have precisely the consequence that distribution is necessarily bad.

What, then, should society do? She must step out of this fatal circle, in which she is driven about by prejudices alone, and replace the "natural" laws, in so far as they are harmful, by rational ones! For this she needs but clear vision and moral strength! It is the part of political economists to sharpen the first. Should the last be lacking for a free resolve, history will indeed have to swing the lash of revolution over her again.

I have thus far, my honoured friend, purposely confined myself to an abstract, methodical form, for it is possible that these letters may fall into the hands of one or other of the "learned" German economists, and they are not accustomed to any other treatment of our science. In my third letter, in which I shall endeavour to refute your views and to establish mine more in detail, I shall strive to be more popular. Perhaps one form will aid the other, to the better understanding of the unusual economic conceptions contained in them.

Footnotes

The constituted value of Proudhon. I must permit myself the remark that the idea of the constituted value was advanced by me before Proudhon, and that the papers in my work *Zur Erkenntniss unserer staatswirtschaftlichen Zustände* contain nothing but the preliminary investigations necessary for the development of that idea.

The word revenue is used throughout, in what follows, as a technical term to correspond to the author's "Rente". By this term he designates generically the income of capitalists, entrepreneurs,

and landowners, as distinguished from that of labourers. Translator.

From this point to , the relative change in wages and revenue will be considered under the supposition of unchanged amount of labour (i.e., labouring population) and unchanged or changing productiveness; from on, under the supposition of unchanged productiveness and changing amount of labour.

See my paper, "Zur Geschichte der romischen Tributsteuern seit Augustus," Hildebrand's Jahrbucher fur Nationaloekonomie und Statistik, vol. iv. et seq.

It is this added value, the addition accruing to the value of the raw material by the subsequent processes, that the author from this point on denotes by the word Fabrikationsprodukt, which I translate manufacture-product. Translator.

Practical men who are not political economists dispute, therefore, that there is such a thing as rent of land at all; likewise acute jurists, as was shown in the discussion upon the principle of rent laid down by me.

The passage enclosed between square brackets should be omitted in reading the sentence. What the author intended to say was, evidently, that if the material used in manufactures were not reckoned as capital, there would be rent in manufacture as there is in extractive industry; while if land were reckoned as capital, there would be no rent in extractive industry as there is none in manufacture. But, as it stands in the original, the sentence makes nonsense. Translator.

Productive force and productiveness must be distinguished from each other. Productiveness signifies the efficacy or fruitfulness of productive force. If in place of ten labourers twenty labourers are employed, or in place of one machine of a given degree of efficacy two of the same kind are set up, the productive force has been doubled; if ten labourers produce as much as hitherto twenty labourers, or if a machine has twice the efficacy of another machine involving the same expense, productiveness has doubled. Here, too, labour is the ultimate standard of measure. Greater quantities of labour are greater productive force; more product with equal quantity of labour is increased productiveness. In recent times, owing to the more rapid increase of population and to industrial inventions, productive force has increased as well as productiveness, but their different effects have scarcely been regarded in political economy.

Compare my pamphlet, Fur den Kredit der Grundbesitzer. Eine Bitte an die Reichstände.
Berlin, . Since then I have written the more elaborate work upon the Principle of Revenue.

Compare the first paper in my work, Zur Erkenntniss unsrer staatswirthschaftlichen Zustände, etc.
Also I. of the present work, where this is shown still more thoroughly.

Compare the last paper in my work, Zur Erkenntniss unsrer staatswirthschaftlichen Zustände, and
I, of this work.

The present state of things in North America is a proof of this.

England, in the last respect, forms an exception in Europe. There the labouring classes were already free before the English revolution, and they were, therefore, successful for a time in their struggles against those laws. That time, however, is long since past.

The landowners, in spite of this, do not grow rich; for with the freedom of the ownership of land, and the mortgaging of it in the shape of negotiable capital, landed property is always involved in debt to its full value, and passes into the hands of the capitalists. See my work, Zur Erklärung und Abhilfe der heutigen Creditnoth des Grundbesitzes. Jena, Fr. Mauke.

WW1

Chapter One An unwelcome encounter

Connie stretched her arms, her gaze meeting with the plume of white-grey smoke curling from their kitchen chimney.

‘Race you home!’ she yelled into the wind.

Charlie-Mouse tore away towards the old house, whipping up a whirl of grass cuttings, twigs and leaves, and without even a glance behind.

‘Run around the tree!’ Connie shouted.

Charlie-Mouse reached out, grabbing the trunk of an apple tree. ‘I’ll make it . . . at least three . . . times round,’ he called.

Connie brought her jazzy coloured wheelchair to a halt.
Her brother grinned, chest heaving. 'Beat you . . . by miles,' he said. 'Don't tell me . . . grass too . . . bumpy?'

Connie smoothed her shock of golden hair and rolled her rainbow bracelet back in place.

'You're so sad and immature, Charlie. You always say that. Anyway, you were ahead from the start!'

Charlie-Mouse leaned over, resting his knobbly elbows on her shoulders and bending to her ear.
'Then you should always be prepared!' he whispered, and jumped away.

Straight into the path of the gangliest boy in class.

Connie's insides crawled as the boy Malcolm Mollet lurched past them to hook a yellow notice onto the swirls of their back gate. He forced his sneeze all over it as if to cement it there, then turned round and smirked. 'Mister Charlie Boring Mouse wants to know what this says?' he crowed.

'Not particularly,' muttered Charlie-Mouse.

'Betcha do.'

Malcolm Mollet faced him square, taunting with a crooked smile. 'I'm gonna tell ya anyway. We're gonna smash it all up!'

'Smash all what up?' demanded Connie.

He spun with a menace in his eyes. 'Your house.'

She followed his finger in disbelief. Claybridge leaned out to them, its peg-tiled roof climbing and falling along the length of the dwelling. She laughed. 'Don't be mad!'

'Suit yourself,' said Malcolm, twisting his nose away.

'You are joking aren't you?' she said. 'They'd never allow it! It's over years old. It's got history and it's . . .' She pulled at the pendant around her neck. 'You are so wrong!'

'We can, and we are. So there!' Malcolm struggled with an asthmatic cough, swinging his body back and forth on the pillar of the Victorian lamp post. 'And your stupid treehouse, Dracula's Castle or whatever you call it – that's coming down too.'

'You idiot!' said Charlie-Mouse, pinning one of his solid stares straight into Malcolm Mollet's small eyes. 'You don't know what you're talking about.'

'Read it yourself, Boring, and wait and see,' threatened Malcolm. 'My old man's got the bulldozers lined up to flatten the lot. Then he's going to put stacks of new houses all over the top.' Flicking over and over at his ash-blonde fringe, the boy turned to go. He spat in the direction of the house and stalked off along the ruts on the muddy side of the path.

'You're disgusting!' Connie shouted after him.

Corberley City Council

Notice of Receipt of Planning Application

Provision of new housing on the site known as Claybridge Farm

Demolition of the aforementioned house and outbuildings . . .

As she read further, panic burned in the pit of her stomach, firing up to launch an attack on every strand of her twelve-year-old body. This is a mistake. No, don't cry – whatever you do, don't cry. She tensed up to fight it off and, breathing hard, held onto her tears and clenched her teeth. She tucked her hair firmly behind her ears and flashed her brother a determinedly explosive look.

'This time the stick insect has gone too far,' she said. 'It's the meanest trick of all.'

Chapter Two The next move

Connie's mum flustered around the kitchen, her soft olive complexion blotched with pink. 'There's been a mix-up with the lease of the house – something to do with the sale of the farmland, the war . . . and the church no longer has control,' she said, bending to open a bottom cupboard. 'The solicitors tried to help but things were messy . . . and we've decided the house is far too grand for us anyway.'

'That can't be the reason,' Connie snapped. 'We belong here. Dad's work is here. We can't let those creeps get the better of us!' Her staccato breaths shortened with increasing desperation, her bright blue eyes clouding. She stopped. The silence bit into her anger and the words spilled out – 'We're not leaving the village are we?'

'No, we're not leaving the village ? that's the blessing at least,' sighed her mum. And she began to talk at greater speed, as if her words protected her. 'The vicarage can go anywhere, as long as your father goes with it. The good news is we have the keys to Number , on the corner. It's nice enough – plenty of space. We'll start moving as and when.' She turned her face and started to sort kitchen utensils into large plastic boxes.

As and when! She meant right away by the looks of it.

Connie left her wheelchair and moved to a kitchen chair. Her mum's face crinkled. A hand whisk clattered to the floor as they held each other tight.

'Hey, hey.' Her mum spoke softly into her shoulder. 'This isn't my strong, courageous girl is it?'

Charlie-Mouse fixed his eyes downward as he stood flexing his calf muscle and kicking his foot to

dent the leg of the kitchen table. ‘Unbelievable,’ he said. ‘I wouldn’t mind so much if it were a case of someone else moving in. But this is mega bad.’

‘Jim,’ Connie’s mum called out. ‘Do come and see the children.’

A flurry of sound, like that of distant voices, nestled with the creaks and murmurings of the old house, and the solid beat of her dad’s footsteps echoed on the stone floor of the hall corridor.

Dad pushed open the door. His face matched the grey of his beard, his forehead fixed in furrows from trained and concentrative thought.

‘Ah.’ As he stretched out his hands towards her, the furrows relaxed a little. ‘You know, you two – it’s not all bad. At least they can’t knock down head office,’ he said, motioning at the church.

‘But it is all bad,’ answered Connie. ‘It’s a total disaster. I can’t believe they’re allowed . . .’ She rapped her knuckles on the tabletop, giving a glare that demanded some sort of resolution from her dad’s tired eyes.

It didn’t come.

‘I know, Darling. It’s difficult to understand – even for me. I’ve asked for divine intervention, left a fair few messages, but no one’s come back to me yet,’ he joked.

She couldn’t utter a sound in return. She picked at the stitching on her pink-and-white-striped shorts, and glared watery-eyed at the quarry tiles on the floor until they submitted to double vision.

A sharp knock at the back door threw her thoughts back together.

‘Oh, Wendy, so good of you to come,’ said her mum, brushing her hands over her eyelids and lashes to greet her friend and neighbour with a polite kiss on the cheek.

‘Not at all,’ said Wendy. ‘Afternoon Vicar? sorry if it’s a bad time. Hello Connie. Hello Charlie. I had to come . . . Mollet’s plans are the talk of the village.’

‘Sadly,’ said her mum. ‘So very sadly.’ She gestured for Wendy to take a seat and started to fill the kettle. ‘Tea?’

‘Please,’ said Wendy. ‘Blueberry, if you have some.’

The water on the bottom of the stainless steel kettle sizzled on the Aga.

‘I’ve a special supply, especially for you,’ answered her mum. ‘You know that.’

Wendy twirled her layered skirt over the empty chair seat next to Connie and sank on top of it. The skirt drifted down after her like a silk parachute, throwing up a powerful aroma of blueberry burst body lotion that swelled in Connie’s nose.

Don’t get too close to the Wendlewitch or she might turn you into a purple frog.

Connie gave half a secret smile. At school they called her Wendy the Wendlewitch. It suited her.

Connie looked upon the Wendlewitch’s shining, moon-shaped face and her sympathetic (almost

purple) eyes. The woman's chestnut hair jumbled out from a tie-dyed cotton hairband that matched the deepest purple hue in her clothing. She had a good aura about her . . . if she were a witch.

'Anything I can do to help,' said their guest, reaching one of her clay-spattered hands to Connie's forearm and sparking a static shock. 'You only have to ask.'

Connie shook her head but willed her to turn Malcolm Mollet and his dad into a pair of frogs.

'How about helping us to pack?' said her mum, with a wry smile.

'No dear, that's not the spirit,' said the Wendlewitch, raising her hands in some sort of a mini-trance. 'There are some great vibes about.' She swirled her head wildly before whipping open her eyes. 'Mind you, I do have a good supply of cases back at the pottery.'

Her mum almost laughed. 'I suppose we could do with some more. I'll send the children over after six.'

'It's not a defeat just yet. We're not going to let Mollet win this, are we?' The Wendlewitch leaned in closer. 'Not with the history of this place.'

Her mum pursed her lips.

'My dear – things are never as bad . . .'

Connie lost track of their conversation as it drifted to the subjects of objections and planning committees. Wishing for a miracle, she fell deeper and deeper into a daydream, savouring the wonderfully satisfying image of Malcolm Mollet transforming from a human stick insect into a plump purple frog.

Chapter Three Packing cases, pots and purple tea

Six o'clock had come and gone when they arrived at the pottery to collect the cases.

Connie's eyes jumped from the window display of jugs, bowls and the scattering of stilled moths and dead flies, to the Wendlewitch leaning out above with her purple mobile against one ear and her hair harassed by the afternoon breeze.

'The door's open – I'll be right down,' the Wendlewitch called, closing up with a flash of purple-painted nails.

'Come on, Charlie-Mouse,' encouraged Connie. 'Push me in.'

Her nervousness tugged inside her chest, much as it did when she came here as a small child, clinging to her parents' sides and feeling their chat thud back and forth across the scary witch's cavern.

She shuddered. The room hummed with the same mystic curiosity – from the crouching blue and

gold spotted china cats eyeing her from a top shelf, to the odd crowd of old and dented copper kettles and the collection of dusty antique fire screens cluttering the chimney breast at the far end of the room.

And so many pots ? old pots crammed full of tools, new pots to be painted, pots waiting to be fired, and pots ready to sell. Pots of all shapes and sizes, in peculiar passions of purple and blue, teetering expectantly on every available surface.

‘You wait here while I search for those cases,’ said the Wendlewitch, stooping to the floorboards and shuffling a gathering of pencils, pens and brushes into her skirt. She delivered them onto a thick spread of sun-curled notes and scraped a heavy wooden stool with carved lion’s feet away from her potter’s wheel to make way for Connie’s chair. ‘You can give her a whirl—’ she said, idly twisting the wheel to-and-fro. ‘She won’t bite.’

When the Wendlewitch let it go, the old wheel inched its way to a stop in its battered wood frame. Connie saw how it slotted into a modern construction of pinewood and metal. Wires trailed beneath, and disappeared into a switchbox at knee level, then to a floor pedal like the treddle her mum used on her electric sewing machine.

Persuasion sparkled from the Wendlewitch’s eyes, and she proceeded to drop a ball-sized lump of wet brown clay into Connie’s open hands.

The soft mass glooped as Connie passed it palm-to-palm. Sort of clammy. Sort of slimy. She curbed a serious urge to squeeze, to see the stickiness worm through the gaps. Reluctantly she cupped it into a firm ball, cradling it with her slender fingers, not wanting to let go.

‘Cool,’ said Charlie-Mouse. Sitting with his chin balanced in his hands at the adjoining worktable, he had that look, as if he were about to set off one of his badly staged throat-clearing fits to put her off.

Connie narrowed her eyes, ‘Don’t you dare,’ she mouthed, sensing the bite of clay in her mouth. But there was something else, and the feeling surprised her. It hit her with all the thrill of a fairground ride – the excitement and the fear pulling her chest tighter still.

The Wendlewitch gave the potter’s wheel a helpful and determined spin using the tips of her ring-clad fingers. ‘Ready?’ she asked.

Connie nodded. Throwing down her clay, she dipped her fingers into the water bowl. But as she drew them back to the wheel, a rush of air swirled out from its centre and around her body. She forced her eyes from the mesmerising spin to fix upon the mystical outline of the Wendlewitch’s face. Scattered particles of light teased the air about her into a haze.

In an instant of purple confusion, the Wendlewitch whirled out of view and her pottery workshop went with her.

A new atmosphere pervaded.

The musty smell of wood and chalk dust hit Connie's nostrils. She fell forward onto a sloped wooden desk, knocking hard into her funny bone.

