Samuel the Seeker

by Upton Sinclair

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SAMUEL THE SEEKER

By Upton Sinclair

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CHAPTER I

“Samuel,” said old Ephraim, “Seek, and ye shall find.”

He had written these words upon the little picture of Samuel's mother, which hung in that corner of the old attic which served as the boy's bedroom; and so Samuel grew up with the knowledge that he, too, was one of the Seekers. Just what he was to seek, and just how he was to seek it, were matters of uncertainty—they were part of the search. Old Ephraim could not tell him very much about it, for the Seekers had moved away to the West before he had come to the farm; and Samuel's mother had died very young, before her husband had a chance to learn more than the rudiments of her faith. So all that Samuel knew was that the Seekers were men and women of fervor, who had broken with the churches because they would not believe what was taught—holding that it was every man's duty to read the Word of God for himself and to follow where it led him.

Thus the boy learned to think of life, not as something settled, but as a place for adventure. One must seek and seek; and in the end the way of truth would be revealed to him. He could see this zeal in his mother's face, beautiful and delicate, even in the crude picture; and Samuel did not know that the picture was crude, and wove his dreams about it. Sometimes at twilight old Ephraim would talk about her,

and the tears would steal down his cheeks. The one year that he had known her had sufficed to change the course of his life; and he had been a man past middle life, too, a widower with two children. He had come into the country as the foreman of a lumber camp back on the mountain.

Samuel had always thought of his father as an old man; Ephraim had been hurt by a vicious horse, and had aged rapidly after that. He had given up lumbering; it had not taken long to clear out that part of the mountains. Now the hills were swept bare, and the population had found a new way of living.

Samuel's childhood life had been grim and stern. The winter fell early upon the mountain wilderness; the lake would freeze over, and the roads block up with snow, and after that they would live upon what they had raised in the summer, with what Dan and Adam—Samuel's half-brothers—might bring in from the chase. But now all this was changed and forgotten; for there was a hotel at the end of the lake, and money was free in the country. It was no longer worth while to reap the hay from the mountain meadows; it was better to move the family into the attic, and “take boarders.” Some of the neighbors even turned their old corncribs into sleeping shacks, and advertised in the city papers, and were soon blossoming forth in white paint and new buildings, and were on the way to having “hotels” of their own.

Old Ephraim lacked the cunning for that kind of success. He was lame and slow, tending toward stoutness, and having a film over one eye; and Samuel knew that the boarders made fun of him, even while they devoured his food and took advantage of him. This was the first bitterness of Samuel's life; for he knew that within old Ephraim's bosom was the heart of a king. Once the boy had heard him in the room beneath his attic, talking with one of the boarders, a widow with a little daughter of whom the old man was fond. “I've had a feeling, ma'am,” he was saying, “that somehow you might be in trouble. And I wanted to say that if you can't spare this money, I would rather you kept it; for I don't need it now, and you can send it to me

when things are better with you." That was Ephraim Prescott's way with his boarders; and so he did not grow in riches as fast as he grew in soul.

Ephraim's wife had taught him to read the Bible. He read it every night, and on Sundays also; and if what he was reading was sublime poetry, and a part of the world's best literature, the old man did not know it. He took it all as having actual relationship to such matters as trading horses and feeding boarders. And he taught Samuel to take it that way also; and as the boy grew up there took root within him a great dismay and perplexity, that these moral truths which he read in the Book seemed to count for so little in the world about him.

Besides the Bible and his mother, Ephraim taught his son one other great thing; that was America. America was Samuel's country, the land where his fathers had died. It was a land set apart from all others, for the working out of a high and wonderful destiny. It was the land of Liberty. For this whole armies of heroic men had poured out their heart's blood; and their dream was embodied in institutions which were almost as sacred as the Book itself. Samuel learned hymns which dealt with these things, and he heard great speeches about them; every Fourth of July that he could remember he had driven out to the courthouse to hear one, and he was never in the least ashamed when the tears came into his eyes.

He had seen tears even in the summer boarders' eyes; once or twice when on a quiet evening it chanced that the old man unlocked the secret chambers of his soul. For Ephraim Prescott had been through the War. He had marched with the Seventeenth Pennsylvania from Bull Run to Cold Harbor, where he had been three times wounded; and his memory was a storehouse of mighty deeds and thrilling images. Heroic figures strode through it; there were marches and weary sieges, prison and sickness and despair; there were moments of horror and of glory, visions of blood and anguish, of flame and cannon smoke; there were battle flags, torn by shot and shell, and names of precious memory, which stirred the deep places of the soul.

These men had given their lives for Freedom; they had lain down to make a pathway before her—they had filled up a bloody chasm so that she might pass upon her way. And that was the heritage they handed to their children, to guard and cherish. That was what it meant to be an American; that one must hold himself in readiness to go forth as they had done, and dare and suffer whatever the fates might send.

Such were the things out of which Samuel's life was made; besides these he had only the farm, with its daily tasks, and the pageant of Nature in the wilderness—of day and night, and of winter and summer upon the mountains. The books were few. There was one ragged volume which Samuel knew nearly by heart, which told the adventures of a castaway upon a desert island, and how, step by step, he solved his problem; Samuel learned from that to think of life as made by honest labor, and to find a thrill of romance in the making of useful things. And then there was the story of Christian, and of his pilgrimage; the very book for a Seeker—with visions of glory not too definite, leaving danger of premature success.

And then, much later, some one left at the place a volume of the “Farm Rhymes” of James Whitcomb Riley; and before Samuel's eyes there opened a new vision of life. He had been happy; but now suddenly he realized it. He had loved the blue sky above him, and the deep woods and the sparkling lake; but now he had words to tell about them—and the common tasks of his life were transfigured with the glory of song. So one might milk the cow with stirrings of wonder, and mow in the meadows to the rhythm of “Knee-deep in June.”

From which you may divine that Samuel was what is called an Enthusiast. He was disposed to take rosy views of things, and to believe what he was told—especially if it was something beautiful and appealing. He was given to having ideals and to accepting theories. He would be stirred by some broad new principle; and he would set to work to apply it with fervor. But you are not to conclude from this that Samuel was a fool. On the contrary, when things went wrong he knew it; and according to

his religion, he sought the reason, and he sought persistently, and with all his might. If all men would do as much, the world might soon be quite a different place.

CHAPTER II

Such was Samuel's life until he was seventeen, and then a sad experience came to the family.

It was because of the city people. They brought prosperity to the country, everyone said, but old Ephraim regretted their coming, none the less. They broke down the old standards, and put an end to the old ways of life. What was the use of grubbing up stumps in a pasture lot, when one could sell minnows for a penny apiece? So all the men became “guides” and camp servants, and the girls became waitresses. They wore more stylish clothes and were livelier of speech; but they were also more greedy and less independent. They had learned to take tips, for instance; and more than one of the girls went away to the city to nameless and terrible destinies.

These summer boarders all had money. Young and old, it flowed from them in a continuous stream. They did not have to plow and reap—they bought what they wanted; and they spent their time at play—with sailboats and fishing tackle, bicycles and automobiles, and what not. How all this money came to be was a thing difficult to imagine; but it came from the city—from the great Metropolis, to which one's thoughts turned with ever livelier interest.

Then, one August, came a man who opened the gates of knowledge a little. Manning was his name—Percival Manning, junior partner in the firm of Manning & Isaacson, Bankers and Brokers—with an address which had caused the Prescott family to start and stare with awe. It was Wall Street!

Mr. Percival Manning was round and stout, and wore striped shirts, and trousers which were like a knife blade in front; also, he fairly radiated prosperity. His talk was all of financial wizardry by which fortunes were made overnight. The firm of

Manning & Isaacson was one of the oldest and most prosperous in the street, so he said; and its junior partner was in the confidence of some of the greatest powers in the financial affairs of the country. And, alas! for the Prescott family, which did not read the magazines and had never even heard of a “bucket-shop”!

Adam, the oldest brother, took Mr. Manning back to Indian Pond on a fishing trip; and Samuel went along to help with the carries. And all the way the talk was of the wonders of city life. Samuel learned that his home was a God-forsaken place in winter—something which had never been hinted at in any theological book which he had read. Manning wondered that Adam didn't get out to some place where a man had a chance. Then he threw away a half-smoked cigar and talked about the theaters and the music halls; and after that he came back to the inexhaustible topic of Wall Street.

He had had interesting news from the office that day; there was a big deal about to be consummated—the Glass Bottle Trust was ready for launching. For nearly a year old Harry Lockman—“You've heard of him, no doubt—he built up the great glass works at Lockmanville?” said Manning. No, Adam confessed that he had never heard of Lockman, that shrewd and crafty old multi-millionaire who had gone on a still hunt for glass-bottle factories, and now had the country in the grip of the fourteen-million-dollar “Glass Bottle Securities Company.” No one knew it, as yet; but soon the enterprise would be under full sail—“And won't the old cormorant take in the shekels, though!” chuckled Manning.

“That might be a good sort of thing for a man to invest in,” said Adam cautiously.

“Well, I just guess!” laughed the other. “If he's quick about it.”

“Do you suppose you could find out how to get some of that stock?” was the next question.

“Sure,” said Manning—“that's what we're in business for.”

And then, as luck would have it, a city man bought the old Wyckman farm, and the

trustees of the estate came to visit Ephraim in solemn state and paid down three crisp one-thousand-dollar bills and carried off the canceled mortgage. And the old man sat a-tremble holding in his hands the savings of his whole lifetime, and facing the eager onslaught of his two eldest sons.

“But, Adam!” he protested. “It's gambling!”

“It's nothing of the kind,” cried the other. “It's no more gambling than if I was to buy a horse because I knowed that horses would be scarce next spring. It's just business.”

“But those factories make beer bottles and whisky bottles!” exclaimed the old man. “Does it seem right to you to get our money that way?”

“They make all kinds of bottles,” said Adam; “how can they help what they're used for?”

“And besides,” put in Dan, with a master-stroke of diplomacy, “it will raise the prices on 'em, and make 'em harder to git.”

“There's been fortunes lost in Wall Street,” said the father. “How can we tell?”

“We've got a chance to get in on the inside,” said Adam. “Such chances don't happen twice in a lifetime.”

“Just read this here circular!” added Dan. “If we let a chance like this go we'll deserve to break our backs hoeing corn the rest of our days.”

That was the argument. Old Ephraim had never thought of a broken back in connection with the hoeing of corn. There were four acres in the field, and every spring he had plowed and harrowed it and planted it and replanted what the crows had pulled up; and all summer long he had hoed and tended it, and in the fall he had cut it, stalk by stalk, and stacked it; and then through October, sitting on the bare bleak hillside, he had husked it, ear by ear, and gathered it in baskets—if the season was good, perhaps a hundred dollars' worth of grain. That was the way one worked to create a hundred dollars' worth of Value; and Manning had paid as much for the

fancy-mounted shotgun which stood in the corner of his room! And here was the great fourteen-million-dollar Glass Bottle Trust, with properties said to be worth twenty-five million, and the control of one of the great industries of the country—and stock which might easily go to a hundred and fifty in a single week!

"Boys," said the old man, sadly, "it won't be me that will spend this money. And I don't want to stand in your way. If you're bent on doing it—"

"We are!" cried Adam.

"What do you say, Samuel?" asked the father.

"I don't know what to say," said Samuel. "It seems to me that three thousand dollars is a lot of money. And I don't see why we need any more."

"Do you want to stand in the way?" demanded Adam.

"No, I don't want to stand in the way," said Samuel.

And so the decision was made. When they came to give the order they found themselves confronted with a strange proposition; they did not have to buy the whole stock, it seemed—they might buy only the increase in its value. And the effect of this marvelous device would be that they would make ten times as much as they had expected to make! So, needless to say, they bought that way.

And they took a daily paper and watched breathlessly, while "Glass Bottle Securities" crept up from sixty-three and an eighth to sixty-four and a quarter. And then, late one evening, old Hiram Johns, the storekeeper, drove up with a telegram from Manning and Isaacson, telling them that they must put up more "margin"—"Glass Bottle Securities" was at fifty-six and five eighths. They sat up all night debating what this could mean and trying to lay the specters of horror. The next day Adam set out to go to the city and see about it; but he met the mail on the way and came home again with a letter from the brokers, regretfully informing them that it had been necessary to sell the stock, which was now below fifty. In the news columns of the paper they found the explanation of the calamity—old Henry

Lockman had dropped dead of apoplexy at the climax of his career, and the bears had played havoc with “Glass Bottle Securities.”

Their three thousand dollars was gone. It took them three days to realize it—it was so utterly beyond belief, that they had to write to the brokers and receive another letter in which it was stated in black and white and beyond all misunderstanding that there was not a dollar of their money left. Adam raged and swore like a madman, and Dan vowed savagely that he would go down to the city and kill Manning. As for the father, he wrote a letter of agonized reproach, to which Mr. Manning replied with patient courtesy, explaining that he had had nothing to do with the matter; that he was a broker and had bought as ordered, and that he had been powerless to foresee the death of Lockman. “You will remember,” he said, “that I warned you of the uncertainties of the market, and of the chances that you took.” Ephraim did not remember anything of the sort, but he realized that there was nothing to be gained by saying so.

Samuel did not care much about the loss of his share of the money; but he did care about the grief of his father, which was terrible to see. The blow really killed him; he looked ten years older after that week and he failed all through the winter. And then late in the spring he caught a cold, and took to his bed; and it turned to pneumonia, and almost before anyone had had time to realize it, he was gone.

He went to join Samuel's mother. He had whispered this as he clutched the boy's hand; and Samuel knew that it was true, and that therefore there was no occasion for grief. So he was ashamed for the awful waves of loneliness and terror which swept over him; and he gulped back his feelings and forced himself to wear a cheerful demeanor—much too cheerful for the taste of Adam and Dan, who were more concerned with what their neighbors would think than they were with the subtleties of Samuel's faith.

The boy had been doing a great deal of thinking that winter; and after the funeral he

called a council of the family.

“Brothers,” he said, “this farm is too small for three men. Dan wants to marry already; and we can't live here always. It's just as Manning said—”

“I don't want to hear what that skunk said!” growled Adam.

“Well, he was right that time. People stay on the land and they divide it up and get poorer and poorer. So I've made up my mind to break away. I'm going to the city and get a start.”

“What can you do in the city?” asked Dan.

“I don't know,” said Samuel. “I'll do my best. I don't expect to go to Wall Street and make my fortune.”

“You needn't be smart!” growled Dan.

But the other was quite innocent of sarcasm. “What I mean is that I'll have to work,” said he. “I'm young and strong, and I'm not afraid to try. I'll find somebody to give me a chance; and then I'll work hard and learn and I'll get promoted. I've read of boys that have done that.”

“It's not a bad idea,” commented Adam.

“Go ahead,” said Dan.

“The only thing is,” began Samuel, hesitatingly, “I shall have to have a little money for a start.”

“Humph!” said Adam. “Money's a scarce thing here.”

“How much'll ye want?” asked the other.

“Well,” said the boy, “I want enough to feel safe. For if I go, I promise you I shall stay till I succeed. I shan't play the baby.”

“How do you expect to raise it?” was the next question.

“I thought,” replied Samuel, “that we might make some kind of a deal—let me sell

out my share in the farm."

"You can't sell your share," said Adam, sharply. "You ain't of age."

"Maybe I'm not," was the answer; "but all the same you know me. And if I was to make a bargain I'd keep it. You may be sure I'll never come back and bother you."

"Yes, I suppose not," said Adam, doubtfully. "But you can't tell—"

"How much do you expect to git?" asked Dan warily.

"Well, I thought maybe I could get a hundred dollars," said the other and then he stopped, hesitating.

Adam and Dan exchanged a quick glance.

"Money's mighty scarce hereabouts," said Adam.

"Still," said Dan, "I don't know, I'll go to the village tomorrow and see what I can do."

So Dan drove away and came back in the evening and there was another council; he produced eight new ten-dollar bills.

"It was the best I could do," he said. "I'm sorry if it ain't enough"—and then he stopped.

"I'll make that do," said Samuel.

And so his brother produced a long and imposing-looking document; Samuel was too polite to read it but signed at once, and so the bargain was closed. And that night Samuel packed his few belongings in a neat newspaper bundle and before sunrise the next morning he set out upon his search.

CHAPTER III

He had his bundle slung over his back and his eighty dollars pinned tightly in an inside pocket. Underneath it his heart beat fast and high; he was young and he was

free—the open road stretched out before him, and perpetual adventure beckoned to him. Every pilgrimage that he had ever read of helped to make up the thrill that stirred him, as he stood on the ridge and gazed at the old farmhouse, and waved his hand, and turned and began his journey.

The horse was needed for the plowing, and so Samuel walked the six miles to the village, and from there the mail stage took him out to the solitary railroad station. He had three hours to wait here for the train, and so he decided that he would save fifteen cents by walking on to the next station. Distance was nothing to Samuel just then.

Halfway to his destination there was a fire in a little clearing by the track, and a young man sat toasting some bread on a stick.

“Hello!” he said. “You're hittin' her lively.”

“Yes,” said Samuel. The stranger was not much older than he, but his clothing was dirty and he had a dissipated, leering face.

“You're new at this game, aren't you?” said he.

“What game?” asked Samuel.

The other laughed. “Where ye goin'?”

“To New York.”

“Goin' to hoof it all the way?”

“No!” gasped the boy. “I'm just walking to the next station.”

“Oh, I see! What's the fare?”

“Six thirty-seven, I think.”

“Humph! Got the price, hey!”

“Yes—I've got the price.” Samuel said this without pride.

“Well, you won't have it long if you live at that rate,” commented the stranger.

“Why don't you beat your way?”

“How do you mean?” asked Samuel.

“Nobody but a duffer pays fare,” said the other. “There'll be a freight along pretty soon, and she stops at the water tank just below here. Why don't you jump her?”

Samuel hesitated. “I wouldn't like to do that,” he said.

“Come,” said the other, “sit down.”

And he held out a piece of his toast, which Samuel accepted for politeness' sake. This young fellow had run away from school at the age of thirteen; and he had traveled all over the United States, following the seasons, and living off the country. He was on his way now from a winter's holiday in Mexico. And as Samuel listened to the tale of his adventures, he could not keep the thought from troubling him, how large a part of eighty dollars was six thirty-seven. And all in a single day.

“Come,” said the young fellow; and they started down the track. The freight was whistling for brakes, far up the grade. And Samuel's heart thumped with excitement.

They crouched in the bushes, not far beyond the tank. But the train did not stop for water; it only slowed down for a curve, and it thundered by at what seemed to Samuel an appalling rate of speed. “Jump!” shouted the other, and started to run by the track. He made a leap, and caught, and was whirled on, half visible in a cloud of dust.

Samuel's nerve failed him. He waited, while car after car went by. But then he caught hold of himself. If anyone could do it, so could he. For shame.

He started to run. There came a box-car, empty, with the door open, and he leaped and clutched the edge of the door. He was whirled from his feet, his arms were nearly jerked out of him. He was half blinded by the dust, but he hung on desperately, and pulled himself up. A minute more and he lay gasping and trembling upon the floor of the car. He was on his way to the city.

After a while, Samuel began to think; and then scruples troubled him. He was riding free; but was he not really stealing? And would his father have approved of his doing it? He had begun his career by yielding to temptation! And this at the suggestion of a young fellow who boasted of drinking and thieving! Simply to start such questions was enough, with Samuel; and he made up his mind that when he reached the city the first thing he would do would be to visit the office of the railroad, and explain what he had done, and pay his fare.

Perhaps an hour later the train came to a stop, and he heard some one walking by the track. He hid in a corner, ashamed of being there. Some one stopped before the car, and the door was rolled shut. Then the footsteps went on. There came clankings and jarrings, as of cars being shifted, and then these ceased and silence fell.

Samuel waited for perhaps an hour. Then, becoming restless, he got up and tried the door. It was fast.

The boy was startled and rather dazed. He sat down to think it out. “I suppose I'm locked in till we reach New York,” he reflected. But then, why didn't they go?

“Perhaps we're on a siding, waiting for the passenger train to pass,” was his next thought; and he realized regretfully that he would have been on that train. But then, as hour after hour passed, and they did not go on, a terrible possibility dawned upon him. He was left behind—on a siding.

Two or three trains went by, and each time he waited anxiously. But they did not stop. Silence came again, and he sat in the darkness and waited and wondered and feared.

He had no means of telling the time; and doubtless an hour seemed an age in such a plight. He would get up and pace back and forth, like a caged animal; and then he would lie down by the door, straining his ears for a sound—thinking that some one might pass, unnoticed through the thick wall of the car.

By and by he became hungry and he ate the scanty meal he had in his bundle. Then

he became thirsty—and he had no water.

The realization of this made his heart thump. It was no joking matter to be shut in, at one could not tell what lonely place, to suffer from thirst. He sprang up and began to pound and kick upon the door in a frenzy.

But he soon tired of that and crouched on the floor again listening and shivering, half with fear and half with cold. It was becoming chillier, so he judged it must be night; up here in the mountains there was still frost at night.

There came another train, a freight, he knew by the heavy pounding and the time it took to pass. He kicked on the door and shouted, but he soon realized that it was of no use to shout in that uproar.

The craving for water was becoming an obsession. He tried not to think about it, but that only made him think about it the more; he would think about not thinking about it and about not thinking about that—and all the time he was growing thirstier. He wondered how long one could live without water; and as the torment grew worse he began to wonder if he was dying. He was hungry, too, and he wondered which was worse, of which one would die the sooner. He had heard that dying men remembered all their past, and so he began to remember his—with extraordinary vividness, and with bursts of strange and entirely new emotions. He remembered particularly all the evil things that he had ever done; including the theft of a ride, for which he was paying the penalty. And meantime, with another part of his mind, he was plotting and seeking. He must not die here like a rat in a hole. There must be some way.

He tried every inch of the car—of the floor and ceiling and walls. But there was not a loose plank nor a crack—the car was new. And that suggested another idea—that he might suffocate before he starved. He was beginning to feel weak and dizzy.

If only he had a knife. He could have cut a hole for air and then perhaps enlarged it and broken out a board. He found a spike on the floor and began tapping round the

walls for a place that sounded thin; but they all sounded thick—how thick he had no idea. He began picking splinters away at the juncture of two planks.

Meantime hunger and thirst continued to gnaw at him. At long intervals he would pause while a train roared by, or because he fancied he had heard a sound. Then he would pound and call until he was hoarse, and then go on picking at the splinters.

And so on, for an unknown number of hours, but certainly for days and nights. And Samuel was famished and wild and weak and gasping; when at last it dawned upon his senses that a passing train had begun to make less noise—that the thumping was growing slower. The train was stopping.

He leaped up and began to pound. Then he realized that he must control himself—he must save his strength until the train had stopped. But suppose it went on without delay? He began to pound again and to shout like a madman.

The train stopped and there was silence; then came sounds of cars being coupled—and meantime Samuel was kicking and beating upon the wall. He was almost exhausted and in despair—when suddenly from outside came a muffled call—“Hello!”

For a moment he could not speak. Then “Help! Help!” he shrieked.

“What's the matter?” asked the voice.

“I'm locked in,” he called. .

“How'd you get in?”

“They locked me in by accident. I'm nearly dead.”

“Who are you?”

“I was riding in the car.”

“A tramp, hey? Serves ye right! Better stay there!”

“No! No!” screamed the boy, in terror. “I'm starving—I've been here for days. For heaven's sake let me out—I'll never do it again.”

“If I let you out,” said the voice, “it's my business to arrest you.”

“All right,” cried Samuel. “Anything—but don't leave me here.”

There was a moment's silence. “Have you got any money?” asked the voice.

“Yes. Yes—I've got money.”

“Don't yell so loud. How much?”

“Why—what?”

“How much?”

“I've got eighty dollars.”

“All right. Give it to me and I'll let you out.”

Frantic as he was, this staggered Samuel. “I can't give you all my money,” he cried.

“All right then,” said the other. “Stay there.”

“No, no!” he protested. “Wait! Leave me just a little.”

“I'll leave you five dollars,” said the voice. “Speak up! Quick!”

“All right,” said Samuel faintly. “I'll give it to you.”

“Mind! No nonsense now!”

“No. Let me out!”

“I'll bat you over the head if you try it,” growled the voice; and the boy stood trembling while the hasp was unfastened and the door was pushed back a little. The light of a lantern flashed in through the crack, blinding him.

“Now hand out the money,” said the stranger, standing at one side for safety.

“Yes,” said Samuel, fumbling with the pin in his waistcoat. “But I can't see to count it.”

“Be quick! I'll count it!”

And so he shoved out the wad. Fingers seized it; and then the light vanished, and he heard the sound of footsteps running.

For a moment he did not understand. Then, “Give me my five dollars!” he yelled, and rolled back the door and leaped out. He was just in time to see the figure with the lantern vanish among the cars up the track.

He started to run up the track and tripped over a tie and fell headlong into a ditch. When he scrambled to his feet again the long train was beginning to move, and the light of the lantern was nowhere to be seen.

CHAPTER IV

Samuel's money was gone, but he was suffering too keenly from hunger and thirst to worry about it for more than a minute. Then the thought came to him—he was here in a lonely place at night, and the train was going! If he were left he might still starve.

He ran over and caught the iron ladder of one of the freight cars and drew himself up and clung there. Later on he climbed on top of the car; but the wind was too cold—he could not stand it, and had to climb down again. And then he realized that he had left the bundle of his belongings in the empty car.

Fortunately for him the train began to slow up at the end of an hour or so, and peering out Samuel saw lights ahead. Also there were lights here and there in the landscape, and he realized that he had come to a large town. The east was just beginning to turn gray, and faint shadows of buildings were visible.

Samuel got off and walked up the track very carefully, for he was stiff as well as weak. There was a light in one of the offices at the depot, and he looked in at the window and saw a man seated at a desk writing busily. He knocked at the door.

“Come in,” said a voice, and he entered.

“Please, may I have a drink of water?” he asked.

“Over there in the corner,” said the man, scarcely looking up from his papers.

There was a bucket and dipper, and Samuel drank. The taste of the water was a kind of ecstasy to him—he drank until he could drink no more.

Then he stood waiting. “I beg pardon, sir,” he began timidly.

“Hey?” said the man.

“I'm nearly starved, sir. I've had nothing to eat for I don't know how long.”

“Oh!” exclaimed the other. “So that's it. Get out!”

“You don't understand,” began Samuel, perplexed.

“Get out!” cried the man. “That don't go in here. No beggars allowed!”

Beggars! The word struck Samuel like a whip-lash.

“I'm no beggar!” he cried wildly. “I—” And then he stopped. He had been going to say, “I will pay for it.”

He went out burning with shame, and on the spot he took his resolution—come what might, he would never beg. He would not put a morsel of food into his mouth until he had earned it.

Across from the depot was a public square, and a broad street with trolley tracks. Samuel walked down the street; and then, feeling weak and seeing a dark doorway, he went in and crouched in a corner. For a while he dozed; and then it was daylight. People were passing.

He got more water at a fountain and felt better. He went down one of the poorer streets where a man was opening a shop. There was food in the window—fruit and bread—and the sight made him ravenous. But he asked for work and the man shook his head.

Samuel went on. Shops were opened here and there; and everywhere he asked for a job—for any little thing to do—and always it was No. Now and then he caught a whiff of some one's breakfast—bacon frying, and coffee or hot bread in a bake shop. But each time he gripped his hands together and set his teeth. He would not beg. He

would find work.

And so on through the morning. He went into stores, big and little. Sometimes they answered politely—sometimes gruffly; but no one hesitated a moment. He went past warehouses, where men were loading wagons—surely there would be work here.

He spoke to a busy foreman in his shirt sleeves.

“How often must I tell you no?” cried the man.

“But you never told me before,” protested Samuel with great earnestness.

“Get out!” said the man. “There are so many of you—how the devil can I tell?”

There were so many! And suddenly Samuel realized that he had passed a good many poor-looking men upon the streets. And were they all hunting jobs and not finding them? Perhaps some were even begging and getting nothing by that.

He went on with a blank terror in his soul. He gazed at the people he passed on the street; some of them had kindly faces—surely they would have helped him had they known. But there was no way for him to let them know—no way but to be a beggar!

He came to the suburbs and asked at the houses. But no one wanted anything done. It was noon and people were at luncheon—he caught odors as doors were opened. He went back into the city, because he could not stand it. He was feeling weaker, and he was afraid with a ghastly fear. Pretty soon he might not be able to work!

It was a new idea to Samuel, that a man might starve in the midst of civilization. He could hardly believe it, and grew half-delirious as he thought about it. What would happen at the end? Would they let him lie down and die in the street? Or was there some place where starving men went to die?

So the day passed, and he found nothing. Several people advised him to get out of town—this was no place to look for work, they said. Apparently something was the matter with the place, but they did not stop to tell him what.

This was the first large town Samuel had ever seen, and under other circumstances

he would have gazed at it with wonder. He passed great buildings of brick and stone, and trolley cars, and a fire-engine house, and many other strange sights. He came to a great high fence, inclosing many acres of buildings, dingy and black with smoke; there were tall chimneys, and rows of sheds, and railroad tracks running in. He passed other factories, huge brick buildings with innumerable windows; and many blocks of working-men's houses, small and dirty frame structures, with pale-faced children in the doorways. The roads and sidewalks here were all of black cinders, and it was hot even in May.

And then he came to a steel bridge and crossed a river and the road broadened out, and he climbed a hill and found himself walking upon a macadamized avenue lined with trees, and with beautiful residences overlooking the ridge. Rich people lived here, evidently; and Samuel stared, marveling at the splendor. He came to a great estate with a stone gateway and iron railings ten feet high, and an avenue of stately elm trees; there were bright green lawns with peacocks and lyre birds strutting about, and a great colonial mansion with white pillars in the distance. “Fairview,” read the name upon the gates.

And then again Samuel remembered his appetite. Surely amid all this luxury there would be some chance for him! He started up the path!

He had got about halfway to the house when a man who was tending the flowers caught sight of him and came toward him. “What are you doing here?” he called, before he had come halfway.

“I'm looking for some work,” began Samuel.

“Do you want to get your head punched?” shouted the man. “What do you mean by coming in here?”

“Why, what's the matter?” asked the boy perplexed.

“Get out, you loafer!” cried the other.

And Samuel turned and went quickly. A loafer!

So for the first time it occurred to him to look at his clothes, which were muddy from his tumble in the ditch. And no doubt his face and hands were dirty also, and his hair unkempt, and his aspect unprepossessing enough for an applicant for labor. At any rate it was clear that this was not the part of the town to seek it in; so he went back across the bridge.

Twilight had fallen and the stores were shutting up. Soon everything would be closed; and that night he felt that he would perish. And so at last desperation seized him.

He bolted into the first lighted place he saw.

It was a saloon—empty, save for a man in white behind the bar.

“I'm no beggar!” shouted Samuel.

“Hey?” said the man.

“I say I'm no beggar! I'll come back and pay you. I'm starving. I must have something to eat.”

“Gee whiz!” said the man.

“I was never in a saloon in my life before,” added Samuel, as he realized the character of the place. “But please—please give me something to eat.”

“Hully gee, young feller!” exclaimed the bar-keeper. “You do it great. You ought to be an actor. Step up and feed your face.”

“What?” stammered Samuel, perplexed.

“EAT!” said the other, and pointed. “Maybe you understand that.”

And Samuel turned and saw a lot of food set out upon a counter. He rushed to it and began. At the first taste a kind of madness seized him, and he ate like a wild beast, gulping things.

For several minutes he did this, while the other watched curiously. Then he remarked, “Say, you'd better quit.”

“What?” asked Samuel, seizing more food.

“I say quit,” said the man. “Just for your own good. I see your story's true, an' a little rest won't hurt you.”

Samuel gazed longingly at the food, desiring more handfuls. “Come over here,” said the man. “What happened to you?”

“I was locked in an empty freight car.”

“Humph! That's a new one! How long?”

“What day is this?”

“Friday.”

“I was locked in Wednesday morning. It seemed longer.”

“It's long enough,” commented the barkeeper.

“I was robbed,” Samuel went on. “A man took all my money.” And then the old shame started up in him. “Don't think I'm a beggar. I'll work and pay for this.”

“That's all right,” said the barkeeper. “Be easy.”

“Haven't you anything I can do? Some wood to split?”

“We don't burn wood.”

“Or some cleaning up?” Samuel looked round. The place did not seem very neat to him. “I'll scrub the floors for you,” he said.

“We have 'em scrubbed in the early morning,” replied the man.

“Well, let me come and do it,” said Samuel.

“Go on!” said the other. “You'll be ready for more feed then.”

“I'll come, just the same, sir.”

“If you take my advice,” the bartender observed, “you'll get out of this town. Lockmanville's a poor place to hunt jobs in.”

Samuel started. “Lockmanville!” he gasped.

“Yes,” said the other. “Don't you know where you are?”

“I didn't know,” said the boy. “Lockmanville! The one where the big glass works are?”

“That's the one.”

“And where old Henry Lockman lived!”

“What about it?” asked the other.

“Nothing,” said Samuel, “only my father invested all his money in Lockman's company, and lost it.”

“Gee!” said the bartender.

“Maybe if I told them,” said the boy, “they'd give me some work here.”

“Maybe,” said the other—“only the works is shut down.”

“Shut down!” cried Samuel; and then added, “On account of his death?”

“No—they always close in summer. But this year they closed in March. Times is bad.”

“Oh,” said Samuel.

“So there's plenty of men looking for jobs in Lockmanville,”. the other continued, “an' some of the other factories is closed, too—the cotton mill is only runnin' half time.”

“I see.”

“Old Lockman used to say there was too many glass works,” the barkeeper added. “An' the fellers he bought out went an' built more. So there you are.”

There was a pause. “I'm coming back in the morning,” said Samuel doggedly.

“All right,” said the other, with a smile—“if you don't forget it.” Then a couple of customers entered. “Run along now,” said he.

And Samuel went—the more readily because he realized that he had been all this

time in a saloon, a place of mystery and wickedness to him.

He started down the street again. A fine cold rain had begun to fall. What was he to do?

He felt warm, having feasted. But there was no use in getting wet. He glanced into the doorways as he passed, and seeing a dark and empty one, crouched inside.

Lockmanville! What a curious coincidence! And there were hundreds in the town out of work. It seemed a strange and terrible thing. Could it be that they let people starve as he was starving—people they knew? Could it be that they went on about their business and paid no attention to such a thing?

He must get out, they told him. But how? Would the railroad take him, if he explained? Or would the people on the way give him work? He had got some food at last, but only by begging. And was he expected to beg?

There came footsteps outside. A man strode into the doorway and took hold of the door and tried it. Then he turned to go out. Samuel moved his foot out of the way.

“Hello!” said the man. “Who's that?”

“Only me,” said Samuel.

“Get up there,” commanded the other.

He got up and a hand seized him by the collar. “Who are you?”

He was jerked into the light before he had a chance to reply. “More bums!” growled the voice; and Samuel, terrified, saw that he was in the grasp of a policeman.

“Please, sir, I'm not doing any harm,” he began.

“Come,” said the policeman.

“Where to?” he cried.

But the other merely jerked him along. A sudden wild horror seized Samuel. “You're not going to arrest me!” he exclaimed.

“Sure,” said the other. “Why not?”

“But,” he exclaimed, “I've not done anything. I can't help it. I—”

He started to drag back, and the man twisted a huge hand, in his collar, choking him. “Do you want to be hit?” he growled.

So Samuel went on. But sobs shook him, convulsive sobs of terror and despair, and tears of shame rolled down his cheeks. He was going to jail!

“What's the matter with you?” said the policeman after a bit. “Why don't you be quiet?”

“You've no business to arrest me,” wailed the boy. “I haven't done anything, and I couldn't help it. I've no place to go and no money. And it's not my fault.”

“You can tell that to the judge,” replied the other.

“But—but what have I done? Why—”

“Shut up!” said the officer, and gave another twist at his throat. And after that Samuel was quiet.

CHAPTER V

In the station-house a fat sergeant sat dozing upon his throne. “Another vagrant,” said the policeman, as if to say there was no special need to rouse himself.

“What was he doing?” the sergeant asked.

“Sleeping in a doorway,” was the reply.

By this time Samuel had come to realize the futility of protest. He accepted his fate with dumb despair. He gave the information the sergeant asked for—Samuel Prescott, aged seventeen, native born, from Euba Corners, occupation farmer, never arrested before.

