

smack.
 "But it is all in a lifetime. So you wobble through your task; make friends with the clerk or the hall-boy, so as to feel secure of being waked in time or not being waked before time; turn in for an hour's sleep and wake to tell a company of strange people something that has grown so old to you that you would rather meet a ghost alone at night, in whatever questionable shape it might come. Then you hang about to catch a freight train to a junction twenty miles away; stay there with two bums, a woman, a baby and a red-hot stove for company until two o'clock in the morning, when the operator sticks out his head to tell you the Western Express is eight hours late, the nearest hotel seven miles away, and no other train up or down the line until the Express arrives. You are hungry, tired, sleepy.

he was allowed a weekly sum out of the receipts over and above his personal expenses. This sum was for the support of his family, and was amply sufficient for that purpose, had there not been other uses to which he deemed it more necessary that it should be applied, of which I had at that time no suspicion.
 The venture seemed doomed to ill-luck from the first. Up to that time I had never known what it was to face a small audience. During the few months previous, illness and misfortune had produced a singularly weak and morbid condition. How I managed to endure the gaze of that first audience, I have never been able to understand. Perhaps I was never nearer suicide than during the night which followed. Everything was wrong; if I had misconceived my audience, it was evident they had quite misunderstood the

to the poppy-fringed shore of the Pacific. No familiarity ever makes it common. Do what we may, it always impresses one like another world, an old world—a dead world, if you like. You may people it; dot it with cities and towns, and sprinkle it with homes; but they are not the same people that live in the verdant stretches of the East; the cities seem strange and unreal; the "ranches" are not farms, say what we may; and the men and women who are born and dwell in this region, seem to lack some nameless thing which we attach to them, but do not find; just as the land that wanders nonchalantly over the immense spaces of this dead world seems to lack something of the refreshment that a breeze which comes over verdant meads and mountains clothed with decidua, is sure to bring.



THE LECTURER IN THE LOW, BROAD WICKER CHAIR, WHICH WAS ACCORDED HIM BY COMMON CONSENT.

but can neither eat, sleep nor smoke. You get your breakfast about noon the next day; arrive late at your destination; meet an angry, scowling audience, who think you took a late train just to beat them out of their money. A trip-hammer is working in your brain. You pity your auditors and feel that your lecture must be insufferably dull. The applause seems arduous in its evident mockery, and when they crowd around you in congratulation at the lecture's close, you think, until the hearty hand-claps shake the cobwebs out of your brain, that they are simply poking fun at you. Then you meet an old friend; perhaps two. They were with you at college, or before Atlanta; on the "March to the Sea," or in Libby Prison; at this convention or that reception. They give you one grip, and then another. Sometimes you know the grip; sometimes the men; sometimes neither. No matter; they are friends. Your weariness disappears; your troubles are over; your appetite is restored. You rejoice some late-open restaurant by a demand for food. You are not scrupulous, but take what is to be had—anything from the inevitable stewed oysters to sardines. Perhaps you have a bottle of Bass's ale, or that best of all nerve-restorers, ginger ale; or, lacking both, maybe a glass of hot milk.

character and purport of the entertainment I endeavoured to give. Unfortunately, its ill-success was not so marked as to cause the immediate abandonment of the trip. Sometimes we made a little, and then again we lost a little more; so that on the whole, we were steadily eating into the reserve that had been provided. Seeing this, I determined unless business greatly improved before we reached the "Divide," to abandon the enterprise and return home. Fortunately, no positive dates had been fixed on the Coast, and I thought it better to face the loss already incurred than go on making new liabilities. I was weak and sore from recent losses and depressed by ill-health, or I would not unlikely have gone on until there was nothing to be done but to make my way back on my "uppers," as the theatrical people say. I have an abundance of the quality of holding on, but none of the much rarer gift of letting go at the right time. I had "lost my grip" and was "down on my luck" worse than I had ever been before or expect ever to be again. I am satisfied now that if we had held on we would have met with better "business," and probably have had a remunerative trip. But I did not know the "Coast" then, and distrusted myself.

