

Samuel Slocum.

A NOVEL WITH A PURPOSE.

CHAP. I.

PREMONITIONS.

"Ah—um—" said Samuel Slocum, as they reached the brow of the hill, "Do you not think that our loftiest ideals adumbrate in a measure to the subtle sub-consciousness of a pre-existence?"

He had been silent for some minutes thinking up something appropriate to the grandeur of the scene which lay outstretched before them.

"On the contrary," said his friend Jacob W. Persimmon, "it is pure introspectiveness which dominates every chord of being vibrating in thrillsome diapason—(good word diapason) to the touch of the master passion."

"True, and yet life seems to be fraught as it were with a calm and buoyant iridescence. It is surcharged with a mellow potency. It is only the actual which culminates. The veritable is always the symbolic. Optimism is the cult of sciolists. The nescience of our age prefigures ulterior modes of thought. Why I could go on and talk in this style for an hour just as easy—"

"Don't, please don't," said his companion. "Remember that Grip's space is limited, while the waste basket is capacious."

"True," said Samuel, and lapsed into silence.

The evening dews were falling as they descended the hill. Below them the little village lay in peaceful repose—all spoke of quiet and restfulness. No sound broke the almost oppressive stillness except the whoop of an occasional inebriate staggering homewards, and the voice of the auctioneer exclaiming, "How much am I offered for this lot? One hundred and twenty five, only one hundred and twenty five. Now's your chance, gentlemen. Best location in the North-West. Rising city of —" [No, you don't! you can't ring in any of your colonization swindles into our columns that way.—ED. GRIP.]

CHAP. II.

THE ATTRACTION OF COHESION.

Amanda Minerva Caldecott sat at the door of her parents' cottage, 'neath the honeysuckle-covered porch, toying in an absent-minded way with her curls and reading the editorials of the *Telegram*. "He has indeed a Powerful Mind," she murmured, "but oh! he is not nearly so soulful as dear Samuel." And the maiden sank into a pleasing reverie from which she was roused by the click of the telephone within. "It is his click—I'd know it—among 1,000," cried the delighted girl. The following conversation ensued:—

"Hello, Amanda—hello, hello!"

"Hello yourself."

"How is my rosebud this morning?"

"Fining for the sunlight of love, dear Sammy."

"What didst think of Dr. Wild's sermon?"

"Was it not full of insight?"

"Yes, and gemmed with pearls of oratory."

"And garlanded with the floral wreaths of rhetoric."

"How delightful is this soul harmony."

In this style the lovers conversed to the extent of about two columns nonpareil.

Little do we think upon what trivial events may hinge our destiny. Amanda, before closing the conversation, put a final question:

"How do'st like Emerson, dear Sammy?"

The reply hoarsely boomed over the wires, "He is a Pantheist, Br-r-r-r."

"Nay, say not so—he is a vibrant and sunlit soul."

"I tell you he is *ausgespielt*, as Kant would say. He is N. G., and essentially a used-up community."

"You are cruel, Samuel. It is too bad to say mean things like that. You lack responsiveness."

"Amanda, I have awakened to a sense of the ultimate exigencies. You can soo me no longer with futile warblings. Henceforth we are no more as heretofore. We meet as strangers. Adieu!"

She quitted the instrument, and flinging herself on the lounge, burst into a tempest of tears.

CHAP. III.

ONE MORE RIVER.

Samuel Slocum dashed out of the office of the thriving coal merchant where he had called to borrow the use of his telephone, in a state of mind so nearly bordering upon frenzy that it would require an arbitration to tell whether the boundary had been passed or otherwise. So absorbed was he that he failed to recognize several of his most persistent creditors. Intuitively he bent his steps towards the Bay. "Is life, then," he murmured, "but as the mirage of the desert, which gleams athwart the vista with its mellow allurements and vanishes as the special correspondent approaches it for a closer interview? Alas! it is too thushy. Fate has got the bulge on me. The spectral finger of Destiny, (which the printer will please spell with a cap. D) beckons me to an early tomb. I would the waters were not so turbid from the close proximity of the city sewer. Nevertheless, at a crisis like this, let us not be hypercritical about trifles."

Thus soliloquizing he walked out to the end of the Yonge-street Wharf, and was just on the point of precipitating himself into the seething waters when—

CHAP. IV.

THE RESCUE.

"Hold, rash youth!"

