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Jimmie Moore *of* Bucktown

By Melvin E. Trotter

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Jimmie Moore of Bucktown

CHAPTER I

The Invasion Begun

"Please kin yer tell me where is der boss of dis Mishun?"

The superintendent turned sharply about and beheld a boy of singularly striking appearance. His stature was that of a child of ten or twelve years and his face that of a worn-out, heart-broken, disappointed old man. His eyes, set far back in his head under heavy eyebrows, indicated an almost abnormal development of the perceptive faculties. In other respects the contour of the head was not remarkable; but the face was one, once seen, never to be forgotten. The nose was pointed and pinched, the cheeks hollow, and the glance of his eye at once appealing and defiant. There could be no doubt that this boy was a bread winner, and that the burdens he carried were altogether too heavy for such young shoulders.

From the ragged cap which he turned nervously in his hands to the large pair of sharp-pointed ladies' shoes on his feet, every garment was a misfit. The loss of a button from the neckband of his blouse-waist permitted it to gap wide open and disclosed the fact that he wore no underclothing. The day was bitterly cold; and the boy's shivery look showed how greatly he suffered.

As the superintendent took in all these facts he realized that, despite his unseemly attire and generally distracted appearance, the boy was by no means an ordinary character. Down deep in the dark gray eyes that never wavered under his steady gaze he saw the making of a man mighty for good or evil.

"I guess I'm the man you want," said Morton, kindly. "Come into my office."

Leading the way, he was followed by the boy into a small private office at the back end of the big mission hall. Offering the lad a seat, he turned to his desk, on which stood two telephones. In an instant that boy was again upon his feet. Looking with wide-open eyes, he inquired, "Be yer goin' ter call der bull? I ain't as't yer fur nuthin'. Me Pa said yer was a good guy and wouldn't squeal. I mus' go."

Morton intercepted the boy at the door. But it was some time before he could persuade him that it was not his intention to turn him over to the police, "the bull," for begging.

"I want to help you," he said. "I'll be your friend, and I won't squeal on you either."

"Well, be yer Mister Morton?" asked the boy.

"Yes, that's my name," replied the superintendent. "And now I want you to tell me all about your trouble. Who sent you to me?"

"Me Pa. He heard your talk on der gospel wagon down at der square. He don't talk about nuthin' else and he wants yer ter come an' see him."

"Is he sick?"

"Sure he's sick. He's been in bed ever since Wednesday. Ma says he's outer his head. Tuesday night he didn't come home from work, and Ma says, 'I guess he's drunk ag'in.' We waited fur him till eleven o'clock and den I couldn't stay awake no longer. 'Sides, der wood was all burnt up and we had ter go ter bed ter keep warm. At five in der mornin' Mike Hardy, der bar-keep' at Fagin's, saw Pa layin' in Rice's wagon box, out in front of der market. It snowed on Pa, and he was near frozed. Mike calls Bill Cook and dey brings Pa home. Bill and Pa is chums; an' Bill gets drunk, too. Ma says dey bot' works fur

Fagin. When dey gits paid dey take all der money straight to Fagin's and spends it for booze."

"Well, what's your name and where do you live?" interrupted Morton.

"Me name's Jimmie Moore, and we live down in Bucktown near der market."

"Go on with your story, sonny," said Morton.

"After dey got him in der house Ma and Bill gits his clothes off and Bill goes and gets some wood and built a fire. I carried me mornin' papers, and when I gits back I stayed wit' Pa while Ma went ter Ransome's house up on der Avenue to do deir washin'. Pa he slept all day till four in the afternoon, and den he raised up straight in bed and, lookin' at somethin' in der corner of der room, said, 'Can't yer see me hand? I raised it twice. Why don't yer come and git me?' I couldn't see nuthin', but he keeps on talkin' dat way fur a long time. Den he laid down again and cried and said he wanted der mishun man ter come and see him. When Ma gits back she sent me to der barber shop to git Fred Hanks ter telephone ter Dr. Possum. He's der city doctor. He looked at Pa and said he had ammonia. Den Ma she cried, 'cause she had no money ter git supper for us kids and fer the doctor's paper, too."

"Pretty soon Mrs. Cook, that's Bill's missus, comes in and she said she'd help take care of Pa. The neighbors done all dey could, but we ain't got no money, er no wood, and der rent ain't paid. We ain't had no fire since yisterday, and dis' mornin' Ma sits down and cries 'cause der's nothin' for der kids ter eat. Her and me don't mind, but we got four girl kids that's hungry all der time. Pa set up in bed and said, 'Go to der mishun man and tell him I mus' see him.' Ma sent me up ter see if yer won't come down ter see Pa."

Finding a knitted scarf for the boy to tie about his neck, the superintendent and Jimmie started for the sick man's bedside. The section of the city where the Moore family lived, locally known as Bucktown, contained the only real slums to be found in the busy and rapidly growing metropolis. It was located on a low tract of ground between the city market and the river, and was inhabited chiefly by negroes and very poor white people.

On the way Jimmie continued his story, and the superintendent tried to tell him about the Father above who loves the poor and who sent His Son to die that all the world might live and have access to the unsearchable riches of God. "The only help that is sure and lasting," he said, "comes from God. He can find a way out of your trouble for you."

"I don't see how He kin help us," replied the boy. "They won't give us no help at der city hall, 'cause we ain't been here long enough. We ain't no city case er nothin' else, I guess. The man said he would put us kids in der Children's Home and Pa in der poorhouse, er send us all back ter Dalton. Ma said she'd die widout us kids."

When the boy stopped talking Morton took him by the hand and told him about the Jesus who loves little boys and their fathers and mothers, and how He would do all things for them. "If you believe in Him," said the superintendent, "you can ask for anything in His name and get it."

"Where is Jesus?" asked Jimmie.

"He's right here now," replied Morton. "You can't see Him, but He's always with us to watch over us and care for us."

This was a stunner for Jimmie. For a full minute he looked straight ahead of him, as if in deep thought, and then raising his eyes until they met Morton's, said: "Watcher givin' us, Cully? Do yer tink I am bug-house?"

"No, I don't think you're crazy, but what I have said is true, Jimmie. You can't see the wind, but you know there is wind because you feel it. I cannot see Jesus with my natural eye, but I know He is here, just as well as you know that the wind is blowing. I trust Him for everything, and He supplies all my needs. I have loved Him and He has kept me for seven years. I never help any one myself; I do it for Him. He gives me the love and the money, and if I help you, you must thank Him and not me."

"Maybe He loves good boys; but I'm no good, ner never was. He can't love no kid like me, kin he?"

"Yes, my boy, just as much as He does me."

"Den He don't know me, for everybody dat knows me says I'm bad. Me Ma, even she says so. I guess He don't love no one in Bucktown."

"Yes, He loves every one in Bucktown, and He will care for you all if you will trust Him and ask Him

for what you need."

"Kin I ask Him fur somethin' ter eat."

"Yes, you can, and you'll get it too. But you must love Him and thank Him for what you get."

Jimmie looked up to see if Morton really meant what he was saying. When he saw the look of intense earnestness on the superintendent's face he knew that he was not deceiving him.

"I hope He'll help Pa," said Jimmie thoughtfully. "I guess he needs it mor'n der rest of us do."

"If your Pa will tell God what a sinner he has been and will ask Him for forgiveness, He will help him. God is a friend of sinners, Jimmie."

"This is where we live," said the boy, turning to go into a miserable shack.

The house was one of the most disreputable looking places in the neighborhood. It consisted of a lean-to portion of a house from which the original building had been moved away. There was no wall beneath; the building stood on four posts, one at each corner, and open on all sides, the wind having a clean sweep beneath the floor in every direction. Within there were two rooms. In the front one was a bed upon which the sick man lay, an old table, two chairs and a box to sit on. In the next room an old wood-burning cook-stove, a big box for table and cupboard combined, and a broken mirror constituted its complete furnishing. The roof leaked, and most of the spaces in the window sashes were filled with rags and paper instead of glass.

A baby of six months, lying in a market basket, was being pulled about the room by an older sister. When Morton entered, two other girls, older than the baby, one two, the other past three years of age, darted under the bed and peeked from beneath the ragged comfort hanging over the edge.

"Dis is Mister Morton from der Mission," said Jimmie proudly, still clasping the hand of the superintendent, "and he says dat Jesus loves every bloomin' one of us, and'll be our friend and owns the whole business. If we lives fur Him, He lives fur us, and—and—"

"You shut up, Jim," said his mother, as with her apron she wiped the dirt off the seat of the nearest chair.

"Sit down, Mister Morton," she said. "Glad to see you. We ain't got much of a place here; but Robert wanted to see you so bad, I sent Jimmie up to the Mission to bring you."

After greeting the little ones, Morton went to the bed and spoke to Mr. Moore. He was sick indeed; and the superintendent knew that he was facing a man who would never stand upon his feet again.

"Oh, sir," said the sick man, "I'm dying, and I'm not saved. I know I'm not fit to go, and I don't know the way to git fit. I heard you talk on the gospel wagon and I've tried to find God by myself, but I don't seem to get any answer to my prayers. Back in Pennsylvania, at a meeting in our little country schoolhouse, I promised God I would live for Him, but after we was married I came out West, and settled in this country where it was wild. Maybe you know how it is. I learned to drink, and that has spoiled all my chances. Since I've been sick here I've seen it all over again, and I want God to save me before I die. I know I've been awful wicked, but I heard you say God loved everybody; now I want you to pray for me."

Moore broke into tears as he thought of his awful sin, and he was weeping bitterly. The superintendent read the third chapter of John slowly and with emphasis, and told of the marvelous love of God that makes the way for the salvation of even the most unworthy. The man said he was ready to give up, but wanted first to confess his wickedness. The story of his life was one of toil and privation. He had learned to drink after he became a man and had a family. From that time on his descent was rapid. He made no attempt to shield himself, but laid bare before the superintendent and before his own family all the secrets of his sinful career. He left his home at Dalton to escape arrest, and when times got hard in the city he feared to go back to his old home on account of the possible consequences of his sin.

When he had finished, the superintendent pointed him to the One who alone could help him. The sick man said he would believe and trust God. That little gathering, with the prayers that followed, was an experience that Morton will remember as one of the events of his life. The wife also expressed a desire to know the Saviour, and both prayed for forgiveness.

There was a joy there that seemed to fill the old shed with the glory of God. Moore's eyes beamed with love, and the whole family seemed to rejoice in the peace that had come to him on his sick bed. Then the superintendent sung a hymn, and little Jimmie, standing close by his side, grasped his hand,

and, looking up into his face, said, "If Jesus will love me I'll love Him and be his boy." Morton took him to the grocery and market. When he left him on the corner, with a basket well filled with good things to eat, he said, "Now, Jimmie, I'll see you in the morning. You tell your Ma and every one that Jesus is your friend and sent you this basket."

"I'll do it, yer bet; and I'll tank Him for dis lot of stuff.
Gee! We'll eat till we bust!"

CHAPTER II

"Der Gang"

Socially and terrestrially Bucktown was situated beside a river. Once a year, when the spring freshet caused the Big Grandee to overflow its banks, the whole tract was inundated. At such times most of the people were compelled to leave their homes and find temporary quarters elsewhere. Along the Market side of the district the ground was a trifle higher, and here a few houses were beyond the reach of the floods. One of these was the shack in which the Moore family lived. Other near-by sections of the city had been filled in to raise them above the level of the high water mark, but Bucktown remained as it was in the beginning.

Its houses were the oldest in the city, and some of them in their day had been the residences of the best citizens. Some were first erected where they now continued to stand; but many others had been moved to make room for the rapidly growing business district, and had been set down here because land was cheap and nowhere else would such worn-out, dilapidated structures find tenants.

Unlike the slums of larger and older cities, Bucktown was largely peopled by men and women who, like its houses, had come from happier and more elegant surroundings. Few of its older inhabitants were born in the slums, and among its people were to be found many whose careers in life were begun under really favorable circumstances; but, like driftwood, they had been crowded out of the busy stream of human effort into this pool of stagnant humanity. In this way the neighborhood had become the dumping ground for everything that was undesirable in a population of more than one hundred thousand souls.

Stall saloons and houses of ill-fame were numerous, and sin and wickedness stalked forth in open daylight with a boldness that knew no hindrance. One-third of the population was colored, and the whites were made up of almost every known nationality. No effort was made to draw the color line. Negroes and whites lived in the same or adjoining houses, and in some families the husband was of one color and the wife of another.

The second house from the Moore home was the celebrated "Dolly" resort, known everywhere as the most dangerous place of the kind in the city. It was luxuriously furnished and was famous for its pretty girls and its dances.

In an old shanty back of Moore's home lived "Yellow Liz," or "Big Liz," a monstrously hideous woman who had once been the wife of Abe Tobey, now doing a long term in State's Prison for murderous assault. "Big Liz" had a wart as large as an acorn in the middle of her forehead and wooly red and black whiskers on her chin and lower jaw. She was recognized as one of the features of the neighborhood, and slumming parties from "uptown" never failed to visit her domicile.

Another house close by had been the home of Tom Beet, who murdered his wife by saturating her clothing with kerosene oil and setting fire to her body while she lay in a drunken stupor on the bedroom floor.

There was no high-toned moral element in the slums. Nobody made any pretense of being good. Every man, woman and child in the community knew that he was a sinner and recognized the fact that other people knew it too. "Oily Ike" Palmer, whose junk shop was the resort of thieves, and who acted in the capacity of a "fence" for all of them, together with Dave Beach, the horse trader and political boss of the ward, were the heroes of the community. "Oily Ike" was known to the police as a criminal, but although many offenses had been traced to his door, the evidence necessary to place him behind the bars was always lacking and he had never been convicted of a crime. He was also an opium eater and a drunkard, while it was said he had once held an honorable position in society. His vices had been

the cause of his downfall, and at the time Superintendent Morton of the City Rescue Mission made his acquaintance he was a crafty, unscrupulous rascal, with the qualities of a beast of prey rather than those of a man.

Beach, the horse trader, sometimes called the "Mayor of Bucktown," was proprietor of a "Traders" barn, a once prosperous livery stable on Brady Street. His place was a "growler joint," and was frequented by all the toughs and criminals in the neighborhood. In his own way, Dave was an autocrat of no mean power. When he O.K.'d a man, that man stood ace high; but when he said "Jiggers," everybody shut up like a clam. Beach was a bad man; but he had brains, and everybody paid court at his throne. It was said he could deliver the vote of Bucktown intact at election time, and there could be no doubt of the effectiveness of his pull with the authorities. He could drink more whisky, and stay sober, than any man in the community. If any one could whip him in a rough and tumble fight, the fact had not been demonstrated; and no one seemed anxious to establish it.

Gene Dibble, a good-natured, big-hearted fellow, worked in the North Woods in the winter, but came to Bucktown every spring to spend his money. He was a fine singer, and could dance the Buck-and-wing, Turkey-in-the-Straw and the Rag like few men. He was a favorite in Bucktown, and a warm friend of Dave Beach.

When it was noised about that Moore had sent for the "Mission Guy," as Morton was known in Bucktown, most of the neighbors waited for Beach to speak before they expressed any opinion. People had been sick and died before; but none had ever been so bold as to send for the mission man, and though they said nothing, some of Moore's best friends thought he must be out of his head.

The day following Morton's visit to the sick man little Jimmie stopped at Dave's barn and told a crowd of fellows who were present what had happened.

"Der main squeeze of der Rescue Mission was down ter our house last night, and he tol' Pa dat Jesus loves us and will give us anyting we wants. De doc says Pa is goin' ter die; but Pa tol' de Mission Guy he believed and now he's saved. He ain't goin' ter drink no more booze er nuthin'. We all belongs ter Jesus now, and He's goin' ter take care of us. Yer kin as't Him fer anyting yer wants, and if yer love Him and confesses Him you'll git it. Dat's wat der Mission Guy tol' Pa."

Although a favorite with the crowd that hung around the barn, Jimmie's little speech provoked a derisive laugh, and, catching the boy by the coat collar, Jewey Martin, an ex-convict, started to fire him out of the door with the advice to "chase himself." Before he had taken three steps Dave Beach had his great fist about Jewey's throat and had shoved him back into a corner.

"You let the kid alone. He's all right and knows what he's talking about. If you was more like that boy, mebbe you'd git to heaven sometime. You don't have to believe what he says if you don't want to, but you want to recollect what I tell you, that you better let him alone around here."

Some religious apologists might question the conversion of a boy of Jimmie's make-up; but among the people of Bucktown there was no doubt about his sincerity and his belief that Jesus loved him and heard and answered his prayers. With Dave Beach back of him he did not hesitate to repeat his story, and it was not long before every one about the market place had heard the tale from his lips.

As Morton would not allow Jimmie to thank him, but taught him that he must thank God for everything, he learned to call Morton "Jesus' storekeeper," and "Jesus' hired man"; and he sang his praises from daylight until dark. In this way he helped Morton to gain a foothold in the neighborhood, and when the people found that he wanted to help them rather than to pry into their affairs he was made welcome when he visited Bucktown.

Jimmie had never learned to read; but one day he told Morton he wanted a little red Testament, such as the superintendent had given his father.

"You jus' tell me some of dem verses like I heard yer read to Pa an' gimme der book, an' I can make a bluff at readin' 'em anyhow."

Using colored inks, Morton marked John 3:16, John 10:28, and other well-known texts. He also explained their meaning to the boy. "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find," and "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these," were Jimmie's favorites, and although he quoted them in language all his own, he never failed to convey their full meaning.

The days that followed Moore's conversion were trying ones for the family. When the fever broke the sick man's cough grew worse, and he required constant attention. Through the Mission, Mrs. Moore found work enough to keep her busy six days in the week, and the task of caring for the sick man fell

upon Jimmie and Mrs. Cook, who proved to be a woman of generous impulses and an excellent neighbor. She ran in many times a day to see how they were getting along. Jimmie had a morning newspaper route and in the afternoon sold papers on the street. At other times he stayed close at home and never tired of talking with his father about Jesus and His love for wicked men and women.

His childlike faith in God was wonderful. He was quick to learn and often surprised Morton by his aptitude; but his chief characteristic was his almost phenomenal grasp of spiritual truths. He prayed to God for food, coal, wood and clothes; and when he had told Jesus what he wanted he always counted it settled.

