

— THE —  
LOGGER

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SALONE ELLIS



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**THE LOGGER**



# THE LOGGER

BY  
SALONE ELLIS ✓



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TO  
MY HUSBAND  
WALTER HENRY ELLIS



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# BOOK I

KINGDOM OF MAN



# THE LOGGER

## CHAPTER I

For four minutes Posey Murry bounded up and down on her hat in blind rage. A deer treading a snake to death beneath the terrific blows of its feet could have no more disastrous intent. With almost savage delight Posey accompanied this attack with a volley of contemptuous outbursts, of which the word "damn" was most prevalent.

She was not conscious of the harsh note her voice made upon the deep, cool quietude of the forest, nor the contrast between it and the low murmuring of the wind in the tree tops or the creek tinkling merrily somewhere off in the woods.

The first wild fury of her passion spent, Posey reached down and picked up the piteously faded green velvet hat. It hung limply in her hand like something that had once been alive. For a moment she felt almost as if she were an assassin. Her scorn seemed to change to a hint of compassion. Yet determined that her sympathy should not master her this time, she quickly threw the hat into the road again. She was going to repeat the attack when something prompted her to pause. She looked up.

From behind a tree near-by a man's head was visible. Two amused yet curious grey eyes peered out at her.

Posey's chin shot up. Her eyes flashed.

"Well — how'd yu like it?"

The man came slowly from his hiding place. There was a hint of pity in the eyes which searched hers. He had intended to express his regret at being obliged to witness such a painful scene, but Posey's manner perplexed him. He decided to make no apologies.

"I — I don't believe I feel free to express my opinion." His tone was grave. Then he smiled. "I must admit the game is new to me."

Posey's lower jaw dropped. She looked at him bewildered.

"If yu don't know that ever' time a logger gits mad he jumps on his hat or — or even sometimes when he's most awful glad — well, then yu ain't no logger." She paused. Her eyes narrowed. She looked at the man curiously as if, but that instant, her thoughts had reverted enough from her own distress to realize that the person who stood before her was a stranger. Then in a flash she noted the neat khaki suit, the smoothly shaven face and other marks of distinction which proved him to be different from the class of men to which she was accustomed. This discovery surprised her, but it did not embarrass her. She frowned thoughtfully. "If — if yu ain't a logger, then who be yu?"

The amused smile returned to the other's eyes.



“But I am a logger.”

Posey shook her head belligerently

“Humph-umph. Nope, yu ain't no logger — 'cause loggers wears the tail o' their shirt out an' they stag their pants clean up tu here.” She bent over to draw one hand across her skirt just below the knee. “See.”

Pretending to be a trifle perplexed the man lifted one eyebrow thoughtfully.

“They don't dress that way all the time, do they?”

“Well, no. They put on their best clothes when they go to town to git soused. But they never wear a rig like that —” She indicated his norfolk coat and trousers. Her manner portrayed a hint of exaltation; as if she could not conceal a feeling that this stranger wore the uniform of some high rank.

Flushing a bit beneath her steady and admiring gaze, he gave a quick, impulsive gesture.

“Suppose we forget all that and become acquainted. I think, perhaps, we are going to be neighbors. I moved my family in to Humptulips last week, and we expect to be here some time.” Lifting his hat he extended a cordial hand. Not quite understanding his gallantry, Posey hesitated as she held out a tanned but smooth-fingered hand. The color mounted to her cheeks as she felt the firm grasp of his fingers when they closed over hers. “My name is Alden, David Alden,” he went on. “I boast of being President, Vice-President and General Manager of the Alden Logging Works —”

Posey gave a gasp of surprise.

“ Yu don’t mean that yer the new man that — ”  
He nodded.

“ Yes, the new and very green man just out from the East.” Alden laughed. “ I understand that is my reputation up here in the woods! My intentions are to log off some timber which a relative was kind enough to leave me in his will.” For a moment his manner was somewhat detached, then he smiled reminiscently. “ I might add that this inheritance came to me at a time when it was greatly appreciated — ” He stopped sudden<sup>ly</sup>. A look of pain had crept into Posey’s eyes. It was plainly evident that her thoughts were not on what he was saying. “ Why, what is the matter? ”

His attention was too pronounced. Posey blushed and looked down. It was unusual to have any one so interested in her. She was a trifle confused. But a moment later, now mistress of herself, she looked up again.

“ Oh, Lordy, yu heard me cuss a’ready.” Her brow clouded. “ But — but I had something to cuss about.” Now that her grievance had returned, her chin drew up in self-pity.

Alden was touched by this.

“ I am sorry to hear that you are in trouble. Would it relieve you to tell me, Miss — I believe I did not get your name.”

Posey eyed him thoughtfully for a moment, as if deliberating whether she should become confidential with this distinguished-appearing stranger.

Then finding the conviction in his eyes, she started out upon a brief biography. Alden found that he had touched a vulnerable spot and he listened patiently.

“ All some people calls me is ‘ a bold hussy.’ An’ when my ole man gits drunk he calls me worse’n that. The men in camp an’ Mother McKnight call me Posey. That ain’t my name. Would yu like tu hear ’bout my real name? ”

“ Yes, indeed.”

“ Well, my real name’s Patrita. I named myself that. It come ’bout like this. When I was borned, my mother she named me Bonita an’ my ole man he named me Patricia. He says they always fought over my name ’fore she died. She was determined to call me Bonita an’ he was hell-bent on callin’ me Patricia. Pa won out at the last of it. He got mad an’ wouldn’t call me either one. He called me Posey. Then when I learned about the fuss I settled the matter by callin’ myself Patrita. But it was too late. He’d called me Posey fer so long that ever’body always calls me that. I’d liked to had the nice name, but Pa says names don’t mean nothin’ —”

“ And what would you like to have me call you? ”

Posey wanted to tell him that she would like to have him call her Patrita, but she could not find the courage. Obviously his mind was more upon the pathetic little figure she made as she stood before him, for Alden did not discern her thoughts.

Posey did not reply at once. "Then I shall call you Posey, too. Will that be all right?"

For the first time Posey smiled. Alden had thought her an odd-looking child. Her dark eyes, extremely dark eyes, of an almost Latin-like intensity, were made more emphatically so by a mop of flaming red hair which shot out in a tangled profusion from her head like little tongues of fire. Her smile was captivating. A ripple of pleasure spread over her face as from the dropping of a leaf into the limpid surface of a still pool. The ripple mounted from her lips to her eyes, until waves of joy swept her with an almost vehement rapture.

Forgetting that she had even desired to be called Patrita, she was overcome with pleasure that this admirable person should show her such intimacy. The anticipation seemed too great for realization.

"Will — will you call me Posey?"

"Of course, if it will please you."

"An' never a bold hussy?"

"Most assuredly not."

"Will it please me! Aw, sa-ay —" Too gratified to find words with which to express her appreciation, Posey could not continue. She happened to look down and her eyes fell upon her hat, now covered with dirt and battered beyond recognition. Her manner immediately changed. Wheeling about she gave the hat a kick that sent it hurtling over into the brush. "There! Bet nobody ain't never goin' tu see you on my bean agin."

Alden could scarce refrain from laughing at this spontaneity.

“Here! Here! Where did you learn to play football?”

Posey looked up at him a trifle boastfully.

“Guess I have got a strong wallop back o’ that kick, ain’t I?”

He looked at her slim young figure.

“For a person your size, I would say you do amazingly well.”

Posey grinned boyishly.

“Got that playin’ shinney in school.” She became very serious. “Had tu. Wasn’t goin’ tu let them Humptulips kids git ahead o’ me in ever’thing.” She paused and reflected a moment. “Guess that’s all I did git, though. Them teachers couldn’t never learn me nothin’. Finally they expelled me ’cause I was so damn — so awful bad. They can’t make me go now. I’m past fourteen —”

While she talked on, Alden studied her carefully.

“Here is another strange character,” he thought. “A young girl away up here in the woods over twenty miles from civilization. A modern dryad.” He noted the coarsely woven and much mended dress, the heavy shoes worn and run over at the heels, the shock of tangled hair. “Poor child. What will Tesa think when she sees her? She is horrified with what she has already found, and she has been here but a week.” He turned his attention to Posey again.

“ But don't you like school? ”

She shook her head.

“ Nope.”

“ Why? ”

Her brow puckered.

“ Fer a lot o' reasons. Mostly 'cause I don't like settin' in a house all day. If a person could study out here in the woods all by yerself — I'd like that. But them kids at school is always pokin' fun at yu. An' the teacher lookin' at yu like yu'd fell in the slough an' was all over mud an' was somethin' she'd be scared tu touch. Maybe I ought o' shouldn't blame 'er. I ain't got no decent clothes, but all the same that ain't my fault an' she's paid fer teachin' an' not fer sizin' the kids up that go to her school.”

Posey stopped. She looked up frankly at Alden, but her eyes were mournful. Presently her mouth puckered earnestly.

“ Guess I might as well begin at the beginnin' an' tell yu the truth 'bout me an' my ole man. Yu won't be here long 'fore yu'll find it out anyway.”

Alden nodded.

“ Tell me anything you wish. If there is any way in which I can assist you, I shall be only too glad to do so.”

Posey was astounded. It seemed incredible that such kindness could come from a stranger. But without comment, she continued:

“ My ole man, Pa, he's 'bout the worst ole soak

up here — an' that's sayin' a lot; bein's they ain't hardly a logger anywhere in these woods that don't git lit to the eyebrows ever' time they git a chancet. The difference 'tween Pa an' most of 'em is that they jist go out tu town 'bout twicet a year an' raise He— raise Cain fer three or four days 'til they've blowed their wad. Most o' the loggers are satisfied tu go on a tear jist twicet a year; Fourth-o-July an' Christmas. But Pa — he plays it's Fourth-o-July an' Christmas all the time. Jist out o' one bun into another. That's my ole man."

Although there were tears on her lashes, Alden noted the girl's effort at bravado while she told her story.

Alden wondered at Posey's confiding in him. He did not understand why she trusted him so upon short acquaintance. It both pleased and flattered him.

Regardless of this girl's uncouth appearance, he had already discovered something elemental deep in her soul; a hidden note of purity which occasionally flashed to the surface like a transient blaze of sunshine upon a mirror. Somehow, he already felt that she was going to take an active part in the new and strange life he had taken up in the West. He was eager to get on to camp where he had an appointment to meet Tim McAvoy, his foreman, but he debated with himself as to whether the affairs of the Alden Logging Works were more important than those of the girl before him.

"Nobody 'round here ain't got no use fer my ole

man," Posey was saying. "An' I'll admit that he ain't worth a damn — a lot — an' when — an' when he gits drunk he beats me —" Her voice broke nervously. A look of anguish came into her eyes, as if she still suffered physically from recent blows.

Alden frowned darkly. Why, the girl was in trouble! He forgot the very existence of the Alden Logging Works, and suffered with Posey. His fists clenched unconsciously as if he desired to punch the head of a man who would get drunk and beat a helpless young girl. Posey saw this and resented it. His manner was so intense that she felt almost as if he had struck her father. She drew herself up stoutly. "But — but he's my father," she added, as if warning him.

Alden made no response to this. He could see that Posey did cherish an undying fragment of affection for this erring parent. It would be better to say nothing.

Her defense for her father was merely temporary. Self-pity dominated her thoughts.

"He give me a lickin' today. That's what I was so mad 'bout when yu found me jumpin' on my hat. Looky here." Without display of false modesty Posey jerked down the collar of her dress to show Alden the great red welts that stood out upon her milk-white and beautifully moulded shoulder.

He was deeply touched.

"Oh, my dear girl!"



She drew her dress back over her shoulder.

“Humph, that ain’t nothin’. Ought tu see me sometimes.” Forgetting that she had spoken loyally of her parent but a moment before, she stiffened. “Know why I was doin’ what I was when yu come up?” Alden shook his head doubtfully. “I—I was a imaginin’ that that there hat was Pa’s face an’ I was jist a trompin’ his ole phiz with a pair o’ cork boots. He d’serves it — all righty. The ole’son-of-a-gun!”

Alden wished to say that he agreed with her, but concluded it was best to keep silent.

“This mornin’ him an’ me had one o’ the worst rows we’ve ever had. I tole ’im I was gittin’ sick o’ wearin’ other people’s ole clothes; somethin’ they didn’t want or that was wore out a’ready. That old hat I jist kicked over in the brush was one that Aunt Sally Mullen got from a woman who give ’er a lot o’ ole clothes an’ things when she moved out tu town. The woman was almost as old as Aunt Sally, an’ I bet that hat belonged tu ’er great grandmother. Aunt Sally said I oughtn’t o’ should be so perticular. She said somethin’ ’bout beggars can’t be choosers. Yu bet Mother McKnight don’t talk tu me like that — Pa said I had tu wear the hat, but I made up my mind I wasn’t goin’ tu; if I had tu fall in the river an’ drown myself so’s I’d lose it.”

Posey was so desperately in earnest that Alden dared not laugh. And then he could see that the matter was too tragic to provoke laughter.

“I tole Pa this mornin’ that I was gittin’

grewed up an' had a right tu nice things like other girls has got. Dresses that we'd bought ourselves with ribbons on 'em like the girls over there in Humptulips git on Fourth-o-July an' Christmas. He said I'd wear whatever he wanted me tu wear, an' tu thunder with the girls in Humptulips an' their dresses with ribbons on 'em. He said he was my father an' I'd do as he said an' I'd got tu fergit them hifalutin' notions 'bout frills an' such like." Posey stopped abruptly and kicked at a pebble at her feet. Presently she continued:

"So there I am, stuck in that ole shack up there in the woods with a drunkard fer a father. Half the time I wouldn't git enough tu eat if it wasn't that Mother McKnight divvies up with me fer deliverin' the washin' tu the loggers for her. She ain't strong 'nough tu walk all the way tu camp an' carry a heavy bundle o' clothes."

Alden was determined that he would investigate Posey's case immediately. While he listened to her, if his manner seemed a trifle falsely condescending, it was wholly unintentional. But Posey's sensitive mind seemed to discern this. With a swift lifting of her shoulders she became scornful. She shot him a dark glance.

"See here, Mister — Mister Alden, yu don't need tu pay no 'tention tu me. I'm all right, I am. I'm Posey Murry! I can look out fer myself. I don't know what kind of a fool I'm a bein' anyhow; goin' on like this 'fore a total stranger. I ought o' should be kicked —"

“ I cannot see why. I think your motive was purely logical, and, if you wish it, I assure you that what you have said shall go no further.”

Posey was moved by the tone of his voice, but she still could not be convinced. She eyed him suspiciously.

“ ’Tain’t nobody’s business ’bout me an’ my ole man. I wouldn’t never said nothin’ ’t all if yu hadn’t caught me mad there while ago. An’ then —” her voice softened, “ an’ then somethin’ ’bout yu — when yu come up there in the road — made me think o’ the kind o’ people Mother McKnight has tole me ’bout. Grand people in big cities that don’t git soused an’ beat up their kids an’ do wicked things —” She paused and shrugged her shoulders dismally. “ Oh, but what’s the use?” she began, then quickly became rigid as if struggling between pride and self-pity. “ That kind o’ livin’ ain’t meant fer people like me an’ my ole man.”

She looked out into the heavy forest that flanked the road on either side. Alden saw the convulsive catch of her throat and a slight tremor sweep her. When she turned to him again her eyes were cold, lifeless, like a fire suddenly extinguished by force.

“ But all the same if anyone should ever tell yu that they was sorry fer me — yu — yu tell ’em I said fer them tu go to Hell.”

## CHAPTER II

“ Say, Tim, what d’you think you’re tryin’ to do over here? ”

Jean Andrews came up to Tim in the woods, his long legs swinging, a curious gleam in his eyes. Tim’s attention was on the donkey crew. He did not hear Jean until the other repeated his question. Tim turned. For a moment he made no reply. His dark blue Irish eyes flashed, and there was a hint of fight in the grim lines about his mouth. It was plain to be seen that the question had not pleased him.

“ Log, of course.”

“ Think you’re goin’ to make a logger out o’ that white-collared sport from Chicago? ”

Tim tried to keep calm.

“ Don’t you worry ’bout that white-collared sport. He’ll be wearin’ the tail of his shirt out an’ his overalls stagged to his knees before a month.”

Instead of agreeing to this, as he should have done, Jean continued to antagonize Tim.

“ Don’t make no difference if he never stags his overalls or wears the tail o’ his shirt out. That ain’t what goes to make a logger by a long shot. Why, that guy’s as green as grass. Who ever heard tell of a fella from an office in the East comin’ out here an’ tryin’ to put across somethin’ that it takes

a lifetime to learn? Nope — he'll never make it in the world."

Something about Jean's self-confident air made Tim see red. It was not only what Jean said, but the rumors that he had been hearing from various sources which made him hostile. It seemed that every time he saw any of his fellow loggers, outside of their own crew, they had some cutting remark to make regarding Alden. Jeffery of the Jeffery Logging Company up on the east fork of the Humptulips, Billy Mann of Mann & Haley on the west fork, and every logger up and down the line from Humptulips to Hoquiam, had something to say about a matter which Tim considered was none of their business. He got it at Ed Seldon's store in Humptulips and at the post office. He was determined now to settle the matter once and for all, even if he had to clean up on somebody.

"Well, by God, Alden'll make it if they's anything within my power to help him." Tim paused an instant and looked sharply at Jean. "I don't mind admittin' that I was recommended to him as bein' the best foreman on Gray's Harbor, an' he's givin' me a big price to help him get started. Best wages I ever got in any camp yet —"

Jean was the one to be moved now. Tim having been recommended as the best logging camp foreman on Gray's Harbor was not the best and most pleasing information to listen to. His being foreman for the Stockton Logging Company over at Axeford, six miles away, made Tim and him rivals

in a sense of the word. But whatever resentment he might have felt while Tim boasted of his good reputation, Jean kept well concealed. He assumed utter indifference.

“ Yeah — What did Alden do in Chicago before he come out here? It’s a cinch he wasn’t loggin’.”

Tim smiled to himself. He noted that Jean was eager to change the subject. Sometimes you could hit a fella harder by what you said to him than by smashing him in the jaw, Tim concluded, although he ached for the physical satisfaction of the latter.

“ No, he wasn’t loggin’. Worse’n that. He was in the stock and bond brokerage business with his father-in-law. His firm went haywire. Understand the old man lost ever’ cent he had in the world.” His mind reverted from personal grievances, Tim became animated. “ Kind of a funny thing happened. Here Alden was left without a bean an’ didn’t know what he was goin’ to do next, when, just a few days after the firm went under, didn’t he get word that his uncle in Seattle had died an’ left him this bunch o’ timber in his will.”

Jean was deeply interested.

“ Well, what d’you know ’bout that! ”

“ Yep.” Tim looked up into the thick growth of fir and spruce and cedar which surrounded them. His face lighted with a broad grin. “ Great thing for Alden that it was this particular tract, for there was never any better timber grew outdoors.”

Jean took off his hat and scratched his head thoughtfully.

“ Yet, him bein’ an Easterner, you’d think he’d a just sold the timber outright —”

“ Lord, no. Alden’s crazy over these woods. Says he was up here once with his uncle when he was a boy, an’ he was so darn stuck on the country that he didn’t want to go back to college. An’ he says ever after that trip out West he never lost the desire to come back here.”

“ Humph! ” Jean turned. “ We’l, I got to be gettin’ back. I was on my way over to Hump-tulips to see if that bull-block come in last night. Been waitin’ for it for four days. We just ’bout had to shut down the works this afternoon — Thought I’d drop in an’ see you a minute on my way over.” He started away. “ So long, Tim.”

Looking up, Tim spied Alden coming up the skid road.

“ Hey, wait a minute, Jean. Here comes Alden now. I want you to meet him.”

When Alden came up, Tim introduced him to Jean.

“ So you’re from Chicago, hunh? I’d a thought you’d have brung out a bull team from the stock-yards instead of usin’ this donkey.”

Alden laughed.

“ Don’t you expect our crew to move faster than that, Mr. Andrews? If I understand correctly, the day of bull teams is over.”

“ Yeah, they’re too slow. You got to keep humpin’ to keep up with the other fella these days.” Jean took out a plug of Star tobacco and

bit off a quid. He offered Alden and Tim a chew, but both declined. "Don't chew, eh? Well, maybe you'll have a drink." He drew out a half-pint flask of whiskey from his hip pocket, but neither of them would accept it when he passed it to them. Jean looked at Tim amazed.

"Gosh all fishhooks, what happened to you, Tim? Well, I'll have a drink alone." Unashamed, he tipped the bottle to his lips and took a deep sup of the raw whiskey, then returned it to his pocket. "I was in Chicago myself for four days last year, Alden. I sure did see some bull teams then. Ever' fella I got acquainted with wanted to take me out to the stockyards. S'pose just 'cause I was a logger they thought I didn't care 'bout seeing' nothin' else. You'd think to hear them talk, they wasn't nothin' else."

"How did you like our windy city?"

"Oh, it was all right, but I'd rather be out here on the harbor. Too damn hot and windy back there for a fella that's uset to cool summers an' lots o' rain — Well, I was just goin' when you come up. Glad I met you and — goodbye." Jean strode off down the skid road.

Tim turned to Alden. They exchanged glances, but nothing was said regarding Jean.

"How are you getting along, Tim?"

"Fine. We're goin' to change lines. We'll run the straw line through this forty and take in the haul-back tomorrow mornin' so not to make any unnecessary delay. Meantime we'll have a few



chokers made. You can have that eight-strand line sent up. This forty runs strong to clears, and we have to have clears on this emergency order. We can continue loggin' on the other settin' later." Tim left Alden for a few moments to give a word of advice to one of the men. Presently he returned. "I've got to go down to the landin', Dave."

Alden liked being called Dave. They walked down to the landing together. Tim talked on while they swung across the shallow swale into the area where the fallers and buckers were already at work with springboards, falling saws and bucking saws, getting ready for the attack upon the great trees.

"While we're loggin' off this forty, the chokers can be made and the main line spliced," said Tim, when they had stopped for a moment with the fallers and the buckers. "That'll give the buckers a chance to catch up on the old settin', an' get out of the way when we are ready to string our lines over on the other forty."

They reached the landing. Tim paused a moment and looked out into the water.

"You know the loggin' game is just like any other. Speed and action are the words. It's a gamble, and I think I'm safe in sayin' it's the biggest gamble of any business, because if there was ever a proposition where you go forward one step and back two, this is it. Fire and water and ever'thing else the Lord wants to give you is eternally handed out to you at the wrong time."

Alden smiled.

“ But if good fortune came too easy we would all be rich, and having achieved wealth without having made an effort to gain it, there would be no lure in the game.”

“ Yep, guess that’s right. And loggin’s like any other game, — the lad that makes good is the fellow that can stick until he begins to gain speed a little an’ can beat the one step forward and the two back —” Tim stopped and a broad grin spread over his face. “ Pretty long speech for a logger, eh? Loggers are men of few words.”

Before Alden left they discussed the crew, naming over certain men whom Tim knew to be expert workmen.

“ Old Cap Murry was over here for a job this morning. I said I’d see about it. Told him to come over tomorrow morning. He’s one of the best hook tenders on the harbor. They ain’t a better hook tender nowhere than old Cap; if he’d only keep sober. But, by the Lord Harry, you can’t depend on him two days at a time. If he hasn’t got a job he’s down in the dumps and drunk because of his hard luck. If he has got a job he can’t stand the prosperity. So there you are.”

At the mention of the name “ Murry,” Alden looked up quickly.

“ I wonder if I didn’t meet his daughter on my way over here.”

Tim eyed him keenly.

“ Posey? ”

Alden nodded.

“ That was the name she gave me.”

Tim smiled.

“ Yep, that’s old Cap’s girl, all right. She’s a live one. Old Cap has an awful time with her.”

“ I think they had been having one of their ‘awful times’ this morning, from the mood she was in when I came upon her in the road.”

Tim threw back his head and laughed.

“ Jumpin’ on her hat an’ cussin’ like a drunken logger, I bet.”

“ It wasn’t quite that bad; but almost.”

Tim became serious.

“ Well, the poor kid. You can’t blame her for anything she does. Old Cap gets stewed and I’m told he whales the daylights out of her sometimes. Some of us have thought of interferin’, but she’s the kind that would not thank us. She’s just Irish enough to cuss the old man into purgatory herself, but if anyone else says anything,— sa-ay — look out! An’ it’s just the same with old Cap. He’s as hard as nails with Posey, but, boys, oh, boys, if anyone was to touch a hair of that girl’s head they’d sure hear from him.”

“ I could not help feeling sorry for her this morning. It was pathetic to see a young girl so distressed.”

“ Yep, you bet. Who wouldn’t feel sorry for her? The poor kid has had a devil of a life, too. Old Cap used to be a seafarin’ man. He got Posey’s mother out of a dance hall down in South America, Rio de Janeiro I think he said. He says she was the

prettiest girl you ever laid eyes on. She was Spanish. But Posey's Irish through an' through. All but her eyes. So you see she's got a double dose of temperament. She was born in a boathouse down on the Willamette River near Portland. Her mother has been dead for a good many years, I guess."

Alden shook his head sadly. "Too bad."

When he had left Tim and was on his way down to the cookhouse Alden could not get Posey out of his thoughts.

"The daughter of a drunkard and a dance-hall woman," he reflected. "Poor child. No wonder she is peculiar." For a moment he paused and plunged into deep thought. "Yet, unless I imagine it, I believe I noted latent qualities in that girl which seemed almost extraordinary. Well, Tesa must not know the truth about her. It would be a dreadful blow to one who puts so much stress upon inheritance."

Reaching camp, which consisted of a long cookhouse, a number of bunkhouses and numerous small shacks, Alden stopped to look at them. He was not pleased with the aspect the group of weather-stained and unpainted buildings made against the livid green background of the forest.

To save the expense of erecting a new camp, he had purchased an old one recently deserted by a logging company who had logged off the timber they owned in that vicinity and moved on to another setting.

The ground was littered with old bottles, rotting discarded garments, a small mountain of empty tins back of the cookhouse, thrown there by a careless cook.

Alden went inside one of the bunkhouses. As he opened the door, he was met by the stench of damp garments dried about the fire and sour from perspiration, blankets slept in months at a time without airing, the fumes of tobacco smoke, kerosene from the lamps and the lingering odor of whiskey cached away in someone's bunk.

The floor was strewn with crumpled papers, tobacco sacks, cigar butts, shoe strings, dirty socks, poker chips, broken pieces of playing cards and a thin layer of splinters knocked off of the floor by calk boots stamping carelessly over it.

Alden looked about him in disgust.

"Humph, they say the bull cook keeps up the bunkhouses. This floor looks as if he had not seen it for six months. I will look into this matter."

The bunks were built of rough lumber two tiers high against the walls. He noted the dirty grey blankets with their faded red borders, the lumpy quilts designed in grotesque patterns. There was something pathetic about these bunks. A few of them had been spread with an attempt at neatness, but most of them were just as they were left when the men crawled out of them that morning.

Upon small shelves above the bunks was stored a disarray of miscellaneous articles; a few weeks' or months' supply of "smokin'" and "chewin'."

a dirty corncob pipe, a shaving outfit, perhaps a whetstone, an old copy of *The Argosy* or *Popular Mechanics*.

On one shelf Alden found a greasy post card, the gay little picture dim from much handling by soiled hands. On another was the faded photograph of a little child. In large tobacco tins on some of the shelves there were, doubtless, keepsakes hidden from dust and prying eyes. Alden had no curiosity to look into these. He was ashamed that he had pried about as much as he had. But he had done so for a purpose. The germ of an idea had become pregnant in his mind.

This germ received a rapid stride toward development when he stumbled and nearly upset a large can standing near the stove. This can contained all the cigar butts and burnt matches which had not been flung upon the floor. They floated in an ooze of ashes liquefied by a flood of tobacco juice from which there rose a strong, offensive odor. Alden was so nauseated that he immediately sought the fresh air.

He found the cookhouse in scarcely better condition.

Dan, the cook whom the loggers called Old Ramrod, was sitting out back of the lean-to kitchen. His chair tilted back against the side of the house, he was smoking casually among the filth of bits of bones, an overflowing slop barrel, the mound of empty tins among which an army of blowflies spun and hummed.

“ No wonder these men go on a drunk twice a year and try to forget,” thought Alden as he swept the cook with a glance.

“ Mr. McAvoy said you sent for me.”

“ Yep.” Old Ramrod changed his pipe over to the other side of his mouth.

“ Was there something you wished? ”

“ Had an order to give yu.” Old Ramrod did not move. His head turned to one side, one might think he was addressing the woodshed or the trees. “ Need a side o’ beef, a barrel o’ flour an’ a case o’ them half-gallon cans o’ mixed fruit.” For the first time he looked up at Alden. His faded eyes narrowed. “ I’d git mixed fruit if I was you. Last place I cooked they fed the men on apricots ’til they was so damn sick o’ them that they said they’d cram the next batch down my throat.

“ Hard ’nuf tu please ’em with the best yu give ’em, let alone tryin’ tu feed ’em up on the same thing all the time.”

Alden was impatient to be off.

“ Was there anything else? ”

The cook rose reluctantly.

“ Yep, got a list here in the kitchen.” Disappearing inside he returned presently with a slip of paper. He handed it to Alden.

Alden started away, but Ramrod called him back.

“ I was wonderin’ if yu was intendin’ havin’ families up here in camp later on — ”

“ Why, I don’t know. Of course, I suppose there will be men with families. I had not thought

whether they would live here in camp or over in Humptulips. I should judge that the men who have children would want to be near the school."

Ramrod nodded dubiously.

"They'll likely be plenty that'll live here too." He removed his pipe and spat upon the ground. "I was goin' tu give yu to understand right now that I ain't goin' tu run no grocery store here at this cook shack. Last place I worked they nigh deviled me to death with their confounded buyin' a drivel o' groceries at a time." He frowned contemptuously. "Seventeen cents worth o' T-bone steak, a can o' peas, two-thirds of a pound o' tea, an eighth of an ounce o' bay leaves, three cents worth o' suet. Good God! The damn women nearly drove me bughouse."

Alden was amused at the little man's injured dignity.

"I will see that you are not troubled," he assured him as he walked away.



### CHAPTER III

“ Oh, Mother McKnight, I’m jist goin’ home. I been over tu Humptulips an’ I’ve found out all ’bout them Aldens! ”

Finding Mother McKnight in her yard as she passed her place, Posey could not refrain from going in to share a bit of neighborhood gossip. She rushed breathlessly through the gate and up the gravel walk. Suddenly she stopped.

“ Why, what ’er yu doin’? ”

The little old lady stood beside her clothesline holding an umbrella over one lone, but exceedingly large, pair of trousers which hung unceremoniously by the waistband. She pointed a finger up at the deep blue sky where spring rain clouds floated leisurely.

“ You see that? ”

Posey nodded.

“ Well, I’ve taken Tim McAvoy’s pants in and out of the house twenty times today; trying to dry them between showers. I made up my mind that I wasn’t going to take them in again, but that I was going to dry them. So I brought my old umbrella out and decided to stay until they were dry enough to press. He wants them by tomorrow night at the latest.” Mother McKnight paused and looked at Posey anxiously. “ But what was you going to tell me about the Alden family? ”

Posey drew a long breath. Her eyes were wide with excitement.

“Lis’sen. Aunt Sally Mullen was over there the other day. Mis Alden sent fer ’er. Sent ’er maid — she calls it — but it’s what we call a hired girl. Well, she sent ’er maid, or ’er hired girl, over tu see’f Aunt Sally ’ud come over an’ do their washin’. I saw Aunt Sally today an’ sa-ay, she says them there Aldens ’er, sure ’nough high-muck-amucks. She says they put on as much splurge as though they lived in Seattle er New York er somewhere.”

Mother McKnight’s kind old face wrinkled into an amused yet sympathetic smile.

“Did Aunt Sally say that? Go on, child, tell me more.”

Posey made a tremendous gesture.

“Did she! I should say she did.” She paused to draw another long breath. “She says they got the most awful grand furniture. Carpets on the floor in ever’ room. One o’ them talkin’ machines an’ — an’ a bathtub!”

Mother McKnight’s eyes widened.

“A bathtub. Well, well.”

“Yep, a bathtub. Aunt Sally says all yu do is jist turn on the water in — in the tub — which she says is all whitish an’ nice ’nough fer any one tu eat out of — an’ there’s the bath. Yu c’n wash yerself jist as nice as though yu was down in the river. Better — ’cause this water is warmed ’forehand an’ there’s lots o’ nice smelly soap which Aunt

Sally says is all done up in fancy wrappings with purty pictures on it. Aunt Sally says she saves 'em. She can't bare tu see purty things like that burned up. She's goin' tu paste 'em on a piece o' cardboard an' put 'em in 'er parlor."

Mother McKnight nodded patiently. She opened her lips to speak, but Posey, in her excitement, interrupted her.

"Aunt Sally says it ain't nothin' tu wash their clothes. Jist like washin' clothes that ain't never been dirtied 'tall." Posey hesitated and became very grave. "I ain't jealous 'cause she's got their washin', Mother McKnight, but, when they ain't hard clothes tu wash, wouldn't it o' been nice if you'd o' got 'em? I could o' brung 'em over fer yu an' delivered 'em too. Why, it'd be a cinch —"

Mother McKnight smiled.

"Oh, that's all right. It doesn't matter."

Posey shook her head.

"It ain't all right. Aunt Sally's got a husband, an' you ain't. It 'ud be a damn sight more nice 'n washin' them there dirty, greasy ole clothes of the loggers."

"But, Posey, somebody's got to do the washing for the boys — and remember they pay me well."

"Oh, sure."

Posey was silent for a moment, but presently she burst out:

"But, sa-ay, I didn't tell yu ever'thing. I seen Mis Alden today. She c'm in tu git 'er mail when I was in the post office."

“ Yes! ” Mother McKnight was truly interested now. She shared the curiosity of every other woman in Humptulips and the neighborhood regarding these people whose sudden coming into their midst had created a sensation. No “ boss ” had ever built a home for his family as Alden had done. There had been a few who had brought their families up into the woods and established them in temporary quarters, but almost always they kept them in Hoquiam or Aberdeen.

When Alden built a home and equipped it with running water, a bath — as Aunt Sally Mullen had already reported far and wide in the neighborhood — and all the modern conveniences of a first-class home in the city, the people of Humptulips were astounded.

The fact that he had managed the running water by means of nearly a mile of inch pipe operated by a ram, when for years few of them had even had a well on their property, was almost unbelievable. They felt that they had advanced amazingly when they no longer got their water from the “ crick ”; a stream of sparkling water coming down out of the foothills of the Olympic Mountains.

“ So you have seen Mrs. Alden already, ” said Mother McKnight.

Posey nodded. Her brow wrinkled thoughtfully.

“ Yes, I seen ’er. I don’t know whether I’m goin’ tu like ’er er not, though. She’s awful sort o’ stuck up. Not a bit like him. Ever’body says Mr. Alden’s su nice. Speaks tu anyone he meets. ”

“ That’s what the boys over at camp was telling me.”

“ Unh hunh. Well, she never spoke tu a single one o’ us there in the post office. Jist marched in like she thought she owned the town. This is the way she did it —” Thrusting her nose in the air, Posey gathered her skirts tightly about her and strode across the yard and back again to demonstrate her impression of Tesa Alden.

“ Oh, well, that may be just her way.” Mother McKnight looked thoughtfully out into the woods. “ She’s a stranger yet. She might have been embarrassed in there among folks she didn’t know.”

Posey made a grimace.

“ Humph, not on yer life. Not her, I bet.” She shrugged her shoulders. “ But, anyway, I don’t give a damn.”

Mother McKnight turned and looked at Posey sharply.

“ I thought you promised you would quit swearing.”

Posey’s eyes fell.

“ I am — tryin’ tu quit.”

“ This doesn’t sound like it. You have said bad words twice since you came in here —”

Posey was dismayed.

“ Well, what’s a person goin’ tu do? When yer tellin’ somethin’ an’ — an’ —” Confused she paused to search for an appropriate word in which she might make her meaning clear and forceful. The search was in vain. “ Anyhow, it’s jist like

Tim McAvoy says: 'Hell an' damn ain't swearin'; it's 'strong emphasis.' "

Posey had tried to be humorous, but Mother McKnight did not laugh.

"It isn't ladylike, is it?"

"No, but —"

Posey was deeply humiliated now. She could scarce endure the kind but earnest look of the older woman's eyes. No one in Humptulips could reach deep down beneath the callous of her young heart as Mother McKnight could.

"I've so often asked you to stop, and reminded you that you are not a little girl any longer —"

This was too much. Almost moved to tears of shame, she was convinced that she must change the subject or she would soon be weeping. Flinging back her head she took a step toward Mother McKnight.

"Mother McKnight, is my ears clean?"

Mother McKnight scrutinized her carefully. Not satisfied, she put down her umbrella and moved nearer. Brushing the mop of flaming hair back from Posey's face, she looked closely.

"No, they're not."

Flushing hotly, Posey drew back.

"Well, I'm goin' right home an' wash 'em."

Mother McKnight looked at her interrogatively.

"Mis Alden's ears was awful clean this mornin' an' 'er hair didn't look all daubed up an' greasy, like su many of the women 'round here. An' 'er skin is jist su white! Even if she is stuck up, she's

most awful good lookin'. She looked so kinda all clean an' starchy this mornin', like one o' the logger's boiled shirts after you've did it up —"

Mother McKnight did not hear much of this. Her thoughts were detached. She was looking up at the sky. It had cleared, and it appeared as if the shower was over for a time. She examined the pair of trousers. Satisfied that they were dry enough to press, she took them off the line and, folding the umbrella, moved toward the house. She invited Posey to come in, stating that she had not eaten yet.

Posey hesitated.

"I better be goin' on."

"No, come on in. Anyway, I've got a bundle of clothes to send over to camp. You can take them now and it will save you another trip."

"How 'bout Tim's pants?"

"He's coming after them tonight himself." Mother McKnight was on her tiny back porch now. "Come on in and have some dinner with me, Posey. I'm having sour potatoes."

Posey looked up wistfully. Her mouth watered.

"Sour potatoes! Oh, sa-ay —" She hurried across the grass and was beside Mother McKnight. "Why is it, Mother McKnight, they ain't no woman in Humptulips that can make sour potatoes as good as you c'n?" she asked as she followed Mother McKnight into the kitchen.

Mother McKnight's eyes beamed. She liked people to boast of her cooking.

“ I don't know, unless it's just because they haven't got the knack. And then I was the first woman in Humptulips that ever made them. The other women learned it from me.” Mother McKnight poked the fire and put in a stick of wood. “ Now you wash your hands, Posey, and set the table while I fry the ham. There's a (wild) blackberry pie there in the pantry. I opened the last can this morning. I wonder if we're going to have as many wild blackberries this year as we did last? Remember, woods was just full of them —”

Mother McKnight had lived alone on her place since her husband was killed in camp ten years before. They had felled on the eighty acres of timber when they first came to Washington and had received quite a sum of money when they sold the timber. But sickness and death had consumed most of the proceeds. By raising most of the food she ate and washing for the loggers, Mother McKnight managed to keep herself comfortably.

She often wondered why she did not return to her people in Iowa, where her three children were buried; but, a great lover of the forest, she could not make up her mind to give it up.

Poverty and losses had not embittered Mother McKnight's heart. She was loved and respected far and wide in the community. There was a certain sense of superiority about her and yet she was a beloved friend to all.

“ If you want a favor done, just go to Mother McKnight,” said the neighbors.



“Gee, she’s always got the goodest things to eat in her pantry,” said the children, “an’ so many purty things in the parlor to show you when you go there.”

“She’s got a heart like an ox,” said the loggers.

There was no one in whom Mother McKnight took the interest that she did in Posey Murry. She had often befriended Posey when old Cap Murry was drunk for days at a time. A number of times she had asked him to let Posey come to live with her, but he had shaken his head stubbornly.

“Not on yer life. I’ve raised that brat since her mother died. She’s jist now gittin’ to an age where she c’n look out fer me. Nope, she stays with me as long’s I live — After that she c’n go with who she pleases.”

Mother McKnight never became discouraged because she was not more of an influence in Posey’s life. She knew the child’s home life was the cause of her irresponsibility, and she longed for the day when Posey would be old enough to get away from it. She was a trifle surprised, however, that Tesa Alden should be the first person to make the girl realize how essential it was to keep up one’s personal appearance. She decided to say nothing to Posey of this. She believed that the matter would be more impressive if she said nothing.

“I’ve got a few more socks to darn and a patch to put on Happy Lenon’s undershirt before you can take the clothes,” she said when they had finished their meal and were in the parlor. “I’ll

declare there isn't a boy in the woods who is as hard on his clothes as Happy. He needs a wife to look after him. Goodness knows he'd be a fine catch for some woman."

Posey scarcely heeded what Mother McKnight was saying. Her eyes were roaming about the room among the numerous "pretty things" in Mother McKnight's parlor. Crocheted tidies on the chairs, an old sampler on the wall, a what-not in one corner loaded with little keepsakes that Mother McKnight had been gathering for years. Posey never tired of looking at this collection. There seemed to be a story in every article.

Mother McKnight did not mind Posey's not listening to what she was saying. She was not altogether directing what she said to anyone in particular; she was merely voicing her thoughts aloud. She, at least, had someone to whom to direct her discourse and she detested talking to herself. To her it showed symptoms of feeble-mindedness.

"You know they are saying that that Mr. Alden has the intention of getting to be one of the biggest loggers in the country. He told someone about having a vision of a wonderful future up here. 'Course, most of the people are laughing about it. Billy Mann told Ed Seldon over in the store the other day that Alden would have to learn that it took something a sight more reliable than visions to make a fortune in logging." Mother McKnight paused and stitched quietly for a time. Presently she looked up.

“ I don't believe the people up here at Hump-tulips understand Mr. Alden. Even though I've never met him, I believe I do. He's an idealist. Common folks don't understand people like that. An idealist, providing he's got the get up and go about him, is the kind who does things. If you don't dream big things, how are you ever going to get them? ”

Mother McKnight studied Posey earnestly to see if what she said was making any impression upon the girl. But Posey's thoughts seemed to be far away. Mother McKnight thought she did not hear her. However, she did not despair.

“ The only thing is: I wish he was something besides a logger.” Pausing again she frowned thoughtfully as she bent over her mending; making her stitches as small and precise as if she were working upon cloth-of-gold. When she looked up again there was that far-away expression in her eyes which Posey had so often seen when Mother McKnight got to delving in idle fancy. “ All my life I've been real fond of poetry — I read it every time I get a chance. I'll never forget a poem I read one time. I can't remember now just how it went, but it was about a great forest and it called this forest the kingdom of man. It went on to tell about how it was man's duty to protect and care for this beautiful forest and all the plant and animal life in it, rather than destroy it because it was — his kingdom — ” Mother McKnight gazed out the window into the forest across the road from her

home. "I wish I could remember that poem—"

"Maybe, yu can sometime."

Mother McKnight turned quickly. Her heart leapt. Posey was listening! And she was so hungry for expression that day. One of those dreamy moods had come over her. At such times she longed for companionship. Encouraged by Posey's attention, she waxed eloquent.

"Well, the first time I ever saw this beautiful forest up here, I said to myself: 'This is the kingdom of man.' And ever since then, there hasn't been a tree fell but what I've had a kind of an ache in my heart about it. Hearing that peculiar groan of the tree when it was falling kinda made me feel like it was trying to tell man that he really was destroying his own beautiful kingdom. Of course, people have to make a living, and all the wealth of this great Western country must be turned into money, but somehow the forest does seem different. Trees seem to belong to and be a part of the divine plan, like the sky and the mountains and the birds and the flowers. But, of course, I'm just an old woman and have my funny notions. I guess what I think doesn't amount to much anyway."

Mother McKnight returned to her mending again. They were each silent. Now Posey's attention was bent upon the forest. She gazed upon it, through the window, as if she had never looked upon it before.

Something unusual was going on in Posey's mind. She could not quite comprehend the mean-

ing of it. It was akin to the sensation she had the day she first met David Alden, and yet a trifle similar to the feeling she had the morning Tesa Alden, crisp and immaculate in fresh linen, walked into the Humptulips post office. Yet, this new emotion which seemed to be stealing in upon her was vastly more significant than either of the others.

Mother McKnight finished her mending and wrapped the clothes in a bundle for Posey to deliver at camp on her way home.

Up the road, where she plunged into the thicker forest, Posey stopped suddenly. She looked up into the deep-green canopy of branches which swung between earth and sky. A strange exalted sensation swept her. Tears sprang to her eyes. She could not define her thoughts, nor could she collect them. They seemed to flutter here and there, like the sunlight on the blowing branches. She tried to concentrate on something, but in vain. It was not unhappiness. She was certain of that. But she was conscious of a mysterious change going on in her mind, a change for which she was not responsible, but one that was involuntary, like a machine that, once started, runs by its own power.

It was as if a part of her, which all her life had been dormant, had suddenly been set in motion. Her lips were moving. She found herself murmuring: "This is the kingdom of man. Kingdom of man."

## CHAPTER IV

David Alden slowly mounted the back steps of his home. On the porch he paused a moment to drive the calks of his boots into a pair of boards laid precisely there for that purpose. With the boards riveted to his calk boots he clumped into the kitchen. Dropping into a chair, placed conveniently near the door, he removed first his boots, then his double-breasted blue flannel shirt.

Alden had become a real lumberjack. He had "staged his pants an' wore the tail o' his shirt out." This particular fashion was amusing to him. It was possible, however, that wearing the shirt with the bottom of the front folded underneath and drawn to the back, where the whole was tucked into the waistband of the overalls, made it possible for the woodsman to move more freely. Alden was still perplexed over the matter, but he was willing to accept it with the grace of a true logger.

Emma, the maid, came in from the dining-room.

"Is my bath ready, Emma?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good. I'm so dead tired tonight that I believe I would snap the head off of an angel if she crossed me."

He rose and shambled across the room. Every

muscle in his body felt as if it had been stretched to the breaking point. However, twenty minutes later he came downstairs very much animated. The bath had rested him. He felt so vivacious that he called a merry: "Hello, there, Tesie!" to his wife who was just entering the hall.

Tesa was a pleasing sight. She wore a formal dinner gown and her hair was dressed as elaborately as though she were giving a dinner and expected distinguished guests. Alden swept her with a glance, from her gorgeously slippered feet to the mass of dark, glistening hair piled high upon her head. He stopped to kiss the cheek she offered somewhat reluctantly.

"One consolation with our present environments, Tesie, is that one need not worry that her gowns will go out of style." He looked upon this recent creation from Worth's with a tolerant smile. "At the end of ten years up here in the woods this gown would ring quite as new as it does tonight, while back in Chicago the style of milady's gown changes with the seasons—" He hesitated and looked down upon his smoking jacket and comfortable house slippers. "But why all this formality? You do look stunning—yet is the reward worth the effort?"

Tesa drew away from him coldly and moved toward the stairs.

"There's a purpose."

This puzzled him.

"A purpose —"

She tossed her glistening head impatiently.

“ Oh, I’ll tell you when I come down. Emma has just given Dunny his bottle. I want to see that he hasn’t thrown it out of his crib.” Tesa hastened upstairs.

Some moments later they were at dinner.

Everything about the table with its silver and fine linen was as carefully appointed as it had always been during their few years of marriage. It did lack the centerpiece of cut flowers. Otherwise neither of them need be conscious but that they were dining in the magnificent home that they had been forced to abandon in Chicago.

“ You said you would tell me your purpose in putting on that gown tonight, Tesie.”

Tesa’s brows lifted slightly.

“ Well, since you have taken it upon yourself to become a full-fledged logger, I feel that some one must save the family pride from going to perdition.”

Alden smiled.

“ Then the action was symbolic. Believing that I am threatening and endangering it, you have taken it upon yourself to sustain the family pride —”

“ Exactly.”

“ In the meantime, unless I lay the family pride before the altar of misconception — we will call it — who, pray, is to keep the wolf from the door? ”

Tesa gave a nervous little gesture.

“ Is it so serious as all that? ”



Alden did not answer at once; principally because his mouth was full of food. One thing he had not brought from Chicago and had gained in Hump-tulips, was a ravenous appetite. Even his desire to respect Tesa's every whim that evening could not restrain that almost insatiable gnawing in the region of his digestive organs. He chewed his roast beef with the ardor of a starved animal. Tesa watched impatiently while he swallowed hard and then took a long sup of water.

"What a horrid appetite you are developing. One might suspect that you were tasting roast beef and escalloped potatoes for the first time in years."

Alden drained his glass. He gave her a significant look.

"I have never tasted it before. Until he has labored twelve long hours among flying axes and wedges and the cable line of a logging camp, one does not know the true purpose of food."

Tesa ignored this.

"You didn't answer my question a moment ago."

"True enough, I didn't, did I? You said: 'Is it so serious as all that?'" He paused and looked across the table at her for one long, thoughtful moment. "Why spoil our dinner talking of it, Tesa? Moreover, I believe it is unnecessary to state the seriousness of our financial situation —"

Tesa sat back and eyed him critically.

"But wearing the clothes of a common logger!"

"I must for a time until we get set up and going."

And, please, do not refer to these men in the woods as common loggers. You are now living in an atmosphere of common loggers and common people. It would behoove you to develop more democratic tendencies."

Tesa's chin lifted. A suggestion of anger flashed in her eyes.

"Never! To be forced to live in this jungle, is one thing. To be forced to meet jungle people on their own level, is entirely another —"

Alden was silent for a moment, then:

"I — I am disappointed, Tesa."

