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FACULTAT DE LLETRES
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SECCIÓ D'ANGLÈS

THE CANADIAN LANDSCAPE THROUGH POETRY

VOLUM I



TESI DOCTORAL DIRIGIDA PER LA DOCTORA SUSAN BALLYN.
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N E L A B U R E U i R A M O S

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Without the company of Brébeuf. Lion
 Of limb and heart, he had entrenched the faith,
 Was like a triple palisade himself.
 But as his broken shoulder had not healed,
 And ordered to Quebec by Lalemant,
 He took the leave that seven years of work
 Deserved. The city hailed him with delight.
 For more than any other did he seem
 The very incarnation of the age- 1530
 Champlain the symbol of exploring France,
 Tracking the rivers to the lairs, Brébeuf
 The token of a noble chivalry.
 He went the rounds of the stations, saw the gains
 The East had made in converts- Sillery
 For Indians and Notre Dame des Anges
 For the French colonists; convents and schools
 Flourished. Why should the West not have the same
 Yield for the sowing? It was labourers
 They needed with supplies and adequate 1540
 Defence. St Lawrence and the Ottawa
 Infested by the Iroquois were traps
 Of death. Three bands of Hurons had been caught
 That summer. Montmagny had warned the priest
 Against the risk of unprotected journeys.
 So when the reinforcements came to France,
 Brébeuf set out under a guard of soldiers
 Taking with him two young recruits- Garreau
 And Chabanel- arriving at the fort
 In the late fall. The soldiers wintered there 1550
 And supervised defensive strategy.
 Replaced the forlorn feelings with fresh hopes,
 And for two years the mission enterprise
 Renewed its lease of life. Rumours of treaties
 Between the French and Mohawks stirred belief
 That peace was in the air, that other tribes
 Inside the Iroquois Confederacy
 Might enter- with the Hurons sharing terms.
 This was the pipe-dream- was it credible?
 The ranks of missionaries were filling up: 1560
 At Sainte Marie, Brébeuf and Ragueneau,
 Le Mercier, Chastellain and Chabanel;
 St Joseph- Garnier and René Menard;
 St Michel- Chaumonot and Du Peron;
 The others- Claude Pijart, Le Moyne, Garreau
 and Daniel.

What validity the dream
 Possessed was given by the seasonal
 Uninterrupted visits of the priests

To their loved home, both fort and residence.
 Here they discussed their plans, and added up 1570
 In smiling rivalry their tolls of converts:
 They loitered at the shelves, fondled the books,
 Running their fingers down the mellowed pages
 As if they were the faces of their friends.
 They stood for hours before the saints or knelt
 Before the Virgin and the crucifix
 In mute transfiguration. These were hours
 That put the bandages upon their hurts,
 Making their spirits proof against all ills
 That had assailed or could assail the flesh, 1580
 Turned winter into spring and made return
 To their far mission posts and exaltation.
 The bell each morning called the neophytes
 To Mass, again at evening, and the tones
 Lured back the memories across the seas.
 And often in the summer hours of twilight
 When Norman chimes were ringing, would the priests
 Forsake the fort and wander to the shore
 To sing the *Gloria* while hermit thrushes
 Rivalled the rapture of the nightingales. 1590

The native register was rich in name
 And number. Earlier years had shown results
 Mainly among the young and sick and aged,
 Where little proof was given of the root
 Of faith, but now the Fathers told of deeds
 That flowered from the stems. Had not Eustache
 Bequeathed his record like a Testament?
 The sturdiest warriors and chiefs had vied
 Among themselves within the martyr ranks:-
 Stories of captives led to sacrifice, 1600
 Accepting scaffold fires under the rites,
 Enduring to the end, had taken grip
 Of towns and clans. St Joseph had its record
 For Garnier reported that Totiri,
 A native of high rank, while visiting
 St Ignace when a torture was in progress,
 Had emulated Jogues by plunging through
 The flaming torches that he might apply
 The Holy Water to an Iroquois.
 Garreau and Pijart added lists of names 1610
 From the Algonquins and the Nipissings,
 And others told of Pentecostal meetings
 In cabins by the Manitoulin shores.

Not only was the faith sustained by hopes
 Nourished within the bosom of their home
 And by the wish-engendered talk of peace,
 But there outside the fort was evidence
 Of tenure for the future. Acres rich
 In soil extended to the forest fringe.
 Each year they felled the trees and burned the stumps, 1620
 Pushing the frontier back, clearing the land,
 Spading, hoeing. The stomach's noisy protest
 At sagamite and wild rice found a rest
 With bread from wheat, fresh cabbages and pease,
 And squashes which when roasted had the taste
 Of Norman apples. Strawberries in July,
 October bechnuts, pepper roots for spice,
 And at the bottom of a spring that flowed
 Into a pond shaded by silver birches
 And ringed by marigolds was water-cress 1630
 In chilled abundance. So, was this the West?
 The Wilderness? That flight of tanagers;
 Those linguals from the bobolinks; those beeches,
 Roses and water-lilies; at the pools
 Those bottle-gentians! For a time the fields
 Could hypnotize the mind to scenes of France.
 Within five years the change was wrought. The cocks
 Were crowing in the yards, and in the pasture
 Were sheep and cows and pigs that had been brought
 As sucklings that immense eight hundred miles 1640
 In sacks- canoed, and portaged on the shoulders.
 The traders, like the soldiers, too, had heard
 Of a great ocean larger than the Huron.
 Was it the western gateway to Cathay?
 The Passage? Master-theme of song and ballad;
 The *myth* at last resolved into the *fact*!
 Along that route, it was believed, French craft
 Freightied with jewels, spices, tapestries,
 Would sail to swell the coffers of the Bourbons.
 Such was the dream though only buffalo roamed 1650
 The West and autumn slept upon the prairies.

This dream was at its brightest now, Quebec
 Was building up a western citadel
 In Sainte Marie. With sixty Frenchmen there,
 The eastern capital itself had known
 Years less auspicious. Might the fort not be
 The bastion of one-half the continent,
 New France expanding till the longitudes
 Staggered the daring of the navigators?
 The priests were breathless with another space 1660
 Beyond the measure of the astrolabe-

A differnt empire built upon the pulses,
 Where eves the sun and moon and stars revolved
 Around a Life and redemptive Death.
 They pushed their missions to the north and west
 Further into Algoquin territories,
 Among the Ottawas and Manitoulin,
 And towards the Ojibways at Sault Sainte Marie.
 New village groups were organized in stations-
 St Magdalen, St Jean, and St Matthias.
 Had Chabanel, ecstatic with success,
 Not named one fort the Village of Believers?
 Brébeuf was writing to his General-
 'Peace, union and tranquility are here
 Between the members of our Order. We need
 More workers for the apostolic field,
 Which more than ever whitens for the harvest.'
 And to this call came Gabriel Lalemant,
 Bonin, Daran, Greslon, besides a score
 Of labourers and soldiers. In one year
 Twelve hundred converts, churches over-crowded,
 With Mass conducted in the open-air!

1670

1680

And so the seasons passed. When the wild ducks
 Forsook the Huron marshes for the south,
 It was the signal for the priests to pack
 Their blankets. Not until the juncos came,
 And flickers tapped the crevices of bark,
 And the blood-root was pushing through the leaf-mould,
 Would they reset their faces towards their home.

X

While Ragueneau's *Relations* were being sent
 Homeward, picturing the promise of the west,
 The thunder clouds were massing in the east
 Under the pounding drums. The treaty signed
 Between the Iroquois and Montmagny
 Was broken by the murder of Lalande
 And Jogues. The news had drifted to the fort-
 The prelude only to the heavier blows
 And deeper treachery. The Iroquois,
 Infesting lake and stream, forest and shore,
 Were trapping soldiers, traders, Huron guides:
 The whole confederacy was on the march.
 Both waterways were blocked, the quicker route-
 St Lawrence, and the arduous Ottawa.
 They caught the Hurons at their camps, surprised
 Canoe-fleets from the reeds and river bends

1690

1700

And robbed them, killed them on the portages.
 So widespread were their forays, they encountered
 Bands of Algonquins on the hunt, slew them,
 Dispersed them from their villages and sent
 Survivors to the northern wilderness.
 So keen their lust for slaughter, they enticed
 The Huron chieftains under pledge of truce
 And closed negotiations with their scalps.

1710

As the months passed the pressure of attack
 Moved grimly towards the west, making complete
 The isolation of Huronia.
 No commerce with Quebec- no traveller
 For a whole year came to the Residence.
 But constant was the stream of fugitives
 From smaller undefended villages,
 Fleeing west and ever west. The larger towns,
 The deluge breaking down their walls, drove on
 The surplus to their neighbours which, in turn,
 Urged on the panic herd to Sainte Marie.
 This mother of the missions felt the strain
 As one by one the buffers were destroyed,
 And the flocks came nearer for their pasturage.

