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GULMORE, THE BOSS.

By Frank Harris

The habits of the Gulmore household were in some respects primitive. Though it was not yet seven o'clock two negro girls were clearing away the breakfast things under the minute supervision of their mistress, an angular, sharp-faced woman with a reedy voice, and nervously abrupt movements. Near the table sat a girl of nineteen absorbed in a book. In an easy-chair by the open bay-window a man with a cigar in his mouth was reading a newspaper. Jonathan Byrne Gulmore, as he always signed himself, was about fifty years of age; his heavy frame was muscular, and the coarse dark hair and swarthy skin showed vigorous health. There was both obstinacy and combative-ness in his face with its cocked nose, low irregular forehead, thick eyebrows, and square jaw, but the deep-set grey eyes gleamed at times with humorous comprehension, and the usual expression of the countenance was far from ill-natured. As he laid the paper on his knees and looked up, he drew the eye. His size and strength seemed to be the physical equivalents of an extraordinary power of character and will. When Mrs. Gulmore followed the servants out of the room the girl rose from her chair and went towards the door. She was stopped by her father's voice:

"Ida, I want a talk with you. You'll be able to go to your books afterwards; I won't keep you long." She sat down again and laid her book on the table, while Mr. Gulmore continued:

"The election's next Monday week, and I've no time to lose." A moment's silence, and he let his question fall casually:

"You know this—Professor Roberts—don't you? He was at the University when you were there—eh?" The girl flushed slightly as she assented.

"They say he's smart, an' he ken talk. I heard him the other night; but I'd like to know what you think. Your judgment's generally worth havin'."

Forced to reply without time for reflection, Miss Gulmore said as little as possible with a great show of frankness:

"Oh, yes; he's smart, and knows Greek and Latin and German, and a great many things. The senior students used to say he knew more than all the other professors put together, and he—he thinks so too, I imagine," and she laughed intentionally, for, on hearing her own strained laughter, she blushed, and then stood up out of a nervous desire to conceal her embarrassment. But her father was looking away from her at the glowing end of his cigar; and, as she resumed her seat, he went on:

"I'm glad you seem to take no stock in him, Ida, for he's makin' himself unpleasant. I'll have to give him a lesson, I reckon, not in Greek or Latin or them things—I never had nothin' taught me beyond the 'Fourth Reader,' in old Vermont, and I've forgotten some of what I learned then—but in election work an' business I guess I ken give Professor Roberts points, fifty in a hundred, every time. Did you know he's always around

with Lawyer Hutchin's?"

"Is he? That's because of May—May Hutch-ings. Oh, she deserves him;" the girl spoke with sarcastic bitterness, "she gave herself trouble enough to get him. It was just sickening the way she acted, blushing every time he spoke to her, and looking up at him as if he were everything. Some people have no pride in them."

Her father listened impassively, and, after a pause, began his explanation:

"Wall, Ida, anyway he means to help Hutchin's in this city election. 'Tain't the first time Hutchin's has run for mayor on the Democratic ticket and come out at the little end of the horn, and I propose to whip him again. But this Professor's runnin' him on a new track, and I want some points about *him*. It's like this. At the Democratic meetin' the other night, the Professor spoke, and spoke well. What he said was popcorn; but it took with the Mugwumps—they that think themselves too high-falutin' to work with either party, jest as if organization was no good, an' a mob was as strong as an army. Wall, he talked for an hour about purity an' patriotism, and when he had warmed 'em up he went bald-headed for me. He told 'em—you ken read it all in the 'Tribune'—that this town was run by a ring, an' not run honestly; contracts were given only to members of the Republican party; all appointments were made by the ring, and never accordin' to ability—as if sich a ring could last ten years. He ended up by saying, though he was a Republican, as his father is, he intended to vote Democratic—he's domiciled here—as a protest against the impure and corrupt Boss-system which was disgracin' American political life. Twas baby talk. But it's like this. The buildin' of the branch line South has brought a lot of Irish here—they're all Democrats—and there's quite a number of Mugwumps, an' if this Professor goes about workin' them all up—what with the flannel-mouths and the rest—it might be a close finish. I'm sure to win, but if I could get some information about him, it would help me. His father's all right. We've got him down to a fine point. Prentiss, the man I made editor of the 'Herald,' knows him well; ken tell us why he left Kaintucky to come West. But I want to know somethin' about the Professor, jest to teach him to mind his own business, and leave other folk to attend to theirs. Ken you help me? Is he popular with the students and professors?"

She thought intently, while the colour rose in her cheeks; she was eager to help.

"With the students, yes. There's nothing to be done there. The professors—I don't think they like him much; he is too clever. When he came into the class-room and talked Latin to Johnson, the Professor of Latin, and Johnson could only stammer out a word or two, I guess he didn't make a friend," and the girl laughed at the recollection.

"I don't know anything else that could be brought against him. They say he is an Atheist. Would that be any use? He gave a lecture on 'Culture as a Creed' about three months ago which made some folk mad. The other professors are Christians, and, of course, all the preachers took it up. He compared Buddha with Christ, and said—oh, I remember!—that Shakespeare was the Old Testament of the English-speaking peoples. That caused some talk; they all believe in the Bible. He said, too, that 'Shakespeare was inspired in a far higher sense than St. Paul, who was thin and hard, a logic-loving bigot.' And President Campbell—he's a Presbyterian—preached the Sunday afterwards upon St Paul as the great missionary of Protestantism. I don't think the professors like him, but I don't know that they can do anything, for all the students, the senior ones, at least, are with him," and the girl paused, and tried to find out from her father's face whether what she had said was likely to be of service.

"Wall! I don't go much on them things myself, but I guess somethin' ken be done. I'll see Prentiss about it: send him to interview this President Campbell, and wake him up to a sense of his duty. This is a Christian country, I reckon," the grey eyes twinkled, "and those who teach the young should teach them Christian principles, or else—get out. I guess it ken be worked. The University's a State institution. You don't mind if he's fired out, do you?" And the searching eyes probed her with a glance.

"Oh! I don't mind," she said quickly, in a would-be careless tone, rising and going towards him, "it has nothing to do with me. He belongs to May Hutchings—let her help him, if she can. I think you're quite right to give him a lesson—he needs one badly. What right has he to come and attack you?" She had passed to her father's side, and was leaning against his shoulder. Those grey eyes saw more than she cared to reveal; they made her uncomfortable.

"Then I understand it's like this. You want him to get a real lesson? Is that it? You ken talk straight to me, Ida. I'm with you every time. You know that."

The feminine instinct of concealment worked in her, but she knew this father of hers would have plain speech, and some hidden feeling forced her violent temper to an outburst of curiously mingled hatred of the Professor and exultation in her power of injuring him.

"Why, father, it's all the same to me. I've no interest in it, except to help you. You know I never said a word against him till you asked me. But he has no business to come down and attack *you*," and the voice grew shrill. "It's shameful of him. If he were a man he'd never do it. Yes—give him a *real* lesson; teach him that those he despises are stronger than he is. Let him lose his place and be thrown out of work, then we'll see if May Hutchings," and she laughed, "will go and help him. We'll see who is—"

Her father interrupted her in the middle of a tirade which would have been complete self-revelation; but it is not to be presumed that he did this out of a delicate regard for his daughter's feelings. He had got the information he required.

"That's all right, Ida. I guess he'll get the lesson. You ken count on me. You've put me on the right track, I believe. I knew if any one could help me, you'd be able to. Nobody knows what's in you better'n I do. You're smarter'n any one I know, and I know a few who think they're real smart—"

In this vein he continued soothing his daughter's pride, and yet speaking in an even, impersonal tone, as if merely stating facts.

"Now I've got to go. Prentiss'll be waiting for me at the office."

While driving to the office, Mr. Gulmore's thoughts, at first, were with his daughter. "I don't know why, but I suspicioned that. That's why she left the University before graduatin', an' talked of goin' East, and makin' a

name for herself on the stage. That Professor's foolish. Ida's smart and pretty, and she'll have a heap of money some day. The ring has a few contracts on hand still—he's a fool. How she talked: she remembered all that lecture—every word; but she's young yet. She'd have given herself away if I hadn't stopped her. I don't like any one to do that; it's weak. But she means business every time, just as I do; she means him to be fired right out, and then she'd probably go and cry over him, and want me to put him back again. But no. I guess not. That's not the way I work. I'd be willin' for him to stay away, and leave me alone, but as she wants him punished, he shall be, and she mustn't interfere at the end. It'll do her good to find out that things can't both be done and undone, if she's that sort. But p'r'aps she won't want to undo them. When their pride's hurt women are mighty hard—harder than men by far.... I wonder how long it'll take to get this Campbell to move. I must start right in; I hain't got much time."

As soon as her father left her, Miss Ida hurried to her own room, in order to recover from her agitation, and to remove all traces of it. She was an only child, and had accordingly a sense of her own importance, which happened to be uncorrected by physical deficiencies. Not that she was astonishingly beautiful, but she was tall and just good-looking enough to allow her to consider herself a beauty. Her chief attraction was her form, which, if somewhat flat-chested, had a feline flexibility rarer and more seductive than she imagined. She was content to believe that nature had fashioned her to play the part in life which, she knew, was hers of right. Her name, even, was most appropriate—dignified. Ida should be queen-like, stately; the oval of her face should be long, and not round, and her complexion should be pallid; colour in the cheeks made one look common. Her dark hair, too, pleased her; everything, in fact, save her eyes; they were of a nameless, agate-like hue, and she would have preferred them to be violet. That would have given her face the charm of unexpectedness, which she acknowledged was in itself a distinction. And Miss Ida loved everything that conduced to distinction, everything that flattered her pride with a sense of her own superiority. It seemed as if her mother's narrowness of nature had confined and shot, so to speak, all the passions and powers of the father into this one characteristic of the daughter. That her father had risen to influence and riches by his own ability did not satisfy her. She had always felt that the Hutchingses and the society to which they belonged, persons who had been well educated for generations, and who had always been more or less well off, formed a higher class. It was the longing to become one of them that had impelled her to study with might and main. Even in her school-days she had recognized that this was the road to social eminence. The struggle had been arduous. In the Puritan surroundings of middle-class life her want of religious training and belief had almost made a pariah of the proud, high-tempered girl, and when as a clever student of the University and a daughter of one of the richest and most powerful men in the State, she came into a circle that cared as little about Christian dogmas as she did, she attributed the comparative coolness with which her companions treated her, to her father's want of education, rather than to the true cause, her own domineering temper. As she had hated her childish playmates, who, instructed by their mothers, held aloof from the infidel, so she had grown to detest the associates of her girlhood, whose parents seemed, by virtue of manners and education, superior to hers. The aversion was acrid with envy, and had fastened from the beginning on her competitor as a student and her rival in beauty, Miss May Hutchings. Her animosity was intensified by the fact that, when they entered the Sophomore class together, Miss May had made her acquaintance, had tried to become friends with her, and then, for some inscrutable reason, had drawn coldly away. By dint of working twice as hard as May, Ida had managed to outstrip her, and to begin the Junior year as the first of the class; but all the while she was conscious that her success was due to labour, and not to a larger intelligence. And with the coming of the new professor of Greek, this superiority, her one consolation, was called in question.