Mrs. Morton, wife of the superintendent, was a frequent visitor at the home, and brought many things to make the bed more comfortable and the two rooms more cheerful for the sick man. No matter what the articles might be, Jimmie always said, "Jesus sent 'em."

On one occasion, when the Mission woman had gone, Mrs. Cook, who was present, turned to Jimmie and said, "I sh'd think you'd thank her for all she's doin' for you folks. She's the best friend yer ever had, and I'll bet none of yer ever even said 'Much erblided.'"

"We don't have ter tank her," said Jimmie. "Jesus is der one we're ter tank. Everyting belongs ter Him, and I'm His'n, too. When we needs anyting we jus' tells Him an' He sends it."

"Well, she's the one who brought that flour this morning, fer I seen her come," said Mrs. Cook, "and none of you thanked her at all."

"Aw, yer go on," replied the boy. "Yer don't know wot you're talkin' about. Dis ain't no graft dat we's a-workin'. Jesus is our friend an' He loves us; dat's why He takes care of us. He'd love yer, too, if you'd let Him, but when yer takes Him for your friend yer got to cut out dose cuss words an' de growler, too. Dat's wat me an' Pa has done, and we belongs to Jesus now. 'Twouldn't be de square ting by Him for us ter tank anybody else, and we ain't afeard but wat He'll give us all we needs."

As for Moore, while he never doubted his salvation, there were times when he was despondent and gloomy. The memory of his misspent life and the consciousness that he had nearly reached the end lay heavily upon his mind, and, left alone as he was for hours at a time, with no one but Jimmie and the other children in the house, he brooded upon his troubles until he grew very miserable. At such times it was interesting to hear Jimmie hold up Jesus and preach the gospel of love as his juvenile mind comprehended it.

"Pa, yer act jus' as though Jesus didn't love yer," he said one afternoon, when the superintendent's wife was present. "He knows yer coughin' spells hurt yer, and He'll help yer to stan' 'em, 'cause He was hurted once Hisself. Ain't He takin' care of us, and didn't He send der Mission Guy ter help us? Yer ain't got no right ter worry; just look how good He's been ter all of us."

One morning when Dr. Snyder, who had been called in on the advice of the Cook family, came to see the sick man, Moore anxiously inquired if there was no chance of his recovery. While he was conceded to be an able man in his profession, the doctor, himself a drinking man, was sometimes rough and heartless in his manner, and, replying to the question, said:

"Well, if you've got any unfinished business on hand you better call a special session and close it up. You'll be pushing clouds within a week."

"Do you mean he's goin' ter die?" asked Jimmie, whose quick ears had caught the remark.

"That's just the plain English of it, my boy," replied the doctor. "The old man's a goner, and no doctor on earth can save him."

"Well, he'll go straight ter Jesus," said Jimmie, "'cause he got saved las' Friday. Gran'ma and Gran'pa er up dar, and Pa an' Ma an' the rest of us is all a-goin'."

"What's the matter with the kid, Moore?" asked the doctor. "Has he gone daffy?"

"No, Doc, the boy's all right. Leastwise if he's daffy, as you call it, I wish to God we'd all got that way long ago. Then we wouldn't be in the condition you find us to-day. Say, Doc, don't you ever expect to be a Christian? If you were in my place you'd see what it means to face death without God."

"Gee, you're good!" said the physician. "The way you talked to Gene Dibble when I sewed up your head after the fight didn't sound much like a prayer to me. You want to get forgiven here before you ask God to do anything for you there. Now, kid, you'd better forget about this religion and tend to the old man. Give him his medicine every hour, and I'll be in again to-morrow. Good-bye."

He slammed the door, and Jimmie sat for a moment in deep thought. Then he turned to his father and said: "Pa, Gene'll forgive yer if yer ast him. I'll go over ter Fagin's and if he ain't dere I'll tell Mike ter send him over wen he comes in."

"How's the old man, Jimmie?" asked Fagin as the boy entered the saloon.

"Doc says he's dyin'. Is Gene Dibble here? Wish't you'd tell him Pa wants ter see him," said the boy as he turned to go.

"Wait a minute, Jimmie; I want to send a little medicine to your father."

He took a bottle from the back bar and began to wrap it up in a scrap of old newspaper. "This is about all the poor devil lived for," he said to himself, "and he ought to have a taste now that he's dyin'."

"Is dat booze?" asked Jimmie.

"It's just a nip for the old man. It's his favorite brand," said Fagin.

"Not his'n; he's got saved an' don't need it in his business," replied the boy, starting for the door.

"Come here, you little fool, and take this bottle to your dad with my compliments," said the saloon-man in anger.

"It's your compliments wat's ailin' him now," answered Jimmie. "Yer got his nine dollars last Tuesday night, and now he's dyin'. I seen yer Ralph goin' ter school wid new shoes and rubbers dis mornin', an' I'm wearin' yer compliments," said the boy, holding up one of his feet encased in a worn-out lady's shoe. "I promised Pa dat I'd take care of Ma an' der kids, and we don't need no booze ter help us, not us."

Jimmie ducked and dodged out of the door just in time to escape a soaking wet bar towel the saloon-man had thrown at him, and at a single bound jumped to the middle of the sidewalk just in time to collide with Bill Cook.

"Hello Bill," he said. "Why ain't yer workin'? Drunk agin? Gee! you'll be seein' 'em agin. Der las' time yer was crazier den a bed bug."

"You be d—!" said Bill. "Guess I'm all right. Only had three drinks. You's is gittin' too good for this neck o' woods. Yer orter move up on der boulevard amongst der bloods."

"Don't Ma do washin' up dere now, smarty? We got friends up dere; see? Why don't yer come over an' see Pa? He's dyin'."

"Go on!" said Bill. "Ye don't mean it! Kin I see him?"

"Sure, come on."

Bill staggered into Fagin's and took two more big drinks and then followed Jimmie across the street. He was badly intoxicated, but the sight of Moore's pinched features and fever-lighted eyes nearly brought him to his sober senses.

Bill was rough and wicked; but his heart within was almost as tender as a babe's. Drink was his worst trouble, and when he was sober he was rather a decent sort of fellow. His effort to appear at ease and say something encouraging to Moore was painful. He stammered and hawed and finally said, "It's all off, Bob; I can't make no speech. Let 'er go t' 'ell."

He pulled up the box, sat down at the bedside and began to cry. The sick man stretched forth his emaciated hand, and, placing it on Bill's head, said:

"Never mind, old man, I know what yer mean. You're my friend all right; but you can't say nuthin' that will help me now. I guess I must cash in pretty soon; but I ain't no coward, Bill; I've just been prayin' and everything is all right 'tween me and God. I don't know what'll become of the old woman and the kids, but I guess He'll take care of them. Maybe they will be better off when I'm gone than when I'm here. I'll tell you, Bill, booze don't get yer much when the doctor says you're up. I wish I'd cut 'er out the first time we saw the gospel wagon down on the square. The Mission man was here just a little while ago, an' he says he will help Jimmie take care of Ma and the kids. He says Jesus loves me, and when he prayed I put in too and says, 'I'm ready, Lord.'"

Moore's effort to talk exhausted his strength and brought on a sinking spell. He gasped and coughed and grasped his throat as though he was strangling. Bill thought he was dying, and grabbing his hat started for the door, telling Jimmie to stay there while he brought the doctor. The scene had been too

much for his shattered nerves, and, reaching the middle of the sidewalk, he stood and yelled at the top of his voice:

"Moore's dyin'! Moore's dyin'! Git the doctor and the undertaker and der Mission man, quick! Moore's dyin'! Moore's dyin'!"

CHAPTER III

"The Busted Funeral"

The commotion that followed made dying a hard matter for Moore. When the doctor and Mrs. Moore reached the house it took them ten minutes, with the help of Dave Beach, to clear the room of the people. When Mr. and Mrs. Morton came, quiet had been restored on the inside, but on the street and at Fagin's they were talking about the funeral expenses, etc., before they had a corpse. In this neighborhood a funeral was looked upon as something of a party or social function, not to be missed. Every one turned out, never failing to dress for the occasion. Mrs. Rose, Mrs. Kinney and Mrs. Washington (colored) were easily in the lead when it came to professional mourners. As Dave Beach said one time, they "could cry real tears at a moment's notice, and keep it up as long as the water lasted and occasion demanded." When Charlie Slater was drowned in the Slough they cried for three days with Mrs. Slater, never going home for meals. Both they and their children put black crape on their arms and lived and cried with Mrs. Slater until Charlie was found. Mrs. Rose kept the crape, and after a funeral would wash and iron it and put it in the "burer" drawer until some one else died. When she heard Bill's cry, she came running with a piece tied on each arm and at least twenty pieces in her hand to supply the neighbors. That she considered her first and solemn duty. Inside of five minutes after Bill yelled and gave the alarm, every one of the regulars was decorated for action.

Bill went to Fagin's and got three big drinks without money, on the strength of Moore's death. He went into the back room, buried his face in his hands and began to weep. He was honest in his weeping, but he had too many drinks aboard and his snores soon told their own story. Bill's cry of "Moore's dyin'!" was soon turned to "Moore's dead; Bill says so." Of course Bill knew nothing of the disturbance he had created, and slept peacefully on in Fagin's back room. In the meantime Mrs. Cook was trying to "square" Bill with the neighbors. After the mistake was discovered every one blamed Bill that Moore was alive. Bill and his wife would fight with each other almost daily. Bill would swear that he had not tasted a drop when he was so drunk he could scarcely see. He contended that he was never drunk so long as he was sober enough to deny it. Mrs. Cook was possessed of an uncontrollable temper, and when she became angry—and she always did when Bill lied to her—she would completely lose control of herself. As Jimmie said one day:

"Gee, der old girl'll bounce irons er any old thing she can git her mitts on when she's sore. Her nose and her chin comes together so fast when she talks dat she's got corns on both of 'em."

She washed and worked until three or four o'clock in the morning to care for her children, and would do anything she could for any one, but when she got "sore," as Jimmie said, every one gave her the right of way. "She calls Bill every name on der calendar, but when it comes ter any one else saying a word about him, she won't stand fer it."

"If Bill said that Bob Moore's dead, he's dead, er soon will be," she said. "He knows a dead one when he sees it. It's a sure thing anyhow, and what difference does an hour or two make? The doctor says he's done fer anyhow."

As Mr. Morton left the house after Moore's death, he led Jimmie by the hand. The little fellow had made some big promises for one so small and frail, but he said God could and would help him. He knew that he could do no more window work for Jewey and his gang, neither could he work the depot crowds on Sunday excursion trains with Fred Hood. As he passed Mrs. Cook he simply said, "He's dead." Before leaving the house Morton had promised Mrs. Moore to help her hold her family together and not allow them to be sent to the Children's Home. Perhaps the promise was not a wise one, but it is hard to refuse a mother such a request in the presence of her dead husband. To raise girls in Bucktown and have them turn out right would be the eighth wonder of the world. The Children's Home would be much the best place for them; but the mother heart revolts at separation.

"We must pray for money to pay your father's funeral expenses, Jimmie," said Morton. Not knowing

whence any of it was coming, but believing that He would provide, they went to the undertaker and made arrangements for the funeral. The next day being Sunday, Morton spoke in one of the big downtown churches, and at the close of his talk on "City Missions" he stated to that fashionable audience just what was needed in the Moore household. After the meeting enough money was placed in his hand to pay for one-half of the entire expense. The next day was a busy one at the Mission. To get clothes for all the children and to keep them clean enough to go to the funeral at two o'clock was no easy matter. The clothes room in the City Rescue Mission is a room where old clothes sent in by well-to-do people are kept for the poor, and hundreds of the less fortunate are cared for every year. Three nurses from the hospital helped Mrs. Morton with the work. With a tub of hot water, ivory soap and sapolio the scrubbing started. They polished their faces until Jimmie said, "They shine like a nigger's heel." The dressing was the hard part. A blue skirt to fit the oldest girl could only be matched in size by a bright green waist, and by her own choice a red ribbon for a belt, with yellow ribbons for her stiff "pig-tails." Mrs. Cook said "she looked like the pattern in a false-face factory." Cast-off shoes were secured for all but Jimmie, and Mr. Morton was compelled to take him to a shoe store and buy him his first pair of new shoes. He had always worn shoes that some one else had discarded. He could not keep his eyes off them as he walked along the street. His warm underclothing and suit from some rich boy's wardrobe, with new shoes, all in one day, was more than he could stand. He was spotted by one of his friends who was yelling, "Extra Press; read all about it!" Mr. Morton and Jimmie came along and to them he said, "Paper, Mister?"

Jimmie raised his eyes from his shoes long enough to say, "Hello, Swipsey! How'd yer like 'em?"

"Where'd yer git 'em?" asked Swipsey.

"Git 'em? I got 'em, ain't I? How'd yer like 'em?"

"Dead swell. Do I git yer old ones?"

"Ain't got no old ones; I give 'em ter the shoe store man. We got a funeral at our house ter-day. Me Pa's died."

As Morton and a quartet reached the house with the children a wonderful gathering was there to greet them. The old bed had been taken down; the casket had been placed between the two windows. Folding chairs, furnished by the undertaker, were placed in rows before the casket. They were nearly filled by the friends and mourners. Bill Cook sat close by the door, so that he might be free to spit without getting up. "Big Liz" sat next to him, smoking her pipe, but at the sight of Morton she put it under her old apron. Several of the girls from the Dolly resort were there to pay their respects. All the neighbors were there, either in person or by proxy. As the quartet started to sing the old song, "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," every one seemed to take it as a signal to cry. No one seemed to know why they cried; but all did their part in making the funeral a "howling success," as Mrs. Rose said. Before the song was ended "Big Liz" was weeping louder than all the four singers could sing. Morton knew that he must have a brief service, and after a short prayer and Scripture reading he spoke words of comfort to the family and told of Moore's wonderful conversion. As he pictured the glories of heaven that await the redeemed and contrasted them with the awful condition of the unrepentant in sin and hell, every one trembled. Morton was very anxious to bring the people to a decision, and felt that the time had come for a final invitation. Bill Cook's eyes were fastened on Morton and, as he spoke of hell and judgment, he was sure it was all intended for him. "Big Liz" had forgotten the pipe in her lap. It had fallen over and the contents had set her dress on fire. The smell of smoke caused by the burning of cotton, wool, and dirt together did not make a pleasing accompaniment for Morton's words. When the smell reached Bill, he leaped into the middle of the room and shouted, "Hell's here now!" Just at that moment "Big Liz" felt the heat from the fire, and she jumped to Bill's side and said, "Yer right, honey, and I'm sure in it." Morton saw what was causing the trouble, and with the help of the undertaker succeeded in getting Liz out upon the street. He called Bill and told him to help her put out the fire. Bill was very much excited, and he took Liz by the hand and started for the big watering trough at the corner of the market. When he reached it he pushed her into the water backward. "That busted up der funeral," as Jimmie said. Such screaming had never been heard in Bucktown. When she at last managed to get out of the icy water she started for Bill, determined to kill him. Dave Beach headed him away from Moore's funeral and gave Morton a chance to close with a feeble prayer. The chance that he had prayed for so long, to reach the people of Bucktown with the gospel, had come and he had lost. He was heart-broken and felt the disappointment keenly. Jimmie was quick to see it and, as the people viewed the remains, he slipped up to Morton, and, pressing his hand, said, "Don't yer care, we'll git 'em all yet."

CHAPTER IV

Jimmie's New Pa

Jasper, the reporter on the Press, knew a good story when he had found one. A quiet visit to the Moore domicile the next afternoon, a brief call at Bill Cook's, and a few liberal potations at Fagin's, were responsible for the write-up which appeared in the evening Press. The pathetic story of sickness, death and privation appealed in a powerful manner to the community. Many well-meaning people flooded the place with provisions and a miscellaneous assortment of wearing apparel, running from silk dresses and opera cloaks to cotton jumpers and soleless patent leathers. As is the case generally, this kind of charity did much more harm than good. For a week they had provision enough to feed every man, woman and child in Bucktown. Mrs. Moore thought it would always be so. She gave up her work and said "she would do nothin' fer nobody."

Five days after the funeral Jimmie rushed into Morton's office at the Mission and said, "Say, I got er new Pa at my house."

"A new what?" asked Morton in surprise.

"A new Pa," said Jimmie. "Me Ma says that Charlie Hathnit would be me Pa from now on; he's been livin' with us fer two days now."

Morton was dumfounded. He sat looking at Jimmie a moment; then he said, "Jimmie, this is all wrong. God cannot bless your home with that man there." Morton, reaching out, drew Jimmie to his side and continued, "You promised your father you would run the house and help your mother to care for the family."

The diminutive figure of Jimmie suddenly straightened and seemed to increase an inch in height as he answered, looking Morton straight in the eyes, "So I did, and I meant it, too."

Then said Morton, "You must not allow that loafer there at all."

A moment later Jimmie was at the door. "Where are you going?" inquired Morton.

"I'm going home ter clean house," said Jimmie, as he dashed down Brady Street. As he entered the house a few minutes later he was not the little Jimmie of an hour before. Almost unconsciously there had been born within him a stern resolve to right wrong; an invisible line had been passed; dependent childhood seemed to fade away and in its place came manhood; he stood there another recruit to the great army of child heroes, the great army of those who are forced to face the stern realities of life. As he looked up into his mother's face the little tempest which had gathered within him for a moment was calmed; he caught her hand in both of his, pressing it against his cheek, an old habit of his when he had sought to comfort his mother or to express some emotion when lips would fail.

"What the h—l ails the kid?" snarled Hathnit.

Jimmie, realizing that there was stern business at hand, and ashamed of his momentary emotion, replied:

"Jus' dis: I got somethin' ter ast yer; what are yer doin' in our house anyhow?"

"Hush, Jimmie," interposed Mrs. Moore. "Yer mind yer business."

"That's jus' what I'm doin', Ma. I seen Morton, an' he says it's all wrong fer yer ter keep this piker here, and yer know I promised Pa der night Jesus took him up dare——"

A curse followed from Hathnit which was so awful that it would have shaken anything but Jimmie's determination. "Go an' tell dis Bible-banging Morton to keep his d—— advice to himself. I'm a peaceable man, but if I mix with this Mission galoot he'll cut out givin' his advice to you kids. As fer you, you better duck till you git this nonsense out of yer head." Hathnit strolled to the door and opened it, and Jimmie was compelled for the time being to leave the house.

