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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK DAVID LOCKWIN—THE PEOPLE'S IDOL ***



[Frontispiece: He appears on the balcony. There is a cheer that may be heard all over the South Side.]

DAVID LOCKWIN

The People's Idol

BY

JOHN McGOVERN,

AUTHOR OF

"Daniel Trentworthy," "Burrith Durand," "Geoffrey," "Jason Hortner,"
"King Darwin," etc.

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Frontispiece: He appears on the balcony. There is a cheer that may be heard all over the South Side.

Three of the most bashful arise and come to be kissed.

The boat drags him. He catches the boy's hand.

Her eye returns in satisfaction to the glittering black granite letters over the portal.

"It's a good scheme, Corkey."

But the bride still stands under the lamp on the portico, statuesque as Zenobia or Medea.

DAVID LOCKWIN

THE PEOPLE'S IDOL

BOOK I

DAVY

CHAPTER I

HARPWOOD AND LOCKWIN

Esther Wandrell, of Chicago, will be worth millions of dollars.

It is a thought that inspires the young men of all the city with momentous ambitions. Why does she wait so long?

Whom does she favor?

To-night the carriages are trolling and rumbling to the great mansion of the Wandrells on Prairie Avenue. The women are positive in their exclamations of reunion, and this undoubted feminine joy exhilarates, and entertains the men. The lights are brilliant, the music is far away and clever, the flowers and decorations are novel.

If you look in the faces of the guests you shall see that the affair cannot fail. Everybody has personally assured the success of the evening.

Many times has this hospitable home opened to its companies of selected men, and women. Often has the beautiful Esther Wandrell smiled upon the young men--upon rich and poor alike. Why is she, at twenty-seven years of age, rich, magnificent and unmarried?

Ask her mother, who married at fifteen. Ask the father, who for ten years worried to think his only child might go away from him at any day.

"I tell you," says Dr. Tarpion, "Harpwood will get her, and get her to-night. That is what this party is for. I've seen them together, and I know what's in the air."

"Is that so?" says David Lockwin.

"Yes, it is so, and you know you don't like Harpwood any too well since he got your primary in the Eleventh."

"I should say I didn't!" says Lockwin, half to himself.

At a distance, Esther Wandrell passes on Harpwood's arm.

"Who is Harpwood?" asks Lockwin.

"I'm blessed if I know," answers Dr. Tarpion.

"How long has he been in town?"

"Not over two years."

"Do you know anybody who knows him?"

"He owes me a bill."

"What was he sick of?"

"Worry."

The man and woman repass. The woman looks toward Lockwin and his dear friend the renowned Dr. Irenaeus Tarpion. Guests speak of Harpwood. His suit is bold. The lady is apparently interested.

"I should not think you would like that?" says the doctor.

"Why should I care, after all?" asks Lockwin.

"Well, if ever I have seen two men whose destinies are hostile, it seems to me that you and Harpwood fill the condition. If he gets into Wandrell's family you might as well give up politics."

"Perhaps I might do that anyhow."

"Well, you are an odd man. I'll not dispute that. What you will do at any given time I'll not try to prophesy."

The twain separate. However, of any two men in Chicago, perhaps David Lockwin and Dr. Tarpion are most agreeable to each other. From boyhood they have been familiar. If one has said to the other, "Do that!" it has been done.

"I fear you cannot be spared from your other guests, Esther," says Lockwin.

"I fear you are trying to escape to that dear doctor of yours. Now, are you not?"

"No. I have been with him for half an hour already. Esther, you are a fine-looking woman. Upon my honor, now--"

She will not tolerate it, yet she never looked so pleased before.

"Tell me," she says, "of your little boy."

"Of my foundling?"

"Yes, I love to hear you speak of him."

"Well, Esther, the truest thing I have heard of my boy was said by old Richard Tarbelle. He stopped me the other day. You know our houses adjoin. 'Mr. Lockwin,' said he, 'as he came home with his basket--he goes to his son's hotel each day for family stores--I often say to Mary that the happiest moment in my day is when I give an apple or an orange to your boy, for the look on that child's face is the nearest we ever get to heaven on this earth.'"

"O, beautiful! beautiful! Mr. Lockwin."

"Yes, indeed, Esther. I took that little fellow three years ago. I had no idea he would grow so pretty. Folks said it was the oddest of pranks, but if I had bought fifteen more horses than I could use, or dogs enough to craze the neighborhood, or even a parrot, like my good neighbor Tarbelle, everybody would have been satisfied. Of course, I had to take a house and keep a number of people for whom a bachelor has no great need. But, Esther, when I go home there is framed in my window the most welcome picture human eye has ever seen--that little face, Esther!"

The man is enraptured. The woman joins in the man's exaltation.

"He is the most beautiful child I have ever seen anywhere. It is the talk of everybody. You are so proud of him when you ride together!"

"Esther, I have seen him in the morning when he came to rouse me--his face as white as his gown; his golden hair long, and so fleecy that it would stand all about his head; his mouth arched like the Indian's bow; his great blue eyes bordered with dark brows and lashed with jet-black hairs a half-inch long. That picture, Esther, I fear no painter can get. I marvel why I do not make the attempt."

"He is as bright as he is beautiful," she says.

"Yes, Esther, I have looked over this world. Childhood is always beautiful--always sweet to me--but my boy is without equal, and nearly everybody admits it."

"He is not yours, David."

The man looks inquiringly.

"I have as good a right to love him as you have. I do love him."

The man has been eloquent and self-forgetful. The woman has lost her command. Tears are coming in her eyes. Shame is mantling her cheeks. David Lockwin is startled.

George Harpwood passes in the distance with Esther's mother on his arm.

"Esther, you know me, with all my faults. I think we could be happy together--we three--you and I and the boy. Will you marry me? Will you be a mother to my little boy? He is lonesome while I am gone!"

The matter is settled. It has come by surprise. If David Lockwin had foreseen it, he would have left the field open to Harpwood.

If Esther Wandrell had foreseen it, she would have shunned David Lockwin. It is her dearest hope, and yet--

CHAPTER II

THE PEOPLE'S IDOL

If David Lockwin had planned to increase all his prospects, and if all his plans had worked with precision, he could in nowise have pushed his interests more powerfully than by marrying Esther Wandrell.

It might have been said of Lockwin that he was impractical; that he was a dreamer. He had done singular things. He had not studied the ways of public opinion.

But now, to solidify all his future--to take a secure place in society, especially as his leanings toward politics are pronounced--to do these things--this palliates and excuses the adoption of the golden-haired boy.

Lockwin hears this from his friend, the doctor. Lockwin hears it from the world. The more he hears it the less he likes it.

But people, particularly the doctor, are happy in Lockwin. His popularity in the district is amazing. He will soon be deep in politics. He has put Harpwood out of the combat--so the doctor says.

And David Lockwin, when he comes home at night, still sees his boy at the window. What a noble affection is that love for this waif! Why should such a thought seize the man as he sits in his library with wife and son? Why should not David be tender and good to the woman who loves him so well, and is so proud of her husband?

Tender and good he is--as if he pitied her. Tender and good is she. So that if an orphan in the great city should be in the especial care of the Lord, why should not that orphan drop into this house, exactly as has happened, and no matter at all what society may have said?

"You must run for Congress!" the doctor commands.

It spurs Lockwin. He thinks of the great white dome at Washington. He thinks of his marked ability as an orator, everywhere conceded. He says he does not care to enter upon a life so active, but he is not truly in earnest.

"You must run for Congress!" the committee says the next week.

Feelings of friendliness for the incumbent of the office to give Lockwin a sufficient excuse for inaction.

The incumbent dies suddenly a week later.

"You must run to save the party," the committeemen announce.

A day later the matter is settled. The great editors are seen; the boss of the machine is satisfied; the ward-workers and the saloon-keepers are infused with party allegiance.

David Lockwin begins at one end of State street and drinks, or pretends to drink, at every bar between Lake and Fortieth streets. This libation poured on the altar of liberty, he is popularly declared to be in the race. The newspapers announce that he is the people's idol, and the boss of the machine sends word to the newspapers that it is all well enough, but it must be kept up.

David Lockwin rents head-quarters in the district, and shakes hands with all the touching committees. Twelve members of the Sons of Labor can carry their union over to him. It will require \$100, as the union is mostly democratic.

They are told they must see Mr. Lockwin's central committee. But Mr. Lockwin must be prepared to deliver an address on the need of reform in the government, looking to the civil service, to retrenchment and to the complete allegiance of the officeholder to his employers, the voters.

Mr. Lockwin must listen with attention to a plan by which the central committee of the Sodalified Assembly can be

packed with republicans at the annual election, to take place the next Sunday. This will enable Lockwin to carry the district in case he should get the nomination. To show a deep interest in the party and none in himself must arouse popular idolatry.

This popular idolatry must be kept awake, because Harpwood has opened head-quarters and is visited by the same touching committees. He has been up and down State street, and has drunk more red liquor than was seen to go down Lockwin's throat. In more ways than one, Harpwood shows the timber out of which popular idols are made.

The doctor is alarmed. He makes a personal canvass of all his patients. They do not know when the primaries will be held. They do not know who ought to go to Washington. All they know is that the congressman is dead and there must be a special election, which is going to cost them some extra money. If the boss of the machine will see to it, that will do!

But Lockwin is the man. This the boss has been at pains to determine. The marriage has made things clear.

One should study the boss. Why is he king? If we have a democracy how is it that everybody in office or in hope of office obeys the pontiff? It is the genius of the people for government. The boss is at a summer resort near the city.

To him comes Harpwood, and finds the great contractor, the promoter of the outer docks, the park commissioners, and a half-dozen other great men already on the ground.

"Harpwood," says the boss, "I am out of politics, particularly in your district. Yet, if you can carry the primaries, I could help you considerably. Carry the primaries, me boy, and I'll talk with you further. See you again. Good-bye."

The next day comes Lockwin.

There are no "me-boys" now. Here is the candidate. He must be put in irons.

"Lockwin, what makes you want to go to Congress?"

"I don't believe I do want to go, but I was told you wished to see me up here, privately."

"Well, you ought to know whether or not you want to go. Nobody wants you there if it isn't yourself. Harpwood will go if you don't."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Well, if you want our support, we must have a pledge from you. I guess you want to go, and we are willing to put you there for the unexpired term and the next one. Then are you ready to climb down? Say the word. The mayor and the senator are out there waiting for me."

"All right. It is a bargain."

"And you won't feel bad when we knock you out, in three years?"

"No. I will probably be glad to come home."

"Very well; we will carry the primaries. But that district needs watching. Spend lots of money."

CHAPTER III

OF SNEEZES

There is no chapter on sneezes in "Tristram Shandy." The faithful Boswell has recorded no sneeze of Dr. Johnson. Spinoza does not reckon it among the things the citizen may do without offense to a free state. Montesquieu does not give the Spirit of Sneezing, nor tell how the ancients sneezed. Pascal, in all his vanities of man, has no thought on sneezing. Bacon has missed it. Of all the glorious company of Shakespeare's brain, a few snored, but not one sneezed or spoke of sneezing. Darwin avoids it. Hegel and Schlegel haven't a word of it. The encyclopedias leave it for the dictionaries.

We might suppose the gentle latitudes and halcyon seas of Asia and the Mediterranean had failed to develop the sneeze, save that the immortal Montaigne, a friend in need to every reader, will point you that Aristotle told why the people bless a man who sneezes. "The gods bless you!" said the Athenian. "God bless you!" says the Irishman or Scotchman of to-day.

A sneeze is to enter the politics of the First District. Could any political boss, however prudent or scholarly, foresee it? A sneeze is to influence the life of David Lockwin. Does not providence move in a mysterious way?

A great newspaper has employed as its marine reporter a singular character. He once was rich--that is, he had \$10,000 in currency. How had he made it? Running a faro bank. How did he lose it? By taking a partner, who "played it in"--that is, the partner conspired with an outside player, or "patron" of the house. Why did not our man begin over again? He was disheartened--tired of the business. Besides, it gives a gambler a bad name to be robbed--it is like a dishonored husband.

The marine reporter's ancestors were knights. The ancestral name was Coeur de Cheval. The attrition of centuries, and the hurry of the industrial period, have diminished this name in sound and dignity to Carkey, and finally to Corkey.

Naturally of a knightly fiber, this queer man has no sooner established himself in command of the port of Chicago than he has found his dearest dreams realized. To become the ornament of the sailor's fraternity is but to go up and down the docks, drinking the whisky which comes in free from Canada and sneezing.

"We steer toward Corkey's sneeze," the sailors declare.

To produce the greatest sneeze that was ever heard in the valley of the Mississippi, give us, then, a man who is

called a "sawed-off" by those who love him--a very thick, very short, very tobaccified, strong man in cavalry pants, with a jacket of the heaviest chinchilla--a restless, oathful, laconic, thirsty, never-drunk "editor." It is a man after the sailor's own heart. It is a man, too, well known to the gamblers, and they all vote in Lockwin's district.

Parlor entertainers make a famous sneeze by delegating to each of a group some vowel in the word "h--sh!" It shall be "hash" for this one, "hish" for that one, "hush" for still another, and so on. Then the professor counts three, at which all yell together, and the consolidated sound is a sneeze.

In a chorus the leader may tell you one singer is worth all the rest. So, if Corkey were in this parlor, and should render one unforeseen, unpremeditated sneeze, you would not know the parlorful had sneezed along with him. Corkey's sneeze is unapproachable, unrivaled, hated, feared, admired, revered. The devout say "God bless you!" with deep uncton. The adventurous declare that such a sneeze would buckle the cabin-floor of a steamer like a wave in the trough of the sea.

When Corkey sneezes, sailors are moved to treat to the drinks. They mark it as an event. A sailor will treat you because it is Christmas, or because Corkey has sneezed.

Greatness consists in doing one thing better or worse than any one else can do it. Thus it is rare a man is so really great as Corkey.

CHAPTER IV

BAD NEWS ALL AROUND

With thousands of gamblers in good luck, and thousands of sailors in port, why should not the saloons of the dock regions resound also with politics--a politics of ultra-marine color--Corkey recocking and warming the cold statesmanship of his newspaper, breaking the counter with his fist, paying gorgeously for both drinks and glasses, smiling when the sailors expel outside politicians and at last rocking the building with his sneeze.

It is thus settled that Corkey shall go to Congress from Lockwin's district. Because this is a sailor's matter it is difficult to handle it from the adversary's side. The political boss first hears of it through the information of a rival marine reporter on a democratic sheet.

This is on Wednesday. The primaries are to be held on Friday. The boss has never dealt with a similar mishap. He learns that ten wagons have been engaged by the president of the sailors' society. He observes that the season is favorable to Corkey's plans.

What, then, does Corkey want?

"Nothing!"

What is he after? He surely doesn't expect to go to Washington!

"That's what I expect. You just screw your nut straight that time, sure."

What does he want to go to Congress for?

"Well, my father got there. I guess my grandfather was in, too. My great-grandfather wasn't no bad player. But I don't care nothing for dead men. I'm going to Congress to start the labor party. I'm going to have Eight Hours and more fog-horns on the Manitous and the Foxes. I'm going to have a Syrena on the break-water."

The siren-horn is just now the wonder of the lake region.

"I tell you she'll be a bird."

The eyes grow brighter, the face grows dark, the mouth squares, the head vibrates, the little tongue plays about a mass of jet-black tobacco--the sneeze comes.

"That's a bird, too," says the political boss.

If Corkey is to start a labor party, why should he set out to carry a republican primary election?

"Oh, well, you're asking too many questions. Will you take a drink? Come down and see the boys. See how solid I've got 'em."

Lockwin's brow clouds as the boss tells of this new development.

"Those sailors will fight," he says.

"But Corkey reckons on the gamblers," explains the boss, "and we can fix the gamblers."

"What will you do?"

"Do? I'll do as I did in 1868, when I was running the Third. The eight-hour men had the ward."

"What did you do?"

"I carted over the West Side car company's laborers--a thousand on 'em."

David Lockwin starts for home. His heart is heavy. To-day has been hard. The delegations of nominating committees have been eager and greedy. The disbursements have been large. An anonymous circular has appeared, which calls attention to the fact that David Lockwin is a mere reader of books, an heir of some money who has married for more money. Good citizens are invited to cast aside social reasons and oust the machine candidate, for the nomination of Lockwin will be a surrender of the district into the clutches of the ring at the city hall.

There is more than political rancor in this handbill.

There is more than a well defined, easily perceived personal malice in this argument.

There is the poisoning sting of the truth--the truth said in a general way, but striking in a special and a tender place.

The house is reached. Lockwin has not enlarged his establishment. Politics, at least, has spared him the humiliation of moving on Prairie Avenue. Politics has kept him "among the people."

It is the house which holds his boy. Lockwin did not adopt the boy for money! The boy was not a step on the way to Congress! Lockwin did not become a popular idol because he became a father to the foundling!

It is a cooling and a comforting thought. Yesterday, while Lockwin sat in his study hurriedly preparing his statement to the party, on the needs of the nation and a reformed civil service, the golden head was as deep at a little desk beside. Pencil in hand, the child had addressed the voters of the First District, explaining to them the reasons why his papa should be elected. "Josephus," wrote curly-head; "Groceries," he added; "Ice," he concluded; A, B, C, D and so on, with a tail the wrong way on J.

It is a memory that robs politics of its bitterness. Lockwin opens the door and kisses his wife affectionately. After all, he is a most fortunate man. If there were a decent way he would let Harpwood go to Congress and be rid of him.

"Davy is very sick," she says, with a white face.

"What! My boy!! When was he taken? Is it diphtheria? What has the doctor said? Why wasn't I called? Where is he? Here, Davy, here's papa. Here's papa! Old boy! Old fel'! Oh, God, I'm so scared!"

All this as Lockwin goes up the stairs.

It is a wheezing little voice that replies; "S-u-h-p-e-s-o-J! What's that, papa?"

"Does that hurt, Davy? There? or there?"

"That's 'Josephus,' papa, on your big book, that I'll have some day--it I live. If I live I'll have all your books!"

CHAPTER V

DR. FLODDIN'S PATIENT

If there be one thing of which great Chicago stands in fear, it is that King Herod of the latter day, diphtheria.

This terror of the people is absolute, ignorant, and therefore supine. The cattle have a scourge, but the loss of money makes men active. When the rinderpest appears, governors issue proclamations. When horses show the glanders, quarantine is established. But when a father's flock is cut off, it is done before he can move, and other fathers will not or cannot interpose for their own protection.

All the other fathers do is to discount the worst--to dread the unseen sword which is suspended over all heads.

When David Lockwin heard that one of his tenants had a child dead with the contagion, the popular idol strove to recall his movements. Had he been in the sick-room? Had Davy been in that region? The thought which had finally alarmed Lockwin was the recollection that he had stopped with Davy in the grocery beneath the apartments of the dying child.

That was nine days before. Why is Dr. Tarpion absent? What a good fortune, however, that Dr. Floddin can be given charge. And if the disease be diphtheria, whisky will alleviate and possibly cure the patient. It is a hobby with Lockwin.

Dr. Floddin has come rather oddly by this practice. Who he is, no other regular doctor knows. But Dr. Floddin has an honest face, and keeps a little drug store on State street below Eighteenth. He usually charges fifty cents a visit, which is all he believes his services to be worth. This piece of quackery would ruin his name with Lockwin, were it known to him, or had Dr. Tarpion been consulted.

The regular fee is two dollars.

The poor come daily to Dr. Floddin's, and his fame is often in their mouths.

Why is Davy white and beautiful? Why is he gentle and so marvelously intelligent?

A year back, when his tonsils swelled, Dr. Tarpion said they must be cut out. The house-keeper said it was the worst possible thing to do. The cook said it should never be done. The peddling huckster's son said Dr. Floddin didn't believe in it.

Then Davy would wake in the night. "I tan't breathe," he would complain.

"Yes, you can, Davy. Papa's here. Lie down, Davy. Here's a drink."

And in the morning all would be well. Davy would be in the library preparing for a great article.

The tribe on the other street, back, played ball from morning until night. The toddler of the lot was no bigger than Davy. Every face was as round and red as a Spitzbergen apple.

Last summer Lockwin and Davy went for a ball and bat, the people along the cross-street as usual admiring the boy. A blacksmith shop was on the way. A white bulldog was at the forge. He leaped away from his master, and was on the walk in an instant. With a dash he was on Davy, his heavy paw in the neat little pocket, bursting it and strewing the marbles and the written articles. Snap! went the mouth on the child's face, but it was merely a caprice.

"Bulldog never bite a child," observed the blacksmith.

But Lockwin had time only to take his baby between his legs. "Please call in your dog," he said to the blacksmith. "Please call him in. Please call him in."

The dog was recalled. The child smiled, and yet he felt he had been ill served. The little hanging pocket testified that Lockwin must tarry in that hateful locality and pick up the treasure and documents.

Trembling in every joint, he called at the house of an acquaintance. "I dislike to keep you here," said the friend, "if you are afraid of the whooping-cough. We have it here in the house."

It seemed to David Lockwin that the city was an inhospitable place for childhood. The man and child traveled on and on. They reached the toy store. They stood before the soda fountain. They bought bat and ball.

It was too far. They rode by street car three miles in order to return the half mile. The child was asleep when they reached home.

"I drank sewer water," he observed to the housekeeper, speaking of the soda fountain, for sewer gas is a thing for Chicagoans to discuss with much learning.

So Davy and David went on the rear lot to play ball. The neighboring tribe offered their services for two-old-cat. The little white boy with the golden curls made a great hit.

"Bully for the codger!" quoth all the red-cheeked.

"We will cut off his curls and make him as healthy as those young ones," said Lockwin.

"You'll never do it!" said the housekeeper.

"Such as him do be too pretty for this life," said the cook, almost with tears in her eyes.

And just at this epoch of new hygiene Davy's eyes grew sore. "Take him to a specialist," said Dr. Tarpion.

The specialist made the eyes a little worse.

"Them's just such eyes as Dr. Floddin cured on my sister," said the peddling huckster's son at the kitchen door.

The housekeeper could say as much for a relative whom the cheap druggist had served.

"Can you cure my boy?" was Lockwin's question to Dr. Floddin.

"I think so," said the good man. He was gratified to be called to the relief of a person of so much consequence. Thereupon began a patient treatment of Davy's tonsils, his nose, and his eyes. As if Dr. Floddin knew all things, he foretold the day when the boy would reappear in his own countenance.

"Bless your little soul," the housekeeper would say, "I can't for the life of me laugh at you. But you do look so strange!"

"I thought," Lockwin would say, "I loved you for your beauty, Davy, but I guess it was for yourself."

"I guess you will love me better when I can play ball with the swear boys, won't you, papa?"

"Yes, you must get strong. We will cut off your curls then."

"And may I sit in your library and write articles if I will be very still and not get mud on me? They throwed mud on me once, papa."

Poor little swollen-eyed Davy! Yet richer than almost any other living thing in Chicago. None knew him but to love him. "I didn't think it would hit him," said even the barbarian who shied the clod at Davy.

When Esther Lockwin took charge of that home she found Davy all issued from the chrysalis of sores and swellings. If he had once been beautiful, he was now more lovely. The union of intelligence, affection, and seemliness was startling to Esther's mind.

It was a dream. It knit her close to her husband. The child talked of his papa all day. Because his new mother listened so intently, he found less time to write his articles, and no time at all out-doors.

"Don't let him study if you can help it," said Dr. Floddin.

The child stood at his favorite place in the window, waiting for old Richard Tarbelle to come home.

"'Bon-Ton Grocery,' mamma; what is 'Bon-Ton?'"

"That is the name of the grocery."

"Yes, I see that. It's on the wagon, of course, but does Mr. Bon-Ton keep your grocery?"

How, therefore, shall the book of this world be shut from Davy? But, is it not a bad thing to see the child burst out crying in the midst of an article?

"Don't write any more to-day, baby," the housekeeper would say.

"Come down and get the elephant I baked for yez, pet," the cook would beg.

And then Richard Tarbelle would come around the corner with his basket, his eye fastened on that window where the smiling child was pictured.

"Here, Davy. There was a banquet at the hotel last night. See that bunch of grapes, now!"

"You are very kind, Mr. Tarbelle."

"Mrs. Lockwin, I have been a hard man all my life. When I had my argument with the bishop on baptism--"

"Yes, Mr. Tarbelle, you are very kind."

"Mrs. Lockwin, as I said, I have been a hard man all my life, but your little boy has enslaved me. Sixty-three years! I don't believe I looked twice at my own three boys. But they are great men. Big times at the *ho*-tel, Mrs. Lockwin. Four hundred people on cots. Here, Davy, you can carry an orange, too. Well, Mary will be waiting for me. Your servant, madam. Good day. I hear your husband is up for Congress. Tell him he has my vote. Good day, madam. Yes, Mary, yes, yes. Good-bye, Davy. Good-bye, madam."

CHAPTER VI

A REIGN OF TERROR

When a man is in politics--when the party is intrusting its sacred interests to his leadership--it is expected that he will stay at head-quarters. It is as good as understood that he will be where the touching committees can touch him. His clarion voice must be heard denouncing the evil plans of the political enemy.

The absence of David Lockwin from his head-quarters is therefore declared to be a "bomb-shell." In the afternoon papers it is said that he has undoubtedly withdrawn in favor of Harpwood.

The morning papers announce serious illness in Lockwin's family.

What they announce matters nothing to Lockwin. He cannot be seen.

If it be diphtheria Lockwin will use whisky plentifully. It is his hobby that whisky is the only antidote.

Dr. Floddin has taken charge. He believes that whisky would increase Davy's fever. "It is not diphtheria," he says. "Be assured on that point. It is probably asthma."

Whatever it may be, it is terrible to David Lockwin, and to Esther, and to all.

The child draws his breath with a force that sometimes makes itself heard all over the house. He must be treated with emetics. He is in the chamber this Wednesday night, on a couch beside the great bed. The room has been hot, but by what chance does the furnace fail at such a moment? It is David Lockwin up and down, all night--now going to bed in hope the child will sleep--now rising in terror to hear that shrill breathing--now rousing all hands to heat the house and start a fire at the mantel. Where is Dr. Cannoncart's book? Read that. Ah, here it is. "For asthma, I have found that stramonium leaves give relief. Make a decoction and spray the patient."

Off the man goes to the drug store for the packet of stramonium. It must be had quickly. It must be boiled, and that means an hour. It is incredible that the fire should go out! The man sweats a cold liquor. He feels like a murderer. He feels bereft. He is exhausted with a week of political orgy.

And yet along toward morning, as the gray morn grows red in response to the stained glasses and rich carpetings, the room is warm once more. The whistling in the child's throat is less shrill. The man and the woman sit by the little couch and the man presses the rubber bulb and sprays the air about the sick boy.

He will take no medicine. Never before did he refuse to obey. But now he is in deeper matters. It requires all his strength and all his thoughts to get his breath. As for medicine, he will not take it. For the spray he is grateful. His beautiful eyes open gloriously when a breath has come without that hard tugging for it.

At eight in the morning the man and the woman eat--a cup of coffee and a nubbin of bread. The mother of Esther arrives. She too is terrified by the ordeal through which the child is passing.

"Go to the head-quarters, David," she says. "You are needed. Pa says so. I will stay all day,"

"Oh, Mother Wandrell, what do you think?"

"Here is your Dr. Floddin, ask him."

The doctor speaks sadly. "He is much worse. What has happened?"

"The fires went out," answers Lockwin.

"Get some flaxseed at once. Get a stove in here. These fine houses kill many people. Keep the body enswathed in the double poultice, but don't let the emulsion touch his skin directly. What is the effect of the medicine? I see he has taken a little. The bottleful is not going fast enough."

"He has taken no medicine at all," says Esther. "It was spilled."

David Lockwin, starting for head-quarters, must now attend the fixing of a stove where there is little accommodation for a stove.

"Give me the child," says the cook, "and the fire will not go out."

"It would be murder for me to go to head-quarters, and I believe it would be double murder," he whispers to himself. He is in a lamentable state. At two o'clock, with the stove up, the flaxseed cooking, the boy warmly bandaged, the asthmatic sounds diminished, and the women certain they have administered some of the medicine to the stubborn patient, Lockwin finds that he can lie down. He sleeps till dark, while Corkey organizes for the most tumultuous primaries that were ever held in Chicago.

With the twilight settling in upon his bed Lockwin starts into wakefulness. He has dreamed of two-old-cat. "Bully for the codger!" the tribe of red-faces yell. In the other room he now hears the dismal gasps of his curly-head.

He rinses his mouth with water, not daring to ask if the worst is coming. He knows it is not coming, else he had been called. Yet he is not quick to enter the sick chamber.

"David, it is your duty to make him take it," the mother says, as she goes. "Esther, you look worse than David."

Thus the night begins. The child has learned to dislike the imprisonment of poultices. The air is heavy with flaxseed. The basin of stramonium water adds its melancholy odor to the room.

It is the first trouble Lockwin has ever seen. He is as unready and unwilling as poor little Davy. It is murder--that furnace going out. This thought comes to Lockwin over and over; perhaps the feeling of murder is because Davy is not an own son.

It is all wretched and hideous! The slime of politics and the smell of flaxseed unite to demoralize the man. O if Dr. Tarpion were only here! But Davy will take no medicine; how could Tarpion help Davy?

Yes, that medicine--ipecac! The name has been hateful to Lockwin from childhood.

Let Corkey win the primaries! What odds? Will not that release Lockwin from the touching committees? Does he wish to owe his election to a street car-company in another quarter of the city?

Perhaps Harpwood will win! How would that aid Davy? Ah, Davy! Davy! all comes back to him! It is a strange influence this little boy has thrown upon David Lockwin, child of fortune and people's idol.

It is a decent and wholesome thing--the only good and noble deed which David Lockwin can just now credit to himself. He bathes his hot forehead again.

Yes, Davy! Davy! Davy--the very thought of Davy restores the fallen spirit. That water, too, seems to purify. Water and Davy! But it is the well Davy--the little face framed at the window, waiting for papa, waiting to know about Josephus--it is that Davy which stimulates the soul.

Is it not a trial, then, to hear this boy--this rock of Lockwin's better nature--in the grapple with Death himself?

If Davy were the flesh and blood of Lockwin, perhaps Lockwin might determine that the child should follow its own wishes as to the taking of ipecac. But this question of murder--this general feeling of Chicago that its babes are slaughtered willfully--takes hold of the man powerfully as he gathers his own scattered forces of life.

"Esther, will you not go to the rear chamber and sleep?"

The child appeals to her that her presence aids him.

"May I sit down here, Davy?"

There is a nod.

"Will you take some medicine now, Davy?"

"No, ma'am!" comes the gasping voice.

The man sprays with the stramonium. The doctor returns.

"Your boy is very ill with the asthma, Mr. Lockwin. He ought to be relieved. But I think he will pull through. Do not allow your nerves to be over-strained by the asthmatic respiration. It gives you more pain than it gives to Davy."

"Do you suffer, Davy?"

"Yes, sir."

"Ah, well, he does not know what we mean. Get him to take the medicine, Mr. Lockwin. It is your duty."

Duty! Alas! Is not David Lockwin responding to both love and duty already? Is it not a response such as he did not believe he could make?