Professor Roberts had brought about a revolution in the University. He was young and passionately devoted to his work; had won his Doctor's degree at Berlin *summa cum laude*, and his pupils soon felt that he represented a standard of knowledge higher than they had hitherto imagined as attainable, and yet one which, he insisted, was common in the older civilization of Europe. It was this nettling comparison, enforced by his mastery of difficulties, which first aroused the ardour of his scholars. In less than a year they passed from the level of youths in a high school to that of University students. On the best heads his influence was magical. His learning and enthusiasm quickened their reverence for scholarship, but it was his critical faculty which opened to them the world of art, and nerved them to emulation.

"Until one realizes the shortcomings of a master," he said in a lecture, "it is impossible to understand him or to take the beauty of his works to heart. When Sophocles repeats himself—the Electra is but a feeble study for the Antigone, or possibly a feeble copy of it—we get near the man; the limitations of his outlook are characteristic: when he deforms his Ajax with a tag of political partisanship, his servitude to surroundings defines his conscience as an artist; and when painting by contrasts he poses the weak Ismene and Chrysothemis as foils to their heroic sisters, we see that his dramatic power in the essential was rudimentary. Yet Mr. Matthew Arnold, a living English poet, writes that Sophocles 'saw life steadily and saw it whole.' This is true of no man, not of Shakespeare nor of Goethe, much less of Sophocles or Racine. The phrase itself is as offensively out of date as the First Commandment." The bold, incisive criticism had a singular fascination for his hearers, who were too young to remark in it the crudeness that usually attaches to originality.

Miss Hutchings was the first of the senior students to yield herself to the new influence. In the beginning Miss Gulmore was not attracted by Professor Roberts; she thought him insignificant physically; he was neat of dress too, and ingenuously eager in manner—all of which conflicted with her ideal of manhood. It was but slowly that she awoke to a consciousness of his merits, and her awakening was due perhaps as much to jealousy of May Hutchings as to the conviction that with Professor Roberts for a husband she would realize her social ambitions. Suddenly she became aware that May was passing her in knowledge of Greek, and was thus winning the notice of the man she had begun to look upon as worthy of her own choice. Ida at once addressed herself to the struggle with all the energy of her nature, but at first without success. It was evident that May was working as she had never worked before, for as the weeks flew by she seemed to increase her advantage. During this period Ida Gulmore's pride suffered tortures; day by day she understood more clearly that the prize of her life was slipping out of reach. In mind and soul now she realized Roberts' daring and charm. With the intensified perceptions of a jealous woman, she sometimes feared that he sympathized with her rival.

But he had not spoken yet; of that she was sure, and her conceit enabled her to hope desperately. A moment arrived when her hatred of May was sweetened by contempt. For some reason or other May was neglecting her work; when spoken to by the Professor her colour came and went, and a shyness, visible to all, wrapped her in confusion. Ida felt that there was no time to be lost, and increased her exertions. As she thought of her position she determined first to surpass her competitor, and then in some way or other to bring the Professor to speech. But, alas! for her plans. One morning she demonstrated her superiority with cruel clearness, only to find that Roberts, self-absorbed, did not notice her. He seemed to have lost the vivid interest in the work which aforetime had characterized him, and the happiness of the man was only less tell-tale than the pretty contentment and demure approval of all he said which May scarcely tried to conceal. Wild with fear, blinded by temper, Ida resolved to know the truth.

One morning when the others left the room she waited, busying herself apparently with some notes, till the Professor returned, as she knew he would, in time to receive the next class. While gathering up her books, she asked abruptly:

"I suppose I should congratulate you, Professor?"

"I don't think I understand you."

"Yes, you do. Why lie? You are engaged to May Hutchings," and the girl looked at him with flaming eyes.

"I don't know why you should ask me, or why I should answer, but we have no motive for concealment—yes, I am."

His words were decisive; his reverence for May and her affection had been wounded by the insolent challenge, but before he finished speaking his manner became considerate. He was quick to feel the pain of others and shrank from adding to it—these, indeed, were the two chief articles of the unformulated creed which directed his actions. His optimism was of youth and superficial, but the sense of the brotherhood of human suffering touched his heart in a way that made compassion and tenderness appear to him to be the highest and simplest of duties. It was Ida's temper that answered his avowal. Still staring at him she burst into loud laughter, and as he turned away her tuneless mirth grew shriller and shriller till it became hysterical. A frightened effort to regain her self-control, and her voice broke in something like a sob, while tears trembled on her lashes. The Professor's head was bent over his desk and he saw nothing. Ida dashed the tears from her eyes ostentatiously, and walked with shaking limbs out of the room. She would have liked to laugh again scornfully before closing the door, but she dared not trust her nerves. From that moment she tried to hate Professor Roberts as she hated May Hutchings, for her disappointment had been very sore, and the hurt to her pride smarted like a burn. On returning home, she told her father that she had taken her name off the books of the University; she meant to be an actress, and a degree could be of no use to her in her new career. Her father did not oppose her openly; he was content to postpone any decisive step, and in a few days she seemed to have abandoned her project. But time brought no mitigation of her spite. She was tenacious by nature, and her jealous rage came back upon her in wild fits. To be outdone by May Hutchings was intolerable. Besides, the rivalry and triumphs of the class-room had been as the salt of life to her; now she had nothing to do, nothing to occupy her affections or give object to her feverish ambition. And the void of her life she laid to the charge of Roberts. So when the time came and the temptation, she struck as those strike who are tortured by pain.

Alone in her room, she justified to herself what she had done. She thought with pleasure of Professor Roberts' approaching defeat and punishment. "He deserves it, and more! He knows why I left the University; drew myself away from him for ever. What does he care for my suffering? He can't leave me in peace. I wasn't good enough for him, and my father isn't honest enough. Oh, that I were a man! I'd teach him that it was dangerous to insult the wretched.

"How I was mistaken in him! He has no delicacy, no true manliness of character. I'm glad he has thrown down the challenge. Father may not be well-educated nor refined, but he's strong. Professor Roberts shall find out what it means to attack *us*. I hope he'll be turned out of the University; I hope he will. Let me think. I have a copy of that lecture of his; perhaps there's something in it worse than I remembered. At any rate, the report will be proof."

She searched hurriedly, and soon found the newspaper account she wanted. Glancing down the column with feverish eagerness, she burst out: "Here it is; this will do. I knew there was something more."

"... Thus the great ones contribute, each his part, towards the humanization of man. Christ and Buddha are our teachers, but so also, and in no lower degree, are Plato, Dante, Goethe, and Shakespeare....

"But strange to say, the *Divina Commedia* seems to us moderns more remote than the speculations of Plato. For the modern world is founded upon science, and may be said to begin with the experimental philosophy of Bacon. The thoughts of Plato, the 'fair humanities' of Greek religion, are nearer to the scientific spirit than the untutored imaginings of Christ. The world to-day seeks its rule of life in exact knowledge of man and his surroundings; its teachers, high-priests in the temple of Truth, are the Darwins, the Bunsens, the Pasteurs. In the place of God we see Law, and the old concept of rewards and punishments has been re-stated as 'the survival of the fittest.' If, on the other hand, you need emotions, and the inspiration of concrete teaching, you must go to Balzac, to Turgenief, and to Ibsen...."

"I think that'll do," said the girl half-aloud as she marked the above passages, and then sent the paper by a servant to her father's office. "The worst of it is, he'll find another place easily; but, at any rate, he'll have to leave this State.... How well I remember that lecture. I thought no one had ever talked like that before. But the people disliked it, and even those who stayed to the end said they wouldn't have come had they known that a professor could speak against Christianity. How mad they made me then! I wouldn't listen to them, and now—now he's with May Hutchings, perhaps laughing at me with her. Or, if he's not so base as that, he's accusing my father of dishonesty, and I mean to defend him. But if, ah, if—" and the girl rose to her feet suddenly, with paling face.

The house of Lawyer Hutchings was commodious and comfortable. It was only two storeys high, and its breadth made it appear squat; it was solidly built of rough, brown stone, and a large wooden verandah gave shade and a lounging-place in front. It stood in its own grounds on the outskirts of the town, not far from Mr.

Gulmore's, but it lacked the towers and greenhouse, the brick stables, and black iron gates, which made Mr. Gulmore's residence an object of public admiration. It had, indeed, a careless, homelike air, as of a building that disdains show, standing sturdily upon a consciousness of utility and worth. The study of the master lay at the back. It was a room of medium size, with two French windows, which gave upon an orchard of peach and apple-trees where lush grass hid the fallen fruit. The furniture was plain and serviceable. A few prints on the wall and a wainscoting of books showed the owner's tastes.

In this room one morning Lawyer Hutchings and Professor Roberts sat talking. The lawyer was sparely built and tall, of sympathetic appearance. The features of the face were refined and fairly regular, the blue eyes pleasing, the high forehead intelligent-looking. Yet—whether it was the querulous horizontal lines above the brows, or the frequent, graceful gestures of the hands—Mr. Hutchings left on one an impression of weakness, and, somehow or other, his precise way of speaking suggested intellectual narrowness. It was understood, however, that he had passed through Harvard with honours, and had done well in the law-course. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at that when he went West, he went with the idea that that was the shortest way to Washington. Yet he had had but a moderate degree of success; he was too thoroughly grounded in his work not to get a good practice, but he was not the first in his profession. He had been outdone by men who fought their cases, and his popularity was due to affable manners, and not to admiration of his power or talents. His obvious good nature had got with years a tinge of discontent; life had been to him a series of disappointments.

One glance at Professor Roberts showed him to be a different sort of a man, though perhaps harder to read. Square shoulders and attenuated figure—a mixture of energy and nervous force without muscular strength; a tyrannous forehead overshadowing lambent hazel eyes; a cordial frankness of manner with a thinker's tricks of gesture, his nervous fingers emphasizing his words.

Their talk was of an article assailing the Professor that had appeared that morning in "The Republican Herald."

"I don't like it," Mr. Hutchings was saying. "It's inspired by Gulmore, and he always means what he says—and something more."

"Except the suggestion that my father had certain good, or rather bad, reasons for leaving Kentucky, it seems to me merely spiteful. It's very vilely written."

