

A 823.918
M

UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY LIBRARY
000000609938706



[and]
With Joy in Arcady.
(See p 57.)



By ...
FRANK MORTON.

Gilmour's Bookshop
165 Castlereagh Street
SYDNEY

The Angel of the E a r t h q u a k e

— By FRANK MORTON —

¶ These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear : clouds they are without water, carried about of winds ; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots. :: :: —St. Jude.

MELBOURNE, 1909 :: :: THE ATLAS PRESS.

10
3/12/35



TO HAROLD ASHTON.

Dear Harold,—

111582
You may remember that night of purple recompense when you and I sat on the hillside at Toowong, and discussed Spinoza, Haddon Chambers, Bobby Byrne (God rest his soul!), and Ivory's Theorem, comparing our warm enthusiasms under the pallid gentle stars. Above us an appealing crescent of moon floated like a shallop of Hydaspes (whatever that may be) across the ancient ocean of the sky be-diamonded. In the valley beneath us, a curate and a housemaid furnished the modern note. You the Fabian and I the Anarchist smiled into each other's soul, tender of each other's preferences, speaking evil of none. You spoke of the opportunities you had just missed with comfort, and I of the opportunities I had just seized with joy. We agreed that Drink was a curse. And the world went very well then.

Will you permit me now, in all seriousness,



remembering our ancient friendship, to offer you this little book—this dream beclouded with a somewhat too deliberate morality? Recalling your delicate kindness and gentle comradeship, I feel that it is a slight and dubious gift enough that I bring you; but I dare say that if the Widow's Mite had happened to be counterfeit, the effect of her humane intention would not have been seriously impaired. As the widow, I am defective in some essentials; but we will let that pass. And you are not the man to look your gift-ass in the mouth, even though the beast be an unconvincing widow and well aged.

You may remember also that the other night, here in this country that is extravagantly called God's, we talked again. This time there was no hillside and no curate. We were years older and soberer. My speech had become subdued to a tremulous dubiety, my riotous thatch had thinned to a foolish pretence; the years (indeed) had left me little but my teeth. You agreed with me that it was possible that things were not quite so bright in New Zealand as some braying publicists would have us think. You admitted—an admission marvellous enough, as between

you the Democrat and I the Tory—you admitted that possibly all the political experiments of a dozen years had not borne fruit of virtue.

Having got you so far, I can offer the little book without apology. So far as its contentions go, it is unfashionably sincere. I do not believe that New Zealand is really as prosperous as Australia is, if only because Australians live more largely. I do not believe that the enthronement of the mob is a good thing. I believe that any community is best governed by its best brains. I believe that the reckless application of specious theories degrades a country and greatly retards its true development. I believe, in especial and most emphatically, that the political enfranchisement of women in New Zealand will prove, in the ultimate result, to be the worst thing that ever befel the country: because in practice, the great majority of the women that trouble to vote are either tools or dupes. I find women in this country voting for men for all sorts of reasons—because this man or that is such a “good” man, because he is a teetotaller, because he was so good to Willy that time, because he is so awf’lly nice, because he is so kind to his mother, because

he is such a good speaker. And I find, as I go about, that of the questions that most vitally affect this state endangered these voting women know little or nothing. Many of the wisest and noblest of the women do not vote. In England, many or most of the noblest and wisest of the women are guided, by some divine intuition that directs the whitest souls, to oppose the Suffragists' cry and claim. I'm glad of that. I am glad of it, because there are perilous times ahead for the great nations, and I would not have my England weakened now. I am glad of it, because I realize that the future is for the Individual, and the average woman moves naturally in masses whenever she gets into the arena of public affairs.

I hate these little, pestilent lawmakers who are for ever forging new fetters for the feet of the people. And I love a Statesman—the man who with an unflinching purpose and an open mind will determinedly do what he thinks is best. For myself, I would rather die in the ooze of these entanglements honestly hopeless of my own strength than I would be carried over the morasses by any unclean beast of the newest political pattern and upbringing.

F. M.

CHAPTER I.

DECEMBER 31, 1960.—Writing the date coolly, like that, I realize how many years have passed since first I held a pen. I see, too, that I am becoming an old man, according to the ancient computation. I have lived eighty years, and fifty of them—save for such brief occasional absences as have sufficed for my little flittings around and about the world on holiday—over fifty years, I say, I have spent in Wellington. How I hated the place, when I had been here a few months only! How differently I think of it now! How different it is, though!—how vastly and how finely different! As I recall my boyish dreams and hopes and prejudices, my little selfish theories of this and that, I chuckle at the wiser world's complete ignoring of my fanciful prescriptions. Here, where the nastiest new nostrums were tested *ad nauseam* before they were flung for ever out of window, it is good to let one's mind wander back over these last

fifty years. It is good to mark, with gratitude and ever-new delight, how wholesomely during these fifty years man has cleansed himself of blood and slime, has been uplifted and made free by means scarce dreamt of in that jostling century of ineffective half-measures, the Nineteenth. Then . . . barbarism, hyprocrisy, tyranny, oppression of class by class, general disorder and unrest, Science herself too often the smirking prostitute of the few that grabbed and slew. Now——

But I must not get away on my hobby, lest these be taken for the dodderings of a dotard. Have no fear. My eye is clear, my form tolerably erect, my brain reasonably active and healthy, my mind open enough, for all my eighty years. Growing old is one of the bad habits that men have latterly been breaking themselves of. Not too soon.

My house is set solidly on a hill, full in the path of the clean, keen winds I love. Below me and around me the city stretches, far-reaching lines of commodious, comely houses and broad, well-ordered thoroughfares. The haven—"harbour" they used to call it, in the days when the world was full of harbours

of sorts, not without need—lies unruffled and pellucid, save where the pleasure-barges and skiffs flash radiantly here and there. Far away to the west as I write, there is a black point that falls and rises, growing momentarily larger as one of the great public ærostats swoops onward to the city. There is no smoke anywhere, no needless dirt, no unsightliness. These are the days of pleasantness and peace. And it's a good world to live in.

And just below me, in the open space of garden where, in my first days here, the Post Office, and a host of other snug, uncomely buildings, used to cumber the ground, Waterton's statue stands. I can see it very distinctly through my glasses. The massive pediment is chaste and noble. On it, there is a man with a determined face, clothed in the extraordinary fashion of his time. With one hand he holds a little child close to his side. The other hand grasps a revolver—the curious weapon that became in a sense the characteristic sign or symbol of that most Christian epoch. The man's face is set, his mien resolute. The Angel of the Earthquake. . . . Lord! how long ago it seems, all that!

It was of the Earthquake, and Waterton's great part in it, that I set out to write. I wandered a little at the outset; but I shall try to be direct and terse from this onward. I suppose I really am growing old, you know. But it's a good world, and I'm not pining for the dark—yet.

CHAPTER II.

Christmas Day, 1910, broke dismally, a dawn of omens. It had rained steadily for a week, and though the downpour had ceased that morning, the sky was blocked by lowering masses of leaden cloud, and the wind that shrilled dismally across the city was cheerless as a corpse. But Wellington was a stalwart little community, careless of omens. For some years the cables had brought almost weekly tidings of cataclysms and disasters. In 1906, the grim procession started with somewhat of an earthquake in San Francisco. A year or two earlier still, there had been a terrible volcanic eruption in Martinique. After the San Francisco affair, old Vesuvius growled

and choked and vomited again. Next, the capital of Jamaica was badly shaken. Early in 1909 the great earthquake at Messina had destroyed a quarter of a million people. From all parts of the world there came frequent stories of such convulsions. And so the march of dire events went on. But in Wellington, a city built on a fault in volcanic country, there was neither dismay nor perturbation; and no steps were taken. Even the old shrewd habit of building in wood was dying out. In the city there were hundreds of buildings, big as that period went, carelessly thrown together with bricks and concrete. It was the age of stucco and shoddy, and the commercial spirit—of which one Samuel Smiles, then deceased and now forgotten, had been the saint and prophet—was undeterred by omens or good counsel. Christmas Day, 1910, broke cheerless over an inveterately cheerful city.

That morning, to please my gentle wife, I went to church. The quaint old service, a survival as apt as the pterodactyl might have been, amused but scarcely soothed me. I saw men, mechanically exuding peace and good-

will according to the established formulæ, whom I knew for callous sharks and sordid hucksters better dead; and, because I was still too young to have things properly in perspective, I was horribly annoyed. Even for 1910, I was not what you would call a particularly happy young man. I had travelled a good deal among various peoples, and had seen much of the futility of effort, much of the meanness of average human character. I had read omnivorously, and was greatly given to discovering infallible specifics. My dreams had brought me to New Zealand, where many unskilled and deluded persons were eagerly at work creating Paradise by act of Parliament; and in New Zealand I had been dismally disillusioned. I had found that socialism in action was merely made a means for the extension of calculated selfishness, and that as society was prodded along the road to Paradise—a muddy road, and tortuous—cherished individual liberties were daily more zealously restricted and contemned. I found that such fine ancient flowers as courtesy and gentleness did not flourish notably in the new atmosphere. I found wrangling churches

and scheming sects hastening to make the worst possible uses of the new stalking-horse. And outside the church, that Christmas noon, I found a vapourous, breathless day, a sky of tarnished copper, an atmosphere of vague forebodings.

For me, then, it was not on the whole a merry Christmas. At home, the heat suffocating appetite, dinner seemed flaccid and unappetizing. My tobacco had lost its savour. I could win no comfort from the hearts of favourite books. My dog—a valiant little terrier that lived till 1920—whimpered and scratched about the room, increasing my agitation. My usually too-voluble cockatoo was as depressed as a saturated mute.

I went to bed early, pleading a headache; and I have no doubt that my wife was glad to be rid of me. I awoke just before midnight, awoke suddenly and completely, as though some icy hand had touched me. My little boy, who slept in a cot near by, was crying. (I can hear his grandson prattling in the next room now). I got out of bed to comfort him, and as I walked across the floor, I lurched, lost my footing, and fell into the fireplace. A big

picture on the opposite wall came down with a crash. The heavy bed my wife and I shared rolled along the floor. I had turned the switch when I got up, and now the light went out suddenly. I got to my feet, and steadied myself by the mantelpiece. The house was swaying and heaving like a ship at sea, but the sensation was uniquely sickening. The chimney outside fell with a tremendous clatter. A confused noise of disturbance in the city came through the open window. I lit a candle, put the boy into bed with my wife, and re-assured them both. Then I went to the window and looked out.

It was like peering into a pit. There was absolutely no glimmer of light. But the awful noises from the city continued and increased. Our house was a stout building of weatherboard, and, save for the fallen chimney, seemed to have suffered no hurt. I dressed hastily, and went out.



CHAPTER III.

