

living in this world, of relishing people. Just people, any people! Walk and look at people walking toward you or passing by. People can be enchanting, inspiring and exhilarating - especially people walking in the sunshine and spring of this world. People who work with their brain and brawn. Who are here for a definite purpose. They glow with the health of doing. The head is well set, and the shoulders fairly bulge in their jackets. And the women are a breed of their own in this world. You see it in their bright eyes and in the pose of their heads, proud and beautiful.

And the strange desire was strong in George to linger in this world, to spend his allotted days in the sunshine and life and doings of these people: For there is no epic, no glory in the face, the facade of the world of Graduation!

But Kinships...? There are, aren't there?

CHAPTER II

The Woe, the Ritual of Parting

Saturday morning, the last day for George at the Eventide. The annoyance of saying goodbye. Not that it is so tragic, but that it smacks of ceremony and ritual. The manner of saying it, the expression of it - as well as the expressionlessness of it - carry within them the challenge, the gamut of human emotion and behavior. Should you or should you not shed a tear when you embrace a long-standing friend like Jack Gardner? How can you part with a guy like him and not feel a strong emotion boiling up

in you! Affinity of Kinship.

You steel yourself and stick out your chest, take a deep breath, as you enter the City Room. Fine, fine, only a few raised their heads and gawked at you. Not even a blush mounted your cheeks. Only that dark little girl who, next to Jack, helped you most in the hard days of your apprenticeship. She has remained since like a hovering spirit at your elbow, to be of service to you, to fly to the end of the world for you, for everything and nothing. But to you she has always remained a fixture of the concept and make-up of a newspaper, never as one of the opposite sex. And now, suddenly, she has blossomed out as an imposing representative of that fair sex. Her hair done up in a fine coiffure, feet enshrined in shoes which add inches to her height, giving her terrific poise. Not at all the little girl, the non-entity, slip-shod and loose, but a thing of inordinate beauty. And there was the light blush and slight tremor of the upper lip, where was the tiny brownish mole - hitherto unnoticed - but now a central point of concentration, from which all her charms and other facets of her being radiate and take their light and lead. She was standing there to be said good-bye to, and — perhaps — to be kissed. Finally in a swish of nothingness, a momentary abeyance of consciousness, a trance, he kissed her, and all was over. He had overcome the hump and was one of the rest. No affinity of kinship.

Sunny-faced Mr. Doaks never left George out of the orbit of his vision. He had promised George to keep his desk for him while away to college - as an inducement to occupy it during vacations.

With Jack Gardner it wasn't so easy. With long face Jack told him he was spoiling his vacation for him. "This is my first extended vacation in years. A rambling trip over Nova Scotia way...."

"What's holding you back?"

"You, George."

George looked hard at Jack. "The irony of it that you should pick

this moment to poke fun at me. And here I was going to shed a few tears."

"I wasn't funny at all. Never more serious. So go ahead with your tears. Maybe it'll ease your conscience."

"Come out with it.... Maybe I laugh too."

"All right, go ahead laugh. Maybe I was crazy counting on you to take over while I was gone for the summer."

"Sorry, Jack. I didn't know.... But that should be no problem. Many here would be glad...."

"Not quite the same. First, the work would have to be divided. But that's not important. The point is I was hoping you'd be out here slugging away for me, and I'd be there following your stuff. Playing a game --- you and I.... Something to look forward to, to read the Eventide of an evening and hunt for the gems and gold nuggets spattered about by you. What you'd say about this, about that, etc. Of course it's madness, but so are you - a little mad. That's what makes it fascinating. You always kept us guessing what you'd say next with that peculiar twist in your brain."

"You got the symptoms all right," George laughed. "Blessed are they who have the contagion, for they'll inherit the kingdom of the insane."

"We'll miss you - our mad baby."

"Honest, Jack, you make me feel like a louse. I have so much to be grateful to you for...."

"Not that, not that," Jack interrupted him, "don't let's take that tack."

"If only I had known, Jack. You know how my funds are.... Well, President Torbets of Bocly offered an assistanceship in the English department --- correcting papers, monitoring at exams, and so on. Not an instructorship. I am not that good. But there'll be an income the year around. During the summer I am to do some tutoring. Hired for this summer already. How can I go back on it?"

Jack put out his hand and took George's. "Of course. I didn't know. Stupid of me. I am certainly happy for you. Be sure to come - and see us."