"It's no more than I expected," said Mrs. Cook to Jimmie as he related the events of the morning. "When I heard Hathnit was a-livin' ter yer house, I jus' told Bill that no good would come from it. Poor Jimmie, you jus' wait till I git these here clothes out of this here bluing water; I'll go over wid yer to see what can be did."

Soon the last towel was through the wringer, and Mrs. Cook, hastily drying her hands on her apron,

accompanied Jimmie to his home. The conference that ensued was not productive of any good. Hathnit was a man devoid of all manly principles, lazy to the limit, ill-bred, ill-kept, illiterate, but still possessing one noticeable characteristic—a keenness which cannot be overlooked in men of his ilk.

Mrs. Cook came to the point at once. "Mis Moore," she said, "yer boy Jim tells me you've took Hathnit here for yer man."

"Right yer be," replied Hathnit. "Yer needn't guess again."

"But yer ain't married yet," said Mrs. Cook.

"Well, yer see it's dis way," proceeded Hathnit. "She said she wanted me and I said I wanted her, so that's ernough. It used ter be the style ter go before the Justice with your dollar and a quarter paper and git tied, but that's a dead one now."

"Well, where's Mollie? She's yer wife, ain't she?" asked Mrs. Cook.

"Naw, Tom Ellen's got her now; he took her while I was doing a two-year contract fer the State."

"But it's wrong," burst out Jimmie. "Mr. Morton says so."

"To h—l with Morton!" said Hathnit. "Now look here, the high-tone guys do that right along, only they spends their good money fer lawyer's licenses and divorce cases. I found this mornin's Herald at the depot, and it says there was six marriage licenses and eight divorces granted in this town yisterday. Fer every five marriages in dis whole State last year there was one divorce. Der people gits married ter-day with the understanding that if they don't like each other they can get a divorce. If that's all marriage amounts to—and it is—I think a man's a blooming sucker ter blow his good money to der lawyers. In dis town a dozen lawyers lives on divorce money alone. Society, so-called, says it's right, and when they gits up deir dancin' parties they have ter git an expert to keep from invitin' hubbie number one, two and three at the same time. If the bloods kin have two or three wives by payin' some cheap lawyer their good dough, I can have two or three an' save my money fer weddin' celebrations. The women all over the country went wild about Smoot and Polly Gamy."

"Yer means Pollie Gainey, that lived over Fagin's last year, don't yer?" asked Mrs. Cook.

"Naw, I means jus' what I said; Polly Gamy means yer can have all kinds of wives," said Hathnit. "Now, ter my way of thinkin', Smoot has as much right ter his wives as these women has ter their husbands. If he would send his money ter some cheap lawyer he'd be O.K. ter their way of thinkin'. Smoot takes care of his kids, anyhow, but these society guys sends theirs ter the Children's Home fer the city ter care fer. There's sixty-six kids there now, and fifty-two of them are from divorced families. Dis Morton that yer crackin' up ter me is kickin' about us livin' tergether without marryin'. He says it's wrong; why don't he say somethin' ter the church members? That big guy, where Bob Evans is coachman, got a divorce from his Missus and gave her the home ter live in. He built a new house on der next block and took another woman, and she took another man. Bob says that Ralph, the kid, calls one Papa and the other Daddie. They all goes ter the same church Sunday mornin' and nothin's said. Why? 'Cause they pay der lawyer. If they're all right, I'm all right; the church stands fer it, the law stands fer it, and society stands fer it. That cheap Mission guy with his old Bible don't cut much ice against that bunch."

"I know the Bible says it's wrong ter put away yer wife an' take another, but no one believes that old book nowadays. Why, I heard one of dem preachers from a dominie shop in Chicago say, when he was preaching down at the Bull Pen, dat the Bible wasn't der word of God at all, and he oughter know 'cause they got der very latest th'ology out. They discover things over there in Chicago. If the kid here don't like der way thin's is doin' he kin duck. I'm runnin' dis house now. Tell Bill ter come over ter der celebration, Mrs. Cook. So long." With this he fished a cigar stub out of his pocket, bit off a portion of it, expectorated freely into the stove hearth, and turning his back to them walked into the front room.

Mrs. Moore was about to follow him, when Jimmie plucked at her dress. When she turned around and their eyes met, the mother love had vanished.

"Ma," he said, his voice faltering, "which one goes, me or that?" pointing to the door where Hathnit had disappeared.

She turned and disengaged his hand, replying, "Ask him, Jimmie; he's runnin' the place now."

Jimmie went out into the world with a heavy heart. He did not mind the fact that he had no home so much as he did that his mother was doing wrong. "I guess I can't keep der promise I made Pa when he

died; but I believe he knows that I'm doin' der best I kin."

CHAPTER V

Mrs. Cook's "Opey"

Bill Cook continued to drink day and night until it was plain to all that he would have another one of his "spells," as his wife always called an attack of delirium tremens. There was no hope for Bill when he once got started. He never stopped until he was arrested or went into the tremens. He could not borrow a five-cent piece, but could always get all the liquor he wanted. It is a fact well known to all drinking men that men will buy them fifty cents' worth of drink rather than give them five cents in money. If they wanted the money for bread for the children they could not get it; but drinks go any time.

Dave Beach had found Bill in the street, and taken him to his barn to sleep off a little of his "jag," as Dave said. Dave and Mrs. Cook never agreed as to the cause of Bill's trouble, so Dave was very careful not to get near her when Bill was coming down with one of his "spells." "He was shot in the army and has bad spells. 'Tain't drinkin' at all 'at ails Bill; he's sick," she would say. Dave found it was better to let her have her way about it; so he put Bill into a box stall, until he could send him home with Jimmie.

Every one in the neighborhood knew that Jimmie could be trusted. He was never known to tell a thing he should not, and had a way of knowing nothing when some one was looking for information.

Mrs. Cook knew that he had left home and was staying in Dave's barn at night and eating anywhere and anything he could get. When Bill failed to come home, she called Jimmie into the house as he came from up-town. "Had yer supper, Jim?" she asked.

"Yep, I'm eatin' up-town now," answered Jim.

"Better have a cup o' tea," she said as Jimmie closed the door. He had lived that day on three dry buns and a drop cookie, and tea, warm tea, sounded good to him. He pulled off his cap and jammed it into his coat pocket as he sat down at the table. "Jim, I was yer friend when yer was in trouble, now I want yer to help me. Bill's been gone all day and I'm scart fer him. Dr. Snyder told me that the next time he had a "spell" he'd die. No better man ever lived than Bill Cook, and I've been thinkin' ter-day 'at somethin's got ter be did. Last night he cried out in his sleep, jus' like he did las' time he had 'em, and at three o'clock this morning he got up an' left the house. I ain't seen nothin' of him since; the younguns think he's workin', and I don't want 'em ter know no different. Bill loves his younguns, and they think there's no one like their Pa. There never was a kinder man than Bill Cook; no siree, not a kinder man nowheres. He's been gittin' worsen an' worsen since yer Pa's funeral, an' honest, Jim, I'm scart."

"Well," said Jimmie, as he finished his third cup of tea, "I know jus' what he needs, but you'll have ter help."

"I'll do anyting yer say, Jim," said Mrs. Cook.

"Say, 'Hope ter die,' and cross yer heart," said Jimmie.

"I'll do it, yer bet."

"All right," said Jimmie. "Der first thing I want yer ter do is ter go ter der Mission wid me ter-night."

"Me? I can't go, Jim; I ain't got no clothes ter go there; 'sides, it's Bill yer want ter help an' not me," she said.

"Yer promised me," said Jimmie, "an' yer mustn't ast no questions. Yer get yer duds on an' I'll be back fer yer in five minutes." Jimmie went over to Dave's barn, told him what was on and Dave promised to get Bill into the house while they were gone.

Mrs. Cook took the children over to Hardy's to play while she made a "call." When Jimmie returned to the house for Mrs. Cook, she was all ready to go.

"Gee, where yer git der lid?" said Jimmie.

"Never you mind, sonny; that hat's some more of yer business." As Jimmie stood and looked her over, he almost wished he had not suggested the trip. Her hat was an old straw derby with two chicken feathers stuck in it. She had put an old wine-colored skirt over her blue wrapper.

"I'm ready," she said, "but yer mustn't sit up front."

"Yer needn't worry," answered Jimmie as he looked once more at her hat.

She was very nervous at first; but after she discovered that no one was looking at her she soon felt at ease. The singing seemed to carry her out of herself. She forgot her trouble and settled down into the chair to enjoy the very best hour she had had in years.

"It's better 'n a opery," she whispered to Jimmie.

No place in the world do people sing as they do in a Rescue Mission. Every one sings there, and the one who can make the most noise is considered the best singer. Each one tries to outdo his neighbor. They sing the old gospel songs with a vim and never seem to tire of them.

The sermon that followed the singing was listened to by Mrs. Cook; but the testimonies almost drove her to say things. She hardly breathed as one after another got up and told what Jesus had done for them.

"I believe my soul, that's Lousy Kate," she whispered to Jimmie when one woman arose and told how God had found her at a jail meeting.

"Sure 'nough, it's her; I knew her when she did that very thing," she said as she followed her in her testimony. "Why, that woman was so crooked she couldn't lay down in a round-house."

When Superintendent Morton gave an invitation for all who wished the prayers of the Christians to come forward, she started for the door. When she had reached it she turned and watched the people as they went forward. She watched one poor drunken man as some of the workers helped him up the aisle. Big tears were in her eyes when she turned to Jimmie. "If that man kin be saved, drunk as he is, there's hope fer Bill, 'cause Bill's no drunkard, he's sick."

"There's hope fer you, too," said Jimmie, when they had reached the sidewalk.

"Me!" she almost shouted. "I ain't no drunkard, ner I never killed anybody, and 'sides, it's Bill yer want ter help, not me."

"The Bible says yer a sinner an' yer need fixin' jus' as bad as Bill," said Jimmie. He knew he was on dangerous ground, but he was determined to push the case as far as he dared. Without giving her a chance to answer, he continued, "Jesus says we're all sinners, an' whosover kin be saved, and that means you."

"I ain't no whosorever, I'm German, and my name's Annabella Cook, and I don't want you nor none of yer friends ter fergit it, sonny."

Jimmie was stumped for a minute. He had asked Morton what to say, but he could not remember the Scripture, so he simply said, "Yer swear, and yer drink, and yer don't pray, and if that ain't sin I don't want a cent. If yer was to die ter-night, you'd want somethin' more than 'em cuss words ter take ter Jesus. Yer Freddie is in heaven and me Pa is there, and yer got too much sense ter miss seein' 'em over there, and 'sides that yer can't never help Bill till yer helped first."

Jimmie had touched a tender chord in Mrs. Cook, and he knew it. She loved her family, and Bill was the apple of her eye. She did not get angry, as Jimmie had feared, but walked along in silence, thinking of what she had heard and how Jimmie had brought it all home to her very door. At last she said, as though speaking to herself, "Yes, I do swear when I git mad, but I don't mean it ten minutes after. No, I guess I ain't ready ter die, but, oh, Jimmie, what made yer mention Freddie? It near kills me." And she began to cry. Freddie had died a few months ago of membranous croup, and his death had caused a great sorrow in the Cook family.

Jimmie slipped his hand into hers, and said, "I'm sorry; but I'm so bloomin' anxious ter see yer both Christians, 'cause yer so good ter me. I guess I'll never have no more Ma but you. Say, how'd yer like der meetin'?"

"It's jus' fine," said Mrs. Cook, glad to change the subject. "I'm goin' agin ter-morrow night."

Bill was all tucked away in bed when Mrs. Cook got home. Dave had put him to bed. The doctor had given him a powder to quiet him.

After the children were asleep Mrs. Cook sat alone thinking of the night's happenings. The market clock struck twelve before she came to herself and thought of going to bed.

"O God, I can't see it; I can't see it," she cried; "but I want ter. I can't see it; I can't see it that way; but I want ter."

"I've seen 'nough fer both of us," said Bill, as he bolted upright in bed. "There's one under my pillow now wid a thousand legs!"

CHAPTER VI

Mrs. Cook's First Prayer

Early the next morning Jimmie was at the Morton home. After a long talk and much prayer he started for Bucktown, armed with that sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. He had some more verses marked in his Testament, and after Morton had quoted them many times he felt sure that he could handle them. Mrs. Cook had confused him the night before so that he could not answer her; but he was sure of his ground after his talk with Morton.

"I wish I could read 'em myself," he said to Morton sadly. "Der yer tink I kin ever learn?"

"Yes, Jimmie, I know you can if you will study. You have five hours that you are not busy with your papers; you can use that time to learn to read. I think that Mrs. Price, a worker in the Mission, will be glad to help you. She used to teach school before her marriage. I will ask her to-day and if she consents to take you as a pupil you must study hard."

"I will, yer bet." And so Jimmie went on his way.

As he quietly pushed open the door of the Cook home, he heard Mrs. Cook talking with three of her neighbors on the back porch.

"Where do you suppose I was las' night, Mrs. Fagin?" she was saying. Jimmie listened with keen interest for her account of the Mission service. He knew that Bill would never get right until she did.

"How do you s'pose I know?" answered Mrs. Fagin. "Where was you?"

"I was to der Mission with Jimmie Moore," she said, "and it's the best time I've had since the balloon extension on the market, six years ago."

"I'd like ter know how yer can have a good time in church," said Mrs. Fagin.

"'Tain't no church, it's a Mission, and they have jus' as good singin' as dey do in Uncle Tom's Cabin, and 'sides, it's a good deal like dat play, too, 'cause yer laff jus' as hard as yer kin one minute and the next minute yer cry like Eva was a-dyin'. Yer couldn't guess in a thousand years who I saw there. I saw Lousy Kate, that you used ter live next door to, and that Hatfield that yer thought was such a dood. Yer oughter hear what he said—yer know every one speaks in der Mission meetin's. He ain't no dummy, that man ain't. He's been an awful drunkard, and when Morton found him he was that fur gone that his wife had ter leave him an' go an' live wid her Ma. He said he got saved, an' now they're happy, and he works in der wholesale house and——"

"Who saved him? Morton?" asked Mrs. Fagin in disgust.

"No, he said it was all Jesus and no Morton about it; that's what Jimmie says erbout Morton, too. I guess he don't amount to much nohow. He says he can't help no one, but can tell them of One who can. I thought I'd split when Hatfield said he was so low down he had to reach up ter touch bottom. Every one laffed like all git-out; but when his woman got up and said it was all true, and that her and her baby come near starvin', every one 'round me cried, and I cried, too. I tell yer, I'd know how ter sympathy with her; only Bill ain't no drunkard, he's sick."

"What's Kate doin' there?" asked Mrs. Fagin.

"She's saved, too. She got saved in jail. Now she's livin' straight an' goes ter meetin' every night. She looks so good, you'd hardly know her, looks ten years younger; but the biggest surprise of all is Morton. Yer know Dave Beach said that he know'd more 'an he looked, and I allowed he'd orter. But say, he's been through der mill and knows der ropes like an' old rounder. He said his mother teached him ter pray and be a good boy, but he got ter boozin' and soon went ter pieces. He got in trouble and fer years lived among thieves and drunkards and knows 'em like a book. He's seen 'em killed and go down in nearly every old way, but never knew any of 'em ter git anywhere until dey git Jesus. He couldn't git no work 'cause he wa'n't honest and couldn't stay sober, so he'd jus' clean up saloons fer his toddy, like Fred Hanks der barber is doin' now. I wish Morton could git Fred. One time he got a plant an' left fer Chicago; then he went into a Mission like his'n is now and got saved. You'd never think he ever did worsen than pull his sister's hair, to look at him now; but he knows what's what, and that's why he was after Moore and all the rest of us, I guess. He says jus' what Jimmie says, that Jesus loves us all and wants us all. There, 'tis eleven o'clock and I've got ter give Bill his medicine. Say, I'm goin' agin ter-night. Go 'long with me?"

"Fagin would go wild if he knew I'd go there; but I'd like ter see it once," said Mrs. Fagin.

For seven nights Mrs. Cook and Jimmie went to the Mission. On the seventh night she rose to her feet and was the first one to go forward to the altar. After prayer she stood up and said she would serve God the best she knew how, and wanted every one to pray for Bill, her husband.

Every one shook hands with her and she forgot that it was getting late. She visited with all the ladies, one after the other.

Jimmie had found Morton at the platform and slipped his hand into Morton's. As their eyes met, both seemed ready to weep for joy. "The ice is broken, Jimmie. And we must not give up until the whole Bucktown gang are in the Kingdom of God. Bill comes next, and you had better get Mrs. Cook home, as it is late. You may hurt your case with Bill if you get him angry."

At last Jimmie got her started, and when they reached the house Bill was nearly wild with rage. He was very nervous and needed something to quiet him.

"Where in h— have you bin?" he shrieked at the top of his voice. "I want a drink and I want it d— quick."

"No doubt, sonny, yer do," said his wife, "and you'll want it quicker 'an that 'fore yer git it. Now shut yer mouth until I'm done," she went on. "I been to der Mission ter-night and I give my heart ter God, an' no more booze comes inter my house, no more, not mine. If yer tongue was hangin' out as long as a clothes line I'd tie it in knots and throw it under der bed 'fore I'd give yer a drop. All der people at der Mission are prayin' fer yer, and Jim is goin' ter der drug store fer somfin' fer yer nerves and ter make yer sleep, and if yer able ter-morrer yer goin' ter der Mission an' git saved too. And oh, Bill! we'll git a carpet fer our front room when yer gits yer pension, and you'll git a new suit of clothes and we'll git a monument fer Freddie's grave, and oh, Bill! we'll go ter be with Jesus and Freddie some day in heaven."

She stooped down and took Bill's bloated cheeks between her hands and kissed him again and again.

"I guess dis is where I lose out," said Jimmie. "I'll go ter der drug store and by that time maybe dey'll have deir love feast finished. Gee, when old Bill gits any booze ter-night, he don't!"

Jimmie spent his last five pennies for a powder for Bill, and went on tip-toe back to Cook's house.

As he opened the door he heard Mrs. Cook praying. She was kneeling by Bill's bed, and this is the prayer Jimmie heard: "O Lord, keep Bill from wantin' booze ter-night, and if he gits gay call him down fer Jesus' sake. Amen."

