# HAPPY ENDINGS

> "As man, perhaps, the moment of his breath
> Receives the lurking principle of death;
> The young disease, that must subdue at length,
> Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength."

WORDS, which at the moment of their being spoken seem devoid of significance, the mere padding of intercourse, are apt to linger in the memory until Time has filled them with a new meaning. Then we see them, of a sudden, joined to subsequent events by the subtle threads of prophetic instinct. It is, for example, as though Destiny were some great architect, who while talking to us, and without considering what he does, hurriedly sketches a building on an odd piece of paper: we see it, remember it, and many years afterward, are startled to observe, in the street down which we are walking, a realization of this drawing in actual bricks and mortar. And so, too, I often look back through the years laid waste until I find Mr. Windrell, lying on his sofa, coughing, a rug spread over his legs, and recall his making to me one of those remarks which are in such general tender that they constitute a communal, rather than personal, utterance. "Well, I know it may be very inartistic of me, but I must confess to liking a happy ending."

This sentiment was so little in tune with the

conception I had formed of the esoteric Mr. Windrell that surprise at its banality may have been in part responsible for my remembering it. Perhaps he was guarding his inner thoughts and otherwise only intent on making automatic conversation to Mr. de Vere-Scrymgeour. At all events, this gentleman expressed delighted agreement.

"Of course, of course, my dear Windrell. '*Nothing is ever so good as you hope, or so bad as you fear.*' Who was it said that? Bismarck, I fancy. It can hardly have been Horace Walpole or Lord Chesterfield. . . . It might have been Lord Salisbury. He said a lot of good things, I believe (that thing about paper parcels and the Boers). When I read, I don't want my feelings to be lacerated, I want to enjoy myself. Yes, it's very true—'*Nothing is ever so good as you hope, or so bad as you fear.*' The quotation may not be quite word-perfect, but that's the sense of it."

He then hurriedly proceeded, before anyone could, as it were, catch him at it, to take a few favourite Latin platitudes, frozen in appropriate metre, out of their cold storage, and pile them up in defence of his attitude.

After a time, Mr. Windrell broke in. "And what makes these books so unpleasant to read, is that the characters are continually struggling against Fate: that is why they are so unhappy . . . whereas since everything is preordained, it would be better to submit. . . . *What is, is.*"

Mr. de Vere-Scrymgeour suddenly dropped the making of his mental barricade, and replied:

"I am not so certain of that. There must always be Endeavour. But I hate all this pessimistic

literature. If it's to be realistic, it should resemble life, not have all its colours darkened . . . hate it. . . . And yet sometimes now, I feel depressed myself . . . getting old, I suppose," he added, with the vacuous smile of those persons who can never be taught to believe that themselves are undergoing the same natural processes as every other living thing since the world's beginning . . . "getting old, but I must own that I feel depressed now at times: I'm sure I don't know why." (Now what depressed me in this, was that Mr. de Vere-Scrymgeour should not know why. . . . Nothing more melancholy than his existence could possibly be imagined. And his comprehension of this would, one felt, have made life better, rather than worse for him, since the chief thing which rendered it depressing was that he was unaware it was so, and in spite of one prevailing grievance, was contented.) "But that is all the more reason not to paint life too blackly."

"And, after all, at the end as at the beginning of life," argued Mr. Windrell, "we are nearer the Light. Of course, his characters exist only on the physical plane. That's what it is."

"And lives never end like that, Windrell: and that's why I say Hardy doesn't know the country he writes about (Why we're sitting in it now, ourselves): children of seven don't commit suicide—or, at any rate, not British children. It's un-English. And if they had, the parents would have kept a stiff upper-lip. The mother and father were quite young, too!—they ought to have got properly married and had other children. I've no patience with them. . . . Probably

they had bad blood—bad blood . . . but then I like a book about real ladies and gentlemen, and no author ever writes one now. Bad blood always tells, I think —but, even then, lives don't end *like that*.

Mr. Windrell coughed more than ever, and tapped his pipe, which made him so much worse, against the edge of the mantelpiece. " But then lives do not really end, do they, Scrymgeour ? " he inquired in a tone of inner conviction which forbade possible dissent. " I like a happy ending in a book ; and I think we have the right to expect one. For books have to have an ending—and therefore it should be happy—whereas the lives transcribed do not end, but only change their background."

