

TRAMPING
WITH A POET
IN THE ROCKIES

STEPHEN GRAHAM

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK TRAMPING
WITH A POET IN THE ROCKIES ***

TRAMPING WITH A POET IN THE ROCKIES

BOOKS BY STEPHEN GRAHAM

THE GENTLE ART OF TRAMPING
THE DIVIDING LINE OF EUROPE
IN QUEST OF EL DORADO
TRAMPING WITH A POET IN THE ROCKIES
EUROPE—WHITHER BOUND?
THE CHALLENGE OF THE DEAD
CHILDREN OF THE SLAVES
A PRIVATE IN THE GUARDS
THE QUEST OF THE FACE
RUSSIA IN 1916
PRIEST OF THE IDEAL
THROUGH RUSSIAN CENTRAL ASIA
THE WAY OF MARTHA AND THE WAY OF MARY
RUSSIA AND THE WORLD
WITH POOR EMIGRANTS TO AMERICA
WITH THE RUSSIAN PILGRIMS TO JERUSALEM
CHANGING RUSSIA
A TRAMP'S SKETCHES
UNDISCOVERED RUSSIA
A VAGABOND IN THE CAUCASUS
ST. VITUS DAY

TRAMPING WITH A POET IN THE ROCKIES

BY

STEPHEN GRAHAM

AUTHOR OF "EUROPE—WHITHER BOUND?"

WITH THIRTY-EIGHT EMBLEMS BY
VERNON HILL



**D. APPLETON-CENTURY COMPANY
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PREFACE

Vachel Lindsay is the poet. He is best known as the author of *General William Booth Enters Heaven*, *The Congo* and *Johnny Appleseed*. He also wrote a highly comical piece called *The Daniel Jazz*. He is a wonderful reciter, and is aided by a sonorous, heaven-reaching voice. All his poems are written to be read aloud, chanted, or declaimed; in some cases they are written to be danced also, and played as games. In many of his recitations the audience is called upon to take part in choruses and refrains. Thus, in one poem, when Lindsay says, "I've been to Palestine," the audience as one man has to cry back to him, "*What did you see in Palestine?*" This is rapturously enjoyed by the audience. When you have heard the poet you can well understand that he did not starve when he used to tramp in America and recite to the farmers for a meal and a night's lodging. He has gained a great popularity.

He is, however, something more than an entertainer. He has a spiritual message to the world, and is deeply in earnest. In a large experience of men and women in many countries, I have rarely met such a rebel against vulgarity, materialism, and the modern artificial way of life. At the same time, despite his poetry, he is almost inarticulate. He has helped me, and here in a way I help him by giving in a new form part of the richness of his thoughts and his opinions.

Vachel Lindsay visited England in 1920, and recited his poems at Oxford and Cambridge and to several groups of friends in London. His mother, Catharine Frazee Lindsay, who accompanied him, was a notable woman in Springfield, Illinois, in religious and progressive activities. She succumbed to an attack of pneumonia this year. But those who met her in this country recognised in her a remarkable figure. At Vachel's invitation I visited Springfield last summer, and we went to the Rockies, and tramped together to Canada, and this volume is a record of our holiday. A mutual friend of ours is Christopher Morley, who brought us together in 1919. When he heard of our projected expedition he interposed to get some letters for the New York *Evening Post*. Some thirty-two of these were written, mostly by the camp fire or sitting on the rocks in the sun, and were printed in the *Post*,

where they attracted considerable attention. “Centurion” in the *Century Magazine* for August wrote: “Mr. Lindsay and Mr. Graham are having a glorious time. As for those of us who must spend the dog-days in stuffy cities and stuffier offices, the picture of the two of them by a camp fire in the Rockies waking to the freshness and glory of a mountain dawn is—well, if there are no future issues of the *Century Magazine*, you may be sure that the entire staff, inspired by this example, has started vagabonding.” Another, a facetious scribe, wrote: “It is conceded by every one that Stephen Graham’s *Tramping with a Poet* will some day stand on the shelf of open-air literature beside *Travels with a Donkey*.”

My thanks are due to the representatives of the Great Northern Railway of America, at St. Paul, who gave us a wonderful collection of pictures, maps, and books, when they heard we were going, on the subject of Glacier Park, which we tramped through. In fact, the railway company would have done a great deal for us, but we eluded their kind care, as was our wish, and got out entirely on our own.

As Vachel Lindsay was an art student before he was a poet, and wrote his first verses as scrolls to be illuminated below emblematic figures, we naturally discussed emblems and emblematic art and hieroglyphics as we tramped together. The emblems in this book are an attempt to express that side of our mutual experience. They have been done by my friend, Vernon Hill, who drew once that very precious work, “The Arcadian Calendar.”

One of the poems is by “Rusticus,” who, anent our adventures, contributed it to the New York *Evening Post*.

A last point: Vachel is pronounced to rhyme with Rachel, and is spelt with one l. It does not rhyme with satchel. The poet asked me to tell you that.

STEPHEN GRAHAM

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TRAMPING WITH A POET IN THE ROCKIES



†

HAIL TO ALL MOVING THINGS

HAIL TO ALL MOVING THINGS

I. TRAMPING AGAIN

WELL, it's good to be going tramping again. I've been sitting in European cafés and reading newspapers half a year, from Constantinople to Berlin, and I've only stretched my legs when in strange cities I needed to find a hotel, beating it pleasurelessly on asphalt. Last autumn, yes, I was tramping over the ruins and wreck of the war in France, and the year before that walked across Georgia on the track of old Sherman. But with a purpose, and in lands where after all there are hotels, and one pulls the blinds down when the stars appear.

But now I've had a real call from Hesperus and the wilds, and am off with a knapsack and a pot and a blanket, and a free mind—yes, and, I confess, a few yards of mosquito netting. I've left a notice, "Not at home," at my Soho flat, though I don't spend much time there, anyhow; "Back in half an hour or so," and there are already four thousand miles between my arm-chair and me.

And as I hasten to the West the link stretches, stretches. Not that my flat could ever be lasting home. Where the lady of your heart is, there is home! And where is she not? The worst thing man ever did to man was to nail him down. So hail to all things and men which move and keep moving.

I AM called by one of the most wonderful men who ever broke silence with a song. He belongs to the same sub-species. Yes, a tramping species. His hat has got a hole in it, and so have his breeches. But he is a poet, and he sings of what the world will be when the years have passed away. He can charm a supper out of a farmer with a song. And I who have tramped without music know what a miracle that is. They always said to me, "Chop this wood," or "Turn that hay," or "If a man do not work, then neither shall he eat."

Grande erreur, Mr. Farmer!

“Well, *I* can’t take to the road,” says Mrs. Farmer. “Look at me!—it’s wuk, wuk, wuk, all day!” Mrs. Farmer was born on a Saturday. I always feel sorry for Saturday’s children. They were born a day before I was. For I was born on a Sunday. How sadly we used to intone it when we were children —“Saturday’s child works *hard* for his living!” And then the relief, “But the child who is born on the good Sunday, is happy and loving and blithe and gay.” That is the tramp-baby, born on the day of rest.

I AM sitting at this moment in the St. Louis train heading for Missouri. The little negro marionette with set smile and the borrowed voice of a ventriloquist has offered coffee, ice-cream, oranges, without response, and now the car-conductor has just put into my hand a tract. It is entitled “Millions Now Living Will Never Die,” and costs 25 cents.

“The emphatic announcement that millions now living on earth will never die must seem presumptuous to many people; but when the evidence is carefully considered I believe that almost every fair mind will concede that the conclusion is a reasonable one.” So the book begins. And you who are spiritually a citizen of Missouri will doubtless require, like doubting Thomas of old, to be shown the very truth in substance and reality.

But the car-conductor has made a mistake. I have not read this book, but I believe. Though I have not seen, I believe and am blessed. And though in the Missouri train, I am not going to Missouri. I am stepping off at Flora, Illinois, to catch the Beardstown local train to Springfield, which unlike St. Louis and Jerusalem and Capernaum, and perhaps more like Tyre and Sidon, is a city of faith where they have bread from heaven to eat.

Not that I am staying in Springfield. But there I pick up the poet. That is where he haunts—“where Lincoln dreamed in Illinois.” The poet thinks that the world could be regenerated from a centre in Illinois—this beautiful state upon which Chicago has thought fit to rear its awful form.

Some one of Illinois, not the poet, wrote to me, “What do you think of Springfield as a centre of world thought?” Now I know the craze of “Boost your home town” can be, and often is, carried to excess, and little Springfield is not even on a main line from New York. But neither is

Bethlehem nor the human heart. If you want to regenerate your wicked world you can begin here and now—or, to use the language of the country, put your hand to your bosom and say it—“*You can begin right here.*” And then, to quote the poet himself, you will have—

Crossed the Appalachians,
And turned to blazing warrior souls
Of the lazy forest.

Springfield will not hold us. But we shall take Springfield with us. We are going to take it in our hearts and place it on the top of the Rocky Mountains, at the Triple Divide, where the waters of the new world flow north and east and west—



*Going tramping again,
Going to the mountains,
To recapture the stars,
To meet again the nymphs of the fountains.
To visit the bear,
To salute the eagles,
To be kissed all night by wild-flowers in the grass!*



TO HEART'S DESIRE

II. FINDING THE POET

FLORA, Illinois, where one changes for Springfield, has a Main Street, and, like many a little town of the Middle West of America, looks rather self-consciously askance at visitors, like the village that voted the earth was flat in Kipling's tale. For the novel of the hour is called *Main Street* and is sold to hundreds of thousands of people and read by every American who reads anything, and is bitterly or jocularly discussed at every tea-table. It sheds a bright light on the life of a typical little town in the Middle West. It names the town Gopher Prairie—because the Middle West is prairie land and the gopher-rats or marmots live there in myriads in their little burrows. The novelist seems to suggest that the people themselves are a species of gopher, a little people, limited of view, good-natured, of the earth earthy, but always bobbing-up. Because of the criticism implied in this novel the Middle West would rather now be called the “Central West.”

These Main Streets, however, except for the sophisticated eyes of a college girl inauspiciously married, are probably not so bad as the realist paints them. They are dull, but genuine. They exhibit our modern civilisation without too many shams. See the people working in the heat. The minds of the young are set on their dull jobs and not thinking of drink or sex—it is sufficiently wonderful. There are “Main Street” towns in every country in Europe, and life is dull in them though adorned by fights and drinks and “hussies”—but where will you find such an unexhausted *élan* and zest for the unornamented reality that America affords? Where else moreover will you find the working-men to-day working in silk shirts? Life in Main Street seems worth while, at least to those who live there.

It's a by-line from Flora to Springfield, and you plough iron slowly through Illinois corn. An old mechanical car-conductor with grey straw hat and fat stubby face calls the stations one by one in an outlandish accent which to a stranger is entirely baffling. He collects the tickets, and if you are for Springfield he puts a red check in your hat-band; if you are for anywhere else it is a white check. Springfield is now in the mind's eye as a large place

and is printed everywhere in big type. The *Springfield Register* and the *Springfield Journal* make showing.

I READ the newspapers and then tick off the names of the stations on the printed time-table of the B. and O. folder and patiently await the city and its bard. A four-hour journey in a slow train in England would seem intolerable, but America has a different sense of time and space, and a long time is not thought so long. At last, in the late dusk, behold Springfield, Illinois, and the unmistakable marble of the poet's face under a small black felt—"waitin' for me, prayin' for me," and certainly not really believing in the act of faith which can bring the mountain to Mahomet. In the literary world when invitations are rife there is a golden rule—*Promise everything and do just what you like*. So one never really knows whether "Yes, I'll come," means yea, yea or nay, nay.

It meant yea, yea this time, and so, getting out of the Beardstown local which pulled up outside the station, behold—two strong men stand face to face and they come from the ends of the earth. Vachel Lindsay rasped out sentences of welcome in broad Illinois and I replied in whispering English, and we bundled along Fifth Street for home. Then mother, of seventy years, tiptoed and curtsied and smiled with the roguishness of a young maid, and brought us in. So we sit now on rocking-chairs and talk while beads of moisture roll ticklingly adown our brows, and it is home.

Vachel is a poetical vagabond. I also am a vagabond. There lies our common ground. He is an old-fashioned hiker of the tramping parson type. He leaves home, as it were to post a letter, and does a thousand or so miles. He made a rule once to travel without money, and he recited his poems to the farmers and their wives for food and a night's lodging. Like Weston, who tramped with ice-blocks under his hat and water streaming down his neck, he can do his twenty miles a day over a long time and has travelled some huge distances in his day. I for my part hardly believe in tramping for tramping's sake, but in living with Nature for what that is worth.

To sleep under the stars, to live with the river that sings as it flows, to sit by the embers of morning or evening fire and just dream away time and

earnestness, to gather sticks to keep the old pot a-boiling, to laze into the company of strangers and slip out of their company in time, to make friends with bird and beast, and watch insects and grubs—to relax and to be; that's my idea of tramping. The blessed nights full of dew or rain and breeze, the full length of a ferny bed that Mother Earth provides—don't they attract, don't they pull one away from the town! And then the day, with celestial, unadvertised, unpaid-for sunshine or shade, on the rocks, on the tufty hills, beside tiny springs or stream on the stairs of the mountains!

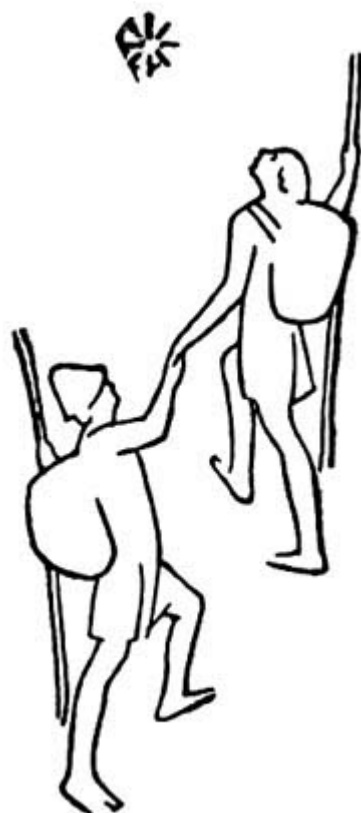
I HAD an idea I was finding my poet at Springfield—well, I know I shall not find him now till we get to the wilderness. He is yet incarcerated in the home town. He reflects in his soul the grey walls and squat architecture of the city; his nerves are still tied to the leading strings of audiences and friends; his soul, like a rare singing bird lately caught by the curious, flings itself against the bars and pines for the wilderness. All is going to go well with him and us, I surmise, and his eyes will have mountains and stars in them, and his nerves get free of strings and sink into their natural beds for a rest, and his soul, that rarely plumaged, wingéd wanderer 'twixt heaven and earth—well, some one has come to open the cage door and let him fly away, to heart's desire.

The world will have to send a fowler after him with a net, if it wants to get him back. And to find him—it will be “a long ways.”



*The poet was in Fifth Street
Mewed up as in a prison.
He was moping in his bedchamber
All the day long*

*Far from the mountains and the flowers,
But see, a visitor has arrived
From strange parts.*



III. TAKING THE ROAD

WE packed our knapsacks at Springfield, and stowed away blankets and socks, a coffee-pot, and a frying-pan. We bought at a ten-cent store knife and fork and spoon, skillet, towels which we sewed into sacks, mugs, and what was labelled “The Mystic Mit—the greatest discovery since soap for cleaning pots and pans.” Lindsay had hobnails put in his old boots and bought a handsome pair of corduroy breeches, which, together with his old black hat, made him look like a tramping violinist. Springfield bade us farewell. We were one night in the train to Chicago and travelled all day north to St. Paul. We were then two nights and a day crossing the great land ocean of Minnesota, North Dakota, and eastern Montana—what was once an unending stage-coach trail to the West.

“This is what I like,” said Lindsay—“the prairie to the horizon, no fences, no stone walls, as in New England. It is all broad and unlimited; that is why since the days of Andrew Jackson all the great politicians have come from the West—the unfenced West. I’d like to put all the Boston and New York people out here on the plains and let the plain men run the East.”

To me, however, it looked a land of endless toil as I saw it from train windows, and I thought of the toiling pioneers and the Russians in the Dakotas, the Swedes and the Germans content to live and toil and be swallowed up at last by the distances and the primitive. European life-rivers have flowed into these deserts and made them what they are. One day their children perhaps will have a Western consciousness, an American consciousness.

WE stepped off the train at Glacier Park Station. Some dozen women in khaki riding breeches were waiting on the platform, and six or seven people got out from the tourist and Pullman cars to cross to the great log-built hotel

opposite. Then the train started again and toiled onwards to the heights of the divide, whence, as Kipling put it:

They ride the iron stallions down to drink;
To the canyons and the waters of the West.

We spent a night at the hotel and were much amused by the idea of a room with a bath in such a place, and by the notice that you could have your linen laundered in twenty-four hours. There was dancing in the evening in an immense hall lit by red Chinese lanterns and adorned by bear-skins and Alaskan ornaments—a fair company of people, too, though mostly from the West.

We, however, were eager for the road, and set out next morning with blankets and provisions and steered a north-westerly or west by north-westerly course by our compasses, abjuring trails and guides. Our idea was to obtain a cross-section view of the Rockies in their most primitive state unguided by convention. We hoped to realise something of what America was like for at least a hundred years after Columbus discovered it. We were headed for the virgin land.

How quickly did we leave that hotel with its “stopping over” crowd behind! In an hour we were in the deep silence of the mountains encompassed on each side by exuberant pink larkspurs and blanket flowers and red paint-brush. We clambered upward, ever upward, through fresh, young, chattering aspens and then green tangled pinewood—and then also through old dead forests lying in black confusion, uprooted, snapped, stricken, in heaps like the woods of the Somme Valley. Then we walked through new dead forests, burned only last year, and then through brown scorched forests that did not burn, but died merely of the great heat which their neighbours’ burning had caused.

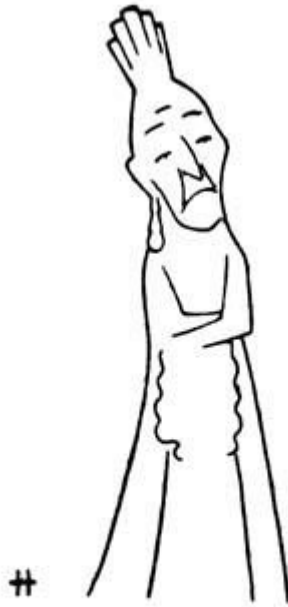
We stepped from log to log and tree to tree, making for the open and the light, with the gaiety of troubadours, and Lindsay seemed romantically happy. I also was happy, and thought of the happy days before the war, when I tramped in this fashion back and forth across the Caucasus Mountains and along hundreds of miles of Black Sea shore. It was pure joy to light the first fire and fry our bacon and make our coffee in the full effulgence of the sun.

GLACIER NATIONAL PARK, which we passed through first, is a preserve. It is God's holy mountain on which no man may shoot. By the laws you are not allowed even to frighten a bird. You may not carry firearms into the region. We were therefore not very agreeably surprised to hear in the thickets the whiz-ping of a gun which some Indians were using. Lindsay nearly got a shot in the head as he got up from luncheon. The fact is, Glacier adjoins the Blackfeet Indian reservation, and the Indians are all hunters by instinct and preference. It is difficult to restrain them. They are a gay, independent, and wild lot. We saw a number of these men with an array of plumes round their heads, steel padlocks in their ears for ear-rings, cow-bells on their sleeves, and chequer-work embroidery on their gay vests and cloaks. They had with them their squaws, fat and handsome women, all swollen out and weather-beaten like fishwives, with high cheek-bones and red-ochre faces. They danced together and skirled in wild Asiatic strains while four intent ruffians in ordinary attire beat upon one small drum with sticks. I seemed to recognise in them some sort of acquaintance to my old friends, the nomads of Central Asia, the Kirghiz—the same sort of faces and the same way of being musical. I have had a similar musical entertainment during weeks and months tramping in Turkestan and Seven Rivers Land. Both Kirghiz and Indians are dying out and both are red. I was struck by the feminine expression of the faces of the Indians and the absence of hair on their lips and chins—as if their males were not male.

However, we soon left the Blackfeet behind, and came out of their forests, and in late afternoon stood high above the lovely length of water which we identified as Medicine Lake.



*The Indians are dancing as we enter their paradise,
Our hearts are dancing too.
We love the Indians because they never bent their backs
To slavery,
To civilisation,
To office-desks.
What matter if they are dying out,
They have at least lived once.*



I WENT TO A HOUSE
AND I KNOCKED AT THE DOOR
BUT THE OLD LADY SAID
I HAVE SEEN YOU BEFORE

**I WENT TO A HOUSE
AND I KNOCKED AT THE DOOR
BUT THE OLD LADY SAID
I HAVE SEEN YOU BEFORE**

IV. FIRST NIGHTS OUT

WE spent our first night in a burned forest beside a sunken pink and grey rock. There was a green carpet of unblossoming flowers as green and romantic as ideal spring, and beside it in contrast the stark blackness of the charred trees all up and down the hill. Hidden from view but twenty yards away was a foaming rivulet with pools.

We bathed and we cooked and we talked and we slept. A great mountain like God Almighty in the midst of His creation was visible to us through the trees. We made our beds soft by pulling the dead red foliage from scorched trees and heaping it under our blankets beside the pink rocks. Lindsay made hot a large stone in the embers of our fire to keep him warm. So we lay down and waited for the night. I looked through black masts and great entanglements to the hills. Lindsay faced a scorched section of the forest all hanging in brown tresses. We listened to the stream below, its music becoming every moment more insistent. We knew that it would lull us all night long.

The mountain cloud then began to come down and roll over the tree-tops, giving them ghostly semblance. That passed, and the stars and the moon appeared and stillness ruled. An hour before dawn we were awakened by the sudden patter of a shower of rain and it was followed by the birth of a wind which came roaring along a ravine and started all the air moving everywhere and all the dead forest creaked and whined. It was our signal to arise.

LINDSAY rose like a young lion roaring, rrrah!... and making the mountains echo with his roar. "Let us go up higher," says he. I read him this. "Put it, 'Lindsay arose groaning and grunting like a pig under a gate—and let people choose,'" said the poet.

He was in great spirits. “I have never been so free. I start afresh. All is behind me. We’ll tramp to the coast. We’ll tramp to Alaska. We’ll do all the national parks, the same way,” were his impulsive speeches.

As we climbed aloft, following the North-west by our wrist-compasses, and careless of time and space, he sang a disreputable song belonging no doubt to that disreputable past of his when he hiked and begged and recited his poems to farmers—

Why don’t you go to work
Like other men do?
How can we work when there’s no work to do?
Hallelujah, on the bum!
Hallelujah, bum again!
Hallelujah! Give us a hand-out
To revive us again!

“You do look a real honest-to-God tramp this morning,” said I in the language of the country, “with your corduroys burst out at the knees, old red handkerchief round your neck, and devil-may-care look in your eyes.”

We reached the top of a mountain where there was a perfect “cyclorama,” as he called it, and he balanced on his toes, and half closed his eyes in his half upturned face, and turned round and about like a teetotum. Last time I had seen him do this was on the carpet of a London drawing-room in Queen Anne’s Gate to the strains of “*Let Samson be a-coming in to your mind.*”

This mountain was our first *ne plus ultra*, for having got to the top of it there was only one thing to do, and that was to go down again. Lindsay tested the echoes from it with “*Rah for Bryan!*” apparently his favourite war-cry, and then as if in response a slim Indian youth on horseback appeared and seemed much amused by us. He was very red and swarthy, with bright teeth, and rode his horse as if he and it made one. He told us he knew all the mountains and had been to the top of every one except Rising Wolf, which had never been climbed by any one. “It is called ‘Wolf gets up’ in our language,” he explained, and pointed to its snarling and menacing mass upstarting through clouds. “A storm comes from the mountain,” said he in warning, and passed on. He passed and we remained, and we saw no other human being the whole day.

“Just think of the children these flowers would amuse,” said Lindsay. “Millions of flowers—and the only human being we see is an Indian. I’d like to write a song on it.”

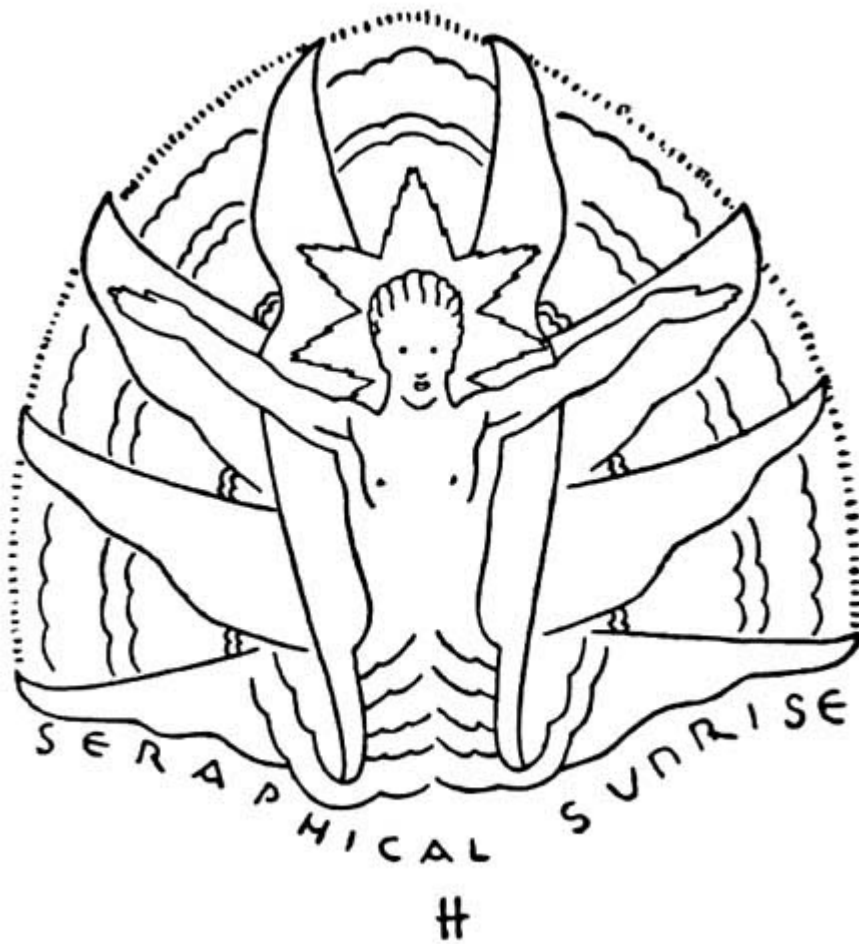
BUT the poetic mood passed. Thunderclouds rose in spectral peaks behind the mountains. Mount Helen grew dark and dreadful, and four phantasmal Mount Helens appeared behind her, the first of white mist, the second of lead, the third of streaming cloud, the fourth of shadow. Rising Wolf entered heaven; a howling, gathering, tumultuous wind roared over all the pines of the valleys and lightning like the glint of an eye traversed the ravine. Clouds swept forward to embrace us and indeed overtook us and soaked us while we sat together on a downward slide and sheltered under a blanket.

The storm passed, but we got drenched to our necks as we walked through dense undergrowth downward to a strikingly prominent clump of gigantic pines which from aloft we had chosen as harbourage for the night. These lifted their fine forms from immemorial heaps of old pine mould, soft and brown and porous. There was a stream near them and we lit a great fire by the water’s edge and hung out a line to dry blankets, coats, pants, socks, and all we possessed.

The heat flew up in armfuls of smoke, in showers of sparks, up to our sagging shirts and heavy blankets. Sparks in hundreds lighted on them, and went out or burned small holes. We walked about like savages the while, wresting dead wood to build ever higher the fire. I pulled down a branch with a tree-wasp’s nest upon it, and brought a cloud of wasps after our bodies, and I paid the penalty in a sting. Thus, however, we dried everything, and we were able at last to make a dry bed in a wet place. But rain came on again at night, and in the intense darkness under the giant pines we lay and heard it, and slept, and then waked to hear it again.



*If it rains in the town and if you get caught in the rain
And soaked to the bone—ah what a calamity!
You must have a hot bath, and take some hot toddy;
You must swallow an aspirin and sleep under blankets,
Whilst your clothes on two chairs by the fire will be drying;
You must put on dry clothes in the morning.
It's different in the mountains,
You can sleep wet and wake wet,
And dry when the weather gets drier,
That's more fun: try it.*



SERAPHICAL SUNRISE

V. GOING UP TO THE SNOW

It cleared up before dawn, but it rained for three hours after dawn. Vachel got up in the night and relit the fire and made himself a hot rock. Coming back into our dark and gloomy thicket, he mistook my form for a bear, and his heart jumped. We lived in expectation of meeting bears. “There’ll just be one heading in the *Illinois Register*,” says Vachel—“ATE BY BEARS.” We placed our bacon twenty yards away from where we slept, and hoped tacitly that they would take the bacon and spare us.

Our knapsacks weighed double next morning because of the wet in our things. We got wetter still as we ploughed out through flower fields of a drowned paradise. But an hour before noon the sun broke free and started a miraculous drying of Nature and of ourselves. We seemed to cook in the steam of our own clothes. On the hillside, at last, we decided to rest and we spread out everything to dry, dispensing with most of our clothes, and we lay in the sun in the hot damp of the flowers and let Old Sol stream into us.

Early in the afternoon most of our clothes were dry and, following the compass, we climbed up and up to a great height through primeval forest. The trees were so close that often we could not squeeze between them with our packs. We hustled and bustled and impolitely pushed through branches and umbrage and crossed tiny glades filled with ineffably lovely basket grass, holding aloft their cream crowns of blossom. It seemed to us a great struggle, and Lindsay and I held different opinions as to what we should find when we got to the end of the wood, and both of us were wrong. He thought it would be “the divide.” I thought it might be another *ne plus ultra* and a sheer descent.

But instead it was a sort of end of the world. Our primeval forest came sharply to an end on a deep, green, wind-bitten line where the branches of the trees were gnarled and twisted and beaten downward. Beyond that was a boulder-strewn upper-mountain region and a wall of rock. We asked no questions as to the morrow, but camped beside a huge stone. It was twelve feet high, but one could creep under it and be safe from the rain. And a few

feet away was our first snow-bank. We built a big fire and made tea of melted snow, and Lindsay made ice-cream of sugar and condensed milk and snow which we voted very good, and we made eight or nine hot rocks for our bed.

BECAUSE of the mountain-wall above us sunset took place at about four in the afternoon here. But a beautiful evening endured long in the east below us. We were so exalted that we looked a hundred miles over the plains and saw, as it were, the whole world picked out in shadow and sunshine below. Sunset slowly advanced over it all, and with reflected rays from an unseen west the day passed serenely away.

Lindsay, being the colder man, slept under the great boulder, and I smoothed out a recess at the side. I lay beside scores of daintily hooded yellow columbines and looked out to the occasional licked-sweet redness of an Indian paint brush. A chipmunk rudely squeaked at us, and as a last visitor a humming bird boomed over our heads like a night-awakened beetle.

We slept serenely. At two I awoke to see a fleeting half moon, all silver, tripping homeward over the high wall of the mountain with attendant stars behind. But away in the east there was a faint rose light over a bank of darkness. The darkness slowly took sharp contour, and the light that comes before the light of day picked out ten or twelve lakes and tarns which we had not noticed until then. The darkness below the rose quivered with lightning; the zenith clearness grew clearer and clearer, and then, with uplifting hands of glory and light, came seraphical sunrise.

Our bonfire, which had burned red all night, now burned a pallid yellow in the new light, and we brought out our blankets into the open and lay down and slept again in the increasing light and warmth of the new day. Then breakfast at seven and God's in his heaven. And we washed in the snow, and scores of curlews screamed from rock to rock above us on the road that we should take.

“How new it all is!” said the poet. “It is as if no one ever slept here before and wakened to see what we see or to do the things we do.”

Wrapped in our thoughts we put our packs on our shoulders and meditatively turned our steps to the downward-dropping corner of the mountain-wall which obscured the adventures of the new day.



