CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

A Few Utopian Impressions

Section 1

But now we are in a better position to describe the houses and ways of the Utopian townships about the Lake of Lucerne, and to glance a little more nearly at the people who pass. You figure us as curiously settled down in Utopia, as working for a low wage at wood-carving, until the authorities at the central registry in Paris can solve the perplexing problem we have set them. We stay in an inn looking out upon the lake, and go to and fro for our five hours' work a day, with a curious effect of having been born Utopians. The rest of our time is our own.

Our inn is one of those inns and lodging houses which have a minimum tariff, inns which are partly regulated, and, in the default of private enterprise, maintained and controlled by the World State throughout the entire world. It is one of several such establishments in Lucerne. It possesses many hundreds of practically self-cleaning little bedrooms, equipped very much after the fashion of the rooms we occupied in the similar but much smaller inn at Hospenthal, differing only a little in the decoration. There is the same dressing-room recess with its bath, the same graceful

proportion in the succinct simplicity of its furniture. This particular inn is a quadrangle after the fashion of an Oxford college; it is perhaps forty feet high, and with about five stories of bedrooms above its lower apartments; the windows of the rooms look either outward or inward to the quadrangle, and the doors give upon artificially-lit passages with staircases passing up and down. These passages are carpeted with a sort of cork carpet, but are otherwise bare. The lower story is occupied by the equivalent of a London club, kitchens and other offices, dining-room, writing-room, smoking and assembly rooms, a barber's shop, and a library. A colonnade with seats runs about the quadrangle, and in the middle is a grass-plot. In the centre of this a bronze figure, a sleeping child, reposes above a little basin and fountain, in which water lilies are growing. The place has been designed by an architect happily free from the hampering traditions of Greek temple building, and of Roman and Italian palaces; it is simple, unaffected, gracious. The material is some artificial stone with the dull surface and something of the tint of yellow ivory; the colour is a little irregular, and a partial confession of girders and pillars breaks this front of tender colour with lines and mouldings of greenish gray, that blend with the tones of the leaden gutters and rain pipes from the light red roof. At one point only does any explicit effort towards artistic effect appear, and that is in the great arched gateway opposite my window. Two or three abundant yellow roses climb over the face of the building, and when I look out of my window in the early morning--for the usual Utopian working

day commences within an hour of sunrise--I see Pilatus above this outlook, rosy in the morning sky.

This quadrangle type of building is the prevalent element in Utopian Lucerne, and one may go from end to end of the town along corridors and covered colonnades without emerging by a gateway into the open roads at all. Small shops are found in these colonnades, but the larger stores are usually housed in buildings specially adapted to their needs. The majority of the residential edifices are far finer and more substantial than our own modest shelter, though we gather from such chance glimpses as we get of their arrangements that the labour-saving ideal runs through every grade of this servantless world; and what we should consider a complete house in earthly England is hardly known here.

The autonomy of the household has been reduced far below terrestrial conditions by hotels and clubs, and all sorts of co-operative expedients. People who do not live in hotels seem usually to live in clubs. The fairly prosperous Utopian belongs, in most cases, to one or two residential clubs of congenial men and women. These clubs usually possess in addition to furnished bedrooms more or less elaborate suites of apartments, and if a man prefers it one of these latter can be taken and furnished according to his personal taste. A pleasant boudoir, a private library and study, a private garden plot, are among the commonest of such luxuries. Devices to secure roof gardens, loggias, verandahs, and such-like open-air privacies

to the more sumptuous of these apartments, give interest and variety to Utopian architecture. There are sometimes little cooking corners in these flats--as one would call them on earth--but the ordinary Utopian would no more think of a special private kitchen for his dinners than he would think of a private flour mill or dairy farm. Business, private work, and professional practice go on sometimes in the house apartments, but often in special offices in the great warren of the business quarter. A common garden, an infant school, play rooms, and a playing garden for children, are universal features of the club quadrangles.

Two or three main roads with their tramways, their cyclists' paths, and swift traffic paths, will converge on the urban centre, where the public offices will stand in a group close to the two or three theatres and the larger shops, and hither, too, in the case of Lucerne, the head of the swift railway to Paris and England and Scotland, and to the Rhineland and Germany will run. And as one walks out from the town centre one will come to that mingling of homesteads and open country which will be the common condition of all the more habitable parts of the globe.