"In —"

"You."

"Oh —"

"I had hoped that you would see matters in a different light. I had hoped that you would accept these good people of Humptulips for their own true worth. At heart I will warrant that most of them have more pure gold than many of our influential friends of former days. At any rate we are obliged to live among them for some time. At least I am —"

Tesa's upper lip curled.

"That sounds like a challenge."

A shadow of pain crossed Alden's face.

"Am I in a habit of challenging you?"

She smiled graciously.

"Go on with your moralizing, my dear. Or might I call it demoralizing?" She was amused at the hurt look in his eyes. "You were saying that we are obliged to live among these people for some

time. Jungle people, I call them, much to your chagrin. Supposing we are — then what? ”

“ Well, I had hoped that you would make the most of it.”

“ Oh, how very amusing. As if I had not been making the most of everything for the past year.”

Alden said nothing in return to this. He merely studied her and tried to analyze her as any devoted husband would strive to analyze a much loved wife. He suspected, and had suspected for months, that Tesa was not at all in sympathy with his present venture. But he would not permit himself to believe that she was trying to put every obstruction in his path to make it impossible for him to pass. It had happened in similar circumstances among friends of their acquaintance, but he did not want to believe that of his wife.

Tesa was not demonstrative, but he had not the slightest doubt that, beneath this unresponsiveness, she loved him with a wife's true devotion, and that eventually, during this crisis which had come into their lives, she would take her stand like the true blue-blood that she was. Her coming west with him had proved her stability to a large degree. All doubt fled from him as he looked across at her where she sat eyeing him bitterly. He was too occupied admiring her dark beauty to see this bitterness.

“ If you had only stayed by Father — Father will rise again in no time. You cannot keep a man of his calibre down.”

This antagonized Alden. He wanted to shout that the very reason he rejoiced in their misfortune was because it had been the means of freeing himself from the dominating influence of such a person. But feeling that this would be unjust, he folded his napkin with exceptional patience while he struggled for self-control.

“ Now listen, dear, why all this haggling? Let us get to our point. It was my choice to come out west. I am only now beginning on the dream of my boyhood. I never lost the desire to return here since the trip I took up into these woods with Uncle Will that summer. Yet I suppose my desires might date back to my ancestors, who had the spirit of the pathfinder so deeply imbedded in their bosoms that nothing could daunt them in their pursuit of new worlds to conquer. But the first time I was conscious of it was that summer I was out here before I finished college. Since then I have never lost the wonderful vision Uncle Will and I saw here together. And, after all these years, I am only now beginning to realize my dream —”

Tesa shrugged her shoulders.

“ Oh, you have always been having dreams. But why involve your family who much prefer to be wide awake? ”

Alden rose and went around the table to her side. He bent over and put an arm about her.

“ Don't let's have words about this matter, Tesie. Let us forget the unpleasantness and think only of the highlights —”

She drew away from him slightly.

“If for no other reason, I think you would resent raising your son in such an environment.”

Tesa knew when she used their child as a weapon in her argument, she touched a vital point. Alden's one passion was his little son. However, he did not acquiesce as easily as she had expected.

“Oh, Dunny is just a wee fellow yet. By the time he is old enough for school, his father will be rolling in wealth.” He stepped back and, thrusting his thumbs in the armholes of his vest, waved his hands significantly. Tesa looked up at his whimsical face.

“Oh, you idealists! The visions you have! Will you never come down to earth? I congratulate you upon having the enthusiasm of a four-year-old.”

This hurt Alden. Tesa had a way of treating his ideas with the same amused tolerance that she might feel toward a small child. For some strange reason he thought of Posey Murry.

“If Tesa would only regard me with but a small degree of the admiration which this child seems to feel,” he thought; and he recalled how the hero worship, which Posey made no attempt to conceal, appealed to his masculine vanity. “Every time I see her, her approval of me is so obvious that I find myself wanting to be everything she seems to believe of me.”

Tesa rose and went into the living room. She sat down on a divan before the fireplace and gazed moodily into the cheerful glow. Alden went to sit

beside her. He took one of her long slender hands in his. Tesa suffered herself to be caressed. She did not draw away when he took her in his arms and laid her head on his shoulder.

“ I know it is hard, dear.” He patted her cheek gently. “ And in your condition you feel it more. I only wish you might see matters as I do.” He paused and looked thoughtfully for a moment at the playful flames. “ Why, to me, we are only now beginning to live — The new things I am learning each day! You cannot imagine how interesting it is to watch and work with those fellows over there in the woods. Logging is an art, just as much as any other industry. And industry is art. I have always argued that point. It is far more vital than the so-called art. We cannot eat music or books or paintings or statues and, no matter how æsthetic we become, still we must eat.

“ And while pleasure seekers are following their own joyful pursuits, such fellows as those over there in the woods, and millions of other workers, are grinding deep down in the depths of industrialism so that we may have clothes to wear, food to eat, houses to live in. Did you ever think of that, Tesie? ”

Tesa did not reply. She leaned calmly upon his shoulder but, somehow he believed that she was listening.

“ Back in Chicago,” he went on, “ when I happened to be among the poorer districts of the city, I often thought of that. I felt I wanted to do

something for these people; for all the unfortunate people on earth. But how could I in my position? I was chained to the upper classes. Then when this timber was left to me just at the time the avalanche occurred in your father's affairs and we were dislodged from the upper classes — am I selfish when I say I rejoiced in our misfortune? Here was the opportunity for which I had longed!”

Tesa winced at this, but she remained quiet.

“What impressed me more than anything else regarding the working classes was their lack of system and sanitation. This time I came west I realized what slow strides our country is making toward progress. The majority of the loggers are still living in filthy bunkhouses and carrying their own vermin-infested blankets to and from the camps. One of the greatest phases in my dream toward the new era of industrialism is fighting for sanitation. We know it is a psychological fact that cleanliness is one of the most essential elements in the uplifting of humanity, and I am going to do all I can to lift labor conditions to a better standard.

“I have had an immense theoretical education. Now I am going to acquire a practical one. I believe that industry can be made beautiful, the same as art and science. Men laugh at poets. Yet it was the poet who caught the vision of lessons in stones, music in running brooks, a singing voice in the whir of machinery. In this great forest where men work like galley-slaves all day, why not create a spirit of pleasure out of it?”

Alden stroked the smooth cheek which lay against his shoulder.

“ I know this is not especially interesting to you, dearie. I do not expect you to be in sympathy with me. All I ask is that you be tolerant until I have proven myself. Most people look upon the dreamer as one who is unbalanced, yet, were it not for the dreamers, where should we be? Every great man has been a dreamer. Franklin, Lincoln, Edison and hundreds of others. To achieve, one must first see the thing in mind before he can carry it out. One must also be a doer, of course. Innumerable people dream and visualize. Far too few carry out these visions.

“ The afternoon I was waiting for you to arrive in Aberdeen I had some time to kill. Not knowing what else to do I climbed Think o' Me Hill; that hill rising back of the town. Remember I pointed it out to you next morning from our room at the Washington Hotel? I told you the sign board was put there by the Think o' Me Cigar Company. It can be seen for miles. There is something significant in that sign. It does set one to thinking.

“ On the hilltop that afternoon I looked out upon Gray's Harbor, with its hundreds of small craft and larger boats anchored at the wharves. From that far distance, the men hurrying to and fro looked like busy insects, loading the ships with their inexhaustible cargo of lumber. Down the Harbor other ships were making to sea, already loaded with lumber, and on their way to ports



all over the world. Below me and out across the river in Cosmopolis and to the north — all along the water front of the Wishkaw River and the shore of the Harbor as far as I could see, were sawmills; ripping, tearing and devouring the great logs like hungry animals. But unlike hungry animals, they were belching up these logs, digested now into countless strips of long smooth boards to be piled in the yards until their time came to be loaded upon the ships.

“ I looked back of Aberdeen and Hoquiam, miles and miles of timber where the hand of man has scourged but a small fraction of the vast forest which spans the greater part of the Olympic Peninsula. In the distance I could hear, above the other noises, the shrill whistle of a donkey engine —” Alden stopped a moment.

“ Tesie, dear, if you but knew how I thrilled at the sight and sound of that broad field below me. My heart swelled and I closed my eyes and said: ‘ Oh, Lord, at last I am no longer to be the puppet of the success of others. Now! Now I, too, am to become a bit of this vast wheel of industrialism ’ — ” Alden paused again and for a moment was lost in thought. “ So don’t you see, Tesie, there on the hilltop that afternoon I saw the beginning of the realization of my dream? From that moment I was given the power of the doer. Now that I have explained my dream to you — can’t you enter into the spirit of it — just a little —” He looked down at Tesa. Her

head had fallen over on his breast. He lifted her face to look into her eyes for his answer. He was so eager for a word of encouragement from her! Again he was to face disappointment.

His wife slept.

## CHAPTER V

“ They’s no gettin’ ’round it, Tim. I’d make Ole Ramrod either hit the ball or hit the puncheon, one or the other.”

Coming into the bunkhouse to tell the engineer to fire up fifteen minutes earlier the following morning, as there was some special work to be done before they could begin on their regular yarding, Tim was met with this protest. For several weeks the men had been complaining about the “grub.”

“ Lord God, yes,” agreed a man who sat sullenly on the edge of his bunk in his sock feet. “ He’s gittin’ worse ever’ day. His coffee’s the damnedest slop y’ever tasted, an’ them biscuits he give us tonight was so hard yu c’d throw ’em through the wall —”

“ Yes, ’n I bet he never wrenches his dishes,” some one broke in. “ He’ll have us all like we was one winter down there at Hansen’s in South Bend. The cook was so doggone dirty he never wrenched his dishes, an’ when we all got the bellyache we couldn’t figure what was the matter ’til one o’ the fellas got so plagued sick he had tu go to a doctor. The Doc as’t ’im what he’d been eatin’. Said, ‘Nothin’ ’ceptin’ the regular grub at camp.’

“ The ole Doc fixed 'im up all right an' he went back tu camp. That night he got tu thinkin' over what the Doc had said. Next mornin' he told the other fellas. They got tu investigatin' an', by gosh, they found out that the cook never wrenched his dishes. Guess they'd all swallowed 'nough soap tu start a factory. Good God, some of us was sick! Guess 'f we hadn't found out in time that there ole buzzard 'ud a killed us 'fore we'd knowed it. Wouldn't put Ole Ramrod past doin' the same thing —”

“ Unless he's so damn dirty he don't use soap,” said another.

Tim listened patiently.

“ Well, we'll see about it tomorrow. Maybe Dan'll do better if I give him a talkin' to. I hate to fire him right off. Besides, I ain't got time to go to town for another cook this week. I wouldn't say anything to Alden if I was you fellows. It would only worry him. I know he wants you to have good grub; cooked right an' plenty of it.”

“ Hell, yes,” said several in a chorus. “ We ain't got no notion o' tellin' Alden nothin'. He sure puts up a plenty. That's what makes us sore. We know 'f Ole Ramrod 'ud cook right we couldn't never eat in a better cookhouse.”

“ Wonder, though, if Alden knows what a logger's belly means to him,” said a big burly giant who stood six foot two in his stocking feet.

“ Wonder if —”

Tim interrupted: “ Well, if he doesn't, I do.”

He turned to the engineer. "I can count on you then to fire up at five forty-five in the morning?"

The engineer nodded.

"Yep."

Tim started to go away, but several who sat about a table playing cards asked him to sit in the game. One of the players looked up and smiled good-naturedly.

"I ain't so all-fired anxious fer 'im to. I know Tim's luck."

When Tim sat down he was handed the deck of cards.

"Here, deal 'em up, Tim."

It was plain to be seen that every man in the bunkhouse respected his foreman. The very fact that he came among them and made a good fellow of himself substantiated him in their estimation.

David Alden was somewhat of a riddle to them. They were still nonplussed that a "white-collared sport from the East" had come among them to succeed in an industry which they were convinced took many years to learn. But if Tim accepted Alden as being O.K., then that was enough.

All during the game, Frank Jerome, a tall thin man in the early thirties, paced restlessly up and down the bunkhouse floor. At length some one shouted: "Frank, why the hell don't yu sit down an' stay down once in a while?" Leaning over, the man spat a stream of tobacco juice at the cuspidor. He missed his aim, and the juice

trickled down the sides of the can. "If you ain't the damnedest fella — work all day slingin' riggin' — that 'ud wear out a huskier man than you — an' then yu traipse up an' down this floor all night. I swear, 'f I ain't heard yu ever' night fer a month, as much as a dozen times a night, trampin' 'round here or out o' doors. You're the nervousest person I ever see."

Casting a swift glance at his censor, Frank sat down on the edge of his chair and looked on at the game for a time. Presently, when he was certain no one was looking, he rose and crept out of doors. When he returned he was a changed man. The night air had helped him.

He sat calmly down before the fire. Soon he wanted to talk. He did talk. His tongue rattled at an amazing pace. No one paid any attention to him. Frank was like that. Took the funniest spells. Sit around like he'd lost every friend on earth — then, maybe, go outside and come back in pretty soon, the jolliest fellow ever was.

"Yu know one time over there in Skikomish I made the slickest cleanin' in a poker game that any bird had ever been known tu make in that one-horse town —" Frank went on, addressing those about him. He received an occasional nod, but otherwise no comment was offered on the tale that he spun in his short jerky manner. "This happened in the back o' Benny Walker's saloon. Straight poker that night an' square cards. No booze. Sober as a judge, ever' one o' us. Well,

Benny, he'd staked me to a twenty. I'd lost pretty heavy the night before. He wasn't keen on lettin' me have the money. Said if it wasn't for my reputation as a card shark there wouldn't be nothin' doin', but, gee menally — ”

Frank's listeners lost the story at this point. There was much excitement at the table. As usual Tim was winning but there was no feeling of resentment abroad. Everyone was laughing loudly.

“ C'm on through with that bottle o' ole Taylor yu got hid in yer bunk, Fred,” demanded one of the players. “ Want tu wet my whistle.”

The bottle was produced and passed around. Tim looked at it critically. But a few days before Alden and he had talked of the men having liquor in the bunkhouses. Alden said it must stop. When the bottle came to him, Tim hesitated. He was hailed by a half-dozen voices: “ Aw, c'm on, Tim! What's the matter 'ith yu tonight? Anyone 'ud think, way yu acted, you'd jist c'm up from Hoquiam an' some Salvation Nell'd been after yu. C'm on, have a shot. Won't hurt yu a bit.”

“ Perhaps I hadn't better say anything tonight,” Tim thought as he took a sup.

“ Go on, take some,” said a man across the table. “ Don't be scared of it. I got more over in my bunk.”

“ That's enough.” Tim passed the bottle on.

It came to a slender, youthful-looking man with a spiritual face. He sat in the background. He lifted a hand in refusal.

“ No, thank you.”

The one who offered it to him grinned evasively.

“ Aw, sure, I forgot you don't drink. You're the religious guy.”

The other nodded.

“ Yes.”

“ All right, I'll drink for you.” He tilted the bottle up to his lips and drank generously. Passing it on, he turned to the religious guy. “ What d' you get out o' that saintly stuff anyway? ”

The religious guy looked up at him earnestly.

“ I get a great deal, sir. I not only get the blessed satisfaction of living a righteous life here on earth, but also hope of eternal salvation in the hereafter.” The other smiled scornfully. “ The Bible teaches us that we must make the most of life, because this is merely the preparation for the higher life. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that we might have life everlasting. In the book of Job it says: ‘ He that — ’ ”

“ Hey there, Sky Pilot, fer the love o' Mike, cut it!” came a shout from across the room. “ None o' that holier-than-thou stuff tonight. A little o' that goes a long ways, an' we been pretty well fed up on it here lately.”

“ I second the motion,” said another. “ A fella c'n stomick that guff from some Salvation Nell down there in Hoquiam or Aberdeen after he's been on a drunk fer a week, but under ordinary circumstances it don't set well.”



“ But, brother, have you never considered the welfare of your soul? Have you never thought of the hereafter? ”

“ Naw, tu hell with it. I’m too dang busy considering the ‘ here on earth ’ to think o’ the ‘ after,’ an’ I’m makin’ a poor mess of it at that.”

“ You believe in a God, don’t you? ”

The man smiled bitterly.

“ I dunno whether I do or not.”

“ But you must know — ”

Some one from the table picked up a bootjack and threw it at the speakers. Then several others joined in and threw a volley of shoes at them. The religious guy took the assault in solemn dignity, but the other man threw the bootjack and the shoes back.

“ What the hell er you fellas tryin’ tu start here? If yu want a rough house I’m right with yu,” and he aimed a calk boot at the head of one of his aggressors. Laughing, the other ducked, and was picking up another boot to throw when something in the front of the room interrupted him. All eyes turned to the door. Posey Murry stood before them. She was hailed with much gusto.

“ Well, what d’ yu know ’bout that! There’s Posey! ”

Posey stopped a moment, poised as if trying to answer all of them at once. There was a genial smile upon her lips. She liked these men. She deposited her bundles on an empty table.

“ There’s yer clean clothes,” she said turning to them.

“ It’s a shame that kid’s got tu hoss our duds over here like that,” said one of the men. “ Some o’ us lubbers c’d git ’em ourselves.”

Posey’s chin shot up.

“ Humph! Then I wouldn’t have nothin’ tu c’m over fer.”

Tim looked up at her curiously.

“ Do you like to come over here, Posey? ”

She nodded.

“ Yep, bet I do. I’m most awful glad Mr. Alden bought this camp so’s it ’ud start up agin — ” She stopped suddenly. Her attention was attracted by one of the men sitting in the background.

“ Why, Henry Hoggens, when did yu git back? ”

Smiling, the man rose and came forward to shake hands with her. He was a small and rather unpretentious person, but there was a bright and somewhat unusual brilliancy about his eyes.

“ Ah, Miss Posey, I — I supposed you had forgotten me — ”

“ Fergotten yu! Sa-ay, not on yer life.” Posey paused and studied him thoughtfully. He flushed under her earnest gaze. “ S’pose I c’d fergit Henry Hoggens, late of the Botanical Gardens of Belfast, Ireland? Him that was picked with six others among all the soldiers of Ireland, by the King of England, to be educated in the greatest educational instu-to-o — institution in Ireland! ” Pursing her lips, Posey’s eyes narrowed. “ Am I

right, Henry?" Henry nodded. "And do you still write poetry, Henry?"

He flushed again, but replied hastily:

"I— yes, I— I am still trying to write poetry —"

Posey jerked her head significantly.

"That's right, Henry, jist keep on. Yu'll git there. I don't fergit the poems yu uset tu write 'bout trees an' birds an' flowers. They were purty, them poems. I 'member the one yu wrote 'bout the lady yu loved. Went somethin' like this:

"Once I loved a lady,  
The lady's name was Sadie.  
And Sadie, she loved me, too.  
But this lady, Sadie,  
Her life was somewhat shady  
She had so many relations  
She didn't know what to do.

And Sadie's relations  
They were very rich  
While my relations  
They were very poor.  
I would like to married Sadie  
And give her the name of Grady  
But I couldn't keep the wolf from the door.'"

Without respect to rhyme or meter Posey recited the poem as far as she remembered it. At length, she had to stop.

"I don't know now jist how Grady come out, but I 'member it was most awful sad. He never

did git money 'nough tu marry Sadie, an' he was too proud tu marry 'er an' live off o' her relations. But how anyone c'd ever write poetry an' git su many words tu rhyme! Gee, 'f I'd eat a dictionary I never c'd git that many words tu sound alike.'

Posey's praise gave Hoggens more confidence. Casting a swift glance about the room, he drew himself up proudly. He cleared his throat: "I — I am sure my poetry is much better now than when I wrote the Grady poem." He was asked where his work was published. He coughed slightly to hide his embarrassment, and made a tremendous attempt at bravado: "Well, I — I just don't get it published —" He frowned judicially. "You, doubtless, know that in the past few years the literary taste of the entire universe has degenerated. People no longer appreciate the work of a true artist. That is, I mean the common herd. There are still a few who have not lost the artistic sense and — and I among others — a — refuse to sacrifice myself." He paused to give these words time to permeate the minds of those about him. "I am content to write for art's sake."

To the amusement of his fellow loggers, Hoggens ended by bowing low and then, as if some important mission called him out into the night, he turned and went outdoors.

A number of the men grinned.

"Good Lord, some grand ole departure that

bird makes. S'pose he was usin' his artistic imagination an' thought he was makin' that speech 'fore the King o' England or some high mogul," said one.

"Unless Henry's improved a heap since he wrote the Sadie Grady poem, he'd better stick to loggin'," said another.

Posey came to his rescue.

"Gee, I don't know 'bout that. He sure c'n write some awful grand poetry." Moving nearer the table she touched Tim on the arm. She held up her chin and leaned toward him. "Say, d'yu see my neck?"

Tim looked earnestly at the white column of her throat, and a dozen other pairs of eyes studied it carefully. She was asked what was the matter with it. Her chin dropped. She looked at the speaker defiantly.

"What's the matter with it! Nothin's the matter with it. It's clean, ain't it? An' looka here." Jerking the hair back from her face, she held an ear up before her audience. "How'd yu like that? Clean neck an' ears — that's me." She did not see the amused gleam in the eyes of nearly every man in the bunkhouse.

"Say, yu don't mean tu say y've started tu wash yer neck an' ears, Posey!" one man shouted. "Thought yu considered yerself a good logger."

Posey shot a swift glance at him. "I do."

"Yu know what a logger thinks 'bout too much washin'."

“ Yep, but — ” Posey hesitated. This man had challenged her. She was confused. “ Well, Mother McKnight’s been at me fer a long time ’bout cleanin’ myself up an’—an’ anyway I been thinkin’ a heap here lately.” She looked at the man. He was laughing. This made Posey indignant. “ An’ — couldn’t a logger be clean? ” The man did not answer her quickly enough, so she hurried on: “ Ever since the first time I seen Mis Alden in the post office over there in Humptulips with ’er neck an’ ears su clean — I — why, I jist made up my mind I’d clean mine, too.” Posey stopped and looked about her. She was not altogether satisfied with what she saw in the men’s eyes, but maybe it was true what Mother McKnight said ’bout men being different than women. An’ maybe they did appreciate her cleanin’ up but just did not know how to express themselves. She was a trifle disappointed in them, but she continued bravely: “ I’d o’ thought yu’d all seen that I look different tonight.”

Tim came to her rescue.

“ I did, Posey. I saw your hair was combed an’ your dress clean an’ — ironed.”

Posey stroked her dress with her hands.

“ Borrowed Mother McKnight’s iron.”

Tim nodded approvingly.

“ Did a good job of it, too.” He looked at her thoughtfully for a moment. “ Now that Old Cap has got a good job here with Alden, maybe you can get some o’ them pretty dresses you want so bad.”

Posey shook her head.

“ Nope. He owes Ed Seldon more fer groceries than he c’n make in a long while. Then how long’ll he stay sober? ”

“ He might stay sober a long time. He might never booze again.”

A hopeful light crept into Posey’s eyes.

“ Gee, if that could only be so! ”

Every man in the room knew Posey’s story. They were all very sorry for her. Standing there, a pathetic little figure in the dim light of the kerosene lamp, the sympathy of each man went out to her. Posey sensed the vibration and when one man said: “ Poor kid, you’ve got it purty tough, ain’t yu? ” she tossed her head back.

“ No, I ain’t. Ever su many people’s got it worse ’n me. I ain’t got any troubles — tell yu ’bout me — Gee, ’f I was tu have any better time ’n I do, I jist wouldn’t know what tu do ’ith myself. S’pect I’d jist bust.” She turned quickly and looked toward the door. She thought the men did not know that it was to hide the flush which had spread from her cheeks to her throat. Controlling herself, she attempted to be gay. “ Well, guess I’ll be goin’.” She moved toward the door.

Tim rose from his chair.

“ Better let me go home with you, Posey.”

She flung him an impudent glance.

“ What for? ”

“ It’s dark as pitch outside. Ain’t you afraid? ”

“ Un hunh! What’s tu be ’fraid of? ” Hurrying to the door she wrenched it open and fled out into the night.

## CHAPTER VI

“An’ now that Aunt Sally’s give up washin’ fer the Aldens they ain’t no reason why you shouldn’t have it, Mother McKnight.”

“But are you sure she has?”

“No, I ain’t sure, but the other day when I was over in Humptulips I heard she had. If it hadn’t been late an’ I had tu git home, I’d o’ gone in an’ found out. I’m on my way over there now, an’ I’ll see Aunt Sally ’bout it today.” Posey paused and studied Mother McKnight’s kind old face for a moment. “The reason I’m su anxious fer yu to git it, is ’cause I know they’ll pay yu well, an’ it’ll be easy as fallin’ off of a log — No, I don’t mean jist that neither. No washin’ ain’t easy as fallin’ off of a log —” Posey frowned. “It does beat hell — it’s awful,” she corrected hastily, “that yu have tu work a’ tall. But ’f yu have tu wash clothes fer a livin’ it’s a lot better tu be washin’ Mis Alden’s embroidery shirtwaists an’ ’er baby’s petticoats than them there heavy ole clothes fer the loggers.”

Mother McKnight looked thoughtfully out the window.

“Why, I don’t think it’s so awful to have to wash for a living. It’s all in the way you look at it. It’s just simply service to your fellow men, the



same as any other work. Of course, it is considered that only ignorant people do smart people's laundry, but when a person's poor and hasn't any other way of getting along, what else can they do? If I was younger and stronger I wouldn't mind it a bit.

"I've always taken a good deal of delight in seeing a line of freshly washed clothes blowing in the wind. A body feels like they'd done something worth while. Getting up in the morning with the sun and putting out a nice white washing seems a lot more satisfying than laying in bed and sleeping until all hours of the day." Mother McKnight paused. "When you come to think of it, dirt is just dirt. No, I never could see why so many women hate to wash —"

The conversation was brought to a close by the click of the front gate. Peering out the window they saw a man coming up the walk. Mother McKnight rose hastily.

"Oh, dear, it's Johnny Moran and he's holding his hand like he'd been hurt." As the man approached the house she could see more closely. "Yes, he has. There's blood on the handkerchief he's got wrapped around his hand. The poor boy! I wonder how bad it is?" She moved toward the door. "Oh, those logging camps! There isn't a week passes but what some of the boys are over here with a mashed finger, or a cut, or something or other to be dressed —" She opened the door. "What is it, Johnny? Are you hurt bad?"

Johnny entered. His face was slightly pale.

"Naw, it ain't nothin' much, Mother. A bunch of us was in the tool house makin' springboards an' I cut my finger."

Mother McKnight sighed.

"Well, I'm glad it's no worse. Come on in the kitchen. I've got some hot water in the tea-kettle. We'll wash it first and then we will put some medicine on it and bandage it."

Johnny sat down in a chair in the kitchen and began to unwrap the soiled handkerchief from about his hand.

"I wouldn't o' bothered you at all, Mother, 'f they'd a been a clean rag in camp. A little cut like this don't 'mount to nothin'."

"Yes, but you must keep it clean so you won't get infection in it. It's the dirt that causes all the trouble." Mother McKnight bustled about getting clean cloths and medicine.

Posey offered to help, but Mother McKnight said there was nothing she could do. Then stating she was in a hurry, Posey departed. There was nothing unusual about Mother McKnight's attending a logger's injuries. As Posey walked along the road she remembered that there were times when she had given her service in less minor cases. For instance, once when one of the men broke his nose by a flying sliver from a wedge. When the flow of blood could not be stopped Mother McKnight was sent for. She stopped the hemorrhage with the powder of dried puffballs.

Another time one of the men came very near being killed by the line which just grazed his neck by a fraction of an inch below the shoulder. The man was unable to work for several weeks. Mother McKnight took him into her home and nursed him as if he had been her own son.

“ My life 'ud o' been different if my mother 'ud o' lived an' she'd been like Mother McKnight,” Posey reflected as she walked through the cool woods. “ Ma was a good woman. I 'member yet how she uset tu talk tu me when I was little. She read the Bible tu me when Pa wasn't 'round. She was unhappy 'cause he was a infidel —”

Posey looked up into the tree tops through which the sunshine fell in a golden spray.

“ Wonder why, when one o' them had tu die, it wasn't Pa. Ma was allus su decent. He uset tu rave at 'er 'bout 'er past life, but he was an' ole liar. I know she'd allus been good, an' I wish't it 'ud a been him that 'ud a died 'stead o' her.”

In Humptulips Posey met a group of boys and girls on their way to Sunday school. She was asked if she was coming. Her eyes fell to her shabby dress and shoes. She shook her head. A number of small boys in the back called to her impudently.

“ Hello, there's Posey Skunk Cabbage. Hello, Skunk Cabbage.”

Some of the older boys and girls giggled.

“ Skunk Cabbage! Skunk Cabbage!” shouted the small boys.

Posey became furious. Picking up several small stones she looked at the young culprits threateningly.

“ You call me that agin an’ I’ll let yu have these rocks right ’tween the eyes.”

“ Haw, you couldn’t hurt nothin’, Skunk Cabbage! ”

Drawing back, Posey was in the act of throwing the stones when some one caught her from behind. She whirled to face Alden. His wife stood a few feet away. Her face flushed with anger, Posey looked up at Alden for an instant as if she chose to strike him. He smiled down upon her. Humiliated, she dropped the stones. Alden said nothing. Ignoring the unpleasant situation, he drew back and lifted his hat. He turned to Tesa.

“ I want you to meet Mrs. Alden, Miss Murry.”

Posey bowed awkwardly.

“ I’m pleased tu meet yu — Mrs. Alden — ”

Tesa acknowledged the introduction with a cold and formal nod and then moved on. Alden saw that Posey noticed this. He regretted it. He knew it did not add any balm to her already wounded feelings. In the eyes lifted to his there were revealed all the hurt pride and wretchedness which the girl felt. He wished that he might say or do something to comfort her. He nodded toward the young people who were now at the top of the hill, the small boys following after them.

“ I wouldn’t pay any attention to their teasing.

They are just little boys. They mean no harm."

Posey's eyes filled with hot tears.

"Who's a-mindin' 'em!" Turning hastily, she fled, leaving Alden looking after her in perplexity. Wheeling about, he joined his wife.

"You see what you get, my dear, when you come to the rescue of ragamuffins."

Alden became very grave.

"That child is no ragamuffin, Tesa."

She laughed.

"Oh, I suppose she is another of those princesses in disguise. I must say she shows no mark of distinction. Very much like the rest of these jungle people — they all seem cast in the same die — unless, perhaps, this one is a trifle odder than the others."

Alden made no reply to these remarks. In fact he scarcely heard them. His mind was deeply absorbed.

"What is there about that child which appeals to me so? There is something in her eyes that grips me; something I have never found in a pair of eyes before. Not even —" He glanced at his wife, whose profile was turned to him while she walked by his side. "No, lovely as she is, I have never found the appeal in Tesa which I find in little Posey Murry. I wonder why —"

Ashamed of the manner in which she had spoken to Alden when he had tried to offer his sympathy, Posey walked slowly toward Aunt Sally's house. Her eyes were upon the ground.

“ It was a most awful way tu act — but what’d he want tu come up there behind me an’ grab me when I was su mad at them damn kids for? ” Suddenly she looked up. “ I don’t care. I don’t! Why ought I should? They don’t have tu like me. Mis Alden an’ ’er hifalutin’ airs! She wouldn’t o’ even noddod tu me ’f he hadn’t made ’er. Acts like she thought she was ’bout ten million miles better ’n anybody else. An’ him — well, course, he’s different — only — ” Something welled up in Posey’s heart. Her eyes again filled with tears. “ I — I do care ’bout Mr. Alden seein’ me mad. ”

Reaching Aunt Sally’s she found no one at home. Deciding she must be at her store, Posey returned to town.

Aunt Sally’s store was in a small building across the street from the post office. She sold candy and chewing gum, thread, loggers’ cotton gloves and other small articles. On Sundays and holidays, if there were enough loggers in town, she sold lemonade.

Aunt Sally had a reputation of being very unsanitary. The loggers declared she never washed the lemonade glasses between servings, and it was reported that she had been seen to lick the dust off of the candy where it lay uncovered upon the counter. However, there being no other place for miles where sweets could be purchased, these reports did not seem to interfere with her trade.

Aunt Sally was passionately fond of gossip — not only the general incidents which occurred

in the neighborhood, but anything exciting which happened in the logging camps. It mattered not whether it was humorous or tragic, so long as it satisfied her insatiable hunger for excitement.

The loggers kept her well supplied with every incident which occurred among the camps, and many which never occurred.

When Posey entered the store she found it full of loggers. Art Jackson, hook tender for Lockwood and McCoy, was leaning over the counter in very serious conversation with Aunt Sally. Art was known far and wide as being the biggest liar in any camp all up and down the river. Yet none of his tales were ever so exaggerated as to cause Aunt Sally to distrust him.

“ You say a log rolled over Perry Balmer’s leg yesterday an’ it broke off an’ run in the ground! ”

Jackson nodded.

“ Yep, that’s what I said.”

Aunt Sally stared at him as hard as her near-sightedness would permit.

“ Well, well — what’d they do ’bout it? ”

Jackson winked at those about him, but his face was deeply solemn as he looked into Aunt Sally’s blinking eyes.

“ What’d they do ’bout it? What could they do but just leave the leg there an’ pack ole Jerry out to town without it? ”

“ Tsu, tsu! Tsu, tsu! Well, fer all this world!”

Aunt Sally still suspected nothing when Jackson

got choked on his chewing gum and had to go outside for a time. When he returned he bought a pound of chocolates and passed the box around.

"Gosh, Aunt Sally, this is tame stuff fer loggers. Ain't you got a little ole Taylor or somethin' hid around somewhere?"

Aunt Sally's lips puckered tightly.

"Indeed, I hain't."

Jackson laughed.

"You know, I never could see why you didn't run a blind pig in connection with this store. When they ain't no saloons nearer than Hoquiam you ought to do good sellin' a little bootleg on the side."

Aunt Sally swelled with indignation.

"I'll have you know, Art Jackson, that I'm a Christian woman an' don't b'lieve in no such goin's on!"

Jackson held up a hand as if to shield himself from her ire.

"Oh, that's right. Sure you are. I forgot. No hard feelings now. That was merely a suggestion. But why ain't you in church right this minute?"

"I have to look after the store."

"Humph, tough luck. S'pose we close up shop and we all go to church. How does that sound? I wouldn't mind singing 'Saved by Grace' with that pretty schoolmarm at the organ."

With a designing smile Aunt Sally shook a finger at him.



“Aw, you’re a great josher, you are, Art Jackson. I’d o’ thought you’d try to make a mash on ’er yerself —”

Jackson tilted his hat back on his head.

“Not a chance in the world with all these other loggers so close. I do pretty well to get a waltz with ’er or a cowdrille on Saturday nights. But what chance has a fella got that’s twenty miles away, an’ Alden’s men just over across the river from here?”

When the loggers had departed, Posey stated her errand to Aunt Sally. Aunt Sally accepted the proposition with good grace. She was willing to relinquish all rights on the Aldens’s family washing, but with the air of a connoisseur she demanded to know if Mother McKnight was capable of filling the position.

“You know this ain’t no logger’s washin’—”

Posey nodded emphatically.

“I know it, but they ain’t no better washer on earth ’n Mother McKnight.”

Aunt Sally’s thin lips pressed tightly together.

“I ain’t so sure ’bout that.”

Posey flushed. She resented Mother McKnight’s ability being doubted. “Well, I am.”

Aunt Sally disregarded this.

“Mis Alden’s awful perticular. Wants ’er clothes wrenched through three waters. Two before the bluin’.”

“Mother McKnight’ll do all that.”

“An’ they have tu be ironed jist so.”

“Yep. Well, Mother McKnight’ll iron ’em jist so.”

“An’ fold all the flat pieces so’s the edges er right together — she’s that finicky.”

Posey was not to be discouraged.

“Umph humph. She won’t have nothin’ tu kick ’bout from Mother McKnight.”

Aunt Sally leaned over the counter and lowered her voice.

“They use napkins at their table.”

“No! All the time?”

Aunt Sally’s nearsighted eyes blinked decisively.

“All the time. Change ’em every day, too.”

Posey gasped. This seemed incredible.

“Gee, they must be most awful high-toned!”

## CHAPTER VII

Alden stepped into Tim's combined office and living quarters one morning as one of the men had come up for his time.

"Well, I got 'er made, Tim. Guess I'll bunch it."

Tim turned to the man.

"You're not going to quit now!"

"Yep. Goin' down the pike this mornin'."

"But, hell, Claude, this ain't the Fourth o' July yet. Ain't you kinda rushin' the season?"

Claude shifted a bit uncomfortably.

"Too much money burnin' in my pockets. I'm a rearin' to go on a jamboree. Anyway, if I don't git down tu Hoquiam purty soon, some other guy'll beat me to Red Rita. Can't tell nothin' 'bout that girl. Today yu got 'er an', maybe, tomorrow yu ain't."

Tim's dark Irish eyes flashed.

"You better steer clear of Red Rita. That dame's fleeced more loggers than any other woman of her kind on Gray's Harbor."

Claude smiled bitterly.

"Yeah? Well," he indicated the time book lying on the table before Tim, "make 'er out anyway — I'm gone."

He stood silently by while Tim made up his time and then wrote a check for the amount in

full owed him by the Alden Logging Works. Handing over the check, Tim smiled genially.

“There you are, Claude, old boy. When you need more money come on back.” Claude took the check and tried to hide a look of pleasure as he thrust it in his pocket. He turned to go. “Say ‘Hello’ to Old Bill in the Log Cabin for me,” Tim added. Claude nodded. As he was leaving some one hailed him in the road.

“Hey, Claude, don’t fergit tu bring somethin’ back with yu when yu come!” Knowing Alden was present and not certain that he did not know what “somethin’” meant, Claude ignored the good-natured demand and went on his way. Alden and Tim looked after him in silence. He disappeared into the bunkhouse. Presently he came out with his roll of dirty blankets.

Tim turned to Alden.

“Well, he’s off. Too much prosperity.”

“What will he do with all his money?”

“Do with it! Lord — it won’t be three days ’til Calihan at the Log Cabin Saloon — that’s Claude’s hang out — an’ Red Rita there at Sweeney’s Dance Hall in Hoquiam will have every cent of it. Likely he’ll have to borrow the dough to get back to camp on. Claude thinks he’s gone for good. They all do when they leave. They’re damn glad to get back on the job again in two weeks at the longest.”

Alden gazed thoughtfully out toward the bunkhouses.

“What an existence, Tim! When are these men going to wake up to realize the lives they are living?”

Tim laughed harshly.

“They’re not livin’, Dave. Nine loggers out o’ ten ain’t no more than a dead soul migratin’ around in the boots of a wreck of human machinery.”

Alden was silent a moment. Dreadful as it seemed, what Tim said was all too true. Suddenly an overwhelming sadness swept him.

“Tim, there must be something done! The breath of life must be restored to these men.”

Tim shook his head doubtfully.

“Maybe so. But I’ll wager it’ll take stronger men than you or me to do it, Dave.”

Tim rose and put on his coat. It was time to get out into the woods. They went outside together. Alden had started away when Tim called him back.

“Say, listen, Dave, don’t you think we’ve been usin’ this yarder for a roader an’ a loader long enough? Now that we’ve got well under way an’ cleaned up on them first forties, I b’lieve it’s about time to get a loader. We sure need one bad.”

Alden nodded.

“Yes, I know we do.”

“We can use it for a roader an’ do the loadin’. Just use the one we’ve got now for a yarder. With them two donkeys we can increase our

output half what we are doing at present. The timber we have in front of us guarantees good machinery. We don't want to try to log with a hay wire outfit, an' I never did like the idea of a line horse." Tim paused and looked at Alden inquisitively. "What do you think about it?" Alden hesitated a moment. Tim misunderstood his silence. "Well — of course, we can go on a while with the yarder. But we'll soon have to have a roader —"

"No, no. Certainly we will have to have a roader. I was just thinking — Perhaps I had better go to Aberdeen right away to see about that."

"Well, if you could manage it. I think we could go a lot faster. We can put a loadin' crew down at the landin' an' throw the yarder over on the other forty. The roader could handle the logs from the yarder an' catch some on the other landin' by using the whip line or snapper. What she can't reach we can get on our return.

"An' say, Dave, we've got to have some new line. Yesterday the men were splicin' the old line with a wire axe when I come along. The hook tender raised hell about it. Said there was so damn many jagers on that line that it wouldn't go through the bull block. We've got several eye splices and a Molly Hogan in it now."

Alden lifted his hand hastily to interrupt Tim.

"I've already ordered that line. I have twelve hundred feet of inch and a quarter coming in tomorrow."

“ Good! ” Tim started to go but paused again. “ By the way, Dave, when you’re buyin’ haul-back for your roader don’t get it too small. Nothin’ smaller than five-eighths. An’ it wouldn’t be wise to buy a cheap bull block. You want plenty of room for the chokers to run through it. See that your grease cup is big enough or it will burn up on us.”

“ Thank you, Tim, I shall see to everything.”

“ Yeah. Well, I think with the new roader we’ll be pretty well lined up for a while. When we get further back in the timber, the yarder can butt the logs down an’ the roader can put them on the landin’. An’ that reminds me — get a loader with a drum big enough to carry fifteen hundred to two thousand feet of line.”

“ I’ll do that, Tim. I’m glad you told me.”

Tim turned.

“ Well, so long.” He started away but stopped again. “ Guess you’re too late to get down town today —”

“ I think so. I’ll go down with Alvin in the morning.”

“ That’s right, Alvin does go to town for a load tomorrow. Don’t s’pose you’ll be back over to camp any more before you go —”

“ Not unless there is something you want.”

“ No, not a thing. So long.”

“ Goodbye, Tim.”

Riding beside Alvin, the teamster, over the puncheon road to Hoquiam next morning, Alden

groaned more than once as the wheels thumped over the rough places and the wagon bed came down with a crash.

"Talk about the rocky road to Dublin! I'll warrant this twenty-eight miles from Humptulips to Hoquiam holds the world's record for the most bumps per mile. Really a corduroy road is smooth as glass in comparison to this."

"Yah, it is pretty bad," said Alvin, in his soft Scandinavian accent. "Yet, I tink I haf seen vorse."

Alden shook his head and smiled dryly.

"Impossible, man."

Alvin stopped the horses a moment to take a chew of "snuss." Alden looked on in amused silence. With a satisfied gleam in his eyes Alvin rolled the snuff under his tongue, then, picking up the lines, bade the horses to move on.

"It seems it would be greatly to the interest of Gray's Harbor County to improve this road. That Humptulips country is one of the richest timber belts in the state. Then there is Quiniault and the Queets to be opened up to the north. In fact I think it would be a paying proposition to have good roads right through from the Harbor to Port Angeles."

"Dey haf surveyed along de river for a road from Hoquiam to Humptulips — a good gravel road."

"So I have heard. Well, I shall do all I can to see that it is put through at once."



Alvin nodded with a detached air. Obviously he was not especially interested in roads, whether good or bad.

“Doubtless, he has bumped over this road so long that he would be uncomfortable on a smooth road,” thought Alden. “Yet — how could he?”

The banks were closed when they got to town. Alden went over to Aberdeen and registered at the Washington Hotel. He had a shave and a shine, and bought some good cigars, from which he selected one and deposited the rest in his vest pocket. He lit his cigar and went out to make several calls before the offices closed.

The night after he had talked with Tim, Alden decided to borrow ten thousand dollars from the Hays & Hays Bank of Aberdeen. After he had gone to bed he thought the matter out and concluded it was the best plan. His six hundred and forty acres were good security. He believed he would have no difficulty in securing the loan.

“If I can just get by this first hard place, after that it will be smooth skidding, as the boys over at camp would say. And I am going to buy up all the timber I can get hold of. It is the only way to get a start.

“The ten thousand will buy that ten by fifteen Willamette loader and also pay for the new line. That will just about put me on my feet. I’ve got enough ahead for the Fourth o’ July pay roll. By that time I will be getting returns on orders filled and can begin buying timber.”

With something of an air of prestige Alden took the table which the head waitress assigned him in the dining room of the Washington that evening. He was a bit amused at his own manner.

“You aren’t getting a trifle puffed up, are you, Alden?” he asked himself, as he took out the *Chicago Blade* and scanned the headlines. He had not been satisfied with the *Aberdeen World*; he wanted some real news. “You know egotism is indication of a small mind —” He continued his self-analysis. “But this is not egotism,” his subconscious mind replied. “Just satisfaction with the beginning of the great adventure.”

The waitress came for his order. He wanted oysters. He wanted something especially good. He was in great spirits. If only Tesa were with him. But she had refused to come.

“Poor child, she said that Aberdeen was but a degree better than Humptulips. She is taking this pretty hard. I guess I made a mistake in bringing her west. It has been too much of a comedown all at once; this losing everything and then coming away out here.”

The waitress came with his oysters.

Alden noticed the man across the table from him had been watching him keenly, especially since he had taken the *Chicago Blade* from his pocket. Presently the man spoke.

“You are from Chicago, aren’t you?” Alden nodded. “Used to be with a firm of Fennel, Gustavson & Fennel, didn’t you?”

“ Yes.”

“ The minute I laid eyes on you I thought I had seen you before. I'm from old Chi, myself. Commercial traveler. Glendenning Iron Works.”

“ Oh, yes.” Alden immediately remembered the firm. He reached over and gave the stranger his hand. “ Glad to see some one from home.” The other smiled cordially.

“ Pretty lonesome burg, this, eh? — after Chicago. How do you happen to be away out here in the West? ”

“ Gone into logging up on the Humptulips.”

“ Humptulips! Good Lord, what a name. Where is it? ”

“ A trifle over thirty miles north of here.”

“ Oh, up in the big timber.”

Alden nodded.

“ How do you like it? ”

“ Fine.”

The stranger drew back from the table and studied Alden.

“ Well, a person never gets so far away but what he meets some one from home.” His eyes narrowed. “ Your firm went bump, didn't it? ”

“ Yes; lost everything, too.”

“ Humph.”

The two men were soon exchanging confidences. After dinner they spent the evening together. Once the other asked Alden what he thought of the lumberjacks.

“ Pretty rough class of men, aren't they? ”

“The loggers! Never met a finer class of men to deal with. They are rough and ready, but they are true-blue to the core. You can depend upon them. When they are your friends, they are your friends. And work! Why, if every other class of men worked like the logger, while he does work, the world would be overflowing with prosperity in no time. Those fellows just buckle in from seven in the morning until six at night with no thought of shorter hours or relief from their labors. And there isn't a harder line on earth than the one they follow; hard and exceedingly dangerous. Life in peril every moment of the day. The line might break; a tree might not fall the right way; a log might roll over them. But never a murmur. Those boys are real heroes.”

The next day Alden met with a surprise. The Hays & Hays Bank would not make him the loan.

“But I have the security. Surely six hundred and forty acres of timber is sufficient security for a loan of this size.” Alden asked to see the president. The cashier ushered him into the private office. The president, too, was adamant. Alden was amazed.

“Why, it isn't as if I were broke — I have money enough to get along with. My camp is on a paying basis. But it is necessary to put in a roader, and I wanted this loan in case I should need it for the Fourth o' July pay day. Although a logger pays his men but twice a year, it does

make it a bit hard to draw on his funds so heavily —”

“ Well, the only thing I can see for you to do is to make us up a statement.” The president opened a drawer of his desk and drew out a sheet of paper. “ Here is a blank. As soon as you have made up a statement, bring it in, and I believe we can let you have the money.”

Alden spent some time making out a correct account of his assets and his liabilities. When he had finished he returned to the bank. The president studied the statement for a time.

“ Yes, this looks all right, yet you are a stranger and, as this money is going back into the business, we will loan you the ten thousand, but will require a note with the signature of your wife and yourself —” The president paused and looked at Alden thoughtfully. “ I have heard of you, Mr. Alden. There are those who think you display a large degree of stamina when you attempt what you have with so little experience. For my part, I admire your nerve, and wish you all kinds of luck.” He smiled. “ Bring your wife in and we will draw up the note at once.”

Alden was provoked as he rode home on the mail stage next morning. He was in hopes to have settled his business without difficulty. At home he met with another surprise. Tesa refused to sign the note. She treated his request with the utmost indifference.

“ No, I will sign nothing. Haven't you carried

on this child's game long enough? Sell your timber outright and let's take the money and return to Chicago. As it is, you may play around until you lose the timber and we will be left with nothing —"

Alden was astonished.

"Tesa, what can you mean?"

"Just what I say, exactly."

"But surely you do not consider my business a child's game!"

She gave a patronizing little smile.

"I do."

"Have you no confidence in my executive ability?"

"It isn't a question of confidence in your executive ability; it is an entire lack of sympathy in the venture."

Alden was both amazed and hurt at this.

"This is no venture, Tesa. When the first axe blazed a tree over there in the woods, my mind was firmly made up that I was going to make good." He paused and eyed her narrowly. "Of course, if you are not going to help me, then I shall go on — alone."

Tesa was a trifle shocked at this outburst. It was the first time he had ever spoken to her in such a steadfast manner. Heretofore he had yielded more or less to her bidding. She was immediately too filled with self-pity to appreciate his point of view. Bewildered, she fled from the room.

Hoping there might be a way in which to induce the bank to make a loan without the note, Alden returned to town next day.

“Sorry, Mr. Alden, but we cannot do it,” said the president.

Troubled, Alden shook his head.

“Not even with the security I have —” The president eyed him keenly. “We acknowledge the fact that you have the security. And we have the money. But it must be legal.”

