CHAPTER IX. ON GOAT ISLAND

1

The whack of a bullet on the rocks beside him reminded him that he was a visible object and wearing at least portions of a German uniform. It drove him into the trees again, and for a time he dodged and dropped and sought cover like a chick hiding among reeds from imaginary hawks.

"Beaten," he whispered. "Beaten and done for... Chinese! Yellow chaps chasing 'em!"

At last he came to rest in a clump of bushes near a locked-up and deserted refreshment shed within view of the American side. They made a sort of hole and harbour for him; they met completely overhead. He looked across the rapids, but the firing had ceased now altogether and everything seemed quiet. The Asiatic aeroplane had moved from its former position above the Suspension Bridge, was motionless now above Niagara city, shadowing all that district about the power-house which had been the scene of the land fight. The monster had an air of quiet and assured predominance, and from its stern it trailed, serene and ornamental, a long streaming flag, the red, black, and yellow of the great alliance, the Sunrise and the Dragon. Beyond, to the east, at a much higher level, hung a second consort, and Bert, presently gathering courage, wriggled out and craned his neck to find another still airship against the sunset in the south.

"Gaw!" he said. "Beaten and chased! My Gawd!"

The fighting, it seemed at first, was quite over in Niagara city, though a German flag was still flying from one shattered house. A white sheet was hoisted above the power-house, and this remained flying all through the events that followed. But presently came a sound of shots and then German soldiers running. They disappeared among the houses, and then came two engineers in blue shirts and trousers hotly pursued by three Japanese swordsman. The foremost of the two fugitives was a shapely man, and ran lightly and well; the second was a sturdy little man, and rather fat. He ran comically in leaps and bounds, with his plump arms bent up by his side and his head thrown back. The pursuers ran with uniforms and dark thin metal and leather head-dresses. The little man stumbled, and Bert gasped, realising a new horror in war.

The foremost swordsman won three strides on him and was near enough to slash at him and miss as he spurted.

A dozen yards they ran, and then the swordsman slashed again, and Bert could hear across the waters a little sound like the moo of an elfin cow as the fat little man fell forward. Slash went the swordsman and slash at something on the ground that tried to save itself with ineffectual hands. "Oh, I carn't!" cried Bert, near blubbering, and staring with starting eyes.

The swordsman slashed a fourth time and went on as his fellows came up after the better runner. The hindmost swordsman stopped and turned back. He had perceived some movement perhaps; but at any rate he stood, and ever and again slashed at the fallen body.

"Oo-oo!" groaned Bert at every slash, and shrank closer into the bushes and became very still. Presently came a sound of shots from the town, and then everything was quiet, everything, even the hospital.

He saw presently little figures sheathing swords come out from the houses and walk to the debris of the flying-machines the bomb had destroyed. Others appeared wheeling undamaged aeroplanes upon their wheels as men might wheel bicycles, and sprang into the saddles and flapped into the air. A string of three airships appeared far away in the east and flew towards the zenith. The one that hung low above Niagara city came still lower and dropped a rope ladder to pick up men from the power-house.

For a long time he watched the further happenings in Niagara city as a rabbit might watch a meet. He saw men going from building to building, to set fire to them, as he presently realised, and he heard a series of dull detonations from the wheel pit of the power-house. Some similar business went on among the works on the Canadian side. Meanwhile more and more airships appeared, and many more flying-machines, until at last it seemed to him nearly a third of the Asiatic fleet had re-assembled. He watched them from his bush, cramped but immovable, watched them

gather and range themselves and signal and pick up men, until at last they sailed away towards the glowing sunset, going to the great Asiatic rendez-vous, above the oil wells of Cleveland. They dwindled and passed away, leaving him alone, so far as he could tell, the only living man in a world of ruin and strange loneliness almost beyond describing. He watched them recede and vanish. He stood gaping after them.

"Gaw!" he said at last, like one who rouses himself from a trance.

It was far more than any personal desolation extremity that flooded his soul. It seemed to him indeed that this must be the sunset of his race.

2

He did not at first envisage his own plight in definite and comprehensible terms. Things happened to him so much of late, his own efforts had counted for so little, that he had become passive and planless. His last scheme had been to go round the coast of England as a Desert Dervish giving refined entertainment to his fellow-creatures. Fate had quashed that. Fate had seen fit to direct him to other destinies, had hurried him from point to point, and dropped him at last upon this little wedge of rock between the cataracts. It did not instantly occur to him that now it was his turn to play. He had a singular feeling that all must end as a dream ends, that presently surely he would be back in the world of Grubb and Edna and Bun Hill, that this roar, this glittering presence of incessant water, would be

drawn aside as a curtain is drawn aside after a holiday lantern show, and old familiar, customary things re-assume their sway. It would be interesting to tell people how he had seen Niagara. And then Kurt's words came into his head: "People torn away from the people they care for; homes smashed, creatures full of life and memories and peculiar little gifts--torn to pieces, starved, and spoilt."...

He wondered, half incredulous, if that was in deed true. It was so hard to realise it. Out beyond there was it possible that Tom and Jessica were also in some dire extremity? that the little green-grocer's shop was no longer standing open, with Jessica serving respectfully, warming Tom's ear in sharp asides, or punctually sending out the goods?

He tried to think what day of the week it was, and found he had lost his reckoning. Perhaps it was Sunday. If so, were they going to church or, were they hiding, perhaps in bushes? What had happened to the landlord, the butcher, and to Butteridge and all those people on Dymchurch beach? Something, he knew, had happened to London--a bombardment. But who had bombarded? Were Tom and Jessica too being chased by strange brown men with long bare swords and evil eyes? He thought of various possible aspects of affliction, but presently one phase ousted all the others. Were they getting much to eat? The question haunted him, obsessed him.

If one was very hungry would one eat rats?

It dawned upon him that a peculiar misery that oppressed him was not so

much anxiety and patriotic sorrow as hunger. Of course he was hungry!

He reflected and turned his steps towards the little refreshment shed that stood near the end of the ruined bridge. "Ought to be somethin'--"

He strolled round it once or twice, and then attacked the shutters with his pocket-knife, reinforced presently by a wooden stake he found conveniently near. At last he got a shutter to give, and tore it back and stuck in his head.

"Grub," he remarked, "anyhow. Leastways--"

He got at the inside fastening of the shutter and had presently this establishment open for his exploration. He found several sealed bottles of sterilized milk, much mineral water, two tins of biscuits and a crock of very stale cakes, cigarettes in great quantity but very dry, some rather dry oranges, nuts, some tins of canned meat and fruit, and plates and knives and forks and glasses sufficient for several score of people. There was also a zinc locker, but he was unable to negotiate the padlock of this.

