

WINDMILLS

A BOOK OF FABLES

BY

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TO
D. H. LAWRENCE

... a huge terrible monster, called Moulinavent, who, with four strong arms, waged eternal battle with all their divinities, dexterously turning to avoid their blows, and repay them with interest.

A TALE OF A TUB

PREFACE TO AMERICAN EDITION

PROPHECY of an event is unlikely to be interesting after it and this may be the reason why my prophetic utterances regarding the Great War took the form of Satire. The first of these fables has a history. It was published originally in London as a little orange-covered booklet, called *Old Mole's Novel* and it was issued simultaneously with *Old Mole*, a character to whom I was so attached that it gave me great pleasure to attribute authorship to him. Only a small edition was printed and it soon ran out of print. A copy of it reached Germany and fell into the hands of a group of young men who were incensed by the nonsense the high-born Generals and Admirals were talking in the Reichstag and I received enthusiastic letters asking for more so that these caustic prophecies might circulate in Germany and serve as an antidote. That was more encouragement than I had received in England and so, for my German friends, who had the advantage of living under a frank and not a veiled Junkerdom, I composed the remaining fables and finished them a few months before the outbreak of war. The translation was proceeded with but so far as I know the book was never issued in Germany. It appeared in England early in 1915 and this intensely patriotic effort of mine was condemned as unpatriotic because we had already caught the German trick of talking of war as holy. It sold not at all in its first expensive edition because it was not a novel, nor an essay, nor a play and the British public had no training in Satire, but I have since had letters from both soldiers and conscientious

objectors saying that the book was their constant companion and solace, and I have recently learned that in a certain division of the British Army it was declared to be a court-martial offense for any officer to have the book in his possession, presumably on the principle that the soldier must not read anything which his superiors cannot understand. That of course was good for the sale of the book and the cheap edition also ran out of print just about the time when the shortage of paper produced a crisis in the affairs of authors and publishers.

The book was useful to me when the time came as evidence that my objection to war was not an objection to personal discomfort, the element of danger, owing to my ill health, not arising as a point at issue, though that would not have made any difference to my position. My objection to war is that it does not do what its advocates say it does, and that no good cause can be served by it. Good causes can only be served by patience, endurance, sympathy, understanding, mind and will.

The attempt to remove militarism and military conceptions from among human preoccupations is a good cause and that I will serve with the only weapon I know how to use—the pen, which they say is mightier than the sword or even the howitzer. Having applied myself to this service before the outbreak of the Great War, which for me began in 1911, I was not to be diverted from it by the panic confusion of those who were overtaken by the calamity rather than prepared for it. With *Windmills*, my essay on *Satire*, my critical study of Samuel Butler, the *Interlude in Old Mole*, I was an active participant in the Great War before it began, but of course no one pays any

attention to a prophet, especially when he is enough of an artist to desire to give his prophecy permanent form. That indeed was my mistake. Had I thundered in the accents of Horatio Bottomley instead of clipping my sentences to the mocking murmur of satire I might have been a hero to some one else's valet, not having one of my own. Peace has her Bottomleys no less renowned than war, but I am afraid I am not among their number, for I have long since returned to the serious business of life, the composition of dramatic works, and I am in the position that most ensures unpopularity, that of being able to say 'I told you so.'

I am a little alarmed when I consider how closely the Great War followed my prophecy of it and turn to the fables, *Gynecologia* and *Out of Work*, which follow logically from the other. A world governed by women as lopsidedly as it has been by men would be much like that depicted here, and the final collapse, if it came, would surely follow the lines indicated in *Out of Work*. None of us knows exactly of what we are a portent and who can imagine to what Lady Astor's flight into fame may lead? If I had not already dedicated this book to my friend D. H. Lawrence I would, without her permission, inscribe upon it the name of the first woman to take her Seat in the worst club in London, the House of Commons.

GILBERT CANNAN.

New York, 1919.

Samways Island

I: TITTIKER

GEORGE SAMWAYS awoke one night with a vague distressful feeling that all was not well with his island. The moon was shining, but it was casting the shadow of the palm tree in which he slept over the hollow wherein he cooked his meals, and that had never happened before.

He was alarmed and climbed down his palm tree and ran to the tall hill from which he was accustomed to observe the sea and the land that floated blue on the edge of the sea. The ascent seemed longer than usual, and when he reached the summit he was horrified to find a still higher peak before him. At this sight he was overcome with emotion and lay upon the earth and sobbed. When he could sob no more he rose to his feet and dragged himself to the top of the furthest peak and gazed out upon an empty sea. The moon was very bright. There was no land upon the edge of the sea. He raised his eyes heavenwards. The stars were moving. He looked round upon his island. It was shrunk, and the forests were uprooted and the little lake at the foot of the hill had disappeared. Before and behind his island the sea was churned and tumbled, as it was when he pressed his hands against the little waves when he went into the water to cleanse himself.

And now a wind came and a storm arose; rain came beating, and he hastened back to the hole in the ground he had dug for

himself against foul weather. Then, knowing that he would not sleep, he lit his lamp of turtle oil and pith and read *Tittiker*.

