

DAYS OF DISCOVERY

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Days of Discovery by Bertram Smith

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BERTRAM SMITH

**DAYS OF
DISCOVERY**

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BY

BERTRAM SMITH

AUTHOR OF "THE WHOLE ART OF CARAVANNING," ETC.

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CALIFORNIA

LONDON

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GIFT OF
PROFESSOR C. A. KOFOLD

WITH few exceptions the contents of this book have appeared in the pages of *The Manchester Guardian*. Those entitled "Pains and Penalties," "Making Money," "Opprobrious Epithets," and "A Dinner Party" came out in the *Saturday Review*, while "The Mystic Gulf" is from the *Spectator*. My thanks are due to the Editors of these three Journals for permission to republish.

B. S.

TO MIND
AIRPORT LIAISON

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Days of Discovery

I

THE BARBARIAN

THOUGH civilization and convention may rule the rest of the household with an iron hand, their sway stops short upon the threshold of the nursery, for the upbringing and development of a small boy are comparable to the progress of the race from the chaos of dark ages to the ordered existence of to-day. In the long run he must adapt himself to the conditions that obtain, he must leave behind his war-paint and the primitive habits and customs of his tribe and clothe himself and learn to behave ; and the day comes when he must begin to calculate, to consider and to look ahead. But for the years when he is still able to hold his own against the forces that are to shape his course he has many things in common with certain kindred souls

in virgin forest where the white man is unknown. Such are his attitude towards the Ordeal of Battle, which he accepts as fitting and straightforward—his willing agreement with the principle that might is right; his faculty not indeed for worshipping but at least for endowing with human attributes all manner of inanimate objects—ships, locomotives and the like. I well remember a time when an Atlantic liner was quite as much alive to me as an elephant and had a much more striking personality. How could one read the thoughts or imagine the sensations of an elephant? But one knew very well what a ship felt like as she moved among the lesser craft with a slow and easy swagger up the tideway or dragged tired limbs to dock after a stormy crossing.

I am told—I had myself forgotten it; it is the sort of thing one does forget—that I was presented at an early age to a fellow-pupil for the first time. We shook hands, under pressure, and as soon as we were left alone, "I'm bigger than you," said I. "Yes," said he, "but I can knock you down"—which he did. That is essentially a prehistoric form of introduction. We could not have been expected to settle down