“All right,” said the man, and went back to his nap; and Samuel was led away, and

after a pretense at a search was shoved into a cell and heard the iron door clang upon him.

He was alone now, and free to sob out his grief. It was the culmination of all the shame and horror that he could ever have imagined; first, to have to beg, and then to be locked up in jail. He knew now what they did with men who were out of work and starving.

He lay there weeping, and then suddenly he sat up transfixed. From the cell next to him had come a cry, a horrible blood-curdling screech, more like the scream of a wild cat than any human sound. Samuel listened, his heart pounding.

There came the voice of a man from across the corridor—"Shut up, you hag!" And after that bedlam broke loose. The woman—Samuel realized at last that the scream had come from a woman—broke forth into a torrent of yells and curses. Such hideous obscenities, such revolting blasphemies he had never heard in his life before—he had never dreamed that life contained within it the possibility of such depravity. It was like an explosion from some loathsome sewer; and its source was the lips of a woman.

For ten minutes or so the tirade continued until it seemed to the boy that every beautiful and sacred thing he had ever heard of in his life had been defiled forever. Then a jailer strolled down the corridor, and with a few vigorous and judicious oaths contrived to quell the uproar.

Samuel lay down again; and now he had a chance to make another discovery. He had felt sharp stinging sensations which caused him to scratch himself frantically. Then suddenly he realized that he was lying upon a mattress infested with vermin.

The discovery sent him bounding to the middle of the floor. It set him wild with rage. Such a thing had never happened to him in his life before, for his home was a decent and clean one. This was the crowning infamy—that they should have taken him, helpless as he was, and shut him up in a filthy hole to be devoured by bedbugs

and lice.

In the morning they brought him bread and coffee; and after a couple of hours' more waiting he was taken to court.

It was a big bare room with whitewashed walls. There were a few scattered spectators, a couple of policemen and several men writing at tables. Seated within an inclosure were a number of prisoners, dull and listless looking. One by one they stepped up before the railing and faced the judge; there would be a few muttered words and they would move on. Everything went as a matter of routine, which had been going that way for ages. The judge, who was elderly and gray haired, looked like a prosperous business man in a masquerade costume.

Samuel's turn came and he stood before the bar. His name was read, and the charge—vagrancy.

“Well?” said the judge mechanically. “What have you to say for yourself?”

Samuel caught his breath. “It's not my fault, sir,” he began.

“Your honor,” prompted the policeman who stood at his elbow.

“Your honor,” said Samuel, “I lost all my money. And I've been trying to find work, your honor.”

“Have you any friends in town?”

“No, your honor.”

“How long have you been here?”

“Only since yesterday, your honor.”

“How did you get here?”

“I came in on a freight train, your honor.”

“I see,” said the judge. “Well, you came to the wrong place. We're going to put an end to vagrancy in Lockmanville. Thirty days. Next case.”

Samuel caught his breath. “Your honor,” he gasped.

“Next case,” repeated the judge.

The policeman started to lead Samuel away. “Your honor,” he cried frantically. “Don't send me to jail.” And fighting against the policeman's grip, he rushed on, “It's not my fault—I'm an honest boy and I tried to find work. I haven't done anything. And you'll kill me if you send me to jail. Have mercy! Have mercy!”

The policeman shook him roughly. But there was something so genuine in Samuel's wail that the judge said, “Wait.”

“How could I help it if I was robbed?” the boy rushed on, taking advantage of his chance. “And what could I do but ask for work? I was brought up honest, your honor. It would have killed my father if he'd thought I'd be sent to jail. He brought me up to earn my living.”

“Who was your father?” asked the judge.

“His name was Ephraim Prescott, and he was a farmer. You can ask anyone at Euba Corners what sort of a man he was. He'd fought all through the war—he was wounded four times. And if he could be here he'd tell you that I don't deserve to go to jail.”

There was a moment's pause. “What regiment was your father in?” asked the magistrate.

“He was in the Seventeenth Pennsylvania, your honor.”

“Be careful, boy,” said the other sternly. “Don't try to deceive me.”

“I don't want to deceive you, your honor,” protested Samuel.

“What brigade was the Seventeenth Pennsylvania in?”

“In the Third Brigade, your honor.”

“And who commanded it?”

“General Anderson—that is, until he was killed at the battle of Chancellorsville. My

father was there."

"I was there, too," said the judge.

"My father used to tell me about it," exclaimed Samuel with sudden eagerness. "His brigade was in the right wing and they had a double line of trenches. And the rebels charged the line with cavalry. They charged a dozen times during the day, and there were big trees cut down by the bullets. My father said the rebels never fought harder than they did right there."

"Yes," said his honor, "I know. I was one of them."

Everyone within hearing laughed; and Samuel turned crimson.

"I beg pardon, your honor," he said.

"That's all right," said the judge. And then he added gravely, "Very well, Samuel, we'll give you another chance for your father's sake. But don't let me see you here again."

"No, your honor," said Samuel. Then he added quickly. "But what can I do?"

"Get out of Lockmanville," said the other.

"But how? When I've no money. If your honor could only help me to some work."

"No," said the judge. "I'm sorry, but I've found jobs for three men this week, and I don't know any more."

"But then—" began Samuel.

"I'll give you a dollar out of my own pocket," the other added.

"Your honor," cried Samuel startled, "I don't want to take money!"

"You can send it back to me when you get a job," said the judge, holding out a bill. "Take it. Prisoner discharged. Next case."

Samuel took the money and was turning away, when a man who had been sitting in a chair near the magistrate suddenly leaned forward.

“Judge,” he said, “if I may interrupt—”

“Why, surely, professor,” said the other pleasantly.

“I may possibly be able to find something for the boy to do.”

“Ah, that will be fine!”

“He seems to be a capable young fellow and might be worth helping.”

“The very thing, professor. Samuel, this is Professor Stewart, of Lockman College.”

Samuel was very glad to meet the professor. He was a trim little gentleman, with a carefully cut black beard and gold-rimmed eyeglasses.

“Here is my card,” he said; “and if you'll come to see me to-morrow morning at my house, we'll see what we can do.”

“Thank you very much,” said the boy, and put the card in his pocket. Then, realizing suddenly that the policeman had let go of his arm, and that he was free, he turned and made his way through the gate.

“A diverting episode,” said the professor.

“Yes,” said the judge, with a smile. “We have them now and then, you see.”

Samuel went out with a glow in his heart. At last he had got a start. He had got underneath the world's tough hide and found kindness and humanity after all. It had been a harrowing experience, but it would not happen again.

He had now one definite purpose in mind. He walked straight out of town and down the river road until he came to a sufficiently solitary place. Then he took off his clothes and sat down on the bank and performed a most elaborate toilet. For half an hour at least he scrubbed his head with sand and water, and combed his hair out with his fingers. And then he went over his clothing inch by inch. At least he would be through with one hideous reminder of his imprisonment.

After which he dressed again and went back to town and found the saloon where he had eaten.

“Hello!” said his friend Finnegan, the bar-keeper. “Back again!”

“I came to explain about this morning,” said Samuel. “I couldn't come because they put me in jail.”

“Gee!” said the other; but then he added, with a laugh, “Well, it was a wet night.”

Samuel did not reply. “I'll come to-morrow morning,” he said.

“You'd better get out of town, sonny,” advised the other.

“I'm all right. The judge gave me a dollar.”

“Humph! A dollar won't last forever.”

“No. But I've got the promise of a job. There was a gentleman there—Professor Stewart, from the college.”

“Hully gee!” said Finnegan. “I know that guy. A little runt with a black beard?”

“I guess so,” said Samuel dubiously.

“I seen his pitcher in the paper,” said the other. “He's one of them reformers—always messin' into things.”

“Maybe that's why he was at the court,” observed Samuel.

“Sure thing! He's a professor of sociology an' such things, an' he thinks he knows all about politics. But we handed him a few last election—just you bet!”

“Who's 'we'?” asked Samuel.

“The organization,” said Finnegan; “the Democrats, o' course. Them reformers is always Republicans—the 'better element,' an' all that. That means the rich guys—that have their own little grafts to work. This perfessor was a great friend of old Henry Lockman—an' the old man used to run this town with his little finger. But they had a big strike here three years ago, and too many men got hit over the head. So it'll be a long day before there's any more 'reform' in Lockmanville.”

“I see,” said Samuel.

“They make a great howl about the saloons an' all the rest,” added the barkeeper. “But when the Republicans ran things, my boss paid his little rake-off just the same, you can bet. But you needn't tell that to the perfessor.”

“I won't,” said the boy.

“What you goin' to do now?” asked the other.

“I don't know. I guess I'll have to get something to eat first.”

“You'll find the cheapest way is to buy a glass of beer and then feed over there.”

“No,” said Samuel, startled. “I—I think I'd rather not do that.”

“Well, so long,” said Finriegan, with a laugh.

“You'll see me to-morrow morning,” said Samuel, as he went out.

CHAPTER VI

Samuel went to a bake shop and bought a loaf of bread and sat on the bench of the public square and devoured it bit by bit. It was the cheapest thing he could think of, and quantity was what counted just then.

Next he had to find a room to spend the night. He knew nothing about hotels and lodging-houses—he walked through the workingmen's quarter of the town, scanning the cottages hesitatingly. At last in the doorway of one he noticed a woman standing, an elderly woman, very thin and weary looking, but clean, and with a kindly face. So he stopped.

“Please,” said he, “could you tell me any place where I could hire a room?”

The woman looked at him. “For how long?” she asked.

“I'm not quite sure,” he said. “I want it for one night, and then if I get a job, I may want it longer.”

“A job in Lockmanville?” said the woman.

“Well, I've the promise of one,” he replied.

“There can't be very many,” said she. “I've two rooms I've always rented,” she added, “but when the glass works shut down the men went away. One of them owed me three dollars, too.”

“I—I'm not able to pay very much,” said Samuel.

“Come in,” responded the woman; and he sat down and told her his story. And she told him hers.

Mrs. Stedman was her name, and her husband had been a glass blower. He earned good wages—five dollars a day in the busy season. But he worked in front of a huge tank of white-hot glass and that was hard on a man. And once on a hot day he had gone suddenly dizzy, and fallen upon a mass of hot slag, and been frightfully burned in the face. They had carried him to the hospital and taken out one eye. And then, because of his family and the end of the season being near, he had gone to work too soon, and his wound had gone bad, and in the end he had died of blood-poisoning.

“That was two years ago,” said Mrs. Stedman. “And I got no damages. We've barely got along—this year's been worse than ever. It's the panic, they say. It seemed as if everything was shutting down.”

“It must be very hard on people here,” said Samuel.

“I've got three children—all girls,” said Mrs. Stedman, “and only one old enough to work. That's Sophie—she's in the cotton mill, and that only started again last month. And they say it may run on half time all the year. I do sewing and whatever I can to help, but there's never enough.”

Samuel forgot his own troubles in talking with this woman. His family had been poor on the farm, but they had never known such poverty as this. And here were whole streets full of people living the same sort of life; hanging over the abyss of destruction, and with no prospect save to struggle forever. Mrs. Stedman talked casually about her friends and neighbors, and new glimpses came to make the boy

catch his breath. Next door was Mrs. Prosser, whose husband was dying of cancer; he had been two years dying, and they had five small children. And on the other side were the Rapinskys, a Polish family; they had been strong in the possession of three grown sons, and had even bought a phonograph. And now not one of them had done a stroke of work for three months.

To have been robbed and put in jail seemed a mere incident in comparison with such bitter and I lifelong suffering; and Samuel was ashamed of having made so much fuss. He had stated, with some trepidation, that he was just out of jail; but Mrs. Stedman had not seemed to mind that. Her husband had been in jail once, during the big glass strike, and for nothing more than begging another man not to take his job.

It was arranged that Samuel was to pay her thirty-five cents for his supper and bed and breakfast, and if he wished to stay longer she would board him for four dollars a week, or he might have the room alone for a dollar.

The two young children came in from school; they were frail and undersized little girls, with clothing that was neatly but pitifully patched. And shortly after them came Sophie.

Samuel gave a start of dismay when he saw her. He had been told that she worked in the cotton mill and was the mainstay of the family; and he had pictured a sturdy young woman, such as he had seen at home. Instead, here was a frail slip of a child scarcely larger than the others. Sophie was thirteen, as he learned afterwards; but she did not look to be ten by his standards. She was grave and deliberate in her movements, and she gazed at the stranger with a pair of very big brown eyes.

“This is Samuel Prescott,” said her mother. “He is going to spend the night, and maybe board with us.”

“How do you do?” said Sophie, and took off the shawl from her head and sat down in a corner. The boy thought that this was shyness upon her part, but later on he realized that it was lassitude. The child rested her head upon her hand every chance

that she got, and she never did anything that she did not have to.

The next morning, bright and early, Samuel was on hand at the saloon, greatly to the amusement of his friend Finnegan. He got down on his hands and knees and gave the place such a scrubbing as it had never had before since it was built. And in return Finnegan invited him to some breakfast, which Samuel finally accepted, because it would enable him to take less from the Stedmans.

Professor Stewart had not specified any hour in his invitation. He lived in the aristocratic district across the bridge and Samuel presented himself at his door a little before eight.

“Professor Stewart told me to come and see him,” he said to the maid.

“Professor Stewart is out of town,” said she.

“Out of town!” he echoed.

“He's gone to New York,” said she. “He was called away unexpectedly last night.”

“When will he be back?”

“He said he'd try to be back the day after tomorrow; but he wasn't sure.”

Samuel stared at her in consternation.

“What did you want?” she asked.

“He promised me a job.”

“Oh!” said she. “Well, can't you come back later on?” And then, seeing that Samuel had nothing better to do than to stare at her dumbly, she closed the door and went about her business.

Samuel walked back in a daze. It gave him a new sense of the world's lack of interest in him. Probably the great man had forgotten him altogether.

There was nothing to do but to wait; and meantime he had only sixty cents. He could not stay with Mrs. Stedman, that was certain. But when he came to tell her, she recurred to a suggestion he had made. There were a few square yards of ground

behind her house, given up mostly to tomato cans. If he would plant some garden seed for her she would board him meanwhile. And so Samuel went to work vigorously with a borrowed spade.

Two days passed, and another day, and still the professor had not returned. It was Saturday evening and Samuel was seated upon the steps of the house, resting after a hard day's work. Sophie was seated near him, leaning back against the house with her eyes closed. The evening was warm and beautiful, and gradually the peace of it stole over her. And so at last she revealed herself to Samuel.

“Do you like music?” she asked.

“Very much indeed,” said he.

“Not everybody does,” she remarked—“I mean real music, such as Friedrich plays.”

“I don't know,” said Samuel. “Who is Friedrich?”

“He's a friend of mine,” Sophie answered. “He's a German boy. His father's the designer at the carpet works. And he plays the violin.”

“I should like to hear him,” said he.

“I'll take you,” she volunteered. “I generally go to see them on Sunday afternoons. It's the only time I have.”

So the next day Samuel met the Bremers. Their cottage was a little way out in the country, and they had a few trees about it and a flower bed. But the house was not large, and it was well filled with a family of nine children. Johann, the father, was big and florid, with bristling hair. He was marked in the town because he called himself a “Socialist,” but Samuel did not know that. His wife was a little mite of a woman, completely swamped by child-bearing. Most interesting to Samuel was Friedrich, who played the violin; a pale ascetic-looking boy of fifteen, with wavy hair and beautiful eyes.

Music was a serious rite with the Bremers. The father played the piano, and the next

oldest son to Friedrich was struggling with a 'cello; and when they played, the whole family sat in the parlor, even the tiny tots, round-eyed and silent.

Samuel knew some “patriotic songs,” and a great number of hymns, and a few tunes that one heard at country dances. But such music as this was a new revelation of the possibilities of life. He listened in a transport of wonder and awe. Such wailing grief, such tumultuous longing, such ravishing and soul-tormenting beauty! Friedrich had only such technique as his father had been able to give him, together with what he had invented for himself; his bowings were not always correct, and he was weak on the high notes; but Samuel knew nothing of this—he was thinking of the music. And he needed no one to tell him about it—he needed no criticisms and no commentaries. Across the centuries the souls of Schubert and Beethoven spoke to him, telling their visions of the wonderful world of the spirit, toward which humanity is painfully groping.

It was impossible for him to keep from voicing his excitement, and this greatly delighted the Bremers, who craved for comprehension in a lonely place. His sympathy gave wings to their fervor, and they played the whole afternoon through, and then Johann invited them to stay to supper, so that they might play some more in the evening.

“You should haf been a musician,” he said to Samuel. “You vas made for it.”

They had a supper such as the boy had missed for some time; a great platter of cold boiled meat, and a bowl of hot gravy, and another bowl of mashed potatoes, with no end of bread and butter. Also there was some kind of a German pudding, and to the stranger's dismay, a pitcher of beer in front of Johann. After offering some to his guests, he drank it all, and also he ate a vast supper. Afterwards he dozed, while Friedrich played yet more wonderful music, and this gave Samuel a new insight into the life of the family, and into the wild and terrible longing that poured itself out in Friedrich's tones. The father was good-natured and sentimental, but sunk in

grossness; and the mother was worn out with the care of her brood, and beneath all this burden the soul of the boy was crying frantically for life.

The exigencies of trade demanded endless variety of designs in carpets and rugs, and so all day Johann Bremer stood in front of a great sheet of cardboard, marked off in tiny numbered squares, on which he painted with many colors. For this he received thirty dollars a week, and his son received twelve dollars as his assistant—painting in the same colors upon all the squares of certain numbers, and so completing a symmetrical design. It was a very good job, and Johann prodded his son to devote his energies to the evolving of new designs. But the boy hated it all—thinking only of his music. And his music meant to him, not sentimental dreaming, but a passionate clutch into the infinite, a battle for deliverance from the bondage of the world. So Johann himself had been in his youth, when he had become a revolutionist, and before beer and gravy and domesticity had tamed him.

No one said a word about these things. It was all in the playing. And now and then Samuel stole a glance about the room and discovered yet another soul's tragedy. Sophie, too, was drinking in the music, and life had crept into her face, and her breath came quick and fast, and now and then she furtively brushed away a tear.

Afterwards, as they walked home, she said to Samuel, “I don't know if it's good for me to listen to music like that.”

“Why not?” he asked—“if it makes you happy.”

“But it makes me unhappy afterwards. It makes me want things. And I get restless—and when I go back to the factory it's so much harder.”

“What do you do in the factory?” asked Samuel.

“I'm what they call a bobbin-girl—I tie the threads on the bobbins when they are empty.”

“Is it very hard work?”

“No, you mightn't think so. But you have to stand up all day; and it's doing the same thing all the time—the same thing the whole day long. You get dull—you never think about anything. And then the air is full of dust and the machinery roars. You get used to it, but I'm sure its bad for you.”

They walked for a while in silence. “Do you like to imagine things?” asked Sophie suddenly.

“Yes,” said he.

“I used to,” said she—“when I was younger.” It was so strange to Samuel to notice that this slip of a child always spoke of herself as old.

“Why don't you do it now?” he asked.

“I'm too tired, I think. But I've a lot of pictures up in my room—that I cut out of magazines that people gave me. Pictures of beautiful things—birds and flowers, and old castles, and fine ladies and gentlemen. And I used to make up stories about them, and imagine that I was there, and that all sorts of nice things were happening to me. Would you like to see my pictures?”

“Very much,” said Samuel.

“I think of things like that when I listen to Friedrich. I've a picture of Sir Galahad—he's very beautiful, and he stands at his horse's head with a sword in his hand. I used to dream that somebody like that might come and carry me off to a place where there aren't any mills. But I guess it's no use any more.”

“Why not?” asked the other.

“It's too late. There is something the matter with me. I never say anything, because it would make mother unhappy; but I'm always tired now, and every day I have a headache. And I'm so very sleepy, and yet when I lie down I can't sleep—I keep hearing the mill.” “Oh!” cried Samuel involuntarily.

“I don't mind it so much,” said the child. “There's no help, so what's the use. It's only

when I hear Friedrich play—then I get all stirred up."

They walked on for a while again.

"He's very unhappy," she said finally.

"I suppose so," replied Samuel. "Tell me," he asked suddenly. "Isn't there some other work that you could do?"

"What? I'm not strong enough for hard work. And where could I make three dollars a week?"

"Is that what they pay you?"

"Yes—that is—when we are on full time."

"Does it make all the girls sick?" he inquired. "There's that girl who came in this afternoon—she seems well and strong."

"Bessie, you mean? But it's just play for her, you see. She lives with her parents and stops whenever she feels like it. She just wants to buy dresses and go to the theater."

"But that girl we passed on the street to-day!"

"Helen Davis. Ah, yes—but she's different again. She's bad."

"Bad?" echoed Samuel perplexed.

There was a brief pause. It was not easy for him to adjust himself to a world in which the good were of necessity frail and ill, and the bad were rosy-cheeked and merry. "How do you mean?" he asked at last.

And Sophie answered quite simply, "She lives with a fellow."

The blood leaped into Samuel's face. Such a blunder for him to have made.

But then the flush passed, giving place to a feeling of horrified wonder. For Sophie was not in the least embarrassed—she spoke in the most matter-of-fact tone. And this from a child of thirteen, who did not look to be ten.

"I see," said he in a faint voice.

“A good many of the girls do it,” she added. “You see, they move about so much—the mills close, and so a girl has no hope of marrying. But mothers says it's wrong, just the same.”

And Samuel walked home the rest of the way in silence, and thinking no more about the joys of music.

CHAPTER VII

On Monday morning Samuel found that Professor Stewart had returned, and he sat in the great man's study and waited until he had finished his breakfast.

It was a big room, completely walled with crowded bookshelves; in the center was a big work-table covered with books and papers. Samuel had never dreamed that there were so many books in the world, and he gazed about him with awe, feeling that he had come to the sources of knowledge.

That was Samuel's way. Both by nature and training, he had a profound respect for all authority. He believed in the majesty of the law—that was why it had shocked him so to be arrested. He thought of the church as a divine institution, whose ministers were appointed as shepherds of the people. And up here on the heights was this great College, a temple of learning; and this professor was one who had been selected by those in the seats of authority, and set apart as one of its priests. So Samuel was profoundly grateful for the attention which was given to him, and was prepared to pick up whatever crumbs of counsel might be dropped.

“Ah, yes,” the professor said, wiping his glasses with a silk handkerchief. “Samuel—let me see—Samuel—”

“Prescott, sir.”

“Yes—Samuel Prescott. And how have you been?”

“I've been very well, sir.”

“I meant to leave a message for you, but I overlooked it. I had so many things to attend to in the rush of departure. I—er—I hope you didn't wait for me.”

“I had nothing else to do, sir,” said Samuel.

“The truth is,” continued the other, “I'm afraid I shan't be able to do for you what I thought I could.”

Samuel's heart went down into his boots.

“You see,” said the professor a trifle embarrassed, “my sister wanted a man to look after her place, but I found she had already engaged some one.”

There was a pause. Samuel simply stared.

“Of course, as the man is giving satisfaction—you see—it wouldn't do for her to send him away.”

And Samuel continued to stare, dumb with terror and dismay.

“I'm very sorry,” said the other—“no need to tell you that. But I don't know of any other place.”

“But what am I to do?” burst out Samuel.

“It's really too bad,” remarked the other.

And again there was a silence.

“Professor Stewart,” said Samuel in a low voice, “what is a man to do who is out of work and starving?”

“God knows,” said the professor.

And yet again there was silence. Samuel could have said that himself—he had the utmost faith in God.

And after a while the professor himself seemed to realize that the reply was inadequate. “You see,” he went on, “there is a peculiar condition here in Lockmanville. There was an attempt to corner the glass industry, and that caused the

building of too many factories, and so there is overproduction. And then, besides that, they've just invented a machine that blows as many bottles as a dozen men."

"But then what are the men to do?" asked Samuel.

"The condition readjusts itself," said the other. "The men have to go into some other trade."

"But then—the cotton mills are on half time, too!"

"Yes, there are too many cotton mills."

"But then—in the end there will be too many everything."

"That is the tendency," said the professor.

"There are foreign markets, of course. But the difficulty really goes deeper than that."

Professor Stewart paused and looked at Samuel wondering, perhaps, if he were not throwing away his instruction. But the boy looked very much interested, even excited.

"Most of our economists are disposed to blink the truth," said he. "But the fact is, there are too many men."

Samuel started. It was precisely that terrible suspicion which had been shaping itself in his own mind.

"There is a law," went on the other, "which was clearly set forth by Malthus, that population tends continually to outrun the food supply. And then the surplus people have to be removed."

"I see," said Samuel, awestricken. "But isn't it rather hard?"

"It seems so—to the individual. To the race it is really of the very greatest benefit. It is the process of life."

"Please tell me," Samuel's look seemed to say.

"If you will consider Nature," Professor Stewart continued, "you will observe that she always produces many times more individuals than can possibly reach maturity. The salmon lays millions of eggs, and thousands of young trees spring up in every thicket. And these individuals struggle for a chance to live, and those survive which are strongest and best fitted to meet the conditions. And precisely the same thing is true among men—there is no other way by which the race could be improved, or even kept at its present standard. Those who perish are sacrificed for the benefit of the race."

Now, strange as it may seem, Samuel had never before heard the phrase, "the survival of the fittest." And so now he was living over the experience of the thinking world of fifty or sixty years ago. What a marvelous generalization it was! What a range of life it covered! And how obvious it seemed—one could think of a hundred things, perfectly well known, which fitted into it. And yet he had never thought of it himself! The struggle for existence! The survival of the fittest!

A few days ago Samuel had discovered music. And now he was discovering science. What an extraordinary thing was the intellect of man, which could take all the infinitely varied facts of life and interpret them in the terms of one vast law.

Samuel was all aglow with excitement at the revelation. "I see," he said, again and again—"I see!"

"It is the law of life," said the professor. "No one can escape from it."

"And then," said Samuel, "when we try to change things—when we give out charity, for instance—we are working against Nature, and we really make things worse."

"That is it," replied the other.

And Samuel gave a great sigh. How very simple was the problem, when one had seen it in the light of science. Here he had been worrying and tormenting his brain about the matter; and all the time he was in the hands of Nature—and all he had to do was to lie back and let Nature solve it. "Nature never makes mistakes," said

Professor Stewart.

Of course, in this new light Samuel's own case became plain. “Those who are out of work are those who have failed in the struggle,” he said.

“Precisely,” said the professor.

“And that is because they are unfit.”

“Precisely,” said the professor again. “As Herbert Spencer has phrased it, 'Inability to catch prey must be regarded as a falling short of conduct from its ideal.' And, of course, in an industrial community, the 'prey' is a job.”

“Who is Herbert Spencer?” asked Samuel.

“He is recognized as the authority in such matters,” said the other.

“And then,” pondered Samuel, “those who have jobs must be the fit. And the very rich people—the ones who make the millions and millions—they are the fittest of all.”

“Er—yes,” said the professor.

“And, of course, that makes my problem clear—I'm out of a job, and so I must die.”

The professor gazed at Samuel sharply. But it was impossible to mistake the boy's open-eyed sincerity. He had no thought about himself—he was discovering the laws of life.

“I'm so glad you explained it to me,” he went on. “But all these thousands of men who are starving to death—they ought to be told it, too.”

“What good would it do?” asked the other.

“Why, they ought to understand. They suffer, and it seems to them purposeless and stupid. But if you were to explain to them that they are being sacrificed for the benefit of the race—don't you see what a difference it would make?”

“I don't believe they would take the suggestion kindly,” said the professor with a faint attempt to smile.

“But why not?” asked Samuel.

“Wouldn't it sound rather hypocritical, so to speak—coming from a man who had succeeded?”

“Not at all! You have a right to your success, haven't you?”

“I hope so.”

“You have a job”—began Samuel and then hesitated. “I don't know how a professor comes to get his job,” he said. “But I suppose that the men who make the great fortunes—the ones who are wisest and best of all—they give the money for the colleges, don't they?”

“Yes,” said Professor Stewart.

“And then,” said Samuel, “I suppose it is they who have chosen you?”

Again the professor darted a suspicious glance at his questioner. “Er—one might put it that way,” he said.

“Well, then, that is your right to teach; and you could explain it. Then you could say to these men: 'There are too many of you; you aren't needed; and you must be removed.'”

But the professor only shook his head. “It wouldn't do,” he said. And Samuel, pondering and seeking as ever, came to a sudden comprehension.

“I see,” he exclaimed. “What is needed is action!”

“Action?”

“Yes—it's for us who are beaten to teach it; and to teach it in our lives. It's a sort of revival that is needed, you see.”

“But I don't see the need,” laughed the other, interested in spite of himself.

“That's because you aren't one of us!” cried Samuel vehemently. “Nobody else can understand—nobody! It's easy to be one of the successes of life. You have a comfortable home and plenty to eat and all. But when you've failed—when you're

down and out—then you have to bear hunger and cold and sickness. And there is grief and fear and despair—you can have no idea of it! Why, I've met a little girl in this town. She works in the cotton mill, and it's just killed her by inches, body and soul. And even so, she can only get half a day's work; and the mother is trying to support the little children by sewing—and they're all just dying of slow starvation. This very morning they asked me to stay to breakfast, and I refused, because I knew they had only some bread and a few potatoes, and it wasn't enough for one person. You see, it's so slow—it's such a terribly long process—this starving people off by inches. And keeping them always tormented by hope. Don't you see, Professor Stewart? And just because you don't come out honestly and teach them the truth. Because you won't say to them: 'The world is too full; and you've got to get out of the way, so as to give us a chance.' Why, look, sir—you defeat your own purposes! These people stay, and they keep on having more children, and everything gets worse instead of better; and they have diseases and vices—they ruin the whole world. What's the use of having a world if it's got to be like this town—crowded with hovels full of dirty people, and sick people, and starving and miserable people? I can't see how you who live up here on the heights can enjoy yourselves while such things continue."

"Um—no," said Professor Stewart; and he gazed at Samuel with knitted brows—unable, for the life of him, to feel certain whether he ought to feel amused, or to feel touched, or to feel outraged.

As for Samuel, he realized that he was through with the professor. The professor had taught him all that he had to teach. He did not really understand this matter at all—that was because he belonged to the other world, the world of successful and fit people. They had their own problems to solve, no doubt!

This non-comprehension was made quite clear by the professor's next remark. "I'm sorry to have disappointed you," he said. "If a little money will help you—"

“No,” said the other quickly. “You mustn't offer me money. How can that be right? That would be charity.”

“Ahem!” said the professor. “Yes. But then—you mentioned that you hadn't had any breakfast. Hadn't you better go into the kitchen and let them give you something?”

“But what is the use of putting things off?” cried Samuel wildly. “If I'm going to preach this new idea, I've got to begin.”

“But you can't preach very long on an empty stomach,” objected the other.

To which Samuel answered, “The preaching has to be by deeds.”

And so he took his departure; and Professor Stewart turned back to his work-table, upon which lay the bulky manuscript of his monumental work, which was entitled: “Methods of Relief; A Theory and a Programme.” Some pages lay before him; the top one was headed: “Chapter LXIII—Unemployment and Social Responsibility.” And Professor Stewart sat before this title, and stared, and stared.

CHAPTER VIII

Samuel meantime was walking down the broad macadam avenue debating his problem. The first glow of excitement was over, and he was finding difficulties. The theory still held; but in the carrying out of it there were complications.

For one thing, it would be so hard to spread this doctrine. For if one tried to teach it by words, he seemed a hypocrite, as the professor had said; and on the other hand, if one simply practiced it, who would ever know? Suppose, for instance, that he starved to death during the next few days? That would be only one person removed, and apparently there were millions of the superfluous.

The truth was that Samuel, in discussing the theory, had applied it only to himself. But now he pictured himself going home to tell Mrs. Stedman that she must give up her futile effort, and take herself and her three children out of the way of the

progress of the race. And he realized that he could never do it—he was not equal to the task. Doubtless, it was because he was one of the unfit. It would need some one who did not know them, some one who could approach the matter from the purely scientific standpoint.

Then there was another difficulty graver yet. Did not this doctrine really point to suicide? Would it not be the simplest solution of his problem if he were to climb down to the river, and tie a stone about his neck, and jump in? Samuel wished that he had thought to ask the professor about this. For the idea frightened him; he had a distinct impression of having been taught that it was a dreadful sin to take one's own life.

The trouble seemed to lie in the dull and unromantic nature of the life about him. If only there had been some way to die nobly and heroically for the good of others. If only there was a war, for instance, and a call for men to perish on the ramparts! Or a terrible pestilence, so that one could be a nurse! But there was nothing at all but this low starving to death—and while other people lived in plenty. Samuel thought of the chance of finding some work which involved grave peril to life or limb; but apparently even the danger posts were filled. The world did not need him, either in life or death!

So there was nothing for it but the starving. Having eaten nothing that day, Samuel was ready to begin at once; he tightened his belt and set his teeth for the grapple with the gaunt wolf of hunger.

And so he strode on down the road, pining for a chance to sacrifice himself—and at the very hour that the greatest peril of his life was bearing down upon him.

He had passed “Fairview,” the great mansion with the stately gates and the white pillars. He had passed beyond its vast grounds, and had got out into the open country. He was walking blindly—it made no great difference where he went. And then suddenly behind him there was a clatter of hoofs; and he turned, and up the

road he saw a cloud of dust, and in the midst of it a horse galloping furiously. Samuel stared; there was some kind of a vehicle behind it, and there was a person in the vehicle. A single glance was enough for him to realize—it was a runaway!

To Samuel the thing came as a miracle—it was an answer to his prayer. And it found him ready. The chance was offered him, and he would not fail—not he! He did not falter for a second. He knew just what he had to do, and he was ready—resolute, and alert, and tense.

He moved into the center of the road. The horse came on, galloping at top speed; it was a blooded horse, swift and frantic with fear, and terrible to see. Samuel spread out his arms; and then in a flash the creature was upon him.

It swerved to pass him; and the boy wheeled, leaped swiftly, and flung himself at the bridle.

He caught it; his arms were wrenched, but he hung on, and jerked himself up. The horse flung him to one side; but with a swift clutch, Samuel caught him by the nostrils with one hand, and gripped fast. Then he drew himself up close and hung grimly, his eyes shut, with a grasp like death.

And he was still hanging there when the run-away stopped, and the occupant leaped from the vehicle and rushed to help him. “My God!” he cried, “but that was nerve!”

He was a young fellow, white as a sheet and trembling in every muscle. “How did you do it?” he panted.

“I just held on,” said Samuel.

“God, but I'm thankful to you!” exclaimed the other. “You've saved my life!”

Samuel still clung to the horse, which was quivering with nervousness.

“He'd never have got away from me, but one rein broke. See here!”—And he held up the end.

“What started him?” asked Samuel.

“Nothing,” said the other—“a piece of paper, likely. He's a fool—always was.” And he shook his fist in the horse's face, exclaiming, “By God, I'll tame you before I finish with you!”

“Look out!” said Samuel. “You'll start him again!” And again he clutched the horse, which started to plunge.

“I've got him now,” said the other. “He'll quiet down.”

“Hold fast,” Samuel continued; and then he put his hand to his forehead, and swayed slightly. “I—I'll have to sit down a moment, I'm afraid. I feel sort of dizzy.”

“Are you hurt?” cried the stranger anxiously.

“No,” he said—“no, but I haven't had anything to eat to-day, and I'm a little weak.”

“Nothing to eat!” cried the other. “What's the matter?”

“Why, I've been out of a job.”

“Out of a job? Good heavens, man, have you been starving?”

“Well,” said Samuel with a wan smile, “I had begun to.”

He sat down by the roadside, and the other stared at him. “Do you live in Lockmanville?” he asked.

“No, I just came here. I left my home in the country to go to New York, and I was robbed and lost all my money. And I haven't been able to find anything to do, and I'd just about given up and got ready to die.”

“My God!” cried the other in dismay.

“Oh, it's all right,” said Samuel. “I didn't mind.”