Here and there, no doubt, will stand quite solitary homesteads, homesteads that will nevertheless be lit and warmed by cables from the central force station, that will share the common water supply, will have their perfected telephonic connection with the rest of the world, with doctor, shop, and so forth, and may even have

a pneumatic tube for books and small parcels to the nearest post-office. But the solitary homestead, as a permanent residence, will be something of a luxury--the resort of rather wealthy garden lovers; and most people with a bias for retirement will probably get as much residential solitude as they care for in the hire of a holiday chalet in a forest, by remote lagoons or high up the mountain side.

The solitary house may indeed prove to be very rare indeed in Utopia. The same forces, the same facilitation of communications that will diffuse the towns will tend to little concentrations of the agricultural population over the country side. The field workers will probably take their food with them to their work during the day, and for the convenience of an interesting dinner and of civilised intercourse after the working day is over, they will most probably live in a college quadrangle with a common room and club. I doubt if there will be any agricultural labourers drawing wages in Utopia. I am inclined to imagine farming done by tenant associations, by little democratic unlimited liability companies working under elected managers, and paying not a fixed rent but a share of the produce to the State. Such companies could reconstruct annually to weed out indolent members. [Footnote: Schemes for the co-operative association of producers will be found in Dr. Hertzka's Freeland.] A minimum standard of efficiency in farming would be insured by fixing a minimum beneath which the rent must not fall, and perhaps by inspection. The general laws respecting the standard

of life would, of course, apply to such associations. This type of co-operation presents itself to me as socially the best arrangement for productive agriculture and horticulture, but such enterprises as stock breeding, seed farming and the stocking and loan of agricultural implements are probably, and agricultural research and experiment certainly, best handled directly by large companies or the municipality or the State.

But I should do little to investigate this question; these are presented as quite incidental impressions. You must suppose that for the most part our walks and observations keep us within the more urban quarters of Lucerne. From a number of beautifully printed placards at the street corners, adorned with caricatures of considerable pungency, we discover an odd little election is in progress. This is the selection, upon strictly democratic lines, with a suffrage that includes every permanent resident in the Lucerne ward over the age of fifteen, of the ugliest local building. The old little urban and local governing bodies, we find, have long since been superseded by great provincial municipalities for all the more serious administrative purposes, but they still survive to discharge a number of curious minor functions, and not the least among these is this sort of aesthetic ostracism. Every year every minor local governing body pulls down a building selected by local plebiscite, and the greater Government pays a slight compensation to the owner, and resumes possession of the land it occupies. The idea would strike us at first as simply whimsical, but in practice it

appears to work as a cheap and practical device for the aesthetic education of builders, engineers, business men, opulent persons, and the general body of the public. But when we come to consider its application to our own world we should perceive it was the most Utopian thing we had so far encountered.

Section 2

The factory that employs us is something very different from the ordinary earthly model. Our business is to finish making little wooden toys--bears, cattle men, and the like--for children. The things are made in the rough by machinery, and then finished by hand, because the work of unskilful but interested men--and it really is an extremely amusing employment--is found to give a personality and interest to these objects no machine can ever attain.

We carvers--who are the riffraff of Utopia--work in a long shed together, nominally by time; we must keep at the job for the length of the spell, but we are expected to finish a certain number of toys for each spell of work. The rules of the game as between employer and employed in this particular industry hang on the wall behind us; they are drawn up by a conference of the Common Council of Wages Workers with the employers, a common council which has resulted in Utopia from a synthesis of the old Trades Unions, and which has

become a constitutional power; but any man who has skill or humour is presently making his own bargain with our employer more or less above that datum line.

Our employer is a quiet blue-eyed man with a humorous smile. He dresses wholly in an indigo blue, that later we come to consider a sort of voluntary uniform for Utopian artists. As he walks about the workshop, stopping to laugh at this production or praise that, one is reminded inevitably of an art school. Every now and then he carves a little himself or makes a sketch or departs to the machinery to order some change in the rough shapes it is turning out. Our work is by no means confined to animals. After a time I am told to specialise in a comical little Roman-nosed pony; but several of the better paid carvers work up caricature images of eminent Utopians. Over these our employer is most disposed to meditate, and from them he darts off most frequently to improve the type.

