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CABLES OF COBWEB

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By

PAUL JORDAN-SMITH

"We are unwilling to spin out our awaking thoughts into phantasms of sleep, . . . making cables of cobwebs, and wildernesses of handsome groves . . . the world is but a dream or a mock-show, and we all therein but pantaloons and antics."—SIR THOMAS BROWNE.



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TO SARAH.

I

HE hated his father; he despised the dull church that was stripped of every sweet bit of ceremonial magic, and made to do service as a sort of vulgar debating hall; he disliked the confining walls of a school-room where the genial lines of Horace had to be halted over in the cause of grammar, and where old Malory had to be disposed of with a date; it was all out of tune with his moods and at discord with his dreams—and his dreams mattered. Why didn't the others dream as he did when he was alone lying stretched out on the floor of the library, beneath the old piano, or when he walked, as he was doing, out under the stars? Nature yielded a cruel magic, but it was magic; books abounded with a sort of necromancy that took one away from the sordid necessity of choosing one's breakfast-food; but people, most people, seemed to insist upon literal details, facts, news, gossip of this and that—frimfram and rules.

He waved his arms in protest and ran up the hill to the old chestnut tree that just now was the hiding place of the moon. The gaunt tree was an ally and had heard his complaints before tonight, but never had it listened to a more scathing story of the meanness of mankind than was now poured forth in the very face of the full moon. People were cruel without being interesting, hypocrites without being clever, stupid without being funny, and educated without being anything. At this safe distance from human hearing he would hurl anathema at the swine.

“Damn!” he cried.

He looked up. No stars had fallen; perhaps the leaves shivered, but the jocund moon seemed unperturbed and blandly amused as before. From somewhere off in the mountains came the melancholy notes of a hunter's horn, and the baying of a hound seemed to mock him with derision.

That was always the way; one couldn't impress anything.

II

JEFFREY was no doubt somewhat of a prig, and made his fellows as uncomfortable as they made him. At fifteen no well-bred American should rebel against his universe nor condemn his race. It is bad form to have higher-than-thou ideals at any age, especially if one is to be a Virginia gentleman and live in a Democracy.

So the boy was something of a pariah, and not a welcome addition to any group of wholesome, normal youths who chose to spend their time in frolic. Of course, being the son of the Reverend John Collingsworth gave him a place and a distinction among the solemn, verjuice-eyed adults of Oldbern, but it made him suspect among their sons. Added to this, was the serious fault of having a private tutor instead of attending public school, in which the minister was sure that his son would acquire the wickedness of the flesh and a careless disregard of the things a gentleman should know and revere. The fact that the tutor, Mr. Washington Webb, was not a native of the county, and was a Princeton man, made matters all the more unpleasant; it implied a feeling of superiority. Then, too, Jeffrey was an alien in that he was an only child and, in consequence, confined to an association of rigidly proper grown folk who spent their days discussing souls, hereafters, damnations, death-bed repentences, missionaries, symptoms, college donations, church fairs, homiletics, exegeses, vanity, small heterodoxies, and, for variety, in very quiet laughter at the crude dialects of the "pore white trash."

There was a day, a Sabbath day at that, when old Dave Epperlie, famous, in the Appalachian region, as a moonshiner and hunter, came walking past the church sans guns, hounds, or any belongings which might suggest "hunter" to a boy whose knowledge of such things came from books.

"There's Hunter Dave just back from the mountains," whispered an admiring lad, nudging Jeffrey.

Jeffrey gazed intently in the direction indicated.

"But where are his accoutrements?" he questioned.

"Accoutrements!" The boys were convulsed with indignant laughter. "He would use a word with four syllables, would he? Damned snob, to speak in an unknown tongue." Later he saw Crockett, the druggist, pointing him out to a stranger. He heard the word "accoutrements," and then, as they looked at him once more, the men laughed. His face burned, and his only revenge was a feeling of conscious superiority. Mr. Webb always used this word, and he himself had verified it out of Webster. It was correct enough. These people were nobodies.

This tendency towards an anti-social feeling, was further fostered by his friendship with the darkies, who, from having been owned by his Grandfather Collingsworth, still remained, in some capacity, as house servants among the numerous members of the family. Rhoda, the old cook, was sturdily of the opinion that most of the Collingsworth parishioners were "nothin' but low down white trash, not fitten to 'soshiate wif gentlemans. 'Cose they don't understand no edgeicated langwidge."

These sentiments, universal among the negroes, were as balm to the boy's soul, and he did not stop to consider the natural prejudice from which they arose. The negroes looked with disdain upon these humble and somewhat shiftless folk, just as the Epis-

copalians and Presbyterians scorned the Methodists. The Collingsworths were Presbyterians and received their religion with becoming reserve and decency. But the Methodists were, according to Jeffrey's father, noisy, perspiring, unctious and common. Their colleges were diploma mills, and they stooped to questionable practises in athletics, and had golden-oak furniture. Altogether they were a bad lot; but unfortunately they were numerous, and, through their public school associations, even the sons of gentlemen were becoming vulgar. That, in John Collingsworth's opinion, was the cause of his son's unpopularity.

The Collingsworths had lived in the county since those pre-revolutionary days when the land grants had encouraged settlers from eastern Virginia to move to the mountain districts, and the early comers, among whom was Crockett Collingsworth Sr., held claim to the choice fertile valleys where living, thanks to the genial institution of slavery, was easy. Those thus favored either were, or, owing to their possessions, soon became gentle folk. The Collingsworths had been sufficiently at ease about their social standing to be unambitious, and were content with their holdings, the land passing in every case to the eldest son, who, after a few years at Wythe College, or, later, at Charlottesville, settled down to the business of being a gentleman farmer. The other sons became, for the most part, country lawyers, members of the Governor's staff, and occasionally, one more impractical than the rest, took a degree in theology at Hamden-Sidney or Princeton. The Civil War had disturbed this order of things to a degree, had made farming less agreeable, and had, for a time, cast a deadening influence over all the youth of the South. Oldbern had known no poverty before, but with the emancipation

of the negro, the place had become fringed about with its "darky town" of semi-starving blacks who must needs be subject to charity. They were enslaved by freedom. Gradually there came an adjustment in an economic way, but the negroes and poor whites were at one another's throats, and out of the bitter feeling between these two classes arose those little lynching bees which have served to advertise that section of America as a very center of sadistic fury.

Yet to Jeffrey when he was alone, walking over hills carpeted with blue grass, or searching in the great woods for the first blossoms of the arbutus, Virginia yielded a peaceful charm. For one thing, he was able to say almost unutterable things to the trees, and having relieved his spirit of its weight of bitterness and been made clean of human restraint, he could give himself up to a sort of natural magic by means of which there was an escape into a world of like-mindedness and magnanimity. Sitting on the bank of a clear cold mountain stream he could nibble at a handful of water-cress and conjure up fancies of strange and terrible gods who were lecherous and yet benign; hybrid creatures out of Lucian and Homer, curiously crossed by goblins from Munchausen, and fairies out of Daphnis and Chloe. To these he would, in a more prosaic mood, sometimes address questions such as: "Why does my father say that Thomas Paine and Darwin were sodomites, and that Emerson was an adulterer? Why do all socialists drink beer, and all evolutionists run away from their wives?" And the mongrel gods would wink at one another and laugh.

Most of all, the boy was excluded by paternal vigilance from contacts with any youth not known to be both pure and well born.

When some of the curious and venturesome lads of Oldbern had essayed to call upon Jeffrey, they had been invariably received in the parlor where one of the parents remained, a watchful and uncompromising guardian of juvenile propriety. Nor were these bold intruders permitted an exit into the more expansive domains of the yard or garden, where parental vigilance could not readily be exercised; they might not even go into the playroom. Conversation was therefore very difficult, and, for some strange reason the visitors never returned.

There had been one memorable exception to this dismal rigidity, made at a time when Mr. Collingsworth had been called away from home for a few weeks, so that his more unsophisticated wife was wholly responsible for the son's welfare. Master Harold Sibley, an engaging and innocent-eyed youth of about thirteen years, had called. He was compelled, owing to some slight affliction, to use a crutch, and this misfortune had the two-fold effect of arousing Mrs. Collingsworth's sympathy, and suggesting to her mind the impossibility of Harold's attempting any very dangerous escapades. The Sibleys were newcomers in Oldbern, but they were known to be of an excellent Virginia family and from a county that was without reproach. Harold was therefore welcomed with a greater degree of hospitality than was usually extended to the youth of the town. Jeffrey was out at the moment, so that his mother was able to study the visitor to greater advantage.

"I have heard lots of nice things about your son, Mrs. Collingsworth," Harold began, in a Sunday School voice,—“My Mama doesn't like me to play with bad boys who use naughty words, and when she heard what a good boy Jeffrey is she wanted me to come over and get acquainted. So many of the boys

here are rough that I don't wonder you keep him at home." Harold had been well informed concerning the Collingsworth prejudices and possessed a psychology beyond his years.

"Yes, home is the best place for boys," agreed Mrs. Collingsworth, visibly impressed by this outburst of piety,—“and I am glad to meet a boy who is so sensible. I have often wished that Jeffrey could have a suitable playmate, but so many of the boys are wild that we have thought it best to keep him entertained here. Do you go out and play with the boys in Oldbern?”

“Oh no, ma'am,” Harold replied, “I love to stay at home and read, and play with my sister Evelyn. Then, on Saturday, we get our Sunday School lesson together, and when Sunday comes, we go to church, and I think we have fun enough at that. But I do wish you would let Jeffrey come over to our house and play.”

When Jeffrey entered the room, a few minutes later, he was astonished to find this newcomer, whom he had seen several times at Sunday School, on warm terms of intimacy with his mother.

“Jeffrey,” said Mrs. Collingsworth, delighted at being able to impart so pleasant a surprise with such a satisfied conscience, “Harold has invited you to go over to his home to play a new game with him and his sister. They have invented a guessing game which they play from the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and I think it would be very nice for you to go.”

Jeffrey was amazed beyond the power of coherent utterance, but he radiated delight. He did not wholly share his mother's enthusiasm for young Sibley, but he was entranced with the notion of escape from adult supervision.

“Be sure not to go anywhere outside of Harold's

yard," cautioned Mrs. Collingsworth, as the two boys were leaving,—“and come straight home when you are through playing. Be here by half past five.”

On the way Jeffrey noticed that his companion's speech lost, yard by yard, the rigid tone of propriety which had been its chief characteristic within the precincts of the Manse. When they had advanced no more than a hundred yards from the minister's house, Harold had ventured to introduce some mild bit of slang; and, by the time they had reached the front gate of the less hallowed home, he had descended to outright profanity. Jeffrey was surprised, but he felt he was going on a real lark.

Evelyn was Harold's twin sister, and, true to promise, when the embarrassed introductions were over, one of the twenty-five volumes of the encyclopædia was brought by that young lady and carefully laid upon the library table. Father and Mother, she informed him, were out, so they could have all the fun they wished. The game consisted in guessing the meaning of certain pictures in the book. With unflinching fingers she opened the volume to a place already stained by eager thumbs, where was an illustrated article on obstetrics. Pointing to an engraving setting forth the technique of the Cæsarian operation, she demanded with a giggle, “What does that mean, Jeffrey?”

But Jeffrey was unable to speak!

“Aw, Sis,” Harold intervened, fearing that she had gone too far in her first venture, and seeing Jeffrey's painful confusion,—“that's too unpleasant; get the volume that has about ‘Bladder’.”

After displaying these fascinatingly shocking works of art for a time, and seeing that they elicited no articulate response from their blushing visitor, Evelyn was inspired to suggest:—“There are lots of things

you haven't seen, Jeffrey, and I reckon I could show you a lot more that are not in the books." Then, with a meaning laugh and a significant look directed at her brother, she turned and ran, giggling, out of the room, calling, over her shoulder,—“I'll be in the hay-loft; you know where, Harold.”

Jeffrey was made very ill-at-ease by this mysterious behavior. He felt that something, far beyond his simple understanding, was being suggested,—something terrifying. He wished that Mr. and Mrs. Sibley were at home, and yet feared their sudden return. Things were not right somehow.

Then Harold explained:—

“Sis saw you at Sunday School and wanted me to bring you over. Come on and let's go out to the barn, and she will show you something that will make your eyes open. The folks are away and we can have some fun. Come on, there won't be any harm in it.”

Unwittingly, Mrs. Collingsworth had sent her son to the home of the most experienced young profligates in the town. The Sibley twins were gifted with more than ordinary curiosity about anatomic details, and had mutually satisfied this craving to the point of satiety (their relations were, strictly speaking, a trifle inside the Mosaic proscriptions), and now they proposed a more embracing field of activity; they were ready to spread their knowledge abroad unselfishly, and Harold was acting the part of an extension-agent, or, in more vulgar parlance, a procurer.

These things were not quite apparent to Jeffrey's immature mind, but he knew, instinctively, that what he was expected to witness in the barn was a thing that would bring down the wrath of two pairs of furious parents; and he stood in great fear of that wrath. Moreover he was dreadfully embarrassed, and

almost ready to cry. Seizing his hat, he rushed from the house as though pursued by demons.

A few days later he confided as much as he had been able to interpret of this experience to Tom, one of the cook's sons, who, after enlargements made possible by a vastly wider knowledge of the world and the flesh, retold it to his mother, Rhoda, who, in her turn, communicated it, with emphasis, to her mistress.

"Dear me!" exclaimed that agitated lady, now conscience stricken at having furthered such a criminal association in her husband's absence, and fearful of harsh criticism on his return,—“That just shows that it won't do to trust any children whatever.”

Shortly after Mr. Collingsworth's return Jeffrey noticed that the Sibley twins left off coming to Sunday School, and, a little later, the family moved away from town; Jeffrey never knew just why, but he did know that parental vigilance had become more rigid than ever before.

III

THE front pew was a very uncomfortable place for a minister's son who was in perpetual anxiety lest his father should by, some awkward gesture, scatter his manuscript (a catastrophe that, indeed, had fallen upon the minister on a warm spring day when the windows had been left open to a disrespectful breeze), or, lest the stiff white ecclesiastical tie should be disarranged, or the sacerdotal trousers become unbuttoned. It was far more endurable when there was a stranger in the pulpit. If anything happened to him the boy could join in the amusement of such ungodly as might be moved to mirth in such a place and at the expense of such a dignitary. In any event Jeffrey would not feel that he was to blame or that he would suffer the subsequent jibes of the members of the Sunday School. This day the pulpit was occupied by Dr. Luther Andrews of Philadelphia, who was traveling in the South in the interest of some Presbyterian educational fund. Jeffrey liked the minister's collar which was not quite so prim as his father's, and somehow suggested a more amiable piety. The black tie seemed quite fetching to the boy's eye. And then the man's voice, as he read out the lesson, had a resonance that thrilled him to the marrow. Jeffrey even liked the man's harsh "r's" and secretly resolved to imitate his pronunciation. The sermon had to do with affairs that were seldom mentioned at his father's desk,—social justice, freedom, and the duty of clear thinking; with illustrations from Dickens, Henry George, Gerald Massey, and Thomas Hardy.

The minister brought his sermon to a close by quoting part of George Eliot's *Choir Invisible*. Jeffrey was tense with excitement, expecting to see his father leap to his feet and throttle the man. He had heard his father's diatribes against George Eliot, and fancied that the woman's writings reeked with infidelity. He now saw that this piece, at any rate, was harmless, and hoped that his father would let him read *Adam Bede*. Mr. Collingsworth, to Jeffrey's amazement, sat unmoved and apparently nodding. He had assumed that attitude of prayer which seemed fitting when a strange minister was in his pulpit. It was as if he were asking the protection of Heaven against the spread of heresy in his flock.

Back at the Manse, where Dr. Andrews was guest, no mention of the sermon was made at a table where the sermon was the invariable accompaniment of the sabbath meal. It seemed an outrageous violation of decency to neglect the discussion of the one enjoyable sermon Jeffrey had ever heard. His father's discourses had, somehow, no savour. They were too familiar, too heavily laden with sin and damnation, and the poetic adornments came from such impossible singers as Dryden, Pope, Young, and Kirke White.

Jeffrey was not old enough to enjoy the antique in theology, or he might have had a keener sense of appreciation. His father was as much of an antique as one of his own Chippendale chairs; but the chair had a beauty that the boy's eye could see, and an association with a past full of the traditions of dear people; whereas the father seemed to him to have resolved himself into a barrier against every one of his son's natural instincts. Such charm as he had was obscured by his constant meddling with his son's beliefs. To have the right belief, sound doctrine, the

correct theory of this and that, seemed, to Mr. Collingsworth, of supreme importance. His amiability toward mild heresies outside his household was assumed for social reasons, or was a prelude to some subtle campaign for the heretic's salvation. He was doubtless sincere in his desire to see all men Presbyterians, Democrats, and upholders of Southern tradition; but for the salvation of the majority he could bide his time. On the other hand, when alien ideas even so much as hovered about his own roof tree, he would be seized by a fanatic and ungovernable rage, and lay about him indiscriminately, blaming everyone and accusing even his mild-eyed wife of conspiring to overthrow the foundations of order and decency. Jeffrey had been the target of abuse on these occasions often enough to have a wholesome dread of scenes and a growing hatred of the ideas that provoked such panic. Lacking logic, and unacquainted with the world, he imagined that all who held ideas contrary to those of his parents were tolerant, sweet, wholesome, magnanimous; were, in fact, like his grandfather who had shrugged his shoulders and said that it didn't matter. Dr. Andrews, Jeffrey felt, was a delightful person. He wanted to tell him as much. At any rate it could do no harm to tell him how much he had enjoyed his sermon. Presently there was a pause in the conversation. Very self-conscious, and blushing at his boldness, he ventured: "Dr. Andrews, I enjoyed your sermon today very much."

"Thank you, Jeffrey, I am very glad you did, for sermons are apt to bore boys at your age."

"I could listen to a sermon like that for a whole day without being bored," Jeffrey assured him. He hoped that Dr. Andrews, like his father, would ask what part of the sermon he fancied most, but fearing that he would not, and resolved to unburden himself

while there was opportunity, he hastened to add—“You talked about so many modern things that I like to hear discussed, and that was a beautiful quotation from George Eliot, and I don’t believe any one will ever go to France after what you said about the Dreyfus case, and——”

“Doctor, won’t you have another piece of chicken?” interrupted Mr. Collingsworth in a more profane tone than was common in the presence of guests, and one that was supposed to convey to the uninitiate no more than the simple interrogation, while to the unhappy son it was the equivalent of—“Damn you, you impertinent young traitor, you will cast reflections on my sermons, will you? And you dare mention the name of George Eliot at my table? Well now, shut up! Decency forbids my thrashing you now, and saying what is in my mind, but you know, confound you, and are properly afraid. You won’t take advantage of me, sir! Just you wait.”

Mrs. Collingsworth was able to translate this message also, and into her soft brown eyes there came a look of pity for her luckless son. Her lips quivered in helpless sympathy. Jeffrey wanted to hold her hand.

When the visiting minister was gone the storm did break, though not so violently as the boy had anticipated. Mr. Collingsworth, fearing that Jeffrey would attribute the origin of his rage to some base motive, sought to appear reasonable.

“I am not scolding you for praising Dr. Andrews’ sermon, Jeffrey,” he explained, “but for the way you did it. Why couldn’t you simply have said that you enjoyed it without inferring that you had never heard a modern note from your father’s pulpit before?”

“I didn’t mean that sir, I——”

“Ah, yes you did, sir, don’t deny it; and it was a serious reflection on me and my work. You know

that your father does address himself to modern topics when they are suitable for the pulpit. If I don't quote that Eliot creature, or make my sermons into stump speeches, it is because I am not a Yankee, and still have some religion and self-respect, sir. But, of course, everybody is more interesting than your father!"

All this ado seemed out of proportion to the offense, yet it somehow made Jeffrey sad instead of angry, and he went away from the study wishing that he were dead.

IV

ONE smiling afternoon in the springtime, when his lessons were done, and Mr. Webb had gone upstairs complaining of a headache, Jeffrey slipped out unobserved and set out for Wygal's Peak where he thought to gather an armful of laurel blossoms or, perhaps, a few buds of calycanthus, and where he might, betimes, read a few lines of Connington's Horace which he had secretly hid in an inner pocket. Connington was really a "pony," but his rendering made Horace so much more human than old Webb did, that even that careful pedagogue was not able to destroy the great pagan's ironic charm. The boy stole out back of the barn, stopped long enough to feed a bit of sugar to a grateful mare who whinnied at his approach, and then bounded away, with gladness in his eyes, toward the hills. Presently he came to an old lichen-covered rail fence rambling by a winding lane. Once in the embanked roadway he was protected from view and his gait moderated. Now he drew forth the book and read as he walked—

"I bid the unhallowed crowd avaunt."

Why this was similar to Emerson's *Self-Reliance*, and if Emerson was a scoundrel, why was Webb permitted to teach Horace? Did independence make rascals? If so, rascals must be pleasant people; they could not, by any chance, be more unpleasant than pious folk. Perhaps even Hell was not undesirable; it was the habitation of happy and wicked genius.

With such unhallowed thoughts he approached the wooded hills where the fragrance of sycamore and gum trees, and the hum of bees among the dog-wood

blossoms, and the murmur of a stream that ran on to the meadows below, perforce dispelled his mood, and, dropping down beneath a purple flowering Judas tree, he gave himself up to the ecstasy of being an animal in the springtime.

Overhead was a robin, calling to his raucus mate in a neighboring poplar, and the leaves about him rustled beneath the tiny feet of curious wrens. The colors around him were splashes of purple and white, magenta and rose, lavender and scarlet—a curious mixture, arranged by a blundering artist; and yet here, in these woods, they provided an instant harmony. From the upper branches of the great poplar hung a muscadine vine that soon would bear scaly, tough-skinned grapes with a most delicious flavor. The vine swayed in the slight breeze, and seemed to have been put there as a swing for teetering birds and mischievous boys. But the forest fragrance seemed, more than all else, to furnish healing to Jeffrey's mood of discontent. He loved smells—even barnyard smells were sweet; a sweating horse, freshly curried, or the fragrant collar just removed after a long drive; the pungent odor of a distant skunk, the peculiar fragrance of the sweet gum and birch—these things, more than color, were the releasing forces of nature. He was a curious mixture; very animal of animals among the primitive; in the study he was a precocious esthete, and a lover of fine-cut phrases and subtle decoration. He was now in the mood of one who, coming off the noisy streets with their hateful odors of commerce and sin, turns into an ancient cathedral and, yielding to the sorceries of dim lights and incense and the age-old symbols of passion and prayer, seeks sanctity in confession. Behind that screen of laurel Pan, perhaps, was priest. He began

to mutter aloud his litany of woes, and his statement of faith:

“Yes, I am a mis-fit down there in the Manse; everything I think is wrong. I love nothing in the world but my mother whose tearful silence at father’s damned fussing betokens sympathy; my old grandad who cared for horses and just chuckled when people argued; and then some books, such as Homer, Defoe and Edgar Allan Poe. I hate the Bible and the dingy hymns, and I hate politics. I want to run away, but haven’t the courage. If I could get away and do as I liked, without my infernal father, I could be as the other fellows. Surely the boys in New England are different. They read Emerson, and do as they please; and there are no brawling Methodists nor sour Presbyterians up there to spoil it all. Evolution is taught, and the people are free. I suppose that if I could know the wicked element here it would be better, but I am a misfit. God! if the people would live out here instead of in houses they wouldn’t worry so over sin and baptism and their miserable little politics. Still, the houses are nice, too, in their way”——The big white ancestral home a few miles back in the country where Jeffrey spent most of his summers, had been built of walnut, and out on the veranda were quaint Windsor chairs, and in the hallway was a fine old inlaid clock; and there was a Heppelwhite sideboard that had belonged to his grandmother, and some curious pewter lamps, and a high white mantel, from which, at Christmas time, had hung four generations of stockings. He went on: “It is the people who make messes of things, and among these the educated are the worst. The darkies are kindly and ignorant and happy. Knowledge seems necessary for existence; but ignorance is required for happiness—so there you are!”

It was growing late, and seeing the coming shadows Jeffrey rose and, brushing off the leaves from his garments, began to gather an armful of flowers as a peace offering and an excuse for his long absence.

Coming out of the thick underbrush into the meadow he paused for a moment, his attention arrested by a group of men who seemed to be running toward a pine-clad hillock a quarter of a mile away. "Strange what they can want up there," he thought. Then he remembered that there was a long abandoned cabin tucked away in the pines, one that he had visited some years before with the delicious expectation of finding a ghost. But what could any one want there? From this distance the men seemed to be excited, and their behavior made him curious. He must find what they were about. He ran rapidly across the field, and, by using a short cut, came up with the crowd just as they entered the clump of pines. They were too intent upon what they were doing to notice him.

A voice from the cabin announced—"Here he is, fellers, we've got him treed. He's unda the floor." A satisfied laugh followed this speech, and Jeffrey recognized the spokesman as Hoge Harrison, the local constable. The seven or eight persons who had followed him, and were now gathered, puffing from their unwonted exertions, about the cabin, were village loafers whose sole claim to prominence lay in their proficiency in throwing horseshoes, or in their expectorative accuracy when engaged in the gentle task of killing flies with tobacco juice.

"Roust him out!" shouted one.

"Come on outa there from unda that floor!" demanded the constable, striking his club against the logs. "You want me to shoot you full of lead, you damned nigger?"

"Who is it?" Jeffrey nervously inquired, his imag-

ination fired to the point of believing that the floor concealed some feud-entangled murderer.

“Oh, it’s that triflin’ little Major Fenley, old Rose’s coon. He’s been a stealin’ old man Oliver’s chickens, and when Hoge tried to ketch him, he run out here like a Texas jack rabbit,” one of the men explained in a tone of derision.

Jeffrey remembered Major as an undersized negro boy, of about fourteen, who had frequently played about with some of his own Mammy Rhoda’s numerous progeny.

“I’m gonna shoot,” cried Harrison, thrusting a shining revolver beneath the logs—one, two, ——”

“I’s comin’ Boss, ’fore God, don’t shoot. I’s comin’,” came a muffled voice from beneath the cabin, followed almost immediately by a black woolly head, sprinkled liberally with dust and cobwebs. Don’t shoot, boss,” sobbed the small darky, showing the whites of his eyes, and trembling in terror.

In reply Harrison thrust forward a great hand and seized the terrified boy by the collar, jerking him to his feet with a snap. “You will run away from me, will you? You sassy nigger!” he shouted. Then, without warning, he raised the stout club and brought it down with a sickening crack upon the boy’s head. “I’ll teach you,” cried the enraged constable, furious at having had to abandon his comfortable seat on the cracker box in front of Giles’ grocery, and he followed the statement with another resounding blow. The men laughed and spat with glee. The negro was too near unconscious to even groan, but the blood spouted from his mouth and nostrils and streamed over the dirty shirt below. Blood seemed to issue from even his eyes and ears.

Jeffrey had been too paralyzed by this sudden brutality to do more than gasp, but as the cudgel was

raised for the third time, he sprang forward and seized Harrison's upraised hand.

"Stop that, you damned cowardly piece of trash!" he cried shrilly. "Are you going to kill the nigger for stealing a chicken? Why don't you try that on somebody your own size?"

"Look a here, Preacher's son, don't you meddle with somethin' that's none of your business. I could take you in for interferrin' with the majesty of the law," replied the agent of that majesty with offended dignity. "What's it to you if I do beat up a nigger or two? Niggers deserve it, and I won't be interferred with when I'm a doin' my duty. Git out of this. I'll tell your paw on you."

"Ain't you a great preacher's son to be a cussin' that way," commented one of the men, to the intense amusement of the others, "I thought you was so much better than the rest of us, with all that private edgication your paw's been a givin' you."

"Well, you know what the sayin' is about preachers' boys being the worst in the world," added another, laughing loudly.

"And I'll thank you not to call me 'trash' again," said the constable threateningly. "I'm just as good as you are. This is a free country and your folks that call themselves gentlemen have done more to hold this here country back than anybody else, always a coddlin' their old niggers and makin' 'em think they are better than common every day white folks. I'll 'trash' you if I ever hear of you talkin' like that again, and what's more I'm goin' to let your paw know about that cussin'."

At this last remark he turned, and with—"Come on fellers, le's get back to town with this precious nigger, before preacher Collingsworth's pride decides to kiss him,"—started off through the pines.

“Don’t hit me no mo’, Boss,” pleaded the negro as he was led away.

“Shut up, you son of ——”

Jeffrey had stood, pale and quivering with rage through these speeches, hardly hearing what was said, and so appalled at the sight of the pitiful, ash-gray, blood-streaked face, that, even had he willed it, he would have been unable to make reply. He was overcome with nausea and a feeling of faintness. When the men were gone, he fell upon the ground, and lay there trembling, violently sick. The world spun around for a time with a fearful roar, and then disappeared.

When he regained consciousness it was quite dark. He was frightened. Why was he lying there in such a fashion? Gradually the ugly scene came back to him, and with it the realization that he had been away from home for a long time and that there would be excitement over his prolonged absence. He got to his feet and hastened, stumbling and falling, to get away from this hill of horrors, and to find the road in the valley beneath. It was not until he had reached the gate of the Manse that he remembered the propitiatory flowers he had gathered. He had dropped them at the cabin.

Mrs. Collingsworth had been alarmed at the unusual tardiness of her son, and was on the veranda at the first click of the gate latch.

“Why, where have you been, Jeffrey?” she demanded, as he came up the steps. “Supper was over an hour ago, and your father and I were terribly uneasy. He had to go over to Mr. Crockett’s right away after supper, so he doesn’t know how late you really are. What has been keeping you?”

Jeffrey told his story, omitting the most gruesome details, while his mother led him to the dining room.

“Why that poor little darky,” she exclaimed when he had done, “He’s nothing more than a child! Still,” she added, “I suppose the officers have to be rough, or there would be no end of stealing. But I don’t think it was a fit place for my boy to be, among those low men. You must keep away from such. I do believe it has made you ill.”

On his part, Jeffrey was thankful that this terrible day was done without an inquisitorial session with his father.

He tossed about in his bed for hours, it seemed, unable to go to sleep. Why were such brutes as Harrison allowed to have office? They were not welcomed in the homes of decent people, but they were allowed to administer their laws. No wonder the North had come down upon them and destroyed slavery. It was due to men like the constable. He recalled a still more repellent occurrence that he had witnessed in Georgia where his father had been asked to dedicate a church. They had visited for a week at the home of the local minister; and one day, when he had strayed away from the house, he had heard cries, and had followed a crowd out beyond the edge of the town to a tree where they were torturing a negro. They had said that he had committed rape, whatever that was, and that they felt “pretty sure” he was the guilty one—“It didn’t matter.” The poor wretch had been deliberately dismembered, and his parts were given out as souvenirs,—a finger here, and an ear there. As often as the man had fainted, he had been revived by cold water and whiskey. And when, at last, some of the crowd had begun shooting bullets into his body, others had complained that it had spoiled the sport. Before the man had lost consciousness they pressed white-hot irons against his feet, and then, as a grand finale, they had burned him to a

cinder. Some of the "best people" of the community had been there in the mob, and afterwards he had heard them explain that the example was excellent,— "the northern nigger lovers must be shown," and that "the pure native morality of the South was the only check the niggers had." It had been a triumphant manifestation of the social conscience, and had seemed to yield both pleasure and satisfaction. Jeffrey distinctly recalled that he had been whipped for having witnessed this display of justice. He was always being whipped. Well, at any rate it was comforting that no such extreme outrages as the one he had seen in Georgia were permitted in Virginia. Only the white trash in Virginia would stoop to such things. But the white trash, and a stricken black boy's face disturbed his dreams that night, and the morning light found his pillow drenched with tears.

The next day Jeffrey's father was interviewed by the insulted constable, and afterward, in the locked study Jeffrey was thrashed, supposedly for his profanity, but really for having been the means of bringing Hoge Harrison to the minister's veranda.

"The very idea," thought Mr. Collingsworth, "Of my son's having caused such a person as that to set foot upon my door-step!"

V

AND so he was to be rid of it all. He was going to college! Webb had been dismissed, and he was to have a fling at life. To be sure it was not as he had planned it, with farewells from the bus and at the station, followed by a solitary journey on the train and a personal interview with the great men of Wythe College to whom he had hoped to confide his desire for an independent course of study. His mother was to go along, install him in a dainty room, explain his temperament to the dean, and state John Collingsworth's ambitions and fears to the men he had hoped to meet alone. Yet, in spite of these disadvantages, he was escaping his father. He resolved never to go to church again. He had enough of that, having been compelled to attend some kind of service at least three times every Sunday, to say nothing of the mid-week prayer meeting where sentimental old ladies sighed over unctuous hymns. No more narrow-mindedness, no more orthodoxy. College was a place of culture and the open mind. The fellows there would talk wisely of Spencer, Darwin, Emerson, and Henry George. Jeffrey didn't know who Henry George was, but his father had said that he was wicked, and that placed him alongside Ingersoll, Thomas Paine, Voltaire and Karl Marx. The books of these men would be in the college library, and he would revel in them. He would read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* too. Ah, that would make his father rage! He remembered that the Baylors had a copy which he had wanted to borrow one day when the minister and his family were there at dinner. His father had very

civilly declined for him and had made apologies; but when they got back to the Manse there had been a scene.

“Just the idea of your wanting a book by that black hearted hussy,” thundered Reverend Mr. Collingsworth. “Why, you make your father the laughing stock of the town. Trash, Sir; worse than trash!”

Webb had not altogether approved of Mr. Collingsworth’s strictures upon his pupil’s curiosity and had, because of this, been the more lenient in permitting Jeffrey to read what appealed to him. True, his meagre collection of books were in Latin and Greek, but that made them perfectly respectable. He had allowed the boy to read the satires of Juvenal, some of Martial’s epigrams, and had made no criticism when his copy of Aristophanes had disappeared for some weeks during which Jeffrey had advanced remarkably in his knowledge of Greek. Jeffrey had not been altogether grateful for these attentions. He had felt that Webb was too strict, too careful of declensions, to either derive or impart the joy with which the best of the classics fairly reeked. He was, to Jeffrey, a dry, pedantic, prematurely aged little man who looked out over gold-rimmed glasses upon a bewildering world, and saw nothing but a dreadful disregard of Latin grammar. He was glad to be rid of Webb.

Then he recalled Mrs. Surry, Webb’s predecessor, with even greater dislike. She had been abominably fat, and there were gray bristles on her chin. He had liked her well enough until she had told his mother, with extreme gravity, of the “lies he made up.” He chuckled at the remembrance. He had tried to entertain Mrs. Surry with one of his day dreams about a wonderful rooster——

——“and Mother took it on the train when we were

going to Roanoke, and as we were crossing New River, Mother was looking out of the window, and her bonnet fell off, and would have dropped into the water, but the rooster flew out and down, and, just before the hat struck the water, he caught it in his bill, and then flew back and came in at the same window."

"If you don't whip him, I'm afraid he'll be a confirmed liar," Mrs. Surry had insisted. And then his father had whipped him.

In revenge he had invented a device with strings and secret pulleys whereby, from his upper chamber he could drag a rough stone beneath the carpet under Mrs. Surry's bed. It made a fearful crawling sound; and at night, when the lights were all out, he had slowly pulled the strings and had listened with glee to his teacher's screams for help. The whole family were aroused. Then the strings were discovered and he had been thrashed once more. Mrs. Surry had told him that he would never amount to anything, and that he would live to disgrace his parents. How he had hated her!

And yet these last days at the Manse were not altogether without some tender memories. Jeffrey sometimes wandered about the house, forgetful of the galling restraints, touching certain old bits of household furniture,—an old piece of Sheraton or the high-boy in his mother's room, or the sombre clock—things that had somehow afforded a release from his actual present, and had carried him back to the old days of which his mother or his grandfather had spoken with lingering wistfulness; or had, by some other twist of fancy, enabled him to picture to himself a world of beauty where he, too, had a will of his own. He caressed with peculiar fondness the old folio of North's *Plutarch* which had yielded pleasure

to at least three generations of his family before him; and his eyes lingered upon a faded spot beneath the piano where, unobserved, he had followed the adventures of Gulliver and Crusoe, and had trembled over Christian's encounter with Apollyon.

He strolled out into the fields on the last day and bade an almost melodramatic farewell to the browsing cattle, and the little brook and the old spring that gushed its fount of cold water from under the hill. Presently he came around through the orchard where the Milam apples and Northern Spies were on the ground, and where the Russets and Pippins hung, awaiting a later maturity. These called to mind, once more, very precious memories of days with his grandfather, with whom he had walked beneath these very trees, and whom he had assisted at the solemn ritual of transforming bruised apples into rich brown cider. Below the orchard was the old barn, the leaning granary, and three wedge-shaped corn cribs where he remembered having slaughtered a multitude of mice. Back under the barn shed, too, was an old horse-power threshing machine, long in disuse, while in the granary was an ancient, thong-bound flail; treasured from the time when the first Collingsworth had come over from England to Virginia. All these things did the boy touch with eyes sometimes filled with tears; and when, at last, he hugged the soft warm nose of his favorite mare, his mother's own jet-black Della, now nearing the age of thirty, he sobbed outright. Why couldn't things be so arranged that when a situation was unpleasant, it could be unqualifiedly so? As it was he was only too glad to be rid of his father's all-seeing and yet unseeing eye, the irksomeness of a too punctilious attendance upon a form of worship alien to his nature, an unnatural relation to his fellows, and a régime of mental exercises that

seemed to thwart every hunger of his soul. On the other hand there was his mother, personless, and yet ineffably sweet and kind; there were the inanimate things that had a way, from one cause or another, of attaching themselves to one's innermost being so that they were very personal and alive; there were the horses, clean, and having a kind of aristocratic mien that allied them to a higher order,—they were friends, as faithful in their way as the darkies were in theirs. So divided were his feelings that, even on the threshold of his emancipation, he was cast down by the consciousness of a dear kind of enthrallment.

Later in the afternoon, Jeffrey was permitted to take a last walk about the town, a privilege hitherto withheld save when he could be suitably accompanied, but granted now that he was on the eve of entering college. Oldbern was a village of but one street—High Street, a name brought from the town in Devonshire where the Collingsworths had their origin, and distinguishing it from the neighboring rivals, the chief thoroughfare of which, in every case, was "Main Street." Here were Jordan's feed and fuel store, Miller's hardware store, Crockett's drug store and pharmacy, the post office, the great red brick court house, surrounded by elms, and bearing over its fluted marble columns the legend—"Justice and Equity." Opposite this imposing edifice stood the one hotel of which the town boasted, Peck's Tavern. A little further on to the north were two grocery stores, the new Busy Bee Dry Goods Emporium, John's barber shop, and Mahone's blacksmith shop. Beside the latter was a place where customers, waiting for their horses to be shod, might throw horseshoes with the village loafers. Throwing horseshoes was about the only week-day recreation the town afforded. Most towns in that section had a railway

station where the populace could gather and get some touch with the outside world, but Major Collingsworth and old Dutchy Peck had, for very different reasons, combined to prevent the railroad from crossing their property. Peck had stoutly maintained that steam trains were of the Devil; and Collingsworth believed that they were dirty and would bring undesirable people and unwholesome conditions in their wake. That was before the war, and now the road passed by three miles to the south, where, at a flag station, Oldbern's citizens, conveyed thither by omnibus, might condescend to employ modern transportation.

At one end of High Street was the First Methodist church, a yellow octagonal building, covered with gingerbread scroll ornaments; at the opposite end was the Presbyterian church, a prim and precise structure with straight lines of brick and white mortar against which green blinds stared out like eyes. Jeffrey approached the church yard gate and picked his way among the tombs to a plot, well in the back, where his own people lay. It was a favorite spot to which the boy loved to steal away, when he could, and meditate upon mortality. All his youthful sentimentalism was called forth here, and he was fond of making believe that he was being buried, and of picturing the grief of his father as he followed the casket to the grave. But when he thought of his mother's tears it was different, and he wept with her over his own loss. He wept also as he stood at the tall shaft of his lately buried grandfather and read—

“SACRED TO THE MEMORY
OF

MAJOR CROCKETT COLLINGSWORTH JR.”

At the foot of this grave he would ponder, it seemed, for hours, and revel in the pleasures of sweet torture.

Today he went from one grave to another, touching with reverence, now the tomb of an uncle who had been killed in battle, or of an aunt who had told him beautiful stories; now a great-grandfather, or some distant kinsman concerning whom family memories had been handed down for generations. No doubt, in some other world, they were expecting much of him. Well, now that he was going out into the world, he would not disappoint their hopes, he would show them.

As if in token of this resolution Jeffrey plucked some roses from a bush nearby and, careful not to overlook a single departed relative, sentimentally laid a flower on the head of every grave. After one last lingering look, he went out of the little gate and very solemnly took a back path past the Episcopal Church and around by the public school at which he had, on days before, been wont to cast many an envious glance. Now he looked at the thing with scorn. The boys who had played about this place had often jeered at him for being a "sissy, too good for a common school," and he had unwisely replied on one such occasion that if he had his own way he would go to common school too, but that his father considered association with other boys very bad, so that he was kept at home with a tutor. This reply was enlarged and annotated at the several homes in the village, and the days that followed had found Jeffrey more of an outcast than ever. Instead of his helplessness making appeal to public sympathy, his revelation of parental ideals visited upon him a rage that was intended for his senior. But today they were more respectful. He met Lee Randolph coming down the path.

"Hello, Jeffrey, going to college pretty soon?" queried Randolph.

"Tomorrow," he replied, with an attempt at superior dignity.

"Why don't you go to Charlottesville where you can have some fun? The University is a real school," taunted Randolph, bent on dimming the glory of Jeffrey's departure.

"Wythe was good enough for my grandad and I suppose it will do for me," returned Jeffrey with some feeling.

"Well, good luck," answered the other, offering his hand with a somewhat supercilious smile.

At the supper table, after grace had been said, John Collingsworth took up the twofold task of slicing ham and giving counsel to his son.

"Now, Jeffrey, you are very young to go away from home, but you have been given advantages that should prepare you for everything you may have to meet. However, I have noticed that you have some very weak tendencies to overcome. You seem to have a hankering to meet the wrong people and to embrace erroneous notions. I have tried to protect you from the things that spoil a boy, but I am afraid that you are not very grateful and that you haven't profited very much by it. You incline after new theories that point toward godlessness; I suppose you think it is smart. And then you are not frank with your father. You go off and discuss these things with Rhoda and Tom and the other niggers, as though they were your equals. You talked to them more than you did to Mr. Webb, and to everybody more than to me. Well, you'll be sorry some day; and now that you are going to college you will be thrown on your own responsibility with nobody that loves you enough to protect you from your mistakes."

The minister gave emphasis to his homily by vigorous use of the carving knife, and Jeffrey could not

help noticing, for all the importance of a last supper, that drops of sweat glistened on his father's bald head, catching the light from the chandelier above. He wondered what his father meant by his lack of frankness, and remembered with a shudder the occasions when he had spoken his mind only to be thrashed. His father had paused at the entrance of Rhoda, who was fetching a plate of hot biscuits. He waited, with an attempt at looking benign, until the old darky had left the room. Family advice was not to be administered in the presence of negro servants.

"In the first place, Jeffrey," the father resumed, "you must pay better attention, and not look as though you were thinking of something else when people are addressing you; it is not polite; and politeness, promptitude and propriety must become a second nature to you. Then secondly, you are too eager to make friends. Beware of people who make advances. Stay in your room when you have left the class, and when you want exercise walk out somewhere back of the college, alone, or with some of your professors. Cultivate people who have power, position, and piety. After we have finished supper we will go into my study and discuss some things that are of even more importance, but—ah—er—, which cannot be spoken of before ladies." Mr. Collingsworth looked meaningly at his wife whose sensitive mouth twitched nervously, and who was obviously embarrassed by the very suggestion of the "important things."

"Won't you have another piece of lemon pie, Jeffrey dear?" asked his mother, by way of making her son more comfortable and of relieving the tensivity of the situation, "I had it made especially for you. It will be the last chance you will have to eat one of Rhoda's pies for a very long time I'm afraid."

“Lemon pie is very dangerous. I have known men to die of indigestion after eating it,” interrupted Mr. Collingsworth, passing his own plate for a second helping. Then, after seeing that there was quite enough for both, he added, “still, I suppose one extra piece on rare occasions won’t hurt the boy.”

When at last father and son arose from the table, excused themselves to Mrs. Collingsworth, and turned toward the study, Jeffrey was atremble with excitement. His father had, for a long time, hinted that some day he would speak to him about “certain things,” and the boy had, at last, through furtive reading, divined that these “things” meant the awful mysteries of sex and their attendant dangers. The last time this promise was made was when he had asked his father concerning the presence of a visiting stallion, and had witnessed a quite visible embarrassment and annoyance take possession of his parent. The first time was when he had announced, before a company of ministers and their wives, that he had just helped an old hen lay an egg. Sex was evidently a terrible thing and always attended with displeasure. This attitude, at any rate, had made it thrilling. He was afraid.

His father locked the door and indicated by a sweep of his arm that he might be seated in the big wing chair. Jeffrey felt rather weak and seemed suddenly lost in the depths as he sank back, seeking protection for his burning face in the soft upholstery of the chair. His father seemed no less overcome by the importance of the forthcoming revelation, and as he felt along the mantle among innumerable pipes, Jeffrey saw that his hand shook. It seemed ages before the man could choose a pipe; it took an eternity to fill it with the moist tobacco, and to light the taper taken from the blue cornucopia by the fire board. And then

the very tobacco seemed to blush with mortification at being privy to such a conference. At last the minister, usually so ready of speech, began:

“My son, I am not uneasy about your studies, for you are interested in books, and while you neglect mathematics and are not over proficient in Latin and Greek, I think you will get through your course without difficulty. Wythe is an excellent school, where the traditions of the family, already established, will help you to resist temptation. But there are things, even at the best colleges, of which I disapprove and am afraid—wine and women. If I have displeased you by depriving you of the company of young people of your own age, it has been for the reason that young people, especially young boys, tell questionable stories—dirty stories. I have protected you from this, for the reason that it leads inevitably to vice. So, when you hear a boy begin such a tale, leave the room at once. There are many mysteries in nature of which you are ignorant, but,—ah—you’re old enough now to know these things, and you will find them explained quite satisfactorily when you come to study biology.”

The minister seemed anxious to put an end to the interview. He puffed nervously at his pipe. “Well, now,” he resumed, “I have to arrange a great many things for your mother to take with her in the morning and must write some letters to the authorities at Wythe, so I will sum up the whole matter in this”—— Here Mr. Collingsworth walked over to the door and listened for a moment, then, advancing toward the fireplace, and lowering his voice, he gave utterance to the secret of life:—

“Jeffrey, beware of bad women, and,—and keep your bowels open.”

The minister gave a great sigh of relief. So did Jeffrey, for all his disappointment. But after he had

kissed his father goodnight and turned toward the door, his sharp eye was caught by the look of an unfamiliar book in the high walnut case. He hastily read the title as he turned the knob of the door—"Boccaccio. The Decameron,"—some theologian, he supposed.

VI

LUCY COLLINGSWORTH and her son arrived at Wythe station after a five hours' journey. All along the way she had pointed out the fine old houses set back from country lanes amid branching trees and surrounded, invariably, by white fences, and, not infrequently, retaining, for a background, a row of log-cabins, survivals from the days of slavery. With the history of many of these homes she was well acquainted, and loved to relate how Colonel This or That had done something to Major Other. In this manner she strove to entertain the boy and to forget that she was giving him up to the guidance of other hands. He was her only son and chief companion; her husband being given to his sermon-making and pastoral duties, and living a life apart from her own homely interests. Secretly she had often wished that John Collingsworth would live even more apart, and leave to her the management of Jeffrey. For, in her way, she felt that she understood the whimsicalities of the lad, and that the too secluded life imposed by his father would some day lead to sorrowful results. But she had feared her husband, sensed his jealousy of the boy's confidence, and, hence, had been almost furtive in her attempts to be companionable with him.

On his part, Jeffrey could not altogether pay strict attention to mere scenery and reminiscences, however delightful. The day was too important. He could overhear snatches of what he imagined was college talk coming from two sun-burned youths from across the aisle. Something about "old Williams math.", and "Doc Parker's Greek exams," and "Stink one." It

was a little puzzling and undignified, he thought. He had heard of these worthies heretofore, but always they had been spoken of in some awe. Surely, however, Doctor Fitzpatrick of the biological department and Professor Wright of economics, and Freeman of psychology, would escape these familiarities. What men they were sure to be!—with grave Johnsonian personalities, rolling Latinized phrases beneath their tongues while explaining the recondite and the mysterious to an awakening and eager mind. He felt sure that they would not, nay, could not, descend to fuss about their meals, nor gossip about salaries. They would be above party politics, or sectarian prejudices, or race hatreds; they would be possessed of clearly outlined and rich individualities, and yet be impersonal in judgment.

The train was slowing down, and the brakeman came to announce, with rasping voice — “Wythe College”. How could a man make such an announcement in such a tone of voice?

There was not a town of Wythe, just a tiny pale green station, a still tinier post office,—the master of which kept a stock of canned goods, confectionery, tobacco, and stationery for the benefit of the students,—a Confederate cemetery, back on the hill; and the college. The buildings of the latter stood off a little way from the railroad, on rising ground, well forested and carpeted with grass. Red brick, white columns, ivy on the walls studded by small, square, white, rimmed window panes, Wythe College was a reduced replica architecturally, of the State University, planned by Jefferson.

Jeffrey was quick to notice that none of the other fellows who were alighting from the train had brought their mothers with them, and this knowledge gave him a sense of an unfair start, and of the possibilities

of future jests. This embarrassment was offset to a degree when Dean Richmond came forward to greet his mother, and to lead them to his own home in Faculty Row. Richmond extended a thin hand to the boy——

“Glad to meet you Mr. Collingsworth.”

A man at last! Jeffrey was so overpowered by the new title that he was totally unable to be critical of the gaunt, gray-and-red, chin-whiskered dignitary who, with the aid of a darky servant, was leading them into the campus. “I’m a man,” he kept repeating to himself.

VII

IT was not without a pang that, three days later, he saw his mother, through dimmed eyes, wave a farewell caress to him from the departing local train. His throat seemed dry and parched, nor did the water from the college spring entirely quench his thirst when he stopped there on his way back to the dormitory. In the room once more he saw everywhere the evidences of his mother's care,—her picture on the table by his bed, an old print of one of Constable's landscapes on the wall, the knitted bed-slippers, and some quilted cushions on the low couch. He comforted himself, however, with the thought that he was, at last, a free man. The room was his kingdom. He was glad that he was in the old building where his grandfather, two great-uncles, and heavens knows how many ordinary relatives had been housed. The mantel was grotesquely carved with initials and the beams showed blackened designs wrought by a heated poker. The floor was worn by the tread of many footsteps, and, near the thick oaken door, was a great black blood stain, ineffaceable since the days when the college buildings had been used by Confederate soldiers for a hospital.

"Where, now," he wondered, "was that particular patriot who had left so indelible an evidence of his loyalty? To what sort of Heaven did such men go? Had he been a poet, or just an insensible lout, driven by necessity into a conflict he had not comprehended? Oh well, either way, the man lost, and left nothing more intelligible than an ugly stain." Jeffrey turned to his books.

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Life for the following weeks consisted of hasty introductions; the meeting of instructors; getting assignments of Anacreon, Homer, ancient history, biology; of being examined at the gymnasium; of being inspected by the members of the rival literary societies; and, finally, he joined the Euripidean, under the pretext that it had the more stately hall, but really because his grandfather had founded it and had given it the motto—

'Αναφαίρετον κτῆμ' ἐστὶ παιδεία βροτοῖς.

It was not long, however, before Jeffrey became conscious that he was making very little headway among the students. Professors took a liking to him, from the outset, because of a wide reading which showed itself at once in recitation; but when the boy went out of the lecture room attempting to continue the discussion of some problem in literature or conduct, the distaste of his fellows became evident. He could take no part in their group-talk about baseball, football, girls, and college pranks, for the very simple reason that he had not lived, before, in a group of equals. He spoke as one from another world, and they deemed it an affectation. Everywhere, then, it was the same—he was damned to solitude where he wanted companionship; damned to fellowship with the mob when he yearned to be alone. Back home his footsteps had been dogged by the undesirable; here he was undesired. At the dinner table, night after night, he overheard yarns about stealing apples, carrying away the chapel bell, putting bewildered cows in the lecture rooms, and frightening the janitor out of his wits with papier-maché ghosts and dangling skeletons. The perpetrators of these conventional jokes were heroes. Daring was a sure road to popularity. There was his key! He would become a devil that he might hear the sweet music of the acclaim of comrades.

One evening, when these acts of heroism were being discussed at dinner, he resolved to make himself one of them. Turning to the man at his right he inquired, with an attempt to approximate the manner of a real fellow—"Did I hear somebody say apples? I wish you would lead me to an orchard, Whittaker, I'd like to show you how to swipe enough for the whole Dorm'."

Whittaker's surprise at the source of this remark was evident for but a moment, then, with a wink at the others,—

"Very good, Collingsworth, I didn't' know that you went in for such things; but if you will bring your pillow cases and meet me at the back of the chapel by, say, ten o'clock we will go and get some of Judge Walker's Virginia Beauties."

He did not explain a thing that was well known to his friends—that Judge Walker kept a guard, armed with a shotgun and assisted by a bull-terrier, at this season, in anticipation of just such raids. What he had announced was a signal to the others to watch for some rare fun. The Freshman was to have a fright and, possibly, a load of bird shot for his ambition—an old game with well known results.

Several minutes before the hour of appointment, Jeffrey was at the chapel door, two pillow cases stuffed in his pockets, and, when joined by Whittaker, he was guided out back of the college farm, through a grove of oaks, and up to the high worm fence surrounding the plantation of one of Virginia's foremost supreme judges. The scurrying white clouds that now and again dimmed the light of the moon served only to make the night full of spectres.

"Now," whispered Whittaker, "you will have to watch out for the dog. Look!"

Peering through the rails, Jeffrey made out, far

down the row of trees just opposite, the figure of a man leaning against a wagon. There was the intermittent glow of a cigar, and then a cough. The boy trembled, but the remembrance of his object was tonic.

"Let me go around to the other end," he whispered. You stay here, Whittaker, to help me get the cases over when I come back." His companion's grin of satisfaction at this turn of affairs was hid by a shadow.

Cautiously, trying each rail for a squeak, the boy climbed over the fence, slid to the ground on all fours, and then, by a serpentine movement of his body in the tall orchard grass, he managed to make the first tree. He felt about him for apples. There were none. He moved closer to the trunk and there, to his great surprise, discovered two big sacks of apples filled and sewn up that very day for shipment. Walker's Virginia Beauties brought fancy prices in New York. Fortune never smiled more beneficently nor, moralists to the contrary, on a better cause. The next task was to turn the sack over on his back without making a sound, and to return to the fence. It was slower work, this impeded return, but, after what seemed hours, it was done. Slowly he rose to his feet and, after well nigh breaking his bones, balanced the heavy burden on the top rail, where his companion steadied it until he could regain the safer ground. Ten disappointed upperclassmen rose from their hiding places in the bushes beyond, and stole rapidly back through the woods to the college.

"What was that noise?" whispered Collingsworth.

"Nothing but squirrels, I reckon," assured the other.

Arriving at the dormitory they found ten fellows grouped about the door. To all appearances, they had been there since dinner and were wholly unaware of this thieving mission.

"Hello, what's this?" inquired one. "Oh, it's Whit-

taker and, let's see," striking a match, "and Collingsworth. Where have you birds been?" Collingsworth was a member of the gang.

Thereafter he busied himself not with Thucydides nor Ovid, but with the art of making himself a hero. Did blackboards have to be greased, professors' horses painted green, or their front doors shattered by giant crackers, or tombstones moved to the chapel to bear later, in letters of red, the name of some unfortunate instructor,—in fact, did any deed, requiring foolhardy risk of limb, and meriting expulsion, appeal to the fellows, Jeffrey was elected captain. Nor was it courage that prompted these essays in boldness; it was the yearning for social approbation. Had it not been for his former tutor's extravagant letters of praise, the status of his forebears and his own serious countenance, which bore a certain air of thoughtfulness, he might have been suspected; with these, and a secretiveness fostered by his father's whip, he escaped unscathed. He even escaped hazing.

By the time of the Christmas holidays he had friends enough: Whittaker and Meadows, Painter and Pope,—all the wild set, flocked about his room, eager to hear plans for some new deviltry. It was quite wonderful at first. There were casino, and seven up, and poker—the latter seeming to reek with evil—, midnight feasts on stolen chicken, and, as a climax to it all, no end of cheap beer smuggled into the halls in innocent suitcases. A skull and cross-bones were added to the walls' fantastic scars, and the same horrid figures stood out on the bowl of Jeffrey's meerschaum pipe. The primness that hitherto had marked him for an "apron-stringer" had given way to an indefinable swagger.

And yet he was not content. Association was not fellowship. His new friends could not understand, for

one thing, his liking to read, when he got into bed, *Lycidas* or *Kubla Khan*, or some strange and fretted passage from the *Urn Burial*. They read nothing more than their assignments, unless, perhaps, it should be a song from Whitcomb Riley or a story by Mary Johnson. This business of liking style was effeminate. Men did not do such things. They grew up to smoke, drink whiskey, argue about religion, politics, niggers, horses, and women's legs. Not ladies' legs, gentle reader; for the very mention of a particular lady's legs, in that section, would start a revolution and bring rapid annihilation upon the scoundrel who suggested such a thing. Ladies had "limbs" in the South. A woman's leg, however, was in the same category with horses and hounds. One would say:—"I like 'em slim, and covered with fine down like that on a goose's body; they are gamer." To which another:—"not for mine. I'm for the big, fat, smooth variety; white flesh and dimples, invisible to the eye, but sensible to the touch."

Jeffrey had not yet felt a woman's leg and had no opinions. These fests of talk were fascinating enough, at first, but they tended to grow monotonous. There was in them neither variety nor originality—the men had acute Priapic imaginations, that was all. A good dirty joke was wonderfully clarifying, but very rare. Even the worst of this conversation was, however, more agreeable than the constant twaddle about Providence and conscience which he had heard at home. Still, this was not what he fancied to hear at college. Weren't people interested in beauty, or in the sources of things, outside of class rooms and text books?

Some days he would escape from this and lose himself in the dark alcoves of the musty, low-ceilinged, old library, whose shelves were filled, for the most part, with the works of Calvin and cast-offs from the

bookcases of deceased clergymen. But he did find Buckle's *History of Civilization in England*, Grant Allen's *Evolution of the Idea of God*, and a set of Herbert Spencer. *First Principles* was a text book of revolt. To Jeffrey it became a Bible. Not that he could understand it all; but he did come to feel, because of it, that the rule-of-thumb explanations of Creation, and the like, were too obviously childlike and were, themselves, but outgrowths of a process, and subject to universal relativity. Abandoning in a moment creeds that he had hated, it seemed to him, from birth, he seized upon a new one with avidity. The famous definition of evolution as an "integration of matter and a concomitant dissipation of motion," took the place of the old formula "I believe in God the Father." It was so much more simple!