CHAPTER VII

Floe

Jimmie was very happy as he gave Bill and Mrs. Cook "Good-night." "Don't yer worry erbout nothin'," he said to Mrs. Cook. "Yer got Jesus ter help yer, an' he'll take care of yer all. I'll see yer in der mornin'. So long."

He started for Dave's barn, where he "roomed." His nerves were all unstrung, he was much too excited to go to bed. He sat down upon the curb in front of the barn and went over the whole evening in his mind. The best he knew how, he prayed and thanked God for answering his prayer. As he sat with his head in his hands, he heard a piercing scream which came from the direction of the Dolly resort. There was nothing unusual about a scream in Bucktown any time of the day or night; but Jimmie jumped to his feet and started on a run to the direction from which it came.

"Dat sounded like Floe's voice," he said to himself. "I hope she ain't hurted."

Floe had been very kind to Jimmie, many times giving him something to eat, and she had given him the pair of shoes he was wearing when Morton first saw him. She always put herself out to speak to him, and when he was "stuck" with his evening papers she would persuade the other inmates of the house to help him out by buying them.

Let it be understood now that Jimmie's ideals of morality were based entirely upon the Bucktown standard. Floe was the best dressed woman in Bucktown; she lived in the best house in Bucktown; she was the handsomest woman in Bucktown; and these facts, to Jimmie's child mind, put Floe and the Dolly resort far in the lead of anything in Bucktown. He knew nothing of their business, and the question of their being wrong had never entered his head. Had any one asked Jimmie a question about the character of this black-eyed woman, his answer would have been, "She's an angel, sure."

The little girls in the neighborhood would say, "When I git big I'm goin' ter have clothes like them girls, an' go ridin' in hacks with white horses. Gee, won't I shine!" The highest ideals of womanhood to these little girls were the women of the Dolly resort. Is it any wonder that Jimmie was interested when he heard Floe scream? When he reached the house he saw her lying at the foot of the stairs; he rushed to her side as others were trying to get her upon her feet. They put her upon a couch and sent for a doctor.

"Did yer fall downstairs?" asked Jimmie.

"Oh, Jimmie, what are you doing in this awful place?" she said. "This is worse than hell itself; do go out, child; I can't stand to see your pure face in a place like this."

"If it ain't er good place fer me, it ain't fer you, Floe. Yer better 'n I am, er ever could be. Are yer hurted much?"

Just then Doctor Snyder came in, and after a brief examination said he found a broken arm and three broken ribs. Floe would not tell how she happened to fall; but several who saw it said that a girl by the name of Maud, in a fit of jealousy, had pushed her downstairs.

"Hello, kid! What are you doing here?" said Doctor Snyder to Jimmie. "You should be in bed at this time of night. How's Bill Cook getting on?"

"Bill's better," said Jimmie, "an' Mrs. Cook got converted at der Mission ter-night, and she's happy all over. When I left there she was prayin' at Bill's bed and he was cryin'. I'll bet he gits saved next."

"You better go home and go to bed, Jimmie; you're excited to-night. You'll feel better in the morning," said the doctor, with a knowing wink at the people standing around. "We must get this girl to her room now."

"Can I come ter see yer to-morrow, Floe?" asked Jimmie.

"If the doctor will let you come; but I don't like to have you come into this awful house."

"I'll be here jus' the same; I'm goin' ter ast Jesus ter help yer," he whispered to her, and slipped quietly out into the street and started for the barn. When he reached there, Dave sat in his old office chair smoking and trying to look unconcerned; but it was plain to Jimmie that he had something on his mind besides his hat.

"Where have you been so late?" he said to Jimmie. "Sit down and tell me about it."

"Mrs. Cook got saved ter-night and Bill's comin' next, I'll bet," said Jimmie in one breath. "Yer see, we's prayin' fer him at der Mission, an' he's got ter come. Say, Dave, Floe jus' got hurted, an' I went ter see her when I heard her holler, an' she said she didn't like ter see me in such a bad house. Is that nice house bad, an' what's Floe doin' dere if it is?"

"Well, the house is anything but good, Jimmie, and I wish Floe lived somewhere else. If you can go to see her I wish you would talk to her just like you did to Mrs. Cook. Tell her about, well, tell her about

yer Friend, you know."

"Who do yer mean? Morton?" asked Jimmie.

"No, I mean the Friend you say Morton works for."

"Oh, yer means Jesus," said Jimmie.

"Yes, that's who I mean; she has heard of Him before, and maybe you can do her good. The poor girl has had lots of trouble and has lost heart in life. Tell her that—that Je—er—that yer Friend loves her and will fergive her all her past and—well, you can tell it better than I can."

"I'll do it, yer bet," said Jimmie, "'cause Jesus loves every one of us, don't he, Dave?"

"Most every one, but not all of us," said Dave.

Jimmie made a dive for his Testament and turned to John 3:16; the page was so dirty and soiled from handling that it could scarcely be seen.

"Der yer see that word marked wid red ink?" asked Jimmie.

"Yes, I see it."

"Well, what is she?"

"It's 'whosoever.'"

"Well, who does that mean?"

"I guess it means just what it says; but you see, with me it is different. I was raised to do right; my father was a Methodist minister, and he taught me to pray and read the Bible when I was a child. I knew what was right, but with my eyes wide open I went into the most awful sin, and God can never forgive one who sins against the light."

"Say, read der whole verse," said Jimmie.

"I know it without reading it; I learned it at my mother's knee before I could talk plain."

"Well, git busy and say it then."

"God so loved the world——"

"Loved der what?" asked Jimmie.

"The world," said Dave.

"Go on," as Dave hesitated.

"That He gave His only begotten Son——"

"Dat's Jesus, ain't it?"

"Yes, that is who it means."

"Go on," said Jimmie.

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever——"

"Who?" asked Jimmie.

"Whosoever," said Dave.

"Don't that mean you?" asked Jimmie.

"I'm afraid not," said Dave.

"Den dis is der way ter read it," said Jimmie, "'Dat whosoever, 'cept Dave Beach, kin have everlastin' life.' Not on your fottygraff; it ain't writ dat way."

"Well, in another place it says that if you know to do right and do it not it's sin," said Dave.

"And dat makes yer a sinner, don't it?" said Jimmie.

"Yes, it does, and a bad one, too," said Dave.

Jimmie put his thumb into his mouth to wet it and turned leaf after leaf. At last he said, "Read dat."

Dave took the book and looked hard and long in silence.

"Read her," said Jimmie.

Dave read very slowly: "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

"Save what?" asked Jimmie.

"Sinners," said Dave.

"Are yer a sinner, Dave?"

"Yes, I am a bad one."

"Worsen dan dis guy? Read der rest of 'er."

"Of whom I am chief," David read.

"All right," said Jimmie, "if He kin save der chief of sinners, can't He save Dave Beach?"

Before he could answer, Jewey, Oily Ike and Fred Hood came in.

"Send the kid home," said Jewey.

"He's at home now," said Dave; "he sleeps here. You can do all the business you have with me in a minute er two. I'm tired of this crooked business; and for my part, I'm going to cut it out. Whatever your haul is to-night you can keep it or let Ike there handle it; I'm done.

"No, don't get leery; I won't turn you. But I don't want no more of it here."

"You'll be havin' Sunday school here every day if that kid hangs around much longer," said Jewey.

"Well, he'll be here just as long as he wants to," said Dave. "It's two o'clock, Jimmie; you had better turn in and I'll call you at three-thirty. Good-night."

Jimmie lay down upon a horse blanket without taking off his shoes or clothes and was soon fast asleep. His day had been a long one and he was very tired, but happy.

After Dave's callers had gone, he stood looking down into Jimmie's tired face. "Poor little Jimmie," he said, "if I knew your paper route, I'd carry it myself rather than wake you up this morning. There's no use talking, that kid don't get enough to eat. I saw him give his little sister his supper money last night, and I know he went to sleep hungry; I never saw his beat. He preaches to every one in his sweet child way and he makes me feel as though I was the biggest devil on earth. By thunder, it breaks me all up." Dave was talking to himself, or thinking out loud.

He was very much moved by Jimmie's life and words; he pulled his old office chair beside Jimmie's pallet and began to weep. Big, strong Dave had broken down and was once more a boy. He was ashamed of his tears and tried to brace up and stop them; but when he would look at Jimmie's little pinched face on the old horse blanket, the tears would start afresh and creep through his dirty fingers and fall to the floor in spite of all he could do. Dave Beach was a strong, big fellow; he had drunk and fought his way through the world and for many years had suppressed his emotional nature. Tears to him were a sign of weakness and he would rather have lost his barn and horses by fire than that any one should see him cry. He jumped to his feet and started to pace up and down the office. "D— fool that I am! I'm bawling worse than a yearling heifer. It's time to call Jimmie and he must not see me this way." He went to the hydrant out in the barn and washed and pulled himself together as best he could, and then went back to call Jimmie.

"It's time to get up, Jimmie," he said as he kicked the bottom of the boy's foot. Jimmie rose and rubbed his eyes, but was so tired and sleepy he fell back again upon the blankets.

"Come, my boy, I want you to go to the lunch counter with me and have a cup of coffee." He reached down and picked the boy up bodily and held him in his great, strong arms a moment, but had to drop him for safety; he would be weeping again if he did not get busy at something else.

"Go out and wash your face, Jim, and you'll feel better."

The cold water did its work.

"Guess I's hard to wake up, wasn't I, Dave?" said Jimmie, as he wiped his face on the lining of his cap—a trick of the newsboys.

"You're all right, Jimmie; but you need more sleep. After you get your papers carried, come back and go up into the haymow and sleep all morning."

"I can't do 'er, Dave. I got ter see Bill and call on Floe and take me first lesson from Mrs. Price and go ter Morton's house, all dis mornin'."

"Well, come, we'll go over and get something to eat," said Dave.

"I don't feel very hungry," said Jimmie, "and I guess I won't go over jus' now. I'll git somfin later."

Dave knew what the trouble was and took Jimmie by the hand and started for the all-night lunch counter.

"You're going to eat with me this time, Jimmie; I have enough money for both of us. No, you'll never pay me a cent of it back. Just a little treat, you know."

Jimmie never wanted something for nothing, but he grew so hungry as he thought of the good things at the counter that he could not say No. Dave ordered their meal, and when it came upon the table Jimmie's big gray eyes stuck out. "Is dis all fer us, Dave? Der meat, an' eggs, an' taters, too, an' coffee 'sides! Gee! it must of cost a quarter, didn't it, Dave?" As he grabbed his knife and fork to start his meal, he looked up at Dave with such love in his eyes that Dave lost his appetite for food and wanted to finish the "bawl" he had started in the barn.

"Go on and eat, Jimmie. You'll be late for your papers," he said.

"I mus' pray 'fore I eat, Dave," he said as he jammed his cap into his coat pocket. "Now, Jesus, I'm glad yer give us all this here good stuff ter eat. It's more'n we got comin'; but yer always givin' us more'n we could ast er tink. Dave's a good man fer payin' fer it, and he's feedin' you when he's feedin' me, 'cause I'm your'n. Make Dave gooder and gooder fer Jesus' sake. Amen."

Dave jumped to his feet and started for the door. "You eat, Jimmie; I'll be back in a minute." He was overcome and the "bawl" had got the best of him. He stood outside the door in the dark and cried as if his heart would break.

"D—— fool that I am! I wish some one would come along and call me names so I could lick him within an inch of his life. I'd feel better anyhow."

After several unsuccessful attempts to control himself, he went to the door and told Jimmie to eat both meals, as he had to go.

"I'll pay you, Mose, when I come over." Before Jimmie could answer he was gone.

He went to Fagin's, got several drinks, tried his best to pick a fight with Mike, then went home and went to bed.

Jimmie ate all there was in sight, and with a full stomach became very cheerful and talked to Mose, the colored waiter.

"Gee, I guess me belly t'ought me t'roat was cut. I bet if it could talk it would ast me what I was doin' up dere."

CHAPTER VIII

Bill's Pension

After Mr. and Mrs. Morton had listened to Jimmie's story of Mrs. Cook's prayer, Floe's "gittin' hurted" and Dave's talk, he went into detail as he described the wonderful breakfast he had eaten. "Gee, I was scart I'd bust when I straightened up. I don't feel like I wanted nothin' for a week."

"Tell me more about Floe," said Mrs. Morton, much interested.

"Do you think she would come to live with us while she is sick?"

I would love to care for her and be her friend if she would let me."

"Do yer mean she can board here?" asked Jimmie in surprise.

"No, I want her to come and live with us; I want her for my friend and companion. She can be our Floe and make this her home."

"Will her name be Floe Morton then?" asked Jimmie.

"Yes, you may call her that if you like, but I do want her to come and live with us. When you go to see her this morning, ask her if she will allow me to see her. If she will, you come right back for me and we will go down together."

After prayer Jimmie started for Bucktown, very happy, and confident that the day would be a day of victory for Jesus. His faith was wonderful. His prayers were so simple and childlike; he prayed to God and asked Him for things in the same language and tone of voice he used when he talked to any one else. He had not acquired the professional whine as yet, and for that reason he received answers to his prayers, because he prayed to God and did not whine to the people who might be around to hear him. Many godly people have been shocked in the Mission because some redeemed drunkard would use slang in his fervent prayer to the Almighty. He simply prayed in his own language. The language of the slums is just as much a language as German or French; it must be learned before it can be understood. The idea that these men must not pray until they have learned that professional, unnatural, painful whine, is as absurd as confining prayer to Latin. When a man or woman is occupied by the wording of a prayer and not with the prayer and with their God, it may be beautiful, but it never gets higher than the bald spot on their head.

Jimmie prayed as he ran along the railroad tracks, and asked God to help him say the right thing at the right time.

"Hello, Bill, yer up, are yer? Yer must be feelin' better."

"Yes, he's up and he ain't had a drink ter-day nor las' night, have yer, Bill?" said Mrs. Cook proudly. "And what's more, yer ain't goin' ter have none, are yer, Bill?"

Bill was eating canned tomatoes from a can with a spoon. Tomatoes taste good to a man in Bill's condition and they will stay down when nothing else will. "He's got ter git out ter-day an' sign his pension papers, 'cause he won't git his money on the fifth if he don't," said Mrs. Cook. "I wish you'd go with him, Jim," she whispered. "He ain't very strong yet."

"I'll do it, yer bet," said Jimmie. "What time do yer want ter go, Bill?"

"About ten o'clock I'll be ready." Bill spoke with great difficulty; he was very weak and nervous.

"Dat'll gi' me time ter go and see Floe," said Jimmie. "I'll be back at jus' ten o'clock. Yer make him wait fer me, won't yer, Mrs. Cook?"

"Yep, I'll keep him if I can."

The colored cook let Jimmie into the Dolly resort through the kitchen, and he was shown to Floe's room by the nurse, who had been called in by Doctor Snyder the night before.

"Oh, Jimmie child, I'm so glad to see you. I've been thinking of what you said about asking Jesus to help me. He can't help me now; it's too late. Come here, Jimmie dear, I want to ask you to do something for me." Jimmie went to her bedside.

"Will you do what I want you to do?"

"I'll do der best I kin ter help yer," said Jimmie proudly. "Yer was good ter me and I want ter be good ter you. I'll never forgit the dollar yer sent ter Ma when Pa was sick, and the shoes yer——"

"Oh, never mind any of that, Jim; I want to ask you to do me this favor before you get started to talk and say something I don't want to hear," said Floe.

"For years the whole aim of my life has been to forget, forget, forget the past. I had succeeded to some extent and begun to believe that I was away from even the thought or desire for anything better than this kind of life. What you said last night has brought it all back to me and I have been living in the past all night, only to awake this morning to this awful reality. Now, Jimmie child, I don't want to hurt

you, but I want you to promise me that you will never mention anything of that kind to me again. It can never do me any good and it only makes me miserable."

"Jesus never makes yer miserable, Floe. He makes yer glad yer livin'," said Jimmie, and before she could answer he went on in his enthusiastic way: "Say, Floe, you know Mrs. Morton at the Mission? Well, she's the best that ever happened. Talk 'bout der limit; what der yer tinks she wants now? I went up ter der house this mornin' and tol' 'em about yer gittin' hurted, den I tried ter tell 'em 'bout Dave Beach, but Mrs. Morton, she says, 'Tell me more about Floe.' 'Do yer know Floe?' I ast. 'No, I do not, Jimmie, but I want to know her.' And dis is what she said: She wants yer to come up ter her house while yer hurted and live with her. She says it ain't so bloomin' noisy, er somfin like dat. You'll git well quicker and she says she wants ter take care of yer, and yer can live dere all der time if yer wants ter, and be Floe Morton. Gee, dey got a swell house with carpets, an' pictures an' things jus' like yer got here, and grass and trees outside and a hummock ter swing in, an' I'll come ter see yer every day. Mrs. Morton tol' me ter come jus' any ol' time I wanted ter. Won't that be fine, me an' you both there?"

Floe tried to speak, but Jimmie talked so fast she couldn't get a word in edgewise.

"Dis here lady with a white doo-bob on her top-knot says I can't stay only fer a minute, so I wants ter tell yer what we're doin'. Me an' Mrs. Morton is comin' up ter see yer, and she's goin' ter tell yer what she wants, and if Doctor Snyder and dis lady says yer can be took, Mrs. Morton is goin' ter get a hearse wagon an' take yer home, an' I'm goin' along. I never rid in one of 'em tings yet. I must go now, but I'm comin' back with Mrs. Morton. So long."

"Wait a minute, Jimmie," cried Floe. "Don't bring that woman in here, Jimmie, do you hear?" But he was gone, or at least he did not give her a chance to talk back.

Jimmie went straight to the Cook home. Mrs. Cook said Bill had just left, but had promised not to take a drink. Jimmie hurried out of the house, and for some reason, unknown even to himself, started for Fagin's. He slipped in unnoticed and there stood Bill on one side of the bar and Fagin on the other. Bill had just got a drink to his mouth with great difficulty after Fagin had poured it out. When he set the glass down upon the bar, Fagin filled it up again and Bill "downed" it. As Fagin filled it for the third time, Jimmie rushed up with his canvas bag, in which he carried papers. Swinging it around his head with all his strength, he hit the glass and bottle and sent them across the room, breaking both on the floor. Bill thought it was his wife. As he ducked his head, he said, "I didn't drink no booze, that was for Fagin."