It is high summer, and our shed lies open at either end. On one hand is a steep mountain side down which there comes, now bridging a chasm, now a mere straight groove across a meadow, now hidden among green branches, the water-slide that brings our trees from the purple forest overhead. Above us, but nearly hidden, hums the machine shed, but we see a corner of the tank into which, with a mighty splash, the pine trees are delivered. Every now and then, bringing with him a gust of resinous smell, a white-clad machinist will come in with a basketful of crude, unwrought little images, and

will turn them out upon the table from which we carvers select them.

(Whenever I think of Utopia that faint and fluctuating smell of resin returns to me, and whenever I smell resin, comes the memory of the open end of the shed looking out upon the lake, the blue-green lake, the boats mirrored in the water, and far and high beyond floats the atmospheric fairyland of the mountains of Glarus, twenty miles away.)

The cessation of the second and last spell of work comes about midday, and then we walk home, through this beautiful intricacy of a town to our cheap hotel beside the lake.

We should go our way with a curious contentment, for all that we were earning scarcely more than the minimum wage. We should have, of course, our uneasiness about the final decisions of that universal eye which has turned upon us, we should have those ridiculous sham numbers on our consciences; but that general restlessness, that brooding stress that pursues the weekly worker on earth, that aching anxiety that drives him so often to stupid betting, stupid drinking, and violent and mean offences will have vanished out of mortal experience.

Section 3

I should find myself contrasting my position with my preconceptions about a Utopian visit. I had always imagined myself as standing outside the general machinery of the State--in the distinguished visitors' gallery, as it were--and getting the new world in a series of comprehensive perspective views. But this Utopia, for all the sweeping floats of generalisation I do my best to maintain, is swallowing me up. I find myself going between my work and the room in which I sleep and the place in which I dine, very much as I went to and fro in that real world into which I fell five-and-forty years ago. I find about me mountains and horizons that limit my view, institutions that vanish also without an explanation, beyond the limit of sight, and a great complexity of things I do not understand and about which, to tell the truth, I do not formulate acute curiosities. People, very unrepresentative people, people just as casual as people in the real world, come into personal relations with us, and little threads of private and immediate interest spin themselves rapidly into a thickening grey veil across the general view. I lose the comprehensive interrogation of my first arrival; I find myself interested in the grain of the wood I work, in birds among the tree branches, in little irrelevant things, and it is only now and then that I get fairly back to the mood that takes all Utopia for its picture.

We spend our first surplus of Utopian money in the reorganisation of our wardrobes upon more Utopian lines; we develop acquaintance

with several of our fellow workers, and of those who share our table at the inn. We pass insensibly into acquaintanceships and the beginnings of friendships. The World Utopia, I say, seems for a time to be swallowing me up. At the thought of detail it looms too big for me. The question of government, of its sustaining ideas, of race, and the wider future, hang like the arch of the sky over these daily incidents, very great indeed, but very remote. These people about me are everyday people, people not so very far from the minimum wage, accustomed much as the everyday people of earth are accustomed to take their world as they find it. Such enquiries as I attempt are pretty obviously a bore to them, pass outside their range as completely as Utopian speculation on earth outranges a stevedore or a member of Parliament or a working plumber. Even the little things of daily life interest them in a different way. So I get on with my facts and reasoning rather slowly. I find myself looking among the pleasant multitudes of the streets for types that promise congenial conversation.

My sense of loneliness is increased during this interlude by the better social success of the botanist. I find him presently falling into conversation with two women who are accustomed to sit at a table near our own. They wear the loose, coloured robes of soft material that are the usual wear of common adult Utopian women; they are both dark and sallow, and they affect amber and crimson in their garments. Their faces strike me as a little unintelligent, and there is a faint touch of middle-aged coquetry in their bearing that I do

not like. Yet on earth we should consider them women of exceptional refinement. But the botanist evidently sees in this direction scope for the feelings that have wilted a little under my inattention, and he begins that petty intercourse of a word, of a slight civility, of vague enquiries and comparisons that leads at last to associations and confidences. Such superficial confidences, that is to say, as he finds satisfactory.

This throws me back upon my private observations.