We cut off the top of the snow with a sharp piece of slate,
And took the purer under-snow to make our coffee,
To make ice-cream:
Fastidious creatures!
And then we stood in the snow-hole
And washed with warm water,
And rubbed ourselves all over with handfuls of sloppy snow —
Disgusting old tramps!
The discreet birds watched us,
The chipmunks squeaked at us,
You didn't see us.



THE DOWNWARD WAY

VI. DIFFERENT WAYS OF GOING DOWNWARD

FOR several days now we did not meet a human being or see evidence of the existence of one; nor, though continually imagining that we had found a bit of a trail, did we find either a footstep or a hoof-mark. "I've never been before in a place where you did not see tin cans," said Lindsay. "Why, some of the popular canyons of the West are literally filled with cans. It is not only tourist parties that leave them, but the cowboys live on canned goods and fill the valley with their cans." Another relief is the absence of advertisements, of all the signs of modern civilisation. You are given without reserve to America as she was.

"I don't believe in class war," says Lindsay, as we turn the corner of the mountain-wall. "I believe in the war of the mountain and the desert with the town. Only the deserts and mountains of America can break the business-hardened skulls of the East."

He wants me to seek with him the source of the American spirit in the mountains of the West. However, reality confronts us and not a dream. We see beyond the wall of the mountain, terrace after terrace and cascade upon cascade, gleaming upward on a sort of endless stairway. To the first waterfall we count eight bays of loose stone and shale. We step from rock to rock, and as my legs are longer this hinders Lindsay more than it does me. He is all for diagonalising downward, or even going straight down, and finding an imaginary easier course skirting the edge of the forest. We, however, try to keep our level, but whether we wish it or no we slide downward at each uncertain step.

At last we come to a bay of tiny, trickling silt, so steep and smooth that a glass marble might roll from the top of the mountain to the bottom. Decent progress along this is impossible, so we decide to toboggan to the bottom, and seat ourselves on broad, flat stones, and guiding ourselves with our hands go off at a rare pace for that imaginary better way at the skirting of

the mid-mountain forest. The device reminds Lindsay of an Indian Government agent who had the task of supplying the Indians with all they needed on their reservation.

There came, consigned to him, some very large skillets or frying-pans, which the Indians repeatedly refused to take away, having no use for them. At last one day the chief came in and gladly took away the lot. The agent, curious to know what they were going to do with them, went out to see. He found half the tribe on the hillside and a very gay game in progress—Indians sitting in the frying-pans and tobogganing on the loose shale.

We slid to the bottom like the Indians, but we found no better way down there. The skirting of the mid-mountain forest ran unevenly, now up three hundred feet, now down again, and it was too arduous a way for us. “Let us go down through the forest and seek a trail,” said my companion. Once more we entered the primeval crowd of vegetation, and like police hurrying to some scene of accident, pushed our way through. In half an hour we made good progress downward and came to a sheer cliff over the rivulet of the valley. The cliff was feathered with pines, and we let ourselves down with our hands from the tops of trees, from branches, from stem to stem and trunk to trunk, to the verdant pit of the stream. We clambered downward like two curious Mowglis, but with large humps on our backs, and the humps were our packs. And how these packs of ours pulled us about! We seldom touched earth with our feet and therefore constantly slewed around and dangled with our packs entangled in thick growth.

There was little to console the poet when the water was reached, unless it was the mess of tea we made on a fire on a dank, red rock standing out of the stream. But he was all for fording the water and for trying to find a better way on the other side. This we did, and we climbed up again and then we climbed down. And we found no better way. For no one had been there before us to make it for us.

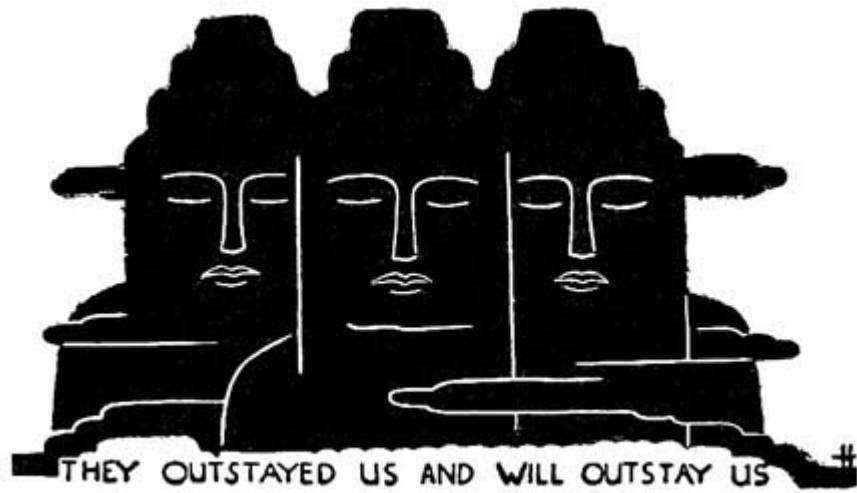
But we found beautiful quarters at last among the snows and the waterfalls below the pass, and we slept under innumerable stars, lulled by the choruses of many waters. We made breakfast at dawn and talked till it was warm. Vachel told me of his past—how he had struggled always against the downward way. People had said to him, “You must make money. You must enter a profession.” When as an art student he had gained some power with

the pencil, they had said, “You must enter commercial art”; when as poet he had been recognised, they had said, “You must let us organise and commercialise your gift, turn it into money for you.” “They wanted to Barnumise me,” said my companion, “and take me all over America as a reciting freak. When I refused, they said, ‘You’ll end in the poor-house,’ and I replied, ‘I don’t care: show me the poor-house—let me go to it.’” He had taken to the road to regain his self-respect. He had gone without any money, and in the hospitality and kindness of the farmers he had won a personal faith in the common man and a reliance which was not merely on success. When he harvested in Kansas for two dollars fifty a day, that daily wage was like millions to him. And now with me, when all the world was telling him he must do thus and so, he was finding in the wilderness of the Rockies a new means of escape.

“To-morrow,” said he, “we will climb right away to the top and find the pass into new country.”



*Who said it was easier to go down,
Facilis decensus and the rest?
I'll say it is more painful
Than to go up.
You think it was great fun a-sliding down the shale
On large flat rocks.
But it leaves me cold,
As the saying is,
For the seat of my pants is much thinner.*



THEY OUTSTAYED US AND WILL OUTSTAY US

VII. SILENCED BY THE MOUNTAINS

MY companion's secret thought is that he is a Virginian. But how, since he was born in Illinois and his parents in Kentucky? "I am a follower of Poe and Jefferson," he answers. Kentucky was largely colonised from Virginia, and the poet is ready to claim allegiance to the chivalric, leisurely and flamboyant genius of the South. "If only as a protest against the drab, square-toed, dull, unimaginative America which is gaining on us all," he adds. He has a passion for ideal democracy, and his great hero of the hour as we stride over the rocks is John Randolph, of Roanoke, who could enter Congress with four hounds and a dog-whip and make speeches to which all must listen. "America," Lindsay insists, "simply *needs* the flamboyant to save her soul." I suppose, because of that faith, he also, Vachel Lindsay, the poet, is a flamboyant genius.

The higher we rose in the mountains the more serious became our conversation. We were silent only when we lost our breath. Upon occasion, in this grand and lonely scene, the poet would lift his voice so high that it could have been heard on the mountain on the other side of the valley. His enthusiasm naturally lifted his resonant voice. His political hero is John Randolph or Andrew Jackson, his literary hero is Ruskin, his artist in marble is Saint-Gaudens, his pet hobby is Egyptian hieroglyphics, his passion is the road, and his ideal is St. Francis. Tell it to the mountains and the streams; tell it out! They hear and so do I.

WHERE we stand is where never man has stood before, or foot of man has trod, and the fresh and virginal flowers on every hand look up at us with mute surprise. We carry our argument higher and higher. We sit and boil our pot beside a bank of purple heather, exalted upon the bare scarp of a sun-drowned mountain, and crackling of roots in the fire blends with strident

Middle-West American. We pull up to the black door of a great rock, and the splashing of a cascade splashes through his vibrant tones.

At last, however, the mountains silenced us. They outstayed us, and will outstay us. They ate up our provisions, and swallowed our breath, and beguiled us deceptively to climb higher. “Upward and onward!” was invisibly written on every crag. And we always expected to get to the top in an hour. We finished the coffee, we finished the milk, we finished the bread, we finished the sugar. We got down to a rasher of bacon a day and tea without sugar and milk. Then even the much-loathed bacon got finished, and the problem was to find a “camp” and get more supplies. So we set ourselves seriously to the task of finding a pass over the range.

The poet became much exhausted, and the high altitude evidently affected him more than it did me. We walked quarter-hours and rested quarter-hours, and every time we rested we fell fast asleep. I led up the steep inclines, and we stopped every twenty paces and listened to our breath, I to his breath, he to mine—*ao, ao, ao*—almost a sob, and waited for the *ahoo* sound, which meant that the lungs had filled again. After some arduous hours in this wise, we came on our first destitute afternoon, to our first topmost ridge. A cold hurricane seemed to try to stop our final conquest of it, and it went through our bodies like swords. But when we exultantly bore through it we came to a sheer precipice going down to a narrow corridor which led always to the northward.

VACHEL punctuates most of his remarks with a wild native yell—“Whoopee Whuh!” but he was down to a whisper now, and could no longer move the mountains with a “Hurrah for Bryan.” Silently and rather mournfully we diagonalised downward to a far blue lake which was the ultimate end of the valley, and the source of the stream we had followed for days. Devastating winds blew across us, and we watched how they descended upon the surface of that lake and tore it off in sprays and circles of water and steam. We found what seemed to be a horse trail over the shingle, but it led to an extensive field of snow, and we recognised only the footsteps of a bear. The lake was not blue, but green when we got near to it, and was banked on three sides by snow.

Said Vachel: "Here, Stephen, is the place to catch a fish."

I said: "No, Vachel, this is just a snow-melt; there never were any fish here."

"Nevertheless try!" said the poet.

Now we had purchased fishing tackle, though we had no rods. And Vachel had a large red wooden grasshopper, and I had a large green one.

Vachel said: "You must throw your grasshopper in, and I'll go light a fire so as to be ready to cook the fish."

So I fastened my fat green wooden gentleman to the gut, and the gut to the line, and attaching a stone, flung him in the air. Behold, he flew like a grasshopper and disported with the winds. But when he settled at last on the surface of that green and snowy lake, he always made a most rapid progress toward the shore. I sailed him like a boat. No fish came, and even our faith remained unrewarded.

Was not this adventure prophetically put in verses in *Alice*, where some one sent a message to the fish, telling them, this is what I wish. And the little fishes' answer was—"We cannot do it, sir, because,"—the little fishes, as was disclosed later, were in bed.

We sat down together in a place like the heath in Macbeth, and the weird sisters were ready to appear, had we been evil. The sun had set, winds were blowing from four directions at the same time, and it was bitterly cold. A tiny fire of roots peeped at us and smoked and chattered, and we tried hard to get warm at it. We looked at the mountain-walls, we looked at our maps and compasses. We thought of the night and of our empty wallets and insides. "Just think of Broadway at this minute," said Vachel. "Still sweltering in heat, not yet lighted up for evening pleasure." We felt far from civilisation, and sighed at last for what we despised. "Or think of Piccadilly and Shaftesbury Avenue," said I, "all a-swarm with the light-hearted summer crowd of London."

"Well, we can't sleep here," said I at length.

"Let us make one last attempt to get over to the other side."

Vachel seemed surprised, but agreed with alacrity: "I'm for it," said he.



*The greedy old mountains have been to our knapsacks
And eaten up most of our food.
They've swallowed our breath and silenced our speech.
But they haven't broken our hearts.
It takes more than a mountain to do that!*



IMPRISONED IN THE VIEWLESS WINDS

VIII. NIGHT AND NOTHING ON THE MOUNTAINS

My companion has a curious old-man-of-the-woods appearance. It is not his loose red handkerchief round his neck so much as his hanging, dead-branch-like arms. His face sleeps even when he is awake. He walks when he is tired in a patient, dog-like way, treading in my very steps. No ribald songs, now, of tramping days—but as if hushed by the hills he croons ever to himself—

O Beulah land, sweet Beulah land,
Lo, on thy topmost mount I stand,

and in a sort of hymnal marching step, like way-worn pilgrims, we take the trackless way upward once again. And it is late twilight. Sombre hope and patience dwell in our hearts as we trudge, trudge upward.

By slow stages we reach a new possible pass, and every time we stop and turn round and sit down to rest we face the lake. On three sides the descent to the water is precipitous, and an overhanging snow-crust goes round. In the late light the surface of the lake is a still, viscous green and the mountain above it a calm blood-red. The snow patches on the mountain are of fantastic shape and give an idea of futurist designs. We stare at the patches and see in one of them a ferocious white tiger, stalking forward with a demented white cat on its back. In another we see an Egyptian figure, slender, with veiled features of awful and eternal significance. These grow in the dusk. The winds chase over us, and when they pass there are moments of windlessness, and we watch hurrying grey rags of clouds running over the brow of the ridge above us and losing themselves in thin air.

It is a romantic climb. We support each other up the steep, sitting down every twenty paces in breathlessness. Vachel sits with his head on my shoulder and I with my head on his. In a minute or so we recover and sit up straight, in the half darkness, and pick up flat stones and try to make them

skid over the snow patches. For a moment I was taken back to the romantic vein of “Parsifal” as I saw it in Vienna, last May, and we were Wagnerian pilgrims, toiling upwards in the ecstasy of mystical opera. Somewhere below us, in the lake, all the violins should sob and croon together and aspire, yes, aspire and throb, and the drums should start the gods to look at us. But we treated the matter in light vein. “The Bacon-eaters,” said Vachel *sotto voce*. “Seventh reel.”

A MIGHTY final effort brought us to the top. I shall not soon forget the dramatic sensation of seeing the new sky which suddenly began to lift itself into our view from out the other side of the mountain, a sky with more light, for it lay in the West. It was as if the prison-wall of the mountain had been thrown down and that which prisoners dream about and rave about had been given us.

And there was a way down. It was night and nothing, but we found a narrow gully on the other side, five or six feet broad, two or three thousand feet down, and an appalling steepness. This gully was all loose stones and boulders which the slightest touch sent clattering or thundering to the bottom. We were nerved to the descent by what we had gone through and by our joy at finding a way out.

I took the lead, clutched the rock wall for support, and began to slip downward, tentatively and cautiously. But directly I started, a wonderful thing occurred. I found the whole body of loose stones under my feet moved with me, and I began a progress as on a moving staircase, down, down, down, as in Jules Verne’s *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*—easily, steadily. Pleasure in this was, however, rudely disturbed. Lindsay had started downward behind me and was naturally starting a movement of rocks on his own, and suddenly a leg-breaking boulder flew past on my track with dumfounding acceleration. I climbed, therefore, away from the moving staircase into a cleft of the rock and waited for the poet to draw level.

It was dark night now, and as the rocks from Lindsay's feet rushed past they struck bright sparks in the gloom. How they crashed! How they thundered and lurched and thumped, and thumped again, and thudded into the abyss below, and how the little stones rattled after them! We agreed to go downward in short spells, one at a time, and then go into shelter and wait till we drew level again. And as we sat side by side in the gloom we looked to the great mountains on the other side of the new valley and discerned a colossal figure nine in snow, staring at us out of the darkness. It was eerie. It needed a deal of nerve to go on.

And we did not go much further. At one point I thought I saw two human beings, or they might have been bears, struggling slowly upward toward us. I shouted to them and they stopped. But they made no reply and just glowered menacingly upward. That was the end for me. I would go no further. I gave the halloo to Lindsay and got into shelter. He came down the way I had come, laboriously, cautiously, like some weather-beaten old soldier, a skulker from beyond human ken. And he also desired to do no more that night. So we lay in a lair of a beast on the brink of a sheer cliff, far, as it happened, above mist and cloud and a rain that was falling below, and slumbered the night away.



The Guardsman and the Western Bard^[1]

Went hiking hand in hand.

They felt uplifted much to see

The prospects wide and grand.

*"A thousand leagues," said one, "Oh Steve,
From any boardwalk band."*

"How fine the air, immense the view!

The trees are large and green.

See! Here are glades and crystal rills,

*And every scent and petal fills
Our souls with pure ecstatic thrills.
Afflatus holds the scene!”
The Guardsman pointed to the sun.
“It’s supper time, I mean.”*

*And as they munched the cracker thin
And quaffed eau naturel,
The gates of heaven were oped—and all
Its liquid contents fell.
They felt the truth that bards have sung:
Heaven is a limpid well.*

*Then night came on, that covers all
Of high and mean degree,
The king, the clown, the russet gown,
The land, the clouds, the sea.
“And yet I scarcely feel,” said one,
“It really covers me.”*

*Long time they sought sweet slumber’s balm,
Kind antidote to care.
“O soft embalmer,” was their psalm
That filled the mountain air.
Embalmer! Something rough in pine
Was as all they wanted there.*

*A chilly dawn illumed the East,
Most wonderfully wet.
And evermore their pangs increased,
Nor heaven’s libations ever ceased ...
(No further messages released
They’re on that mountain yet).*

[1] Contributed by “Rusticus” to the *New York Evening Post* at this point in our adventures.



WHEN HE IS IN PAIN HE CALLETH FOR THE BOTTLE

IX. “WIFE, GIVE ME THE PAIN-KILLER”

“I SUFFERED forty-seven separate chills,” said the poet. “And forty-seven separate cramps,” said I. Did we sleep? Six hours passed somehow and it seemed not so long as waiting that time for a train or for a theatre to open. Lindsay lay in a sort of hole. I lay with my head half over the abyss. I watched the stars swim out of the clouds above. I saw the blackness of the bottomless below us become grey as the clouds formed there. Lindsay cried out once: “I’m getting up to light a fire.” “Impossible!” I rejoined. “There’s no wood, and no place to light it.”

“I am afraid the clouds are below us; we may have to stay up here all day,” I whispered, an hour before dawn. But it was all the same to the poet, whose thoughts were entirely in the present.

Destiny, however, was kind to us. The clouds at last lifted and drifted, and angels at sunrise lifted white curtains and smiled at us.

A couple of old woe-begone weather-beaten tramps lifted themselves up cautiously and peeped at the wilderness. Last night’s nerve had gone. With backs bent, and sometimes on hands and knees, they picked their way gingerly down to the far snow dump beneath, to the first wind-missed bits of mountain forest, to the first tinkling stream, and to the first chalice anemones and pink paint-brush flowers. We washed and we dressed, and we slept and washed again, and put snow inside our hats—for the morning had become rapidly hot—and we descended. The streamlet foamed down its rocky bed, and we waded and jumped and clung to its sides. And other streams flowed into it and made it deeper and the current stronger, and it splashed us above the waist. We waded knee-high through pools where shadowy fishes darted, and we sat to rest on shiny rocks in the water and talked of desirable foods. We scanned the map of the Geological Survey and stared at our compasses and considered the contours of the hills, and at

length were rewarded by the sight of a real human horse trail with indisputable hoof-marks upon it.

WE found this in the afternoon, and for three hours followed doggedly, without meeting a soul. At last, to our great joy, we came upon a trivial enough thing, and that was a piece of candy wrapping. "Those who eat candy do not stray far from the place where candy was bought," said I sententiously.

"Well argued, sir," said Lindsay. "I fully agree."

And, indeed, before sunset the happy augury was fulfilled, and we found a camp much used by Montana fishermen. Curiously enough, though all other wild things are preserved in the National Park, the fishes are allowed to be caught. In our opinion, however, after some experience, the fishes do not stand in need of protection.

At the camp we resumed acquaintance with the human race in the person of the keeper and his wife, a fire-ranger, and a hired maid called Elsie. They filled up our cans and gave us a pail of boiling water to wash our clothes, and thread for our trousers and coats, and a week's rations to take us to "The Sun." They were disappointed that we would not buy bacon.

"Bacon," said the camp keeper, "is my long suit." But Vachel vowed he had gone over to the Mosaic point of view, and didn't care if he never tasted bacon again.

Instead, we "filled up" with corn-beef hash and took into our packs raisins and grape-nuts and butter; double quantities of bread and sugar and milk, and nine packets of comforting lozenges. And we saw by the *Spokane Advertiser* of some remote date that the King and Queen of England had been to Ascot races in person, and no one knew what was happening in Ireland, or whether De Valera was a Protestant or a Catholic, and the fire-ranger confessed he did not know the ins and outs of Sinn Fein. And no, there had not been a forest fire this year yet, though he evidently lived in hope.

So the poet and I fortified ourselves materially and spiritually, and set off again for the North-west. We started on our new rations and had one of the most jovial of meals in a place where evidently people had once camped before. We found the charred circles of old camp-fires in the grass.

While we were resting under the trees, and in the gleam of the firelight, Vachel told me the story of how once, in Kansas, he “ate down” his landlord. He had hired himself out with a gang of others to harvest the wheat on the land of a certain German farmer. All the week-days they “piled the golden sheaves,” and it was a red-hot July. The men ate as much as they were able, slept in barns on the hay when the day was done, slept like the dead, rose with the dawn, and certainly did bring in the wheat. For this they got two dollars fifty a day and were proud of their gains.

On Sunday, however, work was suspended, and the gang just lazed and dozed and ate. The German was a pious Catholic, and said a longish grace before and after meals. As the gang were rather sheepish regarding religion, they generally let one course pass, just to avoid the grace, and came slouching in as the meal went on. But Vachel started in with the first grace, right level with the farmer himself. Whatever he had Vachel had. He had several helpings of everything on the table, and as each of the ten harvest hands came in Vachel started afresh with him, and as he had hash he had hash. As each man thought he had done, he slunk out so as to avoid the second grace. The farmer kept piously waiting for all the men to get finished, and helping himself with them, too, just for company.

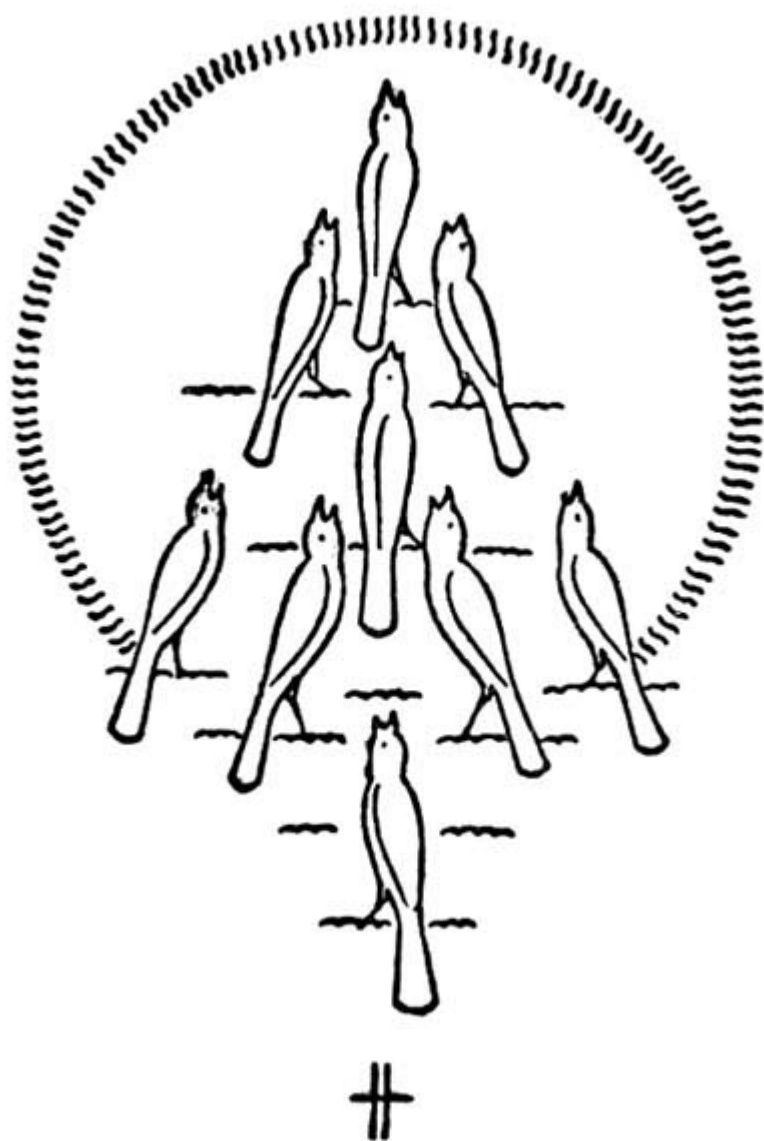
At last all seemed to have finished and gone, and the farmer was about to pronounce the final blessing when he had an afterthought and took another piece of pie. So Vachel also took another piece of pie. Then mechanically the last grace was said. “I went over to the barn and lay down and slept,” says Vachel. “By supper time I was ready for another meal, and I sat down again with the farmer before the rest of the gang had arrived and grace was said. The farmer was about to help himself when suddenly he paused, spoon in hand, and sat back in his chair, looking ill.”

Then, in a loud, stentorian voice he called to the kitchen: “Wife, give me the pain-killer.”

He had a violent fit of indigestion. Wife then brought a large bottle labelled PAIN-KILLER, an astonishing bottle, about a foot long, that looked as if it might be horse liniment, and the farmer took his dose with a large iron spoon. "A terrible stuff," says Vachel, "a stuff that just eats the inside out of you, one part turpentine, three alcohol, and the rest iron rust. It gives you such a heat you forget about your indigestion."

So the farmer had his pain-killer, but he did not eat any supper, and the poet and the rest of the gang as they came went gaily on and ate to the end. "I began with each man as he came in and ate him down," says my hungry companion suggestively. "And the farmer, tasting nothing, had to wait till all were through to say the final grace. We finished at last and went all of us to the barns to sleep till Monday morning and the hour when we returned again to the golden line."

*The kiss by hopeless fancy feigned
On lips that are for others,
Does not compare with the imaginary meal
You eat when the wallet is empty.
The kiss too, when you get it,
Oft proves a disillusion;
But the first meal after an involuntary fast,
Well!
It takes a real poet to describe that!*



X. CLEAR BLUE

AFTER telling me how he “ate down” the farmer, Vachel rested and passed into a halcyon mood. We had a heavenly day climbing towards a heaven of unclouded blue. Swinburne flowed more naturally from the poet’s lips than conversation:

Before the beginning of years
There came to the making of man
Time with a gift of tears,
Grief with a glass that ran.

His thought soared with our steps.

As the sea gives her shells to the shingle
The earth gives her streams to the sea,

he declaimed to the streams. I promised to arrange a Swinburne recital for him next time he came to England. For I soon found that he knew as much Swinburne by heart as he did of his own poetry. Ellery Sedgwick wrote me from Boston that to tramp with a poet would be “Some punkins,” and one may say it was when the poet all day long was a living fountain of verse. I had but to mention a poem and Lindsay poured it forth to the skies. We bathed in a waterfall in the heat of noon, which was also a Swinburnian joy, and we splashed in melting snow whilst our shoulders were burned by the sun and inured ourselves to sun and ice.

The sun literally blistered the skin, and we reclined in it on scarlet shelving rocks and cooked our luncheon. All the while Vachel recited Swinburne’s “Ode to Athens,” addressing the walls of a great mountain cirque which drooped in snow curtains and hanging gardens of silver water.

Up there came to us after lunch a yellowish-grey animal with sprawling hind legs and stupid benevolent snout and whistled at us—*fee-fo, fee-fo*,—a whistling marmot. As I tried to approach him he snuggled off to the snow-field whence he had come, disappeared under the crust, and presently

reappeared from a hole in the midst of the snow and began chasing chipmunks in and out of the snow holes.

WE resumed our journey upward, and all was well. The grass was emerald, the paint-brush was bright ruby. Swallow-tailed butterflies aeroplaned to our feet. The valley was broad and clear without mystery or horror. The waterfalls hung like the gardens of Babylon. An opal lake below us changed and waxed in iridescent glory and caused whispers of rapturous interest. And the mountain we were on was the one of the great figure nine made of snow, which had so thrilled us and appalled us when we saw it afar at night some days before. When we had gone to the top of it we had reached the great divide, where the waters flow north, south, and west toward Hudson's Bay, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Pacific. At least, so the topographers assure us, and we must take their word. Vachel says we will not wait for rain and see the rain-drops hit the mountain-top and divide automatically into three parts.

So we descended at dusk into a verdant valley, with low trees growing wide apart, and waist-high flowering daisies and basket grass, and sunflowers—all as fresh and fair as if gardened for us yesterday. There were serried ranks of flowers. The tall mullein stalks became so thick that they looked like a wooden fencing in the twilight. Looking upward we saw a crimson mountain, a brown mountain, and a green mountain. Looking downward, afar, we saw many forests, separated by streams, sleeping before us. And we slept in a thicket and were made music to by the nymphs of the seven waterfalls of Shadow Mountain.

VACHEL LINDSAY belongs to a sect of primitive Christians called "Disciples of Christ." They are followers of Alexander Campbell, and are called "Campbellites" in America, much as members of the Catholic and Apostolic community are called Irvingites in England. They are akin to the Baptists, being emphatically "immersionists." Among other notable people

who belong to this brotherhood is Mr. Lloyd George, and it has been suggested that the British statesman be asked to address a general convention of the Disciples if he comes to America. The chief virtue in the sect lay doubtless in an attempted return to primitive historical Christianity in all its simplicity. Not that the poet is a narrow sectarian. How could a poet be? But he has drunk deep of the primitive spirit in Christianity, and is very near to children, negroes, Indians, and the elemental types in men and women. He loves oratory more than reason, and impulse more than thought. Hence, no doubt, the well of his poetry.

We talked of the modern cult of mediævalism and the Chesterton-Belloc group as we resumed our tramp, and we discussed G. K. Chesterton's visit to America. Lindsay felt that Chesterton counted for a great deal in America. He was not merely a celebrity. He had the reputation of a Socrates eager to converse with youth. But when he came to America he did not really come. "He has been Barnumised as Oliver Lodge was Barnumised," said the poet. "It's the worst of commercialised lecturing. Literary lions are imported by speculative impresarios and then put to the American people entirely from a dollar point of view. The organisations that can pay five hundred dollars for a visit get their Chesterton. But how about the universities and colleges and small groups, the real intelligentsia of America—the people who have a creative interest in what a thinker and critic has said and in what he says? A similar mistake was made with Alfred Noyes, who was booked as the man who made poetry pay. It created a false impression and did much injury when there was an opportunity for great good." Vachel Lindsay's idea is that two or three literary men and women should be chosen each year as the guests of the nation, and that they should be sponsored by the magazines and the universities. In that way they would meet the American nation and not merely the brassy front of American business.

WITH this subject we plunged through the rank undergrowth of the forest, following our north-westerly way, which should bring us to St. Mary's Lake and the steps of "Going to the Sun Mountain." We gathered our first potful of black currants and stewed them with sugar for our luncheon, and we had

our daily dip in the rushing waters of Red Eagle Creek. It was a warm valley, and the west wind, surcharged with moisture from the Pacific, had expressed itself in a great floral exuberance, in ripe raspberries, currants, and gooseberries, and in forests of firs, which lay against the steep mountain-sides like feathers against a bird's wing.

Vachel indulged his passion for the West and all that the West means to an American. He has memorised at some time or other the map of the United States, and can draw it and put in all the States in a few minutes. He drew it on a scrap of paper as we rested at sunset, putting in the far Western States first—Washington and Oregon like two sugar-boxes on top of one another, and then the key-shape of Utah, whose southern line is roughly the southern line of Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Kentucky, and Virginia, and whose northern line is the northern line of California and Nevada, and approximately of Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Rhode Island.

“California,” says he, “is a whale swimming around the desert of Nevada; Idaho is a mountain throne and its curve is the curve of Montana. Wyoming fits into the angle of Utah. New Mexico is under Colorado, and its capital, Sante Fé, is the spiritual capital of America. Texas plunges southward like a root—don't draw it too small. Oklahoma is a pistol pointing west. Nebraska is another pistol pointing west. North and South Dakota are western blankets. Louisiana is a cavalier's boot. Illinois is like an ear of Indian corn. Arkansas, Missouri, and Iowa move westward with the slant of the mountains and the rivers. All America, as you will see, has a grandiose north-westerly-south-easterly direction or kink caused by the Rocky Mountains primarily, and by the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers secondarily. The Rocky Mountains control the continent. That is why we are travelling north-west. It is quite natural. It is America's way. It is written in her rocks and by her waters.