Alden turned to go. He felt a trifle sick at heart. Why wouldn't Tesa sign that note? Perhaps, if he had reasoned with her. Come to think of it, he had been too harsh and abrupt. It had given the poor girl a dreadful surprise.

The president of the bank called him back.

“Listen, Mr. Alden; I would like to help you. But this shoe-string logging is such a gamble. Yet I have an idea. Are you incorporated?”

Alden moved toward him.

“No.”

“Then incorporate. It is the simplest thing in the world.”

Alden looked at him as if he thought the president were joking. Besides it was absurd to think of his little “one-horse” enterprise as being a corporation. He hesitated and unconsciously retreated a few steps. The banker read his thoughts and smiled.

“Are you frightened by my suggestion?”

Alden laughed.

“ Oh, no, I’m not frightened. Even the thought of such a possibility sort of takes me off my feet.”

“ Why? ” The president paused for an instant and then went on hastily: “ I never could quite clearly understand why corporations are looked upon as something which is vast and threatening, the forerunner of certain disaster, such as thunder clouds or typhoons. The truth is that they are nothing more than combining capital and credit to carry on large business. They are in fact a wonderful protection.”

Alden listened silently while the president continued. Suddenly he had a feeling of great respect for this older and more experienced man. What he was saying was true. He wondered why he had not looked upon the matter in just this light before.

“ Corporations are just like individuals,” the president was saying. “ If the men composing them are intelligent, well informed and fair in their dealing, they are a blessing, and carry on large enterprises that otherwise, singly, they could not attempt to do. True, a corporation, like an individual, can be cold and calculating and take advantage of those in weaker circumstances. In that event they are a curse to the country, whether they be a corporation or an individual.

“ But let me say right here: were it not for corporations there would be no railroads across our American continent even to this day. There would



not be hundreds and thousands of other great enterprises for which our country is famous —”

A week later the Alden Logging Works had the legal right to sign all correspondence Alden Logging Company, Incorporated. And they boasted a capital of fifty thousand dollars.

Alden managed to get Tesa's acceptance to sign the corporation papers upon receipt of ten thousand dollars' worth of shares in the new company, and a promise that at any time she desired to go East she would be free to sell her shares outright to the company.

The principal stockholder of the Alden Logging Company, Incorporated, was David Alden. The next in importance, although far down on the margin of the stock, was Tim McAvoy.

## CHAPTER VIII

In a little clearing out in the woods, Posey lay upon her back looking upward where summer clouds floated lazily in the disk of sky that was visible among that wall of trees. While she lay there brooding dreamily she thought of what Mother McKnight had once said when Posey and she sat in her yard one sunny afternoon:

“Our life is like that sky. It really is awfully big and broad but, because there is so much between us, so many little immaterial things, and what it actually is, it is hid from us; like the sky is hid from the timber. We think there isn't any change going on in our lives from day to day. We think we're just going on living the same from one day to the next, year in and year out. We can't notice what is going on right before our eyes because, like the clouds up there, the movements are so slow.”

But while she reflected, Posey was conscious that a change had come into her life. It dated back to the first day she had met David Alden. As the thought of him came swimming up into her conscious mind, Posey closed her eyes as if she feared that even this mere thought of one whom she cherished so dearly might escape into the intangible glory of the day.

Suddenly a tremendous impulse seized her. She jumped to her feet and gazed intensely out into the woods. The dreamy mood left her. She wanted to shout, to dance, to gallop across the clearing and plunge into the thicket and bury her face in the cool moss on the ground. She walked over to a fallen log and, leaning against it, looked long and earnestly up into the trees.

She became calm again. It was nice to be out there in the woods alone. Mother McKnight said she often went out all by herself into the forest to commune with nature.

“Guess that’s what makes ’er different than other folks ’round here. She says people don’t live near ’nough tu nature. Says we ought to take a few hours at least every week an’ jist go right out into the woods an’ set down on a log an’ jist forgit ever’thing. She says it ’ud do us as much good as goin’ tu church er readin’ the Bible er prayin’.” Posey frowned thoughtfully. “Well, I guess it’d be all right. It sure has made a most awful grand woman o’ her. I’m goin’ tu try it sometime myself —

“Mr. Alden calls Mother McKnight the little woman who lives by the road an’ is a friend to man. He tole me a story one day ’bout a woman that was like that. He says Mother McKnight has a beautiful soul. I don’t know jist exactly what a soul is, but whatever it is — I bet he’s got it too —”

A robin darted out of the forest and settled

upon a bush near her. Posey watched him as he chirped and looked at her defiantly; as if daring her to try to catch him. Presently he flew away and she noted the splash of gay coloring he made against the deep green of the trees. The woods were alive with the song of birds. Bees and insects hummed about her. Squirrels and chipmunks chattered. A rabbit hopped out of the underbrush and, seeing Posey, dove back into the thicket. She watched the rustle of the leaves where the little animal had made its escape. There was something vitally interesting about these dwellers of the forest.

Something in the absolute harmony of everything about her reminded her of the contrast between this and her own home. It came to her that one might learn a great lesson in not only beauty but also system and cleanliness, in the methodical way in which nature went about its work of purification and growth. Posey's mind was susceptible to the influence of good about her that day. But instead of it appealing to loftier ideals, the welfare of her spirit, it whipped her into action regarding her neglect of material things.

Scarcely conscious of what she was doing, she rushed out of the woods and sped along the path which led to her home. Arriving there, she immediately lighted the fire and set a kettle of water on the stove to heat. She looked about her in disgust at the table still standing with the

unwashed breakfast dishes, the beds left just as they had been when her father and she had crawled out of them that morning, the floor littered with several weeks' accumulation of dirt.

"Damned ole shack! Bet I'll make it look like somethin' fer once," she muttered as she started a violent assault upon the interior of it. "Maybe 'f I hurry I c'n swamp 'er out 'fore Pa gits here."

Going outside she brought in a shovel and a pail to scoop up the splinters and bark chips from about the stove, the potato peelings, bread crumbs and bits of rags that littered the shack from one end to the other.

The Murry home was but one room and an attic, which was accessible only by a none-too-secure-appearing ladder. The meager furnishings were almost entirely homemade, with the exception of an old and battered chest of drawers that came from no one knew where. All Posey knew was that it had been her mother's. Now the drawers were quite empty. They were for clothes, but Posey and her father had no clothes to put in them. They were, however, a splendid haunt for wood rats in which to hide their loot.

The stove was merely a makeshift, rusted until it threatened to crumble into a heap of wreckage, the fire box burned out until the ashes fell into the oven.

But Posey was not at all discouraged this day as she snatched the worn broom from its corner

and proceeded to sweep; not only the middle of the floor but also under her father's bed and her own rickety cot. Presently she discovered that the table was uncovered and the dust was flying in a cloud. Jerking the much soiled dish towel from the clothesline, she spread it over the food and the unwashed breakfast dishes. This disturbed the flies which had been congregated about the sugar bowl. They buzzed furiously about the table until Posey shooed them through the open door.

By the time she had finished sweeping, the scrub water was hot. She splashed the hot suds over the floor and scoured it about with the broom with long vehement strokes, as if it were the floor's fault that it was so filthy and she was punishing it. She was in the middle of this when her father appeared in the door.

Posey was surprised. He had come home early. She looked up at him and was going to smile a welcome. The smile froze into a look of horror. He was rip roaringly drunk.

Old Cap Murry could drink whiskey all day and still keep on his feet. And his tongue never got thick. But whiskey made him want to fight. As the loggers said: "When Ole Cap gits soused, he wants to clean up on some one." All the "old timers" knew enough to keep out of his way when he was intoxicated. Consequently Posey was the one on whom he satisfied his desire for fight.

The situation was painful. If she stayed away

while he was drinking, he whipped her for neglecting her duty to him. If she stayed home she was whipped anyway. She knew the moment he appeared in the door that evening that this was going to be one of his bad times.

Steadying himself carefully he came into the house. He stood for a time looking sullenly about him. His eyes fell upon the littered table. Then he turned to the stove. There was no evidence of the preparation of a meal. This angered him. He scowled darkly at Posey.

“Why ain’t supper ready?”

Posey paused in her scrubbing.

“Yer home early, Pa.”

He had not noticed the mop pail and the wet floor before.

“What the hell yu tryin’ tu do?” He indicated the pail.

Posey smiled nervously.

“I — I was a swampin’ out the ole shack.”

He moved toward the pail of hot suds and gave it a kick, which overturned it, and the soapy water poured out upon the floor.

“Why the devil didn’t yu do that this mornin’? I want my supper.”

“But I thought I had lots o’ time. Yu usually ain’t home by this time, Pa.” Posey wiped her wet hands on the front of her dress.

“Ain’t no difference when I’m home. How long ’v I tole yu tu allus have somethin’ ready case I do come?” He looked at the table. “There’s

the damn dishes left jist like they wuz this mornin'! Where the hell yu been all day?"

"I had tu take the Aldens's washin' home fer Mother McKnight."

"Tu hell with Mother McKnight an' 'er washin'! Why wuzn't yu home lookin' after yer own work?" He dropped heavily into a chair. "Yer allus runnin' after her an' doin' thanky jobs fer 'er."

Posey paused in her scrubbing and looked up at him.

"I ain't. She pays me a little —" Posey had no more than said this when she regretted it. Her father did not know that Mother McKnight gave her some compensation for the help she was only too glad to give.

He straightened up suddenly and eyed her as shrewdly as his whiskey-numbed mind would permit.

"What'd yu do 'ith the money?"

Posey hesitated.

"Payin' Ed Seldon on our grocery bill —"

"The hell yu are."

"An' — an' I'm a wantin' a new dress."

Old Cap rose angrily. He shot a warning finger out at her.

"Don't begin that agin. Yu know what happened last time. C'm on git me some supper."

Posey wanted to finish her scrubbing, but she knew it was useless to argue with him. She hastened about warming up the cold boiled



potatoes and cooking a pot of coffee. A number of times she cast covert glances at him where he sat with his eyes stupidly cast downward. A wave of disgust swept her. How long was she going to be getting meals ready for a drunken father? She had hoped that what Tim McAvoy had prophesied was true. Now she accepted her disappointment with something of the stoic manner of the fatalist. As she moved about, her heart felt like a heavy sodden lump which hung in her breast.

When she placed the meal before him, her father looked at it sullenly for a moment and then shoved the plate of potatoes away.

“Where’s the meat?”

“They ain’t none.”

He looked at her as if he did not believe her.

“Where’s the meat?” he repeated, in a loud voice.

“I tell yu they ain’t none.”

“Mean tu say yu wuz over tu Humptulips today an’ never got none, yu fool!”

“Ed ain’t trustin’ us fer no more meat ’til we pay fer what we already bought. He says ’f yu c’n pay them fellers what yu borried money from, yu c’n pay ’im somethin’ too.”

Old Cap leaned over the table and leered at her.

“Yer a damn liar. He never said no sech thing.”

This angered Posey. She was warned of the coming storm, but her rebellious little spirit did not heed the warning. Her eyes flashed.

“ I ain’t! Don’t yu call me a liar, neither.”

Old Cap pushed his chair back and rose from the table. Posey knew all too well what was his intent. She knew that he intended to beat her before he started for the woodpile. Her anger turned to fright.

“ No! No! Pa, don’t do that! I’m tellin’ yu the truth. Honest! Don’t lick me, Pa. I—I can’t stand it.”

He did not heed her pleading. Picking up a stick of wood he advanced toward her.

“ Yu got tu stand it, ’til yu learn tu quit sassin’. I’m yer father. Yer goin’ tu mind me, if I have tu lick hell out o’ yu tu learn yu —”

Something about his grotesquely twisted features revolted Posey. The fear and hate she always felt for him when he was intoxicated returned to her, this time more bitter than ever before. She felt she could not endure to have his cruel hands touch her. Back in her subconscious mind rose revolt which was more poignant than her fear. In that moment Posey knew that she would never plead with her father again. She would demand.

“ Don’t yu dare touch me, Pa!” she cried.

If this daring bravado surprised him, Old Cap showed no signs of it. He paid no attention to her demand. He made a dash for her, but missed his aim. Posey was near the stove. There was a kettle of boiling water sitting over the fire. She reached for it.

“ If — if yu come any closer, Pa, I’ll throw this on yu as sure as there’s a hell! I’ve took yer lickin’s fer the last time.” But she was too late. As her fingers closed on the handle of the kettle, Old Cap brought the stick of wood down across one of her shoulders.

“ God damn yu, yu would, would yu!” He hurled her out into the room. “ We’ll see who’ll do the scaldin’.” He reached for the kettle. Posey screamed. Somehow in dragging it off of the stove, the water upset and poured all over the stove and streamed down upon the floor. Posey fled to the back of the room but he started for her a second time. Dizzy and sick from the blow he had given her, she looked about her for a means of escape, but her father was between her and the door.

She was cornered. Hate it as she might, if she would save herself from another beating, perhaps more violent than she had ever received because she had attempted to fight back, she must plead. Crazy with drink, the sweat pearling out upon his forehead, her father advanced toward her.

“ Pa — oh, Pa, don’t!” she begged. “ Pa, don’t beat me, jist this one time, Pa! Fer God’s sake —”

Something about what she had said caused old Cap to pause. The repulsive look that came into his eyes was now anger mingled with contempt. Filled with disgust, for an instant he seemed to forget his first motive.

“ Hunh — call on yer God, will yu!” His lips curled scornfully. “ Yu make me sick, callin’ on yer God — They ain’t no sech thing.” Horror swept Posey. This denial of a Supreme Being was more terrible than the assault upon her. She too forgot his first intent.

“ But — but there is, Pa. Ma learned me ’bout ’im —”

At the mention of her mother’s name Old Cap’s face went white with rage.

“ Yer Ma, eh! Want tu know what she wuz —” He shrugged his shoulders hatefully. “ An’ yer goin’ tu be jist like ’er — you — bitch!”

Like the rush of water released from the dam in the river when the men opened it for a “ splash,” all the venom that had accumulated from years of cruelty from her father surged through Posey. And yet with this there came a certain clarification. Something momentous told her that her life with her father had ended. The name he had just called her was the key which opened the flume planks of her mind. She knew all too well the terrible definition that that word implied among loggers.

Had she a gun, in that moment of blind fury she might have killed him. She had no gun and he was coming toward her again. As he had always done, he would try to beat her into submission.

She must escape! She could not reach the door, but she was near enough the window.

Snatching the nearest chair she smashed the glass and sprang through the particles of flying slivers to the ground below.

It was still light enough outside so that she had no difficulty in seeing. As she fled through the woods she could hear her father's curses. He was following her. But Posey was too fleet-footed. His age and his condition prevented him from catching up with her. He soon returned to the shack grunting to himself:

"She'll be back. She allus does."

Posey did not go back. While she sped down the road the pain in her shoulder where he had struck her was so acute that it made her despair more bitter. However, she hurried on until she was certain that she was safe. After a time she stopped. She knew that she was far enough away that if she heard him coming she could dart into the brush.

Posey did not know where she was going, but she did know that she was leaving home. The night air soothed her aching temples and her faculties began to return to her.

She could not go to Mother McKnight, because her father would come and make her return home. In fact most any place she went, he would come after her. What should she do! She beat her breast in dismay.

"But — but I won't go back to Pa if I have to kill myself. I will kill myself," she declared with the utter abandon of youth. Hot tears filled her

eyes and rolled down upon her cheeks. She looked up into the patch of darkening sky visible against the deeper shadows of the forest.

“ Oh, God, what will I do! Surely this ain't life. Ain't they somethin' better somewhere than livin' with a father that beats hell 'out o' yu ever' time he gits soused? ” In the midst of her misery, for some strange reason, she recalled Mother McKnight's words that day when they sat in her cozy little parlor: “ This is the kingdom of man — kingdom of man. ” Her heart wretched and forlorn, Posey symbolized the community, the forest, the whole narrow world which was within her radius by her own grievance.

“ No. No. No. It ain't a kingdom! ” she cried. “ It ought o' should be, but it ain't — It's a hell hole! ”

BOOK II.  
THE GREAT URGE





## CHAPTER IX

The moment David Duncan Alden, Junior, set his eyes on Posey Murry it was most emphatically a case of love at first sight. Dunny did not question Posey's race, color or previous servitude. He accepted her, and from all appearances, gladly, for what she was. He kicked his small heels together, crowed, and made a dash for her mop of flaming hair.

It might have been this mop of flaming hair, glowing like a torch, which attracted him at once. Yet it might have been that, regardless of his brief age, which could not quite boast a full calendar year, young Duncan had a mind of his own and recognized a kindred spirit in this girl with the glowing hair and the midnight-black eyes.

Posey came upon the baby the next morning after she had so unauthoritatively taken up her abode in the Alden home. While he lay sleeping peacefully in his crib the night before, he knew nothing of the forlorn little creature who had come bravely to his father's house at a late hour and looking into his mother's cold eyes had said: "I — I heard yer hired girl left, Mis Alden. I've come tu take 'er place."

As if some unseen friend had heard her cry out there in the darkness and led her to safety, Posey

had thought of Alden and had come straight to him for help. He was the one friend who could shield her from her father. Too independent to ask for help, she had posed as a maid.

Mrs. Alden still slept. She had told Posey that all she need do that first morning, until she rose to show her, was to keep up the fires and bring the baby downstairs when he woke. Tesa had left his breakfast all ready prepared and had given Posey strict directions just how to warm his milk.

Posey's coming had been something of a god-send. She had been without a maid for several days. Rising on her dignity over some small misunderstanding, Emma had walked out one morning with a last retort that "Anyone that wanted to live in the jumpin' off place 'til they got queer, could do so." As for herself, she intended to go back to Chicago on the first train that would get her there! She would not even wait for the mail stage next day. She hired Aunt Sally Mullen's husband to drive her to town in his rickety old buckboard.

"Laws-e-e, must o' wanted to go bad enough," said Aunt Sally. "Paid Lym ten whole dollars in advance for gettin' 'er there."

Posey waited in silent awe for Dunny to awaken. She was curious to see the Alden baby. She was not well acquainted with babies of any sort but, from what Aunt Sally had told her, she believed that little Duncan Alden was an exceptionally attractive infant. She was eager for the proof of it.

When she picked him up and bore him down-

stairs, Posey felt as thrilled as a bashful young lover after his first kiss. He clung to her confidently, and the touch of his warm little body against hers filled her with a new and heretofore unknown joy. She carried him into the kitchen. Sitting down before the range she held him while she fed him his breakfast, a task which was by no means an easy one to perform. Several times he grasped his bottle and swung it threateningly in the air. Posey rescued it and twice he dared to throw it upon the floor before she learned that she could not trust him to manipulate it alone.

The bottle finished, he lay back contentedly upon her arm. Posey studied his little pink and white face, still flushed from sleep, his large grey eyes so like his father's. She smiled down upon him and his eyes twinkled.

“Gee, kid, b'lieve you an' me's goin' tu hit it off purty good,” she confided. Dunny smiled his agreement to this. Posey frowned seriously. “I'm sure in a most awful fix. I had the nerve tu tell yer mother last night that I'd come tu be 'er hired girl — 'er maid. I was su mad then that I didn't 'member that I don't know nothin' 'bout work. I wouldn't go back fer nothin' in the world, but now that I'm here — Lordy Moses, I'm jist scared tu death! I'm as scared o' yer mother as ole Paddy Higgens is scared o' ghosts. Aunt Sally tole me long ago how perticular she is —” Posey sighed. “Geemently whiz, an' me not knowin' the first damn thing 'bout nothin' —” Posey bit her lip.

“ I got tu cut this cussin’ ’er she’ll send me back tu my ole man. If she did, it ’ud serve me right—”

While Posey continued Duncan crowed merrily and, watching her lips, tried to twist his own around to form the words she said. They had an amazingly pleasant visit for the first time and a promise of many more just like it.

At ten o’clock Aunt Sally Mullen came in. She was cooking at the Aldens’s; at least until they could get someone else. Finding Posey in the kitchen with the baby on her lap, Aunt Sally was very much surprised.

“ Well, fer the love o’ the Lord, Posey, what you doin’ here? ”

Posey looked up at her frankly.

“ I’m goin’ tu work fer Mis Alden.”

“ What! ”

“ Yes.”

“ Fer how long? ”

“ Ferever.”

Aunt Sally looked at her dubiously.

“ What’ll yer pa say? ”

Posey’s eyes flashed.

“ Don’t give a — a — a care what ’e says.”

Aunt Sally eyed her narrowly.

“ What’s matter ’ith you an’ yer pa? ”

Posey did not reply for a moment.

“ Nothin’,” she said presently.

“ I know better. You wouldn’t leave yer pa fer nothin’. He’s gone an’ got drunk an’ licked yu agin’ — ”

Posey was silent. Tears sprang to her eyes, but she forced them back. Aunt Sally noted this and did not urge her further. Taking out a long gingham apron from the basket she had brought with her, she tied it about her ample waist.

“ Well, I’m glad it had to come at last,” she said, as she began to move about the kitchen. She lifted a lid and looked into the stove. She gave the fire a poke. “ I been lookin’ fer yu to leave home fer a long time.” She did not look toward Posey as she picked up several sticks of wood from the woodbox and put them upon the blaze. She placed the lid back on with a clatter and then turned to Posey. “ Mis Alden’s awful strict — I want tu tell yu that ’fore yu begin — but she’ll learn yu a heap. An’ if you’ll mind ’er she’ll make a woman out o’ yu.”

Posey helped Aunt Sally put out the daily wash. She pared vegetables and assisted with other preparations of the noon meal.

When Tesa came down she wore a negligée; the most beautiful garment Posey had ever seen. She could not refrain from stealing covert glances at the soft pale-blue gown with its broad satin sash and the fine lace at the wrists and throat. She trembled at this loveliness and became conscious of her own shabbiness.

She helped Tesa with the baby’s bath; running here and there on errands; the castile soap, another towel from upstairs, the talcum powder, a fresh bib.

Posey was astounded that such a tiny person could require so much waiting on. However, she had immediately become a willing slave to Dunny, and every step she took was like fleeing upon wings of joy. Even when he twisted up his little face and howled resentment because he could not spend the day in his bathtub, she was not disappointed or disillusioned in him.

“Don’t s’pose the poor little devil knows any better,” she concluded to herself.

Taking Posey upstairs, Tesa searched about in a closet until she brought out a worn but clean and mended dress that Emma had left behind. She handed it to Posey.

“I think perhaps this will fit you.” Posey put it on. The dress was quite large for her, but it answered the purpose. “We will send to town and get you some dresses,” Tesa added. She looked critically at Posey’s hair, which she had tried to comb as neatly as she knew how that morning. “You will be all right until the cleaning is done, but right after lunch you must get into the tub and clean yourself from tip to toe. I’ll give you some shampoo for your hair.” Posey looked up at her eagerly.

“But — but my hair ain’t su awful dirty, Mis Alden. An’ I’ve been keepin’ my neck an’ ears clean since —” She hesitated. “Fer quite a long while now —” The seriousness of her face amused Tesa. She suppressed a smile as she looked down into Posey’s beaming eyes.

Before Posey went to work she decided it was the best plan to have an immediate understanding.

“ I’m most awful dumb, Mis Alden. I don’t know nothin’ ’bout workin’ fer a woman su particular as yu be — but — but I’m willin’ tu try tu do anything yu want tu learn me.”

“ You must say teach,” Tesa unconsciously corrected.

“ Anything yu teach me, then —”

Tesa nodded.

“ That is better. If you are willing to learn, that is all that is necessary.”

When Posey had gone off downstairs Tesa wondered why she had consented to take Posey in when she had come to them so unexpectedly the night before. Now she reprimanded herself for having done so.

“ Heavens, perhaps I have gotten myself into a dreadful dilemma,” she thought, as she stopped a moment before her open window and looked off toward the horizon of the forest. “ Who knows? ” She looked absently down at a robin swinging on the wind-blown limb of a bush nearby. “ Neither of us could get any information out of her last night. She was in trouble, but she would not talk of it. Dave thinks, from what he has heard, it must have been with her father. Of course, he was all sympathy at once and insisted that we should give her refuge. Somehow I don’t feel right about it; if for no other reason than because she is such raw material.”

Tesa left the window and was busy for a time

arranging clean lingerie in her dresser drawers.

“ Dave gloats in the raw material of these jungle people. Sometimes I really believe he prefers them. He seems to think he is going to work wonders with them.” Tesa sighed deeply. “ Oh, why did I ever make the mistake to marry a man of this type? Father and Mother were right. They saw my mistake and tried to break off the engagement before we were married. They wanted me to marry Horace Wainright.” She looked about her in dismay. “ Now if I had married Horace, instead of being away out here at the end of the earth, I would still be in Chicago and on such a basis socially and financially as I was before my marriage. As it is — Oh, dear — ”

Tesa dropped miserably into a chair.

“ Dave actually admitted that he was glad Father lost everything and we were put upon our own resources. How horrid of him! ” She clenched her hands tightly together. “ If Father and Mother only knew how wretched I am! I tried to keep up for their dear sakes and strove to assure them, before I left, that I was really glad to come West with my husband. But even then how I longed to throw myself into their arms and cling to them! ” Tesa rose and paced up and down the room for a time.

“ I do not love Dave. I don't! I don't! Even his kindness repulses me. But what am I to do? What a miserable situation! Married to a man you do not love and to have one child by him and soon



another to be —” There came a tap on the door. Tesa turned. “ Yes.”

“ Mis Alden, I did ever’thing yu tole me tu do. What do yu want did next? ”

Tesa tried to collect her frenzied thoughts. What did she want done next?

“ You may scrub both porches and the steps,” she returned hastily, “ and rake the back yard.”

“ All right, Mis Alden.” Posey’s heavy footsteps could be heard clumping down the stairs.

“ ‘ What do yu want did next? ’ Such English!” Tesa frowned. “ Heavens, that alone is maddening. These people up here seem to try to make an effort to see how ridiculously they can speak.” She paused. “ And Dave thinks I am going to rear our children in this atmosphere. Never! ”

When Tesa went downstairs she was horrified by the mis-arrangement of the living room. She had told Posey to do the dusting and place everything back in order. It now appeared as if Posey had intentionally picked up each article and put it in the wrong place. At noon when Alden came in from the woods Tesa told him of it.

“ But this is just the beginning, Tesa. You will have to give the child time. Remember she does not know the first word of law and order — ”

Tesa’s eyebrows lifted.

“ One need not be told that.”

Alden resented the irony of her voice.

“ You must have patience. Posey does want to learn.”

Tesa shrugged.

“ Why should I have patience? What do I owe this crude, uncultured child? ” She lowered her voice to make sure she would not be heard.

Alden was silent a moment.

“ I suppose no more than any of us owe our fellowmen. ”

Tesa's lip curled.

“ You are referring to the eternal question: ‘ Am I my brother's keeper? ’ ”

Rocking back and forth on his heels and toes, Alden smiled.

“ Possibly. ”

This provoked Tesa.

“ I do not feel obligations so keenly as some. ”

A painful look came into his eyes.

“ I have noted that, Tesie — ”

Ignoring this, she went on:

“ There are some things one owes to oneself. ”

He nodded.

“ Most assuredly, dear. ”

“ Is it not enough that I am obliged to live among these crudely speaking and crudely living people, without having to come into personal contact with them? ”

Alden turned toward the dining room.

“ Oh, come, Tesie, let us not go into that again. I am famished and I must eat and get back to camp. I should have eaten at the cookhouse, but I had to come over on an errand. ”

Through the dining-room window they could see

Posey under a maple tree in the back yard. She was beside Dunny, who sat in his buggy and looked about him with a satisfied air. Alden smiled, and could not conceal his pleasure at the picture Posey made as she stood looking worshipingly down upon the baby. He turned from the window and moved toward the table.

“ She and Dunny seem to be getting along swimmingly. If for nothing else, Posey will be a great help in the care of him — ”

They sat down and Tesa began serving the salad. They ate their lunch in silence.

Aunt Sally had gone out to sit down a moment on the back steps. It was hot and stuffy in the kitchen. Posey drew the baby buggy over to the porch and sat down beside her. She jerked a thumb toward the dining-room window.

“ Why don't we eat with them? ”

Aunt Sally looked at her as if shocked by her ignorance.

“ Hired help never eat with the people they're workin' for. ”

This seemed an incredible surprise to Posey.

“ Why? ”

“ 'Cause they're not big bugs; they're servants. ”

“ Yu mean servants ain't good as big bugs? ”

“ Well, in a way they ain't — no. If yer a servant yu ain't got no money. An' if yu ain't got money yu ain't a high-muckamuck. See? ” She looked at Posey critically.

Posey shook her head.

“ No, I don't see.”

“ Mother McKnight told you how they do in big cities — them high-toned, way-up people —”

“ Yes, but — ” Posey was sorely puzzled.

“ But what? ”

“ Some way I didn't think Mr. Alden was like that.”

Aunt Sally sniffed.

“ Maybe, he ain't — but Mis Alden runs this house.”

## CHAPTER X

Loggers, like homing birds, follow the same flock. The Alden Logging Works was not operating many months before the "old timers" began to appear and hit Tim up for a job. Like homing birds they also have a leader. Tim McAvoy was the leader of these men. Wherever Tim went, the old timers went.

Tim had been foreman for a company which, some months before Alden started up, had closed down because of lack of funds. This had scattered the old bunch. They had gone hither and yon. Some to the upper Humptulips, some went over on the Wishkah and others even migrated as far as Puget Sound to work in camps near Seattle and Tacoma.

But even in deep timber sections news travels fast. It was not long before the old crew began to drop in one by one. Among the first were old Dan, the cook, Alvin, the teamster, Frank Jerome, Sky Pilot, Hoggens, the poet. Then came Johnny Moran, Happy Lenon and Claude, Buck Nevin, George Albers, known as old Sours, and Mother Molly a man of large proportions who got his name from being an adept with a needle.

Preferring to live alone — which was another reason for his being labeled with a feminine nick-

name — he would not live in the bunkhouse with the men, neither would he share his shack with another — Mother Molly spent all his leisure hours embroidering artistic designs upon doilies, sofa pillows, bureau scarfs and bed spreads. These articles, worked in gaily-colored silk thread, were the talk of the women folk for miles around.

There was a group of the older men who had followed logging from its earliest infancy in the West, to the present. Among these were Frank Hymer, Paddy McTigh, Jim McGovern, Mike Higgins and a number of others who boasted of remembering the great forests of western Washington when they stood unblazed from the Canadian line to Portland, Oregon, and from Easton to the Coast.

“Them were the days,” they often said reminiscently. “You fellers kick 'bout yer grub now. Hell, we thought we was lucky then if we had a little salt pork an' boiled beans under our belt. Maybe we had bread an' spuds an' maybe we didn't. Fresh meat was a thing unknown unless some lad would kill a deer or an elk. You young fellers don't know the first real thing 'bout loggin'.

“Logged then with a capstan an' horses an' bull teams, wheels an' sleds. Thought we was cuttin' a great splurge. You now with your big donkey engines! Sometimes two or three of 'em!” Their lips would curl disdainfully as if they envied progress or else coveted the good old days.

These older men lived in the past. Scarcely an evening went by that they did not get together in the bunkhouse after supper and go over old remembrances.

Paddy McTigh and Jim McGovern had worked as "pardners" away back in Michigan before America knew the promise of the great virgin forests of the West. Sucking at his old corn-cob pipe, or a clay pipe if he could get it, Paddy would give his old "pardner" a slap on the back as a sort of introductory announcement that they were going back into the old times, when they were two stalwart young Irishmen who could hold their own with the biggest husky in the woods.

"Do yez remimber, Jim, the time I come so near losin' me leg an' yez grabbed me jist 'fore the log hit me?"

Jim's watery eyes glistened like sunshine on a dewdrop.

"Could I iver fergit the toime, Paddy?"

While they continued, Frank Hymer, sitting quietly by, would edge in an occasional word. Mike Higgens, with a face which substantiated the Darwinian theory, joined these reminiscences with childish zest.

Paddy McTigh and Jim McGovern's friendship was not always smooth sailing. On religious matters they differed vastly. Paddy was a North of Ireland Protestant. Jim was a South of Ireland Catholic. Paddy, being the best talker, always won out in their religious arguments. But he never

changed Jim's religious views. Ordinarily the matter remained suspended between Paddy's struggle to win Jim over and Jim's determination that he was not going to be won. The hottest arguments usually rose when some one had come in from town with a fresh supply of old Taylor.

True to his companion's prophecy, Claude returned to town, several weeks after his departure, that morning. Claude was stone broke, but he had managed to bring in a few quarts of liquor. Frank Jerome, also absent for nearly a month, had returned on the Humptulips stage the same evening with Claude. Between the two of them there was a goodly supply of whiskey that night. Before long it began to look as if the crew would run about fifty per cent short the following day.

Fortunately Tim appeared upon the scene in time to save the situation. Tim knew how urgent the work was right at that particular moment. There was an especial order to be gotten out and they would not get it out any too soon if every man put in full time. As soon as he entered the bunk-house he saw what was going on.

“ Here, you fellows, lay off on that stuff. Ever' fellow in this camp's got to be on the works tomorrow; big head or no big head — ”

Paddy McTigh and Jim McGovern were doing most of the drinking. Even then they were indifferent to their foreman's demands. They behaved like a pair of reckless boys. While Tim was talking to the filer, Paddy turned to Jim.



“ Jim McGovern, I like yez.” Paddy put an arm around Jim’s neck and gripped him as if Jim’s neck were a lamp-post. “ Yez are a good ole stiff, Jim. Only yez come from the South o’ Ireland an’ yez don’t think right.” Paddy shot a covert glance at Tim. Tim’s back was turned. Paddy passed the old Taylor to Jim. “ Now, Jim, ’ave another drink.” He lowered his voice. “ I’ll give yez a drink because I know I could always have a drink off o’ yez.” He reached over and patted the bottle affectionately. “ I paid Claude a dollar six bits fer that, Jim, but yez are welcome to a drink of it — What’s yours is mine an’ what’s mine is me own.” Paddy laughed boisterously at the repetition of the old jest.

With a rapid glance at Tim, Jim tipped the bottle to his lips and prepared for a long swig of Paddy’s old Taylor. Paddy grasped at it greedily.

“ ’Ere, ’ere, Jim! Fer the love o’ the Virgin Mary; I said yez c’d ’ave a drink. I didn’t say yez c’d ’ave it all.” As he took the bottle away, Jim looked slightly wounded.

“ Didn’t ye jist git through sayin’ that ye knew ye could always git a drink o’ me, Paddy? ”

“ I wouldn’t be askin’ yez fer the whole bottle, Jim.”

Jim’s features softened affectionately.

“ But ye could ’ave, Paddy.”

“ No! ”

“ Ye bet ye could. I’m the best friend ye got, Paddy, an’ ye don’t know it. That’s why I want

ye to git right agin with the Holy Father, Paddy. Ye're sorry, Paddy, the way ye talked there while ago, ain't ye? Ye know that if yer poor ole mother knew the way ye was talkin' tonight, she'd turn over in her grave. I — I wouldn't blame 'er. Fer I don't think much of a man that'll turn from 'is church an' the teachin's o' his childhood — ”

Paddy resented this. He looked sternly at Jim.

“ Jim, yez 'ave gone far 'nough. Ever' time yez gits a few drinks in yez, yez gits brave an' starts arg'ein'. I want to tell yez right now that we've arg'ed as fer as we're goin' to arg'e.” Paddy gave Jim a shove with his elbow. “ Now git away from me. I feel fer fight, an' I don't want to 'ave to fight wid yez agin — ”

Jim knew that Paddy was in truth looking for a fight. He knew that Paddy took to fighting like old Ben, the line horse, took to chewing tobacco. Jim chuckled when he thought of old Ben following the men about the woods nudging them for a chew of tobacco. As always he changed the subject with a joke for a humorous remembrance. Soon Paddy was laughing again.

“ Say, Jim, do yez remimber the time we was talkin' on the same question there in the Log Cabin down in Hoquiam? ” Paddy said presently. Jim sighed. This night his effort was in vain. He made no reply. Paddy continued. “ We was settin' by the stove. The bartinder, a young buck, thought 'e was 'avin' a pile o' fun 'out 'n us — Well, remimber we got to fightin' an' in the tussle

we knocked the stove over. The stove pipe flew apart an' 'fore it landed anywhere it cut enough biscuits out'n our heads to serve with a first-rate mulligan; if an Irishman's scalp would make good biscuits.

"It interfered wid the fight that time, Jim, but I'd already licked yez, Jim, an' I c'd lick yez agin only," Paddy looked at the stove which was dangerously near, "only I don't want no more biscuits cut out'n me head." He paused and stretched lazily. "Well, I'll quit now. I'll say good night to yez."

Tucking his bottle of old Taylor under his arm, Paddy rose and crossed the room. Taking off his shoes he rolled into his bunk. In a few moments he was sound asleep. Jim looked after Paddy in disgust. Mumbling something about "Did ye iver see sich a hell uv a fella—" he too rose and retired.

Alvin came in. The first person he saw was Frank Jerome.

"Vell, hello, Yerome. Ven did you git back? Couldn't stay away, coold yu? Ven yu vas goin' down vid me dat day yu said dat Skikomish vas callin' yu. Didn't she vant yu after all?"

Jerome paced up and down the bunkhouse several times; jerking his long legs nervously. Presently he paused before the stove.

"Nothin' doin' in that burg. Didn't have a decent game while I was there. Ever'body's dead. No kale. Forgot all 'bout how tu play cards —"

He was asked if he got the pair of shoes he went after.

It was habitual among loggers that, when they could not find a better excuse to get to town, they claimed that they needed a new pair of shoes. Jerome looked guiltily down at his feet.

“ No, I didn't git the shoes. 'F I had I'd o' lost 'em. S'pose a guy c'd sleep 'round Hoquiam or Aberdeen with a new pair o' shoes an' hold 'em? ”

Happy Lenon spoke up.

“ I'll say he didn't git new shoes. He's been workin' all afternoon cobblin' up the old ones.” Happy laughed.

Jerome looked at him sullenly.

“ Never mind, Happy, that's 'nough out o' you.” He flushed. “ I'll soon make 'er again. An' yu'll see next time I go to town I'll not do like I done this trip. Them sports ain't goin' to git my money so easy next time.”

Alvin whistled softly.

“ Dat's vat ve all say ven ve coom back, Yerome. But ve don't tink dat ven ve go away. Ve are yust sech good sports dat ve are villing to 'spend our mooney at de ba' an' shleep in de ba'n.' ” Everybody laughed at this from Alvin, given in his dry Scandinavian wit.

Taking out his knife Happy picked up a stick of kindling to cut himself a toothpick from it.

“ Goin' down there myself tomorrow. Can't stand 'er any longer. I want you fellas to take care o' Peggy when I'm gone.”

“ Ha — Happy an’ his cat! Why don’t yu take ’er ’long with yu? ” he was asked.

“ Can’t. Peggy ain’t in no fit condition to travel — ” This brought an uproar from those about him, but he continued seriously: “ Want you fellas to take good care of ’er.” He smiled vaguely. “ S’pose she’ll sleep in my bunk while I’m gone, but that’s all right. Anything ole Peg does is all right with me.” It was mentioned that he would make a swell father. Happy shook his head dismally. “ Not a chance. Can’t find no one that’ll have me — ”

“ Well, if Alden knew how much meat yu’re stealin’ off o’ the table in the cook shack, he’d send ole Peg an’ you both down the skid road,” said old Sours.

Happy was going to reply but just then Tim interrupted.

“ Say, Happy, I was out there where you was fallin’ this morning. Wanted to move you over onto the other forty. I couldn’t find you — ”

“ So? Well, a limb fell down an’ broke my spring-board. I had to come in to the shop to make me another ’n.”

This seemed to satisfy Tim. He nodded.

“ Yeah? Well, what I wanted to tell you was that the timber you’re on now is runnin’ strong to hemlock an’ cedar. But we’re after all the fir we can get a hold of. So we’ll move over on the other forty just as soon as you fallers an’ buckers gets a start enough ahead. I want you to get a start

because I'm afraid you're goin' to fall a tree on somebody." Happy frowned as if he did not quite understand Tim. Tim nodded.

"That's straight goods. You an' Claude are not careful enough. The other day when I was in the woods I heard a crackin' noise an' looked up just in time to see a tree fallin'. It didn't fall a hundred feet away from me. If I'd o' been five feet nearer I might have been hit by one o' the limbs flyin'. You fellas must be more careful an' yell 'Timber!' before a tree begins to fall. Give the men plenty of warning before it starts so they'll have time to get out o' the way."

Happy grinned evasively.

"I thought I did."

"No, you don't — Them big sports reachin' out three or four hundred feet in the brush an' knockin' against other trees like a cyclone as they come down are too dangerous to monkey with." Tim paused and studied a moment. "I guess we'll have to manage different anyway. To avoid danger we'll have to keep the fallers far enough ahead; s'posin' we have to put on another set to help you. But you go on over on the other forty, Happy, tomorrow. You was just kiddin' 'bout goin' to town?"

Happy flushed.

"Aw, guess so.. Yep, Claude an' I'll hike over there on that other forty in the mornin'."

Tim had a few hands of blackjack before he left.

"Hear ole Cap's still raisin' hell 'bout Posey,"

said one of the men who was not playing cards. "Says she'll come home agin er he'll know the reason why."

Another, who was reading in his bunk, looked up from his book.

"What's the matter with the damned ole fool anyway? Lick hell out'n the kid an' then expect 'er tu stay home. But she won't go back this time —"

The first shook his head.

"Can't tell a thing 'bout that girl. She's so doggone loyal to Ole Cap —"

Old Sours broke in here.

"The thing that's bother'n me a sight more 'n Ole Cap Murry an' his red-headed brat, is this local-option business." He was asked what it was. "They're talkin' 'bout ferbiddin' booze in the camps."

"Oh, well, they've always done that," said Buck Nevin.

"Yeah — but this is makin' it an offense tu find booze on yer person or in the bunkhouses —"

Tim looked up from the card table.

"Alden is working hard on that, too, boys."

Every eye in the room looked at Tim sharply.

"The hell yu say!"

"Yep."

"Well, I'll be damned! Purty soon a fella can't call 'is name his own. That's a hell of a fine thing to learn —"

"He says it's for the lumberjack's own sake," defended Tim. He paused in the middle of his

game and swung around in his chair. "I'll tell you, boys, we're about to face a new era in the logging business. It was all right for a fella to get drunk an' raise his own particular little hell with booze an' fast women in the old days, but the time has come when we got to cut it out."

"I'm damned 'f I will!" came one vehement retort. "I got a right tu git ginned up 'f I want 'a. An' 'f I want 'a spend my money on the sportin' women in Hoquiam or Aberdeen, that's my business. I'd like tu see the bird that'll stop me —"

This statement was substantiated by a half dozen: "Good fer you, Bill! Yer damn tootin'. You got the guts. I'm right with yu!"

Tim calmly disregarded them all.

"You may be forced to. It's for your own good, I tell you. And it's for the boss's good, too —"

"Sure!" came a voice from one corner. "If it wasn't fer his good, he wouldn't give a damn what we'd do."

Tim gave the man a reproachful look.

"Not necessarily. If a fella ain't got brains enough to know what is best for him, his boss's got a right to force some sense in him, ain't he? It ain't so easy nowadays to buy a piece o' timber an' tear into it as though they'd never be any end, like a man used to be able to do. They's too much competition now. An' competition means the best man wins. A man can't win if he hasn't got clear-headed men working for him. Men can't be clear-headed with their bellies full o' booze.



“Alden’s all right. They ain’t a squarer man in the country, a squarer shooter. He’s got to look out fer Alden, but at the same time he’s got the interest o’ us men at heart, too, now you bet!”

“Oh sure, he’s O.K.!” came in a chorus. “Who said he wasn’t?”

Tim’s lips twisted into a smile, but he returned to his cards.

“No one. I was just puttin’ you wise, that is all.”

“Speaking of Mr. Alden,” said Hoggens, “I have just completed a poem about him. I call him the Empire Builder. Would you boys like to hear it?” His enthusiasm was too intense to note the bored look on the faces about him. He turned to Tim. “Perhaps you would enjoy it, Mr. McAvoy.” Hoggens was met with a volley of protests.

“Cheese it! Cheese it, Dreamer! Fer criminy sake, cut it!”

Tim shifted a bit uneasily.

“Say, Hoggens, I’d like to — but, gosh, I’ve got to get right over to the shack. Got some work to do on my books tonight. Oughtn’t to stayed long as I have —” Tim rose nervously. “No, believe we better put it off ’til some other night, if it’s all the same to you, Henry —” Without finishing his game, Tim fled.

Later in his bunk, after everyone had retired, Hoggens lay looking out into the darkness which was illumined by the flickering firelight. Hoggens’s lips moved unconsciously. The muse was working. He murmured aloud:

“ Empire builder, mighty leader of men,  
Worker of miracles, little did we think when  
You came to these virgin forests  
In this vast unknown,  
Rough and uncouth men that we are —  
We could ever claim you for our own. . . . ”

Hoggens was interrupted by an angry voice.

“ Fer the love o’ Moses, dry up er I’ll throw the bootjack at yu. Don’t yu think some one wants tu sleep instead o’ listenin’ tu that squirrel chatter? If yu want tu pull that stuff, go somewhere where they’s other birds that’s got that same buzzin’ in their beans.”

Deeply wounded, and feeling there was no place for art among such environment, Hoggens turned over in his bunk, muttering something about the lack of appreciation.

“ Amen,” came a soft whisper from Sky Pilot’s bunk. And the two men, getting each other’s vibrations, went to sleep feeling that they each belonged to a world vastly removed from the one in which fate had so mercilessly thrown them.

## CHAPTER XI

Maribel Marie Alden arrived in due time. Her mother had fully intended to go to Chicago for the occasion, but complications arose which prevented her from doing so. For one thing, it was somewhat dangerous to take her small son on such a long journey. Dunny was cutting teeth, and was not in the best of health right at that time. She knew of no one to whom she could intrust him.

Deciding that, under the circumstances, the journey was impossible, she sent for her mother to come to her. This plan seemed satisfactory, and Tesa waited for the day when she should arrive. At the last moment she received a message that her mother had been in an accident and, receiving some slight injuries, it would be impossible for her to come west until later.

Tesa was distracted. It required a great amount of comforting on the part of her husband before she could be made to feel that there were physicians and nurses in Hoquiam and Aberdeen who could meet an emergency of this sort. Of course, it was possible that they could not compare with the family physician in Chicago, Alden thought best to admit to this full-fledged Easterner who refused to become a Westerner.

Tesa was obstinate about going to a hospital in

either of the towns. She preferred to stay home if it killed her. So, with one of the best nurses in Gray's Harbor stationed in her home, and the engagement of the best physician, Tesa took on the attitude of a martyr and prepared for her death; which she stubbornly insisted was inevitable.

All this was very painful to Aunt Sally Mullen. Over the counter of her store one afternoon she confided it to a neighbor.

"I tell you I never seen a woman in such a tantrum. Jist cut up somethin' awful. An' poor Mr. Alden tryin' to comfort her."

Aunt Sally had never been a mother. Her neighbor had given birth to six children. She was not quite so ready to criticize.

"Well, it seems a body ought to overlook a lot when a woman is in her condition —"

Aunt Sally's eyes snapped.

"Mr. Alden does overlook a lot. I ain't never seen a man so overlookin'. I don't care what you say, they ain't no use in a woman carryin' on like she does an' her with ever'thing on earth at 'er beck an' call.

"Look at the wimmin up here that hain't never had no doctor at sech times; them that come up here when the road wasn't nothin' but a trail." Aunt Sally jerked her head so vehemently that the pins threatened to fly out of her wisp of iron-grey hair. "Them days they couldn't git a doctor fer love ner money. Then these upstarts nowadays thinkin' they've got to have ever'thing —"

The other woman shook her head.

“ But Mrs. Alden doesn't know nothin' 'bout that — Them that has ever'thing don't know what it is to do without. ”

Aunt Sally leaned across the counter and lowered her voice.

“ Mis Devons, I've learnt a few things 'bout Mis Alden since I been goin' there. One o' them things is she's too mighty awful finicky. 'Nother thing, she ain't got no bit o' use fer us Humptulips people. Thinks we're all il — illiterate, she calls it. I overheard 'er talkin' to Mr. Alden one time. I didn't know what the word meant at the time, but I come home an' looked it up in the dictionary. It means a person that ain't never had no learnin'.

“ When I found that out, it made me so mad I declared I wasn't never goin' back there no more. But o' course she pays me well an' I need the money.”

The other woman nodded.

“ Yes, a body has to humble themselves in a sight o' things 'cause they need the money.”

“ Mis Alden treats poor Posey as though she didn't have sense 'nough to come in out o' the rain. Course,” Aunt Sally went on, “ that's Posey's affair. She seems to be willin' to take it. My land sakes, I never seen a person so wild over anything as she is 'bout that Alden baby. He is a cute little fixin'.”

When Maribel Marie was about three weeks old, the nurse found it necessary to return to town.

Tesa was grieved about this. The nurse had proved very efficient, and it was hard to get any nurse at all to come up there into the woods.

“ Oh, dear, I don't know what I shall do with a stranger! ”

Posey was in the room at the time. She had brought Tesa's breakfast up to her. A bright thought came to her.

“ Mother McKnight's a — a most awful good nurse, Mis Alden. ”

Tesa looked up absently.

“ Mother McKnight — who is she? ”

Excited, Posey licked her dry lips.