The general effect of a Utopian population is vigour. Everyone one meets seems to be not only in good health but in training; one rarely meets fat people, bald people, or bent or grey. People who would be obese or bent and obviously aged on earth are here in good repair, and as a consequence the whole effect of a crowd is livelier and more invigorating than on earth. The dress is varied and graceful; that of the women reminds one most of the Italian fifteenth century; they have an abundance of soft and beautifully-coloured stuffs, and the clothes, even of the poorest, fit admirably. Their hair is very simply but very carefully and beautifully dressed, and except in very sunny weather they do not wear hats or bonnets. There is little difference in deportment between one class and another; they all are graceful and bear themselves with quiet dignity, and among a group of them a European woman of fashion in her lace and feathers, her hat and metal ornaments, her mixed accumulations of "trimmings," would look like a

barbarian tricked out with the miscellaneous plunder of a museum. Boys and girls wear much the same sort of costume--brown leather shoes, then a sort of combination of hose and close-fitting trousers that reaches from toe to waist, and over this a beltless jacket fitting very well, or a belted tunic. Many slender women wear the same sort of costume. We should see them in it very often in such a place as Lucerne, as they returned from expeditions in the mountains. The older men would wear long robes very frequently, but the greater proportion of the men would go in variations of much the same costume as the children. There would certainly be hooded cloaks and umbrellas for rainy weather, high boots for mud and snow, and cloaks and coats and furry robes for the winter. There would be no doubt a freer use of colour than terrestrial Europe sees in these days, but the costume of the women at least would be soberer and more practical, and (in harmony with our discussion in the previous chapter) less differentiated from the men's.

But these, of course, are generalisations. These are the mere translation of the social facts we have hypotheticated into the language of costume. There will be a great variety of costume and no compulsions. The doubles of people who are naturally foppish on earth will be foppish in Utopia, and people who have no natural taste on earth will have inartistic equivalents. Everyone will not be quiet in tone, or harmonious, or beautiful. Occasionally, as I go through the streets to my work, I shall turn round to glance again at some robe shot with gold embroidery, some slashing of the

sleeves, some eccentricity of cut, or some discord or untidiness. But these will be but transient flashes in a general flow of harmonious graciousness; dress will have scarcely any of that effect of disorderly conflict, of self-assertion qualified by the fear of ridicule, that it has in the crudely competitive civilisations of earth.

I shall have the seeker's attitude of mind during those few days at Lucerne. I shall become a student of faces. I shall be, as it were, looking for someone. I shall see heavy faces, dull faces, faces with an uncongenial animation, alien faces, and among these some with an immediate quality of appeal. I should see desirable men approaching me, and I should think; "Now, if I were to speak to you?" Many of these latter I should note wore the same clothing as the man who spoke to us at Wassen; I should begin to think of it as a sort of uniform....

Then I should see grave-faced girls, girls of that budding age when their bearing becomes delusively wise, and the old deception of my youth will recur to me; "Could you and I but talk together?" I should think. Women will pass me lightly, women with open and inviting faces, but they will not attract me, and there will come beautiful women, women with that touch of claustral preoccupation which forbids the thought of any near approach. They are private and secret, and I may not enter, I know, into their thoughts....

I go as often as I can to the seat by the end of old Kapelbrucke, and watch the people passing over.

I shall find a quality of dissatisfaction throughout all these days. I shall come to see this period more and more distinctly as a pause, as a waiting interlude, and the idea of an encounter with my double, which came at first as if it were a witticism, as something verbal and surprising, begins to take substance. The idea grows in my mind that after all this is the "someone" I am seeking, this Utopian self of mine. I had at first an idea of a grotesque encounter, as of something happening in a looking glass, but presently it dawns on me that my Utopian self must be a very different person from me. His training will be different, his mental content different. But between us there will be a strange link of essential identity, a sympathy, an understanding. I find the thing rising suddenly to a preponderance in my mind. I find the interest of details dwindling to the vanishing point. That I have come to Utopia is the lesser thing now; the greater is that I have come to meet myself.

I spend hours trying to imagine the encounter, inventing little dialogues. I go alone to the Bureau to find if any news has come to hand from the Great Index in Paris, but I am told to wait another twenty-four hours. I cease absolutely to be interested in anything else, except so far as it leads towards intercourse with this being who is to be at once so strangely alien and so totally mine.

