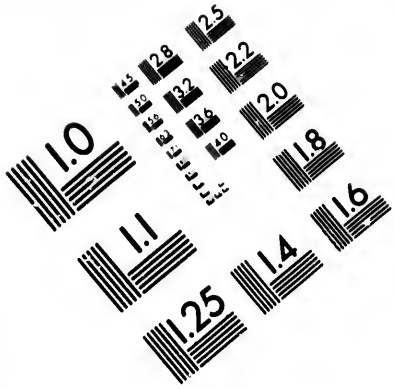

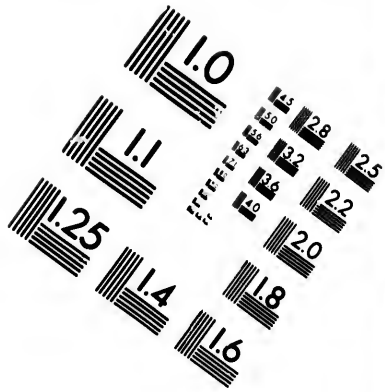

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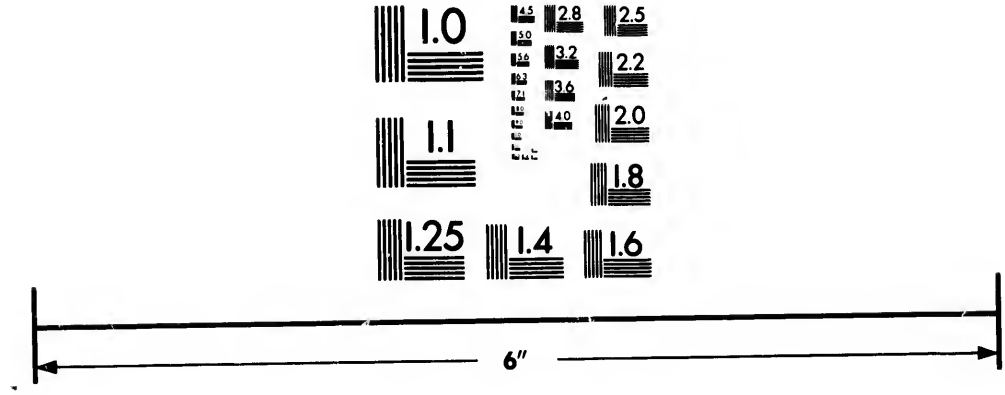

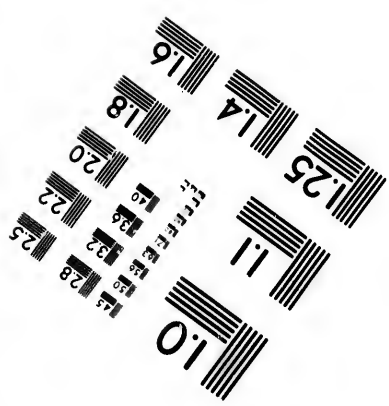

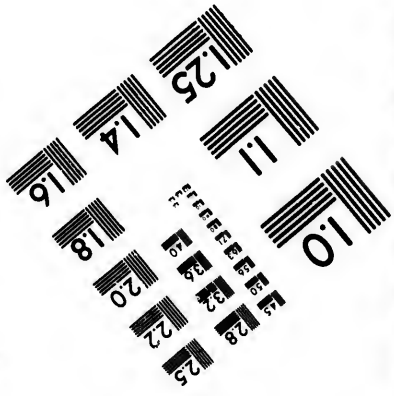

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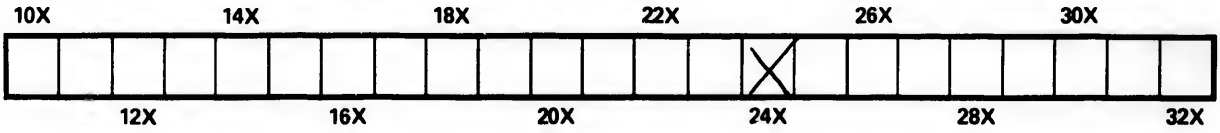

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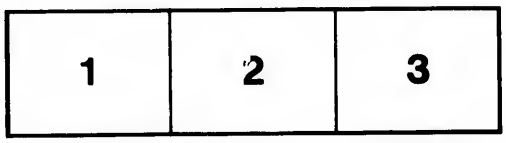

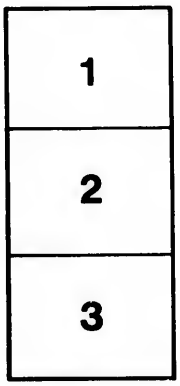

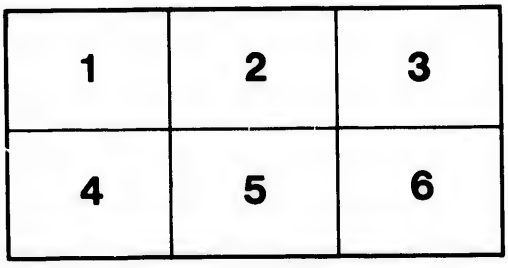

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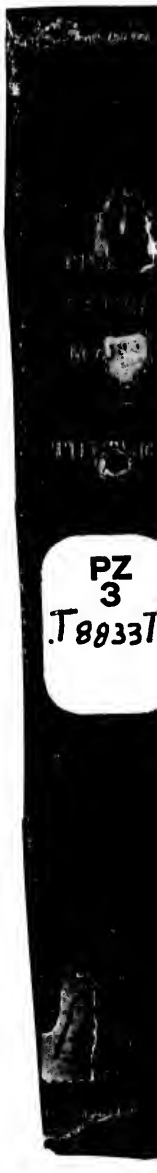
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THAT YOUNG MAN.

By
Charles R. Tuttle

35

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1878.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE.

IN the expectation that the situations described in this little book will be very generally recognized, and, as a consequence, the author's real name generally known, or supposed, I wish to state that the work was written in the *first person* to accommodate what seemed to be a demand growing out of the peculiarities of the incidents which form the subject matter of the sketch. Hence the reader is at liberty to suppose the writer and Jean Clarkson identical, or two persons, as the case may require, or as will best suit his or her fancy. There *is* a reality about the matter, either one way or the other.

THAT YOUNG MAN.

CHAPTER I.

LOTTA, my wife, had spent the afternoon in sorrow. The hours before my return were few, but to her long and heavy.

Dinner over, I had left the rooms in our hotel, and busied myself with important work at the office, little suspecting that dreadful news — a fearful disclosure, I ought to say, — was being poured into the astonished ears of my devoted wife during my absence.

I had come into the belief that my secret, or sin, was forever buried, and would be remembered ever after only by three persons, each of whom was equally interested with myself in keeping it within their own breasts. But, alas! there is nothing

truer in the Book of God, than, "Be sure your sin will find you out."

Six o'clock had come: the business for the day was over; and, as my thoughts ran swiftly over the transactions of the afternoon, which were by no means without profit, my heart took fresh courage, and my hopes lifted themselves into a higher range; while the unrest of a troubled conscience within, which had been yearning in vain for righteous vindication, was once more hushed into involuntary quiet.

Lotta heard my returning footsteps on the staircase, and was standing in the half-open door of our suite to receive me with her usual smiles and kiss of welcome; but it seemed to me that she never looked half so beautiful as now. Her face was radiant, as with the consciousness of recent or approaching victory. Her blue eyes flashed softly, but there was the bright fire of firm resolve in them. She took charge of my hat and overcoat, with an eagerness that seemed fraught with an ecstatic joy. In short, that she felt a new interest in me, was manifest in every action.

"O Jean, Jean! how I *do* love you, with all my heart! How devotedly I have loved you these ten

years, but never so much as now!" and, as if to emphasize her words, or force the reality of their meaning upon me, she threw herself into my lap, and, with both arms about my neck, kissed me passionately.

"That is pretty well done, Lotta," said I: "you must have been rehearsing that on the chambermaid this afternoon. There is a dramatic air about it not all your own, but the acting is good. It must be something costly this time! I haven't seen any thing to come up to this, since you fell into a passion for that two-hundred-dollar silk velvet, in which you look so charming to-night. You shall *have* it, you shall *have* it, no matter what it is; but let me rise and wash for tea."

"O Jean, Jean!" was the only reply; and she still held me, with her arms both about my neck, but with her face now hid in my bosom.

"What is the matter?" I asked, at the same time trying to raise her from me.

"Do you love me, Jean?" Her voice was filling rapidly.

"Certainly, Lotta! Of course I love you, and only you. Why do you ask?" But now I felt a strange mistrust rising within me. She had dis-

covered, in some way, every secret that I had desired to keep from her; and I had almost decided, in my own mind, that at some time or another she would come into possession of this last and most important of them all.

"Oh, because I am afraid you have given your heart to another! Yes, to *another*, to *another!* at last I am to be cast off!" She sobbed out these words, still holding me firmly.

"What do you mean, Lotta? You are crazy. You frighten me: raise up quickly!"

"I am not crazy. I am heart-broken, I am killed! O Jean, Jean, Jean!" and she wept convulsively.

It was now plain that Lotta had heard something. To me it was not a question as to *what*, but *how*. I resolved to commit myself as little as possible, and remained silent.

"How could you deceive me in this way? oh, how could you? What will become of me? I will die, die broken-hearted!"

"What is the matter? Do explain quickly: I am anxious about you!"

"Anxious? Do you *love* me? that is all I want to know! That I will know, *must* know! Tell

me truly: I can bear it," she added, without changing her position.

"Yes: you know I love you. But do explain yourself. Tell me what you mean: I am out of patience, and *will* have an explanation."

"You know what is the matter, and need no explanation!" she replied, raising her head, and looking me full in the face, through her tears.

"Do I? no, I don't," I stammered, unconscious of what I said.

"O Jean! how *could* you, how could you do such a thing?

"What?" I inquired, hoping she would out with it, for now my suspense had become unbearable.

"Write such letters to that girl! I have seen them. You never wrote such affectionate letters to me. You *love* her, you *know* you do: you *know* you do!" the last words being rendered partially inaudible by her sobs, as she dropped her head upon my shoulder.

"What letters?" I demanded, without knowing why I asked the question, but hoping in my mad excitement to learn how she had made the discovery, which it was now only too plain she had made.

"I have seen them all. There is no doubt about it: they are in your own handwriting!"

"Who has been here in my absence?" I inquired earnestly.

"The Rev. Mr. Greythorn. He has told me all. O Jean, Jean! what shall I do? This is my pay for standing by you through all these years. Was ever wife truer than I? Why must I be treated so shamefully?"

"And you believed him, without even so much as an explanation from me, did you?" It was all I could say, and I felt myself sinking so rapidly that something had to be said.

"But I saw the letters!" she answered; and by this time she had partly suppressed her tears, and seemed to grow firmer with every word.

After a pause of about one minute, in which my thoughts moved rapidly, and in which Lotta rose from my knee, and seated herself on a cushion at my feet, with her eyes looking up into mine, expressing a deep anguish and a firmness that sent a cold chill through my whole nature, I broke the silence, having, as I then supposed, caught her intentions, and said,—

"Lotta."

She looked at me earnestly, but did not speak. The tears were rolling, at intervals, down her burn-

ing cheeks. She was in deep sorrow; but there possessed her a spirit stronger than her emotions of grief, — a resolve between which and her woe there seemed to be a mighty conflict waging, but in which the former swayed an easy mastery; and I was puzzled to determine whether there was most of sorrow or of joy pictured in her face. She looked a real heroine, and seemed to possess a will strong enough for any conflict; yet there was in that ever-to-be-remembered gaze, something which, while it held me helplessly its victim, inspired me with hope, and I could not regard her with fear.

"Lotta," I repeated, "you know all, though you are greatly misinformed; but I will not now attempt to discharge myself from this accusation. But few of your apprehensions are true; and, with the explanation which time will soon put upon them, they will bear a vastly different interpretation. I shall now ask you to take my word for only one thing, — I do not and never did love that girl!"

Lotta remained motionless, but her eyes flashed forth evidences of mighty convulsions within.

"If it is your wish, Lotta, we will separate. The writings may be drawn at any hour, and you can

act your own pleasure about a divorce; but you shall have fifteen hundred a year until you are again married, while I live; and when I die you already know how you are to be provided for."

These were the igniting strokes; and the fires such as can burn only in a woman's heart, and which had been so long pent up, now burst forth in volcanic flame.

"Never!" she cried, "no, never! I married you for better or for worse. I placed my *all* upon the altar, body, soul, and spirit, ten years ago, and it is there to-night; nor can the blackest accusations of men or angels move it. I love you, and will die loving you. I have defended you through all the past years, and I will defend you to the end of my life. I know your faults, but I love you none the less; nay, but more, that I may win you from a repetition of them. Leave you, — separate? no, never, while you love me. I can die, if need be, in this struggle; but leave you, *never!*"

She stood before me, no longer the plain wife that she had been, no longer a common creature, but a statue of marvellous beauty, — a living picture, in which there seemed to be a grand triumphal mingling of beauty, virtue, tenderness, devotion, power, faith, and love.

But she had not ended, — only paused, as if to await the realization of a witnessing Heaven above, — and continued: —

"When that man came here, and told his errand, I listened patiently. He showed me the letters, and I read them carefully; but when he had finished, I took my stand between him and the closed door, and demanded the letters, and declared that I would lose my life rather than that he should depart with them. I lived out that declaration until they were consumed in the fire before us; and then I bade him depart, adding, that if I were not a woman, I would punish him on the spot. Separate? O Jean! how could you say that? where is your heart? Have you forgotten our past?"

"Forgive me, Lotta!" was all I could say for myself.

CHAPTER II.

I MUST now pause to give my reader an introduction to Jean and Lotta, and to note some of the principal events in their lives. This is rendered necessary to the end that the peculiar situation described in the previous chapter may be explained.

Jean Clarkson was born in 1848, in a rural Eastern district, not many miles from the inland waters of the Atlantic. His home was located on a pleasant farm, bordering a beautiful bay to which had been given half the name of a noted English general. His father, Guy Clarkson, was poor; but as there were none who were rich, for many miles around, the want of surplus wealth was but little felt. There was no city within a hundred miles of the place, and nothing which could have been properly called a village nearer than five miles. The place was intensely rural. The farm

work was done by oxen, the grist taken to and from the mill by oxen. The farm produce taken to the village, and the tea and molasses taken in exchange for it were transported by oxen. In short, even church-going, when walking was to be avoided, had to be accomplished by oxen. Horses were a great luxury in that neighborhood, and the Clarkson family did not rise to the dignity of owning a horse until Jean had reached his twelfth year.

Jean's father was an easy-going, happy farmer, who loaned to and borrowed from his neighbors, as benevolence suggested or need required, and was never particular about exact measurements, so long as he gave more than he received. Two things, perhaps three, rendered his becoming rich not a supposable question: first, the resources of the whole neighborhood, if strained to the utmost, would not have yielded enough for that purpose; second, he would have given it away as fast as he could have accumulated money; and, third, he never desired to be rich.

Jean's mother was energetic, pushing, and prudent; and, had she lived where honest toil was rewarded, by her own industry she would have enriched the family she reared. In her rude loom,

with shuttle in hand, and Jean at the quill-wheel, winding quills, she wove through many a day, and then, by the light of two tallow candles, through many a long evening, not only for her own family, but for scores of other families, at six cents a yard, thus not only clothing but feeding her children by her ceaseless toil. No city mother could do what she did. Think of shearing forty sheep, washing the wool, greasing it, carding it, spinning it, spooling the cotton warp, then weaving hundreds of yards, and all this by hand! But these days have passed away, and the American people have come into a better inheritance; and so also has Jean's mother passed away, into a better inheritance, — the heavenly, — where spooling and carding and weaving are no more.

Jean's boyhood was not less wonderful than was his manhood strange and eventful. There seemed in store for him a remarkable experience, and it began with his birth, nay, even before; for eight days before that event, on the 6th of March, 1848, his father's house was burned to the ground with all that it contained except its inmates, and Jean came into the world homeless. At the age of three and a half years, he conceived a curious idea from a

mason who was doing some plastering in a room in his father's house, and at once became the promoter and conductor of an extensive enterprise on a similar plan at the back of the house, which had been newly shingled. Being assisted by his elder brother, he mixed the reddish mud into a sort of brick mortar, and, with the use of the trowels which he removed unobserved from the mason's tool-chest, succeeded in plastering the shingled wall very neatly with a coat of dim red, about two inches thick and as high as he could reach. Being discovered before staging could be erected, he was thwarted in what he regarded as a laudable enterprise; but he had the satisfaction of being soundly thrashed for what he had already accomplished.

The toiling mother sent him to school in the hope of gaining some relief (for his constant and unaccountable mischief had become the pest of her life), perhaps quite as much as with a view to his education. He was kept there, much against his will, but with little effect; and, when he had reached his tenth year, his mind had not yet mastered a definition of such terms as "noun" or "verb," much less the difference between them.

At this age he passed pretty much out of the control of any one, and was as often on a hazel-nut expedition as at his books ; but he found little difficulty in persuading his not over-anxious parents that his studies were uninterrupted.

At the age of thirteen Jean awakened from the careless demeanor of the country boy, and began to look ahead. He realized that his past five years at school had been worse than thrown away ; but he placed more emphasis upon what he would yet accomplish, than regrets upon what he had failed to do. Thirty or forty miles distant he could get work at seventy-five cents a day, in a coal-mine ; and he resolved to bid good-by to home and its scenes, and strike out for himself, which he did at the age of thirteen, and has since presided over his own destinies, through many a remarkable experience.

There were no parting scenes between the mother and her boy to describe. The father neither advised nor opposed his plan, for both expected that his stay from home would not extend over a week. But Jean was not of the homesick material, which his parents were perhaps too late in realizing for his or their best interests.

I will not detain the reader with an account of Jean's progress after he left his home, until he had qualified himself for the position of teacher. In four years he had fought his own way, unaided, to a considerable knowledge of such branches as are taught in the present average high school, and presented himself to the examining board for a license to teach, which he was readily granted.

CHAPTER III.

HAVING said, perhaps, all that is necessary of Jean's boyhood, and as Jean and myself are one and the same person, I will pass from the use of the third to the first person as in the opening chapter.

I had spent the winter in school with good results, and was now on my way to the settlement of Winthrop, a beautiful valley, dotted thickly with old-fashioned but pleasant farmhouses. I carried with me my license to teach, granted by the county board. It was the first tangible evidence I had ever received of real success. Having left my father's house four years before, with almost the smallest amount of knowledge possible to a boy of average intelligence, I had hewn my own way, unaided, through many obstacles, to a fair education; had mastered Chambers's six books of Euclid, and the same author's full course of practical math-

ematics, and acquired a fair knowledge of history and kindred branches; and altogether I was well prepared for the duties with which I now sought to be made responsible.

With no meagre realization of my importance, I walked in a dignified air along the river road, living over and over again, in the strength of anticipation, many achievements which I have never realized.

"Surely I will get the school," I soliloquized. "I have the inspector's recommendation, and he assured me that all of the trustees were anxious to engage me."

The sun had scarcely passed the zenith, when I entered the settlement of Winthrop; and there was still a possibility that I should complete my journey in time to dine with the squire.

The squire to whom I refer was chairman of the board of trustees, and one of the wealthiest and most influential men of the valley. These were facts making it necessary that I should lose no time in securing an interview with him, and I turned into the lane leading to his house, with some misgivings.

"Good day, sir! a stranger in this neighborhood,

I take it," said a little man in homespun, in front of his own castle, his furrowed face partly hid by the broad-rimmed straw hat, the handiwork of his own good wife.

These words carried with them a cheer and welcome which touched my heart, and I took courage.

"Good day, sir! Yes, a stranger. I am looking for a school," I replied.

"Your name, please?" he inquired.

"Jean Clarkson," was my quick reply; for I fancied that name would add to my welcome.

"Guy Clarkson's son?" The squire asked the question earnestly, and looked at me sharply.

"Yes, sir," I said, with a bow of satisfaction.

This brought the squire's hand out enthusiastically, and I received a decided token of his respect for my father.

"Come in, come in!" and he led the way into the old but neatly appointed dwelling. I was conducted to the presence of his good wife, Mrs. Jane Bennett.

"Jane, this is Guy Clarkson's son,—James, I believe they call him. He comes to teach our school," said the squire, by way of introducing me to his wife.

"Jean, not James, is my name, sir," I urged, with some timidity.

"Jim! Well, that is only a short for James," replied the squire reprovingly.

"Jean, Jean is the name. Why, father, don't you understand?" remonstrated Mrs. Bennett.

A decided noise in an adjoining room, as of the squeaking of an old-fashioned cord bedstead, attracted our attention, and all eyes were turned in one direction. The sight that met our gaze will not be effaced from my memory till the end of life.

The door leading to what was so well known in that household as "the girl's bedroom" had been made ten inches shorter than the frame or casing, for purposes of ventilation; and a neat little curtain of lace had been frilled upon a wire, to both ornament and blind the aperture.

A delicate white hand had pushed aside this little curtain; and the space revealed thereby — about the size of a nine-by-ten window-pane — enclosed for a single moment one of the fairest, sweetest faces of which maiden ever boasted.

The face came and went so quickly, and the little curtain returned to its place with so little display, that all might have passed without a remark from any one in our party; but the performance was accentuated by another unmerciful squeaking of the bed.

"Lotta, what is the matter?" called out the anxious and mortified mother in a high and excited pitch of voice.

But, as this inquiry brought no answer, she rose, and entered the little bedroom, closing the door after her.

Ten days later, with the aid of the squire, I was organizing my school in the old red schoolhouse in Lower Winthrop, so called to distinguish it from Upper Winthrop, a continuation of the same settlement, but farther up the river.

Excepting the inconvenience of "boarding around," I enjoyed that summer perhaps as I have never enjoyed another; and when the term was ended, I was re-engaged for the winter months, to the satisfaction of both scholars and people.

Two summers and two winters came and went; but with the close of the last I terminated my engagement with the trustees of the Winthrop school, and swung out into a still more responsible existence.

CHAPTER IV.

THE reader may now accompany Mrs. Bennett as she rose from her chair, and repaired to the "girl's bedroom," on the occasion referred to in the previous chapter.

"What in the world do you mean, Lotta? That strange gentleman saw your face over the door, and heard the fearful squeaking of the bed," said the disconcerted mother.

"Who is he, ma?" asked Lotta in a subdued tone, blushing deeply.

"Jean Clarkson, the new teacher who has come to teach our school; and what do you suppose he will think of you, Lotta? I thought you were sick. How could you climb upon that foot-board so as to look over that door? This is all very imprudent, my child."

Lotta hid her face under the bed-clothes, but made no reply until Mrs. Bennett turned to leave the room, when she ventured, —

"Will he get the school, ma?"