The doctor goes. The man works the rubber bulb until his fingers grow paralytic. Esther sleeps from exhaustion. The child gets oversprayed. The man stirs the flaxseed--how soon the stuff dries out! He adds water. He rinses his mouth. He arranges the mash on the cloths. It is cold already, and he puts it on the sheet-iron of the stove.

But Davy is still. How to get the poultices changed? The man feels about the blessed little body. A tide of tenderness sweeps through his frame. Alas! the poultices are cold again, and hard.

They are doing no good.

"Esther, I beg pardon, but will you assist me with the flaxseed?"

"Certainly, David. Have I slept? Why did you not call me sooner? Here, lamby! Here, lamby! Let mamma help you."

The poultices are to be heated again. The woman concludes the affair. The man sits stretched in a chair, hands deep in pockets, one ankle over the other, chin deep on his breast.

"Esther," he says at last, "it must be done! It must be done! Give him to me!"

"Oh, David, don't hurt him!"

The man has turned to brute. He seizes the child as the spoiler of a city might begin his rapine.

"Pour the medicine--quick!"

It is ready.

"Now, Davy, you must take this, or I don't know but papa will--I don't know but papa will kill you."

Up and down the little form is hurled. Stubbornly the little will contends for its own liberty. Rougher and rougher become the motions, darker and darker becomes the man's face--Satanic now--a murderer, bent on having his own will.

"Oh, David, David!"

"Keep still, Esther! I'll tolerate nothing from you!"

Has there been a surrender of the gasping child? The man is too murderous to hear it.

"I'll take it, papa! I'll take it, papa!"

It is a poor, wheezing little cry, barely distinguishable. How long it has been coming to the understanding of those terrible captors cannot be known. How eagerly does the shapely little hand clutch the spoon. "Another," he nods. It is swallowed. The golden head is hidden in the couch.

And David Lockwin sits trembling on the bed, gazing in hatred on the medicine that has entered between him and his foundling.

"Papa had to do it! Papa had to do it! You will forgive him, pet?" So the woman whispers.

There is no answer.

The man sprays the air. "You won't blame papa, will you, Davy?"

The answer is eager. "No, please! Please, papa!"

It is a reign of terror erected on the government of love. It is chaos and asthma together.

"It is a horrible deed!" David Lockwin comments inwardly.

"Mother will be so glad," says Esther. She pities the man. She would not have been so cruel. She would have used gentler means, as she had been doing for twenty-eight hours! And Davy would have taken no medicine.

The room is at eighty degrees. The spray goes incessantly. The medicine is taken every half hour.

At three o'clock the emetic acts, giving immediate relief.

"I have heard my mother say," says Esther, "that a child is eased by a change of flannels. He is better now. I think I will put on a clean undershirt."

The woman takes the sick child in her lap and sits near the stove. The difficulties of the night return.

Why should the man's eyes be riveted on that captive's form! Ah! What a pitiful look is that on golden-head's face! The respiration is once more impeded. The little ribs start into sight. The little bellows of the body sucks with all its force. The breath comes at last. There is no complaint. There is the mute grandeur of Socrates.

"It is in us all!" the man cries.

"What is it in us all, David?" asks the woman.

"Cover him quickly, Esther, my dear," the man gasps, and buries his face in the pillow. "God of mercy, wipe that picture out of my memory!" he prays.

CHAPTER VII

THE PRIMARIES

The sun of Friday morning shines brightly. The sparrows chirp, the wagons rattle, the boys cry the papers, and the household smiles.

The peddling huckster's son is not surprised. He knew Dr. Floddin would cure Davy.

The cook buys heavily. They'll eat now. "Mind what I'll fix for that darlint to-day!" she threatens.

The housekeeper has taken Esther's place at Davy's couch.

"You have undoubtedly saved the life of your boy by making him take the emetic. He will love you just as much. I know--Mrs. Lockwin was telling me how much it disturbed you. Don't lose your empire over him, and he will be all right in a week. He must not have a relapse--that might kill him."

"Doctor, I am risen out of hell, the third day. I cannot tell you what I have felt, especially since midnight. But I can tell you now what I want. I desire that you shall take my place on this case. My personal affairs are extremely pressing. What yesterday was impossible is now easy. In fact, it seems to me that only impossibilities are probable. Remember that money is of no account. Throw aside your other practice. See that the women keep my boy from catching that cold again and I will pay you any sum you may name."

In Lockwin's school money will purchase all things. Money will now keep Davy from a relapse. Money will carry the primaries. Money will win the election.

After all, Lockwin is inclined to smile at the terrors of the evening before. "I was in need of sleep," he says.

He has not slept since. Why is he so brave now? But brave he is. He carries an air of happiness all about him. He has left his Davy talking in his own voice, breathing with perfect freedom and ready to go to sleep.

The people's idol appears at head-quarters. He tells all the boys of his good fortune. They open his barrel and become more in hope of the country than ever before.

The great Corkey appears also at Lockwin's head-quarters. "Hear you've had sickness," he says. "Sorry, because I guess I've knocked you out while you was at home. I never like to take an unfair advantage of nobody."

"Glad to see you, Mr. Corkey. Go ahead! Nobody happier than me to-day."

"He beats me," said Corkey; "but he isn't goin' to be so sweet to-night."

"Oh, I'm elected, sure!" Corkey announces on the docks. "Harpwood he offer me the collectorship of the port if I git down. But I go round to Lockwin's, and he seem to hope I'd win. He beats *me*."

"Why, he's the machine man, Corkey. You don't expect to beat the machine?"

"Cert. All machines is knocked out, some time, ain't they?"

"Not by the marines, Corkey."

"I can lick the man who comes down on these docks to say I'm going to get the worst of it."

Corkey is accordingly elected, and all hands take a drink at the other fellow's invitation, for which the great Corkey demands the privilege of paying. With this prologue the crowds start for the primaries.

"Lockwin, I expect you to stand straight up to the work to-day. You went back on us a little through the week. I know how sickness is, but my wife died while I was in charge of one campaign. Politics is politics. Stand to the work to-day. Nothing's the matter. You've created a good feeling among the boys. I've got to give the car company some more streets anyhow. The residents are hot for facilities. So don't bother about their coming over. They will be over about three o'clock. Let Corkey have the precincts of the Second and Third. If he comes further, a-repeating, you folks must fight. He will vote the gamblers but they will put in vest-pocket tickets for you. Understand? Got all I said? Give Corkey two wards---if he can get the sailors up."

Such are the day's injunctions of the political boss. It is only a special election in one district. It is practically settled already. The boss has a thousand other matters of equal moment.

This is a day on which the prominent citizen stays out of politics. The polling booths are built of stout timber in front of some saloon. The line which is in possession votes all day. Every vote counts one. The sailors arrive and form in line before the various polls of the Second and Third wards.

A stranger--a tenderfoot--that is, a resident party man, entitled to vote--takes his place in the line.

"What did you tell me I lied for?" asks a very tough politician.

"I didn't tell you you lied."

"I lie, do I?"

Several toughs seize the infuriated politician and hold him while the resident escapes.

These wards will be carried for Corkey. In twice as many other precincts the situation is precisely the same, except that Harpwood and Lockwin, the recognized rivals, have the polls.

At three o'clock the wagons begin to unload, vote and reload. A place is made at the head of the line for these "passengers."

The "passenger" sailors vote at all of Corkey's precincts. They start for the other wards.

Now we may see the man Lockwin as commandant. He has the police and the touching committees. He is voting his own "passengers" by the thousands.

The sailors arrive in wagons.

"You can't unload here!" says Lockwin.

The sailors unload.

Eight men seize a sailor and land him back in the wagon.

Corkey sits on the wagon in front. He draws his revolver.

"Put up that gun!" cries Lockwin.

"Put up your pop, Corkey," cry a half-dozen friendly toughs.

"I hate to do it," says Corkey, "but I guess them fellers has got the drop on me."

The battle is over. The sailors are all in the wagon. They drive off toward another precinct.

Corkey is pronounced a white-flag man. It is recalled that he let a partner play in his faro bank and did not kill the traitor.

"Oh, Corkey ain't no good at all," say the bad men from Bitter Creek.

It heats their blood. They shake hands with Lockwin and deploy on the threatened precincts.

When the sailors unload at the next precinct of the Fourth ward the emissaries who have arrived with notice of Corkey's surrender--these great hearts lead the fight. A saloon-keeper rushes out with a bung-starter and hits a sailor on the head. An alderman bites off a sailor's ear. An athletic sailor fells the first six foes who advance upon him. A shot is fired. The long line at the polls dissolves as if by magic. The judges of election disappear out the back door.

There is nothing for the unoccupied alderman to do but to place 400 Lockwin ballots in the box.

The Lockwin ballot contains the name of delegates who are sworn for all time to the alderman.

The police finally arrest all the fighting sailors and hurry them to the station.

The attempt of Corkey to carry any wards or precincts outside of the First and Second is futile. It passes the practicable. In theory it was good.

Twelve wagon-loads of fighting sailors ought to be able to vote anywhere.

A Napoleon would have massed his forces and conquered precincts.

But Napoleon himself sometimes displayed the white feather.

And that is the only way in which Corkey resembles Napoleon.

CHAPTER VIII

FIFTY KEGS OF BEER

"It is estimated," says the opposition press, "that Lockwin, the rich man's candidate, backed by the machine, the organized toughs of the 'Levee,' and the gamblers, has spent over \$25,000 of corruption money. The primaries, which were held yesterday, were the most disgraceful political exhibitions which have ever been offered in our civic history. Harpwood was counted out in every ward but one. Corkey, the sailors' candidate, carried two wards by the same tactics which the police made use of elsewhere. In the First and Second, the officers arrested all 'disturbers' on complaint of Corkeyites. Everywhere else Corkeyites were either forced off the field or are now in the bull-pens at the stations.

"As our interview with the mayor shows, he is unacquainted with facts which everybody else possesses. It is well enough to repeat that we shall never have a real mayor until the present rule-or-ruin machine shall be destroyed.

"It is to be hoped that the split which threatens the convention of to-day will herald the dawn of law-and-order rule, when bossism, clamor for office, and saloon primaries will happily be things of the past."

The primaries which were held on Friday elected delegates to the convention of Saturday. If we scan the large body which is now gathering, it may be seen that the business of to-day is to be done by men who either hold or control office. The sidewalk inspectors, the health inspectors, the city and county building men, the men of the "institutions;" and the men of the postoffice are delegates. It may be safely guessed that they have no desire other than to hold their places until better places can be commanded. The party can trust its delegates. In this hall is gathered the effective governing force of the whole city. To these men a majority of the citizens have relinquished the business of public service. All those citizens who object are in the minority, and a majority of the minority object, only because it is desired that a different set of men should perform the same labors in the same way.

The political boss is not in sight. Eight delegations of Harpwood men are admitted because they cannot be kept out. The convention is called to order by a motion that a Lockwin man shall be chairman.

Four saloon-keepers stand upon chairs and shout.

Four bouncers of four rival saloons pull the orators down to the floor. The saloon-keepers are unarmed--their bung-starters are at home. The Lockwin man is in the chair. He has not been elected. Election in such a hubbub is impossible, and is not expected.

But the assumption of the chair by anybody is a good thing. The convention is thus enabled to learn that Corkey is making a speech. A chair is held on top of another chair. On this conspicuous perch the hero of the docks holds forth.

Corkey is an oddity. He is a new factor in politics. The rounders are curious to hear what he is saying.

"Your honor!" cries Corkey in a loud voice.

There is a sensation of merriment, which angers the orator.

"Oh, I know you're all no-gooders," he says. "I know that as well as any of ye."

There is a hurricane of cat-calls from the galleries.

There are cries of "Come down!" "Pull down his vest!" "See the sawed-off!"

"Yes, 'come down!'" yells the speaker in a white heat. "That's what you bloodsuckers make Lockwin do. He come down! I should say he did! But I'm no soft mark--you hear me? You bet your sweet life!"

The merriment is over. This is outrageous. The dignity of this convention has been compromised. There is a furious movement in the rear. The tumult is again unrestrained. Corkey has blundered.

The chairman pounds for order. The police begin to "suppress the excitement."

"Mr. Corkey, I understand, has an important announcement to make," cries the chair.

"You bet I *have*!" corroborates the navigator.

"Spit it out!"

"Make the turn, Corkey!"

"Everything goes as it lays!"

Such are the preparatory comments of the audience.

"Your honor--"

Corkey has been "pulled" for gambling. His public addresses heretofore have been made before the police justice.

"YOUR HONOR, MR. CHAIRMAN, AND MR. DELEGATES:--We're goin' to quit you. We're goin' to walk, to sherry, to bolt. We didn't have no fair chance to vote our men yesterday. We carried our wards just as you carried your'n. We've just as good a right to the candidate as you have. We therefore with-with-with-go out--and you can bet your sweet life we stay out! and you hear me--"

"Goon!" "Goon!" "Ki-yi!" "Yip-yip!"

Such are the flattering outbursts. Why does the orator pause?

His head quakes and vibrates, his face grows black, the mouth opens into a parallelogram, the sharp little tongue plays about the mass of black tobacco.

The convention leaps to its feet. The Sneeze has come.

"That settles it!" cry the delegates. "Bounce any man that'll do such a thing as that! Fire him out!"

The irresistible movement has reached Corkey's eyrie. Four faithful Corkeyites are holding Corkey's platform. The assault on these supports, these Atlases, brings the collapse of Corkey. He goes down fighting, and he fights like a hero. One of the toughs who saw Corkey put away his revolver at the primary is badly battered before he can retreat.

The melee is a good-sized one. "It is to be observed," writes the keen-eyed reporters, "that the consumption of peanuts rises to its maximum during the purgation of a convention."

The convention is purged. The fumes of whisky and tobacco increase. The crash of peanuts ceases. The committee on credentials reports. Harmony is to be the watchword. In this interest it has been agreed to seat four Harpwood delegates and eight Lockwin delegates in each of the contests.

Although the Harpwood delegates howl with indignation, it is only a howl. None of them go out. They will all vote. But their votes will not affect the nomination. If otherwise, the convention can be again purged and the correct result established. That would be bloody and difficult. Wait until it shall be necessary.

"It is one of the workings of the status quo," writes the reporter of the single-tax weekly, "that friction is everywhere reduced to the minimum of the system. There is little waste of bloody noses in politics."

"It is getting past dinner time. Why not be through with this? What is the matter?"

These are the questions of the sidewalk inspectors, who perhaps ache to return to their other public duties.

"It is Corkey's fault--Corkey's fault! But here's the platform, now!"

"We point with the finger of scorn--" reads the clerk in a great voice.

"That's the stuff!" respond the faithful, shaking hands one with another.

"Order!" scream the bouncers and police. They desire to hear the platform. It is the hinge on which liberty hangs. It is the brass idol of politics.

"And the peace, prosperity and general happiness of the American people will ever remain dear to the party which saved the union and now reaches a fraternal hand across the bloody chasm!" So reads the clerk.

"That's what! We win on that! They can't answer to that!"

"We demand a free ballot and a fair count!"

"No more bulldozing!" exclaims the bouncer who has heard the plank.

"We guarantee to the sovereign electors of the First district, and to the whole population of the nation a reform of the civil service and an entire abolition of the spoils system."

"I suppose," says the bouncer, "that things is going on too open in Washington."

The reading ceases.

"Ki-yi!" "Hooray!" "He-e-e-e-e!" "Zip-zip-zippee!"

There is a crash of peanuts, a tornado of bad air, a tempest of wild and joyous noise.

"The platform was received with genuine enthusiasm. It was adopted without a dissenting voice." Thus the reporters write hurriedly.

There has been an uproar ever since the question was put. Now, if the delegate quicken his ear, he may hear the chairman commanding:

"All those in favor will vote 'aye!'"

Again there is the tempest. The Harpwood delegates have voted aye!

"What is it?" ask most of the delegates.

"Lockwin is nominated by acclamation," comes the answer from the front.

"Oh, is he?" say the delegates, Harpwood men and all.

There is a numerous outgo for liquor. A man is escorted to the stage. He is cheered by those who see him. Most of the leading delegates are bargaining for places on the central committee. The Harpwood men are to be taken care of.

The speech goes on. "It is," says the orator, "the proudest day of my life, I assure you."

"Do you suppose he's gone broke?" inquire the committee men.

"It is the matchless character of our institutions--" continues the candidate.

"We'd be done up if the other fellows should indorse Corkey," says a hungry saloon-keeper.

--The matchless character of our institutions that the people hold the reins of government."

The orator is gathering an audience. "The people" are hungry, but love of oratory is a still weaker place in their

armor. The voice rises. The eye flashes. The cheeks turn crimson. The form straightens.

The orator weeps and he thunders.

"Hi--*hi!*" says the hungry saloon-keeper, in sudden admiration.

"America! My fellow-countrymen, it is the palm of the desert--the rock of liberty.

"We have a weapon firmer set,
And better than the bayonet;
A weapon that comes down as still
As snowflakes fall upon the sod;
But executes a freeman's will
As lightning does the will of God."

The effect is electric.

"Jiminy!" whistles the hungry saloonkeeper, "ain't we lucky we put him up? I could sell fifty kag if he spoke anywhere in the same block."

CHAPTER IX

THE NIGHT BEFORE ELECTION

"The art of declamation," says Colton, "has been sinking in value from the moment that speakers were foolish enough to publish and readers wise enough to read."

All speakers are not foolish enough to publish; all readers are not wise enough to read. Besides, there is still a distinct art of oratory which has not lost its hold on the ears of men.

The orator weeps and he thunders. His audience by turns laments and clamors. But the orator, on the inner side of his spirit, is more calm. The practice of his wiles has dulled the edge of his feelings.

It may be, therefore, that the orator's art is not honest. Yet who knows that the painter himself really admires the landscape which, in his picture, gathers so much fame for him? The interests of the nation are now to be husbanded in this First Congressional district. The silvery voice of the gifted orator is to reclaim the wandering or lagging voter.

The man who has lost faith in the power of the ballot is to be revived with the stimulus of human speech. It can be done. It is done in every campaign.

Lockwin is doing it each afternoon and night. Bravely he meets the cry of "Money and machine." One would think he needed no better text.

But his secret text is Davy. Davy, whose life has been intrusted to Dr. Floddin, the friend of the poor, the healer who healed the eyes of the peddling huckster's son's sister, the eyes of the housekeeper's relatives, and the eyes of Davy himself.

The orator's speech may be impassioned, but he is thinking of Davy.

The orator may be infusing the noblest of patriotism in his hearers' hearts, but often he hardly knows what he is saying.

At a telling point he stops to think of Davy.

The hearer confesses that the question is unanswered.

Is Davy safe? Of course. "Then, my fellow-citizens, behold the superb rank of America among nations!" [Cheers.]

Is Dr. Tarpion to be gone another week, and is the cook right when she says Davy must eat? "Can we not, my friends and neighbors, lend our humble aid in restoring these magnificent institutions of liberty to their former splendor?" [Cries of "Hear!" "Hear!" "Down in front!"]

"The winning candidate," says the majority press, "is making a prodigious effort. It is confidentially explained that he was wounded by the charges of desertion or lukewarmness, which were circulated during the week of the primaries."

Dr. Floddin is therefore to take care of Davy. Dr. Floddin's horse is sick. It is a poor nag at best--a fifty-cents-a-call steed. The doctor meantime has a horse from the livery.

Davy is to continue the emetic treatment. He sits on the floor in the parlor and turns his orguINETTE. "Back to Our Mountains" is his favorite air. He has twenty-eight tunes, and he plays Verdi's piece twenty-eight times as often as any of the others.

"Oh, Davy, you'll kill us!" laments the housekeeper, for the little orguINETTE is strident and loud.

"He'll kill himself," says the cook. "He's not strong enough to grind that hand-organ. He eats nothing at all, at all."

"Papa isn't here any more, but I take my medicine," the child says. The drug is weakening his stomach.

"It is the only way," says Dr. Floddin, "to relieve his lungs."

"Are you sure he is safe?" asks Esther. "Are you sure it was asthma?"

"Oh, yes. Did you not see the white foam? That is asthma."

"You do not come often enough, doctor. I know Mr. Lockwin would be angry if he knew."

"My horse will be well to-morrow and I can call twice. But the child has passed the crisis. You must soon give him air. Let him play a while in the back yard. His lungs must be accustomed to the cold of winter."

"I presume Mr. Lockwin will take us south in December."

"Yes, I guess he'd better."

But Esther does not let Davy go out. The rattle is still in the little chest.

Lockwin is home at one o'clock in the morning. He visits Davy's bed. How beautiful is the sleeping child! "My God! if he had died!"

Lockwin is up and away at seven o'clock in the morning. "Be careful of the boy, Esther," he says. "What does the doctor seem to think?"

"He gives the same medicine," says Esther, "but Davy played his orguINETTE for over an hour yesterday."

"He did! Good! Esther, that lifts me up. I wish I could have heard him!"

"David, I fear that you are overtaking yourself. Do be careful! please be careful!"

Tears come in the fine eyes of the wife. Lockwin's back is turned.

"Good! Good!" he is saying. "So Davy played! I'll warrant it was 'Back to Our Mountains!'"

"Yes," says the wife.

"Good! Good! That's right. By-bye, Esther."

And the man goes out to victory whistling the lament of the crooning witch, "Back to Our Mountains! Back to Our Mountains!"

"Why should Davy be so fond of that?" thinks the whistler.

But this week of campaign cannot stretch out forever. It must end, just as Lockwin feels that another speech had killed him. It must end with Lockwin's nerves agog, so that when a book falls over on the shelves he starts like a deer at a shot.

It is Monday night, and there will be no speeches by the candidates. Esther has prepared to celebrate the evening by a gathering of a half-dozen intimate friends to hear an eminent violinist, whose performances are the delight of Chicago. The violinist is doubly eminent because he has a wife who is devoted to her husband's renown.

Lockwin sits on a sofa with his pet nestled at the side. What a sense of rest is this! How near heaven is this! He looks down on his little boy and has but one wish--that he might be across the room to behold the picture. Perhaps the man is extravagantly fond of that view of curly head, white face, dark brow and large, clear eyes!

Would the violinist make such an effect if his wife were not there to strike those heavy opening chords of that "Faust" fantasie?

"Will they play 'Back to Our Mountains?'" whispers the child.

"Keep still, Davy," the man says, himself silenced by a great rendition.

"The doctor's horse is sick," whispers Davy, hoarsely.

"Yes, I know," says the man. "Bravo, professor, bravo! You are a great artist."

"But the doctor's both horses is sick," insists Davy.

"Bravo! professor, bravo!"

Now comes the sweetest of cradle-songs, the professor with damper on his strings, the professor's wife scarcely touching the piano.

The strain ends. The man is in tears--not the tears of an orator. He glances at the child and the great eyes are likewise dim. "Kiss me, Davy!"

But it is as if Davy were too hard at work with an article. He must break from the room, the man suddenly wishing that the child could find its chief relief in him.

"Yet I made him take the medicine," thinks the man, in terror of that night.

The professor will take some little thing to eat--a glass of beer, perhaps--but he must not stay.

They go below, where Davy has told the cook of the extraordinary professor who can scarcely speak English. Davy has asked him if he could spell Josephus. "After all," says Davy, "I'd be ashamed to play so loud if I couldn't spell Josephus. It hurt my head."

"Yes, you darlint," says the cook; "here's some ice cream. I don't want you to wait. Eat it now."

"I can't eat anything but medicine," says Davy, "and I have to eat that or papa wouldn't love me. Do you think he loves me?"

"Ah, yes, darlint. Don't ye's be afraid of that. Thim as don't love the likes of ye's is scarcer than hen's teeth."

"T-double-e-t-h," observes the scholarly Davy.

"My! my!" cries the cook.

At the table, the professor will not care for any beer. Well, let it be a little. Well, another glass. Yes, the glasses are

not large. Another? Yes.

"Ah! Meester Lockwin," he says at last, "I like to play for you. You look very tired, I hear you will go to the--to the--"

The professor must be aided by his good wife.

"To the Congress--ah, yes, to the Congress."

"If I shall be elected to-morrow," smiles the candidate.

The friends go to their homes. It is not late. Esther has explained the need her husband has of both diversion and rest. "He is naturally an unhappy man," she says, "but Davy and I are making him happier."

"Of all the men I have ever known," says one of the guests to his wife, as they walk the few steps they must take, "I think David Lockwin is the most blessed. All that money could do was dedicated to his education. He is a brilliant man naturally. He has married Esther Wandrell. He is sure to be elected to-morrow, and I heard a very prominent man say the other day that he wouldn't be surprised if Lockwin should some day be President of the United States. They call him the people's idol. I don't know but he is."

"I don't believe he appreciates his good fortune," says the wife. "Perhaps he has had too much."

CHAPTER X

ELECTED

Yes, this is distinctly happy--this night at home, in the chamber after the music, with Davy to sleep over here, too.

"There, Davy," urges Esther, "you have romped and romped. You have not slept a wink to-day. It is far too late for children to be up, David. I only took down the stove to-day, for fear we might need it."

But it is difficult to moderate the spirits of the boy. He is playing all sorts of pranks with his father. The little lungs come near the man's ear. There is a whistling sound.

The north wind has blown for two weeks. It is howling now outside the windows.

"Pshaw!" the man laughs, "it is that cut-throat wind!"

For orators dislike the north wind.

"Pshaw! Esther!" he repeats, "I mistook the moaning of the wind in the chimney." But he is pale at the thought.

"I hardly think you did, David. I can hear him wheeze over here."

"You can! Come here, Davy." But the child must be caught. His eyes flash. He is all spirit. His laugh grows hoarse.

"How stupid I am," thinks the man. He seizes the arch boy and clasps him in his arms.

Then Lockwin takes that white and tiny wrist. He pulls his watch. In five seconds he has fifteen beats. Impossible! Wait a few minutes.

"Sit still for papa. Please, Davy."

The indefinable message is transmitted from the man's heart to the child's. The child is still. The animation is gone.

Now, again. The watch goes so slowly. Is it going at all? Let us see about that.

The watch is put to ear. Yes, it is going fast enough now. Of course it is going. Is it not a Jurgensen of the costliest brand? Well, then, we will count a full minute.

"Hold still, Davy, pet."

What is Congress and President now, as the wheeze settles on this child, and the north wind batters at the windows?

The man looks for help to Esther. "Esther," he says, "I have counted 140 pulsations."

"Is that bad for a child, David? I guess not."

"I am probably mistaken. I will try again."

The child lays the curly head against Lockwin's breast. The full vibration of the struggling lungs resounds through the man's frame.

"The pulse is even above 140. Oh! Esther, will he have to go through that again?"

"No, David, no. See, he's asleep. Put him here. You look like a ghost. Go right to bed. To-morrow will be a trying day. Davy is tired out. To be sure, he must be worse when he is tired."

"Does the doctor come at all in the night?"

"Why, no, of course not. It is a chronic case now, he says. It requires the same treatment."

The voice is soft consoling and sympathetic. The man is as tired as Davy.

"We ought not to have had the folks here," he says.

"No," says Esther.

"I wish the stove were up," he thinks.

"I wish David were not in politics," the woman thinks.

There is in and about that chamber, then, the sleep of a tired man, the whistling of a cold and hostile wind, such as few cities know, the half-sleeping vigil of a troubled woman, and the increasing shrillness of Davy's breathing.

"It sounds like croup to me," she whispers to herself. "It has always sounded like croup to me. I wonder if it could be diphtheria? I wonder what I ought to do? But David needs sleep so badly! I'm sorry I had the company. I told David I was afraid of the child's health. But David needed the music. Music rested him, he said."

The milk-wagons are rattling along the street once more. Will they never cease? The man awakes with a start.

"What is that?" he demands. He has just dreamed how he treated 150 people to cigars and drinks on the day Dr. Floddin brought Davy through. He has been walking with Davy among the animals in Lincoln Park. "There's Santa Claus' horses," said Davy, of the elks.

There is a loud noise in the room.

"What on earth is it?" he asks. He is only partly awake.

"It is poor little Davy," Esther answers. "Oh, David!" The woman is sobbing. She herself has awakened her husband.

The man is out of bed in an instant. The room is cold. There is no stove. There is no stramonium. There is no flaxseed. There is no hot water.

It is not the lack of these appliances that drives Lockwin into his panic. He may keep his courage by storming about these misadventures.

But in his heart--in his logic--there is NO HOPE.

He hastens to the drug store. He has alarmed the household.

"Davy is dying!" he has said, brutally.

The drug clerk is a sound sleeper. "Let them rattle a little while," he soliloquizes with professional tranquillity.

"Child down again?" he inquires later on, in a conciliatory voice. "Wouldn't give him any more of that emetic if it was my child. I've re-filled that bottle three times now."

The stove must be gotten up. The pipe enters the mantel. There, that will insure a hot poultice. But why does the thing throw out gas? Why didn't it do that before?

"It is astonishing how much time can be lost in a crisis," the man observes. He must carry his Davy into another room, couch and all, for he will not suffer the little body to be chilled any further. "If this cup may be kept from my lips," he prays, "I will be a better man."

The sun is high before the child is swathed with hot flaxseed. The man sprays the stramonium. The child has periods of extreme difficulty. He is nauseated in every fiber.

"God forgive me!" prays Lockwin.

"Mamma, will I have to play with the swear boys?"

"No, my darling."

"And will my curls be cut off before you get a picture?"

The man remembers that Davy has been sick much of late. They have no likeness of him since he grew beautiful.

"And may I go to Sunday-school if I don't play with the swear boys? For the teacher said--"

The canal tightens in the throat. The old battle begins.

The man sprays furiously. The child lisps: "Please don't, papa."

The man is hurt to think he has mistaken the child's needs.

The air gets dry again. The child signals with its hand.

"More spray, Davy? Ah! that helps you!"

The man is eased.

"Esther, where is that doctor?"

They had forgotten him. The case is chronic. All the household are doctors. So now by his coming there is only to be one more to the lot of vomiters and poulticers.

Yet it dismays all hands to think they have forgotten the famous savior of Davy. They telephoned for him hours ago. "Ah me!" each says.

The child's feet grow cold. "Hot bottles! Hot bottles!" is the cry. The first lot without corks. And at last Lockwin goes to the closet and gets the rubber bags made for such uses.

At one o'clock the doctor arrives. Lockwin has gone to the drug store to get more flaxseed. If he get it himself it will be done. If he order it some fatal hour might pass. The cold air revives him. He sees a crowd of men down the street. It is a polling-booth.

He strives to gather the fact that it is election day. Corkey is running as an independent democrat, because the democratic convention did not indorse him after he bolted from the Lockwin convention.

But for that strange fillip of politics Lockwin must have been beaten before he began the campaign. Well, what is the election now? Davy dying all the week, and not a soul suspecting it!

"Girls wanted!" The sign is on the basement windows. Yes, that accounts for the strange disorganization of the household. That, in some way, explains the cold furnaces and lack of the most needful things.

Never mind the girls. Plenty of them to be had. That doctor--what can he say for himself?

The man starts as he enters the house. What was it Davy said last night? That "the doctor's both horses were sick!" It is a disagreeable recollection, therefore banish it, David Lockwin. Go up and see the doctor.

