THE SERVICE EDITION

OF

THE WORKS OF

RUDYARD KIPLING
ACTIONS
AND REACTIONS
BY
RUDYARD KIPLING
IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. I
MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1915
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An Habitation Enforced</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Recall</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garm—a Hostage</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Power of the Dog</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mother Hive</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bees and the Flies</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With the Night Mail</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Four Angels</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AN HABITATION ENFORCED

My friend, if cause doth wrest thee,
Ere folly hath much oppressed thee,
Far from acquaintance kest thee
Where country may digest thee...
Thank God that so hath blessed thee,
And sit down, Robin, and rest thee.
Thomas Tusser.

It came without warning, at the very hour his hand was outstretched to crumple the Holz and Gunsberg Combine. The New York doctors called it overwork, and he lay in a darkened room, one ankle crossed above the other, tongue pressed into palate, wondering whether the next brain surge of prickly fires would drive his soul from all anchorages. At last they gave judgment. With care he might in two years return to the arena, but for the present he must go across the water and do no work whatever. He accepted the terms. It was capitulation; but the Combine that had shivered beneath his knife gave him all the honours
of war. Gunsberg himself, full of condolences, came to the steamer and filled the Chapins' suite of cabins with overwhelming flower-works.

'Smilax,' said George Chapin when he saw them. 'Fitz is right. I'm dead; only I don't see why he left out the "In Memoriam" on the ribbons!'

'Nonsense!' his wife answered, and poured him his tincture. 'You'll be back before you can think.'

He looked at himself in the mirror, surprised that his face had not been branded by the hells of the past three months. The noise of the decks worried him, and he lay down, his tongue only a little pressed against his palate.

An hour later he said: 'Sophie, I feel sorry about taking you away from everything like this. I—I suppose we're the two loneliest people on God's earth to-night.'

Said Sophie his wife, and kissed him: 'Isn't it something to you that we're going together?'

They drifted about Europe for months—sometimes alone, sometimes with chance-met gipsies of their own land. From the North Cape to the Blue Grotto at Capri they wandered, because the next steamer headed that way, or because some one had set them on the road. The doctors had warned Sophie that Chapin was not to take
AN HABITATION ENFORCED

interest even in other men's interests; but a familiar sensation at the back of the neck after one hour's keen talk with a Nauheimed railway magnate saved her any trouble. He nearly wept.

'And I'm over thirty,' he cried; 'with all I meant to do!'

'Let's call it a honeymoon,' said Sophie. 'D'you know, in all the six years we've been married, you've never told me what you meant to do with your life?'

'With my life? What's the use? It's finished now.' Sophie looked up quickly from the Bay of Naples. 'As far as my business goes, I shall have to live on my rents like that architect at San Moritz.'

'You'll get better if you don't worry; and even if it takes time, there are worse things than—How much have you?'

'Between four and five million. But it isn't the money. You know it isn't. It's the principle. How could you respect me? You never did, the first year after we married, till I went to work like the others. Our tradition and upbringing are against it. We can't accept those ideals.'

'Well, I suppose I married you for some sort of ideal,' she answered, and they returned to their forty-third hotel.

In England they missed the alien tongues of
Continental streets that reminded them of their own polyglot cities. In England all men spoke one tongue, speciously like American to the ear, but on cross-examination unintelligible.

'Ah, but you have not seen England,' said a lady with iron-grey hair. They had met her in Vienna, Bayreuth, and Florence, and were grateful to find her again at Claridge’s, for she commanded situations, and knew where prescriptions are most carefully made up. 'You ought to take an interest in the home of our ancestors—as I do.'

'I've tried for a week, Mrs. Shonts,' said Sophie, 'but I never get any further than tipping German waiters.'

'These are not the true type,' Mrs. Shonts went on. 'I know where you should go.'

Chapin pricked up his ears, anxious to run anywhere from the streets on which quick men something of his kidney did the business denied to him.

'We hear and we obey, Mrs. Shonts,' said Sophie, feeling his unrest as he drank the loathed British tea.

Mrs. Shonts smiled, and took them in hand. She wrote widely and telegraphed far on their behalf, till, armed with her letter of introduction, she drove them into that wilderness which is reached from an ash-barrel of a station called Charing Cross. They were to go to Rocketts—
the farm of one Cloke, in the southern counties—where, she assured them, they would meet the genuine England of folklore and song.

Rocketts they found after some hours, four miles from a station, and, so far as they could judge in the bumpy darkness, twice as many from a road. Trees, kine, and the outlines of barns showed shadowy about them when they alighted, and Mr. and Mrs. Cloke, at the open door of a deep stone-floored kitchen, made them slowly welcome. They lay in an attic beneath a wavy whitewashed ceiling, and because it rained, a wood fire was made in an iron basket on a brick hearth, and they fell asleep to the chirping of mice and the whimper of flames.

When they woke it was a fair day, full of the noises of birds, the smell of box, lavender, and fried bacon, mixed with an elemental smell they had never met before.

'This,' said Sophie, nearly pushing out the thin casement in an attempt to see round the corner, 'is—what did the hack—cabman say to the railway porter about my trunk—'quite on the top'?'

'No; "a little bit of all right." I feel farther away from anywhere than I've ever felt in my life. We must find out where the telegraph office is.'
‘Who cares?’ said Sophie, wandering about, hair-brush in hand, to admire the illustrated weekly pictures pasted on door and cupboard.

But there was no rest for the alien soul till he had made sure of the telegraph office. He asked the Clokes’ daughter, laying breakfast, while Sophie plunged her face in the lavender bush outside the low window.

‘Go to the stile a-top o’ the Barn field,’ said Mary, ‘and look across Pardons to the next spire. It’s directly under. You can’t miss it—not if you keep to the footpath. My sister’s the telegraphist there. But you’re in the three-mile radius, sir. The boy delivers telegrams directly to this door from Pardons village.’

‘One has to take a good deal on trust in this country,’ he murmured.

Sophie looked at the close turf, scarred only with last night’s wheels, at two ruts which wound round a rickyard, and at the circle of still orchard about the half-timbered house.

‘What’s the matter with it?’ she said. ‘Telegrams delivered to the Vale of Avalon, of course,’ and she beckoned in an earnest-eyed hound of engaging manners and no engagements, who answered, at times, to the name of Rambler. He led them, after breakfast, to the rise behind the house where the stile stood against the skyline,
and, 'I wonder what we shall find now,' said Sophie, frankly prancing with joy on the grass.

It was a slope of gap-hedged fields possessed to their centres by clumps of brambles. Gates were not, and the rabbit-mined, cattle-rubbed posts leaned out and in. A narrow path doubled among the bushes, scores of white tails twinkled before the racing hound, and a hawk rose, whistling shrilly.

'No roads, no nothing!' said Sophie, her short skirt hooked by briers. 'I thought all England was a garden. There's your spire, George, across the valley. How curious!'

They walked toward it through an all-abandoned land. Here they found the ghost of a patch of lucerne that had refused to die; there a harsh fallow surrendered to yard-high thistles; and here a breadth of rampant kelk feigning to be lawful crop. In the ungrazed pastures swaths of dead stuff caught their feet, and the ground beneath glistened with sweat. At the bottom of the valley a little brook had undermined its footbridge, and frothed in the wreckage. But there stood great woods on the slopes beyond—old, tall, and brilliant, like unfaded tapestries against the walls of a ruined house.

'All this within a hundred miles of London,' he said. 'Looks as if it had had nervous prostration, too.' The footpath turned the shoulder of a
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

slope, through a thicket of rank rhododendrons, and crossed what had once been a carriage drive, which ended in the shadow of two gigantic holm-oaks.

'A house!' said Sophie, in a whisper. 'A colonial house!'

Behind the blue-green of the twin trees rose a dark-bluish brick Georgian pile, with a shell-shaped fan-light over its pillared door. The hound had gone off on his own foolish quests. Except for some stir in the branches and the flight of four startled magpies, there was neither life nor sound about the square house, but it looked out of its long windows most friendlily.

'Cha-armed to meet you, I'm sure,' said Sophie, and curtsied to the ground. 'George, this is history I can understand. We began here.' She curtsied again.

The June sunshine twinkled on all the lights. It was as though an old lady, wise in three generations' experience, but for the present sitting out, bent to listen to her flushed and eager grand-child.

'I must look!' Sophie tiptoed to a window, and shaded her eyes with her hand. 'Oh, this room's half-full of cotton-bales—wool, I suppose! But I can see a bit of the mantelpiece. George, do come! Isn't that some one?'
She fell back behind her husband. The front door opened slowly, to show the hound, his nose white with milk, in charge of an ancient of days clad in a blue linen ephod curiously gathered on breast and shoulders.

‘Certainly,’ said George, half aloud. ‘Father Time himself. This is where he lives, Sophie.’

‘We came,’ said Sophie weakly. ‘Can we see the house? I’m afraid that’s our dog.’

‘No, ’tis Rambler,’ said the old man. ‘He’s been at my swill-pail again. Staying at Rocketts, be ye? Come in. Ah! you runagate!’

The hound broke from him, and he tottered after him down the drive. They entered the hall—just such a high light hall as such a house should own. A slim-balustered staircase, wide and shallow and once creamy-white, climbed out of it under a long oval window. On either side delicately-moulded doors gave on to wool-lumbered rooms, whose sea-green mantelpieces were adorned with nymphs, scrolls, and Cupids in low relief.

‘What’s the firm that makes these things?’ cried Sophie, enraptured. ‘Oh, I forgot! These must be the originals. Adams, is it? I never dreamed of anything like that steel-cut fender. Does he mean us to go everywhere?’

‘He’s catching the dog,’ said George, looking out. ‘We don’t count.’
They explored the first or ground floor, delighted as children playing burglars.

'This is like all England,' she said at last. 'Wonderful, but no explanation. You're expected to know it beforehand. Now, let's try upstairs.'

The stairs never creaked beneath their feet. From the broad landing they entered a long, green-panelled room lighted by three full-length windows, which overlooked the forlorn wreck of a terraced garden, and wooded slopes beyond.

'The drawing-room, of course.' Sophie swam up and down it. 'That mantelpiece—Orpheus and Eurydice—is the best of them all. Isn't it marvellous? Why, the room seems furnished with nothing in it! How's that, George?'

'It's the proportions. I've noticed it.'

'I saw a Heppelwhite couch once'—Sophie laid her finger to her flushed cheek and considered. 'With two of them—one on each side—you wouldn't need anything else. Except—there must be one perfect mirror over that mantelpiece.'

'Look at that view. It's a framed Constable,' her husband cried.

'No; it's a Morland—a parody of a Morland. But about that couch, George. Don't you think Empire might be better than Heppelwhite? Dull gold against that pale green? It's a pity they don't make spinets nowadays.'
‘I believe you can get them. Look at that oak wood behind the pines.’

‘“While you sat and played toccatas stately at the clavichord,”’ Sophie hummed, and, head on one side, nodded to where the perfect mirror should hang.

Then they found bedrooms with dressing-rooms and powdering-closets, and steps leading up and down—boxes of rooms, round, square, and octagonal, with enriched ceilings and chased door-locks.

‘Now about servants. Oh!’ She had darted up the last stairs to the chequered darkness of the top floor, where loose tiles lay among broken laths, and the walls were scrawled with names, sentiments, and hop records. ‘They’ve been keeping pigeons here,’ she cried.

‘And you could drive a buggy through the roof anywhere,’ said George.

‘That’s what I say,’ the old man cried below them on the stairs. ‘Not a dry place for my pigeons at all.’

‘But why was it allowed to get like this?’ said Sophie.

‘Tis with housen as teeth,’ he replied. ‘Let ’em go too far, and there’s nothing to be done. Time was they was minded to sell her, but none would buy. She was too far away along from any
place. Time was they'd ha' lived here theyselves, but they took and died.'

'Here?' Sophie moved beneath the light of a hole in the roof.

'Nah—none dies here excep' falling off ricks and such. In London they died.' He plucked a lock of wool from his blue smock. 'They was no staple—neither the Elphicks nor the Moones. Shart and brittle all of 'em. Dead they be seventeen year, for I've been here caretakin' twenty-five.'

'Who does all the wool belong to downstairs?' George asked.

'To the estate. I'll show you the back parts if ye like. You're from America, ain't ye? I've had a son there once myself.' They followed him down the main stairway. He paused at the turn and swept one hand towards the wall. 'Plenty room here for your coffin to come down. Seven foot and three men at each end wouldn't brish the paint. If I die in my bed they'll 'ave to up-end me like a milk-can. 'Tis all luck, d'ye see?'

He led them on and on, through a maze of back-kitchens, dairies, larders, and sculleries, that melted along covered ways into a farm-house, visibly older than the main building, which again rambled out among barns, byres, pig-pens, stalls and stables to the dead fields behind.
'Somehow,' said Sophie, sitting exhausted on an ancient well- curb—'somehow one wouldn't insult these lovely old things by filling them with hay.'

George looked at long stone walls upholding reaches of silvery-oak weather-boarding; buttresses of mixed flint and bricks; outside stairs, stone upon arched stone; curves of thatch where grass sprouted; roundels of house-leeked tiles, and a huge paved yard populated by two cows and the repentant Rambler. He had not thought of himself or of the telegraph office for two and a half hours.

'But why,' said Sophie, as they went back through the crater of stricken fields,—'why is one expected to know everything in England? Why do they never tell?'

'You mean about the Elphicks and the Moones?' he answered.

'Yes—and the lawyers and the estate. Who are they? I wonder whether those painted floors in the green room were real oak. Don't you like us exploring things together—better than Pompeii?'

George turned once more to look at the view. 'Eight hundred acres go with the house—the old man told me. Five farms altogether. Rocketts is one of 'em.'
'I like Mrs. Cloke. But what is the old house called?'

George laughed. 'That's one of the things you're expected to know. He never told me.'

The Clokes were more communicative. That evening and thereafter for a week they gave the Chapins the official history, as one gives it to lodgers, of Friars Pardon the house and its five farms. But Sophie asked so many questions, and George was so humanly interested, that, as confidence in the strangers grew, they launched, with observed and acquired detail, into the lives and deaths and doings of the Elphicks and the Moones and their collaterals, the Haylings and the Torrells. It was a tale told serially by Cloke in the barn, or his wife in the dairy, the last chapters reserved for the kitchen o' nights by the big fire, when the two had been half the day exploring about the house, where old Iggulden, of the blue smock, cackled and chuckled to see them. The motives that swayed the characters were beyond their comprehension; the fates that shifted them were gods they had never met; the side-lights Mrs. Cloke threw on act and incident were more amazing than anything in the record. Therefore the Chapins listened delightedly, and blessed Mrs. Shonts.

'But why—why—why—did So-and-so do so-and-so?' Sophie would demand from her seat by
the pothook; and Mrs Cloke would answer, smoothing her knees, 'For the sake of the place.'

'I give it up,' said George one night in their own room. 'People don't seem to matter in this country compared to the places they live in. The way she tells it, Friars Pardon was a sort of Moloch.'

'Poor old thing!' They had been walking round the farms as usual before tea. 'No wonder they loved it. Think of the sacrifices they made for it. Jane Elphick married the younger Torrell to keep it in the family. The octagonal room with the moulded ceiling next to the big bedroom was hers. Now what did he tell you while he was feeding the pigs?' said Sophie.

'About the Torrell cousins and the uncle who died in Java. They lived at Burnt House—behind High Pardons, where that brook is all blocked up.'

'No; Burnt House is under High Pardons Wood, before you come to Gale Anstey,' Sophie corrected.

'Well, old man Cloke said——'

Sophie threw open the door and called down into the kitchen, where the Clokes were covering the fire: 'Mrs. Cloke, isn't Burnt House under High Pardons?'

'Yes, my dear, of course,' the soft voice
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

answered absently. A cough. 'I beg your pardon, Madam. What was it you said?'

'Never mind. I prefer it the other way,' Sophie laughed, and George re-told the missing chapter as she sat on the bed.

'Here to-day an' gone to-morrow,' said Cloke warningly. 'They've paid their first month, but we've only that Mrs. Shonts' letter for guarantee.'

'None she sent never cheated us yet. It slipped out before I thought. She's a most humane young lady. They'll be going away in a little. An' you've talked a lot too, Alfred.'

'Yes, but the Elphicks are all dead. No one can bring my loose talking home to me. But why do they stay on and stay on so?'

In due time George and Sophie asked each other that question, and put it aside. They argued that the climate—a pearly blend, unlike the hot and cold ferocities of their native land—suited them, as the thick stillness of the nights certainly suited George. He was saved even the sight of a metalled road, which, as presumably leading to business, wakes desire in a man; and the telegraph office at the village of Friars Pardon, where they sold picture post-cards and peg-tops, was two walking miles across the fields and woods. For all that touched his past among his fellows, or their remembrance of him, he might have been in

18
AN HABITATION ENFORCED

another planet; and Sophie, whose life had been very largely spent among husbandless wives of lofty ideals, had no wish to leave this present of God. The unhurried meals, the foreknowledge of deliciously empty hours to follow, the breadths of soft sky under which they walked together and reckoned time only by their hunger or thirst; the good grass beneath their feet that cheated the miles; their discoveries, always together, amid the farms—Griffons, Rocketts, Burnt House, Gale Anstey, and the Home Farm, where Igguldren of the blue smock-frock would waylay them, and they would ransack the old house once more; the long wet afternoons when they tucked up their feet on the bedroom’s deep window-sill over against the apple-trees, and talked together as never till then had they found time to talk—these things contented her soul, and her body throve.

‘Have you realised,’ she asked one morning, ‘that we’ve been here absolutely alone for the last thirty-four days?’

‘Have you counted them?’ he asked.

‘Did you like them?’ she replied.

‘I must have. I didn’t think about them. Yes, I have. Six months ago I should have fretted myself sick. Remember at Cairo? I’ve only had two or three bad times. Am I getting better, or is it senile decay?’

19
‘Climate, all climate.’ Sophie swung her new-bought English boots, as she sat on the stile overlooking Friars Pardon, behind the Clokes’ barn.

‘One must take hold of things though,’ he said, ‘if it’s only to keep one’s hand in.’ His eyes did not flicker now as they swept the empty fields. ‘Mustn’t one?’

‘Lay out a Morristown links over Gale Anstey. I dare say you could hire it.’

‘No, I’m not as English as that—nor as Morristown. Cloke says all the farms here could be made to pay.’

‘Well, I’m Anastasia in the *Treasure of Franchard*. I’m content to be alive and purr. There’s no hurry.’

‘No.’ He smiled. ‘All the same, I’m going to see after my mail.’

‘You promised you wouldn’t have any.’

‘There’s some business coming through that’s amusing me. Honest. It doesn’t get on my nerves at all.’

‘Want a secretary?’

‘No, thanks, old thing! Isn’t that quite English?’

‘Too English! Go away.’ But none the less in broad daylight she returned the kiss. ‘I’m off to Pardons. I haven’t been to the house for nearly a week.’
'How've you decided to furnish Jane Elphick's bedroom?' he laughed, for it had come to be a permanent Castle in Spain between them.

'Black Chinese furniture and yellow silk brocade,' she answered, and ran downhill. She scattered a few cows at a gap with a flourish of a ground-ash that Iggulden had cut for her a week ago, and singing as she passed under the holm-oaks, sought the farm-house at the back of Friars Pardon. The old man was not to be found, and she knocked at his half-opened door, for she needed him to fill her idle forenoon. A blue-eyed sheep-dog, a new friend, and Rambler's old enemy, crawled out and besought her to enter.

Iggulden sat in his chair by the fire, a thistle-spud between his knees, his head drooped. Though she had never seen death before, her heart, that missed a beat, told her that he was dead. She did not speak or cry, but stood outside the door, and the dog licked her hand. When he threw up his nose, she heard herself saying: 'Don't howl! Please don't begin to howl, Scottie, or I shall run away!'

She held her ground while the shadows in the rickyard moved toward noon; sat after a while on the steps by the door, her arms round the dog's neck, waiting till some one should come. She watched the smokeless chimneys of Friars
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

Pardon slash its roofs with shadow, and the smoke of Iggulden’s last lighted fire gradually thin and cease. Against her will she fell to wondering how many Moones, Elphicks, and Torrells had been swung round the turn of the broad hall stairs. Then she remembered the old man’s talk of being ‘up-ended like a milk-can,’ and buried her face on Scottie’s neck. At last a horse’s feet clinked upon flags, rustled in the old grey straw of the rickyard, and she found herself facing the vicar—a figure she had seen at church declaiming impossibilities (Sophie was a Unitarian), in an unnatural voice.

‘He’s dead,’ she said, without preface.

‘Old Iggulden? I was coming for a talk with him.’ The vicar passed in uncovered. ‘Ah!’ she heard him say. ‘Heart-failure! How long have you been here?’

‘Since a quarter to eleven.’ She looked at her watch earnestly and saw that her hand did not shake.

‘I’ll sit with him now till the doctor comes. D’you think you could tell him, and—yes, Mrs. Betts in the cottage with the wistaria next the blacksmith’s? I’m afraid this has been rather a shock to you.’

Sophie nodded, and fled toward the village. Her body failed her for a moment; she dropped beneath a hedge, and looked back at the great
AN HABITATION ENFORCED

house. In some fashion its silence and stolidity steadied her for her errand.

Mrs. Betts, small, black-eyed and dark, was almost as unconcerned as Friars Pardon.

‘Yiss, yiss, of course. Dear me! Well, Iggulden he had had his day in my father’s time. Muriel, get me my little blue bag, please. Yiss, ma’am. They come down like ellum-branches in still weather. No warnin’ at all. Muriel, my bicycle’s be’ind the fowl-house. I’ll tell Dr. Dallas, ma’am.’

She trundled off on her wheel like a brown bee, while Sophie—heaven above and earth beneath changed—walked stiffly home, to fall over George at his letters, in a muddle of laughter and tears.

‘It’s all quite natural for them,’ she gasped. ‘They come down like ellum-branches in still weather. Yiss, ma’am.’ No, there wasn’t anything in the least horrible, only—only—Oh George, that poor shiny stick of his between his poor, thin knees! I couldn’t have borne it if Scottie had howled. I didn’t know the vicar was so—so sensitive. He said he was afraid it was ra-rather a shock. Mrs. Betts told me to go home, and I wanted to collapse on her floor. But I didn’t disgrace myself. I—I couldn’t have left him—could I?’

‘You’re sure you’ve took no ’arm?’ cried Mrs.
Cloke, who had heard the news by farm-telegraphy, which is older but swifter than Marconi's.

'No. I'm perfectly well,' Sophie protested.

'You lay down till tea-time.' Mrs. Cloke patted her shoulder. 'They'll be very pleased, though she 'as 'ad no proper understandin' for twenty years.'

'They' came before twilight—a black-bearded man in moleskins, and a little palsied old woman, who chirruped like a wren.

'I'm his son,' said the man to Sophie, among the lavender bushes. 'We 'ad a difference—twenty year back, and didn't speak since. But I'm his son all the same, and we thank you for the watching.'

'I'm only glad I happened to be there,' she answered, and from the bottom of her heart she meant it.

'We heard he spoke a lot o' you—one time an' another since you came. We thank you kindly,' the man added.

'Are you the son that was in America?' she asked.

'Yes, ma'am. On my uncle's farm, in Connecticut. He was what they call road-master there.'

'Whereabouts in Connecticut?' asked George over her shoulder.
AN HABITATION ENFORCED

'Veering Holler was the name. I was there six year with my uncle.'

'How small the world is!' Sophie cried. 'Why, all my mother's people came from Veering Hollow. There must be some there still— the Lashmars. Did you ever hear of them?'

'I remember hearing that name, seems to me,' he answered, but his face was blank as the back of a spade.

A little before dusk a woman in grey, striding like a foot-soldier, and bearing on her arm a long pole, crashed through the orchard calling for food. George, upon whom the unannounced English worked mysteriously, fled to the parlour; but Mrs. Cloke came forward beaming. Sophie could not escape.

'We've only just heard of it,' said the stranger, turning on her. 'I've been out with the otter-hounds all day. It was a splendidly sportin' thing——'

'Did you—er—kill?' said Sophie. She knew from books she could not go far wrong here.

'Yes, a dry bitch—seventeen pounds,' was the answer. 'A splendidly sportin' thing of you to do. Poor old Iggulden——'

'Oh—that!' said Sophie, enlightened.

'If there had been any people at Pardons it would never have happened. He'd have been
looked after. But what can you expect from a parcel of London solicitors?’

