

He realized that, were he to make good, some gigantic efforts must be made during the coming ten years.

He reviewed the example of his friend Jack, a man of about his own age who had married about the same time. Jack had been fortunate, or he had been wise. His wife had presented him with only one child in all those twenty years. Jack had a similar job to Jim's in the same mill, and they received the same salary. But there the comparison between them ended, for Jack had accumulated wealth from his never-failing monthly pay envelope. Mr. and Mrs. Jack enjoyed life, and housed many of its luxuries. They had travelled much, and had gone abroad on several occasions during holidays when Jim was compelled to stay at home for want of means. The truth was apparent: Jim had been penalized for doing his duty to the country, while Jack had been bonused for neglecting it. Was Jack justified? Well, he lived on the best and got away with it. What was Jim going to do about it? What COULD be done about it? Nothing. Jim had sown; he must reap. The condition was there and it must be reckoned with. Jack seemed to enjoy as much credit for his one as Jim did for his five. Did the social system not require amending?

Jim's first job on earth, and it was his last, was a "hand" in one of the large city saw mills. He was a common laborer. But the laborer at the beginning of the twentieth century was better off than the university man. At that time there were beginning to be too many professional men and too few artisans. The balance of power was beginning to accrue in favor of honest-to-goodness labor. Jim earned good wages; but then, it required it all to meet current expenses. The end of each month found him hungry for his pay envelope to meet bills that were to eat it all up at sight. He was continually paying out his last dollar.

Jim had investigated those realms in whose soft arms some were able to rock in ease and comfort with no apparent source of motive power. But he was never brainy enough to get the inside track on any of the easy money which made such a life possible. In rare instances it was a matter of interest on invested capital, but in a great many it was personality, gaul, cheek, graft. The speculation led Jim nowhere but back to the soil. It seemed to him that the moment his wage would stop, down would come baby and cradle and all. His monthly pay was always a guardian angel standing between him and immediate ruin, starvation, nakedness. Without it his whole domestic fabric would fall about his ears. It was like a lone pillar supporting a beautiful structure, without which the whole magnificent pile would crumble to bits. Out of each dollar of his wage, moreover, he was never able to squeeze more than one hundred cents. In Jim's psychology there was only one way to get by, and that was by the tortuous channel of an everlasting grind.

Jim had been attached to the milling concern so long that he had become part and parcel to it—a cog in one of the small pinions—a bolt that held certain parts together. He had become to that part of the machinery which he handled, what a governor is to an engine. Like the governor, did he break down, the broken part would be replaced by a new. Jim was a mere unit in the great industrial world.

But then, Jim had an asset at home that more than compensated him for the drudgery and the tread-mill existence at the works—the priceless love of his wife, and his five healthy and valuable children. Notwithstanding the cost, they were worth it, and more to him than all other things in the world could possibly be.

Wending his way home one afternoon Jim made another discovery about the social system which augmented rather than weakened his injuries and prejudices. It was the summer of 1915 when conscription was first threatened in connection with the great war. It was a regiment of soldiers training for active service. He recognized a few young fellows whom he knew personally in the ranks. His eldest son

Joe, was just a few years younger than some of those who had enlisted. He was just sixteen.

The possibility of Joe enlisting or being conscripted in time occurred to Jim for the first time in all its gruesomeness. And it started Jim thinking, thinking, thinking. His thoughts this time ran amuck along a new channel, but he reached home before all evidence for the prosecution had been heard.

No sooner had he lifted the latch of the gate leading to his cottage than the door flew open and out rushed Mrs. Jim followed by two of the children. Immediately Jim's gloom vanished and his very feet seemed to develop wings.

The weight of twenty years married life had not left many dinges on Mrs. Jim. She was still fresh and fair, and firm in her love. Her affection for Jim was as true as it was yesterday, as true as it was on the day of their wedding. That was the husband's compensation for the great sacrifice he imagined he had made, and for many things that didn't seem to be according to Hoile.

Mrs. Jim caught him by the arm and dragged him playfully up the few steps to the door, while the two children clung to them, one to the mother and the other to the father.

"Oh, Jim!" she cried, "you can never guess."

Jim's whole being at once flew out to his wife:

"Guess? Guess what?"

"Try," eagerly.

"Apple dumplings?"

"No," in raptures.

"Sweetened oat cake?"

"No, nothing to eat. Try again."

"Cat got kittens?"

She screamed with laughter and delight.

"Wrong. Try again."

"Some one left us a fortune."

"No such luck."

"I thought not," he moaned, with the usual pessimism.

By this time they were in the dining room where the table was set for seven and the other three children were already placed.

Try again," repeated Mrs. Jim, as they entered the room.

"Give it up. What is it?"

"Stupid! Joe's got a job. Could you not guess?" enthused the wife, looking at the boy who was beaming with as much delight as the mother.

"Got a job! Joe? Where?"

"In the postoffice."

"Goodie."

Jim realized in a moment why his son had "got a job" in the postoffice. He recalled the draft of soldiers—recruits—mere boys many of them—passing down Granville street. It was some relief that his boy had been called to help fill the ranks in civil service rather than those of war.

Jim was not permitted to dwell on the tragedy of war or the happy manner in which it affected his own family, for the children began to crowd him; and, at the risk of picturing something that did not exist in 1915, much less in 1923, they all, with the exception of Joe, who was a man now with his postoffice job, kissed father before he sat down to the table. This was more of that wealthy compensation which Jim received in exchange for things which did not appear to be altogether right.

Every time Jim saw his home, and his wife, and his children, his heart swelled with gladness at his great fortune. What a blessing Mrs. Jim had been to him! What a joy she was with her sunshine smile, her kind sympathy, and her uncomplaining constancy!

But Jim had made a new discovery in social psychology. For nearly twenty years he had been bringing up children for the State at his own expense. Was it not Jim's time to speak his mind, to lay a complaint? By what right morally, socially, politically or otherwise had a burden that belonged