The stranger gazed at him in perplexity. And Samuel returned the gaze, being curious to see who it was he had rescued. It was a youth not more than a year or two older than himself. The color had now come back into his face, and Samuel thought that he was the most beautiful human being he had ever seen. He had a frank, open face, and laughing eyes, and golden hair like a girl's. He wore outing costume, a silk

shirt and light flannels—things which Samuel had learned to associate with the possession of wealth and ease. Also, his horse was a thoroughbred; and with a rubber-tired runabout and a silver-mounted harness, the expensiveness of the rig was evident. Samuel was glad of this, because it meant that he had rescued some one of consequence—some one of the successful and fit people.

“Just as soon as you're able, come hold the horse,” said the stranger, “and then I'll fix this rein, and take you back and get you something to eat.”

“Oh, no!” said Samuel. “Don't bother. That's all right.”

“Hell, man!” cried the other. “Don't you suppose I'm going to do anything for you?”

“Well, I hadn't thought—” began Samuel.

“Cut it out!” exclaimed the other. “I'll set you up, and find you a job, and you can have a decent start.”

Find him a job! Samuel's heart gave a great throb. For a moment he hardly knew how to take this—how it would fit into his new philosophy. But surely it was all right for him to take a job. Yes, he had earned it. Even if some one else had to be turned out—even so, he had proven his fitness. He had won in the struggle. He had a place among the successful, and he could help Sophie and her mother.

He got up with eagerness, and held the horse. “Do you think you can manage him?” he asked.

“Oh, yes,” said the other. “I'll chance it, anyhow.”

And he leaped into the runabout and took the reins. “Now,” he said; and Samuel got in, and they sped away, back toward town.

“Don't say anything about this accident, please,” said the young man suddenly.

“I won't,” said Samuel.

“My friends are always teasing me because I drive horses,” he explained.

“Why not?” asked the other.

“Well, everybody drives motors nowadays. But my father stood by horses, and I learned to be fond of them.”

“We never had but one horse on the farm,” observed Samuel. “But I was fond of him.”

“What is your name?” inquired the stranger; and Samuel told him. Also he told him where he had come from and what had happened to him. He took particular pains to tell about the jail, because he did not want to deceive anyone. But his companion merely called it “an infernal outrage.”

“Where were you going now?” he asked.

“I'd just left Professor Stewart's,” replied Samuel.

“What! Old Stew? How do you come to know him?”

“He was at the court. And he said he'd get me a job, and then he found he couldn't. Do you know him?”

“Oh, yes, I had him at college, you know.”

“Oh, do you go to the college?”

“I used to—till my father died. Then I quit. I hate study.”

Samuel was startled. “I suppose you don't need to,” he said after a pause.

“No,” said the other. “My father thought the world of Old Stew,” he added; “but he used to bore the life out of me. How'd you find him?”

“Well,” answered Samuel, “you see, I haven't had any of your advantages. I found what he told me very wonderful.”

“What did he tell you?”

“Well, he explained to me how it was I was out of a job. There are too many people in the world, it seems, and I was one of the unfit. I had failed in the struggle for existence, and so I had to be exterminated, he said.”

“The devil he did!” exclaimed the stranger.

Samuel wished that the young man would not use so many improper words; but he presumed that was one of the privileges of the successful. “I was very grateful to him,” he went on, “because, you see, I hadn't understood what it meant. But when I realized it was for the good of the race, then I didn't mind any more.”

His companion stole a glance at him out of the corner of his eye. “Gee!” he said.

“I had quite an argument with him. I wanted him to see that he ought to teach the people. There are thousands of people starving here in Lockmanville; and would you want to starve without knowing the reason?”

“No,” said the other, “I don't think I should.” And again he looked at his companion.

But the conversation was interrupted there. For some time they had been passing the place with the ten-foot iron railing; and now they came to the great stone entrance with the name “Fairview” carved upon it. To Samuel's surprise they turned in.

“Where are you going?” he asked.

“Home,” said the other.

And Samuel started. “Do you live here?” he gasped.

“Yes,” was the reply.

Samuel stared at the familiar driveway with the stately elms, and the lawns with the peacocks and lyre birds. “This is one of the places where I asked for work,” he said. “They ordered me out.”

“The deuce they did!” exclaimed the other. “Well, they won't order you out now.”

There was a pause. “You haven't told me your name,” put in Samuel suddenly.

“I thought you'd guess,” said the other with a laugh.

“How could I?”

“Why—don't you know what place this is?”

“No,” said Samuel. “What?”

And his companion replied, “It's the Lockman place.”

Samuel caught his breath and clutched at the seat.

“The Lockman place!” he panted; and then again, “The Lockman place!”

He stared ahead at the great building, with the broad porticos and the snow-white columns. He could hardly credit his ears.

“I'm the old man's son,” added the stranger genially. “Albert's my name. They call me Bertie.”

CHAPTER IX

Properly to understand the thrill which this revelation brought to Samuel, one would have to consider the state of his mind. With all the power of his being Samuel was seeking for excellence; and a great and wise man had explained to him what were the signs by which this quality was known. And in the “struggle for existence” old Henry Lockman had succeeded more than any other man of whom Samuel had ever heard in his life. He owned these huge glass works, and many others all over the country. He owned the trolley roads, and the gas works, and the water works; the place had been named after him, and the great college also. For many years he had even run the government of the town, so Finnegan had stated. And here was this huge estate, his home—a palace fit for a king. How great must have been the excellence of such a man! And what benefits he must have conferred upon the world, to have been rewarded with all this power and glory!

And here was his son—a youth in aspect fitting perfectly to Samuel's vision; a very prince of the blood, yet genial and free-hearted—noblesse oblige! To him had descended these virtues and excellences—and all the estates and powers as the sign and symbol thereof. And now had come a poor ignorant country boy, and it had

fallen to his fortune to save the life of this extraordinary being. And he was to have a chance to be near him, and to serve him—to see how he lived, and to find out the secret of his superior excellence. There was no snobbery in Samuel's attitude; he felt precisely as another and far greater Samuel had felt when his sovereign had condescended to praise his dictionary, and the tears of gratitude had started into his eyes.

They drove up before the palace, and a groom came hurrying up. “Phillips,” said young Lockman, “look at that rein!”

The groom stared aghast.

“Take it and show it to Sanderson,” the other continued. “Ask him if I don't pay enough for my harness that he gets me stuff like that.”

“Yes, sir,” said the groom.

They alighted and crossed the broad piazza, which was covered with easy chairs and tables and rugs. In the entrance hall stood a man in livery.

“Peters,” said the young man, “this is Samuel Prescott. I had some trouble with my horse and he helped me. He hasn't had anything to eat today, and I want him to have a good meal.”

“Yes, sir,” said the man. “Where shall I serve it, sir?”

“In the morning room. We'll wait there. And mind you, bring him a plenty.”

“Yes, sir,” said Peters, and went off.

Meantime Samuel had time for a glance about him. Never had he heard or dreamed of such magnificence. It was appalling, beyond belief! The great entrance hall went up to the roof; and there was a broad staircase of white marble, with galleries of marble, and below a marble fireplace, big enough to hold a section of a tree. Beyond this was a court with fountains splashing, and visions of palms and gorgeous flowers; and on each side were vistas of rooms with pictures and tapestries and

furniture which Samuel thought must be of solid gold.

“Come,” said his companion, and they ascended the staircase.

Halfway up, however, Samuel stopped and caught his breath. Before him there was a painting. There is no need to describe it in detail—suffice it to say that it was a life-size painting of a woman, entirely naked; and that Samuel had never seen such a thing in his life before. He dropped his eyes as he came near to it.

They went along the gallery and entered a room, dazzlingly beautiful and bright. It was all done in white satin, the front being of glass, and opening upon a wide balcony. There were flowers and singing birds, and in the panels most beautiful paintings, representing wood nymphs dancing. These airy creatures, also, were innocent of anything save filmy veils; but they were all about the room, and so poor Samuel had no way to escape them. He sought for light within his mind; and suddenly he recollected the illustrated Bible at home. Perhaps the peerless beings who lived in such palaces had returned to a state of guiltlessness, such as had existed before the serpent came.

Young Lockman flung himself into an easy chair and proceeded to cross-question his companion. He wanted to know all about the interview with “Old Stew”; and afterwards, having managed to divine Samuel's attitude to himself, he led him to talk about that, which Samuel did with the utmost frankness. “Gee, but you're a queer duffer!” was Lockman's comment; but Samuel didn't mind that.

The butler came with the meal—carrying it on a big tray, and with another man to carry a folding table, and yet another to help. Such a display of silver and cut glass! Such snowy linen, and such unimaginable viands! There were piles of sandwiches, each one half a bite for a fairly hungry man. There was jellied game, and caviar, and a pate of something strange and spicy. Nothing was what one would have expected—there were eggs inside of baked potatoes, and ice cream in some sort of crispy cake. The crackers looked like cakes, and the cakes like crackers, and the

cheese was green and discouraging. But a bowl of strawberries and cream held out a rich promise at the end, and Samuel took heart.

“Fall to,” said the host; and then divining the other's state of mind, he remarked, “You needn't serve, Peters,” and the men went away, to Samuel's vast relief.

“Don't mind me,” added Lockman laughing. “And if there's any question you want to ask, all right.”

So Samuel tasted the food of the gods; a kind of food which human skill and ingenuity had labored for centuries to invent, and for days and even weeks to prepare. Samuel wondered vaguely where all these foods had come from, and how many people had had a hand in their preparation; also he wondered if all those who ate them would become as beautiful and as dazzling as his young friend.

The friend meanwhile was vastly diverted, and was bent upon making the most of his find. “I suppose you'd like to see the place?” he said.

“I should, indeed,” said Samuel.

“Come and I'll show it to you—that is, If you're able to walk after the meal.”

The meal did not trouble Samuel, and they went out and took a stroll. And so the boy met with yet another revelation of the possibilities of existence.

If there was anything in the world he would have supposed he understood, it was farming; but here at “Fairview” was farming as it was done by the methods of Science. At home they had had some lilac bushes and a row of peonies; here were acres of greeneries, filled with flowers of gorgeous and unimaginable splendor, and rare plants from every part of the world. At home it had been Samuel's lot to milk the cow, and he had found it a trying job on cold and dark winter mornings; and here was a model dairy, with steam heat and electric light, and tiled walls and nickel plumbing, and cows with pedigrees in frames, and attendants with white uniforms and rubber gloves. Then there was a row of henhouses, each for a fancy breed of fowl—some of them red and lean as herons, and others white as snow and as fat and

ungainly as hogs. And then out in front, at one corner of the lawn, was the aviary, with houses for the peacocks and lyre birds, and for parrots and magpies and innumerable strange birds from the tropics. Also there were dog kennels with many dozens of strange breeds.

“Father got those for me,” said young Lockman. “He thought I'd be interested in agriculture.”

“Well, aren't you?” asked Samuel.

“Not very much,” said the other carelessly. “Here's Punch—what do you think of him?”

The occasion for this was a dog, the most hideously ugly object that Samuel had ever seen in his life. “I—I don't think I'd care for him,” he said hesitatingly.

“He's a Japanese bulldog,” observed the other. “He cost three thousand dollars.”

“Three thousand dollars!” gasped the boy in horror. “Why should anyone pay so much for a dog?”

“That's what he's worth,” said the other with a laugh.

They went to see the horses, which were housed in a palace of their own. There were innumerable rows of stalls, and a running track and endless acres of inclosures. “Why do you have so many horses?” asked Samuel.

“Father ran a stock farm,” said the other. “I don't have much time to give to it myself.”

“But who rides the horses?” asked Samuel.

“Well, I go in for sport,” replied Lockman. “I'm supposed to be quite a dab at polo.”

“I see,” said the boy—though to tell the truth he did not see at all, not having the least idea what polo was.

“If you're interested in horses, I'll have them find you something to do here,” Lockman went on.

“Oh, thank you,” said the boy with a thrill. “That will be fine!”

He could have spent all day in gazing at the marvels of this place, but his host was tired now and started back to the house. “It's lunch time,” he said. “Perhaps you are hungry again!”

They came out upon the piazza and sat down. And then suddenly they heard a clatter of hoofs and looked up. “Hello!” exclaimed the host. “Here's Glad!”

A horse was coming up the road at a lively pace. The rider was seated a-straddle, and so Samuel was slow to realize that it was a woman. It was only when he saw her wave her hand and call to them that he was sure.

She reined up her horse, and a groom who followed her took the rein, and she stepped off upon the piazza and stood looking at them. She was young and of extraordinary beauty. She was breathing fast, and her hair was blown about her forehead, and the glow of health was in her cheeks; and Samuel thought that she was the most beautiful object that he had ever beheld in all his life. He stared transfixed; he had never dreamed that anything so wonderful could exist in the world. He realized in a sudden glow of excitement what it was that confronted him. She was the female of this higher species; she was the superior and triumphant woman.

“Hello, Bertie!” she said.

“Hello!” the other replied, and then added. “This is my cousin, Miss Wygant. Glad, this is Samuel Prescott.”

The girl made a slight acknowledgment, and stared at Samuel with a look in which curiosity and hauteur were equally mingled. She was a brunette with dark hair, and an almost Oriental richness of coloring. She was lithe and gracefully built, and quick in her motions. There was eager alertness in her whole aspect; her glance was swift and her voice imperious. One could read her at a glance for a person accustomed to command—impatient and adventurous, passionate and proud.

“I've had an adventure,” said her cousin by way of explanation. “Samuel, here,

saved my life."

And Samuel thrilled to see the sudden look of interest which came into the girl's face.

"What!" she cried.

"Yes," said the other. "Spitfire ran away with me."

"You don't mean it, Bertie!"

"Yes. The rein broke. He started near the gate here and ran three or four miles with me."

"Bertie!" cried the girl. "And what happened?"

"Samuel stopped him."

"How?"

"It was splendid, Glad—the nerviest thing I ever saw. He just flung himself at the rein and caught it and hung on. He saved my life, beyond question."

And now Samuel, burning up with embarrassment, faced the full blaze of the girl's impetuous interest. "How perfectly fine!" she exclaimed; then, "Where do you come from?" she asked.

"He's just off a farm," said Lockman. "He was on his way to New York to make his fortune. And think of it, Glad, he'd been robbed, and he'd been wandering about town begging for work, and he was nearly starving."

"You don't say so!" gasped the girl.

She took a chair and indicated to Samuel to sit in front of her. "Tell me all about yourself," she said; and proceeded to cross-question him about his life and his adventures.

Poor Samuel was like a witness in the hands of a prosecutor—he became hopelessly confused and frightened. But that made no difference to the girl, who poured a ceaseless fire of questions upon him, until she had laid his whole life bare. She even

made him tell about Manning, the stockbroker, and how the family had lost its money in the collapse of Glass Bottle Securities. And then her cousin put in a word about his adventure with “Old Stew,” and Samuel had to tell that all over again, and to set forth his sociological convictions—Miss Wygant and her cousin meantime exchanging glances of wonder and amusement.

At last, however, they tired of him and fell to talking of a dance they were to attend and a tennis tournament in which they were to play. And so Samuel had a chance to gaze at Miss Wygant and to feast his eyes upon her beauty. He could have dreamed of no greater joy in all this world than to watch her for hours—to study every detail of her features and her costume, and to see the play of laughter about her mouth and eyes.

But then came the butler announcing luncheon; and Samuel rose in a panic. He had a sudden vision of himself being asked to the table, to sit under Miss Wygant's merciless survey. “I think I'd better go now,” he said.

“All right,” said young Lockman. “Will you come to-morrow morning, and we'll fix things up?”

“I'll come,” said Samuel.

“What are you going to do with him?” asked the girl.

“He likes to take care of horses,” said Lockman.

“No,” exclaimed the other promptly, “that won't do.”

“Why not?” asked he.

“Because, Bertie, you don't want to make a stable boy out of him. He has too many possibilities. For one thing, he's good looking.”

Samuel flushed scarlet and dropped his eyes. He felt again that penetrating gaze.

“All right,” said Lockman. “What can you suggest?”

“I don't know, I'm sure. But something decent.”

“He doesn't know enough to be a house servant, Glad—”

“No—but something outside. Couldn't he learn gardening? Are you fond of flowers, Samuel?”

“Yes, ma'am,” said Samuel quickly.

“Well, then, make a gardener out of him,” said Miss Wygant; and that settled Samuel's destiny.

The boy took his departure and went home, almost running in his excitement. He was transported into a distant heaven of bliss; he had been seated among the gods—he was to dwell there forever after!

His new patron had given him a five-dollar bill; and before he reached the Stedman home he stopped in a grocery store and loaded up his arms with bundles. And then, seized by a sudden thought, he went into a notion store and set down his bundles and purchased a clean, white linen collar, and a necktie of royal purple and brilliant green—already tied, so that it would always be perfect in shape.

Then he went into the Stedmans, and the widow and the youngest children sat round and listened open-eyed to his tale. And then came Sophie, and he had to tell it all over again.

The girl's eyes opened wide with excitement when he came to the end of his recital. “Miss Wygant!” she exclaimed. “Miss Gladys Wygant?”

“Yes,” said Samuel. “You've heard of her?”

“I've seen her!” exclaimed Sophie eagerly. “Twice!”

“You don't mean it,” he said.

“Yes. Once she came to our church festival at Christmas.”

“Does she belong to your church?”

“It's the mission. Great folks like her wouldn't want us in the church with them. She goes to St. Matthew's, you know—up there on the hill. But she came to the festival

at the mission and helped to give out the presents. And she was dressed all in red—something filmy and soft, like you'd see in a dream. And, oh, Samuel—she was so beautiful! She had a rose in her hair—and such a sweet perfume—you could hardly bear it! And she stood there and smiled at all the children and gave them the presents. She gave me mine, and it was like seeing a princess. I wanted to fall down and kiss her feet."

"Yes," said Samuel understandingly.

"And to think that you've met her!" cried Sophie in ecstasy. "And talked with her! Oh, how could you do it?"

"I—I don't think I did it very well," said Samuel.

"What did you say to her?"

"I don't remember much of it."

"I never heard her voice," said Sophie. "She was talking, the other time I saw her, but the machinery drowned it out. That was in the mill—she came there with some other people and walked about, looking at everything. We were all so excited. You know, her father owns the mill."

"No, I didn't know it," replied Samuel.

"He owns all sorts of things in Lockmanville. They're very, very rich. And she's his only daughter, and so beautiful—everybody worships her. I've got two pictures of her that were in the newspapers once. Come—you must see them."

And so the two rushed upstairs; and over the bed were two faded newspaper clippings, one showing Miss Gladys in an evening gown, and the other in dimity en princesse, with a bunch of roses in her arms.

"Did you ever see anything so lovely?" asked the girl. "I made her my fairy godmother. And she used to say such lovely things to me. She must be very kind, you know—no one could be so beautiful who wasn't very, very good and kind."

“No,” said Samuel. “She must be, I'm sure.”

And then a sudden idea came to him. “Sophie!” he exclaimed—“she said I was good looking! I wonder if I am.”

And Sophie shot a quick glance at him. “Why, of course you are!” she cried. “You stupid boy!”

Samuel went to the cracked mirror which hung upon the wall and looked at himself with new and wandering interest.

“Don't you see how fine and strong you are?” said Sophie. “And what a bright color you've got?”

“I never thought of it,” said he, and recollected the green and purple necktie.

“And to think that you've talked with her!” exclaimed Sophie, turning back to the pictures; and she added in a sudden burst of generosity, “I tell you what I'll do, Samuel—I'll give you these, and you can put them in your room!”

“You mustn't do that!” he protested.

But the girl insisted. “No, no! I know them by heart, so it won't make any difference. And they'll mean so much more to you, because you've really met her!”

CHAPTER X

Samuel presented himself the next morning and was turned over to the head gardener and duly installed as an assistant. “Let me know how you're getting along,” was young Lockman's last word to him. “And if there's anything else I can do for you come and tell me.”

“Thank you very much, sir,” said the boy gratefully; but without realizing how these magic words, pronounced in the gardener's hearing, would make him a privileged character about the place—an object of mingled deference and envy to the other servants.

It was a little world all in itself, the “Fairview” menage. Without counting the stable hands, and the employees of the different farms, it took no less than twenty-three people to minister to the personal wants of Bertie Lockman. And they were divided into ranks and classes, with a rigid code of etiquette, upon which they insisted with vehemence. A housekeeper's assistant looked with infinite scorn upon a kitchen maid, and there had to be no less than four dining rooms for the various classes of servants who would not eat at the same table. All this was very puzzling to the stranger; but after a while he came to see how the system had grown up. It was just like a court; and the privileged beings who waited upon the sovereign necessarily were esteemed according to the importance of the service they performed for him and the access which they attained to his person.

A good many of these servants were foreigners, and Samuel was pained to discover that they were for the most part without any ennobling conception of their calling. They were much given to gluttony and drinking; and there was an unthinkable amount of scandal and backbiting and jealousy. But it was only by degrees that he realized this, for he had one great motive in common with them—they were all possessed with a sense of the greatness of the Lockmans, and none of them wanted anything better than to talk for hours about the family and its wealth and power, and the habits and tastes of its members and their friends.

It was Katie Reilly, a bright little Irish damsel, the housekeeper's sewing girl, who first captured Samuel with her smile; she carried him off for a walk, in spite of the efforts of the second parlor maid, and Samuel drank up eagerly the stream of gossip which poured from her lips. Master Albert—that was what they all called him—was said to have an income of over seven hundred thousand dollars a year. What he did with such a sum no one could imagine; he had lived quite alone since his father's death. The house had always been run by Miss Aurelia, old Mr. Lockman's sister, a lady with the lumbago and a terrible temper; but she had died a couple of years ago. Mr. Lockman had taken great interest in his stock farm, but very little in his house;

and Master Albert took even less, spending most of his time in New York. Consequently everything was at sixes and sevens, and he was being robbed most terribly. But in spite of all his relatives' suggestions, he would not have anyone to come and live with him.

Master Albert was still a minor, and his affairs were managed by Mr. Hickman, the family lawyer, and also by his uncle, Mr. Wygant. The latter was a manufacturer and capitalist—also a great scholar, so Katie said. It was he Samuel had seen that afternoon in the automobile, a tall and very proud-looking man with an iron-gray mustache. He lived in the big white house just after you climbed the ridge; and Miss Gladys was his only daughter. She had been old Mr. Lockman's favorite niece, and he had left her a great deal of money. People were always planning a match between her and Master Albert, but that always made Miss Gladys very angry. They both declared they were not in love with each other, and Katie was inclined to think this was true. Miss Gladys had been away to a rich boarding school, and she wanted to visit some friends at Newport; but her father wanted her to stay with him, and that made her discontented. She was very beautiful, and everybody was her slave. “But oh, I tell you, when she's angry!” said Katie with a shake of her head.

This little Irish girl was a rare find for Samuel, because her brother was the “fellow” to Miss Gladys's maid, and so there was nothing she could not tell Samuel about his divinity. He learned about Miss Gladys's beautiful party dresses, and about her wonderful riding horse, and about her skill at tennis, and even her fondness for chocolate fudge. Miss Gladys had been to Paris the summer before; and her family had a camp in the Adirondacks, and they went there every August in an automobile and flew about on a mountain lake in a motor-boat the shape of a knife blade. Katie wanted to talk about Samuel a part of the time, and even, perhaps, about herself; but Samuel plied her with questions about Miss Wygant.

He had her two pictures folded away in his vest pocket; and all the time that he

trimmed the hedges he listened for the sound of her horse's hoofs or for the chug of her motor. And then, one blissful morning, when he was carrying in an armful of roses for the housekeeper, he ran full upon her in the hall.

His heart leaped so that it hurt him; and instead of passing straight on, as he should have done, he stood stock still, and almost spilled his roses on the floor.

Miss Gladys's face lighted with pleasure.

“Why, it's Samuel!” she exclaimed.

“Yes, Miss Gladys,” said he.

“And how do you like your position?”

“Very well, Miss Gladys,” he replied; and then, feeling the inadequacy of this, he added with fervor, “I'm so happy I can't tell you.”

“I'm very glad to hear it,” she said. “And I'm sure you fill it very well.”

“I've done the best I can, Miss Gladys,” said he.

There was a moment's pause. “You find there is a good deal to learn?” she inquired.

“Yes,” he answered. “But you see, it's about flowers, and I was always interested in flowers.”

And again there was a pause; and then suddenly Miss Wygant flung a question at him—“Samuel, why do you look at me like that?”

Samuel was almost knocked over.

“Why—why—” he gasped. “Miss Gladys! I don't—!”

“Ah!” she said, “but you do.”

Poor Samuel was in an agony of horror. “I—I—really—” he stammered. “I didn't mean it—I wouldn't for the world—-”

He stopped, utterly at a loss; and Miss Wygant kept her merciless gaze upon him. “Am I so very beautiful?” she asked.

This startled Samuel into lifting his eyes. He stared at her, transfixed; and at last he whispered, faintly, “Yes.”

“Tell me about it,” she said, and her look shook him to the depths of his soul.

He stood there, trembling; he could feel the blood pouring in a warm flood about his throat and neck. “Tell me,” she said again.

“You—you are more beautiful than anyone I have ever seen,” he panted.

“You are not used to women, Samuel!”

“No,” said he. “I'm just a country boy.”

She stood waiting for him to continue. “The girls there”—he whispered—“they are pretty—but you—you—-”

And then suddenly the words came to him. “You are like a princess!” he cried.

“Ah, if you ever find your tongue!” she said with a smile; and then after a pause she added, “You don't know how different you are, Samuel.”

“Different?” he echoed.

“Yes. You are so fresh—so young. You would do anything for me, wouldn't you?”

“Yes,” he said.

“You'd risk your life for me, as you did for Bertie?”

And Samuel answered her with fervor that left no room for doubt.

“I wish there was a chance,” she laughed. “But there's only this dull every-day round!”

There was a pause; the boy dropped his eyes and stood trembling.

“Where are you going with the roses?” she asked.

“I'm to take them to the housekeeper.”

“Let me have one.”

She took one from the bunch, and he stood watching while she pinned it to her dress.

“You may bring me some, now and then,” she said with one of her marvelous smiles. “Don't forget.” And then, as she went on, she touched him upon the hand.

At the touch of her warm, living fingers such a thrill passed through the boy as made him reel. It was something blind and elemental, outside of anything that he had dreamed of in his life. She went on down the hall and left him there, and he had to lean against a table for support.

And all that day he was in a daze—with bursts of rapture sweeping over him. She was interested in him! She had smiled upon him! She had touched his hand!

He went home that evening on purpose to tell Sophie; and the two of them talked about it for hours. He told the story over and over again. And Sophie listened, with her eyes shining and her hands clasped in an ecstasy of delight.

“Oh, Samuel!” she whispered. “I knew it—I knew she'd appreciate you! She was so beautiful—I knew she must be kind and good!”

CHAPTER XI

A week passed, and Samuel did not see his divinity again. He lived upon the memory of their brief interview, and while he trimmed the hedges he was dreaming the most extravagant dreams of rescues and perilous escapes. For the first time he began to find that his work was tedious; it offered so few possibilities of romance! If only he had been her chauffeur, now! Or the guide who escorted her in her tramps about the wilderness! Or the man who ran the wonderful motor-boat that was shaped like a knife blade!

Samuel continued to ponder, and was greatly worried lest the commonplace should ingulf him. So little he dreamed how near was a change!

Bertie Lockman had been away for a few days, visiting some friends, and he came back unexpectedly one afternoon. Samuel knew that he had not been expected, for

always there were great bunches of flowers to be placed in his room. The gardener happened to be away at the time the motor arrived, and so Samuel upon his own responsibility cut the flowers and took them into the house. He left them in the housekeeper's workroom and then set out to find that functionary, and tell her what he had done. So, in the entrance to the dining room, he stumbled upon his young master, giving some orders to Peters, the butler.

As an humble gardener's boy, Samuel should have stepped back and vanished. Instead he came forward, and Bertie smiled pleasantly and said, “Hello, Samuel.”

“Good afternoon, Master Albert,” said Samuel.

“And how do you like your work?” the other asked.

“I like it very well, sir,” he replied; and then added apologetically, “I was bringing some flowers.”

The master turned to speak to Peters again; and Samuel turned to retire. But at that instant there came the sound of a motor in front of the house.

“Hello,” said Bertie. “Who's that?” and turned to look through the entrance hall. Peters went forward to the door; and so Samuel was left standing and watching.

A big red touring car had drawn up in front of the piazza. It was filled with young people, waving their hands and shouting, “Bertie! Oh, Bertie!”

The other appeared to be startled. “Well, I'll be damned!” he muttered as he went to meet them.

Of course Samuel had no business whatever to stand there. He should have fled in trepidation. But he, as a privileged person, had not yet been drilled into a realization of his “place.” And they were such marvelous creatures—these people of the upper world—and he was so devoured with the desire to know about them.

There were two young men in the motor, of about his master's age, and nearly as goodly to look at. And there were four young women, of a quite extraordinary sort.

They were beautiful, all of them—nearly as beautiful as Miss Gladys; and perhaps it was only the automobile costumes, but they struck one as even more alarmingly complex.

They were airy, ethereal creatures, with delicate peach blow complexions, and very small hands and feet. They seemed to favor all kinds of fluffy and flimsy things; they were explosions of all the colors of the springtime. There were leaves and flowers and fruits and birds in their hats; and there were elaborate filmy veils to hold the hats on. They descended from the motor, and Samuel had glimpses of ribbons and ruffles, of shapely ankles and daintily slippered feet. They came in the midst of a breeze of merriment, with laughter and bantering and little cries of all sorts.

“You don't seem very glad to see us, Bertie!” one said.

“Cheer up, old chap—nobody'll tell on us!” cried one of the young men.

“And we'll be good and go home early!” added another of the girls.

One of the party Samuel noticed particularly, because she looked more serious, and hung back a little. She was smaller than the others, a study in pink and white; her dress and hat were trimmed with pink ribbons, and she had the most marvelously pink cheeks and lips, and the most exquisite features Samuel had ever seen in his life.

Now suddenly she ran to young Lockman and flung her arms about his neck.

“Bertie,” she exclaimed, “it's my fault. I made them come! I wanted to see you so badly! You aren't mad with us, are you?”

“No,” said Bertie, “I'm not mad.”

“Well, then, be glad!” cried the girl, and kissed him again. “Be a good boy—do!”

“All right,” said Bertie feebly. “I'll be good, Belle.”

“We wanted to surprise you,” added one of the young fellows.

“You surprised me all right,” said Bertie—a reply which all of them seemed to find

highly amusing, for they laughed uproariously.

“He doesn't ask us in,” said one of the girls. “Come on, Dolly—let's see this house of his.”

And so the party poured in. Samuel waited just long enough to catch the rustle of innumerable garments, and a medley of perfumes which might have been blown from all the gardens of the East. Then he turned and fled to the regions below.

One of the young men, he learned from the talk in the servants' hall, was Jack Holliday, the youngest son of the railroad magnate; it was his sister who was engaged to marry the English duke. The other boy was the heir of a great lumber king from the West, and though he was only twenty he had got himself involved in a divorce scandal with some actor people. Who the young ladies were no one seemed to know, but there were half-whispered remarks about them, the significance of which was quite lost upon Samuel.

Presently the word came that the party was to stay to dinner. And then instantly the whole household sprang into activity. Above stairs everything would move with the smoothness of clockwork; but downstairs in the servants' quarters it was a serious matter that an elaborate banquet for seven people had to be got ready in a couple of hours. Even Samuel was pressed into service at odd jobs—something for which he was very glad, as it gave him a chance to remain in the midst of events.

So it happened that he saw Peters emerging from the wine cellar, followed by a man with a huge basket full of bottles. And this set Samuel to pondering hard, the while he scraped away at a bowl of potatoes. It was the one thing which had disconcerted him in the life of this upper world—the obvious part that drinking played in it. There were always decanters of liquor upon the buffet in the dining room; and liquor was served to guests upon any—and every pretext. And the women drank as freely as the men—even Miss Gladys drank, a thing which was simply appalling to Samuel.

Of course, these were privileged people, and they knew what they wanted to do. But

could it be right for anyone to drink? As in the case of suicide, Samuel found his moral convictions beginning to waver. Perhaps it was that drink did not affect these higher beings as it did ordinary people! Or perhaps what they drank was something that cheered without inebriating! Certain it was that the servants got drunk; and Samuel had seen that they took the stuff from the decanters used by the guests.

It was something over which he labored with great pain of soul. But, of course, all his hesitations and sophistries were for the benefit of his master—that it could be right for Samuel himself to touch liquor was something that could not by any chance enter his mind.

The dinner had begun; and Samuel went on several errands to the room below the butler's pantry, and so from the dumb-waiter shafts he could hear the sounds of laughter and conversation. And more wine went up—it was evidently a very merry party. The meal was protracted for two or three hours, and the noise grew louder and louder. They were shouting so that one could hear them all over the house. They were singing songs—wild rollicking choruses which were very wonderful to listen to, and yet terribly disturbing to Samuel. These fortunate successful ones—he would grant them the right to any happiness—it was to be expected that they should dwell in perpetual merriment and delight. But he could hear the champagne corks popping every few minutes. And COULD it be right for them to drink!

It grew late, and still the revelry went on. A thunderstorm had come up and was raging outside. The servants who were not at work, had gone to bed, but there was no sleep for Samuel; he continued to prowl about, restless and tormented. The whole house was now deserted, save for the party in the dining room; and so he crept up, by one of the rear stairways, and crouched in a doorway, where he could listen to the wild uproar.

He had been there perhaps ten minutes. He could hear the singing and yelling, though he could not make out the words because of the noise of the elements. But

then suddenly, above all the confusion, he heard a woman's shrieks piercing and shrill; and he started up and sprang into the hall. Whether they were cries of anger, or of fear, or of pain, Samuel could not be certain; but he knew that they were not cries of enjoyment.

He stood trembling. There rose a babel of shouts, and then again came the woman's voice—“No, no—you shan't, I say!”

“Sit down, you fool!” Samuel heard Bertie Lockman shout.

And then came another woman's voice—“Shut up and mind your business!”

“I'll tear your eyes out, you devil!” shrilled the first voice, and there followed a string of furious curses. The other woman replied in kind and Samuel made out that there was some kind of a quarrel, and that some of the party wanted to interfere, and that others wanted it to go on. All were whooping and shrieking uproariously, and the two women yelled like hyenas.

It was like the nightmare sounds he had heard from his cell in the police station, and Samuel listened appalled. There came a crash of breaking glass; and then suddenly, in the midst of the confusion, he heard his young master cry, “Get out of here!”—and the dining room door was flung open, and the uproar burst full upon him.

A terrible sight met his eyes. It was the beautiful and radiant creature who had kissed Bertie Lockman; her face was now flushed with drink and distorted with rage—her hair disheveled and her aspect wild; and she was screaming in the voice which had first startled Samuel. Bertie had grappled with her and was trying to push her out of the room, while she fought frantically, and screamed: “Let me go! Let me go!”

“Get out of here, I say!” cried Bertie, “I mean it now.”

“I won't! Let me be!” exclaimed the girl.

“Hurrah!” shouted the others, crowding behind them. Young Holliday was dancing about, waving a bottle and yelling like a maniac, “Go it, Bertie! Give it to him, Belle!”

“This is the end of it!” cried Bertie. “I'm through with you. And you get out of here!”

“I won't! I won't!” screamed the girl again and again. “Help!” And she flung one arm about his neck and caught at the doorway.

But he tore her loose and dragged her bodily across the entrance hall. “Out with you!” he exclaimed. “And don't ever let me see your face again!”

“Bertie! Bertie!” she protested.

“I mean it!” he said. “Here Jack! Open the door for me.”

“Bertie! No!” shrieked the girl; but then with a sudden effort he half threw her out into the darkness. There was a brief altercation outside, and then he sprang back, and flung to the heavy door, and bolted it fast.

“Now, by God!” he said, “you'll stay out.”

The girl beat and kicked frantically upon the door. But Bertie turned his back and staggered away, reeling slightly. “That'll settle it, I guess,” he said, with a wild laugh.

And amidst a din of laughter and cheers from the others, he went back to the dining room. One of the other women flung her arms about him hilariously, and Jack Holliday raised a bottle of wine on high, and shouted: “Off with the old love—on with the new!”

And so Bertie shut the door again, and the scene was hid from Samuel's eyes.

CHAPTER XII

For a long while, Samuel stood motionless, hearing the swish of the rain and the

crashing of the thunder as an echo of the storm in his own soul. It was as if a chasm had yawned beneath his feet, and all the castles of his dreams had come down in ruins. He stood there, stunned and horrified, staring at the wreckage of everything he had believed.