'What on earth . . ?' exclaimed Charlie-Mouse, his voice echoing around the empty room. He slid off the back wall and into a seat behind her, scraping hard at her combats. But she didn't move a muscle. She couldn't – even though her elbow ached madly and she wanted to shake away the pain ricocheting through her body. Neither could she make a sound ? her mouth was sealed tight and her tongue glued to the back of her teeth. She moved only her eyes. Hanging portraits of kings, queens and prime ministers glowered back. The background scream of the overhead gas lighting, the whipping of the wind and the shrieks from outside added their challenges to her senses.

Stay calm, breathe, and relax. Everything's fine.

Someone came into the room. Startled, she nodded and smiled politely, clicking her heels in perfect time across the polished floor. The outside noise built to crescendo as the lady opened the door and blew sharply on her whistle. At once the shrieks fell and the playing children – with small boxes dutifully strung across their bodies – hurried into line. 'Be quick about it,' the lady instructed. The room filled – they moved along the lines of desks – shoes plain and practical, laced and buttoned, and polished in black or brown. Two to a bench seat – their backs a combination of coloured cardigans, pinafores, pullovers, shirts and tanktops.

'Settle down please.' The lady cleaned the blackboard with a damp cloth and swung it over to the dry side. She took up a chalk and headed, Monday, th September, .

A half-breath warmed at Connie's neck as Charlie-Mouse stifled another gasp. He clenched his grip on her hair.

'Be calm and considered in your writing – your parents will expect it.'

The children dipped their inkpens. As they drew the pens across the page, the background hiss of silence changed its tone and the invasive sound of a low-altitude propeller aircraft took hold. A girl with bobbed auburn hair looked up with apprehension, only to be waved down by the lady with the chalk. 'One of ours,' the teacher said.

'Do something!' hissed Charlie-Mouse.

'I can't.' Now Connie wanted to cry, or to laugh. Charlie-Mouse pulled harder at her hair. Her head was spinning . . . then she heard a clash of teacups.

Connie found herself back in the pottery, at the potter's wheel, and with her brother by her side.

Nothing had changed from the moment they had left, except that three steaming cups of strong smelling tea enticed her from the trolley and, strangely, she could still hear the sound of the

propeller aircraft. It had followed them into the present day – its sound gradually melding with the quiet whirr and the click from the wheel as it slowed to a stop.

‘Ssshhh,’ breathed the Wendlewitch, with one artistic finger placed to her lips. ‘I have something to confess.’

Chapter Four Of magic and history

‘Ouch!’ Connie howled, wincing at several sharp pulls to her temple as Charlie-Mouse released the final few strands of hair.

The Wendlewitch passed two cups of tea over the top of the potter’s wheel and took up her own. She crash-closed her eyelids and sipped. With a tilt of her head she swallowed, and appeared to stretch her thoughts to the top of the chimney breast. Connie fixed upon the flickering concentration in the mauve creases of her eyeshadow.

‘My oh my, and after all this time,’ the Wendlewitch muttered. ‘No wonder the whispers were spinning me a merry dance.’

‘Where did we go to?’ Connie demanded.

‘That’s for you to say, my dear.’

Connie sent the Wendlewitch her hardest stare. ‘You knew it would happen. You planned it. You wanted Charlie and me to spin the wheel!’

The Wendlewitch put down her cup and held up her hands in surrender. ‘Can you admit you wished for something extra special, in your heart, my dear?’

Connie thought of the house – her mother’s tear-stained face and her dad’s anxious expression. ‘Yes,’ she conceded.

A click sounded from one of Charlie-Mouse’s knees. ‘OK, so are you a witch?’ he said.

The Wendlewitch peered over the top of her purple-rimmed glasses then threw back her head, laughing. ‘Goodness gracious me, no, my dear! But you can call me the guardian of the wheel. And I suppose over the years some of her magic has rubbed off on me.’

The Wendlewitch cast her hand over the top of the potter’s wheel, picking up a bright purple flash of electrostatic energy and drew it through the air with her fingertips. Everything around her jumped to life – the wood in the woodstove burst into flame, the copper kettles steamed, the pencils, pens and brushes danced themselves into an empty pot, and the spotted cats began to play.

‘None of it’s very . . . funny . . . whoa . . .’ Charlie-Mouse said, backing into a pile of packing cases.

Connie kept one hand gripped to her wheelchair and grabbed his T-shirt to pull him forward.

‘Not funny,’ said the Wendlewitch, clicking her fingers. ‘Useful, maybe.’ The purple glow about her dimmed and all fell still.

The last warming drops of radiance awakened Connie’s hopes. ‘We were here,’ she said, letting go of Charlie-Mouse. ‘In this room . . . and it was .’

‘Aha,’ the Wendlewitch replied. ‘When the world changed again and people were displaced.’

‘What has that got to do with anything?’ Charlie-Mouse said.

‘Ssshhh!’ said Connie, shoving her hand over his mouth.

‘My dears, your house is whispering of it too. What I can say is, not long into the war, the owners had to move. It was a standard military thing, they said. But the rumours spread fast.’

‘Rumours?’ whispered Connie. She caught sight of her mum collecting in the last of the washing. She pictured bulldozers advancing across the lawn with menacing speed – it twisted her insides and stabbed at her heart. She tempted her fingers over the wheel. ‘Then we need to know what they were about.’

A look of fear folded its way into her brother’s expression. ‘Hang on. These things are written in record books, aren’t they?’

The Wendlewitch shook her head. ‘You would think so . . .’

‘No. The house is calling for help. We have to go back,’ said Connie.

‘But . . .’ said Charlie-Mouse.

‘But not today,’ said the Wendlewitch. ‘The wheel’s energy is truly spent – anything might happen. You sleep on it – we’ll meet again soon enough.’

Chapter Five Rewind

Claybridge Farm

Wednesday, th September,

Dear Mummy and Daddy,

It is exactly as we remembered it. Claybridge Farm is so very big! Bert got lost when we played hide and seek yesterday. I found him in the end; he was in the attic room. He said he would like it for his bedroom when Auntie Evie moves her sewing machine and the trunks full of old clothes. (She says she is going to send the clothes to the Red Cross because then other people can use them.) Bert likes the view from up there, he says he gets a good look at the planes going over to the airfield

at Castle Camps, but I'm more than happy to stay in the guest bedroom because it used to be yours. It has the highest ceiling I've seen. I sometimes have to pull the light cord over my head in the middle of the night because I don't know where I am. Bert always gets cross and turns the light off again. It's funny that you are not in the room next to me but I imagine that you are.

Thank you for our going-away presents. My lovely doll is sitting on my bedspread right now. Bert is delighted with his matchstick cannon. He keeps firing matchstick pieces along the windowsills and out of the window at Uncle Geoffrey.

Daddy, I hope you have done your packing. Please write to us soon because we want to know what you are doing and where you are sleeping. I hope there isn't going to be any bombing or fighting where you are.

It is quite exciting here. We started school this week. Miss Regent is an excellent teacher. She is kind and funny, and sometimes strict! She lives in the village too, so Auntie Evie says.

Auntie Evie is going to teach us some first aid. She wants to make sure that everyone in the village knows what to do in case of an emergency. I'm quite glad she is a nurse.

We miss you loads and loads and will write as often as we possibly can.

Lots of love from Kit and Bert xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

BON VOYAGE DADDY !!!!

P.S. Daddy, Bert has drawn you a picture of the view from the attic room to take with you. You can see the whole village from up there.

P.P.S. Mummy, Bert says please could you send his slippers. They are at the back of his wardrobe.

Chapter Six In Dracula's Castle

A cloud haze covered the morning sky and the sun strained to break through. As Connie tapped a mass of wartime search words into her laptop, a wet and sticky paper pellet shot through the open window of the large treehouse, landing between the keys.

'I don't know how he even dares!' she seethed. 'He wants attention – he doesn't get enough of it at home.' She poked her scowling sun-freckled face out of the window to see Malcolm Mollet's lanky figure scuttling off down the public pathway towards the pottery. 'Ugh, so vile!' She screwed up her face harder. 'I feel sorry for the Wendlewitch. Fancy having him as a nephew.' Piercing the sticky pellet with a pencil, she huffed and shook it violently out of the gap it came through.

She froze. Malcolm Mollet's dad was parading his awkward six-foot figure up their bricked garden path. She watched him wander along the back of the house, checking his designer suit every now and again in the window panes. 'They're not in,' she said, in a harsh whisper. 'Go away.'

But Malcolm Mollet's dad didn't go away. It seemed he wasn't bothered whether there was anyone in or not. As the church clock chimed he began to nose around the outside of the house, making scribblings in a large black portfolio. Drawing out an enormous tape measure, he trounced over lawn and shrub beds to get from one side of her dad's beautifully kept garden to the other. He shoved his file onto the side of a large terracotta pot brimming with lavender and extracted his mobile phone, wobbling as he stood with one polished toe resting on their doorstep. 'Is that the planning office? Good, yes. No time to chat – take this down,' he said. 'Forty houses. Terraced. Courtyard gardens. No, no, I've changed my mind – fill in the stream and make it eighty. Scrap the courtyard gardens, just give them an outside cupboard for a dustbin – we don't want the new residents to leave a mess.' Malcolm Mollet's dad tossed his head towards Dracula's Castle. Connie fell back from the window. 'Shame about the church,' he continued, giving its patchworked tower a torrid glance. 'It's always in the way. But I'll pray for it to fall down.' He snorted a laugh before regaining his self-control.

Connie's eyes widened until they moved no more. She put her hand over her mouth to stop herself from calling out.

'Perfect business strategy – we are to be congratulated.' Malcolm Mollet's dad snapped his phone shut and flicked again at his perfectly plucked moustache. 'Out with the old and in with the new, lots of money for me and you!' he crooned in a cringeworthy caterwauling of tunelessness, and disappeared around the corner.

Connie groaned. 'He thinks he's won.'

Mollet the Wallet strikes again.'

'This is no time for jokes, Charlie,' she said, pushing her laptop into a bag and thrusting it at him.

'Let's put it off a bit longer.'

'No! It's late enough,' she called.

She slid down the ramp in defiance of her weak leg muscles. She hadn't forgotten the ladder burn on her hands and knees from the last time they raced each other down. Her hands had stung every time she turned her wheels.

This time, the Wendlewitch didn't lean out of her top window. They waited for several minutes but nobody came.

'Look, it says it's open,' said Connie. 'It'll be OK.'

'Do you think so?'

'Come on, Charlie – where's your on-field courage now?'

She flung the pottery shop door wide open and wiggled her nose at the smell of blueberry burst body lotion. It drew her right across the room, her wheels hardly making a sound on the old boards. She looked fearfully at the laden shelves climbing upwards and over her head. The flickering turquoise in the eyes of the china cats made her jump. ‘Oh,’ she exclaimed, pushing Charlie-Mouse ahead.

To her shock, he knelt on the lion stool, gripped the wheel with both hands and started using it as a steering wheel.

‘Dodgems,’ he said, forcing a grin.

She slapped her hands on his. ‘Time travellers don’t do dodgems. Be sensible,’ she hissed.

He huffed. ‘All right, which way does it spin?’

‘Anti-clockwise of course. Use the motor.’

He put his foot on the pedal. ‘Bet nothing happens.’

The wheel started circling and Charlie-Mouse pressed his foot all the way down. Connie shuddered as its magical energy began to encompass her body.

Chapter Seven The kitchen front

Claybridge Farm

Saturday, th May,

Dear Mummy,

We bought sweets with our ration books yesterday. It was quite exciting. I haven’t eaten them all yet. We are having a competition to see who can save the most sweets for the longest time. I am not doing as well as Bert! Uncle Geoff told us that even Princess Elizabeth has a ration book! I wonder if she has competitions with Princess Margaret. Bert says he’s going to buy hundreds and thousands next time because they’ll last longer. I’m not sure I will, I much prefer pear drops. I wouldn’t mind finding out whether or not Princess Elizabeth likes pear drops.

We have been helping in the gardens, converting some of the rose beds into vegetable patches. I planted onions and radishes. Bert planted runner beans. Uncle Geoff didn’t risk potatoes this year; he is using the fields for wheat and barley. He is hoping for a good supply of apples and damsons from the orchard. So are we.

There’s been talk in the village about a Local Defence Volunteers group. It will be a mini army, I think, and will make us all feel safer. Bert wants to join but he is too young.

Lots of love from Kit xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

P.S. Some important visitors came here yesterday. They all wore uniforms and badges and arrived in several big cars.

Summer

Chapter Eight ‘Spitfire Summer’

The outdoors rushed at her, crashing into her face and over her bare knees. She opened her eyes to see a surprisingly more fragile Claybridge reaching out through the heat haze – its walls paled, windows darkened. The door to the kitchen tipped open and a warm wafting of baking and a comforting clink of china brought life to her senses.

Her eyes drifted past Charlie-Mouse to follow the long winding driveway to the road – a collection of barns and a cart-shed confused her. She looked for the pottery shop. ‘Thank goodness,’ she said, releasing her brother’s damp hand from hers. She pulled her wheelchair back, and tried to relax from the tension stressing her from head to toe.

‘Scary,’ Charlie-Mouse whispered. ‘I mean more than before.’

‘Sssh,’ she said.

Through a low stile, not far away, a boy and a girl of about her age layed on the soft grass. The boy rolled over and looked at the sky. The girl she recognised from the schoolroom pored over the front-page of the newspaper, her bobbed auburn hair dropping over her face.

‘France falls, now the battle for Britain,’ the girl said aloud. She folded up the newspaper with a sigh. ‘Whatever is going to happen?’ The girl sat up. ‘Hello there!’ she cried in welcome delight. ‘Wait, I’m coming over.’ She grabbed the paper and her gas mask box. ‘Have you come from abroad?’ She looked them up and down with clear uncertainty.

In a worrying moment, Connie straightened the hem of the blue lycra T-shirt she was wearing. ‘Er, yes, no, well it’s the latest fashion . . .’ she said, thinking of her cousins. ‘Er . . . in Canada.’

The girl in red and white skipped with delight. ‘How lucky to go to Canada. I’ve never been on a liner.’

Charlie-Mouse swayed uneasily.

The girl talked on merrily. ‘We don’t know anyone here yet, apart from Uncle Geoff and Auntie Evie, that is. Do you know them? We’ve been evacuated from North London. We were so lucky to come together. ‘Our whole school has been evacuated to Dorset. Mummy thought about it but Auntie Evie wouldn’t hear of us going. So here we are. Are you thirsty . . . there’s apple juice in the larder.’ She climbed through the stile, the pleats of her cotton skirt blowing in the breeze.

The boy in long shorts jumped to his feet.

‘They’ve been abroad,’ said the girl.

‘Good show,’ he said, offering his hand. I’m Albert Arthur Tyler, Bert for short, and this is Kathleen Rose, my sister.

‘Do call me Kit,’ the girl invited, her red hair ribbon shining.

Connie offered her hand. ‘I’m Connie and this is Charlie although everyone calls him Charlie-Mouse.’

‘A school joke,’ Charlie-Mouse explained.

‘He’s not a mouse, as you can see!’ said Connie, raising her eyes to meet his.

Kit smiled – her face animated with interest and her eyes alive. Bert mirrored her fun, standing as tall as Charlie-Mouse but a contrast in looks. Bert’s porcelain skin shone brighter than any boy’s she had ever seen, and he didn’t have that all-together serious expression like Charlie-Mouse often did.

‘You will stay awhile, won’t you?’ Kit continued. ‘We’ll get that drink.’

She took hold of Connie’s wheelchair by the handles. ‘I know a boy in our street at home but his wheelchair doesn’t look as handy as this. In fact I’m not sure where he is right now. Do you know, Bert? He might be in Dorset. I do hope he’s OK.’

‘I’m sure he’s fine,’ nodded Bert. ‘His mother went too.’

‘Yes, you’re right.’ Kit opened her arms and surprised Connie with a flourishing embrace. ‘Well, this is certainly the nicest surprise we’ve had for absolutely ages,’ she said.

