STEPHEN LEACOCK

ARCADIAN ADVENTURES WITH THE IDLE RICH

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Содержание

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CHAPTER ONE: A Little Dinner with Mr. Lucullus Fyshe

The Mausoleum Club stands on the quietest corner of the best residential street in the City. It is a Grecian building of white stone. About it are great elm trees with birds—the most expensive kind of birds—singing in the branches.

The street in the softer hours of the morning has an almost reverential quiet. Great motors move drowsily along it, with solitary chauffeurs returning at 10.30 after conveying the earlier of the millionaires to their downtown offices. The sunlight flickers through the elm trees, illuminating expensive nurse-maids wheeling valuable children in little perambulators. Some of the children are worth millions and millions. In Europe, no doubt, you may see in the Unter den Linden avenue or the Champs Elysees a little prince or princess go past with a clattering military guard of honour. But that is nothing. It is not half so impressive, in the real sense, as what you may observe

every morning on Plutoria Avenue beside the Mausoleum Club in the quietest part of the city. Here you may see a little toddling princess in a rabbit suit who owns fifty distilleries in her own right. There, in a lacquered perambulator, sails past a little hooded head that controls from its cradle an entire New Jersey corporation. The United States attorney-general is suing her as she sits, in a vain attempt to make her dissolve herself into constituent companies. Near by is a child of four, in a khaki suit, who represents the merger of two trunk-line railways. You may meet in the flickered sunlight any number of little princes and princesses far more real than the poor survivals of Europe. Incalculable infants wave their fifty-dollar ivory rattles in an inarticulate greeting to one another. A million dollars of preferred stock laughs merrily in recognition of a majority control going past in a go-cart drawn by an imported nurse. And through it all the sunlight falls through the elm trees, and the birds sing and the motors hum, so that the whole world as seen from the boulevard of Plutoria Avenue is the very pleasantest place imaginable.

Just below Plutoria Avenue, and parallel with it, the trees die out and the brick and stone of the City begins in earnest. Even from the Avenue you see the tops of the sky-scraping buildings in the big commercial streets, and can hear or almost hear the roar of the elevated railway, earning dividends. And beyond that again the City sinks lower, and is choked and crowded with the tangled streets and little houses of the slums.

In fact, if you were to mount to the roof of the Mausoleum Club itself on Plutoria Avenue you could almost see the slums from there. But why should you? And on the other hand, if you never went up on the roof, but only dined inside among the palm trees, you would never know that the slums existed which is much better.

There are broad steps leading up to the club, so broad and so agreeably covered with matting that the physical exertion of lifting oneself from one's motor to the door of the club is reduced to the smallest compass. The richer members are not ashamed to take the steps one at a time, first one foot and then the other; and at tight money periods, when there is a black cloud hanging over the Stock Exchange, you may see each and every one of the members of the Mausoleum Club dragging himself up the steps after this fashion, his restless eyes filled with the dumb pathos of a man wondering where he can put his hand on half a million dollars.

But at gayer times, when there are gala receptions at the club, its steps are all buried under expensive carpet, soft as moss and covered over with a long pavilion of red and white awning to catch the snowflakes; and beautiful ladies are poured into the club by the motorful. Then, indeed, it is turned into a veritable Arcadia; and for a beautiful pastoral scene, such as would have gladdened the heart of a poet who understood the cost of things, commend me to the Mausoleum Club on just such an evening. Its broad corridors and deep recesses are

filled with shepherdesses such as you never saw, dressed in beautiful shimmering gowns, and wearing feathers in their hair that droop off sideways at every angle known to trigonometry. And there are shepherds, too, with broad white waistcoats and little patent leather shoes and heavy faces and congested cheeks. And there is dancing and conversation among the shepherds and shepherdesses, with such brilliant flashes of wit and repartee about the rise in Wabash and the fall in Cement that the soul of Louis Quatorze would leap to hear it. And later there is supper at little tables, when the shepherds and shepherdesses consume preferred stocks and gold-interest bonds in the shape of chilled champagne and iced asparagus, and great platefuls of dividends and special quarterly bonuses are carried to and fro in silver dishes by Chinese philosophers dressed up to look like waiters.

But on ordinary days there are no ladies in the club, but only the shepherds. You may see them sitting about in little groups of two and three under the palm trees drinking whiskey and soda; though of course the more temperate among them drink nothing but whiskey and Lithia water, and those who have important business to do in the afternoon limit themselves to whiskey and Radnor, or whiskey and Magi water. There are as many kinds of bubbling, gurgling, mineral waters in the caverns of the Mausoleum Club as ever sparkled from the rocks of Homeric Greece. And when you have once grown used to them, it is as impossible to go back to plain water as it is to live again in the forgotten house in a side street that you inhabited long before you

became a member.

Thus the members sit and talk in undertones that float to the ear through the haze of Havana smoke. You may hear the older men explaining that the country is going to absolute ruin, and the younger ones explaining that the country is forging ahead as it never did before; but chiefly they love to talk of great national questions, such as the protective tariff and the need of raising it, the sad decline of the morality of the working man, the spread of syndicalism and the lack of Christianity in the labour class, and the awful growth of selfishness among the mass of the people.

So they talk, except for two or three that drop off to directors' meetings; till the afternoon fades and darkens into evening, and the noiseless Chinese philosophers turn on soft lights here and there among the palm trees. Presently they dine at white tables glittering with cut glass and green and yellow Rhine wines; and after dinner they sit again among the palm-trees, half-hidden in the blue smoke, still talking of the tariff and the labour class and trying to wash away the memory and the sadness of it in floods of mineral waters. So the evening passes into night, and one by one the great motors come throbbing to the door, and the Mausoleum Club empties and darkens till the last member is borne away and the Arcadian day ends in well-earned repose.

"I want you to give me your opinion very, very frankly," said Mr. Lucullus Fyshe on one side of the luncheon table to the Rev. Fareforth Furlong on the other.

"By all means," said Mr. Furlong.

Mr. Fyshe poured out a wineglassful of soda and handed it to the rector to drink.

"Now tell me very truthfully," he said, "is there too much carbon in it?"

"By no means," said Mr. Furlong.

"And—quite frankly—not too much hydrogen?"

"Oh, decidedly not."

"And you would not say that the percentage of sodium bicarbonate was too great for the ordinary taste?"

"I certainly should not," said Mr. Furlong, and in this he spoke the truth.

"Very good then," said Mr. Fyshe, "I shall use it for the Duke of Dulham this afternoon."

He uttered the name of the Duke with that quiet, democratic carelessness which meant that he didn't care whether half a dozen other members lunching at the club could hear or not. After all, what was a duke to a man who was president of the People's Traction and Suburban Co., and the Republican Soda and Siphon Co-operative, and chief director of the People's District Loan and Savings? If a man with a broad basis of popular support like that was proposing to entertain a duke, surely there could be no doubt about his motives? None at all.

Naturally, too, if a man manufactures soda himself, he gets a little over-sensitive about the possibility of his guests noticing the existence of too much carbon in it.

In fact, ever so many of the members of the Mausoleum Club

manufacture things, or cause them to be manufactured, or—what is the same thing—merge them when they are manufactured. This gives them their peculiar chemical attitude towards their food. One often sees a member suddenly call the head waiter at breakfast to tell him that there is too much ammonia in the bacon; and another one protest at the amount of glucose in the olive oil; and another that there is too high a percentage of nitrogen in the anchovy. A man of distorted imagination might think this tasting of chemicals in the food a sort of nemesis of fate upon the members. But that would be very foolish, for in every case the head waiter, who is the chief of the Chinese philosophers mentioned above, says that he'll see to it immediately and have the percentage removed. And as for the members themselves, they are about as much ashamed of manufacturing and merging things as the Marquis of Salisbury is ashamed of the founders of the Cecil family.

What more natural, therefore, than that Mr. Lucullus Fyshe, before serving the soda to the Duke, should try it on somebody else? And what better person could be found for this than Mr. Furlong, the saintly young rector of St. Asaph's, who had enjoyed the kind of expensive college education calculated to develop all the faculties. Moreover, a rector of the Anglican Church who has been in the foreign mission field is the kind of person from whom one can find out, more or less incidentally, how one should address and converse with a duke, and whether you call him, "Your Grace," or "His Grace," or just "Grace," or "Duke," or

what. All of which things would seem to a director of the People's Bank and the president of the Republican Soda Co. so trivial in importance that he would scorn to ask about them.

So that was why Mr. Fyshe had asked Mr. Furlong to lunch with him, and to dine with him later on in the same day at the Mausoleum Club to meet the Duke of Dulham. And Mr. Furlong, realizing that a clergyman must be all things to all men and not avoid a man merely because he is a duke, had accepted the invitation to lunch, and had promised to come to dinner, even though it meant postponing the Willing Workers' Tango Class of St. Asaph's until the following Friday.

Thus it had come about that Mr. Fyshe was seated at lunch, consuming a cutlet and a pint of Moselle in the plain downright fashion of a man so democratic that he is practically a revolutionary socialist, and doesn't mind saying so; and the young rector of St. Asaph's was sitting opposite to him in a religious ecstasy over a *salmi* of duck.

"The Duke arrived this morning, did he not?" said Mr. Furlong.

"From New York," said Mr. Fyshe. "He is staying at the Grand Palaver. I sent a telegram through one of our New York directors of the Traction, and his Grace has very kindly promised to come over here to dine."

"Is he here for pleasure?" asked the rector.