Then suddenly he crossed the drawing-room and opened one of the French windows which led to the piazza. The rain was driving underneath the shelter of the roof; but he faced it, and ran toward the door.

The girl was lying in front of it, and above the noise of the wind and rain he heard her sobbing wildly. He stood for a minute, hesitating; then he bent down and touched her.

“Lady,” he said.

She started. “Who are you?” she cried.

“I'm just one of the servants, ma'am.”

She caught her breath. “Did he send you?” she demanded.

“No,” said he, “I came to help you.”

“I don't need any help. Let me be.”

“But you can't stay here in the rain,” he protested. “You'll catch your death.”

“I want to die!” she answered. “What have I to live for?”

Samuel stood for a moment, perplexed. Then, as he touched her wet clothing again, common sense asserted itself. “You mustn't stay here,” he said. “You mustn't.”

But she only went on weeping. “He's cast me off!” she exclaimed. “My God, what shall I do?”

Samuel turned and ran into the house again and got an umbrella in the hall. Then he took the girl by the arm and half lifted her. “Come,” he said. “Please.”

“But where shall I go?” she asked.

“I know some one in the town who'll help you,” he said. “You can't stay here—you'll catch cold.”

“What's there left for me?” she moaned. “What am I good for? He's thrown me over—and I can't live without him!”

Samuel got the umbrella up and held it with one hand; then with his other arm about the girl's waist, he half carried her down the piazza steps. “That she-devil was after him!” she was saying. “And it was Jack Holliday set her at it, damn his soul! I'll pay him for it!”

She poured forth a stream of wild invective.

“Please stop,” pleaded Samuel. “People will hear you.”

“What do I care if they do hear me? Let them put me in jail—that's all I'm fit for. I'm drunk, and I'm good for nothing—and he's tired of me!”

So she rushed on, all the way toward town. Then, as they came to the bridge, she stopped and looked about. “Where are you taking me?” she asked.

“To a friend's house,” he said, having in mind the Stedmans.

“No,” she replied. “I don't want to see anyone. Take me to some hotel, can't you?”

“There's one down the street here,” he said. “I don't know anything about it.”

“I don't care. Any place.”

The rain had slackened and she stopped and gathered up her wet and straggled hair.

There was a bar underneath the hotel, and a flight of stairs led up to the office. They went up, and a man sitting behind the desk stared at them.

“I want to get a room for this lady,” said Samuel. “She's been caught in the rain.”

“Is she your wife?” asked the man.

“Mercy, no,” said he startled.

“Do you want a room, too?”

“No, no, I'm going away.”

“Oh!” said the man, and took down a key. “Register, please.”

Samuel took the pen, and then turned to the girl. “I beg pardon,” he said, “but I don't know your name.”

“Mary Smith,” she answered, and Samuel stared at her in surprise. “Mary Smith,” she repeated, and he wrote it down obediently.

The man took them upstairs; and Samuel, after helping the girl to a chair, shut the door and stood waiting. And she flung herself down upon the bed and burst into a paroxysm of weeping. Samuel had never even heard the word hysterics, and it was terrifying to him to see her—he could not have believed that so frail and slender a human body could survive so frightful a storm of emotion.

“Oh, please, please stop!” he cried wildly.

“I can't live without him!” she wailed again and again. “I can't live without him! What am I going to do?”

Samuel's heart was wrung. He went to the girl, and put his hand upon her arm. “Listen to me,” he said earnestly. “Let me try to help you.”

“What can you do?” she demanded.

“I'll go and see him. I'll plead with him—perhaps he'll listen to me.”

“All right!” she cried. “Anything! Tell him I'll kill myself! I'll kill him and Dolly both, before I'll ever let her have him! Yes, I mean it! He swore to me he'd never leave me! And I believed him—I trusted him!”

And Samuel clenched his hands with sudden resolution. “I'll see him about it,” he said. “I'll see him to-night.”

And leaving the other still shaking with sobs, he turned and left the room.

He stopped in the office to tell the man that he was going. But there was nobody there; and after hesitating a moment he went on.

The storm was over and the moon was out, with scud of clouds flying past. Samuel strode back to “Fairview,” with his hands gripped tightly, and a blaze of resolution in his soul.

He was just in time to see the automobile at the door, and the company taking their departure. They passed him, singing hilariously; and then he found himself confronting his young master.

“Who's that?” exclaimed Bertie, startled.

“It's me, sir,” said Samuel.

“Oh! Samuel! What are you doing here?”

“I've been with the young lady, sir.”

“Oh! So that's what became of her!”

“I took her to a hotel, sir.”

“Humph!” said Bertie. “I'm obliged to you.”

The piazza lights were turned up, and by them Samuel could see the other's face, flushed with drink, and his hair and clothing in disarray. He swayed slightly as he stood there.

“Master Albert,” said Samuel very gravely, “May I have a few words with you?”

“Sure,” said Bertie. He looked about him for a chair and sank into it. “What is it?” he asked.

“It's the young lady, Master Albert.”

“What about her?”

“She's very much distressed, sir.”

“I dare say. She'll get over it, Samuel.”

“Master Albert,” exclaimed the boy, “you've not treated her fairly.”

The other stared at him. “The devil!” he exclaimed.

“You must not desert her, sir! It would be a terrible thing to have on your conscience. You have ruined and betrayed her.”

“WHAT!” cried the other, and gazed at him in amazement. “Did she give you that kind of a jolly?”

“She didn't go into particulars”—said the boy.

“My dear fellow!” laughed Bertie. “Why, I've been the making of that girl. She was an eighteen-dollar-a-week chorus girl when I took her up.”

“That might be, Master Albert. But if she was an honest girl—”

“Nonsense, Samuel—forget it. She'd had three or four lovers before she ever laid eyes on me.”

There was a pause, while the boy strove to get these facts into his mind. “Even so,” he said, “you can't desert her and let her starve, Master Albert.”

“Oh, stuff!” said the other. “What put that into your head? I'll give her all the money she needs, if that's what's troubling her. Did she say that?”

“N—no,” admitted Samuel disconcerted. “But, Master Albert, she loves you.”

“Yes, I know,” said Bertie, “and that's where the trouble comes in. She wants to keep me in a glass case, and I've got tired of it.”

He paused for a moment; and then a sudden idea flashed over him. “Samuel!” he exclaimed “Why don't you marry her?”

Samuel started in amazement. “What!” he gasped.

“It's the very thing!” cried Bertie. “I'll set you up in a little business, and you can have an easy time.”

“Master Albert!” panted the boy shocked to the depths of his soul.

“She's beautiful, Samuel—you know she is. And she's a fine girl, too—only a little wild. I believe you'd be just the man to hold her in.”

Bertie paused a moment, and then, seeing that the other was unconvinced, he added with a laugh, “Wait till you've known her a bit. Maybe you'll fall in love with her.”

But Samuel only shook his head. “Master Albert,” he said, in a low voice, “I'm afraid you've not understood the reason I've come to you.”

“How do you mean?”

“This—all this business, sir—it's shocked me more than I can tell you. I came here to serve you, sir. You don't know how I felt about it. I was ready to do anything—I was so grateful for a chance to be near you! You were rich and great, and everything about you was so beautiful—I thought you must be noble and good, to have deserved so much. And now, instead, I find you are a wicked man!”

The other sat up. “The dickens!” he exclaimed.

“And it's a terrible thing to me,” went on Samuel. “I don't know just what to make of it—

“See here, Samuel!” demanded the other angrily. “Who sent you here to lecture me?”

“I don't see how it can be!” the boy exclaimed. “You are one of the fit people, as Professor Stewart explained it to me; and yet I know some who are better than you, and who have nothing at all.”

And Bertie Lockman, after another stare into the boy's solemn eyes, sank back in his chair and burst into laughter. “Look here, Samuel!” he exclaimed. “You aren't playing the game!”

“How do you mean, sir?”

“If I'm one of the fit ones, what right have you got to preach at me?”

Samuel was startled. “Why sir—” he stammered.

“Just look!” went on Bertie. “I'm the master, and you're the servant. I have breeding and culture—everything—and you're just a country bumpkin. And yet you presume

to set your ideas up against mine! You presume to judge me, and tell me what I ought to do!”

Samuel was taken aback by this. He could not think what to reply.

“Don't you see?” went on Bertie, following up his advantage. “If you really believe what you say, you ought to submit yourself to me. If I say a thing's right, that makes it right. If I had to come to you to have you approve it, wouldn't that make you the master and me the servant?”

“No, no—Master Albert!” protested Samuel. “I didn't mean quite that!”

“Why, I might just as well give you my money and be done with it,” insisted the other.

“Then you could fix everything up to suit yourself.”

“That isn't what I mean at all!” cried the boy in great distress. “I don't know how to answer you, sir—but there's a wrong in it.”

“But where? How?”

“Master Albert,” blurted Samuel—“it can't be right for you to get drunk!”

Bertie's face clouded.

“It can't be right, sir!” repeated Samuel.

And suddenly the other sat forward in his chair. “All right,” he said—“Maybe it isn't. But what are you going to do about it?”

There was anger in his voice, and Samuel was frightened into silence. There was a pause while they stared at each other.

“I'm on top!” exclaimed Bertie. “I'm on top, and I'm going to stay on top—don't you see? The game's in my hands; and if I please to get drunk, I get drunk. And you will take your orders and mind your own business. And what have you to say to that?”

“I presume, sir,” said Samuel, his voice almost a whisper, “I can leave your service.”

“Yes,” said the other—“and then either you'll starve, or else you'll go to somebody else who has money, and ask him to give you a job. And then you'll take your orders from him, and keep your opinions to yourself. Don't you see?”

“Yes,” said Samuel, lowering his eyes—“I see.”

“All right,” said Bertie; and he rose unsteadily to his feet. “Now, if you please,” said he, “you'll go back to Belle, wherever you've left her, and take her a message for me.”

“Yes, sir,” said Samuel.

“Tell her I'm through with her, and I don't want to see her again. I'll have a couple of hundred dollars a month sent to her so long as she lets me alone. If she writes to me or bothers me in any way, she'll get nothing. And that's all.”

“Yes, sir,” said Samuel.

“And as for you, this was all right for a joke, but it wouldn't bear repeating. From now on, you're the gardener's boy, and you'll not forget your place again.”

“Yes, sir,” said Samuel once more, and stood watching while his young master went into the house.

Then he turned and went down the road, half dazed.

Those had been sledge-hammer blows, and they had landed full and hard. They had left him without a shred of all his illusions. His work, that he had been so proud of—he hated it, and everything associated with it. And he was overwhelmed with perplexity and pain—just as before when he had found himself in jail, and it had dawned upon him that the Law, an institution which he had revered, might be no such august thing at all, but an instrument of injustice and oppression.

In that mood he came to the hotel. Again there was no one in the office, so he went directly to the room and knocked. There was no answer; he knocked again, more heavily.

“I wonder if she's gone,” he thought, and looked again at the number, to make sure he was at the right room. Then, timidly, he tried the door.

It opened. “Lady,” he said, and then louder, “Lady.”

There was no response, and he went in. Could she be asleep? he thought. No—that was not likely. He listened for her breathing. There was not a sound.

And finally he went to the bed, and put his hand upon it. Then he started back with a cry of terror. He had touched something warm and moist and sticky.

He rushed out into the hall, and as he looked at his hand he nearly fainted. It was a mass of blood!

“Help! Help!” the boy screamed; and he turned and rushed down the stairs into the office.

The proprietor came running in. “Look!” shouted Samuel. “Look what she's done!”

“Good God!” cried the man. And he rushed upstairs, the other following.

With trembling fingers the man lit the gas; and Samuel took one look, and then turned away and caught at a table, sick with horror. The girl was lying in the midst of a pool of blood; and across her throat, from ear to ear, was a great gaping slit.

“Oh! oh!” gasped Samuel, and then—“I can't stand it!” And holding out one hand from him, he hid his face with the other.

Meantime the proprietor was staring at him. “See here, young fellow,” he said.

“What is it?” asked Samuel.

“When did you find out about this?”

“Why, just now. When I came in.”

“You've been out?”

“Why of course. I went out just after we came.”

“I didn't see you.”

“No. I stopped in the office, but you weren't there.”

“Humph!” said the man, “maybe you did and maybe you didn't. You can tell it to the police.”

“The police!” echoed Samuel; and then in sudden horror—“Do you think I did it?”

“I don't know anything about it,” replied the other. “I only know you brought her here, and that you'll stay here till the police come.”

By this time several people had come into the room, awakened by the noise. Samuel, without a word more, went and sank down into a chair and waited. And half an hour later he was on his way to the station house again—this time with a policeman on either side of him, and gripping him very tightly. And now the charge against him was murder!

CHAPTER XIII

The same corpulent official was seated behind the desk at the police station; but on this occasion he woke up promptly. “The chief had better handle this,” he said, and went to the telephone.

“Where's this chap to go?” asked one of the policemen.

“We're full up,” said the sergeant. “Put him in with Charlie Swift. The chief'll be over in a few minutes.”

So once more Samuel was led into a cell, and heard the door clang upon him.

He was really not much alarmed this time, for he knew it was not his fault, and that he could prove it. But he was sick with horror at the fate of the unhappy girl. He began pacing back and forth in his cell.

Then suddenly from one corner growled a voice: “Say, when are you going to get quiet?”

“Oh, I beg pardon,” said Samuel. “I didn't know you were here.”

“What are you in for?” asked the voice.

“For murder,” said Samuel.

And he heard the cot give a sudden creak as the man sat up. “What!” he gasped.

“I didn't do it,” the boy explained hastily. “She killed herself.”

“Where was this?” asked the man.

“At the Continental Hotel.”

“And what did you have to do with it?”

“I took her there.”

“Who was she?”

“Why—she called herself Mary Smith.”

“Where did you meet her?”

“Up at 'Fairview.'”

“At 'Fairview'!” exclaimed the other.

“Yes,” said Samuel. “The Lockman place.”

“ALBERT Lockman's place?”

“Yes.”

“How did she come to be there?”

“Why, she was—a friend of his. She was there to dinner.”

“What!” gasped the man. “How do you know it?”

“I work there,” replied Samuel.

“And how did she come to go to the hotel?”

“Master Albert turned her out,” said Samuel. “And it was raining, and so I took her to a hotel.”

“For the love of God!” exclaimed the other; and then he asked quickly, “Did you tell

the sergeant that?”

“No,” said the boy. “He didn't ask me anything.”

The man sprang up and ran to the grated door and shook it. “Hello! Hello there!” he cried.

“What's the matter?” growled a policeman down the corridor.

“Come here! quick!” cried the other; and then through the grating he whispered, “Say, tell the cap to come here for a moment, will you?”

“What do you want?” demanded the policeman.

“Look here, O'Brien,” said the other. “You know Charlie Swift is no fool. And there's something about this fellow you've put in here that the cap ought to know about quick.”

The sergeant came. “Say,” said Charlie. “Did you ask this boy any questions?”

“No,” said the sergeant, “I'm waiting for the chief.”

“Well, did you know that girl came from Albert Lockman's place?”

“Good God, no!”

“He says she was there to dinner and Lockman turned her out of the house. This boy says he works for Lockman.”

“Well, I'm damned!” exclaimed the sergeant. And so Samuel was led into a private room.

A minute or two later “the chief” strode in. McCullagh was his name and he was huge and burly, with a red face and a protruding jaw. He went at Samuel as if he meant to strike him. “What's this you're givin' us?” he cried.

“Why—why—” stammered Samuel, in alarm.

“You're tryin' to tell me that girl came from Lockman's?” roared the chief.

“Yes, sir!”

“And you expect me to believe that?”

“It's true, sir!”

“What're you tryin' to give me, anyhow?” demanded the man.

“But it's true, sir!” declared Samuel again.

“You tell me she was there at dinner?”

“Yes, sir!”

“Come! Quit your nonsense, boy!”

“But she was, sir!”

“What do you expect to make out of this, young fellow?”

“But she was, sir!”

Apparently the chief's method was to doubt every statement that Samuel made, and repeat his incredulity three times, each time in a louder tone of voice and with a more ferocious expression of countenance. Then, if the boy stuck it out, he concluded that he was telling the truth. By this exhausting method the examination reached its end, and Samuel was led back to his cell.

“Did you stick to your story?” asked his cellmate.

“Of course,” said he.

“Well, if it is true,” remarked the other, “there'll be something doing soon.”

And there was. About an hour later the sergeant came again and entered. He drew the two men into a corner.

“See here, young fellow,” he said to Samuel in a low voice. “Have you got anything against young Lockman?”

“No,” replied Samuel. “Why?”

“If we let you go, will you shut up about this?”

“Why, yes,” said the boy, “if you want me to.”

“All right,” said the sergeant. “And you, Charlie—we've got you dead, you know.”

“Yes,” said the other, “I know.”

“And there's ten years coming to you, you understand?”

“Yes, I guess so.”

“All right. Then will you call it a bargain?”

“I will,” said Charlie. “You'll skip the town, and hold your mouth?”

“I will.”

“Very well. Here's your own kit—and you ought to get through them bars before daylight. And here's fifty dollars. You take this young fellow to New York and lose him. Do you see?”

“I see,” said Charlie.

“All right,” went on the sergeant. “And mind you don't play any monkey tricks!”

“I'm on,” said Charlie with a chuckle.

And without more ado he selected a saw from his bag and set to work at the bars of the window. The sergeant retired; and Samuel sat down on the floor and gasped for breath.

For about an hour the man worked without a word. Then he braced himself against the wall and wrenched out one of the bars; then another wrench, and another bar gave way; after which he packed up his kit and slipped it into a pocket under his coat. “Now,” he said, “come on.”

He slipped through the opening and dropped to the ground, and Samuel followed suit. “This way,” he whispered, and they darted down an alley and came out upon a dark street. For perhaps a mile they walked on in silence, then Charlie turned into a doorway and opened the door with a latch key, and they went up two flights of stairs and into a rear room. He lit the gas, and took off his coat and flung it on the bed. “Now, make yourself at home,” he said.

“Is this your room?” asked Samuel.

“Yes,” was the reply. “The bulls haven't found it, either!”

“But I thought we were to go out of town!” exclaimed the other.

“Humph!” laughed Charlie. “Young fellow, you're easy!”

“Do you mean you're not going?” cried Samuel.

“What! When I've got a free license to work the town?”

Samuel stared at him, amazed. “You mean they wouldn't arrest you?”

“Not for anything short of murder, I think.”

“But—but what could you do?”

“Just suppose I was to tip off some newspaper with that story? Not here in Lockmanville—but the New York Howler, we'll say?”

“I see!” gasped Samuel.

Charlie had tilted back in his chair and was proceeding to fill his pipe. “Gee, sonny,” he said, “they did me the greatest turn of my life when they poked you into that cell. I'll get what's coming to me now!”

“How will you get it?” asked the boy.

“I'm a gopherman,” said the other.

“What's that?” asked Samuel.

“You'll have to learn to sling the lingo,” said Charlie with a laugh. “It's what you call a burglar.”

Samuel looked at the man in wonder. He was tall and lean, with a pale face and restless dark eyes. He had a prominent nose and a long neck, which gave him a peculiar, alert expression that reminded Samuel of a startled partridge.

“Scares you, hey?” he said. “Well, I wasn't always a gopherman.”

“What were you before that?”

“I was an inventor.”

“An inventor!” exclaimed Samuel.

“Yes. Have you seen the glass-blowing machines here in town?”

“No, I haven't.”

“Well, I invented three of them. And old Henry Lockman robbed me of them.”

“Robbed you!” gasped the boy amazed.

“Yes,” said the other. “Didn't he rob everybody he ever came near?”

“I didn't know it,” replied Samuel.

“Guess you never came near him,” laughed the man. “Say—where do you come from, anyhow? Tell me about yourself.”

So Samuel began at the beginning and told his story. Pretty soon he came to the episode of “Glass Bottle Securities.”

“My God!” exclaimed the other. “I thought you said old Lockman had never robbed you!”

“I did,” answered Samuel.

“But don't you see that he robbed you then?”

“Why, no. It wasn't his fault. The stock went down when he died.”

“But why should it have gone down when he died, except that he'd unloaded it on the public for a lot more than it was worth?”

Samuel's jaw fell. “I never thought of that,” he said.

“Go on,” said Charlie.

Then Samuel told how he was starving, and how he had gone to Professor Stewart, and how the professor had told him he was one of the unfit. His companion had taken his pipe out of his mouth and was staring at him.

“And you swallowed all that?” he gasped.

“Yes,” said Samuel.

“And you tried to carry it out! You went away to starve!”

“But what else was there for me to do?” asked the boy.

“But the Lord!” ejaculated the other. “When it came time for ME to starve, I can promise you I found something else to do!”

“Go on,” he said after a pause; and Samuel told how he had saved young Lockman's life, and what happened afterwards.

“And so he was your dream!” exclaimed the other. “You were up against a brace game, Sammy!”

“But how was I to know?” protested the boy.

“You should read the papers. That kid's been cutting didoes in the Tenderloin for a couple of years. He wasn't worth the risking of your little finger—to say nothing of your life.”

“It seems terrible,” said Samuel dismayed.

“The trouble with you, Sammy,” commented the other, “is that you're too good to live. That's all there is to your unfitness. You take old Lockman, for instance. What was all his 'fitness'? It was just that he was an old wolf. I was raised in this town, and my dad went to school with him. He began by cheating his sisters out of their inheritance. Then he foreclosed a mortgage on a glass factory and went into the business. He was a skinflint, and he made money—they say he burned the plant down for the insurance, but I don't know. Anyway, he had rivals, and he made a crooked deal with some of the railroad people—gave them stock you know—and got rebates. And he had some union leaders on his pay rolls, and he called strikes on his rivals, and when he'd ruined them he bought them out for a song. And when he had everything in his hands, and got tired of paying high wages, he fired some of the union men and forced a strike. Then he brought in some strike-breakers and hired

some thugs to slug them, and turned the police loose on the men—and that was the end of the unions. Meanwhile he'd been running the politics of the town, and he'd given himself all the franchises—there was nobody could do anything in Lockmanville unless he said so. And finally, when he'd got the glass trade cornered, he formed the Trust, and issued stock for about five times what the plants had cost, and dumped it on the market for suckers like you to buy. And that's the way he made his millions—that's the meaning of his palace and all the wonders you saw up there. And now he's dead, and all his fortune belongs to Master Albert, who never did a stroke of work in his life, and isn't 'fit' enough to be a ten-dollar-a-week clerk. And you come along and lie down for him to walk on, and the more nails he has in his boots the better you like it! And there's the whole story for you!"

Samuel had been listening awe-stricken. The abysmal depths of his ignorance and folly!

"Now he's got his money," said the other—"and he means to keep it. So there are the bulls, to slam you over the head if you bother him. That's called the Law! And then he hires some duffer to sit up and hand you out a lot of dope about your being 'unfit'; and that's called a College! Don't you see?"

"Yes," whispered Samuel. "I see!"

His companion stabbed at him with his finger. "All that was wrong with you, Sammy," he said, "was that you swallowed the dope! That's where your 'unfitness' came in! Why—take his own argument. Suppose you hadn't given up. Suppose you'd fought and won out. Then you'd have been as good as any of them, wouldn't you? Suppose, for instance, you'd hit that son-of-a-gun over the head with a poker and got away with his watch and his pocketbook—then you'd have been 'fitter' than he, wouldn't you?"

Samuel had clutched at the arms of his chair and was staring with wide-open eyes.

"You never thought of that, hey, Sammy? But that's what I found myself facing a

few years ago. They'd got every cent I had, and I was ready for the scrap heap. But I said, 'Nay, nay, Isabel!' I'd played their game and lost—but I made a new game—and I made my own rules, you can bet!"

"You mean stealing!" cried the boy.

"I mean War," replied the other. "And you see—I've survived! I'm not pretty to look at and I don't live in a palace, but I'm not starving, and I've got some provisions salted away."

"But they had you in jail!"

"Of course. I've done my bit—twice. But that didn't kill me; and I can learn things, even in the pen."

There was a pause. Then Charlie Swift stood up and shook the ashes out of his pipe. "Speaking of provisions," he said, "these midnight adventures give you an appetite." And he got out a box of crackers and some cheese and a pot of jam. "Move up," he said, "and dip in. You'll find that red stuff the real thing. My best girl made it. One of the things that bothered me in jail was the fear that the bulls might get it."

Samuel was too much excited to eat. But he sat and watched, while his companion stowed away crackers and cheese.

"What am I going to do now?" he said half to himself.

"You come with me," said Charlie. "I'll teach you a trade where you'll be your own boss. And I'll give you a quarter of the swag until you've learned it."

"What!" gasped Samuel in horror. "Be a burglar!"

"Sure," said the other. "What else can you do?"

"I don't know," said the boy.

"Have you got any money?"

"Only a few pennies. I hadn't got my wages yet."

"I see. And will you go and ask Master Albert for them?"

“No,” said Samuel quickly. “I'll never do that!”

“Then you'll go out and hunt for a job again, I suppose? Or will you start out on that starving scheme again?”

“Don't!” cried the boy wildly. “Let me think!”

“Come! Don't be a summer-boarder!” exclaimed the other. “You've got the professor's own warrant for it, haven't you? And you've got a free field before you—you can help yourself to anything you want in Lockmanville, and the bulls won't dare to lift a finger! You'll be a fool if you let go of such a chance.”

“But it's wrong!” protested Samuel. “You know it's wrong!”

“Humph!” laughed Charlie. And he shut the top of the cracker box with a bang and rose up. “You sleep over it,” he said. “You'll be hungry to-morrow morning.”

“That won't make any difference!” cried the boy.

“Maybe not,” commented the other; and then he added with a grin: “Don't you ask me for grub. For that would be charity; and if you're really one of the unfit, it's not for me to interfere with nature!”

And so all the next day Samuel sat in Charlie's room and faced the crackers and cheese and the pot of jam, and wrestled with the problem. He knew what it would mean to partake of the food, and Charlie knew what it would mean also; and feeling certain that Samuel would not partake upon any other terms, he left the covers off the food, so that the odors might assail the boy's nostrils.

Of course Samuel might have gone out and bought some food with the few pennies he had in his pocket. But that would have been merely to postpone the decision, and what was the use of that? And to make matters ten times worse, he owed money to the Stedmans—for he had lived upon the expectation of his salary!

In the end it was not so much hunger that moved him, as it was pure reason. For Samuel, as we know, was a person who took an idea seriously; and there was no

answer to be found to Charlie's argument. Doubtless the reader will find a supply of them, but Samuel racked his wits in vain. If, as the learned professor had said, life is a struggle for existence, and those who have put money in their purses are the victors; and if they have nothing to do for the unemployed save to let them starve or put them in jail; then on the other hand, it would seem to be up to the unemployed to take measures for their own survival. And apparently the only proof of their fitness would be to get some money away from those who had it. Had not Herbert Spencer, the authority in such matters, stated that “inability to catch prey shows a falling short of conduct from its ideal”? And if the good people let themselves be starved to death by the wicked, would that not mean that only the wicked would be left alive? It was thoughts like this that were driving Samuel—he had Bertie Lockman's taunts ringing in his ears, and for the life of him he could not see why he should vacate the earth in favor of Bertie Lockman!

So breakfast time passed, and dinner time passed, and supper time came. And his friend spread out the contents of his larder again, and then leaned over the table and said, “Come and try it once and see how you like it!”

And Samuel clenched his hands suddenly and answered—“All right, I'll try it!”

Then he started upon a meal. But in the middle of it he stopped, and set down an untasted cracker, and gasped within himself—“Merciful Heaven! I've promised to be a burglar!”

The other was watching him narrowly. “Ain't going to back out?” he asked.

“No,” said Samuel. “I won't back out! But it seems a little queer, that's all.”

CHAPTER XIV

The meal over, Charlie Swift took out a pencil and paper. “Now,” said he. “To business!”

Samuel pulled up his chair and the other drew a square. “This is a house I've been studying. It's on a corner—these are streets, and here's an alley. This is the side door that I think I can open. There's a door here and one in back here. Fix all that in your mind.”

“I have it,” said the boy.

“You go in, and here's the entrance hall. The front stairs are here. What I'm after is the family plate, and it's up on the second floor. I'll attend to that. The only trouble is that over here beyond the library there's a door, and, somebody sleeps in that room. I don't know who it is. But I want you to stay in the hall, and if there's anyone stirs in that room you're to dart upstairs and give one whistle at the top. Then I'll come.”

“And what then?”

“This is the second floor,” said Charlie, drawing another square. “And here's the servant's stairway, and we can get down to this entrance in the rear, that I'll open before I set to work. On the other hand, if you hear me whistle upstairs, then you're to get out by the way we came. If there's any alarm given, then it's each for himself.”

“I see,” said Samuel; and gripped his hands so that his companion might not see how he was quaking.

Charlie got out his kit and examined it to make sure that the police had kept nothing. Then he went to a bureau drawer and got a revolver, examined it and slipped it into his pocket. “They kept my best one,” he said. “So I've none to lend you.”

“I—I wouldn't take it, anyway,” stammered the other in horror.

“You'll learn,” said the burglar with a smile.

Then he sat down again and drew a diagram of the streets of Lockmanville, so that Samuel could find his way back in case of trouble. “We don't want to take any chances,” said he. “And mind, if I get caught, I'll not mention you—wild horses couldn't drag it out of me. And you make the same promise.”

“I make it,” said Samuel.

“Man to man,” said Charlie solemnly; and Samuel repeated the words.

“How did you come to know so much about the house?” he asked after a while.

“Oh! I've lived here and I've kept my eyes open. I worked as a plumber's man for a couple of months and I made diagrams.”

“But don't the police get to know you?”

“Yes—they know me. But I skip out when I've done a job. And when I come back it's in disguise. Once I grew a beard and worked in the glass works all day and did my jobs at night; and again I lived here as a woman.”

“A woman!” gasped the boy.

“You see,” said the other with a laugh, “there's more ways than one to prove your fitness.” And he went on, narrating some of his adventures—adventures calculated to throw the glamour of romance about the trade of burglar. Samuel listened breathless with wonder.

“We'd better get a bit of sleep now,” said Charlie later on. “We'll start about one.” And he stretched himself out on the bed, while the other sat motionless in the chair, pondering hard over his problem. There was no sleeping for Samuel that night.

He would carry out his bargain—that was his decision. But he would not take his share of the plunder, except just enough to pay Mrs. Stedman. And he would never be a burglar again!

At one o'clock he awakened his companion, and they set out through the deserted streets. They crossed the bridge to the residential part of town; and then, at a corner, Charlie stopped. “There's the place,” he said, pointing to a large house set back within a garden.

They gazed about. The coast was clear; and they darted into the door which had been indicated in the diagram. Samuel crouched in the doorway, motionless, while

the other worked at the lock. Samuel's knees were trembling so that he could hardly stand up.

The door was opened without a sound having been made, and they stole into the entrance. They listened—the house was as still as death. Then Charlie flashed his lantern, and Samuel had quick glimpses of a beautiful and luxuriously furnished house. It was nothing like “Fairview,” of course; but it was finer than Professor Stewart's home. There was a library, with great leather armchairs; and in the rear a dining room, where mirrors and cut glass flashed back the far-off glimmer of the light.

“There's your door over there,” whispered Charlie. “And you'd better stay behind those curtains.”

So Samuel took up his post; the light vanished and his companion started for the floor above. Several times the boy heard the stairs creaking, and his heart leaped into his throat; but then the sounds ceased and all was still.

The minutes crawled by—each one seemed an age. He stood rooted to the spot, staring into the darkness—half-hypnotized by the thought of the door which he could not see, and of the person who might be asleep behind it. Surely this was a ghastly way for a man to have to gain his living—it were better to perish than to survive by such an ordeal! Samuel was appalled by the terrors which took possession of him, and the tremblings and quiverings which he could not control. Any danger in the world he would have faced for conscience' sake; but this was wrong—he knew it was wrong! And so all the glow of conviction was gone from him.

What could be the matter? Why should Charlie be so long? Surely he had had time enough to ransack the whole house! Could it be that he had got out by the other way—that he had planned to skip town, and leave Samuel there in the lurch?

And then again came a faint creaking upon the stairs. He was coming back! Or could

it by any chance be another person? He dared not venture to whisper; he stood, tense with excitement, while the sounds came nearer—it was as if some monster were creeping upon him in the darkness, and folding its tentacles about him!

He heard a sound in the hall beside him. Why didn't Charlie speak? What was the matter with him? What—

And then suddenly came a snapping sound, and a blinding glare of light flashed up, flooding the hallway and everything about him. Samuel staggered back appalled. There was some one standing there before him! He was caught!

Thus for one moment of dreadful horror. And then he realized that the person confronting him was a little girl!

She was staring at him; and he stared at her. She could not have been more than ten years old, and wore a nightgown trimmed with lace. She had bright yellow hair, and her finger was upon the button which controlled the lights.

For fully a minute neither of them moved. Then Samuel heard a voice whispering: “Are you a burglar?”

He could not speak, but he nodded his head. And then again he heard the child's voice: “Oh, I'm so glad!”

“I'm so glad!” she repeated again, and her tone was clear and sweet. “I'd been praying for it! But I'd almost given up hope!”

Samuel found voice enough to gasp, “Why?”

“My mamma read me a story,” said the child. “It was about a little girl who met a burglar. And ever since I've been waiting for one to come.”

There was a pause. “Are you a really truly burglar?” the child whispered.

“I—I think so,” replied Samuel.

“You look very young,” she said.

And the other bethought himself. “I'm only a beginner,” he said. “This is really my

first time.”

“Oh!” said the child with a faint touch of disappointment. “But still you will do, won't you?”

“Do for what?” asked the boy in bewilderment.

“You must let me reform you,” exclaimed the other. “That's what the little girl did in the story. Will you?”

“Why—why, yes”—gasped Samuel. “I—I really meant to reform.”

Then suddenly he thought he heard a sound in the hall above. He glanced up, and for one instant he had a glimpse of the face of Charlie peering down at him.

“What are you looking at?” asked the child.

“I thought—that is—there's some one with me,” stammered Samuel, forgetting his solemn vow.

“Oh! two burglars!” cried the child in delight. “And may I reform him, too?”

“I think you'd better begin with me,” said Samuel.

“Will he go away, do you think?”

“Yes—I think he's gone now.”

“But you—you won't go yet, will you?” asked the child anxiously. “You'll stay and talk to me?”

“If you wish”—gasped the boy.

“You aren't afraid of me?” she asked.

“Not of you,” said he. “But if some one else should waken.”

“No, you needn't think of that. Mamma and grandma both lock their doors at night. And papa's away.”

“Who sleeps there?” asked Samuel, pointing to the door he had been watching.

“That's papa's room,” said the child; and the other gave a great gasp of relief.

“Come,” said the little girl; and she seated herself in one of the big leather armchairs. “Now,” she continued, “tell me how you came to be a burglar.”

“I had no money,” said Samuel, “and no work.”

“Oh!” exclaimed the child; and then, “What is your work?”

“I lived on a farm all my life,” said he. “My father died and then I wanted to go to the city. I was robbed of all my money, and I was here without any friends and I couldn't find anything to do at all. I was nearly starving.”

“Why, how dreadful!” cried the other. “Why didn't you come to see papa?”

“Your father?” said he. “I didn't want to beg—”

“It wouldn't have been begging. He'd have been glad to help you.”

“I—I didn't know about him,” said Samuel. “Why should he—-”

“He helps everyone,” said the child. “That's his business.”

“How do you mean?”

“Don't you know who my father is?” she asked in surprise.

“No,” said he, “I don't.”

“My father is Dr. Vince,” she said; and then she gazed at him with wide-open eyes. “You've never heard of him!”

“Never,” said Samuel.

“He's a clergyman,” said the little girl.

“A clergyman!” echoed Samuel aghast. Somehow it seemed far worse to have been robbing a clergyman.

“And he's so good and kind!” went on the other. “He loves everyone, and tries to help them. And if you had come to him and told him, he'd have found some work for you.”

“There are a great many people in Lockmanville out of work,” said Samuel gravely.

“Oh! but they don't come to my papa!” said the child. “You must come and let him help you. You must promise me that you will.”

“But how can I? I've tried to rob him!”