"Shan't starve," said Bert, "for a bit, anyhow." He sat on the vendor's seat and regaled himself with biscuits and milk, and felt for a moment quite contented.

"Quite restful," he muttered, munching and glancing about him

restlessly, "after what I been through.

"Crikey! WOT a day! Oh! WOT a day!"

Wonder took possession of him. "Gaw!" he cried: "Wot a fight it's been! Smashing up the poor fellers! 'Eadlong! The airships--the fliers and all. I wonder what happened to the Zeppelin?... And that chap Kurt--I wonder what happened to 'im? 'E was a good sort of chap, was Kurt."

Some phantom of imperial solicitude floated through his mind. "Injia," he said....

A more practical interest arose.

"I wonder if there's anything to open one of these tins of corned beef?"

3

After he had feasted, Bert lit a cigarette and sat meditative for a time. "Wonder where Grubb is?" he said; "I do wonder that! Wonder if any of 'em wonder about me?"

He reverted to his own circumstances. "Dessay I shall 'ave to stop on this island for some time."

He tried to feel at his ease and secure, but presently the indefinable

restlessness of the social animal in solitude distressed him. He began to want to look over his shoulder, and, as a corrective, roused himself to explore the rest of the island.

It was only very slowly that he began to realise the peculiarities of his position, to perceive that the breaking down of the arch between Green Island and the mainland had cut him off completely from the world. Indeed it was only when he came back to where the fore-end of the Hohenzollern lay like a stranded ship, and was contemplating the shattered bridge, that this dawned upon him. Even then it came with no sort of shock to his mind, a fact among a number of other extraordinary and unmanageable facts. He stared at the shattered cabins of the Hohenzollern and its widow's garment of dishevelled silk for a time, but without any idea of its containing any living thing; it was all so twisted and smashed and entirely upside down. Then for a while he gazed at the evening sky. A cloud haze was now appearing and not an airship was in sight. A swallow flew by and snapped some invisible victim. "Like a dream," he repeated.

Then for a time the rapids held his mind. "Roaring. It keeps on roaring and splashin' always and always. Keeps on...."

At last his interests became personal. "Wonder what I ought to do now?"

He reflected. "Not an idee," he said.

He was chiefly conscious that a fortnight ago he had been in Bun Hill with no idea of travel in his mind, and that now he was between the Falls of Niagara amidst the devastation and ruins of the greatest air fight in the world, and that in the interval he had been across France, Belgium, Germany, England, Ireland, and a number of other countries. It was an interesting thought and suitable for conversation, but of no great practical utility. "Wonder 'ow I can get orf this?" he said. "Wonder if there is a way out? If not... rummy!"

Further reflection decided, "I believe I got myself in a bit of a 'ole coming over that bridge....

"Any'ow--got me out of the way of them Japanesy chaps. Wouldn't 'ave taken 'em long to cut MY froat. No. Still--"

He resolved to return to the point of Luna Island. For a long time he stood without stirring, scrutinising the Canadian shore and the wreckage of hotels and houses and the fallen trees of the Victoria Park, pink now in the light of sundown. Not a human being was perceptible in that scene of headlong destruction. Then he came back to the American side of the island, crossed close to the crumpled aluminium wreckage of the Hohenzollern to Green Islet, and scrutinised the hopeless breach in the further bridge and the water that boiled beneath it. Towards Buffalo there was still much smoke, and near the position of the Niagara railway station the houses were burning vigorously. Everything was deserted now, everything was still. One little abandoned thing lay on a transverse

path between town and road, a crumpled heap of clothes with sprawling limbs....

"'Ave a look round," said Bert, and taking a path that ran through the middle of the island he presently discovered the wreckage of the two Asiatic aeroplanes that had fallen out of the struggle that ended the Hohenzollern.

With the first he found the wreckage of an aeronaut too.

The machine had evidently dropped vertically and was badly knocked about amidst a lot of smashed branches in a clump of trees. Its bent and broken wings and shattered stays sprawled amidst new splintered wood, and its forepeak stuck into the ground. The aeronaut dangled weirdly head downward among the leaves and branches some yards away, and Bert only discovered him as he turned from the aeroplane. In the dusky evening light and stillness--for the sun had gone now and the wind had altogether fallen-this inverted yellow face was anything but a tranquilising object to discover suddenly a couple of yards away. A broken branch had run clean through the man's thorax, and he hung, so stabbed, looking limp and absurd. In his hand he still clutched, with the grip of death, a short light rifle.

For some time Bert stood very still, inspecting this thing.

Then he began to walk away from it, looking constantly back at it.

Presently in an open glade he came to a stop.

"Gaw!" he whispered, "I don' like dead bodies some'ow! I'd almost rather that chap was alive."

He would not go along the path athwart which the Chinaman hung. He felt he would rather not have trees round him any more, and that it would be more comfortable to be quite close to the sociable splash and uproar of the rapids.

He came upon the second aeroplane in a clear grassy space by the side of the streaming water, and it seemed scarcely damaged at all. It looked as though it had floated down into a position of rest. It lay on its side with one wing in the air. There was no aeronaut near it, dead or alive. There it lay abandoned, with the water lapping about its long tail.

Bert remained a little aloof from it for a long time, looking into the gathering shadows among the trees, in the expectation of another Chinaman alive or dead. Then very cautiously he approached the machine and stood regarding its widespread vans, its big steering wheel and empty saddle. He did not venture to touch it.

"I wish that other chap wasn't there," he said. "I do wish 'e wasn't there!"

He saw a few yards away, something bobbing about in an eddy that spun within a projecting head of rock. As it went round it seemed to draw him unwillingly towards it....

What could it be?

"Blow!" said Bert. "It's another of 'em."

It held him. He told himself that it was the other aeronaut that had been shot in the fight and fallen out of the saddle as he strove to land. He tried to go away, and then it occurred to him that he might get a branch or something and push this rotating object out into the stream. That would leave him with only one dead body to worry about. Perhaps he might get along with one. He hesitated and then with a certain emotion forced himself to do this. He went towards the bushes and cut himself a wand and returned to the rocks and clambered out to a corner between the eddy and the stream, By that time the sunset was over and the bats were abroad--and he was wet with perspiration.