Section 4

Wrapped up in these preoccupations as I am, it will certainly be the botanist who will notice the comparative absence of animals about us.

He will put it in the form of a temperate objection to the Utopian planet.

He is a professed lover of dogs and there are none. We have seen no horses and only one or two mules on the day of our arrival, and there seems not a cat in the world. I bring my mind round to his suggestion. "This follows," I say.

It is only reluctantly that I allow myself to be drawn from my secret musings into a discussion of Utopian pets.

I try to explain that a phase in the world's development is inevitable when a systematic world-wide attempt will be made to destroy for ever a great number of contagious and infectious diseases, and that this will involve, for a time at any rate, a stringent suppression of the free movement of familiar animals. Utopian houses, streets and drains will be planned and built to make rats, mice, and such-like house parasites impossible; the race of cats and dogs--providing, as it does, living fastnesses to which

such diseases as plague, influenza, catarrhs and the like, can retreat to sally forth again--must pass for a time out of freedom, and the filth made by horses and the other brutes of the highway vanish from the face of the earth. These things make an old story to me, and perhaps explicitness suffers through my brevity.

My botanist fails altogether to grasp what the disappearance of diseases means. His mind has no imaginative organ of that compass. As I talk his mind rests on one fixed image. This presents what the botanist would probably call a "dear old doggie"--which the botanist would make believe did not possess any sensible odour--and it has faithful brown eyes and understands everything you say. The botanist would make believe it understood him mystically, and I figure his long white hand--which seems to me, in my more jaundiced moments, to exist entirely for picking things and holding a lens--patting its head, while the brute looked things unspeakable....

The botanist shakes his head after my explanation and says quietly, "I do not like your Utopia, if there are to be no dogs."

Perhaps that makes me a little malicious. Indeed I do not hate dogs, but I care ten thousand times more for a man than for all the brutes on the earth, and I can see, what the botanist I think cannot, that a life spent in the delightful atmosphere of many pet animals may have too dear a price....

I find myself back again at the comparison of the botanist and myself. There is a profound difference in our imaginations, and I wonder whether it is the consequence of innate character or of training and whether he is really the human type or I. I am not altogether without imagination, but what imagination I have has the most insistent disposition to square itself with every fact in the universe. It hypothesises very boldly, but on the other hand it will not gravely make believe. Now the botanist's imagination is always busy with the most impossible make-believe. That is the way with all children I know. But it seems to me one ought to pass out of it. It isn't as though the world was an untidy nursery; it is a place of splendours indescribable for all who will lift its veils. It may be he is essentially different from me, but I am much more inclined to think he is simply more childish. Always it is make-believe. He believes that horses are beautiful creatures for example, dogs are beautiful creatures, that some women are inexpressibly lovely, and he makes believe that this is always so. Never a word of criticism of horse or dog or woman! Never a word of criticism of his impeccable friends! Then there is his botany. He makes believe that all the vegetable kingdom is mystically perfect and exemplary, that all flowers smell deliciously and are exquisitely beautiful, that Drosera does not hurt flies very much, and that onions do not smell. Most of the universe does not interest this nature lover at all. But I know, and I am querulously incapable of understanding why everyone else does not know, that a horse is beautiful in one way and quite ugly in another, that everything has this shot-silk quality, and is

all the finer for that. When people talk of a horse as an ugly animal I think of its beautiful moments, but when I hear a flow of indiscriminate praise of its beauty I think of such an aspect as one gets for example from a dog-cart, the fiddle-shaped back, and that distressing blade of the neck, the narrow clumsy place between the ears, and the ugly glimpse of cheek. There is, indeed, no beauty whatever save that transitory thing that comes and comes again; all beauty is really the beauty of expression, is really kinetic and momentary. That is true even of those triumphs of static endeavour achieved by Greece. The Greek temple, for example, is a barn with a face that at a certain angle of vision and in a certain light has a great calm beauty.

But where are we drifting? All such things, I hold, are cases of more and less, and of the right moment and the right aspect, even the things I most esteem. There is no perfection, there is no enduring treasure. This pet dog's beautiful affection, I say, or this other sensuous or imaginative delight, is no doubt good, but it can be put aside if it is incompatible with some other and wider good. You cannot focus all good things together.