"Why do you ask such a question, Lotta? You surely do not expect to go to school any more, especially to that young man," answered her mother.

"No, ma, I do not expect to go to school any more; but" —

"But what, Lotta?" asked her mother promptly.

"Well, I was just thinking how he is probably a young man, just starting out in life, and something made me feel that I should like him to succeed."

Lotta spoke these words hesitatingly, in some confusion, and seemed to be greatly agitated.

"Lotta," asked Mrs. Bennett, now somewhat surprised, "what led you to do so rash a thing as to look over that door at a strange gentleman? You know it is very improper."

"I cannot tell, ma. Something led me to do it, and I did it."

"You cannot tell! Are you not in your right mind?" demanded the anxious mother, who was evidently worried with the strange actions of her daughter.

"That is, ma, I do not like to. I — I am worse, perhaps. May I sit up a little while?" replied Lotta, who was not aware of what she was saying.

"You are worse, perhaps, and wish to sit up a little while! Why, Lotta, your mind is wandering. You alarm me. Are you very sick, my dear?" and Mrs. Bennett shook with fear. She pulled the covering from Lotta's face, and beheld the great tears standing in her eyes, ready to break over her crimson cheeks.

"O Lotta, the fever has returned!" the mother exclaimed frantically, and turned to call her husband.

"Wait, ma: the fever has not returned. I am better, almost well. Let me get up, and dress. I am restless here."

Mrs. Bennett turned to her daughter, bewildered. There was an expression in her face which she could not fathom; but she kissed the sick one tenderly, and bade her remain quiet while she withdrew to assist the younger girls in preparing dinner for Mr. Clarkson, for the family had already dined.

The afternoon was well-nigh spent. The school children were noisily threading their way homewards; and I, drawn by a spell which I could not comprehend, bent my course in deep meditation towards the squire's.

The children were playing in the doorway, and rose to welcome me in their rude manner as they had often done before. After a sham wrestle with the five-year-old boy, and a teasing attempt to kiss the seven-year-old girl, I was invited into the house by Mrs. Bennett, whose natural kind-heartedness overcame any scruples which she might have entertained concerning me as a fit person for her daughter's society.

We chatted a little while together; and, as no one else was there to share in the conversation, I grew nervous, and asked, —

"Where is Lotta to-night?"

"Up-stairs, weaving away on her table-spreads," replied Mrs. Bennett, evidently feeling a satisfaction in the fact that her daughter could weave such difficult pieces.

"I wonder if she would not like to have some quills wound? I have wound thousands of quills for my mother;" and I watched the mother's face with attention, for signs of approval or disapproval.

"You may go and see," she said.

I thanked her, and started up the staircase; but Lotta's loom slammed and banged so loudly that she did not observe my approach, which was behind

her. Standing for a few moments in indecision, I resolved to venture; then, moving up noiselessly behind her, I made the attempt just as I was discovered. Lotta protected herself from my designs, though I believe she regretted it immediately; but her shuttle went sprawling on the floor.

"There, Mr. Clarkson, you have broken my thread!" remonstrated Lotta, emphasizing her words with a curt shake of the head, which threw her auburn curls into a thousand curves and angles.

"No, Miss Bennett, I protest I have not touched your thread; but I will pick up your shuttle, and as I can tie a 'weaver's knot,'" I said, with a gesture which she did not fail to comprehend, "I will mend it."

She motioned assent. I gave her the shuttle, and tied the thread. The weaving was resumed without delay; but I managed to hit her elbow, and again the shuttle fell, and once more the thread was severed.

"O Mr. Clarkson, this is a very particular piece; and knots make an awful effect. Please don't!"

"Pardon me, Miss Bennett; but knots have a good effect on some people, if they are properly tied. Yes, I fancy this is an important piece. It

is very beautiful. How can you weave that pattern, and produce those beautiful figures? What do you call it?"

"Wellington's army," said Lotta, blushing deeply under my pun over the knots.

"Wellington's army! Think of it,—a little girl away down here in Winthrop, weaving damask for table-spreads after the pattern of Wellington's army. Why, if Lord Wellington knew it, he would promote you to a place of great honor." I spoke this with considerable flourish, but Lotta was a match for me. Her reply was less spread-eagle, but much keener.

"In the first place, Lord Wellington must have been dead a good while; and then, pray tell me a position of greater honor than this I now occupy at the loom;" and she looked at me with an air of independence.

"I am glad to find one lady," I answered, "who cannot be promoted. But do tell me whom these table-spreads are for?"

Lotta blushed redder than ever, and would have resumed her weaving, but I held one end of the shuttle. We had met often before, and I had come to believe myself hopelessly in love with her, nor was I without some slight assurance of her regard.

"Lotta," I continued, and this was the first time I had ventured upon so free a use of her name, "I want you to give me one of these table-spreads. Will you?"

She smiled sweetly, but her answer was decided. "There are six of them when done, and I mean to keep them as long as I live."

"Then, in order to get one of these Wellington army table-spreads, a fellow will have to win the weaver?" I asked.

Lotta made no reply, but turned her face from me toward the window. The setting sun sent his full soft rays into the chamber; and this little woman seated in her loom was to me the most beautiful, most interesting picture upon which my eyes had ever feasted. I grew wild with the prospect, and as quick as lightning stole my first kiss.

Lotta had not suspected me, and the shock was decided. A sharp, sudden little scream rent the whole chamber in which the old loom stood, and must have reached the ears of Mrs. Bennett below; for it had scarcely died when the maternal voice floated up the staircase with the ringing melody of,—

"Lotta!"

"Well, ma!"

"Come down: you have woven enough for one day;" and Lotta obeyed promptly. I followed, and called on the little weaver, in the presence of her mother, to bear testimony to the good quality of my quills; but, as Mrs. Bennett did not require any proof beyond my own word, Lotta was spared the alternative of telling a story, or giving me away; for I never wound a quill that evening, nor did my charmer weave two inches during the whole hour in which I assisted her in presiding at the loom.

CHAPTER V.

MY school had been dismissed for the day, and teacher and children were walking rapidly homeward. A slight shower during the afternoon had settled the dust. The air was cool and pleasant.

"Good-evening," said a gentlemen, who had rapidly driven up behind me. "Will you jump in, and take a short drive, by way of recreation? I have the handsomest three-minute animal here that ever raised the dust; just the blood for such a man as yourself."

I was soon enjoying the drive with him.

"What do you think of her?" said Mr. Headly, holding the reins in a jockey attitude.

"She is both fleet and beautiful; but are you not afraid to drive so fast?" I responded in alarm.

"She is true as steel," said Headly; and, to demonstrate his assertion, he shouted at the top of his voice, "Whoa!"

And the well-trained little animal came to such a sudden halt, that we were both thrown against the dashboard.

"You have her under excellent control; and I see you are a regular horseman," was my observation, as we reseated ourselves, the beast resuming her speed, but at a less rapid pace.

Mr. Headly was a genius in his way, a sort of Jack-of-all-trades. At the time of which I write, it was difficult to decide whether he was most farmer, merchant, speculator, horse-trader, or politician. The more respectable and settled portions of the community had come to avoid him as much as possible. They did not speak openly against him; but there was a sort of mutual understanding that he was the greatest liar, the most unscrupulous trickster, in the whole county.

I bethought myself that the company of this man was likely to injure my good name; and I said, —

"Headly, drive slower, or let me out. There is no pleasure in such speed."

He drew the animal into a reasonable gait, and turned his face towards me with a friendly smile, such as only a man can smile for business purposes

"Mr. Clarkson, I bought this mare last week at a great bargain. She is worth two hundred dollars, if she is worth a cent. Now, do you know, I am going to sell you this mare."

"That is right, Mr. Headly: when you are going to *sell* me, tell me frankly on the start, and I shall be on my guard."

"Sell you the mare, I mean," and he laughed heartily.

"I could not buy enough hairs from her tail for a respectable set of fiddle-strings," I said, not departing in the least from the truth.

"Yes, you can, Jean," giving me a friendly pelt on the shoulder. "I'll tell you how you can do it. In the first place, would you not like to own her? Is she not your fancy?"

"That I would, and that she is!" and I was sincere in this remark.

"Then I will sell her to you for one hundred dollars." Headly was now in his element. I had never made a trade beyond the swapping of a cylinder escapement watch in my life, and I afforded him pliable material for his skilful deception.

"But I have not one hundred cents in the world;" and my answer was both earnest and honest.

"What of that? Do you suppose I am afraid to trust you? Your note for six months at legal interest will buy her; and you may have possession to-night." Headly's words were emphasized as only a professional horse-trader can.

I remonstrated that going in debt was a bad thing. My father had always avoided it; and as I did not need the animal, excepting for pleasure, it would be better to wait until I could pay cash on delivery. I thanked him for his confidence in my integrity, but declined the offer.

He now took me through one of his silver-tongued discourses on my real needs of a horse. My standing in the neighborhood required it. I had become popular with the squire. Everybody knew I was courting his daughter; and certainly it must be humiliating to both Lotta and myself, that all our pleasant drives must be after a borrowed horse.

"Yes," he concluded, "buy her. It will be the master-stroke of your life. It will give you caste. Indeed, you will command a higher salary; and you may have the use of my pasture free for the rest of the season, and my harness and buggy at your pleasure."

An hour later I signed my first promissory note. The amount was one hundred dollars, but it was large enough to send a vein of sorrow through my whole life; nor indeed, as I write these lines, nearly twelve years later, has the cloud that arose in the form of that first promissory note, no larger than a man's hand, but which spread in lowering gloom until it darkened all the sky of two lives, been fully dispelled.

Young man, think long and carefully before you sign your first promissory note. It will exert an influence over your whole life, and perchance bring you in sorrow to an early grave. Avoid those who have something to sell.

I found my new purchase something of a pet, but more of a responsibility than a pleasure; but I determined to make the best of it.

The days came and went for more than a week; and I had not, during that time, made my little animal serve the purpose for which, more than for any other, I had bought her. But the hour of my triumph, if triumph indeed there could be in the arrangement, came at last.

"How do you like my horse, Lotta?" I asked, as we drove along the river road towards the Lodge Hall.

Now, Lotta knew what I did not; viz., that three-quarters of the neighborhood had been talking in high ridicule of me because of my foolish bargain, having set it down as Headly's last and most wicked triumph.

"Why did you buy a horse, Jean?"

Lotta was a little sad, and, I declare, her words sent a cold chill through and through me; for I could reply with no sane reason, and did not therefore venture to reply at all.

"Did you need a horse, Jean?"

This question was colder than a river bath, and made happiness for me that evening one of the impossibilities.

We did not speak of the animal again that night, and talked but little on any subject. The debate in the Lodge, in which I always took a leading part, was unusually hot; and I lost my temper twice, at which Lotta must have been deeply mortified. There was a mare in every thought, until it became a perfect nightmare.

The next day I heard of a man who was passing through the neighborhood, and whose destination was not far from my father's house. I lost no time in seeing him, and for the small sum of one dollar,

which I borrowed from the squire, engaged him to lead behind his carriage, and deliver to my father, that mare of mine. With the same gentleman I sent the following letter: —

WINTHROP, Aug. 10, 1866.

DEAR FATHER, — I send you by Mr. Stevens a valuable mare. I called her Lotta when I first got her, but have since changed her name to Nancy. She is very fast, but steady, and will work any way you choose to harness her. Take her and keep her. I wouldn't own a horse as a gift. Work her as hard as you like, drive her as long and as fast as you like, but ask no questions. The school goes well.

Your affectionate son, JEAN.

A few evenings later I sat with the squire's pleasant family at his well-spread evening board, and naturally enough the conversation turned upon my purchase.

"And so you've bought a horse, Jean," observed Squire Bennett; which brought the color to Lotta's cheeks.

"I think there is some mistake, squire. I am not the happy possessor of such a treasure," I answered carelessly.

The Bennett family began a little comedy performance of mutual glances and suppressed laugh-

ing; but Lotta looked at me in all the radiance of hope.

"Own up, Clarkson, own up. You've been victimized. Own up like a man!" retorted the squire's eldest son. And now all but Lotta joined in a pleasant laugh at my expense.

"Own up to what?" I demanded in a decided tone, which brought the laughing suddenly to an end.

Lotta made an excuse to go for the teapot, but left the kitchen-door ajar, and listened attentively not three inches from it.

Now was my time. Things had taken a serious turn. I had spoken in a clear, commanding tone, and would further assert my manhood at once.

"Do you suppose I am fool enough to be swindled by a horse-jockey? The animal I purchased from Headly was raised on a farm less than three miles from my father's. She came into his possession through a sheriff's sale, I believe. A knowledge of this came to my father; and he sent me a letter requesting me to get her for him, but not to exceed a certain price. I got her twenty-five dollars less than his maximum, and shall make that sum on the transaction. I sent her down to fa-

ther's by a Mr. Stevens, who was passing through this place three days ago."

This little speech had the desired effect, and Clarkson stock went up thirty per cent in two minutes with the whole family. Lotta returned feeling a hundred pounds lighter. A burden had fallen from her heart, and a smile of glad relief made her face radiant.

Fall had come. There were a few days of vacation between the summer and winter terms, and the former was to terminate in a few days.

One evening, just before the term closed, Headly called, and, in an undertone, informed me that he was greatly in need of funds, and that, if I would give him an order on the trustees for the retirement of the note, he would discount ten dollars.

Could I refuse to discount my own note? Yes, I would. Indeed, I must. I had already drawn nearly or quite all my salary; but my tongue never failed for apt excuses, the principal of which on this occasion was that I would not suffer the trustees to know I had gone into debt.

He withdrew, excusing himself a thousand times, and assuring me that it was only because he was in a tight place.

However, the occasion had a decided effect upon my actions; for I realized, perhaps for the first time, that paying a note was not as easy a thing as drawing it. I knew it would fall due in the middle of my winter term, and throw me into confusion. Then and there I decided to spend my vacation in raising that hundred dollars, so as to retire my note.

As soon as the term was ended I started for Amherstburg, the county-seat, some forty or fifty miles distant, calling at home *en route*, which was some twenty miles out of my way. I made the journey in the old-fashioned mail-coaches, walking such distances as were necessary to make the connections.

On reaching home, I found my father in the field, ploughing behind a span. Nancy was in the furrow, and seemed to have come down to hard work with a good grace.

"How do you like Nancy?" I inquired, after my father had asked a few questions about my welfare, and answered as many more concerning home.

"She works well; but how did you come by her? She has been a mystery to the people for miles around, these three months," asked my father in an inquiring tone.

We sat down together on the beam of the plough, and I made a clean breast of it.

"You can put my name on the note," he said; "but let this be a lesson to you for life."

Two weeks later, after a successful trip to Amherstburg, I returned to Winthrop, where I retired my note, scorning to pay less than the full amount and the interest down to the day of retirement. But the debt was by no means paid. I had made a simple transfer of my liability from one man and one locality to another; but I had involved my father with me, and placed a rolling stone in the foundation of my financial life which gave way in disaster many a time afterwards, as the following will plainly show.

CHAPTER VI.

TWO years had passed since the events recorded in the previous chapter transpired. School-teaching had been laid aside, and its dull routine exchanged for the stern realities of mercantile business; and now my inexperienced life was about to break down under its first commercial crisis.

Lotta and I had joined hearts and hands for life, and were snugly settled in a cosey little home in Lower Winthrop, nearly opposite the squire's. She had made our home a little paradise with the ample dowry so generously settled upon her by the squire, and seemed to look into the future with the most hopeful anticipations.

I had set out in mercantile life with every sail unfurled. Immense wealth seemed within easy grasp; and I could look forward at the close of my nineteenth year, while yet only six months a husband, to a near future full of affluence and fame.

Winthrop lay to the north of Hanover, — the metropolis of that region, and a seaport city of considerable commercial renown, — about a hundred and twenty miles. A railroad extended from Hanover to within thirty miles of Winthrop, which has since been carried through that settlement and hundreds of miles beyond it.

The resources of Winthrop and the adjoining settlements consisted in live stock, poultry, and the cereals indigenous to an extremely northern temperate zone; and Hanover afforded a ready and profitable market for all these.

For six months my ambition had found a satisfactory portion in such pursuits as collecting from the farmers of Winthrop and vicinity fat cattle of all kinds, marketable sheep and lambs in their season, and in the fall months vast quantities of geese, turkeys, chickens, butter, cheese, &c. Homespun fabrics, such as were woven by the women of that section, were also a salable article of merchandise.

With several strong wagons heavily laden with poultry, mutton, butter, &c., and with a large drove of fat cattle and sheep, I had frequently threaded my way over the little mountains that lay at a moderate elevation between Winthrop and the

northern terminus of the railroad upon which the journey to Hanover was completed.

But alas! the even tenor of this pursuit was now about to suffer a fearful spasm. A crash was at hand. With me the second and third days of September, A.D. 1868, were both black Fridays, though I believe neither of them came on that day of the week; but black Fridays will come on any day in the week to reckless speculation.

I had reached Hanover on the morning of the 2d, with a heavy stock, among which were two hundred sheep and thirty head of fine cattle. With these and other supplies I made a formidable appearance at the stock-yards, and drew around me the wily butchers, who were of all men in that old citadel city the most unscrupulous knaves.

In a few moments I had struck a bargain with a Mr. Sullivan, for the sale of my sheep. He had made a careful examination, with the aid of two of his faithful assistants, and had offered ten shillings or two dollars a head, against my twelve and sixpence asked. We agreed to split the difference, — a sort of compromise common at the yards, — and the bargain was concluded at eleven and threepence, or two dollars and a quarter, a head.

"Fork over the cash, and take them!" I said, agreeing to his proposal.

"I have but one hundred dollars with me; but you can have the balance at my office, whenever you call." His answer was emphasized by the presentation of the one hundred dollars in a sort of matter-of-course manner, and I accepted it; but made some inquiries of his brother butchers concerning his financial standing, before the gate to the yard in which the sheep were secured, was unlocked. Each of my informants vouched for his honor and his purse.

Two hours later I had bargained for the last ox in the stall, and was on my way up town. Having made the necessary arrangements in the city-markets for the sale of my lighter stock, I started out, at one o'clock, to look for my debtors.

Out of one thousand dollars due, I succeeded in collecting but forty-eight during the afternoon; and, up to eight o'clock in the evening, Sullivan had not put in an appearance at his market-place, and the man in charge gave me to understand that his master was probably on his usual Wednesday night drunk.

Fifteen minutes later I found him in a low

brothel, and demanded, in a somewhat excited voice, the payment of my claim. He repudiated the whole matter, declared I was an impostor, and, with the aid of his drunken comrades, gave me accelerating assistance through the street door.

I escaped with no other damage than a wrecked paper collar, a torn vest, and a bruised finger, and walked away determined to lay for him at his office the next morning, which I did; but he protested against my demands, and offered to bring forward ten of the most respectable butchers in Hanover to prove that I had sold him the sheep on three months time.

A lawyer took ten shillings for advice, but gave me no encouraging counsel in return, and only the information that I was victimized, and would probably gain little and spend much in any process of law.

The others put me off in one way and another, but had more regard for my feelings.

By noon on Thursday I was in the throes of my blackest "black Friday." With two hundred dollars in my pocket, and with no possibility of swelling that sum to any considerable amount by further collections, I had come to a painful realization of my situation.

Twelve hundred dollars would be insufficient to satisfy the immediate demands which would meet me on my return to Winthrop. One or two persons whom I had put off on former occasions held old claims which would swell that amount to fifteen hundred dollars.

I walked out of the busy streets, and away on the hill behind the citadel, where I might worry alone in quiet meditation over the ruin into which I had fallen.

With careful scrutiny I followed retrospectively each step of my commercial history, until I came to the false foundation stone, — my first promissory note for one hundred dollars given to Headly at Winthrop nearly two years and a half before.

But I was not the man to seek vengeance on Headly, or to contrive any punishment for Sullivan, whose base intrigue on the previous day was more than a match for Headly's worst designs.

I laid the fault all at my own door, tried to measure the extent of my ruin, and only for the thought of Lotta I could have borne all in silent fortitude.

For a moment a desire possessed me, to flee to parts unknown. Then the remembrance of Lotta brought me to soberness.

"I will go back, and face the worst," I said, in an audible tone, and walked rapidly towards my hotel.

Saturday evening, with a heavy heart, I started from the small town at the northern terminus of the railroad to make the journey over the little mountains to Winthrop and to Lotta.

With two able horses, and a strong but light buggy, my progress was rapid.

Not a star relieved the blackness of the night. Occasional mutterings of approaching thunder gave a solemnity to my sadness, and frequent flashes of lightning revealed the gloomy prospect of the mountain way.

The mutterings soon became decided peals, and the lightning-flashes grew angular in fierce and sharp display, until with the descending torrents the night was as some dark, angry corner of regions forever cast away, where God pours out his wrath in omnipotent fury.

The horses, blinded by the rain, stunned by the fearful revealings of the forked lightnings, and maddened by the sharp, quick, heavy peals of thunder, plunged from ditch to ditch, in wild affright.

From fear and trembling this awful hour graduated my feelings into heroic courage; and in the

midst of the crashing storm I prayed, not in fear, not for the calming of the tempest, — for I had troubles that would live after the storm would subside, — but I prayed, —

"God deliver me from this snare into which I have so recklessly fallen!"

In those dark hours, alone with God and his lightning, I resolved on a bold and fearful course of action. My faith could see ultimate victory; and I nerved my courage to bear the temporary shame that would result.

CHAPTER VII.

THE gray morning light had only thrown its first dim uncertain streaks in the eastern horizon, when I drove up to my little home in Winthrop.

Lotta met me at the door, partly dressed, for she had been awakened by the approach of my carriage.

"Why, Jean, you look like a fright! What is the matter?" and Lotta stood back from me in alarm.

"There is trouble, Lotta, trouble!" and I led her to the sleeping-room from whence she had come.

"Lotta, be firm. Listen carefully. Weigh the matter well: you must choose between two things, either of which are very painful, and you must decide in half an hour."

She remained speechless, and looked at me in

her most serene composure. I gave her a brief but clear account of my affairs, and concluded with the following cruel alternative: —

"I am resolved to leave in half an hour for Boston, and there is no power in the world strong enough to change my mind. I have decided. Do you know what that means? You have your choice of coming with me, or remaining here."

"You have decided; and what would you have me do, — go with you, or stay here?" she asked, restraining her emotions.

"I would have you come with me; but, above all, do as you wish," was my reply.

"Then," she said, "I will go with you at any [illegible]. But give me time to go and see ma and pa, and bid them good-by."

"That will never do. They must know nothing of it, for a knowledge of such a thing would compromise them. Don't you see?"

"I see, I see!" she answered in tears, wringing her hands from anguish.

"We can pay all, and return in one year," I said, hoping to strengthen her sinking heart.

