

moments of time that seem like years—ay, and do the work of years. "You would have liked to do something fine, to have a chance to show off and make the world call you a plucky fellow," a voice in his heart said to him. "And this is what comes to you—a chance to die a dog's death, while the other chaps call you a fool. But if you turn your back you will know all your life, whatever they may say, that you are a poor pitiful coward. Well, it's hard luck; that's what it is."

Jack Temple gave a little sigh, like a schoolboy driven to some unwelcome task; and took two or three steps nearer to the woman.

"Catch hold of my arm," he said. "Lean pretty hard, and you'll get along that far, I should think. If the worst comes to the worst, I can carry you a bit."

The woman stared dumbly at him, too much surprised to make any movement to accept his offered help; but he drew her arm firmly within his; and at the same moment his late companions scattered back in all directions once more.

From a safe distance they raised their voices in confused remonstrance; angry, as men are apt to be when they see a man doing what they dare not do themselves and what they would like to think quite unnecessary to be done by anyone.

Jack Temple would not have paid any heed to them even if he had not felt that it was now too late to draw back. But he felt a little hurt when, as they went off, more than one shouted back a warning that he 'was not to think himself fit company for anyone for one while,' and that he had better not try to join them at the place where they were going to finish the evening.

"You needn't be frightened! If you don't want to have me I want as little to come," he cried, flinging the words indignantly back over his shoulder; and then he turned again to the woman, and gave his whole mind to helping her tottering steps along the rough half-made road.

It was not a pleasant walk for Jack Temple. He had put aside his fears, but he had not forgotten them; and he was sorely tempted to hurry his charge beyond her strength, that he might get away from her dangerous neighborhood.

She began to talk, in her low shaken voice, giving some kind of explanation that he could hardly catch, and was not at all inclined to believe in. He was quite sure that she had the small-pox whatever she might have been driven to say; and while she talked he was wondering whether, having been vaccinated as a baby would protect him now, or whether being vaccinated the next day or that very night would be a safeguard against dangers already run into.

And the time seemed so long! The distance to the end of that long straight road, that his young feet could have travelled in five minutes if he had been alone, seemed to stretch itself out for miles as his companion dragged more and more wearily upon his arm.

Jack thought at last that he should really have to keep his word and carry her; but she made shift to keep on, and to creep past the long front of the Small-pox Hospital; and, sure enough, the second of two small cottages that stood fifty yards beyond it was called Southview.

Here Jack had rather hoped that he would find some one who would confirm the woman's story, or tell him honestly what was the matter with her, but as he tapped at the half-open door a big stupid-looking girl came forward and exclaimed in surprise at the sight of his companion, whom she called Aunt Lizzie, and whom she evidently had not seen for some time.

It was plain that the woman meant to

tell her own tale, true or false, to these relations of hers, and Jack could see no good in staying to hear her tell it. He was just hurrying off when she stopped him for an instant to beg for his address; and he gave it and went away, only hoping that he might never have occasion to think of her again.

It was not because Jack Temple cared nothing about infection that he had been the one to come forward in this emergency. Small-pox is the one disease that is most dreaded in his class, and his mother had when she was a child witnessed an awful outbreak of it in her native town, and her stories of that time had made a deep impression on his mind.

He was no coward; and if he had had anything to do he would soon have shaken off his fears and his serious thoughts, reasonable and unreasonable, together.

But his holiday had come to an untimely

home and shutting himself up in his lodging for the rest of the evening, trying to set his face to what might lie before him.

That his fears were more than half fanciful, that, right or wrong, the next morning would see him ready to laugh at them, made no difference to Jack Temple just then. In the fulness of life and strength, with plenty of time to think about it, he had to realize how near death is to all of us; and a cold breath from the grave seemed to chill the warm young blood in his veins.

It did occur to him that to go out and get drunk would be a very good way of forgetting unpleasant thoughts. If he had run into this danger by mere accident, he might perhaps have taken that way; but now he felt a sort of unwillingness to spoil what had been meant well in that fashion. 'Nay,' he thought; 'I meant it on the right side. I'll face it out and take the consequences, and



'IT ENDED IN HIS GOING TO THE CLUB DOCTOR.'

ly end, and yet there was of course no work for him to do. His home was too far off to go to, and even if it had not been he might not have felt himself safe company for anyone. There was nothing for it but to take a walk by himself on the loneliest, and airiest and bleakest road he could find, and to amuse himself by wondering how soon a man would begin to feel that he was in for small-pox, if he really had taken it.

It ended in his going to the club doctor and getting himself vaccinated, without explaining the reason for his sudden desire for the doctor's services, and then going

not make a beast of myself this time.'

And as he sat and faced it out, the careless, light-hearted boy, to whom life had seemed no more than a game of chance, grew all at once into a man.

He saw, or partly saw, what life was worth, and what he might make of it if it was spared to him; saw the sins and follies of the thoughtless past, and felt a wholesome pang of shame; caught a glimpse of the mercy that had watched and had patience all through his careless boyhood; and made a very humble and honest resolve that if he was kept now safe from harm he would try,