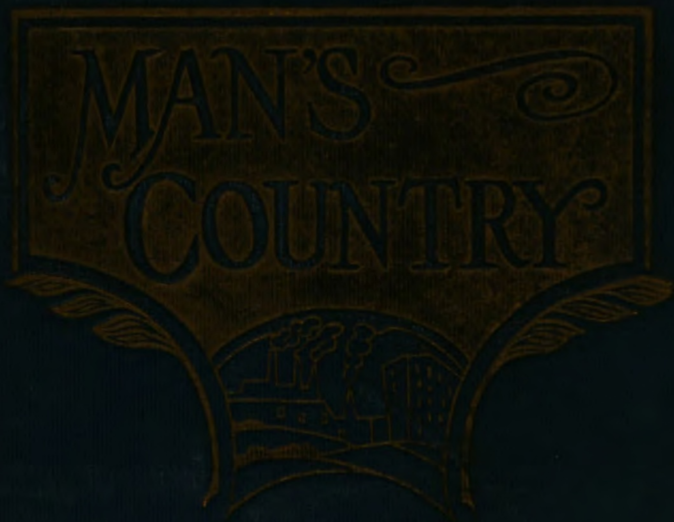

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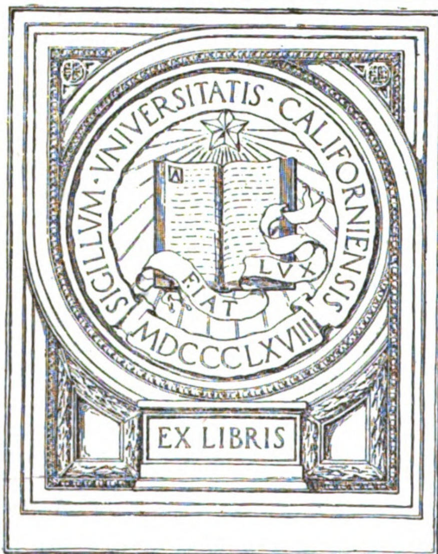

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"WHAT IS BLAKELY DOING HERE?" THE BRIDE ASKED ANXIOUSLY.

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MAN'S COUNTRY

The story of a great love, of which business was jealous

By

Peter Clark
MACFARLANE
Author of "Held to Answer," etc.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHARLES D. MITCHELL

Cosmopolitan Book Corporation

NEW YORK **1923**

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THERE is a great country, largely inhabited by men, to which most women, particularly wives and mothers, are strangers. Every morning husbands and sons go down to it; there they spend their days, their energy, and, in proportion as they succeed, their love. Its name is Business: it is a despotism, demanding submission to its laws, but it is a delectable country to those in its favor, luring them on and on. There are kings there, and princes—and this is the story of one of the princes who grew up to be a king—the history of a great love of which Business was jealous.

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MAN'S COUNTRY

CHAPTER I

DID."

"Didn't."

"A wagon without any horse! It rolled right by me—lickety split."

"You're a darn liar!"

Bim! In the thickening dusk of an April night in the middle nineties, on a suburban street of the city of Detroit, two half-grown brothers leaped upon each other and fought, scratching, kicking, pommeling.

"George-e-e-e-ee! . . . Jimmee-e-e--ee! . . . Sup-per-r-r-r."

Borne upon the breath of a mother who was blissfully unaware what emprise engaged her sons at the moment, these words, with affectionate appeal in every syllable, floated out of a small cottage, from the side-door and one front window of which light was streaming.

At the gladsome call the battlers gave off the conflict abruptly and raced each other for the wash-basin which stood on a bench in the lean-

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to at the back of the house. They were at the age when the call of the stomach claimed precedence over every other demand of lusty nature.

Malachi Judson, head of this house, father of these boys, husband of that slender woman whose tired, proud voice had summoned them to supper, was a hard-working man of stalwart frame, a quick temper, and a slow mind. His face, bearded below the jaw line, was cavernous above, and the responsibilities of life had carved anxious wrinkles deep in his bony brow. With scarce a glimpse at his sons when they sidled, belated and slightly shame-faced, to the table, Malachi was bowed above his food, eating as a man is entitled to eat who has laid bricks all day.

When the last morsel of corned beef to which he had served himself so liberally was gone from his plate, Malachi, after an audible and gustatory draught from his tea-cup, straightened himself and gazed about him with an air of renewed interest in the world. For the first time he noticed that the faces of his sons bore fresh scratches, sundry discolorations, and certain swellings of obviously recent origin.

"Fighting again? You two brothers! Hain't you ashamed of yourselves?" demanded Malachi.

"But, Pa!" and Jim, who was the older brother, although but little the larger—a lad

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with narrow shoulders, thin features, and squirrel teeth—began to make his defense. "George said he saw a wagon out in the road tonight, running along without any horse."

"I did, all right," insisted George, who while younger was the more robust and the more pleasing to look upon had he not just then spoiled the fairness of his countenance by darting daggers of resentment and accusation at his tattling brother. "It nearly run over me."

Malachi Judson's close-set orbs of vision grew stern, and his thin lips tightened. Above all things Malachi hated a liar, and this younger son of his was known to be afflicted with a super-imagination.

"What's that?" he scorned. "A wagon running along without a horse?"

"Yes, sir," replied George, leaning forward, eyes still more aglow, tones frankly excited. "I saw it!"

"You—young—*imp!*" Malachi denounced, the words catapulting forth with an augmented emphasis on each successive one. "What do you mean—setting there and lying to me?"

"I'm not lying, Papa! Honest, I saw it!" avowed George, eyes literally blazing now, but cheeks blanched and voice manifesting a due and proper sense of alarm at his father's dangerous incredulity.

Malachi's face reddened. "You are, you im-

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pudent puppy!" he accused and, with a deft swing of his trowel hand, reached across the corner of the table and cuffed young George sharply upon the ear, whereat tears started in the luminous, brown, excited eyes.

"Did, too, see it!" persisted the boy, whimpering. "What you want to hit me for—just because I told you the truth!"

"Oh, Pa!" the mother importuned, eyes full of pain, sitting helpless but lifting appealing hands. "Don't hurt him, Mal!"

"I'm not hurting him, Mary!" protested Malachi, breathing quickly. "I'm learning him not to lie—the darn impudent cub."

Malachi sighed virtuously, took up the evening paper and sank once more into his chair, where he made an honest effort at composing his family and himself once more in peace. But ostentatious snifflings from the lounge made peace not easy to be composed. After enduring for a time, though with irritable twitchings of the shoulders, these unpleasant lachrymose reminders of the scene which had just been enacted, Malachi gave up in disgust. With an angry crackling of his paper he tossed it from him and arose. The charm of a restful evening in his own home, which the day's work had undoubtedly earned him, had been spoiled. With a manner theatrically deliberate and a frown that forbade questioning, he rolled down his

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sleeves and buttoned them at the wrists; he drew on his coat, picked up his hat, and started for the door.

Yet the parting glance bestowed upon his wife was not ill-natured or unkind. She was merely asked by lifted brows and a facial gesture to comprehend that his own house had been made unbearable to him and that he sought peace where peace could be found—at Kelley's. The front door closed upon him with a snap.

"I did, too, see a wagon without a horse!" blustered the blubbering boy, the minute that snap had echoed into the sitting-room. "I did, too. Give me a licking, will you—and then get me another one from Pa, *will you?*" he snarled and turned ferociously upon his brother.

"There, there, George," soothed the mother with a caressing hand upon the boy's shoulder. "Don't talk about it any more, that's a good boy. It's too unpleasant. Let's not think about it any more even." Fair-haired and gentle-faced, with large, fond eyes and a patient, wistful mouth, the hurt mother threw an arm about each boy and drew them lovingly to her. "You must have thought you saw it, George, of course, or you wouldn't have said so," she comforted tactfully.

"I know I saw it," declared George and stamped impatiently.

"Darn that boy!" soliloquized Malachi, fum-

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ing as he strode out of the yard. "I've got to learn him not to lie."

The street whereon his modest home was situated was within the city's limits, but unimproved and little better than a country road. The path to Kelley's being better on the other side of this road, Malachi started to cross it diagonally, picking his way over the spongy, oozy surface. As he angled thus, he became aware of a strange, mechanical rattle and an odd, persistent snorting in the darkness, but as the sounds were unaccompanied by hoof-beats, he judged them to be something far away and was busy with his thoughts till suddenly the strange noises were in his ears and he felt himself assailed from behind—violently, abruptly, undignifiedly—assailed and overturned, so that he went rolling, coasting, and skidding clear to a ditch that would some day be a gutter, while the rattle and the snort passed on, attaching itself to something totally invisible in the inky blackness.

But human voices, high-pitched and soaring distantly above the rattle and the snort, came back out of the void.

"I think we struck something!" shouted one voice.

"Only a chuck-hole. This road is rotten!" volleyed another.

"Gosh darn ye!" bellowed Malachi, furious, from his ditch, his hand closing on mud as he

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clenched his fist and shook it. "Gosh darn ye! What are ye, anyhow?"

Rising painfully, to the accompaniment of language he would not have wished his sons to hear, with mind engulfed in a fog of mist and amazement, Malachi gave up the intended visit to Kelley's and turned back toward his own house.

"Why, Pa! What's happened to you?" exclaimed Mrs. Judson in astonishment and alarm, as she viewed her husband's rueful countenance and mud-plastered body.

"Fell down!" said Malachi grumpily, and did not meet the gaze of his son, George, when that forgiving youth, all sympathy, rushed to his father's assistance and began currying him with that identical newspaper to whose perusal he had succeeded when the former flung it irately from him. A bathroom being an unknown luxury in the homes of such as Malachi in that period, the kitchen and the kitchen sink were given over to his purpose, while the boys quickened the fire in the cookstove to dry his clothes against the morrow.

Eventually the Judson family went to bed in average good humor with itself. But Malachi had a problem on his mind as he laid his stubbled cheek on the pillow.

"I wonder what the devil hit me?" he kept

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saying to himself throughout the night, but the night brought no answer.

Morning, however, was more communicative. At the breakfast table he got his answer. It was while he gulped his coffee and glanced the *Free Press* through. Upon an inside page his eyes encountered that which made him growl and start.

"Well, I be darned," he muttered with incredulous wonder. "I do be darned."

"What is it, pop?" demanded George pertly. But the father's manner became at once confused and forbidding. He vouchsafed no reply, but folding the paper as for further perusal at noontime, pushed it down into his side coat-pocket.

The day was Saturday.

"Jim, you come with me today," his father directed. "There's a lot of broken scantlings and waste lumber Mulligan said I could have if I'd haul it away. Some of it will be good for kindling, and some for tomato and bean stakes, and some of it for fencing and chicken coops. It'll take you all day to gather it. George, you stay and help your mother."

George could not repress a grin and a gloating wink at his brother. Helping mother was a snap. Jim, on the contrary, would have to put in a day of grinding toil, get splinters in his hands, perhaps a nail in his sensitive flesh, and generally punish his lazy body.

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But when Mr. Judson stepped out of his front door, he noted with surprise that the west wind, blowing all night, had dried the street surface completely, and reasoned that if it had dried the street completely, it would have dried the garden tolerably. To make proof of this he thrust a spading fork into the soil and brought up a huge lump of it. "George," he decided, "you spade up the cabbage patch today, and we'll be getting it in shape for the peas and beans."

He said this quite casually, as if spading up the erstwhile cabbage patch did not represent at least three hours of back-breaking toil to a lad of George's size. It was the elder brother who beamed more happily now and the younger whose smile was sickly.

Now it chanced that as Malachi had lifted that single experimental forkful of earth, the folded newspaper fell unnoticed from his pocket and lay amid the damp weeds unregarded.

George spaded one row across with fine vigor, then paused to reflect upon the hardness of toil in general and the magnitude of this task in particular. He decided to divide it into two parts —one hour's work in the morning and two in the afternoon, when he should have grown more accustomed to such herculean labors and when he would naturally be the stronger with increasing age and another meal inside him. He decided

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further that it would not hurt the ground to dry a little more, and therefore to the morning's portion of the task should be dedicated the last hour before noon.

So blithely he left the fork standing upright in the damp earth and went indoors to help mother. Helping mother consisted in yawning around, offering to do things he knew he could not do, and dawdling lazily through such tasks of sweeping and kitchen-floor scrubbing as were well within his powers. Casually and openly he visited the cooky jar twice, and secretly some half a dozen times more. Then he lay for one hour flat upon his stomach, reading "Golden Days." As the kitchen clock struck eleven, he regarded it malignantly.

"Coises on you!" he muttered in mock tragic humor and dragged himself out into the garden.

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CHAPTER II

THE sun was shining clear. Some birds were twittering in the plum tree, white with blossoms. Pigeons drummed and cooed in the Flannigan cote, some hundred yards away. The leaves of the maple had enlarged since George was out here two hours before. Everything was astir and a-rustle. The air was warm. The earth was steaming. Seeds were popping in it. Everything—everything seemed imbued with energy save only George Judson.

Lazily he put his hand to the fork, and listlessly he pried its tines to and fro in the soil. He had placed one foot on it to thrust it downward, when his eyes fell upon the folded newspaper and recognized it. He took it up, not so much that he recalled that something in its pages had made his father start and frown, not so much as that unfolding it with delicious deliberation and gazing at each succeeding page long and curiously offered valid excuse for further postponement of entry upon his distasteful task. An illustration, the picture of a cheap-looking wagon, yet with something unmistakably odd about it, had caught his eye, when a sound from the roadside path just over the garden fence

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drew his attention. He turned and leaned on the fence, transfixed by a vision that was altogether startling.

A rare and glorified equipage, the like of which he had hitherto beheld only in highly-colored picture-books, was coming down the path. A pair of goats, horns polished, fleeces white and immaculate, were drawing a blue wagon, blue as a bluebird's wing, and proudly perched on the little seat, holding silken rope lines in one hand and a tiny whip in the other, sat a young miss of maybe ten years. She wore a red velvet dress, and a red velvet hat shaped like a lampshade. A cascade of golden curls stole out from under the hat and fell away down the little miss's regally upright back.

The goats advanced in leisurely fashion, putting down their feet like sticks, quite after the manner of goats, but daintily as high-bred animals conscious of their estate. The wheels rolled slowly with an aristocratic crunching as they passed over the uneven surfaces of the dirt path. The lady, like a queen in a circus parade—that was the figure that occurred to the boy—gazed proudly around her from side to side. In the course of those regal circlings it was inevitable that her glance should fall upon young George Judson, standing there in the cabbage patch, newspaper fallen from his fingers, leaning on the fence to look at her.

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"Hullo, boy!" she smiled, unabashed, serene.

George was petrified. "Hullo!" he said.

And she, having greeted him as a human feature on the landscape, regarded him no further, for when her eyes swept next around the circle of her vision, the cart had moved on so far that he was no longer in range.

Once the spectacle was gone by, George affected to scoff. "Where'd that come from now?" he jested. "Runaway, I'll bet, from some of those big houses down on the avenue. Bet she don't know where she is. Bet she don't know where she's going. Bet they're out looking for her right now's what I bet."

But though his utterances affected scorn, in his heart of hearts George Judson was profoundly touched and softened by the vision of a beauty more tender and appealing than any his gaze had ever rested upon. He felt himself all at once a man and knew that in reality he had looked on really satisfying and enthralling female charm for the first time.

Leaving the paper where it had fallen, George leaned over the fence and marked where the horns of the goats jerked rhythmically up and down, with the red velvet dress stirring gently in the breeze. The queenly poise of the head, with its gradual rotation from side to side, was still the same.

George's mouth was open. Speculative awe

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held him motionless. His eye never shifted its objective till the last wheel of the blue wagon had disappeared around the corner into that open pasture where the city might be said entirely to cease and the country definitely to begin. Slowly, like one recovering consciousness and memory, the boy turned toward his spade and his newspaper, but before he got to either, a piercing scream had reached his ears—from down the road and round the corner.

George leaped the fence and darted toward the cries. On rounding the corner, a truly piteous spectacle met his alarmed but valorous gaze. Flannigan's brindled goat, the monster! a depraved and bewhiskered old patriarch of no graces and no uses that any one could discover, was attacking the white goats of the little red queen, and with consequences the more disastrous to her majesty because, when a goat attacks, he does not, as the comic supplements portray, double up like a ball of springs and launch himself with lowered head. As a fact of biology, your butting goat elevates himself high upon his hind legs, stiffens himself like a ramrod from horn to heel, then falls like a leaning tower toward the object of his attack, forehead set to smite.

So Flannigan's outlawed billy reared and fell upon the goats of the queen, and so her white steeds reared to meet the attack and fell forward

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against Flannigan's goat. In consequence the blue wagon of the red queen was going through a series of billowing motions, the front wheels now upon the ground and now in the air, to the necessary disturbance of the peace and dignity of her majesty, who, screaming stridently, but commanding loftily and clinging stoutly, lost her balance just after George rounded the corner, and went rolling backward out upon the dried grass of the pasture.

With true maidenly modesty the little queen thought first of inevitably disarranged skirts and composed them quickly over a pair of legs that appeared to George to be mostly knees, and was sitting up and crying: "Stop him! Stop him! Oh, do please stop him! The horrid, smelly thing!" as her rescuer came dashing up. Gallantry and discretion prompted him to assist the little lady to her feet lest she be trampled upon, but embarrassment and his natural passion for a fight led him to leave majesty to help itself up, and to charge between the battling and embattled animals.

"Ouch!" grunted George. "Dad burn you! Plague take you! Butt me, will you?" and he tried to kick in three directions at once, with only two feet to kick with, one of which must necessarily be upon the ground at least a portion of the time.

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"Oo! Oo!" screamed the little queen, wringing her hands.

George's squirming hand now came in contact with the goat whip upon which its owner in her excitement had lost her grip. Using the handle for a weapon of offense, the boy fell upon Flannigan's goat, selecting the nose as the principal point of attack, and speedily put the old rascal in retreat. But he retired stubbornly and turned at a distance of a dozen paces, stamping, flaunting his whiskers, and shaking his horns menacingly.

"Oh! Oh! You have saved me!" cried the little queen. "Thank you! Thank you!" And with admirable resumption of composure, she came right up and took him by the hand, just as a grown-up lady might have done.

George knew this was very queenly and elegant, yet it embarrassed him. He did not know how to respond in kind. He felt all at once that his own social training must have been highly deficient, since it had not equipped him for an emergency like this. "Your britchin' is busted!" he announced concernedly.

"Is it?" gasped the little queen and clawed at herself in dismay. "Why, no,—no, there's nothing broken, I think."

But George was bending over the traces. "Stand still, will you?" he half-ordered and half-entreated—then, holding the still perturbed

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steeds with one hand, he produced from pocket after pocket, by various physical contortions, an amazing quantity of material—bits of string, bits of wire, a leather shoelace, a one-bladed knife, and some small nails. With these he managed temporary repairs upon the broken breeching, while the little queen gazed with an absorbed expression and tears drying upon her face. She accepted all this service quite as if she were well accustomed to being waited on.

"You're an awfully nice boy," she decided, climbing into the blue wagon and taking the reins, while her radiant eyes looked up so frankly direct into George's that the youngster blushed.

"I'll keep this old skeezicks away from you," he assured, and menaced the brindled creature which waited vindictively in the offing.

"You came from that way," reminded George. "You want to go home, don't you?"

She turned her glorious equipage about, the team being entirely tractable once more till Flannigan's goat began to follow, uttering malicious bleats, when they showed signs of stampede. Thereat the velvet queen manifested alarm, and George, to reassure her, acted as escort clear past the cabbage patch and away down to Kelley's corner, the Flannigan animal obstinately following.

"Now you can go on," said George. "I'll

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drive old Bill clear back home and put him in the pen."

But when the little girl gazed down the vast length of Jefferson Avenue and considered its huge open spaces that by and by lost themselves in a distance in which horses and wagons and carriages seemed all scrambled up together, a fearsomeness possessed her small soul, and her blue eyes, full of wistful appeal, wavered a moment, then fixed themselves upon the face of the boy.

"I—I'm afraid to go home, I guess," she confessed, as if disappointed in herself. "I've had such a scare, you know. I probably must be nervous."

As if suddenly bereft and alone in the world, she thrust out one of the milk-white hands and took hold of George's wrist—a grasp that was timid and yet confiding—a touch that was altogether different from that sturdy clasp of gratitude with which she had taken his hand before.

Inwardly, in the boy soul of him, George Judson jumped as if a hot iron had been laid upon him, but in his flesh he did not move nor start. He only felt that warm, soft touch like velvet, and it melted every purpose in his breast to one purpose—the purpose to guard the little queen from harm—to do more, to be henceforth and forever in all things her obedient slave.

"I'll go home with you!" he announced

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stoutly, disregarding loftily unpleasant memories of an unspaded cabbage patch.

"Oo, that will be lovely—just like a prince in a fairy-tale," cried the little girl, clapping her hands. "You rescue me and then you escort me home."

She looked up at him with the most amazing, sun-like radiance in those jeweled eyes of hers, and somehow all the shyness went out of George. Proud as a knight with his lady, he walked along by her side. Imagination played; possibilities dawned; he was ostentatiously attentive. He must frequently stoop to examine the harness, and he must keep his glance skirting wide horizons for possible massing attacks of enemies—Indians or cannibals or whole herds of goats or lions or elephants or whatever danger it was that might threaten this beauteous young lady who put herself so trustfully under his protection.

From time to time her coquettish glance searched the boy's face from under coy lashes, and at intervals her warmest, most confiding smile was vouchsafed, thrilling him to the depths. But besides being a confiding smile it was a tantalizing, bantering smile. George Judson's was a bold nature. He would not be bantered. And he had made up his mind. Why should he not speak it?

"Some day I'll marry you," he announced frankly.

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"You?" The little red queen drew herself up, yet she was flattered at the compliment. She gave him, after the first look of hauteur, an even more confiding smile. "I like you, boy, you're awfully nice," and she reached out and took his hand once more as sympathetically breaking the force of what she had to communicate. "But—the man who marries girls like me must be rich. Vurry—vurry rich—or they must do something wonderful, boy—something that makes everybody talk about them. Then we marry them."

"I'm going to be rich and do something wonderful too," declared George Judson with a set of his sturdy shoulders. He had made up his mind to that at once.

For some time the houses past which the goat cart trundled had been getting bigger, and now there appeared in the near distance one red stone house which had a whole quarter of a block to itself. It was huge and solid looking, with a white portico in front and wide lawns unfenced and noble trees all around.

"That's where I live—there!" she announced impressively.

"Gosh!" breathed George, deeply awed. "It's a grand home, isn't it?"

But, at the moment, this home showed signs of being much less at ease within itself than its heavy and self-satisfied architecture might suggest. The vast front door was open. A baldish

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man, wearing a solemn coat and a worried expression, and a young woman with a lace cap on her head stood out under the portico, staring up and down the four streets, while before a palatial stable at one side two men hurriedly backed horses into a surrey. For a full minute the little queen appeared to enjoy with a certain approving complacency all these signs of stir and anxiety. And then:

"I guess you better go back now, boy," she suggested, still gazing forward with an abstracted air. "They may be 'sturbed about me being gone so long. They might blame you."

"Let 'em!" George challenged, and would have stood forth boldly.

The blue eyes gave him a grateful look, but the queenly head was shaken in a decisive negative. "I couldn't let you," she whispered with a smile of delightful intimacy, "but I like you, and I'll come driving out your way again sometime. Thank you ever and ever so much. You're a real nice boy—really."

The goats, still putting their feet down like sticks, rolled the little blue wagon forward into the purview of the maid and the butler on the porch. There were immediate manifestations. The butler shouted something, and both he and the maid rushed forward. The grooms stood gazing, then turned the horses back toward their stalls. At the same time a woman bounded down

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the front steps, raced across the lawn, and seized upon the driver of the goats, kissing her frantically. But the little queen, after enduring a moment in the maternal embrace, struggled free, and from the first step leading upward to the grand portico turned loyal eyes back to the land of adventure whence she had come and toward him who had adventured with her. Sighting that face peering from behind the tree, she lifted an arm high, then dipped the four fingers of its hand up and down rapidly in comradely farewell.

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CHAPTER III

IT did not matter to George that the Goat Girl had not asked his name. It mattered only that he had seen a great vision and by it been lifted at least one whole cubit toward manhood's fullest stature. It was a long two miles back to the cabbage patch, but miles had now no power to weary him. Big and purposeful, he strode along. Tardy though he was, recreant though he had been, he did not sidle guilty-faced into the kitchen, but stalked in boldly and sat down to his belated dinner. When his mother chided him, he bore it silently, containing himself with noble patience.

Only one thing bade speculation pause. The Goat Girl had warned he must be rich. His pride approved of that as well. It demanded that he must be upon the same plane with her before he could offer himself; and he must do something worth while besides. That was again the instinct of his pride—always to heap the measure full and overflowing. But how was he to get rich as quickly almost as manhood should be reached, for his was an ardent love that would brook no long delay?

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The spading fork was in his hands once more as he asked himself this question, but there was the paper under foot to remind him of an unfulfilled duty toward the world's news. Turning the pages he came upon that which had caught his eyes before—nothing more, after all, than a cut of a light spring wagon. But the odd look about it. Why, it had neither shafts, nor tongue, nor whiffletrees, and underneath its body, but atop the running gear, was a junk-like collection of coils and goitres, wens and tuberosities, wires and shafts, chains, gears, and cogs, suggesting some kind of engine. Beneath the cut was the legend, "Horseless Carriage."

George got it on the instant. "A wagon without a horse," he cried aloud. "That's what I said. That's what I said. Ma! Ma! A wagon without a horse!"

He went dashing into the house to thrust the picture under his mother's eyes and to read over her shoulder:

"Our fellow citizen, Charles B. King, has been one of the first men in America to build a gasoline-propelled vehicle, and the very first to operate one on the streets of Detroit. In the past two weeks several runs of the new vehicle have been made on suburban roads, mostly in the night-time to escape the eyes of the curious."

"Now, will you believe me?" exulted the boy, capering before his mother.

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"Sakes alive!" declared Mrs. Judson. "What won't they do next?"

"I told you I saw it!" he crowed, pointing to the picture. "It nearly ran over me."

He took the paper out with him again into the garden where, expressing rather the emotions of excitement than the energy of industry, he spaded a row clear across the garden. But with that supreme effort, industry paused content. He beamed once more at the picture of the horseless carriage. It held a strange fascination for him. He felt the elation of a discoverer. He read and reread the news account. It was all too brief.

"Wisht I could see it," he murmured and stared at the nest of machinery. "That's what makes it go, a-course. I wonder what it would be like to ride in it!" At the thought his eyes danced, his voice grew excited, and then a sudden insanity possessed him. "By jinks, I'm a-going to see it!" he announced and kicked down his standing spade. "I'm a-going to see it today. I'll tell Mr. King he nearly run over me, and I'll ask him if I can have a ride in it." The boy's face was shining with the light of a great eagerness. "This old cabbage patch can go to the dickens!" he declared with a defiant look around him.

With a furtive glance over his shoulder at his unsuspecting mother bent over a basket of darn-

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ing, he stole in for cap and coat, then, with the newspaper containing the picture and the address of Charlie King's shop tightly in his hand, George climbed over the fence and started on a dogged run for the main trunk artery east and west through the city of Detroit. How George Judson, reasonably conscientious and with a healthy awe of his father's disciplinary hand, could so have abandoned duty was something that neither his fascination by the idea of the self-propelled vehicle nor his hatred of the smell of a horse could account for. He did it—that was all; and at about half after two o'clock that day stood before King's red factory building. At various places on the ground floor forges flamed, lathes turned, and men hammered at anvils or before benches, making a terrible racket and seeming to exult in it; but back in the far corner of this ground floor was a vacant space. Into this George's eyes eventually roved, then peered, then stared, while a lump formed in his throat and a singular thrill went downward to his heels. There stood the shaftless vehicle of the newspaper cut.

To the boy's complete surprise no gaping crowd surrounded it—in his fascinated judgment an almost irreverent neglect, an indifference that was near to blasphemy; but true enough it was that few in that day took any particular interest in the marvel of the horseless

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vehicle. Indeed, it was not regarded as a marvel, but as a joke—a huge, preposterous farce.

As George gazed there was only one man near the vehicle, a person in all-enveloping overalls and a greasy mechanic's cap, who squatted, prying into the intricacies of the machinery, tapping, peering, and occasionally squirting oil. But presently he touched something that seemed to make the machinery blow up in noise, to the accompaniment of clouds of smoke and fumes of most vile odor. It would have taken a steadier nerve than George's to stand his ground against this sudden manifestation of a hurricane in the midriff of an old spring wagon. Instinctively the lad leaped backward toward the door, but when he saw the workmen not even glancing up from forge and lathe, he turned again to look with startled eyes. The wagon was still there, but vibrating with some whirling mechanical force, and the man in overalls still knelt beside it solicitously.

When Charles B. King straightened his back, wiping his hands with a piece of cotton waste and wearing an air of having concluded operations upon his patient for that day, he noticed the boy for the first time—a lad in his first long pants probably, with a reefer jacket, belt unbuttoned, and a cap perched abstractedly on the back of his head. His hands were thrust deep

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in his pockets, and his face was all absorption, all reverential interest. And Charles B. King in those days could not help but be grateful as a dog to any creature who manifested interest in his machine. Besides, he was fond of boys.

"Hullo, Bub!" he said, and smiled—a confidence-creating smile. "Want to see her go?"

"You bet!" declared George with gusto, yet found himself backing off as the inventor laid his hand upon the seat, but there was something so utterly engaging in Mr. King's twinkling eye as he noticed this rearward movement, that the boy confessed his timidity openly. "I'm kind of 'fraid of her, I guess!" he laughed.

Mr. King laughed also. "So am I, Bub!" he declared. "You never know what kind of a stunt she is going to pull next. Hop into her and let's see what she does this time."

Though fearful, George was not lacking in decision. "I'll chance her," he said and swung into the seat on one side as Mr. King climbed in upon the other.

Gravely the inventor manipulated the steering apparatus to set his front wheels toward the driveway—gravely, as if starting this soulless mechanism were a doubtful, nay, even a dangerous operation. Next he manipulated a lever and toyed with some pedals, after which he waited —solemnly, apprehensively almost, for something to happen. Nothing did happen, whereat

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a puzzled look crept over his face. He thrust the lever forward, then back, then wabbled it experimentally, apparently considering what to do next, when . . . Whoosh! . . . The wagon started—with a clatter in every joint—but backward! It leaped backward so suddenly that George all but went over the dashboard.

Rearward in a dizzy circle spun the car, aiming carefully for a spot on the back wall of the factory and accelerating speed with every movement. The driver meanwhile was frantically pulling and hauling at levers and dancing on various pedals. With the wheels all but striking the brick wall they stopped—stopped as suddenly as they had started; and Mr. King, breathing quickly, perspiring profusely, turned, noted the distance of six inches between his precious vehicle and destruction for it, for his guest, and for himself; then sighed with relief and wiped his sleeve across a young but care-lined brow.

"You stopped her just in time," complimented George with an admiring glance at such a coolheaded driver.

Mr. King laughed mirthlessly. "I don't think I stopped her," he confessed, glancing down warily at his feet and carefully refraining from touching any part of the mechanism of control with his hands. "I—don't know why she stopped," he confessed. "I don't know why she

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shouldn't start again and take us through the wall at any moment."

After some reflection, as being very careful what he did, Mr. King bent over and opened a crude electric switch, whereat the engine ceased to fume and sputter, wheezed once, and passed slowly out of life.

"Guess there won't be any ride today, Bub," he said apologetically. "The gears aren't working right. I've got to take her insides out and tinker her some more."

"S'all right. I had a fine ride," assured George considerately, estimating with his eye the twenty feet the little wagon had darted crab-like. "Say, Mr. King!" he announced with brightening countenance, "when I'm grown up, I'm going to build horseless wagons myself and make a lot of money selling 'em." Then the boyish face brightened still more, and the voice grew exceedingly eager. "Do—do you want to hire a boy right now—a boy that's getting to be a man pretty fast—and let him go to work to help you and learn how to build horseless wagons himself?"

There was such a simple earnestness about this request that it smothered the laugh in Charlie King's throat. "You?" he exclaimed, and took a reinventory of the lad's face, the broad forehead, the large, light-filled, brown eyes, the expression of wistful appeal.

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"I—I've got to be pretty well off by the time I'm a man," confided George, "—for certain reasons," with a look and a tone as if two men should understand each other in some particulars without going too much into details.

"But—school, boy!" protested Mr. King, warningly. "You've got to be at school till you're grown up. You don't build horseless carriages with your hands, you know. You build them with your brains. You don't build a house or a locomotive or anything worth while first with your hands."

This was a devastating thought. George Judson considered doubtfully. He was in a hurry with life. Could he waste much more time on school?

"In your brains?" asked George, still mulling over the thought.

"Yes," said the inventor with laconic emphasis. "And then you build 'em on paper. Last of all you come here to a shop and build 'em of steel and wood." While he said this, Mr. King was unbuttoning those all-shrouding and grease-spotted blue denims and peeling them off.

"It's too late to start work on the gears today," the inventor explained. "Besides, I'm tired and disappointed, and a little peeved at the old girl." He hung his overalls and cap on a peg and was taking down from sister pegs a coat and a derby hat.

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"Would you like to see where I built this wagon first?" he inquired, contemplating George with a thoughtful air.

"Would I!" blurted George Judson.

"Come along; I'll show you," announced Mr. King cheerfully.

Outside the shop stood a team of handsome horses attached to a smart, uncovered buggy.

"Hop in!" commanded his new friend, and George did so.

After a spanking trot through the business district of the city the team swerved in and stopped on Woodward Avenue as at a familiar curb. George saw in front of him a largish house with largish grounds, and yet somehow very different from the Goat Girl's house with which he instantly compared it. This King house seemed older, and it and its surroundings were not "arranged." The yard was packed full of trees and shrubs and flower-beds and walks with a fountain and a little pool.

And when he got into the house it was just like the yard, stuffed full of every kind of beautiful and attractive thing. Two models of full-rigged ships met the boy's eye as he entered the hall, black and shiny hulls, white and gleaming canvas, new yellow ropes.

"I made 'em," boasted Mr. King proudly, enormously delighted with the subtle compliment of George's awed silence before them.

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But besides ships that Mr. King had made, there were pictures in the house that he had painted—gorgeous, oily canvasses. George turned and looked the inventor all over again with an entirely new respect.

"Wisht I could see you paint one," murmured the boy, but even as he said it, his roving eye was lost in other wonders.

At length they came to a desk-like table with a raised slope to part of it. On this were draughting materials, pencils, erasers, rules, compasses, and strange, cloth-like paper, semi-transparent—things the boy's fingers itched to get hold of at once.

"Here's where I borned her!" announced Mr. King with an exaggerated gesture and his most beaming smile.

"Gosh!" sighed the boy, and stood gazing. "Gosh! There—there's a lot more to it than I thought," he confided after a time—"to building horseless wagons."

Charlie King nodded approvingly. The ships, the pictures, the armor, the butterflies—nothing had knocked it out of the kid's head. He wanted to build horseless wagons, and he was yet a boy. But, at that, the horseless wagon was far younger than he. He was half-grown. The horseless wagon was just born.

"Tell you, George," suggested King confidentially and encouragingly. "The horseless

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wagon is yet in its infancy. There's got to be a whole lot of things found out about it yet. Men will have to tinker and tinker for some years yet before the horseless wagon comes into its own and begins to drive other kinds of locomotion off the highways, but it's coming. To bring it is a job for mechanics. Old heads—on young shoulders maybe—but old heads will make the horseless carriage practicable. In the meantime, you stick to school! Father prosperous?"

"Bricklayer, sir; but he's educated some, and he believes in education. He says he's going to keep us boys in school if it's the last thing he does."

"Wise father," approved Charlie King with one of his emphatic nods. "You get through high school at least—make college if you can. When you've done your best, come to me. I'll have the biggest horseless carriage factory in the world then—perhaps the only one—and there'll be a job in it for you."

"I take the job," said George seriously, as if it were right there before him now.

It was wonderful how assuring this prospect was to George Judson; how it appeared to offer the grand solution of all his problems and to provide a field of cloth of gold across which he could gallop straight into the perfect favor of his Velvet Queen. And besides this, there was

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something in Mr. King's manner, in his smile, to make any program seem attractive.

"I guess I've got to go home now," announced George. "Thank you a lot!" He offered in farewell a hand that had been sanctified by the touch of the Velvet Queen, but upon which was still some of the smell of Flannigan's goat and some of the grime of the cabbage patch. "I'll stick to school like you say, and I'll come back for that job. Be sure you hold it open for me."

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CHAPTER IV

GEORGE, hurrying homeward, knew well that he had banked away another huge purpose in his life, yet as he sped on his way his new purpose seemed somehow to belong entirely to tomorrow. Today became once more ominously imminent. For two hours or more he had forgotten time. Now he was painfully conscious of it. The cabbage patch bulked like a mountain; it stretched like a moral morass in which he saw himself struggling.

An unexplained fear forced him to hurry. Something made him sick with a vague, ill-defined unescapable apprehension of impending calamity. He attributed this to mere guilty conscience.

Six o'clock and his father would be at home—grim and uncompromising when he found the spading but half-completed. To save time, the lad angled across lots, darting behind Flannigan's diminutive barn and making a dash for the Judson garden. But as he gained the fence on one side of it, something halted him.

There was an unusual stir around that loved little home. He thought he heard a cry of

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lamentation—a short, sharp, half-smothered wail of anguish. He saw Mrs. Flannigan and another neighbor woman run in hastily; he saw a second woman rush out of the house, hood her bare head in the end of an apron the other end of which was still fastened about the waist, and run frantically up the road. That woman was George's mother. He could not understand it, but a whir of alarm went off in his breast.

A procession of men was coming toward him —a little, short procession of workingmen, with their dinner-pails in their unoccupied hands, and between them they were carrying something. His mother had reached them now and was stumbling along beside that something, wiping her eyes with the apron and exclaiming hysterically. But George Judson still sat upon the fence, frozen stiff, for he saw that the thing the men were carrying was his father. They bore him crudely—but tenderly—upon a door with scantlings thrust underneath, and with his own coat rolled up for a pillow under his head.

All at once George Judson found his legs again. He leaped from the fence and flew to meet the procession.

"Ma! Oh, Ma!" he cried. "Pa! Pa!"

But his mother did not answer. Nobody answered. The solemn-faced bearers marched steadily, but slowly, forward. Eventually, however, the arm of the distracted mother swept out

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and enfolded George without seeing him. This occurred just at the moment when his father's groan of agony assured the boy he was not half an orphan.

Thereafter for a time detached sights and sounds registered themselves vividly but confusedly on the boy's consciousness. There were the feet of the solemn-faced bearers treading lightly and yet their foot-falls booming in his sensitive ears like thunder as they walked across the sitting-room floor and eased their heavy burden down on the bed. There was the crowd about the door. There were his father's groans; there was the wringing of his mother's hands, and the moaning and lamenting of the neighbor women, and the low-voiced, awed tones of the workingmen. There was rushing to get hot cloths for compresses, there was the smell of liniment and arnica; there was the doctor's buggy coming to the door, and by and by another doctor and another buggy. There were George and Jim running wildly past Kelley's to the nearest drug store and back on succeeding frantic errands; and there was his father, calmer now, but with face white and set, a kind of grim courage on it that George always knew was in his father.

"Dad!" he half-sobbed, and, creeping close, crouched to kiss the rough hand that hung over the edge of the bed—it was the trowel hand, the

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hand that had smitten him upon the ear but yesterday.

Malachi Judson needed not to have the doctor's verdict told to him. He knew within himself; hence this expression now of gray despair.

George, awed by this look growing upon his father's face, slipped out to join his mother bowed in the semi-darkness and facing all at once a world of semi-darkness. The doctors had gone away. Mrs. Flannigan watched the patient within.

"Ma!" the boy asked, crowding close and whispering, while he buried his face in her ginghamed arm. "What's—what's the matter with Pa?"

The boy knew, of course, that his father had fallen from the scaffold on which he worked; he had heard the men reciting that; but this question probed deeper. He felt a shudder shake the wiry and toil-hardened, but to him always soft and tender, frame against which he leaned.

"It's—it's Pa's back!" answered the mother, her voice a broken whisper, her words vague and indefinite as if she somehow lessened the calamity by not defining it.

But the boy's mind was intent to know the worst—the worst that all this gloom on every

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face portended. "Is it—is it *broke?*" he appealed.

The mother's answer was a sob, deep and far-reaching as if her lungs would confess all her grief in a single expiration.

Something that felt like an icy dagger pierced the heart of George Judson. A broken back! A dog of his had once sustained a broken back. He knew the utter helplessness, the utter hopelessness, of a creature with a broken back. Yet of his father such a calamity seemed unbelievable. His father had been always to him the embodiment of towering strength. And now was he as helpless as the puppy? Would he never fight the battle of bread for them again? Never chastise his sons again? George felt that he could take a thrashing every day of his adolescent life if only his father could be strong enough to give it to him.

His mother rose heavily and went inside, tears conquered, tear-blotches unconquerable. She stooped and kissed her husband's pain-dewed brow.

"Courage, Mary, old girl!" he whispered. "We got to bear it."

"I know," she said, simply, mournfully, with eloquent resignation in every line of her face and pose.

The two boys were still crouching in separate loneliness upon the porch, with just the width

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of the mother's body between them, for Jim had been there upon the other side of her, leaning against her, too.

"Jim," said George in a husky whisper. "Where's the lantern? I'm going to spade that cabbage patch tonight, so that when father looks out in the morning, he'll see it's done."

"I'll get Flannigan's spade and help you," proposed Jim with an astounding generosity of spirit.

George responded with like generosity. "Shucks, no, Jim! You've worked hard all day. I'm going to do it—alone."