“ 'Member I tole yu 'bout Mother McKnight? It's her that Mr. Alden calls ' the little woman who lives by the side o' the road an' is a friend tu man — ' ”

Tesa smiled tolerantly.

“ What sort of person is she? ”

“ Mother McKnight? Why, she's jist the most awful grandest person in the world! ”

This somewhat amused Tesa.

“ Suppose you go over this afternoon and ask her to come to see me. Tell her if she will come, I will have Mr. Alden send the buggy over for her. It is quite a walk, isn't it? ”

“ Yes, most two miles, an' Mother McKnight has rheumatism so bad that it's hard for her to take long walks. ”

Tesa dropped two lumps of sugar in her coffee and stirred it about with her spoon. Posey watched

the grace of her hands as they moved daintily over the tray. Something about it thrilled her deeply. She found herself forgiving Tesa for her numerous scoldings, and the harsh things she so often said to her.

Regardless of the difficulties, Posey was quite content in the Alden home. She made every effort to try to do her work right, and cared for the Alden baby with unceasing devotion.

Posey was beginning to look upon David Alden as something of a god. His kindness and patience with her for the things she did not know, yet was so eager to learn, seemed to make up for all that she had lost in life heretofore.

She delighted in looking at Alden. The expression of his kind eyes, the way his hair swept back from his brow, the soft, yet firm, pressure of his lips, thrilled her with a pleasant sensation. Often of an evening while he sat reading she would sit and study his face. At such times she would experience a strange stirring within her, a joyous lifting of spirit like that which she felt when Dunny smiled, or she heard a throaty bird note out in the woods, or the sight of sunshine streaming through the window when she woke of a morning. It was all this and yet it was more —

That afternoon she sped over the road to Mother McKnight's in leaps and bounds. It seemed she could not get there fast enough. She found the old lady mending beside her stove in the kitchen. Mother McKnight was glad to see her. She was

additionally pleased to see Posey so animated. Her keen eyes noted the change already wrought in Posey; her clean dress and nicely combed hair.

“ Dear child, I would hardly have known you.” She bade Posey sit down and rest. Posey was still panting.

“ Oh, Mother McKnight, there’s so many heaps an’ heaps o’ things tu tell yu!” She drew up a chair and sat down. “ I — I don’t jist hardly know where tu begin.”

Mother McKnight smiled.

“ It’s been terrible long since you’ve been here. But, of course, I know you’ve been busy over there.”

Posey nodded.

“ Most awful busy here lately.” She paused. “ Babies are sure a lot o’ work. Seems like the littler yu are the more work yu make. But, lis’en, I’ll tell yu what I come over fer.” She proceeded to tell Mother McKnight the nature of her errand. When she had finished Mother McKnight agreed that it might be all right if it was not for the loggers’ washing. What should she do about them? Posey waved an indifferent hand. “ They’ll jist have tu git along, that’s all. What would they do if you didn’t live here?” She looked at Mother McKnight whimsically.

“ I wish yu would come. Maybe y’d git me started so’s I’d begin tu know somethin’. Aunt Sally thinks Mis Alden’s most awful mean tu me but — but — I am dumb.”



“ Oh, but it takes time to learn housework,” said Mother McKnight.

“ Yep. But I c’n wash dishes purty good now, though, an’ I don’t fergit tu wrench them. Mr. Alden tole me I take most awful good care o’ Dunny. That’s what they call their baby — their big baby. It’s short fer Duncan.” Posey clapped her hands together eagerly. “ Mother McKnight, did yu notice I quit cussin’? ”

Mother McKnight nodded emphatically.

“ Indeed I did.”

“ I ain’t used a swear word fer two whole weeks. Mr. Alden’s got a kind of a scheme tu help me. I’ll tell yu ’bout it after awhile. An’, say, another thing — he’s givin’ me lessons in grammer. He’s a awful good teacher. Don’t git mad like she does.”

Mother McKnight listened to Posey while she rattled on as if her tongue was run by perpetual motion.

“ He lets me come in the living room — that’s what they call their parlor — he lets me come in there of an evenin’. An’, lis’en, he plays the graphophone fer me. Mother McKnight, if yu c’d only hear it! Did yu ever hear one? ”

“ No, they didn’t have graphophones before I came West.”

“ Well, yu ought tu should hear it! Oh, sa-ay! Why, the most grandest music! They got a lot o’ pieces. What I like best is some songs by a—a man called C’ruso. Sa-ay, when I hear him sing, why my hair jist starts tu raise an’ I git prickly all up

an' down my back. It's jist su grand that I feel kinda sick when I hear him.

"They've got other pieces they call grand op'ra. An' b'lieve me they are grand. Why, I c'd jist lis'en to 'em forever —"

Mother McKnight paused in her mending.

"I am glad you enjoy it, Posey."

Posey did not see a tear in Mother McKnight's eyes. Her thoughts were too intent upon what she was talking about. She went on enthusiastically:

"Mother McKnight, livin' at Aldens's is jist like livin' in heav'n. Their house! Carpets on ever' floor — well, course not the kitchen an' the bathroom — jist awful grand furniture, real linen table cloths an' napkins that are all shiny, an' grand painted pictures an' vases — an', Mother McKnight, even Mis Alden's window curtains are silk. Awful heavy silk that jist glistens when the sun shines on it — An' — an' that bathtub!"

Posey paused breathlessly.

"If yu go over there, Mother McKnight, yu want tu ask Mis Alden tu let yu take a bath in it. She lets me. Mr. Alden an' her takes a awful lot o' baths. Maybe ever' day." Posey frowned. "But how c'd they be any dirt left on yu if yu took a bath su often as that? I don't blame 'em, though. I like it su well that I c'd jist stay in that there bathtub all the time an' never git out. Think o' the fun a fish must have —"

Posey was silent for a time. She was thinking intently. Mother McKnight went on with her

mending. It was very still in the room. The quiet bothered Posey. It was not in keeping with her thoughts, which whirled like the eddies in the river. Presently she began again.

“ It’s all them grand things at Mis Alden’s, Mother McKnight, that makes me think what a lot us country folks miss. Us with our ole shacks. Even the best people in Humptulips ain’t got more’n one carpet in the house. Most ain’t got any.”

Mother McKnight interrupted her.

“ But we have this beautiful great out of doors; the forest and wild flowers and the birds and the sunshine —”

Posey smiled scornfully.

“ When it shines — which ain’t more ’n ’bout two months out o’ every year. The rest o’ the time it’s either rainin’ er goin’ tu.” Posey was not to be outdone in her argument. She had been doing too much deliberating on the subject to be overcome without a struggle.

“ Yes, if we c’d live in a tree an’ had nothin’ tu do but lis’en to birds sing and smell flowers, it ’ud be all right, but we’ve got tu live in our ole shacks an’ be poor an’ wantin’ better things an’ can’t get ’em. ’Member one time yu was tryin’ tu make me feel better when I was mad ’cause Pa an’ me didn’t have nothin’ — Yu was tellin’ me somethin’ the Bible said ’bout pilin’ up treasures here on earth where moths corrupt an’ thieves take away —”

Mother McKnight nodded.

“ Well, since I been there at Aldens’s, seein’ their nice things an’ gettin’ baths an’ clean dresses that ain’t full o’ patches, I been thinkin’ maybe the world’s changed since that Bible was wrote. Maybe it sounds funny, but after I’ve washed myself in Mis Alden’s bathtub, I sort o’ feel like I was washed inside as well as out. Bein’ clean kinda puffs me up an’ I feel like I *was* somebody. First thing I know I’m actin’ different.” Posey paused a moment and looked at Mother McKnight gravely.

“ Now I don’t want tu hurt yer feelin’s an’ make yu think I ain’t always appreciated the things yu’ve tole me but — but, Mother McKnight, I know they’s a awful change goin’ on inside o’ me. I — I feel different. Sometimes right in the middle o’ my work I have tu stop an’ even sometimes when I’m awake at night I — I jist say: ‘ Oh, Lord, is it wicked ’cause I want grand furniture an’ pictures an’ vases an’ bathtubs like Mis’ Alden an’ billions o’ rich people in the city has got — ”

A worried look clouded Mother McKnight’s brow.

“ But, Posey, you are asking the Lord for material wealth! ”

Posey straightened up suddenly.

“ But, don’t yu see, that it ain’t jist that that I want? What I really an’ truly want is learnin’ an’ fine manners an’ how tu be like Mr. Alden, inside an’ out. A — a really an’ truly way-up person. An’ I know it takes things like grand furniture an’

pictures an' vases an' music an' books an' bath-tubs tu make me like Mr. Alden — inside an' out — ”

Mother McKnight looked at her sadly.

“ Dear child, you are so wrong.”

Posey shook her head belligerently.

“ Then why are the loggers like they are, an' the people in Humptulips so gossipy an' mean to each other? Ain't it 'cause the loggers never had grand things that makes 'em drink like they do, an' ain't it 'cause the people in Humptulips ain't never knowed anything better that makes 'em like they are?”

“ Why, no, of course not. There are lots of wicked people among the rich in the cities, and the people of Humptulips are no more gossipy and mean to each other than any where else.” She looked at Posey thoughtfully for a moment. “ You have a great deal to learn, child. Some day when we have time, I will explain all this to you.”

Posey looked at her moodily.

“ Well, I know this much. I know that 'fore I went tu live with the Aldens I was a whole lot more unhappy than I am now. The trees an' flowers an' birds didn't help me much either. They jist reminded me more 'bout my own misery, like when I see Mis Alden's fine clothes. Even 'er night-gowns er grander 'n any dress I ever had. She's got twelve of 'em. All lacy frilly things that I'd be glad tu wear in the daytime. Maybe yu think I wasn't 'shamed o' that ole outing flannel one o' mine.

Gee! 'N 'en half the time I never wore it tu home. Jist jumped intu bed in my underwear — Well, yu bet Mis Alden never seen it. I chucked it in the stove. She give me some ole ones o' hers."

"That was better than none," said Mother McKnight.

"Sure," agreed Posey. "I asked 'er one day if I c'd jist have a little smell o' the bottle o' perfume she keeps on 'er dresser. She calls it eau do cologne. That's a French name, she tole me. Mmmm, the smell of it! She let me have a little on my hair." Posey rose suddenly. "But here I am talkin' an' I promised to be right back." She reached for her coat where it hung on the back of a chair. "Then yu'll c'm over, won't yu, Mother McKnight?"

Mother McKnight rose and laid down her mending.

"Why, yes, I can go over and see Mrs. Alden. If I suit her I suppose I can stay for a while until she is stronger —"

Posey smiled up into her eyes.

"Gee, yu don't know how glad that makes me!"

Mother McKnight returned her smile.

"I like to make you happy, Posey."

Posey flung her arms impulsively about her neck.

"Do yu, honest?"

"Of course, I do."

Posey was silent for a moment. Presently she stepped back as if she might search Mother McKnight's heart better at a distance.

“ An’ — an’ don’t yu go worryin’ ’bout me longin’ fer material wealth — as yu call it.” She lifted a warning hand. “ ’Cause that ain’t it a’ tall. It’s the great things inside me that I’m jist ’bout bustin’ with wantin’ — an’ I — I still can’t help feelin’ that it takes fine outside things tu git fine inside things — ”

## CHAPTER XII

Alden and Tesa sat before the fire one evening late in autumn. Outside the air was cold, and it was raining. Tesa had drawn the curtains to shut out the sight of that "dreadful and unending rain." Now she reposed quite peacefully, her eyes upon the blaze. Alden sat across from her. His attention was divided between watching the flames leap up the chimney and looking at his wife's calm face. He noted, regretfully, that her cheeks had not regained color as they should since Maribel Marie's arrival.

And it was true that, since she did not die as she had so tragically prophesied before her daughter was born, Tesa had come to assume the attitude of a trapped animal. However, this was merely outward appearance. In her heart was a blaze which grew more vehement as the weeks passed.

For the time being she had acquiesced, because she now believed that no matter how bitterly she protested, her husband's intention was to remain in his present environment.

Another matter which prevented all hope of returning to Chicago for the present was the knowledge that her father had not picked up the thread of his business and sailed on into success again as she had expected. Chicago was overrun



with men who had met adversity late in life, and it was also full of younger and more alert men who were ready to take the place of those who failed.

Under different circumstances Tesa could have flown to her parents and doubtless taken up her life among the gay whirl of society again. But as it was, she realized that she was quite dependent upon her husband. Unless some good fortune rose to free her from bondage — she believed it was nothing less than bondage to be dependent upon a man she did not love — it would be wise to remain until further developments.

For weeks she had been exceptionally quiet, but on this evening some of her old arrogant attitude came back to her. After all, she concluded, a great share of life was founded on bluff. If one gave up, why, of course he was lost. It was inevitable. She looked across at her husband.

“ We have been west but a trifle over six months, Dave, yet I see a change in you already.” There was a hint of irony in her voice. “ What will it be by the time we are here six years, or ten? ”

He shifted his position and threw an arm across the back of the divan.

“ Is the change for better or for worse? ”

Tesa smiled tartly.

“ Which would you expect in these surroundings? ”

“ Then you mean worse? ”

She laughed a trifle scornfully.

“ Perhaps.”

Alden looked down at the floor for a thoughtful moment. Presently he looked up again.

“ Come to think of it, I may have changed — I suppose one naturally would.”

She nodded.

“ Most assuredly.”

Noting the sarcastic tone of her voice, he looked at her keenly.

“ But not necessarily for worse.”

Tesa made no reply to this. They lapsed into silence again. She knew the significance of silence. She was guessing his thoughts. Her husband wanted encouragement. She believed she owed him none, or if she did, she did not care enough about it to make the effort. Still without comment, she studied him while he sat with his eyes bent upon the fantastic pattern of the rug.

“ Just what do I owe him? ” she asked herself. “ Because one is the mother of a man’s children need she be indebted to him for every pursuit she wishes to follow independent of his wishes, or is it unjust that she should desire to follow her own pursuits? ” She studied Alden’s profile. “ When he was courting me, I thought I was marrying an amazingly unusual man. He did seem a contrast to the men of my set. Now I find he is like those others. Perhaps no man is far enough above his own interests to sacrifice anything for his wife. Perhaps a man loves you for just as much as you mean in the scheme of his own

existence. After that, he draws the line. All men, including Dave, are that kind. There may be exceptions. Horace Wainright might have proved an exception if —”

Alden interrupted her reflections by turning an appealing glance at her. She resented it. It had been that appeal in his eyes which had touched her, back in the days when he worked in her father's private office. Even yet it was sometimes hard to resist.

“Tesa, if instead of this coldness all of the time, you could give me a bit of encouragement, it would be much easier. It is hard to work to the best that is in you, when you feel you haven't the sympathy or the support of one so important as your wife. It isn't the simplest thing in the world to begin a business of this kind without capital and carry it through safely —”

“I cannot see why it should matter one way or another, what I think.” Tesa played with the fringe of her gown for a moment. “You seem to be doing very well without me.”

A shadow of pain crossed his face.

“If you only knew just how much it does matter! It is the struggle that is changing me.”

She shot him an inquisitive glance.

“And not your associates?”

“You mean the men in the woods, or the different business men with whom I come in contact all up and down the Harbor?”

Tesa smiled bitterly.

“ I meant the men in the woods. But come to think of it — there is little contrast between the men in the woods and the men for whom they work.”

Alden nodded.

“ I agree with you. Most of these lumbermen got their start by working in the woods. Naturally there would be but a trifling difference.” He stooped to push a chunk into the fire. When he sat up again he continued: “ But it seems that should be greatly to their credit. Really, Tesa, I think they are an especially remarkable class of men.”

She sighed wearily.

“ But so uncultured! There doesn't seem to be a true gentleman among them. Imagine even some of the wealthier lumbermen, here on Gray's Harbor, in a drawing-room in Chicago. I haven't met one but would be like the proverbial bull in a china shop.”

This provoked Alden.

“ Tesa, when are you going to learn that one's character, the true outlying qualities of the man, cannot be judged by his ability to appear well in a drawing-room! ”

“ And family,” she continued, ignoring his remonstrance. “ Show me one, from the men in the woods to the very last person in Humptulips — and it seems very much the same among the people of Hoquiam and Aberdeen — who can claim any lineage worth while. Really, most of them seem as

far from being thoroughbreds as that stray cat I found Posey feeding on the back porch the other afternoon. I should call nearly all of these people mongrels, accidents —”

Alden threw up his hands in dismay.

“For heaven’s sake, let’s drop the subject, Tesa! We will never agree on it, and it is just like revolving in a circle; we always come back to where we began. Worth while people are judged, not by the way they accept good fortune, but by the way they accept adversity. You and I are going through the acid test. Don’t let us have it proven that our fine metal, which we mistook for gold, is, after all, nothing more than brass.”

Tesa shrugged.

“It would not hurt me if the acid test proved that I was brass. How many people today could endure such a test and come out pure gold? Besides this is not a day of tests. It is a day of indulgence and ease.” She laughed. “How amusing you are, David! Your reference to those old similes shows how antiquated you really are, my dear.”

Alden rose impatiently and began to pace up and down the room. Instead of becoming reconciled, as he had hoped that she would, it seemed that Tesa was becoming more bitter each day. He tried to overlook these sarcastic little hints that she dropped at every opportunity, but sometimes it was quite distracting. He usually tried to win her over by kindness, but this night he felt in no such

mood. He had had a hard day. With his hands behind his back he continued up and down the room. The silence between them became rigid. Alden detested such intervals as this. Presently Tesa spoke:

“ If we must change the subject, we might talk of Posey. I think we must come to an understanding regarding her.”

Alden turned and looked at her.

“ What about Posey? ”

Tesa was again amused at the anxiety in his voice.

“ How concerned you are! You sound like a young swain eager to hear of his sweetheart.” Her brows lifted. “ If you were that sort, one might suspect you were falling in love with this child.” She disregarded the hurt look that came into her husband’s eyes. “ I have decided that I shall not keep Posey any longer,” she went on. “ She takes but little interest in her work, or if she does she is most dreadfully stupid. I am going to send her home the first of the week.” She was surprised when Alden spoke up quickly:

“ You will do nothing of the sort, Tesa. Posey remains here.”

Tesa’s lips curled.

“ Aren’t you taking rather undue privileges, even for a husband, when you say that? ”

“ Possibly. But I mean it. Posey shall not be sent back to live with her brute of a father —”

Tesa shook her head.

“ Oh, no, most assuredly not. That would be

cruel. I will send her out to either Hoquiam or Aberdeen."

Alden did not answer immediately but when he did his voice was tense.

"You would not be guilty of sending a fifteen-year-old girl without education or trade out upon her own resources, would you?"

Tesa shrugged.

"How strangely you speak! What do I owe that child?"

Alden returned to his seat. He leaned calmly toward her.

"Listen to me, Tesa — The first twenty-seven years of your life were as nearly a bed of roses as it is possible for one's life to be. When you were Posey's age you were attending the best private school that your father could find on the North American continent. You were indulged and protected from everything that was unpleasant. Everything came your way until about two years ago, when all of a sudden fate turned the wheel and you came up against a snag — I believe that was for a purpose. It comes sooner or later in the life of every man or woman. And it depends largely upon the moral fiber, whether they lose or gain by the change.

"I believe the true purpose in life is to aid our fellow men. I cannot accept the theory of the survival of the fittest. I believe the fit should aid the unfit until all are given the opportunity to meet on an equal basis —"

Tesa threw back her head and laughed.

“ Oh, Dave, you are talking like a socialist! ”

He scowled earnestly.

“ If what I say sounds like socialism, then I am not making myself clearly understood. I am no more of a socialist than you are; that is the type of communist so often mistaken for a socialist.” He paused and reflected a moment. “ True socialism is idealistic, but I question if it could ever be worked out. There would have to be a vast improvement made in the basic principles of human nature before socialism could be successfully operated. It is the underlying false qualities of human nature which cause all the trouble. One might as well try to preserve a jar of already spoiled fruit as to expect socialism to “succeed as the world stands today.”

Tesa bore a detached air.

“ Oh, yes — it is plainly evident, David, that you are one of those who will revolutionize the world some day — in your mind. But why go into politics? They always did bore me so. Get back to where you left off.” She lifted an arm and yawned daintily against the back of her hand. “ I believe we were discussing the fit and the unfit. It had something to do with Posey and me — ”

Alden nodded.

“ Yes. Well, to come to the point, Posey has intelligence. She is by no means degenerate or feeble-minded. She is keen, alert, eager to learn. But the child does not know how. Moreover, she



has never been taught the necessity of education and culture." He paused a moment and observed Tesa thoughtfully. "With the right training I will wager that Posey will develop into a woman that you would be proud to know, — anyone would be proud to know.

"But if we sent her away as she is now, she would go to perdition in no time. You know human nature well enough, Tesie, to be familiar with her type. They are extreme. With the right influence they develop into splendid womanhood. Neglected they fall into the lowest type of dissolutes —"

For an instant fear crept into Tesa's heart, but she quickly controlled this false emotion. She laughed nervously. "It is just another of his eccentric ideas," she thought. Aloud, she said:

"Oh, I think you have Posey overestimated, as you have everyone else in these jungles. To hear you talk, one would think that every person in Humptulips and every logger among the camps all up and down the river were individuals who, had they the opportunity, would be equal in intelligence to those great minds which form the bulk of America's empire builders, the real doers.

"If one would weave a raiment of fine cloth, he must have the fruit of the silkworm to do so. You cannot make fine linen from cotton warp."

Alden lifted his hand.

"But that is a poor comparison, Tesa. We are not dealing in dress material; we are dealing in human souls. My point is the individual, himself.

Instead of admitting that there are a few exceptional people in Humptulips, the same as there are in any other community, whether it be a city or a village, you condemn them as a whole. You cannot see certain elemental qualities in Posey, which I know are there, but you must admit the fineness of Mother McKnight — ”

Tesa nodded.

“ Yes, Mother McKnight is exceptional. But see how she holds herself aloof from the common herd. When she must be among the others, she does not stoop to their level. But Posey — takes to them like birds of a feather. She is over with that horrid Aunt Sally Mullen right this moment. Why doesn't she stay home, if she is the unusual person you would have her be? ”

“ She is hungry for companionship. Mother McKnight retires early and there is no one for Posey to talk to. She cannot spend all her time in the kitchen or her bedroom.”

Tesa studied him discreetly.

“ Oh, you pity her because she must stay in the kitchen or her bedroom. Where else is there for a servant? ”

Alden's eyes dropped to the floor.

“ Yes, that is just it — where else is there — ”

Tesa made a wry face.

“ Would you have her spend her evenings with us? With her ears open to everything, how, pray tell me, could we carry on these most extraordinary discussions? ” She laughed sar-

castically. "Although, I admit, since you have begun this dreadful moralizing, perhaps an audience might somewhat control our mental gyrations." She rose and yawned again. She looked over at Alden with an amused twinkle in her eyes. "Well, since we are not going to the opera this evening, I think I shall retire. I have had a perfectly dreadful day. Maribel Marie spent much of the time fretting, and Dunny fell off of a chair. Most of the afternoon was taken up trying to console him." Tesa made a pretense of great dignity. "Really, I am quite indisposed."

Alden rose and stood beside her.

"I did not quite finish what I was talking about, Tesa. If you would only be patient for a few moments longer —"

She turned and looked at him hastily.

"Oh, dear, after that dreadfully long monologue, didn't you get through?" She sighed dismally. "Well, go on —"

"You are right to some extent regarding those men over there at camp. It is true that many of them lack the executive ability necessary to become a power in the commercial world of today. But suppose — suppose among them there were a few who, had they the opportunity, could reach greater heights — And then besides, that is not just the point. The man with the executive ability is not the only essential power. It is just as momentous that every man, no matter how low his vocation may seem, be shown the signifi-

cance of his own station, and the relation it has in making up the whole.

“The whistle-punk is the smallest paid individual in the woods, but it is just as absolutely necessary that he give his signals correctly as it is for the foreman to manage the crew to the best of his ability. The foreman might manage the crew poorly for a day and throw the company into a debt that would take weeks to make up. But the whistle-punk could give a false signal which might result in a half-dozen deaths.”

“Yes,” said Tesa, “but what has that to do with your subject?”

“It has this to do with it: that what I feel I owe these men is to help them to help themselves. In other words, to realize the significance of their own station, and what it means in the vast scheme of industrialism. To show them that by making the most of what he is doing today, a man may advance into what he is capable of doing tomorrow. While on the other hand, if he is shiftless and irresponsible today, there will be no tomorrow. He will continue in the rut to the end of his days. Furthermore, to prove to these men that the commercial leaders of every age are the men who made the most of each day as it came, but looked forward to the future with a broad vision of great achievement.” Alden paused.

“Tesa, that is the sum and substance of our duty toward mankind: to help them to help themselves. We can do nothing more. It is no more

socialism than it is Christianity. It is no more Christianity than it is common sense. If I happen to have a keener insight to the secret of a successful life, then it is my duty to share this knowledge with my less fortunate brothers. And it is your duty to share what you have gotten out of life, almost involuntarily, with one who has been involuntarily cheated, as Posey Murry has been cheated."

Tesa was at a loss just how to meet this final declaration. She could make no reply. Instead, she smiled at him in over-sweet condescension. Since childhood she had been taught that this was the proper way in which to treat a difficult matter, or one in which one could not comprehend the meaning. A condescending smile concealed a world of misunderstanding.

Her husband spoke in a strange tongue. A language of which, in her narrow life, she had not even heard the code. For Tesa belonged to another world.

## CHAPTER XIII

“ Well, fer the love o’ Pete, look what’s here! ”

Going immediately to his bunk on the evening he returned from town, Happy Lenon found Peggy had taken up her abode among his blankets for more reasons than ordinary solid comfort. Rifling among the bedding, Happy found a half-dozen very recently arrived kittens. “ Say, Peg, this ain’t no maternity ward.” The proud mother cat took his scolding for deep approval and purred loudly. Happy proceeded to inspect the generous-sized family.

Those who witnessed the scene were greatly amused. Some one teased: “ Ha, yu will give ole Peg privileges, will yu? ” The man laughed mockingly. “ ‘Yes, s’pose ole Peg’ll sleep in my bunk while I’m gone, but anything ole Peg does is all right.’ Well, she slipped one over on yu. Serves yu right.” This brought an uproar from every man in the bunkhouse. Jerome slipped up to Happy, his nervous eyes gleaming with a hint of mirth.

“ Lis’en, Happy, on the square, it wasn’t no fault o’ mine. The night she pulled the big affair, we all talked with that cat and tried to reason with ’er. But, geemenally, s’pose she’d lis’en to any of us? She was bent on havin’ them kittens in your

bunk, an' in your bunk she had 'em. One o' the fellas got up an' stopped up the hole in the door where she comes in — but nothin' doin'. They wasn't a thing this side o' hell that was goin' to stop Peg from havin' 'er kittens where she wanted to have 'em. She'd made up 'er mind." Followed more laughter and a dozen ayes to substantiate Jerome's statement. Happy turned upon his tormenters.

"What's the matter with you roughnecks, anyway! Who's kickin'? I wouldn't give a damn if she'd o' had 'em in my hat." He turned again to Peggy who, purring furiously, looked up at him with maternal pride in her eyes. Picking up the kittens one by one he held them up for inspection. As they squalled and wriggled in his hand, Happy observed them gravely.

"Yep, I thought so — I see they're all in the family. Here's Paddy McTigh," he indicated the tiny grey fluff of soft fur. He held out a black and white one with the irregular marks of the common house cat. "Here's Jim McGovern, and here's Sky Pilot, and here's Dreamer," and so on. When he called one of the kittens, Johnny Moran, he got a good-natured punch in the ribs from Johnny.

"Aw, say, Happy, tu hell with you an' yer cats."

Chuckling to himself, Happy restored the shrieking kittens to Peggy and covered them fondly. He turned to Johnny.

“ How do you like yer new side-kicker? ”

“ Mean ole Fat? ”

“ Yeah. ”

Johnny regarded him darkly for a moment.

“ Sa-ay, that bird puts himself up fer a faller. Gosh o Friday! Don't think he's ever been on a springboard before. He certainly don't act it. If he'd lift his feet he'd be a light sawyer, but he clinches 'em on that board like he'd been glued there. But, Lord, yu can't tell him nothin'. He knows it all. ”

“ Ole Slivers uset to get along with 'im all right. ”

“ Well, wish Slivers had 'im back again 'stead o' me — ”

Just then Claude came into the bunkhouse. His eyes were wide .

“ Who yu s'pose is back? ” After several guesses the others gave up. “ 'Member ole Whitey that worked with us last winter up at Jeffries's? The Swede with the violin that packed it from Sweden to Nome? Made a million in gold dust an' lost it 'fore he'd been in the States a month — Had enough left to stake a pal in business in Tacoma. Now the pal owns half the town an' he wouldn't wipe his shoes on Whitey — You fellas surely remember Whitey! ” Of course they remembered Whitey. “ Well, he came in with Alvin tonight. ”

“ The hell yu say! ” chorused a number of the old timers. “ Well, well! Ole Whitey 'an' 'is violin! ”



“ Ain't changed a bit neither. Same ole Whitey.”

“ Same ole Whitey, eh? ”

“ Yep. Come in drunk. He's took his last, though. You know how it always was with him? ”

Smiles and much shaking of heads.

“ Same ole Whitey all right.”

“ Yep. Same ole Whitey.”

They had no more than finished talking of him, when the door opened and Whitey walked in. To the men he was the “ same ole Whitey ”; skin fair as a child's, a nose reddened by too much drink, large, protruding blue eyes, a shock of prematurely white hair — from which he got his nickname — hair that stood out in stubborn disarray all over his symmetrically round head. He was greeted with great gusto.

“ Boys, oh, boys, look who's here! I'm damned if it hain't ole Whitey. Hello, how yu stackin' up, ole socks? Thought yu said yu was never comin' back. Couldn't stay 'way from the ole gang, eh? Well, well, I'm damned.”

His face glowing, Whitey stood looking from one to the other as he returned their greetings and the numerous questions showered upon him. He met their shouts of “ Welcome home! ” and the hearty slaps upon his thin shoulders, with a broad smile.

“ Yep, I yust couldn't stay away no longer.” Whitey placed a battered violin case upon a table and swung his pack to the floor.

“ How'd yu like 'er over there on the Sound? ”

Whitey turned around. "Eh?"

"I say how'd yu like 'er over there on the Sound?"

"Bum."

"No good, eh?"

"Nope. After I yust vorked six mont's, found dey vas a hayvire outfit."

"The hell!"

Whitey kicked his roll of blankets under the table out of the way and moved over to the stove.

"Lost all my money, too."

"No? Ever' bean?"

"Yep."

"Well, that was damn bad luck."

"Zhu betcher life. I yust made up my mind I vould beat it for Gray's Harbor agin. Said to meself, bet I yust git a yob somevere. At de employment office at Hoquiam I hear o' dis man Alden. So here I is."

Spurred by the welcome he was receiving, Whitey turned his back to the stove to warm his thin legs, which seemed none too well clad. Reaching into his back pocket, he drew forth a box of Copenhagen snuff. Giving the usual three taps upon the cover he opened the box, gouged into it and brought up a load on the back of a crooked, bony thumb. Lifting it to his nose, he inhaled a generous snuff into each nostril. Then licking his thumb, he swallowed hard several times, shifted from one crooked position to another, and then looked up with a significant smile.

“ I are ready for anything now.” He was asked if he still played and sang “My Wild Irish Rose.” Rolling his eyes about the room Whitey nodded emphatically. “ Yust de same as efer.”

“ C'm on then, let's have it tu-night.”

Whitey swung an arm out dramatically.

“ Zhu betcher life. I am yust drunk enough to-night to do my best. Zhu know I do better ven I've had a few shots.”

“ Yer all right any ole time, Whitey, ole boy. C'm on, do yer damdest.”

Whitey's eyes rolled with pleasure, but he begged to be excused until his hands were warm; explaining that he could not play with cold hands. The men agreed to wait patiently.

“ Well, I guess we're goin' tu git better grub, now that Ole Ramrod's gone,” said one of the men.

“ Yep,” returned another. “ Know who's cookin' now? ”

“ No.”

“ Yu 'member ole Mulligan Al from up on the east fork. Uset tu cook mulligan stew nine times za week — ”

“ The hell! Is that who that is? ”

“ Yep.”

“ I thought I'd seen him before.” The man paused. “ Yu know what happened tu Ramrod, don't yu? ”

“ No.”

“ Him an' Alvin had a row. Alvin stole Ramrod's ole Taylor an' the next morning Ramrod

caught 'im out in the yard an' bounced the meat axe on his head a couple o' times — ”

“ Is that what happened to Alvin's head? ”

“ Yep. He was stooped over, an' Ole Ramrod fired the meat axe at 'im, an' it just grazed the top o' his head. Guess 'f 'e hadn't been in the position he was in, it 'ud o' took his head clean off. After he got the blood stopped, Alvin went on 'bout his business an' never paid no more 'tention to it. 'Stead o' him gettin' on his high horse, it was Ole Ramrod that was sore. Seemed tu be peeved 'cause he didn't make a clean killin'.

“ He went 'round with a grouch on fer two er three days, an' we all guyed 'im so much 'bout it that he got mad an' quit. We'd say: ' Don't yu know, Dan, that yu can't get under the crust o' a lumberjack's bean? Yu ought o' been in the woods long 'nough tu know that much by now.' Then somebody else 'ud say: ' Darn wonder yu didn't bust the meat axe.' ” The man paused to laugh. “ Well it was too much fer Ole Ramrod. Finally he bunched it. ”

“ So now we got ole Mulligan Al, eh? ”

“ Yep. Ole Mulligan Al. Been here ever sense Gray dug the Harbor — ”

“ Talkin' 'bout ole timers,” said Mike Higgens, “ jist reminds me o' the toime we uset to work in the Michigan woods.” He looked over at Frank Hymer who sat smoking silently. “ Remimber, Frank, the Frinch Canadians that they had there? How thim divils uset t' ate! Remimber the toime

they was a bet up who could ate the most biscuits? Well, a felley wid a name as fancy as the lace on a lady's petticoat won the stake. As shure as there's a God in hiven that mon ate twenty-eight biscuits. An' any wan o' thim 'ud make four o' the ordinary sized biscuits — ”

“ Aw, what a yu tryin' tu hand us, Mike! ” said Claude.

Mike screwed up his monkey face as he turned to Frank Hymer.

“ I'll prove it be Frank.”

Frank nodded.

“ He's right. I saw it myself.”

“ An' it was the same divils that perferred their pork raw,” continued Mike. “ In the winter toime they'd ship us out pork an' corn beef be the barrel from Chicago. Do ye think thim Frinch Canadians wanted their pork cooked? Not on yer life. They'd take o' hunk of it an' put it out in the snow to freeze an' then they'd shave it off an' eat it like thot. Took to it like a baby to 'is mother's milk.” Not caring whether he was believed or disbelieved Mike went on with his story to the end.

“ Guess the rainy season's set in for this year,” said Sours. “ Good God, but I hate layin' on my belly in the mud, scratchin' a hole tu git the choker hook under a log! It ain't no snap in dry weather, but this divin' fer logs in the mud an' the water runnin' out o' yer boots, boys, oh, boys. Then's when I wish I was back where I come from. It c'n rain harder in this damn country than any other

country in the world. They say, though, that's what caused the trees tu be so big an' so many of 'em.

"I don't care 'bout the rain so much. It's the snow an' rain together that gits a riggin' slinger's goat." Asked when he did not like it, why he stayed in the woods, Sours shrugged. "Search me. Guess the rain an' mud an' slush has soaked into my ole bones 'til I'm water-logged. Couldn't git away 'f I tried —"

By this time, Whitey had taken up his violin and was tuning 'er up. Drawing the bow across the strings he tightened the keys until he thought he had the instrument in tune. However, some of those whose ears were more keen than his, made a wry face, but accepted it with good humor.

"All right, c'm on, Whitey, let 'er fly."

With the undaunted bravado of the untrained, Whitey proceeded to give the famous Irish ballad in a series of wild and exaggerated notes that were scarcely recognizable. When he had finished, he was met with loud applause: "Fine! Fine! By gosh, Whitey ole boy, you're there. You're there! C'm on now, sing it fer us. We'll all join in the chorus fer ole time's sake. How does it go?"

Whitey studied a moment trying to recall the beginning of the song. Presently he looked up impatiently.

"By gad, I yust can't tink o' dat first werse." His eyes rolled self-consciously; as if realizing that much had been expected of him and he had failed

to come up to his standard. " But s'pose ve all sing de chorus an' forget de rest." This was sanctioned, and everyone who had the courage joined him, but Whitey's shrill falsetto rose above the others.

" My vild Irish Ro-oo-o-s  
De sveetest flow'r dat gr-oo-s  
Zhu may search everyvere  
But dere's none can compare  
Vid my vild I-ri-sh R-oo-ss — "

Not satisfied with singing the chorus a number of times, some insisted until it was sung again and again. They sang until they were all hoarse and had to stop. Someone suggested that for old time's sake, they have a dance.

" 'Member the dances we uset tu have up on the east fork? " The suggestion was gladly accepted.

" Sure! C'm on, let's have a square dance. C'n yu still play the polka mazook, Whitey? "

" Hey, what's the matter with yu," came a sharp retort. " That ain't no square dance. What we want is Turkey in the Straw er — the Irish Washerwoman."

This was met with joyous cries from the old timers.

" Bet me ole legs ain't too stiff to dance the Irish Washerwoman," said Paddy McTigh, as he jumped to his feet and tried himself out on a few steps of a clog.

" Git yer ladies! " shouted Claude. Johnny Moran and he cleared the middle of the floor. For

every lady a handkerchief was tied about a man's arm.

The dance was on. The dancers bounded over the rough floor as if they had never known a day of labor. A few of them had a pair of shoes that were not calked. Those who did not, danced in their sock feet. The younger men were doubly amused at the older ones, who got in a variation of extra steps as they danced to Whitey's half extemporized version of the Irish Washerwoman. Higgins did the calling.

"Right hand to your partners and alla man left!" the poet directed with as great an attempt at dignity as if he were in a ballroom filled with ladies.

They danced until someone, consulting his watch, discovered the hour was late; then they stopped and, shuffling off to his bunk, it was not long before every man had "turned in" for the night.

Soon, upon the stifling air, there rose, in the odor of drying underwear and the inevitable smell of tobacco smoke and sulphur and the cuspidor, the composite vibration of deep guttural sounds issuing from the throats of the sleepers. Mingled with this, Alvin drove his mules in his sleep; Mike Higgins groaned incessantly from the aching of his rheumatic old bones, of which his sub-conscious mind would not free him; Frank Jerome played his everlasting game of black jack while he fought his frenzied nerves which never slept; Claude uttered



endearing little nothings, perhaps to Red Rita. And last, but by no means least important, were the sleepy little squealings and nuzzling for their mother's milk; Peggy and her family resting peacefully at the foot of Happy Lenon's bunk.

## CHAPTER XIV

The matter of Posey's being sent away remained suspended for the time being. Obviously Tesa had not mentioned it to her, for Posey stayed on during the late autumn and on into the winter.

Regardless of her lack of interest in things about her, Tesa was planning an elaborate holiday festival. She made the excuse that it was the first Christmas that her son was old enough to enjoy, and that the celebration was to be for his sake. Spurred on by this resolution she went into her preparations with an almost frenzied zest. Doubtless the truth was that she tried to occupy each lingering moment so that she might forget holiday festivals of former years. Sometimes, pausing over a gay ornament which she was fashioning from bright-colored paper for Dunny's Christmas tree, remembrance would flood her thoughts and hot tears would spring to her eyes. Choking them back, she would shake her head, and return to her task as if her life depended upon it.

If she had time to spare during the intervals between Dunny's attempting to crawl into the fireplace, or pulling the first shelf of books down upon himself, or threatening to wreck the entire household, Posey helped Tesa.

Dunny was at the age when he took great pride

in his skill of walking. Desiring greater worlds to conquer, he sought the highest and loftiest pinnacles in the house. Countless times a day Posey rescued him from the top of a table (upon which he had climbed by the aid of a chair), the sewing machine, the stairs, bureaus and what not. He delighted, it seemed, in trying to see how near he could hang over the edge of whatever he happened to be upon and not fall off. Sometimes he did fall, and there followed an uproar.

Maribel Marie, whom Dunny called "Sissy Mobo," was not a rugged baby. She seemed to contract all sorts of baby illnesses. She fretted much of the time and required a great degree of attention.

If the care of the children had been her only duty, Posey would have gotten along very well. Loving them as she did, nothing seemed too painful or laborious. But helping with household duties exasperated her. One afternoon in the kitchen she confided her grievances to Mother McKnight. She brought a resentful fist down upon the kitchen table until the recently dried pots and pans clattered noisily.

"I don't see any use of it!"

Mother McKnight looked at her vaguely. Her mind was upon the apple-sauce cake she was making. She had forgotten what Posey was talking about.

"Use of what?"

"This business of puttin' every book and chair

right back in the place where you got it! How can a person always remember to dust the chair rounds, an' to put down the top o' the piano before you begin to sweep? An' beds, — oh, sa-ay, I won't never learn how to make beds. Bet there ain't nobody on earth works as hard to get a bed made, like I do Mis' Alden's. Why should you have to take ever' last sheet an' blanket off right down to the mattress ever' day? I can't always remember she wants that little narrow blanket tucked in at the foot of her bed — just so — ”

Posey looked at the neat array of cooking implements upon the table; the yellow mixing bowl, the wooden spoon, the egg beater, the measuring cup. She watched Mother McKnight's capable hands while she beat the eggs and put them into the mixture of flour, apple sauce, soda, raisins and spices. Posey sighed deeply.

“ Mother McKnight, I don't b'lieve I'm ever goin' to be a bit of good. Ever'thing about housework seems so hard — ” She paused to note the skillful way in which Mother McKnight mixed her cake. “ Gee, I guess you have to know a lot, even to know enough to make a cake — ”

Mother McKnight looked over at her and smiled while she poured the batter into the well-buttered cake pan.

“ You mustn't get discouraged. You will learn. But you must use your mind. A body must use their brains even to do housework well. A good many women think just because it's housework,

they can go at it helter skelter. But you've got to be systematic at this as well as anything else if you want to run it right. You just simply have to use your mind in everything."

Posey shook her head dismally.

"I don't b'lieve I got any brains." Mother McKnight made no reply to this. She was busy at the stove; testing the oven to see if it was the right temperature before putting in the cake. "Anyway, I don't b'lieve I like housework." She paused a moment before going on. "Now if all I ever had to do was tend to babies. I'm a awful good tender of babies —"

"That is because you like them. You must learn to like housework, too."

Posey tossed back her head.

"How can I when Mis Alden's so cranky? She fusses 'bout ever'thing all the time an' wants me to do things her way. Now if she'd let me have my own way —"

"But this is Mrs. Alden's house. She has a right to have things done the way she wants them. I cook what she wants me to cook. Maybe it isn't always what *I* want, but she is paying me to cook her victuals the way she wants them."

Posey straightened up suddenly.

"Well, you bet Aunt Sally didn't. Aunt Sally said she didn't b'lieve in that conglomeration Mis Alden calls salad, an' all them hifalutin' dishes. Said she bet that was what made Mis Alden so cranky 'fore Maribel Marie was born. Eatin'

fancy things like celery an' olives an' all that high-toned stuff she had brung in from town. Aunt Sally says what us folks in here eats is good enough fer anybody."

Mother McKnight closed the oven door carefully. Brushing the flour from her apron, she looked at Posey calmly, but there was a firm pressure about her mouth.

"Now see here, Posey, you can't take too much stock in what Aunt Sally says. If she had her way, everybody in the world would do as Aunt Sally Mullen says; which I for one will say, would be a mighty poor way . . ."

Posey did not hear any more. Cries from the upper floor sent her bounding up the stairs, three steps at a time. Dunny had awakened from his nap and doubtless had gone to his baby sister's crib and also awakened her. Now the two of them set up an uproar. Mother McKnight smiled to herself when a moment later the cries had ceased and everything was quiet.

Unfortunately, just a few days before Christmas, Mother McKnight fell ill, and had to be taken out to the hospital. That left Tesa without a cook. Alden could get no one in either Hoquiam or Aberdeen who would come up until after the holidays. Tesa went to see Aunt Sally Mullen, but the loggers were coming down from the camps and Aunt Sally was busy in the store. This provoked Tesa. It seemed ill-fated that she should be without competent help at such a time.

To make matters more complicated, Dunny caught a dreadful cold, and was a little tyrant. Knowing so little of cooking and housework — and of course Posey knew less — Tesa's nerves were worn to a ragged edge.

Just before dinner on Christmas Eve she had asked Posey to perform some task in the kitchen while she went off upstairs on an errand. When she returned, Posey was doing the task in just the opposite way to that in which she had been instructed. Tesa flew into a rage, and called Posey stupid and illiterate, adding that she was positive now that she would never learn anything.

Posey, too, worn from the strain of the past several days, had come to the point where she could endure Tesa's reproof no longer. Throwing down the paring knife she held in her hand, she turned on Tesa vehemently.

“ Yu mean tu tell me I'm stupid an' illiterate, yu white-faced city huzzy! ” Posey dropped back into her old misuse of English. Jerking viciously at her apron strings, she threw the apron on the floor and looked down at it as if she was going to jump on it. But, her eyes black with fury, she looked up at Tesa again. Posey shook her fist. “ I'm through with big bugs an' all this here high education stuff — 'Fore I'd put up with this any longer, I'll see myself in hell first. ” Her mouth twisted into a grimace. “ I'd rather be a logger a million times an' up tu my belly in mud than this — ” She swept the immaculate kitchen with a

contemptuous glance, as if Tesa Alden's kitchen was representative of the entire order of plutocracy, and she wished it understood that she would have no more of it. Then flying to the door, Posey wrenched it open.

Tesa was alarmed.

"Posey, where are you going?"

"I'm goin' over tu Mr. Alden an' git a job in the woods as whistle punk, that's where I'm goin'." She cleared the back steps in two jumps.

Posey was halfway home before she realized the direction in which she was running. And with this realization came regret for her hasty decision. Remembering it was Christmas Eve, she was about certain in what condition she would find her father. Oh, why did this dreadful thing have to happen, this night of all nights!

When she came within view of her home, she saw the old shack was lighted. A terrible fear and trembling seized her. She almost resolved to turn back, but the memory of the scorn in Tesa Alden's eyes spurred her on. She bolted in the door.

Her father was not alone. Paddy McTigh, Jim McGovern, Frank Hymer and Mike Higgens sat with him about the stove. A strong odor of whiskey and tobacco smoke prevailed throughout the room. A bottle of Sunnybrook whiskey, a half dozen tin cups and water glasses, and a two-quart tin of smoking tobacco were upon the table within reach of the men.

When Posey entered they all looked up in sur-



prise. The other four greeted her, but her father looked down sullenly. Noting this, Paddy McTigh spoke up quickly:

“Ah, ha, I tole Ole Cap yez w’d be comin’ over to spend Christmas wid ’im, Posey. He said yez w’d be spendin’ it at the Aldens’s an’ thim wid their swell Christmas an’ I said not a’ tall a’ tall. If I knows Posey Murry to be the girl I thinks she be, she’ll be spendin’ it wid her father.” He smiled over at Old Cap to see what impression he had made, but there was no response. Old Cap acted as if he had not heard a word. Paddy continued: “We all decided we w’d spend a quiet Christmas up in the woods this year. The rest o’ the b’ys are all in town, but we’re goin’ to stay wid Ole Cap an’ yez, Posey.” Paddy paused. His face became very grave. “We’re not drinkin’ this Christmas, Posey — ”

Frank Hymer was at the table pouring whiskey into a glass.

“No, it’s to be a dry Christmas,” he said as he emptied the contents of the glass down his wrinkled throat.

Although his tongue was already thick, Mike Higgins echoed Frank Hymer’s words.

A trifle sick at heart, Posey pointed to the bottle.

“Yes, that looks like it.”

“Oh, that wee drop counts fer nothin’,” said Paddy, “it’s jist that we’re not goin’ to git tipsy.”

“ It ain’t that we ain’t got enough — ” Frank Hymer’s watery old eyes turned eagerly toward a gunny sack filled with bottles standing in the back of the room. “ Got ever’thing yu c’n think of in there.” He turned to Posey again. “ Eight quarts o’ ole Taylor, a dozen bottle o’ Coburger — ” He smiled. “ Sort o’ sprung ourselves on that swell brand o’ beer, but Christmas only comes twice a year — once I mean — an’ then I think they’s some Holland Dry gin an’ some port an’ — an’ well a little o’ most ever’thing.” He made an effort to straighten up proudly. “ But we ain’t goin’ tu git drunk. Jist got that to prove to ourselves that we c’d have it ’round tu make it seem kinda Christmasy an’ still leave it alone.” He looked at the other four. “ Am I right? ”

Paddy McTigh nodded emphatically.

“ Yez are always roight, Frank.” Paddy turned to Posey. “ Come on, come on, Posey, what are yez so quiet ’bout! ” He indicated a chair. “ Sit down an’ make yerself to home. We’re all mighty glad to see yez.” He tried to catch Old Cap’s eye, but the other avoided them all. He was still sullen.

Old Cap was wondering why Posey was there. He could not believe that it was through any love for him or any sentiment regarding her home, but his mind was too clouded to reason the matter out. However, he did note that Posey had changed. Deep down in his consciousness something told him it was a change for the better. It both pleased and angered him.

So the father and daughter sat during the long evening that followed. The gulf which had always been between them now widened to an impassable breadth. Posey wondered why.