“As the families migrated from Virginia to Kentucky and Illinois and Minnesota—so we go following nature's trail out to the wilderness.”



*North-west, north-west!
Give us north-westerly breezes.
Let us be mad north-north-west,
Rather than southerly sober and sane.
Some one once wrote on a madhouse wall,
That the madder we were the nearer to God;
The saner, the further from Man.
God give us the divine kink
North-north-west, north-north-west,
When you can't tell a hawk from a handsaw,—
Hamlet only became Hamlet when he learned the secret.*



YOU HAVE COME TO BE ALONE WITH
YOUR HEART

YOU HAVE COME TO BE ALONE WITH YOUR HEART

XI. NATIONAL WILDERNESSES

GLACIER in Montana, Yellowstone in Wyoming, Sequoia and Yosemite in California, Grand Canyon in Arizona, besides Mount McKinley in Alaska and many minor reservations and national forests—they ought truly to be called by some name other than parks. The same also is true for Canada, which possesses its wonderful Dominion Parks such as those of Waterton and Lake Louise. The name “park” has evidently been given to popularise them. Such places in Russia are called “wildernesses,” and are resorted to for meditation. They are called literally “empty places,” the same word that is used in the Bible for wilderness. Tolstoy when he died was on his way to the wilderness—to the “Empty Place of Optin.” In England, in our conventional phrase, we should be likely to call them “retreats,” like the retreat on the Island of Iona. But the idea is that they should provide in our life what is meant when it is written: *The Spirit drove Him into the wilderness*; or *He went up into the mountain to pray*. In the midst of the hurly-burly comes the happy thought—“I will arise now and go to my wilderness, to my retreat, to my empty place.”

The spiritual background of Great Britain is in the mountains of the North, among the Cumberland Lakes and on the wild border. Or it is in the obscure grandeur of the Sussex Downs, or on Dartmoor, or on the Welsh hills. Small though the mountains may be, they are continually in the minds of English people. The way of escape is clear. And many of the bright spirits of England and Scotland have derived their strength direct from the hills. Byron and Scott and Ruskin and Wordsworth drew their strength from the hills. Carlyle super-imposed Ecclefechan upon Chelsea. Even he who once said “London’s streets are paved with gold” was driven by the spirit from Battersea to Buckingham. I find a belief in the wilderness strong in Vachel Lindsay. He holds that the wild West has been and still must be the spiritual lodestone of American men. Untamed America has remade the race. Andrew Jackson was the voice of the West of his day, Abraham Lincoln of his. And though New England has held the hegemony of letters he divines that the wilderness—the mountains—will be the source of the inspiration of

the coming time. Early America derived most of her inspiration from across the Atlantic. Her heart was outside her body. But mature America, conscious of herself as a whole, will know more surely that she has a heart and a soul and a way to God in herself.

I LOOK to a time when national wildernesses will have an acknowledged significance in our public life, when men and women of all classes of life will naturally retire to them for recreation—as naturally as people used to go to church on Sundays and for a similar reason. All praise to the foresight and energy of Franklin Lane, the late American Minister of the Interior, that enterprising Canadian who did so much to bring the people's heritage before their eyes!

The “See America First” is a poor slogan. It is like “Do Everything Once” and “Buy him a Fountain Pen.” The question should be raised to a higher level. People need not visit Glacier as they visit Switzerland, in a spirit of curiosity. Even in this sophisticated age they can come as pilgrims of Nature as easily as they can come as tourists. “Triangular trips,” “Four-day tours,” are not in the right spirit. Time is immaterial.

But there is virtue in shoe-leather, virtue in the saddle of the horse. Not much virtue in guides, in hotels. You come to these places to be alone with Nature or you do not arrive.

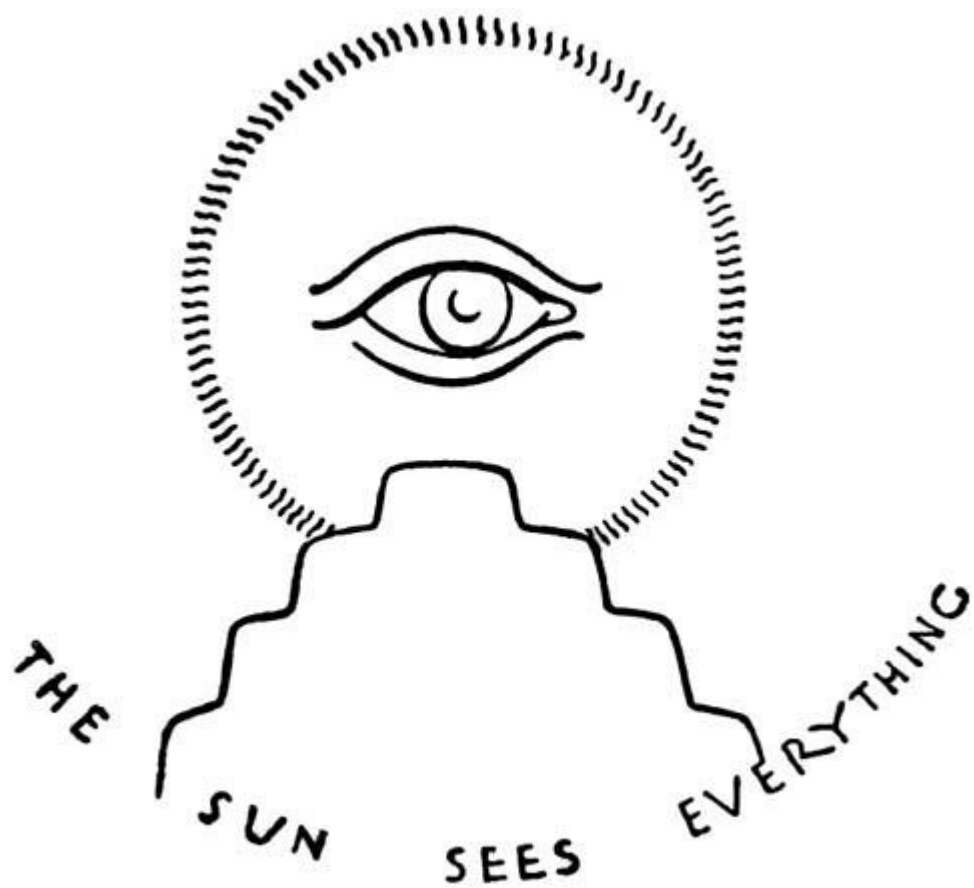
So much for the idea and possibilities of the national parks. Lindsay showed me a portfolio of descriptions of them when he was in London, and he did much to persuade young Englishmen interested in America to visit them, go tramp in them. And though of course we had heard in a dim way of Yellowstone Park and of the Indian reservations both in the United States and in Canada it was a novelty for us. But Englishmen are born trampers and lovers of the wilderness, and are ready to reverse the American proverb—Why walk if you can ride?—and put it, Why ride when you can walk?

And I shall not be the first Englishman to seek refreshment hiking through the wild places of the West.

We talked of this exuberantly as we clambered through the forests on the side of Little Chief Mountain, and it was still our theme in the evening when we lighted our fires in a vast rock temple and chasm down into which tumbled dark water, glittering and hastening as it flowed downward to the valleys. How to say a word for national wildernesses in this sedentary era of the world's history, how to say a word for true religion and quiet and the things of the spirit! Vachel Lindsay will no doubt dramatise the subject in one fine Western epic some day, and I make my appeal, as I have done before, in prose, as for the wildernesses of Europe, so also for the wildernesses of America. But whether we write or sing of what we feel or see, one thing is sure when we are done—we shall have lived apart and tramped and meditated upon the mountains and far in the wilderness and it will mean something in our lives.



*What wish you to-day, dear tramp?
What wish you for brother-man?
Why, just this:—
The quality of mountain-sides in the colour of his eyes,
The deep of stars in the lake of his soul,
Feet that have learned to leap,
And a spirit that longs to fly.
That's what I wish, dear brother, to-day,
Said the tramp.*



THE SUN SEES EVERYTHING

XII. GOING WEST

WE love inspirational phrases such as to “go West” which sprang on to men’s lips in the Great War, and was a way of saying “to die,” which was startlingly poetic, seeing that it came from the soul of those masses usually admitted to be so vulgar. “He’s gone West,” men said with a hushed voice, meaning that like so many who had passed before, he had gone—to another world, to beyond the setting sun. The phrase was not current among the American soldiers, but I have heard of an equally wonderful expression used by the mountaineers, who said: “He has crossed the Great Divide.”

My mind is inevitably drawn to these thoughts as we face so often the setting sun, as we cross the pinnacles of our momentary aspirations, the passes, the divides which separate sky from sky and valley from valley.

Lindsay is also constantly enwrapped by the romance of Going West—the historic and poetic Western movement which has pulsed humanity since the hordes and their caravans stampeded across Asia in the days which are almost before history. What was it, what is it that hypnotises us—is it not the sun which, rising in the morning, calls all his children after him all day and bids them follow when at last he plunges into night and nothingness?

“HAVE courage,” says the sun in the evening. “Have faith,” say the stars all the night long. “You see, I rise again; you will rise,” says the sun in the morning. “This way, this way,” he says till noon, and “Follow, follow,” all the afternoon, and then once more, “Behold! I go. Have courage!” he says in the evening again. And that sets young hearts a-beating, that kindles the poet’s flame and enlarges the spirit and makes the way of the world.

That makes us all nomads, all gypsies, all pilgrims. That draws the steps of the willing, and even the unwilling find themselves borne along by a human tide and a sliding sand of time—away to the west and the night and the other country. No one can stay, even if he will. In time all must go, all must

follow the sun and cross the Divide and go down the slopes of the unimaginable other side and be with the stars in the long, hungry night, the myriads of stars that never do anything else but look down on human souls and ask of us and stare at us and dream of us. The night of stars for all of us, and then with our Father and guide, far o'er these mountains, wan and tired, but gleaming and then resplendent, we lift our eyes to the other country, the dreamed-of, hoped-for country — and it is morning and we are still with the light that we followed yesterday.

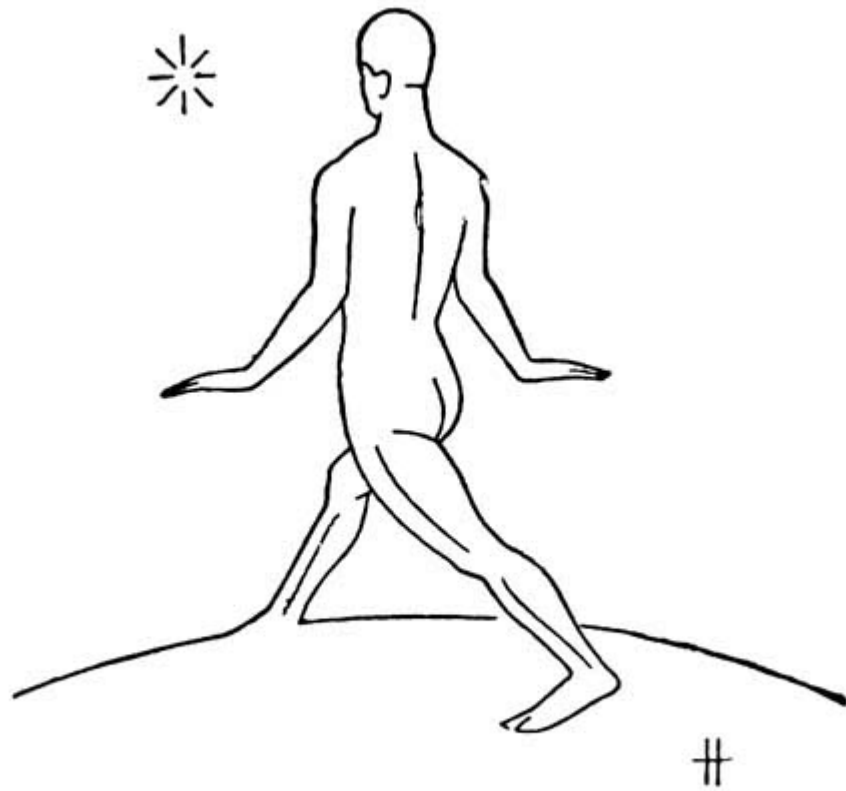
“THE old prairie-schooners,” says Lindsay, “blundered forward on the western way, day after day, season after season, sometimes for years, for the pioneers often worked their way to the Virgin Land which they had taken for goal. Often, indeed, they died on the way, they broke down on the way. Each yearned to the West even as they failed and threw their spirits westward, like Douglasses carrying the heart of Bruce to the Promised Land. The primitive instinct for moving was awakened by the road and many a pioneer found happiness in the going as much as in the attainment.”

We ourselves are going westward now, rather than north-west, and the sun beckons us. For the mountain we are now setting out to reach has been called by the Indians “Going-to-the-Sun.” It stands over and beyond St. Mary’s Lake and climbs heavenward in gigantic steps of stone. It steps from the forest to the rocks, from the rocks to the snow, from the snow to the sky. It is a mighty cathedral, standing in the midst of prosaic mountains, surely one of the most beautiful and majestic of these mountains, symbolic in its shape and its ancient name. We have slept on the mossy earth at the foot of the pines. We will arise and go to the sun.



There's some one calling you:

*Arise, sleepy-head,
Arise from your bed!
A messenger is peeping,
There where you're sleeping:
For the day's been begun
By your master the sun,
And you surely will follow.*



CROSSING THE GREAT DIVIDE

CROSSING THE GREAT DIVIDE

XIII. CLIMBING RED EAGLE

WE journeyed through the primeval forest without a trail to guide us, through the jagged, thorny, tumultuous pine wilderness. It was not so easy for Lindsay, whose legs are shorter than mine, but he took it as a game of banter leader and moved forward doggedly into the openings I made. We were glad to take advantage of the thousands of wind-smitten trees which lay dead, piled at every angle and piled on one another.

We climbed upward for miles on the white, smooth, dead timber of fallen trees, balancing and jumping, transferring from trunk to trunk, and clambering over the immense stars of upturned roots. We were rewarded at length by a view of the rocks above the tree line and of a tumbling cascade. This was in the direction we required and we made for it and lunched by the cascade become rivulet, and then climbed all the afternoon by rock stairs to the snow.

At six beside a “bride-veil waterfall,” we had supper. Above us was an amphitheatre of red rocks and ruined slate and it seemed but a small climb to the top of the mountain. The gradient was steep and there were large quantities of loose stones. We climbed without intermittence until 9 o’clock at night, and as one top was nearly conquered another top seemed to be added. The amphitheatre receded upward to heaven.

How arduous it was and at times how risky! Massive stones on which we relied to place our feet proved to be only passengers like ourselves upon the mountain and at a touch from us resumed their downward track, clashing and smashing from rock to rock. We came to steep banks of shale which moved *en masse* with the weight of our bodies and we lay flat on them and slid with them unwillingly and fearfully. Nevertheless we did make great progress upward, and if we did not conquer the mountain on which we were we at least conquered some peaks that were behind us. We entered the society of the mountains. The mighty eminences and august personalities of the southward view came into our ken.

THE sun went down, the shadows below us deepened, the snow banks multiplied themselves in number, and their outlines and suggestiveness intensified as the valley whence we had arisen lost its trees and changed to a vast blank abyss. Our unfailing wonder when we sat down on a stone to regain our lost breath was the multitudinous terrain of awful, wrathful mountain peaks which in indescribable promiscuity had climbed the horizon wall to stare at us.

Vachel confessed to being dizzy and dared hardly look downward whence we had come. He preferred to look upward, and it was always “three more dashes and we’ll be there,” though instead of three we made thirty.

Our mountain at length seemed to show the last limits and to be crowned by a sort of Roman wall. We came in view of a long, serried, level grey rock which ran evenly along the mountain brow like a fortification, and in the midst of it was a way of stone steps and a gap. I got up through the hole in the wall and hauled up Lindsay’s pack after me, and he followed.

But when we got on top it was flat, but it was not the top. We lay full length there and ate raisins and looked upward over another field of shale and loose boulders, and a cold wind as from the Pole swept across. We watched the first stars appear and talked of finding a sheltered ledge somewhere and sleeping on it or at least waiting on it till morning. But secretly we still had a strong hold on hope. Mountain tops are only to be conquered, and we would not give in.

“THE other sky beyond the mountain ridge is on tiptoe waiting for us,” said I.

It should be explained that the mountains here are nearly all “razor-edges.” When you have climbed sheer up to the top you have to climb sheer down the other side. Plateaus and table mountains are rare.

The mountain “cirques” and ridges actually cut the great sky in two and you can only join the two pieces of it at the top.

However, when, after another forty minutes of picking our way upward, we did actually reach the summit no new sky greeted us. Indeed, I shrank back aghast from the dreadful view that I saw. For the mountain swept downward in long, swift and severe lines into a funnel of Erebus darkness. We stood perched at a gigantic height above the world, and it was black night with an abyss both behind and in front of us.

You could stand on the top of the mountain and see the two dreadful views, on the one side scores and fifties of wrathful, staring mountains and on the other a purgatorial abyss for lost souls.

We dared not start a descent so we slept on the top of the mountain. I lay on a narrow ledge and slumbered and waked. And Vachel, who was hypnotised by the abyss, would not lie down for fear he might fall off or might get up in his sleep and jump. So he sat like a fakir the whole night long, looking unwaveringly on one fixed spot.

“Our friends all lie in their soft beds with their heads on pillows of down,” I thought, “far away in the valleys and across the plains, in snug, comfortable homes, and we lie on rocky, jagged edges on the very top of a great mountain, far from human ken.”

We seemed as much nearer the stars as we were further away from mankind. Venus was like a diamond cut out of the sun, and she lifted an unearthly splendour high into the sooty devouring darkness of the night. In other parts of the sky the meteors shot laconically in and out as if on errands for the planets. Cold winds ravaged the heights, but they did not roar. For the forests were far away. And there was no sound of waters—only the long slow threatening roll and splurge of loose rocks continually detaching themselves from the heights and slipping downward to perdition.

I lay and I lay, and Vachel sat unmoving, and we heard, as it were, the pulse of the world. We did not see humanity’s prayers going up to God. We only saw the stars and the night.



*If you join the mountain-peak club
You'll notice the old members stare at you,
Call you silently a parvenu, interloper, upstart.
Upstart you are, of course,
But never mind, you've got a rise in the world.
No use trying to outstare the mountains
Sitting in their arms-chairs, nursing their gouty feet.
Be a social climber still,
Aspire higher,
And be put up as soon as you can
For the club of Heaven's stars.*



WHERE THE ANTELOPE WILL
GO THE BEAR WILL FOLLOW



WHERE THE ANTELOPE WILL
GO THE BEAR WILL FOLLOW

XIV. DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE

BLESSINGS for dawn and the rosy lights and for the cloudlessness of the morning! Had mist enshrouded us we should have had to have remained high up on the slippery knife-edge of the mountain till the mist had passed. We were able to descend, cautiously, cautiously, for three hours in a trackless precipitous zig-zag to the red peak of a lower mountain and a high snow-bound lake, where we made a good fire and made coffee with our last coffee, and lay down again and slept. Then we washed in the snow and ceased to be old weather-beaten tramps and recaptured our yesterdays and our youth, and Vachel began to sing again and our knapsacks felt lighter, as indeed they were, for we had eaten up all the rations, even the iron rations.

Then we walked to the valley of the Sun Mountain adown the rocks of a continuous cascade. The descent to the snow-bound lake and the red peak had seemed impossible, and we essayed the impossible again. It was not merely a polite walk downstairs. Every step that we took was a problem. We used our hands and the strength of our wrists as much as our feet and the tension of our ankles. Constantly were we faced with fifteen to twenty-foot drops on to narrow ledges, where a balance must be kept when we alighted.

No doubt I am by nature a mountaineer and hillsman, half a Highlander, at least, and Vachel's genius is the genius of the plains. I am an antelope and he is a bear, we tell each other.

"You lead," says Vachel. "Where the antelope will go the bear will follow after him, but the antelope will not follow the bear."

So he followed downward, and we took the most abominable chances of breaking our legs or our necks—we had to take them. Then presently we came to what seemed a full forty-foot sheer drop of foaming water—an impossible descent, you would say, for all the grasp and grip in it was water-washed and water-smoothed by ages of water—impossible, impossible. But no, face it, think it over, it can be managed. O caution, caution! Trust yourself to the Almighty Protector and grit your teeth!

TIMIDITY fought daring all the way down. We sat once or twice, and regarded the view. One thing was certain: we could not climb back to the places we had come from. If we did not continue downward we had to remain where we were.

We did things which one does not do without guides and ropes and the paraphernalia of mountaineering, and when we got down to the tortured fissured rocks below the cataract we looked up whence we had come and said again to ourselves, "Impossible, impossible!"

And as in going up the mountain the winning of the summit was continually deferred, so in descending to the valley we only conquered one steep mountain slope to be presented with another steep mountain slope and another series of terraces and another impossibility.

Perhaps no one ever came this way over the mountains unless it was some adventurous Indian, but even Indians do not venture where horse cannot go. I remember as one of the most remarkable passages of our descent an hour we spent in a subarboreal channel shut out from the light of day, a jagged downward plunge where the stream fell away in darkness while in voluminous curves the thick sallow roofed it in. We made a hanging descent, clinging to handfuls of branches of sallow and swaying and sagging and dropping, and then touching rock with a dangling foot, and then clutching another lower bunch of branches and letting ourselves down again, downward, downward.

BUT it all ended well, for we came at last to sheets of sliding shale and then to a spacious forest. And we had been saved from all mischance, and the silence which danger had gradually imposed on us was broken.

"Bread, beauty, and freedom is all that man requires," cried Vachel, "and now I'll translate it into fire, water, and a place to sleep."

These we found, and one by one the stars discovered us when they peeped through the branches of the lofty pines. They saw us where we lay now far

away below, stretched out beside the embers of our fire and luxuriating in its warmth like cats.

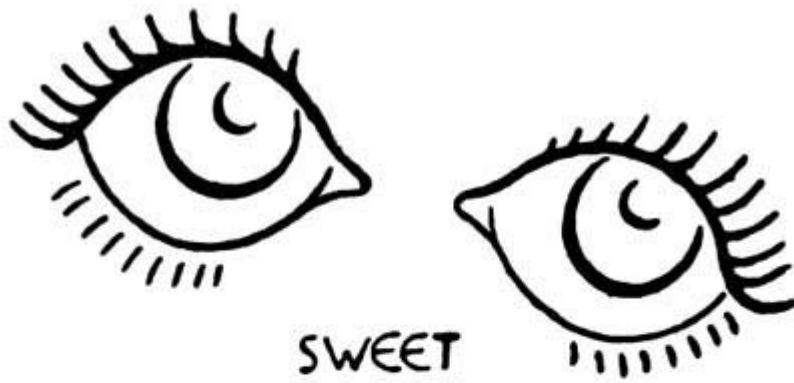
We boiled a pot of black currants and wild gooseberries and we ate it to the last berry, though, as the poet said afterwards, it was a quart of concentrated quinine. And we made a rosy layer of wild black-currant candy in the frying-pan which was not allowed to remain long unconsumed. We had no food in our knapsacks, only a little sugar, but we counted ourselves happy though hungry because we had been up on top of a great mountain and had come down.

“A joy to the heart of a man is a goal that he may not reach,” says Swinburne. And a greater joy still is the joy of reaching it. That is what we have been doing all day.

“Call it ‘Doing the Impossible’ and thinking well of ourselves,” adds the poet when I read this to him:



*“My master builder!” said the lady
When she made the master builder
Climb to the top of his new building,
Risking his life and doing the impossible a second time.
She made him do it, but he doing it was a hero.
He showed his manhood to her
By doing something that could not be done.
“The impossible or nothing” be our cry.
Don’t you loathe the perfectly possible?
I do.*



SWEET
LADIES
DO
STOP
ROLLING
YOUR
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SWEET LADIES DO STOP ROLLING YOUR EYES

XV. PEOPLE IN CAMP

A DAY'S steady tramping brought us to a camp, and then we bathed in St. Mary's Lake and washed every separate item of linen, even that which we wore, and we sun-baked ourselves on the hot beach while the clothes dried, and we made a clean appearance at last among fair women and brave men, and we took supplies on which to vagabondise for days on the slopes of Going-to-the-Sun Mountain.

It was a curious experience to be absolutely alone on the mountains so long and then suddenly to come on a large congregation of tourists. Going-to-the-Sun Camp is a spectacular point in the recognised tour of Glacier Wilderness.

"We are doing the four days' tour," is the common explanation which visitors gave us. Or, "We are making the triangular trip."

One's eyes naturally rest on the ladies, who are nearly all in seeming male attire, and some of this attire fits and some does not; some of it suggests homes where men are rare and breeches have to be imported. But they all look pretty well in this simplicity. Girls in mauve and violet jumpers, shiny leather belts, and leg-o'-mutton breeches sit with us at supper and explain that to-day was their first day on a horse—and they know it. "Are you tired?" say I. "You can tell the world," is the reply. Near us stands a girl in tan riding costume, violet stockings, white shoes, and bobbed brown hair in a hair net. She is talking to two well-built youths, standing with their legs apart, and the girl, imitating their styles, droops forward to them as they chaff one another. She will not stray far. The same may be said of a well-fed lady of sixty, pampered and neurotic, but sitting in a riding jacket and very baggy breeches and nervously smelling at an ammonia bottle. Grandma in trousers is rather portentous.

But how describe the charm of the little boy and girl, children of twelve and thirteen, accoutred also for the horse and sitting on their steeds with the grace of Indians. The old and middle-aged are stiff and only the children look as if they could never get tired. In any case, all is good humour and

jollity. Mme. Censure is not here. There are people with crumpled faces and there are people made of dimples and curves—but happiness holds all.

WE did not see very much of the tourist life. There is not much of it up here. There ought probably to be more. While Yosemite, Grand Canyon and Yellowstone are visited by hundreds of thousands of Americans, Glacier is left unused. We do not want its canyons also to be filled up to the top with cans, but no one would grudge a few more people in a wilderness where you can travel weeks without meeting a soul—a few more sharers in the loveliness of the Northern Rockies.

A number of camps have been made with log-cabins and canvas tents, and there are two large hotels on the fringe of the wilderness. But an especial charm lies in the fact that the people in charge of the camps and the little inns called “chalets” are mostly university students and college girls of the institutions of Minnesota and Montana, and they do the needful work on the self-help principle of earning a little money in their holidays to pay their way during term. There is nothing of the low commercial spirit, no one hanging around for a tip, no one with any interest to treat you shabbily, but instead the natural good manners of unspoiled people. You see the choleric “colonel” trying to get more than his share of attention and service, but he doesn’t effect anything, and you may see the millionaire cheerfully and shrewdly recognising the fact that he must take his turn after his stenographer and perhaps after a couple of ragged old tramps like ourselves.

VACHEL is devoted to the universities and high schools of America and the life they represent. He has almost completely changed his constituency from the “ladies’ club” and the heavy society of Mr. and Mrs. Leo Hunter and is now a poetic voice of young germinal America. He has “covered the map” of the United States singing his songs to college youths. And in return college youth recognises him quickly. He is a natural favourite among those who run the “chalets.” And they all wanted him to “sing” to them.

Not that the visitors do not also make friends with us and we with them. Such coats of sunshine as we have make ordinary sunburn pale and give us much glamour. Souvenir huntresses grab us from a “big ballyhoo” Western town. Likewise, a girl from Chicago, pronounced in three facial contortions. And when we set off to vagabondise for some days we were followed by a beautiful creature who wished for a minute to come with us to the world’s end.



*The tramps have gone to sleep
Nearer to the skies;
Oh ladies, sweet ladies,
Do stop rolling your eyes.
The tramps have gone away
To seek their paradise;
Oh ladies, sweet ladies,
Do stop rolling your eyes.
The tramps have taken with them
The best of apple pies,
They're not prepared to-day
To take on extra ties.
So ladies, sweet ladies,
Do stop rolling your eyes.*



ST. SERAPHIM
HE IS ONLY A WILD BEAST WHEN TREATED LIKE A WILD
BEAST

XVI. VISITED BY BEARS

I RETAIN very cheerily in mind from Russia the memory of the typical Russian saint who lived in the woods and was so holy that the bears approached without malice and took what the saint could spare of the store of crusts on which he lived. The unfortunate Tsarina when she desired so religiously a male heir, went to the shrine of Seraphim in the “empty place” of Arzamas to pray for one. And the most famous thing about St. Seraphim was his love of the bears. He is nearly always depicted in popular oleographs feeding the bears with bread, and in Russian ikons the bear is the national emblem of the primitive nature of Russia and the saint is the emblem of Christ.

On the other hand, I remember also my good old friend Alexander Beekof, a hunter of bears who had himself snapshotted facing in the snowy forest the upstanding, snarling, dangerous beast which presently he was to lay low. And since we are thinking of bears, I call to mind how I saw last winter little baby bears, dressed up in ribbons and fed with milk from a pap-bottle, hawked for sale by refugee Russians from street to street in Constantinople—pets to put in the nursery with your children, astonishing little rompers and ideal players of hide and seek. I have wondered about the bear as we wonder now about the Russian as to just what sort of an animal he is. Is he only a wild beast when treated like a wild beast, but otherwise tame in the presence of saints and children? Or is he a wild beast all the while?

This problem we evidently went to the Rocky Mountains to solve. For there we met the bears, and even if we may not have the haloes of the saints we hope to find a place among the children.

NOT that we were entirely ready for the overtures of Brother Bear, and it is true that we frightened some bears away, but later we got on good terms. I

saw the first bear on “Going-to-the-Sun” Mountain. No one, of course, is allowed to shoot bears in Glacier National Park, though it is not many years since hunters hunted them there with Indians and with dogs, and one may read of the bear-hunting adventures of Emerson Hough and others. Now without dogs or guns the bear has been won over and he has ceased to fear mankind.

It was a beautiful morning and Vachel had been sitting in Baring Creek, letting Balchis, as he called the waterfall, flow over him, and he was now lying in a blanket on the ferns and meditating when I heard an unwonted stump, stump, crash, in the undergrowth.

“Is it a man?” I asked.

Crash, stump, stump, it went again, and peering through the trees I saw a black bear coming towards us, glossy and shaggy. I called Vachel, but at that the bear stopped short, raised his intent, listening ears and then made away from us in another direction. We saw no more of him.

After that I recognised the sound of the bear’s feet in the forest, quite a characteristic sound, and we knew there were many bears. But the next occasion of a personal encounter was some weeks later near Heaven’s Peak. Vachel had got himself an extra long wisp of old canvas from a ruined tent. We slept by a large fire, and when the fire went out a bear came to us. Vachel and I were lying close to one another and both had our blankets over our faces, for it was cold. Vachel, as he told me afterwards, was awakened by something and lay listening to my breathing. He thought to himself, “Stephen is certainly making a terrible racket; he must have a cold”; and then he thought again lazily and unsuspectingly, “Stephen surely must have caught a cold to be snuffing and snorting in that way.” Then he thought again, “He seems to be moving about, I wonder what he’s doing.”

THEN Vachel put his head out of his blanket and what should he see standing beside us but a big black bear. As for me, I was sleeping like a babe, and the bear apparently had been snuffing at me to see whether I were live meat or dead meat. Vachel gave one terrific shout. “THE SON OF A GUN,” said he, and I wakened up.

“Wake up, Stephen; it’s a bear,” said he. At this Brother Bear walked across from my side, where I had a pile of boiled eggs, which he had scattered, and leisurely began to knock our tin cans about on the other side and try and find the ham which we had bought the day before. In a most unsaintly way we drove him off. We forgot the example of St. Seraphim, and Brother Bear was fain to depart. I repented too late and followed the old scallywag up the moon-bathed forest glade quite a way. But he would not be called by his pet name after the abuse we had hurled at him and went away and away till he was lost in the moon-beams. “He was smelling you to find out whether you were good to eat,” said Vachel, laughing. “He wouldn’t begin on you unless he were sure you were carrion.” “Curious,” said I, “isn’t it; we used as children to look at pictures of bears smelling men who were shamming dead in order to escape being eaten by them. In children’s books, the bear won’t eat carrion. Out here in the Rockies you can’t keep them out of the garbage cans of the camps at night.”

