

The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

Founded by EDWARD C. HEGELER

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Frontispiece to The Open Court.

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THE PUZZLE.

BY FLETCHER HARPER SWIFT.

IT was spring—it was dawn in the wilderness of the world. The whole forest thrilled with a happy sweet unrest. Bird song and voice of brook blended with the anthem of the trees. From the Mountains of Dawn encircling the wilderness to the dew-mantled Plain of the Multitude in its midst, beauty and gladness reigned. Up from brown paths, in violet dells, on gray deserts, hundreds of gentle flower folk clad in a thousand hues were bursting joyously into the festive day.

Nowhere did the flowers blossom so sweetly and the brook sing so merrily as beside the Cottage of Childhood which lay in the wilderness not far from the edge of the plain. Roses covered its walls and wove a trembling lattice across the closed shutters. A bird of golden plumage flew from a white birch by the brook, hovered a moment in front of the window like a ripple of sunshine, and poured forth a melody as pure and golden as the dawn. The roses trembled, the shutters opened, and Youth looked on the world.

It was his world, his alone. The morning sun shone for him; the brook laughed and shouted for him; the trees whispered mystic philosophies for him. Mountain, plain, and wilderness hushed themselves a moment as they beheld him, and then broke forth into a tumult of joyous song. Never before had such a face gazed on them. All the hopes, the aspirations, the ideals of the race burned in those eyes. Strength, faith, confidence, and gladness flowed from that countenance whose radiance illumined and transfigured all it touched.

Youth leaned out from the vine-clad casement and gazed and listened and dreamed. A countless throng was moving across the Plain of the Multitude. Some proceeded slowly and thoughtfully; others rushed along with compressed lips and white faces. Some

sang, some wept. The longer he looked the more Youth yearned to mingle with the throng, to learn with them the joys of the dazzling plain, and the secrets of the dark wilderness. He had no ties, no obligations to hold him, and a voice he could not silence urged him to hasten forth.

He turned from the window. As he did so his eyes encountered the treasures of childhood scattered about the room. An irresistible desire to play with them once more seized him. He closed the shutters, but the vision of the multitude rose like a mist between him and his toys, and the voice commanded him to go. With a sigh he gathered his playthings in his arms and carried them to the old chest under the window. He bade his treasures one by one goodbye, laid them away, locked the chest, threw himself upon it and burst into tears. The bird of golden plumage flew from the white birch by the brook, flashed by the window like a shaft of sunshine, and flew away over the plain singing!

Youth arose from the chest and watched the bird till it disappeared, then tying a few belongings into a bundle, slung it over his shoulder, stepped forth from the cottage and hastened toward the plain. Alas, how different it appeared now than when viewed from the cottage! Then hidden beneath the dews of morning, it had seemed a veritable cloth of gold. Now the golden mist had lifted, the gleaming mantle was gone, and a plain stretched out on every hand, limitless, rock-strewn, desolate. Far away in the red sun rose the chimneys of the City of Toil, belching forth fumes and inky smoke. Youth longed to flee the plain and its motley throng and hasten back whence he had come, but the voice told him he never could return to the low white cottage, told him he had crossed its threshold for the first and last time. As he continued his way many in the hurrying throng paused to gaze at him. Some looked at him with envy, some with gladness, some with fear. Some spoke to him with kindness, others with condescension, some with suspicion, many with scorn. Youth turned inquiringly to an aged cripple beside whom he was walking: "Who are those who regard me so hostilely?"

"The slaves of toil."

"Why do they cast upon me such looks of hatred and fear?"

"They fear your strength! They fear you come to take their work from them."

"And who are they who smile at me?"

"Those who have crossed yonder bridge over the Gulf of Want. They dwell in the Courts of Ease and wander where they will."

"Then I, too, will cross the bridge," cried Youth hastening forward.