But they did it together, and two tired brothers crept into their common bed to sleep the sleep of utter weariness, sweetened by a sense of fraternal love that was new to them.

A few days later came the inevitable council over ways and means. It was conceded that the family savings would pay the doctors and leave a small nest-egg against the proverbial rainy day, but this must not be impaired or drawn upon for daily sustenance.

Jim seemed not to pay attention and sighted out the open door with his slingshot. George's face wore a stubborn cast, although his heart was beating quickly.

"I can take in washing and get some orders for rag rugs," proposed the mother hopefully, and then she rested her pleading, expectant

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glance upon her sons, own brothers and yet so different. "You boys will have to quit school and go to work," she sighed.

"I'm willing," said Jim with an alacrity almost suspicious yet having a grateful sound to the ears of his parents.

"I'm not!" declared the younger boy stubbornly, with what seemed the first jarring note of selfishness that had been struck since an untoward accident had sweetened the unity of the home life. Hearing it, the bewhiskered face upon the pillow, whitening on cheeks and forehead under its coat of weathered tan, shifted abruptly, and the quick, close-set eyes of gray slanted their piercing, pain-shot beams upon the face of this youngest child who had spoken his rebellion with such studied resolution as if he had been a man. His mother's lip quivered, and her startled, hurt eyes also reproached him.

"Son!" she chided.

"Oh, I'll help, mother," assured George with a worried look. "I'll help, Dad. I'll dig up as many dollars for the house every month as Jim will; only I won't quit school. I'll get a paper route to carry in the morning; I'll get another for the afternoon; I'll work Saturdays. I'll find ways to earn money and to earn enough, but *I won't quit school."*

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CHAPTER V

SOME years slipped along, and a miracle happened to the world. Concerned with that miracle was Milton Morris. He was a man of fifty, with an open but rather serious countenance, with broad brow, with recessed, crow's-footed eyes.

Mr. Morris sat in his shirt-sleeves at a flat desk that was large, substantial, and scarred with much usage. It was littered with correspondence, with drawings and much small mechanical junk. The room in which the desk was located, besides some office furniture, was also cumbered with cogs, wheels, pieces of shafting, and parts of gas engines with half-exposed workings. This cluttered office was situated on the ground floor of a rangy, two-story structure of brick and corrugated iron in Franklin Street on a lot reaching back toward the Detroit River. Across the top of this building was a sign in cut-out letters against a screen of wire, somewhat loppy under the impact of winds and years, but which still lifted to the world the words:

MILTON MORRIS—GAS ENGINES

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But underneath the center of this legend had been added by means of a wooden sign, in black letters painted on a ground of white, the single word:

"AUTOMOBILES."

The automobile was the miracle which had now happened to the world. When Charlie King and George Judson shook hands that day, there was no such thing—only groping experiments with a horseless carriage. Now the carriage had got the name "automobile"—over which people stumbled somewhat—but it had it; and its commercial manufacture had begun in several American cities. One of these was this same city of Detroit, where a progressive citizen, R. E. Olds by name, astounded those of his fellow-townsmen who took note of such things by the manufacture and sale of four hundred and eighteen automobiles in a single year.

Stories were immediately rife that Olds had made an amazing profit. Scores of men rushed into the manufacture of the new vehicle—some men of ideas, some men of energy, some men of money, all men with dreams of large and glittering profits.

But Milton Morris was different from all these inventors and enthusiasts and promoters. They were young men; he was matured. He had a slow, solid business in gas engines, but it

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never grew large because he was more interested in building machines than in selling them. It was because he was a *builder* that he added automobiles at all. An automobile was several times more complicated than a gas engine; it challenged his building instinct. The result was a little spawn of automobiles, each an almost individual product—a more costly car, but a better car, than most of its early rivals in that city.

But because he was not a salesman, these better cars stood neglected on his floors, and because they stood so neglected Milton Morris sat at his desk and frowned. Yet it was perfectly characteristic that while he frowned, what his mind worked at was not a problem in salesmanship, but an idea half sketched out before him, an idea for taking the controls for his car off the dashboard and running them up through the center of the steering shaft, which would therefore have to be made hollow.

Peering over steel-framed glasses with peculiar flat tops constructed to make peering over easy, he became aware of a young man in a blue serge suit and a straw hat, slightly over the medium height, with dark but luminous eyes, an olive skin, an arching chest, sturdy shoulders, and a combined air of solidity, energy, and smiling aggression about him. Along with buoyant youthfulness, the stranger displayed an

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odd commingling of mannish gravity and earnestness, which challenged closer observation.

"I am George Judson," announced the visitor, quietly, but with the subtle, though perhaps unintended intimation that it was something to be George Judson. At the same time the young man smiled yet more broadly, thereby revealing rows of even, white, strong teeth.

But Mr. Morris did not wish to be sold anything this afternoon. "What can I do for you, Mr. Judson?" he asked, a trifle brusquely.

Now Mr. Morris, without knowing it of course, had got his question all wrong. He should have inquired, "What can you do for *me,* Mr. Judson?"

The George Judson standing here was himself a sort of miracle. Comparing him with that straddling adolescent who had gawped at Mr. King's horseless carriage, this young man represented as much the magic of evolution as the transmutation of "a wagon without a horse" into an automobile.

To believe in this miracle one turns back to that day of dreams shattered by a father's broken back and the stubborn resolve of a boy to realize his dreams in spite of obstacles.

It was from that hour that the boy's old-time, happy-go-lucky ways began to fall from him like the tattered pieces of a frayed and failing garment. He straightened his small back under

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responsibilities, preparing to keep the bond of words which he had given. Yet the ensuing two years proved very hard on the stricken family, mostly because the elder brother, Jim, failed it so completely.

But fortunately, as Jim brought home less and less, George Judson brought home more and more. This was possible because, every day when the afternoon paper route was carried, he went on the street with papers under his arm to sell, and the spring of 1898 was a great year for a newsboy. Cuba was a daily source of sensations. At length the *Maine* was blown up, and swiftly the scare-heads of war became thrilling facts.

George sold out edition after edition. He read the news, of course, and felt a great pride in his country. In his boyish heart he longed to have been storming up San Juan Hill with the Colonel of the Rough Riders, but the regret he felt over an involuntary absence from those stirring scenes of battle was compensated in a measure by the joy and pride he felt in going home each night to his mother with pockets jingling full of nickels, dimes, and quarters. On the 4th of July, 1898, the events of that day being big in news value, he put another boy on to carry his route for him and took the whole afternoon for salesmanship. He made double the usual amount of money and got the first glimpse of a

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new business idea. From that day he never carried another afternoon route. He sublet the job and established himself on a Jefferson Avenue corner.

To maintain himself here, he had sometimes to fight. In business matters his brain was keen. His temper was quick as a flash. His fists were quicker. And yet he was no brawler—no bull-dozer. He was fair—fair to the smaller boys, whereat they rallied around him and bought their papers through him. He gave them their rights, but he fought tenaciously against the older fellows for his rights. Presently he had a little stand from behind which he handled his papers. The stand enlarged. He added a few magazines, and then a few more. The stand became a hole in the wall, and he added a whole line of magazines.

Then one day George tried an experiment. He employed a broken-down Civil War veteran, ambitionless but faithful and honest, to keep the stand open all day while the boy was himself in school. This was an enlarging glimpse of that idea which had come to him when he farmed out his afternoon paper route. While he studied, an old man and a six-foot wooden shelf with a two-dollar cotton awning over it made him as much money as he had made in the three after-school hours in which he had been accustomed to prosecute his business so energetically, and

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George was greatly excited by the possibilities revealed. He explained the principle to his brother Jim, now eighteen, sly, furtive, over-sophisticated, but still his brother, for whom George continued to hope the best, even against his better judgment. He emphasized this belief by setting Jim up in another stand, the duplicate of the first, and located two blocks distant on Griswold Street. But Jim absconded at the end of the first week with some seventy-two dollars of the little news-stand's funds. For George to lose a dime in these days was like losing a drop of heart's blood, but he gritted his teeth and never told his father and mother why it was that Jim did not come home at all now, or, indeed, that he had departed from the city.

Yet this final defection of his brother was a discouraging blow to struggling youth. It hurt George while it hardened him. His life was now all strain and struggle anyway; up betimes each morning to carry his paper route, then came next an hour on the news-stand, at the end of which he set old Nick Cross going for the day and made hasty strides to school and the lessons that he somehow found time to con half-way at least. In the after-school hours there was no play for him. He hurried to the news-stand once more to take up that keen chase for nickels, dimes, pennies that continued till seven or later in the evening. Arrived at home he was accus-

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tomed to smile and kiss his mother, force a cheery "Hello, Dad! How's it been?" for his father, press on him some beguiling magazine, and then, after bolting food he was too weary to enjoy, his school-books displaced the dishes on the table before him. But this study was seldom finished. Usually it merely ended with the youth's face down and fast asleep upon an open page.

"It's too much—too much for you, Sonny!" his mother would urge, almost weeping as she roused and dragged him off to bed.

"No! No!" George would protest, shamefaced. "I wasn't asleep—honest. I got through and just laid down my head for a minute."

The boy was tired, dog-tired all the time, and yet there was a compensating thrill to it all—if he could just hold out. He was getting an education; he was supporting his parents; he was learning wonderful lessons not taught in school, and opportunity, the whole wide field of business and opportunity, was opening before him most astonishingly. Take, for instance, the case of Tony Colombo—Tony who kept the bootblack stand next door to George, with four chairs operated by himself and one assistant. Tony one day got into trouble with the officers of the law over a matter of no concern to this narrative and had immediate necessity for $200, with also the prospect that he might not be able to give his

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personal attention to business duties for some months to come. Tony told his misfortune to the bustling young chap who owned the news-stand, casually and not hopefully.

"Too bad," sympathized George. "Too bad, old man!" and considered the incident a closed one. But later, watching the number of patrons who climbed up in Tony's chairs, and computing the total of the dimes they left each day in Tony's cash drawer, he began to scent an opportunity. The chairs, the brushes, the bench, the whole outfit, could have been duplicated for $40. The balance of the $200 Tony demanded was his valuation on good will, on the steady stream of patrons, and George had been in business long enough to know that this stream of patrons was the difference between success and failure. He estimated the stream and decided it was worth the money—provided one had the money.

Now it happened that George had observed quite early this important fact—that the most flourishing tree of prosperity has its beginning in a very small plant and that while this plant is small it may be bought for very little, but that little must usually be cash. That he might be ready when such an opportunity knocked at his door, George had enjoined upon himself the habit of a cash reserve. At first it used to be only fifty cents to buy the morrow's stock of papers with, but it grew larger; and all the while

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George was taking care of the folks at home quite generously, he was skimping and almost cheating himself to increase day by day this cash reserve. This afternoon, counting up, his cash reserve totaled $190.

From the day's take-in he added another ten dollars and laid the whole in Tony Colombo's surprised and grateful hand—after Tony and George had together evolved a bill of sale, to which the seller affixed his scrawling signature.

The next day, with another assistant in Tony's place and the first man raised to a sort of foreman, George Judson at school—and making an excursion into the literature of the Elizabethan period—was distracted by glowing reflections that besides old Nick Cross selling papers and magazines, two pairs of swarthy hands were shining shoes for *his* customers and ringing up dimes in the cash-drawer. He got a rare thrill out of this and knew that he was becoming a magnate upon a small scale.

But there were always happening things to prevent him from feeling plutocratic—to remind him that his necessities still exceeded his rewards. As, for instance, on the very evening of his acquisition of the boot-black stand, Doctor Denman, while making a family rather than a sick-call upon the Judsons, had ventured the remark that some wonderful things were beginning to be done with spines now. He

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dropped the hint that some months for Malachi in the surgical ward of a great hospital, with the attentions of a certain eminent specialist and the use of some newly contrived and very expensive apparatus, might work a great improvement in the afflicted man's condition.

There was general talk and nothing decided. But the next day George called on the physician in his office.

"Say, Doc, what will it cost?" he asked eagerly—and anxiously.

Doctor Denman was thoughtful, wiping his glasses and staring out the window. "Figuring the lowest possible, and with the specialist cutting seventy-five per cent off his fee, about $1200."

"Twelve—twelve hundred!" gasped George hollowly. "Twelve hundred to try it?"

"To try it—hospital bills and all."

"And it may not help?"

"It may not."

"But it might?"

"It might."

George's voice was getting steadier and steadier, until he gulped the proposition down. "I can pay you forty dollars a month till the twelve hundred's paid," he said, having made swift calculations.

The experiment failed.

Malachi Judson came home from the hospital

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sentenced to a life-long helplessness so far as all but his hands were concerned, yet faced the situation with a dismal fortitude.

And George, having recently attained the proud dignity of a bank account, was sending his check for forty dollars till the whole twelve hundred was paid; and not a dollar of it did he regret, deeming that he got his money's worth in knowing that his father had his chance. Besides, he was getting to be more of a magnate every day. He had two news shops now instead of one, with an alert young woman in charge of the second. But there must have been too much distraction in so many business enterprises for a student's mind, for this year, his first in high school, George failed completely in his mid-winter examinations. It was a crushing blow to his self-esteem.

"Better take it slower, George," urged his friends, the teachers.

And he did. Fewer studies allowed him more sleep, while the steadiness of his income and its equally steady enlargement brought additional ease to mind.

Almost as if in consequence of these things there began to take place a remarkable physical change in George. The intensive labors of the past three years had made him scrawny and nervous. He had been hollow-cheeked, big-eyed, rough-haired, almost ill-favored. But

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now, suddenly, he was none of these things. Adolescence was completing its brilliant transformation act; it was delivering a gawky youth into the arms of glowing, symmetrical young manhood.

It was in this period that George first began to play at salesmanship as if it were some stirring piece of drama.

One day his customers noted, over and above the stock of newspapers and magazines, a shelf of bound books—cheap reprints of best sellers, they were, yet they gave the whole place dignity from George's point of view. Gradually a modest line of new fiction was added, and young Judson was gathering a finer and a finer clientele and supplying a larger and larger stock to meet its requirements.

Yet such successes only whetted the youth's ambition. Among the books that now got on his shelves was a volume called "Self Help," by Samuel Smiles. George found this book full of recitals of how poor boys had won successes, how struggling young men had become artists or sculptors or successful manufacturers or business men. He pored over its pages. He gloated over its heroes. The book became his Bible. And there was a magazine called "Success" that came monthly to his stand, which devoted itself to inspiring men and women of all classes to better their conditions. On this George used to feed

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his ego fat each month with higher hopes and more solemn determinations.

Inevitably, as it seemed, both his hole-in-the-wall news shops widened and lengthened into real little stores with considerable stocks upon their shelves. He began to develop a chain of news-and-magazine stands. The shoe-shining parlor grew to ten chairs, and six men bent their backs and agitated their elbows to make dimes for George Judson. From every standpoint the young man flourished. In his plan of life there seemed no flaw.

George had a horse and buggy, with which he drove himself to and fro; he built a stable where the cabbage patch had been. He had the cottage painted and new carpets and curtains added. An up-to-date wheel chair that was the last word in comfort replaced the old one. He bought his father fancy shirts and attractive neckwear.

"Making a darned dude out of me," Malachi used to grumble, though secretly pleased.

George bought pretty dresses for his mother and insisted on her wearing them. His manner toward his parents was dutiful, and yet it was also masterful. He was quiet, thoughtful, considerate—but authoritative. His parents, proud of him as they were, began to be a little in awe of him.

"Ain't it wonderful, the way that boy's come

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out!" boasted Malachi one day and waited to hear his wife's approving echo.

Instead there came a sound like a sob, and he turned with astonished eyes to behold a coddled mother who was weeping.

"Oh, I think it's terrible, Mal!" she broke out, as with emotion that had been long suppressed. "It's been necessary, I guess, but he's almost ruined," she wailed. "He's a little old man. He don't think of anything but money—making money—Success! Success! Success! He's just got his eye on that."

If George Judson could have seen his mother's tears, he would have been mystified. If he had heard her speech he would have laughed. Neither seeing nor hearing, he went blissfully and determinedly upon his way.

Eventually he graduated from high school two years behind his class, and he had been at least a year behind his age to begin with. He was an oldster among youngsters and was sufficiently embarrassed by this fact that he would not appear upon the platform at the commencement exercises to receive his diploma. He had gained the knowledge it stood for, and that was the important thing with George anyway. The diploma was eventually slipped into his hand at one of his stores by his admiring principal.

These two stores, by the way, had by this time grown to be considerable enterprises, with ever-

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growing stocks upon their shelves and with trained salespeople to dispose of them. But the best, the most assiduous sales person of them all was George Judson himself. Indeed it was as a salesman that his genius manifested itself. George would not be an inventor like Charlie King; he would not be a builder like Henry Ford. But he was already a salesman. He was a marvel at selling things. Being that, he one afternoon sold out his business to the last shoe-string—the shining shop, the chain of news-stands, and the two book stores—everything that he owned; and the proceeds put fourteen thousand dollars in the bank. *Fourteen!*

Now it would not be strange if at this moment George Judson felt a bit cocky, and underneath his prematurely varnished exterior, George was still naïve and human. A little more than twenty-one years old, toughened rather than hardened by his experiences—tempered perhaps is the better word—he straightened his shoulders with this sale of all his business, as if a burden had rolled off, then filled his lungs afresh. He stood upon the threshold of manhood, amply equipped. Before him were two choices. He could go to college and drink in knowledge in long, thirsty draughts with absolutely nothing to distract, or he could launch directly out. He had made up his mind which.

But what he did first was a perfectly natural

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expression of that habit of duty which he had formed. He climbed into his buggy and started for the cottage out beyond the "Indian Village," into that district which had so long been negligible, but now all at once began to be within speaking distance of the homes of the ultra well-to-do.

Once in a while, as they bowled along, the foolish horse looked askance or shied a little at a "devil-wagon" as people still called the gasoline-propelled vehicles now fairly common in the streets of Detroit, though there were yet plenty of superior people who had not so far deigned to ride in one. But as George himself bent his glance upon the devil-wagon it was with an admiring eye—an eye that looked almost as if it knew something that it wouldn't tell.

"Dad," the young man hailed, when he surprised his parents by arriving at home at this unusual time of day. "I'm going to build you and mother a new house and furnish it; and besides, mother's done her last lick of work except waiting on you. I'm going to hire a girl to do the cooking and the housework."

Malachi Judson was impressedly silent as he heard this announcement, contemplating his son with respectful, almost reverential eye.

But his mother was more vocative. "Oh, George!" she exclaimed with a gesture and a tone that were almost of protest. "Are you sure you can afford it?"

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"Surest thing!" boasted George, and in a sudden release of animal spirits long pent up, he seized his mother in his arms, swung her clear off the floor, and spun round with that scandalized lady stretched almost horizontal. He laughed boisterously as he let her down.

"It seems so good, George, to hear you laugh," panted his mother when things had quieted somewhat. "Seems as though as you grow up you grow kind of hard. You just smile and smile kind of cunning like a 'possum but you don't laugh any more. You're just all business."

"I suppose I'll laugh all the time now," responded George, "for I've just sold out my business."

"Sold it out?" exclaimed the mother, almost in alarm, while the bearded mouth of Malachi fell open in surprise and remained a gaping orifice that demanded to be filled with some sort of explanation.

"Lock, stock, and barrel!" declared George.

"Hum!" mused his father, recovering somewhat from the shock of his surprise and pulling at his beard. "What you going to take up now?"

"It isn't settled yet," said George. "But something big, you bet!"

Neither parent had a doubt of that. Leaving them puzzled, to look into each other's eyes questioningly, yet nodding and glowing or

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chuckling with pride, George went back to town and sold the horse and buggy.

"The day of the horse is over," he said to himself, but required the man who had bought the outfit to drive him to the shop of Milton Morris on Franklin Street.

But where, by the way, was Charlie King? In Paris—painting pictures. Where was his factory? He had none—at this time. That George did not have himself driven to the factory of R. E. Olds instead merely showed his independence. Olds had the great successful factory; it became the school from which graduated so many able men into the ranks of the industry, but for reasons which seemed good to him young Judson's choice had fallen upon Milton Morris.

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CHAPTER VI

IT will be remembered that Mr. Morris had asked, not too cordially, "What can I do for you?"

"I want a job as a demonstrator," replied George.

"Gad!" ejaculated Mr. Morris impatiently. "Is there a young fellow in Detroit that doesn't? They come in here twenty a day."

Now some salesmen talk too much. George Judson had learned better. To this impatient remark he offered no comment. He merely stood gazing expectantly at Mr. Morris, reinforcing his appeal for a job with the plea of his earnest eyes and the quiet persistence of his manner, selling himself without a word. Mr. Morris felt this. It compelled him to parley.

"Know anything about gasoline engines? Anything about automobiles?" he plumped.

"No," confessed the young man honestly, "but I've ridden in every automobile built in Detroit, and the best ride I got was in a Milton Morris. Anyhow my business is selling. I know how to get people to buy things."

"Gad! That's the point!" conceded Mr. Morris, who was secretly aggrieved that Olds

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should sell so many cars while his few stood in the warehouse. "You've got the right idea at least. I've a couple of young demonstrators now, and they just smell up the whole town with gasoline, while the warehouse stays full of cars." The door was open, and Mr. Morris pointed with his pencil to where six spick and span new cars stood awaiting a buyer. That was his idea of "full."

"What are you asking for those cars out there?" inquired George, feeling that he was making headway.

"One thousand dollars apiece—too much money for this man's town," frowned the manufacturer.

"Mr. Morris!" The tone of George's voice had been lowered almost to solemnity, and he advanced and leaned a hand impressively upon the big, littered desk. "I am about to make you a proposition that may sound fresh, but I don't mean it that way. I want you to give me two weeks to sell those six cars. If I sell them all in that time, give me fifty dollars apiece commission. If I don't sell them all, I've worked two weeks for you for nothing." George straightened and stepped back from the desk.

Milton Morris sat a moment rather breathless, taking in George again with his eye and his proposition with his mind—a proposition which in his experience was unique.

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"When can I start?" urged George.

"Now!—by jingo!" said Mr. Morris. "You can't bluff me. I like your nerve, too, young fellow. It will take you far. Anderson! Anderson!"

A lank, round-shouldered Swede with grease and grime spotting and streaking his overalls from head to foot appeared in the door leading to the shop.

"Take an hour off, Anderson, and give Mr. Judson a driving lesson," his boss directed.

The Swede looked at his employer and gave meek-eyed assent. Then he looked at George and jerked his head shop-ward.

"How's that young fellow getting along, Anderson?" it occurred to Mr. Morris to ask after a couple of hours, as his assembly foreman sauntered in for some instructions.

"He's drivin' the car all right, but you can't learn him nothing. Couldn't tell him nothing at all after the first five minutes. Wants to figure it out for himself. He's got her all apart out there now."

"All apart?" exclaimed Mr. Morris in some alarm. "Is he a mechanic?"

"Says not. Says you can't never sell a thing, though, till you understand it, know what makes it perform and all that."

"That's kind of sensible," admitted Mr. Morris, and getting up, he strolled out on the

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warehouse floor, where he found young Judson in a pair of borrowed overalls, with sleeves rolled up, grease and dirt to his elbows and his ears, engaged in prying into the mysteries of the Milton Morris automobile.

Secretly this pleased Mr. Morris. "Couldn't get one of these other dudes even to take an oil can in his hand," he remarked to himself.

For three days thereafter George appeared in overalls and flannel shirt. On the fourth day he was a clothing store model in appearance. He sold the sixth car on the tenth day of active salesmanship.

"Holy Zachariah!" exclaimed Mr. Morris. "You're selling 'em faster than we can make 'em. About eight or ten a month is as fast as we can turn 'em out."

"Couldn't you double the force and enlarge the shop?" suggested the young man modestly and yet hopefully.

This was rather cool, but Mr. Morris did not resent it. Instead he gazed thoughtfully, although with an expression half-humorous on his finely graven face.

"How do you do it? Sell 'em so easy, I mean?" he speculated.

"It's simple. All salesmanship is simple," expatiated George. "Just make the other fellow *want* the thing you're selling. Make him *want* it, and he'll do the rest. It is simple, sir . . .

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Mr. Morris!" and there was that respectful dropping of the voice which, with him, always preceded the making of any important proposal. "Mr. Morris, I believe if I took a little lope around the country, I believe I could get a bunch of orders for spring delivery, and we would be able to go ahead on a definite plan of expansion for the factory."

Who had said anything about expansion? And yet Milton Morris, sitting here, trying to dig in with his toes and hold back, felt himself being pushed—absolutely pushed—into contemplation of the idea.

Just how good a talker the young man was, Mr. Morris was beginning to realize. "Let's wait a year. You're pushing me on too fast. Besides, I haven't got the money to spare for the trip."

"I've got a little money," confided George, his eyes shining. "I ask you, Mr. Morris, to let me advance myself five hundred dollars on the firm's account. I believe in the future of the automobile, and I believe especially in your car and in you."

This was irresistible. "Go ahead, George, and convince yourself," said Milton Morris indulgently, and threw up his hands, then admitted: "If you could scare up twenty-five or thirty orders, it would sort of give us something to plan on."

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George nodded, well pleased with himself, and was blithely happy as he took the train. He had never been outside the city of Detroit except for a few little daylight excursions. He had never ridden in a sleeping car. He was unfamiliar with just how one goes to a hotel and registers and deports oneself, but the morning of life was bright upon him. Not a doubt or a misgiving entered his mind. He was a bearer of good tidings to the world.

At the end of the fifth week he was back.

"Mr. Morris," exclaimed George, all brakes off and unable to keep the exultant leap out of his voice. "I sold one hundred and two automobiles." He transferred a huge wallet of signed contracts from his pocket to the scarred and cluttered desk.

Mr. Morris's face, instead of joy, expressed consternation. His cheeks became ashen. "And contracted to deliver them?"

"Before June first."

"My Lord, boy! You have ruined us! Why, where on earth would I get the money to buy the material and pay the wages?"

"I've got part of it here," assured George most amazingly, and holding up a single contract he called attention to a pink slip with perforated edges attached. It was a draft for $333.33, one-third of the price of a Milton

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Morris automobile. There was one attached to every contract.

"But one hundred before June first?" the older man reflected as he filled his pipe. "I'm not so sure it can be done."

"Done? You've got to do it, Mr. Morris. I've sold 'em!"

This was almost autocratic. George said it like an autocrat, too, with a thump of his doubled fist upon the table. But Mr. Morris did not seem to notice.

"We can make 'em, I guess," he decided, "but we'll have to have more money even than this thirty-three thousand you've brought home. Thirty-three thousand! Can I believe it? I reckon, though, I can take those orders down to my bank and borrow twenty-five thousand on the strength of them."

But again George Judson thumped the table. "No, Mr. Morris," he objected squarely. "No! We won't make any little piker loan like that."

This time Mr. Morris observed the thump and the autocratic note. "Don't let a little success spoil you, George," he warned.

"I'll try not to," said the young salesman, flushing. "But don't you realize that if I sold one hundred automobiles in five weeks, I could sell a thousand automobiles in twelve months?"

"A—a thousand!" Mr. Morris murmured the word hoarsely, then leaned back and gaped, his

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startled, recessed eyes seeming to advance and gleam furtively in their sockets.

"Don't you know that Olds has sold four thousand cars this very season?"

"But Olds—Olds." Milton Morris sat forward again, floundering with his arms, as if he also floundered in his mind. "Olds has got the jump on us. Besides, that was just a freak demand. Nobody will ever sell four thousand cars again in any one year."

"Pardon me if I seem to contradict your judgment, Mr. Morris," said George suavely, "but there is a man in Detroit now offering to contract for one thousand cars for spring delivery for the New York City agency alone. I tell you the world is hungry for automobiles. Look at these!" The young man lifted the contracts and fluttered them with their drafts attached. "Mr. Morris, do you know what you are going to do, you and I?"

Milton Morris had not a notion. Leaning back, rather helpless now, he had a craven feeling that however absurd the proposal, he would accept it.

George was going on: "We're going to build not one hundred and two, but one thousand one hundred and two cars, and have them ready for delivery next season. You build 'em. I sell 'em."

"By Gad, I believe you could sell 'em all

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right," conceded Mr. Morris with something like a gasp.

He had been secretly piqued that Olds and Ford could sell their cars while he had not sold his. The thing which George had just done tickled his natural and perfectly justifiable vanity. The thing George proposed to do tickled it still more—while it staggered him.

"I could build 'em, too," he decided, "if we had the money."

"Mr. Morris," said George speaking slowly, trying to strain out of his tones anything of overweening self-conceit, "I say it modestly but firmly—solemnly—I believe I can get the money. Manufacturing is your end; selling is mine. I'll go down here and sell ourselves to the banks for a couple of hundred thousand dollars—that's what I'll do. You go to work on the basis of turning out eleven hundred cars by June 30th. I'll find the money."

Under the spell of the younger man's enthusiastic dream the eyes of the older lighted, and his blood began to tingle. For a moment at least he saw the vision himself, the *vision of the automobile*—making smooth the road and short the way from every man's door to every mart of trade or pleasure—a new pastime and a new service to mankind, a bringing of the country to the city and the city to the country, a retaking of the world in the name of humanity.

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He saw the vision, but the light was toned down in his face and the tingle went out of his blood as, true to habit, his mind came back to concern itself with a concrete, individualized task.

"You're young, George," he said, gazing at the ardent salesman with a look of such sublime faith that it failed utterly to realize how young he was. "You've got an awful lot of pep, but it's an awful big job you've cut out for yourself, going down to get money out of these hard-headed old Detroit bankers on nothing but a shoestring tied to a sizzling gasoline engine."

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CHAPTER VII

NEXT day when, carrying his sheaf of orders with drafts attached for one hundred and two M. M. automobiles, George Judson began to visit the bankers, he found that Mr. Morris's pessimism was well-founded. Yet these bankers knew all about Olds' second year. They had heard that he was selling four thousand cars and would show a cash surplus of $600,000 for the twelve months. But that was Olds. New men and new machines—that was different; that was not an investment, it was a gamble, and bankers were not gamblers—so they told him.

After three days of industrious assault upon the bulwarks of finance the only real encouragement lay in the fact that while none of these bankers could believe in young Mr. Judson's scheme which he talked so enthusiastically, every one of them came within a few minutes to believe in young Mr. Judson himself. There was, for instance, Stephen Gilman. He was the distinguished president of the great St. Clair Trust Company and quite imposing to look upon. He was tall, with a high, narrow fore-

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head over brows that were aggressively and contrastingly black, for his thin and slightly wavy hair was snow-white and parted in the middle as if to heighten that suggestion of balanced probity which was subtly conveyed by every detail of the banker's appearance.

"Who are you, young man?" he asked with an amused smile. "You're the best talker that has sat down in that chair in a long time, I'll say that for you. Your proposition is sound enough, too. I'll tell you that if—"

"You're the first banker that has had the discernment to see that," broke in George gratefully.

"Hold on a minute," warned Mr. Gilman. "I said 'if.' *If* you could convince me that there's any such wide-spread hunger for horseless carriages as you say. I've never even ridden in one of the treacherous things myself."

"Mr. Gilman," proposed George in quiet seriousness, "I will pay all your expenses and supply you with the best accommodations obtainable if you will go out with me to, say, Lincoln or Sioux City, or if they are too far away, Kankakee; and if in either one of those places I do not take ten orders for our cars in seven days, why then I'll admit that I am mistaken about the future of the horseless carriage. If I do sell them, will you not revise your opinion, give serious consideration to my proposal,

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and induce other financial powers in the city to do the same?"

George was serious enough—no doubt of it; yet Mr. Gilman only smiled at the naïve proposal.

"How old are you?" he asked curiously.

"Twenty-two," admitted George, weak enough to be proud of his youth when computed solely in years.

"Hm!" said Mr. Gilman, in surprise. "You talk older."

"Perhaps that's because I've had responsibility and a lot of experience of what you might call small salesmanship."

"What responsibility?" inquired the banker, shrewdly feeling after the answer to those broad yet deeply penetrative questions he had asked a while ago.

George told him—as briefly as possible, yet as fully as necessary to be polite—told him the story of his business experience, the paper routes, the news-stands, the slowly worked-out high school course and his devoted interest in the automobile; also the sound reason why he had selected the Milton Morris vehicle in particular for his most serious business venture. Under the spell of a further cordial interest, he even told about the house he was now building for his father and mother with whom he still lived, and about

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the twelve or thirteen thousand dollars now on deposit in Mr. Gilman's own bank.

"Humph!" said Mr. Gilman again, when he had heard him through to this important piece of information. "You pay me a subtle compliment."

"My gas wagon's just out in front. Won't you let me run you out the avenue and back?" pleaded George earnestly. "It'll do you good to get a little fresh air. It will be in the way of business, too, for I think I can make you understand something of the fascination there is in a spin in an automobile."

"And on the basis of that fascination, you want me to loan you two hundred thousand dollars?" speculated Mr. Gilman, an amused light in his shrewd eye.

"Not on *your* fascination. On the general fascination, of the reality of which you may judge when you have experienced it yourself."

"Help! Help!" laughed Mr. Gilman. "But I'll go with you."

As the two men appeared in the rather exposed position reserved for the passengers on the single-seated, two-cylindered runabout of that day, the pair provided a striking contrast. Yet George, as he guided the car out Griswold Street toward Jefferson Avenue, had no sense of contrasts. He felt very much on even terms.

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"Goes easy, doesn't it?" observed Mr. Gilman, analyzing his sensations.

"Gasoline does the pulling," smiled George.

"Why, I don't notice the smell of gasoline at all," recalled the banker.

This was the day when the standard joke was about the automobile and the standard joke about the automobile was the joke about the smell.

"Pooh! There isn't any smell," asserted George, opening the throttle a bit wider. "If there is, the other fellow gets it."

They were spinning out the avenue eastward now, with the gleam of the river every now and then before their eyes and with the fresh, tangy ozone of early autumn sharp in their nostrils.

"How fast are we going?" inquired Mr. Gilman.

"Faster than your carriage horses would be going if they were running away," declared George.

"Trying to sell me one of these things, aren't you?"

"Trying to sell you my faith in our ability to sell eleven hundred of these cars this year and five thousand next," amended George with a contrasting soberness that was instantly effective.

"Well," retorted the banker, "I admit the fas-

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cination anyway, and I guess we had better turn around now and make for the office."

"Very well, sir," George responded, perfectly agreeable, yet with just the proper suggestion of reluctance, and prepared to bring the vehicle about.

But a street car, wheel flanges already setting up their hideous shriek, was just rounding the corner, and this complicated matters. This, however, would give George an opportunity to demonstrate both his skill and the easy control of the car. Puffed with self-confidence, he began to swing the wheels, but . . . there was a milk wagon speeding along behind that street car, piled high with full cans, drawn by two wild horses, with reins held by a fat Swiss who was practically asleep upon the seat. The horses, knowing from long habit whither they were bound, took it upon themselves to dodge around the street car and cut the wrong way to the turn. When George saw them, it was too late.

"Hold on tight," he shouted to Mr. Gilman, and himself braced for a shock. There followed an awful eternity of suspense that lasted perhaps as long as a split second, after which horses, automobile, street car, slumbering Swiss, and bursting cans of foamy milk spontaneously combined in a moving picture of disaster! . . .

Taking account of casualties: the street car

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was uninjured, while the milk wagon seemed a total loss. The sturdy little automobile, substantial as the character of Milton Morris himself, had plowed straight through it and over it, halting, careened against a trolley pole, with the two wheels on one side spinning idly a few inches from the ground. The horses, kicking themselves free of the wreckage with frightened snorts, dashed madly off. The Swiss driver woke up, took one look at the chaos round him, and plunged wildly away. George was still clinging stoutly to his wheel, but Mr. Gilman had disappeared.

"My Lord! Oh, my Lord!" groaned the young man, out of the chaos, but just then there began a mysterious agitation among the milk cans. George, who by this time had crawled down from his seat, began frantically to toss the cans aside. He found his late passenger underneath, drenched by the white fluid.

"Mr. Gilman!" he cried in anguished concern, "are you hurt?"

"I think not," replied the banker in tones of thick disgust that issued through a film of milk. "No, not hurt!" but as he said it, his verdict was contradicted by a widening circle of crimson which appeared about a contused wound over his right eye.

"Oh, but you are!" discovered George in deepening distress. "You are. My Lord! This is

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awful!" And with an arm under the banker's aristocratic shoulders he helped him to his feet.

"Better take me home, I guess," gasped Mr. Gilman, and he mentioned a location on the Lake Shore Drive in Grosse Pointe.

"Have you there in twenty minutes, sir," assured George, relieved by the opportunity to do something quick, and gave the leaning automobile a vigorous push.

With a lurch the little car righted—not an axle bent, not a wheel sprung, standing as four square to the world as she had stood the morning out of the factory. Yet George was naturally apprehensive as he gave the crank a twist, but the engine started with a sound like the whir of a flock of grouse.

However, Mr. Gilman was viewing with alarm. "Not going to ask me to get in that thing again, are you?" he inquired with a slight show of irritation.

"It's the best transportation available, sir," George said; "it'll have you home in twenty minutes. I hope you don't blame the little car," he added dismally.

"No, no," said Mr. Gilman snappily, "and I don't blame you either, young man. I blame myself. They are treacherous things, these devil-wagons!"

Something boiled in George's breast, but he held it in. Tact, delicacy, consideration—all

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warned that this was no time to start an argument. Besides his passenger began to display an alarming weakness. He wobbled in his seat, and the young man slipped an arm unobtrusively round him where assistance could be prompt if he should faint, and steered skillfully with one hand, making toward Grosse Pointe with all speed possible over the rather poor dirt road.

"My Lord! I wonder if he's dying!" the young man groaned in anxiety, whereat old Stephen roused enough to gasp grimly,

"Not yet—small thanks to you."

However again came contradiction of his stout words. His head dropped and he was off again until the car had come to a stop under the *porte cochère*.

But the approach of the little car had been noted by some eye in the great stone house; the banker's inert form had been recognized, and instant alarm been taken. A butler came running down the granite steps, leaving the door wide open behind him, and between the two men Mr. Gilman suffered himself to be lowered and half-borne upward to his hall.

"A glass of Scotch, Bolton, quick!" the banker gasped and indicated his desire to be eased into a chair, where he sat waiting for the stimulant with his head in his hand.

"Where is Mrs. Gilman or Fay?" he asked

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disappointedly, when a startled exclamation issued from somewhere above, and George's eyes turned to where an impressive staircase lifted itself to the floor above.

In the angle of the balustrade a girl had halted for swift appraisal of the scene, her face a vision of immature loveliness on which bewilderment and alarm were pictured. She wore a dainty frock of some half-clinging blue stuff. Her brown, wavy hair was done precociously high, her figure was a combination of girlish slants and womanly curves; but the oval face was white with fright, and blue, startled eyes swept the faces below.

"Papa!" she cried, and with winged feet came fluttering down. "You are hurt!"

Her manner was all tenderness and impulsive affection, all concern and anxiety. Her arms were about her father's neck in an instant. She was kissing the uncrimsoned area upon his brow, then turning appealing eyes upon the servants with impatient gestures and reproachful pleadings:

"Do something—can't you, some of you—quickly," she urged. "Jean, telephone for mama!"

This appeared the only specific thing she could suggest, and her eyes turned once more eagerly upon her father with, "What was it, father? How did it happen?"

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The half-closed eyes of Stephen Gilman, leaning back weakly, waiting for his Scotch, regarded his daughter with a slight but reassuring smile. "Not exactly hurt, Fay, dear; just bumped is all," he succeeded in saying, when the Scotch arrived, and he gulped it gratefully.

All this time George Judson, fallen completely in the background, had been staring at the girl. She reminded him of a Persian kitten, soft, furry, loving, and she started some strange memory in him that was like a waking of the long, long past. He was staring at her—staring with all his eyes.

The reviving Scotch brought Mr. Gilman around considerably.

"Bolton, you and Morely help me upstairs," he directed, and, his arms upon the shoulders of his butler and his valet, had begun to mount with his daughter anxiously ahead, when, despite pain and anxiety, there occurred to him his duty to the author of his misfortune, the duty to be courteous and even magnanimous.

"Fay," he said and shifted slowly till his eye could contemplate that distressed person by the door, "this is a young friend of mine, Mr. Judson. He was good enough to bring me home —er—uh—after the accident. Thank him, won't you?"

The girl darted her first appraising glance at the young man her father's nod had indicated.

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She saw him—symmetrical, well-favored, concerned, and wistful—and decided that he was a person to be instantly approved and highly appreciated. With a little cry of dismay as though she had been indifferent to one to whom she was under obligations of gratitude, she came impulsively down to him.

"I am so grateful to you—so grateful!" she cried, and took his hand and for a moment held it warmly.

It was the unstudied, artless expression of a distressed and simple heart, utterly devoid of self-consciousness, and as such beautiful and appealing. But the effect produced was beyond the cause. George Judson stood swaying—for he had recognized her. This was the Goat Girl—this was his velvet queen. She had grown into this half-wild, half-tamed, exquisite, frightened, wonderful thing that he wanted upon the instant to take into his arms and soothe and love.

He could have dropped upon the floor and offered up a prayer of thanksgiving. His hand burned where she had touched it. The electric thrill of that personal contact was shooting through him. Some delicate perfume that came close to him with her enveloped him and made him giddy.

"Just what happened, Mr. Judson?" the girl asked.

"He was driving with me. A milk wagon ran

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us down. He got a fall and something struck him. I am sure the first thing for me now is to bring a doctor. I have my car here, you know."

George Judson was saying these things quite glibly, but hardly knowing that he uttered them. Her golden hair had darkened, her soft, child prettiness had become girlishly mobile and variant, and her milk-white complexion had deepened to a creamy yet delicate orchid tint, but the radiant blue of her eyes was still the same.