“But that won't make any difference! You don't know my papa. If you should tell him that you had done wrong and that you were sorry—you are sorry, aren't you?”

“Yes, I'm very sorry.”

“Well, then, if you told him that, he'd forgive you—he'd do anything for you, I know. If he knew that I'd helped to reform you, he'd be so glad!—I did help a little, didn't I?”

“Yes,” said Samuel. “You helped.”

“You—you weren't very hard to reform, somehow,” said the child hesitatingly. “The little girl in the story had to talk a good deal more. Are you sure that you are going to be good now?”

Samuel could not keep back a smile. “Truly I will,” he said.

“I guess you were brought up to be good,” reflected the other. “I don't think you were very bad, anyway. It must be very hard to be starving.”

“It is indeed,” said the boy with conviction.

“I never heard of anyone starving before,” went on the other. “If that happened to people often, there'd be more burglars, I guess.”

There was a pause. “What is your name?” asked the little girl. “Mine is Ethel. And now I'll tell you what we'll do. My papa's on his way home—his train gets here early in the morning. And you come up after breakfast—I'll make him wait for you. And then you can tell it all to him, and then you won't have any more troubles. Will you do that?”

“You think he won't be angry with me?” asked Samuel.

“No, I'm sure of it.”

“And he won't want to have me arrested?”

“Oh, dear me!” exclaimed Ethel with an injured look. “Why, my papa goes to see people in prison, and tries to help them get out! I'll promise you, truly.”

“Very well,” said Samuel, “I'll come.”

And so they parted. And Samuel found himself out upon the street again, with the open sky above him, and a great hymn of relief and joy in his soul. He was no longer a burglar!

CHAPTER XV

Samuel walked the streets all that night. For he fully meant to do what he had promised the child, and he did not care to go back to Charlie Swift, and face the latter's protests and ridicule.

At eight the next morning, tired but happy, he rang the bell of Dr. Vince's house. Ethel herself opened the door; and at the sight of him her face lighted up with joy, and she turned, crying out, “Here he is!”

And she ran halfway down the hall, exclaiming: “He's come! I told you he'd come! Papa!”

A man appeared at the dining room door, and stood staring at Samuel. “There he is, papa!” cried Ethel beside herself with delight. “There's my burglar!”

Dr. Vince came down the hall. He was a stockily built gentleman with a rather florid complexion and bushy beard. “Good morning,” he said.

“Good morning, sir,” said Samuel.

“And are you really the young man who was here last night?”

“Yes, sir,” said Samuel.

The worthy doctor was obviously disconcerted. “This is quite extraordinary!” he exclaimed. “Won't you come in?”

They sat down in the library. “I don't want you to think, sir,” said Samuel quickly, “that I come to beg. Your little girl asked me—-”

“Don't mention that,” said the other. “If the story you told Ethel is really true, I should be only too glad to do anything that I could.”

“Thank you, sir,” said Samuel.

“And so you really broke into my house last night!” exclaimed the other. “Well! well! And it is the first time you have ever done anything of the sort in your life?”

“The very first,” said the boy.

“But what could have put it into your head?”

“There was another person with me,” said Samuel—“you will understand that I would rather not talk about him.”

“I see,” said the other. “He led you to it?”

“Yes, sir.”

“And you have never done anything dishonest before?”

“No, sir.”

“You have never even been a thief?”

“No!” exclaimed Samuel indignantly.

The other noticed the tone of his voice. “But why did you begin now?” he asked.

“I was persuaded that it was right,” said Samuel.

“But how could that be? Had you never been taught about stealing?”

“Yes, sir,” replied the boy—“but it's not as simple as it seems. I had met Professor Stewart—”

“Professor Stewart!” echoed the other.

“Yes, sir—the professor at the college.”

“But what did he have to do with it?”

“Why, sir, he told me about the survival of the fittest, and how I had to starve to death because I was one of the failures. And then you see, sir, I met Master Albert—”

“Master Albert?”

“Albert Lockman, sir. And the professor had said that he was one of the fit; and I saw that he got drunk, sir, and did other things that were very wicked, and so it did not seem just right that I should starve. I can see now that it was very foolish of me; but I thought that I ought to fight, and try to survive if I possibly could. And then I met Char—that is, a bad man who offered to show me how to be a burglar.”

The other had been listening in amazement. “Boy,” he said, “are you joking with me?”

“Joking!” echoed Samuel, his eyes opening wide. And then the doctor caught his breath and proceeded to question him. He went back to the beginning, and made Samuel lay bare the story of his whole life. But when he got to the interview with Professor Stewart, the other could contain himself no longer. “Samuel!” he exclaimed, “this is the most terrible thing I have ever heard in my life.”

“How do you mean, sir?”

“You have been saved—providentially saved, as I firmly believe. But you were hanging on the very verge of a life of evil; and all because men in our colleges are permitted to teach these blasphemous and godless doctrines. This is what they call science! This is our modern enlightenment!”

The doctor had risen and begun to pace the floor in his agitation. “I have always insisted that the consequence of such teaching would be the end of all morality. And here we have the thing before our very eyes! A young man of decent life is actually led to the commission of a crime, as a consequence of the teachings of Herbert Spencer!”

Samuel was listening in consternation. “Then it isn't true what Herbert Spencer

says!" he exclaimed.

"True!" cried the other. "Why, Samuel, don't you KNOW that it isn't true? Weren't you brought up to read the Bible? And do you read anything in the Bible about the struggle for existence? Were you taught there that your sole duty was to fight with other men for your own selfish ends? Was it not rather made clear to you that you were not to concern yourself with your own welfare at all, but to struggle for the good of others, and to suffer rather than do evil? Why Samuel, what would your father have said, if he could have seen you last night—his own dear son, that he had brought up in the way of the Gospel?"

"Oh, sir!" cried Samuel, struck to the heart.

"My boy!" exclaimed the other. "Our business in this world is not that we should survive, but that the good should survive. We are to live for it and to die for it, if need be. We are to love and serve others—we are to be humble and patient—to sacrifice ourselves freely. The survival of the fittest! Why, Samuel, the very idea is a denial of spirituality—what are we that we should call ourselves fit? To think that is to be exposed to all the base passions of the human heart—to greed and jealousy and hate! Such doctrines are the cause of all the wickedness, of all the materialism of our time—of crime and murder and war! My boy, do you read that Jesus went about, worrying about His own survival, and robbing others because they were less fit than He? Only think how it would have been with you had you been called to face Him last night?"

The shame of this was more than Samuel could bear. "Oh, stop, stop, sir!" he cried, and covered his face with his hands. "I see it all! I have been very wicked!"

"Yes!" exclaimed the other. "You have been wicked."

The tears were welling into Samuel's eyes. "I can't see how I did it, sir," he whispered. "I have been blind—I have been lost. I am a strayed sheep!" And then suddenly his emotion overcame him, and he burst into a paroxysm of weeping. "I

can't believe it of myself!" he exclaimed again and again. "I have been out of my senses!"

The doctor watched him for a few moments. "Perhaps it was not altogether your fault," he said more gently. "You have been led astray—"

"No, no!" cried the boy. "I am bad. I see it—it must be! I could never have been persuaded, if I had not been bad! It began at the very beginning. I yielded to the first temptation when I stole a ride upon the train. And everything else came from that—it has been one long chain!"

"Let us be glad that it is no longer," said Dr. Vince—"and that you have come to the end of it."

"Ah, but have I?" cried the boy wildly.

"Why not? Surely you will no longer be led by such false teaching!"

"No, sir. But see what I have done! Why I am liable to be sent to jail—for I don't know how long."

"You mean for last night?" asked the doctor. "But no one will ever know about that. You may start again and live a true life."

"Ah," cried Samuel, "but the memory of it will haunt me—I can never forgive myself!"

"We are very fortunate," said the other gravely, "if we have only a few things in our lives that we cannot forget, and that we cannot forgive ourselves."

The worthy doctor had been anticipating a long struggle to bring the young criminal to see the error of his ways; but instead, he found that he had to use his skill in casuistry to convince the boy that he was not hopelessly sullied. And when at last Samuel had been persuaded that he might take up his life again, there was nothing that would satisfy him save to go back where he had been before, and take up that struggle with starvation.

“I must prove that I can conquer,” he said—“I yielded to the temptation once, and now I must face it.”

“But, Samuel,” protested the doctor, “it is no man's duty to starve. You must let me help you, and find some useful work for you, and some people who will be your friends.”

“Don't think I am ungrateful,” cried the boy—“but why should I be favored? There are so many others starving, right here in this town. And if I am going to love them and serve them, why should I have more than they have? Wouldn't that be selfish of me? Why, sir, I'd be making profit out of my repentance!”

“I don't quite see that,” said the other—

“Why, sir! Isn't it just because I've been so sorry that you are willing to help me? There are so many others who have not been helped—some I know, sir, that need it far more than I do, and have deserved it more, too!”

“It seems to me, my boy, that is being too hard upon yourself—and on me. I cannot relieve all the distress in the world. I relieve what I find out about. And so I must help you. And don't you see that I wish to keep you near me, so that I can watch after your welfare? And perhaps—who knows—you can help me. The harvest is plenty, you have heard, and the laborers are few. There are many ways in which you could be of service in my church.”

“Ah, sir!” cried Samuel, overwhelmed with gratitude—“if you put it that way—”

“I put it that way most certainly,” said Dr. Vince. “You have seen a new light—you wish to live a new life. Stay here and live it in Lockmanville—there is no place in the world where it could be more needed.”

All this while the little girl had been sitting in silence drinking in the conversation. Now suddenly she rose and came to Samuel, putting her hand in his. “Please stay,” she said.

And Samuel answered, “Very well—I'll stay.”

So then they fell to discussing his future, and what Dr. Vince was going to do for him. The good doctor was inwardly more perplexed about it than he cared to let Samuel know.

“I'll ask Mr. Wygant,” he said—“perhaps he can find you a place in one of his factories.”

“Mr. Wygant?” echoed Samuel. “You mean Miss Gladys's father?”

“Yes,” said the doctor. “Do you know Miss Gladys?”

“I have met her two or three times,” said the boy.

“They are parishioners of mine,” remarked the other.

And Samuel gave a start. “Why!” he exclaimed. “Then you—you must be the rector of St. Matthew's.”

“Yes,” was the reply. “Didn't you know that?”

The boy was a little awed. He had seen the great brownstone temple upon the hill—a structure far more splendid than anything he had ever dreamed of.

“Have you never attended?” asked the doctor.

“I went to the mission once,” said Samuel—referring to the little chapel in the poor quarters of the town. “A friend of mine goes there—Sophie Stedman. She works in Mr. Wygant's cotton mill.”

“I should be glad to have you come to the church,” said the other.

“I'd like to very much,” replied the boy. “I didn't know exactly if I ought to, you know.”

“I am sorry you got that impression,” said Dr. Vince. “The church holds out its arms to everyone.”

“Well,” began Samuel apologetically, “I knew that all the rich people went to St.

Matthew's—-”

“The church does not belong to the rich people,” put in the doctor very gravely; “the church belongs to the Lord.”

And so Samuel, overflowing with gratitude and happiness, joined St. Matthew's forthwith; and all the while in the deeps of his soul a voice was whispering to him that it was Miss Gladys' church also! And he would see his divinity again!

CHAPTER XVI

Samuel went back in great excitement to the Stedmans', to tell them of his good fortune. And the family sat about in a circle and listened to the recital in open-eyed amazement. It was a wonderful thing to have an adventurer like Samuel in one's house!

But the boy noticed that Sophie did not seem as much excited as he had anticipated. She sat with her head resting in her hands. And when the others had left the room—“Oh, Samuel,” she said. “I feel so badly to-day! I don't see how I'm going to go on.”

“Listen, Sophie,” he said quickly. “That's one of the first things I thought about—I can give you a chance now.”

“How do you mean?”

“I can get Dr. Vince to help you find some better work.”

“Did he say he would?” asked the child.

“No,” was the reply—“but he is so good to everyone. And all the rich people go to his church, you know. He said he wanted me to help him; so I shall find out things like that for him to do.”

And Samuel went on, pouring out his praises of the kind and gentle clergyman, and striving to interest Sophie by his pictures of the new world that was to open before

her. “I'm going to see him again to-morrow,” he said. “Then you'll see.”

“Samuel,” announced the doctor when he called the next morning, “I have found a chance for you.” And Samuel's heart gave a great leap of joy.

It appeared that the sexton of St. Matthew's was growing old. They did not wish to change, but there must be some one to help him. The pay would not be high; but he would have a chance to work in the church, and to be near his benefactor. The tears of gratitude started into his eyes as he heard this wonderful piece of news.

“I'll see more of Miss Gladys!” the voice within him was whispering eagerly.

“Doctor,” he said after a pause, “I've some good news for you also.”

“What is it?” asked the other.

“It's a chance for you to help some one.”

“Oh!” said the doctor.

“It's little Sophie Stedman,” said Samuel; and he went on to tell how he had met the widow, and about her long struggle with starvation, and then of Sophie's experiences in the cotton mill.

“But what do you want me to do?” asked the other, with a troubled look.

“Why,” said Samuel, “we must save her. We must find her some work that will not kill her.”

“But, Samuel!” protested the other. “There are so many in her position—and how can I help it?”

“But, doctor! She can't stand it!”

“I know, my boy. It is a terrible thing to think of. Still, I can't undertake to find work for everyone.”

“But she will die!” cried the boy. “Truly, it is killing her! And, doctor, she has never had a chance in all her life! Only think—how would you feel if Ethel had to work in a cotton mill?”

There was a pause. “I honestly can't see—” began the bewildered clergyman.

“It will be quite easy for you to help her,” put in the boy; “because, you see, Mr. Wygant belongs to your church!”

“But what has that to do with it?”

“Why—it's Mr. Wygant's mill that she works in.”

“Yes,” said the doctor. “But—I—-”

“Surely,” exclaimed Samuel, “you don't mean that he wouldn't want to know about it!”

“Ahem!” said the other; and again there was a pause.

It was broken by Ethel, who had come in and was listening to the conversation. “Papa!” she exclaimed, “wouldn't Miss Gladys be the one to ask?”

Samuel gave a start. “The very thing!” he said.

And Dr. Vince, after pondering for a moment, admitted that it might be a good idea.

“You will come to church with me to-morrow,” said Ethel. “And if she is there we'll ask her.”

And so Samuel was on hand, trembling with excitement, and painfully conscious of his green and purple necktie. He sat in the Vince's pew, at Ethel's invitation; and directly across the aisle was Miss Wygant, miraculously resplendent in a springtime costume, yet with a touch of primness, becoming to the Sabbath. She did not see her adorer until after the service, when they met face to face.

“Why, Samuel!” she exclaimed. “You are here?”

“Yes, Miss Gladys,” he said. “I'm to work in the church now.”

“You don't tell me!” she responded.

“I'm to help the sexton,” he added.

“And he belongs to the church, too,” put in little Ethel. “And oh, Miss Gladys, won't

you please let him tell you about Sophie!”

“About Sophie?” said the other.

“She's a little girl who works in your papa's mill, Miss Gladys. And her family's very poor, and she is sick, and Samuel says she may die.”

“Why, that's too bad!” exclaimed Miss Gladys. “Tell me about her, Samuel.”

And Samuel told the story. At the end a sudden inspiration came to him, and he mentioned how Sophie had received her Christmas present from Miss Gladys, and how she had kept her pictures in her room.

And, of course, Miss Wygant was touched. “I will see what I can do for her,” she said. “What would you suggest?”

“I thought,” said he boldly, “that maybe there might be some place for her at your home. That would make her so happy, you know.”

“I will see,” said the other. “Will you bring her to see me to-morrow, Samuel?”

“I will,” said he; and then he chanced to look into her face, and he caught again that piercing gaze which made the blood leap into his cheeks, and the strange and terrible emotions to stir in him. He turned his eyes away again, and his knees were trembling as he passed on down the aisle.

He stood and watched Miss Gladys enter her motor. Then he bade good-by to Ethel and her mother, and hurried back into the vestry room to tell Dr. Vince of his good fortune.

The good doctor had just slipped out of his vestments, and was putting on his cuffs. “I am so glad to hear it!” he said. “It was the very thing to do!”

“Yes,” said Samuel. “And, doctor, I've thought of something else.”

“What is that, Samuel?”

“I'll have to have a minute or two to tell you about it.”

“I'm just going to dinner now”—began the doctor.

“I'll walk with you, if I may,” said Samuel. “It's really very important.”

“All right,” responded the doctor in some trepidation.

“I thought of this in the middle of the night,” explained the boy, when they had started down the street. “It kept me awake for hours. Dr. Vince, I think we ought to convert Master Albert Lockman!”

“Convert him?” echoed the other perplexed.

“Yes, sir,” said the boy. “He is leading a wild life, and he's in a very bad way.”

“Yes, Samuel,” said the clergyman. “It is terrible, I know—”

“We must labor with him!” exclaimed Samuel. “He must not be allowed to go on like that!”

“Unfortunately,” said Dr. Vince hastily, “it wouldn't do for me to try it. You see, the Lockmans have always been Presbyterians, and so Bertie is under Dr. Handy's care.”

“But is Dr. Handy doing anything about it?” persisted the other.

“I really don't know, Samuel.”

“Because if he isn't, we ought to, Dr. Vince! Something must be done.”

“My boy,” said the doctor, “perhaps it wouldn't be easy for you to understand it. But there is a feeling—would it be quite good taste for me to try to take away a very rich parishioner from another church?”

“But what have his riches to do with it?” asked the boy.

“Unfortunately, Samuel, it costs money to build churches; and most clergymen are dependent upon their salaries, you know.”

The good doctor was trying to make a jest of it; but Samuel was in deadly earnest. “I hope,” he said, “that you are not dependent upon the money of anyone like Master Albert.”

“Um—no,” said the doctor quickly.

“Understand me, please,” went on the other. “It's not simply that Master Albert is wrecking his own life. I suppose that's his right, if he wants to. But it's what he can do to other people! It's his money, Dr. Vince! Just think of it, he has seven hundred thousand dollars a year! And he never earned a cent of it; and he doesn't know what to do with it! Doctor, you KNOW that isn't right!”

“No,” said the clergyman, “it's very wrong indeed. But what can you do about it?”

“I don't know, doctor. I haven't had time to think about it—I've only just begun to realize it. But I thought if somebody like yourself—some one he respects—could point it out to him, he might use his money to some good purpose. If he won't, why then he ought to give it up.”

The other smiled. “I'm afraid, Samuel, he'd hardly do that!”

“But, doctor, things can't go on as they are! Right here in this town are people dying of starvation. And he has seven hundred thousand dollars a year! Can that continue?”

“No, I trust not, my boy. It will be better some day. But it must be left to evolution—”

“Evolution!” echoed Samuel perplexed. “Do you believe in evolution?”

“Why,” said the other embarrassed—“what I mean is, that there are vast social forces at work—great changes taking place. But they move very slowly—”

“But why do they move so slowly?” objected the boy. “Isn't it just because so many people, don't care?”

“Why, Samuel—”

“If everyone would take an interest in them—then they would happen quickly!”

The two walked on for a minute in silence. Finally, the clergyman remarked, “Samuel, you take a great interest in social questions.”

“Yes, sir,” said the boy. “You see, I have been down at the bottom, and I know how

it feels. Nobody else can possibly understand—not even you, sir, with all your kind heart. You don't know what it means, sir—you don't know what it means!"

"Perhaps not, my boy," said the other. "But my conscience is far from easy, I assure you. The only thing is, we must not be too impatient—we must learn to wait—"

"But, doctor!" exclaimed Samuel. "Will the people wait to starve?"

That question was a poser; and perhaps it was just as well that Dr. Vince was nearing the steps of his home. "I must go in now, Samuel," he said. "But we will talk about these questions another time."

"Yes, sir," said Samuel, "we will."

And the other glanced at him quickly. But the boy's face wore its old look of guileless eagerness.

CHAPTER XVII

Samuel walked away, still pondering at the problem. Something must be done about Master Albert, that was certain. Before he went in to his dinner he had thought of yet another plan. He would appeal to Miss Gladys about it! He would get her to labor with the prodigal!

At eight o'clock the next morning, he and Sophie called at Miss Wygant's home. They went to the servants' entrance, and the maid who opened the door sent them away, saying that Miss Gladys never rose until ten o'clock and would not see anyone until eleven.

So they went home again and came at eleven; and they were taken to a sitting room upon the second floor and there Miss Gladys met them, clad in a morning gown of crimson silk.

"And so this is Sophie!" she exclaimed. "Why you poor, poor child!" And she gazed at the little mill girl with her stunted figure and pinched cheeks, and her patched and

threadbare dress; and Sophie, in her turn, gazed at the wonderful princess, tall and stately, glowing with health and voluptuous beauty.

“And you work in our cotton mill!” she cried.

“How perfectly terrible! And do you mean to tell me that this child is thirteen years old, Samuel?”

“Yes, Miss Gladys,” said he.

She turned quickly and pressed a button on the wall. “Send Mrs. Harris here,” she said to the man who answered.

“Mrs. Harris is our housekeeper,” she added to Samuel. “I will consult her about it.”

The “consulting” was very brief. “Mrs. Harris, this is Sophie Stedman, a little girl I want to help. I don't know what she can do, but you will find out. I want her to have some sort of a place in the house—and it mustn't be hard work.”

“But, Miss Gladys,” said the other in perplexity, “I don't know of anything at all!”

“You can find something,” was the young lady's reply. “I want her to have a chance to learn. Take her downstairs and have a talk with her about it.”

“Yes, Miss Gladys,” said Mrs. Harris; and so Samuel was left alone with his goddess.

He sat with his eyes upon the floor. He was just about to open the great subject he had in his mind, when suddenly Miss Gladys herself brought it up. “Samuel,” she asked, “why did you leave my cousin's?”

Samuel hesitated. “I—I don't like to say, Miss Gladys.”

“Please tell me,” she insisted.

“I left it,” he replied in a low voice, “because I found that he got drunk.”

“Oh!” said the girl, “when was this?”

“It was last Wednesday night, Miss Gladys.”

“Tell me all about it, Samuel.”

“I—I don't like to,” he stammered. “It's not a story to tell to a lady.”

“I already know something about it from my maid,” said she. “Jack Holliday was there, wasn't he?”

“Yes, ma'am.”

“And some women?”

“Yes, ma'am.”

“How many, Samuel?”

“Four, Miss Gladys.”

“Tell me about them, Samuel. What sort of women were they?”

It was very hard for Samuel to answer these questions. He blushed as he talked; but Miss Gladys appeared not at all disconcerted—in fact she was greedy for the details.

“You say her name was Belle. I wonder if it was that girl from 'The Maids of Mandelay.' Was she a dancer, Samuel?”

“I don't know, Miss Gladys.”

“And what became of her?”

“I took her to a hotel, Miss Gladys.”

“And what then?”

Samuel stopped short. “I really couldn't tell you,” he said.

“But why not?”

“Because I promised.”

“Whom did you promise?”

“I promised the sergeant, Miss Gladys.”

“The sergeant! A policeman, you mean?”

“Yes, ma'am.”

“But what—what did the police have to do with it?”

“They took me to jail, Miss Gladys. They thought that I did it.”

“Did what?”

And again the boy shut his lips.

“Listen, Samuel,” pleaded the other. “You know that I am Bertie's cousin. And he's all alone. And I'm responsible for him—”

“Oh, Miss Gladys!” cried the boy. “If you only would try to help him! I meant to ask you—”

“But how can I help him if you keep me in ignorance?”

And so Samuel blurted out the whole story. And Miss Gladys sat dumb with horror. “She killed herself! She killed herself!” she gasped again and again.

“Yes, Miss Gladys,” said Samuel. “And it was awful! You can't imagine it!”

“I read of the suicide in the paper. But I never dreamed of Bertie!”

There was a moment's pause. “It must be a dreadful thing for him to have on his conscience”—began the boy.

“He must have been frightened to death!” said she. And then she added quickly, “Samuel, you haven't told anyone about this!”

“Not a soul, Miss Gladys.”

“You are sure?”

“I'm sure, ma'am.”

“You didn't tell Dr. Vince?”

“I just told him that I had left because Master Albert got drunk, Miss Gladys. That was the truth.”

“Yes,” said she; and then, “You always tell the truth, don't you, Samuel?”

“I try to,” he replied.

“You are very good, aren't you?” she added.

Samuel blushed. “No,” he said gravely. “I'm not good at all.”

The other looked at him for a moment, and then a smile crossed her face. “I've heard a saying,” she remarked—“'Be good and you'll be happy, but you'll miss a lot of fun.'”

Samuel pondered. “I think that is a very terrible saying,” he declared earnestly.

Miss Gladys laughed. And she went on to cross-question him as to the suicide—satisfying her curiosity as to the last hideous detail.

Then she looked at Samuel and asked suddenly, “Why do you wear that hideous thing?”

Samuel started. “What thing?” he asked.

“That tie!”

“Why!” he said—“I got that specially—”

He stopped, embarrassed; and the other's peal of laughter rang through the room. “Take it off!” she said.

She got up and came to him, saying, “I couldn't stand it.”

With trembling fingers he removed the tie. And she took off the beautiful red ribbon that was tied about her waist, and cut it to the right length. “Put that on,” she said, “and I'll show you how to tie it.”

And Samuel stood there, rapt in a sudden nightmare ecstasy. She was close to him, her quick fingers were playing about his throat. Her breath was upon his face, and the intoxicating perfume of her filled his nostrils. The blood mounted into his face, and the veins stood out upon his forehead, and strange and monstrous things stirred in the depths of him.

“There,” she said, “that's better”—and stepped back to admire the result. She smiled

upon him radiantly. “You have no taste, Samuel,” she said. “I shall have to educate you.”

“Yes, Miss Gladys,” he responded in a low voice.

“And listen,” she went on, “you will come to see Sophie now and then, won't you?”

“Yes, yes,” he said quickly.

“And come some time when I am here.”

He caught his breath and gripped his hands and answered yet again, “Yes!”

“Don't be afraid of me,” added the girl gently. “You don't appreciate yourself half enough, Samuel.”

Then there came voices in the hall, and Miss Gladys turned, and the housekeeper and Sophie came in. “Well?” she asked.

“She doesn't know anything at all,” said Mrs. Harris. “But if you want her taught—I suppose she could run errands and do sewing—”

“Very good,” said the other. “And pay her well. Will you like that, Sophie?”

“Yes, Miss,” whispered the child in a faint voice. She was gazing in awe and rapture at this peerless being, and she could hardly find utterance for two words.

“All right, then,” said Miss Gladys, “that will do very well. You come to-morrow, Sophie. And good-by, Samuel. I must go for my ride now.”

“Good-by, Miss Gladys,” said Samuel. “And please don't forget what you were going to say to Master Albert!”

CHAPTER XVIII

Samuel went home walking upon air. He had found a place for himself and a place for Sophie. And he had got the reforming of Bertie Lockman under way! Truly, the church was a great institution—the solution of all the puzzles and problems of life.

And fortunate was Samuel to be so close to the inner life of things!

Then suddenly, on a street corner, he stopped short. A sign had caught his eye—“John Callahan, Wines and Liquors—Bernheimer Beer.” “Do you know what that place is?” he said to Sophie.

“That's where my friend Finnegan works.”

“Who's Finnegan?” asked the child.

“He's the barkeeper who gave me something to eat when I first came to town. He's a good man, even if he is a barkeeper.”

Samuel had often found himself thinking of Finnegan; for it had been altogether against his idea of things that a man so obviously well meaning should be selling liquor. And now suddenly a brilliant idea flashed across his mind. Why should he continue selling liquor? And instantly Samuel saw a new duty before him. He must help Finnegan.

And forgetting that it was time for his dinner, he bade good-by to Sophie and went into the saloon.

“Well, young feller!” exclaimed the Irishman, his face lighting up with pleasure; and then, seeing the boy's new collar and tie, “Gee, you're moving up in the world!”

“I've got a job,” said Samuel proudly. “I'm the assistant sexton at St. Matthew's Church.”

“You don't say! Gone up with the sky pilots, hey!”

Samuel did not notice this irreverent remark. He looked around the place and saw that they were alone. Then he said, very earnestly, “Mr. Finnegan, may I have a few minutes' talk with you?”

“Sure,” said Finnegan perplexed. “What is it?”

“It's something I've been thinking about very often,” said Samuel. “You were so kind to me, and I saw that you were a good-hearted man. And so it has always

seemed to me too bad that you should be selling drink."

The other stared at him. "Gee!" he said, "are you going to take me up in your airship?"

"Mr. Finnegan," said the boy, "I wish you wouldn't make fun of me. For I'm talking to you out of the bottom of my heart."

And Samuel gazed with so much yearning in his eyes that the man was touched, in spite of the absurdity of it. "Go on," he said. "I'll listen."

"It's just this," said Samuel. "It's wrong to sell liquor! Think what drink does to men? I saw a man drunk the other night and it led to what was almost murder. Drink makes men cruel and selfish. It takes away their self-control. It makes them unfit for their work. It leads to vice and wickedness. It enslaves them and degrades them. Don't you know that is true, Mr. Finnegan?"

"Yes," admitted Finnegan, "I reckon it is. I never touch the stuff myself."

"And still you sell it to others?"

"Well, my boy, I don't do it because I hate them."

"But then, why DO you do it?"

"I do it," said Finnegan, "because I have to live. It's my trade—it's all I know."

"It seems such a terrible trade!" exclaimed the boy.

"Maybe," said the other. "But take notice, it ain't a princely one. I'm on the job all day and a good part of the night, and standing up all the time. And I don't get no holidays either—and I only get twelve a week. And I've a wife and a new baby. So what's a man to do?"

Now, strange as it may seem, this unfolded a new view to Samuel. He had always supposed that bartenders and saloonkeepers were such from innate depravity. Could it really be that they were driven to the trade?

The bare idea was enough to set his zeal in a blaze. "Listen," he said. "Suppose I

were to find you some kind of honest work, so that you could earn a living. Would you promise to reform?"

"Do you mean would I quit Callahan's? Why, sure I would."

"Ah!" exclaimed the boy in delight.

"But it'd have to be a steady job," put in the other. "I can take no chances with the baby."

"That's all right," said Samuel. "I'll get you what you want."

"Gee, young feller!" exclaimed Finnegan. "Do you carry 'em round in your pockets?"

"No," said Samuel, "but Dr. Vince asked me to help him; and I'm going to tell him about you."

And so, forthwith, he made his way to the doctor's house, and was ushered into the presence of the unhappy clergyman. He stated his case; and the other threw up his hands in despair.

"Really," he exclaimed, "this is too much, Samuel! I can't find employment for everyone in Lockmanville."

"But, doctor!" protested Samuel, "I don't think you understand. This man wants to lead a decent life, and he can't because there's no way for him to earn a living."

"I understand all that Samuel."

"But, doctor, what's the use of trying to reform men if they're chained in that way?"

There was a pause.

"I'm afraid it's hopeless to explain to you," said the clergyman. "But you'll have to make up your mind to it, Samuel—there are a great many men in the world who want jobs, and it seems to be unfortunately true that there are fewer jobs than men."

"Yes," said the other, "but that's what Professor Stewart taught men. And you said it was wicked of him."

“Um—” said the doctor, taken aback.

“Don't you see?” went on Samuel eagerly. “It puts you right back with Herbert Spencer! If there are more men than there are jobs, then the men have to fight for them. And so you have the struggle for existence, and the survival of the greedy and the selfish. If Finnegan wouldn't be a barkeeper, then he and his family would starve, and somebody else would survive who was willing to be that bad.”

The boy waited. “Don't you see that, Dr. Vince?” he persisted.

“Yes, I see that,” said the doctor.

“And you told me that the only way to escape from that was to live for others—to serve them and help them. And isn't that what I'm trying to do?”

“Yes, my boy, that is so. But what can we do?”

“Why, doctor, aren't you the head of the church? And the people come to you to be taught. You must point out these things to them, so that there can be a change.”

“But WHAT change, Samuel?”

“I don't know, sir. I'm groping around and trying to find out. But I'm sure of one thing—that some people have got too much money. Why, Dr. Vince, there are people right in your church who have more than they could spend in hundreds of years.”

“Perhaps so,” said the other. “But what harm does that do?”

“Why—that's the reason that so many others have nothing! Only realize it—right at this very moment there are people starving to death—and here in Lockmanville! They want to work, and there is no work for them! I could take you to see them, sir—girls who want a job in Mr. Wygant's cotton mill, and he won't give it to them!”

“But, my boy—that isn't Mr. Wygant's fault! It's because there is too much cloth already.”

“I've been thinking about that,” said Samuel earnestly. “And it doesn't sound right to

me. There are too many people who need good clothes. Look at poor Sophie, for instance!"

"Yes," said the other, "of course. But they haven't money to buy the cloth—-"

And Samuel sat forward in his excitement. "Yes, yes!" he cried. "And isn't that just what I said before? They have no money, because the rich people have it all!"

There was no reply; and after a moment Samuel rushed on: "Surely it is selfish of Mr. Wygant to shut poor people out of his mill, just because they have no money. Why couldn't he let them make cloth for themselves?"

"Samuel!" protested the other. "That is absurd!"

"But why, sir?"

"Because, my boy—in a day they could make more than they could wear in a year."

"So much the better, doctor! Then they could give the balance to other people who needed it—and the other people could make things for them. Take Sophie. She not only needs clothing, she needs shoes, and above all, she needs enough to eat. And if it's a question of there not being enough food, look at what's wasted in a place like Master Albert's! And there's land enough at 'Fairview' to raise food for the whole town—I know what I'm talking about there, because I'm a farmer. And it's used to keep a lot of race horses that nobody ever rides."

"Samuel," said the clergyman gravely, "that is true—and that is very wrong. But what can I do?"

And Samuel stared at him. "Doctor!" he exclaimed. "I can't tell you how it hurts me to have you talk to me like that!"

"How do you mean, Samuel?" asked the other in bewilderment.

And the boy clasped his hands together in his agitation. "You told me that we must sacrifice ourselves, and help others! You said that was our sole duty! And I believed you—I was ready to go with you. And here I am—I want to follow you, and you

won't lead!”

Those words were like a stab. The doctor winced visibly.

And Samuel winced also—his heart was wrung. “It hurts me more than I can tell you!” he cried. “But think of the people who are suffering—nobody spares them! And how can you be silent, doctor—how can the shepherd of Christ be silent while some of his flock are living in luxury and others are starving to death?”

There was a long pause. Dr. Vince sat rigid, clutching the arms of his chair.

“Samuel,” he said, “you are right. I will preach on this unemployed question next Sunday.”

“Ah, thank you, sir—thank you!” exclaimed Samuel, with tears of gratitude in his eyes. And he took his friend's hand and wrung it.

Then, suddenly, a new thought came to him. “And meantime, doctor,” said he, “what am I to tell Finnegan?”

CHAPTER XIX

One who has all the cares of humanity upon his shoulders, as Samuel had, is apt to find that it claims a good deal of time. Samuel did his best to keep his mind upon the weighty problems which he had to solve; but he found that he was continually distracted by the thought of Miss Gladys. Again and again her image would sweep over him, driving everything else from his mind. The vision of her beauty haunted him, sending his imagination upon all sorts of strange excursions and adventures.

She had told him to come again; and he wondered how long he should wait. He was supposed to come to see Sophie—but that, of course, was absurd, for he saw Sophie every night at home.

He waited three days; and then he could wait no longer. The hunger to see her was like a fire smoldering in him.

In the morning, at eleven o'clock, he went to the house and Sophie came to the door. “I'll tell her you're here,” said she, understanding at once. She ran upstairs, and came back telling him to come. “And she's glad, Samuel!” exclaimed the child.

“Won't you come, too?” he asked blunderingly.

“No, she told me not to,” was Sophie's reply.

So he went upstairs to Miss Wygant's own sitting room, and found her in a morning gown, even more beautiful than the one she had worn before.

“You don't know how glad I am to see you,” she said.

Samuel admitted that he didn't know; and he added, “And I don't know why you should be, Miss Gladys.”

Miss Gladys stood looking at him. “You find things interesting, don't you?” she asked.

“Why, yes, Miss Gladys,” he replied.

“And I find things so tiresome.”

“Tiresome!” gasped the boy. “Here—in this house!”

“It seems strange to you, does it?” said she.

“Why you have everything in the world!” he cried.

