

# AMBROSE BIERCE

BY CAREY McWILLIAMS

**B**IERCE has been spoken of as a "notorious obscurian," but there was really nothing obscure about the man. This reputation, however, coupled with an amazing amount of esoteric writing about him, has resulted in a myth. It is impossible to deal with this myth other than by a resort to the convenient make-shift of paradox. Thus it can be said, and truly, that Bierce was a very famous man in his lifetime and yet was but little known. Little has been written about him; much has been written about him. Can fact ever be disentangled from fancy? Can the sources of myths ever be traced and analyzed? It is to be doubted. Perhaps further discussion of the man will but result in further confusion, but this is a peril to which all criticism is subject.

Bierce has been written about by the following, the mere juxtaposition of whose names will perhaps explain the growth of the myth: Haldane MacFall, Arthur Machen, A. Conan Doyle, Elbert Hubbard, Arnold Bennett, Arthur Brisbane, William E. Gladstone, Joel Chandler Harris, Eugene Field, Paul Jordan-Smith, William Marion Reedy, John Stapleton Cowley-Brown, Percival Pollard, Walter Harte, Edwin Markham, Gertrude Atherton, W. C. Morrow, Walter Jerrold, R. F. Dibble, Edward J. O'Brien, Walter A. Mursell, C. Hartley Grattan, Allen Nevins, Jay House, Ruth Guthrie-Harding, Franklin K. Lane, Michael Williams, Charles Warren Stoddard, Mark Twain, Edward H. Smith, G. R. Sims, Van Wyck Brooks, Samuel Loveman, Ella Sterling Cummins, Vincent Starrett, Benjamin De Casseres, Dana Sleath, H. G. Scheffauer,

Victor Llona, Charles Willis Thompson, Mary Austin, Thomas Beer, Oscar Lewis, David Starr Jordan, Eric Partridge, George Sterling, Lewis Mumford, Wilson Follett, Harold Williams, Alfred C. Ward and Silas Bent. To the list should be added the name of Rabbi Danziger, sometimes known as Adolphe De Castro,—dentist, lawyer, author, diplomat and theologian. Rabbi Danziger has written much about Bierce, and has talked to newspaper reporters with a glittering profusion of anecdote, but he has omitted to mention the most important of all his memories of Bierce: the time his friend broke a cane over his head.

Bierce has been discussed as if he were wholly a writer of short stories by such critics as Fred Lewis Pattee, Alfred C. Ward and Harold Williams. His stories, in fact, are of trivial importance when compared with the amazing bulk of his satirical writing; if he was a great short-story writer, then it was by a miracle of indirection. Others have been impressed with his talents as a political philosopher, as witness Silas Bent's article in the *Double Dealer* for January, 1921, in which grave comment is made upon the pontifical utterances of the Master. The fact is that much of Bierce's political writing is unutterably trite, Silas Orin Howes' introduction to "The Shadow on the Dial" to the contrary notwithstanding. Again an editorial writer for the *Nation* makes the common mistake of assuming that Bierce was a propagandist against war. Nothing could be further from the truth. These and many similar misapprehensions have arisen largely because Bierce's Collected Works have been accepted as the final repository of his



writings. But this huge collection actually omits the most important portion of his work: his long-continued and highly characteristic "Prattle" in the *Argonaut*, the *Wasp* and the San Francisco *Examiner*. There has been too much comment about him and too little fact.

Bierce was born in Meigs county, Ohio, June 24, 1842, the son of Marcus Aurelius and Laura Sherwood Bierce. His family originally emigrated from England and settled in Lyme, Conn. They were related to Sir Charles Bell, the English anatomist. Connecticut, as is well known, made ambitious claims to the territory westward of its present boundaries, and streams of emigrants from the mother-State settled in the province known as the Western Reserve.

These settlers were very religious and the Bierce family was nothing if not orthodox. Most of the pioneers located in Ashtabula county, and, if we may accept the authority of "Ohio and the Western Reserve," by Alfred Mathews (1902), the Bierce family was among them. Later the Bierces moved to Meigs county, where Ambrose was born, and finally they settled in Indiana near Elkhart.

The history of the family in this vicinity has been laboriously exhumed by Maurice Frink, city editor of the Elkhart *Truth*. The meager but extremely interesting facts were first published in that paper in 1922, and a note containing additional material was written by Mr. Frink for *Book Notes* in August, 1923. But Mr. Frink's story is misleading in at least one particular: it assumes that the Bierces were very commonplace, mid-Western trash. The fact is that their ancestry was quite distinguished, and that many members of the family served with credit in the Civil War. They were New Englanders in the strict sense of the term, and Puritans to the bone.