Mrs. Cloke murmured something. ‘No. I’m soaked from the knees down. If I hang about I shall get chilled. A cup of tea, Mrs. Cloke, and I can eat one of your sandwiches as I go.’ She wiped her weather-worn face with a green and yellow silk handkerchief. ‘Yes, my lady!’ Mrs. Cloke ran and returned swiftly.

‘Our land marches with Pardons for a mile on the south,’ she explained, waving the full cup, ‘but one has quite enough to do with one’s own people without poachin’. Still, if I’d known, I’d have sent Dora, of course. Have you seen her this afternoon, Mrs. Cloke? No? I wonder whether that girl did sprain her ankle. Thank you.’ It was a formidable hunk of bread and bacon that Mrs. Cloke presented. ‘As I was sayin’, Pardons is a scandal! Lettin’ people die like dogs. There ought to be people there who do their duty. You’ve done yours, though there wasn’t the faintest call upon you. Good night. Tell Dora, if she comes, I’ve gone on.’

She strode away, munching her crust, and Sophie reeled breathless into the parlour, to shake the shaking George.

‘Why did you keep catching my eye behind
AN HABITATION ENFORCED

the blind? Why didn’t you come out and do your duty?’

‘Because I should have burst. Did you see the mud on its cheek?’ he said.

‘Once. I daren’t look again. Who is she?’

‘God—a local deity then. Anyway, she’s another of the things you’re expected to know by instinct.’

Mrs. Cloke, shocked at their levity, told them that it was Lady Conant, wife of Sir Walter Conant, Baronet, a large landholder in the neighbourhood, and if not God, at least His visible Providence.

George made her talk of that family for an hour.

‘Laughter,’ said Sophie afterward in their own room, ‘is the mark of the savage. Why couldn’t you control your emotions? It’s all real to her.’

‘It’s all real to me. That’s my trouble,’ he answered in an altered tone. ‘Anyway, it’s real enough to mark time with. Don’t you think so?’

‘What d’you mean?’ she asked quickly, though she knew his voice.

‘That I’m better. I’m well enough to kick.’

‘What at?’

‘This!’ He waved his hand round the one room. ‘I must have something to play with till I’m fit for work again.’
'Ah!' She sat on the bed and leaned forward, her hands clasped. 'I wonder if it's good for you.'

'We've been better here than anywhere,' he went on slowly. 'One could always sell it again.'

She nodded gravely, but her eyes sparkled.

'The only thing that worries me is what happened this morning. I want to know how you feel about it. If it's on your nerves in the least we can have the old farm at the back of the house pulled down, or perhaps it has spoiled the notion for you?'

'Pull it down?' she cried. 'You've no business faculty. Why, that's where we could live while we're putting the big house in order. It's almost under the same roof. No! What happened this morning seemed to be more of a—of a leading than anything else. There ought to be people at Pardons. Lady Conant's quite right.'

'I was thinking more of the woods and the roads. I could double the value of the place in six months.'

'What do they want for it?' She shook her head, and her loosened hair fell glowingly about her cheeks.

'Seventy-five thousand dollars. They'll take sixty-eight.'

'Less than half what we paid for our old yacht
when we married. And we didn't have a good time in her. You were—'

'Well, I discovered I was too much of an American to be content to be a rich man's son. You aren't blaming me for that?'

'Oh no. Only it was a very businesslike honeymoon. How far are you along with the deal, George?'

'I can mail the deposit on the purchase money to-morrow morning, and we can have the thing completed in a fortnight or three weeks—if you say so.'

'Friars Pardon — Friars Pardon!' Sophie chanted rapturously, her dark grey eyes big with delight. 'All the farms? Gale Anstey, Burnt House, Rocketts, the Home Farm, the Griffons? Sure you've got 'em all?'

'Sure.' He smiled.

'And the woods? High Pardons Wood, Lower Pardons, Suttons, Dutton's Shaw, Reuben's Ghyll, Maxey's Ghyll, and both the Oak Hangers? Sure you've got 'em all?'

'Every last stick. Why, you know them as well as I do.' He laughed. 'They say there's five thousand—a thousand pounds' worth of lumber—timber they call it—in the Hangers alone.'

'Mrs. Cloke's oven must be mended first thing,
and the kitchen roof. I think I’ll have all this whitewashed,’ Sophie broke in, pointing to the ceiling. ‘The whole place is a scandal. Lady Conant is quite right. George, when did you begin to fall in love with the house? In the green room—that first day? I did.’

‘I’m not in love with it. One must do something to mark time till one’s fit for work.’

‘Or when we stood under the oaks, and the door opened? Oh! Ought I to go to poor Iggulden’s funeral?’ She sighed with utter happiness.

‘Wouldn’t they call it a liberty — now?’ said he.

‘But I liked him.’

‘But you didn’t own him at the date of his death.’

‘That wouldn’t keep me away. Only, they made such a fuss about the watching’—she caught her breath—‘it might be ostentatious from that point of view, too. Oh, George,’—she reached for his hand—‘we’re two little orphans moving in worlds not realised, and we shall make some bad breaks. But we’re going to have the time of our lives.’

‘We’ll run up to London to-morrow and see if we can hurry those English law—solicitors. I want to get to work.’

They went. They suffered many things ere
AN HABITATION ENFORCED

they returned across the fields in a fly one Saturday night, nursing a two by two-and-a-half box of deeds and maps—lawful owners of Friars Pardon and the five decayed farms therewith.

'I do most sincerely 'ope and trust you'll be 'appy, Madam,' Mrs. Cloke gasped, when she was told the news by the kitchen fire.

'Goodness! It isn't a marriage!' Sophie exclaimed, a little awed; for to them the joke, which to an American means work, was only just beginning.

'If it's took in a proper spirit'—Mrs. Cloke's eye turned toward her oven.

'Send and have that mended to-morrow,' Sophie whispered.

'We couldn't 'elp noticing,' said Cloke slowly, 'from the times you walked there, that you an' your lady was drawn to it, but—but I don't know as we ever precisely thought——' His wife's glance checked him.

'That we were that sort of people,' said George. 'We aren't sure of it ourselves yet.'

'Perhaps,' said Cloke, rubbing his knees, 'just for the sake of saying something, perhaps you'll park it?'

'What's that?' said George.

'Turn it all into a fine park like Violet Hill'—he jerked a thumb to westward—'that Mr. Sangres
bought. It was four farms, and Mr. Sangres made a fine park of them, with a herd of faller deer.'

'Then it wouldn't be Friars Pardon,' said Sophie. 'Would it?'

'I don't know as I've ever heard Pardons was ever anything but wheat an' wool. Only some gentlemen say that parks are less trouble than tenants.' He laughed nervouslly. 'But the gentry, o' course, they keep on pretty much as they was used to.'

'I see,' said Sophie. 'How did Mr. Sangres make his money?'

'I never rightly heard. 'It was pepper an' spices, or it may ha' been gloves. No. Gloves was Sir Reginald Liss at Marley End. Spices was Mr. Sangres. He's a Brazilian gentleman—very sunburnt like.'

'Be sure o' one thing. You won't 'ave any trouble,' said Mrs. Cloke, just before they went to bed.

Now the news of the purchase was told to Mr. and Mrs. Cloke alone at 8 p.m. of a Saturday. None left the farm till they set out for church next morning. Yet when they reached the church and were about to slip aside into their usual seats, a little beyond the font, where they could see the red-furred tails of the bell-ropes waggle and twist
at ringing time, they were swept forward irresistibly, a Cloke on either flank (and yet they had not walked with the Clokes), upon the ever-retiring bosom of a black-gowned verger, who ushered them into a room of a pew at the head of the left aisle, under the pulpit.

'This,' he sighed reproachfully, 'is the Pardons' Pew,' and shut them in.

They could see little more than the choir boys in the chancel, but to the roots of the hair of their necks they felt the congregation behind mercilessly devouring them by look.

'When the wicked man turneth away.' The strong alien voice of the priest vibrated under the hammer-beam roof, and a loneliness unfelt before swamped their hearts, as they searched for places in the unfamiliar Church of England service. The Lord's Prayer—'Our Father, which art'—set the seal on that desolation. Sophie found herself thinking how in other lands their purchase would long ere this have been discussed from every point of view in a dozen prints, forgetting that George for months had not been allowed to glance at those black and bellowing head-lines. Here was nothing but silence—not even hostility! The game was up to them; the other players hid their cards and waited. Suspense, she felt, was in the air, and when her sight cleared, saw indeed, a.
mural tablet of a footless bird brooding upon the carven motto, 'Wayte awhyle—wayte awhyle.'

At the Litany George had trouble with an unstable hassock, and drew the slip of carpet under the pew-seat. Sophie pushed her end back also, and shut her eyes against a burning that felt like tears. When she opened them she was looking at her mother's maiden name, fairly carved on a blue flagstone on the pew floor:

Ellen Lashmar. ob. 1796. ætat. 27.

She nudged George and pointed. Sheltered, as they kneeled, they looked for more knowledge, but the rest of the slab was blank.

'Ever hear of her?' he whispered.

'Never knew any of us came from here.'

'Coincidence?'

'Perhaps. But it makes me feel better,' and she smiled and winked away a tear on her lashes, and took his hand while they prayed for 'all women labouring of child'—not 'in the perils of childbirth'; and the sparrows who had found their way through the guards behind the glass windows chirped above the faded gilt and alabaster family tree of the Conants.

The baronet's pew was on the right of the aisle. 'After service its inhabitants moved forth without haste, but so as to effectively block a
AN HABITATION ENFORCED

dusky person with a large family who champed in their rear.

'Spices, I think,' said Sophie, deeply delighted as the Sangres closed up after the Conants. 'Let 'em get away, George.'

But when they came out many folk whose eyes were one still lingered by the lych-gate.

'I want to see if any more Lashmars are buried here,' said Sophie.

'Not now. This seems to be show day. Come home quickly,' he replied.

A group of families, the Clokes a little apart, opened to let them through. The men saluted with jerky nods, the women with remnants of a curtsey. Only Iggulden's son, his mother on his arm, lifted his hat as Sophie passed.

'Your people,' said the clear voice of Lady Conant in her ear.

'I suppose so,' said Sophie, blushing, for they were within two yards of her; but it was not a question.

'Then that child looks as if it were coming down with mumps. You ought to tell the mother she shouldn't have brought it to church.'

'I can't leave 'er be'ind, my lady,' the woman said. 'She'd set the 'ouse afire in a minute, she's that forward with the matches. Ain't you, Maudie dear?'
‘Has Dr. Dallas seen her?’
‘Not yet, my lady.’
‘He must. You can’t get away, of course. M—m! My idiotic maid is coming in for her teeth to-morrow at twelve. She shall pick her up—at Gale Anstey, isn’t it—at eleven.’
‘Yes. Thank you very much, my lady.’
‘I oughtn’t to have done it,’ said Lady Conant apologetically, ‘but there has been no one at Pardons for so long that you’ll forgive my poaching. Now, can’t you lunch with us? The vicar usually comes too. I don’t use the horses on a Sunday,’—she glanced at the Brazilian’s silver-plated chariot. ‘It’s only a mile across the fields.’
‘You—you’re very kind,’ said Sophie, hating herself because her lip trembled.
‘My dear,’ the compelling tone dropped to a soothing gurgle, ‘d’you suppose I don’t know how it feels to come to a strange county—country I should say—away from one’s own people? When I first left the Shires—I’m Shropshire, you know—I cried for a day and a night. But fretting doesn’t make loneliness any better. Oh, here’s Dora. She did sprain her leg that day.’
‘I’m as lame as a tree still,’ said the tall maiden frankly. ‘You ought to go out with the otter-hounds, Mrs. Chapin; I believe they’re drawing your water next week.’
AN HABITATION ENFORCED

Sir Walter had already led off George, and the vicar came up on the other side of Sophie. There was no escaping the swift procession or the leisurely lunch, where talk came and went in low-voiced eddies that had the village for their centre. Sophie heard the vicar and Sir Walter address her husband lightly as Chapin! (She also remembered many women known in a previous life who habitually addressed their husbands as Mr. Such-an-one.) After lunch Lady Conant talked to her explicitly of maternity as that is achieved in cottages and farm-houses remote from aid, and of the duty thereto of the mistress of Pardons.

A gate in a beech hedge, reached across triple lawns, let them out before tea-time into the unkempt south side of their land.

‘I want your hand, please,’ said Sophie as soon as they were safe among the beech boles and the lawless hollies. ‘D’you remember the old maid in Providence and the Guitar who heard the Commissary swear, and hardly reckoned herself a maiden lady afterward? Because I’m a relative of hers. Lady Conant is—’

‘Did you find out anything about the Lash-mars?’ he interrupted.

‘I didn’t ask. I’m going to write to Aunt Sydney about it first. Oh, Lady Conant said something at lunch about their having bought some
land from some Lashmars a few years ago. I found it was at the beginning of last century."

"What did you say?"

"I said, "Really, how interesting!" Like that. I'm not going to push myself forward. I've been hearing about Mr. Sangres' efforts in that direction. And you? I couldn't see you behind the flowers. Was it very deep water, dear?"

George mopped a brow already browned by outdoor exposure.

"Oh no—dead easy," he answered. "I've bought Friars Pardon to prevent Sir Walter's birds straying."

A cock pheasant scuttered through the dry leaves and exploded almost under their feet. Sophie jumped.

"That's one of 'em," said George calmly.

"Well, your nerves are better, at any rate," said she. "Did you tell 'em you'd bought the thing to play with?"

"No. That was where my nerve broke down. I only made one bad break—I think. I said I couldn't see why hiring land to men to farm wasn't as much a business proposition as anything else."

"And what did they say?"

"They smiled. I shall know what that smile means some day. They don't waste their smiles. D'you see that track by Gale Anstey?"
They looked down from the edge of the hanger over a cup-like hollow. People by twos and threes in their Sunday best filed slowly along the paths that connected farm to farm.

‘I’ve seen ever so many on our land before,’ said Sophie. ‘Why is it?’

‘To show us we mustn’t shut up their rights of way.’

‘Those cow-tracks we’ve been using cross lots?’ said Sophie forcibly.

‘Yes. Any one of ’em would cost us two thousand pounds each in legal expenses to close.’

‘But we don’t want to,’ she said.

‘The whole community would fight if we did.’

‘But it’s our land. We can do what we like.’

‘It’s not our land. We’ve only paid for it. We belong to it, and it belongs to the people—our people they call ’em. I’ve been to lunch with the English too.’

They passed slowly from one bracken-dotted field to the next—flushed with pride of ownership, plotting alterations and restorations at each turn; halting in their tracks to argue, spreading apart to embrace two views at once, or closing in to consider one. Couples moved out of their way, but smiling covertly.

‘We shall make some bad breaks,’ he said at last.
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

'Together, though. You won't let any one else in, will you?'

'Except the contractors. This syndicate handles this proposition by its little lone.'

'But you might feel the want of some one,' she insisted.

'I shall—but it will be you. It's business, Sophie, but it's going to be good fun.'

'Please God,' she answered flushing, and cried to herself as they went back to tea. 'It's worth it. Oh, it's worth it.'

The repairing and moving into Friars Pardon was business of the most varied and searching, but all done English fashion, without friction. Time and money alone were asked. The rest lay in the hands of beneficent advisers from London, or spirits, male and female, called up by Mr. and Mrs. Cloke from the wastes of the farms. In the centre stood George and Sophie, a little aghast, their interests reaching out on every side.

'I ain't sayin' anything against Londoners,' said Cloke, self-appointed Clerk of the outer works, consulting engineer, head of the immigration bureau, and superintendent of woods and forests; 'but your own people won't go about to make more than a fair profit out of you.'

'How is one to know?' said George.

'Five years from now, or so on, maybe, you'll
AN HABITATION ENFORCED

be lookin' over your first year's accounts, and, knowin' what you'll know then, you'll say: "Well, Billy Beartup"—or Old Cloke as it might be—"did me proper when I was new." No man likes to have that sort of thing laid up against him.'

'I think I see,' said George. 'But five years is a long time to look ahead.'

'I doubt if that oak Billy Beartup throwed in Reuben's Ghyll will be fit for her drawin'-room floor in less than seven,' Cloke drawled.

'Yes, that's my work,' said Sophie. (Billy Beartup of Griffons, a woodman by training and birth, a tenant farmer by misfortune of marriage, had laid his broad axe at her feet a month before.)

'Sorry if I've committed you to another eternity.'

'And we shan't even know where we've gone wrong with your new carriage-drive before that time either,' said Cloke, ever anxious to keep the balance true—with an ounce or two in Sophie's favour. The past four months had taught George better than to reply. The carriage road winding up the hill was his present keen interest. They set off to look at it, and the imported American scraper which had blighted the none too sunny soul of 'Skim' Winsh, the carter. But young Iggulden was in charge now, and under his guidance, Buller and Roberts, the great horses, moved mountains.
'You lif' her like that, an' you tip her like that,' he explained to the gang. 'My uncle he was road-master in Connecticut.'

'Are they roads yonder?' said Skim, sitting under the laurels.

'No better than accommodation-roads. Dirt, they call 'em. They'd suit you, Skim.'

'Why?' said the incautious Skim.

'Cause you'd take no hurt when you fall out of your cart drunk on a Saturday,' was the answer.

'I didn't last time neither,' Skim roared.

After the loud laugh old Whybarne of Gale Anstey piped feebly, 'Well, dirt or no dirt, there's no denyin' Chapin knows a good job when he sees it. 'E don't build one day and deestroy the next, like that nigger Sangres.'

'She's the one that knows her own mind,' said Pinky, brother to Skim Winsh, and a Napoleon among carters who had helped to bring the grand piano across the fields in the autumn rains.

'She had ought to,' said Iggulden. 'Whoa, Buller! She's a Lashmar. They never was double-thinking.'

'Oh, you found that? Has the answer come from your uncle?' said Skim, doubtful whether so remote a land as America had posts.

The others looked at him scornfully. Skim was always a day behind the fair.
AN HABITATION ENFORCED

Iggulden rested from his labours. 'She's a Lashmar right enough. I started up to write to my uncle at once—the month after she said her folks came from Veering Holler.'

'Where there ain't any roads?' Skim interrupted, but none laughed.

'My uncle he married an American woman for his second, and she took it up like a—like the coroner. She's a Lashmar out of the old Lashmar place, 'fore they sold to Conants. She ain't no Toot Hill Lashmar, nor any o' the Crayford lot. Her folk come out of the ground here, neither chalk nor forest, but wildishers. They sailed over to America—I've got it all writ down by my uncle's woman—in eighteen hundred an' nothing. My uncle says they're all slow begetters like.'

'Would they be gentry yonder now?' Skim asked.

'Nah—there's no gentry in America, no matter how long you're there. It's against their law. There's only rich and poor allowed. They've been lawyers and such like over yonder for a hundred years—but she's a Lashmar for all that.'

'Lord! What's a hundred years?' said Whybarne, who had seen seventy-eight of them.

'An' they write too, from yonder—my uncle's woman writes—that you can still tell 'em by headmark. Their hair's foxy-red still—an' they
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

throw out when they walk. *He's in-toed—treads like a gipsy; but you watch, an' you'll see 'er throw out—like a colt.'

'Your trace wants taking up.' Pinky's large ears had caught the sound of voices, and as the two broke through the laurels the men were hard at work, their eyes on Sophie's feet.

She had been less fortunate in her inquiries than Iggulden, for her Aunt Sydney of Meriden (a badged and certificated Daughter of the Revolution to boot) answered her inquiries with a two-paged discourse on patriotism, the leaflets of a Village Improvement Society, of which she was president, and a demand for an overdue subscription to a Factory Girls' Reading Circle. Sophie burned it all in the Orpheus and Eurydice grate, and kept her own counsel.

'What I want to know,' said George, when Spring was coming, and the gardens needed thought, 'is who will ever pay me for my labour? I've put in at least half a million dollars' worth already.'

'Sure you're not taking too much out of yourself?' his wife asked.

'Oh no; I haven't been conscious of myself all winter.' He looked at his brown English gaiters and smiled. 'It's all behind me now.'

44
believe I could sit down and think of all that—those months before we sailed.'

'Don't—ah, don't!' she cried.

'But I must go back one day. You don't want to keep me out of business always—or do you?' He ended with a nervous laugh.

Sophie sighed as she drew her own ground-ash (of old Iggulden's cutting) from the hall rack.

'Aren't you overdoing it too? You look a little tired,' he said.

'You make me tired. I'm going to Rocketts to see Mrs. Cloke about Mary.' (This was the sister of the telegraphist, promoted to be sewing-maid at Pardons.) 'Coming?'

'I'm due at Burnt House to see about the new well. By the way, there's a sore throat at Gale Anstey——'

'That's my province. Don't interfere. The Whybarne children always have sore throats. They do it for jujubes.'

'Keep away from Gale Anstey till I make sure, honey. Cloke ought to have told me.'

'These people don't tell. Haven't you learnt that yet? But I'll obey, me lord. See you later!'

She set off afoot, for within the three main roads that bounded the blunt triangle of the estate (even by night one could scarcely hear the
carts on them), wheels were not used except for farm work. The footpaths served all other purposes. And though at first they had planned improvements, they had soon fallen in with the customs of their hidden kingdom, and moved about the soft-footed ways by woodland, hedge-row, and shaw as freely as the rabbits. Indeed, for the most part Sophie walked bareheaded beneath her helmet of chestnut hair; but she had been plagued of late by vague toothaches, which she explained to Mrs. Cloke, who asked some questions. How it came about Sophie never knew, but after a while behold Mrs. Cloke’s arm was about her waist, and her head was on that deep bosom behind the shut kitchen door.

‘My dear! my dear!’ the elder woman almost sobbed. ‘An’ d’you mean to tell me you never suspicioned? Why—why—where was you ever taught anything at all? Of course it is. It’s what we’ve been only waitin’ for, all of us. Time and again I’ve said to Lady——’ she checked herself.

‘An’ now we shall be as we should be.’

‘But—but—but——’ Sophie whimpered.

‘An’ to see you buildin’ your nest so busy—pianos and books—an’ never thinkin’ of a nursery!’

‘No more I did.’ Sophie sat bolt upright, and began to laugh.
AN HABITATION ENFORCED

'Time enough yet.' The fingers tapped thoughtfully on the broad knee. 'But—they must be strange-minded folk over yonder with you! Have you thought to send for your mother? She dead? My dear, my dear! Never mind! She'll be happy where she knows. 'Tis God's work. An' we was only waitin' for it, for you've never failed in your duty yet. It ain't your way. What did you say about my Mary's doings?' Mrs. Cloke's face hardened as she pressed her chin on Sophie's forehead. 'If any of your girls thinks to be'ave arbitrary now, I'll—— But they won't, my dear. I'll see they do their duty too. Be sure you'll 'ave no trouble.'

When Sophie walked back across the fields, heaven and earth changed about her as on the day of old Iggulden's death. For an instant she thought of the wide turn of the staircase, and the new ivory-white paint that no coffin corner could scar, but presently the shadow passed in a pure wonder and bewilderment that made her reel. She leaned against one of their new gates and looked over their lands for some other stay.

'Well,' she said resignedly, half aloud, 'we must try to make him feel that he isn't a third in our party,' and turned the corner that looked over Friars Pardon, giddy, sick, and faint.

Of a sudden the house they had bought for a
whim stood up as she had never seen it before, low-fronted, broad-winged, ample, prepared by course of generations for all such things. As it had steadied her when it lay desolate, so now that it had meaning from their few months of life within, it soothed and promised good. She went alone and quickly into the hall, and kissed either door-post, whispering: 'Be good to me. You know! You've never failed in your duty yet.'

When the matter was explained to George, he would have sailed at once to their own land, but this Sophie forbade.

'I don't want science,' she said. 'I just want to be loved, and there isn't time for that at home. Besides,' she added, looking out of the window, 'it would be desertion.'

George was forced to soothe himself with linking Friars Pardon to the telegraph system of Great Britain by telephone—three-quarters of a mile of poles, put in by Whybarne and a few friends. One of these was a foreigner from the next parish. Said he when the line was being run: 'There's an old ellum right in our road. Shall us throw her?'

'Toot Hill parish folk, neither grace nor good luck, God help 'em.' Old Whybarne shouted the local proverb from three poles down the line.
AN HABITATION ENFORCED

'\textit{We ain't goin'} to lay any axe-iron to coffin-wood here—not till we know where we are yet awhile. Swing round 'er, swing round!'}

To this day, then, that sudden kink in the straight line across the upper pasture remains a mystery to Sophie and George. Nor can they tell why Skim Winsh, who came to his cottage under Dutton Shaw most musically drunk at 10.45 p.m. of every Saturday night, as his father had done before him, sang no more at the bottom of the garden steps, where Sophie always feared he would break his neck. The path was undoubtedly an ancient right of way, and at 10.45 p.m. on Saturdays Skim remembered it was his duty to posterity to keep it open—till Mrs. Cloke spoke to him—once. She spoke likewise to her daughter Mary, sewing-maid at Pardons, and to Mary's best new friend, the five-foot-seven imported London house-maid, who taught Mary to trim hats, and found the country dullish.