As he neared the bridge he halted in surprise. The land beyond was as lovely as a king's garden. Broad paths bordered with flowers wound in and out under arching trees. Nightingales sang in the thickets and fountains played in basins of marble. How different from the dreary Plain of the Multitude! Many people were leaving the plain and hurrying toward the bridge. Full of confidence Youth hastened to the entrance of the bridge. Suddenly there arose before him three grim wolflike creatures barring his path and demanding a fabulous toll. Amazed and terrified, Youth fled to a heap of stones, whence he could view the bridge and its guardians. He was scarcely seated when a carriage bearing an aged man and his son approached the bridge and halted at its entrance. A servant in costly livery tossed three gleaming coins to the grim gatekeepers. Each seized a coin and vanished. The gates of the bridge opened and the carriage rolled across. Throughout the day many similar scenes were enacted. Whoever came with rich tribute passed unquestioned, but whoever came empty-handed was driven away. Some who could not pay slew themselves in the shadow of the bridge. Many went away reluctantly, heaping threats and curses upon the guardians of the bridge, upon all who crossed and even upon life itself.

Weary, hungry, and sick at heart Youth faced the oncoming night. Whither should he go? How procure food and shelter? His eyes fell upon his bundle, his sole possession. The treasures of childhood must be sold. He named them over one by one, debating which he should sacrifice first, grieving to part with any, but at the same time thinking with happy anticipation of the repast and rest they would bring.

At last he untied the bundle: a cry burst from his lips. Of the treasures of childhood he had placed in it not one was to be found. In their place appeared a curious collection of small, strange, worthless-looking objects of indescribable form and material, and a mysterious circle within which they evidently belonged. Youth gazed in silence at the curious objects before him. After a time he began placing them upon the circle, trying to fit them into one another as he had often done with the parts of his jig-saw puzzles to which they began to bear a striking resemblance. The circle was small but the pieces were many and the task slow. As Youth moved the parts about within the circle many still remained mysterious inexplicable forms, others one by one seemed to take on a strange, symbolic

semblance of people he had known, or experiences through which he had passed; the white cottage, his two little comrades Play and Tears, the golden bird, the Plain of the Multitude, the three grim toll-takers—all were represented. Many pieces bore names he had learned in the Cottage of Childhood and were so easy to place that he smiled as he fitted them into one another: Religion and Goodness, Education and Morality, Industry and Wealth, Sloth and Poverty.

"What an easy puzzle," exclaimed Youth, "I shall soon have it solved."

But ere long he began encountering difficulties, pieces with names which he had never heard, pieces without names, pieces which fitted into every other piece within the circle, but which as soon as placed seemed to throw the entire puzzle into helpless confusion. Despite these difficulties Youth fancied more than once that he had solved the puzzle, only to find a moment later that he had failed utterly. Hour after hour went by. The sun sank, but not until the moon covered the circle with a white light did Youth realize how long he had worked in vain. Vexed at his own inability, and disgusted with the Puzzle, he buried it under the heap of stones and gave himself up to sleep.

He was awakened at the first streak of day by the three guardians of the bridge who bent over him, demanding tribute.

"Who are you?" asked Youth, "and what right have you to demand tribute?"

"We are the Three Necessities, masters of all creatures, sole guardians of the bridge that stretches from the Plain of the Multitude to the Courts of Ease. Every living creature pays us tribute. Kings and nations bow before us. From this hour until the hour of thy death we will pursue thee. Every day must thou meet our exactions if thou wilt live. Back to the Desert of Toil. Rest not till thou findest work, or ere many nights. . . ."

"Ere many nights, I will pour rain and cold upon thee, and drain thee of health and strength," whispered Shelterlessness.

"Ere many nights, I will shoot thee through with arrows of pain, and let loose a wolf upon thy vitals," hissed Hunger.

"Ere many nights, I will tear thy raiment from thy back and drive thee naked into the wilderness to herd with beasts," shrieked Nakedness.

Youth sprang from the ground. Back to the Plain of the Multitude! There only, in the City of Toil could he hope to find work and earn the toll demanded by the three Necessities. Yesterday he had looked with indifference upon the great chimneys belching forth

smoke. He had been amazed at the glances of hostility of the slaves of toil. He was beginning to understand now. Those unfriendly faces had been hardened and brutalized by a fear they could never escape, the fear of being unable to meet the exactions of the Necessities. What wonder that they looked with suspicion upon one who might deprive them of their work.

