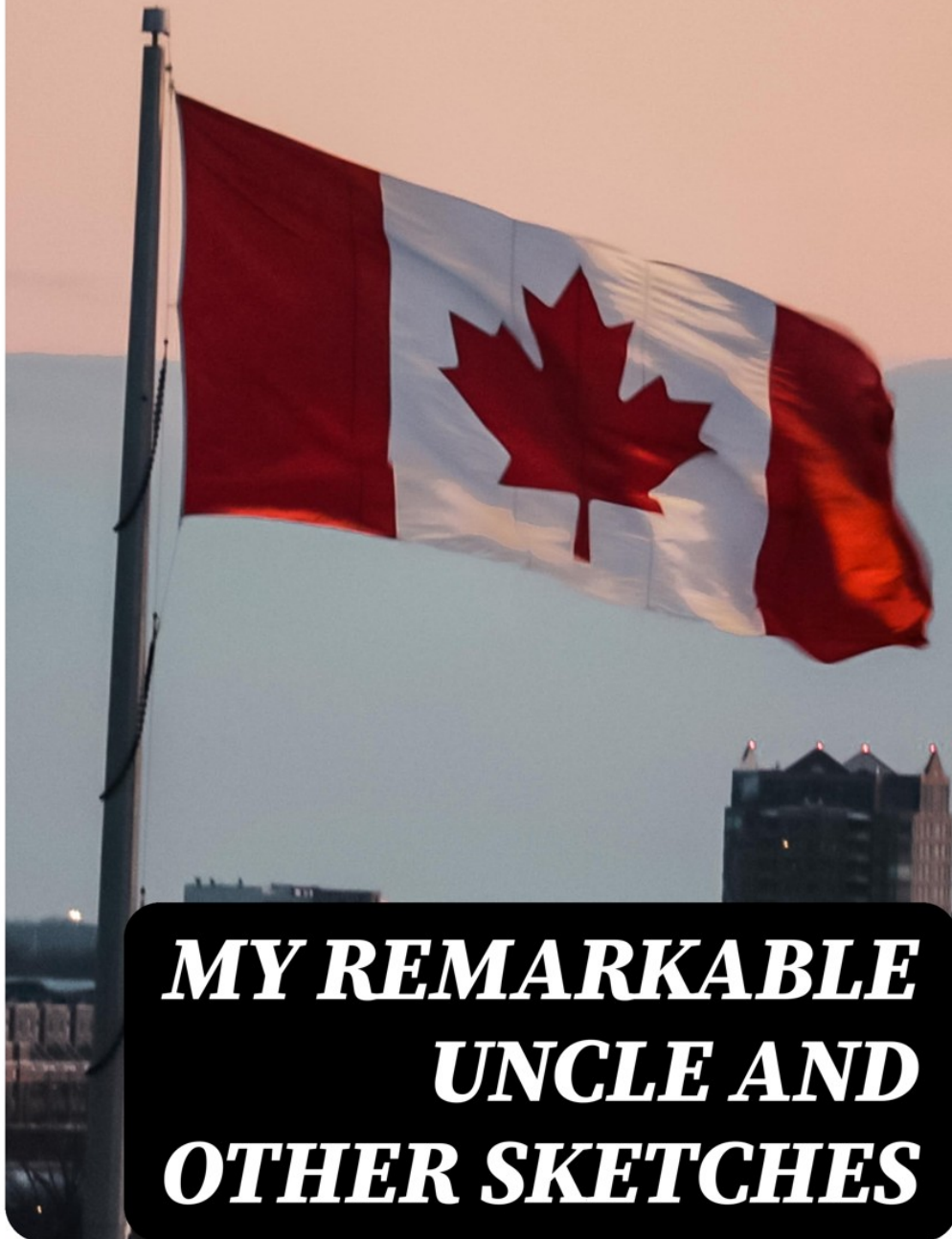


***STEPHEN
LEACOCK***



***MY REMARKABLE
UNCLE AND
OTHER SKETCHES***

***STEPHEN
LEACOCK***



***MY REMARKABLE
UNCLE AND
OTHER SKETCHES***

Stephen Leacock

My Remarkable Uncle and other Sketches

EAN 8596547062653

DigiCat, 2022

Contact: DigiCat@okpublishing.info



TABLE OF CONTENTS

SOME MEMORIES I - MY REMARKABLE UNCLE

SOME MEMORIES II - THE OLD FARM AND THE NEW. FRAME

SOME MEMORIES III - THE STRUGGLE TO MAKE US.

GENTLEMEN. A MEMORY OF MY OLD SCHOOL

LITERARY STUDIES I - THE BRITISH. SOLDIER

LITERARY STUDIES II - THE MATHEMATICAL. PROBLEM OF
THE LOST CHORD

LITERARY STUDIES III - THE PASSING OF THE. KITCHEN

LITERARY STUDIES IV - COME BACK TO. SCHOOL

LITERARY STUDIES V - WHAT'S IN A NAME?

LITERARY STUDIES VI - WHO CANONIZES THE. CLASSICS?

AMONG THE ANTIQUES - AN ADVENTURE OF. AFTERNOON
TEA

SPORTING SECTION I - WHAT IS A SPORT?

SPORTING SECTION II - WHY DO WE FISH?

SPORTING SECTION III - WHEN FELLERS GO. FISHING

SPORTING SECTION IV - EATING AIR

STUDIES IN HUMOUR I - THE SAVING GRACE OF. HUMOUR

STUDIES IN HUMOUR II - LAUGHING OFF OUR. HISTORY

STUDIES IN HUMOUR III - WAR AND HUMOUR

MEMORIES OF CHRISTMAS I - CHRISTMAS. RAPTURE

MEMORIES OF CHRISTMAS II - CHRISTMAS. SHOPPING

MEMORIES OF CHRISTMAS III - WAR-TIME. CHRISTMAS:
SANTA CLAUS

MEMORIES OF CHRISTMAS IV - WAR-TIME. CHRISTMAS: 1941

GOODWILL FOR AMERICA I - CRICKET FOR. AMERICANS

GOODWILL FOR AMERICA II - OUR AMERICAN. VISITORS

GOODWILL FOR AMERICA III - A WELCOME TO A VISITING AMERICAN

GOODWILL FOR AMERICA IV - UNCLE SAM: AN ALLEGORY