"He only begins with your father. Then he wonders what the real motives are which induce you to change your political creed. But the affectation of fairness is the danger signal. One can't imagine Gulmore hesitating to assert what he has heard, that you have no religious principles. Coming from him, that means a declaration of war; he'll attack you without scruple—persistently. It's well known that he cares nothing for religion—even his wife's a Unitarian. What he's aiming at, I don't know, but he's sure to do you harm. He has done me harm, and yet he never gave me such a warning. He only went for me when I ran for office. As soon as the elections were over, he left me in peace. He's eminently practical, and rather good-natured. There's no small vicious malice or hate in him; but he's overbearing and loves a fight. Is it worth your while to make an enemy of him? We're sure to be beaten."

"Of course it isn't worth my while in that sense, but it's my duty, I think, as you think it yours. Remark, too, that I've never attacked Mr. Gulmore—never even mentioned him. I've criticised the system, and avoided personalities."

"He won't take it in that way. He is the system; when you criticise it, you criticise him. Every one will so understand it. He makes all the appointments, from mayor down to the boy who sweeps out an office; every contract is given to him or his appointees; that's how he has made his fortune. Why, he beat me the second time I ran for District Court Judge, by getting an Irishman, the Chairman of my Committee, to desert me at the last moment. He afterwards got Patrick Byrne elected a Justice of the Peace, a man who knows no law and can scarcely sign his own name."

"How disgraceful! And you would have me sit down quietly under the despotism of Mr. Gulmore? And such a despotism! It cost the city half a million dollars to pave the streets, and I can prove that the work could have been done as well for half the sum. Our democratic system of government is the worst in the world, if a tenth part of what I hear is true; and before I admit that, I'll see whether its abuses are corrigible. But why do you say we're sure to be beaten? I thought you said—"

"Yes," Mr. Hutchings interrupted, "I said that this railway extension gives us a chance. All the workmen are Irishmen, Democrats to a man, who'll vote and vote straight, and that has been our weak point. You can't get one-half the better classes to go to the polls. The negroes all vote, too, and vote Republican—that has been Gulmore's strength. Now I've got the Irishmen against his negroes I may win. But what I feel is that even if I do get to be Mayor, you'll suffer for it more than I shall gain by your help. Do you see? And, now that I'm employed by the Union Pacific I don't care much for city politics. I'd almost prefer to give up the candidature. May'll suffer, too. I think you ought to consider the matter before going any further."

"This is not the time for consideration. Like you I am trying to put an end to a corrupt tyranny. I work and shall vote against a venal and degrading system. May and I will bear what we must. She wouldn't have me run away from such adversaries. Fancy being governed by the most ignorant, led on by the most dishonest! It's incomprehensible to me how such a paradoxical infamy can exist."

"I think it'll become comprehensible to you before this election's over. I've done my best for years to alter it, and so far I've not been very successful. You don't seem to understand that where parties are almost equal in strength, a man who'll spend money is sure to win. It has paid Gulmore to organize the Republican party in this city; he has made it pay him and all those who hold office by and through him. 'To the victors, the spoils.' Those who have done the spoiling are able to pay more than the spoiled—that's all."

"Yes, but in this case the spoilers are a handful, while the spoiled are the vast majority. Why should it be impossible to convince the majority that they're being robbed?"

"Because ideas can't get into the heads of negroes, nor yet into the heads of illiterate Irishmen. You'll find, too, that five Americans out of every ten take no interest in ordinary politics, and the five who do are of the lowest class—a Boss is their natural master. Our party politics, my friend, resembles a game of faro—the card

that happens to be in the box against the same card outside—and the banker holding the box usually manages to win. Let me once get power and Gulmore'll find his labour unremunerative. If it hadn't been for him I'd have been in Congress long ago. But now I'll have to leave you. Talk it over with May and—you see that Gulmore challenges you to prove the corruption or else withdraw the imputation? What do you mean to do?"

"I'll prove it, of course. Long before I spoke I had gone into that paving contract; it was clearly a fraud."

"Well, I'd think, if I were you, before I acted, though you're a great help to me; your last speech was very powerful."

"Unfortunately I'm no speaker, but I'll do as well as I can, and you may rely on me to go on to the end. The rich at least must be forced to refrain from robbing the poor.... That malicious sneer at my father hurts me. It can only mean that he owed money in Kentucky. He was always careless in money matters, too careless, but he's very generous at heart. I owe him everything. I'll find out about it at once, and if it is as I fear, the debt shall be paid. That'll be one good result of Mr. Gulmore's malice. As for me, let him do his worst. At any rate I'm forewarned."

"A poor satisfaction in case—but here's May, and I must go. I've stayed too long already. You should look through our ticket; it's strong, the men are all good, I think—anyway, they're the best we can get. Teach him to be careful, May; he's too bold."

"I will, father," replied a clear, girlish voice; "it's mother who spoils him," and then, as the door shut, she moved to her lover, and holding out both her hands, with a little air of dignity, added, "He tries to spoil *me*. But, dear, what's the matter? You seem annoyed."

"It's nothing. An article in that paper strikes at my father, and hurts me; but it can be made right, and to look at you is a cure for pain."

"Let me read it—no, please! I want to help you, and how can I do that if I don't know what pains you?" The girl took the "Herald" and sat down to read it.

May Hutchings was more than good-looking, were it only by reason of a complexion such as is seldom given even to blondes. The inside of a sea-shell has the same lustre and delicacy, but it does not pale and flush as did May's cheeks in quick response to her emotions. Waves of maize-coloured hair with a sheen of its own went with the fairness of the skin, and the pretty features were redeemed from a suspicion of insipidity by large violet eyes. She was of good height and lissom, with small feet and hands, but the outlines of her figure were Southern in grace and fulness.

After reading the article, she put down the paper without saying a word

"Why, May, you seem to take it as seriously as your father does. It's nothing so very terrible, is it?"

"What did father say?"

"That it was inspired by Gulmore, and that he was a dangerous man; but I don't see much in it. If my father owed money in Kentucky it shall be repaid, and there the matter ends."

"Tisn't that I'm troubling about; it's that lecture of yours. Oh, it was wonderful! but I sat trembling all the time. You don't know the people. If they had understood it better, they'd have made a big fuss about it. I'm frightened now."

"But what fuss can they make? I've surely a right to my own opinions, and I didn't criticise any creed offensively."

"That's it—that's what saved you. Oh, I wish you'd see it as I do! You spoke so enthusiastically about Jesus, that you confused them. A lot of them thought, and think still, that you're a Christian. But if it's brought up again and made clear to them—Won't you understand? If it's made quite clear that Jesus to you was only a man, and not superior even to all other men, and that you believe Christianity has served its purpose, and is now doing harm rather than good in the world, why, they'd not want to have you in the University. Don't you know that?"

"Perhaps you're right," returned the Professor thoughtfully. "You see I wasn't brought up in any creed, and I've lived in so completely different an atmosphere for years past, that it's hard to understand such intolerant bigotry. I remember enough, though, to see that you are right. But, after all, what does it matter? I can't play hypocrite because they're blind fanatics."

"No, but you needn't have gone *quite* so far—been *quite* so frank; and even now you might easily—" She stopped, catching a look of surprise in her lover's face, and sought confusedly to blot out the effect of her last words. "I mean—but of course you know best. I want you to keep your place; you love the work, and no one could do it so well as you. No one, and—"

"It doesn't matter, May. I'm sure you were thinking of what would be best for both of us, but I've nothing to alter or extenuate. They must do as they think fit, these Christians, if they have the power. After all, it can make no difference to us; I can always get work enough to keep us, even if it isn't such congenial work. But do you think Gulmore's at the bottom of it? Has he so much influence?"

"Yes, I think so," and the girl nodded her head, but she did not give the reasons for her opinion. She knew that Ida Gulmore had been in love with him, so she shrank instinctively from mentioning her name, partly because it might make him pity her, and partly because the love of another woman for him seemed to diminish her pride of exclusive possession. She therefore kept silence while seeking for a way to warn her lover without revealing the truth, which might set him thinking of Ida Gulmore and her fascinating because unrequited passion. At length she said:

"Mr. Gulmore has injured father. He knows him: you'd better take his opinion."

"Your father advises me to have nothing more to do with the election." He didn't say it to try her; he trusted her completely. The girl's answer was emphatic:

"Oh, that's what you should do; I'm frightened for you. Why need you make enemies? The election isn't worth that, indeed it isn't. If father wants to run for Mayor, let him; he knows what he's about. But you, you should do great things, write a great book; and make every one as proud of you as I am." Her face flushed with enthusiasm. She felt relieved, too; somehow she had got into the spirit of her part once more. But her

lover took the hot face and eager speech as signs of affection, and he drew her to him while his face lit up with joy.

"You darling, darling! You overrate me, dear, but that does me good: makes me work harder. What a pity it is, May, that one can't add a cubit to his stature. I'd be a giant then.... But never fear; it'll be all right. You wouldn't wish me, I'm sure, to run away from a conflict I have provoked; but now I must see my father about those debts, and then we'll have a drive, or perhaps you'd go with me to him. You could wait in the buggy for me. You know I have to speak again this evening."

The girl consented at once, but she was not satisfied with the decision her lover had come to. "It's too plain," she thought in her clear, common-sense way, "that he's getting into a 'fuss' when he might just as well, or better, keep out of it."

May was eminently practical, and not at all as emotional as one might have inferred from the sensitive, quick-changing colour that at one moment flushed her cheeks and at another ebbed, leaving her pallid, as with passion. Not that she was hardhearted or selfish. Far from it. But her surroundings had moulded her as they do women. Her mother had been one of the belles of Baltimore, a Southerner, too, by temperament May had a brother and a sister older than herself (both were now married), and a younger brother who had taken care that she should not be spoiled for want of direct personal criticism. It was this younger brother, Joe, who first called her "Towhead," and even now he often made disparaging remarks about "girls who didn't weigh 130"—in Joe's eyes, a Venus of Rubens would have seemed perfect. May was not vain of her looks; indeed, she had only come to take pleasure in them of recent years. As a young girl, comparing herself with her mother, she feared that she would always be "quite homely." Her glass and the attentions of men had gradually shown her the pleasant truth. She did not, however, even now, overrate her beauty greatly. But her character had been modified to advantage in those schoolgirl days, when, with bitter tears, she admitted to herself that she was not pretty. Her teacher's praise of her quickness and memory had taught her to set her pride on learning. And indeed she had been an intelligent child, gifted with a sponge-like faculty of assimilating all kinds of knowledge—the result, perhaps, of generations of educated forbears. The admiration paid to her looks did not cause her to relax her intellectual efforts. But when at the University she found herself outgrowing the ordinary standards of opinion, conceit at first took possession of her. It seemed to her manifest that she had always underrated herself. She was astonished by her own excessive modesty, and keenly interested in it. She had thought herself ugly and she was beautiful, and now it was evident that she was a genius as well. With soul mightily uplifted by dreams of all she would do and the high part she would play in life, always nobly serious, yet with condescension of exquisite charming kindness, taking herself gravely for a perfect product of the race and time, she proceeded to write the book which should discover to mankind all her qualities—the delicacy, nobility, and sweetness of an ideal nature.