It was still early morning when Youth entered the city and began his quest for work. Hour after hour he went from office to office and from shop to shop. Wherever he went he was confronted with the same question, "What canst thou do?" to which he was forced to give always the same answer: "I am willing to do anything." This reply satisfied no one. Youth listened to one refusal after another with increasing despair. Why had he not been taught something really useful during those years at school, something he could dispose of in the great mart of efficiency and skill! Late in the afternoon from the top of a tall tower he looked out over the city. The sun was setting. The clang of bells and scream of whistles announced the close of the day's work. Youth saw doors of factories swing open and beheld the workers pour forth into the streets. At the base of the tower an old man was crouching, his hand extended for alms. A great fear came over Youth! What if when he grew old, he too must crouch and beg! What should he do to-morrow! Already he could feel the wolf gnawing at his vitals, and his face blanched at the thought of another day.

Once more he opened his bundle to see if he had not overlooked something in his excited search, something he could offer for a night's lodging and a crust of bread. Tears of dismay filled his eyes. There was nothing, absolutely nothing in the bundle save the Puzzle. Youth looked at it in astonishment, terror and wonder mingling. What was this mysterious Puzzle? Why could he not get rid of it? Had he not buried it under the heap of stones by the bridge? How had it returned? Were there not more pieces, and was not the circle larger than the first time he beheld it? He began to feel himself under its spell, to feel that although he was utterly unable to solve it, he would never be able to cease trying. He spread the Puzzle on the tower wall and set to work. At times he fancied he had solved it, only to find a moment later that he had left out certain parts. Nevertheless, he struggled on though growing ever more weary and heartsick. At length he exclaimed, "Cursed Puzzle, you were in sooth a fine exchange for the joys of childhood! Unless I can find some one to whom I can sell you, naught remains for me but the desert, the night, and the wolf."

Emboldened by the fear of three hideous faces which seemed to follow him everywhere, Youth descended into the city streets. But it was in vain that he attempted to dispose of his Puzzle. Nearly all he accosted hurried away. Some glanced at it, but with indifference. The few who made any reply to his importunities, said it was an old, old Puzzle, and that no one cared to consider it.

"What shall I do, where shall I go?" cried Youth.

"Into the desert, to herd with Want and Despair," whispered a voice.

"Alas, merciless toll-men, ye have drained me of strength and hope, must I now sink to the last estate?" moaned Youth sinking to the pavement.

"Hast thou asked assistance at the House of Plenty?"

Youth looked up. The aged beggar he had seen asking alms was bending over him.

"Come," said the beggar assisting Youth to arise. "I will lead thee to the gates, there thou canst seek the master of the house."

Guided by his aged companion, Youth was soon face to face with the master: "Buy your Puzzle? Let me see it," said the old man smiling kindly at Youth.

He glanced at it and quickly covered it. "Lest my son see it," he explained. "Never let him see it, never let him know. He would find little pleasure in the Courts of Ease if he once became interested in this Puzzle. Promise to keep it from him, never to speak of it in his presence. If you wish work I will provide it. You shall be my gatekeeper."

Thus it was that Youth became keeper of the Gates at the House of Plenty in the City of Toil which lay on the Plain of the Multitude.

II.

Youth found his new employment interesting. There was scarcely a moment in the day when some one was not seeking to enter the gates; relatives, friends, merchants, scientists, artists, beggars, thieves. Youth quickly learned to distinguish the members of each class and how to treat them. He was, therefore, successful in his task. He was also happy, for he no longer feared the three Necessities. Often at twilight Youth climbed to his lodging over the gate and looked down upon the City of Toil, wondering, pondering. Many a passer-by stopped to gaze at him. Surely nothing in that grim city compared in beauty and loveliness to Youth dreaming within the Gates of Ease.

One evening as he sat thus pondering, he beheld a countless horde of beggars coming toward the gates, all he had ever driven away and many besides. They stretched toward him a thousand emaciated hands crying: "Feed us, feed us! Every day your master has set before him more than he can eat. Never in our lives have we eaten until satisfied. Your master grumbles if the beef is salt, and flies into a passion if the wine is new. Crusts moistened with tears are our meat, and wine is as strange to us as kindness."

"Who are you?" demanded Youth.

"The poor of the world."

"Whence do you come?"

"From England, France, Germany, Italy, India, Japan, Persia, China, Spain, from every land!"

"How many of you are there?"

"Hundreds of millions."

"My master could not feed such a throng."

"Are we too many? Can no one feed us? Must it ever be our portion to hunger, to weep, to see our children famish, and our parents die of want? Then why were we born? Why must we live?"