1720

There could be only one conclusion when
 The priests saw the migration of the missions-
 That of St Jean four times abandoning
 Its stations and four times establishing
 New centres with a more improved defence;
 That of St Ignace where a double raid
 That slaughtered hundreds, lifted bodily
 Both town and mission, driving to their last
 Refuge that ragged remnants. Yet Ragueneau
 Was writing- 'We are here as yet intact
 But all determined to shed blood and life
 If need be. In this Residence still reigns
 The peace and love of Heaven. Here the sick
 Will find a hospital, the travellers
 A place of rest, the fugitives, asylum.
 During the year more than three thousand persons
 Have sought and found shelter under our roof.
 We have dispensed the Bread of Life to all
 And we have fed their bodies, though our fare
 Is down to one food only, crushed corn boiled
 And seasoned with the power of smoked fish.'

1730

1740

Despite the perils, Sainte Marie was sending
 Her missionaries afield, revisiting
 The older sites, establishing the new,

1750

With that same measure of success and failure
 Which tested courage or confirmed a faith.
 Garreau, sick and expecting death, was brought
 By Pijart and a French assistant back
 From the Algonquin wastes, for thirteen days
 Borne by a canoe and by his comrades' shoulders.
 Recovering even after the last rites
 Had been administered, he faced the task
 Again. Fresh visits to the Petun tribes
 Had little yield but cold and starving days,
 Unsheltered nights, the same fare at the doors,
 Savoured by Jogues and Garnier seven years
 Before. And everywhere the labourers worked
 Under a double threat- the Iroquois,
 And the Huron curse inspired by sorcerers
 Who saw black magic in the Jesuit robes
 And linked disaster with their ritual.
 Between the hammer and the anvil now
 Huronia was laid and the first priest
 To take the blow was Daniel.

1760

1770

Fourteen years
 The priest had laboured at the Huron mission.
 Following a week of rest at Sainte Marie
 He had returned to his last post, St Joseph,
 Where he had built his church and for the year
 Just gone had added to his charge the hundreds
 Swarming from villages stormed by the foe.
 And now in that inexorable order,
 Station by station, town by town, it was
 St Joseph's turn. Aware that the main force
 Of Huron warriors had left the town,
 The Iroquois had breached the palisade
 And, overwhelming the defenders, sacked
 And burned the cabins. Mass had just been offered,
 When the war yells were heard and Daniel came
 Outside. Seeing the panic, fully knowing
 Extinction faced the town with this invasion,
 And that ten precious minutes of delay
 Might give his flock the refuge of the woods,
 He faced the vanguard of the Iroquois,
 And walked with firm selective dignity
 As in the manner of a parley. Fear
 And wonder checked the Indians at the sight
 Of a single dark-robed, unarmed challenger
 Against arrows, muskets, spears and tomahawks.
 That momentary pause had saved the lives
 Of hundreds as they fled into the forest,
 But not the life of Daniel. Though afraid
 At first to cross a charmed circumference

1780

1790

To take a struggle hand-to-hand, they drove 1800
 Their arrows through him, then in frenzied rush
 Mastering their awe, they hurled themselves upon
 The body, stripped it of its clothes and flung it
 Into the burning church. By noon nothing
 Remained but ashes of the town, the fort,
 The cabins and their seven hundred dead.

XI

July 1648

Ragueneau was distraught. He was shepherd-priest.
 Daniel was first to die under his care,
 And nigh a score of missionaries were lost 1810
 In unprotected towns. Besides, he knew
 He could not, if he would, resist that mob
 That clamoured at the stockades, day by day.
 His moral supervision was bound up
 With charity that fed and warmed and healed.
 And through the winter following Daniel's death
 Six thousand Indians sought shelter there.
 The season's crops to the last grain were garnered
 And shared. 'Through the kind Providence of God,
 We managed, as it were, to draw both oil 1820
 And honey from the very stones around us.
 The obedience, patience of our missionaries
 Excel reward- all with one heart and soul
 Infused with the high spirit of our Order;
 The servants, boys, and soldiers day and night
 Working beyond their strength! Here is the service
 Of joy, that we will take whatever God
 Ordains for us whether it be life or death.'
 The challenge was accepted, for the spring
 Opened upon the hardest tragic blows
 The iron in the human soul could stand. 1830

St Louis and St Ignace still remained
 The flying buttresses of Sainte Marie.
 From them the Residence received reports
 Daily of movements of the Iroquois.
 Much labour had been spent on their defence.
 Ramparts of pine fifteen feet high enclosed
 St Louis. On three sides a steep ravine
 Topped by the stakes made nigh impregnable
 St Ignace; then the palisaded fourth,
 Subject alone to a surprise assault, 1840
 Could rally the main body of defenders.

The Iroquois, alert as eagles, knew
 The weakness of the Hurons, the effect
 On the morale of unexpected raids
 Committing towns to fire and pushing back
 The eastern ramparts. Piece by piece, the rim
 Was being cracked and fissures driven down
 The bowl; and stroke by stroke the strategy
 Pointed to Sainte Marie. Were once the fort
 Now garrisoned by forty Frenchmen taken, 1850
 No power predicted from Quebec could save
 The Huron nation from its doom. St Ignace
 Lay in the path but during the eight months
 After St Joseph's fall the enemy
 Had leisurely prepared their plans. Their scouts
 Reported that one-half of the town's strength
 Was lost by flight and that an apathy,
 In spite of all the priests could do to stem it,
 Had seized the invaded tribes. They knew that when
 The warriors were hunting in the forest 1860
 This weaker palisade was scalable.
 And the day came in March when the whole fate
 That overtook St Joseph in July
 Swept on St Ignace- sudden and complete.
 The Mohawks and the Senecas uniting,
 A thousand strong, the town bereft of fighters,
 Four hundred old and young inside the stakes,
 The assault was made two hours before the dawn.
 But half-aroused from sleep, many were killed
 Within their cabins. Of the four hundred three 1870
 Alone managed to reach the woods to scream
 The alarm to the drowsed village of St Louis.

At nine o'clock that morning- such the speed
 Of the pursuit- a guard upon the hill
 Behind the Residence was watching whiffs
 Of smoke to the south, but a league away.
 Bush fires? Not with this season's depth of snow.
 The Huron bivouacs? The settlements
 Too close for that. Camps of the Iroquois?
 Not while cunning and stealth controlled their tactics. 1880
 The smoke was in the town. The morning air,
 Clearing, could leave no doubt of that, and just
 As little that the darkening pall could spring
 Out of the vent-holes from the cabin roofs.
 Ragueneau rushed to the hill at the guard's call;
 Summoned Bressani; sheets and tongues of flame
 Leaping some fifty feet above the smoke
 Meant to their eyes the capture and the torch-
 St Louis with Brébeuf and Lalemant!

Less than two hours it took the Iroquois 1890
 To capture, sack and garrison St Ignace,
 And start then for St Louis. The alarm
 Sounded, five hundred of the natives fled
 To the mother fort only to be pursued
 And massacred in the snow. The eighty braves
 That manned the stockades perished at the breaches;
 And what was seen by Ragueneau and the guard
 Was smoke from the massed fire of cabin bark.

Brébeuf and Lalemant were not numbered 1900
 In the five hundred of the fugitives.
 They had remained, infusing nerve and will
 In the defenders, rushing through the cabins
 Baptizing and absolving those who were
 Too old, too young, too sick to join the flight.
 And when, resistance crushed, the Iroquois
 Took all they had not slain back to St Ignace,
 The vanguard of the prisoners were the priests.

March 16, 1649

Three miles from town to town over the snow,
 Naked, laden with pillage from the lodges,
 The captives filed like wounded beasts of burden, 1910
 Three hours on the march, and those that fell
 Or slowed their steps were killed.

Three days before
 Brébeuf had celebrated his last mass.
 And he had known it was to be the last.
 There was prophetic meaning as he took
 The cord and tied the alb around his waist,
 Attached the maniple to his left arm
 And drew the seamless purple chasuble
 With the large cross over his head and shoulders,
 Draping his body: every vestment held 1920
 An immediate holy symbol as he whispered-
 'Upon my head the helmet of Salvation.
 So purify my heart and make me white;
 With this cincture of purify gird me,
 O Lord.

May I deserve this maniple
 Of sorrow and of penance.

Unto me
 Restore the stole of immortality.
 My yoke is sweet, my burden light.

Grant that
 I may so bear it as to merit Thy grace.'

Entering, he knelt before as rude an altar 1930
 As ever was reared within a sanctuary,
 But hallowed as that chancel where the notes
 Of Palestrina's score had often pealed
 The *Assumpta est Maria* through St Peter's.
 For, covered in the centre of the table,
 Recessed and sealed, a hollowed stone contained
 A relic of a charred or broken body
 Which perhaps a thousand years ago or more
 Was offered as a sacrifice to Him
 Whose crucifix stood there between the candles. 1940
 And on the morrow would this prayer be answered:-
 'Eternal Father, I unite myself
 With the affections and the purposes
 Of Our Lady of Sorrows and Calvary.
 And now I offer Thee the sacrifice
 Which Thy Beloved Son made of Himself
 Upon the Cross and now renews on this,
 His holy altar...

