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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE DAUGHTER OF A REPUBLICAN ***

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A Table of Contents and a List of Illustrations have been added.

THE DAUGHTER OF A REPUBLICAN

[Pg 1]

BY
BERNIE BABCOCK

CHICAGO:
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1900

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[Pg 2]



[Pg 3]

The world at large gives small attention to

human effort until it has reached the full stature of a robust maturity.

By way of encouragement, it is well for many obscure toilers that there are those who think they see a bud of promise in the yet undeveloped effort.

Because of the loving interest she has always taken in my every "first attempt," I dedicate this little volume to

MY MOTHER.



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"'I'm cold,' whined the boy."

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The Daughter of a Republican.

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CHAPTER I.

THE CROWLEY FAMILY.

Let me introduce the reader to the Crowley family, and when you have become acquainted with them bear well in mind that in this broad land of ours there are thousands upon thousands of families in a condition as deplorable, and some whose mercury line of debauchery has dropped to a point of miserable existence as yet unsounded by this family.

The Crowleys are all in tonight, except the father, and he is momentarily expected.

It is a bitter night in February. The ground is covered with ice and sleet causing many a fall to the unwary pedestrian.

The wind comes in cutting blasts directly from the north, rattling and twisting everything in its way not securely fastened, then dying away in a long weary moan, abandoning its effort only to seize upon the elements with a firmer grasp and come battling back with fresh vindictiveness and force.

There were those who did not mind this storm, people around whose homes all was secure and whom no rattling annoyed, people who enjoyed bright lights and warm fires, but these were not the Crowleys. The Crowley's home consisted of two rooms in a rickety old tenement house around which everything rattled and flapped as the wind raged. Their light came from a dingy little lamp on a goods box. Every now and then a more violent gust of wind struck the house with such force that the structure trembled and the feeble light flickered dangerously.

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Here and there broken windows were stopped up with rags and papers and through the insecure crevices the wind found its way with a rasping, tiresome groan.

What little fire there was, burned in a small rusty stove. Its door stood open, perhaps to keep the low fire burning longer, perhaps to let the warmth out sooner, and against the pale red glow four small hands were visible, spread to catch the feeble heat.

On a bed in one corner, gaunt, and with wasted form, a woman lay.

This was the mother.

A girl of perhaps fifteen sat close to the stove and held a tiny baby wrapped in a gingham apron.

A spell seemed to have fallen on the usually noisy group. Even Cora, the family merrymaker, was quiet, until aroused from her reverie by an act of her brother who replenished the fire.

She spoke rather severely.

"Johnnie, how many pieces of coal are there left in the box?"

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"Five—and little ones."

"Then get to work quick! Take out one of the pieces that you have just put in. We are not rich enough to burn three pieces at once."

"I'm cold," whined the boy.

"So am I, awful cold, but you know that coal must do till pa comes."

"I'd like to know when that will be. Any other pa would be home such a freezing night as this. I hate my pa."

"Johnnie, Johnnie, you must not talk that way. He is your father, child."

The voice came from the bed and was marked by that peculiar tone noticeable when persons extremely cold try to speak without chattering.

"I can't help it, mother. I'm cold, so cold, and I'm hungry, too. I only had half a potato, and Maggie says they're all gone."

"Poor child!" said the mother with a sigh. "Here, Maggie, give him this," and she drew from under the pillow a small potato which she held toward the girl.

But the girl did not stir until the hungry boy made a move in the direction of the bed. This movement aroused her as his overdose of coal had roused his other watchful sister a moment previous.

"No! No! Johnnie. Do not take it. Our mother will starve. She has not eaten anything for two days."

"Let him have it, Maggie. I cannot eat it. Perhaps your father will come soon and bring some tea. I think a good cup of tea would make me better." [Pg 8]

"And, mother," said Cora, "we will take the money we were going to spend for shoes and get a bit of flannel for you and the baby. You must have it or you will freeze. Surely father will come soon. He said he would."

"Nearly everyone has gone home now. Hardly a person passes," Cora observed, with her nose pressed against the frosty pane.

"That is because it is so cold. It is not late yet. We will wait a little longer, and then Maggie——"

"O, mother! Do not ask me to go. It is so cold, and suppose—suppose I had to go into a saloon again. It nearly kills me to go about such places."

"You might meet him, Maggie, and keep him from going in."

"If my pa don't come tonight, he's a big liar, that's all!" broke in Johnnie, hotly.

His mother did not answer him. She was watching the face bent low over the tiny baby. She noted the careworn look and the nervous pressure of the hand held over the tiny one to keep it warm.

Presently the girl lifted her eyes to her mother. Those tender pleading eyes of the mother would have melted a harder heart than hers. She went to the bed and put the baby in, close to its mother's side. Then she threw her arms around the haggard woman's neck and kissed her passionately.

"Dear mother," she said, "I would do anything for you. I will go for father, and before it gets any later." [Pg 9]

"Pray, child! Pray every breath you draw! Pray every step you take that you may find him before it is too late. If you do not—I cannot imagine what is to become of us. Pray! God is not cruel. Surely he will hear us in our misery."

Would you see the drunkard's daughter dressed for a walk this bitter night? A frail, slender girl, who should have been warmly clad, she is dressed in thinnest, shabby cotton, through which the elements will play as through rags of gauze, while the flesh of her feet, unprotected by her almost soleless shoes, will press against the sleet. The two faded pink roses that flap forlornly on the side of her coarse straw hat bear a silent suggestion of pathos—a faint remembrance, perhaps, of the days of departed happiness.

While she is adjusting the remnant of a shawl so as to cover as much of her shoulders as possible, the children are giving her numerous messages to be given their father when she finds him. At last she is ready. After hesitating a moment she kisses them all and with a shudder steps out into the howling, swirling blast.

She walked briskly, halting a second every time she met a man to see if he were the object of her search and passing each time with a growing fear, as each time she was disappointed.

At last she came to the door of the saloon where her father had so often worse than wasted the money his family were perishing for at home. [Pg 10]

She stopped.

She knew it was warm and light inside. Perhaps her father had just stepped inside to get warm. Should she look?

While she stood shivering in the wind, getting her courage up to the point of entering, a man passed her and went in. As he went through the door a familiar voice greeted her ear, a voice she well knew and had learned to fear.

She did not hesitate longer. Opening the door she walked swiftly and noiselessly in. For a moment the air seemed to stagger her, so laden was it with the fumes of liquor and tobacco. There was a crowd around the bar and the bartender was busy mixing drinks and jingling glasses.

She saw her father. He was about two-thirds drunk and she knew, poor child, that she had found him at his worst. Her courage almost failed her, and she took an involuntary step toward the door. Her father's voice arrested her.

"Here it goes, and it's my last. Now, who can say Dam Crow has not done the square thing?" And with the words he flung a silver dollar on the bar. His last had joined his first. All had gone into the same coffer while an innocent wife and helpless children were starving and freezing at home.

A pair of hungry, pleading blue eyes came like a vision to Maggie. Before the ring of the silver had died away, she sprang forward like a tiger and seized the dollar. [Pg 11]

"Thief! thief!" cried a chorus of voices and two or three seized her.

"By the Lord, it's Mag! my Mag! Give that money where it belongs, and tell what brings you here, you huzzy," and Damon Crowley seized his daughter by the shoulder and shook her savagely.

"I will give it where it belongs, and that will be to mother. I came here for you, father. Mother is sick and cold and nearly starved. The children are all crying for something to eat and the coal is gone; and this is the last?"

She opened her hand and looked at the dollar. Damon Crowley reached for it, but quick as a flash she closed her fingers over it and thrust her hand behind her.

"Never," she said firmly. "This is the last. It shall be ours to buy mother some tea and the children some bread."

"Give me that money, you devilish brat!" and stepping forward he struck her a blow in the face.

She staggered.

Some of the bystanders laughed. Some called her a plucky girl, and one, more nearly drunk than the rest, thinking that he was in a dog pit no doubt, called lustily, "Sic 'em! Sic 'em!"

Maggie cast an appealing glance around the room. All of the men had been drinking. Some were nearly intoxicated. The bartender was sober, but it was his dollar that was involved; he could not interfere. [Pg 12]

Poor Maggie! She stood her ground bravely. It was the last; she could not let it go. The enraged man gave vent to his passion in a volley of oaths. "Give me that dollar, or — I'll bust your head. I won't stand such treatment, you — fool!" and suiting the action to the words, he drew from under the stove a heavy poker and started toward her.

Someone caught his upraised arm.

"Let her go, Dam Crow. Let her have her dollar. You've done the square thing. Not a stingy bone in your body."

A laugh followed this speech, in which Damon Crowley joined, and which seemed to put him in better humor. He threw the poker down heavily and taking the frightened girl rudely by the arm pushed her toward the door.

"Tell the sick lady her husband wants her to have tea, nice warm tea, plenty of tea, and this is your share," and opening the door he pushed her into the passageway and gave her a violent kick.

The crowd inside laughed loudly and then went on with their drinking and swearing as if nothing had happened. Such visits as the visit of Maggie were of too frequent occurrence to cause any prolonged ripple of excitement.

Poor Maggie! She lay groaning on the cold, slippery ground, just outside this licensed, money-making pet of Uncle Sam's. [Pg 13]

She was half crazed with pain and growing numb when two young gentlemen came along. One stooped and picked up something lying in the street.

"Gad! I've good luck," and he held up the dollar.

"Please, mister! it's mine. Give it to me quick. It's all that's left."

"And what did you do with the others? Come now, you've had a little too much of the stuff inside, but you'd better move on or you'll freeze."

"Let's call a policeman."

"Too cold to stop. They'll find her; and if she freezes, well enough. Her kind are of no use to the world."

Then the speaker dropped the dollar in his pocket, and taking his companion's arm hastened away.

"O God! O God!" groaned Maggie. But her cry was lost on the moaning wind.

Presently a man wrapped in a fur-trimmed coat turned the corner and almost ran over the prostrate form. He halted suddenly and spoke to her. No answer.

He shook her. Only a faint groan.

Then he stepped to the saloon, and after a sharp, decided knock by way of announcement, entered.

"Does the girl lying outside belong to anyone here? She is nearly frozen."

A couple of men stepped to the door and peered out.

"It's Dam Crow's girl. She was in here a huntin' him."

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"Where is her father?"

"That's him," pointing to a man lying on a bench behind the stove.

"Guess he's asleep," said the man, smiling broadly.

"Wake him, and hurry about it," said the gentleman.

But Damon Crowley was not in a sleep that could be easily broken. Like a beast he lay. The spittle oozed from his mouth and spread over his dirty beard in true drunkard fashion. When told that his daughter was just outside freezing, he could only grunt.

"Where is his home?"

"Small use to take her there," one man observed, recounting part of the interview that had taken place a short time before. But no one knew where he lived. The muffled man left the saloon abruptly, evidently much disgusted.

Stepping into the street he called a cab just passing. After having had the half-dead girl placed in the vehicle, the gentleman followed, slamming the door.

Then he took off his great coat and threw it over her tattered garments.

Judge Thorn was a tender-hearted man.

CHAPTER II.

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THE THORNS AT HOME.

The Thorn homestead, like the family whose name it bore, was magnificent and substantial in an unassuming way. Its gray gables seemed to look with a frown on the gingerbread style of architecture that had grown up around it. Under the trees on its lawn, three generations of Thorns had grown to man's estate, and every one of them had become a lawyer.

It had been the hope of the present occupant that when he left the estate he might leave it in the hands of a son, but this was not to be.

After a short married life his wife died, leaving him childless.

Some years later he married a second time. When his first child was born and he was told it was a daughter, he was disappointed. When the second child came and was also a girl, his disappointment verged on resentment. Through the hours of anxious waiting that preceded the arrival of the third child, he walked the floor in a state of mind alternating between hope and fear, and when at last the suspense was over and he looked upon the tiny features of a son, his joy knew no bounds.

He hurried out to break the news to the two little sisters whom he imagined would be as pleased as he was. He found them in the yard, Vivian swinging with her doll and Jean digging a hole in a pile of sand. When the important announcement was made, the black-haired Vivian clapped her hands for joy, but the other little girl kept right on digging, just as if she had not heard. When she had passed the critical point in the process of excavating she paused and looked up.

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The expression in her father's face was something new to her, and she studied him in silence a moment, then said, solemnly:

"Are boys any better than girls, father?"

"Better? Why no, they are no better. They are boys, that is all."

"Well, then!" and the tone of her voice, no less than the words, conveyed the meaning that the matter was settled, and she returned to her digging as if nothing had happened. But she did not forget the incident, and when, shortly after, the tiny baby boy in the cold arms of his mother had been put to rest beneath a mound, and the light had gone out of the father's face and the elasticity out of his step, little Jean pondered and her heart went out strangely to her father in his bitter trouble. She followed him softly about and studied him.

One evening, some time after the little son had come and gone, Jean appeared before her father in the library to make an important announcement. "I've been thinking the matter over, father," she said, "and I've made up my mind I will be your boy. You want a boy, and you know yourself you'll never be able to make one of Vivian, with her wee little mouth and her long braids. Now my hair is just right and I can throw a stone exactly over the middle of the barn and kick a ball farther than any boy on the block. I shall kick more hereafter, for don't you think a boy's legs ought to be cultivated?"

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Judge Thorn smiled and assured her that she was correct in her idea of muscular development.

"Are boys as good as girls, father?"

"Boys as good as girls? Why, certainly."

"Well, you said once that girls were as good as boys, and if boys are as good as girls they're as good as each other, aren't they?"

Judge Thorn could not keep back the laugh this time.

"I believe that is the logical conclusion," he said.

"Then tell me truly, father, if I'm going to be your boy, are you going to be as glad as you were that morning you bothered me when I was digging my well?"

Judge Thorn hesitated a moment, but the clear gray eyes were upon him, and he felt the justice of their plea.

"Yes, dear, I think so."

"And may I do just as you do when I get big—read books and make speeches?"