Connie’s heart pattered as they went into the cool of the kitchen. The array of scones and biscuits on the cooling trays along the counter set her mouth watering. She turned her face from one wall to the other – the room had hardly changed – the glass-moulded lampshade, the light switches, the colour of the doors, and even the chairs under the kitchen table stood out with haunting familiarity.

‘Hello,’ Auntie Evie said, glancing curiously at the top of Charlie-Mouse’s head.

Her brother made a quick attempt to flatten his spiked hair.

Auntie Evie dropped the heavy glasses from her face to hang over her bosom and washed her hands before going into the larder. She reappeared smiling with a large jug of juice – her fresh-featured face and smooth apple-rosy cheeks aglow. Her wavy hair – the same auburn shade as Kit’s – was tied loosely behind. Her patterned dress was buttoned and simple, and covered on top with a sleeveless housecoat. Her dark shoes laced and her legs bare.

‘This is what’s needed, isn’t it,’ she beamed. ‘I’m expecting Uncle Geoff to come in soon – we’ve

things to talk about.' Her cheeks dimpled with anxiety then bloomed once again. 'I'll bargain he can smell fresh-baked biscuits from five miles.' She smiled as she poured. 'So what have you got planned for this hot afternoon? Something cooling?'

'We could go to the stream,' Kit said. 'Now that we have such good company.'

'Sounds the best idea of all. You can ask your uncle to help you find the fishing nets.'

'That's a perfect plan,' Kit said.

Connie only smiled while her insides churned – she wasn't sure they should go too far away.

As her eyes adjusted to the shade of the barn, Connie made out several baskets of plums laid out on a stony earth floor adorned with stray lengths of straw. Sunlight filtered like golden raindrops through the wooden rafters, creating shimmering pools of light. Gradually a large mound of straw loomed into view.

'Look out!' Kit shouted, as someone tumbled over the top of the mound and landed with a bump at Connie's feet.

Bert pulled the straw from the collar of his blue cotton shirt and ruffled his light brown curls to get rid of the bits. Connie ducked her head to hide her amusement.

'See any nets on yer way down?' chuckled Uncle Geoff.

Bert straightened up and brushed dust from his bare shins. 'Yes, Sir,' he said, with a wink.

Uncle Geoff took off his hat to reveal a kindly smile on a face crazed by the sun. Stretching out a browned arm to reach a collection of nets, he unlooped a length of rope and lowered two small pails. 'Yer set,' he said, 'Apart from one thing. I'll get some spare Mickey Mouse masks ? they're all I 'ave I'm afraid.' He disappeared and returned a few moments later with two small cardboard boxes. 'Want 'em back mind, they belong to the school.' The man retrieved a sturdy black bicycle from the shadows. 'So many comings and goings,' he sighed, and put on his hat.

'Follow me!' called Bert.

Charlie-Mouse gave Connie a lasting look, then ran after Bert at speed through a scattering of geese and ducks, with a sleek black Labrador in tow.

'Let them go,' laughed Kit.

It was far too sticky to follow at any other pace than slow. Kit opened the gate and they started to brush through the grasses in the direction of the stream. Warm summer scents swirled through Connie's throat as she wheeled through the turning stalks. Insects jumped, spiders scurried, flies hovered and invisible grasshoppers gently ground their back legs. The sun powered onto her

forearms and pulsed her mind with questions she wanted to ask.

‘I think I saw you in school,’ she said.

‘Are you joining us?’ Kit said. ‘How lovely to hear it. I’ll introduce you.’

They crossed a dusty boundary, emerging on shorter, greener meadowgrass. Connie spoke again.

‘Do you think you’ll be staying at Claybridge for long?’

‘Gosh, we don’t know,’ Kit replied. ‘It depends how the war is going. We’ve been told to expect more bombing? they hit Norwich last week and that’s the frightening thing. Some of the evacuees come from the centre of Norwich. Teddy Bacon’s grandpa is lying seriously injured in hospital. Teddy’s so worried he keeps crying in class. It makes us even more nervous.’

‘It’s hard to be away from home.’

‘So very hard. We miss our parents terribly. Mummy writes every week and we write back. We write to Daddy too. But he can’t always reply. But he’s fine because we heard last week,’ she said, taking charge of Connie’s handles. ‘Are your parents far from here?’

‘Oh . . . I really don’t know.’

‘Oh you poor thing – in the services are they? It’s so difficult.’

‘It’s OK,’ Connie replied, knowing she owed Kit a more truthful explanation.

‘We have to keep on being brave don’t we, like our parents and everyone else in this war. Daddy said he thought it would take a few years to reach peace. Mummy said it wouldn’t be as long. It’s good we have Auntie Evie and Uncle Geoff to look after us, but I do miss my normal life and I do so want to go home . . .’ She drew a long breath and closed her eyes. ‘One day soon, for all our sakes,’ she murmured, leaving her special dream floating in the air.

Kit’s dream drifted into Connie’s consciousness, filling her heart with fear. For she too wanted to go home, and it scared her she didn’t know when that might be. Pressing on, she summoned her resolve from somewhere deep inside, pulling new strength from the beauty around her. She curled to stroke the drying flower of a bee orchid peeping at her through the sweeping of grass. Quietly above, a formation of planes drew parallel lines across the vivid blue.

Now she heard Charlie-Mouse’s laughter and the sound of stones landing in water. A more sudden bark and a sharp crack from behind jumped her head towards the house. Several vehicles turned their wheels along the driveway.

‘Oh, it’s a meeting, I think. They come and go quite often now,’ explained Kit. ‘I don’t know who they are, and I don’t think Auntie Evie truly knows either. If so, she doesn’t say.’

Summer

Chapter Nine Secrets abound

‘Oh fish, where are you?’ Bert sang out, dragging Connie’s attention from the driveway. The boys braced the grassy bank looking into the sparkling water, and by the depth of it she knew the weather had been dry for a time. Bert stripped off his shirt and jumped in. He stood motionless as his rough splashes turned to ripples and smoothed into the flow. He beckoned to Charlie-Mouse. ‘Come in quietly and we’ll catch them by surprise,’ he said. Charlie-Mouse stretched his legs into the water. Connie saw by his grimace the cold bit cruelly into the backs of his knees.

‘There!’ Kit pointed. ‘Sticklebacks, and they’re coming your way.’

‘They’ll do,’ said Bert, poising his net.

Out of nowhere, the black Labrador nudged past her, leaping carelessly into the stream.

‘Hey!’ Charlie-Mouse exclaimed. ‘I’m soaked!'

‘He wants a game!’ Connie replied. ‘Can’t you tell?’

‘Not now!’ said Bert. ‘He’ll have to wait.’

‘Come on Solo,’ encouraged Kit. ‘You’re not wanted.’ She found a stick and hurled it. Eagerly, the dripping dog clawed his way to the bank and chased over the meadow.

Connie settled herself in the casual shade of a weeping willow. She kicked off her pumps and stretched her toes to tickle them in the grass. Rhythmically with her heel, she smoothed a patch of thicker green grass growing close to the edge of the water. She welcomed the cool touch of the blades under her legs. ‘It’s so peaceful,’ she said, her words blending with the breeze, ‘you wouldn’t guess . . .’

‘That’s the thing,’ said Kit. ‘At the moment it’s peaceful, but you never know do you, there could be air strikes anywhere and at anytime. Gas attacks, Uncle Geoff says. I wouldn’t want to be back in London right now either, but I do want to be with Mummy. She says we’re better off here.’ She rattled her sandals to let the grassy bits fall onto the water. Connie watched as the flecks moved with the flow, creating shadowy speckles on the gravel bed of the stream. Kit spoke again. ‘You know she’s been sleeping in the underground – one of the safest places to shelter, some say. And I’m glad, but I worry about her catching a chill, even so. I tell Lucy, sometimes, late at night.’

‘Who’s Lucy?’

‘My doll,’ she laughed. ‘Mummy gave her to me as a going-away present – she’s like a little sister to me and I tell her my worries about the war. It makes me feel better.’

Both girls turned to lie over the waterside. Connie dipped the tips of her fingers. ‘Where are your school friends now?’

‘My best friend Margerie was billeted to a family living north of Lyme Regis on the Dorset-Devon border. Mummy tells me the news. It was lovely at first, Margerie said, but now she is fed up with walking up and down the coast, and especially with the sight of the twisted coils of wire on the seafront. She wants to go home, and if you ask me I think her mother will collect her soon.’

‘Can she go home?’

‘There’s nothing to stop her is there?’

Connie didn’t know what to say. She didn’t know the rules of evacuation, if there were any. Her knowledge of wartime life had its limits and she couldn’t pretend she knew about the things going on around her. Butterflies danced in her stomach as she threw a small twig of willow into the water and watched it drift away under the brick-and-clay footbridge.

‘Do you believe in magic?’ she dared to ask. ‘Real magic?’

Kit laughed. ‘I believe in dreams coming true.’

‘Have you ever dreamed what life might be like at another time?’

‘I think I have wondered,’ Kit answered. ‘Yes, I suppose I do. I sometimes dream we are in the wrong time. That we’d been born long before the war. That we’d never left home. I sometimes dream that the newspaper headlines read that war is over and we have won. I imagine I can see Mummy holding the paper to show us, and it’s as plain as day.’

‘That’s a good dream, and it’ll come, I’m sure,’ said Connie.

Kit started to pull strands of grass from a tussock. She built a small mound and covered it with daisies. ‘My dream castle,’ she laughed. ‘I’ll wish upon my dream castle.’

‘And if you realised you could see life in another time, without dreaming?’

‘Don’t be silly,’ giggled Kit. ‘My goodness, to travel through time, that would be headline news. Even more than victory itself.’

Connie’s fervent gaze had stopped her dead and she sat bolt upright, drawing both her hands up to her head and pushing her fingers into her hair. ‘Do they believe it in Canada?’ she asked, half laughing.

Connie’s silence was potent. Kit reached out with a quivering arm. ‘You’re scaring me,’ she said. ‘You look so very serious.’

Connie unhooked her pendant and laid it in the palm of her hand.

For Connie, October

Kit gripped at Connie's hand.

'It's the day I was born.'

Kit sat back on her heels, her mouth gaping wide. 'But it's not possible. You haven't been born yet!'

'I'm not a ghost that's for sure. I am real. A hundred per cent,' Connie declared. 'Just like you . . .'

She pulled a daisy and pushed it into the dream castle.

'Real? Who's real?' came a voice. Bert splashed down a pail of water.

'But . . . how? How on earth . . .' Kit stumbled, dragging her auburn hair behind her ears. Moisture glistened in her green-flecked eyes and rising to her knees she clutched at her brother's legs.

Connie watched her friends' emotions chase to keep up as she spoke of the magic of the potter's wheel, the Wendlewitch, and of a different time spent at Claybridge. Bert fidgeted, flitting his eyes between the circling fish and Charlie-Mouse. Whole tears clung in the corners of Kit's eyes, and when at last they began to tumble to wet the corners of her smile, Connie floundered. She hated herself for even thinking she were able to explain about Malcolm Mollet's dad, and bring yet another fear into their unstable world, right now. 'We need your help,' she said, when she could hold it in no longer. 'We have to find out what's happening here – it's very important.'

The late afternoon sun stripped through the trees to dance across Connie's face as she retraced her path over the shadow-draped meadow. Bert pointed to the two large cars starting up ahead – shrouds on their headlights and white paint along the edges of the wings. A man of imposing stature in military uniform nodded the peak of his cap in the direction of the front door of the farmhouse. He paused to light up a cigar, looking upwards to see the profile of an aircraft marking a trail across the early evening sky. He got into the back of the car and the vehicles moved off.

Once again, the dark green propeller aircraft drilled into her thoughts – it passed overhead, seeming to draw a shroud of dark cloud over the rich mauves above her. A chill took to the air. Connie rubbed at the goose bumps on her arms but as she raised her head, her senses swirled out of control. She thought she heard a girl's voice but by now she was unable to place it.

Chapter Ten Missing you

Claybridge Farm

Tuesday, th September

Dear Mummy,

It's raining again and I feel many more miles away from you than usual. I can't tell you how relieved we all were to hear your voice. We miss it very much, and Daddy's too. Kit cried when you said that our street had been one of the lucky ones.

After your telephone call, Auntie Evie told us how Mr and Mrs Dougan's house near the docks had disappeared in the smoke. I hope they are being looked after. How lucky nobody was hurt when the bombs blew the windows out at Buckingham Palace.

Kit says "thank you" for knitting her some new gloves. They arrived yesterday. Thanks very much for mine too. We will need them soon. We've already been busy helping Uncle Geoff to store everything for Winter.

We are having a good time back at school but we still have home work to do. This isn't so good. Hope you and Granny are well. Please tell us when you hear again from Daddy. He hasn't been able to reply to us yet.

We hear the planes at night and pray that you'll be all right.

Love from Bert xxxxxx

Chapter Eleven Back to earth

Something pulled them through the twilight chill and into the stuffy heat of the pottery shop. The noise of the aircraft dropped away and she found herself following the final few turns of the potter's wheel before it stopped dead.

'Oh no!' Connie said, aghast. 'It's too early to be back.'

Charlie-Mouse sat entranced. She pinched him. 'Charlie! Are you even listening to me? Spin it again!'

He shook his head. 'We don't know what'll happen. We could end up anywhere.'

'But we need to be there,' she shouted. She put her hands up to her cheeks – heat burning through the gaps between her fingers. 'We've only got until . . .' Clay dust teased inside her throat and she coughed until she hurt. 'Oh . . . why do you always spoil things?'

A hush fell between them and the cluttered room closed in on her. The sun-drenched china cats looked as if they would leap straight down into her lap.

'We can wait,' Charlie-Mouse said.

'I've changed my mind,' she growled. 'Right now I'm hot, tired and I need a drink.'

'Then I vote we go home.'

‘Well it won’t be for tea.’ She pushed her watch in front of her brother’s face. ‘No time has passed at all!’

They made their way along the shaded pathway. Connie tickled her toes in the itchings of grass wedged into her pumps, Kit’s pretty voice replaying in her mind. So immersed was she that she nearly collided with two removal men coming around the corner with a large piece of furniture. She reversed hurriedly, knocking into the notice on the gate. ‘Good,’ she said.

Mum looked more cheerful, meandering between assortments on the lawn. ‘Sally Army collectors,’ she explained. ‘Taking away a few things that won’t fit in. Someone will want them. Now where was I?’ She pointed at the piles. ‘Charity, rubbish, recycling, and Wendy will have that I’m sure,’ she said, putting down an oversize copper kettle. ‘I should have done this years ago. I don’t know quite why we’ve been keeping all this stuff.’

‘Because it might be useful some day?’ offered Connie.

‘It might be, or it might not – I have a new philosophy anyway,’ said her mum.

‘Don’t tell me,’ said Connie. ‘Out with the old, in with the new?’

‘Precisely.’

A good attempt at putting on a brave face

Her mum bent to kiss her forehead. ‘I’ll bring you a cold drink and a piece of flapjack,’ she said. ‘Your dad’s getting some papers together for the planning office. In case. But we’re running out of days.’

Connie got out of her wheelchair and sat with her head resting against the tree trunk at the foot of Dracula’s Castle. She could hear her dad in the study, rustling papers, but she couldn’t see him. The dark emptiness of the room lunged at her through the open French doors. She strained her eyes further. Charlie-Mouse’s rugby trophies and her riding rosettes had been tidied from the mantelpiece and her dad’s disordered piles of books and stacks of papers were gone, replaced with a neatly positioned collection of packed boxes beneath the fireplace and around the desk.

One of her earliest memories was of crawling in from the garden to look at the shining brass microscope on the enormous study desk. How exciting it was when her dad opened the bottom drum to reveal a secret compartment of homemade slides.

‘The sign of an enquiring mind,’ the vicar said to his children. ‘Shall we see what’s inside? Bat Hair,’ he read, taking out the first one. ‘Or there’s Bee’s Wing and this one is Horse Hair. Which do you fancy first?’ Four-year old Connie placed them on the heavy writing desk. ‘This one,’ she said. Their dad put Bat Hair on the circular plate under the lens and tilted the mirror to catch the light.