“Yes, and I'm tired of everything.”

The boy was looking at her in wonder. “It's true,” she said. “Everybody I meet is uninteresting—they live such dull and stupid lives. I'm shut up here in this town—I've got to spend a whole month here this summer!”

Samuel gazed at her, and a wave of pity swept over him. He had felt for some time that she was not happy. So here was one more duty for him—he must help this beautiful young lady to a realization of her own good fortune.

The thought set him athrill. “Ah, but Miss Gladys!” he exclaimed. “Think how much

good you do!”

“Good?” said she. “In what way?”

“Why—think of Sophie! How happy you've made her.”

“Yes,” she said dully. “I suppose so.”

“And me!” he exclaimed.

“Have I made you happy?” she inquired.

And he answered, “I have never been so happy in my life.”

All the wonder that was in his soul shone in his eyes, and arrested her gaze. They stood looking at each other; and then she came to him laughing. “Samuel,” she said, “you haven't got that tie right.”

And once more her fingers touched him, and her breath was upon him, and the glory of her set him on fire. A new wave of feeling swept over him, and this time it swamped him completely. His heart was pounding, his brain was reeling; and blindly, like a drunken man—almost without knowing what he was doing—he put out his arms and caught her to him.

And then, in an instant, horror seized him. What had he done? She would repel him—she would drive him from her! He had ruined everything!

But another instant sufficed to show him that this was not the case. And the tide of his feeling swept back redoubled. From the hidden regions of his soul there came new emotions, suddenly awakened—things tremendous and terrifying—never guessed by him before. His manhood came suddenly to consciousness—he lost all his shyness and fear of her. She was his—to do what he pleased with! And he pressed her to him, he half crushed her in his embrace. She closed her eyes, and he kissed her upon the cheeks and upon the lips; then he heard her voice, faint and trembling—“Samuel, I love you!” And within him it was like a great fanfare of trumpets, for wonder and triumph and delirious joy.

Suddenly there came a step in the hall outside. They sprang apart. The door of the room was open; and for an instant he saw wild terror in her eyes.

Then she sank down upon her knees. “Oh, Samuel!” she exclaimed. “My ring!”

“Your ring!” he echoed, dazed.

“My ring!” she said again; then he heard the voice of Mrs. Harris in the doorway. “Your ring, Miss Gladys?”

“I dropped it,” she said; and Samuel sank down upon his knees also.

They sought under the table. “It fell here,” she said. “It's my solitaire.”

“It must have rolled,” said Mrs. Harris, beginning to search.

“Put your head down and look about, Samuel,” commanded Miss Gladys, and Samuel obeyed; but he did not find any ring.

They continued the search for a minute. Mrs. Harris had come back to the table; and suddenly she exclaimed, “Here it is!”

“What!” cried the other. “Why, I looked there!”

“It was under the leg of the table,” explained the housekeeper.

“Ah!” said the other, and put the precious ring back upon her finger.

Samuel was overwhelmed with astonishment; but it was nothing to what he felt a moment later. His goddess turned to him. “No,” she said. “I'm sorry, Samuel, but it's impossible for me to do what you ask me.”

He stared at her perplexed.

“I have found a place for Sophie,” she went on, “and that is positively all I can do.”

“Miss Gladys!” he exclaimed.

“Really,” she said, “I think you ought not to ask me to do any more. I understand that there is a good deal of suffering among the mill people, and I do what I can to relieve it. But as for taking all the employees into my father's household—that is

simply absurd."

The boy could not find words. He could only stare at her. "That's all," said Miss Gladys. "And about those flower seeds—do what you can to find them. I want them in a few days, if I'm to use them at all. Do you understand?"

"Y-yes, Miss Gladys," he stammered. He had seen her dart a swift glance at the housekeeper, and he was beginning at last to comprehend.

"Bring them to me yourself," she added. "Good-by."

"Good-by, Miss Gladys," he said, and went out.

He went downstairs, marveling. But before he was halfway down the first flight of steps he had forgotten everything except those incredible words—"Samuel, I love you!" They rang in his head like a trumpet call.

He could not hold himself in. He could not carry away such a secret. Sophie went to the door with him; and he took her outside and whispered it to her.

The child stared at him, with awe in her eyes. "Samuel!" she whispered, "she must mean to marry you!"

The boy started in dismay. "Marry me!" he gasped. "Marry me!"

"Why, yes!" said Sophie. "What else can she mean?"

That was a poser. "But—but—" he cried. "It's absurd!"

"It's not, Samuel! She loves you!"

"But I'm nothing but a poor boy!"

"But, Samuel, she has plenty of money!"

It had not occurred to Samuel that way; but he had to admit that it was true. "But I'm not good enough," he protested.

"You are good enough for anyone!" cried Sophie. "You are noble and beautiful—and she has found it out. And she means to stoop and lift you up to her."

The boy was silent, stricken with awe. “Oh, Samuel, it is just like in the fairy stories!” whispered the child. “You are to be the prince!”

So she went on, pouring out the wonder of it to him, and thrilling his soul to yet new flights.

He left her at last and walked down the street half dazed. He was to marry Miss Gladys! Yes, it must be true, for she had told him that she loved him! And then, presumably, he would come to live in that great palace. How could he ever stand it? What would he do?

And he would be a rich man! A great surge of triumph came to him. What would the people at home say—what would his brothers think when he went to pay them a visit, and perhaps to buy the old place?

But he put these thoughts away from him. He must not think of such things—it was selfish and ignoble. He must think of the good that he would be able to do with all the money. He might help the poor at last. He and Miss Gladys would devote their lives to this. Perhaps some day he might even own the mill where the children worked, and he would be able to send them all to school! And he would be a member of the Lockman family, in a way—he might even have some influence over Master Albert! And Ethel and Dr. Vince—how happy they would be when they heard of his good fortune!

In the end his thoughts left all these things, and came back to Miss Gladys. After all, what counted but that? She loved him! She was his! And like a swiftly spreading fire there came over him the memory of what he had done to her; he walked on, trembling with wonder and fear. It was a kind of madness in his blood. It had taken possession of his whole being—he would never again be the same! He stretched out his arms as he walked down the street, because his emotions were greater than he could bear.

Then suddenly, in the midst of the turmoil, a sight met his eyes which brought him

back to the world. Approaching him, about to pass him, was an old man with a gray beard, stooping as he walked and carrying a peddler's basket. The disguise was excellent, but it did not deceive Samuel for an instant. He stood stock-still and cried in amazement: “Charlie Swift!”

The peddler shot a quick glance at him. “Shut up!” he muttered; and then he passed on, and left Samuel staring.

So with a sudden rush, a new set of emotions overwhelmed the boy. He was only a week away from the burglary; and yet it was an age. And how terrible it seemed—how almost incredible! And here was he, about to marry the daughter of a millionaire—while his friend and confederate was still skulking in the shadows, hiding from the police.

Of all the distressed people whom Samuel had met in the course of his adventures, Charlie Swift was the only one whom he had not benefited. And simply to set eyes upon him was to hear in his soul a new call. How could he pursue his own gratifications while Charlie was left a prey to wickedness?

The figure almost passed from sight while Samuel stood wrestling with the problem. He shrunk from the task before him; he was afraid of Charlie Swift, afraid of his cynical smile, and of his merciless sneering. But his duty was clear before him—as clear as that of any soldier, who in the midst of love and pleasure hears the bugle call. He might not be able to do anything for Charlie. But he must try!

And so he turned and followed the old peddler to his home.

CHAPTER XX

“So you've let them turn you into a mission stiff!” said Charlie Swift, when the two were seated in his room.

“A what?” exclaimed Samuel perplexed.

“A mission stiff,” repeated the other. “One of the guys that gets repentance!”

Samuel experienced a sudden chilling of the ardor with which he had come into the room. The old grin was upon the other's face; and the boy realized with a sudden sinking of the heart how hard and savage he was. Finnegan was a babe in arms compared with Charlie Swift.

To convert him would be a real task, a test of one's fervor and vision. Samuel resolved suddenly upon diplomacy.

“They've been very good to me,” he said.

“I dare say,” responded the other indifferently.

“And Dr. Vince is really a very good man,” he went on.

“Humph!” commented the burglar; and then he added quickly, “You haven't been telling him anything about me?”

“Oh, no!” exclaimed the boy.

“Not a word?”

“Have you forgotten that I promised you?”

“That's all right,” said Charlie, “only I just wanted to warn you. You can tie up with the church guys if you feel like it—only don't mention your lost brothers down in the pit. Just you remember that I got some of the doctor's silver.”

The boy gave a start. “Oh!” he exclaimed.

“Didn't you know that?” laughed the other.

“No, I didn't know it.”

“What did you suppose I was doing all that time while you were watching?”

Samuel said nothing for a minute. “Why did you pick out Dr. Vince?” he asked suddenly.

“Him? Why not? I knew his house.”

“But a clergyman! Does it seem quite fair?”

“Oh, that's all right,” laughed the other. “He's got a-plenty. It don't have to come out of his salary, you know.”

“Why not?”

“Because, he's got a rich wife. You didn't suppose he lived in that palace of a house on his own salary, did you?”

“I hadn't thought anything about it.”

“Well, he's all right—he married one of the richest girls in town. And she'll keep his nest feathered.”

There was a pause. “Don't you think that Dr. Vince is a good man?” asked Samuel.

“I don't know,” said the other. “I've got no quarrel with him. But I don't like his trade.”

“Doesn't he do a great deal of good to people?”

“Maybe,” said the other, shrugging his shoulders.

“To poor people?” persisted Samuel.

“I dare say,” admitted Charlie. “But you'll notice it takes all the sand out of them—makes them into beggars. And I ain't that sort.”

“Why do you think he tries to help them?”

“Well, he gets paid for it, don't he?”

“But the other people in the church—the ones who pay the money. Why do you think they do it?”

The burglar thought for a moment. “I reckon they do it to make themselves feel good,” he said.

“To make themselves feel good,” repeated the other perplexed.

“Sure!” said the man. “You take one of those rich women—she's got a lot of money

that she never earned, and she spends all her life amusing herself and ordering servants about. And all the time she knows that most of the people—the people that do the work—are suffering and dying. And she don't want to let that make her feel bad, so she hires some fellow like your friend, the doctor, to preach to 'em—and maybe give 'em a turkey at Christmas. And that takes the trouble off her mind. Don't you see?"

"Yes," said the other weakly. "I see."

"Or else," added Charlie, "take some of those smooth grafters they've got up there—the men, I mean. They spend six days in the week cutting other people's throats, and robbing the public. Don't you think it's handy for them to know they can come on Sunday and drop a five-dollar-bill in the plate, and square the whole account?"

Samuel sought for a reply to these cruel taunts. "I don't think you put it quite fairly," he protested.

"Why not?" demanded the other.

"In the first place, men like that wouldn't go to church—"

Charlie stared at him. "What!" he exclaimed.

"No," said the boy.

"Why not?"

"Well, why should they care to go? And they wouldn't be welcome—"

Charlie burst into laughter. "You poor kid!" he exclaimed. "What have you been doing up there at St. Matthew's, anyhow?"

"I'm the sexton's assistant," said Samuel gravely.

"Yes," said the other. "Evidently a sexton's assistant doesn't see much of the congregation."

"I wish you'd explain," remarked the boy after a pause.

“I hardly know where to begin,” replied the other. “They've such a choice collection of crooks up there. Did you ever notice a little pot-bellied fellow with mutton-chop whiskers—looks as if he was eating persimmons all the time?”

“You mean Mr. Hickman?”

“Yes, that's the chap. He's one of the pillars of the church, isn't he?”

“I suppose so,” said Samuel. “He's one of the vestrymen.”

“And did you ever hear of Henry Hickman before?”

“I know he's a famous lawyer; and I was told that he managed the Lockman estate.”

“Yes,” said Charlie, “and I suppose you don't know what that means!”

“No,” admitted Samuel, “I don't.”

“It means,” went on the other, “that he was old Lockman's right-hand man, and had his finger in every dirty job that the old fellow ever did for thirty years. And it means that he runs the business now, and does all the crooked work that has to be done for it.”

There was a pause. “For instance, what?” asked Samuel in a low voice.

“For instance, politics,” said the other. “Steering the grafters off the Lockman preserve. Getting the right men named by the machine, and putting up the dough to elect them. Last year the Democrats got in, in spite of all he could do; and he had to buy the city council outright.”

“What!” gasped the boy in horror.

“Sure thing,” laughed Charlie—“there was an independent water company trying to break in, and the Democrats were pledged to them. They say it cost Hickman forty-five thousand dollars.”

“But do you KNOW that?” cried the other.

“Know it, Sammy? Why everybody in town knows it. It was a rotten steal, on the face of it.”

Samuel was staring at him. “I can't believe it!” he exclaimed.

“Nonsense!” laughed the other. “Ask round a bit!” And then he added quickly, “Why, see here—didn't you tell me you knew Billy Finnegan—the barkeeper?”

“Yes, I know him.”

“Well, then, you can go right to headquarters and find out. His boss, John Callahan, was one of the supervisors—he got the dough. Go and ask Finnegan.”

“But will he tell?” exclaimed Samuel.

“I guess he'll tell,” said Charlie, “if you go at him right. It's no great secret—the whole town's been laughing about it.”

Samuel was almost too shocked for words. “Do you suppose Dr. Vince knows it?” he cried.

“He don't know much if he doesn't,” was the other's reply.

“A member of his church!” gasped the boy.

“Oh, pshaw!” laughed the other. “You're too green, Sammy! What's the church got to do with business? Why, look—there's old Wygant—another of the vestrymen!”

“Miss Gladys' father, you mean?”

“Yes; old Lockman's brother-in-law. He's the other trustee of the estate. And do you suppose there's any rascality he doesn't know about?”

“But he's a reformer!” cried the boy wildly.

“Sure!” laughed Charlie. “He made a speech at the college commencement about representative government; I suppose you read it in the Express. But all the same, when the Democrats got in, his nibs came round and made his terms with Slattery, the new boss; and they get along so well it'll be his money that will put them in again next year.”

“But WHY?” cried Samuel dazed.

“For one thing,” said Charlie, “because he's got to have his man in the State legislature, to beat the child-labor bill.”

“The child-labor bill!”

“Surely. You knew he was fighting it, didn't you? They wanted to prevent children under fourteen from working in the cotton mills. Wygant sent Jack Pemberton up to the Capital for nothing at all but to beat that law.” Samuel sat with his hands clenched tightly. Before him there had come the vision of little Sophie Stedman with her wan and haggard face! “But why does he want the children in his mill?” he cried.

“Why?” echoed Charlie. “Good God! Because he can pay them less and work them harder. Did you suppose he wanted them there for their health?”

There was a long pause. The boy was wrestling with the most terrible specter that had yet laid hold upon him. “I don't believe he knows it!” he whispered half to himself. “I don't believe it!”

“Who?” asked the other.

“Dr. Vince!” said the boy. And he rose suddenly to his feet. “I will go and see him about it,” he said.

“Go and see him!” echoed Charlie.

“Yes. He will tell me!”

Charlie was gazing at him with a broad grin. “I dare you!” he cried.

“I am going,” said the boy simply; and the burglar slapped his thigh in delight.

“Go on!” he chuckled. “Sock it to him, Sammy! And come back and tell me about it!”

CHAPTER XXI

“Dr. Vince is at lunch,” said the maid who answered the bell.

“Please tell him I must see him at once,” said Samuel. “It's something very important.”

He went in and sat down in the library, and the doctor came, looking anxious. “What is it now?” he asked.

And Samuel turned to him a face of anguish. “Doctor,” he said, “I've just had a terrible experience.”

“What is it, Samuel?”

“I hardly know how to tell you,” said the boy. “I know a man—a very wicked man; and I went to him to try to convert him, and to bring him into the church. And he laughed at me, and at the church, too. He said there are wicked men in it—in St. Matthew's, Dr. Vince! He told me who they are, and what they are doing! And, doctor—I can't believe that you know about it—that you would let such things go on!”

The other was staring at him in alarm. “My dear boy,” he said, “there are many wicked men in the world, and I cannot know everything.”

“Ah, but this is terrible, doctor! You will have to find out about it—you cannot let such men stay in the church.”

The other rose and closed the door of his study. Then he drew his chair close to Samuel. “Now,” he said, “what is it?”

“It's Mr. Wygant,” said Samuel.

“Mr. Wygant!” cried the other in dismay.

“Yes, Dr. Vince.”

“What has he done?”

“Did you know that it was he who beat the child-labor bill—that he named the State senator on purpose to do it?”

The doctor was staring at him. “The child-labor bill!” he gasped. “Is THAT what

you mean?"

"Yes, Dr. Vince," said Samuel. "Surely you didn't know that!"

"Why, I know that Mr. Wygant is very much opposed to the bill. He has opposed it openly. He has a perfect right to do that, hasn't he?"'

"But to name the State senator to beat it, doctor!"

"Well, my boy, Mr. Wygant is very much interested in politics; and, of course, he would use his influence. Why not?"

"But, Dr. Vince—it was a wicked thing! Think of Sophie!"

"But, my boy—haven't we found Sophie a place in Mr. Wygant's own home?"

"Yes, doctor! But there are all the others! Think of the suffering and misery in that dreadful mill! And Mr. Wygant pays such low wages. And he is such a rich man—he might help the children if he would."

"Really, Samuel—" began the doctor.

But the boy, seeing the frown of displeasure on his face, rushed on swiftly. "That's only the beginning! Listen to me! There's Mr. Hickman!"

"Mr. Hickman!"

"Mr. Henry Hickman, the lawyer. He has done even worse things—"

And suddenly the clergyman clenched his hands. "Really, Samuel!" he cried. "This is too much! You are exceeding all patience!"

"Doctor!" exclaimed the boy in anguish.

"It seems to me," the doctor continued, "that you owe it to me to consider more carefully. You have been treated very kindly here—you have been favored in more ways than one."

"But what has that to do with it?" cried the other wildly.

"It is necessary that you should remember your place. It is certainly not becoming

for you, a mere boy, and filling a subordinate position, to come to me with gossip concerning the vestry of my church."

"A subordinate position!" echoed Samuel dazed. "But what has my position to do with it?"

"It has a great deal to do with it, Samuel."

The boy was staring at him. "You don't understand me!" he cried. "I am not doing this for myself! I am not setting myself up! I am thinking of the saving of the church!"

"What do you mean—saving the church?"

"Why, doctor—just see! I went to reform a man; and he sneered at me. He would not have anything to do with the church, because such wicked men as Mr. Hickman were in it. He said it was their money that saved them from exposure—he said—"

"What has Mr. Hickman done?" demanded the other quickly.

"He bribed the city council, sir! He bribed it to beat the water bill."

Dr. Vince got up from his chair and began to pace the floor nervously. "Tell me, doctor!" cried Samuel. "Please tell me! Surely you didn't know that!"

The other turned to him suddenly. "I don't think you quite realize the circumstances," said he. "You come to me with this tale about Mr. Hickman. Do you know that he is my brother-in-law?"

Samuel clutched the arms of his chair and stared aghast. "Your brother-in-law!" he gasped.

"Yes," said the other. "He is my wife's only brother."

Samuel was dumb with dismay. And the doctor continued to pace the floor. "You see," he said, "the position you put me in."

"Yes," said the boy. "I see. It's very terrible." But then he rushed on in dreadful anxiety: "But, doctor, you didn't know it. Oh, I'm sure—please tell me that you

didn't know it!”

“I didn't know it!” exclaimed the doctor. “And what is more, I don't know it now! I have heard these rumors, of course. Mr. Hickman is a man of vast responsibilities, and he has many enemies. Am I to believe every tale that I hear about him?”

“No,” said Samuel, taken aback. “But this is something that everyone knows.”

“Everyone!” cried the other. “Who is everyone? Who told it to you?”

“I—I can't tell,” stammered the boy.

“How does he know it?” continued the doctor. “And what sort of a man is he? Is he a good man?”

“No,” admitted Samuel weakly. “I am afraid he is not.”

“Is he a man who loves and serves others? A man who never speaks falsehood—whom you would believe in a matter that involved your dearest friends? Would believe him if he told you that I was a briber and a scoundrel?”

Samuel was obliged to admit that Charlie Swift was not a man like that. “Dr. Vince,” he said quickly, “I admit that I am at fault. I have come to you too soon. I will find out about these things; and if they are true, I will prove them to you. If they are not, I will go away in shame, and never come to trouble you again as long as I live.”

Samuel said this very humbly; and yet there was a note of grim resolution in his voice—which the doctor did not fail to note. “But, Samuel!” he protested. “Why—why should you meddle in these things?”

“Meddle in them!” exclaimed the other. “Surely, if they are true, I have to. You don't mean that if they were proven, you would let such men remain in your church?”

“I don't think,” said the doctor gravely, “that I can say what I should do in case of anything so terrible.”

“No,” was Samuel's reply, “you are right. The first thing is to find out the truth.”

And so Samuel took his departure.

He went straight to his friend Finnegan.

“Hello!” exclaimed Finnegan. Then, “What about that job of mine?” he asked with a broad grin.

“Dr. Vince says he will look out for you,” was the boy's reply. “But I'm not ready to talk about that yet. There's something else come up.”

He waited until his friend had attended to the wants of a customer, and until the customer had consumed a glass of beer and departed. Then he called the bartender into a corner.

“Mr. Finnegan,” he said, “I want to know something very important.”

“What is it?” asked the other.

“Do you know Mr. Hickman—Henry Hickman, the lawyer?”

“He's not on my calling list,” said Finnegan. “I know him by sight.”

“I've heard it said that he had something to do with beating a water bill in the city council. Did he?”

“You bet your life he did!” said the bartender with a grin.

“Is it true that he bought up the council?”

“You bet your life it's true!”

“And is it true that Mr. Callahan got some of the money?”

Finnegan glanced at the other suspiciously. “Say,” he said, “what's all this about, anyhow?”

“Listen,” said Samuel gravely. “You know that Mr. Hickman is a member of my church. And he's Dr. Vince's brother-in-law, which makes it more complicated yet. Dr. Vince has heard these terrible stories, and you can see how awkward it is for

him. He cannot let such evil-doers go unrebuked."

"Gee!" said the other. "What's he going to do?"

"I don't know," said Samuel. "He hasn't told me that. First, you see, he has to be sure that the thing is true. And, of course, Mr. Hickman wouldn't tell."

"No," said Finnegan. "Hardly!"

"And it isn't easy for the doctor to find out. You see—he's a clergyman, and he only meets good people. But I told him I would find out for him."

"I see," said Finnegan.

"What I want," said the boy, "is to be able to tell him that I heard it from the lips of one of the men who got the money. I won't have to say who it is—he'll take my word for that. Do you suppose Mr. Callahan would talk about it?"

The bartender thought for a moment. "You wait here," he said. "The boss has only stepped round the corner; and perhaps I can get the doctor what he wants."

So Samuel sat down and waited; and in a few minutes John Callahan came in. He was a thick-set and red-faced Irishman, good-natured and pleasant looking-not at all like the desperado Samuel had imagined.

"Say, John," said Finnegan. "This boy here used to work for Bertie Lockman; and he's got a girl works for the Wygants."

"So!" said Callahan.

"And what do you think," went on the other, "He heard old Henry Hickman talking—he says you fellows held him up on that water bill."

"Go on!" said Callahan. "Did he say that?"

"He did," said Finnegan, without giving Samuel a chance to reply.

"Well," said the other, "he's a damned liar, and he knows it. It was a dead straight proposition, and we hadn't a thing to do with it. There was an independent water company that wanted a franchise—and it would have given the city its water for just

half. Every time I pay my water bill I am sorry I didn't hold out. It would have been cheaper for me in the end."

"He says it cost him sixty thousand," remarked Finnegan.

"Maybe," said the other. "You can't tell what the organization got. All I know is that ten of us fellows in the council got two thousand apiece out of it."

There was a pause. Samuel was listening with his hands clenched tightly.

"Did he pay it to you himself?" asked Finnegan.

"Who, Hickman? No, he paid it to Slattery, and Slattery came here from his office. Why, is he trying to crawl out of that part of it?"

"No, not exactly. But he makes a great fuss about being held up."

"Yes!" said Callahan. "I dare say! He's got his new franchise, and he and the Lockman estate are clearing about ten thousand a month out of it. And my two thousand was gone the week I got it—it had cost me twice that to get elected—and without counting the free drinks. It's a great graft, being a supervisor, ain't it?"

"Why did you do it then?" asked Samuel in a faint voice.

"I'll never do it again, young fellow," said the saloon keeper. "I'm the Honorable John for the rest of my life, and I guess that'll do me. And the next time old Henry Hickman wants his dirty work done, he can hunt up somebody that needs the money more than me!"

Then the Honorable John went on to discuss the politics of Lockmanville, and to lay bare the shameless and grotesque corruption in a town where business interests were fighting. The trouble was, apparently, that the people were beginning to rebel—they were tired of being robbed in so many different ways, and they went to the polls to find redress. And time and again, after they had elected new men to carry out their will, the great concerns had stepped in and bought out the law-makers. The last time it had been the unions that made the trouble; and three of the last supervisors had

been labor leaders—“the worst skates of all,” as Callahan phrased it.

Samuel listened, while one by one the last of his illusions were torn to shreds. There had been a general scramble to get favors from the new government of the town; and the scramblers seemed to include every pious and respectable member of St. Matthew's whose name Samuel had ever heard. There was old Mr. Curtis, another of the vestrymen, who passed the plate every Sunday morning, and looked like a study of the Olympian Jove. He wanted to pile boxes on the sidewalks in front of his warehouse, and he had come to Slattery and paid him two hundred dollars.

“And Mr. Wygant!” exclaimed Samuel, as a sudden thought came to him. “Is it true that he is back of the organization?”

“Good God!” laughed Callahan. “Did you hear him say that?”

“Some one else told me,” was the reply.

“Well,” said the other, “the truth is that Wygant got cold feet before the election, and he came to Slattery and fixed it. I know that, for Slattery told me. We had him bluffed clean—I don't think we'd ever have got in at all if it hadn't been for his money.”

“I see!” whispered the boy.

“Oh, he's a smooth guy!” laughed the saloon keeper. “Look at that new franchise got for his trolley road—ninety-nine years, and anything he wants in the meantime! And then to hear him making reform speeches! That's what makes me mad about them fellows up on the hill. They get a thousand dollars for every one we get; but they are tip-top swells, and they wouldn't speak to one of us low grafters on the street. And they're eminent citizens and pillars of the church—wouldn't it make you sick?”

“Yes,” said Samuel in a low voice, “that's just what it does. It makes me sick!”

CHAPTER XXII

Samuel now had his evidence; and he went straight back to Dr. Vince. “Doctor,” he said, “I am able to tell you that I know. I have heard it from one of the men who got the money.”

“Who is he?” asked the doctor.

“I could not tell you that,” said the boy—“it would not be fair. But you know that I am telling the truth. And this man told me with his own lips that Mr. Hickman paid twenty thousand dollars to Slattery, the Democratic boss, to be paid to ten of the supervisors to vote against the other company's water bill.”

There was a long pause; the doctor sat staring in front of him. “What do you want me to do?” he asked faintly.

“I don't know,” said Samuel. “Is it for me to tell you what is right?”

And again there was a pause.

“My boy,” said the doctor, “this is a terrible thing for me. Mr. Hickman is my wife's brother, and she loves him very dearly. And he is a very good friend of mine—I depend on him in all the business matters of the church.

“Yes,” said Samuel. “But he bribed the city council.”

“This thing would make a frightful scandal if it were known,” the other went on. “Think what a terrible thing it would be for St. Matthew's!”

“It is much worse as it is,” said the boy. “For people hear the story, and they say that the church is sheltering evil doers.”

“Think what a burden you place upon me!” cried the clergyman in distress. “A member of my own family!”

“It is just as hard for me,” said Samuel quickly.

“In what way?”

“On account of Mr. Wygant, sir.”

“What of that?”

Samuel had meant to say—“He is to be my father-in-law.” But at the last moment some instinct told him that it might be best to let Miss Gladys make that announcement at her own time. So instead he said, “I am thinking of Sophie.”

“It is not quite the same,” said the doctor; and then he repeated his question, “What do you want me to do?”

“Truly, I don't know!” protested the boy. “I am groping about to find what is right.”

“But you must have some idea in coming to me!” exclaimed the other anxiously. “Do you want me to expose my brother-in-law and drive him from the church?”

“I suppose,” said Samuel gravely, “that he would be sent to prison. But I certainly don't think that he should be driven from the church at least not unless he is unrepentant. First of all we should labor with him, I think.”

“And threaten him with exposure?”

“I'll tell you, doctor,” said the boy quickly. “I've been thinking about this very hard; and I don't think it would do much good to expose and punish any one. That only leads to bitterness and hatred—and we oughtn't to hate any person, you know.”

“Ah!” said the doctor with relief.

“The point is, the wicked thing that's been done. It's this robbing of the people that must be stopped! And it's the things that have been stolen!—Let me give you an example. To-day I met the man who came here with me to rob your house; and I learned for the first time that he had carried off some of your silver.”

“Yes,” said the other.

“And the man asked me to say nothing about what he had done, and I promised. I felt about him just as you do about your brother-in-law—I wouldn't denounce him and put him in jail. But I saw right away that I must do one thing—I must make him return the things he had stolen! That was right, was it not, doctor?”

“Yes,” said Dr. Vince promptly, “that was right.”

"Very well," said the boy; "and the same thing is true about Mr. Hickman. He has robbed the people. He has got a franchise that enables him and the Lockman estate to make about ten thousand dollars a month out of the public. And they must give up that franchise! They must give up every dollar that they have made out of it! That is the whole story as I see it—nothing else counts but that. You can make all the fuss you want about bribery and graft, but you haven't accomplished anything unless you get back the stolen money."

There was a pause. "Don't you see what I mean, doctor?" asked Samuel.

"Yes," was the reply, "I see."

"Well?" said Samuel.

"It would be no use to try it," said the doctor. "They would never do it."

"They wouldn't?"

"No. Nothing in the world could make them do it."

"Not even if we threatened to denounce them?"

"No; not even then."

"Not even if we put them in jail?"

Dr. Vince made no reply. The other sat waiting. And then suddenly he said in a low voice, "Doctor, I mean to MAKE them give it up. I see it quite clearly now—that is my duty. They must give it up!"

Again there was silence.

"Dr. Vince," cried the boy in a voice of pain, "you surely mean to help me!"

And suddenly the doctor shut his lips together tightly. "No, Samuel," he said. "I do not!"

The boy sat dumb. He felt a kind of faintness come over him. "You will leave me all alone?" he said in a weak voice.

The other made no reply.

“Am I not right?” cried the boy wildly. “Have I not spoken the truth?”

“I don't know,” the doctor answered. “It is too hard a question for me to answer. I only know that I do not feel such things to be in my province; and I will not have anything to do with them.”

“But, doctor, you are the representative of the church!”

“Yes. And I must attend to the affairs of the church.”

“But is it no affair of the church that the people are being robbed?”

There was no reply.

“You give out charity!” protested Samuel.

“You pretend to try to help the poor! And I bring you cases, and you confess that you can't help them—because there are too many. And you couldn't tell how it came to be. But here I show you—I prove to you what makes the people poor! They are being robbed—they are being trampled upon! Their own government has been stolen from them, and is being used to cheat them! And you won't lift your voice to help!”

“There is nothing that I can do, Samuel!” cried the clergyman wildly.

“But there is! There is! You won't try! You might at least withdraw your help from these criminals!”

“My HELP!”

“Yes, sir! You help them! You permit them to stay in the church, and that gives them your sanction! You shelter them, and save them from attack! If I were to go out to-morrow and try to open the eyes of the people, no one would listen to me, because these men are so respectable—because they are members of the church, and friends and relatives of yours!”

“Samuel!” exclaimed the clergyman.

“And worse than that, sir! You take their money—you let the church become dependent upon them! You told me that yourself, sir! And you give their money to the poor people—the very people they have robbed! And that blinds the people—they are grateful, and they don't understand! And so you help to keep them in their chains! Don't you see that, Dr. Vince?—why, it's just the same as if you were hired for that purpose!”

Dr. Vince had risen in agitation. “Really, Samuel!” he cried. “You have exceeded the limit of endurance. This cannot go on! I will not hear another word of it!”

Samuel sat, heart broken. “Then you are going to desert me!” he exclaimed. “You are going to make me do it alone.”

The other stared. “What are you going to do?” he demanded.

“First,” said Samuel, “I am going to see these men. I am going to give them a chance to see the error of their ways.”

“Boy!” cried the doctor. “You are mad!”

“Perhaps I am,” was the reply. “But how can I help that?”

“At least,” exclaimed the other, “if you take any such step, you will make it clear to them that I have not sent you, and that you have no sanction from me.”

For a long time Samuel made no reply to this. Somehow it seemed the most unworthy thing that his friend had said yet. It meant that Dr. Vince was a coward!

“No, sir,” he said at last, “you may rest easy about that. I will take the whole burden on my own shoulders. There's no reason why I should trouble you any more, I think.”

And with that he rose, and went out from the house.

CHAPTER XXIII

After Samuel had left Dr. Vince, a great wave of desolation swept over him. He was

alone again, and all the world was against him!

For a moment he had an impulse to turn back. After all, he was only a boy; and who was he, to set himself up against the wise and great? But then like a stab, came again the thought which drove him always—the thought of the people, suffering and starving! Truly it was better to die than to live in a world in which there was so much misery and oppression! That was the truth, he would rather die than let these things go on unopposed. And so there could be no turning back-there was nothing for him save to do what he could.

Where should he begin? He thought of Mr. Hickman—a most unpromising person to work with. Samuel had been afraid of him from the first time he had seen him.

Then he thought of Mr. Wygant; should he begin with him? This brought to his mind something which had been driven away by the rush of events. Miss Gladys! How would she take these things? And what would she think when she learned about her father's wickedness?

A new idea came to Samuel. Why should he not take Miss Gladys into his confidence? She would be the one to help him. She had helped him with Sophie; and she had promised to help with Master Albert. And surely it was her right to know about matters which concerned her family so nearly. She would know what was best, so far as concerned her own father; he would take her advice as to how to approach him.

He went to the house and asked for Sophie.

“Tell Miss Gladys that I want to see her,” he said; “and that it's something very, very important.”

So Sophie went away, and returning, took him upstairs.

“Samuel,” said his divinity, “it isn't safe for you to come to see me in the afternoons.”

“Yes, Miss Gladys,” said he. “But this is something very serious. It's got nothing to do with myself.”

“What is it?” she asked.

“It's your father, Miss Gladys.”

“My father?”

“Yes, Miss Gladys. It's a long story. I shall have to begin at the beginning.”

So he told the story of his coming to the church, and of the fervor which had seized upon him, and how he had set to work to bring converts into the fold; and how he had met a wicked man who had resisted his faith, and of all the dreadful things which this man had said. When he came to what Charlie Swift had told about her own father, Samuel was disposed to expurgate the story; but Miss Gladys would have it all, and seemed even to be disappointed that he had not more details to give her.

“And Hickman!” she exclaimed gleefully. “I always knew he was an old scamp! I'll wager you haven't found out the hundredth part about him, Samuel!”

Samuel went on to tell about the revelation at Callahan's.

“And you took that to Dr. Vince!” she cried amazed.

“Yes,” said he.

“And what did he say?”

“He wouldn't have anything to do with it. And so it's all left to me.”

“And what are you going to do now?”

“I don't know, Miss Gladys. For one thing, I think I shall have to see your father.”

“See my father!” gasped the girl.

“Yes, Miss Gladys.”

“But what for?”

“To try to get him to see how wicked these things are.”

The other was staring at him with wide-open, startled eyes. “Do you mean,” she cried, “that you want to go to my father and talk to him about what he's doing in politics?”

“Why, yes, Miss Gladys—what else can I do?”

And Miss Gladys took out her handkerchief, and leaned down upon the table, hiding her face. She was overcome with some emotion, the nature of which was not apparent.

The boy was naturally alarmed. “Miss Gladys!” he cried. “You aren't angry with me?”

She answered, in a muffled voice, “No, Samuel—no!”

Then she looked up, her face somewhat red. “Go and see him, Samuel!” she said.

“You don't mind?” he cried anxiously.

