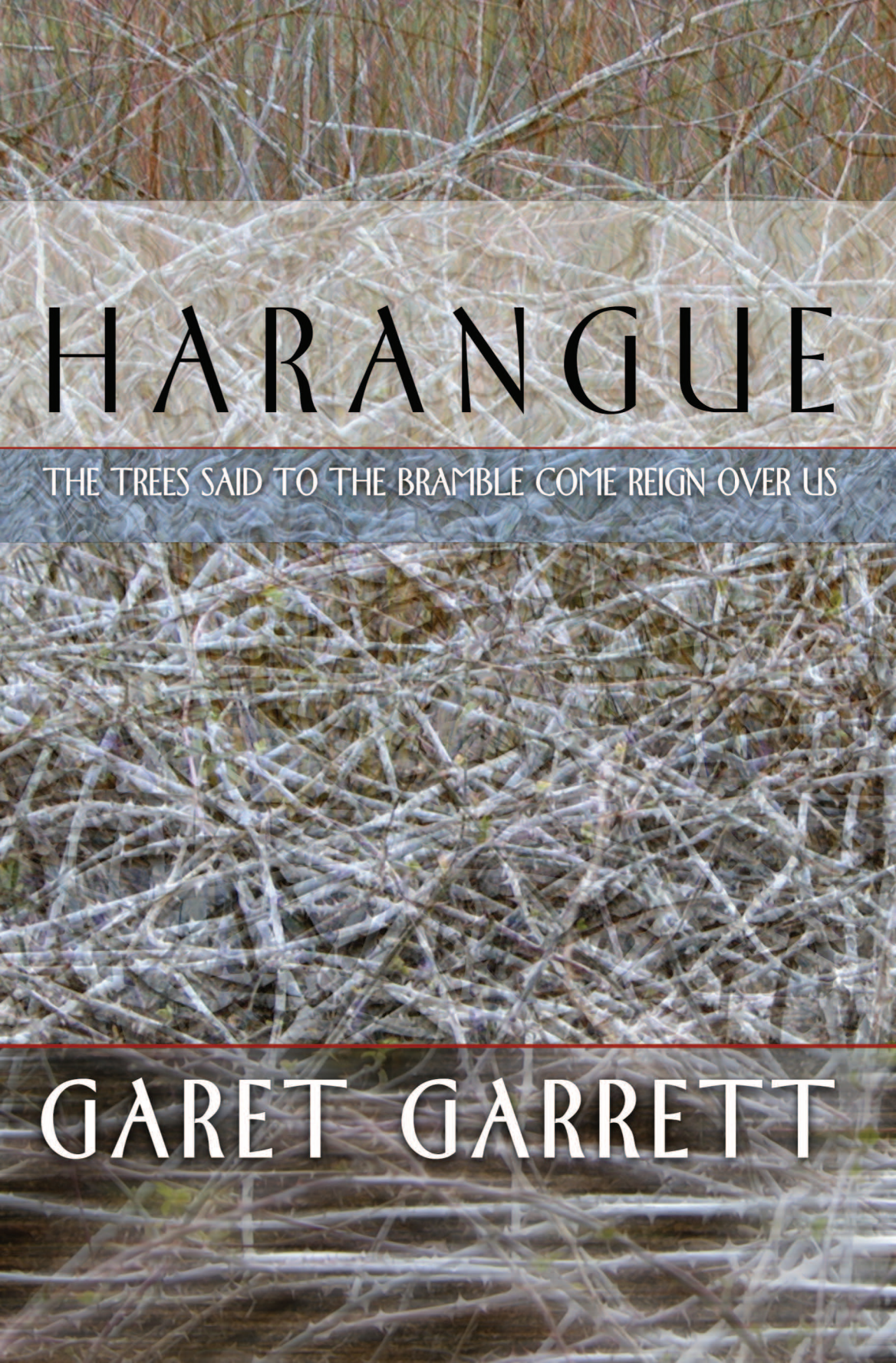
HARANGUE
THE TREES SAID TO THE BRAMBLE COME REIGN OVER US
GARET GARRETT

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BY

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Man is the only animal that can think as if. Hence the Arabian nights, the flying carpet, the pyramids, the zodiac, the artifacts, discontent, utopias and politics. He says, Lo! and the world is not there. Or Lo! again, and he is not there.

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HARANGUE

I

IT was a filthy night. The February harpy had lost her wind brats and was running wide in the avenues, railing, calling, tearing her hair; and her demented brood was brawling in the by-ways.

Empty ash-cans were overturning, rolling, bumbling, saying scandal. Gray streaks of feline terror. Sounds of grating, snapping, creaking, whamming, unholding, unfastening, all for an instant swallowed up suddenly in deep holes of stillness. An electric gong unable to stop. A female shriek, the same for murder or the loss of a hat. Then the din again.

Not a night for holding an intellectual tryst out of doors with nature. As well importune a wild jade in tantrums. Yet there at the top of Washington Square stood a tall red-bearded figure fixed in meditation. He seemed vertical without effort, a neutral fact in vorticular confusion, like the hypothetical perpendicular in chaos.

This grand absurdity was the mind's triumph. The cold wind whipped his thin serge garments, ex-

posed the unvoluptuous sculpture of his long, solitary legs; his thoughts were of the infinite, touching the cosmic hubbub.

He was looking back through Fifth Avenue. The commotion was no part of that view, or the least part; he was hardly aware of it. As before so many times, now again, having descended upon this spot in a certain way and turning to look back he had almost seized that simple, astonishing word-image which was to reveal a metaphysical truth to the senses. He was repeating, like an invocation, this formula: Idea the only reality. Idea is without substance. Therefore substance is unreal.

For the high jargon of metaphysics he had thoughts of deep scorn. Incanting it he hated it. He hated word-images, too. So much silly use had been made of them. Alas! access to truth had immemorially been by fatuous means, bubbles and toys, superstitions and tricks. That was not his fault. None the less it was stultifying, like having to woo one's goddess in the guise of a clown.

Others before him had resolved the nature of reality. The difficulty was that nobody could prove it. Appearances were apparitional. Things were illusions. It-ness, this-ness and that-ness among things, all signs of identity, were illusory, proceeding from contrast, and contrast was the basic illusion, since no form or aspect of phenomenal existence could be other than a movement of one infinite idea. Existence was a limitation. Infinity was

limitless. Ergo, infinity, although it was, did not exists; and the finite symbol for reality was 0.

This was apprehensible to the intellect. Quite. But the opposite of it also was apprehensible, or any pontifical nonsense. The intellect, as he had written, was more gullible than the senses, mainly intent upon deducing by logic what the emotional self had wished beforehand to believe in a mystical manner.

What he had undertaken to do with this truth was to bring it down to the senses, prove it like a physical fact, like relativity. To his own senses first. He himself must be able to apprehend it in that original way. Did not Einstein see relativity as Newton saw gravity, first with the eyes?

Almost he could see it. He had only to establish one vital contact of the illusion that was substance with the reality that was idea, by means of an image—a word-image known to the senses—and the doors of understanding would burst, just as bringing negative and positive together from the two poles of matter had flooded the world with electric power.

Becoming of a sudden conscious that he was consciously thinking he adopted the method of the despised word-imagists, who consciously think of nothing in order that something may unconsciously think of itself. But nothing did think of itself. Then he began to trample and bully his mind; the more he did that the worse it behaved, until he,

Angus Phlyn Fitzjerald, searching the universe for its simplest image and the February harpy seeking her brats were both in one frenzy, the same and equal, two movements of one infinitely extravagant idea, non-existent.

Now idea in the aspect of some hard, foreign substance entered his right eye. Another in the aspect of an alley cat walked through his legs in the figure eight.

With a Greek oath for its satisfying sound he took up his way, which lay diagonally across the Square; he walked as one who well knew the neighborhood, looking at nothing. Turning into Jones street he did not see the idea that passed, hesitated, then turned and made after him to ask a question. Physical irritation, above the displeasure he had taken against his mind, made him blind and politely ferocious. The wind had become offensive in a personal manner.

A little girl with a long loaf of bread held babywise in her arms was running before it with her head down. He did not see her either. Suddenly she veered to miss a barrel of kindling wood that stood on the sidewalk above a fuel vendor's cellar. It went over, spilling, just in front of her. She was agile and should have got round it safely. What wrecked her was a loop of twine that slipped itself from one of the kindling bundles and lassoed her feet.

Fitzjerald and the man wishing to accost him were coming against the wind, walking rapidly in the middle of the street. They were almost abreast as the girl fell headlong, casting the loaf of bread. Her body tripped Fitzjerald, his legs tripped the other man, and they all went down in a heap.

Fitzjerald was the first to rise. He lifted the child and tried her on her feet. Seeing she was unhurt he left her standing and picked up the bread. As she took it from him she looked at the other man. He was bent over, brushing himself angrily with a pocket broom. Then she looked up at the taller man with a scowl that changed slowly to a friendly grin. He neither spoke nor smiled, but gave her knitted cap a tug, as he might have thought either to straighten it or to settle it tighter, then turned her by the shoulders until she was true on the wind again and let her go. As he came about on his own course the other man stood facing him.

"Is this the only Jones street in New York?" he asked.

"Isn't one enough?" Fitzjerald answered and went straight on. He uttered the words with a rumbling growl. That was his natural voice. But his manner was offensive, and all the more for being oblique and impersonal. The smaller man, at first astonished, reacted with resentment. He quickened his steps to catch up, twisted his body around and tilted his face at Fitzjerald. His chin was thrust

out, both hands were clenched, one still holding the pocket broom, which he had forgotten; and he spoke through his teeth.

"As one species to another," he said, "it was a civil question."

Fitzjerald suddenly regarded him with interest.

"Civility," he said, "is an attribute of the species ass."

His manner, although more offensive than before, had changed. For as they looked at each other a Celtic sign appeared between them. Extremely unlike as types, and by reason of that unlikeness mortally antagonistic, still both were Irish and therefore related in a manner too subtle for non-Celtic understanding. Further offence, if any, would be personal and so intended. That was the difference. And this was a kind of recognition that gave the smaller man a sense of satisfaction.

"It was a civil question," he repeated.

"Your mother was a dogged woman," said Fitzjerald.

"A civil question," said the other.

"It had that grand merit," said Fitzjerald. "What then?"

"Is it?"

"It's the only Jones street I ever heard of."

They were still walking, never having paused at all. The smaller man put his little broom away, saying: "There's some mistake. I must have both the street and the number wrong."

"I suggest you have the city wrong," said Fitzjerald.

This mocking the other ignored, saying aloud to himself: "Jones street, thirteen-and-a-half. Quite plain."

"We're just at it," said Fitzjerald, with a slight increase of interest. "The name there," he added, "is Saint-Leon."

"Miss, is it? Miss Jael Saint-Leon?"

"Perfect."

"Isn't she supposed to be very rich?"

"I've known it to be alleged," said red beard.

"Why does she live in a street like this?"

"Maybe because it's the only Jones street there is. I'll ask her."

On that, Fitzjerald turned abruptly, crossed the sidewalk and mounted seven stone steps to the door of a very old Dutch-built house of which three together, all originally alike, had survived in the block. The one to the right of it was let to a junk dealer who used it as it was. The one to the left, on the corner, had been made over on the ground level with plate glass windows and a chamfered front entrance painted red and blue, to an apothecary's taste. Opposite was a five-story walk-up tenement with the fire-escapes in front, now presenting a much less untidy appearance than usual because such of the lares and penates as the wind had not run off with had been snatched inside. On one side of the tenement was an abandoned livery stable

and on the other a Board of Health dispensary.

You could not have passed No. 13½ without noticing that the door and window frames were painted, that the steps were clean and that the brass knobs on the hand railing were not missing. It was not otherwise distinguished, unless by having curtains at the three second-story windows. The lower windows were bare.

Fitzjerald entered this house without knocking. The pugnacious reality followed him in and closed the door behind them.

The hallway was scarcely more than a vestibule, twice the width of the staircase that took off abruptly. The floor was bare and much walked over, but the stairway, clean and white, had a rich carpet tread and the railing was of polished dark wood. At the right was a door bearing a cardboard sign:

Joining
Turning
Carving
Odd Handicrafts
WALK IN

That would account for the fact that the lower windows were uncurtained. The first floor was a workshop. Beyond this door, against the wall, were two wooden effigies, Dutch sailors, three-quarters life size, such as once were a variation upon the tobacconist's wooden Indian sign. From their

weathered appearance it was evident they were true trophies of that time and manner. Here they served as coat holders. Men's coats were hanging on their arms, and men's hats sat carelessly upon their heads. Against the other wall, hanging free by a chain from the ceiling, was a fire gong such as one may see in small villages—a steel band five feet in diameter, weighing at least an eighth of a ton; and hanging by a chain to the wall was a small machine hammer to beat it with.

The only light was from a brass ship's lantern swinging high over the first step of the stairway. From above came the sound of men and women's voices mingling—cultivated voices.

Fitzjerald stood for a moment before the wooden sailors; as there was no place left for his coat he threw it over the banister and started up, thereby pointedly casting off what he had let in after him.

"My name is Capuchin," the man announced. He said it reliantly and with an air of not being magnanimous. It was evident he expected his name to be recognized; also that he expected the tall, superior person to be surprised at the sound of it and a little embarrassed, as one who has behaved badly in a chance encounter with a body who turns out to be of some importance. Fitzjerald did recognize the name; it had been running in newspaper headlines for several months. But he neither paused nor spoke. From the top of the staircase he glanced down. Mr. Capuchin was brushing himself again.

II

In the room Fitzjerald entered on the second floor were three women and five men, all but one seated in various postures at a long refectory table of beautiful medieval design, reproduced by craftsmen in the shop below. The linen upon it was craft woven. The candles that lighted it were in iron holders, hand wrought. Around it instead of chairs were benches of the same design, each one long enough for two to be seated.

At the head of the board, sideways to it, was Jael Saint-Leon. She had finished eating and was smoking a cigarette through a long blue tube held in a clenched hand. Her elbow rested on the table and her forearm was rigidly vertical; when she thought of the cigarette she moved her head to reach it. Otherwise than in this arm her body seemed quite relaxed. She was gazing idly through her smoke at the second figure on her right.

That was a spherical little man with small features in a large face and an immense head perfectly bald. He was eating and had no perception of lesser things. His face hung low over his plate and he made murmuring, cajoling sounds to his food, as if it were alive. Dr. Rabba, writer of histories. He had written scores of them—histories of the world, of religion, of races, of science, and lately in ten volumes a history of history—all perfectly sound and empty. He was a prodigious hack

containing millions of facts. He had no fame at all on the literary plane. One of his several pseudonyms was better known than his own name. His recreation was a passionate interest in talk of revolution. He was useful in this company as a self-reciting encyclopedia, and was neglected as all encyclopedias are. To the conversation he had nothing but historical facts to contribute; and as everyone had learned not to start that torrent and as he was too shy to break it unasked, his rôle was that of listener, which was very agreeable, for very often the talk was about revolution.

He had, however, one amusing office. When the mysterious power had been present that did sometimes lift them high above their cynicism, their boredom, their sophisticated despair, their weariness of facts, and when the human instrument of this power, usually a visitor, had revealed a vision of perfectible man living in a perfect state, a state of nature perhaps, delivered from his wicked institutions, there came after the climax always an embarrassing moment. There was no curtain; no way of theatrical exit. There they sat staring helplessly at one another. Then it was Dr. Rabba who let them down. They would hear him saying in gentle voice, the same in which he addressed his food: "Massacre! Massacre! A little blood. It is ugly. It is soon over. They are not so many after all. You laugh. It is history. I know."

A moment later he, too, would laugh and look around with merry eyes.

Beyond Dr. Rabba sat Dwind, a socialist teacher of economics in the Lothian College of Social Science, which Jael Saint-Leon supported. His eyelids were thin but very tired and he lifted his head to see. The wonder was that a person so anaemic could think so fiercely. He had written many books and was the leading exponent of the doctrine in the country. He talked little, and made always an irritated sound. He appeared to be the only one listening to Grinling, opposite, who was saying there was no such thing as true American liberalism.

Grinling was a Harvard man, under thirty-five, who toyed with the heroic notion of disrecommending his country by cutting himself off from it. Meanwhile, holding that chastisement in reserve, he acted as associate editor of a weekly journal of radical opinion. He was a brilliant writer.

At the end of the table, aloof, was a young man with much upright hair named Semicorn. He had been lumberjack, hobo, editor of an I. W. W. newspaper in Seattle. Having served a term in the Federal prison at Leavenworth for seditious utterances in war time, he came to New York and appeared at the Lothian College. To his surprise he was seized to the heart of a distinguished group of people who thought it monstrous in principle that one should be punished for any political utterance whatever, and had organized a society, with funds,

offices, counsel, agents and publicity experts, for the jealous protection of free speech. Among them was a banker who undertook to see that the young man Semicorn, their instance and hero, should want for nothing. He was serious, a little timid among high foreheads, and awed by the company in which he flourished, perhaps because he could not talk without getting red and losing his grammar. But he made his patrons almost as uneasy as they made him.

The fifth man, the only one not at the board, was De Grouse, second son of a banker by an ancient line. It was supposed that in him the family talent had failed. At least it was that he turned contemptuously from the money trade and preferred the life of a literary artist. He evolved an obscure, precious manner of writing and found some vogue for it in magazines of that taste. He was musical, and wrote at first about music, then about literature and at length about life. His judgments, embossed, cold, intricately strange, were all alike because his interest was not in the thing but in his own sensations about it. He was content to have turned out to be a rosy, waxy, abdominal man, still young. He was at this moment reclining backward on a couch, his short legs crossed, one hand in his trousers pocket, the other, because of the ring, lying palm down and a little spread at his side. Dividing him at the equator was a fine gold chain.

The two women, besides Jael, were near her at

the head of the table. The one on her right, her secretary and constant companion, was Miss Lillibridge.

Fitzjerald once asked Jael in the hearing of a large company, including the object of his remark, why out of all the world she had taken to be her henchwoman a person so alarmingly distractive.

Jael answered, "Yes, isn't she pretty. She is my hair shirt."

Miss Lillibridge was perfectly oblivious. Everyone else was embarrassed and Fitzjerald was deeply sorry, for they all knew what Jael meant. Her satellite had everything that she had not.

The other woman was a Russian, a refugee, princess somebody, whose name no one could pronounce or spell twice the same way. The remedy was to call her Madame, with a strong French accent, and that did very well. She was tall, very thin and spoke only in a fever of excitement, no matter what the subject was. She had come to her English roundabout, through German and French, and made the sound "zee" for "th" incurably. Voluble, yet she might be silent through an entire evening, merely turning her hot black eyes quickly from one speaker to another, maybe not listening at all, just gazing. Her experiences had been melodramatic, some in her imagination and some really. She got them mixed up. She had faced a firing squad. If she forgot to say she had been shot and left there for dead and was reminded of the omission by one who had

heard it before she would say, "Oh, yes; zat ozer time," and go right on. She had killed a man. She got part way out of Russia on a troop train, riding with the soldiers, and walked the rest of it. Many times she had slept in the trenches. Having somehow some money, she kept a very nice apartment up-town. It was never locked for fear some wandering Russian, especially one drunk, might be unable to get in. Sometimes in the morning there would be ten or twelve on the floor, very comfortable. The janitor was scandalized and told the landlord; even the police were interested. But they had all been made to understand zat zese were her children. Besides, what else could zey do?

III

"Welcome, Angus," Jael called, seeing Fitzjerald's form filling the door way. "We are a small lot tonight. Low in our minds. Disagreeably inclined. Come, tell us a new thing."

Fitzjerald saluted by lifting her hand as if to kiss it, which he did not do. It was a gesture only, but invariably he greeted her in that way. In speech he was rude to her, more so than anyone else, but in manner he was old-fashioned and courtly, and although she pretended to be mildly amused, really she liked it.

Everyone treated her with certain marks of respect, especially Dwind, who got a nice salary at

the Lothian College, and Dr. Rabba, who lectured there; but the convention of conduct here was bad manners.

From the couch De Grouse shouted cheerily and Grinling said hello. Fitzjerald did not respond. It was not expected. Nothing was expected.

Having made his little ceremony with Jael he said, "Hello, Lillibridge," "Good-evening, Madame," and passed around to a row of copper pots on a warming table against the far wall. At the end of the warming table was another with plates, silver and so forth. Each guest helped himself to food, of which there was a great abundance, excellent, always ready. A man that might be called a butler, wearing a sack suit, appeared from time to time bringing water and pieces of linen or to remove what was no longer wanted.

Fitzjerald helped himself generously, brought his plate to the table, and sat between Grinling and Madame.

"No new thing, Jael," he said, speaking for the first time. "I'll ask you a question. Someone asked it of me. Why do you live in Jones street?—here?—like this?"

Jael regarded him thoughtfully.

"Well, Mr. Father Confessor," she said, "why do I?"

"I'm serious," he said.

"So am I," she said. "That's it. I might have answered you lightly. Why do you live as you do?"

She knew how Fitzjerald lived. So did the others know. He lived, as anyone would say, wretchedly, in a square hole at the end of a furrier's loft, with a portable oil stove, three sticks of furniture, a bowl of ink and some books on the floor.

"Fair," he said. "I happen to know. The main thing is to express my contempt as I please."

"Contempt of what?" Jael asked.

"Of many absurdities. Of everything I am not and have not got. People. Wealth. The strut of success. Vulgar taste. The triumph of mediocrity. The whole human scene as God left it. And that is what—"

He was stopped by a clangor that jarred the dishes, hurt the teeth, smote the eyes, and died slowly away in waves of appalling reverberation. Madame screamed and covered her face.

"Praise be!" said Jael. "Somebody at last has hit my gong in a regular way. I never could."

Miss Lillibridge got up to see.

Fitzjerald called after her: "Oh, Lillibridge, I forgot. He wants a whisk broom. I see one right there. Throw it at him, please. He fell down in the dust."

"A friend of yours?" Jael asked.

"No. We only arrived at the same moment."

Miss Lillibridge, standing in the upper hall at the top of the staircase, threw the broom down and said, "Come up." With that she returned to her seat.

"Who is it?" Jael asked her.

"I don't know," she said. "A stranger."

There was a clumsy silence. The only audible sound was a bubbling in one of the copper pots. Fitzjerald did not go on with his speech because it would be interrupted by the stir of an arrival, and for the same reason no one else spoke. One, two, three minutes passed. Everyone began to listen for the footfall that came not on the stairway. Fitzjerald of course knew why. That is, he had guessed correctly that it would take Mr. Capuchin some time to decide how to behave in the circumstances. First a long wait in the hallway, very injurious to his self-esteem, and then, after his unbalanced attack upon the gong, a whisk broom at his head.

Fitzjerald was thinking to himself: "Man with a tic in his brain—Always brushing himself—Symbolic unconscious gesture—Something he wishes he didn't know about himself—Something he wants to be rid of—The broom—Won't know what to make of it."

Then Jael herself rose and moved toward the door. As she did so Capuchin was heard ascending. They met, and he handed her a letter, not in an envelope, at the same time pronouncing his name.

"Oh," she said, first shaking hands with him and then glancing at the letter. "You move quickly. I heard only this afternoon that you were starting for New York, and here you are."

She had brought him in.

"These are all nice people," she said, waving her smoking blue tube at them. "They have nice names, but you would forget them at once. Only Miss Lillibridge. You won't forget hers. This is she. You may sit between us. Here. We shall want to talk. Help yourself from the pots. Everything's there. We are all self-serving."

Pointing him to the copper pots, she sat down, vaguely smiling. "It's Mr. Capuchin," she said, and then turned to Fitzjerald.

"Yes, Angus. Contempt of the whole human scene as God left it. And that was what—there you stopped. What was what?"

"What all of us are doing," he said.

"You mean I live in Jones street to be contemptuous?"

"Are you serious or being feminine?"

"I don't know," she said, "but go on."

"Envy and contempt," he said, going on. "They translate in human conduct thus: Envy, 'I am as good as.' Contempt, 'I am better than.' These are the two fundamental forms of the social animal's self-assertion; and which it shall be in the specific case, one or the other, is a matter of how one was born or what one was born with. Every imaginable way with this conflict has been tried. In the east it appeared to have been settled by a caste system, as among the Hindus, inferiors, betters and superiors stratefied by superstition and taboo on rigid

lines supposed to be ordained in nature. But there you see it is breaking out again. In what we call democratic—"

He was interrupted by sounds from De Grouse and Grinling. "Civilization again," one of them groaned. "Spare its old bones!"

Capuchin, who had taken his place at the board between Jael and Miss Lillibridge, moved his head sideways, glancing right and left, as one who, wishing to get into a shindy, casts around for a handy weapon. He thought they were going to put Fitzjerald down, ridicule him, trample on him, and he should have a chance to get in on it. But nothing came of it. The interruption was ironic and despairing. There was no one could talk against Fitzjerald. He would go on until he wished to stop. His voice came from deep roaring pouches, with an effortless booming.

So Capuchin returned to the contemplation of himself. He had got a dinner coat and wore it badly. He kept looking at the front of himself, shooting his cuffs, shooting them too far and getting them back with a wriggling movement. His dress was a mistake. Fitzjerald wore a blue cotton shirt; Grinling a soft flannel one. They made some point of carelessness in dress. The only one who had any style about him was De Grouse. His attire was fancy, not formal.

"—In what we call democratic civilization," Fitzjerald continued, "nothing is fixed. No status can

be fixed. The as-gooders of course have the great majority. To their number is added political power. The I-am-betters are hard put to it. In the last resort they become ludicrous. I think I am better than money changers, shop keepers, meat packers, superior to the great cult Rotarian. I know I am better than a coal digger. But if these others, I mean the money changers, shop keepers, meat packers, Rotarians, press me hard—and they are always coming up—if they begin to know too many things as I know them and to prate my language, then I am obliged to go and live near or among coal diggers in order to keep my contrast clear. To conceal from myself what I am doing I am very likely to ally myself with them against the cult Rotarian, whom they envy and of whom I am contemptuous. I become their champion. I talk of up-lifting them. Deity stuff. I am much more likely to fool myself than to fool them. I am not a coal digger. But I may start a revolution."

He paused.

"Bring it back to Jones street," Jael suggested.

"In a very prosperous state of democratic civilization," Fitzjerald continued, "the competition becomes abominable. Anybody can get rich. The most impossible persons do. Therefore wealth, which has hitherto conferred the high-caste mark, ceases to have any aristocratic value. The I-am-betters who relied upon it are pressed from two sides. On one side the as-gooders competing with

them successfully in display. On the other side those, like myself, who, having declined the competition, hold all wealth in disdain. I, sitting in my cave, exchanging now and then a precious bauble, intrinsically worthless, for the means with which to fill my belly and hide my back—I hold myself high among the I-am-betters.

"But they crowd us hard—the as-gooders. They run after culture and seize it even faster than we can discard it. Why is it the thing, if you are rich, to behave as if you were not? the thing, if you have manners, to get rid of them? the thing, if you have style of dress, to put it off? the thing if you have classical taste in art, to pretend to despise it and prefer instead the grotesques of ancient Africa, jazz, ugliness, anything different? Why? Because so many are rich. A fine house is nothing. Display is cheap. The new rich learn very soon how to buy polish, mental furniture and snobbery, as they buy motor cars or other merchandise. Standard culture is made compulsory. Children get soused in it at the public schools, where they learn polite manners, good English, the outlines of science, the latest dialect of art. From there they go in shoals to the universities, which become culture factories, producing it by mass methods, efficiently. There is irony in it. What shall these children do with what has been bought for them? Are they content to go on with the useful work of their fathers? They are much more likely to cultivate the con-

temptuous pose, pressing me again. De Grouse—I'm never sure about De Grouse, whether he is an artist, born such, or merely unreconciled to a second sonship in a dynasty of great wealth. Give him the benefit. But take Grinling. What was bought for him at Harvard makes him ashamed of the fact that his father got rich in the garment trade. You see what he does. He turns radical and writes disparagingly of wealth."

Neither De Grouse nor Grinling seemed to mind. It was all within the code. Unlimited speech was their idolatry; they had the fervor of flagellents for it. Personalities no matter how extreme were inoffensive provided only they had a political bearing. If one wished to call another a liar or a scoundrel, he did it obliquely, by presenting the other to himself as a social product of that type.

"Is it proved," Jael asked, "that I am living with coal diggers for contrast?"

"You are," said Fitzjerald. "Rich women in fine houses with soft hands and nothing to do are very common. You would be horribly bored. Besides, there could be no distinction in it. So what? You establish yourself in this old house, in this dirty street, to cultivate the handicrafts and work with your own hands. They are callous from contact with refractory materials."

Capuchin looked at Jael's hands. They were as Fitzjerald represented. Thick, applicable hands, with primitive knowledge in them.

IV

No one had noticed that the young man Semicorn in the dimness at the far end of the table had come to his feet, nor was anyone prepared for his flaming forth as he was about to do.

"Th' only word you said that ain't smoose," he began, pointing at Fitzjerald, "is you could'n' fool anybody. You're different than other finks like toads is different than snakes. They ain't no excuse for you. You don't even want what that is we're fighting for 'n' you don't know. My father, he was a coal digger 'n' I ain't ashamed. Maybe I'm ashamed he was a scissorbill, only he didn' know any better. No, sir, you couldn' fool anybody."

His words were very distinct, his voice was clear and hot, but in his excitement he fell back upon the rooty lingual formations in which he was fluent, the vernacular of his nativity, enriched from the dictionaries of the hobo, the lumberjack, the I. W. W. zealot. A curious kind of tongue, not pure in its crudity, but unstable and changing from an overlay of acquired grammar.

"I knew a gyppo like you," he continued. "He was a Cockney clocker with a high lead outfit in Montana. We was riggers up 'n' gandy dancers. He'd be reading books 'n' throwing the bull he was for us, but when as we asked him to stamp in he in and turned us up to th' bull-whacker, who was a fink, too, 'n' then th' boss slapped us on th' behind

with our pay checks. You'd have society be like it is, wage slaves, scissorbills, bosses, pie in th' sky 'n' capitaliss just an so you could feel better than somebody. You ain't no better than a coal digger but for th' way you can talk. It ain't what you know. Why shouldn' their chilern be educated? What's anybody got they ain't entitled to? Their ain't no betters, people being born all equal and same. What makes them different is th' wage system. Nobody's pulling that stuff on me. I ain't fooled with th' dehorn talk I hear around here. I might have met some nice people who can't help being what they are, any more'n my father could. What do they know about free speech, hiring somebody to set in th' office 'n' write letters to th' papers? Nothing. We fight for it. I been in jail for it. Two hundred of us who could get there was at a convention last week in Chicago 'n' we counted a hundred 'n' eighty'd been in jail for free speech. We don't care what th' brass check papers say. Th' labor papers, they called us a bummery convention. We'll make them eat that off th' ground yet. You're wrong about why the rich act like they wasn't rich 'n' take some of us on their lap. They're scared. They know we've got th' idea to break empires 'n' scatter kingdoms like they was dust, abolish the wage system, make th' bosses go to work. Put us in jail! We'll fill all th' jails they got. Show me anybody here's been in jail for what they believed."

Through all this wild speech Jael gazed attentively at the young man. Her face was impassive. When he had stopped Fitzjerald boomed:

"My God! What a lot I don't know about this language, and it's my trade. What is a fink, Semicorn, and a scissorbill?"

His manner was easy, familiar, conversational. Semicorn was instantly dehorned; and sank in a state of sullen embarrassment. He could not think how to answer the question. To define his words would deflate their importance, make them silly. Unable to think of anything right to say, he sat there shifting his eyes, trying not to look at anyone or be looked at. In spite of himself he was obliged to look at Capuchin. Everyone else was looking at him. He had been leaning further and further toward the young man until he lay lengthwise along the edge of the table in front of Miss Lillibridge, apparently very anxious to fix Semicorn's eye.

"I didn't get your name," he said.

"Semicorn."

The young man's voice was defiant and suspicious. He was not sure of Capuchin, whose expression when he became excited was extraordinary. His jaws locked, his chin came forward, and his lips contorting to finish his syllables in front of his teeth made him appear to be either grinning or grimacing. His teeth were gleaming white. He never used tobacco. His eyes, with a glint of light run-

ning in them, were as inscrutable as a black fluid. Now he extended his hand. In doing so he edged further along the table. A glass was overturned; mechanically he set it right again. The young man slowly extended his hand.

"Mr. Semicorn. Yes, of course. One of the men they sent to Leavenworth. I'm glad to meet you. I merely wanted to say, Mr. Semicorn, if you will come with me to New Freedom—I'm going back tomorrow—I'll put you somewhere. We need young men like yourself. Would you care to be editor of our state paper? A chain of papers perhaps. I'll put you anywhere you say. Think it over. That's all, Mr. Semicorn."

He got back to his place on the bench beside Miss Lillibridge without seeing her at all, though he had been lying almost across her lap.

"And I'll tell you what a fink is, Mr. Fitzjerald," he said, setting his face that way. "We named the animal. The fink's conscience is like one of those cute cardboard things you use to send coins by mail, with holes cut in it to fit quarters, dimes and nickels. His principles are the holes. He would take a raise in his pay to blow the whistle two minutes early in a factory full of ten-year-old children working twelve hours a day. He isn't cross-eyed but he never goes where he's looking, and he keeps his civility for his superiors. Civility, Mr. Fitzjerald, is an attribute of the species ass."