Graciously receive
 My life for His life as he gave His life
 For mine...

This is my body.

In like manner...

1950

Take ye and drink- the chalice of my blood.'

XII

No doubt in the mind of Brébeuf that this was the last
 Journey- three miles over the snow. He knew
 That the margins as thin as they were by which he escaped
 From death through the eighteen years of his mission toil
 Did not belong to this chapter: not by his pen
 Would this be told. He knew his place in the line,
 For the blaze of the trail that was cut on the bark by Jogues
 Shone still. He had heard the story as told by writ
 And word of survivors- of how a captive slave 1960
 Of the hunters, the skin of his thighs cracked with the frost,
 He would steal from the tents to the birches, make a rough cross
 From two branches, set it in snow and on the peel
 Inscribe his vows and dedicate to the Name
 In 'litanies of love' what fragments were left
 From the wrack of his flesh; of his escape from the tribes;
 Of his journey to France where he knocked at the door of the College
 Of Rennes, was gathered in as a mendicant friar,
 Nameless, unknown, till he gave for proof to the priest
 His scarred credentials of faith, the nail-less hands 1970
 And withered arms- the signs of the Mohawk fury.

Nor yet was the story finished- he had come again
 Back to his mission to get the second death.
 And the comrades of Jogues- Goupil, Eustache and Couture,
 Had been stripped and made to run the double files
 And take the blows- one hundred clubs to each line-
 And this as the prelude to torture, leisured, minute,
 Where thorns on the quick, scallop shells to the joints of
 the thumbs,
 Provided the sport for children and squaws till the end.
 And adding salt to the blood of Brébeuf was the thought
 Of Daniel- was it months or a week ago?
 So far, so near, it seemed in time, so close
 In leagues- just over there to the south it was
 He faced the arrows and died in front of his church.

1980

But winding into the greater artery
 Of thought that bore upon the coming passion
 Were little tributaries of wayward wish
 And reminiscence. Paris with its vespers
 Was folded in the mind of Lalemant,
 And the soft Gothic lights and traceries
 Were shading down the ridges of his vows.
 But two years past at Bourges he had walked the cloisters,
 Companioned by St Augustine and Francis,
 And wrapped in quiet holy mists. Brébeuf,
 His mind a moment throwing back the curtain
 Of eighteen years, could see the orchard lands,
 The *cidreries*, the peasants at the Fairs,
 The undulating miles of wheat and barley,
 Gardens and pastures rolling like a sea
 From Lisieux to Le Havre. Just now the surf
 Was pounding on the limestone Norman beaches
 And on the reefs of Calvados. Had dawn
 This very day not flung her surplices
 Around the headlands and with golden fire
 Consumed the silken argosies that made
 For Rouen from the estuary of the Seine?
 A moment only for that veil to lift-
 A moment only for those bells to die
 That rang their matins at Condé-sur-Vire.

1990

2000

By noon St Ignace! The arrival there
 The signal for the battle-cries of triumph,
 The gauntlet of the clubs. The stakes were set
 And the ordeal of Jogues was re-enacted
 Upon the priests- even with wilder fury,
 For here at last was trapped their greatest victim,

2010

Echon. The Iroquois had waited long
 For this event. Their hatred for the Hurons
 Fused with their hatred for the French and priests
 Was to be vented on this sacrifice,
 And to that camp had come apostate Hurons,
 United with their foes in common hate
 To settle up their reckoning with *Echon*.

2020

.....

Now three o'clock, and capping the height of the passion,
 Confusing the sacraments under the pines of the forest,
 Under the incense of balsam, under the smoke
 Of the pitch, was offered the rite of the front. On the head,
 The breast, the loins and the legs, the boiling water!
 While the mocking paraphrase of the symbols was hurled
 At their faces like shards of flint from the arrow heads-
 'We baptize thee with water...

That thou mayest be led

2030

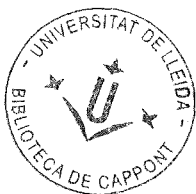
To Heaven...

To that end we do annoint thee.
 We treat thee as a friend: we are the cause
 Of thy happiness; we are thy priests; the more
 Thou sufferest, the more thy God will reward thee,
 So give us thanks for our kind offices.'

The fury of taunt was followed by fury of blow.
 Why did not the flesh of Brébeuf cringe to the scourge,
 Respond to the heat, for rarely the Iroquois found
 A victim that would not cry out in such pain- yet here
 The fire was on the wrong fuel. Whenever he spoke,
 It was to rally the soul of his friend whose turn
 Was to come through the night while the eyes were uplifted in prayer
 Imploring the Lady of Sorrows, the mother of Christ,
 As pain brimmed over the cup and the will was called
 To stand the test of the coals. And sometimes the speech
 Of Brébeuf struck out, thundering reproof to his foes,
 Half-rebuke, half-defiance, giving them roar for roar.
 Was it because the chancel became the arena,
 Brébeuf a lion at bay, not a lamb on the altar,
 As if the might of a Roman were joined to the cause
 Of Judaea? Speech they could stop for they girdled his lips,
 But never a moan could they get. Where was the source
 Of his strength, the home of his courage that topped the best
 Of their braves and even out-fabled the lore of their legends?
 In the brunch of his shoulders which often had carried a load

2040

2050



Extorting the envy of guides at an Ottawa portage?
The heat of the hatchets was finding a path to that source.

In the thews of his thighs which had mastered the trails
of the Neutrals?
They would gash and beribbon those muscles. Was it the blood?
They would draw it fresh from its fountain. Was it the heart? 2060
They dug for it, fought for the scraps in the way of the wolves
But not in these was the valour or stamina lodged;
Nor in the symbol of Richelieu's robes or the seals
Of Mazarin's charters, nor in the stir of the *lilies*
Upon the Imperial folds; nor yet in the words
Loyola wrote on a table of lava-stone
In the cave of Manresa- not in these the source-
But in the sound of invisible trumpets blowing
Around two slabs of board, right-angled, hammered
By Roman nails and hung on a Jewish hill. 2070

The wheel had come full circle with the visions
In France of Brébeuf poured through the mould of St Ignace.
Lalemant died in the morning at nine, in the flame
Of the pitch belts. Flushed with the sight of the bodies, the foes
Gathered their clans and moved back to the north west
To join in the fight against the tribes of the Petuns
There was nothing now that could stem the Iroquois blast.
However undaunted the souls of the priests who were left,
However fierce the sporadic counter attacks
Of the Hurons striking in roving bands from the ambush, 2080
Or smashing out at their foes in garrison raids,
The villages fell before a blizzard of axes
And arrows and spears, and then were put to the torch.

The days were dark at the fort and heavier grew
The burdens on Ragueneau's shoulders. Decision was his.
No word from the east could arrive in time to shape
The step he must take. To and fro- from altar to hill,
From hill to altar, he walked and prayed and watched.
As governing priest of the Mission he felt the pride
Of his Order whipping his pulse, for was not St Ignace 2090
The highest test of the Faith? And all that torture
And death could do to the body was done. The Will
And the Cause in their triumph survived. Loyola's mountains,
Sublime at their summits, were scaled to the uttermost peak.
Ragueneau, the Shepherd, now looked on a battered fold.
In a whirlwind of fire St Jean, like St Joseph, crashed
Under the Iroquois impact. Firm at this post,

Garnier suffered the fate of Daniel. And now
 Chabanel, last in the roll of the martyrs, entrapped
 On his knees in the woods met death at apostate hands.

2100

The drama was drawing close to its end. It fell
 To Ragueneau's lot to perform a final rite-
 To offer the fort in sacrificial fire!
 He applied the torch himself. 'Inside an hour,'
 He wrote, 'we saw the fruit of ten years' labour
 Ascend in smoke- then looked our last at the fields,
 Put altar-vessels and food on a raft of logs,
 And made our way to the island of St Joseph.'
 But even from there was the old tale retold-
 Of hunger and the search for roots and acorns;
 Of cold and persecution unto death
 By the Iroquois; of Jesuit will and courage
 As the shepherd-priest with Chaumonot led back
 The remnant of a nation to Quebec.

2110

THE MARTYRS' SHRINE

Three hundred years have passed, and the winds of God
 Which blew over France are blowing once more through the pines
 That bulwark the shores of the great Fresh Water Sea.
 Over the wastes abandoned by human tread,
 Where only the bittern's cry was heard at dusk;
 Over the lakes where the wild ducks built their nests,
 The skies that had banked their fires are shining again
 With the stars that guided the feet of Jogues and Brébeuf.

2120

The years as they turned have ripened the martyrs' seed,
 And the ashes of St Ignace are glowing afresh.
 The trails, having frayed the threads of the cassocks, sank
 Under the mould of the centuries, under fern
 And brier and fungus- there in due time to blossom
 Into the highways that lead to the crest of the hill
 Which havened both shepherd and flock in the days of their trial.
 For out of the torch of Ragueneau's ruins the candles
 Are burning today in the chancel of Sainte Marie.
 The Mission sites have returned to the fold of the Order.
 Near to the ground where the cross broke under the hatchet,
 And went with it into the soil to come back at the turn
 Of the spade with the carbon and calcium char of the bodies,
 The shrines and altars are built anew; the Aves
 And prayers ascend, and the Holy Bread is broken.