THE TRANSIT OF VENUS - A COLLEGE STORY

MIGRATION IN ENGLISH LITERATURE - A STUDY OF ENGLAND AND AMERICA

THREE SCORE AND TEN - THE BUSINESS OF GROWING OLD

THE PERFECT INDEX - THERE IS NO INDEX, AND WHY

L'ENVOI: A SALUTATION ACROSS THE SEA

THE END

SOME MEMORIES I - MY REMARKABLE UNCLE

[Table of Contents](#)

The most remarkable man I have ever known in my life was my uncle, Edward Philip Leacock--known to ever so many people in Winnipeg fifty or sixty years ago as E.P. His character was so exceptional that it needs nothing but plain narration. It was so exaggerated already that you couldn't exaggerate it.

When I was a boy of six, my father brought us, a family flock--to settle on an Ontario farm. We lived in an isolation unknown, in these days of radio, anywhere in the world. We were thirty-five miles from a railway. There were no newspapers. Nobody came and went. There was nowhere to come and go. In the solitude of the dark winter nights the stillness was that of eternity.

Into this isolation there broke, two years later, my dynamic Uncle Edward, my father's younger brother. He had just come from a year's travel around the Mediterranean. He must have been about twenty-eight, but seemed a more than adult man, bronzed and self-confident, with a square beard like a Plantagenet King. His talk was of Algiers, of the African slave market, of the Golden Horn and the Pyramids. To us it sounded like the Arabian Nights. When we asked, 'Uncle Edward, do you know the Prince of Wales?' he answered, 'Quite intimately,' with no further explanation. It was an impressive trick he had.