" No, no, my dear fellow . . . '*Jam omnia*,' and again ' Another age shall see the golden ear imbrown the slope and nod in the parterre.' . . . Who, for example, would ever have thought the enormous fortune of the de Veres would dwindle to nothing, and that their last descendant would have to earn his living by teaching ? "

" Yet, as they have it in the East, ' All that has been, comes again.' "

And here, after the manner of two characters in a play by Tchekoff, each rambled on, interested in his own particular subject to the exclusion of all else. Mr. Windrell, it is true, a little emolliated his beliefs, fearing that Mr. Slowcombe might be annoyed if they were repeated to him in their full strength, and contented himself with frequent allusions to the philosopher Paracelsus and with talking, upon the whole, in a very confused if mystical way. I was

confident, however, that no opinion he expressed would really have reached Mr. Slowcombe, and that thus he had very much better have given his tongue full rein. For one thing, Mr. de Vere-Scrymgeour, entirely immersed in the past grandeur of the de Veres, was listening to nothing he said (any more than was Mr. Windrell listening to him) : and, for another, it was so impossible in any case to understand what Mr. Windrell himself meant, that to have handed it on to a third person would have been almost beyond human ingenuity. Yet, such as it was, this conversation was the nearest to an intellectual treat that my circumstances at the time afforded me and in every way preferable to the everlasting dirty stories of my fellows over the road, who by means of this repertory were at the same time preparing for a career in the Army and declaring to themselves their recent emancipation from school.

Moreover, Mr. Windrell's love of happy endings, and Mr. de Vere-Scrymgeour's justification of it, bestowed hope. For there was in the air of those days a feeling of restless unease : but these two men must know the world. "*Nothing was ever so good as you hoped, or so bad as you feared*"—As I faced my own future, this was comforting. And, leaving the room, I heard Mr. Windrell's husky voice repeating once more, emphatically, " I like a happy ending."

* * * * * *

It was of no use, I knew, to bother about the future. No escape was possible for me, that was evident. It must be, it was going to be, the Army. That had

long been decided. And I had learnt that to protest oneself unfitted for it only reinforced the resolve of all others concerned: for it was held that the young must never enter any profession suited to their abilities. The object of a gentleman's education and training should be, it was pointed out, not to exaggerate the good, but to help "make-up" the weak points in his character. He need not, goodness gracious! excel in any one thing, apart from sports or games. Versatility, to be bad at nothing and good for nothing, was the aim—in fact, to be a general all-round nuisance, able to criticize and interfere, but never to achieve.

In what other profession, I was asked, would one find a career? What else *could* I do? (What else, one might have answered, could any boy of sixteen-and-a-half to seventeen, with four years of English public-school education behind him, hope to do?) Besides, all the elements in the family, conventional and unconventional, agreed only in this: that "the Army was the making of a man." I had sought a way out, not daring to disclose my ambition to write: for in that respect I was already condemned, and in considerable disfavour for devouring poetry and novels, instead of "reading books for information." (By this phrase was meant Darwin and Ruskin, and such other highly-stylized, if obsolete, propaganda.) So I asked, why not go to a University? Impossible. On the one hand I was told that a bad style prevailed there, signet-rings and bedroom slippers at breakfast, and other really serious things of that kind: on the other, that it was true I might be happy there, but happiness "was not everything in life," and

that to complete and round off character, it was necessary to do something unpleasant every day (by which was meant all day). To this end, the army was a "magnificent training." ("Training," apparently, was to be regarded as something abstract and all-important: but in preparation, I used to wonder, for what? Presumably, since one must go on doing it to an advanced age, for the next life: in which, oddly enough, those who advocated this perpetual training, did not believe. So one was left in a quandary.) Then I suggested the Diplomatic Service? No: young diplomats brushed their hair back from their heads, in the wrong way, straight back. And the life, though agreeable, was no *training*. It must be, it was to be, the Army: and more than that, the Cavalry—an ideal training that! For though the military experience of those who advised this "choice" of occupation had been confined to a few days and nights—which, if cold or wet, they were allowed to pass, instead, at home—spent with the local Volunteers on their annual June "Beano," yet omniscience announced that only in the Cavalry was salvation to be found; a jolly, healthy, rollicking, rosy-cheeked life in the open, "with plenty of friends, what! all good fellows, and after a hard day in the saddle, doncherno, you come back in a regular glow."