During this period she even tried to treat Joe with sweet courtesy, but Joe told her not to make herself "more of a doggoned fool" than she was. And soon the dream began to lose its brightness. The book would not advance, and what she wrote did not seem to her wonderful—not inspired and fascinating as it ought to have been. Her reading had given her some slight critical insight. She then showed parts of it to her admirers, hoping thus to justify vanity, but they used the occasion to pay irrelevant compliments, and so disappointed her—all, save Will Thornton, who admitted critically that "it was poetic" and guessed "she ought to write poetry." Accordingly she wrote some lyrics, and one on "Vanished Hopes" really pleased her. Forthwith she read it to Will, who decided "'twas fine, mighty fine. Tennyson had written more, of course, but nothing better—nothing easier to understand."

That last phrase killed her trust in him. She sank into despondence. Even when Ida Gulmore, whom she had learned to dislike, began to outshine her in the class, she made no effort. To graduate first of her year appeared a contemptible ambition in comparison with the dreams she had foregone. About this period she took a new interest in her dress; she grew coquettish even, and became a greater favourite than ever. Then Professor Roberts came to the University, and with his coming life opened itself to her anew, vitalized with hopes and fears. She was drawn to him from the first, as spirit is sometimes drawn to spirit, by an attraction so imperious that it frightened her, and she tried to hold herself away from him. But in her heart she knew that she studied and read only to win his praise. His talents revealed to her the futility of her ambition. Here was one who stood upon the heights beyond her power of climbing, and yet, to her astonishment, he was very doubtful of his ability to gain enduring reputation. Not only was there a plane of knowledge and feeling above the conventional—that she had found out by herself—but there were also table-lands where teachers of repute in the valley were held to be blind guides. Her quick receptivity absorbed the new ideas with eagerness; but she no longer deluded herself. Her practical good sense came to her aid. What seemed difficult or doubtful to the Professor must, she knew, be for ever impossible to her. And already love was upon her, making her humility as sweet as was her admiration. At last he spoke, and life became altogether beautiful to her. As she learned to know him intimately she began to understand his un-worldliness, his scholar-like idealism, and ignorance of men and motives, and thus she came to self-possession again, and found her true mission. She realized with joy, and a delightful sense of an assured purpose in life, that her faculty of observation and practical insight, though insufficient as "bases for Eternity," would be of value to her lover. And if she now and then fell back into the part of a nineteenth-century Antigone, it was but a momentary relapse into what had been for a year or so a dear familiar habit. The heart of the girl grew and expanded in the belief that her new *rôle* of counsellor and worldly guide to her husband was the highest to which any woman could attain.

A few days later Mr. Hutchings had another confidential talk with Professor Roberts, and, as before, the subject was suggested by an article in "The Republican Herald." This paper, indeed, devoted a column or so every day to personal criticism of the Professor, and each attack surpassed its forerunner in virulence of invective. All the young man's qualities of character came out under this storm of unmerited abuse. He read everything that his opponents put forth, replied to nothing, in spite of the continual solicitation of the editor of "The Democrat," and seemed very soon to regard "The Herald's" calumnies merely from the humorous side. Meanwhile his own speeches grew in knowledge and vigour. With a scholar's precision he put before his hearers the inner history and significance of job after job. His powers of study helped him to "get up his

cases" with crushing completeness. He quickly realized the value of catch-words, but his epigrams not being hardened in the fire of life refused to stick. He did better when he published the balance-sheet of the "ring" in pamphlet form, and showed that each householder paid about one hundred and fifty dollars a year, or twice as much as all his legal taxes, in order to support a party organization the sole object of which was to enrich a few at the expense of the many. One job, in especial, the contract for paving the streets, he stigmatized as a swindle, and asserted that the District Attorney, had he done his duty, would long ago have brought the Mayor and Town Council before a criminal court as parties to a notorious fraud. His ability, steadfastness, and self-restraint had had a very real effect; his meetings were always crowded, and his hearers were not all Democrats. His courage and fighting power were beginning to win him general admiration. The public took a lively though impartial interest in the contest. To critical outsiders it seemed not unlikely that the Professor (a word of good-humoured contempt) might "whip" even "old man Gulmore." Bets were made on the result and short odds accepted. Even Mr. Hutchings allowed himself to hope for a favourable issue.

"You've done wonderfully well," was the burden of his conversations with Roberts; "I should feel certain of success against any one but Gulmore. And he seems to be losing his head—his perpetual abuse excites sympathy with you. If we win I shall owe it mainly to you."

But on this particular morning Lawyer Hutchings had something to say to his friend and helper which he did not like to put into plain words. He began abruptly:

"You've seen the 'Herald'?"

"Yes; there's nothing in it of interest, is there?"

"No; but 'twas foolish of your father to write that letter saying you had paid his Kentucky debts."

"I was sorry when I saw it. I know they'll say I got him to write the letter. But it's only another incident."

"It's true, then? You did pay the money?"

"Yes; I was glad to."

"But it was folly. What had you to do with your father's debts? Every house to-day should stand on its own foundation."

"I don't agree with you; but in this case there was no question of that sort. My father very generously impoverished himself to send me to Europe and keep me there for six years. I owed him the five thousand dollars, and was only too glad to be able to repay him. You'd have done the same."

"Would I, indeed! Five thousand dollars! I'm not so sure of that." The father's irritation conquered certain grateful memories of his younger days, and the admiration which, in his heart, he felt for the Professor's action, only increased his annoyance. "It must have nearly cleaned you out?"

"Very nearly."

"Well, of course it's your affair, not mine; but I think you foolish. You paid them in full, I suppose? Whew!"

"Do you see that the 'Herald' calls upon the University authorities to take action upon your lecture? 'The teaching of Christian youth by an Atheist must be stopped,' and so forth."

"Yes; but they can do nothing. I'm not responsible to them for my religious opinions."

"You're mistaken. A vote of the Faculty can discharge you."

"Impossible! On what grounds?"

"On the ground of immorality. They've got the power in that case. It's a loose word, but effective."

"I'd have a cause of action against them."

"Which you'd be sure to lose. Eleven out of every twelve jurymen in this state would mulct an Agnostic rather than give him damages."

"Ah! that's the meaning, then, I suppose, of this notice I've just got from the secretary to attend a special Faculty meeting on Monday fortnight."

"Let me see it. Why, here it is! The object of the meeting is 'To consider the anti-Christian utterances of Professor Roberts, and to take action thereon.' That's the challenge. Didn't you read it?"

"No; as soon as I opened it and saw the printed form, I took it for the usual notification, and put it aside to think of this election work. But it would seem as if the Faculty intended to out-herald the 'Herald.'"

"They are simply allowed to act first in order that the 'Herald,' a day later, may applaud them. It's all worked by Gulmore, and I tell you again, he's dangerous."

"He may be; but I won't change for abuse, nor yet to keep my post. Let him do his worst. I've not attacked him hitherto for certain reasons of my own, nor do I mean to now. But he can't frighten me; he'll find that out."

"Well, we'll see. But, at any rate, it was my duty to warn you. It would be different if I were rich, but, as it is, I can only give May a little, and—"

"My dear Hutchings, don't let us talk of that. In giving me May, you give me all I want." The young man's tone was so conclusive that it closed the conversation.

Mr. Gulmore had not been trained for a political career. He had begun life as a clerk in a hardware store in his native town. But in his early manhood the Abolition agitation had moved him deeply—the colour of his skin, he felt, would never have made him accept slavery—and he became known as a man of extreme views. Before he was thirty he had managed to save some thousands of dollars. He married and emigrated to Columbus, Ohio, where he set up a business. It was there, in the stirring years before the war, that he first threw himself into politics; he laboured indefatigably as an Abolitionist without hope or desire of personal gain. But the work came to have a fascination for him, and he saw possibilities in it of pecuniary emolument such as the hardware business did not afford. When the war was over, and he found himself scarcely richer than he had been before it began, he sold his store and emigrated again—this time to Tecumseh, Nebraska, intending to make political organization the business of his life. He wanted "to grow up" with a town and become its master from the beginning. As the negroes constituted the most ignorant and most despised class, a little solicitation made him their leader. In the first election it was found that "Gulmore's negroes" voted to

a man, and that he thereby controlled the Republican party. In the second year of his residence in Tecumseh he got the contract for lighting the town with gas. The contract was to run for twenty years, and was excessively liberal, for Mr. Gulmore had practically no competitor, no one who understood gas manufacture, and who had the money and pluck to embark in the enterprise. He quickly formed a syndicate, and fulfilled the conditions of the contract. The capital was fixed at two hundred thousand dollars, and the syndicate earned a profit of nearly forty per cent, in the first year. Ten years later a one hundred dollar share was worth a thousand. This first success was the foundation of Mr. Gulmore's fortune. The income derived from the gas-works enabled him to spend money on the organization of his party. The first manager of the works was rewarded with the position of Town Clerk—an appointment which ran for five years, but which under Mr. Gulmore's rule was practically permanent. His foremen became the most energetic of ward-chairmen. He was known to pay well, and to be a kind if strenuous master. What he had gained in ten years by the various contracts allotted to him or his nominees no one could guess; he was certainly very rich. From year to year, too, his control of the city government had grown more complete. There was now no place in the civil or judicial establishment of the city or county which did not depend on his will, and his influence throughout the State was enormous.

A municipal election, or, indeed, any election, afforded Mr. Gulmore many opportunities of quiet but intense self-satisfaction. He loved the struggle and the consciousness that from his office-chair he had so directed his forces that victory was assured. He always allowed a broad margin in order to cover the unforeseen. Chance, and even ill-luck, formed a part of his strategy; the sore throat of an eloquent speaker; the illness of a popular candidate; a storm on polling-day—all were to him factors in the problem. He reckoned as if his opponents might have all the luck upon their side; but, while considering the utmost malice of fortune, it was his delight to base his calculations upon the probable, and to find them year by year approaching more nearly to absolute exactitude. As soon as his ward-organization had been completed, he could estimate the votes of his party within a dozen or so. His plan was to treat every contest seriously, to bring all his forces to the poll on every occasion—nothing kept men together, he used to say, like victory. It was the number of his opponent's minority which chiefly interested him; but by studying the various elections carefully, he came to know better than any one the value as a popular candidate of every politician in the capital, or, indeed, in the State. The talent of the man for organization lay in his knowledge of men, his fairness and liberality, and, perhaps, to a certain extent, in the power he possessed of inspiring others with confidence in himself and his measures. He was never satisfied till the fittest man in each ward was the Chairman of the ward; and if money would not buy that particular man's services, as sometimes though rarely happened, he never rested until he found the gratification which bound his energy to the cause. Besides—and this was no small element in his successes—his temper disdained the applause of the crowd. He had never “run” for any office himself, and was not nearly so well known to the mass of the electorate as many of his creatures. The senator, like the mayor or office-messenger of his choice, got all the glory: Mr. Gulmore was satisfied with winning the victory, and reaping the fruits of it. He therefore excited, comparatively speaking, no jealousy; and this, together with the strength of his position, accounts for the fact that he had never been seriously opposed before Professor Roberts came upon the scene.