"And a scissorbill. What's that?" Fitzjerald asked, with deep interest.

"A scissorbill, Mr. Fitzjerald, is a man who thanks the boss for his pay check."

Jael suspected there had been a beginning to these amenities downstairs. She was secretly diverted. Nevertheless she intervened.

"Where is this New Freedom you speak of?" she asked. "May anybody go?"

"You haven't seen the evening papers, then," said Capuchin.

"I'm afraid we don't read the newspapers very regularly," said Jael.

"Above it," he commented, speaking audibly to himself as on this new idea. Such a thing as intelligent people not reading the newspapers had never occurred to him.

"Maybe you haven't heard much about the Freemen's League," he said.

"Indeed, we have, though," said Jael. "We've followed it with joy. How you turned everything upside down, elected your own governor, your own legislature, your own judges, when nobody thought it was possible, and then rewrote the constitution as the people wished. We haven't seen that yet—the constitution, I mean. We're looking for it."

"To look is to see," said Capuchin. "Here it is—copies of it. I brought them with me."

He pulled a large quantity of printed matter from his pocket and passed it around, getting up to serve

the inert De Grouse, but overlooking Lillibridge as if she were non-existent. "There's a paragraph in it," he was saying, "purposely a little obscure, which was to give the governor power to change the name of the state by proclamation. That was one of the ideas I couldn't talk much about. I go by psychology in these matters. Sounds are important. People can't see their ideas. Seeing, as somebody says, is the most imperfect of the senses. Hearing came first. That may be. They have to hear their ideas. A sound—you must give your people a sound. Fancy the French revolution without its three sounds—liberty, equality, fraternity! But you can't discuss these matters publicly, can you? New Freedom. The state of New Freedom. Don't you like it? I arranged it with the governor before I left and he did it this afternoon. The people of course think they did it. They have named their own state. And the capital, too. Its name has been changed in the same way to Liberty."

Grinling spoke.

"I've been commenting on your revolution," he said. "I don't know if you have seen any of it."

"Oh, yes," said Capuchin. "In the 'New World.' Very fair, I thought, only you—"

"I have nothing to do with 'The New World,'" said Grinling.

"Oh, no," said Capuchin, quickly. "I meant the —uh . . . it was the—uh—"

Grinling left him swinging.

"In 'The People's Witness,' " said Jael.

"Yes—yes," said Capuchin.

"The news we have to go on isn't always clear," said Grinling. "It occurs to me—"

Capuchin interrupted. "That's the next thing we've got to do. I'm boiling a kettle of water now for the reptile press. If I had the time I might sue half the newspapers in the country for libel. They keep leery little men out there all the time trying to get something on me. Their editors call me crook, traitor, irreligionist, dictator setting up a Russian form of government in their privately owned United States. They walk in my tracks. I'm registered now at a little hotel here under an assumed name because I don't want to be bothered. I shouldn't be surprised at all if they were sitting on the doorstep below, waiting to serenade me." He added: "It might ruin me. Think what they would make of me in a dress suit." He was evidently pleased with this remark, thinking that by referring thus lightly to his mistake in dress he got rid of it.

"I was thinking," said Grinling, "you might give us an intimate outline of events from the beginning—how you got started, I mean, what your means were, and what has really happened."

V

Capuchin needed space in front of him. He put his hands against the table to move himself back,

thinking he was in a chair. But it was not a chair. Then he lifted his end of the bench and moved it back, Miss Lillibridge teetering on the other end. Reseating himself, he put his hands in his pockets, assumed a crouching attitude, and talked.

He had a gift for dramatizing the incident, a kind of unexpectedness, and a comic sense from which nothing was withheld, not even himself. Almost at once his auditors were fascinated. Owing to his habit of making his final word sounds outside of his teeth he could not talk and smile at the same time. At the humorous episodes he stopped to smile, and it was irresistible. His emotions were uncontrolled. When he spoke of little children in their taties or of a woman in childbirth, the nearest doctor forty miles across the frozen prairie and nothing for the new Freemen's Leaguer to wear but a flour sack nightie, he wept.

Afterward—perhaps long afterward—the reflection that these figures in any political sense were irrelevant. They were bits of color splashed in. When he was moved to weep he wept naturally, as a child would, with not the slightest embarrassment and without getting his eyes red. His narrative had the form of fiction. He might have been reciting a story.

First was where.

A state twice the size of Ireland and fewer people than in one first rate city. Climate, 40 below in winter to 110 in summer. There was one very

rich valley, a river flowing north. The rest of it had been bison pasture. Then came the bonanza cattle men. They turned the bison out and drifted their cows up there from Texas to graze on the public domain. The first railroad was built, with enormous grants of land as a free kiss from the Federal government. The eastern owners of the railroad, led by Jay Cooke & Company, bankers, thought of a way to turn their land into money. They advertised it to land-hungry European peasants in the best Yankee manner. Virgin soil, almost for nothing, in a land where everything else was free. Immigrants, mostly Swedes and Norwegians, came in boat loads to buy and settle upon it.

Many Americans, even the newspapers, that were not so bad then, indignantly protested. They said it was immoral to sting confiding foreigners in that manner. The land was worthless. Thereupon the railroad people did what they had not thought of doing before. They tried it. They plowed and sowed some of it experimentally. And it turned out that the land was all right.

But wickedness went only the deeper with the fact of the land being good. All the more the settlers were exploited. That was what they were for. Generally they began with too little capital. They should have known better; yet think how they were beguiled by the legends that brought them. Everyone who touched them made money. Those in the first place who sold them seed, implements, lumber,

bacon and flour at wilderness prices. Then the elevator men who bought their grain, the Minneapolis and Chicago speculators who played in it afterward, the railroads that hauled it out. The man whose labor produced this wealth delivered it to his creditors in the harvest moon and faced the long, hard winter with barely enough to sustain life in a state of hibernation. His winters were terrible. You would find him, if at all, by a length of six-inch stove-pipe sticking out of a snow drift. He lived there in gloom and brooding with his wife and children, eating fried potatoes, and when Spring came he had the shape of a shad. Then he borrowed some seed, some ten per cent. money, some hope from the Lord, and did it once more. If he got a crop, which was not always, the storekeeper who kept him in pawn, the banker, the miller, the trader and the railroad again divided it among themselves. And these people were helpless. He had been looking at it a long time without seeing it. That was because he had been occupied in another way.

"What were you doing there?" Jael asked.

He was coming to that. Running a newspaper, an anti-railroad newspaper, first of that species. It was from that angle he had been assaulting the castle of privilege. The power of the railroads was tyrannical and absolute. There was no other authority in the state to mention. They controlled the elections and what was elected; they controlled economic conditions; they suppressed public opinion

by suborning the press. He did not buy the newspaper; he found it. The man who owned it was about to bequeath it to his creditors, had in fact announced that he meant to stop printing it. There was a funny episode in the taking of it. They were looking at the books, he and the owner; apparently there was only one customer who ever paid, and it wasn't clear what that one paid for. He hadn't even a name. He was entered as Account A, and paid $250 a month regularly.

Capuchin asked what that was.

That, the bankrupt told him, was the only thing he need not worry about. The check came every fifteenth and the people who sent it didn't want much. An editorial maybe twice or three times a year, and they wrote it themselves. It was a gratuity from the railroad, and but for that one little stream of juice the creditors might have had the paper long before..

Drawing a pencil through Account A, Capuchin said, "I'll take it without that," and signed the memorandum of sale that lay on the table.

The retiring owner sat for a minute regarding him in a strange way. Then taking thought for himself he said he should like to make one slight addition to the contract. Taking it under his hand, he made a caret after George Capuchin, party of the second part, and wrote, "being of sound mind," comma, etc. The rest he left as it was, which was merely to say that the party of the first part, in

consideration of one dollar paid, having transferred title and interest, the party of the second part assumed all the liabilities. "Just in case," he said, referring to the change he had made in the paper requiring the buyer to acknowledge his sanity; and so he signed it and pushed it back. That was the complete transaction, except that the relieved owner looked back from the doorway and said: "If you write anything against those people the check will stop and you won't last a month."

He made some wonder in the community, daring the lightning to strike him; but that was nothing to live on. Those who owed the paper money now laughed at the idea of paying. Somehow he lasted nearly two years. He did get an anti-railroad bill introduced in the legislature by the only free member there was in it, and that was all.

One night the paper was set up and might have issued once more if there had been anybody to print it or anything to print it on. The sheriff was strolling about the premises. Word had come from the capitol that his anti-railroad bill, splashed with a quid of tobacco, was hanging upside down on the bulletin board in the public corridor. Of a sudden it occurred to him as an original, astonishing thought that he could quit. He walked out the front door, locked the sheriff inside, threw the key in the gutter and remembered a saying that ran in his family: the tick crawls out of a dead dog's ear.

With nothing else to do he sauntered toward the

state capitol. It was the last night of the session, and there was no other diversion. The rotunda was full of people.

A delegation of farmers had come to beg for a bill that was introduced regularly at the beginning of each session and then purposely forgotten. It was a bill providing for grain elevators to be built by the state so that the farmers might store their grain in their own keeping and sell it when, as and to whom they pleased, instead of having to sell it wet on the harvest glut to the private elevator combine that docked away one-fifth of it, graded away another fifth, and paid for the remainder a take-or-be-damned price. It was never intended that the bill should pass. Its use was to be dangled before the farmers at election time.

The delegation had not been honored with a formal reception. The legislature who had thought it worth while to receive it at all met it standing in this public space. The farmer's spokesman was arguing the matter in a weak, egotistical voice. Nobody was listening. He was very dull; besides, all that he was saying had been said many times before.

A Swede with a long white mustache kept saying, "Aay pro meest! Aay pro meest!"

A man at the edge of the crowd, getting suddenly what the Swede meant, set up the tune, "Oh, Promise Me." There was rude and cynical laughter at that.

Then from among the members of the legislature,

who were all on one side, came a loud voice, saying, "A-a-h-h, go home and slop your hogs."

That insult was the climax. There was a moment of ominous silence. Then the legislators disappeared up the marble stairway, one leading, the others straggling. They had business above.

For a while the farmers lurched and shuffled about, some dumbly gazing, others muttering, and then melted away.

Capuchin was next conscious of himself in the experience of having a vision.

Did they remember the story of Rousseau, father of the French revolution, walking to Vincennes? How under a tree he was struck with a vision that changed the mind of the world? The vision that man was naturally perfect and altogether good and was made wicked by his institutions? It was as sudden as that. Only, it was a very cold night, his tree was a trolley post, and there was no Vincennes.

His vision was of the utmost simplicity. Why shouldn't these people have what they wanted? It was their state, not the railroads' state. What they were talking about was a way to sell the wealth produced by their own labor. Their own, not the railroads' wealth. These legislators telling them to go home and slop their hogs were men whom they, the people themselves, elected, always of course after they had been nominated by the railroads, the bankers, et al. All they needed was someone who could

show them how to unite, declare their freedom and take possession of their own. He could do that.

Two of the farmers in that delegation named Swanson, brothers, he knew; and he returned to the capital to look for them. They were gone. He found them in the town, just as they were starting home, and he went with them.

They sat in the kitchen and talked. A kerosene lamp was both heat and light. The stove was cold and useless because the women and children had taken the lids to bed with them. It got colder and colder, and still they talked. They talked all night and the Freemen's League was born at dawn. The enacting words were written in pencil on the pages of a child's copy book; and they were few. The fewer the better. That was why it took so long.

It was not a political organization though it proposed to employ political means.

The subscriber pledged himself to vote only for men of any political party who were pledged to the League.

Ten or more subscribers constituted a local folkmote, autonomous, self-organizing, electing its own leader.

All the local folkmotes in a county constituted a county folkmote, also autonomous, self-organizing, choosing its own leader.

The Freeman's League was the total organism thus built up, with its head at the capital, its body everywhere. It was authorized beforehand to use

such funds as were necessary to conduct a newspaper, which, received by every member, should possess them all of the truth alike and inform them of the program.

And the whole purpose of the League was to disestablish the predatory profit makers, all private privilege, and establish instead the rights of the people.

Amen.

(Sign here.)

$2.50 payable.

Principles only. That left the program to be talked about. It should be flexible, accommodating itself to the opportunity. All the more it could contain everything the Leaguers wished—state elevators, a state flour mill, a chain of co-operative stores, a government for the people first, one that should fix reasonable prices for the things the people were obliged to buy and profitable prices for what they sold.

After breakfast they set forth. Evangels three. They had agreed to test it first on Knutson, a hard, grunting Norwegian to whom substance had been added. The more grouch the more substance. He had pigs—more pigs than words—a painted barn and money in the bank. If they could sell it to him they could sell it to anybody. They did sell it to him. It was easy. He had been one of the delegation, and had not been able to sleep for burning with anger at the insult received from the legis-

lators. To him it was personal, for he had hogs; few of the others had. Knutson went with them to see that Steenerson signed. Evangels four. Steenerson made one difficulty. He had not the two-fifty; but he offered to give his check, dated the next fall, after harvest. They took it, and it was an idea.

They spent the day at it, and when they turned back they had twenty subscribers and nineteen post-dated checks, payable after harvest. The League was launched. On its note, payable after harvest, it borrowed from Knutson enough money to buy a used Ford for traveling about.

Returning that night to the capital Capuchin's first official deed, after finding the key he had flung in the gutter, was to write a notice and paste it in the newspaper window: "S O L D! To the Freeman's League. George Capuchin, president."

There had been no election of officers but someone had to be president; there had been no sale or purchase of the paper, but all the same it belonged to the League.

It was nothing to sell the idea of the League; it was easy to get post-dated checks. To get any real money, enough to keep the paper going—that was a nightmare. Nevertheless, it was managed. He advertised for torch bearers, practiced them in what they should say so that they should all say it alike, as the paper was saying it, and sent them forth to sell the League—for one-tenth of the sub-

scription money. In ninety days there was at least one folkmote in every county, and he—rather the League—had a drawer full of post-dated checks. A few of these now and then he was able to pawn for some real money.

So much of genesis. The rest was generally though imperfectly known.

At the first political election in the spring the League had been unable to get any of its own men up on either party ticket. What it should do in that case had been planned beforehand. No Leaguer voted at all.

The boss politicians were amazed at the extent of the missing vote. They began to inquire about the League and then of course to denounce it as inimical to the peace and morals of the state. It grew all the faster.

As the post-dated checks began to turn up after harvest the banks were able to identify many of the League's members and wickedly black-listed them as borrowers. That was persecution, and the League had made strong wine of it.

Before the autumn election came there was a folkmote in nearly every township. The weaker of the two political parties put four Leaguers on its ticket for the Legislature. They were elected in a manner to show that the Freemen's League, if it held together, would swing the balance of power.

Then of course all the reactionary forces of the state came together in one mind to fight it. Those

who belonged to the party that had admitted Leaguers to its ticket went over to stand with the other against the League; that left the League in possession of the first one's skin, which it immediately filled.

In the next election, which was the big one, the League had its own people up for all offices. The fight was desperate.

On the side of the conservatives the most effective man was not a politician. He was a banker, Anx. Plaino, who, never having made a speech before in his life, developed suddenly a remarkable gift of simple exposition. He was dangerous for two reasons. It was not only that he could argue for Satan too plausibly; his bank had tremendous influence with rich farmers, many of whom it had built up and then corrupted into the machine of privilege. So, this person, Old Anxiety, they called him, had begun to make some very offensive speeches.

Coming to a sudden stop Capuchin smiled and looked into the faces around the table, one after the other, with an air of letting them all in.

"My grandfather had asthma," he said. "He never went near the horses, for if he did he was sure to be violently seized with it. That's how I happened to think of the trick we played on Anx. Plaino. We waited until he was to bring off a speech a lot of us could get to. He was surprised at the size of his crowd; more perhaps at the ap-

plause he got. The Leaguers came early and sat well up front. Every man had a pocket full of horse dander. We dropped it on the floor. When we applauded the speaker we stomped our feet and raised the dust. That was the last of Mr. Plaino. He didn't recover until long after the election. He nearly died."

He was silent again, then passed under signs of strong emotion.

"Did you hear that on the Sunday before election they prayed for foul weather? Perhaps not. That wouldn't be news. But they did, thinking it would keep our people away from the polls. And the prayer was answered. Two feet of snow. I doubted them myself. The first returns came from the towns and we were beaten. I thought so. Then slowly the returns from the country began to come in. They came in for three days, piling higher and higher, and the folkmotes had won. Everything! Apples and basket."

This he seemed to be saying to himself, forgetting where he was. He was thinking of the steadfastness of his Leaguers, re-creating his own excitement, feeling again the ecstasy akin to grief of victory against great odds. Tears stood in his eyes.

"So there we are," he said, coming to with a start. "The state of New Freedom, capital, Liberty. That's what you asked for, wasn't it?"

He looked at Grinling.

VI

"You must write it," said Grinling. "Just that way. Really! You must. I undertake to find you a publisher." He permitted himself to speak with some enthusiasm.

Fitzjerald spoke, addressing no one directly.

"There is something I miss in these wonderful matters," he said. "I speak of it with proper humility. Something I never see. The point, in fact. What is it the people of New Fredom now are free to do that they could not have done before? Were they not always free to exercise the rights of a majority? Take the seat of authority by voting themselves there? They wanted only the will and the intelligence to do it and a man to lead them."

"The people," said Capuchin, "are always free to cut off the king's head if they can."

" 'One, two, three. The king shall headless be.' So the mummers do it still in Bohemia on Whit-Monday," said Fitzjerald. "Beheading the image of his thralldom is man's most exciting activity. He begins historically with the dragon. He hunts the dragon, heroically. It is cornered in a mud hole; its head is chopped off. Still man is not free. The gods rule. One by one he cuts off the heads of the gods. No good. The king rules. Behead the king! The slayer of the king then rules. Off with his head! The proletariat is enthroned. But the

proletariat has no head either to rule itself with or to be chopped off. What then? The intelligent fragment rules. Away with the head of intelligent fragment! Success rules. Cut off the head of success! Facts rule. Behead the tyrannical facts! Every kind of head has been cut off. Yet man is not free. Still he has to be ruled. Shall he free himself by cutting off his own head?"

"The world as it was and is and will be, forever, amen," said Grinling, jeering. Loud speeches annoyed him, especially these.

"The world is fool-proof," Fitzjerald retorted. "No one can jump off."

Those who knew Madame had been aware for some moments that a diversion was imminent. Only Capuchin was surprised.

"Ze revolution! Where is ze revolution?" she demanded. "Mr. Grinling has been writing about your revolution and will you tell us about it, please. I listen and listen for ze revolution and I hear nozing but ze elections and ze politics and ze voting. Where is ze revolution?"

Pulling his bench back to the table, Capuchin rested his arms on it and held his hands out with a movement of squeezing a soft, round object.

"Privilege has been overturned, Mrs.—uh—" He thought he had forgotten her name, whereas he had never heard it. He gave it up and went on. "A wicked class government has been destroyed. A state exploited by the railroads, by petty lords, by

absent capitalists, has been delivered to the people. The people! Do you understand? Those whose labor creates the wealth and who now for the first time have the light of the body in their eyes."

"Ach! Zeir wealz and zeir bodies," said Madame, scornfully. "In zeir bodies zey are swine, oh, such swine!" Her voice and gestures expressed disgust, amusement and despair, as if she had been thinking of impossible children. "But zeir souls, zey are lovely. Have you done nozing for zeir souls, Mr. Capuchin?"

"I think you are talking nonesense," said Capuchin.

Madame frowned slightly at his rudeness and subsided, murmuring to herself, "Ze anamals! And wiz such lovely souls."

Capuchin was on the point of addressing her again, to mollify her, thinking he had produced an ill effect, when Jael deflected him.

"Folkmote," she said. "Have you been using the word picturesquely, or do you really call them so."

"That's what they are," said Capuchin.

"I like it," said Jael. "Where did you get it?"

"From Kropotkin," said Fitzjerald.

The effect of his cutting in with those two words was unexpected. Capuchin rose slowly to his feet and pointed at him. He was very angry, and when he was angry pools of saliva gathered in the corners of his mouth.

"That person," he said, "that—that—hollyhock,

with no provocation but his own bad nature, has been insulting me ever since we met in the street. I can no longer endure his society." He stood there holding his attitude, still pointing at Fitzjerald, waiting for what should happen.

"Lillibridge, embrace him," said Jael in a shriek of delight. "Kiss him! What joy when they let their angry passions go!"

Miss Lillibridge patted him gently on the back, as she might have passed the butter, without looking.

He looked at Jael to see if she were making ridicule of him. But she was smiling at him earnestly, and said: "We quarrel like this all the time. It is our pastime. Angus says he is sorry whether he is or not and that let's you down. More of the folkmotes. Come. What are your problems now?"

He remembered his errand. Here was a direct invitation to state it. So, although the feathers of his dignity were standing, he sat down again and addressed himself exclusively to Jael.

"Funds," he said, bluntly. "That's our great problem."

And he began to explain why.

The League itself was all right. It was supported by the annual dues. Only, the post-dated check was in one way a great nuisance. They couldn't get rid of it, for it had become a habit, an institution, peculiar to the temperament of the people. They would buy anything with a post-dated

check. As the membership grew, and it was growing very fast, the League always had more post-dated checks than money.

Take a matter for example. There was but one important newspaper in the state. The League's paper was of course a League organ. They could understand how that was and that only the members read it. Well, they needed access to public opinion in general. This paper he was speaking of was a regular newspaper, with an Associated Press franchise and all, and was of course a foe of the League. But the owner was secretly in a terrible panic. He saw what was coming, and he wished to sell out. If the League owned that newspaper it would have all the press there was in the state. Think what that would mean! And the League had in its box enough post-dated checks, if only it could turn them into money, to buy the paper.

However, that was not the main thing. The crucial matter was perhaps easier to handle on the plane of finance. He did not know. He had come for advice.

The legislature was in recess during his absence. That was a precaution. When it came to sit again it would pass at once a bill authorizing the state to build six great grain elevators and a flour mill. Very good. But to build such things you had to have more than a statute. You had to have money. And the state had no money to build them with.

So, the question: would it be possible to sell a bond issue in the east—bonds guaranteed principal and interest by the state of New Freedom, that was to say, by the people themselves? What could be better security for an investor?

All this about the bonds he uttered rapidly, without a pause, having rehearsed it carefully in his mind; and now he looked expectantly at Jael. How easy it would be for her to say: "How much? One, two, three millions? I'll buy them myself." Instead she seemed very thoughtful for a time and said: "Mr. Dwind is our economist. He knows. Dwind, do you think the state of New Freedom could sell a bond issue in the east?"

"I do not," he said.

"Why?" asked Capuchin.

"I speak coldly," said Dwind. "Not as I feel but as I think. In the first place, your New Freedom is experimental. In the second place, you are socialistic, putting the state into business and turning the capitalists out. Therefore, you would not find a banking house willing so much as to touch your bonds."

Grinling said Dwind was wrong. If a banking house could not be found to act, then let the bonds be offered by the state of New Freedom, on direct advertising. He would put the influence of "The People's Witness" behind them. All the liberal opinion in the country would rally to their support.

"Unfortunately," said Dwind, "liberal opinion does not flourish in the pocket, least of all in the pockets of liberals."

While they argued De Grouse came to the table and stood by Capuchin, whose face was sour.

"As I understand it, you've got the legislature, the governor, the bench, the whole state government, including the power to write anything you like into the constitution?"

"Right," said Capuchin.

"And you are proposing to put the state into the elevator and milling business for the people's benefit?"

"Right," said Capuchin again.

"Then why not put it into the banking business for the same reason? Set up a state bank. Require all the funds of the state, the towns, the counties, the townships, the school boards, to be kept there. Then you will have a bank of your own that can cash your post-dated checks, lend money to the League, finance your elevators and mills, anything, provided of course you take care to make it legal."

"We can make anything legal," said Capuchin.

"In that case there is no problem about funds," said De Grouse. "It's perfectly simple. . . . I'm going, Jael."

He waved good-night and disappeared. For several minutes no one spoke, and then—

"De Grouse is right," said Dwind. "He would

be, you know. That is, I mean finance runs in his family as an instinct. That same idea was coming to me. Credit must be an essential part of your structure, Capuchin. Let the people control their own credit. Why should they buy it from private bankers, seeing that they themselves produce the wealth on which it rests?"

"I wonder," said Capuchin, "if we have anybody who could write such a law."

He was still thinking how much easier it would be for Jael to buy the bonds. He had no financial understanding; therefore he was slow to get the meaning of this new idea.

"I will write it for you," said Dwind. "I'll be glad to do it. Great God! Here is the beginning of the end of capitalism forever. And this country, this last refuge of capitalism, was the one in which the perfect opportunity was meant to appear."

No one had ever seen him so excited before.

Miss Lillibridge went to bed. Madame disappeared. Dr. Rabba had slipped away unnoticed. Jael, Fitzjerald and Semicorn listened while Dwind, assisted by Grinling, conducted Capuchin through a foreshortened course in finance. Dwind wrote three outline draughts of the law, the second twice as long as the first, and the third twice as long as that; then he decided he should have to go back with Capuchin to make a survey of conditions. It was important to make no mistakes.

Capuchin had one anxiety. This evidently was

going to take some time. That matter of the newspaper was urgent. The owner might get over his panic or find another buyer. He stated this dilemma several times and once directly to Jael, but she let it drop.

So the destiny of New Freedom was plotted.

As they were breaking up, Semicorn put out his hand to Capuchin, saying, "I've accepted your offer."

Capuchin said, "Fine!" He said it three times. He had forgotten what the offer was. Seeing this the young man said, "I mean I'm going back with you."

"Yes, of course you are," said Capuchin, then remembering. "If we don't get the big newspaper we'll find something else. We'll need you somewhere."

They were passing through the doorway—the men. Jael was still seated at the table.

"Oh, Angus," she called, and Fitzjerald went back. They were alone.

"Tell me something about Kropotkin," she said.

He was surprised.

"You know Kropotkin by heart."

"Never mind. I'm asking you. Not what he wrote. What about him? What was his own meaning?"

"Oh, why he lived in Jones street. A glooming Russian soul. I don't know why for sure. I never

thought of taking him up in that light. I'll do it if you say."

"Then it isn't the same reason in every case, is it? And you may be wrong about me?"

"Quite," he said, wondering why she was so serious. There was a silence. He broke it. "Kropotkin was that fearful enigma of civilization—a sensitive sympathetic, who, unable to endure the sight of struggle for advantage in this silly business of existence, turns nihilist, as Kropotkin did, and meditates violence. He may be religious and afraid to blame God. Or he may in one breath deny God and propose to destroy him. In any case he must fix the blame, so he blames laws, institutions and men for the order of facts. But you never know which is innate: the sense of pity or the impulse to violence. They are related as yes and no, compulsion and inhibition, one to justify the other or one to compensate the other. God and monster both. The killer may feel also a great tenderness for life. All of which comes of thinking. Kropotkin was one of those who made plausible use of the historical method. Unable to prove what he wished to be true from the visible facts of human behaviour he selected historical facts to prove his thesis that mutual aid had been of greater importance than struggle as a principle; and when his mutual aid leagues, having delivered themselves from oppression, turned out invariably to be oppressors of

others, that was merely because they forgot the principle in which he himself preferred to believe. . . . You are not listening."

"No," said Jael, "I am not. You are too long. That's peevish, isn't it? I'm sorry. I wanted to know only why Mr. Capuchin was so angry when you mentioned Kropotkin."

"Vanity in its naive form," said Fitzjerald. "He has few sources, and one of them was rudely discovered. Those of us who are sophisticated in knowledge reveal our sources because if we try to conceal them we are sure to be found out. Put one of us in a company where he knows it to be safe and he will find himself forgetting to mention his sources. I should. One who has read little will say of a book he has never seen or heard of before that he has read it, or thinks he has read it, or doesn't remember, whereas one who has read much, and knows that everyone knows it, may easily say he has never read Shakespeare or the Bible, may even feign not to have read them, to be eccentric. It is all the same thing."

"Angus, you can't help being nice. Why do you hold yourself out to be disagreeable?"

"I merely hold myself out to be the ultimate radical, believing that people are as they seem. Whether they dream their dreams or make them up, invent their masks or get born with them on, it is all the same."

They said good-night.

VII

Jael looked at the time. It was 3:30 A. M. Not late for her. She wished to think; and the proceedure was as follows:

First she built up the open fire, near it she placed a reading lamp, by the lamp a small table with smoking materials, and pulled up a deep chair. Next she tapped a cup of coffee from the urn that was still hot and brought it to the table. These movements were performed in a pattern, that is to say, absently, as from habit. Then she opened a chest that was full of current French fiction in paper jackets and lifted out an armful. The first one she looked at was "Three Who Loved." She threw it back. The second was "The Sadist." That went back. Then "The Remorse of Virtue." She let it fall. The next one bore a jacket illustration of a young woman smoothing the brow of her sleeping Apache with one hand while holding a dagger in the other. She hesitated and looked at the next, whose author in the new fashion disdained titles. In place of a title was a very striking design—a woman smiling ironically into the face of an angry serpent. Deciding for that one, she threw all the rest back, slammed the lid of the chest, kicked off her shoes, and settled herself to read. When she came to again she would have the answer to what it was she had been thinking about.

It often was that as she capsized herself in this

manner she remembered her father, who did the same thing in almost the same way. That was before the Freudian literature of psychology had put within reach of every owner of a mind the appropriate hinges, single or double acting, full instructions with each set, no skill required, merely the commonest household tools, so that anyone could do it.

Her father got his money in Wall street. He was not a banker, not a broker, not a speculator in the ordinary meaning of that word. A mysterious person, who worked alone and never spoke but to say buy or sell and name the quantities. David Saint-Leon. The Silent Saint. He kept an office without books; his records were in his head. He had no habits, no methods. For six months or a year he might not appear once on the tilting ground, or, if at all, only for a moment as a knight on the hill in black silhouette against the sky. If he tarried it was to act. His movements were swift, daring, always at first incomprehensible. Invariably they turned out to be disastrous for some powerful inner group of financiers with a golden cargo in transit. Always at some point they were obliged to cross the open road. There stood Saint-Leon. Before defence or reprisals could be organized he was gone with the booty.

What he did in the meantime was to read or travel. He would sit for months in his library reading Dumas, Hugo, Reade, Scott, Dickens. He

had read all the fiction bound up in sets that existed in the English language. When he traveled it was in Egypt, up and down the Nile, the same path over and over, gazing at the scenery which he never saw. He knew less about Egypt than a child in its first geography.

He was a small man with an eagle head and a lifting, sardonic voice. Most people feared him at sight, probably for his eyes, which pierced what they looked at, penetrating the surface as if it did not exist, or as if he did not see it. One of his unpredictable acts was to marry a famous opera singer. She was a large, thrilling woman, not beautiful. Jael was their only child. Her father named her; it was not until long afterward that her mother by accident learned of the first Jael. By that time she was numb; and besides, the child—well, once more perhaps the man had been right in his diabolic way. The name was the only touch of Eveness the child had.

With a father like that and a mother pursuing an international career, Jael's childhood was a superintended affair. Acquaintance with her parents progressed by intervals, with sometimes as much as a year between; and after she was three the experience of being re-introduced to them became an ordeal.

She was conscious of disappointing them, each time a little more. Her manners were all right; the reports were excellent. Her governess and

tutors were enthusiastic about her merits. Nevertheless, her father wrinkled his eyes and her mother frowned and kept regarding her with an air of tragic perplexity. Then it would wear off; but then they were gone again.

She did not know what was wrong. She got the notion it was her way of greeting them. She was not exuberant; they expected more warmth. So she tried hurling herself at them. Then it was worse. Gradually she began to realize it was in her looks she disappointed them. But she was not responsible for the way she looked; she did not pick out her own things to wear.

She was twelve before she knew it was deeper than clothes. That year her mother gave her a grand party. There were thirty children. Her mother looked in on them from time to time, each time with the same expression because each time the facts were the same. It was Jael's party; but Jael was not the center of it. She was nowhere in it. Fifteen little aspects of the male principle behaved as if she were non-existent.

This was one of the occasions, not very frequent, when both her father and mother were home at the same time. At dinner her mother was in hectic color, and from the conversation Jael understood they had been talking about her, had talked themselves into a temper, and were continuing the subject obliquely, thinking they were over her head.

"I wanted to see," said her mother, aloud, but

to herself, as one talks to an echoing thought. She must have said it already many times.

"Let her buy it, then," said her father in his cynical voice. "Buy it. She'll have the money. As many nice men as nice women now go around holding up their skirts."

"Oh, you beast!" said her mother.

"Your own taste, madame," said her father.

Presently her mother said, "Well, it can't be laid at my door."

"No?" said her father, feigning polite astonishment. "It came by the window, or down the chimney."

When Jael was fourteen her mother died of a heart attack in Berlin.

Before that her father had begun to be interested in her talk, it was so droll, so serious and unexpected. After her mother's death her father passed more time at home and saw more of her. They often talked half the evening, lingering at the dinner table. Their contacts however were mental only. He treated her as friend and equal, sometimes as one woman to another, then again as one man to another.

