

PLANTATION
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VOLUME XV



“But you must not come in.”

—Page 172

☞ THE NOVELS, STORIES,
SKETCHES AND POEMS OF
THOMAS NELSON PAGE ☞

JOHN MARVEL
ASSISTANT

I

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
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TO

Those loved ones whose never failing
sympathy has led me all these years

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JOHN MARVEL, ASSISTANT

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JOHN MARVEL, ASSISTANT

I

MY FIRST FAILURE

I SHALL feel at liberty to tell my story in my own way; rambling along at my own gait; now going from point to point; now tearing ahead; now stopping to rest or to ruminate, and even straying from the path whenever I think a digression will be for my own enjoyment.

I shall begin with my college career, a period to which I look back now with a pleasure wholly incommensurate with what I achieved in it; which I find due to the friends I made and to the memories I garnered there in a time when I possessed the unprized treasures of youth: spirits, hope, and abounding conceit. As these memories, with the courage (to use a mild term) that a college background gives, are about all that I got out of my life there, I shall dwell on them only enough to introduce two or three friends and one enemy, who played later a very considerable part in my life.

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My family was an old and distinguished one; that is, it could be traced back about two hundred years, and several of my ancestors had accomplished enough to be known in the history of the State—a fact of which I was so proud that I was quite satisfied at college to rest on their achievements, and felt no need to add to its distinction by any labors of my own.

We had formerly been well off: we had, indeed, at one time prior to the Revolutionary War owned large estates—a time to which I was so fond of referring when I first went to college that one of my acquaintances, named Peck, an envious fellow, observed one day that I thought I had inherited all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them. My childhood was spent on an old plantation, so far removed from anything that I have since known that it might almost have been in another planet.

It happened that I was the only child of my parents who survived, the others having been carried off in early childhood by a scourge of scarlet fever, to which circumstance, as I look back, I now know was due my mother's sadness of expression when my father was not present. I was thus subjected to the perils and great misfortune of being an only child, among them that of think-

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ing the sun rises and sets for his especial benefit. I must say that both my father and mother tried faithfully to do their part to counteract this danger, and they not only believed firmly in, but acted consistently on, the Solomonic doctrine that to spare the rod is to spoil the child. My father, I must say, was more lenient, and I think gladly evaded the obligation as interpreted by my mother, declaring that Solomon, like a good many other persons, was much wiser in speech than in practice. He was fond of quoting the custom of the ancient Scythians, who trained their youth to ride, to shoot, and to speak the truth. And in this last particular he was inexorable.

Among my chief intimates as a small boy was a little darkey named "Jeams." Jeams was the grandson of one of our old servants—Uncle Ralph Woodson. Jeams, who was a few years my senior, was a sharp-witted boy, as black as a piece of old mahogany, and had a head so hard that he could butt a plank off a fence. Naturally he and I became cronies, and he picked up information on various subjects so readily that I found him equally agreeable and useful.

My father was admirably adapted to the conditions that had created such a character, but as unsuited to the new conditions that succeeded

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the collapse of the old life as a shorn lamb would be to the untempered wind of winter. He was a Whig and an aristocrat of the strongest type, and though in practice he was the kindest and most liberal of men, he always maintained that a gentleman was the choicest fruit of civilization; a standard, I may say, in which the personal element counted with him far more than family connection. "A king can make a nobleman, sir," he used to say; "but it takes Jehovah to make a gentleman." When the war came, though he was opposed to "Locofocoism" as he termed it, he enlisted as a private as soon as the State seceded, and fought through the war, rising to be a major and surrendering at Appomattox. When the war closed, he shut himself up on his estate, accepting the situation without moroseness, and consoling himself with a philosophy much more misanthropic in expression than in practice.

My father's slender patrimony had been swept away by the war, but, being a scholar himself, and having a high idea of classical learning and a good estimate of my abilities—in which latter view I entirely agreed with him—he managed by much stinting to send me to college out of the fragments of his establishment. I admired greatly certain principles which were stamped in him as

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firmly as a fossil is embedded in the solid rock; but I fear I had a certain contempt for what appeared to me his inadequacy to the new state of things, and I secretly plumed myself on my superiority to him in all practical affairs. Without the least appreciation of the sacrifices he was making to send me to college, I was an idle dog and plunged into the amusements of the gay set—that set whose powers begin below their foreheads—in which I became a member and aspired to be a leader.

My first episode at college brought me some *éclat*.

II

THE JEW AND THE CHRISTIAN

I ARRIVED rather late and the term had already begun, so that all the desirable rooms had been taken. I was told that I would either have to room out of college or take quarters with a young man by the name of Wolffert—like myself, a freshman. I naturally chose the latter. On reaching my quarters, I found my new comrade to be an affable, gentlemanly fellow, and very nice looking. Indeed, his broad brow, with curling brown hair above it; his dark eyes, deep and luminous; a nose the least bit too large and inclining to be aquiline; a well-cut mouth with mobile, sensitive lips, and a finely chiselled jaw, gave him an unusual face, if not one of distinction. He was evidently bent on making himself agreeable to me, and as he had read an extraordinary amount for a lad of his age and I, who had also read some, was lonely, we had passed a pleasant evening when he mentioned casually a fact which sent my heart down into my boots. He was a Jew. This, then,

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accounted for the ridge of his well-carved nose, and the curl of his soft brown hair. I tried to be as frank and easy as I had been before, but it was a failure. He saw my surprise as I saw his disappointment—a coolness took the place of the warmth that had been growing up between us for several hours, and we passed a stiff evening. He had already had one room-mate.

Next day, I found a former acquaintance who offered to take me into his apartment, and that afternoon, having watched for my opportunity, I took advantage of my room-mate's absence and moved out, leaving a short note saying that I had discovered an old friend who was very desirous that I should share his quarters. When I next met Wolffert he was so stiff that, although I felt sorry for him and was ready to be as civil as I might, our acquaintance thereafter became merely nominal. I saw, in fact, little of him during the next months, for he soon forged far ahead of me. There was, indeed, no one in his class who possessed his acquirements or his ability. I used to see him for a while standing in his doorway looking wistfully out at the groups of students gathered under the trees, or walking alone, like Isaac in the fields, and until I formed my own set, I would have gone and joined him or have asked him to

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join us but for his rebuff. I knew that he was lonely; for I soon discovered that the cold shoulder was being given to him by most of the students. I could not, however, but feel that it served him right for the "airs" he put on with me. That he made a brilliant exhibition in his classes and was easily the cleverest man in the class did not affect our attitude toward him; perhaps it only aggravated the case. Why should he be able to make easily a demonstration at the blackboard that the cleverest of us only bungled through? One day, however, we learned that the Jew had a room-mate. Bets were freely taken that he would not stick, but he stuck—for it was John Marvel. Not that any of us knew what John Marvel was; for even I, who, except Wolffert, came to know him best, did not divine until many years later what a nugget of unwrought gold that homely, shy, awkward John Marvel was!

It appeared that Wolffert had a harder time than any of us dreamed of.

He had come to the institution against the advice of his father, and for a singular reason: he thought it the most liberal institution of learning in the country! Little he knew of the narrowness of youth! His mind was so receptive that all that passed through it was instantly appro-

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riated. Like a plant, he drew sustenance from the atmosphere about him and transmuted what was impalpable to us to forms of beauty. He was even then a man of independent thought; a dreamer who peopled the earth with ideals, and saw beneath the stony surface of the commonplace the ideals and principles that were to reconstruct and resurrect the world. An admirer of the Law in its ideal conception, he reprobated, with the fury of the Baptist, the generation that had belittled and cramped it to an instrument of torture of the human mind, and looked to the millennial coming of universal brotherhood and freedom.

His father was a leading man in his city; one who, by his native ability and the dynamic force that seems to be a characteristic of the race, had risen from poverty to the position of chief merchant and capitalist of the town in which he lived. He had been elected mayor in a time of stress; but his popularity among the citizens generally had cost him, as I learned later, something among his own people. The breadth of his views had not been approved by them.

The abilities that in the father had taken this direction of the mingling of the practical and the theoretical had, in the son, taken the form I have stated. He was an idealist: a poet and a dreamer.

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The boy from the first had discovered powers that had given his father the keenest delight, not unmingled with a little misgiving. As he grew up among the best class of boys in his town, and became conscious that he was not one of them, his enquiring and aspiring mind began early to seek the reasons for the difference. Why should he be held a little apart from them? He was a Jew. Yes, but why should a Jew be held apart? They talked about their families. Why, his family could trace back for two thousand and more years to princes and kings. They had a different religion. But he saw other boys with different religions going and playing together. They were Christians, and believed in Christ, while the Jew, etc. This puzzled him till he found that some of them—a few—did not hold the same views of Christ with the others. Then he began to study for himself, boy as he was, the history of Christ, and out of it came questions that his father could not answer and was angry that he should put to him. He went to a young Rabbi who told him that Christ was a good man, but mistaken in His claims.

So, the boy drifted a little apart from his own people, and more and more he studied the questions that arose in his mind, and more and

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more he suffered; but more and more he grew strong.

The father, too proud of his son's independence to coerce him by an order which might have been a law to him, had, nevertheless, thrown him on his own resources and cut him down to the lowest figure on which he could live, confident that his own opinions would be justified and his son return home.

Wolffert's first experience very nearly justified this conviction. The fact that a Jew had come and taken one of the old apartments spread through the college with amazing rapidity and created a sensation. Not that there had not been Jews there before, for there had been a number there at one time or another. But they were members of families of distinction, who had been known for generations as bearing their part in all the appointments of life, and had consorted with other folk on an absolute equality; so that there was little or nothing to distinguish them as Israelites except their name. If they were Israelites, it was an accident and played no larger part in their views than if they had been Scotch or French. But here was a man who proclaimed himself a Jew; who proposed that it should be known, and evidently meant to assert his rights

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and peculiarities on all occasions. The result was that he was subjected to a species of persecution which only the young Anglo-Saxon, the most brutal of all animals, could have devised.

As college filled rapidly, it soon became necessary to double up, that is, put two men in one apartment. The first student assigned to live with Wolffert was Peck, a sedate and cool young man—like myself, from the country, and like myself, very short of funds. Peck would not have minded rooming with a Jew, or, for that matter, with the Devil, if he had thought he could get anything out of him; for he had few prejudices, and when it came to calculation, he was the multiplication-table. But Peck had his way to make, and he coolly decided that a Jew was likely to make him bear his full part of the expenses—which he never had any mind to do. So he looked around, and within forty-eight hours moved to a place out of college where he got reduced board on the ground of belonging to some peculiar set of religionists, of which I am convinced he had never heard till he learned of the landlady's idiosyncrasy.

I had incurred Peck's lasting enmity—though I did not know it at the time—by a witticism at his expense. We had never taken to each other

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from the first, and one evening, when some one was talking about Wolffert, Peck joined in and said that that institution was no place for any Jew. I said, "Listen to Peck sniff. Peck, how did you get in?" This raised a laugh. Peck, I am sure, had never read "Martin Chuzzlewit"; but I am equally sure he read it afterward, for he never forgave me.

Then came my turn and desertion which I have described. And then, after that interval of loneliness, appeared John Marvel.

Wolffert, who was one of the most social men I ever knew, was sitting in his room meditating on the strange fate that had made him an outcast among the men whom he had come there to study and know. This was my interpretation of his thoughts: he would probably have said he was thinking of the strange prejudices of the human race—prejudices to which he had been in some sort a victim all his life, as his race had been all through the ages. He was steeped in loneliness, and as, in the mellow October afternoon, the sound of good-fellowship floated in at his window from the lawn outside, he grew more and more dejected. One evening it culminated. He even thought of writing to his father that he would come home and go into his office and accept the

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position that meant wealth and luxury and power. Just then there was a step outside, and some one stopped, and after a moment knocked at the door. Wolffert rose and opened it and stood facing a new student—a florid, round-faced, round-bodied, bow-legged, blue-eyed, awkward lad of about his own age.

“Is this number——?” demanded the newcomer, peering curiously at the dingy door and half shyly looking up at the occupant.

“It is. Why?” Wolffert spoke abruptly.

“Well, I have been assigned to this apartment by the Proctor. I am a new student and have just come. My name is Marvel—John Marvel.” Wolffert put his arms across the doorway and stood in the middle of it.

“Well, I want to tell you before you come in that I am a Jew. You are welcome not to come, but if you come I want you to stay.” Perhaps the other’s astonishment contained a query, for he went on hotly:

“I have had two men come here already and both of them left after one day. The first said he got cheaper board, which was a legitimate excuse, if true; the other said he had found an old friend who wanted him. I am convinced that he lied and that the only reason he left was that

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I am a Jew. And now you can come in or not, as you please, but if you come you must stay." He was looking down in John Marvel's eyes with a gaze that had the concentrated bitterness of generations in it, and the latter met it with a gravity that deepened into pity.

"I will come in and I will stay; Jesus was a Jew," said the man on the lower step.

"I do not know Him," said the other bitterly.

"But you will. I know Him."

Wolffert's arms fell and John Marvel entered and stayed.

That evening the two men went to the supper hall together. Their table was near mine and they were the observed of all observers. The one curious thing was that John Marvel was studying for the ministry. It lent zest to the jokes that were made on this incongruous pairing, and jests, more or less insipid, were made on the Law and the Prophets; the lying down together of the lion and the lamb, etc.

It was a curious mating—the light-haired, moon-faced, slow-witted Saxon, and the dark, keen Jew with his intellectual face and his deep-burning eyes in which glowed the misery and mystery of the ages.

John Marvel soon became well known; for he

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was one of the slowest men in the college. With his amusing awkwardness he would have become a butt except for his imperturbable good-humor. As it was, he was for a time a sort of object of ridicule to many of us—myself among the number—and we had many laughs at him. He would disappear on Saturday night and not turn up again till Monday morning, dusty and dishevelled. And many jests were made at his expense. One said that Marvel was practising preaching in the mountains with a view to becoming a second Demosthenes; another suggested that, if so, the mountains would probably get up and run into the sea.

When, however, it was discovered later that he had a Sunday-school in the mountains, and walked twelve miles out and twelve miles back, most of the gibbers, except the inveterate humorists like myself, were silent.

This fact came out by chance. Marvel disappeared from college one day and remained away for two or three weeks. Wolffert either could not or would not give any account of him. When Marvel returned, he looked worn and ill, as if he had been starving, and almost immediately he was taken ill and went to the infirmary with a case of fever. Here he was so ill that the doctors

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quarantined him and no one saw him except the nurse—old Mrs. Denny, a wrinkled and bald-headed, old, fat woman, something between a lightwood knot and an angel—and Wolffert.

Wolffert moved down and took up his quarters in the infirmary—it was suggested, with a view to converting Marvel to Judaism—and here he stayed. The nursing never appeared to make any difference in Wolffert's preparation for his classes; for when he came back he still stood easily first. But poor Marvel never caught up again, and was even more hopelessly lost in the befogged region at the bottom of the class than ever before. When called on to recite, his brow would pucker and he would perspire and stammer until the class would be in ill-suppressed convulsions, all the more enjoyable because of Leo Wolffert's agonizing over his wretchedness. Then Marvel, excused by the professor, would sit down and mop his brow and beam quite as if he had made a wonderful performance (which indeed he had), while Wolffert's thin face would grow whiter, his nostrils quiver, and his deep eyes burn like coals.

One day a spare, rusty man with a frowzy beard, and a lank, stooping woman strolled into the college grounds, and after wandering around aimlessly for a time, asked for Mr. Marvel. Each of

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them carried a basket. They were directed to his room and remained with him some time, and when they left, he walked some distance with them.

It was at first rumored and then generally reported that they were Marvel's father and mother. It became known later that they were a couple of poor mountaineers named Shiflett, whose child John Marvel had nursed when it had the fever. They had just learned of his illness and had come down to bring him some chickens and other things which they thought he might need.

This incident, with the knowledge of Marvel's devotion, made some impression on us, and gained for Marvel, and incidentally for Wolffert, some sort of respect.

III

THE FIGHT

ALL this time I was about as far aloof from Marvel and Wolffert as I was from any one in the college.

I rather liked Marvel, partly because he appeared to like me and I helped him in his Latin, and partly because Peck sniffed at him, and Peck I cordially disliked for his cold-blooded selfishness and his plodding way.

I was strong and active and fairly good-looking, though by no means so handsome as I fancied myself when I passed the large plate-glass windows in the stores; I was conceited, but not arrogant except to my family and those I esteemed my inferiors; was a good poker-player; was open-handed enough, for it cost me nothing; and was inclined to be kind by nature.

I had, moreover, several accomplishments which led to a certain measure of popularity. I had a retentive memory, and could get up a recitation with little trouble; though I forgot about as quickly as I learned. I could pick a little on a

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banjo; could spout fluently what sounded like a good speech if one did not listen to me; could write what, some one has said, looked at a distance like poetry and, thanks to my father, could both fence and read Latin. These accomplishments served to bring me into the best set in college, and, in time, to undo me. For there is nothing more dangerous to a young man than an exceptional social accomplishment. A tenor voice is almost as perilous as a taste for drink; and to play the guitar, about as seductive as to play poker.

I was soon to know Wolffert better. He and Marvel, after their work became known, had been admitted rather more within the circle, though they were still kept near the perimeter. And thus, as the spring came on, when we all assembled on pleasant afternoons under the big trees that shaded the green slopes above the athletic field, even Wolffert and Marvel were apt to join us. I would long ago have made friends with Wolffert, as some others had done since he distinguished himself; for I had been ashamed of my poltroonery in leaving him; but, though he was affable enough with others, he always treated me with such marked reserve that I had finally abandoned my charitable effort to be on easy terms with him.

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One spring afternoon we were all loafing under the trees, many of us stretched out on the grass. I had just saved a game of baseball by driving a ball that brought in three men from the bases, and I was surrounded by quite a group. Marvel, who was as strong as an ox, was second-baseman on the other nine and had missed the ball as the centre-fielder threw it wildly. Something was said—I do not recall what—and I raised a laugh at Marvel's expense, in which he joined heartily. Then a discussion began on the merits in which Wolffert joined. I started it, but as Wolffert appeared excited, I drew out and left it to my friends.

Presently, at something Wolffert said, I turned to a friend, Sam Pleasants, and said in a half-aside, with a sneer: "He did not see it; Sam, *you*—" I nodded my head, meaning, "You explain it."

Suddenly, Wolffert rose to his feet and, without a word of warning, poured out on me such a torrent of abuse as I never heard before or since. His least epithet was a deadly insult. It was out of a clear sky, and for a moment my breath was quite taken away. I sprang to my feet and, with a roar of rage, made a rush for him. But he was ready, and with a step to one side, planted a

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straight blow on my jaw that, catching me unprepared, sent me full length on my back. I was up in a second and made another rush for him, only to be caught in the same way and sent down again.

When I rose the second time, I was cooler. I knew then that I was in for it. Those blows were a boxer's. They came straight from the shoulder and were as quick as lightning, with every ounce of the giver's weight behind them. By this time, however, the crowd had interfered. This was no place for a fight, they said. The professors would come on us. Several were holding me and as many more had Wolffert; among them John Marvel, who could have lifted him in his strong arms and held him as a baby. Marvel was pleading with him with tears in his eyes. Wolffert was cool enough now, but he took no heed of his friend's entreaties. Standing quite still, with the blaze in his eyes all the more vivid because of the pallor of his face, he was looking over his friend's head and was cursing me with all the eloquence of a rich vocabulary. So far as he was concerned, there might not have been another man but myself within a mile.

In a moment an agreement was made by which we were to adjourn to a retired spot and fight it out. Something that he said led some one to sug-

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gest that we settle it with pistols. It was Peck's voice. Wolffert sprang at it. "I will, if I can get any gentleman to represent me," he said with a bitter sneer, casting his flashing, scornful eyes around on the crowd. "I have only one friend and I will not ask him to do it."

"I will represent you," said Peck, who had his own reasons for the offer.

"All right. When and where?" said I.

"Now, and in the railway cut beyond the wood," said Wolffert.

We retired to two rooms in a neighboring dormitory to arrange matters. Peck and another volunteer represented Wolffert, and Sam Pleasants and Harry Houston were my seconds. I had expected that some attempt at reconciliation would be made; but there was no suggestion of it. I never saw such cold-blooded young ruffians as all our seconds were, and when Peck came to close the final cartel he had an air between that of a butcher and an undertaker. He looked at me exactly as a butcher does at a fatted calf. He positively licked his chops. I did not want to shoot Wolffert, but I could cheerfully have murdered Peck. While, however, the arrangements were being made by our friends, I had had a chance for some reflection and I had used it. I

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knew that Wolffert did not like me. He had no reason to do so, for I had not only left him, but had been cold and distant with him. Still, I had always treated him civilly, and had spoken of him respectfully, which was more than Peck had always done. Yet, here, without the least provocation, he had insulted me grossly. I knew there must be some misunderstanding, and I determined on my "own hook" to find out what it was. Fortune favored me. Just then Wolffert opened the door. He had gone to his own room for a few moments and, on his return, mistook the number and opened the wrong door. Seeing his error, he drew back with an apology, and was just closing the door when I called him.

"Wolffert! Come in here a moment. I want to speak to you alone."

He re-entered and closed the door; standing stiff and silent.

"Wolffert, there has been some mistake, and I want to know what it is." He made not the least sign that he heard, except a flash, deep in his eyes, like a streak of lightning in a far-off cloud.

"I am ready to fight you in any way you wish," I went on. "But I want to know what the trouble is. Why did you insult me out of a clear sky? What had I done?"

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“Everything.”

“What? Specify. What was it?”

“You have made my life Hell—all of you!” His face worked, and he made a wild sweep with his arm and brought it back to his side with clenched fist.

“But I?”

“You were the head. You have all done it. You have treated me as an outcast—a Jew! You have given me credit for nothing, because I was a Jew. I could have stood the personal contempt and insult, and I have tried to stand it; but I will put up with it no longer. It is appointed once for a man to die, and I can die in no better cause than for my people.”

He was gasping with suppressed emotion, and I was beginning to gasp also—but for a different reason. He went on:

“You thought I was a coward because I was a Jew, and because I wanted peace—treated me as a poltroon because I was a Jew. And I made up my mind to stop it. So this evening my chance came. That is all.”

“But what have I done?”

“Nothing more than you have always done; treated the Jew with contempt. But they were all there, and I chose you as the leader when you said that about the Jew.”

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“I said nothing about a Jew. Here, wait! Did you think I insulted you as a Jew this afternoon?” I had risen and walked over in front of him.

“Yes.” He bowed.

“Well, I did not.”

“You did—you said to Sam Pleasants that I was a ‘damned Jew.’ ”

“What! I never said a word like it—yes, I did—I said to Sam Pleasants, that you did not see the play, and said, ‘*Sam, you—*’ meaning, you, tell him. Wait. Let me think a moment. Wolffert, I owe you an apology, and will make it. I know there are some who will think I do it because I am afraid to fight. But I do not care. I am not, and I will fight Peck if he says so. If you will come with me, I will make you a public apology, and then if you want to fight still, I will meet you.”

He suddenly threw his right arm up across his face, and, turning his back on me, leaned on it against the door, his whole person shaken with sobs.

I walked up close to him and laid my hand on his shoulder, helplessly.

“Calm yourself,” I began, but could think of nothing else to say.

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He shook for a moment and then, turning, with his left arm still across his face, he held out his right hand, and I took it.

“I do not want you to do that. All I want is decent treatment—ordinary civility,” he faltered between his sobs. Then he turned back and leaned against the door, for he could scarcely stand. And so standing, he made the most forcible, the most eloquent, and the most burning defence of his people I have ever heard.

“They have civilized the world,” he declared, “and what have they gotten from it but brutal barbarism. They gave you your laws and your literature, your morality and your religion—even your Christ; and you have violated every law, human and divine, in their oppression. You invaded our land, ravaged our country, and scattered us over the face of the earth, trying to destroy our very name and Nation. But the God of Israel was our refuge and consolation. You crucified Jesus and then visited it on us. You have perpetuated an act of age-long hypocrisy, and have, in the name of the Prince of Peace, brutalized over his people. The cross was your means of punishment—no Jew ever used it. But if we had crucified him it would have been in the name of Law and Order; your crucifixion

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was in the name of Contempt; and you have crucified a whole people through the ages—the one people who have ever stood for the one God; who have stood for Morality and for Peace. A Jew! Yes, I am a Jew. I thank the God of Israel that I am. For as he saved the world in the past, so he will save it in the future.”

This was only a part of it, and not the best part; but it gave me a new insight into his mind.

When he was through I was ready. I had reached my decision.

“I will go with you,” I said, “not on your account, but on my own, and make my statement before the whole crowd. They are still on the hill. Then, if any one wants to fight, he can get it. I will fight Peck.”

He repeated that he did not want me to do this, and he would not go; which was as well, for I might not have been able to say so much in his presence. So I went alone with my seconds, whom I immediately sought.

I found the latter working over a cartel at a table in the next room, and I walked in. They looked as solemn as owls, but I broke them up in a moment.

“You can stop this infernal foolishness. I have apologized to Wolffert. I have treated him like

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a pig, and so have you. And I have told him so, and now I am going out to tell the other fellows."

Their astonishment was unbounded and, at least, one of the group was sincerely disappointed. I saw Peck's face fall at my words and then he elevated his nose and gave a little sniff.

"Well, it did not come from *our* side," he said in a half undertone with a sneer.

I suddenly exploded. His cold face was so evil.

"No, it did not. I made it freely and frankly, and I am going to make it publicly. But if you are disappointed, I want to tell you that you can have a little affair on your own account. And in order that there may be no want of pretext, I wish to tell you that I believe you have been telling lies on me, and I consider you a damned, sneaking hypocrite."

There was a commotion, of course, and the others all jumped in between us. And when it was over, I walked out. Three minutes later I was on the hill among the crowd, which now numbered several hundred, for they were all waiting to learn the result; and, standing on a bench, I told them what I had said to Wolffert and how I felt I owed him a public apology, not for one insult, but for a hundred. There was a silence for a second, and then such a cheer broke out as

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I never got any other time in my life! Cheers for Wolffert, cheers for Marvel, and even cheers for me. And then a freckled youth with a big mouth and a blue, merry eye broke the tension by saying:

“All bets are off and we sha’n’t have a holiday to-morrow at all.” The reprobates had been betting on which of us would fall, and had been banking on a possible holiday.

Quite a crowd went to Wolffert’s room to make atonement for any possible slight they had put on him; but he was nowhere to be found. But that night he and Marvel sat at our table and always sat there afterward. He illustrated George Borrow’s observation that good manners and a knowledge of boxing will take one through the world.

IV

DELILAH

MY career at college promised at one time after that to be almost creditable, but it ended in nothing. I was not a good student, because, I flattered myself, I was too good a fellow. I loved pleasure too much to apply myself to work, and was too self-indulgent to deny myself anything. I despised the plodding ways of cold-blooded creatures like Peck even more than I did the dulness of John Marvel. Why should I delve at Latin and Greek and mathematics when I had all the poets and novelists? I was sure that when the time came I could read up and easily overtake and surpass the tortoise-like monotony of Peck's plodding. I now and then had an uneasy realization that Peck was developing, and that John Marvel, to whom I used to read Latin, had somehow come to understand the language better than I. However, this was only an occasional awakening, and the idea was too unpleasant for me to harbor it long. Meantime, I would enjoy myself and prepare to bear off the

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more shining honors of the orator and society-medallist.

At the very end I did, indeed, arouse myself, for I had a new incentive. I fell in love. Toward the mid-session holiday the place always filled up with pretty girls. Usually they came just after "the exams"; but occasionally some of them came a little in advance: those who were bent on conquest. At such times, only cold anchorites like Marvel, or calculating machines like Peck, stuck to their books. Among the fair visitants this year was one whose reputation for beauty had already preceded her: Miss Lilian Poole. She was the daughter of a banker in the capital of the State, and by all accounts was a tearing belle. She had created a sensation at the Mardi Gras the year before, and one who could do that must be a beauty. She was reported more beautiful than Isabelle Henderson, the noted beauty of the Crescent city, whom she was said to resemble. Certainly, she was not lacking in either looks or intelligence; for those who had caught a glimpse of her declared her a Goddess. I immediately determined that I would become her cavalier for the occasion. And I so announced to the dozen or more fellows who composed our set. They laughed at me.

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“Why, you do not know her.”

“But I shall know her.”

“You are not on speaking terms with Professor Sterner”—the Professor of Mathematics at whose house she was stopping. The Professor, a logarithmic machine, and I had had a falling out not long before. He had called on me for a recitation, one morning after a dance, and I had said, “I am not prepared, sir.”

“You never are prepared,” he said, which the class appeared to think amusing. He glanced over the room.

“Mr. Peck.”

Peck, also, had been at the dance the night before, though he said he had a headache, and caused much amusement by his gambols and antics, which were like those of a cow; I therefore expected him to say, “unprepared” also. But not so.

“I was unwell last night, sir.”

“Ah! Well, I am glad, at least, that you have some sort of a legitimate excuse.”

I flamed out and rose to my feet.

“Are you alluding to me, sir?”

“Take your seat, sir. I deny your right to question me.”

“I will not take my seat. I do not propose to

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sit still and be insulted. I demand an answer to my question."

"Take your seat, I say. I will report you to the Faculty," he shouted.

"Then you will have to do so very quickly; for I shall report you immediately." And with that I stalked out of the room. The Faculty met that afternoon and I laid my complaint before them, and as the students, knowing the inside facts, took my side, the Faculty held that the Professor committed the first breach and reprimanded us both. I was well satisfied after I had met and cut the Professor publicly.

I now acknowledge the untowardness of the situation; but when the boys laughed, I pooh-poohed it.

"I do not speak to old Sterner, but I will speak to her the first time I meet her."

"I will bet you do not," cried Sam Pleasants.

"Supper for the crowd," chimed in several. They were always as ready to bet as their long-haired ancestors were in the German forests, where they bet themselves away, and kept their faith, to the amazement of a Roman gentleman, who wrote, "*istam vocant fidem.*"

We were all in a room, the windows of which looked across the lawn toward the pillared portico

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of Professor Sterner's house, and some of the boys were gazing over toward the mansion that sheltered the subject of our thoughts. And as it happened, at that moment, the door opened and out stepped the young lady herself, in a smart walking costume, topped by a large hat with a great, drooping, beguiling, white ostrich feather. An exclamation drew us all to the window.

"There she is now!" Without doubt, that was she.

"Jove! What a stunner!"

"She is alone. There is your chance."

"Yes, this is the first time you have seen her; now stop jawing and play ball."

"Or pay up."

"Yes, supper for the crowd: porterhouse steak, chicken, and waffles to end with."

So they nagged me, one and all.

"Done," I said, "I will do it now."

"You have never seen her before?"

"Never." I was arranging my tie and brushing my hair.

"You swear it?"

But I hurried out of the door and slammed it behind me.

I turned down the walk that led across the campus to the point whither Miss Poole was directing

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her steps, and I took a gait that I judged should meet her at the intersection of the walks. I was doing some hard thinking, for I knew the window behind me was crowded with derisive faces.

As I approached her I cast my eye at her, and a glance nearly overthrew my resolution. She was, indeed, a charming picture as she advanced, though I caught little more than a general impression of a slim, straight, statuesque figure, a pink face, surmounted by a profusion of light hair, under a big hat with white feathers, and a pair of bluish eyes. I glanced away, but not before she had caught my eye. Just then a whistle sounded behind me, and my nerve returned. I suddenly quickened my pace, and held out my hand.

“Why, how do you do?” I exclaimed with well-feigned surprise and pleasure, plumping myself directly in front of her. She paused; looked at me, hesitated, and then drew back slightly.

“I think—, I— You have made a mistake, I think.”

“Why, do you not remember Henry Glave? Is this not Miss Belle Henderson?” I asked in a mystified way.

“No, I am not Miss Henderson.”

“Oh! I beg your pardon—I thought—” I began. Then, as I moved back a little, I added, “Then you

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must be Miss Lilian Poole; for there cannot be more than two like you on earth. I beg your pardon."

I backed away.

"I am," she said. Her mounting color showed that she was at least not angry, and she gave proof of it.

"Can you tell me? Is not that the way to Dr. Davis's house?"

"Yes—I will show you which it is." My manner had become most respectful.

"Oh! Don't trouble yourself, I beg you."

"It is not the least trouble," I said sincerely, and it was the only truth I had told. I walked back a few steps, hat in hand, pointing eagerly to the house. And as I left, I said, "I hope you will pardon my stupid mistake."

"Oh! I do not think it stupid. She is a beauty."

"*I* think so." I bowed low. I saw the color rise again as I turned away, much pleased with myself, and yet a good deal ashamed, too.

When I returned to "the lair," as we termed Sam Pleasants's room, the boys seized me. They were like howling dervishes. But I had grown serious. I was very much ashamed of myself. And I did the only decent thing I could—I lied, or as good as lied.

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“I will give the supper if you will stop this yelling. Do you suppose I would make a bet about a girl I did not know?”

This took the spirit out of the thing, and only one of them knew the truth. Marvel, who was present, looked at me seriously, and that night said to me half sadly,

“You ought not to have done that.”

“What? I know it. It was an ungentlemanly thing.”

“I do not mean that. You ought not to have told a story afterward.”

How he knew it I never knew.

But I had gotten caught in my own mesh. I had walked into the little parlor without any invitation, and I was soon hopelessly entangled in the web at which I had hitherto scoffed. I fell violently in love.

I soon overcame the little difficulty that stood in my way. And, indeed, I think Miss Lilian Poole rather helped me out about this. I did not allow grass to grow under my feet, or any impression I had made to become effaced. I quickly became acquainted with my Diana-like young lady; that is, to speak more exactly, I got myself presented to her, for my complete acquaintance with her was of later date, when I had spent all the

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little patrimony I had. I saw immediately that she knew the story of the wager, though she did not at that time refer to it, and so far as I could tell, she did not resent it. She, at least, gave no sign of it. I asked her to allow me to escort her to a German, but she had an engagement.

“Who is it?” I inquired rather enviously.

She had a curious expression in her eyes—which, by the way, were a cool blue or gray, I never could be sure which, and at times looked rather like steel.

She hesitated a moment and her little mouth drew in somewhat closely.

“Mr. Peck.” Her voice was a singular instrument. It had so great a compass and possessed some notes that affected me strangely; but it also could be without the least expression. So it was now when she said, “Mr. Peck,” but she colored slightly, as I burst out laughing.

“Peck! Pecksniff? Did you ever see him dance? I should as soon have thought of your dancing with a clothes-horse.”

She appeared somewhat troubled.

“Does he dance so badly as that? He told me he danced.”

“So he does—like this.” I gave an imitation of Peck’s gyrations, in which I was so earnest that I

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knocked over a table and broke a fine lamp, to my great consternation.

“Well, you are realistic,” observed Miss Poole, calmly, who struck me as not so much concerned at my misfortune as I might have expected. When, however, she saw how really troubled I was, she was more sympathetic.

“Perhaps, if we go out, they will not know who did it,” she observed.

“Well, no, I could not do that,” I said, thinking of Peck, and then as her expression did not change, I fired a shot that I meant to tell. “Peck would do that sort of thing. *I shall tell them.*”

To this she made no reply. She only looked inscrutably pretty. But it often came back to me afterward how calmly and quite as a matter of course she suggested my concealing the accident, and I wondered if she thought I was a liar.

She had a countenance that I once thought one of the most beautiful in the world; but which changed rarely. Its only variations were from an infantile beauty to a statuesque firmness.

Yet that girl, with her rather set expression and infantile face, her wide open, round eyes and pink prettiness, was as deep as a well, and an artesian well at that.

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I soon distanced all rivals. Peck was quickly disposed of; though, with his nagging persistence, he still held on. This bored me exceedingly and her too, if I could judge by her ridicule of him and her sarcasm, which he somehow appeared too stupid to see. He succumbed, however, to my mimicry of his dancing; for I was a good mimic, and Peck, in a very high collar and with very short trousers on his dumpy legs, was really a fair mark. Miss Poole was by no means indifferent to public opinion, and a shaft of satire could penetrate her mail of complacency. So when she returned later to the classic shades of the university, as she did a number of times for Germans, and other social functions, I made a good deal of hay. A phrase of Peck's, apropos of this, stuck in my memory. Some one—it was, I think, Leo Wolfert—said that I appeared to be making hay, and Peck said, "Yes, I would be eating it some day." I often wondered afterward how he stumbled on the witticism.

Those visits of my tall young *dulcinea* cost me dear in the sequel. While the other fellows were boning I was lounging in the drawing-room chattering nonsense or in the shade of the big trees in some secluded nook, writing her very warm poems of the character which Horace says is hated both

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of gods and men. Several of these poems were published in the college magazine. The constant allusions to her physical charms caused Peck to say that I evidently considered Miss Poole to be "composed wholly of eyes and hair." His observation that a man was a fool to write silly verses to a girl he loved, because it gave her a wrong idea of her charms, I, at the time, set down to sheer envy, for Peck could not turn a rhyme; but since I have discovered that, for a practical person like Peck, it has a foundation of truth.

V

THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE

MEANTIME, my studies—if any part of my desultory occupation could be so termed—suffered undeniably. My appearance at the classroom door with a cigarette, which I flung away just in time not to carry it into the room, together with my chronic excuse of being “unprepared,” moved the driest of my professors to the witticism that I “divided my time between a smoke and a flame.” It was only as the finals drew near that I began to appreciate that I would have the least trouble in “making my tickets,” as the phrase went. Sam Pleasants, Leo Wolffert, and my other friends had begun to be anxious for me for some time before—and both Wolffert and John Marvel had come to me and suggested my working, at least, a little: Wolffert with delicacy and warmth; John Marvel with that awkward bluntness with which he always went at anything. I felt perfectly easy in my mind then and met their entreaties scornfully.

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“Why, I did well enough at the Intermediates,” I said.

“Yes, but,” said John Marvel, “Delilah was not here then——”

I was conscious, even though I liked the reference to Samson, of being a little angered; but John Marvel looked so innocent and so hopelessly friendly that I passed it by with a laugh and paid Miss Poole more attention than ever.

The Debater's Medal had for a long time been, in the general estimation, as good as accorded me; for I was a fluent and, I personally thought, eloquent speaker, and had some reading. But when Wolffert entered the debate, his speeches so far outshone mine that I knew at once that I was beat. They appeared not so much prepared for show, as mine were, as to come from a storehouse of reading and reflection. Wolffert, who had begun to speak without any design of entering the contest for the Medal, would generously have retired, but I would not hear of that. I called Peck to account for a speech which I had heard of his making: that “the contest was between a Jew and a jug”; but he denied making it, so I lost even that satisfaction.

I worked for the Magazine Medal; but my “poems”—to “Cynthia” and “To Felicia,” and my fanciful sketches, though they were thought

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fine by our set, did not, in the estimation of the judges, equal the serious and solemn essays on Julius Cæsar and Alexander Hamilton, to which the prize was awarded. At least, the author of those essays had worked over them like a dog, and in the maturer light of experience, I think he earned the prizes.

I worked hard—at least, at the last, for my law degree, and every one was sure I would win—as sure as that Peck would lose; but Peck scraped through while mine was held up—because the night before the degrees were posted I insisted on proving to the professor who had my fate in his hands, and whom I casually ran into, that a “gentleman drunk was a gentleman sober,” the idea having been suggested to my muddled brain by my having just been good-natured enough to put to bed Peck. I finally got the degree, but not until I had been through many tribulations, one of which was the sudden frost in Miss Poole’s manner to me. That girl was like autumn weather. She could be as warm as summer one minute and the next the thermometer would drop below the freezing point. I remember I was her escort the evening of the Final Ball. She looked like Juno with the flowers I had gone out in the country to get for her from an old garden that I knew. Her face was very

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high bred and her pose majestic. I was immensely proud of her and of myself as her escort—and as Peck stalked in with a new and ill-fitting suit of “store-clothes” on, I fancy I put on my toppiest air. But Peck had a shaft and he came there to shoot it. As he passed near us, he said in a loud voice to some one, “The B. L. list is posted.”