Tittiker was the book left to him by his father whom he had put into the ground many years before, even as he had seen his father do with his mother when he was a little child. He had been born on the island, and could just remember his mother, and his father had lived long enough to teach him how to fish and hunt and make his clothes of leaves, feathers, and skins, and to read in *Tittiker*, but not long enough to give him any clue to the meaning of the book. But whenever he was sad it was a great solace to him, and he had read it from cover to cover forty times, for it was like talking to somebody else, and it was full of names and titles, to which he had attached personages, so that the island was very thickly populated. Through *Tittiker* he knew that the earth moved round the sun, that the moon moved round the earth and made the tides, that there were three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, seven days in the week, and that printing is the art of producing impressions from characters or figures.

II: THE BISHOP

WHEN, the next morning, he crawled out of his lair he saw a man strangely clad in black, with a shiny corded hat on his head and an apron hanging from his middle to his knees, gazing up into his palm tree and down into his kitchen. The man in black saw him and, in the language of *Tittiker*, said:

“Alas, my poor brother!”

“Are you my brother?” asked George.

The man in black stepped back in amazement.

“You speak Fattish?” he cried.

“I have had no one to speak to for many years,” replied George; “but my father spoke as you do.”

“Let us pray,” said the man in black, kneeling down on the sands.

“Pray? What is that?”

“To God. Surely you are acquainted with the nature of God?”

The word occurred in *Tittiker*.

“I often wondered what it was,” said George.

“Ssh!” said the man in black soothingly. “See! I will tell you. God made the world in six days and rested the seventh day...”

“It took me nearly six days to dig my father’s grave, and then I was very tired.”

“Ssh! Ssh! Listen.... God made the world in six days, and last of all he made man and set him to live in his nakedness and innocence by the sweat of his brow. But man ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge and became acquainted with original sin in the form of a serpent, and his descendants were born, lived and died in wickedness and were reduced to so terrible a plight that God in His mercy sent His son to point the way to salvation. God’s son was crucified by the Jews, was wedded to the Church, and, leaving His bride to carry His name all over the world and bring lost sheep home to the fold, ascended into Heaven. But first He descended into Hell to show that the soul

might be saved even after damnation, and He rose again the third day. His Church, after many vicissitudes, reached the faithful people of Fatland, which for all it is a little island off the continent of Europe, has created the greatest Empire the world has ever seen. The Fattish people have been favoured with the only true Church, whose officers and appointed ministers are deacons, priests, rural deans, prebendaries, canons, archdeacons, deans, bishops, archbishops. I am a Bishop."

"All that," said George, "is in *Tittiker*."

And he recited the names and salaries of six dioceses, but when he came to the seventh the Bishop blushed and bade him forbear.

"That," he said, "is my diocese." And he swelled out and looked down his nose and made George feel very uncomfortable, so that to bridge the difficulty he went back to the Bishop's story.

"I like that," he said. "And Hell is such a good word. I never heard it before."

"Hell," replied the Bishop, "is the place of damnation."

"Ah! my father used to say 'damnation.'"

"Ssh!"

"There is something about Jews in *Tittiker*, but what is original sin?"

The Bishop looked anxiously from left to right and from right to left and in a very low, earnest voice he said:

"Are there no women on your island?"

III: ARABELLA

EVEN as the Bishop spoke there came round the point a creature than whom George had not even dreamed of any more fair. But her garments seemed to him absurd, because they clung about her nether limbs so as to impede their action. She came with little steps toward them, crying:

“Father!”

“My child! Not dead!”

“No, dear father. I have been drying myself over there. I have been weeping for you. I thought I was the only one saved.”

“So I thought of myself. What a wonderful young woman you are! You look as if you were going district visiting, so neat you are.”

George was staring at her with all his eyes. Never had he heard more lovely sounds than those that came from her lips.

“My daughter, Arabella,” said the Bishop.

She held out her hand. George touched it fearfully as though he dreaded lest she should melt away.

“I like you,” he said.

“I’m so hungry,” cried Arabella.

“I could eat an ox,” declared the Bishop.

George produced a kind of bread that he made from seeds, and the leg of a goat, and went off to the creek near by to fetch

some clams. He also caught a crab and they had a very hearty breakfast, washed down with the milk of cocoanuts. The Bishop had explained the situation to Arabella, and she said:

“And am I really the first woman you have ever seen!”

“I had a mother,” replied George simply, “But she was not beautiful like you. She dressed differently and her legs were fat and strong.”

“There, there!” said the Bishop. But Arabella laughed merrily.

The Bishop told how they had been with nineteen other Bishops and their families upon a cruise in the steam-yacht *Oyster*, each Bishop engaging to preach on Sundays to the lay passengers, and how the propeller had been broken and they had been carried out of their course and tossed this way and that, and finally wrecked (he thought) with the loss of all hands, though the wireless operator had stuck to his post to the last and managed to get off the tidings of the calamity with latitude and longitude into the air.

It all conveyed very little to George, but it was an acute pleasure to him to hear their voices, and as they talked he looked from one to the other with a happy, friendly smile.