"Surely," said the young man, "what the wind lacks in moisture it makes up in sand."
 "For that matter so do the people," resumed the lecturer. "There is no doubt that the quality of the environment greatly affects the character of a people. In just what particular those who live within this arid belt differ from the dwellers in the verdant and ambrageous East, it would be hard to define; that they do differ, everyone feels when he comes among them."

"Is not that notion largely imaginary?" asked one of the listeners. "I used to think there was a real difference, but the better I become acquainted with the West, the less I see in the people to distinguish them from the East."
 "That may well be," rejoined the lecturer. "Familiarity always lessens the apprehension of difference. A room, the fittings of which seem at first incongruous and bizarre, being often visited and associated in one's mind with pleasant companions, becomes at length a pleasant instead of a jarring memory. The same is true of the people of this region. They have certain most agreeable qualities, in the enjoyment of which the visitor who often comes among them loses sight of the differences he once felt. For this reason the man who is best acquainted with the West is, in some sense, the least able to appreciate its peculiar distinctiveness."

"Do you think a stranger to both regions would notice it?"
 "Probably a foreigner not familiar with English life would not. I happen to know, however, that the cultivated Englishman notes the difference between our Eastern and Western life almost as quickly, if not as accurately as we do ourselves. It was my fortunate chance to make the trip with one of the most distinguished living Englishmen—a close observer, with a world-wide reputation as a scientific thinker. I was greatly amused to hear him exclaim, almost as soon as we had crossed the Missouri into this mystic realm: "Why, how is this? These are a new people. What do you call them? From that time on he was never tired of discussing the subject. His conclusions were very complimentary to our Western brethren, too. "These are the kings," he would say. "They have exactly what other Americans lack—an utter absence of self-consciousness. By-and-by, when the continent is full and the children of you English weaklings are squabbling for breathing-places, the offspring of these larger, coarser-natured children of aridness and silence, hardened by generations of exposure to these conditions, will come down and 'possess the goodly land,' that is, the land where ease has engendered sloth and feebleness. Did you ever think that all the great waves which have overcome the weakness of prosperous civilization, have come from the desert or from high and arid inland plateaus?"



'GIVE IT UP,' SAID THE COLLEGIAN, JAUNTILY.

"Same 'Grippe,' do you say? Your lecturer is the true temperance man. Whatever he eats or drinks must be with an eye single to to-morrow's bodily or mental condition. If he would avoid dyspepsia, let him never seek his couch with an empty stomach or one filled with unsoothing stimulant. Let him avoid beer as he would poison, and whatever is distilled as a mortal enemy; let him shun, at least at night, tea and coffee as Jobe who promise cheer but carry a sword. It is late when you retire, but you are physically content and at peace with all mankind. You rise late to greet a pleasant day, have a good breakfast, take a convenient train, buy a magazine, and settling yourself to its perusal, sing with contentment and say in complaisant vain-glorying:

"Fate cannot harm me; I have dined to-day."
 "You soon learn your mistake. Arriving at your destination, you find no one at the station, though you have telegraphed your train. You hunt up your correspondent. Yes, there are letters for you, he nonchalantly says, but he has left them at home, two miles away across the river. He will bring them at night—if he comes in—that is. Or he will send them to your next appointment. Yes, his wife could get them if you choose to send a messenger. It will take two hours and cost a dollar. Lecture? He doesn't suppose there will be any. He has had a difference with the Bureau. It has been referred to you; but, of course, it is too late to decide it now. Finally, he comes out fat-footed and demands a reduction of fifty per cent. in your fee. You are weak and assent, perhaps only to find that the man has sold every seat in his house and has done no advertising because he had no need to advertise. If you are irreligious or short-tempered, you "use some language," as the chronicler of Thrums expresses it; while if you are very religious or too good-tempered, you content yourself with wishing you were not, and turn with fresh interest to what the next day will bring forth.
 "As I have said, the preparations for this trip were begun late. It was a child born out of due season, if there is any proper season in the lecture business. Coming late, we had to take what was left, which is seldom the best. I had as a sort of partner in the enterprise a man of pleasant manners, active, bright, and apparently well adapted for the position of either manager or advance agent, two functions which he endeavoured to unite in himself. He had not had much, if any, experience in this particular line, but he seemed an ideal combination of the requisite personal qualities, and I had no doubt that he would succeed. He was to have a specific share of the proceeds, after paying a certain portion of the preliminary expenses. Meanwhile,