All right action and all wise action is surely sound judgment and courageous abandonment in the matter of such incompatibilities. If I cannot imagine thoughts and feelings in a dog's brain that cannot possibly be there, at least I can imagine things in the future of men that might be there had we the will to demand them....

"I don't like this Utopia," the botanist repeats. "You don't understand about dogs. To me they're human beings--and more! There used to be such a jolly old dog at my aunt's at Frognal when I was a boy----"

But I do not heed his anecdote. Something--something of the nature of conscience--has suddenly jerked back the memory of that beer I drank at Hospenthal, and puts an accusing finger on the memory.

I never have had a pet animal, I confess, though I have been fairly popular with kittens. But with regard to a certain petting of myself----?

Perhaps I was premature about that beer. I have had no pet animals, but I perceive if the Modern Utopia is going to demand the sacrifice of the love of animals, which is, in its way, a very fine thing indeed, so much the more readily may it demand the sacrifice of many other indulgences, some of which are not even fine in the lowest degree.

It is curious this haunting insistence upon sacrifice and discipline!

It is slowly becoming my dominant thought that the sort of people whose will this Utopia embodies must be people a little heedless of

small pleasures. You cannot focus all good things at the same time. That is my chief discovery in these meditations at Lucerne. Much of the rest of this Utopia I had in a sort of way anticipated, but not this. I wonder if I shall see my Utopian self for long and be able to talk to him freely....

We lie in the petal-strewn grass under some Judas trees beside the lake shore, as I meander among these thoughts, and each of us, disregardful of his companion, follows his own associations.

"Very remarkable," I say, discovering that the botanist has come to an end with his story of that Frognal dog.

"You'd wonder how he knew," he says.

"You would."

I nibble a green blade.

"Do you realise quite," I ask, "that within a week we shall face our Utopian selves and measure something of what we might have been?"

The botanist's face clouds. He rolls over, sits up abruptly and puts his lean hands about his knees.

"I don't like to think about it," he says. "What is the good of reckoning ... might have beens?"

Section 5

It is pleasant to think of one's puzzling the organised wisdom of so superior a planet as this Utopia, this moral monster State my Frankenstein of reasoning has made, and to that pitch we have come. When we are next in the presence of our Lucerne official, he has the bearing of a man who faces a mystification beyond his powers, an incredible disarrangement of the order of Nature. Here, for the first time in the records of Utopian science, are two cases--not simply one but two, and these in each other's company!--of duplicated thumb-marks. This, coupled with a cock-and-bull story of an instantaneous transfer from some planet unknown to Utopian astronomy. That he and all his world exists only upon a hypothesis that would explain everyone of these difficulties absolutely, is scarcely likely to occur to his obviously unphilosophic mind.

The official eye is more eloquent than the official lips and asks almost urgently, "What in this immeasurable universe have you managed to do to your thumbs? And why?" But he is only a very inferior sort of official indeed, a mere clerk of the post, and he has all the guarded reserve of your thoroughly unoriginal man. "You are not the two persons I ascertained you were," he says, with the

note of one resigned to communion with unreason; "because you"--he indicates me--"are evidently at your residence in London." I smile. "That gentleman"--he points a pen at the botanist in a manner that is intended to dismiss my smile once for all--"will be in London next week. He will be returning next Friday from a special mission to investigate the fungoid parasites that have been attacking the cinchona trees in Ceylon."

The botanist blesses his heart.

"Consequently"--the official sighs at the burthen of such nonsense, "you will have to go and consult with--the people you ought to be."

I betray a faint amusement.

"You will have to end by believing in our planet," I say.

He waggles a negation with his head. He would intimate his position is too responsible a one for jesting, and both of us in our several ways enjoy the pleasure we poor humans have in meeting with intellectual inferiority. "The Standing Committee of Identification," he says, with an eye on a memorandum, "has remitted your case to the Research Professor of Anthropology in the University of London, and they want you to go there, if you will, and talk to him."

"What else can we do?" says the botanist.

"There's no positive compulsion," he remarks, "but your work here will probably cease. Here----" he pushed the neat slips of paper towards us--"are your tickets for London, and a small but sufficient supply of money,"--he indicates two piles of coins and paper on either hand of him--"for a day or so there." He proceeds in the same dry manner to inform us we are invited to call at our earliest convenience upon our doubles, and upon the Professor, who is to investigate our case.