"Don't lie, Bill. I saw yer git two, but I don't blame yer fer it. Fagin knows how near yer come ter cashin' in and how weak yer are, and wants ter git yer goin' agin 'cause yer pension's 'bout due; he knows he'll git it if yer drunk."

Fagin was white with rage and started for Jimmie, but Jimmie straightened up and made himself as large as he could, and, with his big gray eyes fastened upon Fagin, said, "I'm not scart of yer bluff; yer coward 'nough ter hit me 'cause I'm little, but yer goin' ter listen while I tell yer somfin. Yer killed me Pa, an' yer know it. After yer got all his dough, yer put him out and he was left in Rice's wagon box ter freeze, while yer slept in yer good bed. When it come ter buryin' him yer didn't give nothin' but a lot of poor booze ter git der people drunk, and der funeral broke up in a free-for-all; now yer after Bill 'cause yer tinks yer can git his pension. His woman's got her second washin' out so fur dis mornin' an' when I ast her how she did it she said she washed all night long, 'cause rent was up and Bill was sick. Then she said she'd wash her finger nails off if she could help Bill git saved. She loves Bill and her kids jus' as much as your woman loves yer and yer kids, and I don't see what yer want ter kill him off fer. Dey never done nothin' ter you. Ah, go on! he wouldn't either git it nowhere else if he didn't git it here." A big tear stole down Jimmie's face as he stood looking first at Fagin and then at poor Bill.

"Der Bible say that God loves everybody, and I believe it 'cause it says so, but I can't see no show fer a dog like you, Fagin. You're worser than any guy I ever see'd. You go ter church every Sunday mornin', and Sunday afternoon and the rest of the week yer booze and steal and raise h——. Yer got ter——"

"Oh, shut up, you little fool; some one told you to say that; no kid your age got off such a temperance talk without some one helping him. That fresh guy from the Mission put you up to rubbing it into me; I'll fix him, and you, too, if I ever hear any more of it." Fagin was beaten by the boy and he felt the defeat keenly.

"I suppose you'll hit him in der back of der head wid a stone, like yer did der poor dago last spring. If yer lookin' fer a good square game I tink Morton could fix yer so you'd need one of yer fottygraffs on yer shirt front ter tell yer wife who was comin' home ter dinner. Come on, Bill, let's git out of here and go sign yer papers. Dis is no place fer gentlemen like me and you."

Jimmie took Bill by the hand and started for the door. Bill had not spoken during the "temperance lecture," and when Jimmie took him by the hand he allowed himself to be led away and seemed glad to have a chance to get out of the place. He did not want to drink, and yet he could not help it.

"So long, Fagin," said Jimmie when he had reached the door with Bill. "When yer confess next Sunday mornin' be sure ter tell 'em 'bout dis hold-up, and tell 'em dat all der money yer gits is money yer steals from der women and kids of Bucktown. An' say, Fagin," Jimmie yelled from the sidewalk, "tell 'em erbout Bill's pension yer didn't git. So long."

Jimmie got Bill back home after the papers were signed and Mrs. Cook put him to bed. Neither spoke of the two drinks to her and she was very happy as she thought of the wonderful things ahead of her. "Fer thirty years Bill's been havin' spells," she said to herself. "Now I believe it's goin' ter change. He can't help gittin' saved if he hears them people at der Mission tell how Jesus kin save 'em."

CHAPTER IX

"Auntie's Favorite Horse"

Dave Beach had traded for an old pacing mare. She was very sore forward, at least sixteen years old, but had a world of speed for a short distance. In the harness she was quiet and kind, but in the barn she would drive nearly every one from her. To feed her was a trick few men cared to learn. She would kick and bite, and any one who was the least bit timid could do nothing with her. Dave had traded for her in another city. She was not known to horsemen around here. He expected to make some money with her, so he kept her out of sight as much as possible until he got her "fixed up a bit," as he put it.

He had her teeth filed until she had a six-year-old mouth. Her shoes were pulled off to let her feet spread and grow. The clippers had removed her long hair, and Dave had fed her to bring the best results for looks and speed. He knew nothing of her breeding, but that was "easy" for a man as horsy as Dave. When she was ready for the public to see she looked as racy as even Dave had hoped for.

The morning paper contained the following advertisement:

"For Sale.—The bay pacing mare Becky Wilkes, by Forward, by George Wilkes, by Hamiltonian 10, by Abdallah 1. Dam: Mamie B, by Brown Hal, by Tom Hal, Jr., by Kitrell's Tom Hal, by old Kentucky Tom Hal. This mare is six years old, kind and gentle, perfectly sound, and can show a 10 clip to wagon. With proper work she would be a world beater. Reason for selling—death in the family. Call mornings at Beach's Livery, Brady St."

After Dave's experience with Jimmie he went to bed and slept until ten o'clock. He was standing in the big double door of the barn, thinking what a fool he had made of himself, when a young fellow drove up to the curb and stopped.

"Is this Beach's Livery?"

"Yes, sir, this is the place," said Dave.

"I see by the paper that you have a pacer for sale." The speaker was a fine-looking young man, with a good face and an easy manner. He was dressed in the pink of fashion, and his general make-up would denote wealth. Dave was not sure of the kind of man he had to deal with. He looked him over carefully, but somehow he was unable to tell whether he was "horse wise" or not. "He'll soon show his hand," said Dave to himself. "He's either 'dead wise' or 'dead easy.'"

"Yes, sir, I have a very fine bay mare and she's for sale to the right party," said Dave. "No one can get that mare to abuse, as she is very dear to our family. Do you want a horse for yourself, sir?"

"Yes, I want one that can go faster than these," pointing to his own team.

"I have the one," said Dave.

"Can I see it?" asked the stranger.

"Sure you can; I'll hitch her up. (Did you hear him say 'it'? Mamma, he's easy!) Oh, Hank!" he shouted. "Put the harness on Becky. (I knew that he'd soon show his hand," said Dave to himself. "He

don't know no more about a horse than a jack-rabbit knows about ping-pong, or he'd never say 'it.' Just watch me hand it to him.) Ginger up a bit, Hank, this man is in a hurry." Of course Hank, the barn man, knew what that meant, and when Becky came out she was champing the bit and pawing like a race horse. Dave was proud of the way she was acting.

"She's perfectly safe and kind, but full of life. Not a mean thing in her make-up, and if you can find an 'out' about her I'll give her to you."

As he was hitching her to his light wagon he kept up his horse talk, and no one could beat him talking horse if he thought the man had money.

"You see this mare is out of Colonel Thompson's celebrated string. The Colonel's wife was my aunt, and when this mare was a colt auntie fell in love with her and would not allow her to be raced down through the circuit. When Johnny Seely broke Joe Patchen he used Becky to work him out and she would go away from him like he was tied to a post. Yes, siree, man, this is the greatest mare on earth and she never had but one chance to show what she could do, and I'll stop and tell you about that right now. Just once we got her away from the home stables and I'll never forget that day. There had been much good-natured bartering among the owners and drivers down through the grand circuit during the season and much money had changed hands among them that did not reach the 'bookies.' When we got to Lexington, Kentucky (our old home), at the close of the season, the owners got together and put up five hundred dollars each for a special race. Mile dash, free-for-all, either gait, association rules to govern. Harry Loper to start them and the first horse under the wire to take the jack-pot. The Lexington association added five thousand dollars.

"The day of the race was ideal, clear and warm and no wind blowing to speak of. Oh, my! I'll never forget the excitement of that day till I die. There was Splan with Newcastle, Geers with Robert J., McHenry with John R. Gentry, Curry with Joe Patchen, Curtis with Walter E., Wade with Dr. M., Kelly with his California wonder. You see every one had to start some horse, even if he was outclassed. Old Dad Hamlin said to the Colonel, 'What are you going to start, Colonel?' 'I don't know; I'll find something,' he said."

The young man did not understand a word that Dave said, but looked at him in wonder.

"After a talk with Seely," Dave went on, "it was decided that they would slip this mare over to the track. Yes, sir, this very mare here, and Johnnie was to drive her in the special race. In the betting she was never mentioned until the Colonel went up and asked for a price on her. 'Oh, about fifty to one,' said Al Swarengen. 'Do you want a dollar's worth of her?' 'Give me a hundred dollars' worth,' said the Colonel. He bet a hundred dollars with every bookie in the bunch at fifty to one. When they scored for the word, Johnnie was in fifth position. They got away the third time down. Every horse was on their stride. Mack had the pole, Curry lay alongside, and Geers, with Robert J. going strong, moved in from the outside just after they left the wire. A blanket would cover the three horses at the quarter pole. Johnnie was trailing close up with Becky, but the trotters Newcastle and Walter E. with Dr. M. were outclassed. The pacers went the first quarter in 30 3/4 seconds, but slowed some in the back stretch. At the half Gentry made a skip, but recovered quick and still held the pole in the upper turn. No one in the grand stand seemed to notice the little bay with her nose at the wheel of Gentry's sulky. The Colonel knew she was there, and he knew also that if Johnnie could get her though the bunch at the head of the stretch there'd be a horse race in Kentucky that day that would make the Doble-Marvin days look like deuces in the Mississippi steamboat jack-pot. As the horses entered the stretch Geers spoke to his knee-sprung bay and he responded as only Robert J. could. Patchen, the big, honest black, was pacing the race of his life. McHenry can team 'em in the stretch like few men, and Gentry was on his tiptoes but holding his place. Johnnie could see no opening to get through as they entered the stretch, so he made a long swing clear to the outside with Becky and then pulled her together for the finish. A hundred yards from the wire it was anybody's race. Mack was reefing Gentry; Geers was talking to Robert J. in his own way; Patchen kept his feet, although Curry was standing up yelling at the top of his voice. The people in the grand stand hardly breathed as Seely came up strong on the outside with Becky. 'Who is that?' they cried. 'See that bay horse come up on the outside. What horse is it? Who's driving her? Come on, boys!' they cried. When within fifty yards of the wire Johnnie shifted both lines into his left hand and cut Becky with the whip the full length of her body. She shot forward with a mighty lunge and Johnnie rained blow after blow upon her. Just before they reached the wire Robert J. and Becky were neck and neck, with Gentry and Patchen at their throat-latch. Drivers and horses were straining every nerve. The great crowd in the stand were holding their breath. The judges and timers forgot their duty. Never will the excitement of that moment be forgotten. Just in reach of the wire Johnnie let go of Becky's head and she shot her nose under the wire about two inches ahead of Robert J. For a moment all was still, then that crowd of Kentuckians threw their hats in the air and yelled themselves hoarse. As the drivers came back to dismount, Johnnie was lifted high in the air and was literally carried into the weighing-room, while Becky was led to the stables to be cooled off. The niggers

rushed to the Thompson mansion on the river and told Mrs. Thompson about Becky's victory. When the Colonel drove back home, with Johnnie leading Becky, Mrs. Thompson came at once to the stables and said to Johnnie, 'Uncover that mare.' 'She is very warm, ma'am,' said Johnnie. 'You can see her in the morning all right.' 'I want to see her now,' she said, and she did. When she was those whip marks she was very angry and said, 'That mare will never race again while I live, nor after, if I can help it.'

"When auntie died she gave the best she had to her favorite nephew, with the understanding, of course, that I would never enter this mare in a race, and I meant to keep her for my own use, but every time I see her it reminds me of my poor, dead aunt, and I am determined to let some good man have her, but he must use her right. It would kill me to think that auntie's favorite horse was abused."

Hank got a coughing spell and started on a run for the back end of the barn. He fell into a box stall and rolled and laughed until it seemed he would never get his breath.

"Oh, mamma!" he said, "if that dood gits that old blister he'll wish she was in heaven with Dave's auntie about the first time he goes to feed her." He doubled up again and rolled in the straw and laughed until he cried. "I like a liar, but Dave suits me too well," he cried. He peeked out of the stall just as Dave and his victim started out of the door. "Becky sure feels her ginger this morning," he said, and then fell back in the stall and rolled and laughed some more.

Dave drove down over the pavement slowly, talking "horse" as he went. When he got down on the river bank, where there was about eighty rods of good dirt road, he "cut her loose." She was used to a "brush" and liked the dirt, and the way she threw dust into that "dood's" eyes pleased Dave. "Did you ever see anything like it?" said Dave as he pulled her up. "And she only got started on that short road. She goes a mile better than a quarter." Dave turned her around and handed the lines to the young man and said, "You drive her down this time."

He fell in love with her on the way to the barn and said to Dave, "How much do you want for her?"

"That's the trouble," said Dave, almost ready to cry. "When it comes to parting with her it almost breaks my heart; but I can't keep her around the barn, as she constantly reminds me of dear auntie. I hardly know what to say. You'll be kind to her, won't you?"

"Oh, yes, I'll be kind to her for your aunt's sake," the young man replied kindly.

As they got back to the barn Dave looked at the slick, fat team that belonged to the young man and said, "Where did you get that pair of farm horses? They'll do for plowing, but you want something that will beat anything in town, and Becky can do it."

After much talk about breeding and speed, Dave finally made him an offer to trade Becky for the team of five-year-olds and one hundred dollars. The man counted out the money without saying a word and Dave nearly fell dead, as he said afterward. "I could just as well got five hundred. What a chump I was!"

As the young man's coachman led the mare away that afternoon after delivering the five-year-olds, Dave called to him and said, "Say, watch her a little in the stable. She's cross, but if you ain't afraid of her you can handle her easy. Don't let her bluff you."

"Thrust me for that, laddy. Oi've seen the loikes of this before," pointing with his thumb to the mare. "Oi sure feel sorry fer pable and harses that are in their second choildhood. Shure, if yer aunt was old enough to remember when this mare was a colt she was old enough to die."

Dave smiled, but made no reply. Generally after a good trade Dave took every one out for a drink and felt very happy. The boys stood around and waited, but Dave failed to say anything. At last Hank ventured to say, "Are yer any good, Dave? We're spittin' cotton."

"You go treat the boys, Hank; I don't want a drink now," said Dave, throwing him a dollar.

For the first time in his life he felt as if he had robbed some one. Everything is fair in a horse trade, and he figured that the fellow could afford to get beat once. "It will teach him a lesson," he said.

"I think he is too game to come back and holler, and I'm not afraid of that; but it sort of looks like taking advantage of his ignorance."

Jimmie and his Friend kept coming up before him until Dave almost wished the old mare was back in the barn.

"I'd give this hundred dollars if I didn't feel so much like an old fool woman. I don't know what's ailing me. I've traded my dead aunt's favorite horse at least fifty times and it never hurt me before like it does now. I guess I need a drink. I'm losing my nerve."

CHAPTER X

Jimmie's Education

"Don't it beat the Dutch, Fagin, the way things is goin' in Bucktown?" said Mike, the bartender, to Fagin one afternoon. "The gang all seem ter be on the bum. When I went home fer dinner this noon, my old lady said she was goin' ter the Mission with Mrs. Cook and Bill ter-night. Ever since that funeral of Moore's, she's been sendin' the kids to the Mission Sunday school and not one of 'em will come inside of this place now. I've been thinkin' I'd put a stop to the whole business and not let her nor the kids go near that place, but I guess I'll keep my hands off until they git to interferin' with my business; then I'll stop 'em hard."

"Has Bill Cook been down to the Mission?" asked Fagin.

"Yes, and I guess they've got him, too. His woman says he's converted, er whatever they calls it, and he told me this mornin' that he wasn't drinkin'. I ast him to have one, but he said he'd foller the water wagon the rest of his life. I give him the laugh, but he wouldn't stand fer it."

"This is pension day, isn't it?" asked Fagin.

"I think so," said Mike.

"Well, if Bill stays sober after he gets his money, then I'll think there's somethin' ter this Mission business," said Fagin.

"That kid of Moore's is makin' most of this trouble and Jewey says that Dave Beach is stuck on him. Dave always had good sense, but he don't show it now. He paid for the ambulance that Mrs. Morton used to take Floe to her house with, and that must 'a' cost three dollars anyhow."

"Does he come here much now, Mike?"

"Not much, and when he does come he acts sore all the time. The other mornin' about four o'clock he came in here and got a couple of drinks and he was so mad he was cryin'. When I ast him what was eatin' him he wanted to lick me. I tell you, things are changin' in Bucktown, Fagin, and I don't like it a little bit."

The women of Bucktown were talking the same way, and little groups of them could be seen here and there in earnest conversation about Mrs. Cook, Bill Cook, Floe, Jimmie, etc.

"I'll bet Bill'll be drunk when he gits his money," said Mrs. Kinney. "You git her mad and she'll swear like she always did. Where der yer suppose she got that hat she's wearin'? When I ast her she said the Lord give it to 'er, and she says she's goin' ter have a carpet and curtains. I wish Bill would git drunk and just teach her a good lesson. She's gittin' too smart. She'll quit speakin' to us next thing we know, and that Floe that Mrs. Morton took home with her, I'll bet she'll be a bad girl agin. If I don't miss my guess, they'll be sorry they ever saw Bucktown."

Even the children would stand and look at Bill when he passed by on the street. Morton had gone with him to his old employer and told him how he was saved, and he gave Bill back his old place in the shop. He worked ten hours each day and went to the Mission every night.

Jimmie was getting on well with is studies under Mrs. Price. She gave him an hour each morning and he worked hard to get his lessons. On Saturday morning he rushed into Morton's office very much excited. "What's the matter, Jimmie?" said Morton.

"Matter? Matter 'nough, I guess. What yer been steerin' me up against? I was jus' gittin' my lesson up at Price's and her man comes home. He's a travelin' man and gits home once a month. He stood lookin' at me and, pointin' his finger at me, says, says he, 'What's dis?' His woman says, says she, 'Dat's Jimmie Moore and I'm teachin' him ter read and write. He's one of der Sunday school boys at der Mission.' 'I don't want no such cattle in my house,' he said ter his woman. 'He's covered wid vermum (er somfin

like dat) and'll steal yer blind when yer ain't lookin',' and said he wa'n't runnin' no mission, and 'f I didn't git he'd sling me out der winder."

"Well, what did you do, Jimmie?" asked Morton.

"Do? I ducks out, and ducks out fast is what I do. Did yer ever see him? He's one of them tall, skinny guys and he's got er high shiny hat dat makes him taller and skinnier. He'd go fer a lead pencil at der masquerade in Bucktown, if he had a rubber on his head. Den his overcoat is so big dat he's got a belly-band buttoned on behind it ter make it littler. Gee, he looked like er rat-tail in er quart cup. I wouldn't care so much, but I left my book dere, and I'm scart ter go after it."

