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CHAPTER XVIII

GAMBLING WITH SECURITY

My ten weeks of daily talking on the Peace Conference and the covenant of the League of Nations ended the War for me. Also, it forced me to consider anew the problem of security. It was nearly four years now since I had put an end to it by severing my connection with The American Magazine. But the years had been so full of the War, the scramble to do something that somebody thought was needful and at the same time to keep the pot boiling, that I had not realized what had happened. It meant for me, as I now saw, the end of an economic era.

I sat down to take stock. Here I was sixty three with only a small accumulation of material goods. I must work to live and satisfy my obligations. To be sure I had my little home in Connecticut which in the fifteen years since I had acquired it had not only grown increasingly dear to me; also it had taken on an importance which I had not foreseen. It had become the family home. Here my mother had come to pass the last summers before her death in 1917;

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here my niece Esther had been married under The Oaks; here my niece Clara and her husband Tristam Tupper, battered by war service, had come in 1919 to live in our little guest house. Here Tris had written his first successful magazine story. Here their two children passed their first years. Nearby my sister had built herself a studio to become her home. ~~The family ashes of 1925 were taken to the burial ground in front of the house.~~ A hundred associations gave the place a meaning and dignity which I had never expected to feel in any home of my own, something that only comes when a place has been hallowed by the joys and sorrows of family life.

I had carried out my original intention of never letting it become a financial burden so, ~~that~~ adrift as I now was I not only could afford my home, but I felt that it was the strongest factor in my scheme of security, for here I knew I could retire and raise all the food I needed if free lancing petered out.

I was quite clear about the work I wanted to do. It was to continue writing and speaking on the few subjects on which I felt strongly and of which I knew a little. These subjects had made a pattern in my mind. If men would work out this pattern I felt that they would go a long way towards ending the world's quarrels, quieting its confusions. First and most important were the privileges they had snatched. I wanted to see them all gradually scrapped, cost what it might

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economically. They were a threat to honest men, to sound industry, to peaceful inter-national life. # I wanted to help spread the knowledge of all the intelligent efforts within and without industry and government, to put an end to militancy, replace it with actual understanding. And then I wanted to do my part towards making the world acquainted with the man whom I believed had best shown how to carry out a program of co-operation based on consideration of others - that was Abraham Lincoln.

There was a man, I told myself, who took the time to understand a thing before he spoke. He knew that hurry, acting before you were reasonably sure, almost invariably makes a mess of even the best intentions. He wanted to know what he was about before he acted, also he wanted all those upon whom he must depend for results to know what he was about and why. Whatever he did he did without malice, taking into account men's limitations, not asking more from any one than he could give. More than anybody I had studied he applied in public affairs Frederick Taylor's rules for achievement of which I have spoken above. The more people who knew about Lincoln the more chance democracy had to destroy the two chief enemies, privilege and militancy. I proposed to take every chance I had to talk about him.

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about him, written many articles and scraps of comments, as well as made many addresses, formal and informal.

This was the program on which I was set so set that I was willing to follow it even if it did take away from me the comforts of a regular salary.

Giving up the salary troubled me less than finding myself without the regular professional contacts which I had so enjoyed for twenty years and on which I found, now I was free, that I had come to depend more than I would have believed.

Not belonging to an editorial group meant that when I dropped my pen at lunch time I no longer could join a half a dozen office mates full of gossip of what the morning had brought;- the last Tarkington manuscript, something of Willa Cather's, a letter from Kipling, that new person from Louisville - Georgia Martin - with a real creation, Emmy Lou, that new person from Wisconsin, Edna Ferber with a bona fide human being in hand, Emma McChesney, or it might be Dunne's last "Dooley" or Baker's last adventure in "Contentment" or gossip from the last man in Washington, perhaps direct from the White House, and always surely from our liberal friends in Congress. This was the stuff of our lunch table talk. We gloated or mourned and our eyes were always on what was coming rather than what had been.

I no longer had an office next door to these friends. My study had become my workshop. Now I must pay my own secretary's bill, my own telephone calls, buy my own stationery. I gasped when I found what these extras amounted to. Freedom, I saw, was going to be expensive as well as lonesome.

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However for eighteen years I have kept to my decision. How little I have contributed to my program in these nineteen years. The chief piece of writing I planned to do I have never finished. That was bringing the History of the Standard Oil Company up to date. I had dropped the story in 1904, but the disolution of the company in 1911 left me with the melancholy conviction that sooner or later I would have to estimate the trial and put down how the new set-up was working. I talked two or three times with Mr. George Wickersham, the Attorney General, who brought the suit and he always cautioned me not to hurry, to let the decision have a chance to work out. I think we decided that about ten years would do it. But the War put a different face on oil. It suddenly became a matter for government control. It was no longer a private business. It was life and death for the allies. "Oil was as necessary to them," Clemenceau wrote to Wilson, "as the blood of men."