On another occasion, however, when three bears came trundling down after our supper was over, I approached one with some bread, which he very gently took from my fingers, and I scratched his nose and put myself on speaking terms.

“Curious,” said I to Vachel, “is it not? These are the same bears which used to figure so largely in adventure stories of the Rocky Mountains. It follows they are ready to be good citizens of the forest if treated ‘good.’”

You’d have had a different experience had they been grizzlies, we were told later.

Maybe. But St. Seraphim himself did not tackle grizzlies.



So we’ve met the bear:

*The bear has snuffed at us
And wondered what we were.
Humans with a forest smell to us,
No doubt quite game;
Sleeping out too, very quietly.
Good to eat no doubt,
Dare one, dare a poor bear take a bite?
Would they mind?
I've bitten most of the animals in the wood
Except them—
In my time.*



ELEMENTS OF GOOD COFFEE

MOSQUITO NETTING

WATERFALL

COFFEE POT

FIR TREE

COFFEE BEANS

STONE

PYRE

LOVE

XVII. LINDSAY'S STONE COFFEE

THE wind blew all night long, a wind that seemed to be cleaning up and burnishing all the spaces between the stars. The rock wall against which I leaned my back kept stealing away the warmth from my blanket. Vachel slept off the level on the ferns, at a forty-five degree tilt downward. We both looked out to the mountains and the stars, and it was an epical summer night on the Rockies.

The mountains were compact and black and clear, and a dim light behind them glorified each. A young moon arose and poised herself above us, and only slowly and very unobtrusively crept across the sky. It was a night of persistent gale but of a steadfast starry universe. It seemed to call for rain, but there never came a cloud, only the metallic interstellar spaces grew lustrous and more lustrous, and the mountains more and more romantic. Our eyes were religiously and adoringly spellbound. Our hands—our feet—that is a different tale.

 Their hearts were pure,
 Their hands were horribly red,

as Balzac said of two young ladies of France.

Vachel, who had tied the tassels of his old steamer rug together and made a sleeping-bag, was meditative of Peary and Shackleton and their companions, and though he had procured an extra flannel shirt and had tied himself up in all he possessed, he still could not find the temperature at which corn ripens in central Illinois. We heard the waters of the creek pouring down below, we heard movements among the trees, and the idea of a bear coming to us was not unsuggested. Vachel picked up his steamer rug and came across to my rock and laid him down nearer to me. We slept then till dawn, slept with one eye open and one shut; one ear alert, the other muffled.

THE lovely light of the east flooded upward and over us from Lake St. Mary, bathing our mountain-side in a peach blossom glamour; small birds winged it through the wedge of air 'twixt mountain and mountain. The creek poured more loudly into our consciousness, and the sharp points of our rocky bed jibbed upward towards our bones. Then it was morning. Then it was coffee time.

I shall never forget the poet as he looked in the dawn, with his red handkerchief tied over his old felt hat and under his chin, and the concentration of his gaze as he plodded about in three pairs of socks and half-laced boots seeking extra twigs to make that fire burn. He looked like a true dwarf or old man of the woods from a page of a fairy-book, but not really visible to human eyes.

And it was an unpractical fairy who expected damp wood and large wood to burn as easily as dry withered pine. It sometimes took a long while to set our pot a-boilin'. Once, however, that had been achieved, great was our reward. We had our coffee, "Lindsay's stone coffee," as we named it, better than any other coffee in the United States.

"STEPHEN," said Vachel quietly to me one day, "you must let them know just how this coffee is made. I'm not one of those selfish people who keep such secrets to themselves. The ladies especially will like to have our secret."

The first point is that you take a stone which has never seen either sunset or sunrise, a stone lying at the feet of trees not less than 100 feet high. It must have lain there not less than 4000 years and listened to the music of a waterfall. That is the important point. Any decent coffee beans ground in any kind of clean grinder will do. A pot that has seen more than one continent is preferred.

You then cut a square piece of white mosquito net sufficient to hold the coffee and the stone. Tie up carefully like a plum-pudding, but leave seven or eight inches of string attached to it so that you can pull the coffee sack up and down in the pot at will. Vachel in this matter of coffee is a complete immersionist. The coffee must go right under.

It is prepared, moreover, in silence and without fear of flame and smoke. The pot stands on a funeral pyre, and is allowed to lift its lid several times before a hand swathed up in a towel darts in to rescue it.

We pour it out into our tin cups. It is black, it is good, it has a kick like a mule; it searches the vitals and chases out the damp; it comforts the spine and gives tone to the heart. And the poet, silent hitherto, sits holding his large cup before him. Then he takes a sip and looks at me.

“Thadd touches the spadd,” says he at last in a deep gastronomical gestatory voice which seems to lend expression to his ears and shoulders. “Thadd touches the spadd,” says he in happy relief.



*Coffee should be made with love;
That's the first ingredient.
It's all very well about the stone,
Say I, but it needs a heart as well.
The coffee knows if you really care,
And will do its best if you lend it encouragement.
You can flatter the coffee whilst it is in the pot,
And it will rise to your persuasion.
But the commonest cause of coffee being just indifferent
Is your indifference towards the coffee.*



TO THE WORLD'S END

XVIII. MAKING MAPS OF THE WORLD

AFTER an era of drawing maps of the United States my companion took to drawing maps of the world, supporting them by mermaids and making them fly by north-westerly and north-easterly angels, and he wrote original couplets and hid them in hollow trees and under stones. As Shelley made paper boats in the Bay of Naples he made maps and hid them—his pet hobby for a number of days.

One verse asked Atlas if he did not find the world heavier since the Treaty of Versailles.

“I hope you made a copy of it before hiding it,” said I.

“Oh, no; stray leaves of poetry, rewards for seekers,” said he. Celebrated mountaineers have been putting copper boxes with their signatures on the tops of the mountains this year; Vachel has been leaving original poems in the valleys.

We set off from Sun Mountain for the high walls of the Canadian line. Vachel was in no passion for climbing, and confessed that if he were a woman, he would, at this point in our adventure, “lie down on the floor and scream.” So our progress was slow and punctuated by long waits. We went through tree thickets and breast-high flowers and through tearing thorns, and we came to many red-rock promontories. Rocks grew up out of the jungle and topped the highest trees, and we climbed them and looked out from their smooth, wind-swept summits and listened to the bears, and Vachel, with paper and pencil, drew maps and put Czecho-Slovakia in the scheme of things, and asked the God who made the world where Turkestan might be.

At length, at noon, we came unto a mighty cliff, an end of the world, rosy red and flamingly joyful, but very final. The poet was a quarter of a mile behind me, and I watched him patiently grubbing his way through the exuberant green, trackless jungle, hit in the face by branches, choked up to the fork of his legs by the weeds. And when he came to the end of the world he asked no questions but just sat down and began drawing a map. "Where," asked he, "is Seven Rivers Land and the Desert of Pamir?"

I left him sitting down below and began climbing the giddy cliff with a tin can in my hand. For growing like wall-flowers on the rocks above were dwarf raspberry bushes all hung with tiny rosy lights—and these were fruits. I got up to them and standing on half-inch ledges and holding to twigs and weeds I picked a cupful of the hot berries all half-cooked by the sun's rays. And when I got down again we had a wonderful repast of raspberries and sugar.

When we resumed tramping we crossed a crag-strewn valley, which was very rough on our boots. My boots were cracking; Lindsay's were very floral. His held out a little while longer, but mine died that day. As we each carried two pairs of boots we were prepared for the emergency.

Mine had been a stout pair of pre-war boots (Americans please read "shoes"). I used them first in North Norway and Russia. I tramped in them in France. They were repaired first by a Russian at Kislovodsk in the Caucasus; repaired for the second time in Georgia by a negro cobbler. For I did Sherman's march and walked from Atlanta to the sea in them in 1919. And they were repaired for the last time by a Frenchman in Hazebrouck last year. I had tramped in them over the battlefields of Gallipoli, and had worn them when the weather was bad in Constantinople, Belgrade, Budapest, Vienna, Warsaw, and almost every other capital of Europe.

"We must burn them," said Vachel, "and have a special ceremony. These are no ordinary shoes (Englishmen please read 'boots') to be abandoned in the wilds without the meed of some melodious tear." So we burned one on a high flaming fire with young pine-shoots for incense, and the other we threw into a rushing mountain torrent, and bade it continue its world journey to the world's end.

WE lay stretched on our blankets by the pine fire that night and talked of the world. We arrived at some ideas. "You are not drawing the map merely as part of a geography lesson," said I. "You are drawing the poetry of it."

A poetical map of the world has never yet been drawn. "It should have ships on its oceans and lighthouses on its rocks and mermaids under it, and stars over it," said Vachel. "Imagine how Blake would have drawn it."

First, you put in the North and South Poles, symbols of man's love of the inaccessible and the paradox of his striving life; then Cape Horn, stormiest point in the world, cape of innumerable wrecks, of the innumerable adventures of daring sailors. Then put in the Panama Canal, symbol of utilitarianism and our modern life. Draw in the Bering Strait, which is the pre-historic link of the Old World and the New, and then the Rocky Mountains, which the red men climbed.

Then draw in a dotted line the keel track of Columbus over the ocean and put an eye upon a peak in the Darien looking downward and outward to the great Pacific. Draw the Mason and Dixon line. Draw $54^{\circ} 40'$ —the "fifty-four forty or fight" line. Then for the old world, make the coast-line of China and then mark the Chinese Wall built to keep out the Huns, then draw the caravans of the hordes, and may arrows fly over the desert of Asia, spitting against Bokhara and Samarkand, spitting against the empire of Darius, spitting against the Scythians, the Slavs, stampeding the Goths and the North Men and ruining Rome and starting the modern world!

You must put in Athens the birthplace of the ideal, and Marathon and then Rome, the birthplace of materialism, the capital of capitals, seat of the Caesars. And then St. Helena, symbol of the doom of would-be Caesars.

Mark in the mysterious Nile, and the place where the Sphinx looks out from the sand. Mark Bethlehem and then Jerusalem—

Thus we schemed and mused and made many maps in fancy, and we took to ourselves just before the stars said good-night the title Geo. Ast.—geographical astrologers.

"I dare you to register as such," said Vachel, "when we get out of all this and reach a hotel at last."



*Poor old world, you're a playground.
And we are the children who romp in you now.
Those maps of you are wrong
Which show trade winds
Instead of winds of inspiration,
Where names of business-places are in bold black print
And railway lines are ruled,
And capitals are marked with blots
And other places are invisible.*



THE EAGLE SEES WHAT IS IN THE PIT

XIX. A MOUNTAIN POINT OF VIEW

“WITE man, you’s skeerin’ me to death,” cries Vachel playfully from behind me as we get out of forests and up among the naked rocks. “Wite man, you’s skeerin’ me to death,” or again, “You might as well kill a man as scare him to death.”

“This is no place to bring ladies,” I ventured.

“And no place to bring a poet, either,” says Vachel. “Look here, Stephen, I make one rule. I’ll only be scared out of my wits once a day.”

The poet riveted his eyes on me, and I was a curious sight, being torn to tatters from head to foot. I had been mending my trousers with the stuff of my vest and the lining of my coat. “Stephen,” cries Vachel, “when I get tired of looking at the scenery I look at your pants.” And I employed much time when we rested sewing up the triangles and flaps on my knees with white thread drawn from our mosquito netting.

We saw now the wonderful cathedral-shaped mountain behind us, blue and white and scarred and crumpled. It lifted its clerestory with grandiosity up into the colder and rarer air. Its rivelled snow hung in great white copes; its earthquake rents and chasms yawned, and its dreadful steeps, up which no man ever climbed, drew sternly and austere up to summits and spires and towers. Grandiose mountain! And what little flies, what microscopical insects we were upon it!

WE came to the top of the Valley of Boulder Creek, stretching away from the heart of the Rockies to the tents of the Indians and the indeterminate plains, one of the grandest of views to my companion, who loves the prairie like the prairie child, an aperçu of America seen from the mountains. “That is what we want to get,” said Vachel, “a Rocky Mountain point of view on all things American. That is the true meaning of calling it a national park.”

“Not only that, but a world-point-of-view can be found,” said I. “That is why it was called Going-to-the-Sun Mountain—the sun sees everything.”

We turned, however, into a wild and obscure region and blundered and staggered among a miscellany of all kinds of boulders. Blue lakelets and pools lay at the foot of djinns of snow, and there were dreadful iceberg-like reflections in the weird blueness of the water. We camped on a plateau, or rather in a wide, high trough surrounded by mountain-sides, and we made a fire of old resinous roots and stumps of dead, dwarfed trees. There were shallow lakes in sight, but the way to them was over undulating, quaking moss. Mists encircled us before nightfall and made our fire ghostly. We lay all night in a great stillness, and the fire glowered and smouldered and the mist uneasily crept into rain with a breeze or settled again into mist with the calm. Next day was a cold and chilling morning like November in England, and we heaped higher the fire with wood and slept till wind and sun conquered cloud and damp. And that was nearly noon.

“ONWARD,” cried Vachel, “upward, higher, purer, better, nobler, sweeter, stronger”—which was his favourite war-cry at the time, and amid stark upper-mountain scenery we made a glorious afternoon march to a place of great height. At length, on what seemed a terrifically high pedestal of black rock, we gleaned a coffee-pot full of fresh snow and proposed to make tea. And I upset the evaporated milk, but licked it up off the rocks with the flat of my tongue. This Vachel was too proud to do, so I have surmised that his progenitors were Lowland Scottish gentlemen farmers, but mine were Border cattle thieves and “land loupers.”

We had supper that evening in a great, open mountain space, with glaciers as large as cities brooding and impending over abysses, and we looked downward to dark and gloomy rising forests gone tired on their way up towards us, and we looked upwards to the grandeur of snow-covered crags and tumultuous, heaven-climbing waves of rock. Vachel fried the beans to an accompaniment of rhythmical remarks. Poetry possessed us both. All about us was in grand, romantic, heroic strain. Vachel remarked how the forests were like harps with long harp strings, and the strings were the lines which mountain stones and avalanches had furrowed there for ages. The

carpet on which we lay was of yellow vetches and dark-blue gentians, with lichen stones all interspersed. Heaven itself was not flat-roofed above us, but raised at the zenith, a blue vault above us, like the dome of a world-temple. And the fire burned a black patch on the green and puffed and flamed symbolically as if we were children of the Old Testament sacrificing there to our God.



*Two stars arose above the mountain's head,
Two stars looked down upon the world in bed;
Looked through the window-panes and saw the world at home,
From Babylon to Tyre, and Rome to Rome.
What if the stars, lifting their tiny lamps,
Were but like us, a couple of old tramps?
Heaven's tramps the stars, blazing their trails they go,
From mountain-top to mountain-top and snow to snow.*



**'I HAD RATHER BE A PEACOCK THAN A HOG' SAID THE
PEACOCK**

XX. BY THE CAMP FIRE

MANY years ago one of the Springfield newspapers offered a prize to the reader who should send in the best answer to the question: *What would you do with a million dollars?* Young Vachel sent in an answer. His was: "I would change them to dimes and have them thrown into the State House yard and any one who wanted them could come and take as much as he liked." The answer was printed in the paper with a lot of others and gave considerable offence. The telephone was kept busy that morning by those who thought fit to tell his father and mother that they ought to look after him better and not let him make a fool of himself.

"I did not get the prize," said Vachel sadly. "The editor probably thought that with a million dollars one could do just a million dollars' worth of good. He thinks, as does my dearest friend, that you can employ people to do good at a salary, and the one who got the prize probably allotted ten thousand dollars to this charity and ten thousand dollars to that and endowed this thing and endowed that and did not even dare to buy himself an ice-cream soda. They've got such a high idea of money that it's almost an attribute of God himself. Now, I rank money low. I'm right up against the weekly magazine advertisement point of view—'Doing good is only possible when you've a lot of money. Get money! Oh, get money first somehow, then you can do good. Wear good clothes and then you'll be in the way of doing good.'"

WE had made our camp under a great overhanging rock beside rushing cataracts. The huge vague scenery about us was made more immense by a cloud screen which prevented one knowing exactly how high the mountains were, and we looked outward at a vastitude of scarred precipitous cliffs. Our fire warmed the rock against which we had laid our blankets, and we

had found a delightfully cosy place in which to be at home. Night came down upon us, but we lay long in the flamelight and talked.

“I don’t think,” said Vachel, “that this money incentive is really a strong one or leads far. That is where I part company with the radicals of this country. They have all founded their faith on the economic theory of history. I’d like to write for them a ‘romantic theory’ of history. I believe in the romantic theory; I do NOT believe in the economic theory.”

“All right, dear Vachel,” said I constrainedly. “There are only you and I present, and God. Say it more quietly.”

“Vanity and ambition have always been stronger motives than the desire of gain. And that is good. I put vanity a whole lot higher than greed. In a country of hogs the peacock is a praiseworthy bird.”

“You say that because you are a peacock.”

“I KNOW IT. I AM A PEACOCK. I AM NOT A HOG.”

“All right, Vachel. Now, if money is not so strong an incentive how do you account for the fact that in your own beautiful State of Illinois Governor Small has been under arrest for appropriation of funds, and at Chicago members of one of the greatest baseball teams in America are under trial for selling championship games to the other side?”

“That’s the influence of the magazine advertisement—praise of dollars and the implication that everything in the world has a commercial value or it has no value. And there are no other honours but money honours.”

It was evidently more than a mere opinion of my companion. It was a creed. He passionately believed what he said. And thus it was that I discovered in Glacier wilderness a very rare bird, the American black swan, and that in the poet of Springfield whom the village in its ignorance was once scandalised about.

Vachel told me how he acted on his creed—What is greater than the power of money? why, contempt of money—and set off without a dime to see America and live, and how the good God took care of him until he got to

California. “In that way I learned to respect myself and to respect my fellow-man,” said he. “I learned what a lot of good poor men and women there are in America. And I have nothing to complain of individuals as such. I could always rely on brotherliness. But it was different with institutions, when I went to people who were not themselves but hirelings, people hired to do good. Don’t I know the minions of charity? What are the places where as a tramp I’ve had the stingiest treatment in the world? Why, in institutions from the paid organisers of charity.” And he told of how he once went to a Y at H— —, Mo., and the fight he had to get mere soap and towel and a bath.

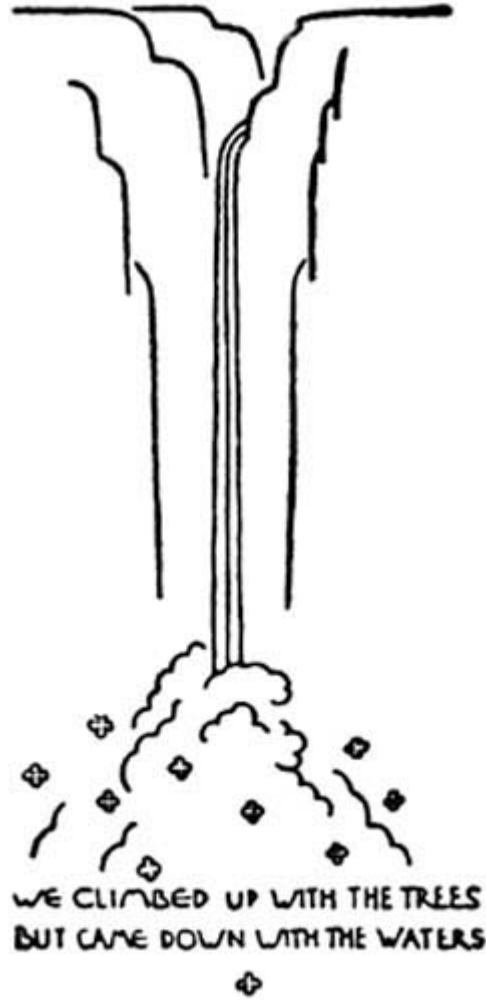
“By Gosh, they weren’t going to give it to me. I said ‘I’ve been a Y.M.C.A. worker myself in New York for years and I know that soap and towel can be had. I know the whole workings of the organisation and I’ll have soap and towel from you if I have to bring the roof down. I’ll go to the editors of the newspapers. I’ll go to the leading ministers and preachers of H— — and I’ll hold you up to shame to the town. I’ll whale you.’ And I got soap and towel and they said, ‘take him down,’ and I got a bath, though I used as much energy to get it from them as would have served to do three days’ hard work. Now I know that if I had gone into any working man’s home in town and asked for it, or even into a hotel I’d have got soap and towel without demur.

“Yet my best friend says, ‘Vachel, you’re morbid on the subject of money.’ I said to him ‘Well, there’s a lot in the New Testament about it. Look it up!’”



*The gopher-rats are sitting on their tails
Watching us all around, listening to us.
What is it these queer birds are getting excited about*

*By their camp fire?
Money, is it? Money's no good to the gophers,
Leave us a crumb or two.
Don't forget a spot of that fried hash:
Squeak!*



**WE CLIMBED UP WITH THE TREES
BUT CAME DOWN WITH THE WATERS**

XXI. DOWN CATARACT MOUNTAIN

VACHEL told me once, to save his self-respect, he took a job in Chicago in a department store at seven dollars a week, and was employed in the wholesale toy department; a whole block of toys, where was to be found every imaginable plaything for young and old, from dolls as large as three-year-old children to family portrait albums that, having a musical box in their binding, played “The Old Folks at Home” and various hymn-tunes when you opened them. He told how a lad called Timmins wound up all the albums he could lay his hands on, and laid them open and went away to another part of the building, and of the wild din that ensued.

Timmins was “fired.”

He told how he lived amid acres of dolls and how, to satisfy the fire insurance inspectors, a three-foot clearance was made between the top of the toy heaps and the roof, and how all one night they did overtime slamming down rows and sections of dolls and toys on to waiting trucks, and they were rushed to another place. Then the inspectors came and passed the building. And when they were gone the Ghetto came and bought the “bum dolls” from the “smash dump,” and Vachel and the rest were soon building toys up to the roof once more.

“BUT none of my friends liked my earning my living in this way. They’d prefer to see me in a bank or an insurance office. You see, I could not paint a picture that would keep me. I would not enter commercial art—I mean advertisement drawing. My poems did not sell, and people thought I had spent long enough studying and loafing, and that I ought to begin to earn a decent living. So I went into the Chicago Department Store. They did not like that. So I took to the road again. Curiously enough, Francis Hackett took a job in that same store before his star arose.”

Vachel and I had a great pow-wow by night and morning fire, and I cannot set down half here in these (I hope) dignified paragraphs. But all the while we sat and talked, the prairie rats sat about us on their tails and haunches, and stared curiously with their forepaws on their chests like good masons in their rituals. They smelt the beans, they smelt the cheese, they smelt the corn-beef hash; they knew they were protected by the United States Government and they had never seen a dog or a cat. Curiously friendly little companions!

After the cloudy night there was a serene morning. When the veils were lifted off the mountains we knew them for just what they were. They did not go all the way to the sky after all.

We went down Cataract Mountain the same way as the water, down to flower-spread meads and spacious fir-woods and widening streams. Up above us the water chariots came racing behind white horses four abreast, five abreast, natural fountains played on every hand, and high as heaven itself tiny cataracts tipped over and fell downwards into veils, into smoke, into nothingness. Characteristic of the place were the great volumes of water which plunged under hollow snow-crusts to emerge forty feet lower down after a momentary vigil in the snow. This is the valley of Cataract Creek, bounded by lofty and perhaps impassable rocks, but in itself a garden to the last patch of mould and the last bright flower.

WE made our way along Haystack Butte toward Mount Grinnell, which, like a mighty fortress, stood facing us in the line of our tramp. Was it the beauty of the garden or was it the limpidity of the streams that set us talking of England? It is a peculiarly happy subject with the poet, who, with all his Americanism, has a true reverence for the fountain of English. This July, just before setting out for the Rockies, he received an invitation from Robert Bridges, the British poet laureate, to become a member of the "Society for Pure English." To that extent has Oxford at least recognised that Vachel Lindsay is no mere performer or charlatan and not the "jazz-poet." To some people in England Vachel came as a prophet, and his courtly and, indeed, stately manners, the profound obeisance which he made with

his hat before entering a church or a school or a house, revealed him as an American of the Washingtonian cast.

Some would-be cynical, smart undergraduate was showing Vachel King's College Chapel at Cambridge, and said to him: "The last American we showed round when we asked him what he thought of it, said, 'Some God-box.'" And he seemed to think that very amusing, and could not understand Lindsay's silence on the point.

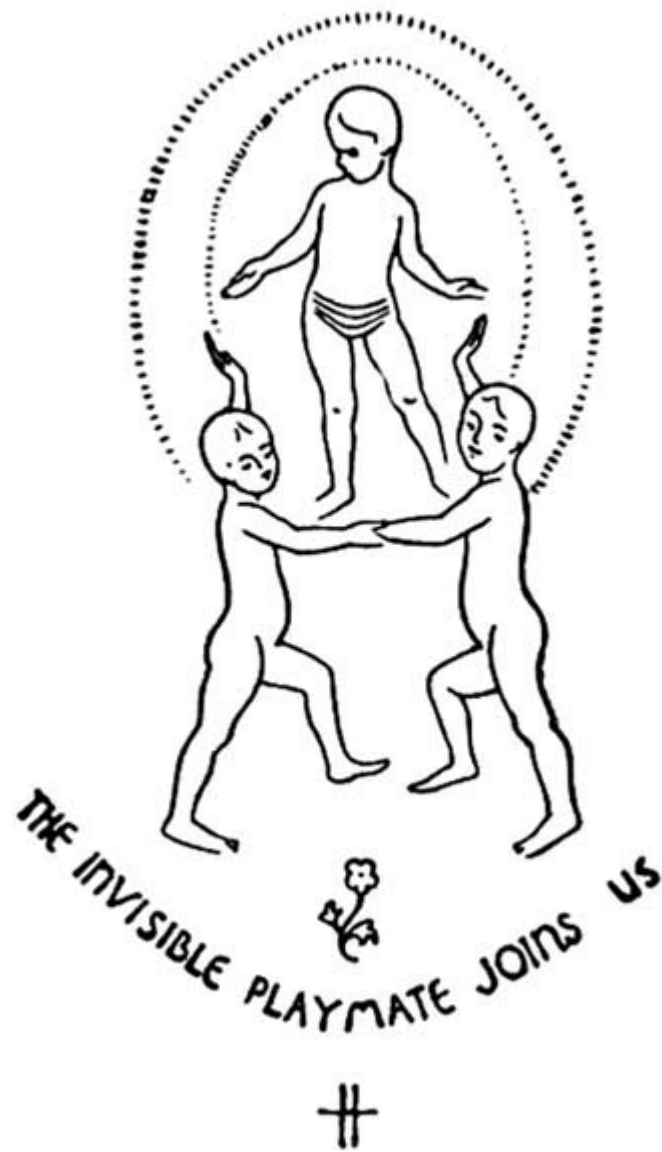
"He did not know for how many years I had lectured on the Gothic and what it meant to me," said Vachel.

Naturally, I chaffed my companion not a little on his belonging to the S.P.E., and called him to order whenever the arduousness of our campaign prompted him to break across the pure classic of Shakespeare's tongue, and I made him take note of many expressions, such as "being wished on," and "handing a man the canned goods," which I bade him chase from America into the sea.

"I should only be too glad, Stephen," said he, "if I could get rid of 'motivate' and a man's 'implications' and 'the last analysis' and 'the twilight zone' and 'canned metaphor' and the dollar adjectives, a 'ten-million-dollar building' and a 'million-dollar bride.'"



*Oxford has asked Chicago
To lend its purifying aid
To the King's English.
O Oxford! O Bridges!*



THE INVISIBLE PLAYMATE JOINS US

XXII. “GO WEST, YOUNG MAN”

“Now, Horace Greeley — —” said Vachel, opening his “morning strafe” of political conversation.

“Who the — — was he?”

“You don’t know? Why, you’ll be saying you don’t know Shakespeare next. That’s as if J. C. Squire had never heard of Edwin Booth.”

“Well, who was he?”

“He edited the *Tribune* throughout the Civil War.”

“That all?”

“He said, ‘The way to resume is to resume.’”

“That all?”

“He said, ‘Go West, young man, and grow up with the country,’ and printed it at the head of his newspaper every day.”

“Oh! Did you ever hear of Mudford?”

“No.”

“What, never heard of Mudford, the famous editor of the *Standard*?”

“No.”

“Ever heard of Nicol Dunn?”

“No.”

“He edited the *Morning Post* in its better days. Ever heard of Frederick Greenwood?”

“No.”

“Never heard of Frederick Greenwood? Why, he was the greatest journalist England ever produced. He inspired Disraeli with the idea of buying the

Suez Canal. If we don't know about your journalists, I see you don't know about ours."

The battery was silenced.

WE walked through five miles of rotten-ripe red raspberries and got thorns in our half-naked knees and carmined our fingers with raspberry juice, and we kept spitting out unpalatable fruits and making uncomplimentary remarks. Then we got to open pine woods and freed our feet of the tangles, and Vachel began to sing softly to himself a children's processional hymn:

We are the Magi,
Children though we are.
We are the wise men,
Following the star.

"There are only two of us." I ventured. "Where do you think the third king has got to?"

"That's King Christopher," said Vachel, sadly. "That's our 'other wise man.' He is with us, but he's invisible. He is sitting in Greeley Square or Vesey Street, and it was thinking of him that really started me on Horace Greeley."

"How do you mean?"

"Well, he said to all the young Magi, 'quit seeking a star in the East, Go West and grow up with the country. Get into America; find your spiritual roots.'"

"You want to persuade every one to cross the Appalachians?"

"Yes," said Vachel dreamily. "So I brought him along invisibly. He is our invisible playmate." And he resumed his children's hymn.

"You're a good bit like Mark Twain and Rudyard Kipling," said Vachel to me at last, "You've a wonderful geographical background. You ought to read the life of Mark Twain. Very interesting. He was made by his life in Nevada. His life in the silver mining camps and his knowledge of the West and the South made him. Read *Roughing It*. It's a great book. Then Kipling

with a boyhood in India and a maturity in America owes much to his knowing both West and East. What's the matter with young men to-day is a disinclination to get their feet dirty. You're the only man in England or America I've been able to persuade to go on a tramp with me. When I proposed it to M— —, the English poet, he seemed to turn pale. That's all behind me," he said, "though I don't know what he meant."

WE came within sight of the shore of Lake Josephine. "Shall we ask our invisible companion if he'd like to come in for a swim with us?" said I.

"Why, that would be fine."

So we broke through to the green and silver lake and, putting our tender feet on the sharp stones and water-covered boulders, waded out to swimming depth and we made a great splash with Napoleon's beautiful bride. And when we came we vagabondised on the shore for the rest of the day—the three of us—lying stretched out beside a mounting red blaze of rain-washed wood.

The beach was all of little mauve stones which we raked into couches. And there we lay munching hot pea-nuts and rebuilding the world on a foundation of the American Wild West. Vachel drew some more world-maps and adopted our invisible playmate as a member of the society of "astrological geographers," and we took for our emblem and device the map of the two hemispheres with the motto, "The World is My Parish."