"That's the thing—bring a doctor," emphasized the girl with an impatient movement of her body. "Get Doctor Rigdon from the Sheldon Building. I'll telephone him you are on the way."

George had to pull himself together to remember that this was in answer to his own proposal.

But while ecstasies and sickening fears alternately possessed George Judson's mind, the little car was bumping frantically over the old dirt road. The life of Stephen Gilman had become all at once doubly precious to George Judson. He found Doctor Rigdon waiting for him on the curb and delivered him under the Gilman marquise after a breathless, hair-raising ride.

"Gracious me!" panted the Doctor, as if he had been running. From the doorway he

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turned. "Gracious me!" he said again and gazed at the still vibrating car.

George this time encountered a new personality in the Gilman hall, a tall, self-contained woman with traces of considerable beauty and a dignified manner.

"I am Mrs. Gilman," she said, bowing but not offering her hand. "Will you wait in the library please?"

Her voice was pleasant, but a degree north of cordial, and her manner was, well—reserved, or exclusive—something like that.

The library immediately joined in this conspiracy by awing him. There were amazing great pictures with amazing, massive, gilt frames; there were spider-legged tables of differing designs and set at varying angles; there were odd little cabinets and intriguing chests of tiny drawers, evidently old, probably far-gathered, all looking only slightly serviceable, but extremely ornamental.

But perversely this very harmony of beauty contributed an additional feeling of discomfort. It made him feel so ridiculously out of his element. Characters in the huge paintings stared him out of countenance; tiny statues ogled him or jiggled derisive fingers at him; a bronze mountain lion snarled at him, showing wicked teeth and a vicious curl of his tail.

But at length he became more accustomed to

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his surroundings and reflected upon their significance, upon the things they told him about the people into whose home he had been abruptly pitchforked. His imagination began to work once more. These things, he perceived, were the creation not alone of wealth, but of culture, of the art of knowing what is right, of the genius-like capacity for making all things material blend themselves into a beauty that serves at the same time that it delights.

George for the moment leaned back in a Louis Quinze chair—only he did not know it was a Louis Quinze—and drew a full, exhilarating breath. But the portraits still mocked; the statues gibbered again. He—an ex-newsboy; he, an automobile salesman; he, a mere struggler for the promotion of a great business conception—he could aspire to much, and did unblinkingly; but could he aspire to—*her?* Now that he had seen her face to face and knew what her perfections were like to be?

For the first time in his cocksure adult life a misgiving that was more than temporary entered the mind of George Judson.

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CHAPTER VIII

GEORGE'S chin was lowered, and he brooded. The doctor was a long time in coming downstairs. The delay was ominous. At length he heard his voice in the hall and, unbidden, hurried out to him.

"No fracture—no!" said Dr. Rigdon in a voice thoroughly professional. "Examination reveals no fracture. Patient weak from shock and some loss of blood, but nothing to apprehend. A few days rest, and he will be as good as ever."

"Thank God!" the young man murmured fervently, and with this great burden rolled from his mind, stood looking about him expectantly. Surely Fay would appear. His heart hungered for her. He needed the sight of her to confirm a thousand details his mind began to thirst for information upon. It required her radiant presence to quicken the courage of his hope and banish some of those dampening reflections in the library. But that bright flower of girlish beauty did not blossom to his yearning.

There being now no excuse to linger, George performed his last service by taking the doctor

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away with him. As he drove, the doctor—mind relaxed of professional responsibility—talked about automobiles in general and the Milton Morris in particular—talked about it and inquired about it—but for once young Mr. Judson was a rather indifferent advocate of automobiles.

"All right," he muttered to himself when the doctor had left him, in such tones of graveyard hollowness as indicated that things were a million miles from being, as he said, all right. "All right. Let's admit it. She doesn't remember me. I don't mean anything to her *now,* but I will—later. By jumping Jeminy, I *will!*"

Next morning Milton Morris was sitting bowed at his desk. "Hello, George!" he hailed. "How are you getting on with that loan?"

"I'm not getting on, Mr. Morris," admitted the young man hollowly and passed on to his own modest desk in the same room.

The older man gazed across at the hunched shoulders of the younger with affection in his glance. It had taken only eight weeks for that affection to grow. It had its root in the fact that Judson was the first employee who had ever manifested more faith in the business than its owner had in it himself.

"And you won't get on with it, either, George," said Mr. Morris consolingly. "The idea's too new—too uncertain. I let you run

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away with me the other day, but in my soul I knew that I was wrong to do it. We've got to peck along slowly, making up a few cars at a time as we get the money and the orders, and watch how the cat's going to jump. We stand to make a lot of money on those orders you got."

"A lot?" he asked suspiciously. "What do you mean—a lot?"

"Ten thousand dollars or so—maybe twenty."

George coughed disdainfully and twitched impatient shoulders. "Ten thousand—twenty thousand dollars isn't anything, Mr. Morris," he announced. "I see this business in terms of millions. Millions, Mr. Morris!"

The older man gazed in silence, surprise mingling with a slight sense of irritation. The boy ought to know when he was beaten. Instead, he was bristling to argue—and the same old arguments.

"You know what Olds did last year and what he is doing this year. Besides that, Ford actually sold six hundred and seventy-four of that chicken-chaser of his, and now a lot of others are rushing into production."

"They're all nuts, every one of 'em," insisted Milton Morris testily.

"You couldn't call Henry Leland a nut, and he's into this Cadillac thing with all his heart," urged George.

"And you couldn't call Olds or Ford nuts,

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either," admitted the other honestly and as if repenting of his irritation; "nor Henry Joy, and they tell me he's bought the Packard plant down in Ohio and is moving it up here. But the trouble is they all get to be nuts as soon as they feel a gasoline engine chugging under their feet. I tell you, George, the world hasn't gone crazy yet, and a lot of these fellows are figuring that it has. They're in, some of 'em, for the biggest kind of smash. Now let's you and me keep out of it. The gasoline buggy has got a future for it all right. There's a place for it, but it's got to be a slow development. People have got to get used to it—got to get used to how to flirt with a gasoline engine. Look at the bicycle fad and let that be a lesson to you. Let's let this thing make us some money, George, and let's don't let it lose us any."

George had to smile at the homely forcefulness of his employer's plea, but his face and his whole manner expressed total rejection of its logic. "Mr. Morris, do you believe in me at all?" he asked.

"Shucks!" exclaimed Mr. Morris. "'Course I believe in you, George. You've got the best bunch of selling brains under one straw hat that's ever come past my door. I suspect you've even got the best bunch of selling brains in the whole town of Detroit."

George looked encouraged; he even blushed

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—slightly, but immediately appealed with, "Then, Mr. Morris, for the sake of getting down to brass tacks, you lay modesty aside and admit that you're the best builder of 'em all."

"All I'll admit," qualified Mr. Morris with an embarrassed cough, "is that when it comes to hitching up gasoline to the family carriage I can see a little farther ahead mechanically than most of them probably. For instance, you'll find me putting into this batch of cars this winter some of the things that the other fellows will be putting in the winter after."

"Which is why I say," declared George, bounding to his feet, "that if Ford or Olds can sell four thousand cars in a year, by hokey, we can, even if our car does cost a few hundred more. Now, Mr. Morris, we talked last week about teaming up together and agreed that we were a team, but we didn't exactly define ourselves. Let's go ahead and do it. Let's prove our faith in our own future by organizing for it."

"Partnership?" suggested Milton Morris, not sure that he caught his drift.

"Not exactly. Not on equal terms, I mean. But here—I've been figuring it out. Suppose we organized the Morris-Judson Automobile Company and capitalized it at 250,000 shares of the par value of one dollar."

"The Morris-Judson Automobile Company,"

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mouthed the older man slowly, as if trying out both the idea and the sound of the words.

"Yes," said George, accepting the challenge in the tone with unblinking gaze, "What do you count your shop worth—just as it stands?"

"I wouldn't have the heart to ask even the Government more than fifty thousand for it," admitted Mr. Morris.

"Let's call it fifty thousand," proposed George, eagerly. "It's worth that to the Morris-Judson Automobile Company. Now, for your name and the good-will of the business, let's add fifty thousand more. Then I'll take a hundred thousand dollars' worth of treasury stock out and sell it at par. That will give us one hundred thousand dollars in ready capital. That's enough to start those eleven hundred cars on, isn't it?"

Mr. Morris nodded a sort of incredulous and tentative approval, but thought he detected a naïve omission. "But that leaves fifty thousand shares of stock still undisposed of," he observed.

George Judson's olive skin turned a deep maroon under a wide, suffusing blush. "I thought," he hemmed, "I thought that if I sold this hundred thousand shares in the open market, and if I put ten thousand cash into the treasury myself, that you would be willing to allot me that remaining fifty thousand as my interest in

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the business. That, you see, would secure control in our hands."

"Settled, by hokey!" said Milton Morris with a flourish of his long arm.

The next morning the lawyers were put to work. But the next afternoon George, instead of going to work to sell stock, drove out to Grosse Pointe to the home of Stephen Gilman. A gray silk dressing-gown wrapped the tall form of the banker, and he reclined upon a *chaise longue,* smoking a cigar comfortably and with only a patch of cotton held by adhesive strips upon a spot above his left eye to remind of the encounter with the milk-cans.

"Mr. Gilman!" George exclaimed in tones of humble delight. "I am extremely relieved to find you looking so well!"

But the banker's reception was somewhat waspish. "You realized, of course, from the moment of the accident that even the possibility of the loan was off?"

Instantly George understood. After consenting to receive him, the idea had arisen in the banker's mind that his courtesy might be taken advantage of to reopen negotiations. But—if Mr. Gilman was still holding the mere possibility of being appealed to in his mind, there still must be the faint glimmer of a hope. George saw this like a flash, and with it came a sunburst of inspiration.

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"You concede that, of course," emphasized Mr. Gilman shrewdly, as if he could not be at ease with his caller until that matter was settled.

"I could not admit that—no, Mr. Gilman," George returned quickly; "unless I would admit that you are the kind of man who, if one bank in which he trusted had failed, would thereafter never trust any bank."

"Hey!" grunted the banker, pricked with surprise and frowning again.

"I mean, Mr. Gilman," elaborated George, his eyes glowing with earnest intent to avoid giving offense, "that you are too shrewd and too discerning a man not to have gathered in our brief ride, even though it terminated unfortunately, a certain amount of faith in and fascination for the gasoline automobile."

"Fascination, fiddlesticks!" the injured man exclaimed irritably. "I'm sick to death with automobiles and with hearing about them."

"It's this way, Mr. Gilman," George explained, ingratiatingly. "We are engaged in the manufacture of one of civilization's greatest necessities. Once civilization gets it, all business, all pleasure, all comfort will roll along faster. Just that little experience of yours last night should convince you. You were injured—let us forget how—and it is an automobile that conveys you swiftly and safely to your home. It is an automobile that brings your family phy-

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sician. Everything needful from a hospital's emergency equipment is rolled swiftly to your door."

Mr. Gilman was beginning to grow restless and to look about him as if seeking means of escape. "It's no use," he said and obviously he summoned resolution. "I may begin to see what you call the 'vision' myself, but bankers and credits are concerned not with visions, but with facts. I should not feel justified in risking my clients' money upon such a vision."

"Then don't. Risk your own! We are organizing the Morris-Judson Automobile Company today. One hundred thousand shares of stock are for sale at par value of one dollar. Take ten thousand—fifty—take all of it, Mr. Gilman, and you will never regret it. I expect to sell one thousand cars next year, with nearly two hundred thousand dollars profit. That's eighty per cent on our capital in one year. Does that look reasonable?"

"No, it doesn't," declared Stephen Gilman shortly, yet his eyes were alight; there was a certain cupidity in the way in which he licked his long, thin lips. "And yet it does look to have a certain amount of basis, the way you put it."

George fell back as inevitably as ever on what others were doing in their pioneer years. "And probably not a banker in on those creamy profits

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because they were too conservative to see the opportunity! Business men see it though. Why not you? You are banking to make money. Here's something that will make money faster. Here's a chance to get in on the ground floor of a new enterprise with a block of stock as large as you want it."

Gilman's manner was peculiar. His hand had stolen up till it masked the expression of his mouth, and over the screen of the hand the eyes peered out, questioning, deliberating, hungering.

George had finished. He had said his say. Good tactics required that the banker should from this on nibble his own way into the enterprise if he would.

It was now, therefore, that real chaffer began. Stephen Gilman hemmed and hawed; he examined and cross-examined; he analyzed and re-analyzed the constituent elements in and the prospects of the Morris-Judson Automobile Company. To George the moment when the shrewd old banker definitely made up his mind was as clear as if the jaws of a steel trap had clicked. But even then it was some minutes before Mr. Gilman spoke.

"I will take ten thousand shares of your stock, George!" he said decisively, and quite with the air of a man entirely well and physically alert, he lifted his softshod feet, swung them to the floor, and stood erect, a tall, spare drape of gray,

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and stalked to a richly appointed writing desk in the corner, where he seated himself and drew toward him a sheet of heavy notepaper with embossed crest. Upon this he wrote methodically, with heavy down strokes, a communication addressed to the Morris-Judson Automobile Company, signed it, blotted it, and scanned it approvingly.

The scratching of the pen had etched certain lines of triumph into George's very soul. The blood in his veins was jumping for he understood that this was a subscription of the banker for those ten thousand shares of stock.

But in the very act of passing this signed subscription over to George, Mr. Gilman hesitated, faced his desk again, turned the leaf, and began to write upon the second page also.

The young promoter was on nettles. This writing was being done, he perceived, so as to make the addendum a portion of the stock subscription upon the first page. Gradually the ardent salesman's heart began to sink, his sense of victory to abbreviate itself. The canny financier was attaching some sort of string to his subscription—tying him up in some way.

Once more there was the agony of a patient blotting, a slow, contemplative reading, and a final approval of the document as a whole, and then with a grim smile and an appearance almost of reluctance the banker passed it over.

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"There," he said, "I feel as if I owe you something anyway. I was rather sharp with you yesterday and this afternoon, and you were very patient. At the same time you didn't kow-tow. I like a man who can stand up under attack but without being offensive."

George flushed under the compliment, greatly relieved by the speech, and tried to restrain himself as he reached for the document. The first page, as he had divined, was a written subscription for the ten thousand shares of stock, but the second page, when, without seeming too disgracefully eager, he could get his eye upon it, was something different, something astonishing. It read:

"I condition my foregoing subscription upon the agreement that each of these friends of mine listed below shall be given an opportunity to acquire a portion of the remaining ninety thousand shares upon the same terms as myself before it is offered to others."

There followed the names of some eight or ten capitalists of the town. Swiftly the significance of what had here been done swept over George. His physical sensation was a sort of chill of delight.

"Mr. Gilman!" he cried, as he wrung the banker's hand, "Mr. Gilman! That means that you've practically sold every dollar of this stock for me. Not a man of them will pass it up."

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Stephen Gilman smiled at the compliment in the deduction, at the same moment that he was lifting both hands in an endeavor to check the flow of George's stammering gratitude. Although George did not know it this transaction, as it stood, was like the character of Stephen Gilman. When he did a thing at all, he liked to do it handsomely.

"You're going against a good deal of odds," he said almost apologetically, "and I felt like giving you a boost. Anyhow, it's not automobiles I believe in, so much as I believe in you. Keep your head up and you have a remarkable business career before you, George. I predict it. I shall watch your course with interest. Don't disappoint me now, will you?"

The plea was almost fatherly—it was almost as Milton Morris had become accustomed to talk to him.

"I'll try not to, sir," the young man answered earnestly. Then he held up the list to explain a sudden eagerness to be off: "This is a trail so warm I feel I've got to follow it up instantly," he said. "You'll excuse me if I go now?"

"Certainly. Get busy. You're working for me now, as well as for Milton Morris and yourself. Get along with you," chuckled the banker, immensely pleased with himself.

But on his way out, even with the mad excitement of such unexpected success dancing in his

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veins, the young man remembered to look around for that soft Persian kitten of a girl whose appearance yesterday had supplied such a satisfying materialization of his youthful dream. He felt as if in an enchanted palace. Why, he might meet Fay; or at least see her at a distance. Failing that, he might hear her voice humming happily from some of the rooms, or her light foot padding on the stairs, or he might detect that delicate fragrance on the air which had been associated with her presence yesterday, thus indicating that she had recently passed that way and giving him delicious assurance that he was moving through the same world with her.

But none of these delightful speculations was realized and with all the brilliant prospects flecking their bright banners before him as he drove away, he still found it possible to feel cheated on that account.

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CHAPTER IX

GOSH! Gosh Almighty!" exclaimed Milton Morris in delightful amazement when George rushed with his exciting news into the little factory on Franklin Street. "Gosh! . . . You did it, by golly, didn't you? . . . Well, darned if I didn't think you would—somehow or other. And to prove that I thought so, look here, George, I've been figuring out how we could allot our parts orders to get out these eleven hundred cars."

He pointed to some memoranda on a page of scratch paper, and began to read off the names of the different manufacturers. "It's mainly the matter of assembly room that bothers me," he finally added. "I was looking at the lot next door and the three behind us. If you think you're going to get money so fast, we could stretch a corrugated roof over those lots and that would give us floor space to throw the eleven hundred cars together in."

But George vetoed this instantly. His success with Stephen Gilman had made him feel

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like a Napoleon. "Too small to do any permanent building on," he said, "but the ground is all right for temporary service. Tell you what we'll do." His mind was working quickly, and he spoke in the same manner. "Get a short term lease on those lots and by the time your parts deliveries begin to come in I'll pick up a circus tent somewhere. 'MORRIS-JUDSON AUTOMOBILE WORKS EXPANDING SO FAST THEY ARE ERECTING ELEVEN HUNDRED CARS UNDER A CIRCUS TENT.' Guess that won't be a bad press story! eh?"

Milton Morris, over the top of his steel-rimmed glasses, gazed at his young associate, wide-eyed and thoughtful, as he considered the circus tent idea. "You're so dodgasted young and immature you don't know there is any such thing as fail, do you, son?" he inquired benignly.

Four days later George was able to report to Mr. Gilman that while three of the persons on his list had declined with a superior smile the opportunity to become stockholders in the Morris-Judson Automobile Company, eight others had seized upon it with more or less avidity, one taking as many as twenty thousand shares and one as few as three thousand; but all had been taken. Mr. Gilman nodded his gratification and gave George a pat on the back.

The infant concern had now one hundred

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thousand dollars of new cash in its treasury. Milton Morris contemplated this delightful state of affairs without any special expression of wonder. He was getting used to miracles now.

"The next thing now is to go out and buy about fifty thousand dollars worth of ink," announced the Secretary-Treasurer complacently.

"Fifty thousand dollars for ink?" murmured Milton Morris dazedly and began to look for the joke.

"Printer's ink!" elaborated George, airily.

"Fifty thousand dollars for advertising?" Milton demanded in shocked tones. The equal of the value of the factory he had spent twenty years in building, good will and all, to be spattered over the country in a few weeks in one wild splash of printer's ink!

George saw the unbelief on the gray, slow-thinking face, saw his stubborn unwillingness to consent to any such programme of extravagance, and understood it. He knew he had shocked him too much by the suddenness of his announcement, but George was accustomed to use the shock method in salesmanship. It was like dynamiting solid rock. It made shoveling easier afterward. And now he began to shovel.

"You keep thinking, Mr. Morris," he reminded the older man, "in terms of this little shop. Forget it and open your eyes wider!

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See that thousand car job, over and above the hundred already sold, that we have to build. You admit that you can build 'em for six hundred dollars a-piece. I think we'll do it for five hundred and fifty. We sell them at a thousand, dealers' commission twenty per cent, leaving us eight hundred. Out of that margin of profit we allot this fifty thousand for advertising."

Milton Morris gave a fine imitation of a shudder.

"Remember, Mr. Morris," challenged George, "there are two sides to this enterprise—building and *selling* cars. It's clear you can build the cars—that's already been figured out. Success thereafter depends not upon you, but upon me—upon my ability to have one thousand purchasers standing ready with the money in their hands as you roll the cars out to 'em. That's what I want the fifty thousand for. That's what I have to have it for. Don't you see?"

"I see the gamble, all right," admitted Mr. Morris. "I see; but it's awful hard on a conservative man like me to just pitch fifty thousand up in the air when—we are going to want so—so much—Say, young fellow! Do you realize that there's got to be something like five hundred thousand dollars for payrolls and materials poured through the cashier's window in order to swing this job?"

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"But not all at once," insisted George, rising and beginning to talk, as was his custom when enthused, with hands, eyes and expression, as well as with his glib tongue. "We don't have to have that money all at once. Time, time, Mr. Morris, is to be the essence of all our contracts. First place, I'm going to ask you to let me take every one of these parts contracts and go out and place 'em myself. Time—time—time is what I'm going to demand. To begin with, nobody is going to dump deliveries on us all at once. I'm going to arrange to have so many engines, so many springs, and so forth, delivered us each week just as we want 'em. No payments for entire contract due at once, you see. Beyond that, in fact, I'm going to make all these parts people consent to a deferred payment system. The bait will be our contracts for next year, which, of course, will be four or five times as big."

"Four or five—" Milton Morris gasped.

"I'm going to push a lot of those payments away off into August and September," George boasted. "I'm going to make it clear that if they want our future business they have got to lend us some of their present-time credits. And believe me, Mr. Morris, I'm going to make them see that our business, widening out over a period of years, is going to be worth stretching a point to get an initial grip on."

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"I concede you'll do that, George," admitted Mr. Morris. "I concede you'll do that if you start." Inevitably he was yielding to the enthusiasm of the younger man and to his colossal faith in his ability to do what he had planned.

"All right, then. We're agreed on our advertising campaign," said George, and pressed on eagerly, "now the first thing for you to do Mr. Morris, is to go ahead and make an external drawing of an automobile that is a lot better looking than any one else has ever produced for anything like the money. Just make the picture. Then give it to me. I'll sell the picture while you go to work to build a car that justifies the picture."

Milton Morris called in a commercial artist to help him; and a few days later George walked in upon the head of a prominent firm of advertising agents.

"I don't know a darned thing about writing advertisements, but I believe in 'em," he prefaced. "And I know how to sell goods. Now here's the car I'm going to build, and we've made an advertising appropriation of fifty thousand dollars. You take that picture and you create a demand that will absorb one thousand cars like that between March 1st and September 30th, and our advertising account is yours. Send a man out to the factory and Mr. Morris will give him the mechanical points; then send him

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to me and I'll tell him how I turn those points into arguments when I talk automobile. That's all. The rest is up to you."

"Not so fast, my dear Mr. Judson; not quite so fast," objected the head of Cooper-Braithwaite, a largish man with heavy shoulders, a clear eye, a strong face and rimless nose glasses through which he gazed very keenly, with an expression almost of disapproval; and yet it was difficult to register entire disapproval of such a glowingly well-intentioned young person as now stood before him.

"I will go to your factory myself, with you. Mr. Morris can demonstrate his mechanical points as you suggest; then you go to work to sell the car to me. If you succeed, I'll take your contract, and sell your cars to the reading public of America. If you don't sell it to me—convince me, that is, of its sound value—I won't touch it at all."

George was a little taken back. "Is that the way you fellows work?" he inquired rather breathless.

"It's the way some of us work," returned the head of Cooper-Braithwaite, with discriminating emphasis.

"Well, it's the right way," decided George instantly.

As the time passed George was able, through his stockholders' influence, to borrow fairly

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freely from the banks. When the banks eventually drew the strings close—and they did this at a disappointingly low limit to George,—Thomas Pence, President of the Blue Lake Steamship Company and one of the stockholders interested through Stephen Gilman, generously opened his own check book.

"Stop worrying, George!" he told the anxious young man. "I'll lend you what money you need. Or quit this foolish little business soon as you can get away from it. It's good, of course, but it's little. It'll always be little. I'll take you into my steamship company, give you a block of stock, make you general manager in a couple of years, and you can stand to skim off a million before you're gray."

Pence had heard all about how George had worked out the allotment of the parts contracts; and he, in common with some others, was beginning to look upon young Judson as Milton Morris did, as a kind of a miracle-worker.

But George could say "No," to the steamship business. "Mr. Pence," he responded in that earnestly respectful way of his which always robbed disagreement of its offense, "if you think this is a little business you're a blind man. Automobile manufacture will be the biggest business in America in half a century. It'll be pretty good-sized in ten years. A million? Say, the Morris-Judson Company will do a mil-

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lion dollar business its first year!" Then he laughed at his own audacity, and astute old Thomas Pence laughed also.

"Hope so, George!" he hemmed. "Hope so!" and the way he opened up his check book would indicate that the hope was very firm.

From the time of this talk with "Uncle Tommy" as Pence's intimates called him, George began to ride entirely easy in his mind. He had grown a little tired with the strain of contest. He felt like a football player who had been playing every position on the team at one and the same time. He had smashed through the line, he had gone round the end, he had been tackled and gone down with the whole howling pack of opposing fates on top of him; yet always so far he had wriggled across the line to some kind of victory. And at last it began to look as if things were ripe for him to kick a goal from the field.

The month of May had come. That paltry one hundred cars which he had created so much of a sensation by selling in five weeks of the early autumn were manufactured and delivered two months ahead of time. The circus tent was up. It made George chuckle to see that old main-top thrusting its three centerpoles high in the air with a Morris-Judson pennant flying from each of them. And on the wide temporary floor beneath it the newest model of Milton-Morris was leaping into existence by scores.

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It was a nifty looking car, really, George admitted that; and the Cooper-Braithwaite advertising campaign had worked out beautifully. Over three hundred orders were on file now, and scores of applications for the Morris-Judson agency were coming in from all over the country, mostly from old bicycle dealers.

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CHAPTER X

SEPTEMBER 30th had come. The assembly floor was empty. The treasury was full. There was not a note in any bank. The last promise was kept—except one. And that was a personal promise of George Judson. The board of directors were gathered in Mr. Morris's office, ready to meet. Outside in the accounting room the Secretary-Treasurer walked to and fro nervously, waiting for the bookkeepers to complete the balance sheet. At length their computations were checked and confirmed to the last decimal, and alert young Percy Mock handed over a sheet with typewritten columns of figures some of which were emphasized by underscores in red.

"Shall I write the dividend checks now, sir?" Percy inquired.

"On the basis I outlined to you," answered George, with an affirmative inflection, and walked toward the inner office, scanning the figures as he went.

About President Morris and the scarred old desk there sat: Aaron Ward, short, thick, bald and fifty; Thomas Pence, balder, bluffer, older,

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but with a complexion of perennially youthful pink; and S. R. Peattie, ageless, colorless, fleshless, with a hook nose and a sticky kind of eye that appeared to adhere to any person or thing at which he looked. These were three of the friends of Stephen Gilman who had taken advantage of his stipulation and had acquired stock in the Morris-Judson Automobile Company.

"Ahem!—Ah!——Reading of the Minutes!" said President Morris, a bit awkwardly, for he was "not much on these legal details," as he was accustomed to confess to his directorate at each meeting.

George read them quickly, probably with not a soul listening but every eye staring at that sheet of paper which, with a sense of dramatic values, had been placed tantalizingly upside down upon the table. S. R. Peattie's sticky eye seemed almost drawing it toward him, as oriental thieves draw money to them by means of wax on the end of a stick.

"Approved!" jerked out Mr. Morris, for he too was anxious to get on, to have that sheet of paper turned over and read.

"Report of the Secretary-Treasurer on year's business, profit and loss," grunted Mr. Morris, and—George turned the paper over.

The respect with which these seasoned business men concentrated their gaze and prepared to listen seemed almost exaggerated, as if they

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perceived in this precocious enthusiast an embryonic captain of industry whose genius was about to disclose itself and lead them on to fortune.

"The year's business," George announced, in a voice that tried hard not to sound strained, "shows a total volume of $1,113,492.00; and the profits, after deducting all expenses for operation, payment of interest and other fixed charges and allowing ten per cent for depreciation on plant, are $214,421.62."

Two hundred and fourteen thousand dollars profit on a capitalization of $250,000.00, not all of which was represented by cash or material! It was unbelievable. For a moment there was silence. They exchanged glances with each other, sidewise or over the tops of glasses, and Uncle Tommy Pence who had believed in George so heartily and financed him so generously, could not repress a chuckle and a sly kick under the table at the sometimes faint-hearted and pessimistic and always covetous Peattie.

George passed the sheet to Aaron Ward, who glanced at it reverently, and passed it to Peattie; Peattie gazed long and stickily and passed it to Uncle Tom who, with scarce a look, handed it on to Milton Morris and drummed impatiently upon the table for the next order.

The sensation was not due to the fact that this total of profits was great. All these men were

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used to much larger figures; but the percentage of profit—eighty per cent on their investment—and made on something new and erratic and uncertain, an automobile; that was what stirred them.

"I move you, Mr. President, that a dividend of eighty per cent be declared upon the capital stock of the Morris-Judson Automobile Company," proposed the Secretary-Treasurer.

"Eighty per cent? George, you're nutty," chided Uncle Tom humorously. "Success has gone to the head. You'll need a big surplus for future operations. Declare a dividend of ten per cent; that'll satisfy everybody; and then go ahead and create a surplus for an operating fund."

"Mr. Pence," said George, rising and indicating by his manner that he was going to make a very important plea, "This is a matter of honor with me, a matter of making good, and *making good* is just now bigger than any other issue which confronts this youthful and, as I believe, growing company.

"I promised Mr. Gilman, and every other stockholder, yourself included, something like eighty per cent profit on their investment. Looking back over the year, I shudder to think how hazardous that was, but we happened to make good on it. Now, gentlemen, I want you to authorize me to take to every stockholder to

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whom I made that promise a check for his dividend on that basis."

George sat down. His plea had been almost personal. He had asked of them nothing but permission to make good on his pledged word, and he had asked it modestly but not without the suggestion of intense emotion. There was an inevitable moment of silence and immobility. Then Milton Morris, rubbing his hands nervously, feeling a bit shy in the presence of these older, richer men who had honored his office with their presence, looked round his board and urged: "George has kind of put this thing over on his own—his own heart, you might say—and I think we ought to let him do about the way he wants to with these profits on the first year. He's probably got some good idea tucked away in the tonneau of his brain right now that's better than any we've thought of."

"Hum! Humph!" rumbled Uncle Tommy Pence deep in his lake-fogged throat. "Certainly. We would anyhow. Mr. President, I so move you."

"Second," said Aaron Ward, who was rather of a seconding nature.

"All in favor?" questioned the presiding officer.

Everybody nodded, even Peattie, and he rather eagerly, as if he could not get his hands on an eighty per cent dividend too soon.

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"So ordered."

George lifted a beckoning hand. Percy Mock, peering through the glass wall and waiting for just that signal, stepped in and laid a package of pink checks before the Secretary-Treasurer, who instantly took them up and feathered their edges lovingly through his fingers. It was a great moment for young George Judson. In these checks he held the final irrefutable evidence that he was not an idle dreamer of dreams but a real doer of deeds. As if lost in thought, forgetful of an audience, he lovingly caressed those perforated edges once more, gloating a little; and it was impossible that the staid business men whose eyes were upon him so intently did not comprehend something of what was passing in the younger man's mind, and sympathize with it.

But before the silence could become more than just noticeable George had recovered himself and began to pass out the checks; to Milton Morris a check for eighty thousand odd, to himself a check for forty thousand odd—money that was now his, not the company's but his own, earned by his own energy, the product of his own investment of money and labor. He hesitated before it, color coming and going in his cheeks, his eyes arrested and clinging to the check almost as Mr. Peattie's adhesive optic might have clung. It was the concrete evidence

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of his success. Then he found and passed over the checks of Mr. Pence, Mr. Ward and Mr. Peattie.

Peattie snatched at his, noted the exact amount $12,432.12, and was about to slip it into his wallet when George stopped him.

"One moment, Mr. Peattie. I want you to give that back to me," the Secretary-Treasurer exclaimed astonishingly.

Mr. Peattie's mouth was open, and he glared as if a most astounding thing had been proposed. "Give it back!" he crabbed.

"Yes, Mr. Peattie. I want you to endorse it and hand it back to me. The company is going to borrow it from you. I am going to ask Mr. Pence and Mr. Ward to do the same. Mr. Morris and I have already agreed that this is what we will do with our checks. We need the money right now in tying up materials for the next year's business at the most advantageous figures possible."

"Then, why'nt you create a surplus!" demanded Mr. Peattie, querulously. "What's the big idea in a cleanhull dividend if you're going to take it away from us again?"

"Because, as I told you," responded George, "I am determined to make good absolutely now and always on any promise I make—you can keep the dividend or lend it to us, but I've got to have your faith, for what I have asked of you

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so far in the way of personal faith, is little to what I'm going to ask. Furthermore, this lets me out on promises to you gentlemen in the future. I promise you nothing more in the way of profits. You can make your own estimates based upon your experience of today."

"But the other stockholders?" inquired the tenacious Peattie, glaring less and growing more thoughtful, while he stretched forth a long bony finger and tapped the six or seven remaining checks.

"I am going to deliver every one of those in person," explained the Secretary-Treasurer, "to those gentlemen to whom I sold the stock with an estimated profit of seventy-five per cent or better."

"And then take them away from them again?" Peattie inquired sarcastically.

This forced a smile from George, although his mood was still serious. "I expect them to give them back to me with the same enthusiasm and upon the same terms as the rest of you."

"Well, I'll be damned!" exploded Seth R. Peattie, glaring once more round the circle. Then, reaching for a pen, he began to endorse his check. "I suppose you've got notes already drawn up, running to each of us for these amounts, and that you've got a resolution all ready for us to pass authorizing the Secretary-Treasurer and the President to sign the notes,"

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he remarked ironically amid the general scratching of pens.

"You have anticipated me precisely," confessed George, and this time his smile was complacent.

"Some day," remarked Mr. Peattie acidly, flinging down the check which had been his for a moment; "Some day young fellow, you're going to stub your toe and fall down hard—being so cock-sure about everything."

George's face portrayed distress and a great humility at this speech. "Really, Mr. Peattie," he protested. "I try not to be cock-sure about any of these things. I only think out the safe way and then I work hard, and I have mighty good help from Mr. Morris, and mighty good advice on everything from you gentlemen. Just think: from the advertising contract forward: have I ever been headstrong about anything? Haven't we always agreed perfectly about each policy?"

"That's because you're so darn smooth, you talk so round."

"Mr. Peattie!" rebuked George. "I insist you do yourself injustice. You do your co-directors injustice. It is merely that your own ripe judgment commends the reasons which I advance. If ever your judgment doesn't commend them, you will refuse to agree, I'm sure."

The young Secretary-Treasurer had a bearing

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so magnificently modest and respectful as he got off this speech, that Peattie knew he was estopped —in the eyes of his fellow-directors if not in his own. Besides he admired the young fellow greatly. "Oh, you're a wizard right now," he conceded, in mollified tones. "I hope you don't ever get to be a *was-ard* is all I can say. Most men do though. Sooner or later, the procession gets too fast for 'em."

"I wonder if it will ever get too fast for me!" pondered George that night as he turned upon his pillow.

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CHAPTER XI

THE year that followed was so full of complications, so full of striving energies, that George hardly lifted his head when the twelvemonths' business cleaned up and he knew that they had done a total of two million dollars' worth with profits above three hundred thousand dollars; but immediately began to lay out the program for the year to come and after that for still another. Steadily they were enlarging and enlarging; new machinery was going in, with new plans for enlargement of output. And they made profits too, year by year, larger and larger profits, but year by year they put them nearly all back to make more. The second year they doubled the capital stock and declared a stock dividend of one hundred per cent. Expansion continued to be the order of the day. They made two thousand, and then three thousand, cars in a year.

In 1907 the Morris-Judson Automobile Company was set to produce three thousand five hundred cars. But the panic of that year caught them in midair. Some things of which they had boasted became now their regret—almost their shame.

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Those factory walls that never stopped rising had eaten up much money. Milton Morris, honest old builder that he was, had been dissatisfied with the turn-out of what he considered was practically an "assembled" car, and wanted to build every part himself to the last screw in a fender.

But this absorbed capital at an enormous rate. It swallowed their surplus, and when the plans for the new year's business were included, it left the concern needing eight hundred thousand dollars at a time when as many hundreds would have been hard to get. The young financier found himself stretched over a barrel. He had to have credit when credit was difficult to get, and two fatalities among his friends made the situation even worse than could be made to appear in any financial statement. Just as he entered the cloud of these business troubles Uncle Tommy Pence, his faithful and generous friend, slipped peacefully out of life. They laid him away when bees were droning in the clover and humming-birds were at the honeysuckle. George mourned him and paid his tribute, but staggered on till one day, when the clouds were darkest, he turned in to the offices of the St. Clair Trust Company, where they told him that Stephen Gilman was down, stricken with pneumonia.

To learn as George did next day that Stephen

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Gilman was dying—was dead—struck him through as with a poniard of Jove. He was big enough to forget that it withered his financial hopes. He cared only that it killed a man who had been like a father to him.

He sent flowers. He wrote a note of sympathy to Mrs. Gilman in which humbly and earnestly he told her what her husband had meant to him, a struggling young business man who despite one chance meeting was still to her a stranger. By a very early arrival he got himself into a pew at Christ Church near enough to the mourning family to be able to feed his eyes upon Fay, to notice that she was growing slightly taller and with more rounded curves, but that the proud head was bent today and that the shoulders trembled from time to time. His emotions were deeply touched. He longed to crowd out from his pew and go and sit beside her and offer his heart in consolation. So daring are the dreams of love!

At the cemetery he found himself standing nearer and nearer to the mourning circle of the relatives and immediate friends. Once, for an instant, Fay, as if all at once her sorrow had become too intimate to be shared even with her family, turned from the group, her eyes fixed far on distance.

In this moment, strangely, inexplicably, as if he might have floated there, George Judson

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found himself standing immediately before her.

"I am so—sorry," he stammered. "I loved your father almost as I love my own."

The girl recalled her streaming eyes from distance at first with a start as at a stranger; then recognition came, and with it she gave a glance of grateful appreciation.

"Th—thank you!" she said, with an aspirated sob, and turned from him quickly back to her mother, while George felt himself transported from her vicinity almost as miraculously as he had come to it.

The encounter had done him great good. She had remembered him this time, although she had immediately turned away as though recognizing that he was outside her circle. But to George, indomitable and heart afire, this was no serious damper. He was still outside that circle, but not much longer would he remain outside.

Yet his career was periled now by panic conditions.

But there were two redeeming elements in the situation. One was the changed attitude of the banks toward the automobile industry in the five years since he had made his first appeal to them for a loan.

The other element was the discovery that personal faith in him was now rather widely spread. It was not only isolated individuals like Stephen

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Gilman who believed in him, but the financial interests generally looked upon him as upon a business institution whose preservation was at least to be considered.

At times of supreme emergency like this, when the business failures were listed in each day's news like the casualties of a battle, a committee representing five important banks and trust companies was appointed to pass upon the condition of the Morris-Judson Automobile Company and determine its right to be assisted as a matter of public policy. When this committee's investigations were complete, George Judson was summoned before it. He went, outwardly calm, but trembling at the knees. Was he nominated for salvation or the scrap-heap? Such solemnity argued the latter. The committee sat with grave, non-committal faces. George felt like a victim led out for slaughter. A sense of his helplessness brought a sweat of apprehension to his brow. This committee held the whole achievement of his past in their hands, from the first penny he had saved as a newsboy, to the last profit on the last car manufactured by the Morris-Judson Automobile Company.

A hand—he could not have told whose—motioned him to a chair at the long directors' table, and he sank into it.

"Mr. Judson," the bulbous-browed L. R. Blodgett, chairman of the committee and presi-

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dent of the Huron National, began—then cleared his throat with a cough as sepulchral as the tone in which he spoke—"I may tell you the result of our conference."

"If you please," said George quietly, but trying to conceal his anxiety.

"Then here it is," blurted Blodgett, as if he pronounced a doom. "This committee regards the success of the Morris-Judson Automobile Company as due to your personal efforts."

This was not a doom; it was a compliment. George wet an eager lip and leaned forward.

"If we, therefore, are to assume its financial responsibilities at this time," postulated Blodgett with a stubborn twist of the chin, "your control must be guaranteed in some way."

"Guaranteed?" George asked, almost resenting. "Why, Mr. Morris and I are the closest of friends. We strike hands before we go ahead on anything. The other directors are unanimous in supporting us."

"That is a very pleasant way to look at the world," broke in Blodgett, "but in our observation as bankers it is the unexpected which must be provided against. I have been delegated to tell you that if you will acquire stock control of the Morris-Judson Automobile Company, we will carry your loans through the year, because we believe your control is a guaranty of their soundness."

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George leaned forward across the table. His throat was choking with sensations of relief, until his mind began to stagger at the cool cruelty of what seemed an impossible condition. "Acquire stock control," he murmured, dazed and not thinking very rapidly. "How would I acquire stock control?"

Mr. Blodgett was prepared to be explicit. "Have Mr. Morris and the other stockholders sign an agreement to turn over to you stock enough to make your holdings fifty-one per cent. of the total; in other words, 255,000 shares instead of the 100,000 you now hold."

"But I—I couldn't ask it," protested George. "That would seem disloyal to Mr. Morris, the best friend I have ever had. Besides, how would I ever pay for it? All the money I have been making has been going back into the company, and to buy 155,000 shares at their real value would take three-quarters of a million dollars—more than that!"

"So far as that goes," responded Chairman Blodgett with his merciless willingness to be explicit, "if you do not get your loan, you crash, and the shares are then valueless or practically so."

George felt the futility of further argument on this point. "But where on earth am I going to get the money to pay for that stock?" he urged, bringing up the next question.

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"Out of profits," declared another member of the committee. "You can pay for this stock and be the owner of it in one year's business."

Such computations seemed dizzy, and yet George saw that they were within reason. He perceived a huge, feelingless machine operating with sure precision to make him rich. He could not stay it—could not fend it off.