“Are you through?” demanded the other.

“Yep.”

“Anybody failed ’t we expected to get through?”

“’T depends on who you expected to get through. Glave’s not on it.”

His shaft came home. I grew cold for a minute and then recovered myself. I saw my partner’s face change. I raised my head and danced on apparently gayer than ever, though my heart was lead. And she played her part well, too. But a few minutes later when Peck strutted up, a decided cock to his bullet head, I heard her, as I turned away, congratulate him on his success.

I slipped out and went over to the bulletin-board where the degree-men were posted, and sure enough I was not among them. A curious crowd was still standing about and they stopped talking as I came up, so I knew they had been talking about me. I must say that all showed concern, and sympathy was written on every face. It was, at least, sweet

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to know that they all considered it a cursed shame, and set my failure down to hostility on the part of one of the professors. I was determined that no one should know how hard hit I was, and I carried my head high till the ball was out, and was so lofty with Miss Poole that she was mystified into being very receptive. I do not know what might have happened that night if it had not been for old John Marvel. I learned afterward that I was pretty wild. He found me when I was wildly denouncing the law professor who had failed to put me through in some minor course, and was vowing that I would smash in his door and force my diploma from him. I might have been crazy enough to attempt it had not old John gotten hold of me. He and Wolffert put me to bed and stayed with me till I was sober. And sober enough I was next day.

As I have said, I received my diploma finally; but I lost all the prestige and pleasure of receiving it along with my class, and I passed through some of the bitterest hours that a young man can know.

Among my friends at college—I might say among my warmest friends—was my old crony “Jeams,” or, as he spoke of himself to those whom he did not regard as his social equals, or whom he

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wanted to amuse himself with, "Mister Woodson"; a little later changed to "Professor Woodson," as more dignified and consonant with the managing class of the institution. When I left for college he followed me, after a brief interval, and first appeared as a waiter at the college boarding-house where I boarded, having used my name as a reference, though at home he had never been nearer the dining-room than the stable. Here he was promptly turned out, and thereupon became a hanger-on of mine and a "Factotum" for me and my friends.

He was now a tall, slim fellow, with broad shoulders and the muscles of Atlas—almost but not quite black and with a laugh that would have wiled Cerberus. He had the shrewdness of a wild animal, and was as imitative as a monkey, and this faculty had inspired and enabled him to pick up all sorts of acquirements, ranging from reading and writing to sleight-of-hand tricks, for which he showed a remarkable aptitude. Moreover, he had plenty of physical courage, and only needed to be backed by some one, on whom he relied, to do anything.

I was naturally attached to him and put up with his rascalities, though they often taxed me sorely, while he, on his part, was so sincerely attached to

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me, that I believe he would have committed any crime at my bidding.

He considered my old clothes his property, and what was far more inconvenient, considered himself the judge of the exact condition and moment when they should pass from my possession to his.

He was a handsome rascal, and took at times such pride in his appearance that, as he was about my size, I had often to exercise a close watch on my meagre wardrobe. He had not only good, but really distinguished manners, and, like many of his race, prided himself on his manners. Thus, on an occasion when he passed Peck at college, and touched his hat to him, a civility which Peck ignored, Wolffert said to him, "Jeams, Mr. Peck don't appear to recognize you."

"Oh! yes," said Jeams, "he recognizes me, but he don't recognize what's due from one gent'man to another."

"Are you going to keep on touching your hat to him?" asked Wolffert.

"Oh, yes, suh," said Jeams; "I takes keer o' my manners, and lets him take keer o' hisn'."

Such was "Jeams," my "body servant," as he styled himself, on occasions when he had an eye to some article of my apparel or stood in especial need of a donation.

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He hated Peck with as much violence as his easy-going nature was capable of, and had no liking for Wolffert. The fact that the latter was a Jew and yet my friend, staggered him, though he put up with him for my sake, and on the night of my fight with Wolffert, I think he would, had he had a chance, have murdered him, as I am sure he would have murdered the professor who threw me on my degree. He got much fuller than I got that night, and his real grief and shame were among the heaviest burdens I had to bear.

Miss Poole returned home the next afternoon after the delivery of the diplomas, and I heard that Peck went off on the same train with her.

I expected some sympathy from the girl for whom my devotion had cost me so much; but she was as cool and sedate over my failure as if it had been Peck's.

All she said was, "Why did not you win the honors?"

"Because I did not work enough for them."

"Why did not you work more?"

I came near saying, "Because I was fooling around you"; but I simply said, "Because I was so certain of winning them."

"You showed rather bad judgment." That was all the sympathy I received from her.

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The old law professor when he took leave of me said—and I remember said it gravely—“Mr. Glave, you have the burden of too many gifts to carry.”

I was pleased by the speech and showed it. He looked at me keenly from under his bushy eyebrows. “I commend to you the fable of the hare and the tortoise. We shall hear of Peck.”

I wondered how he knew I was thinking of Peck with his common face, hard eyes, and stumpy legs.

“You shall hear of me, too,” I declared with some haughtiness.

He only smiled politely and made no answer.

Nettled, I asked arrogantly, “Don’t you think I have more sense—more intellect than Peck?”

“More intellect — yes — much more. — More sense? No. Remember the fable. ‘There are ways that you know not and paths that you have not tried.’”

“Oh! that fable—it is as old as——”

“Humanity,” he said. “‘To scorn delights and live laborious days.’ You will never do that—Peck will.”

I left him, angry and uncomfortable.

I had rather looked forward to going to the West to a near cousin of my father’s, who, if report were true, had made a fortune as a lawyer and an in-

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vestor in a Western city. He and my father had been boys together, but my cousin had gone West, and when the war came he had taken the other side. My father, however, always retained his respect for him and spoke of him with affection. He had been to my home during my early college life—a big, stolid, strong-faced man, silent and cold, but watchful and clear-minded—and had appeared to take quite a fancy to me.

“When he gets through,” he had said to my father, “send him out to me. That is the place for brains and ambition, and I will see what is in him for you.”

Now that I had failed, I could not write to him; but as he had made a memorandum of my graduation year, and as he had written my father several times, I rather expected he would open the way for me. But no letter came. So I was content to go to the capital of the State.

VI

THE METEOR

I AM convinced now that as parents are the most unselfish creatures, children are the veriest brutes on earth. I was too self-absorbed to think of my kind father, who had sacrificed everything to give me opportunities which I had thrown under the feet of Lilian Poole and who now consoled and encouraged me without a word of censure. Though I was deeply grieved at the loss of my parents, I did not know until years afterward what an elemental and life-long calamity that loss was.

My father appeared as much pleased with my single success as if I had brought him home the honors which I had been boasting I would show him. He gave me only two or three bits of advice before I left home. "Be careful with other people's money and keep out of debt," he said. "Also, have no dealings with a rascal, no matter how tightly you think you can tie him up." And his

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final counsel was, "Marry a lady and do not marry a fool."

I wondered if he were thinking of Lilian Poole.

However, I had not the least doubt in my mind about winning success both with her and with that even more jealous Mistress—The Law. In fact, I quite meant to revolutionize things by the meteoric character of my career.

I started out well. I took a good office fronting on the street in one of the best office-buildings—an extravagance I could not afford. Peck had a little dark hole on the other side of the hall. He made a half proposal to share my office with me, but I could not stand that. I, however, told him that he was welcome to use my office and books as much as he pleased, and he soon made himself so much at home in my office that I think he rather fell into the habit of thinking my clients his own.

Before I knew many people I worked hard; read law and a great deal of other literature. But this did not last long, for I was social and made acquaintances easily. Moreover, I soon began to get cases; though they were too small to satisfy me—quite below my abilities, I thought. So, unless they promised me a chance of speaking before a jury, I turned them over to Peck, who would

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bone at them and work like a horse, though I often had to hunt up the law for him, a labor I never knew him to acknowledge.

At first I used to correspond with both John Marvel and Wolffert; but gradually I left their letters unanswered. John, who had gone West, was too full of his country parish to interest me, and Wolffert's abstractions were too altruistic for me.

Meantime, I was getting on swimmingly. I was taken into the best social set in the city, and was soon quite a favorite among them. I was made a member of all the germans as well as of the best club in town; was welcomed in the poker-game of "the best fellows" in town, and was invited out so much that I really had no time to do much else than enjoy my social success. But the chief of the many infallible proofs I had was my restoration to Lilian Poole's favor. Since I was become a sort of toast with those whose opinion she valued highly, she was more cordial to me than ever, and I was ready enough to let by-gones be by-gones and dangle around the handsomest girl in the State, daughter of a man who was president of a big bank and director of a half-dozen corporations. I was with her a great deal. In fact, before my second winter was out, my name was

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coupled with hers by all of our set and many not in our set. And about three evenings every week I was to be found basking in her somewhat steady smile, either at some dance or other social entertainment; strolling with her in the dusk on our way home from the fashionable promenade of —— Street—which, for some reason, she always liked, though I would often have preferred some quieter walk—or lounging on her plush-covered sofa in her back drawing-room. I should have liked it better had Peck taken the hint that most of my other friends had taken and kept away from her house on those evenings which by a tacit consent of nearly every one were left for my visits. But Peck, who now professed a great friendship for me, must take to coming on precisely the evenings I had selected for my calls. He never wore a collar that fitted him, and his boots were never blacked. Miss Lilian used to laugh at him and call him “the burr”—indeed, so much that I more than once told her, that while I was not an admirer of Peck myself, I thought the fact that he was really in love with her ought to secure him immunity from her sarcasm. We had quite a stiff quarrel over the matter, and I told her what our old law professor had said of Peck.

I had rather thought that, possibly, Mr. Poole,

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knowing of the growing relation of intimacy between myself and his daughter, would throw a little of his law business my way; but he never did. He did, in fact, once consult me at his own house about some extensive interests that he owned and represented together in a railway in a Western city; but though I took the trouble to hunt up the matter and send him a brief on the point carefully prepared, he did not employ me, and evidently considered that I had acted only as a friend. It was in this investigation that I first heard of the name Argand and also of the P. D. and B. D. RR. Co. I heard long afterward that he said I had too many interests to suit him; that he wanted a lawyer to give him all his intellect, and not squander it on politics, literature, sport, and he did not know what besides. This was a dig at my rising aspirations in each of these fields. For I used to write now regularly for the newspapers, and had one or two articles accepted by a leading monthly magazine—a success on which even Peck congratulated me, though he said that, as for him, he preferred the law to any other entertainment. My newspaper work attracted sufficient attention to inspire me with the idea of running for Congress, and I began to set my traps and lay my triggers for that.

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Success appeared to wait for me, and my beginning was "meteoric."

Meteoric beginnings are fatal. The meteor soon fades into outer darkness—the outer darkness of the infinite abyss. I took it for success and presumed accordingly, and finally I came down. I played my game too carelessly. I began to speculate—just a little at first; but more largely after awhile. There I appeared to find my proper field; for I made money almost immediately, and I spent it freely, and, after I had made a few thousands, I was regarded with respect by my little circle.

I began to make money so much more easily by this means than I had ever done by the law that I no longer thought it worth while to stay in my office, as I had done at first, but spent my time, in a flock of other lambs, in front of a blackboard in a broker's office, figuring on chances which had already been decided in brokers' offices five hundred miles away. Thus, though I worked up well the cases I had, and was fairly successful with them, I found my clients in time drifting away to other men not half as clever as I was, who had no other aim than to be lawyers. Peck got some of my clients. Indeed, one of my clients, in warning me against speculating, which, he said,

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ruined more young men than faro and drink together, told me he had learned of my habit through Peck. Peck was always in his office or mine. I had made some reputation, however, as a speaker, and as I had taken an active part in politics and had many friends, I stood a good chance for the commonwealth's attorneyship; but I had determined to fly higher: I wanted to go to Congress.

I kept a pair of horses now, since I was so successful, and used to hunt in the season with other gay pleasure-lovers, or spend my afternoons riding with Miss Poole, who used to look well on horseback. We often passed Peck plodding along alone, stolid and solemn, "taking his constitutional," he said. I remember once as we passed him I recalled what the old professor had said of him, and I added that I would not be as dull as Peck for a fortune. "Do you know," said Miss Poole, suddenly, "I do not think him so dull; he has improved." Peck sat me out a few nights after this, and next day I nearly insulted him; but he was too dull to see it.

I knew my young lady was ambitious; so I determined to please her, and, chucking up the fight for the attorneyship, I told her I was going to Congress, and began to work for it. I was prom-

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ised the support of so many politicians that I felt absolutely sure of the nomination.

Peck told me flatly that I did not stand the ghost of a show, and began to figure. Peck was always figuring. He advised me to stand for the attorneyship, and said I might get it if I really tried. I knew better, however, and I knew Peck, too, so I started in. To make a fight I wanted money, and it happened that a little trip I had taken in the summer, when I was making a sort of a splurge, together with an unlooked-for and wholly inexplicable adverse turn in the market had taken all my cash. So, to make it up, I went into the biggest deal I ever tried. What was the use of fooling about a few score dollars a point when I could easily make it a thousand? I would no longer play at the shilling table. I had a "dead-open-and-shut thing" of it. I had gotten inside information of a huge railroad deal quietly planned, and was let in as a great favor by influential friends, who were close friends of men who were manipulating the market, and especially the P. D. and B. D., a North-western road which had been reorganized some years before. Mr. Poole had some interest in it and this made me feel quite safe as to the deal. I knew they were staking their fortunes on it. I was so sure about it

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that I even advised Peck, for whom I had some gratitude on account of his advice about the attorneyship, to let me put him in for a little. But he declined. He said he had other use for his money, and had made it a rule not to speculate. I told him he was a fool, and I borrowed all I could and went in.

It was the most perfectly managed affair I ever saw. We—our friends—carried the stock up to a point that was undreamed of, and money was too valuable to pay debts with, even had my creditors wanted it, which they did not, now that I had recouped and was again on the crest of the wave. I was rich and was doubling up in a pyramid, when one of those things happened that does not occur once in ten million times and cannot be guarded against! We were just prepared to dump the whole business, when our chief backer, as he was on his way in his carriage to close the deal, was struck by lightning! I was struck by the same bolt. In twenty minutes I was in debt twenty thousand dollars. Telegrams and notices for margin began to pour in on me again within the hour. None of them bothered me so much, however, as a bank notice that I had overchecked an account in which I had a sum of a few hundred dollars belonging to a client of mine—an old

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widowed lady, Mrs. Upshur, who had brought it to me to invest for her, and who trusted me. She had been robbed by her last agent and this was really all that was left her. I remembered how she had insisted on my keeping it for her against the final attack of the wolf, she had said. "But suppose I should spend it," I had said jesting. "I'm not afraid of your spending it, but of myself—I want so many things. If I couldn't trust you, I'd give up." And now it was gone. It came to me that if I should die at that moment she would think I had robbed her, and would have a right to think so. I swear that at the thought I staggered, and since then I have always known how a thief must sometimes feel. It decided me, however. I made up my mind that second that I would never again buy another share of stock on a margin as long as I lived, and I wrote telegrams ordering every broker I had to sell me out and send me my accounts, and I mortgaged my old home for all I could get. I figured that I wanted just one hundred dollars more than I had. I walked across the hall into Peck's little dark office. He was poring over a brief. I said, "Peck, I am broke."

"What? I am sorry to hear it—but I am not surprised." He was perfectly cool, but did look sorry.

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“Peck,” I went on, “I saw you pricing a watch the other day. Here is one I gave three hundred dollars for.” I showed him a fine chronometer repeater I had bought in my flush time.

“I can’t give over a hundred dollars for a watch,” he said.

“How much will you give me for this?”

“You mean with the chain?”

“Yes”—I had not meant with the chain, but I thought of old Mrs. Upshur.

“I can’t give over a hundred.”

“Take it,” and I handed it to him and he gave me a hundred-dollar bill, which I took with the interest and handed, myself, to my old lady, whom I advised to let Peck invest for her on a mortgage. This he did, and I heard afterward netted her six per cent.—for a time.

That evening I went to see Lilian Poole. I had made up my mind quickly what to do. That stroke of lightning had showed me everything just as it was, in its ghastliest detail. If she accepted me, I would begin to work in earnest, and if she would wait, as soon as I could pay my debts, I would be ready; if not, then—! However, I walked right in and made a clean breast of it, and I told her up and down that if she would marry me I would win. I shall never forget the

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picture as she stood by the heavy marble mantel in her father's rich drawing-room, tall and uncompromising and very handsome. She might have been marble herself, like the mantel, she was so cold, and I, suddenly aroused by the shock, was on fire with resolve and fierce hunger for sympathy. She did not hesitate a moment; and I walked out. She had given me a deep wound. I saw the sun rise in the streets.

Within two weeks I had made all my arrangements; had closed up my affairs; given up everything in the world I had; executed my notes to my creditors and told them they were not worth a cent unless I lived, in which case they would be worth principal and interest; sold my law books to Peck for a price which made his eyes glisten, had given him my office for the unexpired term, and was gone to the West.

The night before I left I called to see the young lady again—a piece of weakness. But I hated to give up.

She looked unusually handsome.

I believe if she had said a word or had looked sweet at me I might have stayed, and I know I should have remained in love with her. But she did neither. When I told her I was going away, she said "Where?" That was every word—in

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just such a tone as if she had met me on the corner, and I had said I was going to walk. She was standing by the mantel with her shape-ly arm resting lightly on the marble. I said, "God only knows, but somewhere far enough away."

"When are you coming back?"

"Never."

"Oh, yes, you will," she said coolly, arranging a bracelet, so coolly that it stung me like a serpent and brought me on my feet.

"I'll be—! No, I will not," I said. "Good-by."

"Good-by." She gave me her hand and it was as cool as her voice.

"Good-by." And mine was as cold as if I were dead. I swear, I believe sometimes I did die right there before her and that a new man took my place within me. At any rate my love for her died, slain by the ice in her heart; and the foolish fribble I was passed into a man of resolution.

As I walked out of her gate, I met Peck going in, and I did not care. I did not even hate him. I remember that his collar was up to his ears. I heard afterward that she accepted him that same week. For some inexplicable reason I thought of

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John Marvel as I walked home. I suddenly appeared nearer to him than I had done since I left college, and I regretted not having answered his simple, affectionate letters.

I started West that night.

VII

THE HEGIRA

IN my ménage was a bull-terrier puppy—brindled, bow-legged, and bold—at least, Jeams declared Dix to be a bull pup of purest blood when he sold him to me for five dollars and a suit of clothes that had cost sixty. I found later that he had given a quarter for him to a negro stable-boy who had been sent to dispose of him. Like the American people he was of many strains; but, like the American people, he proved to have good stuff in him, and he had the soul of a lion. One eye was bleared, a memento of some early and indiscreet insolence to some decisive-clawed cat; his ears had been crookedly clipped and one perked out, the other in, and his tail had been badly bobbed; but was as expressive as the immortal Rab's eloquent stump. He feared and followed Jeams, but he adored me. And to be adored by woman or dog is something for any man to show at the last day. To lie and blink at me by the hour was his chief occupation. To crawl up and

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lick my hand, or failing that, my boot, was his heaven.

I always felt that, with all my faults, which none knew like myself, there must be some basic good in me to inspire so devoted a love.

When I determined to leave for the West the night of my final break with Lilian Poole, in my selfishness I forgot Dix; but when I reached home that night, sobered and solitary, there was Dix with his earnest, adoring gaze, his shrewd eye fixed on me, and his friendly twist of the back. His joy at my mere presence consoled me and gave me spirit, though it did not affect my decision.

Jeams, who had followed me from college, at times hung around my office, carried Miss Poole my notes and flowers and, in the hour of my prosperity, blossomed out in a gorgeousness of apparel that partly accounted for my heavy expense account, as well as for the rapid disappearance of the little private stock I occasionally kept or tried to keep in a deceptive-looking desk which I used as a sideboard for myself and friends. He usually wore an old suit of mine, in which he looked surprisingly well, but on occasions he wore a long-tailed coat, a red necktie, and a large soft, light hat which, cocked on the side of his head, gave him the air of an Indian potentate. I think

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he considered himself in some sort a partner. He always referred to me and my business as "us" and "our" business, and, on some one's asking him derisively if he were a partner of mine, he replied, "Oh, no, sir, only what you might term a minor connectee of the Captain." He was, however, a very useful fellow, being ready to do anything in the world I ordered, except when he was tight or had some piece of rascality on foot—occasions by no means rare. He wore, at election time, a large and flaming badge announcing that he was something in his party—the opposite party to mine; but I have reason to believe that when I was in politics he perjured himself freely and committed other crimes against the purity of the ballot on which economists declare all Representative Government is founded. One of my ardent friends once informed me that he thought I ought not to allow Jeams to wear that badge—it was insulting me openly. I told him that he was a fool, that I was so afraid Jeams would insist on my wearing one, too, I was quite willing to compromise. In fact, I had gotten rather dependent on him. Then he and I held such identical views as to Peck, not to mention some other mutual acquaintances, and Jeams could show his contempt in such delightfully insolent ways.

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I had intimated to Jeams some time before, immediately after my first serious reverse in the stock market, that I was no longer as flush as I had been, and that unless affairs looked up I might move on to fresh pastures—or, possibly, I put it, to a wider field for the exercise of my powers; whereupon he promptly indicated his intention to accompany me and share my fortune. But I must say, he showed plainly his belief that it was a richer pasture which I was contemplating moving into, and he viewed the prospect with a satisfaction much like that of a cat which, in the act of lapping milk, has cream set before it. The only thing that puzzled him was that he could not understand why I wanted more than I had. He said so plainly.

“What you want to go ’way for, Cap’n? Whyn’t you stay where you is? You done beat ’em all—evy one of ’em——”

“Oh! no, I haven’t.”

“Go ’way f’om here—you is an’ you know you is—dthat’s the reason you carry yo’ head so high.” (He little knew the true reason.) “An’ if you hadn’t, all you got to do is to walk in yonder—up yonder” (with a toss of his head in the direction of Miss Poole’s home), “an’ hang up yo’ hat, and den you ain’ got nuthin’ to do but jus’ write yo’ checks.”

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I laughed at Jeams's idea of the situation, and of old Poole's son-in-law's position. But it was rather a bitterer laugh than he suspected. To soothe my conscience and also to draw him out, I said, though I did not then really think it possible:

“Why, she's going to marry Peck.”

Jeams turned around and actually spat out his disgust.

“What, dthat man!” Then, as he looked at me to assure himself that I was jesting, and finding a shade less amusement in my countenance than he had expected, he uttered a wise speech.

“Well, I tell you, Cap'n—if dthat man gits her he ought to have her, 'cause he done win her an' you ain' know how to play de game. You done discard de wrong card.”

I acknowledged in my heart that he had hit the mark, and I laughed a little less bitterly, which he felt—as did Dix, lying against my foot which he suddenly licked twice.

“An' I'll tell you another thing—you's well rid of her. Ef she likes dthat man bes', let him have her, and you git another one. Der's plenty mo', jes' as good and better, too, and you'll meck her sorry some day. Dthat's de way I does. If dey wants somebody else, I let's 'em have 'em. It's better to let 'em have 'em befo' than after.”

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When Jeams walked out of my room, he had on a suit which I had not had three months, and a better suit than I was able to buy again in as many years. But he had paid me well for it. I had in mind his wise saying when I faced Lilian Poole without a cent on earth, with all gone except my new-born resolution and offered her only myself, and as I walked out of her gate I consoled myself with Jeams's wisdom.

When I left Miss Poole I walked straight home, and having let nobody know, I spent the evening packing up and destroying old letters and papers and odds and ends; among them, all of Lilian Poole's letters and other trash. At first, I found myself tending to reading over and keeping a few letters and knickknacks; but as I glanced over the letters and found how stiff, measured, and vacant her letters were as compared with my burning epistles, in which I had poured out my heart, my wrath rose, and I consigned them all to the flames, whose heat was the only warmth they had ever known.

I was in the midst of this sombre occupation, with no companion but my angry reflections and no witness but Dix, who was plainly aware that something unusual was going on, and showed his intense anxiety in the only method that dull

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humanity has yet learned to catalogue as Dog-talk: by moving around, wagging his stump of a twist-tail, and making odd, uneasy sounds and movements. His evident anxiety about me presently attracted my attention, and I began to think what I should do with him. I knew old Mrs. Upshur would take and care for him as she would for anything of mine; but Dix, though the best tempered of canines, had his standards, which he lived up to like a gentleman, and he brooked no insolence from his inferiors or equals and admitted no superiors. Moreover, he needed out-door exercise as all sound creatures do, and this poor, old decrepit Mrs. Upshur could not give him. I discarded for one reason or another my many acquaintances, and gradually Jeams took precedence in my mind and held it against all reasoning. He was drunken and worthless—he would possibly, at times, neglect Dix, and at others, would certainly testify his pride in him and prove his confidence by making him fight; but he adored the dog and he feared me somewhat. As I wavered there was a knock and Jeams walked in. He was dressed in my long frock coat and his large, gray hat was on the back of his head—a sure sign that he was tight, even had not his dishevelled collar and necktie and his perspiring countenance given

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evidence of his condition. As he stood in the door, his hand went up to his hat; but at sight of the room, he dropped it before he could reach the hat and simply stared at me in blank amazement.

“Hi! What you doin’?” he stammered.

“Packing up.”

“Where you goin’?”

“Going away.”

“When you comin’ back?”

“Never.”

“What! Well, damned if I ain’ gwine wid you, then.”

The tone was so sincere and he was evidently so much in earnest that a lump sprang into my throat. I turned away to keep him from seeing that I was moved, and it was to keep him still from finding it out that I turned on him with well-feigned savageness as he entered the room.

“You look like going with me, don’t you! You drunken scoundrel! Take your hat off, sir”—for in his confusion he had wholly forgotten his manners. They now came back to him.

“Ixcuse me—Cap’n” (with a low bow). “Ixcuse me, suh. I al’ays removes my hat in the presence of the ladies and sech distinguished gent’mens as yourself, suh; but, Cap’n——”



“Hi! What you doin’?” he stammered.

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“Drunken rascal!” I muttered, still to hide my feeling.

“Cap’n—I ain’ drunk—I’ll swear I ain’ had a drink not in—” He paused for an appropriate term and gave it up. “—Not in—I’ll swear on a stack of Bibles as—as high as Gen’l Washin’s monument—you bring it heah—is you got a Bible? You smell my breath!”

“Smell your breath! I can’t smell anything but your breath. Open that window!”

“Yes, suh,” and the window was meanderingly approached, but not reached, for he staggered slightly and caught on a chair.

“Cap’n, I ain’ had a drink for a year—I’ll swear to dthat. I’ll prove it to you. I ain’ had a cent to buy one wid in a month—I was jus’ comin’ roun’ to ast you to gi’ me one—jus’ to git de dust out o’ my throat.”

“Dust! Clean those things up there and get some dust in your throat.”

“Yes, suh—yes, suh—Cap’n”—insinuatingly, as his eye fell on Dix, who was standing looking attentively first at me and then at Jeams, completely mystified by my tone, but ready to take a hand if there was any need for him. “Cap’n——”

“Well, what is it? What do you want now?”

“Will you lend me a hundred?”

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“A hundred dollars?”

“Yes, suh—you see——”

“No. I’ll give you a hundred licks if you don’t get to work and clean up that floor.”

“Cap’n—yes, suh—I’m gwine to clean ’t up—but, Cap’n——”

“Well?”

“I’ll let you in—jes’ len’ me ten—or five—or jes’ one dollar—hit’s a cinch—Lord! I can meck ten for one jist as easy—dee don’ know him—dee think he ain’ nuthing but a cur dawg—dat’s what I told ’em. And I’ll meck you all de money in the worl’—I will dat.”

“What are you talking about?”

“Well, you see, hit’s dthis away—I wouldn’t bother you if dat yaller bar-keeper nigger hadn’ clean me up wid them d——d loaded bones of hisn—jis’ stole it from me—yes, suh—jis’——”

“Cleaned you up? When?”

“Dthis very evenin’—I had seventeen dollars right in my pocket, heah. You ax Mr. Wills if I didn’t. He seen me have it—I had jes’ got it, too——”

“You liar—you just now told me you hadn’t had a cent in a month, and now you say you had seventeen dollars this evening.” Jeams reared himself up.

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“I toll you dthat?” He was now steadying himself with great gravity and trying to keep his eyes fixed on me.

“Yes.”

“No, sir. I never toll you dthat in this worl’! ’Cause ’twould a been a lie—and I wouldn’ tell you a lie for nuthin’ on earth—I never had no seventeen dollars.”

“I know you didn’t—I know that’s true, unless you stole it; but you said——”

“No, sir—what I said was—dthat if you’d len’ me seventeen dollars I’d take Dix there and kill any dawg dthat yaller nigger up yonder in the Raleigh Hotel could trot out—I didn’ keer what he was—and I said I’d—give you a hundred dollars out of the skads I picked up—dthat’s what I said, and you got it wrong.”

“You’ll do what?”

“You see, hit’s this away—dthat big-moufed, corn-fed yaller nigger—he was allowin’ dthat Mr. Mulligan had a dawg could chaw up any dawg dis side o’ torment, and I ’lowed him a ten dthat I had one ’s could lick h——I out o’ any Mulligan or Mulligan’s dawg top o’ groun’—’n’ dthat you’d len’ me th’ ten to put up.”

“Well, you’ve lost one ten anyway—I won’t lend you a cent, and if I catch you fighting Dix, I’ll

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give you the worst lambing you ever had since Justice John had you skinned for stealing those chickens.”

Jeams threw up his eyes in reprobation.

“Now, Cap’n—you know I never stole dem stags—dthat old jestic he jes’ sentenced me ’cause you was my counsel an’ cause’ I was a nigger an’ had’n had a chance at me befo’—I bet if I’d give’ him half de money ’stead o’ payin’ you, he’d a’ let me off mighty quick.”

“Pay me! you never paid me a cent in your life.”

“Well, I promised to pay you, didn’ I? An’ ain’ dthat de same thin’?”

“Not by a big sight——”

“Dthat’s de way gent’mens does.”

“Oh! do they?”

Jeams came back to the main theme.

“Mr. Hen, ain’ you gwine let me have dem ten dollars, sho’ ’nough? Hit’s jes’ like pickin’ money up in de road: Dix kin kill dat dawg befo’ you ken say Jack Roberson.”

“Jeams,” I said, “look at me!”

“Yes, suh, I’m lookin’,” and he was.

“I am going away to-night——”

“Well, I’m gwine width you, I ain’ gwine stay heah by myself after you and Dix is gone.”

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"No, you can't do that. I don't know yet exactly where I am going, I have not yet decided. I am going West—to a big city."

"Dthat's where I want to go—" interrupted Jeams.

"And when I get settled I'll send for Dix—I'm going to leave him with you."

"Yes, suh, I'll teck keer of him sure. I'll match him against any dawg in dthis town—he can kill dthat dawg of dthat yaller nigger's——"

"No, if you put him in a fight, I'll kill you the first time I see you—d'you hear?"

"Yes, suh—I ain' gwine put him in no fight. But ef he gits in a fight—you know he's a mighty high-spirited dawg—he don' like dawgs to come nosin' roun' him. Hit sort o' aggravates him. An' ef he should——?"

"I'll whip you as sure as you live——"

"Jes' ef he should?"

"Yes—if you let him."

"No, suh, I ain' gwine let him. You lef him wid me."

And though I knew that he was lying, I was content to leave the dog with him; for I was obliged to leave him with some one, and I knew he loved this dog, and hoped my threat would, at least, keep him from anything that might hurt him.

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I drifted out to the Club later and casually dropped the information that I was going away. I do not think it made much impression on my friends there—in fact, I hardly think they took the information seriously. They were a kindly lot, but took life and me lightly.

When I left town at midnight the rain was pouring down, and there was no one at the dreary station to see me off but Jeams and Dix, and as the train pulled out I stood on the platform to say good-bye to Jeams, who was waving his right hand sadly, while with the other he gripped the collar of the dejected Dix who, with his eyes on me, struggled spasmodically and viciously.

Suddenly Dix turned on his captor with a snarl and snap which startled Jeams so that he let him go, then whirling about, he tore after the train, which was just beginning to quicken its speed. He had to rush over ties and switch-rods, but he caught up and made a spring for the step. He made good his footing, but Jeams was running and waving wildly and, with his voice in my ears, I pushed the dog off with my foot and saw him roll over between the tracks. Nothing daunted, however, he picked himself up, and with another rush sprang again for the step. This time only his forefeet caught and he hung on by them for

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a second, then began to slip—inch by inch he was slipping off as I stood watching him, when, under an impulse, fearing that he might be killed, I hastily, and with a sudden something in my throat, reached down and caught him just in time to pull him up, and taking him in my arms I bore him into the car. I confess that, as I felt him licking my hands, a warmer feeling than I had had for some time came around my heart, which had been like a lump of ice during these last days, and I was glad no one was near by who knew me. I made up my mind that, come what might, I would hold on to my one faithful friend.

VIII

PADAN-ARAM

I FIRST went to the town in which lived the relative, the cousin of my father's whom I have mentioned. It was a bustling, busy city and he was reputed the head of the Bar in his State—a man of large interests and influence. I knew my father's regard for him. I think it was this and his promise about me that made me go to him now. I thought he might help me, at least with advice; for I had his name.

I left my trunk and Dix at the hotel and called on him at his large office. In my loneliness, I was full of a new-born feeling of affection for this sole kinsman. I thought, perhaps, he might possibly even make me an offer to remain with him and eventually succeed to his practice. I had not seen him two seconds, however, before I knew this was folly. When I had sent in my name by an obtrusive eyed office-boy I was kept waiting for some time in the outer office, where the office-boy loudly munched an apple, and a couple of clerks whispered to each other with their eyes on the

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private office door. And when I was ushered in he gave me a single keen look as I entered, and went on writing without asking me to sit down, and I would not sit without an invitation. When he had finished he looked up, and nodded his head with a sort of jerk toward a chair. He was a large man with a large head, short gray hair, a strong nose, a heavy chin, and gray eyes close together, without the kindliness either of age or of youth. I took a step toward him and in some embarrassment began to speak rapidly. I called him "Cousin," for blood had always counted for a great deal with us, and I had often heard my father speak of him with pride. But his sharp look stopped me.

"Take a seat," he said, more in a tone of command than of invitation, and called me "Mister." It was like plunging me into a colder atmosphere. I did not sit down, but I was so far into my sentence I could not well stop. So I went on and asked him what he thought of my settling there, growing more and more embarrassed and hot with every word.

"Have you any money?" he asked shortly.

"Not a cent."

"Well, I have none to lend you. You need not count on me. I would advise—" But I did not

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wait for him to finish. I had got hold of myself and was self-possessed enough now.

“I did not ask you to lend me any money, either,” I said, straightening myself up. “I did ask you to give me some advice; but now I do not want that or anything else you have, d——n you! I made a mistake in coming to you, for I am abundantly able to take care of myself.”

Of course, I know now that he had something on his side. He supposed me a weak, worthless dog, if not a “dead-beat.” But I was so angry with him I could not help saying what I did. I stalked out and slammed the door behind me with a bang that made the glass in the sash rattle; and the two or three young men, busy in the outer office, looked up in wonder. I went straight to the hotel and took the train to the biggest city my money would get me to. I thought a big city offered the best chances for me, and, at least, would hide me. I think the fact that I had once written a brief for Mr. Poole in the matter of his interest in car lines there influenced me in my selection.

I travelled that night and the next day and the night following, and partly because my money was running low and partly on Dix’s account, I rode in a day-coach. The first night and day

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passed well enough, but the second night I was tired and dusty and lonely.

On the train that night I spent some serious hours. Disappointment is the mother of depression and the grandmother of reflection. I took stock of myself and tried to peer into the dim and misty future, and it was gloomy work. Only one who has started out with the world in fee, and after throwing it away in sheer recklessness of folly, suddenly hauls up to find himself bankrupt of all he had spurned in his pride: a homeless and friendless wanderer on the face of the earth, may imagine what I went through. I learned that night what the exile feels; I dimly felt what the outcast experiences. And I was sensible that I had brought it all on myself. I had wantonly wasted all my substance in riotous living and I had no father to return to—nothing, not even swine to keep in a strange land. I faced myself on the train that night, and the effigy I gazed on I admitted to be a fool.

The train, stuffy and hot, lagged and jolted and stopped, and still I was conscious of only that soul-shifting process of self-facing. The image of Peck, the tortoise, haunted me. At times I dozed or even slept very soundly; though doubled up like a jack-knife, as I was, I could not efface my-

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self even in my sleep. But when I waked, there was still myself—grim, lonely, homeless—haunting me like a stabbed corpse chained to my side.

I was recalled to myself at last by the whimpering of children packed in a seat across the aisle from me. They had all piled in together the first night somewhere with much excitement. They were now hungry and frowzy and wretched. There were five of them, red-cheeked and dirty; complaining to their mother who, worn and bedraggled herself, yet never lost patience with one or raised her voice above the soothing pitch in all her consoling.

At first I was annoyed by them; then I was amused; then I wondered at her, and at last, I almost envied her, so lonely was I and so content was she with her little brood.

Hitched on to the train the second night was a private car, said to be that of some one connected with a vice-president of the road. The name of the official, which I learned later, was the same as that of an old college friend of my father's, and I had often heard my father mention him as his successful rival with his first sweetheart, and he used to tease my mother by recalling the charms of Kitty MacKenzie, the young lady in question, whose red golden hair he declared the most beauti-

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ful hair that ever crowned a mortal head—while my mother, I remember, insisted that her hair was merely carrotty, and that her beauty, though undeniable, was distinctly of the milkmaid order—a shaft which was well aimed, for my mother's beauty was of the delicate, aristocratic type. The fact was that Mr. Leigh had been a suitor of hers before my father met her, and having been discarded by her, had consoled himself with the pretty girl, to whom my father had been attentive before he met and fell "head over heels in love" with a new star at a college ball.

Mr. Leigh, I knew, had gone West, and grown up to be a banker, and I wondered vaguely if by any chance he could be the same person.

The train should have reached my destination in time for breakfast, and we had all looked forward to it and made our arrangements accordingly. The engine, however, which had been put on somewhere during the night, had "given out," and we were not only some hours late, but were no longer able to keep steadily even the snail's pace at which we had been crawling all night. The final stop came on a long upgrade in a stretch of broken country sparsely settled, and though once heavily wooded, now almost denuded. Here the engine, after a last futile, gasping effort, finally

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gave up, and the engineer descended for the dozenth time to see "what he could do about it." To make matters worse, the water in our car had given out, and though we had been passing streams a little before, there was no water in sight where we stopped. It soon became known that we should have to wait until a brakeman could walk to the nearest telegraph station, miles off, and have another engine despatched to our aid from a town thirty or more miles away. So long as there had been hope of keeping on, however faint, there had been measurable content, and the grumbling which had been heard at intervals all the latter part of the night had been sporadic and subdued; but now when the last hope was gone, and it was known that we were at last "stuck" for good, there was an outbreak of ill-humor from the men, though the women in the car still kept silent, partly subdued by their dishevelled condition and partly because they were content for once, while listening to the men. Now and then a man who had been forward would come back into the car, and address some one present, or speak to the entire car, and in the silence that fell every one listened until he had delivered himself. But no one had yet given a satisfactory explanation of the delay.