Better far than Lawyer Hutchings, or any one else, Mr. Gulmore knew that the relative strength of the two parties had altered vastly within the year. Reckoning up his forces at the beginning of the campaign, he felt certain that he could win—could carry his whole ticket, including a rather unpopular Mayor; but the majority in his favour would be small, and the prospect did not please him, for the Professor's speeches had aroused envy. He understood that if his majority were not overwhelming he would be assailed again next year more violently, and must in the long run inevitably lose his power. Besides, “fat” contracts required unquestionable supremacy. He began, therefore, by instituting such a newspaper-attack upon the Professor as he hoped would force him to abandon the struggle. When this failed, and Mr. Gulmore saw that it had done worse than fail, that it had increased his opponent's energy and added to his popularity, he went to work again to consider the whole situation. He must win and win “big,” that was clear; win too, if possible, in a way that would show his “smartness” and demonstrate his adversary's ignorance of the world. His anger had at length been aroused; personal rivalry was a thing he could not tolerate at any time, and Roberts had injured his position in the town. He was resolved to give the young man such a lesson that others would be slow to follow his example. The difficulty of the problem was one of its attractions. Again and again he turned the question over in his mind—How was he to make his triumph and the Professor's defeat sensational? All the factors were present to him and he dwelt upon them with intentness. He was a man of strong intellect; his mind was both large and quick, but its activity, owing to want of education and to greedy physical desires, had been limited to the ordinary facts and forces of life. What books are to most persons gifted with an extraordinary intelligence, his fellow-men were to Mr. Gulmore—a study at once stimulating and difficult, of an incomparable variety and complexity. His lack of learning was of advantage to him in judging most men. Their stock of ideas, sentiments and desires had been his for years, and if he now viewed the patchwork quilt of their morality with indulgent contempt, at least he was familiar with all the constituent shades of it. But he could not make the Professor out—and this added to his dislike of him; he recognized that Roberts was not, as he had at first believed, a mere mouthpiece of Hutchings, but he could not fathom his motives; besides, as he said to himself, he had no need to; Roberts was plainly a “crank,” book-mad, and the species did not interest him. But Hutchings he knew well; knew that like himself Hutchings, while despising ordinary prejudices, was ruled by ordinary greeds and ambitions. In intellect they were both above the average, but not in morals. So, by putting himself in the lawyer's place, a possible solution of the problem occurred to him.

A couple of days before the election, Mr. Hutchings, who had been hard at work till the evening among his chief subordinates, was making his way homeward when Mr. Prentiss accosted him, with the request that he would accompany him to his rooms for a few minutes on a matter of the utmost importance. Having no good reason for refusing, Mr. Hutchings followed the editor of the “Herald” up a flight of stairs into a large and comfortable room. As he entered and looked about him Mr. Gulmore came forward:

“I wanted a talk with you, Lawyer, where we wouldn't be disturbed, and Prentiss thought it would be best to have it here, and I guess he was about right. It's quiet and comfortable. Won't you be seated?”

“Mr. Gulmore!” exclaimed the surprised lawyer stopping short. “I don't think there's anything to be

discussed between us, and as I'm in a hurry to get home to dinner, I think I'll—"

"Don't you make any mistake," interrupted Mr. Gulmore; "I mean business—business that'll pay both you and me, and I guess 'twon't do you any damage to take a seat and listen to me for a few minutes."

As Lawyer Hutchings, overborne by the authority of the voice and manner, sat down, he noticed that Mr. Prentiss had disappeared. Interpreting rightly the other's glance, Mr. Gulmore began:

"We're alone, Hutchin's. This matter shall be played fair and square. I guess you know that my word can be taken at its face-value." Then, settling himself in his chair, he went on:

"You and I hev been runnin' on opposite tickets for a good many years, and I've won right along. It has paid me to win and it has not paid you to lose. Now, it's like this. You reckon that those Irishmen on the line give you a better show. They do; but not enough to whip me. You appear to think that that'll have to be tried the day after tomorrow, but you ought to know by now that when I say a thing is so, it's so—every time. If you had a chance, I'd tell you: I'm playin' square. I ken carry my ticket from one end to the other; I ken carry Robinson as Mayor against you by at least two hundred and fifty of a majority, and the rest of your ticket has just no show at all—you know that. But, even if you could get in this year or next what good would it do you to be Mayor? You're not runnin' for the five thousand dollars a year salary, I reckon, and that's about all you'd get—unless you worked with me. I want a good Mayor, a man like you, of position and education, a fine speaker that knows everybody and is well thought of—popular. Robinson's not good enough for me; he hain't got the manners nor the knowledge, nor the popularity. I'd have liked to have had you on my side right along. It would have been better for both of us, but you were a Democrat, an' there wasn't any necessity. Now there is. I want to win this election by a large majority, an' you ken make that sartin. You see I speak square. Will you join me?"

The question was thrown out abruptly. Mr. Gulmore had caught a gleam in the other's eye as he spoke of a good Mayor and his qualifications. "He bites, I guess," was his inference, and accordingly he put the question at once.

Mr. Hutchings, brought to himself by the sudden interrogation, hesitated, and decided to temporize. He could always refuse to join forces, and Gulmore might "give himself away." He answered:

"I don't quite see what you mean. How are we to join?"

"By both of us givin' somethin'."

"What am I to give?"

"Withdraw your candidature for Mayor as a Democrat."

"I can't do that."

"Jest hear me out. The city has advertised for tenders for a new Court House and a new Town Hall. The one building should cover both, and be near the middle of the business part. That's so—ain't it? Well, land's hard to get anywhere there, and I've the best lots in the town. I guess" (carelessly) "the contract will run to a million dollars; that should mean two hundred thousand dollars to some one. It's like this, Hutchin's: Would you rather come in with me and make a joint tender, or run for Mayor and be beaten?"

Mr. Hutchings started. Ten years before the proposal would have won him. But now his children were provided for—all except Joe, and his position as Counsel to the Union Pacific Railroad lifted him above pecuniary anxieties. Then the thought of the Professor and May came to him—No! he wouldn't sell himself. But in some strange way the proposition excited him; he felt elated. His quickened pulse-beats prevented him from realizing the enormity of the proposed transaction, but he knew that he ought to be indignant. What a pity it was that Gulmore had made no proposal which he might have accepted—and then disclosed!

"If I understand you, you propose that I should take up this contract, and make money out of it. If that was your business with me, you've made a mistake, and Professor Roberts is right."

"Hev I?" asked Mr. Gulmore slowly, coldly, in sharp contrast to the lawyer's apparent excitement and quick speech. Contemptuously he thought that Hutchings was "foolisher" than he had imagined—or was he sincere? He would have weighed this last possibility before speaking, if the mention of Roberts had not angered him. His combativeness made him persist:

"If you don't want to come in with me, all you've got to do is to say so. You've no call to get up on your hind legs about it; it's easy to do settin'. But don't talk poppycock like that Professor; he's silly. He talks about the contract for street pavin', and it ken be proved—'twas proved in the 'Herald'—that our streets cost less per foot than the streets of any town in this State. He knows nothin'. He don't even know that an able man can make half a million out of a big contract, an' do the work better than an ordinary man could do it who'd lose money by it. At a million our Court House'll be cheap; and if the Professor had the contract with the plans accordin' to requirement to-morrow, he'd make nothin' out of it—not a red cent. No, sir. If I ken, that's my business—and yours, ain't it? Or, are we to work for nothin' because he's a fool?"

While Mr. Gulmore was speaking, Mr. Hutchings gave himself to thought. After all, why was he running for Mayor? The place, as Gulmore said, would be of no use to him. He was weary of fighting which only ended in defeat, and could only end in a victory that would be worthless. Mayor, indeed! If he had a chance of becoming a Member of Congress, that would be different. And across his brain flitted the picture so often evoked by imagination in earlier years. Why not? Gulmore could make it certain. Would he?

"What you say seems plausible enough, but I don't see my way. I don't feel inclined to go into business at my time of life."

"You don't need to go into the business. I'll see to that."

"No. I don't need money now particularly."

"Next year, Hutchin's, I'll have a better man than Robinson against you. Lawyer Nevilson's as good as ken be found, I reckon, and he wouldn't refuse to join me if I gave him the chance." But while he was speaking, Mr. Gulmore kept his opponent's answer in view. He considered it thoughtfully; "I don't need money now particularly." What did the man need? Congress? As a Republican? That would do as well. When Mr. Hutchings shook his head, careless of the menace, Mr. Gulmore made up his mind. His obstinacy came out;

he would win at any price. He began:

"It's what I said at first, Hutchin's; we've each got to give what the other wants. I've told you what I want; tell me squarely what you want, an' p'r'aps the thing ken be settled."

As Mr. Hutchings did not answer at once, the Boss went on:

"You're in politics for somethin'. What is it? If you're goin' to buck agen me, you might as well draw out; you'll do no good. You know that. See here! Is it the State Legislature you're after, or—Congress?"

The mere words excited Mr. Hutchings; he wanted to be back again in the East as a victor; he longed for the cultivated amenities and the social life of Washington. He could not help exclaiming:

"Ah! if it hadn't been for you I'd have been in Congress long ago."

"As a Democrat? Not from this State, I guess."

"What does it matter? Democrat or Republican, the difference now is only in the name."

"The price is high, Hutchin's. I ask you to give up runnin' for Mayor, and you ask me for a seat in Congress instead. But—I'll pay it, if you do as I say. You've no chance in this State as a Democrat; you know that yourself. To run for Mayor as a Democrat hurts you; that must stop right now—in your own interest. But what I want from you is that you don't announce your withdrawal till the day after to-morrow, an' meantime you say nothin' to the Professor or any one else. Are you agreed?"