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Everything that rolled or sailed or flew must have it. The great struggle of the nations with navies, England at the head, to command oil at its source, followed the war. The earth was ransacked for it in a terrific predatory hunt. In this effort of the nations to command oil supplies great names arose challenging that of Rockefeller - Sir Henry Diedering - Sir Marcus Samuels - William Knox D'Arcy. The Standard Oil Company no longer ruled the oil world. There was the Royal Dutch and the Shell making up finally the Dutch Shell; there was the Anglo-Persian. All of the dramatic and frequently tragic goings on had to settle down into something like orderly procedure before the history I had in mind could be written.

The time came, along in 1922, when Mr. Wickersham said, "You better go at it." But it was not Mr. Wickersham's dictum that hurried me to undertake to tell the story of what had happened since 1904. It was an entirely unexpected piratical attack on the two volume edition of the history which had been exhausted for sometime. My publisher, wisely enough, was waiting for the promised third volume before reprinting. When it became known in the trade that the book was no longer on the market a report was spread that the Standard Oil Company had bought and destroyed the plates and the price soared. Down in Louisiana Huey Long ~~was said to have~~ paid One Hundred Dollars for a set, so I was told.

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As I frequently received inquiries as to where the books could be found or where a purchaser could be found for a set, I turned the correspondence over to my secretary, a canny woman, who established a trading relation with a dealer in old books and the two of them were in a fair way to do a nice little business when their hopes were blasted by the appearance in a New York book store of an entirely new edition of the work - a cheap edition, selling for five or six dollars. My publishers made an immediate investigation and found that it had been printed in England, probably from German plates.

As the third volume was not ready there was nothing for the publisher to do but to re-print the two, ~~volumes~~ which he very promptly did. On its appearance the pirated edition disappeared from the market. This episode set me to work promptly at the third volume.

But I needed a financial backer if the work was to be put through promptly. I found it unexpectedly in the editor-in-chief for whom the first two volumes had been written - Mr. S. S. McClure. McClure's Magazine which had been suspended for a few years had been revived, Mr. McClure in charge. He felt that bringing Standard oil history up to date was a logical and might be an important feature for the periodical.

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For me there was satisfaction in trying to revive the old editorial relations. I had always missed the gaiety and fire Mr. McClure gave to work and, too, I had always felt a little anxious about what I suspected was happening to him in a group, which even if it was made up of the very best of the town - men and women of ability and loyalty, naturally eager to prove that they could make as good or better a McClure's Magazine than ever had been made, could not, I was convinced, understand Mr. McClure, get out of him what he had to give as his old partner and friend John S. Phillips. So I was willing to give all I had to help in the revival of the old periodical.

I had my book well in hand, some twenty thousand words written when the new McClure's was suspended and the third volume of the Standard Oil Company was cast out before publication had begun.

Perhaps it was just as well for both McClure's and for me. Repeating yourself is a doubtful practice particularly for editor and writer. I feel now there was no hope of my recapturing the former interest in the forner way. The result would have smelt a bit musty. Indeed, though I hate to admit it, I think there has been a slight mustiness about all I have done in the seventeen years since I started.

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that is not an assignment,
"on my own", built as it has been on work done before the Great War.

Left with twenty thousand words on hand and no editor I was obliged to make a quick turn in the interest of security and took on the first piece of work that offered. For one reason ——————

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or another I have never been able to return to that third volume, and it looks now as if it were a piece of work for my ninth decade since it failed to mature in the seventh and eighth!

If I failed to carry out my plan for tracing the manoeuvers of the master monopoly after the Government had taken it apart in 1911 and after it adapted itself to the new and extraordinary situations forced by the Great War, I did trace what could be done in a corporation formed of parts all of which had been built more or less on privilege and which itself enjoyed high tariff protection when a man took hold of it who believed that ordinary ethics did apply to business. This study was shaped around the life of Judge Elbert G. Gary.

It was no idea of mine, this life of Gary, and when it was proposed to me by that energetic and resourceful editor Rutger Jewitt I promptly said, "No." But Mr. Jewitt was insistent. He had talked the matter over with Judge Gary who had told him he would open his records and answer my questions if I would do the book.

That meant, I supposed, that he had confidence in my ability to be fair-minded, whatever my suspicions. His judgment was formed on my handling of certain efforts to improve and humanize the conditions of labor in the mills, factories and towns of the United States Steel Corporation. The

Corporation under his direction had been a pioneer in safety and sanitation work. It had developed a pension system, improved communities, improved its housing, built schools and hospitals where there was no community to take care of these needs. It was the broadest, soundest record that I had found in my gathering of material for the articles the American Magazine had published under the title of "The Golden Rule in Business." I knew from my talks with Judge Gary that there was nothing going on in the Steel Corporation in which he was more deeply interested.

Moreover, I knew he was a man I could talk with freely. More than once when he as spokesman of the Corporation was under attack for arbitrary dealings with labor I had gone to him for his side of the case and although I might not agree, and frequently did not, I always came away enlightened and with a rather humiliated feeling that I had shown myself an amateur in a conversation where he was very much the expert.