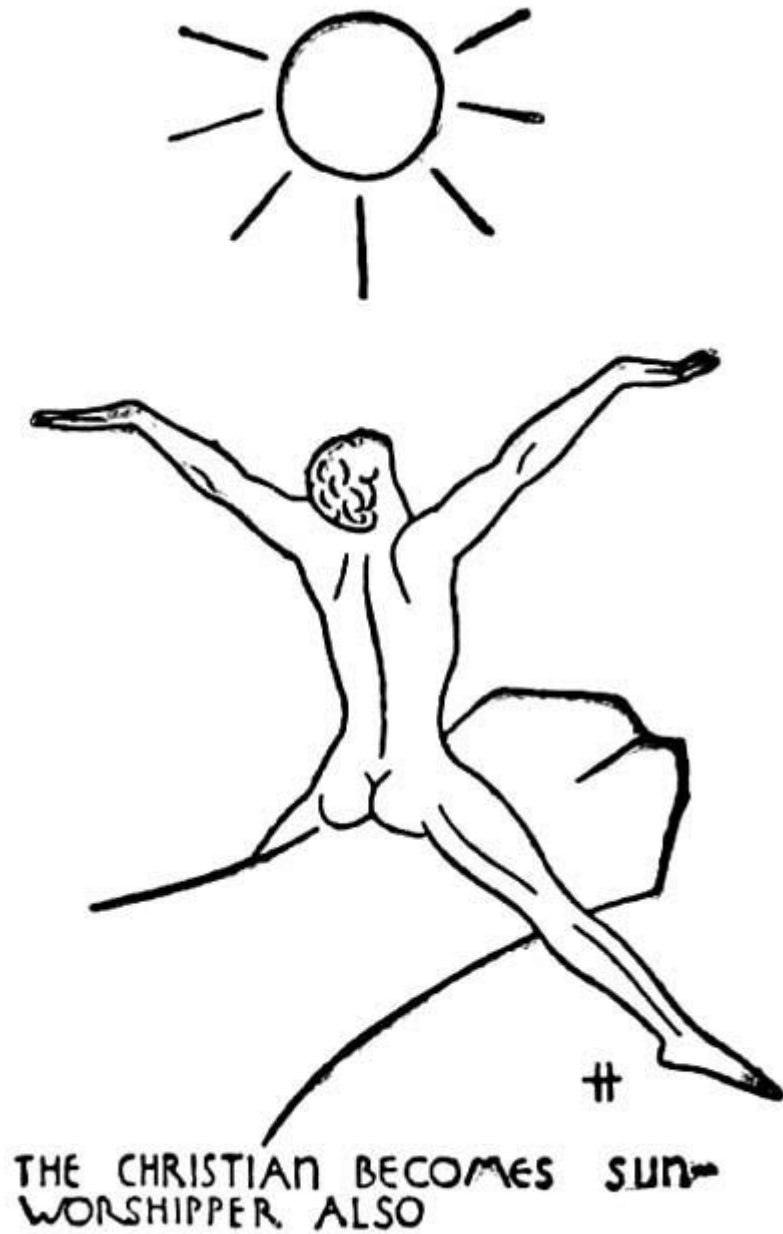
What a serene evening it was by the side of fair Josephine! A half moon rose over us at nightfall and marsh hens sped through the air in volleying groups of wings. The stars and the moon threw a silver radiance on the line of the mountain-tops and on the forests and on the dimples and lines and circles of the lake. We fell asleep and were warm and at peace. We only waked at four in the morning and then bathed before sunrise and mingled our bodies with the perfect reflections of green and grey and brown and snowy mountain-sides.

The sun arising grew upon us and chased wraith-like mists across the waters, and our fire, hotter than the sun, blazed on the mauve stones and

baked us and dried us when we came out to it, and gave us our coffee and gave us all we needed till old Sol was radiant o'er the scene.



*We know about Josephine
What Napoleon did not know.
He was too preoccupied sacking cities
To love the beautiful altogether,
Killing men, counting cannon, putting unneeded
Crowns upon his brothers' heads.
He didn't know much about her,
O no!
He said there were no more Alps,
No more Pyrenees.
He never said there were no more Rocky Mountains.*



THE CHRISTIAN BECOMES SUN-WORSHIPPER ALSO

XXIII. THE SUN-WORSHIPPER

“I DRINK to America as she was before 1492,” said Vachel, lifting high his coffee cup.

“I drink to her as she was before the Red Man came.”

“And I drink to her as she was before the Mound-builders came — —”

“And I drink to her as she was in the days of the mountain-top tribe when a man and his family lived together on a mountain-top and the rule was one peak to one family, and the eagles were tame and carried the mail.”

“And I drink to Noah’s fourth son, who was so naughty he was not allowed to bring a wife into the Ark but carried a pine branch under his arm. Is there any more booze i’ the can? Yea. Very well; I drink again to Noah’s outcast son who wandered in these parts before the mountain-tribe arrived.”

“Is there any more of this most excellent coffee?”

“There is, dear Stephen, one last kick in the bottom of the pot.”

“Then I drink to the Lady of the Lake whom Noah’s son was obliged to marry and to the cut-throat trout that were their offspring — —”

“Enough, enough! Is there any more booze?”

“Not a suck, Sir.”

“Alas!”

THE reader will perhaps surmise that we are approaching the Canadian line and that my anti-saloon companion has fallen for what they make in Alberta.

But no, we have been made drunk with words; it often occurs, and with Lindsay’s stone coffee. The stone in the mosquito-net coffee bag has spoken

through us. It is a piece of the Rocky Mountains, and they know all there is to know about the mysterious mound-builders and mountain-tribes. How gauntly and savagely these old mountains have looked on at no-humanity and for how many thousands of years! “What went ye out for to see?” said Vachel presently when we had hitched on our packs. “Not a reed shaken by the wind! What went we out into Glacier Wilderness for to see? Why, *man*, a prophet. And there’s a prophet in these mountains who can tell us a good deal about the old world. We ought to settle many things about the world before I get back to Springfield and you get back to London. Everywhere you have been I’m going to assume I’ve been also. Now, at our next sitting let us drink to Russia—Russia as she was before the Bolsheviks.”

“As she was before Peter the Great,” I added.

“As she was before the hordes.”

The subject was too dark after all. I felt we should have to drink, not to the past, but to the Russia that is going to be when the Bolsheviks have been forgotten.

“And England?” I asked. “Will you not drink confusion to the enemies of King George V.?”

“OH, no,” said the poet. “I’m too good an American for that. Couldn’t do that. My roots are too deep in democracy. Confusion to the enemies of King George—no, couldn’t drink it. Confusion to the enemies of the English people. Yes, I’d drink that toast.”

“Well, it’s the same thing.”

“Doesn’t sound so.”

“In that case,” I retorted, “I’ll not drink to the President.”

But Vachel had become preoccupied and began an unending chant of Patrick Henry’s oration,

Is life so dear, or peace so sweet,
As to be purchased by chains and slavery—

I don't care for others, but as for myself
Give me liberty or give me death!

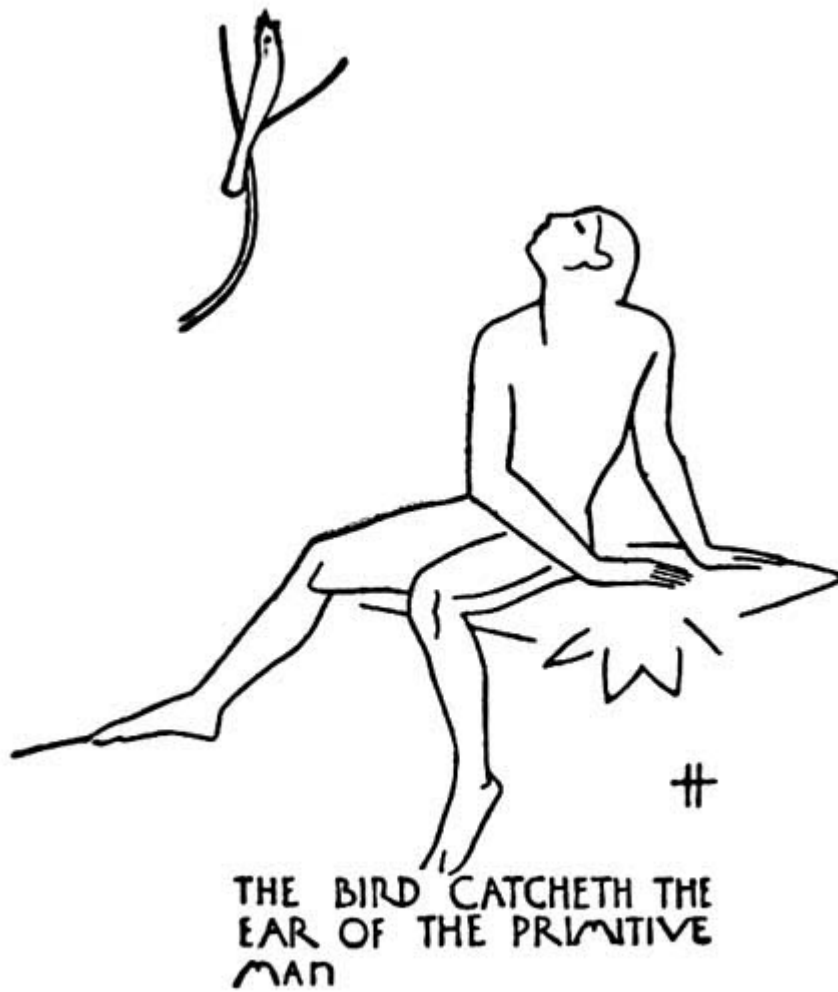
No doubt he did not quote it quite correctly, but I fastened on the third line, which I repeated deliberately after him, "I—do—not—care—for—others," until he was once more moved to mirth and got down from what in one poem he has called:

The old Elijah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist soap-box;
The Rousseau, Mirabeau, Danton soap-box;
The Karl Marx, Henry George, and Woodrow Wilson soap-box.

And we washed off our politics from our minds at high noon in a river. And Vachel sat astride of a giant tree that had fallen across the stream, and luxuriating in the heat he cried out to me, "Gosh, Stephen, I'm a sun-worshipper with my shirt off!"



*Quit drinking coffee
Before it's everlastingly too late;
Be not found among the coffee-bibbers!
Silence those profane toasts
To Noah's offspring and Patrick Henry.
Oh, Uncle Sam,
See how thy children go
To the devil—drinking coffee!
O prohibit it!*



THE BIRD CATCHETH THE EAR OF THE PRIMITIVE MAN

XXIV. TWO VOICES

My companion has two voices: one is that of a politician, harsh and strident, the other is that of a Homeric harper and ballad-chanter of the days of old. The political voice does not please me much. It is the voice of the “hell-roarer” of the prairies. Lindsay loves a mighty shout, an exultant war-whoop for its own sake, like any Indian. And ... I’ve heard those “glacier boulders across the prairies rolled.” I have heard the “gigantic troubadour speaking like a siege-gun.” But there is another voice—

Two voices:

One was of the deep,

The other of a poor old silly sheep.

And ... both were thine!

as G. W. Steevens once wrote. The other voice is truly of the deep; sonorous and golden, murmuring, and with eternity dreaming in it. That is the voice of the poet.

Some days with us were naturally dedicated to poetry. The steps on the mountains caught the rhythms, the gliding waterfalls and the intensely coloured listening flowers suggested the mood of the poets, and then the peaks, the grandeur, uplifted Lindsay’s spirit. The hymns were silenced. Silence hung on the mute figures of Bryan and Altgelt. We let Roosevelt sleep on. American and European civilisation ceased to fill the mind, and there was only the mountains and poetry. Vachel knew by heart whole books, and he crooned and chanted as we walked, and lifted his head up to the snows and the waterfalls and the skies. He has a bird-like face when he recites; his eyes almost close, his lips purse up and open like a thrush’s beak. He glories in the word of poesy, and entirely forgets himself—

Oh ye who tread the Narrow Way
By Tophet-flare to Judgment Day,
Be gentle when the heathen pray
To Buddha at Kamākura.

he chanted over and over again like a prayer, as if those hushed and holy mountains on which we looked were Buddha, Buddha at Kamàkura. And then—

To him the Way, the Law, Apart
Whom Maya held beneath her heart,
Ananda's Lord—the Bodhisat.

For whoso will, from Pride released
Contemning neither man nor beast,
May hear the Soul of all the East
About him at Kamàkura.

Yea, voice of every Soul that clung
To Life that strove from rung to rung,
When Devadatta's rule was young,
The warm wind brings Kamàkura.

My eyes had no doubt often passed over these lines without realising their beauty. The printing of a poem is only a guide, a clue to what the poem really is. It is not the poem itself. You have to divine the inner mystery and beauty. The man who can read a poem may help you to divine it for yourself. And this Lindsay did, making this poem live as we walked about—about and about. The beauty of the poem almost depends on pronouncing the word Kamàkura aright. Because we both loved this song we thought of naming some snowy mountain after Buddha, with the great plea—"Be gentle!" Be gentle, all of us!

Another poem which became a possession of the heart was that of Sydney Lanier, little-known in England—

As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God.
I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh-hen flies,
In the freedom that fills all space 'twixt the marsh and the skies

By so many roots as the marsh-hen sends to the sod,
I will heartily lay me ahold of the greatness of God.

Like the greatness of God is the greatness within
The range of the marshes, the liberal marshes of Glynn.

This poet of southern Georgia gave, I thought, voice to a part of America, and it was a part I had tramped in too, a land of moss-hung forests and marshes, of marsh-blossoms and many birds. In that beautiful first verse how the word “secretly” in the first line enchants the ear, and then the wonderful effect of the phrase “greatness of God” when taken with wing-flight of birds rising o’er the reeds!

Talking of the modern poets, we agreed that a poem was little if there was not sound in it—melody—resonance. We found a common fellowship in Poe, and my companion rolled forth under a low and threatening heaven the cadences of “Ulalume,” his favourite poem, he averred.

Browning meant nothing to him, but he was fond of some of the early poems of Tennyson, especially of “Maud,” which greatly inspired him. Curiously enough, the latter poems of Tennyson were unknown to him—

On a midnight in mid-winter when all but the winds were dead,
“The meek shall inherit the earth” was a Scripture which ran through his
head,

and the kindred poems among the last pages of the collected works of Tennyson.

Matthew Arnold had never touched him, but the music of Keats he understood naturally at sight. Of his own American poets he did not care for Whitman, whom he is so often told he resembles, but he loved Longfellow and all such word-music as—

Sandalphon the angel of glory,
Sandalphon the angel of prayer,

all of which he said one day as we were climbing among the rocks.

He began loving poetry by learning it by heart and reciting it for his own joy, and I began by writing in an exercise-book all the soldiers’ poems of Thomas Campbell and reading them—“a thousand times o’er”—

My little one kissed me a thousand times o’er,
And my wife sobbed aloud in her fullness of heart.

“Stay, stay with us! rest! thou art weary and worn,”
And fain was their war-broken soldier to stay;
But sorrow returned with the dawning of morn,
And the voice in my dreaming ear—melted away!

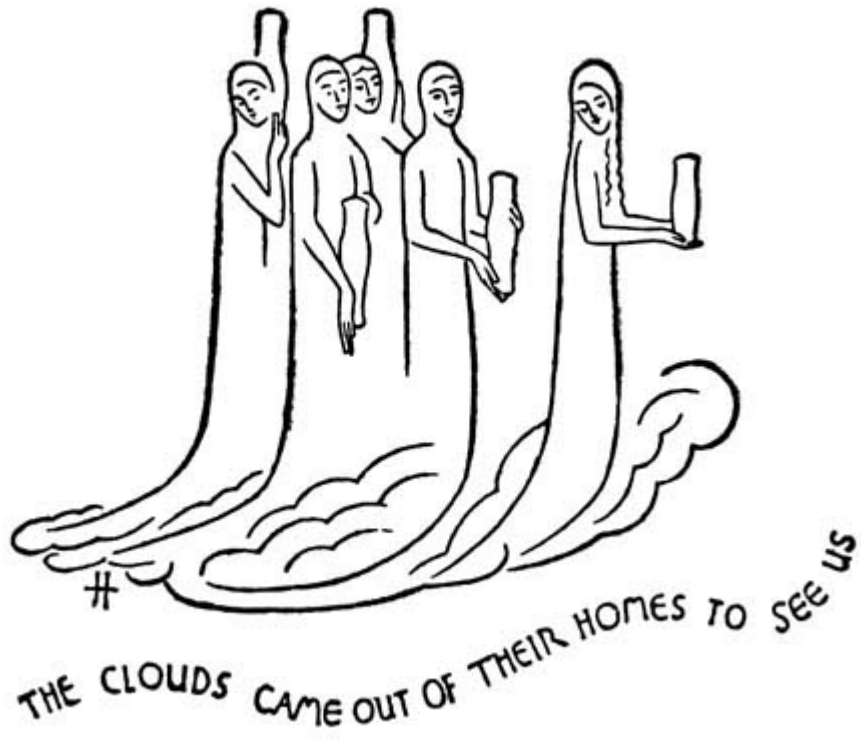
How precious are the recollections of one’s first love of poetry! If as a boy you read the “Golden Legend” walking in country lanes when the hay was cut in swathes in the fields on either hand; if you have ever lain in the midst of a cornfield and crooned to yourself the exultant promises of Rabbi ben Ezra, or climbed mountains with “Marmion” in your heart, or lisped the “Ode to a Nightingale” to the first girl you loved, how touching it will always be in memory!

The poet and the tramp shared thus their recollections as they wandered amidst heights and depths. They surely know much more of one another now!

*I think the poet
Learned to be a poet,
By living with the poets
Till he became a poet.*

*He had the great need in him
To give a song a tune.
So he listened how the birds sang
And he began to croon.*

*Now he’s singing for a living
And living for his singing.
And his companion’s singing,
And all of us are singing,
Because he’s learned to sing.*



THE CLOUDS CAME OUT OF THEIR HOMES TO SEE US

XXV. STOPPED BY THE CLOUDS

WE scrambled through thickets to Mount Grinnell, which stands like a gigantic fortress, a bulwark of this world against others. Its impregnability seemed appalling. Fancy knocking at that door after it was shut! We stopped and looked up at it, and the sight of it relaxed our tense human energy and left us with very contrite souls. However, the nearer we got to it the less it was magnified. Its battlements receded and we soon had a fly's view of the mountain, the view which the fly has when it is walking on the barren surface of the rock.

We clawed our way along the steep entangled shore of Lake Grinnell to a waste of willow saplings, and a litter of postal packets of great rocks delivered by the mail chute of the Grinnell Cataract. Here a great mass of water meets momentarily with calamity and falls over a precipice like houses falling. At two miles' distance it is like a picture of a waterfall seen in a shop window, pretty and attractive. At twenty yards' distance it is the awful thing it is. The sun is hidden at noon and a noise that drowns all other noises is in your ears. The spray blows turbulently over you like rain.

We had thought to cross the cataract through the *disjecta membra* of the rocks at its base, and climbed into dreadful proximity, and advanced our noses inquisitively over the foam. And then very hurriedly we drew back as if we feared we should be tempted across it. But what to do? Not surely to retrace our steps? That seemed unthinkable.

We decided to go lower and try to ford the rapids. Vachel thought that would not be difficult. But I had attempted such crossings in the Caucasus and knew what it meant to adventure one's tender body into a hypnotic, rushing current and a frantic roar of stones. So I went first and demonstrated it.

And we did get across. With most of our clothes off and stuffed into our packs, and with uprooted pine saplings for support, we made a criss-cross diagonal course into the water, which rushed up our bodies like wild mastiffs, and we were too preoccupied with the rolling stones and slippery

snags and the mesmerising onset of the waters to think about the chilling we were getting. It was certainly a victory when we slipped out of the central violence and got into the shallows on the other side.

WE did no more that day. I had sprained two fingers anyway, and could not rely on my left hand. So we piled a dead-willow fire beside the red rocks and talked. The cliff above us went up to heaven, but there was a recess washed out by the water of that waterfall in some past age. I am inclined to think that the cataract made the wind which simply raged round the corner all night long. But we had found a place that was completely out of it. Also, we got enough wood to burn all night and cure the cold. For it was cold up here. We built a long barrier of little rocks between us and the elongated glowing furnace of willow which we had made. This kept the flames off our blankets and yet warmed our bodies all the way along.

It was a majestic night, with the screened light of the moon filling a narrow sky. A selection of heaven's stars played voluntaries to us, but the jazz band of the waterfall kept up a grandiose hubbub, in which were vocal human cries and groans and chatterings—as if it were hell or Broadway going past.

Vachel could talk above this roar; I could not. So I listened to him and his cataclysmic accompaniment. It was, I think, on the subject of Turner and heroic painting. Vachel, and Ruskin before him were attracted to Turner by the heroic style.

“Scenes such as this beside the waterfall delighted Turner. Just at dusk it was a perfect Turner painting. Did you ever see that ‘elegant’ edition of Rogers’s *Italy* which old Mr. and Mrs. Ruskin read with their child? It is profusely illustrated with vignettes by Turner. They are all in the heroic spirit and they started Ruskin on his speculation about cloud-forms and in his idealistic interpretation of Turner.”

“I love the heroic,” Vachel went on. “I hate the game of puncturing heroics which people think so clever nowadays.”

I made no objection. A poet whose voice can be heard above the jazz band is a hero, and my sympathies are not with the flood of the burlesque—

unless, as now, they begin to wrap my soul in slumber's holy balm.

NEXT day we went up to the clouds, climbing by tiny steps of rock and slippery tussocks, and Vachel went ahead and became pioneer of the way. For it was a left-handed mountain, and I had no left hand that I could use, and I kept slipping five feet down in making one foot up. I got left behind, and when I caught up with the poet he was sitting stripped under a waterfall and leaning against a gleaming rock whilst the stream splashed downward over him.

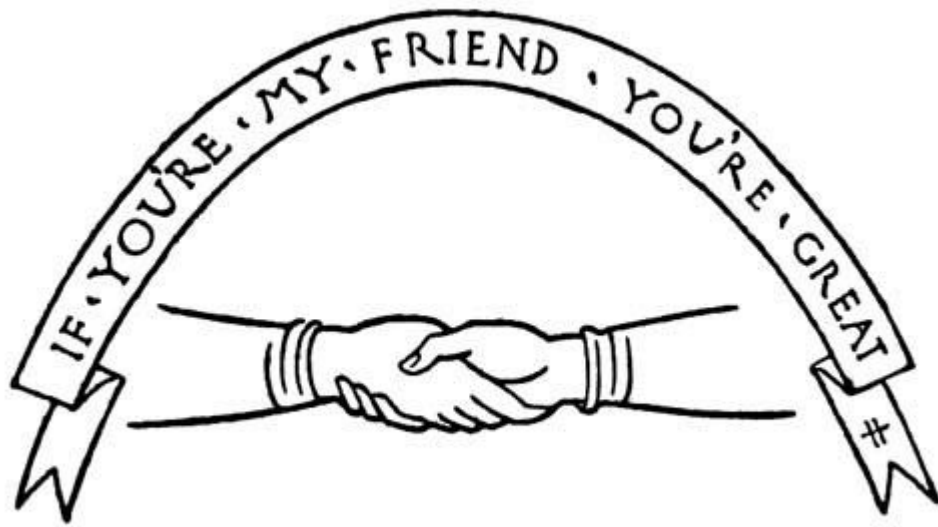
It was a day of great moving clouds. Clouds with personalities came stalking out of chasm bed-chambers, clouds overtook us and enveloped us. We found November's home, where sweeping rains cross and recross on the mountains. We passed near the base of the black and dirty glacier and watched the clouds smoking over it like a spreading fire. And presently there was not a particle of view above us except cloud, and no view below except of the rocks at our feet and the cloud-filled ravines.

We stood in perplexity. In clear weather it is difficult to get over the "Garden Wall" from this side. Now we could not see our way any further. We retired to twin slits in the cliff, stretched ourselves on our blankets, and gave way to meditation.



*The clouds came out of their homes to see us;
They had heard of us and had seen us from afar,
Now they could satisfy their curiosity
And find out just exactly who we were.
So they gave us of their hospitality,
Inviting us both to their mountain abode.*

*Mr. and Mrs. Glacier were at home—a chilly couple,
So were the impulsive avalanches, a family of long descent
And purest origin.
The visitors were mostly ladies of the upper strata of society
Most æsthetically gowned.
They came about us, asked us various questions,
Conventional questions about the weather.
Some new ones came, others drifted away.
We were left by ourselves at the last.
The clouds didn't altogether like our style,
Our form wasn't theirs,
We were obviously parvenus, Nature's profiteers,
Living not on our income but by our output.
The Peaks, their husbands, with their patrimonies,
Were certainly less clever and more stodgy,
But we were clear outsiders, people of a lowly birth,
Not altogether possible, they judged.
So the clouds' curiosity regarding us abated,
We felt pretty chilly towards the end of the party.
They offered us no tea, though we each had an ice on a wafer.
Proud, supercilious, overweening ladies!*



IF YOU'RE MY FRIEND YOU'RE GREAT

XXVI. LINDSAY ON ROOSEVELT

WE decided to change our direction and make for the camp at the head of Lake McDermot. This we could hope to reach by nightfall, as it was downhill all the way. It was moreover a right-hand descent and suited me well. In an hour of diving and plunging downward we got out of the clouds and saw that there was fine weather away to the East. We had moreover found a foot-trail, and, “Bless de Lo’d I’s found de way,” cried Vachel.

Downward, downward to the low pines, to the large pines, to the giant pines—how easy it was to go down. I thought we should have little difficulty in getting to the little log-cabins of the camp, and sleep dry for once. It was now ten days since we had last had a roof over our heads. The prospect was pleasant; we thought of the hot supper awaiting us. We thought of the drying of our clothes and our blankets, and of a gentle sweet repose of our tumbled and jolted bodies between white sheets.

The descent, however, suited Vachel as badly as the ascent had suited me. As a short-legged man he had to take three steps to my one, and he constantly serenaded me through the evening air—“Steeven ... wait a minute! Little Vachel’s lonesome!”

I would stop, he would draw level. “Now wait a minute,” he would say. “Let’s look back! What a wonderful view! Isn’t it a wonderful view? Let’s sit here awhile and take it in—a *wonderful* view!”

Or he would let me go on a bit and then stop me. “Stee-ven, look at the pine-tree, look at the giant tree, giant of the forest, look what a *great* giant! Let’s sit down and take it all in!”

In the twilight we got to talking of oratory, which is one of the poet’s pet themes. He holds that pure oratory is natural poetry. Bryan is a poet; Patrick Henry was a poet; Daniel Webster was a poet. He enunciated various famous lines to me, trying to rouse the mountains with a sort of voice-of-God tone or air-bursting boom which the poet commands—

Lib-er-ty and Un-i-on ...

One ... and in-sep-ar-able ...
Now ... and ... for-everrr!

and he imitated Andrew Jackson saying—“*The Federal Union! It must and will be preserved!*”

I found in the poet a curious creed, and that is, that oratory is better than logic. He preferred the warm glowing orator to the cold clear logician. He preferred Antony to Brutus, and put friendship above merit. He justified the “Solid South” in being solid. He justified Wilson for appointing his friends to power. He considered politics a matter not of theories but of friendships and family ties. He justified the spoils system to me. “When a man comes to power—he brings his clan to power, his friends, the people of the village, and that is much better than a collection of high-browed experts,” said he. He loathed detraction and personal attacks of any kind. The commonest laudatory adjective which he used to me in his conversations about his friends was the adjective “loyal.” I could not persuade him to talk critically of any of the literary work of his friends.

“Any poet who is a friend of mine is a good poet!” cried Vachel more than once. “I’m *for* him.”

WE came into view once more of fair Lake Josephine, but we could not make much headway. We were held by conversational webs. The poet was tired, and at every halting-place he started on some engrossing theme which beguiled us into spending half an hour sitting on dead trees. He was in the rôle of Scheherezade talking to her sultan. We ought to have plunged down to the lake-shore, built a big fire and dried off, but I was foolishly persistent in the idea of getting to the Many Glacier camp that night. Presently we started talking of Roosevelt, and the poet held me by the coat for a whole hour while he explained how he had been carried off his feet by a Republican, and had defied his family and voted for Roosevelt and had been struck out of the family Bible, so to speak.

“I was for him until the end of his Presidency,” said Vachel. “He refused to give business and high finance the first place, he would not talk the holy gospel of tariff, he made the White House a national centre of culture, he

gave a great progressive lead, and rallied to his banner the bright spirits of America; he hit the shams and the frauds and the trusts; he stood by the Negro; he was not afraid to express what he thought on any subject under the sun; he did not halt between yes and no, and he was the very opposite of the Adams type of politician.”

“But it burned him out,” Vachel went on. “He had a third and last period when he was not himself, when he acted the young man, and stage-managed the delusion of endless energy.”

And he told the story of Roosevelt’s last visit to Springfield with great gusto, imitating Teddie’s mighty stride down through the people to the platform, the war-cries and yells of the audience, the clash of the brass-bands.

“And he was not an orator, and he did not believe in the spoils system,” I interrupted maliciously. “And he did not believe in the families ruling America— —”

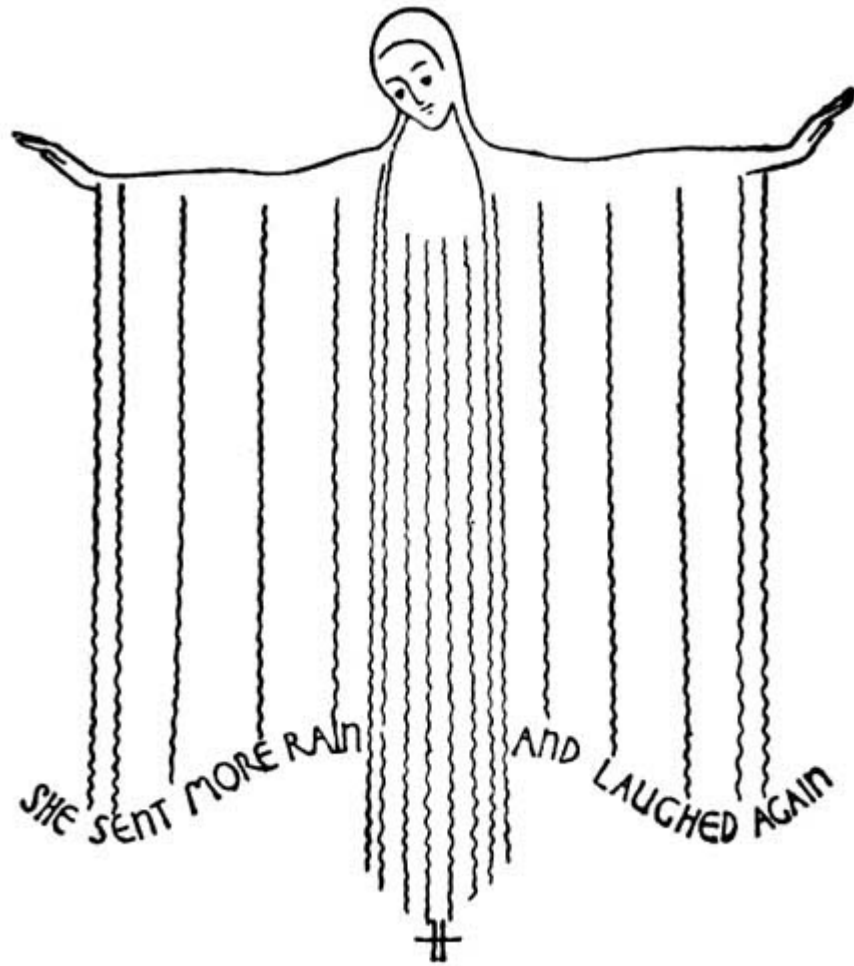
No wonder we got lost in the willows.



*A'm ti-erd, yes a'm ti-erd,
A got th' bloo-ooes aw-fool ba-ad.
Ma feet is sore;
You's awful so-ore,
Ain't ye, feet?
That fellah over the-ere
'S legs is just too lo-ong.
Now where's he gwine to now?
Where's he gwine to now?*

*I'se skeered he'll leave me here a-lone,
All a-lo-one.
Say, Cap, doan go on so fa-ar,
Say, boss, you sure didn't see that tree,
You cahn have no feelin's for the view
Huhhyin' on so fass—*

(Tired Feet Blues)



SHE SENT MORE RAIN AND LAUGHED AGAIN

XXVII. THE WILLOWS

WHEN I was at Springfield I was brought before the children of the High School, where in years past the poet went to school, two thousand children in a grand auditorium. I think we could show nothing of the kind in England, an assembly of nearly all the boys and girls between the ages of twelve and sixteen in the city—white children, black children, immigrant European children promiscuously grouped, bright-faced and vivacious and feeling all-together. I was to speak to them on Russia, but before my turn came the school did twenty minutes' practice at the school-yell. For there was a ball-match on the morrow, and as a young orator cried out to them, "We are going to win to-morrow. If the school is behind us we'll win."