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At last a man who sat near me gave an explanation. "The engine lost time because it had too heavy a load. It's a heavy train, anyway, and they put a private car on and the engine could not pull it, that's all that's the matter." He spoke with the finality of a judge, and sat back in his seat, and we all knew that he had hit the mark, and given the true cause. Henceforward he was regarded with respect. He really knew things. I insensibly took note of him. He was a middle-sized, plain-looking man with bright eyes and a firm mouth. Whether by a coincidence or not, just at that moment something appeared to have given way in the car: babies began to cry; children to fret, and the elders to fume and grumble. In a short time every one in the car was abusing the railroad and its management. Their inconsiderateness, their indifference to the comfort of their passengers.

"They pay no more attention to us and take no more care of us than if we were so many cattle," growled a man. "I couldn't get a single berth last night." He was a big, sour-looking fellow, who wore patent-leather shoes on his large feet and a silk hat, now much rubbed—and a dirty silk handkerchief was tucked in his soiled collar, and in his soiled shirt front showed a suppositi-

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tious diamond. He was, as I learned later, named Wringman, and was a labor-leader of some note.

“Not as much as of cattle—for, at least, they water them,” said another; “they care nothing about our comfort.”

“Unless they ride in a Pullman,” interjected the man near me, who had explained the situation.

The woman with the five children suddenly turned. “And that’s true, too,” she said, with a glance of appreciation at him and a sudden flash of hate at the big man with the diamond. Off and on all night the children had, between naps, begged for water, and the mother had trudged back and forth with the patience of an Egyptian water-carrier, but now the water had given out, and the younger ones had been whimpering because they were hungry.

I went forward, and about the engine, where I stood for a time, looking on while we waited, I heard further criticism of the road, but along a different line, from the trainmen.

“Well, I’ll have to stand it,” said one of them, the engineer, a man past middle-age. “No more strikes for me. That one on the C. B. and B. D. taught me a lesson. I was pretty well fixed then—had a nice house and lot ’most paid for in the Building Company, and the furniture all paid for,

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except a few instalments, and it all went. I thought we'd 'a' starved that winter—and my wife's been sick ever since."

"I know," said his friend, "but if they cut down we've got to fight. I'm willin' to starve to beat 'em."

"You may be; but you ain't got little children and a sick wife."

A little later I saw the flashily dressed man with the dirty handkerchief talking to him, and insisting that they should fight the company. "We'll bring 'em to their knees," he said, with many oaths. The engineer kept silence, the younger man assented warmly.

I went back to my car. Presently matters grew so bad in the car that my sympathies for the children were aroused, and I determined to see if I could not ameliorate the conditions somewhat. I went back to the Pullman car to see if there was any chance of buying some food, but the haggard looking porter said there was nothing on the car. "They usually go in to breakfast," he explained. My only chance would be the private car behind. So, after I had been forward and ascertained that we would not get away for at least an hour more, I went back and offered to look after the older children of the little family. "I am going to take my

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dog for a run; I'll take the little folks too." The mother with a baby in her arms and a child, hardly more than a baby, tugging at her, looked unutterably tired, and was most grateful to me. I took the older children and went down the bank, and turning back, began to pick the straggling wild flowers beside the track. As we passed the private car, the door opened, and the cook tossed a waiterful of scraps out on the ground on which both Dixie and the children threw themselves. But, though there was plenty of bread, it had all been ruined by being in the slop-water; so Dixie was soon left in undisturbed possession.

A little beyond the end of the train we came on a young girl engaged in the same occupation as ourselves. Her back was toward us, but her figure was straight and supple, and her motions easy and full of spring. The sight of the young lady so fresh and cool, with the morning sun shining on a thick coil of shining hair, quite revived me. I drew near to get a good look at her and also to be within shot of a chance to speak to her should opportunity offer. If I were a novelist trying to describe her I should say that she was standing just at the foot of a bank with a clump of green bushes behind her, her arms full of flowers which she had gathered. For all these were there,

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and might have been created there for her, so harmonious were they with the fresh young face above them and the pliant form which clasped them. I might further have likened her to Proserpine with her young arms full of blossoms from Sicilian meads; for she resembled her in other ways than in embracing flowers and breathing fragrance as she stood in the morning light. But truth to tell, it was only later that I thought of these. The first impression I received, as it will be the last, was of her eyes. Dimples, and snow-white teeth; changing expression where light and shadow played, with every varying feeling, and where color came and went like roses thrown on lilies, and lilies on roses, all came to me later on. But that was in another phase. Her eyes were what I saw at first, and never since have I seen the morning or the evening star swimming in rosy light but they have come back to me. I remember I wore a blue suit and had on an old yachting cap, which I had gotten once when on a short cruise with a friend. I was feeling quite pleased with myself. She suddenly turned.

“Are you the brakernan?”

“No, I am not.” I could scarcely help laughing at my sudden fall. “But perhaps I can serve you?” I added.

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“Oh! I beg pardon! No, I thank you. I only wanted to ask— However, it is nothing.”

Dix had, on being let out, and satisfying himself that I was coming along, made a wild dash down the bank and alongside the train, and now on his return rush, catching sight of the young lady in her fresh frock, without waiting for the formality of an introduction, he made a dash for her and sprang up on her as if he had known her all his life. I called to him, but it was too late, and before I could stop him, he was up telling her what after my first look at her I should have liked to tell her myself: what a sweet charming creature we thought her.

Dixie had no scruples of false pride inculcated by a foolish convention of so-called society. He liked her and said so, and she liked him for it, while I was glad to shine for a moment in the reflected glory of being his master.

“What a fine dog!” she exclaimed as she patted him, addressing the children, who, with soiled clothes and tousled heads, were gazing at the spick-and-span apparition in open-mouthed wonder. “How I envy you such a dog.”

“He ain’t ours, he belongs to him,” said the child, pointing to me, as I stooped at a little distance pretending to pull blossoms while I listened.

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“Oh! Who is he? Is he your father?” My face was averted.

“Oh, no. We don’t know who he is; he just took us so.”

“Took you so?”

“You see,” explained the next older one, “our mother, she’s got the baby and Janet, and the gentleman, he said he would take us and get some wild flowers, because we hadn’t had any breakfast, and that dog—” But the dog was forgotten on the instant.

“Have not had any breakfast!” exclaimed the young lady with astonishment.

“No; you see, we had some bread last night, but that’s given out. *She* ate the last piece last night—” (she pointed at the smallest child)—“and we were so hungry; she cried, and Mamma cried, and that gentleman——”

By this time I had turned and I now stepped forward. I confess that, as I turned, wrath was in my heart, but at sight of that horrified face, in its sympathy, my anger died away.

“Oh! and to think what I wasted! How did it happen?”

“The train was late and they had expected to get in to breakfast, but the engine gave out,” I explained.

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“And they have not had any breakfast?”

“No one on the train.”

“You see,” chimed in the oldest girl, glad to be able to add information, “the train’s heavy anyway, and they put a private car on, and it was more than the engine could pull; that’s all that’s the matter.”

The young lady turned to me.

“Do you mean that our car has caused all this trouble?”

I nodded. “I don’t know about ‘all,’ but it helped.”

“You poor little dears!” she said, rushing to the children, “come with me.” And, taking the youngest child by the hand, she hurried to the rear steps of the car, with the others close behind, while Dixie, who appeared to know what was in store, walked close beside her knee, as much as to say, “Don’t leave me out.”

As the train stood on an embankment, the step was too high for her to climb up, so I offered to put the children up on the top step for her. Then came the difficulty of her getting up herself. She called the porter, but the door was shut and there was no answer.

“Let me help you up, too,” I said. “Here, you can reach the rail, and step in my hand and spring

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up. I can help you perfectly well—as though you were mounting a horse,” I added, seeing her hesitate. And, without giving her time to think, I stooped and lifted her to the step. As she sprang up, the door opened, and a portly lady, richly dressed and with several diamond rings on, came out on the platform. She gazed on the little group with astonishment.

“Why, Eleanor, what is this? Who are these?”

“They are some poor children, Aunt, who have had no breakfast, and I am going to give them some.”

“Why, they can’t come in here, my dear. Those dirty little brats come in our car! It is impossible, my dear.”

“Oh, no, it is not, Aunty,” said the young girl with a laugh, “they have had no breakfast.”

“Give them food, my dear, if you please, but I beg you not to bring them into this car. Look how dirty they are! Why, they might give us all some terrible disease!”

But Miss Eleanor had closed her ears to the plump lady’s expostulations, and was arranging with a surly servant for something to eat for the children. And just then the question of their invasion of the car was settled by the train’s starting. I undertook to run forward alongside the car, but

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seeing an open ravine ahead spanned by a trestle, and that the train was quickening its speed, I caught Dixie and threw him up on the rear platform, and then swung myself up after him. The rear door was still unlocked, so I opened it to pass through the car. Just inside the elderly lady was sitting back in an arm-chair with a novel in her lap, though she was engaged at the moment in softly polishing her nails. She stopped long enough to raise her jewelled lorgnette and take a shot at me through it.

“Are you the brakeman?” she called.

“No, Madame,” I said grimly, thinking, “Well, I must have a brakeman’s air to-day.”

“Oh! Will you ring that bell?”

“Certainly.” I rang and, passing on, was met by the porter coming to answer the bell.

“This is a private car,” he said shortly, blocking my way.

“I know it.” I looked him in the eye.

“You can’t go th’oo this car.”

“Oh! yes, I can. I have got to go through it. Move out of my way.”

My tone and manner impressed him sufficiently, and he surlily moved aside, muttering to himself; and I passed on, just conscious that the stout lady had posted herself at the opening of the passage-

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way behind, and had beckoned to the porter, who sprang toward her with alacrity. As I passed through the open saloon, the young lady was engaged in supplying my little charges with large plates of bread and butter, while a grinning cook, in his white apron and cap, was bringing a yet further supply. She turned and smiled to me as I passed.

“Won’t you have something, too? It is a very poor apology for a breakfast; for we had finished and cleared away, but if——”

“These little tots don’t appear to think so,” I said, my ill-humor evaporating under her smile.

“Well, won’t you have something?”

I declined this in my best Chesterfieldian manner, alleging that I must go ahead and tell their mother what a good fairy they had found.

“Oh! it is nothing. To think of these poor little things being kept without breakfast all morning. My father will be very much disturbed to find that this car has caused the delay.”

“Not if he is like his sister,” I thought to myself, but I only bowed, and said, “I will come back in a little while, and get them for their mother.” To which she replied that she would send them to their mother by the porter, thereby cutting off a chance which I had promised myself of possibly

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getting another glimpse of her. But the sight of myself at this moment in a mirror hastened my departure. A large smudge of black was across my face, evidently from a hand of one of the children. The prints of the fingers in black were plain on my cheek, while a broad smear ran across my nose. No wonder they thought me a brakeman.

As I reached the front door of the car I found it locked and I could not open it. At the same moment the porter appeared behind me.

"Ef you'll git out of my way, I'll open it," he said in a tone so insolent that my gorge rose.

I stood aside and, still muttering to himself, he unlocked the door, and with his hand on the knob, stood aside for me to pass. As I passed I turned to look for Dixie, who was following me, and I caught the words, "Ise tired o' po' white folks and dogs in my car." At the same moment Dixie passed and he gave him a kick, which drew a little yelp of surprise from him. My blood suddenly boiled. The door was still open and, quick as light, I caught the porter by the collar and with a yank jerked him out on the platform. The door slammed to as he came, and I had him to myself. With my hand still on his throat I gave him a shake that made his teeth rattle.

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“You black scoundrel,” I said furiously. “I have a good mind to fling you off this train, and break your neck.” The negro’s face was ashy.

“Indeed, boss,” he said, “I didn’ mean no harm in the world by what I said. If I had known you was one of dese gentlemens, I’d ’a’ never said a word; no suh, that I wouldn’. An’ I wouldn’ ’a’ tetched your dorg for nuthin’, no suh.”

“Well, I’ll teach you something,” I said. “I’ll teach you to keep a civil tongue in your head, at least.”

“Yes, suh, yes, suh,” he said, “I always is, I always tries to be, I just didn’ know; no suh, I axes your pardon. I didn’ mean nuthin’ in the worl’.”

“Now go in there and learn to behave yourself in the future,” I said.

“Yes, suh, I will.” And, with another bow, and a side look at Dix, who was now growling ominously, he let himself in at the door and I passed on forward.

IX

I PITCH MY TENT

WHEN, a little later, my small charges were brought back to their mother (to whom I had explained their absence), it was by the young lady herself, and I never saw a more graceful picture than that young girl, in her fresh travelling costume, convoying those children down the car aisle. Her greeting of the tired mother was a refreshment, and a minute after she had gone the mother offered me a part of a substantial supply of sandwiches which she had brought her, so that I found myself not quite so much in sympathy as before with the criticism of the road that was now being freely bandied about the car, and which appeared to have made all the passengers as one.

Not long after this we dropped the private car at a station and proceeded on without it. We had, however, not gone far when we stopped and were run into a siding and again waited, and after a time, a train whizzed by us—a special train with but two private cars on it. It was going at a clipping rate, but it did not run so fast that we did

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not recognize the private car we had dropped some way back, and it soon became known throughout our train that we had been side-tracked to let a special with private cars have the right of way. I confess that my gorge rose at this, and when the man in front of me declared that we were the most patient people on earth to give public franchises, pay for travelling on trains run by virtue of them, and then stand being shoved aside and inconvenienced out of all reason to allow a lot of bloated dead-heads to go ahead of us in their special trains, I chimed in with him heartily.

“Well, the road belongs to them, don't it?” enquired a thin man with a wheezing voice. “That was Canter's private train, and he took on the Argand car at that station back there.”

““They own the road!’ How do they own it? How did they get it?” demanded the first speaker warmly.

“Why, you know how they got it. They got it in the panic—that is, they got the controlling interest.”

“Yes, and then ran the stock down till they had got control and then reorganized and cut out those that wouldn't sell—or couldn't—the widows and orphans and infants—that's the way they got it.”

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“Well, the court upheld it.”

“Yes, under the law they had had made themselves to suit themselves. You know how 'twas! You were there when 'twas done and saw how they flung their money around—or rather the Argand money—for I don't believe Canter and his set own the stock at all. I'll bet a thousand dollars that every share is up as collateral in old Argand's bank.”

“Oh! Well, it's all the same thing. They stand in together. They run the bank—the bank lends money; they buy the stock and put it up for the loan, and then run the road.”

“And us,” chipped in the other, for they had now gotten into a high good-humor with each other; “they get our franchises and our money, and then side-track us without breakfast while they go sailing by—in cars that they call theirs, but which we pay for. I do think we are the biggest fools!”

“That's socialistic!” said his friend again. “You've been reading that fellow's articles in the Sunday papers. What's his name?”

“No, I've been thinking. I don't care what it is, it's the truth, and I'm tired of it.”

“They say he's a Jew,” interrupted the former.

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“I don’t care what he is, it’s the truth,” asserted the other doggedly.

“Well, I rather think it is,” agreed his friend; “but then, I’m hungry, and there isn’t even any water on the car.”

“And they guzzle champagne!” sneered the other, “which we pay for,” he added.

“You’re a stockholder?”

“Yes, in a small way; but I might as well own stock in a paving company to Hell. My father helped to build this road and used to take great pride in it. They used to give the stockholders then a free ride once a year to the annual meeting, and it made them all feel as if they owned the road.”

“But now they give free passes not to the stockholders, but to the legislators and the judges.”

“It pays better,” said his friend, and they both laughed. It appeared, indeed, rather a good joke to them—or, at least, there was nothing which they could do about it, so they might as well take it good-humoredly.

By this time I had learned that my neighbor with the five children was the wife of a man named McNeil, who was a journeyman machinist, but had been thrown out of work by a strike in another city, and, after waiting around for months,

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had gone North to find employment, and having at last gotten it, had now sent for them to come on. She had not seen him for months, and she was looking forward to it now with a happiness that was quite touching. Even the discomforts of the night could not dull her joy in the anticipation of meeting her husband—and she constantly enheartened her droopy little brood with the prospect of soon seeing their “dear Daddy.”

Finally after midday we arrived.

I shall never forget the sight and smells of that station, if I live to be a thousand years old. It seemed to me a sort of temporary resting-place for lost souls—and I was one of them. Had Dante known it, he must have pictured it, with its reek and grime. The procession of tired, bedraggled travellers that streamed in through the black gateways to meet worn watchers with wan smiles on their tired faces, or to look anxiously and in vain for friends who had not come, or else who had come and gone. And outside the roar of the grimy current that swept through the black street.

I had no one to look for; so, after helping my neighbor and her frowsy little brood off, I sauntered along with Dix at my heel, feeling about as lonely as a man can feel on this populated earth. After gazing about and refusing sternly to meet

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the eye of any of the numerous cabmen who wildly waved their whips toward me, shouting: "Kebsuh—kebsuh—keb—keb—keb?" with wearying iteration, I had about made up my mind to take the least noisy of them, when I became conscious that my fellow-traveller, Mrs. McNeil with her little clan, was passing out of the station unescorted and was looking about in a sort of lost way. On my speaking to her, her face brightened for a moment, but clouded again instantly, as she said, "Oh! sir, he's gone! He came to meet me this morning; but the train was late and he couldn't wait or he'd lose his job, so he had to go, and the kind man at the gate told me he left the message for me. But however shall I get there with all the children, for I haven't a cent left!"

The tears welled up in her eyes as she came to her sad little confession. And I said, "Oh! Well, I think we can manage it somehow. You have his address?"

"Oh, yes, sir, I have it here," and she pulled out an empty little pocket-book from the breast of her worn frock, and while she gave the baby to the eldest girl to hold, tremblingly opened the purse. In it was only a crumpled letter and, besides this, a key—these were all. She opened the letter ten-

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derly and handed it to me. I read the address and fastened it in my memory.

“Now,” I said, “we’ll straighten this out directly.” I turned and called a hackman. “I want a carriage.”

There was a rush, but I was firm and insisted on a hack. However, as none was to be had, I was fain to content myself with a one-horse cab of much greater age than dimension.

Bundling them in and directing the driver to go around and get the trunk from the baggage-room, I mounted beside him and took Dix between my feet and one of the children in my arms, and thus made my entry into the city of my future home. My loneliness had somehow disappeared.

My protégée’s destination turned out to be a long way off, quite in one of the suburbs of the city, where working people had their little homes—a region I was to become better acquainted with later. As we began to pass bakeries and cook-shops, the children began once more to clamor to their mother for something to eat, on which the poor thing tried to quiet them with promises of what they should have when they reached home. But I could perceive that her heart was low within her, and I stopped at a cook-shop and bought a liberal allowance of bread and jam and cookies, on

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which the young things fell to like famished wolves, while their mother overwhelmed me with blessings.

We had not gone far, and were still in the centre of the city, when a handsome open carriage drove by us, and as it passed, there sat in it the young lady I had seen on the train, with a pleasant looking elderly man, whom I conjectured to be her father, and who appeared in a very good-humor with her or himself. As I was gazing at them, her eyes fell full into mine, and after a half-moment's mystification, she recognized me as I lifted my hat, and her face lit up with a pleasant smile of recognition. I found my feelings divided between pleasure at her sweet return of my bow and chagrin that she should find me in such a predicament; for I knew what a ridiculous figure I must cut with the dog between my feet and a frowsy child, thickly smeared with jam, in my arms. In fact, I could see that the girl was talking and laughing spiritedly with her father, evidently about us. I confess to a feeling of shame at the figure I must cut, and I wondered if she would not think I had lied to her in saying that I had never met them before. I did not know that the smile had been for Dix.

When we reached, after a good hour's drive, the little street for which we were bound, I found my

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forecast fairly correct. The dingy little house, on which was the rusted number given Mrs. McNeil in her husband's letter, was shut up and bore no evidence of having been opened, except a small flower-pot with a sprig of green in it in a dusty, shutterless window. It was the sort of house that is a stove in summer and an ice-box in the winter. And there was a whole street of them. After we had knocked several times and I had tried to peep over the fence at the end of the street, the door of an adjoining tenement opened, and a slatternly, middle-aged woman peeped out.

"Are you Mrs. McNeil?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Well, here's your key. Your man told me to tell you 't if you came while he was at work, you'd find something to eat in the back room 't he'd cooked this mornin' before he went to work. The train was late, he said, and he couldn't wait; but he'd be home to-night, and he'd bring some coal when he came. What a fine lot o' children you have. They ought to keep you in cinders and wood. I wish I had some as big as that; but mine are all little. My two eldest died of scarlet fever two years ago. Drainage, they said."

She had come out and unlocked the door and was now turning away.

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“I think your man had some one to take the upstairs front room; but he didn't come—you'll have to get some one to do it and you double up. The Argand Estate charges such rent, we all have to do that. Well, if I can help you, I'm right here.”

I was struck by her kindness to the forlorn stranger, and the latter's touching recognition of it, expressed more in looks and in tone than in words.

Having helped them into the house, which was substantially empty, only one room having even a pretence of furniture in it, and that merely a bed, a mattress, and a broken stove, I gave the poor woman a little of my slender stock of money, and left her murmuring her thanks and assurances that I had already done too much for them. In fact, I had done nothing.

As my finances were very low, I determined to find a boarding-house instead of wasting them at a hotel. I accordingly stopped at a sizable house which I recognized as a boarding-house on a street in a neighborhood which might, from the old houses with their handsome doors and windows, have once been fashionable, though fashion had long since taken its flight to a newer and gaudier part of the town, and the mansions were now

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giving place to shops and small grocers' markets. A wide door with a fan-shaped transom gave it dignity. A large wistaria vine coiled up to the top of a somewhat dilapidated porch with classical pillars lent it distinction. The landlady, Mrs. Kale, a pleasant-looking, kindly woman, offered me a small back room on reasonable terms, it being, as she said, the dull season; and, having arranged for Dix in a dingy little livery stable near by, I took it "temporarily," till I could look around.

I found the company somewhat nondescript—ranging all the way from old ladies with false fronts and cracked voices to uppish young traveling men and their rather sad-looking wives.

Among the boarders, the two who interested me most were two elderly ladies, sisters, whose acquaintance I made the day after my arrival. They did not take their meals at the common table, but, as I understood, in their own apartment in the third story. They were a quaint and pathetic pair, very meagre, very shabby, and manifestly very poor. There was an air of mystery about them, and Mrs. Kale treated them with a respect which she paid to no others of her variegated household. They occasionally honored the sitting-room with their presence on Sunday even-

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ings, by Mrs. Kale's especial invitation, and I was much diverted with them. They were known as the Miss Tippses; but Mrs. Kale always spoke of them as "Miss Pansy" and "Miss Pinky." It seems that she had known them in her youth, "back East."

My acquaintance with the two old ladies at this time was entirely accidental. The morning after my arrival, as I started out to look around for an office, and also to take Dix for a walk, as well as to take a look at the city, I fell in with two quaint-looking old women who slipped out of the door just ahead of me, one of them slightly lame, and each with a large bundle in her arms. They were dressed in rusty black, and each wore a veil, which quite concealed her features. But as they limped along, engaged in an animated conversation, their voices were so refined as to arrest my attention, and I was guilty of the impropriety of listening to them, partly out of sheer idleness, and partly because I wanted to know something of my boarding-house and of my fellow boarders. They were talking about a ball of the night before, an account of which they had read in the papers, or rather, as I learned, in a copy of a paper which they had borrowed, and they were as much interested in it as if they had been there themselves. "Oh, wouldn't

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you have liked to see it?" said one. "It must have been beautiful. I should have liked to see Miss ——" (I could not catch the name). "She must have been exquisite in chiffon and lace. She is so lovely anyhow. I did not know she had returned."

"I wonder Mr. —— did not tell us." Again I failed to hear the name.

"For a very good reason, I suppose. He did not know."

"He is dead in love with her."

"Oh, you are so romantic!" said the other, whom I took from her figure and her feebleness to be the elder of the two.

"No; but any one can tell that at a glance."

"What a pity he could not marry her. Then we should be sure to see her as a bride."

The other laughed. "What an idea! We have nothing fit to go even to the church in."

"Why, we could go in the gallery. Oh, this bundle is so heavy! I don't believe I can ever get there to-day."

"Oh, yes, you can. Now come on. Don't give up. Here, rest it on the fence a moment."

As the lame one attempted to lift the bundle to rest it on the fence, it slipped to the ground, and she gave a little exclamation of fear.

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“Oh, dear! suppose it should get soiled!”

I stepped forward and lifted it for her, and to my surprise found it very heavy. Then, as they thanked me, it occurred to me to offer to carry the bundle for them to the street car for which I supposed them bound. There was a little demur, and I added, “I am at Mrs. Kale’s also. I have just come.” This appeared to relieve one of them at least, but the other said, “Oh, but we are not going to the street car. We don’t ride in street cars.”

“Yes; it is so unhealthy,” said the younger one. “People catch all sorts of diseases on the car.”

Thinking them rather airy, I was about to hand the bundle back, but as I was going their way I offered to carry the bundles for both of them as far as I was going. This proved to be quite twenty blocks, for I could not in decency return the bundles. So we went on together, I feeling at heart rather ashamed to be lugging two large bundles through the streets for two very shabby-looking old women whose names I did not know. We soon, however, began to talk, and I drew out from them a good deal about Mrs. Kale and her kindness. Also, that they had seen much better days, to which one of them particularly was very fond of referring. It seemed that they had lived

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East—they carefully guarded the exact place—and had once had interests in a railroad which their father had built and largely owned. They were manifestly anxious to make this clearly understood. After his death they had lived on their dividends, until, on a sudden, the dividends had stopped. They found that the railroad with which their road connected had passed into new hands—had been “bought up” by a great syndicate, their lawyer had informed them, and refused any longer to make traffic arrangements with the road. This had destroyed the value of their property, but they had refused to sell their holdings at the low price offered—“As we probably ought to have done,” sighed one of them.

“Not at all! I am glad we didn’t,” asserted the other.

“Well, sister, we got nothing—we lost everything, didn’t we?”

“I don’t know. I am only glad that we held out. That man knows that he robbed us.”

“Well, that doesn’t help us.”

“Yes, it does. It helps me to know that he knows it.”

“Who was it?” I asked.

“Oh, there was a syndicate. I only know the names of two of them—a man named Argand, and

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a man named Canter. And our lawyer was named McSheen.”

Argand was a name which I recalled in connection with Mr. Poole’s interest in the railways in the case I have mentioned.

“Well, you held on to your stock. You have it now, then?” I foresaw a possible law-case against Argand, and wondered if he was the owner of the Argand Estate, which I had already heard of twice since my arrival.

“No,” said one of them, “they bought up the stock of all the other people, and then they did something which cut us out entirely. What was it they did, sister?”

“Reorganized.”

“And then we came on here to see about it, and spent everything else that we had in trying to get it back, but we lost our case. And since then——”

“Well, sister, we are keeping the gentleman. Thank you very much,” said the younger of the two quickly, to which her sister added her thanks as well. I insisted at first on going further with them, but seeing that they were evidently anxious to be rid of me, I gave them their bundles and passed on.

Among the boarders one of those I found most interesting was a young man named Kalender,

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by whom I sat at the first meal after my arrival, and with whom I struck up an acquaintance. He was a reporter for a morning paper of very advanced methods, and he was pre-eminently a person fitted for his position: a cocky youth with a long, keen nose and a bullet head covered with rather wiry, black hair, heavy black brows over keen black eyes, and an ugly mouth with rather small yellowish teeth. He had as absolute confidence in himself as any youth I ever met, and he either had, or made a good pretence of having, an intimate knowledge of not only all the public affairs of the city, but of the private affairs of every one in the city. Before we had finished smoking our cigarettes he had given me what he termed "the lay out" of the entire community, and by his account it was "the rottenest — town in the universe"—a view I subsequently had reason to rectify—and he proposed to get out of it as soon as he could and go to New York, which, to his mind, was the only town worth living in in the country (he having, as I learned later, lived there just three weeks).

His paper, he said frankly, paid only for sensational articles, and was just then "jumping on a lot of the high-flyers, because that paid," but "they" gave him a latitude to write up whatever

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he pleased, because they knew he could dress up anything—from a murder to a missionary meeting. “Oh! it don’t matter what you write about,” said he airily, “so you know how to do it”—a bit of criticism suggestive of a better-known critic.

I was much impressed by his extraordinary and extensive experience. In the course of our conversation I mentioned casually the episode of the delayed train and the private car.

“The Argands’ car, you say?”

I told him that that was what some one had said.

“That would make a good story,” he declared. “I think I’ll write that up—I’d have all the babies dying and the mothers fainting and an accident just barely averted by a little girl waving a red shawl, see—while the Argand car dashed by with a party eating and drinking and throwing champagne bottles out of the window. But I’ve got to go and see the Mayor to ascertain why he appointed the new city comptroller, and then I’ve got to drop by the theatre and give the new play a roast—so I’ll hardly have time to roast those Argands and Leighs, though I’d like to do it to teach them not to refuse me round-trip passes next time I ask for them. I tell you what you do,”

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he added, modestly, "you write it up—you say you have written for the press?"

"Oh! yes, very often—and for the magazines. I have had stories published in——"

"Well, that's all right." (Kalender was not a good listener.) "I'll look it over and touch it up—put the fire in it and polish it off. You write it up, say—about a column. I can cut it down all right—and I'll call by here for it about eleven, after the theatre."

It was a cool request—coolly made; but I was fool enough to accede to it. I felt much aggrieved over the treatment of us by the railway company, and was not sorry to air my grievance at the same time that I secured a possible opening. I accordingly spent all the afternoon writing my account of the inconvenience and distress occasioned the travelling public by the inconsiderateness of the railway management, discussing, by the way, the fundamental principle of ownership in quasi-public corporations, and showing that all rights which they claimed were derived from the people. I mentioned no names and veiled my allusions; but I paid a tribute to the kind heart of the Angel of Mercy who succored the children. I spent some hours at my composition and took much pride in it when completed. Then, as I had not been out at

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all to see the town, I addressed the envelope in which I had placed my story to Mr. Kalender, and leaving it for him, walked out into the wilderness.

On my return the paper was gone.

Next morning I picked up one paper after another, but did not at first find my contribution. An account of a grand ball the night before, at which an extraordinary display of wealth must have been made, was given the prominent place in most of them. But as I did not know the persons whose costumes were described with such Byzantine richness of vocabulary, I passed it by. The only thing referring to a railway journey was a column article, in a sensational sheet called *The Trumpet*, headed, BRUTALITY OF MILLIONAIRE BANKER. RAILWAY PRESIDENT STARVES POOR PASSENGERS. There under these glaring headlines, I at last discovered my article, so distorted and mutilated as to be scarcely recognizable. The main facts of the delay and its cause were there as I wrote them. My discussion of derivative rights was retained. But the motive was boldly declared to be brutal hatred of the poor. And to make it worse, the names of both Mr. Leigh and Mrs. Argand were given as having been present in person, gloating over the misery they had caused, while a young lady, whose name

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was not given, had thrown scraps out of the window for starving children and dogs to scramble for.

To say that I was angry expresses but a small part of the truth. The allusion to the young lady had made my blood boil. What would she think if she should know I had had a hand in that paper? I waited at red heat for my young man, and had he appeared before I cooled down, he would have paid for the liberty he took with me. When he did appear, however, he was so innocent of having offended me that I could scarcely bear to attack him.

“Well, did you see our story?” he asked gayly.

“Yes—your story—I saw——”

“Well, I had to do a little to it to make it go,” he said condescendingly, “but you did very well—you’ll learn.”

“Thank you. I don’t want to learn that,” I said hotly; “I never saw anything so butchered. There was not the slightest foundation for all that rot—it was made up out of whole cloth.” I was boiling about Miss Leigh.

“Pooh-pooh! My dear boy, you’ll never make an editor. I never fake an interview,” he said virtuously. “Lots of fellows do; but I don’t. But if a man will give me two lines, I can give him two columns—and good ones, too. Why, we had two

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extras—what with that and the grand ball last night. The newsboys are crying it all over town.”

“I don’t care if they are. I don’t want to be an editor if one has to tell such atrocious lies as that. But I don’t believe editors have to do that, and I know reputable editors don’t. Why, you have named a man who was a hundred miles away.”

He simply laughed.

“Well, I’m quite willing to get the credit of that paper. That’s business. We’re trying to break down the Leigh interests, and the Argands are mixed up with ’em. Coll McSheen was in the office last night. He’s counsel for the Argands, but—you don’t know Coll McSheen?”

“I do not,” I said shortly.

“He’s deep. You know you write better than you talk,” he added patronizingly. “I tell you what I’ll do—if you’ll write me every day on some live topic——”

“I’ll never write you a line again on any topic, alive or dead, unless you die yourself, when I’ll write that you are the biggest liar I ever saw except my Jeams.”

I had expected he would resent my words, but he did not. He only laughed, and said, “That’s a good line. Write on that.”

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I learned later that he had a slight raise of salary on the paper he palmed off as his. I could only console myself with the hope that Miss Leigh would not see the article.

But Miss Leigh did see the appreciation of her father in the writing of which I had had a hand, and it cost me many a dark hour of sad repining.

X

A NEW GIRL

THIS is how the young lady heard of it. Miss Leigh had been at home but an hour or two and had only had time to change her travelling costume for a suit of light blue with a blue hat to match, which was very becoming to her, and order the carriage to drive down and get her father, when a visitor was announced: Miss Milly McSheen, an old schoolmate—and next moment a rather large, flamboyant girl of about Miss Leigh's own age or possibly a year or two older, bounced into the room as if she had been shot in out of one of those mediæval engines which flung men into walled towns.

She began to talk volubly even before she was actually in the room; she talked all through her energetic if hasty embrace of her friend, and all the time she was loosening the somewhat complicated fastening of a dotted veil which, while it obscured, added a certain charm to a round, florid, commonplace, but good-humored face in which smiled two round, shallow blue eyes.

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“Well, my dear,” she began while yet outside the door, “I thought you never were coming back! Never! And I believe if I hadn’t finally made up my mind to get you back you would have stayed forever in that nasty, stuck-up city of Brotherly Love.”

Miss Leigh a little airily observed that that title applied to Philadelphia, and she had only passed through Philadelphia on a train one night.

“Oh! well, it was some kind of love, I’ll be bound, and some one’s else brother, too, that kept you away so long.”

“No, it was not—not even some one else’s brother,” replied Miss Leigh.

“Oh! for Heaven’s sake, don’t tell me that’s wrong. Why, I’ve been practising that all summer. It sounds so grammatical—so New Yorkish.”

“I can’t help it. It may be New Yorkish, but it isn’t grammatical,” said Miss Leigh. “But I never expected to get back earlier. My aunt had to look into some of her affairs in the East and had to settle some matters with a lawyer down South, a friend of my father’s—an old gentleman who used to be one of her husband’s partners and is her trustee or something, and I had to wait till they got matters settled.”

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“Well, I’m glad you are here in time. I was so afraid you wouldn’t be, that I got pa to telegraph and have your car put on the president’s special train that was coming through and had the right of way. I told him that I didn’t see that because your father had resigned from the directory was any reason why you shouldn’t be brought on the train.”

“Were we indebted to you for that attention?” Eleanor Leigh’s voice had a tone of half incredulity.

“Yep—I am the power behind the throne just at present. Pa and old Mr. Canter have buried the hatchet and are as thick as thieves since their new deal, and Jim Canter told me his car was coming through on a special. Oh! you ought to hear him the way he says, *My car*, and throws his chest out! So I said I wanted him to find out where you were on the road—on what train, I mean—and pick you up, and he said he would.”

“Oh! I see,” said Miss Leigh, looking somewhat annoyed.

“He did, didn’t he?”

“Yes.”

“Well, you know Jim Canter is a very promising young man, much more so than he is a fulfiller. What are you so serious about? You look as——”

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“Nothing—only I don’t wish to be beholden to—I was just wondering what right we have to stop trains full of people who have paid for their tickets and——”

“What!” exclaimed the other girl in astonishment, “what right? Why, our fathers are directors, aren’t they—at least, my father is—and own a block of the stock that controls——?”

“Yes; but all these people—who pay—and who had no breakfast?”

“Oh! don’t you worry about them—they’ll get along somehow—and if they pay they’ll look out for themselves without your doing it. My way is to make all I can out of them and enjoy it while I can—that’s what pa says.”

“Yes,” said Miss Leigh acquiescingly, “but I’m not sure that it’s right.”

“You’ve been reading that man’s articles,” declared Miss McSheen. “I know—I have, too—everybody has—all the girls. I am a socialist—aren’t they terribly striking? He’s so good-looking. Pa says he’s a Jew and an anarchist, and ought to be in jail.”

“Are you speaking of Mr. Wolffert?”

“Yes, of course. Now you need not make out you don’t know him; because they say——”

“Yes, I know him very well,” said Miss Leigh,

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so stiffly that her guest paused and changed her tone.

“Well, anyhow, my dear, you are just in time. We are going to have the biggest thing we’ve ever had in this town. I’ve almost died laughing over it already.”

“What is it?”

“Wait. I’m going to tell you all about it. You know it was all my idea. Harriet Minturn claims the whole credit for it now that I’ve made it go—says she first suggested it; and I assure you, my dear, she never opened her head about it till I had all the girls wild about it, and had arranged for the costumes and had gotten the count to promise——”

“What is it?” interrupted her hostess again, laughing.

“Wait, my dear, I’m going to tell you all about it. The count’s a socialist, too. He says he is—but you mustn’t tell that; he told me in the strictest confidence. Well, the count’s to go as courtier of the court of—what’s the name of that old king or emperor, or whatever he was, that conquered that country—you know what I mean——”

“No, indeed, I do not—and I haven’t the least idea what you are talking about.”

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“Oh! pshaw! I know perfectly well, and you do, too. The count bet me I’d forget it and I bet him a gold cigar-holder I wouldn’t—what is his name? Won’t the count look handsome with lace ruffles and gold braid all over his chest and coat-tails, and a cocked hat? He’s been showing me the way they dance in his country. I almost died laughing over it—only it makes me so dizzy, they never reverse—just whirl and whirl and whirl. You know he’s a real count? Yes, my father’s taken the trouble to hunt that up. He said he wasn’t ‘going to let a d——d dago come around me without anybody knowing who or what he is.’ Ain’t that like pa?”

“I—I—don’t think I ever met your father,” said Eleanor stiffly.

“Oh! that’s a fact. Well, ’tis—’tis just exactly like him. As soon as the count began to come around our house—a good deal—I mean, really, quite a good deal—you understand?” said the girl, tossing her blonde head, “what must pa do but go to work and hunt him up. He thinks Jim Canter is a winner, but I tell him Jimmy’s bespoke.” She looked at her hostess archly.

“What did he find out?” inquired Miss Leigh coldly, “and how did he do it?”

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“Why, he just ran him down,” explained the girl easily, “just as he does anybody he wants to know about—put a man on him, you know.”

“Oh! I see.” Miss Leigh froze up a little; but the other girl did not notice it.

“Only this one was somebody on the other side, of course, and he found out that he’s all right. He’s a real count. He’s the third son of Count Pushkin, who was—let me see—a counsellor of his emperor, the Emperor of Sweden.”

“I didn’t know they had an emperor in Sweden. He’s a new one.”