2130

EROSION

It took the sea a thousand years,
A thousand years to trace
the granite features of this cliff,
In crag and scarp and base.

It took the sea an hour one night,
An hour of storm to place
the sculpture of these granite seams
Upon a woman's face.

THE SHARK

He seemed to know the harbour,
So leisurely he swam;
His fin,
Like a piece of sheet-iron,
Three-cornered,
And with knife-edge,
Stirred not a bubble
As it moved
With its base-line on the water.

His body was tubular
And tapered
And smoke-blue,
And as he passed the wharf
He turned,
And snapped at a flat-fish
That was dead and floating.
And I saw the flash of a white throat,
And a double row of white teeth,
And eyes of metallic grey,
Hard and narrow and slit.

Then out of the harbour,
With that three-cornered fin
Shearing without a bubble the water
Lithely,
Leisurely,
He swam-

That strange fish,
Tubular, tapered, smoke-blue,
Part vulture, part wolf,
Part neither- for his blood was cold.

THE TITANIC

HARLAND & WOLFF WORKS, BELFAST, MAY 31, 1911

The hammers silent and the derrick still,
 And high-tide in the harbour! Mind and will
 In open test with time and steel had run
 The first lap of a schedule and had won.
 Although a shell of what was yet to be
 Before another year was over, she,
 Poised for the launching signal, had surpassed
 The dreams of builder or of navigator.
 The Primate of the Lines, she had out-classed
 That rival effort to eliminate her 10
 Beyond the North sea where the air shots played
 The laggard rhythms of their fusillade
 Upon the rivets of the *Imperator*.
 The wedges in, the shores removed, a girl's
 Hand at a sign released a ribbon braid;
 Glass crashed against the plates; a wine cascade,
 Netting the sunlight in a shower of pearls,
 Baptized the vow and gave the ship her name;
 A slight push of the rams as a switch set free
 The triggers in the slots, and her proud claim 20
 On size- to be the first to reach the sea-
 Was vindicated, for whatever fears
 Stalked with her down the tallow of the slips
 Were smothered under by the harbour cheers,
 By flags strung to halyards of the ships.

MARCH 31, 1912

Completed! Waiting for her trial spin-
 Levers and telegraphs and valves within
 Her intercostal spaces ready to sart
 The power pulsing through her lungs and heart.
 An ocean lifeboat in herself- so ran 30
 The architectural comment on her plan.
 No wave could sweep those upper decks- unthinkable!
 No storm could hurt that hull- the papers said so.
 The perfect ship at last- the first unsinkable,
 Proved in advance- had not the folders read so?
 Such was the steel strength of her double floors
 Along the whole length of the keel, and such
 The fine adjustment of the bulkhead doors
 Geared to the rams, responsive to a touch,
 That in collision with iceberg or rock 40

Or passing ship she could survive the shock,
 Absorb the double impact, for despite
 The bows stove in, with forward holds aleak,
 Her aft compartments buoyant, watertight,
 Would keep her floating steady for a week.
 And this belief had reached its climax when,
 Through wireless waves as yet unstaled by use,
 The wonder of the ether had begun
 To fold the heavens up and reinduce
 The ancient *hubris* in the dreams of men,
 Which would have slain the cattle of the sun,
 And filched the lightnings from the fist of Zeus.
 What mattered that her boats were but a third
 Of full provision- caution was absurd:
 Then let the ocean roll and the winds blow
 While the risk at Lloyd's remained a record low.

50

THE ICEBERG

Calved from a glacier near Godhaven coast,
 It left the fiord for the sea- a host
 Of white flotillas gathering in its wake,
 And joined by fragments from a Behring floe,
 Had circumnavigated it to make
 In centre of an archipelago.
 Its lateral motion on the Davis Strait
 Was casual and indeterminate,
 And each advance to southward was a blind
 As each recession to the north. No smoke
 Of steamships nor the hoist of mainsails broke
 The polar wastes- no sounds except the grind
 Of ice, the cry of curlews and the lore
 Of winds from mesas of eternal snow;
 Until caught by the western undertow,
 It struck the current of the Labrador
 Which swung it to its definite southern stride.
 Pressure and glacial time had stratified
 The berg to the consistency of flint,
 And kept inviolate, through clash of tide
 And gale, facade and columns with their hint
 Of inward altars and of steepled bells
 Ringing to passage of the parallels.
 But when with months of voyaging it came
 To where both streams- the Gulf and Polar- met,
 The sun which left its crystal peaks aflame
 In the sub-artic noons, began to fret
 The arches, flute the spires and deform
 The features, till the batteries of storm,

60

70

80

Playing above the slow-eroding base,
 Demolished the last temple touch of grace.
 Another month, and nothing but the brute
 And palaeolithic outline of a face
 Fronted the transatlantic shipping route. 90
 A sloping spur that tapered to a claw
 And lying twenty feet below had made
 It lurch and shamble like a plantigrade;
 But with an impulse governed by the raw
 Mechanics of its birth, it drifted where
 Ambushed, fog-grey, it stumbled on its lair,
 North forty-one degrees and forty-four,
 Fifty and fourteen west the longitude,
 Waiting a world-memorial hour, its rude
 Corundum from stripped to its Greenland core. 100

SOUTHAMPTON, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 1912

An omen struck the thousands on the shore-
 A double accident! And as the ship
 Swung down the river on her maiden trip,
 Old sailors of the clipper decades, wise
 To the sea's incantations, muttered fables
 About careening vessels with their cables
 Snapped in their harbours under peaceful skies.
 Was it just suction or fatality
 Which caused the *New York* at the dock to turn,
 Her seven mooring ropes to break at the stern 110
 And writhe like anacondas on the quay,
 While tugs and fenders answered the collision
 Signals with such trim margin of precision?
 And was it backwash from the starboard screw
 Which, tearing at the big *Teutonic*, drew
 Her to the limit of her hawser strain,
 And made the smaller tethered craft behave
 Like frightened harbour ducks? And no one knew
 For many days the reason to explain
 The rise and wash of one inordinate wave, 120
 When a sunken barge on the Southampton bed
 Was dragged through mire eight hundred yards ahead,
 As the *Titanic* passed above its grave.
 But many of those sailors wise and old,
 Who pondered on this weird mesmeric power
 Gathered together, lit their pipes and told
 Of portents hidden in the natal hour,
 Told of the launching of some square-rigged ships,
 When water flowed from the inverted tips
 Of a waning moon, of sound-hounds, of the shrieks 130

Of whirling shags around the mizzen peaks.
 And was there not this morning's augury
 For the big one now heading for the sea?
 So long after she passed from landsmen's sight,
 They watched her with their Mother Carey eyes
 Through Spithead smoke, through mists of Isle of Wight,
 Through clouds of sea-gulls following with their cries.

WEDNESDAY EVENING

Electric elements were glowing down
 In the long galley passages where scores
 Of white-capped cooks stood at the oven doors 140
 To feed the population of a town.
 Cauldrons of stock, purées and consommés,
 Simmered with peppercorns and marjoram.
 The sea-shore smells from bisque and crab and clam
 Blended with odours from the fricassees.
 Refrigerators, hung with a week's toll
 Of the stockyards, delivered sides of lamb
 And veal, beef quarters to be roasted whole.
 Hundreds of capons and halibut. A shoal
 Of Blue-Points waited to be served on shell. 150
 The boards were loaded with pimolas, pails
 Of lobster coral, jars of Béchamel,
 To garnish tiers of rows of chilled timbales
 And aspics. On the shelves were pyramids
 Of truffles, springs of thyme and water-cress,
 Bay leaf and parsley, savouries to dress
 Shad roes and sweetbreads broiling on the grids.
 And then in diamond, square, crescent and star,
 Hors d'oeuvres were fashioned from the toasted bread,
 With paste of anchovy and caviar, 160
 Paprika sprinkled and pimento spread,
 All ready, for the hour was seven!

Meanwhile,
 Rivalling the engines with their steady tread,
 Thousands of feet were taking overhead
 The fourth lap round the deck to make the mile.
 Squash racquet, shuffle board and quoits; the cool
 Tang of the plunge in the gymnasium pool,
 The rub, the crisp air of the April night,
 The salt of the breeze made by the liner's rate,
 Worked with an even keel to stimulate 170
 Saliva for an ocean appetite;
 And like storm troops before a citadel,
 At the first summons of a bugle, soon
 The army massed the stairs towards the saloon,

And though twelve courses on the cards might well
Measure themselves against Falstaffian juices,
But few were found presenting their excuses,
When stewards offered on the lacquered trays
The Savoy chasers and the canapés.