“No, not in the least,” she said. “Go right ahead and see what you can do. He's a very bad, worldly man; and if you can soften his heart, it will be the best thing for all of us.”

“And it won't make any difference in our relationship?” he asked.

“In our relationship?” she repeated; and then, “Not in the least. But mind, of course, don't say anything about that to him. Don't give him any idea that you know me!”

“Of course not, Miss Gladys.”

“Tell him that you come from the church. And give it to him good and hard, Samuel—for I'm sure he's done everything you told me, and lots that is worse.”

“Miss Gladys!” gasped the other.

“And mind, Samuel!” she added. “Come and tell me about it afterwards. Perhaps I can advise you what to do next.”

There was a pause, while the two looked at each other. And then in a sudden burst of emotion Miss Gladys exclaimed, “Oh, Samuel, you are an angel!”

And she broke into a peal of laughter; and swiftly, like a bird upon the wing, she leaned toward him, and touched his cheek with her lips. And then, like a flash, she was gone; and Samuel was left alone with his bewilderment.

Samuel set out forthwith for Mr. Wygant's office. But just before he came to the bridge Mr. Wygant's automobile flashed past him; and so he turned and went back to the house.

This time he went to the front door. “I am Samuel Prescott, from St. Matthew's Church,” he said to the butler. “And I want to see Mr. Wygant upon important business.”

Mr. Wygant sat in a great armchair by one of the windows in his library. About him was the most elaborate collection of books that Samuel had yet seen; and in the luxurious room was an atmosphere of profound and age-long calm. Mr. Wygant himself was tall and stately, with an indescribable air of exclusiveness and reserve.

Samuel clenched his hands and rushed at once to the attack. “I am Samuel Prescott, the sexton's boy at the church,” he said; “and I have to talk to you about something very, VERY serious.”

“Well?” said Mr. Wygant.

Then Samuel told yet again how he had been led into evil ways, and how he had been converted by Dr. Vince. He told the story in detail, so that the other might comprehend his fervor. Then he told of the converts he had made, and how at last he had encountered Charlie Swift. “And this man would not come into the church,” he wound up, “because of the wicked people who are in it.”

The other had been listening with perplexed interest. “Who are these people?” he asked.

“Yourself for one,” said Samuel.

Mr. Wygant started. “Myself!” he exclaimed. “What have I done?”

“For one thing,” replied Samuel, “you work little children in your mill, and you named the State senator to beat the child-labor bill. And for another, you make speeches and pose as a political reformer, while you are paying money to Slattery, so that he will give you franchises.”

There was a silence, while Mr. Wygant got back his breath. “Young man,” he cried at last, “this is a most incredible piece of impertinence!”

And suddenly the boy started toward him, stretching out his arms. “Mr. Wygant!” he cried. “You are going to be angry with me! But I beg you not to harden your heart! I have come here for your own good! I came because I couldn't bear to know that such things are done by a member of St. Matthew's Church!”

For a moment or two Mr. Wygant sat staring. “Let me ask you one thing,” he said. “Does Dr. Vince know about this?”

“I went to Dr. Vince about it first,” replied Samuel. “And he wouldn't do anything about it. He said that if I came to you, I must make it clear that he did not approve of it. I have come of my own free will, sir.”

There was another pause. “You are going to be angry with me!” cried Samuel, again.

“No,” said the other, “I will not be angry—because you are nothing but a child, and you don't know what you are doing.”

“Oh!” said Samuel.

“You are very much in need of a little knowledge of life,” added the other.

“But, Mr. Wygant,” exclaimed the boy, “the things I have said are true!”

“They are true—after a fashion,” was the reply.

“And they are very wrong things!”

“They seem so to you. That is because you know so little about such matters.”

“You are corrupting the government of your country, Mr. Wygant!”

“The government of my country, as you call it, consisting of a number of blackmailing politicians, who exist to prey upon the business I represent.”

There was a pause. “You see, young man,” said Mr. Wygant, “I have many responsibilities upon my shoulders—many interests looking to me for protection. And it is as if I were surrounded by a pack of wolves.”

“But meantime,” cried Samuel, “what is becoming of free government?”

“I do not know,” the other replied. “I sometimes think that unless the people reform, free government will soon come to an end.”

“But what are the people to do, sir?”

“They are to elect honest men, with whom one can do business—instead of the peasant saloon keepers and blatherskite labor leaders whom they choose at present.”

Samuel thought for a moment. “Men with whom one can do business,” he said—“but what kind of business do you want to do?”

“How do you mean?” asked the other.

“You went to those politicians and got a franchise that will let you tax the people whatever you please for ninety-nine years. And do you think that was good business for the people?”

There was no reply to this.

“And how much of the property you are protecting was made in such ways as that, sir?”

A frown had come upon Mr. Wygant's forehead. But no one could gaze into Samuel's agonized face and remain angry.

“Young man,” said he. “I can only tell you again that you do not know the world. If I should step out, would things be any different? The franchises would go to some

other crowd—that is all. It is the competition of capital."

"The competition of capital," reflected the boy. "In other words, there is a scramble for money, and you get what you can!"

"You may put it that way, sir."

"And you think that your responsibility ends when you've got a share for your crowd!"

"Yes—I suppose that is it."

There was a pause. "I see perfectly," said Samuel, in a low voice. "There's only one thing I can't understand."

"What is that?"

"Why you should belong to the church, sir? What has this money scramble to do with the teaching of Jesus?"

And then Samuel saw that he had overstepped the mark. "Really, young man," said Mr. Wygant, "I cannot see what is to be gained by pursuing this conversation."

"But, sir, you are degrading the church!"

"The subject must be dropped!" said Mr. Wygant sternly. "You are presuming upon my good nature. You are forgetting your place."

"I have been reminded of my place before," said Samuel, in a suppressed voice. "But I do not know what my place is."

"That is quite evident," responded the other. "It is your place to do your work, and be respectful to your superiors, and keep your opinions to yourself."

"I see that you will get angry with me," said the boy, "I can't make you understand—I am only trying to find the truth. I want to do what's right, Mr. Wygant!"

"I suppose you do," began the other—

“I want to understand, sir—just what is it that makes another person my superior?”

“People who are older than you, and who are wiser—”

“But is it age and wisdom, Mr. Wygant? I worked for Master Albert Lockman, and he's hardly any older than I. And yet he was my superior!”

“Yes,” admitted the other—

“And in spite of the wicked life that he's leading, sir!”

“What!”

“Yes, Mr. Wygant—he's drinking, and going with bad women. And yet he is my superior.”

“Ahem!” said Mr. Wygant.

“Isn't it simply that he has got a lot of money?” pursued Samuel relentlessly.

Mr. Wygant did not reply.

“And isn't my 'place' simply the fact that I haven't any money at all?”

Again there was no reply.

“And yet, I see the truth, and I have to speak it! And how can I get to a 'place' where I may?”

“Really,” said Mr. Wygant coldly, “you will have to solve that problem for yourself.”

“Apparently, I should have to take part in the scramble for money—if it's only money that counts.”

“Young man,” said the other, “I feel sorry for you—you will get some hard knocks from the world before you get through. You will have to learn to take life as you find it. Perhaps many of us would make it different, if we could have our way. But you will find that life is a hard battle. It is a struggle for existence, and the people who survive are the ones who are best fitted—”

And suddenly Samuel raised his hand. “I thank you, Mr. Wygant,” he said gravely, “but I have been all through that part of it before.”

“What do you mean?” asked the other.

“I couldn't explain,” said he. “You wouldn't understand me. I see that you are another of the followers of Herbert Spencer. And that's all right—only WHY do you belong to the church? Why do you pretend to follow Jesus—-”

And suddenly Mr. Wygant rose to his feet. “This is quite too much,” he said. “I must ask you to leave my house.”

“But, sir!” cried Samuel.

“Not another word!” exclaimed the other. “Please leave the house!”

And so the conversation came to an end.

CHAPTER XXIV

Samuel had had nothing to eat since morning, but he did not feel hungry. He was faint from grief and despair. To encounter a man of the world like Mr. Wygant, cold and merciless and masterful—that was a terrible ordeal for him. The man seemed to him like some great fortress of evil; and what could he do, save to gaze at it in impotent rage?

He went home, and Sophie met him at the door. “I thought you wanted an early supper, Samuel,” said she.

“Why?” he asked dully.

“You had something to do at the church tonight!”

“Yes,” he recollected, “there's to be a vestry meeting, and I have to light up. But I'm tired of the church work.”

“Tired of the church work!” gasped the child. “Yes,” he said. And then to the amazed and terrified family, he told the story of his day's experiences.

Sophie listened, thrilling with excitement. “And you went to see Mr. Wygant!” she cried in awe. “Oh, Samuel, how brave of you!”

“He ordered me out of his house,” said the boy bitterly. “And Dr. Vince has gone back on me—I have no one at all to help.”

Sophie came to him and flung her arms about him. “You have us, Samuel!” she exclaimed. “We will stand by you—won't we mother?”

“Yes,” said Mrs. Stedman—“but what can poor people like us do?”

“And then you have Miss Gladys!” cried Sophie after a moment.

“Miss Gladys!” he echoed. “Will she take my part against her own father?”

“She told you that she loved you, Samuel,” said the child. “And she knows that you are in the right.”

“I will have to go and see her,” said Samuel after a little. “I promised that I would come and tell what happened.”

“And I will see her, too!” put in the other. “Oh, I'm sure she'll stand by you!”

The child's face was aglow with excitement; and Samuel looked at her, and for the first time it occurred to him that Sophie was really beautiful. Her face had filled out and her color had come back, since she had been getting one meal every day at the Wygant's. “Don't you think Miss Gladys will help, mother?” she asked.

“I don't know,” said Mrs. Stedman dubiously.

“It's very terrible—I can't see why such things have to be.”

“You think that Samuel did right, don't you?” cried the child.

“I—I suppose so,” she answered. “It's hard to say—it will make so much trouble. And if Miss Gladys were angry, then you might lose your place!”

“Oh, mother!” cried Sophie. And the two young people gazed at each other in sudden dismay. That was something they had never thought of.

“You mustn't do it, Sophie!” cried the boy. “You must leave it to me!”

“But why should you make all the sacrifices?” replied Sophie. “If it's right for you, isn't it right for me?”

“But, Sophie!” wailed Mrs. Stedman. “If you lost this place we should all starve!”

And again they stared at each other with terror in their eyes. “Sophie,” said Samuel, “I forbid you to have anything to do with it!”

But in his heart he knew that he might as well not have said this. And Mrs. Stedman knew it, too, and turned white with fear.

The boy ate a few hurried mouthfuls, and then went off to his work at the church. But he did not go with the old joy in his soul. Before this it had been the work of the Lord that he had been doing; but now he was only serving the Wygants—and the Hickmans—apparently one always served them, no matter where or how he worked in this world.

“You are late,” said old Mr. Jacobs, the sexton, when he arrived.

“Yes, sir,” said Samuel.

“Dr. Vince left word that he wanted to see you as soon as you came.”

The boy's heart gave a leap. Had the doctor by any chance repented? “Where is he?” he asked.

“In the vestry room,” said the other; and the boy went there.

The instant he entered, Dr. Vince sprang to his feet. “Samuel,” he cried vehemently, “this thing has got to stop!”

“What thing, Dr. Vince?”

“Your conduct is beyond endurance, boy—you are driving me to distraction!”

“What have I done now, sir?”

“My brother-in-law has just been here, making a terrible disturbance. You have been

defaming him among the congregation of the church!”

“But, Dr. Vince!” cried Samuel, in amazement. “I have done nothing of the sort!”

“But you must have! Everyone is talking about it!”

“Doctor,” said the boy solemnly, “you are mistaken. I went to see Mr. Wygant, as I told you I would. Besides that, I have not spoken to a single soul about it, except just now to Sophie and Mrs. Stedman.—Oh, yes,” he added quickly—“and to Miss Gladys!”

“Ah!” exclaimed the other. “There you have it! Miss Gladys is a school friend of Mr. Hickman's daughter; and, of course, she went at once to tell her. And, of course, she will tell everyone else she knows—the whole congregation will be gossiping about it to-morrow!”

“I am very sorry, sir.”

“You see the trouble you cause me! And I must tell you plainly, Samuel, that this thing cannot go on another minute. Unless you are prepared to give up these absurd ideas of yours and attend to your duties as the sexton's boy, it will be necessary for you to leave the church.”

Samuel was staring at him aghast. “Leave the church!” he cried.

“Most assuredly!” declared the other.

“Dr. Vince!” exclaimed the other. “Do you mean that you would actually try to turn me out of the church?”

“I would, sir!”

“But, doctor, have you the right to do that?”

“The right? Why not?”

“You have the right to take away my work. But to turn me out of the church?”

“Samuel,” cried the distracted clergyman, “am I not the rector of this church?”

“But, doctor,” cried Samuel, “it is the church of God!”

There was a long pause.

Finally, Samuel took up the conversation again. “Tell me, Dr. Vince,” he said. “When Mr. Hickman came to see you, did he deny that he had committed that crime?”

“I did not ask him,” replied the other.

“You didn't ask him!” exclaimed the boy in dismay. “You didn't even care that much?”

Again there was a pause. “I asked Mr. Wygant,” said Samuel in a low voice. “And he confessed that he was guilty.”

“What!” cried the other.

“He confessed it—his whole conversation was a confession of it. He said everybody did those things, because that was the way to make money, and everybody wanted to make money. He called it competition. And then I asked him why he came to the church of Jesus, and he ordered me out of his house.”

Dr. Vince was listening with knitted brows. “And what do you propose to do now,” he asked.

“I don't know, sir. I suppose I shall have to expose him.”

“Samuel,” exclaimed the clergyman, “in all this wild behavior of yours, does it never occur to you that you owe some gratitude to me?”

“Oh, doctor!” cried the boy, clasping his hands in agony. “Don't say anything like that to me!”

“I do say it!” persisted the other. “I saved you and helped you; and now you are causing me most terrible suffering!”

“Doctor,” protested Samuel, “I would do anything in the world for you—I would die for you. But you ask me to be false to my duty; and how can I do that?”

“But does it never occur to you that older and wiser people may be better able to judge than you are?”

“But the facts are so plain, sir! And you have never answered me! You simply command me to be silent!”

The other did not reply.

“When I came to you,” went on Samuel, “you taught me about love and brotherhood—about self-sacrifice and service. And I took you at your word, sir. As God is my witness, I have done nothing but try to apply what you told me! I have tried to help the poor and oppressed. And how could I know that you did not really mean what you said?”

“Samuel,” protested the other, “you have no right to say that! I am doing all that I can. I preach upon these things very often.”

“Yes!” exclaimed the boy, “but what do you preach? Do you tell the truth to these rich people who come to your church? Do you say to them: 'You are robbing the poor. You are the cause of all the misery which exists in this town—you carry the guilt of it upon your souls. And you must cease from robbery and oppression—you must give up this wealth that you have taken from the people!' No—you don't say that—you know that you don't! And can't you see what that means, Dr. Vince—it means that the church is failing in its mission! And there will have to be a new church—somewhere, somehow! For these things exist! They are right here in our midst, and something must be done!”

And the boy sprang forward in his excitement, stretching out his arms. “The people are starving! Right here about us—here in Lockmanville! They are starving! starving! starving! Don't you understand, Dr. Vince? Starving!”

The doctor wrung his hands in his agitation. “Boy,” he exclaimed, “this thing cannot go on. I cannot stand it any longer!”

“But what am I to do, sir?”

“You are to submit yourself to my guidance. I ask you, once for all, Will you give up these wild courses of yours?”

“Dr. Vince,” cried Samuel, “I cannot! I cannot!”

“Then I tell you it will be necessary for us to part. You will give up your position, and you will leave the church.”

The tears started into Samuel's eyes. “Doctor,” he cried frantically, “don't cast me out! Don't! I beg you on my knees, sir!”

“I have spoken,” said the other, clenching his hands.

“But think what you are doing!” protested the boy. “You are casting out your own soul! You are turning your back upon the truth!”

“I tell you you must go!” exclaimed the doctor.

“But think of it! It means the end of the church. For don't you see—I shall have to fight you! I shall have to expose you! And I shall prevail over you, because I have the truth with me—because you have cast it out! Think what you are doing when you cast out the truth!”

“I will hear no more of this!” cried Dr. Vince wildly. “You are raving. I tell you to go! I tell you to go! Go now!”

And Samuel turned and went, sobbing meanwhile as if his heart would break.

CHAPTER XXV

Samuel rushed away into the darkness. But he couldn't stay away—he could not bring himself to believe that he was separated from St. Matthew's forever. He turned and came back to the church, and stood gazing at it, choking with his sobs.

Then, as he waited, he saw an automobile draw up in front of the side entrance, and saw Mr. Wygant step out and enter. The sight was like a blow in the face to him. There was the proud rich man, defiant and unpunished, seated in the place of

authority; while Samuel, the Seeker, was turned out of the door!

A blaze of rebellion flamed up in him. No, no—they should not cast him off! He would fight them—he would fight to the very end. The church was not their church—it was the church of God! And he had a right to belong to it—and to speak the truth in it, too!

And so, just after the vestry had got settled to the consideration of the architect's sketch for the new Nurse's Home, there came a loud knock upon the door, and Samuel entered, wild-eyed and breathless.

“Gentlemen!” he cried. “I demand a hearing!”

Dr. Vince sprang to his feet in terror. “Samuel Prescott!” he exclaimed.

“I have been ordered out of the church!” proclaimed Samuel. “And I will not submit to it! I have spoken the truth, and I will not permit the evil-doers in St. Matthew's to silence me!”

Mr. Hickman had sprung up. “Boy,” he commanded, “leave this room!”

“I will not leave the room!” shouted Samuel. “I demand a hearing from the vestry of this church. I have a right to a hearing! I have spoken the truth, and nothing but the truth!”

“What is the boy talking about?” demanded another of the vestrymen. This was Mr. Hamerton, a young lawyer, whose pleasant face Samuel had often noticed. And Samuel, seeing curiosity and interest in his look, sprang toward him.

“Don't let them turn me out without a hearing!” he cried.

“Boy!” exclaimed Mr. Hickman, “I command you to leave this room.”

“You corrupted the city council!” shrilled Samuel. “You bribed it to beat the water bill! It's true, and you know it's true, and you don't dare to deny it!”

Mr. Hickman was purple in the face with rage. “It's a preposterous lie!” he roared.

“I have talked with one of the men who got the money!” cried Samuel. “There was

two thousand dollars paid to ten of the supervisors."

"Who is this man?" cried the other furiously.

"I won't tell his name," said Samuel. "He told me in confidence."

"Aha!" laughed the other. "I knew as much! It is a vile slander!"

"It is true!" protested Samuel. "Dr. Vince, you know that I am telling the truth. What reason would I have for making it up?"

"I have told you, Samuel," exclaimed Dr. Vince, "that I would have nothing to do with this matter."

"I will take any member of this vestry to talk with that man!" declared the boy. "Anybody can find out about these things if he wants to. Why, Mr. Wygant told me himself that he had paid money to Slattery to get franchises!"

And then Mr. Wygant came into the controversy. "WHAT!" he shouted.

"Why, of course you did!" cried Samuel in amazement. "Didn't you tell me this very afternoon?"

"I told you nothing of the sort!" declared the man.

"You told me everybody did it—that there was no way to help doing it. You called it the competition of capital!"

"I submit that this is an outrage!" exclaimed Mr. Hickman. "Leave this room, sir!"

"The poor people in this town are suffering and dying!" cried Samuel. "And they are being robbed and oppressed. And are these things to go on forever?"

"Samuel, this is no place to discuss the question!" broke in Dr. Vince.

"But why not, sir? The guilty men are high in the councils of this church. They hold the church up to disgrace before all the world. And this is the church of Christ, sir!"

"But yours is not the way to go about it, boy!" exclaimed Mr. Hamerton—who was alarmed because Samuel kept looking at him.

“Why not?” cried Samuel. “Did not Christ drive out the money-changers from the temple with whips?”

This was an uncomfortable saying. There was a pause after it, as if everyone were willing to let his neighbor speak first.

“Are we not taught to follow Christ's example, Dr. Vince?” asked the boy.

“Hardly in that sense, Samuel,” said the terrified doctor. “Christ was God. And we can hardly be expected—”

“Ah, that is a subterfuge!” broke in Samuel, passionately. “You say that Christ was God, and so you excuse yourself from doing what He tells you to! But I don't believe that He was God in any such sense as that. He was a man, like you and me! He was a poor man, who suffered and starved! And the rich men of His time despised Him and spit upon Him and crucified Him!”

Here a new member of the vestry entered the arena. This was the venerable Mr. Curtis, who looked like a statue of the Olympian Jove. “Boy,” he said sternly, “you object to being put out of the church—and yet you confess to being an infidel.”

“I may be an infidel, Mr. Curtis,” replied the other, quickly; “but I never paid two hundred dollars to Slattery so that the police would let me block the sidewalks of the town.”

And Mr. Curtis subsided and took no further part in the discussion.

“The church cast out Jesus!” went on Samuel, taking advantage of the confusion. “And it was the rich and powerful in the church who did it. And he used about them language far more violent than I have ever used. 'Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites!' he said. 'Woe unto you also, you lawyers!—Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?' And if He were here tonight He would be on my side—and the rich evil-doers who sit on this board would cast Him out again! You have cast Him out already! You have shut your ears to the cry of the oppressed—you make mockery of justice and truth! You are

crucifying Him again every day!”

“This is outrageous!” cried Mr. Hickman. “It is blasphemy!”

“It must stop instantly,” put in Mr. Wygant. And Samuel knew that when Mr. Wygant spoke, he meant to be obeyed.

“Then there is no one here who will hear me?” he exclaimed. “Mr. Hamerton, won't you help me?”

“What do you want us to do?” demanded Mr. Hamerton.

“I want the vestry to investigate these charges. I want you to find out whether it is true that members of St. Matthew's have been corrupting the government of Lockmanville. And if it is true, I want you to drive such men from the church! They have no place in the church, sir! Men who spend their whole time in trying to get the people's money from them! Men who openly declare, as Mr. Wygant did to me, that it is necessary to bribe lawmakers in order to make money! Such men degrade the church and drag it from its mission. They are the enemies the church exists to fight—”

“Are we here to listen to a sermon from this boy?” shouted Mr. Hickman furiously.

“Samuel, leave this room!” commanded Dr. Vince.

“Then there is no one here who will help me?”

“I told you you could accomplish nothing by such behavior. Leave the room!”

“Very well, then,” cried the boy wildly, “I will go. But I tell you I will not give up without a fight. I will expose you and denounce you to the world! The people shall know you for what you are—cowards and hypocrites, faithless to your trust! Plunderers of the public! Corrupters of the state!”

“Get out of here, you young villain!” shouted Hickman, advancing with a menace.

And the boy, blazing with fury, pointed his finger straight into his face. “You, Henry Hickman!” he cried. “You are the worst of them all! You, the great lawyer—the

eminent statesman! I have been among the lowest—I have been with saloon keepers and criminals—with publicans and harlots and thieves—but never yet have I met a man as merciless and as hard as you! You a Christian—you might be the Roman soldier who spat in Jesus' face!"

And with that last thunderbolt Samuel turned and went out, slamming the door with a terrific bang in the great lawyer's face.

For at least a couple of hours Samuel paced the streets of Lockmanville, to let his rage and grief subside. And then he went home, and to his astonishment found that Sophie Stedman had been waiting up for him all this while.

She listened breathlessly to the story of his evening's adventures. Then she said, "I have been trying to do something, too."

"What have you done?" he asked.

"I went to see little Ethel," she replied.

"Ethel Vince!" he gasped.

"Yes," said she. "She is your friend, you know; and I went to ask her not to let her father turn you off."

"And what came of it?"

"She cried," said Sophie. "She was terribly unhappy. She said that she knew that you were a good boy; and that she would never rest until her father had taken you back."

"You don't mean it!" cried Samuel in amazement.

"Yes, Samuel; but then her mother came."

"Oh! And what then?"

"She scolded me! She was very angry with me. She said I had no right to fill the child's mind with falsehoods about her uncle. And she wouldn't listen to me—she turned me out of the house."

There was a long silence. “I don't think I did any good at all,” said Sophie in a low voice. “We are going to have to do it all by ourselves.”

CHAPTER XXVI

Samuel slept not a wink all that night. First he lay wrestling with the congregation. And then his thoughts came to Miss Gladys, and what he was going to say to her. This kindled a fire in his blood, and when the first streaks of dawn were in the sky, he rose and went out to walk.

Throughout all these adventures, his feelings had been mingled with the excitement of his love for her. Samuel hardly knew what to make of himself. He had never kissed a woman in his life before—but now desire was awake, and from the deeps of him the most unexpected emotions came surging, sweeping him away. He was a prey to longings and terrors. Wild ecstasies came to him, and then followed plunges into melancholy. He longed to see her, and other things stood in the way, and he did not know why he should be so tormented.

Just to be in love would have been enough. But to have been given the love of a being like Miss Gladys—peerless and unapproachable, almost unimaginable!

After hours of pacing the streets, he called to see her. And she came to him, her face alight with eager curiosity, and crying, “Tell me all about it!”

She listened, almost dumb with amazement. “And you said that to my father!” she exclaimed again and again. “And to Mr. Hickman! And to old Mr. Curtis! Samuel! Samuel!”

“It was all true, Miss Gladys,” he insisted.

“Yes,” she said—“but—to say it to them!”

“They turned me out of the church,” he went on. “Had they a right to do that?”

“I don't know,” she answered. “Oh, my, what a time there will be!”

“And what are you going to do now?” she asked after a pause.

“I don't know. I wanted to talk about it with you.”

“But what do you think of doing?”

“I must expose them to the people.”

Miss Gladys looked at him quickly. “Oh, no, Samuel,” she said—“you mustn't do that!”

“Why not, Miss Gladys?”

“Because—it wouldn't do.”

“But Miss Gladys—”

“It wouldn't be decent, Samuel. And it's so much more effective to talk with people privately, as you have been doing.”

“But who else is there to talk to?”

“Why, I don't know. We'll have to think.”

“It's your father and Mr. Hickman I have to deal with, Miss Gladys. And they won't listen to me any more!”

“Perhaps not. But, then, see how much you have done already!”

“What have I done?”

“Think how ashamed you have made them!”

“But what difference does that make, Miss Gladys? Don't you see they've still got the money they've taken?”

There was a pause. “This is something I have been thinking,” said Samuel gravely. “I've had this great burden laid upon me, and I must carry it. I have to see the thing through to the end. And I'm afraid it will be painful to you. You may feel that you can't possibly marry me.”

At these words Miss Gladys gave a wild start. She stared at him in consternation.

“Marry you!” she gasped.

“Yes,” he said; and then, seeing the look upon her face, he stopped.

“Marry you!” she panted again.

A silence followed, while they gazed at each other.

“Why, Samuel!” she exclaimed.

“Miss Gladys,” he said in a low voice, “you told me that you loved me.”

“Yes,” she said, “but surely—” And then suddenly she bit her lips together exclaiming, “This has gone too far!”

“Miss Gladys!” he cried.

“Samuel,” she said, “we have been two bad children; and we must not go on in this way.”

The boy gave a gasp of amazement.

“I had no idea that you were taking me so seriously,” she continued. “It wasn't fair to me.”

“Then—then you don't love me!” he panted.

“Why—perhaps,” she replied, “how can I tell? But one does not marry because one loves, Samuel.”

He gazed at her, speechless.

“I thought we were playing with each other; and I thought you understood it. It wasn't very wise, perhaps—-”

“Playing with each other!” whispered the boy, his voice almost gone.

“You take everything with such frightful seriousness,” she protested. “Really, I don't think you had any right—-”

“Miss Gladys!” he cried in sudden anguish; and she stopped and stared at him, frightened.

“Do you know what you have done to me?” he exclaimed.

“Samuel,” she said in a trembling voice, “I am very much surprised and upset. I had no idea of such a thing; and you must stop, before it is too late.”

“But I love you!” he cried, half beside himself.

“Yes,” she said in great agitation—“and that's very good of you. But there are some things you must remember—”

“You—you let me embrace you, Miss Gladys! You let me think of you so! Why, what is a man to do? What was I to make of it? I had never loved a woman before. And you—you led me on—”

“Samuel, you must not talk like this!” she broke in. “I can't listen to you. It was a misunderstanding, and you must forget it all. You must go away. We must not meet again.”

“Miss Gladys!” he cried in horror.

“Yes,” she exclaimed, “you must go—”

“You are going to turn me off!” he panted. “Oh, how can you say such a thing? Why, think what you have done to me!”

“Samuel,” protested the girl angrily, “this is perfectly preposterous behavior of you! You have no right to go on in this way. You never had any right to—to think such things. How could you so forget your place?”

And he started as if stung with a whip. “My place!” he gasped.

“Yes,” she said.

“I see, I see!” he burst out. “It's my 'place' again. It's the fact that I have no money!”

“Why, Samuel!” she exclaimed. “What a thing to say! It's not that—”

“It's that, and it's nothing but that! It never is anything but that! It's because I am a poor boy, and couldn't help myself! You told me that you loved me, and I believed you. You were so beautiful, and I thought that you must be good! Why, I worshiped

the very ground you walked on. I would have done anything in the world for you—I would have died for you! I went about thinking about you all day—I made you into a dream of everything that was good and perfect! And now—now—you say that you were only playing with me! Using me for your selfish pleasure—just as you do all the other poor people!"

"Samuel!" she gasped.

"Just as your father does the children in his mill! Just as your cousin does the poor girls he seduces! Just as you do everything in life that you touch!"

The girl had turned scarlet with anger. "How dare you speak to me that way?" she cried.

"I dare to speak the truth to anyone! And that is the truth about you! You are like all the rest of them—the members of your class. You are parasites—vampires—you devour other people's lives! And you are the worst, because you are a woman! You are beautiful, and you ought to be all the things that I imagined you were! But you use your beauty for a snare—you wreck men's lives with it—"

"Stop, Samuel!"

"I won't stop! You shall hear me! You drew me on deliberately—you wanted to amuse yourself with me, to see what I would do. And you had never a thought about me, or my rights, or the harm you might be doing to me! And now you've got tired—and you tell me to end it! You tell me about my 'place!' What am I in the world for, but to afford you amusement? What are all the working people for but to save you trouble and keep you beautiful and happy? What are the children for but to spin clothes for you to wear? And you—what do you do for them, to pay for their wasted lives, for all their toil and suffering?"

"Samuel Prescott!" cried the outraged girl. "I will not hear another word of this!"

"Yes, that's just what your father said! And what your cousin said! And what your clergyman said! And you can send for the butler and have me put out—but let me

tell you that will not be the end of it. We shall find some way to get at you! The people will not always be your slaves—they will not always give their lives to keep you in idleness and luxury! You were born to it—you've had everything in the world that you wanted, from the first hour of your life. And you think that will go on forever, that nothing can ever change it! But let me tell you that it seems different to the people underneath! We are tired of being robbed and spit upon! And we mean to fight! We mean to fight! We don't intend to be starved and tormented forever!”

And then in the midst of his wild tirade, Samuel stopped, and stared with horror in his eyes—realizing that this was Miss Gladys to whom he was talking! And suddenly a storm of sobs rose in him; and he put his hands to his face, and burst into tears, and turned and rushed from the room.

He went down the street, like a hunted animal, beside himself with grief, and looking for some place to hide. And as he ran on, he pulled out the faded pictures he had carried next to his heart, and tore them into pieces and flung them to the winds.

CHAPTER XXVII

When Sophie came home that evening, Samuel had mastered himself. He told her the story without a tremor in his voice. And this was well, for he was not prepared for the paroxysm of emotion with which the child received the news. Miss Gladys had been the last of Samuel's illusions; but she was the only one that Sophie had ever had. The child had made her life all over out of the joy of working for her; and now, hearing the story of her treatment of Samuel, she was almost beside herself with grief.

Samuel was frightened at her violence. “Listen, Sophie,” he said, putting his arm around her. “We must not forget our duty.”

“I could never go back there again!” exclaimed the child wildly. “I should die if I had to see her again!”

“I don't mean that,” said the other quickly—seeking to divert her thoughts. “But you must remember what I have to do; and you must help me.”

He went on to tell her of his plan to fight for the possession of St. Matthew's Church. “And we must not give way to bitterness,” he said; “it would be a very wicked thing if we did it from anger.”

“But how can you help it?” she cried.

“It is hard,” said Samuel; “but I have been wrestling with myself. We must not hate these people. They have done evil to us, but they do not realize it—they are poor human beings like the rest of us.”

“But they are bad, selfish people!” exclaimed the child.

“I have thought it all out,” said he. “I have been walking the streets all day, thinking about it. And I will not let myself feel anything but pity for them. They have done me wrong, but it is nothing to the wrong they have done themselves.”

“Oh, Samuel, you are so good!” exclaimed Sophie; and he winced—because that was what Miss Gladys had said to him.

“I had to settle it with myself,” he explained. “I have got to carry on a fight against them, and I have to be sure that I'm not just venting my spite.”

“What are you going to do?” asked Sophie.

“I am going to put the facts before the congregation of the church. If they will do nothing, I am going to the people.”

“But how, Samuel?”

“I am going to call a meeting. See, I have written this.”

And he took from his pocket a piece of paper, on which he had printed, in capital letters, as follows:

TO THE MEMBERS OF ST. MATTHEWS!

“There is corruption in the church. Members of its vestry have bribed the government of the town. They are robbing the people. The vestry has refused me a hearing and turned me out of the church. I appeal to the congregation. Next Wednesday evening, at eight o'clock, I will address a meeting on the vacant lot opposite the church, and will tell what I know. SAMUEL PRESCOTT.”

“And what are you going to do with that?” asked Sophie in wonder.

“I am going to have it printed on little slips, and give them out to the people when they are coming out of the church to-morrow morning.”

“Oh, Samuel!” gasped the child.

“I have to do it,” he said.

“But, Samuel, everyone will come—people from all over town.”

“I can't help that,” he answered. “I can't afford to hire a hall; and they wouldn't let me speak in the church.”

“But can you get this printed so quickly?”

“I don't know,” said he. “I must find some one.”

Sophie clapped her hands suddenly. “Oh, I know just the very thing!” she cried. “Friedrich Bremer has a printing press!”

“What!”

“Yes. His father used to print things. They will tell us.” And so, without stopping to eat, the two hurried off to the Bremer family; and mother and father and all the children sat and listened in astonishment while Samuel told his tale. Friedrich was thrilling with excitement; and old Johann's red face grew fiery.

“Herr Gott!” he cried. “I vas that vay myself once!”

“And then will you help me to get them printed?” asked Samuel.

“Sure!” replied the other. “I will do it myself. Vy did I go through the Commune?” And so the whole family adjourned to the attic, and the little printing outfit was

dragged out from under the piles of rubbish.

“I used it myself,” said the old carpet designer. “But vhen I come here they give me a varning, and I haf not dared. For two years I haf not even been to the meetings of the local.”

“Of the what?” asked Samuel.

“I am a Socialist,” explained Mr. Bremer. And Samuel gave a start. Ought he to accept any help from Socialists? But meantime Friedrich was sorting out the type, and his father was inspecting Samuel's copy.

“You must make it vith a plenty of paragraphs,” he said; “and exclamation points, too. Then they vill read it.”

“They'll read it!” said Friedrich grimly.

“How shall we print it?” asked the father; and the children rushed downstairs and came back with some sheets of writing paper, and a lot of brown wrapping paper. They sat on the floor and folded and cut it, while Friedrich set the type. And this was the way of the printing of Samuel's first manifesto.

“Can you make a speech?” Mrs. Bremer asked. “Won't you be frightened?”

To which Samuel answered gravely: “I don't think so. I shall be thinking about what I have to say.”

It was late at night when the two children went home, with three hundred copies of the revolutionary document carefully wrapped up from view; and they were so much excited by the whole affair that they had actually forgotten about Miss Gladys! It was not until he tried to go to sleep that her image came back to him, and all his blasted hopes arose to mock at him. What a fool he had been! How utterly insane all his fantasies seemed to him now! So he passed another sleepless night, and it was not till daylight that he fell into a troubled slumber.