They moved away into the depths of night, still repeating their questions of despair. Youth watched them with sickening heart. He was still gazing after them when suddenly he became aware of some one standing beside him. Turning, he beheld an old man of appearance so revolting that Youth shrank from the outstretched palm.

"Who are you?" asked Youth.

"Poverty."

"What do you wish?"

Poverty made no reply but held out a circular box which Youth felt unable to refuse. The pauper vanished. Youth opened the box. It was the Puzzle. Long after he believed himself rid of it forever, it had again been forced back upon him. He sighed as he observed that just as it had seemed larger and more difficult the second time, so now it looked larger, more difficult and more hopeless than ever before.

He placed the Puzzle on the window ledge. "When will you cease growing?" he asked, beginning to feel as if the Puzzle were a living thing. "Why do you come to me? I can never solve you."

He left the window and seated himself on the floor in front of the hearth. Forthwith on the floor between him and the hearth appeared the Puzzle, challenging him to the task he had sought to escape. Youth drew it toward him reluctantly but soon was once

more attempting to solve it. Of all the troublesome pieces Poverty was the worst to-night. It slid from one part of the circle to another. It crowded out Industry, Education, and Morality, which heretofore had been so easy to place. More than once he tossed aside one or another perplexing piece. But fling them where he would, sooner or later they appeared within the circle silently demanding a place. It was long past midnight when Youth, vexed beyond endurance, gathered the Puzzle together, hurled it into the fire, crying, "There is too much to do in this world to waste time on a puzzle no one can solve."

It was not difficult for Youth to carry out his resolve to waste no more time on the Puzzle. In fact, it was easier in the House of Plenty to forget the Puzzle than to find time to think about it. Every day was crowded with duties and pleasures; moreover, all within the house desired his companionship so constantly that had he had no duties at all, each day would have been entirely filled.

Of all his friends none was so dear to Youth as his master's only son Fides. Often he left the gates to the care of an under-servant to roam with Fides through the Gardens of Ease. Fides was never so happy as when with Youth, and was ever summoning him to join him in his pastimes. One day, however, when in obedience to such a summons Youth knocked at his young master's door, he received no answer. He knocked again. Again no answer. He threw the door open and entered. Fides lay on the floor as if asleep.

"Fides, Fides, why do you not answer me? Awake! The world was never more beautiful: sky, wood, and river call."

Fides remained silent and motionless. Impatient and impetuous Youth seized his hand but fell back with a cry. The hand was cold and limp. The sound of Youth's weeping brought the servants, who bore Fides to a couch and hastened to summon his father. The master entered followed by friends and servants, and staggered to the couch. Unable to endure the sight, Youth stole from the room to his seat within the gates, where he threw himself on his face and wept till he fell asleep. It was the hour before dawn when he awoke. A figure he had never seen was standing outside the gates. From time to time the appearance of the figure changed as different wayfarers accosted it. One moment it assumed the likeness of a beautiful woman with arms outstretched; the next that of a skeleton with grinning skull, a sickle in one hand and a bell in the other.

"Who art thou?" asked a wan mother carrying in her arms a suffering child.

"Death."

"Where dost thou dwell?"

"In the silent isle, surrounded by gentle cypresses, where pain, poverty, and separation never come," answered the figure becoming very beautiful.

"Take me and my child to your abode."

"Not thee, only thy child."

"No, no!" cried the mother, but it was too late; already the skeleton arms held the child. The mother sank upon her knees moaning. "Thou canst, thou wilt give me back my child."

Death made no reply, but pointed toward the city. Youth looked and beheld a great procession moving slowly through the streets. A specter bearing a scythe was the leader. Behind him followed a never-ending train of torch-bearers, bands of music, biers, pall-bearers, and mourners. On the first bier lay Fides, on the next the child Death had seized. Farther on appeared a magnificent pall, beneath it a king; farther on still a form mighty even in death, a worker. Still they came, men, women, and children of every age, rank, and condition, prostrate on the chariots of death. The longer Youth looked the more perplexed he became. It seemed to him as if the strongest, the best loved, the most needed of every land were being borne away forever, leaving behind the weak, the useless, the unloved. Hour after hour, as silent and motionless as one of the statues by the gate, he watched the grim procession. Contemplating the world's grief, he seemed to have turned to stone. At last the terrible vision was swallowed up in darkness of night, and Youth awoke from its spell to find himself alone with the Puzzle and Death.