"But are you not going to leave some explanation behind us? What are folks to think?" she

inquired, drying her tears, and bracing up under her sorrow.

"We will send a short letter to 'The Amherstburg Gazette,' from Monctown. It will reach its destination about the same time we cross the line. In that letter I will explain the cause of my failure, confess that I could not face my creditors empty-handed, and promise to return and pay in full in less than two years," I answered rapidly.

"How do you know they will publish the letter, Jean?" inquired Lotta, now half in harmony with my plan.

"They are fond of such news, Lotta. They are sure to publish it."

Lotta saw the point; and once more the great tears flooded her eyes, as she thought of the scandalous talk people would make.

In a few moments more a single trunk was packed with some of the more staple necessities in the way of clothing. This was placed carefully under the seat, so as not to attract attention, the boot of the carriage pulled closely over it; then, after a hurried lunch, Lotta kissed the kitten good-by; and, with one wild look round the room, we closed the door after us in sad and silent departure,

and drove quietly away, the sabbath morning light breaking languidly from the eastern sky.

At Monctown I sold my famishing horses. They had completed a journey of one hundred and fifty miles in forty-eight hours, and were not in a condition to demand a high price.

We spent our first night in Boston at a small hotel in Haymarket Square. Lotta had never been in a city before, and she had many misgivings concerning the house. Morning came; breakfast was over, and we returned to our little room for a consultation.

Life was now, in a certain sense, all before us. We were starting over again, and would profit by the past. It was agreed that Lotta's advice should be heeded more in the future than it had been. This concession was made as a partial return for her promise that she would bury her sorrows, cheer up, and look hopefully ahead.

"Now, Jean, let me tell you what to do," began Lotta. "Don't go headlong into business, but get a situation for a time, until you have become acquainted with the city. Let us go to a respectable but cheap boarding-house somewhere, in a private family if possible, and I will try to get into a store.

You must let me work too, Jean; and both together, we will perhaps earn enough in time to go home and pay our debts."

"Part of your suggestion I will follow, Lotta," I replied; "but you are not to go out to work. You shall go home first. What would the squire say if he heard such a thing?"

It was agreed that first of all I should get a boarding-house, and then a situation. The first was easily accomplished at an expense of fifteen dollars a week. The second was not so easy.

In my first attempt, I was victimized by what you may call "intelligence" offices; but, if I am to name them on the merits of this experience, I will call them dens of robbery.

I spent about half a day among these sharpers; and, as I did not know the city, I relied on the good offices of a hackman, between whom and the employment men, I was rendered about fifteen dollars less in purse in a few hours.

Let me briefly relate a part of my misfortunes with these fellows:—

The first to whom I applied took me in with an ease and grace such as only a Yankee can display on studied occasions. He could see at a glance

that it would require definite information to create in my mind any adequate conception of what the province of an intelligence-office was; hence he managed me in leisurely.

I gave him a specimen of my handwriting, which was a little too cramped, he thought, but had no doubt that experience would give it a more open and an easier appearance. He asked questions about my moral character, all of which I answered with a sad recollection. I emphasized my experience as a school-teacher, but avoided any comment on my mercantile experience.

I gave him two dollars for the situation, and found out at this turn of the business that it was another man altogether with whom I was to settle concerning the compensation and other particulars.

Armed with a note of introduction from my well-paid informant, I started in search of the street and number where I should, as he had assured me, come into possession of a permanent and remunerative position.

I was received with great courtesy; and, after answering some ten or fifteen questions, he decided to engage me as his book-keeper, but wanted to know if I would have any objections to collecting city bills two days out of each week.

I consented graciously. Then said he, —

"If you will deposit two hundred dollars as security for your honesty, you can have the place at twenty dollars a week."

We made considerable talk, in which I offered to put up one hundred and fifty in the hands of a bank; but he wanted the money in his own possession, and proceeded to argue the case, when we were interrupted by the sudden approach of a tall young man, fully as green as myself, and evidently from the country, who came in exasperated: —

"Say, Mr., by the powers, if you don't give me that two hundred dollars, I'll take the law of you. You swindled me outright, and I can prove it," he roared out as one aggrieved.

My would-be employer was disconcerted, and led the visitor to an adjoining room, returning quickly with so smooth an apology, that I was fully persuaded the bar had suffered a heavy loss in the errors of his early education.

I promised to consider the matter, and return with a decision; but I failed in the last item.

It was probably the sorrows of this victim, thus publicly manifested, which enabled me and my last one hundred and fifty dollars to continue on friendly terms a little longer.

I paid others two dollars each for similar positions, but could not make any of them fit. At length the only genuine aspect of the intelligence business appeared.

For two dollars I received the address of a Hanover-street dry-goods dealer, who was in pressing need of a clerk. Thence I repaired, and after ten minutes' conversation he offered me six dollars a week, which, when compared with the fifteen for my board, was altogether out of proportion.

I returned to Lotta sad, but not discouraged, and did all I could to convince her that the prospect was good. As I wished to be guided by her judgment, I submitted for her consideration the position I had been offered at twenty dollars a week as bookkeeper and bill-collector, leaving out any mention of the one hundred and fifty security dodge. She approved of it at once, and advised me to take it; and I said that if nothing better could be found during the afternoon I would do so, but didn't mean a word of it.

I was now considerably agitated, though I kept my feelings carefully from Lotta. The future looked dark.

After dinner I consulted a "Herald;" and, after

scanning the want column, found that a heavy Dock-square furniture establishment was in need of a grainer.

About six years before, I had seen a man grain a door, which was all the knowledge I possessed of the art; but I was actuated by a happy resolve.

The time had come to use a little wit. I was in the Yankee metropolis, where drones starve, and where tact becomes wealthy. Thus meditating, I walked rapidly to the establishment.

"Wanted a grainer, I see, sir," I said to the foreman. "What will you pay an A No. 1 grainer, who is capable of doing all kinds of work?"

"It is for bedroom sets that we need a man. Yet the work is quite particular, and must be carefully done," he replied.

"Well, what do you pay?" I demanded.

"Twenty dollars a week," he answered.

"Only twenty a week for a first-class grainer! You astonish me! Guess I will go back to Providence, if you are an authority on Boston prices."

I had never seen Providence; but, as that city was in the direction opposite to that in which I had come, I used the remark for obvious reasons.

We settled on twenty-two dollars and a half a

week, and he wanted me to peel off and go to work that afternoon; but I demurred, and promised to report for duty at seven o'clock the next morning, which I did.

CHAPTER VIII.

IT was scarcely past two o'clock when my engagement as grainer had been completed; and I made good use of the time remaining before I should have to meet the difficulties of my new position.

Half an hour later I was on the elevator leading to the upper flat of a large Cambridge furniture-factory. At the polishing-room I requested the foreman to show me to the graining department. There I found my man. He was one of those genial fellows who are always ready to hear and answer a question.

"I came here for a few lessons in graining. Teach me all you can of the art during the next three hours, — how to prepare the materials, and when and for what and how to use the sponge, the blender, the comb, and the brush;" and I backed the request with a five-dollar bill, which he was

forced to accept before half comprehending my designs.

The next morning I appeared for duty; and, having purchased a well-daubed pair of overalls from my Cambridge teacher, was enabled to present the appearance of an old grainer.

I spent most of the forenoon in making ready, and in the afternoon struck out boldly with sponge and blender, turning out some unique patterns of maple, butternut, chestnut, ash, walnut, &c.

The foreman eyed the first set with evident satisfaction, and remarked that my designs were slightly original.

Lotta was considerably amused over this venture, and half forgot her trouble with the novelty of the situation. She had predicted a failure, and met me in the door of our room, on my return after the first day's work, with, —

"Good-evening, Grainer!"

"Good-evening, *Mrs.* Grainer!" I replied, with a better feeling than I had enjoyed for months.

After several weeks in the graining business, in which I had become an expert on bedroom sets, the seven dollars and fifty cents profit on each week's labor was no longer sufficient to hold me.

Perhaps the first thing that broke the pleasant routine of my enjoyment was a remark that had been, unguardedly, dropped by Lotta one evening after she had been summing up our prospects.

"It will take a long time, Jean, to pay our debts at this rate. Can't I get a situation too?" she asked.

Early in November I got a day off without the knowledge of Lotta, and spent it in looking for something more profitable, but without success as it appeared to me at the close of the day.

In my rounds of observation I came across Bickford's knitting-machine establishment, then on Bromfield Street.

These curious knitters were interesting objects to me. When a boy I had knit many a pair of gloves and mittens; and the presence of these machines awakened within me recollections of home and boyhood. I loved to linger among them.

The genial and keen-sighted Bickford observed my interest, and soon became my salesman.

A little later, with a bundle of yarn under one arm, and a knitter under the other, I was on my way home. Why I made the purchase, I never

knew, but attribute the event to Bickford's shrewdness. He sold me the machine by sheer manipulation. I did not buy it in any large sense; but his receipts were thirty-five dollars larger that day because of my visit.

"What in the world are you going to do with that, Jean?" asked Lotta, thoroughly astonished at my purchase.

"Oh! I got it for you to amuse yourself with. You have no piano, therefore you can knit me some socks on it, which will awaken fond recollections of gone-by days," I answered, half out of humor.

"How much did it cost, Jean?" she followed up earnestly.

"The machine cost twenty-five dollars." I hesitated before making the reply.

"And the yarn?" she continued.

"Ten dollars. Why do you ask?" I spoke reprovingly.

Lotta turned away, and had a good cry. Here was another manifestation of my recklessness. With it came to her a fearful recollection of the past, and she sobbed outright.

A friend came in that evening, and remained

until a late hour. Lotta and he were old acquaintances, and they talked eagerly over early associations, while, in one corner by myself, I experimented on the knitter.

At ten o'clock I jumped from my chair fully two feet from the floor, as if struck, and shouted at the top of my voice, —

"A fortune! A fortune!"

Lotta and our visitor started up in amazement, but I gave them no time for reproof.

"Flemming," I asked excitedly, "do you want a job?"

"That I do," he replied.

"Are you much of a travelling salesman?"

"I reckon I can do that business a little after four years on the road."

"Then consider yourself engaged for three months on a salary, — well, say twenty dollars a week, and railroad fare."

"It is a bargain," he replied, and reached out his hand to confirm it.

I took his hand, and the bargain was closed.

Lotta was now half amused, half alarmed, and half bewildered, if, indeed, there can be three halves to a whole; and she came over to my chair, and said, —

"Why, Jean, this sounds like business."

I left her examining my work, and ran down stairs, where I engaged, from the landlady, the use of her upper unoccupied and unfurnished rooms for three months; and returning I said, —

"Flemming, old boy, come down to the 'Herald' office with me. I want to advertise for some girls."

Lotta did not heed my words, so deeply was she absorbed trying to solve the particular stitch which I had obtained by a change of needles. Bent over the knitter, they were both admiring my discovery.

"Jean, this is perfectly beautiful: how did you do it?" asked Lotta, turning towards me.

"No time for explanation," I said. "Come, old boy, on with your coat."

In next morning's "Herald" there appeared in the want-column: —

"WANTED, twenty girls to work on children's scarfs. Apply at once to ". ——.

Three days later there was a buzzing noise in the upper rooms of our boarding-house, and Lotta was forewoman in a factory for the first time in her life.

With seventeen girls she managed to tassel the scarfs as fast as I, with an expert bobbin-winder, could knit them.

Thus we toiled on, our hearts being refreshed from day to day with such telegrams from our travelling man as, —

"Send one hundred dozen to ——. If you can't turn them out faster I might as well quit the road.

"FLEMMING."

By January the same scarf was being knit in a hundred places throughout New England, but the season was over before my secret had been discovered; and, best of all, Lotta and I were enabled, after discharging every claim, not only in connection with this enterprise, but at Winthrop also, to count two thousand dollars, all our own, which we agreed to divide equally between us.

CHAPTER IX.

AT the close of the worsted business I had little difficulty in persuading Lotta to make a tour of the New England and Northern States with me. We talked of going home, but decided that it would be much better to wait until we had accumulated a fortune, and perchance I had, through possible achievements, rendered my name, in some degree, famous.

At Hartford and New Haven we had pleasant visits; and after two days at the St. Nicholas and three at the Metropolitan, (then in its prime under the proprietary of the Lelands), we had seen all of New York calculated to please or instruct in the winter season.

While at the Metropolitan we visited Niblo's, where Lotta witnessed a theatrical performance for the first time. She accompanied me under protest; but before the curtain dropped on the second act she remarked,—

"Well, I don't wonder people attend theatres. Isn't it perfectly splendid?"

Albany was a dull city, and therefore the Delevan kept us but one day. At other places we made longer or shorter visits, until, returning to one of the most beautiful New England cities, we decided to settle.

Having entered into housekeeping in a small way, I began to cast about for some pleasant business of a permanent character. Many opportunities offered; but most of them had a "skeleton in the cupboard," and I determined not to lose what little I had made, by any wild speculation.

One morning, as Lotta and I sat together at our pleasant grate fire, the girl, Minnie, who had answered the door-bell, came in, and remarked hurriedly, —

"There's a man at the door, what's got a paper to inscribe for."

"Tell him to come in, Minnie," I replied, laughing at her misplaced prefix.

I was anxious for something to occupy my mind, and thought a chat with this canvasser might break the dull monotony of idleness. I had been out of business for months, and my restless ambition was now weary of restraint.

The solicitor presented his paper in a neat but fluent little address, which his employer had probably taught him, setting forth its character and merits, and closing by assuring me that it would eventually find a welcome in every home in the State.

In the middle of his talk my mind was struck with an idea, and I heard nothing he said after that; and, when he presented me with his order-book and pencil, I awoke as from a dream.

"No," I said, "I will not subscribe!" and dismissed him in short metre.

"Good-morning, Lotta. I am going down town to see what the day will bring forth;" and I started away without hinting to her of the large enterprise that had already possessed my soul.

Let us call the city in which we lived New Boston, for purposes of location. It was the oldest and largest city in one of the New England States. With a beautiful harbor, and an extensive merchant marine, New Boston had grown into no mean commercial eminence.

Her old and famous university gave the place a literary cast; and altogether there was no more agreeable place to live, from Maine to Georgia.

The city contained four daily besides several weekly newspapers, and literature of all kinds was duly encouraged. I looked the field over, carefully as I thought, measured my fitness for the task, correctly as I hoped, and then decided.

"I shall call it the 'Sunday Morning Gazette,' Lotta; and we will send a copy of the first number to the squire. You must compose a poem for it."

I was sitting at our table with a sheet of double medium before me, marking out the lines where the column-rules were to come, adjusting the width of the columns, and otherwise deciding on the form and size of my new venture.

"O Jean! I wish you would take my advice. I feel somehow that you will lose every cent you put into it," and Lotta begged hard in opposition.

"Now, Lotta, what do you know about the newspaper business? and why will you presume to advise me on such a matter?" I retorted angrily.

"It is because neither of us know any thing about the business, that I oppose it, Jean," she answered, in a tone of kindness.

"Lotta, I have decided: do you know what that means? All the contracts for the printing are

made, and the first number is to appear one week from Sunday next."

My reply was in a decided accent, and Lotta felt its power.

"I am afraid that will of yours will ruin you some day, Jean," Lotta said in a tone of resignation.

"Jean Clarkson, editor and proprietor, vol. i., No. 1. That sounds about right, don't it, Lotta?"

"It sounds funny enough, Jean. They will think you crazy at home when they read it."

"Hush! listen to my salutatory, and tell me what you think of it;" and I read:—

"SALUTATORY.

"With the issue of the first number of 'The Sunday Morning Gazette' we desire to announce to the people of New Boston and vicinity, that we have determined to supply a long-felt want in the field of journalism, by giving to the people at the close of each week, in a neat and acceptable form, a journal that shall contain in some degree of elaboration, not only a summary of the important news, and a collection of the best contributions to science and art, but an able and lucid exposition of all questions in politics, religion, commerce, agriculture, and kindred subjects, both local and national, in which undertaking we hope to merit the hearty

support of an intelligent and discriminating public, and to which we cheerfully and enthusiastically bring a journalistic experience of many years."

"How do you like the first sentence, Lotta?" I asked before reading farther.

"It is long enough, Jean, but I don't like it," she replied after a short pause. "Please read me the last clause again."

"And to which we cheerfully and enthusiastically bring a journalistic experience of many years," I repeated.

"Is that truthful, Jean?" asked Lotta.

"Pshaw! you ought to know that a newspaper is the last place in the world in which to look for the truth."

"Then I am all the more opposed to your having any thing to do with the business," she said impatiently.

I did not read the remainder of my salutatory to Lotta, nor was she in the least anxious to hear it.

My little parlor was now turned into a sanctum, much to Lotta's annoyance; and as we lived near the business centre I managed to dispense with the luxury of an office. My paper was printed at a down-town printing-house; and I used one of the

unoccupied rooms in the same building, granted me out of a consideration for my patronage, for mailing purposes and supplying newsboys, neither of which were extensive operations.

One forenoon, as I was poring over my exchanges, Minnie announced a lady who wished to see the editor. The caller was shown into my sanctum, and presented me the following note: —

New Boston, April —.

To the Editor, &c. — This will introduce Miss Speedwell, who would like to show you a poem. I have read portions of it, and cannot speak too strongly in its praise. It may be found too long for one issue, but it could be published in instalments.

Respectfully yours,
James Hancock.

Mr. Hancock had recently been defeated for Congress, but was a prominent and popular lawyer of considerable wealth.

Miss Speedwell had preserved her single-blessedness for more than fifty years, living in peace and quiet with an inherited competency, and with no extraordinary characteristics save an unfortunate desire to benefit mankind with the products of her poetical genius.

On this occasion she unrolled a package, handing me the contents, — about three hundred closely-written foolscap pages of manuscript, — a poem entitled "The Orphan Girl."

Scanning the manuscript hurriedly, I remarked that she had hit upon a fine title, as the words "orphan girl" would awaken a deep vein of sympathy; and I felt, though I did not openly express it, that she must needs create sympathy if the poem ever saw the light.

"I have copyrighted it, reserving all rights," she remarked, no doubt in hope of setting aside any fraudulent designs I might have entertained of infringing on her poetical rights.

She left the poem; and I agreed to examine it, or, rather, mentioned that Mrs. Clarkson, upon whose poetical genius I relied in such matters, would look it over, and give her an answer in the course of two or three days.

Lotta was present, and shook her head at me threateningly. She had but little sympathy with my enterprise, and read her Bible much more than my paper.

Thus the scenes came and went, one after another, for months. I enjoyed the business, but was daily

sinking money. The treasury was almost empty, when I resolved on a bold expedient to save the journalistic ship.

I had dabbled with poems and essays until it became evident there was no money in that side of the business; and I now resolved to strike out into politics.

The Hon. John Henderson, son of Hon. Greene Henderson, a prominent resident of the Waterville Valley, not twenty miles distant, was an aspirant for Congress. His father had been a useful man in his day, but was now old and superannuated. The son was vain but ambitious.

I visited this would-be Congressman, and represented, that, owing to the wide circulation and high moral character of the "Gazette," he would do well to secure its influence.

Having a desire to see him elected, based on principle, (?) I was willing to work editorially for a successful issue of the contest — for a fair compensation.

After considerable talk, we agreed that I should put forth his name as a candidate; and I was to receive five hundred dollars on the appearance of the first article, five hundred more when he was

nominated, and five hundred more if he was elected.

These were large figures, considering the influence of my paper, and the terms of payment were reasonable; but the contract was only verbal.

Lotta shook her head apprehensively at the whole story; but I persisted, and the paper appeared with a flaming editorial, in which the Hon. John Henderson was held forth as a fit man for Congress, in strong colors.

Two days after its appearance I received the following note in answer to mine for a remittance of the first instalment. It ran thus: —

WATERVILLE, Oct. ——.

JEAN CLARKSON, ESQ.

Dear Sir, — I regret to say that I am unable to respond favorably to your request for aid to your valuable journal. Other demands more imperative make it impossible. Wishing you success,

I remain sincerely yours,

JOHN HENDERSON.

This set me into a foaming rage. Henderson, it was plain, intended to go back on the whole arrangement. My temper could no longer restrain its force, when Lotta exclaimed, —

"There, *I* told you!"

And it is possible I used language unbecoming the husband of a Christian lady.

I meditated an hour or so when a plan came into my mind; and, as it entered in the hour of wrath, I will credit Satan for suggesting it.

It was now evident that I should outwit my base deceiver. The plan was not altogether right, but I have never wholly repented thereof.

Evident indeed it was, that, unless overcome in some way, the blow would sink my literary ship; and I resolved not to go down in a political storm without revenge. It was therefore a time for bold action.

I changed the head-line of my journal, and called it "The Saturday Evening Messenger," vol. i., No. 1. In a new salutatory, I marked out a new field, and closed hoping to merit greater success than had my late contemporary "The Gazette," which, as I had been informed, had perished. This journal was ostensibly published by the "Messenger" Company, and no editor was announced.

In this issue I said all the evil things of Henderson that had ever been rumored against him from his boyhood. Sending him a marked copy

of the paper, I wrote a note in which I charged him squarely with his deception, and gave him his choice, to fulfil his agreement, or take the consequences.

On the following day he paid me a visit. I was firm and unrelenting. Finally he offered to hand over the first instalment, providing I would let him off. This was agreed to; and ever after, I doubt not, Henderson has fulfilled his newspaper engagements promptly.

I appealed to my wife, that my plan had been only fair since he had so basely deceived me; but she protested that I had sinned, as I had returned evil for evil.

"The Gazette" did not survive, neither did "The Messenger" re-appear; and there was no undue excitement or display at their burial.

CHAPTER X.

IT was now more than a year since "The Gazette" had been laid away in an early grave. Lotta in company with a cousin had gone to spend the summer with her parents at Winthrop.

She had spent many fruitless hours in trying to persuade me to accompany her, but to no result.

"When I have twenty thousand, and not before," was my most pliable answer to her entreaties.

We were to meet again in the fall, on her return to New Boston; but meanwhile I was to stem the tide alone.

As I could now move about at less expense, I proposed in Lotta's absence to visit and prospect some of the cities in the near West.

A bright early spring evening found me in Troy, N.Y., where, at the American House, I met three New Boston parties who were returning from a Western tour.

They were young men of rather doubtful habits, yet of good standing in society. Their prestige in the latter respect was due to the good name of their parents, rather than to any good qualities of their own.

I had never sown any wild oats up to that evening. A youth full of energetic struggles after education, a husband at nineteen, and the faithful, devoted, Christian Lotta to guide my steps, I had walked morally in wisdom's ways up to that hour.

We spent some ten days together, in which perhaps the most wicked of our deeds was the foolish expenditure of money.