He prodded the floating blue-clad thing with his wand, failed, tried again successfully as it came round, and as it went out into the stream it turned over, the light gleamed on golden hair and--it was Kurt!

It was Kurt, white and dead and very calm. There was no mistaking him. There was still plenty of light for that. The stream took him and he seemed to compose himself in its swift grip as one who stretches himself

to rest. White-faced he was now, and all the colour gone out of him.

A feeling of infinite distress swept over Bert as the body swept out of sight towards the fall. "Kurt!" he cried, "Kurt! I didn't mean to! Kurt! don' leave me 'ere! Don' leave me!"

Loneliness and desolation overwhelmed him. He gave way. He stood on the rock in the evening light, weeping and wailing passionately like a child. It was as though some link that had held him to all these things had broken and gone. He was afraid like a child in a lonely room, shamelessly afraid.

The twilight was closing about him. The trees were full now of strange shadows. All the things about him became strange and unfamiliar with that subtle queerness one feels oftenest in dreams. "O God! I carn' stand this," he said, and crept back from the rocks to the grass and crouched down, and suddenly wild sorrow for the death of Kurt, Kurt the brave, Kurt the kindly, came to his help and he broke from whimpering to weeping. He ceased to crouch; he sprawled upon the grass and clenched an impotent fist.

"This war," he cried, "this blarsted foolery of a war.

"O Kurt! Lieutenant Kurt!

"I done," he said, "I done. I've 'ad all I want, and more than I

want. The world's all rot, and there ain't no sense in it. The night's coming.... If 'E comes after me--'E can't come after me--'E can't!...

"If 'E comes after me, I'll fro' myself into the water."...

Presently he was talking again in a low undertone.

"There ain't nothing to be afraid of reely. It's jest imagination. Poor old Kurt--he thought it would happen. Prevision like. 'E never gave me that letter or tole me who the lady was. It's like what 'e said--people tore away from everything they belonged to--everywhere. Exactly like what 'e said.... 'Ere I am cast away--thousands of miles from Edna or Grubb or any of my lot--like a plant tore up by the roots.... And every war's been like this, only I 'adn't the sense to understand it. Always. All sorts of 'oles and corners chaps 'ave died in. And people 'adn't the sense to understand, 'adn't the sense to feel it and stop it. Thought war was fine. My Gawd!...

"Dear old Edna. She was a fair bit of all right--she was. That time we 'ad a boat at Kingston....

"I bet--I'll see 'er again yet. Won't be my fault if I don't."...

4

Suddenly, on the very verge of this heroic resolution, Bert became

rigid with terror. Something was creeping towards him through the grass. Something was creeping and halting and creeping again towards him through the dim dark grass. The night was electrical with horror. For a time everything was still. Bert ceased to breathe. It could not be. No, it was too small!

It advanced suddenly upon him with a rush, with a little meawling cry and tail erect. It rubbed its head against him and purred. It was a tiny, skinny little kitten.

"Gaw, Pussy! 'ow you frightened me!" said Bert, with drops of perspiration on his brow.

5

He sat with his back to a tree stump all that night, holding the kitten in his arms. His mind was tired, and he talked or thought coherently no longer. Towards dawn he dozed.

When he awoke, he was stiff but in better heart, and the kitten slept warmly and reassuringly inside his jacket. And fear, he found, had gone from amidst the trees.

He stroked the kitten, and the little creature woke up to excessive fondness and purring. "You want some milk," said Bert. "That's what you want. And I could do with a bit of brekker too."

He yawned and stood up, with the kitten on his shoulder, and stared about him, recalling the circumstances of the previous day, the grey, immense happenings.

"Mus' do something," he said.

He turned towards the trees, and was presently contemplating the dead aeronaut again. The kitten he held companionably against his neck. The body was horrible, but not nearly so horrible as it had been at twilight, and now the limbs were limper and the gun had slipped to the ground and lay half hidden in the grass.

"I suppose we ought to bury 'im, Kitty," said Bert, and looked helplessly at the rocky soil about him. "We got to stay on the island with 'im."

It was some time before he could turn away and go on towards that provision shed. "Brekker first," he said, "anyhow," stroking the kitten on his shoulder. She rubbed his cheek affectionately with her furry little face and presently nibbled at his ear. "Wan' some milk, eh?" he said, and turned his back on the dead man as though he mattered nothing.

He was puzzled to find the door of the shed open, though he had closed and latched it very carefully overnight, and he found also some dirty plates he had not noticed before on the bench. He discovered that the

hinges of the tin locker were unscrewed and that it could be opened. He had not observed this overnight.

"Silly of me!" said Bert. "'Ere I was puzzlin' and whackin' away at the padlock, never noticing." It had been used apparently as an ice-chest, but it contained nothing now but the remains of half-dozen boiled chickens, some ambiguous substance that might once have been butter, and a singularly unappetising smell. He closed the lid again carefully.

He gave the kitten some milk in a dirty plate and sat watching its busy little tongue for a time. Then he was moved to make an inventory of the provisions. There were six bottles of milk unopened and one opened, sixty bottles of mineral water and a large stock of syrups, about two thousand cigarettes and upwards of a hundred cigars, nine oranges, two unopened tins of corned beef and one opened, and five large tins California peaches. He jotted it down on a piece of paper. "'Ain't much solid food," he said. "Still--A fortnight, say!

"Anything might happen in a fortnight."

He gave the kitten a small second helping and a scrap of beef and then went down with the little creature running after him, tail erect and in high spirits, to look at the remains of the Hohenzollern.

It had shifted in the night and seemed on the whole more firmly grounded on Green Island than before. From it his eye went to the shattered

bridge and then across to the still desolation of Niagara city. Nothing moved over there but a number of crows. They were busy with the engineer he had seen cut down on the previous day. He saw no dogs, but he heard one howling.

"We got to get out of this some'ow, Kitty," he said. "That milk won't last forever--not at the rate you lap it."

He regarded the sluice-like flood before him.

"Plenty of water," he said. "Won't be drink we shall want."

He decided to make a careful exploration of the island. Presently he came to a locked gate labelled "Biddle Stairs," and clambered over to discover a steep old wooden staircase leading down the face of the cliff amidst a vast and increasing uproar of waters. He left the kitten above and descended these, and discovered with a thrill of hope a path leading among the rocks at the foot of the roaring downrush of the Centre Fall. Perhaps this was a sort of way!