She was sixteen when one day he sent for her to come to his private abode. This was one wing of the house—first a very large museum room, then a library, off the library sleeping rooms for himself and man-servant.

He was in bed, propped up in pillows, smoking

a strong cigar. She had not seen him for several days and did not know he was ill. She was pulling up a chair; he made her a gesture to sit on the edge of the bed.

"Jael," he said, "you have not my nature but you have my mind. It will be your curse. But you will have also a lot of money, more than you can spend. All I suggest is that when you are through with it you will leave it free, as I leave it to you."

He smoked a little, thoughtfully.

"There's a silly saying," he said, "that money will not buy happiness, as if happiness were a thing you might hope to acquire. It cannot be acquired. Nobody can give it to you. It's a silly bauble. Ruminants are born with it. All others, if they want it, have to create it in their minds. Money is no hindrance. Only the people who haven't any say it is and they don't believe it."

Then the premonition seized her.

With it came two intense emotions, one of tenderness and one of regret, both rising from a sudden appalling sense of the selfish loneliness of his life.

She fell upon him weeping, took him in her arms. Never before had she wept for anything from her heart.

He was passive for awhile. Stroking her hair he said, in a dry voice, "That's all, Jael. Now I want to think."

But he called to her when she was at the door.

"Don't marry if you can help it," he said. "If

you can't help it, marry a man with red hair and plenty of it. It is my best opinion."

With that he took up the book from his knee and began to read. She had noticed what the book was. Fiction: "Eugene Aram."

The next morning she was amazed that the paper made first page news of his death. Never having once thought of him in relation to the world, she had no notion how important he was.

It seemed strange that anybody else should have known him at all. But how little she knew him herself! She read eagerly all that was said about him; and although the newspapers added much to her picture of him she realized that their knowledge of him, too, was limited. His importance as news lay in the legends that had grown up about him in Wall street, legends of his daring, his success, his wizardry and the extent of his wealth. Their estimates of this seemed to her incredible, little as she could weigh such matters.

The facts were more incredible. His fortune was greater than anyone had guessed.

When the will was filed, leaving the whole of it to her to do with as she pleased, she suffered a violent collision with public opinion. Reporters beseiged the place, got into the house by subterfuge, accosted her as she went in and out, even in her own hallway, demanding her picture, and shouting always one question: what would she do with the money? There was no picture; she had never had

one. This she did not say. In a moment of great exasperation when she had been unable to enter her own doorway for the mob that held it against her, she did say, to the question they shouted at her, that it was nobody's business.

A thoughtless, natural remark. Yet it was instantly telegraphed all over the world and appeared within ten minutes under great black headlines in the afternoon papers. Then it was treated editorially.

It became the text for a brutal attack upon the character of her father. What had he done to be possessed of millions? He had never built anything; he had never thought anything. Out of his vast fortune he had contributed nothing to the aid of art, science or charity. By speculation, which was not labor, he had amassed immense wealth, only in the end to leave it to a sixteen-year-old child who, when asked what she would do with it, replied in that manner—it was nobody's business.

Her mail was astonishing. Black Hand letters, begging letters, religious letters, form letters, one from a clipping bureau containing examples of these insulting opinions and offering to clip and send all of them for so much per hundred.

One of the cuttings enclosed was from a periodical she had never heard of before. It described her personal appearance with cruel unfeeling; and the paragraph ended: "But she has one very fetching feature—fifty millions of dollars."

This was a blow her mind could not parry. She felt it deep in her body. All her life she had been starved. The bread of affection and the sweet of love she could do without. Her desperate hunger was for that glance of appraisal that returns and lingers. And as this hunger was never fed, the more her pride of person grew to be a fierce and jealous passion. The unanswered craving to be touched may make one untouchable.

To be suddenly confronted with an unexpected world all eyes, teeth and claws was a nightmare. But to see her person published to ridicule was agony.

Public curiousity is a busy gadfly. The clamor very soon subsided. She picked her own college, entered quietly and lived in a very modest way, attracting friends of both sexes by the qualities of her mind. Her thinking was free and hearty, and she tended naturally toward the radical process for two reasons. First, she found among rebels a kind of reckless comradeship that stopped the ache of her hunger. Secondly, radical taste in art and literature offered revenge upon the conventional standards of beauty and good-lookingness. She embraced socialism without reflecting upon its implications or the incongruity of her own relation to that doctrine. She saw only its idealism. Communism was even better.

It was not until she left college that she came to have any sense of her wealth. The income was

piling up. When her bankers wished to know what to do with it, she asked them what was the safest of all investments. They said government bonds. She said, "Then put it in government bonds," and went to live three years abroad.

She hated it. Returning, she began to look about for her college friends. They were pursuing their ideas earnestly and fanatically, some as teachers, some as writers, some as artists, some as settlement workers, some as researchers. They came to see her. It was much pleasanter going to see them where they lived in tenements, shabby studios, lofts, community houses, for then the fact that she was rich made no difference, since they liked her as a human being.

In her Fifth avenue house it was either that they were strange or she was ashamed. She imagined they were musing adversely on her father. What had he done to possess these millions? He had never built anything; he had never thought anything. Out of his vast fortune he had contributed nothing to the support of art, science or charity.

Her secret defence of him was plausible. The world's case was gratuitous for the simple reason that he had not spent the money. Instead he had left it to her. She was to do with it what she pleased. From this she evolved the notion that he had expected her to spend it in some honorable manner. This of course she never said to anyone but herself.

It was she who proposed to her radical friends the idea of the Lothian College of Social Science. They were to conduct it in their own way, freely; she was merely to house and support it. Her theory was that earnest thinking, however it begins, will ultimately find some truth. She didn't care what else they taught if only they taught thinking.

When they came to make away with certain dilapidated tenements to clear a site for the building, she was appealed to on behalf of some old craftsmen who bitterly complained at being dispossessed. They could not find cheaper places: they were unable to afford more expensive ones. All old world people they were, who had brought with them nothing but the cunning of their hands and found it not very saleable. That is, they did not know how to sell it.

Among them was a solitary Bohemian coppersmith of rare skill. She sat for hours watching him draw a sheet of soft copper into any shape his imagination desired, a teapot, for instance, all in one piece without a seam, by beating the metal gently with a hammer on a curious horn, one kind of blow when he wished to thicken it and another kind when he wished to thin it. Not alone the art; the material by its color, malleability, and texture excited her fancy. She induced him to teach her.

Out of this experience grew her guild of handicrafts, which became a mild passion. She gathered up those old workmen, placed them comfortably,

then opened a shop in lower Fifth avenue for the display of their things. She put a sign in the window: "Money may be exchanged for these beautiful objects." That made them easy to sell.

The Lothian College gave her a kind of prestige she did not really like. She found herself certified among rich patrons of the masses; the best doors of that cult stood open to her.

In the full phase of a luxurious, highly competitive civilization society breaks at the top. The old rich, becoming weary of their own world, which had no divinity of caste to begin with, abandon its values to the new rich. Then two main roads lie open. One is the jazz road, with manners adapted from the underworld, short, dangerous and jolly. The other is for grave, respectable natures and leads back to a footing with the herd. It is the longer road by about twenty years, and has this further advantage that it offers many beautiful sites for noble monuments on which may be inscribed the particulars of one's interest in his fellow man. Fame, in short. This is really the smart, exclusive road, not only because it is the more difficult but because also it is the more expensive. It is a road to the people, but not a people's road.

Jael went about in this society for a while, exchanging amenities with it, and was amused to see anarchists, revolutionaries, violent dispraisers of wealth, partaking of its hospitality in fine houses, scornfully at ease there. Then she began to see it

cynically. What a blurred design! How involved the meaning, if any meaning it had. How much more honestly vivid the human tapestry must have been with the Scribe, the Pharisee, the Samaritan, a certain rich man, a certain poor man, Herod, Pontius Pilate, John the Baptist, the Great Disturber out of Galilee, each as such!

Besides, it was tiresome. The same talk over and over, endless in monotony, endless in reason, always inconclusive. She was at that age of the mind when the thirst for certitude begins. Surely all things could be settled, one at a time. Yet nothing was ever settled, all thinking seemed a process of absurd upheaval, as if digging up the mental universe were a pastime for its own sake, with no treasure in prospect.

Jones street was in that aspect an adventure of the mind. She resolved to create there a truly radical atmosphere, free of posture, cant or conventional restraint. She did not wish to talk, only to listen. Women were not discouraged; men were preferred. Few women liked it as a matter of fact. Men did. It was comfortable, they were well fed, nothing was expected of them, any humor had its rights, and above all she stimulated them to display their powers of mind.

The more she listened the more perplexed she was. It amazed her to see two men of equal powers proceed by divine logic from the same premises to opposite conclusions. If three reasoned together

there were three conclusions. If the number was four, there were four conclusions. It was so as to everything—an economic matter, a social principle, a work of art, an interpretation of historical facts. Worse, the more intellectual their reasoning was the more uncertain they were of their own conclusions. In the highest case they were not dogmatic; they would admit they might be wrong and probably were; yet starting all over again each would come inevitably to the same place as before, and hopelessly, as she saw, for each mind had a fixed direction. Reasoning did not determine the result; it was the certainty beforehand of the one result that determined the character of the reasoning. Anything could be proved; therefore nothing was proved.

For a long time she suffered the humiliation of supposing their powers were superior to hers. This was from the repetition of a disconcerting experience. There was a point at which she lost them entirely. As they ascended higher and higher on the slopes of the upper mind, she trudging breathlessly behind, suddenly they disappeared as in a mist. Then she had no idea what they were talking about. Their words made no pattern of sense. When they descended again into view, that is, to her plane of comprehension, they were a little awkward and self-conscious, like mystics fresh from a vision. She wondered if perhaps they agreed, off in the mist without her.

She was tormented by the fear that there was a rift in her mind, corresponding to what musical people mean by a hole in the ear. Total deafness to a certain tone interval.

At this time she conceived a worshipful respect for man's gift of abstraction. Man's power, alas! was in the movements of his mind; woman's in the movements of her heart. Therefore she was on the wrong road. Still she was not sure.

One day, between a Cézanne and a Matisse, both notable examples of a kind of perception for which the critics had been obliged to invent a new language, she hung a hideous chromo, processed upon glass, from a Sixth avenue furniture shop, price $2.98. Two of the great art critics were in to dinner that evening. They were startled, then tentatively facetious, and very curious. They kept looking at it and she held her tongue. At length one of them asked her guardedly what she saw in it.

"I don't see the picture," she answered, "if that's what you mean. I haven't any notion what the picture is like."

"What do you see?"

"That bit of red," she said.

They got up and looked at it closely. "That?" one said, pointing.

"Yes," she said.

"But it doesn't belong there."

"Silly," she answered. "Now you are looking at the picture."

She would say no more; and they were shaken. For all their patter of critical wisdom they were not sure. There was the possibility she had seen something they could not see. She had taken them in; and it occurred to her that she might have produced a similar result by standing suddenly still in Broadway and gazing hard at an imaginary elephant floating in upper space.

Again she did it with the literary critics. They were surprised to find on her tables all at once a great quantity of old dime novels, of a series written entirely by one man who had recently died. His achievement, disclosed for the first time in the obituary news, was that he had written one novel a week regularly during nearly thirty years, in all about fifteen hundred. They asked her what she found in them.

"The pure line of the tale," she said, gravely. "The story itself and nothing else. No surface, no writing, no obstructions whatever. An amazing example of the unconscious method. You know of course how the man worked. Listen!"

She read to them bits here and there, daring as she went on to choose the most banal passages, and they were deeply impressed. One borrowed some of the novels to read carefully, and then wrote a profound literary essay on her text—the pure line of the tale.

After that she was sure they never agreed in the mist and suspected, too, that they never them-

selves understood what they were saying as they departed from her into their heaven of intellectual obscurities. Yet always some doubt. She cherished the story of the man in the Cape Cod fishing village who, thinking to make a place for himself at the stove in the grocery store, said he heard there was a whale on the beach. It worked as he thought. One man got up and went to see. That gave him the chair he wanted. But then another got up and went to see. Neither came back. Then a third went. Presently the man who invented the whale was alone by the fire; and when he heard the crunching footsteps of people passing the door in the direction of the beach, he, too, went out in the cold to see. Maybe after all there was a whale.

Her case was somewhat different. She stood fixed in doubt about her own whale. Nevertheless, if she had been certain of its non-existence and of their absurdity, still she would have gone on with them in the same way, never letting them know. It was men she liked, not their minds. She liked their sounds, their smell, their funny ways, their quarrels, their ungrown-up demeanor when she caught sudden glimpses of them as little boys. Seeing them so she discovered how much older women are than men from the moment they are born.

There were no romantic attachments; never had been any. For this two reasons, one on each side.

The only free and natural way she had with men was to challenge their minds. Not otherwise could

she challenge them at all. What other women did she saw. She could analyze it. She understood it. As for herself, she could not manage its first most trifling gesture.

Only once had she ever tried. That was in childhood. She was seven. One rainy day as she sat in her window reading, a boy of the same age appeared in the window of the adjoining house. He was fat and wore glasses. A visitor, perhaps. She had never seen him before. He came the next day at the same hour to ogle her. The third day she expected him, and she threw him a kiss. He returned it. On this small motive she built a romance that filled the world. Every day for two weeks they gazed at each other.

Then they met in the street. She waited for him to speak. He only glanced at her and went by. She ran after him and plucked him by the sleeve. He was eating peanut brittle. For a minute he stood staring at her, with a short-sighted squint, his mouth too full of the sweet to speak, then turned and went on without a word. Ever afterward the sight of peanut brittle produced in her a tremor of dread and a sensation of reeling.

When she was eighteen she began to imagine men looked at her in a certain way and was hysterically furious. Later she learned what that was. When she was twenty objects of feminine loveliness excited extravagant emotions in her. Later she knew also what that meant, and one use of Miss Lillibridge

was to remind her that no trace of it was left.

In every situation it was her mind that saved her. The mind of her one self could gaze down on her elemental other self, seeing it as a lake that was meant to be a torrent. She could see the bottom of the lake. Disagreeable things lived there, slowly groping about, eldritch, terrifying things until she conceived them to be natural creatures distorted by the view as everything under the water is; distorted also and perhaps much more by the accident of having got themselves trapped there.

And the other reason why there were no romantic attachments, the one on the other side, was that these men with whom she did surround herself were intellectual. High thinking cools the blood. Or is it that only the cool blooded think—that way? The frustrated female of her craved not the mentality of man so much as the hot-bloodedness of him, more that as a desperate fact than even the character, the shape or the color of him.

For her coming to live in Jones street there was one explanation Fitzjerald had either missed or found it impossible to mention. In a fastidious mood she detested it. Yet with no disguise of social or aesthetic interests she would have passed at least a part of her time there or in a street of that character. Those groping creatures in the lake of her elemental self required it. They became active, even demonish, when she denied them entirely. They craved contact with vulgar, odorous, common-

place life. Here it was thinly sheathed, sometimes for a moment stark naked, and so oblivious that one could get close up. Its emotions were not in deep wells; they were artesian, suddenly overflowing to the surface. Then the quarrel, the oath, the blow, the caress, the swift, blinding uncoil of the watchful reptile.

There was a time when she did her own shopping for fruits, vegetables, condiments and oil, solely for the secret pleasure of observing a Corsican whose shop was around the corner. He had the look, the easy walk, the animal dignity of a bandit. There was insolence in the way he carried his clothes, especially his trousers. His wife was exquisitely pigmented, and although she was fat she was not stuffed and her movements were all the more voluptuous. They were always together in the shop and yet they almost never spoke. Jael understood the basic meaning of their relationship. The sight of it thrilled her.

One evening as she was passing the shop, over which the pair lived, she heard the woman screaming. Her bandit was beating her. Jael was neither scandalized nor horrified. Her blood leaped and her throat was dry. One might have thought she was angry. She would have thought so herself if she had thought about it at all. But her emotions begged not to be analyzed.

The next day she saw them together again in the shop, as if nothing had happened. The woman

bore no visible marks; he had evidently been careful. Jael regarded him with intense interest. She was particularly fascinated by his hands, one holding out to her a paper bag and the other, palm upward, waiting for her money. They were thick, soft hands, not ugly. As she came to her own door a few minutes later she was conscious of having walked very fast; and then of a phantasy she had been making.

It began with the thought: "What I should do with him if he were mine!" Then either he was hers or she was his and it had to be decided. They were alone on an island. The struggle was terriffic, brutal, dangerous. If he conquered her she would be his slave; yet she was afraid he might not.

"How interesting!" she said to herself. "My own phantasy. Therefore I could do anything I pleased with it. I might have hit him on the head with a stone. But I didn't."

She went no more to the Corsican's shop, perceiving clearly why she had been doing it.

* * *

It was six-thirty when she turned the last page of her French novel. Yawning, she tossed the book in the fire, then sat down at her desk and wrote a note for Miss Lillibridge to find. This was the note: "Get Mr. Capuchin at his hotel and have him in to tea. Tell him I am interested in his newspaper."

Then she went to bed, saying to herself aloud: "What a blessing it must be to have a one-storey mind."

VIII

Walking home from Jael's house Fitzjerald passed again through Washington Square. The sky was hard and clear, the moon was full, and still the harpy raged. The waste of a city's castoff day was running to the second and third cornice lines. Chewing gum wrappers, metallic dust, scurrilous particles, absurdities of waggish matter, news and ideas. Soiled newspapers astride the wind in guilty, obscene shapes, moving in a plane of dimness above the lights. They might even seem to be making evil gestures, like—

"Like witches," said Fitzjerald. "What a witches' night!"

That set him on a train of thought.

Witchcraft had been real, as the church well knew, because it was an idea—an idea the witches had of themselves, an idea people had of witches. Notions of good and evil. Notions of magic. Notions of flying. Videlicet, ideas.

Here were ideas literally flying. Vehicle, once printed matter, or, that was to say, trees converted into woodpulp, instead of the New England broomstick or the imaginary animal of the Scottish witch. It was the Scandinavian witches flew on trees, trees as they grew.

One might see, too, that these objects had a sense of direction, some trick of dirigibility, hither-bound from Bank street, Grove street, Waverly place, Third street, Jones street, all those bias environs west and south where every cult of disaffection had its coven, priest or priestess.

As to who than he should know them better?

Youth in its radical, self-conscious phase, and not very vital, else it would not have time to invent for itself a symbol of flame to worship. Much of that. Ego stuff. Innocuous. . . .

Then those making it a point of difference with society to live romantically in obsolete tenements under some fanciful sign of protest. A good deal of that. Boredom, mostly, increasing with wealth. . . .

Artists pretending to be scornful of Puritanical opinion, to which they were not indifferent, since they spent all their strength to shock it. . . .

Writers, too, bulging their eyes at the key hole, reporting life as a peep-show. Not that they were dirty. The great ancients were dirty, only they did not know it. . . .

Free unions wearing the soiled garment of revolt because otherwise they should be naked; they must pay respectability the homage to keep feud with it. Silly stuff. . . .

Others, however, such as ego-mad communists; self-chosen saviours of the proletariat, avoiding work; anarchists, jealous of the law's protection;

pacifists, dreaming of a war to exterminate militarists; idealists, living grossly; Jack Cades, thinking themselves Cromwells; political refugees from Europe, thinking themselves Lenines and liberators. Economic perverts, living by what they denounced, trading on the evil eye, setting their incantations adrift on woodpulp paper, pretending in their ideas to possess the sorcery to plow a rich man's field with toads and reap barley from his thistles.

Imagine them overcome by faith in their ideas, as the witches were by their belief in the power of the blood-suckled creatures they kept in their imp pots. Then the parallel. On a night like this their ideas take possesion and carry them off to a Devil's Sabbath where anything you will is true. No harm to the witches, old or new. They were sure to come awake again where and as they were. No harm to the furtive old man, walking carefully and looking always behind him, who came every morning an hour before dawn to gather up all the old newspapers in Washington square, folding and sorting them particularly. No harm either to capitalistic society, never to be destroyed by spells and curses, never from without, but only, if ever, from within.

How infantile, how circular, this human intelligence!

What was it the old witches bargained with Satan for? Power—the power to redistribute good and evil in the world. This had turned out to be a power of evil only, because, first, it was an impotent

power, except as it might act upon human fear, and because, secondly, its possessors, unable to do good, became wholly intent upon doing evil to others, in envy, malice and disappointment. And so still in this day of artificial light.

What was the faith of old witches? Faith in the power of a phrase to change realities. "Thout, tout, throughout and about." Merely that, and anything might happen as you wished it. True still in the age of applied science.

What was then as now the greatest common delusion? That you could overcome the disagreeable facts by the simple rite of denying their existence.

And the greatest of all human passions? The passion for martyrdom. . . .

For a moment he was pleased, even a little admiring of his mind. What he had just been thinking was not altogether bad. Not bad at all. Good, in fact. Very good. He would turn it to some account in an essay. Then his critical faculty reviewed it and it went to pieces. It was bad. Intrinsically bad. Not that any part of it was false but that as a whole it represented a fatal confusion of illusion and idea as he conceived them. This always happened. It was his curse. Nothing he did with his creative power ever escaped the destructive acid of his critical judgment. He knew too much; he was knowledge-foundered and he knew even that.

JUMPING CHARIOTS

I

Capuchin returned to New Freedom moving the waters before him. He had in his pocket a blind draft on a New York bank for a sum fifty thousand dollars more than enough to buy the one important newspaper in the state. At the last moment he had had the inspiration to exaggerate the purchase price; afterward he justified it neatly on the ground that the excess was working capital. He meant to put it all in.

With him to New Freedom went Dwind, to write him a banking law, loaned for that purpose by the Lothian College, and Semicorn, to do what should turn out to be best.

On the train Capuchin talked a great deal, all the time in fact, and Dwind became irritated by it. He wished to be meditating.

"How long have you known Jael?" Capuchin asked him.

"Miss Saint-Leon?" said Dwind, in a tilted tone.

"I mean—" said Capuchin, his face slightly crumpled.

"I knew her in college," said Dwind, leaving a proper interval for the other's abashment.

But it was much easier to step on Capuchin than

to get off. His secondary reactions were positive. Why shouldn't he call her Jael? Why should others give themselves airs about taking that privilege? He had called her Jael at tea, and he had got more out of her at one stroke than Dwind had got in his whole life. So he returned, saying:

"A very strange woman, Jael," as if he had known her from childhood.

"Why do you say so?" Dwind asked.

"I was only thinking," Capuchin replied, and said no more.

He had been thinking she was strange. It was about the draft. When he went in for tea the first thing she said was, "How much will that paper cost?" With great presence of wit he mentally added fifty thousand and named the whole figure.

"As a loan or as a gift?" she asked.

This was too unexpected.

"As a loan," he said. "You might take a mortgage only, as the law is, that would have to be reported. I thought perhaps my note would do. Then nobody need know whose money it is."

"Your note will do," she said, and began to write the draft. As she handed it to him he said, "What if I had said as a gift?"

"I should have considered it," she answered.

He held the draft, twisting and looking at it.

"Of course," he said, "it would not have occurred to me—I mean, I was thinking only of a loan, but if—"

He could think of no way to say it that would not sound rather bald. She frowned while he hesitated, then smiled a little and said they would leave it as it was. And all the way back to Liberty he kept calling himself a fool and wondering at her hardness in that one moment. He almost told Dwind, wishing somebody's opinion on what would have happened if he had said gift.

II

The capital of New Freedom was a flat, checkerboard town of six thousand people, clinging to a railroad tangent. It had a trolley line, three banks, one eight-story office building, an Odd Fellows Hall, two movie theatres, nine gas stations, electric lights, a chiropractor, a tourist camp, a country club, no trees, three-quarters-of-a-mile of boulevard with lights down the middle and geometrical spaces indicated for botanical effects.

In first appearances there was no sign of a revolution having taken place. Everything was running. People were going about as usual. They seemed suspicious of strangers, however, and that certainly is not standard equipment in the western specification. There were other signs as the view deepened.

At the Chamber of Commerce the publicity man was clearing out his desk, moving, going away to look for another job of boosting. No more funds for that purpose here.

On an easel in the hotel lobby was a notice: "Rotarian Club Luncheon Postponed."

One at all sensitive to the atmosphere of a bank would have known at once, just inside the door, that the sky had fallen. And one obtuse in such matters must anyhow have noticed the figure of Anx. Plaino standing in the window of the First National, twice life size, thus magnified by the rage of Jeremiah that was on him. In the other window—the First National was on the main corner with two plate glass windows—in the other was a tombstone, chiselled as follows:

Scarred to the Memory
of the
Freemen's League
Born with a post-dated check.
Now gone to find its redeemer.
Died (blank)

Against the plate glass, to be read from the outside, was this singular communication to whom and all concerned:

When the date is filled out on the bottom of that tombstone any man willing to work may borrow money at this bank on his experience and character. Few will have anything else to borrow on. As we started with nothing, so, when the time comes, we can begin all over again. Until then—

Yours truly,
ANX. PLAINO.

This asthmatic old cedar was a landmark on the prairie. His trunk was twisted, his bark was rusty, the law of his growth was run; and yet he was strong, hard in the roots, inclined against the wind.

In tenacity he was fanatical. He had put his bank's assets deep in the salt and was there to stand siege of any length. No compromise desired. His loan window was shut and padlocked.

III

Capuchin had wished his absence to be treated with dignified mystery. Only the governor was supposed to know where he was or when he should return. Nevertheless at the station, besides the governor, were fifty or sixty men, mostly members of the legislature, each one impatient to get his recognition; also two hundred or more curious idlers. The instant he alighted he was surrounded. Many hands were outstretched, some holding papers or waving them to catch his eye. There was a confusion of voices. To all of this he was deaf and blind. Pointing to the name on the end of the railroad station he said to the governor: "Why hasn't that been changed?"

"They say they won't," the governor answered.

"Who says they won't?" Capuchin shouted. "Give them twenty-four hours or we'll change it ourselves. We'll pass a bill to make them elevate their tracks. Tell them that. They won't, eh!"

Then while brushing himself with his pocket broom he began to shake hands, but with an absent, exasperated air. He stopped and beckoned the governor to come close. "Don't put anything like

that in writing," he said. "Understand? Intimate it. That's enough."

The governor nodded, winked knowingly, and made off. He walked as one does in a furrow, lifting one foot higher than the other, loosely.

Capuchin had forgotten to introduce him to either Dwind or Semicorn. He had forgotten them in fact. He looked around for his bag, which someone had already taken up, and started for his office. The distance was only two squares and he was an hour making it. As he silenced the importunities of one by saying, "All right, all right. We'll see about it," or "Fine idea! Bring it to me when I'm not so busy," and pushed a few steps on, another would break in and again he would stop. One read to him a long typewritten treatise on single tax, and simply could not be stopped. Capuchin put the paper in his pocket. Another had a bill for free seeds, another a bill for gas and fertilizer to be distributed by the state at cost, another a bill to abolish the State Agricultural College on the ground that it had the capitalistic view of production.

Everyone seemed to know that he had no hours, no habits, no time at all, and that the way to get his attention was to dangle an object before it. If it was an interesting object he could not resist the impulse to examine it; and to hold his attention it was necessary only to keep the object moving, until a more interesting one got interposed. Then he turned to that one, forgetting the other instantly.

A voice behind him said, "D'j'u see the speculators boosted wheat two cents?"

Off he went at once on the economics and ethics of grain speculation, treating it not as a subject but as an object. He could see the speculators at their nefarious work. He saw them putting up the price of wheat to discredit him and the Freemen's League.

Another voice asked, "What are we going to do about it?"

That was a new object. Instantly he visualized the future of New Freedom. The word was integration. He pronounced it as if he had originated its sound and meaning. They were going to integrate the activities of New Freedom, integrate agriculture and industry together, base one upon the other, as it should be, and so achieve economic liberty, spiritual freedom and common prosperity. It had been once like that in a crude way on the farms of their forefathers. Everything they wanted, those forefathers, they raised and made for themselves. The community self-contained. That was it. Farming at the base, then their own grist mills, saw mills, tanneries, boot and shoe shops, spinning wheels, looms, forges, soap kettles, smoke houses. Labor contentedly integrated. Secure from exploitation. Modernly it had to be achieved on a large scale. A whole state regarded as one community. But there was the model in full principle. No speculators. No middlemen. No advertising. No unfair exchange. Idyllic existence realized.

As he talked the object became clearer, even vivid. Much of this he was seeing for the first time. His inspirations came to him in that way, under stress of vocal excitement. And when he spoke in this mood, hearing new and unexpected ideas from himself, he seemed enchanted; a gazing, slightly startled expression played in his eyes.

His office was still where it was at first, in the publishing plant of the Freemen's League organ. As at last they came to the door his chief organizer broke in with a report on the state of the League, and that stopped him again.

"Go right in," he said to Dwind and Semicorn. "I'll be through here in a minute."

For an hour more he stood there on the pavement, talking, listening a little, making decisions, giving instructions, while Anx. Plaino, as he well knew, was looking on from across the street.

With a dismissing gesture of both hands he broke away and dashed inside. His private office was a room not more than ten feet square. There were two wooden chairs and a sectional bookcase with a hat and some old shoes in it. His desk was half-buried in papers, books, pamphlets and letters that had fallen off all around; what had not fallen off had been slipping the other way toward the center, leaving only a trough or little valley in which he worked.

Semicorn was there alone.

"Where is Mr. Dwind?" Capuchin asked.

"Gone to the hotel," said Semicorn. "What am I to do?"

Capuchin pressed his temples and covered his eyes, trying to remember everything.

"What are you to do? . . . Mr. Semicorn . . . yes." He looked up, then began dusting his person briskly. "Pending further events, Mr. Semicorn, you will be my fido akatees. That is to say, you will stick around. I need somebody with me all the time. Maybe you can think of a way to keep these people off. You see how it is. I never get any time to think. Come with me now."

He led the way out through a back door. He was going to buy the newspaper. That he could not forget.

IV

They were still together, fido behaving perfectly, when at nine o'clock that evening Capuchin distinctly remembered Dwind. He was found at the hotel in possession of the bridal suite. He had already dismissed two stenographers and was with weary heroism controlling an impulse to perform a bodily injury upon the third. What restrained him was the fact that he had exhausted the stock. There was not another one in town. In the agony of creative labor he became slightly demented. Afterward he might be very ill and looked forward to it. He was lying deep in a sofa on the back of his neck,

one leg drawn up, the other resting on its knee, blood flowing by gravity to the brain cells.

Without greeting Capuchin he complained with the privileged petulance of the sick, "There isn't a book in your whole God damn town."

"There's a library at the state house," said Capuchin.

Dwind gnashed his teeth and shuddered.

"What book do you need?" Capuchin asked.

"One of those old shoes in your private bookcase. That might be it," said Dwind.

The place was already littered with books. Every chair had books on it; the bed was piled with them. The wonder was where he had got them. The stenographer was standing, note-book in hand, extremely distraught.

"Read that last paragraph," said Dwind.

The stenographer read it.

"Delete it," said Dwind. "No, don't delete it. Mark it not to go there but in another place when we come to it. . . . Give me that green book. . . . Please open the window an inch and a half . . . from the top. . . . Thank you. . . . Mr. Capuchin, either be seated or go away. . . . No, don't go away. I need some information. Your constitution is a muddle at the crucial point. You've got to change it and I shall have to know beforehand how you are going to do it. . . . Listen to what I am dictating and you will see. (To the stenographer.) 'Section nine,' colon, if you know what

a colon is. (Starting as from pain.) Now what! . . . Inscrutable God, now what!"

It was a loud rapping on the door. Semicorn opened it.

The person who entered was the man from whom Capuchin had bought "The Northwestern Herald" several hours before. His movements were quick and apprehensive; his eyes were like the ant's and his voice was low and confidential. If he had come to tell them the hotel was burning he would have imparted that information in a guarded manner.

"They told me downstairs I'd find you here," he said to Capuchin, hardly above a whisper.

"That's their business downstairs," said Capuchin. "They know everything. That's why they run a hotel so badly."

"I know," said the ant. "That so, too. It seemed important. I wouldn't think it professional etiquette not to tell you in time. Still, it's your own private business I'm meddling with."

"Tell me what?" Capuchin asked.

"Unless of course you meant to suspend the paper," said the ant.

"What is it, man? You'll back into yourself if you are not careful. What is it?"

It was only that when the editorial men of "The Northwestern Herald" learned to whom the paper had been sold, as they did at once, though it wasn't meant for anybody to know for a day or two, they walked out in a body—the managing editor, all the

subordinate editors and all the reporters, save the police reporter who was drunk. There was nobody there to get the paper out, and it was already past nine o'clock.

Having disclosed this extraordinary secret, and in very few words when he came to it, the ant let himself out of the door, closed it gently, and was gone.

Capuchin took up his hat.

"Just a minute," said Dwind, with a faint, imperious gesture of his wan hand. "I'm under no contract with this one-ring circus. I'm serving it for nothing and all I ask is the courtesy of your attention at this point. I might still be standing out there in the street for that matter. If you are not interested in this thing, neither am I."

"Could it possibly wait until morning?" asked Capuchin.

"Not possibly," said Dwind. "If it waits until morning I shall be gone."