I am very strong and fit at eighty, but I still think that that first night of terrors added ten years to my age. When I got out of our side-street, and groped my way into Willis Street, I found the roadway lumbered with debris every few yards. A lot of the electric wires were down, and a dead horse lay across the tram-line at the intersection of Ingestre Street. Many folk were already afoot, but all men at the outset instinctively kept silence. At the corner of Manners Street, a strayed reveller, silly with drink, roared an incongruous song, till a passer smote him savagely across the mouth. He was whimpering stupidly in the gutter when I went by. Men carried lanterns here and there, and I came across a frightened boy from my own office who had an acetylene bicycle-lamp. But the night was still intolerably dark. Willis Street, from Manners Street on, was practically blocked. Two big hotels and all sorts of smaller places had fallen into ruins, and scared

pedestrians were already muttering fearfully of thousands dead. Here and there, bursted water-mains were flooding the roadways. The electric and gas services had broken down at the first shock. The air was thick with an indescribably pungent dust. It seemed to eddy from every direction like a writhing smoke. Through this enfolding dust the men and women wandered strangely disguised and blurred, like figures in some ill dream.

The second shock came at 1.20. The whole front fell out of a shop close by where I was standing, and so I had the first of my narrow escapes. There was a big crash higher up the road, and someone said that the spire of St. John's had fallen. For a moment it seemed that the roadways rolled like waves. This second shock, although it only lasted twenty seconds, did even more havoc than the first, and added to the terror of the overthrow the terror of fire. The huge wooden block of the Government Buildings was the first ablaze, and as the glare grew, desolation was made visible. A great mass of Wellington Terrace had slipped, and fallen on Lambton Quay like a mighty avalanche. It seemed on a first

glance that the whole city was in ruins. The Harbour had risen, and the water at some points touched Lambton Quay. All the shipping was adrift; and the *Toowoomba*, sailing in from Sydney, went to pieces on a huge new rock in the fairway between the Heads. Half-a-dozen buildings were soon in flames, including Parliament House; and nothing could be done to save them. Happily, there was no wind. But worse was to follow. At three o'clock in the morning there was added to the terrors of earthquake and fire, the terror of the panic.

On that I shall touch as lightly as may be, this being only the merest summary of events. It was a panic unparelled and most inhuman. Men and women swarmed into the dark streets half-dressed, and jibbered viciously into each other's faces. I saw and heard such things as it is hateful even to remember. Looting had begun early, but that was a minor evil. The panic added the culminating element of horror; and the panic lasted a long two hours, so that the streets were full of demented creatures till well after sun-up.

The women gave an element of special horror

to these hours of panic. Afraid to remain in their houses, shaken out of all reserve, feeling nothing but the clutch of the giant fear, they wandered about the city. Some had lost their menfolk, and some men half unmanned strove miserably to pacify. The women, despite their enfranchisement and general confidence, looked to the men, and the men, during those worst hours, were themselves distraught. The city was full of human creatures that huddled shrieking in corners or scurried across open spaces whimpering like scared beasts. A horror.

The stricken town lay utterly at the mercy of these new terrors. The police-force, scarcely adequate during normal times, was foolishly impotent now. I saw a burly quaking constable solemnly arrest a drunken sailor amid the choking dust from a fallen building, although the sailor was placidly and harmlessly drunk, and other ruffians in the near vicinity were doing grisly work. On the skirts and in the thick of the panic foul outrage lurked and snarled. Such things were done as it is needless to recall. The futility of the police was proved beyond all question. The whole

police-system was in process of being irrevocably doomed.

By seven o'clock we began to have some idea of the proportions of the catastrophe. Certain of the suburbs, Newtown most notably, had suffered terribly. Petone was submerged. The perplexed authorities reckoned that there were at least five thousand dead. In one hotel two hundred persons had perished. Confirmation of the news of the total wreck of the *Toowoomba* brought with it the certainty of four hundred lives lost there. All the public services were dislocated. The General Post Office was a smoking ruin. Neither trams nor trains could run. The water-supply had failed. And this was only the commencement.

I went home, and was cheered to find all right there. My wife's brothers were visiting us, and they volunteered to stand by the house. I snatched some breakfast, and made my way back to town.



CHAPTER IV.

In a world of this size, the downfall of a comparatively small city like Wellington would seem to be a matter of slight moment ; but great issues spring from small causes, and the overthrow of Wellington stands for all time as one of the great events of human history. This being so, I am impelled to tell the truth, however briefly.

When I got back to town, the panic had largely subsided, but what remained was chaos. The very streets were strewn with dead. The looters, many of them unkempt sailors who had deserted the drifting ships in the Harbour (but all were not sailors, or unkempt)—the looters, inflamed with stolen liquor, were still beyond control. The morning's tale of savage murders so far known was twelve. Among the law-abiding population, there was as yet no cohesion, no system. Constant reports of gruesome outrages kept most heads of households in their homes. But a hundred resolute men met at nine o'clock by

the wrecked Town Hall, and there the famous Vigilance Corps was formed. I had the fortune to be enrolled among the first, and I was sent with a squad to one of the shattered hotels in Willis Street. It was heart-breaking work; but in the course of the morning we succeeded in rescuing a few injured folk. More than that it was impossible to do at the outset; but as new recruits came in the operations were extended. Among the salvage by noon there were already eight hundred corpses. Heavy rain had set in again, and the fires had not spread. The looting remained virtually unchecked; but, beset as we were by grave matters, that passed almost unheeded. Our corps, now over five hundred strong, was armed with revolvers; but throughout that dread forenoon the revolvers were not used. We received by wireless telegraph a good many messages of condolence and promised help; and we were informed at 11.30 that Dunedin had proclaimed a day of humiliation and prayer. There was a general grim laugh at this news, the first laugh I had heard that day.

A quiet, grey-eyed man had been working

with me all the morning. There was nothing especially striking about him, except his resourcefulness and nerve. He told me that he lived out at Newtown; so when we paused for refreshment at noon I took him home with me.

Home! How good it was! The wife had settled quietly to her tasks, and in the well-ordered house there were now no signs of disruption. The chimney smoked a little, but that was to be expected; there was nothing worse. Lunch was good, and we ate it with good appetites. Then we left, and they barricaded the doors again.

The man with me—there had been no sort of formal introduction—told me that he was a journalist, newly arrived. I also was a journalist, but my office was a ruin. The editor had escaped unscathed. There used to be a proverb about the mysterious workings of Providence. . . .

In Willis Street we came across a party of looters—five of them. They looked a bad lot, but were comparatively sober. As we came up, one of them grabbed a young girl who was walking timidly past.

"Let go that girl!" said my companion, quietly.

The ruffian looked up with a curse, kissed the girl brutally on the face, flung her aside, and rushed at her defender.

My companion raised his revolver, and the looter fell, shot clean through the head. Another of them rushed my man, and again the revolver spoke. The remaining three went off at a run.

"That was good," I said, "and necessary. Do you mind telling me your name?"

"Andrew Waterton."

We gripped each other's hand, and went on to our squad.

CHAPTER V.

That afternoon, Waterton, still working steadily in that quiet way of his, came to the front. The work of rescue, where rescue still was possible, was often very dangerous, and Waterton, time and time again, cheerfully took risks at which we others hesitated. The chances he faced were desperate. Once—he

had gone in among a lot of debris, between tottering walls—some stuff fell, and we thought that we had lost him ; but he emerged presently, carrying a chubby child of three, and looking happier than I had seen him theretofore.

“ Mother dead,” he said. “ Better send the youngster along to your place.”

Of course I agreed, and Waterton interpreted my natural assent so liberally that three or four other children were sent along during the afternoon.

Somehow, my new friend was gradually edged to the front, till before evening he was virtually in charge of operations. The corps met by arrangement just before dark. An ineffective military person had been in charge, and him we deposed without ceremony. The story of Waterton and the looters had gone round, and presently one of the younger men proposed that Waterton should have the command. To this no dissentient voice was raised.

“ See here,” said Waterton simply. “ Time’s precious. I’ll lead you to the best of my ability while you see fit to follow me, so long as I lead in earnest. While I’m tsar, I’m tsar. That understood ? ”

There was a hearty chorus of assent.

“Right. Now a section of this populace has gone mad, and is suffering from dishonesty and blood-lust—and otherwise. That section must be whipped out of hand. It’s no use depending on your fool police, and ordinary laws don’t apply here. There are a thousand of us. It’s quite enough, if we hang together. If you see any man looting, warn him ; if he persists, shoot.”

That night at eight, the third and last bad shock came, and much more damage and death resulted. Also, there was another panic. Waterton had undisputed charge now. He worked like ten men, and he proved (a fact I had for some time been suspecting) that the cool mind of one wise and courageous man is better than the brains of a thousand dunder-heads in counsel. First of all, he sent us out in parties of five, and we gathered up the homeless women and children and billeted them in the habitable houses. We took no refusals or excuses, and few were offered. We found that the majority of the men were dazed and helpless, and many sat sullen with their dead. Some we left alone, and some we drove like

cattle to whichever tasks lay nearest—which meant, generally, to whichever corpses lay handiest for burial.

Then the Corps, sternly directed by Waterton, commenced to beat the city for its vermin. Fifty looters and ruffians were summarily shot that night. Resolutions of protest were passed afterwards by some Australian churches ; but I never heard that anyone was any the worse for that. When Waterton and I went home at three, leaving two hundred of the Corps on patrol duty, things were looking quieter. We found my wife still up, with supper waiting for us. The salvaged children were sleeping like strayed cherubs.

CHAPTER VI.

Thus the position stood, then, on the morning of the 27th of December. A large part of the city was destroyed. Nearly ten thousand bodies, as it afterwards proved, were awaiting burial. The authorities had utterly failed to grasp the position and its necessities. On the heels of the first panic there had been a strange

and unprecedented outcrop of lawlessness. There was the possibility of another shock at any moment. Beset by these uncertainties, the terror was not laid. Control lay in the hands of a thousand men—ultimately, in the hands of one man. The Government did nothing and said nothing. Two ministers of the Crown were among the slain; probably about the lightest loss the city suffered. The labour organizations proved that they were useless for any purpose other than political agitation. There was talk of the speedy arrival of a man-o'-war; but that could have made little difference, in any case. Our Corps—it was composed principally of men of the professional classes, a curious thing—was adequate for the needs of direction and management; but the strength of the Corps lay chiefly in the fact that it moved as one man whenever Waterton gave the signal.