This new description did not tally too well at first sight with the already established principle that others should do something unpleasant every day. Experience had enforced original distrust. Before leaving my private school, a master had taken me aside to prophesy similarly how "jolly and healthy"

I should find Eton (" a topping place "), while at the same time, nice man though he was, treating himself to a vicarious pleasure by making to me a most complicated explanation, couched in flower symbols, of " the facts of life." After this, incidentally, it had been quite two years before I could look a primrose in the face again; albeit, in compensation, it did make a new, if rather sinister sense inhabit those lines, which had hitherto appeared rather meaningless:

> " A primrose by the river's brim,
> A yellow primrose was to him:
> And it was nothing more."

But I had found school anything but " healthy and jolly." Indeed that pessimism, which had declared itself in my sceptical attitude toward Mr. Windrell's doctrine of " happy-endings," was rooted in this experience. An entire absence of interest in everything except sport and enjoyment, albeit this last required more intelligence than was given to its consideration, reigned there. It must be all right, it must be usual, one supposed: no calamity could be on the way, or someone, some few persons at least, would denounce the danger. Nevertheless the situation was in all truth alarming, for my comrades were many of them the sons of the men who still governed England. Had some sudden deterioration occurred in the breed, and, if so, what was its cause? Public schools and their games, perhaps, over the course of two or three generations: for a century ago those places, however much more brutal, had been centres of learning, and organized and compulsory play had not been in vogue.

It had been, therefore, almost a relief to be told that one was leaving Eton to prepare for the Army. Nothing else, at that age when each month is a year, mattered except escaping from school—not even the curtailment of the holidays which this plan necessitated. Nor could it then be foreseen that if life were to continue according to the schedule laid down for it, school would in reality never be left behind at all, the only difference being that Smith Major would in the course of time have swollen into Major Smith, and be by the degree of that titular somersault the more civilized.

Every day new prospectuses of places that " made a speciality of preparation for the Army " flowed in. These were lavish in promises, but, where the mental faculties of their youths were concerned, rather subdued in tone. The parents, also, judged by the references they gave, were not very sanguine as to their children's mental capacity.

A typical prospectus is here appended.

It will be noted that, however pleasurably entitled, with headings such as *Meals*, *Holidays*, or *Advances*, the sentences, except where they concern fees, invariably prove to be of a negative nature.

JUBILEE COLLEGE,

CAMBERLEY.

(FOUNDED 1887.)

---

MR. DUDLEY SLOWCOMBE,

ASSISTED BY A STAFF OF EXPERT TUTORS,

prepares a limited number of resident students for the Army Entrance Examinations.

*The number of students is limited to 18. Each student is given a bedroom.*

SUCCESSES are frequent. A list of persons who kindly permit reference is appended.

SITUATION.—A picturesque building, Jubilee College stands in its own grounds of 10½ acres, 520 feet above sea-level, on sandy soil in a proverbially healthy district. It is in every way admirably suited for its purpose.

DISCIPLINE.—The hours of study are rigidly observed. Supervision and Discipline are unremittingly exercised and the moral tone is high.

CHARACTER.—No pupil is received at Jubilee College without a certificate of good conduct from the Headmaster of his last school. It must be emphasized that certificates of expulsion will not be received in lieu thereof.

HOLIDAYS.—Special arrangements can be made for boys to remain at Jubilee College during the whole of the holidays.

---

MEALS consist of Breakfast, Lunch, Tea and Dinner. Great care is taken to see that the pupils always have a good appetite. The food is plain and wholesome.

LEAVE.—Leave of absence during terms is not permitted.

ADVANCES.—No money will be advanced to students.

MOTOR-CARS and MOTOR-BICYCLES are forbidden.

TELEPHONE.—Camberley 1082. Students are not allowed to receive or send a message.

FEES.

The fees are 70 guineas per term, payable in advance. A term's notice, or fees in lieu thereof, is required before the removal of a pupil.

Stationery and books—one guinea per term.

---

There are no EXTRAS, except for Laundress and Medical Attention.

Pupils are *not* required to bring any linen or books with them, except 3 bath towels.

OPINION OF STUDENTS.—Many students have described their life here to Mr. Dudley Slowcombe, in their own words, as "delightful."

