WHITE WILLIAM ALLEN

IN THE HEART OF A FOOL

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In the Heart of a Fool:

Содержание

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CHAPTER I
BEING STAGE DIRECTIONS, AND A CAST OF CHARACTERS

Sunshine and prairie grass–well in the foreground. For the background, perhaps a thousand miles away or more than half a decade removed in time, is the American Civil War. In the blue sky a meadow lark's love song, and in the grass the boom of the prairie chicken's wings are the only sounds that break the primeval silence, excepting the lisping of the wind which dimples the broad acres of tall grass–thousand upon thousand of acres–that stretch northward for miles. To the left the prairie grass rises upon a low hill, belted with limestone and finally merges into the mirage on the knife edge of the far horizon. To the southward on the canvas the prairie grass is broken by the heavy green foliage above a sluggish stream that writhes and twists and turns through the prairie, which rises above the stream and meets another limestone belt upon which the waving ripples of the unmowed grass wash southward to the eye's reach.

Enter R. U. E. a four-ox team hauling a cart laden with a

printing press and a printer's outfit; following that are other ox teams hauling carts laden with tents and bedding, household goods, lumber, and provisions. A four-horse team hauling merchandise, and a span of mules hitched to a spring wagon come crashing up through the timber by the stream. Men and women are walking beside the oxen or the teams and are riding in the covered wagons. They are eagerly seeking something. It is the equality of opportunity that is supposed to be found in the virgin prairies of the new West. The men are nearly all veterans of the late war, for the most part bearded youngsters in their twenties or early thirties. The women are their fresh young wives. As the procession halts before the canvas, the men and women begin to unpack the wagons and to line out on each side of an imaginary street in the prairie. The characters are discovered as follows:

Amos Adams, a red-bearded youth of twenty-nine and Mary Sands, his wife. They are printers and begin unpacking and setting up the printing material in a tent.

Dr. James Nesbit and Bedelia Satterthwaite, his wife, in the tent beside the Adamses.

Captain Ezra Morton, and Ruth his wife; he is selling a patent, self-opening gate.

Ahab Wright, in side whiskers, white necktie, flannel shirt and carefully considered trousers tucked in shiny boots.

Daniel Sands, Jane, his young wife, and Mortimer, her infant stepson. Daniel owns the merchandise in the wagon.

Casper Herdicker, cobbler, and Brunhilde Herdicker, his wife.

Herman Müller, bearded, coarse-featured, noisy; a Pennsylvania Dutchman, his faded, rope-haired, milk-eyed, sickly wife and Margaret, their baby daughter.

Kyle Perry, owner of the horses and spring wagon.

Dick Bowman, Ira Dooley, Thomas Williams, James McPherson, Dennis Hogan, a boy, laborers.

As other characters enter during the early pages of the story they shall be properly introduced.

As the actors unload their wagons the spectators may notice above their heads bright, beautiful and evanescent forms coming and going in and out of being. These are the visions of the pioneers, and they are vastly more real than the men and women themselves. For these visions are the forces that form the human crystal.

Here abideth these three: sunshine and prairie grass and blue sky, cloud laden. These for ages have held domain and left the scene unchanged. When lo–at Upper Middle Entrance,–enter love! And love witched the dreams and visions of those who toiled in the sunshine and prairie grass under the blue sky cloud laden. And behold what they visioned in the witchery of love, took form and spread upon the prairie in wood and stone and iron, and became a part of the life of the Nation. Blind men in other lands, in other times looked at the Nation and saw only wood and stone and iron. Yet the wood and stone and iron should not have symbolized the era in America. Rather should the dreams and visions of the pioneers, of those who toiled under the

sunshine and in the prairie grass have symbolized our strength. For half a century later when the world was agonizing in a death grapple with the mad gods of a crass materialism, mankind saw rising from the wood and stone and iron that had seemed to epitomize this Nation, a spirit which had lain hidden yet dormant in the Nation's life–a beautiful spirit of idealism strong, brave and humbly wise; the child of the dreams and visions and the love of humanity that dwelled in the hearts of the pioneers of that earlier time.

But this is looking forward. So let us go back to scene one, act one, in those days before the sunshine was shaded, the prairie grass worn off, and the blue sky itself was so stained and changed that the meadow-lark was mute!

And now we are ready for the curtain: and–music please.

CHAPTER II
IN WHICH WE INTRODUCE THE FOOL AND HIS LADY FAIR AND WHAT HE SAID IN HIS HEART– THE SAME BEING THE THEME AND THESIS OF THIS STORY

A story is a curious thing, that grows with a kind of consciousness of its own. Time was, in its invertebrate period of gestation when this story was to be Amos Adams's story. It was to be the story of one who saw great visions that were realized, who had from the high gods whispers of their plans. What a book it would have been if Amos and Mary could have written it–the story of dreams come true. But alas, the high gods mocked Amos Adams. Mary's clippings from the Tribune– a great litter of them, furnished certain dates and incidents for the story. Often when the Tribune was fresh from the press Mary and Amos would sit together in the printing office and Mary eaten with pride would clip from the damp paper the grandiloquent effusions of Amos that seemed to fit into other items that were to remind them of things which they could not print in their newspaper but which would be material for their book. What a

bundle of these clippings there is! And there was the diary, or old-fashioned Memory Book of Mary Adams. What a pile of neatly folded sheets covered with Mary Adams' handwriting are there on the table by the window! What memories they revive, what old dead joys are brought to life, what faded visions are repainted. This is to be the Book–the book that they dreamed of in their youth–even before little Kenyon was born, before Jasper was born, indeed before Grant was born.

But now the years have written in many things and it will not be even their story. Indeed as life wrote upon their hearts its mysterious legend–the legend that erased many of their noble dreams and put iron into their souls, there is evidence in what they wrote that they thought it would be Grant's story. Most parents think their sons will be heroes. But their boy had to do his part in the world's rough work and before the end the clippings and the notes in the Memory Book show that they felt that a hero in blue overalls would hardly answer for their Book. Then there came a time when Amos alone in his later years thought that it might be Kenyon's story; for Kenyon now is a fiddler of fame, and fiddlers make grand heroes. But as the clippings and the notes show forth still another story, the Book that was to be their book and story, may not be one man's or one woman's story. It may not be even the story of a town; though Harvey's story is tragic enough. (Indeed sometimes it has seemed that the story of Harvey, rising in a generation out of the sunshine and prairie grass, a thousand flued hell, was to be the story of the

Book.) But now Harvey seems to be only a sign of the times, a symptom of the growth of the human soul. So the Book must tell the tale of a time and a place where men and women loved and strove and joyed or suffered and lost or won after the old, old fashion of our race; with only such new girdles and borders and frills in the record of their work and play as the changing skirts of passing circumstance require. The Book must be more than Amos Adams's or his son's or his son's son's story or his town's, though it must be all of these. It must be the story of many men and many women, each one working out his salvation in his own way and all the threads woven into the divine design, carrying along in its small place on the loom the inscrutable pattern of human destiny. But most of all it should be the story which shall explain the America that rose when her great day came–exultant, triumphant to the glorious call of an ideal, arose from sordid things environing her body and soul, and consecrated herself without stint or faltering hand to the challenge of democracy.

In the old days–the old days when Amos Adams was young–he printed the Harvey *Tribune* on a hand press. Mary spread the ink upon the types; he pulled the great lever that impressed each sheet; and as they worked they sang about the coming of the new day. As a soldier–a commissioned officer he had fought in the great Civil War for the truth that should make men free. And he was sure in those elder days that the new day was just dawning. And Mary was sure too; so the readers of the Tribune were assured that the dawn was at hand. The editor knew that

there were men who laughed at him for his hopes. But he and Mary, his wife, only laughed at men who were so blind that they could not see the dawn. So for many years they kept on rallying to whatever faith or banner or cause seemed surest in its promise of the sunrise. Green-backers, Grangers, Knights of Labor, Prohibitionists–these two crusaders followed all of the banners. And still there came no sunrise. Farmers' Alliance, Populism, Free Silver–Amos marched with each cavalcade. And was hopeful in its defeat.

And thus the years dragged on and made decades and the decades marshaled into a generation that became an era, and a city rose around a mature man. And still in his little office on a rickety side street, the *Tribune*, a weekly paper in a daily town, kept pointing to the sunrise; and Amos Adams, editor and proprietor, an old fool with the faith of youth, for many years had a book to write and a story to tell–a story that was never told, for it grew beyond him.

He printed the first edition of the *Tribune* in his tent under an elm tree in a vast, unfenced meadow that rose from the fringe of timber that shaded the Wahoo. Volume one, number one, told a waiting world of the formation of the town company of Harvey with Daniel Sands as president. It was one of thousands of towns founded after the Civil War–towns that were bursting like mushrooms through the prairie soil. After that war in which millions of men gave their youth and myriads gave their lives for an ideal, came a reaction. And in the decades that followed the

war, men gave themselves to an orgy of materialism. Harvey was a part of that orgy. And the Ohio crowd, the group that came from Elyria–the Sandses, the Adamses, Joseph Calvin, Ahab Wright, Kyle Perry, the Kollanders[1] and all the rest except the Nesbits–were so considerable a part of Harvey in the beginning, that probably they were as guilty as the rest of the country in the crass riot of greed that followed the war. They brought Amos Adams to Harvey because he was a printer and in those halcyon days all printers were supposed to be able to write; and he brought Mary–but did he bring Mary? He was never sure whether he brought her or she brought him. For Mary Sands–dear, dear Mary Sands–she had a way with her. She was not Irish for nothing, God bless her.

Amos always tried to be fair with Daniel Sands because he was Mary's brother; even though there was a time after he came home a young soldier from the war and found that Daniel Sands who hired a substitute and stayed at home, had won Esther Haley, who was pledged to Amos,–a time when Amos would have killed Daniel Sands. That passed, Mary, Daniel's sister, came; and for

[1] The reader may be interested in seeing one of Mary Adams's clippings with a note attached. Here is one concerning Mrs. John Kollander. The clipping from the Harvey *Tribune* of June, 1871, reads:"Mrs. Rhoda Byrd Kollander arrived to-day from Elyria, Ohio. It is her first visit to Harvey and she was greeted by her husband, Hon. John Kollander, Register of Deeds of Greeley County, with a handsome new home in Elm Street."Then under it is this note:"Of all the women of the Elyria settlers, Rhoda Kollander would not come with us and face the hardships of pioneer life; but she made John come out, get an office and build her a cabin before she would come. Rhoda will not be happy as an angel unless they have rocking chairs in Heaven."

years Amos Adams bore Daniel Sands no grudge. What has all his money done for Daniel. It has ground the joy out of him–for one thing. And as for Esther, somewhere about Elyria, Ohio, the grass is growing over her grave and for forty years only Mortimer, her son, with her eyes and mouth and hair, was left in the world to remind Amos of the days when he was stark mad; and Mary, dear, dear, Irish Mary Sands, caught his heart upon the bounce and made him happy.

So let us say that Mary brought Amos to Harvey with the Ohio crowd, as Daniel Sands and his followers were known, The other early settlers came to grow up with the country and to make their independent fortunes; but Mary and Amos came to see the sunrise. For they were sure that men and women starting in a new world having found equality of opportunity, would not make this new world sordid, unfair and cruel as the older world was around them in those days.

Amos and Mary took up their homestead just south of the town on the Wahoo, and started the Tribune, and Mary hoped the high hopes of the Irish while Amos wrote his part of the news, set his share of the type, ran the errands for the advertising and bragged of the town in their editorial columns with all the faith of an Irishman by marriage.

What a fairy story the history of Harvey would be if it should be written only as it was. For one could even begin it once upon a time. Once upon a time, let us say, there was a land of sunshine and prairie grass. And then great genii came and set in

little white houses and new unpainted barns, thumbed in faint green hedgerows and board fences, that checkered in the fields lying green or brown or loam black by the sluggish streams that gouged broad, zigzag furrows in the land. And upon a hill that overlooked a rock-bottomed stream the genii, the spirit of the time, sat a town. It glistened in the sunshine and when the town was over a year old, it was so newly set in, that its great stone schoolhouse all towered and tin-corniced, beyond the scattered outlying residences, rose in the high, untrodden grass. The people of Harvey were vastly proud of that schoolhouse. The young editor and his wife used to gaze at it adoringly as they drove to and from the office morning and evening; and they gilded the town with high hopes. For then they were in their twenties. The population of Harvey for the most part those first years was in its twenties also, when gilding is cheap. But thank Heaven the gilding of our twenties is lasting.

It was into this gilded world that Grant Adams was born. Suckled behind the press, cradled in the waste basket, toddling under hurrying feet, Grant's earliest memories were of work–work and working lovers, and their gay talk as they worked wove strange fancies in his little mind.

It was in those days that Amos Adams and his wife, considering the mystery of death, tried to peer behind the veil. For Amos tables tipped, slates wrote, philosophers, statesmen and conquerors flocked in with grotesque advice, and all those curious phenomena that come from the activities of the abnormal

mind, appeared and astounded the visionaries as they went about their daily work. The boy Grant used to sit, a wide-eyed, freckled, sun-browned little creature, running his skinny little hands through his red hair, and wondering about the unsolvable problems of life and death.

But soon the problems of a material world came in upon Grant as the child became a boy: problems of the wood and field, problems of the constantly growing herd at play in water, in snow, on the ice and in the prairie; and then came the more serious problems of the wood box, the stable and farm. Thus he grew strong of limb, quick of hand, firm of foot and sure of mind. And someway as he grew from childhood into boyhood, getting hold of his faculties–finding himself physically, so Harvey seemed to grow with him. All over the town where men needed money Daniel Sands's mortgages were fastened–not heavily (nothing was heavy in that day of the town's glorious youth) but surely. Dr. Nesbit's gay ruthless politics, John Kollander's patriotism, leading always to the court house and its emoluments, Captain Morton's inventions that never materialized, the ever coming sunrise of the Adams–all these things became definitely a part of the changeless universe of Harvey as Grant's growing faculties became part of his consciousness.

And here is a mystery: the formation of the social crystal. In that crystal the outer facets and the inner fell into shape–the Nesbits, the Kollanders, the Adamses, the Calvins, the Mortons, and the Sandses, falling into one group; and the Williamses, the

Hogans, the Bowmans, the McPhersons, the Dooleys and Casper Herdicker falling into another group. The hill separated from the valley. The separation was not a matter of moral sense; for John Kollander and Dan Sands and Joseph Calvin touched zero in moral intelligence; and it could not have been business sense, for Captain Morton for all his dreams was a child with a dollar, and Dr. Nesbit never was out of debt a day in his life; without his salary from tax-payers John Kollander would have been a charge on the county. In the matter of industry Daniel Sands was a marvel, but Jamie McPherson toiling all day used to come home and start up his well drill and its clatter could be heard far into the night, and often he started it hours before dawn. Nor could aspirations and visions have furnished the line of cleavage; for no one could have hopes so high for Harvey as Jamie, who sank his drill far into the earth, put his whole life, every penny of his earnings and all his strength into the dream that some day he would bring coal or oil or gas to Harvey and make it a great city. Yet when he found the precious vein, thick and rich and easy to mine, Daniel Sands and Joseph Calvin took his claim from him by chicanery as easily as they would have robbed a blind man of a penny, and Jamie went to work in the mines for Daniel Sands grumbling but faithful. Williams and Dooley and Hogan and Herdicker bent at their daily tasks in those first years, each feeling that the next day or the next month or at most the next year his everlasting fortune would be made. And Dick Bowman, cohort of Dr. Nesbit, many a time and oft would

wash up, put on a clean suit, and go out and round up the voters in the Valley for the Doctor's cause and scorn his task with a hissing; for Dick read Karl Marx and dreamed of the day of the revolution. Yet he dwelled with the sons of Essua, who as they toiled murmured about their stolen birthright. When a decade had passed in Harvey the social crystal was firm; the hill and the valley were cast into the solid rock of things as they are. No one could say why; it was a mystery. It is still a mystery. As society forms and reforms, its cleavages follow unknown lines.

It was on a day in June–late in the morning, after Grant and Nathan Perry–son of the stuttering Kyle of that name, had come from a cool hour in the quiet pool down on the Wahoo and little Grant, waiting like a hungry pup for his lunch, that was tempting him in the basket under the typerack, was counting the moments and vaguely speculating as to what minutes were–when he looked up from the floor and saw what seemed to him a visitor from another world.[2]

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[2] Let us read Mary Adams's clipping and note on the arrival of young Thomas Van Dorn in Harvey. The clipping which is from the local page of the paper reads:"Thomas Van Dorn, son of the late General Nicholas Van Dorn of Schenectady, New York, has located in Harvey for the practice of law and his advertising card appears elsewhere. Mr. Van Dorn is a Yale man and a law graduate of that school as well as an alumnus of the college. As a youth with his father young Thomas stopped in Harvey the day the town was founded. He was a member of the hunting party organized by Wild Bill which under General Van Dorn's patronage escorted the Russian Grand Duke Alexis over this part of the state after buffalo and wild game. Mr. Thomas Van Dorn remembers the visit well, and old settlers will recall the fact that Daniel Sands that day sold for $100 in gold to the General the plot now known as Van Dorn's addition to Harvey. Mr. Thomas Van Dorn still has the deed to the plot and will soon put the lots

The creature was talking to Amos Adams sitting at the desk; and Amos was more or less impressed with the visitor's splendor. He wore exceedingly tight trousers–checked trousers, and a coat cut grandly and extravagantly in its fullness, a high wing collar, and a soup dish hat. He was such a figure as the comic papers of the day were featuring as the exquisite young man of the period.

Youth was in his countenance and lighted his black eyes. His oval, finely featured face, his blemishless olive skin, his strong jaw and his high, beautiful forehead, over which a black wing of hair hung carelessly, gave him a distinction that brought even the child's eyes to him. He was smiling pleasantly as he said,

"I'm Thomas Van Dorn–Mr. Adams, I believe?" he asked, and added as he fastened his fresh young eyes upon the editor's, "you scarcely will remember me–but you doubtless remember the day when father's hunting party passed through town? Well–I've come to grow up with the country."

The editor rose, roughed his short, sandy beard and greeted the youth pleasantly. "Mr. Daniel Sands sent me to you, Mr. Adams–to print a professional card in your paper," said the

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on the market. He was a pleasant caller at the *Tribune* office this week. Come again, say we."And upon a paper whereon the clipping is pasted is this in Mary Adams's hand:"The famous Van Dorn baby! How the years have flown since the scandal of his mother's elopement and his father's duel with Sir Charles shook two continents. What an old rake the General was. And the boy's mother after two other marriages and a sad period on the variety stage died alone in penury! And Amos says that the General was so insolent to his men in the war, that he dared not go into action with them for fear they would shoot him in the back. Yet the boy is as lovely and gentle a creature as one could ask to meet. This is as it should be."

young man. He pronounced them "cahd" and "papuh" and smiled brightly as his quick eyes told him that the editor was conscious of his eastern accent. While they were talking business, locating the position of the card in the newspaper, the editor noticed that the young man's eyes kept wandering to Mary Adams, typesetting across the room. She was a comely woman just in her thirties and Amos Adams finally introduced her. When he went out the Adamses talked him over and agreed that he was an addition to the town.

Within a month he had formed a partnership with Joseph Calvin, the town's eldest lawyer; and young Henry Fenn, who had been trying for a year to buy a partnership with Calvin, was left to go it alone. So Henry Fenn contented himself with forming a social partnership with his young rival. And when the respectable Joseph Calvin was at home or considering the affairs of the Methodist Sunday School of which he was superintendent, young Mr. Fenn and young Mr. Van Dorn were rambling at large over the town and the adjacent prairie, seeking such diversion as young men in their exceedingly early twenties delight in: Mr. Riley's saloon, the waters of the Wahoo, by moonlight, the melliferous strains of "Larboard watch," the shot gun, the quail and the prairie chicken, the quarterhorse, and the jackpot, the cocktail, the Indian pony, the election, the footrace, the baseball team, the Sunday School picnic, the Fourth of July celebration, the dining room girls at the Palace Hotel, the cross country circus and the trial of the occasional line fence murder case–all were

divertissements that engaged their passing young attention.

If ever the world was an oyster for a youth the world of Harvey and the fullness thereof was an oyster to Thomas Van Dorn. He had all that the crude western community cherished: the prestige of money, family, education, and that indefinable grace and courtesy of body and soul that we call charm. And Harvey people seemed to be made for him. He liked their candor, their strength, their crass materialism, their bray and bluster, their vain protests of democracy and their unconscious regard for his caste and culture. So whatever there was of egoism in his nature grew unchecked by Harvey. He was the young lord of the manor. However Harvey might hoot at his hat and gibe at his elided R's and mock his rather elaborate manners behind his back; nevertheless he had his way with the town and he knew that he was the master. While those about him worked and worried Tom Van Dorn had but to rub lightly his lamp and the slave appeared and served him. Naturally a young man of his conspicuous talents in his exceedingly early twenties who has the vast misfortune to have a lamp of Aladdin to rub, asks genii first of all for girls and girls and more girls. Then incidentally he asks for business and perhaps for politics and may be as an afterthought and for his own comfort he may pray for the good will of his fellows. Tom Van Dorn became known in the vernacular as a "ladies man." It did not hurt his reputation as a lawyer, for he was young and youth is supposed to have its follies so long as its follies are mere follies. No one in that day hinted that Tom Van Dorn was anything more

dangerous than a butterfly. So he flitted from girl to girl, from love affair to love affair, from heart to heart in his gay clothes with his gay manners and his merry face. And men smiled and women and girls whispered and boys hooted and all the world gave the young lord his way. But when he included the dining room girls at the Palace Hotel in his list of conquests, Dr. Nesbit began squinting seriously at the youth and, late at night coming from his professional visits, when the doctor passed the young fellow returning from some humble home down near the river, the Doctor would pipe out in the night, "Tut, tut, Tom–this is no place for you."

But the Doctor was too busy with his own affairs to assume the guardianship of Tom Van Dorn. As Mayor of Harvey the Doctor made the young man city attorney, thereby binding the youth to the Mayor in the feudal system of politics and attaching all the prestige and charm and talent of the boy to the Doctor's organization.

For Dr. Nesbit in his blithe and cock-sure youth was born to politics as the sparks fly upward. Men looked to him for leadership and he blandly demanded that they follow him. He was every man's friend. He knew the whole county by its first name. The men, the women, the children, the dogs, the horses knew him and he knew and loved them all. But in return for his affection he expected loyalty. He was a jealous leader who divided no honors. Seven months in the year he wore white linen clothes and his white clad figure bustling through a crowd

on Market Street on Saturday or elbowing its way through a throng at any formal gathering, or jogging through the night behind his sorrel mare or moving like a pink-faced cupid, turned Nemesis in a county convention, made him a marked man in the community. But what was more important, his distinction had a certain cheeriness about it. And his cheeriness was vocalized in a high, piping, falsetto voice, generally gay and nearly always soft and kindly. It expressed a kind of incarnate good nature that disarmed enmity and drew men to him instinctively. And underneath his amicability was iron. Hence men came to him in trouble and he healed their ills, cured their souls, went on their notes and took their hearts for his own, which carried their votes for his uses. So he became calif of Harvey.

Even deaf John Kollander who had political aspirations of a high order learned early that his road to glory led through obedience to the Doctor. So John went about the county demanding that the men who had saved the union should govern it and declaring that the flag of his country should not be trailed in the dust by vandal hands–meaning of course by "vandal hands" the opposition candidate for register of deeds or county clerk or for whatever county office John was asking at that election; and at the convention John's old army friends voted for the Doctor's slate and in the election they supported the Doctor's ticket. But tall, deaf John Kollander in his blue army clothes with their brass buttons and his campaign hat, always cut loose from Dr. Nesbit's paternal care after every election. For the Doctor, after he had

tucked John away in a county office, asked only to appoint John's deputies and that Mrs. Kollander keep out of the Doctor's office and away from his house.

"I have no objections," the Doctor would chirrup at the ample, good-natured Rhoda Kollander who would haunt him during John's periods of political molting, pretending to advise with the Doctor on her husband's political status, "to your society from May until November every two years, Rhody, but that's enough. Now go home! Go home, woman," he commanded, "and look after your growing family."

And Rhoda Kollander would laugh amiably in telling it and say, "Now I suppose some women would get mad, but law, I know Doc Jim! He doesn't mean a thing!" Whereupon she would settle down where she was stopping until meal time and reluctantly remain to eat. As she settled comfortably at the table she would laugh easily and exclaim: "Now isn't it funny! I don't know what John and the boys will have. There isn't a thing in the house. But, law, I suppose they can get along without me once in a lifetime." Then she would laugh and eat heartily and sit around until the crisis at home had passed.

But the neighbors knew that John Kollander was opening a can of something, gathering the boys around him and as they ate, recounting the hardships of army life to add spice to an otherwise stale and unprofitable meal. Afterward probably he would go to some gathering of his comrades and there fight, bleed and die for his country. For he was an incorrigible patriot. The old

flag, his country's honor, and the preservation of the union were themes that never tired him. He organized his fellow veterans in the town and county and helped to organize them in the state and was forever going to other towns to attend camp fires and rallies and bean dinners and reunions where he spoke with zeal and some eloquence about the danger of turning the country over to the southern brigadiers. He had a set speech which was greatly admired at the rallies and in this speech it was his wont to reach for one of the many flags that always adorned the platform on such occasions, tear it from its hanging and wrapping it proudly about his gaunt figure, recite a dialogue between himself and the angel Gabriel, the burden of which was that so long as John Kollander had that flag about him at the resurrection, no question would be asked at Heaven's gate of one of its defenders. Now the fact was that John Kollander was sent to the war of the rebellion a few weeks before the surrender of Lee at Appomattox, as Daniel Sands's paid substitute and his deafness was caused by firing an anvil at the peace jubilee in Cincinnati, the powder on the anvil being the only powder John Kollander ever had smelled. But his descriptions of battle and the hardships and horrors of war were none the less vivid and harrowing because he had never crossed the Ohio.

Those were the days when the *Tribune* was at its zenith– the days when Jared Thurston was employed as its foreman and Lizzie Coulter, pretty, blue-eyed, fair-haired Lizzie Coulter helped Mary Adams to set the type. It was not a long Day of

Triumph, but while it lasted Mary and Amos made the most of it and spoke in a grand way about "the office force." They even had vague notions of starting a daily and many a night Jared and Amos pored over the type samples in the advertising in Rounds Printer's Cabinet, picked out the type they would need and the other equipment necessary for the new venture. But it was only a dream. For gradually Jared found Lizzie's eyes and he found more to interest him there than in the type-book, and so the dream faded and was gone.

Also as Lizzie's eyes began to glow in his sky, Jared let his interest lag in the talk at Casper Herdicker's shoe shop, though it was tall talk, and Jared sitting on a keg in a corner with little Tom Williams, the stone mason, beside him on a box, and Denny Hogan near him on a vacant work bench and Ira Dooley on the window ledge would wrangle until bed time many a night as Dick Bowman, wagging a warlike head, and Casper pegging away at his shoes, tore society into shreds, smashed idols and overturned civilization. Up to this point there was complete agreement between the iconoclasts. They went so far together that they had no quarrel about the route of the mob down Fifth Avenue in New York–which Dick knew only as a legend but which Casper had seen; and they were one in the belief that Dan Sands's bank and Wright & Perry's store should fall early in the sack of Market Street. But when it came to reconstructing society there was a clash that mounted to a cataclysm. For Dick, shaking his head violently, demanded a government that should regulate

everything and Casper waving a vicious, flat-nosed hammer, battered down all government and stood for the untrammeled and unhampered liberty of the individual. Night after night they looted civilization and stained the sky with their fires and the ground with the oppressor's blood, only to sink their claws and tusks into each other's vitals in mortal combat over the spoil.

About the time that Jared Thurston found the new stars that had ranged across his ken, Tom Van Dorn, the handsome, cheerful, exquisite Tom Van Dorn began to find the debates between Casper and Dick Bowman diverting. So many a night when the society of the softer sex was either cloying or inconvenient, the dapper young fellow would come dragging Henry Fenn with him, to sit on a rickety chair and observe the progress of the revolution and to enjoy the carnage that always followed the downfall of the established order. He used to sit beside Jared Thurston who, being a printer, was supposed to belong to the more intellectual of the crafts and hence more appreciative than Williams or Dooley or Hogan, of his young lordship's point of view; and as the debate waxed warm, Tom was wont to pinch the lean leg of Mr. Thurston in lieu of the winks Tom dared not venture. But a time came when Jared Thurston sat apart from Van Dorn and stared coldly at him. And as Tom and Henry Fenn walked out of the human slaughter house that Dick and Casper had made after a particularly bloody revolt against the capitalistic system, Henry Fenn walked for a time beside his friend looking silently at the earth while Van Dorn mooned and

star-gazed with wordy delight. Henry lifted his face, looked at Tom with great, bright, sympathetic eyes and cut in:

"Tom–why are you playing with Lizzie Coulter? She is not in your class or of your kind. What's your idea in cutting in between Jared and her; you'll only make trouble."

A smile, a gay, happy, and withal a seductive smile lit up the handsome, oval face of young Mr. Van Dorn. The smile became a laugh, a quiet, insinuating, good-natured, light-hearted laugh. As he laughed he replied:

"Lizzie's all right, Henry–don't worry about Lizzie." Again he laughed a gentle, deep-voiced chuckle, and held up his hand in the moonlight. A brown scab was lined across the back of the hand and as Henry saw it Van Dorn spoke: "Present from Lizzie–little pussy." Again he chuckled and added, "Nearly made the horse run away, too. Anyway," he laughed pleasantly, "when I left her she promised to go again."

But Henry Fenn returned to his point: "Tom," he cried, "don't play with Lizzie–she's not your kind, and it's breaking Jared's heart. Can't you see what you're doing? You'll go down there a dozen times, make love to her, hold her hand and kiss her and go away and pick up another girl. But she's the whole world and Heaven to boot for Jared. She's his one little ewe lamb, Tom. And she'd be happy with Jared if–"

"If she wants Jared she can have him. I'm not holding her," interrupted the youth. "And anyway," he exclaimed, "what do I owe to Jared and what do I owe to her or to any one but myself!"

Fenn did not answer at once. At length he broke the silence. "Well, you heard what I said and I didn't smile when I said it."

But Tom Van Dorn did smile as he answered, a smile of such sweetness, and of such winning grace that it sugar-coated his words.

"Henry," he cried in his gay, deep voice with the exuberance of youth ringing in it, "the world is mine. You know what I think about this whole business. If Lizzie doesn't want me to bother her she mustn't have such eyes and such hair and such lips. In this life I shall take what I find that I can get. I'm not going to be meek nor humble nor patient, nor forgiving and forbearing and I'm not going to refrain from a mutton roast because some one has a ewe lamb."

He put a warm, kind, brotherly hand on the shoulder beside him. "Shocked, aren't you, Henry?" he asked, laughing.

Henry Fenn looked up with a gentle, glowing smile on his rather dull face and returned, "No, Tom. Maybe you can make it go, but I couldn't."