Now, this paralysis of a rampant democracy will doubtless seem very strange to such of you as have not made a close study of the past history of this country. In 1910, public men in New Zealand were too busy with politics to get any grasp of affairs. Accustomed to

move in mobs, men were losing the very instinct of personal initiative. Amid the everlasting turmoil of schemes for social betterment, the individual had been lost sight of; and, worse than that, the individual had begun to lose sight of himself. All things being regarded as the business of the state, were accounted the business of nobody in particular; and whenever the state made a worse than usual bungle of the business, individual citizens became hysterical and sat down. The state, on the night of the earthquake, was really represented in Wellington by five respectable gentlemen of the middle class. Two of these went forthwith to whatever may have happened to be their reward. Of the other three, one was rescued fuddled from his club; one was a narrow sectary who had absolutely no ideas outside the groove of party; and one was an impulsive good fellow who promptly lost his head and made a rather pathetic spectacle of himself. The police, as already noted, proved worse than useless. Three constables were among the fifty looters shot, thus paying a heavier penalty than was paid by constables convicted of burglary and theft in

Dunedin a year or two earlier. But it is useless to blame the police. As a class, they were miserably paid, and miserably esteemed. Their general stupidity had long passed into a by-word. It seems that ordinary intelligence was neither expected nor required of them. The law, which had not been framed to meet the contingencies of earthquake, was as useless as the police. That morning of the 27th the Government got sense enough to recognise and establish Waterton's position. The law, from that time on till the finish, was a sort of martial law approved by Waterton; very stern and summary law indeed. He was more given to action than to argument, and when the puerile majority talked about his "brutal harshness," and all the rest of it, he only smiled in protest. On the 27th he ordered that all men fit for service must work, and there was much weak repining and rebellion of timid stomachs before we got that order into action. Meantime, in that close weather, the thousands of the poor dead were becoming every moment a graver source of menace and offence. Where no possible place of burial was at hand, huge fires were lighted, and the dead disposed of by

process of rough cremation. To all this grisly work there was the most stubborn opposition we had yet encountered. The sickly sentiment of the time was solidly against us. There was a general howl for burial in what was called consecrated ground. This was the fattened glebe of church and sects, the tracts that in the old world had for centuries been the crawling hotbeds of the worst diseases. More than once, as this work of burial went forward, revolvers were used again. The necessity was as repulsive as it was urgent, and Waterton never flinched. I don't suppose that any man ever made more enemies in a day. One of the men shot was a constable who, in the teeth of the sternest warning from our chief, had attempted to assist in the "rescue" of three corpses from one of the pyres. No rescue of that sort could be tolerated, and the constable paid the price of his stupidity and greed. I, for one, did not enrol him in the number of the martyrs; but hysterical ignorance in Wellington and outside made much of the incident. One way and another, by the night of the 27th twelve hundred corpses had been disposed of. There

was no order or discrimination in the filling of the burial-pits ; but the bodies were drenched in the strongest disinfectants that could be procured. Waterton, you see, was an eminently practical man, even at the outset. He was cool and resolute, and he never wilted. Among other matters, on that night of the 27th, he had five thousand homeless orphans on his hands. And the worst was still to come.

CHAPTER VII.

Early on the 28th, three steamers felt their way out of the Harbour, with a thousand passengers on board. Among the number were fourteen clergymen, a dozen justices of the peace, and six members of Parliament. Many others escaped by road. We could well have spared many more ; but that day the port and the roads were shut.

The new terror came at ten o'clock on that hot morning of the 28th. Off Cuba Street there was a dingy thoroughfare given over to the Chinese—a thoroughfare that no sane civilized democracy should have tolerated. It

was from this quarter that the alarming news came. Dr. Pilkington, one of the finest fellows in our Corps, came up to Waterton.

"Small-pox," he said. "Ten cases already; four hæmorrhagic."

Two hundred of us, led by Waterton, went to the infected quarter, taking ammunition and ambulances. The order was that the patients and all possible contacts were to be removed to the Quarantine Station. The Chinese fought like wild-cats. If you had ever seen a low-class Asiatic suffering from hæmorrhagic small-pox, you might be able to form some idea of the horror of the situation. Before the victims and contacts were removed, eighteen Chinese had been killed, and we had lost three of our own men. We had to get the best isolation possible, and as eight hundred persons were isolated together, in one fairly restricted area, the reluctance of the contacts was not inexplicable. Three doctors and ten nurses went along. The behaviour of the nurses, many of them gently bred women who volunteered, was magnificent, right through. Bravery and altruism were part of the doctor's daily equipment in those times; so that they

came in for no special plaudits. But Pilkington must be remembered as the second man of the earthquake.

At three o'clock that afternoon, the tale of the buried and burnt then totalling 2,100, the first case of plague was reported, from a Chinese laundry in Willis Street. The place had been partially demolished by the second shock, and the patient lay in a room with two corpses. For this new horror no suitable area of isolation was available; so Waterton commandeered the *Lubra*, a great mail-steamer just making ready for sea. The agents protested, and the captain made a loud noise; but under the direction of fifty men of the Corps, the *Lubra* was taken into the stream off Day's Bay, and moored there. I remember that the people of Day's Bay, which had not suffered from the quake, held a meeting and made furious speeches; whereupon Waterton sent them five hundred orphans and some terse instructions. Three officers (including the Captain), two cooks, and ten stewards were left on the *Lubra*. They did not volunteer; they obeyed orders, under persuasion. And before nightfall a doctor and four nurses

arrived, with five plague patients. In the city, the Corps was kept hard at work ; for the new panic was worse than the old, being quieter. At seven o'clock news arrived that the whole of Australasia had declared a close quarantine against us. The coming fight, then, was for us ; and we were glad of it.

“ At such a time,” said Waterton, “ interference is the devil. We can work now.”

Work, indeed, rushed down on us. The city had lost its head. The burial-parties had to be kept to their work by bitter compulsion, and over and over again, as the dire need arose, the revolvers talked. The labour unions were organizing opposition ; so Waterton dealt with a few of the leaders summarily, and locked up the others. Less prominent disaffected men were set to the hardest duties, and kept to them. For those who opposed or hindered him at this crisis, Waterton showed no consideration. His open opponents were worked like slaves, and slept under guard. And even so, with the pestilence creeping on us, with typhus getting a strong hold in every direction, there were seven thousand corpses yet unburied on that night of the 28th.

CHAPTER VIII.

In these days of humane individual liberty, it is very difficult to appreciate or to explain the awful outbreak of lawlessness and wrong that swept over Wellington in those terribly dark days, from the morning of the 29th onwards. In New Zealand there had been much gratuitous boasting of the law-abiding tendencies of the democracy, and contrary indications had been ignored, glossed over, or scouted as exceptional. The accepted code inculcated a purely negative morality, and positive virtues were seldom obtruded or esteemed. Certain things were forbidden—a list of things almost daily extended—and on these things the minds of the people dwelt morbidly, if not exclusively. Any too close contemplation of the forbidden begets the desire or inclination to transgress; so that much even of New Zealand's negative morality was merely superficial. Although the idea of virtue, for instance, had been narrowed down to the observance of a certain strict idea

of physical chastity, there could be no pretence that the majority of the men were physically chaste ; and the women spent much of their newly-equipped energy in the vain attempt to make men chaste by statute. And always, the women quaintly overlooked or neglected the fact that in any given transgression of the sexual code there must be two offenders, one a woman. Though women in all the ages have practised the subtlest and most unscrupulous arts of seduction, women generally joined in clamorous condemnation of the seducer man. To handicap the man, and so incidentally to raise the cost of forbidden luxury, the women pulled many devious wires, and devised many oppressive and dangerous acts of reckless legislation ; so that the average young man of that civilization, turned from wholesome courses and conceptions, came to look on the average woman as his natural opponent, fair game. All this mechanical suppression of normal impulse, all this insensate cumbering of the natural way, led inevitably to the aftermath. Let any human impulse be dragged arbitrarily in an artificial direction, and sooner or later there

comes the recoil. The recoil came in Wellington, where for some time the arbitrary pull had been applied more thoroughly and more thoughtlessly than anywhere else on earth since the earlier recoil from puritanism. Hundreds of these young men who now developed so sudden and so dire a spirit of lawlessness had been for years excessive meat-eaters, more or less secret lechers, intemperate, careless, empty-headed and content to be empty-headed. Their education had been shallow and according to rote, taking no account of individual tendencies and idiosyncrasies. They had lost all sense of that chivalrous spirit which, whatever its defects in practice, had been a sweetening influence and a deterrent from the grosser sins. They had been taught (as far as their teaching in that matter went) that religion was essentially not a matter of personal morality, and that the whole responsibility of man on that side lay in the blind acceptance of an alleged vicarious sacrifice attested by dubious tradition and variously interpreted and esteemed by a hundred jangling sects. This essential dogma of the Christian faith, removing per-

sonal responsibility, was essentially immoral ; but the eyes of the mass of men had been blinded by the dust of an effete theology. A religion that taught that a good man might live worthily all his life, and still move on a set path to eternal perdition, while any murderer or thug blackened by abominable crime might win eternal felicity by deliberate repentance at the gallows-head, was a religion infinitely dangerous. But that was the religion to which the young men of Wellington had been born, and in which they had been bred.

The social order of Christendom was deep-based in hypocrisy and infamous pretence. Men naturally polygamous indulged their passions indiscriminately under the mask of Christian marriage, and there was at least a strong probability that a large percentage of illegitimate children were born in wedlock. These considerations, and such considerations as these, were the impelling cause of what I can only call the recoil from matrimony. In the early days of this century a clamour arose concerning the declining birth-rate in certain civilized countries. The best people, from

the standpoint of science, were showing a desire to refrain from marriage, while those that did marry had few or no children. But in the slums and mean streets there was still fecundity, and a terribly large proportion of the children born in many crowded centres were offshoots of degenerate seed, factors in the perpetuation of the unfit. No civilized state attempted to have any such care for its people as a horse-owner has for his stud. Men and women of diseased and criminal stocks (terms often enough synonymous) were permitted to marry, and did marry. The tendency to marriage was especially noteworthy among persons suffering from those dread forms of tuberculosis that our science and care have since those days extirpated. Mental degenerates married and begot mental degenerates. In some conspicuous families, sturdy surreptitious lovers of neurotic ladies actually strengthened and redeemed the strain. It was a very curious civilization to take its moral tone so seriously and claim chastity as its distinctive virtue.

