



IT is not the spurt at the start, but the continued, unrelenting, unrelenting advance that wins the day.

The Turning Point

By Philip Verrill Mighels.
(Continued from last week)

IN a chair above the dealer sat the lookout, hopefully lazy, to all appearances, but never for a second unalert. He leaned down suddenly. "Flash! overlooking a bet!" He pointed with his thumb.

This time a faintly crimson wave of color swept unmistakably over the gambler's face. He had never overlooked a bet before. "Here, Jimmy," he said to the lookout quietly; "I'm off for the night."

He rose from his seat, passed out around the players and followed after Steve, who had already started for the door.

They arrived outside on the covered walk, with the rain pelting steadily about them, and neither had spoken. For a moment they still maintained a silence, the gambler eyeing Steve in a quick, inquisitorial way as if he expected a lecture and meant to resent it.

"Well," he said presently, "how do you know she's my mother?"

"I didn't fetch her," Steve reminded him. "Here she come on the stage, clean tuckered out, but game as they make 'em, and says she hails from Indiana and wants to know if Frank Watson's here in Broken Hill and doin' an honest man's work."

Flash half turned away from Steve and stared straight ahead at nothing save the darkness of the night. His face was intensely white. Without in the least understanding why, Steve pitied the man there beside him.

"What did you tell her?" asked the gambler after another long silence.

"What did you say I was doing?"

"Mining," said Steve. "I thought—"

"Yes—thank you," interrupted Watson quietly. "Where is she now?"

"Asleep in her chair, at the store."

Not by the slightest movement or sign did the gambler betray the fact that this intelligence had gone home to his breast like a stab. He did not seem to have heard. He stood so silently gazing straight ahead that Steve began to hear the rain, heretofore unnoticed—the steady, melancholy drip, drip, drip from trees and eaves sounding strangely loud and eternal.

"Oh, Steve, I can't go and see her!" said Watson abruptly, shaken at last from immobility. "I can't!"

"I'm no more fit to see her than—than any of those—and you know it!" He made a passionate gesture toward the gilded plate behind him. "I'd have to lie about—what I've become. I'd have to lie here! I can't go and see her to-night!"

Steve was awed by the outburst from lips so habitually cold.

"What are you going to do?" he

said. "What do you want me to tell her?"

"I don't know—I don't know," answered Watson, staring at the rain.

"I haven't any place to take her—and I've got to wait. I've got to do something to clean myself—some decent, sweat work! I've got to make my hands look grimy and honest! I've got to get ready, Steve, to see her."

"In the mornin'?" said Steve.

Summer

How sweet the bloom of summer,
The whispering of the rill;
The buzz and whirr of insects
Is flooding every hill;
The air is steeped in sunshine
That has power the heart to thrill.

Till life seems born of Heaven,
And every breath is bliss.
The wind is soft and fragrant
And soothes us with its kiss,
While clouds like angel's raiment
Float through the blue abyss.

And wrong is all forgotten,
We only know the true.
The old is left behind us,
We cling unto the new,
And Heaven is close beside us
And open to our view.

Shall I tell her you've got to stay on shift and will see her first thing in the mornin'?"

"No—not in the morning. I've been what I am too long," said Watson self-acquiescing. "I can't work it up the best you can and give me a week—that's little enough—to work with pick and shovel before I can look her in the face!"

For a moment Steve made no answer. He looked away from Watson's face in rough thoughtfulness.

"But with you right here in the camp," he objected finally, "she'll think there's something wrong."

"It can't be helped. I'll take a job in the Sunrise over in the gulch," said Watson, his voice slightly breaking.

"You can tell her you're sure I'm in the district, but you've got to hunt along mine to mine. You can tell her about anything—except the truth."

And in a week—we'll go away."

"You won't even go down and look in through the window?" asked Steve from some pent-up mother-hunger

deep in his being. "Such a sight might do you good."

"I could!" answered Watson, glancing at him almost wildly. Then he added, "No. Help me for a week, Steve! Shake and give me your word."

He snatched at the outstretched hand of his friend and wrung it with frenzied strength. Then he started straight off in the rain.

"Frank, where you goin'?" Steve called at him loudly. "Where's your coat?"

"I'm going to get a job," said Watson, striding on. And into the darkness, with its mud and chill, he abruptly disappeared.

Steve returned to the store. In his absence Mrs. Watson had wakened. She was thoroughly excited and her face was flushed anew when the big fellow came in at the door.

Steve had his hat in his hand. He forced a smile.

"It's just about as I thought," he said. "He's somewhere's right around the camp, but he's left the Queen to take a better job."

"I dreamed I saw him in the rain," she told them wistfully. "He was goin' away. If he knew I'd come he'd walk a hundred miles to see me." She added in a moment, "I'd walk that far to find him."

"We're bound to find him in a day or two," said Steve. "Some of the mines are pretty far apart."

"You are very kind," she answered. "I've waited so long I can wait a little longer." She hesitated for a moment, looking at the three rough men.

"I thought I'd like to go to his home. Would some of you take me there?"

fallen across the rocks and brush repeatedly and was mud from his feet to his shoulders.

Into the dimly lighted hoisting works he stumbled, where the night superintendent and the engineer were engaged in conversation.

He passed the shaft yawning, double-compartment well, down the abutment mouth of which the cables of the cages disappeared. Bixby, the superintendent, amazed at such a visitor at this hour, turned to greet him familiarly.

"Good Lord, Flash, out for a constitutional?" he said. "I didn't know you were a member of the web-footed tribe."

He smiled, but Watson's face was set in determination.

"I want a job, Hank—underground," he said. "If you can, let me go to-night."

"What's the matter?" answered Bixby, suddenly curious. "You don't need the money. You ain't going to reform?" His query was meant for a joke.

"My mother has arrived in camp," said Watson candidly. "She thinks I'm a miner—an honest workin' man. Give me a job—that's all I ask of you."

It is only in the far-off places where an almost forgotten word or phrase rises infrequently to the lips of men that it tests the wonders of magic.

Such a word in Broken Hill was mother. For any man there to have laid his mother appear and find him naked in his nature would have staggered the lawless of the camp.

There had been no man's mother in Broken Hill since the camp's sudden growth on the gold reef.

The superintendent and the engineer regarded Watson peculiarly for nearly a minute. When Bixby spoke the bantering tone had vanished completely from his voice.

"You can take any job you like," he said. "The cage is coming up in a minute."

Even as he spoke a bell gave forth a signal, sent by a wire-pull from far down below, where men were hotly delving in the earth. The engineer gave power to the huge, unlubricated machine, and rod after rod of the cable, winding on the reels, glided up from the mouth of the shaft without a sound, till after a time that seemed interminable the iron cage abruptly shot into view and was halted at the level of the floor.

On it was a bulky man, a shift boss, who had come up with tools to be sharpened. Watson recognized the man as one who had lost considerable money to him at faro recently and been thrown from the place by force.

His name was Blawd, and Watson knew he had no friendly feeling for him.

"Oh, Blawd," said the superintendent, walking with Watson to the shaft, "you can wait and go down in a minute. Tawson's applied for a job to-night, and you need another man in the store."

Blawd merely nodded, closing his eyes, but a slit that deep-laid emotion was nurtured in his mind against the man with whom he now stood face to face was wholly unguessed by Bixby.

There was silent exaltation in the gambler and himself on almost equal terms at last, with himself as boss, as he

If Watson believed and recognized the face betrayed no sign. He was not the card was on the board. He had asked for employment; he would take it—under Blawd or anyone else.

(Continued next week.)

Are you watching our Summer Premium Talks opposite editorial page. Some of them are sure to interest you.