"I understand he is—" Mr. Fyshe was going to say "about to invest a large part of his fortune in American securities," but he

thought better of it. Even with the clergy it is well to be careful. So he substituted "is very much interested in studying American conditions."

"Does he stay long?" asked Mr. Furlong.

Had Mr. Lucullus Fyshe replied quite truthfully, he would have said, "Not if I can get his money out of him quickly," but he merely answered, "That I don't know."

"He will find much to interest him," went on the rector in a musing tone. "The position of the Anglican Church in America should afford him an object of much consideration. I understand," he added, feeling his way, "that his Grace is a man of deep piety."

"Very deep," said Mr. Fyshe.

"And of great philanthropy?"

"Very great."

"And I presume," said the rector, taking a devout sip of the unfinished soda, "that he is a man of immense wealth?"

"I suppose so," answered Mr. Fyshe quite carelessly. "All these fellows are." (Mr. Fyshe generally referred to the British aristocracy as "these fellows.") "Land, you know, feudal estates; sheer robbery, I call it. How the working-class, the proletariat, stand for such tyranny is more than I can see. Mark my words, Furlong, some day they'll rise and the whole thing will come to a sudden end."

Mr. Fyshe was here launched upon his favourite topic; but he interrupted himself, just for a moment, to speak to the waiter.

"What the devil do you mean," he said, "by serving asparagus half-cold?"

"Very sorry, sir," said the waiter, "shall I take it out?"

"Take it out? Of course take it out, and see that you don't serve me stuff of that sort again, or I'll report you."

"Very sorry, sir," said the waiter.

Mr. Fyshe looked at the vanishing waiter with contempt upon his features. "These pampered fellows are getting unbearable." he said. "By Gad, if I had my way I'd fire the whole lot of them: lock 'em out, put 'em on the street. That would teach 'em. Yes, Furlong, you'll live to see it that the whole working-class will one day rise against the tyranny of the upper classes, and society will be overwhelmed."

But if Mr. Fyshe had realized that at that moment, in the kitchen of the Mausoleum Club, in those sacred precincts themselves, there was a walking delegate of the Waiters' International Union leaning against a sideboard, with his bowler hat over one corner of his eye, and talking to a little group of the Chinese philosophers, he would have known that perhaps the social catastrophe was a little nearer than even he suspected.

"Are you inviting anyone else tonight?" asked Mr. Furlong.

"I should have liked to ask your father," said Mr. Fyshe, "but unfortunately he is out of town."

What Mr. Fyshe really meant was, "I am extremely glad not to have to ask your father, whom I would not introduce to the Duke on any account."

Indeed, Mr. Furlong, senior, the father of the rector of St. Asaph's, who was President of the New Amalgamated Hymnal Corporation, and Director of the Hosanna Pipe and Steam Organ, Limited, was entirely the wrong man for Mr. Fyshe's present purpose. In fact, he was reputed to be as smart a man as ever sold a Bible. At this moment he was out of town, busied in New York with the preparation of the plates of his new Hindu Testament (copyright); but had he learned that a duke with several millions to invest was about to visit the city, he would not have left it for the whole of Hindustan.

"I suppose you are asking Mr. Boulder," said the rector.

"No," answered Mr. Fyshe very decidedly, dismissing the name absolutely.

Indeed, there was even better reason not to introduce Mr. Boulder to the Duke. Mr. Fyshe had made that sort of mistake once, and never intended to make it again. It was only a year ago, on the occasion of the visit of young Viscount FitzThistle to the Mausoleum Club, that Mr. Fyshe had introduced Mr. Boulder to the Viscount and had suffered grievously thereby. For Mr. Boulder had no sooner met the Viscount than he invited him up to his hunting-lodge in Wisconsin, and that was the last thing known of the investment of the FitzThistle fortune.

This Mr. Boulder of whom Mr. Fyshe spoke might indeed have been seen at that moment at a further table of the lunch room eating a solitary meal, an oldish man with a great frame suggesting broken strength, with a white beard and with falling

under-eyelids that made him look as if he were just about to cry. His eyes were blue and far away, and his still, mournful face and his great bent shoulders seemed to suggest all the power and mystery of high finance.

Gloom indeed hung over him. For, when one heard him talk of listed stocks and cumulative dividends, there was as deep a tone in his quiet voice as if he spoke of eternal punishment and the wages of sin.

Under his great hands a chattering viscount, or a sturdy duke, or a popinjay Italian marquis was as nothing.

Mr. Boulder's methods with titled visitors investing money in America were deep. He never spoke to them of money, not a word. He merely talked of the great American forest—he had been born sixty-five years back, in a lumber state—and, when he spoke of primeval trees and the howl of the wolf at night among the pines, there was the stamp of reality about it that held the visitor spellbound; and when he fell to talking of his hunting-lodge far away in the Wisconsin timber, duke, earl, or baron that had ever handled a double-barrelled express rifle listened and was lost.

"I have a little place," Mr. Boulder would say in his deep tones that seemed almost like a sob, "a sort of shooting box, I think you'd call it, up in Wisconsin; just a plain place"—he would add, almost crying—"made of logs."

"Oh, really," the visitor would interject, "made of logs. By Jove, how interesting!"

All titled people are fascinated at once with logs, and Mr. Boulder knew it—at least subconsciously.

"Yes, logs," he would continue, still in deep sorrow; "just the plain cedar, not squared, you know, the old original timber; I had them cut right out of the forest."

By this time the visitor's excitement was obvious. "And is there game there?" he would ask.

"We have the timber-wolf," said Mr. Boulder, his voice half choking at the sadness of the thing, "and of course the jack wolf and the lynx."

"And are they ferocious?"

"Oh, extremely so—quite uncontrollable."

On which the titled visitor was all excitement to start for Wisconsin at once, even before Mr. Boulder's invitation was put in words.

And when he returned a week later, all tanned and wearing bush-whackers' boots, and covered with wolf bites, his whole available fortune was so completely invested in Mr. Boulder's securities that you couldn't have shaken twenty-five cents out of him upside down.

Yet the whole thing had been done merely incidentally round a big fire under the Wisconsin timber, with a dead wolf or two lying in the snow.

So no wonder that Mr. Fyshe did not propose to invite Mr. Boulder to his little dinner. No, indeed. In fact, his one aim was to keep Mr. Boulder and his log house hidden from the Duke.

And equally no wonder that as soon as Mr. Boulder read of the Duke's arrival in New York, and saw by the *Commercial Echo and Financial Undertone* that he might come to the City looking for investments, he telephoned at once to his little place in Wisconsin—which had, of course, a primeval telephone wire running to it—and told his steward to have the place well aired and good fires lighted; and he especially enjoined him to see if any of the shanty men thereabouts could catch a wolf or two, as he might need them.

"Is no one else coming then?" asked the rector.

"Oh yes. President Boomer of the University. We shall be a party of four. I thought the Duke might be interested in meeting Boomer. He may care to hear something of the archaeological remains of the continent."

If the Duke did so care, he certainly had a splendid chance in meeting the gigantic Dr. Boomer, the president of Plutoria University.

If he wanted to know anything of the exact distinction between the Mexican Pueblo and the Navajo tribal house, he had his opportunity right now. If he was eager to hear a short talk—say half an hour—on the relative antiquity of the Neanderthal skull and the gravel deposits of the Missouri, his chance had come. He could learn as much about the stone age and the bronze age, in America, from President Boomer, as he could about the gold age and the age of paper securities from Mr. Fyshe and Mr. Boulder.

So what better man to meet a duke than an archaeological

president?

And if the Duke should feel inclined, as a result of his American visit (for Dr. Boomer, who knew everything, understood what the Duke had come for), inclined, let us say, to endow a chair in Primitive Anthropology, or do any useful little thing of the sort, that was only fair business all round; or if he even was willing to give a moderate sum towards the general fund of Plutoria University—enough, let us say, to enable the president to dismiss an old professor and hire a new one—that surely was reasonable enough.

The president, therefore, had said yes to Mr. Fyshe's invitation with alacrity, and had taken a look through the list of his more incompetent professors to refresh his memory.

The Duke of Dulham had landed in New York five days before and had looked round eagerly for a field of turnips, but hadn't seen any. He had been driven up Fifth Avenue and had kept his eyes open for potatoes, but there were none. Nor had he seen any shorthorns in Central Park, nor any Southdowns on Broadway. For the Duke, of course, like all dukes, was agricultural from his Norfolk jacket to his hobnailed boots.

At his restaurant he had cut a potato in two and sent half of it to the head waiter to know if it was Bermudian. It had all the look of an early Bermudian, but the Duke feared from the shading of it that it might be only a late Trinidad. And the head waiter sent it to the chef, mistaking it for a complaint, and the chef sent it back to the Duke with a message that it was not a

Bermudian but a Prince Edward Island. And the Duke sent his compliments to the chef, and the chef sent his compliments to the Duke. And the Duke was so pleased at learning this that he had a similar potato wrapped up for him to take away, and tipped the head waiter twenty-five cents, feeling that in an extravagant country the only thing to do is to go the people one better. So the Duke carried the potato round for five days in New York and showed it to everybody. But beyond this he got no sign of agriculture out of the place at all. No one who entertained him seemed to know what the beef that they gave him had been fed on; no one, even in what seemed the best society, could talk rationally about preparing a hog for the breakfast table. People seemed to eat cauliflower without distinguishing the Denmark variety from the Oldenburg, and few, if any, knew Silesian bacon even when they tasted it. And when they took the Duke out twenty-five miles into what was called the country, there were still no turnips, but only real estate, and railway embankments, and advertising signs; so that altogether the obvious and visible decline of American agriculture in what should have been its leading centre saddened the Duke's heart. Thus the Duke passed four gloomy days. Agriculture vexed him, and still more, of course, the money concerns which had brought him to America.