“Haven’t they? Oh! well, maybe it was the King of Sweden, or the Emperor of Russia—I don’t know—they are all alike to me. I never could keep them apart, even at Miss de Pense’s. I only know he’s a real count, and I won a hundred dollars from pa on a bet that he was. And he hated to pay it! He bet that he was a cook or a barber. And I bet he wasn’t. And, oh! you know it’s an awfully good joke on him—for he was a waiter in New York for a while.”

“A what?”

“A waiter—oh, just for a little while after he came over—before his remittances arrived. But I made pa pay up, because he said cook or barber. I put it in this hat, see, ain’t it a wonder?” She

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turned herself around before a mirror and admired her hat which was, indeed, as Miss Leigh was forced to admit, "a wonder."

"You know it's just like the hat Gabrielle Lightfoot wears in the 'Star of the Harem' when she comes in in the balloon. I got her to let me copy it—exactly."

"You did? How did you manage that?"

"Why, you see, Jimmy Canter knows her, and he asked Harriet and me to supper to meet her, and I declare she nearly made me die laughing—you know she's a real sweet girl—Jimmy says she——"

"Who chaperoned you?" asked Miss Leigh, as she began to put on her gloves.

"Chaperon? My dear, that's where the fun came in—we didn't have any chaperon. I pretended that Harriet and the count were married and called her countess, and she was so flattered at being given the title that she was pleased to death—though you know, she's really dead in love with Jimmy Canter, and he hardly looks at her. If he's in love with any one—except Mr. James Canter, Jr.—it's with some one else I know." She nodded her head knowingly.

"I'm afraid I have to go now," said Miss Leigh, "my father expects me to come for him." She

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glanced at a jewelled watch. She had stiffened up slightly.

“Well, of course, you’ll come?”

“To what?”

“To our ball—that’s what it is, you know, though it’s for a charity, and we make others pay for it. Why shouldn’t they? I haven’t decided yet what charity. Harriet wants it to be for a home for cats. You’d know she’d want that now, wouldn’t you? She’ll be in there herself some day. But I’m not going to let it go for anything she wants. She’s claiming now that she got it up, and I’m just going to show her who did. I’m thinking of giving it to that young preacher you met in the country two years ago and got so interested in ’t you got Doctor Capon to bring him here as his assistant.”

“You couldn’t give it to a better cause,” said Miss Leigh. “I wonder how he is coming on?”

“I guess you know all right. But pa says,” pursued Miss McSheen without heeding further the interruption, “we are ruining the poor, and the reason they won’t work is that we are always giving them money. You know they’re striking on our lines—some of them. I haven’t decided yet what to give it to. Oh! you ought to see the doctor. He’s the gayest of the gay. He came to

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see me the other day. It almost made me die laughing. You know he's dead in love with your aunt. I used to think it was you; but pa says I'm always thinking everybody is in love with you—even the count—but he says— However——”

“I'll tell you what!” said Miss Leigh suddenly, “I'll come to the ball if you'll give the proceeds to Mr. Marvel for his poor people.”

“Done! See there! what did I tell you! I thought you weren't so pious for nothing all on a sudden——”

“Milly, you're a goose,” said Miss Leigh, picking up her sunshade.

“I'm a wise one, though—what was it our teacher used to tell us about the geese giving the alarm somewhere? But I don't care. I'm the treasurer and pay the bills. Pa says the man that holds the bag gets the swag. Bring your father. We'll get something grand out of him. He always gives to everything. I'll call him up and tell him to be sure and come. You know they've landed the deal. Pa says every one of them has made a pile. Your father might have made it, too, if he'd come in, but I think he was fighting them or something, I don't quite understand it—anyhow it's all done now, and I'm going to hold pa up for the pearl necklace he prom-

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ised to give me. There's a perfect beauty at Setter & Stoneberg's, only seventeen thousand, and I believe they'll take ten if it's planked down in cold cash. Pa says the way to get a man is to put down the cold cash before him and let him fasten his eye on it. If he's a Jew he says he'll never let it go. I tell him by the same token he must be a Jew himself; because he holds on to all the money he ever lays his eye on."

"Can I take you down-town anywhere?" inquired Miss Leigh, in a rather neutral voice.

"No, my dear, just let me fix my hat. I have to go the other way. In fact, I told the count that I was going up to the park for a little spin, and he asked if he couldn't come along. I didn't want him, of course—men are so in the way in the morning, don't you think so? Is that quite right?" She gave her head a toss to test the steadiness of her hat.

"Quite," said Miss Leigh.

"Well, good-by. I'll count on you then. Oh! I tell you—among the entertainments, the count is going to perform some wonderful sleight-of-hand tricks, with cards. My dear, he's a magician! He can do anything with cards. Heavens! it's after one. The count—good-by—good-by."

And as Miss Leigh entered her victoria the

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young lady rushed off, up the street, straining her eyes in the direction of the park.

That night "the ball," as Miss McSheen called it, came off and was a huge success, as was duly chronicled in all the morning papers next day with an elaboration of description of millinery in exact proportion to the degree of prominence of the wearer in the particular circle in which the editor or his reporter moved or aspired to move. Mrs. Argand stood first in "wine-colored velvet, priceless lace," of the sort that reporters of the female sex deem dearest, and "diamonds and rubies" that would have staggered Sindbad, the sailor. Miss McSheen ran her a close second, in "rose-colored satin, and sapphires," spoken of as "priceless heirlooms." Miss Leigh shone lower down in "chiffon, lace, and pearls of great price." So they went columnful, all priceless, all beautiful, all superlative, till superlatives were exhausted and the imagination of the reporters ran riot in an excess of tawdry color and English.

Among the men especially lauded were, first, a certain Mr. James Canter, son and partner of "the famous Mr. Canter, the capitalist and financier," who gave promise of rivalling his father in his "notorious ability," and, secondly, a Count Pushkin, the "distinguished scion of a noble house

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of international reputation who was honoring the city with his distinguished presence, and was generally credited with having led captive the heart of one of the city's fairest and wealthiest daughters." So ran the record. And having nothing to do, I read that morning the account and dwelt on the only name I recognized, the young lady of the white chiffon and pearls, and wondered who the men were whose names stood next to hers.

XI

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MISS LEIGH also read the papers that morning and with much amusement till in one of them—the most sensational of all the morning journals—she came on an article which first made her heart stop beating and then set it to racing with sheer anger. To think that such a slander could be uttered! She would have liked to make mince-meat of that editor. He was always attacking her father.

A little later she began to think of the rest of the article! What was the truth? Did they have the right to stop the train and hold it back? This sort of thing was what a writer whom she knew denied in a series of papers which a friend of hers, a young clergyman who worked among the poor, had sent her and which the press generally was denouncing.

She had for some time been reading these papers that had been appearing in the press periodically. They were written by a person who was

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generally spoken of as "a Jew," but who wrote with a pen which had the point of a rapier, and whose sentences ate into the steely plate of artificial convention like an acid. One of the things he had said had stuck in her memory. "As the remains of animalculæ of past ages furnish, when compressed in almost infinite numbers, the lime-food on which the bone and muscle of the present race of cattle in limestone regions are built up, so the present big-boned race of the wealthy class live on the multitudinous class of the poor."

The summer before she had met the writer of these articles and he had made an impression on her which had not been effaced. She had not analyzed her feelings to ascertain how far this impression was due to his classical face, his deep, luminous eyes, and his impassioned manner, yet certain it is that all of these had struck her.

Perhaps, I should give just here a little more of Miss Eleanor Leigh's history as I came to know of it later on. How I came to know of it may or may not be divulged later. But, at least, I learned it. She was the daughter of a gentleman who, until she came and began to tyrannize over him, gave up all of his time and talents to building up enterprises of magnitude and amassing a fortune. He had showed abilities and ambition at college

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“back East,” where he came from, and when he first struck for the West and started out in life, it was in a region and amid surroundings which were just becoming of more than local importance, as they a little later grew, under the guidance of men of action like himself, to be of more than sectional importance. The new West as it was then had called to him imperiously and he had responded. Flinging himself into the current which was just beginning to take on force, he soon became one of the pilots of the development which, changing a vast region where roamed Indians and buffalo into a land of cities and railways, shortly made its mark on the nation and, indeed, on the world, and he was before long swept quite away by it, leaving behind all the intellectual ambitions and dreams he had ever cherished, and giving himself up soul and body to the pleasure he got out of his success as an organizer and administrator of large enterprises. Wealth at first was important to him, then it became, if not unimportant, at least of secondary importance to the power he possessed. Then it became of importance again—indeed of supreme importance; for the power he wielded was now dependent on wealth and great wealth. His associates were all men of large interests, and only one with similar interests could lead them.

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New conditions had come about of late and new methods which he could neither employ nor contend against successfully.

As he looked back on it later it appeared a feverish dream through which he had passed. Its rewards were undeniable: luxury, reputation, and power beyond anything he had ever conceived of. Yet what had he not sacrificed for them! Everything that he had once held up before his mind as a noble ambition: study, reading, association with the great and noble of all time; art and love of art; appreciation of all except wealth that men have striven for through the ages; friendship—domestic joy—everything except riches and the power they bring. For as he thought over his past in his growing loneliness he found himself compelled to admit that he had sacrificed all the rest. He had married a woman he loved and admired. He had given her wealth and luxury instead of himself, and she had pined and died before he awakened to the tragic fact. He had grieved for her, but he could not conceal from himself the brutal fact that she had ceased years before to be to him as necessary as his business. She had left him one child. Two others had died in infancy, and he had mourned for them and sympathized with her; but he never knew for years, and until

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too late, how stricken she had been over their loss. The child she had left him had in some way taken hold on him and had held it even against himself. She had so much of himself in her that he himself could see the resemblance: his natural kindness, his good impulses, his wilfulness, his resolution and ambition to lead and to succeed in all he undertook.

Even from the earliest days when she was left to him, Mr. Leigh was made aware by Eleanor that he had something out of the ordinary to deal with. The arrangement by which, on the death of her mother, she was taken by her half-aunt, Mrs. Argand, to be cared for, "because the poor child needed a mother to look after her," fell through promptly when the little thing who had rebelled at the plan appeared, dusty and dishevelled but triumphant, in her father's home that first evening, as he was preparing, after leaving his office, to go and see her. It was doubtless an auspicious moment for the little rebel; for her father was at the instant steeped in grief and loneliness and self-reproach. He had worked like fury all day to try to forget his loss; but his return home to his empty house had torn open his wounds afresh, and the echoing of his solitary footfall on the stair and in the vacant rooms had almost driven him to

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despair. Every spot—every turn was a red-hot brand on the fresh wound. No man had loved his wife more; but he awoke now when too late to the torturing fact that he had left her much alone. He had worked for her, leaving the enjoyment to the future; and she had died before the future came, in that desolate present which was to be linked forever to the irretrievable past. It was at this moment that he heard a familiar step outside his door. His heart almost stopped to listen. It could not be Eleanor—she was safe at her aunt's, blocks away, awaiting the fulfilment of his promise to come to see her—and it was now dark. Could it be a delusion? His over-wrought brain might have fancied it. Next second the door burst open, and in rushed Eleanor with a cry—“Oh, papa!”

“Why, Nelly! How did you come?”

“Slipped out and ran away! You did not come and I could not stay.”

When the emotion of the first greeting was over, Mr. Leigh, under the strong sense of what he deemed his duty to the child, and also to the dear dead—which had led him at first to make the sacrifice of yielding to his sister-in-law's urgency, began to explain to the little girl the impropriety of her action, and the importance of her returning

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to her aunt, when she had been so kind. But he found it a difficult task. Mr. Leigh believed in discipline. He had been brought up in a rigid school, and he knew it made for character; but it was uphill work with the little girl's arms clasped about his neck and her hot, tear-streaked little face pressed close to his as she pleaded and met his arguments with a promptness and an aptness which astonished him. Moreover, she had a strong advocate in his own heart, and from the first moment when she had burst in on his heart-breaking loneliness he had felt that he could not let her go again if she were unhappy.

"She would not go back," she asserted defiantly. "She hated her aunt, anyhow—she was a hateful old woman who scolded her servants, and sent her up-stairs to her supper."

When to this her father promptly replied that she must go back, and he would take her, she as promptly changed her note.

"Very well, she would go back; he need not come with her; but she would die."

"Oh, no, you will not die. You will soon grow very fond of her."

"Then I shall grow very worldly, like her," said Miss Precocity.

"What makes you think that?"

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“Because she is a worldly old woman—and you said so yourself.”

“I said so! When?” demanded her father, with a guilty feeling of vague recollection.

“To mamma once—when mamma said something against her husband, you said that, and mamma said you ought not to say that about her sister—and you said she was only her half-sister, anyhow, and not a bit like her—and now you want to send me back to her as if I were only your half-child.”

The father smiled sadly enough as he drew the anxious little face close to his own.

“Oh, no—you are all mine, and my all. I only want to do what is right.”

“Mamma wants me to stay with you—so it must be right.”

The present tense used by the child struck the father to the heart.

“What makes you think that?” he asked with a sigh. The little girl was quick to catch at the new hope.

“She told me so the day before she died, when I was in the room with her; she said you would be lonely, and I must be a comfort to you.”

Mr. Leigh gave a gasp that was almost a groan, and the child flung her arms about his neck.

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“And I sha’n’t leave you, my all-papa, unless you drive me; I promised mamma I would stay and take care of you, and I will. And you won’t make me—will you? For I am your all-daughter. You won’t, will you?”

“No, d——d if I do!” said the father, catching her to his heart, and trying to smother the oath as it burst from his lips.

As soon as she had quieted down, he went to her aunt’s to make the necessary explanation. He found it not the easiest task, for the good lady had her own ideas and had formed her plans, and the change was a blow to her *amour propre*. It was, in fact, the beginning of the breach between Mr. Leigh and his sister-in-law which led eventually to the antagonism between them.

“You are going to spoil that child to death!” exclaimed the affronted lady. This Mr. Leigh denied, though in his heart he thought it possible. It was not a pleasant interview, for Mrs. Argand was deeply offended. But Mr. Leigh felt that it was well worth the cost when, on his return home, he was greeted by a cry of joy from the top of the stair where the little girl sat in her dressing gown awaiting him. And when with a cry of joy she came rushing down, Cinderella-like, dropping her slipper in her excitement, and flung herself into

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his arms, he knew that life had begun for him anew.

Mr. Leigh was quite aware of the truth of Mrs. Argand's prophecy; but he enjoyed the spoiling of his daughter, which she had foretold, and he enjoyed equally the small tyrannies which the child exercised over him, and also the development of her mind as the budding years passed.

"Papa," she said one day, when she had asked him to take her somewhere, and he had pleaded "business," "why do you go to the office so much?"

"I have to work to make money for my daughter," said her father, stating the first reason that suggested itself.

"Are you not rich enough now?"

"Well, I don't know that I am, with a young lady growing up on my hands," said her father, smiling.

"Am I very expensive?" she asked with a sudden little expression of gravity coming over her face.

"No, that you are not, my dear—and if you were, there is no pleasure on earth to me like giving it to you. That is one of my chief reasons for working so steadily, though there are others."

"I have plenty of money," said Eleanor.

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“Then you are happier than most people, who don’t know when they have plenty.”

“Yes—you see, all I have to do when I want anything is to go into a store and ask for it, and tell them I am your daughter, and they let me have it at once.”

“Oh, ho!” said her father, laughing, “so that is the way you buy things, is it? No wonder you have plenty. Well, you’d better come to me and ask for what you want.”

“I think the other is the easier way, and as you say you like to give it to me, I don’t see that it makes any difference.”

Mr. Leigh decided that he had better explain the difference.

“I hate rich people,” said Eleanor suddenly. “They are so vulgar.”

“For example?” enquired her father, looking with some amusement at the girl whose face had suddenly taken on an expression of severe priggishness.

“Oh! Aunt Sophia and Milly McSheen. They are always talking about their money.”

Mr. Leigh’s eyes were twinkling.

“You must not talk that way about your Aunt Sophia—she is very fond of you.”

“She is always nagging at me—correcting me.”

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“She wants you to grow up to be a fine woman.”

“Like her?” said Miss Eleanor pertly.

Mr. Leigh felt that it was wise to check this line of criticism, and he now spoke seriously.

“You must not be so critical of your aunt. She is really very fond of you—and she was your mother’s half-sister. You must respect her and love her.”

“I love her, but I don’t like her. She and Milly McSheen are just alike—always boasting of what they have, and do, and running down what others have, and do.”

“Oh, well, it takes a great many people to make a world,” said Mr. Leigh indulgently. Eleanor felt a want of sympathy and made another bid for it.

“Milly McSheen says that her father is going to be the richest man in this town.”

“Ah! who is talking about money now?” said Mr. Leigh, laughing.

“I am not—I am merely saying what she said.”

“You must not tell the silly things your friends say.”

“No—only to you—I thought you said I must tell you everything. But, of course, if you don’t wish me to I won’t.”

Mr. Leigh laughed and took her on his knee. He was not quite sure whether she was serious or

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was only laughing at him, but, as he began to explain, she burst into a peal of merriment over her victory.

In appearance she was like her mother, only he thought her fairer—as fair as he had thought her mother in the days of his first devotion; and her deeper eyes and firmer features were an added beauty; the well-rounded chin was his own. Her eyes, deep with unfathomable depths, and mouth, firm even with its delicate beauty, had come from some ancestor or ancestress who in some generation past had faced life in its most exacting form with undaunted resolution, and, haply, had faced death with equal calm for some belief that now would scarcely have given an hour's questioning. So, when she grew each year, developing new powers and charm and constancy, he began to find a new interest in life, and to make her more his companion and confidante than he had ever made her mother. He left his business oftener to see her than he had left it to see her mother; he took her oftener with him on his trips, and took more trips, that he might have her company. She sat at the head of his table, and filled her place with an ability that was at once his astonishment and his pride.

At one time, as she changed from a mere child to a young girl, he had thought of marrying again,

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rather with a view to giving her a guide and counsellor than for any other purpose. Her storminess, however, at the mere suggestion, and much more, her real grief, had led him to defer the plan from time to time, until now she was a young lady, and he could see for himself that she needed neither chaperon nor counsellor. He sometimes smiled to think what the consequences would have been had he taken to wife the soft, kindly, rather commonplace lady whom he had once thought of as his daughter's guardian. A domestic fowl in the clutches of a young eagle would have had an easier time.

One phase alone in her development had puzzled and baffled him. She had gone off one spring to a country neighborhood in another State, where she had some old relatives on her mother's side. Mr. Leigh had been called to Europe on business, and she had remained there until well into the summer. When she returned she was not the same. Some change had taken place in her. She had gone away a rollicking, gay, pleasure-loving, and rather selfish young girl—he was obliged to admit that she was both wilful and self-indulgent. Even his affection for her could not blind his eyes to this, and at times it had given him much concern, for at times there was a clash in which, if he

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came off victor, he felt it was at a perilous price—that, possibly, of a strain on her obedience. She returned a full-grown woman, thoughtful and self-sacrificing and with an aim—he was glad it was not a mission—and as her aim was to be useful, and she began with him, he accepted it with contentment. She talked freely of her visit; spoke warmly, and, indeed, enthusiastically, of those she had met there. Among these were a young country preacher and a friend of his, a young Jew. But, though she spoke of both with respect, the praise she accorded them was so equal that he dismissed from his mind the possibility that she could have been seriously taken with either of them. Possibly, the Jew was the one she was most enthusiastic over, but she spoke of him too openly to cause her father disquietude. Besides, he was a Jew.

The preacher she plainly respected most highly, yet her account of his appearance was too humorous to admit a serious feeling for him, even though she had gotten him called to be one of Doctor Capon's assistants.

What had happened was that the girl, who had only "lain in the lilies and fed on the roses of life," had suddenly been dropped in an out-of-the-way corner in a country neighborhood in an

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old State, where there were neither lilies nor roses of the metaphorical kind, though a sufficiency of the real and natural kind, with which nature in compensatory mood atones to those who have of the metaphorical sort but thistles and brambles and flinty soil.

When she first landed there, after the very first excitement of being thrown into a wholly new situation, among strangers whom, though her relatives, she had always regarded much as she had regarded geographical places in distant lands, was over, she found herself, as it were, at a loss for occupation. Everything was so quiet and calm. She felt lost and somewhat bored. But after a little time she found occupation in small things, as on looking closely she discovered beauties in nature which her first glance had failed to catch. The people appeared so novel, so simple, so wholly different from all whom she had known; the excitements and amusements and interests of her life in the city, or at summer watering-places, or in travelling, were not only unknown to them—as unknown as if they were in another planet—but were matters of absolute indifference. Their interest was in their neighbors, in the small happenings about them; and occurrences an hundred miles away were as distant to

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them as though they had taken place in another era. Among the few notabilities in this rural community was a young clergyman whom she always heard spoken of with respect—as much respect, indeed, as if he had been a bishop. What “Mr. Marvel thought” and what he said was referred to, or was quoted as something to be considered—so much so that she had insensibly formed a picture in her own mind of a quite remarkable looking and impressive person. When, at last, she met John Marvel, what was her amusement to discover, in place of her young Antinous, a stout, strapping young fellow, with rather bristly hair, very near-sighted and awkward, and exceedingly shy, a person as far from a man of the world as a stout, country-bred cart-horse would be from a sleek trick-pony. His timidity in her presence caused her endless amusement, and for lack of some better diversion and partly to scandalize her staid kinswomen, she set herself to tease him in every way that her fertile brain could devise.

Visiting the young clergyman at the time, was a friend who came much nearer being in appearance what Eleanor had imagined John Marvel to be: a dark, slender young man with a classical face, but that its lines were stronger and more deeply graven, and unforgettable eyes. He had

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just come to visit Mr. Marvel and to get a needed rest, John Marvel said. He had been a worker among the poor, and his views were so different from any that Eleanor Leigh had ever heard as to appear almost shocking. He was an educated man, yet he had lived and worked as an artisan. He was a gentleman, yet he denounced vehemently the conditions which produced the upper class. But an even greater surprise awaited her when he announced that he was a Jew.

When John Marvel brought his friend to see Miss Eleanor Leigh, the first impression that she received was one of pleasure. He was so striking and unusual looking—with deep, burning eyes under dark brows. Then she was not sure that she liked him, she even thought she was sensible of a sort of repulsion. She had a feeling as if he were weighing her in his mind and, not approving of her, treated her at times with indifference, at times with a certain disdain. She was conscious of an antagonism as Wolffert showed scorn of conditions and things which she had been brought up to believe almost as much a necessary part of life as air and light. She promptly began to argue with him, but when she found that he usually had the best of the argument, she became more careful how she opened herself to his attack. He

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aroused in her the feeling of opposition. His scorn of the money-making spirit of the day led her to defend what she secretly held in contempt. And once when he had been inveighing against commercialism that set up Gods of Brass to worship, and declared that it was the old story of Nebuchadnezzar over again—and was the forerunner to brotherhood with the beasts of the field, she wheeled on him, declaring that it was “only people who had no power to make money who held such views.”

“Do you think that I could not make money if I wished to do so?” said Wolffert quietly, with an amused light in his eyes as they rested on her with an expression which was certainly not hostile; for her eagerness had brought warm blood to her cheeks and her eyes were sparkling with the glow of contention.

“Yes, if you were able you would be as rich as a Jew.”

A yet more amused look came into Wolffert’s eyes.

“Are all Jews rich?” he asked.

“Yes—all who are capable—you know they are.”

“No, for I am a Jew and I am not rich,” said Wolffert.

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“What! You!—You a— Oh, I beg your pardon! I—” she blushed deeply.

“Pray don’t apologize—don’t imagine that I am offended. Would you be offended if I charged you with coming from a race of poets and philosophers and scientists—of a race that had given the world its literature and its religion?”

She burst out laughing.

“No; but I was such a fool—pray forgive me.” She held out her hand and Wolffert took it and pressed it firmly—and this was the beginning of their friendship.

Wolffert walked home slowly that evening, that is, across the fields to the little farmhouse where John Marvel lived. He had food for thought.

When Eleanor Leigh saw John Marvel a few days later she told him of her conversation and the speech she had made to his friend. “You know,” said John, “that he is rich or could be, if he chose to go home. His father is very rich.”

“He is a new Jew to me,” said Eleanor Leigh; “he is quite different from the typical Jew.”

“I wonder if there is a typical Jew,” questioned John to himself, and this set Eleanor wondering too.

But Eleanor Leigh found other causes for wonder in Wolffert besides the salient fact of his race

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which she had mentioned to her cousins, and they forced upon her the consciousness that she would have to readjust her ideas of many things as she had been compelled to do in regard to the appearance and aims of this singular people. Her idea of the Israelites had always been curiously connoted with hooked noses, foreign speech of a far from refined type, and a persistent pursuit of shekels by ways generally devious and largely devoted to shops containing articles more or less discarded by other people. Here she found a cultivated gentleman with features, if not wholly classical, at least more regular and refined than those of most young men of her acquaintance; speech so cultivated as to be quite distinguished, and an air and manner so easy and gracious as to suggest to her complete knowledge of the great world. No matter what subject was discussed between them, he knew about it more than any one else, and always threw light on it which gave a new interest for her. He had a knowledge of the literature and art, not only of the ancients, but of most modern nations, and he talked to her of things of which she had never so much as heard. He had not only travelled extensively in Europe, but had travelled in a way to give him an intimate knowledge not merely of the countries, but of the

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people and customs of the countries which no one she had ever met possessed. He had crossed in the steerage of ocean-liners more than once and had stoked across both to England and the Mediterranean.

“But what made you do it?” she asked. “Did not you find it terrible?”

“Yes—pretty bad.” Wolffert was at the moment showing her how tea was made in certain provinces along the Caspian Sea which he had visited not long before. “About as bad as it could be.”

“Then what made you do it?”

“Well, I saved money by it, too.”

What the other reason was she did not press him to give. She only thought, “That is the Jew of it.” But after she had seen more of him she discovered that the other reason was that he might learn by personal experience what the condition was in the emigrant ships and the holes where the stokers lived down deep amid the coal-bunkers and the roaring furnaces, and further, that he might know the people themselves. Incidentally, he had learned there and elsewhere Italian and Russian, with the strange Hebraic faculty of absorbing whatever he came in touch with, but he thought no more of knowing that than of knowing Yiddish.

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It was this study of conditions that finally gave her the key to his design in life, for it developed as their acquaintance grew that this clear-headed, cultivated, thoughtful man held strange views as to the ordinary things of life, the things which she had always accepted as as fundamental and unchangeable as the solid earth or the vaguely comprehended but wholly accepted revolution of the spheres. In fact, he held that the conditions of modern life, the relations of people in mass, which she had somehow always considered as almost perfect and, indeed, divinely established, were absolutely outworn and fundamentally unrighteous and unjust. She at first did not take him seriously. She could not. To find a pleasant and, indeed, rather eloquent-spoken young man denounce as wicked and vile usurpation the establishment of competitive enterprises, and the accumulation of capital by captains of industry, appeared to her almost impious. Yet, there he sat with burning eyes and thrilling voice denouncing the very things she had always considered most commendable. "Why, that is socialism, isn't it?" she asked, feeling that if she could convict him of this somewhat vaguely comprehended term she would prove her old foundations unshaken.

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Wolffert smiled. He was very good-looking when he smiled. "No, not exactly—if it is, it is only an elementary and individual kind of socialism; but it is socialism so far as it is based on a profound desire to reconstruct society and to place it on a natural and equitable social foundation where every one shall have a chance to work and to reap the fruit of such work."

"What is socialism?" she demanded suddenly.

"It is not what you mean by the term," he laughed. "It is not taking the property of those who have worked for it and giving to those who neither have worked nor will work—that is what you have in mind."

"Precisely," she nodded.

"It is—at least, the socialism I mean—the application of the same method of general order by the people at large to labor and the product of labor: property—that is now employed in government. The reconstruction of the present methods so that all should participate both in the labor, and in the product." He went on to picture glowingly the consequences of this Utopian scheme when all men should work and all should reap. But though he made it appear easy enough to him, Eleanor Leigh's practical little head saw the difficulties and the flaws much more readily

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than the perfect result which he appeared to find so certain.

“You cannot reconstruct human nature,” she protested, “and when you shall have gotten your system thoroughly under way, those who have gotten in positions of power will use their advantage for their own benefit, and then you will still have to begin all over again.” But Wolffert was certain of the result and pointed out the work of his friend John Marvel as a proof of his theory.

While, at first, the broad-shouldered young clergyman fled from her presence with a precipitation which was laughable, it was not long before he appeared to have steeled himself sufficiently against her shafts of good-natured persiflage to be able to tolerate her presence, and before a great while had passed, her friends began to tease her on the fact that wherever she went Mr. Marvel was pretty sure to appear. One of her old cousins, half-rallyingly and half-warningly, cautioned her against going too far with the young man, saying, “Mr. Marvel, my dear, is too good a man for you to amuse yourself with, and then fling away. What is simply the diversion of an hour for you, may become a matter of real gravity with him. He is already deeply interested in you and unless you are interested in him——”

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“Why, I am interested in him,” declared the girl, laughing. “Why, he tells me of all the old sick women and cats in the parish, and I have an engagement to go around with him and see some old women to-morrow. You ought to see some that we went to visit the other day!”

“I know, my dear, but you must not make fun of his work. He is happy in it and is accomplishing a great deal of good, and if you should get him dissatisfied——”

“Oh, no, indeed; I gave him some money last week for a poor family to get some clothes so that they could come to church. They were named Banyan. They live near the mines. The whole family were to be christened next Sunday, and what do you suppose they did? As soon as they got the clothes they went last Sunday to a big baptizing and were all immersed! I was teasing him about that when you heard me laughing at him.”

“The wretches!” exclaimed her cousin. “To think of their deceiving him so!”

“I know,” said the girl. “But I think he minded the deception much more than the other. Though I charged him with being disappointed at not getting them into his fold, really, I don’t think he minded it a bit. At least, he said he

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would much rather they had gone where they would be happy.”

“Now, Mr. Marvel’s friend, Mr. Wolffert, is a different matter. He appears quite able to take care of himself.”

“Quite,” said Miss Leigh dryly.

“But, my dear,” said her cousin, lowering her voice, “they say he is a Jew.”

“He is,” said Eleanor.

“You know it?”

“Yes, he told me so himself.”

“Told you himself! Why, I thought—! How did he come to tell you?”

“Why, I don’t know. We were talking and I said something foolish about the Jews—about some one being ‘as rich and stingy as a Jew,’ and he smiled and said, ‘Are all Jews rich—and stingy?’ And I said, ‘If they have a chance,’ and he said, ‘Not always. I am a Jew and I am not rich.’ Well, I thought he was fooling, just teasing me—so I went on, and do you know he is not only a Jew, but Mr. Marvel says he is rich, only he does not claim his money because he is a socialist. Mr. Marvel says he could go home to-morrow and his father would take him and lavish money on him; but he works—works all the time among the poor.”

ELEANOR LEIGH

“Well, I must say I always liked him,” said her cousin.

“But he isn’t such good fun to tease as Mr. Marvel—he is too intense. Mr. Marvel does get so red and unhappy-looking when he is teased.”

“Well, you have no right to tease him. He is a clergyman and should be treated with respect. You wouldn’t dare to tease your rector in town—the great Doctor — What is his name?”

“Oh! wouldn’t I? Doctor Bartholomew Capon. Why, he is one of the greatest beaux in town. He’s always running around to see some girl—ogling them with his big blue eyes.”

“Eleanor!” exclaimed her cousin reprovingly.

“Why, he’d marry any one of the Canter girls who would have him, or Aunt Sophia, or——”

“Eleanor, don’t be profane.”

The old lady looked so shocked that the girl ran over and kissed her, with a laugh.

“Why, I’ve told him so.”

“Told him? You haven’t!”

“Yes, I have. I told him so when he tried to marry me. Then he tried Aunt Sophia.”

“What! Eleanor, you are incorrigible. You really are. But do tell me about it. Did he really court you? Why, he’s old enough to be your——”

JOHN MARVEL, ASSISTANT

“Grandfather,” interrupted the girl. “That’s what I told him, substantially.”

“Served him right, too. But he must be a fine preacher from what my old friend, Pansy Tipps, once wrote me. Did you ever meet Pansy Tipps? She and her sister live in your city. They went there years ago to press a claim they had to a large fortune left them by their father, Colonel Tipps, who used to be a very rich man, but left his affairs somewhat complicated, I gather from what Pansy writes me, or did write, for she does not write very often now. I wish you’d go and see them when you go back.”

“I will,” said Eleanor. “Where do they live?”

“At a Mrs. Kale’s—she keeps a boarding-house—I don’t know the exact location, and mislaid Pansy’s letter a year or more ago, but you will have no difficulty in finding it. It must be in the fashionable quarter and I should think any one could tell you where she lives.”

“I will find her,” said Eleanor, laughing.

XII

JOHN MARVEL

WHEN, a little later, a scourge of diphtheria broke out in a little mining camp not far from the home of Miss Leigh's relatives and she learned that John Marvel spent all his time nursing the sick and relieving their necessities as far as possible, she awakened to a realization of the truth of what her cousin had said, that under his awkward exterior lay a mine of true gold.

Day by day reports came of the spread of the deadly pestilence, making inroads in every family, baffling the skill and outstripping the utmost efforts of the local physician; day by day the rumor came that wherever illness appeared there was John Marvel.

One afternoon Miss Leigh, who had ridden over in the direction of the mining village to try and get some information about the young clergyman, who, a rumor said, had been stricken himself the day before, came on him suddenly in a by-path among the hills. At sight of her he stopped and

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held up his hand in warning, and at the warning she reined in her horse.

“Don’t come nearer,” he called to her.

“What is the matter?” she asked. “How are you?” For even at that distance—perhaps, some fifty paces—she could see that he looked wretchedly worn and wan.

“Oh, I’m doing very well,” he replied. “How are you? You must not come this way! Turn back!”

She began to rein her horse around and then, on a sudden, as his arm fell to his side, and, stepping a little out of the path, he leaned against a tree, the whole situation struck her. Wheeling her horse back, she rode straight up to him though he stiffened up and waved her back.

“You are ill,” she said.

“Oh, no. I am not ill, I am only a bit tired; that is all. You must not come this way—go back!”

“But why?” she persisted, sitting now close above him.

“Because—because—there is sickness here. A family there is down.” He nodded back toward the curve around which he had just come. “The Banyan family are all ill, and I am just going for help.”

JOHN MARVEL

“I will go—I, at least, can do that. What help? What do you want?”

She had tightened the rein on her horse and turned his head back.

“Everything. The mother and three children are all down; the father died a few days ago. Send the doctor and anything that you can find—food—clothing—medicine—some one to nurse them—if you can find her. It is the only chance.”

“I will.” She hesitated a moment and looked down at him, as if about to speak, but he waved her off. “Go, you must not stay longer.”

He had moved around so that the wind, instead of blowing from him toward her, blew from the other side of her.

A moment later Eleanor Leigh was galloping for life down the steep bridle-path. It was a breakneck gait, and the path was rough enough to be perilous, but she did not heed it. It was the first time in all her life that she had been conscious that she could be of real use. She felt that she was galloping in a new world. From house to house she rode, but though all were sympathetic, there was no one to go. Those who might have gone, were elsewhere—or were dead. The doctor was away from home attending at other bedsides and,

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by the account given, had been working night and day until he could scarcely stand. Riding to the nearest telegraph station, the girl sent a despatch to a doctor whom she knew in the city where she lived, begging him to come or to send some one on the first train and saying that he would be met and that she would meet all his expenses. Then she sat down and wrote a note to her cousin. And two hours later, just as the dusk was falling, she rode up to the door of a country cabin back among the hills. As she softly pushed open the door, with her arm full of bundles, a form rose from the side of a bed and stood before her in the dusk of the room.

“My God! you must not come in here. Why have you come here?”

“To help you,” said the girl.

“But you must not come in. Go out. You must,” said John Marvel.

“No, I have come to stay. I could not live if I did not stay now.” She pushed her way in. “Here are some things I have brought. I have telegraphed for a doctor.”

It was long before she could satisfy John Marvel, but she stayed, and all that night she worked with him over the sick and the dying. All that night they two strove to hold Death at

JOHN MARVEL

bay, across those wretched beds. Once, indeed, he had struck past their guard and snatched a life; but they had driven him back and saved the others. Ere morning came one of the children had passed away; but the mother and the other children survived; and Eleanor Leigh knew that John Marvel, now on his knees, now leaning over the bed administering stimulants, had saved them.

As Eleanor Leigh stepped out into the morning light, she looked on a new earth, as fair as if it had just been created, and it was a new Eleanor Leigh who gazed upon it. The tinsel of frivolity had shrivelled and perished in the fire of that night. Sham had laid bare its shallow face and fled away. Life had taken on reality. She had seen a man, and thenceforth only a man could command her.

The physician came duly, sent up by the one she had telegraphed to; rode over to the Banyan house, and later to the village, where he pronounced the disease diphtheria and the cause probably defective drainage and consequent impregnation of the water supply; wrote a prescription, commended the country doctor, returned home, and duly charged nearly half as much as the country doctor got in a year, which Miss Leigh duly paid with thoughts of John Marvel.

JOHN MARVEL, ASSISTANT

This was what made the change in the girl which her father had noted.

No novelist can give all of a hero's or a heroine's life. He must take some especial phase and develop his characters along that line, otherwise he would soon overload his boat and swamp his reader's patience. He is happy who having selected his path of action does not wear out the reader in asking him to follow even this one line. Thus, it is possible to give only a part of Miss Eleanor Leigh's relation to life, and naturally the part selected is that which had also its relation to John Marvel.

If it be supposed by any one that Miss Eleanor Leigh devoted her entire time and thought to working among the poor he is greatly mistaken. John Marvel and Leo Wolffert did this; but Miss Leigh was far from living the consecrated life. She only made it a part of her life, that is all, and possibly this was the best for her to do. The glimpse which she got at the death-bed in the Banyan cottage that night when she went to help John Marvel fight death, tore the veil from her eyes and gave her a revelation of a life of which she had never dreamed till then, though it lay all about her in its tragic nakedness; but while it gave her pause and inspired her with a sincere

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wish to help the poor—or, possibly, to help John Marvel and Leo Wolffert, it did not change her nature or make her a missionary. An impulse, whatever its ultimate action, does not revolutionize. She still retained the love of pleasure natural to all young creatures. The young tree shoots up by nature into the sun. She still took part in the gay life about her, and, if possible, found a greater zest in it for the consciousness that she had widened her horizon and discovered more interests outside of the glittering little brazen circle in which her orbit had been hitherto confined. She had immediately on returning home interested herself to secure for John Marvel an invitation from Dr. Capon, her rector, to become one of his assistants and take charge of an outlying chapel which he had built in the poorest district of the town, moved thereto by a commendable feeling that the poor should have the gospel preached to them and that his church should not allow all the honors to go to other churches, particularly that of Rome. Dr. Capon prided himself and was highly esteemed by his fellows—that is, the upper officials, clergy, and laity alike—on his ability to obtain from his people the funds needed to extend what was known as “the work of the Parish,” by which was signified mainly the con-

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struction of buildings, additions thereto, embellishments thereof, and stated services therein, and incidentally, work among the poor for whom the buildings were supposed to have been planned. The buildings having all been erected and paid for and due report and laudation thereof having been made, it was found rather more difficult to fill them than had been previously anticipated. And it was set down somewhat to the perversity of the poor that they refused the general invitation extended them to come and be labelled and patronized with words and smiles quite as unctuous as benignant.