But wait, the Boss wants to see you."

"Well, of course, I wasn't forgetting him."

"No, I don't believe it's just that — a handshake. Something on his mind."

Mr. Barton was tilted back in his oaken chair, the "little" cigar in his mouth as usual. Although his eyes were diverted in the general direction of Memorial Square, and seemingly deep in thought, he nevertheless became aware of George's presence as soon as he showed up at the door.

"Come in, George," he said softly without turning his head.

"Good morning, Mr. Barton."

Evidently having concluded what he was thinking about, Mr. Barton turned to face in the direction of George. "I hear," he said smiling broadly, "that you are leaving us now instead of ^{at} the fall term. That's so?"

"Well...." George hesitated.

"Sit down, my boy. Whatever your reasons leaving so suddenly must be valid. Of course you are a free agent — under no contract."

"I didn't think it mattered...."

"Evidently it does. To Doaks, Jack — and even to me." A light smile curled his upper lip, as he looked with fondness upon George. "But don't feel there is any blame in any of us — eh, well, in your direction. But I'd ~~like~~ make a proposition that you continue on the basis of your present salary. That way you'll be with us even when you are away." He smiled deeply now, pleased with his paradoxical phrasing. "You'd continue on the staff, and send us some item from time to time. Or maybe a small column — obse^rvations — two or three times a week."

George colored deeply. "I am more grateful than I can say. It's more than I deserve.... But I know myself. I can't write under pressure. And I'll be pressed for time. Then it would be charity...."

"The Eventide is a sound business, George. It pays for services ren-

dered — and value received." He paused and looked earnestly at George. "And the 'value received' in your case wouldn't stop with your going away to college."

"At best it would be of doubtful value," George countered.

"Let me be the judge of that. The discovery of Solon^{the} Dreen alone is worth it. Already we are beginning to feel a revival of spirit in this old town. No, you can't appreciate it yet, but I can. It is very refreshing. The town has literally come to life, as if after a long illness. Since we got rid of Forrest the town had seen plays hitherto undreamed of as possible to be brought down here. And all through the efforts of this one man. The new people coming here from all over the state, and outside of Maine. It's more business — that's what it means. Besides, the spiritual values. And with the new Emporium to be opened soon by Mr. Dreen, in the fall that is — why, it's like a new industry, with all its benefits accruing to us."

George stood pale with embarrassment, and emotion. He was thankful for the appearance of Mr. Flahrel.

Mr. Flahrel: "Sorry if I am interrupting...."

Mr. Barton: "Come in. We are just about through."

Mr. Flahrel: "I want to speak^{to} you on the special series on Roosevelt for the Sunday Supplement. This week's instalment^e is particularly bitter, and anti-Taft."

"I saw it. Let it stand as is."

"Our George here isn't complimentary to Taft either in his swan article. Would you look at the proofs?"

Mr. Barton rocked his chair a few times in silence, averting his face toward the Square. "No -- that stands as is, too," without^{turning} his head from the Square. "I'll take my chances. Let the public be his jury...."

"But, but..." Mr. Flahrel stammered.

But Mr. Barton was adamant: "Just now I feel like playing a game," he said. He smiled appraisingly at George and turned his glance to the Square.

Mr. Flahrel wondered what game it was he wanted to play.

But George understood.

CHAPTER III

Variations on a Theme of Conciliation And a Reo

Eastern Boulevard was deserted that early Sunday morning, and George felt at peace with himself and the world as he sauntered down the embankment to the lowest terrace overlooking the bay. To George this high point in the bay was like an impregnable fortress, its gentle curves surrounded on three sides by rocky ramparts. A fortress at once forbidding to an adventurous and fool-hardy invader from the sea, as well as a mighty lookout for the defender on land. On days when the air was crystal-clear, and there were many such days on this hill jutting into the sea, one could see objects with the clarity of a stereoscope: pictures framed on the eye-lens in bold relief and brilliance. One could follow from this vantage point the pinnacle of an ocean-going liner to its vanishing point into the curvature of the earth.

He found a bench and spread the fresh-smelling Sunday Edition of the Eventide on his lap. The chimera of the day before, fraught with the heartache of emotion, of decision and parting, was a distant illusion dissolving rapidly in the clean fresh air and bright warm sunlight. There was the elation in him of a feeling of well-being and freedom. Then his eyes caught the caption of his article, his last one at least for the time