The dinner gave the sense that all was well: 180
that touch of ballast in the tanks; the feel
Of peace from ramparts unassailable,
Which, added to her seven decks of steel,
Had constituted the *Titanic* less
A ship than a Gibraltar under heel.
And night had placed a lazy lusciousness
Upon a surfeit of security.
Science responded to a button press.
The three electric lifts that ran through tiers
Of decks, the reading lamps, the brilliancy 190
Of mirrors from the tungsten chandeliers,
Had driven out all phantoms which the mind
Had loosed from ocean closets, and assigned
To the dry earth the custody of fears.
The crowds poured through the sumptuous rooms and halls,
And tapped the tables of the Regency;
Smirked at the caryatids on the walls;
Talked Jacobean-wise; canvassed the range
Of taste within the Louis dynasty.
Grey-templed Caesars of the world's Exchange 200
Swallowed liqueurs and coffee as they sat
Under the Georgian carved mahogany,
Dictating wireless hieroglyphics that
Would on the opening of the Board Rooms rock
The pillared dollars of a railroad stock.

IN THE GYMNASIUM

A group had gathered round a mat to watch
The pressure of a Russian hammerlock,
A Polish scissors and a German crotch,
Broken by the toe-hold of Franck Gotch;
Or listened while a young Y.M.C.A. 210
Instructor demonstrated the left-hook,
And the right upper-cut which Jeffries took
From Johnson in the polished Reno way.
By midnight in the spacious dancing hall,
Hundreds were at the Masqueraders' Ball,
The high potential of the liner's pleasures,
Where mellow lights from Chinese lanterns glowed

Upon the scene, and the *Blue Danube* flowed
In andantino rhythms through the measures.

By three the silence that proceeded from 220
The night-caps and the soporific hum
Of the engines was far deeper than a town's:
The starlight and the low wash of the sea
Against the hull bore the serenity
Of sleep at rural hearths with eiderdowns.

The quiet on the decks was scarcely less
Than in the berths: no symptoms of the toil
Down in the holds; no evidence of stress
From gears drenched in the lubricating oil.
She seemed to swim in oil, so smooth the sea. 230
And quiet on the bridge: the great machine
Called for laconic speech, close-fitting, clean,
And whittled to the ship's economy.
Even the judgment stood in little need
Of reason, for the Watch had but to read
Levels and lights, meter or card or bell
To find the pressures, temperatures, or tell
Magnetic North within a binnacle,
Or gauge the hour of docking; for the speed
Was fixed abaft where under the Ensign, 240
Like a flashing trolling spoon, the log rotator
Transmitted through a governor its fine
Gradations on a dial indicator.

Morning of Sunday promised cool and clear,
Flawless horizon, crystal atmosphere;
Not a cat's paw on the ocean, not a guy
Rope murmuring: the steamer's columned smoke
Climbed like extensions of her funnels high
Into the upper zones, then warped and broke
Through the resistance of her speed- blue sky, 250
Blue water rifted only by the wedge
Of the bow where the double foam line ran
Diverging from the beam to join the edge
Of the stern wake like a white unfolding fan.
Her maiden voyage was being sweetly run,
Adding a half-knot here, a quarter there,
Gliding from twenty into twenty-one.
She seemed so native to her thoroughfare,
One turned from contemplation of her size,
Her sixty thousand tons of sheer flotation, 260
To wonder at the human enterprise
That took a gamble on her navigation-
Joining the mastiff strength with whipped grace

In this head-strained, world-watched Atlantic race:
Her less than six days' passage would combine
Achievement with the architect's design.

9 A.M

A message from Caronia: advice
From ships proceeding west; sighted field ice
And growlers; forty-two north; forty-nine
To fifty-one west longitude. S.S.
'Mesaba' of Atlantic Transport Line
Reports encountering solid pack: would guess
The stretch five miles in width from west to east,
And forty-five to fifty miles at east
In length.

270

1 P.M

Amerika obliged to slow
Down: warns all steamships in vicinity
Presence of bergs, especially of three
Upon the southern outskirts of the floe.

1.42 P.M

The Baltic warns Titanic: so Touraine;
Reports of numerous icebergs on the Banks,
The floe across the southern traffic lane.

280

5 P.M

The Californian and Baltic again
Present their compliments to Captain.

TITANIC

Thanks.

THREE MEN TALKING ON DECK

'That spark's been busy all the afternoon-
Warnings! The Hydrographic charts are strewn
With crosses showing bergs and pack-ice all
Along the routes, more south than usual
For this time of year.'

'She's hitting a clip
Instead of letting up while passing through
This belt. She's gone beyond the twenty-two.'

290

'Don't worry- Smith's an old dog, knows his ship,
No finer in the mercantile marine
Than Smith with thirty years of service, clean
Record, honoured with highest of all commands,
Majestic, then *Olympic* on his hands,
Now the *Titanic*.'

'Twas a lucky streak
That a Southampton dock he didn't lose her,
And the *Olympic* had a narrow squeak
Some months before rammed by the British Cruiser,
The *Hawke*.'

'Straight accident. No one to blame:
'Twas suction- Board absolved them both. The same
With the *Teutonic* and *New York*. No need
To fear she's trying to out-reach her speed.
There isn't a sign of fog. Besides by now
The watch is doubled at crow's nest and bow.'

300

'People are talking of that apparition,
When we were leaving Queenstown- that head showing
Above the funnel rim, and the fires going!
A stoker's face- sounds like a superstition.
But he was there within the stack, all right;
Climbed up the ladder and grinned. The explanation
Was given by an engineer last night-
A dummy funnel built for ventilation.'

310

'That's queer enough, but nothing so absurd
As the latest story two old ladies heard
At a rubber o'bridge. They nearly died with fright;
Wanted to tell the captain- of all things!
The others sneered a bit but just the same
It did the trick of breaking up the game.
A mummy from The Valley of the Kings
Was brought from Thebes to London. Excavators
Passed out from cholera, black plague or worse.
Egyptians understood- an ancient curse
Was visited on all the violators.
One fellow was run over, one was drowned,
And one went crazy. When in time it found
Its way to the Museum, the last man
In charge- a mothy Aberdonian-
Exploding the whole legend with a laugh,
Lost all his humour when the skeleton
Appeared within the family photograph,
And leered down from the corner just like one
Of his uncles.'

320

'Holy Hades!'

'The B.M.'

330

Authorities themselves were scared and sold
It to New York. That's how the tale is told.'
'The joke is on the Yanks.'

'No, not on them,
Nor on The Valley of the Kings. What's rummy
About it is- we're carrying the mummy.'

7.30 P.M. AT A TABLE IN THE DINING SALOON

Green Turtle!

Potage Romanoff!

'White Star
Is out this time to press Cunarders close,
Got them on tonnage- fifty thousand gross.
Preferred has never paid a dividend.
The common's down to five- one hundred par.
The double ribbon- size and speed- would send
Them soaring.'

340

'Speed is not in her design,
But comfort and security. The Line
Had never advertised it- 'twould be mania
To smash the record of the *Mauretania*.'

Sherry!

'The rumour's out.'

'There's nothing in it.'

'Bet you she docks on Tuesday night.'

'I'll take it.'

350

'She's hitting twenty-two this very minute.'

'That's four behind- she hasn't a chance to make it.'

Brook Trout!

Fried Dover Sole!

'Her rate will climb
From twenty-two to twenty-six in time.
The Company's known never to rush their ships
At first or try to rip the bed-bolts off.
They run them gently half-a-dozen trips,
A few work-outs around the track to let
Them finding their breathing, take the boiler cough
Out of them. She's not racing for a cup.'

360

Claret!

'Steamships like sprinters have to get
Their second wind before they open up.'

'That group of men around the captain's table,
Look at them, count the aggregate- the House
Of Astor, Guggenheim, and Harris, Straus,

That's Frohman, isn't it? Between them able
 To halve the national debt with a cool billion!
 Sir Hugh is over there, and Hays and Stead.
 The woman third from captain's right, it's said
 Those diamonds round her neck- a quarter million!'

370

Mignon of Beef!

Quail!

'I heard Phillips say
 He had the finest outfit on the sea;
 The new Marconi valve; the range by day,
 Five hundred miles, by night a thousand. Three
 Sources of power. If some crash below
 Should hit the engines, flood the dynamo,
 He had the batteries: in emergency,
 He could switch through to the auxiliary
 On the boat deck.'

Woodcock and Burgundy!

'Say waiter, I say RARE, you understand.'

380

Escallope of Veal

Roast Duckling!

Snipe! More Rhine!

'Marconi made the sea as safe as land:
 Remember the *Republic*- White Star Line-
 Rammed off Nantucket by the *Florida*,
 One thousand saved- the *Baltic* heard the call.
 Two steamers answered the *Slavonia*,
 Disabled off the Azores. They got them all,
 And when the *Minnehaha* ran aground
 Near Bishop's Rock, they never would have found
 Her- not a chance without the wireless. Same
 Thing happened to that boat- what was her name?
 The one that foundered off the Alaska Coast-
 Her signals brought a steamer in the nick
 Of time. Yes, sir- Marconi turned the trick.'