In that year, 1878, there was a general election in Canada. E.P. was in it up to the neck in less than no time. He

picked up the history and politics of Upper Canada in a day, and in a week knew everybody in the countryside. He spoke at every meeting, but his strong point was the personal contact of electioneering, of bar-room treats. This gave full scope for his marvellous talent for flattery and make-believe. 'Why, let me see,' he would say to some tattered country specimen beside him, glass in hand, 'surely, if your name is Framley, you must be a relation of my dear friend General Sir Charles Framley of the Horse Artillery?' 'Mebbe,' the flattered specimen would answer, 'I guess, mebbe; I ain't kept track very good of my folks in the old country.' 'Dear me! I must tell Sir Charles that I've seen you. He'll be so pleased...' In this way, in a fortnight E.P. had conferred honours and distinctions on half the township of Georgina. They lived in a recaptured atmosphere of generals, admirals and earls. Vote? How else could vote than conservative, men of family like them!

It goes without saying that in politics, then and always, E.P. was on the conservative, the aristocratic side, but along with that was hail-fellow-well-met with the humblest. This was instinct. A democrat can't condescend. He's down already. But when a conservative stoops, he conquers.

The election, of course, was a walk-over. E.P. might have stayed to reap the fruits. But he knew better. Ontario at that day was too small a horizon. For these were the days of the hard times of Ontario farming, when mortgages fell like snow-flakes, and farmers were sold up, or sold out, or went 'to the States,' or faded humbly underground.

But all the talk was of Manitoba now opening up. Nothing would do E.P. but that he and my father must go West. So

we had a sale of our farm with refreshments, old-time fashion, for the buyers. The poor, lean cattle and the broken machines fetched less than the price of the whisky. But E.P. laughed it all off, quoted that the star of the Empire glittered in the West, and off to the West they went, leaving us children behind at school.

They hit Winnipeg just as the rise of the boom, and E.P. came at once into his own and rode on the crest of the wave. There is something of magic appeal in the rush and movement of a 'boom' town--a Winnipeg of the '80s, a Carson City of the '60s...Life comes to a focus; it is all here and now, all present, no past and no outside--just a clatter of hammers and saws, rounds of drinks and rolls of money. In such an atmosphere every man seems a remarkable fellow, a man of exception; individuality separates out and character blossoms like a rose.

E.P. came into his own. In less than no time he was in everything and knew everybody, conferring titles and honours up and down Portage Avenue. In six months he had a great fortune, on paper; took a trip east and brought back a charming wife from Toronto; built a large house beside the river; filled it with pictures that he said were his ancestors, and carried on in it a roaring hospitality that never stopped.

His activities were wide. He was president of a bank (that never opened), head of a brewery (for brewing the Red River) and, above all, secretary-treasurer of the Winnipeg, Hudson Bay and Arctic Ocean Railway that had a charter authorizing it to build a road to the Arctic Ocean, when it got ready. They had no track, but they printed stationery and

passes, and in return E.P. received passes over all North America.

But naturally his main hold was politics. He was elected right away into the Manitoba Legislature. They would have made him prime minister but for the existence of the grand old man of the province, John Norquay. But even at that, in a very short time Norquay ate out of E.P.'s hand, and E.P. led him on a string. I remember how they came down to Toronto, when I was a schoolboy, with an adherent group of 'westerners,' all in heavy Buffalo coats and bearded like Assyrians. E.P. paraded them on King Street like a returned explorer with savages.

Naturally, E.P.'s politics remained conservative. But he pitched the note higher. Even the ancestors weren't good enough. He invented a Portuguese Dukedom (some one of our family once worked in Portugal), and he conferred it, by some kind of reversion, on my elder brother Jim, who had gone to Winnipeg to work in E.P.'s office. This enabled him to say to visitors in his big house, after looking at the ancestors, in a half-whisper behind his hand, 'Strange to think that two deaths would make that boy a Portuguese Duke.' But Jim never knew which two Portuguese to kill.