"Thou must solve it," whispered Death.

"I cannot," answered Youth in a voice so like Death's own that its accents appalled him.

Forthwith through the mist over the city, as if in answer to a summons, called an enticing voice, "If thou canst not solve it, forget it."

Youth turned from Death. The mist lifted and the vision of the city burst upon him. Never before had it seemed beautiful, inviting, but to-night lights blazed everywhere, and music floated on the wind.

"Is that the city I have viewed so often with pity and scorn?" asked Youth.

"Yes," answered the voice, "it is the City of Toil, but to-night is held the fête of Passion and Forgetfulness."

"Can I forget the Puzzle there?"

"Thou canst forget everything."

Without further questioning, without once looking back, Youth fled the Puzzle and the vision of Death and hastened into the city. Gay throngs were wandering through the streets. The air was filled with laughter and merry song. Presently Youth joined himself to a company with whom he proceeded to the entrance of a great hall. He was about to enter when a vision rose before him: the little white cottage he had left so long ago seemed to stand between him and the flaring portal. A child with tears in his eyes looked out from the vine-clad casement, and the golden bird lay dead. While Youth hesitated, alluring voices called to him and Passion and Forgetfulness issued from the hall, threw their arms around him, took his hands in theirs and led him in.

"Who are you, beautiful ones, and why are you masked?" asked Youth.

"I am thine unknown self," whispered Passion.

"I am thy soul's last remedy," whispered Forgetfulness.

"Let me see your faces," cried Youth.

"Behold mine!" said Forgetfulness.

"Beautiful!" cried Youth attempting to embrace her.

"Not yet," cried Forgetfulness, "thou must embrace my sister first."

Youth turned to Passion, "Pray, lift thy mask."

"I cannot till thou hast embraced me."

"Nay, first grant me one glimpse of thy lovely countenance."

"Embrace me," urged Passion, seizing his hands and drawing him toward her. "Embrace me and I will reveal to thee the mysteries of the ancients, the mysteries of thine own nature. Embrace me and I will show thee the paths of life and joy."

"Thou fillest me with a strength I have never known," cried Youth. "Thou has charged me with life. I will lift thy mask!"

"Thou canst not, not though thou hadst the strength of Hercules and Atlas. None save yonder three can, but ask them not."

"Who are they?"

"Dost thou not know them?"

"One I know, one is Death."

"He is my master."

"Who are the other two?"

"Disease and Heredity, my children."

"They are all three hideous."

"Yes, to unaccustomed eyes, but abide with me and thou wilt

soon learn to view them with as much indifference as thou viewest Poverty from the Gates of Plenty."

"I fear them not. Thou hast made me a man. Bid them lift thy mask."

Passion signaled. Straightway, Death, Heredity, and Disease came forward and lifted her mask. A cry of horror broke from the lips of Youth. Was that flayed countenance the face he had all but caressed! Filled with terror and revulsion he fled toward the door.

"Thou wilt come again," cried Passion, springing after him.

"Thou wilt need me and return," called Forgetfulness.

"Remember me, I am thine unknown self," pleaded Passion.

Youth hurried into the street, heedless whither he went. Loneliness and Despair stalked beside him, urging him back to the specter of his avowed unknown self which followed close behind. Voices he had never heard called to him; doors he had never seen opened before him. He dared not pause, he dared not enter, for in every voice and in every form he recognized that self which he was seeking to flee.

III.

After hours of fruitless wandering Youth found himself before the entrance of a great edifice. Through the gleaming windows he beheld men working at desks and tables.

"What temple is this?" he asked of the keeper of the gate.

"The Temple of Learning," replied the gatekeeper.

"Who are those working at this late hour?"

"The Priests of Learning, the Puzzle-Workers; by night they work at the puzzles and by day they teach others to solve them."

"Will they teach me how to solve my puzzle?"

"Surely," answered the keeper of the gate, "and they will provide thee with means to satisfy the three Necessities."

"They know the three Necessities?"

"They know all things, the three Necessities, Poverty, Heredity, the Self, Disease, and Death. These are the puzzles they profess. Enter and thou shalt become a novice in their Temple, a disciple in the Circle of Puzzle-Workers."

Youth followed the keeper of the gate into the temple where he was provided with refreshment and lodging.