Each of my companions ran out of funds, and borrowed of me in turn, until, to accommodate the last, I equally divided my remaining fifty dollars. They were, however, looking for a draft in an early mail; and I was not the man to deny them.

I hate the memories of this Troy affair, and will pass lightly over it. It left me with eight dollars, and a hotel-bill which was not paid till a later date, as we shall see.

My New Boston friends had left. Fortunately for them, they had through tickets. Before leaving, they agreed to remit my dues to Chicago, but

failed to perform; and this was my first grand lesson that companions in sin cannot be trusted.

Alone with my eight dollars, I wandered out to Oakwood Cemetery, — one of the most beautiful spots on the continent. There, alone with the gravestones, I composed a little poem to Lotta, which she still holds among other relics of days forever gone.

My eight dollars carried me to Buffalo. When I arrived it was early dawn, and I possessed neither money nor baggage; nor had I, as I then thought, a single friend or acquaintance in the city.

This statement is hardly correct; for I stepped from the train with a single quarter in my pocket, but had not gone two blocks on Main Street before I came up to a blind man faithfully turning away at a hand-organ, grinding out "Yankee Doodle."

The presence of this enterprising Italian, at such an early hour, filled me with a peculiar inspiration. Before fully realizing what I was about, that last quarter fell musically upon the tin plate, and the thankful organist bowed me a "God bless you!"

"A fit subject for God's blessing, surely!" I thought, as I walked up town.

Entering the leading hotel, I washed, combed, and brushed, all without incurring liabilities beyond my means. Then, with a wishful glance into the breakfast-hall, I turned my steps into the street, hungry and penniless, but not discouraged. There was a romance in the situation which lent a charm even to hunger.

"I have never had such an experience; but surely I can survive the want of a single breakfast, and before noon something will turn up." Thus soliloquizing I walked slowly, not knowing where.

At ten o'clock I rang the bell at a large and well-appointed Delaware Avenue boarding-house, and was conducted to the parlor, where a short, thin-skinned little man came in, and offered to hear my errand.

In a few words I told him frankly my situation: that I had seen better days, that my baggage was detained at Troy, and that my last quarter had been honorably expended.

"But," I concluded, "give me the cheapest room you have in the house, and by Saturday night I shall have earned the money to meet the bill."

"We cannot accommodate you, sir. Our terms are invariably cash in advance," he answered, leading the way to the door.

It required a little bracing up of the moral and physical nerves to repel this; but I braced up and walked out, remembering that the terms of my journal consisted of a part of his reply, "terms cash, invariably in advance," but in my case the motto had not been strictly adhered to.

Half a block farther on, but on the opposite side, I ventured to make another attempt.

A kind, good-natured-looking lady of about forty showed me several rooms, but I managed to be a little displeased with them all.

"I have come to take a position as local editor on one of your leading daily papers, and wish a nice home-like room," I said in an independent manner.

"Well," she replied, "I have a magnificent suite on the lower floor, but I shall have to charge you twelve a week."

I followed her to those rooms, and threw myself into an easy-chair with a princely dignity.

"These will do: what are your meal hours?" for I was hungry.

The bargain over, I straightened up, and said, —

"I will go to the depot for my trunk, and will return in season for dinner. Shall I pay you a week's board now?"

"Oh, no! at the end of the week will be quite satisfactory, sir," she replied, with an expression of womanly courtesy.

One hour later I was made sub city-editor of the foremost daily journal in the city, to relieve an old friend, whom I unexpectedly met, and who desired to take a short vacation.

After the necessary information had been given me by the departing editor, and just before he withdrew, I took him one side, and whispered, —

"See here, Foster, I am strapped, and" —

"Not another word: how much?" and he unrolled a small package of tens as he urged his answer.

"Ten dollars till Saturday."

He gave me fifteen, and was out of the room before I had time to thank him.

At one o'clock, or a little after, I took a hearty dinner at my new boarding-house, and then, withdrawing to my rooms, I beckoned the good landlady to follow. Closing the door after me, I explained how my trunks had (not) been carried on to Chicago by mistake, and added that it was embarrassing to be in a strange boarding-house without baggage; and, holding out the fifteen dollars, pressed her to take out a week's board.

She promptly declined, and assured me that it was entirely unnecessary.

"I am perfectly satisfied if you are," she said: "your appearance is all I want. I wish I had every room in the house filled with such men. Make known your wants freely, and I will try to make you feel at home;" and thus the little woman lectured me into inexpressible happiness.

CHAPTER XI.

THROUGH this short spell of "subbing" at Buffalo, I managed to send for and receive my trunk, and complete the journey to a well-known Western metropolis.

On reaching my destination, I wrote to Lotta, picturing the grandest prospects, and pointing her to a near future greatness that would more than redress all our woes. Yet at the same time I had but four cents in the world, and not so much as the faintest promise of any thing tangible; but I had a courage which knew no such thing as failure.

This was no time for doubt or trembling, but an hour for bold resolve. A mere situation at twenty or thirty a week would not satisfy me; and, if it would, such could not have been easily obtained.

My slight newspaper experience was now to be thoroughly tested. Light seemed to be dawning through the windows of hope looking in that direction.

With a fondness for the profession, and the recollections of my victory over Henderson fresh in memory, I made another attempt newspaper-ward.

After climbing three flights of stairs, and making my way into the dingy editorial department of "The Daily Paragraph," I thus introduced myself and the subject nearest my heart to the editor and proprietor, of whom and whose business I had already learned much:—

"Good-day, Mr. Danelson. My name is Clarkson. I am from the East; and with some newspaper experience I come this way to cast my lot among you."

Mr. Danelson looked me over; and, relieving a chair near at hand of a bundle of exchanges, offered me a seat, without a response of any kind.

"Excuse me for troubling you; but an acquaintance here directed me to you for the information I need, knowing, as he said, that you were well posted concerning the wants and needs of every journal in the city."

A smile of satisfaction irradiated his long, haggard face, at this inspirational compliment. I continued,—

"Now, excuse me, but I am a live man, and

understand the newspaper business to a T ; and I'll tell you what I want to find. Tell me, if you please, where there is a journal in this city with the bare possibilities of success before it, but with the difficulties of an empty cash-drawer, a poor advertising patronage, and a good list of pressing debts all around it. Pardon my blunt way of putting things, Mr. Danelson, but I wish to offer my services to such an establishment on these terms: fifty dollars a week salary if I bring in one hundred a week for the paper on my own work, and nothing if I come short of this amount."

I knew right well that I had already found the newspaper establishment which I was describing, and had come to it fully posted regarding its financial condition.

Danelson was a man of curious characteristics. Being deeply in debt, he had grown nervous over the continual dunning which besieged his office, and was ripe for just such an offer.

He turned his face towards me with a curious smile, and asked, —

"How do you propose to bring to any newspaper one hundred dollars a week, Mr. Clarkson?"

"I understand my business," was all the reply I made.

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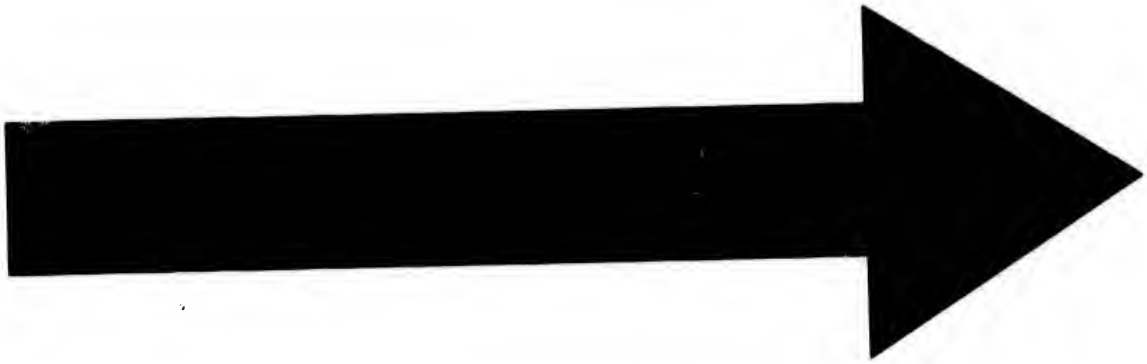

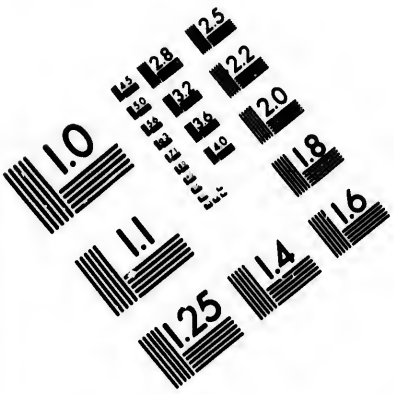

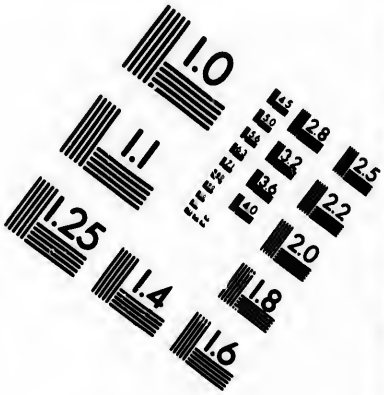

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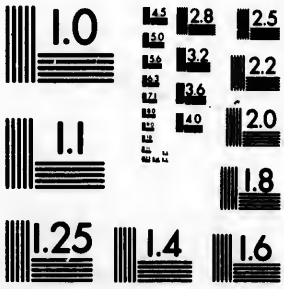

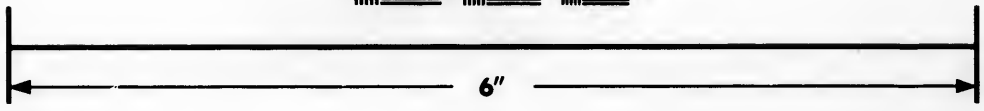

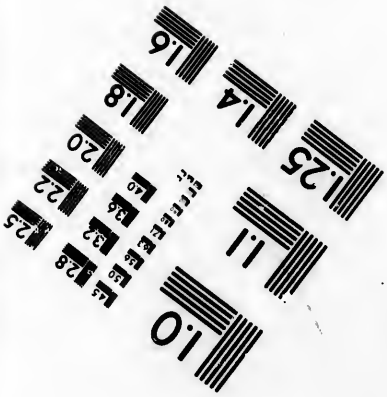

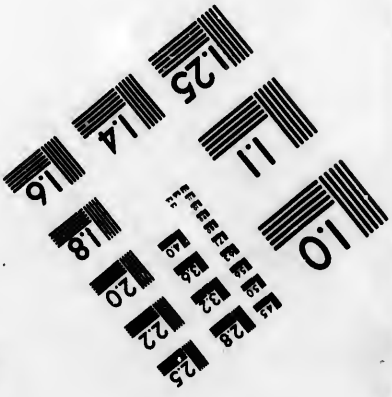

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He took in my meaning at once, and withdrew with me to a private office, where we made considerable talk, and whence I emerged two hours later, as managing editor of "The Daily Paragraph," at a salary of fifty dollars a week, payable by myself on the conditions before mentioned.

I assumed charge with unusual display, and ordered the foreman of the composing-room, who was a son of the proprietor, to change the "make-up," which order he was forced to observe without any good reasons for the change, which he desired me to give.

Mr. Danelson wished to give me a fair trial, and humored my most imperious orders, giving all about the office to understand that I must be obeyed.

Chapman and Gorham were the proprietors of two of the most elegant "sample-room" establishments in the metropolis; and I discovered that the faro-departments of these concerns paid large but unlawful dividends.

An Eastern gentleman stopping at my hotel had been victimized and robbed of three hundred dollars in one of these places, and, although half as much to blame as his deceivers were, was quite ready to expose their villany; and through his kind

offices I was enabled to gain admittance to several of these dens.

Here I witnessed some of the sharpest transactions of which the human intellect, supported by Satanic inspiration, is capable.

More than twenty of the scenes of that night, which came to my knowledge, are worth describing, but I will venture but one of these briefly: —

A middle-aged man had come to the city by a train arriving at eight o'clock, P.M.; and with only a light valise he started to walk from the depot to his hotel, in preference to riding. A sharper met him with a familiar, —

"How do you do, Gov. Hall? Why, you are a stranger in these parts!" And, acting out his words, he shook the stranger's hand warmly.

"Beg your pardon, sir. I am not Gov. Hall: you are mistaken." And he withdrew his hand in embarrassment.

The sharper excused himself, but could not easily satisfy his mind that two men could look so much alike. His apparent mistake offered occasion for a little further conversation, in which he learned all he could about the stranger, his name, residence, and the names of certain parties residing there.

They parted; and the stranger walked on towards his hotel, when, a few minutes later, he was accosted by another sharper, who, having been posted by the first one, not only knew his name, but much which, and to all appearances, evidenced that he was an old acquaintance. He began, —

"Good-evening, Capt. Hart. Glad to see you. When did you leave New Britain?"

He managed to convince the captain that he was an old friend; said he was on his way to St. Louis; and then pulled out a lottery-ticket, with this remark, —

"Here is a lottery-ticket which I bought from a fellow out of a joke, nearly a year ago, in New Britain; and I am told this evening that I have drawn five hundred dollars, and am on my way to the office where it is to be paid. Would you care to come over to see whether or not it is real or a sham?"

The captain consented readily. In a room adjoining the faro-hall, the two men presented themselves, and the sharper handed in his ticket.

A clerk (for such he appeared) brought down a ponderous ledger, and looked for the number of the ticket, through a pair of glasses, in a dignified manner.

a wealthy German citizen, desired to become mayor; then came a happy thought.

There could be no slipshod work in this transaction, with any hope of success. Shintzenstein was a shrewd man, and knew well how to make the best use of his means. Any enterprise to which he lent his assistance must either be for his own or the public's good; but withal he had a kind heart, and knew well how to appreciate and return a favor.

CHAPTER XII.

MY plans once mature, I put up the name of Shintzenstein as a candidate for mayor, and succeeded in publishing a long list of respectable signers to a petition calling on him to come forward as a candidate.

Thus for two weeks I worked hard and faithfully, and did much to increase his popularity. He was a man whose reputation would bear advertising.

Considerable time passed in this way before we met. At last he determined to see with his own eyes the man who was volunteering this service, and he paid me a visit.

I was delighted to see him, but wore an air of strange independence which puzzled him. He subscribed for the paper, paying one year in advance. But this did not satisfy him; and, as he withdrew, he slipped a one-hundred-dollar bank-note in the hand he pressed.

I passed it over to Danelson, and requested another week's salary. He laughed in a curious undertone, but complied.

Here was no slight evidence of the success of my plans. I was marching to the heart of Shintzenstein through his generous impulses, and the force that impelled me was faithful service.

With careful manipulation I progressed step by step, witnessing daily manifestations of my progress.

At this juncture, an event transpired which set the wheels of fortune turning rapidly in my favor. The editor who had been discharged to make room for me had purchased a number of outstanding claims against the paper, to which he had added his own, and entered suit. A judgment had been granted, and the morning had come for its execution.

Danelson had kept a knowledge of this event from me, for a purpose. He probably did not care to trust me with such information, and his measurement of me in this instance was half correct.

"What is going to be done, Mr. Danelson?" I asked excitedly.

"I have a friend who will buy the office in," he

answered in a whisper; for the deputy-sheriff had already entered.

I blamed myself furiously that all this could have transpired under my very nose without my knowing it, but flew over to Shintzenstein's; and, in fifteen minutes, he had authorized me to bid as high as fifteen hundred, saying he would hand me a check for the amount if I succeeded.

I returned to the office to find the sheriff standing on my table, the quill pens smashing under his number-ten boots, and crying fitfully,—

"Three hundred I'm bid; three hundred I'm bid; three hundred, three hundred!"

It was raised to five hundred, five fifty, six, and six fifty; and it soon became evident that Danelson's financial friend had a formidable opponent in the ex-editor's right-hand man.

Finally the latter bid nine hundred; and Danelson's friend withdrew, saying he could not risk any more. The excited proprietor walked the floor in great excitement.

"Nine hundred, third and last time; going, and"—

"One thousand!" I said in a decided voice.

All eyes were turned towards me. The sheriff

was astonished, and Danelson grew impatient, and asked, —

"What does this mean?"

"I mean to save your paper."

"For me?" he demanded in a high pitch.

"No: for Fred and myself."

Fred was his son, the foreman before referred to, an open-hearted, honest young man, who had become my most intimate friend.

Danelson resigned himself, and, at his son's advice, walked away.

"One thousand, third and last time; and sold — to whom?" shouted the official auctioneer.

"To Jean Clarkson," I responded. "The money is ready as soon as the papers can be made out."

Jean Clarkson & Co. were the proprietors of "The Paragraph" thereafter; and, under that management, its patronage soon became self-sustaining. We failed in electing Shintzenstein, but had been well paid for faithful service.

"The Paragraph" finally became a fixed institution, established on a paying basis; and I was about to start to meet Lotta, that she might enjoy the happy lot with me.

Arrangements had been completed for furniture,

and a lease signed for a beautiful little house in the West Division, when on that eventful Sunday night, memorable to all the world, the blasting flame swept into ruin, not only every vestige of "The Paragraph," but three-quarters of a mighty commercial metropolis.

CHAPTER XIII.

ALL night long, and part of the following day, with many a thousand more, I marched before the on-sweeping, all-consuming flames of that mighty conflagration. The cries of alarm, groans of sorrow, and shrieks of dying mortals, of that awful night, still live in my soul, never to be effaced.

Monday noon I ate my soup in St. Ann's Church, with thousands, all of whom were penniless and homeless. The scenes of the previous evening had forced the conclusion upon me, that but little in this life was abiding.

On Sunday I had within my control the means of an apparently permanent livelihood. All had vanished in a few brief hours; but around me were so many, who, being left in the same condition, were less able to overcome it, that I no longer lamented.

"How can I turn this mighty calamity to account?" was a question which I had put to myself, and satisfactorily answered, before the fire had driven me across the North River on the previous night; and I had already entered upon the execution of a plan with that end in view.

In the midst of the crowd I felt a friendly tap upon my shoulder. I turned, and grasped the hand of Fred Danelson, my late partner, whose face had been badly singed in an encounter with the flames.

"God bless you, Fred! I was never so glad to see a man in my life;" and I held his hand, with deep emotion, restraining my tears.

There were men weeping that day, whose eyes had never before given such evidence of the heart's unrest.

"We are all saved, thank God for that! but we are all penniless, homeless, and discouraged," responded Fred, weeping like a schoolboy under severe punishment.

"Brace up, old boy," I said, still holding his hand, but leading him out of the crowd, that we might not hear the sighs and groans, or witness the tears, of the sorrowing multitude.

"Fred," I continued, "I will give you twenty-five

dollars a week and railroad fare, for eight weeks, to do a certain honorable work for me; and I want you to start to-day: will you engage?"

"I am at your command on easier terms," he replied. "But what is to be the nature of my work?"

I posted him:—

"You are to leave town this afternoon, and make a trip to the East. Your progress will be slow, and on this wise: Announce me to lecture in —— to-morrow evening. You will be able to do all the advertising yet this evening, as you reach there by four o'clock. Leave late in the evening, or early in the morning, for the next town, and announce me for that place for Wednesday evening; and so on every evening in the week. Zigzag latitudinally as you progress, so as to take in a wide range of towns, and keep in daily communication with me by telegraph. Don't wait for mail communication. Here is a circular, which print as a dodger in each town, flooding the streets with them; also publish it in all the papers; and, when occasion will admit, have it read from the pulpits. You will be able to secure churches in some places, perhaps, where there are no halls. Leave all bills for me to pay,

even your hotel expenses. And here is an order that will enable you to act on this advice." Thus ended my instructions.

This venture had been suggested to me during the awful night previous, by some friendly spirit; and I had been mentally studying my lecture for twelve hours, in the very presence of the ghastly scenes which I was to describe.

The letter of introduction for my advance agent had already been written. It ran as follows, —

AMID THE FLAMES, Oct. 9, ——.

To Hall Agents, Hotel Proprietors, Printers, Publishers, and all whom it may concern.

All debts contracted by the bearer, Mr. Danelson, in any way in behalf of my lecturing tour, will be paid by me on my arrival. Render him all the assistance you can.

In haste,

JEAN CLARKSON,

Late Editor and Proprietor "Daily Paragraph."

The circular or advertisement, which had also been prepared to save time, ran as follows: —

RUINED CHICAGO — A LECTURE!

The people of —— will be glad to learn, that on ——

evening, in the —— hall, Mr. Jean Clarkson, a well-known Chicago journalist, and a lecturer of marked eloquence and ability, will deliver his most thrilling discourse, entitled "Chicago in Flames." The learned and distinguished speaker will portray the whole disaster in the full strength of his wonderful talents. In the midst of the flames from the commencement to the end of the conflagration, he will speak from personal observation. The hall will no doubt be crowded. General admission, twenty-five cents; reserved seats, twenty-five cents extra. The lecture commences at 7.30, P.M., precisely. Mr. Clarkson comes to us with the following strong indorsements.

Here followed recommendations from ex-governors, mayor, Congressmen, and clergymen, presidents of universities, &c., each of whom I had fortunately met during the morning, and from whom I had received at my earnest solicitation these much-needed testimonials.

One of these recommendations was so strong, so unique, and so characteristic of the haste and excitement of the hour, that I give it here as a "relic of the Chicago fire:" —

"Our distinguished and beloved citizen, Mr. Jean Clarkson, a journalist distinguished alike for his wit, scholarship, and talents, goes to you on this

lecturing tour with our most profound sympathy. Extend to him a hearty welcome."

I omit the signature to this indorsement, not because the distinguished statesman who granted it would object to have it known that he indorsed my project, but because he wrote it, half according to my own dictation, while the flames were breaking forth in mad fury within a hundred feet of him, and because in his wild excitement he knew not what he wrote.

"You are a marvel, Jean. I positively believe, that, were the world to come to an end in full accord with the Puritan faith, you would go off lecturing on the event before the desperate affair should have been fairly consummated," said Fred, rolling up the papers I had given him, in wonder and amazement at the maturity of my plans, while the fire was still raging in the North Division.

"Be off at once, Fred. Here are twenty-five dollars, all I have in the world, but I will trust to borrowing for my own wants."

Fred left me, having entered fully into the merits of my plans.

Two hours later I found Shintzenstein at his

office. Whilst one of the few who were not burned out, he was not without his trouble. I found him walking the floor frantically, and groaning over the loss of a boy of whom he had up to that hour received no tidings.

"Loan me fifty dollars, quick, judge. I will return it in ten days."

He handed me seventy-five in a mistake in the midst of his grief; and I returned the surplus with many thanks, and retired.

I spent the evening until a late hour, poring over my lecture, with the aid of two assistants, one of whom had made some reputation as a speaker for the temperance folks, and the other for the cause of the gospel.