Looking upon his face, flushed and unnatural from the whiskey he was drinking, she could not refrain from feeling a pang of regret that he should be as he was. A sob rose in her throat.

“ He’s all I got in the world, an’ I’m all he’s got. We — we could be something to each other if it wasn’t fer — whiskey — ”

In spite of the fact that it was going to be a dry Christmas, it was not long before the supply of liquor in the sack began to diminish. As if they felt it a religious rite and, as they said, went with the Christmas festivities, they emptied bottle after bottle.

After a time, it was proposed that they sing Christmas carols. Had it not been so sacrilegious, the sounds of their cracked old voices might have been humorous. But the very action set Posey to thinking. She watched them dimly. Her thoughts were remote.

“ Now that I’ve left the Aldens, what am I going to do? ” she asked herself. As if this question had been an open sesame into her future, it struck Posey with such vehemence that she rose and slipped out into the night.

The five old men were all too intoxicated by this time to notice her as she threw an old coat about her shoulders and slipped out upon the porch.

For a long time Posey stood looking into the black depths of the forest which closed in about her. She felt numb, insensible to thought. She tried to devise a plan for the years which lay ahead of her, but they were too dim and uncertain.

What a strange thing life was. The experience of the past months had opened her mind up into new and perplexing channels. Once she had dreamed of the people who lived in the world outside of the forest as being different from the people in Humptulips. If Tesa Alden was representative of them — There was little contrast between Tesa and the women of Humptulips. What matter whether one was called a bold huzzy or stupid and illiterate? Somehow the latter had sounded worse.

Yet again, there was Mr. Alden. Mr. Alden! The very thought of him reacted upon Posey like a stimulant. He was not disappointing. It was his kindness and the helpful things he said to her which made that strange surging in her breast; which made her feel, as she told Mother McKnight, that she wanted to be great inside —

The sound of the ribald voices from within reached Posey's ears. Through the window she could see the five old men. The sight of them nauseated her. That was what came of lives not well lived. Perhaps, if years ago her father had seen as she saw this night, he might have been a different man. A sob of pity and disgust rose in her breast. Looking tensely out into the darkness,

she clenched her fists until the nails cut into her flesh.

“No! No! I — I can’t go back to the old life. I don’t know what I’ll do but — but I must go on.”

When she went inside again, Posey shut her ears to the boisterous and thick-tongued attempt at the sacred old hymns. Going over to her cot she threw herself upon it and was soon fast asleep. She did not know how long the drinking continued through the night, but when she woke at daybreak the five old men were sprawled in chairs or upon the floor snoring heavily; the labored breathing of intoxication.

For a moment Posey felt she could not look upon them. She put her hands over her eyes. The whiskey-laden air inside was too sickening. She rose and sought the fresh air.

It was a beautiful morning, cold and frosty but promising a good day. The sun was just peeping above the wall of the forest. It was too chilly to walk aimlessly. She was obliged to move briskly.

She had not gone far when she saw some one coming up the road. As the person drew near Posey saw it was Alden. She was surprised.

“What can he be doin’ over here when the camp closed last week?”

When they met, Alden stopped. He bade her a “Merry Christmas.”

“I was just coming over to see you, Posey.” She looked up at him perplexed. He paused and

looked down at her gravely. "I want you to come back home —" Posey flushed but made no reply. "You made a mistake by leaving as you did last night," he went on. "You must come back — for your own sake —"

Although she could not understand why he insisted, Posey was moved by the tenderness of Alden's voice. Half ashamed, she looked down. She kicked at a pebble lying in the road.

"I—I—don't guess Mis Alden'll want me — after last night."

Alden said nothing for a moment. He was so filled with pity, and something else which he dare not admit to himself, that he felt he could hardly trust himself to speak for fear of revealing this other. His voice trembled when he spoke.

"But I want you — Posey —" A woman with a keener insight would have suspected what he wished to keep concealed, not only from what he said, but from the way he said it. As if to cover up what he had just said, he continued hastily: "Posey, you know what it means to your future. There is no other way for you — but to return. I know it is hard, but nothing worth while in this life comes without a struggle. You must not go back to the old life — I—I don't believe you could now."

Tears sprung to Posey's eyes. He had guessed her thoughts.

"No, no, Mr. Alden, I couldn't. Please, fergive me if it looks like I ain't 'preciated all the goodness

you've done fer me." She paused and studied him a moment. "But why do you want to do good things fer a— a girl like me —" She stopped. There was something in his eyes which she could not understand. Something which hurt her, and yet made her very happy. Her heart leapt, and for a moment she could not look at him.

Alden saw the slow flush mount to the girl's cheeks, but still he did not move. Although, almost unconscious of it as she, something strange and overpowering was stirring his soul also.

"Posey, you will come for me — won't you?"

When her eyes lifted again the expression of them was like two rising suns. A half-eager, half-afraid smile trembled on her lips, yet she was amazed by what she saw in his eyes. Alden was permitting himself to be drawn to her by this new and impelling force which had taken possession of him. Posey drew back in awe.

"Yes, Mr. Alden — I — I'll come — for you ——"

## CHAPTER XV

One morning late in spring Alden sought Tim out in the woods. He found him on the skid road, on his way toward where the fallers and buckers were working. Tim stopped a moment and, tipping back his hat, scratched his head thoughtfully. It was plain to see that he was in a meditative mood. He bent over and picking up a twig proceeded to break it into small pieces.

“ Well, Dave, she looks different than she did a year ago — ”

Alden looked thoughtfully out into the woods.

“ Yes, I think our prospects are good now.” He turned again to Tim. “ We have a splendid opportunity to buy some more timber. Have you ever been over Scotty McLean’s claim? ”

Tim shook his head.

“ No, I don’t think so.”

“ Scotty tells me he has about fifteen million on it — ”

“ Yep, I believe that all right. It’s a darn good claim.”

“ So I understand. Well, he handed me this cruise this morning. According to the cruise, it runs about two million hemlock, four of cedar and one and a half of spruce. The balance is fir of good quality. Scotty wants fifteen thousand



for it, but if his estimate is correct we will give him twenty thousand — ”

Tim nodded.

“ Yes, an’ then be away ahead of the game.”

“ That is what I thought, Tim. And I want to say that I have no desire to rob anyone up here. Of course I wish to succeed, but not unless I can play square with the other fellow.”

“ You bet your life, Dave, you said it.”

“ I was thinking that this would be a good buy,” continued Alden, “ and, under the circumstances, an almost necessary one. Remember you were saying, that time we were up in the woods several months ago, that we would have to go through Scotty’s claim to log the two sections behind it? That it would be the natural way?” Alden handed Tim the slip of paper with the cruise of Scotty McLean’s timber. Tim looked it over carefully and then handed it back.

“ I’m satisfied that Scotty is right with the cruise, Dave, but even at that we better check up on it to satisfy ourselves.”

“ Oh, most assuredly. I had intended that we should. This was merely to show if it was worth our while. The reason why he is selling so reasonably is that he wants to get down to California to his sister. It seems she is in bad health and he would like to leave as soon as he can make arrangements with us. When do you think we could go over there — ” Alden stopped suddenly.

“ Come to think of it I have to go to town in the

morning. I may not be back for several days. It is possible that I will have to go up on the Sound before I return. Do you suppose you — ”

“ Sure,” agreed Tim. “ I can go over it easy in a half a day. Think maybe I can get things lined up today so that I could run over there tomorrow afternoon.”

“ That will be fine if you can, Tim. I’m a bit anxious to begin getting a line-up on that timber.” Alden smiled. “ It won’t be long before we will be needing it.” They talked on for a time and then Alden turned and went back down the skid road.

Tim came in with the cruise one evening after Alden returned.

“ Well, old Scotty’s all right. It’s a good buy.”

When Tim left that evening Alden followed him outdoors. They leaned against the railing of the veranda and talked earnestly of the matter which was uppermost in their thoughts.

“ By the way, Tim, how do you like your new Tacoma yarder? ”

Tim’s face lighted in the evening dusk.

“ How do I like it ! Sa-ay, for all she’s only a nine an’ a quarter by ten, Dave, she’s a goin’ fool. Can do more yarding than anything I ever see before. Sure can make them big logs turn somersaults.”

Alden smiled. He was pleased with Tim’s approval of their latest buy. It was good to have the big generous Irishman’s appreciation of his

effort. Alden recognized a certain superiority in the man that he believed Tim, himself, did not know that he possessed. They were both silent for a time. Tim's gaze was out upon the skyline. Presently he turned to go.

"Well, guess I'll be gettin' back to camp."

Alden made a quick and decisive movement.

"Wait just a moment. I'll walk a ways over with you."

Tim nodded.

"Sure Mike."

Alden went in to get his hat. He met Posey in the hall on her way upstairs with Dunny.

"Tell Mrs. Alden I am going out for a while."

It was Dunny's bedtime and he was not accepting the fact gracefully. Kicking and scrambling, he fought to free himself from Posey. His father spoke to him sternly. After that the child ceased struggling and went on upstairs calmly. Alden joined Tim.

During the conversation while they walked up the road Alden asked Tim if he knew how many tools they had. Tim chuckled.

"Do I! Say, I know everything we've got from donkey engines to marlin spikes an' wire axes —"

"Don't think I'm trying to run a hardware store," Alden broke in hastily. "I am just checking up. I was so accustomed to system back there in Chicago that I cannot get away from it. Besides I believe it is a good habit. I cannot see

why system should not be applied to logging as well as any other industry."

"No reason on earth why it shouldn't."

"Do you think, Tim, there is anything else we could do to speed things up or make our outlook seem more successful?"

"Don't see what more you could ask for the prospects of the first year — With the two yarders an' the roader an' the loader, we're puttin' out more logs than I ever did in an outfit before."

Alden could not hide his approval of this last remark.

"Is that so?"

"Yep. We have all the equipment we need for the timber we have now. But after we cross Scotty's we'll have to log on them hills back o' his place with a high lead. Or, we might even have to have a sky line. Never be able to reach that timber in any other way."

"I was talking to a man up in Seattle about that the other day," said Alden. "He says the Ledgerwood is about the best you can get on that. They cost somewhere around fifteen or twenty thousand —"

Tim made no response for a moment.

"Well, of course, that's a long ways off yet, Dave. I guess when we come to it we'll be able to put 'er through."

They had reached the river. On the bridge, Alden paused. The two of them looked down into the water.

“Quite a turbulent river for its size,” said Alden.

“My God, yes — An’ I remember that it ain’t been long ago neither since they didn’t have nothin’ to cross this river with but a little old basket thing suspended on a cable. She’s a bear when she’s up, too. We didn’t have much of a freshet this last winter. This bridge has been a big improvement. Before it was put in, the people had to trust to God an’ good luck when they was crossin’ the river in the winter time.”

Again a peaceful silence fell between the two men. Presently Tim turned. “Well, guess I’ll be moseyin’ on.” He lingered a moment as if there was more he wished to say. He leaned back against one of the steel beams of the bridge and observed Alden thoughtfully. “How does she look to you now, Dave — Have you commenced to feel like a logger?”

Alden laughed lightly.

“Why, yes, I’ve felt like one all along. Haven’t I acted it?”

“Oh, yes. I can see you changing every day. You’ll soon get that eastern stuff worn off of you — ”

Alden accepted this jest as it was meant.

“Well, at any rate, I am beginning to feel more like a logger every day. This experience is awakening me to the western way of doing business. If a man is half on the square, I believe these Westerners will do anything to help him along.

“ I believe the Alden Logging Company is already in good financial standing. — ”

“ Yep, I think myself we’re over the hump,” agreed Tim.

“ We can borrow all the money we want on our personal notes,” Alden went on. “ Fortunately we do not require much. Many thanks to you, Tim, for your logging ability, I believe you have put us on top. That loan from the Hays & Hays Bank there last summer gave us just the boost we needed. Their president used us exceptionally well at a time when we were greatly in need of their support.”

Tim spat down into the water.

“ He sure used us white, all right.”

Alden became confidential.

“ Do you know, Tim, if my wife could only be contented here for a while, I would be the happiest man in the West — ”

Tim was a trifle amazed at this bit of information. A true Westerner himself, it seemed incredible that anyone could be dissatisfied with it.

“ Humph, don’t she like it? ”

“ No, the poor girl yearns continually to return to Chicago. Just as soon as our little girl is old enough to stand the trip, I think I shall insist upon her going back for a while. Perhaps, when she comes back, she will be more contented.”

Tim made no reply to this. Never having been married, he was in no position to offer sympathy or advice upon the perplexities of those who were.

Presently he held out his hand and clasped Alden's warmly before he went on his way. Alden watched his bulky form as it merged into the darkness. That hand-clasp pleased him. His heart warmed with good fellowship toward his big foreman.

"And yet, aren't they all more or less like Tim?" he asked himself.

He lingered on the bridge. The river was fascinating. The moon was rising, and it cast its silvery reflection upon the swiftly moving water. Alden watched the highlights playing along the ripples. He looked over at the somber outline of the forest, then back again at the river.

"What a wonderful night!" he thought. "Spring. May again." He listened to the voice of sleepy song-birds rising above the low murmur of the water; as if reluctant to give up their rejoicing until dawn came. The hoarse croaking of frogs floated over to him from a pool across the river.

"If only Tesa could see the promise in this wild country that I can see! But she does not seem to. She cannot see it in the men. She cannot see it in Posey. She thinks them all so uncouth. But the life they've lived! Under such conditions, how could they be otherwise?"

Alden recalled a recent conversation with a fellow logger regarding his dream of improving working conditions among the loggers.

"These men do desire better, but they are not conscious of it," he argued. To which the other did not agree. He insisted that the men in the woods

were hard-boiled — to use his own phrase — and desired nothing better than they had at present. He threw back his head and laughed boisterously.

“What are you talking about, man? Iron beds, clean blankets supplied by the company, bathtubs, showers! Why, Alden, you’d kill them with that sort of stuff. To begin with, they even wouldn’t fall for it. All them roughnecks want is a stake every four to six months so that they can go to town and raise hell with booze and sporting women until they get a belly-full, and then they’re ready to go back to work again.” The man paused a moment before he went on.

“Can’t tell me nothing about lumber jacks. Been with them for over twenty-five years. Got my start in the woods. I’m going to tell you that half of them boys haven’t got sense enough to know the difference between a piano and a crosscut saw.” He brought his fist down vehemently. “I know what I’m talking about.” Alden started to speak but the other waved him aside and continued:

“And dirt — why sa-ay, they pride themselves in the amount of dirt they can keep on their backs without it sliding off. By the Lord Harry, I’ll never forget one time they had to take one of the boys from my camp down to the Aberdeen General Hospital. Say, you can believe me or not but that sport came back up to camp and bragged that the nurse actually had to scrape the dirt off of him with a knife. Bragged on it! Said he give them a dose of what a real genuine hundred per cent



roughneck was like. He hadn't had a bath since he went to town the last time, four months before." The man slapped his legs and laughed uproariously as if this was a good joke.

Alden did not laugh. He shook his head.

"That doesn't convince me. I am determined to take this matter up with the Legislature during their next session in Olympia. It will take more than I have encountered yet to shake my faith —"

The other wagged his head doubtfully.

"Well, hop to it. It's up to you."

Standing there upon the bridge that evening, Alden went over the subject slowly and carefully. He remembered how he had discussed it further with his fellow logger that day. Perhaps his words were lost to this more sophisticated person, but he now recalled what he had said.

"I cannot believe that I am wrong in this dream. I believe the only reason that the men are as they are is because they have been made to feel that logging is entirely a commercial issue in which their boss's financial interest is at stake, and that they must work to this interest or lose their job."

The other man had laughed.

"Sure — why not?"

Disregarding this Alden went on.

"Yet, deep beneath all this, I believe the men do love their work or they would not follow it. If they did not love the great out-of-doors they would work in saw mills or at other professions where they would be sheltered during the long rainy

seasons — That alone is proof that there is a spark of the idealist in them. And, too, I know they take great pride in their profession. The hooktender feels that the camp could not operate without his skilful aid. The faller and the buckler feel likewise, the rigging slinger, the swamper and every man to the bull cook and the whistle punk.”

The other man agreed to this.

“ But why all these high and mighty ideas about it? You got me going. All that stuff is over my head.”

Alden recalled a more recent conversation with another who had hooted at his idealistic views regarding working men. Alden had said that he believed the average working man, not only loggers but all the laboring class, if they themselves were not especially interested in the poetry and the beautiful things of life, were at least tolerant of them. At the word poetry, the other guffawed loudly and told Alden not to try any of that on the loggers. They were not a sentimental class, to say the least of it. Alden explained that he did not mean verse, but poetry in a sense of the word; he referred to that ideal realm of life created by the imagination.

“ Many of these men are great scholars,” he said, “ but through a certain weakness of the flesh they have never put their knowledge to any use.”

He pointed out men in his own camp. Hoggens, the poet, Sky Pilot. Men who, though their interpretation might be crude, did at least cherish a

desire in their heart to improve their own lives and to influence those about them. Many of the men were skilful in some line or other.

Old Sours was a wonderful student of psychology; Claude drew amazingly clever pen and ink sketches; Happy Lenon was well read and had the soul of an artist; old Whitey might have been a musical genius if he had had a musical education in his younger days. Many of the men could sing well for those whose voices were untrained. Mike Higgens was an expert at wood carving. At Christmas time he had presented the children with the cleverest toys he had carved out of yew wood, and there was a gay fan for Mrs. Alden. And there was Mr. Molly, who could equal any woman in needlework —

“All this proves that these men do have artistic temperament,” he told the man. “They have a love for the beautiful, but they are too busy looking out for material needs—carving and hewing the forest so that people who selfishly follow their art may have houses to live in while they are doing so.”

The other man tapped his brow significantly.

“All that stuff is in your head, Alden. Because you are an idealist, you have a sneaking little thought that everybody would be if they were given the opportunity. You’re all wrong. If any of these loggers ever had a soul it’s been dead so long that he’s forgotten about it. You might say they are spiritual derelicts, as well as material derelicts, which most of them are —”

Alden shook his head.

“What makes them derelicts, still holding up the bulwarks of a mighty industry, like the rotten, barnacle-eaten, wooden pilings of a wharf that sooner or later must be replaced by concrete?”

“I don't know. You got me.”

“It is the indifference of the employer to the social and moral welfare of his men that makes them what they are.” Alden paused and looked at the other tensely. “Some day I am going to prove to you logging men of Gray's Harbor, and to every cold and unsympathetic employer in America that there is a great urge surging in the breast of every working man in our country to better his life and to live to the best that is in him. This is no longer the day of the chattel slave. This is the day of the individual — the man.”

Standing there on the bridge that night Alden raised his eyes from the silver and deep purple of the river to the moon sailing in the star-bedecked sky. As he looked far into that multi-colored firmament his spirit began to lift upward. As he had so often done since he was a small boy, he was reaching out into space for understanding, for a greater knowledge of the mysteries of life.

His heart went out to the multitudes of unfortunate and misunderstood souls whose lives were dulled by the unceasing struggle for their daily bread.

“Oh, there is — there is a great urge in the breast of every man,” he cried, “an urge to better his life.

I not only hope and believe it, I know it. And each man harkens to that urge in accordance to the strength of his own weakness; the resistance of his own driving force; to the expanse of his knowledge of the better things of life. Those who believe that this is not so — are wrong. It is merely that the lives of the working men are in chaos, their minds stagnated. No, no, their souls are not dead — but sleeping — ”



# BOOK III

## THE SILENT CALL





## CHAPTER XVI

Horace Wainright, bachelor and wealthy club man of Chicago, stood in the bedroom of his apartment adjusting his necktie before the mirror. He twisted and pulled at it for a time and yet, as if possessed with an evil influence, could not get it as he wanted it. Either it was a fraction of an inch too far to one side or the other, or the knot was not just so. Becoming impatient, Wainright called to his valet.

“ William, get me another tie. There is something wrong with this one. I have tried for over a half hour to get this one right and still it balks — ”

Coming in from the next room, the dutiful William searched through an array of expensive neckties until he found one that pleased Wainright. Certain that he was satisfied, William placed the stock of neckties precisely back upon the beautifully hand-carved rack and was again leaving the room when Wainright called to him.

“ William, I am thinking of going on that proposed trip to Yellowstone Park with the Van Stellars and the Sturtevant's and their party. I may call you this afternoon. They leave tomorrow morning.” He turned and looked at William.

“ Be ready to pack on a moment's notice.”

“ Yes, sir. Is there anything more, sir?”

“ No, that is all.”

William departed.

On his way down in the elevator of the elaborate apartment house where Wainright made his home, when he was at home, a strange thought came to him. Quite unexpectedly an acquaintance of former days whom he had not thought of but casually for months leaped into his mind. Unusual mental pictures flitted before him. Yellowstone National Park. The West — then a pause.

There swam before him vague thoughts of the past. The past! What had it to do with the West? Another pause — Tesa Fennel. Why, Tesa Fennel, of course! Yet, what connection had she with this proposed trip to Yellowstone? Then he remembered.

“What a numbskull I am! The last I heard of Tesa, her primordial hero, whom she married against her parents' wishes, had carried her out west. I now remember having met the mater at a reception several months afterward. Cannot forget how she wept into her point lace hanky, and stated how the big brute had just borne her darling away in a most crude and uncouth manner. Had Tesa not been willing, both Tesa's father and herself should have interfered.”

But what was one to do? It seemed he had been the man of her choice, although they each believed that he must have had a dreadfully hypnotic influence over Tesa — Did Mr. Wainright realize how painful it was to her dear father and mother? The only child! And they had set such hopes on

her. She was such a dear; so beautiful and cultured. Whatever could she have seen in this David Alden, and he a clerk in her father's office, unless it was, as they said, that he had influenced her hypnotically? Well, that was the outcome of allowing one's child to become too familiar with her father's employees —

Wainright wondered now if after five years Tesa's parents had become any more reconciled.

“Don't suppose when she married her primordial hero, Tesa had any idea that she was not always going to nestle in the lap of luxury or she might not have been so eager to turn me down for him,” thought Wainright as he made his way up the street. “Everyone knew what money and social standing meant to the Fennels —” He paused. “But, by heaven, wherever in the West is Tesa? The West is a big country —” He stopped suddenly in the street; uncertain as to just what course of procedure to take. “At any rate, she is somewhere between the Mississippi and the Pacific Ocean.”

Several moments later Wainright was in a telephone booth telling William to make preparations to join the party leaving for Yellowstone the following morning.

In his stateroom the next day Wainright leaned contentedly against the velours back of his seat, and watched the panorama of Illinois cornfields and farmhouses and numerous small towns unfold swiftly as they passed.

Wainright's complacency had nothing to do with his having finally consented to join the party going west. In truth he was not altogether satisfied with himself regarding this. The Van Stellars and the Sturtevents and their crowd were representative of the upper crust of Chicago's ultra-exclusive. To one who prided himself on being something of a cosmopolite, such persons were more or less of a bore.

But there was something novel in going out into the vast and undeveloped regions west of the Mississippi in search of the woman one may have loved at one time, in answer to what had seemed, whether imaginary or otherwise, a telepathic message from her. Wainright felt himself suddenly exalted, like Sir Launfal in search of the Holy Grail. Yet upon second thought he believed he was more of a Lothario in search of a new love intrigue.

During the journey he kept as much to himself as it was possible and avoid suspicion. However, he was suspected, and some of the party even went so far as to question him regarding his apparent broodiness. The women wondered if he were ill. The men wondered if he were in love — again.

The trip to Yellowstone did prove disappointing. "There isn't a good fellow in the bunch," Wainright grumbled to himself one night after he had gone to bed. And he believed he had just cause for complaint.

If he asked one of the young women of his party

to take a walk to a certain point of interest, she was terribly sorry, but she had promised so and so that she would do something else; which, one might be sure, took no physical effort to perform. The men were scarcely less frustrating. It was not long before Wainright learned that, if he wished to view any part of the scenery not accessible from the hotels or the convenient highways, he would have to cut out by himself.

He was thoroughly disgusted as he recalled the haughty Mrs. Van Stellar holding her costly lorgnette up to see the sun on the Rockies when the glow was so brilliant that a blind man could see it.

“ Oh, how chawmed I am,” she had gurgled, to which the ponderous Mrs. Sturtevant had echoed: “ Chawmed, indeed.”

The mincy little Miss Guff-Jordan would pipe, “ Isn't nature amazing!”

“ Amazing isn't the word!” chimed the rat-eyed Reginald Gorwalden, as he always chimed to the tune of anything that little Miss Guff-Jordan would say.

Wainright wondered if this was the reason he had suddenly become obsessed with the idea that he wanted to get away out somewhere in the wilderness and hide until he was willing and glad to get back to the world of people again. The gorgeous beauty of the Park reacted upon him as nothing in the city could.

One day he talked with a fellow traveler who

had been all over the West. Wainright was asked if he had visited Rainier National Park. He replied that this was his first trip west of the Mississippi.

“Then you have missed something. I have met with people who have travelled all through Europe, and they say there is no more beautiful scenery in the world than on Puget Sound, from which you get a splendid view of Mount Rainier and the Cascade Mountains to the south and east.”

Wainright was interested. He asked many questions regarding the Puget Sound country. He learned that the Sound was a great body of water, an inlet of the Pacific Ocean. He also learned that there were two rising cities situated upon the Sound; Seattle and Tacoma. Among other interesting topics, the stranger told him of Lake Quinault; a tiny fresh-water lake rising out of the Olympic Mountains. The Olympics, he informed, were even more picturesque than the Cascades. They, too, could be seen to the north of Seattle and Tacoma.

“You never saw such fishing! Dolly Varden, mountain trout, salmon trout — the prettiest you ever looked upon.” The man smiled reminiscently. “Perhaps you think it isn’t the best sport in the world to go out and make a catch before breakfast and bring them into camp to fry upon an open fire.” This made Wainright’s mouth water.

The man told him of the hunting in the Olympic

Mountains. Deer, elk, bear, wildcats — everything from rabbit and grouse to mountain lions. Before he had finished, Wainright determined that this was the spot for which he yearned. Two days later he set out for Seattle.

During his stay in Seattle and Tacoma on his way to Rainier Park, Wainright was somewhat surprised at the size of these two sister cities situated forty miles apart on Puget Sound.

“Why, they are real cities!” he thought as he looked up Second Avenue in Seattle and noted the number of tall buildings which climbed skyward. He marveled at the smooth broad streets of Tacoma and its attractive schools and public buildings.

“It does one good to come out here to your country,” he told a man at the Rainier-Grand in Seattle. “We Easterners imagine that this is still the wild and woolly West, when the truth is, you are about as far advanced in every line as we are.”

Rainier National Park proved to be as recommended. Words could not describe the natural beauty of that vast undeveloped region. Wainright was fascinated by the great white peak Rainier which, as one approached it, had the peculiar aspect of keeping a trifle in the distance as if it were something intangible, to be kept aloof from the contact of man. In fact it had an almost weird, spectral appearance, as if the mountain were not there at all, but that which was seen was a vision of something that had been.

However, during his stay in the Park, Wainright climbed the peak and learned that it was, in truth, very much there and a most difficult mountain to climb. With other mountaineers he took long tramps to the ice caves of Nisqually Glacier, the Narada Falls, Indian Henry's trail and many other points of interest.

The latter part of July he was ready to move on to Quiniault Lake, two hundred and fifty miles to the north.

His friend at Yellowstone Park had told him that since he had missed the best season of fishing, which was in May, he would, doubtless, enjoy the August season, when there was not only trout in the lake and river, but also the famous Quiniault salmon, which came up the river in masses to spawn during the latter part of August and the first of September.

Wainright came to Gray's Harbor by rail. From there he went to Moclips, a small village on the ocean. After spending a few days beside the turbulent Pacific, he made arrangements with an Indian guide to take him on to Quiniault Lake by boat. This in itself was a most wonderful adventure.

They poled up the Quiniault River to the lake. There were places where the rapids were so swift that they were obliged to get out and walk around them; the guide carrying the canoe on his back.

"This is real pioneering," thought Wainright as he tramped through the trails scarcely discernible beneath the thick overhanging underbrush.



He employed the guide to remain with him during his stay in the Olympics. The Indian seemed exceptionally efficient, and knew all the essential small items about roughing it, of which Wainright had no knowledge.

They made a camp across the lake from the small hotel for tourists, which was on the south shore. Each morning Wainright was up bright and early, but never too early to find Charley Mitchell, the guide, ready with the row boat to go out to catch their breakfast.

The days were one continuation of brilliant sunshine; but only moderately warm. This was a welcome contrast to the stifling heat of the eastern city.

Their camp offered a splendid view of the mountains. They could see far up the valley. Mount Baldy, over which the sun rose each morning, stood in the foreground. Behind it, Colonel Bob, and beyond that rose the full chain of the Olympics; their blue-rimmed peaks piercing the deep azure sky in a jagged line as far as the eye could see.

Behind their camp and to the west, Lone Mountain stood like a solitary sentinel, obscure and somber except when the evening sun, dipping down into the western horizon, left a trail of gold that pierced its shadows.

During the following weeks Wainright and his guide took many long excursions up the valley. They climbed Baldy, the most difficult peak in the

Olympics, and even ventured into the far reaches of the snow caps. They got some small game, but the guide explained that it was yet too early in the season for big hunting. The deer and elk would not come down out of the mountains before autumn.

Charley Mitchell proved to be an interesting companion. During the long cool evenings while they smoked before a camp fire, he told Wainright many interesting tales of the early history of the Quiniault country. He told of his own tribe, the Quiniault Indians, and the Hoh Indians of the Hoh Reservation to the north.

Wainright was in his element. Now he was alone! To be more emphatically alone he had sent William back to Chicago when he left Rainier Park; expressing his desire to look after his own neckties and fold his own trousers until his return.

The wild life fascinated him. Of course, he reflected, it might eventually become monotonous, doubtless it would, but he almost wished that he could decide to spend a year right there in the restful haven of the Olympic Mountains.

## CHAPTER XVII

During the four years that elapsed, Alden had succeeded in getting the gravel road through from Hoquiam to Humptulips. The new road ran along the Humptulips River bed, instead of the upper Hoquiam, to New London, where it left the river and cut through the forest.

Impatient from being put off from time to time with a promise that they would soon start grading, he had at last gone to Montesano, the county seat, and put the proposition up very emphatically before the County Commissioners. The result was that they started the road as soon as the weather permitted, with the assurance that work would begin upon a gravel road from Humptulips to Quiniault within a very short time.

Four years had wrought a vast change in the Alden Logging Works. Scotty McLean's claim had been logged off and now they were on the section back of it. Much to Tim's pride, they were logging this hillside timber with the aid of a high lead. This being such an improvement over the old method, they got far more than their quota of logs per week.

The Alden Logging Company was rated in Bradstreet and Dun as being worth upward of about three hundred thousand. Alden was classed

among the most successful loggers on the Harbor. Moreover, he was soon to get a hearing before the Legislature regarding the placing of steel beds, blankets furnished by the employer, baths and showers in the logging camps.

This hearing, however, moved as slowly as the promise of work upon the road. But, believing that eventually he would win his point, he did not despair. It became evident that Alden was not the only person working upon this issue.

There rose up a class of men in the West, a branch of those who had been operating for some time in the East, who called themselves Independent Workmen of the World. It was not many months before this wave of independence seeped into the logging camps. Among the first objects of dissatisfaction agitated by these men was the unsanitary conditions under which they were obliged to live. They demanded that the employer furnish decent quarters for the men, otherwise there would be a walkout.

Accustomed for years to the men accepting the state of things as they chose to give them, the heads of the logging companies all up and down the Harbor were hostile. Conferences were held to discuss these antagonists who had crept surreptitiously into the realm of the old-time peace-loving logger.

“What’s the damn country coming to when the men who work for you try to run your affairs?” many of them grumbled. The outcome of the

conferences was that the employers formed a body to fight the Independent Workmen of the World. Alden was invited to join them, but refused.

“ You don’t mean to say that you uphold them wobblies! ” one of his colleagues furiously demanded. Alden shook his head.

“ Most emphatically not. I uphold no man in the pursuit of wrong. But regarding this demand for better sanitary conditions — I know they are right. We employers should give our men better living quarters. You know what my attitude has been all along — ”

Alden paused and smiled that peculiar smile of his which his fellow loggers were beginning to learn was by no means a yielding smile.

“ It strikes me as being somewhat amusing that these men should beat me to a matter upon which I have been working for over four years. Did it not seem that there is so much red tape to these favors granted by the State, I should have had a bill passed long ago — ”

Another man broke into the conversation.

“ But the men have been satisfied for years as they are. If it hadn’t been for these confounded I. W. W.’s — ”

“ We were satisfied to believe that the world was flat until we learned that it wasn’t, ” cut in Alden.

His fellow loggers did not altogether get his point of view, but they ceased arguing with him. Alden could see that this obstinacy was separating him from the other logging men of the Harbor,

few of whom agreed with his, what they considered eccentric, views. But believing that he was right he continued fearlessly.

Although he was climbing rapidly in the world of commerce, matters were not going well with Alden and his family. During the early spring of their second year in Washington, Tesa had taken the children and gone east. They had stayed until almost Christmas time. On her return, instead of being content, Tesa was even more dissatisfied than before. She often became disagreeable and quarrelsome. This grieved Alden more than her old manner of arrogance. One evening when she had been unusually obdurate, he questioned her.

“Tesa, why have you come to magnify my faults so? Your manner would almost indicate that you no longer love me —” He paused to wait for her answer. When she did not reply at once, he went on: “When one truly loves, one can endure the faults of those one loves.” He looked at her whimsically, but still Tesa refused to reply. Alden went to her side and stood looking down upon her as he had so often done in the past.

“I am afraid, dear, that unless we work better together in the future than we have in the past — I’m — I’m afraid our married state is going to go to perdition —”

Tesa interrupted him.

“Well, if you must know the truth, I can give it to you.”

He put an arm about her. She drew away to

avoid the hurt look that she knew was in his eyes, but he observed her calmly.

“ Yes, I would like to know the truth.”

She turned to him again, her lips curling insolently.

“ What you just hinted is true. I no longer love you.”

Alden pretended not to be amazed by this sudden declaration, yet she saw a slight tremor pass over him.

“ Oh, Tesie, I cannot believe that,” he returned gently.

She frowned and braced herself against this wave of tenderness. His very kindness antagonized her, because it was harder to meet than if he resented or scorned her.

“ It is true, nevertheless. You are repulsive to me. I — I wish that I might never see you again. I — why, sometimes I even hate you! ”

Alden drew away from what he saw in her eyes. They horrified him. He had never seen such bitterness in a woman's eyes before. There was a moment of rigid silence between them. He wanted time to think. Presently he spoke:

“ Tesa, I scarcely can believe that you mean what you say. Surely your nerves are ragged again tonight. Let us dismiss the subject for the present and talk of it at some future time when you feel more calm.”

Tesa flushed. She turned and faced him fiercely.

“ But I am calm tonight! If my nerves are ragged it is from living month in and month out at the end of the earth with a man I despise! ”

Alden put up his hands as if to ward off a blow.

“ Tesa, how can you despise me when I have always tried to make you so happy? ”

“ Yes, you have tried to make me happy by opposing me in every desire — by striving to mould me over into the kind of woman you would wish me to be — ”

He smiled bitterly.

“ In spite of our being so intensely in earnest, Tesa, this is somewhat amusing. That is the very thing you tried to do with me when we were first married. If I have turned the tables on you, it should be a fair exchange — ”

This merely added to Tesa's fire.

“ Oh, don't try to be humorous in such a moment as this! Getting to the point, I wish to tell you that just as soon as arrangements can be made, I intend to take my children and go home to my parents — ”

Alden lifted a warning hand. He strove to appear calm, but his breast heaved. For the first time in their married life, she had angered him deeply.

“ No, you will not take the children, Tesa. ”

Tesa's eyes flashed.

“ Do you think if I should divorce you that I would give up my children? ”

“ No, indeed, you shall not give up *our* children



—because you are not going to get a divorce.”

She flung back her head defiantly.

“ And who said I was not, pray? ”

Her presumption was infuriating. Alden went white with rage.

“ I said so! ”

Before he could control himself, Alden caught her arm fiercely.

“ But you won't, Tesa. Regardless of what you think of me, you are going to stay with me because you have borne two children by me. The welfare of those children is more important than the flimsy desires of either you or me.” Tesa struggled to free herself, but he grasped her more tightly. “ My son and daughter are not going to grow up to face the disgrace of divorced parents.” He released her, and stood facing her tensely; a triumphant light in his eyes. “ Now — after that don't you think it better to become reconciled? ”

Tesa's only reply was a dark scowl and “ You brute! ” she cried as she fled from the room. She did not know that Alden paced up and down for hours during that long night and fought the storm of anger and disappointment and humiliation that raged in his breast.

During that interval Posey sometimes came into his thoughts. He recalled that during the past four years, Posey had changed more than he had even hoped for. She was developing into splendid womanhood, but a womanhood more magnificent than that of which he had dreamed.

The strange attraction that Alden had felt for Posey since the first time he saw her, had increased as the months passed. He fought it as any true gentleman would fight a matter which he believed detrimental to his state of righteous manhood. But since that Christmas morning four years before, when he had met Posey in the road, he knew that his interest in her was not all pity. Yet, with all this, he never for one moment forgot his rigid duty toward his wife and children. Even though Posey lived in his home, she suspected least of any person in the household or in the community the struggle which was going on in David Alden's breast.

This night, after the painful interview with Tesa, he thought it best to put Posey out of his mind. In fact he reprimanded himself and wondered if this deceptive influence had any bearing upon his life with Tesa.

“ But I know that this feeling I have for Posey is something too high and noble for reproach,” he declared to himself. “ It is what I had hoped to find in Tesa — but at last I have come to know that Tesa is one of those who look upon love as being a matter which does not rise above a physical plane. After the bitter experience this evening, I am convinced that if she and I can never meet even on a physical plane it is hopeless to desire to ever rise above it — ” With this unhappy acquiescence he returned home and crept wearily to his room.

Several evenings later Alden was coming in from camp. Some one was ahead of him, but as it was just growing dusk, he could scarcely recognize who it was until he drew near. When he saw the tilt of her head and the graceful movements of her body, he knew that it was Posey. He walked swiftly until he overtook her. Posey was both pleased and surprised. She stopped to greet him.

He wondered if she was conscious of the picture she made as she stood there in the half-light of the evening, her eyes as limpid as the shadows off in the woods, her hair gleaming as if it still retained a splash of the last rays of the sun which reddened the sky above them.

As they moved leisurely along, something of the enchanted spirit of that summer evening crept into both their veins. They talked but little. The twittering chorus of the birds in the branches above them and the wind sighing through the trees played a tune too exalted to be interrupted by mere commonplace speech. Darkness came on; that intense, alluring darkness of the forest.

While she walked by his side, Alden felt the fullness of Posey's vital youth. Glancing at the shadow of her fine profile he thought of the promise of splendid womanhood she portrayed.

"What a woman she is going to be! What a wife for some man!"

As if she divined the thread of his thoughts, Posey suddenly stopped in the road. She surprised him by asking:

“ Mr. Alden, do you believe in love? ”

Amazed by her question, he could not answer at once. “ Why — why, yes, Posey. That is — I always have. Why do you ask? ”

“ Well, Mother McKnight was talking with me about love this afternoon. Aunt Sally Mullen and a lot of the people in Humptulips keep wondering why I have never fell — fallen in love. They keep talking to me about it until now I’m beginning to wonder myself. I asked Mother McKnight today what she thought was the reason I never have fell — fallen in love and she says it is because I have never found my mate. When I come to think about it, I wonder if I’ll know it when I do find him —

“ Aunt Sally and the women in Humptulips say there is a reason to worry when I’m nineteen already and nearly all the girls here are married and got babies, some of them, before they are that old. Aunt Sally and them think they’ve got a right to worry about me — Have they? ”

Alden studied a moment.

“ There is no set rule as to the age a girl should marry, Posey. I believe Mother McKnight is correct: you have not found your mate.”

“ But how am I going to know when I do? ”  
Posey’s voice rang with a true note of alarm.

Alden felt like telling her that some girl was asking that same question every moment of every day of the year throughout time. But in the shadow he could see her panting, breathless with

excitement. The matter was too momentous to be considered lightly.

“ I—I want to know, Mr. Alden. I thought perhaps you could tell me.” She hesitated. “ You—you seem to know everything — ”

Posey’s fervor was contagious. A moment before Alden’s heart had leapt, but now the same sensation of power which she always made him feel, dominated the pounding of his pulses. Something in what she had just said sustained him and reminded him of the difference in their years and mental status.

“ That is nice of you to say, Posey. But there are many things I do not know.” He thought of the interview with his wife several evenings before. “ Some things I thought I knew, I have learned were wrong — ”

Posey caught the hint of sorrow in his voice. She drew nearer to him. Suddenly she half sensed the same powerful vibrations which had passed between them on that Christmas morning four years before. But she was conscious only of deepest appreciation when she said:

“ Mr. Alden, I—I think you are the grandest man I ever knew.” The sweetness and the earnestness of her voice moved him deeply.

“ Thank you, Posey. I wish everyone regarded me as highly.”

This surprised her. “ Why, don’t they? ”

“ Not everyone — no — ”

This appealed to her sympathetic heart. Posey

reached her hand out to him in the darkness. Alden's hand closed over hers, and something in that clasp overpowered them both. In another moment Posey was in his arms, tense, animated, trembling, her tear-wet cheek pressed against his.

Too overwhelmed to realize what he was doing, Alden clung to her like one who has wandered a lifetime and only at last found that for which he was seeking. While he held her against his breast, it seemed as if there had come to his soul a silent call, and in that call sounded the triumphant declaration that in this great-hearted child-woman of the forest he had found his mate —

And then he remembered. With keen remembrance came the truth. His life was linked with that of another, a woman who did not love him, who loathed him and because they had borne two children together, they must go on to the end.

Bitter remorse smote him. He put Posey away from him gently, as one turns from that which everything in his being desires, yet which he knows he must not have. In that instant his beautiful vision suffered a painful reaction.

Posey misunderstood him. "Oh, Mr. Alden, I — I'm so ashamed!"

He put out his hand and stroked her head gently.

"No, dear, don't be ashamed. Sometime—some-time perhaps I can explain this to you —" His voice trembled. "But I cannot explain it — tonight."

## CHAPTER XVIII

One brilliant afternoon, right after the first of September, Wainright and his Indian guide were hunting far up on a mountain side. The guide had explained that the bear kept to the prairies and the mountain sides during the blackberry and huckleberry season.

A distance ahead of Wainright, the guide presently motioned him to keep still and creep stealthily. Following quietly, they came to a small clearing where a patch of wild blackberries ran riot along the ground and over fallen logs. On their haunches before a bush of luscious berries, an old mother bear and two cubs were greedily raking the fruit into their mouths with their forepaws. Too small to reach the bush sitting, the cubs stood by their mother's side.

The guide watched Wainright's face. Pointing at his gun, he leaned over and whispered: "No shoot 'em when got cub." Wainright shook his head and smiled.

Later the guide told Wainright of the cruel slaughter of the wild animals, especially the deer and the elk when the cows were heavy with young or still nursing their calves. Many a female animal had been shot at this time and the young were left in the woods to starve. However, in later

years the law prohibiting the killing of certain animals except during a stated season had given them greater protection.

Often during these wanderings the Indian related his trapping experiences and, although told in the stoic manner of the undemonstrative Siwash, it was nevertheless thrilling to the hearer. Wainright decided to spend the winter in the Olympic Mountains and trap with the Indian.

"Why not," he wrote a friend in Chicago. "As far as it has gone, this is the life. I imagine a year might be sufficient, but it is an amazingly attractive contrast from the tiresome routine of society. Not that I am off with the social whirl, understand. No doubt by spring I will be anxious to get back to it. But for the present, yours truly intends to bury himself right here in the heart of the Olympics.

"I have succeeded in renting the cabin of an old homestead across the lake from what they call the town site. I have converted this old log cabin into a most inviting lodge. Overlooking the lake and the valley of the Olympics makes it an ideal spot."

Going over for his mail one morning Wainright learned there was much excitement abroad. The Atlantic Fleet, which was making a cruise up into the North Pacific waters, was leaving three big battleships, and Dewey's flagship, the *Olympia*, in Gray's Harbor for several days. There was to be a big Labor Day celebration in honor of the



event. Ranchers from far and near, Indians from the reservations, and loggers and mill workers all up and down the Harbor had planned a carnival to demonstrate to the official staff and the sailors of the fleet a true exhibition of the new West.

There were to be boat races, foot races, log-rolling and rapid tree-falling contests and many other manifestations of the workmen's skill.

The representatives of each Indian tribe were to pitch their tents down on the shore of the Harbor, where they would sell beads, baskets and ornaments cleverly made by hand in exchange for whatever the purchaser chose to give them. They chose fire water. There was a law against the giving or selling of fire water to the Indians but, perhaps, if they were careful—it had been managed before.

Riding the fifty miles to town on horseback, Wainright found the two small towns rife with excitement. The streets were gorgeously decorated with flags and bunting. The shrill buzz of saw mills was now replaced by the music of a merry-go-round calliope, both town and military bands and the loud voice of the throng.

In a pen, just off of the main street, a rancher had his band of tame elk; driven down from Quiniault for the occasion. They were an object of great concern to the sailors from the ships.

Wainright soon fled from the raucous street carnival and sought out the athletic contests. Never having seen it before, the log-rolling con-

test interested him most. It seemed incredible that two men could remain on a log when it was spinning in the water as if revolving on a pivot. With pike-pole in hand, the game was to see which logger could stay on the log the longer. From here Wainright went to watch the Indians in a canoe-poling contest. From there to the pole-vaulting and swimming and high-diving contests.

The most imposing feature of the day was the presentation of a pair of cub bears to the sailors of each boat. It was amusing to see two old loggers — Paddy McTigh and Jim McGovern of the Alden Logging Company's Camp No. 2, it was announced — as they solemnly offered the fuzzy little animals which they had captured in the woods several weeks before.

“An', b'lieve me, it's no small job, I want to tell yez,” Paddy added, as he handed over his gift to the captain in charge of Dewey's flagship, the *Olympia*.

Clinging greedily to a nursing bottle from which the milk was fast disappearing, the two cubs did not stop for ceremonies when the captain held them up for the crowd to view. Their little stomachs protruded like that of an overloaded puppy, but they were determined not to give up until the last drop was exhausted.

After a time Wainright wandered over to an open pavilion where, that afternoon, speeches were to be made. It was still early. The seats were almost entirely vacant. Taking off his hat to cool

his head, he fanned himself while he looked out upon the street. He fell to studying the different types of the excited throng which moved back and forth before him. He believed he had never seen a more varied crowd.

There were lumberjacks, dressed up for the occasion, but the peculiar swing of their shoulders divulged their occupation. Mill men, sailors, loggers, ranchers, women and children of all sizes and classes bumped shoulders while they marched to and fro.

A rancher's lusty wife passed with her brood of young clinging to her skirts. Two young couples, greedily devouring crackerjack, came giggling up the street. The girls, clad in bright-colored cotton dresses, looked about them self-consciously; the boys, decked out in flaming ties and purple socks, a gay ribbon with "Atlantic Fleet 190-" banding their hats, strutted cocksurely by their side. A well-to-do lumberman's wife swept up the street in a regal manner, a son and a daughter on either side of her, their set faces fixed ahead as if they dare not look upon the common herd. Little girls with long, sleek braids and rosy cheeks strode along hand in hand. Small urchins hurried past, shouting in high, shrill voices. Sober-faced fathers wheeling baby carriages moved slowly along; the mother either hot and flushed or calmly following. Old men and women tottered by, their dim eyes lighted from the stimulant of this unusual commotion.

Wainright smiled.

“ Ah, so this is the rabble of the West. After all, the earth isn't so large. There is not a great degree of difference between the rabble of Gray's Harbor, Washington, and that of Chicago. Kipling is right — ”

He turned from the crowd outside to the people filing in the pavilion to hear the “speakin'.” He looked on absently for a time, when presently his attention was attracted by a woman and a child who sat across from him. The woman's face was turned, but there was something strangely familiar about her profile. The child, a handsome boy, sat wearily upon his mother's lap. He appeared very tired, but not too tired to ask questions.

“ Mother, did the man thank Paddy McTigh and Jim Govern for the baby bears? ”

“ Yes, Dunny.”

“ And did they like the baby bears — the soldiers? ”

“ You mean the sailors — ”

“ Yes. Did the sailors like the baby bears? ”

She nodded.

“ I think so.”

“ And will the little baby bears be happy on the boats? ”

“ Oh, yes, of course.”

“ But if the boat goes down in the water, will the little bears go drowned? ”

“ No, the sailors would save them.”

“ But if they didn't save them, would the little bears go drowned? ”

“ I expect they would swim.”

“ Can baby bears swim? ”

“ Yes.”

“ But if the baby bears couldn't swimm'd would they go drowned? ”

The mother looked down at the child impatiently. Wainright could see that she had wearied of his unceasing questions.

“ Oh, Dunny, give me a rest, please! ”

The boy looked about him for a moment heavy-eyed. Presently he leaned back against his mother's breast and was soon asleep. A tall young girl leading a chubby baby of about four years came up the aisle and stopped beside the woman. Jumping up and down and patting her small hands with glee, the baby indicated a number of ice-cream cones which the girl carried carefully.

“ One fo' Posey an' one fo' Dunny an' one fo' Sissy Mobo an'—an' one fo' Muzzy, too! ”

Handing the ice cream to the woman, the girl took the sleeping boy. The baby climbed into her mother's lap. When the mother bent over to pick her up, Wainright got a good view of her face.