*The day is apportioned as follows :*

| | |
|---|---|
| Breakfast . . . | 7.50 to 8.10 |
| Hours of study . | 8.10 to 1 p.m. |
| Luncheon . . | 1.5 p.m. |
| Hours of study . | 1.40 p.m. to 4.10 p.m. |
| Tea . . . . | 4.10 p.m. |
| Hours of study . | 4.20 p.m. to 7.40 p.m. |
| Dinner (Dinner-jacket) . | 7.45 p.m. |
| Preparation . . | 8.30 to 9.40 p.m. |
| Lights out . . | 10 p.m. |

---

Some Extracts, from spontaneous Letters received from parents and pupils:

Dec. 28, 1908.—"I thank you for a jolly nice time."

June 23, 1907.—"Congratulations. To get A. through any exam. is a testimonial in itself for Jubilee College. His Mother and I can hardly believe it. . . ."

Aug. 10, 1909.—"I shall always have pleasure in recommending you for backward boys, who naturally wish to enter the Army. . . ."

Oct. 1, 1908.—"We feel proud of X."

Nov. 5, 1910.—"Hurrah—I call it a real miracle."

April 2, 1909.—"Frank is in every way improved and no longer stammers."

Jan. 8, 1910.—"I shall never forget the larks we had at Jubilee College."

April 1, 1910.—"Davie is quite different since he was in your hands, and appears to enjoy it."

Dec. 20, 1904.—"We are naturally delighted at our son's successes."

Jan. 1, 1909.—"There seems to be a very good tone among the boys."

Dec. 14, 1906.—"The best time of one's life."

Dec. 28, 1908.—"Thanks. All my friends think it a great feat on your part—and the boy seems happy."

* * * * * *

Amongst many others, reference can be made to :

The Hon. Mrs. Agga-Aggar, 2, Airedale Crescent, Hove.

The Right Hon. Sir Axham Anthrax, Government House, Pootoowala.

Sir Blundell Bullough-Bloodworthy, K.C.B., D.S.O., etc., etc., Sandy Lodge, Wiltshire.

The Rev. Prebendary W. Blickworth, Brampton-en-le-Morthen, Yorks.

Mrs. Black-Bugbeare, Borrodale House, Bletchley.

The Hon. Mrs. Bacchus, The Vine, Dunstable.

Canon Behemoth, Bridworth Grove, Leicestershire.

Colonel Chortle, C.B., The Club, Cheltenham.

Canon Chowder, M.V.O., The Rectory, Clickham.

Mrs. Chump, Buckingham House, Moreton-in-the-Marsh.

Prince Chici-Chickikaba, Siam.

The Hon. Mrs. Berkeley Chimera, Basilisk House, Monmouthshire.

Mrs. Dandy, 21, The Crescent, Caterham.

Miss Dump, 8, Empire Villas, Newborough.

Miss Daisy Dimple, Old Hall, Chortle-cum-Bundle, Hants.

Lady Easy, Lax Lodge, Gillingham, Surrey.

Miss Eager, The Gables, Totteridge, Herts.

The Rt. Hon. The Lord Floodgate, Boringham, Norfolk.

Ralph Guy, Esq., Guy's Paddock, Essex.

Sir Hugh Higginbotham, Highbury Old Barn, Malton, Yorks.

Mrs. Harpy, 4, Mycene Road, Nicosia, Cyprus.

The Rev. Silas Longbotham, The Rectory, Rowton, Malpas, Cheshire.

Sir Lancaster Lowbotham, Bart., The Grange, Hallyn, Shropshire.

Miss Minney, 2, Rosebery Avenue, Newborough.

Dr. Moses, The Chase, Hartlepool.

Colonel Morton-Mimms, The Murdoch, Towcester, Northants.

Sir Scaramanga Nagel, C.I.E., Trichinopoli.

Etc., etc.

---

To place the sons of so many worthy fathers securely in the Army, was, one gathered, from all these papers, no easy matter. Each success in that direction was claimed proudly by the crammer responsible as though it were something in the nature of a personal feat of weight-lifting, only to be accomplished after arduous practice on his own part and by the continuous

prayer and fasting of his pupil: for one knew, from experience, the pauper-lunatic-asylum-diet signified by the scholastic euphemism "plain, wholesome food." Together with this material benefit and "special tuition" in the subjects which each boy might most dislike, were usually thrown-in, without extra charge, the spiritual blessings of chapel once every weekday and twice on Sunday. In this respect, the prospectus of Jubilee College was exceptional.