But ~~when Mr. Jewitt brought the proposition to me I hesitated.~~ Was I equal to finding out the truth of things in this enormous industrial labyrinth which he ruled? Moreover, if Judge Gary had been an industrial plunderer would I be willing so to present him? I had no heart for a repetition of my experience with H. H. Rogers.

Another reason for hesitation was that I knew if I did undertake it and was as fair as I knew how to be, that I would at once be under suspicion by groups with whose intentions for the most part I sympathized. They were unwilling

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to consider Gary in any light save that of Scape Goat Number One. An attack - yes - they would welcome it. An attempt to set down his business life as he had actually lived it - no. That was white-washing.

Finally I took the matter to Judge Gary himself. "I do not know that I want to write your life," I told him. "If I find practices which seem to me against public policy as I understand it I shall have to say so. I appreciate your efforts to make working conditions for labor as good as you know how to make them, but it does not follow that I can stand for your financial policies. It is not your humanitarianism but your ethics I suspect."

"Well," Judge Gary laughed, "if you can find anything wrong in our doings I want to know it. I had George Wickersham in here for a year or more going over the whole set-up telling me what he thought we ought not to do, and I followed every suggestion he made. The Government has had its agency here for two years examining our books and they gave us a clean bill of health. The Supreme Court has refused to declare us a monopoly in restraint of trade. Do your worst and if you find anything wrong I shall be grateful."

I felt more of an amateur than ever after that. I also concluded that it would be sheer cowardice on my part to refuse the job which I really needed. I had not been long at my task, however, before I was heartened by the certainty that from the formation of the corporation Judge Gary had made

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a steady and surprisingly successful fight to strip the businesses which he was putting together of certain illegal privileges, as well as to set up an entirely new code of fair practices - the Gary Code it was jeeringly called in Wall Street.

Orders went out neither to ask nor accept special favors from the railroads. Full yearly reports of the financial condition of the Corporation, whether it be good or bad, were sent out. These reports reached the public as early as they did the directors themselves putting an end to the advance information which many insiders were accustomed to use for stock-selling or buying. Various forms of predatory competition were attacked from the inside. Judge Gary not only laid down his code, he followed it up, preached it zealously to his Board.

Another unheard of innovation was his support of President Theodore Roosevelt's attempts to control business. It had become an axiom of Big Business to fight every effort of the government to inspect or regulate. When Gary took the opposite course, applauded Roosevelt's efforts, declared that he was doing business good, doing him good, he was treated as a traitor by many colleagues.

Well, this seemed to me as good business doctrine as I had come across in any concern, much better, more definite and practical as a matter of fact than I got from most corporation critics. But how far was this followed

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up in practice? Before I was through I made up my mind that his code was applied just as completely and as rapidly as Gary could persuade or drive his frequently doubting and recalcitrant associates to it. But that took time, took frequent battles. Indeed, more than once he had come close to losing his official head fighting for this or that plank in his platform.

The Gary Code and the effort to put it in practice reconciled me to my task. ~~My qualms about writing his life disappeared~~ Judge Gary was an easy man to work with because he was himself so interested in following his own story. He had been too busy all his life to give attention to the route by which he had come. Now he enjoyed the looks back. Finding that he was willing to take literally his promise to open records and answer questions I laid out a little plan for covering his life chronologically. It pleased him, for he was the most systematic of men. It gave him delight to remember. "How a man's mind unravels," he exclaimed one day when he had suddenly recalled something long forgotten.

Our interviews were carried on always at 71 Broadway. He kept his appointments exactly. Rarely, if ever, did he keep me waiting, and if by necessity he did he always apologized. If I was late I was made to feel clearly that that was a thing not to be done.

While Gary was prepared to be frank in his talks with me he was not prepared to be mis-quoted. He

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evidently had learned that even with the best intentions a reporter may distort what a man has said out of all resemblance to what he meant. He guarded against this by always having at our interviews a secretary who took down in short hand all that he said, all that I said. I made long hand notes, dictating them as soon as I went back to my desk. I do not remember that a question of mis-understanding of meaning ever came up.

Convinced that the Gary Code was genuine, not mere window dressing for the public, nothing interested me more than how a man in his fifties who had been for twenty years a successful corporation lawyer was willing to preach to Wall Street as he had done. I finally concluded the truth to be that Elbert Gary had never outgrown his early bringing up. He had never gotten over a belief in the soundness of what he had learned in Sunday School and of what later he had taught through most of his manhood in Sunday School. The difference between him and some of his fellows in business brought up in the same way was that he insisted that the Sunday School precepts of honesty, consideration for others, fair play, should be preached on week days as well as Sundays in the Board room as well as the Church. If he ever sensed that his preaching was both comic and irritating to Wall Street, which I doubt, he never gave sign of such a preception.

I soon found that I need not hesitate to bring him all sorts of criticisms of his doings as I unearthed

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them in studying the public's reactions to the Steel Corporation's operations. They never peeved or irritated him, rather he enjoyed analyizing them for my benefit. He never dismissed radical opinions as nonsense. In the year I was working with him there was never a public radical meeting in New York - and there were a good many of them that year - that he did not read all the speeches and did mt comment on them intelligently and with good humor.