"And then?"

He pulls down the corners of his mouth in a wry deprecatory smile, eyes us obliquely under a crumpled brow, shrugs his shoulders, and shows us the palms of his hands.

On earth, where there is nationality, this would have been a Frenchman--the inferior sort of Frenchman--the sort whose only happiness is in the routine security of Government employment.

Section 6

London will be the first Utopian city centre we shall see.

We shall find ourselves there with not a little amazement. It will be our first experience of the swift long distance travel of Utopia, and I have an idea--I know not why--that we should make the journey by night. Perhaps I think so because the ideal of long-distance travel is surely a restful translation less suitable for the active hours.

We shall dine and gossip and drink coffee at the pretty little tables under the lantern-lit trees, we shall visit the theatre, and decide to sup in the train, and so come at last to the station. There we shall find pleasant rooms with seats and books--luggage all neatly elsewhere--and doors that we shall imagine give upon a platform. Our cloaks and hats and such-like outdoor impedimenta will be taken in the hall and neatly labelled for London, we shall exchange our shoes for slippers there, and we shall sit down like men in a club. An officious little bell will presently call our attention to a label "London" on the doorway, and an excellent phonograph will enforce that notice with infinite civility. The doors will open, and we shall walk through into an equally comfortable gallery.

"Where is the train for London?" we shall ask a uniformed fellow Utopian.

"This is the train for London," he will say.

There will be a shutting of doors, and the botanist and I, trying not to feel too childish, will walk exploring through the capacious train.

The resemblance to a club will strike us both. "A good club," the botanist will correct me.

When one travels beyond a certain speed, there is nothing but fatigue in looking out of a window, and this corridor train, twice the width of its poor terrestrial brother, will have no need of that distraction. The simple device of abandoning any but a few windows, and those set high, gives the wall space of the long corridors to books; the middle part of the train is indeed a comfortable library with abundant armchairs and couches, each with its green-shaded light, and soft carpets upon the soundproof floor. Further on will be a news-room, with a noiseless but busy tape at one corner, printing off messages from the wires by the wayside, and further still, rooms for gossip and smoking, a billiard room, and the dining car. Behind we shall come to bedrooms, bathrooms, the hairdresser, and so forth.

"When shall we start?" I ask presently, as we return, rather like bashful yokels, to the library, and the old gentleman reading the Arabian Nights in the armchair in the corner glances up at me with a sudden curiosity.

The botanist touches my arm and nods towards a pretty little lead-paned window, through which we see a village sleeping under cloudy moonlight go flashing by. Then a skylit lake, and then a string of swaying lights, gone with the leap of a camera shutter.

Two hundred miles an hour!

We resort to a dignified Chinese steward and secure our berths. It is perhaps terrestrial of us that we do not think of reading the Utopian literature that lines the middle part of the train. I find a bed of the simple Utopian pattern, and lie for a time thinking--quite tranquilly--of this marvellous adventure.

I wonder why it is that to lie securely in bed, with the light out, seems ever the same place, wherever in space one may chance to be? And asleep, there is no space for us at all. I become drowsy and incoherent and metaphysical....

The faint and fluctuating drone of the wheels below the car, re-echoed by the flying track, is more perceptible now, but it is not unpleasantly loud, merely a faint tinting of the quiet....

No sea crossing breaks our journey; there is nothing to prevent a Channel tunnel in that other planet; and I wake in London.

The train has been in London some time when I awake, for these marvellous Utopians have discovered that it is not necessary to bundle out passengers from a train in the small hours, simply because they have arrived. A Utopian train is just a peculiar kind of hotel corridor that flies about the earth while one sleeps.

Section 7

How will a great city of Utopia strike us?

To answer that question well one must needs be artist and engineer, and I am neither. Moreover, one must employ words and phrases that do not exist, for this world still does not dream of the things that may be done with thought and steel, when the engineer is sufficiently educated to be an artist, and the artistic intelligence has been quickened to the accomplishment of an engineer. How can one write of these things for a generation which rather admires that inconvenient and gawky muddle of ironwork and Flemish architecture, the London Tower Bridge. When before this, temerarious anticipators have written of the mighty buildings that might someday be, the illustrator has blended with the poor ineffectual splutter of the author's words, his powerful suggestion that it amounted simply to something bulbous, florid and fluent in the vein of the onion, and L'Art Nouveau. But here, it may be, the illustrator will not intervene.