"Well, I can. Watch me," he cried arrogantly. "Henry, I want the advantage of my strength in this world and I'm not going to go puling around, golden-ruling and bending my back to give the weak and worthless a ride. Let 'em walk. Let 'em fall. Let 'em rot for all I care. I'm not afraid of their God. There is no God. There is nature. Up to the place where man puts on trousers it's a battle of thews and teeth. And nature never intended pants to mark the line where she changes the order of things. And the servile,

weakling, groveling, charitable, cowardly philosophy of Christ–it doesn't fool me, Henry. I'm a pagan and I want the advantage of all the force, all the power, that nature gave me, to live life as a dangerous, exhilarating experience. I shall live life to the full–live it hard–live it beautifully, but live it! live it! Henry, live it like a gentleman and not like an understrapper and bootlicker! I intend to command, not obey! Rule, not serve! I shall take and not give–not give save as it pleases me to have my hand licked now and then! As for Lizzie and Jared," young Mr. Van Dorn waved a gay hand, "let them look out for themselves. They're not my worries!"

"But, Tom," remonstrated Henry as he looked at the ground, "it's nothing to me of course, but Lizzie–"

"Ah, Henry," Van Dorn laughed gayly, "I'm not going to hurt Lizzie. She's good fun: that's all. And now look here, Mr. Preacher–you come moralizing around me about what I'm doing to some one else, which after all is not my business but hers; and I'm right here to tell you, what you're doing to yourself, and that's your business and no one's else. You're drinking too much. People are talking about it. Quit it! Whisky never won a jury. In the Morse case you loaded up for your speech and I beat you because in all your agonizing about the wrong to old man Müller and his 'pretty brown-eyed daughter' as you called her, you forgot slick and clean the flaw in Morse's deed."

"I suppose you're right, Tom. But I was feeling kind of off that day, mother'd been sick the night before and–"

"And so you filled up with a lot of bad whisky and driveled and wept and stumbled through the case and I beat you. I tell you, Henry, I keep myself fit. I have no time to look after others. My job is myself and you'll find that unless you look after yourself no one else will, at least whisky won't. If I find girling is beating me in my law cases I quit girling. But it doesn't. Lord, man, the more I know of human nature, the more I pick over the souls of these country girls and blow open the petals of their pretty hearts, the wiser I am."

"But the girls, Tom–the girls–" protested the somber-eyed Mr. Fenn.

"Ah, I don't hurt 'em and they like it. And so long as your whisky hamestrings you and my girls give me what I need in my business–don't talk to me."

Tom Van Dorn left Fenn at his mother's door and as Fenn saw his friend turn toward the south he called, "Aren't you going to your room?"

"Why, it's only eleven o'clock," answered Van Dorn. To the inquiring silence Van Dorn called, "I'm going down to see Lizzie."

Henry Fenn stood looking at his friend, who explained: "That's all right. I said I'd be down to-night and she'll wait."

"Well–" said Fenn. But Van Dorn cut him short with "Now, Henry, I can take care of myself. Lizzie can take care of herself–and you're the only one of us who, as I see it, needs careful nursing!" And with that he went striding away.

And three hours later when the moon was waning in the west a girl sitting by her window gazed at the red orb and dreamed beautiful dreams, such as a girl may dream but once, of the prince who had come to her so gloriously. While the prince strolled up the street with his coat over his arm, his hat in his hand, letting the night wind flutter the raven's wing of hair on his brow, and as he went he laughed to himself softly and laughed and laughed. For are we not told of old to put not our trust in princes!

CHAPTER III
IN WHICH WE CONSIDER THE LADIES–GOD BLESS 'EM!

During those years in the late seventies and the early eighties, the genii on the Harvey job grunted and grumbled as they worked, for the hours were long and tedious and the material was difficult to handle. Kyle Perry's wife died, and it was all the genii could do to find him a cook who would stay with him and his lank, slab-sided son, and when the genii did produce a cook–the famous Katrina, they wished her on Kyle and the boy for life, and she ruled them with an iron rod. And to even things up, they let Kyle stutter himself into a partnership with Ahab Wright–though Kyle was trying to tell Ahab that they should have a partition in their stable. But partition was too much of a mouthful and poor Kyle fell to stuttering on it and found himself sold into bondage for life by the genii, dispensing nails and cod-fish and calico as Ahab's partner, before Kyle could get rid of the word partition.

The genii also had to break poor Casper Herdicker's heart–and he had one, and a big one, despite his desire for blood and plunder; and they broke it when his wife Brunhilde deserted the hearthstone back of the shoe-shop, rented a vacant store room on Market Street and went into the millinery way of life. And it wasn't enough that the tired genii had to gouge out the streets

of Harvey; to fill in the gulleys and ravines; to dab in scores of new houses; to toil and moil over the new hotel, witching up four bleak stories upon the prairie. It wasn't enough that they had to cast a spell on people all over the earth, dragging strangers to Harvey by trainloads; it wasn't enough that the overworked genii should have to bring big George Brotherton to town with the railroad–and he was load enough for any engine; his heart itself weighed ten stone; it wasn't enough that they had to find various and innumerable contraptions for Captain Morton to peddle, but there was Tom Van Dorn's new black silk mustache to grow, and to be oiled and curled daily; so he had to go to the Palace Hotel barber shop at least once every day, and passing the cigar counter, he had to pass by Violet Mauling–pretty, empty-faced, doll-eyed Violet Mauling at the cigar stand. And all the long night and all the long day, the genii, working on the Harvey job, cast spells, put on charms, and did their deepest sorcery to take off the power of the magic runes that young Tom's black art were putting upon her; and day after day the genii felt their highest potencies fail. So no wonder they mumbled and grumbled as they bent over their chores. For a time, the genii had tried to work on Tom Van Dorn's heart after he dropped Lizzie Coulter and sent her away on a weary life pilgrimage with Jared Thurston, as the wife of an itinerant editor; but they found nothing to work on under Tom's cigar holder–that is, nothing in the way of a heart. There was only a kind of public policy. So the genii made the public policy as broad and generous as they could and let it go at that.

Tom Van Dorn and Henry Fenn rioted in their twenties. John Hollander saved a bleeding country, pervaded the courthouse and did the housework at home while Rhoda, his wife, who couldn't cook hard boiled eggs, organized the French Cooking Club. Captain Ezra Morton spent his mental energy upon the invention of a self-heating molasses spigot, which he hoped would revolutionize the grocery business while his physical energy was devoted to introducing a burglar proof window fastener into the proud homes that were dotting the tall grass environs of Harvey. Amos Adams was hearing rappings and holding-high communion with great spirits in the vasty deep. Daniel Sands, having buried his second wife, was making eyes at a third and spinning his financial web over the town. Dr. and Mrs. Nesbit were marvelling at the mystery of a child's soul, a maiden's soul, reaching out tendril after tendril as the days made years. The Dick Bowman's were holding biennial receptions to the little angels who came to the house in the Doctor's valise–and welcomed, hilariously welcomed babies they were–welcomed with cigars and free drinks at Riley's saloon by Dick, and in awed silence by Lida, his wife–welcomed even though the parents never knew exactly how the celestial guests were to be robed and harped; while the Joe Calvins of proud Elm Street, opulent in an eight room house, with the town's one bath tub, scowled at the angels who kept on coming nevertheless–for such is the careless and often captious way of angels that come to the world in the doctor's black bag–kept on coming

to the frowning house of Calvin as frequently and as idly as they came to the gay Bowmans. Looking back on those days a generation later, it would seem as if the whole town were a wilderness of babies. They came on the hill in Elm Street, a star-eyed baby named Ann even came to the Daniel Sandses, and a third baby to the Ezra Mortons and another to the Kollanders (which gave Rhoda an excuse for forming a lifelong habit of making John serve her breakfast in bed to the scorn of Mrs. Nesbit and Mrs. Herdicker who for thirty years sniffed audibly about Rhoda's amiable laziness) and the John Dexters had one that came and went in the night. But down by the river–there they came in flocks. The Dooleys, the McPhersons, the Williamses and the hordes of unidentified men and women who came to saw boards, mix mortar, make bricks and dig–to them the kingdom of Heaven was very near, for they suffered little children and forbade them not. And also, because the kingdom was so near–so near even to homes without sewers, homes where dirt and cold and often hunger came–the children were prone to hurry back to the Kingdom discouraged with their little earthly pilgrimages. For those who had dragged chains and hewed wood and drawn water in the town's first days seemed by some specific gravity of the social system to be holding their places at those lower levels–always reaching vainly and eagerly, but always reaching a little higher and a little further from them for that equality of opportunity which seemed to lie about them that first day when the town was born.

In the upper reaches of the town Henry Fenn's bibulous habits became accepted matters to a wider and wider circle and Tom Van Dorn still had his way with the girls while the town grinned at the two young men in gay reproval. But Amos Adams through his familiar spirits got solemn, cryptic messages for the young men–from Tom's mother and Henry's father. Amos, abashed, but never afraid, used to deliver these messages with incidental admonitions of his own–kind, gentle and gorgeously ineffective. Then he would return to his office with a serene sense of a duty well done, and meet and feast upon the eyes of Mary, his wife, keen, hungry eyes, filled with more or less sinful pride in his strength.

No defeat that ever came to Amos Adams, and because he was born out of his time, defeat was his common portion, and no contumely ever was his in a time when men scorned the evidence of things not seen, no failure, no apparent weakness in her husband's nature, ever put a tremor in her faith in him. For she knew his heart. She could hear his armor clank and see it shine; she could feel the force and the precision of his lance when all the world of Harvey saw only a dreamer in rusty clothes, fumbling with some stupid and ponderous folly that the world did not understand. The printing office that Mary and Amos thought so grand was really a little pine shack, set on wooden piers on a side street. Inside in the single room, with the rough-coated walls above the press and type-cases covered with inky old sale bills, and specimens of the *Tribune's* printing–inside the

office which seemed to Mary and Amos the palace of a race of giants, others saw only a shabby, inky, little room, with an old fashioned press and a jobber among the type racks in the gloom to the rear. Through the front window that looked into a street filled with loads of hay and wood, and with broken wagons, and scrap iron from a wheelwright's shop, Amos Adams looked for the everlasting sunrise, and Mary saw it always in his face.

But this is idling; it is not getting on with the Book. A score of men and women are crowding up to these pages waiting to get into the story. And the town of Harvey, how it is bursting its bounds, how it is sprawling out over the white paper, tumbling its new stores and houses and gas mains and water pipes all over the table; with what a clatter and clamor and with what vain pride! Now the pride of those years in Harvey came with the railroad, and here, pulling at the paper, stands big George Brotherton with his ten stone heart. He has been sputtering and nagging for a dozen pages to swing off the front platform of the first passenger car that came to town. He was a fat, overgrown youth in his late teens, but he wore the uniform of a train newsboy, and any uniform is a uniform. His laugh was like the crash of worlds–and it is to-day after thirty years. When the road pushed on westward Brotherton remained in Harvey and even though the railroad roundhouse employed five hundred men and even though the town's population doubled and then trebled, still George Brotherton was better than everything else that the railroad brought. He found work in a pool and billiard

hall; but that was a pent-up Utica for him and his contracted powers sent him to Daniel Sands for a loan of twenty-five dollars. The unruffled exterior, the calm impudence with which the boy waived aside the banker's request for a second name on George's note, and the boy's obvious eagerness to be selling something, secured the money and established him in a cigar store and news stand. Within a year the store became a social center that rivaled Riley's saloon and being near the midst of things in business, attracted people of a different sort from those who frequented Casper Herdicker's debating school in the shoe shop. To the cigar stand by day came Dr. Nesbit with his festive but guileful politics, Joe Calvin, Amos Adams, stuttering Kyle Perry, deaf John Kollander, occasionally Dick Bowman, Ahab Wright in his white necktie and formal garden whiskers, Rev. John Dexter and Captain Morton; while by night the little store was a forum for young Mortimer Sands, for Tom Van Dorn, for Henry Fenn, for the clerks of Market Street and for such gay young blades as were either unmarried or being married were brave enough to break the apron string. For thirty years, nearly a generation, they have been meeting there night after night and on rainy days, taking the world apart and putting it together again to suit themselves. And though strangers have come into the council at Brotherton's, Captain Morton remains dean. And though the Captain does not know it, being corroded with pride, there still clings about the place a tradition of the day when Captain Morton rode his high wheeled bicycle, the first the town ever had seen, in the

procession to his wife's funeral. They say it was the Captain's serene conviction that his agency for the bicycle–exclusive for five counties–would make him rich, and that it was no lack of love and respect for his wife but rather an artist's pride in his work as the distributor of a long-felt want which perched Ezra Morton on that high wheel in the funeral procession. For Mary Adams who knew, who was with the stricken family when death came, who was in the lonely house when the family came home from the cemetery, says that Ezra's grief was real. Surely thirty years of singlehearted devotion to the three motherless girls should prove his love.

Those were gala days for Captain Morton; the whole universe was flowering in his mind in schemes and plans and devices which he hoped to harness for his power and glory. And the forensic group at Mr. Brotherton's had much first hand information from the Captain as to the nature of his proposed activities and his prospective conquests. And while the Captain in his prime was surveying the world that was about to come under his domain the house of Adams, little and bleak and poor, down near the Wahoo on the homestead which the Adamses had taken in the sixties became in spite of itself, a gay and festive habitation. Childhood always should make a home bright and there came a time when the little house by the creek fairly blossomed with young faces. The children of the Kollanders, the Perrys, the Calvins, the Nesbits, and the Bowmans–girls and boys were everywhere and they knew all times and seasons. But the

red poll and freckled face of Grant Adams was the center of this posy bed of youth.

Grant was a shrill-voiced boy, impulsive and passionately generous and all but obsessed with a desire to protect the weak. Whether it was bug, worm or dog, or hunted animal or bullied child or drunken man, fly-swarmed and bedeviled of boys in the alley, or a little girl teased by her playmates, Grant–fighting mad, came rushing in to do battle for the victim. Yet he was no anemic child of ragged nerves. His fist went straight when he fought, and landed with force. His eyes saw accurately and his voice carried terror in it.

He was a vivid youth, and without him the place down by the river would have been bleak and dreary. But because Grant was in the world, the rusty old phaëton in which Amos and Mary rode daily from the farm to their work, gradually bedecked itself with budding childhood blooming into youth, and it was no longer drab and dusty, but a veritable chariot of life. When Grant was a sturdy boy of eight, little Jasper Adams came into this big bewildering world. And after Grant and his gardenful of youth were gone, Jasper's garden followed. And there was a short season when the two gardens were growing together. It was in that season while Grant was just coming into shoeblacking and paper collars, that in some indefinite way, Laura Nesbit, daughter of the Doctor and Bedelia Satterthwaite, his blue blooded Maryland wife, separated herself from the general beauty of the universe and for Grant, Laura became

a particular person. In Mary Adams's note book she writes with maternal pride of his fancy for Laura: "It is the only time in Grant's life when he has looked up instead of down for something to love." And the mother sets down a communication from Socrates through the planchette to Amos, declaring that "Love is a sphere center"–a message which doubtless the fond parents worked into tremendous import for their child. Though a communication from some anonymous sage called the Peach Blow Philosopher, who began haunting Amos as a familiar spirit about this time recorded the oracle, also carefully preserved by Mary in her book among the prophecies for Grant that, "Carrots, while less fragrant than roses, are better for the blood." And while the cosmic forces were wrestling with these problems for Grant and Laura, the children were tripping down their early teens all innocent of the uproar they were making among the sages and statesmen and conquerors who flocked about the planchette board for Amos every night. For Laura, Grant carved tiny baskets from peach-pits and coffee beans; for her he saved red apples and candy globes that held in their precious insides gorgeous pictures; for her he combed his hair and washed his neck; for her he scribbled verses wherein eyes met skies, and arts met hearts, and beams met dreams and loves the doves.

The joy of first love that comes in early youth–and always it does come then, though it is not always confessed–is a gawky and somewhat guilty joy that spends itself in sighs and blushes and Heaven knows what of self-discovery. Thus Grant in Laura's

autograph album after all his versifying on the kitchen table could only write "Truly Yours" and leave her to define the deep significance of the phrase so obviously inverted. And she in his autograph album could only trust herself–though naturally being female she was bolder–to the placid depths of "As ever your friend." Though in lean, hungry-eyed Nathan Perry's book she burst into glowing words of deathless remembrance and Grant wrote in Emma Morton's album fervid stanzas wherein "you" rimed with "the wandering Jew" and "me" with "eternity." At school where the subtle wisdom of childhood reads many things not writ in books, the names of Grant and Laura were linked together, in the innocent gossip of that world.

They say that modern thought deems these youthful experiences dangerous and superfluous; and so probably they will end, and the joy of this earliest mating season will be bottled up and stored for a later maturity. God is wise and good. Doubtless some new and better thing will take the place of this first moving of the waters of life in the heart; but for us of the older generation that is beginning to fade, we are glad that untaught and innocent, our lips tasted from that spring when in the heart was no knowledge of the poison that might come with the draft.

A tall, shy, vivid girl, but above everything else, friendly, was Laura Nesbit in her middle teens; and though Grant in later years remembered her as having wonderful gray eyes, the elder town of Harvey for the most part recollects her only as a gay

and kindly spirit looking out into the world through a happy, inquiring face. But the elder town could not in the nature of things know Laura Nesbit as the children knew her. For the democracy of childhood has its own estimates of its own citizens and the children of Harvey–the Dooleys and the Williamses and the Bowmans as well as the Calvins, the Mortons, the Sandses and the Kollanders, remember Laura Nesbit for something more than her rather gawky body. To the children, she was a bright soul. They remember–and the Bowmans better than any one else–that Laura Nesbit shared what she had with every one. She never ate a whole stick of candy in her life. From her school lunch-basket, the Dooleys had their first oranges and the Williamses their first bananas. Apples for the Bowmans and maple sugar–a rare delicacy on the prairies in those days–for every one came from her wonderful basket. And though her mother kept Laura in white aprons when the other girls were in ginghams and in little red and black woolen, though the child's wonderful yellow hair, soft and wavy like her father's plumey roach, was curled with great care and much pride, it was her mother's pride–the grim Satterthwaite demand for caste in any democracy. But even with those caste distinctions there was the face that smiled, the lips that trembled in sympathy, the heart that felt the truth.

"Jim," quoth the mother on a day when the yard was full of Dooleys and Bowmans and Calvins–Calvins, whom Mrs. Nesbit regarded as inferior even to the Dooleys because of the vast Calvin pretense–"Jim, Laura has inherited that common Indiana

streak of yours. I can't make her a Satterthwaite–she's Indiana to the bone. Why, when I go to town with her, every drayman and ditch digger and stableman calls to her, and the yard is always full of their towheaded children. I'll give her up."

And the Doctor gurgled a chuckle and gave her up also.

She always came with her father to the Adamses on Sunday afternoons, and while the Doctor and Amos Adams on the porch went into the matter of the universe as either a phantasm superinduced by the notion of time, or the notion of time as an hallucination of those who believed in space, down by the creek Grant and Laura sitting under the oak near the silent, green pool were feeling their way around the universe, touching shyly and with great abasement the cords that lead from the body to the soul, from material to the spiritual, from dust to God.

It is a queer world, a world that is past finding out. Here are two children, touching souls in the fleetest, lightest way in the world, and the touch welds them together forever. And along come two others, and even as the old song has it, "after touch of wedded hands," they are strangers yet. No one knows what makes happiness in love. Certainly marriage is no part of it. Certainly it is not first love, for first lovers often quarrel like cats. Certainly it is not separation, for absence, alas, does not make the heart grow fonder; nor is it children–though the good God knows that should help; for they are love incarnate. Certainly it is not respect, for respect is a stale, cold comforter, and love is deeper than respect, and often lives without it–let us whisper the truth in

shame. What, then, is this irrational current of the stuff of life, that carries us all in its sway, that brings us to earth, that guides our destiny here–makes so vastly for our happiness or woe, gives us strength or makes us weak, teaches us wisdom or leads us into folly unspeakable, and all unseen, unmeasured and infinitely mysterious?

There was young Tom Van Dorn. Love was a pleasurable emotion, and because it put a joyous fever in his blood, it enhanced his life. But he never defined love; he merely lived on it. Then there was Ahab Wright who regarded love as a kind of sin and when he married the pale, bloodless, shadowy bookkeeper in Wright & Perry's store, he regarded the charivari prepared by Morty Sands and George Brotherton as a shameful rite and tried for an hour to lecture the crowd in his front yard on the evils of unseemly conduct before he gave them an order on the store for a bucket of mixed candy. If Ahab had defined love he would have put cupid in side whiskers and a white necktie and set the fat little god to measuring shingle nails, cod-fish and calico on week days and sitting around in a tail coat and mouse-colored trousers on Sunday, reading the *Christian Evangel* and the *Price Current*. And again there was Daniel Sands who married five women in a long and more or less useful life. He would have defined love as the apotheosis of comfort. Finally there was Henry Fenn to whom love became the compelling force of his being. Love is many things: indeed only this seems sure. Love is the current of our lives, and like minnows we run in schools through it, guided

by instinct and by herd suggestions; and some of us are washed ashore; some of us are caught and devoured, and others fare forth in joy and reach the deep.

One rainy day when the conclave in Brotherton's cigar store was weary of discussing the quarrel of Mr. Conklin and Mr. Blaine and the eccentricities of the old German Kaiser, the subject of love came before the house for discussion. Dr. Nesbit, who dropped in incidentally to buy a cigar, but primarily to see George Brotherton about some matters of state in the Third ward, found young Tom Van Dorn stroking his new silky mustache, squinting his eyes and considering himself generally in the attitude of little Jack Horner after the plum episode.

"Speaking broadly," squeaked the Doctor, breaking irritably into the talk, "touching the ladies, God bless 'em–from young Tom's angle, there's nothing to 'em. Broad is the petticoat that leadeth to destruction." The Doctor turned from young Van Dorn, and looked critically at some obvious subject of Van Dorn's remarks as she picked her way across the muddy street, showing something more than a wink of striped stockings, "Tom, there's nothing in it–not a thing in the world."

"Oh,–I don't know," returned the youth, wagging an impudent, though good-natured head at the Doctor; "what else is there in the world if not in that? The world's full of it–flowers, trees, birds, beasts, men and women–the whole damn universe is afire with it. It's God; there is no other God–just nature building and propagating and perpetuating herself."

"I suppose," squeaked the Doctor with a sigh, as he reached for his morning paper, "that if I had nothing else to do for a living except practice law with Joe Calvin on the side and just be twenty-five years old three hundred days in the year, and no other chores except to help old man Sands rib up his waterworks deal, I would hold some such general views myself. But when I was twenty-five, young man, Bedelia and I were running a race with the meal ticket, and our notions as to the moral government of the universe came hard and were deepset, and we can't change them now."

George Brotherton, Henry Fenn, Captain Morton and Amos Adams came in with a kind of Greek chorus of general agreement with the Doctor. Van Dorn cocked his hat over his eyes and laughed, and then the Doctor went on in his high falsetto:

"It's all right, Tom; go it while you're young. But that kind of love's young dream generally ends in a nightmare." He hesitated a minute, and then said: "Well, so long as we're all here in the family, I'll tell you about a case I had last night. There's an old fellow–old Dutchman to be exact, down in Spring township; he came here with us when we founded the town; husky old boy, that is, he used to be fifteen years ago. And he had Tom's notion about the ladies, God bless 'em, when he was Tom's age. When I first knew him his notion was causing him trouble, and had settled in one leg, and last night he died of the ladies, God bless 'em."

The Doctor's face flinched with pain, and his treble voice winced as he spoke: "Lord, but he suffered, and to add to his physical torment, he knew that he had to leave his daughter all alone in the world–and without a mother and without a dollar; but that isn't the worst, and he knew it–at the last. This being twenty-five for a living is the hardest job on earth–when you're sixty, and the old man knew that. The girl has missed his blood taint; she's not scarred nor disfigured. It would be better if she were; but he gave her something worse–she's his child!" For a moment the Doctor was silent, then he sighed deeply and shut his eyes as he said: "Boys, for a year and more he's been seeing all that he was, bud like a glorious poison in his daughter."

Van Dorn smiled, and asked casually, "Well, what's her name?" The rest of the group in the store looked down their noses and the Doctor, with his paper under his arm, obviously ignored the question and only stopped in the door to pipe out: "This wasn't the morning to talk to me of the ladies–God bless 'em."

The men in the store watched him as he started across the street, and then saw Laura skip gayly toward him, and the two, holding hands, crossed the muddy street together. She was laughing, and the joy of her soul–a child's soul, shone like a white flame in the dull street and George Brotherton, who saw the pair in the street, roared out: "Well, say–now isn't that something worth looking at? That beats Niagara Falls and Pike's Peak–for me."

Captain Morton looked at the gay pair attentively for a moment and spoke: "And I have three to his one; I tell you, gentlemen–three to his one; and I guess I haven't told you gentlemen about it, but I got the exclusive agency for seven counties for Golden's Patent Self-Opening Fruit Can, an absolute necessity for every household, and in another year my three will be wearing their silks and diamonds!" He smiled proudly around the group and added: "My! that doesn't make any difference. Silk or gingham, I know I've got the best girls on earth–why, if their mother could just see 'em–see how they're unfolding–why, Emma can make every bit as good hash as her mother," a hint of tears stood in his blue eyes. "Why–men, I tell you sometimes I want to die and go right off to Heaven to tell mother all the fine news about 'em–eh?" Deaf John Kollander, with his hand to his less affected ear, nodded approval and said, "That's what I always said, James G. Blaine never was a true friend of the soldier!"

Van Dorn had been looking intently at nothing through the store window. When no one answered Captain Morton, Van Dorn addressed the house rather impersonally:

"Man is the blindest of the mammals. You'd think as smart a man as Dr. Nesbit would see his own vices. Here he is mayor of Harvey, boss of the town. He buys men with Morty's father's money and sells 'em in politics like sheep–not for his own gain; not for his family's gain; but just for the joy of the sport; just as I follow the ladies, God bless 'em; and yet he stands up and reads me a lecture on the wickedness of a little more or less innocent

flirting." The young man lighted his cigar at the alcohol flame on the counter. "Morty," he continued, squinting his eyes and stroking his mustache, and looking at the boy with vast vanity, "Morty, do you know what your old dad and yon virtuous Nesbit pasha are doing? Well, I'll tell you something you didn't learn at military school. They're putting up a deal by which we've voted one hundred thousand dollars' worth of city bonds as bonus in aid of a system of city water works and have given them to your dad outright, for putting in a plant that he will own and control; and that he will build for seventy-five thousand dollars." Van Dorn smiled a placid, malevolent smile at the group and went on: "And the sheik of the village there helped Daniel Sands put it through; helped him buy me as city attorney, with your father's bank's legal business; helped buy Dick Bowman, poor devil with a houseful of children for a hundred dollars for his vote in the council, helped work George here for his vote in the council by lending money to him for his business; and so on down the line. The Doc calls that politics, and regards it as one of his smaller vices; but me?" scoffed the young man, "when I go gamboling down the primrose path of dalliance with a lady on each arm–or maybe more, I am haled before the calif and sentenced to his large and virtuous displeasure. Man,"–here young Mr. Van Dorn drummed his fingers on the showcase and considered the universe calmly through the store window–"man is the blindest of mammals." After which smiling deliverance, Thomas Van Dorn picked up his morning paper, and his gloves, and stalked with

some dignity into the street.

"Well, say,"–Brotherton was the first to speak–"rather cool–"

"Shame, shame!" cried John Kollander, as he buttoned up his blue coat with its brass buttons. "Where was Blaine when the bullets were thickest? Answer me that." No one answered, but Captain Morton began:

"Now, George, why, that's all right. Didn't the people vote the bonds after you fellows submitted 'em? Of course they did. The town wanted waterworks; Daniel Sands knew how to build 'em–eh? The people couldn't build 'em themselves, could they?" asked the Captain triumphantly. Brotherton laughed; Morty Sands grinned,–and, shame be to Amos Adams, the rugged Puritan, who had opposed the bonds in his paper so boldly, he only shook a sorrowful head and lifted no voice in protest. Such is the weakness of our thunderers without their lightning! Brotherton, who still seemed uneasy, went on: "Say, men, didn't that franchise call for a system of electric lights and gas in five years and a telephone system in ten years more–all for that $100,000; I'm right here to tell you we got a lot for our money."

Again Amos Adams swallowed his Adam's apple and cut in as boldly as a man may who thinks with his lead pencil: "And don't forget the street car franchises you gave away at the same time. Water, light, gas, telephone and street car franchises for fifty years and one hundred thousand to boot! It seemed to me you were giving away a good deal!"

But John Kollander's approving nod and George Brotherton's

great laugh overcame the editor, and the talk turned to other things.

There came a day in Harvey when men, looking back at events from the perspective of another day, believed that in those old days of Harvey, Daniel Sands was master and Dr. Nesbit was servant. And there was much evidence to indicate that Daniel's was the master spirit of those early times. But the evidence was merely based on facts, and facts often are far from the truth. The truth is that Daniel Sands was the beneficiary of much of the activity of Doctor Nesbit in those days, but the truth is also that Doctor Nesbit did what he did–won the county seat for Harvey, secured the railroad, promoted the bond election, which gave Daniel Sands the franchises for the distribution of water, gas and electricity–not because the Doctor had any particular regard for Daniel Sands but because, first of all, the good of the town, as the Doctor saw it, seemed to require him to act as he acted; and second, because his triumph at any of these elections meant power, and he was greedy for power. But he always used his power to make others happy. No man ever came to the Doctor looking for work that he could not find work for that man. Men in ditches, men on light poles, men in the court house, men at Daniel Sands's furnaces, men grading new streets, men working on city or county contracts knew but one source of authority in Harvey, and that was Doctor James Nesbit. Daniel Sands was a mere money grubbing incident of that power. Daniel could have won no one to vote with him; the county seat would have gone

to a rival town, the railroad would not have veered five miles out of its way to reach Harvey, and a dozen promoters would have wrangled for a dozen franchises but for Dr. Nesbit.

And if Dr. Nesbit made it his business to see that Dick Bowman had work, it was somewhat because he knew how badly the little Bowmans needed food. And if he saw to it that Dick's vote in the council occasionally yielded him a substantial return from those whom that vote benefited so munificently, it was partly because the Doctor felt how sorely Lida Bowman, silently bending over her washtub, needed the little comforts which the extra fifty-dollar bill would bring that Dick sometimes found in his monthly pay envelope. And if the Doctor saw to it that Ira Dooley was made foreman of the water works gang, or that Tom Williams had the contract for the stone work on the new court house, it was largely in payment for services rendered by Ira and Tom in bringing in the Second Ward for John Kollander for county clerk. The rewards of Ira and Tom in working for the Doctor were virtue's own; and if re-marking a hundred ballots was part of that blessed service, well and good. And also it must be recorded that the foremanship and the stone contract were somewhat the Doctor's way of showing Mrs. Dooley and Mrs. Williams that he wished them well.