The leaders of the school-yell came out of their seats, and they leapt like Indians and flung their arms about and writhed and appealed and struck the floor with the palms of their hands and appealed again. Thus they gave "The Locomotive Yell," which reminded me of the voice of the Purple Emperor Express in Kipling's locomotive story ".007." Thus they imitated a great steam-engine under full pressure of steam, laboriously and mightily and then victoriously roaring forth from the Grand Terminal—

Rah . . . rah . . . rah . . . rah—

Spring . . . field . . . High . . . School

(repeated four times with gradual acceleration)

Yea Springfield

Yea Springfield

Rah . . . Rah . . . Rah.

Vachel was visibly affected. "That's where I get my inspiration," said he. "I just love them to death. I feel as if I'd got a snoot full o' whisky. I just love them."

It would be idle to deny that these yells did not raise every hair on my scalp. It was an astonishing enkindling of the primitive. When I stood up to speak to these children I felt myself on a mighty friendly river. I was borne along by a rapturous enthusiasm which had been started by the yells. The whole

school, boys and girls, white and coloured, were fused in one glowing whole. And Vachel said to me once more, "There is America."

What a contrast to England, where the children are not allowed to get into this rapturous state! If you have faced the critical audience of Rugby or Harrow, or the restrained maidenhood of a school like High Wycombe, you realise the difference. If you are a moving speaker the Head may even ask you "not to get the children excited."

I was explaining this to Vachel. "Well," said he, "that's how it is in England. The duelling spirit survives. Every one is still on his guard. The American has thrown his shield away. Most human beings are incapable of understanding anything till they are moved. That's how we do things in America, and go ahead, by whoops and yells—Whoopee!"

ROOSEVELT made America into one man. He mesmerised America. But the spell failed, and many were disillusioned. His destruction of his own Progressive party was a terrible blow.

We were walking now in the woods in the dark, and heavy rain had come on, and we thought we were on a foot-trail and were not, and we got into a lamentable jungle of devastated pines and wild undergrowth and water. We walked in a circle, we tore our clothes afresh, we climbed pitifully slowly over stark dead jagged trees and branches, and Vachel forgot the subject of Roosevelt and of oratory, and began to make many suggestions as to the right direction. We got so desperate that I said to him:

"You think you know the way. Go ahead, I'll follow."

He wouldn't do that.

"All right: you follow me. And no suggestions for twenty minutes. We're going to get out of here."

We then plunged into a waste of tightly-packed willow trees, all about ten feet high, with branches thickly interlaced. It was intensely dark, and they soused us with water at every step. It was like breast-stroke swimming through them. We came to a pine-tree island in the midst of them, and then

after a long struggle forward, as I thought, we came back to the same pine trees. Then Vachel said, "Let us just lie down here for the night. When morning comes it will be easier."

But the ground under us was in slops of water, and rather than sit and shiver there for hours I was all for getting out, and still believed it possible. This faith or stubbornness was at length rewarded, for we came to the water at the top of Lake McDermot, and it was nothing to us to walk through thigh-deep water for half a mile and ford the river. We were so soaked with the water of the willows that we must have made the lake a little wetter.

So we made our way to the palatial hotel which is situated on the north-eastern corner of Lake McDermot. Bedraggled, hanging in new tatters and with water streaming into little pools on the floor when we stood still, we were no people for the hotel. And we read on the front door, "No one in hobnails or bradded shoes allowed to enter here." The many lights shone on our red faces for a minute, and then we passed on—to the log-cabins of the campers and the hob-nailed brethren. And there we got a room, and we opened our last can of pork and beans and ate it to the bottom, and we rung out our streaming clothes and hung them to dry, and we put Roosevelt and Bryan to sleep, and the poet and the Guardsman were hushed.



*The joke was on us and Nature laughed at us,
She laughed at us, she would not help us.
She sent more rain and laughed again,
Swish, swish!
Ha, Ha!
She laughed at us, she would not help us,
She sent more rain and laughed again.*



SO FOR US HE MADE GREAT MEDICINE

XXVIII. JOHNNY APPLESEED

I BUILT a fire by the roadside opposite the palatial hotel and made our coffee. “It’s like lighting a fire and making yourself a personal cup of coffee on Broadway,” said Lindsay, “but it’s fine.” It’s a dramatic act and startles the imagination. The coffee-pot could be made the emblem of revolt—“Go West, young man, with a coffee-pot. You can live on nothing a year with a coffee-pot. Figure it out, how little money you need to live in the wilds!”

Vachel is all for giving the business man and clerk and industrial worker a three-months’ vacation. “They don’t work in these summer months anyway,” says he. “But they are afraid of being reproached if they take long holidays. Every man here, be he a millionaire or a poor man, works. He has an office, he has a factory. If he hasn’t these, he invents them. He believes it is effeminate to take more than two weeks’ holiday. For a month’s holiday he must have the recommendation of his physician. Otherwise he loses caste and may be called a ‘lounge lizard,’ which is one of the terms of abuse which sting most. On the other hand, modern work becomes every-day more sedentary, more mechanical. In accountancy figures become more exclusive, in the workshop automatic machinery becomes more and more perfect. It dulls and enthralls the mind.”

“Yet how easy it is to get out and do what we are doing!” I urged in agreement.

“Go, give them a message,” cried the poet.

“Intelligentsia of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains. Young men and women, get free, get your coffee-pots, take up the national parks and the free lands of the West!”

“I have an idea that most of the tramps and vagabonds of our country-sides have had lives full of poetry. The men who are dismissed as eccentrics were often mystics. America has not liked its Thoreaus and its Chapmans.... Johnny Appleseed, for instance, who was an American St. Francis, has been generally laughed at as a sort of a harmless lunatic.”

We talked of this on the upward trail next day. One point in favour of the hotel had been its good supply of canvas trousers. I bought myself a pair, and was thereby saved the reproach of looking a little like Johnny Appleseed in the matter of my attire. I laughed at Johnny for having worn a tin can on his head for a hat, and Vachel was at pains to defend him even there. But the poetry of his life was his going ahead of the pioneers of Ohio and Indiana, and planting apple-orchards and tending them and watching them grow for the America that should come after him. I often wonder whether the large red-gleaming Ohio apples of to-day do not come from him. I've stolen them and munched them at dawn, as I tramped to the West, and I can testify how good they were—good medicine.

“And so for us he made great medicine,” says the poet reverently, quoting his own new poem.

Vachel in his quest for beauty was regarded by many as a crank, an eccentric. He endured the humiliation of being village-idiot, or, as they call it in the Middle West, “town-boob.” Awfully silly people who thought themselves smart would stop in front of him with the air of a Johnny Walker whisky advertisement and ask him quizzically if he were “still going strong.” He was discovered later, and hailed and acclaimed by the poets of America and England, but even then the dulled folk of business and politics looked doubtfully upon him. He told me, for instance, how a celebrated impresario introduced him to the notables of the capital, but always with the formula—

“I want to introduce you to Mr. Vachel Lindsay of Springfield, Illinois.... He is a pp—oet.”

So there's a streak of sadness somewhere in the poet's mind, and it comes from brother-man. And that sadness has expressed itself in a love of Johnny Appleseed and all others whom the Spirit drives into the wilderness.

WE camped then under an overhanging crag of Mt. Justinian and watched the moon, half eclipsed by a cliff, creep and crawl like a golden turtle over the mountains, over the mighty tops, over the ... over the world, whilst bright silver cloudlets in ball-robcs danced lightly amongst the stars. And

we climbed next day by twenty-four zigzags to the jagged summit, and rested in a grand snow-cavern as large as a church, made by the winds and the drifts in dread mid-winter, and we saw the clouds blow off the glaciers like washing-day steam out of a kitchen door. The poet lifted his mighty voice to the rocks, and they sent a kindred answer back to him. He called the snow-cavern Brand's Church, and it was a strange and thrilling place in which to abide.

They call the ridge of the mountain the "Garden Wall," but it is not very felicitously named. But it is wall-like. It is like an enormous exaggeration of the Roman wall built to keep out the Picts and Scots from England, but it is a rampart against the Martians rather than against man.

We came at last to a joyous company in an old-fashioned inn, and made happy acquaintance with a band of hikers and sportsmen and mountaineers. Girls with riding-switches in their hands were dancing with one another, and a tall dark striking one whom I called the Spaniard chummed in with us and brought her friend and made Vachel promise to recite. We had a mountain-climbers' supper, and when this was cleared away the bears came down the mountain toward us for the leavings, and watched us eagerly and ate the sweets we threw them, and when the bears were gone we built a huge bonfire and sat around and watched the sparks fly upward, and told stories and chaffed one another. And Vachel talked to us all of the virtue of the West and read to us his poem of the hour—the story of Johnny Appleseed, who in the days of President Washington made for us all—great medicine.



*Thackeray advised us—
How to live on nothing a year.
"Take a nice little house in Mayfair;*

*Order everything and pay nothing.”
We can go one better than that.
Take over the Rocky Mountains
As your personal estate;
Everything arranged for you in advance,
Complete freedom of mind,
And no bills.
When the little game in Mayfair is played out
And you are clearly on the rocks,
Be sweet about it,
Leave your friends a card,
Tell them you’ve been advised a change of scene.
You’re on the Rockies.*



HENCEFORTH I CALL YE NOT SERVANTS
BUT FRIENDS



HENCEFORTH I CALL YE NOT SERVANTS BUT FRIENDS

XXIX. LOG-ROLLING

VACHEL slipped near Heaven's Peak and turned a double somersault downward, buffeting his head with his huge pack (crammed with canned goods, loaves, blankets, and what not) and then I picked him up and found he had sprained his ankle.

"Don't think I'm hurt," said the poet. "I yelled because I was scared. I'll be all right in a few minutes."

He didn't mind the pain, but he loathed being beaten. Nevertheless he was down and out. "We'll go on to-morrow," said he. "We'll go on next day."

"Here we are, and here we remain," said I, "till the ankle has recovered. We can stay a week or two weeks, and I'll go back for more food. So let's make up our minds to it."

So we stayed by a flat-rocked stream on a grand slope in a forest of stately pines and firs. Vachel sat on his blankets like a sultan. And he speedily forgot his ankle and the mountains and Heaven's Peak, and began to tell me the story of Elbert Hubbard, from the time when he travelled in Larkin's soap to the time when he wrote "Who Took the Lid off Hell?" and went down in the Lusitania. And then he told me the substance of "A Self-made Businessman's Letters to his Son," that unashamed best seller which portrayed the benevolent soul of a Chicago packer before Upton Sinclair dared. Then he told me a fantastic story of how ten ne'er-do-well men of Springfield were found ready to die for the Flag. Then he told to me from memory Edgar Allan Poe's story of King Pest, and the ghouls of the forest crept close to us to listen. Then he told me of the prairie-schooners which used to have inscribed on them "Pike's Peak or bust!"

"Heaven's Peak or bust," said I, maliciously pointing to his swollen ankle. "Lindsay, essaying to climb Heaven's Peak, slipped downward," I went on facetiously, imitating the style of my letters to the *Evening Post*. He smiled.

"How yer feelin'?" I interjected.

“I’m feelin’ fine,” said he.

“Shall we get to Canada?”

“I’ll be all right to-morrow.”

“We ought to have gone further whilst the goin’ was good, eh?”

“I’m sorry, Stephen,” said he apologetically.

“But this is good?”

“It’s good enough for me.”

“All right.”

BRINGING in wood for a big fire is rather a tedious job, but I hit on a sporting way of doing it all by myself, and doing it better. We were at seven thousand feet, and the avalanches and spring floods and storms had wrought havoc among the trees. Fine dead trunks lay in scores on the mighty slope of the mountain. Our fire was at the foot of a slippery granite slide. So I took a stout young pine-tree, and began to lever the great dead trees and set them rolling downward. Vachel was perched on a rock above the fire, and the logs arrived at the embers below like colliding locomotives, with a great bump and showers of sparks. It was possible to lever and roll downwards logs that were thirty or forty feet long, and we pulled the great lumps of their sprawling resinous roots on to the fire.

We slept that night among the granite shelves, and the pine-roots roared as they burned, and the great rocks beside the fire cracked under the heat with a sort of earthquake thud which registered a buffet on our bodies ten yards away.

We stayed four days in this wonderful spot, and I became fascinated with log-rolling. Even Vachel, with his ankle, hobbled after me and tried to do it too. We talked of political and literary log-rolling, log-rolling for one’s friends. “I’m all for it,” said the poet. “Log-rolling is a virtue.”

Then he recounted to me the origin of the expression—log-rolling. “It is a Western term,” said the poet. “It also comes from the life of the pioneers.

You know how it was; the settler chose the site of his log-cabin or of his new barn, and then went into the forest and felled the number of trees necessary, and he left them lying where they had fallen, and then called his friends together for a festive occasion. They all worked together for him, and rolled his logs to the most convenient spot where they could be piled to make his home. Of course he always gave his friends a luncheon first, and then they went off and rolled his logs home for him.”

“And I like that,” said the poet. “No man can hope to do much in this world without the help of friends. And I for one would not want to.”

Go to it then, ye log-rollers of the literary world, ye friends, we’ll lunch ye, we’ll give you, coffee with a kick of a mule in it, and fried corned-beef hash fit for the best friend of the Grand Vizier’s cook. And he, as you know, fares better than the Sultan himself.



Who rolled home Shakespeare’s logs?

We did: we helped to do it.

All the world has given a hand.

Were they lunched first?

Ah, I doubt it.

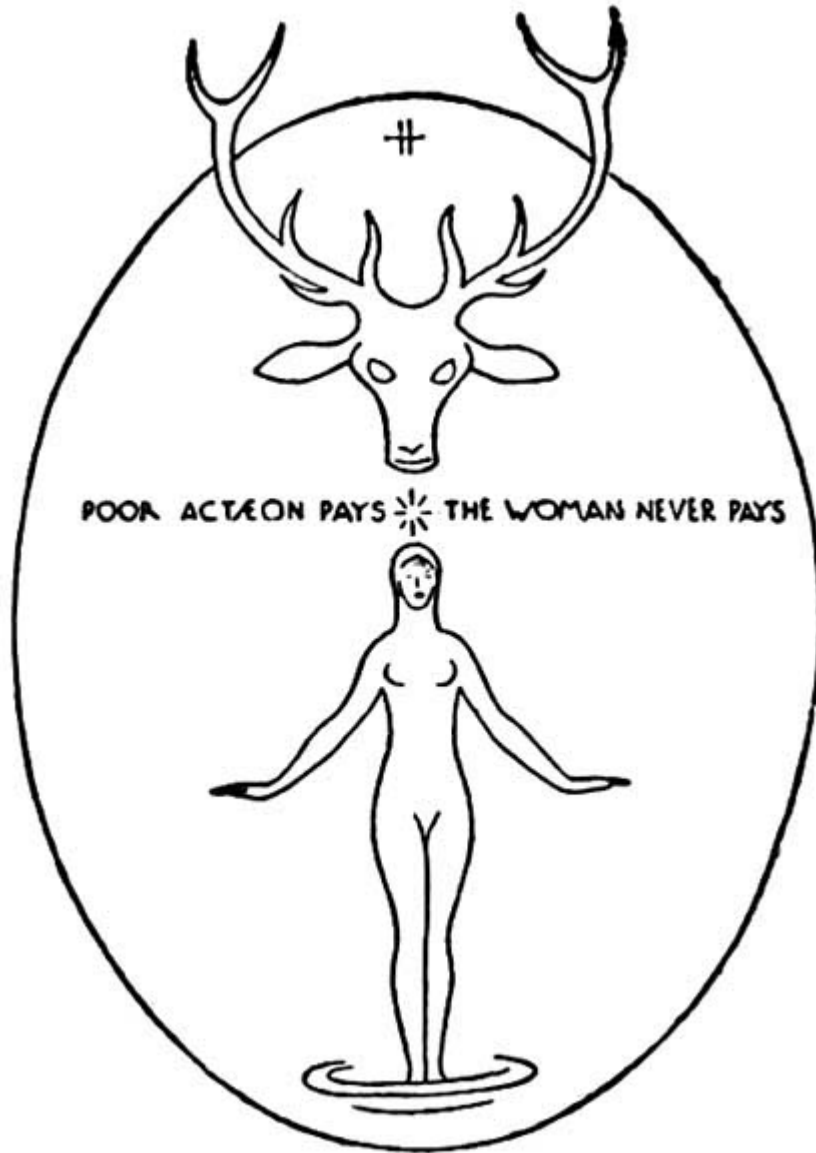
But that was not Shakespeare’s fault,

He was a jolly fellow!

N.B.—According to Frederick Dallenbaugh, writing to the *New York Post*, the real log-rolling commences after the logs have been brought to the site:

“The foundation logs for the house having been duly notched and fixed in position, another tier is placed on top of them, and then another, and so on till the log wall is of the prescribed height. Now, it is obvious that it would be difficult to lift the logs up on to this growing wall. Primitive science then comes to the builder’s aid. Other logs are placed at an incline against those already established in their position and the logs that are to surmount the lower logs are rolled up the incline into place.

“From this came the invitations sent out by the prospective builder to come to his log-rolling.”



**POOR ACTÆON PAYS
THE WOMAN NEVER PAYS**

XXX. TOWARD THE KOOTENAI

SUMMER began to give way to winter on the mountains. There were very cold nights, and frost. The full moon made the forest spacious, and the beautiful fir-trees, like candelabras, glittering with silver lights. The mornings were of an intense stillness as if ordained whilst God walked in the garden. We had stayed three days beside a grey rock wall which was eight feet high, and it began to have the light of home upon it, and one might have lived there long.

Vachel soon began to feel much better, though he looked quaint, hobbling along the rocks and uneven woodland holding on to a tall pine-cudgel which he had cut. He wore a red cotton handkerchief over his crumpled hat, and it was tied in knots under his chin. He was weak at all joints and walked like a dwarf who lives in a hollow tree, a fairy-like antediluvian old fellow. His red wind-blown face was lined and lined. His eyes twinkled as he walked. He stooped to pick up wood, he looked cautiously about him, and I had the feeling that he would rapidly scurry away if a human being came into view.

I returned to camp for a bagful of provisions, and bright-faced Myrtle La Barge gave me a whole apple-pie to take to the poet in memory of Johnny Appleseed, and she gave me large overweight of cheese and apricots and ham and all the rest I asked for. That night a bear came after us, smelling the ham, and I said to him, "Bite Daniel, bite him, bite him!" and the bear studied us some paltry half-hour, but as the Comick saith, "his mind was in the kitchen." And he said to the poet with a disappointed groan—"How about the ham?" But Vachel then waved his pine-cudgel and the bear did waver with his hind-quarters and ran away. The poet then became a silent watcher for the rest of the night.

We set off next day for the Kootenai River, and Vachel had tied up his game foot in a dozen ropes and bindings, and it was soaking in iodine besides, and we went very slowly and he sang hymns all the way. I said to him, "You won't mind, Vachel, if I go ahead some distance." For his singing

scared the wild animals. The white-vested woodpecker walking like a great fly up the dead poles of old pines, tapping as he went, paused meditatively at the sound of Vachel's voice; the grouse and the ptarmigan tripped ahead of us like hens, and scurried out of view; little piggy the porcupine trembled in all his beautiful quills; and the squirrels scolded from all the trees as if we were a terrible annoyance. I am not surprised. At school at Springfield the teacher used to say; "All sing except Vachel," the reason being that he has his own voice entirely. Thus, in slow and devastating accents, keeping pace with the enforced slow walk and pine-cudgel progress, you might have heard him singing—

We ... shall ... dwell ... in that fair and happy ... land
Just across ... from the ever-green sho-o-re.

and I put distance between us, but ever as he caught up I could hear the scared animals rushing away. I grew facetious about the ever-green shore, after he had sung it fifty-five times, and he, with utter meekness, gave it up from that hour forth and sang instead:

When he cometh, when he cometh,
To make up his jewels.

WE descended into a profound and shadowy valley where the pines and firs got loftier as if trying to reach the level of the mighty cliffs above them, but all their branches hung in veils of the tillandsia moss. Here were firs with thousands of Uncle Sam beards of yellow-green hair hanging from thousands of sharp chins. The great depth of the brown floor of the forest was roofed in by darkness, and tree-tops and moss. We came down to a wild brawling stream which rent the forest in twain and let in the fairness of the sky and the sun. It was a perfect place and I must say we did not expect to meet anybody there.

We took off our clothes in the sun, and naked Lindsay took his shirt to wash in the stream. Naked, I made a fire by the water-edge, and put on the coffee-pot to boil. The water of the river was ice-cold, and surreptitiously dipping a limb in it, one registered the fact. Many brown comma butterflies danced in the sunshine, and settling on our arms and legs, tickled us, throwing their

honey-tubes deep into our pores and getting their luncheon before we got ours. Evidently we were a couple of sweet boys.

Our innocence was, however, sharply disturbed by an unwonted cry and a shout, and a red-faced, large-eyed, half-breed Indian suddenly appeared on horseback along the river shore. He was trying to protect the eyes of his party. But he was too late. We made a rapid scramble and dived as a party of five highly-amused girls came past, and following them a dozen pack-mules, carrying their camping outfits and party-frocks.

I lay in the water after that and thought it over whilst a cascade of melted snow rushed down my neck, and I saw on the shore the coffee-pot lifting its lid and spitting many times. Presently I saw the Indian re-appear and struggle through the forest wreckage of the river-bank.

“The party apologises,” says he, “for coming upon you unexpectedly.” I apologised in return.



*When Actaeon saw Artemis at her bath,
The goddess changed him to a stag.
And when Tiresias saw Athene thus
She robbed him of his eyes.
But when these goddesses saw Actaeon and Tiresias
A-bathing,
They laughed.
We meant nothing to them
Compared with what they knew they meant to us.*



FROM THE FIRE TO THE DARK GOES THE TINY SPARK

FROM THE FIRE TO THE DARK GOES THE TINY SPARK

XXXI. AS THE SPARKS FLY UPWARD

WE lunched on ham and peas and caramel cake, and lay in a natural cradle among the roots of giant firs, and slept for an hour of a perfect afternoon. After the ice-cold dip and scalding coffee and a good feed and a self-indulgent snooze, we knew ourselves to be well and certainly happy. What a thing is physical well-being—to be hard, to be fit, to be cool, to be clear-headed, to know there's a live spring in every muscle, and then to be care-free and able to sleep in the afternoon!

Vachel's ankle went very well, the danger was that he might do too much on it. We walked three or four miles up stream and then camped for the night on a wild triangle alongside a mighty barricade of the jetsam of broken water-washed tree trunks, some as long as fifty feet. We lodged in the profound trough of a characteristic Western canyon. Night came quickly, and our camp-fire light obscured the stars. The giant trees with shadowy bases climbed sheer out of sight into the murky sky above. The brown and white foaming river, like hundreds of swimming beavers, rolled onward past us all the while. We boiled from it, washed clothes in it, made soap-foam over it, but the ever-freshening waves purified our margins faster than we could sully them. We paddled about in bare feet on the shore and gathered wood whilst the firelight played on the stones, and we heaped high the bonfire. I stood on a mighty chief of the forest and flung lesser logs from the water-washed wood barricade right to the fire, and they landed one after another with a thud and a roar in the midst of the flames. Then we lay flat on our backs on our blankets and watched our sparks fly up and die in scores, in thirties, in fives, in thirty-fives, in hundred and fives. What a giddy and wild life some of them had! How they whirled! How impetuous were some, how serpentine others! We saw how all of them trailed their light as the first escaped from the fire, and were like serpents of flame.

"They do not die," said the poet. "They only seem to die; they go on, like ideas, into the invisible world. I'd like to write a volume of adventures, the story of the adventures of, say, twelve different sparks."

It was very white wood and very red fire. And it was slow-burning, for the resin had been washed out of all their boles. The fire glowed and glittered and was sociable and was taking time to live and taking time to die. Our eyes grew hot and staring, like children's eyes sitting in front of the yule-logs listening to Christmas tales after their bed-time hour.

Our thoughts fly up brightly and then disappear, but goodness knows where they go to. Our fancies stream upward idly like little flaming serpents. Life is a fire, and we keep on burning and throwing up sparks. We are very pretty, if we could only see ourselves, with our thoughts and fancies jumping out of us and flying from us. The fire will burn out towards dawn, and then the sparks will cease. They'll only be a happy memory then. But the poet believes the sparks go on.

What a silence! The river is roaring past like the river of time itself, but we have forgotten it, we have detached ourselves from it, and beside our little fire there is a silence all our own. We have a silence and a noise at the same time. There is a stillness and aloofness and a sense of no man near.

A disturbing thought comes. "If there were an earthquake in San Francisco you'd feel the tremor here. If there were an earthquake in the West the river might suddenly flow over us." We listened, we tried to sense the sleeping world, the ball on which we were lying. How still, how peaceful it was! Not a tremor, not a quiver from beneath us! Old earth slept the perfect sleep of a child. We too could sleep that way, and presently some one spoke but the others did not reply, did not dare. One was left speaking and the other was asleep. All became still and quiet in the temple. The candles were still burning. But the priest had gone. It was night, and the Spirit reigned in serenity. And the candles were still burning.



*A tiny spark was born to-day;
It said good-b'ye to yesterday.
It carried up a tiny light,*

*Said good-day and then good-night.
“Good-morrow!” said the tiny spark,
But ere the morrow came ’twas dark.
So that’s the best that he can do,
In his own time say “How d’ye do.”*



LINCOLN
THE STAR OF THE EAST BECOMES THE STAR OF THE WEST

XXXII. THE STAR OF SPRINGFIELD

NEXT day, tramping to Flat Top Mountain, we talked of Springfield and Abraham Lincoln. We were in stately forests, and the ancient mould under the feet silenced our steps. We walked slowly, and stopped to pick the big black huckleberries, paused to climb over stricken trees, paused to eat the raspberries from the undergrowth of raspberry bushes.

“I’d like you to think of Lincoln as a poor man,” said Vachel, “an eccentric—laughed at, sneered at a great deal, entirely underestimated, a man who was a mystic, who believed in dreams and presentiments and told many dreams to his Cabinet with great gravity. Politicians want to see in him a conventional great man now, but in his life-time he was called eccentric. He was as much laughed at as Johnny Appleseed. But if a man is called eccentric in this country, or much laughed at, you’ll often find he was a mystic or a genius of some kind.”

One of Vachel’s alternative ideas for a tramp was to do a Springfield star, making the city our centre to radiate outward, or, could I say, walk radiantly outward, in one direction, then in another, all round the compass. “As you went to Bethlehem with the Russian pilgrims so you could pilgrimage to our Bethlehem,” said he, “see our star.”

People from all parts of the world come to Springfield to see the Lincoln home, to visit Salem and the grave of Anne Rutledge, to salute Lincoln’s grave. They do so, not because they are told to do so, or because there are organised tours, but because the heart moves them to it.

But there are also many people in America ready to turn their backs on the simple Abe Lincoln of Springfield. He is too rough for them, too untidy, too raw. They would fain think of him as a man of aplomb, a man of a well-established family, one of the governing class. Lincoln’s son Robert is president of the Pullman Car Company, and they would see the father in the son and surmise a family well-lined, well-wadded, well-upholstered. In that class you can get to power, and be carried there, and sleep on the way. Belong to that class and all is yours!

But the real Abe Lincoln gives the lie to this. It offends some people to the heart to think that Lincoln's father lived in a three-ways-round log-cabin with the fourth side not built in, that young Abraham was a barge-man, what we call in England a bargee, and came down the Sangamon River in a flat-bottomed boat with a cargo and got stuck on the dam at Salem and accepted a job there, and slept in a sort of loft over a ramshackle tavern, men one side of a plank, women the other, and that he rose out of the very depths of American life.

"What Lincoln did, any boy in the United States can aspire to do," cried Vachel as we sat on a log together and looked at the shadow and shine of the myriad-fold population of trees. "We've no governing class. We've only got a class that thinks it is the governing class, but it is the most barren in the community. Lincoln's life shows the real truth. Any one who feels he has it in him can rise to the Presidency of the United States."

I promised to make the pilgrimage to the Lincoln shrines when our tramp should be over and we returned to Springfield. Then Vachel was fired by his pet fancies about his native city. He would have it all painted white, like the Chicago World's Fair. "White harmonises all sizes and shapes of houses and all types of architectural design. And it has an effect on the mind. It suggests the ideal. If the city were all painted white, then people would try to live up to its appearance. Then also it would stand out among all cities of America. The very fact of its painting itself white would go into every newspaper in the United States, it would be known in all English-speaking lands and would direct world-attention to the shrine of Abraham Lincoln," said he.

It seemed to me a practical idea, and I bade him preach it still. He'd find valuable allies in the paint merchants and painters of Springfield anyway. If America could go "dry" one need not despair of Springfield painting itself white. "In America all things are possible," as a German street-song says.

He returned once more to his story of the ten who died for the flag of Springfield—the new flag of the city. "I've always felt," said he, "that there could be found at least ten men among the unlikely fellows who loaf around our town square ready to give their lives for Springfield. If ever there came a time when Springfield was in danger or its flag likely to be dishonoured, I

know it is from the tramps and wasters that something would come. At least, from the people we don't know."

"If only I could write that idea as Edgar Allan Poe wrote 'King Pest,'" said the poet, "then I'd tell the truth and shame the Devil."

"YET Springfield was once disgraced by a most unholy race-riot," my companion went on. "It was in 1908, the centenary of Lincoln's birth, and I felt it as a terrible disgrace. The negro victims were entirely innocent. It was a shocking affair."

We had by this time lifted ourselves high out of the gloomy valleys and had attained to a rarer atmosphere and a clearer world, where the forest lay below like a book that has been read and above it rose the eternal hills lifting their mighty granite shoulders to the sky. We saw in retrospect many of the mountains we had climbed. "Going-to-the-Sun" and "Heaven's Peak" were remote but grandiose on the horizon. We were on a much-exposed ridge of Flat Top Mountain, and we camped in a wintry spot beside a natural table of rock. On the rock we spread our supper; on the ground our blankets. The wind blew the flaps of our blankets, it blew away the flaming embers of the bonfire which we made, and it ignited the grass, and when we had put the fire out on one side it broke out on the other, and yet there was not enough of a fire to warm us. Night came on, and we sought new fuel. Vachel hobbled beside me and discoursed in a preoccupied way about Springfield and its race-riot.

"I'm with you all the way about the Negroes, Stephen," said he, as we struggled to upraise an embedded sapling which the snows had tumbled over in the spring. "If you write about the Negro again, say I'm with you, I subscribe to it. I'll go the limit with you."

We raised the entangled, difficult, fallen tree up on to the star-radii of its roots, and looked down the wild slope to where our fire was burning and blowing. It was dark up there where we were, and the fire below gleamed in the darkness. We rolled the sapling down to the fire and on to it, and stamped out the flames in the grass, and then returned into the darkness for another sapling.

“You know how I felt in Springfield when that riot occurred,” said Vachel. “I visited all the leading Negroes and most of the leading white men. I bombarded the newspapers with letters. And I don’t know that it did any good. You couldn’t be sure that another onslaught on the coloured people wouldn’t occur to-morrow.”

As we talked we sought and collected withered branches, wind-riven arms of the pines. Some we had to pull out of the earth, others we could not pull out.

“I believe the only way to stop lynching would be to break into a lynching crowd and make them either lynch you instead of the Negro or lynch you for interfering. When they realised what they had done their hearts would be touched, their consciences would be shocked,” said Vachel.

We had unwieldy faggots in our arms and so walked closely together down the hill, supporting one another’s wood.

“It is expedient that one man should die for the people once more,” said the poet.

We made up a good fire; we boiled a pot of coffee and fried a heap of beans and stewed a cup of apricots and cut the bread and untied the sugar-bag and exposed the dried raisins, of which we had a capacious little sack-full and wrapped ourselves round and sat by the fire and fed and talked—

“Springfield was just about to attract the attention of the world in a special way, as the shrine of Lincoln, when that riot broke out,” said Vachel. “Large schemes had been approved for the improvement of the city. All promised well. Then suddenly this race-riot broke out, and Springfield was the subject of cartoons all over the United States. The finger of scorn was pointed at Lincoln’s city. Springfield is still trying to live it down.”