"We must know about these things," he said. "We must know all about Lenin, all about Mussolini. They are great forces; they are trying new forms of government."

His knowledge prevented him from being scared. # Above all Gary enjoyed stories of his struggles to establish his own preeminence and his own code in the corporation. At the start he had several of the strong men in the corporation against him, but he had won out and it gave him the greatest satisfaction to show me letters of congratulation, to quote former opponents as saying, "You were right, I was wrong."

Particularly he enjoyed the very good terms on which he stood with Theodore Roosevelt whose unpopularity in the street surpassed even that of the second Roosevelt.

~~Gary liked Roosevelt, believed in what he was trying to do, insisted that the corporation work with, not against the reforms he was trying to institute.~~

He still talked with emotion of the decision of the government to bring suit against the Steel Corporation

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under the Sherman Law. He thought he had satisfied them, that the Steel Corporation was not a monopoly in restraint of trade, that it was what Mark Twain called a good trust, and when the Attorney-General's office decided that there might be a question about the quality of this goodness Gary was terribly disturbed. There were advisors who thought he ought to try to settle the suit outside, but he would not have it so. The Government had doubts and he must satisfy them. He did not believe that the law applied to the Steel Corporation; he did not believe that it was contrary to a sound business policy, a menace to the country. That must be settled once for all.

Of course he was jubilant over the outcome, it justified his conviction. Judge Gary had done a great job and he knew it, but interestingly enough it never made him pompous. As a matter of fact he was simple, natural, in talking about it. ~~he never underestimated his enemies though he did gloat over the fact that some of them had come around to tell him he was right~~ Along with this really simple enjoyment of his own conflict he had a nice kind of dignity and a carefulness of conduct which was not entirely natural to him. To be sure he had always been a good Methodist, a good citizen, a hardworking lawyer, but at the same time in all these earlier years he had led what was then called a gay life. He had liked a fast horse, liked to hunt and see the world. He was curious about all kinds of human performances, looked into them whenever

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he had the chance. When he became the head of the Steel Corporation he could no longer sing in the choir - he had to go to the Opera and sit in a box. He no longer drove fast horses. He wanted to fly and the Board of the Steel Corporation passed an ordinance against it - too dangerous. When he traveled it was more or less in state and he couldn't slip out with a crowd of men at the stopping places to see the town.

It was hard on him but he felt deeply that he owed it to the Steel Corporation to be above reproach. Not a little of this carefulness was due, I think, to the effect on the public, the exhibits that several of the new steel men had made of themselves after the Corporation was formed in 1901 and their offices were centered in New York. They were rich beyond their wildest dreams. The restrictions of the home towns were gone and they broke loose in a riotous celebration which scandalized even Mr. Morgan. Gary joined in nothing which approached orgies. He was too hard a worker and always had been and he saw with distress the effect the high living of certain of the steel men was having on the public. It was a danger he felt equal to the speculation in steel stock by officers of the corporation. To counteract it he gradually became more and more a model of correctness.

I came out of my task with a real liking for Judge Gary and a profound conviction that industry has not produced one in our time who so well deserves the title of

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industrial statesman. But I had to pay for saying what I thought. Under the heading of "The Taming of Ida M. Tarbell" my favorite newspaper declared that I had become a eulogist of the kind of man to whom I was sworn as an eternal enemy. But Judge Gary was not the kind of a captain of industry to whom I objected. On the contrary, he was a man who at the frequent risk of his position and fortune had steadily fought many of the privileges and practices to which I had been objecting.

However, one is judged largely by the company he keeps. Judge Gary belonged to an industrial world where the predatory, the brutal, the illegal, the reckless speculator constantly forced public attention. That there was another side to that world, a really honest and intelligent effort in the making to put an end to these practices few knew or knowing acknowledged. I could not complain. I knew how it would be when I started. But I must confess that more than once while I was carrying on my work I shivered with distaste at the suspicion I knew I was bringing on myself. The only time in my professional life I feel I deserve to be called courageous was when I wrote the life of Judge Gary.

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My active interest in the industrial life of the country brought me unexpected adventures. The most instructive as well as upsetting was serving on a couple of those Government conferences which 20th Century presidents have used so freely in their attempts to solve difficult National problems. An Industrial Conference called by President Wilson for the fall of 1919 was the first of these. Mr. Wilson felt clearly at the end of the war that our immediate important domestic problem was to establish some common ground of agreement and action in the conduct of industry. What he wanted evidently was a covenant by which employer and employee could work out their mutual problems, as co-operators, not as enemies. There was need of action as any one who remembers those days will agree. The whole labor world was in an uproar and one of the periodical efforts to organize the steel industry was under way. Mr. Gompers, the head of the American Federation, sponsoring the strike, had had little or no sympathy with a contest at the moment but had been pushed into it by the adroitness of the radical elements boring from within throughout the war.

"These disturbances must not go on. It should be possible to make plans for a peaceful solution," Mr. Wilson said.