390

The *Barcelona* salad; no, *Beaucaire*;

That *Russian* dressing;

Avocado pear;

'They wound her up at the Southampton dock,
 And then the tugs gave her a push to start
 Her off- as automatic as a dock.'

Moselle!

'For all the hand work there's to do
 Aboard this liner up on deck, the crew
 Might just as well have stopped ashore. Apart
 From stokers and engineers, she's run

400

By gadgets from the bridge- a thousand and one
 Of them with a hundred miles of copper wire.
 A filament glows at the first sign of fire,
 A buzzer sounds, a number gives the spot,
 A deck-hand makes a coupling of the hose.
 That's all there's to it; not a whistle; not
 A passenger upon the ship that knows
 What's happened. The whole thing is done without
 So much as calling up the fire brigade.
 They don't even need the pumps- a gas is sprayed,
 Carbon dioxide- and the blaze is out.'

410

A Cherry Flan!

Champagne!

Chocolate Parfait!

'How about a poker crowd tonight?
 Get Jones, an awful grouch- no good to play,
 But has the coin. Get hold of Larry.'

'Right.'

'You fetch Van Raalte: I'll bring in MacRae.
 In Cabin D, one hundred seventy-nine.
 In half-an-hour we start playing.'

420

'Fine.'

ON DECK

The sky was moonless but the sea flung back
 With greater brilliance half the zodiac.
 As clear below as clear above, the Lion
 Far on the eastern quarter stalked the Bear:
 Polaris off the starboard beam- and there
 Upon the port the Dog-star trailed Orion.
 Capella was so close, a hand might seize
 The sapphire with the silver Pleiades.

And further to the south- a finger span,
 Swam Betelgeuse and red Aldebaran.
 Right through from east to west the ocean glassed
 The billions of that snowy caravan
 Ranging the highway which the Milkmaid passed.

430

9.50 P.M CALIFORNIAN FLASHING

*I say, old man, we're stuck fast in this place,
 More than an hour. Field ice for miles about.*

TITANIC

*Say, 'Californian'. shut up, keep out,
You're jamming all my signals with Cape Race.*

10 P.M

A group of boys had gathered round a spot
Upon the rail where a dial registered
The speed, and waiting each three minutes heard
The taffrail log bell tallying off a knot.

440

11.20 P.M BEHIND A DECK HOUSE

First act to fifth act in a tragic plan,
Stage time, real time- a woman and a man,
Entering a play within a play, dismiss
The pageant on the ocean with a kiss.
Eleven-twenty curtain! Whether true
Or false the pantomimic vows they make
Will not be known till at the *fifth* they take
Their mutual exit twenty after two.

450

11.25 P.M

Position half-a-mile from edge of floe,
Hove-to for many hours, bored with delay,
The *Californian* fifteen miles away,
And fearful of the pack, has now begun
To turn her engines over under slow
Bell, and the operator, his task done,
Unclamps the 'phones and ends his dullest day.

The ocean sinuous, half-past eleven;
A silence broken only by the seven
Bells and the look-out calls, the log-book showing
Knots forty-five within two hours- not quite
The expected best as yet- but she was going
With all her bulkheads open through the night,
For not a bridge induction light was glowing.

460

Over the stern zenith and nadir met
In the wash of the reciprocating set.
The foam in bevelled mirrors multiplied
And shattered constellations. In between,
The pitch from the main drive of the turbine
Emerged like tuna breaches to divide
Against the rudder, only to unite

470

With the converging wake from either side.
Under the counter, blending with the spill
Of stars- the white and blue- the yellow light
Of Jupiter hung like a daffodil.

D-179

'Ace full! A long time since I had a pot.'
'Good boy, Van Raalte. That's the juiciest haul
Tonight. Calls for a round of roodles, what?
Let's whoop her up. Double the limit. All
In.' (Jones, heard muttering as usual,
Demurs, but over-ruled.) 'Jones sore again.'

480

Van Raalte (dealer):
 'Ten dollars and all in!
 The sea's like glass
 Tonight. That fin-keel keeps her steady.'

Jones: 'Pass.'

(Not looking at his hand)

Larry: 'Pass.'

Cripps: 'Open for ten.'
(Holding a pair of aces.) 'Say, who won
The sweep today?'

'A Minnesota guy
With olive-coloured spats and a mauve tie.
Five hundred and eighty miles- beat last day's run.'

Mac: 'My ten.'

Harry: (Taking a gamble on his four
Spades for a flush) 'I'll raise the bet ten more.'

490

Van R.: (Two queens) 'AND ten.'

Jones: (Discovering three kings)
'Raise you to forty' (face expressing doubt).

Larry: (Looking hard at a pair of nines) 'I'm out.'

Cripps:(Flirts for a moment with his aces, flings
His thirty dollars to the pot.)

Mac: (The same.)

Harry: 'My twenty. Might as well stay with the game.'

Van R.: 'I'm in. Draw! Jones, how bloody long you wait.'

Jones: (Withholds an eight) 'One.' (And then draws an eight.)

Cripps: 'Three.' (Gets another pair.)

'How many, Mac?'

Mac: 'Guess I'll take two, no, three.' (Gets a third Jack.)

500

Harry: 'One.' (Draws the ace of spades.)

Van R.: 'Dealer takes three.'

Cripps (The Opener): (Throws in a dollar chip.)

Mac: (The same.)

Harry: 'I'll rise
You ten.'

Van R.: 'I'll see you.'

Jones: (Hesitates, surveys
The chips.) 'Another ten.'

Cripps: 'I'll call you.'

Mac: 'See.'

Harry: 'White livers! Here she goes to thirty.'

Van R.: 'Just
The devil's luck.' (Throws cards down in disgust.)

Jones: 'Might as well raise.' (Counts twenty sluggishly,
Tosses them to the centre.)

'Staying, Cripps?'

Cripps: 'No, and be damned to it.'

Mac: 'My ten.' (With groans.)

Harry: (Looks at the pyramid and swears at Jones,
Then calls, pitching ten dollars on the chips.)

510

Jones: (Cards down.) 'A full house tops the flush.' (He spreads
His arms around the whites and blues and reds.)

Mac: 'As the Scotchman once said to the Sphinx,
I'd just like to know what he thinks,
I'll ask him, he cried,
And the Sphinx- he replied,
It's the hell of a time between drinks.'

Cripps: (watch in hand):
'Time? Eleven forty-four, to be precise.'

Harry: 'Jones- That will fatten up your pocket-book. 520
My throat's like charcoal. Ring for soda and ice.'

Van R.: 'Ice: God! Look- take it through the port-hole- look!'

11.45 P.M

A signal from the crow's nest. Three bells pealed:
The look-out telephoned- *Something ahead,*
Hard to make out, sir; looks like... iceberg dead
On starboard bow!

MURDOCH HOLDING THE BRIDGE-WATCH

Starboard your helm: ship heeled

To port. From bridge to engine-room the clang
Of the telegraph. *Danger. Stop.* A hand sprang
To the throttle; the valves closed, and with the churn
Of the reverse the sea boiled at the stern. 530
Smith hurried to the bridge and Murdoch closed
The bulkheads of the ship as he supposed,
But could not know that with those riven floors
The electro-magnets failed upon the doors.
No shock! No more than if something alive
Had brushed her as she passed. The bow had missed.
Under the vast momentum of her drive
She went a mile. But why that ominous five
Degrees (within five minutes) of a list?

IN A CABIN

'What was that, steward?'
'seems like she hit a sea, sir.' 540
'But there's no sea; calm as a landlocked bay
It is; lost a propellor blade?'
'Maybe, sir.'
'She's stopped.'

'Just cautious like, feeling her way,
There's ice about. It's dark, no moon tonight,
Nothing to fear, I'm sure, sir.'

For so slight
The answer of the helm, it did not break
The sleep of hundreds: some who were awake
Went up on deck, but soon were satisfied
That nothing in the shape of wind or tide
Or rock or ice could harm that huge bulk spread
On the Atlantic, and went back to bed.

550

CAPTAIN IN WIRELESS ROOM

'We've struck an iceberg- glancing blow: as yet
Don't know extent; looks serious; so get
Ready to send out general call for aid;
I'll tell you when- having inspection made.'

REPORT OF SHIP'S CARPENTER AND FOURTH OFFICER

A starboard cut three hundred feet or more
From foremast to amidships. Iceberg tore
Right at the bilge turn through the double skin:
Some boiler rooms and bunkers driven in;
The forward five compartments flooded- mail
Bags floating. Would the engine power avail
To stem the rush?

560

WIRELESS ROOM, FIRST OFFICER PHILLIPS AT KEY

Titanic, C.Q.D.

*Collision: iceberg: damaged starboard side:
Distinct list forward. (Had Smith magnified
The danger? Over-anxious certainly.)
The second (joking)- 'Try new call, maybe
Last chance you'll have to send it.'*

S.O.S

Then back to older signal of distress.