Here, then, was work for him. He would enlighten these superstitious dolts, make them see the implications of the things that old Fitzpatrick was covertly teaching, and thus overthrow the faith of his fathers. Science demanded it.

Very cautiously he mentioned some of these ideas to Clyde Pope. The latter, having no particular prejudices, was not exactly shocked, but a little uneasy when he replied, "If you don't look out you'll be an atheist like Bob Ingersoll and Tom Paine. Old Dad Markham reads such stuff."

Markham was the postmaster and tobacconist, and it wasn't very long before Jeffrey made some pretext to inquire of him whether these books were obtainable. They would add to his mental ammunition.

"Aggzactly," assented the old man, "you can borrow my *Age of Reason* and Ingersoll's *Lectures*. Good readin' in them, son. Mor'n you'll get out a lot of them text books." And he dug out from beneath a cheese box

two dirty, paper-covered volumes. "Be sure to fetch 'em back," he added.

The reading of Ingersoll's rhetorical diatribes and humorous conceits requires but a willing mind and needs little background. Paine, on the other hand, affects more of a pedantic vein and fortifies his reasoning by countless references to Scripture, so that Jeffrey came to be very grateful for the long hours spent in committing to memory passages of scripture from the Testaments, and for the familiarity, thus acquired, with the histories as well as the arrangement of the King James Bible. Paine pointed out contradiction after contradiction in the accounts of the ancient gossellers, revealing discrepancies in those beautiful and simple legends, and making the miracles seem but the play of stage charlatans. To a boy so long compelled to make these golden fairy stories a test of memory, a source of exact history, and a manual of logic; so long forced to hear the unparalleled poetry of Isaiah and Kolheleth and John warped and twisted for texts to confound Catholics and Campbellites and infidels, the discovery of these inexactitudes was a joy. He giggled over subtle inuendoes reflecting sadly upon the virtue of Our Lady, smiled when he saw that there were two unrelated accounts of creation, laughed at the confusions over the crucifixion, and became ecstatic when he beheld the complete overthrow of the legends of the resurrection. Then his mind leaped to a dreadful conclusion, with that discerning power that has ever characterized truth-seeking humanity: The fishermen of Galilee fail to agree, therefore God is all rot! It was horrible that writers should make such blunders. Why, Matthew and Mark were as inconsistent in their histories as rival editors are in the account of an election; or as the consecutive messages of a president of

the United States. Well, at any rate, all preachers were bounders.

A few days of quiet reflection brought about a temper of greater moderation. It was not enough to flaunt the errors of Ezekiel, nor the mistakes of Moses; if he would make headway in this needful propaganda, he must, in the main, attack the fundamentals. Spencer—there, after all, was the man to make popular. He would return to his original plan and form a Spencer club. He had a place now, and would use his reputation for demonic courage for some cultural purpose.

And then he met Yost. Edward Yost was a Sophomore, and behaved with becoming condescension to underlings, but, as a leader of the Euripidean debaters, he lost no opportunity for cultivating acquaintance for one who, on his first try-out, assembled his material with the dexterity displayed by young Collingsworth. The two began taking walks together in the evenings after supper. Yost's father was a prominent attorney in Norfolk, and he looked with disapproval upon the entrance of a steadily increasing number of "white trash" into Virginia colleges. This being his second year he was in a position to know. He confided to Jeffrey:—

"I'm simply amazed that the college doesn't do something about it. Last year there were about a dozen of these riff-raff here, but we scared two of them nearly to death, beat up a third, and let the rest know where they belonged. They never got an invitation from either of the societies. But this year there are fully twenty of them, coming from Scott, Carroll, and the mining towns of West Virginia. The damned impudence of it. Why, if it keeps up, there won't be any social life left here. Some of them are rich as the devil, too; squatted on poor land and shot squirrels and wild turkeys for a living until the Yankees came

down and opened the coal mines. Then they suddenly got to be millionaires. Well, why don't they go to the infernal Yankee colleges where money is everything and family nothing? They certainly wouldn't get a chance here if I had anything to say about it."

"Nor I," agreed Collingsworth, seeing an opportunity to press a point,—“These louts come here in their jeans breeches, and yarn socks, and squirt tobacco juice all over the class room floors until it is sickening. But that isn't my chief objection to them. The poor white trash have taken over the religion of the niggers, until they out-hell hell. The more they increase, the more will the South's reputation for ignorance spread. They are as ignorant and as superstitious as the worst of the darkies, and have none of their virtues. Negro religion is at least amusing, and I do love to hear them sing 'Roll Jordan Roll,' and 'Hell is Deep.' They have something which gives you the creeps, and yet satisfies your ear. There is real passion there. But just go to the meetings of these mountain Methodists and hear them shout and rend each others' clothes! They don't keep time in their shouting the way the niggers do; even at that they make discords; while to hear them sing 'A-way-over-in-the-Promus' La-and,' and 'I hope one day we'll all git thar'—is really revolting. And superstitious! Why they are afraid of black cats, and thirteen, and Friday, and put salt under the sick-bed to drive away devils. And they swallow the Bible whole, and yet can't read it, half of them. Even their preachers can barely read it. I think we ought to keep them out of our colleges; but there should be separate institutions to teach them science. If they would quit depending upon God, and learn how to cultivate their red clay, the whole country would be better. The preachers have the poor devils under their thumbs,” he concluded.

"I don't quite agree with you," answered Yost, "not that I have any use for the preachers or the Bible either, but if you take religion away from these Mountain whites, no woman in this region would be safe. They would commit as much rape as the niggers."

"But the niggers are over-religious and still commit rape," continued Jeffrey "In fact, rape and religion seem to go together pretty well; both are mental cyclones, and while one violates the body, the other deflowers the mind."

"Yes, that sounds very well, Collingsworth," laughed the other, "but these common folk have to be kept down where they belong, and religion does it; at least their kind of Christian religion does it. This humility stuff does a lot of good, and we ought to patronize it. That's what my governor says, and he's got a pretty long head. Christianity has its uses, and the main one is the ability to make people contented with their lot. That's why Constantine chose it out of a half-a-dozen others. He didn't need a gentleman's religion; there were plenty of them floating around over the Roman Empire, perfectly helpless. He had a problem of keeping slaves from revolt. If you and I had been alive and around Jerusalem when Christianity started, we wouldn't have listened to an ignorant street preacher. We would have gone to the Temple with the respectable folk, or, if we didn't happen to have been Jews, would have paid tribute to Pallas Athene. We would have gravely given assent to the crucifixion of that same street soap-boxer, and would have considered ourselves the better patriots for it. And we would have been right. But we would have been wrong, too, for the persecution of a thing always increases it, and if the Romans had tolerated the varmints, they would have died out, just as the Populists

are dying out here. So we've got to tolerate the religion of the poor whites; but we don't have to live with them, and we ought not to have them here at college. They're better off ignorant. Without learning they make, at least, reliable hired-help; with it they're not only worthless but miserable."

Jeffrey was a little crushed by this superior wisdom and saw that he had failed to make his point, but he made one more effort.

"Perhaps you're right, Yost, but at any rate, gentlemen ought to know the truth; and while they may encourage the ignorant to enjoy the farce, they ought to be able to know what is behind the scenes. We have too much ignorance displayed right here in our own chapel. Take old Kennedy's chapel talk last Sunday, and the merest lout can pull it to pieces in a moment. He is still winding Paley's watch. The argument of, as the watch is to the savage so the world is to us—making an analogy to prove a god—is all nonsense, and Herbert Spencer makes short work of it. Spencer is the man we should all know about. What do you say to getting a group together on Friday nights to read him? It's certain we are not to get this kind of teaching in the class room, or at least not until we are seniors. Spencer is too much for one head, but if a bunch of us got together we might get a lot out of it. What do you say?"

"Oh, I suppose we might get a few of our kind here liberal enough to start such a venture, but you'd better keep it dark. Begin, say, this next Friday night, and I'll bring some of the fellows up to your room."

It was growing dark, and the dim kerosene lamps shone feebly out of the dormitory windows. From one of the houses across the campus, came the mournful sound of "Old Black Joe," while overhead, an ancient

owl was heard, with a flap of disgust, to leave its roost in a great branching maple.

A disturbing element had entered into Collingsworth's dream. That there were two sides to this work of necessary emancipation had not before entered his mind. He was not, even now, altogether sure that it was so, but the doubt troubled him. He began to reflect upon some other causes of discontent with his present life. The faculty were not as he had hoped. Daniels, the president, was a pompous vulgarian, with a voice like thick oil, and hair like a door mat. He stood at the desk, during the chapel hour, rolling his great eyes for all the world like an English bull pup, and while his phrases were choice enough, they seemed, to a listener, to ooze from a bubbling surface. Addington was a voice from the tomb; Hendricks had a face of stained vellum, and verjuice eyes that snapped forth an ostentatious piety, begotten of decrepitude. Drury's face was Gothic, and on the arches of his brow sadness made a sort of grimace; the others, with the exception of Wright and Fitzpatrick, who seemed at least human, looked like undernourished farmers. All of them were cold, formal, dead, mincing, spinsterish, and timid. Nothing was; everything seemed so. Academic standards seemed to forbid enthusiasm. Nobody came trouncing into the classroom shouting — "Isn't Mallory a treat?" or exclaimed, over a line of Lucretius, or Shakespeare, — "Here's life, — these old scoundrels knew what they were talking about!" Their eyes didn't even sparkle over Poe or Keats. Damn it all, they were dead, and buried in statistical graveyards, wrapped in the cerements of their own fears.

Long after he had gone to bed the sense of bafflement kept him tossing about, watching strange shadows on the wall, and listening to the night sounds of the creatures that preyed upon other creatures, and

the terror cries of little birds. Now and then he heard the fall of solitary footsteps upon the brick walk outside. Everything was disappointing. What did it all mean? On the hearth, a cricket, unannoyed by cosmic problems, was rubbing its legs together with insectial satisfaction.

VIII

IT has long been a custom, rigidly observed by the innumerable little denominational colleges dotting the hills of the South, not only to take an annual religious census, but also to hold what is called a "revival" some time after this event, for the recruiting of such as are listed as "unsaved," or "not affiliated" with any of the conventionally orthodox churches.

In the old days this series of religious services was conducted by the president, invariably a minister, or by the college chaplain; but of late, the waning of the old pieties, the coming of the new specialization, industrialism, progress, the increase of what is known as democracy,—in a word, vulgarity, had brought into being, along with patent medicines, and perfumed tooth paste, that specialist in religious excitation, the evangelist. The least noxious of these, being at least able to read the Scriptures, were even invited to the colleges. The season for hunting "higher-critics," an amusement invented as a substitute for witch burning, was then at its height in that region, and the presence of an approvedly evangelic and vociferous pointer in a given academic field, insured it, for a little while, from the suspicion of harbouring heretics. Wythe College, though stoutly manned by a theologically sound faculty, had hitherto escaped inquisition; but of late some one had heard some one else say that Dr. Fitzpatrick, an Episcopalian, and therefore already open to the charge of worldliness, was trying to reconcile the doctrine of evolution to the Creation stories of Genesis; and that Freeman had recommended James' *Psychology* to supplement Dr. Noah K. Davis' *Mental Philosophy*,

and, worst of all, had suggested somebody's book on the development of ethical concepts instead of Hopkins' *Law of Love*. These rumors, sufficiently vague to prevent the actual preferment of charges, nevertheless made it necessary to invite some notably successful, and ecclesiastically unimpeachable evangelist to conduct a campaign of salvation for the college students.

Such an one was the Reverend Ebenezer Gross. This pious gentleman was the son of a formerly famous Tennessee horse doctor; and, having been unable to create, during his fifty years, more than fifty-two sermons that would bear repeating, he felt called to the work of a roving evangelism where his fervid eloquence might be more generously rewarded, and where his ambition to travel might be gratified. His thin lips and perfectly straight black hair were barely sufficient to offset the pale chocolate-drop complexion which might have proclaimed him a mulatto. He had the voice of an auctioneer and a temperament of Torquamada crossed with Yorick. With a little more intellectual training he might have made a creditable performance on the vaudeville circuit. As it was he saved, according to his modest handbills, a thousand souls a year,—nearly three a day.

Announcements:—The students of the college are expected to attend the seven daily meetings held for their benefit by Mr. Gross. Preparation:—On each floor of the dormitories student prayer meetings will be held. The leaders of these meetings are to be appointed by Mr. Peyton Wiley, secretary of the Y. M. C. A. Reconnaissance:—Mr. Wiley and his assistants will call on the students at their rooms for information relative to their religious beliefs and church membership. Will they please be ready to answer any questions which they may ask?

Jeffrey was ready, and when Wiley, a dapper and

dimpled youth, with a very hearty hand shake and a very hard back slap, came into his room, he found that he was compelled to remain longer than the three minutes he had allotted for his questionnaire.

"I suppose you are a Christian?"

"What do you mean by Christian?" Jeffrey countered.

"Well, I suppose everybody in this enlightened land knows what a Christian means—a believer in Christ."

"Do you mean the historical Christ, or the metaphysical Christ?"

"Both."

"Well, then, I have some doubts about the existence of the first, and refuse to answer the second until you make clear just what content you put into it."

"Aren't you a member of the Presbyterian Church?"

"My father forced me to be, so I'm a Presbyterian through fraud, and by misrepresentation."

"Shall I put you down, then, as Presbyterian?"

"No!" thundered Jeffrey, "if you must put down something, say agnostic."

"You don't mean to say that you're an infidel?" whispered Wiley.

"Infidel means unfaithful, and I am trying to be faithful to myself to the best of my belief, so I am emphatically not an infidel."

"It seems to me that you're too young to have such decided opinions wholly at variance with the world's best minds."

"How about your being too young to have opinions? If I agreed with you it would be quite proper to have settled the whole matter of God, freedom, immortality, the resurrection, and all the rest of it,—regardless of my age. And who says that all the world's best minds are on your side? Jefferson wasn't, nor yet Lincoln, nor Emerson, nor Charles Darwin, nor Herbert Spen-

cer; and, before Plato, all the Greek philosophers were sceptics."

"But the Greeks were before the light came; they had no Christ."

"If the Greeks were without light, then I think I'll be content to flutter along in the dark," answered Jeffrey.

"Look here, Collingsworth, this is bad business, and I hear that you have been having Yost and Pope and several others in here reading this infidel nonsense and making yourself a bad influence generally. I had hoped it was not true, but you have confirmed all that I heard and more. I haven't time to answer all your objections, but I can tell you that they are childish, and I will send President Daniels up to see you. He will argue with you, if you are in earnest. I am sorry for you, and sorrier still for your good father and mother. What will they think when they hear about this?"

"You'll tell my parents, I suppose? It would be very Christian of you."

"It would be Christian if I did, but I shan't. The proper authorities may do as they see fit."

"I don't believe you put anything down on your list about me," said Jeffrey. "Aren't you going to put me down as agnostic?"

"Agnostic is not in my list of denominations," Wiley replied. "Goodbye, I hope you will come to your senses." He closed the door after him not too gently, but with vast relief.

Jeffrey sank back into his chair a little wearily. So he was accused of being a bad influence, of leading upperclassmen astray. No doubt they would write to his father, and then there would be stormy letters, and his mother's tears. He could picture the scene: John Collingsworth would tear around the room, and, fin-

ally, in a burst of futile rage, would accuse his wife of having been too lenient, too indulgent, toward his son. He would never think of blaming himself. Jeffrey was glad when he thought of his father's possible chagrin and rage. His only regret was for his mother. She never answered a rebuke, was never angered. She just loved and suffered.

IX

THE earlier meetings of the revival were not intolerable. Ebenezer Gross would absent himself from the platform until the time for Scripture reading, when he would appear out of nowhere with a bound, and open his pocket Bible, at the very page from which he wished to read, by giving a mere flip of the hand in which he held the book outstretched as though it were a peach pie. Then he would read with rhetorical flourishes, and without glancing more than once or twice at the text. He made running comments in what he thought was good college vernacular. "Jesus Christ was always there with both feet," he would say, when speaking of the scene at the Betrayal,—“he was the only man in the bunch that had the guts to die but, you ask me, why didn't the Man of Sorrows, this Carpenter King, this Son of Almighty God, who could have called a legion of angels with flaming swords,—why didn't he scrap? Listen!”—Here Gross would run rapidly toward the front of the platform, and lower his voice to a stage whisper—“Listen!” Now he would run, crouching, to the left of the platform—“Listen!—boys this was the guy that was brave enough to flunk out in this world, so that in Hell he might spit in old Satan's face and make a chance for you damned sinners.”

The maidenly members of the faculty looked uneasy and out of place on hearing this, but they supposed that in this wicked age the end justified the means, and if vulgarity was the means of making saints and steeping souls in spiritual culture, then they would, God helping them, tolerate even vulgarity.

Monday night Jeffrey listened with mingled feelings. He was astonished that such words should fall from the lips of a man who held in his hand such a masterpiece of language as the English Bible; he was amused at the incongruity of acrobatics in a college pulpit. Tuesday night he was bored. Gross did not vary enough his athletic performances. Wednesday and Thursday Jeffrey spent the time, in an obscure pew, reading *Tom Jones*. By Friday night he had reached that scandalous point in Fielding's wandering narratives, where Tom discovered Square in Molly Seagrim's bed room, and was all chuckles over this indecent incident, when suddenly one of the preacher's words arrested his attention. It was something about "this infernal doctrine of evolution." Jeffrey looked up. Gross seemed to be looking at him.

"Right here in this college you all have a bunch of smart alecks whose empty heads have been turned by this nonsense. Why that theory was dead and stinking before it was half born. Look at man! He dreams, and lo, there is a mighty steam engine; he sees a vision, and behold the telephone. Being the child of God he is permitted to annihilate both time and distance; and yet Darwin says he came from a monkey! That old fool roasts tonight in hottest Hell, along with Tom Paine and Voltaire—all perverted degenerates who died crying to God for salvation of their miserable souls and before another sun rises in yon eastern sky, my misguided friends, you, too, may be lying, white and cold, your body waiting its coffin, and your soul before an awful God! What are you going to say then? Alas, alas, it will be too late for us to know!—but I can tell you what an angry God will say to you—'Thou fool, depart you into everlasting fire and brimstone, prepared from the beginning for the devil and his angels.'"

The sermon ended with an exhortation to fling intellectual vanities aside and to prepare to meet mothers and preachers and all good people in Heaven. Followed then the hymn:—

“My days, my weeks, my months, my years,
Fly rapid as the whirling spheres
Around the steady pole.
Time, like a tide, its motion keeps
And I must launch through endless deeps,
While endless ages roll.”

And:—

“Remember sinful youth,
You must die; you must die;”

During the singing Ebenezer sat, crouched down in his chair, with his face buried in his hands as though to give out the notion of intense pity and spiritual agony. Now and then he would raise his head, so that his lips could be revealed to the spectators, and would seem to be muttering a communication to some spiritual Presence. As the last words of the song died away he arose as if renewed by Heavenly assurance.

“Boys,” he began, “you may never have another chance like this. The chariot of salvation may never pass this way again. The Holy Ghost may never knock at the door of your hearts as it is doing now. I may be the agent especially sent for your good, and appointed to snatch you like a brand from burning. So while we stand and join in the next hymn, I am going to give the sinners present an opportunity to come forward and sit on the front pew, and ask God to forgive them for their sins. I know that we are good Presbyterians here, and are shy of the mourners’ bench. We haven’t had much use in the past for the shouting Methodists and their methods, but it will do us good to stand out and testify for Jesus in public. Don’t deny your Master. Show your courage. Be

men, and confess your sins. Please to sing the old and familiar hymn—*There Is a Fountain Filled With Blood.*”

A few came forward, but the revivalist was not satisfied.

“Now my friends,” he resumed, addressing the standing congregation, “perhaps some of you have not yet made up your mind to come out for Christ; but before we engage in prayer, let any one who desires the prayers of the good Christians present, please sit, just where he is, and give evidence of his anxiety to be convicted of his sins. We will wait for just a moment.”

A silence, brim full of curiosity, filled the auditorium and, one by one, as if reluctantly, a few more responded; each such action being rewarded by the preacher’s exclamation—“Praise God! Praise God!”

It was an old device, used, no doubt, by the agitators beneath the shadows of the Pyramids, when the Pyramids were young. The object was to get everyone to take some action; and among people with evangelic tendencies, it invariably had its effect. Jeffrey had recently read a book on the psychology of religion, and in the chapter on suggestions and revivals, had found some discussion of this very method of swaying mobs. Calvinistic audiences were not quite so susceptible to these things as the more emotional Wesleyans. Still, when the test comes, very few can brave public disapproval and challenge an exhorter who praises the idols they seem, at any rate, to worship. An individualist, hard headed and independent, might scorn a particular mob action; but if the leader commanded all who loved their country to remove their hats, he would hardly refuse. In this way an anarchist orator might have succeeded in getting some co-operation from even Mr. Theodore Roosevelt.

“It would indeed be sad,” continued the preacher, “if, before this service is brought to a close, all the unsaved here present did not take some part in this great meeting. All of you boys have good mothers and fathers whom you want to meet in the Hereafter; none of you is so hardened but he desires, at some time, to be saved, so I want to ask all who wish to go to Heaven please to be seated where you are and bow your heads, after which we will join in prayer.”

The audience sank back as one man,—that is, all but Jeffrey who, if anything, stood straighter than before, his face white and set, and his eyes burning with a kind of neurotic fire. The Spencer Club had lacked the courage of its apparent convictions. But no, there was Edward Yost rising to his feet. Yost had followed the crowd movement instinctively, but, catching sight of Jeffrey out of the corner of his eye, he flushed crimson, summoned the rebel zeal of his ancestors, and rose trembling, supporting himself by clutching the back of the pew ahead.

Gross was astonished. He glared at these impudent sinners as Calvin must have looked at Servetus. “Is it possible?” he groaned. Many heads came up to see what was possible. They were petrified by such insolence.

“So you really want to go to Hell?” shouted the evangelist.

Collingsworth bowed his head in unregenerate acquiescence; Yost simply stared.

“Let us pray,” commanded Gross.

The prayer that followed began with—“Lord Jesus, thine adversary, Satan, ‘is in our midst.’” In a few graphic phrases the Lord was informed of the horrible state of things in Wythe College. A young man was leading his weak satellites to Inferno. The revivalist went on to shatter the Darwinian hypotheses with

awful epigrams. The Most High was reminded of the fate of Ingersoll. Then followed pyrotechnics, and, after that, an outline of college history. He then drew a picture of distressed and broken fathers and of sobbing mothers. A lurid photograph of Hell was taken on the spot. In conclusion came a plea for the protection of the innocent hearts against the contamination of one already hardened in sin and false pride.

To Jeffrey, who already fancied himself an "emancipated free-thinker," the whole thing was a travesty. He had been accustomed to a religious service that, if colorless, was yet, in its way, dignified and simple. He was not used to hearing Our Lord addressed in the language of the street, much less that of the alley. Enough of reverence and of a sense of fitness was left in him to be disgusted at this abandonment of all decency before the pretended need of salvation.

Here, then, was the center of culture of which he had hoped such high things. Certainly it was not the kind of college life from which his grandfather had drawn his splendid ideals and gentle chivalry; things must have been better in the old days. Nor was it the kind of thing that Webb had spoken of. Still, Webb had been to Princeton, and that was in the North. In the North, no doubt, they were utterly free of this astounding vulgarity. At the first opportunity he would go there. Hawthorne and the Concord school had left their impress up there; and, anyway, the people somewhere must be free and beautiful.

The following day found Collingsworth's name bandied over the entire campus. The Spencer club was to be investigated. Such things were not to be allowed in a Christian institution. Prayer meetings were held. Being Saturday, there was no ordinary chapel service, but there was a special prayer meeting appointed at which Jeffrey was spoken of quite openly.

It was deplored that one of his splendid family should be in such a spiritual plight. In the afternoon word was sent to him that Daniels and Gross were going to call,—“Would he kindly remain in his room?”

They came. Gross now assumed a smirking pleasantry, slapped Jeffrey's back, felt of his biceps, admired the room, asked concerning his father, and told anecdotes about his youth. He, too, had been very wild and exceedingly wicked. He, too, had read Paine, and, going further, had read every word of all the pagans and infidels—from Zeno to Haeckel. Their arguments were easily demolished. Where was the missing link? — Just where the philosopher's stone and perpetual motion were——nowhere. We were all inclined to be sceptics at some time in our lives. Faith was then all the more comforting after the reaction. One outgrew these heterodoxies if one had been well reared (Daniels said “raised”). And now would Jeffrey not, after having had his fling of independence, come this evening to the service determined to make his influence felt on the Lord's side? If for no other reason than to counteract the bad influence he had exerted, this action would do good.

Throughout this speech Jeffrey was remembering the violent things that had been said from the pulpit. Some of the men had grinned at his discomfiture. He hardened his heart.

“No sir, I can't do that honestly. I've been submitted to a public insult. You forced me to make a demonstration against my will. I was compelled to attend your meetings and then was put in a position of ridicule.”

“But my dear boy, it was such a simple proposition,” objected Gross, “of course you want to go to Heaven?”

“Not if evangelists like you are there,” Jeffrey replied.

President Daniels, who had hitherto taken no part in this interview, now sprang to his feet exclaiming,—“Why this is an insult, Collingsworth, your father would thrash you for it, sir. This good man and I came here for your soul’s sake, and this is what we get. I shall write at once to your parents. You ought to be expelled, but unfortunately our rules make no mention of such offenses. However, sir, I want you to know that this so-called Spencer Club can and will be stopped. We will have no more infidel societies in this college, sir!”

As they were leaving the room, Gross, the white lines about his lips betraying the lack of genuineness in his curious smile, assured Jeffrey that his Christian duty compelled a forgiving spirit, and that he would remember him in his prayers.

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The frightened remnants of the informal group of Infernals were a little shy, in the main; some had been frightened too thoroughly, dreading the publicity, or their parents, or, possibly, even Purgatory. Most of them were willing to continue their readings together if the meetings were furtive enough; and there were some possible recruits,—chiefly among those whose religious training had been under the more genial influence of the Episcopal Church. These were not candidates for atheism, but were sufficiently disgusted by the vulgarity of the recent events to enter into any scheme that might lend aid and comfort to the enemy. Altogether, Yost was well pleased with the results of a few hours interviewing, and took no inconsiderable pleasure in revealing what he had done to Collingsworth.

Thereafter the "Spencerites" became a sort of peripatetic school of immature iconoclasts, without an acknowledged head, and with the single aim of finding arguments to discountenance clergymen. They wandered over the hills on Saturdays, and, alas, upon Sundays also, finding in every leaf an evidence of evolution; in every pre-carboniferous fossil imbedded in the soft shale, or harder limestone,—a proof that man was the descendant of an inglorious reptile. The very flowers—sweet williams, and buttercups, and daisies, were refused their language of love, to be made sign posts of a theory. Reason was triumphant.

On the Monday following the exit of Reverend Ebenezer Gross, the Owl, a magazine published jointly by the rival literary societies, devoted two brief paragraphs to the freshmen who were distinguishing themselves in debate, and in one of these occurred a notice of Jeffrey: "Mr. Jeffrey Collingsworth has displayed remarkable talent in three debates this year. His diction is good, arrangement of material logical, and his manner, for the most part, agreeable. The committee believes that if Collingsworth continues to improve as he has done this term, that before his Senior year he will make one of the best debaters the college has produced in recent years. Old Euripideans will recall that Collingsworth is a worthy name, and that the class of 1842 had a medal man of that name who withstood Nelson of William and Mary and brought home the honors."

Jeffrey marked this number, turned down the corner of the precious page, and mailed it to his father in the hope that the pleasure arising from this good news would cause that parent's heart to soften and, perhaps, even elicit a letter of praise. Here is the response that came:

MY DEAR SON:—

I was away from home attending some affairs of the Presbytery when President Daniels' alarming letter came; otherwise you would have heard from me much sooner. In your last letter to your mother you alluded to nothing of this disgraceful affair. I suppose your conscience did not permit it. I am both amazed and pained that a child of mine should take such an unwarrantable position, and should afterwards become so arrogant and insulting—Mr. Gross and the president were your guests and you had no right to act and speak as you did. I do not, in general, approve of either revivals or evangelists, but if rank infidelity and higher criticism are going to develop in our schools, I fail to see how else they are to be combatted.

You have had rare Christian training and have been sheltered from evil in such a way that I hoped you had escaped such godlessness, but, alas, I fear you have a weak mind, and no gratitude for the pains I have taken to have you educated for Christian manhood. You are headed toward the Devil, sir, and if you do not come to a stop, all I can do is to withdraw your college opportunities at the end of the year.

Your mother is heartbroken. May her prayers and my own avail somewhat in bringing you to the light!

Regretfully,

your father,

JOHN COLLINGSWORTH.

Just about what he expected,—all “alases” and “dear me’s,” and no reason. Still it was depressing. Such letters always made one feel as if one had swallowed an egg without cracking the shell; took away

one's notion of self-importance, destroyed one's self-confidence for a time. He wished there were no mails, no postoffices to bear ill tidings. Why did he have such a father? He would change his name when he grew up. In the midst of these bitter reflections someone rapped at the door.

"Come in," he growled.

The door opened. "Oh!"—it was Dr. Fitzpatrick. Jeffrey rose, very much embarrassed.

"Hello, Collingsworth, you look as if you had been seeing things. Whatever is the trouble?"

Here, Jeffrey felt, was someone who would understand what a mess he was in and would perhaps show some sympathy. He handed him his father's letter in silence.

Fitzpatrick adjusted his glasses, sank back in a chair, and read the neatly penned pages with appropriate solemnity. Then, slowly, a genial grin, unacademic and slightly pagan, overspread his features. He had an enormous mouth, Jeffrey noted, but just now this strikingly simian feature seemed almost beautiful.

"Did it ever occur to you," began the biologist,—
"that some people lack a sense of humor? I have spent several years in this college trying to point out that evolution does not destroy religion. Many of my students who had some doubts at first have gone forth from this college to become ministers, and, moreover, ministers who are immune to the attacks of ordinary infidelity. And now, as a result, some people, who claim to be very religious, have worked hard to put me off the faculty on the ground that I am undermining faith. An evangelist comes here to stem the tide of doubt, antagonizes a lot of you young freaks, and makes you so sick of religion that you deny everything. A charming bit of irony. It reminds me of a little thing that occurred to an uncle of mine when I

was a boy. This uncle had a wife whom he thoroughly despised, and of whom he would gladly have been rid. By her, however, he had a child, a little boy, of whom he was very fond. One day during a runaway accident, he attempted, from a singular sense of chivalry, to save the life of the wife whom he hated, and, in the attempt, knocked down and killed the child which he loved above all the world. Ah well, that is the way life runs, I think."

Jeffrey began to forget his troubles in the presence of this cheerful cynic, and even smiled.

"I believe you are about seventeen, aren't you, Collingsworth?"

"Nearly that, sir."

"Well, I was seventeen about thirty years ago, and since that time I have met some pretty stupid folk, both ministers and laymen—even professors—but I have learned that it is better not to antagonize people. Keep your ideas to yourself until they learn to stand alone, and then you won't be anxious about them. After you get out of college, and have money enough and power enough not to care what people say, then you can express what you like. Before then you had better seem to agree with them, and, as the Scripture says, be 'all things to all men.'"

Jeffrey objected that this course of conduct seemed both dishonest and cowardly.

"No," replied Fitzpatrick, mildly, "it is not dishonest. What are ideas worth, anyway? There are only a few original ones, and most of what we call original ideas are utterly worthless. A wholly original thought is almost never a good thought. Sound thoughts are modifications, ever so slight, of the thoughts of others. And you boys, who have stirred up all this trouble for yourselves, have borrowed your ideas from Spencer, who borrowed from Darwin, who borrowed from

his grandfather and from the Lamarck, who borrowed from somebody else,—and so on back to the Greeks. And, on the other hand, Gross borrowed his attempted refutations of these ideas from a long line of theologians. If he had borrowed good ideas from sounder men he might have come out better. By accident you found a more logical source than he. That's all there is to that matter. And since you will probably be borrowing from a dozen or more contradictory sources before you are a half a dozen years older, why go on working up all these good people to such a state? . . . Meantime I will borrow some of your tobacco."

Somewhere back in his father's line of ancestry was a little Huguenot blood, the corpuscles of which grew very hot in Jeffrey's veins during this friendly talk with Fitzpatrick. The old dissenters hated Jesuitism in every form, and must have handed down sharply angular cells to their remotest descendants. At any rate he was uncomfortable. Fitzpatrick was the one man left of all the faculty whose judgment he respected, and just now he seemed to be counseling cowardice.

"I beg pardon, sir, for appearing impudent," said Jeffrey, "and I am very grateful to you for taking the pains to come to see me, and for being so reasonable; but to me, a thing must be either true or false. The Bible stories don't square with science, and the science you teach has facts to prove that the earth is millions of years old, and that life has developed from lower to higher forms. If science is right, Genesis is wrong. And if Genesis is wrong there wasn't any Fall"

"Wait a moment, you are going too fast," interrupted Fitzpatrick. "Genesis may be wrong about one thing and right about another. Wrong about the material history, and right about spiritual interpretation. I am not talking to be quoted, but it is quite possible

that the science of the Bible, if we insist upon taking it as it stands, is very erroneous. It doesn't pretend to be a text-book, and is not to be blamed for ignorant interpreters who make anything out of nothing. But you're just as bad; you take the same point of outlook that the preachers you object to have taken. But it isn't important enough to make a fuss about. What I want is that you should put off the discussion until you are older and can look at the facts more calmly."

"But," Jeffrey began, "Emerson says,—'speak what you think today in words as hard as cannon balls . . .'"

"You forget that he also says, in the same essay,—'Leave your theory, as Joseph his coat—and flee'; Emerson is, like the Bible, full of wholesome contradictions; but I didn't come here to preach to you. You've probably had preaching enough, and have revolted because the preachers seemed too sure. All I want is that you should avoid repeating the same faults. Above all don't be hot about it. Meantime I'm sorry we old fogeys haven't sense enough to avoid making an issue of such silly questions. Come up to my house some evening, when you have forgotten all this bother, and tell me something about your reading."

And he was gone. With him went another of Colingsworth's illusions. To one in his state of feeling, this man was worse than Gross. For while the former had training, knowledge, and science; Gross was ignorant. Fitzpatrick was a Judas to the cause. He had sold out for a professor's salary. Coward! he was juggler with words. With his training a man might wreck all the churches in Christendom; abolish theology, Hell, the Devil, and all superstition. Then there would be happy men and women over all the world. People would work and play on Sunday; and would laugh everywhere and always. No more churches to keep up, no more sermons to hear; no more long prayers

nor dull hymns, nor sins of which to repent in ashes. Progress would then be untrammelled; statues of Galileo, and Darwin, and Ingersoll would be set up everywhere in place of the busts of bishops and droning clergymen. The world would be free. Oh, the shame of such hypocrisy! He was on the verge of tears. In his imagination he stroked the world as though it were a stray kitten. Never mind, he would save the world before it was too late. He would not desert the cause.

XI

NOW every springtime it was the custom for Adele Murphy, a shopworn practitioner in women's favorite vice, to pay a stealthy visit to Wythe College in answer to calls of the cosmic urge. For the paltry sum of two dollars the young readers of Petronius Arbiter and Aristophanes might be initiated into the mysteries of a very commercialized Aphrodite Pandemos, and made afterwards to make propitiatory rites to that evil planet which lies nearest to the sun. Watchful college officials made this annual ministration increasingly difficult, causing the young woman anxious pains and shortening her stay in academic regions to a degree incompatible with that luxurious leisure that sybaritic lovers like. Puritanism, wedded to the spirit of mechanical efficiency, has made even vice akin to the quick lunch counter.

No one knew just who it was that saw her first. No one ever did. She came, got off the train on the side opposite Faculty Row, hastily communicated her presence and a tryst to some former patron, promised favors to her messenger, and usually sped away to the wooded hills back of the Confederate cemetery. Then, after supper, she would receive visitors and, if the gods seemed propitious, make shift to remain for two or three days; if not, she vanished about the time of the midnight local.

The rumor spread rapidly. Adele had come earlier than usual. Perhaps she had heard of the successful revival, and hastened her coming to reap the fruits of new-awakened love. Nothing is more appropriate in

the economy of nature, than the quick response man makes to the calls of the flesh just after a refreshing of the spirit by a season of highly emotional religious rites. The birth rate rises very perceptibly some three-quarters of a year after any great camp meeting where souls are aroused to a sense of their high moral responsibility. The whole social fibre is stiffened. Such may have been the reasoning of Adele. If so, it was the fruit of experience and not the result of a course of training in social statistics. Be that as it may, she was waiting, and was soon to hear eager footsteps in the forest.

Jeffrey sensed an unusual tenseness at the Commons when he went to supper. Men who were wont to be dull and lifeless, had a glow in their eyes as though they beheld a great vision and were destined to hold communion with the Queen of Heaven. They lived! And yet there was upon them a constrained silence. It was not until the meal was ended and they were outside, away from the inhibiting influences of the artificial, and sheltered by unmoral trees, and winked at by the pagan stars, that they broke the spell and began to talk. Between almost adolescent titters Jeffrey was told of the important visitor and her ancient mission. They were all going up Cemetery Hill to look at this carnival of passion; none were going to participate. It would be great fun to watch. Would Jeffrey go?

Now it happened that, a few days before the revival, Jeffrey had seen a book called *What a Young College Man Should Know*, lying on a table in a friend's room, had picked it up, and, on finding that it dealt with sex, had read its meager and overstated message in an hour. The book abounded in clerical sentimentalism and ridiculous inaccuracies, but its one or two illustrations of those parts of our frame which are omitted

from school books on anatomy, lent a certain authority to the treatise which the M.D. appended to the Reverend author's name doubly confirmed. The book taught two things: Sex is the source of the greatest pleasure in the world; sex is the most dangerous thing in the world. Under the second head he was told that the self-gratification of this impulse spelt idiocy; mutual gratification resulted in syphilis. One would rot, one's limbs fall off, one's eyes drop out, leaving hideous, pus-filled cavities. He gathered that if he married a woman, however, it would be perfectly safe. Nothing would happen. Before marriage every drop of life-fluid lost meant a year less of life. He made a rough calculation and found that he had about three more years to live. He believed it for a few hours, because the book invoked the spirit of science; and one touch of science makes all rationalists gullible. Jeffrey's faith in the accuracy of the prophecy was not long unshaken. There were too many exceptions still alive and moving all around him. Nevertheless a wholesome fear remained.

"Would he go?" he asked himself again and again. His sense of decency was outraged. He was shocked. He feared the thing, whatever it was, but he was curious. Here was the mystery of the world about to be made plain. Here was the thing too awful for his father to utter,—the thing that had made him stop at "bowels". Jeffrey longed to be horrified, for he was persuaded that the horror was beautiful.

The place was not difficult to find, for the paths were already well worn, and anxious groups were now arranged about under the trees. Some of the fellows were excitedly puffing big cigars. They moved around with an assumed and exaggerated mirth, now and then bursting into loud laughter. They were like dogs when a bitch is in heat.

There, under a friendly pine, was the woman, gaunt, coughing, white-eyed, yellow-haired, with features strangely like those of the most fantastic creations of Aubrey Beardsley. Her soiled red waist was half unbuttoned, her hat and coat lay in a crumpled heap on the left; at the right and within reach, were a small revolver and a battered handbag into which, during the brief intervals between amatory encounters, she stuffed dirty bills. The initiatory exercises for which the woman received these rewards lasted from four to five minutes, during which the youthful initiate was heckled and encouraged, laughed at and applauded by his riotous friends. The spectacle was revolting, and yet, even the more fastidious, whose sense of decency forbade participation in this orgy, felt a sort of contagion. For it was one of those April nights when the Ram was in the ascendancy, and everything seemed to be in an erotic mood. The very trees rubbed their limbs together in a sort of amorous frenzy. The rising full moon looked like a phallic symbol from a Roman garden; and in the valley below, a passionate steam engine, standing on a side-track, seemed intermittently to breathe out, "Pan, Pan; Pan, Pan."

Twenty youths, fresh from pious homes where they had been protected from all pernicious references to sex, and where their origin had been referred to the anti-Malthusian stork; twenty youths on whose heads the holy hands of the evangelist had but lately been laid, and in whose hearts had burned a yearning for "the peace that passeth understanding," now contributed to that institution of social insurance whereby our homes are made safe. Nearly two weeks later twenty of the students of Wythe College limped into chapel leaning heavily on hickory walking sticks.

Yost, who had watched this sport with Jeffrey, joined him on the return to the campus.

“For my part,” said he, “give me a little well chosen irregularity; but this kind of thing is nasty.”

“Hideous,” Jeffrey agreed. “It tempts a decent man to make himself a eunuch. If this is sex, to hell with it!” And yet he was right glad to have had even this horrid glimpse of the elementary mechanics of love.

XII

IN southern colleges debating and oratory are held in greater esteem than in most American schools, and proficiency in these things is noted by the faculty and has a decided bearing on the awarding of degrees. At Wythe, instead of a thesis, four orations were given by the senior, whose diction was criticized by the English professor, and whose subject matter came under the jurisdiction of whatever department in which he chose to major. A committee from each of the societies reported the standing of its members in debate and this, likewise, was counted for or against the scholastic position of the student. This, added to the general predilection of southerners to speech making, and their idealization of orators, gave great impetus to the life of the college societies, and compelled men, who otherwise would have never glanced at them, to read, in the better magazines, about contemporary problems.

The subject chosen this year for the annual inter-society Freshman Debate, was Socialism. The Euripideans were to affirm; the Euterpians took the negative. Collingsworth was the leader for his society and, for the first time, began to read socialist propaganda. There were no books on socialism in the college library, other than texts of general economics; and most of the magazines, except the *Arena*, were hostile. In the *Arena* he found an advertisement of *Wilshire's Magazine*, and an announcement of a socialist publishing house in Chicago. He ordered the magazine and a catalogue of books, after receiving which he began to wrestle with surplus-value, economic deter-

minism, wage slavery, the evils of capitalism, and the inevitable crisis. "Let the Nation own the Trusts" became his motto, and the *Communist Manifesto* took place beside Spencer in his new Testament. When the night of the debate finally came, he was well supplied with alarming statistics about child-labor, and over-production, and was full of the catch phrases from a hundred pamphlets. His material was well arranged, and, if the speech was a trifle hysterical, the facts colored, and the gestures profuse, it nevertheless gave evidence of sincerity and life. His hearers were mildly interested. Socialism was to them the dream of harmless fanatics, and without serious danger. The time had not come when students were forbidden to play with economic heterodoxy, so there was no more prejudice than if the discussion had been concerned with the merits of ham and eggs. Disinterested and impersonal judges gave the medal to Jeffrey.

He sent this golden token of triumph to his mother whose reply, full as it was of pride and a certain tremulous joy, showed all too plainly, that it was penned in secret. Her husband seemed to take no notice of the affair, and maintained a stiff silence.

There is, in most socialistic literature a kind of chip-on-the-shoulder belligerency, and, in what is known as scientific or Marxian Socialism, there runs, along with the economic theses, definite hostility to organized religious institutions which sometimes appeals to young rebels, disturbed by symptomatic and phenomenal, rather than fundamental evils, more than the theory itself. To Jeffrey the scientific color and evolutionary background of these writers, coupled with their prognostication of an inevitable collapse of Christianity, compelled respect. Any milder statement of the theory would have failed to awaken in him a particle of interest. He first became convinced

that socialism was an ally to agnosticism, a means of overturning the superstitions that murder joy. Now he felt that the economic order must go first; men would become free-thinkers afterwards. It would be just as well, however, to destroy both the economic and religious orders at the same time. His task was growing; and he felt the necessity for becoming a clear thinker.

In one of the magazines now coming to his table, he saw an advertisement: "Think Clearly; Be a vegetarian." He sent for literature which informed him that the co-operative commonwealth would come, wars would cease and superstitions die, when the evils of eating flesh were overcome. Meat clouded the brain and made brutes of men. Shelley, who wrote *Queen Mab*, was a vegetarian. Jeffrey read the life of Shelley, passed on to *Queen Mab*, and quit eating meat. He believed in the universal kinship, and resolved to be no longer a joint criminal in a society of murderers. In addition to handing out copies of *Wilshire's* and the *Appeal*, and Ingersoll's *Lectures*, he now distributed some little leaflets bearing the title:—"Why I am a vegetarian."

But this was not enough. One of the charges hurled against the socialists on the night of the debate was that they believe in free love. Now this is not strictly true, and the boy had seen denials of it, even denunciations, in the books which he had lately read; but the charge had been made in such heat that he resolved to investigate the subject of free love. Now, while the standard socialist papers did not advocate free love, they were very willing to advertise the literature of any cause unwelcome to the journals of respectability. Thus it came to pass that Jeffrey read of and sent for Aaron Philo's "Crimes of Marriage," and "The Philosophy of Free Love," wherein he

learned that to be a *real* revolutionist he must include in his program of emancipation the unshackling of women, the overthrow of conventional marriage, and the rehabilitation of the illegitimate child. Once more he was appealed to in the name of Darwin and the evolutionists. Again the harsh music of the arraignment of the preachers summoned him to the aid of a new cause. For the sake of science he would do anything. All he now lacked of being the typically emancipated American, was a course in Christian Science, the art of Yogi breathing, crystal gazing, and a manual of astrology. But he had not heard of these wonders, and, besides, they did not invoke the name of his particular gods.

Collingsworth was by this time regarded, by those who had formerly considered him a dangerous influence, as simply a harmless crank with a passion for the new and strange. Knowing nothing of the genesis of his aversions, they put down his radicalism to a desire for the bizarre, and treated him with amused tolerance. Daniels was relieved rather than perturbed by each new rumor which came into the president's office, and, toward the end of the year, wrote to Mr. Collingsworth that the boy would soon tire of his mental playthings and return to normal.

The college term drew to a close, and, after a fury of examinations, parades, flowers, orations and farewells, the thing was done, and Jeffrey joined his parents at the old Mill Creek farm where they sometimes spent the summer.

XIII

BETWEEN the gentle April showers the grass on the hills beyond Ripple Ford looked tempting enough for a walk, and several times the woman had glanced up from her embroidery hoop, out through the window, and resolved to set forth, only to hear the approaching patter of yet another downpour. At last, however, the defiant sun burst forth with a more persistent resolve, sent the clouds scurrying across the sky, and lighted up the freshened meadows until the cattle that had been huddled under the trees came boldly out to browse. The woman rose and prepared to go.

A rather handsome blonde of about forty, with the voluptuousness traditionally characteristic of widows, Mrs. Hilda Wethermore might have married again if her late husband's insurance and the slight legacy left by her New England parents had been tempting enough to the very few marriageable men of the county. As it was there had been a few candidates,—an ex-preacher, far too old; a store-keeper, far too ignorant; and a school teacher, far too poor. She might have returned to her native suburb of Boston after the death of Ephram Wethermore, who had been professor of the Romance languages at Wythe, but unfortunately, there had been, prior to her marriage, some naughty gossip which had made the place of her birth seem as hateful as Ripple Ford now seemed likely to become. A widow for more than three years, some said that her husband had succumbed to an excess of marital devotion, and others, with true neighborly interest, discovered that on one occasion a

traveling salesman had visited at her cottage until near midnight. On her part Mrs. Wethermore regretted the sentimental impulse which led her, when she left the house in Faculty Row, to seek the nearby village—only three miles distant—of Ripple Ford. She might have gone to Washington, she frequently reflected, and, by this time married an unattached government official.

Despite a long line of New England ancestors there was little of the Puritan in this woman's instincts; and many of the homelier wives in Wythe had looked with reproving frowns upon her fondness for young company, and upon a certain lustre in her eyes. Still there was no scandal while her husband lived, and she had gone away in good enough repute to warrant being invited to college commencements. It was on the Baccalaureate Sunday of the previous college year that she had met Jeffrey, then a Sophomore. The boy interested her at once. He had that about him which betrayed discontent and a vague restlessness, capable of divers interpretations. She sprang at once, with characteristically feminine logic, to a conclusion born of her own lack of that which, by her widowhood, she had been temporarily deprived. In a word, she felt that he needed a woman's guiding hand, and understanding heart. She would supply both.

It had long been a custom for the students of Wythe to make Ripple Ford the goal of an afternoon walk. There was a soda fountain, and, better still, a bar at which one might imbibe very green beer for five cents a glass. This last was forbidden and therefore all the more desirable. In his first and second years Jeffrey had but seldom gone on these pilgrimages; the place had seemed unattractive enough, and green beer, while necessary to his program of iconoclasm, made havoc with his digestion. This year it was

different. Remembering an invitation given by the widow Wethermore in the previous spring, he had called.

During the first visit he had been ill at ease, and a spirit of dumbness had possessed him, defying the woman's every inquiry concerning his curious theories of life. He came nearer to being articulate when she showed him the quaint bits of New England furniture which she had brought into the South fifteen years before—an old banjo-clock, some "Hessian" andirons, and an ox-bow desk.

"The people here in Virginia," she explained with some defiance, "are not the only ones who inherit old furniture. Indeed, I believe this Wainscott chair of mine came over, with one of my mother's people, in the Mayflower." She led him to the door of her bedroom.

"There is the portrait of one of my great greats," indicating a faded painting of a very wry faced and much bestocked old gentleman, — "Henry Dwight Winship was one of the first ministers in Boston. I keep his picture over my bed just to remind me of the 'thou shalt nots'." She looked knowingly at Jeffrey who blushed, though he scarcely knew why.

The second time he called she took him, with a yet greater wisdom, to the kitchen, in the cooler of which was found some fried chicken, cooked in the approved southern manner, and a finely boiled old sugar-cured ham. Having partaken of these dainties he became voluble with praise. He had heard that northerners know nothing of the kitchen arts. She conceded that she had learned much in Virginia.

"We Virginians are civilized in at least two of our tastes," said Jeffrey,— "mint julep and cured ham. To be right," he continued, "a ham must be treated for many days in salt-petre and sugar, then smoked over

smouldering hickory; after that saturated with port wine, and, finally, hung up in brown paper for a little better than a year. It is then fit for a Cyrenaic." He had already forgotten his vegetarianism. It had to be laid aside too often for the sake of sociability.

"Would you like to make a mint julep?" she queried, anxious to please, "I have some whiskey, and there is plenty of ice."

And so, after a little, he explained the elaborate ritual of the famous mixture with right honest gusto, and showed why the mint leaves should be bruised ever so slightly with a solid silver spoon—the slightest alloy spoiled the drink. She affected an unfelt interest, and exhibited a too childish glee. He felt that he was a success with women.

Later the widow lent him a marked copy of *Leaves of Grass*,—portions of "The Children of Adam" being heavily underlined. The raucus paganism of Whitman, his carefree gospel of conventionlessness, and his startling juxtapositions appealed to Collingsworth. Those hymns to the flesh made conspicuous by an itching pencil, awoke recollections of his old determination to try out free love. This was the one of his acquired theories that had proved quite unmentionable, and he had put it away for a time. But, he reasoned, if a woman were emancipated enough to approve of Walt Whitman, might she not at least listen to him? He was sure that she would not be so shocked as the one or two college fellows to whom he had mentioned the subject. They had replied:—"So that is what socialism leads to!"

Several times Jeffrey had wandered over to the village hoping for an accidental encounter. Once Mrs. Wethermore had been trimming some wayward vines in the garden; at another time she had been coming away from the post-office. On each occasion they had

taken a short walk together, and by this they knew certain favorite spots where, by tacit understanding, they might meet as though by chance; and where, always, on encounter, they feigned surprise. Saturday finally came to be recognized as their day, and the place was usually an old and deserted orchard near Byrds Mill,—a place equidistant from college and the village.

Back in the orchard stood a dilapidated shed under the very inadequate shelter of which Jeffrey had been waiting for above half an hour. His rain coat was dripping, and the pages of Emerson's essay on *Friendship* were puckered by the drops of rain that made their way through the rotted shingles. He had been reading Emerson as a kind of preparation for what he intended to say. To his immature and inexperienced mind, love was a beautiful thing — a mystery and a sacrament hitherto unassociated with his natural sensuousness. And yet, to him, friendship was even a greater wonder than love. From his later reading he got an idealism which he had not before found expressed in the more conventional books, nor exemplified in life. Most married folk seemed bored with one another, or spoke sharply. One or the other dominated and made domesticity a thing of slavery. If people would take friendship, he thought, for the strong foundation of their love; if they would maintain separate homes, and thus avoid those intimacies which reveal the ugly, these unions of men and women would not descend into boredom. Moreover, if the union were unfettered by the binding force of legality, there would be no sense of restraint, and, therefore, a greater desire to restrain all that might hurt or lead to the lessening of romantic joy. If Mrs. Wethermore, from the depths of her experience, could confirm this point

of outlook, and would lend herself to these ideas perhaps they, together, could do much to restore love to its original freedom.

He heard a familiar whistle, then a little exclamation accompanied by a patter of rain drops as the woman's hat shook a low-hanging bough.

"Ugh, now I am all wet, and it hasn't rained a drop since I left home either," she began coming towards the shed. "And you, why you dear boy, you are drenched!"

"That's just my rain coat," he explained, "it was pouring when I left."

"Then you must love your walks very much?" she questioned, fishing for a compliment.

"Yes ma'am."

"Why do you always call me 'Ma'am', or 'Mrs. Wethermore'?" she demanded. "I wish you would call me Nell—at least when we are out on our walks." Then, seeing the book,—“What have you been reading this time?"

"Emerson on Friendship. Isn't it wonderful?"

"Yes, it is, rather; but it is years since I have looked at Emerson. Let's go out to the big rocks on the hill where it is nice, and you can tell me about it."

Together they walked out through the orchard to a little eminence where stood a few lonely cedars beneath which the out-jutting limestone looked like a leaning stack of vellum-clad books. A flock of sheep, washed clean by the shower, was nibbling grass down the slope, at the bottom of which ran the silver thread of a tiny stream broken, now and then, by green masses of water-cress. To the south-east, where white clouds were lifting, stood the North Carolina Mountains. The pair stood silent for a time, then she reached out and touched his hand.

"Jeffrey, spread your rain coat inside out on this

flat rock so I can sit down and listen to your Emerson lesson in comfort."

And thus it was that Emerson became a text for a sermon that the Concord poet would have shuddered to hear. Collingsworth's boyish eloquence over borrowed social hypotheses would have been amusing if there had not been about him a very tremulous and passionate sincerity. He spoke as if he knew the awful loneliness of disappointed love and the hellish terrors of divorce. And he was intoxicated to see the interest in the glowing eyes of his audience. Nelly was wondering whether his lips could be taught to kiss.

"But what are you going to do if there are children?" She objected, when there was a pause.

"Under socialism—"

"But there isn't any socialism, and may not be for a thousand years. What would you have now,—conventional marriage, or brave the wrath of society? What do you propose for today?"

"People in Europe have formed free unions without trouble, and anyway one must be willing to pay a price if one is to do anything fine. A beautiful love must be worth a dozen sordid marriages, and I don't mean to live as"—(he was about to say 'as Mother has', but checked himself)—"most people do."

"You are a dear," she soothed, patting his hand, "and you are so unhappy. I wish I could take you away where we could be free of all this; but you're a dreamer, too much of a dreamer. Marriage is necessary for most of us. Without it we could have no peace. The trouble with you, my dear, is that you are too frank. Why tell all your ideas? When men and women are unhappy in love they find a way outside marriage, but they don't tell everybody."

"Neither do they accomplish anything for society."

"They get what they want."

“Yes,” replied the boy with some heat as he recalled the scene on Cemetery Hill, “and they have established prostitution; they are filthy dogs. Oh, I hate it all! I want everything to be above board.”

She saw that he was thinking of his theories and not of her, and she was disinclined to waste her days in the abstract. Drawing his head to her shoulder she ran her hand through his bushy black hair, and talked to him as if he were her child. She implanted a warm kiss on his neck. Presently his mind came down from cloudland, and he became conscious that he was with a woman.

“You’re a terrible stubborn little boy, you know,” she murmured. Then, after a long pause, added, with a look, the significance of which was wasted, “still you know only the unbendable delight the unfathomable.”

His mind soared again—“Yes,” he responded, delighted at what he thought was a compliment, — “persistence wins.”

She arose abruptly, irritated by his innocence. The epigram with which she had so often taunted her husband had passed over the boy’s head. “Come,” she urged sharply, “it is getting late, I must get back to the house.” He wondered what he had done.

Presently they entered upon an old lane bordered by blackberry vines and banks of red clay. Here they walked in constrained silence until, coming around a sudden bend in the road, they saw an approaching cart, driven by uncle ’Bias Buford, one of the college janitors. Mrs. Wethermore became voluble at once.

“Such a wonderful year you have had, getting your head stocked with so many ideas that I am surprised that it hasn’t burst. And what are you going to do with it all when you are through, Mr. Collingsworth?”

Collingsworth sensed the fact that Mrs. Wethermore

was violently disturbed, but could think of no good reason why. He did not know what to say.

“‘Evenin’, Miss Wethamo; evenin’ Marse Collinwuth,” the old darky greeted, flourishing his crownless hat.

When he was out of hearing the woman resumed with more than usual gravity.

“Now Jeffrey there is an illustration of the weakness of your theory. ‘Bias will no doubt tell some one that we have been walking together, and I will suffer for it. Especially since you are an open advocate of free love. We must not go out together any more. These people will tear my poor reputation to shatters.

“Why, how can they? What have we done?” he demanded.

“That’s just it, we’ve done nothing, but the people’s tongues will make us do everything; they can drive me out of town and you out of college if they wish. They mustn’t see us together again.”

“Then I can’t see you—oh damn! I’m awfully sorry.” The words were lame, but there were tears in his eyes.

Her moment had come, and she took quick advantage of it. Drawing closer she whispered in his ear — though, besides these two, there was no one within half a mile—“Yes, you may come to see me, foolish boy, but it must be at night. Come Saturday nights.” (She had thought it all out before)—“enter through the back garden gate, and tap, let us say, five times on the kitchen door, just so,—that will be our signal.”

The deviltry of it all appealed to him where the dishonesty repelled. He yielded.

“When may I come?”

“Well,” with an attempt at coyness, “this is Saturday.”

“Tonight?”

"If you really want to come. Do you want me, Jeffrey?" Her passion-laden eyes again made something stir within him.

"Yes," he whispered, trembling.

XIV.

WITH pounding temples he ran back to the college. The distance was made in an incredibly short time. He wondered what it was that he was about to do. Why was he going back tonight? What more was there to be said? Why did the woman vibrate between moods of ice and eagerness? How did he annoy her? Did she intend to——?