"Did you say anything to him, Jimmie?" asked Morton.

"Not on yer life, I didn't have time; he came near beatin' me to der door as it was."

"Well, never mind, Jimmie. It may be all right. I will get your book for you and you will learn to read and write yet," said Morton kindly. "Romans 8:28 says that 'all things work together for good to them that love God.'"

While Jimmie's experience with Price was hard for one so sensitive, before the day ended he was very glad it had happened as it did.

As Mr. and Mrs. Price started for down-town that evening to do some shopping, Mrs. Price took Jimmie's book with her. When they reached Brady Street, where the Mission is located, she turned suddenly to Mr. Price and said, "I have that boy's book with me and I want to take it to him at the Mission. Please walk down with me; it is rather rough on Saturday night and I am timid alone." For what followed, hear Mr. Price's own words as he stood up to speak in the Mission at the end of the service.

"If any one had told me this morning that I would be in a place like this to-night, I would have considered that person insane. It was all a mistake on my part, but I thank God for the mistake. For years I have been a traveling man. To hold my trade and be a good fellow I have always treated my customers right. In this way I got into the habit of drinking. Never got drunk very often at first, but the habit kept growing until it has been the other way—never got sober very often. Ten days ago, in another city, fifteen of us boys met at the supper table in the hotel and one of them bet the drinks for the crowd with another one. I do not know what the bet was about, but after supper we all adjourned to the barroom to drink with the loser. Before we stopped we had all treated and every one was ready for anything. To make a long story short, we have all been drunk for ten days. I reached home this morning without money; I left my hotel bill unpaid. My firm does not know where I am. When I went into the house my wife had company, and I was mad in a minute. I tried to kick a boy out of doors that she was teaching to read. I have not spoken a pleasant word all day. To-night my wife asked me to come to this place with her, as she had a book she wanted to deliver to that boy. He was nowhere to be seen, so I sat down with her in the back part of the building to wait for him. Two large women came in and we moved in against the wall to make room for them. I became very nervous and wanted to get out, but I couldn't get past those women. I was angry enough at my wife to choke her, but she sat there and sung those old songs and never once looked at me. When my eye caught sight of the motto there, 'How long since you wrote Mother?' I almost fell from my chair. Listen, fellows; I had as good a mother as God ever gave a boy. I had promised her many times that I would not take another drink, but never could keep my word. One day when I was in a barroom, I received a telegram from my wife which read, 'Come at once. Mother is dead.' When I reached home they told me that the last conscious words were a prayer for her boy. I had promised her to meet her in Heaven, but I've gone lower and lower since her death. I thank God for that boy; I thank God for those words on the wall and for Mr. Morton's invitation to come to Mother's God. Since I came to this altar, Jesus has saved me and I mean to live for Him and meet Mother over there."

As he sat down there was scarcely a dry eye in the house. Jimmie went up to him and put his hand on his arm and said, "I was sore at yer ter-day, but I love yer now, Mr. Price." Price took the boy in his arms and hugged him. "I love you, my boy, and will always be your friend. You will always find my home open to you."

CHAPTER XI

The first day that was warm enough for people to stand outside and listen, Mr. Morton had his big, white stallions hitched to the gospel wagon, which was also white. The team had wintered well and weighed 3400 pounds. As they stood champing their bits outside of the Mission, Jimmie watched them for a few minutes and then, turning to Morton, said, "Please, kin I go erlong, Mr. Morton?"

"Where shall we go, Jimmie? We want to have about three meetings this afternoon if the weather stays warm, as it is now."

"Have all t'ree of 'em in Bucktown," said Jimmie. "I bet I kin git Dave Beach ter come over ter the corner ter see dem dere horses, and I'll bet Fagin and Mike'll come over ter hear Bill Cook make his speel, and say, come here er minute." Jimmie took Morton off to one side, away from every one, and whispered into his ear: "If you'll git Floe ter go down there an' sing dat dere song erbout 'Tellin' yer Ma I'll be dere' [Tell Mother I'll be There], it'll git der whole bunch out to der meetin'."

"Floe is not very strong, Jimmie, and I hardly think she would care to sing in the open air."

"If she'll do et, will yer let her?"

"Oh, yes, if she cares to go I will be glad to take her with us on the wagon. You must not tell her I wanted you to ask her, Jimmie," said Mr. Morton as the boy started on a run to ask Floe to sing.

"She'll be dere by der time der wagon is," said Jimmie, all out of breath, "an' I'm goin' down now ter tell der gang you're comin'."

Before the second song had been sung at least two hundred people stood before the gospel wagon at the corner of the Market. All ages, sizes, colors, kinds, some drunk, some under the influence of morphine and opium, and some Greeks and Russians who could not understand one word of the English language. On the edge of the crowd were three or four girls from the Dolly resort, and as many more from other houses of this same type near by. Oily Ike, Fred Hood and Jewey were there; but Fagin, Mike, Dave Beach and Jimmie were nowhere to be seen. When the male quartet arose to sing, every one became very quiet and listened attentively to the singing.

Morton read the first Psalm and then told the crowd just why they were there. "We are here to tell you about the Lord Jesus Christ and His power to save; because we know that every one of you needs Him," said Morton.

This class of people can never be "fooled," and one endeavoring to help them in a spiritual way must be very frank and honest, and never, never use "nice" words or sayings to catch them. They are very suspicious of everybody and when any one attempts to win them to his way of thinking he must do it in a straightforward, honest manner. Do not call them "dear friends" or "dear brothers and sisters"; do not tell them that they are all good people, as they at once begin to look for a collection box or expect you to have something to sell. They say, "He's either a fool or thinks I'm one."

"The City Rescue Mission stands for the old Gospel of Christ, to save from sin," Morton continued. "And on this wagon to-day are those who were once far in sin, but who are now happy in Him. Every one here knows Mr. Cook. He is your neighbor and I believe your friend. You all knew him in his old life and most of you know how God has kept him these past weeks. I know that you will all want to hear from him, and after he speaks to you I shall ask a lady to sing. She will sing, by request, 'Tell Mother I'll be There.' I take great pleasure in introducing to you Mr. William Cook."

"What's the matter with Bill?" yelled a voice.

"He's all right!" came from nearly every throat as Bill stood up to speak.

Jimmie stepped from the side entrance of Fagin's saloon and was quickly followed by Mike, Fagin, Dave Beach and Gene Dibble. Bill started to speak just as they lined up in front of him, and he became so nervous he could scarcely stand up, much less say anything. Fagin was quick to notice his embarrassment and laughed a rough Ha! Ha!

"Cut that out, Fagin!" said Dave, stepping up to him.

The look in Dave's eyes told Fagin that he meant all he said.

"Go on, Bill, you're a winner," he said. "We want to hear you speak."

"Well, fellows, yer know that this is a new one on me. I've never been up against this gospel wagon game before in my life. My trainin' has been along other lines. I can't make no speech, but I can tell yer this, that fer six weeks I ain't wanted no booze and I've been workin' most of the time and got money in my pocket to buy booze if I wanted it. See?"

"Good boy, Bill," yelled Dave. "You're getting your second wind; all you need is a little more weight forward and jogged every morning in hopples for about ten days and you've got 'em all skinned in your class."

"Go on, Bill," said Jimmie, "tell 'em what yer told 'em in der Mission last night."

"It's this way," said Bill, great drops of perspiration standing on his forehead. "It's this way. In the army I learned to drink. After I came home I took up my old trade and have always worked when I could keep sober. Since I have lived in this part of town I've been drunk more than I have been at work. Every time it happened, I'd swear that it would never happen again, but I'd go and git it before I'd git my breakfast. I tried to stop, but couldn't handle myself at all. Every one round here knows how my family suffered. I could make enough ter keep 'em good, but I'd spent it fer likker. My wife has took in washin' to keep the kids from starvin' and freezin'. She had to work all night, more'n one night, and when Freddie died—Oh, my God! I wish I could forgit that! When Freddie died—I was drunk. Just before he passed away I promised him I'd never drink another drop, but I went out and got into the delirium tremens before I stopped. When I came to myself I found that my wife had sold everything in the house but the stove, table, a few chairs and one bed to pay the funeral expenses. You can call it fun, if yer want to, but I tell you it's hell on earth. Most of you know what's happened lately. When my old pal, Bob Moore, died, I was in bad shape; but I never got away from what God did fer him before he died. When I got out of bed, Jimmie took me to the Mission and Jesus saved me the first night I went there. My wife was saved the night before, and I tell you we're havin' different times at our house nowadays. We had chicken fer dinner to-day and we've had meat once a day fer two weeks. I've eat garlic sausage and rye bread on the free lunch counter fer thirty years, but now I'm eatin' chicken and givin' the old lady and kids a chance ter eat too."

When he sat down some tried to clap their hands, but the crowd did not feel that way. Every one knew that Bill had told the truth and they were touched with the earnest way in which he told his simple, straightforward story.

"Now, while you are quiet, I will ask our friend to sing for us," said Morton. "Please come to the wagon, sister," he said to Floe.

As she stepped upon the wagon every eye was upon her. She was dressed in a dark tailor-made suit, very plain but neat. Mr. Worden at the organ started to play softly. Floe walked to the front of the wagon and looked down into the faces of many she knew. Her large black eyes beamed with love for them all. She was very pale, but calm, and as she stood there she looked like a queen.

"It's Floe," said Dave. "She can beat 'em all singin'."

"Gee, don't she look swell! I'd hardly know her," said Gene Dibble.

"Before I sing this song for you," she said in a clear, sweet voice, "I wish to say something about it. Most of you, no doubt, know this song and many of you like it, but to me it means more than any song I could sing. It simply tells my life story. Let me read it to you.

"When I was but a little child, how well I recollect,
How I would grieve my mother with my folly and neglect.
And now that she has gone to Heaven, I miss her tender care,
Oh, angels, tell my mother I'll be there.

"Tell mother I'll be there, in answer to her prayer,
This message, guardian angel, to her bear.
Tell mother I'll be there, Heaven's joys with her to share,
Yes, tell my darling mother, I'll be there.

"When I was often wayward, she was always kind and good,
So patient, gentle, loving, when I acted rough and rude.
My childhood griefs and trials, she would gladly with me share,
Oh, angels, tell my mother I'll be there.

"When I became a prodigal and left the old roof-tree,

She almost broke her loving heart in grieving after me.
And day and night she prayed to God to keep me in His care,
Oh, angels, tell my mother I'll be there.

"One day a message came to me, it bade me quickly come,
If I would see my mother ere the Saviour took her home.
I promised her before she died for Heaven to prepare,
Oh, angels, tell my mother I'll be there.

"This last verse has been enacted in my life within the past week. Mrs. Morton had written home and told father and mother that I was with her. This message came the next day, 'Come at once. Mother is dying'; it was signed 'From your Father.' In company with Mrs. Morton I reached the old home at four o'clock the next afternoon. I used to think the place was lonely and dreary, but I can never tell you how glad I was to set my foot in the old yard once more. Everything looked so good to me, and the same old apple tree where I used to swing when I was a little girl seemed to welcome me home. Dear old Rover came to meet me and, although it had been three years since he saw me, he knew me. We hugged each other and in his dog way he made me feel that I still had a place in his warm heart. The night I left home, the old dog followed me down the road and it nearly broke my heart when I had to send him back; he loved me when I thought all the world hated me. As I reached the porch, father came to the door. Oh, how different he looked! When I left home he was strong and active and now he is bent with sorrow, sorrow that my sin has brought to him. He took me in his arms and kissed me again and again. I tried to ask him for forgiveness; but he would not listen to me. 'You have been forgiven ever since you left home that awful night, and I have searched for three years to find you and tell you so. But come, my child, you must see your mother; she has been calling for you ever since her sickness.' He led the way into mother's bed chamber. 'Here's daughter, Mother,' he said.

"'Oh, I knew you'd come,' she said with a feeble voice; 'I just knew that God would send you to me before He called me home. Raise me up, child, I can't see you.'

"I lifted her frail body and held her in my arms and—and—well, after I made the promise that is in this last verse, she smiled and, with her eyes turned heavenward, my dear, sweet mother went to be with Jesus. You all know my life, how I suffered for my sin; I tried to forget father, mother, home and God. Loving hands have lifted me back to life once more and Jesus has saved me from it all and I can truthfully say, 'Oh, angels, tell my mother I'll be there.'"

The song that followed carried everything before it, and nearly every one was weeping. The rich contralto voice was never better and Floe was singing from her very soul. She forgot the people around her, she was in another world. When the chorus had been sung for the last verse the male quartet took it up, singing softly, and seemed to carry that crowd into the very heaven of which Floe had been singing.

Morton closed the meeting in prayer and was inviting them to accept Jesus as their Saviour. While he was talking, Floe stepped from the wagon to join Mrs. Morton; as she passed Jewey he made a remark to her and insultingly referred to her past life.

Gene Dibble, hearing it, threw his coat to Dave Beach, and stepping up to Jewey said, "Get out of your clothes and square yourself. No man can insult a girl that's tryin' ter trot square and make me like it." There was an old grudge of long standing between these men and every one knew that a fight was unavoidable; both men were strong and each had a reputation as a fighter to sustain.

"Give 'em room," cried Dave. "We'll see fair play."

"Oh, Mr. Dibble," cried Floe, "don't fight for me. I deserve all he said and more."

Gene turned to Floe, and awkwardly raising his hat was about to speak, when Jewey said, tauntingly, "Oh, I guess he ain't looking fer it very bad; he was just bluffin' anyhow."

Jimmie took Floe by the hand and pulled her away from the ring that Dave had formed by crowding the people back. Every one wanted to see Jewey whipped, but all knew that Gene had his hands full to do it.

It is not the purpose of the story to describe this fight, but, from a fighter's standpoint, it was a beauty. Gene had just come from the North woods and he was hard and strong, and had better wind than his antagonist. It was give and take from the start; blood was flowing freely on both sides. Jewey was becoming winded and began to beat the air and strike very wild.

"Keep out an upper cut," said Dave, "you've got him coming all right."

Gene pulled himself together and went in to finish his man. With a right swing, he caught him square on the point of the jaw; in short, as Dave said, "Gene won it in a walk. Bully for Gene!"

On the way to the Mission, Morton sat with his head in his hands. "Beat again," he said. "Every time I get that people together the devil spoils the whole business."

CHAPTER XII

Fred Hanks

The topic of conversation in Bucktown on Sunday evening was the Gospel wagon service. Many little groups were seen here and there talking about Floe, Bill, the singing or the fight. Every one but Mrs. Kinney liked some part of the service, but she was never known to be pleased with anything.

"The idea of Bill Cook sayin' the things he did! And if I'd 'a' been his wife I'd hide my face. My! I was ashamed fer him. I'll bet he'll be drunk for weeks out and I jus' wish he would," she said.

When some one said they thought the singing was fine, Mrs. Kinney said, "Hum, you call that singin'? That big feller that stood on the end and singed bass looks like a catfish when he opened his mouth. The fellow that plays the organ looks for all the world like a girl, and if you call that singin', I wish you could hear the singin' I heard at the Indian Medicine Show last summer; that's what I call real singin'. And that Floe standin' up there, singin' afore that big crowd and her mother hardly cold in her coffin! The style is that she mus' not go in 'siety fer a year, and if you call that singin' you don't know the first principle of music er 'siety. To my way of thinkin', them big horses should be a-workin' 'stead o' hawlin' a lot o' lazy galoots around town fer pleasure. Why, that Morton wears as good clothes as the undertaker. I'll bet he steals the money out of the collection box at the Mission."

Mrs. Kinney never missed an opportunity to express her opinion and the neighbors knew just what to expect from her. She was the only person in the neighborhood who dared criticise Dave Beach.

"He's a devil, and you'll all find it out when it's too late," she said.

At the Mission the house was packed and several who had been at the Bucktown wagon service were in the audience. Gene Dibble was there with a "shanty" over his eye, his lip was swelled to twice its natural size and his right hand was tied up in a red handkerchief. He certainly looked the worse for wear. He dropped into a back seat and not a word sung or spoken escaped him.

When Floe arose to sing, by request, the same song of the afternoon, Gene straightened up, and before she was half through the song he was standing on tiptoe. Floe saw him as he stood there and recognized him as the man who had fought to defend her that day.

At the close of the meeting, Morton gave an invitation and Gene was the first one to raise his hand for prayer. He raised the one with the red handkerchief about it and Floe went at once to the rear of the room, to speak to him about his soul.

"I'm so sorry to have caused you all this trouble," she said. "You would not be in this condition to-night were it not for me."

"That's nothin'; I'd 'a' done it fer any girl that's tryin' to trot square. It's that song that's botherin' me, not the fight. Do you think I could ever be a Christian like you folks talk about? I have a good mother, but I'll never meet her there like you sing about in the song, the way I'm goin' now; what will I do?"

When Floe and Gene walked up the aisle together, several people from Bucktown saw them. Before Gene could reach Dave's barn the news had preceded him. When Gene and Jimmie walked into the barn, Dave leaped to his feet and, taking Gene's free hand in his, said, "You're right in the step you've taken to-night and I'm glad for you. I know that your life can be a useful one and I don't want any one to put a straw in your way. No, don't say a word about that; it's not for me, but I feel just as much pleased to see you get into it as if it were for me. I know it is right, but I've lost my chance."

At the conference in Morton's home the next morning, there was a time of great rejoicing, also a time

of great anxiety. Jimmie was very happy over Gene's conversion.

"We'll git der whole bunch yet," he said to Morton. "Der was five of 'em at the altar from Bucktown, last night, 'sides Gene. Fred Hanks was er comin' ter der Mission, but he got pinched at der railroad crossin' fer bein' drunk. Fagin give 'm four big drinks and er bottle ter start on, den steered him fer der meetin'. He got nabbed 'fore he got dere."

Fagin had hoped to have Fred cause a disturbance at the meeting. He, Mike and Jewey were doing everything in their power to stop the Mission work in Bucktown. The fight on Sunday was a part of their plan; unfortunately for them, Dave Beach was there to see fair play and it resulted in a victory for Gene. Morton knew that the long fight that was to follow in Bucktown would be hard and bitter, but he also knew that God could give the victory.

"Is Fred in jail now, Jimmie?" he asked.