I confessed it was difficult to think of Springfield as an American Bethlehem after it had been the scene of a race-riot. That was indeed a smudge on its fair name. Quiet little Bethlehem in Palestine has at least kept clear of that. Still even Bethlehem could not help it if some ugly human doings occurred there.

It was curious that the race-riot sprang from the “poor Whites,” and yet from the same poor Whites Vachel was ready to find ten who would die for the Flag.

I told my thought then, and that was, that the poor white population, heroic as it was, would not be deterred by the self-sacrifice of one of their number for the sake of the Blacks. This very year an English clergyman was stripped and beaten almost to death by a gang of Whites in Florida, just because he asked a congregation for fair play for the Negro. And nothing happened to the gang. No prosecutions followed. Lynch is powerful when law is weak.

“The social conscience is dull,” said the poet sadly. “The Negro question is the one which has most plagued America, and most people have given it up and decided not to fret their brains any more about it. You see, we even fought a war for it once, and we’re always quarrelling about it. A news paragraph about a man being burned by a mob will not even catch the notice of the newspaper reader. It either does not stir his imagination, or he refuses to think about it.”

“But it brings America into disrespect in Europe. It takes away from the force of her moral example,” said I.

Lindsay knew that. We discussed then the daring appeal of Governor Dorsey of Georgia to the people of that State to mend their ways. We discussed South Africa and then India.

And then we went for more wood, and the stars shone out above us, peerless in their righteousness, rolling along deliberately as ever on their fixed ways. “How brightly they shine on us,” said I. “We should be as they. If they erred and strayed from their ways as we do, what a mad universe ’twould be.”

“And one of them,” said the poet, “is the star of Bethlehem, the star that rested over Bethlehem and then rested over Springfield for a while.”

“Up here in the mountains we see the stars, but down there in the forests and dark valleys it is not so easy,” said I.

We talked of Springfield by the firelight till one of us fell asleep. One picture remains in my mind, and that is of a Hindu who sought out Vachel Lindsay after he had been to Abraham Lincoln’s home. “Show me now the home of the poet who lives among you,” said the Hindu.



*A Hindu came to Springfield,
He saw the home of Lincoln,
He saw the court of Lincoln,
He saw the streets he trod.
“Now show me,” quoth the Hindu,
Show me your poet Lindsay,
Show me your prophet Lindsay,
Who sings to-day to God.*

*The guide to Fifth Street therefore led
And showed the house where Lindsay fed.
And the Hindu much rejoiced and said:
“I know that Springfield is not dead.”*



GOOD DAY MR PRESIDENT

GOOD-DAY M^R PRESIDENT

XXXIII. FLAT TOP MOUNTAIN

THE fire burned sulkily at dawn, and the grass around it was white with frost. We had lain awake for an hour, silently meditating on the joys of coffee to be. We knew it was no use getting up before sunrise, for fuel was scarce and hard to find. It was a wonderful dreamy dawn, rising above the mists of an autumnal night. We looked to see antelopes perched on the crags above us, and mountain-goats. But the scene was bare on all hands. Our eyes lighted on the rusty foliage of some uprooted trees. Walking in our unlaced boots, we brought this dead wood in, made a fine blaze, and had breakfast, and then curled ourselves up by the fire and slept till the sun stood higher. If I woke first it was to sit with a blanket about my shoulders and pen an article for Kit Morley. It commonly happened that I sat by the fire and scribbled my letters to the Post in the morning whilst the poet had an extra hour asleep.

When we resumed our climb the poet got talking of the Indians. Curiously enough Flat Top Mountain marks the entrance to the country of the Flat-Heads, the Flat-Heads being so called because they press their babies' heads to obtain a flat-headed type of beauty. The mountain has imitated the Indians and grown up flat-headed too. We were presently to meet, when we crossed the Canadian line, a considerable number of Indians of various tribes. Vachel facetiously observed that he wouldn't mind taking an Indian bride if he could find one that walked thirty-five miles a day and took a bath every morning. I held that it was very snobbish on his part. The disqualifying point, however, proved to be the chewing of tobacco. When the poet saw these young Amazons rolling their quids he was confirmed in bachelordom.

"Great people, the Indians," said Vachel. "I was brought up on their orations. So was mother, I believe. Did you ever see M'Gaffey's reader with Black Hawk's 'Oration' and the 'Defence of Spartacus,' and other wonderful studies in popular oratory? I wouldn't mind voting for an Indian to be President of the United States."

“What! A red Indian? I should have thought America was too prejudiced against colour.”

“Not against the Indians. Against the Negroes. You and I don’t think a Negro could rise to Presidency. But an Indian is different. There is a great romance connected with the Indians; there are the traditions of the battles with them; there is the personal grandeur of the braves. Every American boy has longed to be an Indian chief. And then there is the strain of Pocahontas, the Indian princess, married into the pride of Virginia. I believe an Indian President is just what we want to root us in America and give us a genuine American inspiration. It would bring poetry into politics. It would bring all the glamour of the West.”

“But it is not a practical possibility,” I urged.

“I believe it could be put over,” said the poet. “You see, the Indians are a hunting people, a sporting people. They’ve refused to bow the knee to the sordid side of life.”

We agreed that they were such good hunters that it was in vain the United States Government protected game in these parts. The Flat-Heads seemed to have swept off everything. You may go for days and see nothing more edible than marmots and porcupines. On the other hand, I have heard it said that the animals know the difference between the reservations of the Indians and the preserved regions of the Rockies, and at sight of an Indian on the horizon they rush to safety.

Lindsay recounted to me the story of the political campaigns of “Tippecanoe and Tyler too!” and how the wild tokens of Western life invaded the East and moved the imagination of America. Every American politician is aware of this motive force. Even Roosevelt, a pure New Yorker, played the Western game—as Colonel of the Rough Riders.

We had a wonderful walk along the Flat Top, which was a prolonged mountain meadow full of flowers. Vachel began to repine because he foresaw that, like everything else, our tramp must end, and that in a few weeks we should be back in Springfield and the mere town. I told him a story of how one summer day in Petrograd I paused at a fruiterer’s shop to buy some strawberries which looked very inviting. They were very dear, but the shopkeeper said, “I have some very good second quality strawberries

inside the shop, and I strongly recommend them.” “Thanks,” said I. “But I never buy second quality strawberries.” “So in life, eh Vachel, let us never accept second quality strawberries.”

The poet laughed, and began talking of grades of eggs, new-laid eggs, State eggs, selected eggs, political eggs. So walking gently we reached the north-western extremity of the tableland and came upon a grandiose diversified scene of shadows and gloomy greens and barren scarps, and of crowned monarchs of ice and snow. The pines of the Canadian approach were posted like companies of soldiers and disposed in beleaguering armies as if the line, unguarded by men, was guarded by trees, the forest wardens of the Empire and the Republic. The poet saw in the scene another Turner engraving.

We plunged then downward through thick masses of alder and hazel, a whole mountain-side solid with low growth. Here also were thousands of raspberry bushes all agleam with rosy fruits. Vachel called the descent a “raspberry epic.” Down, down we plunged to the dark valley of the rushing Kootenai, only finding a camping-ground after dark.

We came to an aged river in a steep vale of years with old shaggy firs on its very water-edge, and with the ruins of the uncontrollable ever-encroaching forest piled up like walls. We lighted a fire on a humpy-bumpy bit of shore where it was hard either to walk or sit, but easy to find wood to burn. We each cleared ourselves a cradle in the brown needles of the infringing firs.

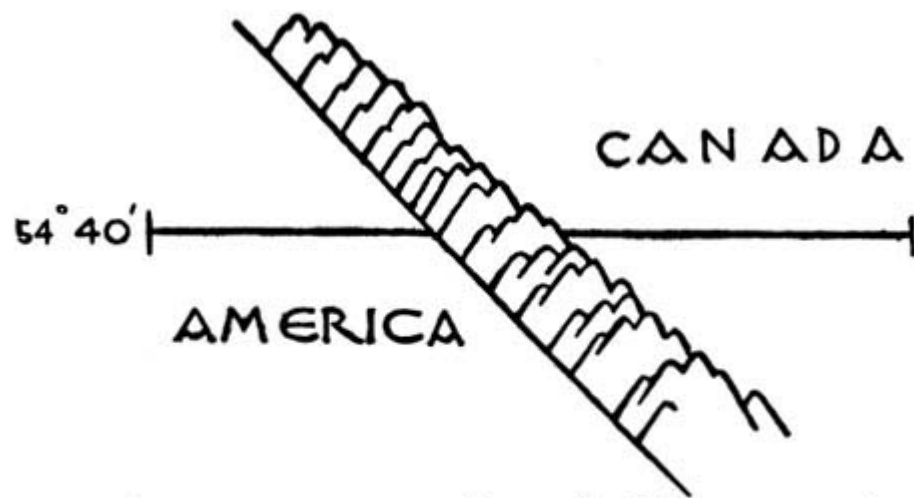
It was a magnificent enclosure which the old river was a-running through, like a cypress-walled garden of an Asiatic mountain-castle. The trees stood like gigantic janissaries or guardsmen with their cloaks on. The night-stars were exalted by the climbing forest and peeped but faintly into the depths, and like a mighty black bastion the sheer rock of the mountain cut off the view northward.

The fire flared, the hot stones cracked and burst. We put our hot blankets around us and sprawled on them whilst the poet cooked the ham and the beans, and I tended the coffee-pot or stripped the last wisps of grease-paper from the butter.

We slept in our cradles and wakened in the morning to see the beavers jumping among the fallen timber and diving in the river.



*A prairie resident,
A dweller in a tent,
A White House resident,
A good man for President!
To White House from white tent.
O excellent precedent!
A precedent for a President.
An unprecedented President!*



We've seen your line of difference and
viewed it with indifference.

We've seen your line of difference and viewed it with indifference.

XXXIV. CROSSING THE CANADIAN LINE

“As we approach the British Empire,” says Vachel facetiously, “the huckleberries grow more plentiful, the raspberry bushes larger, the trees loftier, the air purer.” In the poet’s mind politics and hymns gave way to desire of huckleberries. I luxuriated in raspberries. He was Huckleberry Finn. I was a character in Russian folk-lore—the hare with the raspberry-coloured whiskers. “When we get to a Canadian hotel let us register as H. Finn and R. C. W. Hare,” said the poet.

We had slept on the hoar-frosted grass of mountain meadows near the sky; we had slept among the beavers on the banks of the Kootenai; we tramped in the radiant upper air; we tramped in the gloom of ancient forests. Mount Cleveland lifted its dome of snow high o’er the lesser mountains. Trapper Mountain receded. We listened one night to the coyotes caterwauling in their loneliness. Their superfluous lugubrious laments reminded me of modern West of Ireland poetry. Vachel laughed at the comparison. We came to a deserted cabin, once the habitation of a ranger, now littered with Alberta whisky bottles, and here we read a pencilled remark written years ago: “Slept here last night. Visited by a bare who came into cabin and et two sides of bacon.” Another pencilled notice, apparently by the same hand, said: “Don’t leave garbig lying about but put it in the Garbig Holl.” An Indian came and offered to lead us to a boat on Lake Waterton and give us a ferry to Canada. We preferred to walk, but it occurred to me afterwards that he was not so much interested in boating as in bottles. I don’t doubt he could have got us a drink. Then a grand mounted party came past us with guides and pack-horses, coming from over Brown Pass, going over Indian Pass. This was a rich American family on holiday: here were father and mother, grown children, young children, cousins, and in the midst of them Aunt Jemima, looking very proud and stiff, with an expression on her face which signified “*Never again!*” They had been twenty-eight days in the mountains, camping out all the time.

VACHEL's ankle was rather weak, and he much preferred sitting to walking. He called himself "the slow train through Arkansas." We stopped at stations, half-stations, and halts. "All I lack, Stephen, is steam," said he. But every now and then he would take courage and say, "Lots of walk in me to-day—Canada to-night!"

The excitement of finding the "Canadian Line" cheered my companion. The face which in the morning had looked contrite and penitent as that of one just released from jail, lighted up with new mirth and facetious intent. He began to get steam. The slow train from Arkansas began to approach Kentucky, and the sign of steam was a return to political conversation. He began to chaff me mercilessly on the subject of the Empire and King George and the British lion. I chaffed him about "God's own country." The poet identified America with all that was best in America's traditions and in the visions of her poets, the

All I could never be,
All men ignored in me,

of his native country. I was critical, for I bore in my mind the growth of materialism, the corruption of the law, the lynchings of the Negroes, and the rest. He wanted me to dissociate America from the dollar, from the noisy business rampage, and from all that was unworthy, and instead identify America with the dreams of her idealists.

"That is what I did with Russia," said I. "If I tell England of the ideal America they'll only call me a mystic. But you, Vachel," I continued, "try and think of the Empire that way."

He found it difficult. He could think creatively about his own country, but where others were concerned he reverted to the normal critical mind.

It is almost a recognised convention in literature. If you are writing about a foreign country you take the general average of what you observe and describe that. You can attack lustily without fear that the magazine will lose

“advertising.” The writer on Russia was supposed to bring home a report that the police, and indeed every one else, took bribes, the Jews were persecuted, the prisoners in Siberia were chained together. Most American writers on Russia have done it. Kennan is a characteristic case, who obtained fame identifying Russia with prison horrors without recalling to the minds of his readers that there are dreadful prisons also in the United States, and that the silence of his own Georgia is sometimes desecrated by the melancholy clank-clank of the chain-gang.

I was besought in 1917, by a leading magazine of America, to write an account of Rasputin, and although I had many interesting stories of that evil genius of Russia I refused to write what I considered would at that time be damaging to Russia. On the other hand, I wrote in 1919 a realistic vision of America in perhaps her saddest post-war moment, when Wilson was down and no one knew what America was going to do next, and offered it to the same journal. But the editor was quite hurt that I did not then see America in roseate hues. How characteristic of this sprightly world, which, as Latimer said, “was begotten of Envy and put out at Discord for nurse!”

Not that the poet was critical of England. He idealised England. He was not as critical of England as I was of America. Whilst he idealised America creatively he idealised England romantically. To him America was something to be; to him England was something that forever was—beautiful, the substance of poetry, the evidence of things not seen. He did not sympathise with the Irish. He did not think England was so well organised, commercially, as America. But then to him that was a point in our favour. Only one point was registered against us—he did not think that as a nation we could make coffee; and we lagged behind on Prohibition. But then he had to admit that the Americans for their part did not know how to make tea.

“Except for the King,” said Vachel, “we are much the same people.” He loathed kings. “There’s not much difference between Canada and the United States,” he went on.

“We’ll see,” I answered. “Canadians are subjects of a monarch; Americans are citizens of a Republic. Canadians look to the King. More than a mere line divides the two halves of North America. You’ll see.”

So we tramped on. We had a last lunch and finished the ham, the apricots, and the coffee. As one remarkable fact, we met no Canadians on the American side; we met no Americans going to Canada either. Yet there were no restrictions whatever. Out in the Rockies the unguarded line is literally unguarded; no patrols, no excise or passport officers. You can come and go as you please. The United States would encourage Canada to a communion of perfect freedom. Whilst America puts nothing in Canada's way, Canada for her part could not afford to police a 4000-mile line. All is therefore free.

Still, it is clearly the wild animals that take advantage of freedom, and they abound and are happy in the region about the line. It is a very strange line, straight and absolute on the map, the essence of political division, an absurdity in geography. There is no river, no main mountain-range, no change of the colour of the soil, but only the invisible hypothesis called 54.40—the “Fifty-four Forty or fight” of the boundary dispute. It would have been difficult to find the line but for the fact that a sixteen-foot swathe has been cut in the forest. We had been told to look out for that. We found it at last, and it was afternoon, and we stood in No-man's land together.

It was a curious cut, a rough glade, an alley through the tall pines. We walked along it a short way; we discerned where it stretched far over a mountain-side, a mere marking in the uniform green of the forest-roof. We came down to where the lake water was lapping on the shore, and the great mountains in their fastnesses stood about us. We found frontier-post No. 276, and then I stood on the Canada side and Vachel Lindsay stood on the America side, and we put our wrists on the top of the post. As we two had become friends and learned to live together without quarrelling, so might our nations! It was a happy moment in our tramping.

Then, as it was four in the afternoon, I proposed having tea, much to the mirth of the poet. For had we not finished the last of our coffee at our last American resting-place? Fittingly we began on tea when we entered the Empire.

There was a change of scenery; fresher air, aspen groves, red hips on many briars. A beautiful mountain lifted its citadelled peak into a grey unearthly radiance. We climbed Mount Bertha, and the hillsides were massed with young slender pines that never grow hoary or old, but die whilst they are

young, and are supplanted by the ever-new—forests of everlasting youth. The grandeur of the mountains increased upon us till all was in the sublimity of the Book of Job and of the Chaldean stars. There was nothing petty anywhere—but an eternal witness and an eternal silence.



*A Yank and a Britisher walked to the line,
One was a citizen, the other an alien.
“You alien!” said the Yank.*

*The Yank and the Britisher crossed o’er the line,
One was a subject, the other an alien.
“You alien!” said the Britisher.*

*But when Yank and Briton elaps’d hands on the line,
Then neither the Yank nor the Briton was alien.*

*Hail, Uncle Sam!
Hail, John Bull!*

*We’ve found your line of difference
And viewed it with indifference.*

*You don’t need to guard it,
Nor yet to regard it
With doubt or with fret.
Six weeks we’ve tramped together
In every sort of weather,
And haven’t quarrelled yet.*

*We toe the line, we toe it,
The old tramp and the poet.*

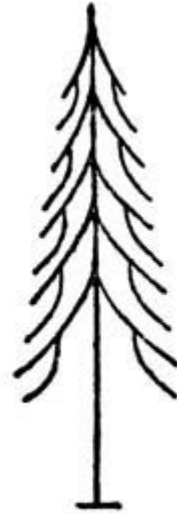
*If we can do it.
And not rue it,
All can—says the poet.*



WASHINGTONIA



WELLINGTONIA



HINDENBURGER

WASHINGTONIA WELLINGTONIA HINDENBURGER

XXXV. THE DIFFERENCE

So we entered the Dominion National Park of Waterton Lakes. We climbed the next mountain after Mount Bertha and saw on every hand the pinnacled and pillared tops of the Canadian mountains, crags surmounted by mighty teeth of stone blackly silhouetted against a radiant sky. Some Dominion officials came into these parts last year, cancelled the old names of the mountains, and gave them a new set—Mount Joffre, Mount Foch, and the rest, as if they were No. 1 and No. 2 of Great War villas. I see by old maps that Mount Cleveland used to be called Kaiser Peak. How war changes the names of places! It changed St. Petersburg to Petrograd, Pressburg to Bratislav!; it has even changed the names of the Rocky Mountains.

“Luckily the Germans did not win,” I said to Vachel, “or New York might have become ‘Zeppelinindorf.’”

We were walking down a slope which Nature had planted out with pompous trees called “Wellingtonias.”

“What do you call them?” asked the poet.

“Wellingtonias.”

“Not in America. We call them ‘Washingtonias.’”

“You forget you’ve crossed the line—Washingtonias this morning, but Wellingtonias this afternoon.”

The poet submitted.

“But what would the Germans have called them?”

“Perhaps they’d call them ‘Bluchers’ or ‘Hindenburgers.’”

Apropos of Bluchers—in the first Canadian village we visited the cobbler for repairs. He was an old man, and explained to us just exactly what “Blucher shoes” were. He pronounced the name to rhyme with “butcher,” and he called them shoes in the American fashion. In America boots are shoes, and shoes are boots.

“They call them Bluchers,” said the cobbler in a quavering voice, “because Blucher came up on both sides, and Bony did not know on which side he’d turn up. So the upper of the Bluchers are equally high on both sides of the shoe.”

THAT is, however, to go some days ahead. We are in the Rockies still, and beside a wonderful stretch of water blown by mountain winds into myriads of running waves. We bathed on its shallow shores; we did not venture far from the bank. For Waterton is a mysterious lake. It has often been sounded, but there are parts of it where no bottom has been found. It is the hole out of which these Rocky Mountains have been scooped, and it goes down, down, down, to the very depths of the earth.

At last we came to a Canadian camping-ground and a group of people clustered around a Ford touring car. A Ford car used for touring. Here there happened to be on holiday a professor of English, and he recognised Lindsay at first sight—such is the fame of the poet in American universities and schools.

This camping-group told us we were in a land predominantly inhabited by Mennonites, Mormons, and Dukhobors, and they whetted our curiosity considerably regarding our new neighbours. We had arrived in a part of Canada which was rather obscure and certainly little visited by either Americans or Englishmen.

We came to a ramshackle inn and a village and a dance-hall, and it was the last dance of the season. The Mormon, German, and Russian belles checked in their corsets at the cloakroom, and prepared for fun. It was a log-cabin hall, but the floor was waxed, and from the beams hung coloured-paper lanterns. There were a score or so of black bear-skins hung on the walls all the way round. On the bear-skins were white sashes with these words printed on them: *I DO LOVE TO CUDDLE*; and on the main beam of the ceiling was written: *Patrons are respectfully requested to park their gum outside*. The whole front of the piano was taken out so that there should be more noise. Splotches on the floor showed how in the past, patrons had

surreptitiously brought in their gum and had accidents. Many couples assembled, and we saw the human species, though not at its best.

WE issued from the mountains on to the southern Alberta plain, and then looking back, saw every great mountain we had ever crossed. “We’ve found the real sky-scrapers,” said Vachel. “Instead of the Times Building, Heaven’s Peak; instead of the Flatiron, Flat Top Mountain; instead of the World Building, Going-to-the-Sun; and instead of the building raised by dimes, the temple not made by hands. The way to these wonders is not by Broadway, but by primitive trails.” The poet conducted the orchestra of the universe with the long blossoming stem of a basket-flower—“instead of the Stock Exchange, the Star Granary over Waterton Lake,” he murmured. We named the beautiful grouping of mountains about the lake as the Star Granary. For at night, with stars above and star-reflections below, it was as if the barns were full of Heaven’s harvest.

We tramped away northward toward the Crow’s Nest, where a great forest fire was raging, and we came to the “cow-town” of Pincer Creek. The Canadian Wild West seemed much wilder than the Wild West south of the line—or rather, the population seemed wilder. One missed the gentleness and playfulness of the United States. The men were harder than down south, and they looked at us with a contempt only modified by the thought that we might be potential harvest hands. The Canadian-English looked more askance at Vachel than they did at me. He looked poetical. They couldn’t have put a name to it, but that is what it was. But whatever it was, I could feel their aversion. They disapproved of tramps, but preferred them to poets. I could see also they didn’t care for Vachel’s accent, but they rejoiced in mine and spoke to me just to get me to reply so that they could hear once more the voice of the Old Country. We were clearly in the Empire and not in the Republic. The Union Jacks in the little log-cabins were wreathed with flowers. The Stars and Stripes had disappeared. We were so struck with the change of feeling in the air that we bought ourselves a school-history of Canada and read it assiduously. The very way of man looking to man was different. Then the first popular song which sounded in our ears was:

We never get up until the sergeant

Brings our breakfast up to bed.
O it's a lovely war!

which is a purely British army song. The Englishman in Alberta is an overman in the midst of a miscellaneous foreign under-population. The Englishman's word is law. He is stronger, rougher in his language and his ways—not educated. But this sort of fibre is best suited for the outposts of Empire.

“We Americans are just a bunch of playful kittens,” said Vachel.

There was nothing very playful about the Alberta pioneers.

“Did you light that fire on the side of the road a mile back? Well, you dam well go back and put it out.”

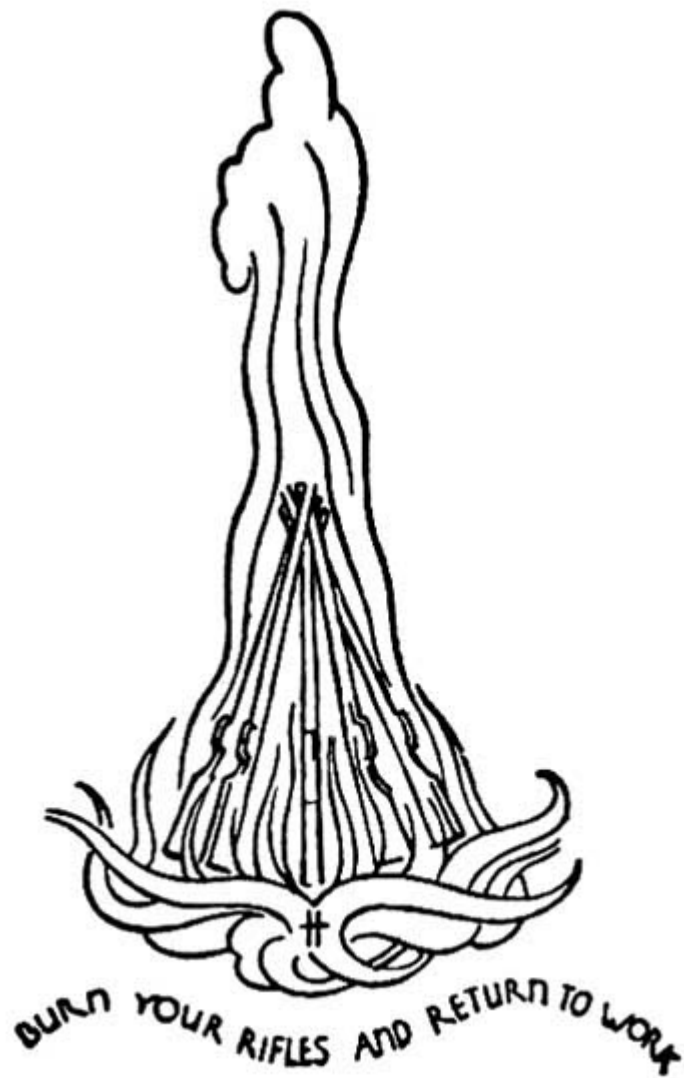
“We did put it out.”

“I tell ye, ye didn't. I won't waste my breath talking to you. If you set the prairie afire I'll have you both in jail by sundown.”

“All right, we'll go back.”



*We're on the same continent.
Well, I don't know. Smells different somehow.
Same air; people speak the same language.
But I don't see that bird about,
That old eagle of yours.
Smells as if a lion had been here.
You don't know the lion's smell?
Well, smell that Union Jack!
That's it.*



BURN YOUR RIFLES AND RETURN TO WORK

XXXVI. DUKHOBORS

WE had not anticipated coming into the neighbourhood of the Dukhobors. It was an interesting surprise. I had promised myself I would make a special pilgrimage some day to Western Canada just to find out what the Dukhobors thought about life, and how they were getting on now. And then to come on them accidentally.

The Dukhobors, or “Spirit wrestlers,” are a Russian religious community brought to Canada in 1898. They claim to have been in existence in Russia for over three hundred years. They are primitive Christians akin to Quakers, but more uncompromising. They are Communists, pacifists, anti-state, anti-church, anti-law. Theologically they consider Christ as a good man and teacher, but not divine. Tolstoy’s teachings show him very close to the Dukhobors in theory. He greatly sympathised with them in the persecution which they suffered at the hands of the Russian Government, and it was in part due to him, and more largely to the Society of Friends in England, that the expatriation of the Dukhobors was accomplished. Tolstoy is said to have put aside the profits of his novel *Resurrection* to defray in part the expenses of transporting the Russians. There are several thousand of them, and first they were taken to Cyprus where at least the British Navy got acquainted with them, as they were naturally a curiosity. Cyprus was not suitable, and so Canada was chosen for a habitat. The community was taken to Saskatchewan, and later migrated in large part to British Columbia. They did not find their path strewn with roses in Canada, and have had a hard time. But despite persecution they have prospered. They are notorious for a naked procession they once made “in quest of the Messiah” some forty miles in bitter winter weather, displaying “the naked truth” to the Canadians—the pilgrimage to Yorktown which has been described with much gusto in the American and Canadian Press. They have refused to take steps to relinquish their Russian nationality, refused to fight, refused to pay taxes. So naturally they have been a thorn in the side of the Canadian.

The Rocky Mountains stretching away in their majesty must remind some Russians of the grand array of the Caucasus as seen from the north—and

the prairie is the steppe. Far away you discern the white and brown buildings of a settlement, and then, ten times as large as anything else, pale-blue grain-elevators. The circumambient moor is many coloured, and a dove-coloured sky is flecked with softest cloud. There are snow fences at many points of the road to protect from drifts in winter. A neverceasing wind which brings no rain is driving over the corn-fields. As you approach the village you begin to see Russian peasant men and women working on the fields hoisting the wheat-sheaves to the harvesting carts, hoisting the sheaves to the top of the stacks. A stalwart peasant-wife in cottons stands on top of the stack, pitchfork in her hand, and she catches the sheaves as they come up to her. The grain-elevators rise mightily into vision, and then the words printed on them in large black letters—**THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD**.

I soon met Pavel Potapof, the local headman, and I talked in Russian with a number of men and women who spoke no other language. They were raising wheat for themselves and for their wheatless brethren who live in the lumbering camps and villages of British Columbia, but represent a sort of a half-way colony between the original Verigin, Saskatchewan, and the main settlement of Brilliant, British Columbia.

Potapof was a boy at Cyprus, where his father enjoyed some authority. He is now a man in his thirties with brown moustache and close-clipped chin. If you are a Dukhobor you may not shave but you may clip with the shears. He remembered touching a Mr. St. John at Cyprus, who used to call him Pavlushka.

Potapof spoke Russian with a soft Little-Russian accent, all g's being h's. He came from Tiflis province, and I talked first of the Caucasus, comparing them with the Rockies. Then naturally we discussed Russia, and a curious crowd gathered about us. Scarcely any spoke English—all were Russian subjects, and I much wondered what they thought of the Bolshevik revolution. For they also are Communists. I soon learned that an appeal had been made to them on behalf of the Bolsheviks to help to stem the famine in Russia. Some of the Dukhobors were for sending grain, some not. They blamed the Bolsheviks for their “two million men under arms.”

Most of them said: “Let those who are richer in Russia give to those who are poorer; there'll be enough to go round.” Imagination did not show them

the ghastly ruin of contemporary Russia, where, except for a handful of Soviet commissaries, there are no rich, no “better-off” people. Most of them also said: “Let them lay down their arms, and then we’ll think of feeding them.” But their deliberations crystallised in the following way. They decided on a symbolic act. They visited all their Ruthenian and Galician neighbours and any one who had a war-trophy to spare, and they made thus a collection of rifles, shotguns, pistols—some three hundred or more weapons. These they burned in a heap. Then they sent a wireless message to the Russian people describing this act, and added further the monition: “Do likewise; burn your rifles, and return to work!”

“They murdered Nikolai (rubili Nikolai) and his family for liberty,” said Potapof. “But now clearly there is much less liberty than ever there was before.”

Nevertheless I thought I detected a curious home-sickness among many of them. The violent rumours and persistent bad news of Russia comes to a primitive community that cannot read in a more disturbing and dramatic way than through newspapers. They complained sadly of conditions in Canada; of droughts, of plagues of grasshoppers, of bygone hardships and persecutions in Saskatchewan.

“Here there will be a Bolshevik revolution too,” said one. “We shall not take part in it. But we know it is preparing. There is much discontent in the neighbouring settlements and in the mines. Oh yes, there is trouble brewing here too.”

This Dukhobor had been talking to brother Poles and Ruthenians, but he was quite out of perspective. I asked how the Dukhobors had fared under the Conscription Act. Apparently they did not suffer much; Canada did not trouble the Dukhobors. They had an easier time than their brothers the Mennonites in the United States. They told me there had been a considerable influx of Mennonites by way of the unguarded line: they also are pacifists and utterly oppose to personal service in war. So struck are they by what happened to them in America through the war that there is much talk of their deserting both Canada and the States and seeking a refuge in Mexico.