Doctor Nesbit's scheme of politics included no punishments for his enemies, and he desired every one for his friend. The round, pink face, the high-roached, yellow hair, the friendly, blue eyes, had no place for hate in them, and in the high-pitched,

soft voice was no note of terror to evil doers. His countenance did not betray his power; that was in his tireless little legs, his effective hands, and his shrewd brain motived by a heart too kind for the finer moral distinctions that men must make who go far in this world. Yet because he had a heart, a keen mind, even without much conscience, and a vision larger than those about him, Dr. Nesbit was their leader. He did not move in a large sphere, but in his small sphere he was the central force, the dominating spirit. And off in a dark corner, Daniel Sands, who was hunger incarnate and nothing more, spun his web, gathered the dust and the flies and the weaker insects and waxed fat. To say that his mind ruled Dr. Nesbit's, to say that Daniel Sands was master and Dr. Nesbit servant in those first decades of Harvey–whatever the facts may seem in those later days–is one of those ornately ridiculous travesties upon the truth that facts sometimes are arranged to make. But how little did they know what they were building! For they and their kind all over America working in the darkness of their own selfish desires, were laying footing stones–quite substantial yet necessary–for the structure of a growing civilization which in its time, stripped of its scaffolding and extraneous débris, was to stand among the nations of the earth as a tower of righteousness in a stricken world.

CHAPTER IV
THE ADAMS FAMILY BIBLE LIES LIKE A GENTLEMAN

How light a line divides comedy from tragedy! When the ass speaks, or the man brays, there is comedy. Yet fate may stop the mouth of either man or ass, and in the dumb struggle for voice, if fate turns the screws of destiny upon duty, there is tragedy. Only the consequences of a day or a deed can decide whether it shall have the warm blessing of our smiles or the bitter benediction of our tears.

This, one must remember in reading the chapter of this story that shall follow. It is the close of the story to which Mary Adams, with her memory book and notes and clippings, has contributed much. For of the pile of envelopes all numbered in their order; the one marked "Margaret Müller" was the last envelope that she left. Now the package that concerns Margaret Müller may not be transcribed separately but must be woven into the woof of the tale. The package contains a clipping, a dozen closely written pages, and a photograph–a small photograph of a girl. The photograph is printed on the picture of a scroll, and the likeness of the girl does not throb with life as it did thirty years ago when it was taken. Then the plump, voluptuous arm and shoulders in the front of the picture seemed to exude life

and to bristle with the temptation that lurked under the brown lashes shading her big, innocent, brown eyes. And her hair, her wonderful brown hair that fell in a great rope to her knees, in this photograph is hidden, and only her frizzes, covering a fine forehead, are emphasized by the picture maker. One may smile at the picture now, but then when it was taken it told of the red of her lips and the pink of her flesh, and the dimples that forever went flickering across her face. In those days, the old-fashioned picture portrayed with great clearness the joy and charm and impudence of that beautiful face. But now the picture is only grotesque. It proves rather than discloses that once, when she was but a young girl, Margaret Müller had wonderfully molded arms and shoulders, regular features and enchanting eyes. But that is all the picture shows. In the photograph is no hint of her mellow voice, of her eager expression and of the smoldering fires of passion, ambition and purpose that smoked through those gay, bewitching eyes. The old-fashioned frizzled hair on her forehead, the obvious pose of her hand with its cheap rings, the curious cut of her dress, made after that travesty of the prevailing mode which country papers printed in their fashion columns, the black court-plaster beauty spot on her cheek and the lace fichu draped over her head and bare shoulders, all stand out like grinning gargoyles that keep much of the charm she had in those days imprisoned from our eyes to-day. So the picture alone is of no great service. Nor will the clipping tell much. It only records:

"Miss Margaret Müller, daughter of the late Herman

> Müller of Spring Township, this county, will teach school in District 18, the Adams District in Prospect Township, this fall and winter. She will board with the family of ye editor."

Now the reader must know that Margaret Müller's eyes had been turned to Harvey as to a magnet for three years. She had chosen the Adams district school in Prospect Township, because the Adams district school was nearer than any other school district to Harvey; she had gone to the Adamses to board because the little bleak house near the Wahoo was the nearest house in the district to Harvey and to a social circle which she desired to enter–the best that Harvey offered.

She saw Grant, a rough, ruddy, hardy lad, of her own time of life, moving in the very center of the society she cherished in her dreams, and Margaret had no gay inadvertence in her scheme of creation. So when the lank, strapping, red-headed boy of a man's height, with a man's shoulders and a child's heart, started to Harvey for high school every morning, as she started to teach her country school, he carried with him, beside his lunch, a definite impression that Margaret was a fine girl. Often, indeed, he thought her an extraordinarily fine girl. Tales of prowess he brought back from the Harvey High School, and she listened with admiring face. For they related to youths whose names she knew as children of the socially elect.

A part of her admiration for Grant was due to the fact that Grant had leaped the social gulf–deep even then in Harvey–between those who lived on the hill, and the dwellers in the

bottoms near the river.

This instinctively Margaret Müller knew, also–though perhaps unconsciously–that even if they lived in the bottoms, the Adamses were of the aristoi; because they were friends of the Nesbits, and Mrs. Nesbit of Maryland was the fountain head of all the social glory of Harvey. Thus Margaret Müller of Spring Township came to camp before Harvey for a lifetime siege, and took her ground where she could aim straight at the Nesbits and Kollanders and Sandses and Mortons and Calvins. With all her banners flying, banners gaudy and beautiful, banners that flapped for men and sometimes snapped at women, she set her forces down before Harvey, and saw the beleaguered city through the portals of Grant's fine, wide, blue eyes, within an easy day's walk of her own place in the world. So she hovered over Grant, played her brown eyes upon him, flattered him, unconsciously as is the way of the female, when it would win favor, and because she was wise, wiser than even her own head knew, she cast upon the youth a strange spell.

Those were the days when Margaret Müller came first to early bloom. They were the days when her personality was too big for her body, so it flowed into everything she wore; on the tips of every ribbon at her neck, she glowed with a kind of electric radiance. A flower in her hair seemed as much a part of her as the turn of her cleft chin. A bow at her bosom was vibrant with her. And to Grant even the things she touched, after she was gone, thrilled him as though they were of her.

Now the pages that are to follow in this chapter are not written for him who has reached that grand estate where he may feel disdain for the feverish follies of youth. A lad may be an ass; doubtless he is. A maid may be as fitful as the west wind, and in the story of the fitfulness and folly of the man and the maid, there is vast pathos and pain, from which pathos and pain we may learn wisdom. Now the strange part of this story is not what befell the youth and the maid; for any tragedy that befalls a youth and a maid, is natural enough and in the order of things, as Heaven knows well. The strange part of this story is that Mary and Amos Adams were, for all their high hopes of the sunrise, like the rest of us in this world–only human; stricken with that inexplicable parental blindness that covers our eyes when those we love are most needing our care.

Yet how could they know that Grant needed their care? Was he not in their eyes the fairest of ten thousand? They enshrined him in a kind of holy vision. It seems odd that a strapping, pimple-faced, freckled, red-headed boy, loudmouthed and husky-voiced, more or less turbulent and generally in trouble for his insistent defense of his weaker playmates–it seems odd that such a boy could be the center of such grand dreams as they dreamed for their boy. Yet there was the boy and there were the dreams. If he wrote a composition for school that pleased his parents, they were sure it foretold the future author, and among her bundle of notes for the Book, his mother has cherished the manuscript for his complete works. If at school Friday afternoon,

he spoke a piece, "trippingly on the tongue," they harkened back over his ancestry to find the elder Adams of Massachusetts who was a great orator. When he drove a nail and made a creditable bobsled, they saw in him a future architect and stored the incident for the Romance that was to be biography. When he organized a baseball club, they saw in him the budding leadership that should make him a ruler of men. Even Grant's odd mania to take up the cause of the weak–often foolish causes that revealed a kind of fanatic chivalry in him–Mary noted too; and saw the youth a mailed knight in the Great Battle that should precede and usher in the sunrise.

Jasper was a little boy and his parents loved him dearly; but Grant, the child of their honeymooning days, held their hearts. And so their vanity for him became a kind of mellow madness that separated them from a commonsense world. And here is a curious thing also–the very facts that were making Grant a leader of his fellows should have warned Mary and Amos that their son was setting out on his journey from the heart of his childish paradise. He was growing tall, strong, big-voiced, with hands, broad and muscular, that made him a baseball catcher of a reputation wider than the school-grounds, yet he had a child's quick wit and merry heart. Such a boy dominated the school as a matter of course, yet so completely had his parents daubed their eyes with pride that they could not see that his leadership in school came from the fact that a man was rising in him–the far-casting shadow of a virility deep and significant as destiny itself.

They could not see the man's body; they saw only the child's heart. It was natural that they should ask themselves what honor could possibly come to the house of Adams or to any house, for that matter, further than that which illumined it when Grant came home to announce that he had been elected President of the senior class in the Harvey High School and would deliver the valedictory address at commencement. When Mary and Amos learned that news, they had indeed found the hero for their book. After that, even his cousin, Morty Sands, home from college for a time, little, wiry, agile, and with a face half ferret and half angel, even Morty, who had an indefinite attachment for glowing exuberant Laura Nesbit, felt that so long as Grant held her attention–great, hulking, noisy, dominant Grant–even Morty arrayed in his college clothes, like Solomon, would have to wait until the fancy for Grant had passed. So Morty backed Grant with all his pocket money as a ball player while he fluttered rather gayly about Ave Calvin–and always with an effect of inadvertence.

Now if a lad is an ass–and he is–how should a poor jack be supposed to know of the wisdom of the serpent? For we must remember that early youth has been newly driven from the heart of that paradise wherein there is no good and evil. He gropes in darkness as he comes nearer the gates of his paradise, through an unchartered wilderness. But to Mary and Amos, Grant seemed to be wandering in the very midst of his Eden. They did not realize how he was groping and stumbling, nor could they know what

a load he carried–this ass of a lad coming toward the gate of the Garden. In those times when he sat in his room, trying to show his soul bashfully to Laura Nesbit as he wrote to her in Maryland at school, Grant felt always, over and about him, the consciousness of the spell of Margaret Müller, yet he did not know what the spell was. He wrestled with it when finally he came rather dimly to sense it, and tried with all the strength of his ungainly soul to be loyal to the choice of his heart. His will was loyal, yet the smiles, the eyes, the soft tempting face of Margaret always were near him. Furious storms of feeling swayed him. For youth is the time of tempest. In our teens come those floods of soul stuff through the gates of heredity, swinging open for the last time in life, floods that bring into the world the stores of the qualities of mind and heart from outside ourselves; floods stored in Heaven's reservoir, gushing from the almost limitlessly deep springs of our ancestry; floods which draw us in resistless currents to our destinies. And so the ass, laden with this relay of life from the source of life, that every young, blind ass brings into the world, floundered in the flood.

Grant thought his experience was unique. Yet it is the common lot of man. To feel his soul exposed at a thousand new areas of sense; to see a new heaven and a new earth–strange, mysterious, beautiful, unfolding to his eyes; to smell new scents; to hear new sounds in the woods and fields; to look open-eyed and wondering at new relations of things that unfold in the humdrum world about him, as he flees out of the blind paradise of childhood; to dream

new dreams; to aspire to new heights, to feel impulses coming out of the dark that tremble like the blare of trumpets in the soul,–this is the way of youth.

With all his loyalty for Laura Nesbit–loyalty that enshrined her as a comrade and friend, such is the contradiction of youth that he was madly jealous of every big boy at the country school who cast eyes at Margaret Müller. And because she was ages older than he, she knew it; and it pleased her. She knew that she could make all his combs and crests and bands and wattles and spurs glisten, and he knew in some deep instinct that when she sang the emotion in her voice was a call to him that he could not put into words. Thus through the autumn, Margaret and Grant were thrown together daily in the drab little house by the river. Now a boy and a girl thrown together commonly make the speaking donkeys of comedy. Yet one never may be sure that they may not be the dumb struggling creatures of the tragic muse. Heaven knows Margaret Müller was funny enough in her capers. For she related her antics–her grand pouts, her elaborate condescensions, her crass coquetry and her hidings and seekings–into what she called a "case." In the only wisdom she knew, to open a flirtation was to have a "case." So Margaret ogled and laughed and touched and ran and giggled and cried and played with her prey with a practiced lore of the heart that was far beyond the boy's knowledge. Grant did not know what spell was upon him. He did not know that his great lithe body, his gripping hands, his firm legs and his long arms that had

in their sinews the power that challenged her to wrestle when she was with him–he did not know what he meant to the girl who was forever teasing and bantering him when they were alone. For it was only when Margaret and Grant were alone or when no one but little Jasper was with them, that Margaret indulged in the joys of the chase. Yet often when other boys came to see her–the country boys from the Prospect school district perhaps, or lorn swains trailing up from Spring Township–Margaret did not conceal her fluttering delight in them from Mary Adams. So the elder woman and the girl had long talks in which Margaret agreed so entirely with Mary Adams that Mary doubted the evidence of her eyes. And Amos in those days was much interested in certain transcendental communications coming from his Planchette board and purporting to be from Emerson who had recently passed over. So Amos had no eyes for Margaret and Mary was fooled by the girl's fine speech. Yet sometimes late at night when Margaret was coming in from a walk or a ride with one of her young men, Mary heard a laugh–a high, hysterical laugh–that disquieted Mary Adams in spite of all Margaret's fair speaking. But never once did Mary connect in her mind Margaret's wiles with Grant. Such is the blindness of mothers; such is the deep wisdom of women!

All the while Grant floundered more hopelessly into the quicksand of Margaret's enchantment, and when he tried to write to Laura Nesbit, half-formed shames fluttered and flushed across his mind. So often he sat alone for long night hours in his attic

bedroom in vague agonies and self accusations, pen in hand, trying to find honest words that would fill out his tedious letter. Being a boy and being not entirely outside the gate of his childish paradise, he did not understand the shadow that was clouding his heart.

But there came one day when the gate closed and looking back, he saw the angel–the angel with the flaming sword. Then he knew. Then he saw the face that made the shadow and that day a great trembling came into his soul, a blackness of unspeakable woe came over him, and he was ashamed of the light. After that he never wrote to Laura Nesbit.

In May Margaret's school closed, and the Adamses asked her to remain with them for the summer, and she consented rather listlessly. The busy days of the June harvest combined with the duties of printing a newspaper made their Sunday visits with the Nesbits irregular. It was in July that Mrs. Nesbit asked for Margaret, and Mary Adams remembered that Margaret, whose listlessness had grown into sullenness, had found some excuse for being absent whenever the Nesbits came to spend the afternoon with the Adamses. Then in August, when Amos came home one night, he saw Margaret hurry from the front porch. He went into the house and heard Mary and Grant sobbing inside and heard Mary's voice lifted in prayer, with agony in her voice. It was no prayer for forgiveness nor for mercy, but for guidance and strength, and he stepped to the bedroom and saw the two kneeling there with Margaret's shawl over the chair where Mary

knelt. There he heard Mary tell the story of her boy's shame to her God.

Death and partings have come across that threshold during these three decades. Amos Adams has known anguish and has sat with grief many times, but nothing ever has cut him to the heart like the dead, hopeless woe in Mary's voice as she prayed there in the bedroom with Grant that August night. A terrible half-hour came when Mary and Amos talked with Margaret. For over their shame at what their son had done, above their love for him, even beyond their high hope for him, rose their sense of duty to the child who was coming. For the child they spent the passion of their shame and love and hope as they pleaded with Margaret for a child's right to a name. But she had hardened her heart. She shook her head and would not listen to their pleadings. Then they sent Grant to her. It is not easy to say which was more dreadful, the impudent smile which she turned to the parents as she shook her head at them, or the scornful laugh they heard when Grant sat with her. That was a long and weary night they spent and the sun rose in the morning under a cloud that never was lifted from their hearts.

In the six or seven sordid, awful weeks that followed before Kenyon was born, they turned for comfort and for help to Dr. Nesbit. They made his plan to save the child's good name, their plan. Of course–the Adamses were selfish. They felt a blight was on their boy's life. They could not understand that in Heaven there is neither marriage nor giving in marriage; that when God

sends a soul through the gates of earth it comes in joy even though we greet it in sorrow. Their gloom should have been lighted; part of its blackness was their own vain pride in Grant. Yet they were none the less tender with Margaret, and when she went down into the valley of the shadow, Mary went with her and stood and supported the girl in the journey.

When Doctor Nesbit was climbing into the buggy at the gate, Grant, standing by the hitching-post, said: "Doctor–sometime–when we are both older–I mean Laura–" He got no further. The Doctor looked at the boy's ashen face, and knew the cost of the words he was speaking. He stopped, reached his hand out to Grant and touched his shoulder. "I think I know, Grant–some day I shall tell her." He got into the buggy, looked at the lad a moment and said in his high, squeaky voice: "Well, Grant, boy, you understand after all it's your burden–don't you? Your mother has saved Margaret's good name. But son–son, don't you let the folks bear that burden." He paused a moment further and sighed: "Well, good-by, kid–God help you, and make a man of you," and so turning his cramping buggy, he drove away in the dusk.

Thus came Kenyon Adams, recorded in the family Bible as the third son of Mary and Amos Adams, into the wilderness of this world.

CHAPTER V
IN WHICH MARGARET MÜLLER DWELLS IN MARBLE HALLS AND HENRY FENN AND KENYON ADAMS WIN NOTABLE VICTORIES

The world into which Kenyon Adams came was a busy and noisy and ruthless world. The prairie grass was leaving Harvey when Grant Adams came, and the meadow lark left in the year that Jasper came. When Kenyon entered, even the blue sky that bent over it was threatened. For Dr. Nesbit returning from the Adamses the evening that Kenyon came to Harvey found around the well-drill at Jamey McPherson's a great excited crowd. Men were elbowing each other and craning their necks, and wagging their heads as they looked at the core of the drill. For it contained unmistakably a long worm of coal. And that night saw rising over Harvey such dreams as made the angels sick; for the dreams were all of money, and its vain display and power. And when men rose after dreaming those dreams, they swept little Jamey McPherson away in short order. For he had not the high talents of the money maker. He had only persistence, industry and a hopeful spirit

and a vague vision that he was discovering coal for the common good. So when Daniel Sands put his mind to bear upon the worm of coal that came wriggling up from the drilled hole on Jamey's lot, the worm crawled away from Jamey and Jamey went to work in the shaft that Daniel sank on his vacant lot near the McPherson home. The coal smoke from Daniel Sands's mines began to splotch the blue sky above the town, and Kenyon Adams missed the large leisure and joyous comraderie that Grant had seen; indeed the only leisurely person whom Kenyon saw in his life until he was–Heaven knows how old–was Rhoda Kollander. The hum and bustle of Harvey did not ruffle the calm waters of her soul. She of all the women in Harvey held to the early custom of the town of going out to spend the day.

"So that Margaret's gone," she was saying to Mary Adams sometime during a morning in the spring after Kenyon was born. "Law me–I wouldn't have a boarder. I tell John, the sanctity of the home is invaded by boarders these days; and her going out to the dances in town the way she does, I sh'd think you'd be glad to be alone again, and to have your own little flock to do for. And so Grant's going to be a carpenter–well, well! He didn't take to the printing trade, did he? My, my!" she sighed, and folded her hands above her apron–the apron which she always put on after a meal, as if to help with the dishes, but which she never soiled or wrinkled–"I tell John I'm so thankful our little Fred has such a nice place. He waits table there at the Palace, and gets all his meals–such nice food, and can go to school too, and you wouldn't

believe it if I'd tell you all the nice men he meets–drummers and everything, and he's getting such good manners. I tell John there's nothing like the kind of folks a boy is with in his teens to make him. And he sees Tom Van Dorn every day nearly and sometimes gets a dime for serving him, and now, honest, Mary, you wouldn't believe it, but Freddie says the help around the hotel say that Mauling girl at the cigar stand thinks Tom's going to marry her, but law me–he's aiming higher than the Maulings. The old man is going to die–did you know it? They came for John to sit up with him last night. John's an Odd Fellow, you know. But speaking of that Margaret, you know she's a friend of Violet's and slips into the cigar stand sometimes and Violet introduces Margaret to some nice drummers. And I heard John say that when Margaret gets this term of school taught here, the Spring Township people have made Doc Jim get her a job in the court house–register of deeds office. But I tell John–law me, you men are the worst gossips! Talk about women!"

Little Kenyon in his crib was restless, and Mary Adams was clattering the dishes, so between the two evils, Mrs. Kollander picked up the child, and rocked him and patted him and then went on: "I was over and spent the day with the Sandses the other day. Poor woman, she's real puny. Ann's such a pretty child and Mrs. Sands says that Morty's not goin' back to college again. And she says he just moons around Laura Nesbit. Seems like the boy's got no sense. Why, Laura's just a child–she's Grant's age, isn't she–not more than eighteen or nineteen, and Morty

must be nearly twenty-three. My–how they have sprung up. I tell John–why, I'll be thirty-six right soon now, and here I've worked and slaved my youth away and I'll be an old woman before we know it." She laughed good naturedly and rocked the fretting child. "Law me, Mary Adams, I sh'd think you'd want Grant to stay with George Brotherton there in the cigar stand, instead of carpentering. Such elegant people he can meet there, and such refined influences since Mr. Brotherton's put in books and newspapers, and he could work in the printing office and deliver the Kansas City and St. Louis and Chicago dailies for Mr. Brotherton, and do so much better than he can carpentering. I tell John, if we can just keep our boy among nice people until he's twenty-five, he'll stay with 'em. Now look at Lide Bowman. Mary Adams, we know she was a smart woman until she married Dick and now just see her–living down there with the shanty trash and all those ignorant foreigners, and she's growing like 'em. She's lost two of her babies, and that seems to be weighing on her mind, and I can't persuade her to pick up and move out of there. It's like being in another world. And Mary Adams–let me tell you–Casper Herdicker has gone into the mine. Yes, sir, he closed his shop and is going to work in the mine, because he can make three dollars a day. But law me! you'll not see Hildy Herdicker moving down there. She'll keep her millinery store and live with the white folks."

The dishes were put away, and in the long afternoon Mary Adams sat sewing as Rhoda Kollander rambled on. For the

third time Rhoda came back to comment upon the fact that Grant Adams had quit working in the printing office–a genteel trade, and had stopped delivering papers for Mr. Brotherton's newspaper stand–a rather high vocation, and was degrading himself by learning the carpenter's trade, when Mary Adams cut into the current of the stream of talk.

"Well, my dear, it was this way. There are two reasons why Grant is learning the carpenter's trade. In the first place, the boy has some sort of a passion to cast his lot among the poor. He feels they are neglected and–well, he has a sort of a fierce streak in him to fight for the under dog, and–"

"Well, law me, Mary–don't I know that? Hasn't Freddie told me time and again how Grant used to fight for Freddie when he was a little boy and the big boys plagued him. Grant whipped the whole school for teasing a little half-witted boy once–did you know that?" Mary Adams shook her head. "Well, he did, and–well now, isn't that nice. I can see just how he feels!" And she could. Never lived a more sympathetic soul than Rhoda. And as she rocked she said: "Of course, if that's the reason–law me, Mary, you never can tell how these children are going to turn out. Why, I tell John–"

"And the other reason is, Rhoda, that he is earning two dollars a day as a carpenter's helper, and since Kenyon came we seem to be miserably hard pushed for money." Mary Adams stopped and then went on as one carefully choosing her words: "And since Margaret has gone to board over at the other side of the school

district, and we don't have her board money–why of course–"

"Why of course," echoed Mrs. Kollander, "of course. I tell John he's been in a county office now twenty years, drawing all the way from a thousand to three thousand a year–and what have we got to show for it? I scrimp and pinch and save, and John does too–but law me–it seems like the way times are–" Amos Adams, standing at the door, heard her and cut in:

"I was talking the other night with George Washington about the times, and they're coming around all right." The man fumbled his sandy beard, closed his eyes as if to remember something and went on: "Let's see, he wrote: 'Peas and potatoes preserve the people,' and the next day, everything in the market dropped but peas and potatoes." He nodded a wise head. "They think that planchette is nonsense, but how do they account for coincidences like that! And now tell me some news for the *Tribune*." The two sat talking well into the twilight and when Rhoda pulled up her chair to the supper table, the editor's notebook was full.

Grant appeared, an ox-shouldered, red-haired, bass-voiced boy with ham-like hands; Jasper came in from school full of the town's adventure into coal and the industries, and his chatter trickled into the powerful but slowly spoken insistence of Mrs. Kollander's talk and was lost and swept finally into silence. After supper Grant retired to a book from the Sea-side Library, borrowed of Mr. Brotherton from stock–"Sesame and Lilies" was its title. Jasper plunged into his bookkeeping studies and by the wood stove in the sitting-room Rhoda Kollander held her

levee until bedtime sent her home.

During the noon hour the next day in Mr. Brotherton's cigar store and news stand, the walnut bench was filled that he had just installed for the comfort of his customers. At one end, was Grant Adams who had hurried up from the mines to buy a paperbound copy of Carlyle's "French Revolution"; next to him sat deaf John Kollander smoking his noon cigar, and beside Kollander sat stuttering Kyle Perry, thriftily sponging his morning Kansas City *Times* over Dr. Nesbit's shoulder. The absent brother always was on the griddle at Mr. Brotherton's amen corner, and the burnt offering of the moment was Henry Fenn. He had just broken over a protracted drouth–one of a year and a half–and the group was shaking sad heads over the county attorney's downfall. The doctor was saying, "It's a disease, just as the 'ladies, God bless 'em' will become a disease with Tom Van Dorn if he doesn't stop pretty soon–a nervous disease and sooner or later they will both go down. Poor Henry–Bedelia and I noticed him at the charity ball last night; he was–"

"A trifle polite–a wee bit too punctilious for these latitudes," laughed Brotherton from behind the counter.

"I was going to say decorative–what Mrs. Nesbit calls ornate–kind of rococco in manner," squeaked the doctor, and sighed. "And yet I can see he's still fighting his devil–still trying to keep from going clear under."

"It's a sh-sh-sh-a-ame that ma-a-an should have th-that kind of a d-d-d-devil in him–is-isis-n't it?" said Kyle Perry, and John

Kollander, who had been smoking in peace, blurted out, "What else can be expected under a Democratic administration? Of course, they'll return the rebel flags. They'll pension the rebel soldiers next!" He looked around for approval, and the smiles of the group would have lured him further but Tom Van Dorn came swinging through the door with his princely manner, and the Doctor rose to go. He motioned George Brotherton to the rear of the room and said gently:

"George–old man Mauling died an hour ago; John Dexter and I were there at the last. And John sent word for me to have you get your choir out–so I'll notify Mrs. Nesbit. Dexter said he was a lodge member with you–what lodge, George?"

"Odd Fellow," returned the big man, then asked, "Pall-bearer?"

"Yes," returned the Doctor. "There's no one else much but the lodge in his case. You will sing him to sleep with your choir and tuck him in as pall-bearer as you've been doing for the dead folks ever since you came to town." The Doctor turned to go, "Meet to-night at the house for choir practice, I suppose?"

Brotherton nodded, and turned to take a bill from Tom Van Dorn, who had pocketed a handful of cigars and a number of papers.

"We were just talking about Henry, Tom," remarked Mr. Brotherton, as he handed back the change.

"He's b-back-sl-slidden," prompted Perry.

"Oh, well–it's all right. Henry has his weaknesses–we all have

our failings. But drunk or sober he danced a dozen times last night with that pretty school teacher from Prospect Township." Grant looked up from his book, as Van Dorn continued, "Gorgeous creature–" he shut his eyes and added: "Don't pity Henry when he can get a woman like that to favor him!"

As John Kollander thundered back some irrelevant comment on the moment's politics, Van Dorn led Brotherton to the further end of the counter and lowering his voice said:

"You know that Mauling girl at the Palace cigar counter?"

As Brotherton nodded, Van Dorn, dropping his voice to a whisper, said: "Her father's dead–poor child–she's been spending her money–she hasn't a cent. I know; I have been talking to her more or less for a year or so. Which one of your lodges does the old man belong to, George?"

When the big man said: "Odd Fellows," Van Dorn reached into an inner coat pocket, brought out some bills and slipping them to Brotherton, so that the group on the bench in the corner could not see, Van Dorn mumbled:

"Tell her folks this came from the lodge–poor little creature, she's their sole support."

As Van Dorn lighted his cigar at the alcohol burner Henry Fenn turned into the store. Fenn stood among them and smiled his electric smile, that illumined his lean, drawn face and said, "Here," a pause, then, "I am," another pause, and a more searching smile, "I am again!"

Mr. Brotherton looked up from the magazine counter where

he was sorting out *Centurys*, and *Harpers* and *Scribners* from a pile: "Say–" he roared at the newcomer, "Well–say, Henry–this won't do. Come–take a brace; pull yourself together. We are all for you."

"Yes," answered Fenn, smiling out of some incandescence in his heart, "that's just it: You're all for me. The boys over at Riley's saloon are all for me. Mother–God bless her, down at the house is for me so strong that she never flinches or falters. I can get every vote in the delegation, but my own!"

"Oh, Henry, why these tears?" sneered Van Dorn. "We've all got to have our fun."

"I presume, Tom," snapped Fenn, "that you've got your little affairs of the heart so that you can take 'em or let 'em alone!" But to the group in the amen corner, Fenn lifted up his head in shame. He looked like a whipped dog. One by one the crowd disappeared, all but Grant, who was bending over his book, and deaf John Kollander.

Fenn and Brotherton went back to Brotherton's desk and Fenn asked, "Did I–George, was it pretty bad last night? God she–she–that Müller girl–what a wonderful woman she is. George, do you suppose–" Fenn caught Grant's eyes wandering toward them. The name of Margaret Müller had reached his ears. But Fenn went on, lowering his voice: "I honestly believe she could, if any one could." Fenn put his lean, tapering hand upon Brotherton's broad fat paw, and smiled a quaint, appreciative smile, frank and gentle. It was one of those smiles that carried agreement

with what had been said, and with everything that might be said. Brotherton took up the hallelujah chorus for Margaret with: "Fine girl–bright, keen–well say, did you know she's buying the books here of me for the chautauqua course and is trying for a degree–something in her head besides hairpins–well, say!"

He stopped in the middle of the sentence, and brought down his great hand on his knee. "Well, say–observe me the prize idiot! Get the blue ribbon and pin it on your Uncle George. Look here at me overlooking the main bet. Well, say, Henry–here are the specifications of one large juicy plan. Funeral to-morrow–old man Mauling; obliging party to die. Uncle George and the angel choir to officiate with Uncle George doubling in brass as pall-bearer. The new Mrs. Sands, our bell-voiced contralto, is sick: also obliging party to be sick. Need new contralto: Müller girl has voice like morning star, or stars, as the case may be." Fenn flashed on his electric smile, and rose, looking a question.

"That's the idea, Henry, that finally wormed its way into my master mind," cried Brotherton, laughing his big laugh. "That's what I said before I spoke. You are to drive into Prospect Township this evening–Hey, Grant," called Brotherton to the boy on the bench in the Amen corner, "Does that pretty school ma'am board with you people?" And when Grant shook his head, Brotherton went on: "Yes–she's moved across the district I remember now. Well, anyway, Henry, you're to drive into Prospect Township this evening and produce one large, luscious brunette contralto for choir practice at General Nesbit's piano

at eight o'clock sharp." He stood facing Fenn whose eyes were glowing. The lurking devil seemed to slink away from him. Brotherton, seeing the change, again burst into his laugh and bringing Fenn to the front of the store roared: "Well, say–Hennery–are there any flies on your Uncle George's scheme?"