He dressed for supper. Why in the devil's name was his tie so difficult? He cut his chin in shaving. Supper was a mechanical pandemonium in dream-land. Some one asked him to pass the butter three times before he heard. When the meal was done everybody seemed bent on talking to him, and a million people wanted him to take a walk. It took him forever to get away.

Once more in the vicinity of Ripple Ford, he became very cautious. Why had the entire population of that village turned out for a stroll? Everyone who glanced at him seemed to say:—"I know where you are going, wicked young man. Oh, what are you going to do?" With fixed eyes, he walked straight through the town as though he had not the least intention of stopping. Out of sight, he doubled back, took to the country, and then stole carefully into the alley back of the Wethermore cottage. The place was full of tin cans that rang like bells. The back garden gate opened with a forbidding groan. Jeffrey stumbled over a protruding tomato frame, and, at the same instant, passionate cats in a neighboring yard set up a frenzied clamour. Sweat broke out all over his body.



He wished that he were engaged in dynamiting Faculty Row, or wrecking a train,—something easy. There flashed across his mind the remembrance of his earlier visits to the house, when he had gone in by the front gate without a thought of—well,—of people. Why was it all so different now? His feet thundered on the back veranda. He tapped. Had he remembered the right number of raps?

The door opened.

“Oh, it is you!” She folded him in her arms.

Presently she led him into the small dining room where, over an alcohol lamp, coffee was steaming. Here, for a little time, between sips of coffee and bites of cake, Nelly told him how like he was to a Greek god, and how she understood his inmost soul, and how her husband had never been a real lover. Jeffrey would, therefore, be the first really to possess her. People were obtuse, and she had been, oh, so lonely until he came. . . .

Kisses.

“Blessed boy.” More kisses.

“No, you kiss like old women after church. This way, open, so.”

She was a creature of abounding health, and the restraints of widowhood, under small town life, had been hardly borne. Now that her impulses were, for a moment, released she was a fury of passion. And Jeffrey was as ignorant and embarrassed a knight as ever entered the lists. Still, he having everything to learn, and she everything to teach, the bout, though brief, was not without its merits. She laid herself out to please him.

So it came to pass that, in a very Victorian room, and beneath the portrait of a grimly pious Puritan ancestor, that took place which, under the circumstances, was very likely, and, indeed, inevitable. And

Jeffrey came to know, for that the woman was a clean and wholesome animal, what Whitman meant when he exclaimed—

“Scent of these armpits, aroma finer than prayer.”

And the joy he possessed in the fact of passion was greater than the joy he had taken in the fancy of free love; and because of that he was a little sad. For, he reflected, this was a secret thing and a theft for which he gave no return to his fellows, and it taught nothing.

The boy had become possessed by the democratic conscience, twin sister of Puritanism; and to him, as to his kind, it was meet that the secret joy should be shared by the multitude, so that there should be nothing curious or hid in the whole world.

Nell was saying to herself:—“By and by he will be a creditable lover and do well what nature intended him to do.” Aloud she repeated, again and again.

“You are wonderful!”

Jeffrey remained in Ripple Ford over Sunday, and the blinds of Mrs. Wethermore’s house were closed and the shutters drawn. And when the banjo-clock struck twelve and Monday was come, he remembered that she had named Saturday for their next meeting,—and Saturday seemed afar off.

“Let me come again tonight,” he plead.

“Don’t be a greedy boy.”

“But Saturday is such a long time to wait.”

She hugged him close and gave a very satisfied laugh,—“you may come Tuesday,” she conceded.

For two weeks Jeffrey spent alternate nights at Ripple Ford, returning to his room just before the break of day. And in that brief period he learned more of the art of love than is to be found contained in all the volumes of the Kama Shastra Society, and became well versed in those things whereof the

Shaykh al-Nafzawi makes frequent mention. So that the scales fell from his eyes, and he knew that he had left Eden.

Now about the time that the scales fall from one's eyes, by reason of the exercises whereby that is accomplished, there often comes a look of langour and of much heaviness. Beholding these signs, Jeffrey's masters began to say that he labored too much for his good, and to urge that he work less hard. Around the commons table there was also talk concerning these things, but it was of a different sort. He would be questioned:—

“Working late these nights, Collingsworth?”—

“I never find him in any more,” another would interrupt.

“Perhaps it's not economics he worries over these days,” some one else would suggest,—“the fancy turns to other things in springtime, doesn't it, Jeffrey?”

“I've been preparing a speech for the prelims,” he would lie, in some embarrassment.

“Always go towards Ripple Ford to think about it?” inquired another tormentor.

Jeffrey wondered just how much the last speaker knew. Had anyone seen his stealthy back-gate entrances? He thought he had been very careful. Perhaps Painter, the last speaker, who was a surreptitious visitor to the one saloon in Ripple Ford, had seen and recognized him. Perhaps 'Bias had told. Wisdom counselled him to feign indifference to these questions. That was the best way to avoid further trouble. But he must talk to 'Bias.

The old darky was cutting dandelions in front of Science Hall.

“Yas sah, it takes resistance to keep out these heah docks and plantin' and dandelions. I dunno what de Good Lawd-Amighty evah did make 'em faw.”

"I suppose, Uncle 'Bias, that you've been working here a long time?"

"Yas sah, I reckon I bin heah about sevunty yeah"—'Bias was about sixty-five.

"Good many changes since you came here?"

"Lawd, yas sah, heap a changes. I wuz heah when dey laid the cawnah stone to most of these heah buildins."

"Changes in the faculty, too, I reckon?" Jeffrey went on, hoping to lead the old man to the subject of his fears.

"Yas sah, seems like they's mo changes that away than any othah. They ain't like they ust to be. Why long ago the men whut cum heah knowed putty neah everythin'. They haid wuz plum full a knowlidge. But now, I ax a professor somethin' and he sez,—'that ain't in my depahtment, 'Bias, you'll have to ax professor Whut-yu-may-callum.' No sah, they ain't like the ole times. An' none of 'em, not even the bes', could evah ansah one question."

"And what was that?" asked Jeffrey.

The old darky straightened up and scratched his head with a cunning smile. "Mebbe you can answer it,—Who was Cain's wife?" It was the old darky's stock question, and Jeffrey admitted defeat.

"I reckon," he replied with a smile, "if the smartest members of the faculty couldn't answer, you oughtn't to expect me to. You say the best ones are all dead?"

"Well, sah," answered 'Bias with a chuckle,—"the good 'uns what dies acknowledges it,—but some lingahs on."

Jeffrey conceived a better opinion of 'Bias' power of discernment.

"Let's see," he continued, "who was the last member of the faculty to die?"

'Bias scratched his head once more—"I disremem-

bahs. Wuz it Doctah Henry?—No, I recollects now, it wuz that po, dried-up Perfessah Whethahmo; that's the man, yas sah, he was the las'."

"Oh yes!" Jeffrey hastened to add,—“that was his widow I met a month or so ago over by Ripple Ford. She walked out in the hills and caught me practising my oration. I believe I met you that same day.”

“Yas, sah, I recollects, I recollects. Well, I reckon that lady wuz too well endowed foh huh man, and that's a fack.”

“People will talk about widows,” answered Jeffrey, reprovngly,—“I think she is a very nice sort, and ought not to be gossiped about.”

“I guess you is right, sah, I guess you is right,” replied Uncle 'Bias. “Widder ladies does have a hahd time, cause they appetites wuks against they repytachuns, and them good women at that. But I don't talk about nobody,—no sah. I have hard enuf time seein' that I don't go to no Bad Place myself. An' even when I sees a male and female a kinda projikin around togetha, I sez to mysef,—if they's not mahied folks,—‘'Bias, whut belongs to folks, they takes, and it don't hurt nobody'; it's just the same wif niggahs an chickens,—they belongs togethah, and religion ain't agin it. No sah, I don't believe in meddlin', no sah.”

Jeffrey commended the old darky right heartily upon his attitude towards scandal-mongering, gave him a dollar for tobacco, invited him to come to his room for some old clothes, and went away much relieved. 'Bias had that in his eyes that convinced him. The darky's religion was deeper than a code of morals. Being without a formal and forbidding ethic, he was full of kindness. 'Bias would never tell.

That night he slipped away from his room with a greater care than ever before, and set out in the direction of Ripple Ford resolved, to lay bare his fear of

discovery and to take counsel for some safer way of meeting, if not, indeed, to propose the foregoing of their trysts altogether. He must go once more—just to tell her that it was unsafe. He must not be the means of destroying the one person who had listened gravely to his hopes, and whose laughter had, for him, held no tone of mockery

He went a long way around, avoiding paths usually frequented by travelers between the two small communities; so that it was near to ten o'clock when he came to the lane back of Mrs. Wethermore's house. As he approached this entrance of the alley he was startled by the glimmer of a lantern, borne somewhat unsteadily from the end opposite where he stood. He turned in instant confusion and made as if to go around to the front gate where he thought there might be an opportunity for unobserved entrance. A group of cypress trees stood on the corner, and through these he plunged in frantic haste; but the Fates conspired against him, for, as he emerged panting from this cover, he stumbled against a trio of men, unrecognizable in the semi-darkness.

"Beg pardon!" he stammered.

"Hello! who is this?" questioned a voice which he recognized as that of Meadows.

Before he could excuse himself and get away, a match was struck, revealing, beside Meadows, Painter and Davidson. There was a moment's silence. Collingsworth's face was scarlet. Then Painter:—

"Well, Collingsworth, been practising a speech?"

Jeffrey did not join in the laughter that followed. He was busily engaged in the serious business of searching for an alibi.

"Kind of strange place to practice oratory," suggested Meadows, "but I suppose there are some willing auditors up here in this town."

Then came the inspiration. There was the saloon to which Painter and some of his friends made frequent visits; to which, in point of fact, Painter had introduced him two years before. This group was, more than likely, headed for there now.

"The fact is," began Jeffrey, hesitatingly, "I have been sneaking up here a good bit lately for a nip of booze. I was just dodging a fellow in the back way. I don't think I want to be seen here by too many. Old Daniels has spies up here from among the students,—some more of this infernal white trash. They stoop to anything,"—Jeffrey finished, hoping that the lie would impress.

"Oh! so that's it. I've wondered what brought you up here so much of late," exclaimed Painter. "Sly, unsociable dog, you won't drink alone tonight; come on and buy us a drink,—we're bound for there now."

Jeffrey saw that he had defeated his immediate object by this fabrication, but he hoped that, somehow, by this weak prevarication, he might protect Nelly Wethermore. He felt in his pocket a crisp ten dollar bill with which he had intended to buy a present for his mother. Oh, well, perhaps he wouldn't spend all of it.

"Surely, come along," he responded with an attempt at eagerness.

And thus it came about that, in a spirit of bravado simulated for a high purpose, the boy was led to a real debauch,—his first drunk. For two hours the boys drank feverishly, frantically, and, for the most part, without enjoyment. They drank in competition. At midnight, Stevens, the burly proprietor, announced that they must get out. Jeffrey bought a flask of Bourbon and the quartet departed, with uncertain feet, in the direction of Wythe. About three o'clock they reached the campus, singing with unconscious appropriateness, "I was seeing Nellie home."

“Les’ wake ’em up!” cried one.

“Awright, heave away,” another assented.

Thereat, with one accord, and with occasional disastrous results, they began throwing whatever they could lay fumbling hands upon at the windows. The whole campus was aroused by the clamour. Heads appeared, and sleepy voices began to inquire what all the rumpus meant.

“Give it to ’em, Jeffrey, ole boy!” shouted Meadows. Someone, from an upper window, sensing the situation, and now being bereft of sleep, discharged a gun, hoping to achieve the double purpose of frightening the rioters and of making others as uncomfortably wide awake as himself. The shot partly sobered the returning youths, and so, with much groping and profanity, they found their respective dormitories; and, finally, without the formality of undressing, tumbled into bed.

The following day, there was called, at the chapel hour, a special faculty meeting at which all four of the youths were summarily expelled,—“for excessive drunkenness and the wilful destruction of college property, either of which, under a ruling made in 1874, merits expulsion of itself, and constitutes a violation not only of the spirit of this institution, but also of the laws of our state.” They were told to be off the campus within twenty-four hours.

Jeffrey’s face burned as with a flame. “Oh, Lord!” he thought, as the realization of the depth of this disgrace came over him,—“if I were being put out for some principle it might be worth it; but to be expelled for getting drunk;—how awful!”

He had weathered the storms of opposition for three years, battling for his unconventional ideas, and had enjoyed the struggle; he was now being wrecked for upholding a very dear conventional ideal in a very

unhappy manner. He was scarcely able to walk away from the chapel.

Four frantic telegrams were sent off that day and answers were received. Three of the boys were commanded, by return messages, to come on home. Jeffrey Collingsworth's answer came a few hours later:—

“You have disgraced your father. Shift for yourself. Expect no help from me.”

Jeffrey had just four dollars left over from the ten of the previous day. When he had recovered himself sufficiently he took stock of his possessions. He would sell most of the books, all, indeed, of the text books. He would reserve, for his own, a Keats, a Coleridge, a Sir Thomas Brown, Marx's *Das Kapital*, and Spencer's *First Principles*. One of the men in the dormitory paid him two dollars for the remainder. His student lamp fetched another two, and his furniture he let go for ten, making a total of eighteen dollars with which to face a very uncertain future.

He looked up 'Bias, confided to that ancient philosopher his troubles, and asked if he would convey his trunk and suitcase to Ripple Ford. He would board for a few days at the Bentley House, a ramshackled hostelry, equally remarkable for cheapness and dirt. 'Bias was all sympathy.

“Lawd Gawd, boy, you sho has raised a catawampus fo yo self,” he exclaimed, “and on top of it all, yo paw ain't goin' to let you come home? Well, well, some payants suttently is cuyous, they suttently is. Of coase I'll take yo things ovah to Ripple Ford; but what in the name of goodness does you want to go to that good fo nothin' place foh?” Jeffrey explained that this catastrophe had fallen upon him unexpectedly, and that, since he had no plans and little money, he wanted to get somewhere nearby so that he could think it

over. The faculty order to get out must be obeyed at once.

"Edgecation suttinly do make hahd hearts," 'Bias commented with energy. "Well, sah, I'll get yo things out of heah at foh o'clock this evenin', yas sah."

Some of the fellows came around to his room during the afternoon, and swore mightily that they would avenge this outrage by getting the student body to resign en masse; but no one of them had anything practical to suggest for Jeffrey's next step. There were regretful goodbyes, but the boy was so dazed by the thing that had come upon him that, for once, the usual sentimentalism and ordinary heart-aches were unfelt. He was to set out at once for Ripple Ford where there would be friendship and understanding. He left the dormitory rather stiffly, conscious of curious gazes and of disapproval, withering under it all, but feigning to be unconcerned and hard. As he stepped out upon the campus a diminutive darky approached, bearing a note.

"Is you Mistah Collingswuf?"

"I am," more haughtily than usual.

"Fessah Fitzpatrick say heahs a note."

Jeffrey unfolded the bit of writing paper, now soiled by the grimy hand:—"Come over for a few minutes before it is legally (!) too late. Don't do anything more foolish than what you have done already"—he read.

"Good old boy! Perhaps he will suggest a way out of this mess," thought Jeffrey. Feeling more secure already, he handed the pickaninny a quarter.

"I suppose you have no plans?" began Fitzpatrick, after Jeffrey had seated himself in the corner of the rather unkempt study.

"Not an idea of one, sir."

"What exactly is your situation?"

Jeffrey explained.

“Haven’t you a host of relatives scattered up and down the Valley of Virginia?”

“All my family are religious and conservative, and I think that this is as good a time as any to get out and quit making trouble. If I go to them for help they will certainly insist upon my respecting their opinions. I want to go North.”

Fitzpatrick had hoped that Collingsworth’s eccentricities would have evaporated by the end of his Sophomore year. Evidently they had not. He wondered just what he could do to help the boy find himself, for there was a certain wistfulness and idealism about him that was rare. It was a pity that he should go to waste.

“What you need, young man, is to finish your college course—you have only a little more than one year left—and then, after that, you should have two or three years of stiff graduate work to give you some balance.”

Jeffrey was in no mood to quibble or question. He nodded assent.

“But, of course,” Fitzpatrick went on, “all our Southern colleges will refuse to take you unless you have the support of Wythe, and that is out of the question. I assume that you would like to get your degree?”

Jeffrey would.

“Then, if that is the case, I happen to know a man who was at Johns Hopkins with me, Doctor Ernest Goddard, a sympathetic fellow if there ever was one, and I believe I can get him to help you. He is the president of Argyle College which is located at a town in Illinois of the same name. Argyle is not exactly a popular college, is, in fact, very liberal, has a good endowment, and, from what I have heard, the town is large enough to give some employment to students.

You can work your way through. It is not a disgrace up there. Do you want to try it?"

Jeffrey pictured his father's discomfiture in the event of his succeeding to get a degree without parental assistance, and he was at once eager to take advantage of this Heaven-sent opportunity.

"Of course I'll try it," he agreed.

"But you will need money?"

"I have enough to take me there."

This was a lie, and Fitzpatrick suspected as much, but wisely held his tongue, and, without further ado, wrote a letter of introduction to President Goddard.

"I think the best plan for you under the circumstances, Collingsworth," he said, when he had finished writing, "is to proceed at once to Argyle before their commencement. You have a month to get there, and Goddard may be able to find you something for the summer. Meantime, there is no need for telling you that while you may be more radical up in Illinois, you will also have to be more temperate. The solid middle classes abhor the vices of gentlemen even more than Southern Presbyterians. Also, I will ask that you say nothing of my action in letters to your home. My wife happens to own a plantation in the Mill Creek country, quite near that of your father, and I may want to settle down there when I am old!"

The letter felt good in his pocket. It was like carrying a Testament over one's heart when going into a battle. Life wasn't so bad after all, for at last he was really and truly free. His father could never dictate again, and he was now escaping the bondage of every narrow dogma in the world. In his fancy the South was already behind him—the South with its lynching, its sentimentalism, its eternal harping about family, its lingering fondness for feudalism, its vast ignorance, its narrow protestantism. He had freedom and at

least two friends. Some philosopher or other had said that in the possession of these two things alone lay enough for happiness. And now, best of all, he was going to Nellie!

And, as he went along his way, the lichen on the rail fence was silver gray, and the birds sang "We-who-we,—wehoo," in an ecstasy of self-admiration. And the song in his heart was "Nellie, Nellie, Nellie!" For the boy was young, and but a little thing was needful to revive hope and awaken joy.

THE room at the Bentley House was dingy, and the red-flowered paper was torn from the walls, here and there, and was suspiciously black and greasy at spots against which the split bottomed chairs had been set. The place smelled of hash and burnt beans and stale tobacco. True to promise, 'Bias had brought his luggage,—a service for which he stubbornly refused compensation. And now, after a miserable supper, he made himself ready to bear tidings to the woman who would understand and comfort.

As soon as he entered the room she sensed his excitement and knew that there was a story. He told it eagerly, even melodramatically, while over her face went changes not noticed by his untutored eye. When he had done, and had left off walking the floor as a rostrum, she began.

So he was expelled! What a disgrace! Why, he was mad, wild, selfish and weak. Let him not deceive himself with the thought that he had done this thing for her. He was silly. Why had he talked so much of strange notions that were abhorred by everyone who had power?—she harped on power constantly. . . .—These people might be stupid in some ways, but they had an instinct for wisdom. When you wanted a thing you should keep your mouth shut about it. That was the way to get it. One had to do things not provided for in the rules, but one was a fool to flaunt the rules in people's faces. One must choose. He was not a reformer, but a poet,—a mad, mad poet. And now he was cast loose from his father, and his education,—everything. Of course if he had been of age and had

had money it would be different. . . . Yes, she had spoken once, perhaps oftener, of his getting away, but it had been of getting away, and not of being sent away in disgrace. Her voice rose in crescendo.

“And then why, of all places, did you come here to Ripple Ford? They will know that you have been here with me. They will drive me out next. Oh, what a fool you are.”

“But I thought you——”

“No, Jeffrey, you never thought. That is what’s the matter with you. You never think. You sent your things up here so that you could come to me and get comfort and be approved; you didn’t stop to think of my side at all—of how a woman in my position is always suspected.” Hysterical tears gathered themselves on the ends of her eyelashes where they trembled in sympathetic agitation.

Jeffrey felt as though he had swallowed a large doorknob, and that it was being wrenched and twisted in his insides. Something made him want to stay and be tortured. Part of him agreed with the accusations that the woman brought, and another part suspected a thing which he was unable to define. He felt that his heart had swollen to the breaking point and then had burst; it felt quite withered within him now. But at last, unable to endure the torment and the woman’s tears, he summoned his self-respect. He got up. And as he began to speak, his voice sounded strange and far off. He could hardly believe the words that he uttered:—“I am very sorry, madam, that I have intruded upon you and caused you pain. I will hasten to make amends. I shall not trouble you again. Tomorrow I am going away.” Tears were coming, and his tears must not be seen.

“Good night, madam,” he said, as he reached for his hat.

“Oh, yes, now you are angry and self-righteous, and you are thinking that I am all wrong,—Jeffrey, you’ve got to listen.”

“Good night,” he repeated.

As he passed the bedroom door he seemed to catch, through his dimmed eyes, a glimpse of Nellie’s puritan ancestor. On the dour face was a smirk of satisfaction. The “Thou—shalt—nots” were having an inning. Jeffrey closed the door on the woman’s sobs. He never noticed that he was leaving by the front way.

That night in the dingy room, where the kerosene lamp smoked, and the floor creaked beneath every weary footfall, a very miserable youth was trying to reconstruct his shattered world. Surely nothing was worth while, and, least of all, himself. Every good thing was gone out of his life,—his gentle, sweet mother; the beautiful home of his childhood memories; and, now, at last, the woman in whom he had believed so utterly, with whom he had dreamed of living in sweet accord with the new morality. His assurance was all gone, and he could see nothing in the future but black chasms of emptiness. His emancipation, which, a few hours before, he had greeted with a shout, seemed to him now a dreadful banishment to a scene of unknown horrors and frightful aloneness. He recalled stories of the inhospitality and coldness of the North. He was journeying to a strange and far off country, and his sole capital was a letter. This document seemed no longer a shield of protection. He would doubtless become a vagabond and starve. All the charm and warmth, all the virtues of Virginia were now present before him. He forgot his quondam scorn for his native state. Virginia was home, and had been the dear home of all his forebears since before the Revolution. He had never been out of it save for two brief visits into Tennessee and Georgia. He shuddered

at the memory of those visits, remembering shabby farm houses, bare-swept yards, fallen fences, stunted cattle, snuff-dipping wenches, laziness, ignorance and vulgarity. The people in Virginia might have grown ignorant, since the Civil War, but they had distinction. There were gentlemen in Virginia. With one or two exceptions, there had been no such negrophobia as existed in Georgia and the far South. It was left for trash to descend to such hatreds. The benevolent tolerance and kindness of his grandfather stood out in contrast to the kind of fiendish race-hatred that raged in the meaner states.

In this mood of regretful retrospect, Jeffrey's father came in for a kinder thought than he usually received. An afternoon was recalled when Jeffrey, then a small boy of ten, had gone over the fields for a long walk with his father. Rhoda had given him a cabbage stalk, and suddenly, three miles from home, there had descended upon his small body a most violent belly-ache. He had wept with the pain of it, and his father had very tenderly carried him on his back, and told stories and laughed and comforted him all that long and weary way over the hills; and then, when they had reached the house, his father had borne him up the stairs to his little room, had fetched medicines and poultices and read him to sleep. This memory came near to breaking Jeffrey's pride. He was tempted to write to his father and ask to be forgiven. But then he pictured the return, the mortifications, the necessary explanations, the meetings with his friends, the cool disapprovals, the necessary acts of repentance, and the humiliating references at family prayers. He would have to get rid of his books, and there would be sneering remarks about all the philosophies for which, during the past three years, he had stood, a feeble but passionate champion. No, he couldn't do it. He must

go on, even to destruction. And now he was utterly alone. The woman had put him out forever.

All night these things ran through his mind; and one thing would rise up to contradict another, impulse paralyzing impulse. It was maddening. And as the constant accompaniment of these conflicts, the tender memories rose up and scorched like cruel flames. Perhaps he might forget some things.—But the last—the woman! Why, he had held her so close!—The intimacies, the caresses,—how could it all end in such a manner? It was unbelievable. She had called him a god,—him! He was ruined. What was it that the Passionate Pilgrim had said?—

“Her lips to mine how often hath she joined?

Between each kiss her oaths of true love swearing!

How many tales to please me hath she coined,

Dreading my love, the loss thereof still fearing!

Yet in the midst of all her pure protestings

Her faith, her oaths, her tears, and all were
jestings.”

So, sleepless, went the night,—and his eyes were red and aching, and lines were on his face. Near dawn he threw himself on the uninviting bed. His head ached. Confused images passed before him:—old Webb,—Rhoda,—fields covered with snow,—shivering cattle,—the Mill Creek springhouse,—the title page of *First Principles*. The streaked red roses on the wall were intermingled with the procession of his fancies. He fell asleep just as the light of the morning sun began to make weird shadows about the room.

Overhead, a satisfied female spider began to make breakfast of her late husband.

“WE used often to speak together at Johns Hopkins,” wrote Fitzpatrick to his friend Goddard, “of the strange differences that exist here in the South, and of how it lacks the homogeneity that one might expect in an old state. The young man I have directed towards your more hospitable academic shelter is a curious blend of some old elements which, for the most part, are quite antagonistic; and I am curious to see the result. About nine-tenths of him is cavalier, gentlemen, of good English stock, imported into this state some time prior to our first unpleasantness with Great Britain. These were easy-going gentry who toiled not for their possessions, but who were ready to fight for them, on occasion. They belonged to the English Church, sir, sent their sons to William and Mary, and took life and mint julep with moderation. But at one time in the ancestry of Collingsworth’s father, there was introduced some Huguenot blood, and, a little later, the boy’s grandfather married one of the daughters of a mountain white (not a “poor white” by a damnsight, as you may remember my pointing out),—Scotch Irish, and full of Cromwellian nonconformity. The grandfather, who had already lowered the family escutcheon by attending this Presbyterian college—a circumstance due no doubt, to that drop of cursed Huguenot blood—, now joined his wife’s church and thus brought an end to a very respectable family tradition.) The outcome of this singular union, John Collingsworth, is a clergyman who, while a gentleman in every other particular, is Cromwellian and vulgar

in respect to his faith; he is, in a word, zealous, enthusiastic, fervent—not of the Church, but of the chapel, as the English would say. This zeal, I suspect, arises from the conflict within him, between the aristocrat and the commoner. The conflict begets doubt, and the doubt, in such a man, causing fear, gives rise to an almost fanatic reiteration of beliefs that are contrary to at least half of his soul and to most of his early environment. He has tried to cram this stiff religion into the head and heart of a son whose mother is altogether of the leisurely old stock of these valleys and not disposed to sternness. The result is curious. The small spark of nonconformity in the boy's make-up, has been fanned into a flame of hatred; Cromwell contra Cromwell. He hates all that his father loves. He is a socialist, an agnostic, a would-be Yankee, and even affects a peculiar northern accent. Left alone he might have been a gentleman, and would no doubt have come to settle upon the estate of his grandfather and to do honor to the rapidly passing traditions of his race. He may revert to it yet, when time has passed and opposition is no longer apparent. I have seen such things happen, but this is the most extreme case that I know, and is therefore the reason for this long letter. I hope that he has it in him to work his way to your door, and I am confident that, if he does, he will be able to accomplish the rest. I am sending, herewith, a list of his credits which I have dug out of the books at the college office, and I will trust you to take my unofficial word for them. This institution will not, of course, give him a certificate”

“And so,” chuckled Professor Fitzpatrick to himself, “I have contrived to make a fitting end of the day. I have violated the ethics of the faculty, outraged the

honor of the president, thrown discredit upon the institution for which I work, helped to undermine religion and social justice, hindered the possible repentance of a hard-headed youth, and insulted the South:—altogether a fruitful piece of educational work.”

So saying, the good man rose, and, after drawing the shades, reached high up on his book shelf and took down volume one of Doctor Johnson's dictionary; reached again and brought down a flask of good brandy and a small glass. “‘For thy stomach's sake,’ Timothy,” he whispered to himself.

XVII

JEFFREY had no particular desire to go anywhere just now, but he had a very definite reason for getting away from where he was. Argyle was a possible place, thanks to the kindness of Fitzpatrick, and he might as well set out at once and go as far as his money would allow. He grudgingly paid one dollar for his night's lodging and his two meals, and then, taking his suitcase went across to the station. A dollar and a half would take him as far as Bristol. He decided not to ask the agent about anything farther, fearing to leave any trace of his destination. He might let them know if he succeeded, but in the event of a failure, he wished to be unmarked of all. He borrowed the agent's hand-truck and fetched his trunk from the hotel. Not once did he trust himself to even so much as glance at the little cottage across the way which had been the scene of his great tragedy.

Once in Bristol he made inquiries concerning the cost of a ticket to Argyle. He didn't have half enough for the fare. After a moment's thought, he decided to ship his trunk by freight. That would cost but three dollars. The agent told him it might take a month to get to its destination, but as Jeffrey, for all he knew, might take two months en route, the delay did not matter. To save himself needless encumbrance he opened the trunk on the platform, and piled in most of the contents of his suitcase, reserving a few things, and making a compact bundle such as he had seen tramps carrying. Into this small bundle of necessaries, he slipped, for some sentimental reason, his battered copy of *Religio Medici*. He did not, at the time, know

that it was a first edition, and worth double the price of a ticket to Illinois. The trunk shipped, the next thing was to sell his empty suitcase. At a second-hand store near the depot he received one dollar for a handbag that had but recently cost fifteen, and was barely worn. He next took himself to a lunch counter and there spent five cents for a cup of coffee and another five for a stale sandwich. A man sitting on the next stool began to talk of the hard times and of the difficulty that some of his friends had encountered in finding employment. The world, according to this disgruntled person, was going to the bad. Encouraged by this friendly pessimism Jeffrey ventured to inquire of him concerning the cheapest way of getting north.

"Where d' ye wanta go?" asked the man.

"Cincinnati first, and then to Springfield, Illinois."

"How much money ye got?"

Jeffrey looked at the questioner sharply and began to be afraid that the man might rob him of the little that he had. Perhaps this man was a thief!—"Five dollars," he lied.

The man laughed. "You won't get very far on that," he said, wiping the coffee from his dripping mustache. "Want to come with me and try to get a job? There ain't many, but you might be able to find somethin' for a day or two."

Jeffrey was now sure that the fellow wanted to get him out where he could hold him up. "No, I have no time to lose, thank you, I want to get away from here today," he replied decisively.

It was now the man's turn to glance suspiciously at this well-groomed youngster who seemed in such a hurry to get out of town. "Was he a pickpocket?" he wondered. He gobbled down his last bit of pie noisily, pushed some small change over the counter and with—

"Well, I guess I can't help you then," got up from his seat and left the restaurant.

Resolved to keep his own counsel, Jeffrey returned to the station and studied the dirty map in the waiting room. Railway maps are very misleading as to distance and direction, and Jeffrey was new to the task of directing himself, so that the route that he chose was far from the straight line it looked on the chart before him. He would go across town and board a train to Big Stone Gap, then double back to Bluefield, proceed north to Cincinnati, and, finally, west to Springfield. Once there, he could easily find his way to Argyle.

He got a train out of Bristol that afternoon, and a few hours later made his next stop, Big Stone Gap, where he was forced to wait over until late the following morning before going on to Bluefield. After he had eaten breakfast on the succeeding day, Jeffrey sent a post card to his mother. He wanted to write a letter, but he feared that he might betray, by some careless word, his actual situation, and thus increase the weight of her care. The brief statement,—“I am going North,” might convey the impression that he was riding comfortably in a Pullman car, and eating three good meals a day. He hoped that she might so imagine it. The actual case was that, after arriving at Bluefield, he should have to save the few dollars he had left for food, and contrive to either steal rides on a freight, or to go to work for a while, to earn some more money.

Once at Bluefield, Jeffrey decided to make an attempt to get aboard a north-bound freight. If unsuccessful he would look about in the little city for a job. Fortifying himself with a good meal, he walked toward the freight yard with a bounding heart. He didn't know just how to go about stealing a ride, and he feared falling into the hands of some yard policeman.

It was not quite dark. Several trains were being made up; noisy switch engines were puffing back and forth, flinging helpless cars into one another and making a terrific din. Brakemen waved unintelligible signals with their arms and shouted expressive profanity with their mouths. A little further down the line a long train was stopping at the tower for final orders. It had the appearance of a through freight. To Jeffrey the only difference between a through and a local freight was a matter of the length. Of all the crew, only the conductor was in sight, and he was now on the side of the tower. Here, thought Jeffrey, was an excellent chance. He crossed the track back of the caboose and ran forward to a flat car loaded with crated machinery. At first glance it seemed to offer a good hiding place. In a moment he was up the side and crowding between two enormous crates. A few minutes later the train was creaking and grinding its way out of the yard. Jeffrey was just making up his mind that stealing a ride is child's play, when a loud voice from somewhere up above began with:—

“Hey there, you damned tramp, git out of there. I saw ye. Hustle out or I'll shoot!”

Without pondering over this invitation, Jeffrey backed out of his hiding place with no inconsiderable alacrity, and with feet made unsteady by fright and the swaying of the cars, rose and looked for the spokesman. A big, sooty-faced man in blue overalls stood on the box car ahead, and waved his brake-stick threateningly.—

“Well, don't stand there and stare at me. Climb down! Jump, before I come down there and git ye.” The train seemed just now to be going altogether too fast to allow a safe descent, but to leap was probably less dangerous than to risk the anger of the trainman; so, holding his bundle in front of his face for protec-

tion, he jumped, struck the ground on his feet, flung forward and rolled down a rocky embankment, landing finally against a fence which brought him up with a thump.

“Are you hurt?—I say, are you hurt?”

Jeffrey got to his feet in some trepidation lest the speaker should prove to be another enemy. But the disarming grin on the face of the inquirer standing on the bank above—a young man who looked no older than he,—not alone dispelled fear; it invited confidence.

“I think no bones are broken,” he answered, beginning to brush the dirt and weeds from his clothes, “but my dignity has been pretty badly upset, and my hands are scratched by this infernal fence. Thank fortune, my trousers are not torn!” he finished, recovering his bundle and scrambling up the embankment.

“Damn shame, throwing you off that way,” commented the stranger. “Are you going far, or just having a spree?”

Not many minutes had passed before Jeffrey, driven by the need for counsel and confession in this strange world in which he found himself, had been induced to relate his entire story.

“And now I suppose I’ll have to stay here in Bluefield and get a job,” he said, as he finished the recital.

“Naw, stow the gloom. We’ll get out of here tonight.”

“Are you going north, too?” inquired Jeffrey, in some surprise and encouraged by his companion’s use of the plural pronoun.

“Chicago,” answered the newcomer, who had introduced himself as Alexander McKaig. “All you need,” he went on, “is a little experience. Of course you’ll be pinched if you try to hop a freight in broad day; and, then, this is no place to pick up a through freight. I am making Graham, about a mile beyond. Just above

there is a steep grade where you can choose your berth at leisure. There'll be a good train along in about a couple of hours. The one you were on is a local, taking supplies to the coal fields. You stick with me, and we'll make Chicago in a week."

McKaig was a very queer person to Jeffrey. Genial, good looking, with a fine sense of humor, he was, by turns, a street urchin, a revolutionist proposing to overthrow the government, and a critic of letters,—recommending Flaubert, Stendhal and Oscar Wilde, or excoriating Emerson and Rudyard Kipling. He wore, to all appearances, a suit of baggy blue denim overalls, but beneath these, as Jeffrey discovered on the first occasion of their dining together, were very respectable worsteds, and, as a *Pièce de Resistance*, a gorgeous tie in the colors of the peacock. Born in the north of Ireland, he had run away to sea, come to America, joined the army through inability to find more congenial employment, deserted on an occasion when his company had been sent to Pennsylvania to break a strike; served, in consequence, a term at Leavenworth,—the sentence being mitigated on account of his youth and previous record—, had been assistant librarian at the prison; and was now, according to his somewhat general description, a labor agitator. He had come south to work among the miners on the Elkhorn, and finding that he could accomplish but little, had gone to Norfolk, and was now enroute to some radical headquarters in Chicago. At twenty-five, he had had more experience than most men have at fifty.

"I don't blame you, boy," he said, on one of the days when, snugly housed in a half empty box car, they were on their way towards Cincinnati, "for leaving that god-forsaken South of yours. For sheer bone-headed ignorance it leads the world. The Methodists

can have it for all of me. Why, the working stiffs down there are worse than slaves,—they are boot-licking sheep-dogs. They would thank their masters to beat them. They have never read anything. Most of them can't even sign their own names. It'll take a hundred years to make a revolution down there."

"But the socialists' propaganda——"

"Damn the socialists. They're too slow. I'm a socialist all right. Here is my red card, stamped down to date, but I'm getting jolly well tired of their infernal political action, and windy election speeches. Everything must wait, according to them, until all the potentialities of the capitalist system are worked out, and all you have to do in the meantime is to distribute pamphlets and make Marxian speeches in preparation for the great day. All rot! Darwinism has done as much harm as good to the movement by spreading the notion of gradual change; and the socialists haven't waked up to De Vries yet. Then they're always spouting about the beauty and joy of work, and glorifying Millet in the sob-sister style of Edwin Markham. They get that stuff from William Morris and Ruskin,—all middle class fol-de-rol. There is nothing beautiful in work as work. I don't want to work."

This was heresy to Jeffrey who, coming from those who had inherited without toil, had been taught to think of the work of others with vast reverence.

"Every one must do a share of work if we are to live," he objected.

"Let machinery do the ugly work, then people will have time for beautiful things; for the making of books and pictures," was McKaig's reply.

Jeffrey felt that even if people did have abundant leisure, very few would turn to the making of beautiful books or paintings. He knew many people who had leisure and any amount of academic training, but

among them he could not think of one who had produced a book fit to read, or a picture that was not hideous. Young women, in the interim between graduation and marriage, drew ghastly crayon portraits of their pastors, or daubed a sentimental old water wheel. The preacher left a volume of unread sermons and a heavily illustrated memoir of his dull life; and the teacher prepared a text book of algebra or a hand-book of horticultural science.

"That," answered McKaig, "is because people are not free. Conventionality and slavery have combined to make everybody dull. When any one class is slave, nobody is free, and there isn't joy enough to inspire creative effort, except in the isolated genius. But there is going to be a great big upheaval in this country before very long, and then you'll see what the common people can do. And unless the socialists quit talking politics and begin to act, they won't be in at the finish. Have you read about the General Confederation of Labor, and what the French radicals are doing?"

Jeffrey had not.

"Well, they"

And McKaig went on from hour to hour telling of the things that were to be done to this wickedly stupid old world when the revolutionists should be in power. Now and then he would pause to answer a question in his offhand manner—questions relating to the origin of the cosmos being as easily settled as the labor problem. He punctuated his discourse upon origins by occasionally lighting a cigarette. His listener grew a bit tired of the quarrels of unionism and would suggest other themes.

"Do you like Walt Whitman?"

"I did until the women's clubs and professional optimists took him up; now he rather bores me with his unceasing chants. Same thing happened to Fitzgerald.

The Rubaiyat was a fine thing till everybody began mouthing it, and putting spiritual allegories in the place of spirituous allegros. I wish Swinburne and Rossetti had left it alone in the book-seller's bin. Everybody pretends to read it now, and it has become as respectable as Bobby Browning. Ever read Ernest Dowson? He wrote one great poem: 'Non sum qualis eram bonae sub Regno Cynarae'—I love that line beginning—'I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.' ”

McKaig sighed appropriately. "I have been faithful to several 'Cynaras,' but hang it all, I won't tell dirty stories."

On the third day after leaving Bluefield, these curious tramps stole forth from their secure hiding place while the train was slowing down somewhere in the suburbs of Cincinnati. Escaping safely from the vicinity of the railroad, they managed to refresh themselves at any number of free-lunch counters in the city and were able, thanks to the generalship of the Irishman, to ride out that night on the front of the baggage-car of a westbound passenger train. For over a hundred miles they rode, buffeted by a cold wind and hot cinders. Sleep was, of course, out of the question. They were compelled to hold on for their lives. At last the train stopped on the outskirts of a small town for water, and as it slowed down McKaig signaled to his half frozen companion to jump. Jeffrey was almost too numb to move, but his landing was, if not more graceful, at least more successfully accomplished than the one at Bluefield.

"I'm going to walk a while," he announced with firmness, rubbing his stiffened limbs—"after this I vote for riding on freights."

McKaig laughed. "As for me I am thankful that the tank is on the west side of the burg," he commented.

“If we walk ahead a little way we will come to the farm land where we may be sure of finding a haystack and can bed down with the cows for a bit. Then we’ll come back here for a freight after we have rested.”

The idea was almost as welcome as the straw rick which they were presently able to make out by the light of the moon. And when at last they were safely buried in their prickly bed, Jeffrey felt more royally couched than if he had lain upon a bed of down. His hand clutched at the bundle, which he was now using for a pillow, and he felt the unyielding covers of *Religio Medici*. He smiled at the thought of Sir Thomas Browne, an agitator, and an outcast lying thus together in a pile of straw.

XVIII

FROM over the cedar crowned mountain tops above Mill Creek came the intermittent rumbles of thunder from the retreating storm. Here and there the serried ranks of clouds were breaking, and the few reluctant drops of rain that fell upon the rolling land in the valley beneath were as a farewell salute. A crafty company of crows, compelled for a time to seek the shelter of a convenient woodland, were beginning to caw their signals for recommencing their unfinished labors on the sprouting corn. Across the valley, running north and south, was a long red ribbon of roadway, having, just now, a surface very like soft wax; a circumstance that proved quite trying to the belated postman's horse in his efforts to drag a bespattered cart overweighed by a ponderous driver and a ridiculously small parcel of mail. The driver, Mr. Lemuel Tatum, was in an irritable mood. He was later than usual; but that was of no matter to one with his disposition and philosophy of life; he was very wet, in consequence of a bulk that defied his dingy water proof, and of the grudging movements necessary for depositing copies of the *Farm Journal*, or *Comfort* in the boxes along the way,—but while any degree of wetness exaggerated his asthma, and was a contributory cause to his present mood, it could be, in some measure, counteracted by a liberal three fingers from a flask at his mountain home; but what he could not abide was the lack of sociability—

“After me a drivin’ seven mile in the rain to tote mail to ’em all, the least a feller could do would be to

be sociable like," he grumbled to himself. "I wonder what's got into the old preacher? Git up, Cap!"

The object of this mild explosion was trudging wearily homeward from the roadside post box near which he had passed back and forth, oblivious of the rain, for fully an hour. A tall man, with nervous fingers that snapped as he walked, Mr. Collingsworth, usually so careful about the fitness of things, made a grotesque figure in a clinging frock suit, drenched for the want of a forgotten umbrella, and an abused silk hat put on in utter abandon. His thin patent leather pumps were ill-suited to the mud under foot and, now and again, threatened to remain fast in the sticky mire. Of all these things the man seemed wholly unconscious as he proceeded down the lane which led from the public highway to the great white Colonial farm house that stood against a hillock covered with oaks and elms. This lane was crossed by Mill Creek, now full to the brim with raging mountain water which splashed spitefully at the foot-log. A musk-rat, driven from his home by the rising water, was swimming for the nearest foothold. As the man approached the momentarily threatened log, the little beast, fearful of a yet greater calamity at human hands, abandoned itself to the stream to be carried to a place of safety; but the man paid no more attention to the predicament of this fellow creature, than to the perils of the foot-log. Reaching at last the freshly white-washed gate, Mr. Collingsworth paused for a moment, strove to clean his muddy pumps against the stile, seemed to make an effort to look more cheerful than he felt, and then walked up the avenue of dripping silver maples to the long veranda where, wrapped in the comforting folds of a Paisly shawl, his wife, grown anxious at his delay in the rain, awaited him.

"Why, my dear, you will take your death of cold!

Why didn't you carry an umbrella? And, mercy me, if you didn't wear a silk hat! Come right in to the fire. I had one built thinking you might be wet,"—greeted Mrs. Collingsworth, as her husband mounted the steps.

"No, there is no letter from him," said Mr. Collingsworth, ignoring his wife's solicitude, and holding out a handful of letters as though they were so much waste paper, "and that gossiping old scoundrel, Tatum, tried to find out why I'm so anxious about the mail, and why I'd quit sending one of the niggers to the postbox."

"I reckon the boy is too proud to write home until he has found something to do," sighed Mrs. Collingsworth. "At any rate it is a comfort to have heard something, even if it was a single postcard. And we know that he intends completing his course at college."

"Ah, yes, but where, and how?" questioned her husband. "What reputable college will accept him after he has been disgracefully expelled? And what does he know about work? He's never done a stroke of work in his life. It's all very well to say on paper that you're going to work your way through college, but finding the work and the school is another matter, ma'am—a horse of another color. If Jeffrey had showed the proper spirit in this affair, I would have arranged to get him in at Charlottesville on condition; but he has taken everything in his own hands, and I can't do anything. I am utterly helpless," he finished miserably.

"I do think that Doctor Daniels acted rather hastily with the boy, turning him out that way," ventured his wife, who was slow to criticize those in authority.

"Yes, and that after all I have done for Wythe in the past, and my father before me," added Mr. Collingsworth, snapping his fingers,—“and Daniels was a classmate of mine, and wouldn't have been president of Wythe if I hadn't helped him. But I suppose it is

foolish to expect any gratitude in this world. And now he writes to me that he is 'sorry'. Confound his sorrow!"

"Don't say that, dear," remonstrated his wife who, since Mr. Collingsworth's resignation from the Oldbern Church, had been frequently shocked by what she termed "profane" outbursts from her husband. "I am afraid we are to blame for the way we brought the boy up, keeping him away from everything that boys usually have and do."

"Well, I did the best I knew how," sighed the minister,—“I wanted him to be a gentleman and a scholar and a God-fearing man. I tried to make him read the best of everything, and I thought if I kept him surrounded with fine influences that he would never get away from them. Instead of that he seems to be utterly alienated from me—seems even to hate me,” he almost sobbed. “Why, even that one postcard was addressed to you, and didn't even mention his father!"

“He will understand some day,” comforted the wife. “I never will believe that a boy of mine is bad at heart, and I know that that story about his drinking is all wrong. If he did drink once, I'm sure it was on a dare, and that he will never do it again.”

“But your brother Paige used to drink more than was good for him,” suggested Mr. Collingsworth, glad to discover something relatively less unpleasant to talk about.

“Only on Christmas and the holidays,” objected his wife. “He drank like a gentleman, and never did anything out of the way when he was under the influence of liquor.”

“And then,” continued Mr. Collingsworth, as if discovering a secret of importance for the first time, and one that bore upon his son's misfortune,—“your grandfather had a still-house in his back yard, one

that survives as a wash house to this day, if I remember correctly."

"Yes, but it was not illicit," countered his wife somewhat sharply, remembering that her husband's maternal grandfather had lived in the mountains.

"Hum," commented the minister, turning away from the fire, "I guess you're right. I'd better go upstairs and change these things of mine at once."

Scenes like these had been enacted for many days in the home on Mill Creek whither Mr. Collingsworth had moved a few days after Jeffrey's expulsion from college. So many questions were asked at Oldbern, and so broken was the minister over the disgrace of his son, that it was intolerable to remain. He had centered his hopes on this only child of his, and, now that they were destroyed, he wished to withdraw himself, and not see the faces of fathers whose sons bid fair to accomplish somewhat to their liking, nor be in Oldbern on the day when they should return from the various colleges to which they had been sent. On the plea of ill health, he had resigned, and had returned to the home where his father and his father's father had first seen the light of day. He felt that, once hid away from curious eyes, he could approach the problem that confronted him—the reclaiming of his son—more naturally. He would not need to put on the mask of stoic hardness and indifference which he had affected in the village. For Mr. Collingsworth was not a hard man. He was a man enamoured with the idea to seem hard, and to walk as though unaffected by the accidents of a vulgar world. In the fastnesses of the forest he chose to weep, and in fields remote from men he could accuse himself.

His wife was made of other stuff, and the removal from the congenial influences of the parish where, to a few of her friends, she could open her heart, made

of her trial a thing trebly hard to be borne. She had, on receiving the news of her son's downfall, dispatched forthwith a hundred dollars which she had secretly put by; but as Jeffrey had left no forwarding address, the letter had been returned along with a note from Dad Markham saying that Jeffrey had gone to Ripple Ford, spent one night there, and had departed, the next morning, for Bristol, without leaving any word of his destination. Markham had, on receiving her letter, made investigations on the campus and had, later, walked to Ripple Ford to gather this information. Mrs. Collingsworth's reply from Wythe College was even more unsatisfactory than this in that no one of the faculty had made the least effort to discover the whereabouts of their former student. "They regretted," etc.,—that was all. The one man of the faculty who had reason to know, chose, out of policy's sake, to keep silent. Then came a postal card from Big Stone Gap with the word that Jeffrey was on his way "North" where he would work his way through school; he was leaving that night and would give an address when he had one; his mother was not to worry!

"North" to the mother meant a place far beyond the sweet influences of friendship, and away from the hearthstones of hospitality. Her son had taken upon him an exile in a land of shrewd bargains and cold shoulders. At Oldbern some of the parishioners had comforted her by relating stories of friendly northerners who had been kind to Mrs. So and So; but in the country house her tears fell daily as she whispered her grief to the knitting needles, or told the cause of her woe to the hall clock. Once she stole away through the grove back of the house and up to the hill-top where there were a few graves holding the ashes of some of the earlier Collingsworths who had

not been removed to the church yard. In her sorrow she almost reckoned her son among the dead. Sometimes, in a more hopeful mood, she would go up to the high-boy in her bed room, and there, from the top drawer, would take out a picture of Jeffrey, taken before his hair had been cut short, and would go through one of their petting dialogues:—

“Mammy’s baby?”

“Yes, but not baby’s mammy, though?”

“Yes, it is.”

Once Rhoda, standing in the hall outside of the door, overheard her mistress going through this affectionate nonsense, and reported the incident to the kitchen:

“Ah do believe Miss Collingswuff is jes a goin’ out’n huh haid ovah that chile; yes sah, she’s jes goin’ plum crazy.”

XIX

(1)

AT about four o'clock in the morning of the thirty-first of May, a very soiled and travel-worn young man walked up a deserted street in the town of Argyle. In his right hand he carried a small bundle. He stopped for a moment at a corner and looked inquiringly now this way, and now that; then, shaking his head, proceeded on up the street in which he had been walking since he had left the yards of the Burlington railroad. Two blocks farther along, his inspection resulted in something more satisfactory. In the middle of the block at his left was a lighted sign board! "Working Man's Hotel," it read.

"Good enough for my purpose as well as my pocket book," he muttered to himself.

The night bell was answered at last by a blear-eyed old man who, between yawns, managed to answer the inquiries of his prospective guest.

"Room with,—ho-hum—bath? Yes, if you have a dollar. Pay in advance."

The money was produced and through its magic the host became a little more amiable. "No, we don't do any cleaning and pressing, but ho-ho-hum, I can have them sent across the street after seven o'clock. It will probably cost you two dollars to have *them* cleaned. Just leave them hanging on the door knob outside. Got the money about you?"

Jeffrey showed the man a five dollar bill.

"Aw right, when do you want to get up?"

"Ten o'clock."

“Ho-hum, right up this way.”

There is an astonishing psychological difference between the shaved and the unshaved. Jeffrey had never been aware of it before, but now, after a bath, shine, shave, hair cut; with clothes pressed and the rents therein repaired, the world seemed altogether a better place and he a better citizen. He had three dollars left, for which he gave thanks for the guidance of his one-time fellow traveler, and to the economies he had practised in getting himself rehabilitated. It was late in the afternoon before he set out across town for the college.

Argyle was a queer place to one who had been accustomed to the rambling string-towns of the South,—towns whose houses were dotted about in a hit or miss fashion. It was laid out like a checker board, save for the very center where there was a primly square park, containing a band stand, a few benches, some trees, and a W. C. T. U. drinking fountain; the whole being enclosed by an iron hitching fence. This square park cut Main Street into North Main and South Main, and the streets parallel to this interrupted thoroughfare were indicated by numerals, while the bisecting streets were known by the letters of the alphabet. It was a very simple but singularly unimaginative arrangement, Jeffrey thought, but he was amazed to note how clean everything seemed to be; no trash was visible, no disagreeable smells greeted one's nostrils, and everywhere were the signs of a moderate prosperity.

The college was housed in a group of nondescript brick buildings set back in an attractively wooded, but highly compressed campus. There were lacking the spaciousness, the repose and the unity that made Wythe, architecturally, a place of beautiful memories. Wythe made one feel like lounging about in a com-

fortable chair and reading out of an old book with blind tooled covers, while an obsequious darky set mint juleps on the table by one's side. Argyle seemed to be the embodiment of science, business, efficiency, sobriety, and success. Beauty was not there to distract one's attention from the task of acquiring culture, and the feet of the young men and women as they moved swiftly from one building to another, beat staccato on the hard pavements. And Jeffrey thanked God that he had reached a land of liberty!

Commencement was drawing near, and the president was busy, so Jeffrey was forced to wait in the library for a short half hour which he spent in looking at the books. Yes, there were Spencer and Mill and Darwin; and here were Lester Ward's books on sociology, Frazer's *Golden Bough* and Bernard Shaw's plays. McKaig had told him of Shaw. President Goddard, he thought, was sure to be a Freethinker, and was probably a socialist. What a heaven this was going to be! . . . He could talk without being thought an eccentric fool, and think what he pleased without being insulted and cast out.

The door opened and the president entered, bearing in his hand Jeffrey's card. There were no formalities. At Wythe one entered the office of the president to find that gentleman standing, very erect, by his chair, where he remained until one was fairly inside the room; then, in grave silence, one was profoundly bowed and gestured into a chair, after which ceremony one was bid to speak. Doctor Goddard addressed him as though he had seen him the day before.

"Well, Collingsworth," he began, holding out his hand, "you came sooner than we were led to expect by Dr. Fitzpatrick's letter. Sorry to have kept you waiting, but awfully busy. You must have had more money than Fitzpatrick thought?"

Jeffrey explained the manner of his coming.

"Very good," commented Doctor Goddard, "and now that you're here, money is the first problem. What are you willing to do?"

"Anything, sir."

"Would you carry papers?"

"What kind of papers?" Jeffrey asked in bewilderment.

"Newspapers, newspapers, of course."

Jeffrey flushed. This was indeed getting far down in the scale of things. A Collingsworth becoming a newsboy! Still, he supposed such things were respectable up here, so he feebly nodded assent.

"I think," continued the president, "that the men here get seven or eight dollars a week on a paper route, and if you are willing to do some service as watchman in one of the dormitories, you can have a room there this summer for nothing. The paper route will mean work from either four to six in the morning, or from three to six in the evening, depending on the paper that employs you. You may be able to get both a morning and an evening route. That will leave the rest of the day free, and, if you care to, I believe that Dr. Rice of the English department could use you around his garden. That would give you your meals and leave you, no doubt, some margin of leisure for study. Of course I assume that you are willing to enter this kind of an arrangement from the fact that you have taken the trouble to come up here."

These plans were rather overwhelming, coming thus from a man he had met only five minutes ago, but Jeffrey felt the great load of uncertainty which he had borne since his dismissal from the South, suddenly lifted from him, and in his anxiety to please this new friend, he would, if possible, have undertaken a hundred additional tasks. He liked the tall, gaunt, white-

haired embodiment of efficiency, and felt at ease as to the future. The great fear of "up north" was dispelled by this man whose business-like air was relieved by an apologetic and almost childlike smile.

"If you will excuse me, Mr. Collingsworth, I am going to turn you over to Mr. Maxwell who will show you about and get you in touch with some of the men who have been working their way," the president finished. "And you can come to my table at the commons tonight for dinner. We will have more time then to get acquainted." He turned again to his office with—"You just make yourself at home here until Maxwell comes."

Maxwell came presently, and proved to be an excellent guide as well as an authority on the problem of making one's way. One of the Seniors was giving up a paper route at the end of the week and he was glad to introduce Jeffrey to the local circulation manager of the Gazette as a good person to take his place. Until school was out, Jeffrey could share his room; and then, to settle the problem of his board, Dr. Rice was willing to have him go to work for him the following day. He could trim the shrubbery in his garden.

It seemed like magic. In the South these arrangements would have to be talked over for many days, and, while the people there would have smiled more, have seemed more cordial, and would have almost inevitably invited one,—in Jeffrey's straits—to "come and stay awhile," the actual business of putting him in a position of independence would have been graciously but painfully deliberate. Jeffrey was conscious, however, of a lack of warmth in the tone of these people, and he wondered whether their brusqueness had a source deeper than the mere accident of a harsh accent. Of one thing he was assured,—the people were just as kind as the ones he had left behind him, and he

was, at the moment, inclined to believe that they were much more just.

At sunset Maxwell took him to the top of the embattled tower on South Hall to get a view of the town. From this elevation, the moderate height of four stories, one could see it all,—a compact huddle of well nigh uniform buildings, on streets as alike as peas in a pod. Beyond, on every side, lay the flat prairie which came up precisely to the carefully set rows of cottages, and stopped without the usual suburban hesitation. Nothing about the town bore the splashed-out look of the curious little villages of the South and East. One could see and comprehend everything at a glance. It was a plaster cast set in the center of a billiard table. Even the rows of trees on the plains beyond—trees that had been set out for wind breaks—had grown up, just so, and come to a stop, one tree not daring to excel another. The churches of the town had no spires. It was a perfect picture of democracy; the triumph of equality, sanitation, and soap.

At first Collingsworth seemed a bit odd to the people of Argyle; not because he was heterodox, for most of the students there had embraced at least one of the heresies which had made him so conspicuous in his own land; but because of his habit of speech, his pronunciation, and his colorful violence. These were milder folk, and not accustomed to the vituperative outbursts of the Southerner. But gradually he came to assimilate himself to the psychology of the plains. Years before he had begun the task of imitating the northern speech, but now that he heard it all about him he soon managed to change "doe" into door, and "moe" into more, and to leave off saying "sir," and "madam." When some one called attention to any phrase not characteristic of the country, he dropped

it at once. He was resolved to become a thorough-going Yankee.

In a few days he was initiated into the business of a paper carrier on one of the residential routes. One got up at three o'clock in the morning and walked about half a mile to the office of the Gazette, in the rear of which one descended into the basement press-room, and took the papers as they came, warm and damp, from the great folding machine. A man was there who verified the count and saw that no newsboy carried too many; or handed out slips bearing the name of a new subscriber. Each newsboy then went apart with his papers, folded them once more, placed them in a canvas sack, and set forth upon his habitual journey. There were short cuts to learn, some back yards that could be traversed, and some that were guarded by a watchful terrier. And when these things were once mastered, the task became automatic—a roll and a cast, and lo! the intelligent citizen had at his door the cultural medium through which he might know the dangers or the felicities of his republic, and become wise.