Money is a troublesome thing. But it has got to be thought about even by those who were not brought up to it. If, on account of money matters, one has been driven to come over to America in the hope of borrowing money, the awkwardness of how to

go about it naturally makes one gloomy and preoccupied. Had there been broad fields of turnips to walk in and Holstein cattle to punch in the ribs, one might have managed to borrow it in the course of gentlemanly intercourse, as from one cattle-man to another. But in New York, amid piles of masonry and roaring street-traffic and glittering lunches and palatial residences one simply couldn't do it.

Herein lay the truth about the Duke of Dulham's visit and the error of Mr. Lucullus Fyshe. Mr. Fyshe was thinking that the Duke had come to *lend* money. In reality he had come to *borrow* it. In fact, the Duke was reckoning that by putting a second mortgage on Dulham Towers for twenty thousand sterling, and by selling his Scotch shooting and leasing his Irish grazing and sub-letting his Welsh coal rent he could raise altogether a hundred thousand pounds. This for a duke, is an enormous sum. If he once had it he would be able to pay off the first mortgage on Dulham Towers, buy in the rights of the present tenant of the Scotch shooting and the claim of the present mortgagee of the Irish grazing, and in fact be just where he started. This is ducal finance, which moves always in a circle.

In other words the Duke was really a poor man—not poor in the American sense, where poverty comes as a sudden blighting stringency, taking the form of an inability to get hold of a quarter of a million dollars, no matter how badly one needs it, and where it passes like a storm-cloud and is gone, but poor in that permanent and distressing sense known only to the British

aristocracy. The Duke's case, of course, was notorious, and Mr. Fyshe ought to have known of it. The Duke was so poor that the Duchess was compelled to spend three or four months every year at a fashionable hotel on the Riviera simply to save money, and his eldest son, the young Marquis of Beldoodle, had to put in most of his time shooting big game in Uganda, with only twenty or twenty-five beaters, and with so few carriers and couriers and such a dearth of elephant men and hyena boys that the thing was a perfect scandal. The Duke indeed was so poor that a younger son, simply to add his efforts to those of the rest, was compelled to pass his days in mountain climbing in the Himalayas, and the Duke's daughter was obliged to pay long visits to minor German princesses, putting up with all sorts of hardship. And while the ducal family wandered about in this way—climbing mountains, and shooting hyenas, and saving money, the Duke's place or seat, Dulham Towers, was practically shut up, with no one in it but servants and housekeepers and gamekeepers and tourists; and the picture galleries, except for artists and visitors and villagers, were closed; and the town house, except for the presence of servants and tradesmen and secretaries, was absolutely shut. But the Duke knew that rigid parsimony of this sort, if kept up for a generation or two, will work wonders, and this sustained him; and the Duchess knew it, and it sustained her; in fact, all the ducal family, knowing that it was only a matter of a generation or two, took their misfortune very cheerfully.

The only thing that bothered the Duke was borrowing money.

This was necessary from time to time when loans or mortgages fell in, but he hated it. It was beneath him. His ancestors had often taken money, but had never borrowed it, and the Duke chafed under the necessity. There was something about the process that went against the grain. To sit down in pleasant converse with a man, perhaps almost a gentleman, and then lead up to the subject and take his money from him, seemed to the Duke's mind essentially low. He could have understood knocking a man over the head with a fire shovel and taking his money, but not borrowing it.

So the Duke had come to America, where borrowing is notoriously easy. Any member of the Mausoleum Club, for instance, would borrow fifty cents to buy a cigar, or fifty thousand dollars to buy a house, or five millions to buy a railroad with complete indifference, and pay it back, too, if he could, and think nothing of it. In fact, ever so many of the Duke's friends were known to have borrowed money in America with magical ease, pledging for it their seats or their pictures, or one of their daughters—anything.

So the Duke knew it must be easy. And yet, incredible as it may seem, he had spent four days in New York, entertained everywhere, and made much of, and hadn't borrowed a cent. He had been asked to lunch in a Riverside palace, and, fool that he was, had come away without so much as a dollar to show for it. He had been asked to a country house on the Hudson, and, like an idiot—he admitted it himself—hadn't asked his host for as

much as his train fare. He had been driven twice round Central Park in a motor and had been taken tamely back to his hotel not a dollar the richer. The thing was childish, and he knew it. But to save his life the Duke didn't know how to begin. None of the things that he was able to talk about seemed to have the remotest connection with the subject of money. The Duke was able to converse reasonably well over such topics as the approaching downfall of England (they had talked of it at Dulham Towers for sixty years), or over the duty of England towards China, or the duty of England to Persia, or its duty to aid the Young Turk Movement, and its duty to check the Old Servia agitation. The Duke became so interested in these topics and in explaining that while he had never been a Little Englander he had always been a Big Turk, and that he stood for a Small Bulgaria and a Restricted Austria, that he got further and further away from the topic of money, which was what he really wanted to come to; and the Duke rose from his conversations with a look of such obvious distress on his face that everybody realized that his anxiety about England was killing him.

And then suddenly light had come. It was on his fourth day in New York that he unexpectedly ran into the Viscount Belstairs (they had been together as young men in Nigeria, and as middle-aged men in St. Petersburg), and Belstairs, who was in abundant spirits and who was returning to England on the *Gloritania* at noon the next day, explained to the Duke that he had just borrowed fifty thousand pounds, on security that wouldn't be

worth a halfpenny in England.

And the Duke said with a sigh, "How the deuce do you do it. Belstairs?"

"Do what?"

"Borrow it," said the Duke. "How do you manage to get people to talk about it? Here I am wanting to borrow a hundred thousand, and I'm hanged if I can even find an opening."

At which the Viscount had said, "Pooh, pooh! you don't need any opening. Just borrow it straight out—ask for it across a dinner table, just as you'd ask for a match; they think nothing of it here."

"Across the dinner table?" repeated the Duke, who was a literal man.

"Certainly," said the Viscount. "Not too soon, you know—say after a second glass of wine. I assure you it's absolutely nothing."

And it was just at that moment that a telegram was handed to the Duke from Mr. Lucullus Fyshe, praying him, as he was reported to be visiting the next day the City where the Mausoleum Club stands, to make acquaintance with him by dining at that institution.

And the Duke, being as I say a literal man, decided that just as soon as Mr. Fyshe should give him a second glass of wine, that second glass should cost Mr. Fyshe a hundred thousand pounds sterling.

And oddly enough, at about the same moment, Mr. Fyshe was calculating that provided he could make the Duke drink a second

glass of the Mausoleum champagne, that glass would cost the Duke about five million dollars.

So the very morning after that the Duke had arrived on the New York express in the City; and being an ordinary, democratic, commercial sort of place, absorbed in its own affairs, it made no fuss over him whatever. The morning edition of the *Plutopian Citizen* simply said, "We understand that the Duke of Dulham arrives at the Grand Palaver this morning," after which it traced the Duke's pedigree back to Jock of Ealing in the twelfth century and let the matter go at that; and the noon edition of the *People's Advocate* merely wrote, "We learn that Duke Dulham is in town. He is a relation of Jack Ealing." But the *Commercial Echo and Financial Undertone*, appearing at four o'clock, printed in its stock-market columns the announcement: "We understand that the Duke of Dulham, who arrives in town today, is proposing to invest a large sum of money in American Industrials."

And, of course, that announcement reached every member of the Mausoleum Club within twenty minutes.

The Duke of Dulham entered the Mausoleum Club that evening at exactly seven of the clock. He was a short, thick man with a shaven face, red as a brick, and grizzled hair, and from the look of him he could have got a job at sight in any lumber camp in Wisconsin. He wore a dinner jacket, just like an ordinary person, but even without his Norfolk coat and his hobnailed boots there was something in the way in which he walked up the long main

hall of the Mausoleum Club that every imported waiter in the place recognized in an instant.

The Duke cast his eye about the club and approved of it. It seemed to him a modest, quiet place, very different from the staring ostentation that one sees too often in a German hof or an Italian palazzo. He liked it.

Mr. Fyshe and Mr. Furlong were standing in a deep alcove or bay where there was a fire and india-rubber trees and pictures with shaded lights and a whiskey-and-soda table. There the Duke joined them. Mr. Fyshe he had met already that afternoon at the Palaver, and he called him "Fyshe" as if he had known him forever; and indeed, after a few minutes he called the rector of St. Asaph's simply "Furlong," for he had been familiar with the Anglican clergy in so many parts of the world that he knew that to attribute any peculiar godliness to them, socially, was the worst possible taste.

"By Jove," said the Duke, turning to tap the leaf of a rubber tree with his finger, "that fellow's a Nigerian, isn't he?"

"I hardly know," said Mr. Fyshe, "I imagine so"; and he added, "You've been in Nigeria, Duke?"

"Oh, some years ago," said the Duke, "after big game, you know—fine place for it."

"Did you get any?" asked Mr. Fyshe.

"Not much," said the Duke; "a hippo or two."

"Ah," said Mr. Fyshe.