On the same instant the *Carpathia* called,
The distance sixty miles- Putting about,
And heading for you; double watch installed
In engine-room, in stokehold and look-out.
Four hours the run, should not the ice retard
The speed; but taking chances: coming hard!

570

THE BRIDGE

As leaning on her side to ease a pain,
 The tilted ship had stopped the captain's breath:
 The inconceivable had stabbed his brain,
 This thing unfelt- her visceral wound of death?
 Another message- this time to report her
 Filling, taxing the pumps beyond their strain.
 Had that blow rent her from the bow to quarter?
 Or would the aft compartments still intact
 Give buoyancy enough to counteract
 The open forward holds?

580

The carpenter's

Second report had offered little chance,
 And panic- heart of God- the passengers,
 The fourteen hundred- seven hundred packed
 In steerage- seven hundred immigrants!
 Smith thought of panic clutching at their throats,
 And feared that Balkan scramble for the boats.

590

No call from bridge, no whistle, no alarm
 Was sounded. Have the stewards quietly
 Inform the passengers: no vital harm,
 Precautions merely for emergency;
 Collision? Yes, but nature of the blow
 Must not be told: not even the crew must know:
 Yet all on deck with lifebelts, and boats ready,
 The sailors at the falls, and all hands steady.

WIRELESS ROOM

The lilac spark was crackling at the gap,
 Eight ships within the radius of the call
 From fifteen to five hundred miles, and all
 But one answering the operator's tap.
Olympic twenty hours away had heard;
 The *Baltic* next and the *Virginian* third;
Frankfurt and *Burma* distant one-half day;
Mount Temple nearer, but the ice-field lay
 Between the two ships like a wall of stone;
 The *Californian* deaf to signals through
 Supreme deliverer an hour ago:
 The hope was on *Carpathia* alone.

600

610

ON THE DECKS

So suave the fool-proof sense of life that fear
 Had like the unforeseen become a mere
 Illusion- vanquished by the towering height
 Of funnels pouring smoke through thirty feet
 Of bore; the solid deck planks and the light
 From a thousand lamps as on a city street;
 The feel of numbers; the security
 Of wealth; the placid surface of the sea,
 Reflecting on the ship the outwardness
 Of calm and leisure of the passengers; 620
 Deck-hands obedient to their officers;
 Pearl-throated women in their evening dress
 And wrapped in sables and minks; the silhouettes
 Of men in dinner jackets staging an act
 In which delusion passed, deriding fact
 Behind the cupped flare of the cigarettes.

Women and children first! Slowly the men
 Stepped backward from the rails where number ten,
 Its cover off, and lifted from the chocks,
 Moved outward as the Welin davits swung. 630
 The new ropes creaking through the unused blocks,
 The boat was lowered to B deck and hung
 There while her load of sixty stepped inside,
 Convinced the order was not justified.

Rockets, one, two, God! Smith!- what does he mean?
 The sounding of the bilges could not show
 This reason for alarm- the sky serene
 And not a ripple on the water- no
 Collision. What report came from below?
 No leak accounts for this- looks like a drill, 640
 A bit of exhibition play- but still
 Stopped in mid-ocean! and those rockets- *three!*
 More urgent even than a tapping key
 And more immediate as a protocol
 To a disaster. *There!* An arrow of fire,
 A fourth sped towards the sky, its bursting spire
 Topping the foremast like a parasol
 With fringe of fuchsia- more a parody
 Upon the tragic summons of the sea
 Than the real script of unacknowledged fears 650
 Known to the bridge and to the engineers.

Midnight! The Master of the ship presents
To the Master of the Band his compliments,
Desiring that the Band should play right through;
No intermission.

Conductor: 'Bad?'

Officer: 'Yes, bad enough,
The half not known yet even to the crew;
For God's sake, cut the sentimental stuff,
The BLUE BELLS and Kentucky lullabies.
Murdoch will have a barrel of work to do,
Holding the steerage back, once they get wise;
They're jumpy now under the rockets' glare;
So put the ginger in the fiddles- Zip
Her up.'

660

Conductor: 'Sure, number forty-seven.' *E-Yip*
I Addy-I-A, I Ay... I don't care...

NUMBER TEN GOES OVER THE SIDE

Full noon and midnight by a weird design
Both met and parted at the median line.
Beyond the starboard gunwale was outspread
The jet expanse of water islanded
By fragments of the berg which struck the blow.
And further off towards the horizon lay
The loom of the uncharted parent floe,
Merging the black with an amorphous grey.
On the port gunwale the meridian
Shone from the terraced rows of decks that ran
From gudgeon to the stem nine hundred feet;
And as the boat now tilted by the stern,
Or now resumed her levels with the turn
Of the controlling ropes at block and cleat,
How easy seemed the step and how secure
Back to the comfort and the warmth- the lure
Of sheltered promenade and sun decks starred
By hanging bulbs, amber and rose and blue,
The trellis and palms lining an avenue
With all the vista of the boulevard:
The mirror of the ceilings with festoon
Of pennants, flags and streamers- and now through
The leaded windows of the grand saloon,
Through parted curtains and the open doors

670

680

Of vestibules, glint of deserted floors
 And tables, and under the sorcery 690
 Of light excelling their facsimile,
 The periods returning to relume
 The panels of the lounge and smoking-room,
 Holding the mind in its abandonment
 During those sixty seconds of descent.
Lower away! The boat with its four tons
 Of freight went down with jerks and stops and runs
 Beyond the glare of the cabins and below
 The slanting parallels of port-holes, clear 700
 Of the exhaust from the condenser flow:
 But with the uneven falls she canted near
 The water line; the stern rose; the bow dipped;
 The crew groped for the link-releasing gear;
 The lever jammed; a stoker's jack-knife ripped
 The aft ropes through, which on the instant brought her
 With rocking keel through safe upon the water.

THE CARPATHIA

Fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen- three
 Full knots beyond her running limit, she
 Was feeling out her port and starboard points,
 And testing rivets on her boiler joints. 710
 The needle on the gauge beyond the red,
 The blow-offs feathered at the funnel head.
 The draught-fans roaring at their loudest, now
 The quartermaster jams the helm hard-over,
 As the revolving searchlight beams uncover
 The columns of an iceberg on the bow,
 Then compensates this loss by daring gains
 Made by her passage through the open lanes.

THE BAND

East side, West side, all around the town,
The tots sang 'Ring-a-Rosie' 720
'London Bridge is falling down,'
Boys and girls together...

The cranks turn and the sixth and seventh swing
 Over and down, the 'tiller' answering
 'Aye, Aye, sir' to the shouts of officers-
 'Row to the cargo ports for passengers.'
 The water line is reached, but the ports fail

To open, and the crews of the boats hail
The decks; receiving no response they pull
Away from the ship's side, less than half full. 730
The eighth caught in the tackle foul is stuck
Half-way. With sixty-five capacity,
Yet holding twenty-four, goes number three.

The sharp unnatural deflection, struck
By the sea-level with the under row
Of dipping port-holes at the forward, show
How much she is going by the head. Behind
The bulkheads, sapping out their steel control,
Is the warp of the bunker press inclined
By many thousand tons of shifting coal. 740

The smoothest, safest passage to the sea
Is made by number one- the next to go-
Her space is forty- twelve her company:
'Pull like the devil from her- harder- row!
The minute that she founders, not a boat
Within a mile around that will not follow.
What nearly happened at Southampton? So
Pull, pull, I tell you- not a chip afloat,
God knows how far, her suction will not swallow.'

Alexander's rag-time band... 750
It's the best band in the land...

Voices from the Deck:
'There goes the Special with the toffs. You'll make
New York tonight rowing like that. You'll take
Your death o'cold out there with all the fish
And ice around.'

'Make sure your butlers dish
You up your toddies now, and bring hot rolls
For breakfast.'
'Don't forget the finger bowls.'

The engineering staff of thirty-five
Are at their stations: those off-duty go
Of their free will to join their mates below 760
In the grim fight for steam, more steam, to drive
The pressure through the pumps and dynamo.
Knee-deep, waist-deep in water they remain,
Not one of them seen on the decks again.

The under braces of the rudder showing,
 The wing propeller blades begin to rise,
 And with them, through the hawse-holes, water flowing-
 The angle could not but assault the eyes.
 A fifteen minutes, and the fo'c'sle head
 Was under. And five more, the sea had shut
 The lower entrance to the stairs that led
 From C deck to the boat deck- the short cut
 For the crew. Another five, the upward flow
 Had covered the wall brackets where the glow
 Diffusing from the frosted bulbs turned green
 Uncannily through their translucent screen.

770

ON THE CARPATHIA

White Star- Cunarder, forty miles apart,
 Still eighteen knots! From coal to flame to steam-
 Decision of a captain to redeem
 Errors of brain by hazards of the heart!
 Showers of sparks danced through the funnel smoke,
 The firemen's shovels, rakes and slice-bars broke
 The clinkers, fed the fires, and ceaselessly
 The hoppers dumped the ashes on the sea.