Those who governed my own destiny were of a lay, deeply Darwinian, turn of mind. Toward the Christian faith, which, by means of having introduced a species of life-after-death-insurance scheme for the poor, enabled them to occupy their present position, they yet maintained an attitude of keen distrust; were never able, perhaps, quite to forget that its original tenets had been much opposed to them. Accordingly, the preparations for my military martyrdom were inflicted on no needy clergyman. Notwithstanding, the middle part of August transported me away once more from my native terraces nigh hidden in the golden mists that ever hang lightly on those uplands in fine weather and from the plantations, in which, knowing every tree, it was possible to hide, if unduly dejected, among the little carillons of summer dew that at this season resounded and sparkled among the rank grass right through the long morning, noon, and until the early evening, and found me instead installed in that haven of "Special Tuition" in the neighbourhood of Aldershot, to which we have referred above: Jubilee College, presided over by Dudley

Slowcombe, Esq. And hereafter, the little incidents and encounters with people that flicker through the narrative are to be thought of as befalling an adventurer into a strange region, or one who sojourned for a time among the savage tribes that, unknown to most of our countrymen until the outbreak of the last war, still survive in the fastnesses of our own fair land, while in the background the reader, it is hoped, will be able to perceive, and study for himself, the workings, amateur and professional, of the English military machine, and of the mind of our military caste* before 1914.

* * * * * *

One evening, when the long strings of the rain dangled uselessly in the summer air and veiled from sight, like the silver fringe of a shawl, all that one

* Many people would, I know, deny the existence of one in England. In Germany, this caste, composed quite openly of a whole layer of society—the Junkers, with the Kaiser at their head—was very easy to perceive, and therefore very vulnerable, whereas in England, being much smaller and less professional, it was all the more subtle and less assailable. Here, no one class, it is admitted, was infected with the spirit that engenders war . . . but no one class was quite free of it. In Germany it was definitely and openly working through the political system : in England it was always divorced from governmental sentiment, could be disavowed, but found a permanent vent for its ambitions in the workings and schemes of the War Office and the Foreign Office, and in the hopes of the heads of the military and diplomatic profession. But it proved none the less dangerous because partly amateur. That the poor stupid people who were guilty of the wickedness often suffered themselves in the loss of those they loved, must not blind us to their wicked folly or to the beastliness of the machine they helped to construct, any more than must the fact that, when put to the test, they were incapable of producing one single great leader be allowed to blind us to their guilt.

was anxiously waiting to see, I drove up to the door, and was immediately ushered in to Mr. Slowcombe's study. It was a large square room, papered in a smoking-room-coloured tint, and embellished with large oil paintings, very full of action, in which British troops in topees, fur-caps or simple helmets, appropriate to the climate depicted, were heroically butchering or being butchered. Over the mantelpiece hung a large map of the world, British possessions and protectorates being marked in red. Against one wall stood a rather empty bookshelf, with a few dry, cloth-bound volumes in it, military manuals and lives of famous soldiers. Mr. Dudley Slowcombe was sitting in a chair, the seat of which, with Mr. Slowcombe on it, spun round suddenly, and sometimes very disconcertingly, at any pressure of his foot on the floor. In this way, as I entered, there was a whizzing sound, and out of a spinning chair he was precipitated toward me to shake hands. But he soon sat down again at his desk, on which were to be observed a framed photograph of an antiquated Boer-War Field-Marshal, and several old bullets, cartridge-cases and other such mementos beaten into pen-racks, penholders and accessories of which it was difficult to guess the meaning. I stood opposite, and now that he had settled down, found him to be a benevolent-looking, seal-like old gentleman, with shrewd eyes, a red, large, somewhat amorphous nose, and a curious habit of blowing out his cheeks and loudly puffing under his white moustache, as though he were endeavouring to give a simultaneous imitation of a man running to catch a train that was starting

and of the train itself. Actually this was one of those tricks sometimes adopted by human beings, not so much to impress others with, as to persuade themselves of their own importance; though it is difficult to understand why so primitive, ungraceful a procedure should, even in their own eyes, enable them to add a moral inch to their stature. . . . Still Mr. Slowcombe puffed at me wide-eyed, perhaps unable to think of anything to say, and still in my turn I surveyed him. It occurred to me that he looked half-starved (which, indeed, as we shall presently see, he was). But his voice, when at last it sounded, came unexpectedly strong: for I was not then aware that he was a celebrated local orator. Moreover it was a kindly voice; so kindly that I have always regarded the economies and absurd, militaristic ideas in which he revelled, as things not inherent in his character, but forced upon him from outside, the deforming results, it may be, of a long period of unhappiness—for unhappiness, of however mild a nature, if spread over a number of years, is most toxic, poisons and distorts. This deduction, on the other hand, must not be allowed sentimentally to neutralize realism: for, alas, whatever the reason, he was now a tiresome, rather harmful old man.

