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Bernard Shaw a Man With a Purpose

In a little book published in the United States by G. W. Jacobs and company, of Philadelphia, under the elegant title "Bernard Shaw," Mr. Holbrook Jackson, a fellow-Fabian, has assumed the task of "interpreting" the Irish Socialist, critic, dramatist and philosopher to those who persist in misunderstanding him. Mr. Jackson admits the difficulties of the undertaking. Not only the majority, but the "acute and honorable majority," frequently finds itself "curiously repelled" by Mr. Shaw. The "G. B. S." of popular superstition, which Mr. Shaw himself has helped to create, stands grinning and bowing and jesting between "G. B. S. gets on my nerves and bores me," says Mr. Shaw. G. B. S. affects a certain portion of the public in the same manner just as he amuses hugely another portion. "The extent of the public's amusement at Bernard Shaw," writes Mr. Jackson, "is the extent of their missing the point." And he goes on with a degree of understanding and knowledge which is inspiring to explain the real Shaw, man, Fabian, dramatist and philosopher, as he sees him—as he would have you see him—you who have named him "farceur," perhaps, or "clerk," or "Socialist," or "millionaire," or "charity" as he has later illustrated that folly on the stage in "Major Barbara." "Don't give him," he says. "Providing for families and giving alms are the same thing. From the point of view of society it does not matter a straw whether the person relieved of the necessity of working for his living by a millionaire's bounty be his son, his daughter's husband, or merely a casual beggar." This is what you often hear called a Shaw paradox. It is, of course, the mere bald statement of an indisputable fact—as commonsensical as Shaw's answer to the question, "What will Socialism be like?" "I don't know," he said.

Yet, with the other Fabians, Havelock Ellis, H. G. Wells, Sydney Webb and the rest, convinced that Socialism contains the germ of a better system of society than the present, he has worked to lead the bourgeois to see, first of all, the defects of the system with which they are so complacent—the bourgeois since he is the very citadel of conservatism—since the working man "who respects the bourgeois and wants to be bourgeois"—is best to be got at secondarily. Such is the Fabian idea—their program is to take what they can get and keep everlastingly at it.

"People," says Mr. Jackson, "will not listen to a new theory of society as long as they believe the old theory is right. Hence the modern reformer is of necessity an iconoclast first and a builder afterward." That Shaw is also a builder is proved when Mr. Jackson begins to consider him as philosopher. But the author considers him first as dramatist.

"The relationship of Bernard Shaw's plays to this state of affairs (the bourgeois complacency with things as they are) is that of diagnosis. They are critical and dramatic statements of disease." Further, where Ibsen, whose plays also are diagnoses, "rings up the curtain and show you life at psychological moments, Shaw does something else. He rings up the curtain and explains social life. Where Ibsen is a simple realist, Shaw is an expository realist—he is Ibsen become self-conscious." As to what constitutes the drama, in Mr. Jackson's view, "it is the clash of will and environment, whether the environment be some impalpable destiny as in the Greek drama, some overwhelming Shakespearean, or the narrowing ideals and institutions of an outworn society as in Ibsen and Tolstoy."

There follows an interesting comparison with W. S. Gilbert—the caricaturist must love what he laughs at. "Duty, for instance," says Mr. Jackson, "is desirable to Gilbert—in moderation. It is the fanaticism of duty which he abhors." Shaw casts aside the whole orthodox conception of duty. Gilbert, on the whole, admires duty. (Continued on Column Five.)

For Lovers of Literature

TRUE FRIENDS.

By Mary E. Killicc.

I go in the gray of morning,
And labor till set of sun;
Then home in the lengthening shadows
I fare when the day is done.

What matter if step be lagging,
Or weary the throbbing brain;
And what of the gibe or buffet
That whelmed the heart with pain?

Away, O ye gloomy visions—
Well shapes that shall haunt no more!
Your shadowy reign is ended—
Forgot at my sanctum door.