Carrying papers is an excellent introduction to business life. One gets to know people at their worst:—in the before-breakfast mood of irritability, or, if one carries an evening paper (as Jeffrey came to do a few days later), in the world-weary, dog-tired mood of discontent. An old woman will get up early for the purpose of scolding her carrier because he left her paper where it would be sprinkled by the gardener, or to ask if he will bring the paper to the door instead of flinging it from the sidewalk. And on the evening when the boy tries to collect the weekly sum of ten cents, the man of the house will come forth, collarless and irascible, to ask if the carrier means to try to collect money from him twice in the same week. Excel-

lent discipline in democracy it was for the grandson of Major Crockett Collingsworth, when that young gentleman would be coming down the street, bearing a sack of papers and meditating upon the sensuous fancies of Lucretius, to be abused by the keeper of a livery stable for the loss of a single issue. Before the year was gone he made some slight modifications in his theory of equality.

It was a new world for Jeffrey and it put into him a new attitude towards life. Because there was little time for study, he used all of it; and by the opening of school in the following autumn he was ready to pass the examinations necessary to enter the Senior class without condition; and as the year went on he saw, with some satisfaction, that his class standing was far above what it had been in any previous year of college life, and that, too, despite the fact that he was carrying more than the required number of hours. He could not resist the new liberty he enjoyed, under a more generous elective system, for entering upon courses of study that promised fascinating fields of research. He turned to psychology with the formerly forbidden William James for a text; comparative religion, which required the reading of the *Golden Bough*, and of Forlong's *Rivers of Life*; an ethics course with Westermarck's *Origins* for parallel reading; and a year's course in sociological theories in which he had often to refer to the books of Kropotkin and Morgan. His report card was so unusually good, for him, that he could not resist sending it to his mother—for the purpose of confounding his father.

(2)

Within a month after his arrival at Argyle, Jeffrey had met a member of the Socialist Local, Frederick

Olson, one of the type-setters employed at the Gazette office, and had received from him an invitation to attend one of their bi-monthly meetings and to join the party. The Local met in a diminutive and somewhat shabby hall over a peculiarly pungent bake shop, and after his first experience therein, Jeffrey was never able to think of socialism without somehow associating it with cinnamon rolls. Illogically enough he was surprised, and somehow disappointed at this first meeting with the Socialists. They met on the first and third Sundays of each month, and with an instinctive, or perhaps, just an inherited respect for the day, Jeffrey had selected, from his lately recovered wardrobe, a suit of black which seemed appropriate to the occasion. He imagined that there would be a large gathering, an interesting lecture, some music, and, finally, some sort of a social gathering where enthusiastic disciples would discuss and strive to simplify the brain-splitting theories of their great master. His heart sank a little when he found that the address given him by Olson led him to a bakery which he had passed on the day of his arrival in the town, and he climbed the stairs with some misgivings. Five old men, two of them coatless, sat about a table in a corner of the room, listening to Olson, who stood before them, reading something from the *Appeal*. Jeffrey hesitated at the door until the reader, sensing a newcomer, turned about.

"Ah, it is our new Comrade, Collingsworth," exclaimed Olson. "Welcome! This is Comrade Lankerstein; and Comrade Muller; and Comrade Steiner; Comrade Smith; and Comrade Levinsky," he said, introducing them in turn. Jeffrey noted that they all, including Comrade Smith, spoke with an accent.

"We are late gathering," exclaimed Olson. "We always must wait for Comrade Bergman, and Comrade

Thomas. We must have a korum and a secretary, eh?" He laughed loudly at this remark of his, and Jeffrey, seeing that all the comrades joined in this mirth, smiled feebly.

The room was unfurnished save for twenty or thirty cane chairs and a small veneered oaken table. On the wall hung a lithograph of a rosy-cheeked Karl Marx, whose little jet black eyes peered out over a Niagara of white whiskers. On the table were some red-covered pamphlets and a bundle of the *Appeal*.

After a time came the two comrades concerning whose lateness Olson had seemed to derive so much amusement; and presently the meeting was called to order. The minutes of the previous meeting at which, it seemed, nothing had been done, were read and approved; a long and poorly typewritten communication from the National Headquarters, was slowly spelled out and, after interminable discussion, voted upon; and then followed the reading of letter after letter from struggling Socialist papers begging for funds. These last were sadly laid upon the table. Towards the end of the meeting, Jeffrey was asked if he would join the party.

The utter dullness of the affair, the lingering over stupid details, and the almost religious insistence upon form had bored him. These old men sat around like deacons at a prayer meeting, and the smell of roasting peanuts that came in from the street outside to mingle with that of cinnamon rolls, was most offensive. His prejudices were aroused, and he almost wished that he were out of it. But it wouldn't do. He must think of the Cause, of the principle. Marx and Engels were sound, and their gospel must be proclaimed in spite of the stupidity of such performances by their followers. He remembered his embarrassment at meeting these homely persons when he had entered the room.

He had shivered when they called him "Comrade"; he thought that "Mr." was somehow good enough for any occasion. He wondered, with some self-distrust, whether he were not a snob. If so, he was a scoundrel and a traitor. He resolved to prove himself and to enter into the movement with all his zeal.

"Yes, Comrade Secretary," he responded, "I am very anxious to join the party if you will have me. I have been a Socialist at heart for three years, but this is the first opportunity I have been afforded for joining the party. I thank you."

And when, a half an hour later, he went forth with Olson and Thomas, he wore, in the lapel of his black coat, a new and shining Socialist button, and in his pocket he carried, besides a number of pamphlets, a significant red card. Thomas had invited these two comrades to take dinner with him at his restaurant, "The Eat Shop," a few blocks away and just on the edge of the factory district. He conducted, besides the restaurant, and under the same roof, a garment-pressing establishment, known as "The Pantatorium," back of which, screened off by a disreputable curtain, was his printing shop, advertised on the sign board without as "The Star Press." A large-boned, square-faced woman, whom Thomas introduced as his wife, was waiting on customers as the trio entered the room.

"Well, socialism don't help me to keep a lunch counter," was her greeting. "I suppose you want dinner for three? Just so. You can wait on them yourself."

"My wife does not understand, does not sympathize; it is my grief," said Thomas, shaking his head.

He led them to a little private room in the rear, where they could talk together without interruption and without endangering the trade.

"It is very hard for a married man to be a Socialist,

if he has a living to make," Thomas explained after he had brought a well-filled tray from the kitchen. "My wife is afraid we will lose money. The revolution will have to be won by single men. Women spoil the spirit of the strike, they have not the courage to make sacrifice and they cannot understand that it is as much, or more, for them than for their husbands."

"All that will be changed when the bread-and-butter problem is settled," said Comrade Olson, struggling with a huge mouthful of bologna,—“economic determinism, economic determinism, everywhere explains bad theories, false religions, false doctrines in the schools; the people are afraid they will lose their bread and butter, so they lie to please their masters, and they lie so long and so loud that they come to think they tell the truth, and then will fight and die for it. If socialism was fashionable, and brought trade, your wife would be a better socialist than you are, comrade, for she would be a good materialist.”

"Ah, but Comrade Olson," cried Thomas. "You lay too much stress on the material side, we must change that, but we must reach the brain first. People must be taught to think. We must not make the mistake of depending too much," he went on, turning to Jeffrey,—“on the economic evolution. The proletariat must be educated so it is superior to the capitalist thinker; then when the system breaks we can take charge. And, then, when we talk all the time about materialist this and materialist that, the people say we think of nothing but the stomach. Bah!”

"Coming back to marriage," said Jeffrey, whose heart still ached from his experience at Ripple Ford, "do you not feel that when women are in a position of economic freedom, they will be led to drop marriage as an outgrown garment? And don't you think that will be the only solution of such problems as Mr.—"

er—I mean Comrade Thomas has been confronted with? Where people are independent of each other financially they will not have to be dependent mentally.”

“If you mean that the marriage rite will be outgrown, and that the economic basis will give independence to each by giving employment to all, you’re right, but if you mean that marriage will ever be outgrown, you’re not sound, Comrade,—” replied Olson. “And free love is not a doctrine we want talked by our comrades. It turns people away from us. Let us help the workers triumph, and help them to think; and then when the day comes the majority can settle the less important matters.”

“See here,” countered Jeffrey, “I am new to the movement, and I want to know just where I stand. Now you, Mr.—ah—Comrade Olson want to keep the idea of freedom in marriage entirely out of the movement, and Comrade Thomas wants us to be quiet about materialism; and yet the Socialist literature I have read speaks of both of these things quite freely and openly. Am I to drop both or neither?”

Then the argument began in earnest, with Thomas and Olson gesticulating wildly, and both talking at once. Marxian terms were flung about the little room as though they were pots and pans, and in their excitement each accused the other of being muddle-headed and a hindrance to the movement. Jeffrey was inclined to agree with both on these points, but concerning the question he had raised, he was destined to receive no light. The men became incoherent, and had arrived at the point where arguments usually end, when the door was opened by a tall, emaciated old gentleman whose face was hidden by side whiskers and steel spectacles.

“Pardon my intrusion,” he began. “But I was hav-

ing a bite to eat here in the restaurant, when I heard the sound of voices. Your wife, Comrade Thomas, told me that you and your friends were having a bit of an argument, so I presumed to enter."

"Come right in, Comrade Doctor Gibbings," shouted Thomas in some relief. "I am glad you came, for you're just the man we need. Meet our new comrade from Virginia, Comrade Collingswurt. This good man," he continued, addressing himself to Jeffrey, "was a professor in the colleges, and is one of the martyrs of the cause. You are a young college man and will appreciate him."

"What college are you from?" questioned Comrade Gibbings.

"I came from Wythe just a few weeks ago and intend to take my Senior year in Argyle."

"Ah! Wythe is a good old Presbyterian school. I used to hear of it in other days. I was once a Presbyterian minister, and am a Princeton man. Glad to see college men coming into the movement. But what was the argument about?"

"I seemed to cause no end of trouble," laughed Jeffrey, "by a question of tactics. Comrade Olson says we must keep quiet about one thing—free marriage; and Comrade Thomas says we should be quiet concerning the materialistic argument. We don't seem to get anywhere."

"As for me," began the old man, taking a handful of raisins out of his pocket and seating himself on the edge of the table, "I am inclined to think that we waste our propaganda on stony ground. We must meet people where we find them. The majority of the typical American people are in the Protestant churches, and there is enough socialism in the Bible to give them a start. Christ was the first socialist. I made the great mistake of going too far with liberal theology and

had to give up my pulpit. I should have gone more slowly and led my congregation with me. It is through the churches that we must work. They must be brought back to Christ, and away from Mammon."

"Oh, Hell!" exclaimed Comrade Olson. "Christ never did live. He is a myth to fool honest working men and to keep them contented—'servants obey your masters'—bunk! I got no more time to waste. I must get home and get some rest. Christ is all bunk, Comrade Gibbings,—and you, too, Comrade Olson,—you ought to know better. Bunk!" and with no other farewell than this expletive, he strode rapidly out of the room.

"I'm very sorry to break up your party," said Comrade Gibbings apologetically. "I am sure I had no intention of being rude."

"Ah that is nothing, Comrade," replied Thomas. "Olson always acts that way in an argument. He can't help it. Look at that head of his,—too much combativeness, too little judgment. It takes phrenology to understand human nature."

"Yes, yes, certainly. I must be going," interrupted Gibbings, suddenly jerking out his watch and getting to his feet. "I was about to forget that I am due at the Baptist Church this evening. I promised one of my friends to bring over some copies of the *Christian Socialist* for distribution at the evening service. I hope to see you again, Comrade Collingsworth. I don't always stay away from the meetings of the Local.

Jeffrey was ready to return to his room at the dormitory, but as old Gibbings was leaving, Comrade Thomas signaled for him to remain for a moment.

"I want to show you my books," he explained, as he drew back a dingy curtain which had concealed a row of well-worn books and pamphlets. "And then I wanted to say that you must not pay much attention

to either of these comrades; one is an atheist and the other is an ex-preacher—both unsound. You are very young and must discover the truth. You must read good literature. Now here's a book to tie to—*The Philosophy of Genetics*,—explaining the universe, past, present, and to come, in symbols and in numbers. It includes Karl Marx and goes beyond him. From this book you will be able to foretell all the coming events of history. Then you will need to be able to read human nature if you are to go far in the movement, and,"—growing very confidential,—“I see that great things are ahead of you. You must study phrenology. I have here the complete course of the Continental Institute of Phrenology and Allied Sciences,” here drawing forth a bundle of typewritten pamphlets bound together with ribbons. “And here again, is my course in Personal Magnetism—fourteen lessons,” he added with emphasis, as though there was some special significance in the number. “Then here is Doctor Astral's great course in Scientific Astrology. I have diplomas in all these things. If they are used right you can become a great power. All these philosophies will help in the establishment of the Co-operative Commonwealth, if they are put into the hands of people who love their fellow men, instead of into the possession of exploiters. Won't you take these home with you and read them,” he implored. “I want you to start right. With the power you can derive from these lessons you can be a great man.”

Jeffrey was embarrassed both by this exaggerated praise, and the excessive size of the library he was supposed to borrow, but the man looked so utterly sincere and so pathetically eager, that he accepted the books with a show of enthusiasm. Thomas, delighted by the notion that his library was going out to the shades of the academy to accomplish a worthy mis-

sionary function, proceeded to make a huge, unwieldy bundle, wrapped in the colored supplements of newspapers which bore evident signs of kitchen and market usage.

"I'm glad to find a young man of so much promise coming to our cause," he said, as he finished tying up the parcel with red cords. "My books are to be used by those who are able to see the truth, and turn it into power for good——"

"Joe Thomas!"——interrupted his wife, bursting at this moment into the room,——"I want to know if I am going to run this shop all by myself, while you gas around and waste your time over the 'cause'." This last word she spat out with vast contempt. "If it wasn't for me, we'd be in the poor house; and you all the time talkin' about 'power'. My patience is just wore out."

Jeffrey felt that this was an excellent opportunity to break away, and he lost no time making apologies and taking his departure.

It was growing late, the streets were quiet, and he hoped that he would not be observed carrying such a monstrous and spectacular bundle. The pockets of his once well-pressed suit were bulging out with pamphlets and periodicals that had been thrust upon him at the meeting; and now this enormous library of nonsense! He remembered that not more than two years had passed since he would have been eager to have dipped into any curious book that promised to offer a singular point of outlook. He had, indeed, read Swedenborg, and something by Cornelius Agrippa; but phrenology! personal magnetism! Good Lord, did people have to feed on superstition in order to live? If a man gave up Christianity on scientific or philosophic grounds he surely would not turn to astrology for a substitute. Gibbings had evidently left

in haste at the very mention of phrenology. He had seemed to be a gentleman; perhaps the only gentleman he had met among the comrades. He had spoken clearly and without either the jargon of the movement or a foreign accent; and yet, even he had been on his way to a Baptist Church! And, Jeffrey went on to reflect, what a come-down the meeting of the Local had been?—a mere handful of men going through a spiritless formula. True, they had explained that all the comrades did not attend regularly, and that, when there was a speaker, they sometimes had a packed hall. But why should people attend such a dull affair? No wonder they did not come. The men had seemed religiously sincere,—their socialism was a religion to them,—and they spent all their earnings for pamphlets which they distributed with the zeal of a missionary. But why did they hold such yawning meetings? A Christian Endeavor Society was more enlightening. This last thought brought him up with a jerk. Was it true? If so, he finally decided, it was because the folk at the Endeavor meetings were young, and because their underlying motive in coming together was social; perhaps an unconscious sex interest was the motive, and they were vivacious from the mere joy of togetherness. He was cast down. All that had been connected with this first meeting with the Socialists had been ugly except the evident fact of their sincerity. And it did not comfort him to think, in this connection, of the beginnings of Christianity. That was, in its origin, he reflected, a proletarian revolt against respectable, dogmatic religion, and its early adherents were, for the most part, neither gentlemen nor ladies. They had been ignorant folk and had, no doubt, many of them, been given to palmistry and sooth-saying more than to good manners and the bath. Then they grew, in the process of time, to be respectable; but

every new break—the origin of every dissenting movement—came from the lower ranks,—down and down to the Methodists and the Holy Rollers. Socialism was a new movement,—that was the trouble.

“Damn it!” he muttered to himself, “why does every new movement have to be started by people who use tooth picks?”

THE trouble with Jeffrey Collingsworth was that he was forever anticipating some manifestation of Heaven upon earth, and permitting his imagination to color the scene around the corner in the key of his desires. He was the dupe of a reality with which he was not yet on speaking terms. He fancied that life was a game of tag in which he was "It" and Beauty was just behind the next bush waiting to be caught. He expected the readers of beautiful books to be beautiful people; the followers of philosophers to be wise; and the disciples of science to be sane. To live, with such expectations, is to embrace madness; still madness is not, perhaps, the worst of mistresses in such a sorry world.

Back in his room he undid his unwieldy package of wisdom-literature, and, removing the stained and crumpled papers, re-arranged the contents in a more compact form, and did up the whole in clean brown wrapping-paper. He would return the books in a fortnight, and tell poor old Thomas how much he had enjoyed them all. He wondered, with some unease, whether he were not doing for this almost stranger what he had refused to do for those at home—the service of seeming to please. It was a simple form of Machiavellianism, and perhaps it should be practised more often, he thought. Yet there was a difference. The people back there were satisfied with what their forefathers had believed and done, while this simple man was groping, in his untutored way, for some new solu-

tion for the wrongs of the world. Surely it was better to be groping and eager, even if wrong, than to be satisfied and to sit still. He would not permit this unhappy first experience to deter his resolution of entering the Radical Movement. He felt that he might, indeed, be of great service to the cause by bringing something of the logic and the science of the academy to its service. He would prepare some simplifications of Marx, Dietzgen, and Lester Ward, suitable to the popular mind, and endeavor to clarify the thought of those fumbling comrades, create a greater unity amongst them; and, at the same time, strive to impart a new enthusiasm to the Argyle Local. Undoubtedly there were, in many places, live centers where the Socialist meetings were not stupid. He would inform himself concerning their programs, and, then, his task should be to bring new life to this one, and make of it an influence both in the town and the college. Happy over this reconciliation to his new world, he betook himself to bed.

(2)

The teachers at Argyle College were very human, very tolerant, and very democratic. At least they seemed so to one who had grown suspicious of the scholastic temper and was ready to start at the slightest suggestion of pedagogic authority. They certainly made no attempt to influence the content of one's thought, or, if they did, it was so indirectly done as to create the impression of self-discovery in one's own mind. They were concerned, rather, with the methods by which one reached conclusions. Indeed they seemed to be collaborators rather than instructors, and, for the first time in his collegiate experience, Jeffrey felt at home. Since these men did not care two straws whether he believed in Jehovah or in Pan, his attitude

of more or less belligerent watchfulness gradually wore away and began to be replaced by a spirit of philosophic calm. One was not compelled to cry aloud for Pan where Pan had no violent detractors. It was a very bad atmosphere for the nourishing of partisanship and the growth of hatreds. One was not compelled to attend chapel, therefore one did.

The president was not always the precipitous person he had seemed at the first interview, and very frequently Jeffrey was invited, together with some other men of the Senior class, to take tea at his house. On these occasions Goddard was fond of drawing from them their reactions to the college life, and of getting some impression of their purposes for the future. Francis Battle, for example, was going to try a hand at scientific farming in Colorado. Dr. Goddard was greatly interested in agriculture and offered suggestions that revealed a knowledge both of the conditions in that state and of the sources from which one might draw helpful information. Samuel Harris, looking for all the world like a cigar salesman, aspired to the church, and hoped to be able to make his pulpit a means of spreading what he was pleased to call "The newer gospel of the larger life." The president seemed very sympathetic, and recited the experiences of conspicuous liberal ministers who had been successful, and spoke at some length of the need of a reinterpretation of the Gospel in the terms of modern life. Jeffrey, in his turn, declared his intention of following in the footsteps of Huxley, popularizing modern science, and, going further than the champion of Darwinism, of simplifying sociology so that the people could be emancipated from dogma and be prepared for the coming of a complete democracy. It was an excellent idea, the president agreed, for it would help to counterbalance Harris' preaching. So it was with them all.

Agreement, encouragement, and assistance were held out to very diverse and diametrically opposed individuals who were bidden to go their ways, every one, with this man's blessing. He confided to Jeffrey that he believed in God as a very real Presence, but that he felt it an impertinence to thrust his belief upon others whose experiences differed from his own. When they needed God they would find him, but they were probably on as sure a road who fancied themselves atheists, as those who called aloud upon His name. He added, however, that he felt that the consciousness of God made for a sweeter and less barren life.

It was as impossible to quarrel with such a man as it was not to love him; but it was hard to be a propagandist in such an atmosphere. There was no one to hit.

If there was an exception to this comfortable tolerance, it was in the person of Doctor Edgerton Rice. With the passing of autumn and the coming of the severe northern winter, there was no work for Jeffrey to do in the garden, so, that he might earn his meals, he was given occasional tasks in the library. There were examination papers to be corrected, a card-index system to be perfected, and catalogues to be made. Aware of Jeffrey's straits, Edgerton Rice frequently made work for him when there was actually no need. In this charitable enterprise he was seconded by his wife, a kindly little woman who had, appended to her name, a Ph.D., whose belt never quite succeeded in uniting her brown skirt to her pink waist, and whose recalcitrant hairpins were invariably on the floor. Mrs. Rice devoted herself so constantly to the business of writing books on the philosophy of æsthetics that she had no time for attending to her personal appearance or to the homely tasks of domesticity. She was in her study, and her husband was in his. They had one

regular servant, a cook, and had no regular hours,—remaining at their desks until hunger,—or, in the case of the husband, the class bell—drove them forth. Jeffrey frequently ate his meals alone.

Thus it came about that Mrs. Rice also found occasion to call upon Jeffrey in her intermittent efforts to bring some order to a very chaotic household. The kitchen alone, thanks to the care of a frequently exasperated cook, was well ordered.

Dr. Rice was devoted to the form of literature rather than to its content. He loved the stately prose of the English Bible, the embroidered sentences of Walter Pater, and the music of De Quincy's poppy-laden dreams. He conceived a violent fancy for Collingsworth as soon as he heard of his having chosen Sir Thomas Browne as the sole literary companion for his journey north. In his enthusiasm, he neglected to ask whether Collingsworth had read as well as he carried this beautiful book; it was enough that he had borne it in his hand. But he was indignant and puzzled that the same youth should devote hours of study to Karl Marx and the economists;—"A waste of time in sheer ugliness!" he would exclaim when Jeffrey would refer to his reading. "There is only one socialist book that is fit to read—Oscar Wilde's *Soul of Man Under Socialism*—and that is not socialistic. People should not be permitted to write ugly books. How can sociology or economics, hygiene or psychology, be other than ugly? Look at the words these frogs are obliged to use:—'proletariat,' 'bourgeoise,' 'financier,' 'brokerage,' 'punctiform,' 'subconscious,' 'appendage,' 'bankruptcy,'—all damnably hideous, and unfit for good paper, and, besides, no book containing an 'ology' of any kind is decent."

"But we wouldn't have any informative literature left if your rule obtained," Jeffrey objected.

“Information that cannot be conveyed by beautiful words is worthless, and ‘information’ itself is a hateful word. *Ecclesiastes*, and *Kubla Khan*, *The Ode on a Grecian Urn*, or *Annabel Lee* convey no information, but they have more liberating power than all the sociological systems in the world. Let me give you a test for a book:—Open to that chapter in *Ecclesiastes*, beginning,—‘Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth,’ and read aloud eight verses; then turn to the thirteenth of *First Corinthians*, and read the entire chapter in the same way; after that pick up any book of sociology and begin to read it aloud for comparison. If it jars upon your ear in any way, throw it into the fire. You may be sure that it is vulgar. Perhaps a better test for you to apply would be to read Pater’s *Conclusion to the Renaissance*, or his *Diaphaneite*, which last, by the way, tells of the only civil kind of revolutionist; then after testing these beautiful things by your ear, open Herbert Spencer’s *Data of Ethics* and read the first paragraph, beginning, if I remember right,—‘The doctrine that correlatives imply one another——’ ”

“Of course,” he added, “if your ear is that of a savage you’ll go on with Spencer to the Devil; otherwise you will gain some appreciation of letters.”

Jeffrey secretly applied this extraordinary test, to some of the essays of Edgerton Rice, and was amused to discover that the result was quite unfavorable, and one that would have embarrassed the author no little. In the case of Marx and Ward, however, matters were much worse, and while he did not wholly share Rice’s enthusiasm for style, nor his belief in the infallibility of this device for the elimination of vulgarity in literature, he did find himself repelled, ever so slightly at first, by the violent contrast between the consummate artist and the blunt propagandist. There was a seduc-

tive power in Pater's languorous sentences that drew him irresistibly, and he remembered how, long ago it now seemed, the magic of the *Urn Burial* had, in a similar fashion, held him for a time, and had made many a text book seem dull and profitless. Just so, Pater spoiled one's joy over the luster after "useful information"; he created a mood out of which one returned to mere knowledge-grubbing with a sort of superior disdain. Jeffrey felt that Pater was a devil who must, however regretfully, be put behind, if he would go on his mission of world regeneration.

At the noon hour, a few days later, Rice came into the dining room bearing in his hand an unwrapped magazine——

"Here is an illustration of what I was saying the other day," he began, handing the magazine to Jeffrey. "That thing has been coming to me regularly for the past year, and, after my looking through one or two numbers, has gone, with even greater regularity into the waste basket. I am giving you this number as an example of what becomes of a man who follows the sorry business of reforming the world. Its editor, Bertram Tucker, used to be a student here, and I once thought that he might get to be a writer of some distinction, but he got hold of Herbert Spencer and decided to reform philosophy, and since then, he has embraced all of the insane cults in the world. Mind you"——he added with a smile——"I have no objection to these things as such, but they have led to loose writing, bad writing, cheap writing; and now this silly magazine of his invites every inferior scribbler, who thinks he has an idea, to become a contributor. Granted that what they call 'ideas' are really ideas, they lack inspiration and they're not literature. No man who respects literature should have anything to do with

them. Tucker is a great disappointment to me," he finished.

"But some one must take an interest in society and in economic laws," Jeffrey ventured, putting the magazine into his pocket.

"Let the politicians and statisticians and meretricians do the dirty work," suggested Professor Rice. "You are cut out for better things. Stick to literature. But I suppose my telling you that will do no more good than in Tucker's case. He was bound for destruction, and to destruction he has gone. Calls his magazine *The Flaming Future*, and it does flame with a vengeance; it sets fire to all good poetry and sound prose—verily a future which, I trust, I shall not live to see."

Jeffrey was saved from replying to this last by the tardy appearance of Mrs. Rice who entered the room giving an apologetic pat to her rebellious hair.

"I am sorry to be late," she murmured, "but I just had to finish my article on Jacobean Furniture for the *International Studio*. I suppose this soup is stone cold by this time."

"Perhaps the cook will bring some more?" Jeffrey suggested.

"I don't dare ask," Mrs. Rice hastened to say, as though alarmed by the very thought. "She scolds enough about our irregular meals as it is, and I simply can't afford to have her leave."

"Excellent, excellent!" said her preoccupied husband looking into space and waving his fork.—"Style is everything."

Jeffrey wondered if these people ever thought of style in relation to eating, and remembered with a pang the hot rolls, and baked ham, and rich puddings of old Virginia, where the beef had been served rare, and where the people had lingered at the table as though it were an altar from which they were loath to

leave. Their conversations had not been agreeable, but their manners had been exquisite.

(3)

The Flaming Future was destined to receive a much more favorable treatment at the hands of young Collingsworth than his adviser had anticipated. Indeed, if that gentleman could have foreseen just what part this lurid journal was going to play in the immediate future of his pupil, he would have never rescued it from his wastebasket. What was meant to serve as a bad example came actually to be embraced as an excellent medium for expression. For it was a periodical edited by and for rebellious youth. Its bright green cover bore the burning emblem of iconoclasm, and beneath this ever lighted torch were the words: "We burn the errors of the Past to light the way of the Future." Within, after an editorial on the necessity for "Cosmic Thinking," were little essays on raw food, on sun baths, on the evils of corsets, on co-operative colonies, on not wearing a hat, on why women should not bear the names of their husbands, on the superstition of dress and on the menace of Christianity. Near the end was a page, advertising the Co-operative Corporation of the Flaming Futurists and inviting all emancipated persons to become members, or, at least, to contribute to the cause. Finally there was an editorial welcome to new writers, bidding rational thinkers to come forward with their literary wares without fear.

Here, thought Jeffrey, was a magazine to which he might dare send an article of his own. None of the writers had a "style"; most of them, to say the truth, were unable to write an intelligible sentence; and they all seemed to be very young. He might easily excel

them all. He had never been equal to offering a contribution to the more formidable reviews, feeling sure that he would be laughed at for his pains; and the few things he had done for *The Owl* had been in the way of English exercises, not expressive of his personality in any manner. He had, after his unfortunate first experience with the Comrades, outlined an essay on "Irrational Rationalists," and he set to work putting it into shape for publication. Since clear thinking, oddly enough, was the watchword of the *Flaming Future*, he felt that his article might not be rejected. As he wrote he became painfully conscious of the difference between recognizing and achieving a distinctive style. One might read and appreciate Jeremy Taylor or Walter Pater; one might be annoyed by the conspicuous vulgarity and structural awkwardness of the journalists, but to turn to and create a fine piece of writing was a very different and infinitely more difficult matter. He found himself doing, again and again, the very things that had seemed most hateful in the work of men, whom, as writers, he despised. He wanted to write beautifully of the principles that, if put into practise, would make a beautiful world. He would have liked the praise of the radicals evoked from the content of his work; but he desired as much, perhaps, unknown to himself, more, the approval of its form by such men as Edgerton Rice. But beautiful words would not yield themselves to thoughts of class-struggle and poverty and pain, and the result of his nights of toil was a thing at once flamboyant and dull. He was cast down, and yet, because it was his child—bore the impress of his mood and expressed, more or less clearly, his present reaction to life—he sent it, religiously wrapped, to Bertram Tucker's *Flaming Future*.

Five days later there came a letter bearing on one

corner of its envelope a red torch. Jeffrey hesitated a moment before opening it and his face burned as if in anticipation of an embarrassment to come. Still, the letter seemed too thin to be his rejected manuscript, so he summoned courage and broke the seal. The "Dear Collingsworth" opening fairly took his breath, and made him stand quite erect. He was recognized as a member of the confraternity of writers! The editor had hastened to reply, he said, not only because of the unusual merits of the manuscript, but also on account of the familiar address of the writer. He had known many liberal persons in the faculty at Argyle—lovable persons—but they were dilettante, middle-class triflers with reality. The students he remembered as taking a weary interest, now and again, in socialism, Fletcherism and Free Thought, but they had never been serious. "It does my heart good," ran the message, "to read your forthright denunciation of every kind of orthodoxy, and your timely warning to the Radical movement to keep clear of new superstitions. I shall give the article a prominent place in next month's issue. Please send us another,—every month if possible."

"'If possible,'" Jeffrey repeated. He could write, though it meant the loss of sleep for a whole year if need be. What was the loss of sleep compared with fame. He rejoiced that his name would appear in print as a regular contributor to a Chicago periodical. He would send copies to some of his old friends at Wythe, certainly to Fitzpatrick. Then he remembered Rice; it wouldn't do for Rice to see. "Thank the Lord for waste baskets!"—he exclaimed.

MRS. COLLINGSWORTH received her son's first letter from Argyle with tears of joy. She knew there was a letter the moment she heard her husband's impetuous feet bounding up the verandah steps. His feet had dragged of late, and never had he been given to such undignified haste. In the orchard by the lane a group of astonished darkies were still gazing towards the house which had just swallowed up the horizontally outstretched coat tails of their suddenly meteoric master.

"Open it! open it!" he cried, holding out the precious envelope while his excited wife fumbled for her glasses. "I recognize Jeffrey's writing—as abominable as ever. Can't you find your spectacles? Here. Where is he?"

"You read it, please," said Mrs. Collingsworth, whose eyes were too dimmed to see.

And so together they made it out: Their son had found friends; had been accepted in a respectable college—a co-educational institution,—(Mr. Collingsworth was, therefore, positive that it was a poor school); he had been living in Argyle for three weeks and already had three positions,—was carrying two papers, and was working about the house and garden of one of his professors. ("How impossible!" exploded his father.) He had delayed writing until he should have something comforting to say, but now he could assure his mother that he would receive his degree just as soon as he would have at Wythe; moreover he liked the school much better. He missed two things,

the mountains and his walks,—the place was a sea of black mud as level as a floor, inspired no curiosity, and was cut into rectangular sections and quarter sections, bounded by bristling wire fences. Would his mother forgive his delay and rest assured that all would be well?

“But where in the world is Argyle?” questioned Mrs. Collingsworth when they had read the letter for the third time.

“That is what I am going to find out,” replied her husband, rushing out of the room toward his study. “I will get my atlas.”

Never having been north of the hypothetical Mason and Dixon line save on the brief occasion of a visit to Philadelphia during the Centennial Exposition, there were vast regions of the country of which they were in total ignorance. Mr. Collingsworth had traveled over all of what was technically termed the South, was familiar with the topography of his own native state, and deemed any further knowledge of his country entirely superfluous. The very suggestion of its necessity he would have regarded as the height of impertinence. Beyond the South, so far as America was concerned, was a vast terra incognita—of obscene barbarism. Outside America, he and his wife were interested in and had planned to visit, on some distant day, just two places—Geneva and Jerusalem; the shrines of Calvin and Christ.

“I know of only two cities in Illinois,” said Mrs. Collingsworth when the map had been laid open,—“Springfield, which is the capital, and Chicago where they ship cattle.”

“I have never sent mine there,” responded her husband with some disdain. “They are always sent to Liverpool, by way of Norfolk. But I have heard of two more places in Illinois,—Peoria, where the great

distilleries are located, and Joliet, where there is a very terrible prison. I trust that Argyle is not near either of them."

At this juncture Rhoda, whose curiosity had been hardly contained since the arrival of reports regarding Mr. Collingsworth's sprint down the lane from the post-box, and who had heard with some amazement the rapid fall of feet on the floor above, suddenly appeared in the doorway.

"'Scuse me, Mis' Lucy, but I done forgot which you say fo' me have fo' dinnah, beaten biscuits or rolls," she lied, looking anxiously from one to the other, and wondering why in the name of common sense they were so perturbed over a book.

"We've heard from our boy at last, Rhoda," replied the Mistress, knowing full well why she had appeared at this moment, and ignoring the obvious subterfuge. Rhoda never forgot.

"Bless the Lawd! Has you now? An' is he all right?"

"He has found work in Illinois and is going to college up there," explained Mrs. Collingsworth.

"What's dat chile goin' to do, a workin'?"—

"He"— — —

But Mr. Collinsworth for all his absorption over the map, suddenly realized that some things must not be told. It would never do for it to get about that his son was a house servant, a yard man, a paper carrier.

"Yes," he interrupted hastily, "he is working for a college—school work—and is doing very well, Rhoda, very well. We are just locating the place on the map. Thank you for your interest."

This last was well known to be a signal for her dismissal, but she was determined to ask one more question.

"Yas, sah, you say he's in Ill-what?"

"Illinois."

"Is that a way up Nawth?"

"Pretty far, I expect."

"Lawd, I jus' bet he gets mo' than tired o' that place. He won't have nothin' fitten to eat. He won't get no beaten biscuits up there!"

"I've found it!" exclaimed the minister, "Here it is about a hundred miles south of Chicago."

Presently Mrs. Collinsworth descended to the kitchen where Rhoda was now explaining the cause of all the excitement to the assembled servants.

"I reckon you had better make a few more biscuits tonight, Rhoda, I think we will eat with a better appetite," she advised with the first real smile she had worn for many weeks.

And that evening, when she was unobserved by her husband, she stole up to the high-boy and took the money out of the letter which had been returned from Wythe. "I think the poor boy will need it now. I an afraid he will work too hard," she whispered to herself.

Meantime her husband, now that his mind was more at ease, found additional reason for rejoicing that he was safe from the enquiring eyes of Oldbern. In a certain sense he was made proud by the pluck of his son in making the brave attempt to hew out his own destiny, but he was ashamed that he should have to descend to such low employment. He found some comfort in the reflection that his ancestors had, in the early days of their establishment in America, worked side by side with their slaves in the tilling of the new soil. But that had been a long time ago, and besides, tilling the soil was a fine thing compared to being a man-of-all-work. Perhaps he ought to help the boy? But no, if he did he would be admitting defeat, and going back on the word he had dispatched at the out-

set. He was now sorry that he had said "expect no help from me," but, having said it, he would wait to see whether Jeffrey persevered to the end and got his degree. He wondered how his son had happened to find Argyle so readily, and had been accepted without recommendation. Surely it could not be much of a school,—and co-educational! Well, he would see. And meanwhile, there was his own attitude. It was all very well for him to exhibit some feeling at home and among the negroes, but when he went to Oldbern he would affect unconcern, and in reply to their inquiries, he would say: "Ah, yes, my son has gone North to take his Senior year. His trouble at Wythe was a slight matter, and anyway he wanted to specialize in science; and he has a good position. It isn't altogether what I should have liked,—his going to a northern school,—but it is coming out very nicely, thank you."

And he devoutly hoped that it really was.

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Suddenly Mr. Collingsworth paused in his nervous pacing about the room, arrested by a new and, apparently, very pleasing idea. It brought a glow of eagerness into his eyes—

"Why not?" he questioned aloud, looking at some imaginary figure through the white panelled wall; then, with sudden resolution and a snap of his long fingers—

"We'll do that very thing." And at the word he turned and ran up the winding stairway to tell his wife.

HARD work and loss of sleep had left patent evidences upon Jeffrey's face; deep lines and dark circles bore testimony to his toil. Working from four until six in the morning; attending lectures for four hours during a day, part of which was devoted to correcting the grammatical blunders of freshmen, and part to some laboratory or other; carrying a heavy sack of papers again from four until six in the afternoon; studying from seven until ten; and then writing until midnight,—left very little time for rest and brought about a nervous tensity that, had not some relief come, would have resulted in disaster. During the summer, when his mid-day hours were unordered by the clock, he had been indifferent to the strain. Working was a new experience, and he had rather enjoyed it, so that when his mother sent him one hundred dollars, he had looked upon the money untempted. He could and would make his own way. Then, too, he feared that his father would know of the gift, and his self-respect, added to a confidence in his own new-found strength, made him reject the gift. When Christmas came his mother, who had been much hurt by his refusal, once more essayed to help. And there was sent by express, a box of rare good things to eat—a great roast turkey, stuffed with chestnuts, a boiled ham, fragrant with spices, and a most delicious fruit cake, embedded in the top of which was a jewelled silver snuff box that had belonged to her grandfather. Jeffrey recognized this familiar household treasure with a start, and was puzzled by its presence in such a place. By pressing a spring the

lid was lifted and revealed the fact that the crisp bill, which he had before refused, had been multiplied two-fold and returned once more; this time with a note urging upon him that he could not well spurn his mother's Christmas gift. It brought tears to his eyes.

Thereafter he gave up carrying the morning paper—The Post—and was thus enabled to complete his year without actual hardship. He was thinner than he had been at Wythe, but there was about him an air of strength and resourcefulness that his old associates would have been amazed to see. Before, he had been equal to daring and youthful deviltries; now, he seemed a person capable of assuming some responsibility. His mornings being freer, he could give more time to the series he planned for the magazine. He had decided upon a study of comparative religion (he was taking lectures in the subject under Steele at the college), designed to show the pagan origin of Christian rites and festivals, and had already sent three of these essays to Tucker. At the outset he was belligerent, and the first study, on the origin of Easter, being derived from his reading of the especially polemical works of the freethinkers, bristled with denunciation, and seemed to assume that Christian priests had deliberately stolen the mystery-rites and symbols of Mythras and Krishna, and had appropriated them to their worship, very much in the spirit of cunning political knaves. Then, as he read more of Frazer and Crawley, Robertson and Wallis Budge, he began to see the universality of the ancient religious-drama and its picturesque properties,—the cross, the mitre, the stole and the chasuble,—and how the meaning of these things lay deep down in human experience of passion and pain. He saw the evidences of their growth, bit by bit, through phallic and solar and ancestor worships, through the worship of the gods

of corn and wine, and then down, with all the accumulated accretions of the ages, to the cult of pity. And he came to know that religion is the effort of blundering and woe-stricken man to discover some symbolic language for fears that can find no tongue, and for hopes that are unutterable. And the first great discord came, he found, when some irreverent and protesting knave, prompted by a fatal curiosity, had endeavored to look behind the veil, and to substitute a vulgar reason for a magic and healing poesy.

The first article, published in the March number of the *Flaming Future*, brought from radicals all over the land many tributes of praise. "Give it to them," wrote a man from Texas, "Its just what they need." But the succeeding numbers were not so successful, and by the first of May the spirit of calm had so settled upon his work, illumined as it was by a more fundamental knowledge of his subject, that angry protests arose. "You are lying down, weakening; what is the matter?" wrote one indignant person, "Are you afraid?"

"H'm," said Jeffrey to himself after reading some of these epistles of protest, "radical means getting at the root of things, and yet the more I get at the foundation of religious origins the less the radicals like it. I wonder what it is all about anyway!"

In this perplexity he wrote to Tucker, enclosing some of the more condemnatory letters, and asking what he should do. The reply was reassuring—

"Pay no attention to what they say. The articles are very good. The only trouble is that you have changed your point of view rather too rapidly, and are not just now hitting the churches as unreservedly as some of our subscribers wish. They have an orthodoxy of their own, and need a little disturbance. Make your next installment into a summary and try your hand at something else,—the educational hoax. And

now I should like to propose your coming up here and joining our group. I need an associate editor. If you are in a position to come, and would like it, let me know at once. There is nothing in it for you, financially, but a living; educationally, it would be worth more than a half a dozen universities. You will be through there by the first of next month, so come up and look us over."

Jeffrey could hardly credit his eyes—an invitation to become an assistant editor! The very thing he needed for self-expression was at hand for the taking. Altogether this was a land of miracles, where things came at one's bidding. He pictured the building in which the *Flaming Future* was housed; the editorial rooms; his own desk whereat he would, in generous tolerance, receive the manuscripts of a thousand eager world-builders. He sat down at once to write a letter of acceptance.

Nevertheless he was far from content about the reception of his most recent articles, and he confided as much to Raymond Hughley, a fellow student in comparative religion.

Hughley, whose neurotic eyes proclaimed him a zealot, was going to be a teacher, and already had very decided pedagogical notions. He was going to revolutionize the schools by the introduction of reformed spelling, and by the abolition of the task-method. He approved of Jeffrey, he said, on the ground that he was forward-looking, and seriously concerned with human betterment; and he had given several evenings to verifying the data for the *Flaming Future*. He was amused by the violence of the criticisms.

"But the fact remains," he commented, when he had quoted some of the worst of the accusations, "that

the last essay is the best of the lot. It is nearer the truth. I wonder if they want the truth?"

"They call themselves 'investigators' and 'truth-seekers,'" Jeffrey replied a trifle sadly.

"So humanitarians call themselves lovers of mankind, but they aren't always. From what you have told me about some of your friends, I have come to think of an 'investigator' as one who carries Haeckel in one pocket and some miserable occult tract in the other. I shouldn't be disturbed by their ravings. You are getting the experience in writing, which is the main thing for the present, while you are finding yourself. What's this about the editorship?"

With assumed indifference Jeffrey handed him Tucker's letter.

"Good boy!" exclaimed Hughley with enthusiasm. "But are you going to take it?"

"To be sure I am."

Hughley gazed thoughtfully at the toe of his shoe. "Are you sure that it is the best thing? Is there any future in it?"

"There is a dreadful lot of nonsense in the magazine without a doubt, if that is what you mean, but it offers a wider field than any that I know. The other radical magazines confine themselves to either anti-Christian or social propaganda, but this goes in for every progressive movement, from spelling reform to psychology. If I am on the editorial side of the table I should be able to say what I want."

"But Tucker is not very definite about money, and you will have to have something to live on in Chicago."

"The colony supports itself," answered Jeffrey.

"I see," replied the other doubtfully. Then, as though determined not to dampen his friend's enthusiasm, "Well, whatever happens, I am glad you are going to Chicago, for I shall be able to see you. Gregg

wants me to come to his school next Fall. The Dickenson School is on the South Side near Jackson Park, and your place must be,—” picking up the letter again, “somewhere near Rogers Park on the North Side; about fifteen miles apart; but that is nothing in Chicago.”

Hughley had visited Chicago twice and was fond of exhibiting his familiarity with the great city.

“It will be good to feel that I know some one in such a big city, but I suppose we will both be too busy to visit much.”

“That’s the trouble with you, Collingsworth, you don’t get acquainted with enough people. The class hardly knows you at all, and you never say a word to any of the co-eds. I haven’t seen you at a dance since you’ve been here. If you got acquainted with more people of your kind, you’d get in line for something better than this magazine. What do you grind all the time for?”

“Well, you see, my father isn’t sending me here.”

“Yes, I know all about that. But there are several here doing the same thing, and they make time for some social life. You have Sundays.”

“I’ve gone to several of Prexy’s teas,” Jeffrey defended, “and, besides I can’t dance.”

“That’s no excuse, the girls would soon teach you.”

“I haven’t a dress suit any more. It was one of the last things I gave to my old janitor at Wythe. I’d as soon go naked as without one.”

“Bother a dress suit, we never use them here, this is a democratic school,” Hughley replied, scornful of Southern conventionality, “And you call yourself a socialist! Why you are the most conventional person in this school. You’ll be miserable among those radicals. I suppose you still find time to attend their meetings. Have you spoken there any more lately?”

"Twice since the day you went with me; that was the first time, and I am going to make an open-air speech on the Square Commencement night."

"That means you won't come to the Alumni banquet! You are a queer devil," exclaimed Hughley.

"See here," he went on, "I've a suggestion to make. I thought of it the afternoon I heard you speak for the Socialists. You're a better orator than the average, by a darn sight. Why don't you sign up for Chautauquas? There's money in that, and you'd always be sure of having an audience. If you want to reform the world there is your chance to reach the heathen themselves. The radicals herd together and talk to hear themselves talk, but in the Chautauqua, while you would have to dilute your message, you would have a chance to make new converts. Gregg has been out with them for a season, talking on Education; I know that he would help put you on."

"What is a Chautauqua like?" asked Jeffrey. (This cultural institution had not yet touched Virginia.)

"You don't mean to say you don't know?" cried Hughley, to whom they were as familiar as red barns or real-estate billboards.

"Never came in contact with one in my life."

"Lord, but Virginia must be a strange country. Nearly every town up here has one,—the chambers of commerce and churches see to that. I can't say that I enjoy them any more, but the majority do. . . . Let's see,—I don't know that I was ever called upon to describe one before. . . . Well, I think of a Chautauqua as a big tent on the edge of a small town. Dog fennell and jimson and smart weed are growing all around it. The sun is very hot and there is no air inside. The fat women have sweat running down their faces in spite of their dripping handkerchiefs and waving palm-leaf fans. The boys and girls get up from

their folding chairs, now and then, and go outside to get some lemonade or some ice cream, while the younger children look for their chewing-gum in the saw-dust. The platform manager, in a suit of moist white duck, sits up in front on a rostrum built of smelly new boards. There is a piano beside him. With the exception of the stars the performers are worn-out preachers and cast-off politicians."

"But the stars?" Jeffrey interrupted.

"—are the Whitefaced Singing Monkey, or Carrie Nation, or Jingo, the Intelligent Jack-ass, or William Jennings Bryan, or the Celebrated Blingo Band. All the speakers have to do, aside from mopping their faces and drawing their checks, is to tell funny stories; and, above all, to say, 'This is the finest town, in the most splendid county, in the most illustrious and representative state, of the grandest and most perfect country on which God's all powerful sun ever shone.' That's all."

He got up from his chair with a smile of satisfaction.

"Not a very tempting scene," Jeffrey commented drily. "And you think that's where I belong?"

"No, I didn't say that, but you will admit that such an institution offers its opportunities. You get the crowd under the impression that it is going to be amused by a talk on 'Our Great American Humorists.' You start off telling them just what I said; then give them a lot of stories, and, by way of parenthesis, inform them that the funniest book you ever read is *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* or Dostoieffsky's *Crime and Punishment*; tell them that their women are the fairest you've ever seen, and that the reason you think so may be found in Ross' *Social Psychology*, or Buckle's *History of Civilization*, or D'Annunzio's *Triumph of Death*. That way you would soon raise

the standard of Chatauqua and make it a real educational force.”

“I’d be lynched,” said Jeffrey.

“Oh, you’re determined to be odd, so be odd, old boy,—and good night.”

XXIII

THE invitations to the fifty-first commencement of Argyle college were just off the press, and it was not without a certain boastful sense of pride, akin to the vulgarity of the self-made, that he mailed these bits of frosted parchment to Yost and Fitzpatrick at Wythe,—Yost would spread the news among the others of the college and they would know that, in spite of everything, he had not utterly failed,—and to his mother at Mill Creek. He felt assured that he would be graduated *cum laude*, but he would not certainly know until the last day when the programs were out. Then he would enclose one in a homeward bound letter, explaining that his mother might enjoy seeing the graduation program of a Northern school! He knew that his father would be made glad also, but he did not begrudge him this pleasure. His heart was still bitter when he thought of his father, and while his resentment was not so keen as it had been when under his dominance, he could not by any means bring himself to think of going back, after graduation, to visit at his home. His mother had written that Mr. Collingsworth was much broken by the separation, that everything would be different, and that he would be received by both of them with full forgiveness. She was unfortunate in the use of the word “forgiveness”, for Jeffrey was by no means sure that he had done anything for which there was a need to be forgiven. He knew that in his mother’s heart there was no thought of patronage, but he suspected, somehow, that his father had caused her to use the word. He longed once more to walk down the winding country

lanes among the rolling hills, and beside the singing water brooks; he hungered to look again at the quaint old houses of Oldbern, set back from the cobbled street, and to pay his vows by the side of the crumbling marbles where his ancestors slept; he wanted to touch again the smooth, worn surfaces of the old mahogany and walnut, and to climb the curving stairway to his room, guided by the light of a flickering candle; he wanted to see once more the honest black faces of the darkies, lighted by smiles of welcome; he wanted to answer her call of loneliness and to go to his mother and to feel her arms about him. But he could not. Resolutely, he put the thought aside and plunged into work.

The examinations did not disturb him this year, for he had so loved his work that it had been play, even as McKaig had said. It was only a question, toward the last days, of finding time, and to this end he had managed to secure a transfer of his paper route, and a dismissal from service at the home of Edgerton Rice. Rice had endeared himself to Jeffrey by the manner in which he received the news of his appointment in Chicago. He had laughed at having been the innocent cause of what he was pleased to call his downfall, but on being shown the last of the essays on comparative religion (Jeffrey had been careful not to let him see the preceding ones) had complimented him:—

“Religion is not an ignoble subject,” he had said, “it is worthy of a better pen; and comparative religion offers a field where the fancy may be free to dwell among a noble family of gods and heroes, where one may walk in fields of asphodel with Attis and Adonis, Freya and Dionysos, or sport with oreads and sprites; or dare the threatening shears of Atropos. You have been premature, perhaps, in venturing into a field pre-empted by great scholars, but you have, at all events,

written a thing that is beyond comparison with these articles on natural food. But it does make me sad to see, by the side of your paragraph on Demeter, an advertisement of pills for 'lost manhood.' But that is the price one has to pay for living in a commercial age."

XXIV

(1)

FRIDAY, Saturday and Sunday of the first week in June were given to the commencement exercises. On the first day, in the early afternoon, there was a picnic, out under the elms, where several of the alumni made speeches. The crowd of returning graduates was growing larger every hour. Jeffrey found these mid-Western folk friendly and easy to approach. The women were eager to tell their former classmates, or, indeed, any one who would listen, how their children had teethed, and grown, and received distinction in this and that. They listened patiently to the less interesting tales of other women, but, at the first pause, feverishly broke in with—"But my John is six feet two," or "Sallie's music teacher, who studied with deReszke in Paris, says that she has a remarkable voice."

The old men were telling of how they never wore gloves when they played base ball, and of how they had taken the president's carriage to pieces and put it together again in the chapel. It seemed to Jeffrey that every white-haired man in Illinois had seen Lincoln, or had heard *the* great debate with Douglas. They described that historic occasion with great gusto. Many boasted that they had shaken Lincoln's hand; and one old man took Jeffrey aside, after he had expressed his unstinted admiration, and told him of some letters which the great president had written to his father—"And I keep them locked up in my safe. Abe wasn't married then, but he wanted to get

married, and my father had suggested some likely women, and Abe wrote back describing, in pretty plain language, just why he wouldn't have this one, and why that one didn't suit him. Yes, sir, he was a great man, but his language was too strong, sometimes, for delicate folks. Those letters ought to be published. They would show how human the man was, and what a Rabelaisian sense of humor he had, but I wouldn't do it for a thousand dollars. It would kill the respect that some of these Y. M. C. A. people have for Lincoln. They don't want a human Lincoln. But I get 'em out now and then and have a good laugh. If you'll come down to Pendava some time I'll show them to you. Why he said about one woman that"—lowering his voice to a whisper—"she ' Yes, sir, Lincoln was the greatest man this country ever had."

During the afternoon Goddard took time to inform Jeffrey that he had seen the class records and that he was being put down for a *cum laude*—"I will write to Fitzpatrick, after commencement, that you have fulfilled all that he expected," he said. "We don't often accept men so informally, or without official transfer, but I don't believe the college has suffered in your case"—he pressed Jeffrey's hand and turned away to avoid an awkward speech of thanks.

"Bless Heaven!" Jeffrey said to himself that night, "here is one thing in the world that I have touched without hurt. I hope I can get away without making some dreadful break, or losing a friend." Some day he hoped to have enough to do something for Argyle in return for the friendly services it had meted out to him. He regretted now that he should be unable to attend the alumni banquet, but he had promised the comrades that he would speak on the Square, and it was too late to change. He had grown popular among

his fellow socialists, and had brought new life into the Local. They liked his speeches which were fervent, violent, eloquent and, sometimes, even logical. He took the results of the class-room to this humble forum and there translated them into simple terms applicable to the economic struggle. And now that he was going away, they had asked for a final speech on this night when the town, in addition to its Saturday night throng of shoppers and pleasure-seekers, would be filled with the guests of the college.

Before going to bed he looked over the notes of his speech. "If they don't know the materialistic conception of history after tomorrow night," he exclaimed, in a burst of conceit, "it won't be my fault."

(2)

The first days of June in Illinois are not always full of the warmth and sunshine that one expects, but on this commencement day Nature smiled down in a most genial mood. Among the tree-tops, as in the grass below, the bees made of industry a melody, and on the eaves of tidy cottages the sparrows, reckless of convention, abandoned themselves to shameless sport. Caps, tilted at every conceivable angle, dashed here and there about the campus over gowns that fluttered in protest at the lack of dignity. The wearers of these academic vestments chattered excitedly, puffed out with importance—"We are to meet at the Gym"—"Stand up when he says 'Members of the Senior class'"—"I wonder if she will sew this tassel for me?"—"Have you seen my big brother going along this way?"—"I am going on to New York"—"Won't that be jolly!"—

Breakfast was an ordeal, and lunch was a maze. Food was beneath contempt. These people had re-

ceived culture, stamped and sealed, or were about to, and were now going forth to enlighten an expectant world.

The hours passed with incredible rapidity, and, before they knew it, the seniors had been assembled at the gymnasium, and, led by the faculty, filed into their places on the stage. Then they were standing up, singing the college hymn; then they were hearing the address of the pompous United States senator,—a “patent medicine king”—telling them of their duty to serve God and country, and of how he had had to struggle to get where he was. There were flowers and banners and gay dresses, and the auditorium was packed with proud fathers and mothers.

Jeffrey did not hear much that was said by the speaker. He did not see the audience. He hated sitting in front of a crowd. If he could do something he did not mind it, but to sit still and feel people looking at him was unpleasant. Any way he was not comfortable, now that he was here. He was glad to get his degree,—it was a kind of union-label, admitting him to organized respectability. Every one had been friendly; the members of the faculty had been uniformly kind and tolerant; the students had welcomed him, and in his class he was received in the warmest fellowship. During the last few days the girls had reproved him for his aloofness, and had chattered so gaily that he almost regretted his hours of solitude. Still he was unhappy. In spite of all their efforts he was a stranger in a strange land. The others on the platform were being watched by their parents, by old friends. They were enjoying this initial success under the eyes of a world in which they had grown up. He was out of it, a foreigner. His heart was back in mountains, hundreds of miles away, and he saw another Commencement where his classmates

for three years were receiving their degrees. The people among whom he sat agreed for the most part with his ideas, theories of life, his mind; the others were akin to his soul,—whatever that was. Barriers were everywhere. Some groups had congenial views and discordant tastes; others, springing from similar environments, shared their tastes but could not agree about doctrines. His graduation was not a triumph; it did not have a social value. What satisfaction would one get from an Oxford doctorate on Mars?

Then he was conscious that the class was rising in response to the speaker. They were being told that America needed them. After a minute or more of eloquence, the speaker subsided and Goddard rose, his massive head of white hair contrasting sharply with the black and crimson of his gown. He spoke only a few words, but somehow they made the florid oration of the fat politician seem the incarnation of vulgarity. In a moment he began to call the names of the class, and to announce their distinctions,—

“Jeffrey Collingsworth.”

Jeffrey arose from his seat in relief, his embarrassment falling away at the command for action. He stood for a moment before the president, while the dean was handing him his diploma. He heard the president's voice, far off it seemed, saying “*Cum Laude*,”—“with all privileges of the same—.” Goddard's hair was like a halo and his voice was now mellow and sweet to his ears, but he felt alone, for all the throng about him, terribly alone. The blue ribboned roll of vellum seemed an empty thing, now that he had it. As he turned to march off the platform something made him, for the first time, look straight at the multitude. His glance was caught as by a magnet by something in the back of the great room. He seemed suddenly rooted to the spot in

sheer amazement. He dropped his diploma on the floor. For there, in the last row, near the aisle, were his father and mother, and even at this distance he could see that their eyes shone with tears.

How he recovered his diploma and got down from the platform, how the commencement exercises came to a close, he never knew. For there had come to him in that one glance at his father's face—down which, unchecked, ran the tears of joy—, as by a blinding flash, the first revelation that John Collingsworth really loved him. He had never seen a tear in his father's eye before; not even on the day they had found his grandfather dead and sitting erect on a rustic seat by the vine-clad sun dial, whose slender shadow had marked his hours for the last time; not then did his father weep. He was used to conceal his tender emotions; to express only his petty violences. His father and his mother—both—there to see him! Letters, speeches, logic would not have convinced him. Their mere presence here, at this distance from their home overwhelmed him; he was not alone!