Mr. Slowcombe was all the more of a soldier for having taken good care never himself to have been in the Army. His views were defined and concise, and almost invariably wrong on all subjects, although they suffered from some form of sclerosis. He was a thorough-going but, as he liked to think, "progressive" Tory—with the typical megalomania which

the adjective used in that connection denotes—and a great believer in the enthusiasm of the working-classes for any proposal to put taxes on their food. Even in those far-away days, he held, as many hold now, that to advocate it was the only way in which the Conservative Party would ever "sweep the country": and after every fresh election, which he helped to lose for his party by speaking on this subject, he would more than ever gasp and puff, but this time with surprise, as the results were announced. In fact, the only point where his opinions broke away from type was over conscription. Of this he was a declared opponent, giving as his reason "that Voluntary Service was more efficient and in accord with the traditions of Empire" (He always talked endlessly of "Empire"—not "the Empire," but "Empire," *tout court*); and no doubt was in this matter not consciously hypocritical. The deception, though it was not less of one for this reason, lay under his consciousness; had somebody suggested to him that it was because conscription would deprive him of his living that he disparaged it, he would have been altogether sincere in the angry and amazed denial he would have offered. But his patriotism, as one came to know it, was disappointing, if ordinary, in its quality. I am convinced that he never gave a thought to any of the things of which England has cause to be proud—for example, her poets, her elm-trees, her experiments in science and humanitarianism, her buildings and her theatrical traditions during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—but instead allowed his imagination to roam among prairies, deserts and imperial

wastes. Figures of export trade he surveyed with the keen, competitive eye of an amateur of cricket averages scanning the scores of the counties. The conditions under which the goods were made, it is needless to say, failed to interest him.

Of all this, of course, I was not aware as I waited for him to break the silence: though it was possible to guess something of it from the very first. At last he made an effort.

"Well, my boy," he said, " so you've decided on a career in the Army. And to my mind, you've done right. It may be dull in peace-time, as many of my old pupils tell me, but there'll be a great scrap before long. Germany's preparing: not a doubt of it; and it's the duty of you young chaps to be ready to give her a hiding. Not, of course, that we want war, but it's the duty of every country to prepare. . . . ' If you want peace,' as they say, ' prepare for war.' "

This welcome rather depressed me, and seized by one of those irresistible impulses to which we are all liable, I did not so much ask as hear my own voice ask, in a clear tone that permitted me no attempt to disguise subsequently what had been said, " Why ? " But taken aback as was myself at this abrupt inquiry, it was nothing to the effect produced upon Mr. Slowcombe. The shrewdness suddenly faded out of his eyes, and an expression of wild, mad fright was substituted for it. During several minutes he puffed, as though completing the last yards of a sprint for which he had not gone into training, and then a torrent of different but muddled explanations, from which stood out for his own comforting various familiar

landmarks, such as " Empire " and " Tariff Reform," burst forth.

" What would happen to Germany," he was saying, " if she wanted a war, and we refused to fight her ? Look at it like that for a moment. Forget that England is a little island, and think of *Empire.* And we know Germany is preparing. My old friend Sir Blundell Bullough-Bloodworthy has just come back from a cure at Carlsbad, and he says there's not a doubt of it, in his mind : not a doubt. And it's very seldom an idea enters *his* head. He's a fine soldier. . . . And so we must prepare too. . . . Empire must always be in the foreground of our minds. For we are an Imperial People. We live in our ships. . . . And what does Tariff Reform imply ? " (Here he struck the edge of his desk a sharp rap with his finger.) " It means Work for All : Work for all means Trade for all " (here he stopped suddenly, as though himself startled at his conclusions). . . . " What was I saying ? " And then becoming calmer, and feeling that his mental tram had got on its rails again. . . ." Ah ! we shall need young fellows like you, if there's going to be a scrap. . . . We older men can help make it and guide it. . . . Yes, yes . . . but we must not do the fighting ourselves, for we must all play our part, however humble, in Empire's Cause, be it " (Mr. Slowcombe, like all patriotic orators, was apt to break into somewhat dramatic phraseology at such moments) —" yes, be it, only in the giving up of our lives."