"And, of course, now and then a giro," the Duke went on, and

added, "My sister was luckier, though; she potted a rhino one day, straight out of a doolie; I call that rather good."

Mr. Fyshe called it that too.

"Ah, now here's a good thing," the Duke went on, looking at a picture. He carried in his waistcoat pocket an eyeglass that he used for pictures and for Tamworth hogs, and he put it to his eye with one hand, keeping the other in the left pocket of his jacket; "and this—this is a very good thing."

"I believe so," said Mr. Fyshe.

"You really have some awfully good things here," continued the Duke. He had seen far too many pictures in too many places ever to speak of "values" or "compositions" or anything of that sort. The Duke merely looked at a picture and said, "Now here's a good thing," or "Ah! here now is a very good thing," or, "I say, here's a really good thing."

No one could get past this sort of criticism. The Duke had long since found it bullet-proof.

"They showed me some rather good things in New York," he went on, "but really the things you have here seem to be awfully good things."

Indeed, the Duke was truly pleased with the pictures, for something in their composition, or else in the soft, expensive light that shone on them, enabled him to see in the distant background of each a hundred thousand sterling. And that is a very beautiful picture indeed.

"When you come to our side of the water, Fyshe," said the

Duke, "I must show you my Botticelli."

Had Mr. Fyshe, who knew nothing of art, expressed his real thought, he would have said, "Show me your which?" But he only answered, "I shall be delighted to see it."

In any case there was no time to say more, for at this moment the portly figure and the great face of Dr. Boomer, president of Plutoria University, loomed upon them. And with him came a great burst of conversation that blew all previous topics into fragments. He was introduced to the Duke, and shook hands with Mr. Furlong, and talked to both of them, and named the kind of cocktail that he wanted, all in one breath, and in the very next he was asking the Duke about the Babylonian hieroglyphic bricks that his grandfather, the thirteenth Duke, had brought home from the Euphrates, and which every archaeologist knew were preserved in the Duke's library at Dulham Towers. And though the Duke hadn't known about the bricks himself, he assured Dr. Boomer that his grandfather had collected some really good things, quite remarkable.

And the Duke, having met a man who knew about his grandfather, felt in his own element. In fact, he was so delighted with Dr. Boomer and the Nigerian rubber tree and the shaded pictures and the charm of the whole place and the certainty that half a million dollars was easily findable in it, that he put his eyeglass back in his pocket and said.

"A charming club you have here, really most charming."

"Yes," said Mr. Fyshe, in a casual tone, "a comfortable place,

we like to think."

But if he could have seen what was happening below in the kitchens of the Mausoleum Club, Mr. Fyshe would have realized that just then it was turning into a most uncomfortable place.

For the walking delegate with his hat on sideways, who had haunted it all day, was busy now among the assembled Chinese philosophers, writing down names and distributing strikers' cards of the International Union and assuring them that the "boys" of the Grand Palaver had all walked out at seven, and that all the "boys" of the Commercial and the Union and of every restaurant in town were out an hour ago.

And the philosophers were taking their cards and hanging up their waiters' coats and putting on shabby jackets and bowler hats, worn sideways, and changing themselves by a wonderful transformation from respectable Chinese to slouching loafers of the lowest type.

But Mr. Fyshe, being in an alcove and not in the kitchens, saw nothing of these things. Not even when the head waiter, shaking with apprehension, appeared with cocktails made by himself, in glasses that he himself had had to wipe, did Mr. Fyshe, absorbed in the easy urbanity of the Duke, notice that anything was amiss.

Neither did his guests. For Dr. Boomer, having discovered that the Duke had visited Nigeria, was asking him his opinion of the famous Bimbaweh remains of the lower Niger. The Duke confessed that he really hadn't noticed them, and the Doctor assured him that Strabo had indubitably mentioned them (he

would show the Duke the very passage), and that they apparently lay, if his memory served him, about halfway between Oohat and Ohat; whether above Oohat and below Ohat or above Ohat and below Oohat he would not care to say for a certainty; for that the Duke must wait till the president had time to consult his library.

And the Duke was fascinated forthwith with the president's knowledge of Nigerian geography, and explained that he had once actually descended from below Timbuctoo to Oohat in a doolie manned only by four swats.

So presently, having drunk the cocktails, the party moved solemnly in a body from the alcove towards the private dining-room upstairs, still busily talking of the Bimbaweh remains, and the swats, and whether the doolie was, or was not, the original goatskin boat of the book of Genesis.

And when they entered the private dining-room with its snow-white table and cut glass and flowers (as arranged by a retreating philosopher now heading towards the Gaiety Theatre with his hat over his eyes), the Duke again exclaimed,

"Really, you have a most comfortable club—delightful."

So they sat down to dinner, over which Mr. Furlong offered up a grace as short as any that are known even to the Anglican clergy. And the head waiter, now in deep distress—for he had been sending out telephone messages in vain to the Grand Palaver and the Continental, like the captain of a sinking ship—served oysters that he had opened himself and poured Rhine wine with a trembling hand. For he knew that unless by magic a new chef and

a waiter or two could be got from the Palaver, all hope was lost.

But the guests still knew nothing of his fears. Dr. Boomer was eating his oysters as a Nigerian hippo might eat up the crew of a doolie, in great mouthfuls, and commenting as he did so upon the luxuriousness of modern life.

And in the pause that followed the oysters he illustrated for the Duke with two pieces of bread the essential difference in structure between the Mexican *pueblo* and the tribal house of the Navajos, and lest the Duke should confound either or both of them with the adobe hut of the Bimbaweh tribes he showed the difference at once with a couple of olives.

By this time, of course, the delay in the service was getting noticeable. Mr. Fyshe was directing angry glances towards the door, looking for the reappearance of the waiter, and growling an apology to his guests. But the president waved the apology aside.

"In my college days," he said, "I should have considered a plate of oysters an ample meal. I should have asked for nothing more. We eat," he said, "too much."

This, of course, started Mr. Fyshe on his favourite topic. "Luxury!" he exclaimed, "I should think so! It is the curse of the age. The appalling growth of luxury, the piling up of money, the ease with which huge fortunes are made" (Good! thought the Duke, here we are coming to it), "these are the things that are going to ruin us. Mark my words, the whole thing is bound to end in a tremendous crash. I don't mind telling you, Duke—my friends here, I am sure, know it already—that I am more or less

a revolutionary socialist. I am absolutely convinced, sir, that our modern civilization will end in a great social catastrophe. Mark what I say"—and here Mr. Fyshe became exceedingly impressive—"a great social catastrophe. Some of us may not live to see it, perhaps; but you, for instance, Furlong, are a younger man; you certainly will."

But here Mr. Fyshe was understating the case. They were all going to live to see it, right on the spot.

For it was just at this moment, when Mr. Fyshe was talking of the social catastrophe and explaining with flashing eyes that it was bound to come, that it came; and when it came it lit, of all places in the world, right there in the private dining-room of the Mausoleum Club.

For the gloomy head waiter re-entered and leaned over the back of Mr. Fyshe's chair and whispered to him.

"Eh? what?" said Mr. Fyshe.

The head waiter, his features stricken with inward agony, whispered again.

"The infernal, damn scoundrels!" said Mr. Fyshe, starting back in his chair. "On strike: in this club! It's an outrage!"

"I'm very sorry sir. I didn't like to tell you, sir. I'd hoped I might have got help from the outside, but it seems, sir, the hotels are all the same way."

"Do you mean to say," said Mr. Fyshe, speaking very slowly, "that there is no dinner?"

"I'm sorry, sir," moaned the waiter. "It appears the chef hadn't

even cooked it. Beyond what's on the table, sir, there's nothing."

The social catastrophe had come.

Mr. Fyshe sat silent with his fist clenched. Dr. Boomer, with his great face transfixed, stared at the empty oyster-shells, thinking perhaps of his college days. The Duke, with his hundred thousand dashed from his lips in the second cup of champagne that was never served, thought of his politeness first and murmured something about taking them to his hotel.

But there is no need to follow the unhappy details of the unended dinner. Mr. Fyshe's one idea was to be gone: he was too true an artist to think that finance could be carried on over the table-cloth of a second-rate restaurant, or on an empty stomach in a deserted club. The thing must be done over again; he must wait his time and begin anew.

And so it came about that the little dinner party of Mr. Lucullus Fyshe dissolved itself into its constituent elements, like broken pieces of society in the great cataclysm portrayed by Mr. Fyshe himself.

The Duke was bowled home in a snorting motor to the brilliant rotunda of the Grand Palaver, itself waiterless and supperless.

The rector of St. Asaph's wandered off home to his rectory, musing upon the contents of its pantry.

And Mr. Fyshe and the gigantic Doctor walked side by side homewards along Plutoria Avenue, beneath the elm trees. Nor had they gone any great distance before Dr. Boomer fell to talking of the Duke.

"A charming man," he said, "delightful. I feel extremely sorry for him."

"No worse off, I presume, than any of the rest of us," growled Mr. Fyshe, who was feeling in the sourest of democratic moods; "a man doesn't need to be a duke to have a stomach."

"Oh, pooh, pooh!" said the president, waving the topic aside with his hand in the air; "I don't refer to that. Oh, not at all. I was thinking of his financial position—an ancient family like the Dulhams; it seems too bad altogether."

For, of course, to an archaeologist like Dr. Boomer an intimate acquaintance with the pedigree and fortunes of the greater ducal families from Jock of Ealing downwards was nothing. It went without saying. As beside the Neanderthal skull and the Bimbaweh ruins it didn't count.