Now Judge Thorn was not an advocate of the advanced sphere of women and was not sure he wanted his daughter to be a lawyer, but after a short reflection, perhaps thinking the request but the passing fancy of a child, he gave his assent. [Pg 18]

"Thank you, father," she responded gravely. "I think you are a very good man." Then she kissed him and left the room.

He sat, still smiling, when her voice close to his side startled him with the announcement:

"I think, father, if you do not care, I will not go into pants. I might not feel at home, you know."

From the time that the little Jean had announced herself as her father's boy, he took more interest in her; and as the child developed, he saw unfolding the traits and abilities he had hoped to nurture in a son. Intuitively she seemed to understand his moods and fancies, and as her understanding developed, the books were a source of delight to her, and many times she discussed knotty problems with her father in a way that pleased him mightily.

So, as the years went by, she slipped into the place the father had reserved for the son, and he loved her with a peculiarly tender love and was never prouder of her than when he heard her say, in explanation of her notions and her plans, "I am my father's boy."

On the particular night when Maggie Crowley was wandering about in the storm, two young women occupied a handsome room in the Thorn home. A cheerful wood fire burned on the hearth and the clear rays from an overhanging light cast brightness over the rows of books that lined the walls. [Pg 19]

These were two people who minded not the winter weather. The cold wind blowing through the gables and leafless trees held no terror for them. Perhaps they rather liked to hear it as by way of comparison it made their lot seem more comfortable.

The tall slender woman with black hair was examining alternately a fashion book and a bunch of samples. She was Vivian, a pronounced society lady.

The other sat in a low chair, by a small study table, reading, only looking up now and then to answer some question put to her by her sister. This was "my father's boy."

The solemn little Jean was gone, in her place was this altogether charming young person, whose shapely head was crowned with coils and coils of red brown hair held in place by numerous quaintly carved silver hairpins. If it had not been for the clear gray eyes and the quaint fashion she still had of dropping her head on one side when solving some momentous problem, the little Jean might have been a dream.

Presently the door opened and Judge Thorn entered.

"Nice evening, girls!"

"Delightful!"

"Blackstone, Jean?"

The young lady looked at the book quizzically a moment and then laughed.

"United States history, father. Last week I reviewed Caesar. Now I am on this, and if I do my best I think I may reasonably hope to be in the Third Reader by next week." [Pg 20]

The judge laughed.

"I have been reading our constitution and looking over the record of 'the late unpleasantness,'" said Jean. "It is very interesting to me. Do you know, father, I love every woman who gave a husband or a son to her country, and I almost hold in reverence the memory of the men who shed their blood to effect the abolition of human slavery in America."

The tall form of the Judge straightened and his eye brightened, like a soldier's when he hears the names of his old battle-fields.

"Do not forget," he said, "that there were those who acted as brave a part who never faced a cannon. It is easy to be borne by the force of a great wave; but those who by their time and talents put the wave of public opinion in motion are the real heroes.

"I can remember the time when a man who preached or taught Abolition was looked upon as narrow-minded, fanatical, bigoted and even criminal. When the name was a stench in the nostrils of the people even in liberty-loving Boston. When men were rotten-egged, beaten, and in some instances killed because they dared to follow the dictates of their own consciences and make sentiment for the overthrow of the traffic in humanity. It took all this to bring it about. No great moral reform takes place without agitation, or without martyrs. Those men bore the brunt of battle before the battle was. They were most surely heroes. They made the tidal wave of opinion that swept the country with insistent force and struck the shackles from 3,000,000 slaves."

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"And you, father, were one of them," cried the enthusiastic girl. "What perils you must have braved!"

"I did all I could, you may be sure," answered the judge, modestly, "and I imagine it would be more agreeable to be whipped in a hand-to-hand encounter than to be caricatured, misrepresented and lied about, and by those, too, who claimed to have the abolition of slavery near their hearts, who prayed unceasingly for its utter destruction, and then split hairs as to the way in which it was to be accomplished, and who fondly hoped to exterminate it by marking boundary lines."

"But then," asked Jean, "was there no way by which this terrible war could have been averted? No way by which the government could have regulated and gradually suppressed slavery?"

"Regulations and restrictions," replied the Judge, waxing eloquent, "put upon such a vice by a government are but its terms of partnership. Gradual suppression of a mighty evil is always a signal failure, and while we wait to prove these failures the enemy gains foothold."

"I am proud of you, father—proud to be my father's boy—proud to be the daughter of a patriot," said Jean, with tears in her clear eyes. "I am a patriot, too, and if ever such an issue comes to the front in my day, I intend to do a patriot's part, if I am a woman."

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"I do not think such an issue will ever be forced to the front again. That was a moral question as well as political. Other matters vex the people of today—money matters mostly—in which more diplomacy is required than bravery."

"I must hurry now. I have but fifteen minutes in which to get down town."

"You surely are not going out tonight?"

"Business appointments must be kept. The storm was not considerate enough to leave town before 'the man' came, and 'the man' cannot wait for the storm to take its departure, so what is to be done?"

"Does James know?"

"I do not want the horses tonight."

Jean stepped out and returned with his wraps. She held the great coat while he thrust his long arms into it. Then she tied his muffler around his neck.

"Father, while you are out, if you run across any lonely reformer, put in for Jean an application for the position of first assistant," laughed Vivian.

Judge Thorn left the room, and these two daughters of fortune settled themselves for a comfortable evening.

Before it seemed possible that an hour had gone they heard a vehicle drive up to the side gate.

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The carriage stopped for several minutes, then rattled away over the hard ground, and presently the judge re-entered the room.

"Ugh! This is a tough night. Fire feels good," and he rubbed his hands briskly.

"I brought home company, girls. Not exactly the reformer Vivian was speaking of; perhaps someone to reform."

"What do you mean?"

"Whom have you found?"

"I think I may be able to explain what I mean, but until the girl thaws out a little we will not know who she is," said the judge mysteriously.

"What in the world do you mean, father? But tell us about it."

"Well, as usual on a night of this sort, there was a missing man. The search for him took me a couple of blocks out of my way and in coming back I passed a saloon of a low order and found the girl lying in the sleet. I thought more than likely she was drunk, and stepped into the saloon to

advise them to look after their productions. Here I found her father in a state of beastly intoxication and learned that she had been there, a short time before, begging him to go home with her to a sick wife and some hungry children, but I could not find out where this home was. Just as I left the saloon a cab came along, and I had the driver put the girl in it. This is all. Where are you going, Jean?"

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"Going to see the object of your charity."

Judge Thorn placed his hand on Jean's shoulder and pushed her gently back into her chair.

"Possess your soul in patience. You could be of no possible service if you were to go. Mrs. Floyd has her in charge and will do all that is necessary. I am not sure that it was wise to bring her here. I am almost sorry that I did so, but I hated to leave her and there was not a policeman in sight; there never is.

"It is a shame such places as the place at which I stopped tonight are allowed to exist. Two-thirds of the crime and misery of our entire nation can be traced directly to their doors. They are a public nuisance, an outrage to civilization. Temperance people must see to it that license is raised so high that this sort cannot obtain it."

"Would that shut them up?" said Jean.

"Certainly it would."

"Not all the saloons?"

"All the poor, low ones."

"What about the rich ones?"

"It would make no difference with them, but they have not the bad effect on the morals of a community that the low ones have. They are patronized by a set of people who do not pour their last cent down their throats and employ their time beating their families."

Jean crossed one foot over the other, leaned slightly forward and with her head dropped a little to one side in the old-time way, sat studying the fire. She was trying to solve some knotty problem.

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Her father smiled. It seemed she was the little Jean come back.

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Give me some, quick!

JEAN THE ABOLITIONIST.

"Come in, father, and make yourself comfortable." It was Jean speaking, as she stood in the glow of the library lamp. "I have been waiting for you. You need not cast your eye around for the paper; you will not find it until my case has had a hearing."

Judge Thorn sank into the great easy chair before the fire with an air of forced resignation, and the young woman continued:

"It is quite necessary nowadays, you know, for women to have 'ideas.' I have ideas on social and moral questions, but I do not know just where I belong when it comes to politics."

The judge lifted his hands with a show of expostulation.

"So our Jean would be a politician," he cried. "Oh, the times! Oh, the customs!"

"Not quite so bad as that, father," replied the young woman, smiling but serious; "but I am in downright earnest. The making, the unmaking and the enforcing of law are politics, and every American woman should have an interest in these things. Every thinking woman must have an interest in them. I must know more of politics." [Pg 28]

"You are right," said her father, thoughtfully; "you are right. I do not believe a woman should get out of her sphere, but a woman's influence is mighty, and inasmuch as all law and reform come through the ballot box, there can be no harm in her giving an intelligent hearing to politics."

"Then, father, please listen to me for a few minutes; I want to tell you what has set me to thinking along these lines. Two weeks ago you brought Maggie Crowley here. I went to see her in her room the next morning, and she told me her story. Her mother was sick, the children were hungry and cold, so she started out to find the father before he had spent his money for drink.

"When she finally found him, she found him in a saloon in the act of handing over his last dollar to pay for liquor that others had drunk as well as himself. She got the dollar some way and started home, when, as she said, she fell. The dollar rolled into the street and a passerby picked it up and pocketed it, in spite of the fact that she told him that it was hers, and that it was the last.

"I shall never forget the way she looked when she came to this part of her story. Her eyes brimmed with tears and her voice was lost in a great big sob. She begged me, for the love of heaven, to go to her mother, who must be half-crazed with grief because of her disappearance, and to take her something to eat.

"So Mrs. Floyd fixed a basket of lunch and we went. A lump rose in my throat when I went into that place. It was cold, very cold. Maggie's mother was lying on a bed in one corner of the room, with one thin quilt over her, and a tiny moaning baby at her breast. Sitting on a box near the bed were two children, a small boy and a girl. They were huddled under a fragment of blanket. The boy was crying for something to eat and his sister was trying bravely to comfort him. [Pg 29]

"There was not a spark of fire nor a crumb of food about the place. When Mrs. Floyd opened the basket and the children saw what it contained, they bounded toward it like wolves, and the woman reached out her thin hand and said, eagerly: 'Give me some quick! I'm nearly starved, and the baby is so weak—my breasts are dry.'

"I took off my glove and felt her hand, and I really thought she must be frozen; but she said she had been that way so much she was growing used to it.

"We stopped on our way home and ordered some coal, and later made a raid on our closets and pantry and made up a load of stuff to take back. I sent some good blankets and quite an assortment of clothing, so that by night they were fairly comfortable.

"I went again the next day to see how they were getting along and to give them news of Maggie, and while I was there the father came home for the first time. He was over his spell of intoxication, but was weak, and tottered like an old man. His eyes were bloodshot, and on the whole he was not a very prepossessing looking gentleman, but I could not help feeling sorry for him. It seemed so sad to see a being, created in the image of God, such a miserable wreck. [Pg 30]

"Casting his eye hurriedly around the room, he went to the bedside and asked for Maggie. His wife told him how she had gone for him, how she fell, and the rest of the story, and then he told his tale, and—can you believe it, father—that man kicked the girl out of the door—kicked his own daughter down the steps into the storm—that night, and gave her the injury from which she lies here under our roof now.

"My blood boiled, fairly boiled. I could feel it bubbling. His wife turned her face to the tiny baby, and I could see her frame shake under the cover. The man knelt beside the bed and wept, too, and again I was sorry, with a sort of contempt mixed in, for the man.

"After a time his wife turned to him, and, resting her thin hand on his head, spoke kindly to him, and referred him to the Lord for the strength that he so sorely lacked. The man did pray, and I am sure he was in earnest; and he asked his wife's forgiveness and took a solemn oath that he

would never touch another cursed drop."

"Good," ejaculated the judge.

"Good?" echoed Jean. "Wait, I have not finished yet. I went there several times. I liked to go. It made me happy to see the look that was coming into the woman's eyes. She took two half-dollar pieces from under the pillow one morning, and proudly displayed them, telling me it was the first time in a year her husband had given her so much. She said she had hoped in vain, so many times, for him to reform that she had given up hope, but that now she really believed poor Maggie's misfortune would prove their blessing. They have not always been poor. Once, when they were younger, they owned a nice home and the husband occupied a good position. But he chose for his associates men who spent a good part of their time in a certain fashionable downtown saloon, and to be social he drank with them. He was not a man who could drink a great deal and not become intoxicated, so, when he began to lie around drunk, they pushed him out.

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"Mrs. Crowley says the starting point of all their poverty and sorrow and shame was on the threshold of the respectable gilt and glass palace that bears over its doors the names of Allison, Russell & Joy. She knows the place well. I think those gentlemen would not be pleased to hear the things she says of them; for certain it is her husband would never have been a drunkard if it had been necessary for him to have learned the habit in a low grog shop."

Jean paused a second and looked at her father, but he seemed unaware of her gaze, and she continued:

"Then I went in to-day to tell them that Maggie would be home in a few days, and I found a change. The girl Cora was on the bed with her mother. The blankets and sheets had disappeared. The few pieces of furniture that the room contained were scattered in disorder. I will try to tell the rest of the story as Mrs. Crowley told it to me. I will never forget, father, the helpless despair that sounded in her voice and manner as she talked.

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"Ah, Miss Thorn!" she said, wearily, "It's all over—all gone. I should have known better than to have hoped again; but hope is so sweet! Yesterday morning my husband seemed more like himself than he has for years. He kissed us when he went away and promised to be home early. We were all very happy. He is such a kind, good man when he is himself. Oh! if only he had never crossed the threshold of that gilded trap of hell. Those men's names burn in my mind. I wonder if such men as Allison, Russell and Joy have hearts.

"Cora fixed supper, and then we waited. He did not come; but I felt so sure some way that he would that I was not uneasy. The children finally had to eat alone. About 9 o'clock he came. Dear Miss Thorn, if you have never seen a raving, frenzied man, pray God you never may. This was the way he came home. He had had just enough of liquor to fire up a gnawing, burning pain and not enough to satisfy him. He came directly to the bed and demanded the money he had given me in the morning. I told him it was gone. He swore an oath, and asked me where. I told him Johnnie had spent it for food. He swore another awful oath, and took up a stick of wood, with which he began to beat the boy.

