

streaming over it, the horsemen in a lengthening trail over meadows, brooks, ploughed fields, hills, are seen clear and colored as though from an elevation; only now and then are we brought into intimate contact with a man or a group, excited or in trouble; but the fox, his straits, his cunning, his fear, his exhaustion, his stout heart are the main theme. His arrival at his goal to find his earth stopped is made tragic; he goes on, a hero, to another hill, where are two boys and a gun and a terrier, who chases him, kills his scent, and gives him a respite. It is brief; they see a speck going along a furrow and are after him again; he has four miles more to go, through sheep, up a stream, where boys throw stones at him, then up a long last hill. There is a thorn fence around the wood; he leaps, fails, leaps again, gets over, and swerves into the wood. They overrun him; he gets to his earth—it is stopped with stones; he hides:

With his ears flexed back and his teeth
shown white,
In a rat's resolve for a dying bite.

Then the hounds crash past. They have changed foxes. The noise passes; the woodland silence, the birds' twitterings resume; night comes, a rested fox goes out for his prowl. There pass him men and hounds going homeward, having killed a fox, persuading themselves that he was the original quarry and the gamest ever known.

Then the moon came quiet and flooded full
Light and beauty in clouds like wool
On a feasted fox at rest from hunting
In the beech-wood gray where the brooks
were grunting.

The beech-wood gray rose dim in the night,
With moonlight fallen in pools of light;
The long dead leaves on the ground were
rimed,
A clock struck twelve and the church bells
chimed.

It is, if the term be not offensive, a great *tour de force*, and as English as a poem could be.

Land and Water

ON HAVING TO WAIT

BY CLAUDE TESSIER

'Just away, sir.' 'Oh——' With a sickly grin and that 'sinking sensation' so reminiscent of examination rooms, momentous interviews, and the unhappy side of life generally, I stood wiping my wet forehead and watching the fast disappearing red light on the guard's van of the train I meant to have caught. Robinson Crusoe gazing forlornly at the sail that never returned could not have struck a more dejected attitude than was mine on that deserted platform. Want of breath alone prevented me from pronouncing terrible and sustained anathemas on the tyrannic and inexorable power that grinds all individual liberty to dust; I refer, of course, to railway time tables.

One hour and seventeen minutes to wait. In the scramble to get off I had clapped a pair of tightish boots on my feet, which were of the kind we all know, that keep quiet so long as you don't give them much work to do. Moreover, it was pouring rain. Somehow or other, it always is pouring rain when anything has happened to make me particularly glum. On the whole, I decided I would put in the time in the waiting room with a book. My disposition is easygoing; of that kind which is ever ready to look on the bright side of things and which somebody has remarked is a more valuable possession than ten thousand a year. The one is, I should think, a corollary of the other; but be that as it may, without ten thousand a year I can make myself happy in places which

many mortals positively abhor, and one of these is a waiting room.

Certainly, they are a little bare; a trifle wanting in individuality. But so, too, was Tolstoy's study; and Japanese houses and model dwellings and the heads of most gentlemen over sixty have those qualities, yet who would declare them abhorrent on that account? Yet some of my friends hate waiting rooms as they hate Huns, because they say they are so bare; as well might they hate themselves when they take a bath.

'Do Not Spit,' 'Beware of Pickpockets,' 'Girls Who Are Homeless or Strangers in This City Should Apply,' etc., greeted me around the walls like the portraits of my ancestors at my country seat, as I entered on this occasion. In addition were the usual bright and vigorous steamers ploughing the sparkling blue waves amid broad streaks of white, white foam; and the map of England reminding me of Laocoön being strangled by the fiery serpent, so vividly has the company's cartographer depicted the sinuous red lines of the railway and the blooddrop-looking stations splashing and winding about the countryside. Sitting on the table (somehow or other waiting room tables, like poor relations, seem made to be sat on), I began studying the list of noble names of the 'strangers in this city' of the female sex, which the notice hanging opposite exhibited for the edification of the less charitably inclined. Before long, however, the room, which was empty when I entered, contained a fair assortment of human flotsam.

A baby, a blind man, three flappers, an old soldier, a young wife and mother, a lively sailor, a young soldier, a rude little boy, a benevolent old gentleman, and a respectable citizen soon enlivened the passing moments

of my sojourn. The rude little boy had been quietly kneeling on a seat and protruding his tongue after the manner of his kind at the ladies and gentlemen whom he saw through the window. The young wife and mother, who was evidently *his* mother, disengaged one hand from the baby and placed it sharply across the little boy's outstanding ear. The three flappers, the young soldier, and the lively sailor were engaged in that sparkling sex-repartee which may be heard so often in our streets and parks at eventide; the benevolent old gentleman, who I knew instinctively was none other than 'Pro Bono Publico' of my morning sheet, was listening sympathetically to a tortuous and expletory tale of the ways of the War Office from the elderly soldier; and as the respectable citizen had snorted away when the behavior of the flappers had become shocking to his notions of propriety, I and the blind man were left together. Moving nearer, I remarked in the slightly raised tone in which one always addresses the sightless: 'It's a wet day.' But either the poor soul was deaf as well as blind or his wonderful instinct had informed him that a scoundrel was speaking, for I got no answer. Feeling a little foolish, I sauntered jauntily to the window.

Mr. Max Beerbohm has told us of his actor friend who became a professional seer-off; he also remarks that really artistic seeing-off is as difficult as any other art, except essay writing, which for sheer laboriousness licks creation, as the Americans say. I think they were all amateurs that I saw before me, as they were standing in monosyllabic and awkward groups below the protruding and visibly bored faces of the travelers. As I watched the train getting ready for departure I began betting which one

of the breathless persons who from second to second scuttled through the barrier would be left in the same manner as I.

Sure enough, when the guard had swung himself in and paper boys and chocolate sellers and porters and porteresses and the others whose business it is to speed departing trains were strolling back along the platform, a poor old lady came tumbling through gasping out if that was her train. When she learned that it had been her train but was now no more, she fell to weeping and crying on her God. Two porteresses led her gently to the ladies' room, where no doubt they administered the consolations of one woman to another. Why is it that only railways and drapers bother about such trifles as minutes and farthings? If I have an appointment with a friend it is

for 10.30 or 2.45 or 6 o'clock, but if I have an appointment with a train it is always for 10.33 or 2.41 or 5.59 or some other disconcerting, non-mnemonic point in time. No draper at a summer sale ever calculated his irritating farthing prices more oddly than it seems your time-table maker does his minutes. We shall have to found an 'anti' society about it, I can see. 'Society for the Abolition of Odd Minutes on Railways' might do for a title; and if we offer a prize for the best essay on 'The Absurdities of Time Tables' we shall get a cheap advertisement and members *and* their subscriptions will come flowing in. By the way, it's no use any of you applying for the post of secretary because that will be given to the chairman's friend: and I mean to be the chairman.

To-day

GRAY

BY MARTIN ARMSTRONG

GRAY of the twilight come,
 Spread those wide wings above our meadows: bring
 Coolness and mist: make dumb
 The jarring noise of day, and gently ring
 Our woods and ponds with dimness: take away
 All busy stir; but let the gray owl sway
 Noiselessly over the bough like a little ghost:
 And let the cricket in the dark hedge sing
 His withered note; and, O Immortal Host,
 Welcome this traveler to your drowsy hall
 And, standing at the porch, speechless and tall,
 Close the great doors, shut out the world, and shed
 Your benediction on this drooping head.

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