Mr. Hutchings paused. The path of his desire lay open before him; the opportunity was not to be missed; he grew eager. But still there was something disagreeable in an action which demanded secrecy. He must think coolly. What was the proposal? What was he giving? Nothing. He didn't wish to be Mayor with Gulmore and all the City Council against him. Nothing—except the withdrawal on the very morning of the election. That would look bad, but he could pretend illness, and he had told the Professor he didn't care to be Mayor; he had advised him not to mix in the struggle; besides, Roberts would not suspect anything, and if he did there'd be no shadow of proof for a long time to come. In the other scale of the balance he had Gulmore's promise: it was trustworthy, he knew, but—

"Do you mean that you'll run me for the next term and get me elected?"

"I'll do all I know, and I guess you'll succeed."

"I have nothing but your word."

"Nothin'."

Again Mr. Hutchings paused. To accept definitively would be dangerous if the conversation had had listeners. It was characteristic of the place and time that he could suspect a man of laying such a trap, upon whose word he was prepared to rely. Mr. Gulmore saw and understood his hesitation:

"I said we were alone, Hutchin's, and I meant it. Jest as I say now, if you withdraw and tell no one and be guided by me in becoming a Republican, I'll do what I ken to get you into Congress," and as he spoke he stood up.

Mr. Hutchings rose, too, and said, as if in excuse: "I wanted to think it over, but I'm agreed. I'll do as you say," and with a hurried "Good night!" he left the room.

Mr. Gulmore returned to his chair and lit a cigar. He was fairly satisfied with the result of his efforts. His triumph over the Professor would not be as flagrant, perhaps, as if Hutchin's' name had been linked with his in a city contract; but, he thought with amusement, every one would suspect that he had bought the lawyer for cash. What a fool the man was! What did he want to get into Congress for? Weak vanity! He'd have no weight there. To prefer a seat in Congress to wealth—silly. Besides, Hutchin's would be a bad candidate. Of course the party name would cover anythin'. But what a mean skunk! Here Mr. Gulmore's thoughts reverted to himself. Ought he to keep his word and put such a man into Congress? He hated to break a promise. But why should he help the Professor's father-in-law to power? Wall, there was no hurry. He'd make up his mind later. Anyway, the Professor'd have a nice row to hoe on the mornin' of the election, and Boss Gulmore'd win and win big, an' that was the point The laugh would be on the Professor—

On the morning of the election Professor Roberts was early afoot. He felt hopeful, light-hearted, and would not confess even to himself that his good spirits were due chiefly to the certainty that in another twelve hours his electioneering would be at an end. The work of canvassing and public speaking had become very disagreeable to him. The mere memory of the speeches he had listened to, had left, as it were, an unpleasant aftertaste. How the crowds had cheered the hackneyed platitudes, the blatant patriotic appeals, the malevolent caricature of opponents! Something unspeakably trivial, vulgar, and evil in it all reminded him of tired children when the romping begins to grow ill-natured.

And if the intellectual side of the struggle had been offensive, the moral atmosphere of the Committee Rooms, infected as it was by the candidates, had seemed to him to be even worse—mephitic, poisonous. He had shrunk from realizing the sensations which had been forced upon him there—a recoil of his nature as from unappeasable wild-beast greeds, with their attendant envy, suspicion, and hatred seething like lava under the thin crust of a forced affability, of a good-humour assumed to make deception easy. He did not want to think of it; it was horrible. And perhaps, after all, he was mistaken; perhaps his dislike of the work had got upon his nerves, and showed him everything in the darkest colours. It could scarcely be as bad as he thought, or human society would be impossible. But argument could not blunt the poignancy of his feelings; he preferred, therefore, to leave them inarticulate, striving to forget. In any case, the ordeal would soon be over; it had to be endured for a few hours more, and then he would plunge into his books again, and enjoy good company, he and May together.

He was still lingering over this prospect when the servant came to tell him that some gentlemen were waiting for him, and he found in the sitting-room half-a-dozen of his favourite students. One of the Seniors, named Cartrell, a young man of strong figure, and keen, bold face, remarked, as he shook hands, that they had come to accompany him—"Elections are sometimes rough, and we know the ropes." Roberts thanked them warmly, and they set off.

The Committee Rooms of the Democratic party were situated near the Court House, in what had been once

the centre, but was now the edge of the town. The little troop had to pass through the negro quarter—small frame-houses, peppered over grassless, bare lots, the broken-down fences protesting against unsociable isolation. The Rooms, from the outside, reminded one of a hive of angry bees. In and out of the door men were hurrying, and a crowd swarmed on the side-walk talking in a loud, excited hum. As soon as the Professor was recognized, a silence of astonishment fell upon the throng. With stares of curiosity they drew aside to let him enter. Slightly surprised by the reception, the Professor passed into the chief room. At a table in the middle a man was speaking in a harsh, loud voice—one Simpson, a popular orator, who had held aloof from the meetings of the party. He was saying:

“It's a put-up game between them, but the question is, who's to go on the ticket in—”

As Simpson's eyes met those of Roberts he stopped speaking.

“Good morning, gentlemen. Please continue, Mr. Simpson; I hope I'm not interrupting you.”

The Professor did not like Mr. Simpson. The atrabilious face, the bitter, thin lips, and grey eyes veined with yellow, reminded him indefinitely of a wild beast. Mr. Simpson seemed to take the courteous words as a challenge. Drawing his wiry figure up he said, with insult in voice and manner:

“Perhaps you've come to nominate a Mayor; we'd all like to know your choice.”

“I don't understand you.”

The Professor's tone was frank, his sincerity evident, but Simpson went on:

“Don't ye? Perhaps Hutchin's has sent you to say, as he's sick it'd be well to run Robinson on both tickets—eh?”

“I don't know what you mean. I expected to meet Mr. Hutchings here. Is he ill?”

“He'll get well soon, I reckon; but after taking a perscription from Gulmore, he's mighty bad and can't leave the house.”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean that Hutchin's has withdrawn his candidature as Mayor. I mean that the 'Herald' has the announcin' of it. I mean it's a put-up job between him and Gulmore to ruin the Democratic party in this town. I mean—”

As the Professor drew back in amazement, young Cartrell stepped in front of him and addressed Simpson:

“What proof have you of what you say?”

“Proof! Proof enough. Does an honest man resign a candidature on the morning of an election, and give the other side the news before his own party?”

The interruption had given Roberts time for reflection. He felt that Simpson's facts must be right. It was characteristic of him that his first thought was, Had Hutchings withdrawn in order to save him from further attacks? No. If he had he'd have told him before the event. A sort of nausea overpowered him as he remembered that Hutchings had related how Gulmore had bought Patrick Byrne—and now he, too, had sold himself. As in a flash Hutchings' weakness of fibre was laid bare to him. “That's the reason I couldn't find him yesterday.” His heart sank within him. “How could Hutchings have been so—?” With the belief in the lawyer's guilt came the understanding that he too was concerned, suspected even. Disgust of traitorism, conscious innocence impelled him to clear himself—but how? To his surprise he found that companionship with these men had given him some insight into their character. He put the question to Simpson:

“Can anything be done now?”

The steadiness of the tone, the resolve in his face, excited a certain curiosity. Shrugging his shoulders, Simpson replied:

“We've not got a candidate. It's too late to get the party together. New tickets'd have to be printed. I—”

“Will you accept the candidature?” Reading the man at once, Roberts turned to the others: “Gentlemen, I hope some one will second me; I nominate Mr. Simpson as Mayor, and propose that his name should be substituted for that of Mr. Hutchings. To show that I'm in earnest I'll contribute five hundred dollars towards the expense of printing the tickets.”

The Professor's offer of money seemed to exercise a magical influence upon the crowd; the loud tones, the provocative rudeness of speech and bearing, disappeared at once; the men began to show him the respect of attention, and Mr. Simpson was even quicker than the rest in changing his attitude—perhaps because he hoped to gain more than they did.

“I had no idee,” he began, “but if the Committee thinks I oughter run I've no objection. I hain't ever cared for office, but I'm a party-man, an' what the party wants me to do I'll do every time. I'm a Democrat right through. I guess Lawyer Hutchin's has gone back on us, but that's not your fault, Professor, and five hundred dollars—an' your work will do a pile. The folk all like you an'—respect you an'—”

Roberts looked at the man; his offer had been a movement of indignant contempt, and yet it had succeeded. He could have laughed; the key to the enigma was in his hands; these men answered to the motive of self-interest as a ship answers to the helm, and yet—how revolting it all was! The next moment he again banished reflection.

“I'll go and get the money, and return as soon as possible. In the meantime, perhaps you, Mr. Simpson, will see that the printing is begun without delay. Then if you'll tell us what polling-stations need superintendence, my friends and I will do our best.”

The appeal found an immediate response—in a few minutes order and energetic work had taken the place of the former angry excitement and recrimination.

To Professor Roberts the remainder of the day was one whirl of restless labour; he hastened from one polling-station to another, and when the round was completed drove to the Central Rooms, where questions had to be answered, and new arrangements made without time for thought. Then he was off again on his hurried round as canvasser. One incident, however, made a definite impression upon him. Returning for the second or third time to the Central Rooms he found himself in a crowd of Irish labourers who had come in

deference to priestly bidding to record their votes. Mr. Hutchings' retirement had excited their native suspiciousness; they felt that they had been betrayed, and yet the peremptory orders they had received must be followed. The satisfaction of revolt being denied to them, their anger became dangerous. Professor Roberts faced them quietly; he soon saw that they were sincere, or were playing the part of sincerity; he therefore spoke for the cause, for the party to which they belonged; surely they wouldn't abandon the struggle because a leader had deserted them! His words and manner; his appeal to their combativeness; his earnestness and good temper were successful. The storm of invective gradually subsided, and although one or two, for the sake of a row, sought to insult him, they did not go to extremes in face of the resolute disapprobation of the American party-leaders. Loyalty to their shibboleth was beginning to draw them, still grumbling and making use of expressive imprecations, on the way to the nearest polling-station, when one of their leaders drew Professor Roberts aside, and asked him:

"Are the bhoys to have nothin' for their throuble? Half a day they'll lose, so they will—a dollar each now would be no more than fair—"

The Professor shook his head; he was not rich, he said, and had already spent more money in the contest than he could afford.

"Be gob, it's poor worruk this talkin' an' votin' for us that gets nothin' by it"—the phrase stuck in his memory as illustrating the paltry baseness of the whole affair. It was with a sense of relief that he threw himself again into the turmoil that served to deaden thought. As the day wore towards evening he became conscious of fatigue, a weariness that was not of the body alone, but of the head and heart. After the closing of the polls he returned to the Central Rooms. They were filled with an enthusiastic crowd, most of whom professed to believe that the Democratic party had won all along the line. Roberts found it hard to bear their self-gratulation and the exuberance of their triumph, but when Simpson began to take the liberties of comradeship with him, the cup ran over. He cut the man short with a formally polite phrase, and betook himself to his house. He would not think even of May; her image brought him face to face with her father; and he wanted rest.