Mr. Fyshe stopped absolutely still in his tracks. "His financial position?" he questioned, quick as a lynx.

"Certainly," said Dr. Boomer; "I had taken it for granted that you knew. The Dulham family are practically ruined. The Duke, I imagine, is under the necessity of mortgaging his estates; indeed, I should suppose he is here in America to raise money."

Mr. Fyshe was a man of lightning action. Any man accustomed to the Stock Exchange learns to think quickly.

"One moment!" he cried; "I see we are right at your door. May I just run in and use your telephone? I want to call up Boulder for a moment."

Two minutes later Mr. Fyshe was saying into the telephone,

"Oh, is that you, Boulder? I was looking for you in vain today—wanted you to meet the Duke of Dulham, who came in quite unexpectedly from New York; felt sure you'd like to meet him. Wanted you at the club for dinner, and now it turns out that the club's all upset—waiters' strike or some such rascality—and the Palaver, so I hear, is in the same fix. Could you possibly—"

Here Mr. Fyshe paused, listening a moment, and then went on, "Yes, yes; an excellent idea—most kind of you. Pray do send your motor to the hotel and give the Duke a bite of dinner. No, I wouldn't join you, thanks. Most kind. Good night—"

And within a few minutes more the motor of Mr. Boulder was rolling down from Plutoria Avenue to the Grand Palaver Hotel.

What passed between Mr. Boulder and the Duke that evening is not known. That they must have proved congenial company to one another there is no doubt. In fact, it would seem that, dissimilar as they were in many ways, they found a common bond of interest in sport. And it is quite likely that Mr. Boulder may have mentioned that he had a hunting-lodge—what the Duke would call a shooting-box—in Wisconsin woods, and that it was made of logs, rough cedar logs not squared, and that the timber wolves and others which surrounded it were of a ferocity without parallel.

Those who know the Duke best could measure the effect of that upon his temperament.

At any rate, it is certain that Mr. Lucullus Fyshe at his breakfast-table next morning chuckled with suppressed joy to

read in the *Plutopian Citizen* the item:

"We learn that the Duke of Dulham, who has been paying a brief visit to the City, leaves this morning with Mr. Asmodeus Boulder for the Wisconsin woods. We understand that Mr. Boulder intends to show his guest, who is an ardent sportsman, something of the American wolf."

And so the Duke went whirling westwards and northwards with Mr. Boulder in the drawing-room end of a Pullman car, that was all littered up with double-barrelled express rifles and leather game bags and lynx catchers and wolf traps and Heaven knows what. And the Duke had on his very roughest sporting-suit, made, apparently, of alligator hide; and as he sat there with a rifle across his knees, while the train swept onwards through open fields and broken woods, the real country at last, towards the Wisconsin forest, there was such a light of genial happiness in his face that had not been seen there since he had been marooned in the mud jungles of Upper Burmah.

And opposite, Mr. Boulder looked at him with fixed silent eyes, and murmured from time to time some renewed information of the ferocity of the timber-wolf.

But of wolves other than the timber-wolf, and fiercer still into whose hands the Duke might fall in America, he spoke never a word.

Nor is it known in the record what happened in Wisconsin, and to the Mausoleum Club the Duke and his visit remained only as a passing and a pleasant memory.

CHAPTER TWO: The Wizard of Finance

Down in the City itself, just below the residential street where the Mausoleum Club is situated, there stands overlooking Central Square the Grand Palaver Hotel. It is, in truth, at no great distance from the club, not half a minute in one's motor. In fact, one could almost walk it.

But in Central Square the quiet of Plutoria Avenue is exchanged for another atmosphere. There are fountains that splash unendingly and mingle their music with the sound of the motor-horns and the clatter of the cabs. There are real trees and little green benches, with people reading yesterday's newspaper, and grass cut into plots among the asphalt. There is at one end a statue of the first governor of the state, life-size, cut in stone; and at the other a statue of the last, ever so much larger than life, cast in bronze. And all the people who pass by pause and look at this statue and point at it with walking-sticks, because it is of extraordinary interest; in fact, it is an example of the new electro-chemical process of casting by which you can cast a state governor any size you like, no matter what you start from. Those who know about such things explain what an interesting contrast the two statues are; for in the case of the governor of a hundred years ago one had to start from plain, rough material and work

patiently for years to get the effect, whereas now the material doesn't matter at all, and with any sort of scrap, treated in the gas furnace under tremendous pressure, one may make a figure of colossal size like the one in Central Square.

So naturally Central Square with its trees and its fountains and its statues is one of the places of chief interest in the City. But especially because there stands along one side of it the vast pile of the Grand Palaver Hotel. It rises fifteen stories high and fills all one side of the square. It has, overlooking the trees in the square, twelve hundred rooms with three thousand windows, and it would have held all George Washington's army. Even people in other cities who have never seen it know it well from its advertising; "the most homelike hotel in America," so it is labelled in all the magazines, the expensive ones, on the continent. In fact, the aim of the company that owns the Grand Palaver—and they do not attempt to conceal it—is to make the place as much a home as possible. Therein lies its charm. It is a home. You realize that when you look up at the Grand Palaver from the square at night when the twelve hundred guests have turned on the lights of the three thousand windows. You realize it at theatre time when the great string of motors come sweeping to the doors of the Palaver, to carry the twelve hundred guests to twelve hundred seats in the theatres at four dollars a seat. But most of all do you appreciate the character of the Grand Palaver when you step into its rotunda. Aladdin's enchanted palace was nothing to it. It has a vast ceiling with a hundred glittering lights, and within it night and day is a

surging crowd that is never still and a babel of voices that is never hushed, and over all there hangs an enchanted cloud of thin blue tobacco smoke such as might enshroud the conjured vision of a magician of Baghdad or Damascus.

In and through the rotunda there are palm trees to rest the eye and rubber trees in boxes to soothe the mind, and there are great leather lounges and deep armchairs, and here and there huge brass ash-bowls as big as Etruscan tear-jugs. Along one side is a counter with grated wickets like a bank, and behind it are five clerks with flattened hair and tall collars, dressed in long black frock-coats all day like members of a legislature. They have great books in front of them in which they study unceasingly, and at their lightest thought they strike a bell with the open palm of their hand, and at the sound of it a page boy in a monkey suit, with G.P. stamped all over him in brass, bounds to the desk and off again, shouting a call into the unheeding crowd vociferously. The sound of it fills for a moment the great space of the rotunda; it echoes down the corridors to the side; it floats, softly melodious, through the palm trees of the ladies' palm room; it is heard, fainter and fainter, in the distant grill; and in the depths of the barber shop below the level of the street the barber arrests a moment the drowsy hum of his shampoo brushes to catch the sound—as might a miner in the sunken galleries of a coastal mine cease in his toil a moment to hear the distant murmur of the sea.

And the clerks call for the pages, the pages call for the guests, and the guests call for the porters, the bells clang, the elevators

rattle, till home itself was never half so homelike.

"A call for Mr. Tomlinson! A call for Mr. Tomlinson!"

So went the sound, echoing through the rotunda.

And as the page boy found him and handed him on a salver a telegram to read, the eyes of the crowd about him turned for a moment to look upon the figure of Tomlinson, the Wizard of Finance.

There he stood in his wide-awake hat and his long black coat, his shoulders slightly bent with his fifty-eight years. Anyone who had known him in the olden days on his bush farm beside Tomlinson's Creek in the country of the Great Lakes would have recognized him in a moment. There was still on his face that strange, puzzled look that it habitually wore, only now, of course, the financial papers were calling it "unfathomable." There was a certain way in which his eye roved to and fro inquiringly that might have looked like perplexity, were it not that the *Financial Undertone* had recognized it as the "searching look of a captain of industry." One might have thought that for all the goodness in it there was something simple in his face, were it not that the *Commercial and Pictorial Review* had called the face "inscrutable," and had proved it so with an illustration that left no doubt of the matter. Indeed, the face of Tomlinson of Tomlinson's Creek, now Tomlinson the Wizard of Finance, was not commonly spoken of as a *face* by the paragraphers of the Saturday magazine sections, but was more usually referred to as a mask; and it would appear that

Napoleon the First had had one also. The Saturday editors were never tired of describing the strange, impressive personality of Tomlinson, the great dominating character of the newest and highest finance. From the moment when the interim prospectus of the Erie Auriferous Consolidated had broken like a tidal wave over Stock Exchange circles, the picture of Tomlinson, the sleeping shareholder of uncomputed millions, had filled the imagination of every dreamer in a nation of poets.

They all described him. And when each had finished he began again.

"The face," so wrote the editor of the "Our Own Men" section of *Ourselves Monthly*, "is that of a typical American captain of finance, hard, yet with a certain softness, broad but with a certain length, ductile but not without its own firmness."

"The mouth," so wrote the editor of the "Success" column of *Brains*, "is strong but pliable, the jaw firm and yet movable, while there is something in the set of the ear that suggests the swift, eager mind of the born leader of men."

So from state to state ran the portrait of Tomlinson of Tomlinson's Creek, drawn by people who had never seen him; so did it reach out and cross the ocean, till the French journals inserted a picture which they used for such occasions, and called it *Monsieur Tomlinson, nouveau capitaine de la haute finance en Amerique*; and the German weeklies, inserting also a suitable picture from their stock, marked it *Herr Tomlinson, Amerikanischer Industrie und Finanzcapitan*. Thus

did Tomlinson float from Tomlinson's Creek beside Lake Erie to the very banks of the Danube and the Drave.