"Then there's one other thing," recalled Mr. Tompkins. "The name of the concern must be changed."

"Changed?" George's face was white and adamantine. This was something he would fight to the uttermost.

"Yes," insisted Chairman Blodgett. "You are the person who is known. It is you who have made the business what it is, and won it the standing it now has. The fact of your acquisition of permanent control must be advertised by a change in the name to the *Judson*-Morris Automobile Company."

George shook his head resolutely. "I'll never consent to that. The thing behind our success is the car we build; the thing behind the car is Milton Morris. Gentlemen," and George raised his voice and stood up as for one of those stump speeches of his, "I'll never consent—it would break Mr. Morris's heart!"

George looked so doleful that Banker Jones had to smile. The other bankers smiled also.

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The gravity of the meeting seemed to have been broken up, so far as the bankers were concerned, and George decided to wait until he could talk it all over with Milton Morris. There was some informal chat around the table about details of the loan, should no hitch occur, and the method of allocating it among the various financial interests represented. George listened to and participated in this, but not hopefully. He felt that relief was being offered to him at too high a price, and it was with an expression of defeat upon his face that eventually he drove out to the factory and sought for Milton Morris. He was not in his office, and Judson eventually found him wandering round the huge plant, with a face like a graven stone, looking lost and helpless.

"What's the outlook—hey? They won't lend us?"

"They will," said George, surprisingly and rather desperately. "Yes—they will: but upon the most absurd conditions. It seems like treachery to tell it to you."

"Treachery? What do you mean, George?" and the older man's voice was steady and brave if also anxious and puzzled. He looked searchingly into his young associate's face. "I never had a son, but if I did I couldn't trust him more than I trust you. What's the matter with you, boy? Let's go in and talk it out." It was no-

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ticeable that the older man had the greater amount of poise though his mind was filled with this darkness of uncertainty.

They walked rapidly into the administration wing of the plant, and up the broad staircase to the glass-walled room which held the president's office in these more ambitious days, and to a new quartered-oak desk of mammoth proportions where Milton Morris liked to sit with blue-prints and drawings before and about him. Before this oaken plateau both men drew up chairs.

"They want you and the other stockholders to sell me shares enough to make fifty-one per cent, so I will have majority control, before they'll make the loan," blurted George.

Milton Morris straightened his shoulders. "Is that all?" he laughed. "Shucks, I've stood ready to do that since the first year's business. It's you that's making us all rich, George."

But young Judson looked almost shocked that his associate and senior should consent thus readily to the treason, and even appear to glory in it.

"But they want to change the name around too," he further specified. "They want to make it Judson-Morris."

"They do, eh?" and old Milton frowned a bit grimly, while he considered. "Well, let them! That's fair enough. You're the big man

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of the concern, George; yours is the big name. Yes; I'm for that. Make you president, hey, and still general manager; and make me vice- and office-boy? That the idea?"

"I suppose so," confessed George sheepishly.

"And if we do that, they'll underwrite our loans?" The old man's face was eager, even excited, as he sought to gain a specific assurance on this point.

"That's what they say."

Milton Morris threw an arm around the absurdly dejected figure beside him. "George!" he husked gratefully. "You've saved us. Saved us! You made this business out of a shoestring, and now you've saved it for all of us."

But the younger man was still in a protesting mood

"Mr. Morris," he began to postulate, "if ever I get this business to the point where we're out of debt and independent of the whole world, the first thing I'll do is to sell your stock back to you at what I paid for it, and the same for every other stockholder who gives up prospective profits to me."

The older man looked at the younger queerly. "George," he observed, "you're a kind of a nut. Quit chewing your thumb now and set right there and dream next year's business, while I appoint old Milt Morris a committee of one to

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run round to these stockholders and get 'em to agree to what I'm willing to agree to."

Milton Morris put on his hat and went out. George remained at his desk pondering the turn of the wheel of business fate which, while it saved his company and his associates, would in one year make him its majority owner and a millionaire. A millionaire! A far-off goal of unthinking youthful ambition had suddenly moved near where he could reach out and touch it; and mentally he held back his hand.

There remained details of the loan and the stock transfers to be worked out, but that was swiftly done, and George, now that he was titularly and actually the chief in command, operated with a new sureness and a new sense of stability. Under the impulse of this new confidence, he left his high mark of 3500 cars far behind and built and sold 5000 in the new year. His profit from this operation not only paid for his newly acquired stock, but it left him more than one hundred thousand dollars besides. Neither was George Judson alone in doing things. Milton Morris capped this year of progress by producing a new and startling model which he called the Nemo. In it the acme of perfection in a medium-price car seemed to have been attained. The Nemos became instantly famous. Ten thousand of them were built in the second year after the conversion of Morris-

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Judson into Judson-Morris, and it was plain that they would all be sold. George's dividend that year, if he drew it out, would total more than one million dollars.

He proposed coolly to build the next year twenty thousand cars; and he proposed something else!

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CHAPTER XII

DETROIT society is old and staid. Its traditions run back to the English occupation—even back of that to the French—but they run also forward to the new crop of motor millionaires, and there were always new people breaking in. Among these climbers this season there appeared eventually a smooth, symmetrical young man of twenty-six or seven, whose presence began to be noted quite regularly at dinners, dances, whist parties, and the like—a young person with regular features, a black combback, an olive skin that was ruddy in the high lights, a pair of dark but light-filled eyes, and a determined mouth which smiled easily—what romantically-minded women are apt to call a dark, interesting face.

His manners lacked the easy assurance of those to the habit born; yet they lacked it only in confidence of execution. That would come with practice. He seemed instinctively to say the right thing and to do the right thing; and, in a society where young men from sheer arrogance of birth were sometimes apt to be too bold, too impudently sure of themselves, a certain shy-

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ness—a little lack of assurance—was almost a charm.

George Judson was having his chance at last; and appeared quite well equipped to make the most of it. Since his high school days he had not ceased to keep up the habit of cultural reading—history, essays, science, philosophy, the masterpieces of fiction—and maintained a certain acquaintance with what was being said in the smarter periodicals. Seldom had a day been so long or so wearing that he did not rest his mind and feed it with some nibblings from a book or worth-while magazine. This enabled him to talk well. He danced acceptably and played a passable hand at bridge. But what commended him to the younger set was that he was a jolly devil and went in for sports. He rode, he golfed, he played tennis, and pulled an oar on the river.

Fay Gilman was fond of equestrian exercise and took it quite regularly at stated hours. "Oh, what a beautiful horse!" she exclaimed one day, as a dappled sorrel with a flash of white in the face went single-footing by. "And what a perfect rider!" Her eyes turned to follow him.

She did not know that this was a moment the rider had lived for calculatingly; that he had combed the Mississippi Valley for the handsomest of the colts of Artist Montrose, a beautiful horse he had seen at a County Fair some-

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where in the west on one of his earliest motor-selling trips; or that he had spent three painful months under instruction, to acquire that seat on an English saddle—all in the hope that he might encounter her like this and that she might make just the remark she had made about horse and rider.

Neither did he know now that she had made it; but was thrilled enough with getting a glimpse of her as he passed—in her riding suit of linen with black boots and a black derby hat from under which her eyes looked bluer, her cheeks rosier, than they had ever looked to him before.

"Why, I do believe that is the young man who was driving father at the time of the accident and who brought him home. I heard that he had made a lot of money. He was such a distressed spectacle that day in the hall."

Fay made this remark to Dean Galt, her riding companion, who loved her with a slow, cold fire and bored her by a humble persistence that was the more irritating to her because she feared she must some day succumb to it.

"Purse-proud and thoroughly disagreeable—always showing off—that up-start type!" criticised Dean, who had been incensed by what he regarded as alienated admiration, and who, incidentally, had inherited his millions. "I can't stand 'em," he concluded virtuously.

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Fay made no reply.

A day or two later she met George Judson formally at one of Miss Browning's affairs and, as she danced with him, felt something strange and indefinable proceeding from his embrace. It was not the step and rhythm. It was something that proceeded from himself and rather defied analysis. Fay was piqued that he did not ask her for another dance immediately, that she might sample the experience again and continue its study empirically, as it were. After that the tide of the evening seemed to bear him away from her.

From the time of that first dance, Fay Gilman encountered George Judson rather frequently at one social affair or another; and always he intrigued her interest; always there was some mysterious but thrilling sense of an interplay of currents between them. What piqued her still was that he seemed to be unconscious of this. Certainly he was not especially attentive to her; but showered his favors on many girls alike. This was a trifle irritating to her pride. He was the first man she had ever wanted to see around her more frequently than he was willing to exhibit himself.

Put out for a time with him, she began contrarily to make deliberate but artful attempts to attract him. To her great joy he proved instantly responsive to these. The mo-

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ment she began to show an especial pleasure in his society he began to confess by his manner an especial pleasure in hers. Being a wilful and resourceful young person with entirely too much leisure on her hands, she set out deliberately to test the lengths of this responsiveness. She proposed horseback rides at what would prove unusual and perhaps difficult hours for a man in business life; and smilingly he accepted their challenge. She proposed foursomes on the golf course with breakfast after at the Country Club and cruelly forced Dean Galt to be one of the quartet—but always herself paired off with George. She made him one of a party off for a three days' cruise on the lake in her steam yacht *Gray Gull*.

And George Judson took no banters. He lost all shyness; his clear eyes had laughter and the joy of living and frank admiration and—something else in them when they rested on her; but she could not quite fathom what.

She said to herself that she got an unusual thrill out of him because he was so unlike the other men of her acquaintance. He seemed in some ways so much older and in others so much younger than other men who were obviously of his own age.

He charmed her physically, and he ravished her imagination by the solid things which he had done and by those which he proposed to

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UNCONSCIOUSLY HE INTRIGUED HER INTEREST.

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do, of which he made no secret to her. She used to look at the walls of that great and ever-growing factory with his name upon it in letters so long and tall, and marvel to think that the man who had produced it was this so charming playfellow of hers—who now wooed her ardently with his eyes, but never with his lips.

He told her one day the story of that factory's creation out of an ideal formed suddenly in boyhood, told it with certain notable omissions and a certain lightness of manner that was assumed to mask the fact that he was talking so much about himself.

"Oh, I think that is wonderful," she cried at its conclusion. "Won-der-ful!"

"How'd you like to go through the plant?" he asked.

"Oh, I'd love it!" cried the girl enraptured. "I never had any use for an old factory before—but one that *you* built!" and she paused to drop coquettish eyes and let a fringe of dark lashes caress a pair of cheeks that to George Judson looked good enough to eat right then.

With his usual directness of action George set the visit for that very afternoon. To make the thing properly climactic, he drove Fay first through Franklin Street and halted before the shack-like structure in which he had found Milton Morris seven years before. The old wire-mesh sign was yet about it. "MILTON

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MORRIS—GAS ENGINES," it still proclaimed, though rather drunkenly, and the paint was nearly weathered from that wooden insert which had borne once in sharp black letters the single word: "Automobiles."

"That's where we began," he said; and could not altogether keep a strain of emotion out of his voice.

"Imagine!" commented Fay; and then they started out to the Judson-Morris Motor Works. She stood before its long façade in reverence. To her it became a magic—the creation of an over-tired schoolboy.

In her heart was awe of the achievement and awe of the man, as they stepped through the open portal into this clanging, screeching, cavernous jungle of wheels and belts and pulleys and strange shapes of roaring machines that somehow suggested gnashing, prehistoric monsters. And to think that this dynamic, steaming crater was the real den of the lion whom she had been using so freely and satisfactorily as a riding, dancing, golfing-partner! She was suddenly conscience-stricken and ashamed of her wilful vanity that had been mean enough to glory in compelling his attendance at her side when perhaps he should have been here.

From that hour she saw George Judson no longer as a mere romantic figure of business. She saw him instead as a sort of vulcan at the

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forge—always framed by the vast dramatic environment of that huge, thundering factory. From that day forward her respect for the young man deepened, as did her appreciation of his devotion. It seemed so much more of a compliment when George Judson came to idle with her. She was doubly grateful for it. Sometimes she had the absurd wish to reciprocate—she indulged the speculation that as George came to play with her, so she might go to work with him. The girl was a good deal mixed. Was she in love with George Judson or was she enamored by his achievements? The spell of his dominance was surely overshadowing her; and the strength of it was witnessed to by the fact that the Gilmans failed to go away for the summer.

September and late September came and the Gilmans were still at home, with, one particular day, George Judson on Montrose Boy and Fay on Princess May, cantering along a Grosse Pointe road. The zest and tang of autumn was in the air; the glory of it was painted on the trees. As they galloped, a rustic summer-house upon the lake shore came into sight, looking bleak and lonesome—so lonesome that it appealed to something in the breasts of the young people who by this time found nothing so unendurable, so worthy of sympathy as loneliness.

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They halted their horses as by a common instinct and gazed at it with a mutual interest.

"Let's go over there and sit in that summer-house," proposed George.

"Let's!" agreed Fay, eagerly as if she too found something especially desirable in the anachronistic trysting place.

They swung from saddles and George tied the horses securely. Once gained, the summer-house seemed cordially hospitable. A clump of trees, still leaved but no longer verdant, fended off the chill lake breeze and filled all the air with a tuneful rustling. A late September sun looked in through the space that had been left unscreened of vine to form a door. Upon a rough-hewn bench in this beam of warming sunshine the young adventurers sat and must have felt their souls glow warm as well.

"Remember my telling you about that talk with Charlie King and my deciding the same day to be a horseless wagon builder?" he asked, trying to be casual.

"Why, of course I do, George," she said and smiled on him, encouragingly if not fondly. "I remember everything you ever told me."

"Well, there was something I left out that happened that day—something more important."

"More important? Why, what could that have been? And why did you leave it out?"

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"Because . . . The Goat Girl!" he answered enigmatically.

"The Goat Girl?" Fay queried, not associating readily, as the psychologists say.

"Yes—you remember, don't you, one day when you and your little white goats ran away from home and an old, brindled tin-can-eater hopped on them, but a boy in a cabbage patch jumped over the fence and—"

"And were you that boy?" Fay almost screamed at him in her joy and amazement, clutching both his hands for an instant.

"Yes," he said, and held her hand playfully, "I'm the boy."

"You were an awfully nice boy, I remember that, but—rather—rather soiled—as I recall."

"No doubt," said George, but he didn't want to be either complimented or teased. He wanted to be seriously and sentimentally reminiscent; and as she was perfectly willing, he told her—or tried to tell her—the story of the place the little red velvet queen had occupied in his life, and that she—not the mere manufacture of horseless wagons—had been his real inspiration.

"And to think that you never told me before?" the girl remembered suddenly to reproach. "George! It almost frightens me. You can keep things so deep in you—and keep after what you want so forever and ever till you get it."

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"But I didn't want to tell you I was the cabbage-patch boy until you understood me well enough to know what the red velvet queen could have meant to me. And now I can. Now I guess you do."

Her eyes widened with slow wonder. "For me?" she murmured, with breath coming quickly, with lifted brows and searching, humbled eyes. "Ever since that absurd goat episode, you have been building a life for me? And you *knew* that I would be kept for you? Would be ready for you when you were ready for me. You believed that?" There was a note of superstitious credulity in her tones.

"Yes, Fay," George's voice was low and almost religious. "It was just like a faith in the universe. Just as I believed in the goodness of God, so, little woman, I believed in you." He was looking levelly into her eyes.

The girl felt first a sense of being vastly complimented as if she had been selected for some signal honor. Then she felt humbled, unworthy of such steadfast devotion through those long, and to her, careless, unmindful years.

She rose up to fly, with quick, startled eyes. But there could be no flying. She was rooted to the spot. A nebulous rainbow cloud of delicious intimacy seemed to envelop them graciously. She was in his arms without an effort—on her part or his. Her hands were on

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his breast and she was looking up into his face trustfully, expectantly even, when suddenly— the thing happened. All at once he was crushing her to him madly, and she was wanting to be crushed, her lips fused to his lips. His proposal, so carefully thought out, had been short-circuited. Love like a spark had leaped from heart to heart before the tardy words could utter themselves.

George Judson had planned it a thousand times—how reverently and how tenderly he would hold her in his arms and whisper his love to her enraptured ears—but something—the touch of her, the warmth of her, the infectious, intimate nearness of her—the long, long want of a dozen years—

After a time, rather breathless, they stared and each saw in the other's eyes a fleeting look of fright. There followed another kiss, more tender, less passionate, than the first, full of reassurance and the sweet promise of a sincere and mutual love. Almost immediately they were sitting again on the rustic bench, he reproaching himself, and she poking at some locks of hair which she felt rather than saw were disarranged; both were laughing nervously.

"I—I didn't finish—" he remembered—with obvious embarrassment.

"What is it, George?" she asked softly, with

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her hands clasped upon his breast again and a look of devotion in her eyes.

"Just this, Fay," he answered gravely. "I love you with all my heart and with all of my life, and I want you to love me. . . . Do you?"

"Do I?" she reflected aloud. "Why, yes, George, I—" She hesitated a moment, then gazed at him with a shy but enlarging smile. "Why, of course, I love you," she admitted naïvely, "now—now that you ask me," and the long lashes were lowered to her blushing cheeks. "Who could help loving you?"

"You darling!" he murmured, and gave her the slow, reverent kiss he had meant to give at first; then stood regarding her with a kind of holy contemplation. He thrilled with the greatest happiness he had ever known. It was like—like what he had thought it would be. He had won her—and he was panting from the effort as a man might be expected to pant after a twelve-year chase.

In another instant he was exulting, male-like, over his conquest. He had made this wonderful girl love him. His head straightened, a very proud feeling came into his breast, and he glanced about him over her shoulder like a man who had conquered the world—the richest, widest, most wonderful world—the world of a woman's heart; and that heart was now pulsing against his own with a steady rhythm that was

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the most inspiring drum beat to which he had ever listened. It made him somehow eager to be up and out and doing.

In his present mood there was one resemblance to that which came over him on the day when the committee from the banks had insisted that he should acquire the stock-control and the presidency of Judson-Morris. That thing was over when his mind had accepted the fact; the rest was mere detail. So now his wooing seemed over. He had won Fay Gilman. He had added her unto his life. All that remained to complete the addition were forms and ceremonies. Details. They belonged to her. He would leave them to her, for his own mind was rushing on —turning back rather from this romantic excursion.

The lovers rode side by side to the *porte cochère* of the new home Stephen Gilman had built, and together they broke to his widow, with mutual blushes and mutual assistance, the news of their engagement.

Mrs. Gilman heard them gravely and sensibly, betrayed no surprise, and offered no objections.

"I think it's a good match," she conceded frankly—"if Fay had to marry! I think it is one her father would approve of—knowing what Mr. Judson has come to."

"What he *will* come to," corrected Fay with proud loyalty. "George is hardly started yet."

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But Mrs. Gilman, at first so cool, threatened now to become emotional; she fixed sober eyes on George and lifting both her hands to his shoulders, held him at arm's length, looking as levelly into his eyes as she could manage.

"George Judson! Do you realize what it means when a mother gives her daughter into a man's keeping?" she demanded soberly, while dark, piercing eyes searched his significantly.

"I suppose not," stammered George, breaking under that gaze; "but I can try to."

"You will have to tame Fay," she conceded rather surprisingly, and remarked it with some conviction.

"Mamma!" reproved that young lady laughingly.

"But see that you do it gently," the mother urged with the mists of maternal love in her eyes. "Don't hurt her. Don't break her spirit."

It was on this same great day that George drove Fay out to call upon his father and mother. Malachi Judson, sitting in his invalid chair with stubby gray hair sticking straight up and stubby old-fashioned beard bristling straight down, with the elevated eyebrows which gave him a habitually alert expression, gazed with solemn, assaying glance upon the sparkling beauty of Fay Gilman, whose first presence had brightened the house like the entry of a flood of sunshine, and unhesitatingly approved her.

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"She's a pippin, George," he croaked solemnly, whereupon Fay laughed with joy and relief at finding herself, after such critical appraising, so whole-heartedly accepted by this funny, doom-stricken old man.

Mary Judson's manner was, of course, different. She adjusted her spectacles, took the girl's hands timidly but surely in hers and gazed for some time into her engaging countenance, with Fay blushing, smiling and even giggling in her embarrassment.

"Fay, you're a good girl," decided George's mother. "I can see that; and not highty-tighty; but you've got a job on your hands. George has always been a little bit undisciplined. He's spoiled father and me, and of course we've spoiled him. I've known some woman would have to take George in hand and break him to harness like. He's been too successful, George has, and he's stiff in the neck, but he's a well-meaning boy. Don't break his heart when you're domesticating him, so to speak, will you, Fay?"

"Mother! Mother!" protested George laughing, and Fay was laughing also at the coincidence, and wondering if this was the sort of thing that mothers always said to prospective sons-in-law and daughters-in-law. Yet she could not seem to scoff.

"I won't, Mother Judson," she declared and gravely kissed the trembling, wistful lips, but

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immediately turned to point a gleeful, mocking finger at George. "Oh, I'll bend him," she cried exultantly, "but I'll bend him gently, so gently that you won't even hear him crack."

George, proud, happy, laughing at his mother's misgivings as he had always laughed at them, flashed a wink to his father.

When the lovers got outside, they laughed again. Fay knew that it was mostly a joke, this talk about taming a husband. Why, to curb and guide George Judson would be a task so delightful that she looked forward to it with the happiest anticipations. Never had there been a man come near her who was so easily amenable. As for George, he knew that Fay, sweetest, most reasonable, most pliant of human companions, was tamed already. How foolish mothers were about some things anyway!

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CHAPTER XIII

GEORGE thought it was an early wedding which Fay and her mother had agreed upon; but his notion of an early wedding was, say, about a week from next Friday, so they could make a week-end honeymoon of it at Niagara Falls. To his complete astonishment, consultation revealed that the two ladies considered next June as an early wedding.

Next June? Nine months away! Utterly impossible. Why, a whole new season's business would have been created and most of it pushed over the hill by that time; and it was a season's business that would require President Judson's undivided, undistracted mind. George had no more intention of conceding a nine months' engagement than he had of surrendering to any one of the big business obstacles which his bustling young career had already encountered. Indeed, such a prolongation of his unmarried state resolved itself into just that—a business obstacle.

"You see, Fay, that's a big job of mine out there at the works and it's my job alone because I made its difficulties myself," he began to reason

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in self-assured tones. "Judson-Morris is a *going* concern—but it's only that. It's like a top that holds its balance as long as you keep it spinning. And that isn't all. The Judson-Morris Motor Company has to keep going in a bigger and bigger way each year. I've got to keep pushing it—keep pouring myself into it more and more—or it will collapse on me, and instead of being a great success I shall be an enormous fizzle."

Fay's doting, amused eyes looked total incredulity, plus reproach that her lover should so malign himself.

"George! As if you could ever be a fizzle!"

But George was perfectly serious. "That's just what I could be," he assured her. "And so, Fay," he concluded, putting his will into plain, blunt words, "I want to get married just as soon as possible. It's necessary, in fact."

"You old dear!" Fay beamed, seizing his coat lapels and pretending playfully to shake him by them. "I know what you mean and you're just as complimentary as you can be to put it that way, but—you're only seeing the man's side of it. See my side for a minute. Getting married is the social climax of a girl's life. It is her great moment. Being engaged—with a splendid ceremony to look forward to—the selecting of bridesmaids and their presents and the wedding colors, the gathering and the making of the trousseau—the dreaming of the

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golden dreams—why that's the most exalted time in a girl's life. I'm not going to give it up, George; not one second of it."

Her eyes had half-closed as in some blissful ecstasy of contemplation out of which she roused to fling arms upon his shoulders with admiring raptures in her glance.

George Judson gasped dumbly in an atmosphere too rare for him to breathe.

"All right," he said, "oh, all right," and threw up his hands in token of surrender.

"You dear! Oh, you dear!" she exclaimed, and soft arms drew him down to her and soft lips touched him with a warm, electric thrill that was melting in its effect. "You are the most reasonable human being in all the world," she purred vivaciously, immensely pleased with him and with herself.

And George was pleased, too. At first he counted that quick capitulation of his a victory over himself; but away from her radiance, back once more in the cold world of business endeavor, and totalling up results, he felt somehow defeated. He saw that practically what had happened was a clash of wills, and it was his will that had been broken. He was gallant enough, however, to tell himself that he was glad that it was so; and wholeheartedly he threw himself into his work at the factory.

Never before had his mind been so keen, his

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decisions so quick and sure, his mastery of business detail so complete. The steady forward march of Judson-Morris showed it. Money, money, money! flowed from his touch—for himself and for all allied with him. Such absorption in such productive labor helped the days to pass. Fay's personality, too, was so infinitely rich and varied and delightful, that it spread a spell over the whole nine months of the engagement.

True, with all this prolonged intimacy of association with Fay Gilman before marriage, with its constant revelation of new and charming witcheries, came the discovery that sometimes they had misunderstood each other completely —that words did not mean the same to her that they meant to him because of the different backgroundings of their lives—but his magnificent self-assurance kept him going with never a doubt that the most fundamental difference in character and aim would prove easily soluble in the tropic sea of matrimony.

But Fay Gilman was also becoming aware of differences, though her attitude toward them was equally superior and self-assuring. That was why she planned a long honeymoon, entirely by themselves, away from everybody they had known, and especially away from the works—a nice, blissful six months in Europe, where one by one those vague but profound differences of

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which she was conscious, might come to the surface and be worked out.

But upon this rock of a half-year's honeymoon the frail, yet heavily-freighted, bark of love threatened to capsize.

"Six months in Europe?" George's voice sank to a hoarse whisper. "Why, Fay, dear, I couldn't do it! I couldn't leave the business. I couldn't." His tone—his look of almost fright made it clear to the girl that what she had so fondly planned was indeed impossible.

He saw her disappointment, followed by an expression that was like despair. "Why, how—how then are we ever going to get on? To get things—things settled between us? Compose our differences, I mean."

"It would be better, wouldn't it?" he conceded quickly, "besides being so wonderful—just like six months of heaven. But . . . Fay, darling! It simply isn't possible. I cannot get farther away from the factory than the end of a telephone wire," and his face assumed that expression of fright again and his tone was graveyard hollow. "Nor that for longer than a week or so—three weeks at the most."

Fay's logic—even her wilfulness—was turned aside by such candor and sincerity. George had conceded her point, yet confessed that the long honeymoon was impossible to him. There was nothing therefore for her to do but yield. She

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did so, but all at once felt herself chilled by a shadow falling into the brightness of her bridal day. It was the shadow of the business!

He felt that he knew this time that all his intuitions had been right: their differences were none of them vital. Dealt with in sweet and patient reasonableness they could all be settled in compromise—as this one had been.

But the compromise this time had been a triumph for him. It served to reassure a nature that needed small reassurance. It was a victory to a man growing now accustomed to victory. Heady with the wine of it, he went next morning bustling to his work at the factory. After a glance at his desk, he went on his usual morning tour of inspection—a swift, hurried walk through the plant.

As he came back into his office he slanted an eye expectantly through the glass frame to where he usually found Milton Morris sitting at this hour. The chair was empty. But even while he was gazing and noting this with inquiring eye, he saw Stella, Mr. Morris's little secretary, come in quickly, stare round her in a startled way as if to make sure of something, and then walk straight through the door into his own office without stopping to knock. She had a tiny white ball of a handkerchief pressed nervously against her lips.

"Mr. Judson!" she stammered excitedly:

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"Mr. Morris has—has had a stroke or something. The housekeeper 'phoned."

"Mr. Morris! A stroke?"

"The housekeeper wants you to go right out there, please."

George Judson leaped to his feet and went rushing out of the office and three steps at a time downward to his car. As he went there came over him with a rush a sense of all that he owed to this man.

"Quick! to Mr. Morris's!" he called to his chauffeur; and in an incredibly short time, as if he had plunged in a straight arrow flight, was being admitted by the housekeeper—for Milton Morris would never come to butlers. She was a tall, angular Scandinavian type, with the natural gloom upon her countenance considerably heightened.

"He is upstairs in his room, sir—you know where," said the woman solemnly, waving George on before her and following laggingly.

He bounded up the steps, but on the floor above halted, breathless. No servants were in sight. The bedchamber of Milton Morris stood at the far end in the corner overlooking Fort Street from a broad expanse of window. This door was ajar and George approached with trepidation and entered noiselessly, expecting to find a roomful of doctors and nurses.

Instead the chamber was empty save for Mil-

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ton Morris. He lay upon the bed in which he had slept, a little on one side, his cheek denting the pillow, his finely etched features in repose, his iron-gray hair but slightly rumpled.

"Mr. Morris!" George called in a tone that trembled despite the manly quality of its appeal. "Mr. Morris!" Humbly this second time, he pleaded to be heard, and there was in his voice something of that gratitude he owed and always had been ready to acknowledge.

But there was no answer to the call; no response to the plea in it.

Stilled and awed by the silence, George touched the strong hand of Morris as it lay upon his breast. The cold of it chilled and startled him afresh; but he braced himself and still held it—tenderly, while the realization sank into his mind of what this was before him. It was Death!

Milton Morris was dead! At fifty-six he had quietly lain down to a night of rest under a burden of weariness so great that it took the sleep of death to provide repose. Such men, in modern industry, wear themselves out so soon.

Inarticulate and broken by so sudden a blow, George dropped upon his knees, his face buried in the bedclothes that formed the shroud, his body shaken by sobs.

George passed a reverent hand over the icy brow and smoothed back the locks of iron gray

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hair from it—a finely moulded forehead that, which had housed a finely organized brain. But as the young man gazed, a flood of recollections swept over him, and with it a welling up of that deep affection which he felt for this kindly, able man who had been to him half father, half elder-brother, loyal, unassuming friend, partner and fellow-creator of a great enterprise.

Dead! Milton Morris dead! His friend and associate! George Judson was appalled and staggered. Despite his vibrant young strength he felt himself suddenly bereft of all, even of his audacity.

"God! What'll I do without him?" he cried humbly. "What'll I do without him?"

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CHAPTER XIV

PRESENTLY the young man was standing again, but looking down through tears, and realizing how very much his every plan for the future and every responsibility he had assumed rested on this figure that now was still and this brain that now was numb. He perceived that under every share of stock, under every bond, under every plan and hope for the future of his work, rested the inventive and constructive brain of Milton Morris. It was that which had underwritten all—all; and now that was substracted from him.

Yet, as George Judson stood thus with weeping eyes, he felt oddly a sort of new strength being built into him like the steel reënforcement in setting concrete—felt his shoulders lifting and squaring under the added responsibilities—heard a voice saying to him: "You *can* go on. You *can* carry the double load. You *can* build somebody into the place of Milton Morris. You *can* and you *will!*"

George Judson heard this voice and believed it. He looked down upon these marble features on the pillow as at something past and gone.

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"Poor old chap! He wore out too soón!" he found himself murmuring through his tears, and it never for a moment occurred to George that he might have been to blame for this wearing out too soon; that Milton Morris, linked up with him, was like a piece of machinery coupled to an engine that was geared too high for it and that by superior speed would literally run it to pieces.

George arranged everything. As Mr. Morris had trusted him in life, so George was faithful to the last detail in death. After the last sad office was concluded, the young man had himself driven, not home, but to the works. They were empty—only watchmen were about. The great factory, unit on unit, arch on arch, space beyond space, seemed huge and void, itself some vast and lonely tomb. The office seemed most empty of all. Not a typewriter clicked, not an adding machine; not a telephone bell rang.

George made his way into Milton Morris's office. His desk was clear, save for a single, graceful spray of some white flowers; and those few, simple draughting instruments so often in the man's hands as his fingers transferred the designs of his devising brain to paper. Mute but eloquent, they testified of him who had been their master. The swivel chair was pushed up close as emphasizing its emptiness.

George Judson sat down beside this chair, as

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often he had sat when Milton Morris was in it. His eyes were on the floor. He was thinking, thinking of the character of Milton Morris and the thing that he had built—thinking that today, in every country in the world, men and women were riding about in comfort, enjoying life and the world as they never could have enjoyed it but for this man's work. And this carried the young man's thought into the future —into tomorrow.

As George pondered, there came to him one of those flashes which seem akin to genius. Give him one year of personal attention to engineering problems, and he would develop or discover the designer in his organization who could be trusted to take Milton Morris's place. But in the meantime—well, in the meantime, what was the matter with the Nemo model? Nothing! With a gasp George realized that Milton Morris had lived at least long enough. The Nemo was his masterpiece for another year. It was more than a year ahead of other cars; in some respects car design was attaining standardization, and the Nemo represented standards of which the rest of the motor world was yet to come abreast.

The more George pondered this idea, the more brilliant the conception appeared to him. He saw an opportunity for a master-stroke. He was building ten thousand Nemos this year; he

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had meant to build twenty thousand of a newer model next year. He saw this suddenly as one vast manufacturing order — thirty thousand Nemos instead of ten; but with production spread over twenty-four months instead of twelve, with expense of manufacture markedly reduced and with profits correspondingly enlarged. It took a daring courage to seize upon the opportunity in the face of certain doubts that assailed any practical mind, but George had never lacked for courage; nor did he now, although objections cropped up immediately from his own staff.

Wyckoff, of the engineering department, and John Williams, sales manager, had reservations. Norton, production manager, of course, was for it. An unchanged design was easy for him. George overswayed the objectors. When rumors of these divided councils got into the Board of Directors, he overswayed them.

One feature of the plan involved an immediate resumption of factory building. George, in a way, had begun to weary of these continual enterprises of enlargement. They entailed an enormous amount of adjusting and readjusting, balancing and rebalancing of the departments of manufacture; to say nothing of the financial burden they imposed. He resolved now upon one final enlargement. He determined to double his floor areas and establish a twenty-four-hour

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system of production that would make one set of equipment do the work of two or three.

To do all this, he stretched the borrowing capacity of the Judson-Morris plant as he had never stretched it before. His credit was better than it had ever been, and he piled a peak load upon it. This was the biggest, the most thrilling operation George Judson had yet entered upon, and never did a general plan a battle more carefully, nor, after his plans were complete, mass every reserve more skillfully for the employment of the last ounce of his strength in the final arbitrament of combat.

In the early days of this huge task, came his wedding day.

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CHAPTER XV

THE wedding of George Judson and Fay Gilman was permitted to lack no circumstance of all that was signified when the beautiful and accomplished daughter of one of the wealthiest families in Detroit society was united with a young man who, rising swiftly in the empire of business to a position of shining eminence, added to his own wealth, present and prospective, the riches of a good appearance and a pleasing personality.

The organ pealed Lohengrin. Fay came down the aisle to meet her lover with the unpainted rose of her cheeks and the sparkle of her eyes proclaiming through the veil that it was no marble bride George Judson took to wife. No sense of awe oppressed her. Audacious as youth itself, she stepped smiling into place beside the groom with not one hint of misgiving, and solemnly the service was intoned.

George Judson was transported, thrilling in all his nerves. Earnestly he listened to the minister's words. Devoutly he sought to realize their import, and believed that he did; believed that God made himself and Fay Gilman into

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one in that hour and that he and she were henceforth a solemnized and consummated union.

Two hours later the wedding breakfast had been eaten and the gay reception was over. The guests, whose numbers had overflowed Strong House and sprinkled its lawns with picturesque color, were trying to congregate *en masse* upon the tiny dock which made connection between the Gilman gardens and lake transportation. A steam whistle had sounded, and the *Gray Gull,* Fay's private yacht, brave in new paint and with bright-work gleaming, was backing into the stream. While the breach between craft and dock slowly widened, the bride and groom appeared upon the deck, waving handkerchiefs and laughing happy derision at the showers of rice and the barrage of old shoes hurled so hilariously and so futilely after them.

In ten minutes the *Gray Gull* was far out on the lake. The last flutter of the bride's handkerchief had become indiscernible, and the last hoarse shout of the revelers on the dock had died away. For George and Fay the cruise of matrimony had begun—seemingly under the most favorable auspices in the world. The lake was calm, and the steady vibration of the engines sent a tremor through the *Gray Gull's* decks, a pulsing that to the happy young couple was like the blissful throb of life itself. There was

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not a ripple on the wide lake—not a fleck of cloud in the sky.

Three days later the *Gray Gull* slipped into a berth at Buffalo, where bride and groom took the train. That same afternoon they were at Wilton Springs—a bit of wood, a bit of stream, and a bit of Adirondacks, with a golf course within easy motoring distance of the hotel. Fay, playful as a kitten, was all effervescent joy over the place and went into fresh raptures on discovering that their suite was not in the hotel, but comprised an entire rustic cottage on the hillside above, with every appointment complete. Great rag rugs covered the floor, and though it was June, there was a chill in the evening air that made the blaze in the cavernous, rough stone fireplace a thing to be lingered by, while the burning pine knots spiced the air with an aromatic quality that was indescribably exhilarating.

Meals came up from the hotel. Servants came with them and with their serving disappeared. The dinner that first night was perfect in every detail, and when they looked up from sipping their coffee, lo, they were alone.

"Alone!" cooed Fay. "Alone!" She seemed to lay so much stress on their being alone. "It was simply wonderful of you, George, to have found this dear, little, homey nest for our honeymoon!" she bubbled, and waltzing round the

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room, broke into gay little trills of song, George followed her every movement with laughing, admiring eyes.

The new day began with a breakfast served in an atmosphere made doubly appetizing by the aroma of the living pines without and the burning logs within. And again the servants retired expeditiously, again leaving the lovers to a delightful sense of solitude that sent Fay once more into trills of happy song, and out on the porch to fill her lungs afresh with the outer air and to stare upward at a pine-covered hillside that challenged youth to climb it.

"Look, George! It's daring us!" Fay cried. "I accept the challenge. Let's get on our hiking clothes and go to it. You can kiss me next upon the very top."

George, bare of head, hands in pockets, unlighted cigar in teeth, stood eyeing her eager enthusiasm with ardent approval, yet he did not move to follow her inside.

"Well, not just yet, dear," he objected. "Here comes Blakeley."

"Blakeley!" Fay exclaimed in a puzzled voice. "What is he doing here?" she asked anxiously. "Does it mean that anything has—has gone wrong?"

"No! Oh, no, dear!" responded George, touched by her quick anxiety and glad to be able to reassure her. "He is just bringing the mail

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so I can sort of keep in touch with things at the factory."

Fay Judson went icy cold. For a moment she was white and motionless. George, his eye on the man with the mail, was suddenly made aware that something was wrong, decidedly wrong, by the quick, hurt tones in which she demanded: "Do you mean that you *arranged* for him to come here? That Blakeley is a part of your plan for our—our honeymoon?"

George turned to find the blue eyes burning with reproach and threatening any moment to fill with tears. He was struck dumb with bewilderment. He had been a little proud of himself for this idea of having Blakeley join him here. It meant ease of mind and hourly assurance, if need be, that all was well at the works, so he could give himself up the more unreservedly to his love-making. Now he did not know what to say except to confess the truth rather sheepishly.

"Why, why—yes, dear!"

"Oh, George!" his wife moaned, as if he had struck her. "A secretary? *On our honeymoon!*"

She turned on her heel and flew past him. He did not need to follow her in order to know that she had flung herself face down upon the bed and was muffling the sound of sobs in pillows.

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He was shocked and distressed, besides being vastly and stupidly perplexed.

What should he do? One impulse was to rush upon that innocent interloper and kick him clear down the hillside to the hotel, him and his confounded trouble-making letters with him. But the sight of the unsuspecting secretary's earnest face, added to the lure of mail in his hand, smothered that impulse. Besides, there was a principle at stake, and as he recognized this, George's face grew grim. He would resolutely settle one thing now.

Upon the porch was a table of hewn slabs. Beside it were two rustic chairs.

Upon the table Blakeley opened out his brief-case and handed to the president of Judson-Morris Motor Company a stack of letters and telegrams.

"I brought those from the office, sir. This is the morning mail."

While President Judson glanced swiftly through this first assortment of letters and telegrams, disposing of many with a glance and a pencil-mark, concentrating upon others with a frown, Blakeley began slitting the flaps of envelopes. That was the scene without upon the porch.

Within, upon the bed, was quite another. There, face down upon the pillows, swathed in the pale blue silk of one of her trousseau morn-

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ing gowns, was the willowy figure of Fay Judson, utterly crushed and confidently expecting to be followed. She was at this instant waiting for a knock on the door. When the knock came, it was her purpose to answer with silence, but she expected thereafter that the knocker would recklessly intrude. She expected her tears to be kissed away and herself to be shaken tenderly, imploringly, until she would consent to see contrite eyes staring into hers from a distance of a few inches, while a humble voice demanded frantically to know what was the matter. She expected that and checked herself suddenly in the middle of a sob to realize that no such thing was happening.

She sat bolt upright and watched the door for the first sign of vibration when he should lay a feeble hand upon it.

And then, all at once, in this alert position, she heard his voice, not near, but away out on the porch, not trembling, but crisp, matter-of-fact, monotonous. Dictating! He was dictating, calmly reading letters and answering them, criticizing advertising copy and approving sales plans.

With her clenched hand she struck the pillow, once, twice, three times; then, with a swift, proud movement, swung her feet to the floor and began to stanch her tears—indignant tears they were

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now—and her lip was curling with a fine, hot scorn.

So she sat for a long time, disdainful—listening to her husband's voice. Not that she meant to listen or cared to listen, but as she would have listened to any sound whatsoever that was there to drone into her ears.

But presently, thus taking in the sound of that voice, she became aware that George's manner was getting nervous and his sentences jerky; that some were vague and ill-formed; that others were tactless and ill-natured; that his utterance grew more and more staccato. At length he stopped. George's voice had indicated that he was disturbed about something.

Her foolish sympathies were instantly aroused. Had there been anything in the mail to cause him worry? She felt a sudden wave of concern for him and a sense of shame and disappointment with herself.