'There it is,' Charlie-Mouse said. 'Looks fluffy.'

'Poor, poor bat!' Connie remarked and crawled underneath the desk. And while her brother looked at the slides, she happily slipped her tiny hand behind the drawers and into all the darkest nooks and crannies to explore for hidden treasure. She found a shiny coin. 'Daddy, Daddy, let's put this under the magnifying glass,' she said, emerging with renewed excitement to sit on top of the desk and look into the microscope.

Now the microscope was packed, along with the trophies and the rosettes, and the desk surface was bare. She slipped off her shoes and closed her eyes – for a moment or two. The house whispered to her, and her mind started to play with the conversations she had shared with Kit, and with image of the two large cars pulling away from the driveway.

Chapter Twelve Gathering pace

The next day she couldn't get Charlie-Mouse out of bed early enough. When at last she heard him thumping about, it sounded as if he were scrambling over an assault course.

Something made her look out of the kitchen window. She clasped her hand over her mouth. There was Malcolm Mollet climbing down from Dracula's Castle with a sleeping bag cast over one shoulder. She flung open the kitchen door and pushed herself onto the path.

'Hey!' she shouted. 'Get out of there, now!'

Malcolm turned his head but didn't connect.

'What are you doing? This is still our house, you know!'

Still no reply. Malcolm dragged the sleeping bag over the rosebeds, catching it on thorns as he headed towards the gate.

'Come back and explain! Coward!' she called out.

A mumble met her ears. 'Dad,' was all she caught.

'Can you believe it!' she said. She looked up at Charlie-Mouse's window. He stared down at her, and vanished.

The stairs clattered to the sound of his arrival.

'His dad might've chucked him out,' he said, scraping his chair to the table.

'I don't reckon,' Connie replied. 'He's all he has. Mrs Mollet got shot of them both.'

'OK so they had a fight about something and he crashed out here.' He crunched into his toast.

'Makes a change from the pottery,' Connie said. 'The Wendlewitch must be sick of him.'

'You're joking aren't you! He won't set foot inside. He thinks she's a total crackpot.'

‘Then do you suppose he went home?’

‘S’pect. He’ll probably go and hang out at the green with his gang. Not that they like him either. They only stick with him because their dads worship his dad,’ Charlie-Mouse sneered.

‘Who told you?’

‘I’ve heard it from the bus crowd. Will Long and those older boys dare him to be rude to everyone, then jeer behind his back.’

‘That’s a bit sad.’

‘He’s sad.’ Charlie-Mouse tipped his orange juice into his mouth. ‘But to be honest I don’t give a stuff about any of them.’

Connie slammed the fridge door. ‘Good, then you’re ready to come with me,’ she said.

The tang of hot blueberry tea tippled in and out of Connie’s nose with the gentle gust circulating the maze of potted plants sitting on the floor of the conservatory at the back of the pottery shop. A peculiar purr curled around her head and was swallowed up into an enormous ‘A . . . tish . . . shoo!!’ The Wendlewitch brought her purple handkerchief to her nose. ‘Typical,’ she complained, ‘On a luddly suddy mornig.’

‘Can we get you anything?’ Connie asked.

‘Do, danks,’ replied the Wendlewitch. ‘I’ve taken a dose of lincedus and now I feel quite woozy.’ She tried to draw air through her nose, then fluttered her lids and exhaled as a dragon would breathe fire, sinking with a ‘phew’ into the cushions on her rattan sofa. Connie was sure she glimpsed a sweep of purple sparks following behind.

‘Waid the hour the magig wanes, and time will brig you back again,’ the Wendlewitch burbled cryptically, waving her arm past the leaves of a gargantuan cheese plant towards the door to her pottery workshop.

‘Are you saying that’s how we come back?’ questioned Connie.

No answer returned – the Wendlewitch’s eyebrows twitched, her lids fluttered and a succession of lightly stuffed-up snores resounded.

‘That doesn’t seem very definite,’ said Charlie-Mouse. ‘I’m not sure if I trust this magic. Connie ignored him. She rolled her wheelchair wheels back and forth and pointed firmly at the door to the workshop.

There he was again! Malcolm Mollet with his sticky forehead and greasy nose splayed tightly on the window glass in front of her. He eyeballed her then pulled his face away leaving a larger and a

smaller splodge. ‘Yuk!’ she exclaimed, hoping he might hear. The boy thrust his chin into the air. ‘Go home!’ she mouthed. Malcolm turned his head and disappeared out of sight. She huffed, edging up to the potter’s wheel. ‘Now keep close, Charlie,’ she said.

Chapter Thirteen Christmas is coming

Claybridge Farm

Tuesday, th December

Dear Mummy,

We have been spending the morning helping to paint the edges of the window glass with black paint and sticking on some more tape. Auntie Evie says that we need to make sure our blackouts are good because there are so many windows here. It was very funny, Mummy, Bert got his arms and his hair completely covered in paint and had to have a bath to soak for more than three-quarters of an hour. I didn’t want to go in after him this time!

This afternoon we started to make some extra decorations for the tree. Auntie Evie gave us some coloured paper and scraps of material. I have sewn a star especially for you in case you can’t come to see us next week after all. Uncle Geoff has dug the tree from the garden already and says he’ll bring it inside tomorrow, a day earlier than usual. We can’t wait!

Daddy wrote to us this week! He drew a beautiful picture of Father Christmas laden with a sack of presents. The woman at the Post Office was almost as excited as we were. We are taking it in turns to keep the letter by our beds. It’s been the best time ever.

With lots and lots of love and Christmas kisses from Kit xxxxxxxxxxxx

P.S. I am so very thankful that Margerie has returned to Dorset. I think she will be pleased to be able to go to school again in the New Year.

P.P.S. Auntie E. has some important news to tell you when she telephones.

Winter

Chapter Fourteen Winter arrival

‘Whoa!’ Bert shouted out, careering into Connie at the bottom of the stairs. His Wellington boots went flying from his hands and into her lap. He straightened up, blinking his eyes from underneath a woolly hat and a fringe of curls. ‘Hello stranger,’ he said. ‘Thought I wouldn’t see you again.’

‘Ditto,’ she said, laughing with shock.

‘Wow!’ shivered Charlie-Mouse, his body quaking. ‘I didn’t . . . expect . . . this.’

‘Come into the kitchen,’ Kit said from the doorway. A look of motherly concern crossed her face and she relaxed her arm around him, pressing his loosely dressed figure into her duffle coat. ‘Gosh, where have you been? It must be six months since.’

‘But how can it have been?’ Charlie-Mouse asked, his cheeks starting to redden. ‘It’s only . . .’

‘It’s nearly Christmas,’ she said.

‘Christmas!’

‘And there’s snow . . .’ said Connie.

‘It came yesterday evening,’ said Kit. ‘We haven’t been outside yet.’

‘Time’s moved on,’ Connie said. ‘In a single day.’

‘We didn’t tell a soul that you’d come,’ Kit whispered. ‘We knew you’d be back.’

‘Did you?’ Connie answered.

‘We hoped,’ Kit said.

‘You faded into the dusk,’ Bert said.

‘The wheel pulled us back, we couldn’t say goodbye,’ Connie said.

‘I called,’ Kit said.

Connie pondered. ‘I heard you.’

‘The clouds blew over – it was as if you had never been.’ Bert said.

‘But we were here, weren’t we?’ Charlie-Mouse said.

Bert nodded. ‘Four fish – remember?’

‘Like yesterday,’ said Charlie-Mouse.

Connie watched the snow stacking itself on every available surface. Tracks and footprints rose and fell as a web over the yard. Three cars waited – crouching, half-buried. Suddenly, Bert hurtled past. He stooped as he ran, casting snowballs back at Charlie-Mouse as he stumbled to do up his coat buttons. Charlie-Mouse ran for shelter around the back of the cars. Connie watched him take off again to follow Bert over the stile. She laughed, pulling one of Kit’s bobble hats over her head and tucking in her hair.

Kit finished wrapping her scarf. ‘Look at all this snow!’ she said, pushing Connie across the yard to the stile. ‘Makes you feel . . .’ Her voice came through in muffled tones. She pulled the scarf away from her lips. ‘Makes you feel safe from the enemy,’ she said.

Her heart crushed with shame. She had almost forgotten the threat of the war. She waited – snow fell into the boys' footprints on the other side of the fence, then lifted over her in a fine spray. She turned her face away and followed the forlorn contours of the snow-covered house. 'I've something to tell you,' she said.

'Then it's utterly disgraceful!' Kit's voice grew angrier as they took shelter in the barn doorway. 'That someone could even think of doing that to Claybridge.' Her scarf slipped – she grabbed at it and started to shake away the ice drops. 'They can't possibly take it away. Mummy and Auntie Evie grew up here. Besides . . .'

Connie ripped her eyes from her wheel tracks.

Kit pointed at the cars. 'The officials,' she said. 'I used to think they came from the airfield but Bert says they're from all directions – some from London.' Suddenly she looked as if she might cry – her lids and lashes flashing with snow crystals. 'I'm not sure I should say this,' she continued, her voice wavering. 'But they're setting it up right now.'

Shivers exploded inside Connie's chest. 'What . . . what are they setting up?' 'We're sworn to secrecy,' Kit whispered. 'And when I tell you, you must promise not to speak of it while you're here – if Mrs Pritchard ever got to know, it would be round the village in a flash.'

'I promise,' Connie replied, her heart pounding.

'Claybridge is to be used for special training,' she said.

The wind turned again and a flurry of excitement and hope flew straight at Connie with the wintry wet flakes hitting at her face and mouth.

'Secret operations,' Kit squeaked.

The mantle swirled and loose powder sprayed down from the barn roof. Connie fumbled at the collar of her coat, folding it over in an attempt to stop the snowflakes from slipping in.

'I heard Auntie Evie say they want agents to stay here as they wait to fly abroad,' Kit said.

'Out of Castle Camps?'

Kit nodded. 'I imagine so. Bert says they'll parachute into Europe from a Lysander because it's less of a target and the plane can land on rough ground.'

'Wow,' Connie said. 'I read of this.'

'And about Claybridge?'

'No.' Connie let her feet fall from her footrest.

Kit fell silent, then bubbled with excitement. 'So you'll have to tell . . .' She took off her hat and sparkled. 'Uncle Geoff has a letter from Whitehall – I caught a glimpse of it?'

‘Do you mean that?’

‘Of course. And we’ll find it.’

Kit shook her auburn hair, as threads of voices weaved their way through the falling snow. Men in a mix of RAF uniforms and dark overcoats trudged across the patterns beneath their feet. They ushered the man in the peaked cap into his car.

Connie couldn’t see clearly enough. And if the military officials did notice the girls in the barn, they didn’t seem to show it. They wiped their headlamps, cleared their windscreens, and guided their cars silently away.

Winter

Chapter Fifteen The unexpected visitor

In the glow of the farmhouse kitchen, Connie’s cheeks tingled with excitement and she started to wiggle her toes. She was enjoying the feeling of putting a warm cup to her cheek when the back door flew open and Uncle Geoff stooped in from the gloom ? with a snowy Malcolm Mollet in tow. Charlie-Mouse and Bert followed.

How on earth . . . How could he be here? He was the cause of it all. How she wanted to blurt out the news to Charlie, but now she couldn’t. Not with him here.

Malcolm’s shivering face stared back. Was it Malcolm? Yes, she was sure of it – even with his dark-ringed eyes shallowed with tears and his nose rubbed to red-raw. The cold and the fear had buried into his complexion, making him look even more pale and pathetic.

‘The dog found the lad shivering in school,’ said Uncle Geoff. He stamped several times on the mat and bent to ease his feet from his wet and snowy boots. ‘Wouldn’t stop ‘is barking ‘til I went to see what it was ‘e’d found. Staring out of the window at us, the boy was. ‘Asn’t said a word to me though.’

To Connie’s surprise, Charlie-Mouse spoke up. ‘He’s with us,’ he said.

‘Decent clothes and a proper coat,’ said Uncle Geoff. ‘That’s what ‘e needs. I don’t know, and on a day like today.’ The man hung up his own coat and hat. ‘Sit down lad. You look like you could do with some ‘ot milk.’

Malcolm gave a nod amidst a stifling of sobs and a struggle to draw breath.

‘There y’are,’ said Uncle Geoff. ‘Drink that and get back some of the colour. We must see about getting you into something warmer and off ‘ome. Corberley, ain’t it? Who are you staying with?’

Connie winced.

‘We’ll make sure he gets there,’ Charlie-Mouse fired, breaking the silence.

Connie pitched a frown.

‘Right y’are.’ Uncle Geoff tutted as he pushed the kitchen door tight shut and steered the draught excluder over the gap with his foot.

Malcolm coughed his tears to a stop and jerked his head semi-upright. He lifted his fringe from his bloodshot eyes. Although he appeared to be looking on, he didn’t talk. The farmer turned up the volume of the wireless broadcast and Malcolm listened.

‘. . . and the Prime Minister finished his speech from the House of Commons by expressing gratitude on behalf of the Government to all those keeping the country running in these very difficult circumstances.’

‘Cheer up lad, things aren’t s’bad,’ said Uncle Geoff, as the newsreader brought the bulletin to a close.

‘Well there’s good news for us all,’ Bert said. ‘Perhaps we can all go home soon.’

‘Take each day as it comes, sonny – things change overnight and yer mothers won’t want you in any danger, that’s for sure.’

Malcolm stumbled over his words. ‘Don’t have . . . one.’

‘Sorry lad, didn’t mean to offend. If you’ve lost yer ma, I’m sorry for yer.’

‘She’s not . . . dead . . . she left.’

‘There’s no explaining some folks,’ said the farmer.

‘Doesn’t wanna know . . . s’what Dad says.’

‘Oh,’ said Charlie-Mouse. ‘It might not be like that.’

‘Malcolm rubbed at his mottled cheekbones and stared blindly.

‘But it ain’t your fault lad. Remember that.’

Connie studied Malcolm’s reaction. His streetwise arrogance was shot – he’d cried it away. He was trying to make sense of something that displayed no sense to him, including the man’s kindness.

Uncle Geoff patted Malcolm on the back. ‘It’s igh time you got yourselves changed. Off upstairs . . . go on, all of yer – you’ll feel better after,’ he rallied. He fetched his hat and gloves from the hotplate.

‘I’ve errands to run.’

Malcolm stood alone near the top of the stairs. Looking at her. Wearing Bert’s shirt, pullover and trousers, he seemed different with his face washed and his ash-blonde hair combed down.

‘I wanna go home,’ he said.

How can you say that to me?’ Connie replied.

‘I just wanna go home.’

‘Well you’ll have to wait.’

‘What do you mean?’

‘I can’t say because I don’t know.’

He held on tight at the banisters – his nerves pulsing in his forehead and she was taken aback by a momentary pang of sympathy. But still she didn’t like him.

‘You watched us, didn’t you!’ she said.

‘I had nothing to do. Dad threw a wobbly at me.’

‘Why weren’t you with your big mates?’

‘We were hanging out at the coffee cellar in Corberley – the manager phoned Dad, s’why he threw one.’

‘You mean you got chucked out the coffee shop then your mates ditched you.’

Malcolm slid his shoe up and down the edge of the runner on the floorboards.

‘So you followed us and spun the wheel,’ she drummed. ‘You realise if something goes wrong it’ll be because of you.’

‘You don’t . . . understand,’ he said, recoiling. ‘I’m meant to be back there . . . in town . . . with Mum . . . ‘til Friday.’

‘So.’

‘So,’ he said, pulling at his hair. ‘I didn’t wanna stay. I hate my mum even more than my dad. They both hate me.’

‘Then you don’t want to go home, do you!’ she shouted. ‘And they probably won’t miss you if that’s what you think.’