Some writers grew lyric about him. What visions, they asked, could one but read them, must lie behind the quiet, dreaming eyes of that inscrutable face?

They might have read them easily enough, had they but had the key. Anyone who looked upon Tomlinson as he stood there in the roar and clatter of the great rotunda of the Grand Palaver with the telegram in his hand, fumbling at the wrong end to open it, might have read the visions of the master-mind had he but known their nature. They were simple enough. For the visions in the mind of Tomlinson, Wizard of Finance, were for the most part those of a wind-swept hillside farm beside Lake Erie, where Tomlinson's Creek runs down to the low edge of the lake, and where the off-shore wind ripples the rushes of the shallow water: that, and the vision of a frame house, and the snake fences of the fourth concession road where it falls to the lakeside. And if the eyes of the man are dreamy and abstracted, it is because there lies over the vision of this vanished farm an infinite regret, greater in its compass than all the shares the Erie Auriferous Consolidated has ever thrown upon the market.

When Tomlinson had opened the telegram he stood with it for a moment in his hand, looking the boy full in the face. His look had in it that peculiar far-away quality that the newspapers were calling "Napoleonic abstraction." In reality he was wondering whether to give the boy twenty-five cents or fifty.

The message that he had just read was worded, "Morning quotations show preferred A. G. falling rapidly recommend instant sale no confidence send instructions."

The Wizard of Finance took from his pocket a pencil (it was a carpenter's pencil) and wrote across the face of the message: "Buy me quite a bit more of the same yours truly."

This he gave to the boy. "Take it over to him," he said, pointing to the telegraph corner of the rotunda. Then after another pause he mumbled, "Here, sonny," and gave the boy a dollar.

With that he turned to walk towards the elevator, and all the people about him who had watched the signing of the message knew that some big financial deal was going through—a *coup*, in fact, they called it.

The elevator took the Wizard to the second floor. As he went up he felt in his pocket and gripped a quarter, then changed his mind and felt for a fifty-cent piece, and finally gave them both to the elevator boy, after which he walked along the corridor till he reached the corner suite of rooms, a palace in itself, for which he was paying a thousand dollars a month ever since the Erie Auriferous Consolidated Company had begun tearing up the bed of Tomlinson's Creek in Cahoga County with its hydraulic dredges.

"Well, mother," he said as he entered.

There was a woman seated near the window, a woman with a plain, homely face such as they wear in the farm kitchens of Cahoga County, and a set of fashionable clothes upon her such

as they sell to the ladies of Plutoria Avenue.

This was "mother," the wife of the Wizard of Finance and eight years younger than himself. And she, too, was in the papers and the public eye; and whatsoever the shops had fresh from Paris, at fabulous prices, that they sold to mother. They had put a Balkan hat upon her with an upright feather, and they had hung gold chains on her, and everything that was most expensive they had hung and tied on mother. You might see her emerging any morning from the Grand Palaver in her beetle-back jacket and her Balkan hat, a figure of infinite pathos. And whatever she wore, the lady editors of *Spring Notes* and *Causerie du Boudoir* wrote it out in French, and one paper had called her a *belle chatelaine*, and another had spoken of her as a grande dame, which the Tomlinsons thought must be a misprint.

But in any case, for Tomlinson, the Wizard of Finance, it was a great relief to have as his wife a woman like mother, because he knew that she had taught school in Cahoga County and could hold her own in the city with any of them.

So mother spent her time sitting in her beetle jacket in the thousand-dollar suite, reading new novels in brilliant paper covers. And the Wizard on his trips up and down to the rotunda brought her the very best, the ones that cost a dollar fifty, because he knew that out home she had only been able to read books like Nathaniel Hawthorne and Walter Scott, that were only worth ten cents.

"How's Fred?" said the Wizard, laying aside his hat, and

looking towards the closed door of an inner room. "Is he better?"

"Some," said mother. "He's dressed, but he's lying down."

Fred was the son of the Wizard and mother. In the inner room he lay on a sofa, a great hulking boy of seventeen in a flowered dressing-gown, fancying himself ill. There was a packet of cigarettes and a box of chocolates on a chair beside him, and he had the blind drawn and his eyes half-closed to impress himself.

Yet this was the same boy that less than a year ago on Tomlinson's Creek had worn a rough store suit and set his sturdy shoulders to the buck-saw. At present Fortune was busy taking from him the golden gifts which the fairies of Cahoga County, Lake Erie, had laid in his cradle seventeen years ago.

The Wizard tip-toed into the inner room, and from the open door his listening wife could hear the voice of the boy saying, in a tone as of one distraught with suffering.

"Is there any more of that jelly?"

"Could he have any, do you suppose?" asked Tomlinson coming back.

"It's all right," said mother, "if it will sit on his stomach." For this, in the dietetics of Cahoga County, is the sole test. All those things can be eaten which will sit on the stomach. Anything that won't sit there is not eatable.

"Do you suppose I could get them to get any?" questioned Tomlinson. "Would it be all right to telephone down to the office, or do you think it would be better to ring?"

"Perhaps," said his wife, "it would be better to look out into the hall and see if there isn't someone round that would tell them."

This was the kind of problem with which Tomlinson and his wife, in their thousand-dollar suite in the Grand Palaver, grappled all day. And when presently a tall waiter in dress-clothes appeared, and said, "Jelly? Yes, sir, immediately, sir; would you like, sir, Maraschino, sir, or Portovino, sir?" Tomlinson gazed at him gloomily, wondering if he would take five dollars.

"What does the doctor say is wrong with Fred?" asked Tomlinson, when the waiter had gone.

"He don't just say," said mother; "he said he must keep very quiet. He looked in this morning for a minute or two, and he said he'd look in later in the day again. But he said to keep Fred very quiet."

Exactly! In other words Fred had pretty much the same complaint as the rest of Dr. Slyder's patients on Plutoria Avenue, and was to be treated in the same way. Dr. Slyder, who was the most fashionable practitioner in the City, spent his entire time moving to and fro in an almost noiseless motor earnestly advising people to keep quiet. "You must keep very quiet for a little while," he would say with a sigh, as he sat beside a sick-bed. As he drew on his gloves in the hall below he would shake his head very impressively and say, "You must keep him very quiet," and so pass out, quite soundlessly. By this means Dr. Slyder often succeeded in keeping people quiet for weeks. It was

all the medicine that he knew. But it was enough. And as his patients always got well—there being nothing wrong with them—his reputation was immense.

Very naturally the Wizard and his wife were impressed with him. They had never seen such therapeutics in Cahoga County, where the practice of medicine is carried on with forceps, pumps, squirts, splints, and other instruments of violence.

The waiter had hardly gone when a boy appeared at the door. This time he presented to Tomlinson not one telegram but a little bundle of them.

The Wizard read them with a lengthening face. The first ran something like this, "Congratulate you on your daring market turned instantly"; and the next, "Your opinion justified market rose have sold at 20 points profit"; and a third, "Your forecast entirely correct C. P. rose at once send further instructions."

These and similar messages were from brokers' offices, and all of them were in the same tone; one told him that C. P. was up, and another T. G. P. had passed 129, and another that T. C. R. R. had risen ten—all of which things were imputed to the wonderful sagacity of Tomlinson. Whereas if they had told him that X. Y. Z. had risen to the moon he would have been just as wise as to what it meant.

"Well," said the wife of the Wizard as her husband finished looking through the reports, "how are things this morning? Are they any better?"

"No," said Tomlinson, and he sighed as he said it; "this is the

worst day yet. It's just been a shower of telegrams, and mostly all the same. I can't do the figuring of it like you can, but I reckon I must have made another hundred thousand dollars since yesterday."

"You don't say so!" said mother, and they looked at one another gloomily.

"And half a million last week, wasn't it?" said Tomlinson as he sank into a chair. "I'm afraid, mother," he continued, "it's no good. We don't know how. We weren't brought up to it."

All of which meant that if the editor of the *Monetary Afternoon* or *Financial Sunday* had been able to know what was happening with the two wizards, he could have written up a news story calculated to electrify all America.

For the truth was that Tomlinson, the Wizard of Finance, was attempting to carry out a *coup* greater than any as yet attributed to him by the Press. He was trying to lose his money. That, in the sickness of his soul, crushed by the Grand Palaver, overwhelmed with the burden of high finance, had become his aim, to be done with it, to get rid of his whole fortune.

But if you own a fortune that is computed anywhere from fifty millions up, with no limit at the top, if you own one-half of all the preferred stock of an Erie Auriferous Consolidated that is digging gold in hydraulic bucketfuls from a quarter of a mile of river bed, the task of losing it is no easy matter.

There are men, no doubt, versed in finance, who might succeed in doing it. But they have a training that Tomlinson

lacked. Invest it as he would in the worst securities that offered, the most rickety of stock, the most fraudulent bonds, back it came to him. When he threw a handful away, back came two in its place. And at every new coup the crowd applauded the incomparable daring, the unparalleled prescience of the Wizard.

Like the touch of Midas, his hand turned everything to gold.

"Mother," he repeated, "it's no use. It's like this here Destiny, as the books call it."