It led him only to the choking and deafening experience of the Cave of the Winds, and after he had spent a quarter of an hour in a partially stupefied condition flattened between solid rock and nearly as solid waterfall, he decided that this was after all no practicable route to Canada and retraced his steps. As he reascended the Biddle Stairs, he heard what he decided at last must be a sort of echo, a sound of some

one walking about on the gravel paths above. When he got to the top, the place was as solitary as before.

Thence he made his way, with the kitten skirmishing along beside him in the grass, to a staircase that led to a lump of projecting rock that enfiladed the huge green majesty of the Horseshoe Fall. He stood there for some time in silence.

"You wouldn't think," he said at last, "there was so much water.... This roarin' and splashin', it gets on one's nerves at last.... Sounds like people talking.... Sounds like people going about.... Sounds like anything you fancy."

He retired up the staircase again. "I s'pose I shall keep on goin' round this blessed island," he said drearily. "Round and round and round."

He found himself presently beside the less damaged Asiatic aeroplane again. He stared at it and the kitten smelt it. "Broke!" he said.

He looked up with a convulsive start.

Advancing slowly towards him out from among the trees were two tall gaunt figures. They were blackened and tattered and bandaged; the hind-most one limped and had his head swathed in white, but the foremost one still carried himself as a Prince should do, for all that his left arm was in a sling and one side of his face scalded a livid crimson. He

was the Prince Karl Albert, the War Lord, the "German Alexander," and the man behind him was the bird-faced man whose cabin had once been taken from him and given to Bert.

6

With that apparition began a new phase of Goat Island in Bert's experience. He ceased to be a solitary representative of humanity in a vast and violent and incomprehensible universe, and became once more a social creature, a man in a world of other men. For an instant these two were terrible, then they seemed sweet and desirable as brothers. They too were in this scrape with him, marooned and puzzled. He wanted extremely to hear exactly what had happened to them. What mattered it if one was a Prince and both were foreign soldiers, if neither perhaps had adequate English? His native Cockney freedom flowed too generously for him to think of that, and surely the Asiatic fleets had purged all such trivial differences. "Ul-LO!" he said; "'ow did you get 'ere?"

"It is the Englishman who brought us the Butteridge machine," said the bird-faced officer in German, and then in a tone of horror, as Bert advanced, "Salute!" and again louder, "SALUTE!"

"Gaw!" said Bert, and stopped with a second comment under his breath. He stared and saluted awkwardly and became at once a masked defensive thing with whom co-operation was impossible.

For a time these two perfected modern aristocrats stood regarding the difficult problem of the Anglo-Saxon citizen, that ambiguous citizen who, obeying some mysterious law in his blood, would neither drill nor be a democrat. Bert was by no means a beautiful object, but in some inexplicable way he looked resistant. He wore his cheap suit of serge, now showing many signs of wear, and its loose fit made him seem sturdier than he was; above his disengaging face was a white German cap that was altogether too big for him, and his trousers were crumpled up his legs and their ends tucked into the rubber highlows of a deceased German aeronaut. He looked an inferior, though by no means an easy inferior, and instinctively they hated him.

The Prince pointed to the flying-machine and said something in broken English that Bert took for German and failed to understand. He intimated as much.

"Dummer Kerl!" said the bird-faced officer from among his bandages.

The Prince pointed again with his undamaged hand. "You verstehen dis drachenflieger?"

Bert began to comprehend the situation. He regarded the Asiatic machine. The habits of Bun Hill returned to him. "It's a foreign make," he said ambiguously.

The two Germans consulted. "You are an expert?" said the Prince.

"We reckon to repair," said Bert, in the exact manner of Grubb.

The Prince sought in his vocabulary. "Is dat," he said, "goot to fly?"

Bert reflected and scratched his cheek slowly. "I got to look at it," he replied.... "It's 'ad rough usage!"

He made a sound with his teeth he had also acquired from Grubb, put his hands in his trouser pockets, and strolled back to the machine. Typically Grubb chewed something, but Bert could chew only imaginatively. "Three days' work in this," he said, teething. For the first time it dawned on him that there were possibilities in this machine. It was evident that the wing that lay on the ground was badly damaged. The three stays that held it rigid had snapped across a ridge of rock and there was also a strong possibility of the engine being badly damaged. The wing hook on that side was also askew, but probably that would not affect the flight. Beyond that there probably wasn't much the matter. Bert scratched his cheek again and contemplated the broad sunlit waste of the Upper Rapids. "We might make a job of this.... You leave it to me."

He surveyed it intently again, and the Prince and his officer watched him. In Bun Hill Bert and Grubb had developed to a very high pitch among the hiring stock a method of repair by substituting; they substituted bits of other machines. A machine that was too utterly and obviously

done for even to proffer for hire, had nevertheless still capital value. It became a sort of quarry for nuts and screws and wheels, bars and spokes, chain-links and the like; a mine of ill-fitting "parts" to replace the defects of machines still current. And back among the trees was a second Asiatic aeroplane....

The kitten caressed Bert's airship boots unheeded.

"Mend dat drachenflieger," said the Prince.

"If I do mend it," said Bert, struck by a new thought, "none of us ain't to be trusted to fly it."

"_I_ vill fly it," said the Prince.

"Very likely break your neck," said Bert, after a pause.

The Prince did not understand him and disregarded what he said. He pointed his gloved finger to the machine and turned to the bird-faced officer with some remark in German. The officer answered and the Prince responded with a sweeping gesture towards the sky. Then he spoke--it seemed eloquently. Bert watched him and guessed his meaning. "Much more likely to break your neck," he said. "'Owever. 'Ere goes."

He began to pry about the saddle and engine of the drachenflieger in search for tools. Also he wanted some black oily stuff for his hands and

face. For the first rule in the art of repairing, as it was known to the firm of Grubb and Smallways, was to get your hands and face thoroughly and conclusively blackened. Also he took off his jacket and waistcoat and put his cap carefully to the back of his head in order to facilitate scratching.

The Prince and the officer seemed disposed to watch him, but he succeeded in making it clear to them that this would inconvenience him and that he had to "puzzle out a bit" before he could get to work. They thought him over, but his shop experience had given him something of the authoritative way of the expert with common men. And at last they went away. Thereupon he went straight to the second aeroplane, got the aeronaut's gun and ammunition and hid them in a clump of nettles close at hand. "That's all right," said Bert, and then proceeded to a careful inspection of the debris of the wings in the trees. Then he went back to the first aeroplane to compare the two. The Bun Hill method was quite possibly practicable if there was nothing hopeless or incomprehensible in the engine.