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"When you are a mother you can better imagine than I can describe how I felt, lying helpless in bed, and seeing a man, my own husband, so cruelly beating my innocent child. Cora, poor Cora, went bravely to her brother's rescue, and her father, God forgive him, beat her until the blood came from his blows, and she fell to the floor, and then he kicked her.

"I could stand this no longer. I sprang from the bed, but I was weak. I could do nothing, and he, the man who promised before God to protect me, kicked me, too. It seemed to me then that his boot-toe pierced my heart. Johnnie ran out to call some one in, but before he returned my husband had taken the blankets and other things that he could pawn and had gone.

"Perhaps you think it strange for me to tell these things to you, but my heart is bursting and my brain is on fire with such misery that I must talk. Come and see what a man can do when crazed with rum—a good father when he is himself—and in a Christian country! Where are the preachers and the people who call themselves God's people, that they do not drive away forever the cause of all this?"

"I looked at the girl Cora; and I wish, father, that she might be put on exhibition in some public show window downtown, conspicuously labeled, 'A specimen of the work done by a father when under the effects of Christian America's legal poison.'

"She was literally covered with wounds and her legs were so swollen she could not walk.

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"Now, father, get out your list of political parties, examine the candidates, and put me where I belong. This is a question that must come into politics, as all reforms come through the ballot-box, and I must give my influence to that political party or power making this a clear-cut issue. I am an Abolitionist."

"A what?"

"An Abolitionist."

"How is that?"

"Simply enough: I stand for the everlasting abolition of the liquor traffic. It is quite the proper

thing for the daughter of a Republican to be an Abolitionist."

Judge Thorn laughed.

"You put your case plain enough," he said. "There is small room to doubt how you stand, but I think that you will see that abolition in this case would be impracticable. You know, my girl, in these days a half-loaf is better than no bread. Political parties, like the grass of the field, sprout up and die away. There are but two real parties. The fight on leading issues is between them. All that is necessary for you to do is to read the platforms of these two parties and make your choice. Listen!"

He took down a political almanac from one of the library shelves.

"We are opposed," he read "to all sumptuary laws as an interference with the individual rights of the citizen." [Pg 35]

Jean sat rocking slowly, with her hands clasped behind her head. As her father read her forehead wrinkled. After he had finished, she waited as if expecting something more, then said:

"Is that all?"

"That is all."

"Then it occurs to me, if I can understand plain English, that this party proposes to do nothing to stop the terrible drink curse. Bring on another. That is not my party."

Judge Thorn read again, and this time with an air of profound satisfaction:

"The first concern of all good government is the virtue and sobriety of the people and the purity of the home."

Jean's face lit up, and she looked eagerly toward her father.

"We cordially sympathize," read on the judge, "with all wise and well-directed efforts for the promotion of temperance and morality."

Jean sat looking into the fire. Her father waited a few seconds, then she turned her face to him.

"And what do they propose to do?"

"Do?"

"Yes, DO! The cordial sympathy of the whole Republican party does not make Mrs. Crowley any happier nor take any of the soreness out of Cora's body, nor do anything toward curing poor Maggie; and I cannot see how 'cordial sympathy' is going to shut up any saloons or keep Mr. Crowley from getting drunk again. So far, so good, but read on. I am anxious to learn what this party proposes to DO to promote 'temperance and morality.'" [Pg 36]

"That is all the platform contains on the subject," said Judge Thorn. "Individuals are left to their own judgment as to the best methods to be used in the restriction of the evil, although the policy of the party is well known."

"It is?"

"High license."

"Does high license promote temperance and morality?"

"Certainly: high license closes a great many saloons entirely, and puts the business in the hands of men who run respectable places."

"Respectable places!" quoted Jean, thoughtfully.

The judge looked at the fire in silence.

"And, father," persisted the earnest girl, "do statistics prove that fewer licenses are issued in cities where high license laws are in effect and that there is a decrease in crime and poverty?"

"To be sure. It must be so, for Republicans, as a rule, are the temperance people and, as a rule, they indorse high license. But you have heard the reading, 'All wise and well-directed *efforts*,' one is at liberty to substitute no license by local option, or any other restrictive measure he deems wise."

"Is there room on this broad platform for any liquor dealers?" [Pg 37]

"Quite a number; and here again may be seen the higher moral tone of the party, for nine times out of ten it is the better class of dealers who are allied with it."

Jean leaned back in her chair and rocked. As she mused she rocked more and more slowly, and when she stopped abruptly her father knew the verdict was ready.

"Well, father, this much is settled: I do not believe in high license. In the first place, I think it dishonest to let the rich man, who can afford to do so, pay for the privilege of making more money and shut out the poor man, who is trying to earn a living, because he is not already rich. In the second place, it occurs to my mind, more so after knowing Mrs. Crowley, that if license

laws could be so arranged as to wipe out the 'respectable' places, the low ones would soon follow. Public sentiment would not tolerate them, and if it did, the coming generation would not be lured to destruction by glitter and music.

"In the third place," and the girl sprang to her feet and stood looking her father full in the face, "a man who labored fearlessly for the overthrow of human slavery when public opinion pointed the finger of scorn at him, said to me not long since: 'Regulations and restrictions put on such a vice by the government are but its terms of partnership.'"

It took Judge Thorn half a minute to recognize his words. Then he laughed.

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"Jean, child, you are getting sharp. Your logic is all right, but you must remember times have changed. This is different."

"I cannot see, father, that the moral issue is any different. Of the two great evils, intemperance is certainly a greater curse than ever slavery was; for while it has all the pain and heartaches and sorrow of every description that accompanies slavery, the worst feature of it is that hell is filling up with souls that drink their doom when they drain the wine cup. I think I understand myself, father, and I say again, I am an Abolitionist. Bring on some other party platform."

"There are no others but the labor organizations and the 'cranks.'"

"What do the labor people say?"

"They regard intelligence, virtue and temperance, important as they are, as secondary to the great material issues now pressing for solution."

"And the 'cranks,' as you call them?"

"They have no policy, and their politics consists in trying to undo all the temperance legislation they get through other parties because it does not come through theirs. As a political party they are the most fanatical and narrow-minded that history takes account of. Indeed, I doubt not that, in certain instances, their obstinate opposition to men and measures has been little short of criminal. But I will read:

"We favor the legal prohibition by state and national legislation of the manufacture, importation and sale of alcoholic beverages."

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"Eureka!" she shouted. "I am not alone. How many others like me?"

"A quarter of a million, I presume," he answered, a trifle grimly.

"And must I take my stand in politics away from my dear father, who is so wise and just?"

"You are young, Jean, and impulsive. You will see the matter in a different light when you have given the subject more thought. I am old now. For over half a century I have studied the affairs of men, and I tell you the time is not now expedient for such an issue to be forced to the front."

"When will it be?"

"When sentiment is strong enough behind the movement to enforce the law."

"Strange," mused Jean. "One might almost imagine, by the amount of resolving that has been done in the last few years, that sentiment was strong enough to sink the traffic five miles deep in the ocean of righteous indignation. I tell you, father, sentiment is the prime essential of the whole thing; but as long as it floats around everywhere, like moonshine, what is it good for? We need concentration and crystallization now. In other words, I believe in a party of embodied sentiment."

CHAPTER IV.

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ASLEEP IN JESUS.

Gilbert Allison, of the firm of Allison, Russell & Joy, wholesale and retail liquor dealers, walking briskly along a sideway that led toward one of the great thoroughfares of the city, halted a second before crossing the street. As he stopped a voice reached his ear. Hearing the voice he took a more careful glance at the surroundings and found himself standing in front of a plain little wooden structure that he learned, from a sign upon one corner, was some sort of an orthodox chapel. Through the narrow, open doorway the voice floated:

Asleep in Jesus, blessed sleep,
From which none ever wake to weep—
A calm and undisturbed repose,
Unbroken by the last of foes.
Asleep in Jesus! Oh, how sweet
To be for such a slumber meet!
With holy confidence to sing
That death has lost its venom sting.

Both words and tune were unfamiliar to him. Was it the song itself, sung to the sweetly pathetic tune of "Rest," was it the strangely beautiful and solemn voice of the singer, or was it common curiosity to see the owner of the unusual voice that proved the attraction prompting him to step into the vestibule? Unseen he watched as the song went on:

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Asleep in Jesus! peaceful rest,
Whose waking is supremely blest.
No fear nor foe shall dim the hour
That manifests the Savior's power.
Asleep in Jesus! Oh, for me
May such a blissful refuge be!
Securely shall my ashes lie
And wait the summons from the sky.

The sweet voice of the singer died away, and the stillness was broken only by low sobbing. Then the minister arose.

Gilbert Allison had seen enough. The plain, dark coffin just before the altar railing told him that another human soul had left its earthly body and had gone beyond.

He was not interested in this. His mind dwelt on the singer. She was rather small, a well-formed and graceful appearing young woman of perhaps twenty-two or twenty-four. She wore a plain dark dress, and a round hat rested on the masses of red-brown hair that framed her face and crowned her shapely head. Here and there in the mass a carved silver hair-pin showed itself, and Gilbert Allison found himself studying the effect as he walked down the street; found himself puzzled as to why he had stopped and noticed her hair or her. Evidently she had made an impression on him. He tried, in a way, to analyze this, and finally gave it up, yet found himself continually recalling the face in its frame of red-brown hair.

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He had known many charming women in his three and thirty years of life, but he had never felt before the indescribable charm that had suddenly, like the fragrance of a hidden violet, come to him for the unknown singer in the dingy chapel. Gilbert Allison had guarded well his heart's affections, but there comes a time in the lives of most men when the heart refuses to be subject to the will and obstinately goes whither it pleases. This man's heart was about to assert its rights. The daughter of a Republican was to have a lover, for it was Miss Thorn who sang.

That Miss Thorn should sing had been the wish of the now lifeless sleeper, and Jean had done her best.

All that was mortal of Maggie Crowley rested in the plain, dark coffin. A life fraught with sorrow and tears and an innocent shame was ended; a body racked with hunger and pain and cold was at rest. From the time of her awful hurt, now a year ago, Maggie had been an invalid. The children had gone out to work, and the frail mother had tried to cheer them as she toiled in the valley of despair. A new sorrow had come into the wretched home: Cora, yet a child in years, because she had a fair face and a drunkard for a father, had been robbed of her one priceless possession—her unspotted character—by a man whose name was familiar in high circles, and whose hand was courted by more than one mother for some cherished daughter.

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From the time that her sister had bartered away her purity, in the bitter, thankless battle that she fought for bread, Maggie had steadily grown weaker, and when the mother knew the time was near at hand for her to go she sent for Miss Thorn.

Jean had never been beside a death-bed, but she did not hesitate.

Maggie was lying, white and thin, upon the pillow. She looked eagerly toward the door. Her eyes lit with a lingering light, and a faint smile came around the corners of her drawn mouth when she saw that it was Jean. She spoke slowly and softly, without much effort, and quite distinctly.

"I'm going pretty soon, Miss Thorn, and I wanted to see you. You've been so good to us—God will bless you for it. When I am gone, don't forget poor mother. Please don't, Miss Thorn! She will be sad. I'm the only one that remembered the other days, and we used sometimes to talk of them and pray that they might come back. Maybe God will send them back some day—but I will not be here. I'm not afraid to die. Christ died for the drunkard's child—I'm sure he did. I'm so glad to go. In my Father's house are many mansions—many mansions—one for us."

She closed her eyes as she repeated the words softly.

"When I am gone, do not feel sad, mother—not too sad," she continued in a moment. "Think that I have only gone to sleep to wake up where there is no more sorrow. I'll be waiting in our mansion, mother, and there we will be happy, for the Book says he will not be there who puts the bottle to his neighbor's lips."

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She stopped to rest. The room was very quiet.

"When my father comes," a look of intense longing came into her sunken eyes, and for a moment she struggled to force back the great sob of sorrow that seemed choking her, "tell him 'goodby' for Maggie. Perhaps he will be sorry—not like he once would have been—just a little. Don't let the children forget me. Dear children! How I wish I could take them all to the mansion. And Cora, poor Cora——"

The last tears that ever shone in Maggie's eyes filled them now.

"God knows about Cora," said Jean, tenderly, while the mother wept in silence.

The dying girl lay quite exhausted, and, while she rested, her eyes wandered from one to the other of the few around the bed and rested lovingly on her mother's face. Her minutes were numbered. Mortality was ebbing away. When she spoke again it was with more of an effort, pausing now and then for breath.

"Stoop over, mother; let me put—my arms around—your dear, kind neck. Put your face down—so I can put my cheek—against yours—as I did when we were happy. I'm going back—to it. I smell the roses. I hear the pigeons—on the roof. Lift me—mother—gently. I am—tired. Sing—my—good night—song—I'll—go—to—sleep."

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Mrs. Crowley drew the dying girl's head close to her heart and tried to sing; but her voice failed. Then, in the presence of the death angel, Jean sang for the girl's long sleeping.

Suddenly a clear, happy, childish voice rang out on the stillness—"Papa's coming!"

It was the last. The arms around the mother's neck unclasped. The weary head sank upon the pillow. The eyelids fluttered. The breaths came shorter and shorter—the weary girl had entered into rest.

The soul of the drunkard's daughter had gone where justice reigns supreme; where a God of justice watches the kingdoms of the earth and in mercy stays the doom that comes a certain penalty of the nation that sells its maids and youths to the rum fiend.

Mrs. Crowley stood looking down on the wan face of her first-born.

"Thank God she is happy! But it's hard—so hard!"

A mother's love is the same the world around. This mother threw herself down by the bedside, and, holding one of the lifeless hands to her lips, sobbed bitterly.

It seemed a desecration that just now the father should come stumbling into the scene, filling the room with the fumes of liquor and muttering drunken curses. But Maggie was beyond the reach of human harm. This would never pain her heart again.

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Neighbors came in, and Jean stepped out into the fresh air.