Even after the settlement in Ohio and Indiana, when it may be inferred that the family had fallen in state, there were several notable members. One of these was an

uncle of Ambrose, Lucius Verus Bierce. He was a gentleman of sundry distinctions. He wrote a volume of essays and served at one time as the president of a small college. In the month of December, 1838, he gathered together a band of 135 men and boarded the steamboat *Champlain* to join the so-called Canadian Rebellion. The men landed above Walkerville, Ont., and marched down to Windsor, where they set fire to the military barracks and guardhouse and to the steamer *Thames*, which was at the dock. Great damage was done: soldiers were killed, the docks were fired, and many habitations destroyed. Finally the rebellion was dispursed by Col. John Prince. The whole tale may be found in "The Story of Detroit" by George B. Catlin, published by the Detroit *News* in 1923. Lucius Verus, nothing if not versatile, later became interested in sculpture and contemplated a trip to Italy for study. He was greatly admired by his nephew for his keen mind and high courage.

Of his immediate family, however, Ambrose was never very proud. He once told George Sterling that his father and mother were "unwashed savages," and to another acquaintance he remarked that all he ever inherited from his mother was a curse—asthma. The entire family, with the exception of Ambrose and his brother Albert, who also went to the Pacific Coast, was very religious, and it was for this reason that Ambrose never returned to Indiana after the Civil War, though he did make one trip home during the war, when he was wounded. Before enlisting he had written some boyish verses to one "Fatima," which he mailed to the young lady unsigned, but never doubting that she would recognize him as their author. The verses contained this line: "Fatima is divine! For I have kissed her thrice, and she is surely mine!" When the returned hero called on his love and asked her if she had received the verses she exclaimed: "Oh, was it *you*!" This was a story that Bierce never wearied of repeating in his later years.



## II

Company C of the 9th Indiana Volunteers was organized at LaPorte, Ind., in 1861. Bierce enlisted at once; he was but nineteen years old. In 1862 the regiment joined the 42nd Ohio Infantry and the 6th Kentucky Volunteers at Nashville and was assigned to the command of General W. B. Hazen. A graphic and detailed account of the service that followed may be found in General Hazen's "A Narrative of Military Service," published by Ticknor Company, at Boston, in 1885.

Bierce was a member of the general's staff during the remainder of the war, and is mentioned in his commander's book as a very brave and gallant fellow. In later years Bierce and Hazen made an engineering expedition into the West and they were always fast friends. When Bierce disappeared into Mexico, his old comrade wrote a letter to his daughter which is as fine a tribute to the man's gallantry as could be imagined. Bierce was breveted for his services and several times mentioned in despatches. He received an ugly scalp wound at Kenesaw Mountain and was loaded on an open flat car late at night and transported back to the base hospital. The dead and dying were piled knee-deep on the car, and left with only the moon to witness their agony.

But Bierce, though war was unkind to him, was not against it. On the contrary he loved it. He wrote and thought much on military matters and once lectured at the War College in Washington. For years he carried on a correspondence with Lord Kitchener, for whom he entertained a great admiration. Bierce's stories reflect his mastery of military detail, and he has been ranked by Laurence Stallings with the greatest of war authors. In "What I Saw of Shiloh," he sings the poetry and glamour of war with naïve rhetoric:

O days when all the world was beautiful and strange; when unfamiliar constellations burned in the Southern midnights, and the mocking-bird poured out his heart in the moon-gilded magnolia; when there was something new under a

new sun; will your fine, far memories ever cease to lay contrasting pictures athwart the harsher features of this later world, accentuating the ugliness of the longer and tamer life? Is it not strange that the phantoms of a blood-stained period have so airy a grace and look with so tender eyes?—that I recall with difficulty the danger and death and horrors of the time, and without effort all that was gracious and picturesque?

But Bierce did not forget the horrors of war. He told many dreadful stories in his column of "Prattle," particularly in the *Wasp* between 1881 and 1886, which did not find a place in his published works. He narrated such truly Bierce episodes as the story of the cavalry officer who was to be shot for desertion. The man was placed, according to Bierce, astride his own coffin, blind-folded. The firing squad was ready to fire the fatal volley, when the doomed man spoke to the officer in charge of the execution. No one heard what was said. Later Bierce questioned the officer and was informed that the unfortunate deserter had requested that a saddle be placed on the coffin!