Ah! there, in the quiet evening,
I'm lord of a vast domain;
A "den" 'mid the tossing treetops,
With vista of sea and plain.

'Tis crowded, aye, overflowing,
With friends that are tried and true—
My books in their well-worn bindings,
My pipe of the winy hue.

I dream, and a smoky tendrill
Enframed fair Juliet's face;
Or dim in the midst of silver
Is pictured a Grecian race.

I circle remotest Pleiads,
Or delve in the ocean's floor;
I tarry with ancient cave-men,
Then wander by Nilus's shore.

I shrink 'neath the pale aurora
That glares o'er some Polar plain,
Or drift 'mid the Isles of Eden
That jewel the Spanish Main.

And thus, when my toil is ended,
And strivings of daytime cease,
My pipe and my books about me,
I stray in the paths of Peace.

About People and Books

Mrs. Bayard Taylor is visiting Mr. Taylor's sister, Mrs. Cary, at Kennett square, Philadelphia, writes the Philadelphia North American. She frequently comes from New York to see her husband's relatives and recall her associations with the country so affectionately described in Taylor's prose and verse, and in which they together lived for several years in handsome Cedarcroft. The mansion is successfully used as a boys' school, and the country roundabout, made so familiar to readers of "The Story" of Kennett, now devotes itself thrifly to the growth of mushrooms, carnations and tomatoes. Although for so many years a resident of this country and of the largest intellectual opportunities—being a daughter of Hansen, the eminent German astronomer, Mrs. Taylor still speaks English with a foreign accent, though, as is well known, she writes it perfectly. The fact only indicates how great are the difficulties of our speech.

far back as 1863, has just finished and published a new novel. There is a singular youthfulness and grace about the style and construction of "The Tents of Wickedness," though Mrs. Miriam Coles Harris, who wrote it, was born in 1834, and is therefore 73 now. She wrote the novel in Paris, where she lives. The plot concerns the awakening of an American girl brought up in the peaceful serenity of a French convent then plunged into the swirl of the American fast set. The story is absorbing and the pictures of life most vivid.

Six new books have just come from the Harpers. Three of these are novels by Margaret Deland, Hamlin Garland, and the French fictionist, Maurice Leblanc. Another is a story for small children entitled "Little Girl and Phillip," by Gertrude Smith.

Dr. Mitchell's New List.

Dr. S. Weir Mitchell's new Philadelphia town house is being prepared for his home-coming, and he is soon expected again in Philadelphia. It is his custom nowadays to remain longer at Bar Harbor than he formerly did. The Book News Monthly devoted its October number to him, and gave several interesting pictures of him and his homes. There were appreciative articles by Harrison S. Morris, Talcott Williams and Richard Watson Gilder. The Century Magazine announces the serial publication of Doctor Mitchell's new novel, "The Red City," for 1908. He always has his stories set in type for months before their publication. He then reads and rereads and revises them with the greatest care. His first choice of a title for his new story had been preempted, he learned, by Richard Whiteing. He then chose "The Red City" because the novel had to do with Philadelphia, and it is the reddest city in the world, he says, except Amsterdam. This is a companion to Doctor Mitchell's famous "Hugh Wayne." While the former was a story of the time of Washington the General, the new one is of the time of Washington the President.

Mrs. Atherton on Sex Relations.

Any woman can marry any man she chooses, says Mrs. Atherton. "We have fevers for them that last a few weeks, and then we become maternal and endure them. We women never love men as we imagine that we could love. Conquests fall on a woman in years. In time other things also cease to satisfy—books and dreams and sunset and liberty. When this finishes she will suddenly demand happiness—the real thing. Then she will love."

When clever women realize that they are a sex apart, and wait until their first youth at least is over before selecting a companion among men, then will the world have taken its first step towards real happiness.