It was nearly noontime. The streets were busy, and as she went towards home she saw the beer wagons driving in every direction, loaded with their freight of sorrow and pain and death. As she passed the palaces of gilded doom, arrayed in cut glass and mirrors, luring the souls of men and boys to hell, she thought of the Christian voters of the nation who allow it to be so because, bound by party ties and fooled by party leaders, they will not force this mighty issue to the front and demand its recognition at the ballot-box; and these words rang in her ears: "Because I have called and ye have refused, ye have set at naught all my counsel. I also will laugh at your calamity when your destruction cometh as a whirlwind."

The words burned in her mind, and when she reached home she entered the library and without removing hat or gloves threw herself upon a sofa.

It was not quite time for luncheon. The house was quiet.

Vivian had, during the year, married the rector of a large and fashionable city church. For weeks before the eventful occasion life had been one round of shopping and fitting, of entertaining and rehearsing. Jean, as maid of honor, had figured conspicuously in the different functions, and for a time her mind was so absorbed with the fragrance and sunshine of life that its seamy side was forgotten. But after it was all over her thoughts and sympathies went out again to that family of the "other half" that she had so strangely become interested in, and the old question pressed itself for solution, why, in a Christian land of plenty, such a state of life for such vast numbers was allowable or even possible.

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With the sound of the dying girl's voice in her ears and the sight of a nation's legalized poison yet before her vision she rested, and so engrossed was she with her thoughts that she did not notice the entrance of her father.

"A penny for your thoughts, my dear."

Jean looked up suddenly. Then she caught her father's hand and drew him to her side.

"I have seen a death to-day, father—a death, a drunkard, loads of beer and whisky."

"Crowley dead at last?"

"Maggie."

"Poor girl. No doubt she is better off."

"Yes, better off," repeated Jean. "But, father, I have been thinking of the whirlwind. You know the Book that has voiced unerringly the stage play of the ages says destruction is coming as a whirlwind—as a whirlwind. Can you not catch its roaring under the bluster of silver and tariff and war? Do you never hear the mutterings of its power? Are there not signs of the coming whirlwind

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—signs unmistakable—roastings in the South and lynchings in the North, bloody strikes from east to west, deep-seated unrest among the nation's laboring masses, and the steadily increasing cry of a multitude of suffering and helpless people writhing under the heel of the great iniquity? Couple the signs of the times, father, with an indisputable knowledge of corruption in politics, the inefficacy of the law because of the absolute power of rum and 'boodle' and the utter absence of any fixed moral principle in the dealings of the great majority of the old party leaders, and have we not an 'issue' that imperatively demands the attention of every loyal American?

"The more I think, the less I blame the laboring element for their dissatisfaction, bordering on madness at times. I feel that they have just cause to be alarmed. Am I a pessimist, father, or is there a cancer eating out the nation's life?"

The young woman stood in the center of the room, erect and with arm extended. The lawyer was looking at her with a gleam of fatherly admiration; but as she closed the outburst with her question he grew grave and stroked his beard. The facts were not unfamiliar to him.

"I do wish," he said thoughtfully, "that the laboring element would see that it is to their interests to stand by that party that promises them the most in the way of reform, instead of making so much fuss and striking and splitting into small parties that can hope to effect nothing and might cripple their best friend and put the country hopelessly in the hands of the political enemies of progress and reform."

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Jean laughed.

"You look now for all the world, father, like a child whom I saw a few days ago. I came upon her holding a doll's body, with a stump of neck where the head had once been. She looked down at it tenderly and smiled a dear little motherly smile. 'What do you see, child?' I asked. 'My dolly's beautiful face,' she said. 'Where is it?' said I. 'It's gone,' she answered, proudly, but with the fond look still in her eyes. You view the reform element in your party in about the same light."

"When did you turn champion of the labor party?" said the judge, a trifle impatiently.

"I have done no turning. There is but one party standing for the real good of the people. What is the use of organizing a party to exterminate trusts and then being afraid to measure arms politically with the greatest trust on earth? The laboring element will seek their best interests sooner or later."

"Your party has added a few labor planks to catch votes."

"I beg your pardon, father. Almost from the beginning, some thirty years ago, this party stood as it does now. The trouble with you is, if I may be allowed to say it, you know nothing of the party I have discovered. Let me read you its platform."

And from a small, green book Jean began her reading, while Judge Thorn listened attentively. But before she had finished James appeared with the evening paper, and almost unconsciously he opened it. As he cast his eyes on the page a smile overspread his face, and the words of the reading were lost. Jean finished presently, and frowned a little, when she saw her father so deeply engrossed in his paper. Presently he looked up, the broad smile still upon his face.

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"Jean, my girl, listen!" and he read an account of the dramatic passage of the anti-canteen law by Congress.

Judge Thorn had been deeply interested in the canteen question. He had known a boy, the son of a professional friend, who had been most carefully and prayerfully reared at home in fear of the inheritance of an appetite for liquor, but who had gone at his country's call to uphold her honor, and had become a drunkard through the regimental canteen. He himself had seen the fifty law-breaking canteens in Camp Thomas at Chickamauga, with their daily sales amounting to hundreds of dollars. He had seen something of the same evil at the little army post near their own city; and a young man who had been his confidential clerk before the war, and who was now with one of the volunteer regiments at Manila, had written to him of the canteen: "It has been the curse of this army, and has caused more deaths than the Mauser bullets. It is a recognized fact that in regiments where canteens are established drinking is not restrained, rather encouraged, and numerous sprees are started that are finished in the saloons just outside. Six cases of delirium tremens have resulted from the establishment of the regimental groggery. Our army is in danger a thousand times greater than any foreign foe may ever bring against us. When will the government take action?"

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The lawyer's clear mind had seen where the responsibility for the whole system lay, and, sorely tried by the President's inaction, partly to lift from his party the odium of the canteen disgrace and partly as a matter of real heart choice, he had worked with more than his usual vigor to help bring to bear a pressure in Washington great enough to abolish the army saloon.

"Cheer, Jean!" he said. "Cheer for the party in power. The bill has passed."

"Was it your party or public sentiment in spite of your party that brought about the passage of the bill?" asked Jean.

"Sentiment, my dear girl," said the judge, dogmatically, "without machinery back of it, is good for nothing."

"Exactly. If you remember, father, that has been the burden of my plea for a new party. Answer

me a question, and I will cheer so that I may be heard a block. You tell me that the position of this party you ask me to cheer for is high license; now here is a list of ninety-five of the principal cities of the country, forty-six high license and forty-nine low license. The total arrests for drunkenness in the high license cities was 288,907, as against 208,537 in the low license cities. What I want to know is this: How is this sort of a temperance measure going to 'promote temperance and morality'? Public control, local option, mulct tax and other measures you devise figure up about the same way. Take these statistics and in the light of them solve the puzzle for me."

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"Statistics are hard to dwell in unity with. Take them to a preacher. This is a matter for them to deal with," laughed the judge.

"Why do they not deal with them, then? Seven million church member voters in this country! Why do not they focus their religion and do something? I divine a reason. While they live all the rest of the year with prayers and resolutions, they go out on a moral debauch on election day with a disreputable individual known as Party."

The judge stroked his beard and smiled. Then he turned again to his paper. "No need," he said, complacently, "for a better party than what we have. Listen!" and again he read the measure that had so pleased him. "Is it not splendid, and so plainly worded that a wayfaring man, though a fool or a third-rate lawyer, cannot mistake the meaning of it. Now watch the machinery work. We shall have 'father's boy' back cheering for the grand old party yet," and the judge placed his hand fondly on Jean's shoulder.

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"I'll keep my eye on the 'machine,'" answered Jean, playfully, "but I am woefully afraid it is punctured, though I wouldn't mention it for anything."

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CHAPTER V.

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LESSONS OF AN ELECTION DAY.

It was the municipal election day. Judge Thorn was alone in his office. He sat at his desk, which was piled with papers which he was busy sorting. The door opened and Miss Thorn entered. The judge looked over his shoulder. "You are a bit late," he said.

Jean looked at her watch.

"A trifle," she answered, "but I have always wanted to know what sort of people run our government, and I have been out satisfying my curiosity. I have been to the polls."

"To the polls," echoed the judge, sharply, whirling around from his desk with a sudden movement that scattered his papers over the floor.

"That is what I said, father. I have been to the polls; and worse, I took an active part in the proceedings by offering the voters 'no license' tickets."

"Jean, I must say you have overstepped the bounds of all propriety. You are a young lady who has been allowed a good many privileges, but this is carrying things a little too far," said the judge, almost hotly.

"You were there this morning, I believe, father," Jean answered, coolly.

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"I believe I was, but that is no reason you should go. It is no fit place for a decent woman."

"I will admit that, father, and I will go a little further and say it is no fit place for a decent man either."

"Men have grown used to such sights and sounds as are seen and heard around a polling place."

"I suppose so. But if decent men can grow used to such things and escape contamination, I think decent women can do the same; and if decent men cannot I suppose you would advise them to stay away from the polls."

"No; no, indeed. The bad element largely predominates now, and it is the duty of every good citizen to stand by his colors at the ballot box. But we will not discuss the matter further. The fact remains the same. Of course you are of age and can go where you choose, yet I am nevertheless displeased."

"I am sorry that you are displeased, father, and if my doing so will afford you any satisfaction, I will promise you that I will not be caught in such a howling mob again until I can go as an equal of some of the specimens I have seen today."

Jean removed her hat and jabbed the hat pin into it with some asperity.

"I have been grossly insulted," she said.

"Just what I have expected to hear," said her father, "and what can be done when you put yourself in the way of it?"

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"I have not the remotest idea how I put myself in the way of it, but you will probably be able to explain to me. Our venerable Uncle Sam is the offending party, and the offense is something like the indignity you would offer me if you gave Vivian all the privileges and love that you should share with me, because she happened to be born with black hair, and then should try to keep me in a state of blissful delusion by telling me I had the sweeter disposition. There would be about as much sense and justice in such a procedure, coming from you, as there is in the way Uncle Sam treats women.

"Here I am, a woman of good moral character, fairly intelligent, I hope, with a good education, denied my right to the ballot because, forsooth, I chanced to be born a woman and am considered too good. To-day's visit to the polls has reminded me of this insult, tendered by our government to its loyal women.

"By the time I got within two blocks of the polling place, I could hear the general commotion. When I arrived on the scene of action, I found a number of women, of good standing in the community, trying to get men to vote against license. Truly a humiliating business! But as they pressed me, I took a few of the ballots and started into the crowd, while a friendly looking policeman followed me.

"I had hardly made a start when some one crossed my path yelling wildly, 'Vote for whisky, boys! Vote for whisky, boys!' He was that half-witted, pumpkin-colored individual that you discharged last winter because he did not know enough to keep the horses' feet clean. Armed with his license ballot, he halted a second before me; then, fluttering the ballot, which he held between his fingers under my nose, he shouted again and again, 'Vote for whisky, boys!'"

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"He gave me a look that told me plainer than a volume of words could have done that he recognized his importance. He knew that he stood head and shoulders above me in Uncle Sam's estimation, in spite of my learning and morality, because on him had been bestowed a gift denied me.

"I do not like it. I want the right of citizenship. I want to stand on an equality with folks at least that do not know enough to clean a horse's feet."

"It sounds very foolish, Jean," said her father, "for one of your birth and breeding to be talking thus of an equality with such a character as this."

"It does sound foolish, wonderfully foolish," admitted Jean. "You and I know, father, that I am his superior, but when it comes to a question of the social welfare, that is a very different thing. He well understands that he is a privileged character there. He is a unit of society's make-up, and

where do I come in? Along with the Chinese, the ex-convict and the insane! I do not relish any such sort of company. God made woman capable of self-government, and expected it of her. Why should she not be on a suffrage equality with man?"

"Why do you want to vote, Jean?" asked the judge, as he would begin with a witness.

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"Why do you want to vote, father?" sharply replied the girl.

"Why, my vote is my individuality in the body politic. I could not do without my vote," said the judge, with a slight hesitation.

"Do you not suppose I want some individuality, too?" came the prompt retort.

The judge laughed.

"I have every reason to believe you do," he said.

"Do you not suppose that I would not like to help make the laws that govern me?" asked Jean, taking upon her the role of inquisitor.

"Men can make enough laws for both sexes, I guess," was the reply, uttered in a tone that carried a suspicion of dismissal.

"I guess they can," persisted Jean; "but what sort of laws have they been? Heathenish, some of them!"

"For instance?"

"Laws that have been on our statute books allowing fathers to will away their unborn children; laws allowing the father to appoint guardians of whatever kind or creed over his children, leaving the mother powerless. And what shall we say about the abominable laws made by men everyone of them, that legalize the sale of drink?"

"Well, a woman is a woman, Jean, and the polls is not a fit place for a woman," and the judge set his lips very firmly.

"That is the assertion you made at the outset, father. It is no argument, and much as I respect you, I can hardly accept it as final. You know, father, that if polling places are not fit for decent women, neither are they fit for decent men, and the sooner decent people get around and clean them up, the better it will be for the country. Come, now, if you have a sound, logical reason why women should not vote, bring it on."

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"Well," said the judge, "even admitting that the advent of women in politics might have a cleansing effect, women do not want the ballot."

"What women?" demanded Jean.

"The majority of women."

"How do you know they do not?"

"It is to be supposed that if they were clamoring to any great extent for it we would hear of it through the papers."

"What papers? Papers that oppose it to the bitter end? I can show you papers by the dozen and the score that would enlighten you along this line. Women do not ask, but rather they demand, the ballot. But this is begging the question. If it is right for women to have the ballot, it is right, and if it is wrong, it is wrong—that is all there is to it. Now, father, tell me the reasons."

"Why, Jean, have not I given you reasons and have you not overruled them, every one?" was the almost testy answer. "A woman is a woman, and God never intended her to vote."

Jean laughed merrily.

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"What are you laughing at?" demanded her father.

"Why, at you; you are back just where you started. Women must not vote because they are women. If you have nothing better to offer there is no use of going over the grounds again. This makes me think of the time I studied circulating decimals."

The judge joined in Jean's laugh, and turned again to his papers, as if glad of a diversion.