The idea had been born months and months before, indeed it had occurred to Mr. Collingsworth on the receipt of the first letter which followed the long days of anxious waiting. His wife had been overjoyed, and had trembled lest he change his mind. Sworn to secrecy, no word of this intended visit did she send to her son, but day after day she hummed lively airs as she went about the house, and night after night she unfailingly marked off the spent figures on the calendar. Once more Mr. Collingsworth began to dream dreams of the future of his son. He hoped that a year of hardship would change the boy's outlook on life, and bring him back to the church and to a decent sense of respect for the traditions of his class. If it

had, and surely it must, he would,—well, what wouldn't he do? But first he must see and know. A free-thinking socialist he would not tolerate. Such a person would bring discredit upon the family, the community, the county and the state; more especially upon him and the methods he had employed in rearing the boy. He would be laughed at for making such a failure. He was ready to confess to his wife, and even to his son, that he had made grave mistakes, but he had no wish to hear the mocking of his neighbors. Nor did he wish to return with a drunken profligate who would spend his estate in wild nights of riot. He felt sure, however, that Jeffrey was not a drunkard; it was the matter of his opinions that he feared most of all. During the vacations that his son had spent at home he had noticed that Jeffrey read curious little pamphlets which he had taken care to insert between the pages of *The Review of Reviews* or the *Atlantic Monthly*. Mr. Collingsworth had seized upon some of these, and, after an indignant glance, had thrown them into the fireplace. He was sorry now that he had acted with such impetuosity, and knew that it would have been better to have reasoned with Jeffrey. He had formulated an argument for the annihilation of socialism, and if the chance presented itself he would bring it forth with great good humor: "The socialists," he would say, "plan to divide everything up," and then he would go on to show how, in a very few days, the wealth of the world would return into the hands of the clever! Yes, he would effect a reconciliation after he had seen and come to be assured that it was possible. He and his wife would go to commencement and surprise Jeffrey.

They agreed that Argyle was a singular little city, but they admired its cleanliness and its air of strict propriety. Its prim angularity was suggestive, some-

how, of the ten commandments. And the hotel to which they were directed, The Puritan House, was polished until it fairly shone with virtue.

They did not wish to spoil the surprise by an early encounter with their son, so they waited impatiently until they knew that the exercises were under way before they entered the grounds. Standing out under the campus elms, Mr. Collingsworth cast an appraising eye upon the buildings, and, while he made a mental note that they were inferior to those at Wythe and the University of Virginia, he recognized that they wore an air of quiet respectability. Mrs. Collingsworth, knowing that her son had trod upon these very pavements, thought that everything was beautiful. She saw that the women had faces much like those of the women at home, that they wore skirts of decent length and modest material, and, so far as she had seen, did not chew gum. She was thoroughly satisfied that all was well. When the audience had risen to sing "Hail Argyle" they entered and were ushered to seats near the door.

With only twenty seniors sitting on the platform, hungry eyes required but a second to find the object of their search. The boy's face showed lines of care and deprivation, thought his mother, careful to discover every change that time had wrought; and, furthermore, he seemed strangely sad and broken, in contrast to the alert forms and expectant faces of the others. All this was unapparent to her husband, who, after brief comparisons, decided that his son had a more thoughtful and scholarly bearing than the rest, that he wore a look of bored unconcern quite fitting to the occasion. "He has the blood and breeding of a gentleman," he boasted to himself.

Secretly, Mr. Collingsworth was annoyed to observe, out of the corner of his eye, that his wife's hand-

kerchief made frequent, albeit furtive trips from her lap to the region of her spectacles. Such evidences of emotion, however quiet, seemed out of place among such a multitude of strangers.

Fortunately the commencement orator, an alumnus of the college, uttered nothing more than the usual American platitudes, all in keeping with average religious beliefs, average moralities, and average patriotism. Any Odd Fellow from Iowa, Presbyterian from Virginia, or Methodist from Massachusetts would have found therein stated the middle class maxims which very accurately indicate his cultural level. Moreover, just prior to this speech, there had been a prayer which made proper mention of every person in the Trinity. These things, together with the catalogue which Mr. Collingsworth had secured the day before, were amply reassuring to one who had feared to encounter, in this Northern school, the rankest infidelity. The president seemed to be a gentleman, despite his business-like address; and, altogether, Mr. Collingsworth was glad that his son had been so well received in such an institution.

It was not until the young man went forward to receive his diploma that he observed his drawn features, the slight stoop of his shoulders and the evident sadness in his abstracted gaze. "Too much work," thought his father, now conscience-stricken, "He looks nearer thirty than twenty-one." Then, to his great surprise, he heard the president announce, with a little more feeling than before, it seemed, that Jeffrey was graduated *cum laude*. "Why the young scoundrel, what grit he has shown—to work his way, and, in spite of it, to secure honors! Confound it! Where is my handkerchief!"

(1)

JEFFREY had almost to pinch himself to be assured of this amazing reality. His father seemed so affable—lovable even—and so at home in this strange environment, among men and women whose creeds he would, in other days, have denounced with evangelistic fury. With Dr. Goddard—to whom this parental pilgrimage seemed perfectly natural, and not a whit surprising—he got on famously, praising the college, inquiring into its history, and expressing his gratitude for the kindness that had been shown his son. As soon as possible the reunited family got away from the chattering throngs—Mrs. Collingsworth wanted to see Jeffrey's room. The request brought him to earth with a thud. He thought rapidly:—a number of inflammatory books and journals must be removed, or this agreeable state of things would quickly pass. He excused himself a moment and ran over to where Hughley was conversing with some of his friends—

“For God's sake, Hughley,” he whispered, drawing him aside, “run up to my room and ditch all my books and papers. Take them out and away, anywhere, please.”

Hughley, sensing the seriousness of the situation, agreed instantly, and with a broad grin rushed off on the errand.

Jeffrey led his parents around back of the gymnasium, past the athletic field, paused to point out this and that landmark, and was thus enabled to prolong

an otherwise three-minute walk into nearly fifteen minutes.

"Dear me, it doesn't look nearly so comfortable as your room at Wythe," said Mrs. Collingsworth, "why, there aren't any curtains! You needed your mother." Then, as he threw off his gown,—“And your clothes need mending—just look at this frayed collar! And what does make you so thin? You don't look as if you'd had a good meal for ages. Do you get enough where you board?”

"Enough, but not as good as at home," he said, rather wistfully.

"It is singular that you don't have any books here," observed Mr. Collingsworth. Hughly, in his zealous anxiety, had done his work all too thoroughly.

"Books are expensive, and I do most of my reading at the library," Jeffrey explained.

"I think," said Mr. Collingsworth, after a long season of talk in which the recent history of the servants, horses and fields had been reviewed, "that, if you have no obligations for the evening, you would better come with us to the hotel and have a good steak dinner. You look as if you need it, sir."

Jeffrey suddenly remembered his engagement to speak at the Square.

"I shall be delighted to go, but—ah—I didn't expect you, and I shall—ah—have to leave you at seven thirty—an engagement with some of the fellows; I could be back again by nine, though. I'm awfully sorry.

That's to be expected at such a time," said his father graciously, "and we don't want to interfere with your plans. We'll be here several days. Come along and we will order an early dinner."

At the hotel another surprise was in store. They had gone up to the room to await the preparation of

the special dinner Mr. Collingsworth insisted upon ordering.

"Now," said that gentleman solemnly, "you are aware that I do not approve of what is called drinking, but I am not so low as to be a prohibitionist. I am not a crank, sir, and I thought it fitting on this auspicious occasion, to provide a little ceremony." So saying, he opened a great, black handbag and produced, carefully wrapped in folds of soft cloth, a tall black bottle. "This wine was bottled by your grandfather before the civil war. There is none better in this country." Digging further down, he brought forth a box, inside which, protected by cotton, were three glasses. "I came provided, you see, sir," and I propose to drink this in the privacy of this upper chamber, not in the spirit of conviviality, but of sacrament, to the permanent reunion of this little family." As they brought their glasses together it seemed that an inconvenient mist had gathered around the eyes of these three communicants, and the place seemed holy.

There was already gathered a throng of people around the square; people going in and out of soda fountains, restaurants and candy stores; people looking at the shop windows; lovers looking at nothing and seeing everything, and loafers looking at everything and seeing nothing. As near the center of the square as the railing would allow the socialists had placed a square box, above which, held by a narrow board nailed to its side, was a gasoline torch so arranged as to illuminate the speaker's face. Thomas was there with a huge armful of the *Appeal*, and Olsen was ready to sell an assortment of red-covered pamphlets. Gibbings was looking at his watch.

"It is time Comrade Collingsworth came," he an-

nounced uneasily. "I don't want to open the meeting without him."

"He will be here any minute, you can depend," answered Olsen. "I think we had better have Comrade Blackman begin to sing something."

Blackman had lately come into the Argyle Local from Little Rock where he had been a singing teacher. He had a tremendous voice, requiring ample room if it were not to be deafening; and he loved nothing better than to display his scales. He welcomed the opportunity and began a Socialist hymn to the tune of "There were Ninety and Nine." In addition to the thirty or forty comrades, the crowd began to draw near to discover what it was all about.

As he hastened down the street trying to recollect the outline of his speech, Jeffrey was thankful that six blocks intervened between the Puritan Hotel and the Public Square, and congratulated himself that he was safe.

"Damn it all! I can't be what I am sure he wants me to be, and I cannot share his beliefs; but O! it is good to know that he cares, and that I can go home sometimes and be friends again. Good old Dad, I'd have never dreamed it!" He skipped along with renewed courage.

There were probably two hundred people gathered around the torch by this time, and when, flushed by the hurry and excitement of the day, Jeffrey arrived at the impromptu stand, Gibbings was greatly relieved.

"Glad you are here, Comrade Collingsworth," he whispered in Jeffrey's ear,— "Congratulations on your success at college! Are you ready to begin when the song is done?"

"Yes,—I'm sorry I couldn't get away sooner," returned the speaker of the evening, coming close to his ear.

"I am going to introduce you first. I won't say but a few words," Gibbings replied.

But he had detected the fumes of wine on Jeffrey's breath, and, being a prohibitionist and a teetotaler, was greatly pained by the discovery. Sometime afterward he confided to one of the comrades that he greatly feared Collingsworth was going to the bad. "I don't think it wise to encourage drinking men to represent the movement," he said, with grave emphasis,—“It turns people away from the cause, and, besides, drinkers can't be trusted.”

The speech of introduction, as is apt to be the case, was much longer than "a few words;" it resolved itself into a pretty thorough history of the socialist movement.

When Jeffrey had gone Mr. Collingsworth paced the room, smoking his cigar with great satisfaction.

"Isn't it wonderful to have our boy again!" said his now radiant wife. "I do hope he can come home with us and spend the summer. I'm worried about his health. Do you think this climate is good for him?"

"I dare say it isn't. Not so good as in our Virginia valleys. But we'll see if he won't go with us. He may have already found some position and be obliged to stay, but he will know that he is welcome, at all events. And if he comes," he went on, breathing out his hopes in great clouds of fragrant smoke, "I will offer to send him to Charlottesville or Johns Hopkins for graduate work, or, if he is still set on the North, I will let him go to Princeton. He is of age now and his own master"—this a little sadly—"Perhaps he may want to settle on the farm, and if so I will turn most of it over to him. He could take a term at the V. P. I. and study scientific agriculture,—he wouldn't know anything about it otherwise. He likes science,

and agriculture is the only thing that science is fit for. But if he has other plans I won't hamper him. In any event I have planned to give him, as a graduation present and a birthday gift in honor of his coming of age, a check for ten thousand dollars."

"What!" exclaimed Mrs. Collingsworth, overjoyed by this unheard of generosity.

"Yes, madam, I'm going to do that very thing. I didn't say anything about it until I saw how things were up here. But when I saw the esteem in which our boy is held by the president of this college; when I found that he had, under unspeakable conditions, completed his education with honor, standing third in a class of twenty; and when I, on going to his room, discovered, instead of a lot of those infernal pamphlets which I feared to find, two good books, I made up my mind that he is worth my assistance."

"But I thought you said there weren't any books up there?" queried his wife.

"I found them on a chair, beneath a pillow, a circumstance that, in itself, was quite convincing. Just two books in that boy's room, and they were my father's copy of *Religio Medici* and a small Bible. I was never more pleased in my life.—But I want to walk around some until Jeffrey gets back. Let's go out, my dear, and look over the town a bit by night. It will do us both good."

But Mrs. Collingsworth was too worn out by the events of this glorious day to be in the spirit for a walk. She wanted to be alone for a while.

"I think I will lie down until Jeffrey returns. You go out and finish your cigar."

"It will be my third since dinner," chuckled her husband, reaching for his hat and cane.

He did not approve of these straight, mystery-killing streets, and yet tonight they provided excellent

avenues on which to spend an excess of exuberant energy. He twirled his cane like a young boy. The light of the streets was insufficient to dim the stars overhead, and the sight of familiar constellations but added to his satisfaction. Block after block he walked, amused by the most trifling circumstance. To a small boy, chasing a distracted alley cat, he gave a dime to forego this torturous pleasure, and paused long enough to ask his name.—

“Olaf Svenningsen,” responded the youngster, eyeing the gold-headed cane with suspicion.

“Spell it, please,” urged Mr. Collingsworth.

“I am thankful,” he said to himself as he walked on, “that we do not have these heathen names in the South, where we are still Americans.”

As he proceeded toward the center of the town the streets grew more populous. Now and then he turned aside to read the inscription in front of a building more or less vaguely resembling a church. He had passed a German Lutheran and a Swedish Methodist before he came to a plain American Presbyterian church: “Ah, this is better.” Then he saw on the bulletin board the name of the minister: Rev. Karl Gerenberg.

“Good Heavens! The country is over-run by foreigners,” he muttered.

Now he was on the Square. Just facing him was a small figure of Lincoln, done in bronze, and a little farther on was a curiously bizarre drinking fountain.

“The North and South would have been on better terms if Lincoln had lived,” he reflected, as though conscious of a sectional rapprochement.

His cigar had burned to a stub, and, seeing a red-fronted stand on the opposite side of the street, he crossed over. After filling his now empty case, he stood for a moment by the spluttering gas-lighter

and looked out benevolently upon the festive park. Made curious by the gathering on the other side, from which rose intermittently, above the confused sounds of the strollers, the voice of a street orator, he wended his way across, hesitating now to glance wonderingly at one of the three or four automobiles that were pertly thrust among the buggies and wagons against what was wont to be the hitching rail. He had seen a few of these new inventions in Richmond and Lynchburg, but they were, as yet, an unaccustomed sight. Against the rubber tire of one of these he tapped his walking stick contemptuously. "What could they do in southern clay?"

Proceeding through the center of the park, the walks of which were lined with well-filled benches, he came within range of the speaker's voice. The man's back was turned, and from his position the gasoline torch concealed his head.

"Is it the Salvation Army, or patent medicine?" he wondered. He had heard that the Army was a useful agency in charity, but in his work he had never encountered it save in brief visits to larger towns. He saw no uniforms here tonight, so he guessed the orator was extolling the virtues of some liniment. He glanced about him at the people who were listening; they were mostly foreigners,—Swedes, Germans, Italians,—and their clothes, while not ragged, proclaimed them on the level with "trash." The better dressed and more intelligent paused for a moment and then scornfully passed on. Mr. Collingsworth was on the point of following their example when the soap-boxer half turned, and in a now clear voice demanded—

"And why is it that you are betrayed by the teachers in your schools and the preachers in your churches? Do they raise their voices in your behalf in the time

of a strike when labor is threatened? Do they support you, the wage-slaves, or your masters, the capitalists? You know the answer to that; but why? Because the church which you call 'yours,' and the school which you call 'public' is dependent on the money of the employing-class, and the clergy and the teachers are co-slaves with you, and, like you, haven't the intelligence to see that their cause is one with yours. They are bought and paid for; the prostitutes of a criminal system of pernicious greed."

"Damnable!" ejaculated Mr. Collingsworth, but as he said it something about the speaker's voice awoke an appalling fear. He strode over a little nearer to where he could see the face of the blasphemer.

"God in Heaven!" he groaned, "Its my son!" And the world fell down about him with a crash. The heavens that before had been sprinkled with stars turned into a most malefic blackness. For a second he stood rigid, some rending power within well nigh compelling him to cry out his agony; then, turning about with an effort, he slunk away into the protecting shadows of the trees.

(2)

"That speech was a great success, Comrade Collingsworth," Olsen volunteered, when Jeffrey stepped off the box to the accompaniment of generous applause. "It is the best you have ever done, the spirit was with you, as the preachers say," Thomas contributed, smiling broadly. Muttering his thanks to these congratulatory comrades as they pressed forward, Jeffrey's eyes sought an opening through which he might escape to return to his waiting parents. He was conscious that he had spoken with a greater ability than ever before, and it made him happy to find just how well it had

been received; but it seemed, after all, a very secondary triumph after the rare miracle of the afternoon. "How good it is to be alive," he exclaimed as he ran along, fairly hugging himself in his ecstasy;—a college degree, won with distinction in the very presence of his dear mother who had come to him as though borne through the sky on a wishing rug; a new father, the like of whom he had never expected to see—a man concerning whom he had been compelled in the space of a few hours completely to reverse all his previous opinions; the gratitude of his comrades; a flattering position awaiting him in the great city of Chicago—O! it was like living in Arabian Nights! He ran, breathless, up the steps of the hotel. He must tell them how happy they had made him.

He found Mr. Collingsworth waiting in the lobby, seated near the door. He saw at a glance that something was wrong. His father looked immeasurably older than when they had parted; his face was white and drawn, and his clothes seemed to sag about him as he slouched down in the leathern chair.

"Whatever is the matter?" he began, "are you—?"

Mr. Collingsworth held up a remonstrating hand—"Nothing at all, sir. I am just a little weary—a little weary." Then with a strange, twisted smile. "But you, sir, have you been having a good time this evening?"

"Yes and no," answered Jeffrey, conscious that there was something back of what his father said,—“If it hadn't been keeping me away from you and mother, I should have enjoyed myself immensely. If I hadn't given my word, I wouldn't have gone, but now it's over, and I haven't anything else to keep me away I suppose you will want to go to the Baccalaureate tomorrow?"

"It makes no difference whatever to me, sir. I wish

you would see whether that little writing room back there is empty."

When they were alone, Mr. Collingsworth listlessly drew forth his morocco case, selected a cigar; then, after carefully cutting off the end, tossed it into a brass cuspidor.

"You see," he began, "I have been living this day in a fool's paradise. For several months, I have been building my hopes on the slender foundations of desire. I have been dreaming that you would turn away from certain follies, and become a gentleman"

"What do you mean, sir?"

"You will see in a moment, my son; I have the floor, and I shan't bother you again after Monday—"

"Why, what in the world?"

"Please let me continue. I know, and have known for some time, that I made a great mistake in bringing you up too strictly, and in not permitting you to have some contacts with the world before you went to college. I have heard of some of your escapades at Wythe, and I don't blame you, but myself. I came up here with your mother to ask your forgiveness, sir, for my blunders, and to see if there was a foundation upon which to build some degree of comradeship between us. Until you become a father you will not know what that longing is. This day I thought that I had realized even more than my wildest dreams, and I was all excited over it. then, I. foolishly," Mr. Collingsworth tried heroically to smile, "took a little walk, and stumbled over the abyss. . . . So I don't care now. I was angry at first and wanted to smash things; but there is your mother to think of—and I am tired of strife. I just made up my mind to tell you that I am interested in you, and love you as my son, but I think it is better that we continue to live in separate parts of the world. You won't fit

into my world. I mention it because I was on the eve of making a proposition that would have made your mother and me very happy; but that is all ended. Perhaps it is better for both of us. . . . What are you going to do for a living, now that you are through school?"

During this speech, Jeffrey had been made aware of intolerable agony. What a terrible ending to this beautiful day. He couldn't be angry at his father now. Not now. He was a different father from the one he had known as a small boy. He was no longer a fiery and belligerent tyrant, denouncing his son; he was a miserable, pitiable, shrunken old man, whose hopes had been utterly killed. And he was the murderer. Some evil thing was pressing white hot irons against his eyeballs; some giant hand was crushing his throat.

"Do you know what you are going to do for a living?" Mr. Collingsworth repeated.

With an effort, Jeffrey found his voice—

"I am going to Chicago. . . . to work. . . . on a magazine."

"What is the name of this magazine?"

"The *Flaming Future*."

"I never heard of it. What salary will you get?"

"Just my living." Jeffrey answered, now almost as indifferent to life as his parent.

"The *Flaming Future*, The *Flaming Future*," repeated Mr. Collingsworth, "something tells me that a magazine with that name won't last very long. When had you planned to take up this work—to go to Chicago?"

"I was going Tuesday, but now that."

"That suits me exactly, sir. I will use that as a plausible excuse for our returning home. I will tell your mother that you are obliged to get on to your work." He rose wearily. "We will have to go up to

the room where your mother expects us. I shall say nothing to her of what has happened—not now. There is no use destroying her happiness. . . . And, while we are about it, I want to offer you a little graduation present, that may help to meet some of your expenses.”

Drawing out a wallet, Mr. Collingsworth thoughtfully extracted three bills; two hundreds, and one fifty.

“I’d rather not, under the circumstances,” Jeffrey objected.

“We haven’t quarrelled, remember,” suggested his father, “and let’s don’t fuss over the little things. We’ve both hurt each other, and there’s an end of it,” stuffing the money in his son’s pocket.

“I wish you didn’t hate the Socialists so much; if you just understood.”

“I don’t hate Socialists, sir; I don’t even know them. But did you ever see me happy among Hard-shell Baptists, or Methodists? No, sir, what I can’t understand is that a man who has been reared a gentleman should ever lower himself to the level of white trash. Let’s go up to your mother, sir.”

XXVI.

(1)

AT BEST, when one is in a particularly cheerful and anticipatory mood, the approach to Chicago is a little depressing. To a fastidious nose, it must seem that the metropolis of the Middle West has released all of the disagreeable smells in the world. Entering by the southwest side of the city, one passes near the stockyards, over the old, scum-covered canal that must ever recall Henley's line about the "Rich deliquium of decay," and through a black fog of soot and smoke which drapes itself about the place as a very mantle of evil. The train carries one over a wilderness of dirt, from which arises the stench of mortification and the clanging sounds that betoken business. Mile after mile of blackened brick cottages, then more miles of tall apartment houses against whose mortar-splashed backs are drab gray balconies, connected by zig-zag stairways, from which, across little back gardens, run criss-cross clothes-lines, flapping with their grotesque burdens of half washed undergarments—of such is the scenery of Chicago when it is viewed from the window of a passing car.

Jeffrey found the journey tasteless and miserable. He tried to face the future with hopeful eyes, and to fancy the pleasant greetings of a new fellowship, the possibilities of a career; but somehow he failed. Outside, as he sped along, the fields were flat, and with all their pleasant greenery, bore no message to his heart. He saw them not. Instead he was thinking of another journey on another train—southbound.

He had secured folders the day before when he had bade good-bye to his father and mother at Argyle, and with many a heartache he followed their own sad way, station by station. They would be at St. Louis now, and now they were nearing Nashville. He could see them as they would pass Wythe on the day following, and when they arrived at the Oldbern way-station Tom would be there to meet them with the surrey. They would avoid passing through Oldbern, and would drive back over wooded hills to the farm, bitterly conscious of the futility of their hopes, and resigned to the long days of autumnal loneliness. Life seemed a blind thing, devoid of meaning. He had gone his way, keenly regretting his mother and listlessly hating his father. Then, in a flash, a joyous revelation had come; he had seen his father in a new light, and, then, just as they had reached across the void to join hands, he had spoiled it all. He would have never done the thing deliberately, he told himself by way of comfort; it just happened. Now he was sadder than ever before, but there was no bitterness—just hurt.

His father had seemed to wither, and his mother, while she had not actually been told the reason for their thinly veiled distress, divined it and suffered also. Of course it was something to have seen them even for a few days; it was good to have felt the blind hatred of the years fall away; good to know that his father loved him, was interested in him, and that now he could and would write to him; but to have disappointed him in such a fashion and at such a moment was too cruel,—it was fiendish. What made it worse was the fact that Mr. Collingsworth had now practically nothing to do. The plantation was large, but with the passing of the years there had been established a routine thoroughly understood and carried

out by the darkies, so that the owner was practically a figure head. The church at Oldbern had now called a young minister. Jeffrey added his father's resignation to the sum of his own misdeeds. Mr. Collingsworth had nothing left for his daily occupation but the perfunctory drive around the farm each morning, an occasional trip to Oldbern, and, perhaps, the solving of some problem in chess, as he sat alone by the fireplace of the study. For the rest, he would spend his days in regret, and, in the evening, the burden of his conversations with his wife would be their mistakes and their sorrow. It was a waste of life, Jeffrey saw; and he felt, just now, all too much to blame. Dreaming himself, he had spoiled the dreams of others. Perhaps he could induce his parents, for their spirits' sake, to take the Geneva-Jerusalem pilgrimage, of which he so often had heard them speak. He almost smiled when he thought of this. He would write to them about it.

Coincident with this thought of Jerusalem came the first blast of the smells of Chicago. He looked out and saw that they had reached the city. Ignorant of the time that must intervene before they should bring up at the Dearborn St. Station, and with characteristic American impatience, he got up to get his things from the rack overhead.

"It will be most an hour before we reach the station," came in a musically mirthful voice from across the aisle.

Jeffrey turned in some bewilderment, not having been aware before that there were any fellow passengers. What he saw was a pair of dancing brown eyes looking out of a face of peach blossoms. Just now the face was smiling, and the full red lips were parted enough to reveal an even row of white teeth.

"Oh, thank you! I thought we were there, by— . . .

by . . . er . . . the smell of things," he hazarded, resuming his seat.

"Then this is your first trip to Chicago? I guessed as much, or I shouldn't have spoken. But I couldn't resist it, when I saw how definitely you were preparing to depart."—This time a more generous smile betrayed a dimple.

"It was good of you to tell me. Ah—pardon me, but do you live here?" Then, fearing that he had presumed too much by the question—"for if you do, I feel that I ought to apologize for mentioning the smells."

"Not at all," she laughed, "if you stay here long, you will come not to mind even the stock yards. I love it, with all the noise and dirt. I left Oberlin last year and have been studying here at the University ever since. You are just out of college, aren't you?"—This with a glance at the pin on the lapel of his coat.

"A three day's graduate, taking my first position, but I rather wish I were going on to the University for work with Vincent and Small."

"They're very good. I had some work with Small last year—studying the settlements and the like," replied the young woman, picking up, with a gesture of dismissal, the magazine which she had been reading.

Accepting this wordless suggestion, Jeffrey endeavored to turn his attention to the backs of apartments and the heaps of scrap-iron, but without overwhelming success. He could not, for the life of him, keep decently away from the corner of his eye. Now the corner of one's eye is a dangerous place to lurk, and to form the habit of hiding there is downright impropriety. Yet, on occasion, the most scrupulous of persons will find it an irresistibly attractive angle of outlook upon things at which it would be highly improper to stare. Indeed, the muscular structure of a

rebellious and over-curious eye makes it oft times impossible of righteous control. If this were not so, plain living and high thinking would not be held at so great a premium. What one chances to see as the result of this physical inevitability—one chances to see. Thus, for example, Jeffrey could not avoid noticing a very well turned ankle encased in a silken fabric which in no whit detracted from the limb it was designed to shield—or show; and again his glance was entangled for a moment in some flying strands of rich brown hair, strayed from beneath a broad-brimmed hat. Apart from its coloring, the face, he decided from these stolen observations, was not unusual, feature by feature; yet the ensemble was somehow very reassuring; a face that could be trusted, one that spoke of health, kindness, humor, intelligence, and, withal, purpose. He began once more to be glad that he was going to live in Chicago; already he had begun to like it. His heart sank a little when he thought of the bigness of the place and how impossible it might be to meet again this calm young woman whose voice had, by some magic, dispelled his weight of misery. A commonplace remark, and lo, his fretting conscience had scampered away and tucked itself quite comfortably to bed. He wished that he might hear this music once again, but she had, with obvious finality, brought their brief interview to an end.

It was not until the train was drawing into the depot, and the passengers had begun to crowd into the aisle, that he summoned courage for another speech:

“I beg pardon, but if I should fail to be met by some friends I am expecting in the station, would you mind telling me how to get to 64 Preston Road, Rogers Park?”

“Certainly,” came the reply, but this time without

an engaging smile, "when you go out of the station, you will find yourself facing north on Dearborn Street. Walk two blocks straight ahead until you come to the "L" stairway; take the Northwestern entrance and get on an Evanston train. At Rogers Park you will have no trouble finding your address." Then with a nod of her pretty head she picked up a satchel and stepped into the aisle. Jeffrey noted that the three initials stamped on the end of the handbag were H. B. S.

"Good Lord, what efficiency!" he thought, as he thanked her. But it was not without a pang of regret that he lost sight of her as the crowd passed through the gate.

(2)

Tucker had promised to meet him at the cigar counter in the waiting room where he would be standing with a copy of the *Flaming Future* in his hand. After a moment of bewilderment, he found the place, and the man—a great broad-shouldered giant, who looked more the part of a wrestler than that of an editor, and who was made conspicuous by wearing white flannel trousers, a white silk shirt, a white Windsor tie, sandals instead of shoes, and neither coat nor hat. He stood by the cigar stand like a colossal whitewashed statue, and across his breast he was holding, so that all who ran might read, a vividly colored copy of his magazine. Jeffrey was embarrassed when he asked—"Is this Mr. Bertram Tucker?" and more than embarrassed when, at the question, the great figure sprang suddenly into life, and leaped forward with a jubilant roar of—

"Welcome to Chicago, Jeff! My, but I am glad to meet you!" and he emphasized his gladness by a paralyzing handclasp. It was like being met by a uni-

formed band with loud trombones, and as the two walked up Dearborn Street, Tucker with his arm about Jeffrey's shoulder, the young man was aware that he was not doomed to obscurity.

Up the roaring canon of Dearborn Street they walked, Jeffrey scarcely able to hear a word that his companion uttered; burned one minute by the glare of the sun as it beat up from the pavements, frozen the next as they came to a cross street swept by the frigid breezes from off the lake. At Van Buren Street, to the clang of the surface cars and the rumble of wagons and vans, was added the more heaven-shattering noise of the elevated, punctuated by shrill blasts from a traffic whistle, so that Jeffrey came to be grateful for the strong arm that guided him safely through the maze.

By the time they had reached Rogers Park he decided that Tucker was such an altogether lovable and genuine person that, despite his eccentric appearance, he was going to like him. Already he knew, in outline, the man's curious history—Tucker never kept anything hid. He had been born in Missouri, had invented a type-setting machine of some sort, while working in his father's printing office, and had made enough money to gratify a youthful ambition to travel. In South America he had been lucky enough to invest in a mining scheme that brought profits a thousand fold, so that at twenty-five he had returned, with a notion of reforming the land of his birth. To this end he had entered Argyle College, but had felt, after two years, that his time was being wasted, and had come to Chicago, where, for five years, he had been the head of the Flaming Futurists. He had spent over a hundred thousand on the venture, and, aside from what he termed the spiritual satisfactions, had made no returns.

The Flaming Future Center was just three blocks from the lake, and was housed in a four-storied brick flat with a grey stone front. Jutting bay windows stood out on each side, and between them, on the first floor, was the entrance. In the rear, occupying most of the space intended for a back yard, was a low shed-like building in which were the editorial rooms and the printing shop.

Jeffrey was to share Bertram Tucker's room on the top floor, and as they went along the dark corridors and up the stairs Tucker kept calling out warnings,—“Don't stumble over that parrot cage,” and, “Watch out for that saucer! Ida will feed her cat in the hall.” The place was all a-clutter with pans and cups and vases and brooms; he even tripped over a type-writer that had been crowded into the hall, and, on the fourth floor, Tucker unwittingly brought down his two-hundred pounds upon a luckless puppy's tail, and caused a great ado. Forth from her room, hair done up in papers, and clad in a faded blue kimono, came the owner.

“Oh, Bert, what have you done to poor Max Stirner?” she cried seizing the frenzied puppy in her arms. “Did the bad man step on ums tail?—You must be more careful.”

“I'm sorry 'Gusta, but Max Stirner ought to be more of a philosopher than to howl when his tail is mashed, and, besides, he should take better care of the 'ego and its own.' I suppose the tail is part of the ego. But here, meet Jeffrey Collingsworth. This is Augusta Graham, author of the 'Life Serene' articles.” Collingsworth noticed that the bony hand she extended was stained with ink—it looked like a fragment of old vellum manuscript.

“Pleased to meet you, Jeffrey Collingsworth,” was her greeting. “I hope you'll like it here at the Center,

and if you are going to room on this floor please don't step on Max."

"It is so dark that he couldn't see the dog, Miss—"

"Leave off the handle, please, we don't use Mr., Miss, or Mrs., here at the Center; its a barbaric usage smacking of serfdom and snobbery. I'm just plain Augusta."

"That is very nice and informal," Collingsworth conceded, "But as I was going to say, Tucker didn't mean to step on the puppy."

"Oh, if you live here long enough you will find that Bert never means to hurt anything; he's just blind, that's all. When you get settled come in and have a chat,"—and she turned away, soothing the injured feelings of Max Stirner.

The room Jeffrey was supposed to share was in a singular state of disarray, books and magazines, liberally sprinkled with dust, lay all about the floor and on the two folding cots, intermingled with used towels and brushes and stubs of discarded pencils. Two enormous iron dumb-bells lay on the cot that he was to occupy, while just above, on the wall, hung an elaborate chart, which Tucker described as the chart of interrelated universal principles, by the use of which instrument clear thinking was inevitable.

"I'm a poor housekeeper," Tucker apologized, seeing Jeffrey's hesitation. "I have to do everything here; most of the folks in our colony spend their time writing, and won't turn a hand to anything else,—but it can't be helped; its the result of the leisure class system. Put your things in this closet for the present till I clean out that bureau. Here's the bathroom, and when you are ready we'll go down to the kitchen. I expect you're hungry."

The combined kitchen and dining room—if such a place could be called a dining room—of the Futurists

was in the basement. As they entered there was a high stack of paper plates on a shelf near the door—there must have been more than a thousand—and in a rough box nearby was a miscellaneous assortment of tin spoons and somewhat blackened forks. Against the wall were barrels of fruit, bunches of over-ripe bananas, and great cases of dried prunes, raisins and nuts. In the center was a long, rough, uncovered table, and just beyond a vast stove such as one might see in a hotel. On this was an aluminum kettle with a capacity of apparently ten gallons. Tucker picked out from another case two paper napkins, and one of these, together with plate, spoon and fork he handed to Jeffrey.

“You seem to have everything here in wholesale quantities; you could feed a small army,” Collingsworth remarked, amazed by the abundance.

“We buy everything wholesale, and keep it here handy, so that the folks can eat when Nature demands. Having regular hours is a superstition far more evil in its effects than going to church, or living under capitalism, a fact which the socialists and freethinkers seem to overlook. Next to corset wearing it is the most wasteful and evil of abuses. People talk of being emancipated when they have merely found out that Jonah was not swallowed by the whale, or because they have learned that the capitalist is stealing their wealth.—But here we are teaching by precept and example the complete emancipation in food, sex, religion, science, philosophy, clothes, medicine, housing, morals, art and education, and the result is that all the so-called radicals have it in for us; for they all want to cling to some pet superstition, like wearing a hat or shoes, eating meat, drinking a glass of beer, or smoking a cigar. What we want is to become completely rational in every detail of life. We live under

a two per cent efficiency; we must learn to live at one hundred per cent. Now take the question of food. Here we have worked out a perfectly scientific system of diet,—let me show you; just follow me with your plate.”

They began to walk about the room, collecting from bin and basket, an Irish potato, two carrots, a stalk of celery, a turnip, a handful of dusty raisins and still dustier prunes, and, finally, a dozen or more English walnuts and an apple.

“Now this is an almost perfect ration just as it is,” Tucker expounded, “carbo-hydrates, proteids, and a dash of mineral salts, but to make it richer and more palatable we have another mixture ready prepared and cooked,”—leading the way to the stove and removing the lid of the kettle,—“In here we put each morning, after all have had their breakfast porridge of cooked oats and barley, a combination of beans, peas, potatoes, spinach or whatever vegetables are in season, and boil them in plain water, adding only a little butter or a few drops of olive oil, and, as a concession to long established habits of taste, a tiny pinch of salt. So we get a combination of cooked and raw food with exactly the right proportion of proteids and fats to make for the highest mental and physical excellence.”

Inside the kettle was a wooden ladle with which the food scientist proceeded to fill one of a number of small metal soup plates.

“You will like this I am sure. It may seem a bit strange at first, but you will come to have a real appreciation of natural food after a time, and will find your health greatly improved. You need more muscle. How much do you weigh?”

“Almost a hundred and fifty pounds,” Jeffrey re-

plied, wondering whether he could swallow this appalling mixture.

“And you are about six feet tall?”

“Six feet one.”

“Then you should weigh a hundred and seventy-five pounds. See here—” rolling back his sleeve and exhibiting enormous biceps—“I’ve developed that and a proportionate muscularity all over my body by the use of this diet and proper exercise—natural exercise—and you must do the same.”

“How am I to eat this potato and these carrots?” asked Jeffrey, who was, in his state of hunger, beginning to find that the cooked mixture was at least possible, but who had not the courage to take the next step.

“Just peel and eat them raw, as you would an apple; you get the real flavor and the entire value that way.”

But Jeffrey declared, when he had finished the bowl of cooked vegetables, that he was quite satisfied, and that he would content himself with a few nuts and an apple for dessert.

When they had done, the paper plates were thrown into a trash box, the bowl and spoon subjected to a momentary shower beneath the faucet, and the kitchen was declared in order.

Then Tucker led him to the printing shop and office. On the way they crossed a small court where, the editor explained, the Futurists held occasional conferences with friends of the group and held continence meetings.

“What are continence meetings?” Collingsworth was prompted to ask.

“Meetings to subdue sex curiosity and to teach us how to control our instincts; but we will come to that later. Here is our printing plant.”

In this room was the first semblance of nicety that

Collingsworth had seen about the Center; the Hoe press was polished until it radiated the very spirit of light, and the type cases seemed to lend themselves to Tucker's system of interrelation far better than the bedrooms had done. At a linotype machine in the corner sat a stout little man with black sleevelets and warty nose whom Tucker presently introduced as Ernest Avery, managing editor, linotypist and proof reader for the *Flaming Future*. Avery lived in a past in which he had known Eugene Field, and for a future in which, without interruption, he could talk single-tax. Fortunately he was subject to severe attacks of asthma during which, unable to speak, he would work furiously. A confirmed bachelor, he was now enthusiastically setting up an article on *The Psychic Factors in Pre-natal Influence*. After whispering a few words of greeting without leaving his seat, he resumed his task at the machine. In the rear a very red-nosed old man was repairing a hand press.

"One of our printers," Tucker explained. "We have no regular printers—can't afford them—but when the magazine is ready I go down to the police courts and pay the fine of some travelling printer who has been up for 'drunk and disorderly,' and bring him out to work off his indebtedness. They are glad to get the good food and lodging, and are grateful for the service. While they are here I give them a bit of my philosophy, and they become travelling missionaries for Futurism. It's a great system."

"Do they reform?"

"I don't know, none of them ever come back."

Jeffrey thought of the food and wondered.

In the editorial rooms—two dusty and littered dens, separated by a glass door—, stacked with exchange magazines, innumerable books, pamphlets for review, manuscripts and paste pots, were, besides

these, or in spite of them, and partly buried beneath them, roll-top desks and several battered typewriters. Before the most likely of these, in Tucker's particular den, sat a woman of doubtful age, thoughtfully engaged in picking out the letters on the keyboard. Had one not seen her roll of bright red hair and the semi-feminine apparel one might have fancied this grim person an ex-welterweight boxer of some standing. There was a masterfulness about the set jaw, accentuated by a severe stiff collar, that suggested no foolishness. Lips tightly compressed and with hard wrinkles at the corners, two deep lines between the half closed grey-green eyes, and nostrils expanded like those of an excited stallion,—all gave evidence of a most determined nature.

"Ida Lamb," Tucker introduced, "here's Jeffrey Collingsworth, all ready and itching to begin work with us."

"Put it there, Collingsworth," shouted Miss Lamb, rising to her feet and extending a muscular hand. Then, surveying him critically from head to foot as if half doubtful of his somewhat conventional attire, "How do you think you'll like getting into the thick of our fight? It's not fighting on paper up here, eh, Tucker?"

As she rose Jeffrey saw her skirt was divided and that her shoes were flat-heeled, reminding him of the brogans worn by the mountain whites in Virginia.

"I don't know just the nature of the fight you mean. I had supposed that you had things pretty much your own way up here," he replied, uncertainty in his tone, "but I suppose I will have to be tried like everyone."

"Ida is our feminist writer and used to be in the suffrage campaigns, until she began to get too liberal for the old war horses," said Tucker, coming to the

rescue. "Have you finished that article on *The New Motherhood*, Ida?"

"Nope, I'm stuck on the conclusion, but I can tear it off tonight, I guess. Been trying my hand at a poem on the white slavery traffic."

"Lord have mercy!" groaned the editor, "you'll be ruined yet, Ida. You'd better stick to prose."

"Do you know," he said when they had gone out, "I have been forced to do most of the work at this place on account of the poetry fever. I have had scores of people come to work at typewriting, stenography, housekeeping, ad soliciting and what not, all claiming to be eager to get the chance to do something for the cause; but after they are here for a while all they want to do is write sonnets. I've had to pay the fare of some of these people to get them here, support them while they lived here, and then, when I have asked them to do something, they have been insulted and left. People have advised me to compel an investment on the part of those who come to the Center to live, but that is not a part of my idea—it spoils it. I want to give of what chance has given to me, and something more. I'm not trying to make money, but to spread ideas."

"Why don't you draw up contracts for your colonists?" Jeffrey inquired.

"No, I'm afraid that would kill the spirit of the thing. It is discouraging sometimes, but it is better to have been kind to a hundred bums than to have hurt anyone. After all why should I blame anybody? People are what heredity and environment have made them, and heretofore both these forces have been unregulated and blind; society has been stupid, and disease and law and jails and bums and criminals are the result. It is for us to teach, and not get angry or impatient. We get perfect returns in this world, and

the police court is the interest society draws on its previous investments; war is another return. The Futurists aim to work out a great synthesis of the sciences whereby the returns shall be perfect human beings, and we must start here."

"But your money won't hold out forever."

"True, I've only about fifty thousand left, and the magazine just pays for itself—and there's taxes and food. . . . The outside voluntary contributions amount to about twenty dollars a month."

"Well, what do you want me to do?" demanded Jeffrey. "I don't intend to be a parasite."

"After next month I want you to run the magazine while I go out and try to get help. I will devote some time to working out my system of synthesis, and that will make about four pages a month on the magazine; I will take care of the colony-food and supplies. The rest of the time I will be in the field, lecturing. You will find over a thousand manuscripts that ought to be looked after, and will get more every mail. Many of these should be revised before we print them. What time you have left you can give to reviews and editorials."

"I'll try it," Jeffrey agreed, "but meanwhile, if you don't mind, I'll clean the place up a bit. I have a little money, and if I can hire someone to help I can straighten out some of the confusion."

"You mean the shop?"

"I mean everything."

"God love you, you are the very one I want here. You are the first person, aside from myself, who has ever suggested cleaning up, and I'm too busy to try any more; but don't offend any of the folks."

In some things Tucker had the sophistication of a trained business man; as an inventor and mechanic he was a near-genius, but as a judge of human nature

he was as simple as an adolescent collie; as a thinker he was as incoherent as a line of modern verse; at heart he was a child, ingenuous, gullible, full of illusions. With all his physical strength he never resented an injury nor an insult. He never lusted after women—being no more able to think an impure thought than to express a logical one—, but because his language was bare of conventional restraint and his sense of fitness yet unborn, he bore the reputation of a modern Casanova. Mothers pointed him out to their little girls as the priapic incarnation of the Antichrist. And all the misunderstood women of the Middle West, as soon as they heard of him, came to offer their services as—secretaries. They asked for stones, and he gave them bread,—such as it was—and they went away, indignant at his abstraction, to join the multitude of those who despised him. Among the radical leaders of Chicago he was the least clear, the most unpopular, and one of the most sincere.

Jeffrey felt that he could trust Tucker—he had no doubt concerning the fairness of the man; but the institution—what a mess! He welcomed, however, the overwhelming nature of the task he had been set, and felt that, in spite of everything, there might be a something big made out the magazine. He would, after the place was cleaned and fit for work, reject a lot of the nonsense—poetry and occult mishmash that had heretofore been allowed,—whip things about into some sort of a logical and consistent policy, and try to wed style, or at least grammar, to iconoclasm. When Tucker was out of the way, he would be severe, and discontinue the publication of the silly personal letters of people who wrote:

“At the age of fourteen, my father, who had always believed the Bible and gone to church, lost his corn crop in a hail storm; and that same summer a neigh-

boring deacon was caught stealing chickens. Since then I have known that there is no God." or:

"The *Flaming Future* is Just Grand! All hail the Dawn!"

He wanted to make a magazine that he would not be ashamed to send to his friends; to Rice, for instance, or—H. S. B. He wondered where she lived; would he ever see her again? She had said that she had studied at the University the year before. A catalogue might tell,—still, that handbag might be her mother's. He would get a catalogue—besides, he wanted to look about the University grounds anyway. It must be an interesting place. He recalled the soft, white flesh of her neck. That last glimpse at the station added to the desirability of taking a graduate course. And yet, he pondered, she was probably a fool, or at least an uncomfortable and disappointing person. That seemed to be the way the world had with him—it turned his dreams to sorry jests, making, where he expected an Emerson, a garbage man; where he hoped to find the Utopian Abbey of Theleme, a stable of puppies and parrots. And he was beginning, ever so slightly, to distrust his desires and to be afraid. Scepticism comes very tardily to those who profess doubt; and to those who need it most, a sense of humor is often withheld until after a season of bitter tears.

XXVII

ON the following Sunday morning there was an informal meeting of a number of Futurists in the court. Jeffrey had already encountered a few of them during the days of his house-cleaning, when, with Ivan Somebody-or-other, a friend of a neighboring janitor, he had endeavored to clear the hall of impedimenta. There had been some lusty protests at first, but finally, when Jeffrey had made snug beds on the back balconies for the puppies and cats, and provided hangings for some bird-cages, peace had been restored, and even Augusta Graham had agreed that the place was more habitable. But now he was to know Lydia Moreton, an olive-skinned and be-spectacled little creature who wrote tirades against vaccination and talked of the solar plexus, Hatha Yogi, and spent hours in the practice of concentration by gazing at a piece of cardboard; Estelle Beaver, fat and fifty, who collected stray cats, arrested cruel drivers in the streets and was secretary to an anti-vivisection society; and Jacob Stein, a very hooked-nosed anarchist, who suffered from severe astigmatism and bad adenoids, and carried about a soiled copy of Bakunin. All in all, Tucker was the only healthy and thoroughly genial person in the group.

The day being very warm, and the shelter of the surrounding buildings sufficient to protect them from the breeze off the lake, they lounged about in thin attire, having selected, apparently, the first thing that came to hand in getting out of bed. The outsiders who dropped in during the morning, were, to say the least, more completely clothed.

Some of the resident colonists were away, only using the rooms at the Center when there was nothing of interest or profit outside. Tucker's was a convenient storage house for their things, and, besides, they needed, on occasion, the free board which they received in return for an ode, an essay or an approving smile.

Tucker explained his coming campaign for more funds; the colony must be endowed with a million dollars.

The statement was greeted with heartfelt applause, and everyone began with enthusiasm to explain just how to spend the money. "Wouldn't it be glorious!" "a large sun-parlor and lecture hall where we could all give lectures" "Oh! and I could give my course on *Our Dumb Animals*, it's so unsatisfactory in this court; there's no room for an audience, and the theatres down-town are too expensive." "And we could build nice kennels."

Then, inevitably, they got around to sex. Tucker didn't care much for sex talk, save when some measure was being proposed to sublimate the force to higher ends, or when his hobby of continence through familiarity was being aired, but he tolerated everything. He even tolerated Jeffrey's pipe.—

"You can poison yourself if you wish, eat meat, drink coffee, tea, whiskey, smoke, do as you will; they are not provided in our cellars, but if you must have them, go ahead. I hate to see a half-rationalist kill himself, that's all."

The sex conference was, for all the enthusiasm of the talkers, a highly theoretical and very un-animal affair. These people spoke of sex as though it were something out of a book. They had, Jeffrey felt, no capacity for anything else. They were curious about it, passionately fond of talking about it in the baldest

fashion, but not, with one or two exceptions, anxious to experience it.

Jacob Stein announced that Maria Encolpitis, the great champion of free love, would speak that evening at Masonic Temple, and invited everyone who wished to hear her to accompany him.

"The same old stuff; we know that crowd; nothing new," they agreed. But Jeffrey, while he did not wish to accompany Stein, wanted to hear the widely heralded orator of the free love movement. She had been quoted by Aaron Philo, and probably, being a leader, had an interesting personality. Not knowing how to get about the city alone he accepted the invitation.

They got off the elevated at Randolph Street, and on the way over to the Temple passed the lighted windows of a café. The sight of real food made Jeffrey hungry, and he decided, with a guilty feeling of disloyalty, that he would sometimes sneak away and enjoy a more palatable meal than Futurism afforded.

Up, up, up, past the tenth and the fifteenth floors to the very top went the elevator. What a world this modern man, the mechanical ant, has created for himself!—thought Jeffrey, made dizzy by the unaccustomed levitation.

The hall was packed and they were compelled to take seats in the very back row of chairs. Foreigners all about him, Russian Jews, German Jews, Poles, Italians, Greeks, Mexicans, Hungarians, there was scarcely a face of the type he was used to see. The air was stifling, and saturated with the odors of sweat and of soiled feet. Surely there is something evil about the toil of cities, he thought, in that the sweat of men who work therein is vile and acrid, whereas the sweat of those who glean the fields is sweet. He had heretofore reckoned the sweat of men a pleasant thing,

. and Nell. Ugh! Walt Whitman had never been present at such a gathering as this, or he had not written a line like that in *Leaves of Grass*.

A queer, bald-headed little man introduced the speaker, and announced the sale of books on sex. He had a voice not unlike that of a news vender on the local trains. Maria Encolpitis, he boasted, had served three terms in jail for her loyalty to the cause. The applause that followed was mingled with hisses and cries of "shame." He took peculiar pleasure (Jeffrey wondered why these introductions invariably gave rise to peculiar pleasure) in presenting Maria Encolpitis, lately of Philadelphia, but now of this world. "Her subject this evening is: A Woman's Right to Choose the Father of her Child."

Maria was a rotund Amazon with yellow hair and thick lips. Her sleeves were short and she had a way of holding her chubby right hand so as to reveal a glittering bracelet encircling the wrist. It seemed a miniature log chain. After relating some of her bitter experiences, she began to describe the slavery of conventional matrimony and the incivilities of the marriage bed. She regarded the asking of sex favors as no more improper than a request to pass the biscuits. Men had looked upon this initiative as their preordained privilege, but it was no more their right than that of women. In fact the woman should decide and take the first step, since hers was the responsibility. A great Chicagoan had likened marriage to a restaurant,—the other man's order always looked better than one's own. Therefore there should be no marriage. Followed then some stories illustrative of the superior passion-hunger of women. The audience, chiefly made up of young people, leaned forward with eyes aglow and mouths open. One or two old men moistened

their lips in half regretful reminiscence. Here and there some one would giggle.

Jeffrey was disgusted,—with both audience and speaker. There was some logic in what had been said, but it was without scientific background or philosophic outlook. Most of all it was ugly—sordid. And the people were like goats. No, goats were natural, and required no lecture for their license. He suspected that the basis for this particular manifestation of revolt arose from temperament, desire, not thought. If he were to retain his respect for the idea he must get away from these filthy exponents. He whispered to Stein that he was ill,—it was too close; he must get out. Stein merely nodded, being drunk with ecstasy at the fount of understanding. Jeffrey quietly, but quickly left the room.

The cold air outside was good to breathe, and he faced the strong east wind, grateful for its tonic power. The people in the streets were full of gaiety and seemed, every one, to be rushing toward some goal of delight. The contagion of haste caught him up and he went along, heedless of direction, toward the lake; then, turning south, found himself presently before the Art Institute, whose couchant lions looked out impassively over the multitude. Electric signboards flashed their defiant messages of rubber tires and eye-tonic back and forth over that temple of culture, in colors of red and green, while on the broad black avenue a procession of motor cars seemed to be whispering files of twin meteors. The lights, the air, the comparative cleanliness of the boulevard drove out the feeling of disgust, and conscious once more of hunger, he retraced his steps and entered the café that he had seen earlier in the evening.

“No,” commented Tucker on the day following, after Jeffrey had told of his experience, “I don’t blame

you for leaving. Those people have no balance; they can't look at things objectively, dispassionately. They injure the cause they profess. But they are genuine; they are not hypocrites such as you will find among more respectable companies; and that ought to count for something."

"I am beginning to think that sincerity is not everything," said Jeffrey—"Cleanliness and taste make up a big nine-tenths of morality."

"Don't drag in morality unless you are prepared to say what is and what is not moral. Morality is, as somebody has said, a matter of the time, the place and the girl. You have to consider the climate, the race mixtures, the heredity, the economic and social environments and the particular psychology and circumstances of every separate case. And since you have mentioned it, the word morality has only one popular significance here in America, and that is sex ethics. No one thinks of laziness or indifference or hate or graft as immoral. If I should call the President of a corporation immoral I would be arrested for libel, and requested to fetch the woman in the case. And—don't interrupt me—these poor devils you despise are not half as dirty in their minds as a lot of preachers. I know, of a certainty, no less than twenty preachers of various respectable pulpits in this city, who take their mistresses to houses of assignation, and then condemn us radicals for talking of sex. I don't blame them for what they do, but what they say....."

"Neither do I blame the Encolpitis disciples," answered Jeffrey "but I think they might talk a little more decently. They need some education and a bath. And as for the preachers, I think a girl would do them good....."

"Hey there, you damned pup!" shouted Avery from the press room, and the next minute, accompanied by

the ki-yis of a soundly kicked puppy, he rushed into Tucker's office holding out a badly mangled manuscript—

“Look what ‘Gusta’ damned Max Stirner has done; he’s nearly eaten up that article on ‘The Higher Sterilization!’”

XXVIII

THE summer passed rapidly and brought a multitude of experiences. The work of sorting and revising manuscripts, answering indignant protests from rejected authors, writing paragraphs to fill an empty space here and there, reviewing books, and securing tramp printers kept Collingsworth reasonably busy. But he found time to get acquainted with some of the city's show places, Lincoln Park, the Art Institute, the Newberry Library and Field Museum. This last was to him a wonderland,—first because therein he saw the fossil evidences of an exfoliating world; hints that had been left behind by passing Life to induce her lovers to seek out her primitive hiding places, or, perchance, to lure them back into her ancient and baffling haunts, while she, the mocking jade, having discarded her outworn garments, marched on ahead. But he came, more and more, to enjoy, rather, those remnants of past civilizations from Alexandria, and Pompeii, and Athens, and from the banks of the sacred rivers of India. He had read of them in books, but to see them—things of delicate beauty and pervasive charm, implements of the chase, hand wrought silver and gold, bronze and ivory, done for the fancy of a queen or the idle moments of an emperor—gave him a curious sense of the futility of striving after progress. Even the utilities were as well attended to in the civilizations before Christ as in our own day—yes, the sanitation, the sewage systems that we boast of now, must humble themselves to Cnossus in ancient Crete. These things gave him a feeling of uncertainty;

for the religion of the emancipated is Humanity and their God is Progress. What if it should turn out that there is no progress? All in all he found the museum a place well fitted to beget scepticism, and he sought solace, after these visits, at the concerts in Ravinia Park among the woods of the North Shore, where were gathered people never fretted by doubt.

The red card suggested another venture. The Argyle Socialists had told him to be sure to visit the National Headquarters:—"There are some grand men there, Comrade," Thomas had said, and Jeffrey hoped that there were. This pilgrimage took him just west of the Loop into a shabby section of the down town neighborhood where the odors of imprisoned poultry and perishable fruits from Water Street were borne along by a vagrant breeze. "Same old thing," he said to himself as he mounted the well worn steps.

"What you want then, Comrade Collingsworth," repeated the tall official of the party,—a man who might have been a retired Sunday School superintendent—"is to get in touch with an active Local. Let me see, I believe the Wells Street Local would be best; wouldn't it, Lobenitz?"—this to a young man who was addressing envelopes nearby.

"It's more alive than Local Rogers Park," was the reply.

"It's a little far," continued the official who had introduced himself as John Armitage, "but if you want action it's the likeliest place on the north side to get it." He wrote an address on a slip of paper. "Go to the corner of Wells and Chicago Avenue and you will find Fred Kupmeyer. Tell him I sent you." Then, after some questions relating to the activities at Argyle—"What are you doing here in Chicago?"

As Jeffrey explained his relation to the *Flaming*

Future, the smile on Armitage's face turned to a frown. He looked doubtfully at the newcomer.

"I don't know that we want any more of Tucker's breed in the party," was his uncivil comment.

"What's wrong with Tucker?" Jeffrey demanded. "He is a good sort; a bit Utopian, and given to fads that I don't find to my taste, but he is sincere and kind, and tolerant. He isn't a good Marxian, but I find a number of socialists who are heterodox on that point."

"More's the pity," answered the other, "but Tucker poses as a leader, and runs a magazine for freaks; that's bad for the movement. Then he has the colony idea; he is a nuisance, and has been put out of the party. I'm sorry you are mixed up with him, that's all"—and, with a deprecatory wave of his hand, he turned back to the desk.

"Shall I, or shall I not?" Jeffrey asked himself as he walked up the street. What the man had said was true enough,—there were too many insane 'isms around the center; but what of tolerance, liberality? Did everything resolve itself into an orthodoxy? But it wouldn't do to go back now; he had pitched his tent in the radical camp at high cost to himself and to the grief of those who were dear to him. He must do something to make it worth while. Perhaps he could broaden the movement. If Tucker would let him run the magazine without interference he would confine it to a sane rationalism and a scientific socialism, with an occasional article on free marriage. But it was Tucker's magazine; what could he do?

Kupmeyer was welding something or other in the back of his shop. A brisk little man somewhere in the thirties, the tinner, unlike many of his comrades, never permitted propaganda to interfere with his work. Nevertheless he received Collingsworth cordially, and,

on learning his errand, left off the welding long enough to dust a chair and offer him a seat.