There is also the story of the two men to be hanged at Murfreesboro, Tenn., for committing a murder outside the day's routine of war. One of them began to tell the assembled army gathered to witness the hanging that he was "going to Jesus, boys," and just then, so Bierce says, a nearby engine emitted a harsh "Hoot, Hoot!" and the men met death to a roar of laughter. Many of Bierce's more familiar war stories are based on actual happenings, as, for example, "Killed at Resaca." Bierce was the officer who carried the news of Lieut. Brayle's death to a lovely lady on Rincon Hill in San Francisco and received the response given in the story.

But while he believed in war, he was no chauvinist. He once remarked to his daughter that General Robert E. Lee was the noblest character of the Civil War and easily the finest general in either army. He was skeptical about the justness of the cause for which he fought so gallantly. Once, when the long-lost body of a Confederate soldier was found near Washington, Bierce wrote to Sterling: "They found



a Confederate soldier the other day with his rifle alongside. I'm going over to beg his pardon." He disliked noisy patriotism, as witness his remark apropos of General Salomon that "he drew his tongue and laid it on the altar of his country." He curtly refused the offer of the government to give him some \$50,000 of accumulated back pay in a note in which he said: "When I hired out as an assassin for my country, that wasn't part of the contract." And he warned his daughter never to accept a cent of the money.

Bierce was against the Spanish-American War and always spoke of it as a freak. At a time when his employer, the chromatic William Randolph Hearst, was dazzling America with gaudy tales about the imprisonment of Evangelina Cisneros, Bierce was writing in the same paper on the same page: "We can conquer these people without half trying, for we belong to the race of gluttons and drunkards to whom dominion is given over the abstemious. We can thrash them consummately and every day of the week, but we cannot understand them; and is it not a great golden truth, shining like a star, that what one does not understand one knows to be bad?"

### III

Bierce's residence in London was the most important episode of his life aside from the war chapter. In 1872 he was a free lance journalist in San Francisco, writing feeble copy for a column called "The Town Crier" in the *News-Letter*. He later collected this material and published it in London as "Nuggets and Dust." It represents the entire body of his writing prior to his London residence, and I stress the point because many critics have stated that he wrote for the *Argonaut* before going to England. This is erroneous, and the significance of the truth may be easily seen by comparing "Nuggets and Dust" with the column of "Prattle" which Bierce started in Volume I, No. 1, of the *Argonaut* on March 25, 1877. He went to England a

rough, uncouth Western humorist, and came back a wit who wrote with great finish and elegance.

It was in 1872 that Bierce married Mary Eleanor Day, daughter of Captain H. H. Day, a wealthy Nevada miner, who had participated in the Virginia City discoveries. Mollie Day, as she was called, was one of the two or three most beautiful "society belles" of early San Francisco. The marriage took place in the San Leandro home of Judge Noble Hamilton. Captain Day presented the young couple with \$10,000 as a wedding gift and they left for England on a honeymoon.

In England Bierce soon came into contact with a group of writers who he thought were of the utmost literary importance, but who were really only "raffish celebrities of Fleet Street." He had corresponded with Tom Hood prior to going to England and that fact was one of the reasons for the visit. Several times it has been said that he also corresponded with Leigh Hunt, but this, of course, is incorrect, for Hunt died in 1859. The story probably got afloat because Bierce named his younger son after Leigh Hunt. In England he learned his trade as a wit from such men as Tom Hood, G. A. Sala, George R. Sims, W. S. Gilbert, Henry S. Leigh, Arthur Stretchley, Clement Scott, Godfrey Turner, T. W. Robertson, Austin Dobson and Henry Sampson. Bierce was an eager pupil. He derived much pleasure from his association with these brilliant, if not important, scribes. He was more happy with Hood than with the others, and was a frequent visitor at Hood's home in Penge, where they enjoyed many a bowl of grog, and where they made a death pact together. In 1875 Hood died. One day, several weeks later, Bierce was walking opposite Warwick Castle when he suddenly felt the presence of his friend in the street. The experience was never forgotten and he made fantastic use of it years later in "The Damned Thing," one of his most famous stories.