There is a sort of highly bred woman who has all the secret fear and antagonism of her sex for the other, a profound resentment of the male instinct for possession, and the deeper terror that what the man may find will make her wholly his.

Life is packed with little unheard-of dramas of the eternal duel of sex; nothing else keeps it going.

A woman incapable of passion is neither more nor less than a failure. From the beginning of time the misery of the world has been caused by the superstition that love was all.

Love is the furious determination of the sex to persist.

Real happiness may lie in forgetting that love is selfish.

If one can be happy without love, why run the risks?

Free love and experimental matrimony are mere excuses for a sort of sensuality that is shallow and inconsistent.

The thought of marriage leaves some women resentful of bondage; of the surrender of self. That is the reason these never marry.

Theories upon love by a man past his prime are as valueless as those of a girl.

The happiness of women depends upon regulating love to the proper place.

A woman in love is eagerly psychological; she longs to discover once for all her sex and herself.

It is not possible for a woman to define one man's fascination to another man.

To be married and have ten children has kept more women up to the correct standard than anything else, except poverty.

Women invariably substitute the word "misunderstood" for failure to accept their point of view.—From Ancestors (Harper's) by Gertrude Atherton.

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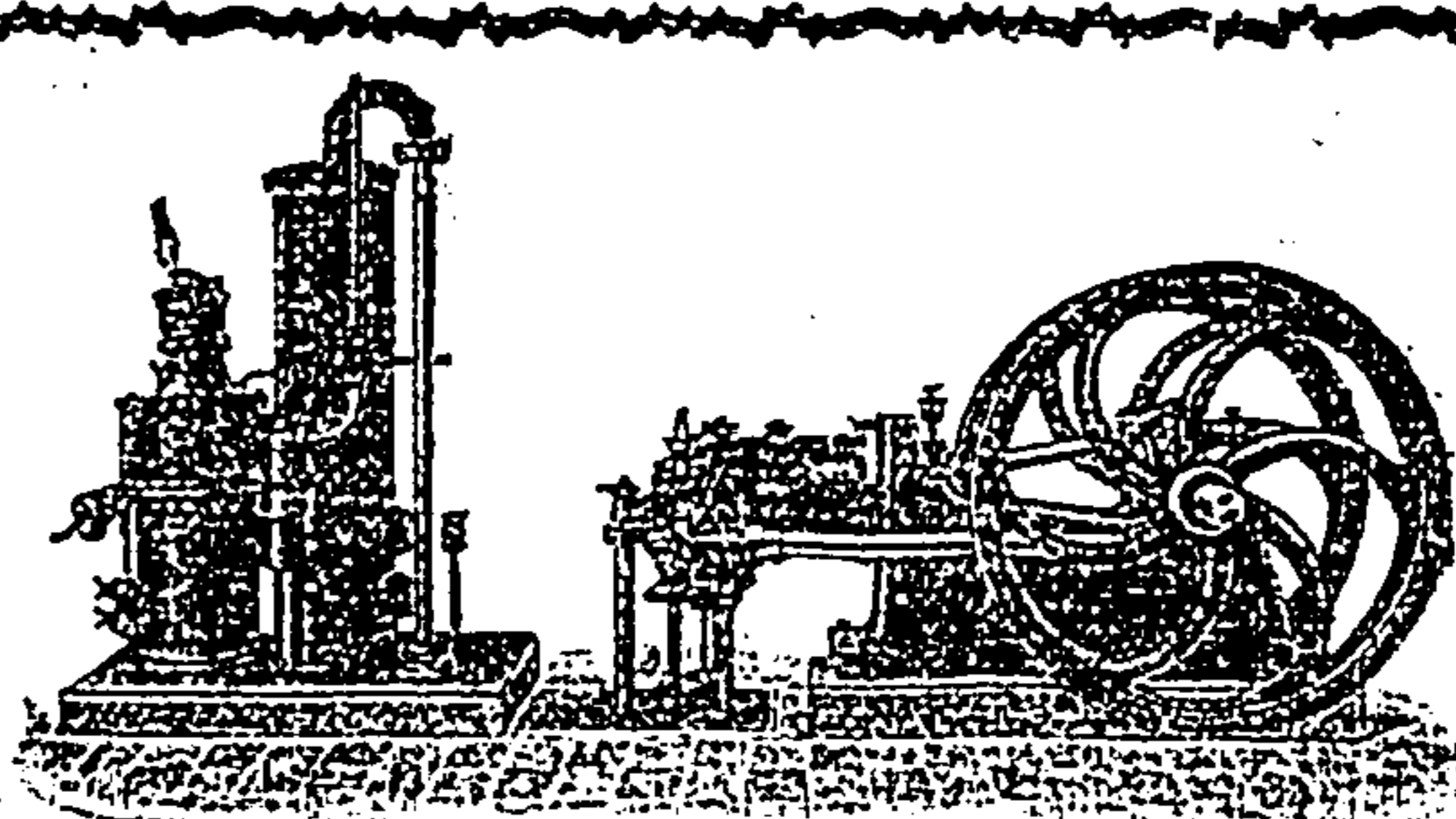
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(Continued From Column Two.)

