

# THE FIGHTING CHANCE

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## CHAPTER I

### ACQUAINTANCE

THE speed of the train slackened; a broad tidal river flashed into sight below the trestle, spreading away on either hand through yellowing level meadows. And now, above the roaring undertone of the cars, from far ahead floated back the treble bell-notes of the locomotive; there came a gritting vibration of brakes; slowly, more slowly the cars glided to a creaking standstill beside a sun-scorched platform gay with the bright flutter of sunshades and summer gowns.

"Shotover! Shotover!" rang the far cry along the cars; and an absent-minded young man in the Pullman pocketed the uncut magazine he had been dreaming over and, picking up gun case and valise, followed a line of fellow-passengers to the open air, where one by one they were engulfed and lost to view amid the gay confusion on the platform.

The absent-minded young man, however, did not seem to know exactly where he was bound for. He stood hesitating, leisurely inspecting the flashing ranks of vehicles—depot wagons, omnibusses, and motor cars already eddying around a dusty gravel drive centred by the conventional railroad flower bed and fountain.

Sunshine blazed on foliage plants arranged geometrically, on scarlet stars composed of geraniums, on