But there was no noise,—at no time was there any noise,—and when Sophie walked abroad she met no one in her path unless she had signified a wish that way. Then they appeared to protest that all was well with them and their children, their chickens, their roofs, their water-supply, and their sons in the police or the railway service.

'\textit{But don't you find it dull, dear?'} said George,
loyally doing his best not to worry as the months went by.

'I've been so busy putting my house in order I haven't had time to think,' said she. 'Do you?'

'No—no. If I could only be sure of you.'

She turned on the green drawing-room's couch (it was Empire, not Heppelwhite after all), and laid aside a list of linen and blankets.

'It has changed everything, hasn't it?' she whispered.

'Oh Lord, yes. But I still think if we went back to Baltimore—'

'And missed our first real summer together. No thank you, me lord.'

'But we're absolutely alone.'

'Isn't that what I'm doing my best to remedy? Don't you worry. I like it—like it to the marrow of my little bones. You don't realise what her house means to a woman. We thought we were living in it last year, but we hadn't begun to. Don't you rejoice in your study, George?'

'I prefer being here with you.' He sat down on the floor by the couch and took her hand.

'Seven,' she said as the French clock struck. 'Year before last you'd just be coming back from business.'

He winced at the recollection, then laughed.
'Business! I’ve been at work ten solid hours to-day.'

'Where did you lunch? With the Conants?'

'No; at Dutton Shaw, sitting on a log, with my feet in a swamp. But we’ve found out where the old spring is, and we’re going to pipe it down to Gale Anstey next year.'

'I’ll come and see to-morrow. Oh, please open the door, dear. I want to look down the passage. Isn’t that corner by the stair-head lovely where the sun strikes in?' She looked through half-closed eyes at the vista of ivory-white and pale green all steeped in liquid gold.

'There’s a step out of Jane Elphick’s bedroom,' she went on—'and his first step in the world ought to be up. I shouldn’t wonder if those people hadn’t put it there on purpose. George, will it make any odds to you if he’s a girl?'

He answered, as he had many times before, that his interest was his wife, not the child.

'Then you’re the only person who thinks so.' She laughed. 'Don’t be silly, dear. It’s expected. I know. It’s my duty. I shan’t be able to look our people in the face if I fail.'

'What concern is it of theirs, confound ’em!'

'You’ll see. Luckily the tradition of the house is boys, Mrs. Cloke says, so I’m provided for. Shall you ever begin to understand these people? I shan’t.'
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

'And we bought it for fun—for fun?' he groaned. 'And here we are held up for goodness knows how long!'

'Why? Were you thinking of selling it?' He did not answer. 'Do you remember the second Mrs. Chapin?' she demanded.

This was a bold, brazen little black-browed woman—a widow for choice—who on Sophie's death was guilefully to marry George for his wealth and ruin him in a year. George being busy, Sophie had invented her some two years after her marriage, and conceived she was alone among wives in so doing.

'You aren't going to bring her up again?' he asked anxiously.

'I only want to say that I should hate any one who bought Pardons ten times worse than I used to hate the second Mrs. Chapin. Think what we've put into it of our two selves.'

'At least a couple of million dollars. I know I could have made——' He broke off.

'The beasts!' she went on. 'They'd be sure to build a red-brick lodge at the gates, and cut the lawn up for bedding out. You must leave instructions in your will that he's never to do that, George, won't you?'

He laughed and took her hand again but said nothing till it was time to dress. Then he
AN HABITATION ENFORCED

muttered: 'What the devil use is a man's country to him when he can't do business in it?'

Friars Pardon stood faithful to its tradition. At the appointed time was born, not that third in their party to whom Sophie meant to be so kind, but a godling; in beauty, it was manifest, excelling Eros, as in wisdom Confucius; an enhancer of delights, a renewer of companionships and an interpreter of Destiny. This last George did not realise till he met Lady Conant striding through Dutton Shaw a few days after the event.

'My dear fellow,' she cried, and slapped him heartily on the back, 'I can't tell you how glad we all are.—Oh, she'll be all right. (There's never been any trouble over the birth of an heir at Pardons.) Now where the dooce is it?' She felt largely in her leather-bound skirt and drew out a small silver mug. 'I sent a note to your wife about it, but my silly ass of a groom forgot to take this. You can save me a tramp. Give her my love.' She marched off amid her guard of grave Airedales.

The mug was worn and dented: above the twined initials, G. L., was the crest of a footless bird and the motto: 'Wayte awhyle—wayte awhyle.'

'That's the other end of the riddle,' Sophie
whispered, when he saw her that evening. 'Read her note. The English write beautiful notes.'

The warmest of welcomes to your little man. I hope he will appreciate his native land now he has come to it. Though you have said nothing we cannot, of course, look on him as a little stranger, and so I am sending him the old Lashmar christening mug. It has been with us since Gregory Lashmar, your great-grandmother's brother—

George stared at his wife.
'Go on,' she twinkled from the pillows.

—mother's brother, sold his place to Walter's family. We seem to have acquired some of your household gods at that time, but nothing survives except the mug and the old cradle, which I found in the potting-shed and am having put in order for you. I hope little George—Lashmar, he will be too, won't he?—will live to see his grandchildren cut their teeth on his mug.

Affectionately yours, Alice Conant.

P.S.—How quiet you've kept about it all!

'Well, I'm—'

'Don't swear,' said Sophie. 'Bad for the infant mind.'

'But how in the world did she get at it? Have you ever said a word about the Lashmars?'

'You know the only time—to young Iggulden at Rocketts—when Iggulden died.'

'Your great-grandmother's brother! She's traced the whole connection—more than your
AN HABITATION ENFORCED

Aunt Sydney could do. What does she mean about our keeping quiet?'

Sophie's eyes sparkled. 'I've thought that out too. We've got back at the English at last. Can't you see that she thought that we thought my mother's being a Lashmar was one of those things we'd expect the English to find out for themselves, and that's impressed her?' She turned the mug in her white hands, and sighed happily. '"Wayteawhyle—wayteawhyle." That's not a bad motto, George. It's been worth it.'

'But still I don't quite see——'

'I shouldn't wonder if they don't think our coming here was part of a deep-laid scheme to be near our ancestors. They'd understand that. And look how they've accepted us, all of them.'

'Are we so undesirable in ourselves?' George grunted.

'Be just, me lord. That wretched Sangres man has twice our money. Can you see Marm Conant slapping him between the shoulders? Not by a jugful! The poor beast doesn't exist!'

'Do you think it's that then?' He looked toward the cot by the fire where the godling snorted.

'The minute I get well I shall find out from Mrs. Cloke what every Lashmar gives in doles (that's nicer than tips) every time a Lashmite is
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

born. I've done my duty thus far, but there's much expected of me.'

Entered here Mrs. Cloke, and hung worshipping over the cot. They showed her the mug and her face shone. 'Oh, now Lady Conant's sent it, it'll be all proper, ma'am, won't it? "George" of course he'd have to be, but seein' what he is we was hopin'—all your people was hopin'—it 'ud be "Lashmar" too, and that 'ud just round it out. A very 'andsome mug—quite unique, I should imagine. "Wayte awhyle—wayte awhyle." That's true with the Lashmars, I've heard. Very slow to fill their houses, they are. Most like Master George won't open 'is nursery till he's thirty.'

'Poor lamb!' cried Sophie. 'But how did you know my folk were Lashmars?'

Mrs. Cloke thought deeply. 'I'm sure I can't quite say, ma'am, but I've a belief likely that it was something you may have let drop to young Iggulden when you was at Rocketts. That may have been what give us an inkling. An' so it came out, one thing in the way o' talk leading to another, and those American people at Veering Holler was very obligin' with news, I'm told, ma'am.'

'Great Scott!' said George, under his breath. 'And this is the simple peasant!'

'Yiss,' Mrs. Cloke went on. 'An' Cloke was
only wonderin’ this afternoon—your pillow’s slipped, my dear, you mustn’t lie that a-way—just for the sake o’ sayin’ something, whether you wouldn’t think well now of getting the Lashmar farms back, sir. They don’t rightly round off Sir Walter’s estate. They come caterin’ across us more. Cloke, ’e ’ud be glad to show you over any day.’

‘But Sir Walter doesn’t want to sell, does he?’

‘We can find out from his bailiff, sir, but’—with cold contempt—‘I think that trained nurse is just comin’ up from her dinner, so I’m afraid we’ll ’ave to ask you, sir . . . Now, Master George—Ai-ie! Wake a littly minute, lammie!’

A few months later the three of them were down at the brook in the Gale Anstey woods to consider the rebuilding of a footbridge carried away by spring floods. George Lashmar wanted all the bluebells on God’s earth that day to eat, and Sophie adored him in a voice like to the cooing of a dove; so business was delayed.

‘Here’s the place,’ said his father at last among the water forget-me-nots. ‘But where the deuce are the larch-poles, Cloke? I told you to have them down here ready.’

‘We’ll get ’em down if you say so,’ Cloke answered, with a thrust of the underlip they both knew.
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

‘But I did say so. What on earth have you brought that timber-tug here for? We aren’t building a railway bridge. Why, in America, half a dozen two-by-four bits would be ample.’

‘I don’t know nothin’ about that,’ said Cloke. ‘An’ I’ve nothin’ to say against larch—if you want to make a temp’ry job of it. I ain’t ’ere to tell you what isn’t so, sir; an’ you can’t say I ever come creepin’ up on you, or tryin’ to lead you farther in than you set out—’

A year ago George would have danced with impatience. Now he scraped a little mud off his old gaiters with his spud, and waited.

‘All I say is that you can put up larch and make a temp’ry job of it; and by the time the young master’s married it’ll have to be done again. Now, I’ve brought down a couple of as sweet six-by-eight oak timbers as we’ve ever drewed. You put ’em in an’ it’s off your mind for good an’ all. T’other way—I don’t say it ain’t right, I’m only just sayin’ what I think—but t’other way, he’ll no sooner be married than we’ll ’ave it all to do again. You’ve no call to regard my words, but you can’t get out of that.’

‘No,’ said George after a pause; ‘I’ve been realising that for some time. Make it oak then; we can’t get out of it.’

58
THE RECALL

I am the land of their fathers,
    In me the virtue stays;
I will bring back my children
    After certain days.

Under their feet in the grasses
    My clinging magic runs.
They shall return as strangers,
    They shall remain as sons.

Over their heads in the branches
    Of their new-bought ancient trees,
I weave an incantation,
    And draw them to my knees.

Scent of smoke in the evening,
    Smell of rain in the night,
The hours, the days and the seasons,
    Order their souls aright;

Till I make plain the meaning—
    Of all my thousand years—
Till I fill their hearts with knowledge,
    While I fill their eyes with tears.
GARM—A HOSTAGE

ONE night, a very long time ago, I drove to an Indian military cantonment called Mian Mir to see amateur theatricals. At the back of the Infantry barracks a soldier, his cap over one eye, rushed in front of the horses and shouted that he was a dangerous highway robber. As a matter of fact he was a friend of mine, so I told him to go home before any one caught him; but he fell under the pole, and I heard voices of a military guard in search of some one.

The driver and I coaxed him into the carriage, drove home swiftly, undressed him and put him to bed, where he waked next morning with a sore headache, very much ashamed. When his uniform was cleaned and dried, and he had been shaved and washed and made neat, I drove him back to barracks with his arm in a fine white sling, and reported that I had accidentally run over him. I did not tell this story to my friend’s sergeant,
who was a hostile and unbelieving person, but to his lieutenant, who did not know us quite so well.

Three days later my friend came to call, and at his heels slobbered and fawned one of the finest bull-terriers—of the old-fashioned breed, two parts bull and one terrier—that I had ever set eyes on. He was pure white, with a fawn-coloured saddle just behind his neck, and a fawn diamond at the root of his thin whippy tail. I had admired him distantly for more than a year; and Vixen, my own fox-terrier, knew him too, but did not approve.

"'E's for you," said my friend; but he did not look as though he liked parting with him.

'Nonsense! That dog's worth more than most men, Stanley,' I said.

'E's that and more. 'Tention!'

The dog rose on his hind legs, and stood upright for a full minute.

'Eyes right!'

He sat on his haunches and turned his head sharp to the right. At a sign he rose and barked thrice. Then he shook hands with his right paw and bounded lightly to my shoulder. Here he made himself into a necktie, limp and lifeless, hanging down on either side of my neck. I was told to pick him up and throw him in the air. He fell with a howl, and held up one leg.
‘Part o’ the trick,’ said his owner. ‘You’re going to die now. Dig yourself your little grave an’ shut your little eye.’

Still limping, the dog hobbled to the garden-edge, dug a hole and lay down in it. When told that he was cured he jumped out, wagging his tail, and whining for applause. He was put through half a dozen other tricks, such as showing how he would hold a man safe (I was that man, and he sat down before me, his teeth bared, ready to spring), and how he would stop eating at the word of command. I had no more than finished praising him when my friend made a gesture that stopped the dog as though he had been shot, took a piece of blue-rulled canteen-paper from his helmet, handed it to me and ran away, while the dog looked after him and howled. I read

Sir—I give you the dog because of what you got me out of. He is the best I know, for I made him myself, and he is as good as a man. Please do not give him too much to eat, and please do not give him back to me, for I’m not going to take him, if you will keep him. So please do not try to give him back any more. I have kept his name back, so you can call him anything and he will answer, but please do not give him back. He can kill a man as easy as anything, but please do not give him too much meat. He knows more than a man.

Vixen sympathetically joined her shrill little yap to the bull-terrier’s despairing cry, and I was
annoyed, for I knew that a man who cares for dogs is one thing, but a man who loves one dog is quite another. Dogs are at the best no more than verminous vagrants, self-scratchers, foul feeders, and unclean by the law of Moses and Mohammed; but a dog with whom one lives alone for at least six months in the year; a free thing, tied to you so strictly by love that without you he will not stir or exercise; a patient, temperate, humorous, wise soul, who knows your moods before you know them yourself, is not a dog under any ruling.

I had Vixen, who was all my dog to me; and I felt what my friend must have felt, at tearing out his heart in this style and leaving it in my garden. However, the dog understood clearly enough that I was his master, and did not follow the soldier. As soon as he drew breath I made much of him, and Vixen, yelling with jealousy, flew at him. Had she been of his own sex, he might have cheered himself with a fight, but he only looked worriedly when she nipped his deep iron sides, laid his heavy head on my knee, and howled anew. I meant to dine at the Club that night, but as darkness drew in, and the dog snuffed through the empty house like a child trying to recover from a fit of sobbing, I felt that I could not leave him to suffer his first evening alone.
GARM—A HOSTAGE

So we fed at home, Vixen on one side and the stranger-dog on the other; she watching his every mouthful, and saying explicitly what she thought of his table manners, which were much better than hers.

It was Vixen's custom, till the weather grew hot, to sleep in my bed, her head on the pillow like a Christian; and when morning came I would always find that the little thing had braced her feet against the wall and pushed me to the very edge of the cot. This night she hurried to bed purposefully, every hair up, one eye on the stranger, who had dropped on a mat in a helpless, hopeless sort of way, all four feet spread out, sighing heavily. She settled her head on the pillow several times, to show her little airs and graces, and struck up her usual whiney sing-song before slumber. The stranger-dog softly edged towards me. I put out my hand and he licked it. Instantly my wrist was between Vixen's teeth, and her warning aaarh! said as plainly as speech, that if I took any further notice of the stranger she would bite.

I caught her behind her fat neck with my left hand, shook her severely, and said:

'Vixen, if you do that again you'll be put into the veranda. Now, remember!'

She understood perfectly, but the minute I released her she mouthed my right wrist once
more, and waited with her ears back and all her body flattened, ready to bite. The big dog’s tail thumped the floor in a humble and peace-making way.

I grabbed Vixen a second time, lifted her out of bed like a rabbit (she hated that and yelled), and, as I had promised, set her out in the veranda with the bats and the moonlight. At this she howled. Then she used coarse language—not to me, but to the bull-terrier—till she coughed with exhaustion. Then she ran round the house trying every door. Then she went off to the stables and barked as though some one were stealing the horses, which was an old trick of hers. Last she returned, and her snuffing yelp said, ‘I’ll be good! Let me in and I’ll be good!’

She was admitted and flew to her pillow. When she was quieted I whispered to the other dog, ‘You can lie on the foot of the bed.’ The bull jumped up at once, and though I felt Vixen quiver with rage, she knew better than to protest. So we slept till the morning, and they had early breakfast with me, bite for bite, till the horse came round and we went for a ride. I don’t think the bull had ever followed a horse before. He was wild with excitement, and Vixen, as usual, squealed and scuttered and scooted, and took charge of the procession.

There was one corner of a village near by, which
we generally passed with caution, because all the yellow pariah-dogs of the place gathered about it. They were half-wild, starving beasts, and though utter cowards, yet where nine or ten of them get together they will mob and kill and eat an English dog. I kept a whip with a long lash for them. That morning they attacked Vixen, who, perhaps of design, had moved from beyond my horse's shadow.

The bull was ploughing along in the dust, fifty yards behind, rolling in his run, and smiling as bull-terriers will. I heard Vixen squeal; half a dozen of the curs closed in on her; a white streak came up behind me; a cloud of dust rose near Vixen, and, when it cleared, I saw one tall pariah with his back broken, and the bull wrenching another to earth. Vixen retreated to the protection of my whip, and the bull paddled back smiling more than ever, covered with the blood of his enemies. That decided me to call him ‘Garm of the Bloody Breast,’ who was a great person in his time, or ‘Garm’ for short; so, leaning forward, I told him what his temporary name would be. He looked up while I repeated it, and then raced away. I shouted ‘Garm!’ He stopped, raced back, and came up to ask my will.

Then I saw that my soldier friend was right, and that that dog knew and was worth more than
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

a man. At the end of the ride I gave an order which Vixen knew and hated: ‘Go away and get washed!’ I said. Garm understood some part of it, and Vixen interpreted the rest, and the two trotted off together soberly. When I went to the back veranda Vixen had been washed snowy-white, and was very proud of herself, but the dog-boy would not touch Garm on any account unless I stood by. So I waited while he was being scrubbed, and Garm, with the soap creaming on the top of his broad head, looked at me to make sure that this was what I expected him to endure. He knew perfectly that the dog-boy was only obeying orders. ‘Another time,’ I said to the dog-boy, ‘you will wash the great dog with Vixen when I send them home.’

‘Does he know?’ said the dog-boy, who understood the ways of dogs.

‘Garm,’ I said, ‘another time you will be washed with Vixen.’

I knew that Garm understood. Indeed, next washing-day, when Vixen as usual fled under my bed, Garm stared at the doubtful dog-boy in the veranda, stalked to the place where he had been washed last time, and stood rigid in the tub.

But the long days in my office tried him sorely. We three would drive off in the morning at half-past eight and come home at six or later. Vixen
knowing the routine of it, went to sleep under my table; but the confinement ate into Garm's soul. He generally sat on the veranda looking out on the Mall; and well I knew what he expected.

Sometimes a company of soldiers would move along on their way to the Fort, and Garm rolled forth to inspect them; or an officer in uniform entered into the office, and it was pitiful to see poor Garm's welcome to the cloth—not the man. He would leap at him, and sniff and bark joyously, then run to the door and back again. One afternoon I heard him bay with a full throat—a thing I had never heard before—and he disappeared. When I drove into my garden at the end of the day a soldier in white uniform scrambled over the wall at the far end, and the Garm that met me was a joyous dog. This happened twice or thrice a week for a month.

I pretended not to notice, but Garm knew and Vixen knew. He would glide homewards from the office about four o'clock, as though he were only going to look at the scenery, and this he did so quietly that but for Vixen I should not have noticed him. The jealous little dog under the table would give a sniff and a snort, just loud enough to call my attention to the flight. Garm might go out forty times in the day and Vixen would never stir, but when he slunk off to see his
true master in my garden she told me in her own tongue. That was the one sign she made to prove that Garm did not altogether belong to the family. They were the best of friends at all times, but, Vixen explained that I was never to forget Garm did not love me as she loved me.

I never expected it. The dog was not my dog—could never be my dog—and I knew he was as miserable as his master who tramped eight miles a day to see him. So it seemed to me that the sooner the two were reunited the better for all. One afternoon I sent Vixen home alone in the dog-cart (Garm had gone before), and rode over to cantonments to find another friend of mine, who was an Irish soldier and a great friend of the dog's master.

I explained the whole case, and wound up with:

'And now Stanley's in my garden crying over his dog. Why doesn't he take him back? They're both unhappy.'

'Unhappy! There's no sense in the little man any more. But 'tis his fit.'

'What is his fit? He travels fifty miles a week to see the brute, and he pretends not to notice me when he sees me on the road; and I'm as unhappy as he is. Make him take the dog back.'

'It's his penance he's set himself. I told him by way of a joke, after you'd run over him so
convenient that night, whin he was drunk—I said if he was a Catholic he’d do penance. Off he went wid that fit in his little head an’ a dose of fever, an’ nothin’ would suit but givin’ you the dog as a hostage.’

‘Hostage for what? I don’t want hostages from Stanley.’

‘For his good behaviour. He’s keepin’ straight now, the way it’s no pleasure to associate wid him.’

‘Has he taken the pledge?’

‘If ’twas only that I need not care. Ye can take the pledge for three months on an’ off. He sez he’ll never see the dog again, an’ so mark you, he’ll keep straight for evermore. Ye know his fits? Well, this is wan of them. How’s the dog takin’ it?’

‘Like a man. He’s the best dog in India. Can’t you make Stanley take him back?’

‘I can do no more than I have done. But ye know his fits. He’s just doin’ his penance. What will he do when he goes to the Hills? The doctor’s put him on the list.’

It is the custom in India to send a certain number of invalids from each regiment up to stations in the Himalayas for the hot weather; and though the men ought to enjoy the cool and the comfort, they miss the society of the barracks down below,
and do their best to come back or to avoid going. I felt that this move would bring matters to a head, so I left Terence hopefully, though he called after me—

‘He won’t take the dog, sorr. You can lay your month’s pay on that. Ye know his fits.’

I never pretended to understand Private Ortheris; and so I did the next best thing—I left him alone.

That summer the invalids of the regiment to which my friend belonged were ordered off to the Hills early, because the doctors thought marching in the cool of the day would do them good. Their route lay south to a place called Umballa, a hundred and twenty miles or more. Then they would turn east and march up into the hills to Kasauli or Dugshai or Subathoo. I dined with the officers the night before they left—they were marching at five in the morning. It was midnight when I drove into my garden and surprised a white figure flying over the wall.

‘That man,’ said my butler, ‘has been here since nine, making talk to that dog. He is quite mad. I did not tell him to go away because he has been here many times before, and because the dog-boy told me that if I told him to go away, that great dog would immediately slay me. He did not wish to speak to the Protector of the
Poor, and he did not ask for anything to eat or drink.'

'Kadir Buksh,' said I, 'that was well done, for the dog would surely have killed thee. But I do not think the white soldier will come any more.'

Garm slept ill that night and whimpered in his dreams. Once he sprang up with a clear, ringing bark, and I heard him wag his tail till it waked him and the bark died out in a howl. He had dreamed he was with his master again, and I nearly cried. It was all Stanley's silly fault.

The first halt which the detachment of invalids made was some miles from their barracks, on the Amritsar road, and ten miles distant from my house. By a mere chance one of the officers drove back for another good dinner at the Club (cooking on the line of march is always bad), and there I met him. He was a particular friend of mine, and I knew that he knew how to love a dog properly. His pet was a big fat retriever who was going up to the Hills for his health, and, though it was still April, the round, brown brute puffed and panted in the Club veranda as though he would burst.

'IT's amazing,' said the officer, 'what excuses these invalids of mine make to get back to barracks. There's a man in my company now asked me for leave to go back to cantonments to pay a debt he'd
forgotten. I was so taken by the idea I let him go, and he jingled off in an _ekha_ as pleased as Punch. Ten miles to pay a debt! Wonder what it was really?'

'If you'll drive me home I think I can show you,' I said.

So we went over to my house in his dog-cart with the retriever; and on the way I told him the story of Garm.

'I was wondering where that brute had gone to. He's the best dog in the regiment,' said my friend. 'I offered the little fellow twenty rupees for him a month ago. But he's a hostage, you say, for Stanley's good conduct. Stanley's one of the best men I have—when he chooses.'