And this was the civilization that had bred the young men who got to work on the morning of the 29th. I make excuses for them now:

the excuses just suggested in my summary of conditions ; but none of the Corps made any excuses for them then. They were intoxicated by the terror of death, which with mean minds is the worst and foulest intoxication. Goaded by each others' example, they were freed from the old restraints. They were for the most part young men who had worked at uncongenial callings for a wage that just sufficed to keep them in rough material comfort—an infamy common enough at that time—and left no margin for indulgence in spiritual or æsthetic pleasures. Their preferred amusements, apart from the general serious and systematic amusement of the chase of women, were gambling, and sport debased by gambling and professionalism. They haunted the music halls, where, side by side with reasonably clean and innocent entertainers, they were gladdened by singers of covertly bestial songs that had no excuse in art. Their untrained minds could not rise to enjoyable appreciation of dramatic subtleties. When they visited the theatre, it was either to witness some illiterate and ill-ordered drama of criminality and blood, with emotionally virtuous passages splashed in in

grease, or some gorgeously staged musical-comedy or burlesque that depended for acceptance on its tuneful triviality of musical pinch-beck, the smutty allusions of its libretto, and the largely undraped limbs of its leering chorus-women. Similarly, anything approaching genuine love of literature was confined to a very small minority of the people. The growth of cheap and popular education had not resulted in any general perspicacity on the side of art. Many of the greatest painters and writers were still made the jest of the multitude. The ruling public taste was for the nastiest, silliest, and tawdriest sort of fiction. Thus one Marie Corelli, whose excessively rare books are still in demand as bibliographic curiosities, was published in huge editions. She was a potent instrument of the devil in the game of mock-morality ; for great multitudes of the people greedily devoured everything she wrote. She was an illiterate, freakish person, unwholesome as a drunkard's nightmare, with no style other than such as lay in the consistency of her stylelessness, with no command of pure English, and her morality was mere miasma of hysteria touched by

greed and stimulated by a silly womanish vanity. She is the worst accusation that one can bring against the English herd of fifty years ago ; and, remembering her deplorable success, it is impossible to assume that the English herd of fifty years ago had any saving sense of humour.

In short, the times were ripe for revolution, and the earthquake at Wellington started the mighty back-spin of the wheel.

CHAPTER IX.

On the morning of the 29th, as Waterton and I were superintending work at the big pyre on Lambton Quay, news was brought to us that a strong gang of young fellows was causing trouble in Cuba Street. We rounded up a hundred of the Corps, and started. The thing proved more serious than we had feared. The gang was at least three hundred strong, and fully half the men were in liquor. There was a scattering of light women among them, but screams from some quarters told us of other women present who were not there by

their own free will. Some of the men had firearms, and some had sticks ; all were armed, one way or another. We fought our way to the points where the women were. It was hot work, and we were badly outnumbered ; but the Corps had by this time got into its stride, and we won through. Of the better class of women we rescued some. Some were not rescued.

In that first hot scrimmage we lost four of our men ; but the gang left twenty of its number disabled and dead. Some of these I knew, and as I looked at them the horror of the new development was borne in upon me.

“ They must have gone mad,” I said.

Waterton was binding a handkerchief round a wound on his left wrist. He smiled grimly.

“ Have it that way, if you will. There’s that in their blood that is the oldest incentive to madness, any way. Some of those fellows have sisters, you know, but that doesn’t count now. The seamy side of civilization’s coming up, and we’re going to have trouble with it.”

We had trouble, trouble worse than we had dreamt of. It is only the first step that counts, and the rioters, once committed, were

not for turning back. Disquieting rumours and reports of fresh outrages poured in on us. We sent out posses of our men, and began bringing in such women as were not adequately protected. Some came willingly, and some we had to drag from homes made desolate by their dead. Waterton cleared the buildings left standing in the central area, and in these the women were accommodated under guard. But time was too short for the work, our hands too few. Doing our best, there was still terribly much had to remain undone. All the time the riot and rapine went on, shifting this way and that as we strove to check and localize it. There were horrors we were powerless to prevent, horrors only known to us too late for remedy. These things are better not talked about, even now; but the fact cannot be slurred.

We armed the householders, so far as we were able, and we got horses for the Corps. But all these things took time, and on that day of the 29th December, the urgency of burial becoming graver every minute and the horror of it increasing in like ratio, the work of burial went on more slowly, with frequent interruptions.

Meantime, the pestilence in all kinds made fearful progress. There were ninety plague cases on the *Lubra*, and double that number of cases of small-pox at the Quarantine Station. To these must be added a number of cases in which death had resulted too speedily for removal. It was no longer possible to quarantine any area of the city, for the pestilence was everywhere.

Waterton had justified himself. He had few critics or enemies now, outside the ranks of the rioters. For once the man and the moment had met. His energy was superb, his will indomitable; but he had little to say. During this day of the 29th December we had abundant opportunity of noting his strange tenderness to women, his almost morbid love of little children. I cannot make this rapid memoir a catalogue of incidents in detail, or I might tell you a thousand things that would more clearly show you how and why this man won our worship; but his name has become a monument, and I have no wish to heap up words. Only, there is one incident I must record.

On the *Lubra* there was a poor woman whose

husband and son had both been killed by the falling of one of the newspaper-offices. Wandering the streets distracted during the hours of panic of that first awful night she had lost her only other child, a sweet girl of ten. All the next day the mother sought the child, till the agony of her search was rudely interrupted, and the poor woman was taken aboard the plague-ship. The pity of this thing had appealed to Waterton, and I think that the brightest gleam of all that dark 29th for him was when the news came to us that the child was found. She had been slightly injured by some falling debris, and was in the house of good people in Cuba Street. The people had grave troubles of their own, and we moved little Netta up to my place. As soon as we could manage it, Waterton and I went off to the *Lubra*. The doctor told us where Mrs. Silcott was lying, and we went along the strangely silent ship to the ward. The nurse in charge was a very beautiful girl, one of our society volunteers, and one of the noblest and most devoted of them all. But this is not the place for her story. She came softly towards us.

"I am Waterton," he said simply. "Where is Mrs. Silcott?"

I saw a new radiance in the nurse's eyes as she looked at him.

"Have you found her child?" she whispered.

"Yes."

"And you—you came off specially to tell her?"

Waterton smiled. No other man, I think, ever smiled quite so.

"I gave myself that pleasure."

She led us to the bed. The patient lay very still, and something told us that there was little hope for her.

"Are you feeling any better, Mrs. Silcott?" Waterton asked.

The woman opened her eyes and looked at us.

"I shall be no better till I go," she said. "I have lost all."

"Not all." His voice was very gentle. "You have still a great responsibility. You must live for little Netta's sake. She is safe at my friend's house."

"God bless you!" she said. "I shall live now."

And she did, in defiance of all established order. There is no reckoning with these women.

But as we turned away I heard her say, "Who is that?"

"That," the sweet nurse murmured proudly, "is the Angel of the Earthquake."

The title clung to him, through all those days, and afterwards.

CHAPTER X.

Of the next days, the long accumulation of horrors, it is not desirable that I should speak in detail. The pestilence raged with such fury that by the third day of the new year there were three plague ships where there had been one, while two other large steamers lay at anchor off the Quarantine Station, floating small-pox hospitals. The bluejackets of the war-ship *Clianthus*, which arrived on New Years Day, did us great service. Other volunteers came in from north and south. It was a long fight and a bitter one, but by the 5th the rabid element of disorder was practic-

ally wiped out, and all the bodies that we could discover had been buried. The pestilence was a greater matter, though Pilkington and his staff worked like the heroes they were. In one week there were nearly two thousand deaths from small-pox and plague. By the 15th the death-roll from those causes had mounted to over five thousand. But Pilkington got hold. A dozen squalid streets that had proved hotbeds of contagion were cleared, and the houses burnt. Slowly the death-rate dwindled. On January the 26th, with 314 cases isolated, the pestilence in the city had run its course and men began to breathe freely. The worst was over.

Of what those weeks meant, to us who were concerned in the work, I can give you but a slight idea; but the weeks of outrage and violence were the worst of all. There were a thousand things we were all eager to forget, and a thousand we were zealous to remember. We realized how thin a crust lay between our civilization and the Pit. We learned to despise the fallacies to which we had clung, to recognise the hopelessness and sheer futility of the theories we had spun. In that little crucible

of Wellington, many things were reduced to their essences and found worthless. The work of Waterton was the triumph of the individual over the mob. There was a great crop reaped amid death and disillusion, and the seeds of it that were sown across the world were not the seeds of communism or of socialism. Those were the days of the dawn of individual liberty. Before that there had been butcherly effort and forlorn experiment, a groping and a making-ready in the dark.

CHAPTER XI.

And so, as you all know, New Zealand became a paradise of the working man in very truth—or, shall we say, a bright suburb of the wider paradise we know. The term "working man" acquired a new significance, and became a term of honour. The day passed when any man could with honour live by the ruthless exploitation of his brother's labour. The sweet old pre-Christian ideals were restored, and what had been a civilization of blood-and-iron was slowly transformed to a civiliz-

ation of white-and-gold. Men ceased to grovel to the fetich of their prejudices, and so began in joyous earnest to cultivate their intelligence. The farce of cheap democracy was played out. Men suddenly became alive to the fact that government by party was at best only a stupid subterfuge. And so the good time came in when there began to be general recognition of the fact that, apart from very few matters, there were no interests in regard to which any man's individual liberty could properly be restricted. The churches collapsed, and Christianity—whatever was good in it—came in. Men were brought to see that they could only be comfortable in each other's comfort, only be truly happy in each other's joy. It was discovered anew that whatever was good in Christianity was good in all the great religions. Whether there may be anything after death—riper spiritual growth, or only a sleep and a forgetting—we do not know; but our general dream-ideal is the Buddhist one of absorption into the Infinite. Dear Waterton, who lived till 1945, in happy union with that sweet nurse we wot of, was a pantheist, and his genial retreat on the

Wanganui River was populous with the old gods and graces of his fancy. His children we know, and his children's children. I don't know whether they have any religion in especial; - I never asked them. But sometimes—sometimes when I go about this gracious earth that nurtures us, and look on the sky of stars and the manifold mysteries our science fails to pierce—sometimes I think that beyond and behind all this grandeur and perfect order there is supernal Mind. Sometimes I think that perhaps perhaps Who knows?

CHAPTER XII.

DECEMBER 31, 1960! Lord! how the time goes! As I write, rockets are flashing against the deep, clear sky of midnight, and another year of the delight of life is being born. My house has been bright all day with the laughter of my grandchildren; my thoughts as I have written have been sweet with memories of her I loved so well. The changing conditions of life after the great peril how they

perplexed and startled her! And yet how glad she was to mark the dawning day! She left me ten years ago, and I still thrill with somewhat of the sadness with which I committed her dear body to the closing fire. Does she see me still, and love me, and understand me, as she always loved and understood me during the fifty years we were true mates and comrades? I wonder!

Across the way, the lights are twinkling in the little house, our latest cage of love-birds. They have been building their nest these many months, lavishing wealth of loving care upon it. They spent Christmas Day with us. I wonder who they are, and where they came from. Francis Grant and Sadie Wilmington. The names sound American, and I know that they have spent some time in Washington. But then, everybody goes everywhere, in these good days. I wonder who they are. But, of course, one cannot pester one's own and the city's guests with curious questions. And it is good to be near young love, you know, good for old bones and memories that fade, that fade. . . .

WITH JOY
IN ARCADY

BY FRANK MORTON



CHAPTER I.

SHOWING HOW I STARTED OUT.