‘You hate me too.’

She knew how to reply to this one. ‘You don’t help yourself.’

‘I didn’t mean—’

‘You never do, do you.’

Malcolm put his hand towards his glistening eyes.

‘Tell me why I should feel sorry for you.’ she said.

‘I don’t want anyone to feel sorry for me.’

‘That’s all right then.’

She propped her elbows on the windowsill and cast her attention on the church. She calmed herself by imagining her dad down in the porchway, greeting the villagers one by one as they arrived for Christmas service with a brushing of hats and a shaking of snowy umbrellas. ‘If we’re here we have to pull together,’ she breathed into the window glass.

‘What’s here?’

‘Christmas .’

‘This isn’t a trick?’ he spluttered. ‘The war and everything?’

‘No, it’s very real.’

‘And . . . you don’t live here . . . the farmer does.’

‘That’s right. And Bert and Kit – they’re all good people.’

‘Meaning?’

‘Nothing in particular.’

She meant everything in particular.

Malcolm let go of the banister and she resisted the sharp urge to move away from him as he came close. The boy bowed his head as he wiped away the condensation to see out of the window and warmed his wet palm on the radiator beneath.

‘Perhaps things can make people change,’ he said.

‘Perhaps things can – like when they find themselves in strange places and can’t do anything about it,’ she replied.

The silence drifted like overpowering smog until the sound of a heavy wardrobe door being squeezed shut and the squealing of a cistern in the bathroom blew some of the atmosphere away. Connie pressed her nose harder against the window to see the time on the iciced church tower. Eleven forty-five.

Malcolm rubbed the window again. ‘Never been in a church.’

Good job, she thought. ‘Quiet, calm, and cold,’ she said.

‘Boring.’

‘No, it’s cool – you can see for miles at the top of the tower.’

Malcolm knocked into her shoulder as he attempted to pull at his fringe. ‘If you say so,’ he said, giving another sniff.

‘I can get up there,’ she asserted. ‘If I want.’

‘Yeah,’ he replied. ‘So, your

WW2

chair downstairs?’

‘I don’t need it all the time, if I want to walk I use calipers.’ She waited to see what he might say next.

‘Some sort of hi-tech stuff it’s built of, your chair?’

‘Titanium – and I’m sure your dad could buy you one if you wanted.’ Now she struggled hard against the guilt switching between her head and her heart.

‘S’pose so . . .’ He left a long pause. ‘S’pose this is the best I can do,’ he sniffed.

‘The best for what?’

‘To be interested . . . to make friends . . . if you wanna . . .’

Connie’s ears tingled to the tips. She knew he was looking straight at her – she sensed his small grey eyes searching out her weakness and saw his outstretched hand from the corner of her eye. She hesitated. Maybe the stick insect deserved a chance – her dad would tell her so. She returned him a glance. ‘It depends,’ she said.

‘Yeah, it does, doesn’t it,’ faltered the boy. He pulled back his hand, a meek smile curving into one sickly coloured cheek. ‘I can try and make up for things. Then maybe we’re quits?’

Connie turned away, picturing the fleet of trucks and bulldozers ploughing through to the house at speed. She blinked and the scene of destruction flipped from her mind.

‘Maybe,’ she said.

‘It’s not fair,’ Kit said, closing her bedroom door, ‘Uncle Geoff and Auntie Evie can’t use the whole house any more – and it won’t be long before we have to—’

‘They were here first thing,’ Bert said. ‘I watched from the orchard.’

‘That’s what you were doing,’ his sister said.

‘Once I climbed the tree, I couldn’t get down without being noticed. It was jolly cold.’

Kit’s dimples rippled into a half-smile. ‘So did you work out what they were talking about?’

‘Er, no,’ he replied.

‘Bet it was top secret,’ Charlie-Mouse joked.

Bert, Kit and Connie stared. He shuffled back. ‘What are you saying?’

‘That you’re right,’ Connie said.

‘They’re arranging a secret operation,’ said Kit, raising her finger across her lips. ‘It’s been so hard not telling.’

‘Secret agents,’ whispered Bert.

Charlie-Mouse’s jaw fell apart. ‘You’re kidding.’

‘I overheard Uncle Geoff,’ Bert said. ‘He sounded completely serious.’

‘What will you do?’ asked Charlie-Mouse.

‘Nothing,’ Bert replied. ‘Except move for a few months.’

‘It’ll be fine,’ Kit said. ‘And Mummy will help.’

‘If only Daddy knew – I want to write and tell him, but I can’t,’ said Bert.

All this time Malcolm Mollet had said nothing. Every now and again he squeaked his hand back and forth over the condensation on the window glass. ‘How come we don’t know all this?’ he said.

‘Perhaps some of us do, and have hidden it on purpose,’ Connie directed.

‘If you mean Dad . . .’ His voice was breaking up. ‘. . . if there’s any proof of it – we’ll have to . . . find it and take it back so that you can—’

Was she hearing him properly? She stared wilfully at the back of Malcolm’s drooping blonde head but he didn’t turn to her nor speak again.

Winter

Chapter Sixteen At the far end of the house

‘Coast is clear,’ Kit called.

Connie adjusted the gas mask box across her body and pushed herself down the long, narrow hallway, feeling the sideways shift of wheels as they crossed uneven flagstones. She touched her hand against the dark oak panelling as it gave way to a tall leaning window leaking a patch of much needed sunlight to a picture adorned with holly and ivy. An icy draught chided by.

‘Be quick everyone,’ Kit called, as she opened the study door. ‘Or the heat will escape.’

The stale smell of cigar smoke flew into Connie’s face. Kit drew aside the long and lazy velvet curtains to reveal the garden in the crisp of winter and a room not long vacated – dents crushing into the cushions of the soft green armchairs. Connie’s eyes fixed upon the so-familiar shape of the cumbersome writing desk lodged in front of the French doors. Blue and gold spotted china cats lazed at each corner – one an inkwell, one a penholder.

‘I know it’s in here,’ Kit said, pulling hard at the drawers of the desk. ‘But these are locked and I don’t know where Uncle Geoff keeps the key.’

‘Feel the ledges,’ Connie said.

Bert started to run his fingers along the underside of the desktop. From the opposite side, Malcolm got onto his hands and knees and disappeared into the foot well.

Charlie-Mouse pressed against the narrow door to the little library room. Books spilled up to the ceiling. He crouched at the bottom shelf, checking in-between the gaps.

‘We’ll go in here,’ Kit said, beckoning Connie through the double doors to the dining room.

Kit pushed aside more curtains and the wallpaper pattern showered over Connie’s arms and legs in shades of green and white. It skipped from the crystals of a grand chandelier to the polished surface of the enormous mahogany dining table, laid with six leather blotting pads.

Connie shivered – a draught drew itself around her as she approached the sideboard. She pulled open a drawer. Letter opener, corkscrew, pile of tablemats . . . but no key.

A noise turned her attention to the window and she saw Uncle Geoff crunching across the snow to approach a stranger – a young airman dressed in a brown flying jacket. The airman stood lean and tall, listening with intent. He spoke a few words and the two men paced towards the house.

‘Who’s that?’ Connie asked.

‘I don’t know, I haven’t seen him before,’ said Kit, replacing a photo frame on the mantelpiece.

‘I expect he’s from the airfield.’

Connie heaved again at the drawer, and it rocked into place. The steady swing of the pendulum knocked within the grandfather clock – echoing over her ears and into the still of the moment that followed. The chimes churned, and she heard a crash.

‘It slipped out of my fingers!’ Malcolm said. ‘It was an accident.’

Charlie-Mouse glared. ‘Then you should be more careful.’

‘It’ll be all right,’ Kit said. ‘We’ll glue it.’

Connie looked at the three large pieces of blue, gold and white china cat, spread over the floor. The sparkle from the cat’s eyes had all but disappeared.

Another glint caught her eye. It was the shine of a small silver key. Excitedly, she tipped forward to pick it up.

Winter

Chapter Seventeen From one desk to another

With a click the key turned and Bert pulled open the desk drawer.

PRIME MINISTER

Dieu et mon droit

, Downing Street,

Whitehall.

December,

Dear Sir,

I am indebted to your kind agreement to vacate Claybridge Farm in the late Spring of .

My Private Secretary will be in contact with you in the next few weeks to confirm the date, which will suit with the arrangements being made to requisition Audley End House. You will, of course, find excellent accommodation at Golden Hill Farm, Corberley Green.

Will you also please take this letter as recognition of my gratitude.

Yours faithfully,

Winston S. Churchill

‘Well! Nothing surprises me now!’ said Kit.

Charlie-Mouse bent over the letter, tugging at his fringe. ‘There’s nothing in there about secret agents,’ he said.

‘Charlie, don’t be stupid!’ exclaimed Connie. ‘He couldn’t possibly write that down, could he? This is enough.’

She rushed through the prime minister’s words once more, feeling an anxious flutter of doubt as she stared at the black ink freshly imprinting the page.

‘You must take it,’ Bert said. ‘Borrow it, say. Put it in your pocket and take it to the future.’

‘Your uncle will notice . . .’ Charlie-Mouse said.

‘We’ll think of something,’ Bert replied. ‘Besides, you can return it later.’

‘Well . . .’ Charlie-Mouse began.

‘No we can’t. What I mean is – we can’t take it with us,’ Connie said. ‘You realise no one will ever believe it’s real – it’ll be too new.’

‘Oh dear,’ said Kit.

‘Then we should hide it . . .’ Bert said.

‘What good will that do?’ asked Charlie-Mouse.

‘If we hide it well, it will survive . . . into the future,’ Bert replied.

‘And you can find it,’ Kit said.

‘Only if it stays in one piece,’ said Charlie-Mouse.

‘Don’t be such a pessimist, Charlie,’ Connie said.

‘It’s cool,’ Malcolm mumbled. ‘If we find somewhere safe and dry – somewhere only we know about.’

Connie flew at him. ‘Oh no, we won’t tell you where – you could ruin everything,’ she said.

‘No, it’s not like that,’ he said, bursting into tears. ‘I want to be part of this . . . you can trust me . . . please?’

She frowned, clasping the envelope to her body. ‘What makes you think we’re going to let this opportunity slip away.’

He didn’t flinch.

‘Or maybe we will trust you,’ she said, tempting the envelope straight to his shaking hands. ‘After all, you need to earn it . . . and we don’t have much choice.’

She held tight to a bubbling excitement, skimming her eyes over the crisp, undulating ground – the snow glinted every now and again as the sun attempted to polish the angular stone of the Norman church tower, then with a change in the wind, it spat across the gravestones. Ice laced the cast iron clock hands as they pointed at ten to one.

‘But we need to hurry up and decide where,’ she said.

Bert unlocked the French doors. ‘OK – who’s coming?’

‘You boys – you go,’ Kit said. ‘We’ll make soup.’

Connie watched the three small figures running across the snow-covered garden and through the back gate to the church. The icy cold bit beneath her borrowed cardigan, and she rubbed at her arms.

Winter

Chapter Eighteen Wish me luck . . . Malcolm's journey

His heart was thumping hard and fast against his chest wall. Malcolm glanced silently from one end of the church to the other, upwards at the shining red and blue of the glass windows, along the white painted walls, and down at the polished brass on the floor. He shivered as his gaze came to rest on the altar, and gave a quick cough.

Bert gave him a rough tug. ‘We’re going this way,’ he said, pulling him over the stone steps.

Malcolm stumbled into the church and onto the shiny path rubbed away by centuries of parishioners. He imagined them following close behind – touching him on his back and patting his hatted head. He didn’t dare look up. Their whispers gatecrashed his head – they passed through his guilt-ridden body, spiralling up to the beams and sweeping down and around the pillars – taunting from the aisles before escaping into the spin of the winter world outside.

But still in his mind, the church was far from empty. With his eyes clinging to the floor, he shrunk past the stern looks of the men leaning over the gallery balustrade; he avoided the eyes of the villagers bowed forward from the walls; and did his best to ignore the children turning with their looks of disapproval.

For all the bad things he had ever done.

They were waiting. Perhaps God was waiting. And for the first time he sent a prayer they wouldn’t judge him yet.

The others had raced ahead and Malcolm too looked for an escape. It was a small Norman archway leading to a narrow spiral stair. He put his foot on a step and grasped the centre pillar. He counted as he rose, to drown out his haunting echoes.

Following a trail of wet prints, he grew closer to the chatter of Charlie-Mouse and Bert. Forty five, forty six. His feet worked faster to meet it. Fifty three, fifty four. His echoes trailed further behind him. Sixty.

The freezing wind bellowed and the tower staircase sucked him upward, pushing him towards an open window. He struggled to stay standing. A scattering of butterfly wings swirled in front of his face, and with a tug his body was dragged backwards. The church seemed to let out a sigh. And it was still. He tripped with exhaustion into the dust-laden patterning of an old floor rug and over the wet-booted feet of Bert and Charlie-Mouse.

‘You made it this far,’ Bert said.

Tick tock, tick tock, tick tock – the sound boxed at his ears. The clock room was empty of any furniture, apart from the brass workings of the clock on the wall, and a chair draped with a fading union flag. Bert gripped him under the armpits.

‘You mean this . . . isn’t it?’ he asked, struggling to get his words out – his throat raw as if it had been rubbed with sandpaper.

‘No,’ Bert replied. ‘There’s a stairladder to the belfry.’

He lifted his eyes to the hole above his head. ‘Bells?’ he sniffed.

‘Don’t worry – they won’t ring, if that’s what you’re worried about,’ Bert said. ‘It’s not allowed. War and all that.’

Suddenly, the war became very real. He stood, shaking, underneath the rickety stairladder.

‘There’s a pocket between the bell frame and the wall,’ Charlie-Mouse said. ‘Connie used to post secret messages for the angels.’

He swallowed hard, and looked up, just making out an edge of a brass bell and part of a large wooden frame.

Bert put his hand against the stairladder and pushed. It shook and the rafters rattled. ‘One at a time,’ he said. ‘I don’t think it will take any more weight.’

‘Can I go?’ asked Malcolm.

He couldn’t see it directly, but he felt the tension firing from Charlie-Mouse’s stare.

Malcolm strung an empty gas mask box across his thin body and put the letter inside. Pitching his eyes skyward, he caught his breath with a cough and grasped hold of the outside edges of the ladder with both his hands.

With every step, the warm smell of the wooden bell frame grew stronger. He did not look back, for fear of the height. Each foot movement was careful and slow. For fear of slipping. He held on tight. For fear of losing balance. He was halfway there – three more steps and he’d be able to see into the bellshaft. The ladder steadied as someone supported it from below.

Six bells rested downward. He leaned in to knock the brass of the shiniest with the knuckle of his forefinger. A dull note sounded. To be here when they rang at once must be mindblowing. To all the children around the world he read. Children with no choice but to be stuck in a war, but he didn’t dare dwell on it.

He craned his head towards the gap at the side of the frame. The wood curved to form a perfect pocket of a hiding place.

He shot a glimpse downwards. He saw feet, far below. But they weren’t following yet. He would go just a bit further – now he had got this far. He grasped for his inhaler, drew upon it and made his way up a second wobbly ladder to a trap door.

There was a sudden change in the air as propellers whirred overhead – the sound of the planes resonated through the bells and into his body – he no longer heard voices. Streaks of sunlight bounced into his eyes through the battlements. He shuffled across and dared to stretch his neck to see over to the rooftops of Claybridge. But he couldn't look for long. A sick feeling bubbled in his stomach as he recalled his father's glee at the prospect of pulling it down.

He brought his eyes to rest upon the pitiless body of a goldfinch lying frosted and motionless on the roof-felt in front of him. He fumbled to find the clean handkerchief Bert had given him, amongst the boiled sweet fragments and bits of paper crowding his pocket. He curled over to gather up the tiny bird. And as the afternoon sun warmed the snow, small drops of melted ice fell from the flagpole about them.

The steady rising call of an air raid siren stirred into his consciousness. He tumbled headlong into a maelstrom of purple.