The Germans returned presently to find him already generously smutty and touching and testing knobs and screws and levers with an expression of profound sagacity. When the bird-faced officer addressed a remark to him, he waved him aside with, "Nong comprong. Shut it! It's no good."

Then he had an idea. "Dead chap back there wants burying," he said, jerking a thumb over his shoulder.

7

With the appearance of these two men Bert's whole universe had changed again. A curtain fell before the immense and terrible desolation that had overwhelmed him. He was in a world of three people, a minute human world that nevertheless filled his brain with eager speculations and schemes and cunning ideas. What were they thinking of? What did they think of him? What did they mean to do? A hundred busy threads interlaced in his mind as he pottered studiously over the Asiatic aeroplane. New ideas came up like bubbles in soda water.

"Gaw!" he said suddenly. He had just appreciated as a special aspect of this irrational injustice of fate that these two men were alive and that Kurt was dead. All the crew of the Hohenzollern were shot or burnt or smashed or drowned, and these two lurking in the padded forward cabin had escaped.

"I suppose 'e thinks it's 'is bloomin' Star," he muttered, and found himself uncontrollably exasperated.

He stood up, facing round to the two men. They were standing side by side regarding him.

"'It's no good," he said, "starin' at me. You only put me out." And then seeing they did not understand, he advanced towards them, wrench in

hand. It occurred to him as he did so that the Prince was really a very big and powerful and serene-looking person. But he said, nevertheless, pointing through the trees, "dead man!"

The bird-faced man intervened with a reply in German.

"Dead man!" said Bert to him. "There."

He had great difficulty in inducing them to inspect the dead Chinaman, and at last led them to him. Then they made it evident that they proposed that he, as a common person below the rank of officer should have the sole and undivided privilege of disposing of the body by dragging it to the water's edge. There was some heated gesticulation, and at last the bird-faced officer abased himself to help. Together they dragged the limp and now swollen Asiatic through the trees, and after a rest or so--for he trailed very heavily--dumped him into the westward rapid. Bert returned to his expert investigation of the flying-machine at last with aching arms and in a state of gloomy rebellion. "Brasted cheek!" he said. "One'd think I was one of 'is beastly German slaves!

"Prancing beggar!"

And then he fell speculating what would happen when the flying-machine, was repaired--if it could be repaired.

The two Germans went away again, and after some reflection Bert removed

several nuts, resumed his jacket and vest, pocketed those nuts and his tools and hid the set of tools from the second aeroplane in the fork of a tree. "Right O," he said, as he jumped down after the last of these precautions. The Prince and his companion reappeared as he returned to the machine by the water's edge. The Prince surveyed his progress for a time, and then went towards the Parting of the Waters and stood with folded arms gazing upstream in profound thought. The bird-faced officer came up to Bert, heavy with a sentence in English.

"Go," he said with a helping gesture, "und eat."

When Bert got to the refreshment shed, he found all the food had vanished except one measured ration of corned beef and three biscuits.

He regarded this with open eyes and mouth.

The kitten appeared from under the vendor's seat with an ingratiating purr. "Of course!" said Bert. "Why! where's your milk?"

He accumulated wrath for a moment or so, then seized the plate in one hand, and the biscuits in another, and went in search of the Prince, breathing vile words anent "grub" and his intimate interior. He approached without saluting.

"'Ere!" he said fiercely. "Whad the devil's this?"

An entirely unsatisfactory altercation followed. Bert expounded the Bun Hill theory of the relations of grub to efficiency in English, the bird-faced man replied with points about nations and discipline in German. The Prince, having made an estimate of Bert's quality and physique, suddenly hectored. He gripped Bert by the shoulder and shook him, making his pockets rattle, shouted something to him, and flung him struggling back. He hit him as though he was a German private. Bert went back, white and scared, but resolved by all his Cockney standards upon one thing. He was bound in honour to "go for" the Prince. "Gaw!" he gasped, buttoning his jacket.

"Now," cried the Prince, "Vil you go?" and then catching the heroic gleam in Bert's eye, drew his sword.

The bird-faced officer intervened, saying something in German and pointing skyward.

Far away in the southwest appeared a Japanese airship coming fast toward them. Their conflict ended at that. The Prince was first to grasp the situation and lead the retreat. All three scuttled like rabbits for the trees, and ran to and for cover until they found a hollow in which the grass grew rank. There they all squatted within six yards of one another. They sat in this place for a long time, up to their necks in the grass and watching through the branches for the airship. Bert had dropped some of his corned beef, but he found the biscuits in his hand and ate them quietly. The monster came nearly overhead and then went

away to Niagara and dropped beyond the power-works. When it was near, they all kept silence, and then presently they fell into an argument that was robbed perhaps of immediate explosive effect only by their failure to understand one another.

It was Bert began the talking and he talked on regardless of what they understood or failed to understand. But his voice must have conveyed his cantankerous intentions.

"You want that machine done," he said first, "you better keep your 'ands off me!"

They disregarded that and he repeated it.

Then he expanded his idea and the spirit of speech took hold of him. "You think you got 'old of a chap you can kick and 'it like you do your private soldiers--you're jolly well mistaken. See? I've 'ad about enough of you and your antics. I been thinking you over, you and your war and your Empire and all the rot of it. Rot it is! It's you Germans made all the trouble in Europe first and last. And all for nothin'. Jest silly prancing! Jest because you've got the uniforms and flags! 'Ere I was--I didn't want to 'ave anything to do with you. I jest didn't care a 'eng at all about you. Then you get 'old of me--steal me practically--and 'ere I am, thousands of miles away from 'ome and everything, and all your silly fleet smashed up to rags. And you want to go on prancin' NOW! Not if 'I know it!

"Look at the mischief you done! Look at the way you smashed up New York--the people you killed, the stuff you wasted. Can't you learn?"

"Dummer Kerl!" said the bird-faced man suddenly in a tone of concentrated malignancy, glaring under his bandages. "Esel!"

"That's German for silly ass!--I know. But who's the silly ass--'im or me? When I was a kid, I used to read penny dreadfuls about 'avin adventures and bein' a great c'mander and all that rot. I stowed it. But what's 'e got in 'is head? Rot about Napoleon, rot about Alexander, rot about 'is blessed family and 'im and Gord and David and all that. Any one who wasn't a dressed-up silly fool of a Prince could 'ave told all this was goin' to 'appen. There was us in Europe all at sixes and sevens with our silly flags and our silly newspapers raggin' us up against each other and keepin' us apart, and there was China, solid as a cheese, with millions and millions of men only wantin' a bit of science and a bit of enterprise to be as good as all of us. You thought they couldn't get at you. And then they got flying-machines. And bif!--'ere we are. Why, when they didn't go on making guns and armies in China, we went and poked 'em up until they did. They 'AD to give us this lickin' they've give us. We wouldn't be happy until they did, and as I say, 'ere we are!"