111583
Nay, I sometimes doubt
If they have not, indeed, the better part—
These poets, who get drunk with sun, and weep
Because the night or a woman's face is fair.

—AMY LEVY.

The great theatre was close-packed with mixed humanity in the mood of carnival. In the stalls the folk overflowed, to the discomfiture of the orchestra ; and at the far back of the theatre, packed to suffocation, they underwent cheerfully the agonies of the Pit. In the dress-circle the select ones of Philistia suffered more tolerable ills, and were on the surface sweet ; though toes were trampled and skirts wrenched awry, and the crush of eager shoulders worked strange distortions of the admired bust-bulge in five hundred open bodices. In the family circle—the region of respectability and sentiment—the general jam was even more pronounced, and many fat persons sweated in ecstasies of satisfied unease. Up in the

gallery above, Bill and the Girl sat close, picking no quarrel with circumstance and the temperature. Bill and the Girl are frankly sexual; they do not lie awake o' nights weeping over their sins, nor do they strive perplexedly for finer appreciation of the colours of sounds; they are human, and not inanimate. In the thick of Bill and the Girl—the hundreds of couples so infinitely diverse, so intimately akin—sat Claud St. Leger and I, in quest of experience and the new sensation. The comedian had a night off, and I was enjoying my usual freedom from lucrative engagements. We had made records, and were not without some thrills of pride. In the teeth of the jibing management we had paid for our seats, and valorously mounted to these altitudes. Shocking extravagance, if you will; but . . . here was stimulus!—or, at any rate, we agreed to assume it so. Next to me a florid girl, with tawny eyes and a mouth like a lusting rose, was eating prawns, and throwing the skins impartially into Philistia. . . .

“To live to-day,” dogmatised St. Leger (somewhat softly for him, for he was more

than a little nervous in the vicinity of Bill and the Girl)—“to live to-day one must get away from opoconax and frill occasionally. Along all paths of ultra-refinement preserves of the artificial graces, one gets back in the end to nausea and the grey slime. As one goes about our world, the everlasting counterfeit of the æsthetic sense—pretence of culture by the ineradicably ignorant, pretence of sensibility by the irremediably stupid—strikes to one’s soul and—er—sours each sweetest spring of living. Now, look about you here. What do you see?”

(“The golden blonde in the third row of stalls,” I interpolated modestly, “has quite the superbest shoulders I have seen for years.”)

“—what do you see? Up here one is, after all, among one’s own folk. One glimpses and appreciates the primitive motives, the olden joys, the essential zest of being, the *joie de vivre*, the—er—”

(“To say nothing,” I insinuated, “of the classic odour of peppermints of the grosser sorts, the taint of onions, and the offence of beer. Now, the golden blonde in the third row of stalls, seen even from this discouraging

distance, is suggestive of all imaginable subtleties of fragrance perfected.")

St. Leger pursues his theme. "What I mean to say is that with these children of the people there is no striving after the remotely inaccessible, no pretence of accomplishment of things—er—that never can be compassed. They snatch each moment's joy with vigour simply glorious, knowing how swiftly each glad moment flies. They warm both hands before the fires of life, and they don't weep in advance over grey possibilities of to-morrow. They live, so to speak, vividly—"

("Luridly!" murmured I to myself, with a scared eye on the prawn-devourer. "They are extremely crude, and they have a trick of glib discourtesy to the stranger that has become habitual with them, and does them infinite discredit. They are, I daresay, the backbone of the nation—the choicest fruits of democracy; but they show ever so much more pleasantly many yards off, and they do certainly treat the English language with extreme despite. Now, the golden blonde in the third row of stalls, despite the gracious

amplitude of her shoulders, suggests Hebe joyous on a June morning, or Psyche warming for the arms of Love.")

"These things"—St. Leger was droning on, greatly content with himself; and I noticed, without regret, that some link of his argument had escaped me—"work together for the good of every man who loves his kind, and longs for sweet riot under a wide sky. The great secret is really to hate prejudice, to admit no pre-conceptions, to preserve an open mind, and so to live out one's life——"

Just at this point something happened. Across the sordid glitter, the merry bustle, the cheerful massed life of that heterogeneous crowd, a portentous crack rang crisply, like the sound of a great whip falling on bare flesh. A second crack followed—louder, sharper, of yet deadlier import. Then a tearing discord such as might accompany the ripping asunder of a band of steel by the jagged teeth of a Titan in torment. Then . . . chaos.

I knew that the gallery was falling. Dimly beneath us I saw a sea of upturned faces, blanched with terror. We seemed to be

turned out carelessly, as milk is spilt from a pot. There was a momentary blur, while all about me was a pallid monotony, a heavy tumultuous silence shredded by shrieks. He who knows not smiles nor weeping, but sits omnipotently calm amid the dust of worlds his hand has smitten, flung us as dole a scrap of his eternities. All was deadly still, and deadly clamorous. Insensibly, as the support went from our feet, I had gripped St. Leger's hand, and I held it still as we fell. Things were clear again. I was quite calm now, quite interested even. It seemed that for a long period—hours or years—time stood at pause. The agonised faces below protruded, distinct and motionless, so that I studied them at my ease. The golden blonde in the third row of stalls had thrown her radiant head back, and was looking straight at me, though it seemed that I must fall full on her splendid bosom; and in her eyes I saw no fear. I saw those eyes, of a soft pellucid hazel, fixed on me. She did not flinch, and my whole heart thrilled in a new strange glow of admiration warming into worship. She smiled. Then . . . nothing but the dark.

CHAPTER II.

THE COMING OF LOVE.

Slowly their souls swam up again through gleams
Of watered light and dull drowned waves of day ;
Till, from some wonder of new woods and streams,
He woke, and wondered more : for there She lay.

—" Nuptial Sleep."

How long this dark lay heavy on my spirit
I do not know, nor greatly care ; on the other
side of things eternity is as a minute spent in
dalliance, and a vacant second's space is all
eternity. But very slowly and sweetly I
found myself again. A great radiance over-
swept and encompassed me—a restful glow of
purple, shot and flecked with gold. I had
no desires and no foreshadowings, but merely
sensed delight with a strange incuriousness.
Then swiftly the light grew in me, and I came
back to definite personality. I felt my head
soft-pillowed as I lay. My veins throbbed
with glad fulness of life. In my ears were
the sighs of zephyr and the songs of birds.
And so at length I opened my eyes. . . .

Ah God! . . . my head was resting on a woman's knees; into my eyes smiled other eyes of a very soft pure hazel, the kindest eyes in all worlds. And the face that bent above me, half-laughing and half-shy, was the face of the golden blonde. Sweet restless fingers trifled with my hair—her fingers; a fragrant freshness was on my brow—her breath; a gently rhythm, subtly attuning all things, pulsed at my ears—the fluttering of her heart. . . . All mystery intensified with sweetness.

But this is a work-a-day world, and I (the remembrance brought a pang) was already as good as married. I started up.

The blonde pouted. Her voice came to me sweet and low, like distant bells of evening heard through quiet rain.

“Was the pillow, then, so hard?”

“Dear lady, no!” I said. “But—your pardon!—where are we? How came we here? I seem to remember——”

“A long leap,” she said, gently. “Ah, yes. We are—I don't know where we are; but I guess that there is no return journey.”

At first I did not understand. What

could she mean? There was a light of transcendent gladness in her eyes, a smile all tremulous of happiness on her lips.

“Meaning——?” I said.

“We are, I think, what the world—our bad old world—calls dead. How else can it be? Do you not remember? We were in His Majesty’s Theatre, and the gallery gave way. You fell, I think, full on my head. If we are not dead we must be in hospital; and—oh, dear new friend, look about you! This is not hospital. And I doubt if it be earth. It’s not Amer’ca, I know. It’s plainly not Australia. I know most of Europe, and don’t recognise it. It’s lots too big for England. Only look!”

I looked, and presently I laughed from very gladness—laughed, if you will, with whatever of music and pure joy had been pent in me. If death had brought me to this, would that death had come sooner!

We were sitting, she and I, on a soft green sward, bright with flowers, beneath a gnarled old tree, an immemorial oak. From other and gayer trees near by, luscious fruits hung. On every hand was a rich background of

sound—rustling of foliage, whispering of hidden waters, melody of birds. Behind us the woods deepened into green aisles and tangled coverts. Before us, from the little knoll on which we sat, we could see a great expanse of lovely country, fair parks and sparkling rivers, bright prominence of fountains in the sun. Here and there were fair houses nesting among trees; here and there, more notable, stately buildings of gracious design and colouring, set among gardens. Over all, a something of poised expectation or awakening such as marked the cool and vigorous oncoming of the morning. The air was unimaginably sweet.

“Tell me,” said the lady softly, “do you feel any effects of the—the accident?”

“I!” I cried, that gladness still possessing me. “I am well, so well as I have never been till now. I am as one just ushered into life mature, and rioting in the goodness of it!”

“And I,” she said. “Then we are really dead, you and I. Ah me! I am so glad!”

We sat so for another moment, drinking in all this strangeness of joy. Presently she spoke again, hesitatingly.

“Tell me, do you feel as I do now—human still, you know, but with a difference—just as though all the bad, downright mean part of you had sloughed off, and must have been someone’s else all the time? Does it seem to you, as to me, that all the base part of life itself has fallen away, leaving these great realities entirely sweet and good? Have all the old hates left you, all the old perplexities, all the old fears?”

“Yes,” I said, “it seems so to me too.”

And then at last I looked boldly into her face. We were still in evening dress, an incongruous couple enough, facing that wide prospect from under that grand old tree. But she was lovely as the morning, none the less; and suddenly I knew that all my heart was in the hollow of her hand. Her glorious eyes were lowered now, her parted lips cried challenges to my soul; all my body and spirit hungered for her, and named her exultantly my lady. I took her dear hands, leaning over her. I looked into her face, till by some compulsion of the gods her eyes were raised and met mine. My heart leapt, and the fragrant spirit of the place

came up and took us into a brotherly embrace of sympathy and comprehension.

"Yes, all has left us," I said, "except the joy of life—the joy of life, dear heart, and the desire of love!"

Then, as I drew still nearer, she did not repulse me, till in the end she gave herself frankly to my arms while I kissed her on the lips; and so for a space we were concerned with no new mystery. Thus, I take it, it might have been with the Adam and Eve of the brave old legend. When they met they kissed—even before they discussed origins. Eve might have blushed as my golden blonde did, though never so sweetly, and been as well content. For, dead or living, on earth or in the stars, we two had met and our hearts had spoken, and we were now one flesh. Amid these marvels, that was the main fact.

"I guess," she murmured presently, "that we died half-lovers. There was some conversation of our eyes as you fell from the gallery. You must not let me think I was won before I was wooed."

"Our eyes outpaced us, I own," said I. "But, sweetheart, what matters it, even

though you were but wooed in the winning ? ”

(On which proposition there was another interlude).