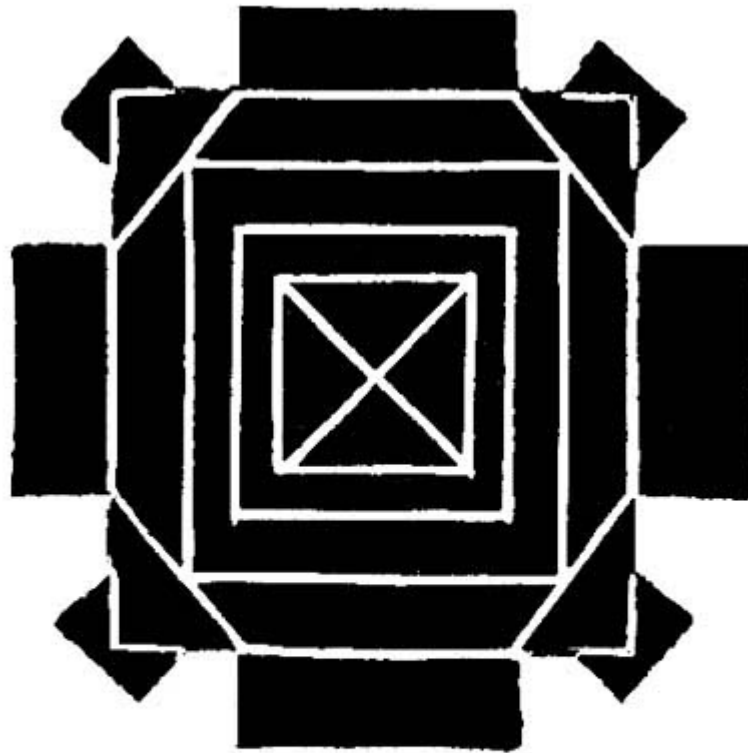
The Dukhobors, however, have a strong hold in Canada, and as long as Peter Verigin, their unofficial patriarch and leader, lives, they will most

probably hold on to their settlements in British Columbia and Saskatchewan. Perhaps in a new era, a new Russia may again take the Dukhobors to herself. Canada does not assimilate them. They do not assimilate Canada. And they are, and they feel, as Dostoievsky said, like “a slice cut out of a loaf.”



*Fancy meeting the Dukhobors
Up in the Rockies:
A bit of old Russia
Planted up there to meet me!
Sure next time when I go to the Caucasus
I'll look to find a batch of English there,
Trying to live their unmolested lives
Under the free institutions
Of old Russia.*

*Tolstoy, in his story of the old pilgrim,
Taught you could find Jerusalem in your native village,
And did not need to pilgrimage afar.
But he did not say you could find freedom
In your own village—in your own heart.
O no, that's political,
You must go a long way to find that.*



WHEREVER THEY LOCATE
THEY BUILD TEMPLES

WHEREVER THEY LOCATE
THEY BUILD TEMPLES

XXXVII. A VISIT TO THE MORMONS

WE tramped from ranch to ranch by the rutty roads that skirt the sections, walked away from the mountain-walls, and ever as we went the terrain extended. The sky had become wider; no rocky walls closed us in. The backs of our necks became swollen from the unusual heat of the sun on them. We kicked up dust as we walked, dust again! Our eyes traversed the scene to light, not on cascades or possible camping-grounds, but on far-away farmhouses. We met the oats and wheat and barley fields striving over the moors, and walked till all moor disappeared, till there was nothing in front of us but gold. Made dream-like by the forest fires, the long range of the Rockies seemed unreal—the mountains which we had climbed became remote and shadowy—and not part of our destiny. Our only reality was golden Alberta, which seemed to extend to infinitude, the plateau only gradually losing its altitude, unfolding and undulating downward—one vast resplendent area of golden harvest fields.

The sun gleamed on numberless shocks on the right, on the left, and ahead, and the whole horizon was massed with newly mobilised golden armies. We walked the rutty roads and were exhilarated, and counted the wheatfields which we passed, knowing that each, being a whole section, was a whole mile long.

We discussed a tragical line in one of Lindsay's poems:

Election night at midnight
Boy Bryan's defeat.
Defeat of Western silver,
Defeat of the wheat
... Defeat of the aspen groves of Colorado valleys,
The blue-bells of the Rockies,
And blue bonnets of old Texas
By the Pittsburg alleys.

Defeat of the wheat! How tragical that sounds in the soul, how calamitous and appalling! It is like the cutting off of golden youth, the extinction of all

our dreams.

WE boiled our pot by the side of the road; we sought milk and bread at farmhouses; we slept at night in the wheat with shocks piled on three sides of us to keep out the wind, and a broken shock underneath us to keep us soft—and the night sky above us was of swans' plumage, and all the golden stalks and stubble about us and above us were exaggerated among the stars.

Night was very different on the plains from night in the mountains. No sound of waters, no castellated peaks rising in the moonlight, no sense of vast unevenness and disjected rocks; but instead, a feeling of being in a great encampment where the swarming shocks of wheat were tents, the tents of such a host that the numbers took away one's breath. The poet rejoiced. He loved it. The odour of the yellow stalks was a new breath of life to him—for he was a prairie boy.

The dawn-twilight was long and quiet, and the mornings were serene. No workers were in sight. The disparity in numbers between men and wheat was remarkable to my eyes. In Russia, the whole plain would have been alive with the gay cottons of peasant lads and lasses. But here, harvesting machinery displaces whole populations of men and women.

Indians began to be numerous on the road as we approached the Blood Reservation, Indian farm-wagons with women and children sprawling on the hay at the bottom, and then Indians on horseback, all one piece with their horses. We left the golden grain behind and crossed the Reserve. Vachel explained what a squaw-man is—a white who marries an Indian girl in order to get hold of her portion of land, the Indians of to-day being almost all of them endowed with land by the Government. We found again the Kootenai, now brawling through the plains, and bathed again, and reverted in spirit to those mountains. Then we tramped from tent to tent across the green wilderness where the Indians lived. Indian boys in many-coloured garments pranced on their horses, chased lines of cattle and horses, and kept the lines straight by galloping incessantly between them from left to right to one end of the line, and then right to left to the other end.

We met Indians in voluminous seedy clothes, walking with a stoop; men with gloomy ruminating faces who tried to avoid contact with a white man. We talked to them; they raised their red romantic faces and glared at us like owls startled by light. They could not speak English, so they answered nothing, but just turned out of our way and slouched on. Or the livelier ones made signs to us. The stout squaws stared at us. The slender girls on their horses were almost indistinguishable from boys.

WHAT a beaten-down and untidy place a Reservation is, strewn with jetsam from the wigwam, hoofed till not a flower remains! The Indians spend more time on horseback than on foot—they can't farm, or won't farm, and possess only the roughest of comforts. We came to a Government Practice Farm where Indians were being taught, and saw squaws working there—but very little sign of decent cultivation on the reservations. The Indian asks enough on which to live. He wants no more, will work for no more. He makes plentiful use of canned foods, and lives from hand to mouth. Hence you never hear of Indian cooks. It is curious to contrast the genius of the negro for cooking and the absence of a taste for cooking in the Indians.

AFTER the Indians we came to the Mormons. They were as much surprised as the Dukhobors. How should Mormons be here? Perhaps we are the first to make the discovery that the Mormons have invaded Canada. These are the first Mormons to invite the shelter of the Empire. As usual, they have made their settlement in a very obscure part, far from the centre of authority. And if trouble should arise they have only to trek through the Rockies, and then Uncle Sam and Senator Smoot will protect them.

We were regaled at farmhouses by sweet Mormon brides, who gave us bannocks, who gave us of their simmering greengages out of the great cauldron on the stove. Elders on horseback very politely, and with many details, showed us the way to Cardston and the Mormon Temple. We were happily and sympathetically disposed towards the Mormons, and Vachel,

who has taught the Salt-Lake-City girls to dance whilst he chanted to them “The Queen of Sheba,” has a soft spot in his heart for the sect. It was really started by a renegade preacher from his own sect of Disciples, Sidney Rigdon, who revised the unsaleable manuscript of a novel called *The Book of Mormon*. He conspired with Joseph Smith, who discovered the book written in aboriginal American hieroglyphics on gold plates and translated it by the aid of certain miraculous spectacles into King’s English, or I should say President’s English, who was murdered; who therefore gave way to Brigham Young, to whom were revealed many mysteries.

“They are a whole lot nearer to Mahometanism than to Christianity,” said Vachel. “I think a Mahometan mission to the Mormons might not be a bad idea as a step on the road towards Christianity.”

WE sat discussing this on the banks of the Kootenai, and I was facetious:

“Ye Mormons, there is no god but God, and Mahomet is His prophet. Whereas in Christ ye are now living in adultery and sin, in Mahomet ye are pure men and women. By Christ, in the after-life there is neither marriage nor giving in marriage, but in Mahomet connubial bliss for evermore, attended by your houris and your wives. Don’t say no. Think it over and I’ll call this afternoon!”

“*Put that in,*” said Vachel. “I think they’ve derived a good deal from the phallic religions too. They’ve made a much bigger thing of Mormonism than it was in the days of Joseph Smith. It has got hold of the sex mysteries. There’s a whole lot of masonry in it. The common sort of condemnation of the Mormons is all that’s ever been attempted by way of criticism of them. They’ve been stoned out of all the Middle West. We have even in Springfield in the Fair-grounds one of their altars taken from Nauvoo, Illinois, from which they were chased. They were a mistaken people—but they learned much through tribulation.”

The poet is by temperament on the side of any one or any institution which happens to be violently attacked. He was greatly interested by Mormonism, so I naturally heard from him many things in favour of it. First of all, he felt it had a great future in America—it was not a dying cult.

“One side of it is getting very popular,” I interjected, with some mirth. “It’s the word of abuse in England from an injured wife to her husband—‘*You—Mormon!*’”

“Well, the idea of polygamy does make a strong appeal to the male,” said the poet. “And the women feel happy in it when it is an accepted convention.”

“You mean, women only object to clandestine polygamy?”

“There is always jealousy,” said my companion. “But that is another matter. What I meant about the future of Mormonism did not refer to polygamy so much. But it’s our first real American religion. It started in America. It pretends to give American religious traditions. According to Mormon, one of the lost tribes of Israel came to South America. Mormonism links America to both Noah and Adam and to the hand of God. In their belief, too, Christ came to America—He did not wait till 1492 for Columbus to discover it first. He was here before Columbus. In Mormonism America is presented with a whole American tradition, going as far back as the Old World traditions, embodied in the Old and New Testaments.”

CARDSTON, which at length we reached, is largely a Mormon city. The Temple, a remarkable structure, exteriorly chaste and beautiful, dominates the scene, and the clouds rest upon it, obscuring its upper storeys in cloudy weather. It is not used for general worship; for that purpose there is a sufficiently ugly tabernacle. It is almost exclusively for the Mormon sacraments, the sealing of wives and children, and for the meditational recreation of the elders. Once the building has been completed and consecrated it will remain inaccessible to outsiders, but in order to avert suspicion, visitors are shown over it until that time. We were lucky, as the Temple is very nearly finished, and it is a rare experience for an outsider to gain access. There are only eight Mormon Temples in the world, and the rites performed therein are entirely secret.

The town is mostly inhabited by Mormons, and the great business “pull” of the sect is evidenced in the technical and structural growth of the place. The land between the city and the reservations is theirs, and also much that lies

beyond. A strong propaganda for the sect is carried on all over America, and also in England and in Europe. Women converts seem especially desired. On the other hand, men of proved sincerity or simplicity are not rejected. The Mormons have land at their disposal, and they exert considerable influence on settlers and pioneers of the West. The elders help to organise business and to mormonise the community as much as possible. They can be of great help to any young Mormon starting life. On the other hand strange dooms are said to await any Mormons who give away their secrets, and apostasy is infrequent.

Some of them are, however, incautious. In my room at the hotel I found a heap of correspondence left there by the last man who had been in occupation. It was perhaps indelicate to pry into a Mormon's private affairs, but I confess to a human weakness of curiosity under the circumstances. Here was the basic material for a novel on the Mormons; letters from one pal to another, letters from girls, sweet letters, despairing letters, telegrams. Technically there is not supposed to be polygamy any more, and legally there is not, but in reality something of the sort goes on, as may be judged from the following letter I transcribe, one of a packet I brought from Cardston.

S — — D,
Mo.

DEAR — — ,

I received your letter written on the 21st from Ladysmith, B.C., yesterday, but I worked late last night and I had an answer to one of Ruth's letters to write that I had put off for a week. So it was pretty near time to get up rather than to go to bed, but I will just drop a hurried line to let you know I still live.

I sure am glad to hear you are able to save a little because I also am trying to save a few pennies also and it sure comes hard. I also am glad to hear you are in a business that you like but you failed to tell me just what your line of selling is. What do you sell? buck handkerchiefs or iron toothpicks. Does Dan travel with you also. It sure is great to be able to see a lot of the world at some one else's expense and your

pleasure. I suppose S— —d is about like Vancouver; rainy and not worth a dam. It sure has rained a lot here in the last few weeks. I believe we have had more rain here this month than Utah has in a year.

About my wife in Utah. I receive letters regularly. Eight or nine days apart as regular as 8 o'clock comes in the morning. Every 8 or 9 days I get a letter and just that often I get a letter from home also. I am going to try to get a vacation and get enough money to take me back to Utah next summer. I don't know if I can or not because I will have to have an operation on my nose right away because I always have a cold as it is. If I do not keep on having this cold I now have I will not have the operation, but if it does not leave me pretty soon I will have the bone taken out and doubtless lose my chance of getting home.

I sure am glad you appreciate Peggy by now. You know, old Pal, that you never miss the water till the well runs dry, and it sure is true when a fellow leaves his friends and is out alone. You sure appreciate what you did have when it is gone completely. I believe that a fellow must live a life like we are to really appreciate the good things in life anyhow. If we did not taste of the sour things the sweet ones would seem sour to us. By gosh it sure is true in one respect I miss some one to darn my sox. I try to do it myself but it is slow work and I get so (nervous?) Try and imagine me sitting all night darning sox. It sure is a bellina (? hellish) job. I don't like it at all.

Well, old pal, I have a Missouri wife now so S— —d seems to be a pretty good place after all. She is a girl I met in church and is about the size and looks about like Ruth W— —. Some girl I will say. We have been to a couple of parties and to a couple of shows in two weeks beside being at her place all day last Sunday. Sunday we are going to have a picnic and take a few pictures, and Monday night a large masquerade party is on and we are going to it also. So

you see I stop her right off and she don't object either, I don't believe.

I wrote W — — a letter on the 3rd of this month and as yet I have not received a letter. I guess he wanted to have a good time while his "heaven" lasts, and I don't blame him either. I believe he is a little worried over his mission and rather hates to go, but I believe he will be alright.

I am getting along fine here. I order all the shoes here so I am the shoe desk manager. The boss gives me all the shoe mail, and I just order what I want and leave the rest. It is quite a large job, but our store is not quite as large as Salt Lake's, but the shoe department could keep a regular man busy. So you see I am doing fine. To-morrow is pay-day and I also get a nice raise, so I have no kick except to darn my sox. They are the greatest worry I have had.

Well, old pal, I gave this letter and your last one pretty good service considering all the work we have now that the winter business is just opening up. Here it is after 12.30 again, so I will go to bed and get up again at 6 a. m. Try to be good, old pal, and don't do anything I wouldn't— Your old pal,

ED.

YOU cannot learn much of the ways of the Mormons by asking them, but when one of them leaves a whole packet of correspondence behind him in a hotel he "sure is" giving things away.

We walked up to the Temple at three in the afternoon, the designated time when visitors are shown round, and punctually at that hour the doors were opened and the curious were admitted.

"Wherever we locates we builds temples," said the guide, a curious old fellow, so illiterate that he strewed the temple floor with his aitches, an Englishman from the provinces, squat, confidential, insinuating. "This is the

eighth Mormon Temple,” said he. “The ninth is now rising in Phoenix, Arizona.”

The visitors were mostly farm-women, and Vachel and I looked like a couple of tramps in their midst. Our clothes hung on us; we held in our hands a couple of the most weather-beaten of old hats. I was the “big un” and Vachel was the “little un.” We looked to have a little less intelligence than gopher-rats.

“The ’ole edifiss is of stone,” said the guide, “and the foundation is of rock and concrete. There’s not five dollars’ worth of wood in the construction. All the wood you see is haksessories.”

“Are all the temples built of stone only?” I asked cautiously, with the air of a stone-mason out of a job.

“No,” said he. “Each is built on a seprit plan.”

“’Ere,” said he, turning to the rest of the company, “’ere we seals. This ’ere room is for ordinances only. No, we don’t worship in the Temple. It’s not used for public worship. You see the red-brick building as you came up to the Temple. That is the Tabernacle where public worship is held, and that is free to all. But ’ere in the Temple we ’as the ordinances and the meditations.”

The guide was naturally a Mormon, and as he showed us around I thought his main objects were to tell us nothing while pretending to tell us all, and yet at the same time to make converts among the women. He did all he could to interest the latter in the cooking and lighting and warming and washing arrangements.

“You ’ave ’ere the electric stoves to cook the meals. You couldn’t keep running in and out of the Temple in yer sacred garments to get meals at resterongs, so we cooks ’ere. But there can be no smell of cooking—as this exhaust takes all the smell away out of the building. Very convenient, eh, ain’t it? We’ve had over ten thousand applications from women to come and cook in the Temple.”

The farm-women giggled appreciatively. The guide led them on to the laundering establishment. As the Mormons wear secret underlinen with signs, they naturally don’t care to send their laundry out to wash. And in the Temple we were given to understand every man and woman wore special

white garments. Consequently there would be much laundering. But all was to be done by the latest machinery, driven by electric power. "No hand-work, no scrubbing, no drudgery and gettin' your fingers red and 'ard," said the guide. "Then, when the wash is done, hpp, in they go to the drying chamber, and in a few seconds they are sufficiently dry to be taken out and ironed on the electric irons."

For a moment it was like being at an ideal home exhibition. "Then the radiators," said the guide, "you see, they don't project into the rooms, but are fixed in the walls dead level with the surface of the walls."

"Of course the Temple 'asn't got its upolstery in yet, but in every room the furniture will be all of a piece with the inlay wood of the walls. If the walls is oak the furniture will be oak to match; if it's bird's-eye maple, the furniture'll be bird's-eye maple; if it's Circassian mahogany the furniture will be Circassian mahogany too. Every room will have its colour scheme. 'Ere you see the thermometer. Now the temperature of the building will be regulated. It won't matter wot the weather is like outside, it will be controlled inside. The engineer will 'ave 'is orfice outside the Temple and don't never need come in. All they 'as to do is telephone 'im to raise the temperature ten degrees or lower it five and he'll do it."

"We comes to the baths" (they are pretty elaborate). "'Ere's the men's section, over there's the women's. You natcherally bathe first of all when you enter the Temple and remove every speck of dust or dirt from your body. And 'ere are the robing-rooms where spotless garments is waiting you to put on. You walks all in white wherever you go in the Temple, and when it 'as been consecrated no more folks will ever go in it in ordinary clothes like as you and me to-day."

The Temple proved to be the last word in luxury and modern convenience. In the most elegant club in London, Paris, or New York I have not seen such luxury and sensual comfort as was in this Temple in the rough wild west. Every room was inlaid with precious woods. The baths and robing-rooms were worthy of a Sultan, the lounge and one-piece carpets all suggested a material heaven. The guide showed us the vast font reposing on the life-size figures of twelve oxen, the symbols of the twelve tribes of Israel. This font was the centre of a stately chamber with galleries running round it. From

the galleries the friends of the candidates could watch the ceremony of immersion. The font was large enough to baptize families at once.

“And you can be baptized many times,” said the guide. “For yourself, then for your friends, and then for the dead—for any one you would like to have saved.”

“Baptized for the dead?” said one of the women in horror. “Yes,” said he. “You think it strange, but the early Christians all used to do it. Just turn up First Corinthians, chapter fifteen. ‘What shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?’ which shows plainly that the apostles recommended it.”

“Is the water cold?” asked a farm-girl, timorously.

“Cold,” said the guide ingratiatingly, “oh, no! It’s warmed. It’s just *nice*. I should say about the temperature of warm milk.”

“Oh!” “Oh!” There was chorus of approval from the women, who had been considering the whole matter from a purely personal point of view.

We were then led to the Creation Room, the Garden of Eden Room, and the Earth-natural Room, all adorned with works of art. There were pictures of the world before Creation, and then of each stage in the process of Creation.

“God don’t love chaos. ’E’s a great organiser. ’E organised it, and ’e divided the water from the hearth and gave us light and made the hanimal creation—yes, all that lives and breeves,” said the guide. “’Ere we meet to meditate on the Creation. Isn’t it a beutiful room?”

Some one asked him if the artists were Mormons. “Yes, all of them,” said he, and then went on—

“You’d think it gets stuffy in ’ere. But no; we ’as the hair taken out and washed and then returned. It’s a new device for washing the hair.”

We passed to Eden. Here were pictures of the whole animal creation in benevolent and sentimental happiness; the tiger browsing beside the lamb, and the lion and the giddy goat frisking around.

The guide purveyed the story of the Garden of Eden, but left out Adam and Eve, and I walked away from him to wander round and seek the portraits of our first parents. They were not included. But I found that the painting of

the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and of the Tree of Life were concave at the base, and that there was a recess and an alcove to each. So there was a place for a living Adam and Eve to sit, side by side, when the meditation on the Garden was going on. My idea is that Eve would be seated in the Tree of Life and Adam in the Tree of Knowledge. But that is surmise. The guide would not tell us what the alcoves were for, but in the eye of curious imagination I saw Adam and Eve sitting there in primitive innocence whilst the hearts of the elders were inditing of a good matter.

From Eden we went to the Earth-natural, which was a hideous place where every animal was depicted with a vicious expression. A large mad coyote or, was it a hyena? seemed to control the atmosphere of the chamber.

“’Ere we ’ave the Hearth after sin ’as crept in,” said the guide. “’Ere is life as we know it, full of sin which you can’t escape. You can all learn a great deal from them pictures. Think of Hadam and Eve. ’Ave you ever thought of it—’ow God gave them the garden of Eden, and of the ‘experience’ ’e made them ’ave there. Isn’t it true about us? ’E didn’t mean that nothin’ should ever ’appen to us. ’E brought us into the world that we might ’ave an experience.”

So we went on to the Marriage Room, which was entirely bare, and no one could say what it would be like when the decorations and the furniture had been added. I judged it time for me to cease being Simple Simon, so I asked the guide as humbly as I could whether the marriages were legal when the ceremony was performed.

“Yes,” said he. “You ’ave a legal marriage.”

“But polygamy?” I queried, and I saw his eyes flame.

“Polygamy ’as been done away with long ago when Utah was received into the Union,” he answered in a gruff way.

“And what happened to the other wives when it was abolished?” asked some one else very softly. But the guide did not reply. Instead he began to hurry us out of the building. We had only seen a third of it and were loth to go. But there was nothing for it. We managed to get a last glimpse of an assembly hall with large frescoes on the walls, depicting Christ distributing the Bread and the Wine to the Mound-Builders, or Indians of South America, and underneath was written III. Nephi 15. Another fresco had

reference to the Book of Josiah, which is part of Mormon Holy Writ—found by Joseph Smith, written on gold plates.

The guide hurried us to the door. “I’ve some pictures of the Temple for sale,” said he to the farm-women. But they seemed all to have been scared by my question about polygamy. Vachel and I stopped to look at the pictures. After all, they were only picture-postcards of the exterior. We bought three.

“Good-b’ye,” said I. “And much obliged.” And I offered him my hand. He gave me his left.

“Good-b’ye,” said Vachel. “Most interesting.” And he offered him his hand. The guide gave him his left also.

“A left-handed shake,” said Vachel, meditatively, as we went down the steps. “You know what that means.”

“No?”

“That means—Go to Hell!”

WE were much intrigued by all this, and found out that Adam is God to the Mormons, and Christ only one of a series which culminated in Brigham Young. Mormonism is the story of a passionate sensual man with a fake religion, a leader, however, of men and women, capable of starting a church, murdered and then succeeded by the great Brigham. The Mormon community, persecuted ever, loathed and detested yet not destroyed, plunged ever westward through the deserts with new revelations all the way, always, however, being overtaken by the tide of other pioneers and chased again. They were secret, and wanted to be secret. But the United States always overtook them. Now they have compromised in many ways and are not persecuted, and they multiply and spread and propagandise. They are disciplined. In politics they all vote one way—as ordered. They begin to be proud of America.

Vachel and I went up to the Temple at night. It looked like a place produced by enchantment—the highest thing on the highest eminence of the

widespread but low-built city of Cardston. Clouds hid the top of it. There was no one near but ourselves, apparently not even a watchman. The massive gates were locked and barred, and above them gleamed electric lanterns in large and graceful M's.

We have learned an elementary lesson about them.

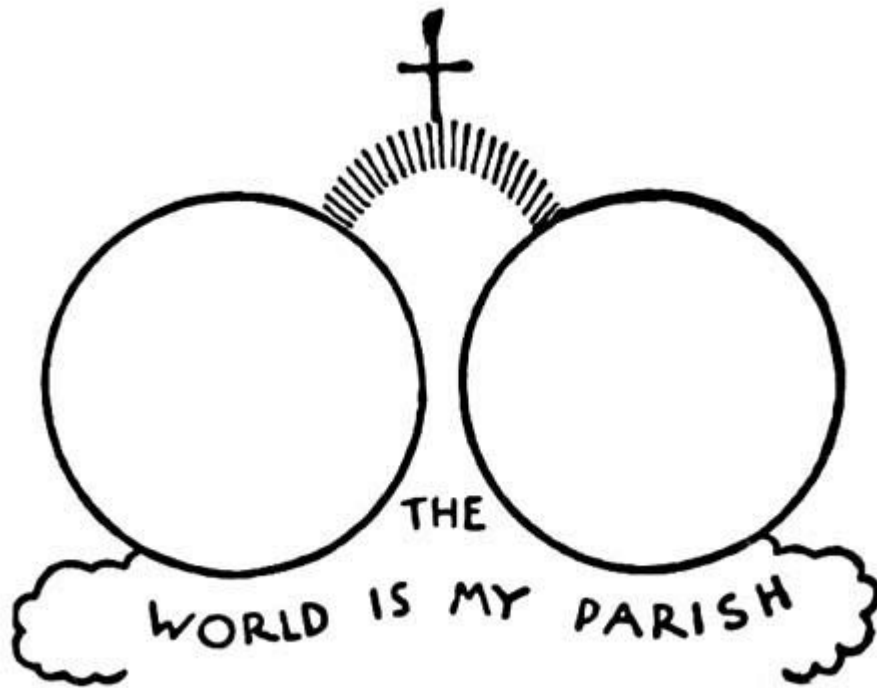
“Remember that, Vachel,” said I. “M for Mormon.”

“The guide said a true word,” said the poet. “God sent us into the world that we might have an experience.”

WITH that our tramping ended. We left our pine-staffs leaning against a Cardston wall. We slept in beds again and bought our coffee at a shop. Gathering prose invaded the clear blue of our poetry. Some sadness, like a shadow, settled on us. And it was good-b'ye to the mountains.



*Thy Kingdom come, O Lord,
As once it came,
May it come again!
For once it came upon the mountains,
It came upon the wings of the morning
Amid the flowers and adown the streams.
It came into our eyes,
It came into our hearts.
Thy Kingdom come, O Lord,
As once it came,
May it come again!*



THE WORLD IS MY PARISH

XXXVIII. BLOOM FOR EVER, O REPUBLIC!

WE crossed the line again and returned to the United States. And then we went to the city of St. Paul, and we saw the falls where Minnehaha and Hiawatha met. We stood on the high bank of the Mississippi and considered meditatively the mounds of the mound-builders there. What more impressive symbol for a world-traveller than these pre-historic mounds—there before the Indians came—emblems of the infinite forgotten past of man! Then we went to Chicago. We saw the beautiful Wrigley building which has risen to look from drab Chicago over Michigan Lake—a building raised by the profits of gum! Vachel introduced me to the first sponsor of his verse, Harriet Monroe, of “Poetry,” and he described to me how he and W. B. Yeats once divided the annual poetry prize of Chicago, and how he was to have read aloud the prize poem—“General William Booth Enters Heaven,” but to the surprise of the company assembled gave his new, hitherto unheard-of work “The Congo,” a poem which at that time must have been dumfounding in its novelty. Then Yeats, who seemed to have snubbed every one including the poet himself, made a very generous speech in favour of Lindsay’s genius. And we met Chicago’s poet, Carl Sandburg, a rugged Scandinavian with brown hair who claimed me as a “Nordic” also. And he carried a large and old guitar on which he thrummed when reciting his poems. He has heard Negro Blues in the South, and loves the coloured folk, and has a whole repertoire of blues which he will sing you if you will. I had a glass of beer with Sandburg in Milwaukee, the only glass of anything of the kind offered me this time in these dry United States. I met Ridgely Torrance, gentle and whimsical, with one long lock of hair on his head like a Russian khokhol. Curiously enough, he also had been enchanted by the Negroes and knew more about them than us all, and he read poetry to us. There I met beautiful Zona Gale of Portage whom, it is said, nearly every literary man who ever met her has at some time or other loved. And meeting Zona I met Lulu Bett. We met delectable Isidora, once queen of Springfield, now queen of another city. And we stayed with Mrs. William

Vaughan Moody, widow of that dramatist and poet who wrote “The Great Divide” and “The Fire-Bringer.” We were a rough-looking couple to be a lady’s guests, but Harriet Moody loves the whole writing world for her husband’s sake and took us in, and I found in her what so many know—a vivid personality, endlessly kind. And couldn’t she cook! We loved her for her poetry and we loved her for her pies.

WE went to Springfield, Illinois, and there we had a general clean-up and our mosquito netting came back from the laundry marked “Lace; two pieces.” I visited all Vachel’s cronies and friends and acquaintances and enemies, and there were articles about us in the *Register* and *Journal* every day for a fortnight, and I spoke to the Radical Kaffee Klatsch for the celebrated Isidor Levine, and to the Conservative Luncheon Club for the ubiquitous Elmer Neale, and I spoke to the *Via Christi* class for Mrs. Lindsay, and to the High School for Vachel’s old teacher, and to the readers in the Public Library for Martha Wilson. I had all the books on Russia put on a table, and I discoursed upon them. The most-read book was *The Brothers Karamazof*, which looked as if it had been in every bed in Springfield. We went to the Negro churches together; we talked to Charlie Gibbs the famous coloured attorney. We were entertained by Mrs. Warren—Drinkwater’s Springfield hostess. We could not visit the Governor—he was under arrest. But we visited the unsuccessful candidate for the governorship at the last election. Vachel discoursed on small-town politics while Mrs. Sherman made us meringues. The poet introduced me to his sweethearts, who were of all ages, from twelve to eighty. I made friends with beautiful little Mary Jane Allen, who danced and glided into and out of our presence, and smiled at us and lifted her child’s heart to us. And we called on “Judith the Dancer,” who taught little Mary Jane. Always along the Springfield streets the sight of the children exhilarated my companion—“Stephen, I just love them to death,” said he.

I got to be very well known. I had a sort of royal progress in the street, questioned and smiled at on all hands. “‘Scuse me,” they would say, “those boots, did you tramp in *them*?” or, “How d’ye do? My little girl heard you

give your talk in the school yesterday. She's full of it; it was *mighty* good of you."

I came to love the people of this little city, and to see the place with Vachel's creative eyes. Surely no one ever encountered such kindness, such real warmth of heart, as I did there. It was very moving for one who had come right out of the bitterness and quarrels of Europe and out of the loneliness of London. They know something about living which we are forgetting. They taught me much, and the poet has taught me much also—the bounty of good humour and of unfailing kindness and warmth. I love those who've got the strength of heart to lift their hands to take yours, who open their mouths actually to speak to you.

So I cannot tell the poet what I owe him, and he says he cannot tell me what he owes me. We made one final quest together, and that was to Salem where Abraham Lincoln lived a poor man's life, and learned mathematics from Dominie Graham and fell in love with the daughter of his landlord—unforgettable Anne Rutledge. And we paused before the massive block of granite which marks Anne's grave, strewn otherwise with flowers, and refulgent with thoughts. And we read Masters's beautiful lines inscribed over the grave:

I am Anne Rutledge who sleep beneath these weeds,
Beloved in life of Abraham Lincoln,
Wedded to him, not through union
But through separation.
Bloom for ever, O Republic
From the dust of my bosom!



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