I succeeded in framing quite an attractive description of such scenes as would be most heart-rending. Many of these never occurred, but all of them might have, and should have in order to give the subject all the variety desirable to the lecturer.

At ten o'clock I received the following telegram from Fred:—

"You are to lecture here to-morrow night. We could pack two halls and three churches if it were possible to divide yourself up."

I read the telegram with peculiar satisfaction, and then and there decided to divide up, though in a somewhat different way.

I engaged my two assistants for a term of four weeks each, and directed them to meet me on the following morning for instructions.

CHAPTER XIV.

I HAD not forgotten Lotta. She was more than a thousand miles away; yet the wires had probably already informed her of the fall of the city, and she might be in distress concerning my safety.

It was Tuesday morning. I had made ready to depart in the new *rôle* of lecturer; but, before leaving, I sent Lotta the following telegram:—

"Chicago destroyed. Start on a lecturing tour eastward. Will meet you at New Boston about Dec. 15. Get ready."

The train did not leave for the city where I was to lecture, until four o'clock in the afternoon; and during the day I perfected my plans of "dividing up."

In a lager-beer saloon in the West Division, — for the want of a better place, — seated around a beer table, my assistants and I continued the study of

our lecture. We exchanged notes, until each was ready to wager the other that his effort would weigh the most.

These two men, well known in the field of journalism and to the temperance and gospel platforms, had now come, under my forceful manipulations, into an engagement to personate Jean Clarkson on a lecturing tour. This was not altogether right; but the public were to be unharmfully deceived, for both of these men were better and more experienced speakers than myself.

Securing and sending out advance agents for each of the new-made Clarksons, all armed with copies of the documents given to Fred, I marked out their routes; one north and the other south of, but both parallel to, my own. I sent out with each a trusty financial agent, who was to look after funds, pay the bills, and report progress daily.

With wonderful fortune I chanced on getting the right man in the right place in every instance; and thus in a threefold tide, we marched eastward from city to city, crying little else but "Fire! fire!" to crowded houses; netting in the aggregate from three to five hundred dollars a night.

The telegrams flew swiftly, both latitudinally

and longitudinally; but the whole lecture corps, advance agents, financial men, and the Clarkson trinity, moved steadily eastward.

The press announced our coming, for considerable distances ahead, and thereby secured to us the field, and promoted our prosperity.

I reached Cincinnati on a Saturday afternoon. Telegrams were awaiting me at the Burnett House, announcing my arrival at Cleveland and Louisville, respectively.

One of the largest halls in the Ohioan metropolis had been secured, and the city was anxious to hear my lecture. The press had published not only the circular above referred to, with all the indorsements, but extracts from various papers on our trifold route, eulogizing the masterly eloquence of the now celebrated Jean Clarkson.

I had scarcely reached the hotel when an enterprising divine sent his card to my room.

"Show him up," I said to the boy, half suspecting his errand.

"Have I the honor of meeting Mr. Clarkson?" he asked, giving me his hand.

"My name is Clarkson," I answered, hoping that no such misfortune would overtake either of

the northern or southern extremities of my individuality.

"I want you to come and preach for me to-morrow morning," he said in a good-natured way.

"Preach!"

"Yes, preach."

"*Preach!* Why, sir, you are crazy! I never did such a thing;" and my astonishment was without bounds.

"Well, you lecture, and I see you are an able and eloquent speaker, and of course you are a Christian; and why not come over, and give our folks a talk? I am played out: besides, I want to get out a full house, with a view to raising a balance on our church debt. Your name will bring out the people, and you can talk Chicago fire or what you like." And thus he pressed his case.

I bethought me of my spiritual standing. Lotta was a devoted Christian, but I could not stand on that. I had joined the church when a mere boy, but had lost my card of membership in more senses than one.

"Well," I said, "if you will do the praying, I will read the first hymn, and talk half an hour."

"Agreed." And so saying he left me to study

up my first sermon. I studied late, and remembered, as I retired, how doubtless mine was not the first sermon ever gotten up in the Burnett House.

Sunday morning came. The divine for whom I was to preach called on his way to the church; and as we walked out together he remarked, that, since the day was beautiful, the announcements would in all probability more than fill the house.

On our arrival at the church, we found it quite as he had remarked. Chairs had been carried up from the vestry; and the aisles, as well as the pews, were crowded.

I read the hymn in a ministerial air, and he went through the remaining opening exercises in a spirit of victory. Preaching hour came. He turned his face to me, and then to the people, and said, —

"I have, as you see, prevailed on Mr. Clarkson — whom you all know in connection with his lecture — to talk to you this morning. He is very anxious that all present may understand that he does not preach, and will not on this occasion, but will say a few words as may suit his own judgment."

He fell back into the sofa, and I rose smiling.

"My friends, I am not a preacher, could not and will not preach; but, at the earnest request of your enterprising pastor, I am here to talk about that calamity from which so many thousand hearts are still bleeding; and, if I were spiritually loyal to the peculiar situation in which I find myself at this moment, I would preface my remarks with the text, 'Be ye also ready.'" And thus I proceeded thirty-five minutes, during which time many a tear in that vast congregation came stealing forth in sympathy for the woes consequent upon the scenes and incidents which I described.

The evenings came and went, until it was no longer embarrassing to meet the vast audiences, and I became master of a discourse not wholly unworthy the great subject.

At last we reached the city which I have already miscalled New Boston. Here in a large and elegantly appointed hall, the three Jean Clarksons came together on one platform, and measured strength before a large and intelligent audience.

I mentioned to my hearers, that, having met two distinguished literary men of the doomed city that day, I had prevailed on them to increase the attrac-

tions of the evening by their presence and co-operation; and, mentioning their names, added that they would each in their turn precede myself in some remarks.

It had been mutually agreed to, that the time, one hour and a half, should be equally divided between the three persons in the Clarkson trinity, and that our advance agents, who had remained there to settle and receive their discharge, should act as judges. One hundred dollars was to be awarded the victor from the receipts of the evening.

There was such a similarity between the discourses of my competitors, that I was forced to believe they had made but little departure from the hints they received at the commencement. This gave the first speaker a decided advantage over the second; but the smiling faces of our judges gave sufficient evidence that they would make due allowance for position.

I followed in my happiest mood, and had a decided advantage. It was the closing lecture of the course or tour; and my profits, after every demand was satisfied, netted the handsome sum of seven thousand dollars.

The contest was therefore unequal. My competi-

tors may have had more ability, even more genuine eloquence; but it was poverty against wealth, labor against capital; and the world is already too familiar with the issues of such unequal contests.

The committee, at my previous suggestion, divided the prize-money equally between my able assistants; and unto this day they recount their respective victories in good faith.

CHAPTER XV.

I HAD now reached the city of my first unfortunate newspaper experience. Here my assistant lecturers were paid off and discharged, as also the whole staff; and we dissolved business relations, feeling that the task in which we had engaged had come to a glorious completion.

Most of my household furniture, formerly used in housekeeping, was stored in the garret belonging to a friend; and the little house in which we had lived was vacated on the same week of my arrival.

I visited it, and found the place had been greatly improved. Then, securing a lease to the 1st of the following May, I began moving in the furniture.

Adding considerably to our household goods, I made the place look as finely as possible, and waited for Lotta. She had already announced her approach by wire, and I was hourly expecting her.

After considerable search, I had found our old girl, Minnie; and she had taken charge of the little home once more, and was anxiously awaiting her mistress.

It was eight o'clock on Christmas Eve when Lotta reached the city; and was, to her utter surprise, conducted to the same little home which she had left a year before.

"Jean, is this real, or am I dreaming?" she asked in delight, looking bright and happy.

"Ask Minnie," I answered, as the girl came in from the dining-room to say that supper was ready, closing the door quickly behind her.

This was almost too much for Lotta; and half crying and laughing she sprang towards me, and partly kneeling, with both arms about my neck and the back of my chair, as was her custom in moments of great joy or sorrow, sobbed out, —

"You have been making a surprise for me, Jean."

I kissed her tears of joy away, and we started for the dining-room, where she met another surprise. A long table was groaning under the richest delicacies; every thing which the season afforded had been prepared; and around the table sat a happy

twelve, Lotta's old and most intimate friends, who joined in giving her a welcome which she can never forget.

Two seats at the table were empty, and we occupied them; while Minnie, with one hand on the sideboard and the other on her hip, asked, —

"And what will you have first, ma'am?"

This situation overcame Lotta, and she burst into tears, crying outright, but with joy. She sobbed, and we laughed heartily, for several minutes; and frequently during the meal she broke out afresh.

The festivities closed over three bottles of *Carte Blanche*, to the presence of which Lotta consented, since the whole affair was in honor of her arrival.

But a still greater surprise was in store for my little queen. Before we arose from the table, Minnie, at the giving of a preconcerted signal, handed a small box to Dr. Norton, who with his amiable wife occupied, at my request, the head of the table.

The doctor, wearing his gravest countenance, arose and began, —

"It is my pleasant duty, friends, to request your attention to what I am about to say. — Mrs. Clark-

son, you have been a long time absent. Your short stay at this pleasant residence drew close to your heart the truest friendship of a large number of good people, a few of whom are here to-night to bear testimony to my words. When you left, a financial cloud — a blessing in disguise — had overshadowed your talented husband. On your return you find him still brilliant with the laurels of victory which he has so gallantly won. Is it not therefore meet and proper that we your friends, we who know your worth and admire your devotion, should assemble here to-night, and extend to you a sincere and heartfelt welcome?"

Lotta, with her face buried in my bosom, sobbed like a child under a father's severest punishment.

The doctor continued, "This we do gladly, heartily, in these words: *Welcome, thrice welcome home!* Nor is this all. I hold here in my hand a beautiful gold watch and chain, the gift of your noble husband. Upon one of the cases I observe the word 'Lotta,' upon the other 'Jean.' These are words which, I fancy, Mrs. Clarkson, have a meaning to you far deeper and more sacred than we are permitted to know. There is but one who can share with you the inspirations which must

come with the mention of these names; and long may you thus share them together! Mrs. Clarkson, take this watch, wear it as a token of your husband's love; and, as its delicate fingers faithfully point to the passing hours, they will imitate the holy constancy of your own untiring devotion."

I took the watch from the speaker, and, throwing the chain around Lotta's neck, placed it in her hand, and tried to brush away her tears, but she cried the more.

The doctor continued, —

"Nor is this all, Mrs. Clarkson. I hold in my hand a bank-draft payable to your order, for two thousand dollars. This comes to you in this wise. I am told that there are articles of copartnership existing between you and your generous husband, written or understood, by which the profits as well as the hardships of life are equally divided between you. In conformity with that compact, let me hand you this draft, your share of the net profits on your husband's genius for the past year. May you receive many such tokens of his love and devotion, and finally may your life become brighter and happier each day to the end of a long and useful life!"

CHAPTER XVI.

LOTTA and I had not been fairly settled in our new old home in New Boston, when one morning as we sat at breakfast, and as I opened an enterprising weekly journal published in New York, to which some ingenious solicitor, with aid of chromos, had induced her to subscribe in my absence, she remarked, —

"What are you going to do next, Jean?"

But before I could answer the question, my eyes were attracted by a portrait which appeared on the first page of the paper in my hands. Under it I read the name of "Col. the Hon. John Nicholson." Aside from the portrait, the paper contained his biography, from which I learned that he had distinguished himself on one of the battle-fields of the Rebellion, in some ordinary affairs, had been twice elected to the State Senate, and had acquired considerable wealth as a brewer, and was only forty-five years old.

"There is a mystery here," I said to Lotta.

"Where, Jean?"

"Here is a portrait and biography of a fellow in this paper, who has done nothing extraordinary, and has no reputation, good or bad, beyond his own neighborhood."

"In what paper?"

"In this weekly fraud to which you subscribed for the sake of a chromo," I replied.

"Well, we don't care, do we?"

"I *do* care. I care to have an intelligent understanding of such things as I see and hear, and this thing puzzles me."

"Can't you puzzle it out? Come, grainer, journalist, lecturer, come, don't let such a thing overcome you," answered Lotta teasingly.

"I mean to;" and, with my reply, I made an examination of the paper to see whether or not the editor understood his business.

"*I* can solve it, Jean. The editor of that paper is in about the same fix that you were when some one induced you to publish Miss Speedwell's poem, 'The Orphan Girl,' in 'The Gazette,' at so much a line."

"Do you mean to say, Lotta, that this man, this Col. the Hon., has paid for all this?"

"I should not think him above it, if he is a brewer," she answered.

This threw me into a deep study. Breakfast over, I walked down town, and made many inquiries concerning the publishing business, especially the book department of it, and learned much I had not before known.

Step by step I came into the most stupendous scheme of my life. I could see one hundred thousand dollars clear profit, as plain as the nose on my face.

I rushed home to a late dinner, finding Lotta considerably alarmed at my long absence.

"Where have you been, Jean, till this time? The dinner was cold an hour ago," said Lotta, with a wry face.

"'Man shall not live by bread alone;' 'I have meat that ye know not of,'" was my reply.

I was too excited to eat much. Lotta listened to my plans with interest. She did not like the business I proposed, but agreed with me that it would likely be profitable.

"It is all due to that miserable little paper you subscribed for, Lotta. You are always helping me without knowing it. Had it not been for the

interpretation which you put upon that portrait which puzzled me this morning, I would not this moment be on my road to fortune."

Lotta laughed heartily, but asked how I was going to manage.

"In this wise," I answered. "We will move to New York, take elegant quarters at the Fifth Avenue, secure a down-town office, and go it in style."

"O Jean, you are crazy! That will ruin us: your ideas frighten me," she answered in alarm.

"Listen, Lotta; I am going to publish a large book of about fifteen hundred pages, called 'Distinguished Americans,' or 'Eminent Americans,' I have not as yet decided which. It will consist of about five hundred or more portraits and biographies. I have estimated that there are five hundred fools in this glorious country, who are rich and vain enough to pay five hundred dollars each for such immortalization as this scheme will afford. That will amount to two hundred and fifty thousand dollars; and I estimate the profits at one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Such an enterprise cannot be conducted in a hog-pen Lotta. No, no! I have the idea. We must go to the Fifth

Avenue Hotel; and I must get out a letter-head, on imported hand-made paper, like this: 'Author's library and study, parlors A, B, C, D, Fifth Avenue Hotel; Publication House, 250, 252, 254, 256, and 258, Broadway.' Then I must issue a circular, describing the work as written by Professor Jean Clarkson, and must get the indorsements of fifteen or twenty State governors to the work. Don't you see, Lotta?"

Lotta saw, for she said, "O Jean, you are a prodigy!"

"Thank you for the compliment, Lotta, but I have no time to appreciate it. Pack me a small valise: I go to New York in an hour, to make the arrangements, and will return in a week to take you, bag and baggage."

Meeting with good results in the metropolis, I soon made all the necessary arrangements for the engraving, printing, &c. A large printing and publishing house, to whom I revealed my plans, offered to go into partnership with me; but I declined, and bound them by writings to the terms of our agreement.

This establishment offered me a room for my down-town office, so that on my letters and circu-

lars I could use half a dozen Broadway numbers, when, indeed, I had but a small desk-room up two flights of stairs.

Very much elated at the prospect, on the evening of the first day I returned to the St. Nicholas, where I was stopping, and telegraphed Lotta, "*Safe and prosperous: hallelujah!*"

CHAPTER XVII.

MY New York arrangements all made, circulars issued, stationery printed, and hotel-apartments secured, I returned for Lotta. A week later we had entered on a scale of expensive living, which, as Lotta often declared, was perfectly wicked.

We had a beautiful suite of rooms, one floor above the dining-room, consisting of a reception-room, a beautiful parlor, and a sleeping-room with dressing and bath rooms attached.

The furniture and appointments were rich and elegant. A private or exclusive table was allotted us in both the dining and breakfast halls, and we were ready to entertain our company in princely style.

My business was now fairly inaugurated. I sent carefully worded letters to distinguished men everywhere; and Lotta, who kept an eye over my

operations, declared she had no idea that the world contained half so many distinguished men as my business revealed.

Here is a sample of the letters which I sent out. It will doubtless be recognized by thousands who read it. Many will laugh triumphantly that they were wise enough to consign it to the waste-basket, where it rightly belonged; others, not a few, will recognize in it the alluring words, which, striking a chord of sympathy in their vain souls, led them on to the indulgence of cheap immortalization. I will give the letter, heading and all: —

Distinguished Americans! A Great National Work! Art Engravings!

AUTHOR'S LIBRARY AND STUDY, PARLORS A, B, AND C, —— HOTEL.
OFFICE ——, BROADWAY ——, NEW YORK CITY.

DEAR SIR, — I beg to direct your attention to my new work, entitled "Distinguished Americans;" circulars fully describing which, and containing the strongest indorsements of the author, you will find enclosed herewith. The work is published by ——— & Co., a firm well known to you. To myself is assigned the important task of selecting persons whose eminence in the various professions and industries entitles them to a place in the work, and of preparing for the press the biographies of such persons. I desire to receive at an early day a photograph of yourself, cabinet size, to-

gether with such data as will enable me to write a lengthy biographical sketch. Should you find it embarrassing to give this, — and I know your sense of modesty will rebel against it, — you will find some literary friend, who, with your own assistance, will be able to supply me with what I require. Both the biography when in type, and the engravings before final publication, will be submitted for your approval. Please grant me an early reply, and signify whether or not you would object to assist this great national enterprise so far as to be at the slight expense of your own engraving.

Your humble and obedient servant,

JEAN CLARKSON.

P. S. I shall be glad to have you call on me at my library and study when you happen to be in the city: I will entertain you to the best of my ability. J. C.

What was not set forth in this letter was eloquently told in the circular that accompanied it, to which a well-known publishing firm in the city had permitted the use of their name for a consideration.

The spring and summer during the progress of the work were full of odd experiences. We were besieged at the hotel by parties who took advantage of the postscript to my letter. It was wonderful how these men would not only pay for this cheap fame, but travel hundreds of miles to New York,

where they could superintend the affair, so far as it concerned them, in person.

Each one called with some such remark as, —

"I received your letter some time ago, but could not exactly understand what was wanted. Having business in the city, I took advantage of a few leisure moments to call and see you personally."

Before they left, however, it became evident that the greater part of their business to New York was with me; or, as Lotta often said, they came to join my "mutual admiration society," for such was her name for my book long before it was published.

I adapted my snare to suit the size of the head which I desired to catch, but left the victims to make their own fits. Three styles of portraits became necessary to meet the demands of the three grades of eminence which my wide-reaching enterprise concocted.

Full-page portraits were five hundred dollars; half, or two on a page, two hundred and fifty each; five on a page, one hundred and fifty each: terms, cash on completion of engraving.

Thus had I graded the distinguished men; but, as I could not control them in matters of choice, it happened as a rule that the least distinguished chose the first class.

The scenes and incidents which came to my mind in connection with this business would fill more than ten volumes of this size; and each of them, if told in proper style, would make a most laughable story. I will detain the reader with but a single one.

I had been manipulating a Michigander who had evidently come all the way from the Peninsula State to see and share in the benefits of my scheme. He may have had some slight pretext of a business character.

I had dined him; and, although a teetotaller, he took a little light wine for his stomach's sake to finish off with, and was feeling in excellent spirits. He had carefully counted the cost, and, like a prudent man that he was, decided to become one of a group of five at one hundred and fifty dollars.

We started out to the artist's gallery, hoping the light would be yet sufficiently strong to get a good negative; but the hour was quite late.

The photographer concluded to make the attempt, but was doubtful as to the results. He had already taken many photographs for my work, and was beginning to suspect the nature of my business in spite of my studied silence.

The object of my regard on this occasion was an old man, who, having grown up with a well-to-do town of his State, had become wealthy through no effort of his own. He had served a term or two in the early forms of the State or Territorial Legislature.

He had been quite a reader of both agricultural and religious works, and was fond of manifesting his knowledge, but fell into the misfortune of using "geology" for "theology," and *vice versa*. This threw Lotta into a fit of laughter, and on one occasion she was forced to leave the room. But to the incident in question.

The old gent took me into the dressing-room, and suggested that I might aid in arranging his hair. He desired it "frowzled," to use a word of his own, in a careless Greeley style. I ran my hands through it, and gave him a sort of Longfellow appearance, and remarked that he was a fine subject.

His vanity was unquenchable, and now broke out in his putting on various phases of expression.

"How do you like that style?" and so asking, he raised his eyebrows, making about sixteen wrinkles, and pouted out his ample lips, after the style of an aged man playing with his grandchild.

"I would look natural," I replied, almost splitting from suppressed laughter.

"Then, how is this?" he continued, drawing his upper lip down firmly, and forcing the under one up with an expression of good-humored surprise.

This was all I could bear, — nay, more. I gave it up. I thought the matter over. There was only a hundred dollars to be lost, and it was a case where I was ready to give two hundred for a laugh; and so I lay down to it, and rolled.

My patron met the operator at the door of the dressing-room, and apologized. I straightened up, and did my best; but momentarily volleys of laughter broke forth in spite of my best endeavors.

He took his seat, and the operator began to adjust the camera. All was ready, and the cloth was being removed, when the old man, raising his hand, said, —

"Take me in a group!"

The operator could enjoy this with me, and we broke out in a fit of laughter, such as astonished the Michigander beyond all measure; either of us unable to speak for several minutes, to save our lives.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DURING my stay at the hotel, I made the acquaintance of one of the guests, named Jean Harrison. He was a wealthy ship-owner, and a young man of only thirty one or two.

Through some means Mr. Harrison's education had been sadly neglected, and he knew little or nothing save what an intelligent person will gather in general contact with the world. He was a bright, intelligent man; and in conversation, especially on matters of business, he was gentlemanly and well informed.

He had been left an orphan while yet an infant, and the parties with whom he found a home did not or could not send him to school.

Among his deficiencies was the utter inability to write intelligently. He could sign his own name, but the penmanship was wretched.

We soon became fast friends, and for some rea-

son I let him into the secrets of my business. One day while in my office I had opened in his presence letters enclosing, in the aggregate, about three thousand dollars. Seeing this, he pressed me to sell him an interest in the affair; but I put him off.

In turn Harrison also made me a confidant in a most important matter concerning himself. He was in a tight place, and needed some such assistance as I could give him.

He had fallen in love with a delightful and accomplished young lady in the city, and had resolved to marry her. The lady loved him in return; but there was a difficulty in the way. She, too, was an orphan, and under the guardianship of an uncle. But little opportunity was afforded her for entertaining gentlemen, except those after his own liking.

The Rev. Dr. Greythorn, the uncle referred to, was principal of a leading college in the city, and preached occasionally. He had arranged, as he hoped, for the marriage of his niece to a Col. Robert Johnson, a lawyer of prospective eminence and some property, and a resident of New York.