Capuchin was distracted. He was in haste for the banking law. He should not know where else to turn for that piece of Greek. Moreover, if Dwind should go back in a tantrum, thinking he had been ill treated, the effect might be disastrous to further relations with Jones Street.

Turning suddenly he asked, "Mr. Semicorn, did I hear you say or did somebody tell me you once ran a newspaper."

"I got out an I. W. W. sheet in Seattle for a year," said Semicorn.

"Good!" said Capuchin. "You get over there and take charge until I come. Only for a few minutes . . . Now then, Mr. Dwind. Pardon me. What do you say is the matter with the Constitution of New Freedom?"

" 'Section nine,' colon," said Dwind to the stenographer, beginning to dictate.

Capuchin did not see the point when it came. Dwind, with suffering of patience, explained it to him; and when he could not help seeing it he began to demur on the ground of political expediency. For some reason he could not clearly state, he did not wish to amend the constitution. The question was how to get public funds into the bank. Capuchin thought it could be done by statute—by a simple law. Dwind said it had to be in the constitution. So they argued it, both insisting. Disputation intoxicated Capuchin, made him slightly delirious, so that he became insensible of time and place. Dwind's vitality was amazing. He lay perfectly inert, using only enough physical energy to make his words audible and to play with his glasses in a scholarly manner. Holding his mind to the point, he defined it over and over in the same words, with a feeble, expiring voice, but with a doggedness that in the end wore Capuchin down.

"All right, Mr. Dwind, a-l-l right," he said. "We have to play with your sticks or go home."

Then he looked at the time. It was two o'clock. He remembered Semicorn, "The Northwestern

Herald," the situation there, and set off in haste to see what had happened, expecting the worst.

What could Semicorn have done? No assistants, no editors, one drunk reporter. Probably there was no paper.

As he came within sight of the building he was relieved to see it lighted. At least they were trying. Coming nearer, he heard the press running. A truck stood at the curb receiving bundled papers from the mailing room as if everything were normal. This was too good.

It occurred to him then that Semicorn was a very reckless young man. What if he had filled the paper with his violent I. W. W. notions! Capuchin's idea for the paper was to face it about gently. It was an important property with a good deal of influence upon public opinion in the state, especially conservative opinion, and that was what he wished to reach. He had even thought of not bringing it over openly to the Freeman's League, holding it neutral instead, until some crisis occurred. None of this had he said to Semicorn.

Restraining an impulse to snatch a paper from the mailing room and look at it, he ran up the stairway to the editorial room on the second floor and arrived there breathless, in a panic.

It was one large room full of dimness and tranquillity. The dimness was an effect of the lighting, which was individual to each desk, under green glass

shades. The tranquillity, like a convalescense, was that which settles in a newspaper office when the last form is closed, thirty is on the hook and the night's deed is done. The telegraph operator was locking up his typewriter. Seven men were sitting at small flat-top desks, smoking and reading the paper—seven besides Semicorn, who was at a roll-top desk in the far corner with his head down, writing.

Capuchin fumbled at the latch of the railing gate, let himself through, and hurried to Semicorn's desk.

"You got her out," he said. "Mr. Dwind kept me there forever. What's it like?"

Semicorn handed him a paper and went on writing. Capuchin sat down with it at the nearest desk, looked at the front page, at the back page, then ran through it nervously and stopped at the editorial page. All at a glance as it should be. The news was displayed in the usual manner. The headlines were in the conventional style of verbless obscurity. There were two editorials. One was about the weather and the other was on the need for a city park.

"Where did you get these?" Capuchin asked, pointing to them.

"Found them already in type. Left over," said Semicorn.

"Good!" said Capuchin. "I was afraid——"

"Yes," said Semicorn. "I know what you were afraid of."

Capuchin regarded him with new interest. He was not such a reckless young man. On the contrary, he was remarkably self-possessed. Almost too much that way.

"It looks like a fine job, Mr. Semicorn. A very neat performance, all facts considered. I'm wondering how you did it."

"Standing on my head," said Semicorn.

Capuchin looked around the room.

"Where did you get these men?"

"Three from the composing-room. The rest I picked up."

"Picked them up," said Capuchin. "They were standing on the galleys, like the editorials, perhaps. Where did you pick them up?"

"They were men I happened to know," said Semicorn.

"Here in this town? But you were with me all day."

"Two I met in the crowd that came over from the station with us," said Semicorn. "You were too busy to notice us."

"I see," said Capuchin. He surveyed the seven silent men, all smoking and reading. Two were within hearing; they seemed not to be listening.

"Men like yourself?" he said, regarding Semicorn in a significant manner.

"More or less," said Semicorn. "A lot of them out here." Seeing that Capuchin was uneasy he added: "They're all right. Because they've worked

on I. W. W. sheets like I have is no reason they can't do a regular job. Most of them have."

Capuchin dropped that subject and turned again to the paper. This time he went through it carefully and saw at the top of the editorial page a line of strong black type he had missed before: "Lafe Semicorn, editor."

He was hotly displeased.

This was not self-possession in Semicorn. It was a bold stroke. And the advantage went with it. How should he undo it; that was, provided he should wish to undo it? Editors cannot be changed every morning like the date line. To take the name down would make the paper ludicrous; but to leave it there would be to accept the young man's audacity. There was no middle way. His displeasure increased with the difficulty. Semicorn, who had been watching him, came and threw one leg over a corner of the desk.

"I thought we'd better tack a name to the masthead," he said. "I didn't suppose you wanted yours there."

Capuchin stood up and brushed himself carefully all over before speaking.

"I have only this to say, Mr. Semicorn. . . . No, of course, I didn't want mine there. . . . I have only to say this. You are stepping strong. You are stepping very strong, Mr. Semicorn."

Semicorn was silent. It was necessary for Capuchin to speak again. "But I'm fair to say it was a

good journeyman job. That stands up. . . . Are you at the hotel?"

"Not yet," said Semicorn. "I haven't had time."

"You'll find a room there. Please come to my office at nine. Then we'll talk things over."

"A l l-r i g h t-sir," said Semicorn, easily and equally, as one sir to another.

V

It did not occur to Capuchin to wonder why at 2:30 A. M., with nothing more to do for the paper, seven men continued to sit at their desks, silently reading. He would have been astonished to see what they did as soon as he was gone. They gathered about Semicorn, all with one shrewd expression of triumph. One placed his two hands on Semicorn's shoulders from behind. It was a gesture they all understood. Another placed his hands in the same way on the shoulders of that one, then another upon his, and so on until they were in line, very close together. A word was uttered, and they began to march in the prison lockstep. They marched round and round between the desks, intoning in deep grisly voices the following impishness:

Bull of the woods
Bull of the woods
Pull the big prayer
(*Shout*) OH!
Bull of the woods
S-s-s! S-s-s! S-s-s!
(*Soft, ironic steps to the three hisses.*)

Bull of the woods
Bull of the woods
Step on the air
(*Shout*) OH!
Bull of the woods
Hi! Hi! Hi!
(*Loud feet to this line.*)

Bull of the woods
Bull of the woods
Hat in the sky
(*Shout*) OH!
Bull of the woods
G-n-u! G-n-u! G-n-u!
(*Dead feet to three hollow groans.*)

Bull of the woods
Bull of the woods
Tree is found tied
(*Shout*) TO!
Bull of the woods
S-h-h! S-h-h! S-h-h!
(*Furtive feet.*)

A scene more weird than sinister, representing the humor of wobblies. A wobbly is a member of the I. W. W. Those letters stand for International Workers of the World.

They stand also for adventure, vagabondage, the truant life, combat, the stone of David, ganghood, sharing, love of destruction, outlawry, secret power, signs and cabals.

These are values and attitudes that lie close to the wayward spirit and belong naturally to youth. Imagine a fraternity of men in whom the spirit of youth has not been over-thrown by self-discipline and wisdom and who for that reason are unable to make the commonplace adjustments to reality; imagine again that they are conscious of their maladjustments and propose to make society over in

accord with those values and attitudes of youth. There you have an engaging picture of the I. W. W. In that aspect it is or was a romantic order, peculiar to this country notwithstanding its grand big name, and one that could not have come to exist anywhere else in the world.

Presently of course it becomes complicated in many ugly ways.

In youth, where it is a measure of years, the love of destruction, the lust for combat, the impulse to lawlessness, all those memories of an immature race time, seldom produce any serious consequences. Knowledge and experience are lacking. Men in the same case of spirit, with the knowledge of adult experience, may and often do become dangerous. Infantile minds with full brute power. They translate the phantasy into facts of violence inimical to the peace and comfort of others. Then forcible repressions, reprisals, fear, hatred and crime.

The first intention of the I. W. W. was to organize the unskilled labor of the country. Workers in construction gangs, gandy dancers, riggers-up, lumberjacks and harvesters—industrial nomads who sleep in bunks and carry their belongings. This kind of labor had been neglected by the craft unions. Or it was that the great labor organizations consisting of federated craft unions had been unable to get hold of the unskilled workers. Naturally so. Men do not wish to be organized with the stigma of an unskilled status. This is contrary to the American

spirit. They want to rise in the world. But it cannot be said to them that their hope is in rising, for that is to say they are low in the scale to begin with. It is difficult, you see. The craft unions, jealous of their own advantages, had nothing worth while to say to these people. What the I. W. W. leaders said to them was:

"All labor is alike. All wage earning is slavery. Let us organize as slaves, rise, destroy the boss and be free. This is war! Class war! The employer and the wage slave have nothing in common. They are enemies forever. In one big union of all wage slaves we shall have the power to ruin capital simply by withholding our hands, by giving the least for the most, by secret acts of sabotage. Thereby we destroy private profit. When we have destroyed private profit we have destroyed the wage system. When we have done that we may take the means of production into our own hands and the world is set free."

This creed gave the unskilled a sense of union, a vision of power and a wild crusading errand. One thing more. It gave them a feeling of pride in their status of inferiority, which under this doctrine was an artificial status, a condition wickedly imposed upon them by the capitalist class. This feeling came through in their songs, one of which was "Hallelujah! I'm a Bum," and in the names by which they were pleased to admire themselves, for example, Wobblies. It amused them to be undignified. All

the greater was the offence they gave to the oppressor; so much the keener was their fancy of power.

The I. W. W. creed spread very fast in the lumber camps. First there. That explains many of its metaphors. The boss of a lumber camp is called bull of the woods. Later, of course, bull of the woods comes to have a general meaning. It means any boss whatever, anyone possessing the authority to allot tasks and direct men at labor.

It spread rapidly throughout the west. Its appeal to the self-conscious unskilled worker was very strong. That was not all. Because of its romantic basis in the rebel spirit it attracted irreconcilables of every type. The true hobo who had never had anything to affiliate with before and was thrilled by this loose garment of importance. The tramp printer, or, that is to say, surviving examples of that historic species, he whom words and words hath made a little mad. Newspaper men in a state of must. The restless, the failures, the defiant of whatever kind, cast off by society's centrifugal process of riddance. Stray geese. Wild geese. Men half-solitary and half-gregarious. Unable to live either within the conventional frame of society or altogether outside of it.

In this distress they invent a theory. They are not wrong. Society is wrong. They will make it over. This vague notion of purpose saves them from the utter loneliness of the outcast, and their

feud with what is becomes their bond with one another.

The token of this is a red card, representing membership in the one big union that shall overturn the wage system, abolish the slavery of unwilling toil, make all men equal and set the world free. A little more. There must be some revenge. This is human. The boss shall not get off so easily. No. They will put the boss to work. Another song: "When the Whistle Blows for the Boss to Go to Work."

The red card went far and thin. The order was never important in point of numbers. But as you might suppose, it was militant and vocal. It devoted more of its resources to propaganda than any other labor organization ever did. It had members who could write and talk. Well, all fanatics can write and talk, even the illiterate, and often with surprising effect.

What was the good of all this feeling that was in them of inferiority exalted and become mighty if they could not express it? They expressed it in newspapers of their own and in violent speech-making. True, men going about with a credo like that, propagating it with intent to be offensive, would get into trouble with the authorities. All the better. That was what they liked most.

When their evangels were seized on the streets of a capitalist town and clapped into jail or when one of their newspapers was suppressed, they or-

ganized what they called a free speech fight. Word would go out to all the I. W. W. offices, "Here is a fight. If you have any loose Wobblies send them to it." There were always Wobblies loose, and at this call they would rush to the scene and talk their wildest, on purpose to get themselves put into jail. The idea was to overwhelm the jails, which in many instances they did. It was something to be doing, it was advertising, modern style, and it was fun. Such fun! and taken always so seriously by the intellectual radicals of the east, as for instance by the company in Jones street, that it became their foremost activity; and continued until the western municipalities became at length as wise they ought to have been at first, so that instead of putting the Wobblies in jail, there to be entertained at the taxpayer's expense, they fanned them out of town. That was much less fun. Often the tramping was rough.

Well, Semicorn and his seven, doing the lockstep at 2:30 A. M. in the editorial room of "The Northwestern Herald," were all red card men. They were vocal organs of that fraternity. All of them had been in prison for free speech, and all of them were more or less trained in newspaper work. Three, including Semicorn, had served as editors of I. W. W. papers; the others had sometime worked on regular papers as reporters, sub-editors and editorial writers. All of them could write in a coarse, salty style, best of course when their emotions were

acting, that is, when they were attacking something by the name of system. Semicorn himself wrote very well. Like most of the others he had two languages. One was the language he talked, especially when excited. It was full of strange idioms, vulgar, ungrammatical. The other was the one he could write.

It was by no means an incompetent crew in the craft sense. Semicorn's account of how he had got it together was mostly true.

It will be recalled that Capuchin, on meeting Semicorn for the first time at Jael's house in Jones street, was moved suddenly to invite him out to New Freedom and suggested an editorial job for him there. Several hours later when Semicorn said he accepted the invitation Capuchin had almost forgotten it. This was notice to Semicorn of Capuchin's character. He understood him perfectly. Always to be taken provisionally. Nevertheless he felt sure that an editorial job would develop and that was what he wanted; he was so sure of it that he persuaded two red card men to go with him to New Freedom. They were on the same train. Two more appeared, as he said, in the crowd at the station. That was luck, but it was not strange, since New Freedom, hitherto very hostile to the Wobblies, now became a warm sanctuary for them.

On arriving that evening at the "Northwestern Herald" office to take charge until Capuchin should come, the first thing he did was to look to the situa-

tion in the composing-room. There, among the printers, two more red card men revealed themselves. These he transferred to the editorial side. Then they were seven.

And at this moment they were exulting at having entrenched themselves. What would come of it? Not one of them had the faintest idea. They might find themselves in the street tomorrow. But whatever came of it, it was fun. So, in that humor, they were hanging the bull of the woods before going to bed.

Semicorn took three of them with him to one room in the hotel. They won it by lot. The others slept in the "Herald" office.

VI

Capuchin rose early the next morning, came at eight-thirty to his office, and was soon fuming under the notion that Semicorn was tardy. Having made a pretty clear guess as to what had happened, he was really worried about the paper. You do not pick up a staff of seven men at nine o'clock in the evening as a gift of Providence. There was some canniness in it.

He knew the Wobblies and understood their ways. Generally speaking, he liked them. When they began coming in numbers to New Freedom, attracted by the Freemen's League fight, he hired

some of them for his canvassing organization—to sell the League, as he always said. They were effective enough, yet gave him a great deal of trouble by getting their propaganda mixed up with his. Several he had been obliged to dismiss for that reason. Not that he objected to their propaganda, only that it was not League propaganda, and that alone he wished to spread by invariable words. He believed the repetition of one idea very important. The dismissed Wobblies were sore, naturally, and made some ugly remarks about repression of speech. However, he handled them carefully and no enmity arose openly.

They understood him, too. Once for a year he had been mayor of a small western town where they came to stage a free speech fight. He met them with a permit, and said: "Denounce anything you dislike but the army. I don't care about the army myself, but there's a camp of regulars out there a few miles and they are a rough, touchy lot. That's all. You can't get yourself put in jail here for anything you say." That spoiled the fun.

Yes, he liked them personally. They had much rebellion in common. But here was another figure of facts. The paper. He was in the absurd position of having got it away from the enemy on the extreme right only to let it fall into the hands of these reckless and dubious allies on the extreme left. Sure, they had no shadow of right in the case. Still, it would be no easy matter to get them out. They

were in house, on the rug; they had nothing to lose and they loved any kind of uproar.

Semicorn arrived promptly at nine o'clock. As he entered, Capuchin made believe to be deeply engrossed in some papers on his desk. Semicorn seated himself, rolled a cigarette and waited.

"Sit down, Mr. Semicorn," said Capuchin. Then he looked up. "You are already seated, Mr. Semicorn. You have a way of seating yourself."

Semicorn made no reply to this, nor did he betray any reaction whatever. He sat there gazing steadily at Capuchin, still waiting, as if nothing had been said. His countenance was square, plumb and innocent, set with blue eyes and touched with color just a little too high to be a true mark of health. Not an impassive face. On the contrary, sensitive; and yet astonishingly impenetrable.

Until that moment Capuchin had not decided what he should say. When he spoke again his voice was combative and his words came hissing through his clenched teeth.

"I like you, Mr. Semicorn," he said. "I don't like you, Mr. Semicorn. That brings us to the third point. You squeeze me, Mr. Semicorn. You will admit that you squeeze me. Suppose I say, 'Mr. Semicorn, I have decided to make you editor of the "Herald".' What will Mr. Semicorn be thinking? He will be chortling and saying to himself, 'I'm already editor of the "Herald," in blackface type.' If I say, 'Mr. Semicorn, I've decided not to

make you editor of the "Herald",' what will Mr. Semicorn be thinking? He will be thinking to himself what a hell of a row he and his Wobbly friends can make about getting out. It's like trying to put out the cat. I have the cat by the belly. That's a bad way to have it. Look at me with a free speech fight on my hands in New Freedom! That's what you would try to make of it. I know you."

This was all so pat to the truth that Semicorn smiled.

"It's when you smile I like you," said Capuchin. "Now listen. I know Wobblies. The trouble is they can't play any tune but their own. They play that one wrong. Each man sings it to suit himself. Very bad for the tune. That's why you get nowhere. Free speech is all right in matters of personal opinion. But where you've got a practical purpose in view you might as well have free trombones in a band. Take these workers of mine, selling the League all over the place. I tell them what to say. They are drilled in it. They are not permitted to add one word of their own. And it works. It works like water on a stone. Now take the paper. This is practical politics, understand. I was thinking I'd keep it neutral for a while. A big gun in the brush. That's impossible since your name has appeared on it. All right. We'll bring it straight over to the League with a roar. Everything for the best. But it's got to be a League

paper, not an I. W. W. paper. It's got to sing the League tune and no other. I know how far it's safe to scare people, and that's never as far as you'd like. Remember, Mr. Semicorn, I don't know you. I assume you are competent to run the paper. Assume it. You did a good job last night, except—well, never mind that. But you'll have to run it as I say, and promise, or we'll have our fight now and get it done with."

"That's clean," said Semicorn. "Now I'll tell you how I see it. To begin with, I'm Wobbly clear through. Maybe I'm cracked on it. Anyway, that's where I live 'n' no other place. I'd squeeze you or the Freemen's League or God Almighty for the I. W. W. Do you get that?"

He was cool, thoughtful.

Capuchin, leaning forward on the edge of his chair, nodded.

"And we all sing that tune by ear," Semicorn continued. "But since you've put it the way you have, this is how I see it, as I was going to say. For a piece of the way we can all ride together. We're going the same direction. As far as that is that, we can ride together; I'll run the paper exactly as you say, if you leave me there. All square. No tricks. And when I think we can't ride any further together I'll let you know in time. How's that?"

"Mr. Semicorn," said Capuchin, rising and putting out his hand, "I'm glad to meet you."

That was settled.

VII

Semicorn was in fact a most reasonable young man, under a riding agreement, as was to appear almost at once.

Finding after all that the constitution need not be amended, Dwind finished the banking law and went to bed. Capuchin sent it the next morning to the governor with instructions peremptory. The instructions were that the legislature was to suspend all rules and enact it immediately.

Late in the afternoon Semicorn called him on the telephone.

"News from the capitol," he said.

"Good!" said Capuchin, all of a sudden feeling his part. He was the engineer of great events. He was as one sitting at the hub of a vast wheel of change, controlling its movements, receiving reports from every point of the circumference. Here was a new use for the "Herald." Department of intelligence. Semicorn had got this. He was the right man there.

"Yes, Mr. Semicorn," he said. "What is it?"

"Your bank bill was beaten. The legislature killed it."

That was all; and it was true.

What had occurred was grotesque. Capuchin's messenger, who happened to be a person the governor detested, walked into the official presence unannounced, delivered the bill and the instructions

about it, and walked out again, flicking the ashes of his cigar on the official carpet.

The governor said to himself, "Huh! Who does he think I am?"

Then he said to himself, "I'm the governor of this state."

Never until this moment had he related himself egotistically to that fact; it was a strange, accidental fact. He walked about, saying it over and over in wonder. "I am the governor of this state." He began to think what it meant. He could call out the militia or declare martial law. And he said again, "Who does *he* think I am?" this time with the emphasis on he, meaning Capuchin himself.

But he feared Capuchin. There was the bill on his desk. He was obliged to act. Calling his clerk he said, "Tell Hemstead and Swanson to come up here." Hemstead was Speaker of the House; Swanson was President of the Senate.

When they appeared, the governor said to them: "Here's a bill from Capuchin and he says suspend the rules and pass it. That's all I know about it. Take it."

The governor's ego malady communicated itself to Hemstead and Swanson, who in the same way had been so far too bewildered by arriving suddenly on the public stage to become conscious of themselves as actors upon it. Now each one said to himself, "Who am I?"

It somehow got into the air. What the governor

did to them they in turn did to the legislators, who were told to pass a bill they could not understand and to ask no questions. Each legislator asked himself, "Who am I?"

The rules were suspended, the bill was read, and the vote was no. Then the legislators resolved themselves a recess in order to grumble. They grumbled all the louder because they were not sure of what they had done and felt guilty and uneasy.

Fifteen minutes after receiving Semicorn's message Capuchin walked in to see the governor.

"What's happened to the bill?" he asked, in an Adam-where-art-thou tone.

"I sent it down right away with your instructions on it," said the governor. "Why?"

"I hear they've killed it," said Capuchin.

The governor was scared. He had never dreamed of a result like that. Forgetting who he was, he got up and went himself to see. When he returned he was out of breath from running up the stairway.

"That takes down anything," he said. "They did kill it, deader than a snake."

"Get them up here," said Capuchin. "All of them."

They straggled in, edged in, pushed one another in, one crossed the threshold on tip-toe and half a dozen followed in like manner, thinking it was etiquette. Two or three lurched in with a specious air of pugnacity. Hemstead and Swanson came last,

as befitted their dignity, to show they could not be hurried.

A curious assortment and here at its worst from awkwardness of stage fright and embarrassment. It represented both the least and the best the League could do. Most of the folkmotes had sent their strongest men. In several cases, however, they had nominated candidates in a spirit of waggery, not expecting them to win; and others had been elected for no better reason than that they needed the job. Two members of that legislature could neither read nor write. Of parliamentary procedure they had no sense whatever. And of course they distrusted the few survivors of the over-turned order who tried to show them the way. There was some snickering during the suspense, until Capuchin began to speak.

"We've dropped a monkey wrench in the gear box," he said, speaking gravely. "The governor ought to have told you."

"I ought to of! *I* ought to of! I didn't know anything about it," said the governor.

An inarticulate murmuring began among the legislators. Here and there a voice crystallized. That was it. What the governor just said. Nobody knowed a blame thing about it. They wasn't voting machines. Maybe it was wrong. What then? A new animal it was. Couldn't make nary head nor tail out of it.

This was a kind of situation Capuchin could handle perfectly. His tone was familiar, conver-

sational, authoritative, and it included them. They were uppermost in fact. It was their bill, not his.

However, it was his fault in one way. He should have told them about it beforehand. That was to say, he should have had the time. But he was obliged to do many things at once. Particularly, just at this time, he had been up to his neck in new hay. It was something they would like to hear about. He had got control of "The Northwestern Herald." Tomorrow they should see. It would come out for the League, heart and fist.

Now about the bill. They didn't understand it. Was that the trouble? Well, hear from him a secret. Neither did he understand it. He was not a banker. In fact, they had not a banker among them and thank God for that. Yet it was necessary to have a state bank in order that they should be able to create and control their own credit instead of buying it at ten per cent from the vultures, such men as Anx. Plaino. He had thought about this a long time, and then had gone to the Lothian College of Social Science in New York for aid. Did they know what the Lothian College was? It was a school on the people's side—a school to teach the people precisely those things the privileged few had made so much mystery of, like finance and economics —a school to tell people what they could do, not what they couldn't do. From the Lothian College he had borrowed a famous expert, had brought him to Liberty expressly to write that law. They would

find him at the hotel, in bed, spent, sick, from the strain of writing it in haste, and all for nothing. A token of his interest in the people's cause.

By this time they were all repenting and anxious to get back and pass the bill. He detained them to say how the intellectual radicals in the east were watching them, how the success of their experiment would change the face of society, and that the towers of privilege were quaking. They must remember this, and never do anything in pique to make one another ridiculous.

"Now wait," he said. "This kind of emergency may rise again. I mean the need to pass a law quickly because the situation requires it. A law maybe that you cannot understand, even one that I cannot myself explain, in detail, except to say what it will do. Nobody understands everything. It's a complicated world. Lots of things you have to take on the other fellow's word. You don't understand what the doctor is doing to you, do you? But you pay him to do it. Pick the right doctor. That's the way. Now I think of something. Do you see this?" He pointed to his necktie—a red one—and began taking it off. "The governor will keep this," he said. "Remember what it looks like. When the reading clerk down-stairs wears this tie you may know that what he is reading is our stuff, guaranteed. That's our medicine, even though you can't read the prescription."

That amused them. What ill feeling was left went off in laughter. And of course they passed the bank bill at once.

Late that evening Capuchin went to the "Herald" office and asked Semicorn what kind of news story had been written on the incident of the day.

"Two," said Semicorn, handing him the manuscripts.

One was a complete narrative of the facts, including Capuchin's talk to the legislators. The other was a brief statement, in effect that the legislature had enacted a law authorizing a state bank; the law and the bank's charter followed, and there was no mention of any mishap.

"That, of course," said Capuchin.

Semicorn nodded.

"While we're on this subject," he said, "I mean, finding out what's news 'n' what ain't 'n' what to suppress, here's another item. You've got a Russian Communist up there in the legislature. He's heard they socialized women in Soviet Russia and he's introduced a bill to do it here."

"I know who that is," said Capuchin. "Don't print it."

He said this without looking at the copy Semicorn held out to him.

"Suppressed," said Semicorn, pleasantly, tossing it aside.

"Mr. Semicorn, we needn't be so frank with one

another," said Capuchin. "Suppressed is a—ah—a bad word. A very bad word. Besides, it only means not to print."

Semicorn grinned and Capuchin smiled.

From the railing gate Capuchin looked back. Semicorn was as he had seen him the first night here, head down, writing. "A most reasonable young man," Capuchin thought. Yet there was somewhere in his mind a reservation. He kept looking. "Too reasonable," he thought. To that he added, "But honest," and let the gate slam.

VIII

There will never be a complete history of the next four years in New Freedom. The formal records, such as they were, have been scattered, lost, destroyed. The emotional records are interesting, but, alas! untrustworthy.

No two persons agree as to, first, what happened; secondly, why it happened. Nor is there anywhere a clear view of what was meant to happen. There is no such view in the after-light; there was no such view at the time. Ideas of communism, ideas of state socialism, ideas of proletarianism, an idea of a kind of idyllic existence under the theory that men are naturally good and wise and sympathetic, artificially made wicked and selfish—all of these ideas revolved in one confusion. At the center of it was Capuchin, acting.

Others deliberated, thought how and why and to what end; what ruled him was a compulsion to act. The use of a new day was to start a new thing. His wheel had to be kept turning, faster and faster. That it should fly apart was inevitable by a physical law. So perhaps the conflict of theories had after all nothing to do with the sequel.

As that approached he passed under the delusion of being himself the portent. The New Freedom idea was Capuchin. As he grew tyrannical his followers became fanatical. The idea was propagated in other states and went very far. He began to dream of power—national power, world power. The Napoleonic mentality is much more common than we know.

As to his character, there were two irreconcilable opinions: one, that he was in fact honest and did nothing with himself in view; the other, that he was temperamentally and morally dishonest, with the ego motive uppermost. In these opinions people were not divided as you might suppose—friends on the one side and enemies on the other. No. Some of his bitterest enemies believed he was honest; some of his closest friends said he was not and were his friends still, for no reason they could ever explain.

Proofs meant nothing. When he was taken in falsehood or had broken a promise he would say, "Well, of course. But what else could I have done?" Then there was no saying what was right

or what was wrong. It turned on a question of intent; and it was almost impossible to believe that the puzzled candor with which he asked that question had not its well in noble and disinterested intentions. You had either to take it so, and say, "That's Capuchin," as if he were somehow exempt from the common assay, or dismiss him brutally as a knave. But you could never be quite sure. Those who denounced him as a knave were all the more scurrilous about it precisely because they were not sure; the verdict required therefore to be emotionally fortified.

His actions were never thought through beforehand. They continually involved him in complicated dilemmas. The Devil is cute. There are situations, as everyone knows, in which, though you are blameless, you cannot escape the sin of duplicity and a sense of guilt. That was the kind of situation that seemed to haunt Capuchin. The perversities of circumstance were forever obliging him to practice subtlety, concealment, misrepresentation of one state of facts in order to protect another; and it was as if he did this against his will, his moral nature bleeding on the altar.

True, he himself created the circumstance. You had to remember that. Again the reservation. Never did he create the whole circumstance—only the beginning of it, releasing and setting in motion forces he could not control. Often, one would think, he did this in the humor of a disbelieving

child that opens the forbidden chest to see what is in it or pulls the lever to see what will happen. All the genii he called up were of dual principle, good and bad. They presented the good side first, then turned out badly and left him in the lurch.

His father, also named George, was born in Ireland and trained for the priesthood. On the day when he was to have been ordained he embraced God's other intention and then migrated to the United States with his lovely, wonder-eyed bride. His purpose was fixed and he pursued it directly. It was to lose himself in the west.

For livelihood he turned his hand to the nearest thing, which was newspapering. Successively he owned or edited thirteen newspapers, all but two of them in small mining towns. After his marriage he turned infidel. Afterward, not before; probably therefore as an emotional defence in the guise of an intellectual conviction. He professed a deep scorn for success, conceived a rage against industrial civilization and held classical education in contempt, or much of any education got out of books. Yet he was himself a brilliant scholar.

In religion his wife went her own way, which was a believing, devout way, not very zealous. Sprites were as real to her as the trees and shrubs. She saw them, and all of her children were afraid of the dark. They were nine. The family was desperately poor and never owned a house. This was because small newspapers pay badly; it was

also because when one did pay the profits were swallowed up in mining stock speculation. Its existence was a series of happenings. Its memories were of feasts after famine, of famine again, of sudden uprootings, of arriving at new places, once in the middle of the night at a place where there were no lights, and they stumbled miles through the dark on a mountain road, holding hands. The girls were encouraged to marry; the boys to get out on their own. When the mother died the youngest was sixteen. She had seen it through. In the coffin with her the father buried a manuscript on which he had been working for twenty years. Then he went to live alone in the mouth of a canyon, with no pencil, no paper, no book of any kind, and died there in meditation.

Young George was the third boy, the runt of the progeny, the most imaginative and resourceful of the nine. His first job was in the composing-room of a newspaper, at the age of fourteen. From typesetting to writing was a short step. Besides, he had his father's knack for it. At twenty-four he had a newspaper of his own. It failed. Then another. That failed. Next he became editor of an established paper in Nevada. From editorship to politics is a shorter step than from typesetting to writing. He got himself elected mayor of the town. That was where he had his experience with the Wobblies.

Naturally he was an emotional radical. How he

came to be such he never knew. Given his history, anyone else would know. He got it with his blood.

Like his father he held a low opinion of material success; with the same contradiction, he had tried several shortcuts to fortune. Never did he gamble in mining stocks. From that form of collision with luck the family has been injured deeply; there was a fanatical prejudice against it. But he had promoted two irrigation schemes at a time when there was a craze for converting worthless desert land into gardens of fabulous fertility. They failed. The bondholders lost their money; the settlers lost everything. They never got the water. The cost of bringing it to them turned out to be prohibitive. Capuchin lost his time. He had nothing else to lose. Nobody accused or suspected him of fraud. Too quick an imagination. Too little reflection on the facts. That was the trouble.

His heart went out to the stranded settlers. Weeping with them, he denounced the bondholders for wanting their money, the engineers for having made bad plans, the contractors for extortion—everyone but himself. Of course if it had turned out differently he might have made a great deal of money. It was after the second of these two land schemes, while he was wandering at large in search of new opportunity, that he found the worn-out newspaper he told them about in Jael's house. There his career began.

In the New Freedom cast was one other volatile

actionist, but of a different and more dangerous type. He foresaw the consequences and intended them. This was Semicorn.

IX

Now to disentangle the principal events, bring them out of the mist and relate them in a coherent manner.

