

## "ANCIENT OF DAYS"

Louden, sighing as he descended his narrow stairs, with the bitterness still upon his lips of the frightful coffee he had made, heard the echo of their laughter with wonder.

It would be an hour at least before time to start to church, when Ariel expected him; he stared absently up the street, then down, and, after that, began slowly to walk in the latter direction, with no very active consciousness, or care, of where he went. He had fallen into a profound reverie, so deep that when he had crossed the bridge and turned into a dusty road which ran along the river-bank, he stopped mechanically beside the trunk of a fallen sycamore, and, lifting his head, for the first time since he had set out, looked about him with a melancholy perplexity, a little surprised to find himself there.

For this was the spot where he had first seen the new Ariel, and on that fallen sycamore they had sat together. "*Remember, across Main Street bridge at noon!*" And Joe's cheeks burned, as he recalled why he had not understood the clear voice that had haunted him. But that shame had fallen from him; she had changed all that, as she had changed so many things. He sank down in the long grass, with his back against the log, and stared out over the fields of tall corn, shaking in a steady wind all the way to the horizon.