The door is reached. Perhaps the child is already easier. The door is opened. The smell of flaxseed reproduces every horror of Davy's first attack. After the man has grown used to the flaxseed he begins to detect the odor of stramonium. The pan is dry. Carry it back to the stove and put some hot water in it. But look at Davy first.

"Esther, how is he?"

"I think he is growing better, David."

"The room here is not warm enough. Let us carry him back where the stove is."

The cook is on the stairs and beholds the little cortege. "Lord! Lord!" she wails, and the housekeeper silences the cry. "They carry them like that at the hospital," the frightened woman explains. "But they are always dead!"

In the kitchen sits a woman, visiting the cook. Her face is the very picture of trouble. She rocks her body as she talks.

"I buried seven," she says.

"Seven children?"

"Yes, and every one with membrainyous croup. They may call it what they please. Ah! I know; I know!"

She rocks her body, and laughs almost a silly laugh.

"Every one of them had a terrible attack, and then was well for a week. Two of 'em dropped dead at play. They seems so full of life just before they go. When my husband broke his leg I lost one. When I caught the small-pox they let one die. Oh, my! Oh, my!"

The woman rocks her body and laughs.

Lockwin wants more boiling water. It gives him something to do to get it. He enters the kitchen.

"Davy has the asthma," he says to the desolate mother as he passes.

"Davy has the membrainyous croup," she replies: "I saw that a week ago. Makes no difference what the doctors say; they can't help no child."

"Where is that doctor, Esther?" the man says.

"He was here while you were gone. He said he would return soon. He said it was a relapse, but he thought there was no danger."

"It is lucky," the man inwardly comments, "that we are all doctors."

"He should have stayed here and attended to his business," the man observes audibly, as he makes a new poultice.

"Mamma!" It is Davy.

"Yes, mamma is here."

"Why don't the doctor come?"

"Are you suffering, precious?"

"I don't know."

"There, let us warm your feet. Don't take them away, pet. See, you breathe easily now."

"Thank God!" says the man "that we are all doctors."

The afternoon wanes.

"Georgie Day, mamma."

"Yes, lamby."

"I want him to have my sleeve-buttons. He can play base-ball, not two-old-cat. He can play real base-ball."

"Yes, Georgie shall come to see you to-morrow."

Lockwin goes to the speaking tube.

"Go and get Dr. Floddin at once. Tell him to come and stay with us. Tell him we have difficulty in keeping the child warm."

The sun has poured into the window and gone on to other sick chambers. The flaxseed and stramonium seem like reminders of the past stage of the trouble. Richard Tarbelle, never before in a room where the tide of life was low, looks down on Davy.

"Mr. Lockwin, I'm not rich, but I'd give a thousand dollars--a thousand dollars!"

"My God, doctor! why have you been so slow getting here?"

"My horses have been taken sick as fast as I got them."

The doctor advances to the child. The child is smiling on Richard Tarbelle.

"What ails you?"

It is Lockwin, looking in scorn on his doctor, who now, pale as a ghost, throws his hands up and down silly as the crone downstairs by the kitchen-range.

"Nothing can be done! Nothing can be done!"

"They say it hasn't been asthma at all," sobs Esther. "I suppose it's diphtheria."

"The man who can't tell when a child is sick, can't tell when he's dying," sneers Lockwin. "Doctor, when were you here yesterday?"

"I haven't been here since to-morrow week. My horses have been sick and the child was well."

Davy is white as marble. His breath comes hard. But why he should be dying, and why this fifty-cent doctor should know that much, puzzles and dumfounds the father. Davy may die next week, perhaps. Not dying now!

"It's a lie. It's not so," the father says.

"Mr. Lockwin, I don't want to say it, but it is so." It is the kind voice of Richard Tarbelle.

"Very well, then. It is diphtheria." It is the one goblin that for years has appalled Lockwin. Well it might, when it steals on a man like this. "To think I never gave him a drop of whisky. Oh! God! Get us a surgeon."

A medical college is not far away. The surgeon comes quickly, although Lockwin has gone half-way to meet him. The two men arrive. Dr. Floddin continues to throw his hands up and down. He loved Davy. Perhaps Dr. Floddin is a brave man to stay now. Perhaps he would be brave to go.

"Well, Mr. Surgeon, look at that child."

"Your boy is dying," says the surgeon, as the men retire to a back room.

"What is to be done?" asks the father, resolutely.

"We can insert a tube in his throat."

"Will that save his life?"

"It will prolong his life if the shock do not result fatally."

"If it were your own child would you do this operation?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Would you do it, certainly?"

"Yes, sir."

"Let us go in."

"Esther, we shall have to give him air through his throat."

"No, no!" shrieks the woman. "No, no!"

The child's eyes, almost filmy before, are lifted in beautiful appeal to the mother. "No, Davy. It shall not be!"

"It must be," says Lockwin.

"I have not brought my instruments," says the surgeon. "It is now very late in the case, anyway."

"Thank God!" is the thought of the father.

The child smiles upon his mother. He smiles upon Richard Tarbelle.

"How can he smile on papa, when papa was to cut that white and narrow throat?" It is David Lockwin putting his unhappy cheek beside the little face.

Now, if all these flaxseed rags and this stramonium sprayer and pan could be cleared out! If it were only daylight, so we could see Davy plainer!

Then comes a low cry from the kitchen. It is the forlorn mother, detailing the treacherous siege of membranous croup.

David Lockwin can only think of the hours last night, while Davy was in Gethsemane. The cradle song was the death song. The doctors sit in the back room. Esther holds the little hands and talks to the ears that have gone past hearing. "There is a sublime patience in women," thinks Lockwin, for he cannot wait.

"Inconceivable! Inconceivable! Davy never at the window again! Take away my miserable life, oh, just nature! Just God!"

The white lips are moving:

"Books, papa! J-o-s-e-p--"

"Yes, Davy. Josephus. Papa knows. Thank you, Davy. I can't say good-bye, Davy, for I hope I can go with you!"

The man's head is in the pillow. "Oh, to take a little child like this, and send him out ahead of us--ahead of the strong man. Is it not hard, Richard Tarbelle?"

"Mr. Lockwin, as I said, I am not a rich man, but I would give a thousand dollars--a thousand dollars--I guess you had better look at him, Mr. Lockwin."

Davy is dead.

Never yet has that father showered on the child such a wealth of love as lies in that father's heart. It would spoil the boy, and Lockwin, himself almost a spoiled son, has had an especial horror of parental over-indulgence.

So, therefore, he is now free to take that little form in his arms. The women will rid it of the nightgown and put on a cleaner garment. And while they do this act, the man will kiss that form, beginning at the soles of the feet.

--Those holy fields
Over whose acres walked those blessed feet
Which fourteen hundred years ago were nailed
For our advantage on the bitter cross.--

Why do these lines course through the man's brain? Curses on that flaxseed and that vile drug which made these fields so hard for these little feet. Any way, the man may gather this clay in his arms. No one else shall touch it! It is a long way down these stairs! Never at the window again, Davy. "I would give a thousand dollars." Well, God bless Richard Tarbelle. If it were a longer distance to carry this load, it would be far better! Light up the back parlor! Let us have that ironing-board! Fix the chairs thus! He must have a good book. It shall be Josephus. Oh, God! "Josephus, papa." Yes, yes, Davy. Put curly-head on Josephus.

The man is crooning. He is happy with his dead.

He talks to the nearest person and to Davy.

There is a great noise at the head of the street. There is an inflow of the people. The shrill flageolet, the brass horns, the bass drums, the crash of the general brass and the triangle--these sounds fill the air.

Where is the people's idol, elected to Congress by to-night's count, already conceded at Opposition head-quarters?

The orator stands over his dead. What is that? Elected to Congress? A speech?

"It will be better," says Richard Tarbelle. "Come up on the balcony, Mr. Lockwin. It will be better."

This noise relieves the father's brain. How fortunate it has come. The orator goes up by a rear stairway. He appears on the balcony. There is a cheer that may be heard all over the South Side.

"He looks haggard," says the first citizen.

"You'd look tired if you opened your barrel the way he did," vouchsafes the second citizen.

The orator lifts his voice. It is the proudest moment of his life, he assures them. In this eventful day's work the nation has been offered a guarantee of its welfare. The sanctity of our institutions has been vindicated.

Here the tin-horns, the cat-calls, the drunken congratulations--the whole Babel--rises above the charm of oratory. But the people's idol does not stop. The words roll from his mouth. The form sways, the finger points.

"He's the boy!" "Notice his giblets!" "He will be President--if his barrel lasts." Thus the first, second and third saloon-keepers determine.

There is a revulsion in the crowd. What is the matter at the basement gate?

It is the cook and the housekeeper in contention.

"I tell ye's I'm goin' to fasten it on the door! Such doings as this I never heard of. Oh, Davy, my darlint! Oh! Davy, my darlint!"

The crowd is withdrawing to the opposite curb, But the crush is tremendous. There are ten thousand people in the street. Only those near by know what is happening.

The cook escapes from the housekeeper. She climbs the steps of the portico. She flaunts the white crape. "Begone, ye blasphemous wretches!" she cries.

"What the devil is that?" asks the first citizen.

The cook is fastening the white gauze and the white satin ribbon on the bell knob.

"Do ye see that, ye graveyard robbers? Will ye blow yer brass bands and yer tin pipes now, ye murtherin' wretches?"

The host has seen the signal of death, as it flaunts under the flickering light of the gas lamp. There is an insensible yet rapid departure. There were ten thousand hearers. There are, perhaps, ten hundred whose eyes are as yet fixed upward on the orator.

"Our republic will forever remain splendid among nations," comes the rich voice from the balcony. One may see a form swaying, an arm reaching forth in the dim light.

The ten hundred are diminishing. It is like the banners of the auroral light. The ten hundred were there a moment ago. Now it is but a memory. No one is there. The street is so empty that a belated delivery wagon may rattle along, stopping at wrong houses to fix the number.

The orator speaks on. He weeps and he thunders.

Hasten out on that balcony, Richard Tarbelle, and stop this scandal! Lead that demented orator in! Pluck him by the sleeve! Pluck harder!

"The voice of the people, my fellow-citizens," cries the people's idol, "is the voice--is the voice of God."

"God, and Holy Mary, and the sweet angels!" comes a low, keening cry from the kitchen.

CHAPTER XI

LYNCH-LAW FOR CORKEY

It is a month after the election. Lockwin has been out of bed for a week.

"You astound me!" cries Dr. Tarpion.

The doctor is just back from his mine in Mexico. The doctor has climbed the volcano of Popocatepetl. His six-story hotel in Chicago is leased on a bond for five years. He has a nugget of gold from his mine. His health is capital. He is at the mental and physical antipodes of his friend. Talk of Mexican summer resorts and Chicago real estate is to the doctor's taste. He is not prepared for Lockwin's recital.

"Your Davy, my poor fellow, had no constitution. Mind you, I do not say he would have died had I remained at my office. I do not say that. Of course, it was highly important that his stomach should be preserved. You fell in the hands of a Dr. Flod--let me see our list. Why, by heavens! his name is not down at all!"

Dr. Floddin's name is not in the medical peagege. Dr. Floddin, therefore, does not exist.

"Well, David, let us speak of it no more. You were entrapped. How about this Congress? I tell you that you must go. You must do exactly as our leader directs."

Lockwin is elected, and he is not. He received the most votes, but great frauds were openly perpetrated. Without the false votes Corkey would have been elected. There is to be a contest in the lower House. The majority of the party in the House is only three, with two republicans on sick beds in close districts.

Interest in the Chicago affair is overshadowing. The President's private secretary has commissioned the Chicago political boss to fix it up.

Corkey is an unknown factor. The boss assures the administration that the district would be lost if Corkey should win.

What does Corkey want?

"I was elected," says Corkey.

"You don't carry the papers," answers the boss.

"I just made you fellers screw your nut for 2,000 crooked votes," says Corkey.

"None of your sailors had the right to vote," says the boss. "Now, here, Corkey, you are going to lose that certificate. It doesn't belong to you, and we've got the House. Here's a telegram from a high source: 'Lockwin must get the election at all hazards. See Corkey.' I'll tell you what you do. You and Lockwin go on and see the President."

"That will never do," says Corkey. "But I'll tell you what I will do."

"Go on."

"Do you know I've a notion that Lockwin ain't goin' to serve. If he resigns, I want it. If he catches on, all right. I want him or you to get me collector of the port. You hear me? Collector of the port. His nobs, this collector we have now--he must get out, I don't care how. But he must sherry. I can't fool with these sailors. If they see me trading with Lockwin they will swear I sell out. See? Well, I want to see Lockwin, just the same. Now, I'll tell you what I'll do: You Send Lockwin to Washington to explain the situation. Get in writing what is to be done. Don't let there be any foolin' on that point. Tell Lockwin to return by the way of Canada, and get to Owen Sound. I know a way home that will leave us alone for two days or more. In that time I can tell what I'll do."

"All right; Lockwin shall go."

"I'll give it out that I've gone to Duluth for the newspaper. But I've no use for newspapers no more. It's collector or Congress, sure. Don't attempt no smart plays. Tell that to the jam-jorum at Washington. If they want me to take down my contest and cover up the hole you ballot-box-stuffers is in here at home, let 'em fix *me*."

"All right."

"It's all right if Lockwin meets me at Owen Sound. I've got the *papes* to send a lot of you duuffers to the pen if you don't come to time."

Corkey therefore sails for Duluth. It increases his standing with the sailors to make these trips late in the year.

Lockwin is to go to Washington. It is evident, say his friends, that he is greatly exhausted with the efforts of the campaign. Dr. Tarpion has hinted that Lockwin is not the ambitious man that he has seemed to be. Dr. Tarpion has hinted that it was only through strong personal influence that Lockwin has been held faithful to the heavy party duty that now lies upon him.

Dr. Tarpion has hinted that Lockwin did not want the office if it did not belong to him.

But Lockwin has had brain fever for nearly a month. What could you expect of a man who made so many speeches at so many wigwams?

"Besides," says the political boss, "he had sickness in his family."

"Some one died, didn't they?" asks a rounder where these reports are bandied.

"Yes, a little boy. Good-looking little fellow, too. I saw him with Lockwin."

"When I was a young man," said the boss, "old Sol Wynkoop got in the heat of the canvass, just like Lockwin. Old Sol was just about as good a speaker. He would talk right on, making 'em howl every so often. Well, his wife and his daughter they both died and was buried, and Old Sol he didn't miss his three dates a day. He didn't come home at all. I had a notion to tell Lockwin that. Oh, he ain't no timber for President, or even for senator. I did tell Lockwin how my wife died. I got to the funeral, of course, for this is a city, and Old Sol was forty miles away, with muddy roads. But, boys, when I get tired I just have to go up to the lake and catch bass. I tell you, politics is hard. I must find Lockwin right away. Good-bye, boys. Charge those drinks to me."

It is Sunday. David Lockwin is walking toward the little church where Davy went to Sunday-school. He passes a group at a gate near the church. "Every week, just at this time, there goes by the most beautiful child. Stay and see him. See how he smiles up at our window."

"He is dead and buried," says Lockwin in their ear. They are young women. They are startled, and run in the cottage.

Lockwin walks as in a dream. To-morrow he goes to Washington. "Politics is hard," he says, but he does not feel it. He feels nothing. He feels at rest. Nothing is hard. He is weak from an illness, of which he knows little. He has never been in this infant-room. Many a time he has left Davy at the door.

The pastor's wife is the shepherdess. She has a long, white crook. Before her sit seven rows of wee faces and bodies. It is sweeter than a garden of flowers. They are too small to read books, but they learn at the fastest pace. The shepherdess gets Lockwin a chair. There are tears in her eyes. The audience is quick to feel. Tears come in the eyes of little faces nearly as beautiful as Davy's. Roses are sweetest when the dew sparkles on them.

"Oh, my dear sir, no. None of them are as pretty as he was." Such is the opinion of the shepherdess. "We see only one like him in a lifetime," she testifies. A wee, blue chair is vacant in the first row at the end--clearly the place of honor. A withered wreath lies on the chair. The man's eyes are fastened on that spot. Here is a world of which he knew nothing. Here he follows in the very footsteps.

"Listen, listen," says the motherly teacher. "This is Davy's father."

Three of the most bashful arise and come to be kissed. Strange power of human pity!



[Illustration: Three of the most bashful arise and come to be kissed.]

"Little Davy is with Jesus," says the shepherdess. "Now all you who want to be with Jesus, raise your hands."

Every right hand is up. Their faith is implicit, but many a left hand is pulling a neighboring curl. Busy is that long shepherd crook, to defeat those wicked left hands.

A head obtrudes in the door. "Excuse me," says the political boss. "Mr. Lockwin, can you spare a moment? Hello, Jessie! no, papa will not be home to-night. Tell mamma, will you?"

A curly head is saddened. Lockwin thanks the shepherdess, and follows his boss.

"The train goes East at 4:45. Don't lose a moment. Lucky I found you."

The newspaper press is in possession of a sensation. On Monday morning we quote: "A plot has been revealed which might have resulted in the loss of the First district, and possibly of Congress, just at the moment the re-apportionment bill was to be passed. Notice of contest has been served on Congressman Lockwin as a blind for subsequent operations, and yesterday the newly elected member left hurriedly for Washington to consult with the attorney general. It is evident that the federal authorities will inquire into the high-handed outrages which swelled the votes of Corkey and the other unsuccessful candidates on election day.

"The time is coming," concludes the article, "when lynch law will be dealt out to the repeaters who haunt the tough precincts at each election day."

The prominent citizens say among themselves: "We ought to do something pretty soon, or these ward politicians will be governing the nation!"

CHAPTER XII

IN GEORGIAN BAY

Corkey is at Owen Sound. The political bee is buzzing in his bonnet. Collector of the port--this office seems small to a man who really polled more votes than Lockwin. The notion has taken hold of Corkey that, by some hook or crook, Lockwin will get out and Corkey will get in.

When he thinks of this, Corkey rises and walks about his chair, sitting down again.

This is a gambler's habit.

There follows this incantation an incident which flatters his ambition. Having changed his tobacco from the right to the left side of his mouth, he strangles badly. It takes him just five minutes to get a free breath. This is always a good sign. Thereupon the darkest of negro lads, with six fingers, a lick, left-handed and cross-eyed, enters the barroom of the hotel.

"Here!" cries Corkey. "What's your name?" The boy stammers in his speech.

"N-n-n-noah!" he replies.

"Why not?" inquires Corkey. "You bet your sweet life you tell me what your name is!"

"N-n-n-noah!"

"Why not? Tell me that!"

"M-m-my name is N-n-noah!" exclaims the boy.

"Ho! ho!" laughs Corkey. "Let's see them fingers! Got any more in your pockets?"

"N-n-n-noah," answers the boy.

"Got six toes, too?"

"Y-y-yes, sah!"

"A dead mascot!" says Corkey. It is an auspice of the most eminent fortune. Corkey from this moment rejects the collectorship, and stakes all on going to Congress. Thoughts of murdering Lockwin out here in this wilderness come into the man's mind.

"I wouldn't do that, nohow. Oh, I'll never be worked off--none of that for me!"

In Corkey's tongue, to be worked off is to be hanged.

"Nixy. I'll never be worked off. But it would be easy to throw him from the deck to-night. Some of the boys would do it, too, if they knew him."

The man grows murderous.

"Easy enough. Somebody slap his jaw and get him in a fight. Oh, he'll fight quick enough. Then three or four of 'em tip him into the lake. Why, it ain't even the lake out here. It's Georgian Bay. It's out of the world, too. My father was in Congress. My grandfather was in. Wonder how they got there? Wonder if they did any dirt?"

Corkey's face is hard and black. He rises. He feels ill. He swears at the mascot. "I *thought* he had too many points when I see him."

The train is late. The propeller, Africa, lies at the dock ready to start.

"Well, if I come to such a place as this I must expect a jackleg railroad. They say they've got an old tub there at the dock. Good stiff fall breeze, too."

The thought of danger resuscitates Corkey. He finds some sailors, tells them how he was elected to Congress, slaps them on the back, tries to split the bar with his fist, a feat which has often won votes, and tightens his heart with raw Canadian whisky.

"Going to be rough, Corkey."

"'Spouse so," nods Corkey. "Is she pretty good?"

"The Africa?"

"Um-huh!"

"Oh, well, she's toted me often enough. She's like the little nig they carry."

"Does that mascot sail with her?"

"To be sure."

"That settles it. Landlord, give us that sour mash."

"Train's coming!"

The drinks are hurriedly swallowed and paid for, and the men are off for the depot near by.

"How are ye, Lockwin?" "How-dy-do, Corkey. Where have you got me? Going to murder me and get to Congress in my place?"

"No, but I expect you're going to resign and let me in."

"Where's your boat? I hear they're waiting. I suppose we can get supper on board. Why did you choose such a place as this?"

"Well, cap, I had a long slate to fix up when I came here. If I was to be collector, of course I want to make my pile out of it, and I must take care of the boys. But I didn't start out to be collector, and I've about failed to make any slate at all. Yet, if I'm to sell out to you folks, I reckon I couldn't do it on any boat in the open lakes. I'm not sure but Georgian Bay is purty prominent. Captain Grant, this is Mr. Lockwin, of Chicago. This is the captain of the Africa. Mr. Bodine, Mr. Lockwin, of Chicago. Mr. Bodine is station-keeper here. Mr. Troy, Mr. Lockwin. Mr. Troy keeps the hotel. Mr. Flood, Mr. Lockwin. Mr. Flood runs the bank and keeps the postoffice and general store."

The group nears the hotel.

Corkey is seized with a paroxysm of tobacco strangling, ending with a sneeze that is a public event. He is again black in the face, but he has been polite.

The uninitiated express their astonishment at a sneeze so mighty, and enter the inn. The women of the dining-room come peeping into the bar-room, but the captain explains:

"That sneeze carried Corkey to Congress. I've heern tell how he'd be in the middle of a speech and some smart Aleck would do something to raise the laugh on the gentleman. Corkey would get to strangling and then would end with a sneeze that would carry the house. It's great!"

"That's what it is!" says Mr. Bodine.

"Gentlemen, my father had it. It's no laughing matter. God sakes, how that does shake a man!"

But Corkey has not only done the polite act. He has relieved his mind. He is no longer in danger of being worked off.

"I wouldn't be likely to do up my man if I introduced him to everybody."

Yet the opportunity to murder Lockwin, as a theoretical proposition, dwells with Corkey, now that he is clearly innocent.

"I might have given him a false name. He'd a had to stand it, because he don't like this business nohow. Everything was favorable. Have we time for a drink, cap'n?" The last sentence aloud.

The captain looks at the hotel-keeper. The captain also sells the stuff aboard. But will the captain throw a stone into Mr. Troy's bar?

"I guess we have time," nods the captain.

The party drinks. The gale rises. One hundred wood-choppers, bound for Thunder Bay, go aboard. The craft rubs her fenders and strains the wavering pier. It is a dark night and cold.

"No sailor likes a north wind," says Corkey.

"I have no reason to like it," says Lockwin.

"I'll bet he couldn't be done up so very easy after all," thinks Corkey with a quick, loud guttural bark, due to his tobacco. "I wonder why he looks so blue? It can't be they won't trade at Washington."

The thought of no office at all frightens the marine reporter. He asks himself why he did not put the main question at the depot before the other folks met Lockwin. The paroxysm has made a coward of Corkey. He gets mental satisfaction by thoughts of the weather. The mate of the Africa is muttering that they ought to tie up for the night.

"What ye going to do?" asks Corkey of Captain Grant.

"The captain is well sprung with sour mash," says Corkey to himself.

"We're going to take these choppers to Thunder Bay to-night," says the captain with an oath.

Supper is set in the after-cabin. It is nine o'clock before the engine moves. There are few at table. After supper Corkey and Lockwin enter the forward cabin and take a sofa that sits across the little room. The sea is rough, but the motion of the boat is least felt at this place.

Lockwin has the appearance of a man who is utterly unwilling to be happy. Corkey has regarded this demeanor as a political wile.

"I'll fetch this feller!" Corkey has observed to himself.

But on broaching the question of politics, the commodore has found that Lockwin is scarcely able to speak. He sinks in profound meditation, and is slowly recalled to the most obvious matters.

The genial Corkey is puzzled. "He's going to resign, sure. He beats me--this feller does."

The boat lunges and groans. It lurches sidewise three or four times, and there are sudden moans of the sick on all sides beyond thin wooden partitions.

"I bet he gits sick," says Corkey. "Pard, are ye sick now? Excuse me, Mr. Lockwin, but are ye sick any?"

"No," says Lockwin, and he is not sick. He wishes he were.

"Well, let's git to business, then. You must excuse me, but--"

Corkey is seized with a paroxysm. He gives a screeching sneeze, and the cries of the sick grow furious.

"Who *is* that?" asks the mate, peering out of his room and then going on deck.

David Lockwin is at the end of his forces. This is life. This is politics. This is expediency. This is the way men become illustrious. He straightens his legs, sinks his chin and pushes his hands far in his pockets.

"Before I begin," says Corkey, "let me tell ye, that if you're sick I'd keep off the decks. You have a gold watch. Some one might nail ye."

"Is that so?" asks Lockwin, his thoughts far away.

"He beats *me!*" comments the contestant. "Well, pard, if you're not sick, I'd like to say a good many things. I suppose them ducks at Washington weakened. If they give me collector, here's my slate."

Corkey produces a long list of names, written on copy-paper.

"I bet she don't budge an inch," he remarks, as he hears the north wind and waves pounding at one end, and the engine pounding at the other.

"Needn't be afraid, pard. Sometimes they go out in Georgian Bay and burn some coal. Then if they can't git anywhere, they come back."

Corkey is pleased with his own remark. "Sometimes," he adds, "they don't come back. They are bluffed back by the wind."

Lockwin sits in the same uncommunicative attitude.

"Pardner, you didn't come out into Georgian Bay for nothing. I know that. So I will tell you what I am going to do with the collectorship. By the great jumping Jewhillikins, that's a wave in the stateroom windows! I never see anything like that."

The captain passes.

"High sea, cap'n!" It is not in good form for Corkey to rise. He is a passenger, with a navigator's reputation to sustain.

"High hell!" says the captain.

"What a hullabaloo them choppers is a-making," says Corkey to Lockwin. "I reckon they're about scared to death. Well, as I was a-saying, I want to know what the jam-jorum said."

Corkey is terrified. He does not fear that he will go down in Georgian Bay. He dreads to hear the bursting of the bladders that are supporting him in his sea of glory.

Lockwin starts as from a waking dream:

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Corkey, but I could have told you at the start that the administration, when it was confronted by the question whether or not it would give you anything, said; 'No!' It will give you nothing. The administration said it would not appoint you lightkeeper at Ozaukee."

"There hain't no light at Ozaukee," says Corkey.

"That's what the administration said, too," replies Lockwin.

"Did you tell 'em I got you fine?" asks Corkey.

"I told them I thought you had as good a case as I had."

"Did you tell 'em I'd knock seventeen kinds of stuffin' out of their whole party? That I'd--"

Corkey is at his wits ends. His challenge has been accepted. At the outset he had saved fifty twenty-dollar gold pieces out of his wages. He has spent fifteen already. The thought of a contest against the machine candidate carries with it the loss of the rest of the little hoard. He has boasted that he will retain Emery Storrs, the eminent advocate. Corkey grows black in the face. He hiccoughs. He strangles.

He unburdens himself with a supreme sneeze. The mate enters the cabin.

"I *knew* that sneeze would wreck us!" he cries savagely.

"Is your old tub sinking?" asks Corkey, in retort.

"That's what she is!" replies the mate.

Corkey looks like a man relieved. Politics is off his mind. He will not be laughed at on the docks now.

"Pardner, I'm sorry we're in this hole," he says, as the twain rush through the door to the deck. It was dim under that swinging lamp. It is dark out here. The wind is bitter. The second mate stands hard by.

"How much water is in?" asks Corkey.

"Plenty," says the second mate.

"What have ye done?" asks Corkey.

"Captain's blind, stavin' drunk, and won't do nothin'."

"Nice picnic!" says Corkey.

"Nice picnic!" says the second mate, warming up.

It is midnight in the middle of Georgian Bay. There is a fall gale such as comes only once in four or five years. In the morning there will be three hundred wrecks on the great lakes--the most inhospitable bodies of water in the world.

And of all stormy places let the sailor keep out of Georgian Bay.

CHAPTER XIII

OFF CAPE CROKER

Corkey has climbed to the upper deck and stands there alone in the darkness and the gale. The engine stops. The steamer falls into the trough of the sea.

The Africa carries two yawls attached to her davits. Corkey is feeling about one of these yawls. He suspects that the lines are old. He steps to the other side. He strains at a rope. He strives to unloose it from its cleat. The line is stiff and almost frozen.

"I'd be afraid to lower myself, anyhow," he observes, for he has the notion that everything about the Africa is insecure.

The ship gives another lurch. Something must be done. Almost before he knows it, Corkey has cut loose the stern. The rope seems strong.

Now he must unwind the bow line from its cleat, or he will lose his boat. He kicks at the cleat. He loosens a loop. He raises the boat and then lowers it. The tackle works.

The other yawl and its tackle roll and creak in the gale. Nobody else comes up the ladders.

The man aloft pulls his line out and fastens it to the cleat which he tried to kick off. He seizes the stern of the yawl and hoists it far over the upper deck. The yawl falls outside the gunwale below, with a great crash and splintering of oars.

"She's there!" says Corkey, feeling the taut line. "She's there, and the rope is good. The davit is good."

The people below seem to know that a boat is being put out. But Corkey is the only man on the ship who thinks the idea practicable. "Of what use to lower a small boat," say the sailors, "in Georgian Bay?"

The man above must descend on that little line. He doesn't want to do that. He goes to the other boat, and makes a feeble experiment of hoisting and lowering, by means of both davits, the man to sit in the yawl. "I couldn't do it!" he vows, and recrosses.

"What'll I do when I get down there?" he mutters. "How'll I get loose?"

He must make his descent knife in hand.

"I can't do it!" he says, and gets out his knife. It is a large fur-handled hunting knife--like Corkey in its style.

Corkey peers down on deck. The wood-choppers are fastening life-preservers about their bodies. Whether they be crying or shouting, cannot be told.

He sees human forms hurrying past the cabin window, and there is reflected the yellow, wooden, ribby thing which he knows to be a life-preserver.

It is a cheering thing in such a moment. "I wish I had one," he says, but he holds to the rope of his boat.

There is no crew, in the proper sense of the word. Not an officer or man on board feels a responsibility for the lives of the passengers. As at a country summer resort, each person must wait on himself.

"Nobody is better'n we are," says the captain.

The Africa is rapidly foundering.

"She must be as rotten as punk," sneers Corkey. He thinks of his cheerful desk at the newspaper office. He thinks of his marine register. He tries to recall the rating of this hulk of an Africa.

"Anyhow, it is tough!" he laments.

The wind is perhaps less boisterous since the engine slacked. The rays of light from the cabin lamps pierce and split the waves. Corkey never saw so much foam before.

"It's an easy good-bye for all of us," he says, and falls ill.

But shall he wait for the Africa to settle?

"She'll pull me down, sure!" he comments.

Shall he wait much longer, then?