It was at this moment that the door flew open. She turned as in flight, but too late. Her husband was beside her, his arm about her, and she was snatched violently to his breast.

"Darling! Darling!" he cried remorsefully, "I couldn't get to you quickly enough. It broke my heart to have you take Blakeley's coming the way you did. All the while I was crazy to get to you. But—but, you see, there was a principle at stake."

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She became instantly stiff and unresponsive in his arms. "What principle?" she demanded.

He explained it to her with earnest but humble and, he hoped, convincing elaboration—the principle of business before pleasure. Fay received this explanation, which was also an admonition. She was, she told herself, a sensible married woman. She saw the reasonableness of such a position, taking his business circumstances into account; yet her pride resented such reasonableness utterly.

"You see," she said, with a conclusive gesture, "that's what I meant about needing a long honeymoon. That's the kind of adjustment we have to make."

George, however, was still of the opinion that their every difference could be laughed and kissed away.

But she would not let him kiss her. "Do you know, George," she warned him soberly, "that you have a way sometimes of thinking things are settled when they aren't?"

"Why, how's that, sweetheart?" He was innocently bland.

"Because you out-argue me. Because you oversway me with the rush of your personality, and I'm sympathetic and weak and defenseless and love you so much that I haven't the heart to say anything back. You think I am convinced, and sometimes I think I am too, because

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everything you say seems so everlastingly right. But then I find afterward that my mind hasn't really surrendered at all. My opinions are just bottled up in me, and then something, something like this wretched appearance of Blakeley here, knocks the top off, and I erupt like Vesuvius on a rampage. The trouble is in part that in your large way you take no account of little things, while a woman's life is mostly made of little things."

"You're one little thing that I take account of, Fay," he teased, eyeing her fondly, coaxingly. "But you see how it is. Business has to go on, and I have to give the wheel a kick once in a while. Most natural thing in the world for you to take Blakeley the way you did. It was my fault entirely for not breaking it to you. Stood it like a thoroughbred is what you did, too. I was proud of you, every minute you were breaking your heart in here while I was breaking mine out there by concentrating on the job. Besides, it's all over now for the day."

"Let's say it is," proposed Fay, unwilling to spoil the day. Hopeful, forgiving, and impulsive, she put up her lips sweetly.

He snatched her in his arms and tried his own special treatment for tear-stains, but in the end it was found that cold water did the work better. Soon they were in their hiking clothes,

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and they left their first quarrel well behind them as they raced each other up the mountain side. Two hours later they looked serenely out upon a placid world from the bald peak itself.

But coming down the mountain, they found, was ever so much swifter and more exciting than going up, and hand in hand, like two children, laughing, shrieking, gamboling, they came —spent and utterly unconscious of the presence of other beings in their world—to where the path branched off and up to their cottage steps. Here they flung themselves panting on the sod, exhausted but still in playful mood. When this playfulness did not subside, there came from above them an embarrassed cough, and Fay, flushing, started up.

Her indignant eyes encountered, on the porch of the cottage, Blakeley, waiting to get his letters signed.

George went up to sign them while Fay remained on the sod, frowning, fuming, kicking an occasional disgusted heel in air. How she hated Blakeley! In him she saw the first personalization of an impersonal rival—a monstrous thing that would take her husband from her if it could.

"Now that's done with!" called George at length to Fay, still sulking on the sod. "Business hours are over."

"Well, I should hope so," responded Fay

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sarcastically, but deciding once more not to let the day be spoiled, grimaced at the secretary behind his back and wrinkled her nose in mock disgust at her husband.

But George's opinion and Fay's hopes were alike in vain, for that afternoon upon the golf links, when they were only at the seventh hole, appeared again this tall, round-shouldered Blakeley, doggedly clambering over a hazard and coming down to them, bearing a telegram which he seemed to think demanded immediate attention.

Fay cut the air viciously with a practice swing of her mashie and waited impatiently while George read the message. For some seconds after, he stood silent, then dictated an answer. But for the remainder of the afternoon his manner was absorbed; he seemed no more than half-conscious of the charming woman at his side. Fay was by turns resigned, mirthful, sympathetic, miffed. When the mood persisted, she grew sarcastic.

"I suppose it is my humble duty not to intrude upon great thoughts," she taunted.

"Fay!" exclaimed George, coming out of his trance with a start. "Forgive me! Intrude whenever you want to. You're a full partner, not a silent one."

"You're the silent one," she complained. "You know, George, I can't help being fear-

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fully disappointed. It shows you have no—no proper sense of the finer values in our association, to bring that man along on our honeymoon."

George did not like being accused baldly of a lack of finer perception. Few men do. You may accuse most of them of gross crimes, and they will not resent it half so much.

"And you!" he retorted. "It shows, dear girl, that you have no—no proper appreciation of the delicacies of my business situation, or you wouldn't make such a mountain of it. Do you think I'd do it if it wasn't necessary? Why, Fay," and he flung his club over his shoulder and drew her close to him; "you could make it hard for me by making too much of this. You could—you could spoil our honeymoon."

"Could spoil it? Indeed!" Her voice expressed an infinite scorn. "You have spoiled it already," she accused, and coldly waltzed herself out of his embrace.

Instantly he was conscious of extreme untactfulness. "Fay! Don't say that!" he pleaded contritely, catching her hand, and the girl-wife, with his dark eyes looking so appealingly into hers, could not resist him long. She could not be commonly irritable and quarrelsome—not now—she could not. A slow, amused smile grew upon her face as her sense of proportions was restored.

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"Very well then, dear, I won't say it," she declared. "Forgive me. What did you make that hole in, seven or eleven?"

"Eleven!" and he smiled at the stab. "As well call it eleven. I'm off even my duffer's game today."

Again the coolness between them had passed as if it had been the shade of a drifting cloud.

But each morning of their stay here, as Fay woke to the ecstasies and delights of a new day, there came always jarring into her mind the thought of Blakeley. His long, gangling form was forever coming in between them—a telegram to read, a letter to sign, a duty to remind her husband of. It was maddening. She had not married Blakeley. Was her life to be forever filled with Blakeleys?

And so from day to day, with hours of rapturous bliss and occasional moments of disillusionment or disappointment, they passed through the allotted period of their honeymoon. In retrospect, from her Detroit home, the trifling discords were forgotten. Fay looked back upon it as a perfect thing.

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CHAPTER XVI

AND yet, contrarily, Fay found in this perfect retrospect ground for forebodings. George, on the other hand, was unreservedly optimistic. His wife and his business were both together now, he could devote himself to each without robbing either.

Feeling this way about carrying his wife into his business, George felt not the slightest compunction about carrying his business into his home. As he sank deep in a luxuriously cushioned chair, lulled by Fay's low, strumming reveries at the piano, as he sat opposite her at meals, as he went with her complaisantly to golf or dinners or the theater, his business went always with him. He went into abstractions over it and came out to tell her enthusiastically at length, or monosyllabically in brief, jerky sentences, things that he had thought, ideas that had come to him; and then relapsed into others.

But Fay soon ceased to regard these as forgivable eccentricities. She found in them signs that business was absorbing him more and more completely, and began to feel the worm of resentment gnawing. In some ways she saw less

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of her husband than she had of her lover. It was never so easy for him to arrange a morning canter. It was never so certain that she could get him out to the links or away on the yacht exactly when she wanted him. A point was presently reached where her dissatisfaction broke out in petulant protest.

"But, my dear!" he reminded her with wide, surprised eyes. "My dear! We're married now."

"That's exactly it, I suppose," she retorted bitterly.

"But my job—" he began to argue, and she cut him off to demand satirically,

"Did I marry a man, or did I marry a business?"

He was hurt and perplexed and afraid to try to carry forward the argument. Besides, there was a reason now why he must not argue with her or get her excited. But he still had ideas that refused to stay battened below decks in his mind.

"Fay," he began one day, with a tender light in his eye, "I want my son born in my own house."

"Our son, I suppose you mean," corrected Fay with a soft, averted glance and a blush, for the idea, in vital and inevitable form, was still new to her.

"Our son," he smiled, acknowledging the cor-

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rection, "in *our* own home. One that I've paid for with money I made myself; a house that you and I have planned with our own minds, just to express ourselves and our own ideas for us —and for him."

"Why," chirruped Fay with a little cry of delight, "why—that's a lovely thought, George! Perfectly lovely."

"Let's make a house that isn't Romanesque and isn't Gothic or Georgian or anything but just modern and attractive and comfortable and cheery and cosy," elaborated George. "It couldn't be so big as this, not near, for I haven't got the money to build one—and it couldn't be on as fine a site as this, for I haven't the money for acreage on the Grosse Pointe front. It could be down nearer to the Indian Village, say."

"But when I have so much money, George," she intervened, "when *he* is to be *ours,* wouldn't you think it would be fair to let me at least buy the land our house would stand on?"

George paused a moment. He wanted to do it all himself—he really did; but in such a moment and over a project like this he could not be ungenerous. "Why, certainly: that would be fair, Fay—only I'd ask you to make it a modest lot—in a modest location. You see, dear, I figure that about a hundred thousand is all I can spare for house and decorations—decorations, of course, including furnishings—and you

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can't get much of a house in your set for that."

"We could do very nicely with it though," admitted Fay, feeling a luxurious sense of self-satisfaction in thus committing herself to a program of enforced frugality. "It would be such fun being modest and economical for our boy's father's pride's sake. But only a hundred thousand! George—aren't you a millionaire?"

"Of course," assented George. "Several of 'em another year; several more of 'em when the Judson-Morris Motor Works stops expanding and strikes a normal gait where I can get my money to stand still and let me count it. This year alone my dividends would be seven hundred thousand if I could take 'em out, but I can't. I'll have to put back every bit over this hundred thousand. We must live on my salary."

"While my money goes right on piling up, with never a thing to do with it, except to use a little of the interest for pin money," his wife pouted. "It's a continual temptation to extravagance, and it makes me feel so useless, so superfluous, George! Sometimes, with all this everlasting expansion out at the Judson-Morris show, you're skimping for money, I gather, and sometimes scrambling madly for it. Why don't you take my money and put it out there?"

"Your money?" George jerked out the query. The idea seemed to come like a shock to him. "Your inheritance in the Judson-Morris hop-

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per?" Then he shook his head quickly with just the faintest suggestion of the air of a man who hastens to put away temptation. "No; I wouldn't feel comfortable—not in investing your money there."

But why wouldn't he feel comfortable? he asked himself, the instant he had made this kind of response, and Fay, not so much because of her husband's decision as because of the manner of it, was questioning also, but aloud:

"Sound—it's sound—the Judson-Morris Company, isn't it?" she asked. "The money would be safe, wouldn't it?"

"Sound? Safe?" George jeered at himself, and he laughed at her. "Secure as the future of the automobile," he declared.

Again his manner was cocksure and his confidence as firm as Gibraltar. The wife was as convinced as her husband.

But while this fond project of nest-building swelled George Judson's heart in moments when he could think of it, the sum total of his business energies was being absorbed by that most audacious and hazardous enterprise of a bold and daring career, the attempt to carry the Nemo model unimproved through a second year and double its total sale at the same time. It was understood by all that he staked not alone his reputation, but his fortune and the future of the Judson-Morris Motor Works. And who

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was there to hold back when their leader dashed so far out in front?

But abruptly this air of confidence began to be vitiated. This devitalizing appeared to be directly traceable to the January automobile shows, where the Nemo model of a year past found itself now set up in comparison with the showings of up-to-the-minute models and designs of other manufacturers. To some Judson-Morris men the Nemo model appeared not so far ahead of the others as they had thought; there were, indeed, those who felt that the Nemo was not even abreast. Such men recalled their earlier doubts and remembered their first misgivings. Brooding these a while, some were moved to write in to John Williams, General Sales Manager, about them. Some of these letters complained of the "old style planetary transmission," and some talked about the "old-style lines of the car."

John Williams, with faith in his president quite undaunted, showed a judicious few of these letters to George.

"Croakers!" the president denounced fiercely. "Fire 'em. They don't believe in us. Fire 'em. Get new agents."

But John Williams was getting more letters every day, and he could not fire a whole distribution system. Near-by agents did not trust to mails but came in and talked to John. The more

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important of these the General Sales Manager passed on to the President.

But George, more politic when he met these doubters face to face than when he only read their letters, was nevertheless quite unyielding. He laughed at them, he taunted them, he challenged them, and it was a tribute to his own ability as a salesman that he actually resold the project to these men over their doubts and in spite of their fears. He made them doubt themselves instead of doubting him and his enterprise. Not a man of them but went out pinning his faith once more to the Nemo model and with a half-chagrined smile at himself for ever having wavered.

Fay was surprised, one night, while sitting on her husband's lap, to notice lines of care etching themselves into his forehead.

"You stick too close to that old shop," she warned. "You must come with me for a long drive tomorrow."

"All right, sweetheart," he said with an agreeableness and a smile that gave utter denial to the idea that he was overtired or worried.

And he kissed her every fear away—until one day Maidie Huffler thought to brighten her period of enforced seclusion by a little well-meant sympathy.

"Isn't it just too bad about George over-staying his market that way?" she began.

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Fay, though startled by her tone and quick to discern that Maidie thought she had hold of some sort of bad news, was quicker even in her pride and loyalty. She laughed aloud and merrily.

"Overstayed his market?" she derided. "Say, Maidie! Any time George Judson overstays his market, you just tell me, will you?"

The challenge in Fay's voice and manner was thoroughly dislodging to Maidie's assumed position.

"Oh, then," she inquired, a good deal less certain of herself, "then it isn't as bad as they say?"

But by this inquiry she carried a quick flutter to Fay's heart, for it assured the wife that "they" must have been saying something very bad indeed. Of course this connected instantly with the sleepless nights and the care lines in his face, but she would no more allow Maidie Huffler to know that she was ignorant of the details of her husband's business than she would permit her to suppose the slightest shadow hung over the bright prospects of Judson-Morris.

"Serious? Maidie! You always were credulous!" Fay laughed satirically as well as convincingly. "Tell me, child," she urged teasingly, "who has been spoofing you now?"

Maidie crimsoned slightly. "Oh, nobody in particular," she insisted apologetically. "I just sort of heard it whispered round that he had a

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big sales campaign on and that it—it wasn't working out quite."

This gave Fay something to take hold of, and her rejoinder was quick, stout, and cunning. "Is that it?" she responded with a superior smile. "Well, Maidie, perhaps you don't happen to remember—of course you wouldn't know it as we do—but every time in the past when George was putting over one of his coups there was always a flock of croakers sitting round and saying it couldn't be done. And while they were saying it couldn't be done, George was going right ahead and doing the thing. That's why he's—why he's George Judson," she concluded, radiantly triumphant.

Maidie felt fairly deflated, and conceding the case against herself, could only be mildly waspish with, "That's why you're Fay Judson, too."

Fay flushed, but preserved her *sang-froid*.

"You can't see me the wife of a business failure, can you?" she inquired coolly.

The two girls kissed, and Maidie went her way—wondering. Fay remained behind—also wondering, although her argument had quite convinced herself, and it was really more than ninety-eight per cent curiosity and an opportunity to be playfully subtle that made her inquire that night,

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"George, what does it mean to overstay one's market?"

George looked puzzled. "Why, uh—why?" and he hesitated, frowning—frowning as if he were going to shunt her off, but she would not be shunted.

"That's what they're saying about you, dear!" she accused him sweetly. "That you've overstayed your market."

The frown blew up in a quick burst of laughter. "They are, are they? Ha, ha, ha!" And George roared long and loudly—long enough to get plenty of time to think. Then he explained volubly. "It means, my dear, that some people are getting envious—that the wish is father to the thought—that I saw something before they did, and that I'm about to clean up on it—two years' profits in one twelve months and a little better. Overstayed my market. Ha, ha, ha!"

An expression of glorified relief sunned itself on his wife's face.

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CHAPTER XVII

ON the morning after that query of his wife's about the overstayed markets, President Judson sat alone in his office, to brood, to ponder, to read disquieting telegrams, and to digest irritating typewritten pages.

John Williams came in. "Chief," said he, putting a good deal of affection into one of his favorite forms of address for his president. "Chief! Hadn't we better turn back? Now, honestly, hadn't we?"

"Turn back?" snorted George contemptuously. "There's nothing in it in this world for the turn-backs. Suppose Columbus had turned back. Think a minute, John," and George laid a hand cordially upon the shoulder of his general sales manager. "Study the history of every successful enterprise in the world, and you'll find there came a time when everybody wanted to turn back—everybody saw failure ahead but the leader. Turn back? Not on your life. We're going on, John. We're going on to victory!"

George lifted his hand high as he lifted his voice high, and then he smote John Williams resoundingly with that uplifted palm, and thereafter waved him out of the room.

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In the midst of this crisis, the shadow of pain fell upon his darling wife. Gallant little Fay, triumphing over agony, looked forward exultantly almost, but George, clinging to her soft hand, felt the warmth of it grow less, felt it plucked at mysteriously as by the tuggings of an unseen current, and was chilled to the heart with fear that she was gone from him forever—chilled and rebellious until at last, as in quiet after storm, he saw her drift back to him across an eddy of unconsciousness, paler but more divine, resting exhausted amid her pillows.

"Our son," she murmured, with an ecstatic, crooning note in her voice. "Our son, George Junior!"

But at this time George Judson knew himself in his heart for an unnatural father. He clung softly to the hand of Fay and kissed it, but had a grudge against this tiny, breathing bundle, for he felt that it had very nearly deprived his life of the dearest thing in it. With passing hours, however, this feeling began to wear off. It went away entirely on that day when four small, lace-work fingers fastened with a clinging grip about the exploring forefinger of George Senior, and refused stubbornly to let go—held him as if thereby he adopted him.

"By jingo!" crowed George. "He knows me. He knows who he's got hold of, and he just isn't going to let go."

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This was an enormous moment for George Judson. He never did forget its sensation.

For weeks thereafter he was liable to break off his task at any moment and go rushing out home to see little George and insist on having him hold his father's finger. "Great, isn't it? Great!" he would grin at his wife, at the nurse, the doctor, the pictures on the wall, at anybody who happened to be round, and especially at George Junior.

And yet for all his happiness through the child, motherhood had not quite resolved itself in Fay as he had expected. Within three weeks of Junior's birth Fay had disillusioned her husband by a sort of return to girlhood at a time when he had expected her to take on more matronly ways.

"You old dear!" she laughed at George's first hint of mild dismay. "Mothering comes first, of course, but it isn't all of life. I'm going to go and go and go, George, after four or five months in prison. It seems as if I could never catch up with bridge, and teas, and dinners, and the whole social whirl. Just as soon as the doctor will let me, I am going back to riding and golf."

George, though disappointed, found himself too generous, too fondly indulgent, to protest at anything which gave pleasure to his pretty wife, who to him was charming even in her wilful-

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ness. It only hurt when she made importunate demands upon his time which he could not by any means grant, but even then he reproached himself—never her; it was only when, with a saucy pout and an impish toss of her pretty head, she intimated that she always found at the club plenty of men perfectly willing to act as her escort, companion, or partner, in case her husband did not find time to do this, that George lost his temper.

"Confound those loafers," he complained. "A job is what they need, I tell you. Fay, every man ought to be compelled to do a certain amount of productive work every day of his life—ought to have some job that claims him. These fellows wear good clothes, and they have good manners, and they're darned fine fellows, but I tell you they're nothing more than hoboes."

Fay, admiring George always when he was flaming—and not directly at her—was greatly amused by this outburst. With a savage growl and then a quick, penitent kiss he turned from his wife and her after-breakfast chatter, and, as he set out for the works, all thought of her drifted from his mind, for just now the mad project of the Nemo model in its second year hung like a millstone about his neck.

That it *was* mad, an array of figures compiled by Percy Mock succeeded this very day in convincing him. And yet George took it so

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calmly, when the supreme moment to confess defeat arrived, that he did not seem to confess it at all.

"Ah-hum!" he said, as if clearing his throat of something—swallowing a lump, perhaps—and passed the sheet back to Percy, and got up and went out alone into the works.

But while "Ah-hum," an inarticulate grunt, was all that he said, yet Percy, having known George Judson well for now nearing eight years, was sure that he interpreted the grunt aright. He rushed in and told John. John Williams let out a cry and came hurrying—to see the empty desk. He went back to tell somebody else, and Percy Mock was already telling other somebodies else. Within ten minutes at the outside, every chief of a department, every responsible employee in the business offices, knew that George Judson had admitted his colossal blunder.

George meanwhile was emphasizing his situation to himself by a swift tour through the works. He was saturating his mind with the conditions he had to meet, and asking himself bruskly, "What'll I do first?" His warehouses were filled to bursting by completed cars. His shipping sheds were congested with them. Even his assembling floors were so overcrowded that the men could hardly work. And every day the switch engines pushed long trains of material

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into his plant. Axles, axles, forever axles! Transmissions, transmissions, forever transmissions; those accursed transmissions which, because of a fatal difference between the old planetary form and the new device of the sliding gears, were declared to be hopelessly out of date. Milton Morris would have had that sliding gear in his model of 1910, but Milton Morris was dead.

The president of Judson-Morris walked back into his office with a quick, alert step. Grim, but without a quaver in his voice, he issued terse orders, knowing well that the edifice of hope must fall and fall quickly to avert a worse disaster. At one slash of the pen $200 was cut from the price of the Nemo model. Within five minutes the telegraph was ticking this message out to every agency, and before the agent in San Diego had received his, the advertising copy announcing the cut was being flashed out, also by telegraph, to a selected list of newspapers at strategic points throughout the country.

George Judson sat, with sweat upon his brow, in the midst of all this vibrant energy which had suddenly been turned loose in an effort to save what might be saved from the wreck of his plans. He knew that by the stroke of that pen he had cut the profits from his twelve thousand unsold Nemos and that only events could decide whether this cut would be sufficient to move the

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goods and forestall catastrophe. If it failed, not merely the writing off of prospective profits, but the writing in of a loss, was inevitable.

It was only when all that could be done that day had been done, and he turned away from his office homeward bound, that the great, crushing sensation of defeat seemed to come down upon him with full force. He felt a yearning for his beautiful wife that was different from any he had ever felt before, a yearning for her because he was weak and she was strong.

So George felt that he wanted to weaken into the arms of Fay tonight. His pride was willing to forego itself; to permit her to see him sapped and humbled; if only he might know the luxury of her outpouring sympathy and listen to a thousand crooning terms of endearment sprinkled into his mind as she sprinkled kisses upon his face. He told himself that he would never know how noble his wife might be until he flung some of his burdens upon her. This night he was resolved to jettison his pride and tell her all. He urged his chauffeur to faster and faster speed, but when he got to the house and rushed within doors, they told him his wife was not yet back from a tea at the country club.

A tea at a country club!

George shut his teeth together hard—indeed, he hardened all over into something as stiff as a post. Disconsolate, he went upstairs to Junior,

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yet it was not a baby to hold his finger—it was a woman to hold his heart—that George Judson was wanting. He touched the soft cheek tenderly and turned restlessly into his wife's room. It was redolent of her; it breathed, it cried out of her; it was a sacred place to him. For a moment he stood and did it reverence.

But his devotion was brought to an end by the whir of a motor below, and he went down the stairs three steps at a time and out on the front porch. Fay was just being helped out of a strange car by a strange young man wearing a cap and an air of indolent grace—a foreign looking person, George decided instantly from his knowledge of local types. The stranger's manner was particularly attentive to the lady, which seemed natural enough, for Mrs. Judson in white, plaited skirt and striped blazer jacket, with a white, soft hat having a piquant dash to the brim, looked particularly vivid and fascinating.

"Oh, George," she cried as her husband appeared. "Come here and meet Sir Brian Hook."

"Sir Brian!—Oh—ah!" stammered George, who had come running down the steps to find himself confronting a pair of gray-blue eyes, a close-cropped mustache, and an agreeable if tentative smile, all on a good-looking face of apparently about thirty years of life's experience.

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"Awfully kind of you to bring my wife home!" the husband said.

"Pleasure, I assure you," murmured Sir Brian, surveying Mr. Judson with unhurried self-possession.

"Won't you come in?" proposed George, cordially.

"Thank you!" said Sir Brian, but he moved toward his car as indicating that his time was limited. From the side of it he turned his blue eyes upon Fay with a smile of entire approval.

"My word, but you're a jolly good partner!" he said. "I should like nothing better than a rubber with you tomorrow if you are going to be at the club."

"Which is just what I am," beamed Fay with hearty assurance. "My husband failed me today, but he'll be out tomorrow, and we'll make it an international sweepstakes."

"Can't make it, sweetheart," confessed George ruefully.

For a moment Fay's face expressed a sweet petulance, then with the air of swift reconciliation to such disappointments she declared: "That's too bad, Sir Brian, for my husband has a wonderful mind for bridge—such concentration as you never saw; but," and her face brightened, "I'm certain to be there. Substitutes for husbands are plentiful these days!"

She laughed, and Sir Brian laughed. George

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also laughed, after which Sir Brian stepped on his gas and went roaring away from a standing start with the eyes of Fay Judson following him out of sight.

"I do believe Sir Brian likes you, George!" enthused Fay, pulling her husband down to give him a kiss in plain view of any passer-by. "Come on!" she added. "I'm crazy to see Junior; always am when I've been out."

George bounded after her.

"How did everything go at the office today?" Fay asked, when after a time she gave the baby back to its nurse and another sort of consciousness came over her—a sort of husband and sweetheart consciousness. It was her stock query always to his home-coming.

"Well, a rather—" he began, feeling his words, when suddenly there came before his mind that picture of the man from whom his wife had just parted—the agreeable young Englishman, with his air of indolent grace and his manner of such impregnable self-assurance. Should he, George Judson, invite unfavorable comparison with that? Should his wife turn from the glamour of a titled and socially accomplished expert to be disillusioned for the first time concerning her husband—to look upon a harried, sagging, ignoble figure of a man in need of understanding and seeking consolation? She should not—decidedly, she should *not!* In an

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instant pride had roused every drooping feather of the spirit of the motor magnate.

"Oh, at the office?" he broke in upon himself, with an affected frown of annoyance, as if it was with difficulty that he brought his mind back to plain thoughts of business. "Oh, you know how it is—a big organization like ours, with a big enterprise on hand like the Nemo—trouble of some kind is always sticking up its head somewhere along the line."

It was skillful acting. His tone rather than his words had permitted his wife to discern that this had been a day of fairly heavy responsibilities, a day of business battle with surprise attacks and hard-pressed drives, but that he had casually and powerfully resisted all and remained calmly in possession of the field.

"Come," she invited, leading the way to her own room. "You sit in the alcove there and look out the window and talk to yourself while I take a splash and slip into something cool. I want you near me."

That was in itself a fine and soothing compliment, the effect of which was not entirely dulled even when it appeared that she wanted him near especially so that she could prattle about Sir Brian Hook.

George was by this time willing to concede that Sir Brian must be quite a fellow, but silence came on abruptly without his opinion being so-

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licited. Nor was it as though the stream of information about the Englishman had gone dry. It was merely that Fay's bath was ready; she had gone, and George was left alone to stare musingly out the window while a maid was in the room laying out garments, with sounds of splashing water and then the patter of a shower issuing from around the corner. The husband's mind was at once inevitably back upon his business. He was reviewing the situation, analyzing his recent response to his wife's inquiry, and reasoning that he really must break the news of real conditions to her—in justice to her he must, and now was the time.

But it was with a start of fear that he realized her presence in the room once more. She was darting to and fro between the laid-out garments on her dressing table and the cheval glass, uttering the while those little bursts and trills of song that marked her more ecstatic moods. Once or twice she burst out whistling. How he did like to hear her whistle!

"Pretty mean kind of runt, a man is," he decided, "if he's got to come home and spoil his wife's happiness by babbling about his business troubles. You bet I won't tell her."

Yet he hurried to the office the next morning with a consciousness of having missed something —a boon which his wife might have supplied to him and had not. Unreasonably, unknown to

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himself almost, a feeling of resentment against Fay for that failure was taking substance in his breast. She was still sleeping calmly as he left his home feeling neglected, forlorn, and slightly touched with self-pity.

News! News of the campaign was what he thirsted for. There should already be a stack of telegrams on his desk from the eastern agencies —from them first because of an hour of difference in time. But the office had an empty look. Round him one sweeping glance through the glass partitions revealed only unoccupied desks. In irritation and amazement, the president of Judson-Morris looked at his watch; and then he understood. The time was but half-past seven. His anxiety had got him here ahead of all the staff. Naturally, therefore, there were no telegrams awaiting him.

But very soon he became aware that the offices were coming to life around him; doors opened and closed; stenographers, clerks, accountants, principals, began to arrive; roll tops shot up, drawers were opened, and filing cases. This showed to the lonely watcher that like himself others were anxious and eager and slipping in ahead of time; he was grateful for their solicitude. Blakeley appeared, looking abashed to find his employer down before him, and a few minutes later telegrams, unenveloped, just as they came from the factory wire, began settling

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one after another, like large, yellow snow-flakes down upon the president's desk.

The chief executive of Judson-Morris scanned these, first with eagerness and then with satisfaction. They carried orders for Nemos at the new price—a dozen here, twenty there, a hundred yonder, and George was eagerly penciling the totals, as men total election returns.

Big orders began to come in—great, ringing, hopeful messages from the Atlantic seaboard. One thousand Nemos at the new price were accepted by Philadelphia, eight hundred by Boston, four hundred by Baltimore, two thousand by New York.

But from the Middle West, that great absorber of medium and low-priced automobiles, and from the wide Pacific coast, there was only silence—except in isolated instances. Telephone calls and flash messages of inquiry plunged impatiently into this silent territory brought only pessimistic response with pleas for more time to let the trade express itself and plain intimation that the cut had come too late.

But the waiting, the watching, and the hoping continued all day in the office of President Judson and on into the night. It was resumed upon the second and the third day, but upon the fourth even George Judson himself had to confess that the first-day voice out of the Middle West was right. The cut had come too late;

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the season was too far advanced; the finished cars might all move, but the unfinished cars—the ones for which parts had been contracted—engines, wheels, axles, and bodies—the carloads of which were pushed daily into the factory yard and checks for which went gayly out from the cashier's desk in a constantly fluttering and dreadfully draining stream—these built but unassembled cars could not be sold.

It was not merely an operation without profits which George Judson faced now. It was a loss—and the only question was, How great a loss? Pale, perspiring, feeling a little touch of dizziness for a moment, George acknowledged to himself the truth. He had been beaten. Actually beaten!

But again he was quick and resolute to act. He had now to confess defeat in the least disguisable way for a manufacturer. He shut down the shop!

This was done so suddenly it was dramatic. He did not shut down next Saturday night. He did not shut down tonight at six o'clock. He shut down now, at 3.40 o'clock in the afternoon. He did not want another piece of material wasted—not another ounce of steel or rubber or aluminum or brass turned into a thing on four wheels that could not be sold at a profit. So he ordered the fires drawn and the power turned off.

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Seven thousand men were out of work.

Out of work! George Judson, staring moodily out the window of his private office in a corner of the administration ell, had a chance to read something of what that meant in the faces of the procession filing out with lunch-boxes or dinner-buckets on their arms. He had often taken pride in watching these well-fed, well-paid workmen of his pass under that window; taken pleasure in their contented looks and admired the air of businesslike independence with which they bought their evening paper and then fought for places on street cars or cranked up their own automobiles and drove away.

Now he might have spared himself, yet some morbid fascination urged him to watch this gloomy picture.

Once in a while a face was lifted to stare at the windows of the administration wing, and perhaps some of these saw George gazing down at them so glumly and knew who he was. Whether they saw him or not, he fancied a look of accusation upon these occasional upturned faces. It was as if they complained because they had had no voice in that control which had brought calamity upon them. Workingmen were concerned in the results; they ought to be consulted in the planning: that was what George read in these upturned faces; or perhaps it was in the air and he caught it like a radio message;

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or possibly it was merely on the outside of his own mind.

"God! What a mess I've made of things, haven't I now? Haven't I?" So the president of Judson-Morris accused himself bitterly.

But he had made other messes elsewhere. In the same minutes when he had been shutting down the shop he had been also flashing out messages to every concern that was manufacturing parts for his old model Nemos, ordering instant cessation and canceling his buying orders with the present deliveries. These telegrams would mean within a day or two at most other lines of men like this marching out of other factories, and George had that picture before his mind also as, an hour or so later, he passed disconsolately out of the factory door.

As he turned his car toward the Indian Village, sickening sensations of awful failure bore down within him, and that yearning to indulge himself for once in delicious depression of spirit before the woman he loved came upon him as it had a few nights before. He took a melancholy pleasure in the planning of an evening in which, he fondly dreamed, a sympathetic and beautiful woman would rise to heights of consolation that should make his hurts seem priceless treasures.

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CHAPTER XVIII

BUT Fay met him at the door in her jauntiest riding costume—the linen one with white boots—and wearing a flat-crowned panama hat with a blue-and-white striped band and a dashing roll to the narrow brim.

"Oh, George!" she effervesced. "I've just prevailed upon Sir Brian to stay and dine with us tonight, riding togs and all. We've had *such* a jolly afternoon that I simply couldn't give him up."

Although the thought of a stranger at his hearth-side tonight was as the thought of salt in an open and sensitive wound, what could the husband do? His was not the heart to damp such beautiful, glowing ardor as his wife's, and besides—Sir Brian! What was there about that man to make George Judson instantly brace and preen himself like a fighting cock?

"Perfectly fine of you to accept, Sir Brian." Stepping forward, he offered a hearty hand.

"Awfully kind of you and all that sort of thing," smiled Sir Brian.

Now it was perfectly true that Judson was glad to see more of Sir Brian. But tonight! It

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was enough to make him hate the man forever. Yet George rallied astonishingly. Youth can often do that.

"This fellow is a thoroughbred," George meditated. "I can imagine just how his inherited pride, with all that ancestor stuff in his mind, would get away with a situation like mine. You'd never know he was sitting on a red-hot stove. Well, I'm a thoroughbred, too. Watch me!"

The dinner was from every point of view a triumph. It was a triumph for Sir Brian, because he retold his tiger story and added many other exciting events of a very active and widely traveled life. It was a triumph for Fay, for she was never more beautiful, more vivacious, or more capable of stimulating the admiration of mankind. And it was a triumph for George Judson because, despite the hollow feeling in his chest, he arched it stoutly against terrible external pressure from most unhappy circumstances. He was witty, entertaining, cordial. Fay was especially proud of him. She had never heard him talk better. He manifested a perfect breeding at all points.

As for the woman, she sparkled and scintillated with brilliance unusual even for her. The fact that her husband was present to witness the effect upon this presumably seasoned appraiser of beauty seemed like a challenge to her to exert

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her every charm. Colorful as a tiger lily, soft as ermine, warm as vital life is warm, she cast her glowing spell, and George Judson was proud—excessively proud—that he possessed her and that she was proud of him and flaunted that pride before their guest.

He had already made up his mind that, Sir Brian or no Sir Brian, he would not tell her about his business situation. Her faith in him as a superman was too fine, too enjoyable, too necessary to his influence over her, to spoil it by confession of unpleasant facts. He would have to tell her something, of course, but not that. Reflecting upon just what he should tell her, he fell out of the conversation without exactly being aware that he had done so.

Fay and Sir Brian continued to talk animatedly—not privately, not confidentially, and yet a conversation in which only themselves were interested. But suddenly Fay roused her husband from reverie by breaking out vivaciously like a child with a new plan!

"Oh, Sir Brian hasn't been out yet on our beautiful Lake St. Clair. Suppose we take him for a run tomorrow. We could, couldn't we?" Her note of cheery proposal was the very essence of partnerly pride and loyalty; yet to George the proposal was painful—if for no other reason than that it reminded him that there must be a tomorrow.

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"Couldn't make it tomorrow, dearie," he regretted to have to confess to that bright, hopeful, appealing face. "I've got something on the fire that's liable to boil over. But you go," insisted George generously. "Make up a party. Make a day of it. Better, make two or three days of it. Go on up to Huron or over to see your mother at Birch Cottage. It will do you good to get on the water for a few days. Do the *Gray Gull* and her crew good, too."

Fay knew generosity when she encountered it. This was perfectly noble of George, and she forgave him her first disappointment, her face brightening by a few additional beams in consequence.

"That would be a lovely plan, wouldn't it?" she agreed instantly. "Only there isn't time, because we have to be back for the Newcomb dinner on Friday night."

"Easy enough," insisted George. "Start tomorrow. Start at ten o'clock, and you can get round all right for Friday. Use the telephone—catch-as-catch-can. In half an hour you can make up a party."

Within ten seconds Fay was on her way to the telephone, and George Judson was experiencing another sickening hollow feeling in his breast. To think that she was actually willing to go away with his affairs at such a crisis. With man-like unreasonableness he again failed to take account

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of the fact that she did not know his affairs were at a crisis—and that he did not intend her to know it.

"Oh, by the way, Fay," her husband remarked quite casually, when at last they were alone; "you might hear some talk tomorrow about shutting down our works temporarily. Don't let it disturb you. We always do begin laying men off this time of year, and this is part of our sales campaign on the Nemos. One of our quick, market-startling turns."

If Fay's mind had not been full of a thousand details about her lake-going party tomorrow, she might have lifted her brows and steadied her blue eyes upon her husband's face, she might have asked questions, casual, blundering, woman questions, that would have torn the thin tissue of dissimulation from before his face, but her mind was full of those details. Would Herbie McRae go, she wondered, and the Austins? The Irwins had already promised.

"George," she said sweetly, and threw her arms upon his shoulders for a moment, "you're a wonderful man, and when you get your business far enough along so you can devote all your time to me, you're going to be a wonderful husband!"

"Going to be? Well, I like that!" protested George, pretending playfully to be ruffled, but careful to let her see that it was only pretense

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and that he was complaisant over the compliment.

So they went to bed. Fay was up betimes next morning, because of the cruise for Sir Brian, and so had breakfast with her husband. When she kissed him good-by, it was with a caress that was tender and affectionate, and yet it was not the kiss that he wanted—that he needed to brace him for the grilling day that lay ahead.

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CHAPTER XIX

AT four o'clock on Friday, after a perfect dream of a cruise, the *Gray Gull* drew into her dock, but Fay Judson looked in vain for her husband. For certain reasons she was painfully anxious to greet him—vague, undefinable reasons; emotions, perhaps, they were instead—but they made her doubly desirous to be folded to her husband's breast and made sure that she was entirely his.

But no husband was in sight. Instead—Blakeley, standing embarrassed and uncertain in the back of the crowd. He made his way to her as soon as the gangplank was down.

"Mr. Judson hopes you have had a pleasant cruise and regrets that a business trip has called him away."

"Out of town? What time will he get into the city this afternoon? Surely he could not have forgotten the Newcomb dinner."

"Not before tomorrow," admitted Blakeley, serious as the man was always serious.

Tomorrow? Fay could have cried with vexation; then something womanly, something more wifely than a sense of slight, got hold of her.

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"Is—is anything wrong, Blakeley?" she asked in a low tone. "Seriously wrong?" Her blue eyes looked startled and soberly anxious.

Blakeley was scared as well as surprised. Surprised beyond measure to see that Mrs. Judson had no faint suspicion of that whirlpool rapid through which her husband's business affairs were being buffeted as if they had been a barrel with George on the inside. Scared because he knew if she was to be told anything now, it would be by one who did not know what she had been told before—and obviously her husband had told her something to keep suspicion allayed.

"Why, no; nothing serious," assured Blakeley, and Fay with quick relief decided that he was only embarrassed. "Just that Mr. Judson got an opportunity to save something on a parts contract by getting right out on the ground at once," blundered the secretary.

Fay dismissed the man with a nod. "Thank you so much for coming," she said sweetly, but her lips tightened between this speech and the one she addressed to Sir Brian as she turned vivaciously upon him.

"Isn't it too vexing?" she exclaimed. "George had to go away on an old business trip and couldn't be here to welcome us home. He sent his greetings though, and you must come over to dinner tomorrow night and tell George about

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that experience of yours in the heart of Africa. Of course he'll be for entertaining you with how he has driven a bargain for seven hundred tons of rubber or something like that at an eighth of a cent below the market in Congo or Belgium or Vladivostock or wherever it is that rubber comes from."

She laughed; and Sir Brian laughed—perhaps because what Fay said was funny—or perhaps because he perceived that she would not have made a speech like this about her husband's business before they started on this cruise.

"But—but—whatever shall I do?" wailed Charlotte Newcomb, when over the telephone Fay broke the news that George Judson was detained by a most vexatious and entirely unexpected business entanglement.

"I—I could bring Sir Brian, I think," Fay suggested tentatively.

The wail went out of Mrs. Newcomb's voice in one sudden gasp of relief. "Oh, do!" she emphasized gratefully. "Fay, you are a life-saver! You wreck me and then you rescue me."

"Thank goodness, that horrid situation was saved!" reflected Fay after she had had one more telephone conversation. "Sir Brian is such a convenience, I don't know how I ever did without him."

She grew pensive, studying herself in the mirror. "A woman of leisure should marry a man

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of leisure," she decided. "I thought I was going to be a help to George. I thought I wanted to help him, but—" Some upper teeth indented her full, red lip, and she was silent once more, staring thoughtfully at the pattern of a rug.

And this mental defection of the wife came at a particular moment when George was rather in need of assistance, too. He was down in Ohio in a town with an Indian name, and he was dealing with a man with an Indian torturer's heart. The contract between the Elbert Wheel Company and the Judson-Morris Motor Company was the means of torture. Jim Elbert was ruthlessly slicing his pound of flesh with a rusty knife from the quivering business form of Judson-Morris. At length George was satisfied that his appeals fell on absolutely stony ground; that he could win no concessions, no consideration whatever.