'That's the reason why,' I said. 'A second-rate man wouldn't have taken things to heart as he has done.'

We drove in quietly at the far end of the garden, and crept round the house. There was a place close to the wall all grown about with tamarisk trees, where I knew Garm kept his bones. Even Vixen was not allowed to sit near it. In the full Indian moonlight I could see a white uniform bending over the dog.

'Good-bye, old man,' we could not help hearing Stanley's voice. 'For 'Eving's sake don't get bit and go mad by any measly pi-dog. But you
can look after yourself, old man. *You* don’t get drunk an’ run about ’ittin’ your friends. You takes your bones an’ you eats your biscuit, an’ you kills your enemy like a gentleman. I’m goin’ away—don’t ’owl—I’m goin’ off to Kasauli, where I won’t see you no more.’

I could hear him holding Garm’s nose as the dog threw it up to the stars.

‘You’ll stay here an’ be’ave, an’—an’ I’ll go away an’ try to be’ave, an’ I don’t know ’ow to leave you. I don’t know—’

‘I think this is damn silly,’ said the officer, patting his foolish fubsy old retriever. He called to the private, who leaped to his feet, marched forward, and saluted.

‘You here?’ said the officer, turning away his head.

‘Yes, sir, but I’m just goin’ back.’

‘I shall be leaving here at eleven in my cart. You come with me. I can’t have sick men running about all over the place. Report yourself at eleven, here.’

We did not say much when we went indoors, but the officer muttered and pulled his retriever’s ears.

He was a disgraceful, overfed door-mat of a dog; and when he waddled off to my cookhouse to be fed, I had a brilliant idea.
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

At eleven o'clock that officer's dog was nowhere to be found, and you never heard such a fuss as his owner made. He called and shouted and grew angry, and hunted through my garden for half an hour.

Then I said:

'He's sure to turn up in the morning. Send a man in by rail, and I'll find the beast and return him.'

'Beast?' said the officer. 'I value that dog considerably more than I value any man I know. It's all very fine for you to talk—your dog's here.'

'So she was—under my feet—and, had she been missing, food and wages would have stopped in my house till her return. But some people grow fond of dogs not worth a cut of the whip. My friend had to drive away at last with Stanley in the back-seat; and then the dog-boy said to me:

'What kind of animal is Bullen Sahib's dog? Look at him!'

I went to the boy's hut, and the fat old reprobate was lying on a mat carefully chained up. He must have heard his master calling for twenty minutes, but had not even attempted to join him.

'He has no face,' said the dog-boy scornfully. 'He is a punniar-kooter (a spaniel). He never tried
to get that cloth off his jaws when his master called. Now Vixen-baba would have jumped through the window, and that Great Dog would have slain me with his muzzled mouth. It is true that there are many kinds of dogs.'

Next evening who should turn up but Stanley. The officer had sent him back fourteen miles by rail with a note begging me to return the retriever if I had found him, and, if I had not, to offer huge rewards. The last train to camp left at half-past ten, and Stanley stayed till ten talking to Garm. I argued and entreated, and even threatened to shoot the bull-terrier, but the little man was as firm as a rock, though I gave him a good dinner and talked to him most severely. Garm knew as well as I that this was the last time he could hope to see his man, and followed Stanley like a shadow. The retriever said nothing, but licked his lips after his meal and waddled off without so much as saying 'Thank you' to the disgusted dog-boy.

So that last meeting was over and I felt as wretched as Garm, who moaned in his sleep all night. When we went to the office he found a place under the table close to Vixen, and dropped flat till it was time to go home. There was no more running out into the verandas, no slinking away for stolen talks with Stanley. As the weather
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

grew warmer the dogs were forbidden to run beside the cart, but sat at my side on the seat, Vixen with her head under the crook of my left elbow, and Garm hugging the left handrail.

Here Vixen was ever in great form. She had to attend to all the moving traffic, such as bullock-carts that blocked the way, and camels, and led ponies; as well as to keep up her dignity when she passed low friends running in the dust. She never yapped for yapping's sake, but her shrill, high bark was known all along the Mall, and other men's terriers ki-yied in reply, and bullock-drivers looked over their shoulders and gave us the road with a grin.

But Garm cared for none of these things. His big eyes were on the horizon and his terrible mouth was shut. There was another dog in the office who belonged to my chief. We called him 'Bob the Librarian,' because he always imagined vain rats behind the bookshelves, and in hunting for them would drag out half the old newspaper-files. Bob was a well-meaning idiot, but Garm did not encourage him. He would slide his head round the door, panting, 'Rats! Come along, Garm!' and Garm would shift one fore-paw over the other, and curl himself round, leaving Bob to whine at a most uninterested back. The office was nearly as cheerful as a tomb in those days.

80
Once, and only once, did I see Garm at all contented with his surroundings. He had gone for an unauthorised walk with Vixen early one Sunday morning, and a very young and foolish artilleryman (his battery had just moved to that part of the world) tried to steal them both. Vixen, of course, knew better than to take food from soldiers, and, besides, she had just finished her breakfast. So she trotted back with a large piece of the mutton that they issue to our troops, laid it down on my veranda, and looked up to see what I thought. I asked her where Garm was, and she ran in front of the horse to show me the way.

About a mile up the road we came across our artilleryman sitting very stiffly on the edge of a culvert with a greasy handkerchief on his knees. Garm was in front of him, looking rather pleased. When the man moved leg or hand, Garm bared his teeth in silence. A broken string hung from his collar, and the other half of it lay, all warm, in the artilleryman's still hand. He explained to me, keeping his eyes straight in front of him, that he had met this dog (he called him awful names) walking alone, and was going to take him to the Fort to be killed for a masterless pariah.

I said that Garm did not seem to me much of a pariah, but that he had better take him to the
Fort if he thought best. He said he did not care to do so. I told him to go to the Fort alone. He said he did not want to go at that hour, but would follow my advice as soon as I had called off the dog. I instructed Garm to take him to the Fort, and Garm marched him solemnly up to the gate, one mile and a half under a hot sun, and I told the quarter-guard what had happened; but the young artilleryman was more angry than was at all necessary when they began to laugh. Several regiments, he was told, had tried to steal Garm in their time.

That month the hot weather shut down in earnest, and the dogs slept in the bathroom on the cool wet bricks where the bath is placed. Every morning, as soon as the man filled my bath, the two jumped in, and every morning the man filled the bath a second time. I said to him that he might as well fill a small tub specially for the dogs. 'Nay,' said he smiling, 'it is not their custom. They would not understand. Besides, the big bath gives them more space.'

The punkah-coolies who pull the punkahs day and night came to know Garm intimately. He noticed that when the swaying fan stopped I would call out to the coolie and bid him pull with a long stroke. If the man still slept I would wake him up. He discovered, too, that it was a good thing
to lie in the wave of air under the punkah. Maybe Stanley had taught him all about this in barracks. At any rate, when the punkah stopped, Garm would first growl and cock his eye at the rope, and if that did not wake the man—it nearly always did—he would tiptoe forth and talk in the sleeper's ear. Vixen was a clever little dog, but she could never connect the punkah and the coolie; so Garm gave me grateful hours of cool sleep. But he was utterly wretched—as miserable as a human being; and in his misery he clung so closely to me that other men noticed it, and were envious. If I moved from one room to another Garm followed; if my pen stopped scratching, Garm's head was thrust into my hand; if I turned, half awake, on the pillow, Garm was up and at my side, for he knew that I was his only link with his master, and day and night, and night and day, his eyes asked one question—'When is this going to end?'

Living with the dog as I did, I never noticed that he was more than ordinarily upset by the hot weather, till one day at the Club a man said: 'That dog of yours will die in a week or two. He's a shadow.' Then I dosed Garm with iron and quinine, which he hated; and I felt very anxious. He lost his appetite, and Vixen was allowed to eat his dinner under his eyes. Even that did not make him swallow, and we held a
consultation on him, of the best man-doctor in the place; a lady-doctor, who cured the sick wives of kings; and the Deputy Inspector-General of the veterinary service of all India. They pronounced upon his symptoms, and I told them his story, and Garm lay on a sofa licking my hand.

'He's dying of a broken heart,' said the lady-doctor suddenly.

'Pon my word,' said the Deputy Inspector-General, 'I believe Mrs. Macrae is perfectly right—as usual.'

The best man-doctor in the place wrote a prescription, and the veterinary Deputy Inspector-General went over it afterwards to be sure that the drugs were in the proper dog-proportions; and that was the first time in his life that our doctor ever allowed his prescriptions to be edited. It was a strong tonic, and it put the dear boy on his feet for a week or two; then he lost flesh again. I asked a man I knew to take him up to the Hills with him when he went, and the man came to the door with his kit packed on the top of the carriage. Garm took in the situation at one red glance. The hair rose along his back; he sat down in front of me and delivered the most awful growl I have ever heard in the jaws of a dog. I shouted to my friend to get away at once, and as soon as the carriage was out of the garden
Garm laid his head on my knee and whined. So I knew his answer, and devoted myself to getting Stanley’s address in the Hills.

My turn to go to the cool came late in August. We were allowed thirty days’ holiday in a year, if no one fell sick, and we took it as we could be spared. My chief and Bob the Librarian had their holiday first, and when they were gone I made a calendar, as I always did, and hung it up at the head of my cot, tearing off one day at a time till they returned. Vixen had gone up to the Hills with me five times before; and she appreciated the cold and the damp and the beautiful wood fires there as much as I did.

‘Garm,’ I said, ‘we are going back to Stanley at Kasauli. Kasauli—Stanley; Stanley—Kasauli.’ And I repeated it twenty times. It was not Kasauli really, but another place. Still I remembered what Stanley had said in my garden on the last night, and I dared not change the name. Then Garm began to tremble; then he barked; and then he leaped up at me, frisking and wagging his tail.

‘Not now,’ I said, holding up my hand. ‘When I say “Go,” we’ll go, Garm.’ I pulled out the little blanket coat and spiked collar that Vixen always wore up in the Hills, to protect her against sudden chills and thieving leopards, and I
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

let the two smell them and talk it over. What they said of course I do not know, but it made a new dog of Garm. His eyes were bright; and he barked joyfully when I spoke to him. He ate his food, and he killed his rats for the next three weeks, and when he began to whine I had only to say 'Stanley—Kasauli; Kasauli—Stanley,' to wake him up. I wish I had thought of it before.

My chief came back, all brown with living in the open air, and very angry at finding it so hot in the plains. The same afternoon we three and Kadir Buksh began to pack for our month's holiday, Vixen rolling in and out of the bullock-trunk twenty times a minute, and Garm grinning all over and thumping on the floor with his tail. Vixen knew the routine of travelling as well as she knew my office-work. She went to the station, singing songs, on the front seat of the carriage, while Garm sat with me. She hurried into the railway carriage, saw Kadir Buksh make up my bed for the night, got her drink of water, and curled up with her black-patch eye on the tumult of the platform. Garm followed her (the crowd gave him a lane all to himself) and sat down on the pillows with his eyes blazing, and his tail a haze behind him.

We came to Umballa in the hot misty dawn, four or five men, who had been working hard for
eleven months, shouting for our dâks—the two-horse travelling carriages that were to take us up to Kalka at the foot of the Hills. It was all new to Garm. He did not understand carriages where you lay at full length on your bedding, but Vixen knew and hopped into her place at once; Garm following. The Kalka Road, before the railway was built, was about forty-seven miles long, and the horses were changed every eight miles. Most of them jibbed, and kicked, and plunged, but they had to go, and they went rather better than usual for Garm's deep bay in their rear.

There was a river to be forded, and four bullocks pulled the carriage, and Vixen stuck her head out of the sliding-door and nearly fell into the water while she gave directions. Garm was silent and curious, and rather needed reassuring about Stanley and Kasauli. So we rolled, barking and yelping, into Kalka for lunch, and Garm ate enough for two.

After Kalka the road wound among the hills, and we took a curricle with half-broken ponies, which were changed every six miles. No one dreamed of a railroad to Simla in those days, for it was seven thousand feet up in the air. The road was more than fifty miles long, and the regulation pace was just as fast as the ponies could go. Here, again, Vixen led Garm from one carriage to the
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

other; jumped into the back seat, and shouted. A cool breath from the snows met us about five miles out of Kalka, and she whined for her coat, wisely fearing a chill on the liver. I had had one made for Garm too, and, as we climbed to the fresh breezes, I put it on, and Garm chewed it uncomprehendingly, but I think he was grateful.

‘Hi-yi-yi-yi!’ sang Vixen as we shot round the curves; ‘Toot-toot-toot!’ went the driver’s bugle at the dangerous places, and ‘Yow! yow! yow!’ bayed Garm. Kadir Buksh sat on the front seat and smiled. Even he was glad to get away from the heat of the Plains that stewed in the haze behind us. Now and then we would meet a man we knew going down to his work again, and he would say: ‘What’s it like below?’ and I would shout: ‘Hotter than cinders. What’s it like up above?’ and he would shout back: ‘Just perfect!’ and away we would go.

Suddenly Kadir Buksh said, over his shoulder: ‘Here is Solon’; and Garm snored where he lay with his head on my knee. Solon is an unpleasant little cantonment, but it has the advantage of being cool and healthy. It is all bare and windy, and one generally stops at a rest-house near by for something to eat. I got out and took both dogs with me, while Kadir Buksh made tea. A soldier
GARM—A HOSTAGE

told us we should find Stanley ‘out there,’ nodding his head towards a bare, bleak hill.

When we climbed to the top we spied that very Stanley, who had given me all this trouble, sitting on a rock with his face in his hands and his overcoat hanging loose about him. I never saw anything so lonely and dejected in my life as this one little man, crumpled up and thinking, on the great grey hillside.

Here Garm left me.

He departed without a word, and, so far as I could see, without moving his legs. He flew through the air bodily, and I heard the whack of him as he flung himself at Stanley, knocking the little man clean over. They rolled on the ground together, shouting, and yelping, and hugging. I could not see which was dog and which was man, till Stanley got up and whimpered.

He told me that he had been suffering from fever at intervals, and was very weak. He looked all he said, but even while I watched, both man and dog plumped out to their natural sizes, precisely as dried apples swell in water. Garm was on his shoulder, and his breast and feet all at the same time, so that Stanley spoke all through a cloud of Garm—gulping, sobbing, slavering Garm. He did not say anything that I could understand, except that he had fancied he was going to die, but
that now he was quite well, and that he was not going to give up Garm any more to anybody under the rank of Beelzebub.

Then he said he felt hungry, and thirsty, and happy.

We went down to tea at the rest-house, where Stanley stuffed himself with sardines and raspberry jam, and beer, and cold mutton and pickles, when Garm wasn’t climbing over him; and then Vixen and I went on.

Garm saw how it was at once. He said goodbye to me three times, giving me both paws one after another, and leaping on to my shoulder. He further escorted us, singing Hosannas at the top of his voice, a mile down the road. Then he raced back to his own master.

Vixen never opened her mouth, but when the cold twilight came, and we could see the lights of Simla across the hills, she snuffled with her nose at the breast of my ulster. I unbuttoned it, and tucked her inside. Then she gave a contented little sniff, and fell fast asleep, her head on my breast, till we bundled out at Simla, two of the four happiest people in all the world that night.
THE POWER OF THE DOG

There is sorrow enough in the natural way
From men and women to fill our day;
But when we are certain of sorrow in store,
Why do we always arrange for more?
*Brothers and sisters, I bid you beware
Of giving your heart to a dog to tear.*

Buy a pup and your money will buy
Love unflinching that cannot lie—
Perfect passion and worship fed
By a kick in the ribs or a pat on the head.
*Nevertheless it is hardly fair
To risk your heart for a dog to tear.*

When the fourteen years which Nature permits
Are closing in asthma, or tumour, or fits,
And the vet's unspoken prescription runs
To lethal chambers or loaded guns,
*Then you will find—it's your own affair,
But . . . you've given your heart to a dog to tear.*

When the body that lived at your single will,
When the whimper of welcome is stilled (how still!)
When the spirit that answered your every mood
Is gone—wherever it goes—for good,
*You will discover how much you care,
And will give your heart to a dog to tear!*
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

We've sorrow enough in the natural way,
When it comes to burying Christian clay.
Our loves are not given, but only lent,
At compound interest of cent per cent.
Though it is not always the case, I believe,
That the longer we've kept 'em, the more do we grieve:
For, when debts are payable, right or wrong,
A short-time loan is as bad as a long—
So why in Heaven (before we are there!)
Should we give our hearts to a dog to tear?
THE MOTHER HIVE
THE MOTHER HIVE

If the stock had not been old and overcrowded, the Wax-moth would never have entered; but where bees are too thick on the comb there must be sickness or parasites. The heat of the hive had risen with the June honey-flow, and though the fanners worked, until their wings ached, to keep people cool, everybody suffered.

A young bee crawled up the greasy, trampled alighting-board. 'Excuse me,' she began, 'but it's my first honey-flight. Could you kindly tell me if this is my—'

'—own hive?' the Guard snapped. 'Yes! Buzz in, and be foul-brooded to you! Next!'

'Shame!' cried half-a-dozen old workers with worn wings and nerves, and there was a scuffle and a hum.

The little grey Wax-moth, pressed close in a crack in the alighting-board, had waited this chance all day. She scuttled in like a ghost, and, knowing
the senior bees would turn her out at once, dodged into a brood-frame, where youngsters who had not yet seen the winds blow or the flowers nod discussed life. Here she was safe, for young bees will tolerate any sort of stranger. Behind her came the bee who had been slanged by the Guard.

‘What is the world like, Melissa?’ said a companion.

‘Cruel! I brought in a full load of first-class stuff, and the Guard told me to go and be foul-brooded!’ She sat down in the cool draught across the combs.

‘If you’d only heard,’ said the Wax-moth silkily, ‘the insolence of the Guard’s tone when she cursed our sister! It aroused the Entire Community.’ She laid an egg. She had stolen in for that purpose.

‘There was a bit of a fuss on the Gate,’ Melissa chuckled. ‘You were there, Miss—?’ She did not know how to address the slim stranger.

‘Don’t call me “Miss.” I’m a sister to all in affliction—just a working-sister. My heart bled for you beneath your burden.’ The Wax-moth caressed Melissa with her soft feelers and laid another egg.

‘You mustn’t lay here,’ cried Melissa. ‘You aren’t a Queen.’

‘My dear child, I give you my most solemn
word of honour those aren't eggs. Those are my principles, and I am ready to die for them.' She raised her voice a little above the rustle and tramp round her. 'If you'd like to kill me, pray do.'

'Don't be unkind, Melissa,' said a young bee, impressed by the chaste folds of the Wax-moth's wing, which hid her ceaseless egg-dropping.

'I haven't done anything,' Melissa answered. 'She's doing it all.'

'Ah, don't let your conscience reproach you later, but when you've killed me, write me, at least, as one that loved her fellow-workers.'

Laying at every sob, the Wax-moth backed into a crowd of young bees, and left Melissa bewildered and annoyed. So she lifted up her little voice in the darkness and cried, 'Stores!' till a gang of cell-fillers hailed her, and she left her load with them.

'I'm afraid I foul-brooded you just now,' said a voice over her shoulder. 'I'd been on the Gate for three hours, and one would foul-brood the Queen herself after that. No offence meant.'

'None taken,' Melissa answered cheerily. 'I shall be on guard myself, some day. What's next to do?'

'There's a rumour of Death's Head Moths about. Send a gang of youngsters to the Gate, and tell them to narrow it in with a couple of
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

stout scrap-wax pillars. It'll make the Hive hot, but we can't have Death's Headers in the middle of our honey-flow.'

'My Only Wings! I should think not!' Melissa had all a sound bee's hereditary hatred against the big, squeaking, feathery Thief of the Hives. 'Tumble out!' she called across the youngsters' quarters. 'All you who aren't feeding babies, show a leg. Scrap-wax pillars for the Ga-ate!' She chanted the order at length.

'That's nonsense,' a downy, day-old bee answered. 'In the first place, I never heard of a Death's Header coming into a hive. People don't do such things. In the second, building pillars to keep 'em out is purely a Cypriote trick, unworthy of British bees. In the third, if you trust a Death's Head, he will trust you. Pillar-building shows lack of confidence. Our dear sister in grey says so.'

'Yes. Pillars are un-English and provocative, and a waste of wax that is needed for higher and more practical ends,' said the Wax-moth from an empty store-cell.

'The safety of the Hive is the highest thing I've ever heard of. You mustn't teach us to refuse work,' Melissa began.

'You misunderstand me as usual, love. Work's the essence of life; but to expend precious un-
THE MOTHER HIVE

returning vitality and real labour against imaginary danger, *that* is heartbreakingly absurd! If I can only teach a—a little toleration—a little ordinary kindness here towards that absurd old bogey you call the Death's Header, I shan't have lived in vain.'

'She *hasn't* lived in vain, the darling!' cried twenty bees together. 'You should see her saintly life, Melissa! She just devotes herself to spreading her principles, and—and—she looks lovely!'

An old, baldish bee came up the comb.

'Pillar-workers for the Gate! Get out and chew scraps. Buzz off!' she said. The Wax-moth slipped aside.

The young bees trooped down the frame, whispering.

'What's the matter with 'em?' said the oldster. 'Why do they call each other "duddy" and "darling." 'Must be the weather.' She sniffed suspiciously. 'Horrid stuffy smell here. Like stale quilts. Not Wax-moth, I hope, Melissa?'

'Not to my knowledge,' said Melissa, who, of course, only knew the Wax-moth as a lady with principles, and had never thought to report her presence. She had always imagined Wax-moths to be like blood-red dragon-flies.

'You had better fan out this corner for a little,' said the old bee and passed on. Melissa dropped
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

her head at once, took firm hold with her fore-feet, and fanned obediently at the regulation stroke—three hundred beats to the second. Fanning tries a bee's temper, because she must always keep in the same place where she never seems to be doing any good, and, all the while, she is wearing out her only wings. When a bee cannot fly, a bee must not live; and a bee knows it. The Wax-moth crept forth, and caressed Melissa again.

'I see,' she murmured, 'that at heart you are one of Us.'

'I work with the Hive,' Melissa answered briefly.

'It's the same thing. We and the Hive are one.'

'Then why are your feelers different from ours? Don't cuddle so.'

'Don't be provincial, carissima. You can't have all the world alike—yet.'

'But why do you lay eggs?' Melissa insisted. 'You lay 'em like a Queen—only you drop them in patches all over the place. I've watched you.'

'Ah, Brighteyes, so you've pierced my little subterfuge? Yes, they are eggs. By and by they'll spread our principles. Aren't you glad?'

'You gave me your most solemn word of honour that they were not eggs.'
THE MOTHER HIVE

'That was my little subterfuge, dearest—for the sake of the Cause. Now I must reach the young.' The Wax-moth tripped towards the fourth brood-frame where the young bees were busy feeding the babies.

It takes some time for a sound bee to realise a malignant and continuous lie. 'She's very sweet and feathery,' was all that Melissa thought, 'but her talk sounds like ivy honey tastes. I'd better get to my field-work again.'

She found the Gate in a sulky uproar. The youngsters told off to the pillars had refused to chew scrap-wax because it made their jaws ache, and were clamouring for virgin stuff.

'Anything to finish the job!' said the badgered Guards. 'Hang up, some of you, and make wax for these slack-jawed sisters.'

Before a bee can make wax she must fill herself with honey. Then she climbs to safe foothold and hangs, while other gorged bees hang on to her in a cluster. There they wait in silence till the wax comes. The scales are either taken out of the maker's pockets by the workers, or tinkle down on the workers while they wait. The workers chew them (they are useless unchewed) into the all-supporting, all-embracing Wax of the Hive.

But now, no sooner was the wax cluster in position than the workers below broke out again.
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

‘Come down!’ they cried. ‘Come down and work! Come on, you Levantine parasites! Don’t think to enjoy yourselves up there while we’re sweating down here!’

The cluster shivered, as from hooked fore-foot to hooked hind-foot it telegraphed uneasiness. At last a worker sprang up, grabbed the lowest wax-maker, and swung, kicking, above her companions.

‘I can make wax too!’ she bawled. ‘Give me a full gorge and I’ll make tons of it.’

‘Make it, then,’ said the bee she had grappled. The spoken word snapped the current through the cluster. It shook and glistened like a cat’s fur in the dark. ‘Unhook!’ it murmured. ‘No wax for any one to-day.’

‘You lazy thieves! Hang up at once and produce our wax,’ said the bees below.

‘Impossible! The sweat’s gone. To make your wax we must have stillness, warmth, and food. Unhook! Unhook!’