The bird-faced officer shouted to him to be quiet, and then began a conversation with the Prince.

"British citizen," said Bert. "You ain't obliged to listen, but I ain't obliged to shut up."

And for some time he continued his dissertation upon Imperialism, militarism, and international politics. But their talking put him out, and for a time he was certainly merely repeating abusive terms, "prancin' nincompoops" and the like, old terms and new. Then suddenly he remembered his essential grievance. "'Owever, look 'ere--'ere!--the thing I started this talk about is where's that food there was in that shed? That's what I want to know. Where you put it?"

He paused. They went on talking in German. He repeated his question. They disregarded him. He asked a third time in a manner insupportably aggressive.

There fell a tense silence. For some seconds the three regarded one another. The Prince eyed Bert steadfastly, and Bert quailed under his eye. Slowly the Prince rose to his feet and the bird-faced officer jerked up beside him. Bert remained squatting.

"Be quaiat," said the Prince.

Bert perceived this was no moment for eloquence.

The two Germans regarded him as he crouched there. Death for a moment seemed near.

Then the Prince turned away and the two of them went towards the flying-machine.

"Gaw!" whispered Bert, and then uttered under his breath one single word of abuse. He sat crouched together for perhaps three minutes, then he sprang to his feet and went off towards the Chinese aeronaut's gun hidden among the weeds.

8

There was no pretence after that moment that Bert was under the orders of the Prince or that he was going on with the repairing of the flying-machine. The two Germans took possession of that and set to work upon it. Bert, with his new weapon went off to the neighbourhood of Terrapin Rock, and there sat down to examine it. It was a short rifle with a big cartridge, and a nearly full magazine. He took out the cartridges carefully and then tried the trigger and fittings until he felt sure he had the use of it. He reloaded carefully. Then he remembered he was hungry and went off, gun under his arm, to hunt in and about the refreshment shed. He had the sense to perceive that he must not show himself with the gun to the Prince and his companion. So long as they thought him unarmed they would leave him alone, but there was no knowing what the Napoleonic person might do if he saw Bert's weapon. Also he did not go near them because he knew that within himself boiled a reservoir of rage and fear that he wanted to shoot these two men. He

wanted to shoot them, and he thought that to shoot them would be a quite horrible thing to do. The two sides of his inconsistent civilisation warred within him.

Near the shed the kitten turned up again, obviously keen for milk. This greatly enhanced his own angry sense of hunger. He began to talk as he hunted about, and presently stood still, shouting insults. He talked of war and pride and Imperialism. "Any other Prince but you would have died with his men and his ship!" he cried.

The two Germans at the machine heard his voice going ever and again amidst the clamour of the waters. Their eyes met and they smiled slightly.

He was disposed for a time to sit in the refreshment shed waiting for them, but then it occurred to him that so he might get them both at close quarters. He strolled off presently to the point of Luna Island to think the situation out.

It had seemed a comparatively simple one at first, but as he turned it over in his mind its possibilities increased and multiplied. Both these men had swords,--had either a revolver?

Also, if he shot them both, he might never find the food!

So far he had been going about with this gun under his arm, and a sense

of lordly security in his mind, but what if they saw the gun and decided to ambush him? Goat Island is nearly all cover, trees, rocks, thickets, and irregularities.

Why not go and murder them both now?

"I carn't," said Bert, dismissing that. "I got to be worked up."

But it was a mistake to get right away from them. That suddenly became clear. He ought to keep them under observation, ought to "scout" them. Then he would be able to see what they were doing, whether either of them had a revolver, where they had hidden the food. He would be better able to determine what they meant to do to him. If he didn't "scout" them, presently they would begin to "scout" him. This seemed so eminently reasonable that he acted upon it forthwith. He thought over his costume and threw his collar and the tell-tale aeronaut's white cap into the water far below. He turned his coat collar up to hide any gleam of his dirty shirt. The tools and nuts in his pockets were disposed to clank, but he rearranged them and wrapped some letters and his pocket-handkerchief about them. He started off circumspectly and noiselessly, listening and peering at every step. As he drew near his antagonists, much grunting and creaking served to locate them. He discovered them engaged in what looked like a wrestling match with the Asiatic flying-machine. Their coats were off, their swords laid aside, they were working magnificently. Apparently they were turning it round and were having a good deal of difficulty with the long tail among the

trees. He dropped flat at the sight of them and wriggled into a little hollow, and so lay watching their exertions. Ever and again, to pass the time, he would cover one or other of them with his gun.

He found them quite interesting to watch, so interesting that at times he came near shouting to advise them. He perceived that when they had the machine turned round, they would then be in immediate want of the nuts and tools he carried. Then they would come after him. They would certainly conclude he had them or had hidden them. Should he hide his gun and do a deal for food with these tools? He felt he would not be able to part with the gun again now he had once felt its reassuring company. The kitten turned up again and made a great fuss with him and licked and bit his ear.

The sun clambered to midday, and once that morning he saw, though the Germans did not, an Asiatic airship very far to the south, going swiftly eastward.

At last the flying-machine was turned and stood poised on its wheel, with its hooks pointing up the Rapids. The two officers wiped their faces, resumed jackets and swords, spoke and bore themselves like men who congratulated themselves on a good laborious morning. Then they went off briskly towards the refreshment shed, the Prince leading. Bert became active in pursuit; but he found it impossible to stalk them quickly enough and silently enough to discover the hiding-place of the food. He found them, when he came into sight of them again, seated with

their backs against the shed, plates on knee, and a tin of corned beef and a plateful of biscuits between them. They seemed in fairly good spirits, and once the Prince laughed. At this vision of eating Bert's plans gave way. Fierce hunger carried him. He appeared before them suddenly at a distance of perhaps twenty yards, gun in hand.

"'Ands up!" he said in a hard, ferocious voice.

The Prince hesitated, and then up went two pairs of hands. The gun had surprised them both completely.

"Stand up," said Bert.... "Drop that fork!"

They obeyed again.

"What nex'?" said Bert to himself. "'Orf stage, I suppose. That way," he said. "Go!"