After Judge Thorn had picked up and rearranged his papers he looked toward Jean, who had suddenly grown quiet. In her face he saw something that was new to him and that in some way sent a little jealous pang to his heart. Her face was a dream study. A soft, far-away expression rested over it, and her father knew that she was somewhere, away from her surroundings, but he did not interrupt her. Presently she spoke:

"I saw a man to-day."

"I supposed that you had seen several."

"Well, of course," the girl admitted, "but I rarely notice men, and that I remember this one so distinctly and think of him surprises me. He was tall and broad shouldered and dressed in a navy blue business suit, and I think probably he was the handsomest man I have ever seen, though I

cannot tell why I think so. His hair and eyes were brown, his hair almost black, it was so dark, and a trifle curly. His eyes were clear and honest looking, with a touch of fun in them and something else that I have not been able to define, but that I liked. He wore a mustache, but it only partially concealed his mouth. I think perhaps it was his mouth that I liked best. It was a firm mouth, maybe a hard one, but I admire a firm man."

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Judge Thorn laughed.

"You must have examined him pretty closely."

"No, father, I saw him at a glance some way. Perhaps he impressed me as he did because I was so disappointed in him. I saw him standing at a short distance from the animated crowd around the polls, looking on with an air of mingled amusement and disgust. I made up my mind that he was the very individual who would take one of my 'no-license' votes, so I asked him.

"He took off his hat and looked down at me, for he is tall, a look made of a little astonishment, a bit of fun and, I imagined, some pity, and said: 'I am really very sorry that I cannot do as you wish, but I cannot consistently vote against license, being myself engaged in the liquor business.'

"Of course I said no more, but I was never so surprised in my life, and to tell the truth, I was disappointed."

Judge Thorn looked relieved.

"I believe I know now why I remembered him so well," continued Jean. "He was the only liquor dealer among those I spoke to to-day, and ignorantly I accosted many, who refused my ticket in a gentlemanly manner. Yes, I have now seen a gentlemanly liquor dealer. I wonder if I will ever see him again. But see! Here are the horses, father. Come, let us go," she said, taking his arm.

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"Poor father! I am sorry for you. It must be a trial to have so strange a child, but really I cannot help it, and I am sure you will forgive me when you remember that I am 'my father's boy.'"

CHAPTER VI.

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THE NATION'S DEFENDERS.

It was one of those prophetic days of early spring when heaven and earth are filled with faint, far promises of the sunshine and verdure of the summer, and when an expectant hush fills all the air, save as now and then a breath of the awakening south wind stirs the faded memories of last autumn's glories where the dried leaves cluster among the thickets or in the fence corners.

The Thorn carriage occupied by Jean and the coachman, James, was rolling along a stretch of suburban road.

Jean had just left the home of the Crowleys', and sat in a reverie of sympathy and indignation. Personally she felt that she was absolutely safe from any harm from the traffic in misery and death; but this very fact made her more pitiful and more determined to use what influence and power she could command against it. The carriage slowed up a bit where the road divided.

"Which way, Miss Jean?"

"To the army post, James," and she continued her brown study, seeming to notice nothing of the landscape until they entered the massive iron gates of the reservation.

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Just inside the gates, on either side, heavy cannons were grouped in triangular fashion and surmounted with cones of cannon balls. At regular intervals black sign-boards, bright with gilt lettering, gave notice that just so far and no farther, and just so fast and no faster, the public might travel in this well-arranged institution of the government.

The drive around the inclosure was a long one, and when the Thorn carriage had reached the side farthest removed from the buildings, a sudden jar and crash startled Jean, and suddenly she found herself lying on the roadside.

Fortunately she was not hurt, and after she had brushed the dust from her eyes and pinned a rent in her skirt she found that only a slight break in the carriage had caused the accident. So after tying the horses to a hitching post at some distance, James pushed the carriage to one side, and with the broken part started to a blacksmith shop at no great distance outside the post, Jean agreeing to wait for him, unless he should be gone too long.

After James had disappeared behind the trees, Jean seated herself comfortably on a bench near by, and with her head resting against a majestic oak, gazed upward at the soft spring sky showing through the brown network of the branches. A bird a great way off circled against the floating clouds for a time and disappeared.

At one end of the inclosure the drill ground, checkered and bare, could be seen. Through the trees the red brick walls of the houses in the officers' quarters showed, while, looking in another direction, she could see a number of stone buildings with porches running their entire length, onto which opened many doors.

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A little removed from all these was a common frame building, which, judging by the number of soldiers gathered around it, was the popular resort of the post. This was the canteen.

Jean's eyes fell with displeasure upon this. It seemed to her like a dark blot upon an otherwise fair picture; like a grave mistake in an otherwise well-ordered institution.

A couple of peafowl trailed their plumage over the dry brown grass across the way from her, and in the slanting rays of the sun they looked like brilliant jewels against the rough and dingy background. But their harsh notes seemed at variance with their beauty, and this, too, made Jean think of the government—a government born more beautiful than any other, and reared in its infancy with the care of a child, yet presenting to the world, by its administration, which is a government's voice, an inconsistency appalling.

Far from broken axles and torn skirts Jean's thoughts traveled, until she was brought to a sense of her surroundings by footsteps, and looking up she saw that two soldiers had turned the curve that shut off the view of the main road and were coming toward her.

One was a thick-set man of about middle age. He had that untidy appearance that marks a slovenly person, and will appear even in a soldier in spite of all wise and well-directed efforts on the part of a government to keep him neat. His large, light gray, campaign hat was pulled down well over his eyes and a short cob pipe was clinched between his teeth.

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The other man was younger and not as heavy. He wore a long coat, open from the neck down, and his cap, set on one side of his head, left his bleared and bloated face in full view.

As they came nearer the younger man staggered fearfully, and Jean knew that he was intoxicated. A feeling, half fear and half loathing, took possession of her as these two ill-visaged privates came nearer; but supposing they would pass, she kept her seat.

"Take-a-hic-your pipe-a-hic-out, in-a-hic-the presence of-a-hic-ladies," the man in the long cloak said.

The thick-set man took his pipe from his teeth and knocked the ashes out against the palm of his hand.

They were directly in front of Jean now.

The man in the long cloak made a tottering bow and addressed her.

"May a-hic we sit down?"

"Certainly," said Jean, the blood rushing to her face at their boldness, and she hurriedly started to her feet.

"Keep-a-hic-your seat and-a-hic-don't get agitated; we're-a-hic-gentle-mench."

The thick-set man had already seated himself, and the other man followed his example, forcing Jean to a place by his side.

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Judging the thick-set man to be the least intoxicated and more decent, she appealed to him for protection. The lower part only of his face was visible, but she saw that he laughed.

"He don't mean no harm. Keep still and he'll go on about his business," he assured her.

Jean's face blazed and her heart beat with the force of four.

The tall man emptied his mouth of tobacco juice and other fluids and substances, and the sickening mixture fell so close to Jean's foot that her boot was spattered. Then he wiped the dribbles on the back of his hand and turned to her.

He bent so close that his hot, foul breath struck her with staggering force and his bloated face almost touched her cheek.

"You're-a-hic-a little peach," he said, with a leer, "and-a-hic-I'm-a-hic-a going to k-k-kiss you."

It was then Jean screamed with all her might, and at the same moment a man sprang to her rescue from a light buggy that had rounded the bend of the drive unobserved.

The thick-set man suddenly disappeared, but the other soldier, either too drunk for rapid movement or too muddled to understand the gravity of the situation, only rose to his feet and stood leering at Jean with disgusting admiration.

The next instant he was felled to the earth and a broad-shouldered man stood over him ready to render a second blow if occasion demanded.

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The soldier made an attempt to rise.

"Lie there, you brute," the man cried, hotly, and the drunken fellow obeyed.

"Nice-a-hic-way to treat a-hic-man that's protecting-a-hic-the-a-hic-honor-a-hic, the honor of——" he muttered.

But the gentleman turned to the woman, and Jean, trembling with fear and indignation, with crimson cheeks and flashing eyes, looked a second time into the face of the gentlemanly liquor dealer.

"I am so glad you came!" she gasped, and held out her hand to him.

As they turned to his buggy the gentleman cast a glance back at the prostrate soldier, who had crawled behind a bush to sleep until removed to the guardhouse.

"Such creatures are a disgrace to a civilized government," he exclaimed, with ill-concealed wrath.

"Our government is a disgrace to itself," she added. "It creates such creatures by a legal process, and yonder is the factory," and she pointed in the direction of the canteen.

"Canteen beer—canteen beer," she began again, with warmth, but stopped, for she knew that she was very much excited and that she might not speak wisely.

If she had opened an argument with the gentleman at her side she would have found that he was well posted with the old arguments about the canteen being an institution to keep the soldiers from the greed of evil saloons outside the different posts, but her companion respected her silence, and did not speak until they had passed the great iron gate, when it became necessary.

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"Now," said he, "if you will direct the way, and have no objections, it will give me pleasure to see you safely home."

"I am Miss Thorn," said Jean, giving him her address.

"Miss Thorn? Perhaps you are related to Judge Thorn?"

"I am," replied Jean, smiling.

"That is nice. I have had the pleasure of meeting the judge, and I do not know a man whom I would rather oblige. He is a man all men honor."

"I am his daughter," Jean said, proudly, "and I assure you my father will feel under lasting obligations to you for your kindness to me this afternoon, Mr. —"

"Allison," the gentleman said.

"Allison?" It was Jean's turn to look surprised.

"Yes, madam. Allison—Gilbert Allison."

"Not of the firm of Allison, Russell & Joy?"

"The same, madam."

She looked at him with mingled wonder and regret. The firm name of Allison, Russell & Joy to her mind was a synonym for heartless destruction of happiness and life. The traffic itself was a great evil generality, and as such met condemnation. But in generalities, as in mountain ranges, there are specific points that tower out distinctively for consideration. Such a pinnacle of iniquity this liquor firm had seemed to Jean to be since her acquaintance with the Crowleys.

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"You must be mistaken," she observed at length.

Gilbert Allison had been amused before. Now he laughed. "If I am mistaken, life has been a vast mistake," he said, "for I have supposed myself to be this same Allison for over thirty years. But why do you think so?"

Jean shook her head sadly.

"I do not understand it at all," she said, gravely.

"I beg your pardon; but if you will explain to me the trouble, perhaps I may be able to enlighten your understanding."

"I do not understand how the same person can be so kind and yet so cruel. I do not understand how one person can risk his life to save a life—for perhaps you saved mine to-day—and yet cause death, and you have been the cause of death."

Jean spoke slowly and looked grave.

Mr. Allison felt like laughing again, but politely refrained.

"I have been accused of a number of things in my life," he said, good-naturedly, "but, until to-day, murder has been omitted from the list."

"There are different modes of procedure—but murder is murder after all!"

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"Certainly, but I was not aware that I had been connected with a 'procedure.'"

"Men deal out slow death for gold and trust its clinking rattle to still the groans and cryings that they cause." Jean spoke reflectively, as if to herself. "In savage countries where there is no Christianity, where all is black, human life is sometimes offered as a sacrifice to gods. Here in Christian America an altar is piled high with mother hearts and manhood and immortal souls.

"This sacrifice goes on unceasingly; the altar fires are never out, and the wail of the little ones and the groans of the crushed that go up from this great altar only cause this god to laugh.

"This god is made of atoms. EVERY ATOM IS A MAN.

"All this time the Christian men of this Christian nation stand around in a great circle, weeping and calling on a Christian's God to hasten the day when this other god shall be ground to dust, meantime mocking their God by legalizing this monstrous thing with their ballots."

Mr. Allison had probably never heard a young lady talk exactly as this one talked, and yet he enjoyed it, and watched the motion of her hand as she used it to impress her words.

"I am afraid I do not understand you even yet," he said, when she paused. "Do you refer to the tariff or seal fisheries or female suffrage or war or what?" [Pg 73]

"I refer to the rum power in America. That is the god I mean. The most heartless, depraved monopoly on earth, yet men and governments grovel in the dust at its feet and cringe like dogs before its power."

Mr. Allison was silent, and she continued, presently, turning her face to him.

"It has always seemed to me that the firm of Allison, Russell & Joy was an important part of this great iniquity; partly, I presume, because I happen to be acquainted with a family that has been utterly destroyed by that firm. Tell me truly—have they, have YOU never heard wails and cries and bitter prayers in the stillness of the night? Have you never felt the burden of your *awful* sin?"

Mr. Allison smiled.

"I am sure," he said, "I have never heard any weeping or wailing that I have been aware of, and really I hope to be pardoned, but the burden that you speak of has failed to make itself felt."

"Well, you will hear it some day. Even legal, licensed murder will have its reckoning time. You will see a face some day; you will hear a voice that will haunt you like the wail of a lost soul."

Mr. Allison shrugged his shoulders as if in apprehension.

"I hope not," he said; "but Miss Thorn, I am afraid you do not enjoy the society of a liquor dealer."

"On general principles, no. And yet I have enjoyed yours very much this afternoon, you may be sure. I thank you for it, and—I am sorry that you are a 'man atom' of the great iniquity." [Pg 74]

"I am sorry that you are sorry," he answered, and then the Thorn homestead rose in view.

"I never was so frightened in my life," Jean said, as they drove in front of the gate. "It seems that no one is safe from insult and injury in a land where liquor is a legalized drink. I never thought that I should fall a victim to it."

"Or be rescued by a liquor dealer."

"That is true," and Jean laughed merrily.

Then she thanked him again, and for half a minute he held her small, gloved hand in his, as he assisted her from the buggy.

"It is I who am grateful that Fate allowed me to be the knight." Then he lifted his hat gallantly, and Jean was gone, but her parting smile stayed with him.

CHAPTER VII.

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THE JUDGE MAKES A DISCOVERY.

After the adventure at the army post Mr. Allison called not infrequently at the home of the Thorns, and though, of course, cordially received by both Jean and her father, nearly always succeeded in leaving Jean thoroughly vexed with him. She made speeches and drew statistics for him, enough in strength and numbers to convert the traffic itself, and was generally rewarded for her pains by an amused look and a good-natured laugh. He seemed to her to be asleep, sound asleep; and try as best she might, it seemed impossible to awaken him; and yet she looked for his visits and enjoyed the task she had set herself about more than she would have cared to admit.