"All them roosters will be up here, and then we can't do nothing. Yet I wish I had somebody with me. Oh, Lockwin! I say, hello! Old man! Lockwin! Come up this way!"

For a moment there is nothing to be heard but the furious whistling of the gale about the mast in front. There is nobody in the wheel-house to the best of Corkey's eyesight.

There are three or four booming sounds. Corkey is startled. They are repeated.

It is the yawl making its hollow sound.

But there are no noises of human beings. "Oddest thing I ever see!" says Corkey. "I didn't know a shipwreck was like this. Everything is different from what is printed--Lord save me!"

The Africa is rolling.

"Here goes!" It is now or never.

Corkey has short, tough fingers. He grasps that rope like a vise. He wraps his left leg well in the coils. He kicks the steamer with his right. The small boat does not touch the water when the steamer is sitting straight in the sea.

It is a horrible turmoil in which to enter. Perhaps he came down too soon!

"I wish I had some one with me now. Mebbe the two of us would get an advantage."

The second mate looks over the gunwale from the prow of the steamer. He knows a land-lubber is handling a yawl.

"D---- fool!" he mutters.

In the Georgian Bay, if the ship go down, all hands are to drown. Only sham sailors like Corkey are to make any effort, beyond fastening pieces of wood about their waists.

"I wonder if I'd come out here for this if I'd got onto it?" Then the grim features relax. "I wonder if his nobbs would?"

Corkey's feet rest on the prow of the small boat. He asks if he fastened that rope securely at the cleat. He has asked that all the way down. Perhaps the steamer is not going to sink.

"Whoopy!"

Corkey is under the steamer's side, deep in the waves. He goes down suddenly, cold, frightened, benumbed. He feels that some one is trying to pull the rope out of his hands. It must be Lockwin. The drowning man clutches with a hundred forces. The tug increases. The struggling man will lose the rope. Lockwin is striking Corkey with a bludgeon. That is unfair! There is a last pull, and Corkey comes up out of the waves.

What has happened? The Africa has rolled nearly over, but is righting.

Corkey's wits return. "I've lost my knife!" he cries, in bitter disappointment. But, lo! his knife is in his hands. He can with difficulty unloose his fingers from the rope.

The Africa is listing upon him again. He dreads that abyss of waters. He cuts the rope far above him and he falls in the sea, the entire scope of his life passing in a red fire before his eyes.

Beside, there is a drowning thought that he has gone out to die before the rest. At the last, when he swung out as the Africa rolled toward him he wanted to climb back.

Now the red fire is gone and Corkey can think. He believes he is drowning. "It's because I wasn't a real sailor," he argues. "The sailors knew better."

Something pulls him. It is the rope which he holds. He knows now that he has a yawl on the end of that line. He pulls and pulls--and comes up to the air, a choking, sneezing, exceedingly active human being. The yawl is riding the water. He rolls into the boat at the prow. He feels quickly for the oars and finds two that are in their locks. Water is deep in the bottom. There is nothing to bail with.

But the joy of the little man is keen. "I'm saved! That's what I am! I'm saved!"

He thinks he hears a new noise--a great sough--the pouring of waters. He is moved sidewise in his boat. He wipes the mist from his eyes and peers in all directions for the ship.

"Where in God's name is she?" It is the most frightful thought Corkey has ever entertained.

The Africa has gone down. It is as sure as that Corkey sits in the yawl, safe for the moment. The spirit of the man sinks with the ship, and then rides high again.

"They're nothing to me!" he says. "I'm the only contestant, too!"

He is too brave. The thought seems sacrilegious. He grows faint with fear! All alone on Georgian Bay!

The boat leaps and settles, leaps and settles. The oars fly in his face, and are jerked away. The boat falls on something solid. What is that? It hits the boat again. An oar flies out of Corkey's hand. His hand seizes the gunwale for security. A warmer hand is felt. Corkey pulls on the hand--a head--a kinky head--comes next. The thing is alive, and is welcome. Corkey pulls with both hands. A small form comes over the gunwale just as a wave strikes the side of the yawl with the only noise that can be heard. The yawl does not capsize. The boy begins bailing with his hands.

It is the mascot. "Hooray!" cries the man. His confidence returns. He hears the boy paddling the water. The rebellious oars are seized with hope, but Corkey feels as if he were high on a fractious horse,

"Bail, you moke!" he commands in tones that are heard for a hundred yards.

"Bail, you cross-eyed, left-handed, two-thumbed, six-toed, stuttering moke!"

The boy paddles with his hands. The man, by spasmodic efforts, holds the boat against the wind for a minute, and then loses his control.

"Bail, you moke!" he screams, as the tide goes against him.

The hands fly faster.

The boat comes back against the wind and the great seas split on each side of the prow.

The swimmers hear Corkey.

"Lordy!" he says. "I know I hit a man then with that right oar. I felt it smash him. There! we're on him now! Bail, you moke! No stopping, or I throw you in! Stop that bailing and catch that duck there! Got him? Hang on!"

It is a wood-chopper.

This yawl is like a wild animal. It springs upward, it rolls, it flounders. It is like a wild bronco newly haltered. How

can these many heads hope to get upon so spirited a steed? See it leap backward and on end! Now up, now sidewise, now vertically!

But the swimmers are also the sport of the waves. They, too, are thrown far aloft. They, too, sink deeply.

"There, I hit that man again, I know I did! Don't you feel him? They must be thick. Come this way, all you fellers! I can take ye!"

The boat is leaping high. These survivors are brave and good.

The wood-chopper, with his wooden life-preserver, is clumsy getting in. He angers Corkey.

"Bail, you moke! Let the other fellows fish for the floaters!"

It inspires Corkey, this frequent admonition of the boy. But the boat cavorts dizzily.

"Bail, you moke! You black devil! Don't you forget it!" The oars go fast and furious, often in the air, and each time with a volley of oaths.

The wood-chopper has seized a man. It is another wood-chopper. There are now four souls in the boat.

It leaps less like an athlete.

It has been half an hour since the Africa went down. There still are cries. To all these, Corkey replies: "Come on! all you fellers that has life-preservers!" But it is incredible that any more should get in the yawl.

Nevertheless, one, two, three, four, five, six wood-choppers arrive in the next half-hour, and all are saved. Tugging for dear life, Corkey holds his boat against the wind.

"There!" cries the commander. "I strike him again!"

A wood-chopper this time grasps a floating man who can make little effort for himself. A half-dozen pair of hands bring him aboard. He sinks on a seat. The boat is now full. It leaps less lightly. The commander is jubilant. He thinks himself safe. He returns to his favorite topic, the mascot.

"You're from the Africa, ain't you? Bail, you moke! He-oh-he! Golly, that was a big one!"

"Yessah!"

"You're Noah. Good name! Fine name! Where's Ararat? He-oh-he!"

"Never seed a-a-airy-rat."

"Bail, you moke! Don't you give me more o' your lip! Bail, you little devil! Don't you see--he-oh--Godsakes! Lookout! Bail, all you fellers! Other side! Quick! It's no good! Hang on! All you fellers."

The boat is turning. Hands grasp the gunwale. The gunwale sinks. Hands rise. The back of the boat rolls toward them. The hands scramble and pat the back of the boat. The gunwale comes over. The boat is right side up. She still leaps. She still struggles to be free. Hand after hand lets go. Six hands remain. The boat rises and ends about. Then the bow rises; next the stern. The yawl strives persistently to shake free from the daring creatures who have so far escaped the Africa and the storm. The boy turns on the gunwale, as it were a trapeze. He opens the locker. He finds a tin pie-plate. He bails.

Corkey gets in.

"Lord of heavens!" he ejaculates, "that was a close call. Them wood-choppers! They was no earthly use."

Two hands are yet on the gunwale.

"Suppose we can git him in?"

"Yessah!" stammers the boy.

The unknown man is evidently wounded, but is more active than when he was first picked up.

Every wood-chopper is gone. There are no sounds in Georgian Bay other than the noises of the boat, the wind and the great waves. There were 117 souls on the Africa. Now 114 are drowned. They perished like rats in a trap.

What moment will the boat overturn again?

"Bail, my son!"

"Yessah!" stammers the boy.

The boat is riding southward and backward at a fast rate. Three hours have passed--three hours of increasing effort and nerve-straining suspense.

The wounded survivor lies in the stern of the boat. The boy bails incessantly. The water is thrown in at the stern in passing over the boat from the prow.

"It's bad on that rooster!" says Corkey, as he hears the water dashing on the prostrate form. "Wonder if his head is out of the drink?"

"Yessah!" stammers the boy, feeling slowly in the stern.

The work and the fear settle into a sodden, unbroken period of three hours more. Growing familiarity with the seas aids Corkey in holding the craft to the wind. But how long can he last? How long can he defy the wind?

"Bail, my son!" he begs.

"Yessah," stammers the boy.

The gray light begins to touch the east. Corkey has lived an age since he saw that light. He is afraid of it now.

A cloud moves by and the morning bursts on the group.

Busy as he is, Corkey is eager to see the man in the stern.

"Holy smoke!" says the oarsman.

"Yessah!" stammers the obedient lad.

The face on the stern seat startles Corkey. The nose is broken, the lips are cut, some of the front teeth are gone and the face has been bloody. It is like a wound poulticed white. It has been wet and cold all night.

"Lockwin, isn't it you?" asks Corkey, greatly moved at a sight so affecting.

"It is," signals Lockwin. The voice is inaudible to Corkey.

The head rises and Corkey strains his ear.

"I'm dying, Corkey. God bless you. I wanted to thank you."

"God bless you, Lockwin. We're all in the same boat. I'm glad we caught you!"

The mascot moves toward the sinking man.

The head falls again on the stern seat. The body is in ten inches of water.

The boat is moving rapidly.

"Want to send any word home, Lockwin?"

There is a pause. There is an effort to speak of money. There is another effort.

"He s-a-ays put a st-st-stone at Davy's-s-s-s grave," interprets the stammerer.

"Who's Davy?" asks the oarsman. "What else did he say?"

"H-h-h-he's dead!" says the lad.

"Bail! bail!" answers the man. "Let's g-g-get 'im out!" suggests the boy in a half-hour. Corkey has been sobbing.

"I thought a heap of Lockwin," he answers.

"I d-d-don't like a d-d-dead man in the boat!"

"Bail, you moke! I'll throw you in!"

But Corkey's voice is far from menacing. Corkey is weak. Now he sees the boy's face in dreadful contortions. The lad is trying to speak quickly, and can make no noise at all.

He rises and points. He is frantic.

"He's crazy!" thinks Corkey, in alarm.

"L-l-land!" screams the lad.

"That is what it is, unless it's sucking us in." Corkey has heard of mirages in shipwreck.

"It's land!" he says, a moment later, as he sees a tamarack scrub.

It is, in reality, a long, narrow spit of sand that pushes out above Colpoy's Bay. Beyond that point is the black and open Georgian Bay for thirty miles.

The boat will ride by, and at least three hundred yards outside. Unless Corkey can get inside, what will become of him?

If he turn away from the wind he will capsize.

On comes the point. It is the abyss of death beyond.

"We never will get it!" cries the man.

The boy's face is all contortions. He is trying to say something.

"Bail, you moke!" commands the man. But his eyes look imploringly on the peninsula of sand.

The black face grows hideous. The eyes are white and protrude. The point is off the stern of the yawl.

"Not d-d-deep!" yells the mascot with an explosion.

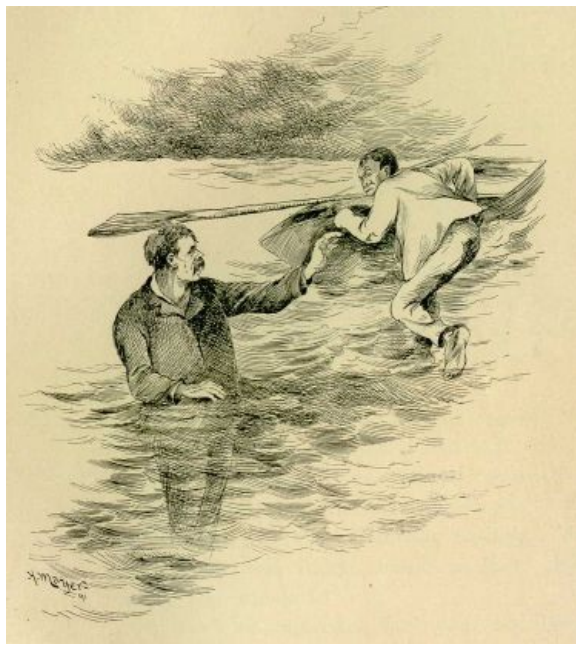
"Sure enough!"

"S-s-s-s-see the sand in the wa-wa-ter!"

"Sure enough!"

The idea saves Corkey and the boy. Over the side Corkey goes. He touches bottom and is swept off.

The boat drags him. He catches the boy's hand.



[Illustration: The boat drags him. He catches the boy's hand.]

"Let her go," is the command, and, boy in arms, Corkey stands on the bottom. The sea rages as if it were a thousand feet deep.

If Corkey wore a life-preserver he would be lost.

Now is he on a sand-bar? This is his last and most prostrating fear. Step by step he moves toward the point. The waves dash over his head, as they dash over the yawl. Step by step he learns that he is safe.

The boat is gone forever.

The water grows shallower. The great sea goes by. The bay beyond may look black now Corkey has escaped its jaws.

He puts down the lad.

"Walk, you moke!" he commands.

The twain labor hand in hand to the point.

The man sinks like a drunkard upon the sands wet with the tempest.

When Corkey regains his senses four men are lifting him in a wagon. The mascot sits on the front seat.

Four newspaper reporters want his complete account.

CHAPTER XIV

IN THE CONVENTIONAL DAYS

One congressman, a hundred wood-choppers and fourteen miscellaneous lives have been lost in Georgian Bay.

It is the epoch of sensational news. A life is a life. The valiant night editor places before his readers the loss of 115 congressmen, for a wood-chopper is as good as a congressman.

And while the theory that 115 congressmen have gone down astounds and horrifies the subscriber, it might be different if that many congressmen of the opposite party should really be sent to the bottom.

The conditions for conventional news are, therefore, perfect. Upon the length of the report depends the reputation of the newspaper. The newspaper with the widest circulation must have the longest string of type and the blackest letters in its headings.

Corkey works for that paper.

"Give us your full story," demand his four saviors.

The mascot stammers so that communication with him is restricted to his answers of yes and no.

It is therefore Corkey's duty to the nation to tell all he has witnessed. He conceals nothing.

"It ain't much I know about it," he says; "she was rotten and she go down."

"Yes, but begin with the thrilling scenes."

"There wa'n't no scenes. I never see anything like it."

"Of course you didn't."

"Well, dry up. The cap'n he came in and went out. The first mate--he wa'n't no good on earth--well--he--"

The remembrance of the first mate's indignities throws Corkey into a long fit of strangling, ending with a monstrous sneeze.

"That's what wrecked her," observes the witty reporter.

"Exactly. I was trying to give you what this Aleck of a first mate was a-saying. After that we start out on deck, and I go up on the hurricane, and stand there in the dark."

"What did you see up there?"

Corkey gazes scornfully at his inquisitors.

"As I was a-saying, I let down the yawl, and it was no good--it was good enough--it saved us. When I get in the wet, I screw my nut and the blooming old tub was gone down, I reckon!"

When Corkey screws his nut he turns his head. He can use no other phrase.

The interviewers are busy catching his exact words.

"Then I pick up the mascot, and he bail. Then we catch them wood-choppers, and they are no earthly good. But I'm mighty sorry for 'em. Then I reckon we take up Lockwin, and he ain't no congressman, neither. I'm the congressman. Don't you forget that. He die off the point in the boat. We see the point, and we sherry out of that yawl. Hey, there, you moke--ain't that about so?"

"Yessah!" stammers the mascot.

"He come from the Africa, and his name is Noah--good name for so much drink, I reckon."

"Yes," say the eager interviewers, "go on."

"Go on! Go on yourselves. That's all."

There is no profit in catechising Corkey. He has spoken. There is Indian blood in him. He saw nothing. It was dark.

"It wasn't no shipwreck, I tell you: not like a real shipwreck. She just drap. She's where she belongs now. But that first mate, he was a bird, and I guess the second mate wasn't no better. The cap'n--I don't like to mention it of him, for I stood up to the bar with his crowd--he was too full of budge to sail any ship at all. But don't say that, boys. It'd only make his old woman feel bad."

The Africa is lost. Ask Corkey over and over. He will bring up out of the sea of his memory that same short, matter-of-fact recital.

The rural interviewers, unused to the needs of the city service--faithful to the sources of their news--finish the concise tale. It covers a quarter of a column.

That will never do for Corkey's paper. He knows it well.

He reaches Wiarton. He hurries to the telegraph office. He buys a half-dozen tales of the sea. He finds a shipwreck to suit his needs. He describes in a column the happy scenes in the cabin before the calamity is feared. He depicts the stern face of the commander as he stands, pistols in hand, to keep the passengers from the boats. The full moon rises. The wind abates. A raft is constructed at a cost of one column and a half of out and out plagiarism. Corkey, Lockwin and forty wood-choppers are saved on the raft. The captain goes down on his ship, refusing to live longer.

"You bet!" comments the laboring, perspiring Corkey. Corkey is a short man, short in speech. This "full account" is a grievous responsibility, for marine reporters are taught to "boil it down."

The raft goes to pieces in mid-sea, and the survivors take to the yawl.

Then Corkey returns and interpolates a column death scene on the raft.

"Too bad there wasn't no starving," he laments. "I was hungry enough to starve."

The boat comes ashore in the breakers, and as the result of an all-night's struggle with the muse of conventionality Corkey has seven columns of double-leaded copy.

Meantime the telegraph operator at Wiarton at Corkey's order has been sending the Covode Investigation from an antique copy of the "Congressional Globe." There is an office rule that dispatches must take their turn on the file. The four interviewers have filed their accounts and their accounts will be sent after the Covode Investigation. When Corkey's dispatch is ready he joins it to a sheet of the Covode Investigation, and therefore the operator has been busy on one dispatch all the time.

The night editor of Corkey's paper begins getting the Covode Investigation from Wiarton. He enjoins the foreman to start more type-setters. Reprint copy is freely set all night, and at dawn the real stuff begins to arrive.

"Appalling Calamity. Loss of 115 Lives on Georgian Bay. Only Two Saved. Graphic and Exciting Account of Our Special Survivor. Unparalleled Feat in Journalism."

Such are some of the many headings. They fill a column.

The night editor, the telegraph editors, the proof-readers, the type-setters, the ring-men, the make-ups, the press-men, are thrilled to the marrow. The printers can scarcely set their portions, they are so desirous to read the other takes.

"I didn't know Corkey had it in him," says Slug 75.

"You'd have it in you," answers Slug 10, "if you went through the wet like he did. How do you end? What's your last word?"

The victorious newspaper is out and on the streets--the greatest chronicle of any age--the most devout function of

the most conventional epoch of civilization.

The night editors of all other city newspapers look with livid faces on that front page. They scan the true and succinct account of Corkey's interview, which reaches them an hour later. They indignantly throw it in the wastebasket, cut off the correspondents by telegraph, and proceed hurriedly to re-write the front page of their exemplar.

The able editor comes down the next day and writes a leader on the great shipwrecks of past times, the raft scene and the heroism of Corkey.

Corkey and his mascot are still at Wiar-ton. Corkey is superintending the search for the yawl and Lockwin's body.

Superintending the search is but a phrase. Corkey is exhibiting his mascot, pounding on the hotel bar and accepting the congratulations of all who will take a drink.

The four correspondents fall back on the Special Survivor and hope for sympathy.

"We have been discharged by our papers," they cry in bitter anger and deep chagrin.

"Can't you get us re-instated?" they implore, in eager hope.

"The man," says Corkey, judicially, "who don't know no better than to send that shipwreck as it was--well, excuse me, gentlemen, but he ought to get fired, I suppose." Corkey stands sidewise to the bar, his hand on the glass. He looks with affection on the mascot and ruminates. Then he brings his adamant fist down on the bar to the peril of all glassware.

"Yes, sir! Now I was out on that old tub. I was right there when she drapped in the drink. If anybody might make it just as it was, I might--mightn't I?"

"You might," they answer in admiration of a great man.

"Well, I didn't do no such foolish thing as you fellows, did I?"

"But why didn't you tell us, Mr. Corkey?"

"That isn't what my paper hired me to do. Is it, you cow-licked, cross-eyed, two-thumbed, six-toed stuttering moke?"

There is a terrifying report of knuckles on the counter. There are signs of strangling and a sneeze.

"N--n--n--noah," stammers the faithful son of swart Afric.

BOOK II

ESTHER LOCKWIN

CHAPTER I

EXTRA! EXTRA!

Esther Lockwin, the bride of a few months, has been hungrily happy.

She has been the wife of David Lockwin, the people's idol. She has passed out of a single state which had become wearisome. She has removed from a vast mansion to a less conspicuous home.

Of all the women in Chicago she would consider herself most fortunate.

People call her cold. It is certain that she is best pleased with a husband like Lockwin. It is his business to be famous.

"Go to Congress," she says. "Outlive your enemies. I think, David, that men are not the equals of women in defending themselves against the shafts of enmity. Outlive your enemies, David."

That Lockwin has the nature she required was to be seen in the death of Davy. An event which would have beclouded the life of common brides came to Esther as an important communication. She saw Lockwin's heart. She saw him kissing the soles of Davy's feet. There is something despotic in her nature which was satisfied in his act. There is also a devotion in her nature which might be as profound.

She would kiss the soles of David Lockwin's feet, were he dead. She could kiss his feet were he despised and rejected among men.

Yet she is counted the haughtiest woman that goes by.

"Mrs. Lockwin is a double-decker," the grocer declares to his head clerk. "She rides mighty high out of the water."

The grocer used to haul lumber from Muskegon. His metaphors smell of the deep.

For ten years young men of all temperaments had besieged this lady. The fame of her money had entranced them. Suitors who were afraid of her distinguished person still paid court, smitten by the love of money.

She was so proud that she must marry a proud man. She must marry a man conspicuous, tall, large, slow. She must banish from her mind that hateful fear of the man who might want her for her financial expectations.

Sometimes when she surveyed the matrimonial field she noted that the eligible suitors were few.

Men with blonde mustaches of extreme length would recite lovers' poems. Men with jet-black hair, eyes and beard would be equally foolish. The lady would listen politely to both.

"It is the Manitoba cold wave!" the lovers would lament as they left her.

To see Esther Wandrell pass by--beautiful, heroic, composed--was to feel she was the most magnetic of women. To recite verses to her--to lay siege to her heart--was to learn that her personal magnetism was from a repellant pole. The air grew heavy. There was a lack of ozone. The presumptuous beleaguerer withdrew and was glad to come off without capture.

There had been one man, and toward the last, two men, who did not meet these mystic difficulties. Esther Wandrell was pleased to be in the society of either David Lockwin or George Harpwood.

David Lockwin she knew. He was socially her equal. He had lived in Chicago as long as she. He was essentially the man she might love, for there was an element of unrest in his nature that corresponded with the turmoil underneath her calm exterior.

She knew nothing of George Harpwood other than that he was an acquaintance with whom she liked to pass an hour. He did not degrade her pride. He walked erectly, he scorned the common people, he presented an appearance sufficiently striking to enable her to accompany him without making a bad picture on the street or in the parlor.

All other men bored her, and she could not conceal the fact.

To promenade with Harpwood and notice that Lockwin was interested--this was indeed a tonic. The world of tuberoses and *portes cocheres*--the world of soft carpets and waltzes heard in the distance--this aromatic, conventional and dreary world became a paradise.

When David Lockwin declared his love, life became dramatic.

When David Lockwin won the primaries and carried the election, life became useful.

When David Lockwin held the little feet of the dead foundling life became noble. She, too, would bring from out the recesses of that man's better nature the treasures of love which lay there. She had not before known that she hungered and thirsted for love.

It might be the affection of a lioness. She might lick her cubs with the tongue of a tiger, but her temperament, stirring beneath her, was pleased.

She has a husband worthy of her worship. She who had not known that she wanted lover's verses, wants them from David Lockwin.

She who had never been jealous of Davy, grows jealous of politics. Yet, fearing her husband may guess her secret and despise her, she appears more Spartan.

She nursed the man sick of brain fever and buried little Davy. She brought her patient to his senses after nearly a month of alienation.

"Is Davy dead, Esther?" he had asked.

This was his first rational utterance.

"You are elected to Congress, David," she said. "Are you not glad?"

"Yes," he answered, and looked like death itself.

She dared not to throw herself upon his pillow and tell him how happy she was that he was restored. Her heart beat rebelliously that she did not declare to him the consuming passion of love which she felt.

Oh, let him resign his honors! Let him travel with her alone! Let her love him--love him as he loved Davy--as he must love her!

But the caution of love and experience had warned her to be still. Had not David waited until the child was dead before she saw the man as he really loved that child?

"I think I can do my duty," he said, wearily.

"I am so glad you were elected!" she said.

"Yes," he answered, and became whiter.

She had sat by the bed, growing uneasy. Ought she to have told him all? Ought she to have acknowledged her deep devotion? Why was he so sad? Surely they could mourn for Davy together! Tears had come in her eyes as she gazed on the couch where Davy's soul went away.

The man had been comforted. "Were you remembering Davy?" he asked.

"Yes, dear," she said.

He had put his weak hand in hers. She was the happiest she had ever been.

She had debated if she might deplore politics. She hated politics now. But she had not dared to be frank. In five minutes more the bridges were burned. The man and the woman were apart again, each in anguish, and neither able to aid the other.

That Lockwin needed a trip to Washington could not be denied. That Esther feared to speak of Davy was becoming very noticeable.

Yet no sooner is the husband gone than the woman laments the folly of letting him leave her.

"Go, David," she had commanded, when she was eager with a desire to keep him or to go with him.

"Shall I accompany you?" she asked, smiling and trembling.

"I must return by a lake steamer, and must see Corkey alone," the husband had replied.

"A lake steamer!" In October! The affair alarmed the wife. She must not let that fear be known.

"Live down your enemies, David!" she had said, as she kissed him.

The words were insincere. They had a false sound, or an unconvincing sound. They had jarred on David Lockwin.

"I can outlive my friends easily enough, it seems," he thought, as he recited the lines of holy fields over whose acres walked those blessed feet. "I can outlive poor Davy. I ought to be happy in politics. It cost me enough!"

And the man had wept.

At home the wife had also wept. She was afraid she had erred. She had not been frank. She accused herself, she defended herself, she noted that it was not yet too late to bid David good-bye, or beg him not to go until he should be stronger. She called a cab from the livery. It was Sunday. There was a long delay. She entered the vehicle and directed that haste should be made to the Canal street depot. She approached the bridge. She feared she had made a mistake. David would think she was silly. It was entirely unlike the cold Esther Lockwin to be acting in this manner.

The bridge bell had rung. The bridge swung. She had looked at her watch. The train would leave at five o'clock. It was 4:50. Could not the driver go round by the Washington street tunnel?

"It is closed for repairs," the driver had said--a falsehood.

When Esther reached the station the train had left. She had returned to her home to wait in dire anxiety until her husband should reach Washington. She had written a long letter unfolding her heart to him.

"Come back to me, my darling," she said in that letter, "and see how happy we shall be! Let the politics go; that killed Davy and makes us all so unhappy. You were made for something nobler. Let us go to Europe once more. Let us seek out the places where you and I have met in the past."

It had seemed too cold.

"I love you, I love you. I shall die without you! Come home to me and save me! I love you, I love you!"

So she had written for a page, and was satisfied.

If she might telegraph it! No! only advertisers and divorced people did that. She must wait.

He would not reply. He would come.

The newspaper announces the arrival of the congressman-elect at the White House. He had left almost immediately for the West.

Then he will not get the letter!

He may arrive in Chicago this night, but how and where? A gale is rising. The wife is terrified with waiting and with love. If she had some little clue of his route homeward. She is a woman, and does not know how to proceed. She goes to her father.

"Oh, fudge, puss! You mustn't let him go again. Ha! ha! you're just like your mother. She pretty near had a fit when I went away the first time. He went a little soon for his health, but our leading men tell us he was needed in Washington. They wanted to see him and get some pledges from him. He'll be home by some lake boat in the morning. They get in about daylight, but it's like a needle in a haystack. Why, the last time I came from Mackinaw they landed me on a pile of soft coal--blest if they didn't! Stay all night, puss. Or go home, if you want to be there."

"Wind blows like sixty!" says the old Chicagoan, after Esther has gone.

The mother harkens. She goes to the window.

"Is that the lake?" she asks.

"Yes; it's too late in the year for David to be on any boat."

The wife of David Lockwin cannot sleep. She cannot even write another letter. "How happy are lovers who may write to each other!" she says. The gale rises and she waits. It is midnight and David is not home. Now, if he should arrive, he would probably keep his state-room until morning.

She awakes at daylight. She dons a wrapper and creeps to the front door. There are the morning papers. She scans every paragraph. Ah! here is David!

"NIAGARA FALLS, Oct. 16.--Congressman Lockwin left here to-day for Owen Sound, on Georgian Bay."

Georgian Bay! Where is that? She seeks the library. She finds a map. Georgian Bay! Perhaps David has some lumber interest there.

The paper is scanned again. Owen Sound, Owen Sound. She is reading the marine intelligence. Yes, here is Owen Sound.

"OWEN SOUND, Oct. 16.--Cleared--Propeller Africa, merchandise, for Thunder Bay. Gale blowing, with snow."

Thunder Bay! It is still more incomprehensible.

There is a cry in the streets, hoarse and loud--a triumphant proclamation:

"Extra! Full account o' de shipwreck o' de Africa! Full account o' de big shipwreck!"

A white arm reaches from a front door. A dime is paid for two papers. The door must be held open for light to read.

"Appalling calamity! Unparalleled feat of journalism!"

Hideous it seems to Esther Lockwin. She clings to the newell-post.

"Death, off Cape Croker, of Congressman Lockwin!" There may be two congressmen of that name.

There may be two! It is a dying hope. Can the eyes cling to the column long enough to read that paragraph?

"Congressman David Lockwin, of the First Illinois, died of his wounds about daylight in a yawl off Cape Croker. His body is lost with the yawl!"

There is a shriek that awakens the household. There is a white form lying in the hall near an open front door.

The servants rush up-stairs. There is a hubbub and a giving of orders.

The voices of the street come into the hall-way as winds into a cave:

"Extra! Extra! 'Palling calamity! Hundred and fifteen congressmen drowned! Extra! Extra!"

CHAPTER II

CORKEY'S FEAR OF A WIDOW'S GRIEF

Corkey and Noah are nearing the residence of Esther Lockwin.

"You bet your sweet life I don't want to see her nibs. It just breaks me all up to hear 'em take on, rip and snort and beller. Now, see here, you moke, when we git in you stand behind where I stand, and don't you begin to beller, too. If you do I'll shake you--I'll give you the clean lake breeze. If you walk up to the mark I'll get you into the league nine. You'll be their man to hoodoo the other ball clubs."

"Yessah!"

"You can't say nothing nohow, so all you've got to do is to see me face the music."

"Yessah!"

"There's the house now. They say he thought a powerful lot of her. Is there a saloon anywhere near?"