Besides that, I was sick, and certain things that came to my knowledge concerning the previous life of my agent, as well as matters connected with his present management, troubled me more than they would at ordinary times. So I decided—much against his wish and protest, I must confess—to turn back. Up to that time I had no grave doubts of his sincerity or integrity. I was merely satisfied of his incapacity, and was sorry for his luck as well as my own; though he had steadily received more than he had earned in the business in which he had previously been engaged, so that it really was no loss to him. I remembered afterwards, that when I decided to take the back track, he had showed up ugly; but I thought nothing more of it then, than to smilingly guess that he had intended to resolve certain complications which had given him a deal of trouble, whenever we should reach the coast, whatever our luck might be. If any one had intimated that he had it in his heart to do me an ill-turn, I have no doubt that I should have resented it or, at the least, have laughed at it.

"On our way back, we had climbed the Pass after supper at Naton which, by the way, ought to be called Sweetwater. Between the Missouri and the Pacific there is hardly anything so welcome to the weary traveller as the splash of water which unexpectedly greets him at this station. It matters not which way he comes, the alkali dust has gathered in his moustache, cracked his hands, and made his throat hot and raspy, as if it were the crater of a volcano. Slowing up to the station, he hears the ripple of falling water. He needs not to taste and try to know that it is cool and sweet. There is something in the very sound which tells him that. Where does it come from? What does he care about its source? It is there, and he drinks again and again. The supper at the Station House tastes extremely well on account of these draughts of pure water, which do not produce an alkaline reaction either in the palate or in the stomach. As we start eastward in the early evening twilight, the drip of the pearly drops is the sweetest of validations. It impressed one like an oasis, passed over in the darkness with only a hint of verdure and the nameless perfume of fresh water in the arid nostrils.
 "Do you know?" he asked, looking around upon his auditory, "what is the greatest of all the wonders our Western World contains?"

"Give it up," said the young collegian, jauntily. "I never could guess a conundrum."
 "Yet I doubt," continued the lecturer, gravely, paying no heed to the young man's flippancy, "if anyone of ordinary sensibility has ever crossed the continent without feeling the strange weirdness of the mighty arid realm which stretches from the edge of the "bad lands" in the East,

"I was not at all sure of my friend's hasty deduction, and tried to show him some bad gaps in his reasoning. But what is the use of arguing with a scientist? They talk about being clear-headed, and all that sort of thing. So far as my experience goes, a scientist is best defined as a man with only half a brain. He is the bloodhound of the human species, who runs with his head so close to the ground that he fails to see the most potent facts an inch away from the line he is following. If he happens to strike the right trail he may run down a big idea; but he is wondrous apt to begin to draw conclusions before he has run his game to earth, which are all the more misleading because of the general notion that science is well-nigh infallible.
 "When a man begins to speculate about the laws of human existence—the progress or retrogression of human masses—I always grow doubtful of his conclusions, because Science has never yet been able correctly to read the past or predict the future of a race or people. The trouble is that Science neglects the complex nature of man. It is comparatively easy to predict the future or unravel the past of other animals. There are only material conditions to deal with in such cases. But when you come to consider man, there is not only the question of bread and meat and a higher intelligence to be taken into account, but that most curious of all forces, the moral impulse, which may hold him down at the very time other things would indicate a rise, or lift him up at the very moment when all material conditions would indicate an irretrievable downward tendency. There are hosts of such contradictions in history—