Grant began buttoning his coat. Fenn, free for the moment of his devil, was happy, and Brotherton looked at the two and cried, "Now get out of here–the both of you: you're spiling trade. And say," called Brotherton to Fenn, "bring her up to the Palace Hotel for supper, and we'll fill her full of rich food, so's she can sing–well, say!"

That evening going home Grant met Margaret and Fenn at a turn of the road, and before they noticed him, he saw a familiar look in her eyes as she gazed at the man, saw how closely they were sitting in the buggy, saw a score of little things that sent the blood to his face and he strode on past them without speaking. That night he slipped into the room where the baby lay playing with his toes, and there, standing over the little fellow, the youth's eyes filled with tears and for the first time he felt the horror of the baby lifting from him. He did not touch the child, but tiptoed from the room ashamed to be seen.

To Margaret Müller, the baby's mother, that night opened a new world. To begin with, it marked her entrance through the portals of the Palace Hotel as a guest. She had sometimes flitted into the office with its loose, tiled floors and shabby, onyx splendor to speak to Miss Mauling of the news stand; then

she came as a fugitive and saw things only furtively. But this night Margaret walked in through the "Ladies Entrance," sat calmly in the parlor, while Mr. Fenn wrote her name upon the register, and after some delirious moments of grand conversation with Mr. Fenn in the gilded hall of pleasure with its chenille draperies and its apoplectic furniture all puffed to the bursting point, she had walked with Mr. Fenn through the imposing halls of the wonderful edifice, like a rescued princess in a fairy tale, to the dining room, there to meet Mr. Brotherton, and the eldest Miss Morton, who recently had been playing the cabinet organ at funerals to guide Mr. Brotherton's choir. Now the eldest Miss Morton was not antique, being only a scant fifteen in short dresses and pig tails. But at the urgent request of Mr. Brotherton, and "to fill out the table, and to take the wrinkles out of her apron by a square meal at the Palace," as Mr. Brotherton explained to the Captain, she had been primped and curled and scared by her sisters and her father, and sent along with Mr. Brotherton–possibly in his great ulster pocket, and she sat breathing irregularly and looking steadily into her lap in great awe and trepidation.

Margaret Müller, in the dining-room whose fame had spread to the outposts of Spring township and to the fastnesses of Prospect, behaved with scarcely less constraint than the eldest Miss Morton. She gazed at the beamed ceiling, the high wainscoting, the stenciled walls, the frescoes upon the panels, framed by the beams, the wide sideboard, the glittering glass and

the plated silver service, and if her eyes had not been so beautiful they would have betrayed her wonder and admiration. As it was, they showed an ecstasy of delight that made them shine and when Henry Fenn saw them he looked at Mr. Brotherton, and Mr. Brotherton looked at Mr. Fenn, and the moon in Mr. Brotherton's face beamed a lively approval. Moreover the cigar salesman from Leavenworth and a hardware drummer from St. Louis and a dry-goods salesman from Chicago and a travelling auditor for the Midland saw Margaret's eyes and they too looked at one another and gave their unqualified approval. In other years–in later years–when she was at Bertolini's Grand Palace in Naples or in some of the other Grand Palaces of other effete and luxurious capitals of Europe, Margaret used to think of that first meal at the Palace house in Harvey and wonder what in the world really did become of the dozen fried oysters that she so innocently ordered. She could see them looming up, a great pyramid of brown batter, garnished with cress, and she knew that she had blundered. But she did not see the wink that Mr. Brotherton gave Mr. Fenn nor the glare that Mr. Fenn gave Mr. Brotherton; so she faced it out and whether she ate them or left them, she never could recall.

But it was a glorious occasion in spite of the fried oysters. What though the tiles of the floor of the Palace were cracked; what though the curtains sagged, and the furniture was shabby, and the walls were faded and dingy; what though the great beams in the dining-room were dirty and the carpets in the halls bedraggled, and the onyx gapping in great cracks upon the

warped walls of the office; what though the paint had faded and the varnish cracked all over the house! To Margaret Müller and also to the eldest Miss Morton, who only managed to breathe below her locket when they were under the stars, it was a dream of marble halls, and the frowsy Freddie Kollander and the other waiter who brought in the food on thick, cracked oblong dishes were vassals and serfs by their sides.

When they started up Sixth Avenue, the eldest Miss Morton was trying to think of everything that had happened to tell the younger Misses Morton, Martha and Ruth–what they ate and what Miss Müller wore, and what Freddie Kollander who waited on them, and also went to high school, did when he saw her, and how Mr. Fenn acted when Miss Müller got the big platter of oysters, and what olives tasted like and if anything had been cooked in the Peerless Cooker that father had just sold Mr. Paxton and in general why the spirit of mortal should be proud.

But Miss Müller entertained no such thoughts. She was treading upon the air of some elysium, and she took and held Mr. Fenn's arm with an unnecessary tightness and began humming the tune that told of the girl who dreamed she dwelt in marble halls; and then, as they left the thick of the town and were walking along the board sidewalks that lead to Elm Crest on Elm Street, they all fell to singing that tune; and as one good tune deserved another, and as they were going to practice the funeral music that evening, they sang other tunes of a highly secular nature that need not be enumerated here. And as Miss Müller had a substantial

dinner folded snugly within her, and the ambition of her life was looming but a few blocks ahead of her, she walked closer to Mr. Fenn, county attorney in and for Greeley county, than was really necessary. So when Mr. Brotherton walked alongside with the eldest Miss Morton stumbling intermittently over the edge of the sidewalk and walking in the dry weeds beside it, Miss Müller put some feeling into her singing voice and they struck what Mr. Brotherton was pleased to call a barbershop chord, and held it to his delight. And the frosty air rang with their voices, and the rich tremulous voice of the young woman thrilled with passion too deep for words. So deep was it that it might have stirred the hovering soul of the dead whose dirges they were to sing and brought back to him the time when he too had thrilled with youth and its inexpressible joy.

Up the hill they go, arm in arm, with fondling voices uttering the unutterable. And now they turn into a long, broad avenue of elms, of high, plumey elms trimmed and tended, mulched and cultivated for nearly twenty years, the apple of one man's eye; great elms set in blue grass, branching only at the tops, elms that stand in a grove around an irregular house, elms that shade a broad stone walk leading up to a wide, hospitable door. The young people ring. There is a stirring in the house, Margaret Müller's heart is a-flutter–and the eldest Miss Morton wonders whether Laura or the hired girl will open the door, and in a moment–enter Margaret Müller into the home of the Nesbits.

As the wide door opens, a glow of light and life falls upon the

young people. Standing in the broad reception room is Doctor Nesbit, with his finger in a book–a poetry book if you please–and before him with his arm about her and her head beneath his chin stands his daughter. Coming down the stairs is Mrs. Bedelia Satterthwaite Nesbit–of the Maryland Satterthwaites–tall, well-upholstered, with large features and a Roman nose and with the makings of a double chin, if she ever would deign to bend her queenly head, and finally with the pomp of a major general in figure and mien.

She ignores the débris of the carpenters who have been putting in the hardwood floors, without glancing at it, and walking to her guests, welcomes them with regal splendor, receiving Miss Müller with rather obvious dignity. Mrs. Nesbit in those days was a woman of whom the doctor said, "There is no foolishness about Bedelia." The jovial Mr. Brotherton attempts some pleasant hyperbole of speech, which the hostess ignores and the Doctor greets with a smile. Mrs. Nesbit leads the way to the piano, being a woman of purpose, and whisks the eldest Miss Morton upon a stool and has the hymn book opened in less time than it takes to tell how she did it. The Doctor and Laura stand watching the company, and perhaps they stand awkwardly; which prompts Mr. Brotherton in the goodness of his heart to say, "Doctor, won't you sit and hear the music?"

Mrs. Nesbit looks around, sees the two figures standing near the fire and replies, "No, the Doctor won't."

To which he chirps a mocking echo–"No, the Doctor won't."

Mr. Brotherton glances at Mr. Fenn, and the Doctor sees it. "That's all right, boys–that's all right; I may be satrap of Harvey and have the power of life and death over my subjects, but that's down town. Out here, I'm the minority report."

Mrs. Nesbit opens the hymn book, smooths the fluttering leaves and says without looking toward the Doctor: "I suppose we may as well begin now." And she begins beating the time with her index finger and marking the accents with her foot.

As they sing they can hear the gentle drone of the Doctor's soft voice in the intervals in the music, reading in some nearby room to his daughter. They are reading Tennyson's "Maud" and sometimes in the emotional passages his voice breaks and his eyes fill up and he cannot go on. At such times, the daughter puts her head upon his shoulder and often wipes her tears away upon his coat and they are silent until he can begin again. When his throat cramps, she pats his cheek and they sit dreaming for a time and the dreams they dream and the dreams they read differ only in that the poetry is made with words.

It is a proud night for Margaret Müller. She has come into a new world–the world of her deep desire. Mrs. Nesbit sees the girl's wandering eyes, taking note of the furniture, as one making an inventory. No article of the vast array of vases and jars and plaques and jugs and statuettes and grotesque souvenirs of far journeys across the world, nor etchings nor steel engravings nor photographs of Roman antiquities nor storied urns nor animated busts escapes the wandering, curious brown eyes of the girl. But

in her vast wonderment, though her eyes wander far and wide, they never are too far to flash back betimes at Henry Fenn's who drinks from the woman's eyes as from a deep and bewitching well. He does not see that she is staring. But as the minutes speed, he knows that he is electrified with alternating currents from her glowing face and that they bring to him a rapture that he has never known before.

But you may be sure of one thing: Mrs. Nesbit–she that was Satterthwaite of the Maryland Satterthwaites–she sees what is in the wind. She is not wearing gold-rimmed nose glasses for her health. Her health is exceptionally good. And what is more to the point, as they are singing, Mrs. Nesbit gives George Brotherton a look–one of the genuine old Satterthwaite looks that speak volumes, and in effect it tells him that if he has any sense, he will take Henry Fenn home before he makes a fool of himself. And the eldest Miss Morton, swinging her legs under the piano stool and drumming away to Mrs. Nesbit's one- and two- and three- and four-ands, peeps out of the corners of her eyes and sees Miss Müller gobbling Mr. Fenn right down without chewing him, and whoopee but Mrs. Nesbit is biting nails, and Mr. Brotherton, he can't hardly keep his face straight from laughing at all, and if Ruth and Martha ever tell she will never tell them another thing in the world. And she mustn't forget to ask Mrs. Nesbit if she's used the Peerless Cooker and if she has, will she please say something nice about it to Mrs. Ahab Wright, for Papa is so anxious to sell one to the Wrights!

It is nearly nine o'clock. Mr. Fenn has been eaten up these twenty times. The wandering eyes have caressed the bric-a-brac over and over. Mrs. Nesbit's tireless index finger has marked the time while the great hands of the tall hall clock have crept around and halfway around again. They are upon the final rehearsal of it.

"Other refuge have I none," says the voice and the eyes say even more and are mutely answered by another pair of eyes.

"Hangs my helpless soul on thee," says the deep passionate voice, and the eyes say things even more tender to eyes that falter only because they are faint with joy. In the short interval the moving finger of Mrs. Nesbit goes up, and then comes a rattling of the great front door. A moment later it is opened and the flushed face of Grant Adams is seen. He is collarless, and untidy; he rushes into the room crying, "O, doctor–doctor, come–our baby–he is choking." The youth sees Margaret, and with passion cries: "Kenyon–Kenyon–the baby, he is dying; for God's sake–Mag, where is the Doctor?"

In an instant the little figure of the Doctor is in the room. He stares at the red-faced boy, and quick as a flash he sees the open mouth, the dazed, gaping eyes, the graying face of Margaret as she leans heavily upon George Brotherton. In another instant the Doctor sees her rally, grapple with herself, bring back the slow color as if by main strength, and smile a hard forced smile, as the boy stands in impotent anguish before them.

"I have the spring wagon here, Doctor–hurry–hurry please," expostulates the youth, as the Doctor climbs into his overcoat,

and then looking at Margaret the boy exclaims wildly–"Wouldn't you like to go, too, Maggie? Wouldn't you?"

She has hold of herself now and replies: "No, Grant, I don't think your mother will need me," but she almost loses her grip as she asks weakly, "Do you?"

In another second they are gone, the boy and the Doctor, out into the night, and the horse's hoofs, clattering fainter and fainter as they hurry down the road, bring to her the sound of a little heart beating fainter and fainter, and she holds on to her soul with a hard hand.

Before long Margaret Müller and Henry Fenn are alone in a buggy driving to Prospect township.

She sees above her on the hill the lights in the great house of her desire. And she knows that down in the valley where shimmers a single light is a little body choking for breath, fighting for life.

"Hangs my helpless soul on thee," swirls through her brain, and she is cold–very cold, and sits aloof and will not talk, cannot talk. Ever the patter of the horse's feet in the valley is borne upward by the wind, and she feels in her soul the faltering of a little heart. She dares not hope that it will start up again; she cannot bear the fear that it will stop.

So she leaves the man who knew her inmost soul but an hour ago; hardly a word she speaks at parting; hardly she turns to him as she slips into the house, cold and shivering with the sound of every hoof-beat on the road in the night, bringing her back to the

helpless soul fluttering in the little body that once she warmed in hers.

Thus the watchers watched the fighting through the night, the child fighting so hard to live. For life is dear to a child–even though its life perpetuates shame and brings only sorrow–life still is dear to that struggling little body there under that humble roof, where even those that love it, and hover in agony over it in its bed of torture, feel that if it goes out into the great mystery from whence it came, it will take a sad blot from the world with it. And so hope and fear and love and tenderness and grief are all mingled in the horror that it may die, in the mute question that asks if death would not be merciful and kind. And all night the watchers watched, and the watcher who was absent was afraid to pray, and as the daylight came in, wan and gray, the child on the rack of misery sank to sleep, and smiled a little smile of peace at victory.

Then in the pale dawn, a weary man, trudging afoot slowly up the hill into Harvey, met another going out into the fields. The Doctor looked up and was astonished to see Henry Fenn, with hard drawn features, trembling limbs, hollow eyes and set lips. He too had been fighting hard and he also had won his victory. The Doctor met the man's furtive, burning eyes and piped out softly:

"Stick to it, Henry–by God, stick hard," and trudged on into the morning gloaming.

CHAPTER VI
ENTER THE BEAUTY AND CHIVALRY OF HARVEY; ALSO HEREIN WE BREAK OUR FIRST HEART

Towns are curiously like individuals. They take their character largely from their experiences, laid layer upon layer in their consciousnesses, as time moves, and though the experiences are seemingly forgotten, the results of those experiences are ineffaceably written into the towns. Four or five towns lie buried under the Harvey that is to-day, each one possible only as the other upholds it, and all inexorably pointing to the destiny of the Harvey that is, and to the many other Harveys yet to rise upon the townsite–the Harveys that shall be. There was, of course, heredity before the town was; the strong New England strain of blood that was mixed in the Ohio Valley and about the Great Lakes and changed by the upheaval of the Civil War. Then came the hegira across the Mississippi and the infant town in the Missouri Valley–the town of the pioneers–the town that only obeyed its call and sought instinctively the school house, the newspaper, orderly government, real estate gambling and "the distant church that topt the neighboring hill." In the childhood of

the town the cattle trail appeared and with the cattle trade came wild days and sad disorder. But the railroad moved westward and the cattle trail moved with the railroad and then in the early adolescence of the town came coal and gas and oil. And suddenly Harvey blossomed into youth.

It was a place of adventure; men were made rich overnight by the blow of a drill in a well. Then was the time for that equality of opportunity to come which the pioneers sought if ever it was coming. But alas, even in matters of sheer luck, the fates played favorites. In those fat years it began raining red-wheeled buggies on Sundays, and smart traps drawn by horses harnessed gaudily in white or tan appeared on the streets. Morty Sands often hired a band from Omaha or Kansas City, and held high revel in the Sands opera house, where all the new dances of that halcyon day were tripped. The waters of the Wahoo echoed with the sounds of boating parties–also frequently given by Morty Sands, and his mandolin twittered gayly on a dozen porches during the summer evenings of that period. It was Morty who enticed Henry Fenn into the second suit of evening clothes ever displayed in Harvey, though Tom Van Dorn and George Brotherton appeared a week later in evening clothes plus white gloves and took much of the shine from Henry and Morty's splendor. Those were the days when Nate Perry and young Joe Calvin and Freddie Kollander organized the little crowd–the Spring Chickens, they called themselves–and the little crowd was wont to ape its elders and peek through the fence at the

grandeur of the grown-ups. But alas for the little crowd, month by month it was doomed to see its little girls kidnaped to bloom in the upper gardens. Thus Emma Morton went; thus Ave Calvin disappeared, and so Laura Nesbit vanished from the Spring Chickens and appeared in Morty Sands's bower! Doctor Nesbit in those days called Morty the "head gardener in the 'rosebud garden of girls!'" And a lovely garden it was. Of course, it was more or less democratic; for every one was going to be rich; every one was indeed just on the verge of riches, and lines of caste were loosely drawn. For wealth was the only line that marked the social differences. So when Henry Fenn, the young county attorney, in his new evening clothes brought Margaret Müller of the Register of Deeds office to Morty Sands's dances, Margaret had whatever social distinction her wits gave her; which upon the whole was as much distinction as Rhoda Kollander had whose husband employed Margaret. The press of the social duties in that day weighed heavily upon Rhoda, who was not the woman to neglect her larger responsibilities to so good a husband as John Kollander, by selfishly staying at home and keeping house for him. She had a place in society to maintain, that the flag of her country might not be sullied by barring John from a county office.

The real queen-rose in the garden was Laura Nesbit. How vivid she was! What lips she had in those days of her first full bloom, and what frank, searching eyes! And her laugh–that chimed like bells through the merriment of the youth that always

was gathered about her–her laugh could start a reaction in Morty Sands's heart as far as he could hear the chime. It was a matter of common knowledge in the "crowd," that Morty Sands had one supreme aim in life: the courtship of Laura Nesbit. For her he lavished clothes upon himself until he became known as the iridescent dream! For her he bought a high-seated cart of great price, drawn by a black horse in white kid harness! For her he learned a whole concert of Schubert's songs upon the mandolin and organized a serenading quartette that wore the grass smooth under her window. For her candy, flowers, books–usually gift books with padded covers, or with handpainted decorations, or with sumptuous engravings upon them or in them, sifted into the Nesbits' front room, and lay in a thick coating upon the parlor table.

Someway these votive offerings didn't reach the heart of the goddess. She rode beside him in his stanhope, and she wore his bouquets and read his books, such as were intended for reading; and alas for her figure, she ate his candy. But these things did not prosper his suit. She was just looking around in the market of life. Pippa was forever passing through her heart singing, "God's in his heaven–all's right with the world." She did not blink at evil; she knew it, abhorred it, but challenged it with love. She had a vague idea that evil could be vanquished by inviting it out to dinner and having it in for tea frequently and she believed if it still refused to transform itself into good, that the thing to do with evil was to be a sister to it.

The closest she ever came to overcoming evil with evil was when she spanked little Joe Calvin for persisting in tying cans to the Morton cat's tail, whereupon Morty Sands rose and gave the girl nine rahs, exhibiting an enthusiasm that inspired him for a year. So Laura thought that if the spanking had not helped much the soul of little Joe, it had put something worth while into Morty Sands. The thought cheered her. For Morty was her problem. During the first months after her return from boarding school, she had broken him–excepting upon minor moonlight relapses–of trying to kiss her, and she had sufficiently discouraged his declarations of undying devotion, so that they came only at weddings, or after other mitigating circumstances which, after pinching his ear, she was able to overlook.

But she could not get him to work for a living. He wouldn't even keep office hours. Lecturing settled nothing. Lecturing a youth in a black and gold blazer, duck trousers and a silk shirt and a red sash, with socks and hat to match his coat, lecturing a youth who plays the mandolin while you talk, and looks at you through hazel eyes with all the intelligence of an affectionate pup, lecturing a youth who you know would be kissing you at the moment if you weren't twenty pounds heavier and twice as strong–someway doesn't arouse enthusiasm. So Morty Sands remained a problem.

Now an affair of the heart when a man is in his twenties and a girl is just passing out of her teens, is never static; it is dynamic and always there is something doing.

It was after one of Morty's innumerable summer dances in the Sands Opera House, that Fate cast her dies for the final throw. Morty had filled Laura Nesbit's program scandalously full. Two Newports, three military schottisches, the York, the Racket–ask grandpa and grammer about these dances, ye who gyrate in to-day's mazes–two waltz quadrilles and a reel. And when you have danced half the evening with a beautiful girl, Fate is liable to be thumping vigorously on the door of your heart. So Morty walking home under a drooping August moon with Laura Nesbit that night determined to bring matters to a decision. As they came up the walk to the Nesbit home, the girl was humming the tune that beat upon his heart, and almost unconsciously they fell to waltzing. At the veranda steps they paused, and his arm was around her. She tried to move away from him, and cuffed him as she cried: "Now Morty–you know–you know very well what I've always–"

"Laura–Laura–" he cried, as he held her hand to his face and tried to focus her soul with his brown eyes, "Laura," he faltered, then words deserted him: the fine speech he had planned melted into, "O, my dear–my dear!" But he kept her hand. The pain and passion in his voice cut into the girl's heart. She was not frightened. She did not care to run. She did not even take his persisting arm from about her. She let him kiss her hand reverently, then she sat with him on the veranda step and as they sat she drew his arm from her waist until it was hooked in her arm, and her hand held his.

"Oh, I'm in earnest to-night, Laura," said Morty, gripping her hand. "I'm staking my whole life to-night, Laura. I'm deadly–oh, quite deadly serious, Laura, and oh–"

"And I'm serious too, Morty," said the girl–"just as serious as you!" She slipped her hand away from his and put her hand upon his shoulder gently, almost tenderly. But the youth felt a certain calmness in her touch that disheartened him.

In a storm of despair he spoke: "Laura–Laura, can't you see–how can you let me go on loving you as I do until I am mad! Can't you see that my soul is yours and always has been! You can call it into heights it will never know without you! You–you–O, sometimes I feel that I could pray to you as to God!" He turned to her a face glowing with a white and holy passion, and dropped her hand from his shoulder and did not touch her as he spoke. Their eyes met steadfastly in a silence. Then the girl bowed her head and sobbed. For she knew, even in her teens, she knew with the intuitions that are old as human love upon the planet that she was in the naked presence of an adoring soul. When she could speak she picked up the man's soft white hand, and kissed it. She could not have voiced her eternal denial more certainly. And Morty Sands lifted an agonized face to the stars and his jaws trembled. He had lighted his altar fire and it was quenched. The girl, still holding his hand, said tenderly:

"I'm so sorry–so sorry, Morty. But I can't! I never–never–never can!" She hesitated, and repeated, shaking her head sadly, "I never, never can love you, Morty–never! And it's kind–"

"Yes, yes," he answered as one who realizes a finality. "It's kind enough–yes, I know you're kind, Laura!" He stopped and gazed at her in the moonlight–and it was as if a flame on the charred altar of his heart had sprung up for a second as he spoke: "And I never–never shall–I never shall love any one else–I never, never shall!"

The girl rose. A moment later the youth followed her. Back into its sheath under his countenance his soul slipped, and he stood before the girl smiling a half deprecatory smile. But the girl's face was racked with sorrow. She had seen tragedy. Her pain wounded him and he winced in his heart. Wherefore he smiled quite genuinely, and stepped back, and threw a kiss at the girl as he said: "It's nothing, Laura! Don't mind! It's nothing at all and we'll forget it! Won't we?"

And turning away, he tripped down the walk, leaving her gazing after him in the moonlight. At the street he turned back with a gay little gesture, blew a kiss from his white finger tips and cried, "It's nothing at all–nothing at all!" And as she went indoors she heard him call, "It's nothing at all!"

She heard him lift his whistle to the tune of the waltz quadrille, but she stood with tears in her eyes until the brave tune died in the distance.

CHAPTER VII
IN WHICH WE SEE HOW LIFE TRANSLATES ITSELF INTO THE MATERIALISM AROUND IT

Coal and oil and gas and lead and zinc. The black sprite, the brown sprite, the invisible sprite, the two gray sprites–elemental sprites they were–destined to be bound servants of man. Yet when they came rushing out of the earth there at Harvey, man groveled before them, and sold his immortal soul to these trolls. Naturally enough Daniel Sands was the high priest at their altar. It was fitting that a devil worship which prostrated itself before coal and oil and gas and lead and zinc should make a spider the symbol of its servility. So the spider's web, all iron and steel in pipes below ground, all steel and iron and copper in wires and rails above ground, spread out over the town, over the country near the town, and all the pipes and tubes and rails and wires led to the dingy little room where Daniel Sands sat spinning his web. He was the town god. Even the gilded heifer of Baal was a nobler one. And the curious thing about this orgy of materialism, was that Harvey and all the thousands of Harveys great and small that filled America in those decades believed with all their hearts–and they were essentially kind hearts–that quick, easy and exorbitant

profits, really made the equality of opportunity which every one desired. They thought in terms of democracy–which is at bottom a spiritual estate,–and they acted like gross materialists. So they fooled the world, while they deceived themselves. For the soul of America was not reflected in that debauch of gross profit making. The soul of America still aspired for justice; but in the folly of the day, believed quite complacently because a few men got rich quick (stupid men too,) and many men were well-to-do, that justice was achieved, and the world ready for the millennium. But there came a day when Harvey, and all its kind saw the truth in shame.

And life in Harvey shaped itself into a vast greedy dream. A hard, metallic timbre came into the soft, high voice of Dr. James Nesbit, but did not warn men of the metallic plate that was galvanizing the Doctor's soul; nor did it disturb the Doctor. Amos Adams saw the tinplate covering, heard the sounding brass, and Mary his wife saw and heard too; but they were only two fools and the Doctor who loved them laughed at them and turned to the healing of the sick and the subjugation of his county. So men sent him to the state Senate. Curiously Mrs. Nesbit–she whom George Brotherton always called the General–she did not shake the spell of the trolls from her heart. They were building wings and ells and lean-tos on the house that she called her home, and she came to love the witchery of the time and place and did not see its folly. Yet there walked between these two entranced ones, another who should have awakened. For she was young, fresh

from the gods of life. Her eyes, unflinching, glorious eyes, should have seen through the dream of that day. But they were only a girl's eyes and were happy, so they could not see beyond the spell that fell around them. And alas, even when the prince arrived, his kiss was poisoned too.

When young Thomas Van Dorn came to the Nesbit house on a voyage of exploration and discovery–came in a handsome suit of gray, with hat and handkerchief to match, and a flowing crepe tie, black to harmonize with his flowing mustache and his wing of fine jet black hair above his ivory tinted face, Laura Nesbit considered him reflectively, and catalogued him.

"Tom," explained the daughter to her father rather coldly one morning, after the young man had been reading Swinburne in his deep, mellow pipe-organ of a voice to the family until bedtime the night before, "Tom Van Dorn, father, is the kind of a man who needs the influence of some strong woman!"

Mrs. Nesbit glanced at her husband furtively and caught his grin as he piped gayly:

"Who also must carry the night key!"

The three laughed but the daughter went on with the cataloguing: "He is a young man of strong predilections, of definite purpose and more than ordinary intellectual capacity."

"And so far as I have counted, Laura," her father interrupted again, "I haven't found an honest hair in his handsome head; though I haven't completed the count yet!" The father smiled amiably as he made the final qualification.

The girl caught the mother's look of approval shimmering across the table and laughed her gay, bell-like chime. "O, you've made a bad guess, mother."

Again she laughed gayly: "It's not for me to open a school for the Direction of Miscalculated Purposes. Still," this she said seriously, "a strong woman is what he needs."

"Not omitting the latch-key," gibed her father, and the talk drifted into another current.

The next Sunday afternoon young Tom Van Dorn appeared with Rossetti added to his Swinburne, and crowded Morty Sands clear out of the hammock so that Morty had to sleep in a porch chair, and woke up frequently and was unhappy. While the gilded youth slept the Woman woke and listened, and Morty was left disconsolate.

The shadows were long and deep when Tom Van Dorn rose from the hammock, closed his book, and stood beside the girl, looking with a gentle tenderness from the burning depths of his black eyes into her eyes. He paused before starting away, and held up a hand so that she could see, wound about it, a flaxen hair, probably drawn from the hammock pillow. He smiled rather sadly, dropped his eyes to the book closed in his hands, and quoted softly:

> "'And around his heart, one strangling golden hair!'"

He did not speak again, but walked off at a great stride down

the stone path to the street. The next day Rossetti's sonnets came to Laura Nesbit in a box of roses.

The Sunday following Laura Nesbit made it a point to go with her parents to spend the day with the Adamses down by the river on their farm. But not until the Nesbits piled into their phaëton to leave did Grant appear. He met the visitors at the gate with a great bouquet of woods flowers, saying, "Here, Mrs. Nesbit–I thought you might like them." But they found Laura's hands, and he smiled gratefully at her for taking them. As they drove off, leaving him looking eagerly after them, Dr. Nesbit said when they were out of hearing, "I tell you, girls–there's the makings of a man–a real man!"

That night Laura Nesbit in her room looking at the stars, rose and smelled the woods flowers on her table beside some fading roses.

As her day dreams merged into vague pictures flitting through her drowsy brain, she heard the plaintive, trembling voice of Morty Sands's mandolin, coming nearer and nearer, and his lower whistle taking the tune while the E string crooned an obligato; he passed the house, went down the street to the Mortons' and came back and went home again, still trilling his heart out like a bird. As the chirping faded into the night sounds, the girl smiled compassionately and slept.

As she slept young Thomas Van Dorn walked alone under the elm trees that plumed over the sidewalks in those environs with hands clasped behind him, occasionally gazing into the twinkling

stars of the summer night, considering rather seriously many things. He had come out to think over his speech to the jury the next day in a murder case pending in the court. But the murderer kept sinking from his consciousness; the speech would not shape itself to please him, and the young lawyer was forever meeting rather squarely and abruptly the vision of Laura Nesbit, who seemed to be asking him disagreeable and conclusive questions, which he did not like to answer. Was she worth it–the sacrifice that marriage would require of him? Was he in love with her? What is love anyway? Wherein did it differ from certain other pleasurable emotions, to which he was not a stranger? And why was the consciousness of her growing larger and larger in his life? He tried to whistle reflectively, but he had no music in his soul and whistling gave him no solace.

It was midnight when he found himself walking past the Nesbit home, looking toward it and wondering which of the open windows was nearest to her. He flinched with shame when he recollected himself before other houses gazing at other windows, and he unpursed his lips that were wont to whistle a signal, and went down the street shuddering. Then after an impulse in which some good angel of remorse shook his teeth to rouse his soul, he lifted his face to the sky and would have cried in his heart for help, but instead he smiled and went on, trying to think of his speech and resolving mightily to put Laura Nesbit out of his heart finally for the night. He held himself to his high resolve for four or five minutes. It is only fair to say that the white clad figure of

the Doctor coming clicking up the street with his cane keeping time to a merry air that he hummed as he walked distracted the young man. His first thought was to turn off and avoid the Doctor who came along swinging his medicine case gayly. But there rushed over Van Dorn a feeling that he would like to meet the Doctor. He recognized that he would like to see any one who was near to Her. It was a pleasing sensation. He coddled it. He was proud of it; he knew what it meant. So he stopped the preoccupied figure in white, and cried, "Doctor–we're late to-night!"