He was very proud to show his island to his visitors, but distressed at the havoc wrought by the storm, and he apologised for its unusual behaviour in moving.

“It has never done it before,” he explained, and was rather hurt because Arabella laughed.

He showed them where, as far as he could remember, his father and mother lay buried, and he took them to the top of the hill, and to amuse them caught a goat and a little kind of kangaroo there was in the forest, and a turtle. He displayed his hammock in the palm tree and showed how he curled up in it and wedged himself in so as not to fall out, and promised to prepare two other trees for them. They demurred. The Bishop asked if he might have the lair, and Arabella asked George to build her a house. He did not know what a house was, but looked it up in *Tittiker* and could find mention only of the House of Swells and the House of Talk. Arabella made a little house of sand; he caught the idea and spent the day weaving her a cabin of palm branches and mud and pebbles. He sang whole passages from *Tittiker* as he worked, and when it was finished he led Arabella to the cabin and she smiled so dazzlingly that he reeled, but quickly recovered himself, remembered as in a vision how it had been with his mother, flung his arms round her neck and kissed her, saying:

“I love you.”

“I think we had better look for my father,” said Arabella.

IV: THE SKITISH NAVY

FOR three nights did the Bishop sleep in the lair and Arabella in her cabin. A grey scrub grew on the Bishop’s chin, and during the daytime he instructed George solemnly and heavily as he delivered himself of his invariable confirmation address,—(on the second day he baptised George in the creek, and Arabella was delighted to be his god-mother)—with an eager pride as he told him of the Skitish Isles where his diocese and the seat

of the Empire lay. The United Kingdom, he said, consisted of four countries, Fatland, Smugland, Bareland, and Snales, but only Fatland mattered, because the Fattish absorbed the best of the Smugs and the Barish and the Snelsh and found jobs for the cleverest of them in Bondon or Buntown, which was the greatest city in the world. He assured George that he might go down on his knees and thank God—now that he was baptised—for having been born a Fattishman, and that if they ever returned to Bondon he would receive a reward for having added to the Skitish Empire.

George knew all about the Emperor-King and his family, and liked the idea of giving his island as a present. He asked the Bishop if he thought the Emperor-King would give him Arabella.

“That,” said the Bishop, “does not rest with the Emperor-King.”

“But I want her,” answered George.

Thereafter the Bishop was careful never to leave his daughter alone, so that at last she protested and said she found Mr. Samways very interesting and was perfectly able to take care of herself.

So she was, and next time George kissed her she gave him a motherly caress in return and he was more than satisfied; he was in an ecstasy of happiness and danced to please her and showed her all the little tricks he had invented to while away the tedium of his solitude, as lying on his back with a great stone on his feet and kicking it into the air, and walking on his knees with his feet in his hands, and thrusting his toe into his

mouth. He was downcast when she asked him not to repeat some of his tricks.

On the fourth day, for want of any other employment, the Bishop decided to confirm George, who consented willingly when he learned that Arabella had been confirmed. The ceremony impressed him greatly, and he had just resolved never to have anything to do with Original Sin when a terrifying boom broke in upon their solemnity. Some such noise had preceded the detachment of the island, and George ran like a goat to the top of the hill, whence, bearing down, he saw a dark grey vessel belching smoke and casting up a great wave before and leaving a white spume aft. Also on the side of the island away from his dwelling he saw two sticks above water, and knew, from the Bishop's description, that it must be the steam-yacht *Oyster*. He hastened back with the news, and presently the vessel hove in sight of the beach, and it conceived and bare a little vessel which put out and came over the waves to the shore. A handsome man all gold and blue stepped out of the little vessel and planted a stick with a piece of cloth on it on the sands and said:

"I claim this island for the Skitish Empire."

"This island," said the Bishop, "is the property of Mr. George Samways."

"Damme," roared the man in gold and blue, "it isn't on the chart."

"Mr. Samways was born here," said Arabella with the most charming smile.

“Yes.” George saw the man glance approvingly at Arabella and was anxious to assert himself. “Yes, I was born on the island, but it broke loose in a storm.”

The officer roared again, the Bishop protested, the men in the boat grinned, and at last Arabella took the affair in hand and explained that her father was the Bishop of Bygn and that they had been in the ill-fated *Oyster*.

The officer removed his hat and begged pardon. They had received messages from the *Oyster*, but the bearings were wrongly reported. Sighting land not marked on the chart, they had decided to turn in to annex it, but, of course, if Mr. Samways were a Skitish subject that would be unnecessary, and—hum, ha!—All’s well that ends well and it was extremely fortunate.

Arabella said that Mr. Samways was not only a Skitish subject but a member of the Church of Fatland, and would be only too pleased to hand over his island to the Colonial or whatever office might desire to govern it. Mr. Samways was, so far, the island’s whole permanent population and would gladly give all particulars. For herself she was only anxious to return to Fatland, and was excited at the prospect of travelling on board one of the Emperor-King’s ships of war. Meanwhile would Mr.

—

“Bich.”

—would Mr. Bich stay to luncheon?

Mr. Bich stayed to luncheon. In the afternoon he made a rough survey of the island, sounded the surrounding waters, declared

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