Bierce left some recollections of these



early London days in his *Collected Works*. His easy circumstances enabled him to associate with as charming a society as London possessed. G. R. Sims has some words about Bierce in his autobiography, and Gilbert Dalziel, of the *Brothers Dalziel*, who owned *Fun* and published Tom Hood's *Comic Annual*, remembers Bierce's visits to the office of the publication at 80 Fleet street. The Bierce of the London days is also remembered by Hattie O'Connor, the only child of Henry Sampson, who was editor of *Fun* after Hood's death in 1875, and by Mrs. Croston, formerly Julia Sampson, who knew him in London and visited him years later in San Francisco. Mrs. Croston's interesting memoirs of him may be found in the *London Evening Standard* for September 15, 1922.

In London Bierce published three books, one of which became quite popular by reason of Gladstone's fondness for it. At this time he was a member of the famous White Friar's Club. Years later he used to tell of attending a dinner there given in honor of Mark Twain and Joaquin Miller. Miller came attired in red hip boots, and a buckskin jacket, with a huge knife stuck in the sash he wore as a belt. Mark and Bierce did not appear at all amazed by Miller's appearance, but accepted it as though such gaudiness were common in America. With elaborate nonchalance they even failed to notice it when Miller picked a fish up from the table by its tail and swallowed it whole.

Bierce lived in London for five years, from 1872 to 1877. His two sons, Day and Leigh, were born there. Later Mrs. Day, his mother-in-law, came to London on a visit and returned to America with Mrs. Bierce and the two children. It was not long after their return that Bierce received word that his wife was again *enciente*. He immediately abandoned his work in London to return and be with her. He returned early in 1877, took up a residence in San Rafael, and began to write his "Prattle" for the *Argonaut*.

The precious criticism which has re-

ferred to this "Prattle" as "unfortunate journalese" is grounded on ignorance. I cannot help thinking it is the most important work Bierce ever did. The much vaunted war stories were written as mere fillers to occupy the space of "Prattle" when its author was indolent or there was a paucity of fools to lambast. "Prattle" appeared in the *Argonaut* from 1877 to 1879. During 1880 Bierce was in the Black Hills on a mining expedition. He returned to San Francisco in 1881 and "Prattle" then ran in the *Wasp*, one of the first colored cartoon weeklies in America, until about 1886. From approximately 1886 to 1896 it appeared every week in the *San Francisco Examiner* on the editorial page, two or three columns of the wittiest, sharpest satire ever written by an American.

The yellowing columns of "Prattle" are amusing even today. I doubt if such beautiful abuse has ever been equaled in our literature. It was so violent that once the attorney for a criminal Bierce was abusing moved for a change of venue on the ground that Bierce's writing had incensed the entire community to such an extent that an impartial jury was impossible. When he read to the court some of Bierce's couplets the court considered the matter for a moment and then granted the motion. This column continued for twenty years.

#### IV

About the question of Bierce's appalling cynicism much theorizing has centered. "Bierce," said David Starr Jordan, "always seemed to me a fine and brave spirit whose life had been darkened by some hidden tragedy." George Sterling, also, murmured about a hidden tragedy and mystery. There were three tragedies in Bierce's life, but I do not think they had anything whatever to do with shaping his mind.

The first had to do with his wife. Bierce separated from her about 1891, when he left the family home at St. Helena and took up his residence at Auburn. The cause



of their separation was simply incompatibility. Bierce's wife was a beautiful woman, but she was conventional, orthodox and perhaps burdened with social aspirations. Bierce always said that he would never divorce her, and he never did. He told one of his oldest and dearest friends that he had never cared for any other woman. Of Mrs. Bierce's devotion to her husband there can be no question. But through a misunderstanding of his wishes she applied for a divorce in Los Angeles in 1904, and then died within three weeks after it had been granted.

However tragic this affair may have been, it must be apparent that it did not change the character of Bierce's writing. He was writing the same pungent satire in 1877, when he was living at San Rafael very happily with his wife and children, that he was writing in 1891 at Auburn after the separation. It has been suggested that Mrs. Bierce was jealous of her husband, who was, of course, lionized by women wherever he went. But the truth is that she seems to have been vastly amused by the antics of admirers, who tried every ruse imaginable to catch his fancy. On the mantel of their St. Helena home was a collection of gifts that they had sent him.