And so a Conference was called. In spite of my refusal to serve on his tariff commission President Wilson had evidently not given me up. As a matter of fact our

acquaintance and mutual confidence had grown during the war.

He now named me as one of four women representatives, the others being Lillian Wald, ~~the~~ head of the Nurses' Settlement in New York City, Gertrude Barnum, a social worker of California and Miss Sarah Conboy of the Cotton Textile Union.

The Conference was an impressive and exciting body of some fifty persons divided into three groups representing the Public, Labor, Employer. I, of course, sat in the first group where I found as my colleagues a bewildering assortment of men from various ranks of life. There was Dr. Charles Eliot, Charles Edward Russell, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Judge Gary, John Spargo, Barnard Baruch, Thomas L. Chadbourne, and a score or more less known to the public, though not necessarily less influential.

At the head of the labor group was Mr. Samuel Gompers. Among his colleagues were some of the most experienced labor leaders in the country.

The members of the employers group were chosen from among men who had been particularly helpful in directing their industries during the War. Among them were many interesting characters. Two that I particularly enjoyed were Henry Endicott who with the Johnsons had established the famous shoe towns near Binghampton, New York, and a delightful pungent character from Georgia - Fuller E. Calloway - who in twenty years had built up from scratch mills and a village with homes and schools - everything to give life and a chance to hard working mill people.

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Mr. Calloway's story of what he had done in Georgia was one of the very few joyous contributions to a gathering doomed to be a dismal failure.

A body could have scarcely had a heartier welcome from the public than we did. People seemed to feel we would find a way to end the fighting; that, so Secretary of Labor Wilson who made the key note speech told us, was what we were there for. If we could produce a document which would secure the rights of all those concerned in an industry it would find a place in the hearts of men like the Magna Charta, the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States and the Emancipation Proclamation. He brought us all to our feet, all save a few who were too interested in political strategy to entertain a high purpose.

We were there to plan for the future of industry. But almost at once we discovered that it was not peace or the future of industry that was in Mr. Gompers' mind. Also, we discovered too that the master politician of the body was Mr. Gompers. We were hardly organized before he called upon us to appoint a committee to report on the steel strike.

Dr. Charles Eliot, outraged, rose in all his very genuine majesty and reminded the body that we were not there to attend to the troubles of the present but to plan that such troubles might be avoided in the future. But the steel strike was on the table and we left it there when we disbanded, a menace and an irritation.

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It was not Mr. Gompers' resolution, however, which ruined the Conference. It was the inability of the representatives of labor and employer to agree on a definition for collective bargaining. The Conference as a whole contended that such a definition must be a leading plank in the platform we were there to make, but there were to be many other planks. Committees were at once formed to frame them. Almost every member of the Conference, too, had some particular resolution that he wanted to incorporate. I know I did. But most of us never found an opportunity to present our notions. Collective bargaining and what it meant was always getting in our way. The employer and a considerable number of the public group believed that the definition which the labor group offered meant a closed shop. Judge Gary openly charged this. But labor was quite as strong in its suspicion that the definition which came from the employer's groups encouraged company unions, at that moment flourishing in numbers that alarmed them. Suspicion governed both groups.

This went on for two weeks, then Secretary Lane, the acting chairman of the Conference, appealed to a very

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sick President and from his bed Woodrow Wilson begged us not to allow division on one point to destroy our opportunity.

"At a time when the nations of the world are endeavoring to find a way of avoiding international war," he wrote, "are we to confess that there is no method to be found for carrying on industry except in the spirit and with the very method of war? Must suspicion and hatred and force rule us in civil life? Are our industrial leaders and our industrial workers to live together without faith in each other, constantly struggling for advantage over each other, doing naught but what is compelled?

"My friends, this would be an intolerable outlook, a prospect unworthy of the large things done by this people in the mastering of this continent; indeed, it would be an invitation to national disaster. From such a possibility my mind turns away, for my confidence is abiding that in this land we have learned how to accept the general judgment upon matters that affect the public weal. And this is the very heart and soul of democracy."

But it was too late. The labor body walked out, except a few railroad men, wise and experienced in negotiations. A group of employers followed them. It was defeat. There was nothing for the President to do but disband the Conference. He did ask, however, that the public group of some twenty five carry on. Now this group included a number of

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extraordinarily able men. From them had come some of the wisest and broadest suggestions that had been placed before the Conference. They could have presented an impressive program, but they had been out-manoeuvered. They lost heart; they refused to go on. The only remarks I made at that Conference, bewildered as I had been by the political manoeuvering, was when I saw the public group prepared for the cowardly business of denying the President's request. "Let us stick to it, do our best, make some report," I pled.

But I do not think anybody heard me. I had an impression as I talked that most of them were calculating when they could get a train to New York.