“ Tesa! ” he gasped, almost aloud. “ I might have known that profile belonged to no other. Tesa Fennel — away out here at the end of the earth — ” He proceeded to study her. His keen conception of analysis took in the entire situation in an instant. “ Tesa has aged too much for her. She is still beautiful, but there is a weary expression about her eyes. I do not like that. She is too

healthy to have that from physical suffering. It is mental. She is not happy." With a quick nervous movement he rose and crossed the aisle.

So many people were coming in, Tesa did not notice anyone standing before her until she chanced to look up. She recognized him at once.

"Horace — am I seeing right?"

He held out his hand.

"I think so, Tesa."

Tesa gave him her hand. As his fingers closed over her cool slender fingers, Wainright thought of the last time he had held them. It was the night she broke their engagement. Wainright smiled.

There was both warmth and sympathetic appeal in the eyes Tesa lifted to his. He noted this.

"And whatever are you doing away out here, Horace?"

He dropped down upon the seat beside her.

"And whatever are you doing away out here?"

"You know I came here the year after I married."

His brows lifted slightly.

"And I came here — looking for you —"

Tesa cast a swift glance at Posey. But by this time Dunny had awakened. Posey was busy watching the children to see that they did not spill their ice cream. Obviously she was paying no attention to what anyone else was saying or doing. Tesa turned to Wainright again. She smiled whimsically.

"Oh, Horace, don't be absurd. Tell me about

yourself. What have you been doing since I last saw you? ”

In a low voice he proceeded to give her a brief sketch of himself from the time they parted years before to the trip to the Yellowstone, Mount Rainier and then finally on to Quiniault. By this time the speeches had begun. Tesa and Wainright heard nothing. The children grew restless. Tesa told Posey to take them outside.

Wainright tossed Posey a dollar.

“ There, give them all the rides they want on the merry-go-round.” He turned to Tesa. “ It won’t hurt them, will it? ”

“ It hurts when they have to stop,” whispered Posey. She put the coin in her purse and led the children away.

As they scrambled up the aisle clinging to Posey’s hand, Wainright nodded toward Dunny and Sissy Mobo.

“ Since they call you ‘ Mother ’ I presume they are yours.” Tesa nodded. “ And who, may I ask, is the Titian-haired, limpid-eyed goddess in charge? ”

Tesa laughed.

“ Oh, she is a protégée of my husband.”

Wainright was thoughtful.

“ A trifle uncultured but truly almost beautiful.”

Tesa’s lips parted in a vague smile.

“ You should have seen her in the beginning. She is one of David’s jungle people.”

Wainright looked at her inquisitively.

“Jungle people?”

“From Humptulips. That is where he carries on his logging business. I must tell you at once, it is I who call the natives of this village jungle people. Did he hear me, he would be very much chagrined.”

While Tesa told him of her life in the West, it was so different from her past that he could scarcely connect this woman with the girl he had known before.

“I am criticised severely by the upper-crust of both Hoquiam and Aberdeen for living in Humptulips. The wives of all the other loggers live in town.” Tesa’s lips curled. “But I can see little choice between these mud flats and the woods. The surroundings are at least picturesque up there, while here the hills back of the towns are covered with stumps and logs; and with this dreadful ill-smelling bay to the front, can you blame me for choosing the woods?”

“One can see the ocean from here, can’t he?” he inquired.

“Sometimes, by straining the eye and the imagination — you can — yes.”

Wainright studied the fine lines that were appearing about Tesa’s eyes and lips.

“You have changed but little, Tesa.”

She felt his eyes upon her. Shaking her head, she flushed.

“Oh, but I have. I have grown older — ”

“Very little. And if so — more charming.”



Her brows lifted.

“ I see you have not forgotten your old habit of flattery, Horace.”

His eyes darkened. He leaned more closely to her.

“ It was not flattery with you — Tesa.”

Tesa drew away from him. Avoiding his eyes, she rose, stating she believed she must go to Posey and the children. Wainright followed her and walked by her side up the street.

They found the children at the merry-go-round. When his mother announced that it was time to go, Dunny set up a howl. But Tesa was firm.

Wainright saw them to their car, which was waiting for them up the street.

“ This seems apparent — your husband is prosperous,” he said, as he observed the big seven-passenger touring car of the latest model. Tesa smiled, but said nothing.

A moment later, she offered her hand to Wainright and left him with his promise that he would come to visit them at their home within the next few days. He stood watching them until the big car backed out into the street and turned its huge nose in the direction of Humptulips.

## CHAPTER XIX

“ Yes, I know you don't like to hear me gossip about Mrs. Alden, Mother McKnight, but honestly you don't know how she has changed since that Mr. Wainright came here. You know, that man from Chicago that is staying up at Quiniault.”

Mother McKnight knew far better than Posey, that Tesa Alden was a very unhappy woman. She had learned much during the months spent in the Alden home from hints that Tesa had dropped at various times. However she did not blame Tesa for her dissatisfaction. She believed that Tesa's self-centered conduct was because she had been an only child and, the daughter of wealthy parents, nothing had risen in her life to restrain her.

Mother McKnight did regret that she even exercised this selfishness on her children and, even though she loved them after a fashion, it appeared that they did not come first in her heart. She often shook her head thoughtfully regarding Tesa's problem and wished that she were strong enough to help her.

“ It all comes from lack of understanding,” she concluded. “ If we could only see things in their true light in this world, what a different world it would be.”

Mother McKnight did not want Posey to know

that she suspected anything had gone wrong in the Alden home. She believed Posey was too young to understand such conditions.

“ Well, of course, it pleases her to have some one from her old home to visit with,” she returned.

“ But she acts so funny with him. She always seems so happy when he’s there. She acts with Mr. Wainright like she ought to act with Mr. Alden. And every time he comes, why, the first thing he does is kiss her hand, like this — ” Posey proceeded to demonstrate the action. Mother McKnight was going to explain that this was merely courtesy, but Posey hastened on: “ And, honestly, she just seems to treat Mr. Alden worse every day. Sometimes when he looks so solemn and hurt when she says mean things to him, I can’t hardly keep from crying.”

Mother McKnight interrupted her.

“ But, Posey, we do not know what there is between Mr. and Mrs. Alden — ”

“ I don’t think there’s anything between them. That’s what’s the matter. I’ve thought for a long time that she doesn’t love him. If a woman loved her husband she wouldn’t act like that.”

Mother McKnight made no reply. A silence fell between them. Posey’s mind was working furiously. Since the evening of her strange experience with Alden, she had yearned to talk it over with some one. Yet intuition warned her that she must be careful to whom she confided it; it was not a subject to be broadcasted.

Moreover, as time passed she became perplexed. Mr. Alden had said that he would sometime explain his conduct that night. He had not explained. Could it be that he had changed his mind?

There were times when Posey had to fight a tremendous desire to be in his arms again, with his eyes searching hers in the dusk of that summer evening. Always during these battles she would become terribly ashamed, and they would end in a fit of depression. Her work and her lessons, which Alden still continued, were not enough to occupy her young mind. But reprimanding herself after one of these mental outbursts, she would strive to shut everything else out of her thoughts and plunge into her studies and her work with a zest akin to madness. This day she felt she must talk to someone regarding her affection for Alden. Looking out the window dreamily for a time, she turned to Mother McKnight.

“The reason I feel so bad when Mrs. Alden treats him the way she does is because I like him so well myself, Mother McKnight.”

Mother McKnight nodded.

“Yes, Mr. Alden is a very nice man.”

Posey shook her head vigorously.

“But I don’t mean just that! I—I mean I like him different than thinking he’s—just nice. I—why, I think Mr. Alden’s the grandest man in Humptulips or Gray’s Harbor or—or the whole wide world!”

Mother McKnight’s face went grey with surprise.

“ Posey, what do you mean? ”

Now that it was out, Posey continued boldly:

“ I — I mean that I can't tell you how much I do like Mr. Alden because—because I just don't know myself — ” She wished that Mother McKnight would not look at her so coldly.

“ Mr. Alden is a married man, Posey. It is all right for young ladies to admire married men, married men as nice as Mr. Alden, but they should not talk like you are talking — ”

Hot tears sprang to Posey's eyes.

“ But why shouldn't I like him awfully, awfully well when he has always been so good and kind to me? Where would I be now if it wasn't for him? And it wasn't Mrs. Alden that give me a place in their home that night I come to them. She tells me that every time she gets mad at me. She says she would have turned me back into the road. But Mr. Alden was my friend. And he's been my friend ever since. He's taught me grammar and manners. He's taught me how to appreciate the better things of life; good books, music and — and a thousand things, Mother McKnight, that I'd have never got if it hadn't been for him — ”

Mother McKnight was a trifle hurt by this confession.

“ But you know, if I could, I'd have done as much for you.”

“ Of course you would, Mother McKnight! And you've been a grand friend all the way through, but somehow it took a person like Mr. Alden to

make me change my ways. You remember what a terrible girl I was five years ago.”

“ Oh, but you were still just a little girl. You would have been all right when you got old enough to understand.”

Posey shook her head.

“ I don't know about that. Things grow on you. It's like Mr. Alden was telling Mr. Wainright the other night. This roughness and immoral condition among the loggers, he said, wasn't any one man's fault. It was the general situation. Perhaps each individual wanted to quit drinking and carousing, he said, but there was always his associates to drag him down into it. There was no getting away from it because the entire economic system was wrong, and that was just why he was so anxious to get at the bottom of conditions — So you can see from that, what a wonderful man he is.”

Mother McKnight nodded.

“ Of course, Posey, no one knows more than I do how Mr. Alden wants to help everybody. See what he has done for me; giving me the money to live on and won't let me wash for the loggers any more.”

“ That's just it. There isn't another man in the world like Mr. Alden, and I know it.” Posey paused a moment before continuing: “ Folks in Humptulips are calling me stuck up, now. But I don't care. They used to poke fun at me and say I was ragged and good-for-nothing. So I guess I would get it no matter which way I went.”

Mother McKnight sighed.

“ Well, I suppose folks that would criticize a body, would criticize you no matter how much you tried. And it’s best to know yourself enough to know you are right, and then not care what they say.”

When Posey rose to go Mother McKnight asked her not to stay away so long next time.

“ It gets lonesome when a person don’t see you once in a while.”

Smiling deeply, Posey went to Mother McKnight and threw her arms about her neck. Laying her smooth young cheek against the soft faded one, she hugged Mother McKnight vehemently.

“ Would it be just awfully, awfully bad for me to go on liking Mr. Alden — like I told you — ”

Mother McKnight drew back and held the girl at arm’s length. She looked earnestly into Posey’s eyes.

“ You can like Mr. Alden all you want to, Posey, but it must be in the right way.”

A shadow of pain crossed Posey’s face.

“ What other way is there to like a man like Mr. Alden! ”

Her intense seriousness touched Mother McKnight and she was immediately ashamed of mature understanding which so often suspects the impulsive adoration of youth. Tears sprang to her eyes and she shook her head.

“ No other way, honey.”

In another moment Posey bounded through the

door and was soon swinging up the road, her head flung back, her eyes staring fiercely into the vista of trees which formed the wall of the forest on either side of the road. The confession to Mother McKnight may have relieved her pent-up emotions, but it had also intensified them.

As she crossed the river, Posey was surprised to find Dunny and Sissy Mobo running toward her. A sudden wave of fear swept her. She hurried swiftly to them. As soon as she was in hearing she called to them: "Dunny and Sissy Mobo, what are you doing down here!"

The two children paused. Dunny's countenance became crestfallen. Sissy Mobo's lower lip trembled. Instantly sorry she had wounded their feelings, Posey bent down and put an arm about each of them.

"We comed to meet you —" sobbed Dunny.

"We tomed to meet oo," echoed Sissy Mobo.

Posey held them close for a moment and then rising, took a hand of each and started toward home. Dunny was not satisfied.

"I want to see the river!" He tugged at Posey's hand and pointed toward the river. "I want to see the pretty water running away —"

Posey held him back.

"You remember how your daddy scolds when you go down to the river and you know he told you how dangerous it was —"

Dunny pouted.

"But — but you're with me now."



“ Well, just this time, but never, never only when I or your mother or daddy is with you — ” Posey suffered him to lead her to the bank where the two children gazed wide-eyed at the swiftly moving stream. Sissy Mobo jumped up and down and clapped her hands in glee.

“ Pretty! Pretty! Pretty! ”

Dunny cast a significant glance at Posey.

“ Yes, but if little boys and little Sissy Mobos fall in they go drowned. ” Posey returned his glance with great gravity.

“ You just bet they do. ”

All during that summer, Dunny had been in a habit of running away from home and taking his little sister with him. Twice they had been found down by the river. The water seemed to fascinate the child and in spite of his father's repeated warnings and threats of severe punishment, Dunny had run away again. This time he begged off with the excuse that he had gone to meet Posey. Believing this half true, he was not punished when he reached home.

In fact his father found it hard to punish him even when it was for his own good. Alden loved both his children, but somehow Maribel Marie did not quite touch the vibrant chord of parental pride in her father, as did his first-born.

That evening, sitting at his desk in his study, which was just off his bedroom, Alden could hear Posey with the two children across the hall in the bathroom. From the shrill squeals and riotous

sounds it was obvious that they were being scrubbed up for the night. Presently he heard small feet pattering from the bathroom to the bedroom, and then Dunny's nightly wail that he didn't want to go to bed, followed by Sissy Mobo's "Don' wanna do to bed —." Posey's voice came in low crooning sounds. Then there was a mysterious thud. Dunny had run and jumped into his bed. Alden listened; amused.

"And did Silvery Hair eat up all the little baby bear's pudding —" Dunny shouted, inviting Posey for a story.

"Did she?" came Sissy Mobo's shrill little voice.

"Well, she almost did. She would have if the mamma bear and the papa bear and the little baby bear hadn't come in just then —"

"No, no, no, Posey, that isn't it, 'cause when the mamma bear and the papa bear and the little baby bear come in, Silvery Hair was up in the little baby bear's bed sound asleep — remember?"

"Oh, yes, of course —"

Alden could hear Posey telling the good-night story as she moved about the bedroom. Later, on his way downstairs he peeped in at them. Dunny had fallen asleep. Sissy Mobo, heavy-eyed but smiling, was wiggling her small pink toes while Posey quoted the old nursery rhyme which she was obliged to repeat each night before the adorable little tyrant would consent to go to sleep.

" 'This little pig went to market, and this little pig stayed home — ' "

## CHAPTER XX

While Tim and he were making plans for the removal of the cookhouse and bunkhouses to the new camp site that summer, Alden made a sudden and swift decision that he would not wait for the Legislature to pass the bills for which he had so long been expectant. One day he talked the matter over with Tim.

“ I believe, Tim, that they have pigeon-holed that bill. Or it may be possible that some of these objectors here on the Harbor have gone up to Olympia and fought it until I have lost out. At any rate, it doesn't seem as if those men up at the Capital have bothered their heads much about the matter at any time. Surely it would have gone one way or the other by now — ”

Tim studied a moment.

“ Well, say, let's do as you said there last spring — let's put her through on our own hook.”

Alden's eyes brightened.

“ Would you be willing to try it out! ”

“ Would I, sa-ay, you just bet your life I would, Dave — if for no other reason than to show them birds that the Alden Logging Company is not asleep.”

“ Good! ” Alden became excited. “ Tim, there isn't a favor in the world that you could grant me

which would please me as much." He paused. "And the time was never more ripe. Us putting in the new camp right away — suppose we equip it with steel beds, mattresses, baths, showers —"

Tim lifted a hand to interrupt him a moment.

"Excuse me just a minute. Say, listen, while we're talking about it — Them lads here on the Harbor can shout all they damn please, but let me tell you," Tim pointed a warning finger at Alden, "them wobblies are getting too strong for 'em. And if they don't clean up their camps free gratis pretty soon, the wobblies are going to see that they do. I don't hang around the bunkhouses for nothin', an' it don't take many minutes to see which way she's going, either."

Alden looked at him earnestly.

"But you are willing to favor them that much, aren't you?"

Tim nodded emphatically.

"You're darn right, I am. An' I think it'll be a good joke on the other fellas to beat 'em to it." He smiled. "As you an' I have said all along: the wobblies are right about forcin' the loggers to clean up the camps — Good God Almighty, when I think of the way the poor damn lumberjacks have been livin' all these years, why it gets a guy even as hard-crusted as I am." Tim paused and reflected a moment.

"It's been them blankets, Dave, that has raised all the particular little hell," he went on presently. "A lumberjack never did have any business

carryin' his beddin' wherever he went an' him sleepin' in every old dump he comes to, till he's full of every kind of lice that was ever created. Good Lord, when you think of it!"

Alden looked down at the ground.

"Yes, it is bad enough, just to think of."

"Why only last week," Tim continued, "one of them foreigners that works down on the landing hadn't been out on the works for a couple of days, an' I got wondering about him. I knew he hadn't gone to town, but I'd been too busy to pay much attention to him. We've got 'em all in the little bunkhouse down by the toolhouse, you know."

Alden nodded. "Well, every day I'd ask his friends or cousins or whatever they are, if he wasn't able to go to work. They'd shake their heads an' act kind of funny. Finally I told them if he was sick to have him sent to the hospital. One of 'em went straight up in the air. 'No, no, no, sick,' he said. 'Be to work purty soon.'" Tim paused and observed Alden silently for a moment.

"Then I suppose you went over and found out for yourself —"

"Did I! Say, when I went over to the bunkhouse, that poor devil was sure in a hell of a shape. He's a Lithuanian or Slovak or something — Anyway, he was diggin' and clawin' at himself like a crazy person. When I went over to him I thought he had gone bugs. When he kept on pawin' around there, grabbin' first his head an' then his face an'

then his hands, I was sure of it. I asked him what was the matter. The poor cuss looked up at me like a man half dead. 'Too much, Mister,' he says, 'Too much. Too much,' an' he kept on with his digging."

"What was the matter with him?" asked Alden.

"Matter? You mean what wasn't the matter.— His face was covered with a two or three weeks' growth of beard an' you believe me or not, Dave, he was so full of lice that they were crawlin' around in his beard. Lice a half an inch long, as true as my name is McAvoy. Why, the poor son-of-a-gun was a perfect hotbed of 'em. Well, you take it from me I hustled him down on the truck to the hospital next morning." Tim paused. "Know what was the matter with him?" Alden shook his head. "He was half dead with syphilitic rheumatism."

Alden turned pale. "Tim!"

"Yep. Fact. Well, all there was to do was to burn the old shack and I saw that the rest of the men that had been bunking in there washed every rag they had in a bichloride solution." Tim turned to go. "No, sir-e-e, we won't get the right kind of sanitary conditions in our camps any too soon to suit me. The old way might have been all right when we had a class of lumberjacks that would keep clean for their own sense of decency. But in this day we've got too many men of all classes working in our camps."

The Sunday morning a bonfire was made of all

the old blankets and bedding was a strange day in camp. Most of the loggers rejoiced in the clean-up. Others were not so enthused. The foreigners, many of whom could not speak English, did not seem to understand the action. Some of the old-timers were skeptical. Paddy McTigh was one of them.

“What’s the world comin’ to, onyhow? It’s a hell of a note whin a man can’t have ’is say, even ’bout ’is own property. All the most of us has got is our beddin’ an’ here is thot goin’ up in smoke.” He watched the great bonfire with sullen eyes. “I—I can’t think they’s ony good comin’ to Alden whin he’s takin’ up with these here new ways. I—I’m damned if I do —”

Mike Higgins’s ferret eyes snapped viciously.

“I’m right with ye, Paddy.”

“And what’s more,” continued Paddy, “they think they’re goin’ to git me in one o’ them bathtub things they got over there in the new camp —” Paddy’s old head wagged from side to side. “Not on yer life. I’ll see meself in hell first!” He paused and spat at a stone lying in the road, then turned again to his colleagues. “Think I’m goin’ to take any chance on one o’ them there contraptions — Why, I might injure meself fer life gittin’ into one of ’em. Slip an’ fall an’ break my damn neck.”

Mike Higgins, Jim McGovern, Frank Hymer and old Cap Murry heartily agreed to this, and they all took a solemn oath that so long as they lived they would not be guilty of endangering their lives by getting into a bathtub.

Because of the sudden and swift changes being made among them in the past several years, these five old men had been in a state of revolt. They often stole off to some secluded spot to talk matters over among themselves. Paddy was usually their spokesman.

"I'll tell yez, she ain't what she uset to be — Them damn furriners an' the wobblies have jist knocked hell out o' ever'thing —"

"Yes, 'n' most of 'em ain't got sense enough tu know how tu gut a clam," said Frank Hymer, "let alone tryin' tu be a logger."

"A lot o' them lads think they learned the loggin' trade, fish slammin' up in Alaska," said old Cap. Murry. "That's all they know 'bout it."

"I tell ye, they don't know that much," said Jim McGovern. "Them bohunks ain't got no brains, their heads are full o' mush —"

Although the general feeling toward the foreigners was not the brotherly spirit that it should be among the loggers, yet there were those among the younger men who were very much impressed by both the foreigners and the I. W. W.'s. Happy Lenon, Claude, Hoggens, Sky Pilot and others of the representative Americans in camp did listen to the I. W. W.'s and the radical foreigners who spent their evenings and Sundays raving about the injustice inflicted upon the workingman.

Josef Hefferman, a German Jew and a radical, spent tireless hours explaining the socialistic theory and the principles for which it stood. Sky



Pilot took to Hefferman's speeches like a duck to water; so Happy Lenon said. He added socialism to his religious discussions; substantiating his statements by the argument that Christ was a socialist.

Hoggens, on the other hand, became more interested in the I. W. W.'s. Shorter hours at his labor meant more time to devote to his beloved muse. Hoggens still wrote poetry with amazing sincerity. He never knew when he might have an inspiration; it often came to him during working hours, or even sometimes at meal time. Missing him on the works one day after the noon hour, Tim went in search of Hoggens. There had been a rush order and every man would have to put in every moment to get it out in time.

Tim found Hoggens in the bunkhouse. Sitting before a table with a pencil in his hand, Hoggens' thoughts were far away. Tim watched him from the door for a critical moment.

"Good God, Dreamer, don't you know it's long past time to get on the works?" Hoggens lifted a swift warning hand, but did not look up. Instead he bent over his tablet and began to write furiously. Tim called again. At length, Hoggens paused and observed him as if from a far distance.

"Yes, yes, it's all right, Tim — You just go on. In a moment I shall pursue you —"

Tim wanted to laugh at the little man's seriousness, but he pretended to be very angry.

"Well, you better pursue me pretty damn quick,

or you'll be pursuing yourself down the pike with your time check in your hand."

Since first the Alden Logging Works had started there had been cooks and cooks and cooks in the camp. Each cook had seemed a new and entirely individual character, but the latest one had proved the greatest enigma of them all. He was a most unusual person.

He was a tall, lean man, with a horse face. So small and high up was his face, one wondered for a moment, when first looking at him, just where his eyes focussed. He often came into the bunkhouses and looked on during a card game. He told the men stories of his experiences during the early days up in the Alaska gold fields. He once confided that his life ambition had been to become a decorator; a decorator of what, he had not stated. But the men had learned to their dismay that since he had never realized this dream, he satisfied his artistic temperament by decorating food. Deep pink cake frosting seemed to be his mania.

Not satisfied with frosting everything in the cookhouse which could legitimately be frosted, in his mad pursuit for expression, this cook strewed the tables and the floors with dabs which spilled from overflowing frosting pots. Great stacks of frosted cookies stood in tottering mounds on the serving tables. Pyramids of assorted cakes, gleaming like piles of pink-cruled snow, were stored in conspicuous places.

"Why, the damn fool is so looney over decorat-

ing, as he calls it — I'd call it slaughter — that he even frosts the bread," said Johnny Moran one night, "an' he dishes it up to us with some dang foreign name. We've got to eat it or do without — It's a doggone wonder that that bird don't frost the dumplings in his mulligans."

Five years had wrought a vast change in Frank Jerome. It seemed incredible that a man in his physical condition could keep up as he did, but it was beginning to be obvious that his nervous system was reaching the breaking point. Several times he had been caught in the act of using the needle on himself. Now it was no secret. All the men knew of it.

"Poor devil, it's a damn shame," said Happy Lenon one night when it had been observed that Jerome had left the bunkhouse twice during the evening. "He's a doggone good worker an' a fine fella if it just wasn't for that."

When Jerome returned the others pretended not to notice him patting his stomach and rolling his eyes in the manner of the drug addict. Jerome walked over to the stove. Now that his spirits had revived, he started out upon a long narrative regarding his one passion, card playing.

"Geemenally, I got in bad this time over in Skikomish. Sure did have hard luck. There was a guy from Spokane over there an', sa-ay, I'm an old timer at blackjack, but that guy's got anything I ever heard tell of backed off of the map. Geemenally, some o' the stunts that bird did pull!

But where I got in bad was that I'd lost my wad 'fore I got next to what he was handin' us.

"But I had his number. I says to myself, I says: 'Now looka here, Frank, s'posin' that fella is from Spokane, just remember that you're from Muckleteo, which is the Monte Carlo of the State of Washington. Without half tryin' you c'n show him where you're at an' bag 'im shoes an' all.' I had borrowed a twenty from Benny Walker. I asked 'im for another'n. That was all I needed. I c'd o' done it with five; but I didn't want to be cheap—" Jerome paused and observed his listeners with tragic earnestness. "Say, what d'you s'pose happened. Didn't ole Benny get up on his ear an' refuse to stake me!

"'No, sir-e-e,' he said, 'not another damn cent' an' I'd got to pay back the twenty I'd already borrowed. I ast 'im why an' he made some excuse 'bout business bein' slack an' he'd got to start economizin'. 'How'll I pay you back?' I said, 'unless you let me in on this game tonight?' 'By good hard work,' says Benny. Then he told me that 'is bartender had flew the coop an' they was short o' help in the dinin' room.

"'But how the hell d'you expect me to tend bar an' wait table at the same time?' I says. 'Put on a pair o' skates!' he yelled.

"You should o' seen me. For two days I was shootin' 'round there like my coat tail was on fire tryin' to get Benny paid back so's he'd stake me again." Jerome shrugged. "Just as luck would

have it, that damn bird flew the coop to Seattle with ever' guy's wad in town that had entered a game with him. I never did get a chance to get back at 'im." Jerome sighed hopelessly. "Well, s'pose that's a gambler's luck — "

One night Jerome tried some of the new tricks he had learned from the Spokane shark, on a number of the foreigners. When they came into the bunkhouse he whispered to Happy Lenon: "Watch me clean up on the bohunks tonight."

It proved that they were not so dull as he expected. The first time he sluffed a card, it seemed to go unseen, but the second time Andrew Droshki, a big Russian Pole, reached over and, without a word, caught Jerome by the back of the neck. Before they had recovered from their surprise, he had yanked him out of his chair and dealt him a number of terrific blows. Not satisfied, he continued. Jerome's nerves gave way. His eyes rolled and he twitched like a person with the St. Vitus dance, but the angry Pole would not give up. When Jerome reeled and started to fall, Claude, being nearest, interfered.

"Here, yu big stiff, what the hell's the matter with yu!" He threw out an arm to protect Jerome from another blow. "Can't yu see you've got 'im bested?"

"She's a damn crook!" bellowed the Pole, and he made for Jerome but, when at that moment Jerome fainted, he drew back in awe. "What matter! What matter with she?"

As they carried Jerome to the air, Claude gave the bewildered foreigner one disdainful look.

“What matter with her — ain’t yu got any brains? She’s a snow bird!”

## CHAPTER XXI

Alden had no objections to Horace Wainright's frequent visits to his home. Instead, he almost welcomed the man's presence there. Since Wainright's first call, Alden had noticed a change in Tesa. In fact the change dated back to the day of the Labor Day celebration in town, after which Tesa told him of meeting a former sweetheart from Chicago.

He paid but little attention to this. Tesa was the type of woman who, after marriage, consider all former male acquaintances as having once been ardent admirers. Alden found himself even feeling sorry for Tesa. The coming of this friend proved how lonely she had been before.

However, since her return from Chicago, Tesa had suffered herself to mingle more with the social set of Hoquiam and Aberdeen. The good road having gone in between Humptulips and the two towns, she did not feel herself so much of an exile. And Alden's purchase of a magnificent Cadillac made it possible, if she chose, to rise in her own cozy east room of a morning and run down to the Grayport Hotel in Hoquiam or the Washington in Aberdeen and have breakfast.

"So different from the old days," Alden sometimes said. To which, for some obstinate reason, she chose to give no satisfactory reply.

Tesa learned that there was an inner circle among the social set of Hoquiam and Aberdeen who boasted their wealth and status with as proud a mien as those of the ultra-exclusive of Chicago.

"But why not?" Alden would often ask when she spoke insolently of this. Smiling bitterly she would return:

"Imagine those crude people having any idea of class, when most of them have sprung from the depths of poverty."

Exasperated, Alden gave up.

"No use. Autocracy is born and bred in Tesa's bones. It is impossible to change her."

Proud of Wainright's obvious marks of distinction, Tesa introduced him into society at once, because she wished to show him off to the Gray's Harborites.

One night on their way home they were discussing the affair of the evening.

"Imagine Mrs. Henderson actually admitting that she baked the cakes for her party tonight, just because Mrs. Smith flattered her about them. It shows how little breeding these people have. I should have at least pretended that they were prepared by a caterer, to have stood my ground with those wealthier women. Mrs. Henderson could not see how terribly patronizing Mrs. Smith was." Wainright laughed.

"I find that the people of Hoquiam and Aberdeen are painfully democratic," Tesa went on. "They will accept persons into their circle without



reference to family or social standing." Here she sighed deeply. "Yet, what else can you expect of loggers?"

Wainright was silent. He was not especially interested in either the hostesses or their cakes. He was more concerned as to whether the chauffeur was sober enough to keep on the road, "which is the crookedest piece of road on the globe," he once pronounced. When they were leaving town he had gotten a whiff of the chauffeur's breath, and it was strong with liquor. However, at three in the morning they reached Humptulips in safety.

"Through meeting you, I think the people here on the Harbor can see the class of people to which I have been accustomed," said Tesa as she drew off her long gloves in the hall.

Wainright smiled down at her meaningly.

"You flatter me, Tesa."

"I mean it."

Wainright was not unconscious of the commercial development of the new West. The logging industry was too much of an essential element to the mercantile trade to look upon it lightly. Insofar as he was not obliged to become a part of this great vital machine which took its place in turning the vast wheel of the world's progress, he was willing to accept it at its face value. He even went so far as to investigate the numerous intricate cogs which turned this wheel about.

One day he found himself out in the woods with Alden, who led him about the works explaining

everything about the logging industry with infinite pride. While he talked on, Wainright felt himself beginning to admire this man who had once been his rival.

“It surely required a world of stamina to leave an easy position such as he had in Chicago, and doubtless would have gained again, to strike out into the wilds as this man has done,” he thought as he trudged behind Alden over logs and up skid roads and then into the deep forest.

They were on the hillside now looking down over the works. Alden turned and pointed to the timber back of them which was immediately so thickly set together that the perspective was lost, — like trying to penetrate the density of a fog bank.

“See that spruce and fir and cedar and hemlock?” Alden indicated the different species of trees; the fir and spruce reaching an average height of from two to four hundred feet and from four to eight feet at the trunk. Wainright nodded. “There are thousands of acres of such timber to be moved right in this district.”

Wainright studied for a moment.

“I got a good view of the timber belt of western Washington from the top of Mount Baldy —”

“Yes, you would, wouldn't you —” Alden looked into the depths of the woods with a dreamy half-admiring gaze. “There is a splendid future for some man here on Gray's Harbor. Some man is going to become the logging king of this Pacific Northwest, and his opportunity lies right in this

district.” He looked at Wainright sharply. “Have you ever noticed, Wainright, that in every issue in life there are but a few persons who reach the top of the ladder? Some blame Fate. Other call it luck. It is neither. It depends entirely upon the person himself. • I have learned that through my experience here in the West. And logging is but little different from any other walk of life.

“A man starting in the logging business, single-handed and alone, as I did, if he thoroughly understands his business and has his eyes open, with ordinary intelligence to learn and keep abreast with the times, will succeed the same as he will succeed in any other business. It is said that only three out of every hundred men prosper in any business. Yet that is purely their own fault. The Great Divinity has qualified every man and woman to make a success and it is up to them to do so —”

Wainright laughed.

“We do not agree upon that point, Alden. I do not believe in a divinity. I am a materialist.”

Alden paled slightly, but went on:

“To a large degree I owe the success of the Alden Logging Company to my foreman and present general manager. Tim has been indispensable. When I started in, I knew nothing of the logging business. It was predicted by older loggers here on the Harbor that I would never make good. ‘How can he,’ they said, ‘when it is such a hard pull on a man who knows his business?’”

“You cannot blame them,” said Wainright,

“it would look precarious to most anyone.”

“Yes. Well, I started right down at the root and studied the matter scientifically. I investigated the issue from every viewpoint. Every moment I had to spare, I did a bit of researching among the other camps. Instead of weighing the problem from the other man’s profits, I weighed it from his losses. I found most of them were making thousands of dollars — but why not? It was inevitable. It was like going into a river bed and gathering handfuls of gold where it flowed in torrents.

“I began to ask myself why, instead of making thousands — why these men were not making millions. Under the circumstances it was quite possible. And I worked upon the solution with the eye of an enthusiast, yet with the mind of one who attacks a proposition with cold logic and incisive thought. In a few months I began to see clearly, and all the while, by the aid of Tim, who is a highly intelligent fellow, I began to break through the crust. To use a logger’s term, we took the bull by the horns. Tim looks after the practical end of the business, he centralizes it. And I look after the financial end.”

Wainright found himself growing interested as he listened to Alden. For a moment he was carried away by the influence of the other.

“One might not suppose how necessary it is to have a man like Tim. A dozen good men may work at a dozen cross purposes and all of them would be

right to a certain degree, which would result in failure. But Tim looks after his part and I look after mine. If I am the head of my business, he is most assuredly the neck. There are other small stockholders in the company, but they take little interest outside of considering the net profits.”

While Alden continued, Wainright noticed how his eyes widened. It reminded him of the eyes of an artist friend in Chicago. When that friend became inspired, his eyes brightened, some said, as if his spirit was inflated and threatened to burst. In a sense of the word it did burst. At such times he would fly to his canvas and work like a madman until exhausted.

This look in Alden's eyes perplexed Wainright. He had always thought of trade as being something coldly matter-of-fact, colorless. But something about Alden's manner indicated that there could in truth be quite a relationship between business and art. His artist friend had once told him that to become a successful artist in these days, one must be more or less of an executive.

The day of starving in a garret was over. Unless a man went out and wrestled with the world at large for his rights, he would remain in his garret. Today the world does not run after you. You must run after it.

“Perhaps, then, to become a successful business man, one must be something of an artist, an idealist,” Wainright concluded.

The thought of the word idealist reacted upon

Wainright's mind like the harsh closing of a door upon a gentle breeze. He reprimanded himself. He had almost permitted himself to become sentimental. He — a materialist!

“ Yes, yes,” he said abruptly to Alden, “ I find that very interesting, but aren't we digressing? What I should like to know more about are the operations of the logging business. A few moments ago, you were speaking of a high lead or a sky line. I did not quite get your meaning. Just what is the difference? ” He tried not to see the hint of disappointment which reflected from Alden's eyes. He laughed cynically to himself.

“ The poor fool need not think he can bore me with that sentimental slush,” he thought, as he waited for Alden's answer. “ That is what is eating the life out of Tesa. She wants realism. She has no desire to live with her thoughts sky high as he does. And he hasn't the brains to see it. I can also see that he is too idealistic. I doubt his success.”

Wainright tried to forget that but a moment before he was reflecting on what a noble fellow Alden was, and comparing him with himself. For a time it had made him realize what a cad he, himself, was. And still while he fought with his inner consciousness, the words of a great man who had spoken before a well-known art club of Chicago, came to him:

“ I do not measure time by years. Time does not move. I am only in this sphere of develop-

ment, and fully believe that what man or woman find to do they should: 'Do it with all their might,'; quotation from the great wise man Solomon. A man may be very enthusiastic about his work, but his thoughts oftentimes run in other channels that add pleasure and love to the development of his real life and soul. 'The most miserable of all creatures on earth are the idle —' " Wainright remembered how he had winced at this statement — " who seem to find nothing to do — "

The supreme light had gone out of Alden's eyes. He was himself again, the logger, the worker, when he replied to Wainright's question.

" Well, it is this way: if the ground is not too rough on the hills we set out a high lead block on the top of a tall tree. It has a tendency to lift the logs over trees and stumps and rubbish and to pull them upward, besides keeping them from running through the chokers. The sky line, on the other hand, is operated from a spile tree at both ends, which picks up the logs and carries them across canyons. This, however, is a very expensive logging proposition and also extremely dangerous.

" There is danger from the time the spile tree man climbs the tree and tops it and the rigging is slung. Sometimes the spile tree breaks or often a defective line will let go. I believe I am correct when I say that more men are killed by this than by any other logging device."

" You are not using the sky line, are you? " asked Wainright.

Alden shook his head.

“ No, and we will not have to. We can get along with the high lead. Our ground is not rough enough at this time, and will not be for a number of years, to guarantee a sky line. If we were to purchase one, we would have to have a special crew. The average logger does not understand it — ”

“ And it being very dangerous, I suppose a man must know his business.”

“ Absolutely. Moreover, we are fortunate in having most of our timber in the valley.”

Wainright asked Alden to tell him about a splash.

“ A splash is where the river is dammed until a large head of water is reserved for floating out the logs when it is needed. At such a time the flume planks are pulled and the river bank flooded. This floats the logs out as they would during a freshet. The secret of running logs down a crooked river is to keep them from forming jams. Men have worked for days sacking the river and rolling the logs out into the deep water to keep them floating. This work is not only very laborious, but also dangerous. Some of our boys will ride logs and go through the very jaws of death — ”

“ And then what becomes of the logs? ”

“ Before leaving the woods the logs are branded, just as cattle are branded before sending them to the stockyards. Each company's brand is carefully registered. All these logs are rafted together



and they are not separated until they get to the mills. Sometimes the logs of twenty different companies are boomed together and driven in a splash at one time."

"Are there ever any logs lost?"

"Indeed there are. Sometimes they jam and jump the banks. This happened to us last fall. We had to send the small yarder down to pull them into the river so that they would go out in the next splash."

Wainright asked if there would be another splash soon.

"I should like to see one."

"Yes, the men up on the east and the west fork are talking of having one, but how soon, I cannot say."

Wainright was silent for a time. Presently, he said:

"It appears very much as you say, Alden, success in this line is almost inevitable. A man could scarcely help but succeed —"

Alden lifted his hand hastily.

"No, that is not altogether true. I think perhaps I did not make myself clear at this point. The logging business is considered one of the biggest gambles of any industry in the world. There are those who work at it a lifetime, and in the end hardly come out with a decent living. Plenty of difficulties may rise to ruin them financially. For instance, I know one man who lost every cent he had when twenty-two thousand

dollars' worth of logs went high and dry for him. An unusually high freshet carried them away up over the bank. They were backed up so far that it would mean more expense than the logs were worth to yard them out again.

"There have been numerous times when the water was so high in the river that the boom has broken, the logs got away and floated clear out of the Harbor and into the Pacific Ocean. One of the most important points in logging is the great precaution which must be taken in the care of the booms."

When they returned to the works, Alden looked for Tim. He stopped to talk with Tim, and Wainright sauntered on, half wishing that Alden would not follow. The experience of the afternoon had affected him strangely. It reminded him that he did have a keen conception of things as they should be, when he opened his mind to it. The talk with Alden proved to him how much, in the past years, he had shut fundamentals out of his life.

Reflecting on the matter, while he strolled along the smooth, brown road, he was disturbed by the influence Alden had had over him. This glimpsing visions of high and lofty places in the sun brought back moments during his boyhood before he had trained himself in the bitter, yet wholly fascinating, school of materialism.

"I am going to keep away from Alden after this," he concluded sullenly. "Tesa is far more on

my own plane. Besides being a beautiful woman with whom I may brighten my stay here in the West, she is also — a safety valve — ” He crossed the bridge. “ Yes, for a few hours, until I am quite sure I have regained my mental equilibrium — I dislike admitting to myself that I had lost it for a moment — I do want to be very much alone.”

## CHAPTER XXII

“ I’ll tell you, Posey, it’s jist somethin’ awful the way folks are talkin’ ’bout Mis Alden an’ her goin’s on with that swell feller she claims she uset to know back there in the East.”

Aunt Sally Mullen scrutinized Posey severely; almost as if she thought Posey to blame for Tesa Alden’s indiscretions. Wagging her head from side to side, she clucked like an old mother hen enthused over the finding of a welcome tidbit.

“ Can’t fool me. From the first time I ever laid eyes on ’er I always said that woman was a strumpet.” Aunt Sally sneered. “ Mother McKnight always upholdin’ ’er an’ you livin’ right in the same house with ’er, an’ then you mean to stand there an’ try to tell me she’s a good woman. Needn’t try to make me b’lieve you’re blind —”

Posey’s lips pressed tightly together. She wanted to tell Aunt Sally that her silence was not for Mrs. Alden. It was for him. Yet she determined that the Aldens’ private affairs should not be exposed through her. She stood obstinately silent while Aunt Sally rattled on.

“ She ain’t got a thing under the sun to do. They ain’t a woman in Hoquiam or Aberdeen that’s got more servants. She jist trapes ’round like some flip girl that ain’t got a care in the

world. Folks is also talkin' 'bout the way she neglects them little young ones o' her'n. Jist the other day right here in the store, Mis Udell says: 'Aunt Sally,' she says, 'you can't tell me that they's a person on earth that can look out fer your own young ones like you would yourself —' "

Posey did not like this. It was a reflection on her.

"I'll have you know, Aunt Sally, that *I* take care of Dunny and Sissy Mobo, and I take good care of them, too. Send anybody to me that says they are neglected."

Aunt Sally's eyes snapped.

"How's it happen then that they've been picked up down by the river a half o' dozen times? Them little young ones are goin' to be drowned yet, now you mark my words."

A sudden fear froze Posey's heart. She gave Aunt Sally an agonizing look.

"Well, nobody's blamin' you, so you needn't get cut up about it."

"I don't care whether they blame me or not. But you can tell them for me that as long as I live there nothing will happen to Dunny and Sissy Mobo."

Aunt Sally nodded.

"Maybe so. But so far as their addle-pated mother is concerned they'd be more neglected than the poorest poor in Humptulips. Course, it's her affair 'bout her own children, but it's our affair 'bout her cuttin' up with this man — It's a disgrace."

“ But you mustn’t think wrong things about her, Aunt Sally.”

Aunt Sally flushed angrily.

“ Mmmm — I mustn’t, mustn’t I? How ’bout the things she said ’bout us? I guess I’ve got a right to get it back on ’er if I’m a mind to. Maybe she can fool people that wants to be fooled, like you an’ Mother McKnight, but I know a few things? ” Aunt Sally smacked her lips. “ I know people! An’ I know that sometimes them proud an’ haughty appearin’ women ain’t always so proud an’ haughty when they ain’t no one lookin’.”

A flood of anger swept Posey. For a moment she wanted to reach across the counter and catch Aunt Sally by her fat, wrinkled throat and throttle her. Too distracted even to quarrel, she got out of the store as quickly as possible.

“ It isn’t that I care so much for Mrs. Alden,” she told herself as she climbed the hill. “ It isn’t that — But how can people say such awful things about each other? Just how can they! ”

Arriving home, Posey found Tesa and Wainright just leaving for Hoquiam. The President of the Lumberman’s Bank was giving a reception at his home that evening in honor of a distinguished guest from the East. The invitation was extended to Mr. and Mrs. Alden. Alden was attending a conference in Portland. He would be unable to be at the reception and also, much to Tesa’s regret, a banquet given at the Grayport several nights later by the wealthy loggers of Gray’s Harbor.

Tesa was good company. Therefore she always received pressing invitations to all the social functions. Although there was a bit of gossip attached to her being seen so much in public with Wainright, yet they each added so much color to any affair they attended, they were always made welcome.

Tesa no longer held herself aloof from the social set of Hoquiam and Aberdeen. She entered into the spirit of their gay whirl and threw every atom of her energy into the gay afternoon affairs, late suppers, dances, night rides, card parties. No one suspected but what she was the happiest woman on Gray's Harbor, unless he were keen enough to suspect the superficial merriment which her manner portrayed.

Since the night she told Alden the truth regarding her feelings toward him, they had become somewhat estranged. His absence from home so much of the time made this estrangement more possible. He no longer sought her sympathy and interest in his affairs. Spiritually they grew farther and farther apart.

Yet the very condition of the relationship between himself and his wife made Alden more keen and alert in a business way. The fact that she did not conceive the truth that a large per cent of his effort was for the sake of herself and their children did not seem to discourage him. Knowing now that she would never be reconciled to having been taken from the life to which she had long been

accustomed, his chief desire was to bring matters about so that she could return to that life.

He was still uncertain just how this would come about, for he remained resolute against her securing a divorce. He detested a law which granted a divorce just because a man and woman no longer desired to live together. The entire plan was shameful and grounded upon false principles. It was cowardice. Those who sought divorce merely to escape the unpleasant tasks of natural law so that they might follow their own selfish pursuits, were not brave enough to face life as it truly was and play the game squarely. Because there were exceptions, then the great majority of divorce seekers tried to establish weak excuses in their case

One night Tesa was bantering him into consenting to set her free.

“Why not try to find yourself, Tesa. Perhaps if you thought the matter over sanely, instead of submitting to flighty fancies, you might readjust your life to mine without too much difficulty.”

Tesa shook her head.

“One has no desire to readjust his life to that of a person one does not love.”

Alden looked at her a moment steadfastly.

“Just what do you call love?”

Tesa returned his glance with a strange gleam in her eyes. For the first time since Wainright had come into their midst, Alden had a faint suspicion that, perhaps, she was becoming enamored with



this former sweetheart; as she insisted upon calling him. He resented the forced, unnatural, almost sensuous sound of her voice when she replied to his question.

“ Love — love is — romance.”

“ Ah, there you have it. False principles again. There is nothing in romance but imagination. It is founded upon child’s play, the seeking after artificiality — ”

Tesa interrupted.

“ And ideals.” She laughed. “ How strangely you talk tonight. One might suspect, David, that your pompous pedestal of idealism was threatening to fall.”

What she said did not frustrate him.

“ No, Tesa, it is not threatening to fall. On the contrary, it is more substantial than ever before. I am now beginning to know life.”

She lifted an impatient hand.

“ But we were talking of love. Why digress? You asked me — now I ask what *you* call love? ” She smiled sarcastically.

Alden straightened up suddenly, as if to strengthen his fortitude against the jest she hurled at him.

“ Love, first and foremost, is service to our fellowmen and to those near and dear to us — ”

Tesa was dismayed. She shrugged impatiently.

“ Oh, dear me, will you never get over that old tirade. If you but knew how boring it is — ” She paused to smile mockingly at him. “ Come to

think of it, you and I never did have a wild love affair. It has, in truth, been very tame from beginning to end." Throwing out her arms Tesa waved them hopelessly and then, clasping her hands behind her head, observed Alden insolently. "I mean one of those sort of tempestuous affairs which end in riotous abandon. You know —" She studied for a moment. "This desire I have may be a sort of reaction from all these years of exile. Or it may be a safety valve to keep me from going insane. At any rate there are times when I find the primordial instinct surging within me until I am desperate. Oh, how I yearn to fall deeply in love — just once."

Her manner was so ridiculous that Alden thought her joking.

"You might fall in love with your husband."

Tesa drew herself up quickly.

"Impossible."

The irony of her voice brought him to realize how truly in earnest she was.

"Tesa, such motives as you refer to are unbecoming to a woman of your station. Remember you are a wife and a mother. What you talk of is infatuation; purely physical attraction. Indeed I regret to say it, but physically you would not endure long with such an affair as the one to which you refer —"

She looked at him beneath lowered lids.

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I say. Once another man had sought

the recesses of your heart, and he found the same unresponsiveness that I found — ”

Tesa's eyes widened.

“ Don't be too certain of that! Perhaps the reason you found only coldness is because you were not capable of stimulating warmth.” Distracted, Tesa rose and walked to the window. For a time she looked out into the darkness. After a time she turned and cast a vicious glance in the direction of Alden. The very manner in which he sat calmly smoking roused her bitterly.

“ When, oh, when will this end!” she asked herself. In that moment she felt as if she had never hated him so much as she did then. She wanted to fight. She could scratch his eyes out. His very calmness made her more furious than if he would quarrel, or even go so far as to strike her.

The afternoon that Tesa left with Wainright, her face glowing with smiles, Posey thought of the moods she was so often in of late. Her spirits were high when Wainright was about, but between his visits so great was her anxiety that she seemed to be more cross and irritable than ever.

“ I don't think Mr. Wainright is doing much trapping,” thought Posey as she watched how carefully he helped Tesa into the car. He posed as assuming a detached air, but it was plainly evident that beneath this pose he was greatly concerned over the welfare of his lady. “ He was supposed to spend the winter trapping with Charley Mitchell, but he is here most of the time.”

As she walked away from the window, Posey thought of a recent conversation with Tesa. She had learned more in that brief intimacy than anything which had previously occurred to reveal Tesa's true regard of her husband.