The second tragedy was that of his eldest son, Day. This boy, who was very gifted and beautiful, was living, in July of 1889, at Chico, Calif. He fell in love with a young girl, Eva Adkins. They were both about eighteen. On the eve of their marriage, the girl ran away to Stockton with young Bierce's best friend. During the elopers' absence of several weeks the local newspapers made great sport of the affair and the result was that Day, a very sensitive youngster, became insane with rage. When the couple returned, the inevitable happened: young Bierce and Hubbs, the other man, began to shoot at about the same time. Both died. The two bodies were brought out from Chico on the same train. At Sacramento they parted: young Bierce's being sent to St. Helena and

Hubbs' to Stockton. The Adkins girl stood on the platform, one ear clipped off by a flying bullet from the revolver of one of her lovers, and remarked to the reporters: "Now ain't that funny—one goes one way, the other goes another!"

This occurred in 1889. A terrible shock, indeed, but the great bulk of Bierce's writing had been written by that date. It was hoped that the tragedy might result in a reconciliation between the Bierces, but it was otherwise. Bierce soon returned to Auburn. In his absence, however, his former employer, and now arch enemy, Frank Pixley, had seized upon the occasion to wax moralistic at his expense in the *Argonaut*. Pixley, who had tasted Bierce's lash, wrote with cruelty and malice. Bierce wrote an answer which may be found in the *Examiner* for August 25, 1889. In it he said, addressing Pixley:

You disclosed considerable forethought, Mr. Pixley, in improving the occasion to ask for lenity, but I can see nothing in the situation to encourage your hope. You and your kind will have to cultivate fortitude in the future as in the past; for assuredly I love you as little as ever. Perhaps it is because I am a trifle dazed that I can discern no connection between my mischance and your solemn "Why persecutest thou me?" You must permit me to think the question incompetent, irrelevant and immaterial,—the mere trick of a passing rascal swift to steal advantage from opportunity. Your *ex post facto* impersonification of the Great Light is an ineffective performance: it is only in your undisguised character of sycophant and slanderer for hire that you shine above.

The son Leigh was the center of the third tragedy. He seems to have been a very brilliant fellow, but intemperate. When he was living with his father in Oakland, a woman who had become infatuated with him at Los Gatos grew offensive in her advances and rumors of the affair reached Bierce. He called on the woman at her hotel and told her to leave Oakland at once or he would publicly denounce her in "Prattle." She left. Leigh later went to New York and became quite well known as an editor and illustrator. He even found backing for a little publication called the *Bee*. But he made a very unfortunate marriage, and it brought down



the wrath of his father, who did not write or speak to him during the two years prior to his death. One day the newspaper for which Leigh was working gave a Christmas benefit. Leigh was to escort a wagonload of provisions and supplies to the East Side. He became intoxicated *en route*, and gave the Christmas treats away. Pneumonia followed and he died. Another terrible blow to his father, but that was in 1901, and Bierce was old enough at that time to be a grandfather.

Whatever may be made of these tragedies, it is apparent that they fall short of an adequate explanation of Bierce's bitterness. It is more probable that the Civil War, and more particularly the period of corruption and dishonesty that followed, made a cynic of him. In any case, his exile in barbaric San Francisco for twenty years could hardly have made him an optimist. The asthma theory has also been put forward. Bierce suffered from asthma as a boy in Indiana; he had inherited the affliction from his mother. He was not bothered with it, however, during the war. Then followed the long expedition across the plains with Hazen, and Bierce arrived in San Francisco a cured man, so far as he could then tell. He once remarked that he would never have married had he thought the cure other than absolute. But on his return to San Francisco in 1877 he was again cursed with the disease, and his agony was doubled when he learned that his younger son, Leigh, had in turn inherited it from him.

## V

In 1896 Bierce went to Washington. His friends say that he was sent there by Hearst for the sole purpose of fighting Collis P. Huntington's Southern Pacific refunding bill. But A. M. Lawrence, editor of the San Francisco *Examiner* for many years, says that Bierce came to him and requested the transfer. That he did successfully fight the refunding measure is borne out by the famous Huntington-Bierce interview, which

took place on the steps of the Capitol and made a great sensation in its day.