The state bank was the beginning; it was also the end. Capuchin named it the People's Bank of the State of New Freedom. It got its capital from the state to begin with and the state guaranteed its deposits. For president he chose a man named Parshall, who had a small National bank in a near-by town but was much more interested in politics than in banking. Long before this he had attached himself to the Freemen's League, believing it would come to control the state, as it had, and thinking it might reward him for his services. His bank was one of the few places where Capuchin had been able to get cash on the League members' post-dated checks. Parshall cashed them, in fact, until the Federal bank examiner threatened to shut him up.

The League did reward him, though much below his expectations, by electing him to the legislature. He was still hopeful. He did not particularly wish to become head of the bank. Capuchin pressed him, however, and he accepted. Capuchin wanted him in the job because he was a reasonable man.

But to set up a bank you need more than a charter, a sum of capital and a figurehead. You require, besides, organization, personnel, rules, methods, working policies and what not. A very complicated mechanism it is, not so much in principle as in part and detail. Dwind had framed the principles. Lesser and other experts were needed for the rest. Parshall was incompetent even to visualize the problem. There was plenty of banking talent in the state, none of it available. It was either too unfriendly to be willing to help or so willing as to be open to suspicion. No sabotage here.

Capuchin appealed to Jael. Had she this talent in her Lothian College? She had. From the faculty, the student body and the alumni it was picked and sent out to him. Some of it was loaned; some of it was to be retained permanently in the service of New Freedom.

From this precedent a practice developed.

The next problem in the affairs of the bank was to organize a farm loan bureau. Agricultural loans represent one of the separate anxieties of banking. The demand for them was tremendous, and it had to be met. This was the people's bank. Was it not their own credit the farmers were asking for? But if it were simply dealt out to them on request, as they expected, there would soon be nothing left for other purposes, such as the state elevators and the state flour mill. Here was a dangerous riddle. Had the Lothian College some farm loan experts?

It certainly had, for it was taking just then special pains to study the mind of the radical western farmer. So another lot of brains was dispatched from New York to New Freedom, some loaned and some to stay, as before.

Then as the implications of putting a state into business began vaguely to be realized by Capuchin, who himself knew nothing of business on the practical side, he asked for experts in such matter as production, distribution, co-operative buying and selling, cost accounting, management, transportation, price phenomena, construction.

The science of economics opened up to him like a new book, enchanting and mysterious. He drew a chart. At the top a board of advisers. Below, a series of bureaus, one for each department of specialized economic knowledge. These bureaus were to have the last word of wisdom on the subject given.

It should work like this: Take the flour mill. First the state says there shall be a flour mill. That is a question of public policy. Very good. Then it goes to the board of economic advisers. The board calls on the bureau of—of—of what? One has been left out. There must be a bureau of general survey to know every physical fact about the state of course.

Now—the board of economic advisers calls upon the bureau of general survey to say where the flour mill shall be put, then on the bureau of production

to say how large the mill shall be in view of the country's total flour production and probable increase of demand, then on the bureau of distribution to say where and how the flour shall be sold, and so on, until you come to the bureau of construction, which is to build it, and will know of course the latest and most efficient thing in the shape of a flour mill; last of all the bureau of management which is to say how the mill shall be operated. All scientific!

Nearly all of these advisers and bureau heads the Lothian College provided. There was consequently much going to and fro, with never fewer than ten of the Lothian faculty on the western scene either as helpers loaned or as observers, so that Jael at length took a large house in Liberty, furnished and staffed it, and made it a rendezvous and club.

She passed a good deal of time there herself, especially in summer; so did various members of the Jones street company, as guests. There came also radical students of social science, honest seekers of the new way, from all over the country, then from all over the world as the noise spread. Her house in Liberty, where she entertained them all, or where they entertained themselves, came to be referred to as Little Jones street. Customs and manners were the same in both places.

New Freedom's first year was one of great formations.

The state elevators began to rise.

The flour mill took form.

The Freemen's League, on money borrowed at the bank, bought three newspapers in other towns and so gained complete control of the press throughout the state. There were no other papers to reckon with, only two or three weak ones, afraid to attack the League and not intelligent enough to do so effectively if they had possessed the courage.

There was a boom in private building, on borrowed money; and the demand for building materials was so great that Capuchin conceived the notion of co-operative lumber yards. He put it through the League, members subscribing the capital with post-dated checks; these were cashed at the People's Bank.

A chain of co-operative retail stores was set up in the same way.

In the autumn the Legislature voted to build a state meat packing plant and three state creameries.

In the elections that year the League won everything it had not carried before; also it somewhat improved the average character of its office holders, everybody being now very serious.

There was one disagreeable fact, to be mentioned in its right place—that is to say, last. The state itself had borrowed so much money from the People's Bank to carry on all these new affairs that in order to pay any of it back, to pay even the interest, it was obliged to increase taxation.

In the second year all prospects broadened, though nothing yet was quite realized. The elevators were finished and began to receive grain. However, the true use and benefit of them could not be fairly tested. The grain crop at large was short and dear. New Freedom had the luck to bring off a good crop and sold it out of the fields at high prices. There was no need for much storage; and the private elevator people paid as much for grain as the state elevators paid, sometimes a little more. When they paid more it was supposed that capital was in a conspiracy to discredit the people's experiment.

The flour mill was completed and about ready to be brought into operation. The meat packing plant and the three creameries were building.

The Legislature voted itself an increase of pay, voted also a subsidy to be paid to the sugar beet growers on the ground that the price they received from the refiners for their beets was unfair; it appointed a commission to report a plan for a ten-million dollar state-owned beet sugar factory, which of course would pay a fair price for beets.

Again to be mentioned last was the aggravation of a cumulative fact. The state's borrowing from the People's Bank had enormously increased; the cost of administering public affairs had risen prodigiously. It was necessary to double taxes.

Capuchin tried in every way to avoid this. He had caused the state to offer a bond issue in the east —bonds of New Freedom, guaranteed by the Peo-

ple's Bank, secured by the thrift and assets of a happy people. But as Dwind had told him in Jael's house two years before, the east would not touch the bonds. To save the issue from disgrace the People's Bank bought most of it. That was a stupid thing to do. The strain upon its resources was already terrific.

Nevertheless, the third year was one of ecstasy. For one thing, the idea of the Freemen's League had begun to sell in an amazing manner outside of the state. The apparent prosperity of New Freedom's farmers plus the zealotry of Capuchin's highly drilled body of canvassers made it sell among the radical-minded farmers elsewhere.

It assumed suddenly a formidable political shape. Demagogic politicians were counting it. A member of the United States Senate, big enough to think of himself as a candidate for president, began to make speeches endorsing its aims. All of this gave the people of New Freedom, the Leaguers, that is, a sense of vast importance in their home-made political clothes. They were path breakers to a new time. They had, beyond their own concerns, an errand to go for the common good. A destiny, perhaps; a luminous place in history. The religious projection occurred. That they were performing an economic miracle was not enough to believe. They were overcoming a principle of evil. They became intolerant of doubt and heresy, bigots, fanatics, mystics.

And now Capuchin began to appear in a magnified form before them. In the beginning his contacts with them were all personal, his words with them informal and conversational. Then as creative activities more absorbed him contacts of any kind began to be neglected and that was bad.

Suddenly he got the notion of arranging mass picnics. Leaguers and their friends to the number of several thousand at a time were gathered up on special trains and taken to see the flour mill or the meat packing plant. Everything was free, including the barbecue.

They were treated as masters of all they saw. To the superintendent of the flour mill they spoke as if he were working for each one of them personally. They admired the evidence of their power, ran their fingers through the flour—their flour! their grain! their own mill grinding it!—and were satisfied. At the meat packing plant they saw strings of refrigerator cars loading dressed beef for export to Europe, and were thrilled.

They forgot that they themselves were paying for everything, including the railroad fares and the barbecue. All such expenditures had to come out of taxes. They did not know their flour was selling at a loss for the reason that the cost of making it was more than flour was worth. Nor did they know that those iced cars full of dressed beef often returned as they went away, that is, full, because the product was not sold and there was nothing to do

but to bring it back and burn it. Thousands of tons of it had already been destroyed in that way secretly.

It was perhaps just as well they did not know. These were festive occasions. Capuchin invariably appeared before the picnic was over and made them a speech that moved them higher in self-satisfaction. One day he arrived and departed by airplane. This dramatized him properly in the popular sense; it proved what a busy and omnipresent person he was. The effect was so satisfying that he adopted that mode of personal transportation.

In the same way he brought Freemen's Leaguers and their friends from other states to wonder at New Freedom's things, so that they might see for themselves what they could do when they had become strong enough to take control of their own. That was advertising; it helped to sell the League afar. Who paid the outsiders' expenses in and back was never quite clear.

X

And this was the year of the plague. Not a visitation of Providence. Not an affliction of the earth mother nor one of the human body. A disease of the mind. A pestilence of the divine faculty. The common imagination was seized with a speculative mania. These people, whose black beast had been private profit, now all as with one impulse began to chase the bawdy bubble.

The ease with which they had found the capital in the procrastinated form of post-dated checks for co-operative stores and lumber yards was a revelation. It was also a temptation to the instincts of greed and cunning.

Some of the same men who had canvassed the Leaguers for subscriptions to those two authorized projects, now went among them selling shares in mythical undertakings. Shares in a great steel and iron plant, though there was neither iron nor coking coal in New Freedom. Shares in a farm implement factory, in an automobile plant, in a textile plant for converting New Freedom's flax crop into the finest linen fabrics, in an airship line to carry garden truck daily to markets in the east, mining companies, oil companies, even at last a grain trading corporation to gamble in grain on the Chicago Board of Trade for the people's profit.

The selling arguments were in a language the Leaguers had learnt by heart. Farm implements to wit. Everyone knew how dear they were, everyone thought the price of them wicked and unreasonable, everyone believed the implement trust made enormous dividends. Who paid those dividends, really? The farmers of course. Why should they? Why not manufacture their own implements and make dividends for themselves? And automobiles. To become little Henry Fords they had only to make automobiles as Ford made them. Then they should have the automobiles and the profit, too.

Post-dated checks were accepted in payment for these shares. The checks were cashed at the People's Bank. The promoters and canvassers took two-thirds of the proceeds for themselves; from the balance the nefarious expenses were deducted; what was left was not enough to worry about. It was out-right swindling.

In all cases, except as to the mining and oil schemes, the canvassers had letters written on Freemen's League paper, signed by Capuchin. These letters never specifically recommended the thing itself. What they did was to endorse the general idea of creating in New Freedom a chain of industrial activities that should make the state economically self-contained. Everything for themselves. He was very keen for that idea. It was the idea of integration that came to him suddenly on the street that day of his return from New York with Dwind and Semicorn.

Yet the canvassers used these letters in a way to make it appear that Capuchin vouched for their wares. Afterward, when it was too late, he repudiated the letters, saying they had been got from him in unguarded moments and that he himself had been the worst deceived. This was probably so. At least none of the money fraudulently so taken ever touched him, or if it did the fact was not discovered.

And this also was the first year of lean crops since New Freedom was named. That would have been so in any case. It was New Freedom's turn to be

on the wrong side of the weather. Nevertheless it was true that agriculture had been neglected. The farmers spent too much of their time sitting on the fences talking politics, economics and schemes for getting rich, much in the same spirit, one can imagine, as that in which people after Luther discussed the Bible, having found a free way of their own to the kingdom of Heaven. If the fields of New Freedom looked not as green as usual, why fret about that? Everyone had bought shares in something that was going to bring him big dividends; moreover, at the very worst, one now could borrow money at low rates of interest instead of having to pawn oneself to the 10 per cent vultures.

But the crops were very bad; so bad, that thousands of those post-dated checks, made in the Spring to be paid after harvest, could not be paid. The People's Bank, having cashed them in advance, was obliged to carry them as loans.

There was a new sound in the land, a sound of murmuring. It was indistinct because it was not informed. Nobody knew the facts. Capuchin himself did not know them; he would not look at them.

The condition of the bank was such that if it had been subject to national law the Federal authorities would have obliged it to close its doors. Yet it went on lending; it could not stop.

Capuchin called upon his economic experts to review New Freedom's achievements, which they did, filling the League's newspapers with laudatory es-

says, all of course in good faith, since everyone was defending his own work.

All news of an adverse character came from outside. Newspapers in New York and Chicago, also eastern magazines, printed much damaging matter about the stock swindling, the wasteful working of the state's business, the perilous use of credit. These the League's newspaper denounced as Wall street organs; they had sent their spies to New Freedom with specific instructions as to what they were to find out.

On the other hand, the radical publications of the east, such as Grinling's weekly, "The People's Witness," went on beating the timbrels and singing the song of praise. These utterances the League's newspapers printed in full. Nobody knew really what to believe.

The year ended, as each of the others had ended, with one more river to cross. Only this was Marah, indeed; the waters were very bitter, and nothing to heal them with.

Taxes were more than doubled, and this time there was no plausible excuse.

Where were the profits from their own things that were to have made the people rejoice?

One of the largest items in the state's budget was "Loss from Operations." No particulars.

The fact was that nothing state-owned had earned a profit; nothing the League owned had earned a profit. Privately owned stores were out-trading the

co-operative stores; privately owned lumber yards were competing successfully with those of the League. The private lumber yards sold for cash and locked their gates at night. Those of the League sold on credit and at night people helped themselves, which was even cheaper. Were these not the people's materials? All of the League's newspapers were wells of loss. And nobody had the facts. It was not only that the facts were suppressed. Nowhere did they head up. They were scattered, unrelated, lost in confusion.

XI

Jael did not know what to believe.

She had spent the Christmas holidays in Liberty, professedly to entertain a party of eastern friends at Little Jones street; really with intent to resolve the doubts that were rising in her. She saw as much as possible of Capuchin, and studied him; he had never been more confident, she thought. He was communicative on all general matters, vague as to all particulars.

She had the governor to dinner, then two or three at a time all of the principal state officials, and at last Parshall, president of the People's Bank, who had a fat body and thin legs. His eyes were set high in his head. He made her think of a frog imitating a bird, and depressed her horribly.

Her total impression of them was that of men

rushing headlong through a mist, over strange ground. Her uneasiness grew. It was at the rim of her feelings, below the edge of her mind. She could not explain it. If she asked herself whom she doubted or what her misgivings were, she found no answer.

She was walking alone to the station to take a train for the east when she saw a crowd in front of Anx. Plaino's bank; and she crossed the street to see what was there of so much interest. By this time nearly everyone in Liberty knew her at sight, but there was more than courtesy in the eagerness with which they made way for her at the window. They treated her as a privileged spectator, or as part of the show, and she was conscious of being curiously regarded.

In a pine chair beside the tombstone,—"Scarred to the Memory of the Freemen's League,"—that Plaino had kept there all this time, now sat a stonecutter, tools in hand, trying not to look self-conscious.

"Look!" someone said, calling her attention to the bottom of the tombstone where the blank space had been left for the year of the League's demise.

Three numerals had been freshly chiselled there: 1, 9, 1.

On the window glass, to be read from the sidewalk, was a communication. It read:

"This mason will sit here every day except Sundays and legal holidays until the Freemen's League

is a political corpse. Then with one more figure he will complete its mortuary emblem. Meanwhile let every man see to it that his foot standeth in an even place. Yours truly, Anx. Plaino."

As she went on she got a full view of old Plaino himself, standing in the other window. He had been standing there three years. Figure of prophecy. Augur of disaster, foretelling it by signs its authors could not interpret.

Jael's first reaction was one of contempt. How puerile! How infantile the people in their curiosities! Hold out to them an image, an image of anything, no matter how crude it may be, and they cannot help staring at it. But hold out to them a thought—ah! that was different. How easily they could help thinking!

What was she saying? People! Well, she, too, had looked. She had crossed the street to look, simply because she saw others looking. Moreover, having looked, she could not get the impression out of her eyes—that image of one sour old reactionary's verdict on the Freemen's League. Therefore he was shrewd. The same verdict delivered to the ears would be much less effective. It is easier to forget what one hears than what one sees.

She remembered Capuchin's first account of Plaino. An asthmatic old man who had never made public speeches and then suddenly developed an oratorical gift under tense emotion and became at once the League's most dangerous adversary. She

remembered the episode of the horse dander, and thought it very cruel.

Another thing she recalled with acute interest. Only a few weeks before this her most trusted banker in New York had mentioned the fact that she was transferring large sums of money to the People's Bank at New Freedom, and asked her if she knew anything about it. She knew nothing about its accounts, she said, if that was what he meant. Then he had warned her; he had heard the bank was not in good condition. She had said, "You have been hearing from Old Anxiety, perhaps," not at all serious. And her banker had said, "Anx. Plaino, you mean. Yes. He is a strange old party. But you will find he is never wrong in his facts. I should be willing to take his bare word on the facts, in any situation, to any amount."

Anyhow, she could not get Plaino and his absurd tombstone out of her head, and this annoyed her extremely.

A few days later in Jones street, after dinner, when only Fitzjerald, Dwind, Grinling and Miss Lillibridge were present, and Dr. Rabba who was never counted, she surprised Dwind by asking him out of the clear this question:

"Is it possible, Dwind, for an institution like the People's Bank of New Freedom to fail?"

And she was startled by his reply.

"Quite possible," he said, calmly.

"Is such a thing probable, though?" she asked.

"Quite probable," he said. It might have been the weather he was speaking of.

"Why do you say so?" she asked.

Dwind assumed his authoritative manner, speaking in that weary, plaintive voice, which nevertheless had extraordinary power of emphasis.

"For two reasons," he said. "The first is Mr. Capuchin. That minnesinger! Vessel of imbecility! Shakespearian ass!"

"How long have you concealed these sentiments about Mr. Capuchin?" Jael asked, uncontrollably amused by men in this aspect.

"For more than three years," said Dwind, which meant from the moment of first meeting him. "The other reason, if you want it," he continued, "is that nowhere in all that Punch and Judy show is there anybody to say no. The machine is running wild. I mean the bank. They've forgotten where the throttle is. If they remembered, still nobody would dare to close it, for that would be to say no."

This unexpected comment from Dwind was ominous and important, and left everyone silent. It meant that he was preparing a moral alibi beforehand, in case the bank should fail; for he had written the law and could not avoid some responsibility in the matter.

Jael was the first to speak.

"When people take control of their own affairs, take it into their own hands, I mean, how shall no be managed? I don't see how. They will not say

no to themselves. Who shall say it for them or to them? And if one does, or may, that one rules them again, isn't it?"

With his head tilted back, eyes almost closed, Dwind merely gazed at her down his nose, from a great distance away. Grinling leaned on the table, took his head in his hand, and began tracing a pattern with a spoon on the linen. They were expecting him to bring forth a thought, but at that instant, much to the surprise of the whole company, Dr. Rabba made an unhistorical observation, for him very original.

"Why say no to the people?" he sighed. He said people always in a petting tone, similar to that with which he cajoled his food. "Why?" he sighed again. "The people will do wrong. Yes. They will make mistakes. Yes. Well, and so? They hurt only themselves. They will learn. But we ourselves have this passion to say no for them. We have this passion to rule them. That is why they never learn."

"Bravo! oh, excellent doctor," Fitzjerald boomed. "The people are themselves the people. Let them alone. Perfect solution."

Dr. Rabbba turned red all over his great bald head. He thought Fitzjerald was making fun of him.

"Nevertheless, it is true," he said. "Once—I am not sure but I think so—once it was so. Once the people were not ruled, and they learned how not

to hurt themselves. To say no is God's business." He sighed deeply as he added, "And God says it enough. No?"

Nobody answered him. His sigh for a long time was the last sound. Grinling, instead of answering Jael, began talking to Dwind about Capuchin. These two were opposite at the long board, half-way down. Jael looked at Fitzjerald, who was the nearest guest.

"You have never been to New Freedom, Angus."

"I'm eccentric," said Fitzjerald. "Moreover, I should be the white Egyptian vulture in that country."

"Be not so sure," said Jael. "Your comments might be devastating. They would be, you know. Still, you might have a little look at us. Friendly like."

"I mean to," he said. "My magnum opus has broken down. I need to go traveling. Luckily, I've come into funds."

"A death?" Jael asked.

"Yes, though not a bereavement. A very old aunt whom I never saw. The tree is almost extinct. I am the only limb of it left."

De Grouse came in at that moment; then an anaemic woman who had been on trial all day for disseminating birth control literature and was secretly disappointed at not having been sent to jail; after her a British labor radical and a new communist from Russia. New Freedom had been forgotten entirely for the evening but for a telegram

handed to Jael by Miss Lillibridge. It was from Capuchin, to say he was on his way to New York.

XII

Jael was at breakfast alone the next day, about noon, when Capuchin arrived. She had the morning paper propped up before her and was just reading the news that Parshall had resigned as President of the People's Bank and gone to live in California. Ground, ill health. No successor had been named. There were rumors of dissension in the Freemen's League, the paper said, and a sense of disillusionment among the people.

Capuchin couldn't remember whether he had eaten his breakfast or should be hungry. First he said he was not hungry; then he said he was. When food was before him he devoured it angrily in large quantities and gulped his coffee steam first.

He had a somewhat soiled appearance, from having traveled in haste, without all of the necessary things, and was unshaven.

Not at all fastidious as a rule about the way men looked, Jael noticed his unkemptness and was not admiring it, perhaps because he was thinking so well of himself. There was no reason why he should not have taken the time to shave and change his linen. It was not that he had not thought of it. He had, and then decided to appear as he was, with the notion that such carelessness was privileged and

somehow enhanced his significance as a man of action. He had the vanity to believe it would be admired. Men are not admired of women for the reasons they think nor ever when and as they fancy themselves; always otherwise for different reasons, reasons they never guess, and in moments they are least conscious of.

Never before had Capuchin impressed Jael so unfavorably. It occurred to her that she disliked him.

"Mr. Parshall has left you," she said, nodding her head at the news.

"It's out, is it?" said Capuchin. "You do read the newspapers. I haven't read them."

Jael's wit, alert and critical, instantly penetrated this large and silly make-believe of not having seen the newspapers. He had. "Well, he's gone," he added. "He'd better not talk. He hasn't so far. I've warned him not to."

"About what?" Jael asked.

"Anything at all, said Capuchin. "That's the understanding. He's a scoundrel at large."

"Is it serious?"

"It will be serious for him if he doesn't hold his smoke," said Capuchin. His answers were short, almost rude. This was not as he had meant the conversation to begin. So he changed it forcibly.

He wished to talk first about Plaino. That old crater had been gathering heat and wickedness for some time and was now on the point of becoming

active. A red card printer working in a job office where Plaino was having tons of anti-League matter printed had brought him examples of it. None of it had yet appeared, but when it did they should have their hands full.

"Did you bring any of it along? I'd like to see it," said Jael.

He had not. She would see enough of it.

"What is it like?" she asked.

"It's only a lot of immaterial stuff we all know," he said. "I mean things we know ourselves and don't talk about. Nothing important by itself. It's the way he brings it all together. Facts about the mill and the packing plant and so on. Temporary facts such as people make too much of because they don't understand the difficulties. Naturally you can't tell them everything—every little thing that happens or goes wrong. You don't tell yourself everything, do you?"

"I try to," said Jael.

"Maybe you do," he said, looking at her and then away. "As I say, it isn't so much anything Plaino's got as the way he puts it together to make it look as if we had been concealing our whole back yard."

"That's true, isn't it?" said Jael. "You have been concealing it. You've suppressed these facts for fear they would make the people uneasy. Now when somebody begins to tell them it is you are uneasy."

"Semicorn uses that word suppress," said Capu-

chin, irritably. "Suppress! Suppress! What does it mean? There's no such thing as saying everything, telling everything, printing everything. Why did we get control of the press to begin with? So we could print our own news in our own way. That was why. No other reason. Now everybody says we've been suppressing the facts. I don't like the word. If you leave out the vitals of truth, on purpose, that is suppression. We've never done that. We've printed what was vital. The truth as we saw it."

He was becoming unpleasantly excited.

"Well, go on. What more of Plaino?" said Jael.

"He hasn't started to yet, that I know of," said Capuchin, "but what I'm afraid of is he will attack Mr. Dwind's bank. If we got a run on the bank I don't know what might happen."

"Mr. Dwind's bank," said Jael, repeating him.

"Yes," said Capuchin, doggedly. "We took it just as he said. We didn't even read the law, not until afterward."

"You think Plaino would do that?" Jael asked.

"Do that! He would do anything. He would start a run on his own bank if he thought that would hurt the League."

"Well, go on again," said Jael.

"The day I left," said Capuchin, "we had a meeting of the directors. I'm not a director, you know. I'm not in it at all, in fact. Only of course I was there. Parshall's quitting had brought matters to

a head. The only trouble with the bank is it needs money. Its assets are good. As the saying is, they're frozen. That means they can't be turned into money. They're very tight for ready money, the bank is. If they had a run on it, they tell me, they couldn't hold out an hour."

"Yes," said Jael.

Her coldness, touched with irony, damaged his style and caused him to do his worst. She was forcing him to the point, not as he intended coming to it, but in her way.

"That's all," he said. "It's what I've come to see you for. If you could take over some of those assets for cash, those farmers' notes and unpaid checks, some flour mill bills, perhaps, . . . or, if you didn't like that, a deposit in cash would help. . . . It's all perfectly good, understand."

"I've already put a lot of money there, you know," said Jael. "My bankers have warned me it isn't safe."

That statement set him off on a wild philippic against Wall street, bankers, privileged interests.

Of course they would tell her it wasn't safe. They were in a conspiracy to ruin the bank. Any other bank in the same circumstances would have only to take its frozen paper to Minneapolis, Chicago or New York and get bright, new Federal money for it. Could the People's Bank do this? No, indeed. Why? Because the U. S. Treasury, the Federal government itself, had joined in that conspiracy.

Jael let him go.

When he subsided, she said: "On one condition. The condition is that I may send auditors of my own to go over the books of the People's Bank. On their report I shall decide."

This was the most unexpected thing she could have said. Capuchin was injured, estranged; also, as she could see, alarmed.

"There are no honest auditors," he said, beginning to walk rapidly to and fro with a singular gesture of the arms, working them as if he had dumbbells in his fists, with an upward slant. "They will make a bad report," he said. "They'd have to. They are prejudiced to begin with. I wouldn't trust one of them with my hat."

She was firm and silent.

"How long do you suppose it would take?" he asked, presently.

"I could send them today," she said. "I should follow them myself and be there to see they lost no time."

Suddenly he veered around.

"Good!" he said. "Plenty good!" He shook hands with her twice. "Everything's all right," he added. "There's nothing that can't be properly explained, unless maybe some of Parshall's work, and he's gone. He was really . . . ! Well, I'd hate to tell you. A bad worker. That's all."

With that he went.

Jael sat musing.

Putting it on the frog. Dwind unloading on Capuchin. Now Capuchin unloading on Dwind and Parshall.

She was disgusted. The specific facts as they afterward developed surprised her not at all. She had already a complete sense of the situation. Dwind's revelation the night before followed by this interview with Capuchin left her in no doubt of the disagreeable truth. The New Freedom experiment was in desperate trouble.

Two questions were before her. One was a question of immediate measures. That could not be settled until she had got a report on the bank. She called to Miss Lillibridge to get her banker on the telephone, the one who had warned her; she told him what she needed. That night six expert accountants departed for Liberty, with a formal letter from Jael to Capuchin saying these were the auditors and please to let them see the books.

The other question was complicated. What of her personal relation to New Freedom?

Her pride was in it. The pride of the Lothian College was in it. But it was much more than a matter of pride. That she had got a great deal of money involved in it gave her no anxiety. She had parted with the money freely, in the belief that it was promoting a social service. This had been the first outlet for her wealth that was both adequate and satisfying. It fulfilled her desire, which was to employ it in a manner to justify her father's acquisi-

tion of it to begin with and her custody of it afterward. All of her other works, the Lothian College included, scarcely absorbed her annual income. Here she was putting forth the principal, not merely the accretions, and that gave her the feeling she wanted.

She was not insensible of the praise bestowed upon her by the illuminati nor of the public esteem in which she was held, even by many who disbelieved in the things she did. Yet in all matters a realist, she knew her own motives. They were not unselfish. The chief one was to redeem the Saint-Leon millions from the stigma they bore when she received them. In this she had succeeded.

Now she asked herself if she would give the whole of her fortune to save the New Freedom experiment. After hard and honest reflection she answered herself, saying, "Yes, provided—" Yes. Provided what? Provided the experiment was sound. Was it? There was the root of the question. Grave doubts tormented her.

To say nothing of the money, the best radical intelligence there was had gone into it. The Lothian College people had gone so far in their work with Capuchin as to make a scientific study of the people by racial groups in order to conduct the propaganda efficiently. The Swedes, for example, loved to be entertained in a joyous manner; the Norwegians preferred long speeches, to which they would listen stolidly for hours on end. So, picnics for

Swedes were not like picnics for Norwegians. They had taken pains to that degree. They had said in the beginning—Dwind, for one, had said it, as she distinctly recalled—that here was the perfect opportunity to prove the case of the people against capitalism.

Well, they had had the situation entirely in their own hands. No assistance had been withheld. And what had they done with it?

A bank full of frozen assets.

Unloading the blame on one another.

Afraid of one asthmatic old man who was threatening to tell the facts.

Afraid themselves to tell the facts.

Suppressing them in the people's own newspapers.

Had they been too intelligent? too clever? What had they left out? Was it wisdom? innate knowing? a way of reference above intelligence? Or had this disappointment been inevitable in human contradiction?

She had been trying to make Fitzjerald talk about it, his view being always so contrary; but he had turned her off, except once to make an oracular observation, which was, "You cannot dispense with the principle of growth. You may know all about a tree and yet you cannot invent one."

Lately she had submerged herself in history. Was there any clear meaning in the historical process? She saw this process as an endless chain turning on a wheel of which only a segment of the upper

rim was visible. People rising, rising, rising, as far back as one could see. Rising always to overthrow something, overthrowing it, then recreating it again, not invariably in the same detail but in the same principle. Seeing it in this way became a phantasy.

It occurred to her that if only the people had the wit to walk slowly backward against the direction of the wheel they might stay up forever; instead, they looked back and stood still and were forever carried on by the endless chain, rising with it suddenly to the plane of view, crossing that plane in an arc, disappearing again to the right.

They knew what they wanted. To be free!

From the moment of appearing out of obscurity at the left to the moment of disappearing into it again at the right, all the way through the arc, they were chanting: "Freedom! Freedom! We know a way to be free!"

She could not make out whether they were fast to the chain actually or merely behaved in that way under a fixed delusion of locomotion, or of progress, from a sense of movement in time, unable to distinguish between that and a movement of their own making.

From this reading, which was voracious and absorbed her whole imagination, she emerged with no convictions. Only much more doubt.

Formulas for freedom such as formerly she had not examined critically now started echoes in her mind, echoes of the song she heard in her phantasy

of the wheel, the rim, the endless chain turning upon it—the song, "Freedom! Freedom! We know a way to be free!"

What were the Russians saying night after night at her board? That song again.

She was not horrified at anything the Russians had done to set themselves free. The fact that troubled her was that they had smashed the Romanoff rule only to bind themselves to a dictatorship that condemned dissenters to exile and death, limited liberty more than it had been limited before and repressed free speech, saying what tyranny always says, "This is for the good of people."

At this time she made a random note of her mind.

"When people talk of freedom," she wrote, "do they know what they mean? I do not. Where is this freedom? In nature? There every living thing must obey the law. The penalty for revolt is sudden death. People cannot be economically free. They have their bodies to keep. They cannot be spiritually free. Fear is their bondage. Fear of God or fear of the unknown. I, myself, now that I walk alone, thinking my own thoughts, am I free? I deliver myself from the opinions of others and find myself bound by the tyranny of doubt. One may believe a false thing and still act. One who doubts is spread taut between yes and no. That one cannot move at all, not even in agony."

On reading what she had written she said, "Sounds like Angus. Even more so." Then she

tore it up, remembering as she did it the words of her strange father, that she had his mind and it would be her curse. Was that why she tore it up? She asked herself. No. She went back. First the writing. Next the association of it with Angus. Then a memory of her father; his words about her mind. But just beneath and much more poignant, though unacknowledged, was the recollection of what he had said at the same time about the kind of man she ought to marry. One with red hair. One like Angus. And it was that had made her tear the piece of writing up. Symbolic gesture, dismissing a troublesome thought. "I think too much," she said, drifting the fragments slowly into the waste basket.

What did at last determine her attitude toward New Freedom was nothing that occurred in her mind. It was feeling. A feeling of personal responsibility and a feeling of loyalty to the Lothian College people. They did believe earnestly in what they were doing. Such sincerity, even wrongly applied, could not be wasted. It was bound to prove something. And the least she could do would be to stand by them.

XIII

Meanwhile in New Freedom that tide which overcometh every tide before was rising fast.

When Jael arrived at Liberty, three days behind

her bank auditors, Anx. Plaino was not in his window; vibrations of him were in the air. There had just been a collision in the public square between men handing his pamphlets out of sacks and persons calling themselves Leaguers who were in fact—at least the leaders of them were—Wobblies aching for a fight. Plaino's men had been driven off. Then he had placed them on the steps of his own bank. That was where Jael saw them. She passed them on purpose to receive a pamphlet, which she read as she walked.