Winter

Chapter Nineteen Caught in the danger zone

The siren started up as Connie washed the mud from the last potato.

Kit dropped her peeling knife to clatter carelessly on the chopping board. ‘We have to go to the shelter,’ she said, controlling her voice.

Pulling open the understairs cupboard, she produced a neatly tied pile of clothes, and flew across the room to fetch an armful of coats and hats.

‘But the boys – will they know to come here? Does somebody go to get them?’ Connie asked, her thoughts firing in all directions.

‘Bert knows what to do, he’ll bring them back.’

Connie’s heart flipped over and over as she pushed herself along the corridor towards the entrance hall. She imagined her parents – their drawn, sleepless faces zooming in and out of her mind’s eye – they looked as if they were searching desperately for something. A certain relief rained over her when she saw the solid figure of Uncle Geoff appear at the other end of the corridor.

‘Enemy’s taking a risk with this snow, ain’t it?’ he said. ‘Scaremongering devils. It’s so we don’t get complacent.’ He lifted the red carpet runner and folded it back on itself. Grabbing hold of a large iron handle from the floorboards, he raised a trap door. ‘This way,’ he said. ‘It’ll be easier with the weather as it is. Evie’s in Corberley, she’ll be in the town shelter b’now. Where are the boys?’

‘At the church,’ Kit answered. ‘They went to the tower. They should be back.’

Uncle Geoff strode past. ‘I’m going over – you girls get down below.’

Connie abandoned her wheelchair by the cloakroom door.

One . . . two . . . three . . . four brick steps down, and . . . pitch black. The damp seeped into her anxious body as she crawled backwards to the bottom. Kit held a lamp aloft and explored for another. With a flick and a hiss, a match flared a sharp shock of brilliance into a passageway of about her own head height, illuminating a steady upward slope away from the house. The intensity of the matchlight fell and Connie followed the lampglow, crawling some way with her shadow hanging overhead. Soft planks of wood pressing into her knees.

After a little while, the gaslight fell into a small square space of an air raid shelter – its sidewalls supported with iron struts and concrete and brightened with hand-drawn pictures. A handful of Christmas stars, a small haversack, a collection of clean mugs and a bunch of keys hung from a metal wire beneath a white-painted shelf. In its darkest corner, Connie picked out a roll of carpet on its end beside several crates of what smelled like stored apples. A small bunk bed covered the end wall and above it, telling chinks of daylight marked the outline of another opening.

‘We’re underneath the barn,’ Kit said. ‘Uncle Geoff dug into the old tunnel.’ She pushed the gas lamps onto the table in the middle of the shelter.

‘I never knew,’ Connie said. She sat on a small wooden chair and hugged her shins.

Kit put a blanket around Connie’s shoulders. ‘There,’ she said. ‘Don’t worry – we’ll be quite safe. And Uncle Geoff will be back soon.’

‘Does it usually last long?’ Connie asked.

‘It depends – we’re used to night raids. I hope it won’t be too long ‘til the all-clear.’

The hatch lifted overhead and Connie recognised Charlie-Mouse’s socks and shoes climbing downwards.

‘Charlie!’ she cried.

He sat on the bottom bunk and blinked across the lit room, his face dusty and scared. ‘We can’t find Malcolm,’ he said.

Another pair of feet came down, and Bert sat by her brother’s side. ‘Uncle Geoff is making a final check, but we think he’s gone.’

Connie blinked hard. ‘Gone? Where could he have gone to?’

‘We don’t know. He took the letter to . . . to . . .’ Charlie-Mouse replied, teeth chattering. ‘I mean, one minute he was there . . . up in the belfry – we called madly to say we were going down – that

we had to come to the shelter – bbbbbut . . . he didn’t answer.’

‘Uncle Geoff will surely find him and bring him back.’ Kit said. She passed him a hot water bottle and wrapped a blanket around him.

Connie kept looking at her watch, and hoping. After five minutes, Uncle Geoff appeared. He gave a bedroll to Bert and took off his cap to scratch his head. ‘Couldn’t find the blighter,’ he said. ‘Caused me a kindly worry, this day ‘e ‘as.’

‘He wasn’t in the church at all?’ Bert asked.

Uncle Geoff shook his head. ‘Climbed right up that tower I did – nothing there, not even on top. There’s nowhere ‘e could’ve ‘idden ‘imself – a boy that age.’

Connie’s forehead quivered. She was surprised at her fear for him.

‘If ‘e’s run off . . .’ Uncle Geoff said, ‘should know better. I just ‘ope someone in the village has taken ‘im in.’

The drone of aircraft echoed into the void of the barn above. Heavy lines bunched close on Uncle Geoff’s face.

Connie held out her hand. ‘Is that?’

Uncle Geoff nodded. ‘Not our planes, this time,’ he said.

She held her breath. She held it longer than she had ever done before. Then she let go. Her eyes were heavy with tears, and they were waiting to fall. Charlie-Mouse pinned his back against the wall of the shelter and stared at her. She couldn’t pull her eyes from him. Her mum’s voice pounded her head.

The drone died away and a single tear dropped into her lap.

‘It’s all right, folks,’ Uncle Geoff said. ‘It’s a scare, that’s all – they can’t see a dickie bird in all this snow.’

The noise came again. This time with a whiz and a whirr and the sound of something falling. Somewhere, not far away at all, glass smashed and stone blasted.

‘Something’s ‘it,’ Uncle Geoff said.

Winter

Chapter Twenty A lucky escape

When the signal for the all-clear rolled out, Connie didn’t stir. The numbness, from sitting tightly still for well over an hour, pricked deep within her body. It hurt her as she forced her limbs into a

stretch.

Charlie-Mouse gave her a heavy-handed high five.

‘You’re being brave,’ she told him.

‘I get it from you,’ he answered.

‘But I’m not brave now.’

‘You’re dealing with it.’

‘I’m not dealing with everything,’ she said, remembering the sight of the boy dragging his sleeping bag down from Dracula’s Castle. She imagined his panic at the siren. ‘Are you sure Malcolm wasn’t in the tower?’

‘Certain,’ Charlie-Mouse replied. ‘He must have climbed down.’

‘If he didn’t come back to the house, he must have wanted to run away.’

‘You mean so he could stay.’

‘I suppose I mean that.’

‘Nah,’ Charlie-Mouse said. ‘He wouldn’t run off – not in this weather – he’s nowhere to go. Besides, he knows he doesn’t belong.’

‘Then I don’t know.’ She gained the determination to crawl. ‘I need to shift my legs,’ she said, lifting the remaining gaslight. Before she could, a call from the house bowled along the dark passageway . . .

‘It’s the tower – they ‘it the tower!’

Uncle Geoff huddled with the small crowd gathered around the Victorian lamplight.

‘It was a stray one – knocked sideways into the belfry,’ she overheard the warden say. She was conscious of her nails digging into her cheeks. ‘Doesn’t look too severe.’

‘We’ll call the lads from the Camps,’ said another man, poking his walking stick into the tufts of green now showing through the snow. ‘They know what to do with unexploded bombs.’

‘There’ll be no church on Sunday,’ said the warden.

‘We’ll use the village hall,’ a woman said.

‘Did anyone see a boy?’ Uncle Geoff shouted.

‘Goodness gracious me, was there a boy in there?’ the woman exclaimed.

‘No, I checked the tower m’self . . . but we don’t know for certain.’

‘Whose is he?’ she asked.

Uncle Geoff turned. ‘These children ‘ere know,’ he said.

‘Mrs Pritchard’s boy again is it?’ said the man accusing his walking stick in Connie’s direction.

‘Up to no good – he should know better.’

About a minute later, the red-faced warden jostled his way back with a large length of rope aloft.

‘We can cordon it off,’ he panted.

Their shouts and calls lessened. Connie took in the piercing air. It shifted to her lungs and made her cough. ‘You were in there,’ she said, moving back from the open French doors.

Charlie-Mouse didn’t speak. He clutched at the heavy curtain fringe and continued to stare.

‘I know,’ Bert replied.

‘I don’t feel safe anymore,’ Kit said – her face patched with worry. ‘Right now, I’d rather be in London with Mummy.’

Bert nudged her in the ribs. ‘Nothing’s happened though, has it, Pretty Kitty? We’re all here.’

‘We’re not – Malcolm’s gone,’ she said.

‘We’ll find him,’ he replied, winding his arm around her.

‘He wasn’t in the tower when the bomb hit, I’m sure of it,’ said Charlie-Mouse. ‘Anyway, I bet he turns up at home ? he’ll be laughing at us for making such a fuss.’

The sound of aircraft hit the wind as Charlie-Mouse brought the French doors to a close. Connie looked out to see the bundle of villagers pointing into the sky. Three Spitfires tailed a Lysander, heading in the direction of the airfield. She held the curtain and watched the Lysander pull from its course to soar over the house. She had heard the sound before.

‘No, we can’t go now . . .’ she said.

The table lamp flickered and faded to grey. And as her reality swirled around her, feelings of emptiness and loss overpowered her head and her heart – she could do nothing to stop any of it.

Chapter Twenty One Where is Malcolm?

The winter chill of Christmas softened into comfortable purple warmth, and the sound of the plane fell away – Connie’s ears met with the sustained and uncomfortable scream of the potter’s wheel in its final few revolutions. Its pull slipped away – leaving her feeling sick and dizzy.

She opened her eyes and gulped. The horrible greasy mark she had seen Malcolm make so many hours ago, looked exactly as it should – only a moment old. She so wanted to believe he was still standing at the open gate to kick stones to clank against the Wendlewitch’s metal dustbins. But the

yard was empty and the gate was swinging back and forth – its corner edge tracing and retracing an arc in the ground.

‘I think a touch of oil is required,’ called a voice from the darkened conservatory. The Wendlewitch stood like a peculiar apparition in a frizzy purple aura, with a pair of earphones draped around her neck and a small can in her hand. The aura paled as she came into the light. ‘Just . . . here,’ she said, twisting the wheel from left to right. ‘. . . and here. There, that should do it.’ A smile creased into her shining face.

‘But you’re not . . . your hayfever . . . you couldn’t . . . and you are,’ said Charlie-Mouse.

‘Completely,’ the Wendlewitch finished. ‘Time is a magical healer, don’t you think?’

Connie snatched at her watch. It was still ten o’clock. ‘It’s impossible to get well that quick,’ she said, perplexed. ‘You were quite ill.’

‘Almost impossible,’ the Wendlewitch said. ‘I don’t do impossible.’ She peered further into Connie’s face, ‘But my dear, are you well?’

The sickness gone, her mouth dried up. ‘It’s Malcolm,’ she said, before her voice went hoarse.

Charlie-Mouse rescued her. ‘He came through after us. Now he’s lost,’ he said.

She kept swallowing, and pulling at the pendant around her neck – she scraped the thin chain from side to side. ‘He just . . . vanished,’ she said.

The Wendlewitch shut her eyes, and when Connie had finished she pulled her glasses up to sit on the crook of her nose. ‘Then I need to think – about the boy and the letter. It changes things,’ she said, rocking her flowery flip-flopped foot backwards and forwards on the floor. ‘Goodness, that young man has been a challenge. I only wish his father could have let me—’ She stopped, throwing her attention to the mantelpiece, where a handful of old photographs and postcards peered from behind a row of unfired pots.

‘What is it?’ Connie asked.

The Wendlewitch pulled out a brown faded picture postcard and stood for some time, staring closely. ‘Mmmm dear? Oh . . . nothing that will make a difference right now.’ She slipped the picture back between the pots.

‘Do you think he will follow us here?’ Connie said. ‘Say he will.’

‘The Wendlewitch caressed the dimple in her chin with her purple fingertips. ‘It all depends,’ she said. ‘I fear that Malcolm has slipped through.’

‘Slipped through?’ said Charlie-Mouse, wearing his most serious expression.

‘With a whirl of the wheel, springs magic more powerful than the grace of time herself. Magic to

pull us to the past, or push us to the future. But time is a funny thing. It has a habit of moving on and losing track of where it once was.'

'God, he is lost.' Charlie-Mouse said.

'But I'm not worried . . . not yet anyway,' the Wendlewitch continued. She placed her palm on the wheel and smiled.

'So where is he?' Connie asked.

'Ah well – that I don't know . . . exactly. The Wendlewitch shrugged and her earphones fell straight off her shoulders. 'It's all quite complicated – my guess is he may have gone backwards an incy bit, or forwards, or . . .' She tilted her head from side to side and when her thoughts appeared to be of no consequence, proceeded to glide by, leaving an almost indescribable burst of blueberry perfume and lubricating oil in her wake. 'I really should be more reassuring, shouldn't I,' she muttered.

'We're in a mess if you ask me,' said Charlie-Mouse.

The Wendlewitch spun full circle. 'No!' she replied. 'You must trust me.' She swept her glossy head from Charlie-Mouse to Connie, and back to Charlie-Mouse. 'You have to carry on. Come back after the midnight – when the magic is strong.'

'You must be joking!' said Charlie-Mouse. 'Not if—'

'Not if what?' Connie shouted.

'Not if there's a chance of never coming home,' he answered.

Chapter Twenty Two In the quiet of the night

Connie lay in bed, cradling her ear to every one of the twelve chimes of the church clock. She had been dreaming of the delight of running up the steps of the tower to the clock room, of finding Malcolm sitting waiting for her on the polished oak of the study desk. He leaned over the blue and gold china cat to pass her a small white envelope, then vanished. Her magical dream became a waking dream, and their last conversation drifted casually by. The words echoed from left to right, changing like bells ringing a tune in perfect time.

'Where will you put it?'

'Oh no, we're not telling you – you could ruin everything.'

'No, it's not like that . . . you can trust me.'

Her bedroom door creaked and she heard a murmur from the hallway. 'Charlie?

She pulled herself upright, automatically throwing all her covers off the bed. They half-covered the

cat. She smiled. ‘You’ll come with me instead, won’t you Honeycomb?’ The cat stretched his legs and clawed into the quilt. ‘I hate to say this, and I know just how many times he’s shot at you with his pea-shooter, but I have to try and find him.’

She pushed a crutch at one of the pottery doors and put a foot inside. Honeycomb brushed his silky smooth coat over her ankle. She shuddered.

The moon shone into her eyes through the expanse of glass, kissing the pots with touches of silver light and shadow. Connie looked up to the top shelf, expecting to see four more green eyes shining down. But there were just two, and a dark empty space. One of the china cats was missing. Where was it? Out on the prowl somewhere? She faltered in her step. The stillness of the night swirled over her senses as the moon covered over, closeting the room over her head with the darkness. Don’t be silly, she told herself. Turn on the light if you’re scared.

Purple wisps of cloud chased across the sky – and as moonlight fell onto the potter’s wheel, a moving pool of shadow cast itself over the fire screen and lifted again to paint the room in mauve. To her relief, she saw Charlie-Mouse’s figure silhouetting its way along the glass. Not long after, his athletic strides sounded on the wood floor.

‘Don’t say a word,’ he said, putting a firm hand on her shoulder.

She unlocked her calipers and sat herself at the lion stool. She slid her hand across the wheel, clasped hold of the edge and pulled it round with as much force as she could.

A glittering, dancing lasso picked up from the spin. In the dim light, it seemed to tighten its grip on the room as it spun faster and faster around them before crashing down in the centre of the wheel to extinguish itself in a final flash of energy.

Chapter Twenty Three Make do and mend

Claybridge Farm
Friday, rd January

Dear Mummy,

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

We read the papers this week. The pictures of London looked very sad. Fifteen hundred fires! We didn’t really want to read about any more firebombing in the City. Just when the man on the wireless told us that good news was on the horizon.

Thank you for calling again. We were so pleased to hear your voice twice in one week. We know

that you will come to visit as soon as you can re-arrange your transport.