In the morning the Professor awoke with a feeling of utter depression. Before he opened the paper he was sure that his hopelessness had been justified. He was right—Gulmore had carried his whole ticket, and Simpson had been beaten by a majority of more than a thousand. The Democratic organ did not scruple to ascribe the defeat to the fact that Lawyer Hutchings had sold his party. The simulated indignation of the journalist found expression in phrases which caricatured the simplicity of sincere condemnation. "Never did shameless corruption..." Roberts could not read the stuff. Yet the feigned passion and tawdry rhetoric in some way stirred up his bile; he would see Hutchings and—but if he unpacked his heart's bitterness upon her father, he would hurt May. He must restrain himself; Hutchings would understand from his manner, and May would be sympathetic—as she always was.

Another thought exasperated him afresh. His idealism had made him ridiculous in the eyes of the townsfolk. He had spent money he could ill spare in a hopeless cause, which was not even a worthy one. And now everybody was laughing at him or sneering—he grew hot with shame. That his motives were honourable only heightened the ludicrousness of his action: it seemed as if he had made a fool of himself. He almost wished that he had left the Democrats to their own devices. But no! he had done the right, and that was the main point. The sense of failure, however, robbed him of confidence in regard to the future. How should he act? Since high motives were ineffectual, Quixotic, ought he to discard them and come down to the ordinary level? 'Twould be better not to live at all. The half-life of a student, a teacher, dwelling apart from the world, would be preferable to such degradation; but—

The situation appeared to him to be so difficult that as soon as he had taken his breakfast he went out for a walk away from the town in order to avoid importunate visits, and to decide upon a course of conduct. The air and exercise invigorated him; the peace and solitude of the prairie, the beauty of earth and sky, the unconsciousness of nature consoled him, reduced his troubles to relative unimportance, and allowed him to regain his equanimity.

Even his ideas in regard to Hutchings underwent a change. After all it was not his part to condemn; his indignation owed its heat to baffled egotism and paltry vanity. When the personal element was abstracted from the causes of his vexation, what remained? Were Hutchings a figure in history, would he judge him with the same intolerance? No; weakness, corruptibility even, would then excite no harsher feeling than a sort of amused contempt. The reflection mitigated his anger. He began to take an intellectual pleasure in the good-humoured acceptance of the wrong inflicted upon him. Plato was right, it was well to suffer injustice without desiring to retaliate. He had yet to learn that just as oil only smoothes the surface of waves, so reason has merely a superficial effect upon character.

Early in the afternoon he made his way to May's home. According to his habit he passed by the servant-girl and entered the study—to find himself face to face with the lawyer.

The shock of disappointment and a certain latent antagonism caused him to speak with a directness which was in itself discourteous.

"Is Miss May in? I wished to see her." After a momentary pause he added, with a tinge of sarcasm, "Your illness wasn't serious, I see."

Mr. Hutchings was not taken by surprise; he had prepared for this meeting, and had resolved to defend himself. The task, he believed, would be easy. He had almost persuaded himself that he had acted in the Professor's interest. Roberts was singularly unworldly; he might accept the explanation, and if he didn't—what did it matter? His own brighter prospects filled him with a sense of triumph; in the last three days his long-repressed vanity had shot up to self-satisfaction, making him callous to what Roberts or any one else might think. But the sneer in his visitor's words stung him, induced him to throw off the mask of illness which he had intended to assume. He replied with an indifference that was defiant:

"No; I wasn't well yesterday, but I'm better now, though I shall keep indoors for a day or two. A chill, I suppose."

Receiving no answer, he found relief in complete boldness.

"You see my prediction as to the result of the election has been justified?"

"You might even say *pars magna fui*."

The retort slipped out. The impudent challenge had to be met. The Professor did not realize how contemptuously he spoke.

The womanish weakness in Hutchings sprang to hurried attack.

"At any rate you've no cause for reproach. I resigned chiefly to shield you. I told you long ago that I didn't want particularly to be Mayor, and the assault upon your position in the University decided me. There was no way to save your place except by giving Gulmore the victory he wanted. You're engaged to May, and May is fond of you: I'm not rich, and a post of three thousand dollars a year is not often to be found by a young man. What would you do if you were dismissed? I had to—sacrifice myself. Not that it matters much, but I've got myself into a fuss with the party, injured myself all round on your account, and then you talk as if you had some reason to be offended. That's hardly right, Professor." The lawyer was satisfied with his case; his concluding phrase built a bridge for a magnanimous reconciliation.

"You wish me to believe that you resigned at the last moment without telling me of your intention in order to further my interests?" Mr. Hutchings was disagreeably shocked by the disdainful, incredulous question; Roberts was harder to blind than he had supposed; his indignation became more than half sincere.

"I didn't make up my mind till the last minute—I couldn't. It wasn't easy for me to leave the party I've fought with for ten years. And the consequences don't seem likely to be pleasant to me. But that doesn't signify. This discussion is useless. If you'll take my advice you'll think of answering the charge that will be brought against you in the Faculty meeting, instead of trying to get up a groundless accusation against me." The menace in the words was not due solely to excitement and ill-temper. Mr. Hutchings had been at pains to consider all his relations with the Professor. He had hoped to deceive him, at least for the moment, and gain time—postpone a painful decision. He had begun to wish that the engagement between Roberts and May might be broken off. In six months or a year he would have to declare himself on Gulmore's side; the fact would establish his complicity, and he had feared what he now knew, that Roberts would be the severest of critics—an impossible son-in-law. Besides, in the East, as the daughter of a Member of Congress, May might command a high position—with her looks she could marry any one—while Roberts would be dismissed or compelled to resign his post. A young man without a career who would play censor upon him in his own house was not to be thought of. The engagement must be terminated. May could be brought to understand....

The Professor did not at once grasp the situation in so far as he himself was concerned. But he divined the cause of the lawyer's irritability, and refrained from pushing the argument further. The discussion could, indeed, serve no purpose, save to embitter the quarrel. He therefore answered quietly:

"I didn't come here to dispute with you. I came to see May. Is she in?"

"No, I think not. I believe she went out some time ago."

"In that case I'll go home. Perhaps you'll tell her I called. Good day."

"Good day!"

As the Professor left the house his depression of the morning returned upon him. He was dissatisfied with himself. He had intended to show no anger, no resentment, and, nevertheless, his temper had run away with him. He recognized that he had made a grave mistake, for he was beginning to foresee the consequences of it. Trained to severe thinking, but unaccustomed to analyze motives, the full comprehension of Hutchings' attitude and its probable effects upon his happiness only came to him gradually, but it came at length so completely that he could remember the very words of the foregoing conversation, and recall the tones of the voices. He could rebuild the puzzle; his understanding of it, therefore, must be the true one. The irrationality of the defence was a final proof that the lawyer had played him false. "Hutchings sold himself—most likely for place. He didn't fear a quarrel with me—that was evident; perhaps he wishes to get rid of me—evident, too. He believes that I shall be dismissed, or else he wouldn't have laid stress upon the importance of my keeping my position. When I spoke of May he was curt. And the explanation? He has wronged me. The old French proverb holds true, 'The offender seldom forgives.' He'll probably go on to harm me further, for I remind him of his vileness. This, then, is life, not as I imagined it, but as it is, and such creatures as Hutchings are human beings. Well, after all, it is better to know the truth than to cheat oneself with a mirage. I shall appreciate large natures with noble and generous impulses better, now that I know how rare they are."

In his room he found May awaiting him. Across his surprise and joy there came an intense admiration of her, a heart-pang of passionate gratitude. As she moved towards him her incommunicable grace of person and manner completed the charm. The radiant gladness of the eyes; the outstretched hands; the graceful form, outlined in silver-grey; the diadem of honey-coloured hair; something delicate yet courageous, proud yet tender in her womanhood remained with him ever afterwards.

"Ah, May!" The word seemed to bring joy and tingling life to his half-numbed heart. He seized her hands and drew her to him, and kissed her on the hair, and brows, and eyes with an abandonment of his whole nature, such as she had never before known in him. All her shyness, her uneasiness vanished in the happiness of finding that she had so pleased him, and mingled with this joy was a new delightful sense of her own power. When released from his embrace she questioned him by a look. His emotion astonished her.

"My love," he said, kissing her hands, "how good of you to come to me, how sweet and brave you are to wait for me here! I was growing weak with fear lest I should lose you, too, in the general wreck. And you came and sat here for me patiently—Darling!"

There was a mingling of self-surrender and ruffled pride in her smiling reproach:

"Lose me? What do you mean? I waited for you last night, sir, and all this weary morning, till I could wait no longer; I had to find you. I would have stayed at home till you came; I meant to, but father startled me: he said he was afraid you'd lose your place as Professor in spite of all he had done for you. 'Twas good of him, wasn't it, to give up running for Mayor, so as not to embitter Gulmore against you? I was quite proud of him. But you won't lose your post, will you? Has anything serious happened?—Dear!"

He paused to think, but he could not see any way to avoid telling her the truth. Disappointments had so

huddled upon him, the insight he had won into human nature was so desolating that his heart ached for sympathy and affection. He loved her; she was to be his wife; how could he help winning her to his side? Besides, her words voiced his own fears—her father had already begun to try to part them. She must know all and judge. But how? Should he give her "The Tribune" to read? No—it was vindictive.

"Come and sit down, May, and I'll tell you what happened yesterday. You shall judge for yourself whether I was right or wrong."

He told her, point by point, what had occurred. May listened in silence till he stopped.

"But why did he resign? What could he gain by that?"

While she was speaking a thought crimsoned her cheeks; she had found the key to the enigma. Three nights before her father had talked of Washington and the East with a sort of exultation. At the time she had not paid much attention to this, though it had struck her as very different from his habit. Now the peculiarity of it confirmed her suspicion. In some way or other his action in resigning was connected with his inexplicable high spirits. A wave of indignation swept over her. Not that she felt the disgust which had sickened the Professor when he first heard of the traitorism. He had condemned Mr. Hutchings on the grounds of public morality; May's anger was aroused because her father had sought to deceive *her*; had tried by lying suggestion to take credit to himself, whereas—

"I wouldn't have believed it," she murmured, with the passionate revolt of youth against mean deceit. "I can never forgive him or trust him again."

"Don't let us talk of it any more, dear. I wouldn't have told you only I was afraid that he would try to separate us. Now I know you are on my side I wouldn't have you judge him harshly."

"On your side," she repeated, with a certain exaltation of manner. "On your side always in spite of everything. I feel for you more intensely than for myself." In a lower voice and with hesitating speech she added: "Did he—did he tell you that he resigned on your account?"