The big title was in red ink:

"THE TRUTH IS SORE"

Beneath it a statement in italics, in effect that since the Freemen's League controlled the press and had refused to print his matter either as news or as advertising at full space rates he was obliged to resort to this method of reaching the public with the facts. The word facts in bold capitals. This was the first of a series of pamphlets. They would be mailed as they came forth to every voter in the state, for the U. S. Mail was still neutral; they could be had also in any quantity on request at the bank. On the back was a photograph of the tombstone; below it a prediction that the missing numeral at the bottom of the stone would be filled in the morning after the next election, in November. "This is not a fact," he was careful to say. "It is a prediction. Every-

thing else in this pamphlet is fact." Fact again in capitals.

It was light on the old man's character that nobody doubted his facts. If he said it was so it was. And not one of his facts was ever disproved. The controversy turned on their meaning and interpretation. Everyone wondered where he had got his information. He knew more about the affairs of the state, the People's Bank and the League as one whole in three parts than any other person inside or outside, and his sources never failed him.

In the first pamphlet he confined himself to the state owned and co-operative business ventures. He told what the flour mill had cost, which was more than the people knew, and how that cost compared per unit of capacity with the cost of the great flour mills in the country. It was nearly double. Then he told what it was costing to make flour in that mill and what the loss was per barrel. The state would save money to shut it up. He told the same story of the meat packing plant, and gave the exact dates on which thousands of tons of good dressed beef had ben brought home and burned. There was similar treatment of the co-operative stores and lumber yards and of the state creameries.

To Jael's immense relief there was not a word about the People's Bank. She wondered at this, and wondered even more after she had read the preliminary report of her auditors. It was available that evening.

The bank was hopelessly insolvent. Moreover, its insolvency involved the finances of the whole state. The state itself was insolvent, in this way. Under Dwind's law not only the state but also the political sub-divisions, meaning counties, townships, school districts and towns, were required to keep their money on deposit in the People's Bank. The largest of these public funds was the school fund, and it was gone. It had been loaned away to farmers, to the Freemen's League, to unknown persons, to the state for its unprofitable business undertakings.

In the bank's vaults were reams of long over-due post-dated checks, some that might become good in time, thousands that were utterly bad. The books were in a state of chaos. Liabilities appeared as assets.

On warrants representing people's grain stored in the people's elevators more money had been loaned than the grain was worth; the price had fallen since it went into storage, and no one had either the authority or the courage to make the farmers sell it and pay off the bank.

There were some blind accounts. One was Account X. All the bank's bookkeepers knew about this was that Parshall had said it was all right. Account X owed the bank more than a million dollars. Then there was a loan of a million-and-a-half to the Louisiana Company, secured by promissory

notes. This, the bank's bookkeepers said, could be explained only by Mr. Capuchin.

And there was almost no cash in the till.

She sent one of her auditors off to California to question Parshall about Account X, and waited for Capuchin, who had been reported out of town but was coming in to dinner.

He arrived in a humor that was new to her. She was expecting him to look worried. Not at all. He was inflated. Everything about him, his gestures, his edges, the contortions of his mouth in talking, seemed slightly exaggerated; and he had in him some secret which he held to his own advantage. Jael wondered. Was he so infatuated as not to realize the seriousness of the situation? Or was he acting?

It was both. Under attack he experienced an ecstasy of exalted innocence. All his deeds, whatever their character, stood before him gilded in the light of perfect intention. The view intoxicated his mind. It was not enough that he himself should see it. He expected others to see and admire it. Yet it was very frail. In some bare corner of his mind he was aware of its frailty, else he would not have been always so quick and jealous to defend it, would not have defended it with such subtlety, would not have ben so inflamed and unforgiving toward those who declined to accept it.

This was the state in which Jael now observed

him. And the impression she got of him that he was acting a rôle was at the same time true. That was another thing.

He had been in a panic about the bank. He could not answer for the effect of its failure upon his Leaguers. His interview with Jael in New York a few days before had been most unsatisfactory. For a moment, when she was so cold and named the condition, which was to see the books, he had thought everything lost. Then suddenly he had veered round and accepted the condition heartily. Here the perfect illustration of one way his mind worked. Not to have accepted her condition would of course have been fatal. On the other hand, there was no reason to suppose that a disclosure of the bank's condition would not also be fatal. He did not deliberately choose. What prompted him to accept was the precognition of an idea that was yet to appear. He felt it somewhere. For hours afterward he struggled to get hold of it. Then it came to him.

The red card printer who brought to him the advance copy of Plaino's first pamphlet had said that the second one, not yet in type, would be an attack on the Lothian College people. This information had not impressed him at the time. In talking with Jael he had forgotten to mention it. Now suddenly, in relation to the bank, it became very important. It made it possible to hang the bank on Jael and her

Lothians. She would find herself publicly identified with it; her reputation would be bound up with it. Therefore she could not afford to let it fail. She would feel obliged to stand by it. Thus, Plaino had played into his hands.

There was the immediate difficulty that Plaino's next pamphlet would not be out for a month whereas the bank required help at once. Therefore, it was imperative to know what was in that next pamphlet in order to confront her with it. Ever since his return to Liberty he had been praying, bribing, cajoling the red card printer to get him a look at it, and only this day he had succeeded. The printer had smuggled out the manuscript. It was all that he could have wished it to be.

Now coming to this interview with Jael he had rehearsed himself carefully in what he should say and how he should say it.

Jael was surprised that his first words were, "Well, what do you think of Old Anxiety's blunderbuss," when he should have had the bank on his mind, as it was on hers.

"It doesn't matter what *I* think of it," she said. "What are *you* going to say about it? How does the 'Herald' answer it tomorrow?"

"That hasn't been decided," he said.

He was helping himself to food and affected an absent manner toward the subject. "That hasn't been decided," he said again, having his dinner be-

fore him. "I thought we had better confer, talk it over together, so as to present a united front when we came to it."

She understood that he was talking carefully, with some purpose in view, and waited.

"I've seen what's to go in the next pamphlet," he said.

She said nothing, though he gazed at her steadily in a way that made her uncomfortable and resentful.

"It's an attack on you, the Lothian College, all your people here," he said.

She noticed that he said your people here.

"Have you got it with you?" she asked.

"No, it isn't in print yet. I've seen the printer's copy." She waited. "Very interesting," he said. She waited. "Facts I knew and put out of my mind and some I didn't know myself," he said.

"As accurate as the facts in his first pamphlet?" Jael asked.

"So far as I know," he said. "As to the facts here, he's got them all straight. How Mr. Dwind was loaned to us by the Lothian College to write the bank's law and charter, that Lothian College people to the number of forty are in state jobs here, costing nearly two hundred thousand a year, and so on. Also the fact that it was your money bought the 'Herald.' I can't imagine how he got hold of that. He has been bribing people in our midst. Some of our own."

He became much interested in his food again.

"Anything else?" Jael asked.

"Yes," he said, pretending to be somewhat reluctant. "He attacks the Lothian College itself. When he comes to that I cannot say how straight his facts are. You would know. And all about this house. He's got that. A lot of information about the people who've been here visiting, especially anarchists. We know what an anarchist is. Most people don't. The name scares them."

Now she began to see where he was heading out. Putting her on the defensive.

"What about the Lothian College in particular?" she asked.

"He calls it a school of anarchy," said Capuchin. "He likes the word. He knows how people take it. Well, that's nothing, is it? But he's gone and got hold of some books written by members of the Lothian faculty. Prints extracts from them. One a book against marriage. One against private ownership of land. We've got to remember we are dealing with people who get married and own land. I'm afraid that stuff will do us a good deal of harm. Oh, yes, and he reprints from the New York newspapers several years ago the story of the president of the Lothian College publicly at a dinner taking a woman to live with him unmarried."

"You think that will hurt," said Jael, commenting.

"I know these people," he said. "I know about how far you can go with them. The land question

alone. You can't talk about state ownership of land around here, not even in theory. Everybody's got land. The man who wrote that book is here in one of the state bureaus." He finished eating. "However," he said, "everything will come right if only we can keep the bank on its legs."

Jael was very angry. Putting her and the Lothians on the defensive in front of himself!

"What do you know about Account X?" she asked him, bluntly.

"Oh, you've heard from your figure worms?" he said.

"I thought you might be able to tell us something about Account X," she said, "while we are waiting to hear from Parshall."

"How are you going to hear from Parshall?"

"I've sent a man to see him. They said at the bank he was the man to ask."

For a moment his eyes wandered.

"I strongly urge you to stop him," he said. "If Parshall is stirred up he may talk. If the bank begins to be talked about that's good-bye." He was thoughtful. "I can tell you all there is to know about that account," he said. "The money was lost in wheat speculation." Seeing her look of amazement, he explained. "The first mistake was to lend the farmers too much money on their grain. Then the price began to fall. The Chicago speculators were putting it down. It was Parshall's idea that we could beat them and put the price back to where

it belonged. The motive was all right. We were doing it for the farmers of New Freedom. But the idea was bad. It turned out that way."

"And the Louisiana Company. What do you know about that?" Jael asked.

This time his eyes did not wander. He was expecting the question.

"They would be suspicious of that," he said. "I suppose they told you I carry the Louisiana Company around in my pocket. That may appear to be so. It doesn't belong to me. I have never so regarded it. It's for the League when the time comes to speak of it. Maybe I ought to have told somebody. I wanted to prove it first. It's in the gristle yet. You need some imagination to see it."

He had been speaking injuredly. Then, as he saw it all clearly again, his imagination burgeoned and his voice lifted. The Louisiana Company was all for grace and redemption. It would repay ten-fold every kind of loss the state had suffered. It owned and held under option a vast tract of land in Louisiana, on a river, with a wonderful site for a power dam. The plan had two features. One was to develop hydro-electric power with which to manufacture at very low cost nitrogenous fertilizer, such as New Freedom needed badly, and distribute it to the people without profit. The other feature was a winter colony in the warm south. Every New Freedom farmer and his family to have a bungalow and some irrigated acres there. A refuge from the

rigors of the northern winter climate and the means to carry on agriculture through the whole year. Change, besides; the excitement of change. Joyous migrations twice a year to keep them happy.

She questioned him about the land. He had never seen it. The engineers had reported on it. She should see their reports the next day. Others had seen it. All reports were excellent. It was cut-over timber land, he admitted, yet to be cleared of the stumps. Nothing had been built or begun. There was only the land and the idea.

This chimera astonished her even more than the explanation of Account X. She was speechless. There he sat, still glowing with the vision, visibly emotional about it. His eyes were hot. His hair, a little long, was brushed straight back over his ears, showing his baby white temples in which the blue veins throbbed. As absurdly meritorious as a school boy from having recited a grand piece. And he was saying, "It's not to be talked about yet. I've denied that I have anything to do with it. That's necessary."

Another irrigation scheme, in fact. This very good reason for its not being talked about was unknown to Jael. She had never heard of his two disastrous ventures in irrigation.

For a while neither of them spoke. He did not wish to ask what she had decided to do about the bank, if anything. He wished her to say, and she did.

"My auditors tell me the People's Bank is insolvent," she said.

"I knew they would tell you that," he said.

"I have made up my mind," she said. "There are two conditions. I will help the bank provided, first, a new board of directors shall be named, to include three practical bankers, and provided, also, that I shall approve of the next president."

Capuchin spoke slowly, as if he were thinking out loud. "As to the directors . . . yes . . . they are named by the legislature. It is in Mr. Dwind's law that way. . . . As to the president . . . he is elected by the directors. That also is according to Mr. Dwind's law. . . . I don't see—"

"I'm not asking you to see," she said. "I'm laying down conditions. The bank is in my hands, remember. I can shut it up."

"How?" he asked. And she knew instantly that he had been waiting for her to make this threat. His manner was victorious. "How?" he repeated.

"By demanding the money I have there," she said. "The bank cannot pay me. It would be obliged to say it was insolvent."

"You would not dare," he said.

That was the point he had been coming to all this time. It was true. She had made an empty gesture; also, she had underrated his cunning.

"Or," she said, "I could simply do nothing and let it shut up in its own way."

He rose from the table.

"Even if you mean it now," he said, "you will change your mind. Not on my account. Not that, of course. Not for the League, either. For your own sake."

That was true. She knew it was true as he was saying it; she had not faced it herself.

"Think about it some more," he said very affably. "I'll come in tomorrow evening."

They shook hands. This was a rite he never omitted, or if he did it was a sign of enmity.

Jael's emotions were so intensely disagreeable that she became physically uncomfortable. She was ashamed of him and ashamed of herself. "A stultifying experience," she thought, reflecting on the interview as a whole. Her impulse was to wash her hands or change her clothes. Then she did a thing she had never thought of doing. The resolve formed itself unawares in her mind. It startled her a little, yet she did not pause to examine it.

Capuchin had not been gone more than five minutes when she set forth, walking rapidly. It was a still, cold night. The moon was full. Her mind became tranquil and knew perfectly what it was doing; yet she had not considered what she should say to him and was vaguely wondering how to begin as she rang Anx. Plaino's door bell.

"Come in!" a voice said. She heard it faintly. It was a loud voice to be heard at all. There were double doors at the entrance vestibule and double windows around the house. It was a square brick

dwelling, ugly and unpretentious. Plaino had been a widower for twenty years. He had no children and lived here alone with two servants, a man outside and a woman to keep house. The woman had gone to bed.

The doors were not locked. Jael let herself into the vestibule, which was dark; then into the hall, which was dimly lighted. Plaino's hat, muffler and overcoat were hanging there on a polished steer's horn; his rubbers were beneath them. The outer peeling of him, grim and censorious, creased by his daily activities, shapen by his personality. He himself was in a room to the right and called again, "Come in!"

The door was ajar. She pushed it open, and saw only the top of his head. He sat in a Morris chair with his back to the door, reading the Scriptures. Without looking, he said a third time, "Come in!" now with some impatience in his voice. Jael walked around and stood facing him. He took off his glasses, looked at her, and said, "Oh!"

She noticed that he wore about the house an old gray coat out at the elbows. In this state of relaxation he looked very old. A pastel portrait of a woman, probably his wife, and "The Signing of the Declaration of Independence" were the only two pictures in the room.

"I'm Jael Saint-Leon," she said.

"I know you," he said. "Push the papers off that chair and sit down."

She felt a little awe of him. Of old men she knew almost nothing and a man of this kind, old or young, was outside her experience. It had occurred to her to mention the fact that her banker in New York knew him and spoke most excellently of his character. When she came to say it there seemed no point to it. It was unimportant.

She said, "Mr. Plaino, do you know the condition of the People's Bank?"

"I do," he said, "and so do you."

"You know it perhaps much better than I do," she said.

"Much better," he said.

"Are you going to attack it?" she asked.

He looked at her for a long time through his glasses, holding them at arm's length. Then he said, " 'For the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth. A woman shall compass a man.' "

"I didn't realize," she said, "how abrupt that question would sound. The reason I ask is this. I want to save the bank if possible. I feel some responsibility for it. It isn't a question of money. I am willing to put the money in. You know what the question is. I had thought of asking you to take charge of it, or to form a committee of bankers for that purpose, but that seems not to be feasible. There are difficulties in the law. The legislature names the directors and the directors name the president. What I have come to ask you for is advice."

He kept looking at her through his glasses, hold-

ing them far and near. His hands were uncommonly long and thin, hardly wider than the thickness of his wrists. It was not there his strength lay.

"I am going to attack it," he said.

"Even though I tell you I am willing to help it through."

"The daughter of David Saint-Leon does not want advice," he said, thoughtfully. "That is not what she comes to me for. She wants information. They have been telling her she must save their bank. They have been telling her that unless she fills its till again with money it will fail. They speak to her in dread accents of a run. I tell her better. They walk in lies. 'T'aint that they are afraid of. Their fear is that when they have no more money to lend the people will turn against them."

"I must be very stupid," said Jael. "Somewhere I lose the point."

"This is not a bank like any other bank," he said. "If it were, Anx. Plaino should not attack it. Never. Shall iron break iron? 'T'aint natural. 'T'aint in the writing. What do they say? They say if a run started on their bank they couldn't last an hour. That's true. But it can't happen. When we speak of a run on a bank what do we mean? We mean the depositors get scared and come all at one time and demand their money back. If the bank can't give them their money it fails. This bank has no money. Its till is empty. Yet I tell you if that fact were published in the newspapers, still there

would be no run on the bank. Why not? You want to know why not? Why, because the people already have the money. The bank does not owe the people. The people owe the bank. Can you imagine people coming in a panic all at one time to pay the bank what they owe it?"

"But the bank does owe a great deal of money," said Jael.

"Not to the people," he said. "That's the riddle. Now follow me. To whom does a bank owe money? Any bank? To its depositors. You know that. Very well. But who are the depositors in this bank? Not the people, mind you. You are one. I think you are the only private depositor it has. You are not going to demand your money back, are you? You are not going to start a run on the bank, are you? Who are the other depositors? They are the counties, the towns, the townships, the schools districts, the state itself, all required by law to keep their funds on deposit there. Those funds are gone. The bank is liable for them. Follow me. To whom is it liable? Not to persons. A county is not a person, is it? A town is not a person. The state is not a person. They are political forms, these depositors, with no blood to run cold, no organs of fear, nothing of their own to lose. They are not going to make a run on the bank. Don't you see what has happened? The counties, the towns, the state—they have been collecting taxes from the people and putting the money—the people's money—

into this bank; and the bank has ladled it out to the people as if it were fable honey. When the people come awake to the fact that it was their own labor, not fable honey, they were beguiled to consume in a delirium of extravagance they will destroy the bank. You cannot stop them. Nobody can. It will be an act of political sanity. Meanwhile there will be no run on the bank. Don't let them befuddle you on that point. The people have eaten their honey."

He was looking at her again in that peculiar way, with one eye closed, trying her first through one lens and then the other.

"I'm greatly obliged to you for giving me this view of it," she said, rising. She held out her hand. The touch of his was limp. He was already adjusting his glasses to their natural use and looking for his place in the Scriptures, lying open on his knee. He called after her, saying: "Slam the outside door so I can hear it."

"Good night," she said.

He waited to hear the door slam and then remembered to say good night.

As she walked slowly home it occurred to her that the old man might have had a subtle motive, namely, to turn her from her thought of helping the bank, for if she did help it—that is, put it in funds again so that it could go on lending—its political power would continue. Nevertheless, he had made it logically clear that its problem was primarily political,

not financial. Being a state bank, it was supreme. No outside authority could touch it or oblige it to confess its insolvency. And since there were no individual depositors to come clamoring for their money, it could simply stand there with a grand and vacant stare. The people had already got out everything there was in it. The people were debtors, not creditors. How extraordinary!

Her mind was made up.

XIV

When Capuchin arrived at Little Jones street for dinner the next evening the scene was unexpected and strange to his humor. He resented both the presence of a large company of Lothians and the jollity among them, in which Jael herself was taking part. They were singing an old western ballad that one had found and brought in about a dying miner; and they were improvising musical sounds for accompaniment, from glasses on the table and from an empty copper pot muffled with a napkin and used as a drum.

Jael smiled at him pleasantly, indicated that he was to sit at her right, where a place was ready, and turned again to her friends, saying: "Almost perfect. Now! Once more."

His displeasure increased. Never had these Lothian people regarded him with becoming respect. Who was he to be treated as one of them? They

had not even taken the trouble to greet him collectively. One had said hello; another had waved a hand; Jael herself had not spoken to him. He fumed and ate, thinking how he should like to fire the whole crew out of their jobs; and just as he was beginning to debate the feasibility of doing it Jael leaned toward him, saying, beneath the singing:

"Your Lothians will all resign tomorrow. Having resigned, they will tender their services to the state for one dollar a year. You can take them back on that basis, if you want them. Hereafter I shall pay their salaries myself."

Before he could answer she turned her attention to the ballad and called for it to be repeated.

Presently again she leaned toward him, saying, with the air of having just remembered, "I've stopped the man that was on his way to see Parshall, as you wished," and gave him no chance to speak.

The singing was followed by conversation, serious, audacious, witty. Jael gave it her whole attention, joined heartily in the laughter, and when there was a sign of its letting down she herself set it off again. This went on for more than an hour, Capuchin becoming all the time more dour and aggrieved, until at last he lost his wits and did what she was expecting.

"What have you decided to do about the bank?" he asked. His tone and manner said also, "This is no time for such frivolous goings on."

She answered him casually, with her attention

divided between what she was saying to him and what the Lothians at that moment were saying to one another. "I've decided," she said, "to do . . . to do nothing . . . for a while. Let's wait to see . . . what will happen." Then immediately she seemed to forget him.

For several minutes he sat quite still. Color began to show in his face. He rose from the table, meaning it to be noticed that he was offended, and said good night without offering to shake hands. Jael said good night very sweetly and let him go.

A rage possessed him. He had been treated lightly by Jael and her companions. In the act of disappointing him she had belittled and mortified him. His ego floundered in distress. A venomous worm with its tail afire, striking at anything but itself.

Notwithstanding the casualness of her manner, which was of course malicious, Jael had picked her words carefully. She had not been final, only procrastinating. All she had said was that she meant to wait. It was still her private intention to aid the bank if the situation should desperately require it. This she did not say. To have said it would have defeated her purpose, which was to try both facts and motives according to Plaino's version of them.

It was Capuchin's misfortune not to see this. His power of intuition failed him.

Moreover, from the light Plaino had opened to her, Jael's understanding of the case was clearer

than his. Her natural impulse was to be candid in all matters. But she had begun to suspect him. It was quite probable, she thought, that he had not been frank with her. On this one point her suspicion was unfounded. Although Plaino was right, as events proved, his view was original. There were other bankers who did not see it as he saw it. Dwind himself did not see it. Capuchin knew nothing about banking, nor did any of his associates understand it in principle. All of them did honestly fear what they said they feared, namely, a run on the bank; besides fearing, as Plaino correctly said, the political consequences of its being unable to continue making popular loans to the people.

Aimlessly, his mind in hot turmoil, Capuchin walked to the "Herald" office, went to the editorial room and sat at a vacant desk.

Presently Semicorn came and bent himself over the desk, resting his two hands upon it.

"The Dowager Empress has been conferring with Anx. Plaino," he said.

"You mean Miss Saint-Leon?"

"Yes. She went to his house last night. Did you know that?"

"Yes. . . . Yes, of course—I knew that," said Capuchin, lying for his vanity's sake. He must be supposed to know everything that happened.

Semicorn straightened up, spread his hands in the air, and walked away.

After some restless moving about, twice dusting

himself with particular care, Capuchin went over to his desk.

"You run a very fine information service, Mr. Semicorn. I compliment you. A very competent service. I suppose you know what they talked about?"

"Who?" said Semicorn, indifferently.

"Plaino and Miss Saint-Leon, last night."

"Yes," said Semicorn, going right on with his work. "I know what they talked about."

Capuchin hated to ask. It made him feel small. He waited for some time. Semicorn waited, too, and continued reading his galley proofs.

"Well, what?" Capuchin asked. He was extremely irritated at Semicorn for obliging him to ask. Instantly that paltry emotion was swallowed up in astonishment, for with no warning of sizzle or smoke, Semicorn exploded.

His seizures came that way. They were probably as unexpected to him as to others, like attacks of mania or visitation of epilepsy. They were not frequent. For long periods he would go along presenting the character of a man exceptionally self-restrained, meeting placidly, or with a sense of humor, circumstances such as cause ordinary beings to lose their tempers. Then suddenly, with no acute provocation, sometimes for no reason whatever that one might know, he became violently excited. There was in him some principle of inflammability which

once it began to act deprived him of self-control. In those moments he lost all sense of fitness and whereness, together with the acquired faculty of speaking grammatically. His voice, at other times pleasant and level, became distorted and high, with a note of frenzy in it; his physical appearance changed. The passing of the paroxysm was as swift as its onset. One instant he would be raving; the next he would be his normal self again, speaking in his natural voice, as if nothing had happened.

At Capuchin's question he threw down his proofs and blue pencil, rose, kicked away his chair, and tore the green eyeshade off his forehead.

"Defeat!" he shouted. "The people's defeat! That's what they talked about."

"Not so loud, Mr. Semicorn," said Capuchin. "Not so loud, please."

"Defeat!" Semicorn shouted again and louder. "I'm telling y' what they talked about. How do I know? She's a capitalis, ain't she? A woman that her own bankers don't know how rich she is. All her talk for th' people is bull. Monkey kissing. Not so loud? Not so loud? Who's going t'tell me how loud? They didn' say nothing loud. Them that their language is money never talk loud. You don't suppose they know each other on sight. Maybe they don't. They're both capitalis. That's all you got to know. One night when you're in bed 'n' ain't looking they come together like evil spirits.

Them as know themselves by stink 'n' spots. I don't care a God damn for your Freeman's League. A billygoat in skirts. I'm riding it like you are because it's going my way. I do hate like hell to see y' get sold out in the night by a she capitalis."

As he began, so he subsided, with the effect of a rocket, only that it shocked the mind instead of the eye. Bringing back his chair, he sat down, adjusted the green eyeshade and took up his work.

"Mr. Semicorn, will you come to my office, please," said Capuchin.

"When?"

"Now. I want to talk this out with you."

Semicorn had only to put on his hat. He never wore an overcoat. Neither of them spoke until they were inside Capuchin's office, with the door locked. Capuchin started to turn on the light, then changed his mind, and they sat in semi-darkness. By the light from a street lamp through the window they could see each others' forms and that was all.

"I am impressed by what you say, Mr. Semicorn."

Capuchin spoke in a low voice. Semicorn was rolling a cigarette and said nothing. But he was surprised. He had been prepared to hear that his ride with the Freemen's League was finished. That was what he expected. Unaware of the estrangement between Capuchin and Jael he very naturally supposed that an attack upon her would be deemed an unpardonable offence.

XV

What had happened to Capuchin is easily explained. Jael's behaviour that evening—her air of indifference, her decision, her unexplained change of feeling—had disappointed him in a crucial manner. His vanity had been trampled. His plans were upset. Above all that he was mystified. Something extremely prejudicial had taken place; he could not imagine what it was. He was groping for an explanation when Semicorn confronted him with the news that Jael had visited Plaino the night before. He was too amazed to see at once the implications of this fact. It was still unrelated, standing there in the center of his mind as an object of wonder, when Semicorn began his harangue.

Suddenly it assumed a sinister meaning. It explained everything clearly.

Semicorn's suggestion that Jael had betrayed him, the people, the Freemen's League, fell upon fertile soil, for Capuchin's nature was such as derives a keen morbid pleasure from the fact, or it may be only the suspicion, of having been betrayed. In the first place, as the victim of betrayal, one is confirmed in one's bad opinion of people. They are more wicked than oneself. Secondly, betrayal perfectly excuses one's own failures. Thirdly, it excites two powerful emotions—a sense of injury and the passion of self-pity—and so leads directly to the delusion of persecution, which, becoming a mania, is the ideal

refuge of the deformed soul. Finally, his ego anger, which at first had no place to strike, now found its relief in a conviction of Jael's depravity. It fused with his righteous indignation. The same object for both. She had offended him in the personal relation. That was one thing. She was discovered, besides, to have betrayed the people's cause, and that was treason.

Semicorn's feelings toward Jael were impersonal, rather contemptuous. She had turned out as he expected.

Plaino was his object. Not that he disliked Plaino in any personal way but that Plaino embodied capitalism, stood forth as its monstrous figure; and capitalism he hated with a destructive, insane passion.

What hatched between them, those two, brooding in the darkness of Capuchin's unlighted office, was a reckless understanding. Capuchin with his cheeks in his hands, his elbows on the edge of his desk, his chair tilted forward on its two front legs, talking to the wall. Semicorn sitting solidly in his chair, very straight, his legs crossed, incessantly smoking. The fire of the cigarette made his face intermittently visible in a dull red glow.

The understanding was that the "Herald" and the other League newspapers, all using the same matter, were to attack Plaino without restraint. Semicorn could go as far in that direction as he pleased. Then the next morning they were to an-

nounce the state's farewell to the Lothians—that they were going to resign in a body and that their resignations would be accepted.

This of course might be regarded as a political move, forestalling Plaino's attack upon them. It had that aspect. But it was also a direct hit at Jael, and lest there should be any doubt on this point there was to be editorial comment on the news, expressing the great relief of the state to be rid of its Lothians, and this was to be followed by specific comment on their disabilities. They were to be represented as theorists, impractical, notorious for disagreement. Their contribution to the cause of New Freedom had cost more than it was worth. And finally it was to be said that the founder of the Lothian College, professing to embrace advanced social theories, was, alas! nevertheless herself a capitalist whose great fortune rested on the principle of private profit. Capuchin undertook himself to write these Lothian editorials and bring them in.

Semicorn returned alone to the "Herald" office. Throwing off his hat, he sauntered to the middle of the editorial room, put his hands to his mouth, yelled "Hi! Hi!! HI!!!," then turned and walked calmly to his desk. His Wobbly friends rose, followed him and stood in a ring, waiting for the news.

"Leave to shoot," he said. "Go as far as we like. Will we surprise them?"

He was pulling Plaino material out of a pigeon

hole as he spoke. It was ready. He meant to take the "Herald" so far on the first impulse that there would be no getting back, and he did.

Capuchin was amazed when he saw the paper the next morning. As it was past eleven o'clock when he and Semicorn parted the night before, and as he supposed the attack on Plaino would require to be worked up, he was expecting a news item on the Lothians and nothing more.

The news about the Lothians was there, properly displayed; but most of the front page was devoted to Plaino. There was a cartoon of him in the act of foreclosing a chattel mortgage. He had stripped the farm of its implements, its horses and live stock, even the precious bag of seed, leaving only the pine hut and five figures of despair—these a woman sitting in the doorway with her head in her lap, three children clinging to her and a man cursing the landscape, all in desperate need of famine relief. Beneath the cartoon was a list of several hundred chattel mortgage foreclosures, taken at random from the county records, with nothing to show they were not all of Plaino's doing.

It was grossly unfair. For so long as anybody could remember Plaino had not foreclosed a mortgage. His maxim was that a banker who loaned wisely was never obliged to do so.

To Semicorn, however, the objection that Plaino himself was not that kind of person would have seemed the merest quibbling. Plaino was a symbol,

not a man. He represented the system that did foreclose mortgages. If he was not that kind of person he ought not to represent that system. And as for the borrower's responsibility, in having borrowed too much or for having failed to make profitable use of what he borrowed, that he would not consider. Why should he, in fact, beginning as he did with the premise that all things belonged by right to the people? What they borrowed was already their own.

The character of the whole paper had changed. Anyone would have known it was the work of I. W. W. radicals. A spirit of brutality pervaded it. The cartoon was brutal in both idea and execution. So were certain headlines here and there, with no reference to Plaino. Several industrial accidents, a mine explosion, a railroad wreck, a suicide, and a routine statistical item from the Labor Bureau of New York State on unemployment, were gathered together under one black headline:

"Dividends!"

That kind of touch had gone all through the news columns. Strikers were referred to as wage slaves. The trial of a communist agitator in New England on a charge of murder was a frame-up; the defendant was a victim. It was all in the headlines. The news itself was in no case altered.

Capuchin knew better. All his blunders were infantile, proceeding from the fact that he had no power of reflection, no control of the externalized

idea. His mind played creatively with things to be, imagined whole and perfect in one stroke of inspiration. But as they appeared in the turmoil of reality with the shape of practical problems they were as unreal to him as an ark full of toy beasts come suddenly to life in full size. Of the New Freedom phantasy too many things had come true. The Freemen's League a red political cloud filling five states with awe. Whirling in it, a bankrupt people's bank; a packing plant, a flour mill, co-operative stores, creameries, and lumber yards, all insolvent; the Louisiana Company that nobody would understand. Now the "Herald" in an I. W. W. frame, which was not at all what he meant it to be. He could not stop them. They would whirl faster and faster until something happened. That was as far as he could think. Until something happened.

It was certain, as in a state of poise he himself had been the first to see, that such a paper as this one Semicorn had just made would alienate all the conservative elements of the Freemen's League. He had boasted that he knew how far it was safe to go with these people; he did know. On the other hand, his agents in the field, selling the League away from home, had been clamoring for more radicalism. It would be easier to sell the League, they said, if its views were more radical. That was undoubtedly true. So, although it was that affairs were going badly in New Freedom, it was possible

by making them worse to spread the power of the Freemen's League much faster abroad. His power it was. In this respect he was the political strategist who makes a stir abroad to divert attention from disasters near. Anyway, it was his rule when in doubt to hit. Gazing at the "Herald" that morning he swelled with a sense of combat. Here was hitting! When he saw Semicorn he complimented him on the Plaino stuff.

XVI

Jael's reactions were bitter. She realized how unjust the "Herald's" handling of Plaino was. That did not concern her so much. This was apparently a way men had of fighting; she had no doubt of the old man's ability in any case to take care of himself. Besides, the "Herald's" violence, she thought, would probably defeat its own purpose. But the treatment of her Lothians—that was insulting, vile, quite unforgivable.

It was a relief that Capuchin came no more to Little Jones Street, for she would not have known what to say to him. And now the stark question—what should she do?