My next adventure in government service came two years later as a member of President Harding's Unemployment Conference. The country had been caught in the first great post-war depression and nobody was ready for it. Nobody knew, indeed, how widespread the unemployment was. Mr. Harding called a Conference to deal with the problem without attempting to find out. The result was that on one hand you had an opposition belittling the numbers, on the other hand you had the sponsorsof the Conference responsible, probably exaggerating them. Nobody knew. And how easy it would have been then as now to find out by the same method the country had used in the war when by a cooperative effort the number of draftable men were counted in twenty four hours at a limited expense.

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This was an impressive Conference because of the make up, and it was a mighty well conducted Conference for the Chairman, Secretary of Commerce Hoover, kept it in hand throughout from the start, and this in spite of the fact that there were all the elements of conflict found in the Industrial Conference and some extra, for here we had rivalry between the labor groups themselves, particularly that thorny problem of trade jurisdiction. But Mr. Hoover was enormously skillful and we came out with a program which if it had been followed and the machinery which it used devised the country would have come into 1929 in a very different state of preparedness.

After our dismissal I put together in a lecture what I conceived to be the practical conclusion of the Conference. As my text I used one of the first principles laid down, "The Time to Act is Before a Crisis Becomes Inevitable." This text was an official and authoritative recognition of the unpalatable fact that business moves in cycles - always has - that a boom will be followed by a slump, that common sense demands preparedness.

How prepare? The Federal Government, state, community, county, down to the smallest, was to have in reserve plans and money for work it wanted done, but not absolutely essential at the moment. When a slump started this reserve was to be called out.

Private industry was by no means let off. In good times it was to lay up a surplus with which to keep plants

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and laboratory alive and ready for action as soon as there was a return of orders. The employee was to be protected by employment insurance. The individual house holder was to keep back certain needed repairs and improvements for the day of need. That is, everybody was to be ready with his life preserver.

For two years I talked with the conviction of the one who has a scheme he believes sound, and I was listened to with more or less enthusiasm, until it was obvious the slump was passing. It was a bad dream well over - good times had come. Why lay plans for the future? By 1926 there were no longer audiences to listen to a talk on preparing for unemployment. Apparently everybody, even President Hoover, who had been the all-efficient chairman of the Conference, forgot all about the program.

On the whole my little excursions into public service were discouraging and disillusioning, but they did convince me that I was right when I gave as one of my reasons for not going on to President Wilson's Tariff Commission the fact that I was not fitted for the kind of work a commission or conference requires.

I was an observer, a reporter. What interested me was watching my fellow members in action, the silent weariness of Secretary Hoover, the amused and slightly contemptuous smile of Charlie Schwab when he heard a woman had been put on the

coal committee, the unwillingness of representatives of rival-mining unions to do anything to relieve the immediate suffering of West Virginia miners, sufferings so useful in their campaigns; the stubborn look on the face of those who fought over jurisdiction in an effort to reach an adjustment which would permit hungry men to take up work waiting for them; the quick political line up; the clever political plays; the gradual fade out of the objective, its replacement by party ambitions.

Altogether it was a revealing study of the reason there is so little steady progress in the world. These failures joined to the refusal to have anything to do with the League of Nations put an end to my hopes that the War had taught us much of anything. We were not ready for the sacrifice necessary for peace nor had we grasped the natural methods by which things grow. We believed we could talk, petition, legislate, vote ourselves into peace and prosperity. We had not learned that toil and self-control are three fourths of any achievement, and that toil and self-control begin with the individual.

I went on with my talking in these years with a troubled mind. Continue this way and we would destroy democracy. Men and women must harden themselves to sacrifice and labor if they were to realize the democratic ideals. That is what Lincoln had believed, that is what he had done. We had allowed, often encouraged, groups of self-interested individuals to have their way. That meant new transformations in government machinery, new types of

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leaders, a multiplication of the children of privilege we had always so feared, the substitution of humanitarianism for ethics, sympathy for justice.

I was discouraged, but I never lost faith in our scheme of things. I never came to believe that we must change democracy for socialism or communism or a dictatorship. You do not change human nature by changing the machinery. Under freedom human nature has the best chances for developing, for correcting its weaknesses and failures, for developing its capacities. It is on these improvements in men that the future welfare of the world depends. So I believed and so I argued as I went about, though sometimes I confess with a spirit so low that my tongue was in my cheek.

Such was my growing disillusionment when in 1926 I was asked to go to Italy to report on the Fascist State of Benito Mussolini, now four years in power, a scandal to the democracies at which he openly jeered, but an even greater one to the socialists and communists who once had thought him on the way to being the strongest radical leader in Europe.

I knew little of what had gone on in Italy after the end of the War. I knew the parlimentary system had broken down; ~~[illegible]~~ I knew there had been two years of guerrilla warfare after the Peace Conference, a period in which it was nip-and-tuck whether the next ruler of Italy would be Communist or Fascist. The Fascists under their leader Mussolini had won out.

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I had been amazed, and have never ceased to be amazed, that the dramatic march on Rome which ended in changing the peaceful transfer of a parlimentary form of government into a dictatorship had been carried out without bloodshed. An astonished world had seen tens of thousands of unorganized and for the most in part unarmed men march from every point in Italy to Rome, call for Mussolini, get him by order of the King and then march home again, not a brick thrown, not a head broken. It was the most amazing transfer of government I had known of.