The twain look in vain for a beer sign, and resume their journey. They ascend the steps.

"There ain't no yawl up here! This is worse than the Africa. I believe I ain't so solid with myself as I was before she founder. Open that valve!"

Noah pulls the bell. There is no retreat now. Faces are peering from every window. Museum managers are on guard at the ends of the street. The story of Corkey and his mascot is on every tongue in Chicago.

Esther Lockwin opens the door. Corkey had hoped he might have a moment of grace. At best there is a hindrance in his voice. Now he is speechless.

"Step in," she says.

He rolls a huge quid of tobacco to the other side of his face, and then falls in a second panic. He introduces his first finger in his mouth as if it were a grappling iron and extracts the black tobacco. He trots down a step or two and heaves the tobacco into the street, resisting, at the last moment, a temptation to hit a mark. He returns up the steps, a buncy figure, in an enormously heavy, chinchilla, short coat, with blue pantaloons,

"Step in," says the voice pleasantly.

The action has begun as Corkey has not wished. He is both angry and contused. A spasm seizes his throat. He strangles. He coughs. He sneezes.

There is an opening of street doors on this alarming report, and Corkey pushes Noah before him into Esther Lockwin's parlors. The man's jet-black hair is wet with perspiration. The boy strives to stand behind, but Corkey feels more secure if the companion be held in front.

"Let me take your hats," she says calmly. She goes to the hall-tree with the hats. She shuts the door as she re-enters.

"Take those seats," she says.

But Corkey must pull himself together. This affair is compromising the great Corkey himself. He does not sit. He must begin.

"Me and this coon, madam, we suppose you want to hear how Mr. Lockwin cashed in--how he--"

"You, of course, are Mr. Corkey, my husband's political opponent?"

"That's what I am, or was, madam; and you ain't no sorrier for that than me."

"The boy and you escaped?"

"I guess so."

"Now, Mr. Corkey, tell me why Mr. Lockwin went to Owen Sound?"

"I can't do that, nohow; and the less said about it the better. It would let a big political cat out of the bag."

"Politics! Was that the reason?"

"That's what it *was*, your honor, madam."

"Can you tell me something about my poor husband?"

It is a figure that by its mere presence over-awes Corkey. Of all women, he admires the heroic mold. The garb is black beyond the man's conception of mourning. The face is chastened with days of mental torture. There is an intoxication of grief in the aspect of the woman that hangs the house in woe.

The mascot slips away from Corkey. The Special Survivor is drifting into an open sea of sentiment. He feels he shall drown.

Yet the beautiful face seems to take pity on him--seems to read the heart which beats under that burry, bristly form--seems to reach forth a hand.

"Exactly as we caught onto Lockwin," thinks the grateful Corkey.

"It comes mighty hard for me, Mrs. Lockwin, for I never expected to be his friend, nohow. He was an aristocratic duck, and I will say that I thought it was his bar'l that beat me."

The widow is striving so hard to understand that the man speaks more slowly.

"But I meet him at Owen Sound. Between you and me he was to fix me--see?"

The woman does not see.

"You mustn't say it to nobody, but I went to Georgian Bay to show him my slate."

"Is it politics?"

"That's what it is, and it's mighty dirty work. But I don't think your husband was no politician."

It is a compliment, and the woman so receives it.

"He was late, and the old tub was rubbing the pier away when the jackleg train arrive."

"The st-st-steamer was wa-wa-waiting," explained the boy.

"Ah! yes," nods the listener.

"You see, the coon can't talk," says Corkey, "but he's got any number of points. Well, we wet our whistles, and it's raw stuff they sell over there--but you don't know nothing about that. I introduce him to the outfit, and we go aboard. We eat, but he don't eat nothing. I notice that. We take the lounge in the fore-cabin. You know where that would be?"

A nod, and Corkey is well pleased.

"We sit there all the time. I want to tell you just how he did. He sit back, out straight, like this, his hands deep in his pockets, his legs crossed onto each other, his hat down, and his chin way down--see?"

Corkey is regaining his presence of mind.

The widow attests the correctness of Corkey's illustration.

"You bet your sweet life, nobody could get nothing out of him, then. What ailed him I don't know, and I ain't calling the turn, but nobody could get nothing out of him, I know that. I talk and talk. I slap him on the shoulder, and pull his leg and sing to him--"

"S-s-say it over," suggests the mascot.

The widow cannot understand.

"Why, don't you know, I was expecting him to fix me?"

"Is it politics?"

"That's what it *is*. So I guess I sing to him an hour--two hours--I can't tell--when he comes to. 'Mr. Corkey,' says that feller--says Mr. Lockwin--'you don't get nothing; You don't get the light at Ozaukee.'

"There ain't no lamp at Ozaukee,' says I.

"That's what the First High said,' says he. So you see I was whipsawed. I get nothing."

"P-p-politics!" interprets the mascot."

"Perhaps I understand," says the widow. Withal, she can see David Lockwin sitting his last hours on that lounge. How unhappy he was! Ah! could he only have read her letter!

"I don't just remember what I did after I found I wasn't fixed. It flabbergasted me, don't you forget it! I know I sneezed--and you must excuse me out there a while ago--and a big first mate he tried to put the hoodoo on me. No, that's not politics, but life is too short. We go out on deck."

"To make the raft?"

"Oh, that's all poppycock! Don't you believe no newspaper yarn. You just listen to me. I'm giving it to you straight. We go out on deck, and then I don't see Lockwin till we git the wood-choppers. How many of them wood-choppers, Noey?"

"Ei-ei-eight!"

"Mrs. Lockwin, them wood-choppers was no earthly use. It didn't pay to pull 'em in. I know it was me who hurt Lockwin with the oars. I didn't know for hours that he was aboard. He showed up at daybreak, you see. I tell you he was awfully hurt."

The face of Esther is again miserably expectant. There will be no mystery of politics in it now. "I wouldn't know him, either by face or voice, Mrs. Lockwin. He lie in the stern and Noey try to help him, but the sea was fearful. I couldn't hear him speak. Noey--the coon here--hear him speak."

"Are you a-dying, old man?" I asks.

"Noey says he answer that he was."

"Yessah, h-h-he done spoke that he w-w-was."

"Want to send some word home, old man?" says I, to cheer him up; for don't you see, I allowed we was all in the drink--just tumble to what an old tub she was--117 of us at the start, and we all croak but me and the moke--the coon, I should say."

The woman is afraid to interrupt.

Suddenly the eye of Corkey moistens. He has escaped a great error. "I didn't hear his last words, nohow."

"He said to p-p-put a st-st-stone over D-Davy's grave," says the lad

The man turns on the boy. The brows beetle. The mouth gives a squaring movement, significant beyond words.

The listener still waits.

"And then," says Corkey, "he whisper his good-bye to you. 'Tell her good-bye for me.' *That's* what he said, you moke!"

"Yessah."

Esther Lockwin grasps those short hands. She thanks the commodore for saving her husband, for living to tell her his last words. She can herself live to find her husband's body.

But it is far too much for the navigator.

His sobs resound through the room. The woman cannot weep. Her eyes are dry,

"I had such feelings as no decent man ever gits," he explains, "but I'll never forgive myself that it was me who steered him agin it."

"You have a better heart than most men, Mr. Corkey."

"I'd give seven hundred cases in bar gelt if he was in Congress to-day, Mrs. Lockwin."

"I know you would, you poor man. God bless you for it!"

Corkey is feeling in all his pockets.

"Take this handkerchief, Mr. Corkey, if it will help you. God bless you always! God bless you always! Come and see me often. I shall never get tired of hearing how my husband died. He must have been brave to cling to the boat."

"You bet he *was*, and if ever you need money, you come to me, for I'm the boy that's got it in the yellow!"

Corkey bows himself down the steps. There two managers of museums implore a few moments' conversation. They tender their cards.

"Naw!" says Corkey, "we don't want no museum."

The managers persist.

"No use o' your chinning us! Go on, now!"

The heroes escape from their persecutors. The mind of Corkey reverts to the parlors of Esther Lockwin.

"Great Caesar!" he exclaims.

"Yessah!"

"Steer me to a bar!"

A few moments later Corkey leans sidewise against a whisky counter, his left foot on the iron rail, his hand on the glass. A mouthful of tobacco is gnawed from the biggest and blackest of plugs. The mascot stands by the stove.

The bartender is proud to serve the only Corkey, the most famous man on the whole "Levee." While the bartender burns incense, the square mouth grows scornful, laconic, boastful. Corkey is himself again. The barkeeper goes to the oil-room for a small bottle.

The handsome eyes of the navigator rest on his protege. The head sets up a vibration something like the movement of a rattlesnake before it strikes. The little tongue plays about the black tobacco. The speech comes forth.

"It's a great act I play on the widow about the 'last words'. He didn't say nothing of the kind. I come near putting my foot right into it."

"Yessah!"

Corkey's right hand is in his side pocket. He ruminates. He feels an unfamiliar thing in his pocket. He draws out a dainty white-and-black handkerchief. There is a painful reaction in his mind.

"I'll burn that female wipe right now!" he says.

"Yessah."

The stove is for soft coal and stands open. Corkey advances to toss the handkerchief in the fire.

His eyes meet the crooked and quizzical orbs of the mascot.

"You mourning-colored moke!"

There is a huge threat in the deliverance.

The hook-like finger tears the black tobacco out of the choking mouth. The great quid is thrown in the fire. The proposed motion is made, and the handkerchief is not burned. Down it goes in the hip pocket beside Corkey's revolver, out of harm's way.

Corkey started to throw something in the fire, and has kept to his purpose.

"Yessah!" says the mascot, sagaciously.

"Bet your black life!" vows Corkey, as if great things hung by it.

He looks with renewed affection on his protege. "I git you into the league nine, sure, Noey!"

"Yessah!"

It is plain that the mascot will preserve an admirable reticence.

CHAPTER III

THE CENOTAPH

"TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS REWARD.--This sum of money will be paid for the recovery of the body of the Hon. David Lockwin, lost in Georgian Bay the morning of Oct. 17. When last seen the body was afloat in the yawl of the propeller Africa, off Cape Croker. For full particulars and suggestions, address H. M. H. Wandrell, Chicago, Ill."

This advertisement may be seen everywhere. It increases the public excitement attending the death of the people's idol. There is a ferment of the whole body politic.

Of all the popular pastors who turn the catastrophe to their account the famous preacher at Esther Lockwin's church makes the most of it. To a vast gathering of the devout and the curious he dwells upon the uncertainties of life. Here, indeed, was a Chicagoan who but yesterday was almost certain to be President of the United States.

"Now his beloved body, my dear brethren and fellow-citizens, lies buried in the sands of an unfrequented sea."

There is suppressed emotion.

"And as for man," chants the harmonious choir, "his days are as grass."

"As a flower of the field," sounds the bass.

"So he flourisheth," answers the soft alto.

"For the wind passeth over it," sings the tenor.

"And it is gone," proclaims the treble.

"And the place thereof shall know it no more," breathes the full choir, preparing to shout that the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him.

It is found that Lockwin had hosts of friends. There is so much inquiry on account of that strange journey to Owen Sound that the political boss is grievously disturbed.

Corkey is not blind to this general uneasiness. He reads the posters and the advertisements. He whistles. It is a sum of money worthy of deep consideration.

"You offered to l-le-end to her," observes the mascot.

"Well, if she had needed the stuff she'd a been after it soon enough, wouldn't she? I don't offer it to everybody. But that ain't the point. I'm going after that roll-ten thousand dollars! You want to come? If I win, you git \$500. I reckon that's enough for a kid."

It is a project which is well conceived, for Corkey may easily arrange for a salary from his great newspaper. To find Lockwin's body would be a clever feat of journalism, inasmuch as the search has been abandoned by the other papers.

A delegation of dock-frequenters waits on Corkey to demand that he shall stand for Congress in the second special election, made necessary by the death of Lockwin.

"Gentlemen, I'm off on business. I beg to de--de--re--re--drop out! Please excuse me, and take something."

The touching committees cannot touch Corkey.

"The plant has been sprung," they comment, "His barrel is empty."

Corkey had once been rich when he did not know the value of wealth. He had been reduced to poverty. On becoming a reporter, he had laboriously saved \$1,000 in gold coins. In a few weeks \$300 of this store had been dissipated.

"And all the good work didn't cost nothing, either," thinks Corkey.

Would it not be wise now to keep the \$700 that remain? When the vision of a contest, with Emery Storrs as advocate, had crossed poor Corkey's mind on the Africa, the Contestant could see that his gold was to be lost. He could not retreat without disgrace. Now he need not advance.

"You bet I *won't!*" thinks Corkey, as he expresses his regrets that enforced absence from Chicago will prevent his candidacy.

"You'd be elected!" chime the touching committees.

"You bet I *would*," says Corkey.

"Corkey is too smart," say the touching committees. "Wait till he gets into politics from the inside. Won't he wolf the candidates!"

Corkey is at last on the shores of Georgian Bay. The weather soon interferes with the search. But there are no signs of either body or yawl.

The wreck of the Africa, followed by daily conventional catastrophes, soon fades from public recollection. The will of David Lockwin is brought into court. The estate is surprisingly small.

It had been supposed that Lockwin was worth half a million. Wise men said Lockwin was probably good for \$200,000. The probate shows that barely \$75,000 have been left to the wife, and the estate thus bequeathed is in equities on mortgaged property. Mills that had always been clear of incumbrances are found to have been used for purposes of money-raising at the time of the election, or shortly thereafter.

The public conclusion is quick and unfavorable.

Lockwin ruined himself in carrying the primaries! The opposition papers, while professing the deepest pity for the dead, dip deep into the scandals of the election. "It is well the briber is out of the reach of further temptation," say they.

This tide of opprobrium would go higher but for the brave efforts of a single woman. She visits the political boss.

"You killed my husband!" she says deliberately.

The leader protests.

"Now you let these hyenas bark every day at his grave. And he has no grave!"

The woman grows white. The leader expostulates, The woman regains her anger.

"He has no grave, and yet your hyenas are barking, and barking. Do you think I do not read it? Do you think I intend to endure it?"

The leader makes his peace.

As a result there is a return to the question in the party press. Long eulogies of Lockwin appear. There is a movement for a monument. The memory of the dead man's oratory stirs the community. Several prominent citizens subscribe--when they learn that their subscriptions, however meager, will be made noteworthy from a source where money is not highly valued. The poor on every side touch the widow's heart with their sincere and generous offerings.

The philosophic discuss the character of Esther Lockwin.

"Her troubles have brought her out. These cold women are slow to strike fire, but I admire them," says the first philosopher.

"Don't you think our American widows make too much ado?" asks the second philosopher.

"They at least do not ascend the burning pyre of their dead husbands."

"To be sure. That's so. I don't know but I like Esther Lockwin the better. I never knew a man to lose so much as Lockwin did by dying."

"She declares his death was due to the little boy's death."

"Odd thing, wasn't it?"

"Yes, but he was a beautiful child. What was his name, now?"

"It was Lockwin's name--let me see--David."

"Oh, yes, Davy, they called him."

"Well, she has erected the prettiest sarcophagus in the whole cemetery for Davy. I tell you Esther Lockwin is a magnificent woman."

"She would have more critics, though, if she were not Wandrell's only daughter."

"Wandrell's only daughter! You don't tell me so! Ah, yes, yes! That accounts for it."

So, while the philosophers account for it, Esther Lockwin goes on with the black business of life. Every week she waits impatiently for news from Corkey. Every week he gives notice that he has found nothing.

"When spring comes, I'll find that yawl," he promises. He knows he can do that much with time.

How often has Esther Lockwin thrown herself on a couch, weeping and moaning as if her body would not hold her rebellious heart--as when Corkey left her in those black and earliest days of the great tempest of woe!

"It is marvelous that it is held to be dishonorable to die, and honorable to live," she cries.

"Oh, David, David, come back! come back! so noble, so good, so great! You who loved little Davy so! You who

kissed his blessed little feet! Oh, my own! my husband!"

A fond old mother, knocking on the door, comes always in time to stop these brain-destroying paroxysms.

"And to think, mother, that they shall asperse his name! The people's idol! Faugh! The people! Oh, mother, mother!"

The mother deplores these months of persistent brooding. It is wrong.

"So they always say, who have not suffered, mother. How fortunate you are."

But the daughter must recollect that to-day is the dedication. A band has marched past. Kind friends have carried the subscription to undoubted success. Emery Storrs will deliver the oration. The papers are full of the programme, the line of march, the panegyric. There are many delicate references to the faithful widow, who has devoted her husband's estate and as much more to the erection of a vast fire-proof annex at a leading hospital.

The public ear is well pleased. The names of the men who have led in the memorial of to-day are rolled on everybody's tongue.

There appears at the scene of dedication a handsome woman. Her smile, though wofully sad, is sweet and sympathetic. She humbly and graciously thanks all the prominent citizens, who receive her assurances as so much accustomed tribute. The trowel rings. The soprano sings. The orator is at his best. Band after band takes up its air. The march begins again. Chicago is gratified. The great day ends with a banquet to the prominent citizens by the political leader.

The slander that republics and communities are ungrateful is hurled in the faces of the base caitiffs who have given it currency.

Behind all the congratulations of conventionality--in the unprinted, unreported, unconventional world--the devotion of Esther Lockwin is universally remarked upon.

Learned editors, noting this phase of the matter, discuss the mausoleums of Asia erected by loving relicts and score a point in journalism.

"The widow of the late Hon. David Lockwin, M. C., will soon sail for Europe," says the society paper.

But she will do no such thing. She will spend her nights and mornings lamenting her widowhood. She will be present every day to see that the work goes forward on the monument.

"I might die," she says, moodily.

There will be no cessation of labor at the ascending column. It is not in the order of things here that a committee should go to Springfield to urge an unwilling public conclusion of a grateful private beginning. Money pours like water. The memorial rises. It becomes a city lion. It is worth going to see.

Society waits with becoming patience. "Inasmuch as the prominent citizens saw fit to render Esther's sorrow conspicuous," says Mrs. Grundy, "it is perfectly decent that she should remain in complete retirement."

Nevertheless notice is secretly served on the entire matrimonial world.

Esther Lockwin will soon be worth not a penny less than five million dollars!

CHAPTER IV

A KNOLLING BELL

It seems to Esther Lockwin that her night of sorrow grows heavier. The books open to her a new world of emotions. Ere her bridal veil was dyed black she had read of life and creation as inexpressibly joyous. The lesson was always that she should look upon the glories of nature and give thanks.

Now the title of each chapter is "Sorrow." The omniscient Shakespeare preaches of sorrow. The tender and beautiful Richter teaches of the nightingale. Tennyson, Longfellow, Carlyle, Beecher, Bovee, the great ancient stoics, the Bible itself, becomes a discourse on that tragic phenomenon of the soul, where peace goes out, where longing takes the place of action, where the will sets itself against the universe.

"Sorrow," she reads, "like a heavy hanging bell, once set on ringing, with his own weight goes."

"How true! How true!" she weeps. She turns to "Hamlet." She reads that drama of sorrow. She accepts that eulogium of the dead as something worthy of her lost husband.

She gloomily reviews the mistakes of her earlier life. She had been restricted in nature to the attentions of a few men. She had found her lord and master. The sublime selfishness of human pride had driven her on the rocks of destruction. This she can now charge to herself. Had she sufficiently valued David Lockwin; had she counseled him to live for himself, to study those inclinations which she secretly understood and never encouraged--had she begged him to turn student rather than to court politics and popularity--then she might yet have had him with her.

The heavy bell of sorrow clangs loudly upon this article of her pride, ambition and lack of address to the true interests of her dead lord.

"Davy would not have died if politics had not been in the way. And then that dreadful fever! That month of vigil! How strangely he spoke in his delirium! How lonesome he was! How he begged for a companion to share his grief! Oh, David! David! David! Come back! Come back! Let me lay my head on your true heart and tell you how I love you. Let me tell you how I honor you above all men! You who had so much love for a foundling--oh, God bless you! Keep you in heaven for me! Forgive the hard heart of a foolish woman whose love was so slow! Come, holy spirit, heavenly dove,

with all thy quickening power! Our Father, which art in heaven, which art in heaven!"

The knolling of the heavy bell grows softer. The paroxysm passes. Religion, the early refuge of the sex--the early refuge, too, of the higher types of the masculine sex--this solace has lit the taper of hope, the taper of hope that emits the brighter ray.

Esther Lockwin will meet her lord again. She will dwell with him where the clouds of pride and ambition do not obscure the path of duty.

She who a half hour ago could not live on must now live at all cost. She has other labors. She must visit the portrait painter's to-day. She would that the gifted orator might be portrayed as standing before the immense audiences which used to greet his voice, but it cannot be done. She must be contented with the posthumous portraits which forever gratify and disturb the lovers of the dead.

It is a day's labor done. The portrait will be praised on all hands, but it has not come without previous failures and despairs.

To return to the house out of which the light has gone--how Esther Lockwin dreads that nightly torment! Shall she linger at the parental home? Is it not the bitterer to feel that here the selfish life grew to the full? Is it not worse than sorrow to discover in this abode the same influences of estrangement? What is David Lockwin in the old home?

A dead man, to be forgotten as soon as possible!

No! no! Better to enter the door where the white arm reached out for the message of blackness. Better to go up and down the stairs searching for David, listening for Davy's organ--better to fling one's self on the couch, abandoning all to the tempest of regret and disappointment; to cry out to David; to apostrophize the unseen; to fall into the hideous abyss of hopelessness; to see once again the north star of religion; to call upon God for help; to doze; to awaken to the abominations of the reality; to remember the escape from perdition; to hasten to the duties of the day!

So goes the night. So comes the morning. She who would not live the evening before is terrified now for fear of death ere her last great labor shall be done.

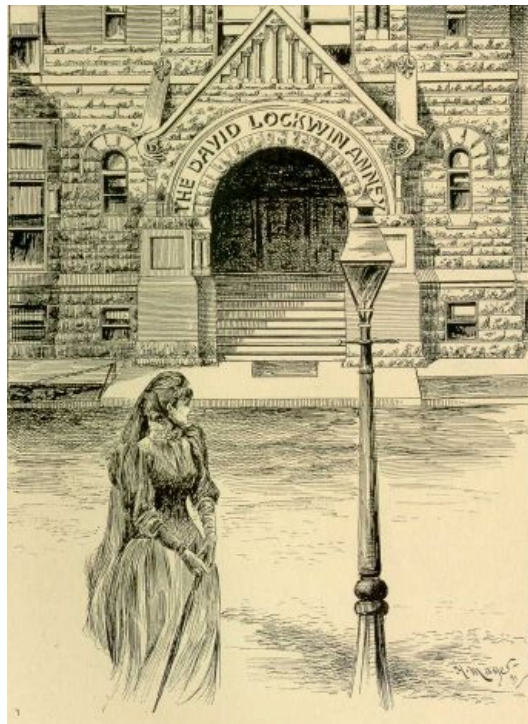
She calls her carriage. She rides but a few squares. Every block in that noble structure represents a pang in her heart. Some of those great stones below must have been heavier than these sobs she now feels. "Oh, David! David! Every iron beam; every copestone, every coigne of vantage, every oriel window in this honorable edifice is for you! Every element has cost an agony in her who weeps for you."

The widow gazes far aloft. It has been promised for this date, and it is done. Something of the old look of pride comes to the calm and beautiful face which the architect and the workmen have always seen.

The vari-colored slate shingles are going on the roof.

Her eye returns in satisfaction to the glittering black granite letters over the portal. She reads:

THE DAVID LOCKWIN ANNEX



[Illustration: Her eye returns in satisfaction to the glittering black granite letters over the portal.]

"A magnificent hospital," says an approving press, "the very dream of an intelligent philanthropy."

BOOK III

ROBERT CHALMERS

CHAPTER I

A DIFFICULT PROBLEM

David Lockwin is not dead.

Look into his heart and see what was there while he sat beside Corkey on the lounge in the forecabin of the Africa.

The time has come for momentous action. It is settled that at the other end of this journey David Lockwin shall cease to exist. Now, how to do it.

He may commit suicide.

He may disappear.

In furtherance of the latter plan there awaits the draft of Robert Chalmers, who bears letters from David Lockwin, the sum of \$75,000. This deposit is in the Coal and Oil Trust Company's institution at New York. The amount is half of Lockwin's estate. Esther shall have the rest.

Serious matters are these, for a man to consider, who sits stretched out on a seat, one ankle over the other, his hands deep in pocket, his chin far down on his chest; and Corkey appealing in his dumb, yet eloquent way, for a share of the spoils of office.

This life of David Lockwin, the people's idol, is an unendurable fiasco.

David Lockwin is disconsolate. Davy is no more.

David Lockwin is sick and weak. Whether he be sane or daft, he scarcely knows, and he cares not at all.

He recoils from politics.

He loathes the reputation of a rich man with ambition--a rich man with a barrel.

He does not believe himself to be a true orator.

He is urged forward by unknown interests over which he has no control. He is morally and publicly responsible for the turpitude of the party leaders and the party hacks.

He is married to a cold and unsympathetic woman. Did he not wed her as a part of the political bargain?

Is life sweet? No. Then let Davy's path be followed. Now, therefore, let this affair of suicide be discussed.

Can David Lockwin, the people's idol, commit suicide? Does he desire to pay the full earthly penalty of that act? He is of first-class family. There has never been a suicide in the records.

His self-slaughter will be the first scandal in his strain.

He is happily married, so far as this world knows. If he be bored with the presence of Esther he alone possesses that secret. She does not. He is the husband of a lady to whom there will some day come an added fortune which will make her the richest woman in the West.

He is the reliance of the party. He is the one orator who remains unanswered in joint debate. Quackery as it is, no opponent dares to cross the path of David Lockwin. It is a common saying that to give an opponent a date with Lockwin is to foretell the serious illness of the opponent. It is a sham--this oratory--but it befools the city.

Can the fashionable church to which Esther belongs sustain the shock of Lockwin's suicide? Behold the funeral of such a wight, once the particular credit of the congregation, now the particular disgrace!

That forthcoming contest with Corkey!

Is it not uncomfortable? What is it Corkey is saying? Oh! yes, Corkey, to be sure! "Mr. Corkey, I should have told you they will do nothing. You must contest."

Here, therefore, are two men who are plunged into the deepest seethings of mental action. The one has missed greatness by the distance of a mere hand's grasp; the other is half crazed to find himself so fatally conspicuous in society.

Let the rich, respectable, beloved, ambitious and eloquent Lockwin hurry back to that problem: What to do when he shall arrive in Chicago?

Can the community be deceived? Let us see how it fared with Lockwin's friend Orthwaite, who found life to be insupportable. The respectability which so becloys Lockwin had been secretly lost by Orthwaite.

His shame would soon be exposed. Orthwaite returned to his home on the last suburban train. He purposely appeared gay before his train-acquaintances. He left the train in high spirits. He pursued a lonely path toward home. He reached a stream. He set to work making many marks of a desperate struggle. He placed a revolver at his heart and fired. Then with unusual fortitude he threw the weapon in the stream.

But the ruse was ineffectual. The keen eyes of the detectives and the keener ear of scandal had the whole truth in a week's time. It was suicide, said the press--bald, cowardly, pitiful.

How difficult! How difficult! Now let us set at that device of mysterious disappearance. How far is that fair to a young wife? Why should she wait and search and hope, although Esther would not disturb herself much! She is too cold for that.

How difficult! How difficult! But why do the eyes of Corkey bulge with excitement? Oh, yes, the ship is foundering because Corkey is in the way of this great business. Corkey should be flung in the sea and well rid of him. As the ship is foundering we will go on deck, but when a man is so conspicuous as David Lockwin, how can he commit suicide--how can he disappear?

There are words, indistinctly heard. It is Corkey crying to Lockwin to climb up the steps to the hurricane deck. Indeed it is a clever riddance of that uncomfortable man. Ouf! that brutal sneeze, that jargon, that tobacco, that quaking of head and hesitancy of expression! It distracts one's thoughts from an insoluble problem; How to shuffle off this coil--not of life, but of respectability, conspicuity, environment!

But what is this? This is not a wave. If David Lockwin hold longer to this stanchion, he will go to the bottom of the sea. This must be what excited Corkey. Something has happened.

The red fire of drowning sets up its conflagration.

Lockwin has time for one regret. His estate has lost \$75,000. He enters the holocaust and passes into nothingness, feeling heavy blows.

He awakes to find himself still with Corkey. His brain is dizzy and he relapses into lethargy. In the faint light of the dawn, totally benumbed by the night's exposure, he is again passing into nothingness.

Corkey questions the sinking man, and Lockwin tries to tell of the money--the deposit of \$75,000 to the order of a fictitious person. He cannot do it.

"Put a stone over Davy's grave," he says, and goes into a region which seems still more cold, more desolate, more terrible.

There is a knocking, knocking, knocking. He hears it long before he replies to it. Let them knock! Let a man sleep a little longer! It is probably the chambermaid at the hotel in Washington.

But it is a persistent chambermaid. Ah, now the bed is lifted up and down. This must be seen to. We will open our eyes.

What a world of light and shimmer! The couch is the yawl of the Africa. The persistent chambermaid is the Georgian Bay.

The gale has subsided. The sun shines. Blackbirds are singing. The yawl is dancing on the waves near the shore.

David Lockwin sits up. How warm and pleasant to be alive!

Alive! Oh, yes! Chicago! The Africa! Is it not better?

Has he any face left? His nose seems flat. He must be desperately wounded. His eyes grow dim. He must be dying again.

He sleeps and is once more gently awakened by the sea--so fond now, so terrible last night.

He sits upright in the yawl, wet, sore, and yet whole in limb. He gathers his scattered faculties. He finds a handkerchief and ties up his face. He muses.

"I am the sole survivor! I, Robert Chalmers, of New York City, am the sole survivor, and nobody shall know even that. Corkey--let me see--Corkey and a boy--they must be at the bottom of Georgian Bay!"

He muses again. His face hurts him once more. He sees a cabin at a distance. He finds he has money in plenty. To heal his wounds will be easy. He must be greatly changed if his feelings may be credited. Two of his teeth are broken, and harass his curious tongue.

What plotter, cunning in exploits, could so well plan an honorable discharge from the bitterness of life in Chicago?

"Sing on, you birds! Fly off to Cuba! I am as free!"

The man is startled by his own voice. It sounds as if some one else were talking. Yet this surprise only increases his joy.

"Free! Free! Free!" The word has a complete charm. It is like the shimmer of the waters. All this expanse of hammered silver is free!

"I am as free!" exclaims Robert Chalmers, of New York City.

And again starting at the sound of his own voice, he seeks the cabin of a hospitable trapper, where his wounds healing without surgical attention, may disguise him all the better.

CHAPTER II

A COMPLETE DISGUISE

David Lockwin has undertaken that Robert Chalmers shall have no trouble. It was David Lockwin, in theory, who suffered all the ills of life. In this theory David Lockwin has seriously erred. Robert Chalmers must bear burdens.

The first burden is a broken nose and a facial appearance strangely inferior to the look of David Lockwin, the orator. Robert Chalmers need not disguise himself. He will never be identified. That broken nose is a distortion that no

detective could fathom. Those scarlet fimbriations under the skin proclaim the toper. Those missing teeth complete a picture which men do not admire.