and supports the fabric of conventions which moves him to mirth. Shaw is the "arch enemy" of these conventions—and his "laughter is never an end to itself." To quote further from Mr. Jackson:

"He has deliberately used art for philosophical and political ends, just as the church, perhaps less conspicuously used art for religious ends. What art there is in his works stands in the same perspective to the vital thought of today as the Madonnas and holy men in the canvases of the old masters stood in relation to what was vital in the thought of their day. Or, to take a more obvious parallel, the problem plays of Bernard Shaw—and for the matter of that, of Ibsen and Tolstoy, and all who have made problem the life of their drama—are the modern substitutes for the morality and mystery plays of the past."

Mr. Jackson goes on to characterize "Man and Superman" "as the modern version of the fall of man—man resisting the tempter and falling," which brings him—past the discussion of the Shaw woman—to Shaw the philosopher.

"The philosopher," he writes, "is the interpreter of his age. He tells you what you mean." Shaw is such an interpreter of moderns. The thrills got from the dramatic moments in Shaw's plays will be remembered by all who have felt them as shocks of realization of things familiar in subjective fact but strangely objective. As one young woman remarked after the play, they drag into the light the "things you think of when you lie awake nights."

As for the general principle behind Mr. Shaw's view of life—he is a man in "revolt not only against man's way of looking at life, but against life's way of treating man," he regards man not as having "much to be thankful for" as the orthodox do; rather he is "the injured party." But the remedy is not death, as Schopenhauer would have it, but life. Man, like all the rest of creation, is the servant of the life force, groping more or less toward the superman.

"So far from the life force having as its highest purpose the salvation of man, the highest purpose of man is to realize the trend of the life force. And only to the extent that man becomes in this way the savior of the world is man of value. Man is not an end in himself." Intrinsically he is merely one of the experiments of that same blind life force. And his later development—since he became a moral being—has seemed to indicate that he may be an abortive experiment—his whole progress a cul de sac. All this is Shaw's philosophy according to Mr. Jackson. If he returns to the point where morality began to warp him, he may yet serve Nature's purpose. Let him do not what he ought, but what he wants to do—get back to the animal instinct, which is the expression of the instinct of the life force. Mr. Jackson explains that doing what one wants does not necessarily mean repulsing into an orgy of vice, but he hints that if the removal of the bonds of orthodox morality should lead to such an orgy it would be the quickest way to get rid of the abortive experiment man and make room for another. Apparently Mr. Jackson has, like Mr. Shaw, faith otherwise—faith in the soundness of the instincts which are the expression of the life force which is to evolve the superman with man's help or without