Alden was away, and it was one of the nights when Wainright was not present. Posey was reading an interesting story, but Tesa sat with her hands folded in her lap and her eyes absently upon the fire. Posey was too deeply engrossed in her story to sense anything unusual in the air. In fact there was nothing unusual. This had been Tesa's accustomed manner for some time. Presently, Tesa sprang to her feet, and beat her fists together.

"Oh, horrors, when I think how I am wasting my life in this dreadful place — it is maddening!"

Posey looked up calmly.

"Is this place so dreadful?"

Tesa gave her a disdainful look.

"Not to some people, no — of course not —"

Posey might have been hurt by the suggestiveness of Tesa's voice, had she not been so amazed at her manner.

"Well, I suppose when one has never known any place but this —" she began, but cut herself short. "But don't you think maybe if a person tried real hard, no matter how awful the place was, you could make yourself happy anyway if you knew it was for the best —"

Tesa looked at her as if she but half heard what she was saying.

“ Yet if one knew they could live in a much more satisfactory place and could have married a far more desirable and intelligent man — ”

For a moment Posey was beside herself. Jumping up from her chair, she faced Tesa vehemently. She felt that she would like to do something to spoil those lifeless marble features of the woman before her. Yet, upon second thought, she wondered if she had misunderstood Tesa or heard wrong. Her anger cooled.

“ Mrs. Alden you don't mean that you might have married some one better — ” She looked half frightened as she gazed into Tesa's eyes, searching for the truth. “ No, no, you couldn't have meant it, because — because there isn't a man in this whole world as wonderful as Mr. Alden! ”



BOOK IV  
TO HIM IS GIVEN





## CHAPTER XXIII

One afternoon late in autumn Posey found herself, for some reason, strangely wrought up. All day she had gone about with a feeling that she could hardly endure to stay in the house. She felt depressed, suffocated. Before it was time to give the children their evening meal and put them to bed, she took them for a walk. They scampered along the road like two playful young animals; Dunny doing droll little antics to excite Sissy Mobo to squeals of joy.

Posey could not enter into the spirit of their mirth this day. Everything about her seemed touched with unreality, as if she were a being vastly detached from it all. She looked upon the foliage of the jackpine and the Oregon grape and the wild fern of the prairie, brilliant from the recent rain, and tried to be influenced by its beauty. Across the prairie the maple trees in the woods were tinted with their autumn colors, now changed from lustrous scarlet and brown and deep yellow to more subdued tones. Posey sighed as she looked upon them. Soon the leaves would drop off and then winter would set in with its long and monotonous rains. Posey shuddered.

“What has come over me that makes me feel like the dying leaves?” she asked herself as she

trudged after the children. "Ugh!" She hurried to catch up with Dunny who had run on ahead to pluck a late wild flower which had thus far escaped the season's frosts.

He held the flower up for Posey to see, his face glowing with pleasure. As if taking on her mood, presently Dunny too became meditative. But he was like that. He would change in a moment from a mood of ecstatic joy to one of deepest melancholy.

The sky had always been a never-ending mystery to Dunny. As if he had not asked the same question dozens of times before, he pointed skyward and looked at Posey.

"What's up there?"

"That's the sky."

He frowned thoughtfully.

"I know, but what's in it. What's it made of?"

This was a hard question. Posey hesitated.

"Well, the sky is just space — and then there are lots of worlds up there like this one."

This puzzled Dunny. He twisted his small face and craned his neck as if to search for those other worlds.

"And do people live in the other worlds?"

"Do people wiv in 'em?" echoed Sissy Mobo. Posey nodded.

"Well, yes, maybe — and remember I told you God lives up in the sky —"

The two children nodded gravely. Sissy Mobo looked long and earnestly upward.

"I don't see 'im," she said presently.

“ But you can't, Sissy Mobo,” said Dunny, “ 'cause He lives far, far away.” With his small hands clasped behind his back Dunny turned to Posey again. “ And when people die do they go up there? ”

“ Yes.”

Meditating for a moment, presently he lifted solemn eyes to Posey.

“ And if me and Sissy Mobo died, would we go up there, too? ”

“ Oh, Dunny, don't say such things!” Tears sprang to Posey's eyes. She darted down and swept the two children into her arms. “ Don't ever talk that way again, Dunny!”

He drew away and looked at her strangely.

“ Why? ”

Posey held him close.

“ Oh, because, Dunny, because —” She could not go on. Rising she clasped a small, plump hand in each of hers and led them back home.

When she was putting him to bed, Dunny threw his arms about her and nestled his head against her breast.

“ I — I'm sorry I made the cry come for you, Posey —”

“ And you won't ever say sad things again, Dunny? ”

He shook his head and then lay back upon his pillow. Posey did not leave them that night until she had repeated the good-night story over and over until they could no longer keep their

eyes open. They were sleeping soundly when she drew the covers up to the sweet little faces and went away.

Alone in the living-room below, she again became obsessed with melancholy. Picking up a novel she had been reading, she tried to concentrate her mind upon it, but the words were meaningless, the lines blurred. She put a record on the phonograph. She had not noticed which one it was. When the disconsolate notes of the Traumerei filled the room, she was strangely fascinated. Never had they appealed to the profound depths of her soul as these notes did this night. They stirred her as the sound of the wind stirred her when as a child she would steal out of doors at night and listen to it blowing through the trees. Remembrance of her childhood brought her father to her mind. A bitter remembrance, yet filled with unusual and tender pathos.

Posey had not heard from her father, except indirectly, for many months. She was told that he had been drinking heavily of late. This hurt her. She had hoped that he might stop sometime before it was too late. Tonight, instead of thinking of him critically, she found herself pitying her father.

“After all, he’s the only father I’ve got. He’s really all I’ve got —” This thought seemed to sweep her with a new and more vital meaning. “Why — why, I never thought of it in just that

way before." She rose and went over to the window to look out into the darkness. Suddenly a frenzied desire took possession of her that she wanted to see him; at once. She moved away from the window as if she would immediately put on a hat and coat and go to him. But on second thought she remembered that that was hardly possible. Both Mr. and Mrs. Alden were away from home.

Posey returned to the fireplace and sat down before it. The record played out. She rose to shut off the machine. She did not play any more, but returned to her seat and sat watching the flames leap up the chimney. Yet, even though her interest was arrested by the blaze, she moved about nervously in her chair. She could not sit still. Her eyes wandered about the room. Her gaze fell upon the pictures upon the wall; three very fine paintings done in oil, and a number of smaller water colors.

Posey studied them thoughtfully. Her favorite was a copy of Rosa Bonheur's — she did not know the name — but it was an animal study. The second was a copy of a Rembrandt. She did not know who the other was by, but it was an original painting by an artist who was still living.

While she looked upon the paintings, it came to Posey what a gorgeous spectacle the beautiful things of the Alden home made on her drab life; as the handsome Alden house made a gorgeous

spectacle of brilliant color against the dull-green forest background.

Studying the elaborate furniture of the room, the heavy silken draperies emphasized by a number of ornamental statuettes and two great Satsuma vases, Posey wondered why Tesa could not be happy. The contrast of her home with that of the others of Humptulips should remind her how much more fortunate she was than others. Posey thought of what Mother McKnight had once said when they were talking of the subject.

“The reason Mrs. Alden doesn’t appreciate what she has is because she has never known what it was to do without. Some rich people are like that.”

Suddenly becoming argumentative, Posey addressed an invisible audience.

“If they only knew what it was not to have a thing in the world, only enough clothes to cover them, why, then maybe they’d appreciate what they have. Mother McKnight says that’s the way the world goes, and she lets it go at that. She believes that there will be a way of evening things up on the other side —” Deeply moved, Posey rose and for a time strode furiously about the room.

Presently she drew up before the massive library table and looked down upon the row of books reposing carelessly between the heavy wrought copper ends. “I don’t believe it!” she said fiercely, as if addressing the books. “I believe

there ought to be a way of evening things up on this side. When they who have everything don't appreciate what they've got, and then they who want haven't got anything —" She unconsciously brought her fists down upon the table. "No sir, there's something wrong somewhere.

"Mother McKnight says it's all material desire for the things of the flesh, and that these desires aren't real, that this life is just a dressing room for the true spiritual life beyond the grave —"

As if her melancholia had taken a sort of reaction, wild impulses surged Posey; maddening impulses, that were poignant with desire, desire for what, she knew not, but she was conscious of being swept by a great and impelling force.

"If desires for the things of the flesh aren't right, then what are we given them for?"

"I believe I'm what Mr. Wainright calls himself, a materialist. Because I do like material things. But why can't you like both? If you aren't s'posed to like these things, then why did Mr. Alden teach me to love books and music and all the grand things that you can't have when you're poor —"

Suddenly a fearful thought came to her mind. She could not go on always as she was now living. Some day she must leave the Aldens. It must end somewhere, sometime. And after that what should she do?

Here was tragedy, stark and terrible. After

these years of living in luxury she must some day return to the old life. Mother McKnight once told her that that was the calamity of poor people going to live with the rich.

Flinging herself upon the divan, Posey buried her face in the pillows and wept. Yet while she lay there, it came to her that Alden had given her something which was greater than just the appetite for luxury. He had given her something which could not be taken away from her, and, planted deep in her heart, it would never die, no matter how far away she wandered from the years she had spent in his home and under his influence.

She did not know how long she had lain there, when there came a knock at the door. For a moment she was frightened. What could any one want at that time of the night? The knock was repeated. She hastened to see who the caller might be. When she opened the door, Happy Lenon stood before her.

“Why, Happy!” she exclaimed eagerly. But something about his manner caused her to draw back. “What’s wrong, Happy?”

Happy removed his hat and fumbled with it for a moment.

“Posey — I — I’ve got bad news for you.”

Her eyes widened.

“For me?”

Happy nodded.

“Ole Cap is awful sick. He’s bad off. He’s



callin' for you. I think you better come over right away — right now —” He paused as Posey looked at him, bewildered and suffering. He was surprised. He had supposed that she had no love for her father. Now he wondered. Posey asked if he were at home or in camp.

“ He's up at the camp. I've got a horse out here for you — ”

Posey asked him to come in and wait for her. She rushed upstairs to ask the servants if they could look after the children while she was gone. She went into the nursery to see that everything was all right before she joined Happy.

On their way over to camp they talked but little. Posey rode along in silence. Happy told her that her father had been on a drunk for over a week, and had had another spell of delirium tremens. This one had been the most terrible one he had ever had. Missing him from camp, some one had gone over to the shack and found him. The boys had tried to sober him up, but he was in such a weakened condition that they were afraid to cut him off from whiskey altogether.

“ I'll be perfectly honest with you, Posey. I think Ole Cap's on his last legs. Don't — don't be too surprised if he has cashed in by the time we git there.” Happy paused a moment and waited, but when she said nothing in return, he went on: “ We tried to git him out to town yesterday, but he's too weak. We didn't think he could stand the trip.”

“ Why didn’t you let me know about him before? ” asked Posey.

“ Well, we knew if we couldn’t do nothin’, you couldn’t. Then we all thought it was all over with you an’ yer ole man — ”

“ But — he’s my father, Happy — ”

Happy tapped the horn of his saddle with the end of his quirt.

“ Well, yeah — you’re right ’bout that, Posey.”

Since the camp had become crowded, the old men had a bunkhouse to themselves. Paddy McTigh and Jim McGovern had taken Old Cap Murry in with them. When Posey arrived, the four faithful friends were sitting beside the bunk where her father lay. They all looked up at her with deepest sympathy, but no one spoke for a time. There was, however, much furious blowing of noses into red bandanas. Posey crept quietly toward them.

“ How is Pa? ” she asked eagerly.

Paddy McTigh shook his head.

“ He ain’t ravin’ like he was, but I’m a thinkin’ he’s a lot weaker.”

“ Then he’s still alive! ”

Paddy nodded. He motioned Posey to a seat. At sight of Posey Jim McGovern, shaking his iron grey head from side to side, rose and made for the door. Paddy looked after him in righteous indignation.

“ Whin it comes to carin’ fer the sick, that no-good Irishman ain’t worth a damn.” Paddy

jerked a thumb toward the door. " Instead o' helpin' care fer Ole Cap, he's spent most o' his time fer the last three days weepin' behind stumps — "

Posey drew nearer her father. She was horrified by his swollen and distorted features. From time to time he kept up an incessant and unintelligible chatter, and at intervals tried to raise himself, but he was too weak. He flung out his arms and sometimes looked wildly about him.

Posey stationed herself by her father, where she sat looking upon the wreck of what was once a vital human being. Jim came in again and went to sit beside her. He patted her comfortingly on the shoulder.

" It's all right, Posey. Don't ye feel sad, girl — Ole Cap's goin' to git up agin an' ever'thing will be all right — "

Posey shook her head and wept silently.

It was plain to see that her father was sinking fast. Several times he rallied. Once he opened his eyes rationally and recognized Posey, but he immediately went off into delirium again. Often they thought he was gone altogether, but presently he would rise up and protest against the dreadful, unseen force which seemed to obsess him.

About three o'clock he opened his eyes and, rising on his elbow, held a trembling hand out to Posey. An almost supernatural light blazed in his eyes, and his manner was like that of a tree which never seems so staunch, in all the years it has stood, until that moment before the gash hewn into its

heart renders it to earth. Those who stood around Old Cap Murry knew that his mind was clearer than it had been for days.

“ Posey! Posey! ” he cried. “ I allus taught yu that there ain't nothin' after this life. It — it's a lie! I — I jist seen 'Im. There is a God! ”

## CHAPTER XXIV

Horace Wainright paused in the act of lifting a forkload of green peas to his mouth. With the fork poised half way between his plate and his mouth, he stopped and observed Alden.

“But, David, I have found that in this life we must either follow the crowd or cast off in another direction. It is useless to try to walk alone among the multitudes.” With a significant smile Wainright bore the peas to their journey’s end and then laid his fork back upon his plate.

Tesa laughed.

“Oh, Horace, he doesn’t understand you at all. Dave is too old-fashioned, too mid-Victorian to be aware that we are approaching an age in which sentimentality is taboo.”

Disregarding her, Alden turned to Wainright.

“No, I admit, Mr. Wainright,” — he always avoided the familiarity of calling him Horace — “I admit that your meaning is slightly vague to me — ”

Wainright regarded him thoughtfully for a moment.

“What I mean is that you are too serious, I might add, too high-minded for this age. You have your wagon hitched to a star, but you might at least drag your heels upon the ground.”

Alden waved this aside. He toyed with his salad for a time.

“As to your reference of my motives not fitting this particular age,” he said presently, “I have no desire to adjust my way of thinking to any particular age. Furthermore, it does not matter to me whether I follow the crowd or whether I walk alone. I believe that one’s train of thought is a result of the experience one has had and the life one has lived, rather than a set rule which must be appropriate from one decade to another.

“Surely we cannot compare so momentous an issue as the train of one’s thoughts with the sleeves of a lady’s gown, which yesterday were leg-o’-mutton, today are another thing and tomorrow are something else.”

Wainright smiled.

“Yet you will admit that thought-waves have universal unity — If not, there would be no wars. All fads and fashions are set by a few strong minds preying upon the weak ones.”

Alden nodded.

“Yes, I agree that ideas, conditions, certain situations are not only directed to individuals and to certain localities. They are universal, that is true. Vital changes do most emphatically sometimes affect an entire nation. But I still hold that there can be the exception. I boast that my way of thinking is the exception, and that any man can make his way of thinking the exception if he is intelligent enough to have sufficient confidence in

his own ideas." Alden paused to take a few bites of food, then putting down his knife and fork he wiped his mouth with his napkin and proceeded:

"I believe greatly in individualism. I cannot believe that because my great grandfather had a complex, as you call it, to probe his mother-in-law's pet driving horse with a pitch fork, that I should inherit the desire to do that same thing. And because my mother-in-law by chance has no driving horse to probe, I should suffer years of repression. The entire theory sounds humorously absurd to me. I believe that my life is governed by the life and experiences of no one that has ever lived before me nor one who lives now or shall live after me. I am ME. Everything that I do, think, say or feel depends entirely upon myself. I have it in me to become as great intellectually, morally, financially as I choose. Nothing need bar my way from the heights of success. So long as my faith in my own potency endures, I can continue upward. So long as I am working for righteousness and justice nothing need stop me. Always I am the great ME, which endures as long as I have the breath of life left in me — "

Wainright's brows lifted.

"That sounds most dreadfully vainglorious, Alden."

"But I trust that you get my meaning. I am merely using myself as an example because I know the development of my own life better than that of others." Alden paused to make sure that Wain-

right understood him. " I believe I am illustrating this theory in my own financial and commercial success. And I owe much of this to having banished all doubt, and my utter fearlessness to march on — "

" Now you are getting into business relations, at which," Wainright laughed lightly, " I draw the line. Sorry to say it, but I am in no way interested in the miraculous effect of the modern economic and financial system. Pardon me if this sounds insolent, but other than a bit of dabbling, in stocks and bonds, which my attorney does for me, my interest in the commercial ceases."

" But you are interested in art," Tesa broke in, in a manner which portrayed that she meant that this in itself was enough.

" To be sure. Anything in the artistic or intellectual line appeals to me greatly. My fond parents might have made anything of me, from a minister to a classic dancer, and I confess to have, at various times throughout my life, attempted to write poetry of the stilted, bilious sort. But never have I had a desire for high and frenzied finance like Dave here — " both Tesa and he laughed at this — " or any of the so-called get-rich-quick promotions.

" Had I created an appetite for the commercial game, doubtless I could be vastly wealthy. Fortunately, I have enough as it is to satisfy a confirmed bachelor. There is nothing more that I want."

Neither of the men saw Tesa wince at this last



declaration. Smiling bitterly, she looked up at Wainright.

“ How I envy you! ”

“ Yes? Well — perhaps it is an enviable position, and perhaps it is not.” He smiled. “ One advantage is that my financial standing keeps me from needing to be concerned over the current events of the day or of the future.

“ I recall a friend of mine in Chicago, a frenzied financier, who was all wrought up this spring because it had been rumored that eventually the United States Steel Corporation will have something like half of the steel trade of the country. That, of course, was of vital importance to him, inasmuch as he is one of the smaller steel corporations. How fortunate I am, I thought, when it doesn't need to matter a Continental to me whether the United States Steel Corporation controls the steel trust, the wool and cotton and the tobacco trusts, the petticoat and the soothing syrup trust and what not. It is all the same to me — ”

“ But it should matter to you,” interrupted Alden. “ That is the trouble with humanity. It is the very reason that the social and economic systems are in such chaos as they are today. Those who are concerned over conditions are in no position to overcome the fault. Those who could do something to counterbalance it are indifferent — ”

“ Now — now, my dear David, wait a moment. I cannot agree with you on this point. Chicago,

like all large cities, is over-run with social settlement workers.”

Alden nodded.

“Quite true. But not workers of the right sort. That is, I mean to say, they are not getting at the nucleus of the trouble. One might as well go out into mid-ocean and try to run a dam from Honolulu to the Caroline Islands and expect the Pacific Ocean to back-water up over the Arctic Circle as to alter conditions in the manner they are going about it at the present day.”

Wainright’s upper lip curled.

“And how would you revolutionize the social and the economic system?”

“First, I would put society on an equal basis. As it is, society is divided into two factions. And each faction is pulling in the opposite direction. One faction is the builders, the doers. The other, and most emphatically the predominant one, is the wreckers and the parasites.”

Wainright lifted an impatient hand.

“Oh, yes, David, all this is true today, but has it not always been true? Will there not always be the Intelligentsia and the Philistines? The one preying upon the other? It seems to me that if we would each mind our own affairs and let the other fellow’s alone, let him be free to do as he chooses, that alone would adjust the difficulty to a large degree.”

Alden shook his head.

“But in the present-day situation the greater

part of society cannot do as they choose. Those who can will not permit the others to do so. So don't you see, it is not a square deal."

Wainright nodded.

"All right then, what would you do to give the Intelligentsia a square deal?"

"I would establish a better system among the masses. I would develop the masses along practical and intellectual lines, and I might add, most emphatically, along sanitary lines. Any intelligent person knows the psychology of cleanliness and the sense of superiority it gives one. There has never been greater evidence of the part it plays in the working man's life than right here in my own camps. If you do not believe me ask Tim, who at first was not altogether in sympathy with my plan of cleaning up the logging camps. Now he is as enthusiastic as I, and he makes it a part of his daily work to inspect the living quarters of the camps to see that everything is in order. It has become as essential to him as seeing each day that every man is out on the works and 'hitting the ball' as he calls it.

"Since we have cleaned the camps of liquor — the death of old Cap Murry was the last bad case — ordered all lights out at ten o'clock, instead of this all-night gambling as it used to be, placed bathtubs and showers and clean linen at the men's disposal, our output has increased at an almost unbelievable percentage. This has really been a charitable act toward the men, and yet many

argue that it is not profitable to mix charity and business."

Wainright leaned back in his chair and studied Alden carefully.

"I hope it works out all right. I am sure no one wishes you success more than I. And I do envy you your enthusiasm. There was a time when I, too, dreamed of great achievements. But now I hold no illusions. Perhaps the reason I am a skeptic and a cynic is because I have seen too much —"

"No," said Alden, "you have not seen enough. And you have allowed yourself to be too greatly influenced by the few disillusionments which are inevitable in any moderately intelligent person's life. It is an undisputed fact that pessimism does not, as a rule, pay. And there has never been an age in which optimism is so essential to success as in this age —"

"Oh, dear," interrupted Tesa, shrugging impatiently, "you two could talk all night and then you would not agree. How could you, when you are each of such distinctly different types?"

Wainright laughed.

"And each very true to type, eh?"

She nodded soberly.

"Extremely so." She rose from the table. "But come, let us go into the other room." She moved away; the two men following her. At the entrance of the living room Wainright detained Alden.

“For all we have said here tonight, David, to simmer the sum and substance of the whole down to a fine point, civilization, after all, only travels in cycles. There will always be the cynic, the reformer, the saint, the sinner and so on. It is merely history repeating itself. A million years ago, doubtless some David Alden of a forgotten age and race was as zealous over the rise and development of civilization as the David Alden who sat at this table tonight.

“The man you idealists choose to call Christ and think of as an exalted being, He, too, if history tells truths, sought to save humanity. Yet humanity went on doing its own little way in the exact manner it wanted to from that day to this.” Wainright paused a moment and looked tensely into Alden’s eyes. “It is my earnest belief that it always will.

“History repeating itself again — It is only human nature that each generation should be intolerant of the one that is past, and the one that is to come. We believe the generation in which we live is the one which shall solve the problem of destiny. It was intended that we should feel this way, so that you reformers and builders, as you call yourself, and your type, shall have faith enough in yourselves to perform these unseen miracles.” Wainright’s brows lifted and he smiled cynically as he moved toward the fireplace and sat down before it.

Alden brought over the cigars and, lighting a

match, held it for Wainright, after which he lit his own cigar.

“ Then you believe that the race is not improving as time goes on? ” he said as he tossed the match into the ash tray.

Wainright puffed at his cigar a moment.

“ Oh, I don't know. There appears to be but little difference. Truly it seems but a trifle better, and yet perhaps it is no worse.”

Alden's eyes narrowed slightly.

“ In that event, there would be nothing to work for toward the uplift of mankind. All this social reform is for nothing. That the government is working on nation-wide prohibition of liquor means nothing; that it is also working on the white slave question and other immoral conditions throughout the country means nothing; that myself and these working men who choose to call themselves Independent Workmen of the World — ” Alden paused. He lifted his hand. “ Now understand, Wainright, that I do not uphold these men in their radicalism. I am merely defending them in whatever views they have which I believe to be sound and practical. And it must be admitted that they have a few — ”

Wainright nodded absently.

“ Yes, we will say they have a few — go on — ”

“ Well, as I was saying, if these men and myself are striving here on Gray's Harbor, as they are working the world over, to lift conditions for the working man to a higher standard than, according

to your theory, that also means nothing." Alden scowled darkly. "Such men as you would let the world wallow in its filth and slime and degradation and sit back upon your haunches, smoke your good cigars and say: 'Let the world go to perdition. It's no funeral of mine —'"

Tesa could see that Alden had worked himself up to an angry pitch. She was both surprised and provoked at him. That he should dare argue with a man of the type she believed Wainright to be, angered her.

There had never been a time during her marriage when she was more conscious of the different planes upon which they each dwelt than she was this night. While the two men talked on she watched her husband where he sat upon the divan conversing, desperately in earnest. His eyes were flashing. She regretted that he could not conceal his agitation. She looked at Wainright. Calm and unmoved, if there was a hidden fire burning in his breast, there was no outward evidence of it.

"Always the well-bred gentleman," she thought as she leaned back in her chair and observed him. "Ah, he is of my world." She sighed. "Why could I not have seen this long ago? The more I am with Horace, the more convinced I am of how mismated David and I are."

Alden and Wainright continued; Alden heatedly, Wainright with outward indifference, but it was obvious that he enjoyed the argument. After a time, too bored to endure longer, Tesa spoke:

“ Horace, how long are you going to sit there and listen to David’s absurd and antiquated theories? ” She yawned. “ I am sure you have a great deal more patience than I have — ”

Wainright turned to Tesa. He said nothing, but something in the expression of his eyes infuriated Alden. That glance spoke volumes. For a moment he was not certain which of the two he desired most to attack. But Tesa was his wife, Wainright his guest. As a gentleman, he could attack neither of them. Controlling his wrath, he rose and getting his hat and overcoat in the hall, went outside for a walk in the night air.

For a time he stalked along angrily. Up the road he met Tim on his way over to town. When they met, Tim turned back with him and they walked along together. Once during the conversation Wainright’s name was mentioned. Instant remembrance of the glance Wainright had given Tesa, came back to Alden. He wondered yet why it had made him so angry, but he recalled how smugly satisfied they each were as they sat there, admitting in that glance that they were worlds removed from the one in which he revolved; worlds unapproachable by him and his kind.

Before he was scarcely conscious of what he was doing, Alden was asking Tim what he thought of Wainright as a man.

The lines about Tim’s mouth were grim as he stopped suddenly in the road and faced Alden in the moonlight.



“ Do you really want to know what I think of that guy? ”

Alden laughed harshly.

“ Yes.”

“ Well, I think he’s the damnedest rounder that ever hit this neck of the woods. An’ I don’t mind tellin’ you as man to man that if I was in your place I’d be a little on the lookout for him. He’s smooth, that bird, let me tell you. Some of these days he’s liable to give you a little surprise that you’re not lookin’ for.”

## CHAPTER XXV

Nothing plays havoc with the mind so much as imagination. Imagination, prompted by the love and the desire for romance, is the most treacherous. Perhaps the most prepossessing human quality, especially in the gentler sex, is this search for romance.

Although Tesa Alden knew not why, she was always apologizing to Wainright. Not that it was necessary. Insofar as material wealth and social standing were concerned she had nothing to apologize for. During the past few years her home had become almost within the radius of magnificence. Other than the opera and the opportunity to meet a part of the world of distinguished people through her social circle, life at Humptulips, heavily seasoned with the best which was to be found in Hoquiam and Aberdeen, was little short of the luxury she had enjoyed in Chicago.

Her husband was broadening so extensively in the financial world that he had about decided to move to either Seattle or Tacoma or Portland, Oregon, and make his business center there. Tim was getting to be so much of an executive that this would be possible. It would be necessary

to spend but a part of the time on Gray's Harbor; as he was doing at present anyway.

Attending conferences, in which he and other logging men and mill men as co-workers exchanged ideas and recommendations of what they supposed to be the best plans upon which to achieve their interest, he was often gone for days at a time, sometimes to Portland, sometimes to Seattle or Tacoma and a number of times he had gone as far as San Francisco.

Even among his competitors on Gray's Harbor, Alden was becoming recognized as a big business man.

"That man is going far," an older business head had once said of him at a meeting. "He has big ideas and he knows how to carry them out."

The wives of many of the prosperous lumbermen on Gray's Harbor spent their winters in California. Alden suggested to Tesa that she do this. But she obstinately refused.

"No, I detest the West. I want to go back to Chicago."

"Yet, you know that under the present circumstances that would be impossible."

Without another word, the subject was dropped.

The strain for Tesa had broken. She no longer fought the rebellious impulses which obsessed her. Her spirit was in revolt; she made no attempt to conceal it.

"If he will not consent to a divorce, and I have no grounds upon which to get one without his

consent, then I shall live my own life in the way I choose. Perhaps, in time he will be glad to give me my freedom."

Pitching headlong into the game of playing with fire, she became reckless, and chose Horace Wainright as her playfellow. And he was not an unwilling participant in entering this game, which is older than history.

However, Wainright did not altogether know his own mind regarding Tesa. Sometimes he thought he loved her deeply, yet, when he detected her seriousness toward him, he hesitated and almost wished to withdraw from this frenzied frivolity into which she was leading him.

"Good Lord, doesn't she know I'm a confirmed bachelor and glory in my freedom?" he would ask himself hopelessly. "Yet what man can resist the wiles of a beautiful woman? Tesa! Apparently as cold and dead as an Egyptian mummy. Although who knows but what — if — But hang it all, if she is in love with me, why didn't she know it long ago?"

"When one has been in exile for nearly six years," said Tesa, one afternoon when they were speeding along the Olympic Highway, "as I have been in exile, in spite of every effort to refrain from it, you take on more or less of the condition of your environment. Both Dave and I have changed considerably since we came West.

"The new West, as they call it, is still a ferocious country. There are no wild beasts to devour

one now, nor Indians waiting to scalp you, but it cannot be denied that a dominant primordial instinct still remains among these Westerners. It may be due to the great open spaces or, perhaps, the vibrations of the but recently wild and woolly West still linger. It might even be climatic conditions which mark such a sharp contrast between the Westerners and the Easterners —” Tesa looked at Wainright’s calm and unmoved profile. A bit of a thrill stirred her. “Have you noticed it?”

Wainright turned to her and smiled. It was as if he had surmised the stirring of her heart.

“To me the West, of course, means you, Tesa.”

Tesa’s eyelids dropped. Something in the expression bent upon her brought vividly to her mind vague emotions which she had been experiencing of late, emotions which, during her girlhood and early marriage, she had not known; in fact not until Wainright had returned into her life again. Now she had no doubt that it was he who was rousing this vehemence which, previously, she had not been conscious of possessing.

The eyes through which she now looked did not see Wainright as the same man who had so ardently wooed her as a girl. Nor did the Wainright of old seem the same person as he who sat beside her. When she had gained her mental equilibrium, she asked:

“Tell me, is it true that you have changed, or is it just that I feel you are different, Horace?”

He did not reply at once.

“ We have each changed.”

She looked up at him admiringly.

“ You seem so much more vitally alive than you did back in the old days. So much more — a — oh, I can't express just what I mean —”

He shook his head.

“ I know what you mean, Tesa. It isn't the change in either of us. The reason you see me differently from what you did then is because you have a much broader perspective with which to view me now. In Chicago there are hundreds of Wainrights —”

“ While here in the West there is but one.”

Wainright shrugged.

“ That sounds too boastful.”

“ But it isn't. I mean every word of it.”

Reaching over, he closed his hand over her long, slender fingers. He felt them tremble beneath the pressure.

“ You are very unhappy, aren't you, Tesa? ”

She turned her head to conceal the tears that sprung to her eyes.

“ Yes, Horace.”

Tesa had begun to believe that she was beginning to reach a climax in the strange dilemma into which she had become involved through her marriage and then this meeting with a past lover. One evening a few nights later Wainright and she were alone in her living-room. The servants were upstairs in their rooms, the children

were in bed, Posey had gone out; no doubt to spend the evening with Aunt Sally Mullen. Alden was away. He was not expected back before the end of the week.

This night Tesa was in an unusually reckless mood. Never had she felt such impiety. Wainright and she were reminiscing.

“Remember the drives we used to have around the lakes at this time of the year, Tesa? Early spring — sunshine and the quick, sharp air blowing in our faces—”

Suddenly a bitter sense of homesickness swept her, yet the memory seemed to anger her rather than sadden her. She rose and began to pace up and down. Presently she stopped before him, her attitude dramatic.

“Don’t remind me, Horace. Can I forget it? Can I forget anything, anything?” Her voice became high-pitched, almost hysterical. “Don’t I live each day, each month, each year on nothing but memories — of the past. For me, there is nothing but the past. Always the past. There is never any present.” Flinging her arms out hopelessly she turned away from him.

Wainright rose and went to her side.

“Why, Tesa, I didn’t realize that you cared so much as this —”

She burst into tears.

“But I do — Oh, I do! And he will not let me go. Even when I have told him that I detest him — even then he will not let me go.”

“ Why does he object to a divorce when he knows that you do not love him? ”

“ The children. He will not consent to it on account of them.”

Wainright misunderstood this.

“ Then go, and leave the children with him.”

For a moment Tesa's maternal instinct dominated.

“ Leave my children with him! ”

Wainright put an arm about her shoulder.

“ Tesa, you are all wrought up. Calm yourself. Don't take your difficulties so tragically. There will be some way in which they can be adjusted. There always is.”

Tesa had never seen this sympathetic element in Wainright before. She had been a trifle afraid because he had appeared so cynical. Now that he had proved that he did have a compassionate heart, she was deeply moved. Overcome by what she believed to be her wretched state, she flung herself into Wainright's arms.

“ Horace, take me away from this, please — please, before I go insane! I can endure him no longer. He is not my husband, he is a brute and — and I love you — ”

Influenced by her fervor, Wainright drew Tesa close. All the old infatuation for her surged through his veins. A swift and sudden decision swept out all his boastful appreciation of bachelordom.

“ Tesa, dear, it was for you that I came West.



Somehow I had a vision that wherever you were, you wanted me. And I came in search of you —” He drew her over to the davenport and took her in his arms again.

Neither of them knew how long they remained in this position when, happening to look up, Tesa saw Posey standing in the doorway leading into the hall. The awed expression of the girl's face, horrified as if almost unbelieving what her eyes saw, filled Tesa with white rage. Jerking herself upright, her eyes flashed fire. She turned on Posey.

“You slinking little eavesdropper, you will steal in upon people when they are not aware of your presence, will you?” Provoked with herself for admitting her guilt, she became presumptuous. Her lips curled. “Well — I hope you are satisfied with what you see.”

Posey took a swift step toward them, as if she were the guilty party and wished to make an explanation. Tesa pointed to the door.

“There is the door. Go. And I mean it this time.” Bewildered yet, Posey started away without a word, but Tesa called her back. “Don't think I have any fear of your gossiping tongue,” she flung furiously. “It will not be long before I shall be away from you jungle people, who creep around in search of prey upon which to satisfy your insatiable appetites.”

Still too amazed to reply — in fact she had only half heard what Tesa was saying — Posey went upstairs to pack her few belongings. Soon

she was out on the road making her way to Mother McKnight. Her heart was too full of sadness and disillusionment to collect her thoughts as she strode along in the darkness. Dry-eyed, she looked hard into the shadows as she passed.

“And all the time I thought that Aunt Sally was lying and unreasonable in the things she said about Mrs. Alden,” she concluded in a voice that was half a whisper and half aloud.

As if the interval must not end with Posey's having actually seen Tesa in Wainright's arms Alden came home unexpectedly that night. Renting a car from a garage in town, he had come in after midnight. Wainright had just left and Tesa had not yet retired. Alden was both surprised and bewildered when he noted the tell-tale flush on her cheeks, the brilliancy of her eyes. This was something authentically new. Never, in all the years since he had known her, had he found Tesa so radiant.

For a moment his heart leapt. Was this for him? He moved toward her to greet her. Instantly Tesa's vibrancy went out; she was stone, impenetrable, as she had always been with him.

For the first time in weeks, the truth was revealed to him. Wainright! Slow rage rose up in him, but he fought to control it. He asked Tesa where Wainright was. She made no reply.

“Answer me!” he demanded.

Tesa looked up at him mockingly.

“Of what concern can that be to you?”

“Of the same concern that it is to any man toward one whom he has given the hospitality of his home, and in return finds that other has stolen his wife’s affections.”

Tesa was almost afraid of what she saw in Alden’s eyes. There was something almost savage, as if he would forget that he was a gentleman if she went too far. Yet she would not admit her fear. In the past she had baffled him by her banter. She would do it now.

“Oh, no, he has not, David. There were no affections to steal.”

Great beads of perspiration stood out upon Alden’s brow. He moved toward her.

“Do you think I will permit such infamy carried on in my house? Have you no honor or respect for your position as a wife and a mother when you permit this social parasite to come into your home and make love to you?”

Tesa threw back her head and laughed. She did not intend to let him humiliate her. True, Posey might tell what she saw, but she would declare that through spite Posey told falsehoods. According to a technical term in law, one is not guilty until he is proven guilty. Well, let them try to bring proof against her.

“Oh, don’t allow yourself to get too excited. Think a moment — aren’t you a bit hasty in your accusations? You might be wrong.”

Catching one of her wrists, Alden gripped it fiercely. He looked as if he would strike her.

“ I am not wrong in the estimation I have had recently regarding your attitude toward me. I have seen enough between you and this man Wainright to know that I am justified in whatever I might think. And when I remember that you have never, in all the years we have been married, been responsive to me —” Suddenly he flung her from him. Stumbling, Tesa half fell back upon the davenport. Trembling with fury he bent over her. “ What have you been to me — a wife? No! A companion? No! A sweetheart? No!” He paused and scrutinized her fiercely. “ Why, good God, you are no wife! You aren’t even a mistress! You are nothing —”

Tesa hid her face as if each word were a blow, but the moment he stopped she turned upon him vehemently.

“ Then, perhaps, now that you have learned I love him, you will consent to a divorce! ”

Alden laughed harshly.

“ You love him —” His eyes narrowed. “ Why, it isn’t in you. Love has no place in the heart of a person like you.”

Tesa rose hastily. She stood looking at Alden tensely.

“ Then give me my freedom! ”

There was a perceptible curl on his lips when he replied:

“ Never! ”

## CHAPTER XXVI

During the first part of November, after the first fall freshet, it was announced that the logging men all up and down the Humptulips would have a "splash." The river being unusually low that year, the logs had been accumulating since early spring. It was predicted that this was to be the greatest "splash" in this history of logging along the Humptulips River.

The rain came during the latter part of October. It poured for two weeks without ceasing. Consequently the river rose and the log jams began to loosen.

The "splash" was set for Friday. It proved to be a desirable day. The sun came out early in the morning; breaking from behind the low clouds which had hidden it so long. The morning waxed warm. The atmosphere had the pungent odor of Indian summer.

This being an unusual event, everyone turned out to see the "splash." Old ladies laid down their knitting, housewives, disregarding a littered kitchen, went down to the river early, a number of the school children played "hookey," and rejoiced in the excuse to hide among the thick underbrush which hung along the muddy banks.

Alden was home that morning, but he was

unable to stay to see the "splash." A pressing business engagement called him to Seattle. He was going to stop over in Tacoma on his way up, so he rose early to catch the morning train from Hoquiam.

While he ate his breakfast, he supposed the rest of the family still slept. He was surprised when someone crept up behind him and laid a small hand on his. A pair of large grey eyes beamed adoringly up into his.

"Hello, Daddy."

Alden looked down at Dunny while he stood waiting for a word of greeting.

"Why, Sonny, what are you doing up so early?" He noted that the child had nothing on but his pajamas. He asked him why he did not have on his dressing gown.

Dunny wriggled.

"I'm — I'm most awful warm, Daddy —"

"But you might catch cold."

When the maid came into the dining-room, Alden asked her to get something to put around him. Dunny looked thoughtfully at his father for a moment.

"Daddy, may I have breakfast with you?"

Alden smiled into his eager eyes.

"Of course you can." He asked the girl to bring Dunny's breakfast in also.

Suddenly prompted by a bright idea, Dunny fled to her side and caught her by the dress. He looked back at his father.

“ And may I have what you eat, Daddy? I— I’m most — drea’ful tired of cereal all the time. I’d like a great big man breakfast — ”

Alden nodded his consent to toast and a cup of hot milk with just a wee bit of coffee in it. Strong coffee was not good for little boys, he explained.

Returning to the table, Dunny slid into his place. His father watched with amused interest while he unfolded his napkin and tucked it under his chin.

“ What pleasure he is going to bring me in a few more years,” he thought as he looked across the table at the child. For a moment his heart went out tenderly to his wife. “ Poor Tesa — after all, if nothing else, she has done a magnificent thing for me in bearing me this splendid little son.” A lump rose in his throat. “ If we can only make things right between us before the children are old enough to realize — They must never know. My children!” — He studied Dunny’s beaming face. “ Dunny, my son!” And then he thought of his rosy baby still asleep in her crib. “ My beautiful little Maribel Marie!”

Dunny looked over at his father complacently.

“ I’m getting to be a big boy now, Daddy, since I’m going to school.” He drew himself up stoutly and threw out his small chest. “ I’ve growed ever and ever so much. See!”

Alden pretended to have noticed it only that morning.

“ Why, you have, haven’t you? ”

Dunny nodded.

“ Yes, 'n I can take good care of Sissy Mobo, too.”

His father looked at him gravely.

“ And you must take good care of your little sister, Dunny.”

“ Yes, 'cause she's just a little bitty weenty girl yet.” His face puckered seriously. “ She don't go to school!”

This exhibition of arrogance amused Alden. He suppressed a smile. He would not have the child even suspect that he did not take his every mood with the exact significance with which it was portrayed. He took great pride in the fact that his son looked upon him as being the most wonderful man in the world. It was an incentive to strive to be all that the child believed him to be. He regretted that a day should come when he might learn that he had been disillusioned.

Finishing his breakfast, he rose from the table. Dunny looked up, a trifle hurt that they could not have a long chat. Yet he was becoming accustomed to his father leaving early to get to Hoquiam in time for the morning train. Alden reached down to kiss him.

“ Good-bye, Son.”

“ Wait, Daddy !” Dunny clambered up in his chair and threw his arms about his father's neck for a “ hug-tight hug,” as he called an unusually demonstrative embrace. “ I want to stand up so's I'm away high like you, and then I can give you a



great big hug-tight hug." He nestled his head under Alden's chin. "That's the way I do Mother, only sometimes she don't want any hug-tight hugs."

Alden risked missing his train to satisfy that warm little heart with a moment's caress. He reached down and kissed Dunny's lips.

"All right now, Sonny." He lifted him off of his chair and was going to swing him to the floor.

"Another for Sissy Mobo!" cried Dunny.

Alden kissed him again and then tore himself away. As he climbed into his car, he looked back to see the little face at the window, glowing with love, a small hand waving furiously at him.

"I understand that the sight is worth seeing," said Wainright the morning he came down from Quiniault to see the "splash." He met Tesa on her way down to the post office to mail a letter which she had neglected to give her husband to mail.

"Oh, if one has never seen one before, it is interesting and unusual," she returned. "It is an event here. All the natives turn out to view it —"

"Then let us play natives and view it with them."

Tesa's eyes flashed, half in amusement and half in scorn.

"Indeed not! I have no desire to even play that I am a native of these jungles —"

A feeling of pity swept Wainright as he looked

down at Tesa. She was more pale than usual. He wondered if she had not been having a rather hard time in the past few weeks. Since the night she had thrown herself into his arms, he had kept away from the Alden home; principally because she had told him of the painful interview between herself and her husband. They concluded it would be best to confine their friendship to narrower bounds.

This morning he said nothing to her of their experience that night. There was a mutual understanding between them, and they each thought it best to await further developments.

"I know a splendid place up above the bridge where we can watch the logs when they first come in sight," Tesa was saying. "We can walk along the bank and watch them below the bridge."

Wainright nodded.

"Fine. When does it begin?"

"They will pull the flume planks right after noon. Of course, it will take some time for the logs to get down this far. They will start the rafts farthest up first and then gradually work down. I think one o'clock will be a good time to go over."

"Very well — I shall be at this spot at twelve-thirty." Wainright lifted his hat and went on.

When Dunny saw his mother getting ready after she had eaten a hasty luncheon, he begged to go.

"May I go with you, Mother? Sissy Mobo and I want to go too."

“ Please, may we go? ” Sissy Mobo’s great blue eyes were pleading.

Tesa considered for a moment.

“ Shall I take them? ” she reflected. Then on second thought: “ No, they would keep up such a tirade of questions that Horace and I would not have a moment’s peace. And then, too, children bore him so dreadfully.”

“ No, you must stay home today, children. I will take you next time — ”

Sissy Mobo’s lower lip dropped and Dunny took on a dejected air. Tesa bent down and put an arm about each of them.

“ Listen, if you will each be good today I will take you for a long, long ride tomorrow. Away up to Montesano. And we will have dinner at some nice place. Won’t that be lovely? ”

Sissy Mobo’s eyes widened.

“ In the au’mobile? ”

“ Yes.”

“ An’ you’ll buy us lots an’ lots of crackerjack, Mother? ”

“ Oceans of it! ”

With such prospects in view, Sissy Mobo was content to stay home. But Dunny was not so easily consoled. He was getting old enough to take an active interest in bigger things, and he had set his heart on seeing the “ splash.”

His mother had put him off before by telling him that he was too little. Now that he was going to school, he felt assured that this could no longer

be an excuse. A very disappointed little boy looked after Tesa as she walked away. Before she was out of sight he was prompted by a bright idea.

“ We will see it, the ‘ splash,’ ” he said obstinately. “ Anyway, we will see the ‘ splash.’ ”

Sissy Mobo looked at him inquisitively.

“ Will we? ”

Dunny nodded firmly.

“ Yes. It won’t be minding but — but just this once we’re not going to mind. All the rest of our life, forever and ever we will mind — but not today.”

Accepting his word as law, Sissy Mobo jumped up and down merrily.

“ We’re goin’ to see the ‘ splash ’ ! We’re goin’ to see the ‘ splash ’ ! ”

Tesa and Wainright had not been stationed long at their post when they heard the roar of rushing waters and the dull thud of thousands of logs bumping together as they sped swiftly toward them; like a stampede of cattle being driven by a storm. The logs sailed rapidly along the surface of the river, now swollen to the top of the banks by the overflow from the dam. They bumped together angrily as if impatient to get ahead of those before them.

With the unassuming air of those who know no danger, the river men rode down upon the great rafts of logs. Boom pole in hand, his eyes riveted ahead of him, Tesa saw Henry Hoggens standing upon the first raft.

In the past several years Hoggens had worked upon the river almost entirely. He was considered the best riverman of the Alden Logging Company's crew.

Tesa turned to Wainright.

"Isn't it thrilling! Even without the sight of the logs driving by, the turbulence of the river is as awe-inspiring as a great fire or a thunder storm."

When Tesa and Wainright passed the people standing on the bank, they noticed that many turned to look at them. Pretending to see none of them, Tesa tossed back her head and walked proudly by. Wainright moved slowly by her side.

"We can see up the river ever and ever so much better up here, Sissy Mobo."

Leading his little sister out upon the great log jam, which had been lodged some distance below the bridge since the last freshet, Dunny pointed gleefully. "See the pretty water running away, Sissy Mobo — But it isn't running away like it's going to pretty soon."

They climbed upon a log which, rising above the rest, was far enough out of the water to enable them to see all about them.

Looking down into the depth below her, Sissy Mobo drew back.

"I 'fraid."

Dunny held tightly to her clenched fist.

"No, no, you mustn't be 'fraid, Sissy Mobo." He straightened himself up suddenly. "See what

a great big boy I am. Nothing couldn't never happen to you with me holding your hand."

Sissy Mobo was still unconvinced, but she allowed him to help her down from the high log and lead her across the jam.

"We'll go 'way over," he said as he picked his way carefully. He pointed to where the logs formed a haphazard bridge far out into the river. "But dist as soon as the logs begin to come down we'll run right back to shore."

The farther Dunny went the more courageous he became. On the opposite shore there were people from Axeford Prairie and neighboring ranches. Among them he recognized Posey. She was standing apart from the others.

The children had not seen Posey since the night their mother had sent her from their home. Delighted, Dunny called to her. He was too far away to make himself heard, so he went out to the very edge of the jam and shouted as loud as his shrill little voice would carry. When Posey did at last hear him and, looking about, discovered his dangerous position, she uttered a cry of horror.

"Dunny, you and Sissy Mobo go right back to shore!"

The wind was coming from the opposite direction. Dunny did not hear what she was saying at first.

"What?"

"Hurry back to shore! Go back! Go back!"

She waved her hands desperately so that he would understand.

Dunny did understand and with this came the realization of his peril. His bravado left him. He fought hard to control the tears as he took Sissy Mobo's hand and made his way back across the jam.

But when they reached the other side the rise of the water, already rushing down ahead of the logs, had dislodged some of those about the edge of the jam.

Hoping that they would get back to safety before it was too late, Posey wondered why the children did not hurry upon shore. She would have rushed to their rescue had it been possible, but it was too far up to the bridge to get around that distance before the rafts began to float down the river.

Presently she saw why Dunny and Sissy Mobo were not upon shore. The dislodged logs were floating away on the swift current. They were trapped!

Posey looked about her at the crowd of people upon the bank. All women and children and old men, there was none among them who could swim. Across the river she saw several of the loggers approaching the jam to watch that it dislodged right so that it would not form another jam farther down the river. She was in hopes that they might see the children, but it was obvious that they did not and they were too far away for her to call to them.

There was but one way left in which she might save the children. Without thought of her own danger, Posey plunged into the icy water. The shock of the cold contact against her warm flesh almost overpowered her for a moment, but she fought the rapidly rising tide. She had not gone ten feet until there came cries from the shore for her to come back. The logs were coming!

Knowing now that it was useless to try to get to the children and that she would do well to save herself, Posey struggled against the current which threatened to carry her on before it. She tried to turn, but it was impossible. The tide was undermining her and bearing her swiftly into the middle of the stream. The rafts were bearing down upon her and she could do little more than hold herself above the water.