It was not only that she could see no way to retire gracefully, although naturally she could not help thinking of that also. Merely to turn her back on the scene and reduce her orbit to the old Jones Street pattern seemed quite impossible, and not

merely in terms of personal chagrin. Much more than her own pride was involved. There was some moral value to be upheld, if only she could see what that was. It seemed very important to save something intangible. This might be an attitude or a point of view, and she had neither. For several days her thoughts were in a state of confusion.

Meanwhile, there was the practical fact of having forty Lothians on her hands. They had resigned, their resignations had been accepted, and now they were out of work. They had all been uprooted and transplanted. This was her responsibility. Some were willing to return to New York; the college could absorb them in its faculty or place them in social research work. Others did not wish to return. It was while meditating what to do with them that she began to revolve an idea the germ of which had been dormant in her mind for a long time.

Going to and fro between New York and New Freedom had produced more than once that occasion in which everything one knows falls away, even one's name and identity; things hitherto unknown, beyond good and evil, assume terrific importance. She became aware of the great mystery of the earth mother. Always it was west of the Mississippi river this happened, sometimes in the swooning glimpse one may remember but never recall, sometimes in dreaming reverie of which the mystical truth alone without object or subject may be remembered. Some inner region of herself became in

these moments vast, co-terminous with the limits of the universe, pulsating with a knowledge the mind cannot share. These experiences left her wordless. She could neither describe nor define them.

Once it occurred to her in rational meditation that the life she knew, life as it appeared from the Jones street point of view, must either renew itself in the soil or perish. Directly or indirectly all those indescribable emotions associated themselves with the earth—the fundamental mother.

There was nothing new in the thought. It was as old as the nostalgia of city dwellers. There had been many trials of going back, of renewing life in that way by intelligent intention to forestall necessity. She turned to the literature of these experiments and was surprised at the extent of it. She read the fascinating history of Brook Farm, also that of the Oneida Community. In an obvious sense every such experiment had failed. That is, not one of them endured. No matter. In a spiritual sense they had not failed. The mistake was to suppose they might succeed materially. That was neither their point nor their meaning. In every case some vital principle had been renewed to go on with, and those in whom it was renewed had gone on.

Well now, in view of her problem, the idea of a soil colony, an adventure of prodigals with nature, opened a vista. It was the happy alternative.

She broached it to the Lothians and they were enthusiastic. They spent several evenings together

setting out the rules to govern it, all very simple. Thirty subscribed. Then she went forth to find the suitable location, which turned out to be a place fifty miles from Liberty where there was available a large tract of land in the valley of the river flowing north; the land sloped gently to the hills that rose abruptly on the west in strange, grotesque formations. It was already somewhat developed. The romantic feature was a very old house that had been an inn on the cattle trail. She named it the Lothian Farm and proceeded to equip it on a considerable scale.

In finding this place she saw more of the country than she had seen before, and it grew upon her; also for the first time she came into direct contact with the people, not as they might present themselves in groups at Freemen's League meetings and picnics—people as they lived and worked. She talked with them, ate with them, passed nights and evenings with them, and expanded sympathetically.

First of all, the contrasts impressed her deeply. Success and failure divided by a road. Independence and well-being on one side; aching discontent and poor living on the other side. The same soil, the same sun, the same seed.

What made this great difference? Not opportunity to begin with. Nearly every highly developed farm, with big barns, swelling herds, strong fences and comfortable dwellings, had the pioneer history. Settlers, a strong man and a good wife,

nothing to begin with but their hands, access to the soil and the habit of toil. Often the hut they first raised over their heads had been preserved as an heirloom in the flower garden; all the children had been born in it.

And the running story on the other side of the road was of one general character, too. Wistful expectations, inexperience, something that was to have happened and didn't.

Presently she could foretell by the look of a farm whether the people upon it would be Leaguers or anti-Leaguers and the degree in which they would be either. The successful farmers were not necessarily more intelligent than the unsuccessful, though very often they were; invariably, however, their intelligence was practical, not imaginative, and they had besides a kind of restraining wisdom. They were not satisfied. All of them, no matter how successful, had specific grievances, and many of them had been hoping through the Freemen's League to remove certain economic evils; but now they were turning away from it in disgust.

The weak farmers, on the other hand, were still for it; the more unfortunate they were the more ardently they were for it, to the point of being fanatical. Capuchin was their demi-urge, their one hope in place of everything else that had not happened, the mighty leveller. Their notion of levelment was simple. The privileged few, those who had got or taken theirs, the strong in brief, were

all to be levelled down while they themselves were to be levelled up.

Jael found herself thinking much more about these who were weak than about those who were strong. Wherein was their weakness? In some significant way they were all alike, though apparently so unlike, and for a long time she could not get hold of it.

Some were lazy. The squatter type, with nothing of their own to lose, and a low, cunning interest in politics. Not so many of these. More numerous were those whose works seemed foredoomed to fail. On this gray side of the road, in fact, was every kind of temperament save one. The successful temperament was not there. Nevertheless, that was the side of the road on which the humanities and sympathies were rich; it was the more hospitable side, and Jael found herself preferring it. The people were more likable than those on the other side, likable as children were.

And this was at last the word she had been wanting to express a common fact about them. They were children precisely in the sense of lacking what children lack, namely, judgment and wisdom. In everything else—will, passions, sentiments, knowledge of facts, activity of imagination—they were grown up; and one had to know them well to realize what it was they were doing to defeat themselves. Rejecting reality, as children do, because it is not what they wish to believe.

It was true they had been exploited. They were obliged to think that was why they had failed. It was not the reason. They were susceptible to begin with; they had been led by imagination into a struggle with nature for which they were unprepared by understanding, by experience, by any economic test. There were some, to be sure, whose trouble was stupidity and ignorance, such as would have failed anywhere at anything.

At this time, however, Jael was less interested in economic analysis than in a new way of regarding life from an emotional approach. She was down on rational thinking. Deliberately to give herself up to feeling alone had become a conscious aesthetic experience. She knew what she was doing. That was the pleasure of it. She could say, "Now I am feeling," and enjoy it, just as she could say, "Now I am reasoning," and enjoy that. Feeling was the new enjoyment.

Seeing and feeling all these people on the unsuccessful side of the road as children gave her a strange, intense pleasure. What they needed to know more about was nature and how to live with her alone by their own strength—not economics, not politics, not how to have the comforts, manners and distractions of the city brought to them, but how to do without the very things they were petulantly demanding. She had an impulse to go among them saying: "Your problem is not economic. Stop thinking of this machine civilization, its won-

ders and cruelties. You must find a spiritual way with nature. Turn to the impersonal mother."

How futile it would be! No one would listen. It was Capuchin's language they understood—the language of the demagogue.

In one of these moments of pure feeling she identified herself with the earth, unable to impart wisdom to her children otherwise than through the language of experience—a language painfully pieced together by many generations that may be altogether lost in one.

She was now at the age of thirty-five, and that part of her which was woman, not mind, was asserting its hunger.

XVII

Developing the spirit and means of Lothian Farm was a task strange and interesting enough to absorb Jael's energies. She passed all of her time either there or at Little Jones Street, as an executive base; and of course followed the way of political events in New Freedom, now having the rôle of spectator only.

Capuchin, Semicorn, all the very radical elements of the Freemen's League, grew more and more reckless.

The "Herald's" campaign against Plaino became scandalous and personal. This was inevitable in human nature. It is all very plausible to begin, as the Semicorns do, by saying it is impersonal, that it

is the system one attacks, not the man, or the man only as an accidental fact in his function of representing the system. But it is not possible to hate an abstract thing. Capitalism, for example, cannot be visualized as a system. It cannot be hated as a system. Emotion requires a definite object, responsible to the senses. This is proved by the necessity, which every demagogue obeys, of erecting human symbols of it to begin with. Presently the fact of representation becomes dim and the symbol itself is hated, as in the opposite case the deity is forgotten and the effigy worshipped. And so it was here.

At the outset, Semicorn and his associates believed in the idea of what they were doing; if in the doing of it they should happen to be unfair to an individual, to Plaino, namely, that was of no consequence. Worse luck to him; he ought not to be that symbol. Eventually they came to believe what they wrote about him as a person, and to hate him as a person; and so it was also with their readers. Plaino himself was the monster. All the rage, the fear, the recriminatory passions rising among the fanatical Leaguers, especially toward the end when they began to have a premonition of defeat, centered upon him. And he did provoke them exceedingly. The intensity of his purpose gave him a super-human, menacing aspect.

He came on with his pamphlet against the Lothians, their retirement notwithstanding. Then was

one devoted wholly to Mr. Capuchin, setting forth his record complete, with all the facts about his unfortunate irrigation schemes long before anybody here had heard of him.

Politically, no doubt, the most effective pamphlet was one entitled, "Confiscating Your Land by Taxation." This was a thesis to prove that if taxes went on increasing at the same rate for another four years they would amount to more than the value of the land. The people would be unable to pay them. Therefore they would lose their land; it would default to the state and private ownership of the soil would cease. Very shrewdly he quoted some of the Lothian theorists who advocated state ownership of land as against private ownership; so that one might infer some such end had been in view from the beginning. This argument cut deeply into the minds and feelings of the farmers.

In the last pamphlet he exposed the bank. His information about it was exact. He knew of the grain speculations and of Capuchin's Louisiana Company. The bank was empty. The school funds were gone. He demanded that Parshall be brought home and indicted.

Nevertheless, for reasons which he had explained to Jael, there was no run on the bank; it did not fail. It merely stood there as a rotten tree, unable to fall. Indeed, the revelation of its insolvency caused thousands of people who owed it money to wish it might fail, thinking naïvely that in such case

their indebtedness to it would be wiped out. Another result also was in accord with his predictions. For several months people had been murmuring against their bank because it had stopped lending money; and now, having got from Plaino's pamphlet the notion that the reason why it had stopped lending money was that the insiders had looted it, they were furious.

The excitement was progressive. Each of Plaino's pamphlets stepped it higher, and as the November election approached nobody's fuse was quite safe.

Capuchin had smashed his airplane. He was afraid to replace it, lest that be a reminder to the Leaguers of the state's swollen expenditures. So now he was racing about in a motor car with a gorgeous phantasy of himself. The Great Defender, fighting for the people, back to the abyss. Whatever happened his glory was prepared; for even more thrilling than the thought of desperate victory was the thought of dramatic defeat — of falling backward into the yawning darkness, heroically brandishing the fragments of his weapon, an imperishable phrase on his lips, a cry of dismay from the people. All that was lacking was the immortal phrase. He had not been able to invent one that satisfied him.

His speeches were accusatory, exhortive, more and more rhetorical. The forces of capitalism were arrayed against them. The eyes of the world were

upon them. The fight for freedom had to be fought all over again. Privilege was powerful and thirsted for revenge. They had made mistakes, naturally. Profiteers also made great mistakes. The difference was that the profiteers capitalized their mistakes and expected the people to pay dividends upon them forever, whereas the people, having made their own mistakes, would pay for them once and be done, taking to themselves thereafter the profit. It was a brilliant, prodigious performance, but empty for all that, having no substance of fact. Continually he was met with the cry, "Talk about Plaino's facts!" He could not talk about them because they were facts. The alternative was to defame him, asperse his motives, inflame feeling against him, which he did in a dangerous manner.

His power was expiring. In paradox, never had the flame of it been so high and vivid, the adoration of it so ecstatic.

Between man and multitude a time comes when one acts upon the other in a manner to glorify both. The man is not then himself. He is, even to himself, the figure reflected in the people's eyes. The people, though they look at him, do not see him. They see a symbol of themselves. As they think they are, so the symbol is. When it speaks they hear themselves. At last occurs the emotional act of deification. In whose image were people made to begin with? Here now is an image of themselves in the likeness of their creator. The pattern

is returned to its maker and the translation is complete.

Toward the end he began to rebuke them, saying: "We are losing. I tell you this to be remembered. We are losing because, being tempted, ye turn away."

Once after he had said this to them at the end of a violent speech a slow, powerful voice was raised, saying:

"There has appeared among us one like Christ."

To this many voices groaned, "A-a-a-men!" A scoffer who whistled derisively was roughly handled at the door.

Yet this Capuchin was a little man, about to be rejected as a symbol and utterly forgotten.

That the League was losing everybody knew. The extent of the disaster was unforeseen. It was total.

Everywhere the Freemen's Leaguers were chased into the ground. Not one official head survived.

The edifice of folkmotes collapsed.

Three hours after the close of the polls Plaino's stone-cutter began to chisel the last numeral at the bottom of the famous tombstone in his bank window, and two tall candles were set in front of it to burn all night.

OBLIQUE DESTINATIONS

I

This was the evening of the day after election. Jael was at Lothian Farm. Supper, which had been made there the high communion rite of the day, was taking place when Capuchin came. There were no servants. His knock at the door was answered by the nearest Lothian, who, on seeing Capuchin, left the door open and silently returned to the table. He entered, closed the door, and advanced to greet Jael. His face wore an ingratiating expression, which was disagreeable, and there was a way of stealth about him. He held his hand out to Jael, who was regarding him steadily; she declined the gesture, that is, she sat perfectly still, continuing only to regard him.

"I can't blame you," he said, dropping his hand. "The pity is in a thing like this everybody gets scarred up . . . all of us . . . even the best of friends. Friends most of all."

Jael said nothing to this.

"There's a matter I must talk to you about," he said. "Something to be straightened up between us. A personal interview seemed necessary."

"Have you had your supper?" Jael asked.

"No, I haven't. I left Liberty right after lunch.

Stopped two or three times on the way to talk. But don't bother."

Jael prepared a place for him. As she rose several others did also, but she made them a sign they understood. She wished to do it herself. Having brought him food on a platter and a cup of tea she took her seat and looked at the Lothian who had been talking when Capuchin knocked.

"Yes," she said, "the effect of sunset upon primitive religion was what?"

The Lothian, so reminded, took up his thought and went on with it.

Capuchin was non-existent. When he had finished eating he seized a moment of silence to say to Jael: "There was no way I could see to avoid a private interview. You will understand when you hear me."

"This is quite private enough," said Jael, without turning her head.

He was determined not to take offense. The necessity under which she placed him to state his business in the hearing of all the Lothians did not embarrass him. On the contrary, it suited him very well to do it that way.

"It's this matter of the 'Northwestern Herald,' " he said, holding his voice up. "I've made out a bill of sale . . ." (pulling it from his pocket), "here . . . in which, for the consideration of one dollar, as the formality is, the property is conveyed outright to you. It has been yours all the time, of

course, but the fact was not on record. This is to acknowledge it legally. You remember how it was. The objection to your taking a mortgage in the first place to secure the purchase money was in that case we should have to disclose your interest, which was thought at the time inadvisable to do. So there has never been any record of your ownership. I wanted to set it all straight before leaving. I'm going away for a rest."

He said it smoothly, a little too plausibly, never hesitating for a word. Jael was thoughtful and did not speak. He moved the paper toward her, quitting himself of it, and said: "If I may offer a word of advice . . . Semicorn . . . I . . . I'd be very dubious about him—about going any further with him, I mean. I've noticed recently that he's . . . what shall I say? . . . not always the same. I hate to say it, but I begin to think he has periods of . . ."

What it was Semicorn had periods of he did not finish saying; by contracting his eyebrows, shaking his head and tapping it with his fingers he left no doubt of his meaning.

Jael lighted a cigarette with an absent, meditative air and sat staring directly at him for some time. She said nothing. She did not touch the paper there in front of her. Conversation was resumed with an effort at the far end of the table and presently became general again, though halting and with need to be artificially sustained. Jael turned her interest

toward it, but took no part. Capuchin held his hand before his face, rubbing his temples or gazing abstractedly at a picture on the wall.

The tension was broken by a loud knock at the door; and when the door was opened, there stood Fitzjerald.

Jael rose to greet him; so did those of the Lothians who knew him.

"A passing sight!" said Jael. "First you are cold. And we should take it nice if you were hungry."

"Cold but not hungry," said Fitzjerald. "I'd like any hot thing to drink."

When he had been served and was comfortable, Jael regarded him with frank pleasure.

"You might look at us," she said. "This is Lothian Farm. These are all Lothians. When and whence? Do account for yourself."

"Today," said Fitzjerald. "At your house in Liberty they told me you were here and how to find you."

"But you must have arrived at noon. Here it is nine o'clock, and the drive takes only two hours."

"Just two hours," he said. "I started at seven."

"You are most unsatisfactory," said Jael. "Nothing to be got out of you. Why these heavy looks?"

"I'm looking at Capuchin . . . Good evening, sir," he roared. "How do you do?"

"Good evening, Mr. Fitzjerald," said Capuchin.

"You are safe I see," said Fitzjerald, so offensively that everyone, even Jael, began to wonder at him. "Safety is your private platitude," he continued. "You mould the bullet, set it in powder, cock the hammer. You do not pull the trigger. That's the dangerous part."

Visibly agitated, Capuchin pushed his chair back from the table and began dusting himself, not aware of what he did.

"You don't brush yourself at the table, Mr. Capuchin," said Fitzjerald. "It's abominable. Moreover, it betrays you. What guilty knowledge of yourself are you forever brushing away?"

"Mr. Fitzjerald," said Capuchin, "we shall have an accounting in full one day."

"It isn't possible," said Fitzjerald. Then he asked suddenly: "At what time today did you leave Liberty, Mr. Capuchin?"

Capuchin's manner altered. He answered quickly, anxiously, "At one o'clock."

"Witnesses for it, I trust? You would have thought of witnesses, Mr. Capuchin."

"Yes," said Capuchin, strangely. He was instantly conscious he had blundered. His wits returned. "I could not possibly leave Liberty unobserved," he said, "whatever it is you mean."

"Of course," said Fitzjerald, sneering. "That you have witnesses is a harmless fact, and still very important. Well, in that case it is news I bring. The banker Plaino was murdered this afternoon."

All eyes turned to Capuchin. He came slowly to his feet, with a dazed expression, and began pacing the floor in a line parallel to the table, beating the palm of one hand with the fist of the other, groaning at intervals.

"Why so distressed, Mr. Capuchin," said Fitzjerald, with wicked taunting. "You are safe. No one will suspect you, least of all the law. The law is stupid. It will pass you by. Its business is only with him who pulled the trigger."

Capuchin stopped, turned to face Fitzjerald and met his gaze unwincingly. To the astonishment of those present who had not seen it happen before, his appearance changed, even the outline of him, which seemed all at once larger and more definite, not blurred at the edges as usual. This was one of those moments in which he saw himself in an aura of innocence, maligned, misunderstood, majestically wearing his sorrows. It clothed him with a fictitious dignity.

"Mr. Fitzjerald," he said, "you are a fiend. I am a guest in this house, an unwelcome one, yet a guest. As touching your insults, therefore, I am at the mercy of Miss Saint-Leon. What she permits I cannot help. But you goad me to say, to her, to you, to all present, that I am no more responsible for what has occurred today than . . . than others. Certainly no more than the Lothian College, no more than the founder of that college herself. I did not invent Semicorn. I did not find him. He

was presented to me in Jones street. I met him there as I met you, as I met her, as I met Lothians at all. I accepted him as I accepted the others. And if . . . no, that's all. That's all I mean to say."

He began pacing the floor again.

"Semicorn!" said Fitzjerald, repeating the name. He was tense, dramatic, leaning half-way across the table, following Capuchin with his eyes. "Nobody had mentioned Semicorn, Mr. Capuchin. Why do you mention him?"

Capuchin faced the company. A stricken look spread slowly over his features.

"No," he said, speaking just above a whisper. "I should not have mentioned him, either. I beg everyone here to forget that I did."

Then, to complete the scene, he fell with a crash upon the table, sobbing:

"I loved that man . . . like a brother . . . I loved him."

Fitzjerald supplied the theatrical fact.

"Semicorn," he said, "is charged with the murder of Plaino."

II

Capuchin's behaviour was never clearly understood by those who witnessed it. No one knew what had taken place between him and Semicorn that morning. He had stopped just short of disclosing it. As information it was very important;

and although it was by no means final as evidence of Semicorn's guilt, yet if it had been known it would have reduced the tormenting doubt that surrounded his case. Capuchin never did reveal it.

It was this: Capuchin was still in bed the morning after election when Semicorn came to see him. What he came for was to expound the Lenine doctrine of revolution, especially the defense of it as an accomplished fact.

The fatal error was to suppose that once the people had got control of the state they were safe. Not so. A revolution had to be defended jealously, by ruthless means. Counter-revolution had to be put down by the same methods as those by which the capitalistic state puts down revolution when it can. What happened to the leaders of a revolution if they failed? They were exiled, hanged, destroyed. So the people, having got the power, should stand their enemies against the wall, instead of leaving them entrenched, free to plot against the new order, to corrupt the inexperienced leaders, to seize the first moment of discouragement to turn the people against themselves, and so destroy the works of revolution.

His mind was aflame. The point of his argument was that a political defeat meant nothing if they refused to accept it. Capuchin was a fool to accept it.

There was yet time to act logically. They had all the means still in their hands. What they lacked

was courage. He, Semicorn, would undertake in one hour to raise a force sufficient for all purposes.

He had worked out a military plan. Spreading a large map on the bed, he traced upon it with an icy finger the lines of communication to be seized. All points of strategic importance were marked in red; there was indicated also the location of food reserves, ammunition, rifles, oil, with precise data as to quantities. According to the plan, the first act after a secret mobilization of forces would be to destroy Plaino and take his bank, as a stroke of terrorism against the morale of the enemy.

As to all the facts he was cool and reasoning. When he returned to the argument his intensity was alarming. The more Capuchin tried to calm him the worse it was. Toward the end—and it went on four hours—he began to reproach Capuchin for cowardice.

"I ought to've known it," he said. "What you haven't got is guts. I'm trying to put some into you—guts to think red, feel red, act red, so's not to let the people down. They're red 'n' you don't know it. They don't know it themselves until they see red done. Then they know it. They're not afraid of red. The capitalis is. Red scares them—their own red does. They won't ride me out of here on a rail. I've told you what I'd do in your place and I'm saying this for myself. I got a better way to go. I'm red to my middle. I've got the guts to do red."

He was talking to himself and to Capuchin at the same time; he appeared to be in physical agony, like some primeval worker of black magic consuming himself to invoke a dreadful power. Red was the word of incantation. He phonated it diabolically.

The paroxysm passed; he was calm again, saying: "It's no good. I hear you saying it's no good. Then let me alone. Leave that to me. You see your way, I see mine; what comes of mine is mine. T'hell with the Freemen's League of politics. Semicorn rides on his own guts . . . I'm telling you in time as I promised to."

In one moment he was gone.

Capuchin, who all this time had been in his pajamas, clothed himself frantically, with no other thought in his head than to pursue Semicorn. As he was leaving the room he looked back and saw the map and the neatly typed military plan still lying on the bed. He put them in his pocket and went on. It was not until he was within sight of the "Herald" office that he was struck with a sense of the incriminating character of these papers.

He stopped aghast. What if something horrible should issue from Semicorn's madness and he, Capuchin, should be arrested with these documents on his person! Time was passing. He shook with dread. The back-firing of a motor car gave him a nasty start.

The self-saving motive came uppermost. Turning, he went around the block to the public garage

where he kept his car, spoke to as many persons as possible, asked the time of day, took on oil and gas, and drove away, hearing himself say he was going for a rest.

That he took the road to Lothian Farm was accidental. His one conscious purpose was to find a place where he could burn the papers without trace. As he was burning them in a deep ravine out of sight of the road his thoughts went back to Semicorn. What should he do? He could not imagine informing against him or having him locked up. Suppose he did. Semicorn would deny everything and he himself had just destroyed the only evidence there was.

Fear began to clutch him, mysterious and horrible. He was afraid to go back. He had told people he was going away to rest. What had prompted him to say that? It was not true when he said it. He had no such intention consciously. They had seen him depart. He need not go back at all. It would seem strange to go back.

Presently he went on. Instinctively he did it, refusing to analyze the impulse, only taking care to stop at least once an hour to talk to someone. Invariably he asked the time of day.

His thoughts dwelt morbidly on the character of Semicorn; he reviewed the incidents of their association together. Together! Together! What did that mean. It was significant, ominous.

Ah! How obvious it was when his wits came

through! They were closely related in people's minds—himself and Semicorn. Everybody knew that Semicorn conducted the "Herald" under his direction. He must rid himself of Semicorn. The "Herald" connected them. He began threshing his mind for some plausible act of disavowal.

It was then it occurred to him to convey the "Herald" back to Jael in a way to make it appear he had never owned it. Between Liberty and Lothian Farm was a small town where he got a blank bill of sale, such as farmers use; then he stopped in a deserted barn to fill it out.

Thus he appeared before Jael, cunningly intent upon a transaction that had no importance whatever outside of his terrified imagination.

On hearing from Fitzjerald that Plaino had been murdered he was as sure as if he had seen the deed that Semicorn had committed it. Two emotions assailed him. One was that of simple horror; the other was one of remorse. For it was true, he had conceived a great affection for Semicorn, and the memory of having abandoned him to his madness clutched his heart. Distributing the responsibility for Semicorn, in that rise against Fitzjerald, was a general defense quite characteristic; it was also a secret, specific defense against the torment of remorse. Then all at once his direct feeling for Semicorn swamped all other emotions and so he collapsed.

III

Jael turned from that ambiguous sight to Fitzjerald and asked for more news. What was the evidence against Semicorn? And what were the circumstances of the murder?

As Fitzjerald recited the details Capuchin lifted his face and listened, forgetting himself, unaware of the incongruity of his position in this company.

The murder was that kind of incredible thing which does often take place. One simply could not imagine it to have happened unobserved, in the midst of activity, in the light, with no effort or possibility of concealment. Yet there was the fact. It did so happen.

At two o'clock Plaino was seen at his desk alive. He sat in a private room at the back of the bank.

Entering the bank one had on the right a row of windows with little desks between for the use of patrons, on the left the long continuous counter with the opaque glass screen and the little barred openings such as one has seen in many banks. Walking straight down this corridor between the street windows and the counter one came to a partition wall with two doors. One was the door to the directors' room, always locked; the other was the door to Plaino's private office. The partition wall was thick and the door was heavy; still it was very extraordinary that such a sound had not been heard through the wall and through the closed

door by the clerks back of the counter outside. From where the cashier sat to Plaino's desk the actual distance was less than thirty feet, and the cashier was all the time in his place, or was supposed to have been.

At two-thirty o'clock a clerk entered Plaino's room. He was there, at his desk, a shapeless lump, with a bullet through his heart. The killer had walked in, right up to the old man's desk, facing him, had shot him and walked out again, and nobody had seen him.

The sequel was swift. The chief of police, a man hitherto unnoted for any power of insight, went immediately to "The Northwestern Herald" office, arrested Semicorn and his Wobbly crew, and searched the editorial premises. In the top right-hand drawer of Semicorn's desk was found a Colt revolver with one chamber fired. The empty cartridge shell was still in it and the smell of burnt powder was fresh. The bullet that killed Plaino had been already recovered; it was found in the wall behind him, and it fitted the empty shell.

Semicorn was questioned. They asked him if the weapon was his. He refused to answer. They asked him if he had killed Plaino. He refused to answer. They asked him if he knew who killed Plaino.

"Yes," he said.

"Who?"

"The people killed him," he answered; and that was all they could get out of him.

There was nothing more, except that the town was in a state of dangerous excitement. When Fitzjerald left at seven o'clock people were gathering around the jail in which Semicorn and his Wobblies were held.

Jael rose from the table. To Fitzjerald she said, "Were you intending to go back tonight? You would be quite comfortable here. But if you were going back we might go together."

"I meant to go back tonight," he said, moving to get on his coat.

Capuchin stared at her unbelievingly. He had no understanding of her compulsion to go and could not restrain a sound of protest.

"But Ja-ah, Miss Saint-Leon, do you . . . if you . . . well, why should you go?"

She did not hear him.

It was remembered afterward by those who noticed him that he was so torn by equivocal impulses as to seem to be moving in two directions at once. As a fact, he followed Jael's car for several miles, then turned back, went deeper into the country, took refuge with some farm friends, and was not heard of again for several weeks.

IV

A sleet storm had come on. The going was slow.

When Jael and Fitzjerald arrived at Liberty it was two o'clock and the town was quiet. They went to Little Jones Street, which had the character of a club, and met again at breakfast. They were alone.

Fitzjerald had been out through the town. There was no newspaper, because, first, the editors were all in jail, and because, secondly, a mob had wrecked the plant.

Feeling ran very high against Wobblies, Lothians, even Leaguers. The mob that wrecked the "Herald" plant had earlier assaulted the jail, meaning to lynch Semicorn. It had entered, in fact, and got its hands on him. The sheriff was a man of strength. He saved his prisoner. In the struggle Semicorn was wounded, no one knew how badly.

"Angus," said Jael, "I've been thinking of what you said to Capuchin on his responsibility—that he did everything but pull the trigger—not meaning to do so of course and yet in fact, by words, by suggestion, by flinging about combustible materials of thought, inciting another type of mentality to commit an insane act. Does that apply to me also?"

He answered, "Jael, you are too rational."

"Don't evade me, . . . please."

"A terrible responsibility does rest upon the intellectual radicals," he said. "If you press me, I am obliged to say I think so. They talk revolution philosophically, meaning change, if they know what they do mean. On a plane beneath philosophical

distinctions other people talk revolution, using the same words, and they are literal. The intellectuals' processes are abstract. They say revolution and see nothing. These others say revolution and see it taking place in the historical manner, as a brutal physical drama. And it seems to me these others are right. That is what revolution does mean. If the intellectuals don't mean revolution in the historical figure they ought to find some other word for what they are talking about. I recall a conversation with the editors of a radical German newspaper in Frankfurt, years ago. We were at lunch, talking politics. They kept speaking of the revolution. I said, 'What do you mean when you say revolution?' First they stared at me and then they said, 'You don't suppose we mean killings in the street and blood in the gutters? That cannot happen in Germany.' I said I only wished to be sure. Thousands of people who read that paper and repeated its very phrases did mean killings in the street and blood in the gutters. And when this actually happened in Germany those editors were of course horrified. That was not what they meant at all. The same words, the same language, the same images, philosophical on one plane, literally understood on the other. It is as if . . . Well!"

There were sounds of crashing glass, then a thud on the floor below—once, twice, a third time. In the intervals could be heard an ominous huzzing outside. Someone came running up to say there

was a mob in front of the house. Jael immediately went down. Fitzjerald followed, not to restrain her but to stand by. She opened the door just as a rock fell on the threshhold, short of its mark. Fitzjerald stood behind her, not clearly in view.

The house was twenty feet back from the street and there was a fence. The crowd, not quite a mob, was on both sides of the fence, egging itself on. Jael's appearance produced a hush. She went to the edge of the porch and said: "I am at home. If you want to see me you may come in. But please do not break my windows."

That was all. She stood there half a minute, waiting. Some unintelligible remarks were shouted at her from the sidewalk; those who were inside the fence began to ooze out again, and nothing more occurred. She went inside and closed the door, not at all gently.

V

At the coroner's inquest Semicorn, his head in bandages, doggedly repeated his first statement. As to the revolver, he refused to answer. Did he kill Plaino? He refused to answer. Did he know at whose hands the deceased had met his death?

Yes.

Whose?

"The people killed him," he answered.

Not another word, no variation of these words, could be got from him, then or ever.

There was no doubt about the revolver. It was his. Seven or eight persons testified positively on this point. In fact, everybody in the "Herald's" editorial department knew it was his weapon. Not this time but at other times and often he was seen to take it from the drawer and slip it into his pocket on going out, always putting it back in its place on returning. Moreover, he had bought it in the town a year before, and this was proved.

The next day he was indicted for murder.

Jael went to the prison to see him. Many difficulties were raised about it, and when these were overcome he declined to receive her. He declined also to have the aid of legal counsel. Nevertheless, she brought two eminent lawyers from New York to prepare his defense. This everyone knew. Secretly, she brought detectives to work on the case, thinking it was possible to prove his innocence.

Her motives were not rational, nor did she seek to rationalize them to herself or to anyone else. From this time forward her conduct was purely emotional.

Her conscious feeling was one of responsibility for Semicorn. It did not interest her to argue it and she would not discuss it, more than to say, "My conscience tells me so."

She had included him with her Lothians. Her loyalty to them was devotional. Lately, with the unfolding of her emotional nature, there had been added to her sense of loyalty a richer feeling. She

began to see them as children. The mother hunger again, disguised and projected. Never until now had this hunger possessed a tragic and helpless object upon which to fix itself. Semicorn became that object.

Her conviction of his innocence was a maternal extravagance, not a reasoned conviction. Never for a moment did she doubt it. She had no theory of the crime nor did she try to explain Semicorn's behaviour under the charge of having committed it. Purposely she avoided formulating theories. Simply, he was not guilty. To that she held. In the development of this attitude she was undoubtedly preparing beforehand the moral justification for extreme, extra-legal measures, with the premonition they would be necessary to save him.

Her detectives found nothing whatever to her use. They were soon convinced of Semicorn's guilt. Her lawyers told her the defense would be hopeless if he persisted in his categorical, incriminating answers, saying he knew who killed Plaino and then refusing to tell, or saying absurdly it was the people killed him, which was the same as refusing to tell. He admitted knowledge of the deed and to withhold it made him accessory to the crime. They supposed he would continue to make these answers. They could not be sure, because he obstinately refused to converse with them. They strongly urged her to adopt the plea of insanity as a defense. There were two difficulties. He probably would repudiate

that plea. It might be managed in spite of him but for the other difficulty, which was final. Jael herself would not consent. She positively forbade the lawyers to take that line. It was not consistent with her conviction of his innocence.