Col. Johnson had become one of my patrons. His steel engraving had been completed, approved,

and paid for; and he still held the biography which I had written, waiting for an opportunity to examine it.

The young lady, whom we may call Tillie, despised Johnson, but, to satisfy her uncle, occasionally received his attentions. She met Harrison secretly, and whenever occasion offered gave him evidences of her regard.

Harrison was a good-hearted man, honest, but a little out of confidence with himself. He could not prosper in this matter nearest his heart, as he desired; and, now that a new difficulty had overtaken him, he sought my counsel and aid.

His new difficulty consisted in a letter which he had received from Tillie. It required an answer; and Harrison could not write sufficiently fine for the occasion, and well he knew it. He laid the whole case before me, and appealed for help.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Harrison?" I asked, as we sat in my office together, brooding over the situation.

"I wish you to answer this letter, and any others she may send me, and do it in such a way as to bring our affairs to an issue."

This was a task to which I gave my best ener-

gies. Having been posted as to all crooks and turns in their experience, I wrote an answer to the letter, which Harrison thought a little too strong. He said it might do for an old lover, but was not timid enough for him. I tried again, and succeeded.

He mailed it, and in three days showed me the answer. I wrote again, and again, and again; and again she replied. Thus matters continued for weeks, not one of which came that did not witness two letters pass each way.

Their love waxed warmer and warmer, and Harrison's found a ready exponent in my willing pen. Their engagement had long since become a matter of the past, and the wedding was soon at hand.

Some of the letters were real efforts, giving a depth and character to courtship which made it instructive as well as entertaining.

Tillie's uncle was watching her closely. He noticed the unusual display of letters, and resolved to make an investigation; and, the more readily that he might execute these designs, he graciously permitted Tillie to pay a visit of a couple of days to a cousin in one of the suburbs, at her own request.

This pretended visit, however, was Tillie's deception, as we shall see.

She had scarcely left his house when he invaded her private apartments, and found the letters. Becoming exasperated, he carried them to Col. Johnson, who, as he rightly supposed, would be able to share in his unhappy surprise.

Johnson was a shrewd lawyer, and at once detected the writing.

"Do you know who this *Jean* is, who writes these letters?" asked Johnson.

"I have no idea," answered the reverend principal.

"He is none other than Professor Jean Clarkson, a married man who lives with his wife at the —— Hotel in this city."

"You astonish me; you break my heart! My niece is ruined. I will prosecute him!" and for a few moments the reverend gentleman in his rage forgot his highest calling.

"Are you sure of this, colonel?" he asked; and, to convince him, the colonel opened a drawer, and brought out his biography. The writing was compared, and there was no longer room for doubt.

They talked first of a prosecution; but both

Johnson and the principal agreed that such a course would ruin Tillie. And at length it was decided that the aggrieved principal should at once pay a visit to Mrs. Clarkson, in my absence, and expose the faithless conduct of her husband. In this way they hoped the whole affair would be broken off without scandal.

Meanwhile my project was nearing completion. The first edition of the book had appeared, and I had sold the right to publish the second for five thousand dollars. In all, after winding up the business, the profits on the enterprise were quite up to my most sanguine expectations, notwithstanding the enormous expense which attended it.

CHAPTER XIX.

ON the same afternoon that the Rev. Dr. Greythorn was disclosing the supposed faithlessness of her husband to Lotta, Harrison and Tillie were being united in an up-town church, and were to meet some friends in a wedding entertainment at our hotel.

Lotta and I were to join the company; but, faithful to my solemn engagement with Harrison, she knew nothing of it until after the scenes described in the opening chapter were enacted.

When, on my return to the hotel, I discovered the cause of Lotta's grief, I resolved on the spur of the moment to test a love which I had already too much tested, and did so in the cruel proposition for a separation. However, my test proved a success; and I never regretted the knowledge gained thereby. Lotta's deportment on this occasion is worthy imitation.

Before the marriage, Harrison, in the honesty of his heart, had confessed to Tillie regarding the letters; and on the wedding evening, at the close of the festivities in the hotel, Lotta and I, with the bride and groom, withdrew to an adjoining parlor, where, to Lotta's utter surprise, I narrated the incidents of the afternoon and evening in relation to the mysterious letters.

Harrison fathered the letters on the spot; and his accomplished bride added her testimony to that of his, and paid me a rich compliment for the penmanship, but gave me no credit for the sentiments. It would have been impossible to convince her that Harrison had not dictated them, and no one was disposed to try.

Lotta, again in one of her laughing, crying fits, called me mean, cruel, but kissed me with manifest relief.

She and Tillie became, and are still, fast friends.

Before we separated, Harrison suggested that I should write another letter. It was the last he would ask me to pen, since it was the only one, he thought, which would embarrass Tillie; and from henceforth she was to act as his secretary.

Writing-materials were provided; and we proceeded, he dictating, and I transcribing: —

— Hotel, New York City.

Rev. Dr. Greythorn.

Dear Sir, — This afternoon Tillie and I were married. We expect you will forgive all when you know all. Come and see us at ten, A.M., to-morrow; but first show this letter to Col. Johnson, and explain the difference, if you can, between Jean Harrison and my friend Professor Jean Clarkson, whose handwriting and my own, from some cause, appear to be identical.

Jean Harrison.

N.

HOTEL, NEW YORK CITY.

and I were married.
ou know all. Come
rst show this letter to
, if you can, between
sor Jean Clarkson,
some cause, appear
JEAN HARRISON.

CHAPTER XX.

NOW, Jean, I want to remind you of something you said before I went home on that visit two years ago," said Lotta, the morning after she had received the Rev. Greythorn's apologies, and extended to him her own for the strange incidents described in the opening chapter, for which they were both slightly at fault.

"Well, go on."

"After I had pressed you to go with me to father's, you said, as my only reward, '*Not until I have twenty thousand.*' Do you remember it?"

"I do; and now you want me to go, I suppose. Well, I have my twenty thousand, and *will* go; I need rest; and since I am out of business we will spend a few months among the old folks at home."

"Will you let *me* manage the whole affair, Jean? You have always had your own way; give me *mine* in this, won't you?"

"Lotta, I am in your hands for the next three months. Steer the ship to suit your whims, and get all the satisfaction out of it you can. I will be ready to leave for home in a few days, and shall like to spend Christmas with mother and father."

Lotta named a day on which we were to leave; and I promised to bend my affairs to meet her appointment. Meanwhile she wrote several letters, and I observed enclosed in one a bank-draft.

We made the journey pretty much all by rail. As before stated, steam communication had been extended through and beyond Winthrop. The same line also ran at a distance of only three miles from my father's house.

On the home trip we passed through the settlement, or close to it, where I had been reared; and I persisted that we should stop at my parents' before passing through to hers.

Lotta was firm. "I have your promise, Jean, that I should manage this affair to my own liking," she said, as the cars neared the station.

"Yes; but what will my poor old mother and father think if we pass them? I won't do it! Lotta, you are selfish, cruel, thoughtless. Let us get off here for the night, and take the early morning train for Winthrop."

"I will not hear to it! All will come out right, and I will take the responsibility."

"But have you no regard for my feelings? You have been home since I have."

"I have decided, Jean! Do you know what that means?" said my wife, stamping her little foot, and taking me off in a way which I readily understood.

The argument continued until we had passed the station, and Lotta had conquered. We rode the remaining twenty miles in almost absolute silence. I tried to appear angry, but felt only impatient, while Lotta entertained me with frequent titterings of laughter until we reached Winthrop station.

Here we were met by Squire Bennett, who, after kissing his daughter, gave me a hearty welcome. We were conducted to his carriage, and driven to his residence, our trunks following close behind in another carriage.

We were taken into the sitting-room, where we met Mrs. Bennett and the family, many of the children having grown almost beyond recognition. Here we received such a welcome as I shall never forget.

One thing worried me. There were no signs of supper, although it was not long past the hour

for that meal; nor had our wants in this respect been inquired after.

"Excuse me, Mrs. Bennett," I said, "but I am as hungry as a bear."

"We shall have supper in a minute," said Lotta quickly, before her mother could speak; "but come and dress. You are covered with coal-dust."

Realizing the force of her remark, I was glad of an opportunity to wash and otherwise make myself presentable.

"You must dress, Jean. Here is your new suit," said my little woman, dancing about me in joyful suspense.

"Not to-night, Lotta. A wash and a comb will do."

"I have decided, Jean! Do you know what it means?" she repeated, again imitating my own style of wilfulness; and added, "Remember your promise."

"Give me some reason for this, or I will not make a fool of myself to please you!" was my impatient answer.

"It is early, and there will be, dear knows who, to see us yet to-night," said the amused little creature, half laughing.

"Lotta, there is a swindle about this, but I will dress."

Half an hour later we returned to the sitting-room, both looking our best.

"Now for the supper. Mrs. Bennett, I am positively hungry!" I spoke again.

"In one moment," she answered; "but let me first take you to the parlor, and introduce you to our friends, who will doubtless like to share with us in a repast."

Lotta took my arm, and we followed; but I was not without suspicions. The door opened to reveal a crowded parlor; and more than thirty voices, male and female, shouted, —

"Come in, come in!"

Lotta, at her old tricks, took to crying and laughing; and for a moment to have opened my mouth would have been a dangerous expedient.

The tears started in one eye; but I sent them back involuntarily with a grip of my obedient nerves, and walked in.

"Ladies and gentlemen," I broke out, "I am surprised, but not overcome. Could you put me on the track of some man in this neighborhood who has marketable sheep and cattle for sale?"

A wild and hearty burst of laughter was the only response, aside from a general stampede in conformity with the announcement that supper was waiting.

We were busy for five minutes shaking hands, and trying to find variety for our answers to such words as "How are you?" "Glad to see you;" "Welcome home!" "Will you teach for us this winter?" "I have a fast mare for sale;" "Don't you want a hundred fat cattle?" &c.

CHAPTER XXI.

PASSING through the sitting-room which we had left, we were led into an old-fashioned farm-house dining-hall, about twenty by forty feet. It presented a delightful appearance, trimmed from floor to ceiling with evergreen, flags, flowers, &c. One would have supposed it a banquet-hall as when dressed for a state occasion.

To me this was the most agreeable surprise of all, and now I could have forgiven Lotta for denying me the privilege of calling at father's; but in the midst of it all I could not help feeling that mother and father had been shamefully slighted. I had not seen them for more than ten years. But they had still eyes to see, and hearts to feel, and would have enjoyed the pleasure of this entertainment; and, aside from this, I was unhappy at the thought of their absence.

Such were my meditations as we took our seats

around the long table. Squire Bennett was looking in his best humor, at the head of the table. His good wife occupied her place at the foot opposite him. About half way down on one side Lotta and I were assigned our places. The other seats on either side were occupied by the guests, except two, — one on my immediate right, and the other on Lotta's immediate left. These had been left vacant, as I thought inadvertently, and I jokingly inquired, —

"Are there not a couple of children whom you can bring to occupy these seats?"

"Why, Mr. Clarkson, have you no family?" inquired the squire. This brought the blush to Lotta's cheeks, and the company laughed heartily at my expense.

"Get him a couple of children, Jane," said the squire in a fit of laughter.

Mrs. Bennett rose as if in obedience, and left the room. In less than a minute she returned with — MY MOTHER and FATHER.

CHAPTER XXII.

"JEAN, it is just one year ago to-night since I gave you that glorious surprise at Winthrop. It makes me homesick to think of it," said Lotta, as we sat together one evening in a beautiful parlor in a leading hotel at the capital city of a prosperous Western State.

"Just one year ago this very New-Year's Eve! What a glorious New-Year's Eve it was! I shall never forget it. How the scenes come and go! We shall never all meet again as on that evening. Mother has gone to her rest and reward, and the squire has been laid in the tomb. Your father and my mother in the better world, my father and your mother still lingering in this: has that thought never come to you with significant force?"

"No, Jean: I never thought of it in just that way before," said Lotta meditatively.

"Nor I. It came to me as my mind hurried

retrospectively over the scenes that are forever gone, but which still live in our recollections. Say, Lotta, you often speak of heaven: now, do you think the squire has ever met my mother there?"

"Of course I do. They are probably talking of us to-night."

"And do you think," I continued, "that they can influence, for good or evil, the affairs of this life, which may or may not concern us?"

"O Jean, that is a Romish idea!"

"Then, you don't believe in it?"

"No."

"Simply because it is Romish?"

"No! I don't know why. I was taught not to. Perhaps they can. I do not understand such deep things. It is not for us to know. What do you think, Jean?"

"Oh! I don't know any thing about it. I leave all such matters to you. You are my doctor of divinity."

"Why did you ask me such a question?" inquired Lotta, somewhat puzzled.

"For this reason. If the departed can influence our actions, I was going to ask you whom we should hold responsible for my father's foolish

proposal of marriage to your mother, — the squire, or my dear departed mother? but, as you don't believe in the doctrine, I'll not ask the question."

"Jean, you are positively wicked. How could you indulge such awful thoughts?"

"Well, let us change the subject. Do you know, Lotta, I am in a quandary over this business, and fear that unless something turns up in my favor it will not go through. The Legislature has now been in session nearly a week, and I have had but little encouragement from any of the members."

"Jean, do tell me what that business is. What are you trying to do? I cannot understand it."

"Simply this," I answered: "I have invented or contrived some eighteen hundred blank forms, used in connection with all kinds of public business, such as school registers, contracts with teachers, and blank forms of all kinds for every department of State business. They have all been approved by the superintendent of public instruction, the Attorney-General, and the heads of the several departments to which they belong. I wish to have them authorized by the Legislature, in which case every department will be obliged to use them. I have them all copyrighted; and, can I push the

matter through both Houses, I will have a monopoly of State stationer in which there are two fortunes annually at the grade of prices I have arranged."

Lotta could now grasp my idea. She inquired no further, but left me to my meditations.

It was evident that most of the members with whom I had talked saw the significance of my plan. It was of a private nature; and, as no one would profit by the law but its promoter, it would be difficult to create sufficient interest to consummate my designs.

I had started out in the belief that five thousand dollars would carry the required resolution through both Houses swimmingly; but three days' combat with the leading members taught me that it would probably require ten thousand, and I was not willing to risk so much.

The project would probably yield a hundred thousand a year; but it was an untried experiment, and there was no telling how often I should be tripped. Two thousand dollars had already been spent in getting out samples of the blanks, and securing the required indorsements from chiefs of departments: therefore it would not do now to falter. I resolved to sink eight thousand more; and,

after weighing the whole case to the best of my knowledge, the possibility of success became apparent.

The wholesale stationery-house which had embarked with me in the enterprise would furnish half the amount required, but were to have only one-third of the profits: hence the case still presented some hopeful phases.

Three days later the members began to gather, and once more the lobby of the hotel was crowded. I resumed my work with cautious manipulation, making the acquaintance of some new members, and advancing in the favor of those with whom I had previously met.

There was one thing decidedly against me. Some ten or twelve of the senators and assemblymen had purchased immortalization, at the rate of two hundred and fifty or five hundred dollars a head, in my "Distinguished Americans" two years before. They had outlived the delusion of their vanity, and had come to view the matter in the light of impartial criticism, and were thoroughly ashamed of the whole affair. More than this, they must have come to believe my endeavors to hand their distinguished names down to posterity were insin-

cere. However, I was not to be overcome by this.

When the session opened, I took a prominent Democrat — one of the leaders — into my confidence; we had bargained, and his best energies were thoroughly enlisted; but he gave it as his candid opinion, that my scheme could not be carried through short of twenty thousand dollars.

"The fact is," he said over a bottle of champagne one evening, "we are seldom re-elected, and must make the best we can of a single term. If members could depend on a run of four or five terms, they would be less grasping."

I appreciated his remark, — that is, I felt its force, — but at the same time resolved to let the scheme rest on the merits of ten thousand, or sink.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WE will now look in upon a little group of three men, who were sipping their wine and puffing their Havanas in an elegant apartment at another hotel in the same city.

These men were Col. Briggs of Melville, Gen. Bright of Morrisburg, and Major Brown of a well-known town on the Mississippi, — the president, vice-president, and treasurer of the Melville, Morrisburg, and Mississippi Railroad Company, whose line was now in course of construction.

These shrewd men — all really celebrated for their energy and success in business — had brought previous legislatures to their aid in no small appropriations, on two occasions. This was the third time they had come up to the capital with an axe to grind, and on this occasion it was exceedingly dull.

Their case was not overly hopeful, for several

reasons. The road had been so long under way, and its management so much at variance with every principle of economy, that it had become a question of State politics, and was difficult of control.

It was to overcome such difficulties that these three railroad dignitaries now united their money and skill and energies.

Another appropriation was indispensable, yet the difficulties in the way of securing it were nearly or quite insurmountable. But these men were not altogether without hope. Hear them: —

"General," asked the major, "what is to be done?"

"I am trying to solve it, major. However, something must be done at once," answered Gen. Bright in perplexity.

"I will tell you," interposed Col. Briggs. "We must send the cleverest lobbyist in this country to that legislature with twenty thousand dollars, and ask for an appropriation of five hundred thousand. If he is shrewd enough he will succeed. If not, our case is lost; but this is our only hope."

"I am ready to indorse your opinion, colonel; but where is there a man smart enough for the

task? That, it seems to me, is the question of the hour," said Gen. Bright, indorsing the proposition.

Major Brown filled his glass, and drank heartily. Then replacing his cigar, he took an easy position, and began, smiling:—

"Gentlemen, I know a man who could carry out the colonel's proposition, provided it is within the scope of human possibilities. You too, unless I greatly err, know the same man quite as well as I do. Now tell me, Gen. Bright and Col. Briggs, on the honor of a man, how much did you pay for the publication of your portrait and biography in that book entitled 'Distinguished Americans'?"

There was a pause. The colonel looked down his nose in silence. Gen. Bright satisfied his nervous disposition by refilling his glass.

"Come, gentlemen, we are all in the same boat. Now let us compare tickets," added the major.

"That was a huge farce! I am ready to confess here, over this glass of wine, that never before or since have I made such a fool of myself. I should like to meet that Clarkson, and give him my congratulations," confessed the general.

The three compared tickets as the major sug-

gested, but found no inequality. They had been immortalized at five hundred a head each. There was no laughing one at the other. The circumstances of the case offered no such opportunity; but each felt a general sympathy for the other.

The major persisted that the man who was smart enough to extract fifteen hundred dollars from the Melville, Morrisburg, and Mississippi Railroad, for the biographical immortalization of its three principal officers, was the man to whom he was ready to commit the important trust of securing the appropriation.

"The man you refer to, major, is at the —— House, in this city. His name is so announced in the evening paper," said the colonel with some enthusiasm.

"Then," said Gen. Bright, "I propose that we appoint Major Brown to wait on him to ascertain on what terms we may, if at all, be able to secure his services for the proposed work. I rather approve of the major's idea."

After some further conversation, this course was agreed upon, and the major accepted the charge.

Lotta and I were reading the evening papers in

silence at the hotel, when a bell-boy rapped at the door. I admitted him, and was presented with a neat card containing the words, —

"A. W. BROWN."

"Who can it be, Lotta?"

"No one that I know; probably one of the members who wishes to talk business. I will retire to the sleeping-room, and you can receive him here."

I ordered the boy to show the gentleman up, falling in with Lotta's suggestion, still puzzling in my mind over the name.

"Brown, Brown? Let me see. I have it. He is one of the patrons to my 'Distinguished Americans.' What can he want? Well, we shall see." Thus I questioned myself until the visitor arrived.

"Mr. Clarkson, I believe. My name is" —

"Major Brown! I knew you in a moment from your steel engraving. Take a seat." The ease with which I recognized him was no small surprise.

"You astonish me, Mr. Clarkson: I had no idea you would remember my face."

"Remember your face! My dear sir, you have a remarkable face. Any man who has made the slightest study of faces would require to see your portrait but once to recognize you anywhere."

This gave him an impression of my superiority; and, as it turned out, was just what I wanted to do.

"What brings you West, Mr. Clarkson? Are you making the acquaintance of our legislators at the Capitol?"

"Yes, somewhat. I seem to fall in with them by accident. They are a jolly set of fellows."

"You are travelling for pleasure, I presume, Mr. Clarkson?"

"I make it a point to bring some pleasure out of most every thing I do."

"Are you much acquainted in the West?"

"Well, slightly."

"How do you like our country and people?"

"Well, very well. You have a vast country, inexhaustible resources, and you are a pushing, energetic people."

Thus the major pursued his questions one after another, with a view to learning my business West. However, he was not rewarded for his pains.

"I saw your name in the papers, and took to myself the liberty of calling. Indeed, I am glad to have met you." And with this remark he rose, apparently to leave.

"I thank you very much, major, for your kindness. I am glad you have condescended to show me so much attention. Will you not sit a little longer? Here are some excellent cigars. Take one, and let us smoke together."

I urged my invitation; and the major accepted a cigar, and reseated himself.

"I suppose you are engaged on some new book, Mr. Clarkson?"

"No, major: I am resting, — simply taking a quiet cruise among your Western cities, rather looking for something to turn up. Before I return, I shall investigate some of the many opportunities for investment which your country presents."

"Would you care to engage your services for a short time in this city, Mr. Clarkson, for a particular object?"

"What is to be done, major?"

At this point we entered into each other's confidence. He gave me the history of the Melville, Morrisburg, and Mississippi Railroad, and pointed out their present needs.

I sympathized with him, and emphasized the need of immediate and substantial public aid, de-

fended railroads generally, and noted some incidents illustrative of their great influence for good.

Finally we came to the point. He had confidence in my ability, I in his money. On these lines we were approaching rapidly to each other's heart.

He expected to gain sufficient influence for the passage of his appropriation bill, with about twenty thousand dollars. I figured a little, and manifested a belief that less would accomplish the desired result.

The subject of my compensation came up; and on this point I was silent. He named five thousand dollars on the condition of my success, but made provision for nothing in case of my failure. I drew his attention to this fact; and he assured me that his course was in conformity with a well-known and long-established rule.

I was not cowardly enough to doubt my own success, and agreed to his terms. We made some other definite arrangements, one of which was, that all moneys distributed were to be conveyed by check signed by himself, and made payable to the order of the parties who were to receive it.

I agreed to this, feeling considerably relieved. There could be no doubt as to my integrity, since there would be no opportunity for deception.

The major left, agreeing to visit my rooms daily, in order to keep posted, and to give me the proper instructions.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BROWN had no sooner retired than Lotta came in, greatly excited.

"Why, Jean, what did I hear?"

"You were not listening, were you?"

"Yes, I was. I couldn't help it. The idea of a man presuming to make you such an offer! Why, Jean, you are no man, or you would have ordered him out of the room: I am surprised! He must think you are a rogue like himself! Think of it,—a perfect stranger comes here, proposing to have you do his meanest work!"