To aristocracy E.P. also added a touch of peculiar prestige by always being apparently just about to be called away, imperially. If some one said, 'Will you be in Winnipeg all winter, Mr. Leacock?' He answered, 'It will depend a good deal on what happens in West Africa.' Just that; West Africa beat them.

Then came the crash of the Manitoba boom. Simple people, like my father, were wiped out in a day. Not so E.P.

The crash just gave him a lift as the smash of a big wave lifts a strong swimmer. He just went right on. I believe that in reality he was left utterly bankrupt. But it made no difference. He used credit instead of cash. He still had his imaginary bank, and his railway to the Arctic Ocean. Hospitality still roared and the tradesmen still paid for it. Anyone who called about a bill was told that E.P.'s movements were uncertain and would depend a good deal on what happened in Johannesburg. That held them another six months.

It was during this period that I used to see him when he made his periodic trips 'East,' to impress his creditors in the West. He floated, at first very easily, on hotel credit, borrowed loans and unpaid bills. A banker, especially a country banker, was his natural mark and victim. He would tremble as E.P. came in, like a stock-dove that sees a hawk. E.P.'s method was so simple; it was like showing a farmer peas under thimbles. As he entered the bankers' side-office he would say, 'I say! Do you fish? Surely that's a greenhart casting-rod on the wall?' (E.P. knew the names of everything.) In a few minutes the banker, flushed and pleased, was exhibiting the rod, and showing flies in a box out of a drawer. When E.P. went out he carried a hundred dollars with him. There was no security. The transaction was all over.

He dealt similarly with credit, with hotels, livery stables and bills in shops. They all fell for his method. He bought with lavish generosity, never asking a price. He never suggested pay till just as an afterthought, just as he was going out. And then, 'By the way, please let me have the

account promptly; I may be going away,' and, in an aside to me, as if not meant for the shop, 'Sir Henry Loch has cabled again from West Africa.' And so out; they had never seen him before; nor since.

The proceeding with a hotel was different. A country hotel was, of course, easy, in fact too easy. E.P. would sometimes pay such a bill in cash, just as a sportsman won't shoot a sitting partridge. But a large hotel was another thing. E.P., on leaving, that is, when all ready to leave--coat, bag and all--would call for his bill at the desk. At the sight of it he would break out into enthusiasm at the reasonableness of it. 'Just think!' he would say in his 'aside' to me, 'compare that with the Hotel Crillon in Paris!' The hotel proprietor has no way of doing this; he just felt that he ran a cheap hotel. Then another 'aside,' 'Do remind me to mention to Sir John how admirably we've been treated; he's coming here next week.' 'Sir John' was our prime minister and the hotel keeper hadn't known he was coming--and he wasn't...Then came the final touch, 'Now, let me see...seventy-six dollars...seventy-six...You--give--me'--and E.P. fixed his eye firmly on the hotel man--'give me twenty-four dollars, and then I remember to send an even hundred.' The man's hand trembled. But he gave it.

This does not mean that E.P. was in any sense a crook, in any degree dishonest. His bills to him were just 'deferred pay', like the British debts to the United States. He never did, never contemplated, a crooked deal in his life. All his grand schemes were as open as sunlight; and as empty.

In all his interviews E.P. could fashion his talk to his audience. On one of his appearances I introduced him to a

group of college friends, young men near to degrees, to whom degrees mean everything. In casual conversation E.P. turned to me and said, "Oh, by the way, you'll be glad to know that I've just received my honorary degree from the Vatican--at last." The 'at last' was a knock-out--a degree from the Pope, and overdue at that!