The fact was, Mr. Allison had been born asleep as far as his relation with the liquor question was concerned. From his father he inherited his interest in the business firm of which he was the junior member, and having been brought up in this atmosphere, he neither knew nor cared for any other. A man possessing even half a portion of real integrity is so rarely found engaged in the liquor business that this man's character was often spoken of. Whether he was honest may be doubted, but certain it was, he was not bidding for the church vote by making promises and prayers. Yet the cloak of respectability that he wore made him ten times more dangerous than one of baser worth would have been; but his cloak, it is well to remember, differed only in color from the cloak worn by unnumbered men, to-day posing before a long-suffering people as Christian leaders.

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In spite of the indifference of Mr. Allison and the vexation of Jean, each felt the subtle power of attraction in the other that neither could explain.

One night when sitting closer than usual to her side, he calmly possessed himself of one of her hands.

"You are quite an enigma to me," he said. "How can you be a bit comfortable in such close proximity to a representative of the ungodly traffic?"

"I cannot," she answered, pulling at her hand. "I will go away."

"Will you?" and he tightened the pressure of his fingers.

Jean dropped her head on her free hand and was very still. Mr. Allison, watching her, presently saw a tear-drop on her cheek.

He put his arm around her, and would have drawn her to him, but with a firm, gentle touch, the meaning of which was unmistakable, she pushed his arm aside, and, rising, stood before him.

The faint trace of tears still marked her eyes, and her voice was a trifle unsteady.

"Mr. Allison, we cannot be even friends! We just cannot! You are a 'man atom of the great iniquity.'" [Pg 77]

She crossed the room, and, raising a shade, stood looking absently into the moonlight. Gilbert Allison leaned forward and seemed trying to obtain the solution of some mystery from the outlines of her figure.

She still stood there when Judge Thorn entered from an adjoining room, and while he conversed with her liquor-dealer lover, Jean left the room to return no more that night.

But Mr. Allison was not thus to be disposed of.

A few evenings passed, and he was again announced a visitor at the Thorn home, and Jean appeared really very glad to see him, considering that they were never to be friends. After a few moments of casual conversation he took from his pocket an evening paper, folded so that she could not miss the reading, and held it before her eyes.

From the item thus displayed she learned that Gilbert Allison, late of the firm of Allison, Russell & Joy, had withdrawn his interest in the firm to be placed in other investments.

The conversation that followed the reading of this announcement, while confidential, was not a long one, but at its close Gilbert Allison knew more of that firmness born of a woman's conviction than he had ever dreamed.

* * * * *

Judge Thorn looked comfortable in his leather chair, his slippered feet on a hassock and a new book in his hand. At any rate, Jean thought so, as she studied him from between the parted curtains, but she was relentless. Stealing softly behind him, she pressed her hands over his eyes. The judge started, and the young lady laughed merrily. [Pg 78]

Then she tried to steal away his book, but he held it.

"Let me put it up, father, I want to talk to you."

The judge still held the book.

"Then I will say 'please.'"

"Is it to be a political conversation?" he asked, gravely.

"Not a breath of politics about it," she answered.

"Any statistics to be brought in?" he questioned further.

Jean laughed again.

"Really, father," she said, "I think I may hope to win you yet. When a judge, and a Republican at that, finds it hard to vindicate his party's doings, and finds statistics overwhelmingly against his party's policy on moral questions, he will look for better things in better places. At this period of his political transmigration I believe a man is more to be pitied for misplaced confidence than blamed for tardy understanding. No, father, not a statistic to-night, unless you compel me to bring them out in self-defense."

Judge Thorn slowly released his book.

"Now," said Jean triumphantly, "we are ready for a nice long talk, that is, if you feel equal to the task of talking. What I have to say will not take long. It is about a little interview between Mr. Allison and—Judge Thorn's daughter, and if I had been less of a 'crank,' I suppose you would have had another son-in-law in prospect." [Pg 79]

"Yes?" questioned the judge. "Then I have been mistaken when I have thought at times that you cared for him."

Jean remained silent a few minutes, then looked up quickly into her father's face.

"You are my best, my dearest friend, father. I will tell you truly. You have not been mistaken. I

love Gilbert Allison, and I cannot help it to save my life."

When Judge Thorn spoke again his voice had changed somewhat. He spoke as if his words were escaping from beneath a weight.

"Better than you do me, Jean?"

She did not answer at once; then she caught her father's eye, and smiled as she said:

"You want the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?"

"Go on," was the judge's quiet reply.

"Then it is 'yes,' father."

A shadow passed over the face of the judge for an instant that carried Jean back to her childhood days, when she used to wonder, as she mused, why it was that her father always looked so sad.

"You have all the sweet ways of your mother, child," said the old man; "and in you I know the traits and intellect that I had hoped to nurture in the boy. For years you have been my comrade—my best loved daughter. I am growing old, now, quite old, and you must leave me." [Pg 80]

As he spoke he ran his fingers through his hair, as if in its thinness and fading color he could discern advancing years.

Jean caught the hand that hung over the arm of the chair between her two and pressed it to her cheek.

"You make me happy, father!" she whispered. "Do you remember long ago I told you that you would some day be glad I was your boy? And so you are. Perhaps it is because I am so like you—I only wish I knew I was—or perhaps I have always loved you best, and yet I have not loved you enough, father."

"Yes, child. Yes, enough to drive away a grief and make me happy."

"Then, remember, father; remember always and forever, that I do not love you any less. If I have come to love another more, I tell you truly, I cannot help it. It has come to me—just come and—come and come; and I have fought it every step of the way. A few times I have pictured to myself such a man as I might some time call my husband. He has been learned and clean and upright, with an irrepressible spirit of patriotism, hindered by no party ties that bind to money instead of moral questions; daunted by no fear, and bound by no memory of a past; and the man has come, and he is—a gentlemanly liquor dealer. But I will not leave you, father. I have no thought other than to stay here." [Pg 81]

This information did not seem to impress the judge.

"You say so, Jean. You mean so; but you will be married, and a wife's duties come before a daughter's."

Jean laughed again.

"You look almost as disconsolate as Mr. Allison did the last time I saw him. Cheer up! I am not going to be married that I know of."

"No?"

"No, father."

"Why, Jean?"

"I see you know that Mr. Allison is a liquor dealer no longer, or you would hardly ask."

"I know. And I know that he sacrifices something in getting out of it at this time. He is a clean man, and though his name has been connected with the interest, that has been all. One could hardly imagine him standing behind a bar."

"He said something like that in his own defense. Let me see—he said the national politics was the great mother of all lesser political plays, and that at such elections he had cast his vote just as you and your preacher have always done. Therefore, as you were temperance men, so he was a temperance man. How was that for argument?"

Judge Thorn laughed. [Pg 82]

"Well, I should not wonder if he were as much of a temperance man as some other folks, after all."

"The more shame for the 'other folks,'" said Jean, a touch of sternness in her voice.

"Have it that way if you wish, but to the original question. I am in no hurry for you to marry, but I suppose you will some time, and Allison is a square man. What he has done in this business move he has done not because he has changed his views on some matters, but all for the love of a woman, and that means much, my girl, these days of fortune hunters and deceivers."

"All for the love of a woman," Jean repeated softly to herself. "That is what he said."

They were both silent a few seconds.

"You have not answered my question, Jean."

"Ah! I forgot, father. You asked me why I could not promise to be the wife of Mr. Allison. I will tell you, as I told him, and I think you will understand as he did.

"If I ever have a husband, he must do right from an honest conviction of right, and because humanity and justice and God demand the right, and never for the 'love of a woman,' although that is a beautiful temptation."

Judge Thorn looked inquiringly at his daughter, and she continued:

"He was not prepared for this, I think, but he understood what I meant, and said that I asked of him the impossible; that it was impossible for him to see the liquor traffic in the light that I do. [Pg 83]

"But I am sure, father, that the underlying principle of my idea is right, and God makes it possible for all men to see the right, if they seek to."

Jean had risen and stood before her father, her face aglow and her eyes shining.

This mood passed shortly, and she returned to her chair. She clasped her hands behind her head and began again softly, as if speaking to herself:

"And then—then he sat down in a chair by the window, with his face turned away. It was very still in the room.

"I went and stood close by his side, but I hardly dared to speak, it all seemed so strange somehow. I wanted—Oh, you do not know how I longed to throw myself into his arms, just to try to wake him; but you know 'propriety'.

"After a time—perhaps an hour, perhaps a minute—he suddenly rose and kissed me on the forehead.

"'Goodby, dear,' he said, 'I think I had better not come any more,' and he left the room without another word.

"After the door had closed behind him and I heard him stepping down the walk, I put both my hands over my heart, just so, and held it tight, for it seemed that it would bound out and go with him."

They sat in silence a little while after Jean ceased speaking, and then she stepped behind her father's chair and dropped her arms around his neck.

"No, father, you shall never be left alone as long as this big world holds Jean. Lonesomeness is so big and dreary!" [Pg 84]

She pressed her lips to his forehead and turned away.

Had such a favor been meted out to the disconsolate Mr. Allison, he would no doubt have been immediately transported to a state of unalloyed happiness. Not so with the judge. The very act, the very words, told him that the woman's affections had been divided, and the streak of selfishness that runs through all humanity had not been overlooked in his make-up.

"Are you not really ashamed of me, father? Just think of it! Me, Jean Thorn, of sound mind and adult years, falling in love with a liquor dealer! It is too strange to believe, and yet I believe the situation would be perfectly delightful if—if—well, if I were not 'my father's boy.' But I will survive, let it be hoped, and if this maddening, sickening, altogether unmanageable love one reads of had rushed upon me like a whirlwind, it would be the same. The man I marry must not be a 'man atom of the great iniquity,' not even to the extent of his vote."

And lest she should mar the impression she hoped to leave upon her father, Jean hurried from the room, waving her hand to him as she passed through the door.

* * * * *

In her own room she sat down to think. Mechanically she unbound the coils of red-brown hair that crowned her head, and holding the quaintly carved silver pins which seemed a part of her identity in her hand, she began a march to and fro across the room. There was no smile on her face, rather a pained, unnatural look that her dearest friend would not have recognized. Presently she stopped. [Pg 85]

Raising her hands, the shining hair rippling over her shoulders like a garment, she lifted her face heavenward.

"My Father!" she whispered, brokenly, "he is asleep. Touch his eyes with kindly fingers that the scales may drop away. Put the hollow of thy hand around his heart and kindle there the love that means the brotherhood of man, for I love him—I love him!"

Even as she stood, with her face upturned from the wealth of flowing hair, the man of her prayer was in the toils of fate, seeing a "face" and hearing a voice that touched his ear and clung to his heart, "like the wail of a lost soul."



"God," she cried, "Look at my hands!"

CHAPTER VIII.

[Pg 87]

"WHAT FOR."

Had Jean Thorn been less interested in the family of Damon Crowley she might have thought it impossible to keep track of them as they moved about. Mr. Crowley reformed every time he got drunk, and got drunk every time he reformed. At such times he made the living place he called home, whether in the filthy garret or rickety shanty, a bedlam. At the present period of their existence the Crowleys were living in a forlorn hovel on the outskirts of the city.

Mr. Crowley thought himself lucky if he chanced to be about when one of Miss Thorn's visits took place, for she paid well for the plain work Mrs. Crowley did, and he always came in for a share. The time had been when this man would have blushed at the thought of asking his wife, or, indeed, any one, for help, but that time had gradually gone by as his manhood dissolved itself in drink. Now he could whine and beg and, not being successful that way, curse and beat to gain his end. He wanted money for whisky worse than ever now, and had less, but the burning in his stomach grew no less to suit the impoverished condition of his purse.

The disease caused by the legalized drink traffic was eating his life away little by little, and as the fire burned it called for more fuel.

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One night when every little gland and fibre in his whole being and all the great ulcers in his diseased stomach seemed like fierce flames cutting and licking and torturing him, half-drunk, he staggered from one grog shop to another, begging for something to drink.

He had hung around the shanty home until he was almost sure that Miss Thorn would not come, then had started out to try his chances. He had begged a little, had pawned a garment belonging to another for a little more, and yet the maddening thirst was not quenched.

It was growing late. He made a circuit of his old haunts, but it was useless—no money, no drink. For his pleading he was mocked. For his curses he was struck and put out. He staggered toward home, the stinging fire within him quickening his pace. One hope remained. Perhaps Miss Thorn had been there after he had gone. Perhaps, hidden away in the little box, he might find a few pennies—enough for this time.

The houses that he passed were for the most part dark, except where some low place cast its straggling light into the night. He hurried on, stumbling now and then. No time could be more suitable for him. He would find the family, what there was left of it, asleep. He would sneak in like a cat and find the box—perhaps the pennies. He rubbed his hot hands nervously together in anticipation.

[Pg 89]

It was not difficult to get into the house, and he found it still and dark. Cautiously he tiptoed to the window and ran his fingers over the casing above it. Nothing but dust. Next he tried the hole in the chimney. Here his unsteady fingers grasped something he thought to be the box, but it proved to be only a loose brick. Growing impatient, he went to the cupboard and fumbled in the corner. No box. He was getting reckless now. Taking a match from his pocket he drew it across the wall. It sputtered and cast a ray long enough for him to find the lamp, which he lit.

The little boy Johnnie, in a bed close by, stirred slightly, rolled over a couple of times, and sat up in bed and opened his eyes. Mr. Crowley, having lost all control of himself, was noisily peering into every nook and cranny. As the father moved nearer, the boy crept closer to his mother, and, huddling by her side, began to cry. It was when he heard the boy's cry that the fire within him licked up the last of his manhood and the Devil had full sway. He set the lamp down with a bang and sprang toward the bed. The boy threw his arms around his mother and gave a cry of terror.

"Mamma! O mamma! Hold me tight! Don't let him get me! O mamma! mamma! mamma!" The mother held the child close, but the man had seized him.