"It was rather cool, Lotta."

"And you seem to take it cool."

"Yes: I shall pay him in another way. I feel greatly encouraged since he came: there is no doubt of my success. In less than ten days, Lotta, 'Clarkson's Forms' will be legalized and authorized, Major Brown will get his fingers

badly burned in this matter, or I am greatly mistaken."

I now began a scheme which ended triumphantly. The major gave me his daily instructions, and in that way I was enabled to work to greater advantage.

Most of these Western politicians, like those of the East, were hard drinkers. An average of three or five whiskeys during the day made a good foundation for excessive champagne-drinking during the evening.

It was through this practice of wine-drinking that I could best find a pretext for private interviews.

On one occasion I was introduced to Capt. Thomas, a live, wide-awake, pushing man. He represented a large and wealthy constituency, and exercised a large influence in the House.

After exchanging salutations, I said, —

"Captain, have you leisure to drink a few bottles of champagne with me this evening?"

"I shall be busy until nine, but will be pleased to meet you after that."

"Then come over to Parlor A, ——— House, at nine, and I will have made ready."

The captain came on time, and we opened a bot-

tle of Roederer. He seemed to have a special relish for Roederer, and could smoke two Havanas to my one.

At ten o'clock we had laid aside the conventionalities due among strangers, and settled down to the more familiar customs of old friends, occasionally emphasizing our words with a friendly pelt of the hand on each other's knee.

We had thus reached the stage for business, and I proceeded.

"Captain, are you true blue?"

"True blue!"

"Square?"

"Square!"

"Then, give me your hand!"

We shook hands as when people wish to recognize each other as in the bonds of strictest confidence.

"Captain, I am liberal, free-hearted, and like to return favor for favor. I have an axe to grind at this session: I want your assistance. I wish to lay my plan before you; *and, if you can conscientiously indorse it,*—understand me, captain, I do not wish to insult you or any other gentleman of honor,—if, I say, after you have carefully weighed my proposals, *you can indorse them as a matter of*

principle, I am willing to give you a check for one thousand dollars, as a sort of compensation for such services as you can render."

"That is fair and honorable. Of course I would not sell my vote or my influence; but I see nothing inconsistent in your proposals. What is your project?"

"I want to have 'Clarkson's Forms' adopted."

"Oh! is that it? I have heard something of your plan, and I see nothing inconsistent in it. There is, I think, no reason why I should not lend my influence to your scheme."

"If I may count on you, captain, to the last, the check will be paid over to-morrow."

"You may count on me for that, Mr. Clarkson: I shall take pleasure in rendering you all the assistance I can. There are some eight or ten from my section whose votes I can shape, — or I should say who depend on me for counsel in all such matters. I will attend to these with pleasure."

We closed, in this way, what some people call a political job. It is hard to define whether the fault is most with the lobbyist or the member. Certain it is that both are guilty.

We opened another bottle of champagne, and

confirmed the mutual understanding by a mutual drink. Before we separated, I remarked with affected disinterestedness, —

"Captain, I am told that our friends of the Melville, Morrisburg, and Mississippi Railroad are after another appropriation. Can you support the measure?"

"I must look into the affairs of that road. There is a screw loose somewhere in the management; but it may be we can see our way clear to give them assistance."

"Captain, you ought to encourage railroads on general principles. It is true the management generally squander half the means at their command foolishly; but the money is usually re-distributed among the tax-payers, and in that way I see no evil that can result."

"I am in favor of railroads, Mr. Clarkson; and, indeed, I have, on a former occasion, voted to aid the Melville, Morrisburg, and Mississippi line, and" —

"And don't you think you will do so again?"

"That depends, Mr. Clarkson. I am rather favorable than otherwise; and it may be I can indorse the proposition to grant another appropriation."

"Well, captain, I am authorized to-night to offer you five hundred for your assistance in this matter, provided you can grant it consistently. You see, these fellows are poor, and cannot come forward as of old. Yet they fully appreciate your influence, and count you as good as fifteen in the House; but, captain, they are poor, very poor. They need help."

"Yes: they have had a hard struggle over that project. It was rather premature, and so many difficulties have come up," added the captain, relighting his cigar.

"Captain, let me put the whole matter into one check, and say that you will give these poor fellows a lift. They could have come down handsomer in days gone by, and you must take the will for the deed."

The Captain now becomes very sympathetic. He recounts some of his deeds of philanthropy and self-sacrifice, to which I listen with profound attention.

Finally we open another Roederer, and order broiled chicken on toast, which is brought to our room. At twelve o'clock lunch was over, and we poured over it a benediction of champagne.

The captain lighted another cigar, and remarked, —

"I will support Gen. Bright's application for an additional appropriation, out of sympathy for the enterprise. The general has worked hard in the matter, and deserves our support. There are, perhaps, some reasons why his application should be refused, but we must give him another lift."

"You are right, captain. It would be hard to throw the road aside now. It is for the interests of the whole State that it be completed at the earliest possible day."

At length the captain took my hand in a "good-night;" and I verbally assured him that on the following day I would pass over the check for fifteen hundred, and added, that, as we had been together in this way, I would manage so as to give him the check of some disinterested man, which I could do by exchanging my own for it. He approved, and we separated.

At one o'clock I rapped at the door of my room, but Lotta made no answer. I rapped again, still louder, and yet there was no stir or noise within. Again and again I rapped, with like results, until at length the key turned, but the door was not opened.

This was the signal for an approaching storm. Lotta had retired, after waiting patiently for two hours. She had not closed her eyes, but wished to manifest her disappointment by keeping me about so long at the door, as if asleep.

I entered, and locked the door after me. Then passing into the sleeping-room, I prepared for retiring.

No words were exchanged. Lotta lay against the wall, at the back part of the bed. I reclined on the front, leaving a space of at least three feet between us.

In a few moments, under the influence of the evening's dissipation, I fell asleep.

Lotta, as was her custom after waiting a reasonable time for my confession, and failing to receive it, began to cry. I did not heed her, and she cried still louder.

After half an hour of this performance, she discovered I was asleep. It was no longer any use to cry. In this dilemma she rose, and, throwing a shawl about her shoulders, passed into the parlor, and sat down before the fire.

The noise which she purposely inflicted, dismissed my sleep. Of course I missed Lotta. In

alarm, I followed her to the parlor, and found her in a crying attitude.

I talked to her tenderly, and she cried as one suffering the pangs of grief. Then followed an explanation, an apology, and some pet names.

At three o'clock we retired, perfectly reconciled. I had promised never again to remain out after ten o'clock; she never again to sulk when imperative business kept me from her even beyond that hour.

CHAPTER XXV.

IN a few days the major called, and I gave him an account of my experiences with the captain. I began in this way:—

"Major, I am becoming more hopeful. How many votes do you think Capt. Thomas can carry with him, in case he should throw his utmost influence with you?"

"A good many. He is very influential; and, besides, I should regard his coming over to us as a considerable stroke. We have regarded him as an enemy."

"And well you might have. I wish, major, you had been a mouse in the crack during the conversation we had the other night."

"Was he very bitter?"

"Bitter! You are probably aware how he sometimes indulges in profanity, are you not, major?"

"He does swear wretchedly sometimes," replied Major Brown uneasily.

"Well, he never reached the climax until I brought this Melville, Morrisburg, and Mississippi Railroad scheme to his notice last evening."

"Oh! I knew he was opposed to granting us further aid."

"I should say he was."

"Then, you could do nothing with him?" he asked in surprise.

"I found him a more difficult case than I expected to encounter in the whole battle. But, major, let me tell you that this very day his enthusiasm in favor of an additional appropriation will overreach that of your best friends."

"You astonish me!" exclaimed Major Brown, rising to his feet in amazement. "Will he really work for us?"

"You may depend on him," I answered. "There is no man in the legislature who will do more,—few, indeed, who can do more."

"I had not expected this. It seems to me, Mr. Clarkson, you have surmounted the greatest difficulty."

"I had to come down handsomely, however."

"Of course, of course. How much did you promise,—a thousand?" asked the interested rail road man, greatly agitated.

"He is to have a check to-day for fifteen hundred. I also want five-hundred-dollar checks for Hosman, Biglow, French, Bowman, Brigham, O'Brien, Fitzpatrick, Harrison, McCormick, and Lindsay; and two-hundred-dollar checks for Patterson, Welsh, Lynch, O'Hara, McGinness, McLellan, Rice, Packard, Dyer, White, Harland, and McFadden."

"Do you mean to tell me, Mr. Clarkson, these men are all for us at the amounts you name?" asked the major, thoroughly bewildered.

"I mean just that."

"How could you have gone through the House in so short a time?"

"Our only hope is in pushing the matter through as fast as possible. Should there be any delays, we will have newspaper mouths to stop, and it will require another twenty-thousand-dollar plug for them. You can see, by the names I have given you, that we are all safe so far as the House is concerned. My plan is to have this bill pass that body at once. Before it reaches the Senate, major, I will have that honorable body prepared to receive it. Senators, as a rule, have more principle than members of the House; and I will need the pres-

tige of their support to the bill among those gentlemen."

"I like your plan, Mr. Clarkson; but are you working within your means?" The major was figuring closely.

"Certainly: eight thousand nine hundred for the House, and eleven thousand one hundred for the Senate. I have made the apportionment to the best of my ability."

After further conversation, the major handed me the required checks, and I spent the day distributing them among the members, reminding each, in turn, that I expected a box of Havanas sent around to Parlor C, ——— House, for my benefit.

The noble legislators received their hire with concealed, yet at the same time pronounced, gratitude, and smiled an assent to my ingenious hint for the cigars.

If the reader will multiply my experience with Capt. Thomas by the number of names given above, he will learn two things; viz., first, how lobbying is done, and what it is done for; second, how I succeeded in getting my authorization of the "Clarkson Forms" through the House at the expense of the Melville, Morrisburg, and Mississipp. Railroad company.

One evening, on returning to the hotel, the clerk wanted to know if I had gone into the cigar business. I told him no, and wanted a reason for such an inquiry. He assured me that some ten or fifteen boxes of cigars had been sent in, all for my room.

"These are a reward of merit, such as Sunday-school superintendents distribute to faithful children, only of a different character: keep mum, and I will remember you at the proper time."

"Mum's the word!" he replied. I entered the elevator, and was soon with Lotta.

"Jean, what has happened?"

"Nothing, I hope."

"Here are twelve boxes of cigars," she continued. "The boy persisted, each time, that they were for you; and I was forced to receive them. What does it mean?"

I explained the matter to Lotta. She laughed heartily, and concluded, that, if the modern legislator was a knave and a fool, he was also generous. Then she gave me a sound lecturing, comparing my conduct with sound orthodoxy, much to my shame.

She feared I was not prepared to die, and mani-

for three days. Should the press come down upon us in the mean time, we might suffer defeat. Now, let us divide the remaining one thousand between the two leading dailies. This done, we are sure of victory."

"I quite agree with your suggestion; and no one is better qualified to manage this little affair than yourself. Here are the checks for the senators; and here also are two checks, one for each paper, dividing the thousand equally between them, as you propose. I trust that in one week you will be able to attend a champagne supper with the officers of the road, in Morrisburg, when we shall celebrate together our success."

"I shall be with you on that occasion if possible, major. There is now no doubt of our triumph."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THERE was pleasure in the work of distributing the checks among the honorable senators, not only for the distributer, but also the distinguished gentlemen who received them. I did not fail to mention the cigars, nor did they fail to respond.

The mission among the newspapers also afforded some enjoyment. I was probably the better lobbyist in that quarter. A brief sketch of my experience with one will present both cases, for they were not dissimilar.

I was admitted to the sanctum of the editor-in-chief, and began, —

"Mr. Editor, I have a matter here that I wish written up. I desire you to look it over; and, if you can indorse it conscientiously, I will pay you handsomely."

"What is it?" he inquired.

I explained that it was "Clarkson's Forms," reminded him that the matter had gone through the House, and would come up in the Senate in a day or two.

He looked over the samples I presented, and at once gave them his warmest commendation.

"I can recommend these," he said, "on principle."

This opened the way. I manifested my readiness to hand over three hundred on the spot, provided three columns could be devoted to a description and recommendation of my scheme.

This was agreed upon, and I gave the assistant-editor some points for the article.

Then, closeting myself once more with the chief, I became philanthropic, remarking that Gen. Bright was striving to get another appropriation for his road.

The editor did not believe the bill could be carried through the Senate. I joined him in this sentiment, adding that it might be accomplished with the assistance of his paper.

He was also of opinion that much influence for or against the scheme might emanate from his pen.

I mentioned that recently I had become inter-

ested in the road, and would like to see the bill become a law, and concluded by offering to raise my three hundred to five if the editor would give the road an editorial send-off in the next issue of his paper.

In this, as in all other cases, I based my proposition on the proviso that he could indorse the road and its wants on principle.

We agreed: [illegible]ssed over the check; and on the following day each journal contained three columns of "Clarkson's Forms" and a half column of Melville, Morrisburg, and Mississippi Railroad.

The "Clarkson Forms" bill passed the Senate with a two-thirds majority two days before the Melville, Morrisburg, and Mississippi Railroad appropriation act came up; but I stood by the ship until the last sail should be reefed.

I realized, that, but for the needs of this unfortunate railroad, my own scheme would have failed utterly. Therefore, since the success of my own plans was indebted to the generosity of these men, I determined to watch their interests faithfully.

The appropriation bill reached a third reading, and became the subject of a red-hot discussion, on a Friday: the Senate was to adjourn at six

o'clock, until the following Tuesday. The enemies of the road began a determined skirmish; but the well-paid votaries of our cause outflanked their foes, and at a quarter to six, only fifteen minutes before the hour of adjournment, the bill was concurred in, and the appropriation of five hundred thousand dollars to the Melville, Morrisburg, and Mississippi Railroad became a matter of history.

The general, the colonel, and the major were in town, as also were many friends of the road; and the whole party indulged themselves in a wine supper at a leading hotel the same evening.

The major arranged for my going to Morrisburg to attend a sort of private banquet to be given by the road as a token of appreciation for my services; but I declined the honor, excusing myself on the ground of important engagements which would compel me to leave the city on Saturday.

Learning this, the officers of the road lost no time in preparing for my entertainment on the evening of their success. I agreed to meet them at ten o'clock.

There was just one little difficulty in the way. Lotta did not want me to attend. I explained the whole matter; and, had it not been for the five

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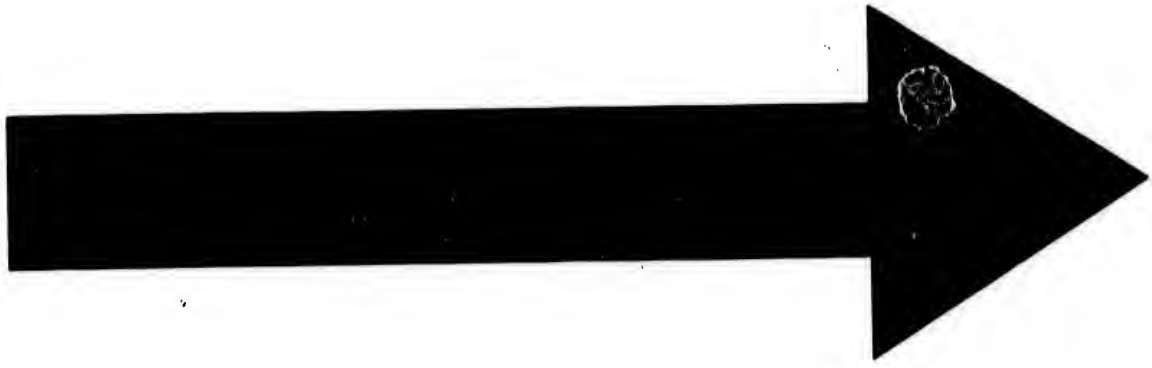

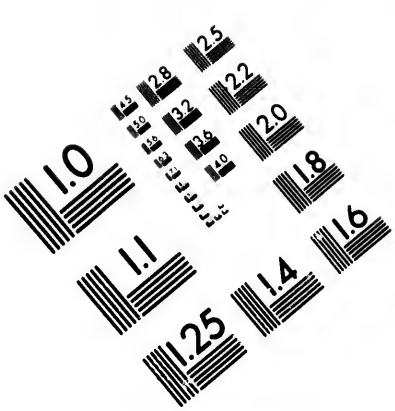

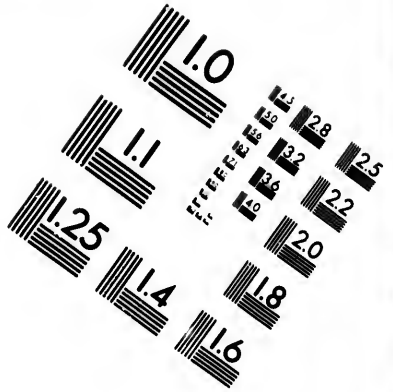

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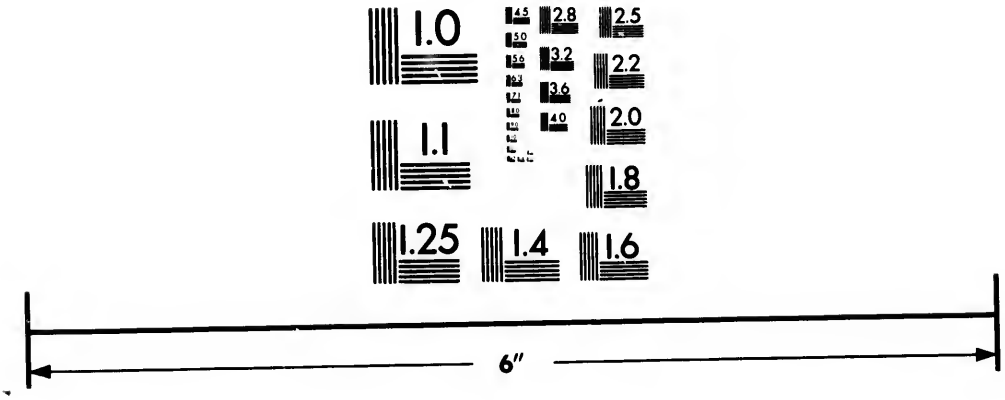

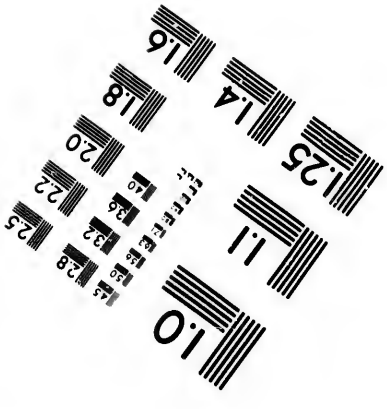

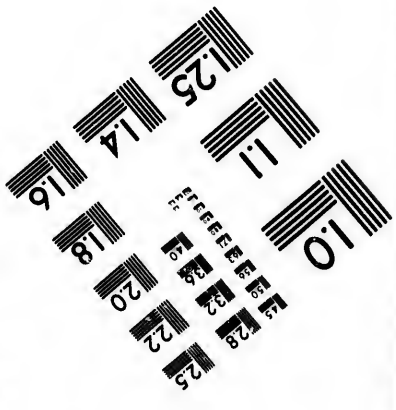

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thousand dollars which I expected to receive on the occasion, her consent would not have been given.

Promising to give her half the money, not to drink any wine, and to be home by twelve o'clock, she reluctantly consented.

The party consisted of some twenty persons, all of whom were fond of champagne, and most of them of cigars.

We drank and talked and smoked until twelve o'clock, when most of the friends retired. At that hour, in company with the three railroad officers, I was conducted to an adjoining room, where we sat down to an elegant luncheon.

When we had refreshed ourselves, the general rose with some formality, and began to clear his throat.

"Gentlemen," he began, "here is to a book called 'Distinguished Americans.' The author is a genius, and his patrons are asses."

We all drank to the sentiment, amid roars of laughter. Then the general, in an easy and outspoken way, confessed his admiration for the scheme, and his distaste for the principle which led him and so many others to become its victims.

He was careful at the same time to enforce the idea that no offence was intended.

Col. Briggs followed with, —

"The Melville, Morrisburg, and Mississippi Railroad, and its benefactor, Mr. Jean Clarkson."

The sentiment was drank heartily, and some curious comments were indulged concerning the relations which I sustained to the road.

Major Brown followed, in a toast to my health, which was enthusiastically drank. Then he presented the draft for five thousand dollars, my reward, according to previous agreement, in a neat little speech, in which he paid me a handsome compliment, and acknowledged himself and his colleagues still my debtors.

We drank all round once more. The trio waited patiently, expecting my reply. This I gave them, saying, —

"Gentlemen, fill your glasses."

They obeyed, and I continued, —

"The Legislature and the Press. The purity of the first is excelled only by the consistency of the last. We recognize in both our country's hope."

They all drank heartily, amid roars of laughter.

CHAPTER XXVII.

I RETURNED from the wine-supper at four o'clock in the morning. Lotta had retired, but awaited my coming with tearful and sleepless eyes.

She would not be comforted: my best endeavors were futile.

"O Jean! Jean! I would rather have a humble home in some secluded country-spot, and live on bread and water, than endure this!"

"What is the matter, Lotta? what have I done?"

"You are going to ruin: I know it! Fascinated by speculation, unholy and unjust, you drown your sense of honor in the accursed wine, and rush madly on!"

"What in the world do you mean, Lotta?" I became impatient under her wholesale denunciations, and took her to task in a tone of self-defence.

I offered her the draft for five thousand dollars, and she cast it from her in frantic abhorrence.

"I despise the wages of your unholy service!"

The draft narrowly escaped the fire, but I rescued it untarnished.

"Jean, you will never be permitted to enjoy this ill-gotten money. Something has told me to-night that there is trouble ahead, and I feel sure we are to meet an unexpected calamity soon."

Lotta had spent the night alone with God and her Bible. The Good Spirit had shown her the true character of my speculations, and given her a forecast of their oncoming reward.

I used my best energies to console her spirit, but to no avail. The morning light sent its first rays into our room, and found her still sobbing with grief, while by her side, buried in sleep superinduced by dissipation, I lay, unconscious of her sorrow.

Partially raising herself, she looked anxiously into my wine-flushed face; then lifting her eyes heavenward, she prayed as only heart of helpless woman can, imploring Him with whom is all power and all grace to save me from the snares into which my strange speculations were rapidly leading me.

There was nothing which she was not ready to yield up to perfect the condition, necessary to secure the answer to her prayer.

"Save him from sin, not in my way, but in thine own way; but save him now! If it be necessary, take from us these ill-gotten gains! Give us a home in poverty and obscurity, — even in want and humiliation, — if only with these thou canst bring him to thyself. I freely give up all! 'tis all I have; I would that it were more! but give me my husband free from sin. Till this be done, I pray forever more!"

