

TREMENDOUS TRIFLES

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Tremendous trifles by G. K. Chesterton

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G. K. CHESTERTON

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BY
G. K. CHESTERTON

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PREFACE

THESE fleeting sketches are all re-published by kind permission of the Editor of *The Daily News*, in which paper they appeared. They amount to no more than a sort of sporadic diary—a diary recording one day in twenty which happened to stick in the fancy—the only kind of diary the author has ever been able to keep. Even that diary he could only keep by keeping it in public, for bread and cheese. But trivial as are the topics they are not utterly without a connecting thread of motive. As the reader's eye strays, with hearty relief, from these pages, it probably alights on something, a bed-post or a lamp-post, a window blind or a wall. It is a thousand to one that the reader is looking at something that he has never seen : that is, never realized. He could not write an essay on such a post

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or wall: he does not know what the post or wall mean. He could not even write the synopsis of an essay—as, “The Bed-Post: Its Significance—Security Essential to Idea of Sleep—Night Felt as Infinite—Need of Monumental Architecture,” and so on. He could not sketch in outline his theoretic attitude towards window-blinds, even in the form of a summary—“The Window-Blind: Its Analogy to the Curtain and Veil—Is Modesty Natural?—Worship of and Avoidance of the Sun, etc., etc.” None of us think enough of these things, on which the eye rests. But don't let us let the eye rest. Why should the eye be so lazy? Let us exercise the eye until it learns to see the startling facts that run across the landscape as plain as a painted fence. Let us be ocular athletes. Let us learn to write essays on a stray cat or a coloured cloud. I have attempted some such thing in what follows; but any one else may do it better, if any one else will only try.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
A PIECE OF CHALK	1
THE SECRET OF A TRAIN	9
THE PERFECT GAME	17
THE EXTRAORDINARY CABMAN	23
AN ACCIDENT	29
THE ADVANTAGES OF HAVING ONE LEG	37
THE END OF THE WORLD	43
IN THE PLACE DE LA BASTILLE	51
ON LYING IN BED	57
THE TWELVE MEN	63
THE WIND AND THE TREES	69
THE DICKENSIAN	75
IN TOPSY-TURVY LAND	81
WHAT I FOUND IN MY POCKET	87
THE DRAGON'S GRANDMOTHER	93
THE RED ANGEL	101
THE TOWER	109

Tremendous Trifles

	PAGE
HOW I MET THE PRESIDENT	115
THE GIANT	123
A GREAT MAN	131
THE ORTHODOX BARBER	137
THE TOY THEATRE	145
A TRAGEDY OF TWOPENCE	153
A CAB RIDE ACROSS COUNTRY	159
THE TWO NOISES	167
SOME POLICEMEN AND A MORAL	173
THE LION	181
HUMANITY : AN INTERLUDE	187
THE LITTLE BIRDS WHO WON'T SING	195
THE RIDDLE OF THE IVY	203
THE TRAVELLERS IN STATE	211
THE PREHISTORIC RAILWAY STATION	219
THE DIABOLIST	225
A GLIMPSE OF MY COUNTRY	233
THE ANGRY STREET : A BAD DREAM	241
THE SHOP OF GHOSTS : A GOOD DREAM	249
THE MYSTERY OF A PAGEANT	257
THE BALLADE OF A STRANGE TOWN	265