"Very well," the young man announced, with a sudden change of manner from earnest appeal to dangerous resignation and a trap-like click of his even, strong teeth. "Very well, Mr. Elbert; you shall have your blood-money. You shall deliver those wheels exactly as per specifications, and you will get your checks. But when the last wheel is shipped and the last check is in, write our name off your books. It will never appear there again. Thanks, too, for that little oration of yours on how a wheel is made. It has given

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me an idea. There is one profit that our next year's car will save. Hereafter we shall build our own wheels."

Mr. Elbert looked startled. For one thing, he understood force and defiance much better than he understood an appeal for mercy. For another, this swift change in manner unsteadied him—made him fear that he had grasped too tightly.

"Going on?" he husked. "Why, George, I heard you couldn't go on. I understood there wasn't going to be any next year for Judson-Morris."

"Couldn't go on! Are you crazy?" snapped the automobile builder irritably. "Don't you know Judson-Morris is entirely solvent? The little setback in the market this year was due to a mistake in judgment, and I'm the man that made it. I'm the man that's going to unmake it, too." And there came an exultant chuckle to George's throat.

"But, George," protested Jim Elbert with a pained expression, "if you're going on, why we want to go on too. If I had understood that—"

"Yes," interrupted the president of Judson-Morris, "if you had known that we were not in as bad as you thought, you'd not have squeezed us as hard as you did. But now that you've done the pincers act you're through. As I told you, we shall build our own wheels from this on."

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George Judson walked out of the office and down to his hotel. His teeth were gritted. He was going on—on.

He reached Detroit physically exhausted and mentally weary and naturally turned to his home as to a haven of rest. He had faced some of the bitterest experiences of his business life. That was tough! But his wife had been away upon a delightful pleasure trip. That was fine.

He would rush into her arms, and she would rush into his. She would kiss the sore spots of his spirit; her warm caresses would rest and revive him. They would have a joyous little evening together, and he would go forth in the morning with the nerve and strength of a conqueror once more.

And Fay did receive him tenderly, but seemed hardly to appreciate that he might be weary or that he was scarred with wounds encountered upon the way to honorable victory over circumstances that were adverse. Well—give an account of yourself! was rather her mood, and in his stiff-necked pride he gave it only sketchily, without illuminating detail or comprehensive analysis, and it was in consequence but sketchily appreciated.

"And now, what kind of trip did you have?" he asked with assumed enthusiasm as they sat down to a *tête-à-tête dinner*.

"Wonderful! Wonderful!" and Fay opened

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her eyes in unaffected ecstasies as at the memory of a perfect adventure. "Sir Brian was such a dear. He enjoyed everything so much—in his undemonstrative way."

And so she went on. But unfortunately, when she came to rhapsodize on Sir Brian at the Newcombs' dinner, she was inevitably reminded of her husband's latest breach of the law of good breeding by running out on the same dinner, thereby introducing Sir Brian to it at all. With burning eloquence she read the indictment to the unhappy culprit, and then with her reproachful blue eyes pinned him like a butterfly on a cork.

George fanned himself violently with his napkin. "Gee whiz, Fay! Can't you understand?" he squirmed. "A whole lot of things came up unexpectedly. This new model we've decided on rather suddenly for next year meant new contracts with our parts makers, and I had to go chasing round to see every one of 'em personally."

"But couldn't you have seen them this week?" she inquired with a superior air.

"This week?" George looked at her in simple amazement. What was the matter with her that she couldn't understand?

Rallying his frayed nerves, he started to be very patient. "No, Fay, dear," he began with a kind of sweet reasonableness. Then the slight

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"LOOK HERE, FAY," GEORGE BLURTED WITH SUDDEN ANGER. "I'M NOT GOING TO STAND FOR ANY MORE OF THIS."

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frown upon her beautiful brow caused his patience to take wings. He thought, judging from past experiences, that he saw the futility of it all. "No!" he blurted with sudden anger. "No! This week wouldn't do as well. Look here, Fay! Confound it, I'm tired. I'm working hard. I've been traveling. I haven't been getting my sleep. I'm not going to stand for any more of this sort of thing. I won't be bawled out like this. I'll come to your darn fool social stunts when I can—when it's convenient—but when it isn't, I won't; and I'm not going to try to tell you why, either. Just business; that's the reason!—Just business!"

Somewhere in the delivery of this speech George had risen and pushed back his chair. Fay was astounded and terribly hurt. Then her pride was touched, and she was bitterly angry, but she would not respond in kind. She owed too much to her own self-respect. She would be cutting instead.

"I might have known," she said, with quivering nostrils and a curl of her beautiful lips, "that a man of your—your practical nature, would be perfectly common whenever anything displeased him."

"Humph!" snorted George, and stood gazing at his wife as if she had struck him unfairly. Then, fearful of what he might say or she might, if the argument were continued, he tried to man-

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ifest self-control by pushing his chair in with nice precision. "You will regret this, Fay," he said reproachfully, and he walked out of the room with his head in the air.

Fay watched him, still terribly angry, but stricken with the realization that that was her husband who was walking away from her. It was appalling to think that he could do such a thing.

So they parted—and so they eventually went to bed—for the first time without a good-night kiss.

But George was restless and remorseful and couldn't sleep. Somewhere past midnight he tiptoed, pajama-clad, to his wife's bedside. The instreaming light of a brilliant moon revealed her position and her features—the position of a person stiffly awake; and he saw her eyes wide but unregarding; yet they had to see him—how he stood with mournful contrition in his pose and how humbly he stooped, lower and lower, till his lips touched her hand and kissed it in token of—of what?—submission—no; of affection and desire to be at peace.

Because she did not draw the hand away, but suffered his lips upon it, he argued that she was mollified, and shuffled gratefully back to bed without speaking a word. That she was mollified or relenting or even remorseful upon her own account seemed evident when she took pains

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to be at breakfast with him in the morning. No allusions were made to the quarrel of the night before, but the pair were ostentatiously considerate and tender toward each other.

George drove off with the notion that the atmosphere had cleared; that he had successfully turned another corner in his marital experience; that he had asserted his independence sufficiently and that his wife would not again heckle him for failure to figure at a social function when business beckoned him violently in another direction.

And business was beckoning violently now. Knot by knot, he actually had the craft gaining speed again. The biggest impulse to this came from Hilary.

Hilary was a tall, pale man with a pinched face and a bulging brow surmounted by a tuft of thin, brown hair. Taciturn and secretive, working alone and almost unnoticed in a corner of the engineering shop, Hilary had been the man to whom Milton Morris was accustomed to take the knottiest of his practical problems. And now, like a flash out of darkness, this taciturn, secretive, competent chap shuffled in to Chilton's desk one day with a design for a new car that instantly commended itself to the vice-president's discerning eye. George Judson saw the points even more quickly than Chilton.

"You've got it, man! You've got our next car right there in your hand!" he declared with a

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burst of enthusiasm that nearly bowled over the bashful designer. "You're a darn poor publicity man, Hilary, but you've got ideas."

After Hilary got his first car of the new design built and George had studied its lines and ridden in it, his enthusiasm was greater yet.

"This car is a hummer, Hilary," he told its creator, "and by the way, there is no reason at all, is there, why the wheel on this model should not be exactly the same as the wheel on the Nemo?"

"None in particular," mumbled Hilary.

"Good!" said George. "That's where we save ourselves from Jim Elbert. I've got to take thirty-two thousand wheels I didn't want from him, and we'll use them up that way. Meanwhile we'll be getting our own wheel shop under way."

"Wire wheels will be coming back sometime," opined Hilary, an absurdly long speech for him. "Maybe soon."

"You think so?" asked George, surprised.

After his inarticulate fashion Hilary expounded his reasons for the views expressed and did it convincingly enough to give the President of Judson-Morris pause.

"Guess we better plan that wheel factory for both wire and wood, and then we can jump with the cat," he decided, and in doing so felt himself getting conservative.

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Yet no one who knew exactly what was happening in the Judson-Morris Works could accuse him of that for one minute, because, at a time when his whole works were shut down except the assembling and shipping departments, he was stubbornly going on with the enlargement of the factory. Seven thousand men out. Department after department empty and silent as a tomb, but walls still lengthening, tons and tons of steel going in, yards and yards of concrete being poured every day.

"He's an idiot and a fool!" growled one of Ford's men whom some business had brought into the plant.

"Or he's the greatest wizard of them all!" chuckled John Williams.

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CHAPTER XX

BUT for all the new fervor of faith manifested by the working organization, it was a sore and savage board of directors of the Judson-Morris Motor Works that met to receive the final report on the disastrous Nemo operation—an operation that showed for the year, instead of the usual fat and juicy earnings, a net loss of $1,200,000.

"The funeral will please come to order," announced President Judson with grim facetiousness, and began the disagreeable duty of a formal reporting, but there was not much humility in his manner. He acknowledged full responsibility for the loss, but trumpeted also full faith in his ability to recoup. To fill the depleted treasury and provide funds for the new operation he proposed coolly an issue of bonds to the extent of three million dollars, secured by a second mortgage on the plant.

"In this market—seconds? You can't place 'em," growled Peattie.

"At seven per cent? I can place them inside of a week," insisted George Judson with haughty assurance.

But when he went down-town and set to work

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with assumed confidence to make good on this proud boast, even his stout courage was dismayed by the refusals he encountered—by the astounding change in attitude since he last had occasion to visit the bankers. Instead of hailing his presence warmly, like an asset, they greeted him doubtfully, like a liability—or what was more ominous yet—with sympathy, which to his proud nature was worse.

"The Street's lost faith in you, George," sympathized old Simon Mumford. "I've got faith in you myself, of course, but your prestige is dented."

Simon Mumford had succeeded Stephen Gilman as president of the St. Clair Trust Company. He was co-executor with Mrs. Gilman of Fay's estate. If the St. Clair Trust wouldn't do anything for George, who would?

George worked for the entire week he had so boastfully allowed himself before his board of directors, and with not one spark of encouragement. At last he stood before S. R. Blodgett. Blodgett had been the man George had tried to see first of all, but he had been put off and put off until, when he was finally admitted to that august presence in the private office of the president of the Huron National, the conviction had already been formed in his breast that salvation depended on Blodgett alone, and Blodgett was unenthusiastic.

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"Tell you what you do, George," he proposed. "You go right ahead trying to sell these bonds yourself. Take a couple of days more on it, then come and see me."

Young Mr. Judson was vastly disappointed, but he bowed to the will of the man he was forced to supplicate. He rose, hat in hand.

"Come in, say, Thursday at four o'clock, George!" directed Mr. Blodgett, blandly kind and moderately encouraging.

George wrung his hand gratefully—grateful for the hope—and went out. He was so confident that S. R. Blodgett meant to help him, that his shrewd brain would point a way out, that he was tempted to give over his personal efforts to float the loan—only tempted, his nature was not soft. He was no quitter. He kept on with his missionary work—he revisited a dozen of the men he had already talked to; but instead of warmer the atmosphere had grown colder since his last interview.

When, on Thursday afternoon, George entered the private office of the President of the Huron National, he found S. L. Haley and T. O. Tompkins there and took instant hope, for here were three of the five men who had helped him to triumph before, but a second look at those impassive faces might have warned him.

"Looks like nothing doing, George!" an-

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nounced Mr. Blodgett, as sparing the victim's agony by not prolonging it.

The face of President Judson must have fallen considerably. His heart sank some fathoms certainly; he could feel it lying like a stone somewhere on the ocean floor of his diaphragm.

"There's a lot of people lost confidence in you," accused Silas Haley with a frown. "We helped you get steadied down once, and then you go rampagin' round like this and upset the whole financial equilibrium of the city."

"The whole financial—you compliment me," suggested George, and was able to smile brightly, judging by exterior appearances.

"Seems like with your control we aren't going to be able to absorb those bonds," explained Blodgett with a grave shake of his head.

"With *my* control?" asked George, giving over the assumed lightness of his manner. "Why, you are the very gentlemen who insisted on my control before you would underwrite the last ones."

"Exactly," said Tompkins dryly, "but now it's different. You've disappointed us."

"About the only way we could handle those bonds would be to have a change of control, wouldn't it?" Silas Haley inquired thoughtfully of Blodgett.

"*Change* of control?" asked George mystified,

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throat dry and voice reverberating in it hollowly as in ghostly chambers.

So they were proposing to oust him? A wildness appeared in his eye, and his dark cheeks purpled with resentful wrath.

"Gentlemen, I'm not conceited enough to suppose there aren't a dozen men in the auto industry in Detroit who could step into my desk and carry this thing forward," he confessed with perhaps a greater humility than he felt. "I flatter myself that in spite of the year's reverses I've got the business to that point. But," and he became suddenly bold and assertive, "I don't know where these men are. I do know where I am. I'm in the saddle out there now, and I've got everything at my finger's end."

"That's just why I wouldn't stand for any change in the management out there now," broke out Tompkins flatly.

A knot of perplexity appeared in the young man's brow. Change of control—no change in management. "You are talking in riddles," he said with a weak smile.

"Not at all. You're president of Judson-Morris, and you've got to stay president," affirmed Silas Haley.

"You see, George," Mr. Blodgett suavely began to explain, "if you were to transfer fifteen per cent of your stock to us, five per cent to each of us, then you would still control the com-

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pany by us voting our fifteen per cent through you; but we control you that way, because if we held off on our fifteen per cent you would lose your majority. That way we could assume responsibility for your not making any wild mistakes again, because we wouldn't let you; and that way we could guarantee the bonds. We've still got confidence in you; other people haven't. But they've still got confidence in us."

The young man's face was a study. "Do I understand that if I transfer fifteen per cent of my stock to you, your institutions will join in underwriting our bond issue?"

"Today!" declared Blodgett with solemn emphasis.

There was silence while George's brain card-indexed this affirmation. If it were just a matter of "playing the game"—well, he could do that, he could stand punishment when it came his turn. And in this case it was true that, originally, he had been catapulted into power by this great game of business the rules of which he had had no part in making. Yes, if necessary he was now ready to prove himself a good loser as he had formerly proved a good winner. But there was another phase to the matter. He must also represent others than himself in this crisis. Milton Morris and his associates had welcomed George's control and had faith in it —would George now be justified in passing it

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along to others with no interests but their own at heart? Others who—both originally and now—had made their own rules as they played the game, and made those rules solely to suit their own convenience?

"And what do you offer for the stock?" George finally inquired.

An expression of mute surprise photographed itself on three innocent faces. Then the surprise froze into scorn.

"Nothing!" snapped Silas Haley.

"Nothing!" George exploded. "Fifteen thousand shares are worth, at the market, $310,000, but with one year's successful business they will be double that. You ask me to give you outright practically three-quarters of a million dollars to secure for my company a loan of three millions. It's an outrage! It's highway robbery!" George's voice had risen to denunciatory tones.

T. O. Tompkins flushed at the accusation, but he did not speak. Silas N. Haley looked pained that a charitable offer could be so misconstrued. He turned and glanced appealingly to S. R. Blodgett. Blodgett wore an air of superior patience. He did not flush; he did not even look pained; he looked comprehension and indulgence.

"No, it isn't, George; no, it isn't," he assured soothingly. "It's like that other transaction of

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ours. The stockholders needed you, and we forced them to sell their stock to you to give you control. Now you need us!"

"But I paid for theirs!"

"Yes, and we pay for ours by using our reputation for conservatism to save your reckless skin for you, young man; that's what we do," retorted Silas Haley acrimoniously, and turning, gazed at S. R. Blodgett and T. O. Tompkins for looks of confirmation.

They gave them and were silent, watching, waiting!

For the time being, George felt fascinated by his own helplessness. He remembered his sensations in the other transaction when he saw this same mysterious organization of financial power operating with machine-like precision and machine-like indifference to make him rich, and now he saw this identical power operating to strip him—to tie him hand and foot to those who would henceforth be the real power over Judson-Morris and over him.

"I'll never do it, gentlemen!" he declared, but yet with self-control and low-toned emphasis that showed how thoroughly he meant what he said. Then he rose as if to go.

"Better sleep on it, George," Blodgett observed with a resumption of his old, paternal air. "You can see me at ten in the morning, if you decide you want to. I'll hold Haley and

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Tompkins in line that long," and he nodded toward his two associates who had gone into executive session a few feet away, talking in vehement whispers and with indignant jerks of their heads.

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CHAPTER XXI

WHERE to turn? What to do? These were the intensive questions that fastened themselves like torturing banderillas in the young manufacturer's mind as, in a cold rage of resentment, he hurried from the presence of the bankers. One moment he declared there was nothing to apprehend in the proposal of Blodgett, Tompkins, and Haley; that it was salvation for him; that their terms were reasonable; that in one year he could earn profits enough to buy back this stock and make his control secure once more. The next he saw in it nothing but a cunningly conceived scheme to take his factory away from him, and he resolved to resist it to the uttermost.

Into this morbid medley there obtruded the old debate—hadn't he better confide the whole miserable mess to Fay? Well, perhaps he would —tonight, in the quiet *tête-à-tête* hour before bedtime.

Reaching home, he found his wife where he would have most wished to find her—in the nursery, hovering over Junior with clasped, enraptured hands and fond, fascinated eyes. She was regarding some of his newer infantile

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acrobatic stunts with true maternal admiration, but turned with a happy exclamation to her husband and welcomed him by bounding into his arms.

"Oh, George, George!" she confessed with a little cry in her voice. "These long, long days without you are such eternities of loneliness!" She said it affectionately, not complainingly.

For a time after this, though still with entwining arms, they bowed together over the antics of their restless and energetic but even-tempered son. Then, of course, the father had to have him in his arms and go parading round the room. This triumphant processional continued until Fay was reminded of the necessity for interrupting it.

"Break away now, father dear!" she warned. "We have just time to dress."

"What's on?" he demanded, lips pursing obstinately.

"Why, the Hickson dinner to Sir Brian."

When her husband's face did not lighten at this thrilling information, she reminded him: "But this is a farewell dinner to Sir Brian."

George's expression grew suddenly interested and thoughtful. "Oh well! If it's a *farewell* dinner," he began to concede, when Fay intervened in sprightly voice with:

" 'Farewell'? Why the cattiness in that inflection? Don't you like Sir Brian?"

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"Look here, Fay! What are you so sensitive about Sir Brian for?" demanded her husband, catching her by both arms.

"Don't be absurd!" Fay protested, wriggling free. "I'm not sensitive about him."

"You had to be, to think that emphasis of mine was catty." George's eyes were level, serious, and searching.

Fay herself was for the time being thoughtful and introspective, after which for a brief instant there was a startled look in her blue eyes. Succeeding this, she laughed, confessing: "It does seem strange, doesn't it? And how quickly you took me up on it! That seems peculiar also."

George had to admit that it did. "I guess—I guess that when two people are as close as we've been feeling just now, the mention of a third party somehow—even though we both like 'em a lot—and I'm strong for Sir Brian; just as strong as you are—I guess it makes us both feel a little touchy, what!"

The dinner itself was rendered rather difficult for George Judson because Simon Mumford sat opposite him, and Simon was an unpleasant reminder. He belonged to the banking world. He had been the first financier to tell George his bonds might be prime but his impaired prestige had made them difficult, if not impossible, of negotiation. And as co-executor of the Gilman

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estate Simon was almost in the family. George found himself studying that shrewd but kindly countenance and wondering what he would say if he knew what Blodgett, Tompkins, and Haley were proposing to do to him.

Yet George rallied tolerably to the social responsibilities of the occasion. Sir Brian made this rather easy, for he was at his best this night.

The Englishman was particularly good over the coffee and cigars, but after the gentlemen rejoined the ladies there was some professional entertainment and Miss Pauson "obliged" at the harp.

George particularly detested harps and, seizing an opportunity, withdrew as far as possible from that golden instrument, sequestering himself in the library where a box of Charlie's clear Havanas appeared ready to his hand.

Now it chanced that one person in the company had noted George's flight and trailed him swiftly to his refuge. That person was Simon Mumford. He chuckled gloatingly at the prospect of a quiet chat in this environment over those things which interested two men of the active business world like themselves.

"George," he announced, "I've been thinking."

"Have you, now?" interjected that burdened young man, forced to be gay lest he reveal the

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undercurrent of anxiety which surged through him like a torrent.

But Simon was not to be deflected from his train of thought by a jest, and went right on. "Old Stephen Gilman left his estate in pretty good shape, you know—easy for his wife to handle—nearly all of it in preferred stocks and high class bonds. More than three million dollars of it."

"So they have told me," answered George with a nod, lowering his cigar while he wondered what the old man might be getting at.

"Interest rates have risen a good deal since Stephen put away most of that stuff," continued the older man. "The way bonds are going now, that money could be put into industrials just as well as not and earn from three-quarters to one and a half per cent more than it's earning now. One and a half per cent on three millions is a lot. It's pretty near criminal not to take it."

"You think," said George, "it would be wise to convert and reinvest; is that the idea?"

Mr. Mumford did not answer George's question save by a nod, but at the same time he asked a question on his own account. "These bonds you're offering pay seven per cent, don't they, George?"

Suddenly George comprehended. "Mr. Mumford," he whispered hoarsely, gripping the co-executor's hand with both of his. "You mean

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—you mean that you would advise Mrs. Gilman to take my whole bond issue?"

His hands, his voice, his whole body were trembling with excited eagerness. Such an action on the part of the executors would put an instant end to his troubles. It would make him independent. It would set him free of the power of three benevolent-looking but grim-hearted old Shylocks who were even now making sure that they held him helpless. "You would recommend that, Mr. Mumford?"

"Yes—unhesitatingly. They are seconds, but with your assets they're sound as firsts. Besides, I think you are entitled to it."

"You do—Mr. Mumford?"

George's voice was still hoarse with excitement; but even before the banker could nod an affirmative, the young man had begun to see another side to the transaction, and was leaning back and shaking his head gravely. "Allow Mrs. Gilman to give up Stephen's carefully placed investments for bonds in my company?" he questioned solemnly and critically. "Mr. Mumford, I could never do it."

Simon regarded the young man steadily, with a grave, penetrative glance in which affection and reproof were mingled.

"It's a way out, though, George!" he suggested presently.

"A way in, you mean!" frowned George.

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"That's one responsibility I wouldn't want to have to carry." And then it suddenly occurred to him that there had been something ulterior in Simon's phrase, "a way out." "You know what they are trying to do to me—Blodgett, Tompkins, and Haley?" he asked, leaning forward again and lowering his voice to a whisper.

"They are nailing you to the cross," said the old man with a sigh. "It looks legitimate to them. It is legitimate, if you can't help yourself. And you can't—except this way," and he managed a gesture which seemed somehow to comprehend the Gilman securities. "It looks reasonable to me. It's a perfectly sound investment; it's a better earning power; it's all in the family; it helps you out of a hole; Mrs. Gilman would do it in a minute."

George shook his head slowly and solemnly and rose as if to get away from temptation.

"Think it over," insisted Mr. Mumford, rising also. "Think it over. They'll nail your hide on the barn door tomorrow. They're likely to demand twenty per cent tomorrow, or twenty-five. Think it over."

The President of Judson-Morris looked troubled, but he still shook his head stubbornly.

"Tell you, George," proposed Simon encouragingly, "I'll come out to the works in the morning, say at ten, and we'll go into it a little further."

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CHAPTER XXII

BEFORE the president of Judson-Morris had time to think over what Simon Mumford had said to him, he heard Fay calling excitedly from the lower hall. He met her on the staircase, all dancing eagerness.

"What do you think, George?" she clamored with childish enthusiasm. "Sir Brian has invited the Hicksons, the Traceys, and us to go with him on his Big Horn hunt in the Canadian Rockies."

But George, though he had come quickly in response to his wife's call, had left his mind back there with Simon Mumford, and it was slow in overtaking him.

"Eh? Oh! What?" he stammered and, gazing past into the hall below, saw that the Hicksons' dinner party was breaking up.

Part of the guests had gone, others were departing. Near the foot of the stairs Sir Brian and the Traceys stood chatting animatedly.

"Oh, wouldn't it be wonderful, just to get off from the world like that?" Fay seized both her husband's hands where he halted on the step

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above her. "Just think: We haven't been away on a real trip since our honeymoon."

Slowly George's mind came round to the contemplation of the idea—this absurd and utterly impossible idea that he at this time could absent himself from the city of Detroit for a matter of three weeks or more.

"Could we leave Junior?" he fended, grasping at any straw and noticing, as he sought to raise this feeble obstacle, that Sir Brian lifted an interested eye toward the two of them.

Fay dismissed Junior with a pursing of her lips to express absurdity and an explosive little: "Why, of course!" after which she was immediately off on the main track again with: "I've always wanted to shoot big game. Sir Brian says we women would enjoy the trip immensely even though we never got a shot, while you men would be certain to kill. Then just think, too, what good fellows the Hicksons and the Traceys are when it comes to potlucking—anything like that! It would be such a lark!"

She was all stampeding eagerness and into each sentence got a plea that was almost pathetic in its earnestness. But George had by this time sensed that, besides Sir Brian, the Traceys and the Hicksons were frankly and interestedly listening, and it irritated him to have these people infer that his wife must plead, for any-

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thing she wanted from her husband, as if he had been a heartless ogre.

"We take the railroad to a station in the Canadian Rockies that Sir Brian knows about," Fay bubbled on; "and from there we start on horseback not far, but up—up—up into the wildest possible country, surrounded on every side by the most awful mountains, till at last we come to some broken tablelands, right on the roof of the world, that are famous pasturing places for the sheep. There we make camp beside a stream fed from melting snow, and—and we go after 'em! Won't it be jolly? Oh, won't it?"

And she let go George's hands to clasp her own in a rapture of pleasurable anticipation.

"But—my dear!" George began in a tone slightly expostulating, while he groped for temporizing phrases which would postpone consideration to a moment when he could soften the inevitable disappointment of his decision.

But with that first word—the first look, indeed—his wife thought she saw refusal coming, and in her manner there was an instant change which revealed that all the while it was fear that lay at the bottom of her breathlessly enthusiastic importunings. With a woman's quick instinct to save her pride, she swung her shoulders quickly to bar random glances from below, so

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no one but he could hear as she whispered half-vehemently, half-imploringly:

"George! George! for my sake—don't—don't refuse me before—don't be too abrupt before—before them."

Such concern was touching, but also it was irritating. In those quick, tremulous, unvocalized words he saw pictured to him a husband presupposed to be too selfishly absorbed in his own concerns to be likely to show any adequate consideration for his wife's feelings, and he did not like the picture—he did not like the presuppositions; he thought both were unjust. At the same time his eyes signaled Fay the desired assurance that she would not be rebuffed.

Clever as an actress, she turned and waved her hand vivaciously to those below. "George is considering," she reported. "He doesn't know whether he can get away or not, but he's going to try awfully hard. Oh, I'm sure we can go!"

Tugging her husband by one hand, she dragged him down the stairs into the group of which the Hicksons were now permanent members, all their other guests having got themselves off.

"I'll do my very darndest, dear folks and Sir Brian," said George after a moment's hesitation. "Perfectly fine of you to ask us! Let you know in twenty-four hours whether we can go or not,

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so there's time to get somebody else and not spoil the party."

Fay, who, under all her simulations of hope and enthusiasm, had been wildly angry at her husband when she suspected him of intent to refuse her bluntly and openly, was instantly mollified and radiantly happy. "Oh, I am sure George will be able to make it!" she declared proudly. "He always does everything he really sets out to do, you know."

"George, you are the dearest thing!" she exclaimed impulsively, as soon as they were settled in the limousine, and to prove it she hugged him almost violently.

"You little muggins!" responded George Judson in his fond tone, and held her closely to him, her velvet cheek on his. "You want to go on that Big Horn hunt something fierce, don't you?"

"Yes, I do!" she answered with an impulsive movement born of yielding once more to the fascination of that brilliant idea. "Besides, it's a matter of pride. George, I am so proud of you—and I want Sir Brian to realize how devoted such a great big business machine as you are can be to his wife, once he is able to think of himself purely as a husband. I want to show him!"

"By Jingo, I'd like to show him, too, sweetheart!" affirmed George, and his tones were

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earnest, but not altogether hopeful. "You see it's just a matter of those new bonds. I've got to float them or I can't leave, and the market seems tight."

"George!" she exclaimed impulsively. "Why don't you let me take those bonds? You know I've been wanting to put my money in the works." Instantly she felt her husband's body stiffen.

"Fay," he reminded her in tones of near reproach, "I couldn't do that, you know. Bless your dear, generous heart, I simply couldn't." There seemed to be unalterable decision in his tones.

"But what are you going to do then, George —about—about arranging to get away?"

"This," her husband answered with sudden resolution. "This: I had an offer today for the bonds. If I don't get a better proposition by tomorrow noon, I'll go to those fellows and close up. Then I can go with you on the trip. There!"

"You darling!" she cried, and flung her arms around him afresh. "Oh, George!" she sighed in tenderest love rapture. "I can forgive you anything when you're—like this."

And George in this moment knew how heartily he too could forgive her every exaction and whim and waywardness and innocently stubborn refusal to understand. But he couldn't

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think of anything in particular that his wife had to forgive, and speculated, rather amusedly, on what it might be.

While Fay was still at breakfast next morning, George reached his desk and began his moral struggle. Temptation loomed large. The din of the factory had never been such sweet music in his ears; the walls had never looked to him such a noble monument to human endeavor; he had never wanted to retain control of Judson-Morris Motor Works as he wanted to retain it now, and he was about to lose that control. It was in this state of mind that bland, kindly Simon Mumford, in keeping his promise made the night before in the Hicksons' library, found George.

"How about it, George?" he asked in his blandest, his most coaxing tone, his fat, pink face shining like a beneficent new moon.

"Nothing doing!" said George bluntly.

But Simon still regarded him hopefully, appealingly, and with sympathy. "I am sure I could persuade Mrs. Gilman," he began to suggest.

"No wife's money in mine, Mr. Mumford, not a dollar." He lifted his hands and shook them, he shook his head, he shrugged a negative even with his shoulders.

"Well, I do be doggoned!" ejaculated Mumford in his thin, crackling voice. "Hum!" and

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he was silent, thinking. "George," he said after an interval, hitching nearer, "I do hate to see those fellows get the screws on you—those particular three."

"And yet," argued George gloomily, "they're the three that got control for me in the first place. If anybody's going to trim me, they're entitled to."

"But not if they started out to trim you from the first," rebutted Simon Mumford quickly. "They had to see you get something from others before they could take it away from you. Supposing they were the ones who so industriously knocked you in financial circles over the Nemo failure just so they could get this chance to skim you like a pan of milk."

"Suppose they did!" exclaimed George flaring up. "Dod gast 'em, I'd like to beat them more than ever if it's possible they did that."

"It's not only possible, it's probable," declared Simon. "Look here now, George! I'm not so sure but I could find somebody else to underwrite those bonds, although of course none of these financial underwriters are in it for their health. Any of them might demand a taste of sugar—they might even demand as much as Blodgett, Tompkins, and Haley, but—"

"I'd rather pay it to them than to those three buzzards," asserted George, his mind having proved very suggestible on the possibility of

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Blodgett, Tompkins, and Haley having "ribbed him for a take-off" as he dubbed the process in his mind.

"Then call up Blodgett and ask him to give you till two o'clock to reach a decision," urged Mumford eagerly. "I believe before two o'clock I can interest somebody else."

"You're on," said George tersely; "and I'm certainly much obliged to you, Mr. Mumford."

It never occurred to him to doubt old Simon. It seemed perfectly reasonable to hope that Simon could find some one to take his bonds when George could not, because he was so obviously an interested party, while Simon's approval alone was almost the underwriting of a bond. He merely turned to the 'phone, called up Blodgett, secured the necessary respite, and fidgeted in his chair, pretending to work but accomplishing nothing, until half past one when the voice of Simon was heard upon the wire vibrating with excitement.

"You're saved, George," he gurgled exultantly. "You're saved, at least, from those three blood-suckers. Templeton & Co. will underwrite the bonds—although they demand the same slice as the other fellows, 15,000 shares of common."

George, greatly relieved for a moment, felt his spirits suddenly sag. He had been hoping against this—hoping that Simon would drive

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a better bargain. Still it saved him from Tompkins, Blodgett, and Haley; and besides, when he later came to meet William H. Templeton face to face, he found him so much easier to deal with that the whole transaction was almost reassuring. To be sure, he had to endorse certificates covering fifteen thousand shares of common stock over to Templeton & Co., but the latter agreed not to present them to the Secretary of Judson-Morris for transfer upon the books for a period of three years, which meant that he could vote this stock as his for that length of time and that for the same period his control was secure. Give him three years of uninterrupted control, and he guaranteed to take care of himself against any kind of catastrophe.

With a sigh of relief he signed his name. He had involved George Judson and impaired his holdings, but he had saved the day for the Judson-Morris Motor Works.

Later he remembered that he had also saved the day for Fay and the Big Horn hunt. As soon as he thought of this, he telephoned Fay.

She was wildly happy. "Oh, you wonderful husband!" she cried in a triumphant rapture. "You wizard! You miracle-worker!"

It had been some months since any one had called George a wizard or a miracle-worker, and he rather liked it. It made him feel that he was really back.

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"And remember, no Blakeley this time!" his wife warned playfully yet meaningly. "No telegrams. No letters. No messengers from the factory!"

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CHAPTER XXIII

FROM the hour of George's decision the Judsons joined the Hicksons and the Traceys in spending every spare moment of daylight in the slaughter of imaginary big horns on an improvised range on the shore of Lake St. Clair, and one week later the three couples entrained for the journey westward. On the fourth day after, Sir Brian Hook, as host of the camp and the hunt, was receiving them in a tiny fold of the mountains so deep and narrow that the sun could be seen only at noonday and there seemed a perpetual chill in the air. There were tents; there were horses and horse wranglers; there was Charlie Waterbucket, the Cree guide and hunter, and there was Wah Sing, an expert cook, while above and beyond them was the Big Horn range, only a few thousand feet higher than their camp in a perpendicular direction but astonishingly distant and astonishingly inaccessible for all its proximity.

The second day Sir Brian not only saw a sheep but killed him. There was clamor of the ladies thereafter to be taken under Sir Brian's especial wing. They drew straws for the honor, and

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Fay won. Sir Brian, who could ride anywhere, climb anywhere, shoot anywhere, and who appeared to think that just for a woman to put on hiking breeches and a flannel shirt made her as wiry as a monkey and as strong as an orang-outang, set out to justify the ladies' faith in him. He delivered Fay, after much laborious exertion, at an isolated spot on the vertebra of the continent where she actually saw a mountain sheep—that is, she saw something like a huge, dirty, white object that stared for an instant, wall-eyed, and then soared like a bird from one detached pinnacle to another, after which it kicked up its heels and dropped suddenly out of sight.

"Oh, what a jump!" Fay exclaimed.

"But, why didn't you shoot?" complained Sir Brian.

"Shoot? What was there to shoot at?" she argued innocently.

And in truth, what was there to shoot at—the sheep having vanished so quickly? Nothing at all now, but Sir Brian's gray and slightly perturbed eyes, and the woman straightway shot at them with her violet ones. Sir Brian, clean and picturesque in his weather-worn hunting rig, and she in her khaki breeches and leathern jacket, with the little cloth hat rolled bewitchingly to one side—there they stood, very close together, breathing quickly from the exertion of

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the climb and the excitement of the moment which had just passed.

Could the man be as cool as he looked? As unmoved by her presence? by the fact of their aloneness—with her husband a mile in one direction helping Eleanor to re-do her spiral puttees (if Sir Brian could have known just what George was doing at that moment!) and with Charlie Hickson and Ralph and Rose clambering somewhere over that fall of rock two miles away where the Englishman had pointed them out to her through his glasses? Would she not have been less than woman if, under such circumstances, Fay had not dropped her eyes in sudden embarrassment and asked herself that question, her bosom heaving with something besides the exertion and the altitude? With wild, rugged nature all round them, and with lofty mountains challenging to boldness, would it not be surprising if she did not find out very soon the answer to her curious craving to know? . . .

They did not get a shot at the sheep.

Presently Sir Brian was helping her down the rock as unostentatiously courteous and apparently as composed and reserved as ever, but—she had found out!

Fay was girlishly happy, enjoying the novel experience of a hunt in these magnificent wilds amazingly, but on the night of this very day when she had found out about Sir Brian her

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husband began to show signs of a flagging enthusiasm. At supper-time while others recounted their adventures, he took no part in the camp-fire merriment. There came a faraway look in his eye, and he fell back into the shadow, as far as possible from the flickering firelight and yet within its circle. Fay knew from his manner that he was wretchedly unhappy and was almost sorry for him—but was still relentless. This hunt was one thing she had exacted of him, and she insisted on her pound of flesh; so instead of sympathizing she eyed him watchfully and with suspicion, impelled to rail at him the minute they were alone. But she suppressed this impulse.

"I won't be an utter tyrant," she said to herself with noble magnanimity. "He can *think* about his business if he wants to."

But the next night when the scattered hunters came by twos and threes and weary into camp, George Judson was not among them. Fay, coming in again under escort of Sir Brian, found pinned conspicuously upon the flap of the Judson tent a note.

"Forgive me, darling, for running away," the note said, *"but I couldn't stick it out any longer.*

"At least I've got you planted up here, and Sir Brian and the others will see that you don't miss anything. Make my apologies to him and any

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excuses that occur to you. I just had to light out; that's all.

"Yours forever,
"George."

"Why, how white you look, Fay!" noticed Eleanor, who was standing by her, and Fay immediately contradicted by looking red.

"And who wouldn't?" demanded Fay hoarsely, and stared at Eleanor, white and dumbfounded.

"What is it?" gasped Eleanor.

"That husband of mine!" ejaculated Fay, disgust and anger mingling. "He has bolted—run away—sneaked back to that dirty old factory of his. Abandoned me to—to—" She checked herself. "Abandoned me, Eleanor!" and her eyes grew large and teary with indignation. "Invited me to shift for myself like any common —common—" Feeling the imminence of tears, she dashed through the opening in the tent and flung herself upon one of the cots. Eleanor followed her sympathetically. She had no fortune of her own, and although her husband's circumstances were easy, he still pursued the dollar. Being of a thrifty nature, she aided and abetted him. She had the utmost respect for such husbandly activities and no great patience with wives who affected not to have.

"I wouldn't be too hard on George just now,

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if I were you," she ventured to suggest. "He's had it pretty fierce this year."

"He has it fierce every year," Fay retorted, searching for a dry spot on her handkerchief. "No sooner does he get one iron out of the fire than he sticks two more in."

"But George has lost a lot of money, you know." Eleanor reminded solemnly.

"Lost money?" Fay curled a tear-swollen lip. "Oh, no!" and she shook her head with a satirical smile. "My husband doesn't lose money. He makes it! Year after year he makes it, and saves out a pittance for himself, and chucks all the rest back into the business, and borrows every cent he can lay his hands on besides."

"Fay Judson!" remonstrated Eleanor, who had listened to this speech with amazement and a sense of shock. "Is it possible you do not know that your husband's company lost money this year? Big money! Away into the millions?"

Fay stiffened proudly and stared. "Oh, no!" she exclaimed in an icy voice with a proud toss of her head. "Oh, no! You are quite mistaken. Quite!"

It was Eleanor's turn to stare. Such blind ignorance combined with such colossal self-satisfaction was truly sublime. "Well!" she retorted in withering tones. "If your husband finds it as hard to tell you anything as I do,

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I'm not surprised you don't know anything about his business."

With this she walked abruptly from the tent.

Fay hardened and blazed over what she deemed the gratuitous affront in this remark, but nothing at all adequate rose to her tongue to hurl after that indignant squeak of Eleanor's climbing boots. Yet what she flamed with most hotly was resentment toward her husband. And at first this was not for putting her in a position where a woman like Eleanor could talk to her as she had just done. It was for his selfishness in stealing away. Didn't he perceive that she was enjoying Sir Brian and his hunt immensely? Didn't he know that it was her ambition to kill a mountain sheep and that her host had pledged his honor as a sportsman that she should have her chance? And was the man too crass not to understand that she couldn't clamber over these wild and lonely crags with another unless a husband were at least in the same county, thereby lending his official countenance to the inevitable intimacies of such association? Why, he had practically abandoned her to Sir Brian!

But at length the pendulum began to swing the other way, and she found herself staring wide-eyed and thoughtful at the brown, sloping roof of the tent which came so near to her as she lay.

"Lost money? . . ." she was questioning the

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empty air, white, bewildered and crestfallen, but not quite sympathetic. "Lost money?"

Doubts and wonderings upon this point so distressed her that she had presently to call Eleanor and ask her humbly to explain.

Eleanor did this, now with sympathy for the wife and indignation for a bombastic, vain-glorious husband who would leave a wife to learn facts like this from an alien tongue.

The supper call brought this conference to a close, but throughout the meal Fay was silent and contemplative, with the men inclined to joke her a little on her enforced widowhood. The joking came to an end after the meal was over and they were all gathered round the fire, when she spoke out boldly to Sir Brian before them all.

"It was big of George, awfully big of him, to slip out this way," she said with a little break in her voice, "so I couldn't insist on going with him; but the fact is, I think I must. We are so dippy about each other, you know, and George has an awful lot of important things on just now. So I feel I ought to be right with him."

"My word!" ejaculated Sir Brian. "Deuce take it! Must you go though?" and looked at her concernedly as if not quite certain she had given the real reason for her departure.

"I fear I must, Sir Brian!" she persisted however, and the next day went down the canyon.

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It was indeed with a genuine sense of hurrying to a duty of wifely comradeship and with reproaches for her own blind selfishness that she started—but alas for her intent—three days upon the train were far, far too long for emotions as fluid as hers to be held constant by a reasoned purpose. She had time to brood. So instead of arriving in Detroit to sympathize and comfort him, she reached home late of an afternoon in a mood of simmering wrath, and meaning to arraign George Judson the instant she got an eye upon his recreant form. Favorable to this purpose was the fact that, unsummoned, George himself came home a bit early from his desk to soothe jaded nerves by a play with Junior.