An encounter with Roosevelt deserves to be equally famous. Sam Davis, the well known Western journalist, had mentioned to Roosevelt that he knew Bierce. The President was immediately interested and expressed a desire to meet him. A formal invitation was sent at once. Bierce replied that he was exceedingly sorry to decline the invitation, but that it so happened that he had a previous engagement with an old friend from San Francisco, and that he never "neglected old friends to make new." Roosevelt was delighted and sent another note, saying, "I quite agree with you. Come tonight and let us be old friends." The loyal Sam Davis was present at the meeting, and, true to Virginia City form, introduced the President *to* Bierce. Later in the evening the three inspected the White House and Roosevelt showed them the famous painting of San Juan Hill with the Rough Rider, well in the foreground, leading the charge. He asked Bierce what he thought of the picture, and was informed that it was inaccurate since it depicted Roosevelt at San Juan when in truth he hadn't been there!

Bierce's life was full of such incidents. He and his wife received an elaborately printed invitation to attend the coronation ceremonies of the King and Queen of the Hawaiian Islands in 1881. Bierce's wife went, along with some others from San Francisco, but the major did not attend. His friends cabled him inquiring as to his absence and he responded: "Why should I bother to see a black Negro crowned Queen of the fly-speck islands?"

One time in St. Helena the local pastor came to call on Mrs. Bierce. Young Leigh ran in from the garden and remarked, aghast, "Daddy, I just heard Day say 'Damn God'." The pastor and Mrs. Bierce were properly horrified, but Bierce's only comment was: "My child, how many times have I told you not to say 'Damn God' when you mean 'God damn'!"

Bierce's wit at all times was very lively.



He once remarked to a lady in Oakland that to be really happy a good woman must possess the three B's, and when asked what they were he said: "She must be Bright, Beautiful and Barren." At a party in Oakland he remarked that a widow was "God's second noblest gift to man," and when some one asked him what the first was, he replied, very softly, "A bad girl." To a very, very proper woman in Washington, he remarked: "Madame, you are so proper that I would even hesitate to call you a woman, since a woman is only a man with a womb."

His daughter wrote to him in Washington asking him to visit her at her new home in Bloomington, Ill. His answer was a wire: "Why Bloomington?" His humor often took a grim turn. In a famous portrait by J. H. E. Partington, Bierce is shown standing by his writing table with his hand on a skull. After making some remark, he would turn to it and say: "That's so, isn't it, old fellow?" I am not at liberty to say whose skull it was. Suffice it to say that it was bequeathed to Bierce by a friend. The ashes of another friend he kept in a silver cigar-box on his desk.

When he was living at Angwin, Calif., in 1892, he met a little deaf girl, Elizabeth Walsh, who was then a waitress in a country hotel. He became interested in her and saw to it that she was sent to a school for the deaf in Berkeley. She possessed poetic talent and her premature death was a severe loss to Bierce. There is a very touching reference to this child on page 168 of his "Letters": he requests his niece to take a picture of the child's grave and send it to him.

His devotion to his disciples was memorable. Of them the following were the chief: George Sterling, H. G. Scheffauer, Flora MacDonald Shearer, Emma Frances Dawson, Gertrude Atherton, Ruth Guth-

rie-Harding, Blanche Partington, Ina Partington, Ina Peterson, Muriel Bailey, and Ruth Robertson (now Ruth Pialkovo). Rupert Hughes wrote Bierce letters addressed to "My Beloved Master." Of these pupils Sterling and Scheffauer were suicides; Flora MacDonald Shearer died in a sanitarium in Livermore, Calif.; Emma Frances Dawson died a recluse in Palo Alto (the newspapers said by starvation); and Mrs. Atherton and Mr. Hughes have committed intellectual hari-kari, the one by writing gland novels, the other by falling in love with the movies.

As Bierce grew older he wrote platitudes, wondered at the banality of existence, swore at life, and was obsessed with the suspicion that the entire play had been a dream. The mystery surrounding his disappearance into Mexico remains unexplained despite the recent efforts of his daughter to unearth the facts. After joining the revolutionists, Bierce wrote to his daughter that in order to convince the men he was with that he was loyal he had shot a few Mexicans; he added: "Poor devils! I wonder who they were!" Even the glamour of war had left him. Experience had embittered him, life had enraged him, and his mistress Art had forsaken him.

As he made that last sad journey southward, lingering at Shiloh, at Franklin, at Chickamauga, what memories must have flouted his soul! Men had died here, on these sun illuminated hillcrests, and he had shot some of them. Had it actually happened? Or was it only a dream of his youth? Battle cries and death yells, and murderous volleys of shot had once torn all this loveliness into a mad medley of hell and the very skies had bled with man's incurable folly. And all for what? They had not even known what they were fighting for!