Dr. Capon had not the reputation of getting on quite comfortably with his assistants. The exactions of his type of success had made him a business man. As his power of organization increased, spirituality dwindled. He dealt more with the rich and less with the poor. He had the reputation of being somewhat exacting in his demands on them, and of having a somewhat overweening sense of his own importance and authority. Bright young men either declined altogether his suggestions of the whiteness of the harvest in the purlieus of the city, or, having been led into accepting positions under him, soon left him for some country parish or less imposing curacy—an

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exotic word which the doctor himself had had something to do with importing from over seas. It thus happened that his chapel recently built for the poor with funds elicited from Dr. Capon's wealthy parishioners was vacant when Miss Eleanor Leigh consulted the reverend doctor as to a good church for a peculiarly good young clergyman, and the doctor being at that time in his second mourning and likewise in that state of receptivity incident to clerical widowers of a year and a half's standing, yielded readily to his fair parishioner's solicitations, and the position was tendered to John Marvel and after some hesitation was accepted—his chief motive being that his old friend Wolffert was there doing a work in which he had greatly interested him. If the fact that Miss Eleanor Leigh also lived in that city influenced him, it would simply prove that John Marvel, like the rest of humanity, was only mortal. The tender was made without the usual preliminary examination of the young man by the doctor, so impressed had he been by the young girl's enthusiastic accounts of John Marvel's work and influence among the poor. Thus it was that, when John Marvel finally presented himself, the doctor was more than surprised at his appearance—he was, indeed, almost shocked.

JOHN MARVEL, ASSISTANT

The doctor was not only fond of his own appearance—which was certainly that of a gentleman and a very well-fed and clerical-looking one as well—but he took especial pride in having his assistants also good-looking and clerical. He loved to march in processional and recessional at the end of a stately procession with two or three fine-looking young priests marching before him. It had a solemnizing effect—it made the church appear something important. It linked him with the historic and Apostolic Church of the ages. With the swelling organ pouring forth its strains to soar and die among the groined arches above him, he sometimes felt as he glanced along the surpliced line before him as if he were borne away, and had any one cried to him from the side he might almost have been able to heal with his blessing. But this short, broad, bow-legged, near-sighted man in his shabby, ill-fitting clothes! Why, it would never do to have him about him! He would mar the whole harmony of the scene. If it had not been too late and if the young man had not had such a potent influence behind him, the doctor might have suggested some difficulties in the way of carrying through the arrangements he had proposed; but though Mrs. Argand and her brother-in-law were understood to have had

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some differences over certain business matters, she was very fond of her niece and she was the wealthiest woman who came to his church. The doctor reflected, therefore, that he need not have the awkward young man about him much; and when a little later it appeared that this gawky young man was filling his chapel and neighborhood-house, poor-club and night-schools and was sending in reports which showed that real work was being done, the doctor was well satisfied to let him remain—so well, indeed, that he never invited him to his house socially, but only held official relations with him. The report that among John Marvel's chief assistants in the work of organizing his poor-clubs and night-school was a Jew socialist disturbed the doctor slightly, but he reflected that when one showed such notable results it was in a way necessary to employ many curious agencies, and, after all, the association with Jews in secular affairs was a matter of taste.

XIII

MR. LEIGH

NOW, to recur to the period of my arrival in the West—the day after Miss Leigh's return home her father paid her the unusual honor of leaving his office to take lunch with her.

Her mind was full of the subject of the paper she had read in the press that morning, giving a lurid picture of the inconvenience and distress entailed on the passengers and scoring the management of the company for permitting what was claimed to be "so gross a breach of the rights of the public."

Ordinarily, she would have passed it over with indifference—a shrug of her white shoulders and a stamp of her little foot would have been all the tribute she would have paid to it. But of late she had begun to think.

It had never before been brought so clearly to the notice of the girl how her own pleasures—not the natural but the created pleasures—of which she was quite as fond as other healthy girls of her age and class, were almost exclusively at the ex-

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pense of the class she had been accustomed to regard with a general sort of vague sympathy as "the Poor."

The attack on her father and herself enraged her; but, as she cooled down, a feeling deeper than mere anger at an injustice took possession of her mind.

To find that she herself had, in a way, been the occasion of the distress to women and children, startled her and left in her mind a feeling of uneasiness to which she had hitherto been a stranger.

"Father," she began, "did you see that dreadful article in *The Trumpet* this morning?"

Mr. Leigh, without looking up, adopted the natural line of special pleading, although he knew perfectly well instantly the article to which she referred.

"What article?" he asked.

"That story about our having delayed the passenger train with women and children on it and then having side-tracked them without breakfast, in order to give our car the right of way."

"Oh! yes. I believe I saw that. I see so many ridiculous things in the newspapers, I pay no attention to them."

"But, father, that was a terrible arraignment," said the girl.

JOHN MARVEL, ASSISTANT

“Of whom?” asked Mr. Leigh, with a little twinkle in his eye.

“Why, of you, of Aunt Sophia, of——”

“Of me!”

“Yes, and of me—of everybody connected with the road.”

“Not of you, my dear,” said Mr. Leigh, with the light of affection warming up his rather cold face. “Surely no one, even the anarchistic writers of the anarchistic press, could imagine anything to say against you.”

“Yes, of me, too, though not by name, perhaps; but I was there and I was in a way the cause of the trouble, because the car was sent after me and Aunt Sophia, and I feel terribly guilty about it.”

“Guilty of what, my dear?” smiled her father. “Of simply using your own property in a way satisfactory to you?”

“That is just it, father; that is the point which the writer raises. Is it our own property?”

“It certainly is, my love. Property that I have paid for—my associates and I—and which I control, or did control, in conjunction with the other owners, and propose to control to suit myself and them so long as we have the controlling interest, every socialistic writer, speaker, and striker to the contrary notwithstanding.”

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“Well,” said the girl, “that sounds all right. It looks as if you ought to be able to do what you like with your own; but, do you know, father, I am not sure that it is our own. That is just the point—he says——”

“Oh, nonsense!” said her father lightly. “Don’t let this Jew go and fill your clear little head with such foolishness as that. Enjoy life while you can. Make your mind easy, and get all the use you can out of what I have amassed for you. I only hope you may have as much pleasure in using it as I have had in providing it.”

The banker gazed over at his daughter half quizzically, half seriously, took out a cigar, and began to clip the end leisurely. The girl laughed. She knew that he had something on his mind.

“Well, what is it?” she asked, smiling.

He gave a laugh. “Don’t go and imagine that because that Jew can write he is any the less a—don’t go and confound him and his work. It is the easiest thing in the world to pick flaws—to find the defects in any system. The difficult thing is constructive work.”

She nodded.

“Did that foreigner go down there while you were there?”

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“The count?”

“The no-count.”

“No, of course not. Where did you get such an idea?”

He lighted his cigar with a look of relief, put it in his mouth, and sat back in his chair.

“Don’t let your Aunt Sophia go and make a fool of you. She is a very good business woman, but you know she is not exactly—Solomon, and she is stark mad about titles. When you marry, marry a man.”

“Mr. Canter, for example?” laughed the girl. “He is Aunt Sophia’s second choice. She is always talking about his money.”

“She is always talking about somebody’s money, generally her own. But before I’d let that fellow have you I’d kill him with my own hand. He’s the worst young man I know. Why, if I could tell you half—yes, one-tenth, of the things I have heard about him— But I can’t tell you—only don’t go and let anybody pull the wool over your eyes.”

“No fear of that,” said the girl.

“No, I don’t know that there is. I think you’ve got a pretty clear little head on your shoulders. But when any one gets—gets—why, gets her feelings enlisted you can’t just count on

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her, you know. And with your Aunt Sophy ding-donging at you and finging her sleek count and her gilded fools at you, it takes a good head to resist her."

The girl reassured him with a smile of appreciation.

"I don't know where she got that from," continued her father. "It must have been that outside strain, the Prenders. Your mother did not have a trace of it in her. I never saw two half-sisters so different. She'd have married anybody on earth she cared for—and when she married me I had nothing in the world except what my father chose to give me and no very great expectations. She had a rich fellow from the South tagging after her—a big plantation and lots of slaves and all that, and your Aunt Sophy was all for her marrying him—a good chap, too—a gentleman and all that; but she turned him down and took me. And I made my own way. What I have I made afterward—by hard work till I got a good start, and then it came easy enough. The trouble since has been to keep others from stealing it from me—and that's more trouble than to make it, I can tell you—what between strikers, gamblers, councilmen, and other knaves, I have a hard time to hold on to what I have."

JOHN MARVEL, ASSISTANT

“I know you have to work very hard,” said the girl, her eyes on him full of affection. “Why, this is the first time I’ve had you up to lunch with me in months. I felt as much honored as if it had been the King of England.”

“That’s it—I have to stay down there to keep the robbers from running off with my pile. That young fellow thought he’d get a little swipe at it, but I taught him a thing or two. He’s a plunger. His only idea is to make good by doubling up—all right if the market’s rising and you can double. But it’s a dangerous game, especially if one tries to recoup at the faro table.”

“Does he play faro?” asked the girl.

“He plays everything, mainly Merry H—l. I beg your pardon—I didn’t mean to say that before you, but he does. And if his father didn’t come to his rescue and plank up every time he goes broke, he’d have been in the bankrupt court—or jail—and that’s where he’ll wind up yet if he don’t look out.”

“I don’t believe you like him,” laughed the girl.

“Oh! yes, I do. I like him well enough—he is amusing rather, he is gay, careless, impudent—he’s the main conduit through which I extract money from old Prender’s coffers. He never spends anything unless you pay him two gold

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dollars down for one paper one on the spot. But I want him to keep away from you, that's all; I suppose I've got to lose you some time, but I'll be hanged if I want to give you up to a black-guard—a gambler—a rou—a lib—a d——d black-guard like that.”

“Well, you will never have that to do,” said the girl; “I promise you that.”

“How is the strike coming on?” asked his daughter. “When I went away it was just threatening, and I read in the papers that the negotiations failed and the men were ordered out; but I haven't seen much about it in the papers since, though I have looked.”

“Oh! Yes—it's going on, over on the other lines across town, in a desultory sort of way,” said her father wearily—“the fools! They won't listen to any reason.”

“Poor people!” sighed the girl. “Why did they go out?”

“Poor fools!” said Mr. Leigh warmly; “they walked out for nothing more than they always have had.”

“I saw that they had some cause; what was it?”

“Oh! they've always some cause. If they didn't have one they'd make it. Now they are talking of extending it over our lines.”

JOHN MARVEL, ASSISTANT

“Our lines! Why?”

“Heaven knows. We’ve done everything they demanded—in reason. They talk about a sympathetic strike. I hear that a fellow has come on to bring it about. Poor fools!”

The girl gave him a smile of affection as he pushed back his chair. And leaning over her as he walked toward the door, he gave her a kiss of mingled pride and affection. But when he had left the room she sat still for some moments, looking straight ahead of her, her brow slightly puckered with thought which evidently was not wholly pleasant, and then with a sweeping motion of her hand she pushed her chair back, and, as she arose from the table, said: “I wish I knew what is right!” That moment a new resolution entered her mind, and, ringing the bell for the servant, she ordered her carriage.

XIV

MISS LEIGH SEEKS WORK

SHE drove first to Dr. Capon's church and, going around, walked in at the side door near the east end, where the robing rooms and the rector's study were. She remembered to have seen on a door somewhere there a sign on which was painted in gilded letters the fact that the rector's office hours were from 12 to 1 on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, and this was Thursday. The hour, however, was now nearly three, and she had called only on a chance of catching him, a chance which a stout and gloomy-looking verger, who appeared from somewhere at her foot-fall, told her at first was lost; but when he recognized her, he changed his air, grew quite interested, and said he would see if the doctor was in. He had been there he knew after lunch, but he might have left. He entered and closed the door softly behind him, leaving the girl in the gloom, but a moment later he returned and showed her in. The rector, with a smile of unfeigned pleasure on his

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face, was standing just beside a handsome mahogany writing desk, near a window, awaiting her entry, and he greeted her with cordiality.

“Oh! my dear young lady, come in. I was just about going off, and I’m glad I happened to have lingered a little—getting ready to launch a new year-book.” He laid his fingers on a batch of printer’s proof lying on the desk beside a stock bulletin. “I was just thinking what a bore it is, and lo! it turned into a blessing like Balaam’s curse. What can I do for you?” The rector’s large blue eyes rested on his comely parishioner with a spark in them that was not from any spiritual fire.

“Well, I don’t know,” said the girl doubtfully.

“I see you were at the grand ball, or whatever it was last night, and I was so delighted to see that it was for a charitable object—and the particular object which I saw.”

“Yes, it is for Mr. Marvel’s work out among the poor,” said Miss Leigh. The rector’s expression changed slightly.

“Oh! yes, that is our work. You know that is our chapel. I built it. The ball must have been a great success. It was the first knowledge I had that you and your dear aunt had returned.” His voice had a tone of faint reproach in it.

MISS LEIGH SEEKS WORK

“Yes, we returned yesterday. I wish the papers would leave me alone,” she added.

“Ah! my dear young lady, there are many who would give a great deal to be chronicled by the public prints as you are. The morning and evening star is always mentioned while the little asteroids go unnoticed.”

“Well, I don’t know about that,” said the girl, “but I do wish the papers would let me alone—and my father too.”

“Oh! yes, to be sure. I did not know what you were referring to. That was an outrageous attack. So utterly unfounded, too, absolutely untrue. Such scurrilous attacks deserve the reprobation of all thinking men.”

“The trouble is that the attack was untrue; but the story was not unfounded.”

“What! What do you mean?” The clergyman’s face wore a puzzled expression.

“That our car was hitched on to the train——”

“And why shouldn’t it be, my dear young lady? Doesn’t the road belong to your father, at least to your family—and those whom they represent?”

“I don’t know that it does, and that is one reason why I have come to see you.”

“Of course it does. You will have to go to a lawyer to ascertain the exact status of the title;

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but I have always understood it does. Why, your aunt, Mrs. Argand, owns thousands of shares, doesn't she, and your father?" A grave suspicion suddenly flitted across his mind relative to a rumor he had heard of heavy losses by Mr. Leigh and large gains by Mr. Canter, the president of the road, and his associates who, according to this rumor, were hostile to Mr. Leigh.

"I don't know, but even if they do, I am not sure that that makes them owners. Did you read that article?"

"No—well, not all of it—I glanced over a part of it, enough to see that it was very scurrilous, that's all. The head-lines were simply atrocious. The article itself was not so wickedly——"

"I should like to do some work among the poor," said the girl irrelevantly.

"Why, certainly—just what we need—the earnest interest and assistance of just such persons as yourself, of your class; the good, earnest, representatives of the upper class. If we had all like you there would be no cry from Macedonia."

"Well, how can I go about it?" demanded the girl, rather cutting in on the rector's voluble reply.

"Why, you can teach in the Sunday-school—we have a class of nice girls, ladies, you know, a very small one—and I could make my superinten-

MISS LEIGH SEEKS WORK

dent arrange for Miss—for the lady who now has them to take another class—one of the orphan classes.”

“No, I don’t mean that kind of thing. If I taught at all I should like to try my hand at the orphan class myself.”

“Well, that could be easily arranged—” began the rector; but his visitor kept on without heeding him.

“Only I should want to give them all different hats and dresses. I can’t bear to see all those poor little things dressed exactly in the same way—sad, drab or gray frocks, all cut by the same pattern—and the same hats, year in and year out.”

“Why, they have new hats every year,” expostulated the rector.

“I mean the same kind of hat. Tall and short; stout and thin; slim or pudgy; they all wear the same horrible, round hats—I can’t bear to look at them. I vow I’d give them all a different hat for Christmas.”

“Oh! my dear, you can’t do that—you would spoil them—and it’s against the regulations. You must remember that these children are orphans!”

“Being orphans is bad enough,” declared the girl, “but those hats are worse. Well, I can’t

JOHN MARVEL, ASSISTANT

teach them, but I might try some other poor class."

"Why, let me see. The fact is that we haven't any"—he was speaking slowly, casting his mind over his field—"very poor people in this church. There used to be a number; but they don't come any more. They must have moved out of the neighborhood. I must make my assistant look them up."

"You have no poor, then?"

"Not in this congregation. The fact is this church is not very well suited to them. They don't mix with our people. You see our class of people—of course, we are doing a great work among the poor, our chapels—we have three, one of them, indeed, is a church and larger than many independent churches. Another has given me some anxiety, but the third is doing quite a remarkable work among the working people out in the east end—that under my assistant, the young man you interested yourself so much in last year—and which your ball committee was good enough to consider in selecting the object of its benevolence."

"Yes, I know—Mr. Marvel. I will go out there."

"Oh! my dear, you couldn't go out there!"

MISS LEIGH SEEKS WORK

“Why not? I want to see him.”

“Why, it is away out on the edge of the city—what you might call the jumping-off place—among manufactories and railroad shops.”

“Yes, I know. I have been out there.”

“You have—why, it is away out. It is on—I don’t recall the name of the street. It’s away out. I know it’s near the street-car terminus that your family own. It’s a very pretty chapel indeed. Don’t you think so? It is natural that you should take an interest in it, as your aunt, Mrs. Argand, helped us to build it. She gave the largest contribution toward it. I don’t know what we should do without charitable women like her.”

“Yes, I know. And Mr. Marvel is coming on well?”

A change came over the face of the rector. “Oh, very well—rather an ungainly fellow and very slow, but doing a very good work for our parish. I have been wanting to get the Bishop to go there all this year as there are a number of candidates for me to present; but he has been so busy and I have been so busy——”

“I will go there,” said Miss Leigh, rising.

“I don’t think you will like it,” urged the rector. “It is a very bad part of the town—

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almost dangerous, indeed—filled with working people and others of that sort, and I don't suppose a carriage ever——”

“I will go in the street cars,” said the girl.

“The street cars! Yes, you could go that way, but why not come here and let me assign you a class?”

“I wish to work among the poor.”

“The happy poor!” said the rector, smiling. “Why not come and help me in my work—who need you so much?” His voice had changed suddenly and he attempted to possess himself of the gloved hand that rested on his table, but it was suddenly withdrawn.

“I thought we had settled that finally last year,” said Miss Leigh firmly.

“Ah, yes; but the heart is not so easily regulated.”

“Oh! yes, yours is. Why don't you try Aunt Sophia again?”

“Try—again?—who?” The rector was manifestly somewhat embarrassed.

“Why, Aunt Sophia—‘the evening star,’” said Miss Leigh, laughing.

“Who says—? Did she say I had—ah—addressed her?”

“No—I got it from you. Come on now——”

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“Which way are you going? That is just my way. May I have the pleasure of driving up with you? I must go and see your aunt and welcome her back. One moment.” He had shown the young lady out of the door. He now turned back and folding up the stock bulletin placed it carefully in his pocket.

As the carriage with its smart team turned into one of the broader streets, two young men were standing in a window of a large building highly decorated, looking idly out on the street. They had just been talking of the threatened strike which the newspapers were discussing, as to which they held similar views.

“I tell you what is the matter with those scoundrels,” said the elder of the two, a large, pampered young fellow; “they need cold steel—they ought to be made to work.”

“How would that suit us?” laughed the other.

“We don’t have to.”

“Hello! What’s old Bart after?” observed the first one.

“Shekels,” said the other, and yawned.

“After her—he’s taking notice.”

“Oh! no; he’s wedded to the tape—goes into the Grand five times a day and reads the tape.”

“Bet you, he courts her.”

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“How'll you prove it?”

“Ask her.”

“Bet you you daren't ask her.”

“How much?”

“What you like.”

“I don't want to win your money.”

“Don't you? Then hand me back that little fifteen hundred you picked up from me last week.”

“That was square, but this is a certainty.”

“I'd chance it—bet you a thousand, Jim, you daren't ask her to her face if old Bart isn't courting her and hasn't asked her to marry him.”

“Oh! that's different. You want to make me put up and then make my bet for me. I tell you what I'll bet—that she's the only girl I know I wouldn't ask that.”

“That may be. Now, I tell you what I'll bet—that you want a drink—ring the bell.”

“That's a certainty, too,” laughed his friend, and they turned and sank wearily in deep chairs till a drink should give them energy to start a fresh discussion.

Having put down the Rev. Bartholomew at the door of her aunt's imposing mansion, Eleanor Leigh, after a moment of indecision, directed her coachman to drive to a certain street in the section known as “downtown,” and there she stopped

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at a pleasant-looking old house, and jumping out of the carriage, ran up the worn stone steps and rang the bell. It was a street that had once been fashionable, as the ample, well-built houses and the good doors and windows testified. But that fickle jade, Fashion, had long since taken her flight to other and more pretentious sections, and shops, loan-offices, and small grocers' markets had long engulfed the mansions of the last generation. Had any gauge of the decadence of the quarter been needed it might have been found in the scornful air of Miss Leigh's stout coachman as he sat on his box. He looked unutterably disgusted, and his chin was almost as high as the chins of his tightly reined up horses.

Miss Leigh asked of the rather slatternly girl who came to the door, if the Miss Tippses were in, and if so, would they see her. When the maid went to see if they were at home, Miss Leigh was shown into a large and very dark room with chairs of many patterns, all old, placed about in it, a horsehair sofa on one side, a marble-topped table in the centre; an upright piano on the other side, and on a small table a large piece of white coral under a glass cover. Where the fireplace had once been, a large register now stood grating off the heat that might try in vain to escape through it.

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Presently the maid returned. "Miss Pansy" was in, and would the lady please walk up? It was in the third story, back, at the top of the stairs. Miss Leigh ran up and tapped on the door, waited and tapped again. Then, as there was no answer, she opened the door cautiously and peeped in. It was a small hall-room, bare of furniture except two chairs, a sewing-machine, a table on which was an ironing-board at which at the moment stood a little old lady with a forehead so high as to be almost bald. She was clad in a rusty black skirt, a loose morning sacque of blue cotton, and she wore loose bedroom slippers. Her sleeves were rolled up, and her arms were thin and skinny. She held a flat-iron in her hand, with which she had evidently been ironing a white under-garment which lay on the board, and another one was on a little gas-stove which stood near a stationary wash-stand. As Miss Leigh opened the door, the old lady gave a little exclamation of dismay and her hand went involuntarily to her throat.

"Oh! I beg your pardon!" said the girl, starting to retire and close the door; "I thought the servant told me——"

By this time the other had recovered herself.

"Oh! come in, won't you?" she said, with a

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smile and in a voice singularly soft and refined. "My sister will be ready to receive you in a moment. I was only a little startled. The fact is," she said laughing, "I thought the door was bolted; but sometimes the bolt does not go quite in. My sister— Won't you take a chair? Let me remove those things." She took up the pile of under-garments that was on one chair and placed it on top of a pile of dishes and other things on the other.

"Oh! I am so sorry," protested the girl, who observed that she was concealing the dishes; "I was sure the girl told me it was the door at the head of the stairs."

"She is the stupidest creature—that girl. I must really get my sister to speak to Mrs. Kale about her. I would, except that I am afraid the poor thing might lose her place. There is another door just off the little passage that she probably meant."

"Yes—probably. It was I that was stupid."

"Oh! no, not at all. You must excuse the disorder you find. The fact is, this is our work-room, and we were just—I was just doing a little ironing to get these things finished. When your card was brought up—well, we both were—and as my sister is so much quicker, she ran to get ready,

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and I thought I would just finish this when I was at it, and you would excuse me.”

“Oh! I am so sorry. I wouldn’t for anything have interrupted you,” repeated the girl, observing how all the time she was trying unobtrusively to arrange her poor attire, rolling down her sleeves and smoothing her darned skirt, all the while with a furtive glance of her eye toward the door.

“Oh! my dear, I wouldn’t have had you turned away for anything in the world. My sister would be *désolée*. We have a better room than this, where we usually receive our visitors. You will see what a nice room it is. We can’t very well afford to have two rooms; but this is too small for us to live in comfortably, and we have to keep it because it has a stationary wash-stand with hot water, which enables us to do our laundering.”

“Yes, I see,” murmured Miss Leigh softly.

“You see, we earn our living by making underclothes for—for a firm——”

“I see, and what nice work you do.” She was handling a garment softly.

“Yes, my sister does beautiful work; and I used to do pretty well, too; but I am troubled a little with my eyes lately. The light isn’t very good at night—and the gas is so expensive. I don’t see quite as well as I used to do.”

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“How much can you do?” asked her visitor, who had been making a mental calculation.

“Why, I— It is hard to tell. I do the coarser work and my sister does the finishing; then she usually launders and I iron when I am able. I suffer with rheumatism so that I can’t help her very much.”

“I hope you make them pay you well for it,” blurted out the girl.

“Why, we used to get a very good price. We got till recently seven cents apiece, but now it has been cut down—that was for everything, laundering and ironing, too. We are glad to get that.”

“How on earth do you manage to live on it?”

“Oh! we live very well—very well, indeed,” said the little lady cheerfully. “Mrs. Kale is very good to us. She lets us have the rooms cheaper than she would any one else. You see she used to know us when we lived back in the East. Her father was a clerk in our father’s office, and her mother went to school with us. Then when we lost everything and were turned out, we found we had to make our own living and we came here to see about our case, and she found we were here—and that’s the way we came to be here. But don’t you let my sister know I told you about the sewing,” she said, dropping her voice, as a brisk

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step was heard outside the door. "Ah! here she is now!" as at the moment the door opened and a brisk little old lady, almost the counterpart of her sister, except that she might have been ten years her junior, that is, sixty instead of seventy years of age, tripped into the room.

"Oh! my dear Miss Leigh, how good of you to come all the way out here to call on us! Sister, what in the world are you doing? Why will you do this? I can't keep her from amusing herself!" (This with a shake of the head and a comical appeal for sympathy from her visitor.) "Won't you walk into our sitting-room? Now, sister, do go and make yourself presentable. You know she will slave over all sorts of queer things. She really loves sewing and ironing. I'm quite ashamed to have you come into this pig-sty. Walk in, won't you?" And she led the way into a larger room adjoining the work-room, leaving Miss Leigh in doubt which was the more pathetic, the little old lady still delving over the ironing-board, making no pretence to conceal their poverty, or the other in her poor "best," trying to conceal the straits in which they were fallen.

Eleanor had observed that the older sister's gaze had constantly rested on the rose she wore, and as they were going out, the latter called her

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sister's attention to it. She said, she thought it possibly the most beautiful rose she had ever seen.

"Won't you have it?" said Eleanor, and unpinned it.

"Oh! no, indeed, I wouldn't deprive you of it for anything. It is just where it ought to be."

Eleanor persisted, and finally overcame both her reluctance and her sister's objection.

She was struck with the caressing way in which she took and held it, pressing it against her withered cheek.

"Sister, don't you remember the Giant-of-Battles we used to have in our garden at Rosebank? This reminds me of it so—its fragrance is just the same."

"Yes. We used to have a great many roses," explained the younger sister, as she led the way into the next room as if she were asking Eleanor into a palace, though this room was almost as bare of furniture as the other, the chief difference being an upright case which was manifestly a folding-bed, and a table on which were a score of books, and a few old daguerrotypes.

"Your friend, Mr. Marvel, was here the other day. What a nice young man he is."

"Yes," said Eleanor. "I am going out to see him. Where has he moved to?" Miss Pansy said

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she did not know the street; but her sister had the address. She would go and see. When she came back, she went over and opened the old Bible lying on the table. "Here is where we keep the addresses of those we especially value," she said, smiling. "Oh! here it is. When he was here the other day, he brought us a treat; a whole half-dozen oranges; won't you let me prepare you one? They are so delicious."

Eleanor, who had been holding a bank-note clutched in her hand, thanked her with a smile, but said she must go. She walked across the room, and took up the Bible casually, and when she laid it down it gaped a little in a new place.

"Oh, you know we have had quite an adventure," said Miss Pansy.

"An adventure? Tell me about it."

"Why, you must know there is a young man here I am sure must be some one in disguise. He is so—well, not exactly handsome, but really distinguished looking, and he knows all about railroads and things like that."

"You'd better look out for him," said Miss Leigh.

"Oh, do you think so? My sister and I were thinking of consulting him about our affairs—our railroad case, you know."

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“Oh! Well, what do you know about him?”

“Nothing yet. You see, he has just come; but he joined us on the street this morning when we were going out—just shopping—and offered to take our bundles—just two little bundles we had in our hands, and was so polite. My dear, he has quite the grand air!”

“Oh, I see. Well, that does not necessarily make him a safe adviser. Why not let me ask my father about your matter? He is a railroad man, and could tell you in a minute all about it.”

“Oh, could you? That would be so kind in you.”

“But you must tell me the name of the road in which you had the stock.”

“Oh, my dear. I don't know that I can do that. I only know that it was the Transcontinental and something and something else. I know that much, because it was only about sixty miles long, and we used to say that the name was longer than the road. My father used to say that it would some day be a link in a transcontinental chain—that's where it got its name, you know.”

“Well, look out for your prince in disguise,” said the girl, smiling as she rose to take her leave.

That evening at dinner, after Eleanor had given her father an account of her day, with which she

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always beguiled him, including a description of her visit to the two old ladies, she suddenly asked, "Father, what railroad was it that used to be known as the 'Transcontinental Something and Something'?"

"The what?"

"The 'Transcontinental Something and Something Else'? It was about sixty miles long and was bought up by some bigger road and reorganized."

"I suppose you mean the 'Transcontinental, Northwestern and Great Iron Range Road.' That about meets the condition you mention. What do you know about it?"

"Was it reorganized?"

"Yes; about twenty years ago and again about ten years ago. I never quite understood the last reorganization. Mr. Argand had it done—and bought up most of the stock."

"Was any one squeezed out?"

"Sure—always are in such cases. That is the object of a reorganization—partly. Why are you so interested in it?" Mr. Leigh's countenance wore an amused look.

"I have two friends—old ladies—who lost everything they had in it."

"I guess it wasn't much. What is their name?"

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“It was all they had. They are named Tipps.”

Mr. Leigh's expression changed from amusement to seriousness. “Tipps—Tipps?” he repeated reminiscently. “Bassett Tipps? I wonder if they were connected with Bassett Tipps?”

“They were his daughters—that was their father's name. I remember now, Miss Pansy told me once.”

“You don't say so! Why, I used to know Colonel Tipps when he was the big man of this region. He commanded this department before I came out here to live, and the old settlers thought he was as great a man as General Washington. He gave old Argand his start. He built that road,—was, in fact, a man of remarkable foresight, and if he had not been killed—Argand was his agent and general factotum— They didn't come into the reorganization, I guess?”

“That's it—they did not—and now they want to get their interest back.”

“Well, tell them to save their money,” said Mr. Leigh. “It's gone—they can't get it back.”

“They want you to get it back for them.”

“Me!” exclaimed Mr. Leigh. “They want me to get it back! Oh, ho ho! They'd better go after your Aunt Sophia and Canter.”

“Yes; I told them you would.”

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“You did?” Mr. Leigh’s eyes once more lit up with amusement.

“Yes; you see they were robbed of every cent they had in the world, and they have not a cent left.”

“Oh! no, they were not robbed. Everything was properly done and absolutely regular, as I remember. It must have been. I think there was some sort of claim presented afterward by the Tipps Estate which was turned down. Let me see; McSheen had the claim, and he gave it up—that was when? Let me see. He became counsel for your Uncle Argand in—what year was it?—you were a baby—it must have been eighteen years ago.”

“That was nineteen years ago, sir. I am now twenty,” said his daughter, sitting up with a very grand air.

The father’s eyes lit up with pride and affection as he gazed at the trim, straight figure and the glowing face.

“You were just a little baby—so big.” He measured a space of about two span with his hands. “That was your size then, for I know I thought your Uncle Argand might have made me counsel instead of McSheen. But he didn’t. And that was McSheen’s start.”

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“He sold out,” said the girl with decision.

“Oh, no—I don’t think he would do that. He is a lawyer.”

“Yes, he would. He’s a horrid, old, disreputable rascal. I’ve always thought it, and now I know it. And I want you to get my old ladies’ interest back for them.”

“I can’t do that. No one can. It’s too long ago. If they ever had a claim it’s all barred long ago.”

“It oughtn’t to be—if it was stolen,” persisted his daughter, “and it was.”

XV

THE LADY OF THE VIOLETS

HAVING decided that Mrs. Kale's did not present the best advantages, I determined to move to more suitable quarters. I chose a boarding-house, partly by accident and partly because it was in a semi-fashionable quarter which I liked, and I paid Mrs. Starling, the landlady, a decisive person, two weeks' board in advance, so as to have that long a lease at any rate, and a point from which to take my bearings. I had learned of the place through Kalender, who was deeply enamoured of Miss Starling, a Byzantine-hued young lady, and who regarded the house somewhat as Adam is assumed to have regarded Eden after his banishment. Mrs. Starling was, in this case, the angel of the flaming sword. She had higher ambitions for Miss Starling.

I had less than forty dollars left, and fifteen of that was borrowed next day by a fellow-boarder named Pushkin, who occupied the big front room adjoining my little back hall-room, and who had "forgotten to draw any money out of bank," he

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said, but would "return it the next day at dinner time," a matter he also forgot. I was particularly struck with him, not because he had a title and was much kotowed to by our landlady and her boarders—especially the ladies—as because I recalled his name in juxtaposition with Miss Leigh's in the flamboyant account of the ball the night after I arrived.

I was now ensconced in a little pigeon-hole of an office in a big building near the court-house, where, with a table, two chairs, and a dozen books, I had opened what I called my "law office," without a client or an acquaintance, but with abundant hopes.

I found the old principle on which I had been reared set at naught, and that life in its entirety was a vast struggle based on selfishness.

I was happy enough at first, and it was well I was. It was a long time before I was happy again. Having in mind Miss Leigh, I wrote and secured a few letters of introduction; but they were from people who did not care anything for me to people who did not care anything about them—semi-fashionable folk, mainly known in social circles, and I had no money to throw away on society. One, indeed, a friend of mine had gotten for me from Mr. Poole to a man of high standing both in

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business and social circles, the president of a manufacturing company, with which, as I learned later, Mr. Poole had formerly some connection. This gentleman's name was Leigh, and I wondered if he were the same person who had been posted by Kalender at the head of my story of the delayed train. I thought of presenting the letter. It, however, was so guarded that I thought it would not do me the least good, and, besides, I did not wish to owe anything to Lilian Poole's father, for I felt sure his influence had always been against me, and I was still too sore to be willing to accept a favor at his hands.

It was well I did not present it, for Mr. Poole, with well-considered and characteristic prudence, had written a private letter restricting the former letter to mere social purposes, and had intimated that I had been a failure in my profession and was inclined to speculate. This character he had obtained, as I subsequently learned, from Peck.

The new conditions with which I was confronted had a singular effect on me. I was accustomed to a life where every one knew me and I knew, if not every one, at least something good or bad about every one.

Here I might have committed anything short of murder or suicide without comment, and might

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have committed both without any one outside of the reporters and the police and Dix caring a straw about it.

I felt peculiarly lonely because I was inclined to be social and preferred to associate with the first man I met on the street to being alone. In fact, I have always accounted it one of my chief blessings that I could find pleasure and entertainment for a half-hour in the company of any man in the world except a fool or a man of fashion, as the old writers used to speak of them, or as we call them now, members of the smart set.

The first things that struck me as I stepped out into the thronged streets of the city were the throngs that hurried, hurried, hurried along, like a torrent pouring through a defile, never stopping nor pausing—only flowing on, intent on but one thing—getting along. Their faces, undistinguished and indistinguishable in the crowd, were not eager but anxious. There was no rest, and no room for rest, more than in the rapids of Niagara. It was the bourgeoisie at flood, strong, turgid, and in mass, ponderant; but inextinguishably common. As I stood among them, yet not of them, I could not but remark how like they were in mass and how not merely all distinction but all individuality perished in the mixing. I recalled a speech that

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my father had once made. "I prefer countrymen," he said, "to city men. The latter are as like as their coats. The ready-made-clothing house is a great civilizer, but also a great leveller. Like the common school of which you boast, it may uplift the mass, but it levels—it destroys all distinction."

This came home to me now.

I had a proof of its truth, and, I may add, of the effect of urban influences not long after I launched on the restless sea of city life. I was passing one day along a street filled with houses, some much finer than others, when my way was blocked by a child's funeral in front of a small but neat house beside one much more pretentious. The white hearse stood at the door and the little white coffin with a few flowers on it was just about to be borne out as I came up. A child's funeral has always appealed to me peculiarly. It seems so sad to have died on the threshold before even opening the door. It appeared to me suddenly to have brought me near to my kind. And I stopped in front of the adjoining house to wait till the sorrowing little cortege had entered the carriage which followed behind the hearse. A number of other persons had done the same thing. At this moment, the door of the larger house next

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door opened, and a woman, youngish and well dressed, appeared and stood on her steps waiting for her carriage which stood at some little distance.

As I was standing near her, I turned and asked her in an undertone:

“Can you tell me whose funeral this is?”

“No, I cannot,” she said, so sharply that I took a good look at her as she stood trying to button a tight glove.

“Oh! I thought, perhaps, you knew as they are your next-door neighbors.”

“Well, I do not. It’s no concern of mine,” she said shortly. She beckoned to her carriage across the way. The coachman who had been looking at the funeral caught sight of her and with a start wheeled his horses around to draw up. The number of persons, however, who had stopped like myself prevented his coming up to her door, which appeared to annoy the lady.

“Can’t you move these people on?” she demanded angrily of a stout officer who stood like the rest of us, looking on.

“It’s a funeral,” he said briefly.

“Well, I know it is. I don’t expect you to interfere with that. It’s these idlers and curiosity mongers who block the way that I want moved to clear a way for my carriage. And if you can’t do

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it, I'll ask Mr. McSheen to put a man on this beat who can. As it happens I am going there now." Insolence could go no farther.

"Let that carriage come up here, will you?" said the officer without changing his expression. "Drive up, lad," he beckoned to the coachman who came as near as he could.

"To Mrs. McSheen's," said the lady in a voice evidently intended for the officer to hear, "and next time don't stand across the street staring at what you have no business with, but keep your eyes open so that you won't keep me waiting half an hour beckoning to you." She entered the carriage and drove off, making a new attack on her glove to close it over a pudgy wrist. I glanced at the coachman as she closed the door and I saw an angry gleam flash in his eye. And when I turned to the officer he was following the carriage with a look of hate. I suddenly felt drawn to them both, and the old fight between the People and the Bourgeoisie suddenly took shape before me, and I found where my sympathies lay. At this moment the officer turned and I caught his eye and held it. It was hard and angry at first, but as he gave me a keen second glance, he saw something in my face and his eye softened.

"Who is Mr. McSheen?" I asked.

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“The next mayor,” he said briefly.

“Oh!” I took out my card under an impulse and scribbled my office address on it and handed it to him. “If you have any trouble about this let me know.”

He took it and turning it slowly gazed at it, at first with a puzzled look. Then as he saw the address his expression changed.

He opened his coat and put it carefully in his pocket.

“Thank you, sir,” he said finally.

I turned away with the consciousness that I had had a new light thrown on life, and had found it more selfish than I had dreamed. I had begun with high hopes. It was, indeed, ever my nature to be hopeful, being healthy and strong and in the prime of vigorous youth. I was always rich when at my poorest, only my heavy freighted ship had not come in. I knew that though the larder was lean and storms were beating furiously off the coast, somewhere, beating her way against the contrary winds, the argosy was slowly making headway, and some day I should find her moored beside my pier and see her stores unladen at my feet. The stress and storm of the struggle were not unwelcome to me. I was always a good fighter when aroused; but I was lazy and too in-

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dolent to get aroused. Now, however, I was wide awake. The greatness of the city stirred my pulses. Its blackness and its force aroused my sleeping powers, and as I stepped into the surf and felt the rush of the tides as they swept about and by me, I felt as a fair swimmer might who steps for the first time in a fierce current and feels it clutch his limbs and draw him in. I was not afraid, only awakened and alive to the struggle before me, and my senses thrilled as I plunged and rose to catch my breath and face the vast unknown. Later on I found that the chief danger I had not counted on: the benumbing of the senses, the slow process under which spirit, energy, courage, and even hope finally die.

