

"No, move on."
 "Never was hungry, was you boss?"
 "Often, but I worked my way out."
 Now the operator, despite his contempt for tramps, of whom he saw many, was a kind-hearted man. Something in the last question touched a long forgotten chord, for, truly enough, in the earlier years of his life he had often been hungry. Coming closer to the tramp he said:
 "Do you see that man at the end of the platform? He is waiting for the mail to come in. He is sort of insane on the 'Brotherhood of Man' question. He'll help you along, but you'll have to earn it and promise to do better. Used to be a railroader when he was young; came here from the East and owns the town now, factories and all."
 "Thanks boss," grinned the tramp, "I guess I'm good for a square meal anyhow. I'll put you on to a dead easy thing some day, boss, if I can."
 The operator watched the retreating figure of the tramp and mused, "Rather a shabby trick to set him on Mr. James. But he did look hungry, and James has more money than he knows what to do with. Hello, here comes the mail train."
 Meanwhile, Mr. James turned at the sound of approaching footsteps and closely scrutinized the tramp. Not a pleasing looking individual at all was this "knight of the road," as he slouched along and pausing by the gentleman's side commenced in a drawing whine, "Say, mister, won't you help a poor fellow what's out of work and lost his arm? Just got out of the hospital in Chicago, and can't hardly stand up."
 A peculiar expression flitted over his listener's face. If his glance had been sharp at first it now amounted to a fixed stare.
 "What's your name?"
 "My name, boss? Why, my name's Ike Jones."
 "Well, Ike, you've changed your name since I saw you last. However, I'm glad to see you for old time's sake. Shake hands, Rawley."
 Every vestige of color faded from the tramp's face. As if by magic the whine and slouch disappeared. A man stood revealed in a brute.
 "Where, when did you ever hear me called that?" he asked shakily, as he held out a dirty hand.
 "When we sat side by side in Buck's school house and lived across lots in Burdensville, as boys; when poor Neeley taught us telegraphy, and we worked together in K tower. You remember that, don't you, Rawley?"
 Did he remember? Ah how many times had he prayed to forget! He had gone down the path to ruin cheerfully. He had been through every stage from gentleman to tramp, yet only God knew of those torturing visions of that far past and its "might have been," which no drunken orgies could drive away.
 "Yes, yes, Jack, I remember. I'm glad you've prospered. I knew you would. I must be going now. Good-night, good-by. I'm going to jump the freight at the top of the hill."
 He tried to pull his hand away, but it was held fast.
 "You're coming home with me, Rawley. You're going to have a bath and some clean clothes, and when you get rested you shall have a place in my office. You shall not go to the dogs while I'm here to take care of you."
 "It's no use, Jack, it's no use. If I couldn't keep sober when I was a respectable member of society and had everything to lose, what can I do as a tramp? I used to travel the Western roads and earn a trifle working for the boys while they slept. But I've lost my nerve. The boys are afraid to trust so shaky a bum. I am sure I have never been sober since the night of the wreck. That's been twelve years. I suppose everybody thinks I'm dead. Do you ever hear from the old place? Is mother living? I suppose Pattie is married by this time."
 He fairly poured the questions out. The other replied:
 "I know that your mother is still living and that Pattie is married. The wreck would never have happened if I'd been there to keep you sober. How I wish I'd made you come away with me when I started out here to 'make my fortune.' Don't you remember how crazy the neighbors thought me when I gave up my position in K tower to come out here? Oh, Rawley, Rawley, why didn't I make you come?"
 "You tried hard enough, Jack, but I

