

THE LOGICAL MAN

JEAN MACCALLUM SWEET

MR. PILSONBY was a logical man. To be truthful, he was the most logical man you would meet in a day's travel. And that's just where you would meet Mr. Pilsonby—in a day's travel, or a week's travel, or any amount of travel. Mr. Pilsonby was a wanderer. He liked to roam the face of the earth from end to end, poking into all kinds of little backwaters and forgotten places, and standing on big city street-corners among forgotten people, carefully carrying his neatly packed little bag of logic every minute of the time, and opening it up suddenly in unexpected places.

When I say that Mr. Pilsonby was a logical man, I do not mean that he was without sentiment. No indeed. It is a fact that he was brimful of sentiment, in a nice way. He really mixed his sentiment with his logic, but not to confusion. To make it all perfectly clear, I had better explain Mr. Pilsonby's philosophy, briefly.

Mr. Pilsonby argued that all sound sensible sentiment was based, somehow, on logic. He explained it something like old native superstitions, that have lately been proved to have good medical foundations. He always said, rather obtusely, that the sentiments that stick simply must have some logical basis or they wouldn't. And a lot of the time, by hook or by crook, Mr. Pilsonby was right.

And so, in his wanderings, Mr. Pilsonby came at last to the little kingdom of Lindenburg. He stayed there quite a while. He usually did, when he liked a place, and he liked Lindenburg. He liked to walk the country roads and watch the farmers ploughing and planting. He liked to stand by a board fence on the sidewalks, and watch a big hole being dug, because he knew that a big hole meant a big building, because he knew people who are wise dig deep for a solid foundation before they really start a big enterprize.

But most of all he liked to be near the Royal Palace when the gates were opened, and the Grand Opera Guards lined up, and the Royal Carriage rolled out with its six dancing white horses, and its coachmen, and its footmen, and the King and Queen themselves, sitting right there and smiling and bowing at the cheering crowds.

Mr. Pilsonby liked the cheering. He was a sensitive man, and the cheers said things to his ear. They spoke of love, they

spoke of admiration for a good show, well done,—but most of all they spoke of pride. "Look!" the cheers were saying to Mr. Pilsonby, the visitor, "Look! That's OUR King! That's OUR lovely Queen! Look! Haven't we a beautiful home for them! Don't we dress them nicely! They're our very own! Look! They smile at us! They like us! They're glad to be ours! Hurrah! HURRAH!"

And Mr. Pilsonby would look around at the crowds. He saw old men in silk hats cheering like children; and he saw poor ones in patched rags with shining faces. Their King and Queen belonged to all alike, and pride lifted them all to the same level. Being a logical man, Mr. Pilsonby knew that not all men can wear silk hats, neither must all wear patched rags. And suddenly he knew that only pride in a common possession can bring them at times to the same level. Mr. Pilsonby thought about that. In some places it could be a President, and in some it could be nothing more than a legend; but he thought, for the common good of Lindenburg, their Royal Family was a very good thing.

Mr. Pilsonby stayed in Lindenburg quite some time, without once opening his bag of logic. He hardly seemed to need it there. He wondered sometimes if he were getting old and neglecting it.

But at last, one day, the time came. Mr. Pilsonby was enjoying his stroll through the park, smiling at the babies and the young mothers alike—he was too little and too old for it to matter. Then, when he rounded a hedge of oleander or something, he came on a small crowd. They were muttering and pushing about—and listening to a thin young man with a hoarse voice who stood on one of the nice green park benches and shouted, and pulled out handfuls of long black hair. Mr. Pilsonby stood back by the oleanders, or whatever they were, and listened.

"And so I say," the young man shouted, "it's time we woke up! Down with these leeches, sucking the blood of the country! Why are the toes out of your shoes? Why are your children crying for bread? Why? I'll tell you why! So Lindenburg can keep them in luxury! So the public money can pay for white horses and gold crowns! That's why. The time is ripe. Strike now. Throw them out! Stop paying the price of your children's bread for a pretty show." Oh the scorn in the voice, now worn to a thin screech, "I say Down With The King!" The little crowd muttered a feeble agreement, and Mr. Pilsonby stepped forward.

"Young man," said Mr. Pilsonby mildly. The young man glared. "Go away," he shouted, "You can't shut me up! This is a free country—I can say what I like." Mr. Pilsonby smiled faintly at that, but let it go. "I wasn't going to stop you," he said, "I just wanted to ask—" "Go away!" the young man screamed, "I don't want any of your sentimental drivel—your traditions, your loyalty and stuff. I know your kind—sloppy old fools!"

But Mr. Pilsonby smiled again, apologetically. "I'm a stranger here," he said in his meek voice, "I don't know anything about your traditions. I just wanted to ask you something. I was—very much interested—."

"Well,—go ahead, ask," said the young man ungraciously.

"I was wondering," said Mr. Pilsonby with some hesitation, "just how much it costs to keep your Royal Family—by the year, I mean."

"Two hundred thousand dollars. That's what it costs! Two hundred thousand a year, skinned out of our hides!—snatched from the mouths of our children! That's what it costs!"

"Hmmm," said Mr. Pilsonby, with deep sympathy, "a considerable sum of money, a considerable sum. And now, sir, may I ask another question?"

"Go ahead," said the young man. The crowd had drawn closer, and stopped shuffling and mumbling.

"Can you tell me the approximate population of Lindenburg?" Mr. Pilsonby was nervously rattling the change in his pocket.

"About ten million, last census, I guess," said the young man, looking a little nonplussed.

"Hmmm," said Mr. Pilsonby thoughtfully, "Ten into two," he muttered, and looked the young man in the eye, "that makes two cents apiece." The young man looked still more nonplussed.

"Now," said Mr. Pilsonby, while the crowd held its breath, "just one more question." Little Mr. Pilsonby raised his voice. "Don't you think, young man, for two cents, you could better occupy your time and talents than in trying to start a revolution in a peaceful country? Here you are, sir!"

Mr. Pilsonby walked majestically back to the oleanders, or whatever they were,—leaving a very nonplussed young man with two cents in his hand, in the midst of a hilarious crowd of erstwhile revolutionaries.