Art has scarcely begun in the world.

There have been a few forerunners and that is all. Leonardo, Michael Angelo; how they would have exulted in the liberties of steel! There are no more pathetic documents in the archives of art than Leonardo's memoranda. In these, one sees him again and again reaching out as it were, with empty desirous hands, towards the unborn possibilities of the engineer. And Durer, too, was a Modern, with the same turn towards creative invention. In our times these men would have wanted to make viaducts, to bridge wild and inaccessible places, to cut and straddle great railways athwart the mountain masses of the world. You can see, time after time, in Durer's work, as you can see in the imaginary architectural landscape of the Pompeian walls, the dream of structures, lighter and bolder than stone or brick can yield.... These Utopian town buildings will be the realisation of such dreams.

Here will be one of the great meeting places of mankind. Here--I speak of Utopian London--will be the traditional centre of one of the great races in the commonalty of the World State--and here will be its social and intellectual exchange. There will be a mighty University here, with thousands of professors and tens of thousands of advanced students, and here great journals of thought and speculation, mature and splendid books of philosophy and science, and a glorious fabric of literature will be woven and shaped, and

with a teeming leisureliness, put forth. Here will be stupendous libraries, and a mighty organisation of museums. About these centres will cluster a great swarm of people, and close at hand will be another centre, for I who am an Englishman must needs stipulate that Westminster shall still be a seat of world Empire, one of several seats, if you will--where the ruling council of the world assembles. Then the arts will cluster round this city, as gold gathers about wisdom, and here Englishmen will weave into wonderful prose and beautiful rhythms and subtly atmospheric forms, the intricate, austere and courageous imagination of our race.

One will come into this place as one comes into a noble mansion. They will have flung great arches and domes of glass above the wider spaces of the town, the slender beauty of the perfect metal-work far overhead will be softened to a fairy-like unsubstantiality by the mild London air. It will be the London air we know, clear of filth and all impurity, the same air that gives our October days their unspeakable clarity and makes every London twilight mysteriously beautiful. We shall go along avenues of architecture that will be emancipated from the last memories of the squat temple boxes of the Greek, the buxom curvatures of Rome; the Goth in us will have taken to steel and countless new materials as kindly as once he took to stone. The gay and swiftly moving platforms of the public ways will go past on either hand, carrying sporadic groups of people, and very speedily we shall find ourselves in a sort of central space, rich with palms and flowering bushes and statuary. We shall look along an

avenue of trees, down a wide gorge between the cliffs of crowded hotels, the hotels that are still glowing with internal lights, to where the shining morning river streams dawnlit out to sea.

Great multitudes of people will pass softly to and fro in this central space, beautiful girls and youths going to the University classes that are held in the stately palaces about us, grave and capable men and women going to their businesses, children meandering along to their schools, holiday makers, lovers, setting out upon a hundred quests; and here we shall ask for the two we more particularly seek. A graceful little telephone kiosk will put us within reach of them, and with a queer sense of unreality I shall find myself talking to my Utopian twin. He has heard of me, he wants to see me and he gives me clear directions how to come to him.

I wonder if my own voice sounds like that.

"Yes," I say, "then I will come as soon as we have been to our hotel."

We indulge in no eloquence upon this remarkable occasion. Yet I feel an unusual emotional stir. I tremble greatly, and the telephonic mouthpiece rattles as I replace it.

And thence the botanist and I walk on to the apartments that have been set aside for us, and into which the poor little rolls of the

property that has accumulated about us in Utopia, our earthly raiment, and a change of linen and the like, have already been delivered. As we go I find I have little to say to my companion, until presently I am struck by a transitory wonder that he should have so little to say to me.

"I can still hardly realise," I say, "that I am going to see myself--as I might have been."

"No," he says, and relapses at once into his own preoccupation.

For a moment my wonder as to what he should be thinking about brings me near to a double self-forgetfulness.

I realise we are at the entrance of our hotel before I can formulate any further remark.

"This is the place," I say.