Thus pleaded the sorrowing Lotta, as the morning light came gently forth, — the hour in which most great prayers have been greatly answered. Nor prayed she in vain.

A spirit softly whispered, "Thy prayer is answered: fear not; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give *him* the kingdom." Thus relieved, she fell back in patient waiting for the coming of the Lord.

There is no power this side of heaven strong enough to face the prayers of a holy Christian wife: at her command the angels wait in anxious preparation to execute the errands of love and mercy: and these are often consummated through tears, sorrow, affliction, and sometimes death.

The days and weeks and months followed. A

large establishment in a well-known Western city had been fully equipped in every department for printing and binding.

Presses large and small, dry presses, cutting-machines, type, and kindred apparatus, all were in position. A large stock of blank paper reached in huge piles the ceiling of the store-room. Nearly two hundred thousand dollars were thus invested.

Orders had accumulated for "Clarkson's Forms" to the extent of many thousand dollars, and many an anxious inquiry had come protesting our delays.

At length all was in readiness. The wheels began to turn, the cylinders to revolve, the huge knives to raise and fall, when lo! in the midnight hour, a fire, kindled, methinks, in answer to that morning prayer, by the hand of some devoted angel it may be, sent its devouring flames from basement to roof in torrid, melting madness, until type, presses, and their kindred machinery, rolled together in one shapeless, useless mass of ruin.

On the day previous, we had decided as to the amount and the companies for our needed insurance; but the devouring element left us no time wherein to execute the belated decision.

Once more all was gone. The last dollar had

been invested. Nor was this all. Fifty thousand dollars of debt had been incurred by the new firm for money borrowed or materials bought.

"God has done it, Jean."

I made no reply.

"It is all for your good."

I answered nothing.

"He will take from us that which comes by unfair means. The wicked shall not prosper," continued Lotta.

I was dumb, and could answer nothing; almost discouraged, yet not altogether. This was the hardest blow of my life. Notwithstanding all my triumphs, I was now penniless and in debt.

Lotta endeavored to show me the wrong of my money-getting plans; declared that my schemes were unholy, and such as Heaven could not bless.

She used arguments which I had no means of answering, and convinced me that there is no short-cut to wealth unattended by dangers and disasters.

Let every one just starting in life, who reads this little book, learn lessons of wisdom from the mistakes of THAT YOUNG MAN.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

LOTTA'S time had now fully come. She set herself fully at work, in the hope that through her counsel she might give me a proper view of myself. She had never felt satisfied with my moral standing, and had become settled in the belief that my prosperity was not real.

Lotta was a true Christian, a consistent church-member, and a faithful wife. She loved her husband, notwithstanding his faults, and hoped for his final rescue from every besetting mistake, in the face of his wildest and most unscrupulous schemes.

She was not the woman ever to despair. With a tireless patience, she could wait through the long years for the triumph of her cause. With God on her side, she had a majority, and was willing to suffer temporary defeat for the sake of permanent victory.

Few men are able to estimate the value of a

good woman. Few give them credit for the power and talents they possess.

I was brilliant, but Lotta was substantial; I eloquent, she devoted. I talked much, and was active; she thought much, and was quiet. I had knowledge, she wisdom; I tact, she talent.

She did not mourn over my loss, but rather to her it seemed a relief; and I could not understand it. All had been swept away, and we were in debt; yet Lotta appeared happier than she had for years before.

I had been out all day, trying to re-organize my business affairs, but with no satisfactory result. Evening had come, and the world seemed dark and cold. I returned to Lotta, and tried to comfort myself in the thought that she was not disheartened.

"Why are you so happy, Lotta, under our misfortune?" I asked.

"Because it is more honorable not to have, and yet deserve, than to have, and not deserve."

"Why, Lotta, you must have been reading Shakspeare or one of the moral philosophers!"

"Yes, Jean, and for your benefit. It was Shakspeare who wrote, —

'To mourn a mischief that is past and gone,
Is the next way to draw new mischief on.
What cannot be preserved when fortune takes,
Patience her injury a mockery makes.
The robbed that smiles steals something from the thief:
He robs himself that spends a bootless grief.'"

"I wish I could appreciate your good humor, Lotta; but I am sad, half discouraged. I do not understand it."

"Jean, did it never occur to you, that misfortune and misconduct were born twins?"

"What do you mean, Lotta?"

"That your faults are the parent of your woes."

"Why, Lotta, do you pretend to say that I deserve this, that I have earned it?"

"Have you no faults, Jean?"

"Yes, I suppose I have: all have faults, more or less."

"Have you no great faults?"

"No!"

"No?"

"Why, Lotta, what have I done?"

"You shall answer that yourself, Jean. Listen patiently, while I put you to the test. Will you let me?"

"Yes; go on."

"No. 1. *Keep good company or none.* Be honest, and answer, Jean."

"Well — I — well, call it *doubtful.*"

"Yes, Jean, we will call it *doubtful.*"

"No. 2. *Never be idle.* Answer."

"Yes, I'm never idle: all right this time. Go on."

"That is a fact, Jean. It is true, you are never idle. I hope you will measure as well all the way through. Well, No. 3. *Always speak the truth.* Answer."

"*Doubtful.*"

"Why, Jean, do you ever lie?"

"Well, no, — that is, I used to tell those railroad men and legislators some pretty tough stories."

"Then, Jean, is not that a great fault?"

"Well, go on. What's next?"

"No. 4. *Make few promises,* and *live up to your engagements.* Answer."

"Fair to middling. Go on."

"No. 5. *Drink no kind of intoxicating liquors.* Answer, Jean."

"O Lotta! I give it up. Go on."

"No. 6. *Always live within your means.* Answer."

"I pass. Go on, Lotta, go on."

"No. 7. *Make no haste to be rich if you would prosper.* Answer."

"I give that up too. Go on."

"No. 8. *Avoid temptation through fear that you will not be able to withstand it.* Answer."

"O Lord! Give us No. 9."

"Well, No. 9. *Never run in debt unless you see plainly a way to get out again.* Answer."

"Floored! Give us No. 10."

"Well, No. 10. *Be just before you are generous.* Answer."

"I can't. Give me the next number."

"No. 11. *Read some portion of the Bible every day.*"

"Go on, Lotta: it is getting worse and worse."

"Well, No. 12. *Never swear, never deceive.* Answer."

"Hold on, Lotta! give us a rest."

"Very well: what do you think of your measurement, Jean?"

"It's a tight fit: you have drawn it too hard. Say, Lotta, where did you get hold of those twelve ideas?"

"Do you not think me capable of having twelve ideas, Jean?"

"I didn't, honestly; not such as you have just uttered. You're a philosopher."

"And what are you, Jean?"

"I'm busted, ruined in fortune; and, according to your *twelve inches*, I don't measure a foot in"—

"Moral character?"

"Well, Lotta, I suppose that's what you call it. You are always talking about morals, or religion, or something good. Lotta, you are a true, good little woman. Women ought to be good. Men would never love them if they were not."

"Suppose we should reverse your words, Jean, and say *men* ought to be good: women would not love them if they were not."

"Lotta, you are mighty sharp to-night. You must have eaten the philosopher's stone. It is all well enough to talk about morality; but you can't live on it. You see we are penniless; and with us it's a matter of dollars and cents."

"You wrong yourself, Jean. Man is to be rated, not by his hoards of gold, not by the simple or temporary influence which he may for the time exert, but by his unexceptional principles, relative both to character and religion. Take these away, and you take his manship. To be great is to be good; to be good is to be wise."

"You are right, Lotta; and you are both good and wise. I am nobody, nothing. Here you are, with just as much to make you valuable as ever. Here I am: having lost my money, I've lost all. Lotta, you know more than I do."

"Do you believe that, Jean?"

"Yes, I do. I mean, you are wiser than I am."

"Then, if you believe I am wiser than you are, why will you not heed my advice?"

"It seems like getting henpecked to take a woman's advice; but, Lotta, I'll tell you what I'll do. There's a screw loose somewhere. A careful examination of the past has convinced me that there is something wrong. I believe, that, in the long run, the right triumphs, and wrong fails or gets defeated. I have made up my mind to take your advice for one year, as an experiment."

"Will you, Jean? Truly, will you?"

"Yes. I give you my word."

"Think carefully, Jean. Remember that stubborn will. Now think, and then tell me again."

"Yes, Lotta, I will."

"Kiss me on it, Jean. I want some pledge by which I can hold you."

We kissed. And, so far as I was able, I passed

myself over into Lotta's management; for I was thoroughly sick of myself.

"May I begin now, Jean?"

"Yes, but go careful; no fooling."

"All right. It is time to retire. Read a chapter for me in the Bible."

"Oh, pshaw, Lotta! don't go to fooling!"

"Fooling? Do you call reading the Bible fooling?"

"No, but — come. I am sleepy; let us retire."

"Then you are going to break your promise on the very start?"

"No, I won't;" and I took the Bible from her hand, and opened it, feeling very foolish, and began to read. The chapter I hit on explained the difference between the house built upon a rock, and that built upon the sand. Lotta tried to apply the lesson, and I thought it was not altogether inappropriate.

"Now, Jean, let us say our prayers. I have had to pray alone these ten years, and I don't propose to do it any more."

"Lotta, if you carry this thing too far, I will throw up the contract, and give it up. There is no use making a fool of yourself and me too."

"Oh! then you think it foolish to pray, Jean?"

"No, it is all right to pray; but there is a time and a place for every thing."

"It seems like a good place right here, and the time could not be more appropriate. Come, Jean, you may say it all over to yourself, and no one will know a word of it but the Lord."

CHAPTER XXIX.

TIME rolled steadily on. For one year and more Lotta had had her own way in nearly every thing. In a few instances my rebellious nature would not submit, but in each case the consequent unrest spoke eloquently in her favor.

I had forsaken all kinds of business entirely, and had accepted a position as librarian in a well-known Western State institution. The salary was two thousand dollars a year; but with this income, and with Lotta's management, we could save about twenty dollars a week.

It was a year of resignation, of trial, of self-sacrifice, of humiliation. My nature was strong, and, lashed into a foam by onsweeping temptations, its yearning billows ran mountain high; but the firm hand of Lotta was sufficient to hold the helm. We braved the tempest through many storms, fought many battles, and won many victories, that the world knew not of.

Settled in our quiet, humble home, I had much to endure, much to resist, to overcome. The tempter was often an intruding guest. There were hours when I could see no real good in restraint; but the cloud would pass, and the sunshine of peace and humble joy reveal the merit of Lotta's advice.

I struggled on. One after another, I put my faults under my feet. From smoking four times a day, I came down to twice, finally once, and then gave it up altogether. Trivial as this may seem, it was one of the hardest struggles I had to endure; and had it not been for Lotta's wise management, in leading me step by step, I should never have graduated out of the evil.

In one bold stroke, I threw all kinds of wine and liquors overboard. This was less difficult with me than would have been the case with others, yet it was by no means easy. There were times when Satan, incarnated in the alluring glass, came surrounded by honorable associations, in the reception or at the party; and on more than one occasion I had to look into Lotta's face for my latitude and longitude. There were, with me, times of honest doubt as to what was right and wrong; with Lotta, never. I often found her as hard a master as the

idea of submitting at all to be governed by the advice of a woman.

This latter feeling, however, was the most insurmountable difficulty. "A man who cannot govern himself is not a man!" would often rise in irresistible fury, and manifest itself in disobedience of the most benevolent restraint; but beneath the mild yet powerful sway of Lotta's persuasive, winning arguments, it would sink again into remorse and defeat.

What my greatest difficulty was, it may be, is your greatest fault, — that of being unable to control myself, and refusing to acknowledge it. Few people are willing to admit the need of outside power to the accomplishment of self-control: yet until they come to this admission they cannot hope to inaugurate any degree of self-government.

The greatest temptation, the one most difficult of defeat, came in the shape of opportunities to embark in speculation and business. On one occasion I received the following letter: —

—— 187–

JEAN CLARKSON, ESQ.

Dear Sir, — Your name has been mentioned to me in the strictest confidence by Major Brown, of the Melville,

Morrisburg, and Mississippi Railroad, as the person whom we should secure to attend the ensuing Congress in behalf of our road. We will afford you an opportunity to make a large amount; and, if disengaged, we would like to hear from you at once.

Very respectfully,
W. P. F. DODGE.

At first I resolved to break away from Lotta's restraint, and go to Washington in behalf of Dodge's dodge; and, no doubt, would have done so, had an opportunity presented itself for carrying out the resolution without her knowledge.

At length, armed with many ingenious arguments, I laid the whole matter before Lotta, and sought her consent.

"Why, Jean, we have laid up nearly a thousand dollars the past year, and have had all we needed. Why race after money? Our quiet little home, with hosts of friends, and plenty to supply our wants, is far to be set above the excitements of city life."

Thus Lotta persuaded and wooed until I was led to send the following reply to the letter received: —

—— Library, ——187-.

W. P. F. Dodge, Esq.

Dear Sir,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of——; and in reply I most respectfully decline the offer you make.

I have the honor to be, sir,

Your most obedient servant,

Jean Clarkson.

In like manner were crushed many a fair temptation. Through each battle my little general led me to final victory. She would not compromise with wrong, and in her strength I dared to do right.

"Lotta," I said one day, "I don't like this kind of life. I would rather not live than to live out the principles of another. I must be myself, whatever that is: I cannot be another. I must vindicate my individuality; and hereafter you must not treat me as if I were not able to manage my own affairs."

"O Jean! I never did that. I can prove to you, this very day, that you are a man of your word; and that is worth feeling proud of. You can make a promise; but, better yet, you can keep it."

"What do you mean, Lotta?"

"I mean that one year ago you promised to take

my advice for one year, and you have kept your promise like a man. I think more of you for that than any thing you have ever done. It is the greatest triumph of your life."

Lotta continued, "One year ago you put the government into my hands. It was only for one year: to-day I yield it up to you. I have done the best I could. The only reward I ask is that you will acknowledge that I have discharged the trust faithfully, devotedly, loyally, in accordance with my obligations. You, Jean, are the constituency. By limitation the power goes back into your hands. It is true I am a candidate for re-election, but I will rest my claim on your good sense and on the merits of my record. Vote, Jean!"

"Lotta, consider yourself re-elected for another term of one year; and I will inaugurate your second administration with a kiss.".

There was a power in Lotta's logic which touched my heart. Had any other person on the earth dared to treat me with half the presumption, blows would have followed words in quick succession.

How true it is that a wife may be the queen of her home, the ruler of her husband! But this queenship does not come of force. The homage

paid it is not compelled. It is a divine queenship, but it does not come by inheritance. A woman may have a right to rule in her own home, but she can never exercise it by force. A king may have a right to rule over his subjects, but he cannot long possess his throne against their will. Christ was born a king, but the additional kingship which he won by his wonderful life and sacrificial death is far brighter.

In such matters as these Lotta was a philosopher. In the wisdom of her plans she never objected to any thing, or set up her opinions or wishes in direct opposition to mine. She never opposed, — always persuaded; never complained when her wishes were unheeded, but sympathized when the opposite course brought disaster. Such a creature would have won obedience from the hardest and most wilful of natures. She conquered mine.

CHAPTER XXX.

I PULLED through another year under Lotta's direction; but long before it expired, her restraints were not required. I had exchanged my librarianship for a different calling, and entered a sphere of life down from which I could look upon the speculations of the past with thankfulness to Lotta that she had ever won me from them.

I had come into an experience, which, added to the scenes that made up the active years of my life, qualified me for the position of counsellor to all young men; and I determined, having already travelled too far in the wrong direction, to lift my voice and wield my pen in quiet but earnest endeavors for the benefit of young men everywhere.

To me a young man at the age of eighteen or twenty was an interesting object. In his boasting language I could hear the wail of coming defeat, in a deep but profound tone, far below the exulting

strains of imaginary triumph. I could measure his talents, weigh his words, estimate his character, and predict his future, as only one having my experiences could.

My heart ached for the smart young men. Of all grades of young men, the brilliant are in the most danger. Few if any fail to meet early disaster; and, of all people, this class rest most uneasily under defeat.

His danger lies in his smartness, in his brilliancy; and his danger to others lies in the same things. The young lady of the day turns from the quiet, honest, non-prodigal young man, with a toss of her queenly head, for she can see nothing in him worthy of admiration; while, on the other hand, she pays a willing homage at the shrine of prodigal genius.

Hence the smart young man is a snare to all young ladies. He first attracts, then charms, and finally too often deceives them; and, if not intentionally, by turning out to be only half the man his surface tact represented him to be.

He is a snare to himself, and universally falls a victim to his smartness. Petted by his friends, falsely esteemed by hosts of deluded admirers, he

fills with conceit, under the weight of which he sinks into disgrace.

The smart young man is constantly making mistakes. Heedless of conservative advice, regardless of past experience, he rushes on in visionary plannings after impracticable objects, only to meet the most cruel failures.

If he turns to business pursuits, he will overreach and fall in the first fluctuation of the market, and he is just the man whom debt will most persecute.

If he starts out into professional life, he will lean over some precipice of adventure, until, losing his balance, he falls headlong, to be dashed and torn upon the solid rocks below. Put him where you will, and he is constantly over-reaching, overdoing himself.

And yet, after all, this young man — this very smart young man — if he can only subject his intellectual zeal and emotional strength to such a benevolent restraint as will keep his actions in harmony with even the most radical possibilities, can and will do more to distinguish his name by deeds of philanthropy, and enterprises for public weal, than any other.

Starting out in life as he does, with both the elements of success and defeat within him, and with the forces of good and evil all around him, this smart young man is an interesting object.

Should he fail in securing a knowledge of himself, and, above all, in maintaining self-government, his bark will founder upon the reefs of extravagance, in the shoals of conceit, with the first tempest of adversity.

The conservative, quiet young man will scarcely ever reach the heights of glory or eminence to which the smart young man, properly governed, may attain; but his success, in the long-run, will be the greatest. Instead of tact, he has talent. He may have but little genius, but he will generally possess much wisdom. He may not shine brightly, but he will wear long, and be useful. He, too, is an interesting object.

Unpopular with the young ladies, diffident in manifesting his preferences, it will frequently happen that the girl he loves will go off and marry that smart young man without knowing that she was loved by him at all. His prodigal brother outstrips him at every turn; and, so far as he can estimate by first experiences, it pays to have a reputa-

tion for recklessness. He, too, tries to be reckless like his brother or his companion; but it's not in him, and he makes a failure of it. He is non-prodigal by nature, conservative in his intellections, conservative in his emotions. Therefore he cannot shine.

His smart brother is married at twenty, perhaps at nineteen: he narrowly escapes being an old bachelor, and marries at thirty or thirty-five. Everybody knew his smart brother's betrothed, and the appointed nuptial day, long before his marriage; and all the people came to the wedding, in full dress, with handsome presents. But in his case it was different. He appeared to shun the lady to whom he was engaged; and, if any one did suspect such an understanding between them, it was on that account. The marriage-day came, and the invitations were a surprise to all to whom they were sent. But few came. There was no great display of dress, or parade of presents. No: the non-prodigal cannot shine, only the smart young man.

The quiet young man starts in a small way, and progresses by degrees, and becomes rich or great, and no one realizes it. The smart young man

starts out with a rush and a display, and gets a reputation for what he does not possess, and a glory for what he does not accomplish.

If the Church succeeds in making a Christian of the smart young man, he will be sure to come into the ark with a shout of glory, and his conversion will attract great attention in the whole neighborhood, as though his soul were worth half a dozen of the quiet sort. The minister and deacons take early knowledge of his gifts and graces, and ten chances to one if they do not pet him into the ministry. If this does not occur, or if his *début* into the Church is not greeted by some such demonstration, the smart young man will more than likely return to the "beggarly elements of the world."

When the plain, quiet, conservative young man joins hands with the people of God, he is not so apt to fix upon the exact day and hour and minute when, and upon the exact church and pew where, he was converted. His start is in the midst of doubts and uncertainties, but he runs well, and at the age of fifty you find him one of the deacons; while his smart brother is either a Talmage or a Moody, at the head of some metropolitan congre-

gation or revival movement, or gone back to the world altogether.

It is, however, pretty hard to tell which is the more valuable to the world, the conservative, quiet, or the smart, brilliant, young man. Certain it is, the world needs them both; but of the two classes the former has much the best of this life. The latter may have glory; but the former has peace, which is much better. The former is a danger to himself and everybody else, unless properly governed. The latter is harmless, and if he benefits no one largely he will injure no one.

The great inventions of the world, and the great discoveries of all ages, may probably, for the most part, be traceable to the smart young man; so also may we thank him for our great ships, railroads, bridges, telegraph-lines, canals, cities, and public improvements. He has done much for the world.

Noah must have been one of the smart young men of his day, as none other could have embraced so radical a faith: hence we are indebted to his peculiar make-up for the preservation of our race.

John the Baptist must have been the smart young man of his day, as the peculiar character of his radical preaching plainly shows: hence we are

indebted to him for the first tidings of salvation, — nay, more, for the identification of the Saviour among men.

In Luther and Knox and Calvin and Wesley we find similar characteristics, as also in thousands of others who have blessed the world by their deeds of radicalism; but all of these men first gained a knowledge of themselves, and then rose to the dignity of benevolent self-restraint to which accomplishment their greatness is directly traceable.

The smart young man is the mast and the sail; his quiet, plain, conservative brother is the hull; both are necessary to complete the bark. But sad indeed will be the fate of the ship, if, when the raging tempests blow, the sail is not reefed by the restraining hand of the experienced mariner.

So also do the plain, unassuming, conservative young men form the grand base, substratum, or foundation of society, while the whole social and political fabric is impelled forward by the outspreading wings of radicalism; but woe to the whole structure, if when the winds of disaster blow, and the seas of adversity roll, the benevolent hand of restraint is not up lifted by the former to guide the efforts of the latter!

Lotta was the foundation, the hull, and the helm; I the mast and the sail. Until I could submit to the restraint of her wise counsels, we were often cast away. It was through this wilful disobedience that I came to disaster in the printing and stationery business.

But at length, and "it is better late than never," I gained a knowledge of myself, and, humiliating though it falsely seemed, yielded to my better judgment and the wise counsels of one who loved me better than I loved my life.

With this change came the first step towards real success; and step by step the brave, patient, heroic little woman led me on, and on, and on, through many a painful resignation, and to victory over many a hard temptation, through the clouds and the midnight of unrest, out into the clear, bright sunshine of peace and joy and usefulness.

I had lived half a life to no purpose, as the reader has already seen. The other half is being filled up with the faithful execution of noble resolves, for the benefit of those around me, to the glory of God, and to my own inexpressible satisfaction. Such is the story of

THAT YOUNG MAN.

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