

out beneath his great thought-microscope, and in one glance had explored the innermost mysteries of what was, after all, a very simple organism.

"Take another month," said Mr Burgoyne, rising from the table, "to consider it. Take a month to make up your mind."

"I have made up my mind now, sir."

"No; I can't have you decide till another month has passed. Weigh it all carefully, Stone—as though it was not yourself—but somebody else. Take advice. Ask Wren. Yes; talk it over with Wren. I have a great opinion of Wren," and he laid his hand on Stone's shoulder. "Why not ask Wren to give you a good overhauling? There is this one consideration, my dear fellow. The sacrifice of your natural hopes may be balanced by the escape from many perils—perils to your health, I mean. Ask Wren how you stand. Are you ready for the battle of life, or should you avoid it?"

In this final month Stone had many talks with his new friend Wren: talking to him with as complete a freedom as though Wren had been an old friend instead of a new one. Wren was a "thorough good sort:" you could not talk to him for long without being convinced of the fact. He was not showy, or brilliant in his work; but he was sound and strong, and much deeper than you could at first anticipate. Indeed, you might probe very deep into Wren's mental storehouse without reaching its floor.

"You'll stay, of course?" said Wren again.

"Yes; I want to stay."

"That's right," said Wren, cheerfully. "You know, you may be sure of one thing—you won't have to complain as to salary. I never heard what he gave Edmundson and the others, but he is always princely in money matters."

"I haven't given a thought to the money."

"That's right," said Wren. "I didn't suppose you were mercenary. I only wanted to tell you about *him*, in case you didn't know. You need have no uneasiness about taking whatever he offers, because he is, I imagine, a really rich man."

"Is he?"