“ I remember now,” said she, demurely, “ that we have not so much as been introduced. My name is Joy Monterey. You may have heard it before. On earth, you know, I was an Amer’can singer.”

“ I had heard it,” said I, “ of course ; yet never heard you sing. You had but just arrived. My name is Geoffrey Weston. In Australia I lived precariously on the fringe of journalism.”

“ And your friend ? ”

“ My friend,” said I. “ What friend, dear love ? ”

“ Why, the friend who died with you. But, there !—what will you think of me for not telling you sooner ? Your friend awoke first, and was smiling down on us when my eyes opened. Then I took your head upon my knee, and I think he understood. Anyhow, he laughed, and said that he too had his dreams, and would e’en go and spy out the land. I promised that we would wait for his return, and he went away

—not towards the open and the places we see, but through the tangle yonder, and so into the heart of the woods. That was just at the pearl of the dawn, an hour or more before you looked on me again.”

Even as she spoke I heard quick steps behind us, and turned to see St. Leger. His eyes were luminous, his face all joyous. He walked very erect, like a man who has been long burdened and is glad to be free. In his arms he carried a mass of blooms—peach blossoms and verbena, hyacinths and wood-violets, honeysuckle and damask roses, daphne and jasmine, and mignonette and feathered grasses. He came up, and scattered this largesse of fragrance all over us and about us. My arm was still about her waist, but we did not care now.

“Dear lad! dear lass!” he cried. “Rest easy! We have come at length to the goal of every hope deferred, to the Land of Hearts’ Desire. Welcome to Arcady!”



CHAPTER III.

SHOWING HOW ST. LEGER MEETS A MAN.

All their life was spent, not in laws, statutes, or rules, but according to their own free will and pleasure. They rose out of their beds when they thought good; they did eat, drink, labour, sleep, when they had a mind to it, and were disposed for it. None did awake them, none did offer to constrain them to eat, drink, nor do any other thing; for so had Gargantua established it. In all their rule and strictest tie of their order there was but this one clause to be observed: *Do what thou wilt.* . .

“All this sweet mystery is overpowering,” I said. “Pray be lucid, St. Leger.”

“A fig for your worshipful solemnity!” said he. “Hold her close, and tell me where you are!”

Joy lowered her eyes, and blushed deliciously. I think I held her closer. I did my best.

“Well, really,” I said, “we are——”

“Oh,” said St. Leger, “I know just where you are, you two; the wayfaring man, though a fool, could read you thoroughly in a half-glance. But put aside these glammers for a moment, and tell me where you are in soberer sense.”

"We have been wondering," I said; "and my dear lady here decided that the old shell of us—the earthy part—is dead."

"As Haman," said St. Leger. "And then——?"

"Perhaps we are—in Heaven," hazarded Joy.

"Perhaps you are," said St. Leger, dryly; "but, my children, it is better than that. In Heaven they have suppressed delicious riot of young blood, and banished kisses; their bliss is mere content in inanition. Guess again!"

"We are not on earth?" I ventured.

"On earth? My dear lad, no! On that side you are dead and gone—a turned page, a back number. By this time they are burying the battered remnant of you, and predicting your joyful resurrection. You are in Arcadia. Hereaway they call it Arcady, because it rhymes more smoothly so, and sits more lightly on the happy tongue."

"Dear Mr. St. Leger," cried my lovely Joy, "you utterly bewilder us. Tell us all."

"Then sit close," said he, "as closely as you choose. The sight of your happiness

harmonises the new outlook, and puts a keener edge to new delight. Ah, you obedient children! I will be orderly, and tell you of my adventures as they befell. I found myself lying here this morning, just as the stars paled. For a space I lay still, possessed by the great unfamiliar happiness that enwrapped my heart. Then I turned, and saw you two. You lay snug in each other's arms. You looked so cosy and so—how shall I put it?—so unconventional that I knew dimly at once that I had escaped from all the footlight tawdriness below there—got away, don't you know, from 'the glare and the glitter and tinsel of time,' and all the rest of it. I rose quietly and looked about me. I would not have disturbed you for worlds. The dawn drew steadily on to day, and day had a new inexplicable beauty that enthralled me. Then your lady awoke and saw me, and such a sweet embarrassment assailed her that her blushes shamed the dawn, and she drew herself reluctantly from your arms. But she soon repented, for she took your head gently on her knees, and looked so kindly on you that I, too, became athirst for love, and went away

so that she might follow her fancies in fuller security. You follow me ? ”

“ Yes,” said I, quietly, “ I follow you.”

“ Your pardon !—I thought your eyes were lost in other employment. I took the path into the woods there. The other side of the little knoll, where you see the rose-laurels, there is a dip into the gentlest glade conceivable. Into this glade I went, and straightway met a marvel.”

He paused.

“ Nay,” said my Joy, “ you must tell us of your marvel.”

“ There may be a little of the dross in us yet,” he said, slowly. “ For ages on our earth the venom of distrust has eaten into the heart of the race, till each had for his nearest fellow at best a gentle tolerance. Men have surrounded themselves with ramparts of lies, and lived in strongholds of daily deceptions. We have got used to all that. But here one cannot lie. You must believe all that I tell you. In the middle of the glade, advancing full to meet me, I met a stupendous anachronism—a satyr and a bacchante. I was a good deal

surprised, interested beyond words, charmed a little. They came steadily towards me. He was an amazing creature, gracefully uncouth, shaggy as a mountain goat, strong as a stallion—a very jolly monster, with a rugged face positively aflame with irresponsible gaiety and the joy of life. As for the other . . . oh, she was wonderful! —a glorious figure of a woman, unrestrained and irrepressible. She was mother-nude; and a picture of her would have staggered our earthly prudes; but she seemed as free of shame and self-consciousness as a child in arms. Cascades of ruddy hair fell in a happy tangle about her shoulders. Her eyes were of a lustrous brown, tending to warm yellow, with gold tints in them. Imagine a tropical sunbeam incarnate, and you will begin to have some dim idea of her. I stopped, and these two stood at pause not ten feet from me. The satyr stood firm on his hoofs, his strong arms folded across his shaggy chest, his great head slightly on one side. The bacchante leaned against him, one lithe arm about his neck and one akimbo on her other hip, her head against his shoulder. Standing so, they laughed. Oh, that laughter!

It was like nothing I could remember, but it suggested the mighty music of a grand organ pealing through an orchestra of 'cellos. Her merry golden notes rippled up and up into high cadences of pure mirth, and down into dusk depths of unadulterate enjoyment; and his jovial thunders boomed out as most effective background. And then—saving your presence, lady—she ran lightly forward and kissed me full on the lips. Such kisses the angels wot not of, and I was still tingling when those two, still laughing, fled down the glade and disappeared. I was shaken to the centre, and my ideas were chaos; but, as you might say, I felt good. I went on deeper and deeper into the forest before me, and I saw other things as I walked. Gentle creatures of the woodland that had no fear—hares that came up shyly and frisked about my feet; dappled deer that thrust cool muzzles into my hands and bosom, and breathed fragrantly into my face; other fair shapes of women, more white and slender than that first laughing wench, and more coy. And finally I came upon a burly Elizabethan figure that reached forth brotherly hands to welcome me. O, rare Ben Jonson!"

“ Ben Jonson ! ” I cried. “ My dear St. Leger ! ”

“ Nay ! nay ! ” cried he, with kindly impatience, “ listen and be still ! Sit close ! I bring you good tidings, and must say my say. The Elizabethan was of stout build, and swarthy. A strong and homely face, made finely luminous by deep eyes aglow, and warmed by a compelling brotherliness. On one cheek, close to the swell of the nostril, there was a small wart that stirred dim memories in me. He held my hand hard and looked into my face, all benevolence.

“ ‘ Th’ art welcome, lad ! ’ he said. The voice was very robust, very virile, very human ; but something in it stirred me to reverence. ‘ Troth, there be but few newcomers of late, ’ said he. ‘ The world grows old. ’

“ ‘ But, ’ I said, ‘ I don’t know where I am, nor how arrived. I was in a theatre at Sydney, and the gallery fell ; and now—— ’

“ ‘ At Sydney, ’ said he. ‘ I never saw the place, nor heard on’t in my time. But in a theatre, say you ? ’ S blood, I follow you. Hast heard o’ me ? I was—and, i’ faith, I am—Ben Jonson, poet and writer of plays. ’

“ ‘ And I,’ I said, ‘ was—ay, and am—
Claud St. Leger, a player poor in parts and
poor in pocket.’ ”

“ ‘ And made a good end,’ said he, ‘ algates
earth’s end is but life’s bare beginning.
Troth, lad, earth knows thee not now, but here
thou shalt be exceeding happy in thy friends
new-found. They are all most choice spirits.
I’ faith, again th’ art welcome ! ’ ”

“ But,” said I, “ this is most strange, St.
Leger.”

“ And at all points most delightful,” said
my Joy.

“ I cannot tell you all he said, nor recall the
set terms of his hearty speech,” said St. Leger.

“ But, in brief, here you have it. This is
not the Heaven of the sad world’s hope : this
is Arcady, the persistent fine dream of the
few whose hope is otherwise conceived. Here
is the delectable land of poets and adventurers
come to their rest, the ultimate perfection of
Bohemia. Each man below there is, it seems,
the architect of his own paradise. For some,
everlasting inanity and sugar-plums ; for
others—for us—perfection of function and
fulness of life, eternal youth under a wide sky.

Never an ideal blurred, and never a jaded sense. Jonson tells me that his three hundred years or so of our time are but as a glad day past. He says that the olden joys are fresher every day. He says that friendship never falters here, and love knows no satiety. There is no weariness and no pain, but always joyous fruition of imperishable desire, 'infinite expansion in a world of various sunlight,' rest and harmony and exquisite content. We have reached the Land of Hearts' Desire, I tell you, and need never fear a morrow."

"I guess I could never fear a morrow, anyhow, now," whispered Joy in my ear.

"Nor I," I rejoined, kissing her.

St. Leger, reclining on his elbow, pelted us with hyacinths.

"I too shall know this love," he said. "I never really did below there, you know. I had my base indulgences, the beastly *bonnes fortunes* that fall to the lot of every personable player in a world of silly women. On occasions I have even believed myself in love, not knowing better. One or two women have loved me, God help them; but that only increased the ache of my empty heart. But my turn will come. That is one of the glorious certainties. Jonson says so."

CHAPTER IV.

SOME CONVERSE OF ARCADIANS.