"Well, Tom, I've got a right to be! Two more people in Harvey to-night than were here at five o'clock this afternoon because I am a trifle behindhand. Girl at your partner's–Joe Calvin's, and a boy down at Dick Bowman's!" He paused and smiled and added musingly, "And they're as tickled down at Dick's as though he was heir to a kingdom!"

"And Joe–I suppose–not quite–"

"Oh, Joe, he's still in the barn, I dropped in to tell him it was a girl. But he won't venture into the house to see the mother before noon to-morrow! Then he'll go when she's asleep!"

"Dick really isn't more than two jumps ahead of the wolf, is he, Doctor?"

"Well," grinned the elder man, "maybe a jump-and-a-half or two jumps."

The young man exclaimed, "Say, Doctor! I think it would be a pious act to make the fellows put up fifty dollars for Dick to-

night. I'll just go down and raid a few poker games and make them do it."

The Doctor stopped him: "Better let me give it to Dick if you get it, Tom!" Then he added, "Why don't you keep Christian hours, boy? You can't try that Yengst case to-morrow and be up all night!"

"That's just what I'm out here for, Doctor–to get my head in shape for the closing speech."

"Well," sniffed the Doctor, "I wish you no bad luck, but I hope you lose. Yengst is guilty, and you've no business–"

"Doctor," cut in Van Dorn, "there's not a penny in the Yengst case for me! He was a poor devil in trouble and he came to my office for help! Do you consider the morals of your sick folks–whether they have lived virtuous and upright lives when they come to you stricken and in pain? They're just sick folks to you in your office, and they're just poor devils in trouble for me."

The Doctor cocked his head on one side, sparrow-wise, looked for a moment at the young man and piped, "You're a brassy pup, aren't you!"

A second later the Doctor was trudging up the street, homeward, humming his bee-like song. Van Dorn watched him until his white clothes faded into the shades of the night, then he turned and walked slowly townward, with his hands behind him and his eyes on the ground. He forgot the Yengst case, and everything else in the universe except a girl's gray eyes, her radiant face, and the glory of her aspiring soul. It was calling with

all its power to Tom Van Dorn to rise and shine and take up the journey to the stars. And when one hears that call, whether it come from man or maid, from friend or brother, or sweetheart or child, or from the challenge within him of the holy spirit, when he heeds its call, no matter where he is while he hears, he walks with God!

So it came to pass the next day that Thomas Van Dorn went before the jury and pleaded for the murderer in the Yengst case with the tongue of men and of angels. For he knew that Dr. Nesbit was loitering in the clerk's office, adjoining the courtroom to listen to the plea. Every faculty of his mind and every capacity of his body was awake, and they said around the court house that it was "the speech of Tom's life!" The Doctor on the front steps of the courthouse met the young man in the daze that follows an oratorical flight, munching a sandwich to relieve his brain, while the multitude made way for him as he went to his office.

"Well, Tom–" piped the Doctor as he grasped the sweaty, cold hands of the young orator, "if Yengst had been innocent do you suppose you could have done as well?"

Van Dora, gave his sandwich to a passing dog, and took the Doctor's arm as they walked to their common stairway. Before they had walked a dozen steps the Doctor had unfolded a situation in local politics that needed attention, and Van Dorn could not lead the elder man back to further praises of his speech. Yet the young lawyer knew that he had moved the Doctor deeply.

That night in his office Tom Van Dorn and Henry Fenn

sat with their feet in the window sill, looking through the open window into the moon. In their discourse they used that elaborate, impersonal anonymity that youth engages to carry the baggage of its intimate confidences.

"I've got to have a pretty woman, Henry," quoth the lawyer to his friend, while the moon blushed behind a cloud. "She must have beauty above everything, and after that good manners, and after that good blood."

The moon came out and smiled at Henry. "Tom, let me tell you something, I don't care! I used to think I'd be pickey and choosey. But I know my own heart. I don't care! I'm the kind of fellow, I guess, who just gets it bad and comes down all broken out with it." He turned his glowing smile into Tom Van Dorn's face, and finding no quick response smiled whimsically back at the moon.

"Some fellows are that way, Henry," assented Van Dorn, "but not I! I couldn't love a servant girl no matter how pretty she was–not for keeps, and I couldn't love an ugly princess, and I'd leave a bluestocking and elope with a chorus girl if I found the bluestocking crocked or faded in the wash! Yet a beautiful woman, who remained a woman and didn't become a moral guide–" he stared brazenly at the moon and in the cloud that whisked by he saw a score of fancies of other women whose faces had shone there, and had passed. He went on: "Oh, she could hold me–she could hold me–I think!"

The street noises below filled the pause. Henry rose, looked

eagerly into the sky and wistfully at the moon as he spoke, "Hold me? Hold me?" he cried. "Why, Tom, though I'd fall into hell myself a thousand times–she couldn't lose me! I'd still–still," he faltered, "I'd still–" He did not finish, but sat down and putting his hand on the arm of his friend's chair, he bent forward, smiled into the handsome young face in the moonlight and said: "Well–you know the kind of a fool I am, Tom–now!"

"That's what you say, Henry–that's what you say now." Van Dorn turned and looked at his friend. "You're sticking it out all right, Henry–against the rum fiend–I presume? When does your sentence expire?"

"Next October," answered Fenn.

"Going to make it then?"

"That's the understanding," returned Fenn.

"And you say you've got it bad," laughed Van Dorn. "And yet–say, Henry–why didn't you do better with the jury this afternoon in the Yengst case? Doesn't it–I mean that tremendous case you have on with the Duchess of Müller–doesn't it put an edge on you? What was the matter with you to-day?"

Fenn shook his head slowly and said: "It's different with me. I just couldn't help feeling that if I was worth any woman's giving herself–was worth anything as a man, I'd want to be dead square with that Yengst creature–and I got to thinking, maybe in his place, drunk and hungry–well, I just couldn't, Tom–because–because of–well, I wanted her to marry a human being first–not a county attorney!"

"You're a damn fool!" retorted Van Dorn. "Do you think you'll succeed in this world on that basis! I tell you if I was in love with a woman I'd want to take that Yengst case and lay it before her as a trophy I'd won–lay it before her like a dog!"

Fenn hesitated. He disliked to give pain. But finally he said, "I suppose, Tom, I'd like to lay it before her–like a man!"

"Hell's delight!" sneered Van Dorn, and they turned off the subject of the tender passion, and went to considering certain stipulations that Van Dorn was asking of the county attorney in another matter before the court.

The next day young Thomas Van Dorn began rather definitely to prepare his pleading in still another suit in another court, and before the summer's end, Morty Sands's mandolin was wrapped in its chamois skin bag and locked in its mahogany case. Sometimes Morty, whistling softly and dolefully, would pass the Nesbit home late at night, hoping that his chirping might reach her heart; at times he made a rather formal call upon the entire Nesbit family, which he was obviously encouraged to repeat by the elders. But Morty was inclined to hide in the thicket of his sorrow and twitter his heart out to the cold stars. Tom Van Dorn pervaded the Nesbit home by day with his flowers and books and candy, and by night–as many nights a week as he could buy, beg or steal–by night he pervaded the Nesbit home like an obstinate haunt.

He fell upon the whole family and made violent love to the Doctor and Mrs. Nesbit. He read Browning to the Doctor and did

his errands in politics like a retrieving dog. Mrs. Nesbit learned through him to her great joy that the Satterthwaite, who was the maternal grandfather of the Tory governor of Maryland, was not descended from the same Satterlee hanged by King John in his war with the barons, but from the Sussex branch of the family that remained loyal to the Crown. But Tom Van Dorn wasted no time or strength in foolishness with the daughter of the house. His attack upon her heart was direct and unhalting. He fended off other suitors with a kind of animal jealousy. He drove her even from so unimportant a family friend as Grant Adams.

Gradually, as the autumn deepened into winter and Tom Van Dorn found himself spending more and more time in the girl's company he had glimpses of his own low estate through the contrast forced upon him daily by his knowledge of what a good woman's soul was. The self-revelation frightened him; he was afraid of what he saw inside himself in those days, and there can be no doubt that for a season his soul was wrestling with its doom for release. No make-believe passion was it that spurred him forward in his attack upon the heart of Laura Nesbit. Within him, there raged the fierce battle between the spirit of the times–crass, material and ruthless–and the spirit of things as they should be. It was the old fight between compromise and the ideal.

As for the girl, she was in that unsettled mind in which young women in their first twenties often find themselves when sensing by an instinct new to them the coming of a grown-up man with real matrimonial intentions. Given a girl somewhat

above the middle height, with a slim, full-blown figure, with fair hair, curling and blowing about a pink and white face, and with solemn eyes–prematurely gray eyes, her father called them–with red lips, with white teeth that flashed when she smiled, and with a laugh like the murmur of gay waters; given a more than usual amount of inherited good sense, and combine that with a world of sentiment that perfect health can bring to a girl of twenty-two; then add one exceptionally fascinating man of thirty–more or less–a handsome young man; a successful man as young men go, with the oratorical temperament and enough of a head to be a good consulting lawyer as well as a jury lawyer with more than local reputation; add to the young man that vague social iridescence, or aura or halo that young men wear in glamor, and that old men wear in shame–a past; and then let public opinion agree that he is his own worst enemy and declare that if he only had some strong woman to take hold of him–and behold there are the ingredients of human gunpowder!

Doctor Nesbit smelled the burning powder. Vainly he tried to stamp out the fire before the explosion.

"Bedelia," said the Doctor one day, as the parents heard the girl talking eagerly with the young man, "what do you make out of this everlasting 'Tom, Tom, Tom,' out there in the living room?"

Mrs. Nesbit rocked in her chair and shook an ominous head. Finally she said: "I wish he'd Tom himself home and stay there, Doctor." The wife spoke as an oracle with emphasis and

authority. “You must speak to the child!”

The little man puckered his loose-skinned face into a sad, absurdly pitiful smile and shrilled back:

“Yes–I did speak to her. And she–” he paused.

“Well?” demanded the mother.

“She just fed me back all the decent things I have said of Tom when he has done my errands.” He drummed his fingers helplessly on his chair and sighed mournfully: “I wonder why I said those things! I really wonder!”

But the voices of the young people rose gayly and disturbed his musings.

It is easy now after a quarter of a century has unfolded its events for us to lay blame and grow wise in retrospect. It is easy to say that what happened was foredoomed to happen; and yet here was a man, walking up and down the curved verandahs that Mrs. Nesbit had added to the house at odd times, walking up and down, and speaking to a girl in the moonlight, with much power and fire, of life and his dreams and his aspirations.

Over and over he had sung his mating song. Formerly he had made love as he tried lawsuits, exhibiting only such fervor as the case required. There can be no doubt, however, that when he made love to Laura Nesbit, it was with all the powers of his heart and mind. If he could plead with a jury for hire, if he could argue with the court and wrangle with council, how could he meet reason, combat objections, and present the case of his soul and make up the brief for his own destiny?

He did not try to shield himself when he wooed Laura Nesbit, but she saw all that he could be. A woman has her vanity of sex, her elaborate, prematernal pride in her powers, and when man appeals to a woman's powers for saving him, when he submits the proofs that he is worth saving, and when he is handsome, with an education in the lore of the heart that gives him charm and breaks down reserves and barriers–but these are bygones now–bygones these twenty-five years and more. What was to be had to be, and what might have been never was, and what their hopes and high aims were, whose hearts glowed in the fires of life in Harvey so long ago–and what all our vain, unfruited hopes are worth, only a just God who reads us truly may say. And a just God would give to the time and the place, the spirit of the age, its share in all that followed.

CHAPTER VIII
CAPTAIN MORTON ACTS AS COURT HERALD AND MORTY SANDS AND GRANT ADAMS HEAR SAD NEWS

Spring in Mrs. Nesbit's garden, even in those days when a garden in Harvey meant chiefly lettuce and radishes and peas, was no casual event. Spring opened formally for the Nesbits with crocuses and hyacinths; smiled genially in golden forsythia, bridal wreath and tulips, preened itself in flags and lilacs before glowing in roses and peonies. Now the spring is always wise; for it knows what the winter only hopes or fears. Events burst forth in spring that have been hidden since their seedtime. And it was with the coming of the first crocuses that Dr. Nesbit found in his daughter's eyes a joyous look, new and exultant–a look which never had been inspired by the love he lavished upon her. It was not meant for him. Yet it was as truly a spring blossom as any that blushed in the garden. When it came and when the father realized that the mother also saw it, they feared to speak of it–even to themselves and by indirection.

For they knew their winter conspiracies had failed. In vain was the trip to Baltimore; in vain was the week with grand opera in

New York, and they both knew that the proposed trip to Europe never would occur. When the parents saw that look of triumphant joy in their daughter's face, when they saw how it lighted up her countenance like a flame when Tom Van Dorn was near or was on his way to her, they knew that from the secret recesses of her heart, from the depths of her being, love was springing. They knew that they could not uproot it, and they had no heart to try. For they accepted love as a fact of life, and felt that when once it has seeded and grown upon a heart, it is a part of that heart and only God's own wisdom and mercy may change the destiny that love has written upon the life in which love rests. So in the wisdom of the spring, the parents were mute and sad.

There was no hint of anger in their sorrow. They realized that if she was wrong, and they were right, she needed them vastly more than if they were wrong and she was right, and so they tried to rejoice with her–not of course expressly and baldly, but in a thousand ways that lay about them, they made her as happy as they could. Their sweet acquiescence in what she knew was cutting the elders to the quick, gave the girl many an hour of poignant distress. Yet the purpose of her heart was not moved. The Satterthwaite in her was dominant.

"Doctor," spoke the wife one morning as they sat alone over their breakfast, "I think–" She stopped, and he knew she was listening to the daughter, who was singing in an undertone in the garden.

"Yes," he answered, "so do I. I think they have settled it."

The man dropped his glance to the table before him, where his hands rested helplessly and cried, "Bedelia–I don't–I don't like it!"

The color of her woe darkened Mrs. Nesbit's face as her features trembled for a second, before she controlled herself. "No, Jim–no–no! I don't–I'm afraid–afraid, of I don't know what!"

"Of course, he's of excellent family–the very best!" the wife ventured.

"And he's making money–and has lots of money from his people!" returned the father.

"And he's a man among men!" added the mother.

"Oh, yes–very much that,–and he's trying to be decent! Honestly, Bedelia, I believe the fellow's got a new grip on himself!" The Doctor's voice had regained its timbre; it was just a little hard, and it broke an instant later as he cried: "O Lord, Lord, mother–we can't fool ourselves; let's not try!" They looked into the garden, where the girl stood by the blooming lilacs with her arms filled with blossoms.

At length the mother spoke, "What shall we do?"

"What can we do?" the Doctor echoed. "What can any human creatures do in these cases! To interfere does no good! The thing is here. Why has it come? I don't know." He repeated the last sentence piteously, and went on gently:

"'They say it was a stolen tide–the Lord who sent it, He knows all!' But why–why–why–did it wash in here? What does it mean?

What have we done–and what–what has she done?"

The little Doctor looked up into the strong face of his wife rather helplessly, then the time spirit that is after all our sanity–touched them, and they smiled. "Perhaps, Jim," the smile broke into something almost like a laugh, "father said something like that to mother the day I stood among the magnolias trying to pluck courage with the flowers to tell him that I was going with you!"

They succeeded in raising a miserable little laugh, and he squeezed her hand.

The girl moved toward the house. The father turned and put on his hat as he went to meet her. She was a hesitant, self-conscious girl in pink, who stopped her father as he toddled down the front steps with his medicine case, and she put her hand upon him, saying:

"Father," she paused, looking eagerly at him, then continued, "there's the loveliest yellow flag over here." The father smiled, put his arm about the girl and piped: "So the pink rosebud will take us to the yellow flag!" They walked across the garden to the flower and she exclaimed: "Oh, father–isn't it lovely!"

The father looked tenderly into her gray eyes, patted her on the shoulder and with his arm still about her, he led her to a seat under the lilacs before the yellow flower. He looked from the flower to her face and then kissed her as he whispered: "Oh my dear, my dear." She threw her arms about him and buried her face, all flushed, upon his shoulder. He felt her quiver under the

pressure of his arm and before she could look at him, she spoke:

"Oh, father! Father! You–you won't–you won't blame–" Then she lifted up her face to his and cried passionately: "But all the world could not stop it now–not now! But, oh, father, I want you with me," and she shook his arm. "You must understand. You must see Tom as I see him, father." She looked the question of her soul in an anxious, searching glance. Her father reached for one of her hands and patted it. He gazed downward at the yellow iris, but did not see it.

"Yes, dear, I know–I understand."

"I was sure that you would know without my spelling it all out to you. But, oh, father," she cried, "I don't want you and mother to feel as you do about Tom, for you are wrong. You are all–all wrong!"

The Doctor's fat hand pressed the strong hand of the girl. "Well," he began slowly, his high-keyed voice was pitched to a soft tone and he spoke with a woman's gentleness, "Tom's quite a man, but–" he could only repeat, "quite a man." Then he added gently: "And I feel that he thinks it's genuine now–his–love for you, daughter." The Doctor's face twitched, and he swallowed a convulsive little sob as he said, "Laura–child–can't you see, it really makes no difference about Tom–not finally!" He blinked and gulped and went on with renewed courage. "Can't you see, child–you're all we've got–mother and I–and if you want Tom–why–" his face began to crumple, but he controlled it, and blurted out, "Why by johnnie you can have him. And what's more," his

voice creaked with emotion as he brought his hand down on his knee, "I'm going to make Tom the best father-in-law in the whole United States." His body rocked for a moment as he spurred himself to a last effort. Then he said: "And mother–mother'll be–mother will–she'll make him–" he could get no further, but he felt the pressure of her hand, and knew that she understood. "Mother and I just want you to be happy and if it takes Tom for that–why Tom's what it takes, I guess–and that's all we want to know!"

The girl felt the tears on his face as she laid her cheek against his.

Then she spoke: "But you don't know him, father! You don't understand him! It's beautiful to be able to do what I can do–but," she shuddered, "it's so awful–I mean all that devil that used to be in him. He is so ashamed, so sorry–and it's gone–all gone–all, every bit of it gone, father!" She put her father's hand to her flaming cheek and whispered, "You think so, don't you, father?"

The father's eyes filled again and his throat choked. "Laura," he said very gently, "my professional opinion is this: You've a fighting chance with Tom Van Dorn–about one in ten. He's young. You're a strong, forceful woman–lots of good Satterthwaite in you, and precious little of the obliging Nesbits. Now I'll tell you the truth, Laura; Tom's got a typical cancer on his soul. But he's young; and you're young, and just now he's undergoing a moral regeneration. You are new blood. You may purify him. If the moral tissue isn't all rotten, you may cure him."

The girl gripped her father's hand and cried: "But you think

I can–father, you think I can?"

"No," piped the little man sadly, "no, daughter, I don't think you can. But I hope you can; and if you'd like to know, I'm going to pray the God that sent me to your mother to give you the sense and power He gave her." The Doctor smiled, withdrew his arm, and started for the street. He turned, "And if you do save him, Laura, I'll be mighty proud of you. For," he squeaked good naturedly, "it's a big job–but when you've done it you'll have something to show for it–I'll say that for him–you'll certainly have something to show for it," he repeated. He did not whistle as he walked down the street and the daughter thought that he kept his eyes upon the ground. As he was about to pass from her view, he turned, waved his hand and threw her a kiss, and with it she felt a blessing.

But curiously enough she saw only one of the goodly company of Doctor Nesbits that trudged down the hill in his white linen suit, under his broad-brimmed panama hat. Naturally she hardly might be expected to see the conscienceless boss of Hancock and Greely counties, who handled the money of privilege seekers and bought and sold men gayly as a part of the day's work. Nor could she be expected to see the helpless little man whose face crumpled, whose heart sank and whose courage melted as he stood beside her in the garden, the sad, hopeless little man who, as he went down the hill was captain of the groups that walked under his hat that hour. The amiable Doctor, who was everybody's friend and was loyal to those who served him, the

daughter neglected that day; and the State Senator did not attract her. She saw only a gentle, tender, understanding father, whose love shone out of his face like a beacon and who threw merry kisses as he disappeared down the hill–a ruddy-faced, white phantom in a golden spring day!

Some place between his home and Market Street the father retired and the politician took command of Dr. Nesbit's soul. And he gave thought to the Nesbit machine. The job of the moment before the machine was to make George Brotherton, who had the strength of a man who belonged to all the lodges in town, mayor of Harvey. "Help Harvey Hump" was George's alliterative slogan, and the translation of the slogan into terms of Nesbitese was found in a rather elaborate plan to legalize the issuance of bonds by the coal and oil towns adjacent to Harvey, so that Daniel Sands could spin out his web of iron and copper and steel,–rails and wires and pipes into these huddles of shanties that he might sell them light and heat and power and communication and transportation.

Even the boss–even Old Linen Pants–was not without his sense of humor, nor without his joyous moments when he relished human nature in large, raw portions. As he walked down the hill there flashed across his mind a consciousness of the pride of George Brotherton in his candidacy. That pride expressed itself in a feud George had with Violet Mauling who, having achieved stenography, was installed in the offices of Calvin & Van Dorn as a stenographer–the stenographer in fact. She on her

part was profoundly proud of her job and expressed her pride in overhanging and exceeding mischievous looking bangs upon her low and rather narrow brow. In the feud between George and Violet, it was her consecrated task to keep him waiting as long as possible before admitting him to Van Dorn's inner room, and it was Mr. Brotherton's idea never to call her by her right name, nor by any name twice in succession. She was Inez or Maude or Mabel or Gwendolyn or Pet or Sweetheart or Dearest, in rapid succession, and in return for his pseudonymnal attentions, Mr. Brotherton always was sure of receiving from Miss Mauling upon leaving the office, an elaborately turned-up nose. For Miss Mauling was peevish and far from happy. She had been conscious for nearly a year that her power over young Mr. Van Dorn was failing, or that her charms were waning, or that something was happening to clog or cloy her romance. On a certain May morning she had sat industriously writing, "When in the course of human events," "When in the course of human events it becomes necessary," "When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for a people to separate–" upon her typewriter, over and over and over again, while she listened to Captain Morton selling young Mr. Van Dorn a patent churn, and from the winks and nods and sly digs and nudges the Captain distributed through his canvass, it was obvious to Miss Mauling that affairs in certain quarters had reached a point.

That evening at Brotherton's Amen corner, where the gay young blades of the village were gathered–Captain Morton

decided that as court herald of the community he should proclaim the banns between Thomas Van Dorn and Laura Nesbit. Naturally he desired a proper entrance into the conversation for his proclamation, but with the everlasting ting-aling and tym-ty-tum of Nathan Perry's mandolin and the jangling accompaniment of Morty's mandolin, opening for the court herald was not easy. Grant Adams was sitting at the opposite end of the bench from the Captain, deep in one of Mr. Brotherton's paper bound books–to-wit, "The Stones of Venice," and young Joe Calvin sadly smoking his first stogy, though still in his knickerbockers, was greedily feasting his eyes upon a copy of the pink Police *Gazette* hanging upon a rack above the counter. Henry Fenn and Mr. Brotherton were lounging over the cigar case, discussing matters of state as they affected a county attorney and a mayor, when the Captain, clearing his throat, addressed Mr. Brotherton thus:

"George–I sold two patent churns to two bridegrooms to-day–eh?" As the music stopped the Captain, looking at Henry Fenn, added reflectively: "Bet you four bits, George, you can't name the other one–what say?" No one said and the Captain took up his solo. "Well–it's this-away: I see what I see next door. And I hear what my girls say. So this morning I sashays around the yard till I meets a certain young lady a standing by the yaller rose bush next to our line fence and I says: 'Good morning madam,' I says, 'from what I see and hear and cogitate,' I says, 'it's getting about time for you to join my list of regular customers.' And she kind

of laughs like a Swiss bellringer's chime–the way she laughs; and she pretended she didn't understand. So I broadens out and says, 'I sold Rhody Kollander her first patent rocker the day she came to town to begin housekeeping with. I sold your pa and ma a patent gate before they had a fence. I sold Joe Calvin's woman her first apple corer, and I started Ahab Wright up in housekeeping by selling him a Peerless cooker. I've sold household necessities to every one of the Mrs. Sandses' and 'y gory, madam,' I says, 'next to the probate court and the preacher, I'm about the first necessity of a happy marriage in this man's town,' I says, 'and it looks to me,' I says, 'it certainly looks to me–' And I laughs and she laughs, all redded up and asts: 'Well, what are you selling this spring, Captain?' And I says, 'The Appomattox churn,' and then one word brought on another and she says finally, 'You just tell Tom to buy one for the first of our Lares and Penates,' though I got the last word wrong and tried to sell him Lares and spuds and then Lares and Murphies before he got what I was drivin' at. But I certainly sold the other bridegroom, Henry–eh?"

A silence greeted the Captain's remarks. In it the "Stones of Venice" grew bleak and cold for Grant Adams. He rose and walked rather aimlessly toward the water cooler in the rear of the store and gulped down two cups of water. When he came back to the bench the group there was busy with the Captain's news. But the music did not start again. Morty Sands sat staring into the pearl inlaid ring around the hole in his mandolin, and his chin trembled. The talk drifted away from

the Captain's announcement in a moment, and Morty saw Grant Adams standing by the door, looking through a window into the street. Grant seemed a tower of strength. For a few minutes Morty tried to restore his soul by thrumming a tune–a sweet, tinkly little tune, whose words kept dinging in his head:

> "Love comes like a summer sigh, softly o'er us stealing;
> Love comes and we wonder why, at love's shrine we're kneeling!"

But that only unsteadied his chin further. So he tucked his mandolin under his arm, and moved rather stupidly over to Grant Adams. To Morty, Grant Adams, even though half a dozen years his junior, represented cousinship and fellowship. As Morty rose Grant stepped through the open door into the street and stood on the curb. Morty came tiptoeing up to the great rawboned youth and whispered:

"Grant–Grant–I'm so–so damned unhappy! You don't mind my telling you–do you?" Grant felt the arm of his cousin tighten around his own arm. Grant stared at the stars, and Morty gazed at the curb; presently he drew a deep sigh and said: "Thank you, Grant." He relaxed his hold of the boy's arm and walked away with his head down, and disappeared around the corner into the night. Slowly Grant followed him. Once or twice or perhaps three times he heard Morty trying vainly to thrum the sad little tune about the waywardness of love.

CHAPTER IX
WHEREIN HENRY FENN MAKES AN INTERESTING EXPERIMENT

The formal announcement of the engagement of Laura Nesbit and Thomas Van Dorn came when Mrs. Nesbit began tearing out the old floors on the second story of the Nesbit home and replacing them with hardwood floors. Having the carpenters handy she added a round tower with which to impress the Schenectady Van Dorns with the importance of the Maryland Satterthwaites. In this architectural outburst the town read the news of the engagement. The town was so moved by the news that Mrs. Hilda Herdicker was able to sell to the young women of her millinery suzerainty sixty-three hats, which had been ordered "especially for Laura Nesbit," at prices ranging from $2.00 to $57. Each hat was carefully, indeed furtively, brought from under the counter, or from the back room of the shop or from a box on a high shelf and secretly exhibited and sold with injunctions that the Nesbits must not be told what Mrs. Herdicker had done. One of these hats was in reach of Violet Mauling's humble twenty dollars! Poor Violet was having a sad time in those days. No candy, no soda water, no ice cream, no flowers; no buggy rides, however clandestine, nor fervid glances–nothing but hard work was her unhappy lot and an occasional clash with Mr.

Brotherton. Thus the morning after the newly elected Mayor had heard the formal announcement of the engagement, he hurried to the offices of Calvin & Van Dorn to congratulate his friend:

"Hello, Maudie," said Mr. Brotherton. "Oh, it isn't Maudie–well then, Trilby, tell Mr. Van Dorn the handsome gentleman has came."

Hearing Brotherton's noise Van Dorn appeared, to summon his guest to the private office.

"Well, you lucky old dog!" was Mr. Brotherton's greeting. "Well, say–this is his honor, the Mayor, come up to collect your dog tax! Well, say!" As he walked into the office all the secret society pins and charms and signets–the Shriners' charm, the Odd Fellows' links, the Woodmen's ax, the Elks' tooth, the Masons' square and compass, the Knights Templars' arms, were glistening upon his wrinkled front like a mosaic of jewels!

Mr. Brotherton shook his friend's hand, repeating over and over, "Well, say–" After the congratulatory ceremony was finished Mr. Brotherton cried, "You old scoundrel–I'd rather have your luck than a license to steal in a mint!" Then with an eye to business, he suggested: "I'll just about open a box of ten centers down at my home of the letters and arts for you when the boys drop around!" He backed out of the room still shaking Mr. Van Dorn's hand, and still roaring, "Well, say!" In the outer office he waved a gracious hand at Miss Mauling and cried, "Three sugars, please, Sadie–that will do for cream!" and went laughing his seismic laugh down the stairs.

That evening the cigar box stood on the counter in Brotherton's store. It was wreathed in smilax like a votive offering and on a card back of the box Mr. Brotherton had written these pious words:

"In loving memory of the late Tom Van Dorn,
Recently engaged.
For here, kind friends, we all must lie;
Turn, Sinner, turn before ye die!
Take one."

Seeing the box in the cloister and the brotherhood assembled upon the walnut bench Dr. Nesbit, who came in on a political errand, sniffed, and turned to Amos Adams. "Well, Amos," piped the Doctor, "how's Lincoln this evening?"

The editor looked up amiably at the pudgy, white-clad figure of the Doctor, and replied casually though earnestly, "Well, Doc Jim, I couldn't seem to get Lincoln to-day. But I did have a nice chat with Beecher last night and he said: 'Your friend, Dr. Nesbit, I observe, is a low church Congregationalist.' And when I asked what he meant Beecher replied, 'High church Congregationalists believe in New England; low church Congregationalists believe in God!' Sounds like him–I could just see him twitching his lips and twinkling his eyes when it came!" Captain Morton looked suspiciously over his steel-bowed glasses to say testily:

"'Y gory, Amos–that thing will get you yet–what say?" he asked, turning for confirmation to the Doctor.

Amos Adams smiled gently at the Captain, but addressed the Doctor eagerly, as one more capable of understanding matters occult: "And I'll tell you another thing–Mr. Left is coming regularly now."

"Mr. Left?" sniffed the Captain.

"Yes," explained the editor carefully, "I was telling the Doctor last week that if I go into a dark room and blindfold myself and put a pencil in my left hand, a control who calls himself Mr. Left comes and writes messages from the Other Side."

"Any more sense to 'em than your crazy planchette?" scoffed Captain Morton.

The editor closed his eyes in triumph. "Read our editorial this week on President Cleveland and the Money Power?" he asked. The Captain nodded. "Mr. Left got it without the scratch of a 't' or the dot of an 'i' from Samuel J. Tilden." He opened his eyes to catch the astonishment of the listeners.

"Humph!" snorted the Doctor in his high, thin voice, "Old Tilden seems to have got terribly chummy with Karl Marx in the last two years."

"Well, I didn't write it, and Mary says it's not even like my handwrite. And that reminds me, Doctor, I got to get her prescription filled again. That tonic you give her seems to be kind of wearing off. The baby you know–" he stopped a moment vaguely. "Someway she doesn't seem strong."