They broke up as they murmured, and disappeared among the other bees, from whom, of course, they were undistinguishable.

‘Seems as if we’d have to chew scrap-wax for these pillars, after all,’ said a worker.

‘Not by a whole comb,’ cried the young bee who had broken the cluster. ‘Listen here! I’ve studied the question more than twenty minutes.
It's as simple as falling off a daisy. You've heard of Cheshire, Root and Langstroth?

They had not, but they shouted 'Good old Langstroth!' just the same.

'Those three know all that there is to be known about making hives. One or t'other of 'em must have made ours, and if they've made it, they're bound to look after it. Ours is a "Guaranteed Patent Hive." You can see it on the label behind.'

'Good old guarantee! Hurrah for the label behind!' roared the bees.

'Well, such being the case, I say that when we find they've betrayed us, we can exact from them a terrible vengeance.'

'Good old vengeance! Good old Root! 'Nuff said! Chuck it!' The crowd cheered and broke away as Melissa dived through.

'D'you know where Langstroth, Root and Cheshire live if you happen to want 'em?' she asked of the proud and panting orator.

'Gum me if I know they ever lived at all! But aren't they beautiful names to buzz about? Did you see how it worked up the sisterhood?'

'Yes, but it didn't defend the Gate,' she replied.

'Ah, perhaps that's true, but think how delicate my position is, sister. I've a magnificent appetite,
and I don't like working. It's bad for the mind. My instinct tells me that I can act as a restraining influence on others. They would have been worse, but for me.'

But Melissa had already risen clear, and was heading for a breadth of virgin white clover, which to an overtired bee is as soothing as plain knitting to a woman.

'I think I'll take this load to the nurseries,' she said, when she had finished. 'It was always quiet there in my day,' and she topped off with two little pats of pollen for the babies.

She was met on the fourth brood-comb by a rush of excited sisters all buzzing together.

'One at a time! Let me put down my load. Now, what is it, Sacharissa?' she said.

'Grey Sister—that fluffy one, I mean—she came and said we ought to be out in the sunshine gathering honey, because life was short. She said any old bee could attend to our babies, and some day old bees would. That isn't true, Melissa, is it? No old bees can take us away from our babies, can they?'

'Of course not. You feed the babies while your heads are soft. When your heads harden, you go on to field-work. Any one knows that.'

'We told her so! We told her so; but she only waved her feelers, and said we could all lay
eggs like Queens if we chose. And I'm afraid lots of the weaker sisters believe her, and are trying to do it. So unsettling!

Sacharissa sped to a sealed worker-cell whose lid pulsated, as the bee within began to cut its way out.

'Come along, precious!' she murmured, and thinned the frail top from the other side. A pale, damp, creased thing hoisted itself feebly on to the comb. Sacharissa's note changed at once. 'No time to waste! Go up the frame and preen yourself!' she said. 'Report for nursing-duty in my ward to-morrow evening at six. Stop a minute. What's the matter with your third right leg?'

The young bee held it out in silence—unmistakably a drone leg incapable of packing pollen.

'Thank you. You needn't report till the day after to-morrow.' Sacharissa turned to her companion. 'That's the fifth oddity hatched in my ward since noon. I don't like it.'

'There's always a certain number of 'em,' said Melissa. 'You can't stop a few working sisters from laying, now and then, when they overfeed themselves. They only raise dwarf drones.'

'But we're hatching out drones with workers' stomachs; workers with drones' stomachs; and albinos and mixed-leggers who can't pack pollen—like that poor little beast yonder. I don't mind
dwarf drones any more than you do (they all die in July), but this steady hatch of oddities frightens me, Melissa!’

‘How narrow of you! They are all so delightfully clever and unusual and interesting,’ piped the Wax-moth from a crack above them. ‘Come here, you dear, downy duck, and tell us all about your feelings.’

‘I wish she’d go!’ Sacharissa lowered her voice. ‘She meets these—er—oddities as they dry out, and cuddles ’em in corners.’

‘I suppose the truth is that we’re over-stocked and too well fed to swarm,’ said Melissa.

‘That is the truth,’ said the Queen’s voice behind them. They had not heard the heavy royal footfall which sets empty cells vibrating. Sacharissa offered her food at once. She ate and dragged her weary body forward. ‘Can you suggest a remedy?’ she said.

‘New principles!’ cried the Wax-moth from her crevice. ‘We’ll apply them quietly—later.’

‘Suppose we sent out a swarm?’ Melissa suggested. ‘It’s a little late, but it might ease us off.’

‘It would save us, but—I know the Hive! You shall see for yourself.’ The old Queen cried the Swarming Cry, which to a bee of good blood should be what the trumpet was to Job’s war-
THE MOTHER HIVE

horse. In spite of her immense age (three years), it rang between the cañon-like frames as a pibroch rings in a mountain pass; the fanners changed their note, and repeated it up in every gallery; and the broad-winged drones, burly and eager, ended it on one nerve-thrilling outbreak of bugles: 'La Reine le veult! Swarm! Swar-rm! Swar-r-rm!'

But the roar which should follow the Call was wanting. They heard a broken grumble like the murmur of a falling tide.

'Swarm? What for? Catch me leaving a good bar-frame Hive, with fixed foundations, for a rotten old oak out in the open where it may rain any minute! We're all right! It's a "Patent Guaranteed Hive." Why do they want to turn us out? Swarming be gummed! Swarming was invented to cheat a worker out of her proper comforts. Come on off to bed!'

The noise died out as the bees settled in empty cells for the night.

'You hear?' said the Queen. 'I know the Hive!'

'Quite between ourselves, I taught them that,' cried the Wax-moth. 'Wait till my principles develop, and you'll see the light from a new quarter.'

'You speak truth for once,' the Queen said
suddenly, for she recognised the Wax-moth. 'That Light will break into the top of the Hive, A Hot Smoke will follow it, and your children will not be able to hide in any crevice.'

'Is it possible?' Melissa whispered. 'I—we have sometimes heard a legend like it.'

'It is no legend,' the old Queen answered. 'I had it from my mother, and she had it from hers. After the Wax-moth has grown strong, a Shadow will fall across the gate; a Voice will speak from behind a Veil; there will be Light, and Hot Smoke, and earthquakes, and those who live will see everything that they have done, all together in one place, burned up in one great Fire.' The old Queen was trying to tell what she had been told of the Bee Master's dealings with an infected hive in the apiary, two or three seasons ago; and, of course, from her point of view the affair was as important as the Day of Judgment.

'And then?' asked horrified Sacharissa.

'Then, I have heard that a little light will burn in a great darkness, and perhaps the world will begin again. Myself, I think not.'

'Tut! Tut!' the Wax-moth cried. 'You good, fat people always prophesy ruin if things don't go exactly your way. But I grant you there will be changes.'
There were. When her eggs hatched, the wax was riddled with little tunnels, coated with the dirty clothes of the caterpillars. Flannelly lines ran through the honey-stores, the pollen-larders, the foundations, and, worst of all, through the babies in their cradles, till the Sweeper Guards spent half their time tossing out useless little corpses. The lines ended in a maze of sticky webbing on the face of the comb. The caterpillars could not stop spinning as they walked, and as they walked everywhere, they smarmed and garmed everything. Even where it did not hamper the bees' feet, the stale, sour smell of the stuff put them off their work; though some of the bees who had taken to egg-laying said it encouraged them to be mothers and maintain a vital interest in life.

When the caterpillars became moths, they made friends with the ever-increasing Oddities—albinos, mixed-leggers, single-eyed composites, faceless drones, half-queens and laying sisters; and the ever-dwindling band of the old stock worked themselves bald and fray-winged to feed their queer charges. Most of the Oddities would not, and many, on account of their malformations, could not, go through a day's field work; but the Wax-moths, who were always busy on the brood-comb, found pleasant home occupations for them.
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

One albino, for instance, divided the number of pounds of honey in stock by the number of bees in the Hive, and proved that if every bee only gathered honey for seven and three-quarter minutes a day, she would have the rest of the time to herself, and could accompany the drones on their mating flights. The drones were not at all pleased.

Another, an eyeless drone with no feelers, said that all brood-cells should be perfect circles, so as not to interfere with the grub or the workers. He proved that the old six-sided cell was solely due to the workers building against each other on opposite sides of the wall, and that if there were no interference, there would be no angles. Some bees tried the new plan for a while, and found it cost eight times more wax than the old six-sided specification; and, as they never allowed a cluster to hang up and make wax in peace, real wax was scarce. However, they eked out their task with varnish stolen from new coffins at funerals, and it made them rather sick. Then they took to cadging round sugar-factories and breweries, because it was easiest to get their material from those places, and the mixture of glucose and beer naturally fermented in store and blew the store-cells out of shape, besides smelling abominably. Some of the sound bees warned them that ill-gotten gains never prosper, but the Oddities at
THE MOTHER HIVE

once surrounded them and balled them to death. That was a punishment they were almost as fond of as they were of eating, and they expected the sound bees to feed them. Curiously enough the age-old instinct of loyalty and devotion towards the Hive made the sound bees do this, though their reason told them they ought to slip away and unite with some other healthy stock in the apiary.

‘What about seven and three-quarter minutes’ work now?’ said Melissa one day as she came in. ‘I’ve been at it for five hours, and I’ve only half a load.’

‘Oh, the Hive subsists on the Hival Honey which the Hive produces,’ said a blind Oddity squatting in a store-cell.

‘But honey is gathered from flowers outside—two miles away sometimes,’ cried Melissa.

‘Pardon me,’ said the blind thing, sucking hard. ‘But this is the Hive, is it not?’

‘It was. Worse luck, it is.’

‘And the Hival Honey is here, is it not?’ It opened a fresh store-cell to prove it.

‘Ye—es, but it won’t be long at this rate,’ said Melissa.

‘The rates have nothing to do with it. This Hive produces the Hival Honey. You people never seem to grasp the economic simplicity that underlies all life.’
'Oh, me!' said poor Melissa, 'haven't you ever been beyond the Gate?'

'Certainly not. A fool's eyes are in the ends of the earth. Mine are in my head.' It gorged till it bloated.

Melissa took refuge in her poorly-paid field-work and told Sacharissa the story.

'Hut!' said that wise bee, fretting with an old maid of a thistle. 'Tell us something new. The Hive's full of such as him—it, I mean.'

'What's the end to be? All the honey going out and none coming in. Things can't last this way!' said Melissa.

'Who cares?' said Sacharissa. 'I know now how drones feel the day before they're killed. A short life and a merry one for me!'

'If it only were merry! But think of those awful, solemn, lop-sided Oddities waiting for us at home—crawling and clambering and preaching—and dirtying things in the dark.'

'I don't mind that so much as their silly songs, after we've fed 'em, all about "work among the merry, merry blossoms,"' said Sacharissa from the deeps of a stale Canterbury bell.

'I do. How's our Queen?' said Melissa.

'Cheerfully hopeless, as usual. But she lays an egg now and then.'

'Does she so?' Melissa backed out of the
next bell with a jerk. 'Suppose, now, we sound workers tried to raise a Princess in some clean corner?'

'You'd be put to it to find one. The Hive's all wax-moth and muckings. But— Well?'

'A Princess might help us in the time of the Voice behind the Veil that the Queen talks of. And anything is better than working for Oddities that chirrup about work that they can't do, and waste what we bring home.'

'Who cares?' said Sacharissa. 'I'm with you, for the fun of it. The Oddities would ball us to death, if they knew. Come home, and we'll begin.'

There is no room to tell how the experienced Melissa found a far-off frame so messed and mishandled by abandoned cell-building experiments that, for very shame, the bees never went there. How in that ruin she blocked out a Royal Cell of sound wax, but disguised by rubbish till it looked like a kopje among deserted kopjes. How she prevailed upon the hopeless Queen to make one last effort and lay a worthy egg. How the Queen obeyed and died. How her spent carcass was flung out on the rubbish heap, and how a multitude of laying sisters went about dropping drone-eggs where they listed, and said there was no more need of Queens. How, covered by this confusion,
Sacharissa educated certain young bees to educate certain new-born bees in the almost lost art of making Royal Jelly. How the nectar for it was won out of hours in the teeth of chill winds. How the hidden egg hatched true—no drone, but Blood Royal. How it was capped, and how desperately they worked to feed and double-feed the now swarming Oddities, lest any break in the food-supplies should set them to instituting inquiries, which, with songs about work, was their favourite amusement. How in an auspicious hour, on a moonless night, the Princess came forth—a Princess indeed,—and how Melissa smuggled her into a dark empty honey-magazine, to bide her time; and how the drones, knowing she was there, went about singing the deep disreputable love-songs of the old days—to the scandal of the laying-sisters, who do not think well of drones. These things are written in the Book of Queens, which is laid up in the hollow of the Great Ash Ygdrasil.

After a few days the weather changed again and became glorious. Even the Oddities would now join the crowd that hung out on the alighting-board, and would sing of work among the merry, merry blossoms till an untrained ear might have received it for the hum of a working hive. Yet, in truth, their store-honey had been eaten long ago.
They lived from day to day on the efforts of the few sound bees, while the Wax-moth fretted and consumed again their already ruined wax. But the sound bees never mentioned these matters. They knew, if they did, the Oddities would hold a meeting and ball them to death.

'Now you see what we have done,' said the Wax-moths. 'We have created New Material, a New Convention, a New Type, as we said we would.'

'And new possibilities for us,' said the laying-sisters gratefully. 'You have given us a new life's work, vital and paramount.'

'More than that,' chanted the Oddities in the sunshine; 'you have created a new heaven and a new earth. Heaven, cloudless and accessible' (it was a perfect August evening) 'and Earth teeming with the merry, merry blossoms, waiting only our honest toil to turn them all to good. The—er—Aster, and the Crocus, and the—er—Ladies' Smock in her season, the Chrysanthemum after her kind, and the Guelder Rose bringing forth abundantly withal.'

'Oh, Holy Hymettus!' said Melissa, awestruck. 'I knew they didn't know how honey was made, but they've forgotten the Order of the Flowers! What will become of them?'

A Shadow fell across the alighting-board as the
Bee Master and his son came by. The Oddities crawled in and a Voice behind a Veil said: 'I've neglected the old Hive too long. Give me the smoker.'

Melissa heard and darted through the gate. 'Come, oh come!' she cried. 'It is the destruction the Old Queen foretold. Princess, come!'

'Really, you are too archaic for words,' said an Oddity in an alley-way. 'A cloud, I admit, may have crossed the sun; but why hysterics? Above all, why Princesses so late in the day? Are you aware it's the Hival Tea-time? Let's sing grace.'

Melissa clawed past him with all six legs. Sacharissa had run to what was left of the fertile brood-comb. 'Down and out!' she called across the brown breadth of it. 'Nurses, guards, fanners, sweepers—out! Never mind the babies. They're better dead. Out, before the Light and the Hot Smoke!'

The Princess's first clear fearless call (Melissa had found her) rose and drummed through all the frames. 'La Reine le veult! Swarm! Swar-rm! Swar-r-rm!'

The Hive shook beneath the shattering thunder of a stuck-down quilt being torn back.

'Don't be alarmed, dears,' said the Wax-moths. 'That's our work. Look up, and you'll see the dawn of the New Day.'
THE MOTHER HIVE

Light broke in the top of the hive as the Queen had prophesied—naked light on the boiling, bewildered bees.

Sacharissa rounded up her rearguard, which dropped headlong off the frame, and joined the Princess’s detachment thrusting toward the Gate. Now panic was in full blast, and each sound bee found herself embraced by at least three Oddities. The first instinct of a frightened bee is to break into the stores and gorge herself with honey; but there were no stores left, so the Oddities fought the sound bees.

‘You must feed us, or we shall die!’ they cried, holding and clutching and slipping, while the silent scared earwigs and little spiders twisted between their legs. ‘Think of the Hive, traitors! The Holy Hive!’

‘You should have thought before!’ cried the sound bees. ‘Stay and see the dawn of your New Day.’

They reached the Gate at last over the soft bodies of many to whom they had ministered.

‘On! Out! Up!’ roared Melissa in the Princess’s ear. ‘For the Hive’s sake! To the Old Oak!’

The Princess left the alighting-board, circled once, flung herself at the lowest branch of the Old Oak, and her little loyal swarm—you could
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

have covered it with a pint mug—followed, hooked, and hung.

‘Hold close!’ Melissa gasped. ‘The old legends have come true! Look!’

The Hive was half hidden by smoke, and Figures moved through the smoke. They heard a frame crack stickily, saw it heaved high and twirled round between enormous hands—a blotched, bulged, and perished horror of grey wax, corrupt brood, and small drone-cells, all covered with crawling Oddities, strange to the sun.

‘Why, this isn’t a hive! This is a museum of curiosities,’ said the Voice behind the Veil. It was only the Bee Master talking to his son.

‘Can you blame ’em, father?’ said a second voice. ‘It’s rotten with Wax-moth. See here!’

Another frame came up. A finger poked through it, and it broke away in rustling flakes of ashy rottenness.

‘Number Four Frame! That was your mother’s pet comb once,’ whispered Melissa to the Princess. ‘Many’s the good egg I’ve watched her lay there.’

‘Aren’t you confusing post hoc with propter hoc?’ said the Bee Master. ‘Wax-moth only succeed when weak bees let them in.’ A third frame crackled and rose into the light. ‘All this
is full of laying workers’ brood. That never happens till the stock’s weakened. Phew!’

He beat it on his knee like a tambourine, and it also crumbled to pieces.

The little swarm shivered as they watched the dwarf drone-grubs squirm feebly on the grass. Many sound bees had nursed on that frame, well knowing their work was useless; but the actual sight of even useless work destroyed disheartens a good worker.

‘No, they have some recuperative power left,’ said the second voice. ‘Here’s a Queen cell!’

‘But it’s tucked away among— What on earth has come to the little wretches? They seem to have lost the instinct of cell-building.’ The father held up the frame where the bees had experimented in circular cell-work. It looked like the pitted head of a decaying toadstool.

‘Not altogether,’ the son corrected. ‘There’s one line, at least, of perfectly good cells.’

‘My work,’ said Sacharissa to herself. ‘I’m glad Man does me justice before—’

That frame, too, was smashed out and thrown atop of the others and the foul earwiggy quilts.

As frame after frame followed it, the swarm beheld the upheaval, exposure, and destruction of all that had been well or ill done in every cranny of their Hive for generations past. There was
black comb so old that they had forgotten where it hung; orange, buff, and ochre-varnished store-comb, built as bees were used to build before the days of artificial foundations; and there was a little, white, frail new work. There were sheets on sheets of level, even brood-comb that had held in its time unnumbered thousands of unnamed workers; patches of obsolete drone-comb, broad and high-shouldered, showing to what marks the male grub was expected to grow; and two inch deep honey-magazines, empty, but still magnificent: the whole gummed and glued into twisted scrap-work, awry on the wires, half-cells, beginnings abandoned, or grandiose, weak-walled, composite cells pieced out with rubbish and capped with dirt.

Good or bad, every inch of it was so riddled by the tunnels of the Wax-moth that it broke in clouds of dust as it was flung on the heap.

‘Oh, see!’ cried Sacharissa. ‘The Great Burning that Our Queen foretold. Who can bear to look?’

A flame crawled up the pile of rubbish, and they smelt singeing wax.

The Figures stooped, lifted the Hive and shook it upside down over the pyre. A cascade of Oddities, chips of broken comb, scale, fluff, and grubs slid out, crackled, sizzled, popped a
little, and then the flames roared up and consumed all that fuel.

‘We must disinfect,’ said a Voice. ‘Get me a sulphur-candle, please.’

The shell of the Hive was returned to its place, a light was set in its sticky emptiness, tier by tier the Figures built it up, closed the entrance, and went away. The swarm watched the light leaking through the cracks all the long night. At dawn one Wax-moth came by, fluttering impudently.

‘There has been a miscalculation about the New Day, my dears,’ she began; ‘one can’t expect people to be perfect all at once. That was our mistake.’

‘No, the mistake was entirely ours,’ said the Princess.

‘Pardon me,’ said the Wax-moth. ‘When you think of the enormous upheaval—call it good or bad—which our influence brought about, you will admit that we, and we alone—’

‘You?’ said the Princess. ‘Our stock was not strong. So you came—as any other disease might have come. Hang close, all my people.’

When the sun rose, Veiled Figures came down, and saw their swarm at the bough’s end waiting patiently within sight of the old Hive—a handful, but prepared to go on.
THE BEES AND THE FLIES

A farmer of the Augustan age
Perused in Virgil's golden page,
The story of the secret won
From Proteus by Cyrene's son—
How the dank sea-god showed the swain
Means to restore his hives again:
More briefly, how a slaughtered bull
Breeds honey by the bellyful.

The egregious rustic put to death
A bull by stopping of its breath:
Disposed the carcass in a shed
With fragrant herbs and branches spread.
And, having thus performed the charm,
Sat down to wait the promised swarm.

Nor waited long. The God of Day
Impartial, quickening with his ray
Evil and good alike, beheld
The carcass—and the carcass swelled!
Big with new birth the belly heaves
Beneath its screen of scented leaves;
Past any doubt, the bull conceives!
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

The farmer bids men bring more hives
To house the profit that arrives;
Prepares on pan, and key and kettle,
Sweet music that shall make 'em settle;
But when to crown the work he goes,
Gods! what a stink salutes his nose!
Where are the honest toilers? Where
The gravid mistress of their care?
A busy scene, indeed, he sees,
But not a sign or sound of bees.
Worms of the riper grave unhid
By any kindly coffin lid,
Obscene and shameless to the light,
Seethe in insatiate appetite,
Through putrid offal; while above
The hissing blow-fly seeks his love,
Whose offspring, supping where they supt,
Consume corruption twice corrupt.
WITH THE NIGHT MAIL
WITH THE NIGHT MAIL

A Story of 2000 A.D.

(Together with extracts from the magazine in which it appeared)

AT nine o'clock of a gusty winter night I stood on the lower stages of one of the G.P.O. outward mail towers. My purpose was a run to Quebec in 'Postal Packet 162 or such other as may be appointed': and the Postmaster-General himself countersigned the order. This talisman opened all doors, even those in the despatching-caisson at the foot of the tower, where they were delivering the sorted Continental mail. The bags lay packed close as herrings in the long grey underbodies which our G.P.O. still calls 'coaches.' Five such coaches were filled as I watched, and were shot up the guides to be locked on to their waiting packets three hundred feet nearer the stars.

From the despatching-caisson I was conducted

127
by a courteous and wonderfully learned official—Mr. L. L. Geary, Second Despatcher of the Western Route—to the Captains’ Room (this wakes an echo of old romance), where the mail captains come on for their turn of duty. He introduces me to the Captain of ‘162’—Captain Purnall, and his relief, Captain Hodgson. The one is small and dark; the other large and red; but each has the brooding sheathed glance characteristic of eagles and aeronauts. You can see it in the pictures of our racing professionals, from L. V. Rautsch to little Ada Warrleigh—that fathomless abstraction of eyes habitually turned through naked space.

On the notice-board in the Captains’ Room, the pulsing arrows of some twenty indicators register, degree by geographical degree, the progress of as many homeward-bound packets. The word ‘Cape’ rises across the face of a dial; a gong strikes: the South African mid-weekly mail is in at the Highgate Receiving Towers. That is all. It reminds one comically of the traitorous little bell which in pigeon-fanciers’ lofts notifies the return of a homer.

‘Time for us to be on the move,’ says Captain Purnall, and we are shot up by the passenger-lift to the top of the despatch-towers. ‘Our coach will lock on when it is filled and the clerks are aboard.’ . . .
WITH THE NIGHT MAIL

'No. 162' waits for us in Slip E of the topmost stage. The great curve of her back shines frostily under the lights, and some minute alteration of trim makes her rock a little in her holding-down slips.

Captain Purnall frowns and dives inside. Hissing softly, '162' comes to rest as level as a rule. From her North Atlantic Winter nose-cap (worn bright as diamond with boring through uncounted leagues of hail, snow, and ice) to the inset of her three built-out propeller-shafts is some two hundred and forty feet. Her extreme diameter, carried well forward, is thirty-seven. Contrast this with the nine hundred by ninety-five of any crack liner, and you will realise the power that must drive a hull through all weathers at more than the emergency speed of the *Cyclonic*!

The eye detects no joint in her skin plating save the sweeping hair-crack of the bow-rudder—Magniac's rudder that assured us the dominion of the unstable air and left its inventor penniless and half-blind. It is calculated to Castelli's 'gull-wing' curve. Raise a few feet of that all but invisible plate three-eighths of an inch and she will yaw five miles to port or starboard ere she is under control again. Give her full helm and she returns on her track like a whip-lash. Cant the whole forward—a touch on the wheel will suffice
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

—and she sweeps at your good direction up or down. Open the complete circle and she presents to the air a mushroom-head that will bring her up all standing within a half mile.