But I had never given much attention to what had followed. I had never asked myself if it was inevitable that a dictator should have arisen in Italy. I had never asked who was this man Mussolini or what was this corporate state which was emerging.

Uneasy as I was over the way things were going in the United States I vaguely felt when I was asked to go look all this up that possibly there were lessons there. Possibly I might learn something from Italy's experience of the process by which manacles are put on free government. However, the real reason I went to Italy was because I was offered so large a sum that I could not afford to refuse.

My friends did their best to discourage my going. Down in Washington a worried under secretary who gave me my passport and letters of introduction told me pessimistically that I probably would be arrested.

"But why?" I asked.

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"Well, that is what is happening now to all our Americans. They drink too much, talk too much. The chief reason as far as we can make out is that they have to arrest them because they are attacking the government. We do the same thing here now and then, you know."

In Paris my best friends, among them Mr. Jaccaci, so much of an Italian that he talked the dialects of several provinces, told me with all seriousness that I would be searched. I must not carry the letters to members of the opposition, nor books hostile to Mussolini. Now I was armed with all of that sort of thing collected in Washington, New York and Paris. I did not propose to give them up without a struggle.

I was told I would find no newspapers excepting those sympathetic to the regime - a serious handicap as I always count largely on newspapers. I must always use the Fascist salute. I took this so seriously that I practiced it in my Paris bedroom. I must not speak French. I was counting on that as I speak no Italian. That is, I started off to Italy with a large collection of "don'ts" coming from what I considered informed people. If I did not have a natural dislike of giving up an undertaking I never would have carried out my assignment.

However, at the end of the first day in Rome, a very exciting day, I awakened to the fact that nobody had searched my bags for incriminating documents, that I had talked French all day and that I hadn't noticed anybody using the Fascist salute, and most important I had found at every newspaper kiosque all the French and English papers side by side with the

Italian. It gave me confidence. As a matter of fact in the four to five months that I was in Italy I did practically what I had planned to do, nobody paid any attention to me. My mail was never interferred with, so far as I know. That is, all the dire prophesies of interference to which I had listened at the start did not come true.

I do not mean to say it was always easy to get to the people with whom I wanted to talk, and more than once when I succeeded I found the person fearful of quotation. I do not mean to say that I found no revolts. Down in Palermo, in corners of Milan and Florence and Turin, as a matter of fact almost everywhere, I ran across bitter critics of the new regime such as I hear every day in this year 1938 of the President of the United States, but on the whole even good parlimentarians were accepting Mussolini. "He has saved the country," men told me. "We don't accept his methods, we don't believe in dictatorship but it is better than anarchy."

Making my headquarters at Rome I went over the country fairly well, particularly the industrial sections. I visited Turin with its hydro-electric developments, its great Fiat factory, its artificial silk, all plants of the first order. I spent some days in Milan, visited the great Pirelli plant, at the moment making underground cables for Chicago. I saw what was left of the co-operates at Bologna. I climbed into that plucky little independent Kingdom of San Marino. Mussolini had been there just before I arrived. They were all for him. He worked and made people work. That

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is what had made San Marino.

I went South into Calabria - over into Sicily, always looking for the effects of the new regime on the life of the people. There was no doubt about it, sensible things were going on, redemption of land, extension of water power, amazing efforts at wheat production and the people were accepting it with understanding, realists that they were.

The first thing that springs to my mind now when I recall those months in Italy is a long procession of men, women and children bent in labor. They harvested fields of rice, wheat, alfalfa, laying grain in perfect swathes; they sat on the ground, stripping and sorting tobacco leaves. They crowded narrow rooms with tiny girls, old women, embroidering with sure fingers lovely designs on linen, fine and coarse; they cooked their meals before all the world in the narrow streets of Naples; they carried home at sunset from the terraces or slopes of mountains great baskets of grapes, olives, lemons, young women straight and firm, their burdens poised surely on their heads, old women bent under the weight on their backs. They drove donkeys so laden that only a nodding head, a switching tail were visible; they filled the roads with their gay two wheeled carts, tended sheep, ran machines, sat in markets, spun, weaved, moulded, built - a world of work.

Mingled with these pictures of labour were equally vagrant ones of these same men and women at play, holiday and Sunday crowds filling the streets, the roads the cinema, the dancing pavilions, the squares of little towns tracing their history

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back clearly more than two thousand years, gay with flags and streamers and light and booths, where in the evenings throngs hold their breath as to the notes of soft music the lithe figures of the rope-walkers pass/ed high over the head with slow and rhythmic steps.