Only the Doctor caught Grant's troubled look.

The Doctor snapped his watch, and looked at Brotherton. The

Doctor was not the man to loaf long of an autumn evening before any election, and he turned to Amos and said: "All right, Amos–we'll fix up something for Mary a little later. Now, George–get out that Fourth Ward voters' list and let's get to work!"

The group turned to the opening door and saw Henry Fenn, resplendent in a high silk hat and a conspicuously Sunday best suit, which advertised his condition, standing in the open door. "Good evening, gentlemen," he said slowly.

A look of common recognition of Fenn's case passed around the group in the corner. Fenn saw the look as he came in. He was walking painfully straight. "I may," he said, lapsing into the poetry that came welling from his memory and marked him for a drunken fool, "I may," opening his ardent eyes and glancing affectionately about, "have been toying with 'lucent syrups tinct with cinnamon' and my feet may be 'uncertain, coy and hard to please,'" he grinned with wide amiability, "but my head is clear as a bell." His eyes flashed nervously about the shop, resting upon nothing, seeing everything. He spied Grant, "Hello, Red," exclaimed Mr. Fenn, "glad to see you back again. 'M back again myself. Ye crags 'n' peaks 'm with you once again." As he nourished his silk hat he saw the consternation on Brotherton's big, moon face. Walking behind the counter he clapped both hands down on Brotherton's big shoulders. "Georgy, Georgy," he repeated mournfully:

"Old story, Georgy. Fight–fight, fight, then just a little, just a very little surrender; not going to give in, but just a nip for old

sake's sake. Whoo-oo-oo-oo-p the skyrocket blazes and is gone, and then just another nip to cool the first and then a God damn big drink and–and–"

He laughed foolishly and leaned forward on the counter. As his arm touched the counter it brushed the smilax covered cigar box and sent the box and the cigars to the floor.

"Henry, you fool–you poor fool," cried Brotherton; but his voice was not angry as he said: "If you must mess up your own affairs for Heaven's sake have some respect for Tom's!"

"Tom's love affairs and mine," sneered the maudlin man. "'They grew in beauty side by side.' But don't you fool yourself," and Fenn wagged a drunken head, "Tom's devil isn't, dead, she sleepeth, that's what she does. The maiden is not dead she sleepeth, and some day she'll wake up and then Tom's love affair will be where my love affair is." His eyes met the doctor's. Fenn sighed and laughed fatuously and then he straightened up and said: "Mr. George Brotherton, most worshipful master, Senior Warden, Grand High Potentate, Keeper of the Records and Seals–hear me. I'm going out to No. 826 Congress Street to see the fairest of her sex–the fairest of her sex." Then he smiled like the flash of a burning soul and continued:

> "'The cold, the changed, perchance the dead anew,
> The mourned, the loved, the lost.'"

And sighing a deep sigh, and again waving his silk hat in a

profound bow, he was gone. The group in the store saw him step lightly into a waiting hack, and drive away out of their reach. Brotherton stood at the door and watched the carriage turn off Market Street, then came back, shaking a sorrowful head. He looked up at the Doctor and said: "She's bluffing–say, Doctor, you know her, what do you think?"

"Bluffing," returned the Doctor absently, then added quickly: "Come now, George, get your voters' list! It's getting late!"

George Brotherton looked blankly at the group. In every face but the Doctor's a genuine sorrow for their friend was marked. "Doc," Brotherton began apologetically, "I guess I'll just have to get you to let me off to-night!" He hesitated; then as he saw the company around him backing him up, "Why, Doc, the way I feel right now I don't care if the whole county ticket is licked! I can't work to-night, Doc–I just can't!"

The Doctor's face as he listened, changed. It was as though another soul had come upon the deck of his countenance. He answered softly in his piping voice, "No man could, George–after that!" Then turning to Grant the Doctor said gently, as one reminded of a forgotten purpose:

"Come along with me, Grant." They mounted the stairs to the Doctor's office and when the door was closed the Doctor motioned Grant to a chair and piped sharply: "Grant, Kenyon is wearing your mother's life out. I've just been down to see her. Look here, Grant, I want to know about Margaret? Does she ever come to see you folks–how does she treat Kenyon?"

Looking at the floor, Grant answered slowly, "Well she rode down on her wheel on his first birthday–slipped in when we were all out but mother, and cried and went on about her poor child, mother said, and left him a pair of little knit slippers. And she wrote him a birthday card the second time, but we didn't hear from her this time." He paused. "She never looks at him on the street, and she's just about quit speaking to me. But last winter, she came down and cried around one afternoon. Mother sent for her, I think."

"Why!" asked the Doctor quickly.

"Well," hesitated Grant, "it was when mother was first taken sick. I think father and mother thought maybe Maggie might see things different–well, about Kenyon." He stopped.

"Maggie and you?" prompted the Doctor.

"Well, something like that, perhaps," replied the boy.

The Doctor pushed back in his chair abruptly and cut in shrilly, "They still think you and Margaret should marry on account of Kenyon?" Grant nodded. "Do you want to marry her?" The Doctor leaned forward in his chair, watching the boy. The Doctor saw the flash of revulsion that spread over the youth's face before Grant raised his head, and met the Doctor's keen gaze and answered soberly, "I would if it was best."

"Well," the Doctor returned as if to himself. "I suppose so." To the younger man, he said: "Grant, she wouldn't marry you. She is after bigger game. As far as reforming Henry Fenn's concerned, she's bluffing. It doesn't interest her any more than

Kenyon's lack of a mother."

The Doctor rose and Grant saw that the interview was over. The Doctor left the youth at the foot of the stairway and went out into the autumn night, where the stars could blink at all his wisdom. Though he, poor man, did not know that they were winking. For often men who know good women and love them well, are as unjust to weak women as men are who know only those women who are frail.

That night Margaret Müller sat on the porch, where Henry Fenn left her, considering her problem. Now this problem did not remotely concern the Adamses–nor even Kenyon Adams. Margaret Müller's problem was centered in Henry Fenn, County Attorney of Greeley County; Henry Fenn, who had visited her gorgeously drunk; Henry Fenn on whose handsome shoulder she had enjoyed rather keenly shedding some virtuous tears in chiding him for his broken promise. Yet she knew that she would take him back. And she knew that he knew that he might come back. For she had moved far forward in the siege of Harvey. She was well within the walls of the beleaguered city, and was planning for the larger siege of life and destiny.

About all there is in life is one's fundamental choice between the spiritual and the material. After that choice is made, the die of life is cast. Events play upon that choice their curious pattern, bringing such griefs and joys, such calamities and winnings as every life must have. For that choice makes character, and character makes happiness. Margaret Müller sitting there in the

night long after the last step of Henry Fenn had died away, thought of her lover's arms, remembered her lover's lips, but clearer and more moving than these vain things, her mind showed her what his hands could bring her and if her soul waved a duty signal, for the salvation of Henry Fenn, she shut her eyes to the signal and hurried into the house.

She was one of God's miracles of beauty the next day as she passed Grant Adams on the street, with his carpenter's box on his arm, going from the mine shaft to do some work in the office of the attorney for the mines. She barely nodded to Grant, yet the radiance of her beauty made him turn his head to gaze at her. Doctor Nesbit did that, and Captain Morton, and Dick Bowman,–even John Kollander turned, putting up his ear trumpet as if to hear the glory of her presence; the whole street turned after her as though some high wind had blown human heads backward when she passed. They saw a lithe, exquisite animal figure, poised strongly on her feet, walking as in the very pride of sex, radiating charms consciously, but with all the grace of a flower in the breeze. Her bright eyes, her masses of dark hair, her dimpled face and neck, her lips that flamed with the joy of life, the enchantment of her whole body, was so complete a thing that morning, that she might well have told her story to the world. The little Doctor knew what her answer to Henry Fenn had been and always would be. He knew as well as though she had told him. In spite of himself, his heart melted a little and he had consciously to stop arguing with himself that she had done the

wise thing; that to throw Henry over would only hasten an end, which her powerful personality might finally avert. But George Brotherton–when he saw the light in her eyes, was sad. In the core of him, because he loved his friend, he knew what had happened to that friend. He was sad–sad and resentful, vaguely and without reason, at the mien and bearing of Margaret Müller as she went to her work that morning.

Brotherton remembered her an hour later when, in the back part of the bookstore Henry Fenn sat, jaded, haggard, and with his dull face drawn with remorse,–a burned-out sky rocket. Brotherton was busy with his customers, but in a lull, and between sales as the trade passed in and out, they talked. Sometimes a customer coming in would interrupt them, but the talk went on as trade flowed by. It ran thus:

"Yes, George, but it's my salvation. She's the only anchor I have on earth."

"But she didn't hold you yesterday."

"I know, but God, George, it was terrific, the way that thing grabbed me yesterday. But it's all gone now."

"I know, Henry, but it will come back–can't you see what you'll be doing to her?"

Fenn, gray of face, with his straight, colorless hair, with his staring eyes, with his listless form, sat head in hands, gazing at the floor. He did not look up as he replied: "George, I just can't give her up; I won't give her up," he cried. "I believe, after the depths of love she showed me in her soul last night, I'd take her,

if I knew I was taking us both to hell. Just let me have a home, George,–and her and children–George, I know children would hold me–lots of children–I can make money. I've got money–all I need to marry on, and we'll have a home and children and they will hold me–keep me up."

In Volume XXI of the "Psychological Society's Publications," page 374, will be found a part of the observations of "Mr. Left," together with copious notes upon the Adams case by an eminent authority. The excerpt herewith printed is attributed by Mr. Left to Darwin or Huxley or perhaps one of the Brownings–it is unimportant to note just which one, for Mr. Left gleaned from a wide circle of intellects. The interesting thing is that about the time these love affairs we are considering were brewing, Mr. Left wrote: "If the natural selection of love is the triumph of evolution on this planet, if the free choice of youth and maiden, unhampered by class or nationality, or wealth, or age, or parental interference, or thought of material advantage, is the greatest step taken by life since it came mysteriously into this earth, how much of the importance of the natural selection of youth in love hangs upon full and free access to all the data necessary for choice."

What irony was in the free choice of these lovers here in Harvey that day when Mr. Left wrote this. What did Henry Fenn know of the heart or the soul of the woman he adored? What did Laura Nesbit know of her lover and what did he know of her? They all four walked blindfolded. Free choice for them was as remote and impossible as it would have been if they had been

auctioned into bondage.

CHAPTER X
IN WHICH MARY ADAMS TAKES A MUCH NEEDED REST

The changing seasons moved from autumn to winter, from winter to spring. One gray, wet March day, Grant Adams stood by the counter asking Mr. Brotherton to send to the city for roses.

"White roses, a dozen white roses." Mr. Brotherton turned his broad back as he wrote the order, and said gently: "They'll be down on No. 11 to-night, Grant; I'll send 'em right out."

As Grant stood hesitating, ready to go, but dreading the street, Dr. Nesbit came in. He pressed the youth's hand and did not speak. He bought his tobacco and stood cleaning his pipe. "Could your father sleep any after–when I left, Grant?" asked the Doctor.

The young man shook his head. "Mrs. Nesbit is out there, isn't she?" the Doctor asked again.

"Yes," replied the youth, "she and Laura came out before we had breakfast. And Mrs. Dexter is there."

"Has any one else come?" asked the Doctor, looking up sharply from his pipe, and added, "I sent word to Margaret Müller."

Grant shook his head and the Doctor left the shop. At the doorway he met Captain Morton, and seemed to be telling him the news, for the Captain's face showed the sorrow and concern

that he felt. He hurried in and took Grant's hand and held it affectionately.

"Grant, your mother was with my wife her last night on earth; I wish I could help you, son. I'll run right down to your father."

And the Captain left in the corner of the store the model of a patent coffee pot he was handling at the time and went away without his morning paper. Mr. Van Dorn came in, picked up his paper, snipped off the end of his cigar at the machine, lighted the cigar, considered his fine raiment a moment, adjusted his soft hat at a proper angle, pulled up his tie, and seeing the youth, said: "By George, young man, this is sad news I hear; give the good father my sympathy. Too bad."

When Grant went home, the silence of death hung over the little house, in spite of the bustling of Mrs. Nesbit. And Grant sat outside on a stone by his father under the gray sky.

In the house the prattle of the child with the women made the house seem pitifully lonesome. Jasper was expressing his sorrow by chopping wood down in the timber. Jasper was an odd sheep in the flock; he was a Sands after Daniel's own heart. So Grant and his father sat together mourning in silence. Finally the father drew in a deep broken breath, and spoke with his eyes on the ground:

"'These also died in the faith, without having received the promise!'" Then he lifted up his face and mourned, "Mary–Mary–" and again, "Oh, Mary, we need–" The child's voice inside the house calling fretfully, "Mother! mother!" came to the

two and brought a quick cramp to the older man's throat and tears to his eyes. Finally, Amos found voice to say:

"I was thinking how we–you and I and Jasper need mother! But our need is as nothing compared with the baby's. Poor–lonely little thing! I don't know what to do for him, Grant." He turned to his son helplessly.

Again the little voice was lifted, and Laura Nesbit could be heard hushing the child's complaint. Not looking at his father, Grant spoke: "Dr. Nesbit said he had let Margaret know–"

The father shook his head and returned, "I presumed he would!" He looked into his son's face and said: "Maggie doesn't see things as we do, son. But, oh–what can we do! And the little fellow needs her–needs some one, who will love him and take care of him. Oh, Mary–Mary–" he cried from his bewildered heart. "Be with us, Mary, and show us what to do!"

Grant rose, went into the house, bundled up Kenyon and between showers carried him and walked with him through the bleak woods of March, where the red bird's joyous song only cut into his heart and made the young man press closer to him the little form that snuggled in his arms.

At night Jasper went to his room above the kitchen and the father turned to his lonely bed. In the cold parlor Mary Adams lay. Grant sat in the kitchen by the stove, pressing to his face his mother's apron, only three days before left hanging by her own hands on the kitchen door. He clung to this last touch of her fingers, through the long night, and as he sat there his heart filled

with a blind, vague, rather impotent purpose to take his mother's place with Kenyon. From time to time he rose to put wood in the stove, but always when he went back to his chair, and stroked the apron with his face, the baby seemed to be clinging to him. The thought of the little hands forever tugging at her apron racked him with sobs long after his tears were gone.

And so as responsibility rose in him he stepped across the border from youth to manhood.

They made him dress in his Sunday best the next morning and he was still so close to that borderland of boyhood that he was standing about the yard near the gate, looking rather lost and awkward when the Nesbits drove up with Kenyon, whom they had taken for the night. When the others had gone into the house the Doctor asked:

"Did she come, Grant?"

The youth lifted his face to the Doctor and looked him squarely in the eye as man to man and answered sharply, "No."

The Doctor cocked one eye reflectively and said slowly, "So–" and drove away.

It was nearly dusk when the Adamses came back from the cemetery to the empty house. But a bright fire was burning in the kitchen stove and the kettle was boiling and the odor of food cooking in the oven was in the air. Kenyon was moving fitfully about the front room. Mrs. Dexter was quietly setting the table. Amos Adams hung up his hat, took off his coat, and went to his rocker by the kitchen door; Jasper sat stiffly in the

front room. Grant met Mrs. Dexter in the dining room, and she saw that the child had hold of the young man's finger and she heard the baby calling, "Mother–mother! Grant, I want mother!" with a plaintive little cry, over and over again. Grant played with the child, showed the little fellow his toys and tried to stop the incessant call of "Mother–mother–where's mother!" At last the boy's eyes filled. He picked up the child, knocking his own new hat roughly to the floor. He drew up his chin, straightened his trembling jaw, batted his eyes so that the moisture left them and said to his father in a hard, low voice–a man's voice:

"I am going to Margaret; she must help."

It was dark when he came to town and walked up Congress Street with the little one snuggled in his arms. Just before he arrived at the house, the restless child had asked to walk, and they went hand in hand up the steps of the house where Margaret Müller lived. She was sitting alone on the veranda–clearly waiting for some one, and when she saw who was coming up the steps she rose and hurried to them, greeting them on the very threshold of the veranda. She was white and her bosom was fluttering as she asked in a tense whisper:

"What do you want–quick, what do you want?"

She stood before Grant, as if stopping his progress. The child's plaintive cry, "Mother–Grant, I want mother!" not in grief, but in a great question, was the answer.

He looked into her staring, terror-stricken eyes until they drooped and for a moment he dominated her. But she came back

from some outpost of her nature with reënforcements.

"Get out of here–get out of here. Don't come here with your brat–get out," she snarled in a whisper. The child went to her, plucked her skirts and cried, "Mother, mother." Grant pointed to the baby and broke out: "Oh, Maggie–what's to become of Kenyon?–what can I do! He's only got you now. Oh, Maggie, won't you come?" He saw fear flit across her face in a tense second before she answered. Then fear left and she crouched at him trembling, red-eyed, gaping, mouthed, the embodiment of determined hate; swiping the child's little hands away from her, she snapped:

"Get out of here!–leave! quick!" He stood stubbornly before her and only the child's voice crying, "Grant, Grant, I want to go home to mother," filled the silence. Finally she spoke again, cutting through the baby's complaint. "I shall never, never, never take that child; I loathe him, and I hate you and I want both of you always to keep away from me."

Without looking at her again, he caught up the toddling child, lifted it to his shoulder and walked down the steps. As they turned into the street they ran into Henry Fenn, who in his free choice of a mate was hurrying to one who he thought would give him a home–a home and children, many children to stand between him and his own insatiate devil. Henry greeted Grant:

"Why, boy–oh, yes, been to see Maggie? I wish she could help you, Grant."

And from the veranda came a sweet, rich voice, crying:

“Yes, Henry–do you know where they can get a good nurse girl?”

CHAPTER XI
HERE OUR FOOL GROPES FOR A SPIRIT AND CAN FIND ONLY DUST

Henry Fenn and Margaret Müller sat naming their wedding day, while Grant Adams walked home with his burden. Henry Fenn had been fighting through a long winter, against the lust for liquor that was consuming his flesh. At times it seemed to him that her presence as he fought his battle, helped him; but there were phases of his fight, when she too fashioned herself in his imagination as a temptress, and she seemed to blow upon the coals that were searing his weak flesh.

At such times he was taciturn, and went about his day's work as one who is busy at a serious task. He smiled his amiable smile, he played his man's part in the world without whimpering, and fought on like a gentleman. The night he met Grant and the child at the steps of the house where Margaret lived, he had called to set the day for their marriage. And that night she glowed before him and in his arms like a very brand of a woman blown upon by some wind from another world. When he left her his throat grew parched and dry and his lips quivered with a desire for liquor that seemed to simmer in his vitals. But he set his teeth,

and ran to his room, and locked himself in, throwing the key out of the window into the yard. He sat shivering and whimpering and fighting, by turns conquering his devil, and panting under its weight, but always with the figure and face of his beloved in his eyes, sometimes beckoning him to fight on, sometimes coaxing him to yield and stop the struggle. But as the day came in he fell asleep with one more battle to his credit.

In Harvey for many years Henry Fenn's name was a byword; but the pitying angels who have seen him fight in the days of his strength and manhood–they looked at Henry Fenn, and touched reverent foreheads in his high honor. Then why did they who know our hearts so well, let the blow fall upon him, you ask. But there you trespass upon that old question that the Doctor and Amos Adams have thrashed out so long. Has man a free will, or has the illusion of time and space wound him up in its predestined tangle, to act as he must and be what he is without appeal or resistance, or even hope of a pardon?

Doctor Nesbit and Amos Adams were trying to solve the mystery of human destiny at the gate of the Adams' home the day after the funeral. Amos had his foot on the hub of the Doctor's buggy and was saying: "But Doctor, can't you see that it isn't all material? Suppose that every atom of the universe does affect every other atom, and that the accumulated effect of past action holds the stars in their courses, and that if we knew what all the past was we should be able to foretell the future, because it would be mathematically calculable–what of it? That does not

prove your case, man! Can't you see that in free will another element enters–the spiritual, if you please, that is not amenable to atomic action past or present?" Amos smiled deprecatingly and added sadly: "Got that last night from Schopenhauer." The Doctor, clearly unawed by Schopenhauer, broke out: "Aye, there I have you, Amos. Isn't the brain matter, and doesn't the brain secrete consciousness?"

"Does this buggy secrete distance, Jim? Go 'long with you, man." Before the Doctor could reply, around the corner of the house, bringing little Kenyon Adams in his best bib and tucker, came the lofty figure of Mrs. Nesbit. With her came her daughter. Then up spoke Mrs. Bedelia Satterthwaite Nesbit of the Maryland Satterthwaites, "Look here, Amos Adams–I don't care what you say, I'm going to take this baby." There was strong emphasis upon the "I'm," and she went on: "You can have him every night, and Grant can take care of the child after supper when he comes home from work. But every morning at eight I'm going to have this baby." Further emphasis upon the first person. "I'm not going to see a child turned over to a hired girl all day and me with a big house and no baby and a daughter about to marry and leave me and a houseful of help, if I needed it, which thank Heavens I don't." She put her lips together sternly, and, "Not a word, Amos Adams," she said to Amos, who had not opened his mouth. "Not another word. Kenyon will be home at six o'clock."

She put the child into the Doctor's submissive arms–helped her daughter into the buggy, and when she had climbed in herself,

she glared triumphantly over her glasses and above her Roman nose, as she said: “Now, Amos–have some sense. Doctor,–go on.” And in a moment the buggy was spinning up the hill toward the town.

Thus it was that every day, rain or shine, until the day of her wedding, Laura Nesbit drove her dog cart to the Adamses before the men went to their work and took little Kenyon home with her and brought him back in the evening. And always she took him from the arms of Grant–Grant, red-headed, freckled, blue-eyed, who was hardening into manhood and premature maturity so fast that he did not realize the change that it made in his face. It grew set, but not hard, a woman’s tenderness crept into the features, and with that tenderness came at times a look of petulant impatience. It was a sad face–a sadly fanatic face–yet one that lighted with human feeling under a smile.

Little by little, meeting daily–often meeting morning and evening, Grant and Laura established a homely, wholesome, comfortable relation.

One evening while Laura was waiting for Tom Van Dorn and Grant was waiting for Kenyon she and Grant sitting upon the veranda steps of the Nesbit home, looked into the serene, wide lawn that topped the hill above the quiet town. They could look across the white and green of the trees and houses, across the prosperous, solid, red roofs of the stone and brick stores and offices on Market Street, into the black smudge of smoke and the gray, unpainted, sprawling rows of ill-kept tenements around the

coal mines, that was South Harvey. They could see even then the sky stains far down the Wahoo Valley, where the villages of Foley and Magnus rose and duplicated the ugliness of South Harvey.

The drift of the conversation was personal. The thoughts of youth are largely personal. The universe is measured by one's own thumb in the twenties. "Funny, isn't it," said Grant, playing with a honeysuckle vine that climbed the post beside him, "I guess I'm the only one of the old crowd who is outlawed in overalls. There's Freddie Kollander and Nate Perry and cousin Morty and little Joe Calvin, all up town counterjumping or working in offices. The girls all getting married." He paused. "But as far as that goes I'm making more money than any of the fellows!" He paused again a moment and added as he gazed moodily into the pillars of smoke rising above South Harvey, "Gee, but I'll miss you when you're gone–"

The girl's silvery laugh greeted his words. "Now, Grant," she said, "where do you think I'm going? Why, Tom and I will be only a block from here–just over on Tenth Street in the Perry House."

Grant grinned as he shook his head. "You're lost and gone forever, just the same, Miss Clementine. In about three years I'll probably be that 'red-headed boss carpenter in the mine—let me see, what's his name?'"

"Oh, Grant," scoffed the girl. She saw that his heart was sadder than his face.

She took courage and said: "Grant, you never can know how

often I think of you–how much I want you to win everything worth while in this world, how much I want you to be happy–how I believe in you and–and–bet on you, Grant–bet on you!"

Grant did not answer her. Presently he looked up and over the broad valley below them. The sun behind the house was touching the limestone ledge far across the valley with golden rays. The smoke from South Harvey on their right was lighted also. The youth looked into the smoke. Then he turned his eyes back from the glowing smoke and spoke.

"This is how I look at it. I don't mean you're any different from any one else. What I was trying to say was that I'm the only one of our old crowd in the High School you know that used to have parties and go together in the old days–I'm the only one that's wearing overalls, and my way is down there"; he nodded his head toward the mines and smelters and factories in the valley.

"Look at these hands," he said, solemnly spreading out his wide, muscular hands on his knees; showing one bruised blue-black finger nail. The hands were flinty and hairy and brown, but they looked effective with an intelligence almost apart from the body which they served.

"I'm cut out for work. It's all right. That's my job, and I'm proud of it so far as that goes. I could get a place clerking if I wanted to, and be in the dancing crowd in six months, and be out to the Van Dorns for dinner in a year." He paused and looked into the distant valley and cried. "But I tell you–my job is down there. And I'm not going to quit them. God knows they're getting

the rough end of it. If you knew," his voice raised slightly and a petulant indignation tempered it. "If you knew the gouging and pocket picking and meanness that is done by the people up town to the people down there in the smoke, you'd be one of those howling red-mouthed anarchists you read about."

The girl looked at him silently and at length asked: "For instance–what's just one thing?"

"Well, for instance–in the mines where I work all the men come up grimy and greasy and vile. They have to wash. In Europe we roughnecks know that wash-houses are provided by the company, but here," he cried excitedly, "the company doesn't provide even a faucet; instead the men–father and son and maybe a boarder or two have to go home–into those little one and two roomed houses the company has built, and strip to the hide with the house full of children and wash. What if your girlhood had been used to seeing things like that–could you laugh as you laugh now?" He looked up at her savagely. "Oh, I know they're ignorant foreigners and little better than animals and those things don't hurt them–only if you had a little girl who had to be in and out of the single room of your home when the men came home to wash up–"

He broke off, and then began again, "Why, I was talking to a dago last night at the shaft mouth going down to work on the graveyard shift and he said that he came here believing he would find a free, beautiful country in which his children could grow up self-respecting men and women, and then he told me about

his little girls living down there where all the vice is scattered through the tenements, and–about this washing up proposition, and now one of the girls is gone and they can't find her." He threw out a despairing hand; "So I'm a roughneck, Laura–I'm a jay, and I'm going to stay with them."

"But your people," she urged. "What about them–your father and brothers?"

"Jap's climbing out. Father's too old to get in. And Kenyon–" he flinched, "I hope to God I'll have the nerve to stay when the test on him comes." He turned to the girl passionately: "But you–you–oh, you–I want you to know–" He did not finish the sentence, but rose and walked into the house and called: "Dad–Kenyon–come on, it's getting late. Stars are coming out."

Half an hour later Tom Van Dorn, in white flannels, with a red silk tie, and with a white hat and shoes, came striding across the lawn. His black silky mustache, his soft black hair, his olive skin, his shining black eyes, his alert emotional face, dark and swarthy, was heightened even in the twilight by the soft white clothes he wore.

"Hello, popper-in-law," he cried. "Any room left on the veranda?"

"Come in, Thomas," piped the older man. "The girls are doing the dishes, Bedelia and Laura, and we'll just sit out two or three dances."

The young man lolled in the hammock shaded by the vines. The elder smoked and reflected. Then slowly and by degrees, as

men who are feeling their way to conversation, they began talking of local politics. They were going at a high rate when the talk turned to Henry Fenn. "Doing pretty well, Doctor," put in the younger man. "Only broke over once in eighteen months–that's the record for Henry. Shows what a woman can do for a man." He looked up sympathetically, and caught the Doctor's curious eyes.

The Doctor puffed, cleaned out his pipe, absently put it away, then rose and deliberately pulled his chair over to the hammock: "Tom–I'm a generation older than you–nearly. I want to tell you something–" He smiled. "Boy–you've got the devil's own fight ahead of you–did you know it–I mean," he paused, "the–well, the woman proposition."

Van Dorn fingered his mustache, and looked serious.

"Tom," the elder man chirped, "you're a handsome pup–a damn handsome, lovable pup. Sometimes." He let his voice run whimsically into its mocking falsetto, "I almost catch myself getting fooled too."

They laughed.

"Boy, the thing's in your blood. Did you realize that you've got just as hard a fight as poor Henry Fenn? It's all right now–for a while; but the time will come–we might just as well look this thing squarely in the face now, Tom–the time will come in a few years when the devil will build the same kind of a fire under you he is building under Henry Fenn–only it won't be whisky; it will be the woman proposition. Damn it, boy," cried the elder man squeakily, "it's in your blood; you've let it grow in your very

blood. I've known you ten years now, and I've seen it grow. Tom–when the time comes, can you stand up and fight like Henry Fenn–can you, Tom? And will you?" he cried with a piteous fierceness that stirred all the sympathy in the young man's heart.

He rose to the height of the Doctor's passion. Tears came into Van Dorn's bright eyes. His breast expanded emotionally and he exclaimed: "I know what I am, oh, I know it. But for her–you and I together–you'll help and we'll stand together and fight it out for her." The father looked at the mobile features of his companion, and sensed the thin plating of emotion under the vain voice. Whereupon the Doctor heaved a deep, troubled sigh.

"Heigh-ho, heigh-ho." He put his arm upon the broad, handsome, young shoulder. "But you'll try to be a good boy, won't you–" he repeated. "Just try hard to be a good boy, Tom–that's all any of us can do," and turning away he whistled into the house and a girlish trill answered him.

After the Doctor had jogged down the hill behind his old horse making his evening professional visits, Mrs. Nesbit came out and made a show of sitting with the young people for a time. And not until she left did they go into those things that were near their hearts.

When Mrs. Nesbit left the veranda the young man moved over to the girl and she asked: "Tom, I wonder–oh, so much and so often–about the soul of us and the body of us–about the justice of things." She was speaking out of the heart that Grant had touched to the quick with his outburst about the poor. But Tom

Van Dorn could not know what was moving within her and if he had known, perhaps he would have had small sympathy with her feeling. Then she said: "Oh, Tom, Tom, tell me–don't you suppose that our souls pay for the bodies that we crush–I mean all of us–all of us–every one in the world?"

The man looked at her blankly. Then he put his arm tenderly about her and answered: "I don't know about our souls–much–" He kissed her. "But I do know about you–your wonderful eyes–and your magic hair, and your soft cheek!" He left her in no doubt as to her lover's mood.

Vaguely the girl felt unsatisfied with his words. Not that she doubted the truth of them; but as she drew back from him she said softly: "But if I were not beautiful, what then?"

"Ah, but you are–you are; in all the world there is not another like you for me." In the rapture that followed, her soul grew in a wave of joy, yet she spoke shyly.

"Tom," she said wistfully, "how can you fail to see it–this great, beautiful truth that makes me glad: That the miracle of our love proves God."

He caressed her hands and pressed closer to her. "Call it what you will, little girl: God if it pleases you, I call it nature."

"Oh, it's bigger than that, Tom," and she shook a stubborn Satterthwaite head, "and it makes me so happy and makes me so humble that I want to share it with all the world." She laid an abashed cheek on his hands that were still fondling hers.

But young Mr. Van Dorn spoke up manfully, "Well, don't you

try sharing it. I want all of it, every bit of it." He played with her hair, and relaxed in a languor of complete possession of her.