Jeffrey told him of his relation to the Argyle Local, his reading, the reception at headquarters, and of how the mention of Tucker had given rise to disapproval. He thought it best to be frank at the outset.

"Your party standing depends on you, not Tucker," said Kupmeyer, smiling. "I have no use for Tucker's policies, but Tucker himself is a good man. He's cloudy up here"—tapping his forehead significantly—"but if you stand by Marx and Dietzgen and Lester Ward you are all sound. Here Joe," he called to an assistant in an adjoining room, "you look after the shop for a minute." Then to Jeffrey, "Come with me and I'll change your card for you."

His little room, overhead, was lined with books, the cases reaching to the ceiling; there was scant room for the narrow bed and two chairs. Every notable scientific work published since the eighteen-fifties seemed to have been seized upon by this indefatigable little man, and tucked away in his den—Weismann, De Vries, Hering, Haeckel, Loeb, books in German and French, as well as English. This was a working-man of a new school, thought Jeffrey, pleased to see this evidence of the tinner's learning. And he was even more pleased by the obvious neatness of the room.

"Come see me some evening when I am not busy," invited Kupmeyer, when he had entered the name and filled out the red card with stamps, "and I shall hope to see you Sunday at Moose Hall

Reassured by finding a socialist whose library was inhospitable to trash, and who, judging by the twinkle in his eyes, had enough humor to save him from fanaticism, Jeffrey began to be reconciled to the inevitable incongruities of the radical movement. He accepted the tinner's invitation more than once, and was sur-

prised each time to find the man all that he had expected; affable, kindly, well-read, balanced and clean. Through him he got his first acquaintance with the book shops, and through him he met another agreeable socialist, Julian Wallace, an attorney whose office was more often the center of philosophic discussion than a source of legal advice. Wallace had an independent income, was a collector of strange books, strange friends, and loved nothing better than to provoke others to an argument. It was Wallace who introduced Jeffrey to the frenzied well in Washington Park.

The well had originally been famous for waters that were reputed to be healing, but latterly it came to be suspected that they contained a specific irritant conducive to disputation. Certain it was that no sooner had a man swallowed a cupful of this potent liquid than he became possessed of an irresistible desire to debate. The subject was immaterial until its discussion was well under way. There were some exceptions to this eclecticism: an old rabbi, banished from Russia, was always there waiting for an opportunity to argue about the prophecies; the driver of a laundry wagon came there on Sundays to discuss Mendelism; a Koreshan came to demonstrate that the earth is a hollow ball; and there were any number of socialists, single-taxers, faith-healers, and freethinkers who specialized in their own particular hobby. The less convincing and luke-warm speakers were content with one or two opponents, and stood apart, or were seated vis-a-vis on the park benches; but the more volcanic orators gathered large groups from which would burst violent interruptions. Sometimes there would be a dozen or more of these open air preachers standing on as many benches, their voices rising in contention

in the effort to shout down their rivals. Those vocally fittest survived.

Overhead, from the tree-tops, the muted birds dropped down, upon the unprotected heads of these turbulent logicians, their testimonies of contempt.

On the day of his first visit—a bright Sunday afternoon—an aged minister was prophesying the end of the world:—

“Automobiles, electric cars, high explosives, skyscrapers—all contrary to the order of nature; joy rides, midnight suppers, cabarets—all contrary to God’s holy laws; these things cannot last. The destruction of Sodom will be yours, O people of Chicago.”

“Go after him, Collingsworth; call him down,” urged Wallace, anxious to try the abilities of his new friend.

“Too easy, too silly, and therefore too hard,” replied the intended victim, “Let’s hear them all.”

They passed a group gathered around an energetic Catholic-Protestant controversy, and came to a stop on the outskirts of what was by far the principal attraction of the afternoon. A young clergyman who, seriously alarmed by the sceptical tendencies of this open forum, had taken it upon himself, with conscientious missionary zeal, to make regular visits to the well, was defending the historicity of Jesus .

“. Aside from the incontrovertible testimony of the ancient manuscripts of the Bible, who doubts the words of Josephus, a disinterested outsider, and an unbeliever?” he questioned.

Wallace nudged Jeffrey with a provoking thumb. Thus goaded, he felt that it was time for him to make an effort.

“I do,” he challenged, “That passage in Josephus is a well-known forgery, and in proof of it I cite you to Bury’s edition of Gibbon’s Rome.”

“Gibbon was an infidel, and his testimony is prejudiced.”

“Furthermore,” continued Jeffrey, beginning to feel his mettle—“you reject the historical basis of the cults of Attis, Dionysos, Osiris and Herakles. You declare that they had no one founder. Yet they made a distinct and forcible impression upon the minds of thousands in the ancient days. You reject the historicity of Krishna who had an embarrassingly similar career to that of Jesus, and was worshipped by millions. You say those cults had their origin, with all their potent influences, in myth and ritual drama. Why, then, aren’t you willing to admit the same of the cult of Christ? His whole history, from the star of Bethlehem to the resurrection, is paralleled by a dozen heroes and gods of mythology who had devoted followers. Why was it that when the priestly scholars, who followed Cortez into Mexico, took back manuscript accounts of Quetzalcoatl—another saviour with a similar birth, career, death and resurrection—why was it that the manuscripts were burned? I tell you it was because the inquisitors knew that there was no chance to say of the ancient Americans that they had borrowed their ideas from Christianity.”

But the young clergyman, already tired, and manifestly unacquainted with the critical data furnished by the science of comparative religion, had left the field to Jeffrey. “I’ll read up on that stuff and get him later,” he whispered to some of his followers, as he departed.

Collingsworth spoke for an hour, and at the conclusion received a kind of ovation. Those who had not been able to understand his allusions to history or mythology were even more convinced that those who had. They all agreed that he was an excellent speaker.

"You ought to get a theater down-town, and give a course of lectures," said Wallace enthusiastically. "There are a dozen theatres in the Loop where lectures are given every Sunday, and there's always room for one more. Chicago is just the place for you. No don't go; let's wait and start another argument."

"I think I will leave you to start one yourself," said Jeffrey, who was a little conscience-stricken at having lent himself to the interruption of the minister's address, and now keen to be off on a mission nearer to his heart. "I have a friend at the University I am anxious to see, and I must get away. Thanks for bringing me here."

A fortnight before he had made his first visit to the University to obtain a catalogue. He had turned at once to the names beginning with "S," but on looking for the combination he sought, found, to his bafflement, that there were no less than three young women registered for the previous year, whose initials were H. B. S.: Hannah Bascomb Simpson, Helen Buell Sherwood and Hazel Beeman Smith. Self-conscious, and fearful of the prim looking woman who stood guard at the Information Desk, he had taken the book out to the marble seat in front of the door. "Simpson, Sherwood, or Smith; I hope to God it isn't Smith!" he muttered fervently. But how was he to find out? He didn't dare approach the secretary with the story that he had seen a pretty girl on the train, had read the initials on her handbag; and then ask this grim woman if he might please have the addresses of the three H. B. S's. No, that would be too silly. He would take a chance that the young woman was Hannah Bascamb Simpson, of——where was it?——Evansville, Indiana.

"No," responded the severe custodian, after looking

for a moment at a huge card index, "Miss Simpson is not here. She did not enroll for the summer quarter, nor has she registered for the autumn." And Jeffrey had not the courage to ask more.

This day he nursed the feeble hope that he might meet the young woman if he but walked about the campus. Perhaps she wasn't Miss Simpson after all; and, Smith or Sherwood, she might be walking out also. And what if he did see her? She would, in all probability, not so much as look at him; she appeared to be that sort. He was a fool to be prowling around hunting for a woman with whom he had, by chance, exchanged a few words on a train. She had forgotten him. But the memory of a luminous glow in her dark brown eyes, and of the lustre of her hair, and of a smile that danced about her lips—the memory of these foolish things was disconcerting to common sense; and, unregardful of the canons laid down in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he walked on, and there was a certain wistfulness in his eyes. But he was not destined that day, nor for many another, to see the Hannah, or Hazel, or Helen of his dreams.

Walking down the Midway to the Illinois Central Station, he began, despite the momentary depression arising from his sense of failure, to build such castles in the air as are common to a youth under the madness of the moon. Suppose he should come to be editor-in-chief of the magazine, and there should issue in profit enough for the maintenance of a cottage, or a snug little flat for two? He could picture the windowed outlook over the lake. . . . and the woman by his side, as they watched the light of the stars making merry on the waters beneath. They would write together, work together, plan together, share together all the beauty of the world. She must be an intelligent person, for the journal she had taken from

her lap wore a cover very like that of the *American Journal of Sociology*. Marriage? No, he would convince her that marriage was an outworn relic of a savage age, and together, by the example of a gracious and beautiful one-ness, they would teach the world that love may be an hallowed thing unblessed by the hands of a priest, and holy without any gestures of genuflexion to the law. And this he held, notwithstanding the ugliness that he had seen manifested by those maimed and twisted misconceivers of truth at the Masonic Temple,—mere trampers of pearls they were, seeking they knew not what. He must not let any experience of this sort blur his vision of free-marriage. But he would compromise to this extent; they would send out announcement cards:—"Mr. Jeffrey Collingsworth and Miss———announce their marriage on———" If the girl's name were Hannah Simpson, his mother would approve of the Hannah as signifying modesty and reserve; if it were Hazel Smith, his father would be sure to think that he had married a Methodist or a Socialist!

He had received a letter from his father a few days before, and the tone of it, while not bitter, was such as to indicate a brooding sadness. Mr. Collingsworth wrote that he had, in the endeavor to understand his son, attended a meeting at the Oldbern Methodist Church—

". a very depressing task, sir, I assure you; but I am possessed to understand why you allow yourself to associate with the socialists. Not that I think for a moment that the followers of John Wesley—who was, in his way, a gentleman—are as pernicious as the socialists, but because they are of the same social level, have I permitted myself to mingle with them. I am even more astonished than before that a Collingsworth should find happiness in the midst of such

vulgarity. . . . But I will chide with you no more, hoping for a day when your eyes shall have been opened. Take good care of your health. if you are in want, let me know. In case you should ever be in need, I enclose a blank check; not for use on your magazine nor for any heathen cause, you understand,—”

He had burned the check, fearing that he might be tempted to its use. He was too proud for that.

Yes, his father was almost right, although he hated to admit it—Methodists and Socialists! What was there in common between them? They were both democratic; both demonstrative; both given to per-spionage. He did hope that the girl's name was not Hazel Smith.

XXVIII

THE September issue of the *Flaming Future* had been delayed. Printers seemed to have been inconsiderately sober during August; and there had been none for whom Jeffrey might offer bail. At last he had found one in a lodging house on Clark Street, not drunk, to be sure, but in such desperate straits that he had been glad to work for a pittance,—glad even for the scientific food. And now the magazine was in the press. Tucker was still working for an endowment fund and was somewhere in Iowa, so Jeffrey had a free hand. This was going to be an excellent number; he was quite proud of it. Kupmeyer had furnished an essay on Dietzgen and the Intellectuals; Wallace had discovered a young Englishman, fresh from London and the Bernard Shaw circle of Fabians, who had an interesting article on Samuel Butler (Jeffrey had never heard of Butler, and Wallace's assurance that nothing concerning *The Way of All Flesh* and *Erewhon* had been published in America, made him feel especially important); then the Englishman presented a friend who was willing to contribute something on Friedrich Nietzsche—the *Aristocratic Iconoclasm of Nietzsche*, it was called; there was a poem by a conservative Chicagoan who had evidently read Keats to some purpose; an article by Hughley on the New Revolution in Pedagogy, the same being a revision of his college thesis; his own editorial on the Benevolent Scepticism of Montaigne; and Tucker's serial on Clear Thinking. Concerning this last, there had been some controversy. Jeffrey had written to Tucker that he wanted to change some of his awkward

sentences, and to modify the balder statements. It was impertinent thus to take liberties with the real editor and owner, but Tucker, with characteristic tolerance, yielded in all good nature. Unfortunately he had sent, along with his last letter, some epigrams thought by him to be particularly clever. To Jeffrey they seemed not offensive, but stupid; and one of these he suspected of being an unconscious plagiarism. Tucker was obdurate. They must be printed, all of them. They could be placed here and there, he insisted, as fillers; and he wanted them framed! There was nothing for it but to print them, but Jeffrey, recalling the profane juxtaposition that had been given to his Demeter paragraph, took some revengeful satisfaction in having the especially questionable text—"Monogamy is a Monologue in A flat"—run next to an advertisement for a powerful laxative.

After the essay on Samuel Butler, his chief triumph was the cover. Rumaging about in the office he had found a large quantity of heavy grey paper, left over from other days, and this he proposed to use to replace the wrapper of bright green. The torch was to be stamped in more decorous if less decorative black. The result was an inoffensive and highly respectable jacket, worthy of comparison with that of the older and more sedate periodicals. Of such a magazine he could be proud, and he planned to send copies to any number of his more conventional friends. He hoped that, later, he might be able to exhibit a copy to the girl of the train.

Then Tucker returned, every furrow on his brow telling of his failure. Only five hundred dollars towards the hypothetical million had been raised, and that had been given by a young and enthusiastic Iowa poet who expected to join the colony and get his living from the investment. The editor chuckled over

the changes that had been introduced during his absence.

“Lord, but we’re getting respectable!” he exclaimed, as he looked over the copy. “When this goes out, they will be comparing us to the *Atlantic Monthly*. Our folks won’t reognize us in this grey jacket; and the stuff is too heavy, too formal for plain people. Still,” he continued, rubbing his chin thoughtfully, “one such number will do us no lasting damage; but as I have reminded you before, we must not get to be a sample of rationalism in evening dress.” Then, detecting the disappointment in his assistant’s eyes, he added—“It’s a nice piece of work, and I am proud of you. . . The place is more livable now that it isn’t cluttered up with trash. . . But, tell me, why is this issue so late?”

Collingsworth explained the difficulties he had encountered in finding printers.

“You still need the old man around,” Tucker replied with a laugh, “I’d have had fifty printers in that time; I know where to look for them.” Tucker enjoyed the irony of his method of securing labor; he thought it a beautiful joke that an anti-alcoholic journal should employ the victims of inebriety. “We profit by the sins of the system we destroy; they make fertilizer for our fields,” he would boast.

“See here, Tucker,” said Jeffrey, who had heard, among other disturbing rumors, sharp criticism of this practice,—“The socialists have put a ban on us because we don’t employ union labor; don’t you think—?”

“I don’t care what they do, we are bigger than a mere party, and, moreover, we are living under a system from which we are entitled to get such paltry profits as we can; cheap printing is one of the benefits. We are not millionaires.”

“Perhaps you are right about that; the socialists are a bit narrow.”

“Narrow as your southern Hardshell Baptists,” interrupted the editor with more feeling than usual.

“. But,” Jeffrey continued, determined to make a clean breast of the accumulated criticisms of the summer, “there are some other charges brought against the Center which, I believe, are deserving of more serious consideration. First there is the matter of costume; excuse my frankness, but I feel that that is one of the chief reasons why you can’t secure funds—the peculiarity of your dress. Sandals alone, or hatlessness of itself, might go unnoticed; but to be different all around drives people away. The ideas would receive a more generous hearing if the clothes didn’t startle. Don’t you think that if you . . . if we . . . compromised a little on the non-essentials, we would get on to better advantage?”

“Do you think I dress as I do to gain notoriety?” Tucker demanded. “No, you don’t? Very well then, why? Because it is natural and sane. I wear clothes outside because it is cold, and I need them. Nature compels us to protect ourselves. In the summer I wouldn’t wear them, inside or out, if it weren’t for our silly laws. But the hat is not required by human law, and natural law is all against it. The race is getting bald through the wearing of hats; and what is uglier than a bald head? Then shoes:—they make corns, bunions, blisters, and God knows what else. The feet need air. My costume is natural, and is adopted for moral reasons. Why do you always carry a cane?” he cried, pointing an accusing finger at the slender walking stick in the corner.

“My father and grandfather.”

“Exactly, because others do it, and because it is a family tradition. For similar reasons you wear a high

collar, and garb yourself in black on Sundays. Yet you would be the first to laugh at a man who gave such a reason for being an Episcopalian or a Republican. Moreover, a cane is a peculiar adornment here in the West, save in the case of old men and the lame. You are neither, and yet you persist in carrying the thing. I don't care, you understand, but I charge you and all conventional people who do useless things, with a lack of moral earnestness. And as for shoes and hats and corsets, they should be prohibited as enemies of the race.

"Many women are ugly without corsets."

"Health is a moral and social obligation, beauty is accidental. And I should count myself a coward to yield one whit to this conventional poppy-cock. It is a matter of the gravest principle with me," he finished, looking sorrowfully at his tradition-bound assistant.

"In some things," confessed that young man, "I fear that I am beginning to lean toward amiability and appearances. I have given up many things for moral and social reasons, but it seems to me that to do everything for a moral reason is a little absurd. I hold reason in great reverence greater, I begin to suspect, than it deserves, , but I think that if I had been conscious of a moral motive back of my successive revolts, I should have abandoned them, and settled down in Virginia. Dominant moral motives make disagreeable men."

"Am I so disagreeable, then?" asked Tucker, a little wistfully.

"No, old man, you're not disagreeable. You are the most tolerant and thoroughly lovable person in the whole movement; but if you had the power, if you became a success, you would make the Spanish Inquisition seem like a flower festival. I, for one, should

be afraid. And now," he added, taking up the offending cane, "I am going to take this emblem of respectability, and march down to the lakeside where the careless waters are playing aimlessly on the lazy sand—just to be inconsistent."

Having been absent from the fellowship for the better part of the summer, Bertram Tucker hastened to arrange for a gathering, not merely of the resident members of the colony, but of the sympathizers from all over the city. Invitations by card and telephone were sent out at once. There was to be a continence meeting held in the court on the following Sunday. As he had already explained to Collingsworth, the object of these little conventions was sex-control. Men and women met together *in puris naturalibus*, and the familiar association thus achieved allayed mischievous curiosity, quieted the throbbings of desire, and rendered improbable that unholy hunger for forbidden fruit, which, we are told, had its origin in Eden. The themes chosen for discussion at these times were chiefly those that are suggested in the dialogues of Plato. Sex was never mentioned,—indeed these were the only occasions when the high talk of sex problems was omitted by the Flaming Futurists. The newcomers, Tucker said, were apt to manifest quite visibly those signs of unemanipation which betokened that they were yet mastered by the ancient trinity of evil; but, after they had attended a number of these meetings they behaved with the becoming docility of shorn lambs.

Collingsworth had shown no keenness to enter this association of ethicists since he had looked—with some disfavor—upon the faces and forms of the earlier participants. He had great sympathy for the motives of these people. They hated prostitution as he did; they believed that sex expression was evil in that it

was a waste of time, and a draining of vitality that would be better spent in spoken and written propaganda, as he did not—not since his experience at Ripple Ford. Moreover, he felt that a meeting with emaciated spinsters, sinewy and masculine suffragists, and adipose police-women would not be a convincing test of one's self-control. He knew that he could live forever—in full possession of his powers—on a desert island, alone with Ida or Augusta, Lydia or Estelle, and, at the close, meet all the celibate tests of St. Paul. Finally, he believed that Tucker had been right when he had declared that the return of improper desires would be rendered improbable. He feared that they would be impossible. He had no longing to go; nevertheless, to please this innocent and high-minded soul, he would go once, but—dressed!

Sunday was a day full of promise. Jeffrey wanted to go for a walk in Lincoln Park, but gave it up out of respect for Tucker. The attendance at the meeting was going to be larger than usual, judging from the sound of hurrying footfalls through the corridors of the building. Tucker had gone below to welcome his disciples. Jeffrey would follow presently. He wanted to wait until they had assembled and were absorbed in conversation before he entered the court. There would be less need for embarrassing introductions, and still more embarrassing lapses of memory on his part—he couldn't remember the names of half the people he met. Moreover he wanted to see it all at once and have it over with. Seated in his room with a yellowed pipe, he turned the pages of the forthcoming issue of the magazine—his magazine. Tomorrow it would go to the binders; that is to say, it would go to the back of the press room, where, with Tucker's help, Avery and some unfortunate tramp would insert and stamp the metal fasteners. Jeffrey read again the

essays on Nietzsche and Samuel Butler. Strange, he thought, that he had not heard of these men before. He must read the *Way of All Flesh* and *Erewhon* certainly; and of Nietzsche, *Human All Too Human* and *Beyond Good and Evil*, judging by the brief excerpts, were too good to be missed. He made note of the titles, and regretted that they were not published in America.

He looked at his watch,—it was time to go downstairs. As a concession to the informality of the occasion he donned a pair of white trousers, a soft shirt, low shoes and a bow tie.

Fully thirty people were gathered in the court, all seriously absorbed in high-minded spiritual themes, when Jeffrey entered. It was, as he had anticipated, as ungainly an assortment of the bloated and blotched as could well be imagined. They reminded him of Heath Robinson's illustrations to Rabelais. Estelle Beaver, whom he singled out because of her obtrusive adiposity, seemed an unshapely mass of oleaginous pulp; while poor Augusta, who was holding the ubiquitous Max Stirner to her uncovered bosom, was but a thin and wavering line.

"Hey there Jeff, this won't do," shouted Tucker, "Clothes are immoral here this afternoon. Your garments are positively suggestive in such a place. Go back and get rid of them at once."

"Right you are," Jeffrey responded, accepting the good-natured reproof, and, not wishing to debate the point, "I'll be back in a minute." But he knew at the moment that he was lying. He had no intention of returning until this farce was over.

Instead, he redressed himself with more than usual care, and taking up his cane and hat, slipped quietly out for a walk. Nor did he stop until he was well up Sheridan Road towards Evanston, where he turned

aside to find a resting place on the shore of the lake. He would make up some apology for Tucker—anything would do. Tucker was so damnably good-natured that he would forgive anything. But what rot this continence business was! It seemed to him that pure idealists, perverted puritans, could be the least healthy and the most evil-minded of mankind. They were looking for sin as the witch-burners of Salem had done. They were the logical descendants of an unhealthy tribe of kill-joys. Such people were either sick from birth, and, too weak to take of pleasure themselves, envious of the joys of the strong; or, having overgorged themselves in some unregulated debauch in youth, had reacted to a mad extreme. He preferred Nell, with all her selfish cunning, to such paralytics; she was alive, passionate. Sex a sin! What was it that Robert Buchanan had said?

“Deem not the deed of kind, Adultery,
 But reverence that function that keeps fair
 The earth, the sea, the ether and the air. . . .
 for as thou dost despise thy flesh and frame,
 Shalt thou despise the Lord through whom they came.
 And if one act of these thou deemest base
 Thou spittest in the fountain of all grace.”

Yes, he decided, the Futurists were weaklings, and Tolstoy was their prophet; Tolstoy, whose books were but the acrid eruptions from an unassimilated lust. Why did Tucker, who seemed at least physically healthy, attract such ninnies about him? Vegetarians, raw food, nasty breath; rot! They needed some of the tonics advertised in their magazine.

But the ceaseless lapping of the blue waters rebuked his dissatisfactions, and lured his gaze out and away from himself, far over the undulating bosom of the lake.

“FOUR o’clock,” said Jeffrey to himself, pausing at the corner of Preston Road and looking thoughtfully at his watch. “The freaks ought to be gone by now.” Then, looking up towards the Fellowship house, “Why, what the devil is all that?”

Drawn up in front of number 64 was a big motor van, on the front seat of which was seated a man wearing the uniform of the police. Jeffrey quickened his steps. “Good Lord!” he exclaimed under his breath, “can they have had a row?”

The windows of neighboring apartment houses were opened for curious heads, and on the sidewalk were a number of excited small boys. Jeffrey thrust himself through the crowd, just as Tucker, smiling and bland as usual, emerged from the front entrance, led by a policeman; behind were Jacob Stein, Avery, Estelle Beaver—indignant and protesting,—Lydia Moreton, with tear-stained eyes, glowering Ida Lamb with clenched fists, and finally, wrapped in the folds of a soiled mother-hubbard, Augusta, screaming aloud, that she would not, would not, be separated from her own Max Stirner.

“You got to leave him, Lady,” said the officer who brought up the rear of this sad procession, “he keeps his coat and pants, aw right.”

“What does this mean, Tucker?” cried Jeffrey, uncertain and trembling.

“You keep out of this,” responded the editor, nodding his head toward the house. And then, lowering his voice to a whisper, “Get bail.”

“Spy! Snitch!” shouted Jacob Stein, accusingly,

noticing Jeffrey for the first time since his unceremonious exit—"You're a fine radical, you are, you damned Judas! Too good for the working class!"

"Shut up!" growled Tucker, "you're hysterical. You don't know what you're talking about." But the women glared at Jeffrey suspiciously.

"Guard the place until you hear from me, O'Rear," directed the officer in charge, speaking to one of his subordinates. "Don't let anyone in or touch anything. Start her up, Tim," and with a roar of the motor, the patrol wagon was off, bearing its load of bedraggled and hastily dressed idealists to the police station.

It took some time for Jeffrey to learn what it was all about. It seemed that in the course of the afternoon, a woman, occupying an upper apartment nearby, had chanced to glance out of her window overlooking the court where the Futurists were desporting themselves, and, amazed, yet delighted by the ludicrous spectacle, had called the attention of other women in the same flat. The Sabbath dullness was dispelled and, in the hubbub that followed, an ex-alderman, one Peter Stahl, looked out, and, enraged that respectable women living under the same roof as himself, should be subjected to such indecent exposures, indignantly called for the police. And just as Tucker was saying. . . .

"Chicago must not only be cleaned of prostitution, but out of the mind of every man, woman and child, there must be driven the last vestige of impure thought and imagination; and we radicals must not confuse freedom with license. We must learn to look at the human body without shame and know that we are made for higher and purer. . . . ?

"This has got to stop. . . . You are under arrest. Hurry up and get on some clothes. What do you mean?". . . . came in thundering tones from a florid policeman who burst suddenly into the court.

"This is an outrage! What right have you to interrupt a peaceful meeting?" cried Ida Lamb, advancing toward the officer with clenched fists.

"Git on some clothes! You ain't no sight for sore eyes," commanded that official, looking her up and down with a disapproving frown. The other policemen crowding into the court, grinned their appreciation of this sally.

Some of the more timid women, sensitive to criticism, and seized by a sudden realization of this alien appraisal of their nudity, endeavored to substitute newspapers, notebooks or handkerchiefs, for the traditional fig leaf—Augusta was even trying to utilize the unfortunate and protesting Max Stirner for this purpose. Others, frightened by the formidable uniforms of the representatives of the law, sought refuge in the printing office, hiding in shivering apprehension behind type cases, presses, and desks. But, in their unprotected state, there was no escape. At length they were herded together, and compelled without delay to make such toilets as, with shaking fingers, they could.

"Too bad, too bad," agreed Wallace, over the telephone. "The newspapers will make capital of this. Glad you were away.....No, you stay where you are; don't go near the station,—the reporters will be there; and don't go back to the Center either..... Come down to my apartment and spend the night with me. I'll get them out tonight, or first thing in the morning. Yes, you can stay up for me if you like. You can find something to read, and my man will look after you."

But Wallace was unable to have the Futurists released on bail until Monday morning. Jeffrey plead in vain to be permitted to go along; he had no wish to

be thought afraid. He liked Tucker, and wanted to show that he was standing by.

"It's foolish," insisted the attorney. "You can do no good, and will merely hurt yourself, and add another picture to the papers. When I come back we will go over to the Center together. If the reporters question you then, you can say that you are my assistant. You stay right here and read these interesting accounts of the 'raid.'"

Indeed the papers were lurid enough.....

"Love Nest Raided"—was the headline of one. Others announced: "Red's Carnival of Lust Put to an End;" "Free Love Center Exposed." Tucker was labelled a socialist, an anarchist, a free-lover, a single-taxer and a dangerous revolutionist. "Hundreds of the naked reds escape," declared one paper.

"What lies!" thought Jeffrey; "Why, Tucker is repudiated by all these organizations, and has nothing to do with them. And as for lust, or even love, the Futurists are incapable of it." He did not know the purpose for which newspapers exist.

"It was too funny," cried Wallace a few hours later. "When I took them back to the Center, Augusta Graham found Max Stirner in a compromising and unmentionable situation, having as the partner to his indecency, a sister of his, an Airedale from across the street. Augusta was heart-broken, but unable to rescue her pet—ha, ha, ha—I couldn't forbear quoting Shakespeare's—'That incestuous, that adulterous beast'—And the worst of it was—ha, ha, ha,—the other dog's name is Queen Victoria!"

"Do they still think that I set the police on them?" Jeffrey inquired anxiously, in no mood to appreciate this humor.

"Tucker never thought it; and they all know now who did it. That made Tucker almost angry when

he found it out. It was a politician by the name of Stahl, who owns two or three of the worst bawdy houses on South Dearborn Street."

In the afternoon, they called at the Center. The place was turned topsy-turvy. All of the women were preparing to leave; they blamed Tucker for their misfortune; he should have had more sense than to have held such meetings in the court. Jeffrey noticed that those who had formerly been the most enthusiastic for the continence conference were now the most bitter. Tucker was depressed, his characteristic optimism having, for the moment, deserted him—"I am not surprised," he said, "that the conventional press is telling lies, but I think that the Socialist papers might, at least, have kept quiet. But they have to emphasize the fact that they have nothing in common with my ideas, and that they long ago repudiated me. . . . What will the courts do to me, Wallace?"

"The fact is, Tucker, that things are pretty dark. They will be prejudiced against you. I can keep you out of a jail sentence, but you will have to pay a stiff fine. . . ."

". . . . And for about twenty others," sighed the editor.

"Shall I go ahead with binding the magazine?" asked Collingsworth, hoping to be of some positive assistance.

"The magazine is not to be issued," replied Tucker with a gesture of finality. "First I have a letter from the Central news agency saying that the issue is late, and, on that excuse, cancelling all orders. That would have merely roused my stubbornness; but then came a note from a dealer in erotica, asking for five-hundred copies for his filthy trade. Not another issue is coming out."

"But it is a perfectly respectable number; it seems

to me that it would do your cause no harm, to say the least," Collingsworth urged, reluctant to see this child of his still-born.

"You may keep a few for yourself, before I make a bon-fire," said Tucker, staring into space.

"Then you don't mean to keep on here in Chicago, I take it, eh?" questioned the lawyer.

"I have three hundred acres of land in Arkansas, where I can grow peaches and pecans. If I had the right kind of a colony established there, I could do something. The city is a bad atmosphere for brotherhood"—The glow returned to the editor's eyes, as he began to unfold the new scheme. "With five acres allotted to each member of the fellowship, we might make a big thing of it. The sale of this apartment, and what I may have left when the courts are through fleecing me, will equip us sufficiently. . . . I'm done with Chicago". . . . Then, remembering his young assistant, he added. . . . "I am deradfully sorry, Jeffrey. . . . all this mess. . . . don't let it discourage you. It's part of the battle."

"I only wish I could help you, Tucker. . . . it's a damned shame. Can't I do something?"

"Absolutely not. I'll have to stay by until after the trial; then Avery and I will quietly get off."

XXX

“**A** GOOD sound meal is what you are most in need of, young man,” said Julian Wallace, that evening as he and Collingsworth sat down in a quiet room at De Jonges. Let’s have a look at the menu. I will take a chance of ordering for both, eh? Well, first you may bring us two Gibsons—my special, you know, Tony—cream of celery soup with a bottle of Marguerita Sherry; baked whitefish; filet of beef, with the oldest champagne you have; roast squabs, with Cockburn’s Port; one coffee and Benedictine.”

“I am sorry for Tucker and all that,” said the lawyer, near the close of their dinner, “but it’s a good thing, in a way, for you. Already good wine and food are bringing a color to your cheeks and a human look into your eyes. You couldn’t have done anything out there. Tucker wouldn’t have let you make his magazine rational or literary—not for long. But now, if you will let me, I have a plan.....”

Chicago, he said, was the great lecture center of America. The people went to lectures just as conscientiously as, in smaller towns, they attend church. In the Loop were theaters filled, Sunday after Sunday, for socialist lectures, rationalist lectures, ethical lectures—everything. There was room for a more inclusive society where one could have lectures on sociology, ethics, literature, philosophy, so treated as to be popular and to have bearing on the problems of human and social conduct. There were a number of persons who were discontented with the narrowness of the existing propagandists, and too well educated to

pay any heed to Tucker. "They want catholicity within reason; but not chaos," he explained, "and from what you have said and written, I judge you to be the man for just such a platform—a humanist platform. That's the name I thought of calling it."

"It is good of you to suggest it, and certainly I must be doing something. I can't live on you."

"We'll get your things from Tucker's tomorrow, and then we can look for a room for you. There are some places near my apartment. How would you like it near the University?"

"Splendid!" cried Collingsworth, suddenly recalling a beautiful face, and then, blushing to a deeper red than had been painted by the wine—"for it would be so close to you—and the University Library."

"Hm," grunted Wallace, with a suspicious twinkle in his eyes.

The waiter brought one coffee and set it before the guest.

"Aren't you having coffee?" Jeffrey inquired, to cover his confusion.

"Never touch it myself. I knew you'd want it, being from the South. But my father taught me to avoid evil. I remember it as though it were yesterday."

"'Coffee'," said my father to me, on the morning of my tenth birthday, 'coffee' he repeated,—pouring me a glass of sound Scotch whiskey—"is a thing you must never touch; it is very dangerous, it and tea, to the philoprogenitive instincts, without the proper exercise of which life would be unsupportable"—

"Come," continued the lawyer, rising and holding up a glass of golden Benedictine, "drink with me to the memory of my sainted father."

IT was late in October before he saw Hughley, who was, by this time, well under way in his new work at the Dickenson school. Alvin Gregg, the headmaster, Hughley confided, let him do as he liked, and he was thus enabled to try out any educational theory he chose. Just now he was placing emphasis on simplified spelling and sentence reading; taking especial delight in the latter in that it did away with the cumbrous necessity for learning the alphabet. Within the great English Gothic building he pointed out each device created for the advancement of learning. The youngsters who were fortunate enough to attend this modern school lacked no means of satisfying their curiosity; indeed every nook of every room contained some strange apparatus to provoke investigation. And outside, on the playground, was a vast relief map of the world, done in cement, and of such proportions to permit, when properly inundated, of a complete terrestrial voyage in the small boat which was provided for this purpose.

“You’re a lucky devil, Hughley,” said Collingsworth. “Educational radicalism is much more respectable and better provided for than social heresy.”

“I was sorry to hear of the Tucker fiasco,” the other returned. “You are lucky yourself not to have been mentioned by the papers; but tell me of your new venture?”

Julian Wallace had been a godsend, Collingsworth explained. He had organized a small society of rationalists and liberals, hired the Irving theater for Sunday afternoon meetings, and now, after three Sundays,

they had an audience of over six hundred persons. Everything was very promising.

“But are you making a living?”

“I’m not in it for that exactly,”—a little stiffly—“but Wallace, who has had a lot of experience with that sort of thing, says that before the year is done I will be getting two hundred a month.”

“Good enough! I hope he is right; and I am glad that you live near by. . . . If you will come with me into the assembly room a moment, I’ll go along and see your apartment. I’d almost forgotten that one of my boys is doing a neglected composition.

The youngster was still laboring on the last sentence when they found him. “Let me see it, Tad,” Hughley requested. . . Then, after a brief examination,—“How do you spell ‘symptom?’ ”

“I don’t know, I guess,”—with a sheepish grin.

“Look it up in the dictionary.”

Collingsworth, standing near that huge volume, observed that the small boy was at a loss. He fumbled and turned the pages aimlessly. Jeffrey stepped nearer, and saw that the feckless child was no further along than the g’s. “I’ll find it for you,” he volunteered sympathetically, turning at once to the sy’s.

“Gee! How do you do it?” breathed the boy in amazed relief.

“Old stuff—I learned the alphabet,” whispered Collingsworth with a smile.

Walking up the Midway, Jeffrey was reminded of the girl whose image the months had dimmed, but not by any means effaced. After some hesitation, he told the story to Hughley.

“Ho! So you are beginning to fall? I thought you didn’t take any interest in women?”

“This one was different.”

"Of course; they always are."

"She looked intelligent, and was beautiful."

"A rare combination; useless prodigality on the part of nature,—when either one is fatal of itself."

"Nonsense, I tell you she was beautiful."

"You are in love."

"That is not a crime, even if it were true."

"Love is a mere matter of skin," recited the detached pedagogue who had read French fiction to some purpose.

"But I should like to meet her; and I have no better clues than than she did graduate work last year under Vincent, and that her initials are H. B. S. Damn it! There were three H. B. S's who did graduate work last year."

"I have it!" exclaimed Hughely, greatly amused by his friend's affair. "Alvin Gregg's sister Mary was graduated last year from the University, and is there now working for a Ph. D. I'll bet she can find out who the girl was. Now,"—taking out his notebook—"you say her initials are H. B. S.? Describe her."

"Impossible!"

"Rot! She isn't imponderable ether."

"I'm not so certain," retorted Collingsworth, after which, as if better to reassure himself of the girl's reality, he launched forth upon a glowing account of her several charms.

"A very good picture of the conventional heroine of fiction, but it will lead to nothing."

"Well, then, she has nice large white teeth, brown eyes and hair,—and a shapely ankle. When last seen, she was wearing a tailored suit to match her hair. . ."

"Didn't she have a birthmark, or a mole, or six fingers on the hand—something distinguishing?"

"She didn't wear flat-heeled shoes," added Collingsworth, with emphasis.

"I will give your colorful description to Miss Gregg when I see her," said Hughely, returning the notebook to his pocket.

(1)

TWO years pass very rapidly when one is young, and there is work to do, and there are ambitions to be fulfilled. And when in addition to these trivialities, there is added the more serious business of giving and receiving good dinners, duration becomes as debatable a subject as the existence of matter to a Berkeleyan metaphysician, or of spirit to a follower of Büchner.

The Humanist Society had proved to be all that Julian Wallace had prophesied: There had been an average attendance of a thousand persons every Sunday for forty weeks of the year, and the remuneration had been sufficient to provide good clothes, room rent, excellent meals, books, and an occasional present to be sent home. The people who came to these lectures were drawn from what is called, out of some slight deference to the caste system, the upper middle classes, and, to all appearances, challenged comparison with the communicants of any respectable Protestant congregation. Collingsworth discovered, after a few encounters in a social way, that most of his followers were a little dull, and seldom did he go to their dinners, where he had found, to his disgust, that he was either lionized, or treated as if he were a parson. They wanted him to tell them, again and again, the quickest method for dispatching orthodoxy, and to repeat his lectures between courses over the dining room table.

So that he had been glad when Wallace had rescued him and carried him off to those Bohemian gatherings

at Mme. Galli's or Andrini's. Nothing was expected of one at these places save good fellowship; there were no cut-and-dried conversations. One grew tired of talking shop forever. At Andrini's one had tasty Italian dishes, reasonably good wine, and no end of spontaneous talk. Even the propagandists who frequented this little basement café became amiable in the more catholic atmosphere. There were journalists, freak poets, budding novelists, artists, and more or less obvious women. When gathered about the long tables, they began talking to one another without the formality of introduction. It was a novelty to this country bred young man, more agreeable than the grocery-store environment at Tucker's, or the dreariness of the evangelical boards where either theology or pure reason drove spontaneity forth from their presence as a plague, and laid for a cover the frosty mantle of propriety. To be sure, the dinners were not such as Wallace would order at De Jonge's where he would insist upon proper wine for every course,—but one must not expect a wholly civilized dinner every day.

And the people? Jacobs would be at Andrini's basement before all others, gazing thoughtfully at the bottom of an empty glass—Jacobs who was a Jew of Jews, but who hated all other Jews, and liked nothing better than to offer insult to some member of his race. But in the midst of gaiety he would fling aside his melancholy and presently, when talk was at its height, would leap to the piano and play Tschaikowsky or Dvorak by the hour; while Stanley Farrington, mounted on a chair, would endeavor to recite a poem from Baudelaire, or do an act from the *Wild Duck*.

Then there was Trueman, from the Board of Trade, who slept silently through all talk of painting, and exhibits, symphonies and philosophy, and only awoke

when sex was mentioned. If some near-Puritan were present, he would make the only speech he had ever been heard to utter: "Garçon, bring me the glands of an intact male cow, just brought to the boiling point, and seasoned with the merest pinch of salt—the merest pinch." After which, unless the sex talk were prolonged—and it usually was—he would relapse into profound slumber.

And there was Peter Canby, the poet laureate of Andrini's, who employed the metres of Swinburne to celebrate the youth of Chicago; who felt more than he thought; who saw mystic significance in the very letters of the alphabet and in the figures that baser men use for counting gold; who was a symbolist, regarding 7 as a challenge, and Δ as an invitation.

Conrad, who made his living by writing for the syndicates, was a weaver of wierd romance, and had, it was rumored, no less than forty rejected manuscripts of as many full-length novels in his closet. He had very generously introduced Collingsworth to the International Syndicate, and by now that young man was able to supplement his income quite substantially by writing unsigned stories that were sold to the country press. Conrad hated the realism of Stephen Crane, and the naturalism of Zola. . . . "I hate all this talk about calling a spade a spade; don't do it. But even that is better than calling a heart a heart; for I am persuaded that the heart is connected somehow with the urinogenital system."

Someone would interrupt with a statement about the necessity for picturing life as it is, and making characters in fiction think and speak as ordinary human beings.

"No," he would retort, "We must not write or talk about the things that are constantly on our minds; it

is filthy. Only the things we dream at odd moments are proper to a work of art."

But some of the women would object that it was only in their dreams that indecency occurred to them.

"That brings us to the problem of terrestrial magnetism," he would reply. Then, in defiance of his canons of art, he would narrate some curious tale, beginning—

"One fine day a very strong and well-knit young friar was walking down a lane in Tuscany where he chanced to meet a singularly beautiful milkmaid, and." He would finish by making some absurd remark to the effect that marriage was an exchange of hair for horns. Whereat Jeffrey would try to divert him from this strain of pessimism by telling how that in the Appalachian mountains the word cuckold still lingered as a common expression, whereas the fact of cuckoldry was rare in those regions.

"But here, where every man covers his horns with his hat, the word is not only dead but forbidden, and rightly so; realistic suggestion, even, is horrible," Conrad could interject.

As the hours passed the company, by now well under the liberating influence of wine, would occasionally break into song; beneath the tables, the unmanicured sought the unmentionable; and the snatches of talk, as they reached Jeffrey's ear, would be somewhat irrelevant:—

". . . . Maeterlinck's characters move through a mist of sadness against a background of. . . ." "veal kidneys and mushrooms make a capital dinner when you. . . ." "Not to Turgenev, but to Dostoievsky must we go for the fiction technique of the future." "O, the brute!". . . . "Yes, he hit her on the Adam's apple with her favorite copy of *Science and Health*." "I don't blame her for getting a di-

voiced." "the most exquisite feeling, my dear, but no power; his brush work is simply wonderful. . ." "Waiter! More apricot brandy." "A sweet little thing; I do think she is making such a mistake. that man. I don't know what I can give her that will be suitable." "a copy of Aretino's *Sonnets* with the illustrations of Romano."

Reluctantly would the proprietor interrupt this inconsequential chatter with the announcement that it was closing time; whereat, with one accord, they would join in singing:—

“Let dogs and divels die:
Let wits and money fly:
Let the slaves of the earth
Be abortive in their birth:
Well or ill come what care I;
For I will roar, I will drink, I will.”

But Collingsworth's visit to these places began, after a time, to grow more and more infrequent. They were all very well, he reflected, for a change, and some of the people who went there were interesting when alone; but every person added to a group lessened its intelligence, increased its superficiality. He came to prefer a quiet table at Vogelsang's, where, with Julian Wallace or Kupmeyer, he could enjoy a more intimate conversation over a pewter tankard of rich brown Culmbacher. This preference for small companies, he insisted, was not due to any Puritan reaction, but to a certain selective sense; a desire to get the best out of people, or, rather, the cleverest. And to justify this attitude to Wallace, who maintained that the parting song at Andrini's sounded the most profound depth of human philosophy, he would quote Emerson's "We descend to meet," or Wilde's—"I never object to what charming people do." "But," he would add, "I do

object to license among the vulgar, the ugly and the stupid!"

(2)

During this period, he had been frequently urged to meet General Carlos Sanquijuela, a Mexican reformer, who, from having served under Diaz in a distinguished capacity, had, because of his increasing love for humanity, moved south to Yucatan where he had discovered, far back in the interior, a very unique and beautiful system of communism practised by the natives. These gentle people, he had said, fashioned jewelry, carved images, wove delicate fabrics, and brought these, together with the more homely products of their toil, to certain central market-places where they were offered freely to all who might desire them. Thither came the farm folk, bearing the fruits of the soil, which, in like manner, they exposed to the needy. A sort of exchange was thus effected without any seeming taint of barter or any effort to the end of sale. It was an attractive picture, and General Sanquijuela had frequently been invited to tell the story in many drawing rooms of the stately homes along Lake Shore Drive during the six months of his stay in Chicago. Before that, he had visited Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland and Minneapolis, arousing among the liberals in each of those cities a keen interest resulting in no inconsiderable practical success. For the amiable communists of Yucatan, he insisted, were hungry, not for material but for intellectual food. They had no schools and no books; and it was his self-appointed task to act as Minister of Education, and to become an ambassador seeking that wherewith to establish a system of public schools, and, as an apex to the system, a University of Yucatan. Unless it were done at once, speculators would enter

the peaceful communities—all the communists were non-resistant pacifists—to exploit their lands and seize their wealth. He was a singularly modest person, refusing on all occasions to speak in public in behalf of the people he loved, preferring rather to meet small groups of serious-minded and well-to-do radicals with whom he could talk heart to heart. In his unassuming way he had already won a multitude of friends, many of whom had given largely for his educational projects, and who were anxious to sell all their goods, acquired under a hateful capitalism, to become citizens of so ideal a state. This last ambition the General had been quick to discourage. He would prepare the way, in due time, for the entrance of foreign idealists seeking in good faith so perfect an asylum; but meantime, there were hostile forces in Mexico whose suspicions must be allayed before such immigration could be undertaken. The existence of these forces, he said, was one reason why he never spoke in public; such a move might seem to cast unfavorable reflection upon his native state, and thus destroy, through international complications, the mission that was to him so dear.

“You must meet the General, Mr. Collingsworth,” urged Mrs. Rexford, one of the leaders of the Humanist Society—, “he is so interesting and is engaged in such a wonderful work for a people who are really accomplishing something. A little group of us are giving a dinner at the Tortilla Café, and I want you to come and sit near him; he is so dear and so wonderful. It will do your heart good; and it will be just splendid to have you beautiful men together, for both of you are working to the same end.”

Thus urged, there was nothing for it but to go. Mrs. Rexford was a very genuine, and, aside from her excessive use of exaggerative adjectives, a thoroughly

charming woman. In proof of her heart-felt interest in Yucatan, she had sold a valuable section of land in Nebraska and given the entire proceeds for the erection of the Liberal Arts building, and the establishment of a chair of applied ethics in the new university. In return, General Sanquijuela had presented this open-hearted benefactress with an illumined parchment naming her as one of the founders of the institution, and bearing, in the lower corner, his own ancient family seal.

Told that he might bring a friend if he chose, Collingsworth invited Kupmeyer to accompany him.

General Sanquijuela presented an appearance quite in keeping with the reputation he bore among the radicals. From the snugness with which his frock coat adjusted itself to his narrow waist and smoothed out over his hips, one might have fancied him to have worn a corset. A little man of not over five feet six inches, the thick iron gray hair, bushy brows half concealing a pair of alert black eyes, the bayonet-like mustachios and wedge-shaped white goatee, gave him a formidableness that one would not have suspected from hearing the purring tone of his voice.

Mrs. Rexford had insisted that, in honor of the distinguished guest, the dinner should abound with Mexican dainties, and, to meet this demand, the chef had outdone himself; the food was as burning hot as if it had issued from the very pits of Inferno. The guests would nibble, and then hastily raise their glasses. Jeffrey felt that Lake Michigan would be perceptibly lower by morning, and was as comforted when the guest of honor turned red and coughed over his food, as he was shocked when the Mexican asked permission of his hostess to make a special order of lamb cutlets—

“You see,” he explained apologetically, “I have been

many months in your delightful country, and I have come to have a great fondness for your American cooking, and now that I am going back so soon, I like to eat your delicious meats while I may—you will excuse?”

He seemed determined to make himself an American in every way, even refusing to answer a question which Kupmeyer had addressed to him in Spanish.—

“No, no, my friend, we must not. I see you are not a fellow-countryman, anyway”—giving the German a searching look—“and besides, while we are in the presence of so many who wish to hear everything, and who could not understand, it would be unfair. But”—he added graciously—“you speak excellent Spanish.”

While they were still toying with their coffee cups, Mrs. Rexford tapped on the table for quiet, then turning to the General.—

“We are all just dying to hear more of your beautiful Yucatan, General Sanquijuela. Some of us have yet to hear anything of those dear people, and those of us who have can never hear too much. Won’t you talk to us now in your own informal way?” she finished with a smile.

“Sen—I beg pardon! Ladies and gentlemen. You will excuse me if I lapse now and then into my native tongue? It is so difficult.”

Jeffrey noticed that after the opening sentences, which were spoken with great deliberation, the speaker never lapsed into his native tongue. The more eloquent he became, the more rapidly he spoke, the more perfect was his English.

“How these foreigners master our language,” Collingsworth commented to one of the women when the speech was done, “and the most amazing thing about

it all was that in the most passionate periods he never faltered once."

"That is the way his subconscious yields to him," the woman replied. "The subconscious will perform miracles if we give it a chance. Oh, he is marvellous, marvellous!"

The speech had been very moving. The man described how the little children, who never had a thought of mine and thine, would share with sweet unselfishness their most precious possessions; how men and women uncursed by the greed of civilization, would urge, with quaint simplicity, priceless gifts upon strangers. As he talked, the women had frequent recourse to their handkerchiefs, and some of the men were uncomfortably red about the eyes. Jeffrey had more than once to secretly prick himself with a pin to avoid the contagion of tears.

The communists of Yucatan were more than a thousand dollars the richer for the evening's work, and Jeffrey promised that on the following Sunday he would speak for a few minutes of Sanquijuela's mission and endeavor to have a contribution given by the Humanists. He urged the Mexican reformer to make use of his platform, but to no avail. "I must not risk international complications," he plead. Nor would he consent to be present when the announcement was to be made. "Let Mrs. Rexford take care of that," he said with a shrug of his shoulders—"your people know her. It is best."

"I wish we could raise money that easily for our work here in the United States," sighed the tinner, as they were leaving the meeting, "but it takes a foreign cause to draw money from the rich. It is a substitute for missions."

"Don't you approve of General Sanquijeula?" Jeffrey asked, in some surprise.

"Well," answered the other, "of course this affair in Yucatan is not socialism; it is a primitive communism, which, in the natural course of evolution must pass and give way to capitalism before there can be a real socialization of wealth. . . . and, anyway, the man might have answered my question in English."

According to promise, Jeffrey, still under the spell of the far-off Utopia concerning which, in such glowing terms, he had lately heard, gave a brief outline of the General's address, and urged the Humanists to respond liberally to the great cause. To his surprise, nearly five hundred dollars were added to the endowment fund of the university. Mrs. Rexford made a speech of thanks, and, on the day following, came a neatly penned note from General Sanquiuela himself, expressing his profound gratitude, hoping that he might soon avail himself of the privilege of attending one of the meetings at the Irving Theatre, and adding the further hope that Señor Collingsworth might be prevailed upon, in the not distant future, to give a course of lectures before the university for which he had spoken such kind words.

Early one morning, about two weeks later, Jeffrey was rudely awakened by a persistent ringing of the telephone bell.

"Damn the telephone, and all infernal modern conveniences!" he exclaimed, as, unable to endure the noise, he rose and slipped a bathrobe over his shoulders.—

"Hello!" he shouted into the harmless transmitter, making his voice as profane as he dared.

"Hold your horses, and don't be cross, old man," came Wallace's voice in reply. "You haven't seen the morning paper, by any chance, have you?"

"You know I never read the papers," he returned, greatly mollified.

"Then get on your clothes, eat a hearty breakfast, and after that read the Tribune—first page, headline and last column. . . no, I mustn't spoil a good story. . . the joke is on you as well as on a lot of your friends. . . Goodbye."

Something in Wallace's voice had suggested excitement as well as amusement, so, without heeding the practical admonition regarding a sound preparatory breakfast, he secured the paper at once and read:—

"General Carlos Sanquijuela—alias John Henry Sawyers, alias Tobias Russell—arrested on charge of getting money under false pretenses. Thought to have secured more than two hundred thousand dollars from prominent Chicagoans. Has served a term at Sing-Sing, and one at Leavenworth. Former pastor of a church in Connecticut which he served under the name of Tobias Russell, and lately swindled through a fake oil schemem."

The paper gave the full history of the man who, it seemed, had been arrested the night before in his rooms at the Auditorium Hotel. He had been born in New York, and had never been any further into Mexico than Tia Juana. After two years at Yale, he had entered the ministry; followed that by a period at Sing-Sing prison; had tried, on his release, to sell stock in a company which proposed making flour from bananas; had spent a few years in the federal prison in Kansas, and had, just now, been engaged in what had promised to be the most successful venture of his entire career, when the detectives had discovered him. Only a few hundred dollars of the moneys that he had received could be found, and the man stubbornly persisted that the bulk of his profits had been already spent. On being confronted by a Spanish

interpreter, it had been found that the General was unable to speak more than a dozen words of that language. Pictures of Sanquiuela and the unfortunate Mrs. Rexford (who was named as the heaviest loser of all), adorned the front page, and telegraphic dispatches from the cities further west testified to the fact that the endowment fund of Yucatan University was one of the largest known to modern educational history.

Then it came to pass that Mr. Jeffrey Collingsworth of Virginia laid hold on the nearest and most fitting expletive that came to hand, or, more accurately, to tongue. It consisted, primarily, of a brief, and possibly libellous, statement concerning the relationship of the late General to his mother, and defined the social and ethical status of that lady by a crisp and colorful adjective. This was prefaced by a blunt theological assumption, and an iconoclastic invocation done in two monosyllables, the whole making one of the most soul-satisfying epithets ever invented to relieve the pent-up emotions and calm the tormented spirit of suffering mankind.

He began to tire of radicalism.

(3)

Perhaps it was the contrast of his thick black hair to the white chiselled face, heightening, as it did, the pallor of his countenance and lending to it the spirituality of a Savonarola; perhaps it was the long tapering fingers moving nervously to turn the pages of his manuscript; perhaps the far-off and somewhat wistful look of the deep-set eyes, suggesting a hunger that was not yet appeased; or, it may have been the deep vibratory tones of his voice issuing from generous lips; the women, however, declared that it was the beauty of his language, enriched by curious and

jewelled adjectives, and the eager and intransigent quality of his idealism that won their hearts. Whatever it may have been, it is certain that they crowded forward at the close of each lecture and bestowed upon him many words of caressing praise, accentuated by the warm pressure of their soft white hands. These tributes were, in most cases, no doubt, but the impersonal expressions of a momentary gratitude; sometimes they arose from the instinct to mother, or the desire to encourage; but not infrequently they sprang from a conscious or unconscious biological need. At first Collingsworth's head was too thickly encompassed by the luminous mist of his dreams to perceive any difference between the personal and impersonal encomium, and he welcomed each such testimony as an added evidence of the ultimate triumph of truth. Moreover, during the first months of his lectureship, the persistent echo of a saucy voice and the memory of a face so lingered with him that he was insensible to other charms. Gradually, however, that memory became dim, and his vision foreshortened; he would never find the girl of the train, he told himself. Meantime, certain women, by now convinced that his irresponsiveness was due to the innocence of a virginal immaturity, made more obvious attempts to secure his attention. And, even after he came to earth, fully conscious of the emotions of these adoring ones, and now in a mood ready to succumb, he was able, without invoking the aid of moral principles, to withstand the wiles of fully a score; to have resisted more would have savored of an unamiability not worthy of a gentleman—and, besides, the twenty-first was charming.

Lois was a soft and fluffy little blonde of, perhaps, twenty-two, whose big blue eyes were dilated with the wonder of a world behind whose material seeming

one might, at any instant, behold the unbearably beautiful presence of the immortal gods. But, by some sad perversion of events, she got no further in her mystic quest than an inconsequent perusal of Maeterlinck would allow. Thus it was that, instead of becoming a vestal virgin in some sacred temple where she might have participated in the rights of an awful hierurgy, she flitted about the foyers of dusty lecture halls in an uncertain hero worship. In the person of every writing man as of every orator she beheld the dim outlines of a god.

Back in New York, before she had read Maeterlinck, she had been loved by a contractor to whom she had been engaged, with whom, truth to say, she had lived for a time; but he had been indefinite about the date of their marriage, so that, by the time she had finished *Monna Vanna*, finding herself free, she had slipped away in search of some hero with whom she might scale the heights, and, in that rare atmosphere, enjoy a more spiritual union. Then she had come to Chicago and found Jeffrey.

Time after time she had flashed her signals of loneliness from a seat in the mezzanine floor across to the stage, but somehow—as she explained it to herself—, their souls did not synchronize, and the telepathy failed. So, mistrusting the futile wireless of the spirit, she resorted to the less subtle contact of a vibratory hand. This, too, seemed doomed to meet with no response, until, grown bold by desperation, she had ventured to say, almost in a whisper:—

“I am very lonely in this big, strange city. . . . I should like to talk to you; to get a reading list if you would be so good.” She raised her eyes in appeal; and he, looking down into their liquid depths, saw and trembled and,—understood.

“Could you come along with me now to a quiet

little place where we could have dinner and talk quite undisturbed?" he ventured, moved by a sudden desire to explore the uncharted.

"That would be delightful—if you are sure it won't be troubling you."

"You are too modest; it is a privilege."

The rest was conventional enough—or unconventional (according to the point of view). The desert blossomed for a few short weeks, and then the flowers, from an insufficient moisture, faded. An apartment on the South Side, dinners, taxicabs, a concert—boredom. For he was moved by no passion other than a curiosity that was sated all too soon; nor was he able to hit upon the mystic key that would unlock the shadowed doors to the *Intruder*, and the *Seven Princesses* or *Péléas* and *Mélisande*. And he would have disentangled himself and gone away had it not been for the fear of bruising her spirit. For, though vastly ignorant, she was a sensitive creature and quick to note a change of his moods. He sought to disguise his disappointment beneath baskets of cut flowers and with the mask of a smile; but she saw and knew. And thus before dullness had turned into disgust; and while there was yet courtesy to soften the edge of scorn, she went away.

One morning he found a note charged with gentleness and regret, but bearing no message of reproach. She had returned to the man in New York whose simple needs she understood, to whom she had much to give.