was like the others. I thought it was too much wild cat. Then, you know, Nellie didn't want me to go. Nellie didn't like you, Jack, she thought you were too straight-laced, and that you tried to make me a good little boy. It was Nellie who gave me the first glass of wine I ever drank. You remember, it was on her birthday, and she asked us to drink her health. You wouldn't touch the wine and she called you 'Miss Mind His Mamma.' I drank it. I'm Nellie's work."
 "I had taken her to a dance the night before the wreck; and I never got sober till I saw the dead people and heard a woman screaming for her baby. Oh, my God, I've heard that scream all these years. I've tried to get drunk enough to drown it. Many and many a time I've thought I'd end it all, but I'm afraid I'll hear that scream in Hell."
 The tramp shook like a man with ague, and after a moment's pause continued:
 "And Nellie called me a worthless drunkard and told me never to speak to her or think of her again. She married some other fellow who knows when he has enough."
 "I know, she married Johnson. They were well matched. Come; I'll get my mail and we will go home to supper."
 "Are you married, Jack?" the tramp asked as they walked along. "What will your wife say?"
 "Yes, I'm married," Mr. James replied, and his face softened and there was a ring in his voice that spoke volumes to an attentive listener. "My wife will be glad to see any friend of mine."
 The tramp was very doubtful on that subject, but he was drawn along against his judgment because the man at his side told him to come. But he did not know that while they were getting the mail at the postoffice Mr. James had written and sent this little note to his wife:
 Dear Pattie:—I've found Rawley. Put some clothes in the spare-room and keep out of the way until I get him into a bath. I don't want him to see you until he is fixed.
 JACK.
 The soft red glow in the big hall felt pleasant, and how glad was the tramp that his friend carried a latch-key. No one heard them come in, and a half-hour later two gentlemen came downstairs together and except that one had an empty coat sleeve they were in no wise remarkable.
 They crossed the hall and opened the library door. There was a rush of children's feet and cries of "Papa!"
 A little lady came from the fireside saying, "You are late, Jack."
 Then the astonished children saw the most remarkable sight they had ever beheld.
 The gentleman with their father fairly shouted: "Why Pattie, dear little Pattie!" He kissed their mother again and again, while both cried for joy; for Pattie was Rawley's sister.
 When the shock of this discovery was over and they were finally seated around the pretty, sparkling table, Rawley found time to ask why he had not been told that the lady he so dreaded to meet was Pattie.
 "I wanted to surprise you. You remember, Rawley, Pattie was my little sweetheart when I carried her books and dinner-basket to and fro from Buck's school house. It was to make enough money to keep a wife that I came out here. Pattie wanted her mother to come, but mother never thought you were dead, although everyone else did. She won't leave the old home for fear you may come some time and find no one there."
 Long after the children had gone to bed and those three sat by the fire talking of the old days. In vain did Rawley argue that they must let him sink back to trampdom. He told them of the awful twelve years he had wandered about as Ike Jones, generally drunk, or worse, a victim of those visions seen only by the unfortunates who see the best and choose the worst.
 "But we will take care of you, Rawley. For mother's sake you must let Jack give you something to eat. You are not old yet. You will get over it. Won't you try, Rawley?"
 "I'll try willingly enough, Pattie. I may stay sober a week, then I may steal the silver, or rob Jack's wife, or borrow from some of his friends, and then get crazy drunk and disgrace you all. When he craving for drink comes on, I can

see Nellie just out of reach in front of me with a wine glass, and I must drink, for I can see the wreck and hear the screams."
 "Don't talk about it, Rawley; I'll tell you what we'll do. You go home and see mother. Tell her we met accidentally, and that you are coming back to stay with me. If Pattie were able to travel or if I could leave her, we'd go with you. You better stay here and let us send for mother."
 But Rawley refused to wait.
 "I must see mother and the old home while I'm sober," he said, "though I'll probably get drunk a dozen times before you see me again. But I won't get drunk while mother can see me and I'll come right back."
 For the first time in many years the tramp slept in a bed, while his sister and her husband both wondered how much of his disgrace lay on his own head and how much at the door of his pretty sweetheart who had coaxed and twitted him to drink her health in his first glass of wine. In some measure he spoke the truth when he said, "I'm Nellie's work." The world holds many just such as he, who are weak and easily led, who will always be some one else's work, good or bad. If Nellie had not used wine the wreck would never have happened. "If" and "might have been," how well they match.
 The next morning Rawley bade them an affectionate good-by. He was well dressed and had plenty of money. He promised his brother-in-law faithfully no matter what happened he would come back, even if he had to tramp every step of the way. So he started.
 He took the local train to the great city beyond, from which place he could go straight through to his old home. But in this city he had to wait three hours for his train. The ride on the local train had been a very long one, and it must be confessed that he was not used to the ordinary method of passenger travel. He felt sick. Not even the abundant dinner which he ordered could stop that awful craving.
 The demon at his elbow whispered "Drink, drink, drink." Pretty, smiling Nellie, with the out-stretched wine-glass, stood just ahead of him. But Pattie's face when she kissed him good-by, and the warm shake of Jack's strong hand lingered with him. Pattie had said, looking straight in his eyes: "Now Rawley, you must be good." He had answered: "Yes, Pattie, I'll try." And he meant it.
 He was trying. God help him! How many others have tried before and will try again.
 He bought his ticket and wandered up and down the platform. The pain and noise in his head grew almost unbearable. Nellie and the wine-glass danced a little way up the street towards the city where was that which would quench his thirst. Twice he started to follow the dancing vision; but each time he remembered and turned back. He looked at the clock in the waiting room. Only one more hour. He would walk on the platform, for only in the air could he find rest. There, there was Nellie again beckoning towards the city. He thought of Pattie and prayed for his train to come. Somehow it appeared to his bewildered brain that if he got on that train he'd be safe.
 Nellie grew bolder as he refused to follow. She danced nearer and nearer, until at last there were dozens of her crowding around him. He raised his arm to push her away when he suddenly realized that Pattie and safety were on the opposite platform.
 "I'm coming, Pattie, I've been good!" he shouted; and before the horrified porters could stop him he dashed across the track just as the western express raced past.
 The locomotive was merciful. There were no marks to tell where he was hurt. Kind hands laid him gently on a hastily improvised bed. The man whose address was found in his pocket was notified. In five hours Jack came.
 The porters told him how the strange gentleman had walked the platform, then gone a little way towards the town twice and each time turned back. How he raised his arm as if to push some one away, and called, "I'm coming, Pattie, I've been good," just as he started across the track.
 Then Jack knew that poor, weak Rawley had conquered his demon and gone before his Maker a victor in the last struggle.—Helen D. Proctor in *The New*

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