"But why—why on earth did you come home?" he demanded when, in consequence of information imparted by the butler, he came bounding into his wife's room.

"Come home?" she iterated scornfully. "What else was there for me to do?" And she stared contemptuously at a husband who could not see that there was nothing else. "Don't you see why I couldn't stay—after you left?" Haughtily the wife with the sense of outrage so strong upon her swept the length of the room and back.

"I certainly do not," he snapped, and in the anger of his expression was also an appeal for her to let some little light of reason in upon

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her strange actions if she could possibly manage to do so. "Will you be good enough to enlighten me."

"Will I?" she inquired with a fine irony. "Will I? I certainly will, George Judson, for I have received a good deal of enlightenment myself. For one thing, I learned from Eleanor Hickson all about your wretched failure with the Nemos. I learned the truth about that—not from my husband, but from the lips of a stranger. George Judson," she accused vehemently, and seemed as if on the point of seizing and shaking him, "why didn't you tell me the condition of your business?"

George gave back a little before the force with which she pressed her attack. Besides, this was a shot that went home. "But I—I did it to be kind," he faltered. "I wanted to spare you."

"But will you be kind enough to observe what a fool it made of me?" she inquired with biting sarcasm.

"Fool!" The husband's features framed utter protest. "Oh, now, Fay, dear!" he pleaded. "I can't stand for that."

"But you made me stand for it!" she resented hotly.

"How—I'd like to know?" George inquired stubbornly, but rather bewildered, and perceiv-

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ing now clearly that he was going to get the worst of whatever was to come.

"Think of me in total, ridiculous ignorance all this spring and summer of how things were going with you," she began, and her wrath was almost melted into tears by sympathy for her own wrongs. "Think of me dragging you to teas, to golf matches, to I don't know what, holding my head high and serene, parading my husband everywhere as a paragon of business genius, bragging about him idiotically! Think of me running about with Sir Brian, taking him off on the yachting trip, and leaving you at home fighting for your life almost—and me finding fault with you because you didn't come to meet us even. Why you—you—don't you see what a cruel position it was to put me in? People must either have thought me a fool who couldn't understand, or a wife so indiscreet she could not be trusted with her husband's business secrets, or too heartless to care simply because she was rich on her own account. Probably they think me all three."

"Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord!" George groaned distressfully. "Is that the way you figure it out?"

"You must be blind," his wife accused. "Wasn't I going around boasting about your cleverness in cutting the prices on your Nemo model at the very time when everybody I was

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talking to knew you had been forced to cut it to save your own neck? Wasn't I?"

"Oh, maybe . . . yes, yes . . . I guess you were, all right," her husband admitted wretchedly.

"Of course, I was, and that's the cruelest thing a man can do to a trusting wife, George Judson—allow her to make herself ridiculous in his behalf." A certain tenderness was permitted to enter into this reproach, and that softness bowled George Judson over completely.

"All right! Have it your own way. I was wrong all the time—all the time," he confessed, throwing up his hands and shaking his head with an expression of deep contrition.

But in such humility there was yet one other rod a truly conscientious wife could lay across his back, and she did not spare it.

"And besides—you've done something else, George," she accused with mournful emphasis. "You've shattered an idol and a tradition—short-lived, but oh, so brilliant while it lasted. I thought you were a superman. I thought anything you touched would succeed, just because it was you that touched it. I thought you were a miracle-worker. You're not. You're just an ordinary, blindly optimistic blunderer whom so far luck has favored. I'm disappointed in you, George; that's the sum and substance of it all; I'm disappointed in you."

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Her passion was exhausted, but she was resolute still. She didn't mean all she was about to say, but it was well to make him think she did. His mother had said he needed to be broken. Very well, the time had come for that, and she would do it thoroughly while about it. In the tone of one who lays a wreath of immortelles upon the grave of love, she began:

"Things can never be the same between us, George." Her voice was carefully restrained so as to get into just the right regret for some sublime ecstasy that was now forever past. "You've destroyed something—something that will never come again. If you had plotted deliberately against the beautiful perfection of our union, you could not have succeeded more completely than you have. That aura of wonder, that halo of romantic admiration with which I have invested you, is gone, George—gone, broken, dissipated, van—"

There is such a thing as the last straw.

"Sa-a-ay!" George demanded with indignant, self-accusing emphasis, and the manner of the man completely bewildered. "What's the matter with us two people, anyway?" Then while his eye was still upon her there came to him a gleam of inspiration.

"Could it," he blurted explosively, "could it be that cursed Englishman, I wonder?"

"Sir Brian!—"

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Startled and outraged, Fay Judson screamed the name hoarsely, as in protest at some terrible profanation, while her husband stared dumbly, for before his eyes a lightning transformation took place.

That soft Persian kitten of a woman, with her little, kittenish rages and quick remorses, whom he had known, went away, and there appeared a vision utterly different—a something out of the jungles of biology—not his darling Fay, but a race-woman, primal, elemental, aboriginal—a very tiger-cat of a woman who appeared to feel herself attacked on ground she would fight tooth and nail to hold, as the primordial women fought.

A transformation indeed, this, for gentle Fay —that same sensitive and refined Fay who had been so painfully shocked, not very long ago, by her husband's vehement outburst against social interruptions. ("Perfectly common," she had called his angry tirade then;—his "practical" nature, under the friction of displeasure, had shown itself through the surface veneer and disappointed sweet Fay so terribly!). A transformation indeed, when a kitten bares its claws!

"George Judson," she warned, with that low, hitherto inconceivable, fierce note in her tones, "George Judson, if you ever dare to make an insinuation like that again I'll tear your eyes out."

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But her husband met the crisis unyieldingly. "It wasn't an insinuation, Fay," he answered steadily; "it was only a hazard, but before God, I believe there's something in it!"

The violet eyes blazed. From soft Fay Judson's throat came that inarticulate snarl of the tigress that is in every woman, and her fingers like curving talons tore toward her husband's face.

But his hands were quicker. Before the fingers could touch him he had seized her wrists. Strong wrists they were, with all their wielding of tennis rackets and swinging of golf sticks and pulling of oars, but George held the hands as if they had been Junior's. He was so much stronger that he could be absolutely gentle as he lowered them to his breast and held them there as in a velvet vise, very close to him, very helpless, while he looked steadily into her eyes.

"Let me go!" she panted desperately. "Let me go!"

He still held her. If he had smiled at the ease with which he did it, if his lip had curled with the slightest scorn at the futility of her struggles, if he had gloated over the magnificence of his physical superiority, or if his eye had flashed one hint of anger, he would have lost her there and then. But he did none of these things. His expression was of shame and unspeakable regret. His air was that of one who

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served—served by controlling her for herself. His moral mastery was greater even than his physical mastery.

As she felt the futility of her efforts, she relaxed them inevitably, and instantly he relaxed the power of his grip. She relaxed more, and he relaxed more, second by second, until she stood entirely unresisting with her hands in his. And all the while this gradation in physical submission had been taking place, his expression had been growing kinder, more considerate, and more sorrowful.

A nervous tremor, preliminary to a great revulsion, passed over her. He felt it—interpreted it. His hands opened, and she was free—to strike him—to tear him—to fly, but she wanted to do neither. With a welling sob she flung her arms high and closed them around her husband's neck in a convulsive clasp of affection and impetuous desire to remain beached and comforted upon that breast forever.

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CHAPTER XXIV

THE next day, and the next and next—and on and on till the time turned magically into weeks and months—George Judson felt free to let himself sink into business with greater absorption than ever. He had once more achieved an understanding with his wife; the fact became more and more evident as time sped by. To this was added also a new kind of head-clear confidence.

Things went swimmingly, too. A year went by—a year of splendid profit, with losses wiped out, with dividends declared, surplus accumulated, and prestige restored. George sensed himself as once more secured in the seat of executive control. The habit of success was once more resumed. Faith in Hilary as the designer to succeed Milton Morris had been amply justified. His second model, the Shiloh, took the water with a loud splash at the January shows, and Judson-Morris cars swept again definitely into the lead of their class.

Season by season, too, saw George's general judgments on the development of the industry confirmed. The factory went on building—

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went on expanding—production and profits went on increasing. Judson-Morris began to be a real factor in the automobile world and in the financial world as well. Twice in four years it was recapitalized and refinanced.

It was no longer a close corporation. Old holdings were broken up and went on the market. The stock was listed on exchanges.

There came a time when in a single year the earnings of George's remaining thirty-six per cent of the stock would have sufficed to buy in the open market the fifteen thousand shares of Judson-Morris necessary to make sure and permanent his control, but the young president did not seize this opportunity, because in that moment his loyalty to his company and its future proved greater than any mere self-interest. He refused to halt the year-by-year expansion by declaring a hull-clean dividend of all its earnings. In part this was because George Judson loved his company better than he loved himself. For his company he would seize the moment; for himself he would take a chance. This was typically Judsonian—in a way, it is typically American. Today, George believed, was the seeding time, tomorrow the harvest; the greater the sowing, the larger the harvest; therefore he never paid off today what could be invested to create a larger fund for paying off tomorrow. It seemed a shrewd policy, but it had its hazards.

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So also had matrimony! He had discovered that afresh and many times in these swift, successful years. Fay's attitude of sweet charitableness toward those exactions which business made of him had been disappointingly and perplexingly short-lived. What was the matter?

It did not seem to be Sir Brian. And yet Sir Brian was still around. But that was only because the globe-trotting young Englishman had a new hobby—air-flight. The feats of the Wright Brothers and others had challenged his sporting instincts. The idea of so combining a few struts of wire, a few spruce laths, and a few yards of canvas that one could thereby take a gasoline engine up in the air and go roaring round among the clouds with it appealed to his passion for adventure. So he flitted between the Wrights at Dayton and Glenn Curtiss at Buffalo, and every little while came back to Detroit to consult about the details of an engine to be perfected especially for this kind of service.

And every time he came he saw a good deal of the Judsons. George being busy he saw more of Mrs. Judson, yet there was not the slightest feeling of jealousy created by this, for the demeanor of Fay at this time was not that of a woman who loved her husband less, but more. Garbed for the links, looking her sweetest, her prettiest, and most winsome, Fay would plead with pouting lips:

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"George! Do come out and have a round of golf with us this afternoon."

And George would be laughingly contemptuous. "Knocking a pill round a pasture? Nope! Not today. Sorry, sweetheart, I've got something real to do."

Absorbed, content, oblivious—playing the greatest game he could conceive of, stroke by stroke, across his huge mahogany desk, he looked down in these days upon mere sport as the diversion of a child mind.

And Fay would be furiously angry and—then—tramping the links with another—Sir Brian, perhaps—would inevitably try to be charitable. "Dear old money-grabber!" she would sigh. But it was hardly to be wondered at if she grew jealous of the factory. "Sell it, George!" she appealed one day wistfully. "I am losing you. I can feel you slipping away from me every day. Sell it and get out so I can have you all to myself. I have so much more than enough for both of us, you know."

George was horrified. "But I can't get out, Fay," he tried to reason with her. "It isn't my money alone, you see. It's all the other fellows'. The stock has been sold and resold. The people who bought it didn't invest in shares in an automobile company. They took stock in me—in my reputation. You see, the whole big enterprise is pyramided on me. I've got to stay and

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make good for everybody that reposes a dollar's worth of confidence in me. I have—in honor, you know."

As he said this, his eyes glowed with a fine light. Fay saw that he was right, and was willing to try to be patient and resigned.

"And how long will it take to work the thing out?" she asked hopefully.

"Only five to seven years," responded George in accents of cheer.

"Oh, my God!" Fay groaned. Her face had become gray and frightened. *"Seven years?"* she whispered the words to herself as if weighing them in her mind, pronouncing the numeral as if it had been seventy instead of seven. "I'll—George!" and she clutched at him helplessly. "I'll be an old woman then. I'll be past thirty."

It was only her profound seriousness that saved her husband from jeering, from ejaculating "Rats!" or some other such disrespectful and unfeeling expletive. Instead he expostulated with sweet reasonableness: "Why, Fay! You'll just be coming into your prime. What a wonderful woman you'll be at thirty! No woman gets to her real beauty before that."

But the wife sat pulling her hands restlessly, with the gray look again in her face, and George had recourse to an old expedient for rallying her spirits. He painted the picture of his ultimate ideal for the plant—a huge hive for a happy

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industrial brotherhood, in which the man who swept the floor, the man who worked at the lathe, the stenographer at the typewriter—every last employee, in fact—was also to be an owner. The factory was to be a noble social enterprise in which everybody worked for everybody else and each made profit for himself. And Fay was carried away by this fine enthusiasm as she had frequently been before.

"Just to think of doing that for so many, many people!" she cried, and clung to his hand. "I guess I can stick it out just for that, George," she confided to him earnestly.

But she could never hold a vision and a purpose like this for long. After a few days,

"I'm too weak, George," she would confess despairingly; "too selfish. I'm only a sybarite after all."

"No, you're not, honey; no, you're not," he would comfort. "Sybarite? Why, I should say not. You do your share of the world's work by just helping me do mine."

But when it became apparent to him that by no stretch of the imagination was she helping him to do his work, he decided the time had come for a little straight talk.

"But I get so bored with just—just nothing to do but be a wife," she broke out at him one day, and he whipped back with,

"For heaven's sake! What's the matter with

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being a wife? If you'd try to be the kind of wife that Eleanor Hickson is, for example, you'd have something to occupy you, all right. Why don't you do the kind of things with me that I want to do—for example—the things that rest me—the things that soothe my nerves—the things that make me fit to go back in the morning and put up a fight? God knows I need it. My job gets tougher every year. Now just look at Eleanor. She waits for old Charlie to come home like a mother for an only son. The first thing she does is to feel him out. If he craves golf, she's for it, if he'd rather smoke on the back porch and go to the theater in the evening she's for that; or if he just feels like shucking off into loose clothes and slippers and sitting around and playing five hundred with a pipe in his mouth that you can smell a mile, why she's for that and she plays the game with him, till he goes to sleep in his chair. If there's a dinner on when he doesn't feel up to a dinner, think she drags him out? Why, say, she'd make a thousand excuses to get him off. She'd lie like a devil to save him—save him, you understand!"

"You idiot!" reproached Mrs. Fay Judson, with a look of hot disdain. "To think of comparing me with a spiritless little echo like Eleanor Hickson."

But George was just getting warmed up to a whole series of helpful suggestions.

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"Or," and he described a graceful circle with his cigarette hand; "why can't you be a wife like Norma Howes then. Look at Norma with her stock farms and her horse shows and her operatic star venture and her penchant for hanging round race tracks—and her far flung battle line of social engagements. She sails the seas like a privateer. She unpacks her trunks at Palm Beach or Newport or Coronado and she has a wonderful time. I doubt if she has a lonely minute.

"And do you think she spends much time fretting because her husband isn't along? Not much, she don't. She knows he's got to be at his desk chiseling out money for her to spend—good old Tom Howes, with the best set of selling brains under his bald bean that there is in the automobile industry save and excepting only one."

"Which modesty forbids you to mention," cut in his wife with biting scorn.

"Exactly," conceded George with the utmost complacency and blundered on with: "Think Tom crabs her when she comes home, broke and tired of the world, and ready to settle down to a long spell of connubial bliss? Not on your life. Tom's face lights up like factory windows at sunset and he gathers her into his arms like Romeo reaching for Juliet. They're happy, darn it! That's partnership—that's mutual ac-

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commodation—that's live and let live, that's—"

George was embarrassed and interrupted by perceiving that his wife was containing herself with difficulty, a prey to surprising, unreasonable anger, while he was innocently and stupidly unaware of having given her cause for anger. He had merely—merely tried to make himself plain—was all. Patient, long-suffering man that he was, he decided to try again. "You don't want to be a vampire, do you, Fay?" he inquired tenderly reproachful. "Just sucking all the business blood out of me—and trying to make me into a sort of—a sort of social lapdog?"

"Lapdog? . . ." and her tones quivered with scorn and wrath as she rose silently and ominously to a very climax of rage in which she exploded upon him with "You—you hedgehog!"

She accomplished a terrific sound of smashing something by a sudden crumpling of the evening paper which had lain in her lap, and flounced out of the room.

"Hedgehog! Whew!" chuckled George. "That was a hot one."

But the very next day Fay had lapsed into her most bewitching mood, that of languorous, challenging love.

"Oh, do come away to Daphnean groves, George, and play with me," she pleaded, with her most captivating smile, glancing up so coquettishly from under the long lashes, so ravish-

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ingly beautiful, so warm and palpitant and enticing, and withal so naïve that he could only pretend to resist her.

"Cleopatra pleading with Antony madly to throw a world away," he intoned jestingly. "Away, temptress! Avaunt!"

But he belied his words by drawing her into his arms with her laughing exultantly because her power to charm was still supreme when she chose to exert it. Yet when she could not charm him into a promise to give her more time from his business, she flew into a tantrum; then lapsed into quivering remorse.

"Oh, George! I do believe I'm the most unjust, unreasonable, ungrateful woman in the world," she confessed, weeping in despair over herself.

This was followed by a pitiful period in which Fay Judson tried to be the kind of wife that Eleanor Hickson was; but she couldn't keep it up. The cool-headed, warm-hearted, steady-nerved standing by required of a wife who would be a help-meet to George Judson, seasoned as he had been seasoned, doing what he was doing, had not been bred into Fay Judson —not yet.

"I'm too weak, George!" she confessed again. "I'm just a sybarite after all."

And there came a time when George no longer disputed this. He thought she was a sybarite,

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and he was willing to let her be a sybarite, if she would be just that and nothing else; but she wasn't. An eternal restlessness possessed her. She was always wanting to go somewhere—to do something that had never been done before. She had a fertile imagination and proved what an astonishing number of absurd enterprises one young woman can think of to propose when she has upward of three millions at her back and abundance of time upon her hands. But one day these proposals appeared to reach the climax of absurdity.

"Wha-a-at!" George ejaculated with coarse incredulity, his heavy brows lifted, his black comb-back seeming to rise along a ridge in its center, so great was his astonishment. "Head an expedition to search for the *Garden of Eden?* Me!"

Fay flushed but stood her ground. "Why, yes, George!" she enthused, sweetly radiant with innocent enthusiasm. "The Mesopotamian Valley is the most romantic place—cradle of history, you know—all full of ruins and cute little inscriptions on sun-baked bricks—important political records mixed in with letters schoolboys wrote to their fathers asking for money—thousands of years ago—letters of lovers to sweethearts, too."

"Oh, I see," scoffed George. "When a girl

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wanted to write a letter to her sweetheart, she heaved a brick at him."

"George! You ignoramus!" she rebuked. "Don't get funny, now. Those ruins are wasting away with every rain, being pillaged by every ignorant, roaming brigand. Precious knowledge may be lost to the world at any moment. Think how fine it would be for George Judson, the automobile manufacturer, to organize and lead a party up the valley of those two ancient rivers on the banks of which civilization was born—take a professor or two along, of course, to direct the excavations and read inscriptions. It would be such a lark, and besides it would be in the interest of science!"

"Science! Gosh, oh, gosh!" exploded George, who had restrained his impatience to the limit while he listened. "Say! Are you getting nutty? Are you? I want to know." He seized her by the shoulders and looked into her eyes. "You'd better see a doctor," he decided. "You had—really."

Fay was naturally indignant at such irreverent scoffing at the dearest project she had conceived for a long, long time. "That's the way you always receive every suggestion I make—you—you stupid, old business drudge!" she reproached. "You haven't got a bit of interest in science!" Her tone of accusation was weepy.

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"I'll try going alone sometime—and then see how you like it!"

This was flung tauntingly from the door as an exasperated and bewildered husband stood staring after the departure of an exasperated and indignant wife.

As for Fay, she said not another word about an excursion to the cradle of civilization, but she had other words to say about other projects as wild, as mad, and to as distant points of the compass for other excuses just as invalid. A mania for far journeyings had taken hold of her.

"Jee-rusalem, where does she hear of 'em all—these countries, I mean?" George would rant. "Gosh! I'm going to burn all the geographies and encyclopedias before she digs up any new places to go. What is it? What is it?"

He tried to make light of that whole phase of Fay's life with him, and did. He laughed away her proposals; he kissed away her tears—he permitted no base suspicions to enter his mind. He was glad of Sir Brian around occasionally to take her places and entertain her and keep her mind from brooding on his inability to be always her escort.

It was not until he realized that Fay's love moods had become so rare that they had almost disappeared; that there were no more of those attacks of quivering remorse; that there was only

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listlessness and despondency verging on despair that he waked up to the fact that there was something absolutely abnormal in the state of relations with his wife.

"What the devil is the matter with me," he burst out savagely at himself, "that I can't make one little woman happy?"

That was his position in general upon this matter until there happened into Detroit an eminent practitioner of psychoanalysis, summoned from New York as an expert witness in a will case of Ralph Tracey's in which subconscious mental histories were involved. For three days it was a *cause célèbre,* and for that period of time the Detroit papers were full of talk about this strange science of diagnosis by dreams.

On the evening before the specialist's departure, the Traceys gave him a little dinner at their home. Among the dozen guests were George and Fay and Sir Brian. The noted guest, large of face and body, proved also a large-brained person with engaging manners and a most agreeable willingness to discourse about his favorite theme.

"Beware how you tell me your dreams!" he challenged, and at once every one was offering what he deemed a discreetly censored sample of his dream life; but the doctor's ready interpretations and keen deductions were disconcerting as well as intriguing. Some he interpreted fully,

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some guardedly; some he did not interpret, causing the narrators a certain feeling of discomfort as wondering what it might be they had unwittingly revealed that was so terrible it might not be stirred into the *potpourri*.

At first every one was vastly entertained, and then some were thoughtful and reserved and introspective or restless, as if they heard skeletons rattling or had unintentionally submitted themselves to the disclosures of an X-ray eye and would be ill at ease until they would wriggle out of range of this blazing searchlight of the under soul.

But one cannot run away from a dinner, and one cannot sit forever dumb. Presently, when those with misgivings in their breast perceived that to fall suddenly quiet was to confess some vague sense of guilt, everybody began laughing and chatting and bantering each other and the doctor. But a skilled psychoanalyst is a dangerous man with whom to bandy wits. Where the subject trenches on his special field, he is sure to suspect if not actually discern the truth which so often lies behind the jest.

As the evening wore on, the doctor gathered an astonishing amount of information about these perfectly respectable people; things their neighbors had never been permitted to know; in a few instances, things they did not even know about themselves. One guest in particular ex-

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cited his interest because of a mental state peculiarly ripe for analysis and because such swift deductions as he could make aroused his keenest sympathy. This person also attracted him because of her unusual beauty. He said to himself that he would like to help that disturbed, wistful little woman if he could, and to that end he favored her with special attention and a discussion cunningly calculated to draw out more of what lay behind those violet eyes.

But there were two guests of the Traceys who told the doctor none of their dreams. One was Sir Brian Hook. The other was George Judson. He was too frankly interested in the doctor's marvelous display of his powers and the possibilities which they raised in his mind to intrude anything concerning himself. He knew all about himself anyway. Accustomed always in his business to the employment of experts, whether in science of technology, to solve problems that his organization could not solve of itself, he was quick to grasp the fact that here was an expert in a new department of human knowledge whose good intent he could trust implicitly and whose skill might be of profound and grateful assistance to him.

In the confusion, exclusions, and contacts incident to the departure of a number of guests, George made opportunity to get the doctor's ear for a moment.

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"You are leaving at eight in the morning, I believe," he postulated. "Don't do it, please, Doctor! You have impressed me tremendously, and I feel that I must consult you upon a matter of grave importance. Money is absolutely of no consideration if you can help me."

And the doctor gave surprising proof of his powers when he slanted a sympathetic eye directly into the earnest, anxious face before him and answered straight, "Yes, Mr. Judson, I agree with you that you *must* consult me."

"You—you know something?" stammered George, and gripped him by the hand.

The doctor returned the grip appreciatingly, but "Tomorrow at eleven," was all he whispered.

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CHAPTER XXV

SECLUDED in a room of the Pontchartrain Hotel, high up from the street, sparing himself nothing, yet trying to be fair to himself as to Fay, George Judson told the scientist the story of his life and of hers and of their life together.

"Just the old familiar story, Mr. Judson," the doctor diagnosed wearily, as if his shoulders were already bowed by the great weight of domestic woe the practice of his peculiar profession devolved. "One I have heard a hundred times before—a husband absorbed in business and a wife with abundant energies and nothing to do."

"But, Doctor," protested George, "she has a lot to do—if she would do it."

"Nothing adequate to do!" emphasized the doctor; "and, and—" But the neurologist this time interrupted himself. He had been going on to complete the world-old triangle by adding, "And the other man."

But the obvious intensity of Judson's nature warned him. He saw that the reaction after this long passivity of a generous and unsuspecting heart might be a sudden impulse to violence.

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After a moment of restrained and restraining silence, therefore, he continued in a much more professional tone.

"These wander-lust obsessions tell the story, Mr. Judson. In effect they are dreams—day-dreams, indeed, but nevertheless the porthole gleamings out of the subconscious. They reveal the whole tragic story, and they tell us exactly what to apprehend."

"Tragic? Apprehend?" George's voice was startled.

But the doctor skilfully avoided a direct answer now by saying: "First, if you please, Mr. Judson, let us consider your wife's character and temperament. She is, I gather, a soft, warm little woman—imaginative, romantic, wilful but essentially loving, fond of caresses, fond of attention, pleased with compliments, very proud of her possessions, whether material or personal. Her child is the most wonderful child. Her husband is the most wonderful hus-hand—or was."

"Was?"

Again that startled query, and again the doctor holding his answer in abeyance while George Judson's expression slowly lost every trace of its ingrained habit of self-assurance.

"Her inheritance of character is strong, but her environing has weakened and subordinated it. She is strong-impulsed but not strong-willed.

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She never had that kind of seasoning. A pout, a tear, or a plea has all her life got her everything she wanted. Isn't that so?"

"It is!"

"And, with it all, one of the dearest, one of the sweetest and most companionable little women in the world."

"Every bit of that and more," declared George. "And whatever is the—"

"Then we must not demand the impossible of this little woman, must we?" the doctor cut in skilfully.

"God knows I never have demanded it!" exclaimed George, conscious of a virtue.

"Then don't demand it now, after what I am to tell you, but first sit humbly at the feet of this distracted wife of yours and learn a lesson in devotion to ideals and to duty that will melt your heart. If it does not also provoke you to reverence and awe, I shall be much surprised."

"Why, what do you mean, Doctor?" inquired George, further disconcerted by such a manner.

"I mean to prepare you for the discovery that you have never properly appreciated your wife."

"Appreciated her? Why, Doctor, I—"

"Listen!" commanded the doctor, and he was now in his tone of most professional exposition: "These wander-lust dreams have one thing common to them all. You, her husband, are in them every one, and they take you away always to

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some far corner of the world where your business concerns cannot claim you—can scarcely reach you. Do you get the significance of that, Mr. Judson? These dreams reveal a devotion to you that is pathetic, a fear of the motor works as a rival for your affections that is tragic. She wanted to get you away from it. That deep want—"

"But that is where she was so unreasonable," broke in George, a trifle irritated at all this bearing down upon a demand for the impossible.

"Unreasonable, but not incomprehensible," declared the doctor, with significant emphasis. "There's the pity of it. She knew it was unreasonable and conceded it, yet her wish-nature would not be denied, and it devised all these fantastic projects one after another, that had as their primary impulse, though she never realized it herself, this passionate desire to have you secure for herself for all her life. Every dream, every absurd proposal to travel—every burst of tears or outbreak of hysteria—or long period of depression following one of your refusals—whether harsh or gentle—was either an expression of her love or a bitter mourning for its fancied loss."

A sad, worshipful light began to burn in the husband's eyes, and a slow conviction of guilt to dawn in his mind, the awful guilt of blindness. "Is that what it meant?" he murmured in an

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awed whisper. "And I thought she was just selfish and whimsical."

"And I presume she thought she was, too," conceded the doctor. "But that is what the wander-lust meant. At least that is what a part of it meant."

"Did it mean something else?" asked George, hanging now upon the doctor's words.

"Yes. There is a second detail common to all these dreams. Each involved an expedition which required distinguished and able leadership and contemplated achievements calculated to shed luster on its directing mind—its hero. You were to be that leader always—that hero. She thirsted continually to see her husband glorified, exalted, made a hero of."

"Gosh!" sighed George, impressed and yet out of patience with the fantastic conception. "Why, why, should she want to pin such crazy exploits on me?"

The doctor regarded the young man in silence for a moment, as if waiting to see if another idea would not now associate itself. When there was no indication that it would, the psychoanalyst went on impressively: "That is where the touch of deeper pathos comes in. There has been in your city, going in and out of your home, a world-traveler of appealing social and personal graces who has visited obscure corners of the globe and done one or two things which, in the

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eyes of an imaginative and romantic young woman, might attach a certain glamour that would outshine the most brilliant achievements of a mere domestic variety of business man."

"That's Hook, of course," said George, recognizing the picture; "but why on earth would Fay want to see me doing the kind of things that nervy young Englishman does?"

"Because admiration is a great quickener of woman's love, and her love for you was being threatened."

"But Doctor," the husband reminded, "we—we still love each other. We're just not—not happy." And then the hint in the specialist's words caught him. *"Threatened?"* he suddenly demanded.

"By her admiration for Sir Brian Hook."

George Judson's face turned livid. "Go on! Go on!" he said helplessly. "What are you going to tell me next?"

The doctor had remained perfectly calm, unresentful, pitying. "Simply that this four-year struggle which you narrated to me is a struggle between two loves. One love was being starved, deprived of some of the things that love feeds on. The other was being nurtured by a full diet of those very qualities as displayed in Sir Brian Hook."

"Hook!" bellowed George, angrily disre-

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spectful. "I tell you there's nothing between them!"

"Except love—I am sure of that," said the doctor with niceness of distinction, and refusing to be insulted by the man he was compelled to hurt in order that perhaps he might help him. "The pathos of the struggle, the thing that should make you in this moment extend to your wife the supremest consideration, is that for the last few months, perhaps a year, there has been but one love."

George's hands gripped the chair arms tightly; he was making the supremest effort to control himself. "Go on! Go on with your damnable deductions," he challenged. "I can answer them every one. She loves me. My wife loves me!"

"But one love," iterated the doctor, with painstaking firmness, still unresentful and pitying, compassionate because of the pain his verbal exploratory slashings caused. "Of late it has been a fierce struggle between love of one man and loyalty to another. She has tried to be your faithful wife; she has tried by a thousand arts and inventions and games she played with herself to keep her love for you alive, to resurrect it when it was dead, to—"

"Doctor!" groaned George, appealingly, as conviction was breaking surely in. "Doctor—don't say that it's dead."

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"I wish I didn't have to," responded the doctor kindly, and laid a soothing hand on the shoulder of the distressed husband, "but I must tell you what I see from the full narrative of her behavior which you have given and the unusually informing glimpses of her own mental state which she afforded me last night. To resume: she had remained loyal, never allowing you to suspect the truth, herself perhaps so unwilling to believe it that she is hardly aware of it now. Lacking that steadfastness of will of which we spoke, she has lacked steadfastness to make the deliberate plunge out of your life which her love impels."

"Doctor! You are wrong—all wrong!" George insisted. "If any other person than yourself had intimated what you have this morning, I should be twisting his head off now."

He stood stupefied, one hand tearing at his hair, the fingers of the other working nervously, while the full extent of what the doctor had so delicately but clearly intimated went crashing through his consciousness.

"Fool! Fool! Fool!" he accused himself. "Poor, doting, trusting fool!" And then, oddly enough, he thought of his wife sympathetically. "Poor, poor little Fay! So white—so clean—so pure! Oh, this is horrible! Horrible!" But a sense of his own wrongs came back to him.

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"This is my reward," he reproached, "for being a generous, trustful husband."

But the doctor felt that he could not permit this man who touched his sympathies to do himself the injury of self-pity when self-pity was neither justified nor commendable. "On the contrary, it is your punishment for assuming that the marriage ceremony and a few casual kindnesses that are after all selfish in their origin and selfish in their aim, give a man a strangle-hold on a woman's heart. It is your nature, I judge, Mr. Judson, to assume too much. It is an American trait. You mean well. There is an old saying that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. You are what I should call a hell-paver. The hell-paver is such a sanguine optimist that he doesn't put all his cards on the table—even to himself. The country is full of them—hell-paving businessmen, hell-paving statesmen, hell-paving editors, preachers, doctors, and so on. You are a hell-paving husband. You meant well, but—"

"I'll kill that Englishman," George cried, with a roar of rage, and started for the door, "I'll kill him!"

The doctor did not even reach out a hand to restrain this potential homicide on his way to do the deed. Instead he remarked thoughtfully, "Perhaps that is the first thing to do," and he said it speculatively, eyes on distance as if, once

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his mind were convinced, he might actually participate in this solemn act of retributive justice.

Such a manner was more arresting to George Judson than hands laid on him could have been. He halted and turned upon the doctor strangely.

"But let's be sure it is before we do it," qualified the psychoanalyst, and centered his glance upon George calmly as though he addressed a reasoning being.

"I must have been blind. I must have been blind," George now reiterated.

"Blind! You were worse than blind," declared the doctor bluntly. "You were stupid!"

"But the question is now—what to do?"

"If you're a big man—big enough—" calculated the doctor, as weighing his man estimatingly, "you might win her back."

"Win her back?" George cried hoarsely.

"Yes. Although the bits of dreams she told me last night revealed clearly that the issue had been settled in her heart, she has hesitated so long in her mind that she might hesitate longer still, and so I say that you might—*win her back.*"

"In God's name, how?" the husband appealed.

"By doing what she wants. Humor her. Indulge her. Shame her. Drop everything and go with her—go hunt the Garden of Eden! That was pitiful! She has lost her Eden all right—poor little girl. Go look for it with her. Buy a yacht and cruise round the world—anything

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like that and—buck up, Judson! You're not the man to quit when you've got a fighting chance. Drop everything and go."

But George stood motionless—petrified. "Drop everything? Sell out? I couldn't do it." A look of awful pain was in his eyes.

The doctor for the first time grew impatient. "But isn't the love of your wife worth more than your factory? That's where you've been weak, Judson—all along."

"But you don't understand, Doctor," he argued dismally. "I'm nailed to the spot. The very existence of the Judson-Morris Motor Works as financed now is based on an operation programmed through a number of years yet, and it's like the two spans of a bridge building out toward each other. Once they're joined, it will have the strength of Gibraltar—but that will take three years yet. In the meantime I'm the Atlas that's planted like a false pier in the stream. Holding both ends."

"More hell-paving!" scorned the doctor. "Let it crash!" He said this quite unfeelingly.

"But it isn't myself alone that would crash," explained George miserably. "A lot of people, widows and wage-earners and small investors generally, have put money in our company. Our stock and our bonds have been peddled through the banks to the little people who can't afford to lose and who have trusted their pitiful all in the

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name and business ability of George Judson. I can't go back on them. My life is not my own exactly. I can't leave, don't you see—in honor, in justice, I can't. Fay knows that—if she hasn't forgotten. I've explained it to her times enough."

"I see you can't," admitted the doctor quickly—"Not the kind of man you are." He had liked George Judson from the first, and pitied him; now he began to have a large respect for him.

"What shall I do, then?" the man appealed.

"Let her go!" answered the doctor incisively.

"Let her go?" George sprang up in protest.

"Yes. She has contemplated going. Her dream showed that."

"Not in a million years!"

"You don't want to condemn a woman to wifehood after she has ceased to love you, do you? Go and tell her she is free. Acknowledge your failure. Since you have lost her love, give up trying to hold her body with a bond that is legal and conventional, but hellish for all that and that she can snap at any time."

George Judson backed away, a horror in his eye and shaking his head stubbornly.

"Sit down. Think!" commanded the doctor, asserting autocratically the moral dominance he had gained, and Judson obeyed as a patient should obey his physician. "Be fair to her! She

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loved you—she bore your child—she has fought out this moral battle till it is making a wreck of her physically and mentally. There can be but two alternatives left. One is to permit her to go of her own act to a life that, with her sensitive nature and inheritance of the puritan conscience, can never be anything else than prolonged torture. The other is for you to be big enough to go to her and tell her she is free. Tell her you have failed, and to seek her happiness where she thinks it lies."

Every atom of George's combative disposition was roused; every element of his moral nature—or was it his mere male instinct for possession?—rejected as horrible such a cold cutting away of a relation to him that, however unhappy, was sacred and still had in it the element of hope. But he was willing to contemplate the suggestion merely to scorn it.

"And then what?" he demanded with quivering nostrils.

"Women are contrary creatures," asserted the doctor. "Freedom offered by you may be all that is necessary to cause her to change. You may shock her out of her present mood by the very unexpectedness of such an act on your part. Her condition is psychological as well as pathological. The mere fact that you, at obvious pain to yourself, take the big, the noble course, may challenge her admiration and send her flying

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into your arms, as you say she used to come at the end of your minor quarrels."

This was like a sudden letting in of light of reasonable hope upon a chaos of utter darkness: "Oh, God! If she only would!" George Judson was reflecting fervently, when another ghastly perception stabbed him, and he burst out with, "But if she does not, I will be turning her out to go with—with—" Speech halted in his constricted throat. He could not utter the name that had become a symbol of horror.

"She might not go with him," meditated the doctor.

"Might not!"

"From the glimpses of her nature I have had, and from the long resistance she has put up, I do not think she would go with him at first. She would be more likely to go away from both of you—far away. One of these mad trips most likely. Well? If she does that, you have an even break—more than an even break—for distance lends enchantment, and besides you are the father of her boy."

"Junior!" George remembered poignantly. "Why, that's another reason why she couldn't leave me—Junior. He is ours. She might be mad enough to wish to undo her marriage, but she couldn't wish to undo Junior. Not possibly."

"But she might decide that an unhappy home

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was the worst place in the world for a child to grow up. Besides, my friend," and the doctor's voice took on a note of warning that was austere, "this is no time for debate over theories. A condition confronts you. As we physicians say, haste is indicated. Again reverting to that dream your wife told me last night, things are at a crisis. If you do not act immediately, you may find it too late to act at all. The best advice I can give you is to go to your wife immediately."

George Judson sprang up. "You may be right," he said. "I will go to her at once, and I should like permission to come back to you at three o'clock this afternoon. Perhaps I may bring my wife back with me." There was the leap of a new encouragement in his voice.

"By all means do," said the doctor heartily. "I will hold the time for you."

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CHAPTER XXVI

BUT when George Judson did come back to the suite in the Pontchartrain, he came alone. He was white and more shaken than when he departed; his eyes appeared sunken.

"She is gone!" he said.

"Already? Hmn! Where to?"

"Europe!"

The doctor was himself rather startled by this complete confirmation of his fears. "And taken the child?"

George Judson nodded sickly. "Her mother, too. The whole family!"

"Then she didn't go with Sir Brian?"

"Sir Brian is gone, though. I tried to find him at the club. Lucky for him I didn't, I guess," and the distracted man dropped his eyes for a minute. "I had one of those crazy spells."

"Lucky for you also, I guess!" observed the doctor pithily.

Judson's slightly shamefaced manner confessed that he thought so, too. He was all over his killing rage and appreciating more poignantly every second the magnitude of the blow which had fallen upon him. He sank dejectedly into a chair, and gazed at the wall with vacant,

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unseeing eyes. His mind busy with terrible regrets, he had forgotten his hatreds.

"I didn't even get a chance to tell her what a blind fool I'd been—that I was mostly to blame for the whole horrid mess and that—" With a weary shake of his head he left the sentence unfinished.

In the breathing silence there came up to the window a vast, faint shouting from the streets below. The doctor stepped to the casement and looked down into the Circle. Crowds were knotted on the corners, with newsboys weaving in and out among them and selling papers so rapidly that rather than any necessities of salesmanship, it must have been the urge of some profound excitement which kept their voices barking in such hoarse, persistent chorus.

"What's it all about, I wonder!" commented the doctor, thinking to divert George for a minute from his misery.

"Oh!" recalled the half-stupefied man, rousing. "You know what the headlines say? War!" His pronunciation of the word was almost incredulous. "Germany has invaded Belgium on the way to France. Russia is attacking Germany."

"My God!" breathed the doctor slowly, his eyes fixed on his informant, while one by one the wide horizons of his mind lighted up with the possibilities of such a conflagration among the

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nations. "England will come in. There'll be the devil to pay. All Europe will be torn to pieces like a rag baby by a pack of wolves," he declared.

Abruptly George Judson stood up. "And my wife and child are sailing into that tomorrow!"

The two men exchanged glances, gravely impressed.

"However, she'll read the papers and—she won't go," reasoned George hopefully.

But the doctor shook his head decisively. "I think she will," he asserted. "Anything as big as a trip to Europe was not decided upon hastily. The fact of war is likely to make her more determined. Indeed, I suspect anything like a war between nations will seem so mild compared to the strife that has gone on in her heart that she will fly to it with a kind of rapture. She craves adventure. She will get it. She pines for action—she will see it. She is in search of romance—she will find it, the grisly, horrible romance of sudden death. She will see men adventuring all round her—women outraged, children trampled, famine stalking! She might get so well fed up on adventure that a home with a butler and a chef in it, in far-off Detroit, and a husband that sticks to his desk like glue all day and comes home nights and pesters her with his selfish caresses, might be the most fascinating idea in the world to her."

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"You think so, Doctor?" George Judson in this hour was clutching at straws if ever man did. "If only I had seen them go—if only I could have kissed her goodby and assured her that I would love her to the end of my life if I lived to be as old as Methuselah! If only Junior had held my finger again!"

"Better they didn't," opined the doctor, looking always at the practical values. "That was her consideration for you—and for herself. Did she leave you any message?"

