

That same evening Helen Scannon waited anxiously for her brother's return. She had tried to be both elder sister and mother to Harry, and it was with a slight protest that she had yielded to her father's wish that he should learn the routine of the workshops.

'It won't hurt him any. It didn't me,' Mr. Scannon had said. 'He has finished the high school, and this will be another school and equally as good.'

'But Harry isn't very strong,' Helen had ventured, 'and there are all sorts of men among the workmen. He has always been particular about his associates, and I have been, too, for him.'

'It will do him good, and toughen his muscle,' was Mr. Scannon's answer. 'The rough and tumble, the good and bad of life are things he will have to face. He is old enough now to begin and show the stuff he is made of.'

'Well, Harry,' was his sister's greeting, 'and how have you got along to-day?'

'As well, I guess, as a green hand could expect. The young man I work beside was very kind in showing and helping me.'

'Does he seem a nice young man,' she asked, quickly.

Harry laughed. 'He might not exactly ornament a five o'clock tea; but I guess he is all right.'

That was at the very beginning, and the two young fellows liked each other more and more upon acquaintance. 'Helen,' Harry said one day some weeks later, 'that Sterns, who works by me, is an uncommon fellow. Do you know he spends his evenings studying up force, velocity, friction, and gravity as applied to machinery. I tell you it takes a pretty stiff determination to dig into such things after working ten hours. I couldn't do it.'

'If he is interested that way,' said Helen, 'why not ask him here some time. Father has a case of books in the library along those lines, and he might like to look at them.'

'That's a prime idea. I'll do it.'

In the meantime those weeks had not been altogether easy ones for Hugh. He was all the time noting habits, ideas, opinions in Harry that not only seemed to set them apart, in spite of natural liking, but array them against each other. One thing was evident, life to the son of the rich man was far from the serious matter it was to the poor boy who had his own way to make. 'Hugh Sterns is all right,' Griggs announced one evening. 'He is going to join the Brotherhood at the next meeting. Old Scannon never played into our hands better than when he sent that little whipper-snapper into the shop. Ten percent more wages, and an hour's less time, that's the word.'

But one day there was an accident to the machinery, and the shop shut down for the day.

'Sterns,' said Harry, as he laid off his working-blouse, 'my father has a lot of books on momentum, force, and that sort of thing. Come up this afternoon, and look them over.'

The invitation came so unexpectedly, the thought of the books was such a temptation, that before he fairly realized it, he had answered, 'Thank you, I'll be glad to come.'

It was the first time he had ever been inside a handsome house, and he looked around at the luxurious appointments with the inward sense of injustice rising higher than ever. It was with a smart at his heart that he sat down beside Harry at the table in the spacious library, and turned the leaves of the volume before him.

Presently the door softly opened, and Helen, a book in her hand, stood in the entrance. 'You left this in my room, Harry,' she said. 'I did not know but you might want it.'

'Yes, thank you. And, Helen, this is Mr. Sterns, my friend and fellow-workman, that I've told you of. My sister, Mr. Sterns.'

The book had been an excuse to Helen. What she wanted was to see and judge for herself this young man, now one of her brother's daily associates. As she looked at his face, stronger, more manly by contrast with Harry's slight fairness, she felt that it was a face that held as yet no evil, and the promise of much good. And with this came a sense of the different conditions of life, which had deepened its lines beyond its years.

Helen had planned to go to a musical club that afternoon, and her hat and dress were laid out in waiting. But between them and her came the question—Was this careless greeting enough? Ought she not to give more of herself, her interest, her time, to her brother and this stranger within their doors? They were entertaining themselves; the idea seemed absurd; but was no less insistent. To put aside self for others was a grace Helen Scannon had already learned, and, pausing with her hand on the door, she said: 'You must not devote all the afternoon to books. I shall expect you to tea with me in the music-room at five o'clock.'

'Is that an invitation or a command?' asked Harry, with a smile that showed his pleasure.