Not until the next morning did he begin to appreciate how beautiful were his surroundings. A hundred marble temples greeted his eyes, beyond them verdant fields through which a stream of

deepest azure wound. A chime of bells awoke him from his reverie and reminded him that his purpose here was not to dream but to sit at the feet of the Puzzle-Workers. Ere long he joined himself to a throng of novices streaming into one of the temples, in which sat renowned priests of learning.

Thus Youth began anew his ardent quest. Amid these beautiful surroundings he continued year after year listening to discourses in the various temples, ever seeking, ever hoping to learn the solution of the Puzzle, but each year he realized more fully that the Priests of Learning were not endeavoring to solve the Puzzle. Each one of them with whom he talked frankly confessed that he was concerned with only one part or segment of it. Moreover, it gradually dawned on Youth that they did not know the real solution even to the fragmentary puzzles they professed. They loved large words and opinions of men long dead. When they discussed the most vital things they talked so long of what had once been that little time was left to discuss what now was. Some of their disciples went to sleep while listening, some played at games, others read papers or books. Those who wished to become Priests of Learning themselves learned the discourses by heart, fancying that in so doing they were accumulating puzzles and solutions enough to last them for the rest of their lives. But though the Priests of Learning proved to have no solution, and though Youth despised some of them for their bigotry and conceit, yet some of them delighted him by their brilliant discourses, others by their personal charm, some by their sympathy. Many of them he loved, perhaps because they were the only men whom he had ever found seriously devoting themselves to the Puzzle. Be that as it may, at the completion of his novitiate Youth departed from the Temple of Learning with regret and with a deep love for its altars, its groves, and its priests.

Upon leaving the Temple of Learning, Youth resolved to visit the Temple of Religion, whose priests he had heard professed a solution to the Puzzle. He was welcomed by the Priests of Religion even more joyously than he had been by the Priests of Learning. They talked most eloquently about the Puzzle, and were confident that they alone knew how to solve it. They examined Youth carefully as to his private life and motives. At length, satisfied with respect to his purpose, ability, and preparation, they led him to the High Priest in the inner temple.

The High Priest spread out the Puzzle and proceeded to cover the larger portion of the circle with a black cloth.

"The key to the solution lies in this piece," he said, drawing

forth one marked "The Heart of Man." "As soon as this can be rightly moulded and fixed all the other parts—Poverty, Injustice, War, Crime, Selfishness and the rest—will arrange themselves."

Thereupon he began twisting, pinching, and crushing the piece he had selected. "It may be necessary to break it," he said. At last he appeared satisfied and laid the "Heart of Man" on the visible segment of the circle. It did not remain in place, however, until he had completely surrounded it by a number of sharp-toothed pieces among which were Fear, Pain, and Punishment.

The High Priest turned to Youth for some expression of satisfaction, but Youth was gazing at a number of pieces which the High Priest had ignored. Injustice, Poverty, Crime, Selfishness, Ignorance, Heredity and many others were sliding across the circle, driving their points into the "Heart of Man," crowding it out of place and changing it back to its previous distorted condition. Youth waited in silence, expecting every moment that the Priest would observe what was happening, and would remedy it. But the Priest sat with a beatific smile upon his face, murmuring, "How marvellous is the Puzzle! How beautiful its solution!"

It pained Youth to dispel his dream, for he was a charming man, and very gentle, but at last Youth could endure it no longer and called the solver's attention to what was taking place. With an impatient gesture, the High Priest gathered together the troublesome pieces and pushed them under the black cloth which at the outset he had fastened over the greater part of the Puzzle. This done, he relapsed into his former state of sweet content, his face wreathed in the same beatific smile.

Youth now observed for the first time that the covered segment of the circle was inscribed: "Segment of Mysteries, Life After Death," and the smaller visible segment, "The Present Life."

Turning to the High Priest he remarked, "Your method of solving the Puzzle seems to be to thrust Poverty, Injustice and all the other troublesome pieces into the 'Segment of Mysteries.'"

"Yes."

"But they are already appearing in 'The Present Life' as disordered as ever."

"That does not affect the solution. It is impossible to establish order among them in 'The Present Life,' nor ought we to desire to entirely get rid of them. It is they which keep in place the 'Heart of Man.' I consign them to the Segment of Mysteries because they belong to that part of the Puzzle which will be worked out in the Life after Death."