"Doesn't love," she questioned, "lift you? Doesn't it make you love every living thing?" she urged.

"I love only you–only you in all the world–your eyes thrill me; when your body is near I am mad with delight; when I touch you I am in heaven. When I close my eyes before the jury I see you and I put the bliss of my vision into my voice, and," he clinched his hands, "all the devils of hell couldn't win that jury away from me. You spur me to my best, put springs in every muscle, put power in my blood."

"But, Tom, tell me this?" Still wistfully, she came close to him, and put her chin on her clasped hands that rested on his shoulder. "Love makes me want to be so good, so loyal, so brave, so kind–isn't it that way with you? Isn't love the miracle that brings the soul out into the world through the senses." She did not wait for his answer. She clasped her hands tighter on his shoulder. "I feel that I'm literally stealing when I have a single thought that I do not bring to you. In every thrill of my heart about the humblest thing, I find joy in knowing that we shall enjoy it together. Let me tell you something. Grant Adams and his father were here to-day for dinner. Well, you know Grant is in a kind of obsession of love for that little motherless child Mrs. Adams left; Grant mothers him and fathers him and literally loves him to distraction. And Grant's growing so manly, and so loyal and so strong in the love of that little boy–he doesn't realize it; but I can see it in him. Oh,

Tom, can you see it in me?"

Before her mood had changed she told him all that Grant Adams had said; and her voice broke when she retold the Italian's story. Tears were in her eyes when she finished. And young Mr. Van Dorn was emotionally touched also, but not in sympathy with the story the girl was telling. She ended it:

"And then I looked at Grant's big rough hands–bony and hairy, and Tom, they told me the whole story of his destiny; just as your soft, effective, gentle white hands prophesy our destiny. Oh, why–why–I am beginning to wonder why, Tom, why things must be so. Why do some of us have to do all the world's rough, hard, soul-killing work, and others of us have lives that are beautiful, aspiring, glorious? How can we let such injustices be, and not try to undo them!"

In his face an indignation was rising which she could not comprehend. Finally he found words to say:

"So that's what that Adams boy is putting in your head! Why do you want to bother with such nonsense?"

But the girl stopped him: "Tom, it's not nonsense. They do work and dig and grind down there in a way which we up here know nothing about. It's real–this–this miserable unfair way things are done in the world. O my dear, my dear, it's because I love you so, it's because I know now what love really is that it hurts to see–" He took her face in his hands caressingly, and tried to put an added tenderness into his voice that his affection might blunt the sharpness of his words.

"Well, it's nonsense I tell you! Look here, Laura, if there is a God, he's put those dagos and ignorant foreigners down there to work; just as he's put the fish in the sea to be caught, and the beasts of the field to be eaten, and it's none of my business to ask why! My job is myself–myself and you! I refuse to bear burdens for people. I love you with all the intensity of my nature–but it's my nature–not human nature–not any common, socialized, diluted love; it's individual and it's forever between you and me! What do I care for the rest of the world! And if you love me as you will some day, you'll love me so that they can't set you off mooning about other people's troubles. I tell you, Laura, I'm going to make you love me so you can't think of anything day or night but me–and what I am to you! That's my idea of love! It's individual, intimate, restricted, qualified and absolutely personal–and some day you'll see that!"

As he tripped down the hill from the Nesbit home that spring night, he wondered what Laura Nesbit meant when she spoke of Grant Adams, and his love for the motherless baby. The idea that this love bore any sort of resemblance to the love of educated, cultivated people as found in the love that Laura and her intended husband bore toward each other, puzzled the young lawyer. Being restless, he turned off his homeward route, and walked under the freshly leaved trees. Over and over again the foolish phrases and sentences from Laura Nesbit's love making, many other nights in which she seemed to assume the unquestioned truth of the hypothesis of God, also puzzled him. Whatever

his books had taught him, and whatever life had taught him, convinced him that God was a polite word for explaining one's failure. Yet, here was a woman whose mind he had to respect, using the term as a proved theorem. He looked at the stars, wheeling about with the monstrous pulleys of gravitation and attraction, and the certain laws of motion. A moment later he looked southward in the sky to that flaming, raging, splotched patch where the blue and green and yellow flames from the smelters and the belching black smoke from the factories hid the low-hanging stars and marked the seething hell of injustice and vice and want and woe that he knew was in South Harvey, and he held the glowing cigarette stub in his hand and laughed when he thought of God. "Free will," says "Mr. Left" in one of his rather hazy and unconvincing observations, "is of limited range. Man faces two buttons. He must choose the material or the spiritual–and when he has chosen fate plays upon his choice the grotesque variation of human destiny. But when the cloth of life is finished, the pattern of the passing events may be the same in either choice, riches or poverty, misery or power, only the color of the cloth differs; in one piece, however rich, the pattern is drab with despair, the other cloth sheens in happiness." Which Mr. Van Dorn in later life, reading the *Psychological Journal*, turned back to a second time, and threw aside with a casual and unappreciative, "Oh hell," as his only comment.

CHAPTER XII
IN WHICH WE LEARN THAT LOVE IS THE LEVER THAT MOVES THE WORLD

Mrs. Nesbit tried to put the Doctor into his Sunday blacks the day of her daughter's wedding, but he would have none of them. He appeared on Market Street and went his rounds among the sick in his linen clothes with his Panama hat and his pleated white shirt. He did not propose to have the visiting princes, political and commercial, who had been summoned to honor the occasion, find him in his suzerainty without the insignia of his power. For it was "Old Linen Pants," not Dr. James Nesbit, who was the boss of the northern district and a member of the State's triumvirate. So the Doctor in the phaëton, drawn by his amiable, motherly, sorrel mare, the Doctor, white and resplendent in a suit that shimmered in the hot June sun, flaxed around town, from his office to the hotel, from the hotel to the bank, from the bank to South Harvey. As a part of the day's work he did the honors of the town, soothed the woes of the weary, healed the sick, closed a dying man's eyes, held a mother's hands away from death as she brought life into the world, made a governor, paid his overdue note, got a laborer work, gave a lift to a fallen woman, made two

casual purchases: a councilman and a new silk vest, with cash in hand; lent a drunkard's wife the money for a sack of flour, showed three Maryland Satterthwaites where to fish for bass in the Wahoo, took four Schenectady Van Dorns out to lunch, and was everywhere at once doing everything, clicking his cane, whistling gently or humming a low, crooning tune, smiling for the most part, keeping his own counsel and exhibiting no more in his face of what was in his heart than the pink and dimpled back of a six-months' baby.

To say that the Doctor was everywhere in Harvey is inexact. He was everywhere except on Quality Hill in Elm Street. There, from the big, bulging house with its towers and minarets and bow windows and lean-tos, ells and additions, the Doctor was barred. There was chaos, and the spirit that breathed on the face of the waters was the Harvey representative of the Maryland Satterthwaites, with her crimping pins bristling like miniature gun barrels, and with the look of command upon her face, giving orders in a firm, cool voice and then executing the orders herself before any one else could turn around. She could call the spirits from the vasty deep of the front hall or the back porch and they came, or she knew the reason why. With an imperial wave of her hand she sent her daughter off to some social wilderness of monkeys with all the female Satterthwaites and Van Dorns and Mrs. Senators and Miss Governors and Misses Congressmen, and with the offices of Mrs. John Dexter, Mrs. Herdicker, the ladies' hatter, and two Senegambian slaveys, Mrs. Nesbit brought

order out of what at one o'clock seemed without form and void.

It was late in the afternoon, almost evening, though the sun still was high enough in the heavens to throw cloud shadows upon the hills across the valley when the Doctor stabled his mare and came edging into the house from the barn. He could hear the clamor of many voices; for the Maryland Satterthwaites had come home from the afternoon's festivity. He slipped into his office-study, and as it was stuffy there he opened the side door that let out upon the veranda. He sat alone behind the vines, not wishing to be a part of the milling in the rooms. His heart was heavy. He blinked and sighed and looked across the valley, and crooned his old-fashioned tune while he tried to remember all of the life of the little girl who had come out of the mystery of birth into his life when Elm Street was a pair of furrows on a barren, wind-swept prairie hill; tried to remember how she had romped in girlhood under the wide sunshine in the prairie grass, how her little playhouse had sat where the new dining-room now stood, how her dolls used to litter the narrow porch that grew into the winding, serpentine veranda that belted the house, how she read his books, how she went about with him on his daily rounds, and how she had suddenly bloomed into a womanhood that made him feel shy and abashed in her presence. He wondered where it was upon the way that he had lost clasp of her hand: where did it drop from him? How did the little fingers that he used to hold so tightly, slip into another's hand? Her life's great decision had been made without consulting him; when did he lose her

confidence? She had gone her way an independent soul–flown like a bird from the cage, he thought, and was going a way that he felt would be a way of pain, and probably sorrow, yet he could not stop her. All the experience of his life was worthless to her. All that he knew of men, all that he feared of her lover, were as chaff in the scales for her.

The Doctor, the boss, the friend, the man, withdrew from his consciousness as he sat behind the vines and he became the impersonal, universal father, wondering at the mystery of life. As he sat musing, he heard a step behind him, and saw his daughter coming across the porch to greet him. "Father," she said, "I have just this half hour that's to be ours. I've planned for it all day. Mother has promised to keep every one away."

The father's jaw began to tremble and his cherubic face to wrinkle in an emotional pucker. He put the girl's arm about his neck, and rubbed her hand upon his cheek. Then the father said softly:

"I never felt poor before until this minute." The girl looked inquiringly at him and was about to protest. He stopped her: "Money wouldn't do you much good–not all the money in the world."

"Well, father, I don't want money: we don't need it," said the girl. "Why, we have a beautiful home and Tom is making–"

"It's not that, my dear–not that." He played with her hand a moment longer. "I feel that I ought to give you something better than money; my–my–well, my view of life–what they call

philosophy of life. It's the accumulation of fifty years of living." He fumbled in his pocket for his pipe. "Let me smoke, and maybe I can talk."

"Laura–girl–" He puffed bashfully in a pause, and began again: "There's a lot of Indiana–real common Eendiany," he mocked, "about your father, and I just some way can't talk under pressure." He caressed the girl's hand and pulled at his pipe as one giving birth to a system of philosophy. Yet he was dumb as he sat before the warm glow of the passing torch of life which was shining from his daughter's face. Finally he burst forth, piping impatience at his own embarrassment.

"I tell you, daughter, it's just naturally hell to be pore." The girl saw his twitching mouth and the impotence of his swimming eyes; but before she could protest he checked her.

"Pore! Pore!" he repeated hopelessly. "Why, if we had a million, I would still be just common, ornery, doless pore folks–tongue-tied and helpless, and I couldn't give you nothin–nothin!" he cried, "but just rubbish! Yet there are so many things I'd like to give you, Laura–so many, many things!" he repeated. "God Almighty's put a terrible hog-tight inheritance tax on experience, girl!" He smiled a crooked, tearful little smile–looked up into her eyes in dog-like wistfulness as he continued: "I'd like to give you some of mine–some of the wisdom I've got one way and another–but, Lord, Lord," he wailed, "I can't. The divine inheritance tax bars me." He patted her with one hand, holding his smoldering pipe in the other. Then he shrilled out in the impotence of

his pain: “I just must give you this, Laura: Whatever comes and whatever goes–and lots of sad things will come and lots of sad things will go, too, for that matter–always remember this: Happiness is from the heart out–not from the world in! Do you understand, child–do you?”

The girl smiled and petted him, but he saw that he hadn’t reached her consciousness. He puffed at a dead pipe a moment, then he cried as he beat his hands together in despair: “I suppose it’s no use. It’s no use. But you can at least remember these words, Laura, and some time the meaning will get to you. Always carry your happiness under your bonnet! It’s the only thing I can give you–out of all my store!”

The girl put her arm about him and pressed closely to him, and they rose, as she said: “Why, father–I understand. Of course I understand. Don’t you see I understand, father?”

She spoke eagerly and clasped her arms tighter about the pudgy little figure. They stood quietly a moment, as the father looked earnestly, dog-wise, up into her face, as if trying by his very gaze to transmit his loving wisdom. Then, as he found voice: “No, Laura, probably you’ll need fifty years to understand; but look over on the hill across the valley at the moving cloud shadows. They are only shadows–not realities. They are just unrealities that prove the real–just trailing anchors of the sun!” He had pocketed his pipe and his hand came up from his pocket as he waved to the distant shadows and piped: “Trouble–heartaches–all the host of clouds that cover life–are only–only–”

he let his voice drop gently as he sighed: “only anchors of the sun; Laura, they only prove–just prove–”

She did not let him finish, but bent to kiss him and she could feel the shudder of a smothered sob rack him as she touched his cheek.

Then he smiled at her and chirped: “Just Eendiany–sis’. Just pore, dumb Eendiany! Hi, ho! Now run and be a good girl! And here’s a jim-crack your daddy got you!”

From his pocket he drew out a little package, and dangled a sparkling jewel in his hands. He saw a flash of pleasure on her face. But his heart was full, and he turned away his head as he handed the gift to her. Her eyes were upon the sparkling jewel, as he led her into the house, saying with a great sigh: “Come on, my dear–let’s go in.”

At nine o’clock that night, the great foundry of a house, with its half a score of chimneys, marking its various epochs of growth, literally was stuffed with smilax, ferns, roses, orange blossoms, and daisy chains. In the mazes of these aisles of verdure, a labyrinth of Van Dorns and Satterthwaites and visiting statesmen with highly powdered womankind was packed securely. George Brotherton, who was born a drum major, wearing all of his glittering insignia of a long line of secret societies, moved as though the welding humanity were fluid. He had presided at too many funerals not to know the vast importance of keeping the bride’s kin from the groom’s kin, and when he saw that they were ushered into the wedding supper, in due form and

order, it was with the fine abandon of a grand duke lording it over the populace. Senators, Supreme Court justices, proud Satterthwaites, haughty Van Dorns, Congressmen, governors, local gentry, were packed neatly but firmly in their proper boxes.

The old families of Harvey–Captain Morton and his little flock, the Kollanders, Ahab Wright with his flaring side-whiskers, his white necktie and his shadow of a wife; Joseph Calvin and his daughter in pigtails, Mrs. Calvin having written Mrs. Nesbit that it seemed that she just never did get to go anywhere and be anybody, having said as much and more to Mr. Calvin with emphasis; Mrs. Brotherton, mother of George, beaming with pride at her son's part; stuttering Kyle Perry and his hatchet-faced son, the Adamses all starched for the occasion, Daniel Sands, a widower pro tem. with a broadening interest in school teachers, Mrs. Herdicker, the ladies' hatter, classifying the Satterthwaites and the Van Dorns according to the millinery of their womenkind; Morty Sands wearing the first white silk vest exhibited in Harvey and making violent eyes at a daughter of the railroad aristocracy–either a general manager's daughter or a general superintendent's, and for the life of her Mrs. Nesbit couldn't say; for she had not the highest opinion in the world of the railroad aristocracy, but took them, president, first, second and third vice, general managers, ticket and passenger agents, and superintendents, as a sort of social job-lot because they came in private cars, and the Doctor desired them, to add to his trophies of the occasion,–Henry Fenn, wearing soberly the suit in

which he appeared when he rode the skyrocket, and forming part of the bridal chorus, stationed in the cigar-box of a sewing-room on the second floor to sing, "Oh, Day So Dear," as the happy couple came down the stairs–the old families of Harvey were all invited to the wedding. And the old and the new and most of the intermediary families of no particular caste or standing, came to the reception after the ceremony. But because she had the best voice in town, Margaret Müller sang "Oh, Promise Me," in a remote bedroom–to give the effect of distant music, low and sweet, and after that song was over, and after Henry Fenn's great pride had been fairly sated, Margaret Müller mingled with the guests and knew more of the names and stations of the visiting nobility from the state house and railroad offices than any other person present. And such is the perversity of the male sex that there were more "by Georges," and more "Look–look, looks," and more faint whistles, and more "Tch–tch tchs," and more nudging and pointing among the men when Margaret appeared than when the bride herself, pink and white and beautiful, came down the stairs. Even the eyes of the groom, as he stood beside the bride, tall, youthful, strong, and handsome as a man may dare to be and earn an honest living, even his eyes sometimes found themselves straying toward the figure and face of the beautiful girl whom he had scarcely noticed while she worked in the court house. But this may be said for the groom, that when his eyes did wander, he pulled them back with an almost irritated jerk, and seemed determined to keep them upon the girl by his side.

As for the wedding ceremony itself–it was like all others. The women looked exultant, and the men–the groom, the bride's father, the groomsmen, and even Rev. John Dexter, had a sort of captured look and went through the service as though they wished that marriages which are made in Heaven were celebrated there also. But after the service was actually accomplished, after the bride and groom had been properly congratulated, after the multitude had been fed in serried ranks according to social precedence, after the band on the lawn outside had serenaded the happy couple, and after further interminable handshaking and congratulations, from those outside, after the long line of invited guests had filed past the imposing vista of pickle dishes, cutlery, butter dishes and cake plates, reaching around the walls of three bedrooms,–to say nothing of an elaborate wax representation of nesting cupids bearing the card of the Belgian Society from the glass works and sent, according to the card, to "Mlle. Lille'n'en Pense"; after the carriage, bedecked and bedizened with rice and shoes and ribbons, that was supposed to bear away the bride and groom, had gone amid the shouting and the tumult of the populace, and after the phaëton and the sorrel mare had actually taken the bride and groom from the barn to the railway station, after the fiddle and the bassoon and the horn and the tinkling cymbal at Morty Sands's dance had frayed and torn the sleep of those pale souls who would sleep on such a night in Harvey, Grant Adams and his father, leaving Jasper to trip whatever fantastic toes he might have, in the opera house, drove down the hill

through the glare of the furnaces, the creaking of the oil derricks and the smell of the straw paper mill through the heart of South Harvey.

They made little talk as they rode. Their way led them through the street which is shaded and ashamed by day, and which glows and flaunts itself by night. Men and women, gambling, drinking, carousing, rioted through the street, in and out of doors that spilled puddles of yellow light on the board sidewalks and dirt streets; screaming laughter, hoarse calls, the stench of liquor, the muffled noises of gambling, sputter of electric lights and the flash of glimmering reflections from bar mirrors rasped their senses and kept the father and son silent as they rode. When they had passed into the slumbering tenements, the father spoke: "Well, son, here it is–the two kinds of playing, and here we have what they call the bad people playing. The Van Dorns and the Satterthwaites will tell you that vice is the recreation of the poor. And it's more or less true." The elder man scratched his beard and faced the stars: "It's a devilish puzzle. Character makes happiness; I've got that down fine. But what makes character? Why is vice the recreation of the poor? Why do we recruit most of our bad boys and all of our wayward girls from those neighborhoods in every city where the poor live? Why does the clerk on $12 a week uptown crowd into Doctor Jim's wedding party, and the glass blower at $4 a day down here crowd into 'Big Em's' and 'Joe's Place' and the 'Crescent'? Is poverty caused by vice; or is vice a symptom of poverty? And why does the clerk's

wife move in 'our best circles' and the miner's wife, with exactly the same money to spend, live in outer social darkness?"

"I've asked myself that question lots of times," exclaimed the youth. "I can't make it work out on any theory. But I tell you, father," the son clinched the hand that was free from the lines, and shook it, "it's wrong–some way, somehow, it's wrong, way down at the bottom of things–I don't know how nor why–but as sure as I live, I'll try to find out."

The clang of an engine bell in the South Harvey railroad yards drowned the son's answer. The two were crossing the track and turning the corner that led to the South Harvey station. The midnight train was about due. As the buggy came near the little gray box of a station a voice called, "Adams–Adams," and a woman's voice, "Oh, Grant."

"Why," exclaimed the father, "it's the happy couple." Grant stopped the horse and climbed out over the sleeping body of little Kenyon. "In a moment," replied Grant. Then he came to a shadow under the station eaves and saw the young people hiding. "Adams, you can help us," said Van Dorn. "We slipped off in the Doctor's phaëton, to get away from the guying crowd and we have tried to get the house on the 'phone, and in some way they don't answer. The horse is tied over by the lumber yard there. Will you take it home with you to-night, and deliver it to the Doctor in the morning–whatever–" But Grant cut in:

"Why, of course. Glad to have the chance." He was awkward and ill at ease, and repeated, "Why, of course, anything." But Van

Dorn interjected: "You understand, I'll pay for it–" Grant Adams stared at him. "Why–why–no–" stammered Grant in confusion, while Van Dorn thrust a five-dollar bill upon him. He tried to return it, but the bride and groom ran to the train, leaving the young man alone and hurt in his heart. The father from the buggy saw what had happened. In a few minutes they were leading the Doctor's horse behind the Adams buggy. "I didn't want their money," exclaimed Grant, "I wanted their–their–"

"You wanted their friendship, Grant–that's what you wanted," said the father.

"And he wanted a hired man," cried Grant. "Just a hired man, and she–why, didn't she understand? She knew I would have carried the old horse on my back clear to town, if she'd let me, just to hear her laugh once. Father," the son's voice was bitter as he spoke, "why didn't she understand—why did she side with him?"

The father smiled. "Perhaps, on your wedding trip, Grant, your wife will agree with you too, son."

As they rode home in silence, the young man asked himself over and over again, what lines divided the world into classes; why manual toil shuts off the toilers from those who serve the world otherwise. Youth is sensitive; often it is supersensitive, and Grant Adams saw or thought he saw in the little byplay of Tom Van Dorn the caste prod of society jabbing labor back into its place.

"Tom," said the bride as they watched Grant Adams unhitch

the horse by the lumber yard, "why did you force that money on Grant—he would have much preferred to have your hand when he said good-by."

"He's not my kind of folks, Laura," replied Van Dorn. "I know you like him. But that five will do him lots more good than my shaking his hand, and if that youth wasn't as proud as Lucifer he'd rather have five dollars than any man's hand. I would—if it comes to that."

"But, Tom," answered the girl, "that wasn't pride, that was self-respect."

"Well, my dear," he squeezed her gloved hand and in the darkness put his arm about her, "let's not worry about him. All I know is that I wanted to square it with him for taking care of the horse and five dollars won't hurt his self-respect. And," said the bridegroom as he pressed the bride very close to his heart, "what is it to us? We have each other, so what do we care—what is all the world to us?"

As the midnight train whistled out of South Harvey Grant Adams sitting on a bedside was fondly unbuttoning a small body from its clothes, ready to hear a sleepy child's voice say its evening prayers. In his heart there flamed the love for the child that was beckoning him into love for every sentient thing. And as Laura Van Dorn, bride of Thomas of that name, heard the whistle, her being was flooded with a love high and marvelous, washing in from the infinite love that moves the universe and carrying her soul in aspiring thrills of joy out to ride upon the

mysterious currents that we know are not of ourselves, and so have called divine.

In the morning, in the early gray of morning, when Grant Adams rose to make the fire for breakfast, he found his father, sitting by the kitchen table, half clad as he had risen from a restless bed. Scrawled sheets of white paper lay around him on the floor and the table. He said sadly:

"She can't come, Grant–she can't come. I dreamed of her last night; it was all so real–just as she was when we were young, and I thought–I was sure she was near." He sighed as he leaned back in his chair. "But they've looked for her–all of them have looked for her. She knows I'm calling–but she can't come." The father fumbled the papers, rubbed his gray beard, and shut his fine eyes as he shook his head, and whispered: "What holds her–what keeps her? They all come but her."

"What's this, father?" asked Grant, as a page closely written in a fine hand fluttered to the floor.

"Oh, nothing–much–just Mr. Left bringing me some message from Victor Hugo. It isn't much."

But the Eminent Authority who put it into the Proceedings of the Psychological Society laid more store by it than he did by the scraps and incoherent bits of jargon which pictured the old man's lonely grief. They are not preserved for us, but in the Proceedings, on page 1125, we have this from Mr. Left:

"The vice of the poor is crass and palpable. It carries a quick and deadly corrective poison. But the vices of the well-to-do are

none the less deadly. To dine in comfort and know your brother is starving; to sleep in peace and know that he is wronged and oppressed by laws that we sanction, to gather one's family in contentment around a hearth, while the poor dwell in a habitat of vice that kills their souls, to live without bleeding hearts for the wrong on this earth–that is the vice of the well-to-do. And so it shall come to pass that when the day of reckoning appears it shall be a day of wrath. For when God gives the poor the strength to rise (and they are waxing stronger every hour), they will meet not a brother's hand but a glutton's–the hard, dead hand of a hard, dead soul. Then will the vicious poor and the vicious well-to-do, each crippled by his own vices, the blind leading the blind, fall to in a merciless conflict, mad and meaningless, born of a sad, unnecessary hate that shall terrorize the earth, unless God sends us another miracle of love like Christ or some vast chastening scourge of war, to turn aside the fateful blow."

CHAPTER XIII
IN WHICH WE OBSERVE THE INTERIOR OF A DESERTED HOUSE

An empty, lonely house was that on Quality Hill in Elm Street after the daughter's marriage. It was not that the Doctor and Mrs. Nesbit did not see their daughter often; but whether she came every day or twice a week or every week, always she came as a visitor. No one may have two homes. And the daughter of the house of Nesbit had her own home;–a home wherein she was striving to bind her husband to a domesticity which in itself did not interest him. But with her added charm to it, she believed that she could lure him into an acceptance of her ideal of marriage. So with all her powers she fell to her task. Consciously or unconsciously, directly or by indirection, but always with the joy of adventure in her heart, whether with books or with music or with comradeship, she was bending herself to the business of wifehood, so that her own home filled her life and the Nesbit home was lonely; so lonely was it that by way of solace and diversion, Mrs. Nesbit had all the woodwork downstairs "done over" in quarter-sawed oak with elaborate carvings. Ferocious gargoyles, highly excited dolphins, improper, pot-bellied little

cupids, and mermaids without a shred of character, seemed about to pounce out from banister, alcove, bookcase, cozy corner and china closet.

George Brotherton pretended to find resemblances in the effigies to people about Harvey, and to the town's echoing delight he began to name the figures after their friends, and always saluted the figures intimately, as Maggie, or Henry, or the Captain, or John Kollander, or Lady Herdicker. But through the wooden menagerie in the big house the Doctor whistled and hummed and smoked and chirruped more or less drearily. To him the Japanese screens, the huge blue vases, the ponderous high-backed chairs crawly with meaningless carvings, the mantels full of jars and pots and statuettes, brought no comfort. He was forever putting his cane over his arm and clicking down the street to the Van Dorn home; but he felt in spite of all his daughter's efforts to welcome him–and perhaps because of them–that he was a stranger there. So slowly and rather imperceptibly to him, certainly without any conscious desire for it, a fondness for Kenyon Adams sprang up in the Doctor's heart. For it was exceedingly soft in spots and those spots were near his home. He was domestic and he was fond of home joys. So when Mrs. Nesbit put aside the encyclopedia, from which she was getting the awful truth about Babylonian Art for her paper to be read before the Shakespeare Club, and going to the piano, brought from the bottom of a pile of yellow music a tattered sheet, played a Chopin nocturne in a rolling and

rather grand style that young women affected before the Civil War, the Doctor's joy was scarcely less keen than the child's. Then came rare occasions when Laura, being there for the night while her husband was away on business, would play melodies that cut the child's heart to the quick and brought tears of joy to his big eyes. It seemed to him at those times as if Heaven itself were opened for him, and for days the melodies she played would come ringing through his heart. Often he would sit absorbed at the piano when he should have been practicing his lesson, picking out those melodies and trying with a poignant yearning for perfection to find their proper harmonies. But at such times after he had frittered away a few minutes, Mrs. Nesbit would call down to him, "You, Kenyon," and he would sigh and take up his scales and runs and arpeggios.

Kenyon was developing into a shy, lovely child of few noises; he seemed to love to listen to every continuous sound–a creaking gate, a waterdrip from the eaves, a whistling wind–a humming wire. Sometimes the Doctor would watch Kenyon long minutes, as the child listened to the fire's low murmur in the grate, and would wonder what the little fellow made of it all. But above everything else about the child the Doctor was interested in watching his eyes develop into the great, liquid, soulful orbs that marked his mother. To the Doctor the resemblance was rather weird. But he could see no other point in the child's body or mind or soul whereon Margaret Müller had left a token. The Doctor liked to discuss Kenyon with his wife from the standpoint of

ancestry. He took a sort of fiendish delight–if one may imagine a fiend with a seraphic face and dancing blue eyes and a mouth that loved to pucker in a pensive whistle–in Mrs. Nesbit's never failing stumble over the child's eyes.

Any evening he would lay aside his Browning—even in a knotty passage wherein the Doctor was wont to take much pleasure, and revert to type thus:

"Yes, I guess there's something in blood as you say! The child shows it! But where do you suppose he gets those eyes?" His wife would answer energetically, "They aren't like Amos's and they certainly are not much like Mary's! Yet those eyes show that somewhere in the line there was fine blood and high breeding."

And the Doctor, remembering the kraut-peddling Müller, who used to live back in Indiana, and who was Kenyon's great-grandfather, would shake a wise head and answer:

"Them eyes is certainly a throw-back to the angel choir, my dear–a sure and certain throw-back!"

And while Mrs. Nesbit was climbing the Sands family tree, from Mary Adams back to certain Irish Sandses of the late eighteenth century, the Doctor would flit back to "Paracelsus," to be awakened from its spell by: "Only the Irish have such eyes! They are the mark of the Celt all over the world! But it's curious that neither Mary nor Daniel had those eyes!"

"It's certainly curious like," squeaked the Doctor amicably–"certainly curious like, as the treetoad said when he couldn't holler up a rain. But it only proves that blood always tells!

Bedelia, there's really nothing so true in this world as blood!"

And Mrs. Nesbit would ask him a moment later what he could find so amusing in "Paracelsus"? She certainly never had found anything but headaches in it.

Yet there came a time when the pudgy little stomach of the Doctor did not shake in merriment. For he also had his problem of blood to solve. Tom Van Dorn was, after all, the famous Van Dorn baby!

One evening in the late winter as the Doctor was trudging home from a belated call, he saw the light in Brotherton's window marking a yellow bar across the dark street. As he stepped in for a word with Mr. Brotherton about the coming spring city election, he saw quickly that the laugh was in some way on Tom Van Dorn, who rose rather guiltily and hurried out of the shop.

"Seegars on George!" exclaimed Captain Morton; then answered the Doctor's gay, inquiring stare: "Henry bet George a box of Perfectos Tom wouldn't be a year from his wedding asking 'what's her name' when the boys were discussing some girl or other, and they've laid for Tom ever since and got him to-night, eh?"

The Captain laughed, and then remembering the Doctor's relationship with the Van Dorns, colored and tried to cover his blunder with: "Just boys, you know, Doc–just their way."

The Doctor grinned and piped back, "Oh, yes–yes–Cap–I know, boys will be dogs!"

Toddling home that night the Doctor passed the Van Dorn

house. He saw through the window the young couple in their living-room. The doctor had a feeling that he could sense the emotions of his daughter's heart. It was as though he could see her trying in vain to fasten the steel grippers of her soul into the heart and life of the man she loved. Over and over the father asked himself if in Tom Van Dorn's heart was any essential loyalty upon which the hooks and bonds of the friendship and fellowship of a home could fasten and hold. The father could see the handsome young face of Van Dorn in the gas light, aflame with the joy of her presence, but Dr. Nesbit realized that it was a passing flame–that in the core of the husband was nothing to which a wife might anchor her life; and as the Doctor clicked his cane on the sidewalk vigorously he whispered to himself: "Peth–peth–nothing in his heart but peth."