It is freezing today. I have put on almost all my pairs of socks at once and I am wearing two vests and two blouses under my pullover. Now that they're rationing clothes, I hope you have enough. Bert has been learning to sew. It's quite funny; he says he isn't that good but he is. I'm sure he won't mind me telling you. We've been making new shoe bags for when we go back to school out of some old dress material that Auntie Evie says belonged to you. They are our lucky tokens.

We are so looking forward to the Spring. But it will be strange to move from here. We visited Golden Hill Farm yesterday. I like it very much. It's only a few miles from Corberley.

Please tell Margerie's Mummy to write that I am thinking about her.

Sending you all our love and kisses,

Kit xxxxxxxxxxxx

Spring

Chapter Twenty Four The stranger

Midnight lifted and the spring tumbled at her – blossom puffed over the tops of the fruit trees, spilling to carpet the tufty ground in pink and white. She picked up a small bunch and tucked it into her hair. ‘Time’s moved on again,’ she said.

There was no sign of anyone – no cars parked along the driveway and the large three-bar gate to the lane remained closed. The hole in the church tower gaped wide. Down below, the rope barrier had gone. ‘What if we’re too late?’

The French doors to the study rocked gently against their hooks on the outside wall. They slipped inside – the scent of fresh daffodils tempting each step she took. But the room wasn’t empty. The young airman occupied the writing desk. His weighty brown flying jacket hugged the back of his chair. He stretched his lean body awkwardly over the desktop as he wrote.

‘Oh, we’re sorry,’ apologised Connie. ‘We didn’t know you were here.’

The airman put his inkpen into the top of the neatly glued blue and gold spotted cat and pushed it back to its corner. ‘It’s fine, I’m alone,’ he said, in a low and controlled tone, ‘Really, don’t worry – I’m almost finished here, please stay.’

The young man didn’t appear to be surprised by their entrance. He stood to put on his flying jacket. ‘The house is yours for a few weeks more,’ he said. ‘And it’s my job as envoy to thank you.’ He brushed lightly at the ends of his ash-blonde moustache.

‘Oh no, but this isn’t . . . and we don’t—’ Connie attempted.

The airman stepped forward to shake their hands in turn, and with a strangely familiar cough and a quick salute he was gone.

She wavered – there was something instantly recognisable in his mannerisms, the asthmatic cough and the crooked smile. No, it wouldn't be possible – this man must surely be in his twenties.

‘Wait a minute!’ she called out after him. Don’t you want to speak to Mr and Mrs . . . ?

Kit and Bert burst through the open doors.

‘Oh!’ she exclaimed. ‘Did you see—’

‘A fine greeting!’ Bert said, lifting a curly lock from his eyes.

‘Oh, I didn’t mean—’ Connie said.

Kit put down a bunch of forget-me-nots and clasped at Connie’s hand. ‘Go on,’ she said. ‘Did we see what?’

‘Did you see the airman?’ Connie finished.

‘No,’ Bert replied. ‘Is he here?’

‘Yeah, he was. He just . . . left,’ Connie said.

‘But we didn’t see anyone,’ said Kit.

‘Oh,’ Connie said again. Confusion built in her brow. ‘I’m sure you would have seen him.’

‘He must have been in a hurry,’ Kit said.

‘To fly?’ asked Charlie-Mouse.

‘Hey, I’ll bet he’s the pilot of the Lysander,’ said Bert. ‘Dash it – I wish I could have seen him to ask about it.’

‘Sssh,’ Kit interrupted. ‘We mean to ask you about Malcolm.’

Connie shook her head. ‘We were hoping you would tell us . . . ’

‘No,’ Kit replied. ‘We haven’t seen him since the day you came. They searched the church and found no sign. No one’s been in the tower since – too dangerous.’

‘Then we have to go and see for ourselves,’ Connie said. ‘There must be some sort of a clue.’

Kit fell silent – her smile faded.

‘Word went out he may’ve been a boy spy,’ Bert said.

‘A fair guess,’ Charlie-Mouse said.

Kit turned a grave look upon him. ‘We didn’t say anything,’ she explained. ‘They wanted to find you too – to ask questions.’

Charlie-Mouse laughed. ‘Did they think we were spies?’

‘Don’t joke, Charlie,’ Connie said.

'The authorities can't risk anything these days, old chum,' Bert said.

'And now?' Connie asked. 'Are they still looking for us?'

'I don't know,' Kit said, keeping her eyes to the ground. gingerly, she raised them, 'Oh, promise me – now you've seen the letter – promise me you're not spies.'

Dry tears fluttered persistently this way and that in the cavern of Connie's chest, and she held them where they were. 'I promise,' she replied. She laid her crutches to one side and pressed the palms of her hands against the desk. She let her shoulders fall and her hopes followed – the weight of her body doubled in her calipers. 'I can't explain everything that's happened – I wish I could,' she said. Kit pulled Connie's hand to her own. 'I'm so sorry, she flustered. 'I know you can't, if I've any sense at all. I'm sorry, very sorry. Can you possibly forgive me?'

Connie's eyes drifted into the little library room. She saw the bedrolls tied up with cord in the corner – the dulled satin edges of the blankets sandwiched tightly – waiting to be taken down to the shelter. She managed a smile. 'These are strange times,' she said. 'But we're good friends, aren't we?' Kit nodded, her cheeks flushing with red. She offered Connie the small bunch of flowers. 'We will always be friends,' she replied.

Spring

Chapter Twenty Five The tower revisited

The worn stone steps to the tower curled away, rising sharply. Connie laid down her crutches, put a hand to the centre pillar and pushed her other hand against the wall.

'There's a danger I'll topple,' she said.

'I'm behind you,' replied Charlie-Mouse.

She laughed. 'You might regret it.'

She climbed with ease – the stairs were narrow and the handrail curved into the stone acted as perfect support to carry herself up to the clock room. The brass dials of the clock turned and chased, absorbing her gaze until Kit came to her side. The girls stood in front of the stairladder.

'Who's going up this time?' Kit asked.

'Scary,' Charlie-Mouse said. 'What are the chances of another raid?'

'They've eased off,' replied Bert. 'But I'm no expert.'

'Me – I'll go,' Connie said.

'Don't be silly, Bert can do it,' said Charlie-Mouse.

‘And so can I,’ she replied. ‘Help me take these legs off.’

Calipers abandoned and her skirt straightened, she wriggled one knee onto the stairladder and pulled up – building a rhythm.

How far did Malcolm get?

Her ear aglow with the heat of the sun being dragged in through the hole above. Sunlight warmed her scalp and her arms, fizzing up the rainbow colours of her bracelet. She looked across to the bell frame – some of the wood was new – cut and repaired into the old. The children’s bell tipped into the air – sparks of light flew from the shiny engraving. A pile of flintstones crowded the platform marking halfway. The window louvres opened out as she rose and found herself level with the children’s bell. She grasped the wood frame and leaned in. Grit and stone filled the wooden pocket at its side. She pulled at the flint and cement mix, emptying it out. But there was no sign of a letter.

‘You let me down, Mollet,’ she said, fist clenched. ‘Just when I was beginning to like you for some reason or other.’ She climbed back on the stairladder but as she did so, her right knee splintered-off part of the rung. She gripped at the sides – fear crushing the feeling in her fingers. The wood dropped twenty metres down.

‘Everything all right?’ Charlie-Mouse called up.

‘Fine,’ she replied, carefully. She closed her eyes and pulled herself up with the little strength she had left in her elbows. ‘I’m going further.’

‘What?’ he called.

‘Everything’s fine,’ she shouted.

The pounding of her heart slowed and her head steadied as she reached the narrow-boarded walkway along the edge of the tower wall.

The hole the bomb had made stretched out below her now, and she could guess it had landed to wedge itself in the metal structure of the bell frame. It was a miracle it hadn’t exploded to blow the tower away. She pushed her head against the trap door and pulled herself onto the rooftop.

Leaning against the flagpole, she looked out over Claybridge. ‘I don’t suppose the Wendlewitch ever expected this to happen,’ she said, aloud. Her sigh joined with the rise of new voices, carried by the breeze.

‘You were very lucky,’

She recognised the voice as belonging to Auntie Evie.

‘I couldn’t stay, I had to come early – for the children. Besides, the office was quiet,’ came the lighter tones of her companion.

Auntie Evie’s voice returned. ‘Was it bad?’

‘Sadie said Wednesday was the worst yet – the fires were fierce down her way. Even I could taste the smoke at the all clear. Several families Sadie knows were bombed-out,’ the second voice said. ‘The firebomb took the entire street . . . the hotel took them all in, mind – and they’ll stay until they get sorted.’

‘I don’t think families have been so important,’ said Auntie Evie. ‘You hear what I’m saying, Lily Parker, don’t you? There’d be something for you here if you wanted. Grandpa Joe wouldn’t have wished it any other way.’

‘I hear, but I have my job at the bank,’ replied Lily. ‘Besides it may all be over in a few months. Our Mr Churchill is seeing to that, isn’t he.’

The figures came into view and Connie watched the two women stroll away to the garden. She descended – the distant rumble of an aircraft rolled across the brass in the heart of the tower. The apple blossom lifted from her head and disappeared below her feet. The air grew chillier – it swished at her loose hair, blowing it across her face. She wanted to keep moving but something compelled her to stay. The blossom carried high again – she moved her head with it, as if being turned in a dance, and found herself looking out of the louvres back towards the rooftops of the house. ‘Malcolm?’ she whispered.

‘Well?’ Charlie-Mouse said.

‘Well . . . there was nothing,’ she replied, rubbing at the grooves in her knees. ‘Or nothing apart from dust and rubble. No clue where he might have gone.’

‘I don’t know what to say,’ Kit said.

‘I do,’ replied Charlie-Mouse ‘He’s lost.’

‘No, he’s not lost,’ Connie replied. ‘He’s just somewhere else.’

Charlie-Mouse shook his head. ‘I’m glad you’re so sure,’ he said.

Shlapp . . . shlapp . . . shlapp

A soft knocking turned her head to the rafters.

‘It’s the wind,’ Bert said.

‘What? Oh, yeah, I expect so,’ Connie replied. A small yellow-gold feather drifted down and she cupped it in the air.

‘What else would it be?’ Kit asked.

‘Malcolm’s ghost?’ Charlie-Mouse said.

‘No, he’s not dead either,’ Connie said. She blew into the down of the feather. ‘I’m sure of it.’

‘Then what?’ asked Charlie-Mouse.

‘I don’t know. It was the feeling I had – it surrounded me,’ Connie said.

Her brother gave a nervous laugh. ‘Still sounds like ghosts,’ he said.

‘Perhaps it was an echo – Malcolm’s echo,’ Kit said.

‘Perhaps,’ Connie replied. ‘Then it’s a pity I couldn’t hear it so well.’

The smell of baking bread streamed at her as they emerged into the spring sunshine, but at this moment Connie knew only confusion and the burning desire to go home – to be with her mum and dad and to wake up as if it had all been a dream. Malcolm Mollet’s dad was welcome to win now. She didn’t care any more.

Spring

Chapter Twenty Six Dreams do come true

‘Darlings!’

The voice stroked softly at Connie’s ears. She turned her head to see the sun-silhouetted figure of Auntie Evie’s companion standing by the tree swing in the orchard.

‘Mother,’ exclaimed Bert.

The lady with a cascade of neat auburn curls around her silk neckerchief bent to rest her wicker basket on the grass. She kissed the heads of her children and held them tight.

‘We’ve missed you so, so much,’ said Kit, her eyes filling up with tears.

‘I’ve missed you too,’ Kit’s mother comforted.

‘We weren’t expecting you for at least another week,’ Bert said.

‘Surprises are always the best. Besides, I couldn’t stay away a moment longer.’

‘I still can’t believe you’re really here,’ Kit said. ‘Does Auntie Evie know?’

‘Yes, my dearest.’ Her voice broke into a whisper, ‘I’ve brought some fudge for a special treat,’ she said. ‘And a note from Daddy.’

‘Oh, Mummy, this is an absolute dream,’ Kit said.

Connie kept her emotions at bay as Kit slipped her arm around her mother’s belted waist and pressed her head against her silky blouse.

Kit murmured – ‘Your pretty perfume, it reminds me of home – of sitting at your dressing table and

looking at the brooches in the drawer while you brush through my hair.'

'How I miss putting the ribbons in your hair, dear Kathleen,' Kit's mother said. She walked her fingertips tenderly over her daughter's head. 'And reading stories to you both – I only read to myself these days and the library's so short of good books. It's the simplest of things I miss the most.' She tickled at Bert's tousled mop. 'Gosh, and you've really grown, haven't you – you're both at least an inch taller. It must be this country air! And my darling Bert, I hear you're camped out in the attic – Evie and I used to do battle to sleep up there.'

Bert laughed. 'Kit couldn't wait to get rid of me.'

'There's a good feeling about this place,' the children's mother continued. 'It lives and breathes like nowhere else I know, and it's why I love it so much. I remember how we used to look forward to the holidays when we would stay here with Grandma. Little tomboys we were, climbing trees in the orchard – although I shouldn't confess to it.' She laughed, settling on the swing seat. 'It was the best thing ever when Grandpa Joe hung the swing. We used to see how far we could jump into the mossy grass,' she said. As she loosened her neckerchief, a small twisted feather spiralled to the ground. She stooped to pick it up, twirling it between her finger and thumb.

'My dearest children . . . once upon a time we came across a boy. I spotted him first from the attic window. He stepped out of the church in a bit of a daze and wandered into the orchard. Evie was on the swing at the time. She asked him what he was doing here and he didn't seem to know. I remember it so well because he carried with him a bird. The poor little thing had perished and not long after we buried it right here,' she said. The boy was distraught, it was as if it was the last thing he had left in the whole world.'

Connie's heart tensed with compassion, before spilling with a relief she had wished to feel inside.

'So what happened to this boy?' Kit urged.

'Grandma took him in and he helped for a month while she found a family to look after him. He went to Golden Hill, and after that I don't recall what happened then. Do you know . . . isn't it silly but I can't quite remember his name – Mervyn or something. Good gracious me,' she hurried on. 'I promised Evie I'd help in the kitchen. But I'll say this much – it's good to be back for a little while, especially now I have my two most precious things by my side.'

Her eyes glazed over and Connie guessed she was thinking of the children's dad.

'We have to get on, don't we,' the lady said, gathering her basket.

Kit and Bert skipped and danced ahead of their mother, their laughter filling the air.

'It was Malcolm . . .' Connie whispered.

‘Who was?’ said Charlie-Mouse.

‘The boy with the bird. It was Malcolm.’

‘But that was years ago and he was just a boy with a dead bird. It could have been anybody.’

‘Yeah. But it was Malcolm. I know it.’

Charlie-Mouse laughed it off. ‘Good story, Sis – but I reckon Malcolm found himself an escape in – one that suited him better than going home.’

‘No,’ she asserted. ‘It’s not a story. He slipped through – like the Wendlewitch said.’

‘How can you be so sure?’

‘I just am.’

‘You’ll have to prove it.’

‘Shut up, Charlie – you know I can’t.’

‘Anyway,’ he said, ‘If he’d slipped through, he’d have grown up by now.’

His words blew with a rush of air, picking up a swathe of blossom and baying at the back of her bare heels. The roar of an aircraft charged her ears. She drew her eyes from her brother to see the dark undercarriage and robust wheel arches of the Lysander rising above.

Through the window glass of the cockpit she was certain she could make out the profile of the airman. Was he waving to her? She stared so hard her eyes fogged and her head began to spin.

Chapter Twenty Seven Welcome home

The wheel pulled on the moonlight and whirled a collage of crazy patterns over her forearms and across the dusty floor of the pottery shop. A shadow image of the Lysander with its night-lights ablaze reflected the glaze of the Wendlewitch’s pots into a sweeping magical shimmer, leading her entranced to gaze at the top shelf. The china desk companions pawed down at her in play. The magic fell away to nothing and the cats stopped still.