The voice was that of Jacob W. Persimmon, whose coal-black mule at that moment thundered along the wharf. Hastily throwing the reins to a boy who was trying to sell the *Evening News* at two for a cent to a group of interested spectators, Jacob dismounted and clutched his friend by the shoulder.

The two men clinched in a desperate struggle.

"Unhand me, Jacob W., you are no true friend of mine. Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate ye. Amanda is false. The stock in the Press Colonization Company is all taken up. Tennyson's later efforts are the meanest hogwash, and I don't care a cent whether school keeps or not. I will solve the Great Conundrum."

"But Samuel, you shall not, you must not! Pause ere you commit a deed which the press of this enlightened country will universally characterize as the 'rash act.' Do not, I implore you, diminish the party strength in the face of an election where every vote will count. Think not that I interfere on your account, it's the party that I have at heart, and I hate to see a good, square Tory vote fooled away in this manner."

"Begone, Persimmon, urge me no more, I am resolved upon the deed."

"But you forget, you have an appointment at 3.30 p.m. to be present at the meeting of the committee of the Society for the Suppression of Vice."

Samuel Slocum's features assumed the dazed expression of one who wakes as from a dream. He passed his hand over his forehead and remarked, "Ah, true, I had disremembered it. How annoying! These societies interfere terribly with a fellow's private arrangements. In the meantime let's go and beverage."

CHAP. V.

TEMPUS FUERT.

Five long and weary years had passed since the events chronicled in the preceding chap-

ters. The scene shifts to a distant city in the New North-West. A street of low wooden buildings occupied as real estate offices and bar-rooms. Long row of emigrants emerging from the station of the C. P. R., gripsacks in hand, welcomed cordially by the friendly land-scooper, and put up to good things in the way of bargains.

"Why, Jacob W., the last man I expected to meet," said a stalwart scooper, the ample pockets of whose fur coat bulged out with plans and title-deeds.

"Samuel Slocum," said the now arrival, "glad to see you, shake."

"You once saved my life, Jacob, I am not ungrateful. I'll put you up to a splendid chance, that is if you have five thousand dollars about you—corner lot, first-class site for hotel—about four miles from the centre of the city—it's been sold to two other fellows already, but that don't make any difference, for all you have to do is to get your deed registered first."

"Say \$4,500 Samuel."

"Well, seeing it's you, I don't mind throwing off a little, and anyway a trifle like five hundred ain't worth talking about."

And the friends adjourned to the nearest restaurant to ratify the bargain.

CHAP. VI.

RE-UNITED.

Mr. Budger, the enterprising landlord of the Howling Catamount Saloon, had pegged out a week or so previous, owing to the number of invitations to "take something yourself" showered upon him by his visitors, and the business was run by his widow.

The two speculators stood apart from the thirsty throng, conversing as to the respective advantages of different localities.

"By the way, what do you think of Emerson?" asked Jacob.

What was there in the query that made Samuel Slocum turn pale and clutch wildly at the bar for support as he answered in a broken voice, "I—I don't know. Leave me a while, you have struck a painful chord in my memory."

The lady behind the bar was also visibly agitated—"Emerson, he is a vibrant and sunlit soul," she murmured, and forgot to put any bitters in the cocktail she was mixing.

Persimmon gazed from one to the other in astonishment. "Oh, ah, got stuck on Emerson lots I suppose," he cried to his newly found friend; "the place did peter out pretty badly, that's a fact, but it'll boom again one of these days."

Samuel did not hear him—violently kicking a yellow dog belonging to a half-breed to conceal his emotion—he turned to the bar and said in a hoarse voice—"Brandy!"

The hostess turned towards him. Their eyes met.

"Samuel! Can it be?"

"Amanda! Yes, 'tis she!"

Tableau!

"All is now forgiven," said Samuel.

"Yes, indeed. Henceforth we will part no more, and Jacob W.," said Slocum, "in consideration of the way things have turned out I don't mind if I let you have half a dozen more lots on the same terms, and in the meantime all that remains to be done, is to stand champagne for the crowd."

"Let this teach us all," said Jacob, "that though subtle irrelevancies may through our life-path-way and obscure our transient gleams of the empyrean, the inherent consciousness which dominates impulse and enfolds as it were to the exclusion of the impalpable, those finer elements of being that permeate our nature, will sooner or later find the expansion of a full efflorescence."

And they all remarked that they thought so too.

THE END.