A day came when the parents stood watching their daughter as she went down the street through the dusk, after she had kissed them both and told them, and after they had all said they were very happy over it. But when she was out of sight the hands of the parents met and the Doctor saw fear in Bedelia Nesbit's face for the first time. But neither spoke of the fear. It took its place by the vague uneasiness in their hearts, and two spectral sentinels stood guard over their speech.

Thus their talk came to be of those things which lay remote from their hearts. It was Mrs. Nesbit's habit to read the paper and repeat the news to the Doctor, who sat beside her with a book. He jabbed in comments; she ignored them. Thus: "I see

Grant Adams has been made head carpenter for all the Wahoo Fuel Companies mines and properties." To which the Doctor replied: "Grant, my dear, is an unusual young man. He'll have ten regular men under him–and I claim that's fine for a boy in his twenties–with no better show in life than Grant has had." But Mrs. Nesbit had in general a low opinion of the Doctor's estimates of men. She held that no man who came from Indiana and was fooled by men who wore cotton in their ears and were addicted to chilblains, could be trusted in appraising humanity.

So she answered, "Yes," dryly. It was her custom when he began to bestow knighthood upon common clay to divert him with some new and irrelevant subject. "Here's an item in the *Times* this morning I fancy you didn't read. After describing the bride's dress and her beauty, it says, 'And the bride is a daughter of the late H. M. Von Müller, who was an exile from his native land and gave up a large estate and a title because of his participation in the revolution of '48. Miss Müller might properly be called the Countess Von Müller, if she chose to claim her rightful title!'–what is there to that?"

The Doctor threw back his head and chuckled:

"Pennsylvania Dutch for three generations–I knew old Herman Müller's father–before I came West–when he used to sell kraut and cheese around Vincennes before the war, and Herman's grandfather came from Pennsylvania."

"I thought so," sniffed Mrs. Nesbit. And then she added: "Doctor, that girl is a minx."

"Yes, my dear," chirped the Doctor. "Yes, she's a minx; but this isn't the open season for minxes, so we must let her go. And," he added after a pause, during which he read the wedding notice carefully, "she may put a brace under Henry–the blessed Lord knows Henry will need something, though he's done mighty well for a year–only twice in eighteen months. Poor fellow–poor fellow!" mused the Doctor. Mrs. Nesbit blinked at her husband for a minute in sputtering indignation. Then she exclaimed: "Brace under Henry!" And to make it more emphatic, repeated it and then exploded: "The cat's foot–brace for Henry, indeed–that piece!"

And Mrs. Nesbit stalked out of the room, brought back a little dress–a very minute dress–she was making and sat rocking almost imperceptibly while her husband read. Finally, after a calming interval, she said in a more amiable tone, "Doctor Nesbit, if you've cut up all the women you claim to have dissected in medical school, you know precious little about what's in them, if you get fooled in that Margaret woman."

"The only kind we ever cut up," returned the Doctor in a mild, conciliatory treble, "were perfect–all Satterthwaites."

And when the Doctor fell back to his book, Mrs. Nesbit spent some time reflecting upon the virtues of her liege lord and wondering how such a paragon ever came from so common a State as Indiana, where so far as any one ever knew there was never a family in the whole commonwealth, and the entire population as she understood it carried potatoes in their pockets

to keep away rheumatism.

The evening wore away and Dr. and Mrs. Nesbit were alone by the ashes in the smoldering fire in the grate. They were about to go up stairs when the Doctor, who had been looking absent-mindedly into the embers, began meditating aloud about local politics while his wife sewed. His meditation concerned a certain trade between the city and Daniel Sands wherein the city parted with its stock in Sands's public utilities with a face value of something like a million dollars. The stocks were to go to Mr. Sands, while the city received therefor a ten-acre tract east of town on the Wahoo, called Sands Park. After bursting into the Doctor's political nocturne rather suddenly and violently with her feminine disapproval, Mrs. Nesbit sat rocking, and finally she exclaimed: "Good Lord, Jim Nesbit, I wish I was a man."

"I've long suspected it, my dear," piped her husband,

"Oh, it isn't that–not your politics," retorted Mrs. Nesbit, "though that made me think of it. Do you know what else old Dan Sands is doing?"

The Doctor bent over the fire, stirred it up and replied, "Well, not in particular."

"Philandering," sniffed Mrs. Nesbit.

"Again?" returned the Doctor.

"No," snapped Mrs. Nesbit–"as usual!"

The Doctor had no opinion to express; one of the family specters was engaging his attention at the moment. Presently his wife put down her paper and sat as one wrestling with an impulse.

The specter on her side of the hearth was trying to keep her lips sealed. They sat while the mantel clock ticked off five minutes.

"What are you thinking?" the Doctor asked.

"I'm thinking of Dan Sands," replied the wife with some emotion in her voice.

The foot tap of Mrs. Nesbit became audible. She shook her head with some force and exclaimed: "O Jim, wouldn't I like to have that man–just for one day."

"I've noticed," cut in the Doctor, "regarding such propositions from the gentler sex, that the Lord generally tempers the wind to the shorn lamb."

"The shorn lamb–the shorn lamb," retorted Mrs. Nesbit. "The shorn tom-cat! I'd like to shear him." Wherewith she rose and putting out the light led the Doctor to the stairs.

Both knew that the spectral sentinels had used Daniel Sands and his amours only as a seal upon their lips.

The parents could speak in parables about what they felt or fancied because there was so little that was tangible and substantial for them to see. Of all the institutions man has made–the state, the church, his commerce, his schools,–the home is by far the most spiritual. Its successes and its failures are never material. They are never evidenced in any sort of worldly goods. Only in the hearts of those who dwell in a home, or of those to whom it is dear, do its triumphs and its defeats register themselves. But in Tom Van Dorn's philosophy of life small space was left for things of the spirit alone, to register. He

was trying with all his might to build a home upon material things. So above all he built his home around a beautiful woman. Then he lavished upon her and about the house wherein she dwelled, beautiful objects. He was proud of their cost. Their value in dollars and cents gave these objects their chief value in his balance sheet of gain or less in footing up his account with his home. And because what he had was expensive, he prized it. Possibly because he had bought his wife's devotion, at some material sacrifice to his own natural inclinations toward the feminine world, he listed her high in the assets of the home; and so in the only way he could love, he loved her jealously. She and the rugs and pictures and furniture–all were dear to him, as chattels which he had bought and paid for and could brag about. And because he was too well bred to brag, the repression of that natural instinct he added to the cost of the items listed,–rugs, pictures, wife, furniture, house, trees, lot, and blue grass lawn. So when toward the end of the first year of his marriage, he found that actually he could turn his head and follow with his eyes a pretty petticoat going down Market Street, and still fool his wife; when he found he could pry open the eyes of Miss Mauling at the office again with his old ogle, and still have the beautiful love which he had bought with self-denial, its value dropped.

And his wife, who felt in her soul her value passing in the heart she loved, strove to find her fault and to correct it. Daily her devotion manifested itself more plainly. Daily she lived more singly to the purpose of her soul. And daily she saw that purpose

becoming a vain pursuit.

Outwardly the home was unchanged as this tragedy was played within the two hearts. The same scenery surrounded the players. The same voices spoke, in the same tones, the same words of endearment, and the same hours brought the same routine as the days passed. Yet the home was slowly sinking into failure. And the specters that sealed the lips of the parents who stood by and mutely watched the inner drama unfold, watched it unfold and translate itself into life without words, without deeds, without superficial tremor or flinching of any kind–the specters passed the sad story from heart to heart in those mysterious silences wherein souls in this world learn their surest truths.

CHAPTER XIV
IN WHICH OUR HERO STROLLS OUT WITH THE DEVIL TO LOOK AT THE HIGH MOUNTAIN

The soup had come and gone; great platters of fried chicken had disappeared, with incidental spinach and new peas and potatoes. A bowl of lettuce splashed with a French dressing had been mowed down as the grass, and the goodly company was surveying something less than an acre of strawberry shortcake at the close of a rather hilarious dinner–a spring dinner, to be exact. Rhoda Kollander was reciting with enthusiasm an elaborate and impossible travesty of a recipe for strawberry shortcake, which she had read somewhere, when the Doctor, in his nankeens, putting his hands on the table cloth as one who was about to deliver an oracle, ran his merry eyes down the table, gathering up the Adamses and Mortons and Mayor Brotherton and Morty Sands; fastened his glance upon the Van Dorns and cut in on the interminable shortcake recipe rather ruthlessly thus in his gay falsetto:

"Tom, here–thinks he's pretty smart. And George Brotherton, Mayor of all the Harveys, thinks he is a pretty smooth article; and the Honorable Lady Satterthwaite here, she's got a Maryland

notion that she has second sight into the doings of her prince consort." He chuckled and grinned as he beamed at his daughter: "And there is the princess imperial–she thinks she's mighty knolledgeous about her father–but," he cocked his head on one side, enjoying the suspense he was creating as he paused, drawling his words, "I'm just going to show you how I've got 'em all fooled."

He pulled from his pocket a long, official envelope, pulled from the envelope an official document, and also a letter. He laid the official document down before him and opened the letter.

"Kind o' seems to be signed by the Governor of the State," he drolled: "And seems like the more I look at it the surer I am it's addressed to Tom Van Dorn. I'm not much of an elocutionist and never could read at sight, having come from Eendiany, and I guess Rhody here, she's kind of elocutionary and I'll jest about ask her to read it to the ladies and gentlemen!" He handed Mrs. Kollander the letter and passed the sealed document to his son-in-law.

Mrs. Kollander read aloud:

"I take pleasure in handing you through the kindness of Senator James Nesbit your appointment to fill the vacancy in your judicial district created to-day by the resignation of Judge Arbuckle of your district to fill a vacancy in the Supreme Court of this State created there by the resignation of Justice Worrell."

Looking over his wife's shoulder and seeing the significance of the letter, John Kollander threw back his head and began

singing in his roaring voice, "For we'll rally round the flag, boys, we'll rally once again, shouting the battle cry of freedom," and the company at the table clapped its hands. And while George Brotherton was bellowing, "Well–say!" Judge Thomas Van Dorn kissed his wife and beamed his satisfaction upon the company.

When the commotion had subsided the chuckling little man, all a-beam with happiness, his pink, smooth face shining like a headlight, explained thus:

"I jest thought these Maryland Satterthwaites and Schenectady Van Dorns was a-gittin' too top-lofty, and I'd have to register one for the Grand Duke of Griggsby's Station, to sort of put 'em in their place!" He was happy; and his vernacular, which always was his pose under emotional stress, was broad, as he went on: "So I says to myself, the Corn Belt Railroad is mighty keen for a Supreme Court decision in the Missouri River rate case, and I says, Worrell J., he's the boy to write it, but I says to the Corn Belt folks, says I, 'It would shatter the respect of the people for their courts if Worrell J. should stay on the bench after writing the kind of a decision you want, so we'll just put him in your law offices at twelve thousand per, which is three times what he is getting now, and then one idear brought on another and here's Tom's commission and three men and a railroad all made happy!" He threw back his head and laughed silently as he finished, "and all the justices concurring!" After the hubbub of congratulations had passed and the guests had moved into the parlor of the Nesbit home, the little Doctor, standing among

them, regaled himself thus:

"Politics is jobs. Jobs is friends. Friends is politics. The reason why the reformers don't get anywhere is that they have no friends in politics. They regard the people as sticky and smelly and low. Bedelia has that notion. But I love 'em! Love 'em and vote 'em!"

Amos Adams opened his mouth to protest, but the Doctor waved him into silence. "I know your idear, Amos! But when the folks get tired of politics that is jobs and want politics that is principles, I'll open as fine a line of principles as ever was shown in this market!"

After the company had gone, Mrs. Nesbit faced her husband with a peremptory: "Well–will you tell me why, Jim Nesbit?" And he sighed and dropped into a chair.

"To save his self-respect! Self-respect grows on what it feeds on, my dear, and I thought maybe if he was a judge"–he looked into the anxious eyes of his wife and went on–"that might hold him!" He rested his head on a hand and drew in a deep breath. "'Vanity, vanity,' saith the Preacher–'all is vanity!' And I thought I'd hitch it to something that might pull him out of the swamp! And I happened to know that he had a sneaking notion of running for Judge this fall, so I thought I'd slip up and help him."

He sighed again and his tone changed. "I did it primarily for Laura," he said wearily, and: "Mother, we might as well face it."

Mrs. Nesbit looked intently at her husband in understanding silence and asked: "Is it any one in particular, Jim–"

He hesitated, then exclaimed: "Oh, I may be wrong, but

somehow I don't like the air–the way that Mauling girl assumes authority at the office. Why, she's made me wait in the outer office twice now–for nothing except to show that she could!"

"Yes, Jim–but what good will this judgeship do? How will it solve anything?" persisted the wife. The Doctor let his sigh precede his words: "The office will make him realize that the eyes of the community are on him, that he is in a way a marked man. And then the place will keep him busy and spur on his ambition. And these things should help."

He looked tenderly into the worried face of his wife and smiled. "Perhaps we're both wrong. We don't know. Tom's young and–" He ended the sentence in a "Ho–ho–ho–hum!" and yawned and rose, leading the way up stairs.

In the Van Dorn home a young wife was trying to define herself in the new relation to the community in which the evening's news had placed her. She had no idea of divorcing the judgeship from her life. She felt that marriage was a full partnership and that the judgeship meant much to her. She realized that as a judge's wife her life and her duties–and she was eager always to acquire new duties–would be different from her life and her duties as a lawyer's wife or a doctor's wife or a merchant's wife, for example. For Laura Van Dorn was in the wife business with a consuming ardor, and the whole universe was related to her wifehood. To her marriage was the development of a two-phase soul with but one will. As the young couple entered their home, the wife was saying:

"Tom, isn't it fine to think of the good you can do–these poor folk in the Valley don't really get justice. And they're your friends. They always help you and father in the election, and now you can see that they have their rights. Oh, I'm so glad–so glad father did it. That was his way to show them how he really loves them."

The husband smiled, a husbandly and superior smile, and said absently, "Oh, well, I presume they don't get much out of the courts, but they should learn to keep away from litigation. It's a rich man's game anyway!" He was thinking of the steps before him which might lead him to a higher court and still higher. His ambition vaulted as he spoke. "Laura, Father Jim wouldn't mind having a son-in-law on the United States Supreme Court, and I believe we can work together and make it in twenty years more!"

As the young wife saw the glow of ambition in his fine, mobile face she stifled the altruistic yearnings, which she had come to feel made her husband uncomfortable, and joined him as he gazed into the crystal ball of the future and saw its glistening chimera.

Perhaps the preceding dialogue wherein Dr. James Nesbit, his wife, his daughter and his son-in-law have spoken may indicate that politics as the Doctor played it was an exceedingly personal chess game. We see him here blithely taking from the people of his state, their rights to justice and trading those rights cheerfully for his personal happiness as it was represented in the possible reformation of his daughter's husband. He thought it would

work–this curious bartering of public rights for private ends. He could not see that a man who could accept a judgeship as it had come to Tom Van Dorn, in the nature of things could not take out an essential self-respect which he had forfeited when he took the place. The Doctor was as blind as Tom Van Dorn, as blind as his times. Government was a personal matter in that day; public place was a personal perquisite.

As for the reformation of Tom Van Dorn, for which all this juggling with sacred things was done, he had no idea that his moral regeneration was concerned in the deal, and never in all the years of his service did the vaguest hint come to him that the outrage of justice had been accomplished for his own soul's good.

The next morning Tom Van Dorn read of his appointment as Judge in the morning papers, and he pranced twice the length of Market Street, up one side and down the other, to let the populace congratulate him. Then with a fat box of candy he went to his office, where he gave the candy and certain other tokens of esteem to Miss Mauling, and at noon after the partnership of Calvin & Van Dorn had been dissolved, with the understanding that the young Judge was to keep his law books in Calvin's office, and was to have a private office there–for certain intangible considerations. Then after the business with Joseph Calvin was concluded, the young Judge in his private office with his hands under his coattails preened before Miss Mauling and talked from a shameless soul of his greed for power! The girl before him

gave him what he could not get at home, an abject adoration, uncritical, unabashed, unrestrained.

The young man whom the newly qualified Judge had inherited as court stenographer was a sadly unemotional, rather methodical, old maid of a person, and Tom Van Dorn could not open his soul to this youth, so he was wont to stray back to the offices of Joseph Calvin to dictate his instructions to juries, and to look over the books in his own library in making up his decisions. The office came to be known as the Judge's Chambers and the town cocked a gay and suspicious eye at the young Judge. Mr. Calvin's practice doubled and trebled and Miss Mauling lost small caste with the nobility and gentry. And as the summer deepened, Dr. James Nesbit began to see that vanity does not build self-respect.

When the young Judge announced his candidacy for election to fill out the two years' unexpired term of his predecessor, no one opposed Van Dorn in his party convention; but the Doctor had little liking for the young man's intimacy in the office of Joseph Calvin and less liking for the scandal of that intimacy which arose when the rich litigants in the Judge's court crowded into Calvin's office for counsel. The Doctor wondered if he was squeamish about certain matters, merely because it was his own son-in-law who was the subject of the disquieting gossip connected with Calvin's practice in Van Dorn's court. Then there was the other matter. The Doctor could notice that the town was having its smile–not a malicious nor condemning smile, but a

tolerant, amused smile about Van Dorn and the Mauling girl; and the Doctor didn't like that. It cut deeply into the Doctor's heart that as the town's smile broadened, his daughter's face was growing perceptibly more serious. The joy she had shown when first she told him of the baby's coming did not illumine her face; and her laughter–her never failing well of gayety–was in some way being sealed. The Doctor determined to talk with Tom on the Good of the Order and to talk man-wise–without feeling of course but without guile.

So one autumn afternoon when the Doctor heard the light, firm step of the young man in the common hallway that led to their offices over the Traders' Bank, the Doctor tuned himself up to the meeting and cheerily called through his open door:

"Tom–Tom, you young scoundrel–come in here and let's talk it all over."

The young man slipped a package into his pocket, and came lightly into the office. He waved his hand gayly and called: "Well–well, pater familias, what's on your chest to-day?" His slim figure was clad in gray–a gray suit, gray shirt, gray tie, gray shoes and a crimson rose bud in his coat lapel. As he slid into a chair and crossed his lean legs the Doctor looked him over. The young Judge's corroding pride in his job was written smartly all over his face and figure. "The fairest of ten thousand, the bright and morning star, Tom," piped the Doctor. Then added briskly, "I want to talk to you about Joe Calvin." The young man lifted a surprised eyebrow. The Doctor pushed ahead as he

pulled the county bar docket from his desk and pointed to it. “Joe Calvin’s business has increased nearly fifty per cent. in less than six months! And he has the money side of eighty per cent. of the cases in your court!”

“Well–” replied Van Dorn in the mushy drawl that he used with juries, “that’s enough! Joe couldn’t ask more.” Then he added, eying the Doctor closely, “Though I can’t say that what you tell me startles me with its suddenness.”

“That’s just my point,” cried the Doctor in his high, shrill voice. “That’s just my point, Thomas,” he repeated, “and here’s where I come in. I got you this job. I am standing for you before the district and I am standing for you now for this election.” The Doctor wagged his head at the young man as he said, “But the truth is, Tom, I had some trouble getting you the solid delegation.”

“Ah?” questioned the suave young Judge.

“Yes, Tom–my own delegation,” replied the Doctor. “You see, Tom, there is a lot of me. There is the one they call Doc Jim; then there’s Mrs. Nesbit’s husband and there’s your father-in-law, and then there’s Old Linen Pants. The old man was for you from the jump. Doc Jim was for you and Mrs. Nesbit’s husband was willing to go with the majority of the delegation, though he wasn’t strong for you. But I’ll tell you, Tom,” piped the Doctor, “I did have the devil of a time ironing out the troubles of your father-in-law.”

The Doctor leaned forward and pointed a fat, stern finger at

his son-in-law. “Tom,” the Doctor’s voice was shrill and steely, “I don’t like your didos with Violet Mauling!” The face above the crimson flower did not flinch.

“I don’t suppose you’re making love to her. But you have no business fooling around Joe Calvin’s office on general principles. Keep out, and keep away from her.” And then the Doctor’s patience slipped and his voice rose: “What do you want to give her the household bills for? Pay ’em yourself or let Laura send her checks!” The Doctor’s tones were harsh, and with the amiable cast off his face his graying blond pompadour hair seemed to bristle militantly. The effect gave the Doctor a fighting face as he barked, “You can’t afford it. You must stop it. It’s no way to do. I didn’t think it of you, Tom!”

After Van Dorn had touched his black wing of hair, his soft mustache and the crimson flower on his coat, he had himself well in hand and had planned his defense and counter attacks. He spoke softly:

“Now, Father Jim–I’m not–” he put a touch of feeling in the “not,” “going to give up the Mauling girl. When I’m elected next month, I’m going to make her my court stenographer!” He looked the Doctor squarely in the face and paused for the explosion which came in an excited, piping cry:

“Why, Tom, are you crazy! Take her all over the three counties of this district with you? Why, boy–” But Judge Van Dorn continued evenly: “I don’t like a man stenographer. Men make me nervous and self-conscious, and I can’t give a man the best

that's in me. And I propose to give my best to this job–in justice to myself. And Violet Mauling knows my ways. She doesn't interpose herself between me and my ideas, so I am going to make her court stenographer next month right after the election."

When the Doctor drew in a breath to speak, Van Dorn put out a hand, checked the elder man and said blandly and smilingly, "And, Father Jim, I'm going to be elected–I'm dead sure of election."

The Doctor thought he saw a glint of sheer malicious impudence in Van Dorn's smile as he finished speaking: "And anyway, pater, we mustn't quarrel right now–Just at this time, Laura–"

"You're a sly dog, now, ain't you! Ain't you a sly dog?" shrilled the Doctor in sputtering rage. Then the blaze in his eyes faded and he cried in despair: "Tom, Tom, isn't there any way I can put the fear of God into you?"

Van Dorn realized that he had won the contest. So he forbore to strike again.

"Doctor Jim, I'm afraid you can't jar me much with the fear of God. You have a God that sneaks in the back door of matter as a kind of a divine immanence that makes for progress and Joe Calvin in there has a God with whiskers who sits on a throne and runs a sort of police court; but one's as impossible as the other. I have no God at all," his chest swelled magnificently, "and here's what happens":

He was talking against time and the Doctor realized it. But his

scorn was crusting over his anger and he listened as the young Judge amused himself: "I've defended gamblers and thugs–and crooks, some rich, some poor, mostly poor and mostly guilty. And Joe has been free attorney for the law and order league and has given the church free advice and entertained preachers when he wasn't hiding out from his wife. And he's gone to conference and been a deacon and given to the Lord all his life. And now that it's good business for him to have me elected, can he get a vote out of all his God-and-morality crowd? Not a vote. And all I have to do is to wiggle my finger and the whole crowd of thugs and blacklegs and hoodlums and rich and poor line up for me–no matter how pious I talk. I tell you, Father Jim–there's nothing in your God theory. It doesn't work. My job is to get the best out of myself possible." But this was harking back to Violet Mauling and the young Judge smiled with bland impertinence as he finished, "The fittest survive, my dear pater, and I propose to keep fit–to keep fit–and survive!"

The Doctor's anger cooled, but the pain still twinged his heart, the pain that came as he saw clearly and surely that his daughter's life was bound to the futile task of making bricks without straw. Deep in his soul he knew the anguish before her and its vain, continual round of fallen hopes. As the young Judge strutted up and down the Doctor's office, the father in the elder man dominated him and a kind of contemptuous pity seized him. Pity overcame rage, and the Doctor could not even sputter at his son-in-law. "Fit and survive" kept repeating themselves over in Dr.

Nesbit's mind, and it was from a sad, hurt heart that he spoke almost kindly: "Tom–Tom, my boy, don't be too sure of yourself. You may keep fit and you may survive–but Tom, Tom–" the Doctor looked steadily into the bold, black eyes before him and fancied they were being held consciously from dropping and shifting as the Doctor cried: "For God's sake, Tom, don't let up! Keep on fighting, son, God or no God–you've got a devil–keep on fighting him!"

The olive cheeks flushed for a fleeting second. Van Dorn laughed an irritated little laugh. "Well," he said, turning to the door, "be over to-night?–or shall we come over? Anything good for dinner?"

A minute later he came swinging into his own office. He pulled a package from his pocket. "Violet," he said, going up to her writing desk and half sitting upon it, as he put the package before her, "here's the candy."

He picked up her little round desk mirror, smiled at her in it, and played rather idly about the desk for a foolish moment before going to his own desk. He sat looking into the street, folding a sheet of blank paper. When it became a wad he snapped it at the young woman. It hit her round, beautiful neck and disappeared into her square-cut bodice.

"Get it out for you if you want it?" He laughed fatuously.

The girl flashed quick eyes at him, and said, "Oh, I don't know," and went on with her work. He began to read, but in a few minutes laid his book down.

"How'd you like to be a court stenographer?" The girl kept on writing. "Honest now I mean it. If I win this election and get this job for the two years of unexpired term, you'll be court stenographer–pays fifteen hundred a year." The girl glanced quickly at him again, with fire in her eyes, then looked conspicuously down at the keyboard of the writing machine.

"I couldn't leave home," she said finally, as she pulled out a sheet of paper. "It wouldn't be the thing–do you think so?"

He put his feet on the desk, showing his ankles of pride, and fingering his mustache, smiling a squinty smile with his handsome, beady eyes as he said: "Oh, I'd take care of you. You aren't afraid of me, are you?"

They both laughed. And the girl came over with a sheet of paper. "Here is that Midland Valley letter. Will you sign it now?"

He managed to touch her hand as she handed him the sheet, and again to touch her bare forearm as he handed it back after signing it. For which he got two darts from her eyes.

A client came in. Joseph Calvin hurried in and out, a busy little rat of a man who always wore shiny clothes that bagged at the knees and elbows. George Brotherton crashed in through the office on city business, and so the afternoon wore away. At the end of the day, Thomas Van Dorn and Miss Mauling locked up the office and went down the hall and the stairs to the street together. He released her arm as they came to the street, and tipped his hat as she rounded the corner for home. He saw the white-clad Doctor trudging up the low incline that led to Elm

Street.

Dr. Nesbit was asking the question, Who are the fit? Who should survive? His fingers had been pinched in the door of the young Judge's philosophy and the Doctor was considering much that might be behind the door. He wondered if it was the rich and the powerful who should survive. Or he thought perhaps it is those who give themselves for others. There was Captain Morton with his one talent, pottering up and down the town talking all kinds of weather, and all kinds of rebuffs that he might keep the girls in school and make them ready to serve society; yet according to Tom's standards of success the Captain was unfit; and there was George Brotherton, ignorant, but loyal, foolishly blind, of a tender heart, yet compared with those who used his ignorance and played upon his blindness (and the Doctor winced at his part in that game) Mr. Brotherton was cast aside among the world's unfit; and so was Henry Fenn, fighting with his devil like a soldier; and so was Dick Bowman going into the mines for his family, sacrificing light and air and the joy of a free life that the wife and children might be clad, housed and fed and that they might enjoy something of the comforts of the great civilization which his toil was helping to build up around them; yet in his grime Dick was accounted exceedingly unfit. Dick only had a number on the company's books and his number corresponded to a share of stock and it was the business of the share of stock to get as much out of Dick and give him back as little, and to take as much from society in passing for coal as it could, and

being without soul or conscience or feeling of any kind, the share of stock put the automatic screws on Dick–as their numbers corresponded. And for squeezing the sweat out of him the share was accounted unusually fit, while poor Dick–why he was merely a number on the books and was called a unit of labor. Then there was Daniel Sands. He had spread his web all over the town. It ran in the pipes under ground that brought water and gas, and the wires above ground, that brought light and power and communication. The web found its way into the earth–through deep cuts in the earth, worming along caverns where it held men at work; then the web ran into foul dens where the toilers were robbed of their health and strength and happiness and even of the money the toilers toiled for, and the web brought it all back slimey and stinking from unclean hands into the place where the spider sat spinning. And there was his son and daughter; Mr. Sands had married at least four estimable ladies with the plausible excuse that he was doing it only to give his children a home. Mr. Sands had given his son a home, to be sure; but his son had not taken a conscience from the home–for who was there at home to give it? Not the estimable ladies who had married Mr. Sands, for they had none or they would have been somewhere else, to be sure; not Mr. Sands himself, for he was busy with his web, and conscience rips such webs as his endways, and Daniel would have none of that. And the servants who had reared the youth had no conscience to give him; for it was made definite and certain in that home that they were paid for what they did,

so they did what they were paid for, and bestowing consciences upon young gentlemen is no part of the duty of the "help" in a home like that.

As for his daughter, Anne, again one of God's miracles was wrought. There she was growing in the dead atmosphere of that home–where she had known two mothers before she was ten and she saw with a child's shrewd eyes that another was coming. Yet in some subsoil of the life about her the roots of her life were finding a moral sense. Her hazel eyes were questioning so curiously the old man who fathered her that he felt uncomfortable when she was near him. Yet for all the money he had won and all that money had made him, he was reckoned among the fit. Then there was the fit Mr. Van Dorn and the fit Mr. Calvin. Mr. Calvin never missed a Sunday in church, gave his tithe, and revered the law. He adjusted his halo and sang feelingly in prayer meeting about his cross and hoped ultimately for his crown as full and complete payment and return, the same being the legal and just equivalent for said hereinbefore named cross as aforesaid, and Mr. Calvin was counted among the fit, and the Doctor smiled as he put him in the list. And Mr. Van Dorn had confessed that he was among the fit and his fitness consisted in getting everything that he could without being caught.

But these reflections were vain and unprofitable to Dr. Nesbit, and so he turned himself to the consideration of the business in hand: namely, to make his calling and reëlection sure to the State Senate that November. So he went over Greeley County behind

his motherly sorrel mare, visiting the people, telling them stories, prescribing for their ailments, eating their fried chicken, cream gravy and mashed potatoes, and putting to rout the forces of the loathed opposition who maintained that the Doctor beat his wife, by sometimes showing said wife as exhibit "A" without comment in those remote parts of the county where her proud figure was unknown.

In November he was reëlected, and there was a torchlight procession up the aisle of elms and all the neighbors stood on the front porch, including the Van Dorns and the Mortons and John Kollander in his blue soldier clothes, carrying the flag into another county office, and the Henry Fenns, while the Doctor addressed the multitude! And there was cheering, whereupon Mr. Van Dorn, Judge pro tem and Judge-elect, made a speech with eloquence and fire in it; John Kollander made his well-known flag speech, and Captain Morton got some comfort out of the election of Comrade Nesbit, who had stood where bullets were thickest and as a boy had bared his breast to the foe to save his country, and drawing the Doctor into the corner, filed early application to be made sergeant-at-arms of the State Senate and was promised that or Something Equally Good. The hungry friends of the new Senator so loaded him with obligations that blessed night that he again sold his soul to the devil, went in with the organization, got all the places for all his people, and being something of an organizer himself, distributed the patronage for half the State.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.