He was both glad and sad; relieved and self-accusing. But he said to himself that he had learned one thing: that freedom might be as entangling, and well nigh as inescapable, as the most rigid legality; and that, hence, it was the part of wisdom to take as much care in forming a free alliance as in entering mat-

rimony. He was thankful that it had been Lois, to whom to be undesired was intolerable; and for her he breathed a prayer upon the winds.

And yet—wisdom and high resolve are but chaff, and we the play balls of vital forces; for, after all the meditation and logic, there came, within sixty days, Martha!

Martha Winfrey was the wife of a man who had made enough of a fortune from his mines in Arizona to justify his marrying one of the most extravagant young women in the city of Phoenix. One of her first demands had been that they forsake the limited society of the small city for cultured Boston. Once there, however, the woman had found her husband's money an unavailing means of introduction to Back Bay drawing rooms, and out of sheer loneliness, had been forced to seek other outlets for her energy and her lord's purse. He had already found comparative content in one of the less exclusive clubs. First she took to studying period furniture and filling her home from the antique shops; then came oriental rugs; then Japanese prints; then books—for their bindings rather than their contents. Beginning with gaudy sets of de luxe editions, dressed in colors to harmonize with the lamp shades, she had passed on rapidly to Rivière's, Zaehnsdorf's and Cobden-Sanderson's. Through her visits to the old book stores she came to know somewhat of the fascinating craft of binding, and was inspired to take lessons therein. There were no children—thanks to recent discoveries in antiseptic surgery—and, since, being an energetic Western woman, she must do something, she dragged her unwilling husband to London where he must needs spend idle hours about American bars whilst her fingers acquired the skill to transform the odorous skins of pigs and

goats into finely tooled coverings for precious books, When they had at last returned to America, she had, incontinent, insisted upon pulling up their wealth of antiques and moving to the more democratic and hospitable city of Chicago. Here, she thought, money would do almost as much for one as it would in Phoenix.

But furniture and rugs, or even the pleasant task of binding her favorite books, cannot wholly content the life of a vigorous woman who has yet to pass the thirtieth birthday. For while she had been busy filling her house and her mind, her husband had been filling his stomach with those beverages which, lightly tasted, lend zest, but, heavily imbibed, bring paralysis to—well—this, that and the other. She grew fretful and went upon the search for adventure; and she knew definitely what she wanted. By the time she met Jeffrey Collingsworth her shyness had worn away, and her technique, if somewhat obvious, was calculated to bring immediate or no results.

She had, by accident, attended one of his lectures, and, attracted alike by the depth of his voice and the curve of his nose, had drawn certain conclusions. Thereafter she had listened enough to learn that he was fond of books, and that he had read such divers writers as Casanova and Schopenhauer.

It began by her inviting him to ride in her car; her speed made him nervous. Then she asked him to read to her. "Your voice has such depth, such penetration," she urged, hoping to move him by flattery. But he was used to flattery, and acknowledged the tribute with cold politeness. Then she tried him with books; and presently was rewarded with the first gleam of interest. For while his life had been given to the company of books as such, he was yet to know of first editions, and rare bindings.

He was more interested in the early editions of Malory, and Burton, Cervantes and Swift; and in the folios and quartos of Shakespeare, particularly when they remained in their original bindings of paneled calf. The smooth brown sides of a small folio of Montaigne were especially fascinating—(she had taken him to the old corner at McClurg's where rare things used to abound). The prices of these treasures, however, appalled him at first; and he was astonished to learn that the *Religio Medici* which he had so carelessly borne on his northern pilgrimage, done up in a disreputable scarf, was an especially rare first edition, worth three hundred dollars. He secretly congratulated himself upon a single state wherein he might, after a time, by foregoing some of his downtown dinners, indulge in the luxury of acquiring a few of the less expensive of these enviable possessions. Next, through the courtesy of a salesman, with whom she was evidently well acquainted, she introduced him to the tempting literature of English book catalogues; and, with this as an excuse, invited him to her home.

"I will give you any number of catalogues, and you can write to England and soon surround yourself with infinite temptation," she said. "Besides, you must see my bindery. Binding is something you would love."

"The very word frightens me."

"It is quite harmless, and has proved a great solace to me." She sighed deeply, then went on: "Anyway, you will want to look at my books—especially my rare *Perfumed Garden*."

"That intrigues me. But what is the *Perfumed Garden*?"

"Sh! Not so loud.—It is a precious item."

Collingsworth, unfamiliar with the terminology of

collectors, had never before heard a book called an "item."

"When you come, be sure to bring that book you were speaking of last Sunday—Schopenhauer's—what was it?"

"You mean the *Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*?"

"That's it; no wonder I couldn't remember the title. But I want you to read some of it to me. Would Wednesday afternoon be convenient for you?"

She greeted him warmly, and led him at once to the chamber she had fitted up for a bindery. "Did you bring your *Fourfold Root—of—er—Sufficient Evil*?" she demanded as they entered the room.

"Reason, not evil," he corrected.

"It comes to the same thing—in the end."

"Yes, I have it here in my pocket."

"I do hope your voice is in a good condition for a long reading."

"Quite strong enough for the purpose, thanks; but you must tell me about these implements, and just how you go about the work of binding. What are these?"

"Ah, they are my tools—all sizes you see; these little ones are suitable for this tiny volume of Victorian verse, but the great Elizabethan folio requires a big, masterful tool, like this. . . I love to handle the larger implements, such as the one you have there."

"And you press them. . . .?"

"Right into the leather, when it is moist—thus. The tool must be warm, almost hot. That one is a designing tool."—And she went on enthusiastically, explaining the process of blind-tooling, and telling how carefully she had to watch for the signatures in the sheets; and showed him how to place the press-pin

for screwing down each volume firmly. She really needed a strong man to assist her at this work, she said. From the beating stones she led him to the blocking press, and from there to her leather chest.

To all of these details he listened with interest, wondering how it could be that after undergoing these mechanical processes, step by step, through stitching and hammering, blocking and trimming, these masterpieces of thought and feeling could retain their majesty and their magic. And yet, there before him, she triumphantly displayed the finished products of her loving toil, handsomely outfitted in new suits of shiny leather.

"But this is boring, I am afraid; come into the library and see my *Perfumed Garden*."

Protesting that he was not bored the least bit, he, perforce, followed her through the hallway toward the front of the house, where, coming suddenly to a massive door opening upon the street, she stopped long enough to shoot a bolt, turn a key, and affix a chain with a padlock.

"Whatever makes you do all that?" he inquired, puzzled by the elaborate performance.

"I don't want our reading to be interrupted."

"But you promised to show me your *Perfumed Garden* first," he reminded her. "How is it bound?"

"In natural vellum. It is very white and soft." She paused a moment when they came to the curtained entrance of the library. "I owe it to you to explain more fully about my precaution with the door," she went on a trifle nervously—"The fact is that my husband—"

"Husband!" Jeffrey repeated after her with a shudder. "I didn't know you had a—live one."

"I haven't, but the corpse is a very jealous creature.

He was brought up in the Southwest, and was trained to use a gun with frightful precision—”

“Good Lord!”

“He once shot a servant of mine whom he thought too familiar with me. He is very jealous,” she repeated.

Jeffrey glanced back at the door. “Is he likely to come?”

“He seldom comes any more,” she explained sadly, “but when he does, it is done with disgusting haste. . . Here is the item I wanted you to see. Just feel its satiny finish.” She unfolded it gently.

But Jeffrey was thinking of the door and the jealous husband.

“Now let me see your. . . Schopenhauer,” she demanded, a little indignant at his seeming indifference.

He fumbled at his pocket. “It is bound in very limp morocco,” he apologized—“I don’t like to show it to you now.”

“Nonsense. Out with it. Perhaps I can make it a little firmer in my bindery, if you will let me,” she offered generously. Then, seeing his look of uneasy abstraction, “Are you ill?”

“I think my voice is quite unequal to reading,” he confessed, still haunted by the vision of a western gun-man who might at any moment become an actual and terrifying reality.

“Ah!” she exclaimed, laying possessing hands upon the *Fourfold Root*. . . .

But just then came a clicking sound from the direction of the door. It was as if some one were trying the lock.

Collingsworth seized his hat and coat with convulsive eagerness.

“This is no time to be reading philosophy, nor for toying with the covers of books. I make no pretense

to bravery when I am in the house of a jealous husband. And while his lack of understanding may be distressing to you, it is highly probable that he might be more acutely discerning in regard to me. And that would be embarrassing. I prefer him ignorant. Moreover, I concede him every right in advance; and since I find my voice growing weaker every moment under the strain of an unhappy expectancy, I beg that you will excuse me and permit me to effect as rapid an exit from the rear of your home, as is consistent with—not grace, but—safety.”—During this speech Collingsworth was backing slowly but surely, down the corridor, past the bindery, to a door that opened upon an alley. “I regret that I was unable to inspect your *Perfumed Garden* more closely, madam; though I daresay it is very like many another book, slightly different in binding, but quite familiar and typical in content. The suggestion of fragrance was, however, quite appealing, and as I said, I regret that my trepidation made it impossible to turn a single page. But on the whole, I have learned much for which I can never thank you enough—Good-bye”

“And it was only the postman putting letters in the box,” sobbed Mrs. Winfrey a few minutes later—“The coward!”

“Young man,” Collingsworth addressed himself seriously, as he began to breathe the breath of freedom once more—“you had a narrow escape from becoming as ridiculous a figure as Tucker at his worst. It is all very well, this talk of the fascination of triangles, but I have no taste for an angle by itself; I will either be two sides and two angles, or nothing. I daresay Tolstoi’s aunt was right when she advised him to seek adventures with experienced married ladies; but that was Europe where husbands shrug their shoulders,

and this is America where they sling their guns and advertise you in the daily press. Certainly it is not worth the anxiety and possible mortification to one's pride, unless there is a very real passion which may not be escaped. As to widows and independent young women of age—that is another matter. But you have permitted yourself to drift into situations requiring biological research where you were seeking to satisfy another kind of curiosity. You are a fool; a plain fool. Hereafter let women alone unless you are in love with them. Leave these vulgar intrigues to those notorious parsons who have affairs with the married members of the choirs, and confine yourself to good wine, fragrant tobacco and sound books."

To be sure, he admitted, there might come *the Woman*, in which case, certain revisions would have to be made.

From all of which it will be seen that Mr. Collingsworth was still a very serious-minded young man, yet unable to enjoy a hearty laugh at the cosmic comedy, much less at his own curious antics. And it was observed, about this time, that a note of what some were pleased to call satire, other cynicism, and yet others, flippancy, crept into his lectures whenever he made reference to love or sex. Julian Wallace wondered why the attendance of women began to grow steadily less.

(4)

It was during his third summer in Chicago that Fitzpatrick came. Having published a valuable monograph on some unfamiliar saphrophytes the year before, the University had asked the Virginia professor to give a course of lectures during the summer quarter. Collingsworth was delighted to see his old friend once more, not alone because of the great debt of gratitude

that he owed to him, or because he was a sort of father confessor, but also, and perhaps chiefly, because he was a link with his native state. For no Virginian, however much he may scorn the ignorance that has latterly fallen on the land of his birth, or deprecate her descent beneath the dominance of the vulgar classes that have risen to power within her borders since the civil war, ever loses the feeling that somehow her grassy hills are a little more beautiful, her stately old houses a little finer, and her history much more glorious than that of any other commonwealth in the Republic.

Except that his hair was by now snow-white, Fitzpatrick had remained unchanged. "We don't change very much where I live," he remarked in reply to Jeffrey's observations,—“You wouldn't notice any difference at Wythe. . . . Yes, Bias is still there; he now claims to have lived upwards of a hundred years. . . . Yost? he has just finished a course in law and is going into his father's office. . . . No, they have never invited Gross to hold another meeting at the college. I think Daniels realized that he was a mistake; and, anyway, Gross got into some kind of an affair with a woman and had to change his territory and denomination. But that was to be expected from a man of his type. . . . I got quite well acquainted with your father last summer, Collingsworth; spent a delightful vacation on the farm instead of going to Europe. Mr. Collingsworth is a capital chess player, and a much more amiable man since he retired from the ministry.”

“He wrote to me about it; your visits up the Creek gave him more pleasure than he has had for several years, I fancy,” said Jeffrey with a sigh. “Does he seem much older?”

“A little shrunken, and his shoulders droop a bit;

otherwise much the same, save, as I said, milder, quieter. The darkies love him. He is extraordinary kind and patient to them."

"And my mother?"

"Very much feebler than she ought to be at her age. Worries about you a lot. You know," he exclaimed, drawing nearer,—“it's a beastly shame for you to be in such a relation to your parents. Why don't you go to see them?"

"Father doesn't want me. He said it was better for me to stay away."

"Nonsense! He didn't mean it. He's just afraid you'll say something about socialism or free-thought; and meantime here you are growing more conservative every day, until finally you will be a greater moss-back than your father."

"Yes, I have lost most of my radicalism—nearly all in fact—but I still carry a red card, and am most emphatically not a Christian. The more I come to know myself, the less of a propagandist I become, and the less satisfactory to any movement. My reading of Nietzsche and Butler, Thomas Hardy and Anatole France, has helped me; but that, together with some unfortunate experiences, has caused the women to stop coming to the lectures; and my love of Pater has caused some discontent among the men. I'm going to quit after next season. I can make enough at my writing and do more good. It's the movements—the organizations—that I can't stand. The people expect you to hold the same point of view all the time,—to repeat the same formulas. They hate to have you point out the follies of their own movement. They stifle magnanimity as much in one cult as in another. The free thinkers want to hear their side preached all the time just as much as the churches want theirs. It's all idiocy. Still, I hold respect for

the great thinkers among the socialists, and am not, as I said, a Christian."

"No more am I," answered Fitzpatrick. "I have great reverence for Jesus, but none for Christianity as an organization or a formulated creed. And I also have read Marx—a brilliant old fellow he was. But it would never occur to me to join an organization to uphold his ideas. I know how silly and how fatal an organization is to an idea. But this is beside the point. Why don't you write and tell your father that you have given up socialism and come back to the church? A lie, of course, but we have to tell so many of those every day, that one more of Plato's noble prevarications won't hurt your chance for salvation."

"That does appeal to me, but I fear I couldn't make it convincing enough to carry out; besides I'd have to join the church to prove it, and I just could not make a go of pretending to believe the Calvinistic faith.

"Oh, any one would do; why not try my church, the Episcopal? Your grandfather was an Episcopalian before he married, and I fancy that his heart was there all along."

"Yes," said Jeffrey, with a reminiscent smile. "Once in a while he used to sneak away to one of their services, and I remember his taking me sometimes. It spoiled my taste for other churches; there was some colour there. Then, too, I was conscious of my grandfather's happiness as I sat by his side, and you know I loved him so much that his feelings were contagious to me, and I instinctively felt that I belonged there. Of course now I know that I couldn't accept their creed any more than another. And yet—" he confessed a little doubtfully—"I go occasionally to hear a service at the Church of the Ascension—very high, and all that sort of thing, you know, and I like it; the beautiful ritual, the rich vestments, the incense..."

“Ah!” cried Fitzpatrick, “that is just it. The old hereditary instinct begins to stir. For, after all, what does the belief matter? Religion is a dance, a drama, ritual, ecstasy;—a symbolization of life’s supreme moments in a beautiful rite. Confound all intellectual formulas! What does it matter to your soul, spirit, imagination what the facts are about matter, or hell, or evolution? Those things are excellent toys for the exercise and amusement of one’s mind, but we need something else. Pay no attention to the miserable sermons. The preacher is more often than not a perfect ass.”

“I’ll never join another organization of any kind,” replied the other quite firmly. “But I may tell the ‘noble lie’ you spoke of. Thanks for the suggestion.”

“Excellent!” responded the old professor, rubbing his hands together in glee, “It will be a genuine act of Christianity.”

With Julian Wallace, Fitzpatrick got on famously, appreciating the lawyer’s Epicurean taste in wine, and exchanging sly Pantagruelian stories with high relish. For Wallace took nothing so seriously as to interfere with fine living, and at his socialism was as ready to laugh as at the palpable absurdities of sex. An urbane catholicity was characteristic of the man’s outlook, and as an onlooker he liked to observe the passing show of tragi-comedy, not disdainingly, now and then, to descend to the thick of the fray to crack a few heads, but always withdrawing with a quiet chuckle. With such a man the old biologist felt quite at home, and he congratulated Collingsworth on his choice of friends.—

“Just the kind of man you need to associate with, my friend; and I attribute your growing magnanimity more to this association than to your reading. And that reminds me of something. Ho, ho, ho! You

know your father has always despised the Methodists. Well, an old Methodist minister,—a friend of mine by the way, and quite a student of the classics—was spending the summer near my home, and I took him to Mr. Collingsworth's one day and introduced him as a friend of mine and a famous chess player. And what with playing games, and talking Latin the two old rogues fell quite in love with one another. But you should have seen your father's face when he found out! There is nothing like contact to enable one to see exceptions."

"There are some decent people in all organizations," Jeffrey admitted, "but in a realistic age it isn't proper to make mention of them."

For a lark, they took Fitzpatrick to Andrini's. If possible, there had gathered about the long tables a more miscellaneous and disputative assembly than usual, and Wallace, with true dramatic instinct, took good care to set them at logger heads without delay.

"A rather weak imitation of some of the cafés in the Latin quarter of Paris," remarked the gentleman for whom these pains had been taken, "but it is far better than our typical American restaurant life; and I see you have some negroes present," he added with a start of surprise.

"Ah yes," said Wallace, elated by this turn of events, "and your young pupil there,"—nodding in Jeffrey's direction,—"takes great delight in bringing them to our tables. Usually he sits as near them as possible. Not long since I asked him to provide a speaker for a conservative club to which I happen to belong, and do you know that he brought along a particularly black negro, much to the disgust of the members!"

"I'll venture it is not done from any natural impulse," replied Fitzpatrick draining his glass of claret

and reaching for the bottle. "I smell a theory back of everything he does."

"Correct," admitted the young man, "You will recall, my friend, that when you asked me to say a few words on that occasion, I repeatedly emphasized the fact of my Southern origin, and, in particular, that I am a Virginian and the descendant of a family of Confederates. What I want these people to know," he continued, turning to Fitzpatrick, "is that we who believed in slavery are more tolerant than they who wanted to make negroes their social equals. It was harder for those men to sit at the table with a negro poet than it would have been for my father—by far." He laughed like a mischievous small boy. "And think," he went on, "of the thousands of young Northerners who died in the faith that their blood was shed for equality! What would they say of their descendents, if they could speak from the grave?"

"They did not fight for negro equality," interrupted a rather portentous person across the table,— "They fought to preserve the Union."

"Yes," Wallace remarked, "to preserve the union of manufacturers from competition with a highly successful form of slavery."

"And to democratize slavery so as to include white men." Fitzpatrick put in.

"It is the tradesman's method for elevating the Host,"— said Jeffrey, "but it does not prevent the Springfield Yankees from holding a delightful lynching party."

"Speaking of Springfield," commented the lawyer, now weary of the Civil War discussion, "I saw our friend Bertram Tucker there a few days ago. I went down on an important case, and a client of mine was driving me out to his home in the suburbs, when he ran out of gasoline and turned into a garage; and

who should come out to wait on us but Tucker. I said—"Tucker, what are you doing here? I thought you were in Arkansas with your colony."

"That's all done for," he said. "I took an Armenian fellow in with me and in six months he beat me out of colony, money and everything. Then when I tried to remonstrate with him, he hit me over the head with an unmentionable vessel." Tucker said to me that for once he forgot his self-control and smashed the Armenian pretty badly; then, ashamed of himself, he gave up everything and left. Pouring gasoline was better than co-operation."

"Poor old Tucker, he deserved a better fate. He's too idealistic for this sorry world," remarked Jeffrey, who was genuinely grieved by this recital.

"See that loving couple in the corner, Professor." Wallace indicated with a nod of his head an affectionate pair, who, heedless of the company, were unable to resist the temptation of a kiss. "They're too lost in one another to mind our glances. How beautiful it is to see the human animal return to the downrightness of the birds, without the wicked inhibitions of a painful self-consciousness. Unfortunately though, it may lead afterwards to a public scandal."

"We don't have such scandalous situations in the South," Jeffrey put in, annoyed as much by the scene as by Wallace's having pointed it out to his old friend.

"What's that? We don't have scandals in the South?" shouted Fitzpatrick, "We have just as much scandal there as anywhere, different, because the surroundings are different. Have you forgotten your classics, sir? The world is the same everywhere, and in all times. Did not Martial celebrate the scandals of Chione and of Deiphobus? Did not Juvenal advertise the shame of noble Viento's lady, Hippias? And have not Ovid and Petronius made notorious the cuck-

oldery of the ancient world? No scandal indeed! Why, we have had it as near Wythe as Ripple Ford within a year. Do you remember Mrs. Wethermore?"

"Mrs. Wethermore?" cried Collingsworth, blushing furiously.

"Yes, the widow of one of the former members of our faculty. She had what is called an affair with a travelling salesman, and finally was forced to leave the village. To his credit, the man came and rescued her, and they are now living together near Lynchburg, I believe. It seems that she had been giving this man her favors for a number of years, off and on."

So that was the woman for the sake of shielding whose delicate reputation he had sacrificed his career at Wythe, made his parents suffer the sharp agony of humiliation, and had himself undergone a premature exile! All along she had been using him as a mere substitute for an absent lover. Well, now that her name was bandied about, he could at least unburden himself to his friends without the guilty sense of a betrayer. In a few short sentences, pregnant with self-reproach, he unfolded his downfall.

"Aha! So that was what was back of your drunken episode. I thought at the time that you were not the person to seek inebriety for its own sake. You see," Fitzpatrick continued, turning to Wallace, "our young friend here can't even drink, save for some puny principle or fantastic theory; can't even drink," he repeated, caressing with reverent fingers the dark bottle that sat before him. "I'll venture now that even the affair with the woman was prompted by some abstraction. You deserved to be fired, Collingsworth, you deserved it, sir. You are unworthy of a good bottle of brandy. The theory of gallantry is very pretty within limits—limits of common sense. It reminds me, however, of an uncle of mine—" And

he once more related with the same gusto as in other days, his favorite story of the blundering relative who killed his only child."

By this time, through the usual process of elimination, the company at Andrini's basement had been reduced to the more capable consumers of wine and the more insistent votaries of Momus and high talk. Martinis, Manhattans, Gibsons, silver fizzes, sloe-gin sours, absinthe frappes, good punch and thin claret had contributed to create the nearest approach to a tolerable democracy that may be realized on this happy planet; and under its ephemeral spell, sweet and harmless blasphemies rolled off the thickening tongues of men and maidens only to make a chanted sound like that of the murmur of a litany. Soft curses fell upon nationalism and its flags; round and modulated oaths against the tyranny of the government and the sycophantic injustice of the courts; pious vituperation was gracefully flung at the steeples of the church; and the breath of malediction went out upon all the gods from Olympus to Sinai. It was a beautiful moment, and the old teacher, more tolerant than ever under the mellowing influence of good liquor, smiled benignly upon the scene. It was not until some ungracious lout, who had but scurvily and with niggard economy paid his tribute to the cups, began to prate of a future time—after science should have done its work—when, for the sake of efficiency, men would swallow tablets as a puny substitute for food, that his magnanimity deserted him. In righteous wrath he rose unsteadily from his seat—.

"Sirs, I have listened in all charity to a multitude of heresies; I have heard our human institutions condemned, and our gods reviled upon their thrones; I have heard patriotism denounced in excellent Johnsonese as the last resort of scoundrels. I have been

unmoved and even amused; for all these things are but vain abstractions that may change within an hour. But I'm damned if I am going to sit in this company and harken to the ultimate blasphemy, this prophesy of evil, this profanation of the kitchen. The waiting palate against whose noble arches wine-red berries and succulent grapes, and the tender flesh of the wild red deer may soon be pressed by an eager tongue; the sensitive nostrils, quick to note the rising fragrance of many a right royal dish, and the rich bouquet of scented wine; against these altars no sacrilege will I hear. For Ceres and Dionysos, and the divinities of the hearth, and the gentle spirit that presides over the oven, are sacred realities before whom every head must bow in grateful reverence. I care not for theories of government spun out by knaves; the fate of democracy moves me not. One form of government is as good or bad as another, and every change is for the worse. The violent death of a senator, a fat and unctuous politician who sweats to maintain the rights of average mediocrity, is to me no more than the accidental crushing of an aphid. It is nothing, worse than nothing. Nor do I pay tribute to the hypothetical, save as to an amusing toy. But to the senses and the appetites, and to the sovereign arts that do them homage, I bend the knee in happy appreciation. Nay, when I think of these things—of bread and wine—I become assured that there is in this universe a great and awful Presence, a mystic divinity in Person; and I know that when our Lord partook of these elements on that last evening he was revealing the path of initiation to the great miracle of at-one-ment. What the Lord has made sacred, let no man revile." He sank back with an almost beatific smile.

Then they all arose, and, after a final toast and song, came forward and embraced the old man with many

tokens of affection. Even Jacobs seemed to wear a halo of good cheer. Trueman forgot to make his shocking order, and Canby went home to write a poem.

In a few weeks the term at the University was ended, and Fitzpatrick, who had proved a great success, took his leave.

“Forget any foolish thing I may have said in a moment of excess,” he remarked as he was about to enter his train. “I spend most of my days in an unhealthy academic atmosphere of modern Puritanism, so that when I escape I am a weakling, unable to sustain good drink in the manner proper to a gentleman. . . . And go ahead as you are—evolve backwards to your excellent grandsire. Live and drink—with moderation—, and when you come back to Virginia, I will be your neighbor. For I shall retire next year and go to live at Mill Creek. Goodbye. *Nil admirari*,—and *pax vobiscum*.”

THE ragman was at the back door, and Mary Gregg, with characteristic thoroughness, was intent upon ridding the house of its every bit of disused clothing. Already she had ransacked her protesting brother's wardrobe and dragged forth two dingy suits and an ancient over-coat; just now she was attacking Raymond Hughley.

"I'm sure you've a lot of things that are of no possible use to you. Just let me look at your closet. My, but you bachelors are a caution!"

Gregg, from the doorway, winked sympathetically at his friend and departed.

"Here are three pairs of dusty trousers that no self-respecting man should be allowed to appear in—ever," she announced, tossing them out into the room.

"They are good enough for working about the house in," Hughley excused himself weakly.

"No!"—emphatically. "And whoever could wear this coat with such a rent as that?"—holding out a blue serge garment critically.

"I thought it might be mended some time."

"Not that. You'd better go through the pockets of these things to see that you don't lose a fortune," she remarked caustically, continuing the search.

"Nothing in the pants anyway," said Hughley, half regretfully laying them aside. "But here is a pencil stub, an old letter from a teacher's agency, and—by Jove! an old notebook of mine. I wondered what had become of that."

"Well," announced Miss Gregg with one last lingering look at the now renovated closet, "I guess that is

everything. Wait just a moment and I will bring you the fortune."

"Hmp!" grunted the young man, beginning to turn the leaves of the recovered memorandum.

In a few moments she was back again. "For two coats, three vests and four pairs of trousers,—seventy-five cents!" She held up the two coins in triumph. "I really should ask a commission, but I shan't."

"See here!" exclaimed Hughely,—“I find something that I forgot to mention to you ages ago—let's see—why it's nearly three years. You get your Ph. D. this spring, don't you? . . . I thought so. You know Collingsworth?"

"Certainly,—your radical young classmate who lectures down-town. He's been here a number of times; what of him?"

"Why just this: when he first came up here he told me of seeing some fair goddess on the train. He got her initials—H. B. S.—and, from what he said, was quite smitten. I told him I would ask your help in locating her; but I guess he's forgotten all about it—never said anything more. Fact is, we're both so busy that we haven't seen much of each other of late. Here's the description." He read the notes in mock derision.

". . . . No, it doesn't say much for a fact. But, you bad boy, to have forgotten such a budding romance! It's a dirty shame; and there he had been keeping her in his heart for months. You are incorrigible," she accused, "but I'll try to atone for it. I'll bet I can find out—if it was one of those three, I can, at any rate. But has he fallen in love with someone else in the meantime?"

"Not unless it has been during the last four or five months," answered Hughely, "But the girl may have married and be the mother of twins by this, you know."

"Pessimist! It interests me. Here's your money... Let you know later."

"Thanks for the cleaning, Mary; at least it has restored my notebook."

"And has given me a Sherlock Holmes mystery to unravel," she called out over her shoulder.

(2)

"Hello! I see you have something to tell me," prophesied the teacher, as Miss Gregg burst into his office at the Dickenson School on the following Tuesday.

"I didn't get around to it until yesterday," she answered, dropping into a chair, "but I have some results. She is Helen Buell Sherwood. She studied at the University one year, went to New York on some research work for Vincent, and is back now, living on the North Side with her aunt."

"I should say that you have done pretty quick work," he hazarded.

"But I should have known in the first place, just as soon as I saw her name among the three. I've met her, and I don't blame your friend one bit for falling in love with her; she's a darling."

"Oh yes, I daresay. Well, perhaps you can give me a more accurate account of what she is like. How did you find out at last?"

"Doctor Vincent let me look through his files, and from even the brief description I gave, he placed her at once. She did a lot of research work for him on some municipal affairs. What is she like? Well—she is the kind that makes a man ask why in the world she would ever choose a career. Do you know what I mean? They would never ask me that; they just look at me and then think how fitting it is that I am

a teacher,"—with a resigned shrug of her shoulders.

"Oh, I say now!" interrupted Hughely, who really did not know what to say.

"No," she cautioned, holding up a finger of warning, "don't lie. . . . and then she is one of these rare women who wear the golden key of scholarship without being either ugly or stupid. She doesn't wear hers, by the way; and she refused, for all the urging, to go on for a Ph. D. She isn't going to teach, and instead of studying in the class room, she goes to New York or Europe, and now and then returns with several hundred pages of notes for somebody's study of municipal government."

"Why doesn't she publish them herself?" inquired the teacher, who was secretly doing a book on education.

"Her ambition doesn't seem to lie in that direction. She just wants to be doing something useful. Her father and mother are dead, and she has a lot of money, they say, so she feels that it is necessary to make some sort of return to society for a good education and the luxuries. But what puzzles me now is to know how to bring her and Jeffrey Collingsworth together."

"Why bother about it? They may both be engaged now. She has undoubtedly forgotten the incident, if she ever thought about it at all; and he would probably laugh if I mentioned it to him."

"I could invite them to the house for dinner some evening," she continued, ignoring the other,—“I think I could find an excuse for that. But, no, that would be too obvious. First thing I shall call, on the pretext that I want to know something about the data she has provided for Trenton's new book—*The Occupations of Women*. Then I will find a way to take her to

one of Mr. Collingsworth's lectures. I want to hear what he is like on the platform, anyway.

"It seems to me that you are a very determined matchmaker," remarked Hughley. "I didn't know that you went in for that sort of thing."

"I never get a chance, Raymond," she countered. "You and Alvin are so slow. Besides, every woman is something of a gamester in such matters, and it isn't so dull as teaching."

It is funny, thought Hughley, when she had gone, that I never noticed how attractive Mary Gregg is. So modest, too. Confound it, when Alvin advances my salary, I may. . . . But I wonder if she would listen to me?

(3)

The audience had been small. . . . no more than seven hundred people. The gallery had been empty, and not more than a score were in the balconies. Moreover, enthusiasm had been lacking, and the applause had been but occasional and half-hearted. These people did not care very much for literary discussions when they were without an iconoclastic sting. And Collingsworth had been trying to tell them that the anti-Victorian sentiment was apt to be exaggerated; that some of the bravest thinking, some of the most beautiful as well as virile writing in the world had been done in Victorian England. To this end, he had cited Pater, Hardy, Butler, Swinburne, Dickens, Rossetti, Disraeli, Wilde and Arthur Machen, as well as Darwin and Huxley. He had conceded the general tone of dreariness, primness, Puritanism; and had dismissed Tennyson, Browning and Gladstone with a gesture of disdain. But of all the Victorians his audiences had applauded only the scientists. It made him begin to doubt the validity of

science. He was glad now that there were only three months more. Then he would be free to write nonsense, and read as much as he liked. Occasionally he would do something serious, such as an article on sociology, he thought, as he put on the light spring overcoat in the dressing room. Perhaps he would be keener about helping to advance humanity when he should no longer be a professing humanist, forced to meet so many stupid humans. He adjusted the silk scarf about his neck.

"Beastly cold, this March weather," he remarked to an attendant. "I'd like to live where the winter can break up decently and have done with it." He walked slowly down the side exit that led into the foyer.

Of late he had made a practice of lingering in the little dressing room at the back of the stage until he was quite sure of meeting no one at the entrance. Only Wallace or Kupmeyer could find him, and the latter had about given him up.

"The devil" he whispered as he came suddenly to the foyer, "Some women! I suppose they will want a reading list, or to ask what spritual significance there is in Salome, or whether I wasn't too flippant about Browning, or what were the facts about Disraeli's love affairs." Outwardly he managed an anticipatory smile. Just then the two women who had been the cause of this silent fury turned, and he recognized Mary Gregg. Restored at once to an amiable mood, he sprang forward—

"Oh, I am surprised! I've never seen you here before. Were you in my audience today? Thank you so much for coming. Where are Alvin and Ray?"—His happiness was quite evident.

"I think you have seen, but not met my friend, Miss Sherwood, Mr. Collingsworth. . . ."

As he bowed the acknowledgment, he noticed this lady's face for the first time—since. . . .

“Oh, why—I believe I have met,—or at least seen you before; certainly, I remember now. . . .” And, as the memory returned, his face, for some unexplainable reason, became quite red.

“Really!—where was it, I wonder?” she inquired, a little puzzled. “I thought, during your lecture—parts of which, by the way, I enjoyed very much—that your face was familiar; but I'm curious to know where we could have met.”

“I have never forgotten,” confessed Jeffrey. “It was one spring day about three years ago, when I was coming from Argyle on my first trip to Chicago. I got up to leave the train several miles before we reached the depot, and you were good enough to enlighten me.”

“Of course; it comes back to me now.” She laughed merrily—“And you were rude enough to comment on Chicago's smells!”

“It was horrid of me, but I don't notice them now; my senses are too thoroughly dulled. But I am delighted to see you again. . . . Won't you two come with me to the Annex, for tea?” he invited somewhat awkwardly.

“That would be lovely,” agreed Mary Gregg with instant enthusiasm, “but afterwards you are both to come with me out to the flat—it is an acceptable condition?—, for Ray will be expecting us. Alvin is away for the week end, and won't be back till late. We'll have Welsh Rarebit and beer, Mr. Collingsworth,” she added by way of additional temptation.

For Jeffrey the affair was not altogether a success. Somehow he could not say the things he wanted to say, and he blushed at almost every remark that he made. “Why is it,” he kept wondering, “that I can't

act like a grown-up man?" He had, by this, grown very accustomed to such encounters, and felt quite a man-of-the world; but just now he couldn't think of a thing—that could be said aloud. If he could have given himself free range, he thought, he would have made some such speech as this:—

"So, Helen Sherwood—you who were the girl of my dreams for a season, and are no whit the less lovely for the intervening time, nor for the actuality—, here you are sitting opposite me within the reach of my hand; and yet, somehow, with the lapse of the brief seasons, my heart does not yearn as it did, nor come near to that ineluctable bliss that I had fancied it would feel in your gracious presence. Still, I am right glad that you are neither Simpson, nor yet Smith, and that you are clad in a simple crepe-de-chine waist that permits me to see the white loveliness of your adorable neck. And while I thought, a second since, that time had most unkindly erased your image and encased my soul in hardness against the magic of your voice, I am now become less sure of that sad fate. In fact, I think, now, as then, that you are the most delicious, and down-right human being in all the world. True, your teeth, I plainly see, are not pearls, but honest, generous and capable—teeth; and neither are your lips like rubies, for they bear no stain to be erased by the vulgar napkins of a hostelry, and have none of the fiery coldness of a jewel to be set in silver; nor is your throat like that of a swan, for that would be all too slender and serpentine and feathery: For all these things I thank God. But your voice is like music, and there are blossoms on your cheeks very like the arbutus when it comes in spring, and as natural; and your eyes, while not pools of anything, speak volumes of forth-right honesty. I suspect that I love you already!"

Aloud he was saying:

"Thanks, I will have another cake. . . . how long are you going to remain in Chicago this time, Miss Sherwood?"

"Probably a year, probably forever, unless there is something more to be done outside. Just now I am studying the Chicago milk supply, and that may take ages."

"Whatever are you going to do with the dairies?" he asked in some surprise.

"Get rid of most of them," she returned with determination. "You would be amazed to know of the filth that exists about the dairies and milk depots in this city. They are a source of untold disease—flies, and stench—ugh! I hope that when my report goes in conditions will change. But I do feel sorry for some of them. One man out on the southwest side, who has a little dairy barn, told me only yesterday that if the things that I urged were required, he would be ruined. His two children and a nephew are his only assistants,—his wife is bed-ridden. But his place is simply hopeless; a single building, one room for the milk-vats and separators, and the adjoining one—quite large—is for the cows. Overhead the family lives, all five of them—and there are no screens. It will have to go, I am afraid, for he hasn't the money to make a single improvement."

"What a work for a woman to be doing!" he ejaculated.

"It is splendid, I think," cried Mary Gregg—"and if we waited for the men, nothing would be done. Certainly the politicians are not going to attack it; they would let us all die of the plague."

"But it is the profit system that causes these conditions," Jeffrey objected. "That is where we must strike to cure these things. If we once get rid of the

cause, the superficial effects will take care of themselves.”

“It is a great deal nicer to attack a principle in a comfortable theatre, than to strike at a condition in a stable; I know {that,” replied Miss Sherwood, with some energy. “I’d rather do it myself, and I don’t deny its usefulness,” she added, fearing that she had spoken too bluntly. “What the radicals are doing is all very well for a life-work, \but meantime, if some of the temporary symptoms are not taken care of, the race will perish of infantile paralysis, typhoid and tuberculosis.”

“I daresay you are quite right,” he admitted, though in his heart he resented the fact of her having to go into such filthy places.

“If it were just the well-to-do, and the business men who {had to die as a result of this condition, I shouldn’t turn a hand; but it’s the helpless little tots of the poor who can’t afford the certified milk, that move me.”

“I wish you would take me on one of your investigating trips,” Collingsworth plead, having had a sudden flash of inspiration.

“They’re not pleasure jaunts,” she warned doubtfully, “but if you would be interested, I should be glad to have you come along. Tuesday I shall be visiting a number of places on the West Side—some of the very worst, I’m told. Would you \care to join me then?”

“Most assuredly,” he responded with a zest not born of the remotest interest in pure milk.

“Poor old Ray will wonder what in the world has become of us,” said Mary Gregg, glancing at her watch and rising from the table, “We must run along.”

Mary was jubilant, and when, after a long session

of nonsense and much laughter, her guests had departed—Collingsworth made happy by having the privilege of seeing Helen Sherwood to the station—, she and Hughley ran up the steps to their apartments, she could not refrain from clapping her hands—

“Aren’t they both just dear?”

“He looked as though he would like to eat her, but I can’t say that she showed any desire to be a breakfast food,” Hughley remarked. “I should say that they are woefully unsuited for each other. Collingsworth is all for the general the abstract, the theoretical. She is concrete, practical; she is more logical than he is.”

“But you have been telling me how radical he is, and I didn’t find him a bit like that today. He was quite detached, balanced and impersonal—too much so if anything—, and he defended Victorian literature as no radical would ever think of doing. But he seemed sad and down-cast about something. He sounded as if he were reading his lecture and was tired.”

“Did you ever hear of how Jonah went to Ninevah and told the people that they were going to be destroyed; and then, when they weren’t, as he had expected, was grievously disappointed? Well, that’s Collingsworth:—he went out to reform the world in a whirlwind of fire, and because things didn’t happen, he’s through with it.”

“Your analogy is poor, even if that were the whole of Jonah’s story. Here is what I think has happened: Your friend paints, in his mind, pictures of an ideal world; then, when he goes out, he expects to find them hanging in the galleries. Instead he discovers ugliness everywhere, and then reproaches himself with the bad work. He is too introspective and too impa-

tient. Why I think they're just suited to each other because they are so different."

"She is interested in her work, not men."

"That may come later," said Mary Gregg, determined to look on the brighter side of a romance in which she was now taking a very personal interest. "But I was afraid that she would say some of the terribly frank things she is credited with, and shrivel poor Mr. Collingsworth's soul. You know, when she first met Dr. Potter out at the University, she was talking along casually about something, when suddenly she noticed his cravat, and without thinking said—'What an awful tie!' then both she and Potter blushed furiously."

"Good Heavens! Is she like that?"

"She is absolutely spontaneous. When she feels a thing, she says it, come what may. And yet, on the other hand, she thinks with deliberation. . . . Well, I've done what I could to repair your carelessness, Ray, and now I think I'll go to bed."

XXXIV

(1)

BACK at her home town in Indiana the people had thought, when the girl was in her teens, that Helen Sherwood was destined to be a breaker of hearts. Not that she had been given to more than normal flirtations, or was too frivolous; but there had been that in the dancing eyes, as in the ripples of mischievous laughter, which caused wise old men to shake their heads regretfully and the old women to sigh as they looked upon their sons or grandsons: "She'd make a fine match," they would often say, "but I'm thinkin' she'll hear 'em all before she ever decides. She don't seem settled like. It's a pity her pore mother was took away before the 'child quit wearing her short skirts. . . . No, no man, even if he is as good as the old Jedge, is ever fitten to look after a girl."

And she had listened to them all, or nearly all, before she was well out of high school. Most of these proposals came from young hearts, unsullied by any ulterior motive and filled to the overflowing with the palpitant urge of a first romance; a few—from the older men—sprang from the added factor of Judge Sherwood's reputed wealth. She laughed at them all.

Then she had gone to Oberlin and come in contact, through books, with the serious fact of social problems, the very existence of which she had never dreamed, and, through the young women she met, with the notion that a woman must have a more purposive career than that of comforter to a petulant husband. To these ideas she made but little response

until, at the beginning of her junior year, the death of her father brought her face to face with the overwhelming actuality of a multitude of responsibilities. On return to college she determined to address herself no longer to a merely general curriculum that might do well enough as a prelude to a life of ease, but to become familiar with the sources of wealth, the conduct of business, and the backgrounds of politics. She wanted to know why she had wealth, how to maintain it, and what she might, with some high purpose in mind, do with it.

Thus it came about that with this access of zeal she not only made Phi Beta Kappa, but went out with the distinction of being one of the most thorough students of applied economy the college had known.

At the University of Chicago, after one year of graduate work, she had been advised to take an advanced degree and promised a place on the faculty, but this she had scorned as an idle and unadventurous life, lending itself too easily to a secluded narrowness, and, finally, begetting the cunning caution of unworthy fear. Universities, like churches, she saw, were controlled, in the last analysis, by average stupidity. And her father, an undogmatic man in all things, had taught her the wisdom of freedom. "Two heads may at times be better than one, but three heads make insanity," he was fond of saying; and he had kept as clear of parties as he did of churches or mobs. So, instead of dwelling with the theories of things, she had gone out on special errands of fact-gathering for certain scholars; partly because of a feeling of definite social obligation, and partly for the adventure with life. And to all appearances she was content with this state of things; so content that on her occasional visits to southeast Indiana, her father's onetime partner, old Samuel

Phillips, who was now a sort of agent for her estates, would scold her by the hour.

“Just fancy! A pretty girl like you gadding around the slums of God knows what city, inspecting the dirty babies of these umph foreigners (Mr. Phillips suppressed the stronger expletive in the presence of ladies), and looking after their drains, and collecting figures on municipal graft. Bah! I wish I were a younger man.”

To which Helen would reply, in bantering tones, that perhaps, when she had done all that she could of her duty as an unrecognized citizen of the Republic, she might consent to settle down to the business of respectable wifeness. It would be, she urged, a quiet prelude to a peaceful death.

The actual experiences as an investigator of municipal affairs had strengthened, in two ways, the determination to go on with her work; the corruption that was daily uncovered convinced her that business interests dominated both politics and politicians; the politicians, from the alderman to the senators, were either ignorant near-imbeciles, vulgar and stupid, or equally vulgar knaves. They were, to her mind, the results of a man-made government, and the indifference of gentlemen who washed their hands of such things. A woman was needed to protect the interests of the coming generation against such devastating greed and stupidity. In the second place, the antics of certain feminists, and of sentimental women in politics who were trying to meddle with reforms in such a manner as to make an informed woman blush for her sex, caused her to feel that it was high time for women with common sense and humor to take a hand in affairs, if for no other purpose than to show that all women are not fools. To this end she went about such work as she had to do without the flare of

publicity; and never, even when engaged in unearthing the most noisome scandal, consented to an interview.

It made life exciting, some of these ventures of hers, and the sense of opposition turned an otherwise dull and colorless task into something of a lark. Then there were the men; more than half of the politicians she was forced to meet, moved to sudden passion by her charms, came to a conclusion, begotten of their desires, that a woman in public is a public woman, and endeavored to act as, under the circumstances, such men act. They regretted it instantly, and she went away amused. "What ridiculous lobsters politicians are!" she would comment.

Nevertheless, on certain spring days, despite the serious nature of her self-appointed tasks, Helen would sigh, and share the restlessness of the whole organic world—that is to say, that part of it which is not overcome by anemia and crippled with that envious incapacity which is known among humans by the name of Puritanism. Under the spell of discontent Helen the Woman would brush aside Miss Sherwood the Civic Reformer, and wonder if in the whole world there were a man with the brains and decency of her father, who didn't have a paunch.

Mrs. Montgomery, surprising her niece in these moods, would endeavor, at such times, to introduce "a very, very nice young man, my dear, and so intelligent. Not that I would think for a moment of marriage, or of interferring with your work, but. . . ."

Invariably Helen found these nice young men extremely dull and either very serious, or too like the cover designs of a summer magazine. And to avoid some of the patently well-arranged social designs on the part of her aunt, she had taken a little apartment

overlooking the north end of Lincoln Park; it was both a workshop and a refuge.

Not that her aunt was a nuisance, she would explain—for Mrs. Montgomery was one of those young old ladies who flutter about in the constant endeavor to keep abreast of the latest idea, and to smile benignly upon the most extreme vagary of modern life—, but that the old dear was too determined that her niece should not utterly waste herself upon the sterile altars of civic righteousness.

(2)

“Aren’t you going to take any kind of a vacation, Helen dear?” her aunt questioned one mid-summer day, when even the cool proximity of the lake was unavailing against the terrific heat. “I thought that milk investigation would end weeks ago, especially since you have such an enthusiastic assistant.”

Perhaps it was the weather or some passing reflection, but it seemed to Mrs. Montgomery that a faint increase of color was perceptible on Helen’s cheek.

“I am most through, Auntie, but you see, there are the reports to write, and it may take several weeks,” she replied, stirring her iced-tea very thoughtfully.

“It didn’t seem to me that Mr. Collingsworth was exactly the kind of a man who would enjoy inspecting milk depots and the like—at least that was the impression I got from the two or three times he has been here. I liked him though, such old fashioned manners, and quaint expressions—very unlike most young people. Too bad he is a lecturer.”

Helen’s aunt was a very sensible woman in most respects, and while she might enjoy hearing what the speaker said about Moliere or Yeats, she entertained for his profession, as for his person, a profound dis-

trust, born of the knowledge that oratory and orators are alike vulgar. Surprised as well as disappointed when she found that her niece's young friend was engaged in such business, she had been startled on the occasion when, in response to her questions, he had voiced her own thoughts by adding to his declaration—

“A very low and sorry trade, madame; a prostitution of fine phraseology and clear thinking to the mean understanding and ignoble enthusiasm of the mob. I am glad to say that I am abandoning it for the more detached occupation of scribbler.”

“Wonderful!” she had replied, relieved by his assurance, “But before you do I should like you to speak for our Modern Authors Club. I am glad you feel that way about lecturing; still, being on the program committee of my club, I like to secure good speakers, and I will admit that lectures do one good; they save us the dreary task of much reading.” (Mrs. Montgomery had caught this much of the spirit of her age and class:—an insatiable appetite for tabloid information).

And, under the circumstances, Jeffrey, by now willing to placate a hundred thousand of Helen's relations, if need be, had been able to do no less than to acquiesce.

“Do you know what kind of things he is going to write?” the aunt went on, speculating over Helen's sudden abstraction.

“Essays and short stories, I believe. He writes for the syndicates.”

“Oh,”—visibly impressed by the word ‘syndicate’—“I do hope that if he ever comes to write novels, he won't be tempted to do one of those miserable autobiographies that so many of the young men are doing since Samuel Butler's example.”

"I suppose they haven't imagination enough to do anything else," Helen remarked, ringing for me ice. "But even that is better than these sappy romances by incorrigible optimists. Anyway, Mr. Collingsworth is interested in more serious problems—knows a lot about the theory of things—and has made, since he has lived in Chicago, a great many hazardous ventures in behalf of the poor. He is," concluded with a slight undercurrent of defiance, "a very nice young man, and has been of great assistance to me."

"I mean nothing seriously derogatory by regretting that he had been a speaker, my dear," the aunt hastened to say "and I feel much better to know that you are accompanied on those frightful excursions of yours. Still I do think you should take a rest and go with me up to Fox Lake or to the Dells for a while—you might induce Mr. Collingsworth to go along, if you are going to work on those reports—, besides it would be convenient to have a man along." Mrs. Montgomery looked at her niece to mark the effect of this last suggestion.

But Helen was on guard. "Do you think then, that a man is so needful, Aunt Kate?" she questioned with an affectation of langour that was thinly transparent to the discerning lady sitting opposite.

"I think that a young woman with your complexion and directness makes a poor business of concealing her feelings," said her aunt with a merry laugh, "so I am going to kiss you here, and here, and leave you to your thoughts."

(3)

When the light of the moon plays upon the lapping waters of a willow-bordered lake, and the slightest motion of a tiny boat suffices to make the reflected stars dance about like drunken fairies; when the sky

overhead is an innocent blue, and the very whispers of every vagrant breeze are laden with the murmurs of passion-heavy flowers; when the little boat has crept softly beneath the unsubstantial shadows of an overhanging tree; and when, therein and closer together, perhaps, than is strictly necessary, there are a man and a maiden in whose veins is the blood of youth; then, O putrid cabbage head of Respectability—any beautiful thing may happen.

And it did!—Once, . . . twice, . . . thrice. But how many stars are there in the heavens? Madam Grundy, if she were listening by the shore of the lake, would have heard nothing, even if she had strained her ears (which, by the way, I hope she did). And the delicious moments when their mouths burned upon one another were not timed to harmony with a censor. And the fate of Democracy—which is, at best, but a poor and transient thing—was left to the soiled hands and shoddy heads of Demos; the idle questions that vex the tormented minds of a thousand sap-drained metaphysicians were all forgot in the compelling presence of a more ancient wisdom.

To record their words would be to set down a delirious symbology of nonsense—the same in all ages—beneath which is hid the very core of the meaning of life and the sum of truth; but which, in the act of saying, conveys, to foreign ears, but the lisping patter of fools. It is needless, therefore, to say that because of the passion of a second they swore, within hearing of the shifting sand, to an everlasting fidelity; or to observe that they embraced with such ardour as nearly to upset the boat. From what the moon was vouchsafed to see through the overhanging boughs, the two were full of joyance; and if the moon were satisfied, that is enough.

There were two cottages side by side, and into them,

when the stars began to pale, and after many tender assurances, went the man and the maid. And she, when she had gone to her bed, sank into the dreamless sleep of tired satisfaction, and about her bruised red lips was a smile.

With him it was otherwise, and the dawn was quite come before he slept; for there was yet a flavor and a fragrance about his lips that he must need recall again and yet again. And when he slept, there were visions that came;—a troupe of beautiful girls, and their leader was Helen; and in her hair there were blue hyacinths, and a band of beryls was about her brow; and about her feet were the fallen petals of pink roses, and her feet were white like new ivory. And his cup of happiness was full.

Right merry they were at the noon breakfast the next day, though Jeffrey blushed very vividly when Helen had been able to contain their secret no longer than it took to take two bites of grapefruit. And if the stupid creatures were surprised at Aunt Kate's lack of amazement, they were no less glad at her cordial acceptance of a new nephew.

“As if it weren't written all over your faces!” she exclaimed, laughing at their dismay. Nevertheless, as is wont to be, for some reason, there were tears in her laughter.

Mrs. Montgomery was not sorry to know that her niece was engaged. Not that she disapproved of women taking a part in life, but because she felt that such a part must be brief and soon acted—a prelude to better things, she was used to say. And she did not regret Jeffrey, for had not her niece rejected all the likely young men of her acquaintance? And there must be someone. She liked his looks, his voice, his taste in clothes, and his old-fashioned manners (for

he had taken care to revive the little customs that he once had scorned, and was not now so particular to affect the Northern ways), and the tender glances that he bestowed upon Helen. Already she had inquired somewhat into his ancestry—she was born in other days—, and approved of the son of a clergyman as a fitting match for a lawyer's daughter. True, the Presbyterian part was not altogether agreeable to one who was of a more ancient faith, attended St. Peters at Easter time, and observed Lent, but still the son of a clergyman was the son of a clergyman; and if evil things were said of such offspring, the fact remained that, in her eyes, he was a gentleman.

So they were all filled with a restless content.

That is what love does.

(4)

The days at Fox Lake passed with the rapidity of seconds, and life for the two lovers was so completely a thing of caressing glances and contented sighs, and clasped hands that reports, and investigations and all problems whatsoever were as if they had not been. That fretful midge, the human reason, ceased to trouble them—Phi Beta Kappa or not—with its buzz, buzz of busy impudence, and the "I think" gave way to "We feel." So it was in Paradise, until there was a snake.

This state of things could not last forever, alas, and all too soon there came the dreary necessity of returning to the city. Mrs. Montgomery must do this and that for the club, and something else for St. Peters.

A city does not of necessity kill passion—it may inflame it in a certain artificial way—, but to those who have been used to fields and forests as settings for their day-dreams, the city is not provocative of

the finer moods; at least not the American city. There are the noises, the cries of news venders, and those innumerable affronteries by means of which progressive industrialism thrusts itself at one from every turn. One begins at once to think in the terms of Veblen, Shaw, and the pamphleteers. And they call this returning to earth!

There had been, as yet, no word of when the marriage would take place; the formidable expression had not been uttered, nor had it been consciously present to any save Helen's aunt who had already, in her mind, been making pictures of its slightest details, and who had no doubt of its being done, with due solemnity, in her own church.

First thing for Collingsworth came the distressing news that he would have to get out of the apartment in which, ever since he had left the Futurists, he had been very comfortably housed. He hated moving; more so now that the walls of his room bristled with books. But since the place was to be overhauled, and the landlord's word was final, he set about a task that would have been frightfully dull, had not Helen volunteered her assistance. For her the idea of house-hunting was no end of fun; and with her the fact itself took on an attraction that as unbelievable. And when, after two days of tramping about, with many pleasant interludes of tea and ices, a place was found, he was uncertain whether to be glad or not. The place was likely enough: a small brick building, formerly a stable belonging to an imposing atrocity in yellow brick which, with the growth of the city, had given way to apartments. By some miracle this little edifice was, instead of being converted into a garage, turned into a very habitable two-roomed cottage, such as is frequently rented under the dignified title of studio. It had a bath, and, what was equally neces-

sary, but, to Jeffrey, not so desirable, a telephone.

"Confound telephones! They are a nuisance; interrupt one's reading and one's sleep. I suppose I will have to put up with it though."

"But you can talk to me over this hateful invention, can't you? Will that be so dreadful?"

"Oh I had forgotten that. . . . of course now, it is different." The janitor, who had admitted them being out of the room for a moment, Jeffrey demonstrated just how different he felt that it was.

"But I am sorry you didn't want me on the North Side near you," he said presently.

"We'd never get anything done, Jeffrey. No, this is far better for both of us. Here you are so near to the Field Museum, one block from Hyde Park Boulevard, and almost on the edge of the Lake. It's lovely, and it will make variety for us when we visit one another."

"Will you come to see me. . . . here. . . . at my cottage?" Jeffrey was just a little startled by this casual proposal. He knew that she was not precisely conventional, that she had read too much and seen too much for that; but he had feared that she might, in the last analysis, be afraid to put one of his two remaining heterodoxies into practice. What did she mean by "visit" at his cottage?

"Certainly, silly boy; I thought you were dreadfully radical, but then you've never been to Europe, have you? Well, you see, you are going to fit this room for a study, reception room or studio, as you please; the other is to be your bedroom. You will receive here, Mr. Old-Fashion, any men or women you choose to invite. You rationalists are as stiff as Covenanters."

"I am not old-fashioned," he protested, irritated by the charge, "I didn't say that there was anything

wrong about your coming. On the contrary, I was afraid you wouldn't. I'm delighted."

"In your mind, yes, when you come to reason about it. But just for a moment, sir, you were a wee bit shocked," she accused, pinching his cheek slightly. "You still have some of the village obscenities left among your instincts. All country preachers, and cross-roads old maids think that when a young woman visits a young man's room that happens which, if similarly circumstanced, they would wish to happen to them. But this is Chicago, and, what is more to the point, the twentieth century; and, Jeffrey dear, this room is ever so much nicer than most of those box-like studios. You must hurry and get moved into it."

* * * *

She was a wonderful companion, he reflected, thinking over the incident days afterwards when he was snugly established in his little house; beautiful, thoughtful of others, passionate, and modern. How modern, he wondered. He had told her of Nellie, and Lois, and Martha—everything. She had seemed mildly interested and not jealous. She didn't know women were like that, she had said; she had thought such conduct was reserved for men. But she hadn't been shocked by the relation; thought it was better that men have experience of that kind than the usual thing. Such affairs would better happen before marriage; then one knew.

Marriage? Would she insist upon that? They hadn't really spoken of it; were they actually drifting into marriage? Some of his books leaned down to frown upon the very idea. By Jove! They would better talk that matter over at once. At Fox Lake it had not seemed important; just now it loomed up formidably. It must not be.

No, marriage was the death of romance, he reasoned;

and his love for Helen was too beautiful a thing to be subjected to such a test. Free, people endeavored constantly to please, never grew too familiar, kept on the stretch to be interesting; and thus, striving to meet the expectations of the other with frequent surprise, became something themselves. Married, they sagged, took one another for granted, and thus became stupid. His father had for years dominated Mrs. Collingsworth in opinions as in life. He loved her no doubt, but he had crushed what individuality she had. Perhaps it was better now that he had left the ministry; that was enough to make anyone disagreeable. A minister had to see to it that his wife's clothes were just so, not too fine for Mrs. A., and good enough for Mrs. B. Well, age and trouble and life at the farm had remedied that, but the fact remained: legality made a mess of love. People should be able to live together in freedom with all the fineness and reverence and loyalty that blind idealists still attribute to marriage. Yes, he would insist upon that. . . . he would fight for that as for freedom of speech. . . . they were the two things left in which he could believe enough to fight. . . . Socialism? Hardly. Perhaps, if it weren't for the Socialists; it was merely interesting, but the others were vital—had to do with life as it was actually lived under the sun. . . . Confound that rat! What was he eating?