The screams of the women and children upon shore reached the ears of the rivermen. Henry Hoggens' alert eyes sighted Posey. In an instant he was in the water and, with almost superhuman skill, captured her just as the undertow was sucking her beneath the raft.

Posey cried into his ear that Dunny and Sissy Mobo were on the jam but, had he heard her, it would have been too late. Rescued by the boom pole held out to them from one of the other rafts, they had no more than reached safety when their raft and others riding abreast of them, blew the jam.

At once it was broadcasted that the Alden chil-



dren had been on the jam. As they were borne along on that fury of rushing logs, the eye of every man watched in hope that the little bodies might rise above the water.

About three quarters of a mile down the river, some one caught sight of Dunny's brown head. One of the men dove in and brought him up. Mangled by the blows of logs, where they had struck against him, it was believed that he was killed almost as soon as he had fallen into the water. All that had saved him from the full force of the blows was that his clothing had caught on the long splinters which stuck out from the end of a log. Had it not been for this, his body might never have been recovered.

Although the river was sacked for days afterward, Sissy Mobo was never found. It was thought that perhaps she, too, had been caught in something of the same manner as Dunny and carried along by the undertow, was swept down the river and into the harbor.

## CHAPTER XXVII

“For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul.”

This quotation from the thirty-sixth verse of the eighth chapter of Mark weighed heavily in David Alden's mind all during the night he sat in watch over the dead body of his little son.

Dunny, his first-born, the light of his life, his pride, his joy — gone forever. Dunny, in whom he had made so many plans for their future life together; in whom he had dreamed and had visions of the man he was going to be. Dunny! His little body so vibrant and alive only that morning when they parted. His little mouth clinging to his in loving embrace!

Dead. His little boy was dead. And Maribel Marie, his baby with the starry eyes. Not even a scrap of her dress remained. Swept from him! He was denied even the last opportunity of gazing upon her in death —

There was no consolation for Alden in this tragedy. Not one thread upon which he could linger. Strangely he blamed himself. He thought of a dozen things he might have done to prevent it, even to the thought of having taken them with him that day.

He did not blame Tesa. How was she to know

any more than he, that the children would go down on the log jam that day? However, he did not know that they had begged to go with her and she had refused to take them, putting them off with promises, and had gone away with Wainright. He did not know this and, even the gossiping tongues of Humptulips had not the courage to tell him the truth.

Alden's suffering was nothing to compare with Tesa's. In addition to the loss, her suffering was poignantly multiplied by the realization that she was partly to blame. Prostrate with grief, for days after the funeral of Dunny she refused to see anyone. Burying herself in the seclusion of her room, there were moments when she believed she would go insane. Self-condemnation smote her mercilessly and unrelentingly. Night after night she lay awake, her eyes searching the darkness.

Her days were even worse agony. Every moment of every hour, she found herself listening for the sound of her children's shrill little voices, to hear the patter of their feet in the hall outside.

"What have I done! What have I done to deserve such punishment," she would wail into the silence of those long nights, and then for hours she would toss from side to side upon her bed, calling for her children. Calling and calling again in vain.

Alden heard none of this. He was not at home. He had been called to San Francisco in the company's interest. He did not delay the trip because of his sorrow. In fact he somewhat welcomed the

opportunity to get away from the scene of the disaster. There were moments when he wondered if he could find the fortitude to return.

All during his absence that verse from the Book of Mark came to him again and again: "For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

One evening in the crowded dining room of the St. Francis Hotel this inquisition rose before him more vitally than before. It may have been because of the gaiety about him; the lively strains of the orchestra, the low hum of voices.

In a flash the past swept through his mind; from the first meeting with Tesa to the present.

"How unwise of me trying to keep her against her wishes," he reflected. "I should have let her go with Wainright that night when she begged me to consent to a divorce. Perhaps, if I had, the children would still be living —" He paused and studied the table service before him absently. "Yet it was for their sake that I fought against a separation. I did not want my children to grow up to learn that their father and mother stooped to the common discrepancies that some parents do. I was proud and vain. I wanted my son to always look up to me as he did in his childhood. I strove to carry out his illusions into facts. What a fool I have been — what a fool!

"Striving to gain the whole world, to lay the trophies of my victory at the feet of my loved ones. And, after all, where has this idle fancy led me —

this dream of becoming a power in the financial world — What have I gained — ”

Alden's reflections were interrupted by someone who had stopped at his table, and now stood before him. He did not look up, but he did become conscious of having been served for some time and that he had not touched a mouthful of the food. He looked down at his plate. The meat was cold, the salad already soggy. He looked about him. People's eyes were upon him. Several were staring curiously.

Suddenly he felt that he wanted to fly from this scene of gaiety. How could other hearts rejoice when his was so sad?

He felt a hearty slap upon his back. He looked up. The person who had been standing beside him smiled cordially. The light of his eyes kindled a spark of warmth in Alden's heart. He jumped to his feet.

“ No, no, Alden, sit still! What are you doing down here in San Francisco? ”

Alden extended a welcoming hand.

“ I — why, Mr. Griggs — this is indeed a most pleasant surprise. ”

The man was Walter Griggs, president of the Griggs Lumber Company of Portland, Oregon. One of the most successful lumbermen of the Pacific Northwest, he was known all up and down the Coast; not only for his executive ability but also for his excellent personality. He was famed far and wide as being a great humanitarian. Alden

and he had been acquainted for a number of years. He was very much interested in Alden's progress and an ardent admirer of his fine principles.

After the greeting, Alden unconsciously started to follow him away. Griggs pointed to the untouched food.

"Sit down there, my boy, and eat your dinner! You were just beginning, weren't you?"

Flushing slightly, Alden looked down at the table.

"It does look like it — but the fact is, I believe food was placed there nearly a half hour ago—"

Scrutinizing him sharply, Griggs instantly discovered that Alden was troubled. Giving him a gentle shove toward his chair, he unceremoniously took the chair beside him. They were alone. Alden had been the only occupant at the table. Griggs leaned over toward him and eyed him keenly.

"Alden, you're not yourself tonight. You are worrying over something. What is the trouble?" Alden hesitated to reply. Griggs patted him affectionately on the arm. "All right, go ahead and eat your dinner. You can tell me all about it later."

They talked of commonplaces until Alden had eaten all he wished of the cold and unappetizing food and drank the cup of hot coffee that the waiter brought him. Without waiting for his dessert, he rose, got his check and went out into the lobby with Griggs. They sat and smoked for a time. When they had finished their cigars, Griggs invited Alden

up to his rooms. On the way up in the elevator he mentioned that he believed they could talk much better in privacy.

“Now tell me what is the matter?” he said, when he had beckoned Alden to a comfortable chair and they were settled comfortably. “You have always been such a spirited fellow. It is both new and surprising to find you in this mood. You act as if you had lost your last friend —”

“I am afraid my affliction is worse than that, Mr. Griggs.”

“Why—why you don’t mean it! Is it possible?” Griggs paused. “I beg your pardon, for appearing so inquisitive. I just supposed that business reverses were depressing you. I know we all get down at the mouth sometimes over some little perplexity that always seems to come out all right at the last of it.”

Alden shook his head.

“It was perfectly all right for you to inquire, Mr. Griggs. I appreciate your interest —” He stopped suddenly. Griggs studied him a moment. Alden’s manner was confusing.

“The man surely is in trouble,” he thought.

“If your trouble is anything which you can tell — Sometimes it is a relief to get an obsession off of one’s mind.”

Alden was silent a moment.

“Yes, it is something that I can tell and, I agree with you. Perhaps it will help me to talk with someone.”

He related the incident of the children's drowning. When he had finished Griggs shook his head sadly.

"Yes, that is, indeed, very, very sad. I can imagine nothing worse. There is no alleviation for grief. Only time can heal, to a degree, the scar it leaves upon the heart."

Before the evening was over, Alden found himself going even farther into the confidence of this older man. Suffering so long in silence, he had reached a point where he welcomed the opportunity of finding a friend with whom he could trust his heartache.

"And there you are," he said at length, "I feel that I may have gained the whole world — the world which I set out to conquer — and now I question if I have not lost my own soul —"

Griggs lifted a deprecating hand.

"Not at all! Not at all! Get that idea out of your mind. It is merely an illusion. A man of your character cannot lose his soul. And don't condemn yourself. This tragedy might have happened to the children of any man. It does happen. There is scarcely a day passes but what we read in the newspapers of similar accidents. They are inevitable. Doubtless guided by an Unseen Power for reasons which we know not of.

"And this trouble between yourself and your wife. It does not behoove others to give advice but, since you ask it, I believe from what you tell me that you are each making a mistake by going



on as you are. She is not happy. You are not happy. The friction between you is merely restricting the spiritual development of both your lives. And in such an instance it seems unpardonable that two people should continue the marriage relationship. This is, indeed, an exception and I believe that I am not wrong in expressing my opinion to you, Mr. Alden." Griggs paused and observed Alden thoughtfully.

Alden was impressed by the other man's earnestness. Although he secretly rejoiced in this exchange of confidence which drew them together, yet his conscience told him that he was not doing the manly thing in sharing the affairs of his intimate family life with an outsider. Truly commendable people did not do such things. He felt himself something of a cad. But this night his resistance was low. Even if the principle was wrong, the relief was comforting.

"Now my idea of marriage, Alden," Griggs continued, "is that the vast majority of people take the matter selfishly. They consider that, outside of the state of child-bearing, it is an institution in which they can indulge themselves to the utter extent of their selfishness. Literally this: other than perpetuating the race to as small or as great a degree as they choose, they believe they owe humanity nothing in the development of this movement."

Alden did not quite get his meaning at this point.

“ Well, we make a merger in business so that we can strengthen our facilities, do we not? Yes — Then why not consider marriage on the same basis? I sincerely believe that first and foremost we all owe our lives to humanity. The betterment of the race! This is my slogan. If there is not a spark of that divine love for our fellowmen burning in our bosoms, then I don't believe we are worth the space we occupy on the face of this earth.”

Alden smiled.

“ How good it is to hear some one say this when, for some months, I have been under the influence of two very opposing faculties.”

Griggs nodded.

“ Yes — Well, I believe that marriage should be the strengthening of our faculties toward helping mankind. We will leave the physical and the romantic phase out of this. That comes naturally — Now when a husband or a wife ceases to recognize this duty, then they are not doing their part. If it is true that your wife has opposed you in everything you have desired to do toward the development and aid of the welfare of your fellowmen, then she proves what a selfish creature she is, and you owe her nothing. No matter how much it hurts to give her up, do so. Let her return to her parasite class. She is not worthy of you.”

Alden flushed.

“ Oh, my dear Griggs, I am not such a paragon as all that! ”

Griggs shook his head.

“Not necessarily a paragon, no — But a man who is indispensable to his fellowmen, and the dear Lord knows that there are all too few of them in this world.” Griggs paused and observed Alden gravely. “Why, man, you have proved yourself in every way, principally in what you have done for the working men of Gray’s Harbor. And you may not realize that you have set an example for the logging men all over the Northwest. I don’t believe you are conscious, yourself, of the impression you made on others when you went in on your own to establish better conditions among your men before being forced to do so, as many of the others were forced to do.”

Alden lifted his hand.

“Oh, but that wasn’t anything highly commendable. It was merely an experiment — ”

Griggs pounded the chair arm with his fist.

“But I say it was commendable. Shafer of the Shafer Logging Company out of Seattle told me the last time he was in Portland about a delegation of them visiting you this summer. How they visited your camps and found the men contented and putting out more work than any crew of men had ever done before. It could not be denied that their efficiency was due to their being clear-headed, well fed, comfortably established. Shafer said they were one and all for adopting your measures without further delay.”

Griggs reached over and laid a hand on Alden’s arm.

“ I want to see you buck up, Alden. It is not right of you to give up this way. Of course, your family comes first, but I don't believe you realize what an influential man you are in the State of Washington. You are still young in years and also in business experience. I want to tell you a little story and I do not believe it will be long until my prophecy will prove true.

“ A number of big corporations are watching you closely, Alden, and sooner or later one of them is going to pick you up. Men of your type are not to be found every day. The corporation that wants you is going to bid high. Now I am going to give you a word of advice. When the psychological moment arrives, don't turn it down.

“ High finance must be handled these days through corporations. And combining capital and credit is the only way in which to carry on these great enterprises. Added to this there must be brains, and that is the element that cannot be bought. There is a lot of stir and hubbub about corporations and capitalists, but just let some individual try to take the world by the tail alone, and see how far he gets — ”

Alden rose and reaching for his hat turned to Griggs.

“ Mr. Griggs, I cannot tell you how much your advice has helped me tonight. A man can face a multitude of reverses in a business way, but just one little bad turn in a personal matter — ” He hesitated.

Griggs smiled.

“ Will throw him off key.”

Alden nodded.

“ That is it exactly.” He moved toward the door. Griggs rose and came to him with outstretched hand.

“ I hope I have helped you,” he said. “ It was not a desire to pry into a man’s private affairs which led me to talk to you as I have tonight. But the moment I saw you down there in the dining room I knew that you were in trouble. Before you go, I want to add one word.” He paused. “ Do all you can to make things right between yourself and your wife. Have an understanding with her—”

Alden moved impatiently.

“ Oh, I have tried all that a thousand times —”

“ Well, then look at the matter in a cold-blooded, matter-of-fact business way. Sever your relations with her — this sounds most horribly harsh coming from one man to another, but good sound sense compels me to say it — and then, perhaps, sometime — you will find a woman who will love and respect you enough to work to your interest as well as her own. The world is full of them.”

## CHAPTER XXVIII

All that his friend had said to him at the Hotel St. Francis in San Francisco had sounded very plausible to Alden at the time. But arriving home again, the past rose before him menacingly. A dreadful fear overtook him. The speech which he had prepared to make to Tesa on his return now seemed very crude and irrelevant.

Reaching Humptulips, he found that he was badly needed in camp. A number of minor difficulties had arisen. Consequently he was too busy for the next few days to go to Tesa.

He learned from the maid that Mrs. Alden was confined to her room and still refused to see anyone.

“Of course, in that event, she is in no condition to approach,” he told himself, glad for an excuse to defer the interview. Going on about his business he had no word from her nor she from him, other than his inquiry about her health.

This situation might have continued for days had it not been that Wainright came to the house to see Tesa one evening. Up in the Quiniault valley hunting with Charley Mitchell for a week, Wainright knew nothing of Alden's return during his absence. Eager to know from Tesa's lips if she were any more reconciled, he hurried to see her.

Immediately upon his inquiry the maid came down with the word that Mrs. Alden would receive him.

From the living-room Alden overheard the conversation between Wainright and the maid who were in the hall. In an instant he was furious. His wife receiving another man, yet refusing to admit him into the privacy of her boudoir! What a fool he had been to let this despicable white-faced son of a diabolical class court his wife in his own house as if she were a seventeen-year-old girl!

He rushed into the hall. Wainright was mounting the stairs. Alden leapt the steps three at a time, and grasping Wainright by the arm whirled him about.

“ You contemptible cur, what do you mean by going to my wife’s rooms in this manner! ”

Wainright smiled insolently.

“ It was your wife’s orders. ”

Alden pointed down at the outside entrance.

“ And it is my order that you get out that door before I kick you out. I also give you to understand that so long as Tesa is my lawful wife, you are to stay away from her. Afterward, your relationship with her will no longer be my affair. ”

Wainright shrugged as Alden let loose his arm.

“ Very well, David, as you wish. ” Turning about, he made his way down the steps and left the house.

Hearing their voices, Tesa had come out into

the hall. She called to Wainright but, drawing nearer the head of the stairs, discovered that he was just closing the door behind him. Wildly indignant, she turned on Alden.

“What right have you to order my friends out of my house!”

Alden did not reply. He was still too angry. He feared he might say something which he might afterward regret. He went on up the stairs and taking Tesa by the arm led her into her room. Closing the door behind them, he motioned her to sit down and control herself. She made little effort to evade him. Looking upon her pale and drawn face, he could not refrain from feeling a pang of sorrow for her. It was plainly evident that she was fighting a losing fight.

Taking a seat beside her, Alden reached out for her hand. But as always she drew away. He pretended not to notice this.

“Tesa, I have wanted to have a talk with you ever since I came back from San Francisco. I was going to wait until you were stronger. Yet I believe if we should come to an understanding, perhaps it would help you. I believe most of your suffering is mental.” He paused and looked at her whimsically, but Tesa’s marble features revealed nothing. He continued:

“I realize now that we have reached a crisis. I have come to give you your freedom—” He noticed that she moved uneasily. “Yes, I suppose



you think it strange of me to say this after fighting a divorce as I have all this time. But now I have come to look upon it as a relief. We could neither of us endure longer under this strain. You remember the reason I would not give you your freedom long ago was because of the children." He paused and sighed deeply. "That obstruction is no longer in your way —"

Leaning back in her chair Tesa wept softly. Sitting silently beside her, Alden wondered why he was no longer affected as he once was when she gave away to her emotions. All he now felt was a terrifically dull sensation in both heart and mind. Presently, she began to sob loudly.

"Oh, I can't, I can't go on. I want to die and get out of this misery!"

A spark of hope flamed in Alden's breast. He reached out to her unconsciously.

"Tesa, do you think we might — make it up — even yet —"

"No, no — that is out of all reason — It's just that it is going to be so hard to go on — alone —"

The spark of hope died, and Alden found himself relieved that it had. He was prompted to ask Tesa how about Wainright — this sounded as if she were not sure of him — but his finer sense would not permit him to at such a critical moment.

He studied her as she sat huddled miserably in her chair. He thought of how he had once loved her. Now that love was dead, absolutely dead. If it had revived for an instant a moment

before, that was merely an illusion. Other than a deep pity for her and a pang of regret that their lives had turned out as they had, he was unmoved.

Her words proved that her utter selfishness was still uppermost in her thoughts. Even the death of the children had not altered this. She dreaded that she must go on alone. Perhaps now, realizing that he no longer loved her, she saw what she was losing. But if so, she was assured that it was too late. She knew he was the type of man whose affection once turned, could never be rekindled.

“She dreads to go on alone. How about the empty years ahead of me?” Alden shuddered. He dare not think of it.

He waited for a time, anxiously hoping that the miserable interview would end. Presently, feeling there was nothing more that he could say or do, he rose and left the room. He tried to throw off the dreadful depression which obsessed him, but it seemed impossible. Remembering that he had some essential business to attend to in Seattle next day, he ordered the chauffeur to bring the car around. He would go to town that night so that he would not have to rise so early the next morning to catch the first train.

Alden was gone for three days. When he returned he learned that Tesa had left for Chicago with Wainright the day before. She had discharged all the help but the chauffeur who refused to leave until Alden returned.

There was no word from Tesa. She had left as unceremoniously as if there had been no more intimacy between herself and Alden than between two strangers. This wounded him deeply. It was harder than the death of the children. There had been a farewell with them. The memory of the last good-night kiss from Maribel Marie, and Dunny's loving good-bye that morning of the tragedy were memories which he would forever cherish in his heart.

Yet in thinking the matter over, he asked how else could Tesa and he have parted? When two people have lived as man and wife for a number of years, it is hard to part as enemies and yet, if they have once loved, it is hardly possible to part as friends.

His utter dislike of divorces made him feel that he was in a shameful and most unpleasant situation. He could not get the disturbing thought out of his mind that he had lost in one of the most important issues of his life.

During the days that followed he tried to put everything behind him by plunging into his financial affairs. He went at his work with a sort of restless frenzy. Even the men in camp noticed it. Tim saw it and did all he could in his rough way to console Alden. They spent their evenings in long heart-to-heart talks regarding life and the innumerable problems which creep in upon one unawares.

One night, during long and wakeful hours in

which he lay pondering, the thought of Posey came to Alden. So poignant was this thought after the many weeks of forgetfulness, it was almost as if Posey had returned from another world. A surge of mingled joy and regret swept him. He sat upright in bed and gazed out into the darkness.

“How could I have been so distracted with my own woes that I should forget the very one I should have remembered? Why, there is one understanding soul left —”

Alden had not seen Posey since she left their home. He never learned the exact reason why she left, but surmised that there had been trouble between Tesa and her. Owing to the circumstances he was glad that she had not been with them during those past weeks.

So troubled and grieved with his own personal matters, he had not thought of the night that he had held Posey in his arms and seemed to catch a vision that she was his mate. The bitter experience through which he had just gone had dulled this vision. Perhaps after all it was as much of an illusion as all the other things in his life which he had believed to be beautiful. But while he lay pondering that night, his love for Posey did return; yet in a new and strange form.

Suddenly an infinite tenderness filled his heart. He thought of Posey as one related to all that he had lost in his wife and his children. Here was one who might fill the void in his life!

He recalled the years in which he had patiently administered to Posey the rudiments of the finer and higher principles of education. How ardently she had sought to develop a taste for good music, literature, art of every kind. It had been like the eager little woods-flower growing beneath the underbrush, seeking the rays of the sun when it filtered through the trees.

Alden's fancies began to control him again.

"Why, Posey is a part of me! As my little boy and girl were a part of me physically, this child is a part of me mentally and spiritually. I must not abandon her now."

He found himself growing very hungry for her. It gave him new fervor and hope that he might soon see her again. He would see her again, too. He would go to her.

As if that silent call had again rung from his soul to hers, the next evening, although it was late when he came to his deserted home, Alden was surprised by seeing a light in the living-room. Entering the hall, he could hear the welcome crackle of fire on the hearth. He wondered who his visitor might be, and yet when he found Posey sitting calmly before the fireplace, he was not at all astonished. Posey looked up and smiled.

"How do you do, Mr. Alden. I suppose you wonder at my being here —"

He moved toward her and held out his hand.

"Not at all, Posey. I am very happy to find you here."

“Are you?” She regarded him seriously for a moment. “Mother McKnight and I decided that it was dreadful for you to be here all alone — and in trouble.” She paused an instant and then hurried on. “We came over this afternoon and cleaned things up about the house. Mother McKnight said she expected you were sick of eating at the cookhouse, so she did some baking.” Posey nodded her head toward the dining room. “There’s some of her apple sauce cake in there and a veal pie with mashed potatoes and creamed peas. She remembered that was what you liked most of all —”

Alden’s face lighted with pleasure.

“Posey! How splendid of both of you.”

“Oh, that wasn’t anything at all. Mother McKnight had to get right back home, but I said I wanted to wait and see you. I wanted to tell you that everybody hadn’t forgotten you —”

Alden dropped down beside her and drew her hand in his. Posey saw his throat contract, his eyes were almost tearful.

“Dear child, I am not deserving of your remembrance or your kindness —”

Posey’s eyes widened.

“Why?”

“The way I have neglected you since you so heroically tried to save my little boy and girl that day —”

She shook her head and tried to assume indifference

“That wasn’t anything, Mr. Alden. If — if I only might have saved little Dunny and Sissy Mobo —” Tears sprang to her eyes. She strove to keep them back. “I — I’d do it again — a thousand times —”

Alden studied her gravely.

“Dear child — because you loved them so?”

Posey’s eyes grew limpid. A faint smile trembled on her lips.

“No, not *only* that, Mr. Alden — but also because I love you so —”

Turning pale, Alden drew back. He almost feared what he saw in the girl’s eyes.

“No, no, Posey, you must not love me in that way! You must never love anyone like that — and suffer what I have suffered.” He buried his face in his hands. “God forbid that anyone so sweet and lovely as you must endure the pain and disillusion which I have endured, am still enduring —”

“Mr. Alden, this isn’t an illusion!” said Posey so fiercely that he looked up at her amazed. “This is real!”

He bent toward her.

“You mean you love me that way, Posey?”

She nodded vehemently.

“I do.”

“But you are such a child. Are you sure you know your mind?”

Springing to her feet, Posey stood before him defiantly.

“I am not a child. I am a woman and I do know my own mind.”

Still he could not be convinced. His senses were still too dulled to grasp the significance of such promise.

“Posey, dear, stop to think a moment. You have never known another man who meant as much in your life as I because —” He could not argue farther. The truth was too obvious there in her eyes. It could not be denied that, at least in that moment, she meant what she was saying. Suddenly overwhelmed, he caught her in his arms. “Listen, Posey, if this hurts, forgive me — but — but I could not accept your love on such uncertain grounds —” He drew her closer into his embrace.

Unashamed Posey flung her arms about his neck.

“But I want you, Mr. Alden. I have loved you all along and that is why I never even tried to care for another man. I wanted you.”

Alden pressed her wet cheek against his.

“Yes, dear, I — I have loved you too since the first moment I ever saw you but —” Confused, he paused for words with which to express himself. “You see I was a married man and — and I must do the honorable thing. I did think I loved my wife, even until just a few weeks ago. I was sure of it — There is so little distinction between the artificial and the real, even in love — that we are prone to make mistakes. So don’t you see it is hard for me to feel the significance of this, when



it is so soon after my trouble? I am still perplexed and — and afraid —” He released Posey and held her out at arm’s length.

“ You must give me a few moments to think. In moments of this kind it is not so easy to make quick conclusions. We often imagine what we would do under similar circumstances, but a conscientious person cannot act upon sudden impulses.”

Rising, he walked up and down the room thoughtfully for a time. When he glanced over at Posey sitting quietly upon the davenport, he chided himself for not being the type of man who would instantly take up his life with this charming young girl and forget that there had ever been anything in his past life. But he was too serious-minded for that. Presently he went to sit beside her again. He looked eagerly into her eyes.

“ Posey, I am going to give you a test. Suppose you go out into the world for two years, perhaps more —”

Posey clung to him desperately.

“ No, no, I want you now! ”

He smiled sadly.

“ That is impossible, dear. I am not even a divorced man. I could not marry you until a certain length of time after my wife divorces me. In the meantime suppose you go away to school. You are still very young — You seem but a child to me. That is why it is hard to surrender all that is in my heart to you.” He paused. “ There

is quite a difference in our ages, remember.”

She looked up hastily.

“ Only about fifteen years — ”

“ One year is as much as ten between youth and old age. ”

She shook her head.

“ But you will never be old aged to me — ”

He stroked her cheek fondly.

“ Now listen, how does this sound to you. Suppose you go east. I can send you to friends of mine in Chicago where you can enter a finishing school. It would be the opportunity of a lifetime for you. You have regretted that you did not have more education. This would be the chance. ”

Alden paused and was silent for some moments.

“ And then, at the end of a few years, if you still care — ”

Posey was hurt that he still doubted her.

“ Oh, but, Mr. Alden, I will! I will! ”

Suddenly a surge of tremendous joy again swept him, as it had that night out there upon the road. He caught Posey again to his heart and held her trembling against his breast.

“ Posey, dear little Posey, I wish that all the sorrow that I have experienced in the past months might be far behind me and that I could marry you tonight, this moment! There is no doubt in my heart of my love for you. I believe you to be everything I desire, mentally, spiritually, physically and yet — before I am willing to surrender I must know that you are truly in love with me

and not merely fascinated." He held her face up to his and looked hungrily into her eyes.

"Understand that you are facing a grave problem when you give yourself to me. For when I have the proof of your love there will be no turning back. The next Mrs. David Alden shall have no divorce —"

## CHAPTER XXIX

For several days during the first week of the following June there was high excitement among the men of the Alden Logging Works. As a result of a certain announcement there had been a wild and riotous uproar which ended in the wrecking of "sky pieces." It had been necessary to send to Hoquiam for sixty-seven new hats to cover the heads of sixty-seven out of the several hundred employees of the Alden Logging Company, Incorporated.

"Ole Tim was goin' tu take unto himself a wife. Ha! Ole Tim — think of it! Already up in Tacoma, where the prospective bride lived, makin' preparations fer the big show. The knot was tu be tied June 3. The bridal couple was goin' tu Portland fer their honeymoon an' then comin' on back tu Humptulips.

"Well the ole timers was gittin' up a blow-out fer the bride an' groom. It was goin' tu be pulled in camp. None o' the rough stuff, though — see — No booze — tu speak of? Jist a big feed an' a shindig. Hirin' an orchestra tu come up from Aberdeen. Some class — eh? But nothin's too good fer ole Tim. 'S'nough tu make the whole gang jump on their hats. Ole Tim gittin' spliced! Ha — what d'yu know 'bout it?"

Happy Lenon and Johnny Moran were on the program committee. The only one who did not approve of every plan for the entertainment was old Whitey. He confided to Paddy McTigh, Jim McGovern, Frank Hymer and Mike Higgins his regret that he was not called upon to furnish the music for the occasion.

“Dey tink I am not gude enough fer deir high-class doin’s.” Swallowing hard, Whitey took refuge in a chew of “snuss.” “Vell to hell vid dem. I play yust so gude music as dey haf now days, long bevore any of dem jounge upstarts vas born. Hey, Paddy?” He looked wistfully at Paddy.

Paddy nodded significantly.

“Yez are damn right, Whitey. Yez can play good ’nough fer onybody yit, too. But yez are not goin’ to spile Tim’s party be grouchin’. Jist fergit it fer the prisint.”

Happy and Johnny spent almost one entire night decorating the dining room of the cook shack. Fastening long festoons of gaily-colored crêpe paper to the three acetylene gas lamps which hung from the ceiling, they draped them about the table. Garlands of cedar tied with gorgeous crêpe paper bows hung upon the walls. Behind a bower of cedar branches extravagantly decorated with paper roses, they improvised a nook for the orchestra.

Grinning with childish pride, Happy stepped back and viewed their work.

“ Some class, eh? ”

Johnny paused and looked about the room.

“ Now you’re talkin’, Happy.”

“ But nothin’s too good fer ole Tim.”

“ You said it.”

“ Guess there ain’t hardly any o’ the ole timers but what’ll be here to the feast, is they, Johnny? ”

“ Guess ever’one but ole Cap Murry an’ Frank Jerome.”

Happy was silent for a moment.

“ Yep, that’s right, they are gone — ” He returned to his work. “ Well, I don’t know but what Jerome is better off by gettin’ killed there in the woods last winter. He was hittin’ the pipe too strong. I think the dope would o’ got ’im pretty soon anyway. He was gettin’ worse all the time. Remember the time that bohunk jumped on ’im an’ knocked ’im out? ”

“ Yeah.”

“ Well, he was pretty near down an’ out right then.”

“ Yeah. Guess you’re right at that — They said that was how the tree come to hit ’im. He was so full o’ hop that he didn’t know enough to watch where he was goin’.”

Happy shook his head sadly.

“ Yep, I remember. Poor ole Jerome. Poor devil.”

Happy and Johnny bought up all the chickens in Humptulips. Mother McKnight, bent on taking a part in the preparations, baked cakes by the

score and pies and cookies and doughnuts, this, however, much to the chagrin of Aunt Sally Mullen.

When they came into the store to impart the news to her, she was highly indignant.

“ You boys allus have favored her. There are others in Humptulips who can cook as well as Mother McKnight.”

Happy and Johnny exchanged uneasy glances. Johnny quickly spoke:

“ Good Lord, should think you had 'nough to do, Aunt Sally, without beefin' 'cause someone don't give you a thanky job! ”

Aunt Sally's near-sighted eyes lighted a trifle.

“ Well, if I thought it was that, 'stead o' yer thinkin' that she was the only woman in the world that could stir up a cake or bake a pie — ”

Johnny winked at Happy.

“ Gosh, no, Aunt Sally! I should say not. Gee whillikers! what d'yu think — we ain't got no brains or somethin'?” Johnny paused. “ Now you jist fergit it — See? Jist remember that you've got a gilt-edged invitation as one o' the 'specially invited guests to the party.”

Buying two pounds of chocolates and a dozen oranges, Happy and Johnny departed. They stopped in to see Mother McKnight.

Mother McKnight was now keeping house for Alden.

“ Not a single thing to do all day but just see that the hired girl does her work right,” she told

the two men that day. "But let me tell you," she lowered her voice confidently, "I do most of the cooking. Course Mr. Alden don't know a thing about it, but he likes good things to eat and I know how he likes them cooked. I have to laugh when several times he has said: 'Mother, that girl is a splendid cook. Sometimes I almost suspect that you are preparing the meals — .' Then he will stop and look at me with them eyes of his. 'But don't you forget that I invited you here to have a home, not a job,' he'll say, just like that." Mother McKnight nodded her head knowingly. "And I never let on. I know how easy it is to fool a man — And, my, was there ever a man that had a heart in him like Mr. Alden?"

"Nope, unless it's ole Tim," said Happy.

Mother McKnight's brows knitted.

"That reminds me: who are you going to get to cook your chickens?"

"Ole Ramrod. You knew he was back, didn't you?"

"No! Is Dan back?"

"Yep. Got back week before last. He's cookin' over in Camp 2. We're goin' to get him to cook the chickens because, if you can keep 'im sober, he's the best man cook in the State of Washington." Remembering the pride Mother McKnight took in her culinary art, Happy drew strong emphasis upon the "man." "The ole cuss kicked like the dickens an' said he wasn't hired out fer a banquet cook, but Johnny an' me both told 'im that he'd either cook



this feed or we'd take 'im out an' stand 'im up against a stump an' shoot 'im full o' holes. Then o' course he laughed an' come through like he always does when you call his bluff."

The morning Tim arrived in camp with his bride every man was eager to get a peek at their foreman's "sidekicker." The first thing Tim did was to call a holiday. He announced that everybody could do anything he pleased except go to town. The day was theirs, but they must be on hand to go to work the next morning. He brought out cigars and wine enough so that each man had a chance to drink to the bride.

"Go on, boys, help yourselves," he announced from the door of his office, "do anything you want. The place is wide open today."

But few of the men got intoxicated. They were more intent upon the celebration which was to take place that evening. It was quite a task to keep it concealed from Tim so that he would be surprised.

All during the morning there was much confusion in the bathhouse of each camp. There was shaving and hair cutting, shoe shining and much brushing of best suits which had not been worn since Christmas. They were all bent on looking their best.

Happy Lenon, immersed in the depths of a delightfully hot bath, was surprised by a staccato of furious knocking upon the bathroom door.

"Who's there?"

“ Hey, Happy, let me in quick.” The voice was Johnny’s.

“ Help yerself. Nothin’ stoppin’ yu. The door’s unlocked. If yu think I’m goin’ to get up out o’ here to open it, you got a think comin’ — ” By this time Johnny had wrenched the door open and burst in upon him. Johnny’s eyes glowed.

“ I seen ’er! ”

“ Seen who? ”

“ The bride.”

“ The hell — did you honest? ”

“ Yep.”

“ What does she look like? ”

Johnny’s eyes rolled significantly.

“ Look like! Good Lord, she looks like ole Tim had gone an’ robbed somebody’s cradle. I bet that kid ain’t dry behind the ears yet — ”

Happy’s glistening face twisted grotesquely.

“ The devil you say! ”

“ ’Sright.”

Happy shook the lather from his hair and ducked his head under the water to rinse it. Presently, the soapy water streaming from his face, he looked up at Johnny.

“ Well, I’m damned. They’s no fool like an ole fool.”

Coming out of the bunkhouse, freshly shaved and well groomed in their best suits, the eyes of those sitting about on boxes and benches in the sun followed Happy and Johnny admiringly. When they had passed, one man spoke:

“ If they’s a girl over there in Humptulips that’s got a lick o’ sense when they come over to the doin’s tonight — why, they’ll be two more weddin’s in the near future.”

Up the street, Happy and Johnny stopped a moment at Hoggens’ shack. Hoggens and Sky Pilot were seated in the door; the one with a pencil in his hand and a writing pad resting on his knee, the other with his eyes upon the horizon of the forest, talking in his usual frenzied manner.

“ And I say unto you, the Kingdom of God is near at hand — ” reached the ear of Happy and Johnny. The two young men hailed him.

“ Hey there, Sky Pilot, cut it! Cheese it! You’re way off yer base. This old world ain’t goin’ to end fer a long time yet. It never was better — ”

Sky Pilot looked up with his ministerial air.

“ No, no, fellow loggers, you are wrong. The word of God is being swiftly fulfilled. In the Scriptures it says — ”

Happy and Johnny turned indifferently to Hoggens.

“ What you doin’, Dreamer? Writin’ an ode to Springtime? ”

Looking up with tremendous seriousness, Hoggens shook his head.

“ No, I am preparing a poem for Tim and the new Mrs. McAvoy.” He looked complacently down at the scrawl of lines upon the pad. “ I think this is to be the greatest piece of work I have ever done yet.”

Grinning good-naturedly, Happy and Johnny walked away arm in arm. When they were out of hearing, Johnny laughed.

“ Poor ole Dreamer, he’s sure ’nough bugs.”

Presently, with little pretense at harmony but with a greater effort at making a noise, Happy and Johnny’s deep masculine voices rose away up the road.

“ T’sh, brother loggers, don’t you sigh  
We’ll all be sky pilots bye-an’-bye. — ”

When it was reported that Mr. Alden was coming home especially for the occasion, Happy and Johnny arranged that he was to have the seat of honor at the head of the table, Mother McKnight at the foot and the bride and groom in the middle.

With careful precision Happy pinned the last paper rose upon the cedar bower.

“ If Posey was only here ever’thing would be fine an’ dandy.”

“ Wonder when she’s comin’ back,” said Johnny.

“ Oh, it’ll be a long time. She ain’t been gone six months yet. Mother McKnight says she’ll be away two years, anyhow.” Happy was silent for a moment. “ Funny ’bout Alden takin’ such a shine to her, wasn’t it? Wonder if he ain’t kinda stuck on ’er? Now that ’is wife flew the coop — wonder if sometime he won’t up an’ marry Posey — ”

Johnny’s thoughts were more intent upon the effect of the banquet hall right at that moment than they were on Alden and his heart interests. He looked at Happy absently.

“ Gosh, don't ask me — how do I know? ”

Late in the day, after all the younger men had gotten out of the way, four old men, as if bent upon yielding to an inevitable crime, crept surreptitiously toward the bathhouse. Four suits of freshly laundered underwear tucked tightly beneath four cautious arms, the quartette stole through the door and drew it shut quietly. At the threshold Jim McGovern groaned and looked hopelessly at Paddy McTigh.

“ Nothin' under hell, Paddy, except an earthquake an' Tim McAvoy's weddin' would o' led me to sich an act.” Jim's voice was mournful.

Paddy nodded slowly.

“ Yez are right, Jimmy. I feel as if I was layin' me life in the hands o' the Holy Father whin I enters this door — ” Paddy paused and for an instant it appeared as if he was going to turn back. “ But this is wan night in history that we've got to look clane an' smell right — ” He pointed to the door of the bathroom. “ What else is there fer us, Jimmy, but thot? ” Paddy's manner portrayed that of a martyr who had surrendered all hope.

At that moment a young man came out from behind the curtain which divided the shower from the rest of the room. Four pair of eyes followed the splendid young giant as he crossed the room; his body glistening and red from the contact of cold water. As he moved swiftly along, his finely developed muscles rippled beneath his satin skin. Unconscious of the secret admiration of his specta-

tors he hurried vigorously into his clothes. He was soon gone.

Frank Hymer looked hungrily after him. Too modest to tell others of his ambition, no one knew that Frank Hymer had once been a great boxing enthusiast in his early days. He had even gone so far as to have dreams of himself in the ring. But that had been long ago. Now he looked after this younger man with the eager pride that a father takes in a son who is to realize his shattered hope.

“That’s the kid who’s been trainin’ fer the boxin’ that’s comin’ off in Aberdeen next week —” Frank licked his dry lips. “He’s goin’ up to Seattle on the fourth to fight Jack North, the heavyweight champion from Idaho —”

“Well, now ye don’t tell me!” Mike Higgens’ crooked little eyes gleamed. He pointed down at his own short and bowed legs. “If I iver thought I could train ’til I’d be like that young spalpeen, I — I’d start in tomorry —”

Paddy McTigh looked at the pair of unpromising legs dubiously.

“I — I wouldn’t begin it, Mike. Yez would be sorry yez iver started — If yez live to git out o’ this bathhouse yez’ll be doin’ a lot fer an ole mon.”

The bathing was over, and the bathers gathered together to discuss this feat which they had undertaken only after strenuous measures against it. They inspected each other carefully. It was a momentous occasion.

Panting and steaming, Jim McGovern was the

last one to come out of the tub. Paddy McTigh paused in the act of drawing on his trousers.

“ Yez lived through it, Jimmy? ”

Mopping the perspiration from his brow, Jim nodded dismally.

“ Ye ain’t lookin’ at me spirit, are ye? ”

Coming up to him, Jim was amazed by Paddy’s suddenly throwing back his head and laughing uproariously, as if at a huge joke.

“ What the hell — ” Jim began, but Paddy interrupted.

He touched Jim affectionately upon the shoulder.

“ Lord God, Jimmy, yez are white, after all — ”

Jim looked at him bewildered.

“ What ye tryin’ to git through that wide mouth o’ yours — ye no good Irishman! ”

Paddy gravely pointed at Jim’s clean neck and wrists visible where his undershirt was turned back.

“ Yez — yez don’t know, Jimmy, how relieved I am after all these years — ”

Jim’s eyes flashed fire.

“ Relieved! What ye tryin’ to get at — Did — did what little sense ye got in that thick head o’ yers leave ye with the dirt — ”

Paddy drew away and looked at him from head to foot.

“ No, no, Jimmy, but bein’s I niver seen yez clane before — I — I allus thought yez had a bit o’ nigger blood in yez — ”

## CHAPTER XXX

In the dusk of a late spring evening, Alden stood before the west window of his study. His gaze rested upon the evergreen wall which cut a sharp dark outline against the brilliant multi-colored sky that lifted like a filmy veil above a shroud. Alden found himself comparing his life to that forest and sky. His past was the shroud which hung low in the distance; the future was the bright-hued veil that lifted lightly and floated before him.

Pondering over the prospects of the new and fuller life which lay before him, the past moved through his mind in kaleidoscopic swiftness. He smiled affably as he thought of the achievement which faith and hope and earnest procedure had brought him.

It seemed almost incredible that the Alden Logging Company had made the rapid strides toward success which the past two years revealed. But there could be no denial of it. Locked in his safe was the evidence; a contract drawn up between himself and a great corporation with whom he had made a merger but the week before. The result of the contract was that the Alden Logging Company was now incorporated for two million dollars. He was president of the new firm; B. J. Stickney, of the Stickney, Gordon Company, the largest lumber



dealers on the Pacific Coast was vice-president; Tim McAvoy was general manager.

Alden recalled the day B. J. Stickney and he had gone up into the woods together and gone over the entire situation. Standing upon a hillside, they looked down upon that vast wealth of timber still untouched. Stickney was quite overcome with the prospects of it.

“Alden, this is only a beginning. A few years from now, your five camps, upon which you now look with pride, will seem quite small then.” He clenched his fists as if gripping the following thought before sharing it with another: “Why, man, right here before our eyes is wealth untold for the corporation that goes after the big game —” Alden remembered that he had been too moved to reply, yet he knew from the other’s eyes that he read his thoughts.

“But we’ve got to go after it in a wholesale manner,” Stickney continued. “This driving the logs down the river is too slow, too long to wait. We must have a railroad.”

Alden remembered how he had fairly gasped at such a prospect now being within reach.

“You are correct, Mr. Stickney. I have realized that for some time, but did not have the capital to attempt such a venture.”

The other tapped him upon the shoulder confidently.

“I am not afraid to bet you my interests in the Company, Alden, that a few years from now we

will have a railroad running up through this district and will be operating at least a dozen camps; employing from twelve hundred to fifteen hundred men."

Alden made no attempt to conceal the pleasure he took in this amazing prophecy. Stickney looked into his eyes and laughed at what he saw there. And then they laughed together; like two enthusiastic boys.

"You like that, don't you?"

Alden became very grave.

"My God, man, if you only knew how I have worked for this —"

The other also grew grave.

"I do know, Alden. No one knows better than I what tremendous effort a man must put into a proposition of this sort to drive it through. And then what hurts is the way the world sometimes looks upon the matter after he has made it. So far as others are concerned, few people know the hours of mental labor that one must apply to achieve success. They are so liable to say: 'Oh, well, he made his easy. Money just rolled in to him without his having to go after it.' Or more cruel still: 'If he hadn't stolen right and left and robbed and thieved and plundered, he wouldn't be where he is today.'" Stickney shrugged: "But that is neither here nor there. It is just one little unpleasant part of the game."

The next day Alden went with him as far as Aberdeen. They were soon to meet again in

Portland, but in the meantime Stickney had an important trip east. He was going to New York. On the platform of the observation car the two men shook hands. They talked until the train began to move. Before he disappeared inside B. J. Stickney saluted Alden boyishly.

“ Well, good-bye, old man.” He smiled significantly. “ And here’s luck to the future Logging King — of the Pacific Northwest! ”

This night as he stood before the window Alden thought of the significance of those words. Even though given half in jest, it was as if Stickney had figuratively crowned him the Logging King: a reward for all the years of effort toward this goal.

“ What a difference a few years can make,” he reflected. He thought of the night he met with his friend in the Hotel St. Francis in San Francisco. His heart was heavy with sorrow that night. The loss of his little son and daughter weighed heavily upon him. His heart now pained at the memory of those fleeting little lives. He thought of Tesa.

“ Poor Tesa. I feel no bitterness toward her now. I only hope that she has found happiness with Wainright. Tesa’s years and mine together were merely years of misfortune which it may be, when we each realize true love and happiness, we shall be the richer for having experienced.”

The sun disappeared behind the evergreen wall. Darkness came on. Alden watched the streaks of faint lavender and rose and gold which slowly merged into night.

Posey was coming home next day. He was to meet her in Seattle. For a moment a feeling of anxiety swept him.

“ After two years with the world of people, I wonder if she still cares. Will she be as willing to give herself to me, as she was before she went out to search that other world and make comparisons between younger and more desirable men than I? ”

Alden walked slowly away from the window and lighted the lamp on his desk. His eyes fell upon the upturned page of a book he had been reading that afternoon. Scanning the lines absently, he was attracted by one sentence which seemed to stand out from all the others: “ And to him is given all that is best for him to enable him to climb to that higher and better life. — ”

Alden was thrilled by these words.

“ Ah, that is it, ” he whispered softly to himself. “ If it is for the best for me, Posey shall be given to me — ” He returned to the window to look out into the velvet dusk of the night. “ If she still cares — what a future ours will be — ”

His mind in a receptive mood, Alden's boyhood dreams began to pour fantastically in upon him. He was to realize them yet! It was not too late. And never was the time more ripe.

Civilization had never been more significant than in this twentieth century. Humanity faced a new era, and with the turning of the tide Alden saw the multitudes fleeing from the old era of fear and doubt or sheer fanaticism. He saw them

accepting life as it actually was — big and broad, magnificent — as truly vital as they chose to make it.

No more was the working man to be the chattel slave, the drudge. He was coming into his own. Education was to be his salvation. Before him was the life splendid, to accept freely if he was man enough, or to turn from it if he had not the courage to meet it bravely.

A mist gathered before Alden's eyes, as if he was given a signal to look into that intangible realm which comes only to those who walk on a higher plane.

“And my mate and I shall go forth to give ourselves to this great cause — she by my side — together we shall bear ever upward and onward.” Suddenly overwhelmed he reached out to those visions which seemed so near in the soft dusk of that spring night. “No, no, no — I have not lost my soul! Only now — now have I found it — ”

“Mr. Alden, did you want Martha to get you an early breakfast in the morning?”

Mother McKnight's silver-gray head appeared in the open door. Alden turned.

“Yes, Mother, I shall be leaving early. I am going to take the morning train to Seattle.”

“All right, I will tell her. I am going to bed now. Good-night, Mr. Alden.”

Alden was suddenly moved by the sweetness of this kind old soul whose every thought was for others. He felt a desire to take her in his arms and

press her to him as he so often yearned to do to the mother he had never known. Moving to her side, he caressed Mother McKnight tenderly and reached down to kiss the soft cheek.

“ Good-night, Mother,” he said.

Presently the door closed gently behind her.

Posey! Patrita Murry as she now called herself.

Posey, after two years in an exclusive finishing school in Chicago. Alden could scarce believe that the marvelous creature sitting across from him in the luxurious parlor of the Rainier-Grand Hotel in Seattle was the same girl who had left him two years before.

Clad in a modish attire, a modest but exceedingly becoming traveling suit, a gaily colored hat placed at just the right angle upon her head, Posey appeared as if she was a picture from a fashion magazine come to life. Stray locks of her flame-colored hair fell softly upon her cheeks, emphasizing the brightness of the hat.

From all outward appearances she was a changed Posey, but in those dark and limpid eyes, Alden saw the trace of hidden fires which the hand of culture could never extinguish.

The while she prattled on, telling him of the thousand and one interesting items regarding her stay in Chicago, her school, the people she met, he studied her carefully; searching her eyes for the truth for which he was so hungry.

When they were quite alone that night, he strove to calm the tempest in his breast. This

new Posey was maddening. A number of times he began to question her, but he stammered like a foolish boy. After a time he found his courage.

“ And now, dear, after all these months — do you still care — ”

There was a shadow of pain in the eyes Posey turned upon him.

“ How can you question that, Mr. Alden, when you know — ”

“ Call me Dave, sweetheart — Do you still love me? I want to hear it from your lips.”

Suddenly Posey's eyes lighted like the turbulent volcano which remains dormant for many years only because it has never found a rift through which to expel the fires of its bosom.

Alden knew his answer. He held out his arms. Posey fled into their shelter in tumultuous abandon.

“ Dave, I do! Oh, I do — After all these terribly long months of waiting — I do love you — more and more and more.”

THE END









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