One who has never had the experience of starting in a big city alone, without a connection of any kind, cannot conceive what it means: the loneliness—utter as in a desert—the waiting—the terrible waiting—being obliged to sit day after day and just wait for business to come, watching your small funds ooze out drop by drop, seeing men pass your door and enter others' offices and never one turn in at yours, till your spirit sinks lower and lower and your heart dies within you. One who has not felt it does not know what it is to be out of work and not able to

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get it. The rich and fat and sleek—the safe and secure—what know they of want? Want, not of money, but of work: the only capital of the honest and industrious poor! It is the spectre that ever haunts the poor. It makes the world look as though the whole system of society were out of joint—as if all men were in conspiracy against you—as if God had forgotten you. I found men in a harder case than mine—men in multitude, with wives and children, the babe perishing at the mother's withered breast, the children dying for food, staggering along the streets seeking work in vain, while wealth in a glittering flood poured through the streets in which they perished. This bitter knowledge I came to learn day after day till I grew almost to hate mankind. The next step is war against society. Not all who wage it hate the men they fight. It is the cause they hate. There I sat day after day, full of hope and eagerness and—now that my conceit was somewhat knocked out of me—with not only abundant ability, but the stern resolve to transact any business which might be entrusted to me, and just rotted to despair. No wonder men go to the devil, and enlist to fight the whole establishment of organized society. I almost went. When I look back at it now it seems like a miracle that I

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did not go wholly. Pride saved me. It survived long after hope died. Sometimes, I even thought of the pistol I had in my trunk. But I had made up my mind to live and win. There, too, came in Pride. I could not bear to think of Lilian Poole and Peck. How she would congratulate herself and how Peck would gloat! No, I could not give him that satisfaction. Peck did me a good turn there. A strong enmity, well based, is not always without good results; but Peck should not smear my memory with pretended pity. So I starved, but held on. When I got so that I could endure it no longer, I used to go out and walk up and down the streets—sometimes the fashionable streets—and look at the handsome residences and the fine carriages and automobiles flashing by and the handsomely dressed people passing, and recall that I was as good as they—in my heart, I thought, better. Some of them with kind faces I used to fancy my friends; but that they did not know I was in town. This conceit helped me. And at times I used to fancy that I lived in a particular house, and owned a particular team: thus living for a brief moment like a child in “making pictures.” A house is sometimes personal and well-nigh human to me. It appears to have qualities al-

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most human and to express them on its face: kindness, hostility, arrogance, breadth or narrowness, and brutal selfishness are often graven on its front. I have often felt that I could tell from the outside of a house the characteristics of the people within. Arrogance, ignorance, want of tact, pretentiousness and display, spoke from every massy doorway and gaudy decoration with a loudness which would have shocked a savage. This being so, what characters some of the wealthy people of our cities must have! It must be one of the compensations of the poor that the houses of the rich are often so hideous and un-homelike.

The mansion I selected finally as mine was a light stone mansion, simple in its style, but charming in its proportions; not one of the largest, but certainly one of the prettiest in the whole city. Amid a waste of splendid vulgarity it was almost perfect in its harmonious architectural design and lines, and had a sunny, homelike look. It stood in an ample lot with sun and air all around it, and grass and flowers about it. Our fathers used to say, "seated," which has a more established and restful sound. It looked a home of refinement and ease. Its stable was set back some distance behind and a little to one side, so that I

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could see that it was of the same stone with the mansion and just enough of the same general style to indicate that it belonged to the mansion, and the teams that came out of it were the nattiest and daintiest in the city.

One day as I was walking, trying to divert myself from my loneliness, a brougham rolled out of this stable with a pair of airy, prancing bays, shining like satin, and drew up to the carriage-block a little before me, and a young lady came out of the house as I passed by. My heart gave a leap, for it was the girl I had seen on the train. I took her in, rather than scanned her as she tripped down the stone steps, and she glanced at me for a second as if she thought I might be an acquaintance. She made as she stood there one of the loveliest pictures I had ever laid eyes on: her trim, slim figure, exquisitely dressed, in the quietest way; soft, living brown hair, brushed back from a white, broad forehead; beautiful, speaking eyes under nearly straight brows; and a mouth neither too big for beauty nor too small for character; all set off by a big black hat with rich plumes that made a background for what I thought the loveliest face I had ever seen.

Something pleasant had evidently just happened within; for she came out of the door smiling,

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and I observed at the same moment her eyes and her dimples. I wondered that people did not always smile: that smile suddenly lit up everything for me. I forgot my loneliness, my want of success, myself. Her hands were full of parcels as she came down the steps, and just as I passed the wind lifted the paper from one—a bunch of flowers, and in trying to recover it she dropped another and it rolled down to my feet. I picked it up and handed it to her. It was a ball, one of those big, squashy, rubber balls with painted rings around it, that are given to small children because they cannot do anything with them. She thanked me sweetly and was turning to her carriage, when, under a sudden impulse, I stepped to the door, just as I should have done at home, and, lifting my hat, said, “I beg your pardon, but mayn’t I open your door for you?”

She bowed, looking, perhaps, just the least shade surprised. But, having handed her in, I was afraid of embarrassing her, and was backing away and passing on when she thanked me again very graciously. Again I lifted my hat and again got a look into her deep eyes. As the carriage rolled off, she was leaning back in it, and I felt her eyes upon me from under the shade of that big hat with a pleasant look, but I had assumed

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an unconscious air, and even stopped and picked up, as though carelessly, a couple of violets she had dropped as she crossed the sidewalk; and after a sniff of their fragrance, dropped them into my pocket-book, because they reminded me of the past and because I hated to see them lie on the hard pavement to be crushed by passing feet. The book was empty enough otherwise, but somehow I did not mind it so much after the violets were there.

“Who lives in that house?” I asked of an officer.

“Mr. Leigh, the banker and big west-side street-car man—runs all the lines out that way—all the Argand Estate don’t run,” he added. He waved his arm to include a circle that might take in half the town or half the world. “The big house in the middle of the block is Mrs. Argand’s—the great philanthropist, you know. Everybody knows her.” I did not, but I did not care; I knew all I wanted to know—I knew who Miss Leigh was. I reflected with some concern that this was the name of the vice-president of the railway whom I had attacked through Kalender and of the man to whom Mr. Poole’s perfunctory letter was addressed. I went back to my office in better spirits, and, having no brief to work on,

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even wrote a poem about the violets—about her leaving a track of violets behind her.

I was drawn to that street a number of times afterward, but I saw her no more.

I don't believe that love often comes at first sight; but that it may come thus, or at least, at second sight, I have my own case to prove. It may be that my empty heart, bruised and lonely in that great city, was waiting with open door for any guest bold enough to walk in and claim possession. It may be that that young lady with her pleasant smile, her high-bred face and kindly air, crossing my path in that stranger-thronged wilderness, was led by Providence; it may be that her grace and charm were those I had pictured long in the Heavenward dreams of youth and but now found. However it was, I went home in love with an ideal whose outward semblance was the girl with the children's toys—truly in love with her. And the vision of Lilian Poole never came to me again in any guise that could discomfort me. From this time the vision that haunted me and led me on was of a sweet-eyed girl who dimpled as she smiled, and dropped her violets. The picture of Lilian Poole, standing by the marble mantel in her plush-upholstered parlor, adjusting her bracelet so as to set off her not too small wrist,

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while I faced my fate, flitted before my mind, but she was a ghost to me, and my heart warmed as I thought of the lady of the violets and the children's toys.

XVI

THE SHADOW OF SHAM

I SOON changed back to my first boarding-house. After my two weeks were out for which I had prepaid, I went to my landlady, Mrs. Starling, a tall, thin woman with high cheek bones, a cold eye, and a close mouth, and told her frankly I could not pay any more in advance, and that, though I would certainly pay her within a short time, it might not be convenient for me to pay her by the week, and I left it with her whether she would keep me on these terms. She did not hesitate a second. Her first duty was to herself and family, she said, by which she meant her daughter, "Miss Starling," as she always spoke of her, but whom the irreverent portion of the boarders whom I associated with always spoke of as "Birdy," a young woman who dressed much in yellow, perhaps because it matched her blonded hair, played vehemently on the piano, and entertained the young men who boarded there. "Besides," she "wanted the room for a dressing-

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room for a gentleman who wished a whole suite," she added, with what I thought a little undue stress on the word "gentleman," as the "gentleman" in question was the person who had borrowed my money from me and never returned it: Count Pushkin, who occupied the big room next my little one. He had, as I learned, cut quite a dash in town for a while, living at one of the most fashionable hotels, and driving a cart and tandem, and paying assiduous attention to a young heiress in the city, daughter of a manufacturer and street-car magnate; but latterly he had taken a room at Mrs. Starling's, "in order," he gave out, "that he might be quiet for a time," as a duke or duchess or something—I am not sure he did not say a king—who was his relative, had died in Europe. He had taken the greater part of the boarding-house by storm, for he was a tall, showy-looking fellow, and would have been handsome but for a hard and shifty eye. And I found myself in a pitiful minority in my aversion to him, which, however, after a while, gained some recruits among the young men, one of them, my young reporter, Kalender, who had moved there from Mrs. Kale's.

The boarding-house keeper's daughter was desperately in love with Pushkin, and, with her

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mother's able assistance, was making a dead set for him, which partiality the count was using for what it was worth, hardly attempting meantime to disguise his amusement at them. He sang enough to be passable, though his voice was, like his eye, hard and cold; and he used to sing duets with Miss Starling: the method by which, according to a vivacious young Jew, named Isadore Ringarten, who lived in the house, he paid his board. I never knew how he acquired his information, but he was positive.

"I vish," said Isadore, "I could pay my board in vind—vith a little song. Now, I can sing so the count he would give me all he is vorth to sing so like I sing; but I am not a count—efen on this side."

However this was, Pushkin paid the girl enough attention to turn the poor thing's head, and made her treat harshly my reporter, Kalender, who was deeply in love with her, and spent all his salary on her for flowers, and lavished theatre tickets on her.

The evening before I left I had to call Pushkin down, who had been drinking a little, and I must say, when I called, he came promptly. It was after dinner in "the smoking-room," as the apartment was called, and he began to ridicule poor Victoria cruelly, saying she had told him her hair

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was yellow like that of the girls of his own country, and he had told her, no, that hers was natural, while theirs was always dyed, and she swallowed it.

“She is in loaf mit me. She swallow whatefer I gif her—” he laughed. The others laughed, too. But I did not. I thought of Lilian Poole and Peck. Perhaps I was thinking of my money, and I know I thought of the account of the ball which took place the day I arrived. I told him what I thought of his ridiculing a girl he flattered so to her face. He turned on me, his eyes snapping, his face flushed, but his manner cool and his voice level.

“Ha, ah! Are you in loaf mit her, too, like poor Kalender, who spent all hees moneys on her, and what she laugh at to make me amused? I gif her to you, den. I too not want her—I haf had her, you can take her.”

He made a gesture as if tossing something contemptuously into my arms, and put his cigarette back in his teeth and drew a long breath. There were none but men present, and some of them had stopped laughing and were looking grave.

“No, I am not in love with her,” I said quietly, standing up. “I only will not allow you to speak so of any lady in my presence—that is all.” I

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was thinking of a girl who lived in a sunny house, and had once taken a lot of little dirty-faced children to feed them, and once had smiled into my eyes. I only knew her name, but her violets were in my pocket near my heart. I was perfectly calm in my manner and my face had whitened, and he mistook it, for he blurted out:

“Oh! I vill nod? I vill nod speaks in your presence? You vill gif me one little lesson? You who know te vorl so vell. I tank you, Millot!”

He bowed low before me, spreading out his arms, and some of the others tittered. It encouraged him and he straightened up and stepped in front of me.

“I vill tell you vat I vill does,” he proceeded. “I vill say vat I tam please before you about anybodies.” He paused and cast about for something which would prove his boast. “Tere is nod a woman in tis town or in America, py tam! that vill nod gif herself to fon title—to me if I hax her, and say, ‘tank you, Count.’ Ha, ah?” He bent his body forward and stuck his face almost into mine with a gesture as insulting as he could make it, and as I stepped back a pace to get a firm stand, he stuck out his tongue and wagged his head in derision. The next second he had turned almost a somersault. I had taken boxing lessons since

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Wolffert thrashed me. I saw the bottom of his boots. He was at precisely the right distance for me and I caught him fairly in the mouth. His head struck the floor and he lay so still that for a few moments I thought I had killed him. But after a little he came to and began to rise.

"Get up," I said, "and apologize to these gentlemen and to me." I caught him and dragged him to his feet and faced him around.

"You haf insulted me. I vill see about tis," he spluttered, turning away. But I caught him with a grip on his shoulder and steadied him. The others were all on my side now; but I did not see them, I saw only him.

"Apologize, or I will fling you out of the window." He apologized.

The affair passed. The count explained his bruises by some story that he had been run down by a bicycle, to which I learned he afterward added a little fiction about having stopped a runaway and having saved some one. But I had left before this little touch occurred to him. Mrs. Starling must have had some idea of the collision, though not of the original cause; for she was very decided in the expression of her wishes to have possession of "the dressing-room" that night for the "gentleman," and I yielded possession.

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The curious thing about it was that one reason I could not pay Mrs. Starling again in advance was that he still had my money which he had borrowed the day after I had arrived.

From Mrs. Starling's I went back to my old boarding-house, kept by Mrs. Kale, as a much cheaper one, in a much poorer neighborhood, where I was not asked to pay in advance, but paid at the end of the month by pawning my scarf-pins and shirt studs, and gradually everything else I had.

I was brought up to go to church, my people having all been earnest Christians and devoted church people; but in my college years I had gone through the usual conceited phase of callow agnosticism; and partly from this intellectual juvenile disease and partly from self-indulgence, I had allowed the habit to drop into desuetude, and later, during my first years at the bar, I had been gradually dropping it altogether. My conscience, however, was never quite easy about it. My mother used to say that the promise as to training up a child in the way he should go was not to be fulfilled in youth but in age, and as my years advanced, I began to find that the training of childhood counted for more and more. Lilian Poole, however, had no more religion than a cat. She wished to be comfortable and to follow the general

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habit of the feline class to which she belonged. She went to the Episcopal Church because it was fashionable, and whenever she had half an excuse she stayed away from church unless it were on a new-bonnet Sunday, like Easter or some such an occasion, when she made up by the lowness of her genuflections and the apparent devoutness of her demeanor for all omissions. I must confess that I was very easily influenced by her at that time, and was quite as ready to absent myself from church as she was, though I should have had a much deeper feeling for her if she had not violated what I esteemed a canon of life, that women, at least, should profess religion, and if she had not pretended to have questionings herself as to matters as far beyond her intellect as the Copernican system or Kepler's laws. I remember quoting to her once Dr. Johnson's reply to Boswell, when the latter asked if Poole, the actor, were not an atheist: "Yes, sir, as a dog is an atheist; he has not thought on the matter at all."

"Dr. Samuel Johnson?" she asked. "You mean the one who wrote the Dictionary?" and I saw that she was so pleased with her literary knowledge in knowing his name that she never gave a thought to the matter that we were discussing, so let it drop.

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As David said, that in his trouble he called upon the Lord, so now, in my solitude and poverty, I began once more to think on serious things, and when Sunday came I would dress up and go to church, partly in obedience to the feeling I speak of, and partly to be associated with people well dressed and good mannered, or passably so. The church I selected was a large stone edifice, St. ——'s, with a gilded cross on its somewhat stumpy spire, toward which I saw a richly clad congregation wending their way Sunday morning.

The rector, as was stated in gilded letters on a large sign, was the Rev. Dr. Bartholomew Capon. I cannot say that the congregation were especially refined looking or particularly cordial; in fact, they were very far from cordial, and the solemn verger to whom I spoke, after turning a deaf ear to my request for a seat, took occasion, as soon as he had bowed and scraped a richly dressed, stout lady up the aisle, to look me over on the sly, not omitting my shoes, before he allowed me to take a seat in one of the rear pews.

The preacher—"The Rector," as he spoke of himself in the notices, when he occasionally waived the rather frequent first personal pronoun—was a middle-aged gentleman with a florid complexion, a sonorous voice, a comfortable round person,

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and fair hands of which he was far from ashamed; for he had what, but for my reverence for the cloth, I should call a trick of using his hand with a voluminous, fine cambric handkerchief held loosely in it. His face was self-contained rather than strong, and handsome rather than pleasing. He was so good-looking that it set me on reflecting what relation looks bear to the rectorship of large and fashionable churches; for, as I recalled it, nearly all the rectors of such churches were men of looks, and it came to me that when Sir Roger de Coverley requested his old college friend to send him down a chaplain, he desired him to find out a man rather of plain sense than much learning, of a good aspect, a clear voice, a sociable temper, and, if possible, a man who knew something of backgammon. His sermon was altogether a secondary consideration, for he could always read one of the Bishop of St. Asaph's or Dr. South's or Dr. Tillotson's. Possibly, it is something of the same feeling that subordinates the sermons to the looks of rectors of fashionable churches. However, I did not have long to reflect on that idea, for my thoughts were given a new and permanently different, not to say pleasanter, direction, by the sudden appearance of a trim figure, clad in a gray suit and large gray hat, which, as it moved up the

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aisle, quite eclipsed for me "the priest and all the people." I was struck, first, by the easy grace with which the young girl moved. But, before she had turned into her pew and I caught sight of her face under the large hat which had hidden it, I knew it was my young lady, Miss Leigh, whom I had helped up on the train and afterward into her carriage. It is not too much to say that the Rev. Dr. Capon secured that moment a new permanent member of his congregation. Before the service was over, however, I had been solemnized by her simple and unaffected devoutness, and when, in one of the chants, I caught a clear liquid note perfectly sweet and birdlike, I felt as though I had made a new and charming discovery.

The rector gave a number of notices from which I felt the church must be one of the great forces of the city for work among the poor, yet, when I glanced around, I could not see a poor person in the pews except myself and two old ladies in rusty black, who had been seated near the door. I was struck by the interest shown in the notices by my young lady of the large hat, from whose shapely little head with its well-coiled brown hair my eyes did not long stray.

"I have," he said, "in addition to the notable work already mentioned, carried on, through my

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assistant in charge, the work of St. Andrew's chapel with gratifying success. This work has reached, and I am glad to be able to say, is reaching more than ever before, the great ignorant class that swarms in our midst, and exhibits a tendency to unrest that is most disturbing. This is the class which causes most of the uneasiness felt in the minds of the thoughtful."

I observed that he did not mention the name of "the assistant in charge," and my sympathy rather went out to the nameless priest, doing his work without the reward of even being mentioned.

As to the sermon, I can only say that it was twenty minutes long, and appeared aimed exclusively at the sins of Esau (whom I had always esteemed a quite decent sort of fellow), rather than at those of the doctor's congregation, whom he appeared to have a higher opinion of than of the Patriarchs. I recall the text: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you." He made it very plain that to be pious and prudent was the best way to secure wealth. He held up a worldly motive and guaranteed a worldly reward. Such a sermon as that would have eased the most uneasy conscience in Christendom.

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When the congregation came out I dawdled in the aisle until my young lady passed, when I feasted my eyes on her face and finely curved cheek, straight nose, and soft eyes veiled under their long lashes. My two old ladies in black were waiting in the end of a pew and, as I observed by their smiles when she approached, waiting like myself to see her. I had already recognized them as the old ladies of the bundles, whom I had once helped on the street. How I envied them the smile and cordial greeting they received in return! I made the observation then, which I have often had confirmed since, that tenderness to the aged, like that to the very young, is the mark of a gentle nature.

I heard them say, "We know who has done the work out at the chapel," and she replied, "Oh! no, you must not think that. My poor work has been nothing. Your friend has done it all, and I think that the doctor ought to have said so," to which they assented warmly, and I did the same, though I did not know their friend's name.

As I had nowhere to go in particular, I strolled slowly up the street, and then walked back again. And as I neared the church, I met the rector who had just left his robing-room. He was a fine-looking man on the street as well as in the chancel,

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and I was prompted to speak to him, and say that I had just heard him preach. He was, however, too impatient at my accosting him and so manifestly suspicious that I quickly regretted my impulse. His "Well, what is it?" was so prompt on his lips and his suspicion of me was so clear in his cold bluish eyes, that I drew myself up and replied: "Oh! nothing. I was only going to say that I had just heard you preach—that's all."

"Oh! Ah! Well, I'm much obliged. I'm very glad if I've helped you." He pulled out his watch.

"Helped me! You haven't," I said dryly and turned away.

A quarter of an hour later, as I strolled along the street lonely and forlorn, I saw him hurrying up the steps of the large house which had been pointed out to me as Mrs. Argand's, the great philanthropist.

XVII

THE GULF

AS I saw more of the city, its vastness, its might, and its inhumanity grew on me. It was a world in itself, a world constructed on lines as different from that in which I had lived as if smaller cities I had known as if it had been Babylon or Nineveh. The contrasts were as great as they could have been in the capitals Sardana-palus built. Structures so vast that they must have dwarfed the towers of Sardis—so rich and splendid that the Hanging Gardens of Babylon must have been outshone—reared their stupendous bulk into the smoky air and cast into perpetual shade all that lay near them. Hard beside their towering mass lay a region filled with the wretched tenements of the poor, and a little further off the houses of the well-to-do. And there was not a greater contrast between the vastness of the one and the pitiful squalor of the other than between the life of the owners

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of the former and that of the denizens of the closely packed tenements which dwindled in their shadow. Splendor and squalor were divided often only by a brick wall. The roar of the tide that swept through the teeming streets drowned the cry of wretchedness, and only the wretched knew how loud it was. I had never seen such wealth, and I had never dreamed of such poverty.

The vulgar make the parade; the refined pass so quietly as scarcely to be observed. The vulgarity of the display of riches began to oppress me. I discovered later the great store of refinement, goodness, and sweetness that was hidden in the homes alike of an element of the wealthy, the merely well-to-do, and the poor. But for a time it was all eclipsed by the glare of the vulgar and irresponsible rich. Arrogance, discontent, hardness, vulgarity, were stamped in many faces, and spoke in every movement of many of those I saw, even of the most richly dressed.

I think it was more the vulgarity and insolence of those I saw decked in the regalia of wealth than anything else—than even my own poverty—that changed my views and turned me for a time from my easy indifference as to social conditions toward a recognition that those conditions are ridiculously antiquated, a bent I have never quite

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got over, though I was later drawn back to a more conservative point of view than, under the hatred of sham and the spur of want, I was driven to occupy for some time. They have no traditions and no ideals. They know no standard but wealth, and possess no ability to display it but through parade. They feel it necessary to prove their novel position by continual assertion. They think that wealth has exempted them from decency. They mistake civility for servility and rudeness for gentility. Their best effort is only a counterfeit, a poor imitation of what they imagine to be the manners of the upper class abroad whose indifferent manners they ape.

“Misery loves company,” and when I wanted comfort I left the section of splendor and display, of riotous extravagance and glittering wealth, and went to those poorer than myself; a practice I can commend from experience.

When I got so desperate that I could not stand it any longer, and was afraid I might fall down dead or do myself violence, I used to turn my steps in another direction and walk through the poorer part of the city—not the worst part—where there was nothing but dirt and squalor and filth: that sickened me, and I had never had much sympathy with the class that lived there. They al-

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ways appeared contented enough with their surroundings and rather to enjoy themselves in their own way. And not the successful workman's quarter. There was an assurance and assumption there that offended me. The assumption bred of sudden success, no matter in what class, is everywhere equally vulgar after its kind. It was the part of the city where the people were respectable, but where they could just hold on with all their struggling and striving, that I used to go into; the part where there were patches, not rags; and sometimes an effort to keep down the dirt, and where a bit of a plant in a little pot or a little cheap ornament in a window told of the spark of sentiment that could yet live amid the poverty and hardness about it. They always place them in the windows, partly, no doubt, to get the light, and partly, perhaps, to show passers-by that there is something within better than might be looked for next door. These people on their holidays always make toward the open country; they try to get away from their robust, more successful brothers, and get back near to Nature—the old mother that cares nothing for success; and repays only according to the love her children bear her. Here I often walked as I grew more wretched.

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In this section I used to see people with whom I felt in touch: a man with the badgered look in his eye that made me know that he was at bay; or a woman with that resigned air which hopeless struggling stamps in the face and binds on the shoulders. These drew me nearer to my kind, and made me feel that there were others in a harder case than I, and gave me a desire to help them. I came to know some of them by sight and the houses in which they lived, and sometimes I spoke to them and exchanged a word or two, and the effort to take a cheerful view with them helped me, and sent me back to my little lonely cubby-hole cheered and in some sort comforted and resolute to hold out a little longer. But it was hungry work.

This element composed the great body of the population, but deep down below them lay a yet lower element weltering in an infinite and hopeless misery to which even the poor class I speak of were alien. They were generically spoken of at times as the criminal classes. They were not this at all, though among them were many criminals—driven to crime by necessity—because there was no means for them to subsist, no possible means nor hope outside of their casual and occasional violation of the statute law by which

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they secure enough for empty bellies and freezing bodies merely to keep alive. They live among and on the poor, and one of the bitterest trials of poverty is the continual presence and preying of these parasites who like other vermin pursue them and cannot be kept off. Their only common crime is desperate, infinite poverty—poverty beyond hope, for they have nothing—not work, nor the hope of work—not even the power to work, if it should be offered them. As the well-to-do look with anxiety to the loss of their property and the consequent sinking to some lower plane of moderate poverty, so the poor look with shuddering or, at last, with despair to sinking into the slough of this hopeless state for which there is no name, because none has been devised adequate to describe its desperate misery. Often but a block or even but a wall divides the reeking slum where they creep and fester and rot, from the broad, well-lighted, smooth-paved avenue where irresponsible wealth goes clattering by in its wild orgy of extravagance and reckless mirth. The eye of the mangy and starving wolf from his thicket gleams dully at the glittering pageant of heartless irresponsibility and waste. Should the pack ever find a leader bold enough to spring, what will be the end?

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At present they are hungry enough, but they have not organized; they are not yet a hunting pack, but only scattered bands, slinking about hungrily, fighting and preying on each other, the larger bands with the bolder leaders driving off the weaker and unorganized. But let them all organize once and the end will not be yet.

Day after day I saw my last few dollars leak away, and, though I replenished my thin purse at times by pawning everything pawnable I had, yet this, too, gradually oozed away. Fortunately I had plenty of clothes, which I had bought in my flush days, so I could still make a respectable appearance.

As money got low all sorts of schemes used to present themselves to me to replenish my pocket. One was to go out as a laborer on the streets, clean bricks, or do anything. I was not lazy. I would have walked around the world for a case. I do not think I was ashamed of it, for I knew it was respectable, but I was afraid some one I knew might pass by; I was afraid that Pushkin or Mrs. Starling might see me, and—yes, that that young girl from the colonial house might recognize me. I had often thought of her violets since I had dropped them into my pocket-book. And now, when this idea came to me, I took them out

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and looked at them. They still retained a faint fragrance. What would be the result if she should pass by and see me cleaning bricks—me a laborer, and Pushkin—the thoughts came together—should see me? I would win on my own line if it took me all my life.

The idea of Pushkin suggested another plan. Why not gamble? Gambling was gentlemanly—at least, gentlemen gambled. But did they play for a living? I had gambled a little myself in the past; played poker, and, like most men, prided myself on my game, though I generally lost in the long run; and when I was making good resolutions after my failure, I had made up my mind never to play again anywhere. And I had always held to the opinion that, as soon as a man played for his living, he crossed the line and ceased to be a gentleman. Now, however, it began to appear to me as if this were the only plan by which I could make anything, and as if I should have a good excuse for breaking my resolution. I resisted the temptation for some time; but one night, when I had pawned nearly everything and had only three or four dollars left, I went out, and after a long but half-hearted battle gave up, as such are always lost, and turned into a street across an alley from my office where I knew there

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was a gambling place over a saloon kept by one Mick Raffity. I went boldly up the stairs. Even as I mounted them I felt a sort of exhilaration. I stopped at the door and my old resolution not to play again stirred and struggled a little. I caught it, however, with a sort of grip almost physical, and gave it a shake till it was quiet. I knew I should win. The blaze of light within cheered me, and, without hesitating an instant, I walked across the room to where a crowd stood watching the play of some one seated at a table. It was a large and richly decorated room, with a few rather daring pictures on the walls and much gilding about the ceiling. The hot air, heavy with tobacco smoke and fumes of one kind and another, met me in a blast as I entered, and involuntarily I thought of a sweat-shop I had once seen in my earlier days. But the sensation passed and left me warm and exhilarated. As I passed along, a man looked at me and half nodded. I knew he was the proprietor. I made my way in and caught the dealer's expressionless eye, and taking out a note as carelessly as if my pockets were stuffed with them, I glanced over the board to select my bet. At one end of the table sat the large, heavy-browed middle-aged man I had run into one night on the stairway leading from the

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alley to the building where I had my office. He was somewhat tipsy and evidently in bad luck, for he was heated and was betting wildly. Near by sat a big, sour-looking fellow, flashily dressed, whom I recognized as having been one of my fellow-travellers on the side-tracked train, the one who had talked to the trainmen of their wrongs. He still wore his paste diamonds, his silk hat, and patent-leather shoes. But I took little notice of these. Casually, as I dropped my note, my eye fell on the player at the middle of the table. He was surrounded by stacks of chips. As I looked he raked in a new pile; at least a hundred dollars, and he never changed a particle. He was calmer than the dealer before him. He was in evening dress and success had given him quite an air. I caught up my note without knowing it and fell back behind a group of young men who had just come up. Curious things happen sometimes. I found my note doubled up in my hand when I got out of doors, a quarter of an hour later. All I remember is my revulsion at seeing that gambler sitting there raking in money so calmly, with my money for his stake in his pocket, and I turned out for him: an adventurer who said all American women were at his bidding. It recalled to me the girl I had seen on the train and had handed, later,

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into her carriage, and the good resolutions I had formed. And it strung me up like wine. I felt that I was a coward to have come there and as bad as Pushkin.

Just as I turned to leave the place a party of young fellows entered the room. They had come from a dinner at Mr. Leigh's, as I understood from their talk, and were "going on" to a dance unless the luck should run to suit them. They were in high spirits, "Mr. Leigh's champagne" having done its work, and they were evidently habitués of the place, and good patrons, I judged, from the obsequious respect paid them by the attendants. The leader of them was a large, rather good-looking young fellow, but with marks of dissipation on a face without a line of refinement in it. The others all seemed to be his followers. They greeted familiarly and by name the eager attendants who rushed forward to take their coats, and the leader asked them casually who was in to-night.

"The count's here, I think, sir," said one whom they called Billy.

"The count! Coll McSheen's staked him again," said the young leader. "And he swore to me he'd never let him have another cent, with oaths enough to damn him deeper than he will be damned anyhow. Come on, I'll skin him clean."

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I lingered for a moment to see him "skin" Pushkin.

They sauntered up to the table and, after a greeting to the count, began to toss bills on the board as though they grew on trees. The least of them would have kept me going for months. I had never seen money handled so before and it staggered me.

"Who is that young man?" I asked of a man near me, nodding toward the leader. "He must be pretty rich."

"Rich! You bet. He's Jim Canter. Got all his daddy's money and going to get all the Argand and Leigh piles some day. He'll need it, too," added my informant.

"I should think so." I recalled his name in connection with Miss Leigh's name in the account of the ball, and I was feeling a little bitter.

"Why, he'd just as lief try to corner water as to bet a hundred dollar bill on a card. This is just play to him. He'd give all he'd win to-night to any one of his women."

"His women?"

"Yes. He's one of the real upper class."

"The upper class!" So this was the idea of the upper class held by this man and his kind! My soul revolted at the thought of this man standing

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as the type of our upper class, and I was turning away when Pushkin shoved back his chair. As I turned he looked up and I saw him start, though I did not catch his glance. The dealer saw him, too, and as he looked at me I caught his eye. He motioned to me, but I took no notice. As I walked out the man near the door spoke to me.

“There’s supper in the next room.”

“Thank you. I don’t want it.”

“Come in again. Better luck to-morrow.”

“For you, I hope,” I said, and I saw his mystification.

I had of late been having an uncomfortable thought which was beginning to worry me. The idea of doing away with myself had suggested itself to me from time to time. I do not mean that I ever thought I should really do it; for when I reflected seriously, I knew I should not. In the first place, I was afraid; and in the next place, I never gave up the belief that I should some day achieve success. When I analyzed my feelings I found that the true name for my unhappiness was egotism. But the idea would come up to me and now began to pester me. I had a pistol which I could never bring myself to pawn, though nearly everything else was pledged. I put the pistol away; but this did not help matters; it

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looked like cowardice. So that evening I had taken the pistol out and put it into my pocket when I went into the street. If I could only catch some burglar breaking into a bank, or some ruffian beating a woman, or some scoundrel committing any crime, it would attract attention, and I might get work. I often used to think thus, but nothing ever happened, and I knew nothing would happen that evening when I walked out of the gambling house. So presently the pistol began to be in my way, and my mind went to working again on the ease with which I could go to my office and lock myself in. Still I kept on, and presently I found myself near the river, a black stream that I had often thought of as the Styx. It was as black and silent now, as it slipped on in the darkness, as the River of Death.

I was sauntering along, chewing the cud of fancy, wholly bitter—and sinking lower and lower every step in the slough of despond, working over what would come if I should suddenly chuck up the whole business and get out of life—pondering how I should destroy all marks by which there could be any possibility of identification, when the current of my thoughts, if that moody train of dismal reflection could be dignified with such a name, was turned aside by a small incident. As

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I wandered on in the darkness, the figure of a woman standing—a shadow in the shadow—at a corner of an alley arrested my attention. Even in the gloom the attitude of dejection was such as to strike me, and I saw or felt, I know not which, that her eyes were on me, and that in some dim, distant way they contained an appeal. I saw that she was young, and in the dusk the oval outline of a face that might have both refinement and beauty challenged my attention. Was she a beggar or only an unhappy outcast, waiting in the darkness for the sad reward which evil chance might fling to her wretchedness? I put my hand in my pocket, thinking that she might beg of me, and I would give her a small portion of my slender store, but she said nothing and I passed on. After a little, however, still thinking of her dejected air and with a sudden sympathy for her wretchedness, I turned back. She was still standing where I left her. I passed slowly by her, but she said nothing, though I felt again that her eyes were on me. Then my curiosity or possibly, I may say, my interest, being aroused, I turned again and walked by her.

“Why so sad to-night?” I said, with words which might have appeared flippant, but in a tone which she instantly recognized for sympathy.

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She turned half away and said nothing and I stood silent watching her, for her face must once have been almost beautiful, though it was now sadly marred, and an ugly scar across her eye and cheek, as if it might have come from the slash of a razor, made that side drawn and distorted.

“Do you want money?”

She slowly shook her head without looking at me.

“What is it, then? Maybe, I can help you?”

She turned slowly and looked at me with such indescribable hopelessness in her face that my heart went out to her.

“No, I’m past help now.”

“Oh, no, you’re not.” My spirits rose with the words, and I felt suddenly as if I had risen out of the slough which had been engulfing me, and as though I had gotten my feet on a firm place where I could reach out a hand to help this despairing and sinking sister.

“Yes, past help now.”

“Come and walk with me.” And as she did not stir, I took her hand and drew it through my arm and gently led her forward along the street. I had a strange feeling as I walked along. I somehow felt as though I had escaped from something which had been dragging me down. It was

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a strange walk and a strange and tragic story that she told me—of having left her home in the country, inspired by the desire to do something and be something more than she was, a simple farmer's daughter in another State, with some little education such as the country schools could give; of having secured a position in a big shop where, for a small sum, she worked all day and learned to see and love fine clothes and beautiful things; of having fallen in with one or two gay companions in this and other shops who wore the fine clothes and had the beautiful things she admired; of having been put forward because she was pretty and polite; and then of having met a young man, well dressed and with fine manners; of having fallen in love with him and of having accepted his attentions and his gifts; and then, of having been led astray by him; and then—of such an act of base betrayal as, had I not had it substantiated afterward in every horrid detail, I should never have believed. I had known something of the wickedness of men and the evil of an uncontrolled life in the city, where the vilest passions of the heart are given play, but I had never dreamed of anything so revolting as the story this girl told me that night. She had been deliberately and with malice aforethought lured not

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only to her destruction but to a life of slavery so vile as to be unbelievable. The man who had secured her heart used his power over her to seize and sell her into a slavery for which there is no name which could be used on the printed page. Here, stricken by the horror of her situation, she had attempted to escape from her captors, but had been bodily beaten into submission. Then she had made a wild dash for liberty and had been seized and slashed with a knife until she fell under her wounds and her life was in imminent danger.

From this time she gave up and became the slave of the woman of the house: "Smooth Ally," she said they called her; but she would not give me her name or her address. She would have her killed, she feared, if she did so. Here she gradually had yielded to her fate and had lived in company with her other slaves, some willing, some as unwilling as herself, until finally her place was needed for one more useful to her owner, when she had been handed on from one owner to another, always sinking in the scale lower and lower, until at last she had been turned into the street with her choice limited only to the river or the gutter. Long before she had finished her story I had made up my mind that life still held

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for me something which I might do, however poor and useless I knew myself to be. The only person I could think of who might help her was Miss Leigh. How could I reach her? Could I write her of this poor creature? She could not go back to her home, she said, for she knew that they had heard of her life, and they were "good and Christian people." She used to write to and hear from them, but it had been two years and more since she had written or heard now. Still she gave me what she said was her father's address in another State, and I told her I would find out how they felt about her and would let her know. I gave her a part of what I had. It was very little, and I have often wished since then that I had had the courage to give her all.

I was walking on with her, trying to think of some place where she might find a shelter and be taken care of until her friends could be informed where she was, when, in one of the streets in front of a bar-room, we heard mingled laughter and singing and found a group of young men, ruffians and loafers, standing on the sidewalk, laughing at the singers who stood in the street. As we drew near, I saw that the latter were a small group of the Salvation Army, and it appeared to me a providence. Here were some who might help

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her. At the moment that we approached they ended the dirge-like hymn they had been singing, and kneeling down in the street one of them offered a prayer, after which a woman handed around something like a tambourine, asking for a collection. The jeers that she encountered might have daunted a much bolder spirit than mine, and as each man either put in or pretended to put something in, one a cent, another a button or a cigarette stump, she responded, "Thank you and God bless you." I was ashamed to make an appeal to them there for the poor girl, so I walked with her a little further on and waited until the blue-clad detachment came along and their tormentors retired to warm themselves, without and within, in the saloon in front of which they had been standing. I accosted the woman who had taken up the collection and asked her if she could take care of a poor girl who needed help badly, and I was struck by the kindness with which she turned and, after a moment's glance, held out her hand to the girl.

"Come with us," she said, "and we will take you where you will find friends."

Even then the young woman appeared too frightened to accept her invitation. She clung to me and seemed to rely upon me, asking me to go

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with her, but partly from shame and partly from what may possibly have been a better motive, I told her my way led elsewhere, and, after persuasion, she went with the Salvationists, and I walked home happier than I had been in some time.