With these words the lover rose upon the air ; and being consumed inwardly with the greatness of his love, penetrated with vehement wing into the highest place of heaven, to lay his cause before the father of the gods. And the father of gods took his hand in his, and kissed his face, and said to him : " At no time, my son, hast thou regarded me with due honour. Often hast thou vexed my bosom, wherein lies the disposition of the stars, with those busy darts of thine. Nevertheless, because thou hast grown up between these mine hands, I will accomplish thy desire. . . "

" Curious thing," said St. Leger, presently. " Jonson seems to have become a socialist. Indeed, so far as I could gather from my short talk with him, they are all socialists in Arcady. In his brotherly fashion he's pretty rough on the old world. He says that in his day the things not permitted were frequently the things most innocent and in their essence beautiful ; and the things upheld as right, ordained of God, big medicine of the priests, were things black and double-damned. He says that worship was a pretence, and patriot-

ism a snare, and that the nation grovelled swinishly in the slime, content to be the king's pander. He says that society was rotten in its bases, and hopelessly at fault in its methods and intentions. He wants to know what can be said of a world where every bully of infamous purlieus propagates his kind, and a Herrick dies virgin—a world that flouts dear love, exalts the bawd Convenience, and only makes a virtue of necessity? He tells me that all the brave souls come here, all the divinely discontented, the prophets and the Christs of the greater hope, all haters of high-flying hypocrisies, smashers of idols, lovers of men. The noblest of the dreamers are here, and the humanest of the saints. All strong men and sweet women who found a frank delight in life, and took honest joy in honest bodily pleasure; all men who gladly staked their all on causes already as good as lost, and died crying their brave defiance in the very gates of hell; all bold unflinching seekers after truth, worshippers of beauty, children of light—all, all are here! Right up to the eighteenth century of our time they poured into Arcady; during the eighteenth, the stream diminished;

during the nineteenth, it became a trickle by comparison. Modern conditions make too strongly for mere dry-as-dust respectability and self-righteousness to please the old gods in whose paradise we are. Men have become too insistent on everlastingly doing something to realise the need of being something. But here is the home of joy, and everything one hears enchants the soul. Entrance is forbidden to many wise and many prudent, the righteous overmuch; but poor disreputable dogs like me, bending at no altars, loving nothing but art and nature, come in, and are eternally at home. Here every pleasure blooms in perfectness, and every joy is heightened to the full. I have only heard a little, but it is enough."

"And now," said Joy. "What next?"

But St. Leger went on, rapt and glowing, as though he had no audience but his own heart.

"There are wood-nymphs and water-nymphs, dryads and hamadryads. I saw a sylph whose whiteness gleamed like silver careering through green, luminous shades on the back of a centaur. The woods are full of

exquisite, kind beasts, that neither fear nor shun one. Ah God! this is the heaven of souls a-weary. 'They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat.' Here is neither cruelty nor wrong, weak repining nor any vain regret. Here hope comes gladly to its heritage, and love takes full possession of its kingdom with a song. Here sorrow may not enter, nor any shadow of doubt. Here is no jealousy, because love is all and in all, and suffices to itself. 'And death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more—the first things are passed away.' Ah, do you begin to realize the joy of it now, you two? Have you hearts to feel and eyes to see? We have left the old world sweltering and stewing in the heat and sweat of its manifold abominations, bending greedily over the witches'-cauldron of its creeds and theories and age-old wrongs. And we are safe in Arcady! Ai!!"

But here befell an interruption, for up the slope before us came a party of four. The two men were of the medium height, and as they neared us we could see that one was

dressed in sober Elizabethan garb, and the other more gaily, in the fashion of a later day. The Elizabethan had a prominent nose and a head of curly hair, and there was in the whole atmosphere and manner of him a very noticeable and attractive quaintness. The gentleman of the eighteenth century was well-knit and swarthy, fully conscious of a graceful leg ; and it could be seen at a half-glance that he was very alert and masterly, keen of his wit, and not without his vanity. In him, too, the nose was the immediately prominent feature, but the eyes, extremely clear and bold and winning, commanded even greater attention. Of the ladies, the taller was a very gracious and lissom brunette, dusky and splendid like a warm night of stars, with glorious deep eyes, and mouth as ardent as a passion-flower—the whole superb creature excellent and mobile. She was habited strangely, in a fashion long bygone, with a conspicuous conical head-dress such as ladies of the fourteenth century were wont to wear. The other girl was plumper and brisker. About her white brow tumbled a riotous wealth of red-gold hair. Her pouting mouth was sweet as a spring rose-bud, and

desirable as nothing in Arcady but itself. She had the kindest, jolliest, bravest eyes I ever saw. She was, in short, a laughing, dimpled, merry little rogue, good to see, and better (I judged) to kiss, and her every glance was sunshine.

The gentleman of the eighteenth century loitered lovingly through a sweeping bow, frilled by a gracious flourish of his feathered hat. Then he turned at once to introduce to us the modest Elizabethan, who had stood by during this elaborate display of courtesy, a picture of good humour.

"Pray let me present to you my good friend, Master Robert Herrick, a most gallant gentleman and very passable poet. Most beautiful lady, Master Herrick shall write a madrigal of your eyes, for your eyes are sweet as first love, and outshine the summer stars."

Joy smiled and bowed, nor grudged this most magniloquent gentleman his humour.

Master Herrick also smiled and bowed. "But," he said, with a whimsical gesture towards his friend (as who would say: "Forgive him. 'Tis a mad dog, but honest")—"but . . . the ladies!"

The other turned imperturbably.

“In this dark damsel,” he said, “behold the lovely Margaret of Burgundy, who was loved on earth by brave gentlemen not a few, and afterwards lied about in so-called history. Master Herrick has it in his heart to love her at this time, admiring her for her simplicity, which it was his honour first to discover.

“And here is one of your own nation—the mad sweet minx, Nell Gwyn. Her moods of love are variable as the moon. A million times I have sworn to her by the eternal gods that I love her, and a million times she has lacerated my heart with her laughter. She came not even now in token of relenting, but merely that she might greet the player of your company.”

Whereupon Nell threw aside her hat and advanced to St. Leger. She put her plump hands on his shoulders, and looked into his face.

“A babe could name your calling, lad,” she said. “And now wilt take Nell Gwyn’s welcome, warm from Nell Gwyn’s heart?”

“Sweet Nell,” said St. Leger, bending over her, “I have been wanting to meet you all my weary life.”

"'Twas prettily spoken," said Nell, and straightway put up her lips to be kissed.

Now kisses are much in fashion in Arcady, and this fashion is contagious, so that presently I kissed Joy again in very gladness of heart, and Herrick shyly kissed the lovely Margaret, while the dark gentleman stood with his lips unoccupied except by laughter. But, in a little, Nell Gwyn spoke again, and her gentle voice was no longer merely roguish.

"Dear lad," she said, "and you, fair sir and gracious lady, y' are all most truly welcome to full part of our joy. You've left a bad world for a brave one. We're all the better away from the poor, wretched, silly world that might have been so glad. When I sang and danced to make them merry, I always pitied them in my heart of hearts. When I lay in the palace—the one thing the king loved—I always pleaded for the people, although they sometimes thought Nell didn't care. Ah, me! that stupid world."

"I, too," said St. Leger, "while I made them mirth I pitied them. I had at least the solace of my art. When I saw men wasting blood and brain in the acquisition of worthless

things, when I saw sweet women squandering years of precious life in the pursuit of the trivial and the sordid, I too pitied them—pitied them till sometimes I almost grew to hate them for their folly and their brutishness. I saw men and women make to themselves gods from the mire their own lusts had trampled, and my heart sickened.

' I hate their grave profanity, that drapes
 With royal right of sanctified intent
 Base greeds in which their common lives are spent
 With honoured name. I loathe the lust that apes
 A passion, and in coarse fruition shapes
 No flower of fair regret, but straight escapes
 From all the richer joy and sorrow blent
 In after-thinking, as from punishment.

' I hate the heavy sham of wits, that find,
 Examine, lose, and re-find that sole grain
 Of rarest gold—dust on a golden plain.
 Their science, leaving thousand-fold behind
 Mysterious tracks of knowledge, that my mind
 Scans with some inner vision not yet blind,
 Like flash of memory striving to regain
 Possession of a heart's once bright domain.

' Yea, with their dreary creeds, their life's pale bloom,
 Their science, all of matter, that just plays
 With the external slough as it decays,
 Left by some risen spirit near his tomb.
 They seem, indeed, to dwell in lower gloom
 Of mansions, through whose every upper room,
 Made wonderful with full and cloudless rays,
 My winged soul passed in splendid former days.

' But, oft-times—when perhaps beneath the glare
Of one of their coarse tinselled shows I sit,
Lone in their midst—in spite of some fond fit
Of self-sufficing thoughts ; with piteous stare,
Their upturned faces seeking to stay care,
And fire lives soulless, dreamless, with toes bare,
Most tawdry splendours their own hands have lit,
Plead to my heart, and sorely trouble it.

' And I am on a sudden changed, and filled
With an immense compassion ; with a deep
Almighty yearning to those men who reap
No real good all their days ; who ne'er have thrilled
With one rich touch of joy ; whose lives creep chilled
From sunless childhoods, with dull pulses stilled
In dreamless deaths—their souls no memory keep,
And in their lives are no fair pasts to weep.

' Oh, then my heart within feels nigh to break,
With vast desire to soothe some perfect way
Those joyless men ; to lend their languid day
A gleam of hope, their night some trance, to make
The deathly darkness holier. For their sake
Tears flood my eyes, and worlds of pity ache
About slow sources of cold speech, and stay
For one great word my lips ne'er find to say.

' I long—yea, for a space—to draw more near,
And join my comfort with their hearts' dull mood ;
I burn to tell, in their own tongue, the good
I mean to them, the pity my thoughts bear.
Alas ! I could not speak, they could not hear,
No dream of mine to their eyes could appear.
Vain, the thoughts go back to the heart to brood,
Ere I have spoken, or they understood.' "

“The note is almost too hopeless, even for the old earth,” said Joy. “The word is sometimes helpful, though it be spoken only brokenly.”

“Ah, yes,” said the gentleman of the eighteenth century. “The chief joy of my own life was always to make others happy. One reaps immediate rewards in the satisfaction of doing kindness. As our Shakespeare says: ‘It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.’”

“Which reminds me, sir,” said Joy, “that you have not yet introduced yourself.”

The gentleman of the eighteenth century threw back his head a moment, and then bowed again, with a gracious gesture of a ringed hand. “I,” he said, “am Casanova of Seingalt.”



CHAPTER V.

SUNT LACHRYMÆ RERUM. . . .

Look down into the abysmal distances! Attempt to force the gaze down the multitudinous vistas of the stars, as we sweep slowly through them, thus—and thus—and thus! Even the spiritual vision, is it not at all points arrested by the continuous golden walls of the universe? the walls of the myriads of the shining bodies that mere number has appeared to blend into unity? . . . Come! we will leave to the left the loud harmony of the Pleiades, and swoop outward from the throne into starry meadows beyond Orion, where, for pansies and violets, and heart's-ease, are the beds of the triplicate and triple-tinted suns. . .