It was hard to realize when I looked on them that six years earlier those same people were as badly out of step as they were perfectly in step at the present moment, that instead of rhythmic labour, there was a clash of disorder and revolt. Men and women not only refused to work themselves/ but to let other people work. Grain died in the fields, threshing machines were destroyed, factories were seized, shops were looted, railways ran as suited the crew. Sunday was a day/ not of rest, amusement, prayer, but of war; fetes were dangerous, liable to be broken up by raids. Instead of the steady balance, orderly action, so conspicuous today was the disorganization, anger, violence of a people unprotected in its normal life; a people become the prey of a dozen clashing political parties and not knowing where to look for a Moses to lead them out of their Egypt. How could/it be, one asked, that in so brief a time a people should/drop its clubs and pick up its tools?

There was only one answer - Mussolini. Already he was a legend, a /name everywhere to conjure with. I used it myself after I had talked with him, on scared gentlemen to whom I had letters of introduction and who feared quotation - "But Mussolini saw me - talked with me" - nothing too much trouble after that.

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But what kind of a man was this dictator?

"You must go and see Mussolini," our able and friendly Ambassador S. S. Fletcher told me one morning while I was working on the Embassy's volumnious records of what had gone on in Italy since the end of the War. I balked.

"I am not ready with the questions I want to ask him."

"Oh," said Mr. Fletcher, "just go down and have a chat with him."

With my notion of Mussolini gathered largely from English and American, as well as hostile Italian sources, the word seemed utterly incongruous. Could one chat with this bombastic and terrifying individual who never listened, told you what to think, to say? Impossible. But of course I went.

The most exciting and interesting hour and a half I spent in Italy was in an ante-room watching two score or more of persons waiting to be received, watching them go in so scared, come out exultant, go in inflated, come out collapsed. There was no one of them but was anxious, even the Admiral of the Fleet then at Ostia. He walked nervously about while he was waiting, adjusting his uniform, and when his turn strode in as if marching in a parade.

Nothing ~~xx~~ I saw in Italy, as I have said, was more interesting to me. Though I must confess that all the time there was an undercurrent of nervousness. What I was afraid of was that my French would go to pieces, providing he gave me a chance to speak at all of which I had a doubt. What

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if I should forget and say "vous" instead of "votre excellence," would I be shot at sunrise?

It was all so different from what I had anticipated. I must have mis-read and mis-heard the reports of interviews to have had such an unpleasant impression of what was waiting me. As I crossed the long room towards the desk Mussolini came around to meet me, asked me to take one of the two big chairs which stood in front of his desk. And as he seated me was apologizing, actually apologizing, in excellent English for keeping me waiting. As he did it I saw that he had one of the most extraordinary smiles I have ever seen and more than that when he smiled he had a dimple.

Nothing could have been more natural, simple and courteous than the way he put me at my ease. I found myself not at all afraid to talk, eager to do so. If he had not been as eager I think I should have done all the talking for luckily at once we hit on a common interest - better housing. Immediately his smiling face became excited and stern. He pounded the table.

"Men and women must have better places in which to live. You cannot expect them to be good citizens in the hovels they are living in in parts of Italy."

He went on to talk with appreciation and understanding of the various building undertakings all ready well advanced, some of which I had seen in different parts of the country. He talked at length of the effect on women of crowded, cheerless homes. "A reason for their drinking too much wine

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sometimes," he mused.

He was particularly interested in what prohibition was doing to working people in the United States. "I am dry," he said, but I would not have Italy dry (sec." And he amused me by quickly changing sec to seche. "We need wine to keep alive the social sense in our hard working people."

Altogether it was an illuminating half hour and when Mussolini accompanied me to the door and kissed my hand in the gallant Italian fashion I understood for the first time an unexpected phase of the man which makes him such a power in Italy. He might be, was I believed, a fearful despot, but he had a dimple.

I left Italy my head alive with speculations as to the future of the man. There was a chance and it seemed to me a very good one that he would be assassinated. Three dramatic attempts were made on his life while I was there, attempts known to the public. There may have been others the authorities kept quiet. As I was sailing there came a rash attack on him at Bologna, the assassin being torn to pieces, so it was said, by an enraged crowd. For months after my return I watched my morning paper for the headline, "Mussolini Assassinated."

Of course there was a chance, and so far as I could see it was what Mussolini, himself, believed he could realize - to bring Italy on to an even keel economically, to

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do it by thrift, hard work, development of resources and by a system of legitimate colonization in the parts of the earth where he could obtain land, ~~favor~~ by treaty, or by purchase.

And there was a third possibility which one at all familiar with the course of dictators in the world, particularly with the one with whom you instinctively compare Mussolini - Napoleon Bonaparte - that the day would come when he would over-reach himself in a too magnificent an attempt, an attempt beyond the forces of his country and so of himself, and he would finally go down as Napoleon went down.

Are Ethiopia and the alliance with Franco and the rebels of Spain to be to Mussolini what Spain and Russia were to Napoleon?

I was glad to breathe the air of the United States. It was still free, whatever our follies. There was at that moment no dictator in sight - no talk of one. But it was not Mussolini or the Corporate State which mattered to us, it was what was back of them. Why had parlimentary government broken down in Italy, the Italy of Garabaldi, of Cavour, Victor Emanuel? Why had a dictator been able to re-place it with a new form of government? Those were the questions of importance to Americans. There was where there was something to learn.

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