'Yes,' says Captain Hodgson, answering my thought, 'Castelli thought he'd discovered the secret of controlling aeroplanes when he'd only found out how to steer dirigible balloons. Magniac invented his rudder to help war-boats ram each other; and war went out of fashion and Magniac he went out of his mind because he said he couldn't serve his country any more. I wonder if any of us ever know what we're really doing.'

'If you want to see the coach locked you'd better go aboard. It's due now,' says Mr. Geary. I enter through the door amidships. There is nothing here for display. The inner skin of the gas-tanks comes down to within a foot or two of my head and turns over just short of the turn of the bilges. Liners and yachts disguise their tanks with decoration, but the G.P.O. serves them raw under a lick of grey official paint. The inner skin shuts off fifty feet of the bow and as much of the stern, but the bow-bulkhead is recessed for the lift-shunting apparatus as the stern is pierced for the shaft-tunnels. The engine-room lies almost amidships. Forward of it, extending to
WITH THE NIGHT MAIL

the turn of the bow tanks, is an aperture—a bottomless hatch at present—into which our coach will be locked. One looks down over the coamings three hundred feet to the despatching-caisson whence voices boom upward. The light below is obscured to a sound of thunder, as our coach rises on its guides. It enlarges rapidly from a postage-stamp to a playing-card; to a punt and last a pontoon. The two clerks, its crew, do not even look up as it comes into place. The Quebec letters fly under their fingers and leap into the docketed racks, while both captains and Mr. Geary satisfy themselves that the coach is locked home. A clerk passes the way-bill over the hatch-coaming. Captain Purnall thumb-marks and passes it to Mr. Geary. Receipt has been given and taken. ‘Pleasant run,’ says Mr. Geary, and disappears through the door which a foot-high pneumatic compressor locks after him.

‘A-ah!’ sighs the compressor released. Our holding-down clips part with a tang. We are clear.

Captain Hodgson opens the great colloid underbody-porthole through which I watch overlighed London slide eastward as the gale gets hold of us. The first of the low winter clouds cuts off the well-known view and darkens Middlesex. On the south edge of it I can see a postal packet's
light ploughing through the white fleece. For an instant she gleams like a star ere she drops toward the Highgate Receiving Towers. 'The Bombay Mail,' says Captain Hodgson, and looks at his watch. 'She's forty minutes late.'

'What's our level?' I ask.

'Four thousand. Aren't you coming up on the bridge?'

The bridge (let us ever praise the G.P.O. as a repository of ancientest tradition!) is represented by a view of Captain Hodgson's legs where he stands on the Control Platform that runs thwartships overhead. The bow colloid is unshuttered and Captain Purnall, one hand on the wheel, is feeling for a fair slant. The dial shows 4300 feet.

'It's steep to-night,' he mutters, as tier on tier of cloud drops under. 'We generally pick up an easterly draught below three thousand at this time o' the year. I hate slathering through fluff.'

'So does Van Cutsem. Look at him huntin' for a slant!' says Captain Hodgson. A fog-light breaks cloud a hundred fathoms below. The Antwerp Night Mail makes her signal and rises between two racing clouds far to port, her flanks blood-red in the glare of Sheerness Double Light. The gale will have us over the North Sea in half-an-hour, but Captain Purnall lets her go composedly—nosing to every point of the compass as she rises.
WITH THE NIGHT MAIL

‘Five thousand—six, six thousand eight hundred’—the dip dial reads ere we find the easterly drift, heralded by a flurry of snow at the thousand fathom level. Captain Purnall rings up the engines and keys down the governor on the switch before him. There is no sense in urging machinery when Æolus himself gives you good knots for nothing. We are away in earnest now—our nose notched home on our chosen star. At this level the lower clouds are laid out, all neatly combed by the dry fingers of the East. Below that again is the strong westerly blow through which we rose. Overhead, a film of southerly drifting mist draws a theatrical gauze across the firmament. The moonlight turns the lower strata to silver without a stain except where our shadow underruns us. Bristol and Cardiff Double Lights (those statelily inclined beams over Severnmouth) are dead ahead of us; for we keep the Southern Winter Route. Coventry Central, the pivot of the English system, stabs upward once in ten seconds its spear of diamond light to the north; and a point or two off our starboard bow The Leek, the great cloud-breaker of Saint David’s Head, swings its unmistakable green beam twenty-five degrees each way. There must be half a mile of fluff over it in this weather, but it does not affect The Leek.
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

‘Our planet’s overlighted if anything,’ says Captain Purnall at the wheel, as Cardiff-Bristol slides under. ‘I remember the old days of common white verticals that ‘ud show two or three hundred feet up in a mist, if you knew where to look for ’em. In really fluffy weather they might as well have been under your hat. One could get lost coming home then, an’ have some fun. Now, it’s like driving down Piccadilly.’

He points to the pillars of light where the cloud-breakers bore through the cloud-floor. We see nothing of England’s outlines: only a white pavement pierced in all directions by these manholes of variously coloured fire—Holy Island’s white and red—St. Bee’s interrupted white, and so on as far as the eye can reach. Blessed be Sargent, Ahrens, and the Dubois brothers, who invented the cloud-breakers of the world whereby we travel in security!

‘Are you going to lift for The Shamrock?’ asks Captain Hodgson. Cork Light (green, fixed) enlarges as we rush to it. Captain Purnall nods. There is heavy traffic hereabouts—the cloud-bank beneath us is streaked with running fissures of flame where the Atlantic boats are hurrying Londonward just clear of the fluff. Mail-packets are supposed, under the Conference rules, to have the five-thousand-foot lanes to

134
WITH THE NIGHT MAIL

themselves, but the foreigner in a hurry is apt to take liberties with English air. 'No. 162' lifts to a long-drawn wail of the breeze in the fore-flange of the rudder and we make Valencia (white, green, white) at a safe 7000 feet, dipping our beam to an incoming Washington packet.

There is no cloud on the Atlantic, and faint streaks of cream round Dingle Bay show where the driven seas hammer the coast. A big S.A.T.A. liner (Société Anonyme des Transports Aériens) is diving and lifting half a mile below us in search of some break in the solid west wind. Lower still lies a disabled Dane: she is telling the liner all about it in International. Our General Communication dial has caught her talk and begins to eavesdrop. Captain Hodgson makes a motion to shut it off but checks himself. 'Perhaps you'd like to listen,' he says.

'Argol of St. Thomas,' the Dane whimpers. 'Report owners three starboard shaft collar-bearings fused. Can make Flores as we are, but impossible farther. Shall we buy spares at Fayal?'

The liner acknowledges and recommends inverting the bearings. The Argol answers that she has already done so without effect, and begins to relieve her mind about cheap German enamels for collar-bearings. The Frenchman
assents cordially, cries 'Courage, mon ami,' and switches off.

Their lights sink under the curve of the ocean.

'That's one of Lundt & Bleamers's boats,' says Captain Hodgson. 'Serves 'em right for putting German composites in their thrust-blocks. She won't be in Fayal to-night! By the way, wouldn't you like to look round the engine-room?'

I have been waiting eagerly for this invitation and I follow Captain Hodgson from the control-platform, stooping low to avoid the bulge of the tanks. We know that Fleury's gas can lift anything, as the world-famous trials of '89 showed, but its almost indefinite powers of expansion necessitate vast tank room. Even in this thin air the lift-shunts are busy taking out one-third of its normal lift, and still '162' must be checked by an occasional downdraw of the rudder or our flight would become a climb to the stars. Captain Purnall prefers an overlifted to an underlifted ship; but no two captains trim ship alike. 'When I take the bridge,' says Captain Hodgson, 'you'll see me shunt forty per cent of the lift out of the gas and run her on the upper rudder. With a swoop upwards instead of a swoop downwards, as you say. Either way will do. It's only habit. Watch our dip-dial! Tim fetches her down once every thirty knots as regularly as breathing.'
WITH THE NIGHT MAIL

So is it shown on the dip-dial. For five or six minutes the arrow creeps from 6700 to 7300. There is the faint ‘szgee’ of the rudder, and back slides the arrow to 6000 on a falling slant of ten or fifteen knots.

‘In heavy weather you jockey her with the screws as well,’ says Captain Hodgson, and, unclipping the jointed bar which divides the engine-room from the bare deck, he leads me on to the floor.

Here we find Fleury’s Paradox of the Bulk-headed Vacuum—which we accept now without thought—literally in full blast. The three engines are H. T. & T. assisted-vacuo Fleury turbines running from 3000 to the Limit—that is to say, up to the point when the blades make the air ‘bell’—cut out a vacuum for themselves precisely as over-driven marine propellers used to do. ‘162’s’ Limit is low on account of the small size of her nine screws, which, though handier than the old colloid Thelussons, ‘bell’ sooner. The midships engine, generally used as a reinforce, is not running; so the port and starboard turbine vacuum-chambers draw direct into the return-mains.

The turbines whistle reflectively. From the low-arched expansion-tanks on either side the valves descend pillarwise to the turbine-chests.
and thence the obedient gas whirls through the spirals of blades with a force that would whip the teeth out of a power-saw. Behind, is its own pressure held in leash or spurred on by the lift-shunts; before it, the vacuum where Fleury’s Ray dances in violet-green bands and whirled turbillons of flame. The jointed U-tubes of the vacuum-chamber are pressure-tempered colloid (no glass would endure the strain for an instant) and a junior engineer with tinted spectacles watches the Ray intently. It is the very heart of the machine—a mystery to this day. Even Fleury who begat it and, unlike Magniac, died a multi-millionaire, could not explain how the restless little imp shuddering in the U-tube can, in the fractional fraction of a second, strike the furious blast of gas into a chill greyish-green liquid that drains (you can hear it trickle) from the far end of the vacuum through the eduction-pipes and the mains back to the bilges. Here it returns to its gaseous, one had almost written sagacious, state and climbs to work afresh. Bilge-tank, upper tank, dorsal-tank, expansion-chamber, vacuum, main-return (as a liquid), and bilge-tank once more is the ordained cycle. Fleury’s Ray sees to that; and the engineer with the tinted spectacles sees to Fleury’s Ray. If a speck of oil, if even the natural grease of the human finger touch the hooded
WITH THE NIGHT MAIL

terminals Fleury's Ray will wink and disappear and must be laboriously built up again. This means half a day's work for all hands and an expense of one hundred and seventy-odd pounds to the G.P.O. for radium-salts and such trifles.

'Now look at our thrust-collars. You won't find much German compo there. Full-jewelled, you see,' says Captain Hodgson as the engineer shunts open the top of a cap. Our shaft-bearing stones, ground with as much care as the lens of a telescope. They cost £37 apiece. So far we have not arrived at their term of life. These bearings came from 'No. 97,' which took them over from the old Dominion of Light which had them out of the wreck of the Perseus aeroplane in the years when men still flew wooden kites over oil engines!

They are a shining reproof to all low-grade German 'ruby' enamels, so-called 'boort' facings, and the dangerous and unsatisfactory alumina compounds which please dividend-hunting owners and turn skippers crazy.

The rudder-gear and the gas lift-shunt, seated side by side under the engine-room dials, are the only machines in visible motion. The former sighs from time to time as the oil plunger rises
and falls half an inch. The latter, cased and guarded like the U-tube aft, exhibits another Fleury Ray, but inverted and more green than violet. Its function is to shunt the lift out of the gas, and this it will do without watching. That is all! A tiny pump-rod wheezing and whining to itself beside a sputtering green lamp. A hundred and fifty feet aft down the flat-topped tunnel of the tanks a violet light, restless and irresolute. Between the two, three white-painted turbine-trunks, like eel-baskets laid on their side, accentuate the empty perspectives. You can hear the trickle of the liquefied gas flowing from the vacuum into the bilge-tanks and the soft glück-glock of gas-locks closing as Captain Purnall brings '162' down by the head. The hum of the turbines and the boom of the air on our skin is no more than a cotton-wool wrapping to the universal stillness. And we are running an eighteen-second mile.

I peer from the fore end of the engine-room over the hatch-coamings into the coach. The mail-clerks are sorting the Winnipeg, Calgary, and Medicine Hat bags; but there is a pack of cards ready on the table. Suddenly a bell thrills; the engineers run to the turbine-valves and stand by; but the spectacled slave of the Ray in the U-tube never lifts his
head. He must watch where he is. We are hard-braked and going astern; there is language from the Control Platform.

‘Tim’s sparking badly about something,’ says the unruffled Captain Hodgson. ‘Let’s look.’

Captain Purnall is not the suave man we left half-an-hour since, but the embodied authority of the G.P.O. Ahead of us floats an ancient, aluminium-patched, twin-screw tramp of the dingiest, with no more right to the 5000-foot lane than has a horse-cart to a modern road. She carries an obsolete ‘barbette’ conning-tower—a six-foot affair with railed platform forward—and our warning beam plays on the top of it as a policeman’s lantern flashes on the area sneak. Like a sneak-thief, too, emerges a shock-headed navigator in his shirt-sleeves. Captain Purnall wrenches open the colloid to talk with him man to man. There are times when Science does not satisfy.

‘What under the stars are you doing here, you sky-scraping chimney-sweep?’ he shouts as we two drift side by side. ‘Do you know this is a Mail-lane? You call yourself a sailor, sir? You ain’t fit to peddle toy balloons to an Esquimaux. Your name and number! Report and get down, and be—!’

‘I’ve been blown up once,’ the shock-headed man cries, hoarsely, as a dog barking. ‘I don’t
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

care two flips of a contact for anything you can do, Postey.'

'Don't you, sir? But I'll make you care. I'll have you towed stern first to Disko and broke up. You can't recover insurance if you're broke for obstruction. Do you understand that?'

Then the stranger bellows: 'Look at my propellers! There's been a wulli-wa down below that has knocked us into umbrella-frames! We've been blown up about forty thousand feet! We're all one conjuror's watch inside! My mate's arm's broke; my engineer's head's cut open; my Ray went out when the engines smashed; and ... and ... for pity's sake give me my height, Captain! We doubt we're dropping.'

'Six thousand eight hundred. Can you hold it?' Captain Purnall overlooks all insults, and leans half out of the colloid, staring and snuffing. The stranger leaks pungently.

'We ought to blow into St. John's with luck. We're trying to plug the fore-tank now, but she's simply whistling it away,' her captain wails.

'She's sinking like a log,' says Captain Purnall in an undertone. 'Call up the Banks Mark Boat, George.' Our dip-dial shows that we, keeping abreast the tramp, have dropped five hundred feet the last few minutes.

Captain Purnall presses a switch and our signal
beam begins to swing through the night, twizzling spokes of light across infinity.

‘That’ll fetch something,’ he says, while Captain Hodgson watches the General Communicator. He has called up the North Banks Mark Boat, a few hundred miles west, and is reporting the case.

‘I’ll stand by you,’ Captain Purnall roars to the lone figure on the conning-tower.

‘Is it as bad as that?’ comes the answer. ‘She isn’t insured. She’s mine.’

‘Might have guessed as much,’ mutters Hodgson. ‘Owner’s risk is the worst risk of all!’

‘Can’t I fetch St. John’s—not even with this breeze?’ the voice quavers.

‘Stand by to abandon ship. Haven’t you any lift in you, fore or aft?’

‘Nothing but the midship tanks, and they’re none too tight. You see, my Ray gave out and—’ he coughs in the reek of the escaping gas.

‘You poor devil!’ This does not reach our friend. ‘What does the Mark Boat say, George?’

‘Wants to know if there’s any danger to traffic. Says she’s in a bit of weather herself and can’t quit station. I’ve turned in a General Call, so even if they don’t see our beam some one’s bound to help—or else we must. Shall I clear our
slings? Hold on! Here we are! A Planet liner, too! She'll be up in a tick!

'Tell her to have her slings ready,' cries his brother captain. 'There won't be much time to spare. . . . Tie up your mate,' he roars to the tramp.

'Ver mate's all right. It's my engineer. He's gone crazy.'

'Shunt the lift out of him with a spanner. Hurry!'

'But I can make St. John's if you'll stand by.'

'You'll make the deep, wet Atlantic in twenty minutes. You're less than fifty-eight hundred now. Get your papers.'

A Planet liner, east bound, heaves up in a superb spiral and takes the air of us humming. Her underbody colloid is open and her transporter—slings hang down like tentacles. We shut off our beam as she adjusts herself—steering to a hair—over the tramp's conning-tower. The mate comes up, his arm strapped to his side, and stumbles into the cradle. A man with a ghastly scarlet head follows, shouting that he must go back and build up his Ray. The mate assures him that he will find a nice new Ray all ready in the liner's engine-room. The bandaged head goes up wagging excitedly. A youth and a woman follow. The
liner cheers hollowly above us, and we see the passengers' faces at the saloon colloid.

'That's a pretty girl. What's the fool waiting for now?' says Captain Purnall.

The skipper comes up, still appealing to us to stand by and see him fetch St. John's. He dives below and returns—at which we little human beings in the void cheer louder than ever—with the ship's kitten. Up fly the liner's hissing slings; her underbody crashes home and she hurtles away again. The dial shows less than 3000 feet.

The Mark Boat signals we must attend to the derelict, now whistling her death-song, as she falls beneath us in long sick zigzags.

'Keep our beam on her and send out a General Warning,' says Captain Purnall, following her down.

There is no need. Not a liner in air but knows the meaning of that vertical beam and gives us and our quarry a wide berth.

'But she'll drown in the water, won't she?' I ask.

'Not always,' is his answer. 'I've known a derelict up-end and sift her engines out of herself and flicker round the Lower Lanes for three weeks on her forward tanks only. We'll run no risks. Pith her, George, and look sharp. There's weather ahead.'
Captain Hodgson opens the underbody colloid, swings the heavy pithing-iron out of its rack which in liners is generally cased as a smoking-room settee, and at two hundred feet releases the catch. We hear the whir of the crescent-shaped arms opening as they descend. The derelict's forehead is punched in, starred across, and rent diagonally. She falls stern first, our beam upon her; slides like a lost soul down that pitiless ladder of light, and the Atlantic takes her.

'A filthy business,' says Hodgson. 'I wonder what it must have been like in the old days?'

The thought had crossed my mind too. What if that wavering carcass had been filled with the men of the old days, each one of them taught (that is the horror of it!) that after death he would very possibly go for ever to unspeakable torment?

And scarcely a generation ago, we (one knows now that we are only our fathers re-enlarged upon the earth), we, I say, ripped and rammed and pithed to admiration.

Here Tim, from the Control Platform, shouts that we are to get into our inflators and to bring him his at once.

We hurry into the heavy rubber suits—the engineers are already dressed—and inflate at the air-pump taps. G.P.O. inflators are thrice as thick as a racing man's 'flickers,' and chafe.
abominably under the armpits. George takes the wheel until Tim has blown himself up to the extreme of rotundity. If you kicked him off the c.p. to the deck he would bounce back. But it is ‘162’ that will do the kicking.

‘The Mark Boat’s mad—stark ravin’ crazy,’ he snorts, returning to command. ‘She says there’s a bad blow-out ahead and wants me to pull over to Greenland. I’ll see her pithed first! We wasted half an hour fussing over that dead duck down under, and now I’m expected to go rubbin’ my back all round the Pole. What does she think a postal packet’s made of? Gummed silk? Tell her we’re coming on straight, George.’

George buckles him into the Frame and switches on the Direct Control. Now under Tim’s left toe lies the port-engine Accelerator; under his left heel the Reverse, and so with the other foot. The lift-shunt stops stand out on the rim of the steering-wheel where the fingers of his left hand can play on them. At his right hand is the midships engine lever ready to be thrown into gear at a moment’s notice. He leans forward in his belt, eyes glued to the colloid, and one ear cocked toward the General Communicator. Henceforth he is the strength and direction of ‘162,’ through whatever may befall.
The Banks Mark Boat is reeling out pages of A.B.C. Directions to the traffic at large. We are to secure all 'loose objects'; hood up our Fleury Rays; and 'on no account to attempt to clear snow from our conning-towers till the weather abates.' Under-powered craft, we are told, can ascend to the limit of their lift, mail-packets to look out for them accordingly; the lower lanes westward are pitting very badly, 'with frequent blow-outs, vortices, laterals, etc.'

Still the clear dark holds up unblemished. The only warning is the electric skin-tension (I feel as though I were a lace-maker's pillow) and an irritability which the gibbering of the General Communicator increases almost to hysteria.

We have made eight thousand feet since we pithed the tramp and our turbines are giving us an honest two hundred and ten knots.

Very far to the west an elongated blur of red, low down, shows us the North Banks Mark Boat. There are specks of fire round her rising and falling—bewildered planets about an unstable sun—helpless shipping hanging on to her light for company's sake. No wonder she could not quit station.

She warns us to look out for the back-wash of the bad vortex in which (her beam shows it) she is even now reeling.

The pits of gloom about us begin to fill with

148
very faintly luminous films—wreathing and uneasy shapes. One forms itself into a globe of pale flame that waits shivering with eagerness till we sweep by. It leaps monstrously across the blackness, alights on the precise tip of our nose, pirouettes there an instant, and swings off. Our roaring bow sinks as though that light were lead—sinks and recovers to lurch and stumble again beneath the next blow-out. Tim’s fingers on the lift-shunt strike chords of numbers—$1:4:7:-2:4:6:-7:5:3$, and so on; for he is running by his tanks only, lifting or lowering her against the uneasy air. All three engines are at work, for the sooner we have skated over this thin ice the better. Higher we dare not go. The whole upper vault is charged with pale krypton vapours, which our skin friction may excite to unholy manifestations. Between the upper and lower levels—$5000$ and $7000$, hints the Mark Boat—we may perhaps bolt through if . . . Our bow clothes itself in blue flame and falls like a sword. No human skill can keep pace with the changing tensions. A vortex has us by the beak and we dive down a two-thousand-foot slant at an angle (the dip-dial and my bouncing body record it) of thirty-five. Our turbines scream shrilly; the propellers cannot bite on the thin air; Tim shunts the lift out of five tanks at once and by sheer weight drives her
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

bulletwise through the maelstrom till she cushions with a jar on an up-gust, three thousand feet below.

‘Now we’ve done it,’ says George in my ear. ‘Our skin-friction, that last slide, has played Old Harry with the tensions! Look out for laterals, Tim; she’ll want some holding.’

‘I’ve got her,’ is the answer. ‘Come up, old woman.’

She comes up nobly, but the laterals buffet her left and right like the pinions of angry angels. She is jolted off her course four ways at once, and cuffed into place again, only to be swung aside and dropped into a new chaos. We are never without a corposant grinning on our bows or rolling head over heels from nose to midships, and to the crackle of electricity around and within us is added once or twice the rattle of hail—hail that will never fall on any sea. Slow we must or we may break our back, pitch-poling.

‘Air’s a perfectly elastic fluid,’ roars George above the tumult. ‘About as elastic as a head sea off the Fastnet, ain’t it?’

He is less than just to the good element. If one intrudes on the Heavens when they are balancing their volt-accounts; if one disturbs the High Gods’ market-rates by hurling steel hulls at ninety knots across tremblingly adjusted electric tensions, one must not complain of any rudeness
WITH THE NIGHT MAIL

in the reception. Tim met it with an unmoved countenance, one corner of his under lip caught up on a tooth, his eyes fleeting into the blackness twenty miles ahead, and the fierce sparks flying from his knuckles at every turn of the hand. Now and again he shook his head to clear the sweat trickling from his eyebrows, and it was then that George, watching his chance, would slide down the life-rail and swab his face quickly with a big red handkerchief. I never imagined that a human being could so continuously labour and so collectedly think as did Tim through that Hell's half-hour when the flurry was at its worst. We were dragged hither and yon by warm or frozen suctions, belched up on the tops of wulli-was, spun down by vortices and clubbed aside by laterals under a dizzying rush of stars in the company of a drunken moon. I heard the rushing click of the midship-engine-lever sliding in and out, the low growl of the lift-shunts, and, louder than the yelling winds without, the scream of the bow-rudder gouging into any lull that promised hold for an instant. At last we began to claw up on a cant, bow-rudder and port-propeller together; only the nicest balancing of tanks saved us from spinning like the rifle-bullet of the old days.

‘We’ve got to hitch to windward of that Mark Boat somehow,’ George cried.

151
'There's no windward,' I protested feebly, where I swung shackled to a stanchion. 'How can there be?'

He laughed—as we pitched into a thousand-foot blow-out—that red man laughed beneath his inflated hood!