Of course it could not last. Gradually credit crumbles. Faith weakens. Creditors grow hard, and friends turn their faces away. Gradually E.P. sank down. The death of his wife had left him a widower, a shuffling, half-shabby figure, familiar on the street, that would have been pathetic but for his indomitable self-belief, the illumination of his mind. Even at that, times grew hard with him. At length even the simple credit of the bar-rooms broke under him. I have been told by my brother Jim--the Portuguese Duke--of E.P. being put out of a Winnipeg bar by an angry bar-tender who at last broke the mesmerism. E.P. had brought in a little group, spread up the fingers of one hand and said, 'Mr. Leacock, five!' The bar-tender broke into oaths. E.P. hooked a friend by the arm. 'Come away,' he said, 'I'm afraid the poor fellow's crazy! But I hate to report him.'

Presently his power to travel came to an end. The railways found out at last that there wasn't any Arctic Ocean, and anyway the printer wouldn't print.

Just once again he managed to 'come East'. It was in June 1891. I met him forging along King Street in Toronto--a trifle shabby but with a plug hat with a big band of crape round it. 'Poor Sir John,' he said, 'I felt I simply must come down for his funeral.' Then I remembered that the prime minister was

dead, and realized that kindly sentiment had meant free transportation.

That was the last I ever saw of E.P. A little after that someone paid his fare back to England. He received, from some family trust, a little income of perhaps two pounds a week. On that he lived, with such dignity as might be, in a lost village in Worcestershire. He told the people of the village--so I learned later--that his stay was uncertain; it would depend a good deal on what happened in China. But nothing happened in China; there he stayed, years and years. There he might have finished out, but for a strange chance of fortune, a sort of poetic justice, that gave to E.P. an evening in the sunset.

It happened that in the part of England where our family belonged there was an ancient religious brotherhood, with a monastery and dilapidated estates that went back for centuries. E.P. descended on them, the brothers seeming to him an easy mark, as brothers indeed are. In the course of his pious 'retreat,' E.P. took a look into the brothers' finances, and his quick intelligence discovered an old claim against the British Government, large in amount and valid beyond a doubt.

In less than no time E.P. was at Westminster, representing the brothers. He knew exactly how to handle British officials; they were easier even than Ontario hotel-keepers. All that is needed is a hint of marvellous investment overseas. They never go there but they remember how they just missed Johannesburg or were just late on Persian oil. All E.P. needed was his Arctic Railway. 'When you come out, I must take you over our railway...'

really think that as soon as we reach the Coppermine River we must put the shares on here; it's too big for New York...'

So E.P. got what he wanted. The British Government are so used to old claims that it would as soon pay as not. There are plenty left.

The brothers got a whole lot of money. In gratitude they invited E.P. to be their permanent manager. So there he was, lifted into ease and affluence. The years went easily by, among gardens, orchards and fish-ponds old as the Crusades.

When I was lecturing in London in 1921 he wrote to me. 'Do come down; I am too old now to travel; but any day you like I will send a chauffeur with a car and two lay-brothers to bring you down.' I thought the 'lay-brothers' a fine touch; just like E.P.

I couldn't go. I never saw him again. He ended out his days at the monastery, no cable calling him to West Africa. Years ago I used to think of E.P. as a sort of humbug, a source of humour. Looking back now I realize better the unbeatable quality of his spirit, the mark, we like to think just now, of the British race.

If there is a paradise, I am sure he will get in. He will say at the gate, 'Peter? Then surely you must be a relation of Lord Peter of Tichfield?'

But if he fails, then, as the Spaniards say so fittingly, 'may the earth lie light upon him.'

SOME MEMORIES II - THE OLD FARM AND THE NEW FRAME

[Table of Contents](#)

When I left the old farm of my childhood which I described in talking about my remarkable uncle, I never saw it again for years and years. I don't think I wanted to. Most people who come off farms never go back. They talk about it, cry about it--but they don't really go. They know better.

If they did go back, they would find, as I did, the old place all changed, the old world all gone, in fact no 'farms' any more, no cross-road stores, no villages--nothing in the old sense. A new world has replaced it all.