The Prince obeyed with remarkable alacrity. When he reached the head of the clearing, he said something quickly to the bird-faced man and they both, with an entire lack of dignity, RAN!

Bert was struck with an exasperating afterthought.

"Gord!" he cried with infinite vexation. "Why! I ought to 'ave took their swords! 'Ere!"

But the Germans were already out of sight, and no doubt taking cover among the trees. Bert fell back upon imprecations, then he went up to the shed, cursorily examined the possibility of a flank attack, put his gun handy, and set to work, with a convulsive listening pause before each mouthful on the Prince's plate of corned beef. He had finished that up and handed its gleanings to the kitten and he was falling-to on the second plateful, when the plate broke in his hand! He stared, with the fact slowly creeping upon him that an instant before he had heard a crack among the thickets. Then he sprang to his feet, snatched up his gun in one hand and the tin of corned beef in the other, and fled round the shed to the other side of the clearing. As he did so came a second crack from the thickets, and something went phwit! by his ear.

He didn't stop running until he was in what seemed to him a strongly defensible position near Luna Island. Then he took cover, panting, and crouched expectant.

"They got a revolver after all!" he panted....

"Wonder if they got two? If they 'ave--Gord! I'm done!

"Where's the kitten? Finishin' up that corned beef, I suppose. Little beggar!"

9

So it was that war began upon Goat Island. It lasted a day and a night, the longest day and the longest night in Bert's life. He had to lie close and listen and watch. Also he had to scheme what he should do. It was clear now that he had to kill these two men if he could, and that if they could, they would kill him. The prize was first food and then the flying-machine and the doubtful privilege of trying' to ride it. If one failed, one would certainly be killed; if one succeeded, one would get away somewhere over there. For a time Bert tried to imagine what it was like over there. His mind ran over possibilities, deserts, angry Americans, Japanese, Chinese--perhaps Red Indians! (Were there still Red Indians?)

"Got to take what comes," said Bert. "No way out of it that I can see!"

Was that voices? He realised that his attention was wandering. For a time all his senses were very alert. The uproar of the Falls was very confusing, and it mixed in all sorts of sounds, like feet walking, like voices talking, like shouts and cries.

"Silly great catarac'," said Bert. "There ain't no sense in it, fallin' and fallin'."

Never mind that, now! What were the Germans doing?

Would they go back to the flying-machine? They couldn't do anything with

it, because he had those nuts and screws and the wrench and other tools. But suppose they found the second set of tools he had hidden in a tree! He had hidden the things well, of course, but they MIGHT find them. One wasn't sure, of course--one wasn't sure. He tried to remember just exactly how he had hidden those tools. He tried to persuade himself they were certainly and surely hidden, but his memory began to play antics. Had he really left the handle of the wrench sticking out, shining out at the fork of the branch?

Ssh! What was that? Some one stirring in those bushes? Up went an expectant muzzle. No! Where was the kitten? No! It was just imagination, not even the kitten.

The Germans would certainly miss and hunt about for the tools and nuts and screws he carried in his pockets; that was clear. Then they would decide he had them and come for him. He had only to remain still under cover, therefore, and he would get them. Was there any flaw in that? Would they take off more removable parts of the flying-machine and then lie up for him? No, they wouldn't do that, because they were two to one; they would have no apprehension of his getting off in the flying-machine, and no sound reason for supposing he would approach it, and so they would do nothing to damage or disable it. That he decided was clear. But suppose they lay up for him by the food. Well, that they wouldn't do, because they would know he had this corned beef; there was enough in this can to last, with moderation, several days. Of course they might try to tire him out instead of attacking him--

He roused himself with a start. He had just grasped the real weakness of his position. He might go to sleep!

It needed but ten minutes under the suggestion of that idea, before he realised that he was going to sleep!

He rubbed his eyes and handled his gun. He had never before realised the intensely soporific effect of the American sun, of the American air, the drowsy, sleep-compelling uproar of Niagara. Hitherto these things had on the whole seemed stimulating....

If he had not eaten so much and eaten it so fast, he would not be so heavy. Are vegetarians always bright?...

He roused himself with a jerk again.

If he didn't do something, he would fall asleep, and if he fell asleep, it was ten to one they would find him snoring, and finish him forthwith. If he sat motionless and noiseless, he would inevitably sleep. It was better, he told himself, to take even the risks of attacking than that. This sleep trouble, he felt, was going to beat him, must beat him in the end. They were all right; one could sleep and the other could watch. That, come to think of it, was what they would always do; one would do anything they wanted done, the other would lie under cover near at hand, ready to shoot. They might even trap him like that. One might act as a

decoy.

That set him thinking of decoys. What a fool he had been to throw his cap away. It would have been invaluable on a stick--especially at night.

He found himself wishing for a drink. He settled that for a time by putting a pebble in his mouth. And then the sleep craving returned.

It became clear to him he must attack. Like many great generals before him, he found his baggage, that is to say his tin of corned beef, a serious impediment to mobility. At last he decided to put the beef loose in his pocket and abandon the tin. It was not perhaps an ideal arrangement, but one must make sacrifices when one is campaigning. He crawled perhaps ten yards, and then for a time the possibilities of the situation paralysed him.

The afternoon was still. The roar of the cataract simply threw up that immense stillness in relief. He was doing his best to contrive the death of two better men than himself. Also they were doing their best to contrive his. What, behind this silence, were they doing.

Suppose he came upon them suddenly and fired, and missed?

10

He crawled, and halted listening, and crawled again until nightfall, and

no doubt the German Alexander and his lieutenant did the same. A large scale map of Goat Island marked with red and blue lines to show these strategic movements would no doubt have displayed much interlacing, but as a matter of fact neither side saw anything of the other throughout that age-long day of tedious alertness. Bert never knew how near he got to them nor how far he kept from them. Night found him no longer sleepy, but athirst, and near the American Fall. He was inspired by the idea that his antagonists might be in the wreckage of the Hohenzollern cabins that was jammed against Green Island. He became enterprising, broke from any attempt to conceal himself, and went across the little bridge at the double. He found nobody. It was his first visit to these huge fragments of airships, and for a time he explored them curiously in the dim light. He discovered the forward cabin was nearly intact, with its door slanting downward and a corner under water. He crept in, drank, and then was struck by the brilliant idea of shutting the door and sleeping on it.

But now he could not sleep at all.