'Look!' he said. 'We must clear those refugees with a high lift.'

The Mark Boat was below and a little to the sou'west of us, fluctuating in the centre of her distraught galaxy. The air was thick with moving lights at every level. I take it most of them were trying to lie head to wind, but, not being hydrams, they failed. An under-tanked Moghrabi boat had risen to the limit of her lift, and, finding no improvement, had dropped a couple of thousand. There she met a superb wulli-wa, and was blown up spinning like a dead leaf. Instead of shutting off she went astern and, naturally, rebounded as from a wall almost into the Mark Boat, whose language (our G.C. took it in) was humanly simple.

'If they'd only ride it out quietly it 'ud be better,' said George in a calm, while we climbed like a bat above them all. 'But some skippers will navigate without enough lift. What does that Tad-boat think she is doing, Tim?'

'Playin' kiss in the ring,' was Tim's unmoved
reply. A Trans-Asiatic Direct liner had found a smooth and butted into it full power. But there was a vortex at the tail of that smooth, so the T.A.D. was flipped out like a pea from off a finger-nail, braking madly as she fled down and all but over-ending.

'Now I hope she's satisfied,' said Tim. 'I'm glad I'm not a Mark Boat... Do I want help?' The General Communicator dial had caught his ear. 'George, you may tell that gentleman with my love—love, remember, George—that I do not want help. Who is the officious sardine-tin?'

'A Rimouski drogher on the look-out for a tow.'

'Very kind of the Rimouski drogher. This postal packet isn't being towed at present.'

'Those droghers will go anywhere on a chance of salvage,' George explained. 'We call 'em kittiwakes.'

A long-beaked, bright steel ninety-footer floated at ease for one instant within hail of us, her slings coiled ready for rescues, and a single hand in her open tower. He was smoking. Surrendered to the insurrection of the airs through which we tore our way, he lay in absolute peace. I saw the smoke of his pipe ascend untroubled ere his boat dropped, it seemed, like a stone in a well.

We had just cleared the Mark Boat and her
disorderly neighbours when the storm ended as suddenly as it had begun. A shooting-star to northward filled the sky with the green blink of a meteorite dissipating itself in our atmosphere.

Said George: ‘That may iron out all the tensions.’ Even as he spoke, the conflicting winds came to rest; the levels filled; the laterals died out in long easy swells; the air-ways were smoothed before us. In less than three minutes the covey round the Mark Boat had shipped their power-lights and whirred away upon their businesses.

‘What’s happened?’ I gasped. The nerve-storm within and the volt-tingle without had passed: my inflators weighed like lead.

‘God He knows!’ said Captain George soberly. ‘That old shooting-star’s skin-friction has discharged the different levels. I’ve seen it happen before. Phew! What a relief!’

We dropped from ten to six thousand and got rid of our clammy suits. Tim shut off and stepped out of the Frame. The Mark Boat was coming up behind us. He opened the colloid in that heavenly stillness and mopped his face.

‘Hello, Williams!’ he cried. ‘A degree or two out o’ station, ain’t you?’

‘May be,’ was the answer from the Mark Boat. ‘I’ve had some company this evening.’
WITH THE NIGHT MAIL

'So I noticed. Wasn't that quite a little draught?'
'I warned you. Why didn't you pull out north? The east-bound packets have.'
'Me? Not till I'm running a Polar consumptives' Sanatorium boat. I was squinting through a colloid before you were out of your cradle, my son.'
'I'd be the last man to deny it,' the captain of the Mark Boat replies softly. 'The way you handled her just now—I'm a pretty fair judge of traffic in a volt-flurry—it was a thousand revolutions beyond anything even I've ever seen.'

Tim's back supplely visible to this oiling. Captain George on the c.p. winks and points to the portrait of a singularly attractive maiden pinned up on Tim's telescope-bracket above the steering-wheel.

I see. Wholly and entirely do I see!
There is some talk overhead of 'coming round to tea on Friday,' a brief report of the derelict's fate, and Tim volunteers as he descends: 'For an A.B.C. man young Williams is less of a high-tension fool than some . . . Were you thinking of taking her on, George? Then I'll just have a look round that port-thrust—seems to me it's a trifle warm—and we'll jog along.'

The Mark Boat hums off joyously and hangs
herself up in her appointed eyrie. Here she will stay, a shutterless observatory; a life-boat station; a salvage tug; a court of ultimate appeal-cum-meteorological bureau for three hundred miles in all directions, till Wednesday next when her relief slides across the stars to take her buffeted place. Her black hull, double conning-tower, and ever-ready slings represent all that remains to the planet of that odd old word authority. She is responsible only to the Aerial Board of Control—the A.B.C. of which Tim speaks so flippantly. But that semi-elected, semi-nominated body of a few score persons of both sexes, controls this planet. ‘Transportation is Civilization,’ our motto runs. Theoretically, we do what we please so long as we do not interfere with the traffic and all it implies. Practically, the A.B.C. confirms or annuls all international arrangements and, to judge from its last report, finds our tolerant, humorous, lazy little planet only too ready to shift the whole burden of public administration on its shoulders.

I discuss this with Tim, sipping mate on the c.p. while George fans her along over the white blur of the Banks in beautiful upward curves of fifty miles each. The dip-dial translates them on the tape in flowing freehand.

Tim gathers up a skein of it and surveys the
WITH THE NIGHT MAIL

last few feet, which record '162's' path through the volt-flurry.

'I haven't had a fever-chart like this to show up in five years,' he says ruefully.

A postal packet's dip-dial records every yard of every run. The tapes then go to the A.B.C., which collates and makes composite photographs of them for the instruction of captains. Tim studies his irrevocable past, shaking his head.

'Hello! Here's a fifteen-hundred-foot drop at fifty-five degrees! We must have been standing on our heads then, George.'

'You don't say so,' George answers. 'I fancied I noticed it at the time.'

George may not have Captain Purnall's catlike swiftness, but he is all an artist to the tips of the broad fingers that play on the shunt-stops. The delicious flight-curves come away on the tape with never a waver. The Mark Boat's vertical spindle of light lies down to eastward, setting in the face of the following stars. Westward, where no planet should rise, the triple verticals of Trinity Bay (we keep still to the Southern route) make a low-lifting haze. We seem the only thing at rest under all the heavens; floating at ease till the earth's revolution shall turn up our landing-towers.

And minute by minute our silent clock gives us a sixteen-second mile.
'Some fine night,' says Tim. 'We'll be even with that clock's Master.'

'He's coming now,' says George, over his shoulder. 'I'm chasing the night west.'

The stars ahead dim no more than if a film of mist had been drawn under unobserved, but the deep air-boom on our skin changes to a joyful shout.

'The dawn-gust,' says Tim. 'It'll go on to meet the Sun. Look! Look! There's the dark being crammed back over our bows! Come to the after-colloid. I'll show you something.'

The engine-room is hot and stuffy; the clerks in the coach are asleep, and the Slave of the Ray is ready to follow them. Tim slides open the aft colloid and reveals the curve of the world—the ocean's deepest purple—edged with fuming and intolerable gold. Then the Sun rises and through the colloid strikes out our lamps. Tim scowls in his face.

'Squirrels in a cage,' he mutters. 'That's all we are. Squirrels in a cage! He's going twice as fast as us. Just you wait a few years, my shining friend, and we'll take steps that will amaze you. We'll Joshua you!'

Yes, that is our dream: to turn all earth into the Vale of Ajalon at our pleasure. So far, we can drag out the dawn to twice its normal length.
WITH THE NIGHT MAIL

in these latitudes. But some day—even on the Equator—we shall hold the Sun level in his full stride.

Now we look down on a sea thronged with heavy traffic. A big submersible breaks water suddenly. Another and another follows with a swash and a suck and a savage bubbling of relieved pressures. The deep-sea freighters are rising to lung up after the long night, and the leisurely ocean is all patterned with peacock’s eyes of foam.

‘We’ll lung up, too,’ says Tim, and when we return to the c.p. George shuts off, the colloids are opened, and the fresh air sweeps her out. There is no hurry. The old contracts (they will be revised at the end of the year) allow twelve hours for a run which any packet can put behind her in ten. So we breakfast in the arms of an easterly slant which pushes us along at a languid twenty.

To enjoy life, and tobacco, begin both on a sunny morning half a mile or so above the dappled Atlantic cloud-belts and after a volt-flurry which has cleared and tempered your nerves. While we discussed the thickening traffic with the superiority that comes of having a high level reserved to ourselves, we heard (and I for the first time) the morning hymn on a Hospital boat.
 ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

She was cloaked by a skein of ravelled fluff beneath us and we caught the chant before she rose into the sunlight. 'Oh, ye Winds of God,' sang the unseen voices: 'bless ye the Lord! Praise Him and magnify Him for ever!'

We slid off our caps and joined in. When our shadow fell across her great open platforms they looked up and stretched out their hands neighbourly while they sang. We could see the doctors and the nurses and the white-button-like faces of the cot-patients. She passed slowly beneath us, heading northward, her hull, wet with the dews of the night, all ablaze in the sunshine. So took she the shadow of a cloud and vanished, her song continuing. 'Oh, ye holy and humble men of heart, bless ye the Lord! Praise Him and magnify Him for ever.'

'She's a public lunger or she wouldn't have been singing the Benedicite; and she's a Greenlander or she wouldn't have snow-blinds over her colloids,' said George at last. 'She'll be bound for Frederikshavn or one of the Glacier sanatoriums for a month. If she was an accident ward she'd be hung up at the eight-thousand-foot level. Yes—consumptives.'

'Funny how the new things are the old things. I've read in books,' Tim answered, 'that savages used to haul their sick and wounded up to the
tops of hills because microbes were fewer there. We hoist 'em into sterilized air for a while. Same idea. How much do the doctors say we've added to the average life of a man?'

'Thirty years,' says George with a twinkle in his eye. 'Are we going to spend 'em all up here, Tim?'

'Flap ahead, then. Flap ahead. Who's hinder-ing?' the senior captain laughed, as we went in.

We held a good lift to clear the coastwise and Continental shipping; and we had need of it. Though our route is in no sense a populated one, there is a steady trickle of traffic this way along. We met Hudson Bay furriers out of the Great Preserve, hurrying to make their departure from Bonavista with sable and black fox for the insatiable markets. We over-crossed Keewatin liners, small and cramped; but their captains, who see no land between Trepassy and Blanco, know what gold they bring back from West Africa. Trans-Asianic Directs, we met, soberly ringing the world round the Fiftieth Meridian at an honest seventy knots; and white-painted Ackroyd & Hunt fruiters out of the south fled beneath us, their ventilated hulls whistling like Chinese kites. Their market is in the North among the northern sanatoria where you can smell their grape-fruit and bananas across the cold snows. Argentine beef
boats we sighted too, of enormous capacity and unlovely outline. They, too, feed the northern health stations in ice-bound ports where submersibles dare not rise.

Yellow-bellied ore-flats and Ungava petrol-tanks punted down leisurely out of the north, like strings of unfrightened wild duck. It does not pay to ‘fly’ minerals and oil a mile farther than is necessary; but the risks of transhipping to submersibles in the ice-pack off Nain or Hebron are so great that these heavy freighters fly down to Halifax direct, and scent the air as they go. They are the biggest tramps aloft except the Athabasca grain-tubs. But these last, now that the wheat is moved, are busy, over the world’s shoulder, timber-lifting in Siberia.

We held to the St. Lawrence, (it is astonishing how the old water-ways still pull us children of the air), and followed his broad line of black between its drifting ice-blocks, all down the Park that the wisdom of our fathers—but every one knows the Quebec run.

We dropped to the Heights Receiving Towers twenty minutes ahead of time, and there hung at ease till the Yokohama Intermediate Packet could pull out and give us our proper slip. It was curious to watch the action of the holding-down clips all along the frosty river front as the boats
WITH THE NIGHT MAIL

cleared or came to rest. A big Hamburger was leaving Pont Levis and her crew, unshipping the platform railings, began to sing 'Elsinore'—the oldest of our chanteys. You know it of course:

Mother Rugen's tea-house on the Baltic—
Forty couple waltzing on the floor!
And you can watch my Ray,
For I must go away
And dance with Ella Swyn at Elsinore!

Then, while they sweated home the covering plates:

Nor-Nor-Nor-Nor-
West from Sourabaya to the Baltic—
Ninety knot an hour to the Skaw!
Mother Rugen's tea-house on the Baltic
And a dance with Ella Swyn at Elsinore!

The clips parted with a gesture of indignant dismissal, as though Quebec, glittering under her snows, were casting out these light and unworthy lovers. Our signal came from the Heights. Tim turned and floated up, but surely then it was with passionate appeal that the great tower arms flung open—or did I think so because on the upper staging a little hooded figure also opened her arms wide towards her father?

In ten seconds the coach with its clerks clashed down to the receiving-caisson; the hostlers dis-
placed the engineers at the idle turbines, and Tim, prouder of this than all, introduced me to the maiden of the photograph on the shelf. 'And by the way,' said he to her, stepping forth in sunshine under the hat of civil life, 'I saw young Williams in the Mark Boat. I've asked him to tea on Friday.'
AERIAL BOARD OF CONTROL

Lights

No changes in English Inland lights for week ending Dec. 18.

Cape Verde. Week ending Dec. 18. Verde inclined guide-light changes from 1st proximo to triple flash—green white green—in place of occulting red as heretofore. The warning light for Harmattan winds will be continuous vertical glare (white) on all oases of trans-Saharan N.E. by E. Main Routes.

Invercargil (N.Z.)—From 1st prox. : extreme southerly light (double red) will exhibit white beam inclined 45 degrees on approach of Southerly Buster. Traffic flies high off this coast between April and October.

Table Bay—Devil’s Peak Glare removed to Simonsberg. Traffic making Table Mountain coastwise keep all lights from Three Anchor Bay at least two thousand feet under,
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

and do not round to till East of E. shoulder Devil’s Peak.

Sandheads Light—Green triple vertical marks new private landing-stage for Bay and Burma traffic only.

Snaefell Jokul—White occulting light withdrawn for winter.

Patagonia—No summer light south Cape Pilar. This includes Staten Island and Port Stanley.

C. Navarin—Quadruple fog flash (white), one minute intervals (new).

East Cape—Fog flash—single white with single bomb, 30 sec. intervals (new).

Malayan Archipelago lights unreliable owing eruptions. Lay from Cape Somerset to Singapore direct, keeping highest levels.

For the Board:

Catterthun
St. Just
Van Hedder

Casualties

Week ending Dec. 18th.

Sable Island—Green single barbette-tower freighter, number indistinguishable, up-ended, and fore-tank pierced after collision, passed 300-ft.
level 2 p.m. Dec. 15th. Watched to water and pithed by Mark Boat.

N.F. Banks—Postal Packet 162 reports *Halma* freighter (Fowey—St. John's) abandoned, leaking after weather, 46° 15' N. 50° 15' W. Crew rescued by Planet liner *Asteroid*. Watched to water and pithed by Postal Packet, Dec. 14th.

Kerguelen Mark Boat reports last call from *Cymena* freighter (Gayer Tong Huk & Co.) taking water and sinking in snow-storm South McDonald Islands. No wreckage recovered. Messages and wills of crew at all A.B.C. offices.


Ascension, Mark Boat—Wreck of unknown racing-plane, Parden rudder, wire-stiffened xylonite vans, and Harliss engine-seating, sighted and salved 7° 20' S. 18° 41' W. Dec. 15th. Photos at all A.B.C. offices.
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

Missing

No answer to General Call having been received during the last week from following overdues, they are posted as missing:

- **Atlantis**, W. 17630 → Canton—Valparaiso
- **Audhumla**, W. 889 → Stockholm—Odessa
- **Berenice**, W. 2206 → Riga—Vladivostock
- **Draco**, E. 446 → Coventry—Puntas Arenas
- **Tontine**, E. 3068 → C. Wrath—Ungava
- **Wu-Sung**, E. 41776 → Hankow—Lobito Bay

General Call (all Mark Boats) out for:

- **Jane Eyre**, W. 6990 → Port Rupert—City of Mexico
- **Santander**, W. 5514 → Gobi-Desert—Manila
- **V. Edmundsun**, E. 9690 → Kandahar—Fiume

Broke for Obstruction, and Quitting Levels

Valkyrie (racing plane), A. J. Hartley owner, New York (twice warned).

Geisha (racing plane), S. van Cott owner, Philadelphia (twice warned).

Marvel of Peru (racing plane), J. X. Peixoto owner, Rio de Janeiro (twice warned).

For the Board:

Lazareff
McKeough
Goldblatt

Traffic.
NOTES

High-Level Sleet

The Northern weather so far shows no sign of improvement. From all quarters come complaints of the unusual prevalence of sleet at the higher levels. Racing-planes and digs alike have suffered severely—the former from unequal deposits of half-frozen slush on their vans (and only those who have 'held up' a badly balanced plane in a cross-wind know what that means), and the latter from loaded bows and snow-cased bodies. As a consequence, the Northern and North-western upper levels have been practically abandoned, and the high fliers have returned to the ignoble security of the Three, Five, and Six hundred foot levels. But there remain a few undaunted sun-hunters who, in spite of frozen stays and ice-jammed connecting-rods, still haunt the blue empyrean.

169
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

Bat-Boat Racing

The scandals of the past few years have at last moved the yachting world to concerted action in regard to ‘bat’ boat racing.

We have been treated to the spectacle of what are practically keeled racing-planes driven a clear five foot or more above the water, and only eased down to touch their so-called ‘native element’ as they near the line. Judges and starters have been conveniently blind to this absurdity, but the public demonstration off St Catherine’s Light at the Autumn Regattas has borne ample, if tardy, fruit. In future the ‘bat’ is to be a boat, and the long-unheeded demand of the true sportsman for ‘no daylight under mid-keel in smooth water’ is in a fair way to be conceded. The new rule severely restricts plane area and lift alike. The gas compartments are permitted both fore and aft, as in the old type, but the water-ballast central tank is rendered obligatory. These things work, if not for perfection, at least for the evolution of a sane and wholesome water-borne cruiser. The type of rudder is unaffected by the new rules, so we may expect to see the Long-Davidson make (the patent on which has just expired) come largely into use henceforward, though the strain on the sternpost in turning at speeds over forty miles an hour is
admittedly very severe. But bat-boat racing has a great future before it.

Crete and the A.B.C.

The story of the recent Cretan crisis, as told in the A.B.C. Monthly Report, is not without humour. Till 25th October Crete, as all the planet knows, was the sole surviving European repository of ‘autonomous institutions,’ ‘local self-government,’ and the rest of the archaic lumber devised in the past for the confusion of human affairs. She has lived practically on the tourist traffic attracted by her annual pageants of Parliaments, Boards, Municipal Councils, etc. etc. Last summer the islanders grew wearied, as their premier explained, of ‘playing at being savages for pennies,’ and proceeded to pull down all the landing-towers on the island and shut off general communication till such time as the A.B.C. should annex them. For side-splitting comedy we would refer our readers to the correspondence between the Board of Control and the Cretan premier during the ‘war.’ However, all’s well that ends well. The A.B.C. have taken over the administration of Crete on normal lines; and tourists must go elsewhere to witness the ‘debates,’ ‘resolutions,’ and ‘popular movements’ of the old days. The only
people who suffer will be the Board of Control, which is grievously overworked already. It is easy enough to condemn the Cretans for their laziness; but when one recalls the large, prosperous, and presumably public-spirited communities which during the last few years have deliberately thrown themselves into the hands of the A.B.C., one cannot be too hard upon St. Paul's old friends.
CORRESPONDENCE.

Skylarking on the Equator:

To the Editor—Only last week, while crossing the Equator (W. 26°15), I became aware of a furious and irregular cannonading some fifteen or twenty knots S. 4 E. Descending to the 500 ft. level, I found a party of Transylvanian tourists engaged in exploding scores of the largest pattern atmospheric bombs (A.B.C. standard) and, in the intervals of their pleasing labours, firing bow and stern smoke-ring swivels. This orgie—I can give it no other name—went on for at least two hours, and naturally produced violent electric derangements. My compasses, of course, were thrown out, my bow was struck twice, and I received two brisk shocks from the lower platform-rail. On remonstrating, I was told that these 'professors' were engaged in scientific experiments. The extent of their 'scientific' knowledge may be judged by the fact that they expected to produce
(I give their own words) "a little blue sky" if "they went on long enough." This in the heart of the Doldrums at 450 feet! I have no objection to any amount of blue sky in its proper place (it can be found at the 4000 level for practically twelve months out of the year), but I submit, with all deference to the educational needs of Transylvania, that 'skylarking' in the centre of a main-travelled road where, at the best of times, electricity literally drips off one's stanchions and screw blades, is unnecessary. When my friends had finished, the road was seared, and blown, and pitted with unequal pressure-layers, spirals, vortices, and readjustments for at least an hour. I pitched badly twice in an upward rush—solely due to these diabolical throw-downs—that came near to wrecking my propeller. Equatorial work at low levels is trying enough in all conscience without the added terrors of scientific hooliganism in the Doldrums.

Rhyl.

J. Vincent Mathen.

[We entirely sympathize with Professor Mathen's views, but till the Board sees fit to further regulate the Southern areas in which scientific experiments may be conducted, we shall always be exposed to the risk which our correspondent describes. Unfortunately, a chimera bombinating in a vacuum
is, nowadays, only too capable of producing secondary causes.—*Editor.*

*Answers to Correspondents*

**Vigilans**—The Laws of Auroral Derangements are still imperfectly understood. Any overheated motor may of course ‘seize’ without warning; but so many complaints have reached us of accidents similar to yours while shooting the Aurora that we are inclined to believe with Lavalle that the upper strata of the Aurora Borealis are practically one big electric ‘leak,’ and that the paralysis of your engines was due to complete magnetization of all metallic parts. Low-flying planes often ‘glue up’ when near the Magnetic Pole, and there is no reason in science why the same disability should not be experienced at higher levels when the Auroras are ‘delivering’ strongly.

**Indignant**—On your own showing, you were not under control. That you could not hoist the necessary N.U.C. lights on approaching a traffic-lane because your electrics had short-circuited is a misfortune which might befall any one. The A.B.C., being responsible for the planet’s traffic, cannot, however, make allowance for this kind
of misfortune. A reference to the Code will show that you were fined on the lower scale.

Planiston—(1) The Five Thousand Kilometre (overland) was won last year by L. V. Rautsch, R. M. Rautsch, his brother, in the same week pulling off the Ten Thousand (oversea). R. M.'s average worked out at a fraction over 500 kilometres per hour, thus constituting a record. (2) Theoretically, there is no limit to the lift of a dirigible. For commercial and practical purposes 15,000 tons is accepted as the most manageable.

Paterfamilias—None whatever. He is liable for direct damage both to your chimneys and any collateral damage caused by fall of bricks into garden, etc., etc. Bodily inconvenience and mental anguish may be included, but the average courts are not, as a rule, swayed by sentiment. If you can prove that his grapnel removed any portion of your roof, you had better rest your case on decoverture of domicile (see Parkins v. Duboulay). We sympathize with your position, but the night of the 14th was stormy and confused, and—you may have to anchor on a stranger's chimney yourself some night. Verbum sap.!

Aldebaran—(1) War, as a paying concern, ceased in 1967. (2) The Convention of London expressly reserves to every nation the right of
waging war so long as it does not interfere with traffic and all that implies. (3) The A.B.C. was constituted in 1949.

L. M. D.—Keep her full head-on at half power, taking advantage of the lulls to speed up and creep into it. She will strain much less this way than in quartering across a gale. (2) Nothing is to be gained by reversing into a following gale, and there is always risk of a turn-over. (3) The formulæ for stun’sle brakes are uniformly unreliable, and will continue to be so as long as air is compressible.

Pegamoid—Personally we prefer glass or flux compounds to any other material for winter work nose-caps as being absolutely non-hygroscopic. (2) We cannot recommend any particular make.

Pulmonar—For the symptoms you describe, try the Gobi Desert Sanatoria. The low levels of most of the Saharan Sanatoria are against them except at the outset of the disease. (2) We do not recommend boarding-houses or hotels in this column.

Beginner—On still days the air above a large inhabited city being slightly warmer—i.e., thinner—than the atmosphere of the surrounding country, a plane drops a little on entering the rarefied area,
precisely as a ship sinks a little in fresh water. Hence the phenomena of 'jolt' and your 'inexplicable collisions' with factory chimneys. In air, as on earth, it is safest to fly high.

Emergency—There is only one rule of the road in air, earth, and water. Do you want the firmament to yourself?

Picciola—Both Poles have been overdone in Art and Literature. Leave them to Science for the next twenty years. You did not send a stamp with your verses.