The great fortune that Tomlinson, the Wizard of Finance, was trying his best to lose had come to him with wonderful suddenness. As yet it was hardly six months old. As to how it had originated, there were all sorts of stories afloat in the weekly illustrated press. They agreed mostly on the general basis that Tomlinson had made his vast fortune by his own indomitable pluck and dogged industry. Some said that he had been at one time a mere farm hand who, by sheer doggedness, had fought his way from the hay-mow to the control of the produce market of seventeen states. Others had it that he had been a lumberjack who, by sheer doggedness, had got possession of the whole lumber forest of the Lake district. Others said that he had been a miner in a Lake Superior copper mine who had, by the doggedness of his character, got a practical monopoly of the copper supply. These Saturday articles, at any rate, made the Saturday reader rigid with sympathetic doggedness himself, which was all that the editor (who was doggedly trying to make the paper pay) wanted to effect.

But in reality the making of Tomlinson's fortune was very simple. The recipe for it is open to anyone. It is only necessary to own a hillside farm beside Lake Erie where the uncleared bush and the broken fields go straggling down to the lake, and to have running through it a creek, such as that called Tomlinson's, brawling among the stones and willows, and to discover in the bed of a creek—a gold mine.

That is all.

Nor is it necessary in these well-ordered days to discover the gold for one's self. One might have lived a lifetime on the farm, as Tomlinson's father had, and never discover it for one's self. For that indeed the best medium of destiny is a geologist, let us say the senior professor of geology at Plutoria University. That was how it happened.

The senior professor, so it chanced, was spending his vacation near by on the shores of the lake, and his time was mostly passed —for how better can a man spend a month of pleasure?—in looking for outcroppings of Devonian rock of the post-tertiary period. For which purpose he carried a vacation hammer in his pocket, and made from time to time a note or two as he went along, or filled his pockets with the chippings of vacation rocks.

So it chanced that he came to Tomlinson's Creek at the very point where a great slab of Devonian rock bursts through the clay of the bank. When the senior professor of geology saw it and noticed a stripe like a mark on a tiger's back—a fault he called it—that ran over the face of the block, he was at it in an instant,

beating off fragments with his little hammer.

Tomlinson and his boy Fred were logging in the underbrush near by with a long chain and yoke of oxen, but the geologist was so excited that he did not see them till the sound of his eager hammer had brought them to his side. They took him up to the frame house in the clearing, where the chatelaine was hoeing a potato patch with a man's hat on her head, and they gave him buttermilk and soda cakes, but his hand shook so that he could hardly eat them.

The geologist left Cahoga station that night for the City with a newspaper full of specimens inside his suit-case, and he knew that if any person or persons would put up money enough to tear that block of rock away and follow the fissure down, there would be found there something to astonish humanity, geologists and all.

After that point in the launching of a gold mine the rest is easy. Generous, warm-hearted men, interested in geology, were soon found. There was no stint of money. The great rock was torn sideways from its place, and from beneath it the crumbled, glittering rock-dust that sparkled in the sun was sent in little boxes to the testing laboratories of Plutoria University. There the senior professor of geology had sat up with it far into the night in a darkened laboratory, with little blue flames playing underneath crucibles, as in a magician's cavern, and with the door locked. And as each sample that he tested was set aside and tied in a cardboard box by itself, he labelled it "aur. p. 75," and the pen

shook in his hand as he marked it. For to professors of geology those symbols mean "this is seventy-five per cent pure gold." So it was no wonder that the senior professor of geology working far into the night among the blue flames shook with excitement; not, of course, for the gold's sake as money (he had no time to think of that), but because if this thing was true it meant that an auriferous vein had been found in what was Devonian rock of the post-tertiary stratification, and if that was so it upset enough geology to spoil a textbook. It would mean that the professor could read a paper at the next Pan-Geological Conference that would turn the whole assembly into a bedlam.

It pleased him, too, to know that the men he was dealing with were generous. They had asked him to name his own price or the tests that he made and when he had said two dollars per sample they had told him to go right ahead. The professor was not, I suppose, a mercenary man, but it pleased him to think that he could, clean up sixteen dollars in a single evening in his laboratory. It showed, at any rate, that businessmen put science at its proper value. Strangest of all was the fact that the men had told him that even this ore was apparently nothing to what there was; it had all come out of one single spot in the creek, not the hundredth part of the whole claim. Lower down, where they had thrown the big dam across to make the bed dry, they were taking out this same stuff and even better, so they said, in cartloads. The hydraulic dredges were tearing it from the bed of the creek all day, and at night a great circuit of arc lights gleamed

and sputtered over the roaring labour of the friends of geological research.

Thus had the Erie Auriferous Consolidated broken in a tidal wave over financial circles. On the Stock Exchange, in the downtown offices, and among the palm trees of the Mausoleum Club they talked of nothing else. And so great was the power of the wave that it washed Tomlinson and his wife along on the crest of it, and landed them fifty feet up in their thousand-dollar suite in the Grand Palaver. And as a result of it "mother" wore a beetle-back jacket; and Tomlinson received a hundred telegrams a day, and Fred quit school and ate chocolates.

But in the business world the most amazing thing about it was the wonderful shrewdness of Tomlinson.

The first sign of it had been that he had utterly refused to allow the Erie Auriferous Consolidated (as the friends of geology called themselves) to take over the top half of the Tomlinson farm. For the bottom part he let them give him one-half of the preferred stock in the company in return for their supply of development capital. This was their own proposition; in fact, they reckoned that in doing this they were trading about two hundred thousand dollars' worth of machinery for, say ten million dollars of gold. But it frightened them when Tomlinson said "Yes" to the offer, and when he said that as to common stock they might keep it, it was no use to him, they were alarmed and uneasy till they made him take a block of it for the sake of market confidence.

But the top end of the farm he refused to surrender, and the

friends of applied geology knew that there must be something pretty large behind this refusal; the more so as the reason that Tomlinson gave was such a simple one. He said that he didn't want to part with the top end of the place because his father was buried on it beside the creek, and so he didn't want the dam higher up, not for any consideration.

This was regarded in business circles as a piece of great shrewdness. "Says his father is buried there, eh? Devilish shrewd that!"

It was so long since any of the members of the Exchange or the Mausoleum Club had wandered into such places as Cahoga County that they did not know that there was nothing strange in what Tomlinson said. His father was buried there, on the farm itself, in a grave overgrown with raspberry bushes, and with a wooden headstone encompassed by a square of cedar rails, and slept as many another pioneer of Cahoga is sleeping.

"Devilish smart idea!" they said; and forthwith half the financial men of the city buried their fathers, or professed to have done so, in likely places—along the prospective right-of-way of a suburban railway, for example; in fact, in any place that marked them out for the joyous resurrection of an expropriation purchase.

Thus the astounding shrewdness of Tomlinson rapidly became a legend, the more so as he turned everything he touched to gold.

They narrated little stories of him in the whiskey-and-soda corners of the Mausoleum Club.

"I put it to him in a casual way," related, for example, Mr. Lucullus Fyshe, "casually, but quite frankly. I said, 'See here, this is just a bagatelle to you, no doubt, but to me it might be of some use. T. C. bonds,' I said, 'have risen twenty-two and a half in a week. You know as well as I do that they are only collateral trust, and that the stock underneath never could and never can earn a par dividend. Now,' I said, 'Mr. Tomlinson, tell me what all that means?' Would you believe it, the fellow looked me right in the face in that queer way he has and he said, 'I don't know!'"

"He said he didn't know!" repeated the listener, in a tone of amazement and respect. "By Jove! eh? he said he didn't know! The man's a wizard!"

"And he looked as if he didn't!" went on Mr. Fyshe. "That's the deuce of it. That man when he wants to can put on a look, sir, that simply means nothing, absolutely nothing."

In this way Tomlinson had earned his name of the Wizard of American Finance.

And meantime Tomlinson and his wife, within their suite at the Grand Palaver, had long since reached their decision. For there was one aspect and only one in which Tomlinson was really and truly a wizard. He saw clearly that for himself and his wife the vast fortune that had fallen to them was of no manner of use. What did it bring them? The noise and roar of the City in place of the silence of the farm and the racket of the great rotunda to drown the remembered murmur of the waters of the creek.

So Tomlinson had decided to rid himself of his new wealth,

save only such as might be needed to make his son a different kind of man from himself.

"For Fred, of course," he said, "it's different. But out of such a lot as that it'll be easy to keep enough for him. It'll be a grand thing for Fred, this money. He won't have to grow up like you and me. He'll have opportunities we never got." He was getting them already. The opportunity to wear seven dollar patent leather shoes and a bell-shaped overcoat with a silk collar, to lounge into moving-picture shows and eat chocolates and smoke cigarettes—all these opportunities he was gathering immediately. Presently, when he learned his way round a little, he would get still bigger ones.

"He's improving fast," said mother. She was thinking of his patent leather shoes.

"He's popular," said his father. "I notice it downstairs. He sasses any of them just as he likes; and no matter how busy they are, as soon as they see it's Fred they're all ready to have a laugh with him."

Certainly they were, as any hotel clerk with plastered hair is ready to laugh with the son of a multimillionaire. It's a certain sense of humour that they develop.

"But for us, mother," said the Wizard, "we'll be rid of it. The gold is there. It's not right to keep it back. But we'll just find a way to pass it on to folks that need it worse than we do."

For a time they had thought of giving away the fortune. But how? Who did they know that would take it?

It had crossed their minds—for who could live in the City a month without observing the imposing buildings of Plutoria University, as fine as any departmental store in town?—that they might give it to the college.

But there, it seemed, the way was blocked.