Oh bother, he must finish that story before morning. . . . where was he? . . . Yes, that was it. . . . Damned nonsense. Why did people pay for such stuff? He sharpened his pencil. But they did, and there was some money in it; one must live, especially now that there was Helen to be considered. There was no turning back. He began to write eagerly.

And the rat gnawed all night in the attic overhead, and wondered why the intruder below soiled but did not eat the paper that lay before him.

WHILE the tea was brewing, Helen arranged the roses he had brought, placing them thoughtfully in a great bronze Chinese bowl. Jeffrey sat crouched forward on the edge of the Empire couch, his chin resting in his hands so as to give his face some semblance to that of a benevolent gargoyle. He allowed his gaze to wander from her deft fingers long enough to make an appreciative survey of the room. The old black oak hundred-legged table on which the girl was placing the flowers, the little butterfly stand in the corner, the curious old kettle-front secretary with its graceful cabinet top, the ladder-backed Chippendales, the etchings on the wall—Cameron's, Haden's, Whistler's—the soft gray rugs, all made a very satisfying appeal. There was not too much; there was none of the stiff newness of the strict period manner so inescapable at Mrs. Montgomery's; it was comfortable, spacious, elegant, simple. So many of the places where he went were soft, fluffy and suffocating; typifying the ambitions as well as the cultural level of their owners. This was just right; and there was enough of age and dignity about the few pieces that Helen had brought from her home to make him feel that their forebears would have never quarrelled. There was no trace of a gold fish and canary atmosphere to spoil it all.

Helen, too, was lovely this afternoon, in a simple house-dress of gobelin blue silk. The tips of her ears were just visible beneath a fluff of brown hair. The blue was of just that shade to accentuate the adorable pink in her cheek. What a lucky devil he was!

"I just had a note from Mary Gregg, dear, and you can't think what has happened to her." Helen stepped back to survey the flowers with a smile of appreciation.

"Been elected to a head-professorship somewhere? Principal of a school?"

"No!"—with disgust—"Can't you think of Mary in some other terms? I'm afraid most people never see below the surface. Mary is beautiful; too good by far for your academic fossil-friend, Hughley."

"Hughley!"—she isn't going to. . . . ?

"She is going to marry Raymond Hughley, and she is as happy as a bird."

"What a world! Why, I never dreamed of either of them marrying. Hughley used to go about with girls at Argyle—always with a different one—, but I thought he and Mary were more like brother and sister."

"That is a very good basis for marriage—good enough for most,—and I fancy they will continue just like that; a slow, comparatively happy existence, with little excitement; he with his experiments and she with the mending. . . . But," she broke off suddenly, "I was forgetting tea, and you look starved."

"I am a little tired," he said, taking one of the sandwiches, "Aunt Kate's lecture is my last. The women's clubs are as silly as the cults. I'm not sure but they are not cults."

Helen was amused. "I hope you didn't shock poor Aunt Kate?"

"No, I didn't shock anybody, and I wasn't shocked. If I were as big a fool as I was when I came north, I suppose I would go on lecturing to these females in the hope that sometime and somewhere there would be a really intelligent and serious group of people; but I don't have to taste everything on the bill of fare now in order to know what is good."

"You throw away the entire bill?"

"So far as groups go, yes. I'll tell you what they were like." Jeffrey was suddenly animated with diabolical glee:—

"Serious women, rows and rows of them, ages indeterminate; a sprinkling of unused lorgnettes. They carry about fat, uncut volumes of Bergson and Eucken, or whatever happens to be the rage at the moment, and chatter in a jargon about creative mind, and intuition, freewill and duration. One exclaims—'Oh, isn't Bergson spiritual! I am so uplifted by him; and the life force just simply makes me tingle!'"

"One fool woman wanted to know whether 'dear Nietzsche wasn't really Bergson in poetry?'—Bah! Then there are the sticky women who come up afterwards and want to know, confidentially, if you really believe in Nietzsche's morals; and follow that by suggesting that their unspeakable husbands are away from home! . . . and that for old Friederich who was a recluse and taught a morality that makes the ten commandments seem soft as dough!"

Helen was convulsed.

"Do you know," he continued, "I believe there is a definite ratio of these nymphomaniacs to certain unfortunate writers. I have compared notes with other speakers on this same point. If one lectures to, say, five hundred women on Bernard Shaw, five will come forward afterward to ogle and demonstrate the Ann Whitfield instinct; if it is Hauptmann—particularly if the *Sunken Bell* is rung in—, there will be ten; if Nietzsche, fifteen; Maeterlinck, twenty; and I should be afraid what would happen at a Whitman lecture."

"But the same thing happens to women who try to do anything in public," she countered with a chuckle. "One out of five business men, and nine out of ten politicians try the same tactics with me

when I mention even so prosaic a thing as sewer-pipes to them. And every actress is run after by tired business men and young fops."

"I know. It's silly—artificial. They all make such grave pretenses about it. It would be better if people just went and took what they wanted in the name of what they always seem to desire. Why dress it up with some poor devil of an author? It's our rotten age, I suppose."

"I think you are wrong," said Helen. "It is merely that humans are new to civilization and certain subtle indirections; and their attempts to disguise ancient impulses become ludicrous. I imagine that when Christianity began to be preached, the frumpy old society ladies murmured together—'How radical! How advanced, how immoral, my dear, setting aside our ethics and our gods!' and went out forthwith to hold the hands of the street preachers."

"Herds have always been silly, and I have been the silliest of all in expecting anything of them," he confessed mournfully.

"Here, take some more tea, and you won't be so downhearted," Helen suggested with a mischievous smile. "Food and drink help us to keep a balance of healthy meliorism in these matters. Oh, and I will get some Sauterne; it is the only wine I have in the house, and it will have to do."

"Ah! that is excellent, and there is something in your philosophy, I will admit," he conceded, eyeing the remaining sandwiches thoughtfully. "It is astonishing; how much more amusing the universe seems after a generous meal. That doesn't alter what I said, however. But you and what you have fed me make me feel much better. And that reminds me that on the way down from the club house, I sketched a little story." Jeffrey drew forth a piece of note paper.

"It's just an outline, but I think it will be amusing."

The scene of the story was laid in Heaven where, leaning upon the ramparts were Jesus, Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, Nietzsche, Walt Whitman and John Wesley, looking down with profound disgust upon their silly disciples who were busily engaged in warping and twisting and quarrelling over the teachings of their departed leaders; converting them into dogmas that utterly destroyed their spirit, and defeated the ends for which they had been promulgated.

"Oh what perversion of democracy!" exclaimed Whitman; "What profanation of faith!" from Wesley; "Muddle-heads," said Nietzsche; "Pharisees, hypocrites," sighed Jesus; "Fools," cried Darwin, and at the word he spat copiously upon his bickering disciples. Following his example, all the great leaders began to ensalivate their clamorous adherents, and in this task they were aided by all the prophets and teachers of Heaven, until, upon the earth beneath, there rose a great stream, inundating the planet, and finally, threatening the very solar system. Rabelais, standing near, suggested a more fitting method for visiting contempt upon these scurvy fellows, but the prophets, while they chuckled at the proposal, feared that celestial censorship would prevent its being put into execution. When the planetary system disappeared from view, the great leaders gave a sigh of content: "Now we can breathe," they said.

Jeffrey replaced the notes and took a sip of wine, questioning with his eyes.

"I suppose it is just," Helen agreed with a frown, "but I think Jesus would not have approved of the method. He would rather have felt such pity and disappointment that he would have drowned them all with his tears; add that, and you may make an excel-

lent story. But where would you get such a thing published?"

"I'm tempted sometimes to start a small publishing house, and bookshop," he said, "with a very select stock of old and rare books, and just such modern things as seem to me worth while. I should like to put out new editions of some of the seventeenth century English translations. If I had a place of that kind I might, now and then, print some things that otherwise could never be done. My writing does not keep me occupied enough; and if I am going to work I want something that is part play."

"Bookselling makes people stuffy, doesn't it?" she inquired, sceptically.

"There is no end of excitement in it," declared Jeffrey. "Finding first editions, association volumes, to say nothing of tempting people to buy fine things when they are looking for trash, provides a lot of entertainment. Think of the opportunity: a man comes in to buy the *Hid 'en Hand* and you sell him *Marius the Epicurean!*"

"That would be fun," Helen observed, settling herself on the couch within reach, and looking as if she felt that other occupations would be infinitely more amusing.

And they were.

* * * *

Not until the latter part of September was Jeffrey able to approach the problem that he so much dreaded—marriage. Every day she had seemed more dear, and the dearer she grew the more fearful he became. She was very necessary to his life, he felt; not simply because of the lure of her beautiful body and the exquisite charm of her face—though they were enough, in all conscience, to tempt him—, but also, yes, and chiefly, because of her enthusiasms, her

vitality, genuineness and intelligence. He found that she was by no means typical of either the feminists or the reformers; there was nothing angular nor hysterical about the woman. And there was something unusual about the quality of her mind. Feminine? Yes, and easily moved to tears; but never to sobs. She loved to be kissed, petted and even teased, and during these moments she did not descend to prosaic trivialities.

Nor did she meet questions after the manner of women; there were no evasions, no shocks. One could speak to her with the same frankness with which one was accustomed to address men. If there were a sudden engagement, there was no need for elaborate explanations. She was frank, and expected others to be equally so. Whatever came into her mind she spoke out, and she welcomed the same from her companion. Well, in a word, she was, to Jeffrey, perfect.

Still, there were his ideals. He had battled for them in his way, and had suffered. With all the disillusionments he clung to his theories of free marriage with pathetic earnestness.

All the way across town he had planned his speech. He must make her know just how much he wanted her,—and that forever. And he must make clear that he was no cheap varietist, chasing women as entomologists run after butterflies; that he was not seeking a vulgar affair. She must know that already, but he was afraid.

The room was heavy-sweet with the scent of lavender, and she was wearing the beryls that he had given her, inspired by his dream. It was hard to talk when he wanted to take her in his arms and just hold her—forever. But he must, come what would.

“Helen,” he began, nervously fingering his walking stick, “I want to talk to you about marriage.” It was

hard for him to speak; and, now that he was in her presence, what he planned to say seemed cold and casual. He trembled. All night he had tossed in troubled anticipation of this moment, and now all the beauty of the words had escaped; the idea was barren.

"Is that so appalling, Jeffrey dear?" she questioned, struck by the unusual pallor of his face and the strained look in his eyes.

"No," he said, taking her hands from his shoulders, "I don't want you to do that, Helen; it takes away all my courage. Please sit down; I must say it."

As she arranged the cushions, and curled up in a corner of the couch, he began to pace the rug, striving to keep his glance averted.

"You must know that I love you," he began awkwardly. . . . "You are everything, and I want you always. . . . This has been the most beautiful thing that ever came to me. . . . the only person who never disappointed, except my mother."

Then he outlined his idea of marriage, his ideal. He differentiated sharply between it and the ordinary notion of free love. He hated that; this was another thing. Would she understand? As he walked, one familiar with his early history would have been quick to mark how like the elder Collingsworth he was in his nervous walk and in the way he twitched his fingers.

"I don't believe in marriage," he finished desperately, looking into her eyes as though he expected her to fly through the window at the announcement.

"Yes, I understand." She spoke slowly, as though pondering over each word. "But I can't see yet, dear, why you are so troubled over it. I know that human marriage grew out of strange tribal customs, and that it exists as it is because of expediency, property,

the state, the protection of the weak, and all that. I know that there is no *a priori* question of right or wrong about it. It isn't moral, but a social question. And I know the sordidness of divorce, and think our childish laws should be amended. What you have said is familiar enough to me; still, I fail to see why you are so excited over it?"

"But I am proposing that we live together, sweet thing, without any marriage ceremony by church or state. Of course, I'm not silly enough to insist upon our boasting about it on every occasion; and we could send out cards announcing the fact that we were married. We could make our own ceremony," he urged, made hopeful because of her evident tolerance.

A look of wonderment came into her eyes. "For us to live together without marriage? . . . Why, how impossible!"

"Oh, you don't trust me!" he cried, his lips trembling with emotion.

She got up and walked to the window. "It isn't something that can be decided in a minute," said Helen, and, to him, her voice was cold and far off.

It seemed that she was there for hours. It was almost unbearable, and yet he did not trust himself to speak. He was moved to throw himself at her feet and cry out his pain, but some impulse to dignity forbade it. He merely brushed away the gathering tears and waited in choking silence. The air seemed laden with the breath of doom; his heart ached with unutterable agony.

She turned and came toward him. "Sit by me Jeffrey," she almost whispered, "while I try to tell you what is in my heart. It isn't that I don't trust you; I know you are sincere, and that you love me; but if we did this, think of the social price. . . . No. I don't mean Lake Shore society; I mean work, doing

things. Every time you made a speech, or wrote a thing, you would be referred to as a free-lover, and presently you couldn't do anything. The doors would be closed. I am not afraid of being cut—of insult, but I don't want to be helpless. I don't want my power to do things to be killed. This is Puritan America, and though we live together as ascetics and saints, we would be branded forever. Just the lack of that foolish little ceremony would destroy all of our dreams." She burrowed her hand into his burning palm.

"But people have to be taught that it can be done beautifully," he protested. "We ought to be able to pay the price. . . It seems to me the greatest thing we could do for the most beautiful thing in the world."

Helen closed her eyes with an effort and drew a long breath. Suddenly she got up, making a brave attempt at cheerfulness. "You must go now," she said. "I. . . I've got to be alone. . . to think."

They walked in silence to the door, and with aching eyes they searched one another's souls for that which is never known, but in silence.

* * * *

For a moment she stood watching him as, with the leaden feet of a benumbed sleep-walker, he stumbled down the stairs. Her heart yearned for him, and she made as if to call out; then, with a quick gesture, she closed the door, and, running back into the still room, threw herself, face down, upon the couch.

* * * *

What had come over her, she wondered, as hours later, she walked the floor even as he had done in the afternoon. Why was she in the grip of such an unescapable agony? Had she not pondered over such "problems" before, as they suggested themselves from the pages of well nigh every modern novel or drama?

Even Aunt Kate had reasoned calmly through hours and hours of Ibsen and Shaw. . . . But to live the thing; to convert life into a perpetual conflict with society. . . . She had for three years been doing battle with human greed, but it was the kind of warfare in which the "decent element" took her side. In this they. . . . everybody. . . . would be against her. . . .

. . . She wanted him. . . more than anything else, she felt; but what did he know of this thing, this standing against the wall to be the target for every journalistic and social vilification? He had fought too, but always with some kind of support. Yes, he had been arrested even, for defending some agitator or other. . . . But, even then, one of the papers had come to his rescue at the last moment. And he was proposing now to challenge the whole body of human prejudice. Oh, it would destroy him, her, their love, all their life! And she loved him so! . . . He seemed so broken about it, so frightened, so dependent. . . . That was it; he had communicated his suffering to her; and her heart ached because of his sense of loneliness. . . . But was that it? That was too simple. . . . Why couldn't she get hold of herself—be reasonable?

NO one could find him. The telephone buzzed in vain. Hughley rang to ask him to be best man at his wedding; Wallace wanted him for dinner; Kupmeyer called. Apparently the cottage was empty of life save for the gnawing rat overhead.

Never did a man walk more feverishly, nor with such unseeing eyes. It seemed that he was bent upon setting foot on every pavement of the South Side. There was a look of weariness about him, as if he were bearing an invisible burden upon his shoulders. For three days he had gone about in this fashion, setting out at dawn and not returning until late at night. Sometimes he stopped to rest upon a park bench; often he merely leaned for a moment against some supporting wall. Once a policeman had accosted him to know what he was about, and then, finding that he was neither drunk nor vagrant, passed on, grumbling under his breath.

Tonight, for the first time, he was conscious, not of hunger, but of the need for food. He was growing weak, and was like to fall. He thought he might swallow hot coffee and a roll. The man at the lunch counter at Sixty-Third Street eyed him with suspicion. He had heard of these "dope fiends," and didn't trust them. They were liable to do anything.

He felt stronger, and as he slowly made his way homeward, the outlines of things began to grow more clear. Perhaps there was no ground for his suffering that way. Why couldn't he sit down and wait, as others would do? It was a big thing that he had asked, and

Helen was right in taking time. . . . Or had that last farewell been final?

The mail box was full. He glanced through the letters hurriedly. There was nothing from her, so he threw them on the table where there were already a score of unopened envelopes. Several times he had been tempted to write and tell her how much he cared, how beautiful their days together had been, how he needed her; but he had been restrained by a feeling that it would be merely a plea for himself. She must decide untroubled. . . . must let him know.

There was a chill in the air. Shivering, he lighted the gas logs. He thought of reading. The testament? Old Sir Thomas? Montaigne? Hardy? No, he didn't want to read—didn't want to do anything. The telephone rang. He didn't answer. It rang again, and yet again. He got up—

“Hello!”

No answer.

“The party hung up,” came the voice of central.

“Good!” He went back to his chair, and gazed intently at the artificial logs about which blue green flames played like the darting tongue of an evil serpent. The shreds of asbestos hung down like the whitened skin of a leper. The wavering shadows on the floor were fitful sprites come to mock his loneliness. He looked about the room. It had meant so much when she had come to help him arrange it; but tonight it didn't awaken any response. There were the Beardsley drawings; the little etching of the Quai Voltaire; the old engravings of Samuel Johnson and Rabelais; the “shrine corner,” where hung the pictures of his father, in stiff ecclesiastical raiment, his mother, smiling for all the prim black satin, and Helen. . . . Then there were the high cases of books; *Gulliver* and *Tristram Shandy* seemed to grin down at

him, and Fielding shook his head; Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* thrust itself out eagerly, but met no hand of greeting.

He got up and stood before the pictures in the corner. There they were—the people who had loved him; the ones that he had loved. To all he had brought, what? Suffering and disappointment.

“Oh God!” he cried, “Why am I made this way?” He dropped into a chair by the table and sobbed.

* * * *

What was that curious sound of tapping? He sat up suddenly. It was strange. How late was it, he wondered. The clock had stopped; he had forgotten to wind it. He looked at his watch. Why, it was only ten o'clock! The tapping came again. Surely someone was at the door; perhaps it was Wallace come to rout him out.

It was too dark outside for him to make out the queer little figure that stood hesitating on the steps below as though awaiting but a word to turn in flight.

“What is it?” he asked sharply. He was in no mood to receive visitors.

“Jeffrey, don't you want me? . . . I have come. . . . I, I couldn't stay away,” came the voice like far-off music.

They clung to one another like frightened children.

* * * *

“Are you sure?” he kept repeating as if determined to find some way of destroying his new-found happiness.

“Sure,” she repeated after him. “Logic, experience, common sense, are all against it; but I love you—I want you—and I couldn't bear to think of you here lonely and suffering—both of us suffering to be, together, and just an idea to keep us apart—I'm not going to think, just love.”

The flames of the gas log were a rosy pink, and the fluttering pieces of asbestos might well have been fur from the collar of Kris Kringle. The shadows on the wall were fairies, and the stout folios smiled with benevolence upon the scene. The rat overhead, annoyed by so much happiness, had scampered away.

* * * *

The big arm chair was hospitable to the two occupants, so snugly did they sit, and it neither creaked nor groaned when they occasionally spoke.

Already they had talked out the misery of their three days of suspense and loneliness, and Helen, quick to note his haggard face, had insisted upon rummaging about for food. There was nothing but tea and cakes in the house; but tea and cakes, where there is joy, make a feast; and they were abundantly satisfied.

Now they were planning for the future. They would get a larger place—there were several nearby. It was a good thing, they agreed, that he was not lecturing—not a public man any longer. The papers might not find it out. They would announce their marriage just as though it had been regularly done, and she would call herself Mrs. Collingsworth. At this last Helen laughed gleefully, and the two embraced once more. They would have two work rooms, one common living room, a kitchen, dining room and—. They stopped there, embarrassed, both of them.

“What will Aunt Kate do?” Jeffrey asked.

“She will be frightened at first, for fear of a scandal; but if none comes she will accept us beautifully. I will give her a few more modern dramas that are so learnedly chattered over at her club, and she will be

quite reassured," Helen explained mirthfully. "But what will your parents say?"

"The announcements will satisfy them; they are such innocent dears that they will assume that of course we have had a minister, or at least a license, and they will, both of them, love you. Old Mammy Rhoda is still there, and she will brush her girls aside and insist upon preparing a wonderful dinner." Jeffrey smacked his lips in joyful prelibation.

Thus they planned and dreamed, kissed and embraced all the night long, sitting in the great arm chair. Nor, for all their loss of sleep, were they conscious of fatigue. Presently Jeffrey saw "the long grey fingers of the dawn," and gave a start—

"Why, what a brute I am! I have kept you here sitting up the blessed night."

"It has been a blessed night; I wasn't aware of the time. Are you tired, you dear boy? Oh, you must be! It is I who am a brute; your poor lap must be quite crushed," she cried, springing to her feet.

"Nonsense, you are as light as a feather, and I could hold you always. . . . but—" Jeffrey was suddenly embarrassed. There were some things that he had not associated with Helen—at least not this night. He didn't know how to begin. She might think him a beast; might think that the flesh had fathered his ideal. In some respects, conventional marriage was more convenient; one married and went about living at once, and, notwithstanding the modesties, with some naturalness.

"—You can have my bed. . . . in there," he went on desperately. "I have a cushion and blankets. . . . it will be very comfortable for me. . . . about noon we can go out for breakfast."

"Oh!" Helen toyed with a silver paper knife in some confusion. Then, with an access of determi-

nation, she turned and, taking both of his hands in her own—

“Don’t let’s be fools, darling. . . . I know. . . . But you see I am all ready. . . . What do they call it?—compromised?—by staying here all the night. . . and we are married of our own will.”

Jeffrey never knew before that cheeks could grow quite so rosy, nor lips be so sweet. After a little while he whispered in her ear—“I have our marriage service put down on a bit of parchment. If you will have it, I should like that we read it first.”

Out of a thin little fifteenth century manuscript book—*Horae Beatae Mariae Virginis*—he drew forth the folded parchment, on which, closely written, was the ritual, part original, part compiled. It was twice the length of the longer Episcopal service, and three times as binding. After a few verses from Corinthians, and a fragment from Lucretius, there followed one of Lodge’s sonnets—

“I give my whole life for her dwelling-place,
 And all my days are mansions made for her,
 And all my heart is like a harp-player
 Singing with eyes insatiate of her face.
 And she, for the same love’s sake, in the trace
 Of my dark journey follows everywhere,
 And from the labor of truth and the despair
 She can console me in her deep embrace
 For love has made her body of his delight
 And of his sacred frenzy, and his light
 Is calm and ardent in her perfect eyes;
 And love has shared his faith and liberty
 Between us, who are blent inseparably
 In the communion of”

But just at that moment of moments there came a most unexpected and violent pounding on the door. Jeffrey started, alarmed by the profane interruption.

Could it be—? In some consternation he motioned Helen to the room beyond, and, bracing himself, went to open the door.

The brass buttons on the messenger's boy's coat caught the light of the now risen sun. The boy was yawning.

"Telegram, Mister. . . . Hold on! You have to sign here. . . Thanks." Without waiting for the usual "Answer?" he mounted his wheel and was off.

"Only a telegram," Jeffrey announced: "Now we will go on with our service."

The sudden break, the surprise, the quick apprehension, had revealed the fact that she was very tired. She leaned forward wearily against the back of the arm chair. "Only a telegram!" she repeated, startled by the careless ease with which he tossed it on the table, "Why, open, read it; it may be important."

"Ha, perhaps some of my stories have made a hit, and I am being invited to interview the publisher." He tore open the envelope—

"God in Heaven!" he groaned, crushing the yellow paper in his hand, "My mother! My mother!"

Helen was at his side in an instant. The message they read together was brief: "Mother at the point of death. Take first train home. Father."

Jeffrey was trembling from head to foot. She led him gently to the chair.

"Sit down, dear," she said, kneeling at his side. . . . "You must go at once. . . . I will telephone about the trains; then we will get ready." Jeffrey sat huddled down, lost in the dazed stupefaction of utter misery. Presently she was at his side once more.

"There is a train for Cincinnatti, from the La Salle Street Station at eight o'clock. It makes perfect connections to Virginia. You can gain time by taking it at Woodlawn. . . . There are only two reservations

left—" she hesitated for an instant—"Shall I make one for you?"

"Yes, please," he answered mechanically.

A strange hurt look came into her face, a look of bewilderment; then, drawing herself up, she hurried back to the telephone.

Jeffrey got up with an effort and began, with fumbling fingers, to drop things into his travelling bag.

"I have everything arranged dear, and a taxi will be here in half an hour," Helen announced as she came into the bedroom. Then, glancing at the array of disorder, "Oh, you poor, poor darling. Let me pack for you."

* * * *

All the long way to the station he sat staring out into the future of which he had suddenly grown careless. Of the nestling form by his side he was scarcely aware, although he kept repeating—"You are so dear to me; so good." And that was all he said at the depot when, at the moment he was to get aboard the train he turned and held her for a second in his arms: "You are so dear."

Once aboard the train, following the porter down the isle, the sense of incompleteness, of something forgotten, came upon him with a rush. "Why," he exclaimed half aloud, "I should have made her come with me." In guilty consternation he rushed to the window. The train was moving; Helen was slowly walking back to the station stairs. She had turned away to hide her tears.

* * * *

One minute she was saying—"O, the misery that has come upon him,—poor, poor boy" And the next found her crying out,—“But why didn't he take me with him at such a time?" As the cab jolted along over the tortured miles she repeated the words a

thousand times. Didn't the fact of his going away in that fashion show that he had no sense of need for her? And in such an hour of grief, if he did not instinctively cry out for her companionship—when he was faced with the greatest sorrow—, what did it mean? If they had been married in a church would he have thought of going away alone? And then he had quite automatically pocketed the key of the little house; no thought of her going there; no thought of her belonging. Did something within him seem to recognize an unfitness in her going to his dying mother's bedside? Her reason dismissed these doubts, but something, deep down, troubled her. . . . there at the telephone she had hesitated, she had supposed that he would tell her to secure both reservations when she mentioned it. O, and she would have gone, gladly gone—just to be with him when he faced the emptiness of the world. What would she have cared for wardrobes, clothes, things at such a moment! But he didn't say the word; what was wrong? . . . What was wrong?

XXXVII

(1)

THE air was still, the clouds hung motionless; even the birds were silent. And within the great white house there was silence also. The clouds were ghosts, the trees, on the arm-like boughs of which clung the pale etiolated leaves of autumn, were ghost trees, and the house was a ghost house. In the white-panelled library, there was a long black thing which is called a casket, and within the casket was the empty shell of what had been a woman. The white hair had once been black, and had blown about her face as she raced over the hills on horse-back; about the now set lips smiles had been wont to play; down the traced lines of the faded cheeks many a burning tear had run its course. The hands that were folded and waxen and inert, had been used to minister comfort and to bestow kindness. And now the thing that had made of dust a personality was gone.

At the side of the casket sat an old man from whom the gift of livingness seemed to have departed. But no, he reached out and touched the cold hands with one of his own, and his lips moved as though he were whispering secrets that only the silence must hear.

(2)

He knew that it had happened as soon as he had stepped off the train and looked into Tom's melancholy face.

“Yestiddy mawnin—uhly, yas sah, Mistah Jeffrey.”

It seemed unbelievable. The hills were unchanged; the way-station was the same; out yonder were the good old mountains. Only his mother was not.

And yet things were changed. There was an automobile, for instance—a desecration in this quiet, peaceful countryside where there were old houses, embanked roadways and vine-bordered lanes—which was to shorten the distance to the house of death. All the soft, intimate details of the landscape were lost in frantic speed. Perhaps it was better so, for each such spot held memories that now clutched at his heart like fingers of steel.

The motor broke the stillness that had hung about the mill creek farm for more than a day, and even the yellow leaves on the maple trees seemed to shiver and stir at the unholy sound.

The darkies were lined up along the walk where they stood in respectful silence before so sorrowful a home-coming. To each he gave a solemn greeting, pressing their extended hands with real affection, until he came to old Rhoda; into her embrace he threw himself and sobbed outright.

“Lawd bless you, chile, her haht sho did ache for the sighta huh boy. . . . yuh done loss a good motha. . . .”

—Then at last father and son, with arms about one another, stood over the motionless clay. Fitzpatrick, who had been waiting about the house for Jeffrey’s coming, closed the library door that they might be undisturbed by the small regiment of tip-toeing relatives. “And there she lies, poor woman, between two theories,” he whispered to himself.

* * * *

The long procession, the same old brick church

with the eyes of an owl, the same garden of grave-stones, meaningless words that brought no crumb of comfort, barren rites, curious eyes, dust. What did it mean?

(3)

The night after the funeral he wrote to Helen. His sympathies, as well as suggestions from Rhoda and Fitzpatrick, told him that for many weeks—perhaps months—he ought to stay and try to comfort his father. What did she want him to do about it? It was cruel to be thus separated. But was it not more cruel and very selfish to think of his own love when his father was suffering so? He had not spoken to his father of her—of their marriage—because, well, at first because of the confusion to which he had no wish to add so startling an announcement. Now it seemed unnatural, and his father might ask questions that could but lead to unhappiness. He would wait until a better time. Meantime he wanted her, loved her, and when he returned would try to make it up. Then he would bring her to this, his old home, where,

—“There lingers the scent of apples and the fragrance of tobacco downstairs; above, one catches faint whiffs of lavender, even as in your own room. . . . without, the branches of a great locust tree brush against the window panes, and there is lowing of the herds, and the far-off tinkle of a sheep bell. . . . back of the house are the now leaning cabins where the darkies used to dwell—today they have framed cottages, ugly and stark—, and there is a clear and icy spring of pure water gushing out of rocks about which the gnarled roots of an ancient elm have wound themselves like the giant fingers of a dreadful jinee. In the orchard hang apples with rosy cheeks, red apples, apples that are green like jade, and apples of russet

gold. . . . And, in so far as my heart will let me, I joy in the beauty of a picture which has been touched by the cold hand of death, and only lacks your presence, beautiful one, to bring back life and hope. . . .”

(4)

Month followed month, and all through the bleak winter, Jeffrey found that his father clung to him with a pitiful insistence that forbade all thought of return. He arranged for Wallace to look after the rent of his cottage, and to send some manuscripts and clothes that he needed; forwarded his weekly contributions to the syndicate, and prepared to remain in Virginia until spring should come once more. Spring, he felt, would be a more cheerful time; a time when Mr. Collingsworth could be out of doors and be about somewhat more than a listless brooding over the past, fostered by the sight of little things around the house. For his part, he must get back to Helen; and he planned that he would go on ahead, announce the marriage, and then send for his father. Perhaps they could persuade Mr. Collingsworth to live with them; or, better, they could all live in Virginia.

In the old library he renewed his acquaintance with Aristophanes, Lucian, Horace and Juvenal, and was surprised to find how much of them he had missed in his youth. Was there any such thing as modern and ancient, he mused. The abuses and utopias that are thought of as peculiar to our age, were attacked and dreamed of a thousand years ago. Two thousand years before, women were laughed at for paint and powder and depilatories; there had been demagogues, and graft and speculation. The world had not changed, nor human nature altered.

Why, then, had he made such bother and fuss about

change—progress? And why had he been so disappointed in the movements into which he had thrown himself with such impetuosity?

When he stood looking down upon his mother's face a clue had come to him, a clue for which he found no word. He had suddenly come to a realization that there was a beyond-flesh; just as for many an ancient human habitation there was an over-house. Things, if they were worth while things, had, or came to have, a personality. The mere fact of putting his mother in the ground did not make her less real to him. He did not like to speak of these things to people who would say: "Oh yes, Heaven, immortality," and think in terms of a mere personal continuance off somewhere else. No, it was a finer thing than that. In was just that the moon and stars came, finally, to be something more than mere celestial phenomena; and that beyond and through the trees were fairy trees. An ancient thought it was, but it had just come to him; and somehow it made the world a richer place and restored some of the dreams of his childhood.

Personality, poise, imagination, sweetness, magnanimity; these things were worth while. And the reformers—the revolutionists—were generally lacking in them. There were great exceptions—Debs, for instance—, but most of these people spoke sharply, acidly, and were angular in their ways as in their thoughts. The John Browns of the world were disagreeable. Thought was not everything, modernity mattered very little; but to be gracious was to make a noble gesture before the universe.

There was another thought that came to him also: He had shared the American mania for gregariousness, for joining things. Wisdom certainly did not lie in that direction. Men and women might be absurd, pathetic, ridiculous even; but they were gen-

erally decent when one took them apart and alone. Herded together, with elbows and shins in contact, they became idiotic and even fiendish. "At all events," he comforted himself, "I have never yet joined a lodge!"

His father had grown more and more tolerant, and now, over the chess board, with their pipes aglow, they found a quiet sense of companionship that was a joy to them both. Some evenings Jeffrey would read aloud from *Pickwick*—one of Mr. Collingsworth's favorites—and this led to the discovery that the home library had, all unknown, a rare copy of the first edition of that remarkable volume bound up from the parts. It was a fortunate cantrip of fate, this discovery, for, when his son expounded his knowledge of rare editions, Mr. Collingsworth caught the contagion and began forthwith to re-examine his books. It revealed very little of value other than that of old associations: the North's *Plutarch* was no older than 1658, and Raleigh's *History of the World* was a late edition, printed in 1652. Then the father had remembered that there were some old books in the attic, and, in great excitement, they had begun the search. There were sermons for the most part; a complete file of *Hagerstown Almanacs*, and another of the *Christian Observer*; but in one box, tucked far under the eaves, were found the nine small volumes of *Tristram Shandy* as they were issued at York in 1759—1765, while in the fifth, seventh, and ninth volumes were the autograph signatures of L. Sterne himself. But most exciting of all was the Shakespeare. Mr. Collingsworth had declared, as he went up the stairway, that there was a folio in his grandfather's library, so cumbrous that it had been put away; he had no idea of its date. At last they dug it out from beneath some of Edward's *Sermons*—joints cracked,

leather blackened with age, and the paper thumbed at the corners, it was nevertheless a fourth folio—"Printed for H. Herringman" in 1685. On the front cover was pasted the armorial bookplate of David Garrick! The two men in the attic behaved for a time as though they were insane.

"And to think," cried Mr. Collingsworth, "these treasures have lain up here for years as so much rubbish to be eaten by rats. I'm going to go through everything in this house."

There was soon a Lowndes's *Bibliography* in the library, and the old man found no inconsiderable pleasure during the balance of the winter in making a catalogue of his books.

XXXVIII

(1)

THIS happy diversion not only brought new interest to Mr. Collingsworth, but it also gave to Jeffrey the freedom to enter upon the congenial task of translating *Le Bovarysme* of Jules de Gaultier. Wallace had suggested it to him months before, but the fact of romance had been too compelling to leave either time or inclination for a study of man's power to create illusions for himself. Now that he had begun to reflect upon some of his disappointments, this book came to him with clarifying force. It seemed to have been written especially for him. Had he not, from the outset, been imaging the world of men and women as somewhat other than they were? His subsequent dissatisfactions were the products of his own unmitigated folly. And himself he had attempted to cast in the role of an evangelist of science, whereas his instincts were all for poetry, imagination; of democracy, when his instincts were those of a solitary. He had been—even as Sir Thomas Browne said—clutching at cables of cobweb. De Gaultier said that every human being struggled between two tendencies; what he was, by heredity, instinct, environment; and what he imagined himself to be as the result of some fancy. In so far as these tendencies happened to converge, success might follow; but most often there was a vast chasm between them—the Bovarystic angle—that made for a tragicomic failure. The book at once fascinated and frightened him. Was he an illustration of it, he asked

himself. Was not everything, rather, a confirmation of it? Tom, who was coachman, chauffeur, farmhand by turns, was at heart unmoral, heathen, carefree; but he had conceived for himself the part of an earnest preacher, and on certain Sundays of each month made the little log school house groan with fervid Christian eloquence. On week days Tom would stand by, a fascinated but miserable onlooker, while less inhibited and happier blacks were rolling dice. His fingers would fairly twitch to be in the game; now and then his eager knees would bend as if to compel their unfortunate owner to bow before the god of Chance. Then some of his Christian friends would happen along, or a white man would pass near, and Tom, remembering his assumed part, would half-heartedly reprove the unmindful gamblers. Yes, Tom was an illustration. So, in a way, was his father; so was Fitzpatrick. People were all playing parts; no one was natural.

Several times during the winter Jeffrey had gone with one of the negroes to help with the sheep. Some of the ewes had, by accident, been bred so as to drop their lambs at this inconvenient season of snow and ice, and had to be looked after; there was a stampede during which one of the wethers, more daring than the rest, had rushed too near the crumbling but icy bank of the creek, not only to fall in himself, but to lead his luckless followers after him. How much more intelligent, thought Jeffrey, than most other democrats. For human democrats would fuss around and pretend to debate, to reason, about the action of their leaders before they followed; but they would just as surely, for all their talk, take the tumble. The sheep had the advantage of it; they merely jumped in and drowned themselves, or broke their necks. They didn't waste time discussing it before-

hand. All of their energy was reserved for the essential, democratic, conformatory, greatest-good-for-the-greatest-number flop. Jeffrey wondered if they created any comforting illusions for themselves as they went over. Did they say: "At any rate we followed the excellent precedent of Senator Wether." or "We were obedient unto the end; blessed be the name of Gregarius"?

(2)

The letters that came from Helen were not at all reassuring, although Jeffrey was not able to say why. They were full of tenderness, and, from the outset, she had urged him to remain with his father until he should be better able to spare him. But there was an undertone of sadness and disappointment that he was unable to understand. Of course, he reasoned, it was tragic that death should have come almost at the instant when they were pronouncing themselves husband and wife, and when they were trembling before a very beautiful expectancy. This memory was almost enough to drive him back to Chicago at once. But no, he must be sensible and kind. There was no need for upsetting his father's life again, when, by possessing himself, everyone could be made happy.

As he read and re-read the daily messages, it seemed to him that she was a little afraid of his changing outlook upon life. She detected, she told him, a growing tendency toward an individualistic, hedonistic mysticism; or at least she gathered it from his letters. "I fear," she wrote, "any approach to Oriental thought on the part of the West. Inactivity is a curse to us; and when any fundamental scepticism is wedded to the mystic point of view, inaction logically follows. . . . You say that you have been disillusioned of society; but, even when we were on our tours

about town together last summer, you were so kind and dear to the unfortunate people we met; never treated them as though you felt the least bit the way you now talk of feeling toward mankind. . . .”

And again she had written: “I have no more hope of a millenium than you, certainly never as much as you once had, my dear; but there are some things that, as intelligent people, we should never permit: I mean these overwhelming acts of injustice against the helpless ones of the earth, the exploitation of children, the deprivation of their rights to health and education. . . .”

Jeffrey was not sure that he agreed with this last. Health, certainly, should be safeguarded, but education? It seemed to him now that education was good for only a few people—for those who manifested a passion and a genius for knowledge. Were college folk any more brilliant or original than the unlettered? They were less original, but more facile in speech, he decided. They were colder, less sympathetic. All they gained by education was a less colorful and more correct vocabulary; a certain set of phrases; an ability to dress in the average unoffensive manner; an enlarged capacity to earn money up to a given limit. This last had come to be the object of a college education. But the average A. B. supported an obviously idiotic political creed, sat in a golden-oak pew at the Mudville Church, grinned over ancient platitudes with his neighbors, interested himself in the growth of his town,—nay, actually took pride in pointing out new stores and gas stations, glibly informing one concerning the cost of their erection; belonged to a lodge, and was, in fine, as dull as the alderman or even the mayor. As a gardener, or hod-carrier, how much more interesting and original he would have been. Education gave to mediocrity the conceit that it was equiv-

alent to culture, but it sapped away its original and simple enthusiasms. Jeffrey was inclined to thank his creator that Virginia was an ignorant state.

"The ideal condition for society," he wrote to Helen, "is one in which only the clever, the curious and the well-bred, who have the instincts of gentility, possess what is called education. Indeed, such people are unhappy without knowledge; all others are unhappy with it. The inferior man, regardless of academic training, is susceptible to mob-mania and every sort of vulgar hoodlumism. In fact, he is a hoodlum, just as ready to applaud and follow William Jennings Bryan or the yellow journals, as are the members of the Bottle Washer's Union. Any crisis, however trivial, will prove it. To avert this danger, we need a cultured minority to run things; to have absolute control. . . . See what a difference a few years have made in my outlook? I prefer the company of old Mammy Rhoda to that of the conventional Ph. D.!"

But Helen was little interested in these discussions. Normally she would have been keen to do battle with him, and, in fact, she committed to paper many a humorous objection to his diatribes; but in her heart she was looking always for something which she never found; asking for a letter she never received. Every message was full of tender assurances, of "I love you"; and many of them called her "his wife," and were signed, "Your husband"; but in no letter was there the actual assumption that they were, in truth, husband and wife. When he had written that he had asked Wallace to get some things from his cottage, it had hurt her to the quick. When he had told her of his father's need of him, why hadn't he said—"We are needed down here; you had better come and help me comfort him?"

After a great struggle she had gone to him and

offered herself without reservation; and she had assumed that night, as they read together those hymns of love, that they were married, were one. She had expected, when the blow had fallen, that he would say, "Come, *we* must go at once to mother." But he didn't say it; instead, there was a timid and apologetic deference in the very tone of his letters—he failed to affirm any actuality for their relationship, and made no demands. He left her, for all his tenderness, alone and unfulfilled.

* * * *

It was now well along into March, and the crocus blooms were out; soon there would be dog-wood and wild violets. The wheat showed green between the leaning shocks of corn that were left standing from the previous autumn, and on the wind-tossed boughs of the locust trees, buds were beginning to swell. Rhoda, moved by the twinges that tortured her stiffening limbs, foretold such deluges of rain as the land had never known.

When Jeffrey came down for breakfast it was nearly noon. He had sat up far into the night completing the first draft of his translation.

"'Good mawnin'? Good Lawd Gawd, you means 'Good evenin', Mistah Jeffrey, yassah, you means 'evenin'. You jes' like yo' paw when he wuz young and survigrous—ump—that rhumatiz is agoin' tu get me to my grave yet.—Liza!"—calling from the door, "staht some buckwheat cakes, an' tell 'at good-fuh-nothin' Grovah Cleveland to fetch three fresh aigs from the hen-house; an' you put on some fresh coffee. Yassah, you is jes' like yo' paw—umph! Whut fuh does you stay up so late? Tain't good fo' yo' consti-tucium."

"I've just finished a book, Aunt Rhoda, and I had to sit up until it was done."

"You ain't meanin' one a them trashy love stories?" with vast scorn.

"It has something to do with love," Jeffrey admitted, sprinkling a thick layer of brown sugar over his mush. "It tells about how we imagine love before we live it."

"They sho is a lotta diffunce. I recolleck how the young niggahs use to talk to me about how they would fetch in the wood, an' split the kindlin, an' tote the watah from the spring; but when I mahied Aleck, it didn't take long for that tchune to change to 'Dey ain't no watah fer me to drink, an me a workin hahd all day; whut de mattah wid you?'—Yas sah, they's a big diffunce. But it 'pears to me that a likely young man like you is, would be a lovin' the gals and not a writin' about it."

"I'll bring one home some of these days."

"Not no Nawthan lady?" Rhoda inquired anxiously.

"I expect so. I know a mighty nice one."

"Do she know how to look aftah the cookin', and men' the socks, an' awdah the pervisions, an' sech like?"

"She is very practical, as well as exceedingly pretty."

"Well this house sho' do need a well managin' white lady—Liza, where'd them aigs go? They've had time to hatch an' grow up!"

* * * *

Yes, thought Jeffrey, Helen will be a very practical manager for the home; and, what a hostess! Together they would make the big plantation house a center of social life, such as it had not been since the Civil War. They would divide their time between Virginia and Chicago. Yes, and from the city they would invite their friends to come and make merry with them over mint juleps, and the savory old wines from the cellar. The Mill Creek home would become

known as a place where epicures and men of letters met to laugh away the fretting cares of a too strenuous world. Fitzpatrick would like it; and he would like Helen too. "I'll go down the Creek tomorrow and tell the old chap about her," he resolved.

XXXIX

(1)

AS they settled down in comfortable chairs for the evening smoke Mr. Collingsworth cleared his throat nervously.

"H'm—er, ah, my son, what is this that Rhoda and Fitzpatrick have been hinting about your—that is about some love affair. . . . I mean serious love affair? Is there anything in it? There is. . . ."

"Why, what did they say?" countered his son, striving to cover his confusion by a witless attempt to strike a match against empty space. So Fitzpatrick had told, had he? Sly old devil. He should have known better.

"Well," chuckled the father, now beginning to feel relief in the face of his son's discomfiture, "Rhoda hinted something to the effect that you had a Northern sweetheart, that you might marry her some day; and Fitzpatrick rode by this afternoon and suggested that you might have a good reason for settling down at the old home. And, do you know," he suddenly burst out with great feeling, "that would please me better than anything in the world. You need a good wife. . . . and this home needs a woman's touch." He turned away to hide the gathering tears.

"I hesitated to tell you on account of—well, I thought you'd been through enough, and I thought it might bother you," Jeffrey confessed, wondering just how much he should tell.

"Bother me! why, sir, it is healing to my soul. . . . and if that is her picture on your dresser, I should say that she is an excellent young lady, and that for

once you have shown rare good judgment. Have you any definite plans?"

"The truth is," replied Jeffrey groping for as consistent a lie as possible under this unexpected turn of events, "that we had planned to get married about the time I received your telegram, and were just waiting until you should be feeling. . . ."

"My advice to you, sir," interrupted Mr. Collingsworth in great excitement, "is to make your arrangements as soon as possible. Go right back and marry Miss, er——"

"Sherwood."

"Sherwood—a good name, sir—at as early a date as is convenient for her, and bring her home. . . . I'll have Rhoda and her worthless girls go to work at once; we'll make this old place shine and this will be a home again. . . ."

(2)

How easy it had all been;—how wonderful that in communicating his own hopes he had transformed the household into a center of expectancy and good cheer! His father had dropped the weight of years and sorrow as if by magic, and his face was radiant with a new gladness. He might yet live to see himself a grandfather!

And the letter had been written telling Helen of how the revelation had been received, and of how he wanted to return at once to Chicago and bring her to the Virginia home. He had posted it the morning after his discovery. And after some thought he had added a paragraph that, he felt, would be particularly fetching—certainly a welcome relief to Aunt Kate:—

"Revolt seems to me petty and childish—a gesture not in keeping with the great dignities of life. For the things that we despise there is only one answer—

silent contempt. The notions, the prejudices, of the mob are unworthy the sword of a gentleman. To feign acquiescence is the part of wisdom. . . . I was foolish to insist upon a free ceremony; we should have continually to justify it—and people do not merit such consideration. Moreover, it is wearying to the flesh and spirit. Let us go through the form of marriage—meaningless as it is—and have our life uninterrupted by the bickerings of the bourgeois, and unsoiled by the filthy hands of the ‘plain people’. . . .”

“Please let me know at once when we may have the wedding—as quiet as is consistent with Aunt Kate’s vanities—and when I can come to get you. . . .”

The letter had gone on Thursday morning. She would receive it by Saturday; he would have his answer Tuesday. And soon he would have his woman—the one reality left in this welter of life. After this primary satisfaction came books, wine, tobacco, and the hills and valleys of his native state; beyond these things nothing; but they were enough. Life was good!

XXXX

TOM didn't approve of this riding horseback. The grooming added to his duties and did not contribute to his pleasure. Driving the car gave him a sense of power, and, as the machine whizzed through Darky Town, almost a feeling of proprietorship.

"All ready, Tom?" Jeffrey was impatiently switching his leggings with his riding quirt.

"Yas sah, but why don't you eveh let me drive you no moh? It don't take but a few minits goin' to no Oleburn that a way, an' it's style."

"I don't care for that kind of style, Tom. Besides, horses are much more stylish now. 'Most everyone has a car; and then, I hate the speed and noise."

"Hm. Well sah, heah's the old maah."

"I'll be back in time for dinner. And Tom"—this for consolation—"When I bring my wife here, I'm going to let you drive us through the mountain country for a week or so—kind of a wedding trip you know."

"This time a yeah, and mountain roads! Why, Mistah Jeffrey they ain't no roads in them mountains cep' gulleys, and they'll be runnin' mud."

"Then we'll wait until later; but you shall drive us until you get your fill of it."

"All right, sah, I'll sho drive you," grinned the black, shaking his head vigorously. "I'll sho drive you."

Jeffrey was feeling particularly fit this day, and had risen early, eager to be off to Oldbern. For the last two days it had been almost impossible to keep still;

he stalked about in nervous anxiety. Not that he had any doubt as to what her answer would be—he was too sure of her for that—but that he was intoxicated with the love of her, and hungry for the touch of her hand. He could not wait for the rural delivery; it was beter to get to town where he could waylay old Tatum as he was sorting the rural mail, and thus save at least half an hour. Tatum had, for some time now, released the flea-bitten horse to the mountain pastures, and was driving a Ford, which convenience shortened the suspense of many an anxious maid who awaited, with twitching fingers, a Sears-Roebuck catalogue or a Woman's Home Companion. But latterly, even this was not quick enough for Jeffrey; certainly not today.

He was worried about Helen. The recent letters had been uniformly listless and brief. . . . Poor girl! She was tired to death, he thought. A few months in this peaceful country would restore her boundless energy. Yes, there was sure to be a letter this day. It was Tuesday; Sunday she would have written. . . it was just now due. The thought comforted him. And, as he rode along, the fields were covered with a mist of loveliness, and the scented pines whispered of the sacred mystery of the quiet forest; and he answered with a song.

Riding down High Street, he hailed everyone with hearty cordiality, and paused long enough at each greeting to inquire about the "folks," the weather and the coming crops. From the interest he seemed to take in these village people, an outsider might have mistaken him for a politician seeking re-election.

The letter window of the small post-office was closed—the mail had evidently arrived, and was being distributed. He peered through the glass boxes, whistling merrily the while; or turned away in answer

to a salutation. Second to throwing horse-shoes, the daily mail provided the town's chief entertainment—moving pictures came only once a week—and the villagers were now forming a line before the delivery window.

Collingsworth waited until he saw that the letters were all up. The men were now distributing papers and packages. He tapped on the door that led to the rear office, where rural-route officials worked. The door was slightly opened.

“Hello, Mr. Collingsworth, what can I do for you?” asked a freckled assistant.

“Hello, Peck, will you please ask Tatum to come here a moment—?”

“Certainly.”

“Howdy,” growled Totum, who hated to use any more energy than was strictly necessary.

“Sorry to trouble you, Tatum, but I am particularly anxious about a letter I am expecting. Would you mind seeing if you have one for me in your pack?”

“I reckon so,” snapped the old man, and waddled away mumbling something about ‘trying a body’s patience.’”

“. . . . Yes, here’s one. Hope that satisfies ye!”

Jeffrey glanced at the writing on the envelope. “It does,” he responded with jubilant emphasis; “thanks for taking the trouble, Tatum; you may dance at my wedding—and, what’s more, drink, too!”

“I’ll hold ye to that last, young man,” said the carrier, showing the first signs of amiability, “and don’t you fergit it.”

“Right. I won’t forget.”

* * * *

“Now to get somewhere where I can read, Nancy,” he whispered, as he swung himself into the saddle.

Then he remembered the old chestnut tree, underneath whose hospitable branches he had, as a boy, so often gone for solace and solitude. It was nearby. Here he would go to read this message of love. . . . a long message, too, from the feel of it. "All about the dresses she has bought, and what we are to do at the wedding, and, best of all, she'll be telling us when to come, and. . . . Get up, Nancy!"

Ah, here was the place; how familiar it seemed—the same old fence. He dismounted and hitched the mare in a corner, to one of the lichen-covered rails. "You wait a bit, old girl—stay, here is a lump of sugar. That's a good girl."

Near the outer edge, where over-hanging boughs almost swept the ground, were some hawthorn bushes, grown thicker since he was a boy, and there, hid away from the curious human eyes, he would read. He broke the seal and sunk down upon the cool turf. A fearsome rabbit, disturbed by this invasion, scampered away for new cover.

As he unfolded the thin white pages, the man's face was alight with the glow of joyful preconception; to the very paper she had communicated the imperishable magic of her personality, he thought. But as he read, the eagerness seemed to give way to fear, and his hands shook so that he could scarcely hold the paper.

". . . .I cannot, cannot do it," he made out, through half blurred eyes. . . . "There is so much to be done. You have given up the fight—the only fight worth while. . . . I cannot, must not, settle down. . . . Couldn't see at first just what it meant; where you stood—and what I wanted. I know that if nothing had happened that night to stop us, we would have gone along and behaved just as you had planned to do, and would have been brave, would have shared everything. But it would have been false, superficial.

A great thing did happen, and under its over-powering weight, you forgot that we were one—or should have been. Not that I think there is any magic in the ceremony, do I write these words, but that somehow the seal of social approval makes things more natural. But I am glad now that we did not have that seal, for then I wouldn't have seen, wouldn't have known. Just that lack of assumption on your part, in a moment of unutterable grief, opened my eyes to the lack of comradeship—I was hungry for love, but I was wrong. . . . there is something greater. We can't work together"—'Work' underscored—" I see it now. You would tolerate, but not share my interest—my passion for the future. . . .

"So, in spite of you, and of Aunt Kate's pleas, I am going away—I don't know where—but away, and alone where I can rest and prepare for my part in making or trying to make, a world fit to live in. I hate compromise, *laissez faire*—Please, please forgive. . . . I didn't know. . . . didn't mean to hurt. . . . Forgive, and remember that I am going that you and I may be spared the hollow mockery of an unreal marriage. . . . You have come, through your pain, to the lonely path, where only a few may walk—and they, I fear, for their own discreet delight. I cannot walk there. . . . I must go. . . . it is final. . . ."

* * * * *

The sun sank behind the hills in the west, leaving a malefic crimson stain against the embanked clouds along the horizon. . . . By and by the stars came out, and Sirius flickered and winked at Orion, whilst Orion lifted his glittering club. The mare, in the fence-corner below, shifted uneasily and whinnied beseechingly to her master, but her master did not hear.

As the darkness grew apace, two negroes—Major—

now "Rev'unt"—Fenley and some woman of his flock—sought the seclusion of a nearby thicket for their immediate devotions. Thence came, presently, whispers, some sound of shuffling amongst the leaves, sighs, soft promises; then in louder tones—from the woman:

"Oh! God sho' is good to me; God sho' is good.'"

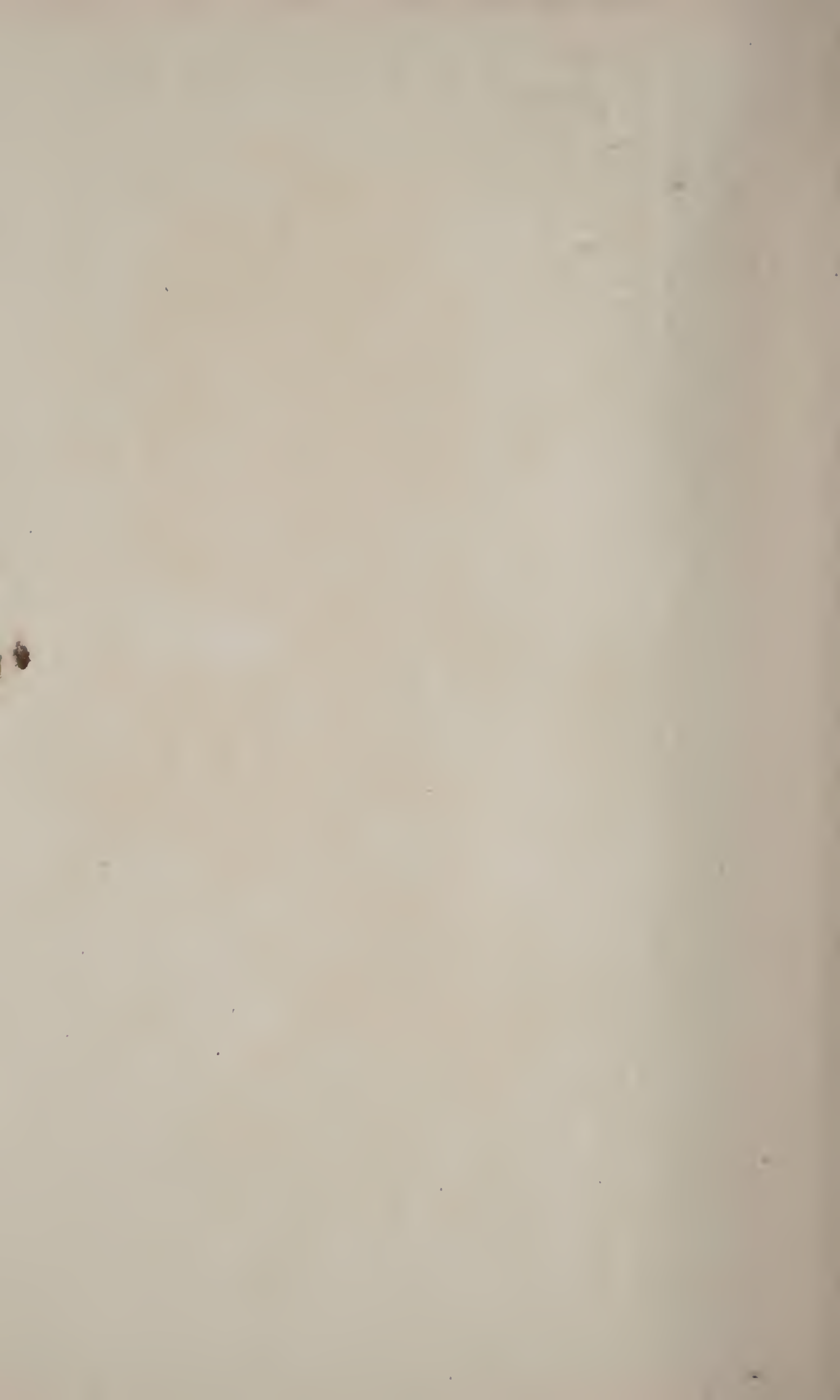
Again there was a shuffling of the leaves, and then, taking opposite directions, two figures slunk quietly, listlessly, away and melted into the more inclusive darkness.

As unmindful of this intrusion as the intruders were unaware of him, the man in the hawthorn sat as before.

Off somewhere in the distance came the melancholy notes of a hunter's horn, and the baying of a hound seemed to mock with derision.

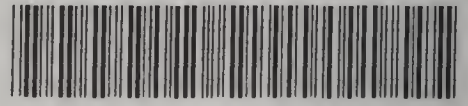
From over the top of the chestnut tree the jocund moon showed a face like amber wine. She seemed to smile—as unperturbed and blandly amused as aforetime.

THE END.



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