David Lockwin was courted. Robert Chalmers is shunned. It wounds a personal vanity that in David Lockwin's philosophy had not existed. It is the ideal of disguises, but it does not make Robert Chambers happy.

Why, too, should Robert Chalmers desire so many appurtenances of life that were in David Lockwin's quarters? If we find Chalmers housed in comfortable apartments at Gramercy Square, is it not inconsistent that he should gradually supply himself with cough medicine, turpentine, alcohol, ammonia, niter, mentholine, camphor spirits, cholagogue, cholera mixture, whisky, oil, acid, salves and all the aids to health and cleanliness by which David Lockwin flourished? How slight an annoyance is the lack of that old-time prescription of Dr. Tarpion, which alone will relieve the melancholia!

For Robert Chalmers finds that the weather still gives him a turn. If the lost prescription will alone lift the oppression, is not the annoyance considerable, providing Dr. Tarpion cannot be seen?

Robert Chalmers had planned a life at Florence. But now he is a man without a body. It is enough. He will not also be a man without a country. He will stay in New York.

In fact, a fortune of \$75,000 is not so much! It will be well to husband it. The books must be bought. Day after day the search must go forward for copies like those in Chicago. Josephus! What other copy will satisfy Robert Chalmers? Here is a handsome Josephus--as fine as the one in Chicago. But did Davy's head ever lie on it?

Well, bear up then, Robert Chalmers. You are free at least. You need not lie and cheat at elections. You need not live with a woman whose heart is as cold as ice and whose pride is like the pride of an Egyptian Pharaoh. You sunk that yawl well in the sands of Georgian Bay! You filled it with stones!

You thought you were the sole survivor, yet how admirably the rescue of Corkey and the boy abetted your escape, Robert Chalmers. They saw David Lockwin die. They took his dying wishes. Fortunate that he could not mention the deposit at New York!

But why is David Lockwin so dear? Why not forget him?

Did he play a part that credits him? Why stop at Washington and take the mail that awaited in that long-advertised list? Truly, Robert Chalmers was strong enough to lay those letters aside without reading. That, at least, was prudent.

Let us read these newspaper accounts. There is intense excitement at Chicago. Lockwin is libeled. The election bribes are exposed. David Lockwin had spent nearly \$200,000 to go to Congress, it is stated.

"Infamous!" cries Robert Chalmers, and vows he is glad he is out of a world so base. He puts forth for books.

Search as he may, he cannot find the editions that have grown dear to David Lockwin. He cannot abstain from more purchases of Chicago papers. They are familiar--like the books in David Lockwin's library at Chicago.

This is a dreary life, without a friend. He dares not to seek acquaintances. Not a soul, not even a restaurant keeper, has ventured to be familiar. The man with a broken nose and missing teeth--the man with a grotesque voice--is scarcely desired as a customer at select places on the avenues and Broadway. Let him find better accommodations among the Frenchmen and Italians on Sixth avenue.

"Probably," they say, "he has fallen in a duel."

But there are fits of melancholia. Return, Robert Chalmers, to your handsome apartments. Draw down your folding-bed, turn on the heat, study those Chicago papers. Live once again! What is this? A reaction at Chicago. Why, here is a page of panegyric. Here is a large portrait of the late Hon. David Lockwin, lost in Georgian Bay!

The man whisks off his bed, and runs it up to the wall, whereupon he may confront a handsome mirror. He compares the two faces.

"A change. A change, indeed!" he exclaims sadly. It is not alone in the features. The new man is growing meager. He is an inconsequential person. He is a character to be kept waiting in an ante-room while strutting personages walk into the desired presence.

He pulls the bed down. He cannot lie on it now. He takes a chair and greedily reads the apotheosis of David Lockwin.

As he reads he is seized with a surprising feeling. In all this eulogium he sees the hand of Esther Lockwin. Without her aid this great biography could not have been collated.

The sweat stands on his brow. He studies the type, to learn those confessions that the publishers make, one to another, but not to the world.

"It is paid for," he groans. He is wounded and unhappy.

"It is her cursed pride," he says. "I'm glad I'm out of it all."

He sits, week after week, hands deep in pockets, his legs stretched out, one ankle over the other, his chin far down on his chest.

"Funny man in the east parlor!" says the chambermaid.

"Isn't he ugly!" says her fellow-chambermaid.

But after this long discontent, Robert Chalmers finds that Chicago mourns for him. He is flattered. "I earned it!" he cries, and goes in search of the books that once eased him--the identical copies.

The movement for a cenotaph makes him smile. On the whole, he is glad men are so sentimental about monuments. He is glad, however, that no monument will be erected.

It is undoubtedly embarrassing.

He is thinking too much of Chicago. He must begin this second life on a new principle. He must forget David Lockwin. It grows apparent to the man that his brain will not bear the load which now rests upon it. He must rather dwell upon the miseries that he has escaped. He must canvass the good fortune of a single and irresponsible citizen, Robert Chalmers, who has no less than \$74,500 in bank. He must put his mind on business.

No!

One reason for quitting the old life was the desire to pass a studious life.

Well, then, he must wait patiently for that period when his mind will be quiet. A certain thought at last reanimates him.

Would it not be well to act as a clerk until the weariness of servitude should make freedom pleasing? This is both philosophical and thrifty.

Robert Chalmers therefore advertises for a situation as book-keeper. This occupation will support him in his determination to neglect the Chicago newspapers.

"Greatest man I ever saw to sit stretched out, his hands deep in his pockets, his feet crossed, his head far down on his shirt bosom," says the chambermaid at Gramercy Square. "He must be an inventor. He thinks, and thinks, and thinks. Dear sakes, but he is homely."

An advertisement secures to Robert Chalmers a book-keeper's place in a dry-goods agency on Walker street. The move is a wise one. The labor occupies his time, improves his spirits and emancipates him from the unpleasant conclusions that were forcing themselves on him. He is not liked by the other clerks because he is not social, but he is able to consider, once more, the humiliations which he escaped by avoiding a contested election, and by a successful evasion of a wedding compact which was a part of his foolish political ambition.

Several months pass away. If Chalmers is to be anything better than a book-keeper at nine hours' work each day he must move, but he who so willingly took the great step is now afraid to resign his book-keepership. He dreads life away from his tall desk. This problem is engaging his daily attention. This afternoon the clerks are arguing about Chicago. He cannot avoid hearing. He is the only party not engaged in the debate. They desire his arbitration. Does Clark street run both north and south of the river in Chicago? Here, for instance, is the route of a procession. Is it not clear that Clark street must run north if the procession shall follow this route?

They lay a Chicago Sunday paper on his desk. The portrait of David Lockwin confronts Robert Chalmers. There is a page of matter concerning the dedication of a monument on the following Saturday.

The arbiter stammers so wretchedly that the losing side withdraw their offer of arbitration.

"Chalmers doesn't know," they declare, and take away the paper while Chalmers strives to read to the last syllable.

He is sick. He cannot conclude his day's work. His evident distress secures a leave for the day.

"Get somebody in my place if I am not here tomorrow," he says, thoughtfully, for they have been his only friends, little as they suspect it. "Chicago in mourning for David Lockwin!" he cries in astonishment, as he purchases great files of old Chicago papers. "Chicago dedicating a monument to David Lockwin! It is beyond conception! And so soon! The monument of Douglas waited for twenty years."

The air and the ride revive the man. He even enters a restaurant and tries to eat a *table d'hote* dinner with a bottle of Jersey wine, all for 50 cents. To do a perfunctory act seems to resuscitate him. He takes up his heavy load of newspapers and finds a boy to carry them. He remembers that he is a book-keeper on a small salary, and discharges the boy at half-way.

He reaches his apartments and prepares for the long perusal of his files of Chicago news. Each item seems to feed his self-love. He is not Robert Chalmers. He is David Lockwin.

Hour by hour the reader goes on. Paper after paper falls aside, to be followed by the succeeding issue. At last the tale is complete. David Lockwin, dead, is the idol of the day at Chicago.

The man stretches his legs, puts one ankle over the other, sinks his hands deep in his pockets, a newspaper entering with the left arm, and lowers his head far down on his chest. The clock strikes and recalls him to action.

"I can reach Chicago in time for that dedication," he says. "I guess, after all, that I am David Lockwin's chief mourner."

Ah, yes! Why has not this second life brought more joy? The man ponders and questions himself.

"I am Davy's chief mourner, too!" he says, and sobs. "By heaven, it is Davy that has made me unhappy! I thought it was Chicago. I thought it was politics. I thought it was Esther. It must have been Davy!"

"If it were Davy," he says, an hour later, "I have made a mistake."

Down he looks into his heart, whither he has not dared to search before. He is homesick. Nobody loves Robert Chalmers. Nobody respects Robert Chalmers. David Lockwin dead is great and good. How about David Lockwin living?

His hands go deeper in his pockets at this. The motion rustles the newspaper. He strives to shake free of the sheet. His eye rests on the railway timetables.

He falls into profound meditation again. He considers himself miserable. He is, in fact, happy, if absence of dreadful pain and turmoil be a human blessing. At last his eye lights up, and the heavy face grows cheerful.

"I will go to Chicago!" he says.

CHAPTER III

BEFORE THE TELEGRAPH OFFICE

Robert Chalmers is in Chicago this morning of the dedication, and has slept well. He tossed in his bed at New York. He snores at the Western inn.

He asks himself why this is so, and his logic tells him that nature hopes to re-establish him as David Lockwin. There is a programme in such a course. At New York there was neither chart nor compass. It was like the Africa in mid-sea, foundering.

Now Robert Chalmers is nearing land. And the land is David Lockwin. The welcoming shore is the old life of respectability. Banish the difficulties! They will evaporate. Listen to the bands, and the marching of troops!

He goes to the window. The intent of these ceremonies smites him and he falls on the bed. But nature restores him. Bad as it is, here is Chicago. David Lockwin is not dead. That is certain. He is not pursued by the law, for another congressman has been chosen. David Lockwin has tried to kill himself, but he has not committed murder.

Is it not bravado to return and court discovery? But is not Robert Chalmers in the mood to be discovered? "What disguise is so real as mine?" he asks, as friend after friend passes him by.

True, he wears a heavy watch-chain and a fashionable collar. His garb was once that of a professional man. Now his face is entirely altered. Gouts of carmine are spotted over his cheeks; wounds are visible on his forehead. His nose is crooked and his teeth are misshapen. His voice is husky.

He enters a street-car for the north. It startles him somewhat to have Corkey take a seat beside him.

"Will this car take me to the dedication?" Chalmers makes bold to ask the conductor.

"That's what it will!" answered Corkey. "Going there? I'm going up myself. I reckon it will be a big thing. Takes a big thing to git me out of bed this time of day. I'm a great friend of Mrs. Lockwin's!"

"You are?"

"That's what I am. I was on the old tub when she go down. May be you've heard of me. My name is Corkey."

"Clad to meet you. My name is Chalmers. I have read the account."

"Yes, I've got tired of telling it. But it's a singular thing, about Lockwin's yawl. Next week I go out again. I'll find that boat, you hear me? I'll find it. I tell the dame that, the other day."

"Mrs. Lockwin?"

"I tell her the other day that I find the yawl. I'll never forget that boat. Lord! how unsteady she was! I'm sorry for the dame. Women don't generally feel so bad as she does. It's a great act, this monument--all her--every bit! These prominent citizens--say, they make me weary! You've heard about the hospital--the memorial hospital. She blow hundred and fifty thousand straight cases against that hospital--the David Lockwin Annex. Oh, it's a cooler. It's all iron and stone and terra cotta. She's spent a fortune already. She doesn't cry much--none, I reckon. But no one can bluff her out."

Robert Chalmers is pleased in a thousand ways. He is so glad that he scarcely notes the facts about the annex. Since he was cast away no other person has talked freely with him. The open Western manner rejoices his very blood.

"Lockwin was a pretty fair-sized man, like you. I guess you remind me of him a trifle. They was a fine pair. I never was stuck on him, for I was in politics against him; but somehow or other I've hearn the dame praise him so much, and he die in the yawl, and so on, until I feel like a brother to him. Just cut across with me," as they leave the car. "Want a seat with the reporters? Oh, that will be all right out here. Say you're from the outside--where is it? Eau Claire? Say Eau Claire. Here is some copy paper. Sit side of me. Screw your nut out of my place, young feller," to a mere sight-seer. "Bet your life. Don't take that seat neither! Go on, now!"

David Lockwin is to report the dedication of his own monument. He trembles and grows thankful that Corkey has ceased to talk. The audience gathers slowly. David Lockwin wonders it he be a madman thus to expose himself. A memorial hospital! Did not Corkey speak of that? The David Lockwin Annex!

This is awful! Lockwin has not read a word of it. Ay, but the apartments are still at Gramercy Square. Why did he come? What fate led him away? What devil has lured him back? Hold! Hold! There is Esther! Lift her veil! Give her air! Esther, the beautiful!

The reporter for the Eau Claire paper groans with the people. His heart falls to the bottom of the sea. She loves him! God bless her! She loves him! Why did he not believe it at home? God bless her! Is she not noble?

"She's a great dame," Corkey whispers loudly. "Special friend of mine. You bet your sweet life I'd do anything for her. I'll find that yawl, too!"

"The late honorable David Lockwin," begins the pastor of the fashionable church.

"The late honorable David Lockwin," write the reporters.

"The late honorable David Lockwin," writes David Lockwin.

He grows ill and dizzy once more. The exercises proceed. He will fall if he do not look at Esther's face.

"I know," cries the shrill soprano, "that my--Redeemer liveth."

There comes upon the widow's face an ecstatic look of hope. She will meet her husband in heaven, and he will praise her love and fidelity.

"God bless her!" writes the Eau Claire reporter, and hastily scratches the sentence as he reads it.

A messenger approaches the reporters. A note is passed along.

"I got to go!" whispers Corkey, "you can stay. They sent for me at the office. I guess something's up."

David Lockwin is only too glad to escape. He dreads to leave Esther, yet what is Esther to him? He will hurry away to New York before he falls into the abyss that opens before him.

"Do you suppose she loved her husband as much as it seems?" he asks.

"I wish she'd love me a quarter as much, though I'm a married man. Love him! Well, I should say!"

Corkey tries to be loquacious. But his dark face grows darker.

"Oh! it's bad business. I'm sorry for her, and it knocks me out, I ain't my old self. I got up feeling beautiful, and it just knocks me. I don't think she ought to build no monument, nor no hospital, for it keeps her hoping. What's the use of hoping? I'll find that yawl. Curious about that yawl. Wouldn't it be great stuff if he should show up? Wonder what he'd think of his monument and his hospital? A hospital, now, ain't so bad. You could take his name off it. They'll do that some day, anyhow, I reckon. I've seen the name changed on a good many signs in Chicago. But what's a monument good for after the duck has showed up? Old man, wouldn't it be a sensation? Seven columns!"

Corkey slaps his leg. He quakes his head. The little tongue plays about the black tobacco. He sneezes. The passengers are generally upset.

A substantial woman of fifty, out collecting her rents, expostulates in a sharp voice.

A girl of seventeen laughs in a manner foreboding hysteria.

The conductor flies to the scene.

"None o' that in here!" he cries, frowning majestically on Corkey.

"Don't you be so gay, or I'll get you fired off the road," answers the cause of all the commotion.

"Randolph street!" yells the conductor in a great voice.

The irate and insulted Corkey debarks with Lockwin.

"Pardner, I wouldn't like to see him come back, though. I'd be sorry for him. Think of the racket he'd have to take!"

"What time does the train start for New York?" asks Lockwin.

"Panic! Panic! Panic!" is the deafening cry of the newsboys.

The two men join a crowd in front of a telegraph office. Bulletins are on a board and in the windows. Men are rushing about. The scene is in strange contrast with the sylvan drama which is closing far to the north, where the choir is singing "Asleep in Jesus."

There is a financial crash on the New York Stock Exchange. Bank after bank is failing. "The New State's Fund Closes," is the latest bulletin.

"I got pretty near a thousand cases," says Corkey, "but you bet your sweet life she ain't in no bank. I put my money in the vaults."

"Banks are better," says Lockwin. He has a bank-book somewhere in his pockets. He pulls forth a mass of letters gray with wear. The visible letter reads:

**"HON. DAVID LOCKWIN,
Washington,
D. C."**

His thought is that he should destroy these telltale documents. Then he wonders what may be in these envelopes. There flashes over him a new feeling--a sharp, lightning-like stroke passes across his shoulder-blade and down his arm.

It is Esther's handwriting, faded but familiar. The envelope is still sealed. It is a letter he got at Washington.

The man trembles violently.

"Fraid you're stuck?" asks Corkey.

The man hurriedly separates his bank-book from the letters. He displays the fresh and legible name of Robert Chalmers on the bank-book.

"I have a little in a New York bank," he says.

Corkey looks on the book. "The Coal and Oil Trust Company's Institution," he reads, "in account with Robert Chalmers. Well, money is a good thing. Glad you're fixed. Glad to know you. I'm fixed myself."

Corkey examines the list of failures. "I'm glad you're heeled," he says.

A boy is fastening a new bulletin on the window.

"*There* you be, now!" says Corkey.

"The Coal and Oil Trust Company's Institution Goes Down," is on the bulletin.

"I'll lend you money enough to git home," says Corkey.

"Panic! Panic! Panic!!" bawls a large boy, who beats his small rivals ruthlessly aside and makes his way to Lockwin.

The man is still trembling. He is trying to put away his worthless bank-book and cannot gain the entrance of the pocket.

"Ere's your panic! Buy of me, mister. Say, mister, won't you buy of me? Ah! git out, you great big coward!"

It is the sympathetic Corkey, smartly cuffing the invader.

"Strike somebody of your size, you great big coward! Ah! git out, you great big coward!"

CHAPTER IV

"A SOUND OF REVELRY BY NIGHT"

"Poverty," says Ben Franklin, "often deprives a man of all spirit and virtue. It is hard for an empty bag to stand upright."

David Lockwin has but one familiar acquaintance in the world and that is Corkey. Corkey will now start in search of the body of David Lockwin!

David Lockwin has but a few hundred dollars in cash. His fortune is in a ruined bank. He hopes to get something out of it. His experience tells him he may expect several thousand dollars.

Is it wise to return to New York? Yes. A situation awaits him there. He can protect his rights as a depositor. He can enjoy the pleasant apartments at Gramercy Park.

But the expense! Ah! yes, he must take cheaper quarters. It is the first act of despotism which poverty has ever ventured to impose on David Lockwin.

It makes New York seem inhospitable. It makes Chicago seem like home. Still, as David Lockwin seeks his hotel, noting always the complete solitude in which he dwells among the vast crowds that once knew him familiarly or by sight, it chills him to the marrow.

He enters the hotel dining-room. The head waiter seats his guest at a table where three men are eating. Every one of them is a business acquaintance of Lockwin.

The excitement of the moment drives away the brain terrors which were entering the man's head. The men regard the newcomer with that look which is given to an uninvited banqueter whose appearance is not imposing. The best-natured of the group, however, breaks the silence. He speaks to the diner on his left.

"Where did you get the stone for that sarcophagus you put up yesterday?"

"In Vermont."

"Who ordered the job--Lockwin or the widow?"

"She did."

"Well, it's a pretty thing. I wish I were rich. I lost a little boy too."

The monument-maker at this begins a discourse on the economies of his business and shows that he can meet the requirements of any income or purse.

"Did you see Lockwin's portrait at the institute?" asks the third party,

"No. Is it good?"

"I hardly think so. I don't remember that he ever looked just like it. Everybody knew Lockwin, yet I doubt if he had more than one close acquaintance and that was Tarpion--Doc. Tarpion."

"Does the doctor act as her adviser in all these affairs? Did you read about the dedication? Did you know about the hospital? She had better keep her money. She'll need it."

"She? Not much. She had a big estate from Judge Wandell's sister who died. The judge himself has no other heir. I shouldn't wonder if he advised the erection of the hospital to give her the credit of what he intended to do for himself."

"Well, I never knew a town to be so full of one man as this town is of Lockwin. You'd think he was Douglas or Lincoln."

"Worse than that! Douglas and Lincoln are way behind. Take this city to-day and it's all Lockwin. Going to the banquet to-night?"

David Lockwin has finished his meal. He rises.

"Coming back," says the monument-maker confidentially to his inquirer, "I can fix you a beautiful memorial for much less money and it will answer every purpose."

"I'll see you again," says the customer, cooling rapidly away from the business. "I must go to the North Side and get back here by 9 o'clock."

Why shall not David Lockwin take the night train and leave this living tomb in which the world has put him?

"In which I put myself!" he corrects.

It all hurts him yet it delights him. "She loved me after I was dead," he vows and forgets the sting of poverty.

Now about this going to New York to-night. He would like to be prevented from that journey. What shall do that for David Lockwin?

"Davy's sarcophagus!"

The thought seizes him with violence. Of course he cannot go. He seeks his room. He throws himself on his bed and

gives way to all his grief. It takes the form of love for Davy. David Lockwin weeps for golden-head. He weeps for the past. He is living. He ought to be dead. He is poor. He is misshapen in feature. He is hungry for human sympathy. The world is giving him a stone. Oh, Davy! Davy!

The outside electric lights make a thousand monuments, hospitals, sarcophagi, portraits and panics on the chamber walls. The hours go past. There is a bustle in the hotel. There is a sound of merriment in the banqueting hall, directly below. The satisfaction of having dealt tenderly by the beloved dead is expressing itself in choice libations and eloquent addresses.

The man listens for these noises. There is a loud clapping of hands. An address has concluded.

The glasses tinkle. Doors open and shut. Waiters and servants run through the hall giving orders and carrying on those quarrels which pertain to the unseen parts of public festivities.

"Why did I not go?" David Lockwin asks. "Ah! yes. Davy! Davy's tomb. I will see it, if it shall kill me to live until then. But how shall I pass this night? What shall I do? What shall I do?"

The glasses tinkle. The laughter bursts forth unrestrainedly. The banquet is moving to the inn-keeper's taste.

The electric lights swing on long wires. The glass in the windows is full of imperfections and sooty. The phantasmagoria on the wall distracts the suffering man. Why not have a light? He rises and turns on the gas. Perhaps there will be a paper or a book in the room. That will help.

Poverty of hotel life! There is only the card of rules hung on the door. Lockwin reads the rules and is thankful. He studies the lock history of the door, as represented in the marks of old locks and staples. Here a burglar has bored. Here a chisel has penetrated to push back the bolt. Yes, it was a burglar, for there is now a brass sheath to prevent another entry. Most of these breakages, however, have been made by the hotel people, as can be seen by the transom locks.

That brings up suicides. David Lockwin has committed suicide once. The subject is odious.

The laughter below resounds. The man above will read from the lining of some bureau drawer.

He goes to that piece of furniture. The dressing-case is completely empty excepting a laundry bill on pink paper.

He clutches that. He examines the printer's mark. He strives to recall the particular printing-office.

He has not the courage to go forth into the street. He does not want to read, except as it shall ease him from the cruel torment which he feels.

The glasses jingle and chime. The stores across the street close their doors and darken their show windows. Why not go below and buy the latest novel?

The suggestion fairly sickens the man. He did not know he was so nervous. To read for pastime while a great city is filled with his obsequies--he cannot do it!

There is but one course--to read the rules, to study the history of the door until it reaches the stage of suicide--ah! to feel in one's pockets! That is it! That is it!

David Lockwin cons his bank-book. He opens his worn letters--letters to the Hon. David Lockwin. He grows timid as he descends into the vale of despair.

Why did he do it? These details of the electoral campaign seem trivial now. Easy difficulties!

He reaches the last letter of the packet. Marvelous that he should wait to unseal it until an hour so fraught with need!

It is Esther's letter--probably some cold missive such as she wrote during their courtship and engagement.

David Lockwin is beginning to love his wife as a dog worships its master. He looks to her for safety. He wants to think of her as she is now--a sincere mourner for a dead friend, husband and protector; a superior being, capable of pity for David Lockwin.

"Is it wise to read it?" he asks in a dread. "But why should I not be generous? Why should I not love her--as I do love her? God forgive me! I do love her! I love her though she smite me now--cold, cold Esther!"

The man is crying. He cannot hear the banqueters. He has at last escaped from their world. His hands shake and he unseals the letter, careful to the last that no part of the envelope be torn.

He will read the cold letter. Cold, cold Esther! He kisses the envelope again and again. The sheets are drawn from the inclosure. She never wrote at such length before. He scans the first page. His face grows cold with the old look of disappointment. He wishes he had not read. He turns to the next page. The text changes in tone. There succeeds a warmth that heats the heart aglow.

David Lockwin passes his hands across his eyes. He is dazed. He reads on:

"Come back to me, my darling, and see how happy we shall be! Let the politics go--that killed Davy and makes us all so unhappy. You were created for something nobler. Let us go to Europe once more. Let's seek the places where we have met in the past."

How much more of this can David Lockwin endure?

His temples rise and grow blood-red. The gas seems to give no light. He reads like a man of short sight. His eyes kiss the sacred sheet.

"I love you! I love you! I shall die without you! Come home to me, and save me! I love you! I love you! I love you! I love--!"

David Lockwin has fainted.

The glasses chink, and heavy feet tramp on soft carpets, making a muffled sound.

"Scuse me!" says a thick-voiced banqueter in the hall. "I thought it was my hat! Hooray! 'Scuse me! I know it's pretty late. Whoop! 'Scuse me!"

The waiters bicker hotly; the counting-room bell rings afar off. There is a smothered cry of "Front!"

"All trains for the East--" comes a monotonous announcement in the corridors.

"Sixty-six! Number sixty-six!" screeches the carriage-crier.

A drunken refrain floats on the air from Wabash avenue:

 "We won't go home till morn-i-n-g,
 T-i-l-l daylight doth appear."

CHAPTER V

LETTERS OF CONSOLATION

On the Africa David Lockwin loved but one person, and that was David Lockwin.

On this morning after the banquet David Lockwin hates but one person, and that is David Lockwin.

He had lately hungered for somebody more charitable to himself than he himself could be. He had experienced a mean, spiritless happiness in noting the honors which the widow was heaping on his memory. Now he is furiously in love with that widow. He sallies from the hotel in haste to her residence.

Three blocks away from his goal, with the old home in sight, he awakens to his danger. A moment more and the whole shameful truth had been known!

"No, base as I am, I cannot do that," he shudders.

Besides, he is a true lover, and what one ever dared to take the great risk?

Here she lives! And between her and her lover, her husband, yawns the chasm of death! Was it not a black act that could so enrobe a woman? He recalls her garb as she appeared at the dedication yesterday--solemn, solemn!

It is unsafe to stay in this neighborhood, yet let this man creep nearer and gaze on the house where Davy died.

The balcony--it seems to him, dimly, that he made a speech from that balcony. But Davy's death is not now the calamity it was yesterday. It seems more like a pleasant memory--a small memory. The gigantic thought is Esther, Esther--Esther the beautiful, the noble, the generous, the faithful. She shall be the wife of Ulysses, waiting for his return, and he shall return!

The husband again starts for Esther's door. There are two men within him--one is David Lockwin dead, the other is David Lockwin living. Once more the eminent man who is dead seizes the maddened lover who is living and prevents a disaster.

Love this house as he may, therefore, David Lockwin must avoid it until he can control himself. It is true his books are in there, his manuscripts, his chronicles, "Josephus," and a thousand things without which he cannot lay hold on the true dignity of life. It is true he is slipping down the declivity that invites the easy descent of the obscure and powerless citizen. If he have true hope--and what lover has it not--he must hurry away. He is not safe in Chicago just at present, because the abstraction of a lover, joined with the self-forgetfulness of a man in the second life, will assuredly lead him to ruin.

His eyes leave that house with utter regret. He makes the long ride to Davy's tomb and finds it covered with fresh flowers. The tenderest of care is visible. The lawn is perfect--not a leaf of plantain, not a spear of dandelion. Money will not produce such stewardship of the sepulcher. It is Esther's own devotion.

He goes to the site of the cenotaph. Is it not a difficulty for a lover? Yet love sustains him. His invention suggests method after method by which he may undo the past.

He visits the foundations of the David Lockwin Annex. He notes the character of the materials that are strewn over three streets. His love for Esther only increases.

Thence to the Art Institute he hastens. They said it was a poor likeness of Lockwin. He vows it is good. It is good because Esther has done it!

He has seen all--all but Esther. He starts blindly for Esther's house once more. As he walks rapidly southward, his own team comes up the avenue. It is Esther within the carriage. She looks at a man in gray business dress, with colored nose and a drunkard's complexion. She notes the large watch-chain. She finds him no different from all other living men. She is looking for David. "Come back, my noble husband," she sobs, "come back from the grave, or let me join you."

A moment afterward she fears she may die before her work shall be done. That was a sharp sting at her heart just then.

David Lockwin is frozen with that cold look. The carriage is past. He was on his way to Esther's to tell her all. If he had not risen out of his abstraction ere it should be too late, he would have confronted this cold lady--this mature builder of cenotaph and hospital.

He is terrified--a lover's panic. She does not love him, or she would have called to him as they passed.

So thinks David Lockwin, for he cannot see himself except as he once was. People call him Chalmers when they address him, which is not more than once a day, but it is like the salutation to Judge Wandrell. He does not call himself "Judge" nor sign himself "Judge." "My dear judge," writes a friend. "Your friend, H. M. H. Wandrell," answers the same man.

It is easy for David Lockwin to answer to the name of Robert Chalmers. He has found it totally impossible to become Robert Chalmers in fact. He is David Lockwin, disinherited--a picture of the prodigal son--but David Lockwin in every bone and muscle--no one else.

Esther Lockwin has refused to know David Lockwin.

Sharp as may be his hurt at this event, he is, nevertheless, once more recalled to the expedencies. If he shall be in hope of Esther, it would be well to escape from a situation so dangerous.

"And I am poor! Why did I not think of that? It was easy to marry her, because I was wealthy. I am a poor man now." He repeats it over and over.

It would be well to hurry to New York and attend to that matter of the Coal and Oil Trust Company institution. He could not go but for the lover's hope of preparing something for the reunion.

Between Chicago and New York one may fall into a wide abyss of despair. The late Honorable David Lockwin has tarried in Chicago, has assisted at the public dedication of his own cenotaph, has visited the David Lockwin Annex, has looked his own widow in the face. His pride is torn out by the roots. A man once exalted is now humbled. And, added to the horrors of his situation, every fiber of his body, every aspiration of his spirit, proclaims his love of the woman who once wearied him.

His dilemma is dreadful without this catastrophe of love. He thanks the fates that he is in love. It gives him business. He will not sell his claim against the ruined bank. He will work as book-keeper. He will wait and collect all. Patience shall be his motto. He will communicate with Esther through a spiritual medium. He will--better yet--write to her anonymously. Every day a type-written missive shall be sent to her. He will have her! It is all possible!

"It is all easy!" David Lockwin says, and goes resolutely at work to save the remnants of his fortune.

For a year he turns the inertia of his love into his daily business. Esther is building at Chicago, David will build at New York--a fabric of love, airy, it may be, but graceful and beautiful.