Out, out are the lights—out all!
And over each quivering form
The curtain—a funeral pall—
Comes down with the rush of a storm.
And the angels, all pallid and wan,
Uprising, unveiling, affirm
That the play is the tragedy "Man,"
And its hero the Conqueror Worm.

Of the next weeks, so crowded with new delicious interests, so compact of crowning joy, I can speak but briefly. After all, of what use are words? Who can translate a great moment into set terms of speech? Of

all the smiling thousands about us, each exulting in the other's happiness, we two (I think) were quite the happiest. In that new world of beauty and delight, the shining company of the Arcadians conspired to heighten our pleasure. Whenever we chose to go abroad, entertainments were arranged in our honour. "As You Like It" was played for us, for instance, with St. Leger and Nell Gwyn in the cast, and a real Titania, who came to whisper sweet promises to my dear between the acts. There were balls and excursions. There was a concert, at which Grisi sang divinely, and our Nell made fresh breaches in all men's hearts, and Paganini played so nobly that they fetched swart Orpheus, still glowing from the arms of his Eurydice (who is not where they would have her), to strike his lyre and keep the gods in countenance. Then my Joy sang, and so I heard for the first time the glorious voice of that great singer who was my dearest love. With that, Charles Second, who was managing, made the daintiest speech, just edged with delicate raillery, all in praise of Joy, and grave Beethoven put a wreath of laurel on her shining hair; and so she came

back to me in a gentle tremor of womanly satisfaction and content.

Of subtler joys I might tell—as how we heard Shakespeare and Montaigne discussing the nature of love, with such serene wisdom and high confidence as thrilled all our souls ; and how, not an hour later, we saw these two great ones leaning with rapt delight over a tiny song-bird that had nestled into the poet's hand. Ah me, the impotence of words ! I cannot give you the faintest inkling of the joys of Arcady. Joy and I delighted to be alone, and we delighted to be in company ; for there are neither bores nor blunderers in Arcady. In our little bower, as the days wore by, we had many visitors. Most frequently, glad Casanova, who was for the moment tremendously in love with Agnes Sorel, a lady, otherwise, abundantly willing to be wooed. There was, of course, Claud St. Leger, who dressed superbly, and shone in talk, and so grew daily in favour with gods and men, but whose chief concern was still to gaze into Nell Gwyn's eyes. Then we had rare Ben Jonson, who rolled in at odd times, and filled our nook with a golden flood of mellow talk. Charles

Second, too—genial, gentle, whimsical—and his tyranness of the moment, a slender wisp of an Irish girl, with a wealth of red-gold hair, a mouth like the visible bloom of summer, and glorious velvety eyes of such extraordinary softness and depth that she had kept the fickle Stuart in thrall for months beyond his limit. But most frequent and most welcome of all our visitors was our dear Titania. We welcomed her because in coming she did us special honour, for the fairies are the wisest and the wittiest folk in royal Arcady; but chiefly we welcomed her for her charm, her sweetness, her exceeding kindness and exquisite sympathy. She was lovely enough to dazzle the eye and bemuse the senses. Her eyes were of a strange tawny yellow, which alternately glowed like Arctic sunset or deepened into tropic dusks of unimaginable allurements. Her skin was like mother-of-pearl, translucent, as though the purity of her soul shone through. Her voice was beautiful as my mother's, whose voice sounds ever lovelier in the heart of my hearts now those dear lips are still. Incomparable Titania fluttered in and out, and spent much time with

us, neglecting other friends. There was always something wistful behind her beaming eyes. I could not understand it then, but now I know—the fairies are the wisest folk in royal Arcady. Of these things I cannot bring myself even now to speak more fully.

One afternoon Titania came to us, and I saw that in her eyes the wistful quality had deepened. Joy and I were sitting in a tiny arbour we had contrived below our tangled garden. All nature perfected lay heavy with delight. A faun and a hamadryad were frolicking in the stream a hundred yards away, and the harmony of their laughter, pulsating in our ears, made us love each other better—if such a thing could be. The faun was a noble fellow, the nymph as gracious and appealing as a valse of Chopin.

Titania perched herself on Joy's knees, then, leaning forward, put a soft hand on my forehead.

“For a little longer,” she said, “the darkness, the expectation; but then, dear friend Geoffrey, the fragrant dawn, the glory of the sunrise, the gladness of the everlasting morning. And you will remember—remember—

remember! A little pain, a little weariness; but the eyes of your heart shall see Joy waiting for you just over the rim of the dawn. Ah, yes, you will remember always!"

I heard her voice remotely now, as though from a distance in which her eyes were stars. It seemed as if the sunbeams were drawing together, and confusing all things in a mist of gold. A terrible dismay oppressed me—a dread foreshadowing. I felt dear familiar lips on my lips, and a dearer voice came golden through the gathering dusk of gold.

"Geoffrey!" it cried. "Have no fear. I know you will not forget... just over the rim of the dawn... a little time, my husband... Ah! most dear..."

* * * * *

"Tell me," I pleaded. "There was a singer—an American singer, you know—"

"You must not distress yourself," said the nurse, "because you have been very, very ill. Madame Monterey, the doctors say, must have died instantly, like your friend Mr. St. Leger. You know, you were as good as dead yourself, for days and days."

"Thank you, nurse," I said.

* * * * *

One cannot learn resignation in a day, can one? The poignancy of my bitter sorrow has passed. In this world, where one is daily pressed upon by the multitude of peering faces that have no light in them, I am as an exile in a far country. I have never really recovered from that accident, and I never shall. I saw the doctor again to-day, and he looked so grave that I'm feeling almost happy now. The peering people say that I have been queer since the accident. How can I say anything to *them* of Arcady? how seek to win them to the freer life, the loftier ideal, the wider hope?—I, who am queer, and am slipping so blessedly towards release! But... just over the rim of the dawn... a little time, dear wife... the fragrant dawn... the everlasting morning... Joy!



[BY THE SAME AUTHOR].

LAUGHTER AND TEARS:

VERSES OF A JOURNALIST.

FIVE SHILLINGS NET.

With a candid preface, and a portrait of the Author.

A few copies of the large-paper edition, with a special Terminal Essay, remain for subscription—

TEN-AND-SIX.

None of his work, however slight in theme, is slovenly. And he has the gift of happy phrase and the buoyancy of an optimistic outlook on life. He is tonic to the jaded soul. . . He is perhaps the best ballade-writer in Australia, and his command of other verse-forms shows a mind soaked in good literature. The man behind the verse, too, cannot be forgotten. His is a sane and vivid outlook in a drab world, and for him Australasia should be thankful.—*The Bulletin*.

Frank Morton has published a book of verses and justifies himself of his frankness in the prose which he sends as forerunner and post-courier to his songs. . . . Applause to Mr. Morton with his confession of faith of a gay Hedonist, told in verse and prose alike of a delicate and distinguished quality.—*The Lone Hand*.

A pleasant book to read, witty, cynical, and crisp in style, and, as predicted by the author in his post-script, one is none the worse for the reading. What one cannot help noticing, however, from the first page onwards, is the amazing cleverness of the writer, his *verve* and his modernity. Morton shows a mastery of those lighter verse-forms called artificial—as if all verse-forms were not artificial! They are all here, as imported from France—the triolet, rondeau, villanelle, pantoum, ballade, chant royal, etc.—many with the force of Henley, and many with the grace of Dobson.—MR. BERTRAM STEVENS, in *The Lone Hand*.

One pauses, amazed. This book of poems is an amazing medley. The mere ease of the rhythm and the rhyme, the swinging, joyous gait of the poet, the variety of theme and sentiment, the observation, the intimacy, the reality and the realism, the humanity of the book,—these rare, almost-forgotten virtues amaze with their superabundance. I do not know a more individual poet in this southern hemisphere. Frank Morton writes because Frank Morton must, and he sings because his soul sings. The man is a personality, an individual live human, a-quiver with feeling and sensitiveness: speaking and singing with a beautiful, sane, wholesome, righteous straightness and frankness. Philistine and prude go down, the dull and weariful dogs, as always must be where there is a strong wrestler in the lists. And Morton passes on blithely, a-singing, and forgets all about the battle he has just won in the music he has in his heart.—MR. RICHARD ARNOLD SINGER, in *The Triad*.

The young men who are helping to build up an Australasian school of poetry will be quite enthusiastic concerning Mr. Morton's verse. And well they may be.—*Lyttleton Times*.

Among the few Australian writers who have produced a fair amount of verse that is artistically worth while.—*The Worker*, Sydney.

At heart he is an enthusiast for the cause of the suffering and oppressed, the unhappy and the unlucky, the fallers by the way.—*New Zealand Times*.



[IN THE PRESS].

ME!

Personal Symptoms and Ideas.

THE AUTHOR'S FOREWORD	SMOKE-DRIFT
ON GROWING OLD	AFTERNOON IN ARCADY
A THEORY OF HOUSES	THE HEATS OF NOON
THE OTHER SIDE	ON DEATH
THE GENTLER SEX	GAUDEAMUS!
GOLDEN MEMORIES	ILL IN BED
A LITERARY SWINDLE	THE BLESSEDNESS OF
AUTUMN GLOWS	THE RESTORATION
BOOKS AND LIFE	THE BOOKFELLOW AND
AN EARLY JOURNALIST	TOBACCO
THE BREAKING DAY	THE ART OF JOURNAL- ISM

Price—THREE AND SIX.

And a small edition on heavy paper, strongly bound, each copy numbered and signed by the author.

SIX SHILLINGS.

THE SECRET SPRING.

For private circulation. This book of verse is not intended for the general reader, and will issue to subscribers only.

SIX SHILLINGS.

The edition is strictly limited, and each copy will be numbered and signed by the author.



THE BOOK OF JOYOUS SUMMER

and the Explorer of Familiarities.

The prose and verse by Frank Morton ; the pictures by D. H. Souter.

ONE SHILLING NET.

A few Collectors' Copies on Art Paper, Half-a-Crown Net.

Mr. Souter's work is known everywhere now. The delightful grace and audacity of his fine line, the subtly exotic quality of his humour, the inimitable dash and delicacy of his style, his virile men that are such quaint and reasonable dogs, his intensely feminine women that suggest girls of Gerbault delicately edited by Rops—these things have made D. H. Souter as popular with connoisseurs in Europe and America as he has been with the Australian public

since ever the Australian public first succumbed to his characteristic charm.

This book will be the first notable collection of Mr. Souter's work ever published, and the scores of drawings and illustrations will be here published for the first time.

Mr. Morton's work this time is not merely typical, but more so.

ORDER THROUGH YOUR BOOKSELLER
OR DIRECT FROM THE PUBLISHER,
BOX 827, WELLINGTON, N.Z.

All special editions must be ordered from the publisher direct.



