

"I still cannot understand why you do it," Will said. But I did not believe him and I said so.

"You, too, went ahead when you were only nineteen, because you saw something better than the things you were leaving behind and you were not thinking of yourself only. Were you ever sorry? Wouldn't you do it again, even if you knew that it meant fatigue and frost-bites and hours of doubt and distress. No one wants a fiddling job . . . when Frank Kinley carried on the Sunday School at Northfield School long ago someone asked him why he stuck to it, in the heat of summer and the cold of winter, pointing out that the parents of the children were indifferent, and the youngsters themselves often trying, noisy and inattentive. Frank made a reply which I have never forgotten. He said: 'I knew what the Sunday School has done for me, as boy and man. I know, and I want other people to have it. I cannot eat my bread alone.' With that phrase 'I cannot eat my bread alone,' I joined Frank Kinley's lodge. You called me an uplifter a few minutes ago, which is, of course, a term of disdain. But that's what I am and I'm not ashamed of it. And don't forget that I'm having a good time at it. No one need feel sorry for me. It is the greatest adventure in the world, and I would not change places with anyone. You see I understand why people sneer at uplifters. It's a form of defence mechanism. It's a cover for selfishness but no one need ever envy a selfish person, for no selfish person is happy."

There was a long silence between us, then as we watched the flying landscape. Then Will spoke:

"You'll never change," he said. "And you will have a good time, as you say. You'll have plenty of friends and many enemies. You'll probably make mistakes and know both joy and sorrow, but at least you'll have the satisfaction of having lived . . . and you know how I feel about you."