Each night he indites in type-writer and addresses to Esther Lockwin an essay on the value of hope in great afflictions. The tone grows familiar, as the weeks pass by. "My dear madam" becomes "my dear Mrs. Lockwin," and at last "my dear friend." To-night, far into the small hours, he pours out his advice and comfort:

"Be brave, my dear friend," he proceeds. "Undreamed-of happiness may still be yours, if you can but come to place confidence in your faithful correspondent. There are things more strange than anything which the books give us. As a matter of fact, dear friend, the writers do not dare to make life as it is, for fear of outrunning the bounds of fiction. Let me give you comfort, and at the proper time I shall be able, not to reveal myself, perhaps, but to offer you opportunity to give me a signal that my services are valuable to you.

"Preserve your health. This admonition has been iterated in the hundreds of different treatises I have placed before you. My diligence and patience must recommend themselves. My hope must reinspire your drooping energies. Until tomorrow at eventide, adieu!"

The time is ripe to learn the effect of these courteous ministrations. David Lockwin dares not intrust his secret to a chance acquaintance like Corkey, who is completely devoted to Mrs. Lockwin. What man can now be found who will support a possible relation of mutual friend in this singular case?

The thought of Dr. Tarpion comes again and again.

Clearly a lover cannot wait forever. And he must know whether or not Esther reads the letters. But, of course, she reads them!

"And they comfort her, God bless her!" cries the happy lover. But he must not wait too long. She needs him. She must be rescued from Chicago.

Why not write to Dr. Tarpion? He is a dear old friend.

He seems very dear, now that Lockwin needs him. The doctor is the administrator of the estate, if we come to recollect. Certainly!

Now, therefore, let David undertake an interrogatory, and tremblingly mail it to Dr. Tarpion. To be sure, this is better. Suppose David Lockwin the unknown monitor, had invited Esther to advertise in a newspaper, and the advertisement had been left out! Or, suppose he had suggested a certain signal at her house, or in New York--anywhere! It would be a chance too great to take. No lover should leave anything to fortune. Dr. Tarpion will give the information. He shall be the mutual friend--the go-between to unravel this tangled web of deception.

If David Lockwin shall in future discover himself to Esther, he must have the aid of a discreet and loving friend. Dr. Tarpion is the man. This letter will open the way for further disclosures. It is as follows:

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL.

DEAR SIR:--For about a year I have seen fit to offer to Mrs. Lockwin such consolation as I thought might lessen her grief. Will you kindly inform me if my suggestions have at any time mitigated her sorrow? I shall be happy to know that an earnest and faithful labor has done some little good. You may inclose a letter to the care of Robert Chalmers, New York City, who will deliver it to me.

The reply is prompt:

CHICAGO, May 1.--I am in receipt of a type-written communication from an unknown party, and am not unwilling to inform the writer that Mrs. Lockwin's mail all comes to me. I have for a year burned every one of the consolatory letters alluded to, in common with thousands of other screeds, which I have considered as so many assaults on the charity of an unhappy lady.

The series of letters from New York have, however, been the most persistent of these demonstrations. I have expected that at the proper time we should have a claimant, like the Tichborne estate. Some experience in administrative affairs, together with the timely suggestions of a friend, lead me to note the opportunity for a claimant in our case. David Lockwin's body was not found. I have, therefore, kept a sharp eye out for claimants, and will say to the writer of the "consolatory letters" that our proofs of Lockwin's death are ample. Two persons saw him die. Mrs. Lockwin is a sagacious woman, keenly aware of the covetousness aroused by the public mention of her great wealth.

The writer will therefore, if wise, abandon his attentions and intentions. If I receive any more of his "consolatory letters" I shall look up Robert Chalmers with detectives. Respectfully,

IRENAEUS TARPION, M. D.

CHAPTER VI

THE YAWL

It is about 10 o'clock at night in the office of the great newspaper. The night editor sits at his desk reading the latest exchanges. The telegraph editor labors under a bright yellow light, secured by the use of a vast expanse of yellow paper.

The assistant telegraph editor is groaning over a fraudulent dispatch from a correspondent whose repute is the worst.

A place is still vacant at the tables. The marine dispatches are piling high.

"Where is the sea-dog?" asks the night editor, who is in command of the paper.

"Good evening, Corkey," says the telegraph editor. "I trust we are spared for another day of usefulness," says the night editor, with an unction which is famous in the office.

"How is the ooze of the salt deep, commodore?" asks the night editor.

"How is the coral and green amber?" asks the telegraph editor.

"Green nothing!" mutters Corkey. He feels weary.

"How did you leave great Neptune?" asks the assistant telegraph editor.

These questions are wholly perfunctory. The telegraph editor has dedicated five minutes to the history and diary of the triple alliance.

When Corkey is happy this inquisition flatters him. When he is black in the face there is an inclination to deal harshly with these wits. A thousand clever things flash into his black eyes but escape his tongue.

He struggles to say something that will put the laugh on the telegraph editor, and begins choking. The head vibrates, the little tongue plays about the black tobacco, the mouth grows square.

"Run for your lives, gentlemen," cries the assistant telegraph editor, making believe to hold down his shears. There is an explosion. It is accompanied with many distinguishable noises--the hissing of steam, the routing of hogs from their wallow, the screech of tug whistles and the yell of Indians.

The door stands open to the great composing-room, where eighty typesetters--eighty cynics--eighty nervous, high-strung, well-paid workmen--stand at their intellectual toil. They are all in a hurry, but each rasps his iron type-stick across a thin partition of his type case. It is a small horse-fiddle. The combined effect is impressive, chaotic.

The night foreman rages internally. He stalks about with baleful eye. "Buck in, you fellows," he says. "The paper is behind."

"I wish it would kill him," the night foreman says of Corkey.

There is silence in the telegraph-room. The tinkle of the horse-cars comes up audibly from the street. The night editor knows what has happened, to the slightest detail. He mentally sees the night foreman standing in the shadows of the parlor (wash-place) laughing to kill. The night editor grows still more unctuous.

"From earthquakes, hailstorms and early frosts," he prays, "good Lord, deliver us."

"Good Lord, deliver us!" comes the solemn antiphone of the telegraph editor, the assistant telegraph editor, Corkey and the copy boy.

The chinchilla coat is off. This is manifestly a hard way to earn a living for a candidate for Congress, a dark horse for the legislature and a marine editor who has run his legs off all day.

"He's been moving," the boy whispers to the night editor.

The night editor scans the dark face. It is serious enough. It is the night editor's method to rule his people by the moderation of his speech. In this way they do all the work and thank him for keeping his nose out of affairs.

"We hear, commodore, that you have moved your household gods."

"Yes," grunts Corkey. To the jam-jorum Corkey must be civil, as he will tell you.

"Where to?"

"Top flat, across the alley from the Grand Pacific."

"That's a five-story building, isn't it?"

"That's what it is."

Corkey is busy fixing his telegrams for the printer. He is trying to learn what the current date is, and is unwilling to ask.

The night editor is thinking of Mrs. Corkey, a handsome little woman, for whom the "boys in the office" have a pleasant regard.

"Is there an elevator?"

"I didn't see no elevator when I was carrying the kitchen stove in."

"How will Mrs. Corkey get up?"

This is too much. Corkey has made a hundred trips to the new abode, each time laden with some heavy piece of furniture or package of goods. How will Mrs. Corkey get there, when Corkey has been up and down the docks from the north pier to the lumber district on Ashland avenue, and all since supper?

The marine editor sits back rigidly in his chair. The head quakes, the tongue plays, he looks defiantly at the night editor.

"She's coming," says the assistant telegraph editor, holding down his shears and paste-pot.

The head quakes, but it is not a sneeze. It is a deliverance, *ex cathedra*. The night editor wants to hear it.

"You bet your sweet life, Mrs. Corkey," says the commodore, "screw her nut up four flight of stairs. That's what Mrs. Corkey do!"

The compliments of the evening are over. It is a straining of every nerve now to get a good first edition for the fast train.

"Gale to-night, Corkey," says the telegraph editor. "We've taken most of your stuff for the front page. The display head isn't long enough. Write me another line for it."

"Hain't got nothing to write," Corkey doesn't like to have his report taken out of its customary place. When there are blood-curdling wrecks he wants the news in small type along with his port list.

"Hain't got nothing to write," he repeats sullenly. He gapes and stretches. He knows he must obey the telegraph editor.

"Hurry! Give it to me. Give me the idea." Corkey's eye brightens. He is a man of ideas, not of words. He has an idea. His head quakes. The tongue begins its whirring like the fan-wheel before the clock strikes.

"You can say that the life-saving service display a great act," says the marine editor, relieved of a grievous duty.

His pile of telegrams grows smaller. The dreaded work will soon be over.

"How's your rich widow?"

Corkey has not failed to plume himself on his aristocratic and familiar acquaintance. His associates are themselves flattered. Corkey is to take the telegraph editor to call on Mrs. Lockwin. The night editor is jealously regarded as too smooth with the ladies. He will be left to his own devices.

"How's your rich widow?" is repeated. But Corkey cannot hear. He is reading a telegram that astonishes, electrifies and confuses him.

"COLLINGWOOD, 14.--After wading ten miles along shore found yawl Africa sunk in three feet water, filled with sand and hundreds stone. Can take you to spot. What reward? What shall we do?"

Corkey seizes the dispatch, puts on his coat, and rides downstairs. On the street he finds it is midnight. He looks for a carriage. He sets his watch by a jeweler's chronometer, over which a feeble gas flame burns all night.

He changes his mind and rides back upstairs. He enters the telegraph operators' room, where five men are at work receiving special intelligence.

"Get Collingwood, boys."

"That drops off at Detroit. Collingwood's a day job."

The instrument is clicking. The operator takes each word as the laborious Corkey, with short pencil, presses it into the buff-colored paper.

CHICAGO, 14.--Let it be! Will be at Collingwood to-morrow. CORKEY.

CHAPTER VII

A RASH ACT

David Lockwin reads the letter of Dr. Tarpion with horror.

"Heavens and earth!" he cries, and pulls at his hair, rubs his eyes and stamps on the floor. "Heavens and earth!" This, an edifice built with the patience and cunning of a lover, must fall to nothing.

He is as dead to Esther as on the day the yawl danced on the shining sands of Georgian Bay.

He is terrified to know his loss. To believe that he was in daily communication with Esther, and that she must ache to know him, has sustained David Lockwin in his penance.

The crime he committed, he feels, has been atoned in this year of lover's agony. That agony was necessary--in order that Esther might be gradually prepared for the revelation.

She has not been prepared. The labor must begin again, and on new lines.

The receiver of the Coal and Oil Trust Company's Institution this day declares a dividend of 10 per cent. The lover may draw over \$7,000--a magnificent estate. It seems greater to him than the wealth of the Indies or the Peruvians seemed to the early navigators.

He sells his belongings to a second-hand dealer. He hastens his departure. The folks at Walker street can get another book-keeper. Robert Chalmers is going to San Francisco. Easy to lie now after the practice of nearly two years.

But to think that Esther has not read a word of all he has written! David Lockwin hisses the name of Dr. Tarpion. Many is the time they have tented together. But how did the doctor know? He had only a type-written anonymous communication.

Nevertheless this lover curses the administrator as the cause of the fiasco.

"But for him my path would be easy."

David Lockwin thinks of Tarpion's threat about a claimant. It grows clear to him that there is a Chicagoan alive who can view his own cenotaph, his own memorial hospital, his own home--who can proclaim himself to be the husband, and yet there will be men like Tarpion who will deny all.

Lockwin's face annoys him. "Why was I such a fool to go without the proper treatment in that outlandish region! Why was I so anxious to be disguised?"

Oh, it is all on account of the letters. That busybody of an administrator and censor has undone all! Better he had never been born. Why should a doctor neglect his patients to separate husband and wife? The wise way will be to march to the house at Chicago and take possession.

"That I will do!" the man at last declares. He is maddened. He cares nothing for reputation. He cannot bear the thought that Dr. Tarpion, an old friend, should day by day burn the epistles that evinced so much scholarship, charity and sympathy. The lover is not poor. No man with \$7,000 in his pocket is poor. He is not driven back to Esther by want, as it was before. That stings the man to recall it. No, he has means. But if he were poor, he would work for the dear lady who loved him so secretly. He gloats over the letter of Esther. It is worn in pieces now, like so many cards. The train from New York enters the city of Chicago.

"That is the new David Lockwin Hospital," says a passenger.

"Why did I blunder in on this road?" the lover asks. He had not thought his situation so terrible as it seemed just now.

"I am doubtless the sorriest knave that ever lived here," he mourns, but it only increases his determination to go directly to Esther.

"I guess Dr. Tarpion will not throw *me* in the waste-basket! Seven thousand dollars!"

David Lockwin feels as rich as Corkey.

It is a mad thing he is doing, this pulling of the door-bell at the old home. The balcony is overhead. Never mind little Davy! We can live without him, but we cannot live without Esther. Ah that Tarpion! that base Tarpion! Probably he intends to marry her! It is none too soon to pull this bell. Now David Lockwin will enter, never to be driven forth. He will enter among his books. Never mind his books. It is she, SHE, SHE! Till death part them SHE is his. It is the seven thousand dollars that gives him this lion-like courage. Esther needs him. He has come.

The door opens. A pleasant-faced lady appears.

"Call Mrs. Lockwin, please."

"Mrs. Lockwin? Oh, yes. I believe she did live here. I do not know where she lives now, but it is on Prairie avenue. After her father died she went home to live."

Is Judge Wandrell dead? The caller is adding together the mills, pineries, elevators, hotels, steamers, steel mills, quarries and railroads that Judge Wandrell owned on the great lakes.

The pleasant-faced lady thinks her caller ought to go.

He is angry at her. He shows it. He blames her as much as he does Tarpion. He retreats reluctantly. A stranger is in possession of the home of David Lockwin.

He was foolhardy a moment before. He is timid now.

He was rich. He has seven thousand. Esther is rich. She has five millions.

CHAPTER VIII

A GOOD SCHEME

The absence of love ruined David Lockwin. Love built Chicago. Love erected the David Lockwin Hospital. Love supports David Lockwin. He is a man to be pitied from the depths of the heart. Love makes him happy.

He reads the revised scriptures. To love's empire has been added the whole realm of charity. "Love," says the sacred word, "covereth a multitude of sins."

"Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

Love has become prudent. Love has whispered in David Lockwin's ear that while it might be brave to knock at the door of one's own home, it would be rash to present one's self to Esther Lockwin, on Prairie avenue--Esther Lockwin, worth five millions!

Yet this lover, in order to bear, to believe, to hope and to endure, must enter the charmed circle of her daily life. He haunts the vicinity, he grows fertile in his plans. He discovers an admirable method of coming in correspondence with the Prairie avenue mansion.

Dr. Floddin has recently died, and a new proprietor is in possession of the drug store. It is a matter of a week's time to install David Lockwin. It could have been done in a minute, but a week's time seemed more in order and pleased the seller. You look in and you see a square stove. Rising behind it you see a white prescription counter, with bottles of blue copper water at each corner. Rising still higher behind is a partition. Peer to the right and you may see a curtain, drawn aside. A little room contains a bed, an Argand lamp, a table with a small clock, druggist's books and the revised New Testament.

You may see David Lockwin, almost any day, sitting near and under that curtain; his clothes are strangely of the color of the drapery; his legs are stretched out one ankle over the other; his hands are deep in pockets; his head is far down on his breast. Or you may see him washing his windows. He keeps the cleanest windows on lower State street.

In this coigne of vantage it turns out that David Lockwin eventually comes to know the family life at the mansion. The servants at the Wandrell home have long stood behind the prescription counter while their orders were in course of serving.

The confinement of the business--the eternal hours of vigil--these matters feed the hungry love of the husband.

"Without this I should have died," he vows. The months go by without event.

Corkey has been the earliest caller. "Saw your sign," he says; "recollected the name. Been in New York all the time? I say, old man, want a pardner? I got a clean thousand cases in gold to put in."

The druggist has difficulty in withstanding Corkey's offers of capital. Corkey is struck with the idea of business. He has taken a strong fancy to Chalmers. Day by day the two men grow more intimate.

"Thought I'd never see you again, old man. I suppose I ought to start a saloon, but somehow I hate to do it, now I know some good people. Bet your life I'm solid over there!"

He points with his thumb toward Prairie avenue.

"I'm a good friend of the richest woman, I guess, there is in the world!" His tongue pops like a champagne cork. "I don't like to keep no saloon."

"I shall sell as little liquor as possible," the druggist says, conceiving the drift of Corkey's ideas.

"Pardner, you must have been a hard drinker yourself. How did your voice get so husky?"

"It was so always."

"It was so the first day I met you. Remember the dedication?"

"Yes; do you remember the bank?"

"Yep. Don't you know I tell you I was going to find that yawl?"

"I do."

"Well, I find it."

Does David Lockwin color? Or are those features forever crimson?

"You do look like a man as has been a red-hot sport in his day. Ever do anything in the ring? Let me try that red liquor of yours. Let's see if it tears. Oh, yes, about the yawl. I just go to the widow the other day and ask her for three hundred cases on the search. Well, she give me the three hundred and want me to take more, and I go right to Collingwood. The duck he show me the boat, and you bet your sweet life I hid her where she never will be seen. What's the use of tearing up the widow's feelings again?"

"You did right!" says the husky voice, the lover all the time wishing the discovery had been published. He feels like a claimant. He is not sure the world would believe David Lockwin to be alive if he could prove it.

"Chalmers, I'm going to tell you something that I haven't said to nobody. I hid that boat, and I threw away big money--I know I did. But I could get all the money I wanted of her--a free graft. Give me another slug of that budge."

The druggist is filling a small graduate with whisky for Corkey. What is Corkey about to say?

"They're having high old times in Russia. That was a great bomb they git in on his nob's last winter."

"The czar? Yes."

"I reckon they're going to git the feller they've got on top there now, too, don't you? They say he put on ten crowns yesterday. What do they call it? The coronation, yes. What's the name of the place? Moscow, yes."

The druggist is less confused.

"Wouldn't it be funny if the czar wasn't dead. But say, pardner, what would you say if I went over there and told my widow I didn't believe her old man was dead at all? Would she give me the gaff? Would she git mad?"

The druggist is busy finding a cork for a bottle. At last he comes to the light to try the cork. He is behind a show-case. Corkey is in front of the, case holding a newspaper in hand, out of which he has been reading of the coronation. His black eyes seem to pierce David Lockwin's face. David Lockwin looks back--in hope, if any feeling can show itself in that veiled countenance. "He ain't dead! Not much! Can't tell me! I don't bury boats for nothing. I tell you I think a heap of her, and she slung herself so on that hospital and on that other thing there, out north, that I'd hate to give her away. What was that yawl buried for? Nobody see it and it was worth money, too. What was it buried for? Now I never tell you the story of the night on the old tub. He sit just so."

Corkey takes a seat behind the stove and imitates David Lockwin.

The druggist gazes as in a stupor. He steps to his little room and removes the chair. He must not sit and cogitate.

"Something ail him. I guess he was crazy."

"He must have been," says the druggist, "if he wasn't killed."

"Oh, he wasn't killed. Can't tell me. Now, suppose he want to come back to Chicago--ain't he in a sweet box? And his wife over there crying her eyes out--with more money--with more money--well--"

Corkey's head vibrates, his tongue whirs, he sneezes. Children, romping on the sidewalk, troop to the door of the druggist to learn what has happened.

Corkey looks at the prescription booth. He notes the blue copper water at each corner. His eyes rise to the white partition which separates the rear room from the store.

"Sleep in there?"

"Yes," says the druggist, huskily.

"Get out of here!" cries Corkey to the last of the merry throng. "I used to play just that same way right here in this street. Cozy place in there. Well, I ain't so smart, but I've had a scheme on ever since I found that yawl. She's crying her eyes out over there--you can't tell me, for I know. Mebbe his nobbs would like to come back. I'm going to sound her, and if she's favorable I'm going to advertise--see?"

"Do you see her often?"

"Yes, oftener than I want to. You see she makes me go over that last night on the old tub and on the yawl. Now I'm getting tired of telling how he died. He ain't dead. But she seems to harp on that. You just ought to hear her cap him up. He's the greatest and goodest man you ever see. Well, now. I'm going to change the play a little. Oh, she's no use. She even wants me to bring the coon, and I let the ball-players take him. He can't be going down there. I don't want him along nohow. I tell you I'm going to change the box. I'm going to bring her round to the idea that he's alive."

Corkey is earnest. His eyes are sparkling. He is chewing hard on his tobacco. His head is quaking.

"He's alive, and so he's a--well, he's a no-gooder."

"Yes," says the druggist huskily.

"But I hate to see her pining away, and I'm going to steer her against the idea that she can get him if she wants him. She's so rich she can do anything she wants to. I guess if she wants him she can clear out with him and live in--where is it?--in Moscow. That's about the place for ducks like him."

"Yes," says the druggist.

Corkey takes the glass graduate in hand. He turns sideways and puts his arm heavily on the frail show-case. He lifts his foot to place it on the customary iron railing of a whisky shop. He ruminates.

"The David Lockwin Annex--that means a wing, doesn't it? Yes, I thought so. Well, the wing is bigger than the--than the--than the--the wing is bigger than the bird."

It is an observation that Corkey believes would be applauded among the sharp blades of the telegraph room. He drinks in a well-pleased mood.

"The David Lockwin Annex! The monument! They've given that a stiff name, too. I've seen some gay things in this town, but that beats me. It takes a woman to make a fool of herself. And there she is over there crying for her great hero. Fill this jim-crack with the budge again. Let her draw as much water as she will--put it to the top notch!"

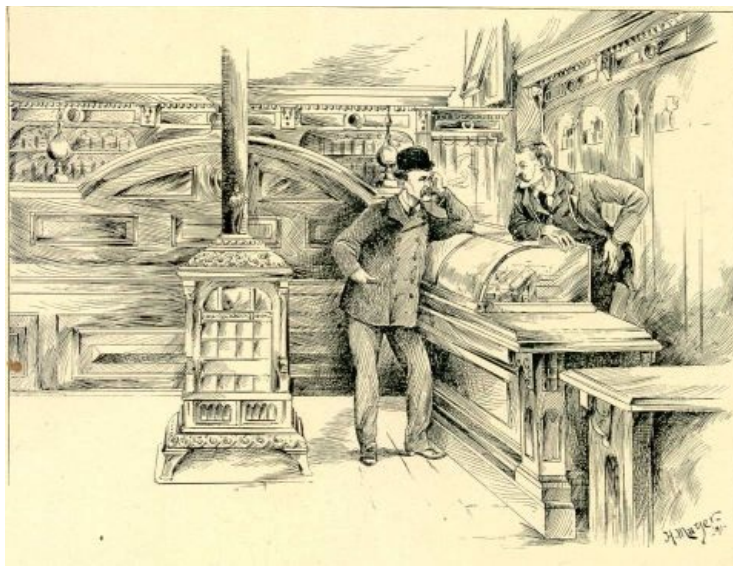
The druggist trembles as he fills the graduate.

"Won't you have a bigger one?" he suggests.

"No, I ain't drinking much between campaigns. Did you know I was going to run for the Illinois house? Yes, that's nearer to my size than a whole congressional district. I'm in for it. But that's not now. My mind is over there, on the avenue. Say, old man, is the scheme any good? He dassen't come back. Do you think she'd pull out and go to him, wherever he is?"

The druggist carries the empty graduate to the water sink. He rinses it. His heart beats with the greatest joy it has ever known. He returns the graduate to the prescription counter.

"It is a good scheme, Corkey."



[Illustration: "It is a good scheme, Corkey."]

"You bet it *is*. Chalmers, just fill that thimble-rig once more. It don't hold three fingers, nohow. Hurry, for I got to go to the north pier right off. That's your little clock striking 6 in there now, ain't it?"

CHAPTER IX

A HEROIC ACT

David Lockwin is losing ground. He daily grows less likely to attract the favorable notice of Esther Lockwin, or any other woman of consequence. His face has not only lost comeliness, but character. It would seem that the carmen fimbriations just under the skin of his cheeks flame forth with renewed anger. The difficulty in his throat increases. He relies nowadays entirely on Corkey.

"And Corkey does not know how rapidly this anxiety is killing me!"

The druggist plans every day to confess all to Corkey. Every day, too, there is a plan to meet Esther. But as David Lockwin grows small, Esther grows grand. Talking with the servants of her mother's home has degraded, declassed, the husband. He has hungered to meet her, yet months intervene without that bitter joy.

It is a bitter joy. Yesterday, when Lockwin carried a prescription to the house of a very sick widow, he suddenly came face to face with Esther. It had been long apparent to the man that the woman was repelled by his face. This, yesterday, she did not conceal. The husband trembled with a thousand pleasures as the sacred form passed by. He struggled with ten thousand despairs as he was robbed of her company and left to bemoan her disdain.

He worshiped her the more. He read last night, more eagerly, how love endureth all things. It must fast come to this, that David Lockwin shall love her at a distance, and that she shall be true to the memory of the great and good David Lockwin.

Or, he must approach Corkey on the subject of his scheme of reunion. This morning, washing the windows of the drug-store, the proprietor revolves the problems of his existence.

"Time is passing," he groans; "too much time."

The gossip of the store deals often with Dr. Tarpion. Dr. Tarpion is gradually arousing the jealousy of the husband. The burning of the consolatory letters was a dreadful repulse of the lover's siege.

The druggist has scrubbed the windows with the brush. He is drying them with the rubber wiper. He stamps the pole on the sidewalk. He does not want to be jealous, but time is going by--time is going by. That Tarpion! It would be hard! It would be hard!

A new thought comes. The disfigured face grows malicious.

"It would be bigamy! Ha!"

David Lockwin has fallen upon a low place. But he would perish if jealousy must be added.

"Corkey's plan is a good one, but why does he not push it faster? And Corkey has not spoken of the matter for three weeks. One night he said he would soon be 'where he could talk.'"

The prescription clerk is very busy. A customer wants a cigar. The druggist goes in to make a profit of three and a half cents. He returns to his window, wets it once more, begins the wiping, and is frightened by the thought of five millions of money.

"Davy's tonsils swelled, and Tarpion was to cut them off. I wonder if it is my tonsils. I wonder if my nose could be straightened. I have no doubt my skin could be cleared."

Once more the supporting forces of nature have come to the rescue of David Lockwin. It is clear that he must be rejuvenated. He must exercise and regain an appetite. He must recover twenty-five pounds of flesh that have left him

since that cursed night of the Africa.

"Strange fate!" he ejaculates, remembering the almost comatose condition in which he walked on deck, and was saved.

His eyes grow sightless. The dull, little, trivial street has palled upon his view. He sees a crowd gathering at a corner and making demonstrations in a cross street.

The next moment his own horses dash around the corner into State street, driverless and running away.

A lady's head protrudes from the window. Yes, it is Esther!

The druggist grasps his long pole lightly. He takes the middle of the street. He holds his pole like a fence before the team.

"Whoa, Pete! Whoa, Coley!" he cries.

The horses believe they must turn. They lose momentum. They shy. The man is at their bits.

They drag him along the curb. One horse slips down. The pole cracks in two. A hundred men are on hand now.

David Lockwin flies to the carriage. He unlocks the door. He gathers his wife in his arms. Oh! happy day! He carries her into his drug store. He applies restoratives to the fainting woman. She slowly revives.

"Please take me home and send for Dr. Tarpion," she says, relapsing into lethargy.

Men seize David Lockwin, for he is bleeding profusely.

"He terrifies her!" they exclaim. They wash his forehead. He has a long cut over the brow.

Work fast as he may with court-plaster Esther is carried forth before the druggist can be in front to aid. People are full of praise for the heroic man.

"But he won't be no prettier for it," say the gossips of the neighborhood.

CHAPTER X

ESTHER AS A LIBERAL PATRON

Esther Lockwin has been confined to her room for a month by Dr. Tarpion's orders. The servants say she will not enter a carriage again.

David Lockwin has hired an extra clerk, and is daily under a surgeon's hands. After six months of suffering he is promised a removal of the red fimbriations; his nose shall be re-erected; his throat shall be reasonably cleared.

He lies on his cot, and Corkey is a frequent visitor.

"You wa'n't no prize beauty, that's a fact," says the candid Corkey. "I think you're wise, but I'd never a did it. You've got as much grit as a tattooed man. Them fellers, the doctors, picks you with electric needles, don't they? Yes, I thought so. Well, I suppose that's nothing side of setting up your nose. But she sets up there like a hired man--you've got a good nob now! Yes, I'm deep in politics again. I'm a fool--I know it, but I don't spend more'n five hundred cases, and I go to the legislature sure. If I get there some of these corporations that knocked me out afore will squeal--you hear me! No, you don't spend no money on me. I wish you could git out and hustle, though. But you ain't no hustler, nohow. Want any drug laws passed?"

Corkey must do the greater part of the talking. He sits beside the bed carrying an atmosphere of sympathy that the feverish lover needs. Gradually the thoughts of the sympathizer fix on the glass graduate. It tickles his membranes. His head quakes, his tongue whirs, he jars the great bottles outside with his sneeze.

The tears start from his eyes, his throat rebels at its misusage, his big red handkerchief comes out. It makes a sharp contrast with his jet black hair and mustache.

"Old man," he said, "do you suppose your bone-sawers could cut that out of me? It makes me forgit things sometimes. Oh, yes, yes! That puts me in mind! I came to tell you this morning that Mrs. Lockwin was coming over to thank you!"

"It's time," whispers the lover, bravely.

"I told her to come on. She needn't be afraid of you. I tell you she was mighty glad when I tell her you was a friend of mine."

There is a click at the door-latch. The patient starts. Corkey looks out into the store.

"Here she is!" whispers Corkey, smoothing the coverlet. "How d'ye do, Mrs. Lockwin? Just step in here. Mr. Chalmers is not able to sit up."

"I heard he was hurt," says Esther. "Poor man! I owe him so much!"

It is perhaps well that David Lockwin has had no warning of this supreme event. It seems to him like the last day. It is the Second Coming. A hundred little wounds set up their stings, for which the husband is ever thankful. He can hear her out there in the store. He can feel her presence. She appears at his door! She stands at the foot of his couch! She, the ineffable!

"Oh!" she exclaims, not expecting to see a man so badly wounded, so highly bandaged.

"Nothing at all serious, Mrs. Lockwin," explains Corkey.

"Oh, I am so very sorry," says the lady. "Mr. Chalmers, you find me unable to express my feelings. I cannot tell you how many things I should like to explain, and how seriously I am embarrassed by the evils I have brought on you. I dare say only that I am a person of large means, and am sensible that I cannot repay you. I owe my life to your noble act. If I can ever be of service to you, please to command me. I shall certainly testify my regard for you in some proper way, but it afflicts me to feel that you are so much worse hurt than I was by the runaway. I lost a noble husband. If he had been alive you would not have been left unthanked and unserved for so long a time."

It distresses Corkey.

"That's what he was--a white man!"

David Lockwin is dumb. But he thinks he is saying: "I am David Lockwin! I am David Lockwin!"

"It is a sweet remembrance, now." Her voice grows clearer. "They tell me I did wrong to mourn so bitterly. I suppose I did. Mr. Chalmers, I should like to entertain you on your recovery. How singular! This is our old family drug store! Didn't Dr. Floddin keep here? Poor Dr. Floddin! Oh! David! David! Good-bye, Mr. Chalmers."