He nodded.

"And you're not angry?"

"No." He smiled slightly. "I understand men better now than I did yesterday. That's all."

"Oh, but you ought to be mad. I am. How can you—"

"Let us talk, dear, of what concerns us more. Have you heard anything? From what your father said I half fear that the meeting to-morrow may go against me. Has no one called?"

"Professor Krazinski. I saw his card on the table when I came in. You think it's a bad sign that he's the only one?"

"I'm afraid so. It may be merely anxiety, but I'm growing suspicious of every one now. I catch myself attributing low motives to men without reason. That electioneering has infected me. I hate myself for it, but I can't help it; I loathe the self-seeking and the vileness. I'd rather not know men at all than see them as they've shown themselves lately. I want to get away and rinse my mouth out and forget all about it—away somewhere with you, my sweet love."

"But you mustn't let them condemn you without an effort." While speaking she put her hand on his shoulder and moved close to him. "It might injure us later. And you know you can persuade them if you like. No one can listen to you without being won over. And I want you to keep your post; you love teaching and you're the best teacher in the world, ah—"

He put his arms round her, and she bowed her head on his neck, that he might not see the gathering tears.

"You're right, dear. I spoke hastily. I'll do my best. It won't be as bad as we think. My colleagues are men of some education and position. They're not like the crowd of ignorant voters and greedy place-hunters; they'll listen to reason, and"—half bitterly—"they've no motive to do me wrong. Besides, Krazinski has called, and I scarcely know him; perhaps the others didn't think of coming. It was kind of him, wasn't it? I'm very grateful to him. He must be a good fellow."

"What has he done so wonderful? Oh, my!"—and she turned her face up to his with half-laughing deprecation—"I'm afraid I'm deteriorating too. I can't hear you praise any one now without feeling horribly jealous. Yes, he must be good. But don't be *too* grateful to him, or—I must be going now, and, oh! what a long time it'll be until to-morrow! I shall have grown old before—to-morrow."

"Sweetheart! You'll come here and wait for me in the afternoon, won't you? I shall want to see you so much."

"Yes, if you like; but I intended to go up to the University—mayn't I? It'll seem ages—aeons—waiting here by myself."

"The meeting will not last long, and I'll come to you as soon as it's over. Darling, you don't know how much you have helped me. You have given me courage and hope," and he folded her in his arms.

Mr. Gulmore liked to spend his evenings with his wife and daughter. It amused him to hear what they had been doing during the day. Their gossip had its value; sentimental or spiteful, it threw quaint sidelights upon character. On the evening before the Faculty meeting Ida was bending over a book, while Mr. Gulmore smoked, and watched her. His daughter was somewhat of a puzzle to him still, and when occasion offered he studied her. "Where does she get her bitterness from? I'm not bitter, an' I had difficulties, was poor an' ignorant, had to succeed or go under, while she has had everythin' she wanted. It's a pity she ain't kinder...."

Presently Mrs. Gulmore put away her work and left the room. Taking up the thread of a conversation that had been broken off by his wife's presence, Mr. Gulmore began:

"I don't say Roberts'll win, Ida. The bettin' 's the other way; but I'm not sure, for I don't know the crowd. He may come out on top, though I hev noticed that young men who run into their first fight and get badly whipped ain't likely to fight desperate the second time.—Grit's half trainin'!"

"I wish I could be there to *see* him beaten!" Ida had tried to turn her wounded pride into dislike, and was succeeding. "I hate to feel he's in the same town with us—the coward!"

At this moment Mrs. Gulmore reentered the room.

"To think of it! Sal left the gas-stove flarin'. I made her get up and come downstairs to put it out. That'll learn her! Of all the careless, shiftless creatures, these coloured people are the worst. Come, Ida, it's long after nine, and I'm tired. You can read in your bedroom if you want to."

After the usual "good night" and kisses, Ida went upstairs. While Mrs. Gulmore busied herself putting "things straight," Mr. Gulmore sat thinking:

"She takes after her mother in everythin', but she has more pride. It's that makes her bitter. She's jest like her—only prettier. The same peaky nose, pointed chin, little thin ears set close to her head, fine hair—the Yankee school-marm. First-rate managin' women; the best wives in the world to keep a house an' help a man on. But they hain't got sensuality enough to be properly affectionate."

On the following afternoon Roberts stopped before the door of his house and looked back towards the University. There on the crest of the hill stood the huge building of bluish-grey stone with the round tower of the observatory in the middle—like a mallet with a stubby handle in the air.

While gazing thus a shrill voice reached him, the eager treble of a newsboy:

"Great Scandal!" he heard—and then "Scandal in the University! Full Report! Only five cents! Five cents for the 'Herald's' Special!"

He hastened to the gate and beckoned to the little figure in the distance. His thoughts were whirling. What did it mean? Could the "Herald" have issued a special edition with the report of the meeting? Impossible! there wasn't time for that. Yet, he had walked leisurely with Krazinski, and newspapers did wonders sometimes. Wonders! 'twould be a breach of confidence. There was an honourable understanding that no one should divulge what took place in a Faculty meeting. "Honourable" and Gulmore—the two words wouldn't go together. Could it be?

A glance at the contents-bill brought a flush to his face. He gave a quarter for the sheet, and as the boy fumbled for change he said, taking hold of the bill:

"I want this too; you can keep the rest of the money," and hurried into the house.

May met him at the door of the sitting-room, but did not speak, while he opened out the paper, and in silence showed her the six columns, containing a verbatim report of the meeting.

"What do you think of that?" he asked, and without waiting for an answer he spread the contents-bill upon the table.

"This is better," he went on, bitterly. "Read this!" And she read:

Ruptions in Learning's Home. The President's Flank Attack.

Fours to a Pair. The Pagan retires and the Pole.

"Oh, the brutes! How could they?" May exclaimed. "But what does it mean?"

"You have it all there," he said, touching the bill; "all in two or three lines of cheerful insult, as is our American fashion. In spite of the opinion of every leading lawyer in the State, sixteen—fanatics, to give them the benefit of the doubt, voted that a disbelief in Christian dogma was the same thing as 'open immorality.' The Father of Lies made such men!"

"Did no one vote for you?"

"Two, Krazinski and some one else, I think 'twas little Black, and two papers were blank. But fancy the President speaking against me, though he has a casting-vote. All he could say was that the parents were the only proper judges of what a student should be taught. Let us grant that; I may have been mistaken, wrong, if you like; but my fault was not 'open immorality,' as specified in the Statute. They lied against me, those sixteen."

May sympathized too keenly with his indignation to think of trying to allay it; she couldn't help asking, "What did you do after the voting?"

"What could I do? I had had enough of such opponents. I told them that if they dismissed me I'd take the case into the courts, where at the worst their reading of the words 'open immorality' would be put upon record, and my character freed from stain. But, if they chose to rescind their vote I said I was willing to resign."

"They accepted that?"

"Krazinski forced them to. He told them some home-truths. They dared not face the law courts lest it should come out that the professorships were the rewards of sectarian bigotry. He went right through the list, and ended by resigning his position.

"Then Campbell got up and regretted his speech. It was uncalled-for and—you know the sort of thing. My colleagues, he said, would have preferred to retain my services if I had yielded to the opinion of the parents. Under the circumstances there was no course open but to accept my resignation. They would not enter the vote upon the minutes; they would even write me a letter expressing regret at losing me, etc. So the matter ended.

"Coming down the hill I tried to persuade Krazinski not to resign on my account. But the dear old fellow was obstinate; he had long intended to retire. He was very kind. He thinks I shall find another place easily.

"Now, May, you have heard the whole tale, what is your opinion? Are you disappointed with me? You might well be. I'm disappointed with myself. Somehow or other I've not got hate enough in me to be a good fighter."

"Disappointed? How little you know me! It's my life now to be with you. Whatever you say or do is right to me. I think it's all for the best; I wouldn't have you stay here after what has passed."

May meant all she said, and more. At the bottom of her heart she was not sorry that he was going to leave Tecumseh. If she thereby lost the pleasure of appearing as his wife before the companions of her youth, on the other hand, he would belong to her more completely, now that he was cut off from all other sympathy and no longer likely to meet Miss Gulmore. Moreover, her determination to follow him in single-hearted devotion

seemed to throw the limelight of romance upon her disagreement with her father, which had been much more acute than she had given Roberts to suppose. She had loved her father, and if he had appealed to her affection he could have so moved her that she would have shown Roberts a hesitation which, in his troubled and depressed condition, might have brought about a coldness between them, if not a rupture of their relations. But Hutchings, feeling that he was in the wrong, had contented himself with depreciating Roberts by sneer and innuendo, and so had aroused her generous partisanship. The proceedings of the Faculty naturally increased her sympathy with her lover, and her enthusiastic support did much to revive his confidence in himself. When they parted in the evening he had already begun to think of the preparations to be made for his journey Eastwards.

A few weeks later a little knot of friends stood together one morning on the down-platform of the Tecumseh station, waiting for the train to come in. Professor Roberts was the centre of the group, and by his side stood dainty May Hutchings, the violet eyes intense with courage that held the sweet lips to a smile. Around them were some ten or a dozen students and Krazinski, all in the highest spirits. They were talking about Roberts' new appointment at Yale, which he attributed to Krazinsk's influence. Presently they became aware of an unwonted stir at the entrance-door behind them. As they turned in wonder they saw that the negro hands had formed a lane through which, heralded by the obsequious station-master, Mr. Gulmore, with his daughter on his arm, was coming towards them. Headless of their astonishment, the Boss walked on till he stood in front of Roberts.

"Professor, we've heard of your good fortune, and are come to congratulate you. Ida here always thought a pile of your knowledge an' teachin', an' I guess she was right. Our little difference needn't count now. You challenged me to a sort of wrastle an' you were thrown; but I bear no malice, an' I'm glad to offer you my hand an' to wish you—success."

Roberts shook hands without hesitation. He was simply surprised, and had no inkling of the reason which had led Gulmore to come to the station and to bring Ida. Had he been told that this was the father's plan for protecting his daughter against the possibility of indiscreet gossip he would have been still more astonished. "Nor do I bear malice," he rejoined, with a smile; "though the wrestling can hardly be considered fair when twenty pull one man down."

"'Twas my crowd against yours," replied the Boss indifferently. "But I'm kinder sorry that you're leavin' the town. I'd never have left a place where I was beaten. No, sir; I'd have taken root right there an' waited. Influence comes with time, an' you had youth on your side."

"That may be your philosophy, Mr. Gulmore," said Roberts lightly, as the other paused, "but it's not mine. I'm satisfied with one or two falls; they've taught me that the majority is with you."

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK GULMORE, THE BOSS ***

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