'Whichever you choose to call it,' she answered gayly, 'so long as you come.'

To Hugh the whole thing was a new revelation; the tasteful room; the cozy table (not the conventional cup of tea and a wafer, for Helen knew young men's appetites better than that), and more than all, the atmosphere of cordial kindness that she knew so well how to impart.

He heard there, too, something of Mr. Scannon's early life, the struggles that had beset it, and the responsibilities that still burdened it. And his own reserve yielding, he hardly knew how, his listeners caught a glimpse of the odds against which he had made his way, and felt a real sympathy with his courage and force.

'I am glad to have met you,' Helen said, as he rose to leave. 'I am always glad to know young men in whose future I can hope.'

Hugh walked down the street with a glow at his heart he had seldom known. Helen's kindness had touched him deeply. And what energy and perseverance and character had once accomplished in the elder Scannon's case, could they not still do it, in some measure, in his own? Hugh had come to the point where a hand's weight could turn the scale. That had been given, and reviewing some of the problems that had vexed him, he settled them for himself, then and there.

'No,' said Griggs, in the Brotherhood Hall, that evening, 'Hugh Sterns wouldn't come. He gave me a lot of twaddle about the mutual need of labor and capital for each other, and the duty of a workman to perfect himself in his line. More than that, he came out square, and said that he would have nothing to do with any strike, and would use his influence against one; and as the younger ones will all follow him like sheep, that means we can do nothing.'

So, merely from a business point of view, Helen's cup of tea had been worth while—

and its larger consequences are not ended yet.

A Veteran's Yarn.

('Nomad,' in 'Toilers of the Deep.')

You want me to tell you a story,
Of the times when I was a lad;
It's a very long time ago, sir,
And my mem'ry's getting bad.

Still, I'll do the best I can, sir,
Though the story's a sorrowful one;
And it brings the tears to my eyes, sir,
Once I've fairly begun.

I was boss of a North Sea 'coper,'
Just twenty and three years ago;
As big a hell as afloat, sir,
No worse could be found, I know.

The fishermen used to board us,
The youngsters as well as the men;
And would drink till they rolled on the
deck, sir,
Would sleep, and then drink again.

How well I remember their forms, sir,
As over the rail they crept,
And tumbled into their boats, sir,
Some sprawled in the bottom and
slept.

I quite got used to their faces,
Some youthful and all aglow,
Others all puckered, with traces,
Of drink's sad havoc and woe.

Many a fisher I've known, sir,
Fine brawny men, and brave;
Get drunk as could be on a 'coper,'
Then go to a watery grave.

A cloud of vice and shame, sir,
Hung over the great North Sea,
Till came the good ship 'Ensign,'
And set our fetters free.

'Twas thought that she would not
succeed, sir,
The wisecracks shook their heads;
But right, not might, must win, sir,
As the banner of truth outspreads.

I went aboard the vessel,
And heard the Missioner talk;
I felt quite like a babe, sir,
A babe just on the walk.

But when they knelt for prayers, sir,
I felt my knees give way;
And down I went on the deck, sir,
And then commenced to pray.

God's light had entered my soul, sir,
Such soul as was left for good;
And when I rose from the deck, sir,
In my Maker's presence I stood.

I made a lasting vow, sir,
To straightway change my life,
And become an honest toiler,
And honor my children and wife.

This is my humble yarn, sir,
But it means so much to me;
It tells of my conversion,
From the vice of the wild North Sea.

For years the 'Ensign' labored,
Doing good to all around;
And to-day no sign of a 'coper,'
Can be seen on the fishing ground.

The cloud of vice and shame, sir,
Is removed from our fisherlads' sea,
And, thanks to the Mission's vessels,
The fisherfolk now are free,

Free in body and soul, sir,
Free to look all in the face;
Free to enter God's kingdom,
Free to receive Christ's grace.

When I go down to the grave, sir,
My dying prayer shall be;
'God bless the noble Mission,
And the fishermen on the sea.'