I went back the other day in a motor car to have a look round the locality that I hadn't seen since I left it by means of a horse and buggy more than half a century before. I came to do this because I happened to have been looking at one of those typical 'motor ads' that you see in the coloured illustrations, motors glistening to an impossible effulgence, a gravelled drive, impossibly neat, beside wide lawns of inconceivable grass and unachievable flower beds. In and beside the motor car were super-world beings as impossible as the grass and flowers around them; youths as square in the shoulders as Greek gods, girls as golden as guineas, and even old age, in the persons of the senior generation, smoothed and beautified to a pink and white as immaculate as youth itself. And as I looked at the picture of this transformed world not yet achieved, but at least existing in the creative mind of the artist, I fell to thinking of all the

actual transformation that new invention has brought into our lives.

I thought particularly of how it has changed the aspect of what we used to call the country--the country of the horse and buggy days that I so easily recall. So I went back.

Our farm was up in a lost corner of Ontario, but the locality doesn't particularly matter. They're all the same from Ontario to Ohio.

We lived four and a half miles from 'the village.' To get to it from our farm you went down a lane--heavy going--up to the hubs in bad weather, then on to a road and up a hill, the same hill really you had just come down only on a different angle; then along a splendid 'spin' of at least three hundred yards where you 'let the mare out,' that is, made her go like blazes (eight miles an hour); then, whoa! steady! another hill, a mighty steep one, to go down. You had to take it pretty easy. In fact, for the hills you had far better get out and walk, as we generally did; it eased the mare to have us walk up the first hill and it eased the buggy to have us walk down the second.

After the second hill, a fine spin of about four hundred yards, good road and 'room to pass.' You couldn't 'let the mare out' all along this, as it might 'wind' her; but she could keep going at a pretty smart clip just the same. Then came the 'big swamp,' about three-quarters of a mile or more; in fact, I never knew a road from Maine to the Mississippi that didn't have a swamp in it. A lot of the big swamp was 'corduroy' road. The word means corde du roi, or king's rope, but the thing meant logs laid side by side with dirt

shovelled over them. In the swamp there was no room to pass except by a feat of engineering in chosen spots.

After the swamp you went on over a succession of 'spins' and 'hills,' the mare alternately 'eased' and 'winded' and 'let out'--and at last, there you were, in the village street--yes, sir, right in the village, under an hour, pretty good going, eh? Cover the mare up with a blanket while we go into the tavern or she may get the 'heaves'--or the 'humps'--or I forget what; anyway it was what a mare got if you stayed too long in the tavern.

And the village street, how well I remember it. Romantic--well, I don't know; I suppose it was. But it was just a street; stores on each side with a square sign over each. Trees here and there. Horses hitched to posts asleep; a grist mill at the end where the river hit the village or the village hit the river, I forget which. There were no fancy signs, no fancy stores. The sole place of entertainment was the tavern--beer 5 cents, whisky 5 cents, mixed drinks (that means beer with whisky or whisky mixed with beer) 5 cents. Food, only at meal times at a York shilling a meal, later raised to a quarter.

Such was the typical farm road and village of fifty years ago--a 'social cell' as I believe the sociologists would call us.

Now look at the change. I visited it, as I say, the other day in a large smooth-running motor car--this 'social cell' from which I emerged fifty years ago. Changed? The word isn't adequate. It just wasn't there any more. In the first place, some one had changed our old farmhouse into a 'farmstead.' You see, you can't live any longer on a farm if you are going to have people coming to see you in motor

cars--golden girls, Apollo boys and Joan-and-Darby elders. You must turn the place into a 'farmstead'--with big shingles all over it in all directions--with a 'loggia' in front and a 'pergola' at the side.