VI

The Semicorn case meanwhile had become the most celebrated of its kind. It was one of a notorious kind.

In the mentality of those who define themselves as class-conscious proletarians, coming as such to inherit the world, there is a morbid passion to exploit, experience and contemplate martyrdom. This passion, forever strange, is very old. The wonder and mystery of it haunt the ruins of Rome to this day. Any I. W. W., any communist, anarchist, rebel or radical, whom or what, brought to trial on a criminal charge, be the crime homicide, arson, burglary, sedition or treason, is thereby recommended for sainthood. A weird litany begins in the radical press, and the formula is:

First, the crime was an act of class warfare, therefore not a crime.

Second, the man is innocent; the crime was not committed.

Third, the charge was invented by the Neros of capitalism and their satraps.

Fourth, the object is to terrorize the proletariat;

a victim is wanted; justice has been corrupted beforehand.

Lastly, if he is convicted and hanged, the obit and post-obit songs and the enrollment of another martyr.

But if he is found not guilty, justice acquires no merit. Only, Nero was that time afraid. The proletariat has won a victory.

The organization that had learned how to exploit this emotional asset most effectively was the one to which Semicorn belonged, namely, the I. W. W. It had found the cry of persecution to be much better for all purposes of propaganda than its old free speech fighting. It had always one candidate for martyrdom, sometimes two or three, on the way to the scaffold, besides twenty or thirty minor martyrs in jail, not for anything they had done, whether they had done it or not, but for what they believed —for their faith.

Now the Semicorn case went to the top. It was inevitable they said, that the bosses on returning to power in New Freedom would demand a victim. Semicorn was marked as a sacrifice to their lust for revenge. The evidence, all circumstantial, had been framed against him. The revolver had been planted in his drawer and wretches had been bought to swear it was his; or, if it was really his, then it had been fired by someone else, perhaps into the body of Plaino, and then returned to his drawer.

All revolutionary organs chanted these sayings;

the liberal weeklies, like "The People's Witness" edited by Grinling, repeated them, not as their own, not with direct sanction, but to show what the masses were thinking and feeling and how low and discouraged was their opinion of justice. It behooved the state, they said, to be aware of this, and, besides, with reactionary feeling such as it was in New Freedom, it was impossible that a man in Semicorn's case could get a fair trial.

Capuchin never came forward with his evidence. If he had, the retort would have been that the capitalists had paid him to imagine a damning tale to justify the atrocity upon which they were bent.

The trial came on in March. Jael attended. On Semicorn's side were five lawyers—Jael's two, then two hired by the I. W. W. with funds raised from popular subscription, and a fifth appointed by the court as a formality after Semicorn had refused to have anything to do with the other four. On the side of the state was the prosecuting attorney alone. Having put in all the circumstantial evidence, he asked Semicorn to take the stand. Over the protest of his five lawyers he did so. The prosecuting attorney asked him again the well known questions and in a clear voice he made the well known answers.

The case was hopeless, as Jael's lawyers had said. The jury was out ten minutes and brought in a verdict of guilty in the first degree.

He was sentenced to be hanged.

Without his sanction the case was appealed; the higher court confirmed the verdict unanimously. It was appealed again, and with the same result. The day for his execution was set.

VII

Jael had not waited. She was already acting upon a secret design. Her weapon was money; in her use of it she was perfectly unmoral, reckless and extravagant. The justification, if she needed any, was her conviction of Semicorn's guiltlessness.

What now she proposed to do could not be worked through lawyers, nor through detectives, nor through anyone whose like she had ever known. Certainly not through friends, for it was dangerous. She required someone who was already persuaded, a zealot caring nothing for the consequences and yet one who should be subtle, cautious and cool-minded in all that was of means to a desperate end.

And she found this ideal agent in the person of an I. W. W. who was the only one of Semicorn's friends at large, going about freely, accepted by everyone. This was owing to his personality. It was very droll. Nobody could be serious about him. His figure was ludicrous. His pockets were always so bulging with papers and documents that his arms were spread, and he carried a thick, twisted cane like a fifth member. One eye was slightly cocked. He had a twitching smile. This

was a nervous affliction, increasing with mental excitement, so that if he became very earnest or vehement, all the more he seemed to be laughing at himself, or kidding the part. He made others laugh. He had the wit to shape these personal oddities into a perfect disguise beneath which he concealed a nature almost as violent as Semicorn's, and it was never suspected. His name was Leaveout. Besides that he possessed extraordinary intelligence, he was daring, fertile, and cunning.

Semicorn had been removed to the state penitentiary to await death. The penitentiary was a small institution on a lonely hill twenty miles beyond Lothian Farm. The warden had some secret radical sympathies, rooted in malicious envy; much more important was the fact that he was greedy.

The plot evolved between Jael and Leaveout was to deliver Semicorn into the hands of the International Workers of the World, who would undertake to hide him forever.

With the corruptible warden a party to the conspiracy, two men, as Leaveout discovered, could easily effect the delivery in a noiseless manner, by stealth. It was really quite simple. Nevertheless, it took time to perfect the plan. There was the escape after the delivery to be organized. At almost the last moment the warden doubled his price to a fabulous sum. Two weeks before the day set for the execution everything was ready. But then they had to wait ten days more for a dark night.

On the day preceding the appointed night the conspirators were gathered at Lothian Farm. They were, besides Jael herself, Leaveout and four other men who might have passed for lumberjacks, riggers, sailors, or farm laborers, as in fact they were and might be, interchangeably. True types of the bedouin worker. Two were sauntering about separately, outdoors. Two were indoors reading. All four had that solitary, musing air which in strong men on the way to a rash action overlays the coiled intention. They are never thinking about what they are going to do.

It was a warm afternoon. Jael was at her desk in the living hall, working with some papers, and Leaveout was with her, when Fitzjerald's voice came booming through the open door. To Jael's surprise, Leaveout knew him and greeted him freely.

She had not seen him for some time, though he had kept rooms at the hotel in Liberty ever since his first arrival on the day of the murder and was always somewhere around. She understood vaguely that he liked the country and was seeing a good deal of it. That accounted for frequent periods of absence, sometimes for a day or two, again for a week or more.

His appearing unexpectedly at this time evoked in her a variety of feelings. She was glad to see him; but the moment was awkward. Somehow it weakened her. Not as to her purpose, for that was fixed, and besides, her cast was made. The

last detail had been settled; all the money had passed. The reaction had begun. She was low in spirit, lonely, wretched and dangerously tense. Conspiracy was foreign to her nature. Partly it was that Fitzjerald's figure was like the ghost of a time so tranquil and remote that she could hardly suppose her life to have been one continuous piece of reality. For an instant it stood otherwise. Everything this side of Jones street was unreal; it would dissolve as a nightmare. She could have thrown herself headlong upon him as he stood there in the doorway, filling it and looking in, to ask him if this were not so, turning child herself.

"I want to take you for a ride," said Fitzjerald.

"Thanks," she said. "I'm not at all sociable, but I'll go."

As they were leaving he asked, "Would it matter if we got back late? I mean, are you leaving anything in suspense?"

"No," she answered. "I'm all clear. The later the better."

They drove for an hour on a road Jael did not know—hardly more than a track on the buffalo grass. Suddenly he turned around the shoulder of a small butte and stopped out of view of the road. They walked a short distance to a spring and sat there in the shade of a glacial boulder.

"I know what you have been doing," he said. "I know what is to take place tonight."

Her first reaction was one of anxiety for the plot.

"How did you find it out?"

"By using my faculties," he said. "That's all irrelevant."

"But is it likely anyone else knows?"

"I think not," he said. "In that sense your enterprise is probably safe. That is not to say it could not have been discovered—only that no one else has had any suspicion. I knew you too well not to suspect you. That's where I started."

"But I couldn't tell you," she said.

"I understand that," he answered, "and though I have known it for some time I couldn't speak of it, either, for I realized how necessary it was for you to go through with it. You have gone through with it. Your part is accomplished. A very practical piece of work, if I permit myself to admire it. Now my part begins."

"Your part!"

"Mine. The part I take. First I speak of consequences. You will be found out. It is certain. All your care has been to safeguard the end in view. As concerns yourself you have been reckless. Have you thought of the personal consequences?"

"Don't, Angus. Don't . . . please."

"One of the consequences is that you are likely to be hanged in Semicorn's stead. For having effected his escape you may be deemed guilty of the crime of murder."

"I am one of those who did everything but pull the trigger," she said.

"Oh! nonsense. Now hear me, Jael. I possess this information. It is mine. I may do with it what I please. I am resolved to use it in one of two ways. As we stand here you shall choose. Either you shall bind yourself upon your word to put yourself entirely in my hands, go with me now from this spot, remain in my keeping until I release you—or, I will go immediately to Liberty and prevent the delivery of Semicorn."

"Angus! What is this? You do not . . . it is . . . yes, but you do mean it, don't you? . . . I know you. We do not begin now and here to play with words. Say it again, please. Carefully."

"If you say yes we go on from here, on and on, wherever I see the way——"

"You as my jailer."

"I as your keeper."

"And if I say no?"

"If you say no, I shall go at once to Liberty and give information of your plot."

"And as to going away . . . with you . . . where is away?"

"Nowhere. To invisibility. We vanish."

"For how long?"

"Until I release you."

"I see," she said. "Until Semicorn is discovered. Until then, you think. I tell you I have put all my intelligence to this. The plan is perfect. He will never be found."

"Well," said Fitzjerald, "I tell you I have used

such wits as I possess to a similar end. We shall never be found, either."

She was quite still for several minutes.

"Angus, while we are still friends, as of old, let us speak our thoughts freely. We are not playing a game, are we? You apparently do not understand. This is an indignity to my person, to my personality, to the soul of me. You wish to save me. You are willing to sacrifice yourself to save me. The sentiment is noble. To be saved at all is repugnant to me. To be saved in this manner is ignominious. I should prefer to be hanged."

"I know all that," he said. "I admit it."

"And you will admit also that you have no right to put me to this choice."

"Admitted," he said carelessly.

"I am trying to keep it clear," she said. "You have the power to oblige me to say yes. That I admit. I cannot prevent you from defeating my project if I say no. This you must see is at bottom simply a question of physical strength. You are the stronger. I mean, if it were reversed you could prevent me from defeating you? You could detain me here by brute force."

"You shall choose," he said, looking at his watch.

"One more word, Angus. You can oblige me to say yes. You can. But if you do I shall never forgive you. It will be as a solid wall between us forever."

"Even so."

"I should be unable to help hating you."

"I'm sorry," he said.

She stood for a while looking into the spring, with her back to him.

"Are you ready to take my word?"

"I am listening for it," he said, "and I'm hoping it will be no."

"Yes," she said, facing him, with an expression he had never seen.

He held out his hand; she turned away.

"Then let's be starting," he said. "Take the back seat, please, and find the rug. We shall be driving all night."

It was Fitzjerald's one extravagant enterprise in the field of emotional action and need not be otherwise explained. It became fantastic. That would be supposed. From an overdeveloped life of the mind the descent to emotionalism, when it occurs, is steep. Being new, the taste in romantic behaviour is rank, juvenile and uncritical. Its gratification is a wonderful debauch.

VIII

On the Mississippi river a little twenty-foot scow with a cabin on her and a long oar over the stern for either steering or lazy propulsion, nosing about in the flats, stuck on a sand-bar, drifting with the current or tied up in the shade at sundown, a wisp of violet smoke curling out of her stove-pipe funnel,

a smell of bacon coming off on the breeze, will not be observed, remembered or missed, especially if she is unpainted and dingy. If her whole company consists of one man and one woman, it is quite enough and all that life's maritime regulations require. If the members of this company are not on speaking terms, that is unfortunately human. Proximity does it. Or if the woman were mostly invisible and the man, lazing aft, conducted an interminable monologue, you would understand.

There was one such scow, more aimless seeming than the rule is, on which the man talked a high language, as if he were reading a book, though he was not; and if the other river people had listened they would have been suspicious, thinking it alien and wrong. There was much that was wrong here.

The woman inside never spoke; but she thought what a blessed relief it would be to break character, to scream, to quarrel, to fight, to utter profanity, even as other river women, their protests beginning abruptly, ending suddenly, ending sometimes with a splash, the sound of it all coming swiftly across half a mile of still water, staccato vibrations intensified.

This woman appeared when the meal was ready. The meal was eaten in silence. She washed up the things and set them away, as if that were a self-assigned task. Then sometimes she went forward and sat in a little sawbuck chair, slapping mosquitoes.

The man reclined aft, smoking and rumbling.

He was undiscouraged though the woman seemed never to be listening. The reader may not care to listen, either. Nothing happens right away, and one who likes may skip.

Evenings, mornings, afternoons, the man rumbled, and his sayings were such as these:

"The people are not radical here. They are conservative. The soil is young, the hour is young, opportunity is young. Radicalism in this country is a pale ferocity. A personal attitude disguised as a social intention. If you are really a radical you have something the matter with you. There was nothing the matter with the people of New Freedom. They were too young to have anything the matter with them. They had no impulse to destroy anything in principle. What they did want and all they wanted was increased participation in the material benefits of the order that is. Which is not radicalism. Now comes a man like Capuchin, bidding them rise as peasants against the castle. They are not peasants. They are proprietors of the land they work. And there is no castle. What stands for it is an invisible fact called capitalism. They discover that they themselves are capitalists, interested not in the destruction of capitalism but in the proper working of it. Which again is not radicalism. It is the despair of the radical cult. If those people had been radical, wishing to destroy the order, they could have understood a deed like Semicorn's. Instead, they reacted violently the other

way. Hence that sudden revulsion of feeling in New Freedom . . ."

Again: "The proletariat. This is an old-world word, imported here. So far as it is a fact it is an old-world fact, also imported here. When the proletariat becomes articulate, what does it say? It says, 'Life shall be level. The values of existence shall be horizontal. No one shall have more to eat or wear or enjoy than another.' That is to say, everyone shall be free but to possess more than another; everyone shall be free but to be greater or better than another. And the desire to be greater than another is universal. It is this desire that moves the proletariat itself, as a class. For what is it really saying? The meaning of what it says is this: 'We, the people, the slaves, the hewers and bringers whom you have so long despised—we are greater than any other class, greater than all other classes. None shall possess more than we possess and pretend by that sign to a superiority of any kind. We shall inherit the earth.' What unites the proletarians is this thought of their collective greatness and a bitter hatred toward those who deny it in words, in acts, in manners, or by the implication of their possessions. . . . Here is no permanent proletariat. It is always passing, dissolving. Why? Because here it is so easy to possess. . . ."

Again: "I close my eyes and see adopted children to the number of three or four thousand gathered in Washington Square. They have banners, reading:

'Bloody Hands Off Russia.' 'Empty the Jails.' 'Release Our Class Prisoners.' 'Deport Us to Russia if You Dare.' They are Slavs and Jews and Letts and Poles, all a little timorous and anxious to touch one another. Gradually order is established, four abreast, and out of the mass the head of a column appears, twenty or thirty leaders singing in very good voice, the others following. The song is the *Internationale,* and as the strain lifts and floats all hats come off. This is significant. The procession gives one the curious impression of being weighted. It moves forward steadily and at the same time there is a hanging back. What moves these people? Why do they do this? They are all well dressed and well fed. They have come lately from Russia. They would not go back. Their banners are irrelevant altogether. What is taking place here? Why are they so wistful and earnest? This is what it means. These people are not wretched. They are happy. They are not falling. They are rising. They are stumbling up. Yesterday they were nobody in Russia. Here they are emerging. They are free to gratify publicly their desire for self-assertion. They are saying to themselves, addressing the imaginary people who live in the big houses all about: 'We are the proletariat. The earth belongs to us, not to you. We have only to reach forth our hands and take it. Therefore, we are superior to you, even though you do not believe it, even though we do not really believe it ourselves.' It is

a kind of class daydream. It satisfies the bitter yearning to be as good as anybody. This takes the place of religion. That is why the hats come off. They are all so naïve and shy and crowd-conscious that they cannot be looked in the eye. There is no destructive intent in their minds. Everything they feel is large and vague. But they will be as petulant as children if they are crossed. They will kick and scream and bite. But they are rising. That is the fact. They will disappear upward. . . ."

Again: "Some radicals say, 'We do not propose to abolish wealth. We say, abolish poverty.' The fact is you cannot abolish poverty without abolishing wealth. For wealth is relative. One can be sensible of it only in contrast with poverty. What is poverty? What is wealth? There is no absolute measure. Only contrast. In that hut over there the people seem wretchedly poor. That is because habitations have improved. Not long ago, historically speaking, the royal family would have lived in a hut like that. The king himself. The poor now have more than the rich had a few generations ago, more of everything to eat and wear and enjoy. They are none the less torn by envy because others have more. . . ."

Or: "I come again to Kropotkin, idealist, grieving for the botch of mankind, desperately sad at seeing how badly human nature works. He conceives a better way for it to behave. It should behave altruistically. Life should be on a plan of

mutual aid. Help thy neighbor as much as thyself. It is not working that way. The facts are all otherwise. The visible facts. What does he do? Does he accept the facts we know about human nature? No. He rejects them. He recreates the facts of history to prove how well it might work in this other way. There is the silly difficulty that when he has so recreated the facts of history to show human nature working as it should, the people fail him. Having found the perfect way, they depart from it. Thus, the league of free cities, founded on mutual aid, ate up the serfs and peasants. The craft guilds, formed on the same right principle, oppressed the minor crafts and the unskilled and the consumers, until they had to be overthrown. What is proved? That people unite to gain an advantage and, having gained it, abuse it? No. It is only proved to Kropotkin that there is some principle of wickedness in the leadership, for see how beautiful the world would be if from the beginning those who united to make themselves free and equal and powerful had included everyone else in their freedom and power and equality. Absurd! The imagination may so easily recreate historical facts to prove that to be true which ought to be true! Man may do almost anything he likes with the facts. He is continually creating new facts. He cannot recreate the fact of himself. That is not to say he has ever tried. . . ."

And again: "You cannot tell people the truth. In

the first place, they will not receive it. In the second place you do not know what it is. . . ."

IX

Headway by leeway, floating and drifting, sleeping and waking, the endless rumbling of Fitzjerald's serial soliloquy—this had been going on for nearly two months, down three hundred miles of river, and Jael was nearly mad. She had thought of saying to him: "I may not take back my word, but I am free to end my life." What restrained her was a sense of absurdity.

His physical nearness day and night became a horror. A thin partition divided the cabin. At night she could hear the slightest movement on his side. Sometimes he snored.

It was much more comfortable than she could have imagined, in the creature sense. Her little bunk was soft. He had been extremely thoughtful to provide personal necessaries, certain indispensable things a man could not be expected to remember or think of, even intimate garments of fine texture to be worn under the coarse gingham dress he specified for appearances. Yet each of these things was a separate outrage. They were details, offensively touching her person, whereas she had conceded to him only the right to control her movements.

Right! What right had he to take charge of her life at all? The only right he could conceivably claim was one he did not assert.

Her anger and disgust were so strong that the consequences she had been saved from, in contrast with what she had been saved for, grew dim. Suppose she had stood her ground at Lothian Farm, as she meant to do, until he had interfered. Suppose she had been hanged in Semicorn's place. Even in that extremity she would still have been herself, a definite, responsible person. In this incredible situation she was not herself. She did not belong to herself; she did not belong to him.

She, Jael Saint-Leon, reduced to melodrama!

A nameless woman floating on the river with a man who believed he had saved her from being hanged, for God knew what fantastic reason of his own, if any.

His impersonal serenity in all circumstances, ignoring even the fact that she never spoke, compounded the torture.

He had put off his beard. His face had turned a cherry-wood color from the sun. His forearms had become freckled, and the hair upon them, now lighter than his skin, was a revelation of shagginess. He had an odor she had never noticed before. Not an odor of uncleanliness. A masculine smell that affected her sometimes very disagreeably, sometimes quite otherwise.

She hated him, and her feeling of repugnance was often so strong that she could not eat. This worried him, whereupon she had moments, for which she despised herself, of feeling sorry. Then

there was the ghastly uncertainty, the fact of its being an indeterminate affair. When should it end? Perhaps never, unless she broke out of his trap. When they should come sometime to the end of the river—then what?

But she was fair, analytical and self-seeing. It was with her mind and spirit she hated him. That was not the whole of her. She knew—having discovered it by a process of painful self-exploration—that his total unawareness of her as a woman was the unpardonable affront, a subtle, unmentionable injury.

Wondering if his attitude were real or only studied she began to regard him from that point of curiosity. Apparently it was real. She could not be sure; and she never knew. But to the end of this preposterous interlude his indifference to her, as man to woman, was flawless. It taunted her. More than once she had the impulse to test it by some overt act. She knew also that if for one instant it were different on his part, if he betrayed by so much as one little gesture the slightest sex interest in her, she would cast herself overboard or try to kill him.

With this humiliating and unexpected knowledge of herself she went back to the evening when he put her to the choice. What else could she have done? She could think of many things another kind of woman might have done. She was not that kind of woman. Probably he was not the kind of man

the kind of woman she was not could have detained there by the spring.

Nevertheless, when she came to this point something seemed to be left out, or to drop out—some further subtle explanation of her yes. So far as she knew at the time she said yes to protect and save her plot, unable to see any feasible alternative. Was it possible that an unacknowledged feeling for Fitzjerald, as a refuge of strength, as a lover, perhaps, had defeated her wits and influenced her decision? She had the courage to face this at last, and to prove it affirmatively, by putting to herself squarely the question: Suppose it had been another man? Suppose it had been Capuchin, for example? Then would she have said yes? Certainly not. What else she might have done she could not say. Yet there was the fact. In no other case, with no other man, would she or could she have said yes.

These progressive discoveries of her inner self did not in the least soften her sense of indignation. On the contrary, they increased it most perversely. She hated him all the more.

Such was the case and the breaking point of strain was near when one day the drifting scow came upon three men swimming the river. Two were in trouble, having spent themselves; the third, a powerful swimmer, was helping them, first one and then the other, telling them how to unhinge their joints and take it easy. Fitzjerald hauled them all aboard.

The two who were spent fell down in a wet heap.

The third, who was tall, red haired and purposeful, said to Fitzjerald, "Take us over t' the other side."

The river at that point was more than a mile wide. The other side was flat, alive with mosquitoes, and the scow had been avoiding it; besides, it was twice as far.

"Why that side?" Fitzjerald asked. "I don't want to go over there. This side is nearer."

"We got t'get over there," the man said. His tone was peremptory. He looked uneasily at the near side, then marked the course of the scow and glanced at the sculling oar, clearly with the thought of taking possession of the craft and putting her across himself.

"Then you had better go on swimming," said Fitzjerald. "This is not a ferryboat."

Just then on the near bank, which was high, appeared a group of horsemen, all armed with rifles and shotguns. One of them, thinking himself a battleship commander, dropped a bullet in the water ahead of the scow; and all of them yelled.

"Put her off!" said the red haired man, moving to take the oar.

"Stand still," said Fitzjerald, quietly. "I'll not put you ashore until I find out what it's all about."

The man hesitated. Meanwhile the scow was working shoreward. One of the horsemen shouted: "Take them men to the other side. You bring them back here an' we'll hang them."

At that Fitzjerald put the scow off toward the

other side, remembering how the river divided the states. The other side was another state. Evidently this was an affair of summary expulsion.

"It seems unanimous," he said to the red haired man. "What's your name? and what's wrong with the three of you?"

"My name's Lovelace," the man answered. "That ain't my name but I like it. An' they ain't nothing wrong with us. We belong to th' red card union, that's all."

He leaned against the cabin, wet, contemptuous and disgusted, as one who knows trouble and may be easily bored with it.

"Wobblies, eh?" said Fitzjerald. "What have you been doing to make yourselves so unpopular?"

"You don't haf to do anything t' get unpopular 'f'you're a Wobbly," said Lovelace. "Y'just naturally are that way. Ain't no place good for you. 'F'a wheat stack burns up 'r'a pulley runs off th' shaft 'n' they know you tote a red card, that's you, 'n' they fan you out o'th goddam state. One o' my partners there now's got some lead in his leg. That's why he wasen swimming so good."

"May we do something for him?" Jael asked. She had been listening, and now appeared in the cabin door with this question.

Lovelace regarded her for a moment casually and answered: "No, madam. We got him fixed up. Ain't so bad. They diden go t' kill him. Just t' scare him. When they want one of us killed they

get th' law to do it, like they done t' Semicorn."

"Semicorn?" she repeated. "Did you say Semicorn?"

"Yes, madam. He was one of us they wanted to kill, 'n' they murdered him by law."

"You are wrong," she said. "He was not executed. Are you sure?"

"Am I sure?" he said. "You c'n read, can't you? . . . Here!"

He pulled from his pocket an oil skin wallet, opened it carefully and drew out the folded front page of an I. W. W. newspaper. The only news on it was the account of Semicorn's execution, treated as a class murder in great block type. Jael only glanced at it.

"But I had heard he was to be . . . to be saved," she said.

"Where d'yu get that?" he asked. His manner was rough and menacing and he regarded her with wonder-struck suspicion. Before she could answer his expression changed. The wonder remained, apparently increasing; the suspicion went away.

"I mean," she said, hesitating, "there was a rumor that he was to escape . . . that it had been arranged . . . and I had heard nothing since."

"Now I get you," he said, in a very different voice. "That was so, too. What you diden know—"

"Lay off! Lay off that!" shouted one of the two men lying forward of the cabin.

"Shut up!" said Lovelace. Then to Jael: "What you diden know was he refused t' be saved. It was all ready for him. Like that!" (Snapping his fingers.) "He woulden go. He said no."

At that moment the scow crawled up on the mud.

Jael looked at Fitzjerald.

"You hear?" she said. "I am released."

"Yes," he answered.

"Put the plank over, please."

"I'll go ashore and get directions," he said. "It may be miles to the nearest town."

Lovelace was already putting the plank over, with one ear cocked to what was passing between Jael and Fitzjerald.

"If you were not a profound idiot," she said to Fitzjerald, "you might see that I am at the limit of my self-control. I loathe myself. I loathe you. I will go alone. Do you understand? From this instant I will be alone. I wish to walk in the mud—alone!"

"It's coming dark," he said, placidly. "It isn't safe."

At that she laughed, with wicked scorn, and there was the note of an hysterical scream in it.

"Safe!" she repeated. "From safety I am delivered."

With that she walked down the plank and cut straight across the dried mud flat. There was nothing ahead of her but this black bottom land so far as one could see. No habitation in sight.

Lovelace spoke a few words in a low tone to his companions and then set out after her. Fitzjerald followed.

For a mile or more Lovelace made no effort to overtake her. Then he mended his pace.

"He's foll'in' you, madam," he said. "Him you heaved off back there."

"So are you," said Jael.

"That's different," he said. "You got nothin' agen me 'n' I wanta talk to you."

"What about?" she asked, holding her way.

"You woulden know me, that's right," he said. "I've done myself over a bit since I was t'your place. I diden know you first."

She stopped to look at him. There was first some vague, startling association; then suddenly full recognition.

"I do," she said. "You were one of the four who waited that day at Lothian Farm. You were—"

"One o' them that went for Semicorn," he said.

"Why didn't you take him by force?" she demanded.

"No good," he replied. "He diden want t'go. Where'd you keep a man like that agen his own will? I knowed him too well for that."

"You knew him? How long had you known him?"

"Long afore that was. From when he was a kid, you might say."

Here at last was one who knew something of Semicorn's history. For the rest of the way—and it was six miles to the nearest town—they walked together, Lovelace talking about Semicorn. Fitzjerald doggedly kept them in sight.

How a certain tragedy in Semicorn's childhood controlled the rest of his life was easily understood. His father was a miner in Colorado, not a radical, not an agitator, a docile man, whose way in a labor dispute was merely to stand with his own. There came a very desperate strike when the boy was ten. The strikers and their families, evicted from the company houses, pitched camp in tents and armed themselves; and it became very hot for scabs and strike breakers. To protect the lives of these the militia was called out. Between the strikers and the militia occurred several bloody collisions. In one of them a stray bullet killed Semicorn's mother. To take revenge was thereafter his ruling passion. He cut out for himself at fourteen, worked at anything he could find, went to night school, joined the I. W. W. because it was the most militant order in sight, and soon found his way to its department of propaganda. It was to increase his equipment for that work, with an ambition to become head of the organization, that he went to New York and entered Lothian College after having been discharged from Leavenworth prison, where he served a term for inciting men to resist the draft. Not that he was a pacifist.

He said it was a capitalistic war, and he believed it was a capitalistic bullet that killed his mother.

Lovelace evidently had known him intimately. He told many details of his life, humanly interesting though irrelevant, and would have gone on interminably but that they came at last to the town and to the door of the hotel. Jael gave him some money and bade him come to her in the morning. She had an idea for his future.

As Lovelace left her Fitzjerald came up. He stood in a ludicrous light and did not mind. His manner was not in the least altered.

"It is both custom and law," he said, "for the jailer to see that his charge shall fare forth with the requisite means. Are you all right? Do you need anything?"

"Thank you," she said, coldly, and turned to go in. But the sight of his tall figure receding gave her a pang.

"Angus!" she called.

He came walking back.

She was embarrassed. This made her very angry again. She the one to be embarrassed! It was one thing more he had done to her.

"I have forgotten why I called you back," she said. Then on impulse, "Angus, I do you the compliment to suppose you are a damn fool."

"I know that," he said.

"You know everything," she retorted. "Do you know one thing more? I should sometime regret

not having asked you and I may as well ask you now. What are your true feelings about me?"

"I have given it some thought," he answered.

"I'm sure you have. What have you found out?"

"This," he said. "Between man and woman there is no wormless friendship."

She might have retorted. The words were ready. Friendship! Did he lay it entirely there at last and put her in the wrong for having failed to understand it? Did not men with one another respect the individual's right to meet the consequences of his own acts in his own way? Would one man have taken possession of another as he had taken possession of her?

But she said none of this. A contrary emotion moved her to offer him her hand.

"Good-bye," she said, smiling a little. "What are you going to do?"

"My legs are stiff," he said. "So is my mind. I shall go for a walk to the west, over the mountains, putting the rest of the year to it. What are you going to do?"

"You will find me in New York," she said, "and that's as far as I know."

With that she went in.

X

She returned to New York unannounced and went direct to Jones street. It was early morning. Lilli-

bridge and DeGrouse were at breakfast alone, with certain unmistakable signs of a very intimate relationship.

"It's quite all right," she said to Jael's look of inquiry. "We are married. I couldn't leave while you were lost. So we did the other thing. De Grouse came here."

Jael ceded them the place for so long as they might wish to keep it. On entering the door she had been seized with a feeling of aversion. To reinstate herself here was unimaginable. Instead, she opened the old Saint-Leon house uptown and went to live there, temporarily, she supposed.

The old circle reformed in this environment, and she was interested to see how readily her guests accommodated themselves to its luxurious texture, as if they were quite used to it. Indeed, in the years that had passed since she left this house to make a place in Jones street where her friends could be at ease everyone had become much more familiar with the surfaces of fine living.

She abandoned the Lothian Farm in New Freedom, though not the idea. That she went on with, to a much larger scale, with one farm in Pennsylvania and another in Connecticut, and induced the Lothian College to take it up.

From time to time she heard of Capuchin. Once she heard from him direct. He took up co-operative marketing and worked out an elaborate scheme of control, costing, grading, branding and selling, which

he had sold once to the fig growers in California, once to the apple growers in Washington and once to the irrigationists in Idaho; and now in a long letter to Jael he wished her to finance its application to nation-wide agriculture.

Fitzjerald returned to New York the next winter. One evening he appeared for dinner. Jael greeted him as of old, and also as of old she was genuinely glad to see him. He was just the same. He knew most of the company. It had not changed so much. One notable addition was a red haired man as tall as himself and much in the same figure. This was Mr. Lovelace, who had not renamed himself and appeared to have a good deal to do in an executive way with the new Lothian farms. No one could tell, not even Jael, whether Fitzjerald remembered him or not.

Secretly both Jael and Fitzjerald were very sentimental about that absurd Mississippi river voyage. They knew too much and thought too much. That was the whole trouble and why it turned out so badly. He with a fantastic notion of romantic behavior from the literature of sublime knighthood and she with no Eveish way to a man.

On taking her away so high-handedly he had no thought but one of rescue; yet he had been willing to give all the rest of his life to it, with whatever that might entail. Afterward it seemed to him quite impossible to make love to her or in any way disclose his feeling to a damsel held in durance. Then

at the end when she said she loathed him he believed it, and so answered her question as to say the motive had been one of friendship.

For a long time, under conditions of restored amity, neither one referred to this experience obliquely or otherwise. He perhaps would never himself have touched it.

One night at dinner a vivacious California woman sat opposite Fitzjerald and they had been tilting together. At one thrust from him, somewhat rough, she turned to Jael and asked:

"What kind of man is this Mr. Fitzjerald?"

Jael was lighting a cigarette, and she answered, saying it slowly: "He is the kind of man who doesn't know what a woman means when she says yes."

THE END

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