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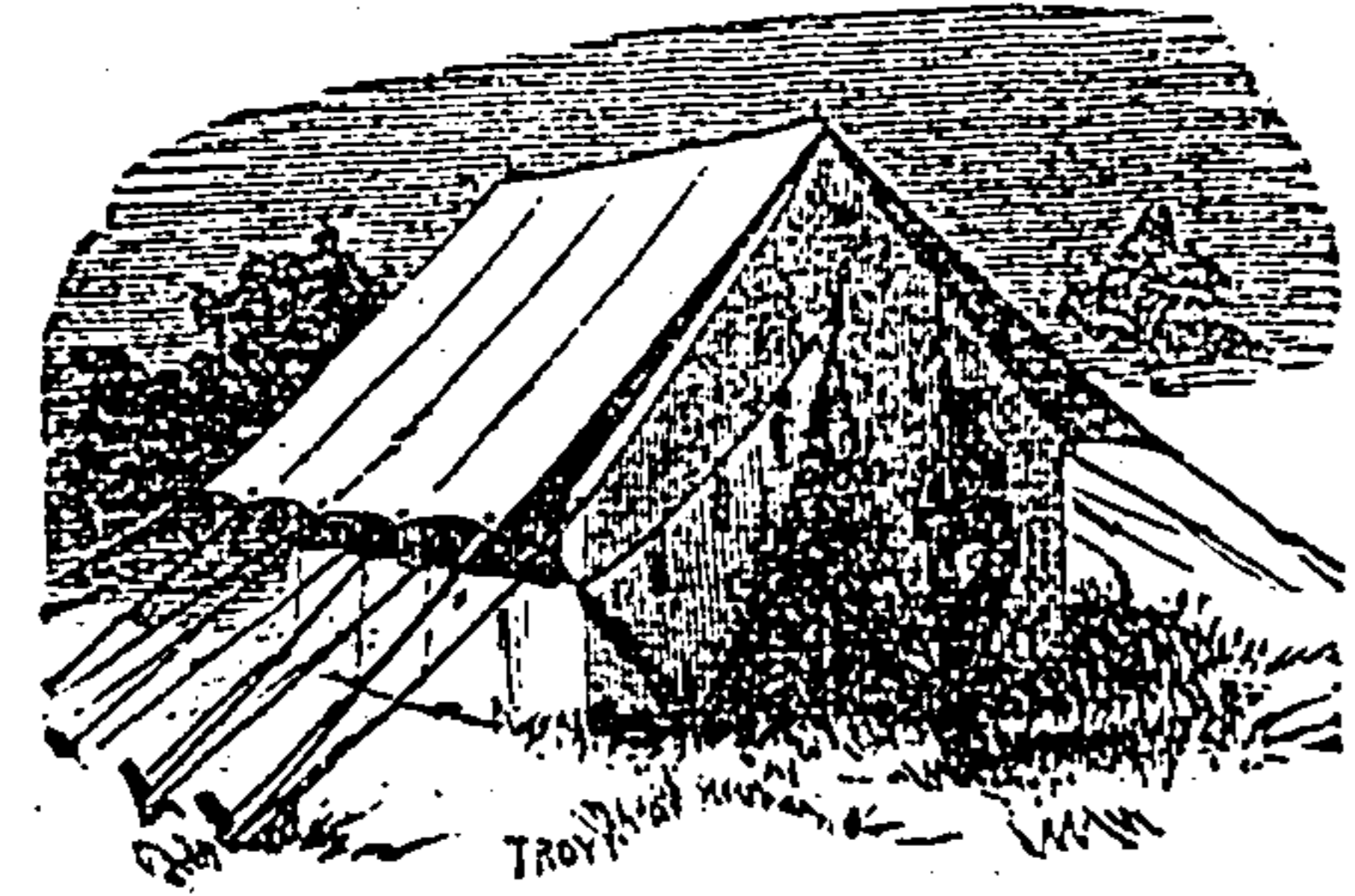
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