

"In much the same way as I account for any other rush. One follows the other. Let one man but run up a street yelling, and see how quickly he will have a crowd at his heels. I look though, for this mad exodus to continue till it cures itself, for men are very much like a flock of sheep, who will blindly follow their leader from a good pasture field into a poorer. But when the latter is picked bare, then pale hunger — the real tester — will drive them back again. It will be the same with the present rush to the towns. They will become so congested, the suffering will become so intense that the inevitable reaction will set in, returning reason will tell these people that the soil itself is the real storehouse of nature, and we will see the tide set in again towards the farm. I am as certain of this prediction being fulfilled, as I am that the sun will rise to-morrow morning.

"Well, I must say that you have made out a tolerably strong case from your point of view" Mr. Anderson said, "still I hope you may be able to keep up your connection with the paper, even if you do go back to the farm.

"Oh yes" he answered eagerly "nothing will please me better than to write of the country and its people. I want to say also, that perhaps my stay in the city would not have affected me so deeply, had I not been brought directly into contact with its worst side from the start. The squalid misery of the slums, the inhuman depravity of whole families herded together in one common living and sleeping-room like brute beasts, the poor, pathetic old-young faces of the little children in those smothering tenement houses, their wee, staring eyes straining to catch one glimpse of the blue sky beyond, oh God can I ever forget them? And the horrible unkindness everywhere! I had read that there was a feeling of mellow good-fellowship, running like a fine thread throughout the relations of the slum-dwellers, but I saw no evidences of such. Instead of this, I saw drunken, ruffianly brothers strike their sisters with closed fists, I saw fathers pound their weakly children like if they were fighting with men, till I had to interfere to save life, I saw everywhere in the slums a systematic and cruel tyranny of the strong over the weak. Not even once did I see any indication of finer feelings, not once did I see a standing up against the savage sway of the intoxicated bully. The reign of brute force was everywhere in the slums, civilization had dropped off like a useless mask. Can you wonder that I almost hate the city where such can and does exist, that I long again for the dear old farm, to hear the joyous matins of the birds in the trees, the babble of