"Dat's what Dave tol' me dis mornin'."

After prayer, Jimmie with Morton started for the jail.

"Dis is Mr. Morton from the Mission, Fred; he wants ter see yer." With great difficulty Fred arose from the old plank upon which he was lying. He took hold of the bars with both hands, but was so weak he could not stand on his feet.

"Just sit down, my boy; I want to talk to you," said Morton, kindly.

Fred fell back exhausted upon the plank. In the city police stations of this country, a plank built against the wall is used for a bed.

"You see," continued Morton, "I've been all through this thing and know just how you feel. Jimmie tells me you have been drinking for several weeks without a let-up. Have you had a drink this morning?"

"No, and I'm near dead fer one," said Fred.

"If I should take you out of here and help you to get on your feet, would you like to make a try for a better life?" asked Morton. "I was in a worse shape than you when I staggered into a Mission and learned of Jesus' power to save drunken men. I turned myself over into his keeping and I've not wanted a drink for over seven years. I know you are weak, but God is strong and He will fight for you. If you will promise me to do as I tell you, I will pay your fine and take you out of here."

"I drew a ten spot or a three thirty-five," said Fred. "If you'll pay it for me I'll pay you back as soon as I get to work and I'll never take another drink as long as I live."

"Unless you let the Lord undertake for you," said Morton, "you'll be drunk again inside of a week."

Morton prayed with him and then went to the clerk of the police court and paid his fine.

After Fred had had a bath and shampoo Mr. and Mrs. Morton went with him to his home. His wife and boy had not seen him for ten days and they were actually suffering for the necessities of life. It required much talk and coaxing before Mrs. Hanks would agree to give him one more chance.

"You do not know him as I do," she said to Mrs. Morton. "A thousand times he has promised me to stay away from saloons and not drink, but he's broken every promise he ever made me. Our rent is two months behind, and baby and me have gone to bed hungry more than one night on account of his drunkenness. I'm tired of it all, and if it wasn't for baby's sake I'd end my life. I wish I was dead." She buried her head in her hands and wept bitterly.

"It'll never happen again; I'm done this time sure," and he meant what he said.

Morton left money with Mrs. Hanks to buy things to eat. She put Fred to bed and cared for him as tenderly as loving hands could. A woman's love is wonderful. In a few days Fred went to work at his old job, determined to be a sober man the rest of his life.

That night he stood up in the Mission and said he was sober and was going to remain sober. On his way home to dinner next day, Fagin called to him from the saloon door.

"Hello, Fred, they tell me that you're going to be a Mission stiff. Come in here a minute." Fred stepped inside.

"I never thought you would get yellow on the bunch," said Fagin. "A man's a baby that will admit he

can't take a social glass and stop when he wants to. Let's all take one together. Give us all something, Mike," said Fagin.

Fred did not have the courage to say No. He not only took a drink with Fagin, but remained there until he was so drunk he couldn't see. Never had he been worse, that night he was helped into the Mission by Fagin's gang. They followed him in and waited to see the fun, but Fred was too drunk to make a noise and soon fell asleep.

At the close of the meeting, Mr. Morton shook him until he awoke. "Come, Fred, I want you to go home with me to-night; I want to help you and be your friend." The next morning Fred was so ashamed of himself that he did not want to see the Mortons. He dressed himself and tried to slip out of the house unnoticed. Mrs. Morton intercepted him at the door.

"Never mind about the past, my boy," she said. "You let God take care of you for to-day and you'll be all right. Your boss said you could go to work and your wife wants you to come home. We'll help you in every way we can, and if you'll only trust God, everything will brighten up."

Fred was heartbroken.

"I don't deserve such treatment from you folks; I turned you and lied to you like a thief," he said.

"But Jesus loves you and we love you and your family loves you and you can go out in the strength of God and win the fight. Keep away from saloons and pray for help," said Mrs. Morton.

Bill Cook was having a hard fight with the Fagin crowd. They had tried every way to get him to drink but he had been able to say No, in the name of the Lord. Then they attempted to get him angry.

"Bill gets paid fer testifyin' in the Mission; he's just workin' a new graft," Fagin said one day.

Bill was angry in a moment and wanted to fight, but before he could say anything, Jimmie said to Fagin, "Yer bet yer life he gits paid fer servin' Jesus. Look at dem clothes he's wearin'. He never had 'em when yer was gittin' his dough. He's dressin' jus' as swell as yer dressin'. When his woman gits rigged up fer meetin' she makes yer old gal look like er wheelborrer in er autermobile parade. Say, Fagin, yer worked up 'cause yer thinks yer kin git Bill sore an' den he'll take one. Not him; he's drinkin' other kind er booze, eh, Bill?"

Gene Dibble was tormented almost beyond human endurance. He walked into Dave's barn one day white with rage. "If I've got ter stand this kind of a deal ter be a Christian, I'll cut this whole business out."

"What's the trouble?" asked Dave.

"There'll be trouble enough when I see Fagin," said Gene; "I just came from his place, but I can't find him. The dirty thief says that Floe is wrong and that I'm just playin' this here religious dodge just to get Floe. Floe an' me have been singin' together some and he says we're not trottin' square. I'll tell yer, Dave, there'll be singin' over to his house and he won't know anything about it if he don't stop mentioning Floe's name in that old cheap booze dump. That name's too good ter even be spoke in there."

Dave smiled and Gene was quick to see it.

"Now see here, Dave, you're wrong. I'm not stuck on Floe and no dog like Fagin can kick her down while I live."

"You stay away from Fagin's," said Dave, "and don't let anything that you hear bother you. I'll see him to-day and he'll stop talking or I'll make him stop."

After Fagin learned that he was causing Gene and Bill so much trouble he doubled his efforts to persecute them. "They're afraid to pass by the place any more," he said. "If they're tryin' to do good, why don't they come in and talk to us? I guess Gene can't leave his girl long enough.

"Say, kid, come here," he called to Jimmie. "Why don't Morton come down here and try to convert us? Does he think we're so good we don't need it?"

"Der yer want him ter come?" asked Jimmie.

"Sure I want him, but he won't come; he's scart of the cars."

Thirty minutes later, Jimmie rushed into Fagin's. There were ten or twenty men at the bar and Jimmie called out so every one could hear, "Say, Fagin, Mr. Morton said he'd come ter-night at eight er-clock

an' hold a meetin' in yer saloon if you'll promise ter sell no booze from eight ter nine. Will yer do it?"

"Be game, Fagin, be game!" cried several voices. "Don't let him bluff you."

Fagin hesitated a moment.

"You're yellow, Fagin. I heard yer ask the kid why he didn't come and now yer afraid he will come."

"Be game, old man; we'll all come to the meeting," said another.

After much good-natured talk of this kind, Fagin turned to Jimmie and said, "Tell 'em to come, kid, and we'll give 'em the warmest time they've had in months."

CHAPTER XIII

"Fagin's Meetin'"

At eight o'clock Fagin's big bar-room was filled with people. The crowd was mostly made up of men, although several women had ventured in to see the fun. At the bar men were standing three deep. Mike and Fagin were both working hard, but were unable to wait upon the crowd.

"Here they come," cried some one at the door.

In a moment every one was quiet and still, as Morton and his workers filed into the place. Fagin's place was known as a free and easy. In the rear of the room was a platform upon which stood several chairs, a table and an old grand piano.

"Go back to the platform," said Fagin.

Jimmie, Floe, Gene Dibble, Bill Cook, Mrs. Cook and Morton stepped upon the platform. Floe went to the piano and started to play the old song, "Jesus, Lover of My Soul." Without an invitation nearly every one joined in the singing and Morton was pleased. As the song ended about twenty strong voices started to clap their hands and sing:

"Monday I got awful drunk,
Tuesday I got sober,
Wednesday night I stayed at home
To think the matter over.
Thursday I went out again,
Friday I took more,
And Saturday night they found me tight
On Fagin's cellar door."

They repeated it three times, making more noise each time. Just as they stopped, Floe and Gene started to sing:

"On Sunday I am happy, on Monday full of joy,
On Tuesday I've a peace, the devil can't destroy.
On Wednesday and on Thursday I'm walking in the light,
Friday 'tis a Heaven below, the same on Saturday night."

Without a stop they ran into Doane's greatest song, "Hide Me, O My Saviour, Hide Me."

Whatever Fagin's plans were, he had forgotten them. Never were two voices better adapted for this sort of music. Gene's tenor voice blended perfectly with Floe's rich alto. But, what is more essential in the singing of the Gospel, they both knew what they were singing about and to whom they were singing.

The best story teller on earth can not tell a story well unless he knows it, neither can the best singer on earth sing the Gospel well unless he knows it. The question so often asked to-day, Why are there no conversions in our church? could be answered sometimes by a glance into the choir loft.

Every one stood spellbound as Floe and Gene put their very souls into the song:

"Hide me when my heart is breaking, with its weight of woe,
When in tears I seek the comfort, Thou canst alone bestow."

Every word was a prayer and Floe was singing to God alone; she seemed to forget the crowd and the place; she remembered the time she had taken her broken heart to Jesus with its weight of woe. Gene was self-conscious, but no one knew it, as every eye was upon Floe. She stopped playing and stood up as they very softly sang the chorus the last time. Falling upon her knees, she said: "Let us pray. O Father, we thank Thee, that Thou hast given us a chance to praise Thee in this room. In former days, in this same place, we blasphemed Thy Holy Name. We thank Thee for forgiveness, for peace, for power to overcome sin, and now, O Father, our prayer is for the people in this room. We know that Thou lovest them all; may they realize to-night that Jesus is the sinner's Friend. For the habit-bound ones, we pray, set them free, O God!" With tears streaming down her cheeks she prayed for Dave Beach, Fagin, Mike, Ike Palmer, and the girls that were living lives of shame; the plea she made to God for Fred Hanks would almost melt a heart of stone. "Forgive these men for getting poor, weak Fred drunk to-night," she prayed. "He is trying hard, but Mr. Fagin and his helpers are doing all they can to kill him; for Jesus' sake stop them, for the sake of his heart-broken wife and his little boy, stop them. May every man, woman and child here to-night be saved for Jesus' sake. Amen."

Not a person moved during the prayer; every word went straight to the hearts of the people; many of the women were weeping and the men were fighting back their tears with more or less success.

After Fagin had consented to allow a meeting in his place he and his crowd had gone after Fred and filled him full of liquor. At the right time he was to be brought into the room and introduced as one of Morton's converts. This was to be the signal for the crowd to break up the meeting.

Floe had spoiled their plans by her prayer. Fred came into the room unnoticed while she was praying, and at the close of her prayer he pushed his way to the platform. In his drunken way he said he didn't want to blame the gang for his condition, but he had tried as hard as he could and it was no use, there was no hope for him. He began to cry and left the room by the rear door. He pulled the door open again and, waving his hat in the air said, "You pikers will never git another chance to make a monkey out of me," and slammed the door.

Morton jumped to his feet and said to the crowd, "I want Floe and Gene to sing for you, but before they sing I will ask Mrs. Cook, one of your neighbors, to say something about Jesus in her home." Morton was afraid to have Bill Cook speak, but thought Mrs. Cook could keep the crowd still better than a man.

"Everybody here knows me," said Mrs. Cook. "We've lived here in this town for thirty years. All that time, until a little while ago, we've had a drunkard's home. Jesus saved me one night and my husband came the next night and we're havin' the blessedest time yer' ever heard tell on. Bill don't drink no more and I ain't been mad fer two weeks now, 'cept when Fagin and Mike tried ter git Bill ter drink. I don't see fer the life of me, what they want ter git Bill back inter the gutter agin fer"—Morton trembled—"they oughter be satisfied; they've had all his money fer years. I wouldn't do that ter them er their families if they was tryin' ter git along like we are," and she began to cry.

Before she could go on with her talk, Morton arose and said, "Floe and Gene will sing." The song selected was the duet, "They are Nailed to the Cross."

"There was One who was willing to die in my stead,
That a soul so unworthy might live,
And the path to the cross, He was willing to tread,
All the sins of my life to forgive.

"They are nailed to the cross, they are nailed to the cross,
Oh, how much he was willing to bear!
With what anguish and loss, Jesus went to the cross!
But he carried my sins with Him there.

"He is tender and loving and patient with me,
While He cleanses my heart of its dross;
But 'there's no condemnation,' I know I am free,
For my sins are all nailed to the cross.

"I will cling to my Saviour and never depart,
I will joyfully journey each day,
With a song on my lips and a song in my heart,

That my sins have been taken away."

After the song Morton gave an invitation. Mike stepped out from behind the bar, untied his white apron and walked up to the platform. "If you people think that I kin be fergiven I want it right now," he said. "I did try to get Bill to drink and I got Fred Hanks drunk and I'm an awful sinner, but I'm done with the whole business; I'll never sell nor take another drink in my life if God will forgive me the way I've used Him." Mike's wife pushed her way through the crowd and they both bowed in prayer at the old saloon platform. At least twenty-five men and women came forward that night and prayed to God for mercy. Fagin stood with his elbows on the bar and watched everything that was going on, but he said nothing.

At nine o'clock Mr. Morton said, "We agreed to get through in this place at nine o'clock and our time is up. I wish to thank Mr. Fagin for his kindness to us, and before we close I wish to ask God to bless him and his family and get him out of this business."

Fagin bowed his head as Morton prayed, and as they passed out he shook hands with all of them and invited them to come again.

The next night at the Mission the first man upon his feet to give a testimony was Oily Ike Palmer. "I was in Fagin's bar-room meeting, and before I went to sleep last night Jesus saved me. Every one in the First Ward knows me and they know very little good of me. I was educated for the ministry and expected to be some one in this world. Everything was bright before me; my parents were both Christians and well to do. Every one, in the little place where I lived, pointed me out as a model young man. A so-called doctor gave me morphine for pain one day and told me to carry it with me always. Some of you know the rest of my story without my telling it; it soon got the best of me. For fifteen years I have been a drug fiend. I have tried every known remedy and they have all failed. With the drug I began to drink whisky. In order to keep myself in these things, I became dishonest. For ten years at least I have made my money in a crooked way. My family have suffered everything through my sin. We were not raised in the slums, but have drifted to the very bottom because of my vicious habits. My brothers and sisters never mention my name, and in the old home my picture has been turned toward the wall. Last night, when Jimmie Moore came to my home and invited me to the Fagin place, I could not refuse him. He told me that Jesus could help me and that you people here would be my friend. I went to Fagin's and heard of my way out; I left that place determined to find God if I could; I spent half of last night upon my knees, and to-night, although very weak and nervous, I know that I am saved. I've been twenty-four hours without drug or whisky and I could never do that unless God was with me. I just want to say one more thing before I sit down. Jimmie Moore came to my house again to-day and invited me to this meeting. When I told him I had no clothing fit to be seen in a place like this, he took every penny he had, thirty-seven cents, I believe, and bought these pants from Rosenbaum. He has promised to leave an evening paper there for sixty-three days to make up the dollar—the price of the pants. I did not know that until this evening, or I should not have allowed him to do it. Jesus saved me, but that boy did his share of it and under God I want to thank Jimmie for my salvation."

Mike and his wife both spoke and thanked God for salvation.

Bucktown was well represented at the meeting and several professed conversion. After the meeting Jimmie said to Morton, "When we git Dave and Fagin, Fred Hanks and Doc Snyder saved, Bucktown will be just as good as der Bulevard ter live in. Jewey got pinched ter-day and he'll git a ten spot, 'cause dey found der goods on him."

CHAPTER XIV

Fred and Doc

When Fred Hanks left Fagin's, he started for the river determined to end his life. Fred had made many desperate attempts to live a sober life, but with him it was out of the question. He had made resolution after resolution. He had taken the gold cure and in less than forty-eight hours after being cured he was drunk again. His own father had said to Morton, "There is no hope for him, and I wish that he was dead." Five different times Morton had prayed with him and Fred had promised each time to stay away from drink and trust God; and he meant every word he said. Men do not get to be drunkards from choice; they cannot help it. It is the first drink that makes drunkards, not the last. The hundreds of thousands of young men and women who are drinking just for fun to-day will be a great

army of helpless drunkards to-morrow. Of course, if they were told this, every one would laugh at the idea that they would ever be drunkards; but, allow the question, where else do the drunkards come from? Many men say they can drink or they can leave it alone. Every drunkard in the world has been able to say the same thing sometime, but that time passes for nearly every one. Men who say they can drink or leave it alone, invariably drink. The same thing is true with the poor fallen girl. Never did a girl start out with the intention of going into the very depths of sin; but Charles N. Crittenden tells us that three hundred thousand women are living in houses of ill-fame in the United States alone. Their average life is only five years and it takes six thousand girls every thirty days to keep the ranks filled. Seventy-two thousand girls enter upon a life of shame every year; again, allow the question, where do they come from? No man starts out to be a drunkard; no girl starts out to be a harlot; why are there so many? Unconsciously they become slaves to sin, and the result is, our country is reeking with this class of people. One who has given a life among women of this class says that nine out of every ten come from the dance hall. One thing is certain, they all come from our homes. Nearly all would gladly leave the awful life they are living if they could, but, like poor Fred Hanks, they are bound hand and foot by sin. Nothing but the power of God can save the fallen.

Fred went to the bridge over the East Side canal and, climbing to the top of the railing, deliberately leaped into the dark waters, twenty feet below. Several people saw him when he leaped and he was rescued from the water before he could drown. When the officer from the corner saw who it was he called the wagon from the police station and Fred spent the night in his wet clothing on the plank in a cell. As he was loaded into the wagon several people inquired who he was. "Oh, only a drunken barber," was the reply; "we get him often. It ain't the first time he's tried this."

The next morning, with Jimmie, Morton went to the station and took Fred to his home. There was a change in Fred; Morton saw something in him that he had never noticed there before.

"Fred," he said kindly, "you have had a very close call; but God in His love and mercy has seen fit to spare you. What do you mean to do with your life?"

"With God's help I'll give it all to Him." And right then and there he unconditionally surrendered himself to God.

Mrs. Hanks took her baby in her arms and paid Fagin a visit.

"O Mr. Fagin, won't you please give Fred a chance to stay sober? Every time he gets away from liquor for a few days, you do all in your power to get him drunk again. Last night he nearly succeeded in killing himself, after you had filled him up, and you would have been his murderer had he accomplished his purpose. Baby and myself have had nothing to eat to-day and I cannot stand this strain much longer; for our sake, won't you give him a chance?"