They struggled for a minute—a madman's strength and a devil's cunning against a mother's love—unequal struggle! [Pg 90]

The man—a demon now—had the child.

He cast his eye around the room and picked up a knotty piece of wood. The boy pulled frantically back toward his mother, trembling and screaming, but the die was cast.

A volley of oaths burst from the drunken fiend's lips.

"Not much this time! No help now, till I'm done with you. Damn you! Stand up," and he gave the boy a blow that caused him to twist with pain, but he steadied his voice to ask:

"What for, papa? What for?" But the words were lost in screams, for the blows kept falling.

Mrs. Crowley rushed up and caught his uplifted arm.

"You will kill the child! You are mad. Help! Somebody help!" she cried; but no help came. Drunken rows are a part of our civilization.

The boy had succeeded in getting away, but the unequal struggle was soon at an end, and Mrs. Crowley was struck to the floor by a heavy blow.

The father dragged the terror-stricken little fellow from behind the bed.

"Come! Damn you! I'm not done yet! I'll teach you to be scared of your dad and to yell like an idiot when I come into my own house," and the blows fell rapidly.

On the little hands when they were raised to protect the head, on the head when the hands dropped down in pain, on the legs when the body twisted in agony, on the back when the body bent to shield the legs, and the childish voice broke through the screams at intervals: [Pg 91]

"What for? Oh, what for?"

Mrs. Crowley looked around the room for something with which to fight the man. She seized an iron frying-pan and struck him with all the force she could summon, but the blow was insufficient.

He loosed the child only long enough to push his wife violently to the wall and choke her until she gasped and grew dizzy, adding a couple of blows as a finishing touch, and after tossing her weapon from the window again turned his attention to the child.

"Not done yet! No! Not done! Take this—and this—and this," and heavy blows sounded.

"Oh, papa! tell me what for, and I'll never, never do it any more. Please, papa, what for?" and the child raised his terror-stricken face to his father's, but the brute struck the little upturned face.

"No—you won't do it again when I get done. I'm not done yet. Not done."

Mrs. Crowley again sprang upon the madman, and, drawing her fingers tightly around his neck, threw her whole force into the grasp, but he loosened it. Then he kicked her out the door and bolted it fast.

The child had fallen to the floor, but partly arose as the father returned.

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"Not done yet—no—not done," and he struck the poor, bleeding body many blows.

The boy sank back on the floor. His screams were ended; but as he lay there he still moaned, "What for?"

Then the moaning ceased, the eyelids quivered and the breath grew faint.

But even then his father had not exercised enough of his "personal liberty." The imps of hell hissed him on. The torturing fire within him leaped higher and higher, searing his soul. He bent low over the body and beat it still, till the tender bones crushed under the blows. Then throwing the knotty stick, quivering with his own child's blood, into a corner, with a fearful scream the murderer dashed out into the night.

Then the mother crept back, but it was too late. The little life had gone. From somewhere out of the mysterious, breezy night, perhaps, the spirit of Maggie had come, and had taken the soul of her poor brother to a city where pain and tears are unknown.

But another voice had been added to the chorus of suffering children as by the million they cry out in their pain till the appeal of outraged childhood goes thundering and reverberating into the ear of the Almighty Father, while he writes the "What for" of their wailing protest in the book of his remembrance as the record unto the day of Christian America's reckoning, in letters that burn brighter as the curse waxes worse and worse. [Pg 93]

Against the name of the church, too, as she wraps her righteous robes around herself and will not, in her dignity and purity, set her mighty foot on the neck of the curse, while drunkards by unnumbered thousands stagger under her colored glass windows to Hell, he writes WHAT FOR? and the letters burn on.

Against the name of the Christian whose vote makes strong the party that legalizes the saloon and the drunkard he writes "WHAT FOR?"

What man shall stand in the presence of the Holy One, when the books are opened, and tell WHAT FOR?

CHAPTER IX.

[Pg 94]

GILBERT ALLISON HEARS A VOICE.

It was this night that two travelers were journeying across a bit of suburban country toward their city homes. They were out later than they had expected to be, perhaps. At any rate, it was somewhere close to the hour of midnight and they were approaching an old graveyard.

As they neared the ancient burying ground Mr. Allison, for he was one of the riders, became less talkative, and rode closer to his friend, a young man of about his own age.

"Hist, Sammy! Didn't you hear something? Ah! Now it has gone again. You were not quick enough. Keep your ear open. At the turning of the wind it may come again."

"Well, by grabs! Gillie, where will you end?" laughed the other. "First love, now ghosts. Listening for spooks because we happen to be passing the burying spot of some of our ancestors. Allow me to alight and pick a switch for the poor boy to defend himself with when the ghosts set upon him."

"Sammie! Sammie! I hear it again! It's coming on the breeze. Listen now!"

Gilbert Allison stopped his horse and leaned eagerly forward. Sammie listened, but was again too late. The dead leaves rustled close by over the sunken graves; the tall, bare trees waved their skeleton arms, while the breeze died away to a long, weary sigh and was gone. [Pg 95]

"It does not come from the cemetery, Sammie, but from beyond. Perhaps it will come again. Listen!"

The breeze was coming to them again, and they drew their horses to a halt.

"There, Sammie! You did not miss that, did you?"

They listened a moment longer, but the breeze was dying away and with it the cry, whatever it was.

"The Dickens! Allison, let us hurry on. This is too ghostly a night to tarry. That cry gives me an uneasy feeling to the marrow of my bones."

They quickened their pace, and rode some distance in silence. The sky seemed growing darker and the wind was rising. A thick clump of trees hard by cast a gloomy shadow across the road, and just as they passed into this the floating clouds covered the face of the moon, and they were in pitchy darkness.

Suddenly there burst into the black night from somewhere in front of them a most unearthly yell.

Allison's horse quivered and Sammie's gave a violent lurch.

"Heavens, Sammie! What was that?"

"Blast the moon!" ejaculated Sammie. "Ride close to the side of the road. It was near here."

They had passed the clump of trees, but were still in the dark. All was still save the tiresome [Pg 96]

moaning of the trees. Then they heard the rapid approach of some man or beast, and the next instant, directly at their sides, there went out onto the night air a succession of blood-curdling yells and barks.

The horses sprang and danced.

The moon came out, and in its pale yellow light they saw the creature disappearing down the road. It was the figure of a man, crouching and springing, rather than walking. As he neared the clump of trees he made the night shudder with still wilder and fiercer screams. Then he disappeared down the shadowy road.

"A madman!" said Allison. "Heavens! What couldn't he do to a fellow if he had him to himself?"

Sammie laughed nervously.

"His boots are full of snakes, if I am not mistaken—but truly a bad fellow. He must have been what we heard back by the cemetery."

"No. Not such a noise as that. That was a wailing cry. Perhaps—he surely cannot have had his hand on any human being. Let us hurry on. The devil must be hereabouts to-night."

The suburbs seemed again to be asleep. The wind came and went over the rickety homes, sparsely scattered, and its moaning was made more dismal by the long-drawn out howl of some sleepless cur.

At rare intervals a light gleamed from a window.

One window from which a light shone Gilbert Allison and his friend looked into that night, and somehow that window remained always open in the memory of each, with a bright light burning behind it. [Pg 97]

It was a dreary little structure that stood close to the roadside, quite alone. The window was only a square hole, and the feeble light inside flickered as the wind blew through. There had been glass there once, no doubt, but that glass and many other cheap glass windows had gone into a better, richer piece of glass, and that hung in a respectable saloon.

Reflecting the decanters and red noses—and broken hearts? No! Ah, no! Their reflection would have injured the trade. They remained where the cheap glass had once been, and it was one of these hearts that Gilbert Allison, late of the firm of Allison, Russell & Joy, caught a glimpse of as he paused at the open window.

A woman sat on the floor in the middle of the room.

A woman of petrified misery. She gazed beyond the surrounding walls into the happy past, the mournful future—into Heaven and Hell, or somewhere.

Close by her side lay the still warm body of the boy. She placed her hands over his face, and, feeling the warmth, opened the tattered, bloody little night-dress and pressed her ear over the heart—pressed it closer and closer, but the heart was still.

She did not cry, this woman. Why should she? She knew the child was better off. She lifted a corner of her garment and wiped the thick blood from the face, then she pressed her lips to the lips, the cheeks, the forehead, in long, loving, mother kisses. She drooped her head close over the childish body, and drawing the soft arms around her neck held them there. She stroked back the hair, and her hands were bloodstained. [Pg 98]

Resting the child's body tenderly on the hard floor, she raised her face of misery and her bloodstained hands toward Heaven.

"God!" she cried. "Look at my hands! See God! Here it is—my baby's blood. Come, God, and see my boy. He's getting stiff—but come, God—come! See the bruises and the blood! See the face—the little face, all full of pain and fear—and feel the crushed bones, God! He is getting cold—cold—cold! The boy's dead!"

She caught up one of the child's hands and pressed it convulsively. After a moment's silence she began again, suddenly, fiercely:

"Is there any God? Where is he? Where does he stay? Not with Christians. They have the power, if God were with them, to stop the curse. No, not with them. They do not stop it. No. They license it, they do. 'Woe, woe to him that puts the bottle to his neighbor's lips.' They do! They do! But God must be somewhere. God come out of somewhere!"

The wind blew and the light flickered. Allison and Sammie, looking in, seemed riveted to the spot. It was not a pleasant picture, yet they gazed.

"My husband a murderer!" wailed the woman. "The boy's blood on his hands? Lord God! I never want to see his face again! Have mercy on his soul! Perhaps he cannot help it now—he is a madman. Love him if you can—I loved him once." [Pg 99]

Something like a sob sounded in the woman's voice, but she choked it back. After a moment of silence she moved a short distance from the little corpse, and, raising herself upright on her knees, with her hands clasped at arm's length over her head, she prayed.

It was not a Christlike prayer—rather the helpless cry of a soul tortured, in the grasp of a Christianized sin.

"Lord God! Down deep in Hell—away down—down where the fire is hottest, and the black blackest, and the smoke thickest, there let the man be bound forever who covers the business of Hell with a respectable covering. There forever let him see my boy's piteous, quivering face; let him hear the dying moan and see the red blood! I know them, God! You know them, God—you know them! Hear my prayer!"

Another gust of wind came, nearer and stronger, and the lamp flickered out. It was quiet. Very quiet. So quiet that Allison and Sammie heard the sigh that escaped the woman's lips. It was a heavy sigh, filled with tears and utter despair.

A sigh that went farther than all the sighing winds had ever gone. A sigh that was wafted far above to the great God who keeps record of the sighs that come up from the hearts of a million drunkards' wives, and who writes on the balance-sheet: "Vengeance is mine. I will repay."

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Some people, one of them an officer, entered the house from the opposite side, and the two travelers, seeing no need for their services, turned away and mounted their horses.

Mr. Allison was somewhat excited.

"Hanging is too good for that brute!" he said, loudly. "I believe I could stand by and see him roast. Heavens, what a devil! Poor woman, I wish I had not stopped there to-night."

Sammie grunted. "Thinking of the place she referred to as the respectable dealer's future headquarters?" he questioned.

"Shut up, will you! This is no time for joking!"

The young man complied with the request of his polite friend, and thought to himself, but Mr. Allison was no better pleased. He knew that if he had not seen it, it would have been. It really was. He was deeply stirred. And as he rode on through the night he was thinking new and strange thoughts.

CHAPTER X.

[Pg 101]

"THE SIN BURDEN."

After Gilbert Allison arrived home from that ride, the ghostly night on which he saw the fruits of a sinful traffic in all its horror, he hastily disrobed and turned into bed, hoping to sleep away the unpleasant thoughts and pictures that had possession of his mind; but no sooner had sleep overtaken him than a face, framed in a halo of red-brown hair, looked down upon him from an eminence; a white hand with a phosphorescent glow pointed at him, while a voice kept repeating, to the accompaniment of a childish wail, "Man—atom of the great iniquity, man—atom of the great iniquity."

In his dream he did not recognize the face nor voice, and yet both seemed strangely familiar to him.

When daylight came, the face and the white hand and the moaning child went away and the face of the woman whose misery he had looked upon haunted him, and her bitter prayer came to him in snatches.

The experience was distressing in no small degree to the ease-loving man. He could not analyze his feelings and was not aware that what one strange little woman called a "sin burden" had fallen with its weight upon him. He was in the act of rubbing his eyes before his moral resurrection.

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* * * * *

Damon Crowley was behind the bars for the last time. Perhaps he did not know, at any rate he did not care. He had reached the beginning of the end.

From the corners of his cell dark faces leered at him; cruel, sharp claws closed around his limbs and icy fingers grasped his throat—yet he was not dead. Outlines of things he saw became to him living creatures of destruction and crouched over him, grinning in his face and tearing him to bits—yet he was not dead. Snarling beasts sank their fangs into his flesh, a thousand poison insects rushed and swarmed upon him, and he felt the virus of their sting bounding through his body—yet he lived.

Slimy serpents wriggled over him, thrusting their forked tongues into his nose and ears, and when he grabbed frantically to tear them away they had gone.

A fire burned within him and he tore his flesh and hair, while death like a dark shadow hovered nearer and nearer, closing in slowly but surely. The end of Damon Crowley was not as a child falls to sleep nor as a Christian steps into the great beyond.

It was a time of screams and groans; of frantic clutchings and hard grappings. Those in neighboring cells were glad for once that the walls were thick and the bolts secure.

* * * * *

Gilbert Allison imagined he would feel better when he knew that Damon Crowley was securely lodged under lock and key; but such was not the case. The knowledge of this only seemed to press some real or imaginary burden closer to him. Then he imagined that he would perhaps feel at peace with the world and himself when white-robed justice had had her perfect course, and the victim of a nation's sin had been hung by the neck until dead. But even the news of the tragic death of the murderer did not prove a cure for his nameless and indefinable ill-feeling. [Pg 103]

Then it occurred to him that perhaps his name had not been taken from over the doors of the establishment of which he had so long been a part. Being fully resolved to completely sever his connection with the business, he looked upon this as a necessary step, and not without some small hope that it might help a little toward restoring his upset conscience.