I even took some steps to call public attention to the horrible story the poor Magdalen had told me of her frightful experience, and actually wrote it up; but when I took it to a paper—the one that had published my first article—I was given to understand that the account was quite incredible. The editor, a fox-faced man of middle age, with whom my paper secured me the honor of an interview, informed me that the story was an old one, and that they had investigated it thoroughly, and found it without the slightest foundation. If I wanted further proof of this, he said, he would refer me to Mr. Collis McSheen, one of the leading lawyers in the city, who had conducted the investigation.

XVIII

THE DRUMMER

I BELIEVE Mrs. Kale would have let me stay on free almost indefinitely; for she was a kind-hearted soul, much imposed on by her boarders. But I had been playing the gentleman there, and I could not bring myself to come down in her esteem. I really did not know whether I should be able to continue to pay her; so when my time was up, I moved again, to my landlady's great surprise, and she thought me stuck up and ungrateful, and was a little hurt over it, when, in fact, I only did not want to cheat her, and was moving out to the poorest part of the city, to a little house on which I had observed, one afternoon during one of my strolls, the notice of a room for rent at a dollar a week. I think a rose-bush carefully trained over the door decided me to take it. It gave me a bit of home-feeling. The violet, of course, is in color and delicacy the half-ethereal emblem of the tenderest sentiment of the heart. "The violets all withered when my

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father died," sighed poor Ophelia. And next to violets, a rose-bush, growing in the sun and dew has ever stood to me for the purest sentiment that the heart can hold.

I heard shortly afterward of the engagement of Miss Lilian Poole to the man she used to laugh at; but after a single wave of mortification that Peck should have won where I had lost, I did not mind it. I went out to look at the sunny house with the trees and the rose-bushes about it and wonder how I could meet Miss Leigh.

The room I took when I left Mrs. Kale's was only a cupboard some nine feet by six in the little house I have mentioned; but it was spotlessly clean, like the kind-looking, stout, blue-eyed Teuton woman who, with skirt tucked up, came to the door when I applied for lodging, and, as the price was nearer my figure than any other I had seen, I closed with Mrs. Loewen, and the afternoon I left Mrs. Kale's sent my trunk over in advance. It held the entire accumulation of my life. There was something about the place and the woman that attracted me. As poor as the house was, it was beyond the squalid quarter and well out in the edge of the city, with a bit of grass before it, and there were not only plants in the windows well cared for, but there was even a

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rose-bush beside the door making a feeble attempt to clamber over it with the aid of strings and straps carefully adjusted.

The only question my landlady asked me was whether I was a musician, and when I told her no, but that I was very fond of music, she appeared satisfied. Her husband, she said, was a drummer.

I asked if I might bring my dog, and she assented even to this.

“Elsa was fond of animals,” she said.

When I bade good-by to Mrs. Kale and my friends at the boarding-house, I was pleased at the real regret they showed at my leaving. Miss Pansy and Miss Pinky came down to the drawing-room in their “best” to say good-by; Miss Pinky with her “scratch” quite straight. And Miss Pansy said if they ever went back home she hoped very much that I would honor them by coming to see them, while Miss Pinky, with a more practical turn, hoped I would come and see them “there—and you may even bring your dog with you,” she added, with what I knew was a proof of real friendship. I promised faithfully to come, for I was touched by the kindness of the two old ladies who, like myself, had slipped from the sphere in which they had belonged, and I was rather grim at the reflection that they had been brought there

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by others, while I had no one to blame but myself—a solemn fact I was just beginning to face.

When I walked out of the house I was in a rather low state of mind. I felt that it was the last day when I could make any pretension to being a gentleman. I had been slipping down, down, and now I was very near the bottom. So I wandered on in the street with Dix at my heels and my pistol in my pocket.

Just then a notice of a concert, placarded on a wall, caught my eye, and I gave myself a shake together as an unmitigated ass, and determined suddenly that I needed some amusement and that a better use for the pistol would be to sell it and go to the concert. I would, at least, be a gentleman once more, and then to-morrow I could start afresh. So I hunted up a pawnshop and raising from the villain who kept it a few dollars on my pistol, had a good supper and then took Dix home and went to the symphony. As it happened, I got one of the best seats in the house. It was a revelation to me—a revolution in my thoughts and feelings: the great audience, gay with silks and flowers and jewels, filling up all the space about and above me rising up to the very top of the vast auditorium. I did not have time at first

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to observe them, I only felt them; for just as I entered the Director came out and the audience applauded. It exhilarated me like wine; I felt as if it had been myself they were applauding. Then the music began: The "Tannhauser Overture." It caught me up and bore me away: knighthood and glory and love were all about me; the splendor of the contest; the struggle in which a false step, a cowardly weakness might fling away the world; the reward that awaited the victor, and the curse if he gave way, till I found myself dazzled, amazed, and borne down by the deluge of harmonious sound—and could do nothing but lie drifting at the mercy of the whelming tide, and watch, half-drowned, whatever object caught my eye. The first thing I took in was the tall old Drummer who towered above the great bank of dark bodies with swaying arms. Still and solemn he appeared out of the mist, and seemed like some landmark which I must hold on to if I would not be swept away. No one appeared to pay much attention to him, and he appeared oblivious of all but his drums. Now he leant over them and listened to their throbbing, now he beat as if the whole world depended on it. I held on to him and felt somehow as if he were the one to whom the Director looked

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—the centre of all the music and pomp and mystery, and I must keep him in sight.

I don't know much of what came on the programme after that; for I was awakened by the storm of applause which followed and during the intermission I looked about at the audience around me. They filled the house from floor to roof, every seat was occupied, and the boxes looked like banks of flowers. All the faces were strange to me, though, and I was beginning to feel lonely again, and was turning to my old Drummer, when, sweeping the boxes, my eye fell on a girl who caught me at once. She was sitting a little forward looking across toward the orchestra with so serious an expression on her lovely face that I felt drawn to her even before I took in that she was the girl I had seen on the train and whom I had handed into her carriage. As I gazed at her this came to me—and with it such a warm feeling about my heart as I had not had in a long time. I looked at the men about her, one of whom was the good-looking clergyman, Dr. Capon, and the next instant all my blood was boiling—there, bending down over her, talking into her ear, so close to her that she had to sit forward to escape his polluting touch, was the gambler whom I had heard say not three weeks before that every

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American girl was open to a proposal from him. I don't know really what happened after that. I only remember wishing I had my pistol back—and being glad that I had pawned it, not sold it; for I made up my mind anew in that theatre that night to live and succeed, and preserve that girl from that adventurer. When the concert was over I watched the direction they took, and made my way through the crowd to the exit by which they would go into the foyer. There I waited and presently they came along. She was surrounded by a little party and was laughing heartily over something one of them had just said, and was looking, in the rich pink wrap which enveloped her, like a rich pink rosebud. I was gazing at her intently, and caught her eye, and, no doubt struck by my look of recognition, she bowed. She had not really thought of me, she was still thinking of what had been said, and it was only a casual bow to some one in a crowd who knows you and catches your eye; but it was a bow, and it was a smiling one, and again that warm feeling surged about my heart which had come when I met her on the street. The next second that fellow came along. He was taller than most of the crowd, and well dressed; was really a handsome enough fellow but for his cold

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eyes and hard look. The eyes were too bold and the chin not bold enough. He was walking beside a large, blondish girl with shallow blue eyes, who appeared much pleased with herself or with him, but at the moment he was bowing his adieux to her while she was manifestly trying to hold on to him.

“I don’t think you are nice a bit,” I heard her say, petulantly, as they came up to me. “You have not taken the least notice of me to-night.”

This he evidently repudiated, for she pouted and smiled up at him. “Well, then, I’ll excuse you this time, but you needn’t be running after her. She won’t——”

I did not hear the rest. I was thinking of the girl before me.

He was looking over the heads of the people before him, and the next moment was elbowing his way to overtake my young lady. Close to him in the crowd, as he came on, stood Mrs. Starling’s daughter, painted, and in her best finery, and I saw her imploring eyes fastened on him eagerly. He glanced at her and she bowed with a gratified light dawning in her face. I saw his face harden. He cut her dead. Poor girl! I saw her pain and the look of disappointment as she furtively followed him with her eyes. He

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pushed on after my young lady. But I was ahead of him. Just before he reached her, I slipped in, and when he attempted to push by I stood firm before him.

“Beg pardon,” he said, trying to put me aside to step ahead of me. I turned my head and over my shoulder looked him in the face.

“I beg *your* pardon.”

“Oh!” he said. “How do? Let me by.”

“To ply your old trade?” I asked, looking into his eyes, over my shoulder.

“Ah!” I saw the rage come into his face and he swore some foreign oath. He put his hand on my shoulder to push me aside; but I half turned and looked him straight in the eyes and his grasp relaxed. He had felt my grip once—and he knew I was not afraid of him, and thought I was a fool. And his hand fell.

I walked in front of him and kept him back until the party with my young lady in it had passed quite out of the door, and then I let him by. For that evening, at least, I had protected her.

I walked to my lodging with a feeling of more content than I had had in a long time. My heart had a home though I had none. It was as if the shell in which I had been cramped so long were broken and I should at last step out into a



“To ply your old trade?” I asked.

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new world. I had a definite aim, and one higher than I ever had had before. I was in love with that girl and I made up my mind to win her. As I walked along through the gradually emptying streets my old professor's words came to me. They had been verified. I reviewed my past life and saw as clearly as if in a mirror my failures and false steps. I had moped and sulked with the world; I had sat in my cubby-hole of an office with all my talents as deeply buried as if I had been under the mounds of Troy, and had expected men to unearth me as though I had been treasure.

It may appear to some that I exaggerated my feeling for a girl whom I scarcely knew at all. But love is the least conventional of passions; his victory the most unexpected and unaccountable. He may steal into the heart like a thief or burst in like a robber. The zephyr is not so wooing, the hurricane not so furious. Samson and Hercules lose their strength in his presence and, shorn of their power, surrender at discretion. Mightier than Achilles, wiler than Ulysses, he leads them both captive, and, behind them in his train, the long line of captains whom Petrarch has catalogued as his helpless slaves. Why should it then be thought strange that a poor, weak, foolish, lonely young man should fall before him

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at his first onset! I confess, I thought it foolish, and yet so weak was I that I welcomed the arrow that pierced my heart, and as I sauntered homeward through the emptying streets, I hugged to my breast the joy that I loved once more.

As I was on the point of ringing the door-bell there was a heavy step behind me, and there was my old Drummer coming along. He turned in at the little gate. And I explained that I was his new lodger and had been to hear him play.

“Ah! You mean to hear the orchestra?”

“No, I don't. I meant, to hear you—I went to the concert, but I enjoyed you most.”

“Ah!” he chuckled at the flattery, and let me in, and taking a survey of me, invited me to come and have a bit of supper with him, which I accepted. His wife came in and waited on us, and he told her what I had said, with pleasure, and she laughed over it and rallied him and accepted it, and accepted me instantly as an old friend. It gave me a new feeling.

A few minutes later there was another arrival. A knock on the street door, and the mother, smiling and winking at her husband, went and let in the new-comers: a plump, round-cheeked girl, the mingled likeness of her two parents, with red cheeks, blue eyes, smooth flaxen hair, and that

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heifer-like look of shyness and content which Teuton maidens have, and behind her a strapping-looking young fellow with powerful shoulders, and a neck cased in a net of muscles, a clear pink skin and blue eyes, and with a roll in his gait partly the effect of his iron muscles and partly of mere bashfulness. I was introduced and the first thing the mother did was to repeat delightedly the compliment I had paid the father. It had gone home, and the simple way the white teeth shone around that little circle and the pride the whole family took in this poor bit of praise, told their simplicity and warmed my heart. The father and mother were evidently pleased with their daughter's young man—for the mother constantly rallied the daughter about Otto and Otto about her, drawing the father in with sly looks and knowing tosses of her head, and occasionally glancing at me to see if I too took in the situation. Although I did not yet know a word of their language, I could understand perfectly what she was saying, and I never passed an evening that gave me a better idea of family happiness, or greater satisfaction. When I went up to my little room I seemed, somehow, to have gotten into a world of reality and content: a new world.

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I awakened in a new world—the one I had reached the night before: the land of hope and content—and when I came down-stairs I was as fresh as a shriven soul, and I walked out into the street with Dix at my heel, as though I owned the earth.

The morning was as perfect as though God had just created light. The sky was as blue and the atmosphere as clear as though the rain that had fallen had washed away with the smoke all impurity whatsoever, and scoured the floor of Heaven afresh.

Elsa, with her chequered skirt turned back and a white apron about her comely figure, was singing as she polished the outer steps, before going to her work in a box factory, and the sun was shining upon her bare head with its smooth hair, and upon the little rose-bush by the door, turning the rain-drops that still hung on it into jewels. She stopped and petted Dix, who had followed me down-stairs, and Dix, who, like his master, loved to be petted by a pretty woman, laid back his ears and rubbed his head against her. And, an hour later, a group of little muddy boys with their books in their hands had been beguiled by a broad puddle on their way to school and were wading in the mud and laughing over the spatters and splotches they were getting on their clothes

THE DRUMMER

and ruddy faces. As I watched them, one who had been squeezed out of the fun and stood on the sidewalk looking on and laughing, suddenly seized with fear or envy shouted that if they did "not come on, Mith Thelly would keep them in"; and, stricken with a sudden panic, the whole flock of little sand-pipers started off and ran as hard as their dumpy legs would carry them around the corner. I seemed to be emancipated.

I made my breakfast on a one-cent loaf of bread, taking a little street which, even in that section, was a back street, to eat it in, and for butter amused myself watching a lot of little children (among the last of whom I recognized my muddy boys, who must have found another puddle) lagging in at the door of a small old frame building, which I knew must be their school, though I could not understand why it should be in such a shanty when all the public schools I had seen were the most palatial structures.

I took the trouble to go by that day and look at the house on the corner. It was as sunny as ever. And when on my way back to my office I passed Miss Leigh, the central figure of a group of fresh-looking girls, I felt that the half-shy smile of recognition which she gave me was a shaft of light to draw my hopes to something

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better than I had known. Dix was with me, and he promptly picked out his friend and received from her a greeting which, curiously enough, raised my hopes out of all reason. I began to feel that the dog was a link between us.

XIX

RE-ENTER PECK

IT happened that the building in which I had taken an office bore a somewhat questionable reputation. I had selected it because it was cheap, and it was too late when I discovered its character. I had no money to move. The lawyers in it were a nondescript lot—criminal practitioners, straw-bail givers, haunters of police courts, etc.; and the other occupants were as bad—adventurers with wild-cat schemes, ticket-scalpers, cranks, visionaries with fads, frauds, gamblers, and thieves in one field or another, with doubtless a good sprinkling of honest men among them.

It was an old building and rather out of the line of the best growth of the city, but in a convenient and crowded section. The lower floor was occupied with bucket-shops and ticket-scalpers' offices, on the street; and at the back, in a sort of annex on an alley, was a saloon known as Mick Raffity's; the owner being a solid, double-jointed son of Erin, with blue eyes as keen as tacks; and

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over this saloon was the gambling house where I had been saved by finding Pushkin.

On the second floor, the best offices were a suite occupied by a lawyer named McSheen, a person of considerable distinction, after its own kind, as was the shark created with other fish of the sea after its kind; a lawyer of unusual shrewdness, a keen political boss, and a successful business man. I had, as happened, rented a cubby-hole looking out on a narrow well opposite the rear room of his suite.

Collis McSheen was a large, brawny man with a broad face, a big nose, blue eyes, grizzled black hair, a tight mouth, and a coarse fist. He would have turned the scales at two hundred, and he walked with a step as light as a sick-nurse's. The first time I ever saw him was when I ran into him suddenly in a winding, unswept back stairway that came down on an alley from the floor below mine and was used mainly by those in a hurry, and I was conscious even in the dim light that he gave me a look of great keenness. As he appeared in a hurry I gave way to him, with a "Beg pardon" for my unintentional jostle, to which he made no reply except a grunt. I, however, took a good look at him as he passed along under a street lamp, with his firm yet noiseless step—as

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noiseless as a cat's—and the heavy neck and bulk gave me a sense of his brute strength, which I never lost afterward. I soon came to know that he was a successful jury-lawyer with a gift of eloquence, and a knack of insinuation, and that he was among the most potent of the political bosses of the city, with a power of manipulation unequalled by any politician in the community. He had good manners and a ready smile. He was the attorney or legal agent for a number of wealthy concerns, among them the Argand Estate, and had amassed a fortune. He was also “the legal adviser” of one of the afternoon papers, the *Trumpet*, in which, as I learned later, he held, though it was not generally known, a large and potent interest. He was now looming up as the chief candidate of the popular party for mayor, an office which he expected to secure a few months later. He was interested in a part of the street-car system of the city, that part in which “the Argand Estate” held the controlling interest, and which was, to some extent, the rival system of that known as the “West Line,” in which Mr. Leigh held a large interest. I mention these facts because, detached as they appear, they have a strong bearing on my subsequent relation to McSheen, and a certain bearing on my whole future. But, on occasion

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he was as ready for his own purposes to attack these interests secretly as those opposed to them. He always played his own hand. To quote Kalender, "he was deep."

My first real meeting with him gave me an impression of him which I was never able to divest myself of. I was in my little dark cupboard of an office very lonely and reading hard to keep my mind occupied with some other subject than myself, when the door half opened quietly, with or without a preliminary knock, I never could tell which, and a large man insinuated himself in at it and, after one keen look, smiled at me. I recalled afterward how catlike his entrance was. But at the moment I was occupied in gauging him. Still smiling he moved noiselessly around and took his stand with his back to the one window.

"You are Mr. Glave?" he smiled. "Glad to see you?" He had not quite gotten rid of the interrogation.

I expressed my appreciation of his good-will and with, I felt, even more sincerity than his; for I was glad to see any one.

"Always pleased to see young lawyers—specially bright ones." Here I smiled with pleasure that he should so admirably have "sized me up," as the saying goes.

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"You are a lawyer also?" I hazarded.

"Yes. Yes. I see you are studious. I always like that in a young man—gives him breadth—scope."

I assented and explained that I had been in politics a little also, all of which he appeared to think in my favor. And so it went on till he knew nearly all about me. In fact, I became quite communicative. It had been so long since I had had a lawyer to talk with. I found him to be a remarkably well-informed man, and with agreeable, rather insinuating manners. He knew something of books too, and he made, I could not tell whether consciously or unconsciously, a number of literary allusions. One of them I recall. It was a Spanish proverb, he said: "The judge is a big man, but give your presents to the clerk."

"Well, you'll do well here if you start right. The tortoise beats the hare, you know—every time—ev-ery time."

I started, so apt was the allusion. I wondered if he could ever have known Peck.

"Yes, I know that. That's what I mean to do," I said.

"Get in with the right sort of folks, then when there's any sweeping done you'll be on the side of the handle." He was moving around toward

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the door and was looking out of the window reflecting.

"I have a letter to a gentleman named Leigh," I said. "I have not yet presented it."

"Ah!"

I turned and glanced at him casually and was struck with the singular change that had come over his face. It was as if he had suddenly drawn a fine mask over it. His eyes were calmly fixed on me, yet I could hardly have said that they saw me. His countenance was absolutely expressionless. I have seen the same detached look in a big cat's eyes as he gazed through his bars and through the crowd before him to the far jungle, ocean spaces away. It gave me a sudden shiver and I may have shown that I was startled, but, as I looked, the mask disappeared before my eyes and he was smiling as before.

"Got a pretty daughter?" he said with a manner which offended me, I could hardly tell why.

"I believe so; but I do not know her." I was angry with myself for blushing, and it was plain that he saw it and did not believe me.

"You know a man 't calls himself Count Pushkin?"

"Yes, I know him."

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"He knows her and she knows him."

"Does she? I know nothing about that."

"Kind o' makin' a set for him, they say?"

"Is she? I hardly think it likely, if she knows him," I said coldly. I wondered with what malignant intuition he had read my thoughts.

"Oh! A good many people do that. They like the sound. It gives 'em power."

"Power!"

"Yes. Power's a pretty good thing to have. You can—" He looked out of the window and licked his lips in a sort of reverie. He suddenly opened and closed his hand with a gesture of crushing. "Power and money go together?" And still smiling, with a farewell nod, he noiselessly withdrew and closed the door.

When he was gone I was conscious of a feeling of intense relief, and also of intense antagonism—a feeling I had never had for but one man before—Peck: a feeling which I never got rid of.

One evening a little later I missed Dix. He usually came home even when he strayed off, which was not often, unless as happened he went with Elsa, for whom he had conceived a great fondness, and who loved and petted him in return. It had come to be a great bond between the girl and me, and I think the whole family liked me the

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better for the dog's love of the daughter. But this evening he did not appear; I knew he was not with Elsa, for I remembered he had been in my office during the afternoon, and in consequence I spent an unhappy night. All sorts of visions floated before my mind, from the prize-ring to the vivisection table. I rather inclined to the former; for I knew his powerful chest and loins and his scarred shoulders would commend him to the fancy. I thought I remembered that he had gone out of my office just before I left and had gone down the steps which led to the alley I have mentioned. This he sometimes did. I recalled that I was thinking of Miss Eleanor Leigh and had not seen or thought of him between the office and my home.

I was so disturbed about him by bedtime that I went out to hunt for him and returned to my office by the same street I had walked through in the afternoon. When I reached the building in which my office was, I turned into the alley I have mentioned and went up the back stairway. It was now after midnight and it was as black as pitch. When I reached my office, thinking that I might by a bare possibility have locked him in, I opened the door and walked in, closing it softly behind me. The window looked out on the well

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left for light and air, and was open, and as I opened the door a light was reflected through the window on my wall. I stepped up to close the window and, accidentally looking across the narrow well to see where the light came from, discovered that it was in the back office of Coll McSheen, in which were seated Mr. McSheen and the sour-looking man I had seen on the train with the silk hat and the paste diamond studs, and of all persons in the world, Peck! The name Leigh caught my ear and I involuntarily stopped without being aware that I was listening. As I looked the door opened and a man I recognized as the janitor of the building entered and with him a negro waiter, bearing two bottles of champagne and three glasses. For a moment I felt as though I had been dreaming. For the negro was Jeams. I saw the recognition between him and Peck, and Jeams's white teeth shone as Peck talked about him. I heard him say:

“No, suh, I don' know nuthin' 't all about him. I'se got to look out for myself. Yes, suh, got a good place an' I'm gwine to keep it!”

He had opened the bottles and poured out the wine, and McSheen gave him a note big enough to make him bow very low and thank him volubly. When he had withdrawn Peck said:

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"You've got to look out for that rascal. He's an awfully smart scoundrel."

"Oh! I'll own him, body and soul," said McSheen.

"I wouldn't have him around me."

"Don't worry—he won't fool me. If he does—" He opened and closed his fist with the gesture I had seen him use the first day he paid me a visit.

"Well, let's to business," he said when they had drained their glasses. He looked at the other men. "What do you say, Wringman?"

"You pay me the money and I'll bring the strike all right," said the Labor-leader, "and I'll deliver the vote, too. In ten days there won't be a wheel turning on his road. I'll order every man out that wears a West Line cap or handles a West Line tool."

The "West Line"! This was what the street-car line was called which ran out into the poor section of the city where I lived, which Mr. Leigh controlled.

"That's all right. I'll keep my part. D——n him! I want to break him. I'll show him who runs this town. With his d——d airs."

"That's it," said Peck, leaning forward. "It's your road or his. That's the way I figure it." He rubbed his hands with satisfaction. "I am

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with you, my friends. You can count on the Poole interest backing you."

"You'll keep the police off?" said the Labor-leader.

"Will I? Watch 'em!" McSheen poured out another glass, and offered the bottle to Peck, who declined it.

"Then it's all right. Well, you'd better make a cash payment down at the start," said the Labor-leader.

McSheen swore. "Do you think I have a bank in my office, or am a faro dealer, that I can put up a pile like that at midnight? Besides, I've always heard there's two bad paymasters—the one that don't pay at all and the one 't pays in advance. You deliver the goods."

"Oh! Come off," said the other. "If you ain't a faro dealer, you own a bank—and you've a barkeeper. Mick's got it down-stairs, if you ain't. So put up, or you'll want money sure enough. I know what that strike's worth to you."

McSheen rose and at that moment I became aware of the impropriety of what I was doing, for I had been absolutely absorbed watching Peck, and I moved back, as I did so knocking over a chair. At the sound the light was instantly extinguished and I left my office and hurried down

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the stairs, wondering when the blow was to fall.

The afternoon following my surprise of the conference in McSheen's back room, there was a knock at my door and Peck walked into my office. I was surprised to see what a man-of-fashion air he had donned. He appeared really glad to see me and was so cordial that I almost forgot my first feeling of shame that he should find me in such manifestly straitened circumstances, especially as he began to talk vaguely of a large case he had come out to look after, and I thought he was on the verge of asking me to represent his client.

"You know we own considerable interests out here both in the surface lines and in the P. D. & B. D.," he said airily.

"No, I did not know you did. I remember that Mr. Poole once talked to me about some outstanding interests in the P. D. & B. D., and I made some little investigation at the time; I came to the conclusion that his interest had lapsed; but he never employed me."

"Yes, that's a part of the interests I speak of. Mr. Poole is a very careful man."

"Very. Well, you see I have learned my lesson. I have learned economy, at least," I laughed in reply to his question of how I was getting along in my new home. He took as he

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asked it an appraising glance at the poor little office.

“A very important lesson to learn,” he said sententiously. “I am glad I learned it early.” He was so smug that I could not help saying:

“You were always economical?”

“Yes, I hope so. I always mean to be. You get much work?”

“No, not much—yet; still, you know, I always had a knack of getting business,” I said. “My trouble was that I used to disdain small things and I let others attend to them. I know better than that now. I don’t think I have any right to complain.”

“Oh—I suppose you have to put in night work, too, then?” he added, after a pause.

This then was the meaning of his call. He wished to know whether I had seen him in Coll McSheen’s office the night before. He had delivered himself into my hands. So, I answered lightly.

“Oh! yes, sometimes.”

I had led him up to the point and I knew now he was afraid to take a step further. He sheered off.

“Well, tell me something,” he said, “if you don’t mind. Do you know Mr. Leigh?”

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“What Mr. Leigh?”

“Mr. Walter Leigh, the banker.”

“I don’t mind telling you at all that I do not.”

“Oh!”

I thought he was going to offer me a case; but Peck was economical. He already had one lawyer.

“I had a letter of introduction to him from Mr. Poole,” I said. “But you can say to Mr. Poole that I never presented it.”

“Oh! Ah! Well—I’ll tell him.”

“Do.”

“Do you know Mr. McSheen?”

I nodded “Yes.”

“Do you know him well?”

“Does any one know him well?” I parried.

“He has an office in this building?”

I could not, for the life of me, tell whether this was an affirmation or a question. So I merely nodded, which answered in either case. But I was pining to say to him, “Peck, why don’t you come out with it and ask me plainly what I know of your conference the other night?” However, I did not. I had learned to play a close game.

“Oh! I saw your nigger, Jeams—ah—the other day.”

“Did you? Where is he?” I wanted to find him, and asked innocently enough.

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“Back at home.”

“How is he getting on?”

“Pretty well, I believe. He’s a big rascal.”

“Yes, but a pleasant one, and an open one.”

Peck suddenly rose. “Well, I must be going. I have an engagement which I must keep.” At the door he paused. “By the way, Mrs. Peck begged to be remembered to you.”

He had a way of blinking, like a terrapin—slowly. He did so now.

He did not mean his tone to be insolent—only to be insolent himself—but it was.

“I’m very much obliged to her. Remember me to her.”

That afternoon I strolled out, hoping to get a glimpse of Miss Leigh. I did so, but Peck was riding in a carriage with her and her father. So he won the last trick, after all. But the rubber was not over. I was glad that they did not see me, and I returned to my office filled with rage and determined to unmask Peck the first chance I should have, not because he was a trickster and a liar, but because he was applying his trickiness in the direction of Miss Leigh.

That night the weather changed and it turned off cold. I remember it from a small circumstance. The wind appeared to me to have shifted

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when Miss Leigh's carriage drove out of sight with Peck in it. I went home and had bad dreams. What was Peck doing with the Leighs? Could I have been mistaken in thinking he and McSheen had been talking of Mr. Leigh in their conference? For some time there had been trouble on the street-car lines of the city and a number of small strikes had taken place on a system of lines running across the city and to some extent in competition with the West Line, which Mr. Leigh had an interest in. According to the press the West Line, which ran out into a new section, was growing steadily while the other line was falling back. Could it be that McSheen was endeavoring to secure possession of the West Line? This, too, had been intimated, and Canter, one of the richest men of the town, was said to be behind him. What should I do under the circumstances? Would Peck tell Miss Leigh any lies about me? All these suggestions pestered me and, with the loss of Dix, kept me awake, so that next morning I was in rather a bad humor.

In my walk through the poorer quarter on my way to my office I used to see a great deal of the children, and it struck me that one of the saddest effects of poverty—the dire poverty of the slum—was the debasement of the children. Cruelty ap-

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pears to be the natural instinct of the young as they begin to gain in strength. But among the well-to-do and the well-brought-up of all classes it is kept in abeyance and is trained out. But in the class I speak of at a certain age it appears to flower out into absolute brutality. It was the chief drawback to my sojourn in this quarter, for I am very fond of children, and the effect of poverty on the children was the saddest part of my surroundings. To avoid the ruder element, I used to walk of a morning through the little back street where I had discovered that morning the little school for very small children, and I made the acquaintance of a number of the children who attended the school. One little girl in particular interested me. She was the poorest clad of any, but her cheeks were like apples and her chubby wrists were the worst chapped of all; and with her sometimes was a little crippled girl, who walked with a crutch, whom she generally led by the hand in the most motherly way, so small that it was a wonder how she could walk, much more study.

My little girls and I got to that point of intimacy where they would talk to me, and Dix had made friends with them and used to walk beside them as we went along.

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The older girl's first name was Janet, but she spoke with a lisp, and I could not make out her name with a certainty. Her father had been out of work, she said, but now was a driver, and her teacher was "Mith Thellen." The little cripple's name was "Sissy"—Sissy Talman. This was all the information I could get out of her. "Mith Thellen" was evidently her goddess.

On the cool, crisp morning after the turn in the weather, I started out rather earlier than usual intending to hunt for Dix and also to look up Jeams. I bought a copy of the *Trumpet* and was astonished to read an account of trouble among the employees of the West Line, for I had not seen the least sign of it. The piece went on further to intimate that Mr. Leigh had been much embarrassed by his extension of his line out into a thinly populated district and that a strike, which was quite sure to come, might prove very disastrous to him. I somehow felt very angry at the reference to Mr. Leigh and was furious with myself for having written for the *Trumpet*. I walked around through the street where the school was, though without any definite idea whatever, as it was too early for the children. As I passed by the school the door was wide open, and I stopped and looked in. The fire was not yet made. The stove was

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open; the door of the cellar, opening outside, was also open, and at the moment a young woman—the teacher or some one else—was backing up the steps out of the cellar lugging a heavy coal-scuttle. One hand, and a very small one, was supporting her against the side of the wall, helping her push herself up. I stepped forward with a vague pity for any woman having to lift such a weight.

“Won’t you let me help you?” I asked.

“Thank you, I believe I can manage it.” And she pulled the scuttle to the top, where she planted it, and turned with quite an air of triumph. It was she! my young lady of the sunny house: Miss Leigh! I had not recognized her at all. Her face was all aglow and her eyes were filled with light at a difficulty overcome. I do not know what my face showed; but unless it expressed conflicting emotions, it belied my feelings. I was equally astonished, delighted, and embarrassed. I hastened to say something which might put her at her ease and at the same time prove a plea for myself, and open the way to further conversation.

“I was on my way to my law-office, and seeing a lady struggling with so heavy a burden, I had hoped I might have the privilege of assisting her as I should want any other gentleman to do to my sister in a similar case.” I meant if I had had a sister.

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She thanked me calmly; in fact, very calmly.

“I do it every morning; but this morning, as it is the first cold weather, I piled it a little too high; that is all.” She looked toward the door and made a movement.

I wanted to say I would gladly come and lift it for her every morning; that I could carry all her burdens for her. But I was almost afraid even to ask permission again to carry it that morning. As, however, she had given me a peg, I seized it.

“Well, at least, let me carry it this morning,” I said, and without waiting for an answer or even venturing to look at her, I caught up the bucket and swung it into the house, when seeing the sticks all laid in the stove, and wishing to do her further service, without asking her anything more, I poured half the scuttleful into the stove.

“I used to be able to make a fire, when I lived in my old home,” I said tentatively; then as I saw a smile coming into her face, I added: “But I’m afraid to try an exhibition of my skill after such boasting,” and without waiting further, I backed out, bringing with me only a confused apparition of an angel lifting a coal-scuttle.

I do not remember how I reached my office that day, whether I walked the stone pavements

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through the prosaic streets or trod on rosy clouds. There were no prosaic streets for me that day. I wondered if the article I had seen in the paper had any foundation. Could Mr. Leigh have lost his fortune? Was this the reason she taught school? I had observed how simply she was dressed, and I thrilled to think that I might be able to rescue her from this drudgery.

The beggars who crossed my path that morning were fortunate. I gave them all my change, even relieving the necessities of several thirsty impostors who beset my way, declaring with unblushing, sodden faces that they had not had a mouthful for days.

I walked past the little school-house that night and lingered at the closed gate, finding a charm in the spot. The little plain house had suddenly become a shrine. It seemed as if she might be hovering near.

The next morning I passed through the same street, and peeped in at the open door. There she was, bending over the open stove in which she had already lighted her fire, little knowing of the flame she had kindled in my heart. How I cursed myself for being too late to meet her. And yet, perhaps, I should have been afraid to speak to her; for as she turned toward the door,

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I started on with pumping heart in quite a fright lest she should detect me looking in.

I walked by her old home Sunday afternoon. Flowers bloomed at the windows. As I was turning away, Count Pushkin came out of the door and down the steps. As he turned away from the step his habitual simper changed into a scowl; and a furious joy came into my heart. Something had gone wrong with him within there. I wished I had been near enough to have crossed his path to smile in his face; but I was too distant, and he passed on with clenched fist and black brow.

After this my regular walk was through the street of the baby-school, and when I was so fortunate as to meet Miss Leigh she bowed and smiled to me, though only as a passing acquaintance, whilst I on my part began to plan how I should secure an introduction to her. Her smile was sunshine enough for a day, but I wanted the right to bask in it and I meant to devise a plan. After what I had told Peck, I could not present my letter; I must find some other means. It came in an unexpected way, and through the last person I should have imagined as my sponsor.

XX

MY FIRST CLIENT

BUT to revert to the morning when I made Miss Leigh's fire for her. I hunted for Dix all day, but without success, and was so busy about it that I did not have time to begin my search for Jeams. That evening, as it was raining hard, I treated myself to the unwonted luxury of a ride home on a street-car. The streets were greasy with a thick, black paste of mud, and the smoke was down on our heads in a dark slop. Like Petrarch, my thoughts were on Laura, and I was repining at the rain mainly because it prevented the possibility of a glimpse of Miss Leigh on the street: a chance I was ever on the watch for.

I boarded an open car just after it started and just before it ran through a short subway. The next moment a man who had run after the car sprang on the step beside me, and, losing his footing, he would probably have fallen and might have been crushed between the car and the edge of the tunnel, which we at that moment were entering, had I not had the good fortune, being on

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the outer seat, to catch him and hold him up. Even as it was, his coat was torn and my elbow was badly bruised against the pillar at the entrance. I, however, pulled him over across my knees and held him until we had gone through the subway, when I made room for him on the seat beside me.

“That was a close call, my friend,” I said. “Don’t try that sort of thing too often.”

“It was, indeed—the closest I ever had, and I have had some pretty close ones before. If you had not caught me, I would have been in the morgue to-morrow morning.”

This I rather repudiated, but as the sequel showed, the idea appeared to have become fixed in his mind. We had some little talk together and I discovered that, like myself, he had come out West to better his fortune, and as he was dressed very plainly, I assumed that, like myself, he had fallen on rather hard times, and I expressed sympathy. “Where have I seen you before?” I asked him.

“On the train once coming from the East.”

“Oh! yes.” I remembered now. He was the man who knew things.

“You know Mr. McSheen?” he asked irrelevantly.

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“Yes—slightly. I have an office in the same building.”

I wondered how he knew that I knew him.

“Yes. Well, you want to look out for him. Don’t let him fool you. He’s deep. What’s that running down your sleeve? Why, it’s blood! Where did it come from?” He looked much concerned.

“From my arm, I reckon. I hurt it a little back there, but it is nothing.”

He refused to be satisfied with my explanation and insisted strongly on my getting off and going with him to see a doctor. I laughed at the idea.

“Why, I haven’t any money to pay a doctor,” I said.

“It won’t cost you a cent. He is a friend of mine and as good a surgeon as any in the city. He’s straight—knows his business. You come along.”

So, finding that my sleeve was quite soaked with blood, I yielded and went with him to the office of his friend, a young doctor named Traumer, who lived in a part of the town bordering on the working people’s section, which, fortunately, was not far from where we got off the car. Also, fortunately, we found him at home. He was a slim young fellow with a quiet, self-assured man-

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ner and a clean-cut face, lighted by a pair of frank, blue eyes.

“Doc,” said my conductor, “here’s a friend of mine who wants a little patching up.”

“That’s the way with most friends of yours, Bill,” said the doctor, who had given me a single keen look. “What’s the matter with him? Shot? Or have the pickets been after him?”

“No, he’s got his arm smashed saving a man’s life.”

“What! Well, let’s have a look at it. He doesn’t look very bad.” He helped me off with my coat and, as he glanced at the sleeve, gave a little exclamation.

“Hello!”

“Whose life did he save?” he asked, as he was binding up the arm. “That’s partly a mash.”

“Mine.”

“Oh! I see.” He went to work and soon had me bandaged up. “Well, he’s all right now. What were you doing?” he asked as he put on the last touches.

“Jumping on a car.”

“Ah!” The doctor was manifestly amused. “You observe that our friend is laconic?” he said to me.

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“What’s that?” asked the other. “Don’t prejudice him against me. He don’t know anything against me yet—and that’s more than some folks can say.”

“Who was on that car that you were following?” asked the doctor, with a side glance at my friend. The latter did not change his expression a particle.

“Doc, did you ever hear what the parrot said to herself after she had sicked the dog on, and the dog not seeing anything but her, jumped on her?”

“No—what?”

““Polly, you talk too d——d much.””

The doctor chuckled and changed the subject. “What’s your labor-friend, Wringman, doing now? What did he come back here for?”

“Same old thing—dodging work.”

“He seems to me to work other people pretty well.”

The other nodded acquiescingly.

“He’s on a new line now. McSheen’s got him. Yes, he has,” as the doctor looked incredulous.

“What’s he after? Who’s he working for?”

“Same person—Coll McSheen. Pretty busy, too. Mr. Glave there knows him already.”

“Glave!—Glave!” repeated the doctor. “Where did I hear your name? Oh, yes! Do you know a preacher named John Marvel?”

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“John Marvel! Why, yes. I went to college with him. I knew him well.”

“You knew a good man then.”

“He is that,” said the other promptly. “If there were more like him I’d be out of a job.”

“You know Miss Leigh, too?”

“What Miss Leigh?” My heart warmed at the name and I forgot all about Marvel. How did he know that I knew her?

“‘The Angel of the Lost Children.’”

“‘The Angel—’? Miss Eleanor Leigh?” Then as he nodded—“Slightly.” My heart was now quite warm. “Who called her so?”

“She said she knew you. I looked after some of her friends for her.”

“Who called her the ‘Angel of the Lost Children’?”