As Youth listened to this explanation he became convinced that the High Priest had no solution satisfactory to him; his was an after-death solution. Such a specious promise of a solution in a future life relieved the Slaves of Toil and the Princes of Ease alike of all responsibility of solving the Puzzle in the present life. At first he had believed that Religion was doing much toward effecting a solution, but now this faith was tottering. He even began to wonder whether Religion was not directly responsible both for the general belief that the Puzzle never could be solved in this life, and for the universal practice of devising and accepting temporary expedients instead of courageously demanding and working toward something that promised a final solution.

Disappointed but not despairing, Youth departed from the Temple of Religion and made his way to the Temple of Law. Over the door in great letters of stone was carved the word "JUSTICE." "Not in learning, not in religion, not in making over the heart of man, but in justice lies the solution," quoth Youth as he entered.

Within the vestibule appeared a statue of Justice holding in one hand a pair of golden balances and in the other a book of the law. The champions of Justice, the law-makers, were at work when Youth passed into the inner temple, eager to observe how laws were made and how justice was projected into the actions and customs of men. Youth had expected to find here the wisest of men devoting all of their time and energies to problems of justice and law. Instead, he found men grievously ignorant, men who had not the faintest conception of justice, men who were unable to discuss any topic whatever without losing all self-control and substituting invidious personalities for arguments. Some of them walked in the outer corridors, others read or joked, some dozed, some slept, while their sacred duties were turned over to hirelings. Youth looked in vain for any sign of Justice. She had been driven into the outer courts long ago. Ignorance, Prejudice, Favoritism, Indifference, and Greed, their faces covered with masks bearing her likeness, occupied her seats and her altars.

Puzzle in hand, Youth passed from one body of law-makers to another. Though greatly disheartened, he was resolved not to leave the Temple of Law without attempting to discover whether the solution of which he had heard so much was to be learned here. At length he came upon a small group sitting somewhat apart whose appearance and bearing inspired him with confidence and hope.

"Tell us what brings thee here and in what way we can serve thee?" asked one who seemed to be the leader.

Thus encouraged, Youth spread out the Puzzle before them saying: "Creators of Law and Guardians of Justice, if ye will only reveal unto me how Justice may be put and kept in place, the other parts will, I am confident, arrange themselves."

The law-makers showed a deep interest in the Puzzle. They agreed with Youth that if Justice could be given its right place the other pieces would arrange themselves. However, they made no essay to place it, and when Youth besought them to undertake the task, they replied: "We deal in laws, not justice here."

Youth left the Temple of Law and wandered forth into the city.

"Not in the heart of man, not in religion, learning or law is the solution to be found," he murmured. "Alas, if I could only forget this Puzzle, but I never can!"

IV.

There had been a time, a brief period, when Youth had imagined that he was the only one seriously interested in the Puzzle. But that was long, long ago. Gradually he had come to realize that every age and every race had been brought face to face with it and had striven to solve it. The multitude had ceased long ago to believe that it could be solved. Again and again had he heard from others the exclamation he had uttered once himself: "There is too much to do in this world to waste time on a puzzle no one can solve."

Youth stood alone on the Mountains of Dawn and looked out over the Wilderness of the World. A great fear came over him—What if the multitude were right, what if the Puzzle never could be solved! Once more he resolved to forget it, to lose it, to rid himself of it forever. But his efforts were in vain. Sometimes he would awaken in the night to find it lying beside him. Sometimes it would appear to him in the blaze of noon, sometimes in the soft glow of sunset, most often when he was worn, lonely, and discouraged. Often weary with unavailing efforts he would gaze far across the Plain of the Multitude through the mists toward the little white cottage he had left so long ago. It made Youth sad to behold it, but it was a sadness not without hope. Sometimes after gazing thus he would stretch himself in the shadow of a tree or rock and try to fall asleep, hoping if only in dreams to pass within those white walls. He longed to hear again the song of the golden bird and to see golden visions.

One evening as he lay thus, looking across the plain toward the Cottage of Childhood, he fell asleep and dreamed. Once more it

was spring in the Wilderness of the World. Once more he leaned out from the vine-clad casement and gazed out on the Plain of the Multitude. Even while he looked he beheld the nations of the earth assembling on the limitless plain. From the four quarters of the earth they came and encamped in the center of the plain. In the midst of the encampment appeared a vast table about which were gathered representatives of every tribe and nation of the world, each with a puzzle before him. A voice cried, "Let him who can solve the Puzzle appear."