780

As yet no panic, but none might foretell
 The moment when the sight of that oblique
 Breath-taking lift of the taffrail and the sleek
 And foamless undulation of the swell
 Might break in meaning on those diverse races,
 And give them common language. As the throng
 Came to the upper decks and moved along
 The incline, the contagion struck the faces
 With every lowering of a boat and backed
 Them towards the stern. And twice between the hush
 Of fear and utterance the gamut cracked,
 When with the call for women and the flare
 Of an exploding rocket, a short rush
 Was made for the boats- fifteen and two.
 'Twas nearly done- the sudden clutch and tear
 Of canvas, a flurry of fists and curses met
 By swift decisive action from the crew,
 Supported by a quartermaster's threat
 Of three revolver shots fired on the air.

790

800

But still the fifteenth went with five inside,
 Who, seeking out the shadows, climbed aboard
 And, lying prone and still, managed to hide
 Under the thwarts long after she was lowered.

*Jingle bells, jingle bells,
 Jingle all the way,
 O what fun...*

810

'Some men in number two, sir!'

The boat swung

Back.

'Chuck the fellows out.'

Grabbed by the feet,

The lot were pulled over the gunwale and flung
 Upon the deck.

'Hard at the forward cleat!

'A hand there for that after all. Lower
 Away- port side, the second hatch, and wait.'

With six hands of his watch, the bosun's mate,
 Sent down to open up the gangway door,
 Was trapped and lost in a flooded alley way,
 And like the seventh, impatient of delay,
 The second left with room for twenty more.

820

The fiddley leading from a boiler room
 Lay like a tortous exit from a tomb.
 A stoker climbed it, feeling by the twist
 From vertical how steep must be the list.
 He reached the main deck where the cold night airs
 Enswathed his flesh with steams. Taking the stairs,
 He heard the babel by the davits, faced
 The forward, noticed how the waters raced
 To the break of the fo'c'sle and lapped
 The foremast root. He climbed again and saw
 The resolute manner in which Murdoch's rapped
 Command put a herd instinct under law;
 No life-preserver on, he stealthily
 Watched Phillips in his room, bent at the key,
 And thinking him alone, he sprang to tear
 The jacket off. He leaped too soon. 'Take that!'
 The second stove him with a wrench. 'Lie there,
 Till hell begins to sing your lids- you rat!'

830

But set against those scenes where order failed, 840
 Was the fine muster at the fourteenth where,
 Like a zone of calm along a thoroughfare,
 The discipline of sea-worn laws prevailed.
 No women answering the repeated calls,
 The men filled up the vacant seats: the falls
 Were slipping through the sailors' hands,
 When a steerage group of women, having fought
 Their way over five flights of stairs, were brought
 Bewildered to the rails. Without commands
 Barked from the lips of officers; without 850
 A protest registered in voice or face,
 The boat was drawn up and the men stepped out
 Back to the crowded stations with that free
 Barter of life for life done with the grace
 And air of a Castilian courtesy.

*I've just got here through Paris,
 From the sunny Southern shore,
 I to Monte Carlo went...*

ISIDOR AND IDA STRAUS

At the sixteenth- a woman wrapped her coat
 Around her maid and placed her in the boat; 860
 Was ordered in but seen to hesitate
 At the gunwale, and more conscious of her pride
 Than of her danger swiftly took her fate
 With open hands, and without show of tears
 Returned unmurmuring to her husband's side;
 'We've been together now for forty-years,
 Whither you go, I go.'

A boy of ten,
 Ranking himself within the class on men,
 Though given a seat, made up his mind to waive
 The privilege of his youth and size, and piled 870
 The inches on his stature as he gave
 Place to a Magyar woman and her child.

And men who had in the world's run of trade,
 Or in pursuit of the professions, made
 Their reputation, looked upon the scene
 Merely as drama in a life's routine:

Millet was studying eyes as he would draw them
 Upon a canvas; Butt, as though he saw them
 In the ranks; Astor, social, debonair,
 Waved 'Good-bye' to his bride- 'See you tomorrow,' 880
 And tapped a cigarette on a silver case;
 Men came to Guggenheim as he stood there
 In evening suit, coming this time to borrow
 Nothing but courage from his calm, cool face.

And others unobserved, of unknown name
 And race, just stood behind, pressing no claim
 Upon priority but rendering proof
 Of their oblation, quiet and aloof
 Within the maelstrom towards the rails. And some
 Wavered a moment with the panic urge, 890
 But rallied to attention on the verge
 Of flight as if the rattle of a drum
 From quarters faint but unmistakable
 Had put the stiffening in the blood to check
 The impulse of the feet, leaving the will
 No choice between the lifeboats and the deck.

The four collapsibles, their lashings ripped,
 Half-dragged, half-lifted by the hooks, were slipped
 Over the side. The first two luckily
 Had but the forward distance to the sea. 900
 Its canvas edges crumpled up, the third
 Began to fill with water and transferred
 Its cargo to the twelfth, while number four,
 Aft and higher, nose-dived and swamped its score.

The wireless cabin- Phillips in his place,
 Guessing the knots of the Cunarder's race.
 Water was swirling up the slanted floor
 Around the chair and sucking at his feet.
Carpathia's call- the last one heard complete-
Expect to reach position half-past four. 910
 The operators turned- Smith at the door
 With drawn incredulous face. 'Men you have done
 Your duty. I release you. Everyone
 Now for himself.' They stayed ten minutes yet,
 The power growing fainter with each blue
 Crackle of flame. Another stammering jet-
Virginian heard 'a tattering C.Q.'
 Again a try for contact but the code's
 Last jest had died between the electrodes.

Even yet the spell was on the ship: although 920
 The last lifeboat had vanished, there was no
 Besieging of the heavens with the crescendo
 Of fears passing through terror into riot-
 But on all lips the strange narcotic quiet
 Of an unruffled ocean's innuendo.
 In spite of her deformity of line,
 Emergent like a crag out of the sea,
 She had the semblance of stability,
 Moment by moment furnishing no sign,
 So far as visible, of that decline 930
 Made up of inches crawling into feet.
 Then, with the electric circuit still complete,
 The miracle of day displacing night
 Had worked its fascination to beguile
 Direction of the hours and cheat the sight.
 Inside the recreation rooms the gold
 From Arab lamps shone on the burnished tile.
 What hindered the return to shelter while
 The ship clothed in that irony of light
 Offered her berths and cabins as a fold? 940

And, was there not the *Californian*?
 Many had seen her smoke just over there,
 But two hours past- it seemed a harbour span-
 So big, so close, she could be hailed, they said;
 She must have heard the signals, seen the flare
 Of those white stars and changed at once her course.
 There under the *Titanic's* foremast head,
 A lamp from the look-out cage was flashing Morse.
 No ship afloat, unless deaf, blind and dumb
 To those three sets of signals but would come. 950
 And when the whiz of a rocket bade men turn
 Their faces to each other in concern
 At shattering facts upon the deck, they found
 Their hearts take reassurance with the sound
 Of the violins from the gymnasium, where
 The bandsmen in their blithe insouciance
 Discharged the sudden tension of the air
 With the fox-trot's sublime irrelevance.

The fo'c'sle had gone under the creep
 Of the water. Through without a wind, a lop 960
 Was forming on the wells now fathoms deep.
 The seventy feet- the boat deck's normal drop-
 Was down to ten. Rising, falling, and waiting,
 Rising again, the swell that edged and curled

Around the second bridge, over the top
Of the air-shafts, backed, resurged and whirled
Into the stockhold through the fiddley grating.

Under the final strain the two wire guys
Of the forward funnel tugged and broke at the eyes:
With buckled plates the stack leaned, fell and smashed 970
The starboard wing of the flying bridge, went through
The lower, then tilting at the davits crashed
Over, driving a wave aboard that drew
Back to the sea some fifty sailors and
The captain with the last of the bridge command.

Out on the water was the same display
Of fear and self-control as on the deck-
Challenge and hesitation and delay,
The quick return, the will to save, the race 980
Of snapping oars to put the realm of space
Between the half-filled lifeboats and the wreck.
The swimmers whom the waters did not take
With their instant death-chill struck out for the wake
Of the nearer boats, gained on them, hailed
The steersmen and were saved: the weaker failed
And fagged and sank. A man clutched at the rim
Of a gunwale, and a woman's jewelled fist
Struck at his face: two others seized his wrist,
As he released his hold, and gathering him 990
Over the side, they staunched the cut from the ring.
And there were many deeds envisaging
Volitions where self-preservation fought
Its red primordial struggle with the 'ought,'
In those high moments when the gambler tossed
Upon the chance and uncomplaining lost.

Aboard the ship, whatever hope of dawn
Gleamed from the *Carpathia's* riding lights was gone,
For every knot was matched by each degree
Of list. The stern was lifted bodily 1000
When the bow had sunk three hundred feet, and set
Against the horizon stars in silhouette
Were the blade curves of the screws, hump of the rudder.
The downward pull and after buoyancy
Held her a minute poised but for a shudder
That caught her frame as with the upward stroke
Of the sea a boiler or a bulkhead broke.