"He's not badly hurt at all," says Corkey, "you mustn't worry over that."

"I'm so glad, Mr. Corkey."

It is the autumn of a great misery. The woman is righting herself. She is trying to listen to the advice of society. Lockwin, by dying, committed a crime against the first circles. "A failure to live is a gigantic failure," says Mrs. Grundy.

David Lockwin listens to every movement. The widow tarries.

"Send me a dozen large bottles of that extract," she says, choosing a variety of odors. She orders a munificent bill of fancy goods. The clerk moves with astonishing celerity.

The patient suppresses his groans.

"Oh! Chalmers is well off," says Corkey.

"I'm glad," says Esther, "poor man! Good-bye, Mr. Corkey. You are neglecting me lately. I hope you will be elected. I wish I could vote. Oh, yes, I guess the clerk may give me a stock of white notepaper. Do you believe it, Mr. Corkey, I haven't a scrap about the house that isn't mourning paper! Yes, that will do. Send plenty. Good-bye. Come over and tell me about politics. Tell me something that will make life seem pleasant. I'm tired of my troubles. I think I'm forgetting David. Good-bye."

BOOK IV

GEORGE HARPWOOD

CHAPTER I

CORKEY'S GOOD SCHEME

The courtly and affable George Harpwood has fought the good fight and is finishing the course. It is he who has labored with the prominent citizens. It is he who has moved the great editors to place David Lockwin in the western pantheon--to pay him the honors due to Lincoln and Douglas. It is Harpwood who has carried the banquet to success. It is he who, in the midnight of Esther Lockwin's grief, prepared for her confidential reading those long and scholarly essays of consolation which she studied so gratefully. Mr. Harpwood did not put his lucubrations in the care of Dr. Tarpion. Each and every one was written for no other eye but Esther's.

While Dr. Tarpion was holding the husband at bay, Dr. Tarpion was rapidly overcoming a prejudice against Harpwood.

"Really, the man has been invaluable to me," the administrator now vows. "No one could deliberately and selfishly enter the grief-life of such a widow."

For Harpwood, smarting with a double defeat, in the loss of Esther and the election of Lockwin, has at once devoted himself to the saddest offices. He has been diligent in all kinds of weather. He has discreetly avoided the outer appearance of personal service. But he has filled the place of spiritual comforter to Esther Lockwin, and has filled it well.

If you ask what friends Mrs. Lockwin has, the servants will speak of Dr. Tarpion first, of the architects, and of Corkey. Harpwood they do not mention. He may have called--so have a thousand other gentlemen. They have rarely seen Mrs. Lockwin, for she has been at the cenotaph, the hospital, and the grave of little Davy.

So long as Harpwood's suit has flourished by letter, why should the less cautious method of speech be interposed? To-day, Esther could not sustain the intermission of the usual consolatory epistle.

George Harpwood is one of those characters who have many friends and are friends to few. Others need him--not he them. He can please if he attempt the task, and if the task be exceedingly difficult, he will become infatuated with it.

He will then grow sincere. At least he believes he is sincere. Thus his patience is superb.

His manners are widely praised. If he have served Esther Lockwin with rare personal devotion, it cannot be denied that it has piqued many other beautiful, eligible and desirable women.

He can well support the air of a disinterested friend. The ladies generally bewail his absence from their society. Esther Lockwin must soon be warm in the praise of a gentleman who, divining the needs of a widow, has so chivalrously taken up her woes as his own. Tenderly--like a mother--he has touched upon her projects. Gladly he has accepted the mission she has given to him. At last when he brings Dr. Tarpion to the special censorship of Esther's mail, and to the fear of claimants, George Harpwood is in command of the situation.

When a man cultured in all the arts that please, gives himself to the fascinating of a particular person, male or female, that man does not often fail. Where the prize is five millions he ought to play his highest trumps.

This is what George Harpwood has done. Sometimes he has paused to admire his own unselfishness. Sometimes, after a drenching on account of the David Lockwin Annex--a costly fabric--Mr. Harpwood marvels that men should be created so for the solace of widows! The other ladies show their discontent. Fortunes are on every hand, and Esther is like Niobe, all tears. Why does Harpwood turn all tears, weeping for Lockwin? This causes Harpwood to be himself astonished.

It is only genius that can adapt itself to an environment so lugubrious. It is only genius that can unhorse suspicion itself, leaving even the would-be detractor to admit that Mr. Harpwood is a kind man--as he certainly is.

"Who would not be kind for five millions?" he asks, yet he the next moment may deny that he wants the five millions.

It is a fine fortitude that George Harpwood can show upon occasion. It was he who, lost in the opium habit, went to his room for two weeks, and kept the pieces of opium and bottles of morphine within sight on his mantel, touching none of the drug--curing himself.

He could serve Esther as long as Jacob served Laban. He could end by the conquest of himself. While he shall be doubtful of his own selfishness, all others must be glad that Esther is given into hands so gentle and intelligent.

Mrs. Grundy knows little about this. Esther Lockwin has offended Mrs. Grundy by a long absence from the world.

If Esther now feel a warm glow in her heart; if she pass a dreary day while Mr. Harpwood is necessarily absent, nobody suspects it--except Mr. Harpwood. It has not displeased the disinterested friend of Esther Lockwin to note the upward drift of his political opportunities. It is silently taken for granted that he is a coming man. Whenever he shall cease his disinterested attentions to the widow it is clear he will be a paragon. And the critics who might aver as much, did they know the case, would be scandalized if he so mistreated the lady who has come to lean on him.

"In doing good to others," says George Harpwood, "we do the greatest good to ourselves."

Yet one must not devote himself to a rich lady beyond a period of reasonable length. One's own business must be rescued from neglect. If this doctrine be taught skillfully Esther Lockwin will learn that she must show her gratitude in a substantial manner.

Five millions, for instance.

After that crisis secrecy may be, less sternly imposed. If the lady, in her illness--ah! that was a shock to Harpwood, that runaway--if the lady, in her illness, demand personal calls, which must certainly let loose the gossips--after all, it is her matter. If Esther Lockwin desire to see George Harpwood in the day-time, in the evening--all the time--so be it.

Is it the bright face of Esther Lockwin that spurs Corkey to his grand enterprise? What has kept the short man so many months in silence? Why is it he has never gotten beyond the matter of the lounge in the fore-cabin of the Africa? This afternoon he will speak. It is a good scheme. It can be fixed--especially by a woman.

"She can stand it if he can," says Corkey, who reckons on the resurrection of David Lockwin.

So the face that was dark at State street becomes self-satisfied at Prairie avenue. Corkey is picturesque as he raps his cane on the marble stairs.

"Bet your sweet life none of this don't scare me!" he soliloquizes, touching the stateliness of the premises.

He enters. He comes forth later, meeting another caller in the vestibule. It is a dark face that the Commodore carries to the bedside of David Lockwin, around on State street.

Corkey sits down. Then he stands up. He concludes he will not talk, but it is a false conclusion. He will talk on the patient's case.

"How slow you git on, old man."

"Not at all. I am getting well," is the cheerful reply. Corkey is in trouble. It is, therefore, time for Lockwin to give him sympathy. "Corkey is a good fellow," thinks Lockwin, gazing contentedly on his caller.

"I'm afraid it ain't no use," says Corkey, half to himself. "I ain't had no luck since I let the mascot go to the league nine," he says, more audibly.

"I am quite happy," Lockwin says. "It will be a sufficient reward to look like other folks. Only a few weeks of this. But it is a trial."

"It's more of a trial, old man, than I like to see you undertake."

"Yet I am happy. It will be a success. Wonderful, isn't it?"

"Pretty wonderful!" Yet Corkey does not look it.

The man in the bandages thinks upon what he has suffered with his face. He blesses the day he was permitted by Providence to stop that runaway. All is coming about in good order. It needed the patience of love--of love, the impatient. He is so sanguine to-day that he must push Corkey a little regarding that scheme.

"Yes, it is wonderful!" says Corkey with affected animation, recovering his presence of mind.

"Have you been over at our friend's lately?" The question comes with the deepest excitement. The countenance of Corkey falls instantly.

"Yes, just come from there."

"Are things all smiling over there?"

"Yes. They're too smiling."

"Did you see Dr. Tarpion?"

"Oh, I never see him! Things are too smiling! You'll never catch me there again."

Lockwin starts.

"She can't play none of her high games onto me. Bet your sweet life! If she don't want to listen to reason, it's none of my funeral. I say to her--and I ought to say it afore--I say to her how would she like to see her old man."

The patient turns away from Corkey. The oldest wounds sting like a hive of hornets.

"Well, you ought to see the office she give me! She rip and stave and tear! She talk of political slander, and libel, and disgrace, and all that. She rise up big right afore me, and come nigh swearing she would kill such a David Lockwin on sight. There wasn't no such a David Lockwin at all. Her husband was a nobleman. She wished I was fit to black his boots--do you mind?--and you bet your sweet life I was gitting pretty hot myself!"

The thought of it sets Corkey coughing. A thousand wounds are piercing David Lockwin, yet he does not lose a word.

"Then she cool off a considerable, and ask me for to excuse her. 'Oh, it is all right,' says I, a little tart. 'That will be all right.'

"Then she fall right on her knees, and pray to David Lockwin to forgive her for even thinking he isn't dead.

"Now it was only Wednesday that a duck in this town knocked me out at the primaries--played the identical West Side car-barn game on me! Yes, sir, fetched over 500 street-sweepers to my primaries--machine candidate and all that--oh! he's a jim-dandy!"

"I'm sorry for you, Corkey," the wretched husband says, and thus escapes for a moment from his own terror.

"Yes, it was bad medicine. So I wasn't taking much off anybody. I gets up pretty stiff--this way, and says: 'Good day, Mrs. Lockwin. I guess I can't be no more use to you, nohow.' And just as I was pulling my hat off the peg there comes the very duck that knocked me out--right there! And she chipper to him as sweet as if David Lockwin had been dead twenty years. And he as sweet on her, and right before me! Ugh!"

"Weren't you mistaken, Corkey!" feebly asks the man in the bandages.

"Wasn't I mistaken? Oh, yes! I suppose I can't tell a pair that wants to bite each other! She that was a giving me the limit a minute before was as cunning as a kitten to that rooster. Ugh! it makes me ill!"

"Who is he?" asks David Lockwin.

"He's Mister George Harpwood," cries Corkey bitterly, "and if he aint no snooker, then you needn't tell me I ever see one!"

CHAPTER II

HAPPINESS AND PEACE

Esther Lockwin looks upon George Harpwood as her savior.

"I wanted to be happy," she smiles. "I did not believe I could exist in that desolate state. You came to me! You came to me!"

"Emerson declares that all men honor love because it looks up, not down; aspires, not despairs," says Harpwood. The friend of Esther's widowhood has quoted to her nearly every consolatory remark of the philosophers.

"Shall we live here?" she asks, willing to go to Sahara.

"Certainly. Here I have the best future. You are a helpful soul, Esther. I shall rely upon you."

"We are too sad to be true lovers," she sighs. "Yet I could wish to have you all to myself."

The man is flattered. He, too, is in love. "I will go with you if you would be happier amid other scenes," he suggests.

"I have nothing to be ashamed of, have I?" she asks proudly, thinking of her noble David and his fragrant memory.

"If I am to have a widow I should like such a widow," the man replies.

"I pray God you shall never have one," she vows.

Both are exquisitely happy. Neither can say aught that displeases or hurts the other. For Esther it is the dawn--the glorious sun rising out of a winter night. She never had a lover before.

With George Harpwood it is the crowning of an edifice built with infinitely more pains than the David Lockwin

Annex.

The noise of all this is abroad. "The wedding will be private," says Mrs. Grundy with sorrow. "But the Mrs. Harpwood that is to be will this winter entertain on a lavish scale. She is devoted to Harpwood's political aspirations."

"That man Harpwood, if he gets to Congress this winter, will begin a great career. I wouldn't be surprised to see him President," says one bank cashier to another.

"Well, he's marrying the woman who can help him most. The labor people are all on her side."

"When shall the day be, Esther?" the friend of her sorrows asks.

"Let it be the last Thursday of next month at 6 o'clock," she replies, and is far more peaceful than when David Lockwin asked her to marry him far on in the long ago, for on that night she cried.

"I suppose the number of guests should be small," he notes.

"Only our nearest friends. A Thursday, dear, at 6 o'clock."

The neighborhood is agog. The servants outdo each other in gossip. There are household arrangements which are to turn a gloomy abode into a merry dwelling-place.

The decorators must work night and day. The mansion is as brilliant with gas as on the evening Esther Wandrell put her hands in David Lockwin's and listened rapturously to his praise of the beautiful child.

Is that a shadow skulking about this corner! Probably it is some night policeman employed by the widow.

Certainly it is a faithful watch the figure keeps on the great house where the decorators toil.

"I'm glad I'm not rich," says one pedestrian to his companion.

"They're awfully afraid of burglary," says the companion.

CHAPTER III

AT 3 IN THE MORNING

"Where is Chalmers?" asks Corkey.

"Mr. Chalmers is not in," answers the clerk.

"I want to see him," says Corkey, authoritatively.

"He is not in," retorts the clerk with spirit.

"Has he sold out?"

"No."

"When will he be in?"

"I can't tell you. Excuse me." A customer waits.

"Yes, yes, yes!" growls Corkey. But he never was busier. He is trying to do his work at the office and to get through election week.

"Where is Chalmers?" Again Corkey is at the drug store. "See here, my friend, I don't take no street-car way down here to have you do no cunning act. Is Chalmers in town?"

"I do not know."

The clerk is telling the truth, and is in turn offended. "I do not know," he says, resolutely.

Corkey is convinced. "I'll bet it's true," he says, suddenly summing up the situation.

He hurries away. The weather is wet and cold.

Corkey is drenched, and of all things he dreads a drenching. For that he wears the thickest of clothes.

Three hours later he is known to be badly beaten at the polls. He is denounced as a sore-head, a bolter, and a fool.

Corkey goes to his home. On the night of the fourth day he appears in the yellow light of the telegraph-room.

"Commodore, we're sorry for you. Take it easy, and get back to work. No man can live, doing as you've done. You were up all the time, weren't you?"

Corkey's light is burning because the other editors need it. He sits with his coat on, his face on his hands, his elbows on the table.

"I was up the last six days," he explains. "I just got out of bed now."

"Do you good to sleep," says the night editor.

"What day is it?"

"Saturday."

"Well, I go to sleep some time Wednesday. I sleep ever since."

There is a chorus of astonishment. "It will save your life, Corkey. We thought the election would kill you."

"I'm sleepy yet."

"Go back and sleep more."

"Good-bye, boys. I'm much obliged to you all. I'm out of politics. They got all my stuff. I'm worried over a friend, too."

"Too bad, Corkey, too bad."

These editors, whose very food is the human drama, have not lost sight of the terrible chapter of Corkey's activity, anxiety and inevitable disappointment.

"Too bad, isn't it!" the telegraph editor says. "Had any fires?"

"It makes me almost cry," answers the assistant telegraph editor. "Fires? Yes, I've enough for a display head."

"We must go and look after Corkey if he isn't here to-morrow night," observes the night editor. "He's bad off."

A little after midnight there is a loud rattle at the door of the drug store.

The prescription clerk at last opens the door.

"Is Chalmers home yet?"

The clerk is angry. "You have no right to call me up for that!" he avers. "I need my sleep."

"You don't need sleep no worse than I do, young feller."

The door is shut, and Corkey must go home.

When the comrades next see Corkey he is down with pneumonia. His fever rages. Sores break out about his mouth. "I have a friend I want to find awful bad," he says, fretting and rolling. "Chalmers! He runs a drug store at 803 State street, down beyond Eighteenth. But I'm afraid he ain't to be found. I'm afraid he's disappeared. I couldn't find him last week, nor last night, but it was pretty late when I git down there."

The doctor is grave. "He must not worry. Find this Chalmers. Tell him he must come at once if he wishes to make his friend easier."

"I must see Chalmers. I'm sicker than they think. I'm tired out. I can't stand such a fever. That pillow's wet. That's better. It's cold, though. I guess my fever's going. Now I'm getting hot again. I do want to see Chalmers."

The patient tosses and fumes. The comrades hurry to Chalmers' drug store, as others have done.

"The proprietor is out of the city," the clerk answers to all inquirers. "He left no address."

"If he arrives, tell him to hasten to Mr. Corkey's. Mr. Corkey is fatally ill with pneumonia. He must see Mr. Chalmers."

Twenty-four hours pass, with Corkey no better--moaning and asking for Chalmers. All other affairs are as nothing.

Chalmers does not come.

Twenty-four hours more go by. The doctor now allows none of the comrades to see the sick man.

He does not roll and toss so much. But he inquires feebly and constantly for Chalmers.

At midnight he calls his wife. "You've heard me speak of Chalmers, sissy," he says.

There is a ring on the door of the flat.

"That's him now."

But it is a neighbor, come to stay the night out.

"Lock the door. Open that drawer, sissy. Get out that big letter."

The trembling little woman obeys.

"Sissy, did you know we was broke?"

"Our gold?"

"Yes, it's all gone; every nickel. But I wouldn't bother you with that if Chalmers would come. Now, don't cry, and listen, for I'm awful sick. This letter here is to Mrs. Lockwin, and it will fix *you*. And I want to see Chalmers, to see that he stands by her. See?"

The wife listens. She knows there is a letter to Mrs. Lockwin.

"Now I'm going to give something away. When I see Chalmers in his drug store, he sits on his chair so I know it's a dead ringer on Lockwin. Chalmers is Lockwin, sissy. Don't you blow it. I've never told a soul till you. I've schemed and schemed to fix it up, but I never see a man in such a hole. He don't know I'm onto him. But I've no use for this Harpwood, that did me up when he had no need to. I wasn't in his way. A week from Thursday night Harpwood is to marry Mrs. Lockwin. It isn't no good. I want you to see Lockwin, and tell him for me that if his story gets out it wasn't me, and I want you to tell him for me that he mustn't let that poor widow commit no bigamy. It's an awful hole, that's what it is! It is tough on him!"

He has worked on the problem for years.

The man groans. There is a rap on the door. "Hold up a minute. I wouldn't mix in it, but I've done a good deal for the two of 'em, and I've lost a good deal by Harpwood's play on me. I expect Harpwood will set her against you, and I want her to do for you, pretty. So you tell Lockwin he must act quick, and mustn't let her commit no bigamy. She's too good a woman, and you need money bad, sissy. All my twenty-pieces! All my twenty-pieces! My yellow stuff! Will you see Chalmers, sissy? Call him Chalmers. He's Lockwin, just the same, but call him Chalmers."

The wife kisses her husband, and puts the letter back in the drawer.

"Sissy."

"Yes."

"I forgot one thing. Git a little mourning handkerchief out of my hip-pocket. There ain't no gun there. You needn't be afraid."

The woman at last secures a handkerchief which looks the worse for Corkey's long, though reverent, custody.

"Wash it, sissy, and show it up to Mrs. Lockwin. I reckon it will steer her back to the day when she felt pretty good toward me. Be careful of that Harpwood. He ain't no use. I know it. She give me that wipe her own self--yes, she did! God bless her."

The woman once more kisses the sick man.

"The gold, sissy!"

"Never mind it," she says.

"You think it's some good--this letter--don't you, sissy?"

"Of course I do."

"I'm much obliged to you, sissy. Let in those people, now."

The doctor enters. Corkey is at ease. He sinks into the wet pillow. He closes his eyes.

"Did Chalmers come?" asks the physician.

"Never mind him," says Corkey faintly.

The night goes on. The yellow lights still color the telegraph-room. At 3 o'clock the copy boy enters hurriedly.

"Corkey just died," he says, electrifying the comrades. "He just gave one of his most awful sneezes, and it killed him right off. The doctor says he burst a vein."

Eighty lights are burning in the composing-room. Eighty compositors--cross old dogs, most of them--are ending a long and weary day's toil. There are bunches of heads rising over the cases in eager inquiry.

"Corkey's sneeze killed him!" says Slug I.

"Glad of it," growls one cross dog.

"Glad of it," growls another cross dog

"Glad of it," goes from alley to alley about the broad floor.

"Who's got 48 X?" inquires the man with the last piece of copy. It is the end of Corkey's obituary.

"This will be a scoop," says the copy-cutter.

The father of the chapel has written some handsome resolutions to make the article longer.

"Come up here, all you fellows! Chapel meeting!"

The resolutions are passed with a mighty "Aye!" They are already in type. A long subscription paper for the widow finds ready signers. No one stands back.

The men wash their hands, standing like cattle at a manger.

"It's tough!" says Slug 1.

"You bet it's tough!" says Slug 10, the crossest old dog of the pack.

"They say he went broke at election," says Slug 50.

"If his widow could learn to distribute type she could do mighty well over here. I'd give her 4,000 to throw in every day," says Slug 10. "Oh, let go of that towel!"

The men return to their cases, put on their coats and wrap their white throats. This pneumonia is a bad thing, anyhow.

Tramp, tramp, the small army goes down the long, iron stairways.

"Did you hear about Corkey?" they ask as they go. "Corkey had a heart in him like an ox."

"Bet he had," echoes up from the nethermost iron stairway.

THE BRIDEGROOM

Esther Lockwin's wedding day is at hand. Her mansion is this afternoon a suite of odorous bowers. Happy the man who may be secure in her affection!

Such a man is George Harpwood. Let the November mists roll in from Lake Michigan. "It is no bed out there for me," thinks the bridegroom, whose other days have often been gloomy enough in November.

Let the smoke of the tall chimneys tumble into the streets and pirouette backward and forward in black eddies, giving to the city an aspect forbidding to even the manner-born. George Harpwood feels no mist. He sees no smoke. It is the tide of industry. It is the earnest of Esther's five millions.

"My God, what a prize!" he exclaims. The marriage license is procured. The minister is well and cannot fail. There is a bank-bill in the vest pocket, convenient for the wedding fee.

It is wise to visit the hotel once more and inspect one's attire. This city is undeniably sooty. A groom with a sooty shirt bosom would not reflect credit on Esther Lockwin.

"Magnificent woman!" he cries, as he changes his linen once more. He thinks he would marry her if she were poor.

It is getting well toward the event. Would it be correct to go early? Where would he stay? Would he annoy the bride? What time is it? Let us see. Four-thirty! Yes, now to keep this linen white. How would it do to put a silk handkerchief over it--this way? Where are those silk handkerchiefs? Must have one! Must have one! Not a one! Where is that bell?

He touches the bell. He awaits the boy, who comes, and goes for a handkerchief.

He sits upon the side of the bed and listens to the bickerings of the waiters in the hall of the dining-room below. Dinner is now to be served.

He studies the lock-history of the door.

"Lots of people have broken in here," he muses.

He passes over the rules--well he knows them!

The electric lights on the street throw dim shadows on the gas-lit wall--factories, depots, vessels, docks, saw-mills. The phantasmagoria pleases Mr. Harpwood.

"At 6 o'clock," he smiles, "I shall be the most powerful man in these parts. I shall have the employment of nearly 15,000 men. I shall be the husband of the woman who built the David Lockwin Annex--"

The man pauses.

"The David Lockwin Annex," he sneers, "No! No! No! It was a splendid pile. It was a splendid pile."

The man grows sordid.

"But it cost a splendid pile. Pshaw, George Harpwood, will anything ever satisfy you? How about that hospital? Didn't it give you your opportunity?"

The boy returns. The man sits on his bed and muses:

"How differently things go in this world! See how easily Lockwin fell into all this luck! See how I have hewn the wood and drawn the water!"

Something of disquiet takes possession of the bride-groom.

"I'm awfully tired of consolatory epistles. I must keep Esther from being a hen. She's dreadfully in earnest."

As the goal is neared, this swift runner grows weary. The David Lockwin Annex never seemed so unpleasant before.

It has taken longer to rearrange his linen and secure a faultless appearance than he would have believed. He hastens to don his overcoat. He smiles as he closes the door of his little bedroom at the hotel. He goes to take the vast Wandrell mansion.

Why is his coachman so careless? After 5 o'clock already. The bridegroom is late! He must bargain with a street jehu. But, pshaw! where can he find a clean vehicle? He hurries along the pavement.

His own driver, approaches. "I went to the stables to put the last touches on her. Come around to Wabash avenue and see how she shines."

It is not too late after all, and the groom will turn out of a faultless equipage at the very moment. Ladies of experience, like Mrs. Lockwin, notice all such things.

"In fact," says George Harpwood, "there is no other man in town whom she could marry, even if she loved him. Might as well expect her to marry Corkey. Poor dead Corkey!"

It is pleasant, this riding down Prairie avenue to one's wedding.

"Splendid! Splendid!" cries the ardent soldier of fortune, as the blaze of the Wandrell mansion flashes through the plate-glass windows, of his carriage. It is the largest private residence in the city. "Splendid!" he repeats, and leaps out on the curb. A messenger is hurrying away.

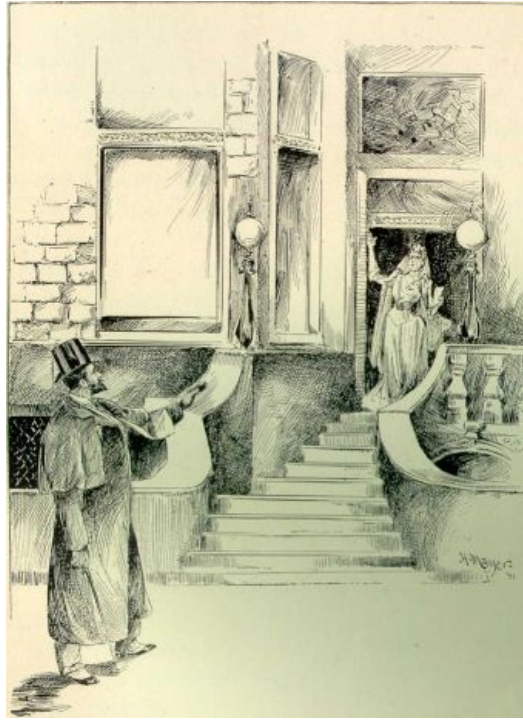
"Is that Esther on the portico? What an impulsive woman."

His back is towards the carriage to close the silver-mounted door. He turns.

It must be a mistake! Is he blind? The mansion, which was a moment before ablaze, is now all dark! But the bride

still stands under the lamp on the portico, statuesque as Zenobia or Medea. The statue grasps a paper. Like Galatea, she speaks:

"Is that you, George?"



[Illustration: But the bride still stands under the lamp on the portico, statuesque as Zenobia or Medea.]

"I have come, my love. What has happened?"

"Listen!" she commands, and reads by the portico light:

Thursday Afternoon, Nov. 30.

ESTHER, MY WIFE AND WIDOW:

It is absolutely necessary that you should come at once to the drug store formerly kept by Dr. Floddin, at 803 State street.

Bring an escort.

This step must be taken in your own interest--certainly not in the interest of your husband.

DAVID LOCKWIN.

"Come!" she says, taking her lover by the hand as a teacher might take a child.

But George Harpwood is not at his wits' end.

"Get into my carriage, Esther," he suggests softly.

"No," she says sternly. "We will walk thither."

The pair go round the corner into a mist made azure by a vast building which is lighted at every window to the seventh story. It rises three blocks away like a storm-cloud over the lake.

It is the David Lockwin Annex. The bride hurries faster than the bridegroom would have her walk. He seizes her arm.

"My dear," he whispers in those accents which seem to have lost their magic power, "it is merely a claimant. I was expecting it, and I'll put him in the penitentiary for it. Do not be alarmed by forgers. It is only a forgery."

CHAPTER V

AT SIX O'CLOCK

Through the mist and the smoke a red and a green light shine out on State street.

The door of the little store is locked. The bride's hand has rattled the latch.

A silver star can be seen in the store. It is an officer in charge of the premises. He hurries to the door.

"Are you Mrs. Lockwin?"

"I am. Let him in, too." The officer has willed to exclude the bridegroom.

"Hadn't he better wait outside?"

"Let him in!"

"Here is a packet addressed to you." The officer hands to the bride a thick letter. "Take this chair, madam."

The bride sits down, her back toward the lights in the window. The bridegroom stands close behind her.

"Be firm, Esther. I'll put him in the penitentiary. I'll put him in the penitentiary!"

The bride opens the packet. Many folded documents fall to her lap. She is quick to spread out the chief letter.

The bridegroom pulls the silk handkerchief off his white shirt-front and wipes his perspiring forehead again and again. He leans over her shoulder to read. The writing is large and distinct:

Thursday Afternoon, Nov. 30.

MY DEARLY BELOVED WIFE AND WIDOW:

It may be barely possible that I have lived these years of shame and degradation to some good purpose, and for the following reasons: The man whom you now love so well--the man whom you are about to marry--George Harpwood--is an adventurer and a criminal.

I inclose documents which show that on Monday, the 4th of August, 1873, this George Harpwood, described and photographed, married Mary Berners, who now lives at Crescentville, a suburb of Philadelphia. She bears the name of Mrs. Mary Harpwood, and has not been divorced to her knowledge. Beside deserting her, Harpwood robbed her and reduced her to penury.

I inclose documents showing that five years earlier, or on Wednesday, the 8th of January, 1868, George Harpwood eloped with a child wife, Eleanor Hastings, and basely deserted her within four weeks. She now resides with her sister-in-law, Mrs. Moses Hastings, on Ox-Bow Prairie, a few miles south of Sturgis, Michigan.

It is my request that the little store and its belongings, including the bank account of Robert Chalmers, so-called, be given to the widow of the late Walter B. Corkey.

The bitterness of life is yours. But the bitterness of death is mine.

Your husband, who loves you,

DAVID LOCKWIN.

There is a click at the door. The bride hears it not. The documents fall to the floor. There are photographs of George Harpwood; there are green seals; there are many attestations.

The bride must raise her eyes now. She sees the star of the officer. She reads the number--803. Is that from David, too?

Ah, yes, she must turn her head. The bridegroom is gone!

A man enters, in hot haste and intense excitement. Is it the bridegroom returning?

It is Dr. Tarpion. He seizes her by the hand.

"My dear friend!" he cries. "My dear friend!" he repeats, "I have just now learned that your husband is still living."

But she does not hear it. She can only look gratefully toward the administrator, clinging to his hand.

She gazes in a dazed way on the white prescription-booth beyond the square stove; on the bottles of blue copper-water on each corner. Higher, the partition rises into view.

She meets the eyes of the officer.

A patrol wagon clangs and clamors down State street. It will stop before the door.

Officers enter from the patrol wagon. "Where is that suicide?" they ask in a low voice, seeing a bride.

The officer in charge steps to the side of the bride. He speaks tenderly--the tenderness of a rough man with a kind heart. "Madam," he says, "you can go behind the partition and see the body. No one will come in for a few moments."

The bride rises. She hurries toward the little room where Robert Chalmers suffered and died.

"Oh, David!" she cries. "Oh, David! Oh, God!"

"I guess we will not need the wagon," the officers say among themselves, and step out on the sidewalk.

The little clock behind the partition strikes 6.

A dozen factory whistles set up their dismal concert out in the blue mist.

THE END.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK DAVID LOCKWIN—THE PEOPLE'S IDOL ***

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