Fagin was very nervous as he thought of the awful way he had acted. He promised her, not only to refuse Fred any liquor in his place, but said he would do all in his power to keep it away from him in other places. As she left the place, he slipped a dollar into her hand and said, "Feed the kid; he looks hungry."

Fred was sick from the effects of his bath the night before; but so determined was he to do right, that he went with Jimmie to Doctor Snyder's office and from there to work. The doctor gave him some medicine and called him "a d— fool" for his attempt of the night before.

"Say, Doc," said Jimmie, "Fred's got Jesus ter-day and boozin' and him is done. Ter-night in der Mission he's goin' ter speak erbout it. Yer promised ter come down some night; won't yer come ter-night t' hear Fred?"

"If Fred will speak I'll come down and sit on the front seat," said the doctor, tauntingly, as he turned to Fred.

"You'll be on the front seat then," said Fred, "'cause I'm goin' to speak if God lets me live. I've tried lots of times to brace up, but this time I'm trustin' God. If you're a man of your word you'll be in the Mission to-night and on the front seat too."

That night the doctor was there. He had several drinks aboard, but was not in the least intoxicated. After the singing and Scripture reading the meeting was thrown open for testimonials. Bill and Mrs. Cook stood up and told how God had saved them. The doctor had never heard them speak before and he at once became very much interested. When Mike Hardy stood up to speak the doctor was so surprised that he turned around in his chair and unconsciously said, "Well, I'll be d—! When did he get into this game? If there's nothing in this religion they're talking about, a mighty lot of people are getting fooled in this Mission business."

Fred Hanks took hold of a chair in front of him and with difficulty rose to his feet. "I don't expect any one to take stock in me," he said; "I have made so many mistakes and turned the Mission people so many times I am almost ashamed to look at them. I'm not making any promises this time. I've turned my case over to Jesus Christ. If I get drunk now, He's to blame, 'cause he's running the whole shooting match. My life has been a failure from start to finish. When I was a boy I carried papers; one of my regular customers was an old Dutch woman, who used to brew her own beer. Every evening when I delivered her paper I got my glass of beer. I got so I looked ahead to it and when I was sixteen years old I could drink as much beer as a man. I learned the barber's trade, and before I was twenty years of age I was known as a drunken barber. I braced up many times, but when I started again I always went lower than I was before. I got into trouble, was arrested, and pled guilty. On account of my parents, the judge suspended sentence with the understanding that if I ever took a drink, he would call me up before him and give me five years. With the State prison staring me in the face I managed to stay sober three months. During that time I worked hard, got good clothes on me and married one of the sweetest girls that ever lived. After our marriage—well, it's the same old story; why should I tell it again? I've been in jail all over this country. My picture is in the Rogues' gallery in more than one city. I did not want to be dishonest, but a man can't drink whisky and be honest.

"I have stolen the pennies out of my baby's bank to satisfy that awful desire for whisky. Don't tell me that a man does that because he wants to; I couldn't help it. God help me; I've tried as hard as any man ever tried to be somebody but that craving for whisky was there and it had to be first in my life. Whisky was my god, I worshiped it, I loved it better than my family, my life. I've taken the shoes off my feet in the winter time and traded them for whisky. But to-day, thank God, I've not even wanted a drink. The first day in years that I've not wanted whisky is to-day. Gold cure failed; prison bars failed; wife's tears failed; but Jesus has taken even the desire for it away. When a man has that gnawing at his very vitals there is but two things that will touch it, a big drink of whisky or the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank God, I have Him, and I'll never thirst again. Last night I leaped from the bridge into the water to end my life; but God saved me from death and hell. I do not understand how He can love such a brute as I am, but He does and now I'm saved."

The doctor was very much moved by what he had heard.

"I never heard it just this way," he said. "The way you folks put it it's a personal matter and I never could believe that. I believe there is some great Supreme Being; but I do not believe in a personal God. I think that after you die you get what's coming to you; but you people say that you're saved right now and you know it. That can't be."

In the inquiry meeting, Morton took his Bible and sat down beside Dr. Snyder. "Doctor, read that verse," he said, opening his Bible to John 5:24.

"Verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth My Word and believeth on Him that sent me, hath——"

"Does that mean, 'will have'?" asked Morton.

"No, 'hath,' is in the present tense," said the doctor.

"'Hath everlasting life', then, means that we have it now, don't it, doctor?"

"That is what it says, sir."

"Now look at Isaiah 53:6," said Morton.

"All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way and the Lord hath laid ____"

"Not 'will lay'," said Morton. "'Hath laid' upon Christ 'the iniquity of us all.' Does that mean you, doctor?" asked Morton.

"Can it mean me?" asked the doctor.

"If the Word is true, it means you," said Morton.

Like a flash it dawned upon the doctor that Jesus had borne his sins in His own body on the tree. He leaped to his feet and said: "All these years I've been a chump! I've never been satisfied with myself. Had I known this was for me I would have had it long ago." He was very happy and went from one to the other shaking hands. When he met Jimmie, he hugged him.

"I want to go to Bucktown and tell the gang I'm saved," he said.

After the meeting Fred Hanks, Doctor Snyder and Jimmie went from place to place in Bucktown and the doctor did all the talking. He preached to every one he met. In Fagin's, he told them all how Fred and he had been saved and begged every one of them to give their hearts to God. The last place they went was to the Dolly resort. Never was there such a plea made for purity as the doctor made to that crowd of women. "There is something better for you than this sort of life," he said. "God loves every one of you and wants to save you now. If you will trust Him to save you I will find you a different home than this." He did not look for what happened.

"If you will find me a place where I can live like other people, I'll leave here to-night," said one. "I don't like to live this way, but there's no one cares for me."

About midnight the door-bell rang at the Morton home, and when Mr. Morton opened the door, the doctor, Fred and Jimmie stood there with three women from the Dolly resort.

"I was preaching to the people down in Bucktown," said the doctor, "and I told them I'd find them a better place to live if they would trust God. They took me at my word and I have nothing else to do but bring them here."

Every bed was filled but they were made welcome by Mrs. Morton.

"Come right in," she said. "One of you can sleep with Floe and the other two can sleep in this bed downstairs. To-morrow we will get another bed and put it in Floe's big room."

Mr. and Mrs. Morton slept on the floor that night.

When Jimmie reached the barn it was two o'clock.

"Where in the world have you been, Jimmie?" asked Dave.

Jimmie told Dave of all that had taken place and he was as much interested as was Jimmie.

"Gee, der doc is a comer sure!" said Jimmie. "He can preach jus' as good as he can peddle pills."

CHAPTER XV

The Picnic

Mrs. Morton and Floe spent most of the time during the day in the homes of Bucktown. They would call the neighbors together to sew for a certain family. After the sewing a prayer meeting was held and many women and children were saved in these meetings. In this way the wives and children were made ready to join with the heads of the homes in Christian living. The children were dressed and put into the Mission Sunday school; the family altar was established and home life took on a new phase in Bucktown. Many were after the loaves and fishes only; and they got them. Mrs. Morton knew that they were trying to deceive her but she never stopped helping them. When real trouble came they would always send for her and many that started out to "work" the Mission found Jesus before the "work" ended.

As time drew near for the Mission picnic, the young people and children talked of nothing else. Six or seven hundred people attend the annual picnic and the day is one never to be forgotten by those who go.

Two days before the picnic, Jimmie rushed into Morton's office and said, "Mr. Morton, I want ter ast you fer somfin'."

"What is it, Jimmie?" asked Morton.

"Well, kin I have it?"

"You can have anything I can give you, my boy; but what is it?"

"I want der gospel wagon and white horses fer picnic day."

"Now, what in the world do you want with a thing like that?" asked Morton.

"Didn't yer say dat everybody was invited ter der picnic?" asked Jimmie.

"Yes, that's what I said."

"Well, I want ter take der Bucktown gang what can't go dere by demselves, and I want der wagon ter haul 'em. Der's more 'an twenty of 'em 'at can't go dere in street cars. Der's one-winged Bob, Hump Rumpord, Goosefoot Sus, Stumpie-der-shine, Nigger Mose, Hop Hawkins, Blind Billy, der pianer player at Dolly's, 'sides those nigger kids of Griffin's 'at's been sick all winter, and 'sides, Mrs. Rollins says Swipsey can go wid me if I'll take care of 'im. He near died wid der dipteria and he's just gittin' over it."

"Well, can you run such an excursion, if I get a good man to drive the team?" said Morton.

"Kin 'er duck swim? 'Course I kin run her. Kin I have her?" asked Jimmie.

"Yes, you may have them and we will help you in every way we can," said Morton. "How's Dave Beach getting on?"

"Gee, he's under construction. He's mad at everybody, drinks like er fish and swears ter beat der cars," said Jimmie.

"You mean that he is under conviction," said Morton.

"Well, what ever she is, Dave can't swaller 'er an' she's near choking him."

The day of the picnic was warm and bright, a great crowd was there with lunch baskets, and every one was in the best of humor. Thirty minutes after the cars reached the park, Jimmie's excursion came. The white horses were covered with foam and never did they seem so proud as they danced and pranced up the steep hill to the park. Jimmie stood on the back step and was as proud as the team. Bill Cook lifted Swipsey from the wagon and placed him in a hammock. Jimmie introduced his load as "der bunch."

"When do we eat, Hump?" asked Bob.

"I dunno. I hope mighty soon. Jimmie says it's goin' to be swell."

"Wonder what dey'll have. Did yer see any of der stuff?" asked Hop.

"Nope, but I hope they have pie an' soup an' cake wid raisins in it. Say, Mose, which you'd rather have, sweet potatoes and possum or watermelon an' 'lasses?"

"Hush yuh business, man! Hush, yuh business! I'd drop dead suh, if I'd see a possum. Who said watahmelon? Look yah, man, I ain't had no pokchop foh moh 'an a week. Hush, man! I can't stan' no foolin' 'bout such impotent mattahs."

When dinner was announced Morton gave orders to have Jimmie with "der bunch" sit at the first table. He told the young ladies who waited upon them to give them everything they wanted. The first things that were passed to them were several plates of ham sandwiches.

"Please, how many kin I have of 'em, missus?" asked Hump.

"You can have all you want of them; help yourself," replied the lady.

He took no less than seven sandwiches the first grab. All that the rest of "der bunch" needed was some one to start the thing right, so they all took a like amount.

"Leave der rest of 'em for Blind Billy," said Hump, as one of the ladies started away with one of the plates.

"What's dat yellor stuff comin', Jim?" whispered Swipsey.

"Gee! don't yer know nothin'?" said Jimmie knowingly. "Dat's hard eggs wid corn mush over dem."

After Swipsey had tasted of it a few times, he turned to Jimmie and said, "Them's taters, jus' common taters, wid dat stuff spilt on 'em and they tastes jus' like green walnuts."

More sandwiches, baked beans, pickles, potato salad, lemonade, etc., were being stored away so fast that it kept several ladies busy waiting upon them. When they were well filled Mrs. Morton sent a plate of fried chicken to their table. Mose stood up and looked at it.

"Look, yuh woman, where dat chicken come from? I'd give my hat if I had dat ol' ham an' bread out of me. I'll put my share of dat chicken away if I bust."

They all grabbed at once. Jimmie got the largest piece and gave it to Blind Billy. "I don't want no chicken, no how," he said.

Two large watermelons followed. They were cut in fancy scallops and the waiter put them both down in front of Mose. He took the largest piece and laid his face upon it and laughed until he cried. "Mah, watahmelon, what am I eveh 'gwine to do with you. If I eat dat melon, I'll die suh. But I neveh could die any happier."

They all ate watermelon till they could hardly straighten up. Then, when the ice cream and cake was set before them, there was great sorrow.

With tears in his eyes, Stumpy stood up and said, "We're der biggest lot of d—— fools what ever lived. Here we'se are full to der neck wid bread and taters and dem cheap beans dat we'se kin all git ter home and never left no room for chicken, watermelon, ice cream and all dis here kinds of cake. Somebody oughter take us out in der woods and kick us ter death."

"An' yer all doin' der same ting every day," said Jimmie. "Yer gits so full of cuss words and shootin' craps and boozin' and stealin' and lyin' dat yer don't have no room fer Jesus. Jesus is ice cream and cake an' watermelon, an' Morton says He's honey outen der rock. Yer don't git no feed like dis at Fagin's or no where else where they ain't got Jesus."

On the way home, Jimmie attempted to get his load of cripples to accept Christ; and the argument they had about "ligion," as Mose called it, would make splendid reading for preachers; but we will pass most of it by. Jimmie told them that Jesus loved them all and was able to help them.

"In der picture I see'd of Him, He's got long hair and wears long dresses like a woman and looks jus' like he's goin' ter cry. What's He know erbout guys like us? I can't walk er nothin' and kin a womany man help me?" asked Hop.

"I don't care erbout no pictures," said Jimmie. "He ain't no womany man. He built houses and barns and was a carpenter when He was here. He was born in a barn and slep' in a barn same's I do an' He didn't have no more home 'an I got. He jus' knows what I'm doin' an' what I need an' kin take care of me, 'cause He's been there."

When they were in the midst of their argument the wagon stopped in front of Dave's barn. Dave's opinion on any subject was final in Bucktown.

"Say, Dave, come here, will yer?" cried Jimmie. "Dese pikers are tryin' ter say that Jesus don't love 'em and can't save 'em and sech like and I want yer ter prove that I'm right. Don't Jesus love everybody?"

"Yes, everybody," said Dave.

"Ain't He got der power der save everybody?"

"Yes, everybody," said Dave.

"Cripples an' all?" asked Jimmie.

"Yes, cripples and all," said Dave.

"Won't He fergive 'em all der mean things dey done?"

"Yes, all of them," said Dave.

"An' won't He take care of 'em all der time?"

"Yes, all the time," said Dave.

"Now, smartie, what did I tell yer?" said Jimmie to Hop.

"Say, Dave," said Hop, "do yer believe all yer sayin'?"

"I certainly do," said Dave.

"Say, Dave, why don't yer git it if yer believe it?"

Dave was dumfounded.

"Oh, it's not for me, boys," he said. "You see, it's——"

"Den it's not fer us neither," Hop ejaculated. "So yer see yer don't believe a word yer say. We're goin'. So-long, Dave."

Jimmie's eyes filled with tears as he watched Dave stand there with his head down. Never had he known Dave to get the worst of an argument before. As the team started, Dave looked up at Jimmie; their eyes met for an instant. The pain and sorrow on Jimmie's face pierced Dave to the heart.

CHAPTER XVI

Dave Strikes His Gait

After Jimmie had sold his evening papers he started for Dave's barn. His heart was heavy. Dave had a wonderful influence over this boy. Jimmie loved him and believed him to be a wonderful man. He found Dave in his office. "Dave, I want ter talk ter yer erbout what Hop said ter yer. He said 'at if it wasn't fer you it wasn't fer him either. Yer didn't say nothin' and I've been thinkin' maybe yer didn't have nothin' ter say. If yer sure it's not fer yer, how kin it be fer me? I don't know what ter do. I pray fer yer every day but if God don't want yer I might as well give yer up."

He buried his face in his hands and began to weep.

"It's me that's been wrong, Jimmie, not you. I've fought God ever since I've known you. After you went away to-day I hated myself for my cowardice. I know what is right and I'll do it or die."

Jimmie looked up and said, "Der yer mean yer are goin' ter get saved?"

"That's just what I mean, Jimmie, I am——" But before he could finish his sentence Jimmie jumped into his lap and hugged him.

"Dear old Dave, I knowed you'd come. Let's go to der Mission right away, it's time fer der singin' already."

Dave walked so fast that Jimmie had to run to keep up. The song service was in progress when they reached the Mission. They sat down in the front row of seats and after a few songs Dave jumped to his feet and said, "Excuse me, I want to get saved and I want to get saved bad. I can't wait for the word. I want to get off now. I've scored at will, I've scored by the pole horse and I've laid up a heat or two; but I want to get on my stride and face the wire agoing square. I'm done jockeying and with everything else that's crooked and I'm going into this race teaming for first money. I'll win by the help of God."

After the meeting, Floe, Gene, Bill Cook and his wife, Ike Palmer, Mike Hardy, Mr. and Mrs. Morton and Jimmie went with Dave to Bucktown. He invited them to visit him at his barn; but his office was so small they could not all get in, so they went to the Cook residence. Dave excused himself and in five minutes returned with Fagin. Fagin was surprised when he saw the crowd, but he did not seem displeased. Dave was the first to speak.

"Fagin, I let Jesus into my life to-night and I want you to do the same thing. We're going to start a Sunday school in Bucktown and we want your room for the purpose.

"This afternoon I denied Christ and I feel that I've turned a lot of young folks from God; I will get them back for Him if I have to start a Sunday school and have meetings in the old barn besides. You know, Fagin, the other day when Fred Hanks tried to kill himself, you told me you were tired of your business and wished you could be a Christian. You told me how sorry you were you boozed him up six times after Morton had got hold of him. Now, Fred has given himself to God and is doing good work in the Mission and we want you to join us."

Mrs. Fagin was sent for and it took very little persuasion to bring her to a decision for the right.

"Mr. Morton and myself will take the lease for the building off your hands and we'll pay you for what stock you have," Dave told them. "You can get into the factory where you used to work and you can live like a man."

Very little remains to be said. The men that came to God through Jimmie Moore's ministry made the

greatest Gospel-wagon crew ever known. In jail, street and Mission meetings they worked like one man, never once was any jealousy known to spring up amongst them. Not one of them ever went back into the old life for one hour. Five of them have been called into God's work and all have been prospered and blessed of God.

Jimmie is living with Mr. and Mrs. Gene Dibble and no one ever saw a happier home.

Jimmie says, "Floe's der best cook what ever happened." Dave, Bill and Fagin used their influence and elected aldermen who closed every stall saloon and house of ill-fame in Bucktown. For eight months Fagin's place was used for a kindergarten during the week and Sunday school on Sunday. The Railroad Company bought the old houses in Poverty Row and razed them; a side track running to the market has taken their place.

One day Jimmie stood at the market and said, "Gee! dis don't look no more like old Bucktown dan a man what's smokin' looks like a Christian."

End of Project Gutenberg's Jimmie Moore of Bucktown, by Melvin Earnest Trotter

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