"This!" George took from his inside coat pocket an oblong of lavender notepaper. The communication was without salutation and without signature. It was very brief and read:

"I am going, George, on the far, far journey. (You won't miss the farewell. I couldn't stand it.) I am going to search for the Garden of Eden. To search for it without you! That sounds topsy-turvy, doesn't it? But I've taken our small edition of you along, precious, precious Junior!"

That was all.

"That doesn't sound as if she went away with Sir Brian," declared the doctor, weighing the note in his hand.

"But—she's left me!" despaired George, unable to see hope anywhere in the sky. "I've lost her! *Say!*" and he sat up with a sudden fierceness of self-accusation. "What's the matter with

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me? I work like the devil, and I don't get anything out of it. I win a wife, and I can't keep her. I have a son, and he's taken away from me. I've made a lot of money, but I can't ever get my hands on any of it to spend. I've built a great business, and so help me God, I'm tortured half the time for fear they're going to take it away from me! What's the matter with me anyway?"

"You're a hell-paver!" diagnosed the doctor again.

"But I'm not one of these sapheads that just dream of doing things," resented George. "I do 'em, I'm a performer."

"And a lot of hell-pavers are performers. That's how they fool themselves. Your scheme of life looks to you like a masterpiece. It would to a lot of people. They wouldn't see where the hell-paving comes in."

"You'll have to show me," challenged the man stubbornly.

"And I will show you," rejoined the doctor resolutely. "There are two kinds of hell-pavers, the weak and the strong; the little and the big. The weak intend and stop there. The strong perform all right, but they leave fatal gaps in their biggest performances that rob them of the fruits of their efforts just as you see that you yourself have been robbed. Recall your simile of the unfinished bridge a while ago—you've

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left more open gaps in your life structure than you've got hands and arms to hold the bridges up with."

George winced, but the doctor never faltered.

"And you've also hell-paved at home. You were hell-paving when you did not tell your wife frankly the facts about your business. You should have had her sympathy when you got only her scorn. You hell-paved when you checked your beautiful wife with another man upon the golf-links as you might have checked a wet umbrella at a stand."

"Doctor!" roared the husband in pain. "I never did that. You know I never did it."

"You did something strangely like it," rebuked the specialist with a relentless driving home of his assertion by an unshaken glance of his level, blue eyes.

"No—no," protested George, sick to death with his distress and sick with any attempt at speculating upon the mistakes that had led to them, although it was himself that had asked it. "I'm wrong, but you're not right. Let's end this moralizing, and help me, Doctor, if you can. I just haven't learned the secret of holding a woman's love. What is that secret, Doctor?"

"If I knew, I could make a million dollars a day selling it in New York City alone," smiled the doctor. "If I knew, I could brighten the homes and lighten the hearts of half the men

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and women in the world. Each man must find it out for himself. You haven't—yet."

"But, so help me God, I will!" declared George with rising emphasis, and, suddenly indomitable again, he started up and seemed about to take himself away.

"Where are you going?" asked the doctor, apprehensively.

"To New York to bring her back."

"Don't!" said the doctor impressively. "I advise against it. It will lose you your chance. Be patient. Be self-contained. Be resigned. If you have lost her, she is gone from you beyond your power to bring her back. If you have not, there is still hope that your absence, not your presence, may rekindle her love for you. You have always been devoted to her—in your blind, self-engrossed fashion. Leave that to fight for you—that and the boy! Go back to all that's left you—your job—and do it! Try to bear yourself in such a big way that it will challenge her admiration once more, that it will make her turn to you like the magnet to the pole."

George appeared to listen with the humble faith of a child. "But how is she going to know what I do now?" he objected.

"I fancy she will know—that she will find a way, or has arranged a way, to keep herself informed of all your goings on." The doctor came near with lowered voice and a hand sym-

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pathetically on George Judson's shoulder. "You have one resource left to try now, my boy, the power of constancy, of a faithful and steadfast love—the power of the knowledge that a home is open and a husband waits for her here. That, without one act of violence, one bitter word of recrimination, he confesses at least his own faults and he—*waits!*"

"*Waits?* My God! That is an awful sentence, Doctor, to a man like me. I'm a go-getter. I never wait for plums to fall into my lap. I shake the tree."

"This may be the very discipline your character requires. Patience, Mr. Judson, is as great a virtue as your particular god, perseverance, and a rarer one—a more difficult one. Wait."

"Wait!" The great specialist had advised with an impressiveness so great that it had all the authority of a supreme moral imperative. And it was a tribute to the fibre of George Judson that he was able to do this—wait. There was no direct communication, but he knew that Fay had landed in England. And of course she must remain in England, for there was no travel now except backward to America, and she did not travel backward. But England! That was Sir Brian Hook's country.

Then from her mother vague news began to come to his mother. Miraculously she had gained the Continent, as if some high influence

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had opened secret doors for her. She was in Paris. She was in Rome. She was—of all places—Salonica. How did she accomplish it? He could only surmise, and the only surmise that occurred to him was an unpleasant one. But there she was—in the thick of it. Drinking her fill of excitement—feeding the passion of her eternal restlessness; getting, George hoped, her fill of adventure.

And his boy! Where was he?

Safe in England! So Mrs. Gilman's letter had assured Mary Judson, and besides the heart-ache of loss and loneliness George's proud spirit chafed especially at this. His boy—his son—why should he be in England, a foreign country and war-encompassed? why dependent upon the care of hired strangers? Why, some of these air raids or something—but there he was, and his mother was still away upon her quest of the Garden of Eden, while the covenant George Judson had made with himself forbade him to interfere, forbade him to do anything but wait.

He kept the covenant. He remained in America. He never closed the Indian Village home. Out of it he came and went to his daily work. The servants stayed on. The cream-and-blue room was as it had always been. Mrs. George Judson was merely away. She might return at any time.

Lonely but proud, suffering but self-contained,

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George Judson gave himself up to longer hours of unremitting toil than he had known since boyhood. He punished himself with work. His dissipation was work. His life became one long debauch of work, work, work! Work that prospered now as no work of his had ever prospered before. But there were also times when hope and faith strove against sickly, withering jealousy and both were blighted by it, times when he left everything for a day and rushed down to New York to counsel with the specialist who had been definitely established as physician to, not his body, but his heart.

"What is she doing round all these places? How does she get there?" These were stock queries of George's always.

"Nursing, maybe," soothed the doctor.

"Nursing? Fay! She doesn't know how to nurse. She's not—steady enough to nurse."

"Scrubbing, maybe. Roustabout work in hospitals."

George Judson smiled, a superior, half-ironic smile. His wife wouldn't nurse, she couldn't scrub, she couldn't do anything but play.

But the wise doctor smiled also, and not ironically, but hopefully. "It might be," he suggested, "that this play-girl is learning to work—is learning to organize her energies about something else than whims—that her will-life is conquering her impulse-life—that over yonder is

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growing, my man, a woman so big that you'll have to be a bigger man than you have ever been to aspire to her. Remember you thought you had to be rich to win her at first. But she didn't put so much value on your riches. Mere dollars couldn't hold her. It may be that you'll have to become a great deal more of a man to be the kind of mate she can admire as she once admired you and as we want her to admire you again."

"But how—?" George would begin always to protest, and,

"Wait! Be steadfast! Stick!" That was always what the advice of the Doctor simmered down to.

And meanwhile, business—and such business! How easy it was to make money now! He could discharge his salesforce, he could cancel his advertising contracts, he could turn every energy and every resource to production. With a kind of black exultation he saw the dividends grow larger and surer—the ends of the two spans of the bridge growing nearer and nearer together until at last they joined. The operation was complete. The empty chambers of hope on which the foundations of the Judson-Morris Motor Works had been laid were filled now by the solid gold of earned assets. The institution was sound. With a sigh of relief President Judson ceased to be Atlas holding up the world of his creation.

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He leaned back to breathe. In business, at any rate, he was no longer a hell-paver—except —unless—

He had drawn no more than one breath of this blessed relief, however, before his mind had fastened on the single ground for business apprehension which remained—the fifteen per cent —the fifteen thousand shares he had been forced to part with, thereby jeopardizing his control. He had money enough now to buy it, but Templeton would not sell. George went into the market to buy a different fifteen thousand shares or any part of them, but Judson-Morris stock was all at once strangely retiring. It had practically disappeared. This meant that somebody was buying it. For what?

There could be but one reason. George was sick as he thought what this reason was. It would be terrible if they took the plant away from him now—now, just as he had made it into the great, solid structure that it was. It was all he had left—except a hope that turned toward Europe. This hope and that fear seemed all that remained to him, and it was while he shifted his eyes dizzily from one to the other and back again, that the United States rushed suddenly headlong into the world war. Instantly George Judson roused to a new possibility.

The Judson-Morris Motor Works no longer required his presence. It would run now of its

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own momentum, and he decided to abandon its direction entirely to Chilton. He left an order with his brokers to buy all or any part of fifteen thousand shares of Judson-Morris common when and wherever opportunity should arise, and himself went immediately to enlist. He wanted to fight, a rifle in his hand, against civilization's enemies.

He might die! Well, why not? But they wouldn't give him a gun.

"Just the man we need to go to France and organize our motor transport service," suggested a dollar-a-year friend of George's in affiliation with the War Department, and into motor transport he was sent—by way of Liverpool and London.

London? His boy was there, but in London he learned that Junior was tucked away in a corner of Wales far from the path of air raids. "Safest place in the kingdom," they told him, but when the eager father wanted to set off hot-foot to Wales, he could not go because of military orders.

But there was one satisfaction in passing through London. He saw Mrs. Gilman there, her hands full of war work on some committee or other of American women, and she gave him a more detailed account of Fay's activities. They had been quite worthy ones. She had found herself in the war. Its opportunities

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called down to earth her restless, romantic spirit. She had learned to be of use in the world.

But she was still restless, nomadic of disposition. She had established a home for orphaned Belgian children, but had left it for others to manage. She had taken a course and done nursing in the great Red Cross Hospital at Neuilly, near Paris, and then, craving more adventure, had gone to driving ambulance for a British Hospital unit.

George was permitted to see a snapshot of her in uniform, the same trim, graceful figure, but with a rare steadiness in the eyes, a new strength in the pose—or was it the uniform that imparted this? Why not an American uniform? But the Americans had only men driving ambulances.

Nothing was said about Sir Brian; nothing was asked about him. George feared the question—feared a reply that might destroy hope.

He went on to France, a land groaning with war and teeming with the movement of war, yet to his fascinated imagination, it seemed only some small, magic maze in the labyrinths of which he must presently encounter his wife. In this state of mind he indulged day-dreams the absurdity of which made those by which his wife had once been charmed seem like polished diamonds of Aristotelian wisdom.

For instance, he dreamed ridiculously of being

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sent on some errand to the British sector, of there blundering into front-line danger, where he would fall wounded or gassed or something, lying all night upon the field; but with morning light the stretcher-bearers would take him back, back to where an ambulance waited. Its driver, a graceful girl, especially fetching in her jaunty cap and Sam Browne belt, would be standing by while the stretcher-men lifted their burden into her car.

But that was a dream—an absurd, ridiculous imagining. He never saw the British sector. He never got within one hundred miles of the American front. He was never even ditched in one of his own trucks. He spent most of his time working twenty hours a day. He got rid of the two bars of a captain and finally wore the eagle of a colonel on his collar, but he had the authority of a three-star general in his organization, and he did his part to keep the army fed and clothed, working with unbounded enthusiasm until the armistice. But in a few short November days all the glamour and fascination faded out of war. A military organization became dreary and desultory and inefficient.

He longed to get away from it and had prestige enough now to secure immediate leave. He searched the hospitals of Paris; he appealed to the records of the British Ambulance Units; he

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turned at length to London. Even Mrs. Gilman had gone, leaving no address.

Discouraged, hope almost gone, he went back to Paris. When he reached the Hotel Continental, lo, there was a letter with the address almost obliterated by postmarks—a letter that had followed him for months through the eccentric channels of army mail, and at last had overtaken him here. But the address was still distinguishable, and it was in her handwriting.

He thrilled at the sight of that beloved, bold, and angular but distinguished hand. Not in four years had his eye seen anything that so gladdened him, and with heart beating wildly under his breast of whipcord khaki, he sought the privacy of his room. Once there he tore it open almost violently, yet with a genuine reverence in the touch of his impatient fingers.

"George, George," the letter began, "I am so glad you are in the war—so proud to hear that General Harbord has personally commended you."

Harbord—where had she heard that? It was only six months ago? The letter was five months old. She must have been very close to him to have heard of that within a month in war areas. It gave him an uncanny, superstitious feeling, but it made his heart leap as at the discovery that she had been watching him nearer than he

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thought—and why was she watching if she did not still love him?

"But it isn't that which impels me to write to you. As time drifts on and there is more time for understanding of the tragedy that overtook our love, there are some things that it seems I must tell you. Do you mind if I hurt you a little while I tell them? Things that you ought to know, George, because sometime, somewhere, again, you will be trying to make a woman happy, and I don't want you to make the old mistake."

Sometime—somewhere—*a* woman! The inference inevitable from the form of this allusion was chilling. He shuddered as if a polar blast had struck him but—he read on:

"Some things I thought were vices in you, George, have come to look like virtues since I've seen so much of other men. But I think for one item, that as a lover, George, you put too much trust in material things. You wanted to give your wife a mountain of concrete and steel when she would rather have had a rose. You ordered wagon-loads of flowers sent to me in those five years, George, but I never appreciated all of them as much as if you had stopped your car by the roadside and gathered a handful of daisies and brought them to me. But you never did that.

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If you had thought of gathering them, you would not have had time to bring them. You would have sent them back by Blakeley!"

"God!" George Judson cried out sharply, under his breath, and bit his lip.

"A woman isn't just an acquisition, you know," the letter went on. *"It isn't all when you've captured her. You can't just drag her home through the jungle to your lair and expect her to stay there like a dove with clipped wings and be content. The wooing has just begun then. I told you once it was the duty of a husband to make his business romantic—that was silly, no doubt—but it is the duty of a husband to remain always a wooer and a lover.*

"In those days, George, you didn't want a wife; you wanted a pet sheep that would come when you called her and stay away when you didn't. You wanted a plaything, and I couldn't be merely that—though that was all I knew how to be. Being a husband is not an executive position; it's only one side of a partnership, and not merely a partnership in business, but in life.

"But enough of ragging! I had these things to say that would hurt you, but might do you good. I have now something to add that will comfort you and certainly do you good also. You are a great builder, George—a creator. Oh, I get so sick of destruction and destroyers!

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I never saw so plainly as now how important are the constructive forces in the world's history. The greatest men are not the destroyers; they are the constructors. You are a constructor.

"Oh, George! I had such a thrill one day. They gave me a new ambulance to drive, and it was one of yours. I nearly screamed for joy. When no one could see, I bent and kissed the name upon the radiator. Until that moment I had not known how great and really worthy was the thing you were doing. I thought that it would be a kind of sad comfort for you to know that I had caught your vision at last, as it is now for me to recognize it.

"Speaking for myself—for my selfish own concerns—I have not entered into Eden yet, but I think I know where it is. I think it is very near me now—I think I can smell its fragrance —I think I can reach out and touch the secret spring that will open its gates to me. But I have not reached out my hand yet. And before I did, it seemed comradely to write these lines to a fellow-fighter in this war against one of civilization's enemies.

"FAY."

So the letter ended. Cryptic—maddening—inflaming. It was dated Warsaw. Warsaw! She had got out of British service—that was why

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he could not find her—she was with Hoover perhaps. She had not told him. She did not want him to find her. But—it was not yet too late! and he would find her. He would!

But his leave of absence was expiring. He was still a cog in the military machine and must go back to Tours and take up his duty, the dull, drudging duty of putting up the shutters on a war. But at last his part in it would be done, and when it was, and not until then—he would ask for his discharge—on French soil.

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CHAPTER XXVII

THE day after his discharge Colonel George Judson was in Paris seeking a name in the records of the Polish Relief Committee. It was not there, but he was told more complete records would be found in the London office. He rushed to London. At the Hotel Savoy a cablegram from John Williams overtook him. It read:

"Templeton presents stock certificates bearing your endorsement for transfer on books amount fifteen thousand shares. Is this all right?"

George had received this cablegram in his room. He read it and wavered in his tracks as he stood staring at its words a second time. It meant that Templeton was breaking away. He had caved—he had sold—he—No; it was not all right!

"The traitor!" Judson raved. "After I've made him more than a million dollars in dividends, besides giving him the stock!"

But rage gave way to sickness at heart and bitter self-reproaches. At last that of which he had been so long apprehensive had come to pass. Templeton had yielded inevitably to the great temptation. The mysterious group whom

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George had suspected of working insidiously to buy control of Judson-Morris had broken the veteran banker down.

Still, there was a chance that they had not actually got his stock yet—a chance that Templeton was only getting in position to trade if he decided to do so. If George were there and on the ground, he would rally his every source and fight as he had never fought before.

But suddenly he was listless and lackadaisical. What was the use of fighting for that when the thing he most wanted in the world—? He drew from his wallet a letter broken at the creases and almost worn out with handling. He pondered this letter. After all, did it alter matters? Its author had in no wise committed herself. She had then and since studiously concealed herself from him. There was no hope in the letter. There was, rather, a clear intimation that she was about to find her Eden without him.

With *whom?* He speculated bitterly. For Eden was not a lonely place. God had seen that it was not good to be alone in Eden. There were two in Eden always.

The man sat with his head in his hands, weighing, weighing. He was a man of action. This fight that might be made for the Templeton stock—it was a concrete thing to do. Judson-Morris was his creation. It was all that was left to him of what he had aimed his life at.

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Besides: "Do the immediate duty. Stick to your job! The only job you've got left." And this was his job now—to be resolute—to be a man—to go back and save the Judson-Morris Motor Works to that great program of democratization which he had planned for it.

He rose up and took command of himself and entered upon the action. June 30th was the annual election, the earliest date at which control could be wrested from his hands and this was—this was—what day was this anyway? He had lost count of the days, but a newspaper on the table beside his bed proclaimed that this was the 12th of June.

Twelfth of June! Anniversary of his wedding. Pitiful reminder! With the ache of that thought in his heart he studied steamship sailing and learned that the *Lapland* would leave Liverpool on the 16th, but that she would go by way of Brest. She was his only chance.

All the way over radiograms gave the anxious passengers news flashes of what was going on. A thing called Diamond Motors, a thing with no existence except upon paper, was opening its bill like a huge cormorant and engorging one automobile factory after another and the copy of the paper, which George bought eagerly as the boat was warping to her pier, reported that at tomorrow's annual meeting Diamond Motors

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would swallow the Judson-Morris Motor Works.

"I'll be damned if they will," declared George, biting savagely through his cigar as a taxicab whirled him across town to the Grand Central station, and his mind was busy with planning for tomorrow's sharp and decisive action. He did not know yet what he would do, but he was determined to do something and do it vigorously. His staff knew that he was coming, and they would have been doing their utmost already.

At nine o'clock next morning George Judson was in his own office in Detroit. Chilton, John Williams, and Percy Mock all greeted him in succession, wringing his hand, telling him he looked like a two-year-old and all that sort of blarney; but immediately dropped their voices into graveyard whispers to confer upon the momentous issue which they faced in the stockholders' meeting set for 10:30 o'clock.

"It's Diamond Motors without a doubt, that's after us," declared John Williams, confirming the newspapers.

"It doesn't help us much to know who it is, when this is all we've been able to rally," said George disappointedly, as he contemplated the few hundred shares that, after all his standing orders and all his recent frantic cabling, were the sum total of what his brokers had been able

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to gather—and added to them in his mind the one thousand and odd hundreds which the faithful Chilton, Williams, and Mock had been able to rally in proxies and otherwise.

"Looks tough!" admitted Chilton with a solemn shake of his head.

"It looks worse than tough," mumbled George. "Our only hope is that we're going to have some friends in that meeting that we don't know about."

An hour passed. George did some frenzied telephoning. He sent Chilton, Williams, and Mock out to make short personal appeals where it was thought that personal appeals for stock or proxies might yet be effective, but each came back empty-handed.

"Let them show us what they've got," George Judson proclaimed stoutly, "and then we'll show 'em what we've got."

This was a bold speech, but empty. His associates knew it was empty, but they admired him for making it—and they did not know that his knees trembled as he arose at last and led the way into the directors' room.

The long, polished mahogany table would seat ten persons. Chairs around the room and massed beyond it would seat twenty-five more. Not all the chairs were taken. Stockholders' meetings are not usually largely attended. There was a woman or two. The men ranged from the

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country merchant and the small businessman class, through a sprinkling of professional men, to one particular person who looked like "big business." He was carefully groomed, from the Panama hat which reposed before him upon the table, at the far end of which he had presumed to take a seat, to the expensive tan oxfords upon his feet and the figured silk socks which they encased. This man was tall and spare and sandy, with a hawk-like nose, a spike-like chin, a cold, blue eye, and a shrewd and self-composed air.

The president sat down in the president's chair at the opposite end of the table from this stranger whose features had such an unmistakably wolfish aspect.

"That's the guy," said John Williams, nudging George. "That's Jason Weems, Trustee. He is Diamond Motors and a hard-boiled bird if ever I saw one."

As the roll-call proceeded, George was surprised to notice what changes had taken place in the holdings. The name of S. R. Peattie had gone, the Pence Estate was gone; the name of Morris was gone; it gave George a feeling of shivery loneliness. As the answers came back with holdings of shares or proxies, President Judson noted these figures upon his desk blotter with a small gold pencil and kept a running total in his mind, but the totals were small. Aside from his own 36,000 shares and those

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which his brokers and associates had turned up for him—2215 altogether—there was nothing but driblets represented—fifty shares here, thirty-two there, two hundred yonder, until eventually was called the name of Jason Weems, Trustee.

Jason Weems smiled casually and reported that he held as owner 29,000 shares of the common stock of the Judson-Morris Motor Works, and as proxy 14,625 more, a total of 43,625.

George dropped his little gold pencil.

The roll-call came to an end.

President Judson appointed the usual committee to examine proxies—which would include, of course, the proxies of Jason Weems, Trustee. Percy Mock was on the committee, and he would look for technical errors in the proxies of this Weems person, yet George Judson had never a doubt but that they of all the proxies would be found most entirely correct in form. Jason Weems did not look like a person who would take anything for granted. There was, to the most penetrating eye, nothing of the hell-paver about him.

"Seventeen thousand four hundred and twelve shares not answering," reported Williams to the meeting, and George Judson started.

Seventeen thousand! Control was in them—if they could be produced; but without them

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control was under the thumb of Jason Weems at the other end of the table.

George bent low and held a whispered consultation with John Williams on his right, but John dashed his hopes. "Mainly it's the 15,000 Templeton transferred on the books to Ellery Anderson, Trustee. The dope I get is that Ellery Anderson, Trustee, is a little brother to Jason Weems, Trustee. Ellery is Jason's ace in the hole. Ellery lays off, and Jason votes a majority of the shares represented without entirely tipping his hand."

George saw in this but another manifestation of that inclination to trickery, to dark and evil and mysterious methods by which he had been beaten. It confirmed his fears. "Well, he doesn't need to tip it," he said hollowly. "I guess we're done."

"It looks that way," admitted John.

The committee on proxies was performing its duties. It would report presently.

Then the annual report would be read. Then the chair would announce, "Nominations are in order for the election of officers of the Judson-Morris Motor Company for the ensuing year."

Then this tall person, with a reddish cast of countenance and a face like a cross between a fox and a wolf, would slip a list of names to John Williams. That would be the names of the new board of directors, an entirely new

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board, and Jason Weems would announce that he voted for the election of these names 43,625 shares. The rest was mere form. George Judson's automobile works would be gone.

"You take the chair, Chilton!" said President Judson, and arose and went out, not into his executive office, but into the private office.

The formal examination of proxies would take a few minutes longer; the reading of the annual report would take half an hour. For that few minutes and that half-hour George would still be president, and he wanted to be alone to reflect.

His private office was in the corner of the administration ell, and its windows afforded a sweeping view of the main plant. He was surprisingly calm. He stood biting his lip and gazing out the window upon the whole wide area of the shops, then slanting his eyes down to the busy come and go of traffic through the gates quite as he had seven years ago when the works had stopped so suddenly and the men had come streaming out with wonder or despair or sullen hate written on their features.

He had been sick with disappointment with himself then. Today his reflections were far more bitter. Then the business was in danger. Now it was himself. True, he was a rich man. There were somewhere between twelve and twenty millions of value in this property today,

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with all its ramifications and its good-will, and one-third of it all was his beyond anybody's power to take away. But what were millions, what was the machine, if he lost his power to drive it?

"The business is sound, but I am unsound," he accused himself hollowly, with a feeling of awful chagrin, then gazed again at that stretching canopy of steel and concrete with a wide and wistful eye.

He thought of his dream of making this a vast industrial brotherhood, a workman-owned plant, a happy shop, the happiest and most efficient shop in America, and reproached himself bitterly for having loosely lost the opportunity to serve his workmen as he had meant to serve them. He called himself their betrayer. He called himself a blindly optimistic, weak-willed fool.

But there came just now a tapping at the door followed by the entry of Blakeley, faithful and watchful to the last.

"Mr. Mumford to see you, sir," he said.

Mumford! George started angrily at the name. It was bland old Mumford who had advised him to put his faith in Templeton & Co., instead of in Blodgett, Tompkins, and Haley. But could the three have thrown him down any more completely than Simon? George doubted it. Why, they might even have

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had gratitude enough, on account of the money he would have made them, to stand by him now against the overshadowing figure of the trust.

But there was Mumford entering—an old man, much older than he had looked seven years ago, and he was sixty then—and George could not but be polite to an old man. He arose and turned to greet him, though he could not help shooting a hard look, a look that was almost accusation.

But Mumford's contenance, pink under white hair, bore no trace of guilt upon it. In fact, he smiled and seemed rather pleased with himself, whereat George, inevitably yielding to that amiable, self-satisfied radiance, hailed him by name and extended a cordial hand. But what Mr. Mumford proffered was not a hand to be shaken; it was a hand that submitted to the gaze of George Judson an oblong piece of paper with both printing and writing upon it. George inclined his head forward slightly and let his glance rest upon it with that indifference with which any man who had just lost a vast pile of concrete and steel, filled with throbbing machinery and potential with a mighty manufacturing volume, might be expected to look upon a mere slip of paper.

But suddenly his listless glance lighted; he snatched at the slip and read it. "Mumford!" he exclaimed with a startled, questioning eye.

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The slip of paper was a proxy for 15,000 shares of the common stock of the Judson-Morris Motor Company. It was made out to George Judson, and it was signed Ellery Anderson, Trustee.

Simon Mumford's answer to that frantically shouted query was a reassuring nod and a most beatific smile.

"Control!" George shouted in a voice that was breaking with excitement. *"Control!"*

He seized the frail Simon by the shoulder and shook him with fierce gratitude, then put him aside like something inanimate, and with the light of savage exultation on his face started toward the conference room, but halted and stared again at the slip of paper which quivered in his unsteady hand while he manipulated it between his fingers to make sure it was real and not an hallucination created by his own gloomy imaginings. To make sure also that his eyes had not deceived him, word by word, and almost painfully, with twisting, constricted lips, he read it through aloud to the signature, Ellery Anderson, Trustee.

"Trustee for *whom?"* he suddenly boomed so forcefully that old Simon Mumford, waiting for this query, was struck momentarily speechless. He opened his mouth, but no sound came out of it.

"Trustee for whom?" roared George Judson

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again, relentlessly, suspiciously, as fearing some ghastly trick.

Simon found his tongue. "For Mrs. George Judson."

Mr. George Judson turned deathly white, and for one staring moment his mouth was wide and motionless. *"My wife?"* he whispered, faint with emotion.

Simon put a steadying hand upon his shoulder. "It's genuine, George," he said, "and your wife owns that stock. She always has owned it since you gave it up. It was she who took your three million dollars' worth of bonds and saved you from those bloodsuckers. Templeton, another old friend of her father like myself, consented to act, merely as a dummy. Ellery Anderson was a legal fiction invented to relieve Templeton of the importunities of this Diamond Motors crowd."

George had weakly gripped the old man's arm for support, and for a time was silent, struggling with a new and violent current in his emotions.

"And she—it was she who saved the works for me that time," he remarked at last in low, breathless tones full of a gratitude that was almost worship.

"Yes," smiled Simon.

"Even while she hated them, she saved them for me," he murmured as if talking to himself;

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and then he suddenly turned an accusing glance upon the old man. "And why was I not permitted to know?" he reproached.

"Because you had shown that knowingly you would not allow it," replied the old financier. "It was your wife's aspiration to be at least as noble and generous as you were."

"Noble! Me? Pah!" said George Judson, with a gesture of bitterness. He leaned now against the desk, and his external eye was gazing at the proxy, but his mind was busy with a sequence of awful regrets.

"Damned bombastic pride again!" he was saying to himself. "I wouldn't tell them frankly, and I wouldn't let them know. Therefore they couldn't tell me—and therefore all these needless, agonizing fears of loss of factory control—and why, we might have understood each other all along if—"

This was the train of his thought, and he was so absorbed by it that he did not notice that the door opened softly and that a very small person in the uniform of an American soldier had entered it—an unusually smart uniform, topped off with the overseas cap and finished by a swagger stick. This trim, smart figure in the exquisitely tailored uniform clicked heels and saluted—a diminutive figure for a uniform-wearer, say about the figure of a boy of eight years. The rose of health was upon his cheeks,

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his features were regular, and the blue eyes, filled at first with a curious kind of concern at that absorbed, bowed figure of a man leaning against the desk, sparkled with joy at his first glance of recognition.

"Junior!" George Judson shouted. *"Junior! My boy, my boy!"* and flung out his arms.

"Dad-dee!" the small soldier cried and leaped into his father's embrace, "Dad-dee-e-e!"

"Where on earth did you come from?" George asked when he could get his breath.

"Home!" and the youngster, now in his father's lap, kicked his heels and smiled with an amazing air of satisfaction.

"What home?" demanded George Judson frantically.

"Our home—that we always lived in till we went away."

"But how did you get there?"

"Mother brought me."

"Your mother? She is there?"

Junior hesitated a moment. "Yes, Daddy. She sent me to fetch you."

The child was talking with an English accent; but George Judson could not resent that now. It sounded utterly charming.

"To bring me?" he almost screamed. "Let's go!"

He sprang for his hat and offered a hand to the boy. With a shout of glee Junior fastened

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upon that forefinger which he had been used to hold in infancy, and shouting with boyish delight, he clung on and flew, with his feet scarcely touching the floor, as his father dashed out of the door. Along the corridor and round the turns they ran, and, not waiting for the elevator, plunged downward floor by floor and out upon the curb in front where the president's car and his chauffeur were once more in waiting as they had been accustomed to be before the war took him away.

"Home—quick!" he panted.

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CHAPTER XXVIII

IT was a wild ride that George Judson took, homebound from the motor works, and at the end of it he found his wife waiting for him; but not at the door; not in library or hall, but standing in the center of her own cream-and-blue room, wearing a simple housedress of pink and white stripes in some soft material—an old dress it was, that he had loved her in in the old days. She was wearing her hair in a way that he had liked it, the fine, dark locks waved about the brow and temples, and the lustrous coils doubled low upon the neck. She was the same Fay and yet a different one.

Her beauty was more striking, more ravishing than ever. The rich color contrasts of her symmetrical face were all heightened. But besides this there was upon the features a new kind of glow as from fires deep in the soul fed by some rare, spiritual experience, and even in her pose there was a new dignity as hinting some marked exaltation of character, some fresh access of purposefulness in life.

She did not advance, but smiled, and it was the old smile with a new glory added. She

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spoke, and it was the old tone, but with a richer, mellower trill than he had ever heard before. She was there; and she was more exquisite than ever and—he loved her more devotedly, more passionately, than he had ever loved her.

"You have come home," he cried with a choke in his voice, with eagerness consuming him, but still holding off, for his soul had learned its discipline.

"To you," she said simply, and opened her arms.

The long wait was over!

With a sigh of ecstasy that was pain, he folded her to his breast for the longest, the tenderest, the slowest embrace that he had ever given, each moment of which was rapture beyond rapture.

George Junior gazed at his father and mother strangely for an interval, and then, as if awed by some emotion beyond his power to comprehend, he backed out of the room and sought the absorbing concerns of childhood elsewhere.

As for the reunited lovers, nothing and nobody existed but themselves, and in the minds of each a thousand thoughts, reflections, queries, explanations, impulses, and resolutions were forming and demanding expression. Each knew instinctively that this embrace marked the end of wanderings, of discontents, of misunderstandings and separations; that at last two lives were fused, and each wanted to give the other bonds to that

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effect—bonds of gratitude, bonds of affection, bonds of eternal assurance. Both were highly emotional, close to laughter and to tears.

"You—you saved the works for me!" blurted George with shining eyes.

"You—you kept the home open for me," she countered, and kissed him with impulsive tenderness. Then a mood of self-reproach overtook her. "Oh, I was hard, hard, when I went away," she said. "It took a long time to break me, but at last I am broken, George, broken by a world and its woe, and made whole again by the gospel of work and service."

"It was all my fault, though," insisted the husband with a manner that demanded generously the right to monopolize all self-reproaches for himself. "I am just a plain hell-paver!"

"A hell-paver?" Fay looked at him wonderingly.

"Yes," said George, and expounded to her Doctor Mellus's definition of the word with some of his own connotations added. "That's all I've been, just a plain hell-paver," he concluded remorsefully.

But a soft, appealing hand was laid upon his arm, and Fay's face, full of a look of deep contrition was brought near to his. "I've been a hell-paver, too," she said humbly. "I meant well, but I didn't do well. I was just a silly, wilful, spoiled child of luxury. Environment

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had nearly ruined me. But I am cured, I think; at least I am improved. I have learned to work, George. Feel my hands!"

He took them reverently in his. The palms were hard, the fingers roughened; he lifted them to his lips and kissed them. She went on:

"In the midst of all that woe and distress over there I found the impulse to work; I discovered the thrilling, absorbing pleasure that there is in work. But I was so ignorant I didn't know how to work at first. With all my supposed accomplishments I was unfit for anything useful in a world where suddenly nothing but useful things were needed. But I think I may tell you that I have learned. King Albert was good enough to say that I had been rather useful, and he gave me a bit of ribbon to remember his words by. There is also a trinket in my trunk that the French pinned on my breast. And I hear one is coming from the British. I am not so ashamed of that as of some things."

George leaned back and resurveyed his wife with a kind of awe. No wonder he had discerned in her something that was new and more superior even than those old superiorities which had so impressed and fascinated him in times past. But she was feeling a little exalted and inspired.

"You were right, George, to work," she told him. "The world is falling to pieces. It needs

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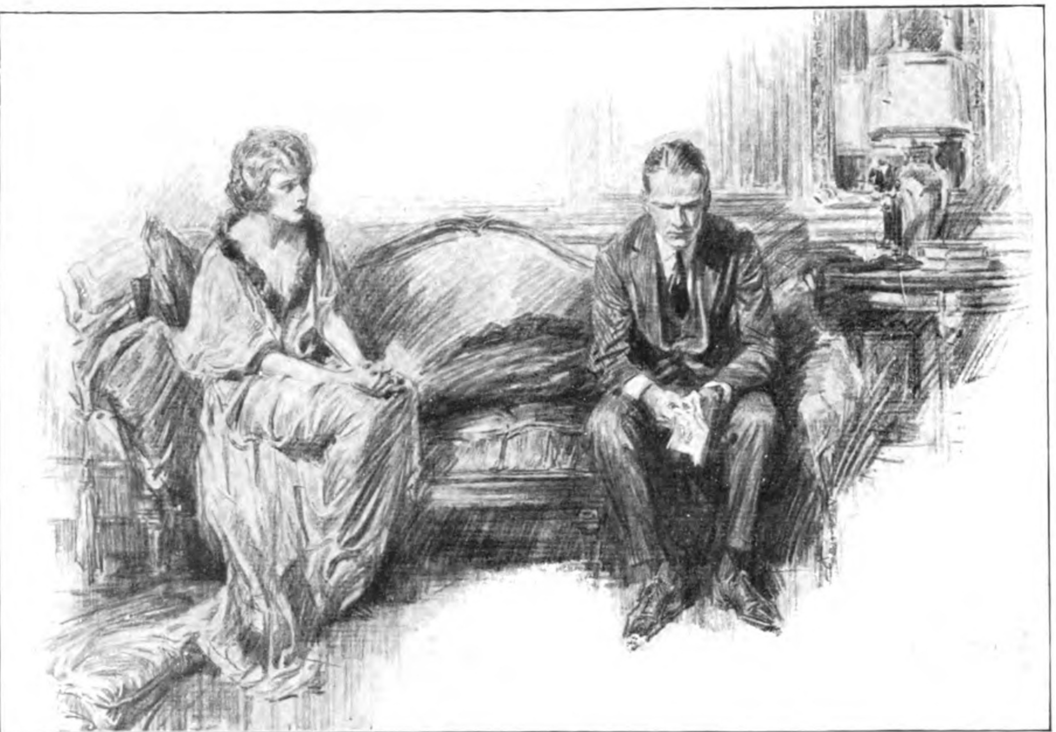

"I——I HAVEN'T ANY JOB," HE CONFESSED.

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work. Empires are rotting from the hinges of history. Civilizations are crumbling. Men and women go workless and go hungry. Behind us, over there, is a world to be reconstructed—nations, families, individuals to be rebuilt. And it isn't just in Europe and Asia where reconstruction is going on. It's here." She was speaking with quivering enthusiasm now, the beautiful eyes ablaze with a kind of earnestness her husband had never seen in them before.

"Let's do our part to make that rebuilding a fact, husband mine," she pleaded, and drew affectionately close once more. "The world is down. It has to be helped up. And your first step toward that is that mutual ownership program you had in mind once. You haven't abandoned that, have you? I want you to get it going, and I want to stand right beside you and help you operate it as the chief part of your job."

But George Judson had suddenly a very peculiar expression on his face, and his eyes were lowered to a crumpled slip of paper in his hand. "I—I haven't got any job," he recalled confusedly. "They just elected a new board of directors over my head."

"Over your head?" inquired his wife in surprise. "But didn't Simon—?"

"Yes, Simon did. But," and George stared sheepishly at that wrinkled slip of paper in his

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hand, "but—Junior came in, and—and I forgot everything and rushed to you."

"You old dear!" she cried enthusiastically and threw her arms about him. "That shows I was right to come home. You do love me more than your old factory, don't you?"

"Don't I? I always did," insisted George.

"But what can you do then—about the factory plan?" Fay inquired, perplexed and feeling that a very real calamity had happened.

"More hell-paving!" ejaculated George with a rueful smile. "By now I'm ousted, and although we still hold the majority stock, we couldn't vote it till the next annual meeting. Tell you," he said. "You were always wanting me to take a vacation. I'll take a vacation for a year, and we'll get acquainted all over again."

"Won't that be thrilling!" cried Fay, "but—" eagerly—"We won't idle, George, on our vacation. We'll go to Europe and work for Mr. Hoover's commission, or we'll settle right down here in Detroit and do something that ought to be done and never has been done before—or— Just a minute, dear! There's the telephone."

She stepped to the extension instrument with an expression of annoyance clouding her features, for this was no time for talk with any outsider, but as she held the receiver to her ear, her face gradually underwent a radiant change.

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"What?" she insisted eagerly. "Say that again, Mr. Williams. I want to get it perfectly straight."

George crowded close to her. "What is it?" he demanded. "What does John Williams want?"

Fay hushed him with her eyes. Then she turned abruptly toward him and laughed the happy laugh of a girl, while the telephone instrument sagged unnoticed in her hands.

"George," she exulted. "You've been reëlected president. Weems wanted you. The Diamond people wanted you. All the old officers are reëlected—only Weems is chairman of the Board. They want you to carry on."

George stared.

"Then I've got my job back again?" he said rather unnecessarily.

"And I've got my husband back," laughed Fay.

"Fay, dear," he asked as they sat down together, awed and subdued by the violence of their own happiness, "just what was it made you go away?"

His wife flushed and hung her head, toying with a tassel on the corner of the davenport.

"What made me go away," she announced very deliberately, "was just supreme discontent with—with myself, with my husband, with . . . the whole darned world."

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"And what brought you back?" he asked shyly.

"You!" she answered mischievously, and leaned close with her breath against his cheek. "*You* and the gradual dawn of good sense. I saw all kinds of men over there—men with titles and men without, men with great rank and men with decorations for valor upon their breasts. They seemed to vie for the privilege of paying me attention. But they were not all nice men. I met nobles who were not noble.

"I was always comparing you with them, and George—now don't get vain—generally to your advantage. You had your faults but they were superficial faults—theirs went deep—to their very hearts. Blue blood, I found, is sometimes mostly black."

George nodded, deeply satisfied of course; but there was another ghost that required to be laid before his mind could be entirely at rest.

"By the way, Fay," he asked, as casually as possible, "did you ever see or hear anything of Sir Brian over there? He completely fell out of things round here after the beginning of the war.

"Why,—why didn't you know?" his wife inquired, with shocked eyes and a quick little gasp of pain. "He was here for years on a secret mission for his government. When hostilities broke out he insisted on active duty in the air

service. Poor gallant fellow! On his very first combat flight he went roaring down to a hero's death in a chariot of flames." A tear quivered on one of her long lashes and, unashamed, she let it fall. "He was a very great help to me—eventually—Sir Brian Hook! He showed me how very much I loved my husband."

There was some mystery in this allusion but George did not try to comprehend it—did not wish to try. He merely bowed his head in silent emotion over a brave man's death.

Fay was silent also, her mind skirting wide horizons but finally coming back with a sense of supreme contentment—supreme attainment too. Fondly she crept close into George's arms.

"And the sweetest thought to me, George," she said, "is that at last I have found the Garden of Eden, and not away off yonder in a Persian valley, but here in our own quiet home."

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