Forthwith a great number from every tribe and nation presented themselves. One after another tried and failed. Many of them asserted and believed they had solved it, but all who looked with clear unprejudiced eyes could see they had done nothing except arrange the pieces according to some fantastic plan pleasing to their own thoughts and fancies. No sooner had the last of these dreamers or fanatics attempted and failed, than a great strife arose in the encampment between the Slaves of Toil and the Princes of Ease. Each side accused the other of preventing the solution. The Princes of Ease aided by troops of hired soldiers drove the Slaves of Toil from the plateau back to the City of Toil, where they remained for many years. At the end of this time nothing was to be seen in the City of Toil save machines. Even the Slaves of Toil had become machines or parts of machines. Sometimes the machines spoke, sometimes they wept, sometimes they cried to Youth to perform "the great miracle" and change them back into men.

But Youth was helpless; moreover, Labor itself had become such a hideous thing that Youth's thought was to flee from it and gain an abode within the luxurious Courts of Ease.

At last the Great Miracle came, not quickly but gradually. One by one, the machines became transformed into men, women, and children, beings of mien so terrible that Youth trembled and hid his face.

"Behold, what creatures your machines have made us!" they cried as they swept down upon the Courts of Ease pillaging, plundering, devastating.

A great darkness fell upon the earth while the machine-men ruled and terrorized every land. At last there came a voice through the darkness: "Let Mother Earth appear."

Straightway from behind the Mountains of Dawn came a beautiful woman with an infant at her breast and carrying a basket filled with flowers, fruits, and grains.

"Mother Earth," asked the voice, "hast thou not enough for all thy children?"

"More than enough," answered Mother Earth. "In every part of my dominion I have priceless ores and minerals that have never been mined, forests and quarries that have never been entered, vast fields given over to the pleasures of the Princes of Ease, that cry for sowing and harvest."

"How long then must the millions of the earth toil and yet want?"

"As long as my treasures are usurped by the few and kept from the many."

"Canst thou then solve the Puzzle?"

"No, but I can direct the solution. Let every man join his Puzzle with that of his tribe or nation."

Many refused to do this.

"Then we must wait," said Mother Earth sadly, and they waited many years. At the end of this time all who refused to obey the command of Mother Earth had perished.

"Let the Five Continents and the Isles of the Sea assemble to the solution of the Puzzle," cried Mother Earth.

The Five Continents and the Isles of the Sea gathered on the Plateau with their puzzles before them.

"Harken now, Continents and Isles of the Sea," cried Mother Earth. "Your puzzles are one puzzle and the solution is one solution. The solution of one is possible only through the solution of all. As long as Indifference forms a part of one, Greed will form a part of all. As long as Greed continues in one, Oppression, Injustice, Hatred, Ignorance, Poverty, and Crime will continue in all. As long as Ignorance, Injustice, and Hatred appear in one, War and Want will appear in all. Not till ye see your puzzles as one puzzle, and not till ye unite to solve it as one will it begin to be solved."

Mother Earth ceased. The Five Continents and the Isles of the Sea seemed to be holding a council. Then they began joining their Puzzles, now exchanging pieces, now pausing to consult. In twenty years the Puzzle was nearly solved, and at the end of thirty years, it was completely solved. Youth looked in vain for Greed, Injustice, War, Intemperance, Ignorance, Poverty, Crime and all the other pieces which had made the solution impossible. They had vanished, and in their places were Justice, Brotherhood, Cooperation, Generosity, Nobility, Plenty, Happiness, and Peace.

Mother Earth rejoiced at the sight of the Puzzle solved, and

the Five Continents and the Isles of the Sea sang for joy. Youth awoke from his dream, filled with joy and hope, only to find himself once more gazing upon the dark Plain of the Multitude. But even as he gazed a voice that resounded around the earth called from the Mountains of Dawn: "Despair not, O Youth, the Puzzle shall be solved! And in that day there shall be one government upon the earth and one people; and there shall be one aim, manhood; and there shall be no more poverty, no more injustice, no more war, no more disease, no more fear, and even death shall be beautiful."