

SUNSHINE-SHADDER

firmed this supposition, for the ever watchful had noticed the frequent receipts from the savings bank pass from the wicket into his muscular, horny hands.

It was the sum and substance of their gleanings, however, and even Limpy, who knew the history of every man and woman on the hillside, admitted that when it came to the hill-top he was "flabbergasted." Outwardly indifferent to private or public opinion, Benjamin's attitude towards the villagers remained almost as reserved as upon his entry among them. Even upon the rare evenings when he dropped into the genial atmosphere of the store, his tongue touched alone upon the most commonplace topics of the countryside. They all felt he could tell a story, a story of a different life beyond the hillside, and it was with eagerness that they discussed and exaggerated upon the slightest remark made by this man whose name alone they knew.

Only upon one occasion could they remember that he fairly loosened his tongue to indulge in other than the gossip of the neighborhood. It was an unexpected procedure, and the night that he so forgot himself as to contradict an assertion touching upon the pleasures of a city life was a night that lived long in the memory of his hearers. For once utterly forgetful of self, he propped his cane between his knees and pictured in rich but simple language the sunshine and shadow of city life as they had never heard it before. The hour grew late, but regardless of this they clustered round, a silent group who feared to stir lest the slightest inattention would break the spell upon him.