North Nigeria—The Mark Boat was within her right in warning you off the Reserve. The shadow of a low-flying dirigible scares the game. You can buy all the photos you need at Sokoto.

New Era—It is not etiquette to overcross an A.B.C. official's boat without asking permission. He is one of the body responsible for the planet's traffic, and for that reason must not be interfered with. You, presumably, are out on your own business or pleasure, and must leave him alone. For humanity's sake don't try to be 'democratic.'

Excoriated—All inflators chafe sooner or later. You must go on till your skin hardens by practice. Meantime vaseline.
REVIEW

The Life of Xavier Lavalle

(Reviewed by René Talland. École Aéronautique, Paris)

Ten years ago Lavalle, 'that imperturbable dreamer of the heavens,' as Lazareff hailed him, gathered together the fruits of a lifetime's labour, and gave it, with well-justified contempt, to a world bound hand and foot to Barald's Theory of Vertices and 'compensating electric nodes.' 'They shall see,' he wrote,—in that immortal postscript to The Heart of the Cyclone—'the Laws whose existence they derided written in fire beneath them.'

'But even here,' he continues, 'there is no finality. Better a thousand times my conclusions should be discredited than that my dead name should lie across the threshold of the temple of Science—a bar to further inquiry.'

So died Lavalle—a prince of the Powers of the Air, and even at his funeral Céllier jested at 'him
who had gone to discover the secrets of the Aurora Borealis.'

If I choose thus to be banal, it is only to remind you that Céllier's theories are to-day as exploded as the ludicrous deductions of the Spanish school. In the place of their fugitive and warring dreams we have, definitely, Lavalle's Law of the Cyclone which he surprised in darkness and cold at the foot of the overarch ing throne of the Aurora Borealis. It is there that I, intent on my own investigations, have passed and re-passed a hundred times the worn leonine face, white as the snow beneath him, furrowed with wrinkles like the seams and gashes upon the North Cape; the nervous hand, integrally a part of the mechanism of his flighter; and above all, the wonderful lambent eyes turned to the zenith.

'Master,' I would cry as I moved respectfully beneath him, 'what is it you seek to-day?' and always the answer, clear and without doubt, from above: 'The old secret, my son!'

The immense egotism of youth forced me on my own path, but (cry of the human always!) had I known—if I had known—I would many times have bartered my poor laurels for the privilege, such as Tinsley and Herrera possess, of having aided him in his monumental researches.

It is to the filial piety of Victor Lavalle that we
owe the two volumes consecrated to the ground-
life of his father, so full of the holy intimacies of
the domestic hearth. Once returned from the
abyssms of the utter North to that little house upon
the outskirts of Meudon, it was not the philosopher,
the daring observer, the man of iron energy that
imposed himself on his family, but a fat and even
plaintive jester, a farceur incarnate and kindly, the
coop-equal of his children, and, it must be written,
not seldom the comic despair of Madame Lavalle,
who, as she writes five years after the marriage,
to her venerable mother, found 'in this unequalled
intellect whose name I bear the abandon of a large
and very untidy boy.' Here is her letter:

'Xavier returned from I do not know where
at midnight, absorbed in calculations on the
eternal question of his Aurora—la belle Aurore,
whom I begin to hate. Instead of anchoring—I
had set out the guide-light above our roof, so he
had but to descend and fasten the plane—he
wandered, profoundly distracted, above the town
with his anchor down! Figure to yourself, dear
mother, it is the roof of the mayor's house that the
grapnel first engages! That I do not regret, for the
mayor's wife and I are not sympathetic; but when
Xavier uproots my pet araucaria and bears it
across the garden into the conservatory I protest at
the top of my voice. Little Victor in his night-
clothes runs to the window, enormously amused at the parabolic flight without reason, for it is too dark to see the grapnel, of my prized tree. The Mayor of Meudon thunders at our door in the name of the Law, demanding, I suppose, my husband’s head. Here is the conversation through the megaphone—Xavier is two hundred feet above us.

"Mons. Lavalle, descend and make reparation for outrage of domicile. Descend, Mons. Lavalle!"

"No one answers.

"Xavier Lavalle, in the name of the Law, descend and submit to process for outrage of domicile."

Xavier, roused from his calculations, only comprehending the last words: "Outrage of domicile? My dear mayor, who is the man that has corrupted thy Julie?"

"The mayor, furious, "Xavier Lavalle——"

"Xavier, interrupting: "I have not that felicity. I am only a dealer in cyclones!"

"My faith, he raised one then! All Meudon attended in the streets, and my Xavier, after a long time comprehending what he had done, excused himself in a thousand apologies. At last the reconciliation was effected in our house over a supper at two in the morning—Julie in a wonderful costume of compromises, and I have
her and the mayor pacified in bed in the blue room.

And on the next day, while the mayor rebuilds his roof, her Xavier departs anew for the Aurora Borealis, there to commence his life's work. M. Victor Lavalle tells us of that historic collision (en plane) on the flank of Hecla between Herrera, then a pillar of the Spanish school, and the man destined to confute his theories and lead him intellectually captive. Even through the years, the immense laugh of Lavalle as he sustains the Spaniard's wrecked plane, and cries: 'Courage! I shall not fall till I have found Truth, and I hold you fast!' rings like the call of trumpets. This is that Lavalle whom the world, immersed in speculations of immediate gain, did not know nor suspect—the Lavalle whom they adjudged to the last a pedant and a theorist.

The human, as apart from the scientific, side (developed in his own volumes) of his epoch-making discoveries is marked with a simplicity, clarity, and good sense beyond praise. I would specially refer such as doubt the sustaining influence of ancestral faith upon character and will to the eleventh and nineteenth chapters, in which are contained the opening and consummation of the Tellurionical Records extending over nine years. Of their tremendous significance be sure that the
A modest house at Meudon knew as little as that the Records would one day be the planet’s standard in all official meteorology. It was enough for them that their Xavier—this son, this father, this husband—ascended periodically to commune with powers, it might be angelic, beyond their comprehension, and that they united daily in prayers for his safety.

‘Pray for me,’ he says upon the eve of each of his excursions, and returning, with an equal simplicity, he renders thanks ‘after supper in the little room where he kept his barometers.’

To the last Lavalle was a Catholic of the old school, accepting—he who had looked into the very heart of the lightnings—the dogmas of papal infallibility, of absolution, of confession—of relics great and small. Marvellous—enviable contradiction!

The completion of the Tellurionical Records closed what Lavalle himself was pleased to call the theoretical side of his labours—labours from which the youngest and least impressionable planeur might well have shrunk. He had traced through cold and heat, across the deeps of the oceans, with instruments of his own invention, over the inhospitable heart of the polar ice and the sterile visage of the deserts, league by league, patiently, unweariedly, remorselessly, from their ever-shifting
cradle under the magnetic pole to their exalted
death-bed in the utmost ether of the upper atmo-
sphere—each one of the Isoconical Tellurions—
Lavalle’s Curves, as we call them to-day. He had
disentangled the nodes of their intersections, assign-
ing to each its regulated period of flux and reflux.
Thus equipped, he summons Herrera and Tinsley,
his pupils, to the final demonstration as calmly as
though he were ordering his flighter for some mid-
day journey to Marseilles.

‘I have proved my thesis,’ he writes. ‘It re-
 mains now only that you should witness the
proof. We go to Manila to-morrow. A cyclone
will form off the Pescadores S. 17 E. in four days,
and will reach its maximum intensity twenty-seven
hours after inception. It is there I will show you
the Truth.’

A letter heretofore unpublished from Herrera
to Madame Lavalle tells us how the Master’s
prophecy was verified.

I will not destroy its simplicity or its significance
by any attempt to quote. Note well, though, that
Herrera’s pre-occupation throughout that day and
night of superhuman strain is always for the
Master’s bodily health and comfort. ‘At such
a time,’ he writes, ‘I forced the Master to take the
broth’; or ‘I made him put on the fur coat as you
told me.’ Nor is Tinsley (see pp. 184-85) less
concerned. He prepares the nourishment. He cooks eternally, imperturbably, suspended in the chaos of which the Master interprets the meaning. Tinsley, bowed down with the laurels of both hemispheres, raises himself to yet nobler heights in his capacity of a devoted chef. It is almost unbelievable! And yet men write of the Master as cold, aloof, self-contained. Such characters do not elicit the joyous and unswerving devotion which Lavalle commanded throughout life. Truly, we have changed very little in the course of the ages! The secrets of earth and sky and the links that bind them, we felicitate ourselves we are on the road to discover; but our neighbours’ heart and mind we misread, we misjudge, we condemn—now as ever. Let all then who love a man read these most human, tender, and wise volumes.
WANTS

REQUIRED IMMEDIATELY, for East Africa, a thoroughly competent Plane and Dirigible Driver, acquainted with Radium and Helium motors and generators. Low level work only, but must understand heavyweight digs.

Mossamedes Transport Assoc.
84 Palestine Buildings, E.C.

MAN WANTED—DIG DRIVER for Southern Alps with Saharan summer trips. High levels, high speed, high wages.

Apply M. Sidney,
Hotel San Stefano, Monte Carlo.

FAMILY DIRIGIBLE. A competent, steady man wanted for slow speed, low level Tangye dirigible. No night work, no sea trips. Must be member of the Church of England, and make himself useful in the garden.

M. R.,
The Rectory, Gray's Barton, Wilts.

COMMERCIAL DIG, CENTRAL and Southern Europe. A smart, active man for a L.M.T. Dig. Night work only. Headquarters London and Cairo. Linguist preferred.

Bagman,
Charing Cross Hotel, W.C.


N. 2650. This office.

The Bee-Line Bookshop
BELT'S WAY-BOOKS, giving town lights for all towns over 4000 pop. as laid down by A.B.C.

THE WORLD. Complete 2 vols. Thin Oxford, limp back. 12s. 6d.

BELT'S COASTAL ITINERARY. Shore Lights of the World. 7s. 6d.

THE TRANSATLANTIC AND MEDITERRANEAN TRAFFIC LINES. (By authority of the A.B.C.) Paper, 1s. 6d.; cloth, 2s. 6d. Ready Jan. 15.

ARCTIC AEROPLANNING. Siemens and Galt. Cloth, bds. 3s. 6d.

Lavallo's Heart of the Cyclone, with supplementary charts. 4s. 6d.

RIMINGTON'S PITFALLS IN THE AIR, and Table of Comparative Densities. 3s. 6d.

ANGELO'S DESERT IN A DIRIGIBLE. New edition, revised. 5s. 9d.

VAUGHAN'S PLANE RACING IN CALM AND STORM. 2s. 6d.

VAUGHAN'S HINTS TO THE AIRMATEUR. 7s.

HOFMAN'S LAWS OF LIFT AND VELOCITY. With diagrams. 3s. 6d.

DE VITRE'S THEORY OF SHIFTING BALLAST IN DIRIGIBLES. 9s. 6d.

SANGER'S WEATHERS OF THE WORLD. 4s.

SANGER'S TEMPERATURES AT HIGH ALTITUDES. 4s.

HAWKIN'S FOG AND HOW TO AVOID IT. 3s.

VAN ZUYLAN'S SECONDARY EFFECTS OF THUNDERSTORMS. 4s. 6d.

DAHLGREN'S AIR CURRENTS AND EPIDEMIC DISEASES. 5s. 6d.

REDMAYNE'S DISEASE AND THE BAROMETER. 7s. 6d.

WALTON'S HEALTH RESORTS OF THE GOBI AND SHAMO. 3s. 6d.

WALTON'S THE POLE AND PULMONARY COMPLAINTS. 7s. 6d.

MUTLOW'S HIGH LEVEL BACTERIOLOGY. 7s. 6d.

HALLIWELL'S ILLUMINATEDSTAR MAP, with clockwork illumination, giving apparent motion of heavens, boxed, complete with clamps for binnacle, 36 inch size only, £2 2s. (Invaluable for night work.) With A.B.C. certificate, £3 10s.

Zalinski's Standard Works:

PASSES OF THE HIMALAYAS. 5s.

PASSES OF THE SIERRAS. 5s.

PASSES OF THE ROCKIES. 5s.

PASSES OF THE URALS. 5s.

The four boxed, limp cloth, with charts, 15s.

GRAY'S AIR CURRENTS IN MOUNTAIN GORGES. 7s. 6d.

A. C. BELT & SON, READING
Safety Wear for Aeronauts

Flickers!  Flickers!  Flickers!

High Level Flickers

"He that is down need fear no fall."
Fear not! You will fall lightly as down!

Hansen’s air-kits are down in all respects. Tremendous reductions in prices previous to winter stocking. Pure para kit with cellulose seat and shoulder-pads, weighted to balance. Unequalled for all drop-work.

Our trebly resilient heavy kit is the ne plus ultra of comfort and safety.

Gas-buoyed, waterproof, hail-proof, non-conducting Flickers with pipe and nozzle fitting all types of generator. Graduated tap on left hip.

Hansen’s Flickers Lead the Aerial Flight
197 Oxford Street

The new weighted Flicker with tweed or cheviot surface cannot be distinguished from the ordinary suit till inflated.

Flickers!  Flickers!  Flickers!
What “SKID” was to our forefathers on the ground, “PITCH” is to their sons in the air.

The popularity of the large, unwieldy, slow, expensive Dirigible over the light, swift Plane is mainly due to the former’s immunity from pitch.

Collison’s forward-socketed Air Van renders it impossible for any plane to pitch. The C.F.S. is automatic, simple as a shutter, certain as a power hammer, safe as oxygen. Fitted to any make of plane.

COLLIISON
186 Brompton Road
Workshops, Chiswick
LUNDIE & MATHERS
Sole Agts for East’n Hemisphere

Starters and Guides

Hotel, club, and private house plane-starters, slips, and guides affixed by skilled workmen in accordance with local building laws.

Rackstraw’s forty-foot collapsible steel starters with automatic release at end of travel—prices per foot run, cramps and crampons included. The safest on the market.

Weaver & Denison
Middleboro
Remember

Planes are swift—so is Death
Planes are cheap—so is Life

Why does the 'plane builder insist on the safety of his machines?
Methinks the gentleman protests too much.
The Standard Dig Construction Company do not build kites.
They build, equip, and guarantee dirigibles.

Standard Dig Construction Co.
Millwall and Buenos Ayres.

HOVERS

POWELL'S
Wind-Hovers

for 'planes lying-to in heavy weather, save the motor and strain on the forebody. Will not send to leeward. "Albatross" wind-hovers, rigid-ribbed; according to h.p. and weight.

We fit and test free to 40° both ways of Greenwich.

L. & W. POWELL
196 Victoria Street, W.

Remember

We shall always be pleased to see you.
We build and test and guarantee our dirigibles for all purposes. They go up when you please and they do not come down till you please.
You can please yourself, but—you might as well choose a dirigible.

STANDARD DIRIGIBLE CONSTRUCTION CO.

Millwall and Buenos Ayres.

Gayer & Hutt

Birmingham and Birmingham Eng. and Birmingham Ala.

Towers, Landing Stages, Slips and Lifts public and private

Contractors to the A.B.C., South-Western European Postal Construction Dept.
Air Planes and Dirigibles

C.M.C.
Our Synthetical Mineral

BEARINGS
are chemically and crystallogically identical with the minerals whose names they bear. Any size, any surface.
Diamond, Rock-Crystal, Agate and Ruby Bearings—cups, caps, and collars for the higher speeds.
For tractor bearings and spindles—Imperative.
For rear propellers—Indispensable.
For all working parts—Advisable.

Commercial Minerals Co.
107 Minories

Resurgam!
IF YOU HAVE NOT CLOTHED YOURSELF IN A

Normandie Resurgam
YOU WILL PROBABLY NOT BE INTERESTED IN OUR NEXT WEEK'S LIST OF AIR-KIT.

Resurgam Air-Kit Emporium
Hymans & Graham
1198
Lower Broadway, New York

Remember!

Q It is now nearly a generation since the Plane was to supersede the Dirigible for all purposes.
Q TO-DAY none of the Planet's freight is carried en plane.
Q Less than two per cent. of the Planet's passengers are carried en plane.

We design, equip, and guarantee Dirigibles for all purposes.

Standard Dig Construction Company
MILLWALL and BUENOS AYRES
FOR SALE

at the end of Season the following Bat-Boats:

GRISELDA, 65 knt., 42 ft., 430 (nom.) Maginnis Motor, under-rake rudder.
MABELLE, 50 knt., 40 ft., 310 Hargreaves Motor, Douglas’ lock-steering gear.
IVEMONQA, 50 knt., 35 ft., 300 Hargreaves (Radium accelerator), Miller keel and rudder.

The above are well known on the South Coast as sound, wholesome knockabout boats, with ample cruising accommodation. Griselda carries spare set of Hofman racing vans, and can be lifted three foot clear in smooth water with ballast-tank swung aft. The others do not lift clear of water, and are recommended for beginners.

Also, by private treaty, racing B.B. Tarpon (76 winning flags) 120 knt., 60 ft.; Long-Davidson double under-rake rudder, new this season and unstrained. 850 nom. Maginnis motor, Radium relays and Pond generator. Bronze breakwater forward, and treble reinforced forefoot and entry. Talfourd rockerd keel. Triple set of Hofman vans, giving maximum lifting surface of 5327 sq. ft.

Tarpon has been lifted and held seven feet for two miles between touch and touch.

Our Autumn List of racing and family Bats ready on the 9th January.
Hinks's Moderator

A monorail overhead starter for family and private planes up to twenty-five foot over all.

Absolutely Safe

Hinks & Co., Birmingham

J. D. ARDAGH

I am not concerned with your 'plane after it leaves my guides, but till then I hold myself personally responsible for your life, safety, and comfort. My hydraulic buffer-stop cannot release till the motors are working up to bearing speed, thus securing a safe and graceful flight without pitching.

Remember our motto, "Upward and Outward," and do not trust yourself to so-called "rigid" guide bars.

J. D. ARDAGH, BELFAST AND TURIN

A. R. Vol. I 193
Hooded Binnacles with dip-dials automatically recording change of level (illuminated face).
All heights from 50 to 15,000 feet £2 10 0
With Aerial Board of Control certificate £3 11 0
Foot and Hand Fog-horns; Sirens toned to any club note; with air-chest belt-driven from motor £6 8 0
Wireless installations syntonised to A.B.C. requirements, in neat mahogany case, hundred mile range £3 3 0
Grapnels, mushroom anchors, pithing-irons, winches, hawsers, snaps, shackles, and mooring ropes, for lawn, city, and public installations.
Detachable under-cars, aluminium or stamped steel.
Keeled under-cars for planes: single-action detaching-gear, turning car into boat with one motion of the wrist. Invaluable for sea trips.
Head, side, and riding lights (by size) Nos. 00 to 20 A.B.C. Standard. Rockets and fog-bombs in colours and tones of the principal clubs (boxed).
A selection of twenty £2 17 6
International night-signals (boxed) £1 11 6
Spare generators guaranteed to lifting power marked on cover (prices according to power).

Wind-noses for dirigibles—Pegamoid, cane-stiffened, lacquered cane or aluminium and flux for winter work.

Smoke-ring cannon for hail-storms, swivel-mounted, bow or stern.

Propeller-blades: metal, tungsten backed; papier-mâché, wire stiffened; ribbed xylonite (Nickson's patent); all razor-edged (price by pitch and diameter).

Compressed steel bow-screws for winter work.

Fused Ruby or Commercial Mineral Co. bearings and collars. Agate-mounted thrust-blocks up to 4 inch.

Magniac's bow-rudders—(Lavalle's patent grooving).

Wove steel beltings for outboard motors (non-magnetic).

Radium batteries, all powers to 150 h.p. (in pairs).

Helium batteries, all powers to 300 h.p. (tandem).

Stun'sle brakes worked from upper or lower platform.

Direct plunge-brakes worked from lower platform only, loaded silk or fibre, wind-tight.

Throughout the Planet
THE FOUR ANGELS

As Adam lay a-dreaming beneath the Apple Tree,
The Angel of the Earth came down, and offered Earth in fee.
   But Adam did not need it,
   Nor the plough he would not speed it,
   Singing:—'Earth and Water, Air and Fire,
        What more can mortal man desire?'
     (The Apple Tree's in bud.)

As Adam lay a-dreaming beneath the Apple Tree,
The Angel of the Waters offered all the Seas in fee.
   But Adam would not take 'em,
   Nor the ships he wouldn't make 'em,
   Singing:—'Water, Earth and Air and Fire,
        What more can mortal man desire?'
     (The Apple Tree's in leaf.)

As Adam lay a-dreaming beneath the Apple Tree,
The Angel of the Air he offered all the Air in fee.
   But Adam did not crave it,
   Nor the voyage he wouldn't brave it,
   Singing:—'Air and Water, Earth and Fire,
        What more can mortal man desire?'
     (The Apple Tree's in bloom.)
As Adam lay a-dreaming beneath the Apple Tree,
The Angel of the Fire rose up and not a word said he.
But he wished a fire and made it,
And in Adam’s heart he laid it,
Singing:—‘Fire, Fire, burning Fire,
Stand up and reach your heart’s desire!’
(The Apple Blossom’s set.)

As Adam was a-working outside of Eden-Wall,
He used the Earth, he used the Seas, he used the Air and all;
And out of black disaster
He arose to be the master
Of Earth and Water, Air and Fire,
But never reached his heart’s desire!
(The Apple Tree’s cut down !)

END OF VOL. I
THE SERVICE KIPLING

26 Vols. 16mo.

Blue Cloth. 2s. 6d. net per Vol.

The volumes are printed in an old-style type designed after an old Venetian model and known as the Dolphin Type.

Plain Tales from the Hills. 2 Vols.
Soldiers Three. 2 Vols.
Wee Willie Winkie. 2 Vols.
From Sea to Sea. 4 Vols.
Life’s Handicap. 2 Vols.
The Light that Failed. 2 Vols.
The Naulahka. 2 Vols.
Many Inventions. 2 Vols.
The Day’s Work. 2 Vols.
Kim. 2 Vols.
 Traffics and Discoveries. 2 Vols.
Actions and Reactions. 2 Vols.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LTD., LONDON.
THE WORKS OF RUDYARD KIPLING.

UNIFORM EDITION.
Extra Crown 8vo. Red Cloth, with Gilt Tops. 6s. each.

POCKET EDITION.
Fcap 8vo. Printed on Thin Paper. With Gilt Edges. In Scarlet Limp Leather, 5s. net; in Blue Cloth, 4s. 6d. net per Volume.

PLAIN TALES FROM THE HILLS. Eighty-second Thousand.
LIFE'S HANDICAP. Being Stories of Mine Own People. Sixty-eighth Thousand.
MANY INVENTIONS. Sixty-fourth Thousand.
THE LIGHT THAT FAILED. Eighty-first Thousand.
WEE WILLIE WINKIE, and other Stories. Forty-second Thousand.
SOLDIERS THREE, and other Stories. Forty-seventh Thousand.
THE DAY'S WORK. Eighty-ninth Thousand.
THE SECOND JUNGLE BOOK. With Illustrations by J. Lockwood Kipling. Seventy-eighth Thousand.
STALKY & CO. Sixty-second Thousand.
FROM SEA TO SEA. Letters of Travel. In Two Vols. Thirtieth Thousand.
THE NAULAHKA. A Story of West and East. By RUDYARD KIPLING and WOLCOTT BALESTIER. Twenty-fifth Thousand.
KIM. Illustrated by J. Lockwood Kipling. One hundredth Thousand.
JUST SO STORIES FOR LITTLE CHILDREN. Illustrated by the Author. Eighty-fifth Thousand.
TRAFFICS AND DISCOVERIES. Forty-seventh Thousand.
PUCK OF POOK'S HILL. With Illustrations by H. R. MILLAR. Fifty-first Thousand.
ACTIONS AND REACTIONS. Forty-sixth Thousand.
REWARDS AND FAIRIES. With Illustrations by FRANK CRAIG. Forty-fourth Thousand.

SONGS FROM BOOKS. Uniform with Poetical Works. Crown 8vo. 6s. Pocket Edition. Fcap. 8vo. Cloth, 4s. 6d. net. Leather, 5s. net Edition de Luxe. 8vo. 10s. 6d. net. Nineteenth Thousand.

Also issued in Special Binding for Presentation. Extra Gilt Cloth, Gilt Edges. Price 6s. each.

SOLDIER TALES. With Illustrations by A. S. HARTRICK. Fourteenth Thousand.
THE JUNGLE BOOK. Illustrated.
THE SECOND JUNGLE BOOK. Illustrated.
"CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS." Illustrated.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LTD., LONDON.