And the road? All gone, all changed. A great highway swept by in its course and sheared lane and hills into one broad, flat curve; threw aside the second hill into a mere nothing of a 'grade,' with a row of white posts; and the swamp, it has passed out of existence to become a broad flat with a boulevard two-way road, set with new shingled bungalows with loggias and pergolas, overgrown with wistaria and perugia, and all trying to live up to the passing motor cars. There's a tearoom now where the spring used to be, in the centre of the swamp, the place where we watered the mare to prevent her blowing.

But you hardly see all this--the whole transit from farmstead to village by the sweeping, shortened concrete road is just three minutes. You are in the village before you know it.

And the village itself! Why, it's another place. What charm is this, what magic this transformation? I hardly know the place; in fact, I don't know it. The whole length of it now is neat with clipped grass and the next-to-impossible flowers, copies from the motor-car advertisements; there are trim little cedars and box hedges, trees clipped to a Versailles perfection and house fronts all aglow with variegated paint and hanging flowers...And the signs, what a multitude of them; it's like a mediaeval fair! 'Old English Tea Room'! I didn't know this was England! And no, it isn't; see the next sign, 'Old Dutch Tea Room,' and 'Old Colony

Rest House,' and 'Normandy Post House'! No, it's not England; I don't know where it is.

But those signs are only a fraction of the total, each one vying with the last in the art of its decoration of the angle of its suspension. 'Joe's Garage.' Look at it--built like a little Tudor house, half-timbered in black and white. Joe's grandfather was the village blacksmith, I remember him well, and his 'blacksmith shop' was a crazy sort of wooden shed, out of slope, with no front side in particular and a forge in it. If they had it now they would label it 'Ye Olde Forge' and make it an out-of-town eating place.

But these new signs mean that, for the people who ride from the city in the motor cars, the village and its little river has become a 'fishing resort.' You see, it's only fifty-six miles from the city; you run out in an hour or so. You can rent a punt for \$1 and a man to go with you and row for another \$1--or he'll fish for you, if you like. Bait only costs about 50 cents, and you can get a fine chicken dinner, wine and all, for about \$2. In short, you have a have a wonderful time and only spend \$10; yet when I was young if you had \$10 in the village no one would change it, and \$10 would board you for a month.

And the people too! A new kind of people seems to have come into--or no, grown up in--the village. I find on examination that they're really the grandsons and granddaughters of the people who were there. But the new world has taken hold of them and turned them into a new and different sort of people--into super people as it were. Joe Hayes, for example--you remember his grandfather, the blacksmith--has turned into a 'garage-man,' handy, efficient,

knowing more than a science college, a friend in distress. What a horse-and-buggy doctor of the countryside was to the sick of fifty years ago, such is now the garage man to the disabled motor car and its occupants towed into his orbit. People talk now of their mimic roadside adventures and tell how there 'wasn't a garage man within five miles,' as people used to tell of having to fetch the doctor at night over five miles of mud and corduroy.

And Joe's brothers and cousins have somehow turned into motor men of all sorts: taximen, and even that higher race, the truckmen. What the draymen of Old London were--admired for their bulk and strength even by the fairest of the ladies--so to-day are the 'truckmen' who have stepped into their place in evolution...

Nor is it one sex only that the motor has transformed. People who live in a village where motors come and go must needs take thought for their appearance. See that sign, beauty parlour! You'd hardly think that that means Phoebe Crawford, whose great-aunt was the village seamstress. Or that other sign, Georgette: Lingerie, that's Mary Ann Crowder. Her grandfather was Old Man Crowder up the river.

Changed, isn't it? Wonderfully changed, into a sort of prettier and brighter world. And if a little 'social cell' has changed like this, it's only part of the transformation that has redecorated all our world.

The only trouble is to live up to it--to be as neat and beautiful as a beauty-parlour girl, as friendly as a garage man, as bold and brave as a truck driver and as fit a guest to sit down to a frogs' legs dinner in an Old Mill chop house.

Alas! This happy world that might have been, that seemed about to be! The transformation from the grim and sombre countryside to all this light and colour, had it only just begun to be overwhelmed and lost in the shadow of War?

Perhaps the old farm had something to it after all.