"You see, mother," said the puzzled Wizard, "we're not known. We're strangers. I'd look fine going up there to the college and saying, 'I want to give you people a million dollars.' They'd laugh at me!"

"But don't one read it in the papers," his wife had protested, "where Mr. Carnegie gives ever so much to the colleges, more than all we've got, and they take it?"

"That's different," said the Wizard. "He's in with them. They all know him. Why, he's a sort of chairman of different boards of colleges, and he knows all the heads of the schools, and the professors, so it's no wonder that if he offers to give a pension, or anything, they take it. Just think of me going up to one of the professors up there in the middle of his teaching and saying; 'I'd like to give you a pension for life!' Imagine it! Think what he'd say!"

But the Tomlinsons couldn't imagine it, which was just as well.

So it came about that they had embarked on their system. Mother, who knew most arithmetic, was the leading spirit. She tracked out all the stocks and bonds in the front page of the *Financial Undertone*, and on her recommendation the Wizard bought. They knew the stocks only by their letters, but this itself

gave a touch of high finance to their deliberations.

"I'd buy some of this R.O.P. if I was you," said mother; "it's gone down from 127 to 107 in two days, and I reckon it'll be all gone in ten days or so."

"Wouldn't 'G.G. deb.' be better? It goes down quicker."

"Well, it's a quick one," she assented, "but it don't go down so steady. You can't rely on it. You take ones like R.O.P. and T.R.R. pfd.; they go down all the time and you know where you are."

As a result of which, Tomlinson would send his instructions. He did it all from the rotunda in a way of his own that he had evolved with a telegraph clerk who told him the names of brokers, and he dealt thus through brokers whom he never saw. As a result of this, the sluggish R.O.P. and T.R.R. would take as sudden a leap into the air as might a mule with a galvanic shock applied to its tail. At once the word was whispered that the "Tomlinson interests" were after the R.O.P. to reorganize it, and the whole floor of the Exchange scrambled for the stock.

And so it was that after a month or two of these operations the Wizard of Finance saw himself beaten.

"It's no good, mother," he repeated, "it's just a kind of Destiny."

Destiny perhaps it was.

But, if the Wizard of Finance had known it, at this very moment when he sat with the Aladdin's palace of his golden fortune reared so strangely about him, Destiny was preparing for him still stranger things.

Destiny, so it would seem, was devising Its own ways and means of dealing with Tomlinson's fortune. As one of the ways and means, Destiny was sending at this moment as its special emissaries two huge, portly figures, wearing gigantic goloshes, and striding downwards from the halls of Plutoria University to the Grand Palaver Hotel. And one of these was the gigantic Dr. Boomer, the president of the college, and the other was his professor of Greek, almost as gigantic as himself. And they carried in their capacious pockets bundles of pamphlets on "Archaeological Remains of Mitylene," and the "Use of the Greek Pluperfect," and little treatises such as "Education and Philanthropy," by Dr. Boomer, and "The Excavation of Mitylene: An Estimate of Cost," by Dr. Boyster, "Boomer on the Foundation and Maintenance of Chairs," etc.

Many a man in city finance who had seen Dr. Boomer enter his office with a bundle of these monographs and a fighting glitter in his eyes had sunk back in his chair in dismay. For it meant that Dr. Boomer had tracked him out for a benefaction to the University, and that all resistance was hopeless.

When Dr. Boomer once laid upon a capitalist's desk his famous pamphlet on the "Use of the Greek Pluperfect," it was as if an Arabian sultan had sent the fatal bow-string to a condemned pasha, or Morgan the buccaneer had served the death-sign on a shuddering pirate.

So they came nearer and nearer, shouldering the passers-by. The sound of them as they talked was like the roaring of the sea

as Homer heard it. Never did Castor and Pollux come surging into battle as Dr. Boomer and Dr. Boyster bore down upon the Grand Palaver Hotel.

Tomlinson, the Wizard of Finance, had hesitated about going to the university. The university was coming to him. As for those millions of his, he could take his choice—dormitories, apparatus, campuses, buildings, endowment, anything he liked but choose he must. And if he feared that, after all, his fortune was too vast even for such a disposal, Dr. Boomer would show him how he might use it in digging up ancient Mitylene, or modern Smyrna, or the lost cities of the Plain of Pactolus. If the size of the fortune troubled him, Dr. Boomer would dig him up the whole African Sahara from Alexandria to Morocco, and ask for more.

But if Destiny held all this for Tomlinson in its outstretched palm before it, it concealed stranger things still beneath the folds of its toga.

There were enough surprises there to turn the faces of the whole directorate of the Erie Auriferous Consolidated as yellow as the gold they mined.

For at this very moment, while the president of Plutoria University drew nearer and nearer to the Grand Palaver Hotel, the senior professor of geology was working again beside the blue flames in his darkened laboratory. And this time there was no shaking excitement over him. Nor were the labels that he marked, as sample followed sample in the tests, the same as those of the previous marking. Not by any means.

And his grave face as he worked in silence was as still as the stones of the post-tertiary period.

CHAPTER THREE: The Arrested Philanthropy of Mr. Tomlinson

"This, Mr. Tomlinson, is our campus," said President Boomer as they passed through the iron gates of Plutoria University.

"For camping?" said the Wizard.

"Not exactly," answered the president, "though it would, of course, suit for that. *Nihil humunum alienum*, eh?" and he broke into a loud, explosive laugh, while his spectacles irradiated that peculiar form of glee derived from a Latin quotation by those able to enjoy it. Dr. Boyster, walking on the other side of Mr. Tomlinson, joined in the laugh in a deep, reverberating chorus.

The two had the Wizard of Finance between them, and they were marching him up to the University. He was taken along much as is an arrested man who has promised to go quietly. They kept their hands off him, but they watched him sideways through their spectacles. At the least sign of restlessness they doused him with Latin. The Wizard of Finance, having been marked out by Dr. Boomer and Dr. Boyster as a prospective benefactor, was having Latin poured over him to reduce him to the proper degree of plasticity.

They had already put him through the first stage. They had, three days ago, called on him at the Grand Palaver and served him with a pamphlet on "The Excavation of Mitylene" as a sort

of writ. Tomlinson and his wife had looked at the pictures of the ruins, and from the appearance of them they judged that Mitylene was in Mexico, and they said that it was a shame to see it in that state and that the United States ought to intervene.

As the second stage on the path of philanthropy, the Wizard of Finance was now being taken to look at the university. Dr. Boomer knew by experience that no rich man could look at it without wanting to give it money.

And here the president had found that there is no better method of dealing with businessmen than to use Latin on them. For other purposes the president used other things. For example at a friendly dinner at the Mausoleum Club where light conversation was in order, Dr. Boomer chatted, as has been seen, on the archaeological remains of the Navajos. In the same way, at Mrs. Rasselyer-Brown's Dante luncheons, he generally talked of the Italian *cinquecentisti* and whether Gian Gobbo della Scala had left a greater name than Can Grande della Spiggiola. But such talk as that was naturally only for women. Businessmen are much too shrewd for that kind of thing; in fact, so shrewd are they, as President Boomer had long since discovered, that nothing pleases them so much as the quiet, firm assumption that they know Latin. It is like writing them up an asset. So it was that Dr. Boomer would greet a business acquaintance with a roaring salutation of, "*Terque quaterque beatus*," or stand wringing his hand off to the tune of "*Oh et presidium et dulce decus meum*."

This caught them every time.

"You don't," said Tomlinson the Wizard in a hesitating tone as he looked at the smooth grass of the campus, "I suppose, raise anything on it?"

"No, no; this is only for field sports," said the president; "*sunt quos curriculo—*"

To which Dr. Boyster on the other side added, like a chorus, "*pulverem Olympicum*."

This was their favourite quotation. It always gave President Boomer a chance to speak of the final letter "m" in Latin poetry, and to say that in his opinion the so-called elision of the final "m" was more properly a dropping of the vowel with a repercussion of the two last consonants. He supported this by quoting Ammianus, at which Dr. Boyster exclaimed, "Pooh! Ammianus: more dog Latin!" and appealed to Mr. Tomlinson as to whether any rational man nowadays cared what Ammianus thought?

To all of which Tomlinson answered never a word, but looked steadily first at one and then at the other. Dr. Boomer said afterwards that the penetration of Tomlinson was wonderful, and that it was excellent to see how Boyster tried in vain to draw him; and Boyster said afterwards that the way in which Tomlinson quietly refused to be led on by Boomer was delicious, and that it was a pity that Aristophanes was not there to do it justice.

All of which was happening as they went in at the iron gates and up the elm avenue of Plutoria University.

The university, as everyone knows, stands with its great gates

on Plutoria Avenue, and with its largest buildings, those of the faculties of industrial and mechanical science, fronting full upon the street.

These buildings are exceptionally fine, standing fifteen stories high and comparing favourably with the best departmental stores or factories in the City. Indeed, after nightfall, when they are all lighted up for the evening technical classes and when their testing machinery is in full swing and there are students going in and out in overall suits, people have often mistaken the university, or this newer part of it, for a factory. A foreign visitor once said that the students looked like plumbers, and President Boomer was so proud of it that he put the phrase into his next Commencement address; and from there the newspapers got it and the Associated Press took it up and sent it all over the United States with the heading, "Have Appearance of Plumbers; Plutoria University Congratulated on Character of Students," and it was a proud day indeed for the heads of the Industrial Science faculty.

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