“A friend of mine—Leo Wolffert, who works in the slums—a writer. She’s always finding and helping some one who is lost, body or soul.”

“Leo Wolffert! Do you know him?”

“I guess we all know him, don’t we, Doc?” put in the other man. “And so do some of the big ones.”

“Rather.”

“And the lady, too—she’s a good one, too,” he added.

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I was so much interested in this part of the conversation that I forgot at the moment to ask the doctor where he had known John Marvel and Wolffert.

I, however, asked him what I owed him, and he replied:

“Not a cent. Any of Langton’s friends here or John Marvel’s friends, or (after a pause) Miss Leigh’s friends may command me. I am only too glad to be able to serve them. It’s the only way I can help.”

“That’s what I told him,” said my friend, whose name I heard for the first time. “I told him you weren’t one of these Jew doctors that appraise a man as soon as he puts his nose in the door and skin him clean.”

“I am a Jew, but I hope I am not one of that kind.”

“No; but there are plenty of ’em.”

I came away feeling that I had made two friends well worth making. They were real men.

When I parted from my friend he took out of his pocket-book a card. “For my friends,” he said, as he handed it to me. When I got to the light I read:

“Wm. Langton, Private Detective.”

It was not until long afterward that I knew that

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the man he was following when he sprang on the car and I saved him was myself, and that I owed the attention to my kinsman and to Mr. Leigh, to whom Peck had given a rather sad account of me. My kinsman had asked him to ascertain how I lived.

I called on my new friend, Langton, earlier than he had expected. In my distress about Dix I consulted him the very next day and he undertook to get him back. I told him I had not a cent to pay him with at present, but some day I should have it and then——

“You’ll never owe me a cent as long as you live,” he said. “Besides, I’d like to find that dog. I remember him. He’s a good one. You say you used the back stairway at times, opening on the alley near Mick Raffity’s?”

“Yes.”

He looked away out of the window with a placid expression.

“I wouldn’t go down that way too often at night,” he said presently.

“Why?”

“Oh! I don’t know. You might stumble and break your neck. One or two men have done it.”

“Oh! I’ll be careful,” I laughed. “I’m pretty sure-footed.”

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“You need to be—there. You say your dog’s a good fighter?”

“He’s a paladin. Can whip any dog I ever saw. I never fought him, but I had a negro boy who used to take him off till I stopped him.”

“Well, I’ll find him—that is, I’ll find where he went.”

I thanked him and strolled over across town to try to get a glimpse of the “Angel of the Lost Children.” I saw her in a carriage with another young girl, and as I gazed at her she suddenly turned her eyes and looked straight at me, quite as if she had expected to see me, and the smile she gave me, though only that which a pleasant thought wings, lighted my heart for a week.

A day or two later my detective friend dropped into my office.

“Well, I have found him.” His face showed that placid expression which, with him, meant deep satisfaction. “The police have him—are holding him in a case, but you can identify and get him. He was in the hands of a negro dog-stealer and they got him in a raid. They pulled one of the toughest joints in town when there was a fight going on and pinched a full load. The nigger was among them. He put up a pretty

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stiff fight and they had to hammer him good before they quieted him. He'll go down for ninety days sure. He was a fighter, they said—butted men right and left."

"I'm glad they hammered him—you're sure it's Dix?"

"Sure; he claimed the dog; said he'd raised him. But it didn't go. I knew he'd stolen him because he said he knew you."

"Knew me—a negro? What did he say his name was?"

"They told me—let me see—Professor Jeams—something."

"Not Woodson?"

"Yes, that's it."

"Well, for once in his life he told the truth. He sold me the dog. You say he's in jail? I must go and get him out."

"You'll find it hard work. Fighting the police is a serious crime in this city. A man had better steal, rob, or kill anybody else than fight an officer."

"Who has most pull down there?"

"Well, Coll McSheen has considerable. He runs the police. He may be next mayor."

I determined, of course, to go at once and see what I could do to get Jeams out of his trouble. I

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found him in the common ward among the toughest criminals in the jail—a massive and forbidding-looking structure—to get into which appeared for a time almost as difficult as to get out. But on expressing my wish to be accorded an interview with him, I was referred from one official to another, until, with my back to the wall, I came to a heavy, bloated, ill-looking creature who went by the name of Sergeant Byle. I preferred my request to him. I might as well have undertaken to argue with the stone images which were rudely carved as caryatides beside the entrance. He simply puffed his big black cigar in silence, shook his head, and looked away from me; and my urging had no other effect than to bring a snicker of amusement from a couple of dog-faced shysters who had entered and, with a nod to him, had sunk into greasy chairs.

“Who do you know here?”

A name suddenly occurred to me, and I used it.

“Among others, I know Mr. McSheen,” and as I saw his countenance fall, I added, “and he is enough for the present.” I looked him sternly in the eye.

He got up out of his seat and actually walked across the room, opened a cupboard and took out a key, then rang a bell.

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“Why didn’t you say you were a friend of his?” he asked surlily. “A friend of Mr. McSheen can see any one he wants here.”

I have discovered that civility will answer with nine-tenths or even nineteen-twentieths of the world, but there is a class of intractable brutes who yield only to force and who are influenced only by fear, and of them was this sodden ruffian. He led the way now subserviently enough, growling from time to time some explanation, which I took to be his method of apologizing. When, after going through a number of corridors, which were fairly clean and well ventilated, we came at length to the ward where my unfortunate client was confined, the atmosphere was wholly different: hot and fetid and intolerable. The air struck me like a blast from some infernal region, and behind the grating which shut off the miscreants within from even the modified freedom of the outer court was a mass of humanity of all ages, foul enough in appearance to have come from hell.

At the call of the turnkey, there was some interest manifested in their evil faces and some of them shouted back, repeating the name of Jim Woodson; some half derisively, others with more kindness. At length, out of the mob emerged poor Jeams, but, like Lucifer, oh, how changed!

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His head was bandaged with an old cloth, soiled and stained; his mien was dejected, and his face was swollen and bruised. At sight of me, however, he suddenly gave a cry, and springing forward tried to thrust his hands through the bars of the grating to grasp mine. "Lord, God!" he exclaimed. "If it ain't de captain. Glory be to God! Marse Hen, I knowed you'd come, if you jes' heard 'bout me. Git me out of dis, fur de Lord's sake. Dis is de wuss place I ever has been in in my life. Dey done beat me up and put handcuffs on me, and chain me, and fling me in de patrol-wagon, and lock me up and sweat me, and put me through the third degree, till I thought if de Lord didn't take mercy 'pcn me, I would be gone for sho'. Can't you git me out o' dis right away?"

I explained the impossibility of doing this immediately, but assured him that he would soon be gotten out and that I would look after his case and see that he got justice.

"Yes, sir, that is what I want—jestice—I don't ax nothin' but jestice."

"How did you get here?" I demanded. And even in his misery, I could not help being amused to see his countenance fall.

"Dey fetched me here in de patrol-wagon," he said evasively.

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"I know that. I mean, for what?"

"Well, dey say, Captain, dat I wus disorderly an' drunk, but you know I don' drink nothin'."

"I know you do, you fool," I said, with some exasperation. "I have no doubt you were what they say, but what I mean is, where is Dix and how did you get hold of him?"

"Well, you see, Marse Hen, it's dis way," said Jeams falteringly. "I come here huntin' fur you and I couldn' fin' you anywheres, so then I got a place, and while I wus lookin' roun' fur you one day, I come 'pon Dix, an' as he wus lost, jes' like you wus, an' he didn't know where you wus, an' you didn't know where he wus, I tuk him along to tek care of him till I could fin' you."

"And incidentally to fight him?" I said.

Again Jeams's countenance fell. "No, sir, that I didn't," he declared stoutly. "Does you think I'd fight dat dog after what you tol' me?"

"Yes, I do. I know you did, so stop lying about it and tell me where he is, or I will leave you in here to rot till they send you down to the rock-pile or the penitentiary."

"Yes, sir; yes, sir, I will. Fur God's sake, don' do dat, Marse Hen. Jes' git me out o' here an' I will tell you everything; but I'll swear I didn't fight him; he jes' got into a fight so, and then jist

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as he hed licked de stuffin out of dat Barkeep Gallagin's dog, them d——d policemen come in an' hammered me over the head because I didn't want them to rake in de skads and tek Dix 'way from me."

I could not help laughing at his contradictions.

"Well, where is he now?"

"I'll swear, Marse Hen, I don' know. You ax the police. I jes' know he ain't in here, but dey knows where he is. I prays night and day no harm won't happen to him, because dat dog can beat ary dog in this sinful town. I jes' wish you had seen him."

As the turnkey was now showing signs of impatience, I cut Jeams short, thereby saving him the sin of more lies, and with a promise that I would get him bailed out if I could, I came away.

The turnkey had assured me on the way that he would find and return me my dog, and was so sincere in his declaration that nothing would give him more pleasure than to do this for any friend of Mr. McSheen's, that I made the concession of allowing him to use his efforts in this direction. But I heard nothing more of him.

With the aid of my friend, the detective, I soon learned the names of the police officers who had arrested Jeams, and was enabled to get from them

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the particulars of the trouble which caused his arrest.

It seemed that, by one of the strange and fortuitous circumstances which so often occur in life, Jeams had come across Dix just outside of the building in which was my law office, and being then in his glory, he had taken the dog into the bar-room of Mick Raffity, where he had on arrival in town secured a place, to see what chance there might be of making a match with Dix. The match was duly arranged and came off the following night in a resort not far from Raffity's saloon, and Dix won the fight. Just at this moment, however, the police made a raid, pulled the place and arrested as many of the crowd as could not escape, and held on to as many of those as were without requisite influence to secure their prompt discharge. In the course of the operation, Jeams got soundly hammered, though I could not tell whether it was for being drunk or for engaging in a scrimmage with the police. Jeams declared privately that it was to prevent his taking down the money.

When the trial came off, I had prepared myself fully, but I feel confident that nothing would have availed to secure Jeams's acquittal except for two circumstances: One was that I succeeded in

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enlisting the interest of Mr. McSheen, who for some reason of his own showed a disposition to be particularly civil and complacent toward me at that time—so civil indeed that I quite reproached myself for having conceived a dislike of him. Through his intervention, as I learned later, the most damaging witness against my client suddenly became exceedingly friendly to him and on the witness-stand failed to remember any circumstance of importance which could injure him, and finally declared his inability to identify him.

The result was that Jeams was acquitted, and when he was so informed, he arose and made a speech to the Court and the Jury which would certainly fix him in their memory forever. In the course of it, he declared that I was the greatest lawyer that had ever lived in the world, and I had to stop him for fear, in his ebullient enthusiasm, he might add also that Dix was the greatest dog that ever lived.

XXI

THE RESURRECTION OF DIX

STILL, I had not got Dix back, and I meant to find him if possible! It was several days before I could get on the trace of him, and when I undertook to get the dog I found an unexpected difficulty in the way. I was sent from one office to another until my patience was almost exhausted, and finally when I thought I had, at last, run him down, I was informed that the dog was dead. The gapped-tooth official, with a pewter badge on his breast as his only insignia of official rank, on my pressing the matter, gave me a circumstantial account of the manner in which the dog came to his death. He had attempted, he said, to get through the gate, and it had slammed to on him accidentally, and, being very heavy, had broken his neck.

I had given Dix up for lost and was in a very low state of mind, in which Jeams sympathized with me deeply, though possibly for a different reason. He declared that we had "lost a dog as

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could win a ten-dollar bill any day he could get a man to put it up."

"Cap'n, you jes' ought to 'a' seen the way he chawed up that barkeep Gallagin's dog! I was jes' gittin' ready to rake in de pile when dem perlice jumped in an' hammered me. We done los' dat dog, Cap'n—you an' I got to go to work," he added with a rueful look.

It did look so, indeed. A few days later, a letter from him announced that he had gotten a place and would call on me "before long." As he gave no address, I assumed that his "place" was in some bar-room, and I was much disturbed about him. One day, not long after, Dix dashed into my office and nearly ate me up in his joy. I really did not know until he came back how dear he was to me. It was as if he had risen from the dead. I took him up in my arms and hugged him as if I had been a boy. He wore a fine new collar with a monogram on it which I could not decipher. Next day, as I turned into the alley at the back of the building on which opened Mick Raffity's saloon, with a view to running up to my office by the back way, I found Dix in the clutches of a man who was holding on to him, notwithstanding his effort to escape. He was a short, stout fellow with a surly face. At my appearance Dix re-

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peated the manœuvres by which he had escaped from Jeams the day I left him behind me back East, and was soon at my side.

I strode up to the man.

“What are you doing with my dog?” I demanded angrily.

“He’s Mr. McSheen’s dog.”

“He’s nothing of the kind. He’s my dog and I brought him here with me.”

“I guess I know whose dog he is,” he said insolently. “He got him from Dick Gallagin.”

Gallagin! That was the name of the man who had put up a dog to fight Dix. A light began to break on me.

“I guess you don’t know anything of the kind, unless you know he’s mine. He never heard of Gallagin. I brought him here when I came and he was stolen from me not long ago and I’ve just got him back. Shut up, Dix!” for Dix was beginning to growl and was ready for war.

The fellow mumbled something and satisfied me that he was laboring under a misapprehension, so I explained a little further, and he turned and went into Raffity’s saloon. Next day, however, there was a knock at my door, and before I could call to the person to come in, McSheen himself

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stood in the door. The knock itself was loud and insolent, and McSheen was glowering and manifestly ready for trouble.

"I hear you have a dog here that belongs to me," he began.

"Well, you have heard wrong—I have not."

"Well—to my daughter. It is the same thing."

"No, I haven't—a dog that belongs to your daughter?"

"Yes, a dog that belongs to my daughter. Where is he?"

"I'm sure I don't know. I wasn't aware that you had a daughter, and I have no dog of hers or any one else—except my own."

"Oh! That don't go, young man—trot him out."

At this moment, Dix walked out from under my desk where he had been lying, and standing beside me, gave a low, deep growl.

"Why, that's the dog now."

I was angry, but I was quiet, and I got up and walked over toward him.

"Tell me what you are talking about," I said.

"I'm talking about that dog. My daughter owns him and I've come for him."

"Well, you can't get this dog," I said, "because he's mine."

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"Oh! he is, is he?"

"Yes, I brought him here with me when I came. I've had him since he was a puppy."

"Oh! you did!"

"Yes, I did. Go back there, Dix, and lie down!" for Dix, with the hair up on his broad back and a wicked look in his eye, was growling his low, ominous bass that meant war. At the word, however, he went back to his corner and lay down, his eye watchful and uneasy. His prompt obedience seemed to stagger Mr. McSheen, for he condescended to make his first attempt at an explanation.

"Well, a man brought him and sold him to my daughter two months ago."

"I know—he stole him."

"I don't know anything about that. She paid for him fair and square—\$50.00, and she's fond of the dog, and I want him."

"I'm sorry, for I can't part with him."

"You'd sell him, I guess?"

"No."

"If I put up enough?"

"No."

"Say, see here." He put his hand in his pocket. "I helped you out about that nigger of yours, and I want the dog. I'll give you \$50.00 for the dog—

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more than he's worth—and that makes one hundred he's cost."

"He's not for sale—I won't sell him."

"Well, I'll make it a hundred." A hundred dollars! The money seemed a fortune to me; but I could not sell Dix.

"No. I tell you the dog is not for sale. I won't sell him."

"What is your price, anyhow?" demanded McSheen. "I tell you I want the dog. I promised my daughter to get the dog back."

"Mr. McSheen, I have told you the dog is not for sale—I will not sell him at any price."

He suddenly flared up.

"Oh! You won't! Well, I'll tell you that I'll have that dog and you'll sell him too."

"I will not."

"We'll see. You think you're a pretty big man, but I'll show you who's bigger in this town—you or Coll McSheen. I helped you once and you haven't sense enough to appreciate it. You look out for me, young man." He turned slowly with his scowling eye on me.

"I will."

"You'd better. When I lay my hand on you, you'll think an earthquake's hit you."

"Well, get out of my office now," I said.

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“Oh! I’m going now, but wait.”

He walked out, and I was left with the knowledge that I had one powerful enemy.

I was soon to know Mr. Collis McSheen better, as he was also to know me better.

A few days after this I was walking along and about to enter my office when a man accosted me at the entrance and asked if I could tell him of a good lawyer.

I told him I was one myself, though I had the grace to add that there were many more, and I named several of the leading firms in the city.

“Well, I guess you’ll do. I was looking for you. You are the one she sent me to,” he said doubtfully, when I had told him my name. He was a weather-beaten little Scotchman, very poor and hard up; but there was something in his air that dignified him. He had a definite aim, and a definite wrong to be righted. The story he told me was a pitiful one. He had been in this country several years and had a place in a locomotive-shop somewhere East, and so long as he had had work, had saved money. But they “had been ordered out,” he said, and after waiting around finding that the strike had failed, he had come on here and had gotten a place in a boiler-shop, but they “had been ordered out” again, “just as I

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got my wife and children on and was getting sort of fixed up," he added. Then he had resigned from the Union and had got another place, but a man he had had trouble with back East was "one of the big men up here now," and he had had him turned out because he did not "belong to the Union." He was willing to join the Union now, but "Wringman had had him turned down." Then he had gotten a place as a driver. But he had been ill and had lost his place, and since then he had not been able to get work, "though the preacher had tried to help him." He did not seem to complain of this loss of his place.

"The wagon had to run," he said, but he and his wife, too, had been ill, and the baby had died and the expenses of the burial had been "something." He appeared to take it as a sort of ultimate decree not to be complained of—only stated. He mentioned it simply by way of explanation, and spoke as if it were a mere matter of Fate. And, indeed, to the poor, sickness often has the finality of Fate. During their illness they had sold nearly all their furniture to live on and pay rent. Now he was in arrears; his wife was in bed, his children sick, and his landlord had levied on his furniture that remained for the rent. At the last gasp he had come to see a lawyer.

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“I know I owe the rent,” he said, “but the beds won’t pay it and the loan company’s got all the rest.”

I advised him that the property levied on was not subject to levy; but suggested his going to his landlord and laying the case before him.

“If he has any bowels of compassion whatever—” I began, but he interrupted me.

“That’s what the preacher said.” But his landlord was “the Argand Estate,” he added in a hopeless tone. He only knew the agent. He had been to him and so had the preacher; but he said he could do nothing—the rent must be paid—“the Argand Estate had to be kept up, or it couldn’t do all the good it did”—so he was going to turn them out next day.

He had been to one or two lawyers, he said; but they wouldn’t take the case against the Argand Estate, and then the lady had sent him to me.

“What lady?”

“The lady who teaches the little school—Miss Leigh—she teaches my Janet.”

McNeil’s name had at first made no impression on me, but the mention of Miss Leigh, “the Argand Estate,” and of Wringman brought up an association. “McNeil?—McNeil?” I said. “Did you have five children; and did your wife bring them

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on here some months ago—when the train was late, one day?”

“Yes, sorr; that’s the way it was.”

“Well, I will keep you in longer than tomorrow,” I said. And I did. But Justice is too expensive a luxury for the poor. “Law is law,” but it was made by landlords. I won his case for him and got his furniture released; I scored the Argand agent, an icy-faced gentleman, named Gillis, “of high character,” as the Argand counsel, Mr. McSheen, indignantly declared, and incidentally “the Argand Estate,” in terms which made me more reputation than I knew of at the time.

The case was a reasonably simple one, for my client was entitled to a poor debtor’s exemption of a few household articles of primary need, and he had not half of what he could have claimed under his exemption. It appeared, however, that in the lease, which was in the regular form used by the Argand Estate, all exemptions were waived, and also that it was the regular practice of the estate to enforce the waiver, and it was alleged at the trial that this practice had always been sustained. It was the fact that this was the customary lease and that a principle was involved which brought Mr. McSheen into the case, as he

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stated, for a client who was the largest landlord in the city. And it was the fact that Miss Leigh had recommended me and that McSheen was in the case that made me put forth all my powers on it.

On the stand the Argand agent, Gillis, who, it appeared, had begun as an office-boy in the office of Mr. Argand and had then become his private secretary, from which he had risen to wealth and position, a fact I had learned from Kalender, was foolish enough to say that the case was gotten up by an unknown young lawyer out of spite against the Argand Estate and that it was simply an instance of "the eternal attacks on wealth"; that, in fact, there were "only two sides, the man with the dress-coat and the man without."

"You began poor. When did you change your coat?" I asked.

The laugh was raised on him and he got angry. After that I had the case. I was unknown, but Gillis was better known than I thought, and the hardship on my client was too plain. I led him on into a tangle of admissions, tied him up, and cross-examined him till the perspiration ran off his icy forehead. I got the jury and won the case. But, notwithstanding my success, my client was ruined. He was put out of the house, of course,

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and though I had saved for him his beds, every article he possessed soon went for food. The laws established for the very protection of the poor destroy their credit and injure them. He could not give security for rent, and but for a fellow workman named Simms taking him into his house, and the kindness of the man he had spoken of as "the preacher," his children would have had to go to the workhouse or a worse place.

McNeil's case was the beginning of my practice, and in a little while I found myself counsel for many of the drivers in our section of the city.

Among those whom this case brought me in touch with was a young lawyer, who, a little later, became the attorney for the Government. My interest in him was quickened by the discovery that he was related to Mr. Leigh, a fact he mentioned somewhat irrelevantly. He was present during the trial and on its conclusion came up and congratulated me on my success against what he termed "the most powerful combination for evil in the city. They bid fair," he said, "to control not only the city, but the State, and are the more dangerous because they are entrenched behind the support of ignorant honesty. But you must look out for McSheen." As he stood near Coll McSheen, I caught the latter's eye fixed on us with that

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curious malevolent expression which cast a sort of mask over his face.

I had not hunted up John Marvel after learning of his presence in the city, partly because I thought he would not be congenial and partly because, having left several affectionate letters from him unanswered during my prosperity, I was ashamed to seek him now in my tribulation. But Fate decided for me. We think of our absent friend and lo! a letter from him is handed to us before we have forgotten the circumstance. We fancy that a man in the street is an acquaintance; he comes nearer and we discover our mistake, only to meet the person we thought of, on the next corner. We cross seas and run into our next-door neighbor in a crowded thoroughfare. In fact, the instances of coincidence are so numerous and so strange that one can hardly repel the inference that there is some sort of law governing them.

I indulged in this reflection when, a morning or two later, as I was recalling my carelessness in not looking up John Marvel and Wolffert, there was a tap on the door and a spare, well-built, dark-bearded man, neatly but plainly dressed, walked in. His hat shaded his face, and partly concealed

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his eyes; but as he smiled and spoke, I recognized him.

“Wolffert! I was just thinking of you.”

He looked much older than I expected, and than, I thought, I myself looked; his face was lined and his hair had a few strands of silver at the temples; his eyes were deeper than ever, and he appeared rather worn. But he had developed surprisingly since we had parted at College. His manner was full of energy. In fact, as he talked he almost blazed at times. And I was conscious of a strange kind of power in him that attracted and carried me along with him, even to the dulling of my judgment. He had been away, he said, and had only just returned, and had heard of my success in “defeating the Argand Estate Combination”; and he had come to congratulate me. It was the first victory any one had ever been able to win against them.

“But I did not defeat any combination,” I said. “I only defeated Collis McSheen in his effort to take my client’s bed and turn him and his children out in the street without a blanket.”

“There is the Combination, all the same,” he asserted. “They have the Law and the Gospel both in the combine. They make and administer the one and then preach the other to bind on men’s

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shoulders burdens, grievous to be borne, that they themselves do not touch with so much as a finger.”

“But I don’t understand,” I persisted; for I saw that he labored under much suppressed feeling, and I wondered what had embittered him. “Collis McSheen I know, for I have had some experience of him; and Gillis, the agent, was a cool proposition; but the Argand Estate? Why, McSheen strung out a list of charities that the Argand Estate supported that staggered me. I only could not understand why they support a man like McSheen.”

“The Argand Estate support charities! Yes, a score of them—all listed—and every dollar is blood, wrung from the hearts and souls of others—and there are many Argands.”

“How do you mean?” For he was showing a sudden passion which I did not understand. He swept on without heeding my question.

“Why, their houses are the worst in the city; their tenements the poorest for the rent charged; their manufactories the greatest sweatshops; their corporate enterprises all at the cost of the working-class, and, to crown it all, they sustain and support the worst villains in this city, who live on the bodies and souls of the ignorant and the wretched.”

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“Whom do you mean? I don’t understand.”

“Why, do you suppose the Coll McSheens and Gillises and their kind could subsist unless the Argands and Capons of the Time supported them? They have grown so bold now that they threaten even their social superiors—they must rule alone! They destroy all who do not surrender at discretion.”

“Who? How?” I asked, as he paused, evidently following a train of reflection, while his eyes glowed.

“Why, ah! even a man like—Mr. Leigh, who though the product of an erroneous system is, at least, a broad man and a just one.”

“Is he? I do not know him. Tell me about him.” For I was suddenly interested.

Then he told me of Mr. Leigh and his work in trying to secure better service for the public, better tenements—better conditions generally.

“But they have defeated him,” he said bitterly. “They turned him out of his directorship—or, at least, he got out—and are fighting him at every turn. They will destroy him, if possible. They almost have him beat now. Well, it is nothing to me,” he added with a shrug of his shoulders and a sort of denial of the self-made suggestion. “He

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is but an individual victim of a rotten system that must go."

My mind had drifted to the conference which I had witnessed in McSheen's office not long before, when suddenly Wolffert said:

"Your old friend, Peck, appears to have gotten up. I judge he is very successful—after his kind."

"Yes, it would seem so," I said dryly, with a sudden fleeting across my mind of a scene from the past, in which not Peck figured, but one who now bore his name; and a slightly acrid taste came in my mouth at the recollection. "Well, up or down, he is the same," I added.

"He is a serpent," said Wolffert. "You remember how he tried to make us kill each other?"

"Yes, and what a fool I made of myself."

"No, no. He was at the bottom of it. He used to come and tell me all the things you said and—didn't say. He made a sore spot in my heart and kept it raw. He's still the same—reptile."

"Have you seen him?" I asked. He leaned back and rested his eyes on me.

"Yes, he took the trouble to hunt me up a day or two ago, and for some reason went over the whole thing again. What's McSheen to him?"

"I shall break his neck some day, yet," I observed quietly.

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“You know I write,” he said explanatorily. “He wanted me to write something about you.”

“About me?”

“Yes.”

“What a deep-dyed scoundrel he is!”

“Yes, he wanted to enlist me on the McSheen side, but—” his eyes twinkled. “Where do you go to church?” he suddenly asked me.

I told him, and I thought he smiled possibly at what I feared was a little flush in my face.

“To ‘St. Mammon’s’! Why don’t you go to hear John Marvel? He is the real thing.”

“John Marvel? Where is he?”

“Not far from where you say you live. He preaches out there—to the poor.”

“In a chapel?” I enquired.

“Everywhere where he is,” said Wolffert, quietly.

“What sort of a preacher is he?”

“The best on earth, not with words, but with deeds. His life is his best sermon.”

I told him frankly why I had not gone, though I was ashamed, for we had grown confidential in our talk. But Wolffert assured me that John Marvel would never think of anything but the happiness of meeting me again.

“He is a friend whom God gives to a man once

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in his lifetime," he said, as he took his leave. "Cherish such an one. His love surpasseth the love of women."

"Has he improved?" I asked.

A little spark flashed in Wolffert's eyes. "He did not need to improve. He has only ripened. God endowed him with a heart big enough to embrace all humanity—except—" he added, with a twinkle in his eye, "the Jew."

"I do not believe that."

"By the way, I have a friend who tells me she has met you. Your dog appears to have made quite an impression on her."

"Who is she?"

"Miss Leigh, the daughter of the gentleman we were talking about."

"Oh! yes—a fine girl—I think," I said with a casual air—to conceal my real interest.

"I should say so! She is the real thing," he exclaimed. "She told me you put out her fire for her. She teaches the waifs and strays."

"Put out her fire! Was ever such ingratitude! I made her fire for her. Tell me what she said."

But Wolffert was gone, with a smile on his face.

XXII

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SO, "the preacher" whom my client, McNeil, and my poor neighbors talked of was no other than John Marvel! I felt that he must have changed a good deal since I knew him. But decency, as well as curiosity, required that I go to see him. Accordingly, although I had of late gone to church only to see a certain worshipper, I one evening sauntered over toward the little rusty-looking chapel, where I understood he preached. To my surprise, the chapel was quite full, and to my far greater surprise, old John proved to be an inspiring preacher. Like Wolfert, he had developed. When he came to preach, though his sermon was mainly hortatory and what I should have expected of him, his earnestness and directness held his congregation, and I must say he was far more impressive than I should have imagined he could be. His sermon was as far from the cut-and-dried discourse I was used to hear, as life is from death.

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He spoke without notes and directly from his heart. His text, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden." He made it out to be a positive promise of rest for the weary in body, mind and soul, given by One not only able to help but longing to do so: a pitying Father, who saw His tired children struggling under their burdens and yearned toward them. The great Physician was reaching out His hands to them, longing to heal them, if they but received Him; if they but followed Him. To be converted meant to turn from what they knew to be evil and try to live as they felt He lived. He had come to bring the gospel to the poor. He had been poor—as poor as they. He knew their sorrows and privations and weakness; and their sins, however black they were. All He asked was that they trust Him, and try to follow Him, forgetting self and helping others. Do not be afraid to trust Him, or despair if He does not make Himself known to you. He is with you even until the end—and often as much when you do not feel it as when you do.

God appeared very real to him, and also to his hearers, who hung on his words as simple as they were. I felt a seriousness which I had long been a stranger to. He appeared to be talking to me,

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and I set it down to tenderness for old John Marvel himself, rather than to his subject.

When the service was over, he came down the aisle speaking to the congregation, many of whom he appeared to know by name, and whose concerns he also knew intimately. And as the children crowded around him with smiles of friendliness, I thought of the village preacher with the children following, "with endearing wile."

His words were always words of cheer.

"Ah! Mrs. Tams! Your boy got his place, didn't he?"

"Mrs. Williams, your little girl is all right again?"

"Well, Mrs. McNeil" (to a rusty, thinly clad woman who sat with her back to me), "so your husband won his case, after all? His lawyer was an old friend of mine."

I had sat far back, as the church was full when I entered, and was waiting for him to get through with his congregation before making myself known to him; so, though he was now quite close to me, he did not recognize me until I spoke to him. As I mentioned his name, he turned.

"Why, Henry Glave!" Then he took me in his arms, bodily, and lifting me from the ground hugged me there before the entire remnant of his

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congregation who yet remained in the church. I never had a warmer greeting. I felt as if I were the prodigal son, and, although it was embarrassing, I was conscious that instant that he had lifted me out of my old life and taken me to his heart. It was as if he had set me down on a higher level in a better and purer atmosphere.

I went home with him that night to his little room in a house even smaller and poorer than that in which I had my room—where he lived, as I found, because he knew the pittance he paid was a boon to the poor family who sublet the room. But as small and inconvenient as the room was, I felt that it was a haven for a tired and storm-tossed spirit, and the few books it contained gave it an air of being a home. Before I left it I was conscious that I was in a new phase of life. Something made me feel that John Marvel's room was not only a home but a sanctuary.

We sat late that night and talked of many things, and though old John had not improved in quickness, I was surprised, when I came to think over our evening, how much he knew of people—poor people. It seemed to me that he lived nearer to them than possibly any one I had known. He had organized a sort of settlement among

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them, and his chief helpers were Wolffert and a Catholic priest, a dear devoted old fellow, Father Tapp, whom I afterward met, who always spoke of John Marvel as his "Heretick brother," and never without a smile in his eye. Here he helped the poor, the sick and the outcast; got places for those out of work, and encouraged those who were despairing. I discovered that he was really trying to put into practical execution the lessons he taught out of the Bible, and though I told him he would soon come to grief doing that, he said he thought the command was too plain to be disobeyed. Did I suppose that the Master would have commanded, "Love your enemies," and, "Turn the other cheek," if He had not meant it? "Well," I said, "the Church goes for teaching that theoretically, I admit; but it does not do it in practice—I know of no body of men more ready to assert their rights, and which strikes back with more vehemence when assailed."

"Ah! but that is the weakness of poor, fallible, weak man," he sighed. "'We know the good, but oft the ill pursue;' if we could but live up to our ideals, then, indeed, we might have Christ's kingdom to come. Suppose we could get all to obey the injunction, 'Sell all thou hast and give to the poor,' what a world we should have!"

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“It would be filled with paupers and dead beats,” I declared, scouting the idea. “Enterprise would cease, a dead stagnation would result, and the industrious and thrifty would be the prey of the worthless and the idle.”

“Not if all men could attain the ideal.”

“No, but there is just the rub; they cannot—you leave out human nature. Selfishness is ingrained in man—it has been the mainspring which has driven the race to advance.”

He shook his head. “The grace of God is sufficient for all,” he said. “The mother-love has some part in the advance made, and that is not selfish. Thank God! There are many rich noble men and women, who are not selfish and who do God’s service on earth out of sheer loving kindness, spend their money and themselves in His work.”

“No doubt, but here in this city?—”

“Yes, in this city—thousands of them. Why, where do we get the money from to run our place with?”

“From the Argand Estate?” I hazarded.

“Yes, even from the Argand Estate we get some. But men like Mr. Leigh are those who support us and women like—ah— But beyond all those who give money are those who give themselves. They bring the spiritual blessing of their presence,

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and teach the true lesson of divine sympathy. One such person is worth many who only give money."

"Who, for instance?"

"Why—ah—Miss Leigh—for example."

I could scarcely believe my senses. Miss Leigh! "Do you know Miss Leigh? What Miss Leigh are you speaking of?" I hurriedly asked to cover my own confusion, for John had grown red and I knew instinctively that it was she—there could be but one.

"Miss Eleanor Leigh—yes, I know her—she—ah—teaches in my Sunday-school." John's old trick of stammering had come back.

Teaching in his Sunday-school! And I not know her! That instant John secured a new teacher. But he went on quickly, not divining the joy in my heart, or the pious resolve I was forming. "She is one of the good people who holds her wealth as a trust for the Master's poor—she comes over every Sunday afternoon all the way from her home and teaches a class."

Next Sunday at three P. M. a hypocrite of my name sat on a bench in John's little church, pretending to teach nine little ruffians whose only concern was their shoes which they continually measured with each other, while out of the corner

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of my eye I watched a slender figure bending, with what I thought wonderful grace, over a pew full of little girls on the other side of the church intent on their curls or bangs.

The lesson brought in that bald-headed and somewhat unfeeling prophet, who called forth from the wood the savage and voracious she-bears to devour the crowd of children who ran after him and made rude observations on his personal appearance, and before I was through, my sympathies had largely shifted from the unfortunate youngsters to the victim of their annoyance. Still I made up my mind to stick if John would let me, and the slim and flower-like teacher of the fidgety class across the aisle continued to attend.

I dismissed my class rather abruptly, I fear, on observing that the little girls had suddenly risen and were following their teacher toward the door with almost as much eagerness as I felt to escort her. When I discovered that she was only going to unite them with another class, it was too late to recall my pupils, who at the first opportunity had made for the door, almost as swiftly as though the she-bears were after them.

When the Sunday-school broke up, the young lady waited around, and I took pains to go up

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and speak to her, and received a very gracious smile and word of appreciation at my efforts with the "Botany Bay Class," as my boys were termed, which quite rewarded me for my work. Her eyes, with their pleasant light, lit up the whole place for me. Just then John Marvel came out—and it was the first time I ever regretted his appearance. The smile she gave him and the cordiality of her manner filled me with sudden and unreasoning jealousy. It was evident that she had waited to see him, and old John's face bore a look of such happiness that he almost looked handsome. As for her—as I came out I felt quite dazed. On the street whom should I meet but Wolffert—"simply passing by," but when I asked him to take a walk, he muttered something about having "to see John." He was well dressed and looked unusually handsome. Yet when John appeared, still talking earnestly with Miss Leigh, I instantly saw by his face and the direction of his eye that the John he wanted to see wore an adorable hat and a quiet, but dainty tailor-made suit and had a face as lovely as a rose.

I was in such a humor that I flung off down the street, swearing that every man I knew was in love with her, and it was not until ten o'clock that night, when I went to John's—whither I was

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drawn by an irresistible desire to talk about her and find out how matters stood between them—and he told me that she had asked where I had gone, that I got over my temper.

“Why, what made you run off so?” he inquired.

“When?” I knew perfectly what he meant.

“Immediately after we let out.”

“My dear fellow, I was through, and besides I thought you had pleasanter company.” I said this with my eyes on his face to see him suddenly redden. But he answered, with a naturalness which put me to shame:

“Yes, Miss Leigh has been trying to get a place for a poor man—your client by the way—and then she was talking to me about a little entertainment for the children and their parents, too. She is always trying to do something for them. And she was sorry not to get a chance to speak further to you. She said you had helped her about her fire and she had never thanked you.”

It is surprising how quickly the sun can burst from the thickest clouds for a man in love. I suddenly wondered that Miss Leigh among her good works did not continually ask about me and send me messages. It made me so happy.

“What became of Wolffert?” I inquired.

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“I think he walked home with her. He had something to talk with her about. They are great friends, you know. She helps Wolffert in his work.”

“Bang!” went the clouds together again like a clap of thunder. The idea of Wolffert being in love with her! I could tolerate the thought of John Marvel being so, but Wolffert was such a handsome fellow, so clever and attractive, and so full of enthusiasm. It would never do. Why, she might easily enough imagine herself in love with him. I suddenly wondered if Wolffert was not the cause of her interest in settlement work.

“Wolffert is very fond of her—I found him hanging around the door as we came out,” I hazarded.

“Oh! yes, they are great friends. He is an inspiration to her, she says—and Wolffert thinks she is an angel—as she is. Why, if you knew the things she does and makes others do!”

If John Marvel had known with what a red-hot iron he was searing my heart, he would have desisted; but good, blind soul, he was on his hobby and he went on at full speed, telling me what good deeds she had performed—how she had fetched him to the city; and how she had built up his church for him—had started and run his

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school for the waifs—coming over from her beautiful home in all weathers to make up the fire herself and have the place warm and comfortable for the little ones—how she looked after the sick—organized charities for them and spent her money in their behalf. “They call her the angel of the lost children,” he said, “and well they may.”

“Who does?” I asked suspiciously, recalling the title. “Wolffert, I suppose.”

“Why, all my people—I think Wolffert first christened her so and they have taken it up.”

“Confound Wolffert!” I thought. “Wolffert’s in love with her,” I said.

“Wolffert—in love with her! Why!” I saw that I had suggested the idea for the first time—but it had found a lodgment in his mind. “Oh! no, he is not,” he declared, but rather arguing than asserting it. “They are only great friends—they work together and have many things in common—Wolffert will never marry—he is wedded to his ideal.”

“And her name is Eleanor Leigh—only he is not wedded to her yet.” And I added in my heart, “He will never be if I can beat him.”

“Yes—certainly, in a way—as she is mine,” said John, still thinking.

“And you are too!” I said.

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“I? In love with—?” He did not mention her name. It may have been that he felt it too sacred. But he gave a sort of gasp. “The glow-worm may worship the star, but it is at a long distance, and it knows that it can never reach it.”

I hope it may be forgiven to lovers not to have been frank with their rivals. His humility touched me. I wanted to tell John that I thought he might stand a chance, but I was not unselfish enough, as he would have been in my place. All I was brave enough to do was to say, “John, you are far above the glow-worm; you give far more light than you know, and the star knows and appreciates it.”