SOME MEMORIES III - THE STRUGGLE TO MAKE US GENTLEMEN. A MEMORY OF MY OLD SCHOOL

[Table of Contents](#)

I mentioned above that I had gone away from the farm where I lived as a child to a boarding-school--the old Upper Canada College that stood half a century ago on King Street in Toronto. It has all been knocked down since. I look back at it now with that peculiar affection that every one feels for his old school after it has been knocked down and all the masters dead long ago.

But certain things that I was reading the other day in the English papers brought the old school back vividly to my mind. What I was reading belonged in the present English discussion, which the war has so much accentuated, about social classes, and whether 'gentlemen' can go on finding a place. For it seems there is a good deal of alarm now in England over the idea that 'gentlemen' may be dying out. In an old civilization things come and go. Knighthood came and went; it was in the flower, then in the pod and then all went to seed. Now it seems to be gentlemen that are going. It appears that the upper classes are being so depressed and the lower classes so pushed up, and both shifting sideways so fast, that you simply can't distinguish an upper birth from a lower. In fact it is hard to make up their births at all.

I wasn't meaning to write on that topic. The thing is too big. Everyone admits that if gentlemen go, then Heaven

only knows what will happen to England. But then Heaven only ever did. But the point here is that the question has got mixed up with the fate of the public schools; I mean, of course, public in the English sense, the ones the public can't get into. The best solution--it is generally admitted--in fact a solution 'definitely in sight,' is in the idea that if you throw the big board schools into the public schools and then throw the small private schools into both of them, then you so mix up your gentlemen with your others that they all turn into gentlemen. Of course you can't face this all at once; a whole nation of gentlemen is a goal rather than--well, I mean to say it takes time. Meantime if it is 'definitely in sight,' that's the place where the genius of England likes to leave it. It can roost there and go fast asleep along with Dominion Status for India and the Disestablishment of the Church.

So, as I say, this talk of 'gentlemen' in England turned me back to our old Upper Canada College on King Street sixty years ago, and the desperate struggle there to make us gentlemen. We didn't understand for a while just what they were trying to do to us. But gradually we began to catch on to it, and feel that it was no good. There was a kindly and oratorical principal, whom I will not name but whom the affection of Old Boys will easily recall--a kindly principal, I say, with a beautiful and sonorous voice that used to echo through the Prayer Hall in exaltation of the topic. 'This school, I insist,' he would declaim, 'must be a school of gentlemen.' We used to sit as juniors and think, 'Gee! This is going to be a tight shave! I'll never make it,' but presently we learned to take it more easily. We noticed that the gentlemen question broke out after a theft of school books,

or the disappearance of small change foolishly left in reach. Not being yet gentlemen, we made a distinction between 'stealing' a thing and 'hooking' it. A gentleman, you see, classes both together. He'd just as soon steal a thing as hook it.

But, bit by bit and gradually, we were led towards the ideal. We were often told, by oratorical visitors, that Upper Canada College was founded as a 'school for gentlemen.' When I entered the school there was still a few old, very old, boys around, who belonged to the early generations of the foundation. We felt that the school had been fooled in some of them. They seemed just like us.

Personally, however, I got by on a side issue. In those days there was none of the elaborate registration, the card index stuff, that all schools have now. Any information that they wanted about us they got viva voce on the spot by calling us up in front of the class and asking for it. So there came a day soon after I entered when the Principal called me up to be questioned and a junior master wrote down the answers. 'What,' he asked, 'is your father's occupation?' I hesitated quite a while, and then I said, 'He doesn't do anything.' The Principal bent over towards the junior master who was writing and said in an impressive voice: 'A gentleman.' A sort of awe spread round the room at my high status. But really why I had hesitated was because I didn't know what to say. You see, I knew that my father, when in Toronto, was probably to be found along on King Street having a Tom-and-Jerry in the Dog and Duck, or at Clancey's--but whether to call that his occupation was a nice question.