I managed to murmur something non-committal in reply, and Mr. Slowcombe, who apparently bore me no ill-will for the lapse in good taste for which I

had been responsible, dipped now from the eagle-heights he had been for the past minutes inhabiting and added, "I've put you in No. 18. A nice, bright room, you'll find it. . . . The notice-board outside this door will tell you everything you want to know about your work. I think you'll find the men here very agreeable. Just one word more" (and now he was to soar again). "School lies behind you: life stretches before you, and you are on its threshold; in this moment, a solemn moment in your life, it behoves you to remember that Empire was built up on the efforts" (and here Mr. Slowcombe began to use gestures more frequently than hitherto; a fact I noticed at the time but did not interpret until afterwards. He had, of course, slipped into the very familiar peroration to which he treated all his new pupils, and which was designed to end each of these interviews) "not of men merely working for that purpose (Look, for example, at Australia!), but of a million, nay, many million men, working as one man for a cause they knew not but dimly felt" (knock on desk). "Empire is not mainly a material fact, but a dream that abides in the heart—yes, in the heart" (gesture pointing to that important organ and voice softening to pathos), "and" (brought out as though, who should say, "That will take you aback a bit") "in the *head*" (palm of hand crashed loudly on desk) "of every one of us: not only a dream. A prayer that rises from every quarter of the globe and demands to be made real. An epic drama that takes its action in the heart. . . ." (At this moment of climax there was a loud knock at the door, and Mr. Slowcombe

said crossly: "Yes, Müller, do wait a minute—I'm just coming now. . . . What a nuisance that man is. He doesn't understand a single word of English, but always manages to interrupt me whenever I'm saying anything important.) As I was saying, in the heart of every Englishman worthy of his breed. . . ." (Dipping again) "By the way, when you look at the notice-board, you'll see that a subscription-list has been opened for the gardener . . . he's too old for work and must retire. Now the men here like to run the place as a mess: you know, share-and-share-alike. . . . And I see no objection, so instead of pensioning the gardener off myself, we've opened a subscription-list for him. . . . Even in such small ways as this, even if—for example—as you've only just joined us, you were to give a mere sovereign, one learns a little, and on however small a scale, to comprehend the Spirit of Empire, as befits an Officer and a Gentleman."

Now this culmination did, for once, signify something. My interview with Mr. Slowcombe had been in the nature of an accolade. Thus was every schoolboy transmuted into something higher. Henceforth, I was an embryo "Officer and Gentleman": not, it should be explained, that one was as yet able to exact the full reverence due to the complete development of those terms, but that one could claim to be treated with a certain respect, such, for example, as a tadpole might enjoy in his evolutionary position as a future frog. And, indeed, Mr. Slowcombe understood so well the tricks of examiners, had met with so many unbelievable successes in getting even the stupidest

of his pupils " past " (he always used this preposition, as if the whole thing were some superlative form of obstacle race) their examinations, that the process was to be regarded, not as fortuitous, but as one pertaining to the natural laws of growth. And the superficial difference made by instilling this idea, that they were adult objects of esteem, into the heads of these overgrown schoolboys was soon visible.

At first I experienced a feeling of nervousness, an uncertainty as to the correct conduct, for up to this time I had been solely acquainted with two brands of behaviour: the at-home one, which was innate, and that which it had been necessary gradually to manufacture for use in the idiot, irresponsible life of a school. Here, however, I found existence was, on the surface, at a quite other and more pleasant level, even though the work was much harder.

But the act of transubstantiation by which Mr. Slowcombe accomplished this " Officer and Gentleman " business brought advantages to himself as much as to his pupils. To me, it guaranteed liberty and independence of a circumscribed order: while it enabled him, by giving the dog a good name and, as it were, by encouraging the poor animal to believe that he merited it, to put into execution an astonishing number of economies. For example, by dint of this one experiment, simple as it was bold, just as the raw material of the establishment had been turned into something surpassing, so had the supper upon which it was nourished been transmuted into that symbol, no less of gentlehood than maturity, " *dinner*." The food was identical, I found, with that of supper at