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FEARFULLY restless and eternally yearning is the soul of man. He must live, and he must love, therefore he must suffer in a strife of wild and conflicting emotions. In youth, golden dreams and magical visions lead him on across the blue margent of the world. Happiness is with the stars, kept from him by delightfully fantastic enemies in flying turrets. The flight to approach the goal has all the glory of high adventure. Even the wincing sting of disappointment and occasional failure is forgotten in the rash pride of immaturity and the lusty consciousness of stalwart strength. But, with the lengthening shadows of the years, the sustaining dream is inevitably broken—the happy picture is blurred forever. When that happens, life to many of us is nothing but a dreary void haunted by the spectre of universal tragedy. The dimming of the once bright light of hope has brought an aching hurt of personal failure and there seems no other course than flight; the flight of escape from self that is sometimes called cynicism. However, there is another way, another philosophy, which admits the existence of mud, but nevertheless claims the truth of the stars.

I daresay that few men have lived as fully as Saint Francis. That means that rarely does history produce such a sufferer as he. Certainly, his quest for the Secret of life found few purple patches. He knew completely the fearsome quality of sorrow and disappointment. With tears unshed and sadness too deep for words, he bent broken before a jeering mob in the narrow shunting streets of Assisi when he first set out on his journey. Thereafter, his life-story was a tale told by the idiot of scorn and misunderstanding. Alone on the craggy black heights of Alvernia he must often have cried aloud in near-despair. Yet, despite searing disappointments—yes, even the knowledge of the defection of some of his own friars—he was too deeply rational to flee the battlefield of self. The philosophy of escape is too negative; he prepared the philosophy of hope; it is that preference that made him a saint. To say that life signifies nothing is fundamentally wrong; that he knew, for in living he proved that there is no such thing as personal tragedy: and that the way to the golden gateway of the star is by the path of battle, failure, hope, and . . . success.