Turning a corner, he raised his eyes. There, in the glow of the full sunlight, blazed the richly-wrought words, "Allison, Russell & Joy." They looked positively ugly to him and he felt that he had been injured by the other members of the firm. Entering the establishment to request that the sign be altered he came upon a trio discussing trade items, and the old familiar phraseology fell upon his ears like jangling voices.

As he passed out an old customer slapped him familiarly on the back and asked after business. Hardly had he escaped this one before another grasped his hand and inquired in jovial manner how times were. Then a drummer approached him, and, on being informed that he was no longer connected with the trade interests, assured him that the trade had suffered a loss. As he halted a moment in front of a hotel, a half-intoxicated man with a tale of woe, because of having been ordered out of the palatial sample room of the late liquor dealer, drew some attention to him and increased his feeling of disquiet and irritability. [Pg 104]

Each time he informed his assailant that he had severed his connection with the business, but it was not until the red-headed proprietor of a groggery drew nigh with a grievance, that the last straw had been put upon his already overtaxed nerves and conscience.

With more than the necessary amount of vigor he declared himself innocent of the business and dropped remarks relative to groggeries that would have delighted the ear of a temperance lecturer.

After this series of unpleasant encounters Gilbert Allison betook himself to the office of his friend, Dr. Samuel Thomas, the companion of his memorable ride, for advisement.

Entering the room without previous announcement, he dropped his hat onto a promiscuous pile of books and papers and spread himself on the couch. Here, with his hands clasped under his head, he studied the pattern of the ceiling paper a few seconds before venturing a remark.

Dr. Sammie, used to moods and fancies, waited.

"Would you do anything for a friend in need, Sammie?" asked the visitor at length, with a strong emphasis upon the "anything." [Pg 105]

"To be sure. Speak out."

"Then laugh."

"Laugh?"

"Yes, laugh."

"Laugh? What about?"

"Anything or nothing—but laugh. I have not heard a suspicion of a laugh in weeks. I have been prowling around in a valley of dry bones, and to save my soul I cannot find my way out. I thought I had just begun the ascent of a slope where smiles are occasionally seen, when the hope was shattered by the vulgar familiarity of a mob belonging to the trade."

Dr. Sammie listened to the rather unusual remarks of his friend, and as he recounted the day's experiences in his own original way the amused look on his face drew itself into definite shape around his mouth, and, when Allison had delivered himself of something unusual in the way of a tirade on dive-keepers, the climax had been reached, and the listener rested his head against the back of his chair and laughed in a manner sufficiently hearty to have satisfied the request of his friend.

"Soured on the fraternity, have you?" he asked.

Gilbert Allison slowly raised himself to a sitting posture and, with an elbow resting on either knee, transferred his study from the ceiling pattern to that of the carpet. He did not answer the question.

"Crowley died," he at length observed.

"Yes—and I should think you would be the man to be glad. I imagine the after feeling must be anything but pleasant when one has for years helped fit a fellow creature for the gallows." [Pg 106]

Gilbert Allison frowned between his hands and spoke sharply.

"It is a legal business," he said.

"Legal? Yes, legal—but you have sense enough to know that if it is legal for you to sell, it must be legal for some other fellow to buy; and if some other fellow spends his money for liquor he had the right to drink it, and you can hardly be unreasonable enough to hold a man responsible for what he does when the lining has been eaten out of his stomach and his brain soaked with alcohol. Such a man is a legal murderer, and the custom that breeds him should take care of the finished production.

"Mind you, I am not giving a temperance lecture; that is out of my line. But it has always seemed to me to be a rotten sort of justice that hangs a man for doing what the government gives him a license to do."

Mr. Allison looked up suddenly.

"Do you suppose, Sammie, that Deacon Brown knows the Traffic as it is—as we have seen it?"

"His church machinery grinds out resolutions annually of such a warlike nature that I am inclined to believe he does," said the doctor grimly.

"He has been in every political caucus that I have, for the last five years and has voted as I have from constable to President. I have voted for the interests of the Trade. What has he been voting for?" demanded Allison.

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"I'll give it up," said Sammie, dusting the ashes from the end of his cigar; "but the Lord have mercy on his brains if he thinks it has been for 'temperance and morality.'"

Gilbert Allison arose and began a measured tread up and down the room.

"Laugh some more, Sammie! I have not yet recovered my normal condition. I had as soon be dead as morbid. Laugh. Perhaps it will prove infectious."

"I prefer to diagnose my case before applying a remedy," said the doctor. "Tell me your symptoms. What ails you?"

"I am in a dilemma, Sammie—a dilemma. Tell me—will it be necessary for me to wear a staring placard on my back the rest of my mortal days in order that people may know I have everlastingly severed my connection with the liquor business?"

Dr. Sammie was obliging enough to favor his guest with another hearty laugh. Then he blew two clouds of smoke over his head and watched it curl itself away around the chandelier, for notwithstanding the fact that he knew, or should have known, the effects of nicotine on the human system, this aspiring young member of the medical profession wasted money and nerve force in his slavery to a habit.

"I tell you, my friend," he said, with an air of confidence, "there are a set of people in the world—mind you, I do not say that they are wise—who would tell you that by casting a single vote in a certain way you would stamp yourself as the vile opponent of the Trade's interests 'forevermore, amen!'"

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Gilbert Allison paused in his walk and looked into his friend's face a second. A sigh of relief escaped his lips, and immediately he found himself in the midst of a ringing laugh peculiar to one who has broken through the meshes of a dilemma and finds himself free.

"The best speech of your life, Sammie! Thank you!" and hastily donning his hat he left the room without further comment.

Dr. Sammie smiled when the door closed behind his friend. He had an idea whither his way tended.

CHAPTER XI.

[Pg 109]

AN AWAKENING.

Judge Thorn sat looking over the evening paper.

Lost in her own thoughts, Jean sat in the shadow of a palm idly thrumming a guitar, the soft pliant strains corresponding well with the expression of her face.

A sudden exclamation from her father caused her to look up.

His profile alone was visible to her, but there is an expression in outlines when one understands the subject, and she knew that something of an unusually puzzling or distressing nature engaged him.

Eagerly watching, she played on softly.

Presently the judge crushed the paper into a ball and with another exclamation of disgust threw it across the room where it rolled behind a scrap basket under a desk. At sight of so uncommon a procedure Jean went to her father's side.

"What news, father mine? What news?" she asked.

Judge Thorn pointed in the direction of the wadded paper.

"Jean," said he, solemnly, "you remember how proudly I boasted to you when Congress prohibited that blackest disgrace of our army, the liquor-selling canteen. You know how deeply I felt the shame and disgrace upon the whole legal profession when an officer of the cabinet perpetrated the outrage that thwarted the will of the sovereign people. Jean, girl, in a long life of close contact with the nation's politics I have never met anything that has so deeply tried my loyalty to the party in which I have helped to work out the political problems of almost half a century as did that act that, as a life-long student of law, I recognized as a fraud. [Pg 110]

"But I have bolstered my shattered faith in the party with my absolute confidence in the President. I have refused to believe—to this very hour I have refused to believe that the man whose magnificent career I have watched with such interest and of whose stainless honor I have been so proud, would consent to be a party to such an act of anarchy. I have insisted, as you well know, stoutly holding my position though the long delay has made me sick at heart, that when the long routine of official red tape had at length unrolled itself and the case should finally come to the President, justice would be done and the nation's honor vindicated.

"Now, look there!"

And with hands that trembled with suppressed anger the old jurist unfolded the crumpled paper, which Jean had recovered, and pointed out the telegraphic report that told how another high official of the President's official family had disgraced himself, his profession and the administration by the formal declaration that he accepted the historic Griggs infamy as a correct interpretation of law. [Pg 111]

"Jean, my child, spare me. Say nothing now, child. I can not bear it. The faith of a lifetime is shattered. On that page I read, plainly as if it were printed there, that the President is a party to the infamy. The party of my lifelong loyalty stands committed by the act of its chosen leaders to the foulest anarchy that ever disgraced a civilized people. Had I no thought for temperance, as a citizen and as a lawyer, I could not otherwise than see in this the forerunner of the gravest national disaster."

The young woman listened with an expression in which deepest scorn for the treason done was mingled with tender pity for the stricken man at her side. Sharp, cutting words crowded to her lips for a final argument, but her love for her father checked them.

Just then, in the silence, a step was heard approaching the house. In a twinkling the canteen outrage slipped from the mind of the girl, for the step was one whose echo had made indelible prints on her heart and whose owner she had been many times heartsick to see.

She had hardly time to wonder what brought him at an hour long past the usual time for making calls before he was with them.

When he had been informed by the judge of the latest chapter in the history of the canteen outrage, Mr. Allison laughed heartily. [Pg 112]

"What have you been voting for the last ten years, Judge," he asked.

"Not for the canteen," the older man answered warmly.

"I have, and for every other measure conducive to the best interests of the trade—and we have voted the same ticket to a dot."

Finding the judge rather indisposed to talk just then the young man turned to his hostess.

"I am on a quest," he said. "Tell me of some one possessed of enough knowledge of human nature to recommend a course that will square me with an unruly conscience and—a woman."

"My father is a legal light, ask him. He needs diversion now, I think," and Jean smiled at sight of his perplexed face.

"His specialty has not been 'man atoms of a great iniquity,'" said Allison with a smile that hardly concealed his anxiety. "Tell me, what would you do if you had been a 'man-atom,' had grown disgusted with the mother mass and wished to completely sever your connection with it before God and man?"

"You mean if I were a man? Well, first I would ask the Lord to forgive me for ever having been a 'man-atom.'"

"I have been duly penitent," assented the questioner.

"Then I would buy some paper—a quantity of it—and I would write yards and yards of resolutions stating that 'it can never be legalized without sin.'" [Pg 113]

"And then?"

"Then I should pray a whole lot—and pursue the even tenor of my way; and if my conscience should assert itself in the face of all this, I should think it too cranky a conscience to be humored."

"What about the woman?"

Jean smiled.

"Woman? Women," she said, "have notions. To save their lives they cannot see the use in wasting paper and prayers. They would DO something. Women—some women—believe in standing right with God and conscience though the heavens fall."

"So do some men," said Allison, gravely.

Jean started slightly. The tone of his voice, the look of his eye, conveyed to her the knowledge that somewhere, somehow, since she had seen him last he had been awakened.

Involuntarily she clasped her hands and in the passing glance she gave him Gilbert Allison caught a glimpse of the heaven that orthodox people say follows the resurrection of the just.

Judge Thorn roused himself from the spell that had been cast over him by the news in the crumpled paper.

A second time he took it in his hands and slowly, solemnly crushed it.

"The rank and file, the men whose honesty and virtue have made the party great," he said, "have been defrauded, outraged. My support of the administration and of the party of my political life is forever ended unless it reclaim the right to a decent man's support." [Pg 114]

While her father talked, Jean, lest in the first moments of her delightful discovery she should clap her hands or cry or dance or in some other unconventional way outrage grave decorum, returned to her seat and her guitar.

The fringed palm threw long jagged shadows over her dress and stretched away to meet the firelight dancing on the hearth-rug.

The mingled tones of the two voices reached her ear, but she heard them indistinctly. To the soft strains that answered the strokes of her fingers, she kept repeating over and over to herself, "He is awake, he is awake."

Presently she heard her father leave the room.

Then her heart began to whirl and beat in a way unknown to her before. She caught the faint chime of a distant steeple bell and the notes of the low music died away to a plaintive breathing as she counted the strokes, for she knew the fateful hour of her life was at hand.

Just as the last stroke quivered out onto the new hour, he came. He sat down beside her and putting aside the guitar, drew her close to him.

"You are awake," she said softly, as if half afraid of breaking some magic spell. "Tell me about it." [Pg 115]

He dropped his hand over one of hers and described the tragedy of the victims of the "great iniquity" that he had seen on that eventful night.

When he spoke of the murdered child he felt her hand clench in his and when he told of the prayer consigning the "respectable" dealer to the place prepared for Satan and his earthly henchmen, involuntarily she would have drawn away from him, but his arm bound her like a band of steel.

"A tortured face—a bitter prayer—a bloody tragedy—ugly instruments; but in the hands of the Divinity that smooths out man's rough hewing they have cut away the last outline of a 'man-atom.' Are you glad? Has fate fashioned me to the satisfaction of one peerless, priceless woman?"

For one moment Jean hesitated. Then——

But what business is that of ours? Our story has been of the daughter of a Republican, and the young woman whose face is hidden upon the shoulder of Gilbert Allison, once rum-seller, now by God's grace Prohibitionist, is no longer the daughter of a Republican; for Judge Thorn's resolution, slow formed, is as unbreakable as nature's laws.

THE END.

Section 17 of the Army Act, passed by Congress March 2, 1899, reads: [Pg 116]

"That no officer or private soldier shall be detailed to sell intoxicating drinks as a bartender or otherwise, in any post exchange or canteen, nor shall any other person be required or allowed to sell such liquor in any encampment or fort, or on any premises used for military purposes by the

United States; and the Secretary of War is hereby directed to issue such general order as may be necessary to carry the provisions of this section into full force and effect."

After vainly trying to find some other method of evading the law, Secretary Alger, then the head of the War Department, obtained from Attorney-General Griggs the opinion that the army saloon, known as the canteen, could run as usual if only the bartenders were not soldiers. Griggs said:

"The designation of one class of individuals as forbidden to do a certain thing raises a just inference that all other classes not mentioned are not forbidden. A declaration that soldiers shall not be detailed to sell intoxicating drinks in post exchanges necessarily implies that such sale is not unlawful when conducted by others than soldiers.... The act having forbidden the employment of soldiers as bartenders or salesmen of intoxicating drinks, it would be lawful and appropriate for the managers of the post exchanges to employ civilians for that purpose. Of course, employment is a matter of contract, and not of requirement or permission."

This opinion, pronounced anarchy by every judge and every lawyer, outside of the President's Cabinet, that has spoken upon it, is upheld by Secretary Root, the new head of the War Department; and by President McKinley.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE DAUGHTER OF A REPUBLICAN ***

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