He nodded towards morning and woke up to find it fully day. He breakfasted on corned beef and water, and sat for a long time appreciative of the security of his position. At last he became enterprising and bold. He would, he decided, settle this business forthwith, one way or the other. He was tired of all this crawling. He set out in the morning sunshine, gun in hand, scarcely troubling to walk softly. He went round the refreshment shed without finding any one,

and then through the trees towards the flying-machine. He came upon the bird-faced man sitting on the ground with his back against a tree, bent up over his folded arms, sleeping, his bandage very much over one eye.

Bert stopped abruptly and stood perhaps fifteen yards away, gun in hand ready. Where was the Prince? Then, sticking out at the side of the tree beyond, he saw a shoulder. Bert took five deliberate paces to the left. The great man became visible, leaning up against the trunk, pistol in one hand and sword in the other, and yawning--yawning. You can't shoot a yawning man Bert found. He advanced upon his antagonist with his gun levelled, some foolish fancy of "hands up" in his mind. The Prince became aware of him, the yawning mouth shut like a trap and he stood stiffly up. Bert stopped, silent. For a moment the two regarded one another.

Had the Prince been a wise man he would, I suppose, have dodged behind the tree. Instead, he gave vent to a shout, and raised pistol and sword. At that, like an automaton, Bert pulled his trigger.

It was his first experience of an oxygen-containing bullet. A great flame spurted from the middle of the Prince, a blinding flare, and there came a thud like the firing of a gun. Something hot and wet struck Bert's face. Then through a whirl of blinding smoke and steam he saw limbs and a collapsing, burst body fling themselves to earth.

Bert was so astonished that he stood agape, and the bird-faced officer

might have cut him to the earth without a struggle. But instead the bird-faced officer was running away through the undergrowth, dodging as he went. Bert roused himself to a brief ineffectual pursuit, but he had no stomach for further killing. He returned to the mangled, scattered thing that had so recently been the great Prince Karl Albert. He surveyed the scorched and splashed vegetation about it. He made some speculative identifications. He advanced gingerly and picked up the hot revolver, to find all its chambers strained and burst. He became aware of a cheerful and friendly presence. He was greatly shocked that one so young should see so frightful a scene.

"'Ere, Kitty," he said, "this ain't no place for you."

He made three strides across the devastated area, captured the kitten neatly, and went his way towards the shed, with her purring loudly on his shoulder.

"YOU don't seem to mind," he said.

For a time he fussed about the shed, and at last discovered the rest of the provisions hidden in the roof. "Seems 'ard," he said, as he administered a saucerful of milk, "when you get three men in a 'ole like this, they can't work together. But 'im and 'is princing was jest a bit too thick!"

"Gaw!" he reflected, sitting on the counter and eating, "what a thing

life is! 'Ere am I; I seen 'is picture, 'eard 'is name since I was a kid in frocks. Prince Karl Albert! And if any one 'ad tole me I was going to blow 'im to smithereens--there! I shouldn't 'ave believed it, Kitty.

"That chap at Margit ought to 'ave tole me about it. All 'e tole me was that I got a weak chess.

"That other chap, 'e ain't going to do much. Wonder what I ought to do about 'im?"

He surveyed the trees with a keen blue eye and fingered the gun on his knee. "I don't like this killing, Kitty," he said. "It's like Kurt said about being blooded. Seems to me you got to be blooded young.... If that Prince 'ad come up to me and said, 'Shake 'ands!' I'd 'ave shook 'ands.... Now 'ere's that other chap, dodging about! 'E's got 'is 'ead 'urt already, and there's something wrong with his leg. And burns. Golly! it isn't three weeks ago I first set eyes on 'im, and then 'e was smart and set up--'ands full of 'air-brushes and things, and swearin' at me. A regular gentleman! Now 'e's 'arfway to a wild man. What am I to do with 'im? What the 'ell am I to do with 'im? I can't leave 'im 'ave that flying-machine; that's a bit too good, and if I don't kill 'im, 'e'll jest 'ang about this island and starve....

"'E's got a sword, of course"....

He resumed his philosophising after he had lit a cigarette.

"War's a silly gaim, Kitty. It's a silly gaim! We common people--we were fools. We thought those big people knew what they were up to--and they didn't. Look at that chap! 'E 'ad all Germany be'ind 'im, and what 'as 'e made of it? Smeshin' and blunderin' and destroyin', and there 'e 'is! Jest a mess of blood and boots and things! Jest an 'orrid splash! Prince Karl Albert! And all the men 'e led and the ships 'e 'ad, the airships, and the dragon-fliers--all scattered like a paper-chase between this 'ole and Germany. And fightin' going on and burnin' and killin' that 'e started, war without end all over the world!

"I suppose I shall 'ave to kill that other chap. I suppose I must. But it ain't at all the sort of job I fancy, Kitty!"

For a time he hunted about the island amidst the uproar of the waterfall, looking for the wounded officer, and at last he started him out of some bushes near the head of Biddle Stairs. But as he saw the bent and bandaged figure in limping flight before him, he found his Cockney softness too much for him again; he could neither shoot nor pursue. "I carn't," he said, "that's flat. I 'aven't the guts for it! 'E'll 'ave to go."

He turned his steps towards the flying-machine....

He never saw the bird-faced officer again, nor any further evidence of his presence. Towards evening he grew fearful of ambushes and hunted

vigorously for an hour or so, but in vain. He slept in a good defensible position at the extremity of the rocky point that runs out to the Canadian Fall, and in the night he woke in panic terror and fired his gun. But it was nothing. He slept no more that night. In the morning he became curiously concerned for the vanished man, and hunted for him as one might for an erring brother.

"If I knew some German," he said, "I'd 'oller. It's jest not knowing German does it. You can't explain'"

He discovered, later, traces of an attempt to cross the gap in the broken bridge. A rope with a bolt attached had been flung across and had caught in a fenestration of a projecting fragment of railing. The end of the rope trailed in the seething water towards the fall.

But the bird-faced officer was already rubbing shoulders with certain inert matter that had once been Lieutenant Kurt and the Chinese aeronaut and a dead cow, and much other uncongenial company, in the huge circle of the Whirlpool two and a quarter miles away. Never had that great gathering place, that incessant, aimless, unprogressive hurry of waste and battered things, been so crowded with strange and melancholy derelicts. Round they went and round, and every day brought its new contributions, luckless brutes, shattered fragments of boat and flying-machine, endless citizens from the cities upon the shores of the great lakes above. Much came from Cleveland. It all gathered here, and whirled about indefinitely, and over it all gathered daily a greater

abundance of birds.