She held her head in her hands – feeling the electrostatic charge spiking out of her hair as it lay over the surface of the slowing wheel. ‘We were so nearly there, I’m sure of it,’ she whispered.

‘Huh?’ Charlie-Mouse said. ‘Tell me I can go back to sleep.’

The floorboards twinged and creaked above. ‘Ssshhh,’ she said.

Something mouse-size scampered down the moonlit stairs and shot towards the shop door. In its wake, the Wendlewitch hovered halfway down in her dark flowing dressing gown. The moon slipped an eery stripe onto one side of her face. She gave a tidy yawn and patted her cheeks with

her hands. ‘I didn’t mean to make you jump, my dears,’ she said.

With a click of a light switch underneath her potter’s wheel, the Wendlewitch brought a warm blush to her pottery shop. ‘There – now we can see each other.’

Connie saw her own reflection twinkling in the Wendlewitch’s night-time spectacles and for a moment she thought she saw someone over her shoulder. She looked round – but there was no one there.

The Wendlewitch snapped something on top of the potter’s wheel.

‘I want you to look at this,’ she said, turning the sepia-toned postcard to catch the light of the lamp.

Connie peered in to see two fair-haired girls laughing, and leaning on the fence. A darker-haired boy of about her age sat on top of the fence beside them. A smaller boy sat lower down on the stile, looking straight to camera.

‘Taken at Claybridge,’ the Wendlewitch said. ‘Circa nineteen-twenty-something.’

‘The trees by the stream – they’re so small,’ Charlie-Mouse exclaimed.

Connie pointed. ‘This girl looks like Kit,’ she said. ‘It can’t be her. Not then. But it could be her mother.’

The Wendlewitch pulled off her glasses. She was about to speak when Charlie-Mouse whipped the picture from under her nose.

‘Look! The boy on the stile,’ he announced. ‘It can’t be . . . but it is . . . it’s Malcolm!’

The table lamp flickered and the potter’s wheel buzzed.

‘The wheel’s turning . . . on its own!’

Charlie-Mouse’s words disappeared into a quickening of shrieks from within the chimney breast.

‘Seems her power is still strong,’ the Wendlewitch shouted through the din.

As Connie gripped to her crutches, the table lamp blew. In the pitch black, the wheel radiated a pale mauve over her body. Spinning faster and faster, mauve turned to silver, picking up the hollows in Charlie-Mouse’s face and making him appear skeletal. She thrashed out for his hand and shut her eyes tight.

Chapter Twenty Eight New hope

Golden Hill Farm

Saturday, nd August

Dear Mummy,

We spent today by the brook at Corberley Green, as it was scorching again. Bert made potato crisp sandwiches for our lunch basket. I took one of Auntie Evie's old magazines and lay on the rug in the shade reading it for most of the afternoon. Bert spent all the time in the water, throwing sticks for Solo. Neither seemed to tire of this game.

Auntie E. and Uncle G. are spending some weekends on the fields back at Claybridge. They tell us everything appears to be normal there and that they have some land girls coming for the harvest at the end of the month. GOOD NEWS, even the siren is sounding less often. I do hope they announce that war is over soon because then Daddy can come back and we can all go home together. I do have a hopeful feeling about the future.

I will write again on Friday. Auntie E. has been saving lots of nice things to celebrate Bert's birthday and we are going to make a layered party cake. Some of the boys and girls from nearby are coming for tea.

Today we had stewed apples and ginger cream. The whole house was filled with a delicious mix of smells after we finished the cooking.

Until next week, Mummy.

With all my love, Kit xxxxxxxxxxx

P.S. Bert says to tell you that he made the ginger cream!Summer

Chapter Twenty Nine Their finest hour?

She swallowed the still night air. It calmed her heart and steadied her head. Slowly, she raised her eyes to see an aircraft passing directly overhead.

'The Lysander,' she said.

'Do you think it's been on a mission?' said Charlie-Mouse.

'Maybe.'

She rested heavily on her crutches as Charlie-Mouse shone his pocket torch around. The bushes and trees cowered, and as the narrow beam reached the Victorian lamplight, it dulled to a faint glow.

'Oh,' he said. 'That's that.'

A triangle of light escaped from the house as the kitchen door opened and closed. Two figures moved onto the lawn – the contours of their bodies and the rounded shapes of their heads

accentuated by the plane of moonlight laid over the garden and projecting their shadows to the wall behind.

‘What’s this then?’ said a gruff voice.

Connie pinched her eyes tight shut in the glare of the torchlight.

‘We’re on schedule to leave in ten minutes,’ the woman in the headscarf said, looking anxiously at her wristwatch.

‘It’s OK, I’ll deal with these children. Tomasz has only just flown over – there’s time before the handover.’

The bearded man stood the other side of the kitchen table.

‘Tell me what are you doing here,’ he demanded. ‘On restricted land.’

The colour had all but disappeared from Charlie-Mouse’s cheeks. His face quivered in the wavering of the gas lamp.

‘You won’t believe us,’ Connie said. ‘But we’ve come to find some . . . one.’

‘No one knows anyone here,’ the man replied. ‘Who have you come to find?’

Thoughts pummelled her head. Kit and Bert, the family – for one thing, they must all be at Golden Hill . . .

‘Wait,’ the man said, taking off his flying hat. The static pulled his ash-blonde hair into the air.
‘Are you looking for me?’

Connie stared from his beard up to his small grey eyes. They pinned her with sincerity and concern. But she was unable to reply.

‘Because if you are, there’s not much time. I’m flying to Poland in under the hour. Veronika has a rendezvous at am, she has to radio back.’

Veronika put down her small brown case and gave a meagre smile. Her thin painted lips glowed orange in the strange light. ‘Do we trust them, Malcolm?’ she lilted.

Malcolm turned. ‘It’s OK – they know this place,’ he replied.

‘Then you’re Malcolm . . .’ began Charlie-Mouse. ‘And you know who we are?’

‘Time does strange things,’ Malcolm said. ‘But it won’t let us forget where we came from.’

The kitchen door opened.

‘Tomasz. So soon,’ Malcolm said. ‘All set?’

The man nodded.

‘Then we must go,’ Malcolm said.

Veronika lifted her hand mid-air to gesture goodbye and followed Tomasz into the darkness. Malcolm zipped his heavy jacket and grasped hold of his flying hat and goggles. Instead of following, he threw open the door to the hallway. ‘Wait here,’ he said.

His steps echoed on the stone floor. She strained her eyes to see. Another door grated open . . . then closed. His tall, lean figure came back towards her.

In one of his hands Malcolm held a curled and faded envelope sprinkled over with brown dots, and in the other a blue and gold spotted china cat.

‘These are meant for you,’ he said. ‘Take good care. Our futures depend on it.’ He gave a flicker of a crooked smile and walked out after his companions.

The leaves rustled, and for a moment the sleeping orchard came to life. She sat on the tree swing and swayed side to side. Charlie stood with his back flat to the tree trunk. She barely saw him in the blur of darkness.

From over the top of the church tower came the night-lights of the Lysander. Its drone deadened by the clouding sky – the deep-grey shadow shuddering through the hemisphere.

‘Why would he ever want to come back with us?’ she said.

The night air thinned – pixellating in random sequence, it broke apart and sent her tired head into a semi-sleep. She spun this way and that, through the darkness – mixing with ghostly images of the house, of Charlie-Mouse and of the silhouetted Lysander.

Chapter Thirty Flashes of the past

‘Charlie?’ Connie called. She jumped at the sound of her voice in her head and pressed at the flesh of her ears to unblock them. ‘Charlie, are you here?’ The floor lifted from her feet and rose through her body before she blacked out completely.

The house whispered and she dreamed again. She dreamed of crossing the snow to the house. She opened the French doors to find Malcolm waiting in the study. He turned from the open fire and offered her the cat. As she reached to grasp hold, she dropped it – the spotted pieces smashing again over the parquet floor. He leaned to say something . . . and this time she heard him clearly.

‘You can save it,’ he said.

Opening her eyes, she found herself back in her own bed. The morning sun crept through the crack in her curtains, slashing its trail over her quilt cover and across the two precious objects on her

bedside table.

She sat up and stared.

Blue and gold spots jumped out at her from the crazed white glaze. Turquoise sparks from the cat's eyes flew like fireworks. Nervously, she reached out an arm to lift the fragile creature from its position on top of the envelope. She expected an electric shock – but it didn't come. She ran a forefinger over its smooth china back and along its tail. Something clinked. She shook gently. The penholder cat separated in her hand and something shiny and about the size of a fifty pence piece dropped onto the sunny patch of her quilt.

Chapter Thirty One The shoot

Veronika's small silver medal warmed in her hand as the same afternoon she watched members of the local news television crew buzzing like bees over a lavender bush in front of the Friday market in Corberley town square. She gripped tightly, with rebounding thoughts. What had become of her? What had become of Malcolm?

The producer waved his arm across her line of sight, darting this way and that over the pavement to brief the camera team. The presenter paced up and down rehearsing her lines.

'Is it someone famous?' called one lady, with gusto.

Connie didn't hear the reply – she had her eyes stuck firmly upon a familiar dark-suited figure close by.

'How can this be?' rasped Malcolm Mollet's dad.

A small man with horn-rimmed spectacles nodded back at him politely.

'We . . .' mouthed Malcolm Mollet's dad, directing his finger back and forth, 'had a deal.'

The man ignored him, continuing to buff up his tiepin with his handkerchief, then walzing off in the opposite direction.

Malcolm Mollet's dad was left gasping. He sidled up to a window at the Guildhall where he flirted with his own reflection. He relaxed his body and practised a beguiling smile while raising one eyebrow. He tried again, putting his right shoulder forward and raising both eyebrows. After a few minutes of what Connie could only call powerful posing practice, he grimaced. He smoothed down the lapels of his suit jacket, ran his fingers through his hair and teased at his delicately lined moustache.

As if in response to the vanity, the presenter gave a lightening-quick brush to her hair and flashed her face into her hand mirror. Snapping the mirror shut she got straight down to business. 'You understand we'll be going live to camera soon, don't you,' she told him. 'Stewart's in the studio

and he'll want to ask you some questions.'

'Ooh,' called the lady from the crowd. 'I see 'im on TV of an evening.'

Connie tucked in a smile.

'Quiet please,' called the producer. 'We'll go for a take with the planning man.'

The small man in horn-rimmed spectacles moved up to the public microphone.

'At lunchtime today,' he said. 'The Council received new information regarding the application for new housing at Claybridge Farm . . . and as a consequence is obliged to defer its decision to allow for consultation with local heritage and the war museum . . .'

Cheers came from the growing crowd.

'Stewart's in the studio waiting,' someone shouted across.

'Get the property developer!' said the producer, wiggling his pen at Malcolm Mollet's dad.

The presenter approached Malcolm Mollet's dad, with cameraman and soundman in tow. She put an earphone into his ear. 'Look to camera please. Are you ready? And, Action!'

Snatching a sideways glimpse at the monitor, Connie saw Malcolm Mollet's dad turning redder, and redder still as he bumbled into a mountain of words that became only mumbles to her ears.

The sound of an aircraft cut across filming. She watched Malcolm Mollet's dad spin his head angrily to the air and clutch hold of his greased-back hair with both hands. In her mind she saw Malcolm. Her chest fluttered and strength drained from her arms and legs.

'Cut! And go once more,' shouted the producer. 'Be smart and fast about it – I want us at Claybridge by two-thirty.'

Connie fought to bend, rubbing skin and metal through her thin tights – her calipers annoyed her intensely today. She grabbed her mum's hand and pulled it close. 'Shall we go back now?' she whispered.

Her mum nodded and tapped Charlie-Mouse on the shoulder. 'Tell your father we're going home,' she said.

Chapter Thirty Two A place in time

They waited by the open door to the pottery shop – Connie's senses kicked with the warm essence of the still evening air stirred with the smell of damp clay and blueberry burst perfume. The windows trailed off their latches, pushed wide.

The Wendlewitch reached for more water. Splashing her fingers in the bowl, she began to slip shape

into a bulging brown-grey pot spinning round and round on her wheel. She used her thumbs to draw the clay upwards and outwards, and her bowl grew into a useful form. She brought the wheel to a stop, and choosing a modelling tool, began to turn it by hand. She pressed the tool firmly, and worked until she met with the start of the pattern. With a satisfied ‘Hmmm’ she drew a thin wire underneath and drifted to the fireplace to place her pot into the one remaining space on the mantelpiece. ‘Come right in,’ she called, half hidden by one of the embroidered fire screens.

‘They’ve gone,’ Connie said. ‘Everything’s quiet.’

‘As it should be,’ returned the Wendlewitch.

Connie uncurled her fingers. ‘But we have to wait.’

‘Ah, the medal. Intelligence Corps.’

‘I’ve been thinking about her,’ Connie said.

‘Veronika has a story in both wars,’ said the Wendlewitch. ‘For certain.’

‘And Malcolm’s story?’

The Wendlewitch dropped her glasses to her nose. ‘That will be a question of timing.’

Connie picked up the hesitancy in the Wendlewitch’s voice.

‘Hey, he’s got to come back – hasn’t he?’ said Charlie-Mouse.

The Wendlewitch waggled her clay-covered gemstones over the top of her potter’s wheel – a flash contacted the two, and her purple-glittered eyelids juddered until she took her hand away.

He carried on undeterred. ‘His dad’s gonna notice.’

The Wendlewitch wiped at the surface of her wheel. ‘Either you can leave that to me, or . . . ’

‘Or what?’

The Wendlewitch did not answer him. Instead she collected the pieces of blue and gold china cat from her workbench and began to join them.

‘Some finely ground bone china and good glue – she’ll be as good as new,’ she said. ‘Then we’ll put her back where she belongs.’

Connie looked up at the top shelf.

‘Oh no,’ the Wendlewitch said. ‘Not there.’ She opened out her large stepladder. ‘They deserve a place on your study desk.’

‘But—’ Connie said, searching deep within the Wendlewitch’s purple eyes.

‘No buts,’ the Wendlewitch replied. She climbed up, then down, and laid the china cat with the small inkwell next to its companion. ‘Call them a thank you.’ Her smile brimmed and spilled. ‘Mother loved the cats,’ she said. ‘As she loved Claybridge – the very first time she clapped eyes

on it.'

Connie returned the smile. 'I think I know that.'

'You do?'

'Yesterday . . . the photocard of Malcolm and the children at Claybridge. I thought you were going to say something.'

The Wendlewitch rinsed and dried her hands, reaching for the mantelpiece. 'It's the only picture I have of my grandmother as a young girl,' she said. 'She looks so much like dear Kit at the very same age, don't you think.'

'Kit's your mother, isn't she,' said Connie.

As the Wendlewitch lifted a fingertip to the smile on her lips, the floor shook, pots rattled and Charlie-Mouse fell hard on the lion stool.

'Goodness me, seven-fifteen, and about time!' the Wendlewitch exclaimed. Drawing a remote control from her pocket, she zapped her buzzing kiln into silence. Without further word of explanation, she tucked the photocard in her pocket, settled a floppy purple hat on top of her wild, chestnut hair, and wended her way to the front of her pottery shop. The door banged shut leaving an echo of emptiness and anticipation, and a whirl of whispers.

The thrill lay siege to her. Connie cast an eye to the potter's wheel and pushed at the lion stool with one of her crutches. 'Dare you, Charlie,' she said.

Epilogue

Summer Malcolm's deliverance

So close to the ships on the clear night horizon, even at eighteen thousand feet Malcolm believed he could almost touch. Soon the stray lights of East Brandenburg would be flickering like the last sparks from a bed of embers.

He didn't hear a thing. The flames caught hold, curling up to his window. He judged from the ochre in Veronika's eyes, it had to be now.

His stomach jolted with the rapid downward motion of the Lysander. Letting slip the controls, 'Jump,' he shouted. 'Jump!'

'Malcolm!'

He pitched after her into the black.

Black turned to grey, then to purple. Swirling round and round, his head cushioned in air.

It seemed like forever.
