UNTIL TOMORROW

"The destruction was so near complete that plant and animal life crept back over the earth slowly. The soil itself was to a great extent polluted by the fall-out. But that portion of humanity which escaped was truly fit, and brought with it memories, and a resolve never to repeat the fatal mistake of society divided against itself."

The speaker was Hubert Brodkin, venerable sage and keeper of the archives; the time, the year 1000 A.H. (after the holocaust); the place, Entrada Island, large western neighbor of a country once called Kanata. Professor Brodkin's listeners, several thousand in number, were gathered on the sea-shore and along the sandy estuaries of two great rivers; yet so near perfect was his voice transmitter that all could have heard had he spoken in a whisper. Behind them lay a lush land and all shared in common those things commonly used. There was plenty for all, with no rich, no poor, a fulfillment of the dreams of ancient dreamers called "Utopians," whose very names were forgotten.

"Warnings of the impending catastrophe," continued the professor, "were given about the year 1950, in what was then referred to as the 'Christian Era.' But the great mass of people were indifferent, and left all vital matters to those few who held them in complete subjection and who were spoken of as "experts." The particular economic and social period was described variously as 'Rugged Individualism,' 'Democracy,' and 'A Way of Life.' Five per cent of the population came into control of ninety-five per cent of the world's wealth, and so well did they command communication and silence opposition that the major portion of mankind was thought-controlled. It was a time of hand-clapping, of slogans, catch-words and phrases. Imitation came to be regarded as talent. Mouth-gurgling passed for music. From talking and thinking alike people began to look alike, to resemble in certain measure a famous dummy of the time called 'Mortimer Snerd.' And so tractable had they become that the dominant few, drunk with power and greediness could play with them as an angler plays with a hooked fish. This mass inertia tempted the world's dictators to lead it on into events so terrible that today's descriptions are dumb. People and records went down to destruction together, and what little I can tell you was passed on mainly by word of mouth from those few who survived to their descendants."

Here, onward, Professor Brodkin's style of speech became broken now and then by a slangy idiom echoing, so to speak, out of some forgotten time with which he alone seemed in tune:

"The circus began in this section of the earth after a number of sailing ships unloaded their razzle-dazzle biped freight. They struck a wild land inhabited by Primitives. Each ship's company consisted of a small number of Grabbers and a large quota of Goofs. The Grabbers were OK, they were wise cookies. The Goofs were everything else. Unlike Mother Hubbard, they were at once both poor and lacking in ambition. So long as they could eat, sleep, and breathe air in and out they were satisfied. The Grabbers sicked the Goofs onto the Primitives. The Goofs advanced in three columns. Some members of the first unit rode horses. Others bore guns, powder, and lead. Such gentry were described in a future time as 'Liberators.' Their combined attack appalled the Primitives who fought back as best they could with stone hatchets, bows and arrows. The front section of the second column carried a huge white cross on which the skeleton of a man was spread — this terrorized the Primitives. Now followed closely a group clad in long black coats, and carrying large books in their hands — these hypnotized the Primitives and softened 'em up for the third company. These sweet-scented gentlemen lugged kegs and jugs filled with a fiery fluid which sent the blood racing through the natives' veins, causing them to dance and whoop 'er up in wild fashion.

"Ground had now been broken for the Grabbers, who arrived plentifully supplied with mouse-traps, miscellaneous trinkets, and muskets made of cast-iron that later were to burst in the natives' faces. The Grabbers had an eye on four-footed animal skins in the possession of the Primitives. Spaniards called the procedure 'Negocio,' Englishmen dubbed it 'Business Incentive,' which term in after years was to ripen into 'Free Enterprise.'

"When the process of skinning the Primitives who had skinned the quadrupeds was well advanced and both were all but exterminated, the Grabbers divided the country amongst themselves, drove stakes and built fences around their allotments, then posted signs proclaiming this land is the private property of Grabber So-and-So and trespassers will be severely dealt with by virtue of 'Constituted Authority.' This latter sounded awesome to the Goofs, and since it was printed in large capitals they had not the temerity to question matters; especially when a number of the bigger Goofs were dressed in uniforms, armed, and sworn to obey the rules laid down by Constituted Authority.

"A 'Culture' period now followed in which the Goofs were taught to sing patriotic songs, and told how lucky they were to be living in Kanata. It was driven home to them how badly the Grabbers of other lands treated their Goofs.

"Then, when the landless, propertyless Goofs had no alternative, they made a deal with their overlords by which they (the Goofs) could live on the lands and do all the work, cut the timber, build the houses, grow the crops, raise cattle, build dams, factories, power plants; in brief, do everything necessary to keep the Grabbers in clover.

"The society developing out of this lopsided partnership became finally an insane mechanism in which the parts operated against the whole. Each family of Goofs desired the elimination of its neighbor. Each group hoped for the misfortune of other groups. Everywhere, individual interest took precedence over public good. The lawyer wanted litigations, particularly among the rich. The physician wanted sickness — he would be ruined if everybody died without disease. The military man wanted wars that would carry off half his comrades and secure him promotion; the undertaker wanted burials; farmers wanted famine to double, or treble the price of grain; the architect, carpenter and mason wanted conflagrations. It was truly each against all. The era was described by a noted philosopher, Bertram Dresser, as 'Graboofia.' Indeed it is to Dr. Dresser that we are indebted for much of the information handed down. And it all added up to a survival of the slickest.

"This charming result was affected by the Goofs surrendering to the Grabbers at the point of production their entire product, and receiving wages sufficient merely to restore the energy to work. Surplus values retained by the Grabbers had to be sold in order to provide them with profit, ease and luxury. Fully half the Goofs were now put to advertising and unloading the loot. But due to a world wide expansion of technology the Grabber gangs of most lands had surpluses to sell. Markets shrunk and rivalry between the great robber groups grew bitter. In the frantic search for trade they ferreted out all potential customers. It was at this point that propaganda ran rife and military build up sky-rocketed. It was a carnival of name-calling; when interests clashed the other fellow became a 'Red,' a 'Black,' a 'Blue,' or a 'Communist.' Each Grabber group would trot out some new weapon, expecting all opposition to collapse in fear; but instead, some one of them would come up with an even newer and better instrument of destruction. More than half the Goofs' labours were devoted to this end.

"From early youth Kanatan Goofs had been taught that one of their