He had to control his impatience until after eleven o'clock, the hour of the service at

the church. Sophie wished to go with him and share his peril, but he would not consent to this. He would not be able to give the manifesto to everyone, but he could reach enough—the others would hear about it! So, a full hour before the end of the service, he took up his post across the street, his heart beating furiously. He was feeling, it must be confessed, a good deal like a dynamiter or an assassin. The weather was warm, and the door of the church was open, so that he could hear the booming voice of Dr. Vince. The sound of the organ brought tears into his eyes—he loved the organ, and he was not to be allowed to listen to it! At last came the end; the sounds of the choir receded, and the assassin moved over to a strategic position. And then came the first of the congregation—of all persons, the Olympian Mr. Curtis!

"Will you take one of these, sir?" said Samuel, with his heart in his throat. And Mr. Curtis who was mopping his forehead with his handkerchief, started as if he had seen a ghost. "Boy, what are you doing?" he cried; but Samuel had darted away, trying to give out the slips of paper to the people as they came out at both doors. He was quite right in saying that everybody would know about it. The people took the slips and read them, and then they stopped to stare and exclaim to one another, so that there was a regular blockade at the doors of the church. By the time that a score of the slips had been given out the members had had time to get their wits back, and then there was an attempt to interfere.

"This is an outrage!" cried Mr. Curtis, and tried to grab Samuel by the arm; but the boy wrenched himself loose and darted around the corner, to where a stream of people had come out of the side door.

"Take one!" he exclaimed. "Pass it along! Let everyone know!" And so he got rid of a score or two more of his slips. And then, keeping a wary lookout for Mr. Curtis or any other of the vestrymen, he ran around in front again, and circled on the edge of the rapidly gathering throng, giving away several of the dodgers wherever a hand

was held out. “Give them to everyone!” he kept repeating in his shrill voice.

“The evil-doers must be turned out of the church!”

Then suddenly out of the crowd pushed Mr. Hamerton, breathless and red in the face. “Samuel!” he cried, pouncing upon him, “this cannot go on!”

“But it must go on!” replied the boy. “Let me go! Take your hands off me!” And he raised his voice in a wild shriek. “There are thieves in the church of Christ!”

In the scuffle the dodgers were scattered on the ground; and Mr. Hamerton stooped to pick them up. Samuel seized what he could and darted to the side door again, where there were more people eager to take them. And so he got rid of the last he had. And for the benefit of those whom he still saw emerging, he raised his hands and shouted: “There are men in the vestry of this church who have bribed the city council of Lockmanville! I mean to expose them in a meeting across the street on Wednesday night!” And then he turned, and dodging an outraged church member who sought to lay hold of him, he sped like a deer down the street.

He had made his appeal to the congregation!

CHAPTER XXVIII

Samuel rushed home, breathless, to tell Sophie; and pretty soon came the Bremers, who had been watching the scene from a distance. And the thrilling tale had to be told all over to them.

Then Johann made a novel announcement. “For that meeting,” he said, “you must get a permit.”

“A permit!” exclaimed Samuel. “From whom?”

“From the police,” replied the other. “You must haf it for all street meetings.”

“And where do I get it?”

“At the station house, I think.”

Samuel did not much fancy a visit to the station house, which he knew far too well already; but he would have gone into a den of lions for the sake of his cause. So, bright and early the next morning, he set out. With Mrs. Stedman's help he had persuaded Sophie that she must return to the Wygants, and so he walked part of the way with her.

There was a new sergeant at the desk, an Irishman. “Please, sir,” said the boy, “is this where I get a permit?”

“For what?” asked the other.

“To hold a meeting on the street, sir.”

“What sort of a meeting?”

“Why—I've just got something to say to the people, sir.”

“Something to say to the people!” echoed the other; and then, suddenly, “What's your name?”

“Samuel Prescott, sir.”

And the sergeant's eyes opened wide. “Oh!” he said. “You're that fellow!”

“What did you say?” asked Samuel.

“The chief wants to see you,” replied the other.

And so Samuel was escorted into the private room, where Chief McCullagh, red-faced and burly, sat at his desk. When he saw Samuel he bounded to his feet. “So here you are!” he cried.

To the sergeant he said, “Leave us alone.” And when the man had shut the door, he strode toward Samuel, and thrust a finger into his face. “Young fellow,” he cried, “you promised me you would get out of this town!”

“No!” exclaimed the boy.

“What?” roared the other.

“No, sir! It was Charlie Swift promised you that!”

“And what did you promise?”

“I promised I wouldn't tell anyone about—about Master Albert, sir. And I haven't done it.”

“I told Charlie Swift to take you out of town. And why didn't you go?”

“He didn't—” And then Samuel stopped. He had promised to tell nothing about Charlie.

“Go on!” cried the chief.

“I—I can't tell,” he stammered.

“What?” exclaimed the other. “You want to hide things from me? Don't you suppose I know that he's still in town; and that you and him have been doin' jobs?”

“No—no!” cried Samuel in terror.

“You can't lie to me!” threatened the chief. “I know you, you young villain!”

He stood glaring at the boy for a few moments. “And you have the nerve to come here!” he cried. “What do you want anyway?”

“I—I want to hold a meeting, sir.”

“Who's given you a license to make trouble in this town?”

“Nobody's given me one yet,” replied Samuel. “That's what I came for.”

“Don't you get gay with me!” snapped the chief. But Samuel was far from the thought of getting gay with anyone—he was trembling in his boots. The man towered over him like a huge gorilla, and his red face was ferocious.

“Now look here, young fellow!” he went on. “You might as well get this straight. You'll get no permit to make any speeches in Lockmanville! D'ye see?”

“Yes, sir.”

“And what's more, you'll not make any speech. D'ye see?”

“But—but—” gasped the boy.

And McCullagh shook his finger so that it almost hit Samuel's nose. “You'll not make any speech! You'll not make it on the street, and you'll not make it anywheres else in town! And you might as well get that through your nut and save yourself trouble. And if I hear of you givin' out any more papers on the street—you'll wish you hadn't—that's all, young fellow! D'ye see?”

“I see,” gasped Samuel.

“All right,” said the chief. “And if you take my advice, you'll get the first train out of Lockmanville and never show your face in it again. Now get out of here!”

And Samuel got out, and went down the street dumb with dismay. So they had got the police after him!

Of course he would make his speech. He could not let himself be stopped by such a thing as that. But he saw at once how matters were complicated—if the police were to stop him before he had made clear what he had to say, they might ruin all his plans.

He must seek advice about it; and he went at once to the carpet factory, and sought out the little room where the Bremers sat with their drawing boards and paints.

“So that's it!” exclaimed Johann. “They vill shut you up!”

“Do you think they can?” asked the boy.

“Sure they can!” cried the other. “They hafn't let the Socialists speak on the streets for years. We should haf fought them!”

He reached for his coat. “Come,” he said. “I vill take you to see Tom Everley.”

“Who is Tom Everley?” asked the boy.

“He's a lawyer, and he vill tell you. He's the secretary of the local.”

“A Socialist!” exclaimed Samuel, startled. Again it was the Socialists!

Everley sat in a little office in an out-of-the-way street. He was a young chap, frank

and boyish-looking, and Samuel's heart warmed to him at once. “Comrade Everley,” said the carpet designer, “here is a boy you ought to help. Tell him all about it, Samuel—you can trust him.”

So Samuel told his tale once more. And the other listened with breathless interest, and with many exclamations of incredulity and delight. When the boy had finished, he sprang up excitedly and grasped his hand. “Samuel Prescott,” he cried, “put it there! You are a brick!”

“Then you'll stand by me!” exclaimed Samuel, breathless with relief.

“Stand by you?” echoed the other. “I'll stand by you until hell freezes solid!”

Then he sat down again, and began tapping nervously on the desk with his pencil. “I'll call a special meeting of the local,” he said. “They must take you up. The movement's been slow in Lockmanville of late, and a fight like this is just what the comrades need.”

“But I'm not a Socialist!” objected Samuel.

“That's all right,” replied Everley, “we don't care about that.”

Samuel had not meant it that way, but he could not think how to make his trouble clear.

“I can get the local together to-morrow night,” went on the other. “There's no time to be lost. We must get out a lot of circulars and cover the town.”

“But I only wanted the people of the church to come,” said the boy.

“But others will come anyway,” said Everley. “And haven't the people a right to know how they've been robbed?”

“Yes,” said Samuel, “they have.”

“And perhaps,” added the other with a smile, “if the congregation has a little pressure from outside, it will be much more apt to take action. What we've got to do with this thing is to make a free speech fight out of it, and open the eyes of the

whole town. Otherwise the police will nip the thing in the bud, and no one will ever know what we had."

"You must be careful how you give out those circulars," put in Johann. "They will nip you there, if they can."

"That's all right," laughed Everley. "You trust the comrades for that! We know a printer we can rely on!"

Samuel drew a deep breath of satisfaction. Here was a man who understood things, and took hold with conviction—a man who was really willing to do something. It was very disconcerting that he happened to be a Socialist!

Everley took up a pencil and wrote the new announcement:

PEOPLE OF LOCKMANVILLE!

"Having made the discovery that members of the vestry of St. Matthew's Church had been bribing the city council, I demanded an investigation, and I was turned out of the church.

"I called a meeting to tell the congregation about it, but I was refused a permit to speak. Chief of Police McCullagh declared to me that I should never make my speech in this town.

"Will you stand by me?

"I intend to speak on Wednesday night, at 8 P.M., at the vacant lot opposite the church.

"In the name of Free Speech and Civic Decency,

"SAMUEL PRESCOTT."

"How's that?" he asked.

"Fine!" exclaimed Samuel in delight.

"I'll take the risk of having it set up," added the lawyer. "And I'll get the notices to

the members of the local off in this evening's mail. Come, we'll go to see one or two of them now and talk it over with them."

So they went down, and while Johann hurried back to his work, Samuel and Everley stopped in a cigar store a couple of doors down the street, kept by a little Russian Jew with a merry face and dancing black eyes. "Comrade Lippman," said Everley, "this is Mr. Prescott."

There came also "Comrade Minsky," from the rear workroom, a cigar maker, bare-armed and very yellow and emaciated. To them Everley told briefly the story of Samuel's adventures and what he proposed to do. The glow of excitement with which they received the tidings left no doubt as to their attitude. And a couple of blocks around the corner was a little shop where a grizzled old carpenter, "Comrade Beggs," clutched Samuel's hand in a grip like one of his vises, while he expressed his approval of his course. And then they called on Dr. Barton, a young physician, whom Everley declared to be one of the mainstays of the local of the town. "He got his education abroad," he explained, "so he has none of the narrowness of our physicians. His wife's quite a speaker, too."

Mrs. Barton was a sweet-faced and mild-looking lady, who reminded Samuel of the picture of his mother. All the while that Everley was telling his story the boy was staring at her, and trying to straighten out the tangle of perplexity that was caused in his mind by the idea of her being a Socialist speaker!

By and by the doctor came in, and the story had to be told yet again. They were so much interested and excited that they begged their visitors to remain to luncheon. They talked the whole problem out, and Samuel was struck by the certainty with which their minds took hold of it. There was no need of any long explanations with them—they seemed to know just what to expect; it was as if they possessed some magic key to the inner life of Lockmanville, enabling them to understand everyone in it, and exactly how he felt and exactly how he would act under any given

circumstances.

All this was an amazing experience for Samuel. A few hours ago he had been a voice crying in the wilderness; forlorn and solitary; and now here was a band of allies, sprung up suddenly, from the very ground, as it seemed. Men who knew exactly what was wanted, and exactly how to get it; who required no persuading, who set to work without wasting a word—just as if they had been doing such things all their lives! He was so swept away with delight that for a while he was tempted to forget what sort of people they were.

But it came back to him suddenly, when they had returned to Everley's office. He sat gazing at the young lawyer with such a worried expression on his face that the other asked, “What's the matter?”

“Tell me, Mr. Everley,” said the boy, “how can the Bartons believe in free love?”

“Believe in free love?” echoed Everley. “What put that into your head?”

“But don't they believe in free love?” persisted Samuel.

“Why, of course not. Who said they did?”

“But they are Socialists!”

And the other put down his work and laughed heartily. “Where did you pick that up?” he asked.

“Why,” stammered the boy, “I've read everywhere that Socialists believe in free love!”

“Wait till you get well going in this reform of yours!” laughed the young lawyer, “and then see what you read about yourself!”

“But,” gasped Samuel, aghast, “don't Socialists believe in free love?”

“Some of them do, I suppose,” was the reply. “I know one who believes in ghosts, and one who believes in the Pope, and one who believes in Adam and Eve. How can I help what they believe?”

There was a pause. “You see,” explained Everley, “we are a political party; and we can't keep anybody from joining us who wants to. And because we are an advanced party, all sorts of wild people come to us. How can we help that?”

“But,” exclaimed Samuel, “you are against religion!”

“We have nothing to do with religion,” replied the other. “I told you we are a political party. Some of us have found it necessary to leave the capitalist churches—but you will hardly blame us for that!”

“N-no,” admitted the boy; then he added, “But don't you want to destroy the Government?”

“On the contrary, we want to strengthen it. But first we have to get it away from the capitalists.”

“Then, what DO you believe?” asked Samuel in perplexity.

Then the other explained that they were seeking to organize and educate the working class, for the purpose of bringing about an economic change. They wished to take the land and the mines, the railroads and the factories out of the hands of the capitalists. “We believe that such things should not belong to individuals,” he said, “but to the people. Then there will be work for everyone, and everyone will get the full value of his labor, and no man will be able to live without working.”

There was a pause, while Samuel was getting the meaning of this into his mind. “But,” he exclaimed in amazement, “that is exactly what I believe!”

“Of course,” replied the other, “it is exactly what everyone with sense believes.”

“But—but—” gasped the boy, “then am I a Socialist?”

“Nine tenths of the people in the country are Socialists,” replied Everley—“only they haven't found it out yet.”

“But,” cried Samuel, “you ought to teach them!”

“We're doing our best,” laughed the other. “Come and help us.”

Samuel was quite dumfounded. “But how do people come to have all these false ideas about you?” he asked.

“Those are the ideas that the masters want them to have.”

Samuel was clutching at the arms of his chair. “Why—it's a conspiracy!” he cried.

“Precisely,” said the other. “A conspiracy of the ruling class. They own the newspapers and the books, the colleges and churches and governments. And they tell lies about us and keep us down.”

And so Samuel found himself face to face with the ultimate horror of Capitalism. It was bad enough to own the means whereby the people lived, and to starve and exploit their bodies. But to own their minds, and to lead them astray! To keep them from finding out the way of their deliverance! Surely that was the crime of crimes!

“I can't believe it!” he panted.

And the young lawyer answered, “Come and work with us a while and see for yourself.”

CHAPTER XXIX

Samuel went home and faced a surprising experience. There was a dapper and well-dressed young man waiting to see him. “My name is Pollard,” he said, “and I'm from the Lockmanville 'Express.' I want to get a story from you.”

“A story from me?” echoed the boy in perplexity.

“An interview,” explained the other. “I want to find out about that meeting you're going to hold.”

And so Samuel experienced the great thrill, which comes sooner or later to every social reformer. He sat in Mrs. Stedman's little parlor, and told his tale yet again. Mr. Pollard was young and just out of college, and his pencil fairly flew over his notebook. “Gosh!” he exclaimed. “But this is hot stuff!”

To Samuel it was an extraordinary revelation. He was surprised that the idea had not occurred to him before. What was the use of holding meetings and making speeches, when one could have things printed in the papers? In the papers everyone would read it; and they would get it straight—there would be no chance of error. Moreover, they would read it at their leisure, and have time to think it all over!

And after Mr. Pollard had gone, he rushed off in great excitement to tell Everley about it. “You won't need to print those circulars,” he said. “For I told him where the meeting was to be.”

But Everley only smiled at this. “We'll get out our stuff just the same,” he said. “You'd better wait until you've seen what the 'Express' prints.”

“What do you mean?” asked the boy. But Everley would not explain—he merely told Samuel to wait. He did not seem to be as much excited as he should have been.

Samuel went home again. And later on in the afternoon, while Mrs. Stedman had gone out to the grocer's, there came a knock on the door, and he opened it, and to his amazement found himself confronted by Billy Finnegan.

“Hello, young fellow!” said Finnegan.

“Hello!” said Samuel.

“What's this I hear about your making a speech?” asked Finnegan.

“I'm going to,” was the reply. “But how did you know?”

“I got it from Callahan. Slattery told him.”

“Slattery! Has he heard about it?”

“Gee, young fellow! What do you think he's boss for?”

And Finnegan gazed around the room, to make sure that they were alone.

“Sammy,” he said, “I've come to give you a friendly tip; I hope you'll have sense enough to take it.”

“What is it?” asked the other.

“Don't try to make any speech.”

“Why not?”

“Because you ain't a-going to be let to make it, Sammy.”

“But how can they stop me?”

“I dunno, Sammy. But they ain't a-going to let you.”

There was a pause.

“It's a crazy thing you're tryin' to do,” said the other. “And take my word for it—somethin' will happen to you if you go on.”

“What will happen?”

“I dunno, my boy—maybe you'll fall into the river.”

“Fall into the river!”

“Yes; or else run your head into a slungshot some night, in a dark alley. I can't tell you what—only you won't make the speech.”

Samuel was dumfounded. “You can't mean such things!” he gasped.

“Sure I mean them,” was the reply. “Why not?”

Samuel did not respond. “I don't know why you're tryin' to do this thing,” went on the other, “nor who's backing you. But from what I can make out, you've got the goods, and you've got them on most everybody in the town. You've got Slattery, and you've got Pat McCullagh, and you've got the machine. You've got Wygant and Hickman—you've even got something on Bertie Lockman, haven't you?”

“I suppose I have,” said Samuel. “But I'm not going to tell that.”

“Well, they don't know what you're going to tell, and they won't take any chances. They won't let you tell anything.”

“But can such things be done?” panted the boy.

“They're done all the time,” said the other. “Why, see—it stands to reason. Wouldn't

folks be finding out things like this, and wouldn't they be tellin' them?"

"To be sure," said Samuel. "That's what puzzled me."

"Well," said the bartender, "they ain't let to. Don't you see?"

"I see," whispered the boy.

"There's a crowd that runs this town, Sammy; and they mean to go on runnin' it. And don't you think they can't find ways of shuttin' up a kid like you!"

"But Mr. Finnegan, it would be murder!"

"Well, they wouldn't have to do it themselves, would they? When Henry Hickman wants a chicken for dinner, he don't have to wring its neck with his own hands."

Samuel could find nothing to reply to that. He sat dumb with horror.

"You see," continued Finnegan after a bit, "I know about this game, and I'm givin' you a friendly word. What the hell does a kid like you want to be reformin' things for anyway?"

"What else can I do?" asked Samuel.

To which the other answered, "Do? Get yourself a decent job, and find some girl you like and settle down. You'll never know what there is in life, Sammy, till you've got a baby."

But Samuel only shook his head. The plan did not appeal to him. "I'll try to keep out of trouble," he said, "but I MUST make that speech!"

So Finnegan went out, shaking his head and grumbling to himself. And Samuel hurried off to see his lawyer friend again. The result of the visit was that Everley exacted from him a solemn promise that he would not go out of the house after dark.

"I know what was done in this town during the strike," said the other, "and I don't want to take any chances. Now that they have finished the unions, there's nobody left but us."

So Samuel stayed at home, and told Sophie and her mother all about his various

experiences, and about the people he had met. The child was almost beside herself with delight.

“Oh, I knew that help would come!” she kept saying, “I knew that help would come!”

Worn out as he was, the young reformer could hardly sleep that night, for all the excitement. And early in the morning he was up and out hunting for a copy of the “Express.”

He stood on the street-corner and opened it. He glanced at the first page—there was nothing there. He glanced at the back page, and then at one page after another, seeking for the one that was given up to the story. But there was no such page. And then he went back and read over the headings of each column—and still he did not find it. And then he began a third time, reading carefully each tiny item. And so, after nearly an hour's search, when he found himself lost in a maze of advertisements, he brought himself to realize that there was not a line of the story in the paper!

When Everley arrived at his office that morning, Samuel was waiting for him on the steps. Seeing the paper in the other's hand, the young lawyer laughed. “You found out, have you?” he said.

“It's not here!” cried Samuel.

“I knew just what would happen,” said the other. “But I thought I'd let you see for yourself.”

“But what does it mean?” demanded the boy.

“It means,” was the answer, “that the Lockman estate has a mortgage of one hundred thousand dollars on the Express.”

And Samuel's jaw fell, and he stood staring at his friend.

“Now you see what it is to be a Socialist!” laughed Everley.

And Samuel saw.

CHAPTER XXX

After supper that evening came Everley with Friederich Bremer, to take Samuel to the meeting of the local, where he was to tell his story.

The “local” met in an obscure hall, over a grocery shop. There were present those whom Samuel had met the night before, and about a score of others. Most of them were working-men, but there were several who appeared to be well-to-do shopkeepers and clerks. Samuel noticed that they all called one another “comrade”; and several of them addressed him thus, which gave him a queer feeling. Also he noted that there were women present, and that one of them presided at the meeting.

Everley made a speech, reading Samuel's manifesto, and telling how it had been given out. Then he called upon Samuel. The boy stood upon his feet—and suddenly a deadly terror seized hold upon him. Suppose he should not be able to make a speech after all! Suppose he should be nervous! What would they think of him? But he clenched his hands—what did it matter what they thought of him? The poor were suffering, and the truth was crying out for vindication! He would tell these men what had happened to him.

So he began. He told how he had been robbed, and how he had sought in vain for work, and how he had been arrested. And because he saw that these were people who understood, he found himself a case, and thinking no longer about himself. He talked for nearly half an hour, and there was quite a sensation when he finished.

Then Everley rose to his feet again. “Comrades,” he said, “for the past year I have been urging that the local must make a fight for free speech in this town. And it seems to me that the occasion has now come. If we do not take up this fight, we might just as well give up.”

“That's right,” cried Beggs, the old carpenter.

“I took the liberty of ordering circulars,” continued Everley. “There was no time to be lost, and I felt sure that the comrades would back me. I now move that the local take charge of the meeting to-morrow evening, and that the two thousand circulars I have here be given out secretly to-night.”

“I second that motion,” said Mrs. Barton.

“It must be understood,” added Everley, “that we can't expect help from the papers. And our people ought to hear this story, as well as the members of the church.”

And then he read the circulars, and the motion was put, and carried unanimously.

“Now,” said Everley, “I suggest that the local make this the occasion of a contest for the right to hold street meetings in Lockmanville. As you know, the police have refused permits ever since the strike. And I move that beginning with Thursday evening, we hold a meeting on the corner of Market and Main streets, and tell this story to the public. And that we continue to hold a meeting every night thereafter until we have made good our right.”

Samuel could see from the faces of the men what a serious proposition this was to them. Everley launched into an impassioned speech. The workingmen of the town had lost their last hope in the unions; they were suffering from the hard times; and now, if ever, was the time to open their eyes to the remedy. And the Socialists were powerless, because they had permitted the police to frighten them. Now they must make a stand.

“You realize that it will mean going to jail?” asked Dr. Barton.

“I realize it,” said Everley. “We shall probably have to go several times. But if we make up our minds from the beginning, we can win; we shall have the sympathy of the people—and also we can break the conspiracy of silence of the newspapers.”

“That is the thing we must think of,” said the woman in the chair.

“I am ready to do what I can,” added the lawyer. “I will give my services free to

defend the speakers, or I will be the first man to be arrested—whichever the comrades prefer."

"We will lose our jobs," said some one in the rear of the room.

"Yes," said Everley, "that is something you will have to consider. You know well enough how much I have lost already."

Samuel listened in breathless excitement to this discussion. Here were poor people, people with no more resources than he, and at the mercy of the same forces which had been crushing him. Here was one man who had lost an eye in the glass works, and another, a railroad brakeman, who was just out of the hospital after losing a leg. Here were men pale and haggard from hunger, men with wives and children dependent upon them; yet they were giving their time and their money—risking their very existence—in the cause of human freedom! Had he ever met a group of men like this before? Had he ever dreamed that such men were living?

He had thought that he was alone, that he had all the burdens of humanity upon his own shoulders! And now here were people who were ready to hold up his hands; and from the discussion he gathered that they were part of a vast organization, that there existed such "locals" in every city and town in the country. They made their own nominations and voted for their own candidates at every election; they published many newspapers and magazines and books. And they were part of an army of men who were banded together in every civilized nation. Wherever Capitalism had come, there men were uniting against it; and every day their power grew—there was nothing that could stop them.

These men had seen the vision of the new time that was coming, and there burned in them a fire of conviction. Suddenly Samuel realized the import of that word "comrade" which they gave one another; they were men bound together by the memory of persecutions, and by the presence of ruthless enemies. They knew what they were facing at this moment; not only Chief McCullagh with his policemen and

their clubs; not only the subsidized “Express” with its falsehoods and ridicule: but all the political and business power of the Hickmans and Wygants. They were facing arrest and imprisonment, humiliation and disgrace—perhaps ruin and starvation. Only in this way could they reach the ears of the people.

“Comrades,” the young lawyer was saying, “every step that has been taken in the progress of humanity has been taken because men have been willing to give their lives. Everywhere that our movement has grown, it has been in the face of persecution. And sooner or later we must make up our minds to it—we may wait for years, but nothing can be accomplished until we have faced this issue. And so I ask you to join with me in taking this pledge—that we will speak on the streets of Lockmanville next Saturday night, and that we will continue to speak there as often as need be until we have vindicated our rights as American citizens.”

There was a solemn hush when he finished; one by one the men and women arose and offered themselves.

“I have been out of work for four months,” said one, “and I have been promised a job next week. If I am arrested, I know that I will not get it. But still I will speak.”

“And I am in Wygant's cotton mill,” said another. “And I'm not young, and when I'm turned out, it will not be easy for me. But I will help.”

“And I, too,” put in Lippman, the cigar store keeper; “my wife can tend the shop!” There was a general laugh at this.

And then Friedrich Bremer sprang up. “My father has been warned!” he cried. “But I will speak also!”

“And I!” exclaimed Samuel. “I think I am going to be a Socialist. Will you let me help?”

“No one's help will be refused in a crisis like this,” said Everley. “We must stand by our guns, for if they can crush us this time, it may be years before we can be heard.”

And then, somewhere in the hall, a voice began to sing. Others took it up, until the walls of the building shook with a mighty chant. “What is it?” whispered Samuel to Friedrich.

“It is called 'The Red Flag,'” replied Friedrich.

And Samuel sat spellbound, listening while they sang:

Hark to the thunder, hark to the tramp—a myriad army comes!

An army sprung from a hundred lands, speaking a hundred tongues!

And overhead a portent new, a blood-red banner see!

The nations gather in affright to ask what the sign may be.

Banner of crimson, banner bright, banner flaunting the sky!

What is the word that ye bring to men, the hope that ye hold on high?

We come from the fields, we come from the forge, we come from the land and sea—

We come in the right of our new-born might to set the people free!

Masters, we left you a world to make, the planning was yours to do—

We were the toilers, humble and sad, we gave our faith to you.

And now with a dread in our hearts we stand and gaze at the work of the years—

We have builded a temple with pillars white, ye have stained it with blood and tears!

For our little ones with their teeming hopes ye have roofed the sweatshop den,

And our daughters fair ye have prisoned in the reeking brothel's pen!

And so for the sign of our murdered hopes our blood-red banner see—

We come in the right of our new-born might to set the people free!

Tremble, oh masters—tremble all who live by others' toil—

We come your dungeon walls to raze, your citadel to spoil!

Yours is the power of club and jail, yours is the axe and fire—

But ours is the hope of human hearts and the strength of the soul's desire!

Ours is the blazing banner, sweeping the sky along!

Ours the host, the marching host—hark to our battle song!

Chanting of brotherhood, chanting of freedom, dreaming the world to be—

We come in the right of our new-born might to set the people free!

CHAPTER XXXI

While the other members of the local scattered to distribute the circulars, Everley and Friedrich escorted Samuel home, and saw him safely in, and the door locked. They had supplied him with some Socialist papers and pamphlets, and he spent most of the next day devouring these. They spread a picture of the whole wonderful movement before him; they explained to him all the mechanism of the cruel system, in the cogs of which he had been caught.

It was all so very obvious that Samuel found himself in a state of exasperation with the people who did not yet understand it, and spent his time wrestling in imagination with all those he had ever known: with his brothers, and with Finnegan, and with Charlie Swift, with Master Albert and Mr. Wygant, with Professor Stewart and Dr. Vince. Most of all he labored with Miss Gladys; and he pictured how it would be after the Revolution, when he would be famous and she would be poor, and he might magnanimously forgive her!

And when Sophie came home, he explained it all to her. It did not take much to make a revolutionist out of Sophie. She had become quite thoroughly what the Socialists called “class-conscious.”

The members of the local had been anxious about Samuel all day. Everley had come in twice in the afternoon, to make sure that he was safe; and he came over again after supper, and said that Beggs and Lippman and the Bartons and himself were

coming to act as a body guard to take Samuel to the meeting. The circulars had created a tremendous sensation—the whole town was talking about it, and the police were furious at the way they had been outwitted.

So the hour of the meeting drew near. It was as if a great shadow were gathering over them. They were nervous and restless—Samuel pacing the room, wandering about here and there.

His speech was seething within him. He saw before him the eager multitude, and he was laying bare to them the picture of their wrongs. So much depended upon this speech! If he failed now, he failed in everything—all that he had done before has gone for nothing! Ah! if only one had a voice that could reach the whole world—that could shout these things into the ears of the oppressed!

His friends had said they would come at a quarter to eight. But they came at half past seven, and sat round and waited. It was thought best that they should not arrive until the precise minute of the meeting; and meantime they outlined to Samuel the plan of campaign they had formed.

Dr. Barton was to make the opening speech, introducing Samuel; and by way of outwitting the police, he was to be particularly careful to get into this “introduction” all the essential facts which it was desired to lay before the people. He was to tell about the twenty thousand dollars which Hickman paid to Slattery, and about the acknowledgment which Wygant had made to Samuel, and about how the boy had been turned out of St. Matthew's Church. If the police attempted to interfere with this, the doctor was to persist until he had been actually placed under arrest; and then others were to take up the attempt in different places, until six had been arrested. In this case Samuel was to make no attempt to speak at all; they would “save” him for an out-door meeting—and also Everley, who was to defend them in court. More circulars would be given out the next afternoon, and another attempt to speak would be made that evening.

All this was duly impressed upon the boy, and then the little company set forth. Dr. Barton walked on one side of him, and Everley on the other; Mrs. Barton, Mrs. Stedman and Sophie came next, and Beggs and Lippman brought up the rear. So they marched along; they kept their eyes open, and every time they had to pass a man they gave him a wide berth.

So they came to the place of the meeting. At the corner were the Bremers and half a dozen others, who formed a ring about them. There was a huge crowd, they said—the lot was thronged, and the people extended to streets on every side. There was a score of policemen scattered about, and no doubt there were many detectives.

Promptly on the minute of eight the little group approached. There was a murmur of excitement among the waiting crowd, as they started to force their way through. Samuel's heart was thumping like mad, and his knees were trembling so that he could hardly walk. The people gave way, and they found themselves in the center, where several of the Socialists stood guard over the half dozen boxes from which the speaking was to be done.

Without a moment's delay, Dr. Barton mounted up.

“Fellow citizens,” he called in a clear, ringing voice; and instantly a hush fell upon the crowd, and a thousand faces were turned toward him.

“We are here,” he began, “for a very important purpose—”

Instantly a policeman pushed his way toward him.

“Have you a permit for this meeting?” he demanded.

“We have been refused a permit!” proclaimed Dr. Barton to the crowd. “We are here as law-abiding citizens, demanding our right to free speech!”

“You cannot speak,” declared the policeman.

“There has been bribery of the city council of Lockmanville,” shouted the doctor.

“You cannot speak!” cried the policeman sharply.

“Henry Hickman paid twenty thousand dollars to the city council to prevent the passage of the water bill!” cried the speaker.

“Come down from there!” commanded the officer, and made a grab at him.

“I will not stop until I am arrested!” declared the doctor. “I am here to protest against bribery!”

“Come down and shut up!” shouted the other.

“For shame! For shame!” said voices in the crowd. “Let him speak!”

“That charge was made before the vestry of the St. Matthew's Church! And the vestry refused to investigate it, and turned out a member of the church! And we are here—”

And so, still shouting, the doctor was dragged off the box and collared by the policeman.

“An outrage!” cried people in the audience. “Let him go on!” And yet others shouted, “Arrest him!” The throng was in a turmoil; and in the midst of it, Lippman, who was the second victim appointed for the sacrifice, sprang upon the stump of an old tree, a little at one side, and shrieked at the top of his lungs:

“Henry Hickman paid twenty thousand dollars to Slattery to beat the water bill; and now he and the Lockman estate are making ten thousand dollars a month out of it! And Wygant confessed to our speaker that he ran the city government to get franchise favors—”

And then Lippman was seized by an officer and dragged off his perch, and choked into silence—surrounded meanwhile by a crowd of indignantly protesting citizens. It was quite clear by this time that the crowd had come to hear Samuel's speech, and was angry at being balked. There was a general shout of protest that made the policemen glad of their numbers.

Of these exciting events Samuel and Everley had been witnesses from the vantage

point of a soap box. Now suddenly the boy caught his friend's arm and pointed, crying, “Who's that man?”

Near the outskirts of the thrown was a big burly individual, who had been roaring in a furious voice, “For shame! Go on!” and waving his fists in the air.

“I don't know,” said Everley. “I never saw him before.”

“An outrage!” yelled the man. “Kill the police! Smash them! Drive them away!”

And Everley caught the boy's arm, crying excitedly, “He's been sent here, I'll wager! They want to provoke trouble!”

And even as he spoke, the two saw the man stoop, and pick up a brick-bat, and fling it into the center of the crowd, where the police were massing.

“Arrest that man!” shouted Everley indignantly, and leaped forward and plunged through the throng to reach him.

There was a roar from the crowd, and Samuel saw that several men had grappled with the bully; he saw, also, that the police in the center of the throng had drawn their clubs, and were beginning to strike at the people. A burly sergeant was commanding them, and forcing back the crowd by jabbing men in the stomachs.

Meantime the next speaker, a woman, had mounted upon a box, and was crying in a shrill voice: “We are Socialists! We are the only political party which dares to speak for the working class of Lockmanville! We protest against this outrage! We demand free speech! There has been bribery in our city council!”

Then suddenly the boy heard a disturbance behind him, and turned, just in the nick of time. A fellow had thrust his way through the crowd toward him, a rowdy with a brutal, half-drunken face. And Samuel saw him raise his hand, with some dark object in it, and aim a smashing blow at his head.

The boy ducked and raised his arm. He felt a sharp, agonizing pain, and his arm dropped helpless at his side. Something struck him across the forehead, cutting a

gash, out of which hot blood spurted, blinding him. He heard Beggs, who was beside him, give a shout—"Down!" And realizing that his life was aimed at, he dropped like a flash, and put his head under him, covering it with one arm as well as he could.

There was a struggle going on over him. Men were pushing and shouting—and some one kicked him savagely upon the leg. He crawled on a little way, still keeping his head down, underneath the feet of the contendents. He heard Beggs shouting for help, and heard the Bremers answering; he heard the roar of the throng all about, the sharp commands of the police sergeant, and the crack of clubs, falling upon the heads of men and women. And then he swooned, and lay there, his face in a pool of his own blood.

Meanwhile, one by one, three more speakers rose and made their attempts, and were arrested, while the indignant people voiced their helpless protests. Then suddenly, somewhere in the crowd, a woman began to sing. Others took up the song—it swelled louder, until it rang above all the uproar. It was the hymn that Samuel had heard at the meeting of the local—The Red Flag!

It took hold of the crowd—men followed the melody, even though they did not know the words. They continued to sing while the police were leading away their prisoners; they followed, all the way to the station house, with shouts of protest, and of encouragement for the victims.

And so the throng moved on, and the uproar died away. There was left upon the scene a little group of frightened people, gathered about two who lay upon the ground. One of them was Samuel, unconscious and bleeding; and the other was Sophie, clinging to him and sobbing upon his bosom, frantic with grief and fear. And meanwhile, in the distance one could still hear the melody ringing:

Yours is the power of club and jail, yours is the axe and fire,

But ours is the hope of human hearts and the strength of the soul's desire!

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SAMUEL THE SEEKER ***

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